



LITERARY STUDY OF RASAYANA AND ITS ROLE IN THE IMPROVEMENT OF IMMUNITY

¹Chandrakar Srishti

²Diwan Rashmi

³Sahu Jeevan Lal

¹MD Scholar Shri N.P.A Government Ayurved College, Raipur C.G.

²Lecturer Shri N.P.A. Government Ayurved College, Raipur C.G.

³Lecturer Shri N.P.A. Government Ayurved College, Raipur C.G.

ABSTRACT

Rasayana Chikitsa is one of the important branches of *Ayurveda* which helps to maintain the healthy life style. According to *Ayurveda*, *Rasayana* improve immunity and perform many vital functions of human body. *Rasayana* therapy is a part of preventive *Ayurvedic* healthcare. It helps to delay the process of aging and thus helps to live longer with good strength and immunity. All classical texts have explained *Rasayanas* in brief details. *Acharyas* of *Bruhatrayi* and *Laghutrayi* have dedicated separate chapters for explaining *Rasayanas*. Diet, drugs and regimens which promote longevity and prevent diseases are called *Rasayana*. Many herbs and dietary material can act as *Rasayana* and work as immune stimulant, antioxidant, adoptogenic and anti-stress agent. *Rasayanas* are also known to have anti-infective properties. As health-related awareness increases in the population, people become more conscious about their future health. This makes to grow public interest towards *Rasayana* therapy which has ultimately resulted in increased life expectancy and thus contributing to rise in elder population. *Rasayana Chikitsa* boosts the *Ojas* (vital force of life) and immune system. *Rasayana* is the tool to create premium *Dhatus* so when the quality of *Dhatus* enhances results are strong immune system to fight against diseases, longevity, development of body and youthfulness. The ultimate aim of *Rasayana* therapy is to correct *Dosha* disturbances & improve *Agni* and *Dhatu* function.

Keywords *Ayurveda, Rasayana, Ojas, Vyadhikshamatva, Agni, Dhatu.*

INTRODUCTION: *Ayurveda* has two aims i.e. prevention & promotion of health and secondly cure from the disease.^[1] *Acharyas* promoted the use of *Rasayana* to enhance the *Oja* and immunity. *Rasayana* therapy means rejuvenation therapy. In addition to several *Ayurvedic* medicines for the prevention of various diseases, *Ayurveda* recommends a number of anti-aging supplements called *Rasayana*. *Rasayana* means that which helps in attaining the excellent *Rasadi Dhatus*.^[2] There are numerous *Rasayana* therapies explained in traditional *Ayurvedic* texts. *Rasayana* is helpful to increase the immunity of the person to keep him away from the disease. *Rasayana* are health promoting and rejuvenating agents which by their empirical effects produce

resistance against disease both physically and mentally.^[3] The concept of *Rasayana Chikitsa* as a branch which has its own importance not only in the old age but also need to be commenced in the early stage.^[4] The ultimate aim of *Rasayana* therapy is to correct *Dosha* disturbances & improve *Agni* and *Dhatu* function which overall improves strength, immunity, *Ojas*, vitality, longevity, memory, intelligence and excellence of luster.

The word *Rasayana* is composed of two words *Rasa* + *Ayana*. *Rasa* means nutrition and *Ayana* means microcellular channels and hence *Rasayana* essentially means nutrition at microcellular level. These *Rasa* nourishes the body and stimulates the immunity of the body and keeps the person healthy.^[5]

Rasayana in different Samhitas

Acharya Charaka starts *Chikitsa Sthana* with *Rasayana* and *Vajikarana* giving still more priority to *Rasayana*.^[3] In this chapter Charaka has described therapeutics of two types: *Swasthasya Urjaskara* (which promotes strength and immunity) and *Artasya Roganut* (which alleviates disorders).^[6] That which promotes strength and immunity is mostly included in *Vrishya* and *Rasayana* while the therapy of the second group is mostly used for alleviation disorders.^[7]

Acharya *Susruta* has introduced a number of newer *Rasayana* drugs as *Kalamegha* (*Andrographis paniculata* Nees.), *Varahikanda* (*Dioscorea bulbifera* Linn.), *Golomi* (*Acorus calamus* Linn.), *chhattra* (*Anethum sowa* Kurz.), *Atichhattra* (*Anethum sowa*), *Gambhari* (*Gmelina arborea* Linn.), *Phala* (*Aegle marmelos*) and *Karvira* (*Nerium indicum* Mill.).^[8]

