



# Critical evaluation of Rakta Sarata Snigdha Rakta Varna

<sup>1</sup>Dr. Sonam Rawat    <sup>2</sup>Dr. Swati N. Khandale    <sup>3</sup>Prof. A.S. Baghel

<sup>1</sup>MD Scholar, <sup>2</sup>Assistant Professor, <sup>3</sup>HOD & Professor

Department of Kriya Sharira

Institute of teaching in Research and Ayurveda (INI), Jamnagar, Gujarat

## Abstract

**Introduction** - *Ayurveda* have mentioned that *Dosha*, *Dhatu* and *Mala* are the three essential components of *Sharir*. These three components are very important as per their functions. The factors which do the function of *Sharir* are called as *Dhatu*. The basic constructive framework of body is formed by *Dhatu*. *Dhatus* have same set of functions in every individual but quality & richness of these functions may vary from person to person, which is decided by excellent state of these *dhatus* which is *Dhatusarata*. The inherent strength of a person cannot be assessed by bulk and size of the body but only judged by the Sara examination. Like *Dhatusarata* is the reflection of the strength of a person, skin is a reflection of internal environment in the body that shows equilibrium state of *Doshas*, *Dhatus*, *Malas*. **Aim**- To compile and analyse the literature regarding concept of *Rakta Sarata* available in various classical texts of *Ayurveda*. **Material and methods**- Classical texts of *ayurveda*, previous research articles, journals related to the topic. **Discussion**- Since the skin is a reflection of the *Rasa Dhatusarata* but its complexion and texture come under *Rakta Dhatusarata*. The person with pure blood has glowing complexion. *Rakta Dhatu* is very important amongst all the *Dhatus* as sustenance of life is the main function of *Rakta Dhatu*, so its qualitative and quantitative assessment is of much importance. According to *Charaka* a *Rakta Sara* person have bright red and lustrous elegant appearance of the ears, eyes, face, tongue, nose, lips, palm and sole of foot, nails, forehead and genitals. **Conclusion**- The purpose of the review is to highlight the importance of assessment of skin in *Rakta Dhatusarata*, which will determine the strength and help in planning the management of the individual eventually.

**Keywords**- Complexion, *Dhatusarata*, Skin, *Rakta Sara*

**Introduction**-*Ayurveda* has mentioned *Dosha*, *Dhatu* and *Mala* as the three essential components of body<sup>1</sup>. *Dhatu* can be considered a significant tissue part of our body<sup>2</sup>. *Dhatu* serves the *Dharana* (support/retain) function of the body<sup>3</sup>.

*Dhatu Sarata* is a unique concept of *Ayurveda*. *Acharya Charaka* has given specific physical and physio-psychological characteristics for all *Dhatu Sarata*.

*Sara* is a good mirror to assess properties and function of *Dhatus*. It is one amongst the tenfold examination which is done to understand life span of an individual, degree of strength possessed by person and to rule out morbidity. *Sara* means the excellence and the purity of virtuous state of *Dhatu* and mind. By assessing the *Sara* one can identify the present status of health and intellectual properties of an individual<sup>4</sup>.

The efficiency of *Rakta Dhatu* is known by assessing the *Rakta Sarata*. *Rakta Dhatu* is very important amongst all the *Dhatus* as *Jeevana*<sup>5</sup> (life sustaining) is the main function of *Rakta Dhatu*, so its qualitative and quantitative assessment is of much importance. According to *Charaka* a *Rakta Sara* person have bright red and lustrous elegant appearance of the ears, eyes, face, tongue, nose, lips, palm and sole of foot, nails, forehead and genitals. These persons are endowed with happiness, elevated or best intelligence, mental tranquillity and delicacy or tenderness to the person<sup>6</sup>.

**Aim** – To compile and analyse the literature regarding concept of *Rakta Sarata* available in various classical texts of *Ayurveda*.

## Objective –

To distinguish the concept of *Twak Snigdha* & the concept of *Twak Varna* in detail.

