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**REVIEW ARTICLE** 

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### Achara Rasayana: A substantial reference that can determine character formation in children

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#### ABSTRACT

Character, being an aggregate of physical & mental traits that can distinguish and individualize a person, marks its emergence right from early childhood. Since formation of character is a gradual process, influence of parents, teachers, friends, the people they talk to frequently, the food habits they follow, the circumstances they pass through, the books they read, the cinemas and videos they watch, influence of social media, the environment they live in etc. plays a very vital role in shaping a child's personality. *Ayurvedic* concepts like *Dinacharya*, *Rithucharya*, *Sadvritta*, *Achara Rasayana*, remain as concepts in the texts and it is a necessity now, to inculcate these habits in daily life of children, in the early period of growth itself as it can pave a path to healthy physique & happy mental status throughout their livelihood. *Achara Rasayana*, a set of factors that include all these influential factors listed one by one, is till date valid yet unexplored to its fullest applicability. **Aim:** To evaluate the contents of *Achara Rasayana* and explore the ways in which it can influence character framing in children. **Conclusion:** The values prescribed in *Achara Rasayana* serves as milestones for step-by-step modification of character, if followed from early childhood. These factors are to be practiced daily, or included in the new education system as they can influence in creating quality minds and sustain it throughout the life, maintaining physical, mental, social, spiritual upgradation ending in health. Parents, educators, near surroundings of the children, should be aware of the actuality and train them with these core values to build in a healthy society.

Key words: Achara Rasayana, Rasayana, Bala Rasayana, Childhood character, Character formation

#### **INTRODUCTION**

Character, being an aggregate of physical & mental traits that can distinguish and individualize a person, marks its emergence right from early childhood. As Stephen R Covey once said, "Our character is basically a composite of our habits" and it is these daily deeds

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that can determine our destiny. Since formation of character is a gradual process, influence of parents, teachers, friends, the people they talk to frequently, the food habits they follow, the circumstances they pass through, the books they read, the cinemas and videos they watch, influence of social media, the environment they live in etc. plays a very vital role in shaping a child's personality. It is high time that we interfere in these influential and see to what the probable outcomes of it are, in molding our child's character. Achara Rasayana<sup>[1]</sup>, a set of factors that include all these influential factors listed one by one, is till date valid yet unexplored to its fullest applicability. In this article, we would emphasize on the relevant criteria of Achara Rasayana, that can determine and shape the character in children, if practiced in a day-today basis. Ayurvedic concepts like Dinacharya, Rithucharya, Sadvritta, Achara Rasayana, remain as concepts in the texts and it is a necessity now, to

inculcate these habits in daily life of children, in the early period of growth itself as it can pave a path to healthy physique & happy mental status throughout their livelihood. Basically, character formation of the children can lead to a vibrant & capable youth who can upbring our nation into a full-fledged and developed form.

#### **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

Since there are very less references with the applicability of the important Ayurveda concepts like Dinacharya, Rithucharya, Sadvritta, Achara Rasayana, and their influences in children, there was a necessity to understand the same in a better manner. Acknowledging the lack of sufficient information regarding the influence of Acharaya Rasayana, which can play a substantial role in the determination of character, raised the need of compiling the same. That would illuminate the necessity of properly inculcating these referential in the day-to-day life practices of children that can pave to a capable youth for our nation. The approach consisted of thorough searching of several resources which includes Ayurvedic treatises, books, dissertations, conference proceedings and web based scientific databases. The key words that were used for the search consists of character formation in children, stages of character formation, Achara Rasayana related articles, Achara Rasayana in character formation, social media in child health etc.. Doing proper literary review revealed that there is less tries to enfold the same and apply it in the children education system which resulted in this reviewing of the topic.

#### **ACHARA RASAYANA**

The core aspects of *Achara Rasayana*, reveals the necessary role that it can play in bringing up a person's character. India, being a country known for its tradition and culture, but losing its identity in the recent pasts, needs capable youth with virtues highlighting the same for establishment of values throughout the world, as they are interestingly peeping onto our fashion. For this reason, if we could infuse these virtues into young minds, it can bring in justifiable and capable citizens, who understands the power of this culture &

traditional inputs & they can contribute better to globalizing *Ayurveda*. Initially one should know how to interpret these substantial references of *Achara Rasayana* with relevance to the present-day character of children.

