

Exploring Scope of *Rasayana* Therapy in Pediatric Cohort: A Scientific Overview

Dr. Bhavya Pandey¹, Prof. (Dr.) Srikanta Kumar Panda²

¹ MD Scholar, PG Department of Kriya Sharira, Ayurvedic and Unani Tibbia College New Delhi

² Professor, PG Department of Kriya Sharira, Ayurvedic and Unani Tibbia College New Delhi

Corresponding Author: Dr. Bhavya Pandey

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ABSTRACT

In today's health-conscious world, boosting immunity is vital for both mental and physical well-being. Modern challenges like COVID-19, tuberculosis, and frequent childhood infections underscore the need for preventive care. Ayurveda offers *Swasthya Urjaskar Chikitsa*—health-promoting treatments—through *Rasayana* (rejuvenation therapy) and *Vajikarana* (vitality therapy), which enhance innate and acquired immunity.

Children, in particular, benefit from *Rasayana* as it strengthens resistance to infections, reduces antibiotic dependency, and supports long-term health. Frequent use of antibiotics for common illnesses like URTIs weakens immunity and contributes to antibiotic resistance. Integrating *Rasayana* into paediatric care can foster a healthier, more resilient generation.

Equally important is *Achara Rasayana*—a code of good conduct promoting mental and social wellness. Teaching children *Sadvritta* (ethical behaviour) aids character development, emotional balance, and self-discipline.

Modern lifestyle issues—excessive screen time, lack of outdoor play, and diminished emotional support in nuclear families—adversely affect children's overall development. Ayurveda's holistic approach addresses these challenges, encouraging balanced nutrition, physical activity, and mental wellness.

Incorporating Ayurvedic practices like *Rasayana* and *Achara Rasayana* into daily life nurtures strong, healthy, and emotionally resilient individuals.

Key words: Rasayana, Rejuvenation, Vyadhikshmatva, paediatrics, mental health

INTRODUCTION

Rasayana, a key concept in *Ayurveda*, is one of the eight branches (*Ashtanga*) of *Ayurvedic* medicine. It primarily focuses on the promotion of longevity, vitality, and overall well-being. The term "*Rasayana*" comes from "*Rasa*" (the essence or fluid of life) and "*Ayana*" (path or way), indicating a therapeutic process aimed at rejuvenating and enhancing the body's life forces. It involves the use of herbs, minerals, diet, and lifestyle practices to strengthen the body and

mind, enhance immunity, and improve health.

In recent years, *Rasayana* has attracted significant interest in modern scientific research due to its promise of improving health outcomes, delaying aging, and enhancing quality of life. This literature review will explore *Rasayana* in *Ayurveda*, its types, and the scientific evidence supporting its efficacy.

In several texts, *Acharyas* have described numerous *Rasayana*, ingredients,

preparation techniques, dosages, and indications. *Rasayana* yoga, Kalpa, or formulation is made up of several components and active principles found in plants that boost the immune system, such as *Ashwagandha*. Active ingredients include acylsteryl glucosides, saponins, and others. Both healthy people use these to stay healthy and sick people use them to treat illnesses. The body produces free radicals because of numerous biochemical processes, and these free radicals can combine with biological molecules like proteins, lipids, and nucleic acids to harm paired macromolecules and cause several oxidative stress-related diseases, including cancer, atherosclerosis, inflammatory conditions, cardiovascular diseases, and aging. Superoxide dismutase and catalase are two enzymes that the human body can use to fight off free radical damage. The body's nutritional components, such as glutathione, ascorbic acid, and tocopherol, also lessen the damage that free radicals do. The body looks for antioxidant supplementation from external sources because diseased processes can occasionally disrupt these defensive mechanisms. Oxidative stress lowers antioxidant levels in critically ill people and in certain pathologic diseases like diabetes. It is anticipated that antioxidant supplements will be beneficial for such circumstances. The greatest strategy for healthy people to prevent several diseases is to routinely eat enough foods or herbs that are high in antioxidants.¹

One of *Ayurveda's* specialties is *Rasayana Chikitsa*, or Rejuvenation. "*Rasayana*" refers to the path to achieving superior *Rasadi Dhatus*. The enhanced nutritional status and superior *Dhatus* traits result in a few secondary *Rasayana* features, such as strength, longevity, *Ojobala*, etc. According to recent research on *Rasayana* therapy, *Rasayana* drugs have immunomodulatory, anti-inflammatory, anti-cancer, and antioxidant effects. *Rasayana* therapy enhances life quality and mental health. In today's era of junk food, emerging pathogens, and climate adversities, incorporating *Rasayana* in the paediatric age

group is essential to build a healthy human resource for the nation and to prevent the development of antibiotic and drug resistance in children. The most prevalent juvenile illnesses, paediatric recurrent respiratory tract infections (RRTIs), are linked to high rates of morbidity and mortality. Approximately 6% of children under the age of six are thought to exhibit RRTI. Up to 25% of children under one year old and 18% of children between one and four years old in wealthy nations suffer with RRTI.

