HISTORY AND EVOLUTION OF *VĀJĪKARAŅA*- AN ANCIENT INDIAN CONCEPT OF APHRODISIA

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ABSTRACT

An aphrodisiac is various forms of stimulation or thoughts to arouse sexual excitement. In ancient times a distinction was made between substances that increase fertility versus one that simply increase sex drive. In Indian philosophies, medical and non medical literature approdisiacs are explained under the heading of Vājīkaraņa. Unlike modern aphrodisiacs Indian concept is holistic and balanced approach towards the sexuality of individual. This Vājīkaraṇa concept fulfills right from as a mechanical act to emotional act and from emotional act to social and ultimately spiritual act. Vājīkaraņa drugs are considered for promoting the quantity & quality of semen, for normalizing the erectile dysfunction, promotion of semen production & discharge and ultimately for a good progeny. Many Ayurvedic classics defined Vājīkaraṇa as a separate branch of medicine and mentioned many single and compound aphrodisiacs drugs under Vājīkaraņa. These drugs are also indicated for spermatogenesis, improving erectile function and to mitigate various other male infertility problems. Along with various Ayurvedic classics, Vatsyāyanā's classic work "Kāmasūtra" (Aphorisms of love), Kalyanamalla's "Anangaranga", Kucimāratantra and various other contemporary texts also express Indian attitude towards sex as a central and natural component of Indian psyche and life.

Key words: Ayurveda, *Vājīkaraṇa*, Aphrodisiac, *Vātsyāyana Kāmasūtra*, *Anaṅgaraṅga*

Introduction

History of aphrodisiacs is as old as history of civilization. Ancient Indians zeal for sexual fulfillment and good progeny is witnessed from the period of *Veda*. In *Aṣtāngāyurveda* (eight branches of Ayurvedic medicine) *Vṛṣya* or *Vājīkaraṇa* is considered as a separate branch of medicine. Many medieval Ayurvedic and contemporary classics have given much

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concern over $V\bar{a}j\bar{i}karana$ and many of the drugs and diet mentioned for this purpose are well known and easily available. A review on evolution of $V\bar{a}j\bar{i}karana$ from Vedic period to present era and studying the indicated drugs and diet enlightens ancient Indian wisdom and enriches the present field of aphrodisia.

Veda

Men are advised to drink the recipes which enhance semen virile to cause pregnancy (garbhakaraṇaṁ piba)¹. Vājīkaraṇa is defined as a medicine which enhances manly vigor, (to copulate with high energy like horse) and also makes the diseased to normal².

It is further emphasized that *Uduṣa* (dawn or first light of day) stimulates the sexual organs and the sun lends excitement. The semen enhancing and health protecting drug named *Vṛṣa* causes sexual excitement and erection of the male sexual organ³. Vedic hymn stresses the role of these aphrodisiac drugs to erect the fallen and weak organ (penis) with full of vigor and semen⁴. Lord *Indra*, Lord *Sarasvati*, God of Fire and physicians are worshiped to bless the weak with vigor similar to that of strong man to stiffen the penis like bow⁵⁻⁶. A herb named *Śēpaharṣiṇi* is considered as essence of herbs and waters, brother of divine herb *Soma* and nourisher of semen ^{7,8}. Usage of this herb is explained to extend the organ like the rope of bow, with strength similar to a horse, a mule, a he-goat, a ram, a bull and hill horse (*Tayādara*) ^{6,9, and 10}. Further it is indicated to enhance capacity of male for an unfatigued attack over their partners as a tiger or bear attacks the deer¹¹⁻¹². Impotency in man was considered as great problem for wife in Vedic age and woman having an impotent man as husband are known as *Vadhrimati* ^{13, 14, 15}. The Aṣvins (Vedic Gods) are generally invoked to restore the virility in men^{16,17, 18}.

Skanda Purāņa

According to this text Brahma (God of creation) had given Manmatha (the God of love) twelve places namely women's side glances, tresses of hairs, buttocks, breasts, navel, armpits, lower lip resembling tender shoots, young maidens and spring season, cooing of cuckoo, moon light and advent of monsoon. This reference gives an idea about erotic or aphrodisiac woman body parts, aphrodisiac locations and situations¹⁹.

