



A REVIEW OF SASNEHA GUNA OF PITTA DOSHA

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ABSTRACT:

Acharya Charaka says that “One who knows the normal functioning of the *Sharira* [body] alone can understand its functioning and he can then work towards the attainment of *Arogya* [health]. Such a physician alone stands to be referred as the *Bhishak* [physician]”. Any deviation from the normal functioning of body leads to disease. Every physician strives to attain success in the field of clinical practice by easing the suffering of the individual. *Dhatu-Samya* [equilibrium of structural component] is attained when the *Dosha* work in their normalcy owing to their normal *Guna-Karma* (attributes). Acknowledging these attributes of *Pitta Dosha* with a purview of modern science is the requirement of present scenario. To understand this aspect of *Dosha*, there is a need of enhancement of fundamentals with respect to practical implementation. In the present review, an effort has been put to understand the *Sasneha Guna* [quality of unctuousness] of *Pitta Dosha* based on the etymological and syntactical derivation, bio-physical and molecular meaning.

Keywords: *Sasneha, Pitta, Kleda*, Physiological aspect.

INTRODUCTION

The body of all the organisms is made possible only by the *Vata*, *Pitta* and *Kapha* [1]. These are ever necessary for the maintenance of its integrity. The three *Dosha* maintain the integrity of the organism by creating, assimilating and diffusing strength, in the same way as *Soma* [moon], *Surya* [sun] and *Anila* [air] maintain the integrity of the terrestrial world [2]. In their normal states, *Dosha* help in the proper functioning of the body; while in their abnormal states they afflict the body by causing various kinds of diseases [3]. *Vata* is responsible for all the *Chesta* [functions] of the body; it is the *Prana* [life] of living beings and is responsible for the disease formation and destruction of body [4]. *Pitta* is responsible for the metabolic and thermogenic functions of the body [5]; whereas *Kapha* is responsible for providing the strength, structural support & stability to the body entities and also performs secretory and lubricating functions [6].

Thus, these three *Dosha* maintain the homeostasis in the body while performing

their own functions. These also support the *Dhatu* [tissue] and *Mala* [waste products] and give support to them in carrying out their functions. Out of these three *Dosha*, *Pitta* is the representative of *Agni* [digestive factors] in the body [7]. *Pitta* is responsible for all the bio-chemical reactions taking place in the body. *Pitta* carries out its functions owing to its various *Guna* [qualities].

Guna:

Qualities are not visible to the naked eye but these can be known based on the *Karma* [functions] a particular substance performs [8]. In order to understand better about the functioning of any substance it is pertinent to know the properties of that substance. Usage of similar quality substances will increase the substance or its related functionality whilst the usage of opposite quality substances will reduce/decrease the substance or its related functionality [9].

Qualities are inseparable and an inherent part of any substance [10]. Following qualities of *Pitta* have been mentioned in various *Samhita* [classical text]: [11-17]

Table no. 1: qualities of Pitta

Varna [colour]	Rasa [taste]	Gandha [smell]	Triguna presence	Consistency	Other Guna
<i>Shukla- Aruna varjya</i> [except white & red colour (of morning sun)]	<i>Katu</i> <i>(Nirama)</i> [pungent]	<i>Visra</i> [smelling of raw meat]	<i>Satva</i> <i>Guna</i>	<i>Sara</i> [fluid]	<i>Tikshna</i> [sharp]

<i>Pandu-Aruna varjya</i> [except white & red colour (of morning sun)]	<i>Amla (Sama)</i> [sour]	<i>Vaigandhya</i> [smell other than normal]		<i>Drava</i> [flowing]	<i>Ushna</i> [hot]
<i>Pita (Nirama)</i> [yellow]		<i>Puti</i> [putrid]		<i>Ishat Snigdha (Sasneha)</i> [slight viscosity]	<i>Laghu</i> [light]
<i>Nila (Sama)</i> [blue]				<i>Anatisneha</i> [less unctuousness]	<i>Ruksha</i> [dry]

These qualities of *Pitta*, either singly or in combination, take part in the performing of various functions which are attributed to *Pitta*. Without adequate knowledge of qualities of *Pitta*, a proper understanding of the physiological functioning and its usage in the clinical practice cannot be made.

Practical & Clinical knowledge needs to be validated in the purview of contemporary science. Thus, it is a contextual need to be fulfilled for the betterment of scholars and practitioners of *Ayurveda* so as to clear the ambiguities from the intellectual minds.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES:

Systemic review of the references related to *Sasneha Guna of Pitta Dosha*.

MATERIALS AND METHODS:

For the in-depth study of the topic, classical texts of *Ayurveda* along-with their commentaries, modern medical text books of

physiology, *Sanskrit* dictionaries as well as other relevant sources were referred.

METHODOLOGY:

Following points were elaborated for better understanding of the *Guna*: –

- 1) *Paribhasha Prakarana* [definitions] – Literary aspect,
- 2) *Guna-Karma* aspect,
- 3) *Agni evam Pachana vyapara* – Metabolism and Digestion,
- 4) *Nanatmaja Vikara* [self-specific diseases],
- 5) Drugs acting on *Sasneha Guna of Pitta*.