## Materials and methods

*Ayurvedic* texts mainly *Brihatrayee* comprising *Charaka Samhita*, *Sushruta Samhita*, *Ashtanga Samgraha* and *Ashtanga Hridaya* were analysed for the present review. Various *Ayurvedic* lexicons were also reviewed which provided the definite base for the study. All the analysed data was scrutinized and re-arranged in making the framework of the narrative review of the present topic.

## Literary review

*Sara* is one of unique concept of *Ayurveda* described under tenfold examination in *Charak Samhita*. ‘*Sara*’ means the purest form of *Dhatu*. *Acharya Chakrapani* illustrated *Sara* as *Vishudhataro Dhatu*, which means the most excellent, best, real, genuine, strong essence of *Dhatu*. The definition of *Sara* implies the normal functioning of *Jatharagni* and its moieties *Dhatvagnis*, resulting in the proper production of *Dhatu* in the *Saptadhatu* sequence. It also signifies tissue vitality, tissue quality with excellent functional capacity which provides strength & stability to body. *Ayurveda Acharyas* remarkably described the physical & physio-psychological characteristics of *Seven Dhatu Sarata* & *Satva Sarata*. *Sara Pariksha* is one of important tool described to determine *Bala* (strength) of the person. *Acharya Charaka* emphasized that strength cannot be correlated with mass or the physique of the body i.e. well

built & lean stature. It would be a misleading notion if the physician considers a well-built person to be having good strength, merely based on his physique or a lean person can always to be considered as weak as contrary condition may exist e.g. a thin body-built person may be possessing good strength. This is explained with the analogy of ants which though having tiny body are able to carry heavy weights due to its strength<sup>7</sup>.

***Rakta Dhatu***-The tissue frameworks of the body comprise of seven sorts of fundamental tissues or *Sapta-Dhatu*. *Rakta* is one amongst them. It is formed by the catalysation of its previous *Dhatu* e.g. *Rasa Dhatu* by action of *Raktagni*. *Rasa* adds to the arrangement of *Rakta* by moving supplement substances which are homologous of *Rakta Dhatu*. These homologous substances get red hued under the *Ushma* of *Pitta*<sup>8</sup>. *Rakta* or blood as per *Ayurveda* “*Raktam Varna Prasaadanam Mamsa Pushtim Jeevayathicha*”<sup>9</sup> as it is one of the seven *Dhatu* (tissue), its prime function is sustenance of the body and it increases color or complexion, *Charaka* opines that *Visuddha Rakta* is responsible factor for *Bala* (physical strength), *Varna* (complexion), *Sukh* (happiness) and *Ayu* (longevity)<sup>10</sup>.

In *Ashtanga Hridaya*, *Vagbhatta* said about *Shuddha Rakta* that it is *Madhura* (sweet), *Lavana* (salty), *Sama Shitoshna* (temperate), *Asamhata* (liquid), like shade of *Padma* (red lotus), *Indragopa* (*Dactylopius coccus*), *Hema* (Gold) and *Rakta* of *Avi* (sheep) and *Shasha* (hare). *Vridha Vagbhatta* likewise portrayed similar characteristics of *Shuddha Rakta*. It is like characteristics of *Pitta* and *Saumya-Agneya* by its temperament. These are different shades relying on individual constitution. It responds to substances which influence *Pitta*. *Sharangdhara* has informed that *Rakta Dhatu* which supports the life is *Snigdha* (unctuous), *Chala* (mobile) and *Madhura* (sweet) in taste<sup>11</sup>.

**Rakta Sarata-** In ancient days, due to unavailability of devices, study of *Dhatu* was done by examining external parts of body. *Sara Pariksha* is one of the most important examinations which gives an idea about qualitative state of *Dhatu*.

People who have *Rakta Dhatu Sarata* are invested with highlights such as ears, eyes, oral pit, tongue, palms, soles, nails, brow, and penis; every one of these organs are of red shading. These organs are glistening, gleaming. Such people are appealing, attractive. They can't tolerate strenuous occupation or hot atmosphere. They are endowed with insight, bliss and magnificence. People having the brilliance of *Rakta* (Blood), their body stays hot<sup>12</sup>.