- Sathyavadinam (being truthful) Being truthful to one's own self is one of the keys to maintain a healthy mind. Being trustworthy attracts the surrounding and if maintained well, results in happy relationships. This can comfort the stressful minds, if they go wrong and thereby help to maintain the equilibrium between the inner self and physique.
- 2. Akrodham (anger free) When you are in anger, never take decisions is what old theories says. This makes it clear that anger is a capable factor that can dysregulate the mind. Being free from anger, needs immense will power and tolerability. Whenever anger arises, it imbalances the tranquility within, thereby making the body, host a disease process.
- 3. Nivritha Madhya (avoiding alcohol) One should restrain the intake of alcoholic drinks, as it has power to alter the levels of consciousness in a person. When someone is unaware of the surroundings, he has an extraordinary fearlessness that can destroy him from being himself. The risks that associate with it are even worse than they really are.
- 4. Nivritha Maithuna (following celibacy) Maintaining celibacy is a requirement in the study duration as it improves the ability of the child to concentrate. This fantasy world that distracts you to the core can even be affecting the health, both physically and psychologically. Following celibacy, indicates a balance between the sexual urges as well as the real-life circumstances, which can fulfill the desires but simultaneously shape your internal & external behavior.
- 5. Ahimsa (free from violence) Engaging in creating harm to self or surrounding, in the form of physical attacks, disturbing the stability of mind verbally, creating an adverse scene emotionally etc. can

demolish the health not only in you but to your supporting system too. A wise person does not follow violence to pave his path, whereas he carves his own destiny being different from many in the scene.

- 6. Anayasam (be relaxed) & Prashantham (stay calm) To sustain the relaxed nature of body and to maintain the calmness of mind, one must be brave, brave enough to analyze what he sees, what he hears, what he speaks and what he does. If you are aware of the sequels of your actions, that marks you special amongst others.
- 7. Priya Vadinam (having pleasant talks) Healthy talks, between the wise, help you uplift the level of knowledge that you possess. Acknowledging where to talk and where not to, determines the quality of a person. A child with positive attitude is framed out if you can instill this in early childhood.
- 8. Japa Nithyam (offering daily prayers) Performing daily prayers and rituals point towards our culture & traditions. Being a part of it, creates a space for exploring yourself to understand who you are, what your responsibilities are, what your strengths are and how to utilize it fearlessly. Prayers does not mean going to a religious space and offer yourself there but channels a path to analyze your inner self and uplift it to a better one.
- 9. Shoucha Nithyam (maintaining hygiene) -Hygiene, is a part of daily routine that brings in purity externally as well as internally. Pure mind ends up in good deeds which restore energy & vitality daily. This also helps in preventing infectious diseases when children get exposure to it even more.
- 10. Dheeram (having courage) Having courage to speak and do what is worthier is a characteristic feature of strong minds. Stronger the mind is healthier the actions would be.
- 11. Tapasvinam (performing meditation) Imbibing the self-worthy religious practices heals the wounds of minds, help you relax better and aids a comfortable and logical decision-making skill.

Knowing yourself better assists in self creativity & productivity. Rendering your worries to the supreme power that you believe in raises your inner self and make one free from worries.

