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Rasayana Therapy –Tool For Healthy Ageing

Dr. Trupti Jain¹

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1. Dr. Trupti Jain, Asst. Prof. Swasthavritta Pt. Khushilal Sharma Govt. Ayurveda College & Institution, Bhopal.(M.P.)

Corresponding Author :- Dr. Trupti Jain, Asst. Prof. Swasthavritta Pt. Khushilal Sharma Govt. Ayurveda College & Institution, Bhopal.(M.P.) Mobile No – 09340647004, Email- trupatijain211@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT: -

In recent years, due to advanced healthcare facilities Life Expectancy around the world has been increasing steadily, but this achievement has been possible only in terms of chronological ageing. The increase expectancy of life is now associated with several health problems which definitely affects persons quality of life. We all know that ageing is an inevitable phenomenon, so people are searching strategies for healthy ageing. Ayurveda is the only science which described a branch devoted to study of ageing & its prevention under the heading of “*Rasayana Tantra*”. *Rasayana therapy* (Rejuvenation) is mainly a science of nutrition which improves immunity of body against diseases. On the basis of current level of understanding *Rasayana* (Rejuvenation) has adaptogenic property, anabolic activity, immunomodulatory effects and antioxidant effect. So, if it should be adopted in systematic manner from early onset of life, it delays ageing process and causes healthy ageing.

Key words- Life Expectancy, adaptogenic property, anabolic activity, immunomodulatory effect and antioxidant effect, healthy ageing.



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INTRODUCTION

Long, disease free and healthy life is the desire of every human being. In present era ageing process is adversely affected by unhealthy and stressful lifestyle. As age advances, accumulation of cellular and molecular changes occur which impair the normal physiology which in turn trigger age associated diseases. *Rasayana* therapy (Rejuvenation) described in Ayurveda is a science of nutrition and is applicable to all the age groups, from pediatrics to geriatrics. *Rasayan* therapy (Rejuvenation) has all components to rejuvenate and build physiology in a consistent manner as long as it is an integral part of ones lifestyle in the form of *Aushadha*(drug), *Ahara* (diet), and *Achara*(conduct).

MATERIAL AND METHOD

Material related to *rasayan* is collected from Ayurvedic text including *Brihatrye* and *Laghutrye* and text book of modern medicine respectively. The index, non-index medical journals has also referred to collect information of relevant topic.

Review of Literature

Concept Of Ageing-

Ageing is a normal inevitable physiological process that starts from birth and ends with death.^[1] Ageing is affected by intrinsic factors such as heredity and extrinsic factors such as environment, disease and lifestyle.^[2] Poor diet,

lack of exercise, inadequate sleep, smoking, intake of alcohol and stress are some contributory factors for ageing. There are many theories put forward regarding ageing but the most popular theory is “Theory of free radicals” which is still considered worldwide.^[3] These free radicals causes cellular damage through lipid peroxidation, DNA damages and oxidative damage of proteins. Several researches proved that consumption of antioxidant in the form of diet or medicine will help to slow down free radical damage.^[4] Ageing changes are functional as well as structural, manifesting at all levels and affect the cells, the tissues, the organs and even the configuration of body.^[5]

In Ayurveda Ageing is mentioned as “*Jara*”-a *Swabhavabalapravritta Vyadhi*^[6] and classified as *Kalaj Jara* (Natural ageing) and *Akalaj Jara* (Premature ageing).^[7] *Kalaj Jara* (Natural ageing) is unavoidable and irreversible process but *Akalaj Jara* (Unnatural ageing) is somewhat reversible process. *Jara* (Ageing) is the decline of *Dhatu* (tissues), *Virya* (virility), *Indriya* (senses), *Bala* (strength), *Utsaha* (enthusiasm), associated with *Palitya* (greying of hair), *Vali*(wrinkled skin), *Kasa* (cough), *Shwasa* (breathlessness), *Vepathu* (tremors).^[8] Acharya Sharangdhar quoted that during ageing sequential decline of biological factors like *Balya* (strength), *Vridhhi* (growth), *Chhavi*(Reflection), *Medha* (Intellectual), *Tvaka*(skin), *Drishti*(vision), *Shukra*(semen), *Vikrama*(power), *Buddhi* (Intellect), *Karmendriya* (senses) occurs in the every

decade of life.^[9]