Since several of the *Rasayana's* ingredients are known for their ability to scavenge free radicals, the *Vayasthapana Rasayana* is often used in the Indian traditional *Ayurvedic* system to treat age-related ailments and diseases. *Amalaki*, *Haritaki*, *Guduchi*, *Gokarna*, *Mandookparni*, *Punarnava*, and *Shatavari* are the contents of *Vayasthapana Rasayana*.²

A developing youngster is constantly impacted by parental, cultural, and social influences. Thus, constant work should be done progressively to improve the *sattva* attribute and abstain from immoral behavior. Adopting positive behaviors through counselling will help the youngster fit in and be accepted by their classmates. Strength, serenity, and patience will act as a parasol to go over psychological stressors. The primary cause of behavioral and emotional disorders is *pragyaparadha*, which is defined as undesirable and imbalanced activities in little, excessive, or uncommon ways. Controlling it requires defeating the psyche or mind, which stops the mind from wanting unhealthy things with the correct comprehension and healthy operation of all sense organs. *Achara Rasayana* is defined as the mental attitude must be maintained to sustain excellent mental health in the *Ayurvedic* book. The *Achara Rasayana* lists behaviors and tasks that should be performed and avoided. This can be used effectively to teach parents how to instill good behavior in their children from an early age and to correct any behavioral issues as soon as they arise to

prevent the emergence of emotional and behavioral illnesses.

LITERATURE REVIEW

ETYMOLOGY (NIRUKTI) ²

The word *Rasayana* (*Rasa* + *Ayana*) refers to nutrition and its transportation in the body. *Rasa* means nutrition and *Ayana* means microcellular channels and hence *Rasayana* essentially means nutrition at microcellular level. *Rasayana* tantra is the branch which endows *Vayaha-Sthapan* virtue – age sustainer, gives lifespan, intellect and above that which is also able in curing diseases by strengthening immune system. (*Roghapaharansamarth*). *Rasayana* helps to render the human system impervious to illness and deterioration. It makes it possible to maintain youthful vitality or manhood into old age. According to *Dalhan*, *Ayushkar* denotes living for more than 100 years, but *Vayasthapana* can be understood as living for up to 100 years. *Dalhana* adds that other writers believe *Vayasthapana* might be interpreted as *Jarapaharana* or preserving a longer youthful life. According to *Chakrapani's* analysis of *Vayasthapana*, *Vayasthapana* is age sustaining, meaning it maintains youthfulness. Basically, one that keeps people from becoming old.

Rasayana in Ayurvedic Tradition

The concept of *Rasayana* has been a part of *Ayurvedic* texts since ancient times. It is most notably described in texts such as the *Charaka Samhita*, *Sushruta Samhita*, and *Ashtanga Hridaya*. According to the *Charaka Samhita* (*Sutra Sthana*, Chapter 1), *Rasayana* therapies are intended to preserve or restore the balance of the *doshas* (bodily humours), promote rejuvenation, and enhance immunity. *Rasayana* also focuses on increasing the production of *Ojas*, which is the vital essence of the body, believed to confer immunity, vitality, and strength.

Types of Rasayana

Classification of Rasayana ³

- *Dravya Bhuta-Rasayana*: When *Rasayana* effect is obtained using

Dravyas like herbs, minerals, Herbo-mineral drugs, food, milk etc. it is known as *Dravya Bhuta-Rasayana*.

- *Adravyabhuta-Rasayana*: Where no substance is used and *Rasayana* effect is obtained by good moral conduct, meditation etc. then it is called *Adravyabhuta-Rasayana*. e.g., *Achara-Rasayana*.
- According to scope of use
 1. ***Kamyar-Rasayana***: These are used in healthy people for further promotion of health. It is further sub-divided into.
 - a. *Pranakamya* - One which promotes longevity.
 - b. *Srikamya* - Promotes body lusture.
 - c. *Medhakamya* - Promotes memory & intellect
 2. ***Naimittika-Rasayana***: The *Rasayana* which are used specifically in the prevention or treatment of specific diseases are termed as *Naimittika-Rasayana*. This is the prime area where *Rasayana* drugs are mainly studied and tested in present times.

