

CLASSIFICATION AND DESCRIPTIONS OF *RASA DRAVYA* AS *MAHARASA*, *UPARASA*, *SADHARANA RASA*, *DHATU*, *UPADHATU*, *RATNA*, *UPARATNA*

Dr. Amita Rani*

Associate Professor, Rasashastra Department, Government Ayurveda College, Kota, Rajasthan, India.

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*Corresponding Author: Dr. Amita Rani

Associate Professor, Rasashastra Department, Government Ayurveda College, Kota, Rajasthan, India.

ABSTRACT

Rasashastra is a branch of Ayurveda which primarily focused on preparation and therapeutic utility of *Rasa dravyas*. These substances put great hold in Ayurvedic therapeutics and offers wide range of applicability against many diseases. *Parada* is treated separately in *Rasa Shastra* due to its unique properties, while other mineral substances categorized into different groups including *Maharasa*, *Uparasa*, *Sadharana rasa*, *Dhatu* and *Upadhatu*, *Ratna* and *Uparatna*, *Sudha*, *Sikatha* and *Kshara varga*, *Visha* and *Upavisha*. These groups are classified on the basis of availability and utility, therapeutic uses, potency, physical and chemical properties, prevailing beliefs and practices. Several metal-mineral based substances are comes under the heading of various categories of *Rasa dravyas*. These substances are utilizes for therapeutic purposes as well as for processing of other substances. Considering significance of *Rasashastra* in Ayurveda field, this article provides an overview on the classification and descriptions of various *Rasa dravyas*.

KEYWORDS: *Ayurveda*, *Rasashastra*, *Dravya*, *Maharasa*, *Uparasa*, *Dhatu*.

INTRODUCTION

Rasashastra is a fascinating and complex branch of Ayurveda that focuses on the use of *Rasa dravyas*, which include substances like mercury and other alchemical compounds. These substances are believed to have potent therapeutic properties and are used in various formulations to treat a wide range of diseases. *Rasa dravyas* are classified (**Figure 1**) based on several factors including their utility and relation to mercury (*Rasa*). In

this context substances that enhance the potency of mercury are classified under *Maharasa*.^[1-3] *Abhraka* and *Vaikranta* are placed in this group since they strongly enhances efficacy of Mercury. Substance with slightly less potency is considered as *Uparasa*, while those with very lower potency are categorizes as *Sadharanarasa*. Similarly the classification of *Ratna* and *Uparatna* is based upon their characteristics like hardness of metals.^[3,5]

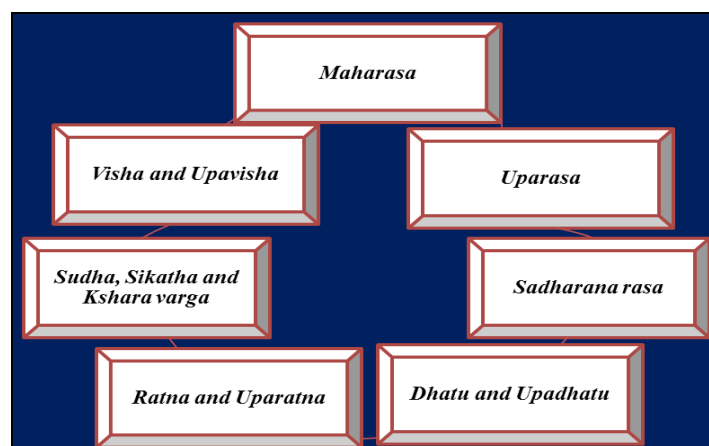


Figure 1: Classification of *Rasa dravyas*.

This classification of *Rasa dravyas* influenced by various factors as follows

- 1. Utility in Parada Processing:** The classification of *Rasa dravyas* may depends upon their utility during the procedures like *Murchana* and *Jarana* of *Parada*, as well as different *Samskaras* of *Parada*.
- 2. Therapeutic Use:** *Rasa dravyas* are used for medicinal purpose, after purification processes. This also becomes basis of their classification including purification measures.
- 3. Potency with Metals or Minerals:** The presence of minerals in these substances contributes towards their potency.

