



# JOURNAL OF EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES AND INNOVATIVE RESEARCH (JETIR)

An International Scholarly Open Access, Peer-reviewed, Refereed Journal

## MEDHYA RASAYANA: AYURVEDIC REJUVENATORS FOR COGNITIVE HEALTH.

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### ABSTRACT

Rasayana is describes the measures of attaining long life, anti-aging, increasing immunity and providing excellent nutrition to all the body tissues. Rasayana on regular practice boosts nourishment, health, memory, immunity and longevity. Rasayana can be classified as Dravyabhuta and Adravyabhuta Rasayana. Adravyabhuta Rasayana includes Aachara Rasayana and Dravyabhuta Rasayana are classified as Kamya Rasayana, Naimittika Rasayana and Ajasrika Rasayana. Medhya Rasayana is a subtype of Kamya Rasayana and they are used with an intention or desire to improve intellect, concentration and memory. Prajnaparadha has been described to be the causative Factor of most of the diseases in ancient Ayurvedic texts, this signifies the importance of the use of Medhya drugs in Ayurvedic system of medicine since ages. Need of attaining mental peace is increasing day by day in view of tremendous increase in the stress and anxiety. Medhya Rasayana described in the classics can be used as single Dravyas or in combination. Some examples from our classics are Mandukaparni, Gudduchi, Yashtimadhu, Shankhpushpi, Brahmi, Vacha, Jatamansi and Ashwagandha.

**Keywords:** Medhya, Rasayana, memory, stress, chittodvega, cognitive.

**AIMS AND OBJECTIVES:** To describe the importance of using Rasayana in today's problem such as anxiety and stress.

**MATERIALS AND METHODS:** All the relevant Ayurvedic classics with desired content matter was available which was thoroughly searched and the outcome was analyzed.

### INTRODUCTION

Rasayana is one of the critical branches of Ashtanga Ayurveda which deals with the promotion of physical and mental health. In today's hastily lifestyle, everyone wants to be at the peak but it is not an easy task. The people who appear healthy, in fact encounter many customary troubles like anxiety, stress, fatigue etc. They may not appear ill in young age but these factors act as main causative or precipitating factors for severe diseases in late age. Hence, maintenance of health and health related quality of life is a necessity in present era to run in the race of competition, thus hold a good position, and enjoy being there. The Most Common Problem of Society Stress affects people of all ages and in all walks of life. Children at play, students preparing for examination, workers on the job and elderly at the home all are subjected to stress. Stress is our body's way of responding to any kind of demand. When people feel stressed by something going on around them, their bodies react by releasing chemicals into the blood. These chemicals give people more energy and strength, which can be a good thing if their stress is caused by physical danger. But this can also be a bad thing, if their stress is in response to something emotional and there is no outlet for this extra energy and

strength. Those who have difficulty in dealing with stress over time suffer from a number of stress related disorders. Majority of the adolescent undergo stress, whatever the sources may be internal or external, and it hampers the major functioning of the body.

Stress is categorized by feelings of tension, frustration, worry, sadness and withdrawal, which commonly last for few days. Depression is characterized by more extreme feelings of hopelessness, sadness, isolation, worry, withdrawal and worthlessness that last two weeks or more. Improved methods of assessment and research design have established a robust and causal association between stressful life events and major depressive episodes.<sup>[1]</sup> Stress levels if not controlled can lead to lifestyle disorders like diabetes, high cholesterol and cardiac arrest. Irregular working hours often lead to dietary disturbances.<sup>[2]</sup> Ayurvedic classics also mention stress and anxiety as a precursor of many diseases like Jvara, Prameha, Pandu and Rajyakshma <sup>[3]</sup> etc. The Concept of Rasayana Therapy Rasayana Tantra which has been mentioned among eight branches of Ayurveda describes the measures which enhances longevity and memory, alleviates disease and slows the ageing process resulting in total gain of physical and mental health. It is the measure of providing excellent nutrition to all the body tissues.<sup>[4]</sup> In nutshell, it aims to produce a state of Dhatusamya through different modes of action. Classification of Rasayana Rasayana can be classified as Dravyabhuta and Adravyabhuta Rasayana. Adravyabhuta Rasayana includes Aachara Rasayana and Dravyabhuta Rasayana can be classified as Kamya Rasayana, Naimittika Rasayana and Ajasrika Rasayana. The different types of classification of Rasayana can be understood as follows.

