ANALYSIS OF ARTAVA (MENSTRUATION) IN CONTEXT OF SHARIRA RACHANA

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ABSTRACT

The proper understanding of terminology is vital for a systematic knowledge of any structure especially in context of Sharira Rachana. A term is a structured set of concepts and their designations in a specific field. The proper terminology is concerned with relationship between the concepts and also makes a fundamental pillar. The aim of present article is to compiled, critically analyze the terminology related to Artava i.e. Raja, Artava and Shonita and elaborate the fundamental concepts behind those terminologies in various classics of Ayurveda. Presence of Raja, Artava since childhood, concept of Raja, Shonita, character of Artava and difference between Artava and Shonita are mentioned as reviewed literature. About one month of time period is needed in the formation of Artava in adult female’s means to reach the Artava from its originating place to destination place or from Yakrita and Plehea to Garbhashaya (Yoni) and this makes complete passage of Artava. Artava have Agneya Pradhana nature as source of Agneyatattva for Garbha while Anushmasheeta composition of Rakta Dhatu laid the foundation of Dhatu for body. Raja is the flowing constituent of Artava and Beeja as constituent of Artava is the source of Garbha. Both Artava and Rakta Dhatu are formed from Rasa Dhatu by Ranjanakriya. This process converts the Saumyabhava to Agneyabhava. This article can be helpful to understand the various terminologies related to the Artava.

INTRODUCTION

Whole Sphere of Sharira Rachana can be obtained only after getting the view of bird’s eye and this requires study in definitive manner. The proper understanding of terminology is vital for a systematic knowledge of any structure especially in context of Sharira Rachana. The specific or detailed manner of study is called analysis. Compilation and contemplation are must to recognize the deep facts regarding any terminology of Ayurveda. Most of the concepts of Sharira Rachana have been described in very minute form, so it is not always possible to analyze it. It is only perceived by its clinical aspect. These all basic concepts of Sharira Rachana are built upon Panchabautika and Tridoša principles. Sharira Rachana is not defined as separate subject so its description is found hither and thither in scattered form. Out of triad of Samhita, most of concepts of Shaarira are found in the Sushruta Samhita. This is only subject which formulate podium for all subjects and clinical knowledge. A term is a structured set of concepts and their designations in a specific field. The proper terminology is concerned with relationship between the concepts and also makes a fundamental pillar. Little work has been conducted regarding the terminologies of Samhita. So it is necessary to add some thoughts for the further elaboration of Sharira Rachana in purview of terminologies. The aim of present article is to critically analyze the terminologies related to Artava i.e. Raja, Artava and Shonita. To compiled the references regarding the terminologies of them and elaborate the fundamental concepts behind that terminologies in various classics of Ayurveda are the objectives of the article.

Presence of Raja, Shonita or Artava since childhood

As in young or aged plans flowers and fruits do not come up, as in bud and decaying flower or fruit the fragrance is not explicit, similarly in females Raja (menstrual flow) and Stanya (milk) before twelve years and after fifty years of age are not visible. As fire located within the wood cannot be noticed without specific efforts, similarly Shonita require appropriate time and specific effort for their gross appearance. Commentators like Dalhana and Cakrapani quoted the view for the presence of Artava since from the embryonic period.
Concept and formation of Raja

The Rakta, which is formed by the Rasa Dhatu get the term Raja in the females within specific time period of age. It appears in the female after the age of twelve years and subsides by the age of fifty. This time limit shows the normal phenomena in healthy females[4]. Definition of Raja is also described by Dalhana to differentiate it from the Rakta Dhatu. The specific fraction of Rakta which takes places in Yoni of healthy females in the specific time that is in Ritukala known as the Raja. Appearance and its characteristics are similar as the Rakta. Through this definition, Dalhana gave the stress upon two conditions in the formation of Raja[5]. Streeyoni word refers the Rachanatmaka Adhishthana from where the Raja is getting off in specific time period of month. Ritukala represents the fixed period in every month in which flow of Raja appears in healthy female individual.

From Rasa Dhatu, the Rakta named Raja is formed. Rakta reaching uterus and coming out for three days in every month is called Artava[6]. The Raja is formed from essence part of Rasai[7]. There appear some differences of opinion regarding the formation of Raja. Caraka, Sushruta, Dalhana and Cakrapani opined that it is formed from Rasa, while Vaghbhatta says that blood accumulated in uterus, then discharged as Artava, the Raja is derived from essence portion of Rasa; both these descriptions are identical, because Rakta either Dhatu Roopa or menstrual blood is derived from Rasa, thus it appears that Sushruta etc. have mentioned the earlier stage of Raja formation while Vaghbhatta the latter stage. The point has been clarified by Cakrapani that during the process of formation, the Artava is Saumya due to influence of Rasa, while at the time of its excretion due to specific changes it assumes Agneya character. This alteration is brought due to change in character caused by all Doshas in the same way as solid substance are changed into fume due to action of fire, cane juice a vitiating factor of Kapha is changed after fermentation into wine which vitiates all the three Doshas[9]. Arunadatta opines that this Raja is formed from Acharasara and not from Rasa Dhatu[9]. Shangadhara and Bhavamishra mention Raja as Upadhatu (by product) of Rakta[10].

