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Concept of Rasayan- A Review Study

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Abstract

Rasayana is one of the eight main branches of Ayurveda and is recommended to increase Ojas after Shodhan therapy. The Rasayan drugs and formulations provides longevity, memory, intelligence, freedom from disease, youthful age, excellence of luster, complexion and voice. It is good for all age groups for the elderly, pregnant women. Rasayan therapy prevents the effects of early aging on both and increase the body resistance to disease. Rasayan therapy is particularly good for Vata types during the autumn, to give them weight and strength and help them endure the long, cold winter. It is contraindicate in any condition associated with Ama, for obese person and during cold and flu, congestive disorder, fever and allergies. The wisdom of Ayurveda has provided guidelines for slowing down the ageing process (Jara) by increasing Ojas.

Key word- Rasayan, Ayurveda, Jara, Ojas.

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INTRODUCTION

Rasayan Tantra is one of the eight major specialities of *Ashtanga Ayurveda* exclusively devoted to rejuvenation and geriatric care. It aims at achieving a long and heathy life. *Rasayana Chikitsa* is not a drug therapy but a multiangle approach taking care of body and mind both, thus affording a total well being to an individual. It includes specialized

procedures practised in the form of rejuvenation practices, dietary regimen and special health promoting conduct & behaviour i.e. *Achar Rasayana*.

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Rasayana therapy improves metabolic activities and results in best possible biotransformation. It promotes longevity, memory, youthfulness, strength of body and senses. *Rasayana Chikitsa* mainly used for maintaining the health of healthy individuals although can be used for curing disease.

Aims and Objectives- To highlight the key messages that is common to many of the existing guidelines. Critically reviewing and commenting on any differences. To assess the usefulness of Rasayan Therapy.

Material and Methods- This review was done by compiling the classical Ayurvedic literature, modern literature, magazines and research journals as well as PUBMED, MEDLINE database.

Definition:

1. *Rasayana* is that by which old age and diseases are averted.¹

2. Means of obtaining the optimal nourishment to all the *Dhatu*s of body are called *Rasayana*.

3. *Rasayana Tantra* is one which deals with delaying of ageing process, increasing intellect and strength, prolongation of life and curing the disorders.²

Classification of Rasayana- In view of the scope, method and contents of use, *Rasayana* may be classified as follows:

A) As per scope of use:

1. Kamyasayana
 - ★ Pranakamyasayana
 - ★ Shrikamyasayana
 - ★ Medhakamyasayana
2. Naimittikasayana
3. Ajasrikasayana

B) As per method of use:

1. Vatatapikasayana
2. Kutipraveshikasayana

C) As per contents of Rasayana:

1. Aushadhasayana
2. Ajasrikasayana
3. Acharasayana

As per scope of use:

Acharya Dallhana has classified *Rasayana* according to scope of use as follows:

- Kamyasayana** - *Kamyasayana* means a definite aim. These are promoters of normal health, immunity and energy levels. They can be further divided in following types -
 - Pranakamyasayana** - Promoter of life, vitality and longevity.
 - Medhakamyasayana** - Promoter of intellect.
 - Shrikamyasayana** - Promoter of complexion and lustre.
- Naimittikasayana** - *Nimittasayana* means things used for a short and specific period. It is not the specific medical treatment for particular

disease but it is used as adjuvant along with the specific management of disease e.g. *Ashwagandha Churna*, *Ashwagandharishta* is indicated in the treatment of tuberculosis.

List of popular Naimittaka Rasayana

S.No.	Disease	Rasayana Drugs
1	Drishti Mandya	Triphala, Shatavari, Jyotishmati, Yashtimadhu
2	Kushtha	Bhallataka & Tuvaraka Rasayana
3	Rajyakshma	Ashwagandha, Pippali, Shilajatu & Nagbala
4	Shwasa	Agastya & Bhallataka Rasayana
5	Prameha	Shilajatu, Amalaki, Haridra
6	Pandu	Amalaki & Lauha Rasayana
7	Vata Vyadhi	Rason, Guggulu, Vacha, Nagabala

(Study by K.N.Uduppa and R.H.Singh 1995)

iii. Ajasrika Rasayana- *Ajsrika Rasayana* can be used daily as diet. *Dugdha and Ghrita* are common *Ajsrika Rasayana*.⁴

As per method of use:

Acharya Charaka has classified *Rasayana* according to mode of administration.⁵

i. Vatatapika Rasayana (outdoor regimen) - It can be administered even if the individual is exposed to wind and sun. Hence it is called *Vatatpika Rasayana*.

ii. Kutipraveshika Rasayana (indoor regimen) – This type of *Rasayana* is administered in a cottage (indoor) and the individual is not exposed to wind & sun. *Samshodhana karma* is required prior to this method.