#### Dravyabhuta Rasayana

##### (A) As per method of use <sup>[5]</sup>

- Kuti Praveshika (indoor use)
- Vatatapika (outdoor use)

##### (B) As per Scope of use

- Kamya Rasayana- (Promoter of normal health) –These are used with an intention or desire to gain or promote longevity, memory or beauty.

1. Prana Kamya (Promotes- e.g: Amalaka, Brahmrasyana, Chyavanprash etc).
2. Medha Kamya (Improves mental faculties –e.g. Mandukparni, Guduchi, Shankhapushpi, Brahmi etc.)
3. Shri Kamya (Improves lusture or physical beauty of body-e.g. Bringraja, Aswagandha etc.)

- Naimittika Rasayana–These are used in diseases. Some Rasayana are disease specific e.g. Shilajatu in Prameha, Tuvaraka in skin diseases etc.

- Ajasrika Rasayana- These are used in routine in the form of diet. -e.g. milk and Ghrita.

##### C) According to Prabhava (Effect)

- Samshodhana Rasayana e.g Haritaki and
- Samshamana Rasayana e.g. Guduchi and Madhuyashti Adravyabhuta Rasayana Achara Rasayana-Conduct of Rasayana Achararasayana includes worship god, respecting elders, holding on truth, avoiding anger, avoiding indulgence in alcohol and sex, keeping peaceful, being kind to living beings, balanced sleep, regular use of nourishing diet and studying religious literature. Budhimedhakargana includes Satatadhyayan (the habit of reading or gaining knowledge), vada (discussion with others), Partantraavalokan (reading other texts), Acharyaseva (paying regards to mentors), Ayushyabhojan (nutritious diet), Veganamavidharan (not holding urges), Brahmcharya (controlling desires) and Ahinsa (non violation).

## DISCUSSION

Medhya Rasayana is a subtype of Kamya Rasayana and they are used with an intention or desire to improve intellect, concentration and memory. Medhya Rasayana described in the classics can be used as single Dravyas or in combination. Some examples from our classics are Mandukaparni, Gudduchi, Yashtimadhu, Shankhpushpi, Brahmi, Vacha, Jatamansi and Ashwagandha. Due to Medha a person will be able to obtain the knowledge of existing object and hence person becomes learned. They can be useful in the stress and anxiety state or simply to improve intellect and memory. Rasayana drugs are used for preservation of positive health. Rasayana stands as an answer to solve the problem of healthful longevity including mental development and resistance against disease. Rasayana is a specialized type of treatment influencing the fundamental aspect of body i.e. Dhatu, Agni and Srotasa. It is possible that different Rasayana drugs may act with predominance effect at different levels. These comprehensive effects are brought about with the help of the varied pharmacodynamics properties of these drugs. Rasayana effect is not a specific pharmacological action but is a complex phenomenon operating through a comprehensive mechanism involving the fundamental factors like Rasa-samvahan, Dhatus, Agni and Srotsa. Acharya Nagarjuna has mentioned that Medhya drugs mainly act by their Achintya Veerya i.e. Prabhava. The effect of Medhya Rasayana is also at different levels such as at level of Rasa, Agni, and Srotsa. At the level of Agni these drug act by stimulating and improving the function of Agni. At level of Srotsa, these drugs improve the circulation of Rasa by opening and cleaning the micro channel and then ultimately improve the function of Medha. These drugs have beneficial effect on body as well as on mind. Various Medhya Rasayana drugs used are Mandukparni Svarasa, Shankhpushpi Kalka, Guduchi Svarasa and Mulethi Churna. These Medhya Rasayana are described in Charaka Samhita. Some of the Rasayana drugs act by Panchbhautika composition, some by rasa, Gunaveerya, and Vipaka. The probable mode of action of these herbs can be defined as the Pharmacological properties of drugs are the resultant of different combination of Mahabhoota.

