

Inside Review of *Naimittika Rasayana*

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ABSTRACT

Rasayana (Immunomodulator) have been mentioned in the treatment of various diseases, *Naimittika Rasayana* are disease specific and are capable to act at the level of *Agni* (digestive fire), *Rasa* (plasma), and *Srotas* (Channels). It increases *Ojas*, *Vyadhikshamatva*, *Bala* (immunity) and even exhibits multidimensional activities like anti-oxidant, tissue protective, immune stimulant, and immune potentiating, immune competent and improves the quality of life. In this paper an effort has been made to know about the diseases specific *Naimittika Rasayana* mentioned in Ayurvedic Literature.

Keywords: *Naimittika Rasayana*, Quality of Life, *Rasayana*, *Vyadhikshamatva* (Immunity)

INTRODUCTION

"Health is Wealth". *Rasayana* promote longevity by retarding ageing process and preventing diseases, which is one of the eight clinical specialties of classical Ayurveda practiced extensively and effectively since ages. Though chiefly concerned with improving the health status *Rasayana* is used also as curative treatment with effect. Thus, it serves the dual purpose of eradicating the ailments and keeping them away thereby promoting and prolonging the life span.

Acharya Sushruta defines *Rasayana Tantra* is one which deals with delaying of ageing process, increasing of intellect and strength, prolongation of life and curing of disorders¹. *Rasayana* as the process by which there will be stability of body, all types of sensory and motor organs; and no

graying of hair, wrinkling and baldness.² *Rasayanas* are non-toxic Ayurvedic complex herbal preparations or individual herbs used to rejuvenate or attain the complete potential of an individual in order to prevent diseases and degenerative changes that leads to disease³. In this paper an effort has been made to know about the diseases specific *Naimittika Rasayana* mentioned in Ayurvedic Literature.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

We know that "necessity is the mother of all inventions", so the same principle applies in origin of *Rasayana* also. Because the origin of Ayurveda⁴ had explained in detail in *Deerghanjeevitadyayam* (chapter on desire for life) of *Charaka Samhita* which is the first chapter of the entire textbook. Here the Ashtanga of Ayurveda also explained including the *Rasayana Tantra* too. But later in *Chikitsastana* of the same text, in *Rasanadyaya Acharya* Charaka were forced to describe the origin of Ayurveda⁵ in the *Ayurvedasamuthaniya Adyaya*, 4th pada of the same. In Second Pada, of *Rasayana* chapter, *Pranakamiyadyayam*, *Acharya* told that, because of the lifestyle the man became abode of diseases. By following these muscles become flabby, joints become loose, blood becomes afflicted and fat gets liquefied. In such persons, marrow does not remain intact inside the bones, there occurs impairment in the ejaculation of semen and *Ojas* (semen) gets diminished. In such circumstances, person feels exhausted,

languid and falls victim to excess sleep, drowsiness and laziness. He loses enthusiasm, incapable of physical and mental work. He loses memory, intellect and complexion and becomes an abode of diseases. Thus, he fails to enjoy his life. This necessitates the full fledged domain of the *Rasayana* Sastra in diseased⁶.

Rasayana in Diseased

The objectives of Ayurveda is to maintain the health of a healthy individual and cure of disease of patients^{7,8}, Ayurveda maintains health in healthy and alleviates disorders in diseased. The ultimate aim in both is equilibrium of essential factors *Dhatuamyata* (Balance in fundamental support of body). *Dhatuamyata* can be secured by *Cikitsa*⁹ and this *Cikitsa* (treatment) is classified into *Bhesaja* (with medicine) and *Abhesaja*¹⁰ (without medicine).

Bhesaja is again divided into two

1. Some of them tone up the health of healthy person (*Swasthasya urjaskara*)¹¹ which subclassified and *Rasayana*¹² is one among them.

Medicine belonging to this category is considered to be useful for a healthy person. There are certain natural conditions like old age, which affect even a healthy individual. The medicine belonging to this category helps to maintain excellent physique.

2. Some of them treat the ailments of the patients¹³.

Medicines belonging to this category specifically useful for curing fever etc. But *Acharya* Chakrapani while commenting on this context opined that, the medicine not only maintains the healthy status of a healthy person, to some extent they also help in alleviation of diseases. e.g.: *ChyavanapRasa*, *BhallathakaRasayana* etc. Chakrapani added that medicines which are mostly used for rejuvenation therapy, have also their effects to cure diseases and many instances to that effect are available in the concerned chapters¹⁴. In this concern *Acharya* concluded that, the medicine do the

action by producing strength and longevity of the individual¹⁵.

The definitions of *Rasayana* Thantra given by the *Acharyas*, says the importance of these in field of curing disease-.

