

CONCEPT OF RASAYANA IN AYURVEDA - A REVIEW¹Meher Raj Kumar²Sharma Surendra Kumar³Gavali Preeti

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Aim of human being is to live a long and healthy life and *Ayurveda* the world's oldest school of medicine, teaches us how to live and keep excellent health. *Dinacharya*. *Dinacharya* (daily regimen), *Ratricharya* (night regimen), *Ritucharya* (seasonal regimen), *Pathya-apathyā* (wholesome-unwholesome diet), *Sadvruta* (ideal habits), *Rasayana* (rejuvenation) and *Vajikarana* (aphrodisiacs) all play essential roles in this regard. The majority of patients who have recovered from a disease get re-affected by the same or a different disease. Patients with *Alpa vyadhikshamatva* encounter similar issues in their lives.

Objectives: To understand the concept of *Rasayana* & *Rasayana Chikitsa* and its utility in today's context. **Material and method:** Materials are gathered from *Charaka Samhita*, *Sushruta Samhita*, *Sarangadhar Samhita*, *Harita Samhita*, *Jalpakalpa taru tikka* and other modern literatures, journals, articles. **Result:** This review article provides significant information regarding various options of *Rasayana* drugs & therapy which contribute significantly as a therapeutic component of *Ayurveda* for curing the illness, prevent reoccurrences of diseases and also for maintaining a healthy lifestyle. **Discussion:** The *Rasayana* medications and therapies listed below can be used to treat a number of diseases and conditions, as well as for everyday use. The majority of the *Rasayana* herbs and treatments have also undergone modern study, including several pharmacological tests. Some of the most well-known *Rasayana* treatments are being studied with modern research methods like *Aswagandha*, *Amalaki*, *Triphala*, *Bilva* etc. **Conclusion:** As we get older, we start to lose some of our abilities. Individuals require different rejuvenating substances at different ages to replenish these losses. This conceptual study on *Rasayana* contains important information about various *Rasayana* drugs and therapies that can be employed at various stages of human life, on various tissues-systems, *Dhatus* and *Shrotas* to preserve health and prevent illness.

Key Words: *Rasayana*, *Sadvritta*, *Ayurveda*, Immunity, *Vyadhikshamatva bala*

INTRODUCTION: Fundamental principle of *Ayurveda* itself is to restore the health of a healthy person and treatment of sick ones¹ & *Rasayana* is one of the therapies which signifies both the points. *Rasayana* should be used for three purposes mainly for maintaining health, prevention of diseases & old age and to

avoid the recurrence of diseases. *Swasthya Rakshanam* - maintaining an individual's physical, mental, social, and spiritual well-being. *Ayurveda* recommended a specific therapy known as 'Rasayana therapy' to achieve this goal. *Rasayana* is one of the eight clinical specialisations of *Ayurveda*, a well-developed science that was

practised in the form of *Astang Ayurveda*, which included *Kaya Chikitsa* (medicines), *Shalakya* (ENT and Ophthalmology), *Shalya Tantra* (Surgery), *Visha Tantra* (Toxicology), *Bhoot Vidya* (psychiatry), *Kaumarbhritya* (Paediatrics), *Rasayana* (Rejuvenation) and *Vajikarana Tantra* (Aphrodisiac therapy)². *Rasayana* literally means enhancement of *Rasa* (the essential fluid) created by food digestion that supports the body by strengthening the *dhatus*³.

It entails the specific application of particular drugs or medications with the goal of preventing ageing and increasing longevity, immunity, improving mental faculties and enhancing the body's vitality and lustre³. Thus, it is the key to preserving positive health and longevity i.e., even ordinary people can use this branch to improve physical strength, health, and resistance to defend themselves from any sickness, whereas the remaining branches deal with curing sick people.

Charak begins *Chikitsa Sthana* with *Rasayana* and *Vajikarana* giving *Rasayana* even greater priority⁴. The rationale offered by *Chakrapani* is that they are *Mahaphaldayi* and *Rasayana* bestows strength and immunity, resulting in a thousand years of long and disease-free life⁵.

Charaka has categorised *Bheshaja* or therapeutics into two types:

Swasthasya Urjaskar and *Artasya Roganut*.