- 12. Deva Go Brahmana Acharva Guru Vriddha Archaneratham (worshipping) - Is there anyone in the world who was born with a good character, who knew what is right & what is wrong? Indeed, it is one's privilege that he can portray himself as a better person being influenced by the surrounding people & nature. It is through the guidance of parents, teachers, and the elderly, that slowly one understands the secrets of healthy living making them capable of taking wise decisions. In early childhood, it is difficult to estimate what is good & which remains bad, what is right & what is wrong, and it is through the inputs of surrounding that one can be in a circle of wellness, safe & secure. A specific time each day should be kept aside to show gratitude to the people who helped you to be a better version of yours.
- 13. Anrishamsya Param Nithyam (being loving and compassionate) Anyone in his livelihood, should remain kindhearted and instill in himself the seeds of compassion & love. This is when you realize the feeling of the needy, consider yourself in their pants and react. That can make you a simple but attractive personality.
- 14. Nithyam Karuna Vedinam (being kind) In the self-evolutionary process, one need to be kind for himself & the society, as the way one speaks, the mannerisms one follow, the deeds a person perform, the skills, the thoughts, differentiates a person from others. This specifies the individuality of a person & highlights him from peers.
- 15. Sama Jagarana Swapnam (having balanced sleep habits) Balanced sleep habits is a key to sustainable health status. Only when you avail sufficient sleep, your mind can bring in fresh thoughts & ideas; it can work to its fullest capabilities ensuring health.
- 16. Nithyam Ksheera Ghrita Ashanam (consuming milk & ghee daily) Daily intake of milk & ghee,

that are considered as a *Satwik* food, not only aids the digestion process but aggravates the metabolism rate, in turn resulting in appropriate bowel habits. This serves as the primary target in prevention of diseases along with promotion of intellect.

- 17. Desha Kala Pramananjam (being aware of place & time) Knowing the place & period you live in, adapting to daily deeds in accordance with the same, makes you a person, easily merging with nature. This can alter body mechanisms in relation with the environment you live in and prepares body to overcome any untoward effects.
- 18. Yukthiknjam (having logical creativity) Logical thinking paves a road to precise actions, which is considered as smart work. Rather than working harder, if you plan yourselves to attain target in a balanced way, it can save time and energy.
- 19. Anahankritham (without ego) Being confident in your strengths propels your caliber into the next level in achieving destiny, but performing duties with extreme ego not only distracts the target but makes the path towards it more tangled.
- 20. Shastha Acharam Asankeernam (being simple) -By being generous and maintaining a simple but disciplined life, it aims at achieving higher targets, making one stronger day-by-day. The admiration given to such a person is often acceptable by all.
- 21. Adhyatma Pravanendriyam (with well oriented sense organs) To evolve yourself, you should be in a conscious state of mind, aware of the power of your sense organs, the ability of them to change your strength physically & emotionally and have a good control in each of them. Only then, achieving greater heights is reachable for a normal man, without deviating from the right tract.
- 22. Upasana for Vridhanam Asthikanam Jithatmanam (having company of elders, theists & the persons having self-control) Showing due respect to the elderly, to people who offer true devotion on their religion and persons who have attained control on their self, is part of respecting

achievers. The qualities they can make you imbibe, is already proven and hence need not doubt it further. This can help your path a trouble free one and assist you to prepare yourselves in facing them wisely. You also gain the blessings of these achievers, which is inevitable for your success.

23. Dharma Sastra Param (devoted to holy scripts) Believing in the books written by the experienced
Sages, making them as references that you can rely
upon, eases the route, and imbibes moral values in
you. To be confident from within, they are proven
thoughts, gifted in a nutshell for the ones having
complete dedication to their work.

The purpose of abiding by Rasayana therapy include, attaining a long life, enhancing memory, improving intellect, providing general health, maintaining youthfulness and luster, helps in betterment of complexion, aids digestion, strengthen the immunity and senses, clarifies the speech<sup>[2]</sup> etc. Emphasizing Achara Rasayana, the general code and conducts, amongst all other Rasayana Dravyas, makes it clear that these are simple to follow or rather are ways to prevent unhealthy living so that a productive and an efficient society is created. But these are ethical codes which are to be inculcated in a very young age or middle age, after being undergone the purificatory procedures physically and being prepared with clarity in mind. [3] The mightiness of this simple codes and conducts roots even up to the cellular and tissue levels, providing quality organelle and luster.

