

Understanding the Concept of *Tvaka Sara* in Ayurveda - A Review

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ABSTRACT

The *Sara* (essence of *dhatu*s) is considered to be an important concept of Ayurveda, which is responsible for assessing *Bala* (strength) and *Sthiramsha* (stability) *Sara* is a good mirror to assess properties and function of *Dhatu*s (fundamental support of the body). But *Sara* is highly disregarded, overlooked and under studied aspect in clinical practice. By the help of *Laxanas* (symptoms) we can understand *Tvak* (skin) *Sara*, hence review of *tvaka sara* is taken.

Keywords: *Tvak Sara*, *Bala* (strength), *Sthiramsha* (stability), *Dhatu*s

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda is science of life. A physician, who knows thoroughly, the structure and functions of body, can only understand the Ayurveda. Such a physician will be beneficial for the society. So, before going to treat a patient, it is better to know the structure and functions of healthy person.¹ *Dosha* (base of body), *Dhatu* (fundamental support of body), and *Mala* (excreta) are the fundamental part of *Sharira*.² All the physiology of the body is nothing but the normal functions of these entities in the body. However, there is state of equilibrium among all the constituents of a healthy person.³ If there is any disturbance in this equilibrium state, it will lead to the development of diseases.⁴ In order to evaluate natural power i.e. *Bala* of these *Dhatu*, *Sarata* examination is mentioned in

Ayurveda.⁵ *Sarata* is an index to measure the *Bala* of individual *Dhatu*.⁶

During description of *Dhatu Sarata* the characteristic of *Rasa* (plasma)-*Sarata* is given by the name of *Tvak-Sarata* by all the *Acharya*. It is probably due to the fact that function of *Rasa Dhatu* (Plasma) is best manifested by *Tvak*. The function of *Rasa Dhatu* is *Prinana* (nutrition).⁷ Any disturbance in the *Rasa Samvahan* (Plasma circulation) leads to abnormal changes over *Tvak*. Hence *Rasa Sarata* and *Tvak Sarata* are used as synonyms of each other and taken for study.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Term *Sara* has two meanings *Bala* (strength or resistance to disease) and *Sthiramsha* (Part of stability)⁸.

Sir Monir Williams has described the meaning of *Sara* as essence excellent part of anything, the best part or quittances⁹. *Chakrapani*'s view that concept of *Sara* is related with the *Dhatu* only, not with *Doshas*, *Updhatu* (further formed from *dhatu*) or *Mala*.¹⁰ *Charaka* and *Vagabhatta* has categorizes the individuals in following three groups.

- i. *Sarva-Sara*: containing the essence of all the *Dhatu* and *Satva*.
- ii. *Maddhyam-Sara*: contains the essence of all the *Dhatu* in moderate quantity.
- iii. *Asara*: contains the essence all the *Dhatu* at the minimal level.¹¹

Characteristics of Sarva-Sara Purusha

According to *Charaka*, individuals of *Sarva-Sara* are endowed with great strength, happiness, endurance against difficulties, self confidence in all enterprises, inclination to benevolent acts, firm and balanced body; well-balanced gait. They have a resonant & melodious deep and high pitch voice; supremacy; wealth; enjoyment; honor; slower aging process and pathogenesis; minimal disease and long life with progeny of their own quality.¹² They are always involved in social welfare programs of the society. *Vagabhatta* in *Astanga samgraha*, has mentioned the same characteristics as mentioned in *Charaka*.¹³ According to *Astanga hridaya*, such persons are characterized by presence of great self-respect, hope of success in all the activities, capacity of withstanding troubles, wisdom and steadiness.¹⁴

Characteristics of Maddhyam Sara Purusha

Such individuals have characteristics of *Sarva-Sara* in moderate degree^{15,16}.

Characteristics of Asara Purusha

Persons, lacking classical characteristics of *Sarva Sara*, are said to be as “*Asara*”¹⁷

General Considerations of Tvak-Sara Person

The term *Tvaksara* is constituted by two components i.e. *Tvak* & *Sara*. *Sara* literally means *Vishuddhatar Dhatu*, essence of *Dhatu* or *Bala*, which signify the characteristics of a good quality of *Dhatu* in respect of its structure, functions, and quantity. *Rasa* is the first *Dhatu* in the sequence of *Sapta-Dhatu* system of the body.¹⁸ *Dalhana* clarifies that in the term *Tvaksara*, the word *Tvak* means *Rasa* residing in the *Tvak*.¹⁹ Hence *Tvaksara* person possesses a good quality of *Rasa Dhatu* in predominance. The *Tvak Sara* persons can be defined as “Individuals having predominance of essence of a good quality and quantity of *Rasa Dhatu*, characterized with a healthy and good looking skin”. In such persons, excellence of *Rasa Dhatu* is observed in comparison to individuals of other *Sara*, which have other *Dhatu* in predominance.

