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Concept of *Shukra Dhatu* and *Stree Shukra* - A Review

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda has described three basic functional elements of human body, viz., *Dosha*, *Dhatu* and *Mala*. Human body is made up of seven *Dhatu*s (Seven categories of tissue), viz., *Rasa*, *Rakta*, *Mamsa*, *Meda*, *Asthi*, *Majja* & *Shukra*. *Shukra* is 7th *Dhatu*. It is present in whole body. It becomes active after the age of sixteen years, even though it is present from birth. Concept of *Stree-Shukra* discussed in classics because *Acharya Sushruta* has mentioned that when sexual activities happen in two sexually excited women, they secrete *Shukra* within each other, due to which there is formation of foetus without bones. *Acharya Vagbhatta* has clarified that even though woman secrete *Shukra* during coitus, it is useless for fertilization. All *Dhatu*s have their definite sites in the body; they are present in every cell in subtle form. Every cell retains capacity to divide or reproduce itself. Thus, one must interpret the *Garbhotpadana* (reproduction) function of *Shukra Dhatu*. In future, it may be possible that with the development of the facts; we will discover any content in the cell which possesses definite role in cell division. Sperms as well as spermatic fluid and male sex hormones are also one part of *Shukra*, parallel to which females retain *Artava*.

Key words: *Shukra Dhatu*, *Stree-Shukra*, *Ayurveda*

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda has described three basic functional constituents of human body, viz., *Dosha*, *Dhatu* and *Mala*. They are compared with roots of tree, as tree roots are important for its health; same as that these

three constituents are necessary for human's health.^[1] Human body is composed of *Dhatu*s, i.e., basic forms of body tissues. *Dhatu*s are seven in number, hence called as *Saptadhatu*. They are- *Rasa* (Plasma), *Rakta* (Formed blood cells), *Mamsa* (Muscle tissues), *Meda* (Fatty tissues), *Asthi* (Bone tissue), *Majja* (Bone marrow and nervous tissues) and *Shukra* (Reproductive tissues). *Shukra Dhatu* is said to be produced from *Majja Dhatu* in sequence of *Dhatu* transformation. *Shukra Dhatu* (Reproductive tissues) is present in whole body, but its location is described around bladder opening according to *Acharya Sushruta*.^[2] Various scholars have quoted *Vrishana* or *Mushka* (Testis), *Shepha* (Penis), *Stana* (Breast) and *Majja* (Bone marrow) as *Moola-Sthana* (Origin) of *Shukravaha Srotasa* (System related with reproductive tissue). These all references as cited above reveal that *Shukra Dhatu* is present in every cell

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of body, but it is present predominantly in reproductive organs. The main function of *Shukra Dhatu* is *Garbhotpadana*. The word *Dhatu* is derived from the verb *Dhatu* which means support. The cell is the structural unit of all the tissue except *Rasa Dhatu*.

UNDERSTANDING THE SHUKRA DHATU

In the sequence of *Dhatu* formation there are several theories believed like *Khale-Kapot Nyaya*, *Kedari-Kulya Nyaya* i.e., a complete conversion from one substance to another. The time required for conversion of a tissue into next one is 1 and 5 days according to *Acharya Charka* and *Acharya Sushruta* respectively. According to this theory *Shukra Dhatu* contains seeds of all seven tissues. Hence this theory can very well explore how is a fertilised ovum which results from conjugation of sperm and ovum all these seven tissues are represented.

Depending on this theory the term "*Shukra Dhatu*" represents both ovum and semen and generative tissue which further helps in formation of higher tissues like *Oja*. This theory on concepts helps to understand *Shukra Dhatu* in terms of *Shukra Beeja* i.e., ovum and *Purusha Beeja* i.e., sperm which in conjugation gives rise to fertilised ovum.