1. *Swasthasya Urjaskar* means promoting and maintaining the health of a healthy individual. *Bala* (strong, energy), best (*Prashasta*), and life are all words that describe the word '*Urja*'. *Rasayan* and *Vajikaran* therapies are included in *Swasthasya Urjaskar*. According to *Chakrapani*'s opinion on this topic, the former promotive therapy is intended to

treat *Swabhavik Rogas*, or natural illness in a healthy individual such as hunger, thirst, ageing, early death, sleep, and so on.³ While the latter addresses sexual issues such as low libido, sperm abnormalities, and cravings, among others. They are named *Urqaskara* because they give the essential (*Prashasta*) biological elements and enriches one's whole structure, *Chakrapani* say. On the same level, *Gangadhar* believes that this sort of therapy is classified as *Swasthavritta* because it enhances *Oja*, or vital energy.⁶ Similarly, *Yogindranath* states that *Urqaskar* refers to something that encourages power, complexion, and so on.⁷

2. *Artasya Roganut* means alleviates the symptoms. It implies to help those who are suffering from a variety of ailments. According to *Chakrapani*, the word *Arta* denotes painful situations caused by numerous disorders like as *Jwara*, *Kasa*, *Kustha* and so on, and *Artasya Roganut* denotes the *Bheshaja* that relieves such illness.

According to *Gangadhar*, this type of therapy has *Doshprashaman* properties. Both of these groups are stated to be capable of performing both functions.⁶ According to *Chakrapani*, the energy-promoting group, which includes *Vrishya* and *Rasayan* treatments, not only has aphrodisiac and rejuvenating characteristics but also serves as a disease reliever.³

AIM AND OBJECTIVES

- i. To understand the concept of *Rasayana* & *Rasayana Chikitsa* in *Ayurveda*.
- ii. To re-establish the concept of *Rasayana* therapy & its utility in today's context.

METHODS AND MATERIAL

This conceptual study is based on a review of material gathered from classical Ayurvedic books like *Charaka Samhita*, *Sushruta Samhita*, *Sarangadhar Samhita*, *Harita Samhita*, *Jalpakalpa taru tikka*, *Charaka upaskar tikka*, modern literatures, magazines and journals, articles, and research papers. Searches for related websites have also been conducted.

ETYMOLOGY

The phrase *Rasayana* is made up of two words: *Rasa* & *Ayana* and it refers to nutrition and how it is transported throughout the body. *Rasa* is the *Sanskrit* word for sustenance or nourishing fluid, while *Ayana* is the *Sanskrit* word for microcellular channels or passageways. *Rasayana* is the method through which an individual achieves the highest level of *Rasa* (digestive fluid produced after digestion). As a result, *Rasayana* effectively translates to 'feeding at the microcellular level.'

According to *Yogindranath*, *Ayana* can also be interpreted as *Apayana* and hence *Rasayana* can be viewed as a method or measure for achieving replenished and good *Dhatus*. *Rasa* denotes all of the *Dhatus*, while *Ayana* (*Vardhan*) denotes nutrition or nourishment.⁷ As a result, it is apparent that procedures for nourishing or strengthening the *Dhatus* are referred to as *Rasayana*.

Rasayana restores normalcy to *Rasa Dhatus* and hence keeps the other *Dhatus* in balance for a longer time. As a result, it slows down the aging process and promotes longevity, which is known as *Vayasthapan* or *Jaranashan*. *Rasayana* also improves an individual's illness resistance.

Rasayana according to different *Samhitas*:

I. **CHARAK SAMHITA:** *Rasayana* is a rejuvenating treatment aimed at achieving premium or high-quality *Rasa* and other *Dhatus*. As a result, it can be thought as faster and suitable nourishment that improves the body's biological competency. When *Chakrapani* interprets the preceding line, he claims that the word *Rasadi* encompasses not only physical but also mental attributes such as memory. As a result, he considers *Rasayana* to be a rejuvenating therapy for obtaining vitality, health and mental competency.⁸

