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Importance of *rasayana* therapy in present era

Pravin P. Patil^{*1}, Arun Dudhamal², Sailee Sanjay Mallar³

1. Assistant Professor, Ayurved Samhita Siddhant Department,
2. HOD and Associate Professor, Rognidan Dept.
3. M.D scholar, Ayurved Samhita Siddhant Department, Mob- 8976762205

Ayurved College, Sion, Mumbai, Maharashtra, India- 400022

***Corresponding author:** Email: drpravinpatil2011@gmail.com ; Mob- 8108888375

ABSTRACT-

Rasayana therapy is one of the eight specialties of Ayurveda. Aim of Ayurveda is to provide complete health-physical, social and spiritual. *Rasayana* therapy ensures the same by promoting health, immunity and in turn longevity. The main purpose of *rasayana* therapy is to maintain the health of healthy individual and cure the diseases of diseased one.¹ *Rasayana* acts at the level of cellular metabolism and hence improves the metabolic activities of the body. *Rasayana* therapy consists of certain drugs which aim at-

- a) Preserve and promote the health of healthy individual.
- b) Improves the status of *dhatu*s
- c) Management of diseases
- d) Prevents ageing and provides longevity
- e) Boost immunity

- f) Rejuvenate the system

It is not only a single drug treatment but also a specialized therapeutic procedure practiced as a major specialty in Ayurvedic medicine. Properly and timely use of *rasayana* drugs promotes youthfulness, memory, intelligence, complexion, body glow and best physical strength. *Rasayana dravyas* acts at various level i.e. *rasa-dhatu*, *agni*, and *srotas*.

Various research works is done in the field *rasayana* so here an effort is made to review all classical knowledge and its implementation to achieve the goal of ayurveda “*Swasthasya swastha rakshanam aaturasya vikar prasamanamch*”.

KEYWORDS:

Rasayana, immunity, longevity, ageing, naimitika, kama, vatatapika

INTRODUCTION-

Ayurveda science of life having two aims, one is to maintain the health of healthy person and the second is to cure diseases of diseased person.¹ The current modern definition of health is “Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well being and not merely absence of disease (WHO). Ayurveda has best provision to achieve good healthy life. *Rasayana* therapy works for it; to promote healthy life by preventing the diseases. *Rasayana* means the science of Rejuvenation. *Rasayana chikitsa* consist of certain dietary & therapeutic measures which are to correct as well as improve *dhatus* immunity by a proper nutrition.

***Labhodayo hi shastanam rasadinam rasayanam*²**-

The word *Rasayana* is composed of two words *Ras* + *Ayan*. ‘*Rasa*’ means fluid or juice & ‘*Ayan*’ means pathway. Hence the literal meaning of *rasayana* is ‘fluid pathway.’ *Rasa* is the vital fluid produced by the digestion of food. *Rasa* provides nutrition, enhances the immunity, and sustains life. *Rasayana* is the method of treatment through which the *rasa* is maintained in the body. The purpose of *rasayana* is to give strength, immunity, ojus, vitality, will power and determination. It also attains longevity, memory, intelligence, excellence of

luster, complexion and voice, optimum strength of physique and sense organs.

Today is the era of erroneous lifestyle in which people are not able to follow the rules of healthy and happy living due to unawareness or due to their personal, social or professional obligations like intake of substandard diet, *viruddha*, *vidahi*, *abhishyandi* diets and abandoning the rules of dietetics as described in texts. Moreover, performing excessive and irregular exercise, not controlling the impulses of greed, grief, fear, anger, infatuation etc immunity of *Dhatu* goes on decreasing. All these factors are still prevalent today and cause premature ageing and encounter a number of diseases. Due to these factors nourishing fluid of good quality is not produced, *Strotoavrodha* is manifested, therefore nutrition of further *dhatus* is also impaired and imbalance in *doshas* occurs, which makes the person susceptible for sufferings of various *dhatus* and *ojokshaya*.