Acharya *Vagbhata* in *Ashtang Hridaya* has omitted the description of *Divya Rasayana* i.e. Divine *Rasayanas* and has incorporated several number drugs for medicinal use such as *Rasona* (*Allium sativum* Linn) and *Palandu* (*Allium cepa* Linn).^[4]

Chakradutta has emphasized the role of *Sansodhana* therapy as a *Purvakarma* (precursor) for *Rasayana* therapy. The therapy which sustains ageing and prevents the diseases is known as *Rasayana*. It should be administered in early or middle age after purification of the body. *Rasayana* therapy administered to the person without prior *Shodhana* (purification) does not effects properly like dyeing in a dirty cloth.^[9]

Sharangdhar Samhita does not show a separate chapter on *Rasayana Chikitsa* though essential information about *Rasayana* therapy is available in this text. The most significant description available in this *Samhita* on this subject is the definition of *Rasayana*. Thus the *Bheshaja* (drug) which destroys *Jara* (old age) and *Vyadhi* (disease) is known as *Rasayana*.^[10]

According to *Bhavaprakasha*, following salient features, beneficial actions and essential effects of *Rasayana-Jaravidhvanshi* (preventing old age), *Vyadhi Vidhvanshi* (destroying the disease), *Vayasthambhakara* (age sustaining), *Chakshushya* (promotion of vision), *Brimhana* (nourishment of *Dhatus*), *Vrishya* (virility promoting) and *Bheshaja* (quality drug).^[11]

In *Yogaratanakara*, there is full separate chapter on *Rasayana*. The definition of *Rasayana* is same as described by Charaka.^[12]

Oja : The term *Ojas* has been stated in *Ayurvedic* classics to stand, not only for *Sleshma* but also for *Rasa* and *Rakta*.^[13] There are two types of *Ojas* i.e. *Para* and *Apara*. These two types of *Ojas* have a direct bearing on body's defense against decay, degeneration and infection. Charaka has also described *Apara Oja* in *Arthedashamahamuliya adhyaya*.^[14] In this context *Chakrapani* comments that the quantity of *Para Oja* is 8 drops (*Ashtabindu*) and it is located in *Hrudaya*. The seat of *Apara Oja* (*Ardhanjali*) on other hand is the ten *Dhamnis* connected with *Hrudaya*.^[15]

Ojas is the *Sara* i.e. essence of all *Dhatus*. It is originated like honey gathered by bees from various flowers and fruits. *Ojas* is derived from all the *Sapta Dhatus* in other words all the *Dhatus* contribute to the making of it.^[16] The entire body with its limbs and organs is permeated with *Ojas* and '*Tat Abhavasca Shiryante Sharirani Saririnam*' i.e. in the absence or deficiency of *Ojas* in the body cause wasting, decay, degeneration and destruction.^[17]

Immunity

The word "*Vyadhikshamatva*" is often correlated to immunity. *Vyadhi* means disease and *Kshamatva* means capacity to defend. The quality of the *Dhathu's* determines the intensity of *Vyadhikshamatva*.^[18] When etiological

factors come in contact with body they try to produce disease. At the same time body tries to resist the disease. This power of the body, which prevents the development of disease or resists against the developed disease, is called *Vyadhikshamatva*. Principles of *Vyadhikshamatva* in *Ayurveda* are free from diseases and lead healthy and prosperous life.^[19]

Immunity is the ability of the body to protect against all types of foreign bodies like bacteria, virus, and toxic substances etc. which enter the body.^[20]

There are two types of immunity^[21]

1. **Nonspecific or Innate immunity** is considered as the first line of defense without antigenic specificity. Its major components are:

- Humoral – comprised by complement.
- Cellular – consists of macrophages, neutrophils and natural killer cells.

2. **Specific or Adaptive immunity** is characterized by antigenic specificity. Its main components are:

- Humoral – consists of antibodies formed by B cells.
- Cellular – mediated by T cells.