II. **SHUSHRUT SAMHITA:** *Rasayan tantra* is the branch that endows *Vayahstapan* with the property of age preservation, imparting longevity, intelligence and most of all, the ability to cure ailments by enhancing the immune system (*Rogapaharansamarth*)⁹. It allows you to keep your manhood or youthful vitality until you are well into your senior years. In his commentary on *Sushruta Samhita*, *Dalhana* interprets the term 'Rasayana' in two ways: that (food, medicine, or therapy) which nourishes *Rasa* and other *dhatus* and that therapy (medicine) which makes the *Bheshaja* (drug) dependant *Rasa* (taste), *Guna*(properties), *Veerya*(potency), *Vipaka* (taste after digestion), *Prabhava* (specific property) easily and thoroughly compatible to the body. Thereby bestows long life, strength and retards ageing, imparts excellent *Rasadi Dhatus* and immunity against diseases.⁸

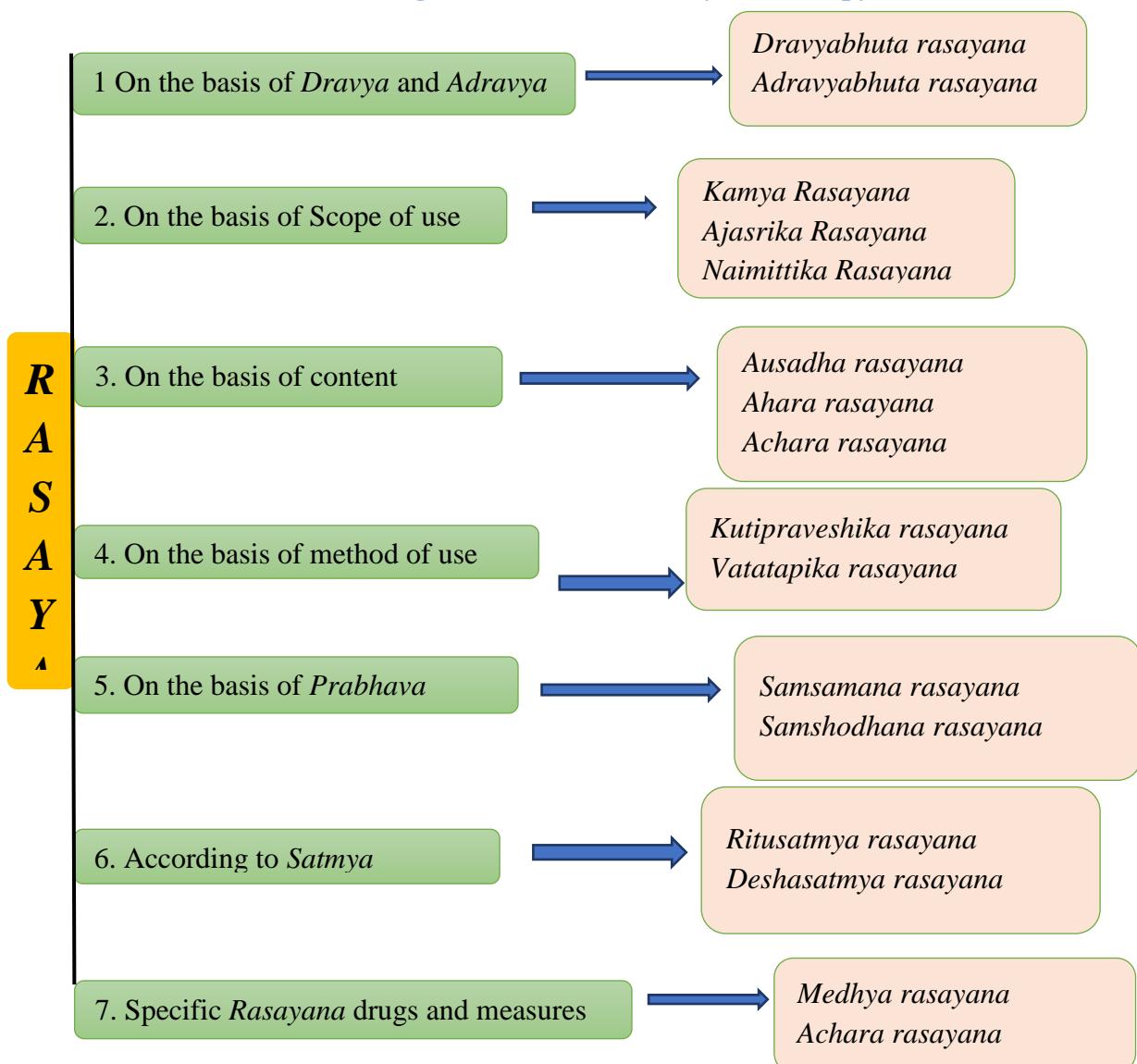
III. **HARITA SAMHITA:** *Rasayana* is a therapy that provides firmness/ strength to the *Shareera* (body), *Indriya* (sensory and motor organs), and heals wrinkles, greying of hair and hair fall. *Rasayanas*, according to *Acharya Harita*, can