Rasayana is actually that which increases the essence of each *Dhatu*, starting from *Rasa*. According to *Acharya Sushrut*, the substances which decreases aging process, increases the longevity and increases the mental as well as physical strength & which destroys the disease process is called as *Rasayana*. To deal all these

consequences, *Rasayan* therapy (Rejuvenation therapy) was introduced. This therapy is so much essential that it became an inseparable part “*RASAYAN TANTRA*” of *Ashtang Ayurveda*.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES:

1. To explore the classical *Ayurveda* and allied literature for understanding the fundamental concept of *Rasayana* Therapy and its benefits.
2. To identify the practical utility of *Rasayana* Therapy for the welfare of human beings in present era.

MATERIALS & METHODS:

Classical *Ayurveda* texts, modern literature and journals pertaining to *Rasayana* Therapy were analyzed for comprehensive understanding of concept of *Rasayana* Therapy, its historical review, types, mode of action, need, benefits and uses.

HISTORICAL REVIEW-

Rasayana in Charaka Samhita:

The 1st chapter of *chikitsa sthan* is devoted to *Rasayana* Therapy, which indicates the importance of *rasayana* therapy as acknowledged by *Acharya charaka* due to its marvelous effects and also having role in alleviation of diseases. *Acharya charaka* has described various *Rasayana Yoga* viz. as 6 *yogas* in *Ch.Chi 1-1*, 37 *yogas* in *Ch. Chi 1-2*, 16 *yogas* in *Ch.Chi 1-3*, 4 *Rasayana yogas* in

Ch. Chi. 1-4. It shows that at that time maintenance of health was the priority for which *Rasayana* therapy was at its peak.

Rasayana in Sushrut Samhita:

Sushruta has described *Rasayana* in *chikitsa sthan* in four chapters i.e. from 27th to 30th, which indicates that *Rasayana* therapy was not emphasized much by *Acharya Sushruta*. This is probably due to the fact *Sushruta Samhita* is primarily dealing with surgical discipline. He has given comprehensive, systematic and scientific classification of *Rasayana* therapy. New *Rasayana* drugs and *yogas* have been added by *Acharya Sushruta*.

Rasayana in Vagbhata Samhita:

The description of *Rasayana* Therapy in last chapters of *Uttara tantra* i.e. 49th chapter of *Ashtang Samgraha* and 39th of *Ashtang hrudaya* indicates the fact that at that time *Rasayana* therapy was less admired, as aim of curing the diseases would have been more essential. The description of *Rasayana* resembles close to *Charaka Samhita*. Definition, types, modes of administration, age of administration and various *Rasayana yogas* have been described in detail.

Numerous details of *Rasayana* therapy is available in *Sharangadhar Samhita Purva khand 4th chapter*, *Kalpa sthana of Kashyapa samhita*,

CLASSIFICATION OF RASAYAN:

According to mode of action-

- 1) **Kutipravesika** i.e. the patient is given Rasayana therapy inside *Trigarbha kuti* (indoor management)³
- 2) **Vatatapika** i.e. the patient is given Rasayana therapy on outdoor basis. Few *vataatapika yogas* are *Sheetodaka*, *milk*, *haritaki yoga*, *Amalaki svarasa*, *amlaki churna*.³

According to Specific Indication-

- 1) **Kamya Rasayan** (promoter of health of healthy)
 - (a) *Prana kamya*: Rasayana therapy aiming to fulfill desires of vitality and longevity e.g. *Triphala rasayan*, *haritaki rasayan*.
 - (b) *Medhakamya*: Promoter of intellect e.g. *Brahmi*, *Shankhpushpi*.
 - (c) *Srikamya*: promoter of complexion and lusture, fortune.
- (2) **Naimittika rasayan** - rasayana therapy used as an adjunct of specific therapy in certain diseases e.g. *Shilajatu* in *Prameha*, *bhallataka* in *Amavata*.
- (3) **Ajastrika rasayan**- Regular use of nutritious foods for the endorsement of health e.g. *ksheerghritaabhyas*.