The body's resistance is importance in the health of living beings, for prevention and rapid recovery from disease. Majority of *Rasayana* drugs works on multiple areas and helps in achievement of immunity through its *Dipana*, *Pachana*, *Medhya*, antioxidant, adoptogenic and immunomodulators properties.^[22]

Indications for *Rasayana*^[23]

- Age between 16-70 years
- Oleated person
- Purified person

Contraindications for *Rasayana*^[24]

- *Anatmavan* – those who do not self controlled
- *Aalsi* – lazy person
- *Daridra* – poor
- *Pramadi* – unstable person
- *Vyasani* – addicted person
- *Papkruta* – the sinful
- *Bheshajapamani* – those who do not respect medicine.

Benefits of *Rasayana* therapy^[25]

- *Rasayana* therapy is supposed to nourish blood, lymph, adipose tissue and semen and thus prevent freedom from chronic degenerative disorders like arthritis and disease of senility.
- *Rasayana* is thought to improve metabolic processes which result in best possible biotransformation and produce the best quality bodily tissue and delay senility and prevent other diseases of old age.
- *Rasayana* builds natural resistance against infection. Increase immunity and have an immunomodulatory effect which prevents any kind of autoimmune disorders.
- *Rasayana* therapy reduces oxidative stress, reduces free radical injury and delays aging.

Table No.1- Effect of Rasayana

| <i>Acharya Charaka</i> ^[2] | <i>Acharya Susruta</i> ^[26] |
|---|--|
| Promotes Longevity of life | Sustains age and youthfulness |
| Improved mental and intellectual competence | Increase in life-span |
| Provides immunity against diseases resulting in positive health (<i>Arogya</i>) | increase intellectual capacity and strength |
| Delays ageing process by preserving Youthfulness | Freedom from diseases (i.e. immunity is increased) |

| | |
|---|---|
| Improvement in the complexion and luster of the skin (<i>Prabha</i> and <i>Varna</i>) | <i>Sarva Upghatshamaniya</i> i.e. Cures all the ailments and problems |
| Enrichment in voice (<i>Swara</i>) | Acts as rejuvenator and general restorative treatment |
| Excellence of body glow (<i>Kanti</i>) | |
| Optimization of strength of body and <i>Indriyas</i> (motor and sense organs) | |
| Command over speech/ infallibility of speech (<i>Vaksiddhi</i>) | |
| Attaining Humbleness and politeness(<i>Pranati</i>) | |
| Proper, accurate balanced and premium production of all the <i>Sharir Dhatus</i> | |

DISCUSSION: According to *Ayurveda*, *Rasayana* therapy affects the body and mind and brings balance between the physical and psychic wellbeing. By strengthening immunity *Rasayana* does nourishment to all *Dhatus*, thus improving resistance against the infectious disease. It prevents muscles and tissue damage, thus delays the ageing process. Thus *Rasayana* not only rejuvenates the body and mind but it also prevents infections and diseases. The immunity of a person is increased due to regular use of *Rasayana*. The person becomes healthy and strong. Thus *Rasayana* helps in obtaining the optimum nourishment to the *Dhatus*.^[27]

Ojas and immunity is interlinked. If *Ojas* is in physiological state, there is no possibility of development of disease processes including infecting ones like viral/bacterial etc, since the *Ojas* is the *Sara* of *Sapta Dhatus* and naturally inparts profound support and preservation.

Acharya Susruta has defines a healthy man as one who has equilibrium of *Doshas*, normal functioning of *Agni*, normal condition of seven *Dhatus*, beside his soul, the sense organs and mind should be happy and cheerful^[28]. *Rasayana* stands like an answer to solve the problem of

healthful longevity including mental development and resistance against the disease. *Rasayana* is a specialized type of treatment influencing the fundamental aspect of the body i.e. *Dhatu*, *Agni* and *Srotas*.^[29]

Vyadhikshamatva is depends on the presence of *Bala* in the body. *Rasayana* drugs also influence the *Oja* which increases *Sharir Bala*. A person with appropriate amount of *Sharir Bala* is also said *Saptadhatu*sara. This provides the capacity to resistance against the external disease causing agents. Thus *Rasayana* can act as immunomodulator, by strengthening the immunity. *Rasayana* works at various levels in the human body and overall result is absolute state of *Vyadhikshamatva*.