- 4. Physical and Chemical Properties:** Physical appearance and chemical properties of *Rasa dravyas* also influences their classification. For example, *Ratna* is known for their pleasant appearance, while *Sudha varga dravyas* contain calcium.

As mentioned above the various factors play role in the categorization of *Rasa dravyas*, various classes of *Rasa dravyas* includes different substances as depicted in **Table 1**, which utilizes specifically as per requirement of processing and therapeutic demand.^[4-6]

Table 1: Brief description of various categories of *Rasa dravyas*.

Category	Description
<i>Maharasa</i>	Group of minerals important in formulations after <i>Rasa</i> .
<i>Uprasa</i>	Category following <i>Maharasa</i> ; consists of eight minerals.
<i>Sadharana Rasa</i>	Ordinary compounds classified after <i>Maharasa</i> .
<i>Dhatu</i>	Metals termed as <i>Loha varga</i> , extracted from ores.
<i>Upadhatu</i>	Classified after <i>Dhatu</i> s, includes seven minerals.
<i>Ratna</i>	Precious stones with astrological importance and curative powers.
<i>Upratna</i>	Semiprecious gems with less hardness and luster than <i>Ratna</i> .
<i>Sudha-Varga</i>	Substances containing calcium, grouped under <i>Sudha varga</i> .

Maharasa

Dravyas in this classification are potent with metals, used for processing of *Parada* for therapeutic purposes. They include *Abhraka*, *Vaikranta*, *Makshika*, *Vimala*, *Shilajatu*, *Sasyaka*, *Rasaka* and *Chapala*, etc.

Uparasa

These substances have been explained after *Maharasa*, this includes *Gandhaka*, *Gairika*, *Kasisa*, *Kankshi*, *Haratala*, *Manahshila* and *Kankushta*. According to *Anandakanda*, additional substances include *Vartika*, *Makshika*, *Hingula*, *Shilajatu*, *Shankha*, *Bhunaga*, *Tankana*, *Sindura*, *Sambuka*, *Girisindura*, *Gouripashana*, *Kachalavana*, *Kampillaka*, *Visha*, *Saurashtri*, *Shambuka*, *Sabuni*, *Navasara*, *Mruddarashringa*, *Ahiphena*, *Shukti*, *Chinaksara*, *Lavana*, *Gorochana*, *Amlavetasa*, *Guggulu*, *Laksha* and *Kshara*, etc.

Sadharana rasa

These substances are described in *Rasaratna Samuchaya* which includes *Kampillaka*, *Gouripashana*, *Navasara*, *Kapardika*, *Agnijara*, *Girisindura*, *Hingula* and *Mruddarashringa*.

Dhatu varga

Dhatu Varga consists of three main types as follows

- ✓ *Shudha Loha*: Includes *Swarna*, *Rajatha*, *Tamra* and *Loha*.
- ✓ *Putiloha*: Includes *Naga* and *Vanga*.
- ✓ *Mishra Loha*: Includes *Pittala*, *Kansya* and *Varta*.

Rasa Hrudaya Tantra describes this classification differently which includes *Swarna* and *Rajatha* under *Saraloha*, while *Pittala*, *Tamra*, *Abhraka* *Satva* and *Kanta* under the heading of *Satvaloha*. *Naga* & *Vanga* are categorized under the *Putiloha* sub type of *Dhatu Varga*.^[5-8]

Upadhatu

These substances possess qualities similar to *Dhatu*, however vary somewhat from them. They can be used as *Pratinidhi Dravya* (substitutes) when the actual *Dhatu* is unavailable as follows

- ✚ In the absence of *Swarna*: *Swarnamakshika*
- ✚ In the absence of *Rajata*: *Rajatamakshika*
- ✚ In the absence of *Tamra*: *Tutha*
- ✚ In the absence of *Vanga*: *Kansya*
- ✚ In the absence of *Yashada*: *Riti*
- ✚ In the absence of *Naga*: *Sindura*
- ✚ In the absence of *Loha*: *Shilajatu*

Ratna Varga

These substances are durable, rare, colorful and highly precious, possess transparency, beauty and luster the put significant hold in society and considered costly element. The example includes *Manikya*, *Mukta*, *Pravala*, *Tarkshya*, *Pushparaga*, *Vajra*, *Nila*, *Gomeda* and *Vaidoorya*.

