ISSN (Online): 2455-3662
EPRA International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research (IJMR) - Peer Reviewed Journal
Volume: 12| Issue: 10| October 2026|| Journal DOI: 10.36713/epra2013 || SJIF Impact Factor 2026: 8.753 || ISI Value: 1.188

Rasala: AN AYURVEDIC NUTRACEUTICAL PREPARATION-A REVIEW

Dr. Harsha G[1], Dr. Jagadeesh Mayya[2], Dr. Yashaswini H N[3]

[1]3rd Year PG Scholar, Department of Rasashastra and Bhaishajya Kalpana, ALN Rao Memorial Ayurvedic medical college and Hospital Kachkal road, Koppa 577126

[2]Professor, Department of Rasashastra and bhaishajya kalpana, ALN Rao Memorial Ayurvedic medical college and Hospital Kachkal road, Koppa 577126

[3]Assistant Professor, Department of Swasthvritta & Yoga, Bapuji Ayurvedic Medical College & Hospital, Shivmogga 577204

1. INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary landscape of global health, the concept of nutraceuticals, substances that provide medical or health benefits, including the prevention and treatment of disease has gained significant traction. *Ayurveda*, the ancient Indian system of medicine, has long recognized the dual role of diet as both sustenance and medicine, encapsulated in the concept of *Ahara* as *Aushadha*[1]. Among the diverse array of traditional preparations, *Rasala* stands out as a unique functional food that bridges the gap between culinary enjoyment and therapeutic intervention.

Rasala[2] is a classical Ayurvedic preparation belonging to the category of *Dadhi Kalpana*. Historically, it has been valued not only for its palatable nature but also for its specific health-promoting properties. In the tradition of *Rasa Shastra* and *Bhaishajya Kalpana*, which focuses on the pharmaceutics of Ayurvedic medicines, *Rasala* exemplifies the sophisticated use of dairy products and spices to create preparations that are easily assimilable and nutritionally dense. This review aims to systematically analyze the available evidence regarding the nutraceutical potential of Rasala and its components within the framework of modern pharmacology and traditional Ayurvedic wisdom.

2. METHODS

This review article was compiled through a systematic examination of unique scholarly papers aggregated from various scientific databases, including SciSpace, Google Scholar, and PubMed. The search strategy focused on terms such as *"Rasala," "Rasala Kalpana,"* "Ayurvedic functional foods," and specific ingredients like "*Dadhi*" (curd), "Sita" (sugar), and "*Maricha*" (black pepper).

The literature search was structured to cover:

- Classical references to Rasala and its preparation methods.
- The nutritional and phytochemical profiles of its primary ingredients.
- Pharmacological evidence supporting the therapeutic claims associated with these ingredients.
- The contemporary relevance of Ayurvedic preparations as nutraceuticals.

Given the scarcity of modern clinical trials specifically focused on the composite preparation "*Rasala,*" the review adopts a component-based analysis, synthesizing evidence from studies on its constituent parts and their synergistic effects as described in the context of *Ahara-Dravya* and *Rasayana* therapy .

3. RESULTS: COMPOSITION AND PREPARATION OF *RASALA*

3.1 Classical Ingredients and Rationale

Rasala is fundamentally a dairy-based functional food. While modern variants exist, the classical preparation relies on several key components, each contributing a specific nutritional or pharmacological profile:

1. ***Dadhi*(Curd/Yogurt)[3]:** The base of *Rasala* is *Dadhi*, which is recognized in *Ayurveda* as a nourishing and probiotic-rich substance . It provides essential macro- and micronutrients and serves as a vehicle (*Anupana*) for the spices included in the preparation.
2. ***Sita* (Sugar/Jaggery)[4]:** Used to balance the sourness of the curd and provide immediate energy. Sugar in *Ayurveda* is often used to enhance the *Brumhana* (nourishing) effect of dairy .
3. **Spices (*Maricha*[5], *Ela*[6], *Lavanga*[7]):** Black pepper (*Maricha*), cardamom (*Ela*), and clove (*Lavanga*) are standard additions. These spices are known for their *Deepana-Pachana* (digestive and carminative) properties, which counteract the heavy (*Guru*) nature of curd.
4. **Variants:** Some traditional texts mention the addition of camphor (*Karpura*)[8] or honey, further diversifying the phytochemical profile of the preparation.

