

## A COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF MEDHYA RASAYANAIN AYURVEDIC PEDIATRIC PRACTICE

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### ABSTRACT

Ayurveda is founded on two fundamental principles: the preservation of health in healthy individuals and the management of diseases in those who are ill. Among the eight classical branches of Ayurveda, **Rasayana** is primarily concerned with rejuvenation, healthy aging, and the promotion of physical and mental well-being. Within this branch, **Medhya Rasayanas** represent a unique group of medicinal plants traditionally recognized for their ability to enhance higher mental functions, including memory, intelligence, learning capacity, concentration, and comprehension. These cognitive-enhancing effects are attributed to their specific therapeutic property, known in Ayurveda as **Prabhava**.

**KEYWORDS:** Medhya Rasayana, Ayurveda. Medha, Dhi, Dhriti, Smriti.

### INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda, often referred to as the "Science of Life," is one of the world's oldest systems of healthcare and emphasizes the maintenance of physical, mental, and spiritual well-being. Among its specialized therapeutic approaches, **Rasayana Chikitsa** occupies a significant place

because of its rejuvenating, preventive, and health-promoting properties. The term *Rasayana* is derived from the Sanskrit words *Rasa* (the primary nourishing essence of the body) and *Ayana* (pathway), collectively referring to measures that enhance the nourishment, regeneration, and proper functioning of body tissues.<sup>[1]</sup>

Ayurvedic literature describes Rasayana therapy as a means to improve tissue nutrition, strengthen immunity, delay the aging process, and promote longevity. In addition to enhancing physical health, Rasayana is recognized for its positive influence on cognitive functions such as memory, concentration, intelligence, and learning capacity. It also contributes to improved complexion, voice quality, vitality, and resistance against disease.

In many developing countries, including India, childhood malnutrition and recurrent infections continue to affect normal growth and development. From an Ayurvedic perspective, *Bala Rasayana* offers a comprehensive approach to address these concerns by improving tissue nourishment, enhancing immune competence, and supporting neurodevelopment. Various herbs described in classical Ayurvedic texts, such as.<sup>[2]</sup>

## OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

Analysis of “Medhya Rasayana” in enhancing the intellectual power.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

Conceptual study comprises the review of the available literature in the ancient classical texts, scientific journals, dissertations, research paper etc. concerned with this concept.

### Medhya Rasayana<sup>[3]</sup>

- Mandukaparni Swarasa
- Yasthimadhu Churna
- Guduchi Swarasa
- Sankapushpi Kalka

| S.No. | Medhya Rasayana | Latin name                    | Family name    | Synonyms                                                                                   |
|-------|-----------------|-------------------------------|----------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1     | Mandukaparni    | Centella asiatica (Linn.)     | Apiceae        | Manduki, Mahausadhi, Divya, Twastri, Saraswati                                             |
| 2     | Yastimadhu      | Glycyrrhiza glabra (Linn.)    | Fabaceae       | Madhuka, Klitaka                                                                           |
| 3     | Guduchi         | Tinospora cordifolia (Willd.) | Menispermaceae | Cakralaksanika, Tantrika, Amrta, Amrtavallari, Mandali, Kandodbhava, Chinnaruha, Vatsadani |
| 4     | Shankhapushpi   | Convolvulus pluricaulis Chois | Convolvulaceae | Ksheerpushpi, Mangalyakusuma, Supushpi                                                     |

### 1. Mandukaparni (*Centella asiatica*)



Mandukaparni (*Centella asiatica*) is one of the important Medhya Rasayana drugs described in Ayurveda for enhancing higher mental functions. Classical Ayurvedic literature refers to this herb by several synonyms, including **Manduki**, **Twastri**, **Divya**, and **Mahaushadhi**, reflecting its wide therapeutic importance. According to Ayurvedic principles, Mandukaparni predominantly pacifies **Kapha** and **Pitta Doshas**. Botanically, it is a small, creeping perennial herb that spreads through slender stolons and develops roots at the nodes. Traditionally, the fresh whole plant, particularly its expressed juice (Swarasa), is preferred for medicinal use because it is believed to retain maximum therapeutic potency.

