



## A REVIEW ON THE CONCEPT OF DHATU SARATHA AND IT'S CLINICAL UTILITY

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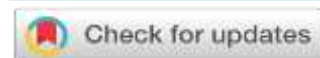
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### ABSTRACT

*Dhatu Saratha* is a unique concept in Ayurveda, which accounts for the assessment of *the Bala* of an individual. *Dhatu* is an entity that is one of the pillars for the construction of the body along with *Dosha* and *Mala*. So, assessment of *Dhatu* is of utmost importance as far as health and treatment are considered. *Dhatu Saratha* examines the qualitative aspects of each *Dhatu*. This paves a path for the understanding of the *Bala* of the individual and treatment can be planned accordingly as *Rogibala* has to be assessed prior to treatment. Acharyas have mentioned eight types of *Dhatu Saratha*; seven in accordance with *Saptha Dhatu* and the eighth one being the *Satva Sara*, which assesses mental endurance. Acharya Kashyapa has also mentioned *Ojo Sara*, the total is nine. Apart from *Bala* assessment, *Dhatu Saratha* also have utility in the personal and professional life of an individual, since *Saratha* can reflect in the character of the individual.

**Keywords:** *Bala, Dhatu Saratha, Ojo Sara*

### INTRODUCTION

The human body is made up of *Dosha, Dhatu,* and *Mala*<sup>1</sup>. For the proper functioning of the body, an equilibrium of these factors is a must. Among these three, *Dhatu* has the function of nourishing and sup-

porting the body. The most purified or vital part of *Dhatu* is known as *Sara*, which means it is the excellence of that particular *Dhatu*<sup>2</sup>. So, assessment of *Dhatu Saratha* means assessing the quality of each

*Dhatu* which in turn gives an idea about the *Bala* of the patient, since *Dhatu* is the factor that supports the body. In Ayurveda, the first step before starting the treatment is to assess the *Rogabala* and *Rogibala* so that a proper treatment plan can be made. It is fallacious to consider an individual to be strong or weak by merely considering the body's stature. Some individuals having emaciated bodies may be strong enough and others having well-built body stature may be weak. Here comes the utility of *Sara* pareeksha, which gives the idea about the qualitative excellence of the *Dhatu* and determines the *Bala* of the individual and thus helps to make the treatment successful.

**ETYMOLOGY:** The term *Sara* is derived from the root 'sri sthira' with 'ghan' as a suffix which means most excellent, essential, best, real, true, strong, etc.

**DEFINITION**

*Sara* can be defined as; "srayate sthiraebhavathi yatra tatra Sara" which means 'the thing which becomes stable is known as Sara'.

Amarakosha has given two meanings for the word *Sara Bala* (strength) and sthiramsa (stable part).

Cakrapani on commenting on caraka Samhita has defined *Sara* as the purest form of *Dhatu*<sup>2</sup>.

**DHATU AND SARA**

The term *Dhatu* is derived from the root: "du-dhanj-dharana poshanayo" which means, it is the one giving *Dharana* and *Poshana*. *Dharana* means to support and *Poshana* means to nourish. So, *Dhatu* performs

both of these functions. In our body, *Dhatu*s have two states: viz. *Poshaka Dhatu* and *Poshya Dhatu*. *Poshaka Dhatu* is the one which nourishes, and *Poshya Dhatu* is the form which is being nourished. So, *Dhatu Saratha* is a measure of *Poshya Dhatu* or *Sthayi Dhatu* in the body which is responsible for *Deha dharana*.

**CLASSIFICATION OF DHATU SARATHA**

Even though the concept of *Sara* is based on *Dhatu* which are seven in number, Acharyas have mentioned eight types of *Sara* which also includes *satva Sara* which assess the mental strength of the individual since it is as much important as body strength. So, there are eight types of *Sara* to assess the *bala* of the individual<sup>3</sup>. They are.