Reddish colour of pinna of ear shows proper nourishment of *Rakta*, *Mansa* and *Asthi Dhatu*. Predominance of *Teja*, *Jala* and *Prithvi Mahabhuta*, Eyes appears *Bhrajishnu* (Bright or radiant) due to predominance of *Teja Mahabhuta*. Due to predominance of *Jala* and *Teja Mahabhuta*, eyes are clean and beautiful (*Shrimat*). The intra structure are nourished by vascular layer hence they appear *Raktavarni*. Face is slightly oily, reddish and with lustre as *Varna* mainly appears on face. Red coloured tongue is due to proper nourishment of *Rakta* and *Mansa Dhatu*. Penis is highly vascular structure in *Rakta Sara* person. Reddish and lustrous nails are signs of good health. *Snigdha*, *Raktavarnalalat* (forehead) shows proper nourishment of *Rakta* and *Mamsadhatu*. Nose is formed from *Tarunasthi* and *Mamsapeshis*. Red colour shows nourishment of *Mansa* and *Raktadhatu*. Lips are thin muscular layer. *Raktadhatu* can be observed on this structure. Skin of planter region of palms and soles is thick; it indicates normal function of pure *Rakta*. Palate is covered with mucous membrane. It should be red and shiny and indicates proper nourishment of *Mamsadhatu*<sup>13</sup>.

**Snigdhatta-** *Snigdha* is the characteristic referring to the 'Greasiness / Slimmy / Unctuous / Oily'<sup>14</sup>; one of the twenty *Gurvadi Gunas*; caused due activated *Jala Mahabhuta*; denotes physiological & pharmacological sliminess; manifests moistening of body parts, increase strength and lustre.

*Snigdha* in context to the external appearance can be the look that is tender, associated with joy, pleasant anticipation, attractive appearance<sup>15</sup>.

Acharya *Charaka*<sup>16</sup>, *Sushruta*<sup>17</sup> has described *Snigdha* property of *Rakta Dhatu* which gives unctuous or oily appearance to the different body parts as described in *Rakta Dhatu Sarata* as well a pleasant appearance to the skin. One of the studies have shown significant result that individual endowed with *Rakta Sarata* have oily skin compared to *Tvak Sarata*<sup>18</sup>.

**Varna-** Ayurveda has given broad meaning to *Varna* by denoting a wide range of synonyms as *Prabha*, *Kanti*, *Rupa* and *Chaya*. *Varnotpatti* is initiated from *Garbhavastha* (conception), controlled by several factors after the birth. *Pancha Mahabhuta*, *Tridosha*, *Prakriti* (constitution), *Garbhiniparicharya* (regimen for pregnant women), *Garbhini Manobhava* (Emotional status), *Triguna*, *Atma* (soul), *Shukra* (Semen) are involved in formation of *Varna* during the *Garbhavastha* (pregnancy) *Jatharagni*, *Ahara* (Food), *Dhatu* (Tissue), *Sara* (essence of all dhatus) and *Ojas* affect *Varna* mainly after birth. Behaviours and regimens like *Nidra* (Nidra), *Ahara Vihara* (Food habits & lifestyle), *Sneha Karma* (Oleation therapy), *Sweda Karma* (sudation), *Taila Abhyanga* (oil massage), *Udvartana* (Rubbing and kneading of body), *Anulepana* () and *Vyayama* (Exercise) effect on skin complexion<sup>19</sup>.

