

Sara Pariksha: An Ayurvedic approach for assessing Dhatu's Excellence- A Review Article

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Abstract

Introduction: *Ayurveda*, the ancient Indian system of medicine, outlines several physiological assessment tools to evaluate an individual's strength, constitution, and overall health. Among these, *Dhātu Sārata Parīkṣā* is a key concept used to assess the quality and excellence of bodily tissues (*dhātu*). *Sāra Parīkṣā*, one of the *Daśavidha Parīkṣā* described by Ācārya Caraka in *Caraka Saṁhitā Vimāna Sthāna*, examines the *lakṣaṇa* of a *Sāra Puruṣa* to understand inherent strength and constitution. **Methodology:** This review is based on a comprehensive study of classical *Ayurveda* texts, particularly the *Bṛhatrayī*—*Caraka Saṁhitā*, *Suśruta Saṁhitā*, and *Aṣṭāṅga Hṛdaya*—along with allied literature and modern commentaries. Descriptions of the eight types of *Dhātu Sārata* were analysed for their physical, psychological, and behavioural attributes. Contemporary publications were also reviewed. **Results:** Classical literature identifies eight types of *Dhātu Sārata*—*Tvak*, *Rakta*, *Māṁsa*, *Meda*, *Asthi*, *Majjā*, *Śukra*, and *Sattva Sāra*. Each type shows distinct physical features, mental tendencies, behavioural traits, and varying levels of vitality. **Discussion:** The review emphasises the importance of *Dhātu Sārata* as a vital parameter for personalised healthcare in *Ayurveda*. Evaluating tissue excellence supports diagnosis, prognosis, treatment planning, and lifestyle guidance. However, the absence of standardised tools and limited empirical validation restrict its widespread application.

Key words: *Sara Pariksha, Dhatu Sarata, Rogi Pariksha, Dhatu bala.*

Introduction:

Sara Pariksha examines the strength of a person. It is an important diagnostic tool in *ayurveda* and used to assess an individual's physical and physiological strength, resilience and the quality of their *dhatu* (body tissue). *Acharya charak* has mentioned seven types of *dhatu*'s in *chikitsa sthan* of *charak samhita* and in *vimansthan* he talked about eight types of *Sara* that is *Ashtavidha Sara* which determines the physiological and physical strength of an individual. Sometimes we can't decide the strength of a patient only by looking at the appearance because *ayurveda* says that it is not necessary that a lean person will have a weak strength. For example, small ant can carry many times of its weight. So, by doing *sara pariksha* we can determine the strength of a person.

Aim

To analyse the classical foundations, clinical significance, and diagnostic relevance of *Dhātu Sārata Parīkṣā* as described in the classical texts of *Ayurveda*, and to explore its role in assessing an individual's *Dehabala*, *Manobala*, and overall constitution.

Objectives

1. To review classical Ayurveda literature—including the Bṛhatrayī (Caraka Saṁhitā, Suśruta Saṁhitā, Aṣṭāṅga Hṛdaya)—to understand the traditional descriptions and evolution of Dhātu Sārata Parīkṣā.
2. To study the eight types of Dhātu Sārata—Tvak, Rakta, Māṁsa, Meda, Asthi, Majjā, Śukra, and Sattva Sāra—and document their physical, mental, and behavioural characteristics.
3. To evaluate the relevance of Dhātu Sārata in determining Dehabala, Manobala, vitality, constitution, and disease susceptibility as mentioned in classical texts.
4. To explore the applicability of Sāra Parīkṣā—one of the Daśavidha Parīkṣā—in personalised healthcare and clinical decision-making in contemporary Ayurveda practice.