1. *Tvak Sara*
2. *Rakta Sara*
3. *Mamsa Sara*
4. *Medo Sara*
5. *Asthi Sara*
6. *Majja Sara*
7. *Sukra Sara*
8. *Satva Sara*

The sequence in which acharyas have explained *Sara* is also different. Both Caraka and Vagbata have described *Sara* in the same order of *Dhatu* from *Rasa* to *Sukra* and ending with *Satva Sara*. But Susrutha has reversed the order and he also opined that the individuals have prosperity and longevity in the preceding order<sup>4</sup>.

**Table: Classification of Sara according to different Acharyas**

Charaka Samhita <sup>3</sup>	Susrutha Samhita <sup>4</sup>	Ashtanga Hridaya <sup>5</sup>	Ashtanga Sangraha <sup>6</sup>	Kashyapa Samhita <sup>7</sup>
<i>Tvak Sara</i>	<i>Satva Sara</i>	<i>Tvak Sara</i>	<i>Tvak Sara</i>	<i>Tvak Sara</i>
<i>Rakta Sara</i>	<i>Sukra Sara</i>	<i>Rakta Sara</i>	<i>Rakta Sara</i>	<i>Rakta Sara</i>
<i>Mamsa Sara</i>	<i>Majja Sara</i>	<i>Mamsa Sara</i>	<i>Mamsa Sara</i>	<i>Mamsa Sara</i>
<i>Medo Sara</i>	<i>Asthi Sara</i>	<i>Medo Sara</i>	<i>Medo Sara</i>	<i>Medo Sara</i>
<i>Asthi Sara</i>	<i>Medo Sara</i>	<i>Asthi Sara</i>	<i>Asthi Sara</i>	<i>Asthi Sara</i>
<i>Majja Sara</i>	<i>Mamsa Sara</i>	<i>Majja Sara</i>	<i>Majja Sara</i>	<i>Majja Sara</i>
<i>Sukra Sara</i>	<i>Rakta Sara</i>	<i>Sukra Sara</i>	<i>Sukra Sara</i>	<i>Sukra Sara</i>
<i>Satva Sara</i>	<i>Tvak Sara</i>	<i>Satva Sara</i>	<i>Satva Sara</i>	<i>Ojo Sara</i>
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## DISCUSSION

The characteristic features of each *Dhatu Sara* have been very well explained in the classics for a better understanding. But in Kashyapa samhitha, the features of *Tvak Sara* and *Raktha Sara* only is there<sup>8</sup>. The later part of the *Samhitha* is not available now. There are only names of other *Dhatu Saras*, in which there is mentioning of *Ojo Sara*.

### 1. TVAK SARA

*Tvak Sara* means skin but contextually means *Rasa Dhatu*. While commenting on Susrutha samhitha, Dalhana quoted in this context that *Tvak sara* means *Rasa Sara*, and *Rasa* here means the *Rasa* that is located in *Tvak* (skin)<sup>9</sup>. The individuals having *Tvak Sara* will be having unctuous, smooth, soft, clear, less numerous, deep-rooted, and tender hair and lustrous skin. The persons of this *Sara* are endowed with happiness, good fortune, grandeur, enjoyment, intellect, learning, health, cheerfulness, and longevity<sup>10</sup>. According to acharya Susrutha, the individual having pleasant and soft skin and hair is called as *Tvak Sara*<sup>4</sup>. When Kashyapa samhitha is concerned, he is of the opinion that *Uttama Tvak Sara* persons are devoid of skin diseases, their skin looks very fresh, and pleasure-seeking and they will be having rapid wound healing capacity<sup>7</sup>. The prime function of *Rasa dhatu* is *Preenana* (nourishment). *Tvak sara* is nothing but the *Rasa sara*. So, a perfect *Tvak sara* individual will have a perfectly nourished state. The best way to assess the nutritional status is to examine the integumentary system, the largest organ of the body, which includes skin, hair, and nails, and it is done in *Tvaka sara pareeksha*. As *Tvak Sara* individuals have smooth and fair skin, and soft and well-nourished hair, they can shine in different careers like modelling and advertisement. They can work as sales executives as they are good-looking and endowed with good communication skills. These people are intelligent so they can be good managers, and initiators and can be better with the marketing department.

