



ROLE OF RASAYANA IN LONGEVITY: A REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

In this world longevity and old age are accompanied with a variety of health challenges and population studies indicate that elder people will use three to five times more healthcare services compared to the younger population. *Ayurveda* has two aims i.e. prevention and promotion of health. *Rasayana* may be employed for fulfilling both of them. Health promotion, disease prevention and rejuvenation approaches are used in this system of medicine through dietary and therapeutic means and both approaches can slow aging and invigorate functions of the body's organs. The *Rasayanas* are rejuvenators, nutritional supplements and possess strong antioxidant activity. *Rasayana* refurbish the neuronal, endocrinal and immune systems are considered to prevent ageing, re-establish youth, strengthen life, brain power and prevent diseases, thus enhancing bodily resistance to all kinds of injury. The main purpose of *Rasayana* therapy is to impede the aging process and to delay the degenerative process also known to promote positive health and longevity. *Rasayana* is one of the comprehensive disciplines of *Ayurveda*, which comprises a specialized use of herbs, herb mineral formulations, food articles. Thus a plan for *Rasayana* therapy right from birth shall be introduced in routine immunization schedule.

Keywords *Ayurveda*, *Rasayana* therapy, Immunity, Aging, Rejuvenation

INTRODUCTION

The *Rasayana-tantra* represents the basic approach of *Ayurveda* which comprises preventive promotive, curative aspects of health and carries the most practical methods for management of health and disease through its measures as the *Rasayana-chikitsa*.¹ Every man wants to live long and healthy. This is possible by promoting rejuvenation, healing and regeneration of living tissue in the body and for this *Rasayana* therapy in *Ayurveda*. The classical *Ayurvedic* text says that medicine therapy is divided into preventive and curative therapy. Promotion of the health is main objective of *Ayurveda* which is achieved by the unique modality mentioned in *Ayurveda*

called *Rasayana* or rejuvenation. This unique class of therapy enhances the life span, delays aging, improves the intelligence and memory power, promotes health, provides youthful states of the body, betters the body lustier and voice improves the efficiency of the different cognitive abilities and enhances the innate health. The ultimate aim of *Rasayana* therapy improves strength, immunity, *Ojas*, vitality, longevity, memory, intelligence and excellence of luster.²

Acharya Charaka has described therapeutics of two types: *Swasthasyaurjaskar* (Promotive of Vigour in health or preventive Therapy) and *Artasaryagnut* (Destructive of disease in the ailing or Curative Therapy)

1. Swasthasya urjaskar

It means to promote and maintain the health of healthy person. The word 'Urja' means best (*Prashasta*), *Bala* (strength), Energy and life (*Pranana*).³ "As they provide the essential (*Prashasta*) bodily factors and enriches ones total structure, they are termed as *Urjaskara*, mentions *Chakrapani*. On the same level *Gagadhara* holds type of therapy coming under *Swasthavritta* means the therapeutic which promotes *Oja*, the vital energy Similarly *Yogindranath* also explains *Urjaskar* means that which promotes strength, complexion, etc.

2. Artasyarognut

The word *Arta* as per *Chakrapani* implies painful conditions caused by various disorders like *Jwara*, *Kushtha*, etc. and thus *Artasyarognut* means the *Bheshaja* which pacifies those pains.¹⁰

Classification of Rasayana⁴

The objective of classification of *Rasayana* is to achieve preventive, promotive and curative aspects of health.

On the basis of the utility

1. *Kamy Rasayana*
2. *Ajasrika Rasayana*
3. *Naimittika Rasayana*

1) *Kamy Rasayana*:

To achieve desired specific purpose more towards to improving longevity (*Ayusya*) or to slow down the ageing process (*Vayasthapana*).

Vayasthapaka Mahakashaya (Great Extractives) are *Guduchi* (*Tinospora Cordifolia*), *Haritiki* (*Terminalia Chebula*), *Amalki* (*Emblica Officinale*), *Shweta* (*Clitoria Ternatea*), *Jeewanti* (*Leptadenia Reticulate*), *Atirasa* (*Asperagus Racemosus*), *Mandookparni* (*Centella Asiatica*), *Punarnava* (*Boerhaavia Diffusa*) etc.