Ayurveda has a goal to maintain the health of a healthy person and do treatment of unhealthy person. *Sara Pariksha* is done by both healthy and unhealthy individuals. It determines the *Bala Praman*. Doctor can't give *Tikshna chikitsa* to *heen Bala* patient.

because it will trigger the condition of a patient in same way we can't give *Mridu chikitsa* to *uttam Bala* patient as it will not put any impact on patient, and the disease will grow so knowing the patient physical strength or inner strength is an important and necessary aspect of diagnosis. If we consider an example, poor *meda sara* person may prone to conditions like obesity and type 2 diabetes. Good *sattva sara* person has good mental strength and resilience but poor *sattva sara* person must suffer from conditions like mental disorder, stress, anxiety and depression. There is a strong relationship in *chikitsa* and *rogi bala*. *Aushadh kaal* also depends on the *Bala*. The assessment of a person's *sara* is crucial for the physician in deciding the best course of treatment and predicting a person's ability to recover. A person with poor or *madhyama Sara*, *Rasayana* therapies can be recommended specifically to enhance the quality and strength of their tissue and immunity.[1]

Review:

According to *Ayurveda*, the human body is formed by *doshas*, *dhatu*s, and *malas*, which are considered as its fundamental roots of the body. *Doshas* (*Vata*, *Pitta*, *Kapha*) are the three energies that control bodily functions.

*Dhatu*s are the seven tissues that form the body's structure which are as follows:

Rasa dhatu → Plasma lymphoid tissue

Rakta dhatu → Haemopoietic tissue

Mamsa dhatu → Muscular tissue

Meda dhatu → Adipose tissue, phospholipid

Asthi dhatu → Bony tissue or bones

Majja dhatu → Bone marrow

Shukra dhatu → sex hormones

Malas (*Muttra*, *Purish*, *Sweda*) are waste products that are eliminated from the body, and their balance is crucial for health and imbalance causes disease. The origin, sustenance, and destruction of the body are based on its "root," which refers to *Dosha*, *Dhatu*, and *Mala*.

"Root" is defined as the material cause (*upadana karana*), like how thread is the material cause of cloth. *Dosha*, *Dhatu*, and *Mala* are the material causes of the body,

without which it cannot exist. According to *Acharaya Sushruta* in the *Sutrasthan*, *Dhatu* are those entities of body which are responsible for the support and nourishment of the body and in turn are responsible for the overall growth of the body. In modern we can correlate it with tissues. According to *Acharya Charak*, the body is called the community of the soul, which is the basis of consciousness, and the disorders of the five great elements. The soul and the five great elements remain in harmony in this body, that is, they work in cooperation in a state of equilibrium. *Panchmahabhut* is found in each component of body. Every matter is composed of *panchmahabhut* but some are dominantly formed by *Parthiv* (earth), *Jalia*(water), *Agni*(fire), *Akash*(space), *Vayu*(air), similarly *dosha-dhatu-Mala* are formed by *panchmahabhut*, these are as follows:[2]

Table1: Panchmahabhuta relation with dhatu

Dhatu	Chakrapani	Dalhan
<i>Rasa</i>	<i>Jala</i>	<i>Jala</i>
<i>Rakta</i>	<i>Agni +Jala</i>	<i>Agni</i>
<i>Mamsa</i>	<i>Prithvi</i>	<i>Prithvi</i>
<i>Meda</i>	<i>Jala +Prithvi</i>	<i>Jala+ Prithvi</i>
<i>Asthi</i>	<i>Prithvi +Vayu</i>	<i>Prithvi+ Vayu+ Agni</i>
<i>Majja</i>	<i>Jala</i>	<i>Jala</i>
<i>Shukra</i>	<i>Jala</i>	<i>Jala</i>

Table2: Panchamahabhuta relation with Mala

Mala	Panchmahabhuta
<i>Mutra</i>	<i>Jala+ Agni</i>
<i>Purisha</i>	<i>Prithvi+ Agni+ Vayu</i>
<i>Sveda</i>	<i>Jala</i>

Table3: Panchamahabhuta relation with Tridosha

<i>Tridosha</i>	<i>Panchmahabhuta</i>
<i>Vata</i>	<i>Vayu+ Akash</i>
<i>Pitta</i>	<i>Agni</i>
<i>Kapha</i>	<i>Jala+ Prithvi</i>

Dhatu nourishes all the tissues and provide physical strength and insulation. They create the skeletal frame, support the nervous system, and enable reproduction. Each of the seven *dhatu* has specific roles in providing nourishment and vitality. For example, *rasa dhatu* and *rakta dhatu* are key components. In *Ayurveda*, a balanced state of *dosha*, *dhatu*, body tissue, and *mala*, or waste product, defines equilibrium. This balanced state is known as *dhatu samya*. When *dhatu* are in their natural state, they sustain and nourish the body.