Some of the examples are

- *Pandu - Loha, Mandura, Swarnmakshika*
- *Prameha - Haridra, Shilajatu, Amalaki*
- *Kushtha- Khadira, Tuvaraka, Triphala, Bhallatak*
- *Mutravahasrotas Vyadhis - Gokshuru, Punarnava, Shilajatu*
- *Vata Vyadhi - Shilajit, Guggulu, Rasna, Bala*
- Eye diseases - *Triphala, Madhuyashti*
- Respiratory diseases- *Pippali, Sirisha, Chyawanprasha*
- Psychiatric disorders- *Ashwagandha, Shankpushpi, Brahmi*

Ajasrika Rasayana: Food substances which we consume in our daily life on regular basis in moderation for nourishment of body tissues. Examples are the daily usage of milk & ghee.

According to method of Administration

- 1) ***Kuti Praveshika Rasayana***: This is basically the indoor method of *Rasayana* administration. As per the textual

reference person was made to stay in a specially designed *Tri Garbha* chamber for a particular period and *Rasayana* drug was administered after bio purification with *Panch-Karma* along with *Rasayana* drug patients are also advised to follow strict diet schedule and specific code and conduct of life. Thus, it is the administration of *Rasayana* under strict controlled conditions. This is a superior method of administering *Rasayana* as maximum benefits can be obtained from this.

2) **Vatatapika Rasayana**

Vata means air and *Atapa* means sunlight. In this method of *Rasayana* administration person is exposed to air and sunlight hence it is termed as *Vatatapika*. In this method, while on *Rasayana* therapy continues his normal daily routine. Here the diet and lifestyle are flexible as per the lifestyle of patient and therefore the outcome of the *Rasayana* therapy administered by this method is less than the indoor method of *Rasayana* administration.

3) **Dronipravesika-Rasayana**

This method of *Rasayana* administration is not in use in present times. But treatise *Charak Samhita* has described this method in which person after consuming specific herbs stays in *Droni* (boat) made of *Palash* (*Butea monospermea*) and stays inside it for six months. After six months person attains health, lusture, intellect and vigour.

3. **Other types of Rasayana**

• **Medhya Rasayana**⁴

This group of *Rasayana* have memory and intellect enhancing properties. They improve the (intellect) *Dhi*, (retention power) *Dhriti* and (recalling power) *Smriti*. Although all the *Rasayana* drugs are having these properties but special four drugs have been mentioned in

improving the higher mental functions. They are *Guduchi*, *Madhuyashti*, *Mandukparni* and *Shankhpushpi*.

• **Aachara Rasayana**⁵

Acharya-Rasayana is basically the non-pharmacological way of acquiring the *Rasayana* effect with good personal, moral and social behavior. In this type of *Rasayana*, the ways of living, the role of *Satvika* diet, what to do and what to avoid have been described. By following the principles of *Acharya Rasayana*, a person can achieve psychological and social satisfaction which is essential for a healthy living.

Scientific Perspective and Evidence

ROLE OF RASAYANA IN PEDIATRICS

Each year, around 5 million children under five dies from preventable causes like preterm birth, asphyxia, pneumonia, diarrhoea, and malaria—mostly in low-resource settings. In contrast, COVID-19 has caused fewer than 2,000 deaths in this age group globally, under 0.1% of all COVID deaths.⁶ Every year, more than one million children under the age of five die from tetanus and measles. As a result, a youngster who has received vaccinations may experience recurring infections that eventually hinder their development. Immunization has a specific disease-specific function. It has no bearing on a child's basic immunity or general health.⁷ If we can boost immune function in any way; it will provide children with the fundamental strength they need to stay active and healthy even.

According to *Acharya Kashyap* in the *Lehadhyaya*, herbs such as *Manjistha*, *Triphala*, *Brahmi*, *Chitrak*, *Bala*, and *Atibala* are believed to promote intelligence (*medha*), support healthy growth and development (*Ayu*), and boost strength and immunity (*Bala*). Some important research of these *Rasayana Dravyas* is enlisted below.