It is again of three subtypes:

(i) *Prana kamy Rasayana (life energy)*:

It is used for achieving or maintaining the best quality of *Prana* in the body. It promote longevity.

E.g. *Amalaki*, *Haritaki*, *Guduchi* etc.

(ii) *Sri Kamy Rasayana* : It promote body luster and complexion.

E.g. *Guduchi*, *Amalaki*, *Triphala*, *Ashwagandha* etc.

(iii) *Medha kamy Rasayana* : It promote mental competence.

E.g. *Shankhapushpi*, *Brahmi*, *Vacha*, *Mandukparni* etc

2) *Ajasrika Rasyana*: Daily use of milk, Ghee or any potential medicines to keep the person health to defend against various ailments and also to improve his general strength.

3) *Naimittika Rasyana*: Treatment of ailments using specific formulation for specific diseases. This is the curative aspect of *Rasayana Chikitsa*. For example, use of *Agastyarasayana* in Chronic Respiratory disorders is a type of *Naimittika Rasayana*. *Silajatu* (*Asphaltum punjabinum*) in *Prameha*, longevity.

Based on method of use:

1) *Vatatapika Rasayana*: i.e. outdoor regimen. For example "Chyavanapraasa" is used as a *Rasayana* for children or adult daily once or twice to enhance general immunity and strength.

2) *Kutipravesika Rasayana*: i.e. intensive indoor regimen.

Based of diet and life styles:

1) *Asushdha Rasayana*: Includes drug based *Rasayana*.

2) *Achara Rasayana*: Includes lifestyle and dietary based *Rasayana* are included in *Ahara Rasayana*.⁵

Benefits of Rasayana:

According to *Charaka Samhita* - *Rasayana* help longevity, memory, intelligence, freedom from all diseases,

youth, excellence of luster, complexion, voice, excellent potentiality of body and sense organs, true words politeness and brilliance.⁶ *Rasayana* is a way for attaining excellent *Rasa Dhatu*.⁷

Sushruta Samhita⁸

- Sustains age and youthfulness
- Increase in life-span
- Increase intellectual capacity and strength
- Freedom from diseases (i.e. immunity is increased)
- Acts as rejuvenator and general restorative treatment

Sharangdhara Samhita

Acharaya Sharangdhara has described the progressive aging where it has been described that every individual is at risk of losing one of the following properties at every decade. Aging is a natural process and the changes that occur due to aging are bound to occur. The following table [Table 1] enumerates these changes of every stage of life and the possible *Rasayana dravyas* prescribed to prevent those changes or to minimize their effect as per *Sharangdhara Samhita*.⁹

Table 1: Need and Rasayana Medicine According to Age Groups according to Sharangdhara Samhita

Decade	Loss of features	Desirable Rasayanas ¹⁰
First (0-10yrs)	<i>Balyavastha</i> (Childhood)	<i>Swarna</i> (Gold)
Second (11-20yrs)	<i>Vruddhi</i> (Growth)	<i>Bala</i> (<i>Sida cordifolia</i> Linn)
Third (21-30yrs)	<i>Chavi</i> (Luster)	<i>Amalaki</i> (<i>Emblica officinalis</i> Gaertn)
Fourth (31-40yrs)	<i>Medha</i> (Intellect)	<i>Shankapuspi</i> (<i>Convolvulus pluricaulis</i> Choisy)
Fifth (41-50yrs)	<i>Twaka</i> (Complexion)	<i>Jyotismati</i> (<i>Celastrus paniculatus</i>)
Sixth (51-60yrs)	<i>Drusti</i> (Vision)	<i>Jyotismati</i> (<i>Celastrus paniculatus</i>)
Seventh (61-70yrs)	<i>Shukra</i> (Reproductive power)	<i>Ashvagandha</i> (<i>Withania somnifera</i> L)
Eighth (71-80yrs)	<i>Vikrama</i> (Courage)	<i>Bala</i> (<i>Sida cordifolia</i> Linn)
Ninth (81-90yrs)	<i>Buddhi</i> (Intelligence)	<i>Brahmi</i> (<i>Herpestris moniera</i> HBK)
Tenth (91-100yrs)	<i>Karma Indriya</i> (Motor organs)	<i>Bala</i> (<i>Sida cordifolia</i> Linn)
Eleventh (101-110yrs)	<i>Chetas/Manasa</i> (Mind)	<i>Rasayana</i> may not be effective
Twelfth (111-120yrs)	<i>Jivana</i> (Ceasation of life)	<i>Rasayana</i> may not be effective