### 2. RAKTA SARA

Caraka has explained that the individuals with *Rakta Sara* will be beautiful and shining and they have unctuous and reddish ears, eyes, faces, tongues, noses, lips, palms, soles, nails, forehead, and genitals. The

persons of this constitutional essence are endowed with happiness intelligence, enthusiasm, tenderness, moderate strength, intolerance to pain, and intolerance to heat<sup>11</sup>. In Susrutha Samhita, a person having oily and coppery nails, eyes, palate, tongue, palms, and soles is considered *Rakta Sara* purusha<sup>4</sup>. According to Kashyapa, *Rakta Sara* individual who is known to possess unctuous and coppery nails, eyes, palate, tongue, lips, palms, and soles<sup>7</sup>. The perfect state of *Raktha dhatu* can lead to increased body metabolism, which leads to an increase in BMR (Basal Metabolic Rate). This can lead to increased circulation and will result in redness in the skin and mucus membranes. The increased temperature due to higher BMR will be the reason for their intolerance towards heat. As they have the excellence of intelligence, are good book surfers, and have an innovative minds, they can set their careers as academicians, researchers, doctors, and engineers. They can understand people easily, so they can become good consultants and administrators. On contrary to that, they cannot tolerate exertion and hot environment. So, the working atmosphere should be cool, and they should do the less strenuous job for maximum efficiency and comfort.

### 3. MAMSA SARA

*Mamsa Sara* individuals will be having stable, heavy, and good musculature at the temporal region, forehead, nape, eyes, cheeks, jaw, neck, shoulders, abdomen, axilla, chest, hand, feet, and all joints. This constitution is endowed with tolerance, non-greediness, wealth, knowledge, happiness, simplicity, health, strength, and longevity<sup>12</sup>. According to Susrutha, a well-statured body, strong and concealed bones, joints, and good musculature are the features of *Mamsa Sara* purusha<sup>4</sup>. *Mamsa dhatu* accounts for the muscular part of the human body. A well-nourished *Mamsa dhatu* can reflect as the muscular body parts even in bony areas. It is the characteristic feature to distinguish the *Mamsa sara* individual. The stout and robust bodies, tolerance, and longevity can make them good military officers and good administrators. These individuals can make their career in sports as they have good muscle strength and stamina. They can also choose professions like

wrestling, modelling, and gym training because of the well-covered, healthy body and good strength.

#### 4. MEDO SARA

happiness, enjoyment, clarity, simplicity, and softness in dealing with others<sup>13</sup>. Individuals having oily urination, sweat and voice, a big body, and intolerance to strain are the features of medo Sara purusha as per susrutha<sup>4</sup>. The term *Medo dhatu* is invariably connected with the fat moiety of the body. The oily appearance of excreta can be due to the excretion of fat via faeces. The free fatty acids and triglycerides account for the oily appearance of skin, hair, eyes, and nails. The melodious voice can make them good singers and broadcasters. These individuals have unctuous looks and voices, so they can work as anchors. They are the type of people who love a sedentary lifestyle and like to enjoy life. So, they can be good hoteliers and luxury store owners. Since they have a clarity and taste of what is best suited for an occasion or individual, they can also be good fashion critics.

#### 5. ASTHI SARA

According to Caraka, *Asthi Sara* purusha is characterized by prominent heels, ankles, knees, elbows, collar bone, chin, head, joints, bones, nails, and teeth. They are highly enthusiastic, active, tolerant to pain, having a strong and firm body as well as longevity<sup>14</sup>. According to Susrutha, individuals having a big head, large shoulders, strong teeth, jawbone, and nails are the features of *Asthi Sara* persons<sup>4</sup>. The prominence of bones and thus bone density can make the person active. The strong joints, nails, and teeth endow them with a strong body. They will be inborn athletes as they are enthusiastic, active, and have well-built bodies. The ability to stay active all the time makes them good leaders also. Compared to other individuals, they have high endurance. This will make them capable of being adventure sporters like river rafters, mountaineers, and bikers. Unlike *Rakta Sara* individuals, they can tolerate and withstand extreme conditions. So, they can work as astronauts, marine commandos, and in the military.

