

A CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS OF RASADHATU

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ABSTRACT

Body is made up of tissues i.e. termed as *Dhatu* in *Ayurveda*. *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. Any pathological status of *Rasadhatu* can affect the all other *Dhatu* and finally may deteriorate the health of an individual. As this is the only *Dhatu* which is having circulating nature all over the body, taking *Rakta* along with it, it can act as a medium for healthy maintenance of the body and if vitiated causes diseases. It is the most superficial *Dhatu* which can be easily accessed. So, proper understanding of *Rasadhatu* is very essential for knowing the healthy and diseased status, as well as to plan and get success in treatment.

Keywords: *Rasa, Rasadhatu, Dhatu, Ahararasa, Sthayee Dhatu, Asthayee Dhatu.*

INTRODUCTION

Tridosha, Saptadhatu and *Trimala* are the basic concepts of *Ayurveda*. *Vata, Pitta* and *Kapha* are the *Tridosha*. *Rasa, Rakta, Mamsa, Medas, Asthi, Majja* and *Shukra* are the *Saptadhatu*, *Mutra, Purreesha* and *Sweda* are the *Trimala*. The word '*Dhatu*' comes from a verb '*Dha*' which is having the meaning 'to support (*Dharana*) and to nourish (*Poshana*)¹. It is the one which supports body, mind and life. They are seven in number (*Rasa, Rakta* etc.)*Rasadhatu*, first among the *Saptadhatu* and it is having prime importance of all *Dhatu*, as it is formed out of *Ahararasa* (essence of food) after *Saarakitta Vibhajana* (metabolic transformation). It is supposed to nourish the all other *Dhatu*. *Rasadhatu* and *Ahara Rasa* are different entities. *Rasadhatu* is the more transformed form of *Ahararasa* with an ability to nourish all other six *Dhatu*.

The proper conceptual understanding of these concepts is very essential. So here an attempt is being made to analyse the concept of *Rasadhatu* for its better understanding.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The *Charaka Samhita, Sushruta Samhita* and *Ashtanga Hridaya* were scrutinized regarding the references for the concept of *Rasadhatu*. Conceptual analysis was done for the proper understanding.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

To understand broad concept of *Rasadhatu* and analyze of the same

Rasadhatu

'*Dhatu*' which is being continuously circulated in the body is called as *Rasa Dhatu*.² *Ahaara Prasada/Teja* (essence portion of *Ahaara Rasa*), *Asrikkara*(blood former), *Agni Sambhava*(formed out of *Agni*), *Dhatu Sara* (fundamental *Dhatu*),

Sowmya Dhatu (Ap Mahabhuta Pradhanya Dhatu) are the other names of Rasadhātu.

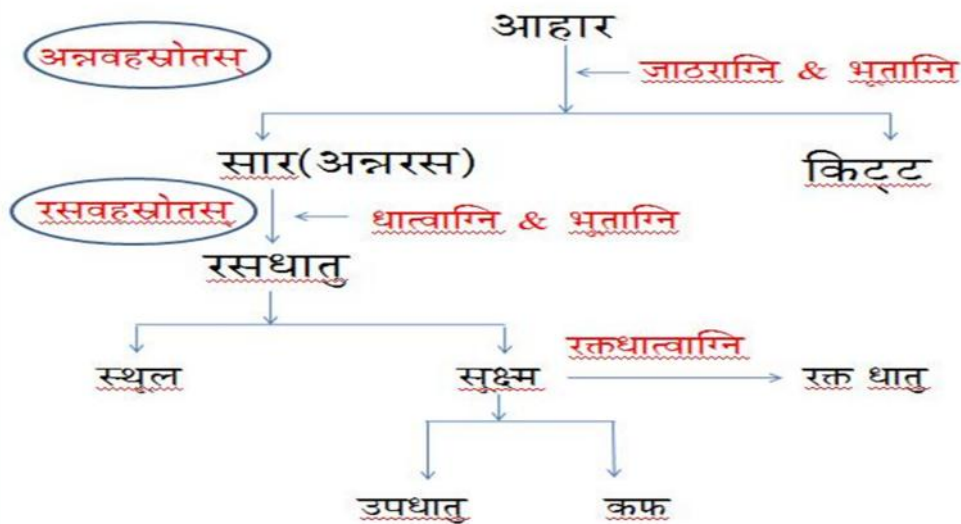
From Rasa body takes birth. Formation and development of foetus, its maintenance (continuance of life activity), growth and non-attachment from sensual activities are done by Rasadhātu. Shukra and Artava combine to form embryo (Garbha). Artava is produced verily from Rasadhātu.^{3,4,5} Its composition in the formation of embryo plays an important role in the sex determination also.⁶ It is the Dhatu which can nourish, develop and maintain all other Dhatu. So, one should protect Rasadhātu by taking nutritious food & with proper regimen.

