

**CONTROVERSY OF RASNA – A REVIEW**<sup>1</sup>\*Dr. Deepak Mishra, <sup>2</sup>Prof. Makhan Lal, <sup>3</sup>Dr. R. B. Yadav<sup>1</sup>M.D.scholar Post Graduate Department of Dravya guna, State Ayurvedic College and Hospital, Lucknow.<sup>2</sup>HOD, Post Graduate Department of Dravya guna, State Ayurvedic College and Hospital, Lucknow.<sup>3</sup>Professor, Post Graduate Department of Dravya guna, State Ayurvedic College and Hospital, Lucknow.**\*Corresponding Author: Dr. Deepak Mishra**

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**ABSTRACT**

Rasna is a very important medicinal plant which is described in our ayurveda and classics. But it is taken as a controversial drug due to unclear identity. Since most of the population in developing countries are dependent on herbal drugs for their primary health care. Now a days due to increasing demand of these natural herbs, they are under threat of unavailability of natural sources and crude drugs, these herbs are being adulterated due to which faith of the public in herbal drugs declined and it leads to one of the most reasonable drawback in promoters of ayurveda and herbal drugs.

**KEYWORDS:** Ayurveda, Rasna.**INTRODUCTION**

- Rasna is an herb growing upto 5-6 ft. height bearing attractive red coloured inflorescence. It is best among vatahara substances according to Acharya Charak. A large percentage of plants used in Ayurvedic practices and herbal medicines are subjected to controversy. Controversial drugs or Sandigdha Dravyas is term used for medicinal plants having controversial botanical sources due to polynomial nomenclature system of Sanskrit, non-availability of plants and parallel evolved knowledge. Controversy is creating problem for uniformity in standardization and reliability of Ayurvedic products.

**Causes of Controversy**

**Mistake done during copying of Manuscripts-** For Example: Taalavriksha of Dhanwantari Nighantu has become Latavriksha in Nighantu sesha.

**Geographical variation-** *Berginia ligulata* is source of Pashanbhed in North India while *Aerva lanata* is considered as Pashanbhed in South India.

**Single synonym given for multiple plants-** eg. Amrita is used for *Tinospora cordifolia*(willd.)Miers ex Hook & Thoms and *Terminalia chebula* Retz.

**Non-availability** – for example Sankhpushpi dealt in samhita is not available and for this *Clitoria ternatea* Linn. is used in south India while *Convolvulus microphyllus* Sieb. ex Spreng are being used in north India.

**Poor understanding of Sanskrit word in different context-**for example Pippala denotes bodhivriksha when

used in male gender and the same in female gender denotes long pepper.

**Parallel evolving knowledge system-** for example *Centella asiatica* (L) urban is used in north for Brahmi(*Bacopa monnieri* (L.) Pennel.

**Vernacular names-** Matala in Tamil refers to *Punica granatum* Linn. Where as in Kannada it pertains to *Citrus medica*.

**Non Ayurvedic/ Medical literature also creates controversy-** eg. In poetry Kamala, Utpala, Kumuda, Kalhara all are, at a times, referred as same but botanically they are different species.

**Polynomial nomenclature**

**RASNA IN SAMHITAS****CHARAKA SAMHITA-**

Rasna is mentioned in Anuwasanopag Mahakashaya Gana.

Elaparni one of the synonyms of Rasana mentioned in Vamanopag Dravyas in Vimana Sthana-8/143, it is only one synonym found in samhita kaal.

Rasna is also mentioned in Vatavyadhi chikitsa as Rasna taila along with other Gandha Dravyas. (Ch.chi.28/165) Sushruta Samhita-

Rasna is mentioned in Arkadi Gana, maximum drugs of this group are herb or shrubs, and it is also mentioned as Sleshmasamshamana.

It is mentioned with Vacha, Ativisha etc. Dravyas in Moodhgarbha Chikitsa for Vedanasamana.(Su.Chi.15/21)

**WHY RASNA BECAME CONTROVERSIAL----**

Rasna is mentioned in Amar Kosh in two contest-

- As synonym of Elaparni

2. As synonym of Nakuli  
Chandrata- Rasna as Gandha Dravya.

Chakrapanidutta mentioned Rasanadwayum, Nakulidwayum- Both Rasna and Nakuli as same; Rasna as Gandha Nakuli.

Dalhana has mentioned Rasna as Surabhi, Surasa, and Gandhanakuli as Sugandhamoola Rasna.