Phytochemical investigations have demonstrated that Mandukaparni contains several biologically active triterpenoid saponins, including **Asiaticoside**, **madecassoside**, **Asiatic acid**, **madecassic acid**, and related compounds. These constituents are considered responsible for many of its pharmacological activities. Experimental studies suggest that the herb exhibits neuroprotective, antioxidant, and cognitive-enhancing properties. It has been reported to

support learning, memory, neuronal growth, and behavioural functions, making it a promising natural agent for promoting brain health and cognitive performance.<sup>[4]</sup>

## 2. Yashtimadhu (*Glycyrrhiza glabra* Linn.)



(Plant)



(Roots)

Traditional Ayurvedic literature considers Yashtimadhu an effective brain tonic that supports healthy nervous system function. It is believed to improve cerebral circulation, nourish neural tissues, and help maintain normal glucose metabolism, thereby contributing to optimal cognitive performance.

Experimental studies indicate that Yashtimadhu possesses promising neuroprotective properties. It has demonstrated beneficial effects on learning, memory, and cognitive performance in experimental models, particularly under conditions of oxidative stress and cerebral ischemia. Animal studies have also shown improvements in spatial learning and passive avoidance behaviour, suggesting a protective role against neuronal damage. Furthermore, research involving scopolamine-induced cognitive impairment has reported significant enhancement in memory and learning, indicating its potential therapeutic value in dementia and other neurodegenerative disorders. Phytochemical studies have identified several biologically active constituents in *Glycyrrhiza glabra*, including glycyrrhizin, glycyrrhetic acid, flavonoids, isoflavones, and various phenolic compounds. These phytochemicals contribute to its diverse pharmacological activities, including antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, neuroprotective, immunomodulatory, and adaptogenic effects.<sup>[5]</sup>

## 3. Guduchi (*Tinospora cordifolia*)

Guduchi (*Tinospora cordifolia* (Willd.) Hook. f. & Thomson) is one of the most valued medicinal plants in Ayurveda and is widely recognized for its rejuvenating (Rasayana) and



cognitive-enhancing (Medhya) properties. Classical Ayurvedic literature describes Guduchi under several important therapeutic groups. In the Charaka Samhita, it is included in the Vayahsthapana (promoting longevity), Dahaprashamana (relieving burning sensation), Trishnanigrahana (alleviating excessive thirst), Stanya Shodhana (purifying breast milk), and Triptighna Mahakashaya (reducing excessive satiety) categories. Similarly, the Sushruta Samhita mentions Guduchi in formulations such as Guduchyadi, Patoladi, Aragvadhadi, Kakolyadi, and Valli Panchamoola.



Guduchi is known by numerous Sanskrit names, including Amrita, Madhuparni, Chinnamula, Amritavalli, Jivanti, Somavalli, Rasayani, Vayastha, Vishalya, Kundali, Dheera, and Chandrahasa, among others. These names reflect its reputed ability to promote vitality, longevity, and overall health. According to Ayurvedic principles, Guduchi helps maintain the balance of all three doshas (Vata, Pitta, and Kapha), making it a Tridosha Shamana herb.<sup>6</sup>

#### 4. Shankhapushpi (*Convolvulus pluricaulis*)



Shankhapushpi (*Convolvulus pluricaulis* Choisy) is a well-known Medhya Rasayana in Ayurveda, traditionally used to improve memory, intelligence, and mental well-being. Classical Ayurvedic texts describe it by the synonyms Ksheerpushpi and Mangalyakusuma. According to Ayurvedic pharmacology, it primarily pacifies Vata and Pitta doshas, making it beneficial in

disorders associated with the nervous system and psychological imbalance. Phytochemical investigations have identified several bioactive constituents in Shankhapushpi, including microphylllic acid, shankhapushpin, kaempferol, kaempferol-3-glucoside, 3,4-dihydroxycinnamic acid, and  $\beta$ -sitosterol. These compounds are believed to contribute to the plant's diverse pharmacological activities, particularly those affecting the central nervous system. Modern scientific studies suggest that Shankhapushpi possesses neuroprotective, antioxidant, and cognition-enhancing properties. Its ability to neutralize free radicals and reduce oxidative stress is considered one of the primary mechanisms responsible for protecting neuronal cells and supporting brain function. These antioxidant effects may help preserve memory and improve overall cognitive performance.<sup>[7]</sup>

### Rasayana

The word **Rasayana** is derived from two Sanskrit words:

- **Rasa** – meaning *fluid, juice, or the primary nourishing essence of the body*.
- **Ayana** – meaning *pathway or movement*.