According to Arunadatta, the commentator of *Ashtangahridaya*, has clearly pointed out that, *Rasayana* acts as an antitoxin in the cases of poisoning and as preventive to death resulting from it¹⁶. *Susrutha* while defining *Rasayana* given social importance to the term "*RogaapahaRasamartha*"¹⁷ (capable of treating the diseases). Chakrapani mentioned *Rasayana* *Dravya* are usually alleviative of diseases and also virilific and promotive of vigour in healthy individuals by increasing resistance in the body¹⁸. Chakrapani again stated in *Vimanasthana* of *Charaka Samhita* as, *Rasayana* is the one which wards off diseases as well as old age. In *Tatvachandrika* commentary also, the word "*Vyadhividwamsana*" (destruction of diseases) is emphasized. *Acharya* Chakradutta and *Baishajyaratnavalikara* also emphasized the term "*Vyadhividwamsana*" while defining *Rasayana*^{19,20}. *Bavaprakasha* also mentioned the importance of *Rasayana* in curing diseases²¹.

Disease Specific Rasayana

The greatest potential for improving the health of the people in general is to find in what way they live and follow the routines of their life. Ayurveda emphasizes on both curative as well as preventive aspect. *Vikara* (diseases) are innumerable in number and any one medicine cannot be expected to act against all kinds as well as against all types of diseases. On the contrary in such a stage of crisis in day today Ayurvedic practice, *Rasayana* especially *Vyadhihara Rasayana*, (taking the diseases away) which is specific to a particular disease can play a vital role by giving adequate *Rasayana* effect along with its *Vyadhi Vipareetha* (opposite to the diseases) action. *Rasayana* can be utilized in the correction of *Dhatu-Vaishamya* (imBalance in fundamental support of body)

due to some specific diseases. *Sushruta* considered such *Rasayana* under the category of *Naimittika Rasayana*²².

This consists of two words, The term “*Naimittika*” is derived from the word *Nimitta* which means cause or etiology, which is the reason for the *Vyadhi* (diseases) manifestation. The term *Rasayana* means rejuvenation or promoter of vitality. Thus, *Naimittika* type of *Rasayana* can be defined as *Rasayana* specific to a disease which will improve the vitality of individual towards the specific disease. “*Naimittikam Vyadhinimittam*”²³

According to Ayurveda, diseases are produced because of the *Dhatu-Vaishmya*. Hence *Naimittika Rasayana* can be utilized in the correction of *Dhatu-Vaishmya* which having sufficient strength to protect body from disorders due to some specific diseases. It improves the state of *Dhatu Vaishmya* in chronic or *Yapyvyadhi* (which cannot be easily cured by medicine). *Rasayana* also known as *Urjaskara*, i.e giving strength towards the specific disease, by improving the resistance i.e. Immunity, or “*Apunarbhava*” (which does not allow the recurrence of the diseases). *Chakrapani* opines on *Vyadhikshamatva* as, it is *Vyadhi-Balavirodhitam* (It is the capacity to restrain or withstand the strength of the diseases i.e., strength to arrest the progress of disease).

Method of Administration

It is that which acts to get rid of specific diseases and is accompanied by other benefits of *Rasayana*. Thus this is also called as *Vyadhihara Rasayana*. The method of administration of *Naimittika Rasayana* i.e., *Vyadhihara Rasayana* can be compared with the administration of *Vatatapika Rasayana*, which is recommended in diseased. The name itself indicates that it is a therapy which does not require any restriction of *Vata*(air) and *Atapa*²⁴ (sunlight). In case of diseased ones *Vatatapika* is ideal²⁵. Mild disturbances may happen in the middle of this procedure due to the incorrect administration of recipe, which can be easily treated²⁶. This mode of administration itself proves fit for the present day.

According to the disease condition, specific *Rasayana* drug will be selected for the administration. One can get ample references regarding curative effects of *Rasayana* in the classics along with their health promoting effects such as *Pippali Rasayana*, *Bhallataka Rasayana* in *Kustha* (skin diseases), *Arsas* (piles) *Ayo Rasayana* in *Mahakustha* (skin diseases), *Tuvaraka Rasayana* in *Madhumeha* (Diabetes), *Somaraji Kalpa* in *Kustha* (skin diseases), *Kalpa Guggulu Kalpa*, *Silajatu Kalpa*, *Vrdhdhadaru Kalpa*, *Sarpiguda* in *Ksataksina* (emaciated), *Yogaraja* in *Pandu* (Anemia), etc.