Garuda Purāņa

Mahāṣāli (a variety of rice) ²⁰, Laghupañcamūla²¹ namely Śālaparṇi (Desmodium gangeticum DC), Pṛṣṇiparṇi (Uraria picta Desr), Bṛhati (Solanum indicum Linn), Kaṇṭakāri (Solanum xanthocarpum Schatd & Wendi) and Gōkṣura (Tribulus terrestis Linn), ripen mango²² and rock salt²³ are mentioned as aphrodisiac drugs.

Pañcatantra

Shyness, friendship, melodious voice, intellect, brilliance of youth, enjoying the sensuality of women, equanimity within the species, absence of sorrow/misery, carnal pleasure, religion, scriptures, intelligence of *Brhaspati* (the teacher of Gods), hygiene, concern about good behavior - all these occur only when the creatures' stomach is full.

This elegant Subhāṣita from Viṣṇuṣarma's Pañcatantra clearly indicates the necessity of appropriate and adequate food/nutrition, a requisite for having the right mindset and power for optimum sexual performance²⁴.

Vatsyāyanakāmasūtra

Vatsyāyanakāmasūtra is a chief guide on Hindu erotic literature. In this text in part seven chapter one, many recipes for increasing sexual vigor are explained. Among them milk mixed with sugar, root of the Ucchața (Uțamgan- Blepharis edulis Pers.) and liquorice; drinking milk boiled with testicles of a ram or a goat mixed with sugar; milk boiled with Kapikachubīja (Mucuna pruriens Bek seeds), Vidārīkanda (Pueraria tuberosa DC) and Ksīrikā (Manilkara hexandra Roxb.); milk boiled with Priyālabīja (Buchuanania lanzan spreng), Vidārīkanda (Pueraria tuberosa DC) and Morata (Maerua arenaria Hook f. & Th.); sweet dish (Pāyas) prepared from black gram, milk and sugar; sweet dish (Pāyas) prepared from ghee, honey, sugar, liquorice, Madurasa (Marsdenia tenacissima W&A); rice boiled with the eggs of the sparrow, milk, ghee and added with honey; sesamum seeds boiled with milk, eggs of sparrows and mixed with sugar, ghee, fruits of the Śringāṭaka (Trapa bispinosa Roxb.), flour of wheat and beans; Intake of milk boiled with Satāvari (Asparagus racemosus Willd), Śvadamstra (Tribulus terrestis Linn), Gudūci (Tinospora cordifolia (willd) Miers), long pepper and liquorice along with added honey and ghee; drinking boiled ghee or clarified butter in the morning during the spring season; Intake of powder of the seed of the Svadamstra (Tribulus terrestis Linn) and the flower of barley are some important aphrodisiacs²⁵.

Anangaranga

Anangaranga of Kalyānamalla is a classic book on Hindu art of love. In this text in chapter six, eight internal medicines for increasing sexual vigour are explained. Among these recipes Intake of powder of Āmalakī (Emblica officinalis Gaertn) fruit, which is triturated with juice of same and dried, along with ghee, sugar candy and honey; dishes prepared from black gram, ghee, milk and sugar; a confection prepared from three myrobalans, Lohabhasma (preparation from oxide of iron by Puṭapāka), liquorice, ghee and honey are some of the best aphrodisiacs (Vājīkarana)²⁶.

Ratirahasya

Ratirahasya the 'secrets of Love' was written by a poet named *Kokkoka*. In this text in 15th chapter under the heading of *Vājīkaraṇa* aphrodisiacs and *Vīryavṛddhiyogā* (enhancers of quality and quantity of semen) are mentioned. Among them milk boiled with roots of *Nāgabala* (*Grevia hirsuta* Vahl.), roots of *Asparagus racemosus* Willd, seeds of *Mucuna pruriens* Bek and seeds of *Tribulus terrestis* Linn; liquorice powder mixed with honey along with milk of cow; dishes prepared from wheat powder, milk of cow or goat along with same animal's ghee; milk boiled with roots of *Asparagus racemosus* Willd; milk boiled with testicles of goat and black sesame seeds; powders of *Śālaparṇi* (*Desmodium gangeticum* DC) or *Vidārikanda* (*Pueraria tuberosa* DC) triturated with the juice of same and mixed with ghee and taken with milk are some important aphrodisiacs²⁷.