According to the effect-

- (1) **Samshodhan**: The drugs used for the purpose of purification of body by the processes of *Vaman*, *Virechana* etc. Thus vitiated *doshas* enrooted out of

body ultimately result in rejuvenation of body.¹⁹

- (2) **Samshamana**: In this type, vitiated doshas are not expelled from body but get pacified inside the body e.g. *Nagbala*, *guduchi*, *Triphala*, *amalaki rasayan* etc.¹⁹

THE RASAYANA DRUGS-

Among a very wide range of drugs claimed to possess 'Rasayana' (rejuvenating) effect the following drugs are more popular even today, viz. 'Amalaki, Pippali, Shatavari, Amruta, Sankhapushpi, Bramhi, Vacha, Shilajatu, Louha and Suvarna' as a single drugs and 'Chywanaprasha' and *Amalaka Churna Rasayana* as compound 'Rasayana' drugs. Acharya sharangdhar has described rasayana drugs for specific *dhatu*s¹⁵.

Rasayana drugs for specific *dhatu*s or tissue-

DHATUS	SUITABLE DRUGS
RASA (plasma)	Khajur, draksha, kashmari
RAKTA (blood)	Amalaki, bhringraj, palandu, lauha
MASA (muscle)	Bala, nagabala, ashwagandha
MEDA (adipose)	Guggulu, shilajit, amrita, haritaki
ASTHI (bone)	Laksha, shukti, shankha
MAJJA (bone marrow)	Vasa, majja, lauha
SHUKRA (reproductive tissue)	shatavari, musli.

A unique decade wise description of ageing process is given by *Acharya Sarangdhara*-¹⁵

AGE	AGEING PROCESS	SUITABLE DRUGS
0-10	<i>Balya</i> (childhood)	<i>Vacha, suvarna bhasma</i>
11-20	<i>Vridhhi</i> (growth)	<i>Bala, Aswagandha</i>
21-30	<i>chhavi</i>	<i>Amalaki, louha bhasma</i>
31-40	<i>Medha</i> (<i>intellect</i>)	<i>Shankhapushpi, jyotismati, brahmi</i>
41-50	<i>Twaka</i> (health of skin)	<i>Bhringaraj, priyal, jyotismati</i>
51-60	<i>Drushti</i> (vision)	<i>triphala, shatavari, jyotismati</i>
61-70	<i>Shukra</i> (sexual ability)	<i>ashwagandha, kappikacchu</i>
71-80	<i>Vikrama</i> (physical ability)	<i>bala, amalaki</i>
81-90	<i>Buddhi</i> (wisdom)	<i>brahmi, shankhapushpi</i>
91-100	<i>Karmendriya</i> (locomotor activity)	<i>ashwagandha, bala.</i>

VATATAPIKA RASAYANA- The outdoor regimen where the person may remain in

the society and continue his duties while under therapy. This is a routine method of ‘*Rasayana*’ therapy. It is convenient and is cheap but the results are not up to the mark³.

KUTI PRAVESHIK RASAYANA-

A special indoor regime which is very rigorous procedure. The person has to be hospitalized he has to undergo *Panchakarma* (purificatory measures) as per standard schedule and then he has to start using the *Rasayana* (rejuvenating drug) selected for him in consideration of a number of factors mentioned earlier. During this period he has to stay in a specifically constructed therapy chamber, the ‘*Rasayana Kuti*’. However, being a cumbersome procedure the ‘*Kuti Pravesika*’ method is not commonly used these days³.

NAIMITTIKA RASAYANA-

As also mentioned earlier the ‘*Rasayana*’ therapy is advocated both during health as well as during disease. During health they are used to promote the general *vigor* and vitality while during disease they are used with a similar object to improve the vitality of patient so that he may fight out a particular disease. Specific *Rasayan* drugs have been advocated for specific diseases to be used as adjuncts to

general treatment. Such ‘*Rasayana*’ drugs are known as ‘*Naiimitika Rasayana drugs*’.