Status of Tridoshas, Saptadhatus, Indriyas, Ojus and Agni-

Balance state of *Vata*, *Pitta* & *Kapha* are responsible for healthy life. As per the age, predominance of *doshas* changes as *Kapha* is predominant *Dosha* in childhood, *Pitta* during the adulthood and *Vata* during old age.^[10] *Kapha* is mainly responsible for growth and development while *pitta* is responsible for vigour and vitality of youth and *Vayu* precipitates atrophy or *Kshaya* (Depletion) of *Dhatus* (body tissues). During ageing depletion of *Kapha* occurs and *Vata* increases spontaneously. Due to *Vata* predominance gradual decrease or involution of all the *Dhatus* (body tissues), *Indriyas* (senses) and *Ojus* (vital essence) occurs while ageing. *Agni* is responsible for the vigor and vitality of an individual and promotes the growth and development of the body. As the age advances *Vata* increases and *Agni* (digestion fire) depleted which leads to decrease in vigor and vitality with decay and atrophy due to defective metabolism.

Concept Of Rasayana (Rejuvenation) -

Rasayana (Rejuvenation) is one among the eight specialties of Ayurveda. Since ancient times it is practiced as an important specialty for rejuvenation and geriatric care.

Acharya Shushruta enumerated that this branch includes all the measures which help for attaining longevity, enhance intelligence and mental strength and increase immunity against various disease.^[12]

Acharya Charaka explained that *Rasayana* (Rejuvenation) is a therapy which invigorate a healthy person by producing the best quality of *Rasadi* Dhatu (Plasma tissue) and such state of improved nutrition is claimed to lead a series of secondary attributes like prevention of ageing, enhanced immunity, mental competence,

increase vitality and luster of body.^[13]

Acharya Sharangdhara clearly stated that *Rasayana* (Rejuvenation) has capacity to destroy the ageing as well as disease.^[14]

Classification-

A. On the basis of mode of administration.^[15]

1. *Vatatapika* (Out door *rasayana* Therapy).
2. *Kuti Pravehsika* (Indoor *rasayana* Therapy)

B. On the basis of action.^[16]

1. *Kamyas Rasayana* (for promotion of health of healthy)
 - a. *Pranakamyas* (promotes longevity and lifespan)
 - b. *Medha Kamyas* (improves mental faculties)
 - c. *Shrikamyas* (improves beauty and lustre of the body)
2. *Naimittika Rasayana* (to cure the diseases)
3. *Ajastrika Rasayana* (for daily use)

C. Special Rasayana drugs and measures

1. *Medhya* (for brain and mental health)^[17]
2. *Aachar Rasayana* (healthy behaviour for rejuvenation effect)^[18]

D. On the basis of effect ^[19]

1. *Samsodhana Rasayana*
2. *Samshamana Rasayana*

Benefits of Rasayana (Rejuvenation) -

Acharya Charaka enumerated that a person who undergo *Rasayana* therapy (Rejuvenation) obtains *Deerghayu* (long life), *Smriti* (memory), *Medha* (intellect), *Arogya* (health), *Taruna vaya* (youth), *Prabha* (lustre), *Varna* (complexion), *Swaraoudarya* (excellence of voice), *Dehaindriyabala* (strength of body and senses), *Vaksiddhi* (power of speech true), *Pranati* (salutation), *Kanti* (clamminess of features) etc and by the use of *Rasayana* (Rejuvenation) we can live for thousand years free from diseases, weakness and old age.^[20]

These benefits could be classified as –

1. Promotive Role – *Rasayana* (Rejuvenation) attains its name because of promotive role of

formation and circulation of *Rasadhatu* (Plasma), synthesized during foremost phase of metabolism. Thus use of *Rasayana* (Rejuvenation) promotes biological attributes like metabolic functions, physical strength, memory, luster, complexion etc.