#### 6. MAJJA SARA

*Majja Sara Purusha* will have soft organs, strength, an unctuous complexion and voice, and thick long, and rounded joints. They are endowed with longevity,

strength, wealth, critical understanding, progeny, and respect in society<sup>15</sup>. Susrutha said that a person who does not lean, has good strength, soft and deep voice, prosperity, and big eyes are considered *Majja Sara Purusha*<sup>4</sup>. *Majja dhatu* can be correlated with the bone marrow, which is the place of erythropoiesis. So, *Majja sara* individuals will be having a well-organised hemopoiesis, which will result in a good complexion and strength. The big eyes with a proportional and stable body can make them exceptionally good dancers. As they have a soft voice, they can become singers just like *Medo Sara* individuals. These people have expressive features and also, and they are very pleasant to look at. These are the qualities to pave the path to careers like acting and modelling. *Majja Sara* individuals have good patience and have the feature of critical thinking. Using these characters, they can work as scientists. They have money and can resourcefully use it to yield maximum benefit, so they can be finance managers.

#### 7. SUKRA SARA

*Sukra Sara Purusha* is characterized by being attractive with a gentle look, whitish clear eyes filled with milk, cheerfulness, unctuous-rounded-firm-even, compact teeth, an unctuous complexion, and a voice. They are impressive and have large buttocks. They are loved by women, strong, endowed with happiness, grandeur, health, wealth, honour, and progeny<sup>16</sup>. As per Susrutha, the individual having oily skin, well-developed, white-coloured bones, teeth, and nails, lustrous, and having more children should be considered *Sukra Sara*<sup>4</sup>. Most of the features shown by *Sukra sara* individuals can be accounted as the functions of testosterone. The increased sebaceous secretion by testosterone gives the complexion. Its action of encouraging bone growth can result in the characteristics of teeth, and testosterone also has the function of modulating the voice. *Sukra Sara* individuals hardly do any strenuous work as they are gifted with luxuries from the very day they are born. Their conversational skills are very good, and they have a profound understanding of public affairs so they will be good in human resource management. These individuals are very attractive so they become actors and models. As they are beautiful

and art lovers, they can also choose careers like artists and sculptors in which they can shine.

### 8. SATVA SARA

Individuals with *Satva Sara* are endowed with memory, devotion, gratefulness, knowledge, purity, and enthusiasm. They are skilful, determined, fighting in battle with expertise, free from sorrow, have proper gait, depth of wisdom, and sincerity in action, and are devoted to virtuous act<sup>17</sup>. *Satva Sara* individuals have a good memory, devotion, excellence, and purity and they always do good things, as per the opinion of Susruta<sup>4</sup>. They are individuals with purity in mind and are devoted to God. They will not be affected by the ups and down in life to a great extent. Their knowledge and wisdom help them to keep their patience intact. So, they are the group of individuals, who are attracted to spirituality, and they will be good speakers as they have great knowledge.

### SARVA SARA PURUSHA LAKSHANA

*Sarva Sara Purusha* is the individual having the characteristics of all the *Sara*. Those individuals endowed with all the *Sara* will be very strong, extremely happy, possess good endurance, self-confidence in initiating all actions, always concentrating their mind, intellect in auspicious acts, firm and well-formed body, *balanced* movement, and resonant-melodious-deep-high pitched voice. They will always have happiness, grandeur, wealth, enjoyment, honour, slow aging, and slow pathogenic process and are endowed with children and longevity<sup>18</sup>. In *Ashtanga sangraha*, Vridha Vagbhata also explains somewhat similar characteristics for *Sarva Sara Purusha*. According to him, a person endowed with all types of *Sara* will be very strong, with a stable physique, capable of withstanding strain, having full confidence in the results of his activities, benevolent in all his deeds, possesses a strong body, *balanced* gait, has a vibrating, polite, dignified and loud voice, enjoys happiness, wealth, money and luxuries. Old age and diseases approach him slowly; is endowed with many children of similar qualities and enjoys a long life.