Uparatna

They are *Vaikranta*, *Perojaka*, *Suryakranta*, *Sphatika*, *Candrakanta* and *Rajavarta*.

Sudha varga

This includes substances containing calcium, used for the various processing of *Parada* including *Bandana*, *Mrudukarana* and *Jarana*. They also used for liquefying metals and *Shodhana* of *Haratala*. The drugs included in this category are *Sudha*, *Shambhuka*, *Khatika*, *Samudraphena*, *Godanti*, *Kurmaprushta*, *Svetanjana*, *Kukkutandatwak*, *Mrugashringa*, *Shukti* and *Shankha*.

Visha

These substances are useful in *Rasakarma* and *Rasabandhana*; facilitate digestion of metals by *Parada*. *Sthavara* and *Jangama* are two types of *Visha* according to *Rasa Tarangini*. *Rasendrachintamani* and *Rasamanjari* emphasized different types of *Kanda Visha* including *Saktuka*, *Kalakuta*, *Vatsanabha*, *Mustaka*, *Shringika*, *Halahala*, *Sunama*, *Shankhanabha*, *Haridra*, *Mayura*, *Binduka*, *Sumangala*, *Shuklakanda*, *Raktashringi*, *Pushkara*, *Bhramara*, *Karkotaka* and *Visha*.

Upavisha

Rasaratna Samuchaya described seven types including *Langali*, *Vishamushti*, *Karavira*, *Jayapala*, *Nilaka*, *Kanaka* and *Arka*. *Rasa Tarangini* describes others types including *Ahiphena*, *Vijaya*, *Bhallataka*, *Snuhi Ksheera*, *Vishatinduka*, *Jayapala*, *Dhattura*, *Arka Ksheera*, *Langali*, *Karavira* and *Gunja*.^[7-10]

DISCUSSION

The principles for classifying *Rasa dravyas* include equipment used, method of preparation, form of the final preparation, heating pattern and properties of substances. *Lohavedha* and *Dehavedha* are two important aspects related to the mercury, substances which are important for achieving *Lohavedha* are categorizes under the *Maharasa* group. Substances responsible for *Dehavedha* were classified under the heading of *Uparasa*.

Rasa dravyas possesses distinct identities, metals classified as *Loha/Dhatu*s depending on their metallic aspects; *Ratnas* categorizes based on their attractiveness and *Visha dravyas* grouped based on their poisonous behavior. Classification of *Rasa dravyas* involves various categories such as; *Maharasa*, *Uparasa*, *Sadharanarasa*, *Dhatu*, *Upadhatu*, *Ratna*, *Uparatna*, *Visha* and *Upavisha*.^[8-11]

CONCLUSION

The various classes of *Rasa dravyas* includes different categories such as; *Maharasa*, *Uparasa* and *Sadharanarasa*, etc. These different *dravyas* enhances efficacy of mercury and involves in processing of mercury. *Maharasa* substances are potent and used to enhance efficacy of *Rasa*, *Uparasa* are less potent crucial for processes of mercury and *Sadharanarasa* are less effective and used for various purposes. Herbal products along with mineral and metal contribute towards the mercurial processing and imparts many therapeutic properties. *Rasa dravyas* include various minerals,

mercurial and metallic substances which are well known for their potency against numerous diseases. These drugs grouped into different classes such as *Maharasa*, *Uparasa*, *Sadharana Rasa*, *Dhatu* and *Upadhatu*, *Ratna* and *Uparatna*, *Sudha*, *Sikatha*, *Kshara Varga*, *Visha* and *Upavisha*. These substances undergo *Shodhana* and *Marana* to ensure their safety and efficacy, widely used in Ayurveda to treat disorders, also promote tissue rejuvenation and enhance vitality and longevity, etc.

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