TABLE-1 VARIOUS RESEARCH IN RASAYANA USEFUL IN PEDIATRICS

RASAYANA	PROVEN ACTIVITIES	REFERENCES
1. Amalki (Emblica Officinalis)	It has antioxidant properties that enhance brain function, promoting focus and clarity. Antioxidants protect enzymes, fats, and vitamins, helping to prevent or delay cellular damage.	(Ganju et al., 2003) ⁸
2. Haritiki (Terminalia chebula)	Haritaki decreases inflammation in body. It possesses immunomodulatory properties that increase WBCS production. It acts as anti-ageing, rejuvenating, nourishing and enhancing immunity. Improve body weight, improve life expectancy by maintaining healthiness.	(Vaibhav & Wahi, 2011) ⁹
3. Vibhitaki (Terminalia bellirica)	Vibhitaki, rich in gallic acid, combats microbes and boosts bacterial clearance. Atibala enhances neutrophil and macrophage activity through free radical scavenging. Together, Triphala and Atibala act as immunomodulators with potential immunostimulant and immunosuppressant effects.	(Saraphanchotiwitthaya, Sripalakit, & Ingkaninan, 2008) ¹⁰ (Shaikh, Lochan, Kaul, & Tandon, 2014) ¹¹
4. Atibala (Abutilon indicum)	Atibala possesses aphrodisiac and strengthening properties, and its antimicrobial nutrients help treat liver disorders, blood diseases, lung conditions, bronchitis, tuberculosis, and regulate internal secretions. The use of A. indicum as an adjuvant in immunization programme has been advocated due to its immunomodulatory properties.	(Central Council for Research in Ayurveda & Sidha, 2002); 50. ¹²
5. Brahmi (Bacopa Moneri)	Brahmi enhances cognition and memory by improving neurotransmission and promoting nerve regeneration in key brain areas like the hippocampus, cortex, and hypothalamus. In vitro studies have demonstrated its protective and curative effect on gastric ulcers.	Prakash, J.C., & Sirsi, M. (1962) ¹³ Bhattacharya, S.K., Kumar, A., & Ghosal, S. (2000); ¹⁴
6. Manjistha (Rubia Cordifolia)	Manjistha is a renowned Rasayana that supports memory, reduces neurodegeneration, and aids tissue regeneration.	. Cai, Y., Sun, M., Xing, J., & Corke, H. (2004). ¹⁵ Rawal, A.K., Muddeshwar, M.G., & Biswas, S.K. (2004) ¹⁶
7. Bala (Sida Cordifolia)	Bala enhances strength in bones, joints, and muscles, supports digestion, and hydrates tissues. It acts as a coolant, has anti-inflammatory, hepato-protective and diuretic properties, regulates intestinal motility, and aids nutrient and water absorption.	Kanth, V.R., & Diwan, P.V. (1999) ¹⁷ Kumar, R.S., & Mishra, S.H. (1997). ¹⁸
8. Chitraka (Plumbago zeylanicum)	Administration of ethanolic extract (100-200kg) for 6 weeks in streptozotocin diabetic rats increase hepatic hexokinase activity and decrease hepatic G-6- PO ₄ , ALP, S. acid phosphatase showing hepatoprotective properties.	Zarmouh, M.M., Subramaniyam, K., Viswanathan, S., & Kumar, P.G. (2010). ¹⁹
9. Aachara Rasayana	Ayurveda's text, Achara rasayana is described as the mental attitude to be followed to maintain good mental health. Conduct and work to be done and avoided are mentioned in Achara rasayana. This can be utilised beautifully to guide parents about the good conduct to be inculcated in their child from the very beginning and to control any faults in behaviour as soon as possible to avoid the development of emotional and behavioural disorders.	Kumar, Dash, Shilpy, Kumar, and Singh (2023). ²⁰

TABLE-2 Benefits of Rasayana^{21,22,23}

ACHARAYA CHARAKA	ACHRAYA SHSHRUTA	ACHRAYA VAGABHATTA
Enhances cognitive and intellectual abilities	Maintains youth and slows the aging process	Same as Acharya Charaka, added a point Vrishya instead of Pranati
Strengthens immunity, leading to better overall health	Promotes longevity	
Slows the aging process and maintains youthful vitality	Enhance intelligence and physical strength	
Improves skin radiance and overall physical appearance	Protects against illnesses	
Refines voice quality and clarity	Help in overcoming a wide range of health disorders	
Boosts physical strength and sharpens sensory functions	Functions as a rejuvenating and overall health-promoting agent	
Promotes humility and gentle behavior		

DISCUSSION

TABLE-3 Discussion on Balarasayana as described in the Kashyapa Samhita, aligned with findings from various contemporary research studies and Samhita.