CONCLUSION: *Ayurveda* is aimed for the maintenance of *Dhatusamy* and it is basically achieved by preservation of health. Concept of *Rasayana* is designed for both conditions i.e. health as well as diseased. *Rasayana Chikitsa* is a basic therapy for rejuvenation since it attains longevity, intellect, memory and freedom from disease, youth and excellence of lusture. Thus we can say that *Rasayana* has an important role in the immunity enhancement. It is required to create awareness among people about *Rasayana*, which will prevent disease & promote health of the every individual. *Rasayana* drugs are not only immunomodulatory

activity, but also have other effects such as immune-stimulation, anti-stress, antioxidant properties. Scientific studies have proven the effective role of *Rasayana* therapy in the management of chronic life style related diseases and degenerative changes. *Rasayana* is the preventive therapy described in *Ayurveda* which is helpful to maintain health, retard aging process and promote immune system to fight against infection.

REFERENCES

1. *Charaka Samhita* of *Agnivesha* elaborated *Vidyotini* Hindi commentary, Dr. Kashinath Shastri & Dr. Gorakha Natha Chaturvedi, Part 1, Chaukhambha Bharti Academy, Varanasi, Reprint Edition 2017; *Sutra sthan* 30/26, Page No.587.
2. *Charaka Samhita* of *Agnivesha*, elaborated *Vidyotini* Hindi commentary, Pt. Kashinatha Shastri & Dr. Gorakha Natha Chaturvedi, part 2, Chaukhambha bharti academy, Varanasi, Reprint 2013; *Chikitsa sthana* 1/1/8, Page No.5.
3. Dr. Manish kumar soni et al, Importance of *Rasayana* in immunity(*Vyadhikshamatva*), world journal of pharmaceutical and medical research 2018,4(3),196-198, Page No.1.
4. *Ashtang Hridaya* of *Srimadvagbhata*, Dr. Brahmanand Tripathi, Chaukhambha sanskrit Pratisansthan, Delhi, Reprint 2012; *Uttarasthan*, chapter 39/3, Page No.1183.
5. The principles and practice of *Kaya Chikitsa*, Prof. S. Suresh Babu, Volume 4, Chaukhambha orientalia, Varanasi, Reprint 2016; Page No.120.
6. *Charaka Samhita* of *Agnivesha*, elaborated *Vidyotini* Hindi commentary, Pt. Kashinatha Shastri & Dr. Gorakha Natha Chaturvedi, part 2, Chaukhambha bharti academy, Varanasi, Reprint 2013; *Chikitsa sthana* 1/1/4, Page No.3.
7. *Charaka Samhita* of *Agnivesha*, elaborated *Vidyotini* Hindi commentary, Pt. Kashinatha Shastri & Dr. Gorakha Natha Chaturvedi, part 2, Chaukhambha bharti academy, Varanasi, Reprint 2013; *Chikitsa sthana* 1/1/5-6, Page No.4.
8. *Susruta Samhita* of *Maharshi Susruta*, Kaviraja Ambikadutta Shastri, part 1, Chaukhambha Sanskrit Sansthan, Varanasi, Reprint 2016; *Chikitsa sthan* 27/11, Page No.153.
9. *Chakradatta (Chikitsa Sangraha)* of *Chakrapanidatta*, Dr. G. Prabhakara Rao, Chaukhambha orientalia, Varanasi, 1st edition 2014; 66/1-2, Page No.653.
10. *Sharangdhar Samhita* of *Acharya Sharangdhar*, Jiwanprada Hindi commentary, Dr. Smt. Shailaja Srivastava, Chaukhambha orientalia, Varanasi, reprint 2011; *Purvakhanda* 4, Page No.33.
11. *Bhava Prakasha* of *Bhavamishra*, Dr. Bulusu Sitaram, part 2, Chaukhambha orientalia, Varanasi, Reprint 2017; *Uttarkhanda* 2, Page No.736.
12. *Yogaratanakara* with *Vidyotini* Hindi commentary by Vaidya Lakshmiapati Sastri, Chaukhambha Prakashan, Varanasi, Reprint 2013; *Rasayanadhikaran*, Page No.498.
13. The principles and practice of *Kaya Chikitsa*, Prof. S. Suresh Babu, Volume 4, Chaukhambha orientalia, Varanasi, Reprint 2016; Page No.118.
14. *Charaka Samhita* of *Agnivesha*, elaborated *Vidyotini* Hindi commentary, Pt. Kashinatha Shastri & Dr. Gorakha Natha Chaturvedi, part 1, Chaukhambha bharti academy, Varanasi, Reprint 2017; *Sutra sthana* 30/9, Page No.583.
15. *Charaka Samhita, Ayurveda Dipika's* Ayusi Hindi commentary, Vd. Harish Chandra Singh Kushwaha, first part, Chaukhambha orientalia, Varanasi, Reprint 2016; *Sutra sthan* 30, Page No.490.