Physiological Aspects

Ahararasa is a pure and minutest essence of well digested food. It is the nutrient and precursor for all the other Dhatu.⁷ It is formed from 4 types of food

composed (Ashita, Peeta, Khadita and Leahya) of Five Mahabhutas, 6 tastes, 2/8 Viryas (Sheeta- Ushna or Snigdha- Ruksha; Vishada- Pichhila/ Guru- Laghu; Mridu- Teekshna) and many other properties.⁸ Rasadhātu is formed from this Ahaarakasa.

The consumed Ahara gets digested under the action of Jatharagni (digestive fire) and Bhutagni in Annavaha Srotas (channel for transportation of food) and it will be differentiated into Sara (Annarasa/ useful portion) and Kitta Bhaga (discardable portion). Under the action of Rasadhātagni and Bhutagni in Rasavaha Srotas Annarasa will be differentiated into Sthulamsha (Poshya or major) and Sukshmamsha (Poshaka/ minor). Sthulamsha will nourish the Rasadhātu proper, whereas Sukshmamsha will further lead to the manifestation of Raktadhātu under the action of Raktadhātagni, Rasa Upadhātu (Stanya and Artava) and Mala (Kapha).



Rasadhatu predominantly composed of Jala Mahabhuta.^{9, 10} Hridaya is considered as the main Sthana.¹¹ Time taken for the formation of Rasadhātu from Ahararasa is 24 hours.^{12, 13} its quantity is 9 Anjali (1764 ml).¹⁴ It is of 2 types:

- Sthayee (Poshya)* it is stationary one, make up the structural architecture of the body and exist in material form. Continuously undergo construction and destruction maintaining a state of dynamic equilibrium (Swasthyam).
- Asthayee (Poshaka)* It is the circulating Dhatu, comprise the nutrient substanc-

es, which form the precursors of *Poshya Dhatu*.¹⁵

The formed *Rasadhatu* from *Rasavahasrotas* will be taken to *Hridaya* by *Samana Vata*, from there it enters 24 *Dhamani*, which passes 10 upward, 10 downward and 4 laterally.^{16,17} It circulates all over the body simultaneously and con-

