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Review Article

ACHARA RASAYANA: A NOVEL PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda, the science of life explains the daily regimens in terms of ahara (food), vihara (life style) and achara (mental attitude) which will help in preventive and promotive health. Rasayana is one among the eight major specialties of holistic health science 'Ayurveda' and achara rasayana is one among the components of rasayana. Following proper achara and vichara is nothing but achara rasayana. The practical importance of this achara rasayana was well recognized by the stalwarts of Ayurveda as it not only increases the life span but also increases the quality of life of an individual. Before administering any rasayana, body must be purified with certain purificatory procedures to get its desired effect. The complete effect of rasayana cannot be achieved just by purifying the body; there must be purity of mind also which can be achieved by following achara rasayana.

Keywords: Achara rasayana, Achara, Ayu, Sadvritta.

INTRODUCTION

“Shastrashikshakrutavyavahara” is achara. The good conducts developed or acquired by understanding the shastras is termed as achara. The entity which brings the rejuvenation is termed as rasayana. Hence achara rasayana is the moral conduct and behavior which helps the rejuvenation of a person who follows it regularly. This particular concept is explained in Charaka Samhita, in the context of rasayana. Achara rasayana is the means to acquire rasayana effect through social and personal conducts.

Constituents of Achara Rasayana

A set of virtuous acts are mentioned in the context of sadvritta (good conducts) by following which a person attains deerghayu (long life)². So those acts are also to be considered under achara rasayana. The features of hitayu³ are also similar to components of achara rasayana and sadvritta. One who incorporates these sadvritta and achara rasayana in day to day life will attain hitayu and deerghayu. (Table 1)¹

Table 1: Constituents of Achara Rasayana

Satyavadi	Truthful
Akrodha	Free from anger
Nivruttamadya	Devoid of alcohol
Nivruttamaithuna	Devoid of sexual activities
Ahimsakam	Non violence
Anayasa	Not involving in strenuous activities requiring more than ones maximum strength
Prasahantam	Peaceful
Priyavadinam	Pleasing speech
Japa	Practicing enchantation
Shoucha	Maintaining cleanliness
Dheera	Stable and steady
Dana nityam	Practicing charity regularly
Tapas	Penance
Deva go brahmana, guru, vridhaarchaneratam	Offering prayers to god, cows, brahmana, teachers, preceptors and old people
Anrushamsyaparamnityam	Absolutely free from barbarous acts
Nityamkarunavedinam	Compassionate
Samajagaranaswapnam	Sleeping and waking up at regular time
Nityamksheeraghrithashinam	Regularly consuming milk and ghee
Desha kalapramanajnam	Having a fair knowledge of place and time
Yuktijnam	Expert in knowledge of rationality
Anahankrutam	Free from ego
Shastachara	Good conduct
Asankeernaashana	Avoiding unwholesome food
Adhyatma	Interested in spiritual knowledge
Pravanendria	Having excellent sense organs

Upasitaramvridhdhanam	Respect for elders
Astika	Believing the existence of God and superiority of Vedas
Jitatmanah	Having self-control
Dharma shastrapara	Regularly studying the scripture

Application of Tantrayukti in understanding Achara Rasayana

Tantrayuktis are the key to understand a shatra in tantra form. Tantrayukti helps to elaborate the concept mentioned in concise form and to understand that in depth; here are the tantrayuktis which are applied to understand the concept of achara rasayana.

- Adhikarana- Here rasayana is the subject matter of discussion and achara is the way to attain effect of rasayana.
- Yoga- The subject matter has been arranged in appropriate manner under the heading of achara rasayana.
- Nirdesha- The concept achara rasayana along with its benefits has been discussed in an appropriate manner.
- Upadesha- The categorical instructions of achara rasayana has been explained by the acharyas. So this should be followed.
- Prasanga- Even though the matter is discussed in the context of sadvrutta, again it is mentioned under rasayana context for better understanding.
- Viparyayah- If one follows Achara rasayana he will attain deerghayu, if the opposite acts are done it will lead to alpayu.