SELECTED *NAIIMITIKA RASAYANA* DRUGS FOR FOLLOWING DISEASE-

Sr. No	Diseases	<i>Naiimitika Rasayana Drugs</i>
1	Eye	<i>Jyotismati, triphala, shatavri, yastimadhu</i>
2	Heart	<i>Salparni</i>
3	Skin	<i>Gandhak rasayan, vidanga</i>
4	Grahni & gulma	<i>Pippali, bhallataka</i>
5	Tuberculosis	<i>Rasona, nagabala, shilajatu, pippali</i>
6	Anemia	<i>Louha</i>
7	Asthma	<i>Agastya rasayana, bhallataka</i>
8	Neuromuscular diseases	<i>Rasona, guggulu, bala, nagabala</i>
9	Diabetes	<i>Shilajatu, amalaki, haridra</i>
10	Obesity, lipid disorders	<i>Guggulu, haritaki</i>
11	Hypertension	<i>Rasona, bala, rasna, medhya rasayana drugs</i>
12	Hypotension	<i>Kasturi, kupilu</i>
13	Allergic diseases	<i>Haridra</i>

MEDHYA RASAYANA-

Though in principles all ‘*Rasayana*’ drugs are supposed to rejuvenate both, the body as well as the mind, a separate class of ‘*Rasayana*’ drugs has been described in

the text for specifically improving the ‘*Medha*’ i.e. the memory, will power and intelligence. Such drugs are known as ‘*Medhya Rasayana*’ drugs or in lay man terms, brain tonics. Among a very wide range of such drugs the following have been considered important viz. ‘*Sankhapushpi, Brahmi, Mandukparni, Guduchi, Yastimadhu, Jyotismati, Vacha and Asvagandha*’. The recent studies done on this category of drugs has shown the possibility of varying degrees of psychotropic action in these drugs especially anti-anxiety effect. Some of them have also been found hypertensive¹²

ACHAR RASAYANA-

The one who is truthful, free from anger, abstaining from alcohol and women, non violent, non-exerting, calm, sweet spoken, engaged in *jap* (repeated incantations), and cleanliness observing charity, penance, worshipping gods, cow, *brahmanas*, teacher, preceptor, elders, devoted to love and compassion, observing vigil and sleep in balance, using ghee and milk regularly extracted from cow, well behaved, self controlled, serving elders, devoted to holy scriptures these individuals only get blessed with fruits of *rasayana*.¹⁶

In modern *civilisation* and competitive world the psychological and social life of person is disturbed. The quarrel and crime rate is also

significantly increasing. In such conditions incorporation of *achar rasayan* in lifestyle will definitely helpful for personal as well as social life to control these hazards.

MODE OF ACTION:

It has been explained by *Acharya Dalhan* on the basis of *Rasa*, *Guna*, *Veerya*, *vipaka*, *prabhava* of the *rasayan* drugs. When *rasayan* drugs of different *rasas* are taken, they are digested by *jathragni* followed by *bhutagni*. During this phase normal *vata*, *pitta* and *kapha* are produced along with pure *saara* part i.e. *Ahaara rasa*.

This qualitative *Rasa* produces pure *Rasa dhatu*, which then continues the chain of production of other *raktadi dhatus* with the help of respective *dhatwagni* upto *ojas* formation. Therefore well formed *dhatus* keep on nourishing the body till they are taken, e.g. *Rasa* provides contentment and saturation & nourishes the blood, *rakta* generates clarity in complexion & nourishes the *medas*, *medas* gives rise to unctuous material, sweat & firmness & nourishes bones, *asthi* supports the body & nourishes *majja*, *majja* provides unctuous, strength, nourishes *shukra* and fills up bones, *shukra* provides valour, pleasure, physical strength, exhilaration and is meant for reproduction. There are some *Rasayana* drugs which act at the level of

Rasa by improving the nutritional value of the *poshaka rasa* which helps to obtain the best quality of *dhatu* viz. *Shatavari*, *bala*, *atibala* etc. Drugs resulting in unimpaired *agni* are *pippali*, *haritaki*, *chitraka*, and those acting at the level of *agni* are *pippali*, *rason* and *haritaki* etc.