Physical & Socio-Psychological Characteristics of Tvak Sarata from Different Samhita^{20,21,22,23}

S.No	<i>Charaka</i> physical	socio- psychological	<i>Sushruta</i> physical	socio- psychological	<i>Kashyapa</i> physical	socio- psychological
1	Snigdha (Oily)	Sukha (Pleasure)	----		snigdha (Oily)	
2	Slakshana (Viscosity)	Saubhagya (Good luck)	----		-----	
3	Mridu (Soft)	Aishwayra (Wealth)	Mridu (Soft)		-----	
4	Prasanna (Happy)	Upbhoga (Consumption)	Prasanna (Happy)		-----	Upbhoga (Consumption)
5	Apla (Few)	Buddhi (Wisdom)	-----		-----	
6	Gambhira (Seriously)	Vidya (Knowledge)	-----	vidya (Knowledge)	-----	
7	Sukshma (Micro)	Praharsha (Thrill)	-----		-----	
8	Sukumara (Fragile)	Ayushya (longevity)	-----		-----	
9	Prabha (Blaze)		-----		-----	
10					Nirmala (clean)	
11					Absence of skin Diseases	
12					Rapid wound healing	

Relation of Tvaksarata & Vyadhi

As we know that the ultimate aim of *Sara* examination is to evaluate *Bala* of the

person.²⁴ Since *Tvaksara* persons are having a good quality, quantity, and function of *Rasa Dhatu* as well as *Tvak*. So, they have

more resistance against the diseases shared by these two.²⁵ If we see it in the light of modern science, then we can come at conclusion that *Rasa Dhatu* can be most appropriately correlated with the blood plasma, which performs the function of the *Rasa Dhatu* i.e. nutrition to every part of the body²⁶. It is now quite evident that the blood plasma contains many immunoglobulin i.e. IgG, IgM, IgA etc. these factors are important components of body immunity²⁷. They resist the invasion of *Rajnichara* (bacteria and viruses).^{28,29} These *Rajnichara* [disease causing organism] always try to destruct *Oja* (Power) of the person, which is the essence of all the *Dhatu* and causes *Vyadhikshamatva* (Immunity) in the person. Thus a *Tvaksara* person will have relatively good quality of *Oja* which is contributed by *Rasa Dhatu*. It is why the *Tvaksara* persons have a relatively stronger resistance against the disease of *Rasa Dhatu*. *Tvaksara* persons are having more immunity against the disease of *Tvak*. If infection occurs, it will improve faster. Their wound healing property is good³⁰. A *Tvaksara* person is usually not affected by *Rasapradosaj Vyadhi* (Infection due to blood plasma) i.e. *Pandu* (Anemia), *Hridroga* (Heart Diseases) etc. If they are affected by such diseases, shall improve faster. A *Tvaksara* person can tolerate the causes of *Rasa Kshaya* (Plasma deficient) easily. In such individual the symptoms of *Rasa Kshaya* will be delayed. They can tolerate louder sound; they will be not exhausted easily and can tolerate the thirst easily. The concept of *Sarata* is different from the concept of *Kshaya* or *Vridhhi* (Excess) of *Dhatu*, Because, *Kshaya* and, *Vridhhi* are only quantitative change of particular *Dhatu*.³¹ Hence from the above discussion it is clear that a *Tvak Sara* person is comparatively immune for *Rasa Kshaya*, *Rasa Vridhhi*, or *Rasa Pradoshaja Vyadhi* as well as for skin disease.

Factors Affecting Tvak Sarata

Sara of every person is probably decided at the time of *Shukra-Shonita*

Samyoga^{32,33} (Fertilization of Sperm and Ovum). But the antenatal care, maternal *Ahara* (diet) & *Vihara* (Routine Activities) has a great influence³⁴. Also post natal endogenous & exogenous factors affect the level of *Tvaksarata*. It is why a person has different level of *Tvaksarata* at different chronological age as well as in different *Ritu* (Season). So the level of *Tvaksarata* is a dynamic state. It can be improved using proper *Ahara* & *Vihara*. At the same time it deteriorate when person not adapt proper *Ahara* & *Vihara*.

