A Step for Healthy Life in Modern Era w.s.r. to Rasayana Therapy: A Review

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Abstract
In today’s era of modernization and civilization, there are increased trends of many diseases like Diabetes, Hypertension, cancer and reduced average healthy life. The economic and social growth of any country depends on health of the population. By seeing importance of health and increased disease burden, Govt. of India had started “Health for All and All for Health” mission in 2005. Ayurveda is the ancient system of medicine in the world; it deals with every aspect of life. Primary aim of Ayurveda is prevention and promotion of health of healthy person and secondly cures of disease. Rasayana is intended in Ayurveda as an effective tool to synthesize the excellent quality of Dhatu and increases strength and immunity against diseases. In Ayurvedic classics plenty of Rasayanas are explained for longevity as well as management of diseases. So here an effort is made to review the classical knowledge and applicability of Rasayana in healthy and diseased condition.

Keywords
Rasayana, Ayurveda, Dhatu
INTRODUCTION

Need of Rasayana:-

Our faulty lifestyle and diet is totally responsible for vitiation of Doshas in our body. These Doshas get vitiated because of unwholesome diet and ingredients of food which are alkaline, sour, salty and pungent. Ingestion of dry vegetables, meat and ingredients which are mutually contraindicated like fruit salad, banana with milk, fish and milk, abhishyandi diet (e.g. eating curd in night), heavy, putrid food and habits like irregular time of diet, taking meal before the digestion of previous meal. Lifestyle like addiction of day sleep, excessive sexual indulgence and alcohols, exposed to stressful life, excessive and irregular exercise, subjected to excess of fear, grief, hunger, greed and overwork. These factors vitiate Doshas and vitiated Doshas are responsible for manifestation of diseases in the body. There is impairment in the ejaculation of semen & the Ojas undergoes diminution. Because of these, person feels exhausted and becomes habitual to excess of sleep (Tandra), gets dyspnoea, loses initiatives and becomes incapable of physical and mental work. He also feels loss memory, intellect and complexion. Ayurveda is the science of life having two aims, one is to maintenance of health of healthy person and the second is to cure diseases of diseased person. The maintenance of health may be achieved by Rasayana therapy which is a division among the eight specialized branches of Ayurveda. Rasayana chikitsa consist of certain dietary & therapeutic herbal preparations which are able to correct as well as improve dhatus immunity by proper nutrition.

The word Rasayana is made up of two words Rasa + Ayana. ‘Rasa’ means nutritional fluid and ‘Ayana’ means path. Technically Rasayana means obtaining “excellence of rasa” (the nourishing fluid which is immediately produced after digestion) is known as Rasayana. This rasa nourishes our body and stimulates immunity of the body and keeps us healthy. According to Vagbhatta, by Rasayana sevan one can attain longevity, memory, intelligence, health, youthfulness, excellence of lustre, complexion and voice, optimum strength of physique and sense organs.

Importance of Rasa Dhatu:-

Rasayana means the augmentation of Rasa. Establishment of good quality of Dhatu may be achieved by this vital fluid. It is produced by the digestion of food. It is the rasa flowing in body which sustains...
the life; when it stops flowing, life comes to an end. By the use of Rasayana this rasa is maintained, freshened, and augmented. According to Shusruta⁶ Rasayana tantra is meant for establishing the youthful, promoting life-span, intellect and strength and eliminating diseases⁷.

Types of Rasayana Therapy:-

According to mode of administration⁸

1. Kutipraveshika Rasayana (indoor rejuvenative regimen)
2. Vatatapika Rasayana (outdoor rejuvenative regimen)

According to modalities Rasayana is divided in to two types

1. Adravyabhuta Rasayana or Achara Rasayana (Behavioural modalities) - it is a type of Rasayana for psychological and spiritual health. Literally “Achara” means discipline. This type of Rasayana does not require internal administration of any type of rejuvenating medicine. Speaking the truth, practicing non-violence, living in harmony with the outside factors, following social morals and behaviours, everything included under this category of Rasayana. Following these ethics leads to establishment of superior class of dhatus (tissues) and provides better health and immunity by increasing the quantity and quality of Ojas.
2. Dravyabhuta Rasayana (Drug based modalities) - This type of Rasayana therapy includes some herb and food types which are beneficial for the optimum functioning of the body as well as the brain.

According to the achievable outcome⁹

Rasayana is of three types: Naimittika rasayana, Ajasrika rasayana, and Kamya rasayana.

1. Naimittika rasayana (nimitt – Sanskrit for “cause”) it is given to cure the diseases in the body. It is also called as Rogapaharan or Curative type of Rasayan. Some examples of this Rasayana are Shilajatu, Bhallataka and Tuvaraka Rasayana etc.
2. Ajasrika Rasayana or Vayasthapan Rasayan comprises use of milk, ghrita, honey healthy lifestyle, diet, exercise and adopting the principles of proper nap and celibacy it helps in maintaining good health. It also provides healthy and prosperous quality of life.
3. Kamya Rasayana¹⁰ is used to to serve a special purpose or desire (kama - desire). It is of four types:
   • Prana Kamya; used to promote longevity and life span
   • Medha Kamya; used for enhancing the memory and intellect.eg. Shankhapushpi Rasayana
   • Shrikamaya; used to improves beauty and lustre of the body
• **Chakshu Kamya**; used for maintaining healthy eyes.