2. Protective Role – As described in Ayurvedic literature *Rasayana Tantra* is designed to confer protection against disease, premature ageing and such other negative influences on physiology exerted by both biosphere and ecosphere.

Each and Every ancient text book on Ayurveda has enlisted several *Rasayana* (Rejuvenation) drug which can be used according to need are as follows.^[21]

1. *Rasayana* (Rejuvenation) recommended for daily use

Dugdha (Milk), and *Ghrita* (Ghee)

2. *Rasayana* (Rejuvenation) Recommended for social and spiritual development

Aachar Rasayana (Life style *Rasayana*)

3. *Rasayana* (Rejuvenation) recommended on the basis of Prakriti

Vata – *Bala* (*Sida- cordifolia*), *Ashwagandha* (*Withania somnifera*), *Shatavari* (*Asparagus racemosus*)

Pitta – *Amalaki* (*Emblic officinalis*)

Kapha- *Bhallataka* (*Semicarpus anacardium*), *Guggulu* (*Combifera mukul*), *Pippali* (*Piper longum*)

4. *Rasayana* recommended on the basis of *Sapta Dhatu*-

1. *Rasa*(*Plasma*)- *Draksha* (*Vitis vinifera*), *Shatavari* (*Asparagus racemosus*), *Dates* (*Phoenix sylvestris*)

2. *Rakta*(*Blood*)- *Amalaki* (*Emblic officinalis*)

3. *Mamsa*(*Muscle*)- *Masha* (yellow gram), *Bala* (*Sida- cordifolia*), *Ashwagandha* (*Withania somnifera*) *Kupilu* (*Nux vomica*)

4. *Meda* (*Fat*)- *Guggulu* (*Combifera mukul*), *Shilajit*, *Haritaki* (*Terminalia chebula*), *Guduchi* (*Tinospora cordifolia*)

5. *Asthi*(*bone*)- *Shukti bhashma* (conch shells), *Kukkutanda twak bhasma* (egg shell), *Vamshalochana* (*Bambusa arundinacea*)

6. *Majja*- *Shankhapushapi* (*Convolvulus pluriacaulis*), *Loha bhasma*, *Swarna bhasma*

7. *Shukra*- *Kapikkachu* (*Mucuna prurita*), *Vidarikanda* (*Pueraria tuberosa*), *Shatavari* (*Asparagus racemosus*), *Ashwagandha* (*Withania somnifera*), *Swarna bhasma* (gold), *Ghee* and *Cow milk*

6. *Rasayana* (Rejuvenation) recommended on the basis of Age -

1. 1-10yrs : *Vacha*(*Acorus calamus*), *Swarna bhasma*

2. 11-20yrs: *Ashwagandha* (*Withania somnifera*), *Bala*(*Sida- cordifolia*)

3. 21-30yrs: *Amalaki* (*Emblic officinalis*), *Loha bhasma*

4. 31-40yrs : *Shankhapushapi* (*Convolvulus pluricaulis*), *Jyotishmati* (*Celastrus panniculatus*)

5. 41-50yrs: *Bhringaraj* (*Eclipta alba*), *Priyal* (*Buchanania lanzan*), *Jyotishmati* (*Celastrus Panniculatus*)

6. 51-60yrs: *Shatavari* (*Asparagus racemosus*), *Jyotishmati* *Celastrus panniculatus*), *Saptamrita lauha*

7. 61-70yrs: *Atmagupta* (*Mucuna prurita*), *Ashwagandha* (*Withania somnifera*)

8. 71-80yrs : Usually : *Amalaki* (*Emblic officinalis*), *Bala* (*Sida- cordifolia*)

