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Critical analysis on concept of *Rakta*

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda explains *Dosha Dhatu* and *Mala* are the basic structures of our body. *Vata*, *Pitta* and *Kapha* are *Tridoshas*. *Rasa*, *Rakta* etc are the 7 *Dhatus*. *Doshas* are responsible for *Prakruta* and *Vaikruta* functions of the body. *Dhatus* are nourished by *Saara* portion of *Ahara*. *Dharana* is the major function of *Dhatu*. *Rakta* is produced from *Rasa* in *Raktavaha Srotas* by the action of *Rakta Dhatwagni*. The main function of *Rakta* is *Jeevana Karma*. In our classics we will find many references regarding *Rakta* as a *Dhatu*. *Dhatu* is the one which gives origin to *Upadhatu*. Some have considered *Rakta* as *Dosha* because of its major role in sustaining the body.

Key words: *Rakta*, *Dosha*, *Dhatu*

INTRODUCTION

Rakta word is derived from *Raja Ranjane* which indicates the red colour or staining property. Synonyms of *Rakta* are *Rudhira*, *Shonita*, *Kshataja*, *Asrik*, *Lohita*.

Rakta is *Panchabhoutika* in nature. *Panchaboutika* qualities of *Rakta Dhatu* are *visrata*, *dravata*, *raga*, *spandana*, *laghuta*.^[1] Colour of *Rakta* is red like *Indragopa*, *Gunja Phala Varna*.^[2]

Rakta is *Anushnasheeta*, *Madhura*, *Guru*, *Snigdha*.^[3] *Sthana* of *Rakta* is *Raktavaha Srotas*.^[4] *Sushruta* added *Raktavahini Dhamani* along with these.^[5]

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Formation of *Rakta*

Raktavaha Srotas plays an important role in formation of *Raktadhatu*. *Rakta* is formed by the action of *Raktadhatwagni* on *Rasa Dhatu* in *Raktavaha Srotas*, where *Teja* of *Ahara Rasa* and *Ranjaka Pitta* along with *Ushma* act on *Rasa* to cause redness in the *Rakta*.^[6] The *Rasa* that comes to the heart with the help of *Samana Vata* is also transformed by *Pitta* to *Rakta* and then circulates to entire body.

Even though it is *Panchabhoutika*, *Teja* and *Jala Mahabhuta* are predominant in *Rakta*. Quantity of *Rakta Dhatu* is 8 *Anjali*.^[7] *Sira* and *Kandara* are *Upadhatu* of *Rakta Dhatu*^[8] and *Pitta* is *Raktamala*.^[9]

Functions of *Raktadhatu*

- *Jeevana* (Sustenance and Nourishment) is the main function of *Rakta Dhatu*.^[10]
- Nourishment of *Mamsa Dhatu*.^[11]
- *Varnaprasadana*.^[11]
- *Sparshajnanata* (Sensation of touch),
- *Rakta* also keeps individual alive^[12]

Description of Rakta as a Dosh

- As three *Doshas* helps in *Dharana* of living body, *Rakta* also participates in *Dharana* of the body^[13]
- Sharira* is basically dependent on *Ahara* and four factors are responsible for any deviation of *Sharira* from its homeostatic status namely *Vata*, *Pitta*, *Kapha* and *Shonita*.^[13]
- Charaka Samhita* also gives much importance to *Rakta Dhatu* as like *Dosha*
- Being a surgeon *Sushruta* has given much importance to *Rakta*.
- Vata*, *Pitta*, *Kapha*, *Rakta* these four are main factors present in *Utpatti Kala*, *Sthithi Kala*, *Pralaya Kala*.^[14]
- Similarity are there in between properties of *Rakta* and *Doshas* like its own *Sthana*, *Guna*, *Srotas* etc
- Like *Doshas*, *Rakta* also moves all over the body. By this also it helps in *Dharana* and *Poshana* of the body.
- Many diseases will be cured after *Raktamokshana* therapy.^[15]
- Sushruta* while explaining *Shatkriyakala*, In *Prasara Avastha* he tells that *Doshas* spread either individually or in combination with 2 or 3 *Doshas* or with combination of *Shonita*, here *Shonita* has given equal importance as like *Dosha*^[16]
- Rakta* is also a cause for *Sharirika Vyadhi - Apathya Ahara* and *Vihara* brings about *Vata*, *Pitta*, *Kapha* and *Raktaja Vyadhis*.
- While classifying the diseases *Acharyas* have classified it into *Vataja*, *Pittaja*, *Kaphaja* and in many places they have classified it into *Raktaja* also.