Appearance of Raja

The text word (written in original text) “Rakta meva” indicates the appearance of Raja or fraction of Artava which is coming out in each month and can be seen externally. This term suggests its similarity to the Rakta in terms of external appearance. Normal menstruation is not associated with pain or burning sensation, excreted blood is not unctuous, not very scanty or excessive in amount; colour resembles the red juice of lace, red lotus flower, fruit of jequirity or rabbit’s blood[11]. As per opinion of Dalhana, pure Rakta has characteristics not to discolour the cloth after washing[12]. This is also same with the Raja which helps to define its purity as Pratyaksha Pareeksha. Bhavamishra has explained the difference in colour is due to Prakriti of individuals, and vitiated all Doshas are responsible for symptoms like pain and burning sensation etc.

Concept of Shonita

In context of describing the Dosha and their location, Acharya has counted Shonita as fourth Dosha which is essential pillar to keep the balance of the body. Here word Shonita refers to the second one Dhatu, which takes origin from the Rasa Dhatu through the process of Ranjana occurs in the Yakrita & Pleeha. The seats of Shonita are described as the Yakrita & Pleeha[13]. It means these both Avayavas are said to be as Raktashaya or both Avayava are included in the Raktashaya. Even Shonita formation is occurred by the process of Ranjan but instead of complete Agneya nature, it has some Sheeta qualities also and these characteristics make the Shonita as proper Dhatu[14]. According to Cakrapani being a Dhatu it possesses Saumya Gunas along with Agneya properties and this makes the Shonita as Anushanasheeta[15].

Character of Artava

Artava is Agneya, has characteristics of Rakta, forms Garbha and is also essential for life[16]. Though dominant Mahabhuta in this is Tejas, however, others also exist in smaller amounts.

It is four Anjali in Pramanas[17].

Entire period of one month is divided in three:

1. Rajahsrava: 3 to 5 days

Intermenstrual period has been given as of one month by all writers; however, there is difference of opinion regarding duration of menstruation as three days[18], five days[19], and seven days[20]. If flow is excessive it lasts for three days; if average then for five days; however, if slight flow without any other symptom of abnormality persists even for sixteen days, it may be considered as normal[21]. This stage is governed by Vata.

2. Ritukala: 12 to 16 days

It is of twelve days[22], according to other opinions it may be of sixteen days; if yoni, Garbhashaya and Artava are healthy, it may be of entire month; sometimes Ritukala may come up without menstruation[23]. Dalhana has explained that in twelve days duration, the first three days and last one day of constriction of yoni out of sixteen days duration are not counted. Since the seeds deposited during this period are likely to bear fruit, hence it is termed as Ritukala. Its duration as twelve days for Brahmanis, eleven days for Kshatriyas, ten or eight days for Vaishyas and nine or six days for Kshudras has been mentioned[24]. This stage is governed by Kapha.

3. Ritu vyateetaka: 9 to 13 days.

This stage is governed by Pitta. Presence of Purana Raja and constriction of Yoni, less chance of
conception and raised body temperature are the characteristics of this phase.

**Difference between the Artava and Shonita**

Artava is different form of Shonita. It is having more Agneya properties than Shonita, because the product of conception having both features of Agni and Saumya (source of Saumyabhava in Garbha is Sukra)[25]. Even Artava has similarity with the Rakta Dhatu but it is responsible for the formation of Garbha[26]. From the word Artava it's both component are reflected here. One which is having similarity in external appearance and second which is having similarity in its formation but for a different purpose. As per Dalhana statement these both are the product of Rasa Dhatu. In spite of having Saumya origin, they both are Agneya in nature. Even both are having with Agneya properties but the specially mentioning of Artava has been done because it makes a source to carry the Agneya Guna where as Rakta Dhatu is not. According to Cakrapani commentary, this reference explains about the importance of Artava among all Upadhatu and shows the most important causative factor in the production of Garbha. Both are getting originate from the Saumya Rasa Dhatu but after the specific process of transformation Agneya nature get develop in both. Due to difference in this Agneya Tattva (quantitative ratio of Agneya Mahabhuta) one plays its important role in the transferring this Agneya tattva in the Garbha and form as Beeja for the production of Garbha. The other having combined nature and maintains the Agneya Tattva in body[27].