Kucimāratantram

Kucimāratantram is an ancient text written by sage Kucimāra, dealing mainly on protection and beautification of male and female genitalia and aphrodisiacs. In this text 4th chapter deals with Vājīkaraṇa (aphrodisiacs). Among those recipes Pūri (A type of unleavened bread from India and Pakistan, usually deep-fried) made up of powders of Kapikacubīja (Seeds of Mucuna pruriens Bek), māṣa (Seeds of Vigna mungo L. seeds), rice, goat's milk and ghee²⁸; pūri made with powders of Vidāri (Pueraria tuberosa DC), Māṣa (Seeds of Vigna mungo L. seeds), sesame seeds, Yava (Hordeum vulgare Linn), fat of pig, ghee, Lohitaṣāli (red variety of rice)²⁹; testicles of goat cooked in milk and ghee along with mutton and mutton soup³⁰; powders of Kapikachubija (Seeds of Mucuna pruriens Bek), Gokṣura (Tribulus terrestis Linn) mixed with sugar candy and milk³¹; powder of root of Aṣvagandha (Withania somnifera Dunal) along with milk³¹; Bhasma (ash prepared by a special technique known as Puṭapāka) of Loha (Iron), Bhasma of Svarṇamākṣika (copper pyrite), Śilājit (Bitumen), Vijaya (Cannabis sativa) are some of the examples of the aphrodisiac recipes and drugs³².

Ayurveda

Ayurveda is an ancient Indian system of healthcare which has a systematic description of medicine or therapy called "Vājīkaraṇa" or Virility therapy". As per Ayurveda factors which make a man capable of entering into sexual intercourse with woman with stallion vigour and which makes him capable of performing excessive sexual intercourse are called Vājīkaraṇa 33. It also aids in nourishing the body of the person. According to Caraka these medicines are said to give strength and potency similar to a horse, increasing the quantity and quality of semen, sperm count and sperm motility 33. The person who takes these

aphrodisiacs is claimed to get erection for a longer duration. Persons are advised intake of aphrodisiacs to earn *Dharma* (righteousness), *Artha* (wealth), *Prīti* (love) and *yaṣas* (fame). A person gets these benefits through his progeny and the aphrodisiac therapy enables him to procreate³⁴. A sexually excited female partner is said as the best aphrodisiac in terms of receptacle of the sex act as each individual item of beauty gives immense pleasure to an individual and alone the conglomeration of all these objects (at a place) in the body of a young woman accounts for excellence as an aphrodisiac³⁵.

Among causes of seminal abnormalities and impotence, intake of unwholesome food, intake of cold, un-unctuous, scanty, polluted and contra indicated food, emaciation, diminution of *rasa* (plasma) and other body tissues, fasting, excessive indulgence in sex, impotency by birth, worry, grief, lack of confidence, fear, anger have been given more importance³⁶. To overcome many of these factors various single and compound medicines and foods are explained.

Among the Aphrodisiac medicines Viz, Bṛmhaṇiguṭika³⁷, Vājīkaraṇaghṛta³⁸, Apatyakariṣaṣṭikaguṭika³⁹, Vṛṣyakṣīra⁴⁰, Vṛṣyaghṛta⁴¹, Vṛṣyapippalī⁴², Vṛṣyapāyasa⁴³, Vṛṣyaṣatāvarīghṛta ⁴⁴ etc are explained in Caraka samhita. Siddhaṣālmalikalpa⁴⁵, Kāminīmadabhañjanirasa ⁴⁶, Kāminīdarpaghna⁴⁷, Śrīkāmadēvaras ⁴⁸, Kāmāgnisamdīpan⁴⁰, Kāmesvaramodaka⁵⁰, Rativallabhamodaka⁵¹, Kāmāgnisamdīpanamodaka⁵², Śatāvarīmōdaka⁵³, Śrimadanānandamodaka⁵⁴, Vānarīvaṭikā ⁵⁵, Aṣvaganḍhaghṛtam⁵⁶, Chāgalādhyaghṛtam ⁵⁷etc. are explained in Bhaiṣajyaratnāvali.