Following are some of examples of Rasayanas used for specific purpose

- **Brahma Rasayana** – Useful in free from disease, gain longevity and vigour.¹¹
- **Chyawanprasha Rasayana** – It promotes intellect, memory, luster, immunity to disease, longevity, strength of sense organs, sexual excitement, great stimulation of digestive, clarity of

complexion, downward movement of *Vayu* and emerges with fresh youthful complexion.¹²

- **Amalakayasa Brahma Rasayana** – It is useful rejuvenating recipe which makes a person live for one thousand years, which prevents old age, cure disease, promotes *Buddhi* (wisdom) and strength of senses.¹³

• **Aindra Rasayana** – It promotes longevity, nourishment, *Dhana* (wealth), *Svara* (voice) and *Varana* (complexion).¹⁴

• **Pipalli Vardhamana Rasayana** – It is promoter of voice, longevity, restores youth and intellect.¹⁵

• **Shilajatu Rasayana** – It is useful in long life, happiness, prevents ageing, disease. It is an excellent drug for producing sturdiness of body.¹⁶

• **Haritaki Rasayana** – It developed powers to see through the completion of all projects in hand and leads a long life. Improves strength and gives healthy life and longevity.¹⁷

• **Triphala Rasayana**- It nourishes both body & mind thereby promoting longevity of life and lives for one hundred years free from old age.¹⁸

Current Features of Rasayana Therapy

Rasayana Chikitsa means rejuvenation therapy. Rejuvenation literally means to return to youthful conditions or to the normal from diseased state. Rejuvenation therapy helps to promote and preserve health. It also increases a healthy person's mental and physical capabilities. It is known to have improved skin complexion and texture, modulates the voice and increases sensing capacity of sense organs. The person became healthy and strong.

DISCUSSION

It may ultimately be leading to the achievement of the comprehensive effect as stated by *Charaka* "Labhopayohi shastanam rasadinam rasayanum." Its effects mentioned in term of *Vayasthapana* and *Ayushkara*, *Medhakara*, *Urjaskara*. It stands as an answer to solve the problem of healthful longevity including mental development and resistance against disease. *Rasayana* drugs are used for

preservation of positive health and act as a Antioxidants, immunomodulator. An immunomodulatory are used in longevity of life. These Antioxidants are useful for protection of heart disease, Diabetes mellitus. In these recent study *Ashwgandha* and *Guduchi* drugs are more helpful in preventing the oxidative stress and premature aging. Both drugs are safe for adults and indicate significant anti-aging effect in normal health.

CONCLUSION

Rasayana Chikitsa is a basic therapy for rejuvenation since it attains longevity, memory, intellect, freedom from disease, youth and excellence of luster. *Rasayana* is the preventive therapy describe in *Ayurveda* which is helpful to maintain health, retard aging process and promote immune system to fight against infection. *Rasayana* is not just a drug therapy but it is a specialized procedure practised in the form of rejuvenative recipes, dietary regimen and special health promoting conduct and behaviour. Scientific studies have proven the efficacious role of *Rasayana* remedies in the management of chronic life style related diseases and degenerative changes. It has been reported that the '*Rasayanas*' are rejuvenators, nutritional supplements, possess strong antioxidant activity and antagonistic actions on the oxidative stressors. This review articles describes significant information's regarding various options of *Rasayana Chikitsa* as per *Ayurveda* including herbs, combinations of herbs in the form of traditional formulation

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Source of support: Nil Conflict of interest:
None Declared

Cite this Article as : [Meena Nilam et al :
Role of Rasayana in Longevity: A Review]
www.ijaar.in : IJAAR VOLUME IV ISSUE
IX JUL –AUG 2020 Page No:1017-1022