Understanding the Concept of Tvaka Sara in Ayurveda - A Review

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ABSTRACT

The Sara (essence of dhatus) 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 Dhatus (fundamental support of the body). But Sara is highly disregarded, overlooked and understudied 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), Dhatus

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), Dhatus (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 Dhatus, Sarata examination is mentioned in Ayurveda.⁵ Sarata is an index to measure the Bala of individual Dhatus.⁶

During description of Dhatus, 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 Dhatus 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 Sthiramsa (Part of stability).⁸ Sir Monir Williams has described the meaning of Sara as essence excellent part of anything, the best part or quittances.⁹ Chakrapani’s view that concept of Sara is related with the Dhatus only, not with Doshas, Updhatus (further formed from dhatus) or Mala.¹⁰ Charaka and Vagabhatta has categorized the individuals in following three groups.

i. Sarva-Sara: containing the essence of all the Dhatus and Satva.
ii. Maddhyam-Sara: contains the essence of all the Dhatus in moderate quantity.
iii. Asara: contains the essence all the Dhatus 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. They are always involved in social welfare programs of the society. Vagabhatta in Astanga samgraha, has mentioned the same characteristics as mentioned in Charaka. 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.

Characteristics of Maddhyam Sara Purusha

Such individuals have characteristics of Sarva-Sara in moderate degree.

Characteristics of Asara Purusha

Persons, lacking classical characteristics of Sarva Sara, are said to be “Asara”.

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. Dalhana clarifies that in the term Tvaksara, the word Tvak means Rasa residing in the Tvak. 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No</th>
<th>Charaka physical</th>
<th>socio-psychological</th>
<th>Sushrata physical</th>
<th>socio-psychological</th>
<th>Kashyapa physical</th>
<th>socio-psychological</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Snigdha (Oily)</td>
<td>Sukha (Pleasure)</td>
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<td>snigdha (Oily)</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Slakshana (Viscosity)</td>
<td>Saubhagya (Good luck)</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Mridu (Soft)</td>
<td>Aishwarya (Wealth)</td>
<td>Mridu (Soft)</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Prasanna (Happy)</td>
<td>Udbhoga (Consumption)</td>
<td>Prasanna (Happy)</td>
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<td>Udbhoga (Consumption)</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Apla (Few)</td>
<td>Buddhi (Wisdom)</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Gambhira (Serious)</td>
<td>Vidya (Knowledge)</td>
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<td>vidya (Knowledge)</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Sukshma (Micro)</td>
<td>Praharsha (Thrill)</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Sukumara (Fragile)</td>
<td>Ayushya (longevity)</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Prabha (Blaze)</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Nirmala (clean)</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td>Absence of skin Diseases</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td></td>
<td>Rapid wound healing</td>
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Relation of Tvaksarata & Vyadhi

As we know that the ultimate aim of Sara examination is to evaluate Bala of the person. 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. 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 body. 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 immunity. They resist the invasion of Rajnichara (bacteria and viruses). These Rajnichara [disease causing organism] always try to destruct Oja (Power) of the person, which is the essence of all the Dhatu and causes Vyadhi (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 good. 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, they will 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 Vriddhi (Excess) of Dhatu, Because, Kshaya and, Vriddhi are only quantitative change of particular Dhatu. Hence from the above discussion it is clear that a Tvak Sara person is comparatively immune for Rasa Kshaya, Rasa Vriddhi, or Rasa Pradoshajya 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 (Fertilization of Sperm and Ovum). But the antenatal care, maternal Ahara (diet) & Vihara (Routine Activities) has a great influence. 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 Rasavaha Srotodusti. Besides diet mental tension and stress are also factor which vitiate Rasavaha Srotas 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.

4. The Nidana (Etiology) of Kusha Roga (Skin diseases) can also deteriorate the Tvaksarata and then causes skin disease.

5. Adana Kala (First six month of the year or sun dominating season) - in this
period the Bala of Person is gradually lost\textsuperscript{39} hence Sara too.

**Measures to improve the level of Tvaksarata**

The different measures can be summarized as below-

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

  Since the Tvaksarata 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\textsuperscript{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.

- **Dinacharya in maintaining Tvaksarata**

  In Ayurveda there is description of various day to day lifestyles for maintaining the health\textsuperscript{31}. Application of taila on head, sneha abhyanga (oileation of the body), udvartana (Rubbing of the body with medicated churna), snana (Bathe)

- **Importance of Ritucharya in maintaining Tvaksarata**

  In Ayurveda there is description of a different lifestyle and diet for different Ritu,\textsuperscript{42} to avoid adverse environmental effect on the Sarata, to improve Bala. All the six Ritu has been broadly divided in to two.\textsuperscript{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,\textsuperscript{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 followed.\textsuperscript{45} In Grisma Ritu (summer) of Adana Kala, Tvaksarata 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 body\textsuperscript{46}. 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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