Factors Deteriorating the level of Tvaksarata

Although, such factors, are not enumerated in our Samhita directly. But on the basis of the reasoning and our understanding we can classify such factors as below-

1. The factors causing *Rasavaha Srotodusti* (Deformity in channels or abnormal plasma collection) can deteriorate the level of *Tvaksarata* by hampering the *Rasa Samvahan* (Plasma channel circulation). A diet, which is *Guru* (difficult to digest), *Sheeta* (cold), *Snigdha* (oily), if taken in large amount for a long time, will lead to *Rasavah Srotodusti*³⁵. Besides diet mental tension and stress are also factor which vitiate *Rasavaha Srotas*³⁶ and ultimately diminishes the level of *Tvaksarata*.
2. The excessive fasting may also causes *Rasa Kshaya* hence can decrease the quality of *Rasa Dhatu* and thereby deteriorate the *Tvaksarata*.
3. Excessive intake of *Kapha Vardhak Ahara* & *Vihara* (The diet and routine which increases fat or heaviness in body) which can deteriorate level of *Tvaksarata*.³⁷
4. The *Nidana* (Etiology) of *Kustha Roga* (Skin diseases) can also deteriorate the *Tvaksarata* and then causes skin disease.³⁸
5. *Adana Kala* (First six month of the year or sun dominating season) - in this

period the *Bala* of Person is gradually lost³⁹ hence *Sara* too.

Measures to improve the level of

Tvakasarata

The different measures can be summarized as below-

- **Rasayana (Rejuvenator) to improve *Tvakasarata***

Since the *Tvakasarata* is the characteristics of the healthy state of the *Rasa Dhatu* and the *Tvak* both. So, to maintain the *Sarata* in general, *Rasayana* are the measure to produce excellent *Rasadi Dhatu*⁴⁰. Since the essence of *Rasadi Dhatu* is collectively called as *Oja*, which is the index of the *Bala*. So, in *Charaka Samhita* before going to the detail of treatment of individual diseases, there are descriptions of the measure to improve the body resistance by improving the quality of *Rasadi Dhatu*.

- **Dincharya in maintaining *Tvakasarata***

In Ayurveda there is description of various day to day lifestyles for maintaining the health⁴¹. Application of taila on head, *sneha abhyanga* (oleation of the body), *udvartana* (Rubbing of the body with medicated churna), *snana* (Bathe)

- **Importance of *Ritucharya* in maintaining *Tvakasarata***

In Ayurveda there is description of a different lifestyle and diet for different *Ritu*,⁴² to avoid adverse environmental effect on the *Sarata*, to improve *Bala*. All the six *Ritu* has been broadly divided in to two.⁴³

I. *Adana kala*

II. *Visharga kala* (last 6 months of the year or moon dominating season)

In *Adana Kala* there is gradual loss of *Bala* of individual's,⁴⁴ hence the *Sarata* of *Dhatu* is also decreasing, because *Sarata* is also the index of *Bala*. To protect this loss of *Bala*, specific *Ritucharya* must be followed⁴⁵. In *Grisma Ritu* (summer) of *Adana Kala*, *Tvakasarata* is at its minimum level; hence it is quite evident that the patient having the symptoms of *Rasa Kshaya* is mostly seen in this *Ritu*. In *Visharga Kala*, although, the *Sharirik Bala*

is gradually increases, but it is quite evident that in this *Ritu*, skin losses its natural characteristics & becomes rough and dry. It is because in this *Ritu*, the intensity of *Jatharagni* (digestive fire) is very high and if proper diet is not taken, it starts destroying *Rasa Dhatu* of the body⁴⁶. Since *Rasa Dhatu* is best manifested via *Tvak*, so, its quality also decreases. So, to avoid such conditions, proper *Ahara & Vihara* of *Hemanta Ritu* (winter) should be followed in winter season.

DISCUSSION

It is observed that *Tvak Sara* person generally do not suffer with skin disease and if skin infection occur, it is cured easily. According to *Kashyapa* a *Tvak Sara* child have a skin, free from skin diseases and are endowed with a good wound healing property. Therefore, "The *Sara* is the excellence or essence of *Dhatu* that provide strength and stability to the body".

CONCLUSION

Tvak Sara persons are having essence of *Rasa Dhatu* of better quality, quantity and function.

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