

A CRITICAL REVIEW OF “*RASA DHATU*” – BODY FLUIDSDr. Dhananjay Bhagawandas Bairagi*¹ and Dr. Anand Ramu Sukenkar²

¹MD Kriya Sharir, Professor and HOD, RJS Ayurved Medical College and Research Center
Kopargaon, Ahmednagar.

²MD Rachana Sharir, Professor and HOD, RJS Ayurved Medical College and Research
Center Kopargaon, Ahmednagar.

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Corresponding Author*Dr. Dhananjay****Bhagawandas Bairagi**

MD Kriya Sharir, Professor
and HOD, RJS Ayurved
Medical College and
Research Center Kopargaon,
Ahmednagar.

ABSTRACT

In contemporary Ayurveda the practice of comparing ancient Ayurvedic terms with similar modern terminology is in vogue. It gives an insight to the working physiology and helps to decode some parts with respect to treatment. *Rasa dhatu* is one of the *Sapta Dhatu* mentioned in Ayurveda classics. *Dhatu* – as name suggests, these are building blocks of body structurally and functionally too. *Rasa Dhatu* is first described and then the others sequentially. It is Prime *Dhatu* which is derived from digestion of food and at the same time is responsible to maintain continuous supply of *Poshak Ansh* – nutrients to next *Dhatu* all over the body. Endeavor is made to critically study *Rasa Dhatu* right from its origin (*mool sthana*), its functions and contemporary correlation along with therapeutic importance.

KEYWORDS: *Rasa Dhatu*, *Sapta Dhatu*, *mool sthana*, *Poshak ansh*.

INTRODUCTION

In Ayurveda human body physiology is described in a very peculiar fashion. *Tridosha*, *Sapta dhatu*, and *Trimala* forms the basis of body. In this, *Tridosha* - *Vata*, *Pitta* and *Kapha* are working units of the body. Whereas *Sapta Dhatu* and *Trimala* are said to be *Dushya* – which get affected by *Tridosha*. In this *Rasa dhatu* is prime *Dhatu* mentioned in classics. This *Dhatu* forms the base of all *Dhatus* in nutrient - *Poshak ansh* supply. Its name suggests the nature of circulation all over the body and thus supporting each successive *Dhatu* in all terms. All *dhatu* are mentioned with their origin site i.e. *Mool sthana* and its related organ. This gives insight about the specific *Dhatu*, its production, state in body – *Parivahan*, *Kshay*-

Vrudhi and *Dhatu mala Avastha*. Any vitiation in *Dosha* affects this *Dhatu Strotas* and hence resulting in formation of disease. Inversely while studying the patho-physiology of a certain disease we can tract the *Dushya*, *Dosha* and its main base Dhatu i.e. *Rasa dhatu*.

Hence an endeavor is made to critically study *Rasa Dhatu* in context to contemporary science to reach out the treatment protocol to be made in Ayurveda.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

A thorough evaluation of *Rasa dhatu* is been made according to Ayurveda classics as follows,

Rasa Nirukti – Definition of term –

तत्र रस गतौ धातुः, अहरहर्गच्छतीत्यतो रस ॥

- Su. Su. 14/13

As stated by *Acharya Shusruta*, the word implies the meaning of *Gati* – pace. After getting the form of *Dahtu* – *Rasa* keeps circulating all over the body continuously. In contemporary science it may be referred as Plasma and Lymph which keeps circulating all over the body.

Mool sthana

तस्य हृदयं स्थानम् ।

- Su.Su. 14/3

In classics it has been mentioned that *mool sthana* (functional origin) of *Rasa* is *Hrudaya* and *Daha Dhamnya*. With the virtue of *Vyan Vaayu*, *Rasa Dhatu* is circulated all over the body. While considering the diseases caused due to *Rasa Dushti* (being vitiated by any of the three *Dosha*), it becomes utmost important to consider its *Mool sthana*. So drugs which have effect on *Hrudaya* and *Vyan vaayu* are also considered in its treatment.

Rasa Karya (Functions)

Prinan (Nourishment) as it formed directly from digested food - *Aahar rasa*. It carries all required nourishment factors and thus forms basis of nutrient supply to all *Dhatu*.

रसस्तुष्टिं प्रीणनं रक्तपुष्टिं च करोति ।

- Su. Su. 15/5

As it is said to be like as *Shleshma* – *Kapha dosha*, it has the property of *Snehana*. Which keeps all the body parts lubricated and facilitate ease in all bodily functions.

Types of *Rasa Dhatu*

विविधो रसः स्थायी पोषकश्चेति |

- Cha. Chi. 15/17

Sthayi – major part of *Rasa dhatu* derived from *Aahar Ras*. It carries out *Dhatu kriya* and is circulated all over body till minute capillaries supplying to skin. Thus gives insight of *Rasa Sarata* (Functional excellence) as *Twak Sarata*.

Poshak – part of *Rasa dhatu* which is responsible to nourish successive *Dhatu*. Thus proper healthy formation of *Rasa dhatu* is of prime importance for formation and balancing of all other *Dhatu*.

Rasa Kshay – *Vrudhi* (Imbalance)

Kashay –

रसे रौक्ष्यं श्रमः शोषो ग्लानि शब्दासहिष्णुता |

- A. Hru. Su. 11/17

As mentioned in texts, symptoms related to *Hrudaya* and *Vyan vaayu* vitiation are listed. This includes reduced or low function of normal *Rasa dhatu*. *Krushta*, *Shosha* (Emaciation), *Trushna* (Thirst), *Shram* (fatigue), *Shabda ashahishnuta* (inability to tolerate sound).

Vrudhi –

रसोऽपि श्लेष्मवत् |

- A. Hru. su. 11/7

It is mentioned to have similar properties as that of *Shelshama* – *Kapha dosha*. Hence *Vrudhi* – increase in quantity refers to the symptoms as *Hruday utklesh* – nausea, *Aalasya* – laziness or sluggishness in action/ nature.

CONCLUSION

By through study of Ayurved classics, *Rasa dhatu* can be correlated to body fluids viz; Lymph, Plasma and cellular fluids. As the texts mentions the functions of *Rasa dhatu* has resemblance with their contemporary counterpart. Diseases of lymphatic system can be considered under *Rasa dhatru Dushti* – i.e. vitiation of *Rasa* by any of the three *Dosha* or imbalance in it (*Kshay/Vrudhi*). To line up treatment of *Rasa dhatu* diseases we have to take in consideration following points, *Rasa dhatu aagni*, *Jatahr aagni* – optimum digestive fire, *Rasa dhatu moola sthan* – *Hrudaya*, *Twak* – skin as representative organ in *Rasa sarata*

(functional excellence). Also *Rasayana* – rejuvenating drugs specifically mentioned for Rasa dhatu has importance in treating disorders. Drugs like *Praval pishti*, *Mukta Pishti*, *Swaras* - fresh juice of fruits and medicinal plants, *Shatavari* etc. prove to be of utmost importance in treatment regime.

Abbreviations

A. Hru. su. – Ashtanga Hrudaya Sutrasthana

Cha. Chi. – Charak Samhita Chikitsasthana

Su. Su. – Sushruta Samhita Sutrasthana

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