Both *Acharya Charaka* and *Susrutha* explained the role of *Panchmahabhutas* for the determination of skin colour. *Acharya Charaka*'s view of the effectiveness on the origin of skin colour is unique. He has quoted that *Avadata* (white complexion) determined by the predominant association of *Agni*, *Udaka* and *Antariksha Mahabhutas* in the foetal period. In the same way, *Krishna Varna* (black complexion) formed due to the predominance of *Prithvi* and *Vayu Mahabhutas* and *Shyamavarna* (brown complexion) determined by the involvement of all *Mahabhutas* in equal proportion. Under the chapter of *Mahagarbashareera*, *Acharya Charaka* mentions, *Rupa*, *Darshana*, *Prakasha*, *Pakti* and *Ushna* forms by the involvement of *Agni Mahabhutha*. Similarly, *Acharya Susrutha* has quoted complexion is determined by the *Teja Mahabhutha*. *Tejas* element is the causative factor of complexion at the time of conception. If it predominantly associates with *Ap* element, it bestows the foetus a fair complexion and the predominance of *Prithivi* element causes a black one. He further describes *Prithivi* and *Akasha* elements give rise to blackish complexion while *Ap* and *Akasha* element makes a fair complexion to the foetus<sup>20</sup>.

Acharyas also highlights the fact that *Pitta* present in the skin is *Brajakagni*. It is responsible for the expression of colour of the skin<sup>21</sup>.

**Rakta Varna-** *Rakta Varna* means red color<sup>22</sup>, but in the context to skin color it can be different shades of red and pink color.

As per *Acharya Vagbhatta*<sup>23</sup>, In *Pitta Prakriti* people have *Tamra Varna* (coppery colour) skin which is eventually a reddish hue.

There is also concept of undertone of skin which exhibits range of skin hue in different individual. The undertone is the colour that is visible from underneath the surface of the skin that determines the overall hues. Skin undertones mainly fall under warm, cool and neutral colours. Warm skin undertone means that the underlying colours in the skin are mainly peach and gold. Cool skin undertone is characterized by hints of pinks, blues and red undertones<sup>24</sup>. A mixture of both warm and cool skin undertones is neutral. Cool skin undertone can be elicited as *Rakta Varna* in *Rakta Sarata*<sup>25</sup>

**Discussion-** *Dhatu Sarata* (excellence of tissue) implies prominent nature of *Dhatu* (tissue) and radiant useful viewpoint is *Sara*. The word *Rakta* means coloured as well as reddened. Depending upon its usage, it can also mean impassioned. Each of these meanings has important implications from the perspective of health and healing. *Rakta Dhatu* is more than blood. It is the carrier of the fire that invigorates the body and mind. As such, when *Rakta Dhatu* is healthy, a person feels energized with a healthy passion for life. *Rakta Dhatu*, being made up primarily of the element fire, has similar qualities. It is hot, light, dry, hard, unstable, rough, flowing, clear, subtle and sharp. These qualities are very similar to *Pitta Dosha* which is made up of mostly *Teja* (fire) and a little *Apa* (water). When the *Rakta Dhatu* is in dominant state, the qualities of *Pitta Dosha* and *Agni* (fire) will be more evident in *Rakta Sara* individuals. A person feels warmer. As heat builds up in the body, the body tries to release the heat. This occurs in several ways. One way is through the skin. Vasodilatation brings blood to the surface in order to cool it off. This makes the skin appear reddish in colour. Vasodilatation may also be seen in the eyes and other parts of the body which get red colour due to high blood supply and very thin layer of skin<sup>26</sup>. This can be the reason that ancient *Acharyas* mentioned the organs especially the *Akshi* (palpebral conjunctiva), *Jihva* (tongue), *Mukha* (mucus membrane of oral cavity), *Oshtha* (lips), *Talu* (palate), *Panitala* and *Padatala* (palms and soles with their creases) to be *Rakta Varni* (red color) in the physical examination of *Rakta Sara*. According to *Acharya Sushruta Varna Prasadana*<sup>27</sup> i.e., Imparting color to skin is function of *Rakta Dhatu*. When there is decrease in *Rakta Dhatu* the skin becomes *Ruksha* (dry) because *Rakta* has *Snigdha* property.<sup>28</sup>