DISCUSSION

The effect of rasayana are longevity, good memory, intelligence, good health, features of young age, having good color and complexion, good voice, strong body with well-functioning sense organs and attractive body⁴. All these attributes are achieved by following achara rasayana also. These codes and conducts should be followed daily to attain the desired effect. Hence it is also termed as “nitya rasayana”. Aim of rasayana is not just to increase the span of Ayu but also for the attainment of moksha. Rasayana maintains the purity of the manas. In ancient time rasayana kept Rishi ganas free from old age, weakness, diseases and death which were the obstacles hindering them to perform tapas for attaining moksha. Certain codes and conducts are mentioned under the concept of achara rasayana to attain the purpose of rasayana. Even though similar codes and conducts are explained under the context of sadvrutta, achara rasayana has been exclusively mentioned in the rasayana adhikara. In the context of sadvrutta it only speaks about the rules and regulations where as in the context of achara rasayana it is result oriented. Deerghayu is the prime factor among the results of rasayana. Combination of shareera, indriya, satwa and atma is considered as Ayu⁵. So deerghayu refers to the prolonged combination of these four components. Along with increasing the span of Ayu, achara rasayana enhances sukhayu and hitayu also. Though the regimens explained under achara rasayana have influence on all the components of Ayu i.e. shareera, indriya, satwa and atma they can be categorized as follows (Table 2). Amongst the components of achara

rasayana, majority are those having influence on manas. Ayurveda gives equal importance to body and mind in prevention and curing the diseases which is noticed in the context of rejuvenation also. Achara rasayana aims mainly over maintaining the healthy status of mind and there by attaining longevity of life. The treatment principles mentioned for diseases involving manas are jnana, vijnana, dhairya, smriti and samadhi⁶. The same are the components of achara rasayana also. Hence following achara rasayana has considerable impact on manas. The concept of satvavajaya chikitsa mentioned for the treatment of manasikarogas involves the treatment principle- “ahitebhyoarthebhyomanonigrahah” means having control over manas and sense organs this is included under the components of achara rasayana also. To say in a nut shell, longevity is achieved by enhancing both physical and psychological status of a person and achara rasayana helps more towards achieving psychological wellbeing.

Probable mode of action of achara rasayana

Achara rasayana acts as rasayana in following dimensions

- By personality development
- By improving the social relationship
- By improving the physical health
- By enhancing the spiritual well being

Achara rasayana helps in improvement of personality traits such as thoughts, feelings and behaviors that distinguish individuals from one another. 50 % of personality depends on genetic factors. So the effect of achara rasayana runs through generations. Social interaction must be healthy to maintain a good relationship. The components of achara rasayana are indeed helpful for improvement of social relationship. The individual who follows the virtues mentioned in achara rasayana will be endowed with hitayu. In the last few years, researchers have looked at so called helper's high and its effect on human body. Scientists are searching to understand just how altruism- the wish to perform good deeds affects our health, even our longevity⁷. When a person act on behalf of other people, research shows that they feel greater comfort and less stress. The concept of achara rasayana revolves around the activities for the improvement of quality of mind. These modifications of mind in psychological level can be regarded as conditional responses. These responses are continuous interactions between attention process of mind and sensible and insensible information fed into CNS which maintains harmony between body and mind. Meditation and adaptation of moral and ethical life increase melatonin level in the body. Melatonin is secreted from the pineal gland, works like endogenous antioxidant and checks the growth of free radicals in the human body. Studies reveal that humoral and cell mediated immunity is closely related with physiological system.