9. 81-90yrs: drugs are not : *Brahmi* (*Centella asiatica*)

10. 91-100yrs: : *Bala* (*Sida cordifolia*), *Ashwagandha* (*Withania somnifera*)

7- *Rasayana* recommended for Sense-

organs and System -

- 1- Eye- *Triphala* , *Shatavari* (*Asparagus racemosus*)
- 2- Skin- *Tuvaraka* (*Hydrocarous laurifolia*), *Khadir* (*Acacia catechu*), *Bakuchi* (*Psoralea corylifolia*)
- 3- Respiratory System- *Chyavanprasha*, *Pippali* (*Piper longum*),
- 4- Digestive System- *Pippali* (*Piper longum*), *Bhallataka* (*Semicarpus anacardium*), *Haritaki* (*Terminaliya chebula*).
- 5- Circulatory System (Lymphatic)- *Draksha* (*Vitis vinifera*), *Shatavari* (*Asparagus racemosus*)
- 6- Circulatory System (Blood)- *Amalaki* (*Embilica officinalis*), *Dhatri Lauha*, *Bhringaraja* (*Eclipta alba*), *Suvarnamakshika bhasma*
- 7- Skeleto-Muscular System- *Bala* (*Sida cordifolia*), *Ashwagandha* (*Withania somnifera*), *Guggulu* (*Combifura mukul*)
- 8- Nervous System- *Ashwagandha* (*Withania somnifera*), *Shankhapushpi* (*Convolvulus pliuriacaulis*)
- 9- Reproductive System- *Shatavari* (*Asparagus racemosus*), *Swetamusali* (*Chlorophytum borivilianum*)
- 10- Urinary System- *Punarnava* (*Boerrhevia diffusa*), *Gokshura* (*Tribulus terrestris*)

DISCUSSION

Healthy ageing is defined as the process of developing and maintaining functional ability that enables wellbeing in older age.^[22] For healthy ageing the objective of treatment is to counteract the vitiation *Vata* during old age, inhibit the tissue depletion (*Dhatukshaya*) and maintain the qualities of tissues (*Prashasta Dhatus*), enhance the strength (*Bala*) and promote the digestion and metabolism (*Jatharagni and Dhatwagni*).

Rasayana agents (Rejuvenation) both drugs and food like *Satavari*, *dugdha*, *ghrita* etc

physically contains high quality of nutrients and improves tissue nourishment by acting on the *Rasa* level. Several other *Rasayana* drugs like *Bhallataka*, *Pippali* improves digestion, absorption and metabolism and acts indirectly as anabolizers .Some other kind of *Rasayana* (Rejuvenation) like *Guggulu* (*Commiphora mukul*), *Rasona* (*Allium Sativum*) etc. cleans and activates the microcirculatory channels that is *Strotoshuddhi* (cleaning channels) which improves the tissue health and their quality.^[23] One should always start *Rasayana* therapy(Rejuvenation) in adult and middle age^[24] because it may not be helpful in *Vridhdha Avastha* (ageing) when irreversible ageing changes have already occurred.

Several researches reported that *Rasayana* (Rejuvenation) had adoptogenic, anabolic, antioxidant, anti-ageing, intellect promoting, cell proliferation and regeneration and immunomodulating property.^[25-26]

CONCLUSION-

- ✓ *Rasayana* (Rejuvenation) is an accelerated and appropriated nutrition leading to improved biological competence of body. Thus for healthy ageing the particular *Rasayana* (Rejuvenation) has to be selected for each individual appropriately by consideration of his *Vaya* (age), *Prakriti* (Constitution), *Satmya* (adaptability), State of *Agni*, *Dhatus* (tissues), *Strotas* (channels) and environment factor like *Desha*, *Kala* etc.
- ✓ *Rasayana* (Rejuvenation) is a magic tool if adopted in systematic manner from the early onset of life , it prevents premature ageing as well as helps to attain healthy ageing.

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