#### **DISCUSSION**

Kindness towards all living beings, sacrificing worldly pleasures, having self-control on one's physical and mental attributes, the ability of mind to stay happy in other's victory, are the glimpses of *Sadvritta*, establishing a good character. [4] *Ayurveda* being a science believing in prevention of disease rather than managing a manifested one, furnishes virtues like *Dinacharya*, *Rithucharya*, *Sadvritta*, *Achara Rasayana*, that has to be made a habit, providing *Adhyatma Dravya Guna Sangraha*. *Manos*, *Mano Artha*, *Bhuddhi*, *Atma* constitutes *Adhyatma Dravya Guna Sangraha* and its proper coordination can result in good deeds

and improper one leads to bad deeds, as put forth in Sadvritta. [5] Even though many types of Unmada (psychiatric illness) are explained in our treatises, on the conclusionary remarks, admitting the reality, it is emphasized that these names are merely for the sake of diagnosing a manifestation, and it is based on one's personal deeds and misdeeds that a disease result in. [6] From this, it is crystal clear that manifestation of a disease is relied upon one's behavior, highlighting the necessity of an appropriate character which marks its beginning from early childhood. Dhi, being the intellectual aspect, decides what is good and what remains bad in daily life, Dhriti, which is the ability to control oneself following a disciplined life, and Smriti, being the memory factor that decides future having past knowledge, the deviation of this combo is Pranjnaparadha, serving as the prime cause of disease manifestation, provoking all Shareerika and Masika Doshas.[7] The values in Achara Rasayana, has ability to enhance Dhi, Dhriti, Smriti, keeping Pranjnaparadha, making children perform to their fullest capacity. Intake of milk and ghee daily, can improve these mental faculties providing immense braveness and intellect. Adharma, the Moola Karana of varying the air, water, land and seasonal qualities, results in Janapadodhwamsa (pandemics), making it clear how a misbehaving citizen can contribute to national insecurities.[8] Every decade being passed with declining of one fourth of Dharma, the quality of the generations passing by is deteriorating day by day. [9] Hence, the necessity of following Achara Rasayana arises. Even when the Prakriti of a person is unalterable, some modifications can be established by increasing Satwa Guna. The aim of following Achara Rasayana is to enhance the Satwa Guna in a person that is necessary for leading a healthy personal and social life.

Academic success goes proportionate with the quality character building, which in turn ends up in excellent emotional, spiritual, social well-being thereby providing a favorable physical health. [10] This excellency can be attained only when the education system in homes and schools provide a packaged systematic approach at an early age itself, by instilling

basic personality framing qualities in a slow but understandable fashion. It is not only the classroom learning that shapes him out, but comprehensive, continuous, integrative approach in a step-by-step manner involving the child's parents, teachers, friends, and frequent assessments of the same can mold an individualized attitude in children. For this, the denotations of Achara Rasayana, holds good. General learning proficiencies like attention, memory, selfregulation, reasoning, problem solving; learning skills like initiation, motivation, curiosity, engagement, persistence; physical development and health related safety, nutrition, growth, fitness, sensory and motor development; cognitive skills and concept knowledge in general subjects and specific topics; social skills like relational security, empathy, relatedness, communication; emotional regulation and mental wellbeing are the domains of early learning and child development.[11] Interestingly, the ingredients of Achara Rasayana, contains all these virtues in a cocoon form. Being a substantial reference that can determine the character formation in children, the elements of Achara Rasayana can be categorised into personal, nutritional, psychological, spiritual, social behavioural aspects, which are keys to child development. The elements numbered 1, 3, 4, 9, 15 speaks regarding personal empowerment whereas 16 indicates the nutrition related concerns. 2, 6, 10, 17, 18, 21 emphasises the necessity of emotional or psychological maturity and 8, 11, 12, 22, 23 gives importance to one's spiritual supremacy. None the less, 5, 7, 13, 14, 19, 20 are valued for their excellence related to social and behavioural perspective. Hence this Nithya Rasyana<sup>[12]</sup> can create wonders interfering in the child's developmental process, sustaining him as the best every time.

