



Research Paper

Importance of *Rasaushadhis* in *Ayurveda*

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ABSTRACT

Rasaushadhis are the herbo-mineral or metal or mineral formulations which are used for therapeutic purpose. In *Ayurvedic* practice the *Rasaushadhis* has been considered as more effective and beneficial due to lesser therapeutic doses, enhancement of action of other ingredients of formulation, more shelf life, quicker action and palatability as compared to herbal preparation. *Rasaushadhis* are being the backbone of *Ayurveda* due to its *Rasayana* and therapeutic properties. The assimilation of *Rasa* preparations in the body is much faster because the preparation undergoes different processes called *Samskaras*. This helps in active and quick assimilation of even the minute doses in the body. *Rasaushadhi* is although named after mercury but apart from mercury there are lot of minerals and metals described in *Rasashastra* with *Rasayana* properties eg. *Shilajatu*, *Swarna*, *Rajata* etc. The *Rasaushadhis* as *Rasayana* therapy helps to attain longevity, physical strength, immunity, mental competence, sharpness of sense organs and qualities of *dhatu*s. It nourishes whole body and improves immune system and hence natural resistance to infection will be more. Since centuries *Rasaushadhis* are used in different disease conditions without developing any noticeable side effects.

KEYWORDS: *Rasaushadhis*, *Rasayana*, *Ayurveda*, *Rasashastra*

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I. INTRODUCTION

The term *Rasa* generally denotes *Parada*, *Maharasa*, *Uparasa* and *Sadharana rasa* but the term also includes incinerated or killed metals and poisonous tubers. Hence the formulations which consist above as one of the constituent can be termed as *Rasaushadhi*.^[1] *Ayurveda* has described science of *Rasaushadhis* for the sake of quantitative and qualitative life span of human.^[2] Many *Rasa* preparations have been proven to be successful in treating various disorders with minimal adverse effects. The minerals and metals are very effective and potent for immunization, rejuvenation and the elimination of the diseases. *Rasaushadhis* are safe in therapeutic doses and absorb easily in the body.^[3] As compared to conventional medicines, *Bhasmas* etc. are the unique *rasa* preparations for curing diseases, can easily enter into the bloodstream and become more biocompatible. They have developed a new era in nano- medicine system due to its nano particles size and holistic approach towards disease.^[4]

Also all the *rasa* preparations are not recommended for all patients. The indications, dose, mode of administration, duration of treatment, nature or *prakruti* of patients, *pathya-apathya* etc are the important factors which should always be considered before prescribing *rasa* medicines to the patients.^[5] *Acharya Charaka* also said- A perfectly understood drug is life saver like ambrosia whereas a drug not perfectly understood is like poison (fatal), weapon, thunderbolt & fire. A drug whose name, form and properties are not known, and when known, if improperly used can produce disaster.^[6]

RASAUSHADHIS

Rasaushadhis are the herbo-mineral or metal or mineral formulations. *Rasa* preparations also contain heavy metals like mercury, tin, arsenic, lead etc.^[7]

Rasaushadhis although named after mercury (*parada*), can be classified in two distinct classes. 1. Mercurials and 2. Non-mercurials. Use of mercury in therapeutics was started as a bio-enhancer rather than as a drug. Combination of mercury with any drug was supposed to reduce its dose and increase its efficacy manifolds.^[8]

A) Mercurials preparations-

Based on the method of preparation, the mercury based drugs are classified as 1. *Khalviya rasa* 2. *Parpati rasa* 3. *Kupipakwa rasa* and 4. *Pottali rasa*.

1) **Khalviya Rasa**- *Khalviya Rasaushadhis* are prepared with the help of Mortar and pestle. Initially mercury and sulphur are mixed in mortar and triturated with pestle until it converts into black colored powder, then other herbal or mineral ingredients are mixed and triturated with specified herbal juices and pills are rolled according to the dose.^[9] Since the mercury and other ingredients of the formulation are grinded in a mortar, known as 'Khalva' as per the terminology of *Ayurveda*, the formulation is known as 'Khalviya Rasa'.^[10]

2) **Parpati Rasa**: Mercury and sulphur are first ground, if prescribed, with specified metal *bhasma*, if not, without metal *bhasma*, to prepare a homogeneous black coloured fine powder termed as 'Kajjali'.^[11]