As per contents of Rasayana:

1. **Aushadha Rasayana** (drug *Rasayana*)
 2. **Ajasrika Rasayana** (dietary *Rasayana*)
 3. **Achara Rasayana** (conduct *Rasayana*)
- (*The Holistic Principles of Ayurvedic Medicine, Prof R.H.Singh*)

Another classification -

Acharya Dallhana has further classified *Rasayana* as follows:

- **Samshodhana Rasayana-** the *Rasayana* drugs which eliminate the vitiated *Doshas* by expelling them from the body by *Vamana, Virechna* and *Shodana*. Eg. *Pippali* and *Yashtimadhu*.

- **Samshamana Rasayana-** the drug which produces *Shamana* (pacifying) effect. ⁶

Aachara Rasayana

One more *Rasayana* variety has been mentioned in *Charaka Chikitsa Sthana* i.e. *Aachara Rasayana* or *Nitya Rasayana*. Persons who are truthful and free from anger, alcoholism, sexual indulgence; who do not indulge in violence and over exercise; who are peaceful and soft spoken, who practise *Japa, Tapa*, cleanliness, charity; who are stable and steady; who regularly offer prayers to Gods, cows, *Brahmanas*, teachers, preceptors and aged people; who are compassionate and merciful; who go to sleep and awake at regular time; who habitually take *Ghee* and milk; who are experts in the knowledge of rationality; who are free from ego; whose conduct is good; who are not narrow minded; who love spiritual knowledge; who have excellent sense organs, respect for elders; who believe in the existence of Gods; who have self control and who regularly study *Dharmasastras* will get best out of rejuvenation therapy. If persons endowed with these qualities practice rejuvenation therapy, they get all the rejuvenation effects described above. ⁷

Medhya Rasayana - *Acharya Charaka* has mentioned specific *Rasayana* for

increasing *Medha* i.e. intelligence and memory like *Brahmi* (*Bacopa monnieri*), *Madhuyasthi* (*Glycirrhiza glabra*), *Shankhapushpi* (*Convolvulus pleuricaulis*), *Guduchi* (*Tinospora cordifolia*). These *Rasayanas* increase longevity, cure disease, and promote strength, *Agni, Varna* and *Medha*. Among them *Sankhapuspi* is an excellent drug for the promotion of intellect. ⁸

Classical Concepts of Rasayana Therapy

Rasayana therapy is not a simple drug therapy but is a specialized therapeutic procedure. It may lead to comprehensive clinical effects designated as *Vayasthapana, Ayushkara, Medhakara, Balakara* and *Jara Vyadhinashana*. In conformity with these comprehensive effects, the practice of *Rasayana* therapy has been advocated to involve a number of specific considerations like:

- ★ *Prakriti* (Constitution)
- ★ *Vaya* (Age)
- ★ *Satmya* (Biological adaptability to *Desha/Kala/Ritu*)
- ★ *Dhatus* (Tissues and tissue nutrition)
- ★ *Srotas* (Microcirculation)
- ★ *Agni* (Digestive and metabolic factors)
- ★ *Ojas* (Vitality)

Consideration of Prakriti - *Rasayana* drugs are administered to persons

according to their constitution or *Pakriti*. It has to be determined in view of the basic pharmacodynamic properties of a particular *Rasayana* drug, suitable for a particular *Prakriti*.

Consideration of *Vaya*

Rasayana therapy exhibits the anti ageing effects like *Vayasthapana*, *Ayushkara* and *Jara Nashaka*.

The maximum utility of *Rasayana* therapy can be obtained when used during early, adult and middle age of life i.e. 3rd to 5th decades as suggested by *Sushruta* and *Vagbhatta*.

Thus early adult and middle age is the best period for *Rasayana* therapy.

