



Review Article

ANALYSIS OF ARTAVA (MENSTRUATION) IN CONTEXT OF SHARIRA RACHANAJain Nishi^{1*}, Joshi Anil Kumar¹¹MD Scholar, Dept. of *Sharira Rachana*, National Institute of Ayurveda, Jorawer Singh Gate, Amer road, Jaipur, India.**Article info****Article History:**

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KEYWORDS: Terminology, *Raja*, *Artava*, *Shonita*, *Ranjanakriya*.**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 *Pleeha* to *Garbhashaya* (*Yoni*) and this makes complete passage of *Artava*. *Artava* have *Agneya Pradhana* nature as source of *Agneyatattva* for *Garbha* while *Anushanasheta* 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*.

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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 *Tridoṣa* 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 plants 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.^[1] As fire located within the wood cannot be noticed without specific efforts, similarly *Shonita* require appropriate time and specific effort for their gross appearance ^[2]. Commentators like *Dalhana* and *Cakrapani* quoted the view for the presence of *Artava* since from the embryonic period.^[3]

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 *Rasa*^[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 *Vagbhata* 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 *Vagbhata* 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 *Dosha* 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 *Dosha*^[8]. *Arunadatta* opines that this *Raja* is formed from *Ahararasa* and not from *Rasa Dhatu*^[9]. *Sharngadhara* 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 *Dosha* 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 *Avayava* 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 Guna* 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 *Pramana*^[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 vyateetakala*: 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 Pleeha*. So it can be inferred that the process of formation of *Artava* begins in *Yakrita and Pleeha*. 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 Pleeha* 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 *Streebeeja* 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 Pleeha* 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 *Pratyaksha*, 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 *Streebeeja* 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*.

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