3) **Kupipakwa Rasa-Kajjali** is filled upto 1/3rd in a narrow mouth high long neck glass flask termed as 'Kupi' and then subjected for controlled heating, or sometimes in an earthenware crucible termed as 'Mushaa' or in a metallic crucible; then it is termed as 'Kupipakwa Rasa'.^[12]

4) **Pottali rasa** – The mixture of ingredients of metal and mineral origin are triturated in herbal and made into a bolus (*pottali*), and then it is kept in a silk cloth in which a layer of sulphur is spread and tied. This bolus is further cooked in molten sulphur till the final is obtained.^[13]

B) Non-mercurials preparations

It includes- *Dhatubhasma*, *Satva* and *Pisti*.

Important factors related to Rasaushadhis administration:

Following factors regarding administration of *Rasaushadhis* must be kept in mind-

- Proper dose
- Time
- Mode of drug administration
- Diet and routine management
- Shelf life (*Saviryataavadhi*)
- Testing and analysis of drug before use.

Problems in Rasa preparations:

- All *Rasa* materials have a purification procedure before being administered into the human body.
- Unpurified or poorly prepared *Rasa* preparations can be highly toxic and endanger the life of a patient.
- Preparation of the *Rasa* medicines are slow and hard.
- Global non availability
- Global non acceptance

Advantages of Rasaushadhis:

- *Rasaushadhis* are used in minute doses, easily palatable and fast acting.^[14]
- Incinerated minerals possess excellent therapeutic values and they have a longer shelf life.^[15]
- The preservation is easy.
- The assimilation of *rasa* preparations in the body is much faster because the preparation undergoes different processes called *sanskaras*. This helps in active and quick assimilation of even the minute doses in the body.^[16]
- The efficacy of *rasa* medicines increases with time, which means that the *rasa* medicines have no expiry date.

IMPORTANCE OF RASAUSHADHIS IN AYURVEDA

Rasa shastra is a branch of *Ayurveda* that deals with the *Rasa* preparations and was mainly developed in the medieval period. The drugs in *Rasa shastra* are used in various formulations which are having different valence states, different crystal structure and physical properties.^[17] Formulation in the form of *Rasaushadhis* uses the metals and minerals for chronic disorders in different combinations, dosage forms and at various levels of purities.^[18] Hence it is very essential to prepare it in a proper way. There are so many *Rasa* preparations available in market which are useful in diabetes, liver diseases, anemia, obesity, heart diseases, skin diseases, respiratory tract disorders, cancer etc. *Rasaushadhis* improve immune system and help to attain longevity, physical strength, immunity, mental competence, sharpness of sense organs and work as *Rasayan* therapy.

Excellence of Rasaushadhis in Ayurvedic practice^{[19],[20]}

There are approx. 430 *Rasa* preparations that support physician to pacify *Jwara*. Eg.

- *Mrityunjaya rasa* – Destroyed cell is revitalized- used in infectious fever conditions
- *Tribhuvanakeerti rasa* – *Tribhuvana* are *Udara* (Alimentary), *Urah* (Respiratory) and *Shiras* (Neural) – any conditions that are developing fever in these areas.

There are approx. 342 *Rasa* preparations that support physician to pacify *Kasa*. Eg.

- *Kasakuthar rasa* – Cough & Headache
 - *Swasakasachintamani rasa* – Chronic cough of undiagnosed, Asthma
 - *AbhrakaBhasma* – Chronic cough
- There are approx. 283 *Rasa* preparations that supports physician to pacify *Shwasa*. Eg.
- *Shwasakasachintamani rasa* – COPD
 - *Lakshmiivilas rasa* – COPD, Pulmonary oedema
 - *MallaSinduram*- COPD
- There are approx. 9 *Rasa* preparations that supports physician to pacify Diabetes Eg.
- *Vangeswara rasa* – Blood sugars are not much altered but polyuria is present
 - *Sarveswara rasa* – used for diabetes complications especially – it regulates the blood sugar levels and enhances the erection capacities
- There are approx. 87 *Rasa* preparations that supports physician to pacify Rheumatoid Arthritis. Eg.
- *Amavatari rasa* – specific drug of choice
 - *Chandraprabhavati* – when obesity and GIT problems precipitates in R.A.
- There are approx. 118 *Rasa* preparations that supports physician to pacify *Kamala*. Eg.
- *Dhatriloham* – Jaundice
 - *Lakshmiivilas rasa* – Jaundice associated with anemia
 - *Lohaparpati*– Jaundice with complications such as diarrhea, fever, puerperal jaundice or neonatal jaundice
- There are approx. 23 *Rasa* preparations that supports physician to pacify Obesity. Eg.
- *Shiva Gutika* – Obese + DM + COPD
- There are approx. 162 *Rasa* preparations that supports physician to pacify *Atisara*. Eg.
- *Lohaparpati* – It is specific to use when there is Anaemia as it makes the constipation.

