

RASAYANA THERAPY: MODE OF ACTION OF RASAYAN DRAVYA'S

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ABSTRACT

The nutritional and nourishment deriving function of particular drugs are known as '*Rasayana*' in *Ayurveda*. The term *Rasayana* as (*Rasa+ Ayan*) that means path of obtaining good quality of *Rasa*. In *Ayurveda*, *Rasayana* have a 2 fold aspect of improving immune system (*Ojaskarbhava*) and helpful in treatment modalities. It seems that *Rasayana* drugs acts at 3 levels of bio-system to promote nutritional aspects-1) At the level of *Agni* by promoting digestion and metabolism. 2) At the level of *Stotas* by promoting microcirculation and tissue perfusion. 3) At the level of *Rasadidhatus* by acting as direct nutrition. *Rasayan* has an effect of immunomodulator, Adoptogenic, Anabolic, Nootropic, Anti-oxidant and Anti-ageing etc. on body and psyche. Thus the *Rasayana* remedies can be concluded as nutritional dynamic and rejuvenation therapy for body and psyche.

Keywords: *Rasayana*, *Ayurveda*, Immunomodulator, Anabolic, Nootropic

INTRODUCTION

"*Rasayana*" is among eight branches of *Ayurveda* with high importance in *Ayurvedic* therapeutics with objectives like rejuvenation, regeneration, anti-ageing, better cognitive functioning and immunomodulation. The term "*Rasayana*" gives a broad explanation as immunomodulator as well as disease curing as described by *Charak Samhita*. *Rasayana* consist of two words '*Rasa*' and '*Ayan*' which means way of obtaining good quality of *Rasa*, stat of this *Rasa* in the body directly governs the stat of health of individual, so it means obtaining optimum standard of *Rasa* is known to be *Rasayana*. *Rasaya-*

na has multiple benefits viz longevity, memory, intelligence, health, luster, better sensory and motor abilities etc.

Acharyacharaka has described *Rasayana* as a means of obtaining the best quality of *Rasadi Dhatus*, Best quality of *Rasa dhatu* leads to formation of good quality of other *dhatu*s. Consequently '*Rasayana*' helps as an effect of Regeneration all body tissue.¹

Aacharya Sushruta defines as '*Rasayana*' a measure to promote a young age, to prolong longevity, develops health and mental func-

tion; impart resistance and immunity against disease.²

The effect of *Rasayana*-considering *Ayurvedic* concepts of physiology *Rasayana* agent promotes nutrition through following mode-by direct enrichment of the nutritional quality of *Rasa* (Nutritional plasma)- *Shatavari*, Milk and Ghee and by promoting nutrition through improving (Digestion and Metabolism) as *Bhallataka*, *Pippali*, and by Promoting the competence of *strotas* (Microcirculatory channels in the body) as *Guggulu* etc. By proper use of *Rasayana* a person can get a happy healthy long life.

AIM:

To describe and elaborate the mode of action of *RasayanaDravya*.

Objective:

To explore newer dimensions of *Rasayana Dravya's* as Immunomodulator, Adoptogenic, Anabolic, Nootropic, Anti-oxidant and Anti-aging etc. on body and psyche.

Classification of *Rasayana*: 4

1) According to mode of action of Administration of *Rasayana*:

- a) *Kutipravesika Rasayana*: In this form of *Rasayana* the person is made to stay in a specially designed chamber for a certain period and is given *Rasayana* preparations.
- b) *Vatatapika*- In this form the person can carry out his normal work and still undergo *Rasayana*.
- c) *DroniPravesika*

2) According to purpose of Administration:

- a) *Kamya Rasayana*- These is promoter of normal health. They boast body energy levels, immunity and general health hence the *Rasayana*.
 - *Pranakamya*- Promoter of vitality and longevity.
 - *Medhakamya*- Promoter of intelligence.
 - *Srikamya*- Promoter of complexion.
- b) *Nimitta*- Mean's things lised for a short and specific period, used for treating disease.
- c) *Ajasrika Rasayana*- Is using food substances onregular basis for nourishment body.

3) According to mode of Action:

- a) *Samsodhan Rasayana*
- b) *Samashaman Rasayana*
- 4) *AacharaRasayana*: This means how the person should behave while moving in the society.

5) According to Age- 5

Table 1: Classification of *Rasayana* According to Age

Age groups in years	Desired Effect	Rasayandrugs
1-10	<i>Balya</i> (Childhood)	<i>Suvarnabhasma, Vacha, Kasmiri</i>
11-20	<i>Vridhhi</i> (Growth)	<i>Bala, Shatavari, Ashwagnadha</i>
21-30	<i>Chavi</i> (Beauty)	<i>Amalaki</i>
31-40	<i>Medha</i> (Intellect)	<i>Bramhi, Shankhapushpi, Vacha, Suvarna</i>
41-50	<i>Twaka</i> (Health of Skin)	<i>Jyotishmati, Priyal, Bringaraj</i>
51-60	<i>Dristi</i> (Vision)	<i>Triphala, Shatavari, Jyotishmati</i>
61-70	<i>Sukra</i> (sex)	<i>Atmagupta, Vajikaran Drugs</i>
71-80	<i>Vikrama</i> (Physical)	<i>Bala, Aamalki</i>
81-90	<i>Buddhi</i> (Wisdom)	<i>Brahmi, Shankhapushpi</i>
91-100	<i>Karmedriya</i> (locomotors activity)	<i>Ashwgangha, Bala</i>