successfully treat illnesses that are accompanied with problems.¹⁰

IV. **SHARANGDHAR SAMHITA:**
Rasayana removes senility and diseases.

Guduchi (*Tinospora cordifolia*), *Haritaki* (*Terminalia chebula*) and *Guggul* (*Commiphora mukul*) are among examples.¹¹

Flow chart no.1 showing Classification of Rasayana therapy



MODE OF ACTION OF RASAYANA¹²

Rasayana increases nutrition in four ways, based on Ayurvedic physiology concepts:

- Through direct nutritional enrichment of *Rasa* (nutritional plasma) - like *Shatavarai* (*Asparagus racemosus*), *Amalaki* (*Emblica officinalis*), milk, ghee
- Through increasing nutrition by enhancing *Agni* (digestion and metabolism) -like *Bhallataka* (*Semecarpus anacardium*), *Pippali* (*Piper longum*)

III. Through promoting competency of *Srotas* (microcirculatory channels in the body) like *Guggulu* (*Commiphora mukul*), *Haritaki* (*Terminalia chebula*), *Tulsi* (*Ocimum sanctum*)

IV. Through its *Vishaghna* property like *Shankhapuspi* (*Convolvulus pluricaulis*), *Manjistha* (*Rubia cordifolia*) *Rasayana* enhances microcirculation, resulting in the production of high-quality tissues in the body. It also boosts *Agni*'s

strength and helps the body rid itself of waste. It has antioxidant, anti-stress and anti-anxiety properties.

BENEFITS OF USING RASAYANA³

Table no.01 Benefits of using Rasayana :

1.	<i>Dirghaayu</i> (Promotes Longevity of life)	8.	<i>Swara</i> (Enrichment in voice)
2.	<i>Smriti</i> (memory) enhances	9.	<i>Deha vala</i> (Optimization of strength of body)
3.	<i>Medha</i> (intelligence) increases	10.	<i>Indriya vala</i> (Optimization of strength of motor and sense organs)
4.	<i>Arogya</i> (freedom from illness)	11.	<i>Vaksiddhi</i> (Command over speech/ infallibility of speech)
5.	<i>Tarunavayah</i> (Delays ageing process by preserving youthfulness)	12.	<i>Pranati</i> (Attaining humbleness and politeness)
6.	<i>Prabha</i> (Improvement in the complexion)	13.	<i>Kanti</i> (Lustre / glow)
7.	<i>Varna</i> (Colour of the skin)	14.	Attaining excellence quality of <i>Rasadi dhatus</i>

Chakrapani while commenting on *Vaksiddhi* and *Pranati* says that *Rasayana* bestows the advantage of power of hypnotism and honour in society respectively.

Table no. 02 Herbs / Medicines used for Rasayana therapy and their functions¹²

S.No.	Herbs / medicines	Functions
1.	<i>Ashwagandha</i>	Helps to treat and prevent nervous system diseases.
2.	<i>Amalaki</i>	Slows down the ageing process by lowering catabolic activity.
3.	<i>Shatavari</i>	Helps nursing mothers to produce more milk as well as infertility, libido, and women's health.
4.	<i>Haritaki</i>	Helps to eliminate waste and enhance digestion.
5.	<i>Brahmi, Shankpushpi and Vacha</i>	Boosts memory power, sharpness, and intelligence.
6.	<i>Pippali</i>	Helps with respiratory difficulties and strengthens tissues.
7.	<i>Bala</i>	Provides body tissues with strength
8.	<i>Guggulu and Punarnava</i>	Helps the body to digest waste products and improves renal function.

