



## Review Article

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CONCEPT OF *MEDHYA RASAYANA* IN AYURVEDA: AN OVERVIEWNeelam <sup>1\*</sup>, Patekar Rashmi <sup>1</sup>, Chaudhary Anubha <sup>2</sup>, Soni Gaurav <sup>3</sup>, Dwivedi K.N. <sup>4</sup><sup>1</sup>Ph.D Scholar, P.G Department of Dravyaguna vgyana, National Institute of Ayurveda, Jaipur, Rajasthan, India<sup>2</sup>PG Scholar, P.G Department of Dravyaguna vgyana, National Institute of Ayurveda, Jaipur, Rajasthan, India<sup>3</sup>Lecturer, Department of Rachnasharira, NEIAH, Shillong, Meghalaya, India<sup>4</sup>Professor, Department of Dravyaguna vgyana, Faculty of Ayurveda, IMS, BHU, India

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## ABSTRACT

*Ayurveda* is the ancient science of medicine in the world; its legacy goes back to the Vedic era. *Ayurveda* has a unique holistic approach towards life, health, and cure. It has two main aims - one is to maintain good health and the second is to cure diseases. The *Rasayana* or rejuvenation is one of the eight specialized branches of *Ayurveda* that primarily deals with the maintenance of health. The focal basis of *Rasayana* is accelerated and appropriate nutrition to improve the biological competence of body. A good intellectual power acts as a catalyst in all aspects of life. All *Rasayanas* are nutrition promoters in general but there is certain target specific *Rasayanas* viz. *Medhya Rasayana* for the brain, *Hridya Rasayana* for the heart, *Caksusya Rasayana* for eyes and so on. *Medhya Rasayana* is claimed to promote cognitive functions of the brain and helps in regeneration of neural tissues besides producing antistress, adaptogenic and memory enhancing effect, and retarding brain aging. Four *Medhya Rasayana* are mentioned in the 1<sup>st</sup> chapter of *Charak Samhita*. *Acharya Charaka* used *Swarasa* (fresh juice) of *Mandukaparni* leaves, *Churna* (powder) of *Yasthimadhu* root & stolon along with milk, extract of *Guduchi* stem and paste of the whole plant of *Shankhapuspi*. All these drugs have multi-dimensional actions having an influence on mental health. They not only enhance the *Dhi* (Power of acquisition), *Dhriti* (power of retention), *Smriti* (power of recollection) but also rejuvenate the whole system and their pathways.

**Keywords:** Ayurveda, *Medhya Rasayana* rejuvenation

## INTRODUCTION

The desire for long life in civilization has been since Vedic times, hence the search and conception of its various modus operandi. These were not only used on basis of need like in the form of therapeutic interventions, but also some of them were integrated into the lifestyle in the form of routine activities.

Concept of *Rasayana* in *Ayurveda* classics

It is that which enhances the vigour of a healthy person, that is *vrishya* (aphrodisiac), that is *rasayana* (rejuvenator).<sup>1</sup> Among these two, *rasayana* particularly allays various illness.<sup>2</sup>

"Long life span, (improved) memory, comprehension ability, health, youthful vigour, lustre, complexion, (improved) voice, generosity (in one's mind), energetic body and organs, *Vaksiddhi* (an ability found in pious people by which their spoken words come out to be true), humility and attractive

nature (i.e enchanting beauty/handsomeness) are attained by *Rasayana* (rejuvenator). Also, it ensures health of tissues etc (in the body).<sup>3</sup>

*Medhya Rasayana*

*Medhya Rasayana* (Intellectual rejuvenator) is a class of *Rasayana* (rejuvenator) drugs, that especially act on *medha* (intellect) to promote its function to the optimum level. And the word *Medhya* means that which is beneficial to *Medha* (*Medhaye hitam medhyam*), produces or improves *medha* (intellect) in its absence or its deficiency and is purifying<sup>4</sup>. *Medhya Rasayana* (Intellectual rejuvenator) are the fresh juice of *Mandukaparni* leaves, powder of *Yasthimadhu* root & stolon along with milk, extract of *Guduchi* stem and paste of the whole plant of *Shankhapuspi* as mentioned by *Acarya Charaka*. They all bestow upon its user longevity, removal of diseases, improve strength, proper metabolic functions, healthy complexion, voice and intellectual functions, especially *Shankhapuspi*.<sup>5</sup>

Table 1: The Botanical Name, Family, Part Used and Dose of *Medhya Rasayana* <sup>6</sup>

Drug	Botanical name	Family	Part used	Form & Dose
<i>Mandukaparni</i>	<i>Centella asiatica</i> Linn.	Umbelliferae	Panchanga (Whole plant)	Swaras (Juice) 10-20 ml
<i>Yasthimadhu</i>	<i>Glycyrrhiza glabra</i> Linn.	Fabaceae	Root, stolon	Churna(Powder) 3-5 gm.
<i>Guduchi</i>	<i>Tinospora cordifolia</i> (Wild) Miers	Menispermaceae	Stem	Churna(Powder) 3-6 gm
<i>Shankhapuspi</i>	<i>Convolvulus pluricaulis</i> Chois	Convolvulaceae	Panchanga (Whole plant)	Kalka (Paste) 10-20 gm