6) According to Deha Prakruti

- a) *VataPrakruti*- Bala, Ashwagnagha, Guduchi, Shankhapushpi, Ghee, Milk, Gold.
- b) *Pitta Prakruti*- Shatavari, Amalaki, Brahmi, Chyavanprash, Milk, Ghee, Silver.
- c) *Kapha Prakruti*- Vacha, Bakuchi, Brahma Rasayan, Haritaki, Triphala, Honey.

7) According to RituSaattmya-

- a) *Aadankala*- Sitavirya and Laghuguna Dravya (Amalaki).
- b) *Visarga Kala*- Ushnavirya, Guru gunadravya (Bhallatak).

Mode of Action of Rasayana Dravya's:

Rasayanadravya's are used for preservation of positive health. Aacharya Sushruta defines a healthy man as one who has equilibrium of *Doshas*, normal function of *Agni*, normal condition of seven *dhatu*s, beside his soul, the sense organs and mind should be happy and cheerful. *Rasayana* stands as an answer to solve the problem of healthful longevity including mental development and resistance against disease. *Rasayana* is a specialized type of treatment influencing the fundamental aspects of the body i.e. *Dhatu*, *Agni*, and *Strotasa*. It is possible that different *Rasayana* drugs may act with predominance effect at different levels. These comprehensive effects are brought about with the help of the varied Pharmacodynamics properties of these drugs. *Rasayana* effect is not a specific pharmacological action but is a complex phenomenon operating through a comprehensive mechanism involving the fundamental factors like *Rasa-Samhana*, *Dhatu*s, *Agni* and *Srotas*. It may ultimately be leading to the achievement of comprehensive effect as stated by Aacharya Charak "Labhopyayo Hi Shastanam Rasadinam Rasayanam"³. It Produces the *Rasayana* effects mentioned in term of *Vayasthapana* and *Ayushkara*, *Medhakara*, *Urjaskara* so that *Rasayana Dravya's* acting at the level of *Rasa* by improv-

ing specific nutritional values of *Poshak Rasa*. Probably *Rasayana Dravya's* are having *Madhura*, *Guru*, *Snigdha* and *Sheeta* properties act as *Rasayana* at the level of *Rasa* by promoting the nutritional value of *Rasa* which in term help in obtaining the best quality of *Dhatu*s. The example of such drugs may be *Shatavari*, *Madhuyashti*, *Bala*, *Dugdha*, *Ghritha* etc. *Rasayana Dravya's* have a fundamental effect at the level of *Agni* or digestion and Metabolism. The *Rasayana Dravyas* possessing the *Ushna*, *Laghu*, *Ruksha* and *katu*, *Tikta*, *Kashaya* *Rasa* may be acting at the level of *Agni*, Vitalizing the organic metabolism leading to an improved structural and function pattern of *Dhatu*s, may cause *Srotoshodhana* and production of the *Rasayana* effects. *Dravya's* such as *Pippali*, *Guggulu*, *Rasona*, *Bhallataka*, *Rudanti* mainly acts at the level of *Agni* so improve the digestion and create excellence of *Saptdhatu*. The *Rasayanadravya's* like *Vidang*, *Chitrak* and *Haritaki* are experienced to enhance *Agni* at the level of *Jatharagni*. Similarly *Amalaki*, *Amrita*, *Pippli*, *Kumari* are supposed to act on *Dhatu*. *Rasayanadravya's* which influence *Oja* are supposed to induce *Bala* and *Vyadhikshamatva* or Immunity.

Anabolic effects-

Initial investigations of *Rasayana* drugs were designed to elicit their role on metabolism and tissue building. *Dravya's* like *Aamalaki*, *Gambhari*, *Pippali*, *Shatavari*, *Guduchi*, *Shilajatu* has shown a positive hint in this direction regular administration of such drugs was found to improve nitrogen balance and thus promote tissue building.

Anti-Stress and Adaptogenic Effect-

The process of living is subjected to many paradoxical situations. One such a paradox is Stress. To be precise, every living organism in this universe is positioned in some or other kind of stressful situation. It is practically difficult to

define the normal and abnormal values for stress and it will be highly variable. What matters the most is one's own threshold of tolerance. If you have a good tolerance it is easy to fight against any kind of stress. Therefore we look at the means of improving our own tolerance and a *Rasayana* drug could come to your rescue to some extent.