### MADHYAMA AND AVARA SARA

*Madhyama Sara* individuals will have characters of respective *Sara* in moderate degree and show characteristics of *sarva Sara purusha* moderately<sup>19</sup>. *Avara*

*Sara* individuals possess properties of respective *Sara* in the lowest degree and show none or minimum characters of *Sarva Sara purusha*<sup>20</sup>. So, all eight types of *Sara* can be assessed as either *Pravara*, *Madhyama*, or *Avara* in an individual, which will give an idea about the *Bala* of the patient.

### IMPORTANCE OF SARA PAREEKSHA

The strength of the individual cannot be measured by merely looking at the body as he is lean or corpulent. It is observed that some persons having small bodies and leanness are strong just like the small ants that have small body and look emaciated but can carry a heavy load. Hence one should examine the patient in respect of *Sara*<sup>21</sup>. *Sara* is the tool to assess *Bala*, which in turn indicates the power of resistance against disease. Since *Sara* is an indicator of a particular *Dhatu*, the number of *Dhatu Saratha* present in the body of the individual will be directly proportional to his/her *Bala* or immunity.

It is also observed that an individual with the predominance of a particular *Sara* will have more resistance against the diseases affecting that particular *Dhatu*, just like Kashyapa said *Tvak Sara* children have disease-free *Tvak*, and their skin is capable of rapid healing of wounds<sup>7</sup>.

Susrutha while explaining the factors needed for successful treatment counted *Sara* as one of them<sup>22</sup>, which emphasizes its importance. In the context of *Samsodhana* in *Charaka Samhita kalpasthana*, it is said that *Madhyama* and *Heena Bala* individuals should be given *Madhyama* and *Mridu sodhana*. The *Oushadha kala* also depends upon the *Bala* of *Rogi*. *Balavan rogi* is given medicine without food early in the morning and *Durbala rogi* is instructed to take medicine mixed with *Laghu* and *Hita ahara*. In pregnant women, if one or more *Dhatus* are having *Heena Saratha*, treatment can be given accordingly to provide nourishment to that particular *Dhatu* so that there will not be *Heena Sarata* in the foetus. All these are pointing towards the importance of assessing *Bala* and *Dhatu Sarata* in treatment. Apart from all these, the *Dhatu Saratha* assessment can discover the comfort zone of an individual, which will give an idea about the liking or the abilities of that person. As it is said earlier, *Dhatu Saratha* can

reveal the true strength of an individual. So, by taking advantage of these two, a person can be guided to a profession according to his liking and can also give useful advice to improve the quality of life.

## CONCLUSION

*Dhatu saratha*, the qualitative excellence of a *Dhatu* is the most precise tool for the assessment of *Dhatu* functioning. Apart from physical characters, it also examines the psychological part which makes sure that all the aspects of a *dhatu* are covered. From a modern point of view, it can be considered tissue vitality, tissue quality, and constitutional essence. So, a perfect *Sara* will help for the proper functioning of the body and resist disease-producing mechanisms. In healthy individuals, it is the key that helps them to identify their strengths and weakness, whereas, in a diseased condition, it will help in the assessment of *Bala*, which is a pre-requisite for starting the treatment. In a nutshell, it can be said that the two aims of Ayurveda, prevention of disease and maintenance of health, both are dependent upon *Bala*, as *Bala* is needed for body functioning and disease prevention. This *bala* is indicated by *Dhatu saratha*. This fact itself gives the importance of *Dhatu saratha* in Ayurveda.

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