Raja Nighantu has mentioned 3 types of Rasna-

1. Moola Rasna
2. Patra Rasna
3. Trina Rasna

Shiva Das Sen- Nakuli and Sarpagandha as Rasna. synonyms of Rasna—

Elaparni, Suvaha, Shreyasi, Rasya, Surasa, Yuktarasa, Sugandha, Nakuli, Gandhanakuli, Atirasa, Gandhamula, Rasa, Yukta,

#### Drugs used as the name of Rasna

1. *Pluchea lanceolata* C.B.Clarke. (Asteraceae)- UP, Bihar, and Northwest of India
2. *Alpinia galanga* (L.) Willd (Scitamineae)- South India
3. *Vanda tessellata* Loud and Loud/ *Vanda roxburghii* R. Br. (Orchidaceae)- Bengal.
4. *Viscum album* (Loranthaceae)- Punjab
5. *Withania coagulans* (Stocks) Dunal (Solanaceae)- Sindha
6. *Aristolochia indica* L.(Aristolochiaceae)-
7. *Inula racemosa* Hook.f. (Asteraceae)-
8. *Rauwolfia serpentine* (L.) Benth. ex Kurz (Apocynaceae),
9. *Lochnera rosea* (Apocynaceae)-
10. *Enicostemma littorale* Blume (E. littorale) (Gentianaceae)
11. *Dodonaea viscosa* ( Sapindaceae)- Andhra Pradesh
12. *Tylophora asthmatica* ( Asclepiadaceae)- Mumbai

#### DISCUSSION

Controversy about authentic botanical source of medicinal plants dealt in classical Ayurveda texts lead a cause of substitution and create a problem for standardization of Ayurvedic practices and herbal products.

The botanical identity of Rasna is still a controversial one. This controversy exists in various angles, language, availability etc. A number of different plants are equated with Rasna by different workers.

According to the description found in Samhita, Rasna should be a herb or shrub which has aroma and the leaves should be resemble like Ela, having Tikta Rasa, Ushna Veerya and Kaphavatashamaka property. The drugs which are used as Rasna at different places are mostly herb or shrubs with Tikta Rasa, Ushna Veerya and Kapha-Vatashamaka karma.

But *Tylophora asthmatica*, *Aristolochia indica* are climbers and *Viscum album*, *Vanda tessellata* are epiphytic plants, *Dodonaea viscosa* is a large shrub to small tree and *Alpinia galanga*, *Inula racemosa*, *Tylophora indica* has only aroma.

The synonyms used for *Rasna* such as *sugandhamoola* (root is fragrant), *ela parni* (leaves resembles those of ela) *etc.* have certain connotations appropriate to *Alpinia galanga* Linn. than *Pluchea lanceolata* or *Vanda tessellata*.

The Vaidyas of greater part of Northern India consider *Pluchea lanceolata* as the genuine source of Rasna.

Whole plant mainly, leaf is used as rasna in the case of *Pluchea lanceolata* C.B.Clarke.

The sun dried rhizomes of *Alpinia* sp. are the useful part. The aerial and climbing roots, stem and leaves of *Vanda* sp. are cut and dried and sold in the drug market of U.P., M.P., Bihar and Bengal.

According to API *Pluchea lanceolata* is considered as genuine source of Rasna.

The 3 varieties of Rasna mentioned in Raj Nighantu are 3 different botanical species using as following in Bengal-

- a) Moola Rasna- *Rauwolfia serpentina*
- b) Patra Rasna- *Lochnera rosea*
- c) Trina Rasna- *Vanda roxburghii*

But Bapalal Vaidya considered Trina Rasna as Sadabahar (*Lochnera rosea*) and Nayee or Naahi (*Enicostemma littorale*).

K.C. Chuneekar in his hindi commentary of Bhavaprakasha Nighantu has also mentioned Kaali Rasna (*Heliotropium strigosum* Willd.) and Safed Rasna (*Lepidogathis trinervis* Nees) on the basis of thesis work of Dr. Suryashekhar Mishra.

#### CONCLUSION

Controversy of drugs mainly due to polynomial system of nomenclature in classical texts.

Controversy about authentic botanical source of Rasna dealt in classical Ayurveda texts should be resolved by integrated research and those sources should be validated which have more potency for described pharmacological activities.

*Pluchea lanceolata* and *Alpinia galanga* are the nearest source of Rasna dealt in classics but *Pluchea lanceolata* is considered the authentic source by API and also supported by various scholars of recent time like Bapalal Vaidya and others.

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