Flow chart no. 2 showing Procedure and effect of Rasayana intake

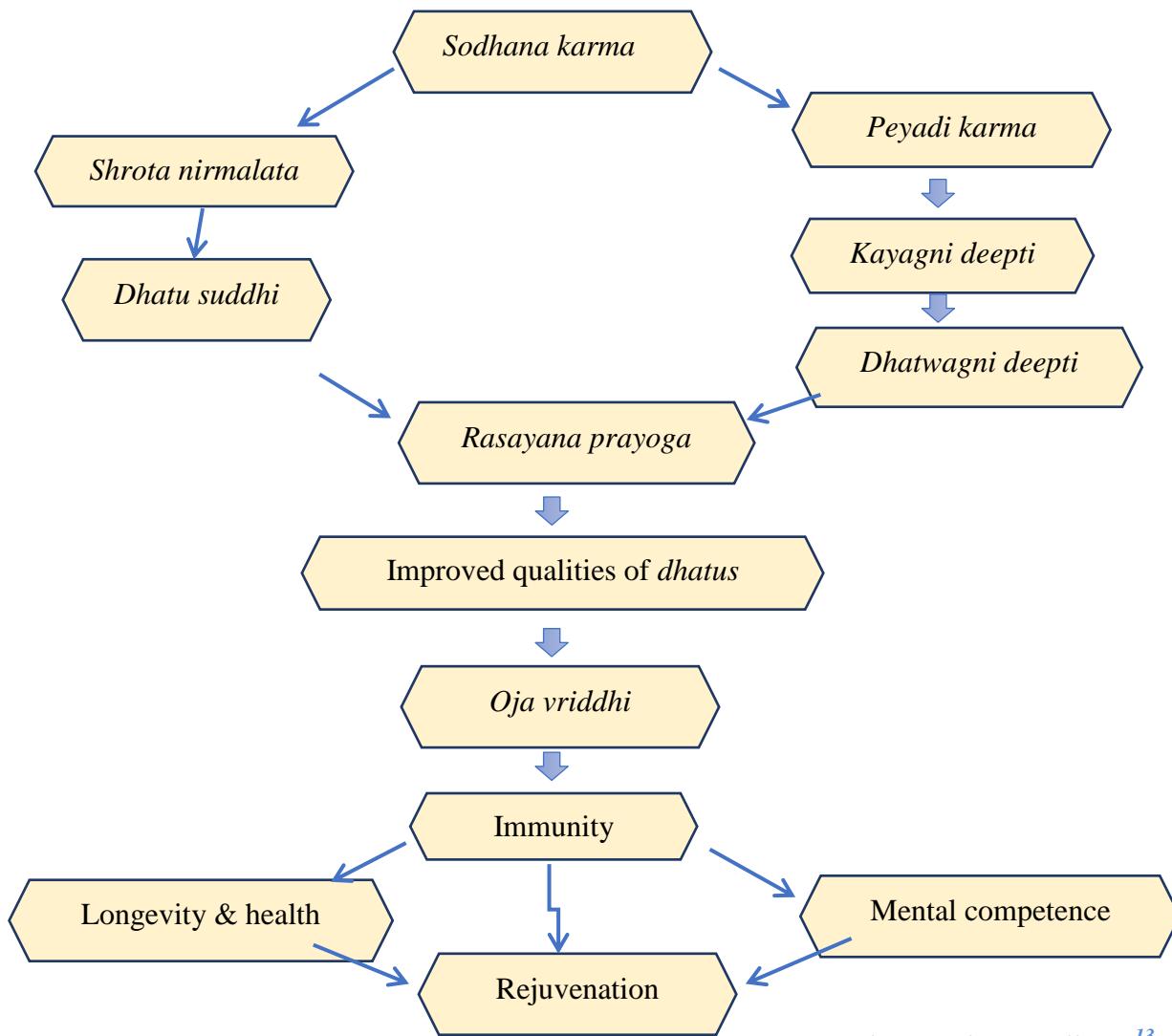


Table no. 03 Rasayana medicine according to age by Acharya Sharangdhara¹³

Decade	Loss of tissues	Sharangadhara
0-10 years	Balyavastha (childhood)	Swarna, Vacha
11-20 years	Vriddhi (growth)	Bala, Kasmari
21-30 years	Chhavi (complexion)	Amalaki
31-40 years	Medha (knowledge)	Shankhapuspi
41-50 years	Twak (skin)	Jyotismati
51-60 years	Dristi (vision)	Jyotismati
61-70 years	Sukra (reproductive capacity)	Atmagupta, Aswagandha
71-80 years	Vikrama (valour)	Bala, Amalaki
81-90 years	Buddhi (intelligence)	Brahmi
91-100 years	Karma-indriya (motor organs)	Bala
101-110 years	Chetas (mana / mind)	Rasayana not effective
111-120 years	Jivan (life)	Rasayana not effective