**DISCUSSION**

The Sukra and Artava are described as two causative factors for the creation of Garbha. Although formation of Sukra and Artava is present in both male and female individuals but only one is specifically described in each. This criteria of description is depending upon their comparatively relevance. This comparative relevance is only due to "Agnisomeeyatvat" nature of Garbha. It means only one Tattva is carried forward to the Garbha by one individual. So for this purpose the Sukra is having with Saumya nature while Artava have Agneya one.

Snigdha or Saumya Ansha transfer into one another and results in the formation of successive Dhatu in the process of Dhatu formation. But in females in spite of this transformation process (mainly of Snigdha Guna), one another substance is required as source of Agneya Tattva for the creation of Garbha so Artava formation takes place as Upadhatu form, while males have Saumya Beeja as in form of Sukra (source of Saumya Ansha to Garbha) so there is no need for formation of Artava as Upadhatu.

In order to explaining about character, formation of Rakta Dhatu etc. formation of Artava has been described by Acharya. Prior mentioning of Artava formation indicates its relation with Rakta Dhatu. Specific Agneya nature of Artava makes it peculiar from Rakta Dhatu, even though its appearance is same. This Agneya Tattva is developed by the Ranjanakriya. In order to formation of Rakta Dhatu, Ranjanakriya have importance in the transformation of Rasa Dhatu. During this process, a sub product, Upadhatu is formed named as Artava. It may be formed just before to formation of the final product as Rakta Dhatu. It indicates that Artava and Rakta both are having some similarity because both are products of Ranjanakriya. This similarity is in terms of Bhautika level. Ranjanakriya is the only transformation process to develop the Agneya Tattva in Rasa or in other words transformation of Saumyabhava to Agneyabhava. This transformation process takes place in Yakrita and Pbecca. So it can be inferred that the process of formation of Artava begins in Yakrita and Pbecca. After formation, it is stored in Yoni through the specific Dhamani. This concept is also observed in clinical aspect that drugs which are used in the treatment of Artavakshaya is possible to act upon the Yakrita and Pbecca to stimulate the Ranjana Pitta for the initiation of Ranjanakriya.

Thus in nutshell, it is said that Ranjanakriya forms foundation for the production of both. Their constitutional composition laid difference in their function. Artava have Agneya pradhana nature as source of Agneyatattva for Garbha, so it present as Strbeeja while Anushanasheeta composition of Rakta Dhatu laid the foundation of Dhatu for body.

About one month of time period is needed in the formation of Artava in adult females. In other meaning about one month of time period is needed to reach the Artava from its originating place to destination place or from Yakrita and Pbecca to Garbhashaya and this makes complete passage of Artava.

From the Artava Upadhatu word, two meanings are taken in complete Samhita which can be interpreted as follows:

1. **Rakta as Artava or the flowing constituent of Artava**

   This part of Artava is named as Raja, Rakta of Artava as mentioned in Samhita. It has appears like Rakta of rabbit or extract of Laksha as it has mentioned by Acharya Sushruta. This also resembles the features of Rakta Dhatu so it has entitled with term "Rakta meva" in context of formation of Rakta during mentioning about the feature of Raja. This part of Artava is coming out through the Bahyamukha Artavavaha strotas, initially in first 3 to 4 days of Ritukala. Normalcy of flowing part shows the purity of another Beeja part of Artava.

2. **Beeja as Artava or the stable constituent of Artava**

   The Beeja part is chief source for the creation of Garbha. After withdrawal of flowing fraction of Artava, it lasts for the next 12 days of period of Ritukala
named as Drishtaartava. After this period on closing the opening of Yoni, it is not available for combination with Sukra. Among the two components of Artava, Artava Pareeksha has mentioned only for the previous flowing component. As Beeja part is not examined directly by Pratyayaksha, on the basis of Rakta part of Artava, purity of previous one can be inferred. So the Acharya has described only characteristics of Rakta part Artava. In general, testing by cloth and its colour make a base for the testing of purity of Beeja part Artava indirectly.

CONCLUSION

Artava have Agneya pradhana nature as source of Agneyatattva for Garbha and present as Streebeea while Anushanasheeta composition of Rakta Dhatu laid the foundation of Dhatu for body. Raja is the flowing constituent of Artava and Beeja as constituent of Artava is the source of Garbha. Both Artava and Rakta Dhatu are formed from Rasa Dhatu by Ranjanakriya. This process converts the Saumyabhava to Agneyabhava and it need one month of time to reach its destination place Garbhashaya. This article can be helpful to understand the various terminologies related to the Artava. Similarly other terminologies related to Sharira Rachana may also be compiled and analyzed for better understanding the subject of Sharira Rachana.

REFERENCES


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