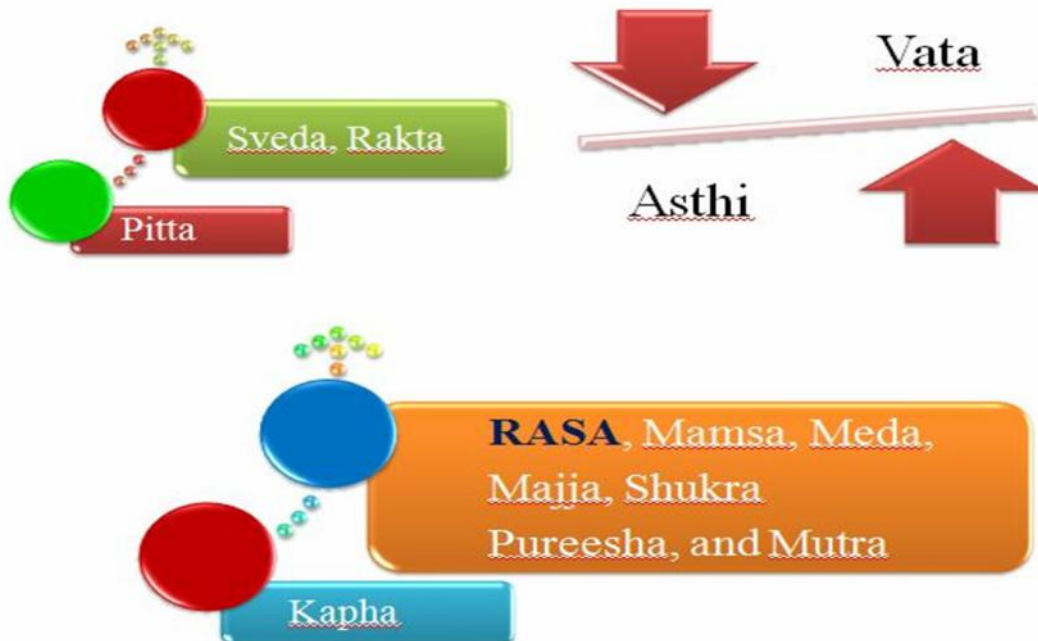
tinuously with the help of *Vyana Vayu*, which stimulates the process of circulation by its nature. This can be compared with waves of sound, like Fire and water.¹⁸ Gratification, satisfying and nourishment of *Raktadhātu* are the function of *Rasadhatu*.^{19, 20, 21}

Rasadhatu functions ²²	
Tarpana	Saturates persons of all ages
Vardhana	Promotes development of child
Dharana & Jivana	Sustains adult with fully developed <i>Dhatu</i>
Yapana	Maintains old with deteriorating physique

Upadhātu ²³	<i>Stanya</i> (breast milk) & <i>Arthava</i> (mensrual blood)
Mala ^{24,25}	<i>Kapha</i>

Ashraya Ashrayeebhava Sambandha of *Rasadhatu* with *Kapha Dosha*

can be better understood with diagrammatic representation here under.²⁶



Individuals with excellence of *Twak* are characterised by unctuous, smooth, soft, clear, fine, less numerous, deep rooted and tender hair and lustrous skin. They are also endowed with happiness, good fortunes, power, enjoyment, intellect, knowledge, health, excitement and longevity.²⁷

Rasavaha Srotas are the channels of circulation of *Rasadhatu*. *Hridaya*, *Dasha Dhamani* and *Rasavahini Dhamani* are said to be the *Moola Sthana* for these Channels.^{28, 29}

Avalambaka Kapha is one of the fluid entities in the body and is considered as important among all *Kapha* types. It