3.2 Pharmaceutical Preparation (*Rasala Kalpana*)

Fresh curd was suspended in muslin cloth for 10 hours to drain the whey, yielding a concentrated solid curd mass. Powdered sugar was whisked into the curd until fully dissolved. Followed by boiled & cooled milk is added to impart a smooth, silky consistency. A finely powdered spice blend of Ela, Lavanga, Maricha, and Karpura was sprinkled in and whisked uniformly to obtain a homogeneous, lump-free paste.

4. DISCUSSION: NUTRACEUTICAL AND PHARMACOLOGICAL RATIONALE

4.1 Probiotic and Digestive Benefits

The primary nutraceutical value *of Rasala* stems from its curd base. Modern science classifies fermented dairy products as functional foods due to their probiotic content,

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which supports gut health and enhances nutrient absorption. In Ayurveda, *Dadhi* is considered *Vata-nashaka* (balancing the Vata dosha) and *Balya* (promoting strength). The inclusion of black pepper (*Maricha*) and other spices provides a synergistic effect; for instance, the piperine in black pepper is known to enhance the bioavailability of various nutrients and phytochemicals. This combination makes Rasala an excellent preparation for managing gastrointestinal disorders like *Grahani* (malabsorption syndrome), where maintaining gut flora is crucial.

4.2 Antioxidant and Rejuvenative (*Rasayana*) Potential

Rasala can be classified as a *Nithya Rasayana* (daily rejuvenator) because it provides continuous nourishment and helps maintain systemic health. The ingredients, particularly Sita & spices, contribute a significant amount of antioxidants, such as flavonoids and phenolic acids. These compounds help mitigate oxidative stress, a key factor in aging and chronic diseases.

Comparative analysis with other Ayurvedic preparations like *Chyawanprash* or *Amalaki Rasayana* reveals that while *Rasala* is simpler in composition, it shares the common goal of enhancing *Ojas* (vitality) and immunity. The *Rasayana* effect of dairy-based preparations is well-documented in classical texts, emphasizing their role in longevity and the replenishment of vital fluids (*Rasa Dhatu*).

4.3 Synergy of Ingredients

The specific combination of ingredients in Rasala serves multiple functional roles:

- **Immunomodulation:** Preparations involving dairy and spices have been shown to possess immunomodulatory effects, enhancing the body's defense mechanisms against communicable and non-communicable diseases.
- **Cardiovascular Support:** Ingredients like cardamom have been linked to cardiovascular protection through glycemic regulation and antioxidant defense.
- **Metabolic Health:** Though sweet, the overall glycemic index of Rasala is moderated by the fat content of the curd and the metabolic-stimulating properties of the spices, making it a balanced nutraceutical option.

5. LIMITATIONS

The primary limitation of this review is the lack of specific clinical data on the *"Rasala"* preparation as a whole. Most available studies focus on the individual components (curd, black pepper, raisins) rather than the synergistic Ayurvedic formulation. Furthermore, the classical descriptions of Rasala vary slightly across different texts, leading to potential differences in nutritional composition. Future research should focus on standardized preparation and clinical trials to validate the classical claims of its *Hridya* and *Brumhana* effects in modern populations.

6. CONCLUSION

Rasala is a quintessential Ayurvedic nutraceutical that exemplifies the ancient wisdom of functional nutrition. By combining the probiotic benefits of *Dadhi* with the carminative and antioxidant properties of traditional spices and fruits, it offers a multi-pronged approach to health maintenance. Within the department of Rasa Shastra, Rasala serves as an important bridge between dietetics and pharmaceutics, providing a palatable and effective vehicle for systemic rejuvenation and digestive health. As modern interest in functional foods grows, preparations like Rasala warrant further scientific exploration to integrate their benefits into contemporary clinical practice.

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