Pharmacological investigations on drugs like *Aswagandha* (*Withaniasomnifera*) and *Shilajatu* point to this unique biological effect of *Rasayana* drugs. Accordingly a drug with *Rasayana* quality can benefit the user in two distinct ways. Firstly it can neutralize the negative effects of stress on physiological and restore homeostasis. This effect is generally termed as anti-stress effect. Secondly a long term administration of such drugs may enhance one's own tolerance levels and help to cope up with stress better. This particular effect is termed as Adaptogenic effect.

Immuno-modulatory Effect-

Immunity (*Vyadhikshmatva*) is another biological phenomenon with varied implications. At its first place immune system works to fight back any kind of external invasions on the body e.g. invasions by microbes. Immune system is a multi-locational, multi-component defense system guarding the body as a whole. Again as by today's understanding immune system may also play a paradoxical role in the body. For example when it works in a balanced manner, it guards the body from invasions by microbes. When this defense system mechanism goes weak the body suffers infections. One may need a drug which can stimulate the immune cells to work more effectively. On the contrary, immune system under selected circumstances may start doubting our own tissues and invade them ruthlessly. Such an abnormal phenomenon may lead to development of a class of disease entities lead to development of a class of disease entities called

“Auto-Immune Disorder”. In such kind of complex problems, one may need to suppress the Hyper-acting immune complex.

Rasayandravyas are being continuously explored for their effect on immune system. Available evidences show that, these drugs can be used to modulate the immune function. At one hand they may work to enhance immune function and build you firm deep within, or they might pacify an angry immunity cell to be in its limits on the other. This *Rasayana* drug favors the host in both ways.⁶

Nootropic Effect:

Ayurveda was fascinated with the idea of enhancing mental capabilities. *Rasayana* which are specific to brain and nervous system are known by the name of *Medhya Rasayan* (Nootropic). They include a specific group of herbs, which are used to boost up the cognitive functioning like memory, concentration and retention and so on. An improved cognitive ability can have better influence on psychological aspects like mood, thinking skill and ability to cope with stress. Some of these *Medhya Rasayanas* can be enlisted as *Mandukaparni* (*Centellaasiatica*), *Yashtimadhu* (*Glycyerrhizaglabra*), *Guduchi* (*Tinosporacordifolia*), *Shankhpushpi* (*Convolvulus pluricals*), *Ashwagandha* (*Withaniasomnifera*), *Vacha* (*Acoruscalamus*), *Jyotishmati* (*Celastruspanniculata*), *Brahmi* (*Bacopamonneri*) and *Jatamansi* (*Nardostachysjatamansi*).

The cognition-promoting effect of *Medhya Rasayana* is best seen in children with memory deficits, or when memory is compromised following head injury or a prolonged illness and in old age. These drugs are judiciously used in different conditions to prevent and manage mental illnesses. In old age, *Medhya* drugs are used in single or in formulations to attain delaying of senile degenerative process. Most of these are known to balance the deranged *Vata*.

Anti-oxidant Effect-

Oxygen creates another paradoxical situation for a living cell to face with. There has been a tremendous understanding today on the rampaging effects of oxygen free radicals if generated in excess free radicals, by producing certain kinds of enzymes to some extent. When these natural mechanisms become inadequate, the concentration of free radicals goes up in the tissues and lead to various diseases. Today oxygen free radicals are implicated in to wide range of diseases starting from minor allergies to cancers.

Rasayana drugs are now discovered to help the physiological in overcoming such oxidative injury. Present understanding goes that a *Rasayana* drug enhances the natural enzymatic defense mechanism of the body.⁶

Anti-aging Effect-

Administration of *Rasayana* drugs appears to be associated with prevention of aging also. There have been only few investigations in this direction and they are too inadequate to prove or disapprove ancient thought. Available evidences faintly indicate that *Rasayana* drugs could influence the secretion of a hormone Dihydroxy phenyl Alanine (DHEA), the deficiency of which is implicated in the process of aging. Neurotransmitter substances such as Norepinephrine, Acetyl chlorine or Dopamine (DHEA) are released in stress conditions. Repeated stress on every cell causes aging process.

Rasayana therapy is thus, associated with multi-dimensional effects on the physiology.

CONCLUSION

At last it can be concluded that *Rasayana* therapy is a wonderful treatment procedure of Ayurveda. By its proper use, a person can live healthy and happy long life. *Rasayana* therapy is not a simple drug therapy but is a specialized

therapeutic procedure implicating the fundamental concept of Ayurveda. Science of Rejuvenation deals with recipes which enable a man to retain his manhood or youthful vigor up to good old age and which generally serve to make the human systems invulnerable disease and decay.

The Rejuvenation therapy has unimaginable and wonderful effects. It promotes life, maintains positive health, and preserves youth and cure morbid sleep, drowsiness, physical as well as mental fatigue, laziness and weakness. It maintains proper balance amongst *Vata*, *Pitta* and *Kapha*. It produces stability, cures stiffness of muscles, stimulation of muscles, stimulate Digestion and Metabolism. Therefore persons desirous of attaining long life, vitality and happiness should practice Rejuvenation therapy with complete devotion according to the prescribed procedures.

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