

## ***PITTA THE CULPRIT FOR RASAYANA THERAPY***

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## ABSTRACT

With world's advancement in the health sector, no significant control over disease is seen. Rather, new health issues are out and many struggle to find remedial solution for the same. Hence the ayurvedic concept of *rasayana* therapy paves the ray of light. *Rasayana* (rejuvenation) therapy focuses on protection of *oja* (normal proportion of immune factor) by promoting strength and alleviation of disease. To get all the benefits of *rasayana* therapy, *agni* along with three *dosha* should be in balance. But these days most people are accustomed to unhealthy dietary habits end up with more consumption of certain *rasas*, preferably *amla lavana katu kshara* which intern cause *pitta* vitiation. *Pitta* in its normalcy is said to be *ojaskrit* (immune developer) and, on vitiation, brings *ojovikruti* (immune depletion). This article put forwards the concept of *ojavisramsas* caused by vitiated *pitta* initiated by depletion of *agni* due to the over indulgence in *gramyaaahara* (urbanized food) which hinders the attainment of proper beneficial effect of administered *rasayana*. Henceforth *sarvarasaabhyasa* (use of all six tastes) and equilibrium of three *dosha*, especially *pitta dosha* should be considered prior to *rasayana* therapy.

**KEY WORDS**-Agni, Immunity, *Oja*, *OjaVisramsas*, *Pitta*, Rejuvenation

## INTRODUCTION-

Among many treatment modalities mentioned in ayurveda, *rasayana* therapy is the one which can be administered both for the promotion of strength and the alleviation of disease. It restores equilibrium of *dosha* and brings stability to *deha* (body), amends the *agni* (1). Consumption of food in an erroneous way is one among the prime factor for creating diseases. Hence, proper dietary habits are of prime importance. In ayurveda certain food combinations have been specifically mentioned as being important causes of disease. It is a need in today's era to keep an eye on these types of food habits that can hamper the normal functions of *agni* (2). Gastric fire is the supreme of all metabolic activities, and all body elements originate from it. Individualistic approach of ayurveda state *prakruthi* differs from person to person and hence the digestion and metabolic activities also differ accordingly (3). The *swasthya* (well-being) of one depends on his internal fire which ultimately maintains the *oja* and *teja* (normal body temperature). The resistance of an individual is said to be because of this internal fire (4).

## MATERIALS AND METHODS-

- Classical Ayurvedic textbooks [*Chraka Samhita*, *Susrutha Samhita*, and *Astanga Sangraha*] are used to document the information.
- Articles published over different journals where reviewed.
- Web sources are also reviewed.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE-

### ❖ OJA

*Oja* is considered as the essence of all the body tissue elements. *Oja* is responsible for unique growth, nourishment, and strength (5). *Acharya Susrutha* denoted *oja* as *bala* (strength) (6). Strength gives stability and maintains compactness of muscles. It provides energy to perform

all kinds of activities without any hindrances and also provides clarity of voice and complexion. A well-balanced and nourished *ojas* imparts its due effect on the normal functioning of *karmendriya* and *dnyanendriya* (motor and sensory organs) (7).

*Ojas* is considered to be of two kinds namely *para ojas* which is subtle in nature which resides in heart and is in very minute quantity measuring only eight drops and *apara ojas* present in whole body and gross measuring half an *anjali* in quantity.

*Bhela samhita* has described twelve sites where *ojas* resides in body, they are –*rasa* (plasma), *rakta* (blood), *mamsa* (muscles), *meda* (fats), *asthi* (bones), *majja* (bone marrow), *shukra* (semen), *sweda* (sweat), *pitta* (GIT secretions), *sleshma* (mucoid secretions), *mutra* (urine) and *purisha* (stool) (8).

Stages of abnormalities of *ojas* are explained as *ojo visramsa* (first stage), *ojo vyapad* (second stage), *ojo kshaya* (third stage) which may occur in various conditions. According to ayurveda these abnormalities may arise as a result of metabolic malfunction leading to diminished production of *oja*.