**Benefits of Rasayana Chilkitsa** –:

According to Acharya Charaka, the person undergoing the Rasayan therapy benefits:

1. Enhancement the intelligence, memory power, will power, body strength, skin lustre, sweetness of speech & physical power.
2. It gives nourishment to all dhatus & prevents chronic degenerative changes & illness. So it increases strength of dhatus & protect from chronic degenerative disorders like arthritis & senile diseases.
3. Rasayana deals with preventive health for enjoying normal life. To produce the superior quality of dhatus Rasayana was designed in classical Ayurveda. It involves in the prevention and alleviation of senility and maladies.
4. It helps in achieving proper physical strength & sharpness of the sense organs.

**Some commonly used Rasayanas**–:

In Ayurveda, Acharyas have stated different Rasayana drugs according to different decades of life. The concept of this recommendation is just to promote good health and compensate body for natural decaying process and slow down the process of autopsy (programmed cell death). Different Rasayana drugs for different decades of life is described in Table 1, and Rasayana drugs for different diseases in Table 2, Rasayana drugs for different tissues in Table 3 and Rasayana drugs according to different systems described in Table 4.

**Some special classical Rasayana preparations**–:

1. Indicated for longevity of life and prevention of diseases
   2. **Brahma rasayana**
   3. **Dwitiya brahma rasayana**
   4. **Chyavanaprasha**
   5. **Chaturtha amalaka rasayana**
   6. **Amalaka ghrita**
   7. **Amalakavaleha**
   8. **Triphala rasayana**
   9. **Nagabala rasayana**
   10. **Abhayamalaka rasayana**

11. Indicated in management of diseases:
• Bhallataka Rasayana: Kaphaja roga (The diseases of kapha dosha)23.
• Endra Rasayana: shwitra, kushtha (obstinate skin disorders), pleeha (spleenomegaly), vishamjwara (fever)24.
• Pippali Rasayana: hikka (hiccup), shwasa (dyspnea), kasa (cough), arsha (haemorrhoids), grahami (digestive disorders), pandu (anaemia), peenasa (coryza), shopha (oedema)25.
• Vardhaman Pippali Rasayana: pleeha (spleenomegaly), udara (ascites)26.
• Shilajatu Rasayana: Useful in multiple disorders with proper adjuvant28.
• Tuvaraka Rasayan: Kushtha roga (skin diseases)29.

Time of administration of Rasayana:-
According to Sushruta30 Rasayana should be administered to a person in their early age or middle age31. Rasayana and Vajikarana therapies administered to those whose body has not been purified becomes useless, just as colouring a dirty cloth, so before administration of rasayana drugs purification of body is necessary32.

Rasayana chikitsa in modern research parameters:-
Various experiments have been done on Rasayana drugs to show their activity as immune stimulant, antioxidant, and anti-stress etc. Rasayana drugs act as-

Immunomodulator- an element that alters the immune response by augmenting the ability of the immune system. It reacts with the antigens by initiating the production of antibodies or sensitized cells33.

Adaptogen– The ability of an organism to adapting the environment is produced by a

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metabolic regulator which is called adaptogen. Environmental factors can be either physiological (external), such as injury or aging, or psychological (internal), such as anxiety34. Some adaptogenic herbs- are Ashwagandha, Guduchi, Tulsi, Haridra, Shatavari, Amalaki, Pippali etc.

Antioxidant- Antioxidants are the substances whose presence in relatively low concentrations that prevents the degree of oxidation of targets. Being present in serum, these antioxidants circumvent the damage caused by oxygen free radicals35.

Nootropic- Nootropic substances are those which promote functions of brain and intelligence. These drugs can be categorized as Medhya Rasayana. Acharya Charaka has described four important Medhya Rasayana drugs namely- Mandukaparni, Guduchi, Yashtimadhu and Shankkhpushpi36.
DISCUSSION

*Rasayana* therapy is a boon to mankind, different *Rasayana* has been explained in the classics which are helpful not only to preserve the health but also to get rid of diseases. According to Sushruta a healthy man is who has equilibrium of *Doshas*, normal functioning of *Agni*, proper condition of *sapta Dhatus*. His soul, sense organs and mind should be happy and cheerful. *Rasayana* provides a healthy living with mental improvement and resistance against diseases. *Rasayana* is a tremendous therapy improving the fundamental aspect of body i.e. *Dhatu*, *Agni* and *Srotas*. It produces the *Rasayana* effects which are mentioned in term of *Vayasthapana* and *Ayushkara*, *Medhakara*, *Urjaskara*. Probably *Rasayana* drugs are rich in various types of vitamins so that it may improve the particular nutritional values of *Poshaka Rasa*. *Rasayana* drugs are capable of counteracting the damaging effect of oxidation. So they work as anti-oxidants.

The possible mechanisms by which action of *Rasayana* can be interpreted with modern aspects are as follows:

- Antioxidant action
- Immuno-modulatory action
- Hemopoetic effect
- Nutritive effect

CONCLUSION

At last it can be concluded that *Rasayana* therapy is a wonderful therapeutic procedure of *Ayurveda*. In today’s medical practice it has vital role to serve mankind. It may lead to comprehensive clinical effects such as *Vayah sthapana*, *Ayushkara*, *Medhakara*, *Balakara* and *Jaravyadhi nashana* effects. By the proper use of *Rasayana* a person can live a disease free healthy and happy long life. *Rasayana* therapy is useful to achieve the physical mental and social wellbeing.
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