

**AYURVEDIC REVIEW ON RASA DRAVYA, THEIR SPECIFIC PREPARATION
METHODS ACCORDING TO CLASSICAL TEXTS**

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda works as the science of wellness; this ancient stream not only concerned with the restoration of the health of an individual but also sets the ground for a healthy society as well as nation. Its concepts are very instrumental in disease prevention as well as their management. *Rasashastra* is one of the branches of Ayurveda which imparts great importance in clinical practice due to its wide range of therapeutic applicability. This branch utilizes minerals and metals along with herbs for medicinal purpose. The origins of *Rasashastra* are traceable to the employment of mercury, which was considered a major *Rasa Dravya*. The effectiveness of *Rasa Aushadhi* merely depends upon their preparative methods which include *Murchana*, *Mardana*, *Rodhana*, *Jarana* and *Niyamana*, etc. Since these processes play a vital role towards the safety and efficacy of *Rasa Dravyas* thus present article explores various approaches of the preparative techniques of *Rasa Dravyas*.

KEYWORDS: Ayurveda, Rasa Dravyas, Jarana, Mardana, Mercury.

INTRODUCTION

The evolution of Ayurveda as a traditional system of medicine in ancient Indian culture included medicines not only of plant and animal origin but also metal and mineral-based drugs. *Rasashastra* is the Ayurvedic branch of herbo-mineral pharmaceuticals, possesses its own basic principles. The major principles of *Rasashastra* includes concept of *Lohavada*, *Dehavada* and methods of metal & mineral processing. *Shodhana*, *Marana*, *Amritikarana* and *Bhavana* are major preparative practices of this science. These methods of preparation in *Rasashastra* convert crude, incompatible materials into biocompatible ones so that they can be given safely without producing toxic effects.^[1-3]

Drugs prepared on the basis of *Rasashastra* principles have a number of benefits, including potent pharmacological actions, high strength, good palatability, advantages of low dosing frequency and longer shelf life, etc. These *Rasa Aushadhis* have great utility in treating health disorders such as arthritis, obesity, dermatological problems, anemia, tumors, sexual dysfunction, respiratory ailments and gastrointestinal disease, etc. Their curative activity is significantly a function of unique preparatory procedures like *Shodhana*, *Bhavana* and *Marana*.

The processing of *Rasa Aushadhis* consists of purification, grinding, heating and incineration in controlled manner. These preparations contain various types of *Rasa Dravyas* such as *Maharasa*, *Visha*, *Uparasa* and *Upavisha*. As minerals and metals can be dangerous in their toxic forms if not processed appropriately, their preparation necessitates accurate methods so that they can become safe and effective. The key ingredients used in *Rasa Aushadhis* include *Parad*, *Gandhaka*, *Suvarna*, *Maakshika*, *Rajata* and *Loha*, etc. These ingredients processed through different methods to enhance their activity and retain efficacy. The processing of herbo-mineral formulations converts toxic substances into the non-toxic palatable form.^[3-6]

Processing of Metals and Minerals

Metals and minerals are incompatible with the body and cannot be taken in their crude or original state. They need to undergo extensive processing so to make them most suitable for therapeutic purposes. This includes exposing them to animal products, herbal juices and extracts of plants to decrease toxicity which ultimately promote their assimilation. The processing techniques also convert these materials into finer, bio-available and softer states. These processing techniques ensure maximum therapeutic effects with minimal toxicity. Among the different mineral-based preparations, *Rasa Dravyas* are important as mercurial preparations which

include *Samskarita Parada*, *Hingulotha Parada* and *Shuddha Parada*. Mercury (*Parada*) subjected to different preparatory methods as mentioned in **Figure 1**.^[4-7]

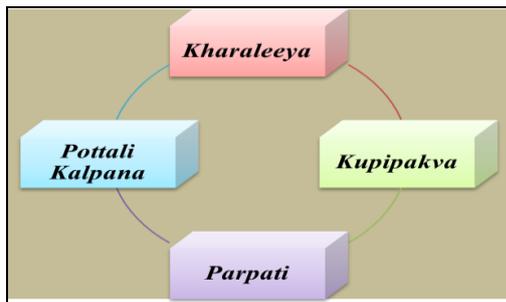


Figure 1: Different preparatory methods of Parada.

