

AGASTHYA RASAYANAM USED IN HUMAN RESPIRATORY DISEASES: A REVIEW

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Agasthya Rasayanam is named after the great sage Agasthya who is deified both in Ayurveda and Siddha, the ancient Indian knowledge. The sastric preparation method followed in preparing *Agasthya Rasayanam*, the 23 ingredients and their medicinal properties documented by various researchers are compiled in this article. The therapeutic properties of *Agasthya Rasayanam* is deemed to be the synergistic medicinal effect of the 23 ingredients which have individually the property of anti-inflammation, antioxidant, anti-pyretic, anti-microbial and/or anticancer. *Agasthya Rasayanam* is considered to be a wonder drug based on the Indian traditional knowledge prescribed to cure mainly human respiratory disorders. Interestingly, it is also found to confer longevity to the patients administered with this drug.

Keywords: *Agasthya Rasayanam*, Ayurveda, Siddha, Herbals, Ancient indian knowledge

Introduction

Agasthya Rasayanam is named after sage Agasthya, who was a noted *rishi* among the contributors of Ayurveda. He was one of the founders of *Siddha* system of medicine and *Siddha vaidhyam* is also known as

Agasthyavaidhyam (Fig. 1 (a) and (b)). Still his descendants practice this ancient system of healing in Tamil Nadu. Agasthya Rishi (Siddhar in Tamil), the chief of 18 *siddhars*, structured the grammar of classical Tamil language and established a school in the banks of river Tamirabarani as shown in Fig. 2.

1916-ம் வருஷத்தில் கல்கத்தாவில் கூடிய
ஆயுர் வேத மஹா சபையில், வைத்தியம்
அல்லது அக்ஷரீய வயித்திய முறை
பெயர்ப்பற்றி ஆயுர் வேத பண்டிட்,
சுரியன் D. கோபாலாச்சாரியர் பேசியது.

(a)

தென் இந்தியாவில் தமிழ் (அக்ஷரீய) வைத்
திய முறை வழங்கப்பட்டு வருகிறது. இது ஆர்
ஷம்-நாகரீகம் (ஆர்ஷம்-முலிகைகளால் வாழ்ந்தி
யம்; தந்திரம்-இரசவர்க்கங்கள்-உலோக வர்க்கங்கள்
எல்லாம் வாழ்ந்தியம்) இரண்டு முறைகளும் தமிழ்வாயித்
தியத்தில் கலந்ததாகக் கருதப்படுகிறது. இது ஆரி
யர்களில் வாழ்ந்திய முறைகளைப்போலவே, அக்ஷ
ரீய முறையிலும், விவரமுறையின் தன் அருட் சக்
தியால் கத்திகெள்வாக்-அஸ்வனி தேவர்கள்-அக்ஷ
ரீய முறைகள் முடிவாகக் கருதும் முறையே உபயோக
முறைகளாக வெளிப்படுத்தினார் என்றும் சொல்லப்
படுகிறது.

(b)

Fig. 1 (a) and 1 (b). Photocopy of an Ayurveda book which mentioned Ayurveda as Agasthyavaidhyam in Kolkata



Fig. 2. Agasthya Rishi with his wife Lobamuthra on the banks of Tamirabarani

Agasthya Rasayanam is also called as Agasthya Hareetaki Vasasyana, since Hareetaki — *Terminalia chebula* is one of the key ingredients. It is used to treat chronic respiratory conditions and asthma. Shati — *Hedychium spicatum* and Bala — *Sida cordifolia* acts as rejuvenator. The term *rasayana* means “rejuvenation” and it delays aging process and increases immunity. Depletion of rasa in our body happens due to excessive

stress and change in life style, as a result the homeostasis of body is affected. *Agasthya Rasayanam* balances the homeostasis of an individual and gradually relieves a diseased person from respiratory diseases. It improves respiratory strength and so it is recommended for respiratory diseases such as chronic asthma, bronchitis, insomnia and coughs. Hence, the objective of this article is to list out the key ingredients of *Agasthya Rasayanam* and analyse the individual herbal drug with regard to its medicinal properties as evidenced through earlier research publications.