Each tissue has its own specific enzymes which helps it to digest its own nutrients and manufacture tissue on *Updhatu* and the higher tissues with the help of its specific energy fluid i.e., *Oja* [*Shukra* + *Shukragini* (Enzymes) *Shukra Oja* as a whole (Both in male & female)]

Embryologically *Shukra Dhatu* is generative tissue not sperm alone. The generative tissue and organs arise from *Shukra Dhatu Kala* as present all over the body. The generative tissue in sex organs gives rise to sperms and ova while the generative tissue in other organs is responsible for regeneration of the same tissue or organs. Formation of sperm and ovum which have the ability to give birth to another individual and human life is the most evolved function of generative tissue. The sperm and ovum contain the representative of all the body tissues and organs. *Shukra* does not have any associated tissue i.e.,

Updhatu or a specific waste product. Some authors consider *Oja* i.e., energy fluid as *Updhatu* of *Shukra*.

Functions of Shukra

Apart from "*Garbhotpadana*" strength, courage, love and happiness depend upon the normal functioning of the generative tissue.

Different classics have described functions of *Shukra* which are as follows–

- It nourishes subsequent *Dhatu*, i.e., *Ojas*.^[3]
- It forms foetus^[4] and its sex.^[5]
- It can produce hereditary defects.^[6]
- It is responsible for betterment of skin texture, strength, attraction towards opposite sex and erection of penis.^[7]
- If it is vitiated by *Dosha(s)*, it is not useful for fertilization.^[8]

Location of Shukra

Shukra is present in whole body in the form of *Shukradhara Kala*.^[9] Its specific location is *Majja Dhatu* (Bone marrow) and *Vrishana* (Scrotum).^[10] Various scholars have mentioned roots of *Shukravaha-Srotasa*, they are testes, penis, breasts and bone marrow.^[11,12,13] *Shukradhara Kala* is spread in whole body, it is mainly located at lateral side of the urinary bladder and urethra.^[14] In the process of coitus, *Shukra* which is excreted by man, enters within female reproductive system and fertilization takes place.^[15] By reviewing these quotations it clarifies that *Shukra* may be co-related with sperms including spermatic fluid and even testosterone etc. sex hormones in male. *Acharya Gananatha Sen* has explained similarly as *Antah-Shukra* and *Bahi-Shukra* (Which is absent in female).^[16]

Properties of Shukra Dhatu

It is *Madhura* (In taste), *Guru*, *Sheeta*, *Pichchhila*, *Shweta* and semitransparent. It smells like *Mahu* (Honey). It is semifluid and sometime resemble oil, honey or *Ghee* in appearance and consistency. Its quantity *Ardha Anjali*.

Shukra Abhivyakti (Activeness of Shukra)

Human body is made up of seven *Dhatu* (Seven categories of tissues). *Shukra* is seventh *Dhatu*. It is present in whole body. It becomes active after the age of sixteen years, even though it is present since birth.^[17]

Stree-Shukra

The generative counterpart of semen i.e., sperm, is ovum in females and is termed differently as *Pushpa* or *Beejarakta* or *Phala*. All those terms indicated that it is this generative cell which takes part in conjugation with sperm and formation of a fertilised ovum. Though the sperm and ovum contain all the five basic elements sperm (*Shukra*) is cold having predominance *Jala Mahabhoota* Whereas ovum is hot and contain predominantly energy element (*Ushana* and *Agnya*). So *Shukra* is sperm and *Beejarakta* is ovum, having opposite properties united with each other forming fertilised ovum.

Artava and Raja

Sometimes the word *Artava* is used to indicate ovum but ideally it should be used to indicate menstruation discharge only and *Raja* is synonyms of this.

Sushruta has mentioned that when sexual activities happen in two sexually excited women, they secrete *Shukra* within each other, due to which there is formation of foetus without bones.^[18,19] *Vagbhata* has clarified that even though woman secrete *Shukra* through coitus, it is useless for fertilization.^[20] *Arundatta* has described that in the process of coitus there is secretion of *Shukra* from woman, but it is not functional for conception.^[21] Word *Stree Shukra* is used to indicate vaginal discharges secretions during intercourse.