**Pigmentation of the Skin:** Melanin, carotene and hemoglobin are three pigments that gives skin a wide variety of colour. Melanin is located mostly in the epidermis, carotene is mostly in the stratum corneum and dermis, and hemoglobin in the dermal microvasculature contributes to the overall skin color with a red dominant for oxygenated hemoglobin and bluish red for reduced hemoglobin<sup>29</sup>. It is evident that people living in the high altitude has more red blood cells count and hemoglobin % than the inhabitants at sea level<sup>30</sup>, resulting in reddish colour of the skin. Dryness of the skin is also seen in the anaemia that is low haemoglobin levels in the blood. This can be understood as excellence state of *Rakta Dhatu* which gives *Snigdha* and *Rakta Varna* to the different body parts like ears, eyes, oral pit, tongue, palms, soles, nails, brow, and penis. Studies have shown a positive correlation between hemoglobin % and *Rakta Sarata*.<sup>31, 32</sup>

**Conclusion-** Considering all the points collected in the literature review and then discussed the *Snigdha* in *Rakta Sarata* is due to *Snigdha* property of *Rakta Dhatu* and its *Ashrayee Pitta* as well. The *Varna* is function of *Pitta* that gives *Tamra Varna* that can be reddish or pinkish hue of the skin and *Rakta Dhatu* is also responsible for the *Varna* in the body because of co-dependency of *Pitta* and *Rakta*. So this can be concluded that the *Varna* aspect comes under the *Rakta Dhatu* hence reflects its best of qualities in *Rakta Sara Purusha*.