16. *Charaka Samhita* of Agnivesha elaborated *Vidyotini* Hindi commentary, Dr. Kashinath Shastri & Dr. Gorakha Natha Chaturvedi, Part 1, Chaukhambha Bharti Academy, Varanasi, Reprint Edition 2017; Sutra sthan 17/75, Page No.351.

17. *Susruta Samhita* of Maharshi Susruta, Kaviraja Ambikadutta Shastri, part 1, Chaukhambha Sanskrit Sansthan, Varanasi, Reprint 2016; *Sutra sthan* 15/27, Page No.79.

18. Venugopalan SN and Venkatasubramanian P, Understanding the Concepts *Rasayana* in *Ayurveda* Biology, J Nat Ayurvedic Med 2017; 1(2): 000112.

19. Dr. Manish kumar soni et al, Importance of *Rasayana* in immunity (*Vyadhikshamatva*), world journal of pharmaceutical and medical research 2018,4(3),196-198.

20. Davidson's principles and practice of medicine, Brian R. Walker, Churchill livingstone Elsevier limited, 22nd edition 2014; chapter 4, immunological factors in disease, Page No.72.

21. Text book of pathology, Harsh Mohan, Jaypee brothers medical publishers (p) LTD New Delhi, Reprint 2003, chapter 3, Immunopathology and Amyloidosis, Page No.48.

22. Dr. Nitin Vinayak Sawane, Dr. Aparna Nitin Gade, Dr. Mahendra Agrawal, Review on *Rasayana* therapy to improve immunity for better health, J Ayurveda Integr Med Sci 2019;4(6):154-156

23. *Susruta Samhita* of Maharshi Susruta, Kaviraja Ambikadutta Shastri, part 1, Chaukhambha Sanskrit Sansthan, Varanasi, Reprint 2016; *Chikitsa sthan* 27/3, Page No.150.

24. *Susruta Samhita* of Maharshi Susruta, Kaviraja Ambikadutta Shastri, part 1,

Chaukhambha Sanskrit Sansthan, Varanasi, Reprint 2016; *Chikitsa sthan* 30/4, Page No.162.

25. Ayugreen.com>benefits of rasayan, 30-04-2020.

26. *Susruta Samhita* of Maharshi Susruta, Kaviraja Ambikadutta Shastri, part 1, Chaukhambha Sanskrit Sansthan, Varanasi, Reprint 2016; *Chikitsa sthan* 27,28, Page No.150-157.

27. Anil kumar Singh, Arvin kumar Gupta, Manish, Pramod Kumar singh, *Rasayan* therapy: A magic contribution of Ayurveda for healthy long life, Int J Res Ayurveda Pharma, 2014;5(1):41-47.

28. *Susruta Samhita* of Maharshi Susruta, Kaviraja Ambikadutta Shastri, part 1, Chaukhambha Sanskrit Sansthan, Varanasi, Reprint 2016; *Sutra sthan* 15/48, Page No.84.

29. Anil kumar Singh, Arvin kumar Gupta, Manish, Pramod Kumar singh, *Rasayan* therapy: A magic contribution of Ayurveda for healthy long life, Int J Res Ayurveda Pharma, 2014;5(1):41-47.

Corresponding Author: Dr. Srishti Chandrakar, MD Scholar Shri N.P.A Government Ayurved College, Raipur C.G.

Email: srishtichandrakar03@gmail.com

Source of support: Nil Conflict of interest: None Declared

Cite this Article as : [Chandrarakar Srishti et al : Literary Study of Rasayana and its Role in the Improvement of Immunity] www.ijaar.in : IJAAR VOLUME IV ISSUE XI NOV-DEC 2020 Page No: 1196-1201