Other *Rasayana* Yogas Found Effective In Various Diseases²⁷

Table No: 1 Rasayana in various diseases

Eye diseases	Thriphala (Three <i>myroBalans</i>), Shathavari (<i>Asparagus racemosus</i>), <i>Yashtimadhu</i> (<i>G. glabra</i>)
Heart diseases	<i>Arjuna</i> (<i>Terminalia arjuna</i>), <i>Shalaparni</i> (<i>Desmodium gangeticum</i>), <i>Pushkaramula</i> (<i>Inula racemosa</i>), <i>Guggulu</i> (<i>Commiphora mukul</i>)
Skin diseases	<i>Bakuchi</i> (<i>Psoralea corylifolia</i>), <i>Gandhaka</i> (Sulphur), <i>Bhallathaka</i> (<i>Semecarpus anacardium</i>), <i>Thuvaraka</i> (<i>Hydnocarpus laurifolia</i>), <i>Vidanga</i> (<i>Embeliaribes</i>)
Joint diseases	<i>Shallaki</i> (<i>Boswellia serrata</i>), <i>Amruthabhallathaka</i> , <i>Rasona</i> (<i>Allium sativum</i>)
Diabetes	<i>Shilajathu</i> (Black bitumen), <i>Amalaki</i> (<i>Emblicoeffinialis</i>), <i>Haridra</i> (<i>Curcuma longa</i>)
Anemia	<i>Lauha</i> (Iron)
Hypertension	<i>Rasona</i> (<i>A. sativum</i>), <i>Sarpagandha</i> (<i>Rauwolfia serpentina</i>), <i>Bala</i> (<i>Sida cordifolia</i>), <i>Rasna</i> (<i>Alpinia galanga</i>), <i>Medhya Rasayana</i>
Hypotension	<i>Kupilu</i> (<i>Strychnos nux-vomica</i>), <i>Kasthuri</i> (Musk)
Asthma	<i>Haridra</i> (<i>C. longa</i>), <i>Shirisha</i> (<i>Albezia lebeck</i>), <i>Agastya</i> (<i>Sesbania grandiflora</i>), <i>Rasna</i> (<i>A. galanga</i>)
Lipid disorders	<i>Guggulu</i> (<i>C. mukul</i>), <i>Harithaki</i> (<i>Terminalia chebula</i>)
Allergies	<i>Haridra</i> (<i>C. longa</i>)
Mental disorders	<i>Brahmi</i> (<i>Becopa monnieri</i>), <i>Jyothishmathi</i> (<i>C. paniculata</i>)

Mode of Action of Naimittika Rasayana

The word *Rasayana* essentially refers to acquisition and circulation of nutrition needed to provide nourishment to the body and tissue perfusion. Hence it may be presumed that a *Rasayana* agent acts at any of the following three levels which are *Rasa* (plasma), *Srotas* (Channels), *Agni* (digestive fire)

Rasa

Rasayana agents must enrich the nutritional quality of *Poshaka* (nutritive) *Rasa* as most of them physically contain high quality of nutrients in their bulk and when administered, they are added to the pool of nutrition present in the *Poshaka Rasa* and in turn help in improving in *Dhatu Poshana* (nourishment of fundamental support of body) i.e., *Dhatu* with optimum quality. e.g.: *Satavari*

Agni

Rasayana agents improve the *Agni* and thus promote *Dhatu Poshana*. Several *Rasayana* drugs are known to have *Deepana* (enlightening) and *Pachana* (digestion) properties by the virtue of their qualities like *Laghu* (small), *Ushna* (hot) or by *Prabhava* (effect), thereby promote the functions of *Agni* for the digestion of food and the *DathvAgni* to vitalize the metabolic resulting in turn to improved nutritional status at the level of *Dhatu* i.e. *Dhatu* with optimum quality e.g.: *Pippali*, *Bhallataka*.

Srotas

Some of the *Rasayana* drugs promote the competence of *Srotas* leading to the better bio availability of nutrients to the tissues and improve tissue perfusion. This is another mode through which a *Rasayana* agent may help in promotion of nutritional status i.e. *Dhatu* with optimum quality. e.g.: *Guggulu*.

Rasayana by virtue of their qualities, actions and *Prabhava* (effect) promote *Ojas* (immunity). *Ojas* is considered as quintessence of all *Dhatu* of the body. It is the *Ojas* which is responsible for imparting

Vyadhikshamatva (resistance towards disease) in an individual.

CONCLUSION

Thus proved the wisdom of Ayurveda *Rasayana* therapy is given due credentials by all the branches of Ayurveda, because, of its innumerable capabilities. It really deserve to be called as nectar/Amrta. If Ayurveda as a whole, is able to conquer diseases, similarly *Rasayana Tantra* is also capable enough to triumph over the same. With the advancement of the modern medicine, the new dimensions of *Rasayana Tantra* will come into light. Even though, *Rasayana Tantra* is a single branch of Ayurveda, it covers a vast range of medical activities such as, anti-oxidant effect, immunomodulatory effect, anti-stress and adaptogenic effects etc.

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