## Reference-

1. Shastri AD. reprint (2016), Sushruta Samhita, Varanasi: Chaukhamba Sanskrit Prakashana, Sutra Sthana, 'Doshdhatumalakshayavridhivigyaniya adhyaya 15/3', P 73
2. <http://namstp.ayush.gov.in/#/sat>
3. Sharma PV. Reprint (2018), Sushruta Samhita. (Vol. 2) Varanasi: Chaukhamba Visvabharti; Sutra sthana 14/20. P 148
4. Durgesh, Nandini & Sharma, Durgesh Nandini & Brahm, Dr & Sharma, Dutt. (2016). DEMOGRAPHIC STUDY TO EVALUATE PHYSIOLOGICAL RELATION BETWEEN IQ AND RAKTA SARATA. World Journal of Pharmaceutical Research. Vol 5. Page no. 2093 - 2100. 10.20959/wjpr20165-6445.
5. Pt. Hari Sadashivashastri editor, (2017), Ashtanga Hridaya of Vagbhata, Sutra sthana, Ch.11, Ver.4, Reprint edition, Varanasi: Chaukhamba Surbharati prakashana; p.183
6. Durgesh, Nandini & Sharma, Durgesh Nandini & Brahm, Dr & Sharma, Dutt. (2016). DEMOGRAPHIC STUDY TO EVALUATE PHYSIOLOGICAL RELATION BETWEEN IQ AND RAKTA SARATA. World Journal of Pharmaceutical Research. Vol 5. Page no. 2093 - 2100. 10.20959/wjpr20165-6445.
7. Phule, Sharayu & Ganesh, Patil & Ghate, Umesh. (2019). CRITICAL EVALUATION OF APPLIED ASPECTS OF DHATUSARATA. 6. 900-907.
8. Dr. Ankit Agrawal, Dr. Deepika Mehra. (2019). The role of Rakta Dhatu in human body: The birds eye view; Journal of Pharmacognosy and Phytochemistry; 8(2): 2203-2205
9. Murthy K.R. Srikantha, Susruta Samhita with English translation, Vol. I, Chaukhambha Orientalia, Varanasi, 2012 page no.102
10. Sharma R.K., and Dasa B. (2001) Caraka Samhita with English translation and critical exposition, Vol. I, Chaukhambha Bharati Sanskrit Series Office, Varanasi. Page 403
11. Dr. Ankit Agrawal, Dr. Deepika Mehra. (2019). The role of Rakta Dhatu in human body: The birds eye view; Journal of Pharmacognosy and Phytochemistry; 8(2): 2203-2205
12. Dr. Ankit Agrawal, Dr. Deepika Mehra. (2019). The role of Rakta Dhatu in human body: The birds eye view; Journal of Pharmacognosy and Phytochemistry; 8(2): 2203-2205
13. Bhawsar P, Nampalliwar AR. (2022) "Assessment Of Raktasarata: Conversion Of Theory Into Practical Approach" IRJAY. [online] ;5(3);78-82.
14. [Snigdhatta, Snigdhattā: 8 definitions \(wisdomlib.org\)](#) last visited on 19 dec 2023
15. [www.wisdomlib.org/definition/snigdha](http://www.wisdomlib.org/definition/snigdha)
16. Acharya YT, editor. Charakasamhita of Agnivesha. (2017) Vimana Sthana. Ch.8, Ver.104, Reprint edition, Varanasi: Chaukhamba Orientalia; p.278
17. Acharya YT & NR. (2018) editor. Sushruta samhita of Sushruta. Sutra Sthana. Ch.35, Ver.16, Reprint edition, Varanasi: Chaukhamba Sanskrit Sansthan; p.152
18. Dr. Archana Choudhary, Dr. Rita Singh, Dr Sanjay Srivastava. (2019) comparative analysis of skin quality in twaksara and raktasara individuals along with methods of its enhancement – a pilot study, International Journal of Research in Medical Sciences and Technology, Vol. No. 8;274-280.
19. Nishan S.P.A.S et al. (2023) Review on Concept of Varna (Skin Complexion) in Ayurveda; www.ijaar.in: IJAAR VOL V ISSUE XII JAN-FEB 2023 Page No: -907-918
20. Nishan S.P.A.S et al (2023) Review on Concept of Varna (Skin Complexion) in Ayurveda ; www.ijaar.in : IJAAR VOL V ISSUE XII JAN-FEB ,Page No:-907-918
21. Shrikantha Murthy KR. (2004) Vagbhata Astanga Hridayam Text, English Translation, Notes, Appendix and Indices. Volume I. Chaukhamba Krishnadas Academy, Varanasi.155 p
22. wisdomlib.org, Last visited on 20 dec 2023
23. Shrikantha Murthy KR. (2012) Astanga Samgraha of Vagbhata Text, English Translation, Notes and Index. Volume II. Chaukhambha Orientalia A House of Oriental, Antiquarian and Ayurvedic Books, Varanasi. 413-4 p
24. <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com>
25. Laxmidhar Dwivedi (Part 2) (2008) Charaka Samhita: Chakrpani commentary; Vimana Sthana; Roghishagjitiya Adhyaya; Chapter 8 verse 96 Chaukhamba Krishnadas academy, Varanasi; 919
26. Dr. Sujit kumar, Concept of Agni and Its Physiological Aspects on Human Body, Pharma Ayurveda online Journal JIF: 1.021, 2:01. ISSN: 2456- 82799
27. Acharya YT & NR, editor. (2018) Sushruta samhita of Sushruta. Sutra Sthana. Ch. 15, Ver. 5, Reprint edition, Varanasi: Chaukhamba Sanskrit Sansthan, p.68
28. Acharya YT & NR, editor. (2018) Sushruta Samhita of Sushruta. Sutra Sthana. Ch. 15, Ver. 5, Reprint edition, Varanasi: Chaukhamba Sanskrit Sansthan; p.69

29. Duteil, L., Roussel, K., Bahadoran, P. (2017). Skin Color and Pigmentation. In: Humbert, P., Fanian, F., Maibach, H., Agache, P. (eds) Agache's Measuring the Skin. Springer, Cham. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-32383-1\\_5](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-32383-1_5)
30. Windsor JS, Rodway GW. (2007) Heights and haematology: the story of haemoglobin at altitude. *Postgrad Med J*; 83(977):148-51. doi: 10.1136/pgmj.2006.049734. PMID: 17344565; PMCID: PMC2599997.
31. Bhaswar Priyanka, Shirsath Sunita. (2019) Study of Raktasarata and haemoglobin percentage NJRAS April- June | Vol. 07th | Issue-4
32. Ghate Umesh S. Indapurkar Kavita V. (2014) Study of Dhatu sarata and its association with blood indices. *Int. J. Res. Ayurveda Pharm*;5(3):309-314