1) *Paribhasha Prakarana* – Literary aspect:

निरुक्तिः [स्नेह शब्दस्य] – “स्निह + घञ्”, “स्निह प्रितौ” ॥

लक्षणं – “दर्शने स्पर्शने वापि श्रवणे भाषणेऽपि वा। यत् द्रवत्यन्तरंगं स स्नेह इति कथ्यते ॥ (श.क.द्रु.)

- १) स्नेहोऽपां विशेषगुणः। संग्रहमृजादिहेतुः ।
(प्रशस्तपाद भाष्य)
- २) यस्य (द्रव्यस्य) क्लेदने (कर्मणि) शक्तिः स स्निग्धः।
(हेमाद्रि – अ.ह.सू.१/१८)
- ३) स्नेहमार्दवकृत् स्निग्धो बलवर्णकरस्तथा।
(सु.सू.४६/५१६)

Snigdha: that which has the ability to produce “*Kleda*” [moisture] is *Snigdha*.

Snigdha is the special quality of *Jala* [water] & in turn *Jala* predominant body entities.

Sneha: that which produces *Ardra* [moistness], *Snigdhta* [unctuousness], *Bala* [strength] and *Varna* [color] in the body [or its parts] is *Sneha*.

2) *Guna-Karma* aspect:

The word “*Sasneham*” as one of the qualities of *Pitta* has been used by *Charaka* and *Vagbhata* [12,13]. *Sushruta* has not mentioned *Sasneha* as the quality of *Pitta*. *Dalhana* states that *Pitta* is *Snigdha*[18]. *Chakrapani Datta* commenting on the word “*Sasneha*” says that it denotes “*Ishat snigdhta*” [19]. *Aruna Datta* and *Hemadri* also opine the same. The prefix “*Sa*” is used in the meaning of “*Ishat*” [20] [slight or little].

As evident from the qualities ascribed to *Pitta*, it can be said that *Pitta* is derived from “*Teja* [fire] & *Apa* [water]” *Mahabhuta* [primary elements]. *Charaka* considers it to

have slight unctuousness; but *Sushruta* considers *Pitta* as similar to *Teja* [14] only and hence he has not mentioned *Sasneha* as the quality of *Pitta*. *Chakrapani Datta* also adds that this “*Ishat Sneha*” is only to indicate that *Pitta* can be treated by the use of *Sneha* [19]. In *Jalpkalptaru* commentary by *Gangadhar*, it is said that *Sasneha Guna* is in lesser quantity and more quantity is of *Ushna Guna* [21]. It is known that ghee and milk are *Pitta* pacifying substances having *Sneha* and *Shita* [cold] qualities [21]. So, it can be postulated from above points that possession of *Sneha* here means that *Pitta* is not having *Ruksha Guna*.

Acharya *Chakrapani* has very clearly said that *Sasnaeha Guna* of *Pitta* is because of its combination/attachment with *Drava Guna* and is not a natural/innate/self-existing quality of *Pitta* [22]. Whenever *Pitta* is in *Niramavastha* then it becomes *Ruksha* [devoid of unctuousness] as in fever, which is under treatment. Further he clearly mentioned that *pitta* is of two types i.e *Sadravam* (having *Drava Guna*) and *Nirdrava* (not having *Drava Guna*). The one which is *Sadravam* possesses *Sneha guna*. *Nirdrava Pitta* becomes *Ruksha* as a result of *Langhanadi* karma which absorbs its *Ardra Bhag* (moisture) [22]. It is the “*Ruksha Teja*” which leads to fever and further needs the help of “*Sneha*” for treatment [23].

Further probing of the word “*Sasneha*” with its relevant appropriate meanings lead to the following inputs [24]:

Ishat Snigdha: Glossiness – Surface lustre/shiny or smooth surface but not sticky;

Kledne Snigdha: Moisture/Wetness – Small amount of liquid that makes something moist;

Snih pritou: Affection/Kindness – Attachment/Pleasure.

On probing the functions of *Pitta*, it can be said that *Sasneha Guna* of *Pitta* is also responsible for the *Deha Mardavm* [softness of body parts] and *Prabha* [lustre] [25]. *Sneha* is also responsible for colour [25] so *Bhrajaka Pitta* can be said to have *Sneha Guna*. Also, while mentioning the features of *Doshaja Prakriti* [body constitution/phenotype] of an individual, *Charaka* did not consider *Sasneha* as taking part in the formation of phenotype of the person.

3. Agni Avam Pachan Vyapara:

Digestion of food is dependent upon many factors such as *Ushma* [digestive factors], *Vayu* [kindling factors], *Kleda* [moisture], *Sneha*, *Kala* [time] and *Samyoga* [combination of above factors] [26]. When *Pachaka Pitta* leaves its *Dravata* [fluidity], it functions in digestion and is called by the name *Agni* [27]. For *Pachaka Pitta* to function properly in digestion, the food should have become *Mridu* [soft]. This softness of food particles is achieved by the *Sneha Guna* only. It is only

after the food has attained softness, that the digestive fire acts on this food and it undergoes proper digestion [28].