The Key Ingredients of *Agasthya Rasayanam*

The 23 different herbs which are used in making *Agasthya Rasayanam*, a sastric preparation, is summarised in Table 1.

Table 1: List of Key Ingredients in *Agasthya Rasayanam*

S.No	Ayurvedic Name	Botanical Name	Quantity in old (new) Measures
1	Bilva-Bael	<i>Aegle marmelos</i>	2 palams (96 grams)
2	Syonaka	<i>Oroxylum indicum</i>	2 palams (96 grams)
3	Ghambhari	<i>Gmelina arborea</i>	2 palams (96 grams)
4	Patali	<i>Sterospermum suaveolens</i>	2 palams (96 grams)
5	Ganikarika	<i>Clerodendrum phlomidis</i>	2 palams (96 grams)
6	Shalaparni	<i>Desmodium gangeticum</i>	2 palams (96 grams)
7	Prushniparni	<i>Uraria picta</i>	2 palams (96 grams)
8	Brhati	<i>Solanum nigrum</i>	2 palams (96 grams)
9	Kantakari	<i>Solanum xanthocarpum</i>	2 palams (96 grams)
10	Goksura	<i>Tribulus terrestris</i>	2 palams (96 grams)
11	Atmagupta	<i>Mucuna pruriens</i>	2 palams (96 grams)
12	Shankapushpi	<i>Convolvulus pluricaulis</i>	2 palams (96 grams)

13	Shati	<i>Hedychium spicatum</i>	2 palams (96 grams)
14	Bala	<i>Sida cordifolia</i>	2 palams (96 grams)
15	Hasti-pipali	<i>Piper longum</i>	2 palams (96 grams)
16	Apamarga	<i>Achyranthes aspera</i>	2 palams (96 grams)
17	Pipali	<i>Piper nigrum</i>	2 palams (96 grams)
18	Chitraka	<i>Plumbago zeylanica</i>	2 palams (96 grams)
19	Barngi	<i>Clerodendrum serratum</i>	2 palams (96 grams)
20	Pushkaramoolam	<i>Inula racemosa</i>	2 palams (96 grams)
21	Thailam (oil)	<i>Sesamum indicum</i>	2 palams (96 grams)
22	Hareetaki	<i>Terminalia chebula</i>	2 palams (96 grams)
23	Yava (barley)	<i>Hordeum vulgare</i>	1 Adhaka (3 kg 73 g)

Preparation Method of Agasthya Rasayanam

The 20 herbal ingredients, other than the 3 herbs added later, are cooked in 15 liters or 5 *adhakas* (measurements as per the ayurvedic pharmacopoeia of India) of water till the grains of barley becomes soft. The decoction is strained out and later, 100 fruits of hareetaki, and 12 grams (1 *tula*) of jaggery, 192 grams (1 *kudava*) of ghee, 192 grams (1 *kudava*) of 96 grams of sesame oil and *Piper longum* powder are added and cooked further until it attains *leghyam* status. Finally, 192 grams (1 *kudava*) of honey is added when it is cool.

Dosage and Side Effects

1-2 teaspoons, twice a day either before or after food along with luke warm water or as directed by an Ayurvedic physician. High dosage may cause loose stools. The 23 different herbs used in *Agasthya Rasayanam* have been compiled with their medicinal properties established through research

publications. The summary details of their properties and the authors are given below.

The Medicinal Properties of the 23 Herbals of Agasthya Rasayanam

BAEL — *Aegel marmelos* — rutaceae — possesses anti-helminthic, anti-inflammatory, anti-bilious, anti-parasitical, laxative and nutritive properties (Kala, 2006).

SYONAKA — *Oroxylum indicum* — bignoniaceae — the root bark and stem bark contain flavonoids: oroxylin A, bai calein, chrysin. It possess anti-allergic properties and used in treating asthma, sore throat, laryngitis, the seeds are active on chronic cough and gastric troubles (WHO – Western pacific series -3 – medicinal plants in Vietnam).