Among the Aphrodisiac foods $V\bar{a}j\bar{i}karanapindarasa$ is prepared from sugar, dehusked grains of black gram, bamboo manna, milk, ghee and the powder of wheat along with ghee⁵⁸; $Vrsyam\bar{a}hisarasa$ from ghee, black gram, testicles of goat and the meat of buffalo⁵⁹. Vrsyarasa are prepared from ghee with meat of birds namely Cataka (sparrow), Tittiri (partridge), Kukkuta (wild cock), Barhi (a type of peacock), Harinsa (swan) and juice of sweet or sour fruits⁶⁰. Further alone meat of $Cataka^{61}$ and meat of $Kukkuta^{62}$ are considered aphrodisiac. Rice of sixty days crop (sastika variety) along with soup of black gram⁶³ and eggs of fish fried with ghee, eggs of Barhi, Harinsa (swan) etc⁶⁴ fried with ghee are said aphrodisiac. Aphrodisiac dishes like Saskuli, Vartika, Pupalika etc can be prepared from semen of Cataka, Harinsa, Dakṣa, Sikhi (peacock), crocodile, ghee of cow, fat of pig, fat of Kulinga (forest bird similar to sparrow), powders of Sastika variety rice and wheat⁶⁵. Apatyakara svarasa named aphrodisiac juice prepared from the fruits of Atmagupta (Mucuna pruriens Bek), black gram, grapes, Sringataka (Trapa bispinosa Roxb.) and Kharjura (dates), roots of Satavari (Asparagus racemosus Willd.), milk, ghee of cow, sugar and honey⁶⁶ acts

as best aphrodisiac. Special curd prepared from curd, cream of curd, sugar, honey, bamboo manna, cardamom and black pepper⁶⁷ acts as aphrodisiac. Aphrodisiac rice prepared from Sastika variety rice, milk, ghee, sugar and honey⁶⁷; milk of a cow, whose skin has been marked by a heated ring of gold, are also said as aphrodisiac. Vṛṣyamāhiṣarasa made with sprouted black gram, fruits of Ajada (Mucuna pruriens Bek), meat of buffalo, ghee, curd and juice of pomegranate; pills made with paste of pork added with black pepper, rock salt, boiled ghee poured into the chicken soup and finally added with liberal quantity of ghee, powdered spices, curd and the juice of pomegranate are important non vegetarian aphrodisiacs⁶⁸. Rohita and Śapharī types of fish and meat well fried in boiling ghee⁶⁹; Rohita fish fried in ghee and mixed with the soup of the meat of the goat and the juices of fruits⁶⁹; fried (ghee) dishes made by paste prepared by crushed fish and meat added with Hingu (Ferula narthex Boiss), Saindhava (rock salt), coriander and wheat-flour 70; different types of fish added with unctuous, sour and saline spices, boiled in the soup of the meat of buffalo, added with meat of fish, black pepper, cumin, coriander, ghee and small quantity of *Hingu* (Ferula narthex Boiss) are most aphrodisiac⁷⁰. Intake of powder of Āmalakī (Emblica officinalis Gaertn), which is seven times triturated with juice of same $(\bar{A}malak\bar{t})$ and dried taken along with ghee, honey and milk as Anupāna is one of the best aphrodisiacs⁷¹. Intake of milk boiled and filtered along with crushed goat's testicles⁷² and the same along with long pepper and rock salt is instant aphrodisiac⁷³. Intake of sesame seeds macerated with milk and processed with goat's testicles; Śaskulī (a round dish) prepared of them⁷⁴; dishes made by frying (in ghee) the mixtures of powders of long pepper, black gram, Sāli rice, barley and wheat ⁷⁵; eggs of crab, tortoise and crocodile along with powders of long pepper and salt⁷⁶; milk of cow which has one calf of one year old and which is fed on the leaves of black gram; all groups of milk and meat as well as $K\bar{a}k\bar{o}ly\bar{a}di$ group of drugs⁷⁷; milk cooked with fruit, root, bark and leaf-bud of Asvatta and mixed with sugar and honey⁷⁸; powder of seeds of Kapikacchu (Mucuna pruriens Bek) and Iksuraka (Astercantha longifolia Nees.) mixed with sugar followed by intake of milch warm milk are highly aphrodisiac.

