

RASNA A CONTROVERSY-AN AYURVEDIC REVIEW**Dr. Manish Pamnani***

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ABSTRACT

Ayurvedic medications are generally single or polyherbal formulations. When *Vaidyas* used these different formulations for pain related disorders their first choice is *Rasna* based formulations (eg. *Churna*, *Guggulu*, *Kwatha*). *Rasna* is a well known drug for vitiated *vata pradhana* disorders as in text it is clearly stated that *Rasna vataharanama* by *Acharya Charaka* in *Agraya Dravyas*^[1] But most of them didn't know that *Rasna* is a controversial drug. There are so many botanical sources which are used as *Rasna* in different regions. Further in this article we read about different botanical sources which are used as *Rasna*.

KEYWORDS: *Rasna*, Botanical Source, *Vata* Disorders, *Agrya**Dravyas*.**INTRODUCTION**

As in *Charaka samhita* in *Agrya dravyas* it is clearly stated that *Rasna Vataharanama* means *Rasna* plant is regarded as best for vitiated *Vata pradhana* disorders in which patient complains for pain. Also *Rasnaaguruni Sheetaapnyanapralepanama* is also stated which means *Rasnaaguru pralepa* is used to relieve *sheeta* conditions which is generally developed by vitiated *vata* and *kapha*. In *Ayurveda* second place is given to drug after *Vaidya* because without appropriate drug even a superior *vaidya* can't treat the patient successfully. But now-a-days we are totally unaware of correct and appropriate botanical source of various herbal drugs, *Rasna* is one of them. Nowadays *Vaidyas* focus is only to cure disease on the basis of different market formulations even they don't want to know what the different company is using as botanical source for various herbal drugs which constitute these formulations. When we deeply think about which plant is *Rasna* things become difficult for us. There are so many

botanical sources which are considered as *Rasna*. Out of them to pick the correct source is still difficult for us.

AIM:-Complete study of *Rasna* in different lexicons to reveal and solve this controversy.

METHODOLOGY: - A systemic methodology was followed to go through the literary data. A thorough study was done of different lexicons *Bhavprakash nighantu*, *Adarsh nighantu* etc. and various reference books like *Dravyaguna Vijnana* books of L.Hegde, J.L.N Shastri, were referred.

If we start investigation to reveal the truth, first in texts we have to find why drug named as *Rasna*. In different texts we found various etymologies like-

रस्यते शब्दयते कफ वातजित् इत्यादि गुणयुक्ता

यद्वा रस्यते आस्वादयते शोथादिरोगिभिः इति।।^[2]

Means *Rasna* plant is always praised owing to its *Kapha vatahara* properties. This is the best drug for *Shotha* etc. diseases.

जिहवावत् पत्राणि यस्याः।^[3]

Plant has Leaves like Tongue.

Rasna is classified in:-

Table 1: Showing Description of *Rasna* in Various Lexicons.^[4,5,6]

Different Lexicons	Varga/Gana
• <i>Charaka-</i>	<i>Anuvasanopaga, Vayasthapana Mahakashaya</i>
• <i>Sushruta-</i>	<i>Arkadi gana</i>
• <i>B.P.N</i>	<i>Haritakyadi varga</i>

Previously in *Nighantu kala* each drug is characterized by various synonyms from which we can easily identify them and with help of these synonyms *Guna-karma* of drugs are also expressed. Also in case of *Rasna* these synonyms are mentioned in texts which are described as under.

Table 2: Showing Different Synonyms of *Rasna* according to various texts.^[7]

Synonym	Artha (Meaning)
युक्तरसा/युक्ता	Plant can be used to treat many diseases/Plant has full of Juices.
गंधनाकुली,गंधमूला,सुगन्धा/सुरभी	Leaf has good smell.
एलापर्णी	Leaf resemble to the leaf of <i>Ela</i> plant.
रसादय/अतिरसा/रास्ना/सुवहा/सुरभि	Increases <i>Rasa dhatu</i> .
रस्या/सुरसा	Taste of <i>Rasna</i> is very pleasant.
श्रेयसी	<i>Rasna</i> is regarded as the best drug for <i>Vataroga</i> .
नाकुली	<i>Rasna</i> is liked by mongoose.

If we did not identify the drug or we are in a stage of confusion regarding authenticity of drug in that case *Acharyas* says we had to use the potential drug (*Gunasampna*) on patient and match those actions which drug performs on patient with the *Karmas* mentioned in the texts. If results are same we are in a same direction otherwise our observation are wrong. *Rasna* posses *Tikta Rasa, Guru, Ushna Guna Kaphavatashamaka, Amapachaka, Shotha, Shwasa, Vatarakta, Udarroga, Kasa, Jwara, Visha Nashana* and also alleviates eighty types of *Vata* disorders.

रास्ना युक्तरसा रस्या सुवहा रसना रसा ।

एलापर्णी च सुरसा सुगन्धा श्रेयसी तथा ॥

रास्नामपाचिनी तिक्ता गुरुष्णा कफवातजित् ।

शोथश्वाससमीरास्रवातशूलोदरापहा ।

कासज्वरविषाशीतिवातिकामयसिध्महत् ॥ (B.P.N. HV -163 &164)

Further in texts three types of *Rasna* are also mentioned and in present for that these botanical sources are considered mentioned as under.^[8,9]

रास्ना तु त्रिविधा प्रोक्ता मूलं पत्रं तृणं तथा ।

जेयो मूलदलो श्रेष्ठो तृण रास्ना तु मध्यमा ॥ (रा.नि.)