#### ❖ PITTA

*Pitta* being one among three dosha, place a major role in metabolic processes that generate heat in the body. The qualities of *pitta* are said to be mild, sweet, hot, sharp, viscous, sour, mobile, and pungent. The vitiation of *pitta* creates imbalance in the normal functions of *pitta dosha*. Use of substances having qualities similar to *pitta* will provoke the *pitta* to get vitiated and the opposite quality substances will subside the same (9). *Pitta* supports the body by performing coloring, digestion, production of *oja*, vision, intelligence, and body temperature along with other functions of *agni* (10).

*Pitta* again is divided into five types, (*pachaka pitta*, *ranjaka pitta*, *sadhaka pitta*, *alochaka pitta* and *bhrajaka pitta*) (11), among which the *pachaka pitta* that resides in *amashaya pakwashaya Madhya* and does the *pachana karma* (digestion process), residing in its own place along with its normal functions, supports the other types of *pitta* to perform their normal functions (12). The *sadhaka pitta* is that which resides in the *hrudaya* (heart), takes part in the functioning of intelligence, discrimination, pride and enthusiasm (13).

#### ❖ AGNI

*Agni* is the inevitable factor in the process of *paka* (digestion process) that converts food in the form of energy. Individual having *agni* in *samaavasta* (normal state) will be absolutely healthy and lead long and happy life. If *agni* is vitiated, whole metabolism in his body get disturbed, resulting ill health and disease (14). In *samaavasta* brings proper digestion, vision, joy, happiness, maintains normal bodily heat and normal complexion and in *vishamaavasta* (abnormal state) it causes indigestion, diminished vision, fear, anger, abnormality in body heat and abnormal complexion.

#### ❖ Explaining different types of agni-

- *Jatharagni* of one type looks after food digestion and absorption.
- *Bhutagni* of five types converts heterogeneous substance to homogenous.
- *Dhatvagni* which is of seven types have different functions like synthesis and breakdown of tissues with the help of metabolic transformations.

The whole outcome of above process is *prasada* (essence) and *kitta* (excretory waste) part in which the former helps to nourish *dosha* and *dathu* and later gets excreted out from the body.

#### ❖ **JatharagniPaka**

*Jatharagnipaka* (Gastro intestinal digestion) explained as *avasthapaka* in ayurveda, which takes place in *amashaya* and *pakwashaya* brings changes in the state of food in the process of digestion. This leads to two phases of *avastapaka* called *prapaka* and *vipaka*.

#### ❖ **Prapaka -**

*Prapaka* phase divided into three phases, *madhurabhava*, *amlabhava* and *katubhava*.

- **Madhurabhava:** This process of digestion taking place in the *urdhvaamashaya* (fundus of stomach) is considered as *madhurabhava*. The final *rasa* (taste) resultant product in the *urdhvaamashaya* is *madhura* (sweet) (15).

Salivary amylase converts insoluble starch, polysaccharides into soluble dextrin (16). Saliva secreted by the salivary glands resembles the action of *bhodakakapha*. The end product of this reaction is sweet or *madhura*, described as *madhurabhava* (17).

- **Amlabhava:** *Pachaka pitta* secreted by the mucus cells of stomach helps in the digestion of proteins and fats. This leads to the phase of *amlabhava* which results in formation of acidified chyme which is in the *pakwapakwam* stage (not fully digested). It has to go for further digestion in *adhoamashaya*. This *paka* involves conversion of insoluble proteins into soluble peptones (18). The movement of partly digested food to *adhoamashaya* leads to secretion of *achapitta* (19). The digestion of proteins, fats and carbohydrates by the pancreatic secretions and bile is similar to the concept of *achapitta*.

- **Katubhava:** This phase resembles to the acrid and pungent (*katu*) reactions taking place in the large intestine. The contents from *amashaya* reaching *pakwashaya* are dehydrated by the action of heat gets converted into lumps forming an acrid and pungent gas (20).

#### ❖ **Phases of digestion -**

- **First phase** begins in mouth and completes in upper stomach. First half of food stays in stomach, getting prepared for first part of digestion, getting mixed with mucus and being converted into a bolus can be considered.
- **Second phase** begins in lower part of stomach; being acted upon by acids can be considered. This phase also continues in duodenum wherein food mixed with acids propelled from lower stomach is acted upon by digestive enzymes including bile, pancreatic juice etc.
- **Third and last phase** of digestion begins in second part of small intestine and ends in large colon. Absorption of essence of digested food takes place in small intestine and absorption of residue water, salts and minerals take place in colon with solidification of waste products and formation of feces and flatus.