Thus *Rasayan* therapy works at the level of *Rasa* (nutrition), *Agni* (Digestion & metabolism), *Strotamsi* (microcirculation) enabling to procure the best qualities of different *dhatus*. *Prabhava* of *Rasayan* drugs results in achievement of certain divine effects.

The rasayan indicated for longevity of life and prevention of diseases: *Brahma rasayana*, *Chyavanaprasha*⁵, *Amalaka ghrita*⁷, *Amalakavaleha*⁷, *Kewalaamlaka rasayana*.

The rasayan indicated in management of diseases:

- ◆ *Bhallataka Rasayana*- *Kaphaja roga*.
- ◆ *Endra Rasayana*- *shwitra* (*leucoderma*), *kushtha* (*skin diseases*), *pleeha* (*splenomegaly*) *vishamjwara* (*fever*).
- ◆ *Pippali Rasayan*- *kasa* (*cough*), *shwas* (*dyspnea*), *hikka* (*hiccup*), *arsha* (*haemorrhoids*), *grahani* (*digestive disorders*), *pandu*

(anaemia), *peenasa* (coryza), *shopha* (oedema).

- ◆ *Vardhaman pippali rasayana-pleeha* (splenomegaly), *udar* (ascites), *kasa* (cough), *shwas* (dyspnoea), *grahani* (digestive disorders), *pandu* (anaemia), *shopha* (oedema), *vatashonit* (gout).
- ◆ *Triphala rasayana*- intellect, memory, gives long life and helps to treat all diseases.

BENEFITS OF RASAYANA-

A person undergoing *rasayana* therapy attains longevity, memory, intellect, freedom from disease, youth, excellence of luster, complexion, voice, excellent potentialities of the body. The means by which one gets the excellence of *rasa* is known as *rasayana* or a rejuvenation therapy.²

RESEARCHES IN THE FIELD OF RASAYAN:

Rasayana therapy is found most effective in Tuberculosis. It significantly decreases cough, fever, dyspnoea, haemoptysis, and increase body weight¹⁷

Rasayana in rheumatoid arthritis: *Vardhaman pippali rasayan* is effective in the management of *Aamavata* (rheumatoid arthritis). A significant decrease in erythrocyte sedimentation rate was also noted¹⁷

Rasayana in geriatrics: In senile memory impairment *guduchyadi medhya rasayana* showed memory enhancement, anti stress, antidepressant and *anxiolytic* properties¹⁷

Rasayana in intelligence: *centella asiatica* fresh leaf extract showed a significant result concerned with learning and memory¹⁷

Rasayana in recurrent rhinitis- use of *Triphala rasayana* in recurrent rhinitis gave good results¹⁶

DISCUSSION-

Rasayana therapy is very useful in today's era. Due to unhealthy food, unhealthy living, increased mental stress, physical exertion, not having control over mental urges and body tissue going under degeneration so early. To overcome this problem as people finds very difficult to adopt all ancient fundamentals so along with dietetics and following some principles, we can use *rasayana* therapy to keep them healthy, happy, stress free and bring control over their mental urges which in turn disturbs *tridoshas* of body. By implementing *rasayana*, slowly the generation will become healthy and they won't have problems in family planning, and children's born will be also healthy devoid of any congenital abnormality, juvenile diseases and decreasing fetal and maternal morbidity rates.

So this is the main problem being faced in present era. Also, many chronic diseases makes body weak, no energy, old age people losing their will power so it is very useful in chronic disorders to give strength, will power, energize body and keeps fresh and happy.

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 it is a specialized therapeutic procedure implicating the fundamental concept of ayurveda. It may lead to comprehensive clinical effects designated as *vaya sthapana*, *ayushkara*, *medhakara*, *balakara* and *jara vyadhi nashana* effects.

During *rasayana* therapy a person desirous for optimum effects should consume a suitable regime of diet and should follow a suitable code of psychosocial conduct as prescribed under *achara rasayana*.

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