4. Nanatmaja Vikara:

Nanatmaja Vikara are the diseases caused due to vitiation of primarily single *Dosha* [29]. These can be due to vitiation of one, two or many qualities of that particular *Dosha*. The following *Vikara* [disorder] can be said to have an affliction of *Sasneha Guna* [30]: -

Sweda [morbid sweating][31]

Kleda [dampness – a morbid condition of *Dhatu* like *Rakta*, *Mamsa*][31]

Srava [discharge][31]

Kotha

[inflammation/gangrene/putrefaction][3]

These *Nanatmaja Vikara* of *Pitta* have *Kleda* as a factor in pathogenesis which can be said to be associated with *Sasneha Guna*.

5. Drugs acting on Sasneha Guna of Pitta:[32]

The *Dravya* which pacify *Sasneha Guna* of *Pitta* are: -

Table no. 2: drugs acting on *Sasneha Guna*

Dravya	Botanical name
<i>Chandan</i>	Santalum album
<i>Nalada</i>	Vetiveria zizanioidis
<i>Nimba</i>	Azadirachta indica
<i>Haridra</i>	Curcuma longa
<i>Daruharidra</i>	Cyperus rotundus
<i>Musta</i>	Cyperus rotundus
<i>Laja</i>	Fried paddy

<i>Durva</i>	<i>Cynodon dactylon</i>
<i>Naygrodra</i>	<i>Ficus bengalensis</i>
<i>Padmaka</i>	<i>Prunus cerasoides</i>
<i>Priyangu</i>	<i>Callicrpa macrophylla</i>
<i>Shyonak</i>	<i>Oroxylum indicum</i>
<i>Lodhra</i>	<i>Symlolus racemosus</i>
<i>Samanga</i>	<i>Mimosa pudica</i>
<i>Dhataki</i>	<i>Woodfordia fruticosa</i>
<i>Jambu</i>	<i>Syzygium cumini</i>
<i>Udambar</i>	<i>Ficus glomerata</i>
<i>Ashwatha</i>	<i>Ficus religiosa</i>
<i>Ashmantak</i>	<i>Ficus rumphii</i>
<i>Khadira</i>	<i>Acacia catechu</i>
<i>Arjuna</i>	<i>Terminalia arjuna</i>
<i>Kadamba</i>	<i>Anthocephalus indicus</i>

DISCUSSION:

Sasneha Guna is present in combination/attached with *Drava Guna*. It does the *Mardava* and *Kledana* functions. *Mardavata* and *Snigdghata* are represented on the skin as *Prabha* and *Kanti* (which are observable). In digestive processes, it imparts softness to ingested food so as to facilitate the digestion by digestive factors in stomach. This quality is *Vatahara* [*Vata* pacifying] and *Shleshmakara* [promotes *Shleshma*]. The movement of various substances in all the *Avayava* [organs & its parts], *Srotas* [channels] etc. is due to the lubrication of organ/path owing to *Sasneha Guna* only.

As, it is the first amongst the qualities mentioned for *Pitta*, it can be said that it is the first quality to be afflicted amongst the various qualities of *Pitta*. Upon affliction, it may become the cause for production of various pathogenesis as mentioned earlier.

Observable factors:

The following physiological *Bhava* [factors] which have the presence of *Sasneha Guna* can be observed in the body:

- Sweat,
- *Sukumarta* [delicateness/softness],
- Unctuousness of ears, eyes, mouth, nose, tongue, lips, palms, nails, forehead & penis.
- *Prabha* [lustre] due to *Sasneha Guna*.

Examining factors:

Snigdghata can be examined in faeces, urine, face & skin.

Sukumarta and *Mriduta* in skin is *Sparshana-gamya* (by the use of tactile sensation)

Presence of slight unctuousness in general diseases of *Pitta Dosha*.

Loss of/diminished function of *Sasneha* in *Yakrita* [liver] might be observed in following diseases:

Yakrita shotha [inflammation in liver]

Pittashaya shotha [inflamed gall-bladder]

Pittashmari [gall-bladder stones]

Pandu [anaemia]

Kamala [jaundice]

Kumbhakamala & *Halimaka* [both advanced stages of jaundice].

In GIT:

Due to loss of/diminished functioning of *Sasneha*, *Ushnata* and *Tikshnata* of pitta increases which might lead to *Daha* [burning], *Shotha* [inflammation] and *Vrana* [ulcer] formation in GIT. As small amounts of ghee is beneficial for lighting and maintain fire; similarly, slight *Snigdhta* is beneficial in proper functioning of *Pitta*.

Similar assessment of pathogenesis can be done for various organs & diseases.

Proposed objective parameters [tests]:

1. Observation of stool consistency, stickiness,
2. Bile acid assay – bile fat contents,
3. Hepatic lipase activity test,
4. Lipid profile,
5. Skin [moisture]: Blotting paper test, Moisture meter for skin moisture.

CONCLUSION:

Present work is aimed with the view to develop an understanding of *Sasneha* quality of *Pitta Dosha* with respect to physiological, pathological, and laboratorial aspects. It is an initial step and similar efforts can be made to understand other qualities of *Pitta Dosha*.

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