#### ❖ **Vipaka-**

*Vipaka* or *nishtapaka* means post digestion change in taste. Substances consumed, come into contact with digestive fire and get digested by it, they undergo change in their tastes. This

post digestion change in taste of a substance is called *vipaka* (21). Substances of sweet and salt tastes get converted into sweet after-taste called as *madhuravipaka* which intern will increase *kapha*. Substances of sour taste get converted into sour after-taste and are called *asamlavipaka* which increases *pitta*. Substances of pungent, bitter and astringent tastes get converted into pungent after-taste called as *katuvipaka* increases *vata*. If less sweet is manifested in food at the first stage then less *kapha* is formed in first stage of digestion.

#### ❖ AGNI AND ITS RELATION WITH PITTA

Strength of digestion can be co-related as *agni*. All factors involved in digestion are referred as *agni*. *Agni*, represented by *pitta* acts as primary digestive power in body, produces good and bad effects depending on normal or abnormal functional state of *agni* (14). The term *pitta* derived from "*tapasantape*" (22). *Pitta* the factor, which regulates all thermo- dynamic activities in the body, in which function of *agni* is a part (23).

While talking about *rasayana* therapy, *pitta* influence on the *jataragni paka* (internal fire) and on *ojas* are clearly visible, this can hinder the full effect of *rasayana* therapy. The word *rasayana* itself denotes the *aayana* of *rasa*. *Rasa* can mean different things in different contexts, such as essence, taste, flavor, juice, and so on. *Shadrasa* and *rasayana* are interlinked, which shows how concomitant they are. *Shadrasas* play a larger role in *rasayana* therapy. All morbidity arises due to unwholesome habits, as these lifestyles and eating habits are not favorable to eliciting a proper response in the development of body elements. Among all the unwholesomeness, excess *amla lavana katu kshara* are the *rasas* that cause the accelerating factor for the deterioration of health. Focus oriented on these three *rasas* among the six shows how well they are connected to *pitta dosha*. *Amla lavana katu kshara* substances excess usage over a period of time vitiates the *pitta*. In the whole world, life is dependent on food. Ingesting wholesome food brings about nourishment, and an unwholesome diet causes disease (24).

#### DISCUSSION-

*Ojas-Agni-Pitta* is interrelated and influences each other. *Agni* none other than *pitta* in its normalcy develops *oja*, hence the vitiation leads to *ojovisramsa* (25). *Rasa abhyasa* before and on commencement of *rasayana* therapy is of great concern as in today's time. *Gramyaaahara* (urbanized diet) with excess usage of *amla lavana katu kshara* substances on an average daily basis facilitate *pitta dosha* vitiation. *Pitta* vitiating factors play a significant role in deterioration of health during this time period. *Aahara* being the nourishing factor of body elements, it is dependent on the action of *agni*. Therefore, the *agni* is said to be the main stay of life. So the *agni* represented by *pitta* in the body should be in a normal state of affairs for healthy living.

Diet has always been a concern for people of all ages, and different dietary practices have different effects on health. Food is the primary source of energy for the body to perform normal functions. That food which maintain the equilibrium state of body elements and help in eliminating abnormalities can be considered wholesome and which act in the opposite manner are considered unwholesome. For sustained healthy living, it is important to cultivate the habit of *sarvarasa abhyasa* in our daily diet (26).

**CONCLUSION -**

*Rasayana* is not just a drug therapy, specialized procedures, recipes, regimens, codes of conduct; all include *rasayana* therapy, which strengthens the immune system and promote health. *Agni* being invariable in the process of *paka* (digestion) provides nourishment to the body. *Agni* getting hampered from its normal state can vitiate *pitta* and end up in depletion of *oja*. Consumption of *gramyaaahara* with more affine towards *lavana amla katu kshara rasa* imparts its due effect to vitiate *pitta* by deranging *agni*. Hence before administration of *rasayana* therapy, *ojavisramsas* caused by vitiated *pitta* should be considered.

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