Medha is attributed to predominance of Satva Guna, Hence Akashiya, Taijus, Aapya drugs having Satvaguna predominance improve Medha. On the basis of Rasa tikta rasa has direct action on the promotion of Medha. It performs this function by its Laghu property and Deepana-Paachana and Srotoshodhaka action. Madhura rasa also by promoting the formation of Ojus nourishes five sense, mind and Medha. Hence Medhya Rasayana drugs appear to be predominantly Tikta-madhura rasa. Amla, Lavana and Katu rasa are having least importance in Medhya action. Similarly, Ushana veerya drugs stimulate Saadhak pitta which promotes Medha<sup>[6]</sup> Ushanaveerya drugs improve Grahanashakti (power of reception) and Smriti (power of recalling). Majority of drugs are having Madhuravipaka which nourishes Medha by formation of Ojus. So, all the Medhyarasayana drugs improve mental faculties, improve mental function and intellect.

Some Medhyarasayana mentioned in Charaka Samhita:

1. **Mandukparni** (*Centella asiatica* Linn.) is a prostrate, stoloniferous perennial herb rooting at node Major constituents are saponin (medacoside, asiaticoside, medacassoside, asiatic acid, a new triterpenic acid<sup>[7]</sup> They act on behavior besides being neuroprotectives and brain growth promoter<sup>[8]</sup> *Centella asiatica* inhibits the memory impairment induced by scopolamine through the inhibition of AChE<sup>[9]</sup> BR-16A (Mentat), a formulation containing *Centella asiatica* proved for its antistress effects<sup>[10][11]</sup>

2. **Yashtimadhu churna**: Fine powder of dried root is used internally with milk for therapeutic purpose as Medhya.<sup>[12]</sup> The roots and rhizomes of *G. glabra* has been studied with respect to spatial learning and passive avoidance<sup>[13]</sup> preliminary free radical scavenging cerebral ischemia and antioxidant capacity towards LDL oxidation. The roots and rhizomes of *Glycyrrhiza glabra* is an efficient brain tonic; it increases the circulation into the CNS system and balance the sugar levels in the blood<sup>[14]</sup> Liquorice has significant action on memory enhancing activity in dementia<sup>[15]</sup>

3. **Gudduchi swarasa** (*Tinospora cordifolia* (Wild) Miers) is a large glabrous, deciduous, climbing shrub of Menispermaceae family found throughout tropical India. Juice of whole plant is used therapeutically as Medhya<sup>[16]</sup> It is also used in the form of decoction, powder and Satwa (starch extract of stem). Its root is known for its anti stress, anti-leprotic and anti-malarial activities<sup>[17,18]</sup> Neuroprotective and ameliorative properties are due to their antioxidant and trace element contents<sup>[19]</sup> It increases the blood profile and has lead

scavenging activity. *Tinospora cordifolia* has been claimed to possess learning and memory enhancing, antioxidant, and anti-stress activity. [20]

**4. Shankhpushpi kalka** (*Convolvulus pleuricaulis* Choisy) is a perennial, prostrate or sub erect spreading hairy herb, found throughout India. Recommended therapeutic form is fine paste of whole plant. Highly regarded as Medhya (intellect promoter). Important chemical principles are microphylllic acid, Shankha pushpin, kaempferol-kaempferol-3-glucoside, 3, 4 dihydroxycinnamic acid, sitosterols. Neuro protective and intellect promoting activity implicated to free radical scavenging and antioxidant property. [21] BR-16A (Mentat), a poly herbal combination containing Shankhpushpi significantly reversed the social isolation stress induced prolongation of onset and decrease in pentobarbitone-induced sleep, increased total motor activity and stress-induced antinociception in experimental model. Ayushman-8 (containing Shankhpushpi, Brahmi and Vacha) reported to be effective on Manasa-mandata (mental retardation). [22] Shankh pushpi calms the nerves by regulating the body's production of the stress hormones, adrenaline and cortisol. [23] *Convolvulus pleuricaulis* whole plant extract, shows the highest inhibitory activity against *Helicobacter muridarum*. [24]

## CONCLUSION

Medhya function is with Mana, and due to Nadi-sansthan is the visistha adisthana of presence of Mana; this Medhya Karma is related with Nadisansthan. Nadisansthan are connected with Brain that's why the Medhya dravya also known as brain tonic.

Medhya Rasayana offers a profound, time-tested approach to strengthening the mind, sharpening intellect, and preserving mental health. In an era of increasing cognitive challenges and emotional imbalances, integrating these Ayurvedic brain tonics into daily life—under proper guidance—can be a powerful tool for mental rejuvenation and emotional stability.

In essence, Medhya Rasayana is not just about enhancing memory—it's about nurturing the very essence of consciousness, and cultivating a balanced, sattvic mind for a harmonious and purposeful life.

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