

ROLE OF RASA DHATU IN SHAULYATA – AN ANALYTICAL REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda is recognized and ancient system which describes various ways to make the healthy life. It is the oldest system of healing and provides service to mankind in which body physiology is too much emphasized to understand the aetiology and pathogenesis of a disease, so that the best treatment can be searched out for the benefit of humanity. In Ayurveda, *Dosha*, *Dhatu* and *Mala* are the basic blocks upon which the body positions. Out of these *Dhatu* mainly does the function of holding together the bodily elements. There are seven *Dhatu* in our ayurvedic classic like as *Rasa*, *Rakta*, *Mansa*, *Meda*, *Asthi*, *Majja* and *Shukra*. *Rasa Dhatu* is the first *Dhatu* and plays an

important role because it is the first forming *Dhatu* and it is responsible for forming all the next *Dhatu* proper nutrition. Any pathological status of *Rasadhatu* can affect the all other *Dhatu* and finally may deteriorate the health of an individual. In this article we are going to discuss the role of *Rasadhatu* in *Sthaulyata* (Obesity). According to *Acharya Sushruta* “*Rasa Nimittam eva Sthaulyam Kaasrshyam cha*”. If the *Rasa* is not formed accurately or if it is contaminated it leads to many systemic infections. The extreme of body frames i.e. obesity and emaciation both depends on the quality and quantity of *Rasa Dhatu*, its distribution, conversion, and utilisation in the

KEYWORDS:- Obesity, *Rasadhatu*, *Sthaulya*.

INTRODUCTION

According to *Ayurveda* the origin of body is from *Anna*. After proper metabolic process the food ingredients changes into *Anna-rasa* or *Adhyarasa Dhatu*, which helps in the formation

and nutrition of the other dhatus of the body. *Rasadhatu* is the first formed *Dhatu* from essence of food at the level of its metabolic transformation. As it is the *Dhatu* that can provide precursor material for the formation of all other *Dhatu*, it is of prime importance in nourishment, development and maintenance of the body.

Mostly problems arise when a person becomes *Sthoola* or *Krishna*, it is due to the *Rasa Dhatu* as well. *Sthaulya* itself is due to many other diseases or we can say these diseases are the combination of many other diseases. The feature of the *Rasa Dhatu* is dependent upon the strength of *Agni*, or digestive fire. Food and liquid ingredient are initially digested in the gastrointestinal tract and, turned into *Ahara Rasa*. This fluid then endures metabolism by the *Rasagni* to form *Rasa Dhatu*. The condition of *Agni* determines the standard of *Rasa* produced. When the *Rasagni* is sluggish, the competence of transformation is reduced. When the *Rasagni* is simply too active, it efficiently converts *Ahara Rasa* to *Rasa Dhatu*, however conjointly burns up some of the *Rasa Dhatu* that is being produced. There is a highly variable fluid intake that must be carefully matched by equal output of water from the body to prevent body fluid volumes from increasing or decreasing.

AIM AND OBJECTIVES

To understand broad concept of *Rasadhatu* and its relation to obesity.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Literature search- Review of literature regarding *Rasa Dhatu* and *Sthaulya* are collected from Brihatrayi and available commentaries on it and research articles are also searched from various websites.

Type of study- Conceptual study.

Rasa Dhatu:- *Rasa* is the first *Dhatu* formed after complete digestion of food and due to its continuous circulation is called as *Rasa*.^[1] The function of *Rasa Dhatu* is *Preenana* (Nutrition).^[2] Two kinds of *Rasa Dhatu* present in the body, one is *Sthayi Dhatu* and another is *Poshaka Dhatu*.^[3] Heart is the main place of *Rasa Dhatu*.^[4] When *Rasa Dhatu* is functioning properly helps within the formation of other *Dhatus* and additionally nourishes the body and also improves skin texture. If *Rasa-dusti* existing either due to *Vridhhi* (increase in quantity) or due to *Kshaya* (decrease in quantity) of *Rasa Dhatu* then various diseases have been occurred.

Rasavaha Srotas - It is the passage of circulating *Rasa* all over the body. It originates from the heart and circulates *Rasa* by ten vessels.^[5] According to *Acharya Sushruta* the same organs and channels form *pranavaha srotas*.^[6] This means the heart and channels transporting *Rasa* also carry vital force (*prana*) in the body.