Table 2: Rasapanchaka of Medhya Rasayana<sup>7</sup>

Drug	Rasa	Guna	Virya	Vipaka	Prabhava
Mandukaparni	Tikta	Laghu	Shita	Madhura	Medhya
Yasthimadhu	Madhur	Guru, Snigdha	Shita	Madhura	-
Guduchi	Tikta, Kasaya	Guru, Snigdha	Ushna	Madhura	-
Shankhapuspi	Tikta	Snigdha, Picchil	Shita	Madhura	Medhya

Table 3: Recent Experimental Studies of Medhya Rasayana

Medhya Plant/Herb	Research Work	Investigator/Author	Journal	Year of publication
<b>Mandukaparni</b> ( <i>Centella asiatica</i> Linn.)	Effect of <i>Centella asiatica</i> on cognition and oxidative stress in an intracerebroventricular streptozotocin model of Alzheimer's disease in rats.	Veerendra Kumar MH, Gupta YK	Clin Exp Pharmacol Physiol.	2003
	<i>Centella asiatica</i> (L.) Leaf Extract Treatment during the Growth Spurt Period Enhances Hippocampal CA3 Neuronal Dendritic Arborization in Rats.	Mohandas Rao KG, Muddanna Rao S, Gurumadhva Rao S.	eCAM	2006
	Neuroprotective evaluation of standardized extracts of <i>Centella asiatica</i> in monosodium glutamate-treated rats.	Ramanathan M et al	Indian J Exp Biol	2007
	<i>Gotu Kola</i> ( <i>Centella asiatica</i> ) extract enhances phosphorylation of cyclic AMP response element binding protein in neuroblastoma cells expressing amyloid beta peptide.	Xu Y, Cao Z, Khan I, Luo Y	J Alzheimer's Dis.	2008
	<i>Centella asiatica</i> extract selectively decreases amyloid beta levels in the hippocampus of Alzheimer's disease animal model.	Dhanasekaran M, Holcomb LA, Hitt AR, Tharakan B, Porter JW, Young KA, Manyam BV	Phytother Res.	2009
	The antiepileptic effect of <i>Centella asiatica</i> on the activities of Na <sup>+</sup> /K <sup>+</sup> , Mg <sup>2+</sup> and Ca <sup>2+</sup> -ATPases in rat brain during pentylenetetrazol-induced epilepsy.	Visweswari G et al	Indian J Pharmacol	2010
	Antioxidant and DNA Damage Preventive Properties of <i>Centella asiatica</i> (L)	Anand T et al	Urb. Phcog J	2010
<b>Yasthimadhu</b> ( <i>Glycyrrhiza glabra</i> Linn.)	Anxiolytic activity of <i>Glycyrrhiza glabra</i> Linn.	Ambawade SD, Kasture VS, Kasture SB.	J Nat Remedies.	2001
	Memory enhancing activity of <i>Glycyrrhiza Glabra</i> in mice.	Dhingra D, Parle M, Kulkarni SK.	J Ethno-pharmacol	2004
	Memory-strengthening activity of <i>Glycyrrhiza glabra</i> in exteroceptive and interoceptive behavioral models.	Parle M, Dhingra D, Kulkarni SK	J Med Food	2004
	Antidepressant-like activity of <i>Glycyrrhiza glabra</i> L. in mouse models of immobility tests	Dhingra D, Sharma A	Prog Neuropsychopharmacol Biol Psychiatry	2006
	Evaluation of the effect of <i>Glycyrrhiza glabra</i> Linn. root extract on spatial learning and passive avoidance response in rats.	Ravichandra V, Ahalyadevi, Adiga S.	Indian Drugs	2007
	Cerebroprotective effect of <i>Glycyrrhiza glabra</i> Linn. root extract on Hypoxic rats.	Muralidharan P, Balamurugan G, Venu Babu.	Bangladesh J Pharmacol	2009
	Effect of <i>Yasthimadhu</i> ( <i>Glycyrrhiza Glabra</i> ) on Intelligence and Memory Function in Male Adolescents	A.K. Teltumbde, A.K. Wahurwagh, M.K. Lonare, T.M. Nesari	Sch. J. App. Med. Sci.,	2013
	Beneficial effect of aqueous root extract of <i>Glycyrrhiza glabra</i> on learning and memory using different behavioral models: An experimental study	Kosuri Kalyan Chakravarthi and Ramakrishna Avadhani	J Nat Sci Biol Med.	2013