BAALA RASAYANA	Probable Mode of action
1)AMALKI (Emblica Officinalis)	<i>Amalaki</i> supports liver function, aids digestion, and promotes natural cleansing. It rejuvenates tissues, balances <i>pitta</i> , and acts as a gentle bowel tonic. Rich in antioxidants, it contains 20 times more vitamin C than oranges.
2)HARITIKI (Terminalia chebula)	<i>Haritaki</i> has detoxifying properties that help eliminate toxins and balance <i>vata</i> . It supports digestive health and enhances the function of sensory organs.
3)VIBHITIKI (Terminalia bellirica)	<i>Vibhitaki</i> is particularly useful for calming the <i>Kapha</i> dosha, although it also helps to calm the other three doshas. It provides excellent support for the body's three vital tissues: <i>Asthi</i> dhatu (bone), <i>Mamsa</i> dhatu (muscle), and <i>Rasa</i> dhatu (plasma). It's astringent in nature.
4)ATIBALA (Abutilon indicum)	<i>Atibala</i> is a body-strengthening and aphrodisiac herb with antibacterial properties. It helps regulate internal secretions and is used to treat bronchitis, tuberculosis, lung conditions, liver disorders, and blood-related issues.
5)BRAHMNI (Bacopa Moneri)	<i>Brahmi</i> enhances cognitive function, supports emotional balance, reduces stress, boosts immunity, promotes respiratory and skin health, aids digestion, and protects against toxins.
6)MANJISTHA (Rubia Cordifolia)	<i>Manjistha</i> balances <i>Agni</i> and <i>Soma</i> , aiding cellular detoxification and blood purification. It supports healthy blood and cholesterol levels, regulates blood flow, helps with clotting issues, and detoxifies the lymphatic system through its <i>raktaprasadan</i> (blood-purifying) properties.
7)CHITAKA (Plumbago zeylanicum)	<i>Chitraka</i> is a powerful <i>Ayurvedic herb</i> for digestion. It boosts metabolism, clears intestinal toxins, supports liver function, aids fat and sugar digestion, enhances nutrient absorption, and has antibacterial and anti-inflammatory properties.
8)BALA (Sida Cordifolia)	<i>Bala</i> means strength and supports muscles, joints, and bones. It aids digestion, hydrates tissue, cools the body, regulates bowel movement, enhances nutrient absorption, reduces inflammation, and has strong diuretic properties.
9)Sadavritta and Achara rasayana	Childhood is the ideal time to develop the qualities of <i>sattva</i> , <i>raja</i> , and <i>tama</i> . Strengthening <i>sattva</i> through age-appropriate practices from <i>Sadvritta</i> and <i>Achara Rasayana</i> can help prevent emotional and behavioural issues. A holistic approach—including these <i>Ayurvedic</i> principles along with counselling, CBT, parent training, and nootropic support—can effectively support children's mental and emotional well-being.

CONCLUSION

Vaccines function similarly to an immune system training program. Without exposing

the body to sickness symptoms, they prime it to combat illness.

Immune cells known as lymphocytes react to foreign invaders like bacteria or viruses by generating protein molecules called antibodies. The function of vaccination is restricted to the specific illness for which the child has received the vaccination. It has no bearing on a child's general immunity or health. Enhancing the body's immune system in any way will give children the fundamental strength they need to stay active and healthy even when they are ill. One of the best aspects of Ayurvedic preventive medicine is rasayana treatment. They maintain growth and development through appropriate nutrition and function as both brain and body tonics. It is a useful tool for combining the many wonderful aspects of dhatus. They create an infection-resistant barrier. Several *Acharyas* claim that *Rasayana* offers intelligence, memory, *ojus*, strength, immunity, vigour, and willpower. Children are an important asset to our country, as they represent the future human resource. Healthy human resources are essential for the development of every nation. However, children are often affected by bacterial diseases, for which antibiotics are commonly used. Over time, this can lead to antibiotic resistance.

If *Rasayana* therapy (a branch of *Ayurveda* focused on rejuvenation and immunity) is introduced to children in appropriate doses from an early age, it can help reduce their dependency on drugs and lower the risk of developing antibiotic resistance.

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