Thus, **Rasayana** literally means "**the pathway of nourishment**" or "**the path of rasa**." It also refers to the process through which the body receives optimum nourishment, leading to excellence and proper development of all the **dhatu**s (body tissues).

According to **Sushruta Samhita**, Rasayana includes substances and therapies that:

- Delay the aging process.
- Increase longevity.
- Improve physical and mental strength.
- Enhance immunity.
- Prevent and destroy diseases.

According to **Charaka Samhita**, Rasayana refers to drugs, diets, and lifestyle practices that nourish the body by producing high-quality **rasa dhatu**, which in turn nourishes all the other dhatus. These therapies rejuvenate healthy individuals, maintain youthfulness, and protect against diseases.

In simple terms, **Rasayana** is a rejuvenation therapy in Ayurveda. It consists of medicines, nutritious food, and healthy lifestyle practices that slow aging, improve overall health, strengthen the body and mind, and help a person remain active and capable of performing daily

activities even in old age.<sup>[8]</sup>

### Rasayana Therapy in Ayurveda

According to Ayurveda, **Rasayana (rejuvenation) therapy** is aimed at restoring health, increasing longevity, and enabling a person to pursue the spiritual aspects of life. It promotes physical, mental, and emotional well-being by improving the quality of body tissues (Dhatus), digestive fire (Agni), body channels (Srotas), and vitality (Ojas).<sup>[9]</sup>

### Types of Rasayana

#### 1. Kamya Rasayana

- Used to fulfill specific desires (*Kamya* means desire).
- Promotes overall physical and mental health.

#### 2. Pranakamya Rasayana

- Used to enhance the quality of **Prana** (life energy).
- Improves vitality and overall life force.

#### 3. Medhakamya Rasayana

- Enhances intellect, memory, and cognitive functions.

#### 4. Srikamya Rasayana

- Promotes vitality, strength, beauty, and longevity.

#### 5. Naimittika Rasayana

- Used to prevent or manage diseases caused by specific factors.
- Helps restore balance and supports recovery from illness.<sup>[10]</sup>

#### 6. Balarasayana

- **Brahmi** (*Bacopa monnieri*)
- **Guduchi** (*Tinospora cordifolia*)
- **Bala** (*Sida cordifolia*)
- **Ashwagandha** (*Withania somnifera*)
- **Kushmanda** (*Benincasa hispida*)

Are traditionally regarded as Balarasayana drugs because of their rejuvenating and restorative properties. Classical Ayurvedic scholars, including **Acharya Kashyapa**, emphasized the

importance of Rasayana formulations during childhood. Kashyapa described specialized preparations, including **Lehana**, which are administered to enhance immunity, promote healthy growth, improve cognitive development, and strengthen both the body and the mind. Contemporary experimental and clinical studies also suggest that several Balarasayana herbs possess immunomodulatory, antioxidant, adaptogenic, neuroprotective, and growth-promoting activities, supporting many of their traditional therapeutic applications.<sup>[11]</sup>

### Medhya Rasayana herbs properties<sup>[12]</sup>

| S.No. | Drugs        | Rasa           | Guna              | Veerya | Vipaka  | Karma    |
|-------|--------------|----------------|-------------------|--------|---------|----------|
| 1     | Mandukaparni | Tikta          | Tikta             | Sheeta | Madhura | Medhya   |
| 2     | Yashtimadhu  | Madhura        | Guru, Snigdha     | Sheeta | Madhura | Chedana  |
| 3     | Guduchi      | Tikta, Kashaya | Guru, Snigdha     | Ushna  | Madhura | Rasayana |
| 4     | Sankhpushpi  | Tikta          | Snigdha, Picchila | Sheeta | Madhura | Medhya   |

These medicines improve the functioning of **Dhatus, Agni, Srotas, and Ojas**, thereby acting as rejuvenators and immunity enhancers.

### Rasayana in Children

Ayurveda recommends Rasayana therapy in children with great caution, as improper use may be harmful. When used appropriately, it:

- Enhances immunity.
- Promotes healthy growth and development.
- Helps prevent infectious diseases.
- Supports physical and mental development.

