



Review Article

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CONTROVERSIES OF RASADRAVYA IN RASASHASTRA: A REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

Rasashastra is one of the essential branches in Ayurvedic management of diseases. In Rasashastra texts we can find different formulations prepared out of mineral, metal and herbo mineral drug combinations which are going to show their medicinal effect in very short of time and giving good result in the management of different diseases. In present due to scarcity, unavailability, miss interpretations of the drug many of the drugs and formulations are not in use and highlighted them in the group of Controversy. If the controversies which are present in branch of science not resolved, it going to harm the existence of drugs explained in text book. To preserve the treasure of science it is need of hour to carryout scientific validation process by encouraging research scholars to take up such work in institutional level. In this article review of controversial drug is done to brief the drugs in endangered condition.

Keywords: Rasashastra, controversy, endanger

INTRODUCTION

Rasashastra is the science of Indian alchemy has given more contribution in the field of management of disease in Ayurveda. In Rasashastra drugs are classified as Sthavara, Jangama and Audbhida.¹ On the basis of these classifications Acharya classified different groups of rasadravya. In each group of dravya's there are some controversial drugs are mentioned. The controversies are regarding their origin, types, synonyms, different vernacular names, structure and therapeutical properties. The word controversy refers to the confusion or unauthenticated or unjustified versions of subjects. Ayurveda is older and practiced in the form of parampara since 5000 years. As the time advances some relative aspect of drugs which were found in those days are compared with present available sources.

Review

The controversies are the unexplored aspect of science. These are mainly depended on factors like

1. Non-availability
2. Rare-occurrence
3. Lack of Research work
4. Misinterpretation
5. Lack of popularity and practice
6. Gap of knowledge in between past and present.

Non-availability

The drugs that are explained by Rasacharyas regarding their properties and grahyagrahya laxanas are cannot be assessed in present mineral drugs. It is because of non-availability or scarcity of native forms of mineral or ore-mineral.

Puspanjana

It is a controversial mineral, some scholar say that it is a zinc oxide mineral, which is white in color and useful in eye diseases just like puspanjana, others mentioned that is Antimony oxide i.e. Sb_2O_3 . But actually what it is? Is not clear so far²

Rare occurrence

Some of the drugs are rarely found in their native form. Ex. Giri Sindhura, Shilajatu, Chapala.

Girisindhoora

According to acharyas it is the drug, which is collected from the fractures of mountain rock. Now a days we are not having detail description about its use, availability etc.

Shilajatu

The source of shilajatu is mainly from furrows of mountain, so it is called as mineral resin. But now a day instead of mineral resin we are getting exudates of plant *Asphaltum punjabinum* along with lots of adulteration³.

Chapala

Chapala is the drug, which is mentioned in the ashta group of maharasa made controversy because of lack of identification and scarcity of drug. The present day scholars or Rasashastra have different opinions regarding Chapala, some of them opine it as Bismuth (Bi) other opines Selenium (Se) should be considered as Chapala. As maharasa group contains the drugs which are in the form of mineral or ore of metal. On the basis of origination some scholars mentioned that it must be a mineral or metal ore for this reason metal selenium or bismuth cannot be considered as Chapala.

Although metal bismuth has many similar properties as Chapala like it is easily fusible, heavy and bright. But bismuth is mainly used in digestive troubles. Metal selenium has many amorphous forms and found admixture with Chalcopyrite and mainly used in sexual disorder and also as best anti-oxidant. It can be considered as Chapala⁴.

Lack of research work

There are some areas concerned to drug establishment, which requires thorough knowledge regarding characterization of mineral drug. Ex. Rasaka, Karpura shilajatu. Rasanjana.

Karpurashilajatu

It is said to be white colored exudates of mineral resin (Shilajatu). But now a day it is compared with Sora. Where as the origin and occurrence of sora is entirely different when compared with Karpurashilajatu.

Rasaka

In present day Rasaka, which is the ore mineral of Yashada is also out of use. It's because of difficulty in selection of drug. In classics acharyas mentioned 3 varieties of Rasaka. But in present day it is very difficult to compare the available sources with the verses of acharya.

Rasanjana

Since ancient times Rasanjana is considered to be a controversial material. Ancient have mentioned that it is two types, one is shailaja i.e. obtained from hills are mines hence it must be a mineral and on this basis prof. D.A. Kulkarni has mentioned that Rasanjana is yellow oxide of mercury, which a mineral is obtained in nature in small quantity. But present day vaidyas are using the kritrima variety of rasanjana, which is prepared by ghanakriya of darvikwath and Ajadugdha. It is also used in netra rogas since ancient times.

Misinterpretation

Different scholars interpreted some of the drugs and their properties differently. That created much confusion with respect to use of that drug.

Kankushta

Since ancient times Kankushta is also a controversial drug. According to Bhaluki it is an ore of Tin metal, i.e. Cassiterite. According to Rasarnava it is bright red in colour just like Vidruma (coral). According to rasaratna samuchchaya it is found in the base of high peaks of Himalaya Mountain^{5,6}.

Some scholars say that it is a faecal matter of newly born elephant child, which is yellowish black in colour. Other mentioned it is a part of umbilicus of a newly born horse child, which is yellowish white in color.

Lack of popularity and practice

It is the major problem what we are observing now a day. It is because of lack of sufficient experimental data and also fewer descriptions of drugs and their utility. Ex. Rasaka bhasma, Vimala bhasma, Chapala bhasma, Haratala bhasma, etc

Gap of knowledge

Confusion persists and all this mixed patriotic pride adds fuel to the fire of controversy. Every body thinks that there plant or drug is the real one because, it's being used since time of immemorial and cannot be set a side even though it may not tally the scriptural reference.

CONCLUSION

“Controversy can not be set aside at once. It will take more time. It requires constant hammering. It requires an open mind to give up our expected meaning whenever the right thing is shown and grasp what is sensible of course tentatively, when some other proofs are available”. We must be ready to let it go and accept the new one by applying standards of pharmaceutical, analytical, pharmacological and experimental trials.

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