

MINERALS OR METALS AND THEIR *PRATINIDHI DRAVYA* IN *RASASHASTRA*: A CRITICAL REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

Rasashastra is an Ayurvedic pharmaceuticals science in which formulations are created using metals, minerals, gemstones, marine medications, and other materials. In *Ayurveda* pharmaceuticals, various metals, gemstones, mineral medications, and so on are used; some of these drugs are quite uncommon and expensive. In *Ayurvedic* pharmacology and pharmaceuticals, the use of alternative pharmaceuticals is stated if the drugs are not available. Substitute medications are added, and the formulation is developed to provide the desired property and therapeutic activity. The substitutes are chosen in such a way that they provide the desired benefit without jeopardising the finished product's efficacy. This concept is also found in a section of Indian alchemy that discusses drug alternatives. Substitutes for gold,

chalcopryrite, silver, and other *Rasadravyas* have been mentioned. When the properties of the original drug and the substitute drug are compared, the properties are quite comparable and that the substitute medicine will be a great substitute for the original drug. However, because no research has been done in this area to see if the efficacy remains the same, it offers up new avenues for future research.

KEYWORDS: Metals, Ayurveda, Substitute, Rasadravya, Pharmaceuticals etc.

INTRODUCTION

Pratinidhi Dravya (substitutes for herbal drugs) are narrated in *Ayurvedic* classical texts when original or a form of drug is not available. In *Ayurveda* there are many drugs combined in single formulation, some of them were difficult to get and some species got destroyed with development of civilization and industrialization. This resulted in scarcity and less availability of the ingredient in the formulation which may cause a drastic or no effect of formulation at all. Hence ancient seers of *Ayurveda* advised some drugs which can be used when other drugs with similar properties is not available for medicinal purpose. Such drugs are known as *Pratinidhi* or substitute drugs. This concept is based on *Ayurveda* principles and is referred from one of the *Bhavaprakash*, *Yogaratanakar*, *Bhaishjya Ratnavali* etc.

Rasashastra is an Indian alchemical science in which medications of mineral, metallic, and marine origin, as well as gemstones are employed for therapeutic purposes. Before being used in various formulations, these medications are purified, incinerated, and so on. Some pharmaceuticals are prohibitively expensive, are only available in a few locations, or are otherwise unaffordable. Substitute medications have been mentioned in *Ayurveda* pharmaceuticals to address these limitations, and this holds true even for *Rasadravya* in *Rasashastra*.

Drugs and their substitute

Swarna (Gold) is a noble metal with *Rasayana* and other qualities. *Swarna* is the *Swarnamakshika* replacement (Chalcopyrite). According to the author of *Ayurveda Prakasha*, there are three reasons why *Swarnamakshika* can be used as a gold alternative. For starters, it contains a small amount of gold. Second, it is known as *Swarna Upadhatu*, and it contains *Swarna* (Gold) *Gunas* (properties). Finally, the author believes that not only the attributes of *Swarna* (Gold) will be there, but also the properties of the other elements. In a nutshell, because *Swarnamakshika* contains *Swarna* (Gold) and has qualities like *Swarna*, it can be used as a gold substitute. Similar views are expressed by the authors of *Bhavaprakasha* and *Bhaishajya Ratnavali*, *Rajata Makshika* is said to be a replacement for *Rajata* (Silver). As an *Upadhatu*, *Rupya Makshika* possesses similar *Gunas* as *Rajata* (Silver), although its characteristics are reduced in comparison to *Rajata*. Other *Gunas* will be present in it, in addition to the qualities of *Rajata* (silver). *Rupyamakshika* has a *Madhura* (sweet) and a little *Tikta* (bitter) rasa, has *Madhura Vipaka*, is *Veerya Vardhaka* (increases vitality), *Rasayana*

(rejuvenative), and is indicated in *Kushta* (skin disorders), *Pandu* (anaemia), *Prameha* (diabetes), *Visha* (poisonous effect), and other conditions. *Gairika* (Red ochre) is another medication that falls under the *Uparasa* group. In *Bhaishajya Ratnavali*, it is said to be a substitute for *Swarnamakshika* (Chalcopyrite). Based on its characteristics and properties, *Vaikranta* (Tourmaline) can be used as an alternative for *Vajra* (Diamond). A glance at the attributes of *Vaikranta* reveals that it is preferable to that which has eight edges, eight surfaces, is smooth, hefty, clean, and smooth and that which possesses all the properties of Diamond is best. Apart from that, *Yadavji* says that *Uparatna Vaikranta*, or Tourmaline, can be utilised as a diamond alternative.