The experiences of the children at their homes and schools vary and for this reason is learning proficiencies in children differ. These executive functions notably depend on the development of the pre frontal cortex specially in children of kindergarten and preschool age. [13] Development of language skills initiates at infancy itself, progress to mature by observing parent and surrounding talks, imitating friends and family,

using gestures and attains excellency by the age of two to four. [14] Rapid brain growth being a characteristic feature in infancy and toddling age, emphasises the importance of brain exercises in a very young age. It is important to acknowledge the role of socio-emotional aspects in early childhood education, as an improper approach can result in persistent socialising difficulties and behavioural problems.[15] This justifies the relevance of cultivating character framing blocks of Achara Rasayana in an early period itself. Regularising them makes a child healthy in all aspects, aiding him to become an achiever always. The basic virtues like trust truthfulness is inevitable for valuable relationships, organisational cultures and in framing a quality society. It is only then that others reciprocate the same trust and honesty, helping in framing a constructive relation.[16] Anti-social conducts, abnormal personal development etc. are influenced by one's ability to express anger. Moreover, the child attains control over his own senses, achieves targets of his life, have a neat behavior with near ones, and establish a better self, by adopting steps to analyze and control self-anger.[17] Various academic concerns, school droppings, altered behaviour, drug abuse, sexual pervasion related disorders, unintentional drink and drive related incidents are associated with early initiation of alcohol usage.[18] Starting from foetal alcoholic syndrome in infancy to emotional and conduct problems in adulthood, development of alcoholism in early adulthood are evolved with parents being chronic alcoholics.[19] It is the near surroundings of children, along with media, that influence education related to sexual aspects, related thoughts and perceptions in kids. In later life, the children who gained an age appropriate sex education appears to be even more stable in relationships with opposite gender than the other.[20] Teenagers spends an accountable period of time in the company of diametric gender and thinking of them which reduces their time from academic pursuits. More is the risk of unplanned pregnancies, sexually transmitted infections, abortions, when sexual intercourse is started at a young age, even subtracting academic and school achievements.[21] Experiencing violence with peers or elders, children may present with difficulty in framing

emotional attachments, restrain from being close with others, have an unpredictable behaviour, making it difficult in consoling them whenever required, which becomes a difficult task to discipline them. An interruption in their routine may end in self injurious habits, rage, and violence. [22] There are evidences that states poor physical and mental health sequels are proportionate with adversities in childhood, like parental neglect, poor socio economic profile, early foster life etc.[23] Having the ability to rapidly learn moral values, practices has to be information, cultivated in the early childhood itself. Protection and care, interactions and relations, stimulations and learning are the necessary determinants of adult behaviour and learning them in childhood creates a robust base for an independent adulthood. Morality here indicating a control over self-desires and senses, paves its way to spirituality, irrespective of whether the child is inclined towards it. Unformed virtues should never be rejected as faults of children, and care should be taken not to interfere in child development process but suggest and observe them growing.[24] By performing daily meditation techniques, conflicting thoughts resolves, a sense of connectedness arises and being a step wise process, that results in aggravating mind to objectless focus. This can help in enhanced skill development and matured decision making. [25] Growth and development of children is influenced by the hours of efficient sleep at night, which is around 9-11 hours for children aged 6-13, helping them minimise the behavioural alterations, cognitive deficits enhancing learning and memory consolidation. Diminished concentration, reasoning and problem solving ability arise due to insufficient sleep, hampering task completion ability. Disorganised sleep also impairs academic performances in children aged 8-16.[26] Instruction influenced character building training can contribute to student's academic achievements, communication skills, self-confidence and independence, framing the principle values like kindness, honesty, generosity, tolerance, loyalty, respect etc., contributing much to a vibrant youth for nation.[27] Health of school going children is prime concern for all parents as poor personal hygiene result in frequent diarrhoeal diseases, worm infestation, skin

diseases and dental diseases. When staying in a group the transmission of this is even more easier and acknowledging the same and implementing strategies for preventing it can help children stay disease free. [28]

#### **CONCLUSION**

Accepting the fact that there are scarce studies on how morality of Achara Rasayana can be applied in present day, how it can determine the character framing in children, raised the need of a review regarding the same. These character-building blocks, when practiced becoming habits can help in creating a young, vibrant, and brave youth for our nation, having all the core values of our culture and tradition, which is on its path to decline. In short, the values prescribed in Achara Rasayana serves as milestones for step-by-step modification of character, if followed from early childhood. These factors are to be included in the new education system as they can influence in creating quality minds and sustain it throughout the life, maintaining physical, mental, social, upgradation ending in health. Parents, educators, near surroundings of the children, should be aware of the actuality and train them with these core values to build in a healthy society.

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