However, when they become abnormal, they harm the body and can cause disease. To examine the condition of *dhatu*, *Ayurveda* recommends *sara pariksha*, which is mentioned in *dashvidha pariksha*. *Dhatu sara pariksha* refers to the quality of this individual tissue. It serves as an important indicator of a person's intrinsic strength and immunity.[3]

Maintenance of the equilibrium of the *dhatu*s (*dosha*, *dhatu* and *malas*) is the very object of the science of life. The individual (patient or person) constitutes the site for the administration of therapies with the view to bringing about equilibrium of *dhatu*s. Weak patients should receive gentle therapies, while those with strong stamina and physique can withstand more intense treatments for better results. Thus, the patient needs to be assessed based on their prakriti (physical constitution), *vikruti* (illness), *sara* (excellence of *dhatu*s or tissue elements), *samhanana* (compactness of the organs), *Pramana* (size of the organs), *satmya* of the organs), *satmya* (suitability), *sattva* (mental state), *Ahara shakti* (digestive power), *vyayama shakti* (capacity for exercise), and *vaya* (age) to determine their strength and the severity of the disease. The purpose of describing the eight types of individuals who excel in different tissues is to measure their strength. This measurement is helpful when providing treatment to anyone. It's misleading to judge a person's strength based solely on their body size or shape. Some individuals may appear small and thin, like ants, but can carry heavy

loads. Therefore, the *sara Pariksha* (examination of an individual based on the excellence of various tissues) is recommended. To determine specific strength measures, individuals are classified into eight groups based on their seven dhatu and manas:[4]

1. *Twak sara* (contextually *Rasa dhatu sara*).
2. *Rakta* (blood) *sara*.
3. *Mamsa* (muscle-tissue) *sara*.
4. *Asthi* (bone & cartilage tissue) *sara*.
5. *Medas* (adipose tissue) *sara*.
6. *Majja* (marrow tissue) *sara*.
7. *Sukra* (semen) *sara*.
8. *Sattva* (mental faculty) *sara*.

Sara Pariksha:

Sara pariksha is an ancient *ayurvedic* diagnostic method that assesses a person's physical, physiological, and mental health. It evaluates the quality of body tissues by having a physician examine physical and physiological traits. This assessment helps in identifying the balance of *dhatu*. It also aid's in determining the right dosage and type of medicine, especially for procedures like *Saman* and *Shodhan* purification.

Ayurveda believes that every person has a unique physical and mental constitution. By examining the *sara*, or excellence, of *dhatu*, a physician can understand a person's strength, immunity, endurance, mental traits, disease resistance, and suitability for certain treatments or therapies. Each *dhatu* has a specific set of physical and physiological qualities. Identifying which *dhatu* is dominant or well developed helps in assessing the overall health profile of the patient.

Rogi pariksha in *Ayurveda* is a patient examination that assesses the disease (*Roga*) and the patient's strength (*rogi bala*) for accurate diagnosis and treatment. Key methods include sensory examination such as *Darshana*, *Sparshan*, and *Prashna*, the "tenfold examination" (*Dashavidha Pariksha*), and *Nidanapanchaka* for analyzing the

disease. The goal is to understand the patient's constitution, strength, and the disease's characteristics. This helps in determining the best treatment plan.

Ayurvedic texts describe several examination frameworks, including the twofold, threefold, sixfold, eightfold, and tenfold methods.