Rasayana Drugs Recommended For Different Age Groups

Age group	Desired effect	Suitable Rasayana Drug
1-10	Balya	Vacha, Swarna Kashmari
11-20	Vridhhi	Ashwagandha, Bala
21-30	Chhavi	Lauha, Amalaki
31-40	Medha	Jyotishmati, Shankhpushpi
41-50	Twaka	Bhringaraja, Priyala, Somraji
51-60	Drishti	Triphala, Saptamrita Lauha

61-70	Shukra	Atmagupta, Ashwagandha
71-80	Vikrama	Drugs may not be effective
81-90	<u>Buddhi</u>	Drugs may not be effective
91- Above	Karmendriya	Drugs may not be effective

(Study by K.N.Uduppa and R.H. Singh 1995)

Consideration of *Satmya* - Similar to *Vaya* and *Prakriti*, the *Rasayana* therapy demands a consideration of the *Satmya* (adaptability) in *Ayurveda*. Broadly one may need different *Rasayana* drugs in different *Ritu* or seasons and different *Desha* or climates. The pharmacodynamic properties of different *Rasayana* drugs have also to be taken into the consideration.

Similarly in consideration with *Desha Satmya*, *Snigdoshna* drugs may be good for *Jangala Desha*; *Rukshoshna* drugs for *Anupa Desha* and *Sadharana* drugs for *Sadharana Desha* and so on.

Consideration of *Dhatu*- Depending upon the status of different *Dhatu*s and *Dhatu*sara, specific *Rasayana* drugs have

been mentioned for the benefit of different *Dhatu*. Pharmacodynamic properties and *Panchabhautika* constitution of different *Dhatu*s and different *Rasayana* drugs is to be considered. Following *Rasayana* drugs have been considered specific for the respective *Dhatu*. *Rasayana* works at the level of *Dhatu*s by nourishing them and thereby enriching the nutrients in *Rasa Dhatu* which converts to *Rakta, Mansa, Meda, Asthi, Majja* and *Shukra*.

Consideration of Agni - *Rasayana* drugs have effect at the level of *Agni* i.e *Jathragni* Thereby enhancing digestion, assimilation & metabolism ultimately leading to efficient nutrition to all the *Dhatu*s. Drugs acting at the level of *Agni* are *Pippli, Chitraka, and Vidanga*. *Koshtha Pareeksha* should be done before using *Rasayana*. *Vataj Prakariti* has *Krura Koshta*, *Pittaj* has *Mridu Koshta* and *Kaphaj* has *Madhyama Koshta*. So *Rasayana* drugs should be administered according to the *Koshta* of an individual.

Consideration of Srotas - *Rasayana* drugs act at the level of *Srotas* and help in the *Shodhan* of *Srotas* increasing the microcirculation, which further promote the *Dhatu Poshana* e.g. *Guggulu, Rasona,*

Bhallataka. So *Rasayana* drugs should be advocated according to the requirements of the individual after the thorough *Pareeksha* of *Srotases*.

Consideration of Ojas - *Ojas, Saaransh* of all *Dhatu*s which is supposed to induce *Bala, Vyadhikshamatva* or immunity. *Jivaniya* group of drugs, *Yashtimadhu, Swarna* are some of the drugs which improve quality of *Ojas*. Similarly improvement in mental faculties or *Medhakara* effect is also achieved with *Rasayana* therapy. That is why our classics have given priority to *Medhya Rasayana* such as *Shankhpushpi, Jyotishmati, and Brahmi* etc.

Effect of Rasayana Therapy - Following table shows the comparison of the effect of *Rasayana* given in the *Vrihatrayee*.The three major treatises of *Ayurveda*.

Effect of Rasayana	Charaka	Sushruta	Astanga Hridaya
Arogya	+	-	+
Dirgha ayu	+	+	+
Tarunya vaya	+	+	+
Smriti	+	-	+
Medha	+	-	+

Prabha	+	-	+
Varna	+	-	+
Swara	+	-	+
Deha bala	+	+	+
Indriya bala	+	-	+
Vaksiddhi	+	-	+
Pranati	+	-	-
Kanti	+	+	+
Virya	-	+	-
Odarya	-	+	-
Vrishyata	-	-	+

From the above table, it is obvious that, *Astanga Hridaya* has followed the same ideology of the *Charaka Samhita*. The effects of *Rasayana* are capable enough to fulfill both objectives of *Ayurveda*, i.e., prevention and curing.

Mode of Action of Rasayana

Rasayana drugs are used for preservation & maintenance of positive health. *Acharya Sushruta* has defined a healthy man as one who has equilibrium of *Doshas*, normal functioning of *Agni*, normal condition of *Dhatus*, along with the calmness of soul, sense organs and mind.