As mentioned above *Kharaleeya*, *Kupipakva*, *Parpati* and *Pottali Kalpana* are different preparatory methods of *Rasa Dravyas*. *Kharaleeya* preparation involves triturating purified mercury with herbs in *Khalva Yantra*. This procedure changes its physical state, decrease particle size and enhances palatability, etc. In *Kupipakva* method the mercury and sulfur are treated in a sealed glass vessel under controlled heat. *Rasashindoor* is one such example of this preparation. *Parpati* is thin layer, formed from *Kajjali* by melting and pressing it on a banana leaf to form micronized preparation which is very fine in nature. *Pottali Kalpana* includes triturating of *Kajjali* with *Kumari Swarasa*, further exposing it to high heat for further purification.

Parada Ashtadasha Samskara includes 18 purification processes of mercury, in which mercury is subjected to 18 specialized processing methods to increase potency and eliminate impurities. First five procedures are performed for the removal of impurities; next three steps are performed for increasing potency, after eight for transmutative properties, seventeenth for testing transformation power and eighteenth for its medicinal use in humans. *Acharya Somadev's Rasaratnasamuchchaya* mentioned 31 categories of

instruments, 17 types of *Musha*, 4 forms of *Koshthi* and 10 forms of *Putra* for the preparation of various *Rasa Dravyas*.^[7-9]

General Techniques of *Rasa Shastra*

✓ **Shodhana** is purification measure which is necessary to remove poisonous elements from minerals and metals. *Shodhana* is done in two phases *Samanya Shodhana* and *Vishesha Shodhana*. In *Samanya Shodhana* metals are subjected to repeated heating and quenching in different herbal fluids like *Til Taila*, *Takra*, *Gomutra*, *Kanji* and *Kulattha Kwatha*. *Vishesha Shodhana* is similar to the heating and quenching process but employs specific liquids designed for particular minerals and metals.

✓ **Marana** transforms raw metals into fine and bio-assimilable form, which can be used for therapeutic purpose. This includes triturating metals with herbal juices and processing them with controlled heat to prepare incinerated powders. These nano-sized particles, increased therapeutic activity and bioavailability of drugs and metals. The various methods of *Marana* are *Jarana*, *Pishti*, *Lepa*, *Bhavana* and *Bhavana*.

✓ **Jarana** is a process in which *Parada* is treated to restore it to its natural form while increasing its therapeutic properties, particularly when mixed with *Gandhaka*.

✓ **Murchhana** is a process in which mercury is treated with or without sulfur to enhance its compatibility, this process includes various approaches such as; *Sagandha Murchhana*, *Nirgandha Murchhana* and *Amritikarana*.

The practice of *Rasashastra* includes specific methods of mercury processing, which involves specialized equipment for particular purpose. The preparative techniques like *Marana*, *Amritikarana* and *Bhavana*, etc. offers several advantages in the preparation of *Rasa Dravyas* as mentioned in **Table 1**.^[8-11]

Table 1: Benefits of preparative techniques of *Rasashastra* used for *Rasa Dravyas*.

Preparatory Method	Benefits	Example
<i>Shodhana</i>	Removes toxic impurities, enhancing safety and compatibility with body.	<i>Swedana</i> for <i>Parada</i> to eliminate impurities.
<i>Marana</i> , <i>Jarana</i> and <i>Murchhana</i>	Converts metals and minerals into fine form which increases their potency.	<i>Loha Bhasma</i> minimizing toxicity of iron.
<i>Bhavana</i> and <i>Mardana</i>	Enhances medicinal properties, improves absorption and efficacy.	<i>Abhraka Bhasma</i> gains potency while treated with <i>Triphala Swarasa Bhavana</i> .

CONCLUSION

Rasashastra is branch of traditional Ayurveda in which metals and minerals are used for medicinal purpose after subjecting for preparative techniques like *Shodhana*, *Marana*, *Jarana*, *Murchhana* and *Bhavana*. These processes are used to modify non-compatible substances into a safe and compatible form. Manufacturing processes of *Rasa* drugs must impart quality to prevent

degradation of formulations and ensuring long-term efficacy. The preparative techniques in *Rasashastra* enhance stability of formulation. These techniques converts toxic element into non-toxic one & absorbable forms. These preparatory methods also enhance pharmacological properties of *Rasa Dravyas*.

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