Trividha Pariksha (Threefold Examination)

This basic method includes:

1. *Darshana (Inspection/Observation)*: Visually examining the patient's body, appearance, complexion, and any visible symptoms.
2. *Sparshana (Palpation/Touch)*: Using touch to check body temperature, texture, consistency, and the pulse (*Nadi Pariksha*).
3. *Prashna (Interrogation/Questioning)*: Asking detailed questions about the patient's history, diet, lifestyle, symptoms, aggravating and pacifying factors, and mental state.

Ashtasthana Pariksha (Eightfold Examination)

This method, made popular by the text *Yoga Ratnakara*, focuses on examining eight specific sites or features:

Nadi (Pulse)

Mutra (Urine, including *Tailabindu Pariksha* using sesame oil drops)

Mala (Stool)

Jihva (Tongue)

Shabda (Voice/Speech) *Sparsha* (Touch/Skin)

Drik (Eyes/Vision)

Akriti (General Appearance/Physique)

Dashvidha Pariksha (Tenfold)

The *Dashvidha Pariksha* (tenfold examination) is an important diagnostic framework in *Ayurveda* for creating personalized treatment plans and preventing disease. Its key value is in offering a complete view of a person's unique physical and mental makeup, rather than just concentrating on the illness.

Ayurveda emphasizes that treatment should be personalized to each person's unique constitution (*Prakriti*) and current imbalances (*Vikriti*). The *Dashvidha Pariksha* provides the detailed information needed to achieve this personalization, ensuring that treatments are effective and safe. The examination helps determine the patient's physical and mental strength, resilience, and vitality. This assessment is important for deciding the intensity, dosage, and type of therapy, such as *Panchakarma*, that the patient can handle. A strong patient can tolerate strong treatments, while a weak patient needs gentler approaches.

Nine out of the ten parameters, all except *Vikriti Pariksha*, also apply to healthy individuals (*Swastha*). This helps practitioners spot potential weaknesses and suggest preventive measures, dietary changes, and lifestyle adjustments to maintain health and avoid future diseases.

Significance of *Sara Pariksha*:

In *Ayurveda*, *Sara Pariksha*, or essence examination, is an important diagnostic tool. It assesses a person's fundamental strength, known as *Bala*, the quality of their bodily tissues, called *Dhatu*s, and their physical and mental make-up. This method is one of the ten main ways to examine patients, known as *Dashvidha Atura Pariksha*.

It allows the physician to evaluate a person's natural physical and mental strength, which isn't just based on body size.

Disease Diagnosis and Prognosis: By evaluating *Dhatu Sarata* (tissue excellence), physicians can better diagnose conditions and predict a patient's ability to resist illness (*Vyadhikshamatva*) and recover. People with better tissue quality are generally more resilient to sickness.

Guiding Treatment: This assessment directly affects treatment planning. The physician decides the right intensity and dosage of medicines (*Aushadha*) and

therapies (like *Shodhana* or *Samshamana*) based on the patient's strengths.

Personalized Healthcare and Prevention: It enables a tailored approach to health, guiding recommendations for lifestyle, diet (*Ahara matra*), and exercise to maintain health (*Swasthavritta*) and prevent future diseases. For example, individuals with *Meda Sara* (fat tissue excellence) may be more likely to develop conditions such as obesity and Type 2 diabetes.

Career and Progeny Planning: It can help guide career choices based on a person's physical and mental strengths. For example, *Asthi* and *Mamsa Sara* individuals may be suited for military roles, while *Majja Sara* individuals may excel in administrative jobs. It also contributes to antenatal care, with the potential to improve the *Sarata* of children by evaluating and advising parents.

Determining Tissue Quality for Medical Use: Recent research points to the possibility of identifying people with better tissue quality for donations. For example, blood banks could store blood from *Rakta Sara* individuals, or bone marrow from *Majja Sara* individuals, leading to improved transplantation results.

Sara Pariksha offers a complete understanding of a person's physiological and psychological essence. This allows the *Ayurvedic* practitioner to tailor preventive and curative measures effectively.

Need of Sara Pariksha:

It is a mistake to judge someone as strong or weak based on their appearance, such as being plump or thin, or their body size. Some people with small, thin bodies can be quite strong.