Rasayana is a specialized type of treatment influencing the fundamental aspects of body i.e. *Dhatu*, *Agni* and *Srotas*. It is possible that different *Rasayana* drugs act with predominant effect at different levels. *Rasayana* effect is not a specific pharmacological action

but is a complex phenomenon operating through a comprehensive mechanism involving the fundamental factors like *Rasa-Samvahan*, *Dhatus*, *Agni* and *Srotas*. It may ultimately lead to the achievement of the comprehensive effect as stated by *Acharya Charaka* "लाभोपायो हि शस्तानां रसादीनां रसायनम" .⁹

Probably *Rasayana* drugs having *Madhura*, *Guru*, *Snigdha* & *Sheeta* properties, act at level of *Rasa* by promoting the nutritional value of the *Rasa* which in turn help in obtaining the best quality of *Dhatus*. Examples of such drugs are *Shatavari*, *Madhuyashti*, *Dugdh* and *Ghrita*. *Rasayana* drugs have a fundamental effect at level of *Agni* or digestion and metabolism. *Rasayana* drugs possessing *Ushna*, *Laghu*, *Ruksha Guna* and *Katu*, *Tikta*, *Kashaya Rasa* act at level of *Agni*. They vitalize the organic metabolism leading to an improved structural & functional pattern of *Dhatus* and production of the *Rasayana* effects. Drugs such as *Pippali*, *Guggulu*, *Rasona*, *Bhallataka* and *Rudanti* mainly act at level of *Agni*. (*R.H.Singh et.al.1978*)

The *Rasayana* drugs with *Katu*, *Tikta*, *Kashaya Ras*; *Vishada*, *Ruksha*, *Laghu Guna*; *Ushna Veerya* and *Katu Vipaka* may cause *Srotoshodhana*. *Rasayana* drugs which influence *Oja* are

supposed to induce *Bala* and *Vyadhikshamatva* (immunity) e.g. *Jivaniya Gana* drugs, *Swarna* and *Pippali*.

Of all the types of treatment modalities described in *Ayurveda*, *Rasayana* can be considered superior because of its versatile actions. It can be employed as both preventive as well as curative measure. It exerts purifying effect on *Srotas*, pacificatory effect on *Doshas* and at the same time, rejuvenates and revitalizes the *Dhatu*s.

Management of Jara with Rasayana

Rasayana drugs are the substances that support *Rasa* and stimulate the production of *Ojas*. Thus in old people *Rasayana* promotes longevity, memory, intelligence, freedom from disease, youthfulness, excellence of luster. Various studies showed the free radical scavenging and antiageing effect of *Rasayana*. *Ayurveda* considers *Ojas* as the subtle essence of the immune system. When *Ojas* is low immune system is weak. *Rasayana* is not a single drug it bears wide coverage on the drug, diet and discipline. It is achieved by *Achara Rasayana*, *Ahar Rasayana* and *Dravya Rasayana*. *Rasayana* acclaimed for *Swasthsya Oorjaskar*, *Vyadhihara* and prevent *Jara*. Treatment of *Jara* associated problems with *Rasayana* and other medications is possible to improve the quality of life to

some extent. *Rasayana* therapy ensures long life.

While describing the best *Bhavas* (*Agrya Samgraha*) *Acharya Charaka* has mentioned "*Jara Yapyanam*" which means *Jara* is on the top amongst diseases which cannot be cured but the patient may be kept symptom-free by proper treatment. *Acharya Chakrapani* while commenting on the word *Nishpratikriyah* mentioned that ordinary treatment has got no effect on aging but *Rasayana* is effective against it.

An ideal *Rasayana* prolongs life, improves memory and intellect, promotes health, and provides immunity against diseases thereby helps an individual to lead an energetic life. It improves lustre and complexion of the body, tones the voice and speech, and increases the acuity of all the sensory and motor organs, vitality and vigor.¹⁰

CONCLUSION

Rasayan is the preventive therapy describe in *Ayurveda* which is helpful to maintain health, retard aging process and promote immune system to fight against infection. *Rasayan* is very helpful to maintain healthy body and mind in today environmental condition and life style. *Rasayan* contribute to strengthening our digestive fire (*Agni*), serve as a rejuvenating remedy and help keep us healthy for a long time. A *Rasayan* cure

can be the right thing to help us recharge our batteries physically and mentally. Rasayan is very important view point expressed in classical treatises and is boon to the world.

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