

ROLE OF RASAYANA CHIKITSA IN THE PREVENTION OF DISEASE AND
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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda is a comprehensive medical system of body, mind and spirit. It is a science and art of appropriate living, which helps to achieve better long life. It also guided about the prevention of disease and maintenance of health. Ayurveda is also frequently referred as 'Ashtanga Ayurveda' and *Rasayana chikitsa* are the part of the it (*Ashtanga Ayurveda*). It helps a person to maintain good health or to establish impaired or lost physical or mental health. *Rasayana* therapies are said to revitalize all the seven *Dhatus* (body elements), therefore, restores equilibrium and health.

KEYWORDS: *Rasayana*, *Dhatus*, *Ashtanga Ayurveda*, health, disease.

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda is also frequently referred as 'Ashtanga Ayurveda' as it has eight parts. These are following; *Kaya chikitsa*: Related to whole body, *Bala chikitsa*: Related to infants, *Graha chikitsa*: Related to psychological problems, *Urdvanga chikitsa*: Related to the Ear, Nose and Throat region, *Salya chikitsa*: Related to Surgery, *Visha chikitsa*: Related to Toxicology, *Rasayana prakarana*: Methods to rejuvenate the sapta dhatus, *Vajikaran chikitsa*: Related to improving health of progeny. The *Rasayana* medicines are believed to have aphrodisiac qualities as well. The concept of *Rasayana* may also extend to the next generation of human life through the birth of a healthy offspring immune to diseases as well as with the best genetic constitution or with less genetic aberration, as it nourishes the semen. *Amalaki*, *Haritakydi*, *Trifala*, *Chyavanaprasa* are few out of the long list of *Rasayana*. Sharangadhara has advised that in each group of age, every person should take specific *rasayana* for keeping healthy and fit. It should be kept in mind that *Rasayana* has a more preventive aspect than a curative one. Hence it is done after the treatment of disease to prevent recurrence of that disease or to nourish the tissues that have been damaged by the disease. It can also be done in absence of a disease to prevent the occurrence of diseases.

Ayurveda identifies seven vital *Dhatus* that provide nourishment, growth, and structure to the entire body.

Disturbance or imbalance in their equilibrium of dhatus causes diseases. The seven dhatus are Plasma (*Rasa*), Blood (*Rakta*), Muscle (*Mamsa*), Fat (*Meda*), Bone (*Asthi*), Bone marrow and nerve (*Majja*) and Reproductive fluid (*Shukra*).

Types of *Rasayana*

- **Kamya**-These are promoters of normal health. They boost body energy levels, immunity and general health. They can be further divided in following types: **Pranakamya**-Promoter of vitality and longevity and **Medhakamya**-Promoter of intelligence and **Srikamya** - Promoter of complexion.
- **Nimitta** - This is used for treating diseases, done only for a specific period.
- **Ajasrika** - It is using food substances on regular basis for nourishment of body e.g. daily usage of cow milk, ghee etc.
- ❖ **Medhya rasayana**: Charaka has mentioned specific *rasayana* for increasing medha or intelligence and memory. *Brahmi*, *Mandukaparni*, *Jatamansi*, *Jyotishmati*, *Shankhapushpi*
- ❖ **Acharya Rasayana**:^[1] This means how the person should behave while moving in the society. It should follow: nonviolent and calm behavior, avoiding misuse of alcohol & sex, soft way of talking and living, be patience-full and sincere, generous and sensible, well manner and egoless, having

cleanliness, worshipping gods and teachers, preferring religious thoughts, having equal sleep & work, spiritual, serving elderly people.