Clinical features of vitiation of rasavaha srotas

If the transport channels of *rasa dhatu* are vitiated, then following clinical features are observed:

- Dislike towards food, anorexia, altered sense of taste, incapability to identify tastes, nausea, heaviness in the body, lethargy, bodyache, fever, blackouts, anemia, obstruction of channels, impotence, tiredness (*Angavasada*), emaciation, diminished *Agni*, and wrinkling of skin and greying of hair.^[7]

In addition to the above features, the following features are observed after injury to Rasavaha srotas

Emaciation (*Shosha*), crying due to pain (*Akroshana*), bending (*Vinamana*), confusion (*Mohana*), vertigo (*Bhramana*), trembling (*Vepana*) and death.^[8]

Role of Rasdhatu as vitiated factor in disease: *Ras Dhatu* is involved in the pathogenesis of many diseases like *Jwara*^[9] obstinate urinary diseases including diabetes (*Prameha*)^[10] and emaciation including tuberculosis (*Shosha*)^[11] The extremes of body frames i.e. obesity (*Sthaulya*) and emaciation (*Karshya*) depend on the quantity and quality of *Rasa Dhatu*, its distribution, conversion, and utilization in the body. These two conditions are risk factors for a wide range of metabolic disorders and lifestyle disorders.

Importance of Rasdhatu:- Ayurveda mentioned that formation of *Sthula*, *Krusha* and *Madhya Sharir* depends on *Dravyataha*, *Gunataha* & *Karmataha Vriddhi*, *Kshaya* & *Sthitee* of *Rasadhatu*. *Rasa* is first *Dhatu*, which is responsible for nourishment of all body elements, & further *Dhatus*.

Formation of *Rasadhatu* depends on type of food taken. More intake of *Guru*, *Sheet*, *Mrudu Gunatmaka Aahara* leads to *Rasa-vriddhi* which further outcomes in *Sthoulya*. It may be due to *Prithvi* & *Aap Mahabhuta* predominance in *Guru*, *Sheet*, *Mrudu*, *Snigdha*, *Madhur*, *Sthira*, *Pichhil Gunatmaka Aahar*. *Rasadhatu* has similar things as that of *Kapha*. Therefore, vitiation of *Kapha* causes vitiation in properties of *Rasadhatu*, which further leads to vitiation

of *Meda Dhatu* because *Rasa, Meda* are seat of *Kapha Dosha*.^[12]

Defination of *sthaulya*

‘रसनमित्तमेव स्थौल्यं कार्श्यं च’¹³

In Ayurveda there is no distinct definition of *Sthaulya* like other disease. But it describes *Sthaulya* very perfectly as follows

An individual whose increased *Meda Dhatu* (Adipose tissue) makes his hips, Abdomen and breasts Pendulous and whose vitality is much less as compared to his body size is called as "*Sthaulya*" the word "*Roga*" clears that Ayurveda has classified *Sthaulya* under disease entity. Obesity is emergent as an important health problem in India. Twenty-two million Indians are obese, especially abdominal obese. Obesity is chronic and increasingly common disease characterized by excess body fat. It develops steadily and often continues throughout life. Obesity is normally caused by a sedentary lifestyle, lack of physical work and irregular diet and sleep pattern, stress.

Obesity giving rise to many serious health problems like coronary artery disease, type2 diabetes mellitus, respiratory diseases, hypertension, stroke, dyslipidaemia, osteoarthritis, cancer (ovarian, breast, endometrial, gall bladder, prostate, colon), sleep apnoea, infertility, gout, venous circulatory disease, dermatological problems, psychological problems (poor self-esteem, depression). According to Ayurveda, obesity can be compared with '*Sthoulya*' Modem Science defines obesity as a body mass index greater than 27 for men and 25 for women. Body mass index can be calculated as body weight in Kilograms per square meter of the body size. In other word it is approximately Equivalent to 120 percent of the ideal body weight.

Causes of overweight / obesity:- The causes of obesity are very clearly explained in *Ayurveda*. The following reasons which are mentioned in *Ayurveda* increase the deposition of fat.