Table No. 1 Dravya and their substitute.

S. No.	Dravya	Pratinidhi Dravya
1	Swarna	Swarnamakshika
2	Rajata	Rajatamakshika
3	Swarnamakshika	Gairika
4	Vajra (Diamond)	Vaikranta

Other than the above in *Bhavaprakasha*, *Sphatika* (alum) is used in the absence of *Sourashtra*, *Daruharidra kwatha* (decoction of *Berberis aristata*) is used in the absence of *Rasanjana* (Yellow oxide of Mercury), *Teekshna loha* is used in the absence of *Kantaloha Bhasma*. *Kantaloha Bhasma* is a *Rasayana* that raises *Agni* and is said to be beneficial in all ailments when combined with the correct *Anupana*. *Swarna Bhasma*, also known as *Vishapaha*, promotes *Ojas* (strength) and *Bala*. *Mukta Bhasma* has a sweet taste is *Laghu* (light) in *Guna* and possesses *Sheeta Veerya* (cold potency). It is claimed to be *Vrishya* (aphrodisiac), *Ayushya* (increases life span), *Netrya* (helpful to eyes), *Hrudya* (excellent for heart), *Medhya* (memory booster), and *Vishaghna* (anti-poisonous). *Mukta Shukti* is beneficial in *Pittaja* and *Raktaja* rogas, as well as circumstances such as *Parinama Shula*, *Amlapitta*, and *Annadrava Shula*.

Table no. 2: Pratinidhi Dravya in Bhavapraksha.

S.No.	Dravya	Pratinidhi Dravya
1.	Saurashta	Sphatika
2.	Rasanjan	Daruharidra kwatha
3.	Rajata	Rajatamakshika
4.	Makshika	Swarna Gairika
5.	Swarana & Rajata	Kantaloha bhasma
6.	Kantaloha	Tikshna loha
7.	Mukta	Muktashukti

The author of *Yogaratanakara*, offers a few other substitutes for pharmaceuticals, such as *Rasasindura* (Red sulphide of Mercury) in *Abhava* of *Parada Bhasma* (calcified ash of Mercury), *Hingula* (Mercury Sulphide) in *Abhava* of *Rasasindura*, *Mukta Bhasma* (calcified ash of Pearl) in *Abhava* of *Vaidurya*.

Table No. 3: Pratinidhi dravya in Yogaratanakar.

S. No.	Dravya	Pratinidhi dravya
1.	Swarnamakshika	Taramakshika
2.	Parad/Swarna	Loha bhasma
3.	Kantaloha	Tikshna loha
4.	Mukta	Muktashukti
5.	Parad bhasma	Rasasindura
6.	Rasasindura	Hingula
7.	Vaidurya	Mukta bhasma

Rasasindura is aphrodisiac, *Balya* (strengthening), and beneficial in *Nadi Dourbalyata* (nervous weakness). *Hingula* is *Sarvadoshahara* (all doshas are pacified), *Rasayana* (rejuvenative), and *Vrishya* (aphrodisiac).

DISCUSSION

The use of metals and gemstones in *Ayurvedic* pharmaceuticals, particularly as *Rasayana* and for emergency therapy, is documented in *Rasashastra*. Because a few medications are expensive and uncommon, alternatives must have been described in *Rasashastra* books in order to include their *Gunas* (properties) into the formulation and obtain the desired result. Substitutes for a few medications, such as gold, chalcopryrite, and others, have been mentioned. A literature review was conducted to better understand the qualities of the pharmaceuticals and compare them. It was discovered that these drugs have similar properties and indications, and that using them in formulations will most likely achieve the intended effect.

CONCLUSION

Although the use of substitutes for mineral medications is uncommon, it is described in the scriptures. The substitute drug should have the same qualities as the original drug. The substitutes are employed to ensure that the formulation has the therapeutic properties that are necessary. The substitutes must have been stated because the qualities and indicators are the same. Substitutes for Gold, Silver, and Iron have been mentioned in the *Dhatus* category, in *Maharasa Varga* for Chalcopryrite, in *Uparasa Varga* for *Anjana*, and in *Ratna Varga* for

Vajra, Vaidurya, Mukta, and other gemstones. However, there has been little research done in the field employing the substitute and determining its efficacy. There is still a lot of room for study to be done in this sector.

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