- ❖ **Kutipraveshik (Indoor therapy)^[2] & Vatatapik(Outdoor therapy):** Kuti means chamber, in this form the person is made to stay in a specially designed chamber for a certain period and is given rasayana preparations. His body is purified first by Panchakarma and then he is subjected to Rasayana. In the Vatatapik form the person can carry out his normal work and still undergo rasayana³.
- ❖ **Criteria for Rasayana:** Ideal age group for receiving rasayana is between 16 yrs to 90 yrs. It is advisable to purify the body with suitable methods of Panchakarma (when necessary) or by mild purification so that the person gets maximum benefit. The person should be of a stable mind, intelligent and should be able to control his desires. He should have belief in the medicines and procedures that are going to be done. While undergoing rasayana treatment, the person should abstain from smoking, alcohol and other bad habits.^[4]
- ❖ **Historical Aspects:** Rasayana is described elaborately in the four padas of the 1st chapter in Charaka's cikisthasthana of Charak Samitha. In Susruthasamitha it is found in 27-29 chapter of Chikistasthana & Astangahrdaya of Vagbhata of Utteratantra.
- ❖ **Purpose of Rasayana:** Rasayana should be used for three purposes mainly- 1.Maintaining health⁵, 2.Prevention of diseases and old age⁶ and 3.To avoid the recurrence of diseases.
- ❖ **Effects of Rasayana:** Considering the Ayurvedic concepts of physiology Rasayana agent promotes nutrition through one of the following three modes: By direct enrichment of the nutritional quality of rasa (nutritional plasma) – Satavarai,^[7] milk, ghee etc. or By promoting nutrition through improving agni (digestion & metabolism) – Bhallataka,^[8] pippali,^[9] etc. or By promoting the competence of srotas (microcirculatory channels in the body)- Guggulu, tulsi, and so on. The second type is a more complicated process and involves total reformation of the body. In such a therapy, the patient is isolated from his/her routine life and is kept in a kuti (hut), which is specially designed for rasayana-chikitsa, under the observation of an ayurvedic specialist.

Benefits of Rasayana Therapy^[10]

- ❖ It is supposed to nourish blood, lymph, flesh, adipose tissue and semen, and thus prevent degenerative changes and illness, thus gives freedom from chronic degenerative disorders like arthritis and senile diseases.
- ❖ 'Rasayana' aims are to maintain youthfulness, vigour, vitality of the body and keeping away ageing process, senility and debility to impart long, healthy,

disease free life, intelligence, glow, complexion, generosity, strength of body and senses.

- ❖ **Rasayana actions** - Rasayana acts through various ways –It improves micro-circulation and thereby produces optimum quality tissues in the body. It also increases the strength of Agni and removes waste products from the body. It works as antioxidant, anti-stress, anti-anxiety also.
- ❖ **Need for Rejuvenation** - Our life style has become very hectic. This is due to over exertion – physical as well as mental, it increases stress. The timing of eating has become irregular due to change in the duties. Due to availability of various gadgets in the kitchen, use of television, mobile phones and computers has resulted in lack of exercise. Many people are becoming addicted to Alcohol, smoking, excessive sex, too much sleep and drugs, using stale foods with preservatives. This all leads to low dhatu bala, low ojas, vitiation of all doshas; resulting in – premature aging, fatigue, debility, inability to adopt to stress, recurrent illness and depression.

DISCUSSION

Rasayana improves the metabolic activities and results in the best possible bio-transformation. Jara Cikitsa or Rasayana Tantra promotes rejuvenation in a healthy person and cures the disease of an unhealthy person. Rasayana is not a drug therapy but is a specialized procedure practised in the form of regenerative recipes, dietary regimen and special health promoting conduct and behaviour ie, Acharya-Rasayan. Most of these Rasayanas can be used regularly as a food for maintaining balanced mental and physical health. They may be used either alone or along with other modalities of treatment as an adjuvant.

CONCLUSION

Literally means of 'Rasayana' is "the path of juice", which aims to nourish, restore and balance the body functions or at achieving the maximum body's potential. *Rasayana chikitsa* provides a long, disease free and vigorous life to the person, who undergoes this therapy seriously, as it helps to bring life back to normal.

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