GAMBHARI — *Gmelina arborea* — verbenaceae — useful to improve depleted body tissues, chronic respiratory conditions. Leaves used to cure asthma (Soni 2013). It possess anti-inflammatory and anti-cancer properties (Prachi Garodia *et al.*, 2007).

PATALI — *Stereospermum suaveolens* — bignoniaceae — used to cure bronchitis,

pneumonia, coughs, gastritis, rheumatic arthritis (Rahmatullah *et al.*, 2010, Meena *et al.*, 2010, Srivatsava, 2009).

GANIKARIKA — *Clerodendrum phlomidis* — Verbenaceae — root and leaf extract have been used for treatment of asthma (Shrivastava, 2007, Vadnere *et al.*, 2007).

SHALPARNI — *Desmodium gangeticum* — Fabaceae — Cures respiratory diseases (Shankar *et al.* 2017).

PRUSHNIPARNI — *Uria picta* — Fabaceae — Cures cough, fever, gout, ulcer, vomiting (BhagyashriNagarkar *et al.*, 2013).

BRAHTI — *Solanum nigrum* — Solanaceae — cures cough and rejuvenates liver (Jain, 2011).

KANTAKARI — *Solanum xanthocarpum* — solanaceae — cures brochial asthma, fever, and respiratory diseases (Singh, 2010, Parmar *et al.*, 2010).

GOKSURA — *Tribulus terrestris* — Zygophyllaceae—possess anti-urolithiatic activity (Prachi *et al.*, 2009).

ATMAGUPTA — *Mucuna pruriens* — Fabaceae — defends Parkinsonism (Ashok *et al.*, 2007).

SHANKAPUSHPI — *Convolvulus pluricaulis* — Convolvulaceae — cures nerve disorders — (Hussain *et al.*, 2007).

SHATI — *Hedychium spicatum* — Zingeberaceae — cures asthma — (Aqil and Ahmed, 2003, SomeshThapliyal *et al.*, 2014).

BALA — *Sida cordifolia*— Malvaceae — possesses antihelminthic and antioxidant properties (Pawa *et al.*, 2011).

HASTIPIPALI — *Piper longum* — Piperaceae — well known medicine for the diseases of respiratory tract (Manoj *et al.*, 2004).

APAMARGA — *Achyranthes aspera* — Amaranthaceae — antiasthmatic, hepatoprotective, anti-allergic (Srivastav. *et al.*, 2011).

PIPALI — *Piper nigrum* — Piperaceae—anti-microbial, antioxidant (Khalaf *et al.*, 2008).

CHITRAKA — *Plumbago zeylanica* — Plumbagenaceae — cures syphilis, piles, possesses antimicrobial properties (Parekh and Chanda, 2007).

BAARNGI — *Clerodendrum serratum* — Verbenaceae— used for the treatment of asthma and inflammation (Shrivastava and Patel, 2007).

PUSHKARAMOOLAM — *Inula racemosa* — Asteraceae — possesses antimicrobial properties (Lokhande *et al.*, 2007).

TILAM (OIL) — *Sesamum indicum* — Pedaliaceae— possesses wound healing activity (Kotadekiran and Asad, 2008).

HAREETAKI — *Terminalia chebula* — Combretaceae — possesses antimicrobial activity, laxative, antioxidant (Aneja and Joshi 2009).

YAVA (BARLEY) — *Hordeum vulgare* — has low glycemic index and staple food since 2,400 B.C. (Newman and Newman, 2006).

Conclusion

The present review on *Agasthya Rasayanam* reveals that they possess anti-inflammatory, immunomodulatory, antioxidant properties and even some of the ingredients are known to be endowed with anti-cancer properties. These properties of the herbs used in the preparation of *Agasthya Rasayanam* makes it a wonder drug to cure human respiratory

disorders besides conferring rejuvenative benefits to human beings administered with this medicine. The time tested attribute of curing respiratory disorders and immune boosting quality of *Agasthya Rasayanam*,

based on the literature review, could be due to the synergistic effect of the individual herbal components in it which can be further researched along this angle.

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