Some important examples of *parpaties* and their therapeutic indications^[21]

<i>Parpati</i>	Therapeutic indications
<i>Rasa Parpati</i>	Colicky pain, malabsorption syndrome, diarrhoea, dysentery, inflammation, jaundice, anaemia, fever, rheumatism and haemorrhoids, skin disorders, dyspepsia and digestion.
<i>Bola Parpati</i>	Menorrhagia or metrorrhagia bleeding disorders and bleeding haemorrhoids
<i>PanchamirtaParpati</i>	Malabsorption syndrome, haemorrhoids, vomiting, diarrhoea, fever, tastelessness, bleeding disorder, senescence linked skin and hair changes, eye disorder, digestive impairment and oligospermia
<i>LauhaParpati</i>	Digestive impairment, malabsorption syndrome, dyspepsia, anaemia, <i>Jwara</i> , postpartum fever- puerperal fever, diarrhoea, jaundice, splenic

Some important examples of *pistis* and their therapeutic indications^[22]

<i>Pisti</i>	Therapeutic indications
<i>Pravalapisti</i> (from coral)	Oligospermia, loss of strength and immunity, digestive impairment, low intelligence etc.
<i>MuktaPisti</i> (from pearl)	Diarrhoea with bleeding , heart disease, mania and psychosis, bleeding disorders
<i>Manikyapisti</i> (from ruby)	Loss of body strength (immunity), heart disease, oligospermia, digestive impairment, weakness, low intelligence

Some important examples of *pistis* and their therapeutic indications^[23]

Name	Therapeutic indications
<i>MakaraDhvaja</i>	Weakness of the heart, Senility/Premature ageing, Fever, digestive impairment. Aphrodisiac and nutrient to body and mind with adaptoimmuno-neuro-endocrino-modulator properties
<i>Mallasindura</i>	Bronchial asthma, Disease due to <i>Vata</i> and <i>Kaphadoshas</i> and Syphilis
<i>Rasapuspa</i>	Gastro-enteritis with piercing pain, ascites, dysuria etc
<i>Rasasindura</i>	Disease due to <i>kaphadosha</i> , loss of strength / immunity, tissue wasting, weakness of the heart, colicky pain, digestive impairment , anaemia, obesity, ulcer etc.
<i>Vatagni kumara rasa</i>	Cough, dyspnoea/asthma, fever, <i>vataroga</i> (disease due to <i>vatadosha</i>)
<i>Samirapannaga rasa</i>	Disease due to vitiation of all the three <i>doshas</i> , stiffness in joints due to <i>kaphadosha</i> , fever, dyspnoea, asthma, cough
<i>Svarnavanga</i>	Chronic cough, dyspnoea/asthma, diabetes and polyurias and diseases of urinary tract
<i>Svarnasindura</i>	Oligospermia, tissue wasting, learning disability and all diseases

II. CONCLUSION

By looking at above examples we conclude that *Rasaushadhis* are the important formulation in *Ayurvedic* therapeutics and are the backbone of *Ayurveda*. The *raspreparation* in a minute dose allow it to slip between the smallest bodily channels (*srotas*) and penetrate into the deepest tissues. The main advantages of *Rasaushadhis* is its potency, longevity and effectiveness. These are usually tasteless, odourless, requires only a miniscule dose to deliver a strong and long lasting effect and it is not needed over a long period of time. *Ayurveda* has described science of *Rasaushadhis* for the sake of quantitative and qualitative life span of human. But before recommending *Rasaushadhis* factors like its dose, indications, mode of administration, pathya-apathyaetc should be considered.

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