Table no. 04 Rasayana drugs used according to Dhatu¹⁴:

Sr. No.	Dhatus	Rasayana drugs
1.	Rasa	Draksha, Khajura, Kashmari
2.	Rakta	Aamlaki, Palandu, Lauha
3.	Mamsa	Ashwagandha, Bala
4.	Meda	Haritaki, Guggulu, Amrita, Shilajatu
5.	Asthi	Laksha, Shukti, Shankha
6.	Majja	Lauha, Majja, Vasa
7.	Sukra	Aatmagupta, Pippali, Mushali, shatavari

Table no. 05 Rasayana drugs according to Strotas¹⁴:

Sr. No.	Shrotas	Rasayana drugs
1.	Pranavaha Strotas	Pippali, Bhallatak, Amalaki, Marich, Kasturi
2.	Udakavaha Strotas	Sarva Jaliya Padartha
3.	Annavaaha Strotas	Panchkola, Kapardika, Shankh Bhasm, Hing, Nagkeshar
4.	Rasavaha Strotas	Kharrjur, Mantha, Laja Manda, Guduchi
5.	Raktavaha Strotas	Loha Bhasm, Ghrit, Gorochana, Kushthaghana Dravyas
6.	Mamsavaha Strotas	Karaskar, Suwarna, Kumbha
7.	Medavaha Strotas	Guggulu, Shilajatu, Kumbha
8.	Asthivaha Strotas	Abha
9.	Majjavaha Strotas	Vacha, Bringraj, Roupya, Bhasma
10.	Sukravaha Strotas	Vanga bhasma, koncha
11.	Mutravaha Strotas	Shilajatu, Gokshura, Punarnava
12.	Purisavaha Strotas	Kutaja, Bilwa, Haritaki
13.	Swedavaha Strotas	Vanga bhasma

Table no. 06 Rasayana drugs according to Disease¹⁴:

Sr. No.	Roga	Rasayana Dravyas
1.	Prameha	Shilajatu, Haridra, Amalaki
2.	Amavata	Amrita, Bhallatak, Rasona
3.	Hridroga	Shalparni, Arjuna
4.	Medoroga	Guggulu, Harritaki
5.	Shwasa	Bhallatak, Shirisha, Haridra
6.	Kushtha	Tuvaraka, bhallataka,
7.	Pandu	Lauha, Makshika,
8.	Manasaroga	Medhya Rasayana (sankhapuspi, Guduchi, mandukaparni & yastimadhu)

Indication of Rasayana Chikitsa

- The ideal age for Rasayana intake is 16 to 60 years¹⁵.
- To ensure that the person receives the most benefit, it is recommended that the body be purified using appropriate

Panchakarma methods (when necessary) or by mild purification⁸.

- The individual should have a sound mind, be intellectual, and be able to manage his desires. Individual must have faith in the medicines and procedures that will be used⁸.

- Smoking, drinking, and other unhealthy habits should be avoided while receiving *Rasayana* treatment⁸.
- The person must possess *satvik manas* (positive psychological traits) and be free of the *Manasika Doshas* namely *Raja* and *Tama*. Before beginning *Rasayana* therapy, ensure that your mind is free of impurities. Each individual's *Vaya*, *Prakriti*, *Satmya*, *Agni* and *Dhatus* states, *Srotas*, and environmental elements such as *Desha*, *Kala* and others must all be taken into account while choosing a *Rasayana*⁸.

Contra-Indication of Rasayana Chikitsa
Rasayanas are forbidden to follow seven categories of people, according to *Acharaya Sushrut*¹⁶. 1) *Alasi* (Lazy), 2) *Anatmavan* (those who lack self-control), 3) *Daridra* (financially weak), 4) *Pramaadi* is a Sanskrit word that means the indigent (unwise, Not listening), 5) *Vyasani* (victims of vices), 6) *Paapakruti* (victims of vices, the sinful), 7) *Bhesajapmani* (Those who do not trust on medication)

People mentioned above are unworthy of treatment due to the seven factors listed here, all of which operate as impediments to the effects of *Rasayanas*. 1) Ignorance, 2) Inactivity, 3) Unstable mentality, 4) Poverty, 5) Dependence, 6) Intemperance and impiety, 7) Inability to obtain authentic medications.

