



## Review Article

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### A CONCEPT OF STRI-SHUKRA: AN AYURVEDIC PERSPECTIVE

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#### ABSTRACT

Ayurveda has described three basic physiological constituents of human body, viz., dosha, dhatu and mala. Human body is made up of seven dhatus (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 from birth. Concept of stri-shukra is discussed in classics because Sushruta has mentioned that when sexual activities happens in two sexually excited women, they secrete shukra within each other, due to which there is formation of foetus without bones. Vagbhata has clarified that even though woman secrete shukra through coitus, it is useless for fertilization. All dhatus have their definite locations in the body; they are present in every cell in subtle form. Every 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 of the facts; we will discover any content in the cell which possesses definite role in cell division. Sperms along with spermatic fluid and male sex hormones are also one part of shukra, parallel to which females possess artava. Stri-shukra excreted during coitus is nothing but the secretions of bartholins, cervical and endometrial glands emergence at the end of orgasm.

**Keywords:** Shukra dhatu, stri-shukra, Ayurveda

#### INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda has described three basic physiological constituents of human body, viz., dosha, dhatu and mala. They are compared with roots of trees, as tree roots are important for its health; same like that these three constituents are necessary for human's health.<sup>1</sup> Human body is composed of dhatus, i. e. basic forms of body tissues. Dhatus 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 (reproductive tissues) is present in whole body but its location is described around bladder opening according to Sushruta.<sup>2</sup> 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 of body, but it is present predominantly in reproductive organs.

#### Stri-shukra

Sushruta has mentioned that when sexual activities happens in two sexually excited women, they secrete shukra within each other, due to which there is formation of foetus without bones.<sup>3,4</sup> Vagbhata has clarified that even though woman secrete shukra through coitus, it is useless for fertilization.<sup>5</sup> Arundatta has described that in the process of coitus there is secretion of shukra from woman but it is not functional for conception.<sup>6</sup>

#### Shukra-dhatu with relation to Female Body

Concept of shukra and artava with respect to female body is summarized in Flow Chart<sup>7</sup>.

#### Shukra Abhivyakti (Activeness of Shukra)

Human body is made up of seven dhatus (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.<sup>8</sup>

#### Functions of Shukra

Different classics have described functions of shukra which are as follows –

- It nourishes subsequent dhatu, i.e. ojas<sup>9</sup>
- It forms foetus<sup>10</sup> and its sex<sup>11</sup>
- It can produce hereditary defects<sup>12</sup>
- It is responsible for betterment of skin texture, strength, attraction towards opposite sex and erection of penis<sup>13</sup>
- If it is vitiated by dosha(s), it is not useful for fertilization<sup>14</sup>

#### Location of Shukra

Shukra is present in whole body in the form of shukradhara kala.<sup>15</sup> Its specific location is majja dhatu (bone marrow) and vrishana (scrotum).<sup>16</sup> Various scholars have mentioned roots of shukravaha-srotasa, they are testes, penis, breasts and bone marrow.<sup>17-19</sup> Shukradhara kala is spread in whole body, it is mainly located at lateral side of the urinary bladder and urethra.<sup>20</sup> In the process of coitus, shukra which is excreted by man, enters within female reproductive system and fertilization takes place.<sup>21</sup> 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. Ganatha Sen has explained similarly as antah-shukra and bahi-shukra (which is absent in female).<sup>22</sup>

**Stanya and Shukra**

Sushruta has explained that stanya (breast milk) is present in entire female body similarly like shukra in males, but stanya (breast milk) is an upa-dhatu (by-product) of rasa dhatu.<sup>23</sup> On the other side shukra is seventh dhatu and it is formed subsequent to majja dhatu.

**Stri-shukra and Shukra dhatu**

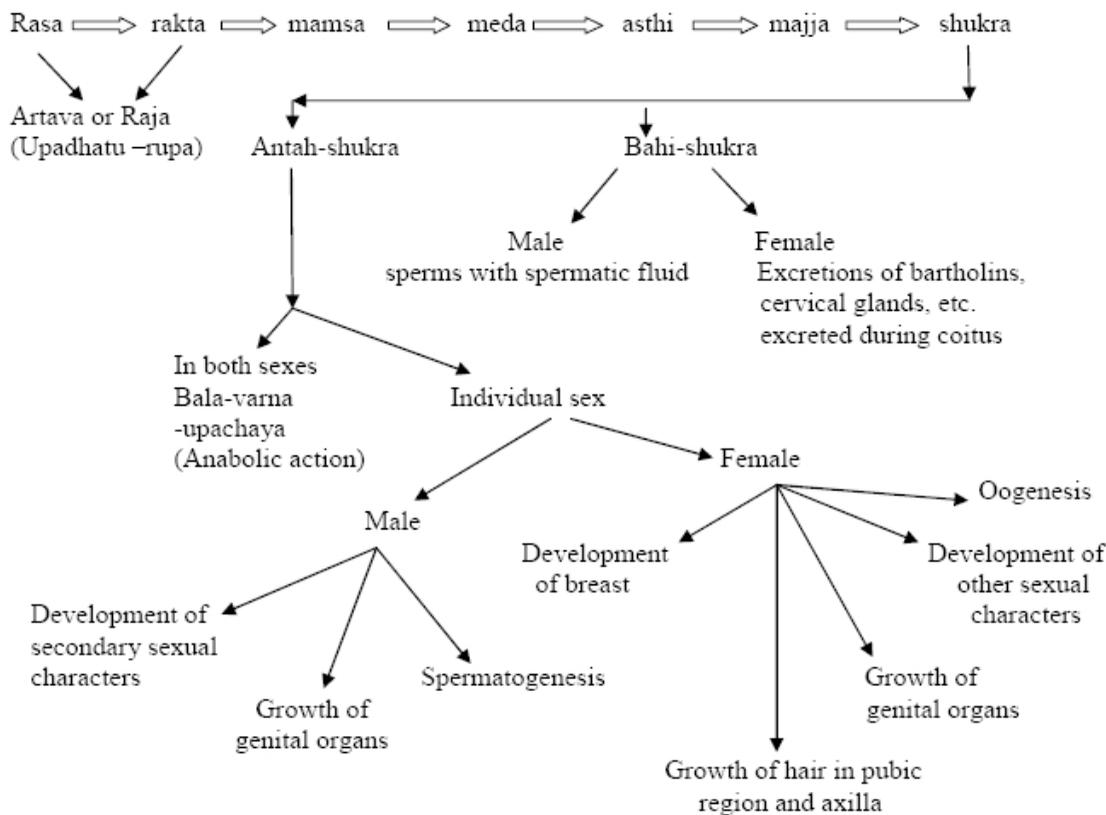
It is not possible to consider stri-shukra described before is similar to shukra dhatu; because shukra dhatu is responsible for garbhotpadana (reproduction), but stri-shukra is useless for fertilization.<sup>24</sup> As Sushruta has described the possibility of formation of foetus without bones after sexual act of two female doesn't have any scientific support.<sup>25</sup> 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.<sup>26</sup>

**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)<sup>27</sup>; 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.<sup>28</sup>



**CONCLUSION**

Human being has seven dhatus and it is made up of various microscopic cells. Despite the fact that all these dhatus 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. Sperms along with spermatic fluid and male sex hormones are also one part of shukra, parallel to which females possess artava. Stri-shukra excreted during coitus is nothing but the secretions of bartholins, cervical and endometrial glands emergence at the end of orgasm.

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