supports *Hridaya*, *Trika* and all other *Kapha*.^{30, 31, 32}

Pathological Aspects: *Rasavridhi Lakshana* is similar to *Sleshma Vriddhi Lakshana*. They are as follows, *Agnisadana*, *Praseka* (Increased salivation) *Aalasya* (Laziness), *Gaurava* (Heaviness), *Svaitya* (Palloriness), *Saitya* (Coldness), *Slathangata* (Laxity of organs), *Svasa* (Dyspnoea), *Kasa* (Cough) and *Atinidrata* (Excessive sleep).³³ *Rasadhatu* in its decreased state produces *Raukshya* (Dryness), *Shrama* (Tiredness), *Shosha* (Emaciation), *Glaani* (Weakness) and intolerability towards sound (*Shabda Asahishnuta*) (*Rasakshaya Lakshana*).³⁴ *Rasavaha Srotas* get vitiated due to excessive intake of heavy, cold, excessive unctuous food and over worry (*Rasavaha Srotodushti Karana*).³⁵ *Ashraddha* (Loss of desire for food, no difficulty in taking food), *Aruchi* (Disapproval of food even after it has been taken in), *Asyavairasya* (Manifestation of abnormal taste in mouth), *Arasajnata* (Absence of perception of food), disinclination for food, anorexia, disgeusia, ageusia, nausea, heaviness, drowsiness, fever with malaise, fainting, anaemia, obstruction of channels of circulation, impotency, asthenia, emaciation, loss of power of digestion and premature appearance of wrinkles and grey hairs are the *Rasapradoshaja Vikara*.³⁶ Injury to *Rasavaha Srotas* & its *Moola* lead to depletion of *Rasadhatu* which is followed by *Shosha* (Emaciation), *Vata Dushti*, *Akroshana* (Loud Grooming), *Vinamana* (Bending), *Moha* (Loss of consciousness), *Bhrama* (Illusion), *Vepana* (Tremors) and *Marana* (Death) (*Rasava-hasroto Viddha Lakshaana*).³⁷ For the cure of diseases caused by vitiation of *Rasa*, all types of *Langhana* (reducing therapy) should be advised (*Rasavaha Srotodushti Chikitsa*).³⁸ Ten types of *Langhana* in-

cludes four types of elimination therapies, control of thirst, exposure to wind and sun, intake of substance that stimulates digestion, fast and physical exercise.³⁹

DISCUSSION

A. *Rasadhatu- Udaka*⁴⁰

Rasadhatu is nourishing in nature and *Udaka* is not so. Quantity of *Rasadhatu* (9 *Anjali*) and *Udaka* (10 *Anjali*) are also different. *Udaka* is found in association with other body fluids and can be seen mixed with faeces in diarrhoea whereas *Rasadhatu* cannot be seen outside.

B. *Rasadhatu- Ahaararasa*

Ahara Rasa when acted by *Rasa Dhatwagni* converted in to *Rasa Dhatu*. Even though *Ahaararasa* after its complete transformation only called as *Rasadhatu*, structural or functional differentiation of these two entities not so easy and it is almost impossible. Hence differentiation of *Ahaararasa*, *Sthayee* and *Asthayee Rasadhatu* from one another is not possible. This is the reason, *Rasa* in general considered as *Rasadhatu* and vice versa.

C. *Parinati Kaala*^{41,42}

Time taken for the formation of *Rasadhatu* from *Ahaararasa* is not fixed and it depends on individual *Agnibala* so it is individualistic. *Rasadhatu* is said to be staying for a period of 3015 *Kalaa* (5 days) in each *Dhatu*. Formation of all *Dhatu* takes approximately 1 month (30days) time i.e. 18090 *Kalaa*. This period also cannot be said as fixed as the formation of *Dhatu* from *Ahaararasa* is a continuous, uninterrupted process like moving wheel and depending on *Agnibala*.

D. *Artava Agni Pradhanatwam*

Even though *Artava* (*Agneya Dravya*) is formed from *Rasadhatu* (*Sowmya Dhatu*) it is predominant of *Agni Mahabhuta*. This is may be because of involvement of *Agni* at the level of transformation

of *Rasadhatu* into *Artava* (i.e. *Artavagni/Rasadhatwagni* itself) and permutation and combination of *Panchamahabhuta* in the transformation process (*Agnipaaka*). It can also be understood by considering the formation of foetus (*Garbha*) by the union of *Shukra* and *Shonita*. Predominance of *Shonita* at the time of conception, which is *Agneya* in nature leads to the formation of female child so, female are supposed to be *Agneya* naturally. May be because of this reason *Artava* being formed from *Rasadhatu* in the body (*Shareera*) of female (Formed because of dominance of *Agneya Dravya* i.e. *Shonita*) is also *Agneya* in nature.