Rasayana therapy should not be administered if the patient is experiencing an acute or active phase of an illness. *Rasayana* therapy is also not recommended for the *Amavastha*. *Rasayana* therapy administered in this situation is not only ineffective, but it might also create distressing effects.

During *Rasayana* Therapy, some measures must be observed. During

therapy, for example, one should avoid rage, violent temperament, drinking, sex, stress and so on.

Achara Rasayana – A Specific Form of Rasayana

Achara means conduct or manner of action or behaviour. *Achara Rasayana* is a proper code of social behaviour. It instils in us a preferred way of life with clearly defined do's and don'ts. *Achara Rasayana* is mentioned in a number of books. It signifies the following points:

A person must be truthful, must be free of anger, abstaining from wine and women, must not engage in violence, should be relaxed and calm, soft spoken, engaged in meditation and cleanliness, loving and compassionate, must routinely offer prayer to gods, teachers and the elderly, must be free of immoral act, must drink milk and ghee on a regular basis, must be free of ego, should desire spiritual knowledge, must have good sense organs and must have self-control, considering the measure of place and time with propriety¹⁷.

DISCUSSION

Rasayana therapy is essential for maintaining our health and well-being. The *Rasayana* drugs and therapies listed here are useful for a variety of ailments and conditions, as well as for general consumption. *Tridosha*, *Sapta Dhatus*, *Malas*, and *Panchmahabhuta* are basic elements of our body that naturally maintain health, according to *Ayurveda*. These, in normal circumstances, correspond to specific norms in terms of quantity, quality, and functionality. However, this condition is not static, and the dosha becomes unbalanced as a result of numerous endogenous and exogenous influences, leading in disease formation. *Rasayana* improves growth and use as *Vayasthapana* (adulthood), *Ayushkara*

(longevity), *Medhakara* (wisdom), *Balakara* (strength), and *Jara Vyadhinashana* (anti-ageing), according to traditional Ayurvedic texts¹⁸. *Rasayana* therapy rejuvenates the body and promotes a healthy lifestyle by preventing ailments. Most of these *Rasayana* plants and medications have also been subjected to modern research, which has included numerous pharmacological screenings. Some of the most well-known *Rasayana* treatments being investigated using contemporary research approaches. *Ashwagandha* (*Withania somnifera*) is a well-known medical herb that is used as a *Rasayana*, and its root extract has demonstrated to be effective in reducing pain and impairment in people with osteoarthritis of the knee¹⁹. Furthermore, an extract of *Amalaki* (*Emblica officinalis*) leaves has been proven to have fast anti-lipid peroxidation actions by neutralizing free radicals and lowering the risk of diabetes complications²⁰. As *Vayasthapana*, *Amalaki* is said to be the finest treatment. *Triphala*, a widely used treatment for a variety of ailments, also has *Rasayana* properties. *Triphala* was discovered to reduce the nephrotoxic effects of bromobenzene by enhancing antioxidant enzyme activity and lowering lipid peroxidation and kidney functioning indicators²¹. *Bilva* (*Aegle marmelos*), another well-known *Rasayana* medication, has also demonstrated powerful anticancer and antioxidant properties²² and its antioxidant mechanism has also been found to have gastro-duodenal preventive and anti-ulcerogenic qualities²³.

CONCLUSION

Rasayana therapy is a type of treatment that rejuvenates the entire body and makes it disease-free. This conceptual study on *Rasayana* contains important information

about various *Rasayana* drugs and therapies that can be employed at various stages of human life, on various tissues-systems, *Dhatus* and *Shrotas* to preserve health and prevent illness. The main goal of this *Rasayana* therapy is to slow down the ageing process and prevent degeneration in the body, as well as to prevent disease recurrence and complications by regenerating bodily tissue. Only a thorough understanding and use of this principle in Ayurvedic therapy would result in perfect and exact treatment. As a result, it is apparent that no disease treatment is complete without the use of *Rasayana* therapy.

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