They are like ants, which are small and appear frail but can carry heavy loads. Therefore, we should evaluate individuals based on the quality of their *dhatu*s.

The examination of *sara* shows the *bala* of a person. One cannot function without *bala* and cannot resist without it. To achieve both goals of *Ayurveda*—maintaining health and, if ill, curing the disease and returning to a balanced state—one must understand their *bala*.

Types of *Sara Pariksha*:**Qualitative:****Table 4: Types of *Sara* on qualitative basis [5]**

Types of <i>Sara</i>	Features of <i>Dhatu Sara</i>
<i>Uttam sara</i>	Maximum features of <i>dhatu sara</i> are Present
<i>Madhyam sara</i>	Features of <i>dhatu sara</i> are present in moderate quantity
<i>Avara sara</i>	Very few features of <i>dhatu sara</i> are present

Quantitative:

1. *Twak Sara* → checks the quality of the skin and the essence of *Rasa* (plasma, lymph).
2. *Rakta Sara* → evaluates the quality of blood.
3. *Mamsa Sara* → looks at the quality of muscle tissue.
4. *Meda Sara* → checks the quality of fatty tissue.
5. *Asthi Sara* → examines the quality of bone tissue.
6. *Majja Sara* → reviews the quality of bone marrow and nerve tissue.
7. *Shukra Sara* → measures the quality of reproductive tissue.
8. *Satva Sara* → gauges the quality of the mind and mental strength.[6]

Lakshana of *sara purusha*:**Table 5: *Lakshana of sara purush* [7]**

Types of <i>sara</i>	Physical features	Physio- psychological features
<i>Rasa / Twak sara</i>	Skin is unctuous, smooth, soft, clear, with fine sparse deep rooted and delicate hairs and lustrous	Happiness, good fortune, power, enjoyment, intelligence, learning, health, cheerfulness, and longevity.

<i>Rakta sara</i>	Ear, eye, face, tongue, nose, lip, palm of hand, sole of feet, nails, forehead & genitals are, red handsome & brilliant	Happiness, sharp, intellect, magnanimity, tenderness, moderate strength, lack of endurance & tolerance of heat.
<i>Mamsa sara</i>	Temple, forehead, nape, eyes, cheek jaws, neck, shoulders, abdomen, axillae, chest, hands, feet & joint's equipped with firm, heavy & good muscle.	Forbearance restraint lack of greed wealth learning happiness, simplicity, health strength, longevity.
<i>Meda sara</i>	Unctuouness, complexion, voice, eyes, hands, hair, skin hair, nails, teeth, lips, urine& faeces.	Wealth, power, happiness, enjoyment, charity, & delicacy in dealings.
<i>Asthi sara</i>	Heels, ankles, knee, elbow, collar bone, chin, head & joint & also bones, nail & teeth.	Enthusiastic, active, enduring, having strong & firm body as well as longevity.
<i>Majja sara</i>	soft organs, strong unctuous complexion, sweet voice, prominent long & rounded joints.	Long lived strong endowed with learning, wealth, understand, progeny, respect.
<i>Shukra sara</i>	Charming, looking with charm, eyes filled with milk, immensely exhilarated, tip of teeth as unctuous, rounded, firm, even compact pleasant & unctuous complexion & voice brilliant prominent buttocks.	Strong happy supremacy, health, wealth, honour, progeny.
<i>Sattva sara</i>	Endowed with memory devotion, great full, learned, pure, courageous, skilful, resolute, fighting in battles with prowess, free from anxiety.	Strong, happy, enduring, confident in all actions, inclined to benevolent acts, balanced body, wealth, enjoyment, supremacy.