E. *Rasa Upadhatu* in Male

Body will prepare everything that is needed from time to time. As there is no need or necessity for Male to have *Artava* or *Sthanya*, there will be no formation of *Upadhatu* from *Rasadhatu* in males.

F. *Twaksaara* versus *Rasasaara*

All the skin layers are formed from the *Ashrik* (blood) like layers of scum on boiling milk.⁴³ As the quality and quantity of blood depends on quality and quantity of *Rasadhatu* it can be inferentially understood that features of *Twak* represents the *Rasasaarata*. As skin can be a tool for clinical examination, importance was being given to *Twak* for the assessment of *Rasadhatu* in an individual.

G. *Hridaya- Rasadhātu Sthana- Rasavaha Srotas*

Even though *Rasadhatu* circulates throughout the body, only *Hridaya* is considered as its location, this is may be because of the reason that the force of circulation is from *Hridaya* only. *Hridaya* is essential for the transportation of *Poshakamsha* of other *Dhatu* also, but it is considered as the *Moola Sthana* for *Rasavaha Srotas* only, why because the

Ahar Ahar Gachhati function i.e. the continuous movement function of *Rasadhatu* can be taken over and satisfied by the only organ of the body i.e. *Hridaya*, which never stops from birth to death. *Rasadhatu* which reaches the *Hridaya* with the help of *Samana Vata* will be circulated throughout the body by *Vyana Vata*.⁴⁴

H. *Dasha Dhamani- Rasavahini Dhamani*

These are the *Moola Sthana* of *Rasavaha Srotas* as per different *Acharya*. *Dhamani* means the structure which is having pulsation. a. Right Coronary Artery, b. Left Coronary Artery, c. Superior Vena Cava, d. Inferior Vena Cava, e. Pulmonary Trunk, f. Aorta and g. - j. Four Pulmonary Veins can be considered as *Dasha Dhamani*. All the vessels near to heart show pulsation because of transmission of pressure from heart. All these vessels also may be considered as *Rasavahini Dhamani* only because of functional similarity. This difference in the *Moola Sthana* may be because of the individual speciality of the *Acharyas* (*Charaka- Physiopathological* and *Sushruta- Anatopathological*).

I. *Rasadhatu Vriddhi- Kshaya*

Vriddhi and *Kshaya* of *Rasadhatu* will affect the successive *Dhatu* and can deteriorate the health of the individual very badly.

J. *Rasapradoshaja Vikara- Rasavaha SrotoViddha*

Rasadhatu/ Rasavaha Srotas vitiation may lead to simple to complicated disorders. Its vitiation may not only show its effect at its own level, it may extend to the level of *Shukradhatu* also. For example like *Klaibya*. Its vitiation may lead to simple disorder like *Ashraddha* and even *Marana*.

K. *Rasadhatu- Medium of circulation*

As a medium of circulation *Rasadhātu* is clinically useful. Any medicine after its metabolic transformation will enter into *Rasadhātu* and can circulate throughout the body and can easily reach even minute target area/ channels of the body including all other *Dhātu*.

L. *Rasadhātu-Avalambaka Kapha*

One is *Dhātu* and the other is *Dosha*. *Rasadhātu Sthana* is *Hridaya* whereas *Avalambaka Kapha* function is to nourish *Hridaya*. *Rasadhātu* circulates throughout the body through *Hridaya* and nourishes all other *Dhātu* whereas *Avalambaka Kapha* stays near to *Hridaya (Urah)* and nourishes it.

CONCLUSION

Rasadhātu is the first *Dhātu* among *Saptadhātu*. It is having prime importance as it is the precursor material for all the other *Dhātu* formation. Its *Vridhi* and *Kshaya* will reflect its effect on all the *Dhātu*. Its vitiation may show simple to very complicated effects on health. It is the *Dhātu* essential for the new creation (Embryo formation) and also maintenance of life (Recreation), so it's understanding and reviewing have its own importance in present era.

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