Description of Rakta not as a Dosh

- There is only mentioning of *Tridoshas* in our classics namely *Vata*, *Pitta* and *Kapha*.^[17]
- While explaining types of *Prakruti*, *Acharyas* explained *Vataja*, *Pittaja*, *Kaphaja Prakruti* but there is no explanation of *Raktaja Prakriti*.^[18]

- Doshas* has to be expelled through natural routes like

For *Kapha* - *Vamana*

Pitta - *Virechana*

Vata - *Basti*

But for removing vitiated *Rakta*, we have to do *Raktamokshana* by making an opening externally

- Vata*, *Pitta* and *Kapha* have their own sub types whereas *Rakta* doesn't have any subtypes.^[19]
- While explaining *Nanatmaja Vikaras Acharyas* explained *Vataja*, *Pittaja*, *Kaphaja Nanatmaja Vikaras* but for *Rakta* they explained *Raktapradoshaja Vikara*.
- Rakta* takes its *Ashraya* in *Pitta*, here *Pitta* is *Ashrayee*. *Rakta* depends on *Pitta*, so it is not *Dosha*.^[20]
- According to *Ksheeradadhi Nyaya*, formation of *Rakta* is from *Poshakamsha of Rasa*.^[21] But *Doshas* are individually present in the body and these are not depend on other factors for their formation
- General *Sthana* has been mentioned for *Tridoshas*

Vata - *Adhobhaga*

Pitta - *Madhyabhaga*

Kapha - *Urdhwabhaga*

But for *Rakta* there is no mentioning of general *Sthana*.

- Doshas* can independently vitiate other entities but *Rakta* alone will not cause vitiation of other entity. *Rakta* along with other *Doshas* vitiates other entities.
- In *Lokapurusha Samya*, simily has been given for *Vata*, *Pitta* and *Kapha*^[22]

Vata - *Anila*

Pitta - *Surya*

Kapha - *Soma*

But not for *Rakta*. If they consider *Rakta* as *Dosha* they would have given simily for *Rakta* also.

- Acharya Vagbhata explained the effect of 6 seasons on Tridosha like Sanchaya, Prakopa and Prashama but not for Rakta.^[23]

DISCUSSION

Doshas are only 3, if we consider Rakta as fourth Dosh then Tridosha Siddanta of Ayurveda will become inappropriate. Rakta Dhātu is extremely important for sustenance of life.^[24] It is therefore needed to protect this Dhātu by all measures. Dalhana explains that, Sushruta being a surgeon he had to primarily think about Rakta Dhātu because Rakta is very much important for life. For production and maintenance of Garbha along with Vata, Pitta and Kapha, Rakta is also very important. Doshas are responsible for deciding types of Prakriti, Rakta is not responsible for formation of Prakriti.

Acharyas explained general Sthana for Dosh but not for Rakta, if they consider Rakta as Dosh they would have mentioned Sthana for Rakta also along with Dosh. If they consider Rakta as Dosh they would have given simily for Rakta also. Doshas are individually present in the body these are not depend on other factors for their production. Rakta is formed from Poshakamsha of Rasa Dhātu in Raktavaha Srotas by the action of Rakta Dhatwagni. Rakta alone cannot vitiate the other structures in the body, Rakta along with other Doshas can vitiate other structures.

We can't eliminate the vitiated Doshas through natural routes. So, Raktamokshana is a procedure where we can remove vitiated Doshas from body by making an external opening.

CONCLUSION

Acharya Charaka inspite of giving much importance to Rakta Dhātu, doesn't accept Rakta as a Dosh. If definitions and functions of Dosh and Dhātu are considered, it is not possible to accept Rakta Dhātu in Dosh category. As Doshas are formed independently during Pachana of Ahara and origin of Rakta is from Saara portion of Rasa, So Rakta is Dhātu. In the concept of Dhatus the Pradoshaja Vikaras are explained not in Dosh concept. Saara Laxanas are explained only for Dhatus not for Doshas.

Dhatus generate Upadhatus but Doshas will not produce Upadhatu. Here Sira and Kandara are Upadhatu of Rakta, so we can consider Rakta as Dhātu not Dosh. Our Acharyas have related Tridoshas and Trigunas but they have not mentioned any relation between Rakta and Triguna. This justifies Rakta to be considered as Dhātu instead of Dosh.

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