Table 2: Classification of Constituents of Achara Rasayana with respect to Components of Ayu

Components of Ayu	Constituents of Achara Rasayana	
SHAREERA	Nivruttamadyamaithuna	
	Anayasa	
	Shoucha	
	Samajagaranaswapnam	
	Nithyamksheeraghruaashinam	
INDRIYA	Asankeernaannasevana	
	Jitatmanam	
SATWA (MANAS)	Pravanendriyam	
	Sathyavadi	
	Akrodha	
	Ahimsakam	
	Prashastam	
	Priyavadinam	
	Japa	
	Dana nithyam	
	Tapas	
	Devagobrahmana guru vruddarchaneratam	
	Anrushamsyaparamnithyam	
	Nithyamkarunavedinam	
	Desha kalapramanajnam	
	Anahankrutam	
	Shastrachara	
	Upasitaramvrudhanam	
	Asthikanam	
	Dharma shastraparam	
	ATMA	Devagobrahmana guru vruddarchaneratam
		Adhyatma

Comparison between stressful condition and the effect of Achara rasayana⁹: Figure 1

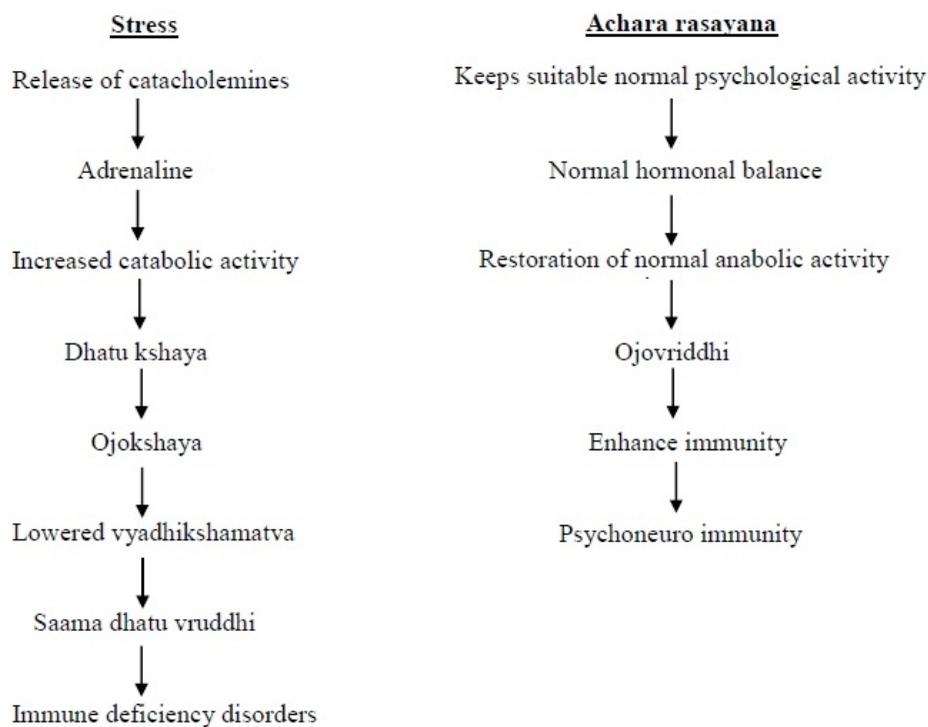


Figure 1: Comparison between Stressful Condition and the effect of Achara Rasayana

They form an integrated network of defensive mechanism sensitive to psychological events. It is also established that severe depressed mental state leads to suppression of immune system. Negative thoughts, anger, greed, jealousy etc. generates free radicals. These free radicals damage DNA, RNA, protein and enzyme, induce polymerization of membrane and can even cause cell death. Dehydroepiandrosterone (DHEA) is a hormone released from adrenal cortex. Increased levels of stress decrease the level of DHEA, leading to coronary artery disease, breast cancer, osteoporosis, decreased rate of wound healing⁸.

CONCLUSION

Achara rasayana helps in attaining healthy and qualitative long life. By following Achara rasayana vyadhikshamathva and bala of an individual are enhanced. It also helps in attaining hitayu. Achara rasayana contributes more towards enhancing psychological wellbeing of a person. Achara rasayana can be propagated through interventions like individual education, mass education and can be co-opted as a compulsory syllabus for primary and higher education to achieve health for all upcoming generation.

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