अथ रास्ना भृंगपत्रा पाषाणादौ प्रजायते ।

गिरौ च लघु रास्ना स्यात् ततो हीन गुणा स्मृता ॥

सुगन्धमूला.एलापर्णी.....।। (शिवदत्त)

Table 3: Showing Botanical Sources for different types of *Rasna* mentioned in *Raj Nighantu*.^[10]

Type	Botanical Source
<i>Mula Rasna</i>	<i>Rauwolfia serpentina</i>
<i>Patra Rasna</i>	<i>Lochnera Rosea</i>
<i>Trina Rasna</i>	<i>Vanda roxburghi/Tesellata</i>

Now-a-days mostly two botanical sources which are mostly used for *Rasna* as per region wise. In northern region *Pluchea lanceolata* is considered as *Rasna*. *Pluchea lanceolata* occurs in upper gangetic plains, Punjab, Rajasthan, Gujarat and other provinces in the plains of Ganga and North West parts of India and in South India *Alpinia calcarata* is considered as *Rasna* which grows very commonly in Karnataka, Kerala and Andhra Pradesh.

***Pluchea lanceolata*:**^[11]-Robust hoary, pubescent woody herb or an erect under shrub, growing up to 1.5 m tall, with whitish or grayish branches. Slender, terete, softly ashy pubescent stem & branches. Leaves are thick, coriaceous, sessile, oblong-oblong lanceolate shaped, narrowed at the base, with a tiny point at the tip, leathery, minutely velvety (Ashy Pubescent) on both surfaces, Alternate phyllotaxy, Margin is entire or obscurely toothed at the tip. Flowers are white pale yellow, florets are pink, outer one are tinged at the apex in headed compound corymbs inflorescence ovoid or bell-shaped. Root is cylindrical, irregularly bent or twisted. Outer Surface is covered with a dark brown thick bark having longitudinal striation and transverse cuts. Bark peels off at no. of places exposing a fibrous creamish tissue Posses spicy odour, Bitter in taste.

***Alpinia calcarata*:**^[12] Root stock is perennial, not tuberous stem is slender leaves are lanceolate in shape having acuminate apex green and glossy, flowers are numerous calyx tube is funnel shaped, ovate-oblong, sessile white in colour ,streaked with purple veins. Two synonyms (*Elaparni and Sugandhmoola*) for *Rasna* used by Acharya Shivdutta clearly shows that leaves of *Alpinia* are simile to *Elettaria cardamomum (Ela)* leaves but not to *Pluchea lanceolata*. *Sugandhamoola* is also more fitted to *Alpinia calcarata* than to *Pluchea lanceolata*.

Table 4: Following Botanical sources which are considered as *Rasna* by Acharya Bapalal Vaidya.^[13]

S.no.	Latin name	Family	Region(In which this plant is considered as <i>Rasna</i>)
1.	<i>Vanda tesellata</i>	<i>Orchidaceae</i>	Bengal
2.	<i>Alpinia galanga</i>	<i>Scitaminae</i>	South India
3.	<i>Pluchea lanceolata</i>	<i>Compositae</i>	North India,Punjab,Gujarat
4.	<i>Viscum album</i>	<i>Loranthaceae</i>	Amritsar
5.	<i>Withania coagulens</i>	<i>Solanaceae</i>	Sindh
6.	<i>Aristolochia indica</i>	<i>Aristolochiaceae</i>	Gujarat
7.	<i>Inula racemosa</i>	<i>Compositae</i>	Maharashtra
8.	<i>Rauwolfia serpentine</i>	<i>Apocynaceae</i>	Bengal
9.	<i>Lochnera rosea</i>	<i>Apocynaceae</i>	Bengal
10.	<i>Enicostemma littorele</i>	<i>Gentianaceae</i>	-----
11.	<i>Dodonea viscosa</i>	<i>Sapindaceae</i>	Andhra Pradesh

DISCUSSION

In my opinion *Alpinia galanga* or *Alpinia calcarata* is considered as *Rasna* because both the synonyms *Elaparni* and *Sugandhmoola* are properly fitted to this not to *Pluchea lanceolata*. But as we mention above it is considered as *Rasna* in South India so it is quite difficult due to many factors (Availability, cost, adulteration and substitution) for *Vaidyas* of North India to use it as *Rasna*. Also according to Acharya Shivdutta *Rasna patra* is Simile to *Bhringpatra* (*Eclipta alba*) this thing properly fitted to *Pluchea lanceolata* not to *Alpinia calcarata* or *galanga*. So in this case we can say that *Pluchea lanceolata* used as *Rasna* is also correct by *Vaidyas* of North India. Other varieties which are mentioned by Acharya Bapalal Vaidya considered as a substitute for *Rasna*.

CONCLUSION

According to region wise both *Alpinia galanga/calcarata* or *Pluchea lanceolata* can be considered as *Rasna*. Also from above discussion various synonyms are also fitted more to these two botanical sources as compared to other. Other botanical sources should be considered as a substitute for *Rasna*. Further research is needed on basis of *Karmukta* like which is more Vatahara or Sheetaapayana by pralepa because in ayurveda most of valuable knowledge is Karmanumaye which we have to reveal out by practical. *Rasna* is also a multidimensional drug which works on various systems

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