It is not possible to consider *Stree-Shukra* described before is like *Shukra Dhatu*; because *Shukra Dhatu* is responsible for *Garbhotpadana* (Reproduction), but *Stree-Shukra* is useless for fertilization.^[22] As *Sushruta* has described the possibility of formation of fetus without bones after sexual act of two female doesn't have any scientific support.^[23] *Bhavamishra* has put forth the theory of eighth *Dhatu* in female. He has

explained *Artava* as seventh *Dhatu* and *Shukra* as eighth *Dhatu*. But he has also not mentioned its location, attributes etc.^[24]

Stanya and Shukra

Sushruta has explained that *Stanya* (Breast milk) is present in entire female body similarly like *Shukra* in males, but *Stanya* is an *Upa-Dhatu* (By-product) of *Rasa Dhatu*.^[25] On the other side *Shukra* is seventh *Dhatu* and it is formed subsequent to *Majja Dhatu*.

Anasthi Garbha^[26]

Anasthi Garbha is one of the most misunderstood and mis-interpreted concepts of *Ayurvedic* paediatrics. Most of the times this is interpreted as a boneless foetus (According to *Acharya Dalhana* the meaning of *Anasthi* is presence of soft bone i.e., *Komal Asthi*) resulting from lesbian relationship. *Acharya Dalhana* mention this is the *Hetu* of formation of *Vikrit Apatya* (Physically and/or mentally retarded or dysmorphic). *Stree-Shukra* is considered responsible in favour of this notion. Such misunderstanding requires clarity. *Anasthi Garbha* is reporting of a rare incidence of birth of an abnormal child with skeletal dysplasia, which results from sexual relationship between a female (46XX) and a phenotypic female (Male pseudohermaphrodite with spermatogenesis i.e., 46XY). An attempt is made here for a clear scientific understanding of *Anasthi Garbha*. Here *Acharya Dalhana* mentions that one of the partners is *Shandhaa* (*Vrisha*). *Shandha* is a feminine term meant for hermaphrodite meaning that the person is a transsexual with female phenotype. *Acharya Sushrut* has described such *Narishandha* who is a female phenotype, behaving like a male and having libido towards females. Female pseudo hermaphroditism refers to masculinization of the external genitalia in a patient with a female karyotype from exposure to abnormally elevated levels of androgens. Female pseudo hermaphroditism refers to an individual with ovaries but with secondary sexual characteristics or external genitalia resembling those of a male. *Acharya Dalhana* commentary may report that one female was both genotypically and phenotypically normal (46XX) with an ability to conceive and another

was a phenotypic female who was able to produce sperms i.e., female external genitalia with male gonads.

Parthenogenesis is an asexual form of reproduction where the female reproduces without fecundation i.e., the act of fertilization by the male. Here the embryo develops from an ovum after duplication of maternal genome. The production of an embryo from a female gemmets without any genetic contribution from a male gamete with or without the eventual development into an adult. There is no paternal genome in such embryos. Parthenogenesis is more commonly found in invertebrates and is rare in vertebrates. So, the concept of *Anasthi Garbha* is very rare in human. In some previous research study on mice have revealed that gynogenomes i.e., embryo with two maternal genomes showed embryonic development till the early somite stage but with poor extra-embryonic tissue (Placental) development ultimately resulting in abortion.

Here understanding gynogenesis is also essential. Gynogenesis is a special form of sexual reproduction in which insemination is necessary but the head of the sperm penetrating the ovum does not transform into male pronucleus and the gynogenetic embryo develop at the expense of the ovum nucleus only. The gynogenetic offspring are all female identical to the mother. Reproduction of gynogenetic form occurs when gynogenetic female mate with male of the bisexual form of the same and related species.