“तदतिस्थौल्यमतिसंपूरणाद्गुरुमधुरशीतस्निग्धोपयोगद्व्यायामाद्
व्यवायाद्दिवास्वपाद्धर्षनित्यत्वादचिन्तनाद्धीजस्वभावात्चोपजायते”¹⁴

<i>Aharatmaka Nidana</i>	<i>Viharatmaka Nidana</i>	<i>Manasika Niadana</i>	Others
<i>Santarpana, Adhyashana</i>	<i>Avyayama</i> (No physical activity)	<i>Harshnityatva</i> (Cheerfulness)	<i>Amarasa</i> (Indigestion)
<i>Guru Aharsevana</i> (Food which is heavy to digest)	<i>Avyavaya</i> (No sexual activity)	<i>Atichintana</i> (No grief)	<i>Snighda, Madhura Basti sevena</i> (Enema which contains oil and sweet medicines)
<i>Madhur Aharasevana</i>	<i>Diwaswapa</i> (Day sleeping)	<i>Manasonivritti</i> (Idle Mind)	<i>Tailabhyanaga</i> (Massage)
<i>Snigdha Aharasevana</i> (Food which will increase <i>Kapha</i>)	<i>Sukha Shayy</i> (comfortable bedding)	<i>Priyadarshana</i>	<i>Singdha Udvartana</i> (Powder massage with oily medicines)
<i>Adyashana</i> (food after lunch or dinner)	<i>Atisnana Sevana</i> (excessive Bathing)		
<i>Ati-Brimhana</i> (over nourishment)			
<i>Atisampurna</i> (Binge eating)			

Pathogenesis of *sthaulya*: It is a *Dushya* predominant disorder. In pathogenesis of *Sthaulya*, all the three *Doshas* are vitiated especially *Kledakapaha, Pachakpitta, Samana & Vyan Vayu*. In physiological conditions *Jathraagni* nourishes subsequent *Dhatwaagni & Bhutagni*. *Sthaulya* results from derangement of *Dhatwagni*. According to *Sushruta*, it is *Rasanimitaj Vyadhi*. Due to intake *Kapha* predominant *Ahara, Diwaswapana* and *Avyayama* vitiated *Rasadhatu* circulates whole body, produces *Medas* and causes *Sthaluya*.

Samprapti ghataka

Dosha - *Kapha* dominant *Tridoshaja*.

Dushya - *Rasa* and *Meda Dhatu*

Agni: Early phase – *Agnimandhya*

Late phase – *Teekshnaagni*

Srotasa: *Medovaha* and *Rasavaha Srotasa*

Srotodushti: *Sanga srotodushti* and *Vimargaman*

Adhithana: *Sarvanga* (specifically *Udara, Sphika, Stana* and *Gala pradesha*).

Roga Marga: *Bahya*

DISCUSSION

The disease *Sthaulya* originates due to consumption of *Kapha Vriddhikara Aahara Vihara* and *Anyanidana*. These factors disturb *Jatharagni* producing *Ama Aanasara* which results in

Medodhatu Agnimandya. This condition leads to excessive growth and accumulation of *Medo Dhatu* causing the disease *Sthaulya*. In Ayurveda, the action of drugs is effected in the body through its pharmaco dynamics properties like *Rasa, Guna, Veerya, Vipaka* along with these *Prabhava* is the specific property inherited by the drug which cannot be described and the principle of treatment in Ayurveda is based on *Samprapti Vighatana* which is achieved by relieving *Dosha Dushya Sammurchana*. In the pathology of *Sthaulya*, *Kapha* is main *Dosha* and *Rasa, Meda* are main *Dushya*, while *Agnimandya* take place at *Medodhatuagni* level. So, drug having *Kapha* and *Medanashaka* property and efficacy to correct the function of *Medodhatvagnimandya* is effective to control *Medoroga*.

CONCLUSION

After the brief discussing the relation between *Rasa* and *Sthaulya*, it shows that *Rasa* is the main dhatu in the body which helps in the establishment of other *Dhatus* of the body. It circulates into the body full time i.e. day and night which nurtures, develops, maintains and keeps the entire body functioning continuously. *Rasa dhatu* is distributed into two parts, one is static i.e. *Sthayi Dhatu* like the tissue fluid and intestinal fluid and another is flowing i.e. *Poshaka Dhatu* just like plasma and lymph, which help the nutrients to reach up to the whole-body tissue. By the indigestion due to imbalance of *Agni* they produce *Ama*, which is responsible for production of further diseases and it also includes *Sthaulayta*. Obesity is a common problem. It is mainly due to inappropriate lifestyle, mistaken food choices and lack of physical exercise.

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