Along with aphrodisiacs in *Bhaiṣajyaratnāvali* separate chapter is dealt for detaining the discharge of semen (*Vīryasthambhan*). *Nāgavallyādyacūrṇam*⁷⁹, *Kāminīvidrāvaṇarasa*⁸⁰, food preparations with goat testicles are some among them.

Based on variation of seasons variant erotic articles are explained. In rainy season, rivers with waves of foam, mountains with blue peaks and the onset of black clouds; in autumn, rise of beautiful moon at night, wind which is pleasant to touch and which has the smell of the pond full of *Kumuda* (water lilly); in early and late winter, nights which are long

enough for sexual indulgence and women smeared with saffron and Aguru (Aquilaria agallocha Roxb); in spring, pleasing companions, cooing sound of the cuckoo bird, flowers in the parks in the ridge of the forests, pleasing diet and drinks, sound of the music, mind which is broad and free from afflictions, accomplishment of the objective, freshly initiated love affair and women are considered as erotic and weapons of cupid (the god of sex). The factors described for spring season also are considered to work as sexual stimulants in other seasons. In general for all seasons beginning of youth, sexual excitement, pleasing time are said excellent erotic factors for men⁸¹.

Discussion and Conclusion

An aphrodisiac is a substance that increases sexual desire. The name comes from *Aphrodite*, the Greek goddess of sexuality and love. Throughout history, many foods, drinks, and behaviors have had a reputation for making sex more attainable and pleasurable. Unlike the western concept, Indian concept of aphrodisia($V\bar{a}j\bar{\imath}karana$) is holistic, unique and balanced approach. Westerns have treated the subject for crazy world and only for physical enjoyment. Indian medical systems have given a separate entity and explained $V\bar{a}j\bar{\imath}karana$ as a separate branch of medicine (one among eight branches). Indian philosophies explained this as one of the tool for Moksa (eternal emancipation). Veda adored Gods and nature to make man virile for good progeny.

 $V\bar{a}j\bar{i}karana$ substance improves sexual vitality and promotes the creative transformation of sexual energy for the benefit of the body and mind. These herbs invigorate the entire system including reproductive, just as a tree is invigorated from the roots. They have a strong revitalization action on the body tissues including nerves and bone marrow. In Ayurveda semen is considered as essence of all body tissues. As per the Ayurvedic concept the drugs which help to strengthen the bones, muscles, ligaments, blood etc also helps in regeneration of semen both in quality and quantity. Hence Ayurveda suggests many food regimens to fulfill dietary insufficiency and to speed up the regeneration of various body tissues which ultimately causes long-lasting positive synthesis of semen virile and enhancement of physical and mental capabilities of men. Among the aphrodisiacs some foods have psychoactive properties, some have revitalization action on the body tissues and certain drugs and diet can actually enhance blood flow to the genitals. Black gram, milk, ghee, meat of various animals, fish etc. are well known important diet used repeatedly as aphrodisiac. Black gram dal is considered good nutrient with instantaneous energy, body tissue regenerator and aphrodisiac on long term usage⁸². Milk is a balanced diet, particularly in a vegetarian and proved to increase erectile power and quality of semen⁸³. Cow ghee has good digestibility and many medicated ghee are proved to enhance erectile power and quality of semen 83.

Flesh foods like meat, poultry and fish are rich in good quality protein and vitamins and calcium⁸⁴. Flesh foods also enhance body stamina. In modern medicine many diseases are treated by supplying the deficient vitamins, minerals and chemicals to restrict further damage. In the same way Ayurveda believes *sāmānya siddhānta*(Law of Similarity i.e similarity is the cause of increase), which supports enhancement of similar products. This is the prime reason for using semen of various animals, goat testicles and flesh of various animals to regenerate various body tissues including semen.