According to "Studies in the Psychology of Sex" mucous ejaculation from vagina is in former days regarded as analogous to the seminal ejaculation in men and hence essential to conception. The belief that mucous poured out in women during sexual excitement is feminine semen and therefore essential to conception had many remarkable conjectures and was widespread until the seventeenth century.

Shukra Dhatu is not limited with reproductive system in males

One cannot confine *Shukra Dhatu* to reproductive system in males, because *Shukra* is a *Dhatu* which is vital for sustenance of body and it provides nutrition

for next factor, i.e., *Ojas*. Total absence of any particular *Dhatu* will not allow body to survive. People who are without total reproductive system due to congenital problem or because of surgical removal, they have reasonably ordinary life period and this is not possible due to lack of *Shukra Dhatu* together with *Ojas* (As *Ojas* forms from *Shukra*).^[27] Hence to bind *Shukra Dhatu* with only reproductive system is not logical, even in males.

Interpretation of Shukra Dhatu with Modern Context

Considering the significance of *Shukra Dhatu* for survival, its previously discussed functions and its occurrence in both genders, it seems alike description of endocrine group especially hypothalamic- Pituitary Axis. As *Shukra Dhatu* is present in each cell of body as well as it plays imperative function in reproduction, it is analogues with prostaglandins. Germinal cells are helpful for reproduction. So, this word before interpericistate *Shukra Dhatu*.

DISCUSSION

Ayurveda believes that human body is composed of 7 *Dhatu*s among which *Shukra Dhatu* is the last *Dhatu*, which further helps in formation of higher tissue like *Oja*. This theory of *Dhatu*s Formation is applicable for both male and female. According to "*Ksheera Dadhi Nyaya*" *Dhatu* transformation of *Shukra Dhatu* contains seeds of and 7 tissues. This theory explains "*Shukra Dhatu*" represent both semen (*Purush Beeja*) and ovum (*Shukra Beeja*).

Hence in this theory most discussion fact is that whether *Shukra Dhatu* exists only in male note in female. But *Acharya Sushruta* clearly mentioned that after sexual contact of two female (Among which one is *Naarishandha*). *Anasthi Garbha* is formed which is an abnormal child with soft bones, but *Acharya* did not mention regarding the sex of the produced child. The definition of *Naarishandha* refers for her hermaphrodite behaving like a male and having libido towards female having elevated level of androgens. *Acharya Dalhana* mentioned that one of the females was phenotypic female who was able to produce

sperm i.e., external female genitalia with male gonads.

In these contexts, the theory of parthenogenesis may be discussed, but it is an asexual form of reproduction without fecundation. Hence the embryo develops from an ovum after duplication of maternal genome. The gynogenesis theory resembles some similarities with the production of *Anasthi Garbha* as it is a sexual reproduction in which insemination is necessary. It occurs when gynogenetic female mate with male of the bisexual form of the same related species. The vaginal discharge during the sexual excitement never considered as semen as these are the secretions of Bartholin glands.

CONCLUSION

Human being has seven *Dhatu* and the 7th *Dhatu* is *Shukra* found in both male and female. Embryologically *Shukra Dhatu* is generative tissue not sperm alone. The generative counterpart of semen (In male) is considered of sperm and ovum in females, which is formed differently as *Pushpa* or *Beejarakta*. *Anasthi Garbha* is very rare of birth of as abnormal child with skeletal dysplasia which results from the sexual relationship in between two females both of which one is female another is *Narishandha* (Pseudohermaphrodite) having 46XY chromosome. The mucous poured out in women during sexual excitement is not semen (As like in men). It is the secretion of Bartholin glands. However, is an essential part to help in conception.

Despite the fact that all these *Dhatu*s have their exact locations in the body but they are present in subtle form in every cell. Each cell possesses capacity to divide or reproduce itself. Thus, one has to interpret the *Garbhotpadana* (Reproduction) function of *Shukra Dhatu*. In future, it may be achievable that with the development in the facts; we will discover any content in the cell which possesses definite role of cell division.

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