<b>Guduchi</b> ( <i>Tinospora cordifolia</i> (Wild) Miers.)	Antistress activity of <i>Tinospora cordifolia</i> (Wild) Meirs.	Patil M, Patki P, Kamath HV, Patwardhan B.	Indian drugs.	1997
	Effect of <i>Tinospora cordifolia</i> on Learning and Memory in normal and memory deficit rats.	Agarwal A et al	Indian J Pharmacol	2002
	<i>Rubia cordifolia</i> , <i>Fagonia cretica</i> Linn. and <i>Tinospora cordifolia</i> exert neuroprotection by modulating the antioxidant system in rat hippocampal slices subjected to oxygen glucose deprivation.	Avinash KR, Manohar GM, Saibal KB.	BMC Complement Altern Med	2004
<b>Shankhapuspi</b> ( <i>Convolvulus pleuricaulis</i> Chois.)	Evaluation of comparative and combined depressive effect of <i>Brahmi</i> , <i>Shankhpushpi</i> , and <i>Jatamansi</i> in mice.	Indurwade NH, Biyani KR.	Indian J Med Sci	2000
	A clinical study on the role of Jaladhara and <i>Shankhpushpi</i> ( <i>Convolvulus pleuricaulis</i> ) in the management of Chittodvega (anxiety disorder).	Parsania S. Jamnagar: Dept. of Kayachikitsa, IPGT and RA, Gujarat Ayurveda university;	NA	2001
	A study on the effect of <i>Shankhpushpi</i> compound and Satwavajaya Chikitsa in Chittodvega (generalized anxiety disorders).	Sanjeev Kalra. Dept. of Post Graduate studies in Manasa Roga, SDM College of Ayurveda and Hospital. Hassan	NA	2006.
	Effect of <i>Convolvulus pleuricaulis</i> Choisy. on learning behavior and memory enhancement activity in rodents.	Nahata A, Patil UK, Dixit VK	Nat Prod Res.	2008
	Neuroprotective role of <i>Convolvulus pleuricaulis</i> on aluminium-induced neurotoxicity in rat brain	Bihaqi SW, Sharma M, Singh AP, Tiwari M	J Ethnopharmacol	2009
	An update on <i>Shankhpushpi</i> , a cognition-boosting Ayurvedic medicine.	Sethiya NK, Nahata A, Mishra SH, Dixit VK:	Zhong Xi Yi Jie He Xue Bao.	2009
Effect of <i>Convolvulus pleuricaulis</i> Choisy and <i>Asparagus racemosus</i> Willd on learning and memory in young and old mice: a comparative evaluation.	Sharma K, Bhatnagar M, Kulkarni SK	Indian J Exp Biol.	2010	
Nootropic, anxiolytic and CNS-depressant studies on different plant sources of <i>Shankhpushpi</i> .	Malik J, Karan M, Vasisht K:	Pharm Biol.	2011	

## DISCUSSION

### Concept of *Medha* (Intellect)

The part of *Dhi* (Power of acquisition) which retains, understands, comprehends information is called as *Medha* (intellect)<sup>8</sup>. Since *Dalhan* defines it as the subtle part of *Buddhi* (Mind) that contains the things heard<sup>9</sup> as well as an intellectual capacity to comprehend<sup>10</sup> or retain books that are read<sup>11</sup>, we can also infer that in the context of medical text *Buddhi* (Mind) is synonymous to only *Dhi* (Power of acquisition) unlike in Sanskrit lexicons where it is synonymous to *Chitta* (Mind), *Chetana* (Consciousness), *Prajna* (Intelligence).<sup>12</sup>

### Concept of *Dhi* (Power of acquisition)

*Dhi* (Power of acquisition) is synonymous with *Buddhi* (mind). *Buddhi* (mind) has been defined by as that faculty which judges good & bad<sup>13</sup> and controls our activities (physical and mental).<sup>14</sup> A good functional *Buddhi* (mind) is a function of *prakrata Kapha*<sup>15</sup>, a sign of good *Tvak* (skin) & *Sattva sara* in any person<sup>16</sup> and seen as a personality trait of a *Pitta & Kapha Prakriti* (body constituent) person<sup>17</sup>. Its impairment is characterized by confusing permanent things with temporary things, temporary things with permanent things, beneficial things with harmful things and harmful things with beneficial things. Its health or normal functioning is recognized as the ability to view things as they are with no room for impaired judgement<sup>18</sup>.

### Mode of action of *Medhya Rasayana*

*Prabhava janya karma* (special action) i.e. Action exerted due to the combination of *Panchamahabhoota* (five basic elements) in a way very unique to the specific *dravya* only and not seen in others with similar *Rasa* (taste), *Guna* (property), *Virya* (potency) & *Vipaka* (end metabolism).

## CONCLUSION

Therefore, we can conclude that the *Medhya* action of *Medhya dravya* like *Mandukaparni* (*Centella asiatica*), *Yasthimadhu* (*Glycyrrhiza glabra*), *Guduchi* (*Tinospora cordifolia*) and *Shankhpushpi* (*Convolvulus pleuricaulis*) are ascribed to its *Prabhava* (special action) and unexplainable to the virtues of its *Rasa* (taste), *Guna* (property), *Virya* (potency) & *Vipaka* (end metabolism).

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