Dhatu vikruti Karan aur Chikitsa:**Table 6: Dhatu Vikruti Karan aur chikitsa**

<i>Dhatu</i>	<i>Dhatu vikruti karan</i>	<i>Chikitsa</i>
<i>Rasa</i>	Weak digestive fire	Langhana (fasting), herbs that boost Agni such as Trikatu and ginger.
<i>Rakta</i>	Imbalance pitta	Rakta shodhan (blood purification), Raktmochan (bloodletting), vaman, virechan (therapeutic purgation) Herbs like guduchi, neem, manjistha
<i>Mamsa</i>	Muscle weakness	Shodhna, Shashtra krama, agni karma, Herbs such as ashwagandha
<i>Meda</i>	Metabolic issue	Langhana, virechana, Herbs such as Guggulu
<i>Asthi</i>	Vata aggravation	Massage with oil Herbs which is rich in calcium
<i>Majja</i>	Immunity issue	Rasayana Herbs like ashwagandha
<i>Shukra</i>	Imbalance of reproductive health	Vajikarana (aphrodisiac therapies) Herbs such as shatawari and ashwagandha.

Role in modern science:

Twak sara: This relates with blood plasma, and it is measured by BMP (Basic metabolic panel), plasma protein test, blood clotting test, plasma amino acid test.

Rakta sara: This relates with haematological parameters, and it is measured by HB% (Haemoglobin percentage), MCH (Mean corpuscular Haemoglobin), and MCV (Mean corpuscular volume)

Mamsa sara: This talks about muscle mass strength, and tone (Tony's) and it is

measured by hand grip dynamometer.

Meda sara: This is related with fat metabolism, body composition, and by cholesterol and triglycerides test.

Asthi sara: In modern, this directly relates with bone mineral density (BMD) and measured by DEXA Scan (dual-energy x ray absorptiometry).

Majja sara: This relates with bone marrow, and it is measured by aspirations and biopsy.

Shukra sara: This relates with reproductive health, and it is measured by sperm count, hormonal balance (testosterone and estrogen levels), overall immune count

Sattva sara: This relates with modern psychology and psychiatry concepts, and it is measured by electroencephalogram (EEG).

Disease caused by Vikruti of dhatu:

Table 7: Disease caused by vikruti of dhatu

<i>Dhatu sara</i>	<i>Kshaya</i> (deficiency)	<i>Vridhhi</i> (Excess, Toxicity)
<i>Twak sara</i>	Fatigue, nutritional deficiency	Excessive salivation, oedema (swelling)
<i>Rakta sara</i>	Anaemia, dry skin, paleness	Skin diseases like ringworm, Leukoderma
<i>Mamsa sara</i>	Weakness, muscle wasting	Tumours, Tonsil, Abnormal Muscle
<i>Meda sara</i>	Enlargement of spleen, joint crackling	Obesity, shortness of breath, cardiovascular Disease
<i>Asthi sara</i>	Fragile bone, hair/nail loss, joint pain	Bone deformities
<i>Majja sara</i>	Persistent joint pain, potential neurological issues	Joint swelling, heaviness in Eyes
<i>Shukra sara</i>	Infertility, pain in testes, weakness	Excessive sexual desires

Conclusion:

Sara Pariksha in *Ayurveda* has a true focus on excellence by providing a general conclusion like a final exam summary. The relevance of *Sara* is an important strength for assessing an individual's condition. The examination of *Dhatu* reveals the status of *Dhatu* and *Sattva* (mind) of an individual. The assessment of *Dhatu Sarata* was based on subjective experiences, so we need to develop some standardized tools to find possible correlations.

Since *Dhatu Sarata* is useful in many areas of life, such as *Bala* (evaluating strength), medical treatment, and choosing the best offspring, doctors should be familiar with it. The ideas of *Agni vaya*, *Dhatu pramaan*, *garbhotpadaka bhava*, and *ahaar matra* are some of the factors that have an impact that affect the *dhatu sarata*. The conclusion of *Sara Pariksha* is that it is a specific diagnostic tool in *ayurveda* for improving an individual's health, resistance to disease, and overall outlook by assessing the quality of their basic tissues. It helps doctors understand the patient's ability to recover. It guides treatment strategies, assesses disease risk, identifies career paths, and evaluates mental and physical abilities.

This data is useful in many ways, such as determining a patient's physical capacity and assessing the strength of a person with a thin build.

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