### Common pediatric Rasayana preparations include:

- Swarna Bhasma
- Vacha
- Madhu (Honey)
- Ghrita (Ghee)
- Panchagavya Ghrita
- Brahmi Ghrita
- Abhaya Ghrita
- Samvardhana Ghrita



- Mandura Bhasma
- Lauha Bhasma

### Swarna Prashana

Swarna Prashana is a traditional Ayurvedic formulation containing **Swarna (gold)** along with herbs such as **Brahmi** and **Vacha**, mixed with **honey (Madhu)** and **ghee (Ghrita)**.

Traditionally, purified gold is rubbed on a clean stone with a small quantity of water and then mixed with honey and ghee before administration. It is traditionally believed to:

### Benefits of Rasayana Therapy

1. Rasayana therapy promotes healthy salivary secretion, which supports normal appetite and enhances the digestive process.
2. By improving gastrointestinal function, it helps relieve common digestive problems such as constipation and indigestion.
3. It is beneficial in managing pediatric digestive disorders, including diarrhea, indigestion, and *Grahani Roga*, by strengthening digestive capacity.
4. Its rejuvenating properties help reduce fatigue and support recovery from mild febrile conditions.
5. Rasayana contributes to mental well-being by promoting emotional balance and reducing the risk of psychological disturbances.
6. It enhances the body's natural immune response, increasing resistance to common infections and illnesses.
7. Regular use supports healthy physical growth, cognitive development, and overall well-being in children.
8. It improves skin health by enhancing complexion and maintaining healthy skin texture.
9. Rasayana helps regulate metabolism and supports the body's natural detoxification mechanisms, reducing the accumulation of metabolic toxins (*Ama*).<sup>[13]</sup>

### Mode of Action of Rasayana in Pediatric Disorders

Rasayana therapy improves the quality of **Rasa Dhatu**, ensuring proper nourishment of all body tissues (*Dhatu Poshana*). Through its **Dhatuwardhaka** (tissue-promoting) and **Agnivardhaka** (digestive fire-enhancing) properties, it supports healthy tissue formation and growth. The **Srotoshodhana** (channel-cleansing) action facilitates efficient circulation and elimination of waste products, thereby improving detoxification and maintaining physiological

balance.

The **Tikta Rasa** (bitter taste) of Rasayana formulations is believed to enhance the *Akasha Mahabhuta*, which promotes mental clarity and increases *Sattva Guna*. In addition, the **Madhura Vipaka** (sweet post-digestive effect) nourishes all body tissues, strengthens vitality (*Ojas*), and supports immunity. The **Laghu Guna** (light quality) further contributes to mental alertness and psychological stability. Collectively, these pharmacodynamic properties make Rasayana therapy valuable in promoting health, preventing disease, and supporting the management of paediatric disorders.

### Formulations

1. Chyavanaprasha
2. Brahmi Ghrta
3. Vasanta-Kusumakara
4. Dhatri Rasayana

### CONCLUSION

According to Ayurveda, particularly the teachings of Sushruta, the period from birth to 16 years is considered **Balyavastha**, a crucial stage of growth and development. Ayurvedic paediatrics (Kaumarbhritya) provides a comprehensive framework for the prevention, diagnosis, and management of paediatric disorders. Various therapeutic measures, including herbal formulations, Rasayana therapy, and supportive Ayurvedic remedies, are recommended to promote health and manage childhood illnesses.

Ayurveda emphasizes that prevention is more effective than treatment. Therefore, adherence to **Dinacharya** (daily regimen) and **Ritucharya** (seasonal regimen) during childhood is considered essential for maintaining physical, mental, and emotional well-being. These healthy lifestyle practices help preserve normal growth, strengthen immunity, and reduce the risk of disease.

For the diagnosis of pediatric disorders, Ayurveda advocates a systematic assessment through methods such as **Nadi Pariksha** (pulse examination), **Sharira Pariksha** (physical examination), **Prashna Pariksha** (history taking), and evaluation of **Graha Roga**, when relevant within the classical Ayurvedic context. In addition, Ayurveda highlights the importance of appropriate dietary guidelines for children, recognizing nutrition as a key factor

in healthy growth, tissue development, and disease prevention.

Overall, the holistic principles of Ayurveda offer a valuable approach to paediatric healthcare by integrating preventive practices, balanced nutrition, individualized diagnosis, and rejuvenative therapies to support the overall health and development of children.

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