Along with physical abnormalities, various psychological conditions such as anxiety, depression etc. have been considered to have huge impact on sexual performance. Neurotransmitters which are the important brain chemicals for passing messages in the neural network, anti oxidants, anxiolytics, anti depressants play an important role in male sexual excitement⁸⁵.

Good physical performance⁸⁶, anti anxiety⁸⁷, anti neurodegenerative⁸⁸, improvement of semen quality^{89, 90} etc. are the properties of *Asvagandha* (*Withania somnifera* Dunal) which supports its usage in various aphrodisiac drugs of Ayurveda. In the same way effect of *Kapikacchu* [*Mucuna pruriens* (Linn.)] on improvement of sexual behavior and sperm patterns^{91, 92} and its neuroprotective and antiparkinson effects were proved^{93, 94, 95}. In a study men with early erectile dysfunction were proved 3.8 times more likely to develop Parkinson's disease during the follow-up periods and the study also indicated that erectile dysfunction is common among Parkinson's disease individuals⁹⁶. Use of *Mucuna pruriens* (Linn.) in various aphrodisiac drugs and diets of Ayurveda can prevent Parkinson's disease and enhance erectile function.

By the review of ancient literature, observing traditional usages and their benefits and analyzing the results of present day studies it can be concluded that Indian concept of aphrodisia, Vājikaraṇa, is the best one and may the people of the world become rejuvenative, virile and morally adhere to these principles for good progeny and better family life.

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सारांश

वाजीकरण (प्राचीन भारतीय कामोद्दीपन सिद्धान्त) का इतिहास एवं विकास

गोली पेंचल प्रसाद एवं अला नारायण

कामोद्दीपन लैङ्गिक उत्तेजना की जागृति के लिए प्रेरणा और विचारों के विविध रूप हैं। प्राचीन काल में सन्तानोत्पादन सामर्थ्य एवं मात्र सामान्य कामोद्दीपन की वृद्धि के बीच एक अन्तर बताया गया था। भारतीय दर्शनों, चिकित्सिकीय और अचिकित्सिकीय साहित्य में कामोद्दीपन की व्याख्या वाजीकरण के अन्तर्गत की गई है। आधुनिक कामोद्दीपन की अपेक्षा भारतीय सिद्धान्त पवित्र एवं व्यक्ति के यौनाचरण की सन्तुलित धारणा है। यह वाजीकरण सिद्धान्त शारीरिक चेष्टा से भावनात्मक चेष्टा एवं भावनात्मक चेष्टा से सामाजिक और अन्ततः आत्मीय चेष्टा का सम्पुरण करता है। वाजीकरण द्रव्य शिश्न की असम्यक कार्यक्षमता को सामान्य करने के साथ-साथ शुक्रोत्पादन और निस्सरण तथा अन्ततः श्रेष्ठ सन्तान की उत्पत्ति करने के लिए शुक्र की मात्रा एवं गुणवत्ता की वृद्धि करते हैं। बहुत से आयुर्वेदीय ग्रन्थ वाजीकरण को चिकित्सा शास्त्र की पृथक शाखा के रूप में परिभाषित करते हैं एवं इनमें वाजीकरण के अन्तर्गत वृष्य द्रव्य अनेक एकल द्रव्यों और योगों के रूप में वर्णित किये गये हैं। ये द्रव्य शुक्राणु अक्षमता को दूर करने के साथ-साथ शिश्नोत्तेजना की वृद्धि एवं अन्य विविध पौरुष प्रजनन समस्याओं का शमन करते हैं। विविध आयर्वेदीय ग्रन्थों के साथ-साथ वात्स्यायन के कामसूत्र, कल्याणमल्ल का अनङ्गरङ्ग, कुचिमारतन्त्र एवं विविध अन्य समकालीन ग्रन्थ भी भारतीय मानस और जीवनशैली के केन्द्रीय एवं प्राकृतिक अङ्ग के रूप में काम के सम्बन्ध में भारतीय व्यवहार को अभिव्यक्त करते हैं।