



Review Article

STUDY OF *VARNOTPATTI* (ORIGIN OF COMPLEXION) - IN AYURVEDA TEXTS

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ABSTRACT

In the process of *Varnotpatti* (Origin of complexion), not a single factor plays a role, but many factors are assigned for the formation of *Varna* according to our classical scholars. These factors are *Agni*, *Mahabhuta*, *Shukra*, *Ahara* and *Vihara* etc.; they contribute in the formation of *Varna* in *Garbhavastha*. Once the complexion is formed, it cannot be changed at the latter stage of the life. Some factors also participate in the process of *Varnotpatti* after birth. Prime importance has been given to *Agni* (Teja) *Mahabhuta* in the manifestation of *Varna*. A soft good healthy skin gives glowing appearance and a radiant complexion. The total health of the skin is reported by its texture, colour, tone, luster, complexion etc.

1. INTRODUCTION

The concept of *Varna* has been adroitly described in the Ayurveda texts. Every person has some particular skin colour and complexion. Many combinations of fair and dark colour and complexion are visible. Genetic factor is important in determination of an individual's basic skin colour. As the skin colour is mainly

dependent upon genes, nothing more can be done but complexion and radiance of the skin can be maintained or increased by taking proper care as protection from excess sunlight, frequent cleaning etc. In Ayurveda, terms like *Kanti*, *Prabha*, *Chhaya*, *Varna* etc. are used regarding the subject.^[1] Among them *Varna* word is used in a

broader aspect which includes most of the parameters which are necessary for healthy skin. Effort is made to cosmetic approach of *Varna* in Ayurveda.

The word *Varnotpatti* comprises of 2 words: *Varna* + *Utpatti*. According to Ayurvedic classical texts, many factors seem to be participated in the process of *Varnotpatti*. They contribute in the formation of *Varna* in *Garbhavastha*. Once the complexion is formed, it cannot be changed at the latter stage of the life. Some factors also participate in the process of *Varnotpatti* after birth.

2. Factors responsible for *Varnotpatti*:

2.1 Panch Mahabhuta:

Tejo dhatu means the *Agni Mahabhutaha* been considered as originator of all the *Varna*. *Agni Mahabhuta* with combination of other *Mahabhuta* gives four types of *Varna*.^[2]

- *Agni* + *Jala*– *Gaura Varna* (Fair)
- *Jala* + *Akasha* + *Agni*– *Gaura Shyam* (Medium)
- *Prithvu* + *Akasha* + *Agni* – *Krishna Shyam* (Olive)
- *Prithvi* + *Agni* - *Krishna* (Deep)

According to *Acharya Charak*, *Agni* dominantly associated with *Jala* and *Akasha* gives raise *Gaura Varna* to the fetus, with *Vayu* and

Prithvi Mahabhuta gives *Krishna Varna* and equal proportion of all the *Mahabhuta* contributes the *Shyama Varna* to the child.

2.2 Shukra Dhatu:

The color of *Shukra Dhatu* is also responsible for the formation of color and complexion of embryo, as when the color of *Shukra Dhatu* is white or having the color of *Ghrita* or *Manda*, the child will be having *Gaura Varna* (fair), when it is like Oil, the child will be having *Krishna Varna* (black) and if when it is like the color of Honey, the child will be of *Shyama Varna* (brownish).^[3] *Indu*, the commentator of *Ashtanga Samgraha* has established variants in nutrition effects variant in semen and thereby the variant in the fetus. It can be said that the complexion is determined by the paternal factors.

2.3 Triguna:

When two or more substances are mixed together, the resulting compound is having some particular color. So, whenever a new color is produced in a compound, it is to be explained by the dominant of *Tamas*, *Rajas* and *Sattva* in the combination. As the combination of *Mahabhutas* gives rise to some particular color to the fetus, *Mahabhutas* can be interpreted in the terms of *Sattva*, *Rajas*, and *Tamas*. Therefore, the role of *Triguna* i.e. *Sattva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas* is important as far as that of *Mahabhuta*.

2.4 Garbhotpadaka Bhavas:

Certain factors are inherited from mother, and certain from father, some past impressions of *Atma* and still others from the nutrition from the food ingested. Amidst the various factors of embryo, *Atma* and *Satmya* are assigned for the manifestation of color and complexion.^[4]

2.4.1 Atma:

Varna has been assigned as the *Atmaja Bhava*. The actions of past life are dissimilar to each other, so that, variations in the characteristic features among the individuals are seen. So, besides the *Mahabhutas*, *Atma* also comes in this picture on account of the *Karmas* of previous birth.

2.4.2 Satmya:

Acharya Charak has counted the *Varnaas Satmyaj bhava*. *Satmya* is nothing except the suitability towards the diet and regimens taken by mother during the period of gestation. Fetus gets nutrition from the mother. So, by providing nutrition to the respective *Mahabhutas*, this provides the strength and complexion to the Fetus. Thus, it can be attributed towards the role of *Satmya*.

Besides, the four factors viz., time, uterus, the nutritious food and the *Shukra* and *Shonita* enriched by their qualities are essential for the production of embryo. If the quality of anyone of these factors becomes poor, there is a possibility of the change in color of the offspring. *Charak* says that the malformation of the shape, color and

senses are caused by the vitiated *Dosha* that are provoked by the defects of the sperm, by the actions associated in the previous life, by the condition of the uterus and season as well as by the defects of mother's diet and behavior during gestation.^[5]

2.5 Manasik Sthiti (Mental status) of Mother:

Acharya Vagbhata has advised that the lady should think about the persons having that type of *Rupa* and *Varna*, which she wants to have in her offspring.^[6]

Acharya Charak has also accepted the role of thinking of mother in the formation of *Varna* and has given a detailed description. Thus, the thinking of mother affects the *Sattva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas* according to the type of thinking. Then these *Trigunas* transform the waves into *Tanmatras* according to their dominance. Further, these *Tanmatras* have influences the respective *Mahabhutas*. In this way, the *Trigunas* alters the relative *Mahabhutas* in the body and hence those in the *Garbhashaya*. Thus, influences the production of color of child.^[7]

2.6 Ahara and Vihara of the mother:

In *Charak Samhita*, states that fetus gets nourishment from the *Ahararasa* of mother through the placenta, which is attached with mother's heart, which provides strength and complexion to the fetus as it contains all the essential factors.^[8]

Taking sweet foods like *Kshira* etc. and much use of water by the pregnant lady results in the fair complexion of her child, the use of *Tila*, *Vidahi Anna* etc. by her results in the child having darker one and with mixed diets the child becomes having *Shyama Varna*.

While describing the factors which damage to the fetus, *Charak* describes that excessive use of *Amla Rasa* by mother results in the child suffering from skin disorders and that of *Kashaya Rasa* results the child having *Shyava Varna*. He states that the pregnant lady gives birth to the child suffering mostly from the respective disorders etio-pathological factors of which are used by her during the gestation. Hence, the woman desiring excellent progeny should particularly abstain from then wholesome diet and behavior.^[9]

2.7 Relation between *Prakruti* and *Varna*:

Prakruti also influences the formation of *Varna* in the fetus. Particular *Prakruti* gives some specific complexion.^{[10],[11],[12]}

2.8 *Rasa Dhatu* in *Varnotpatti*

Rasa Dhatu plays important role in formation of colour and complexion of the skin. That is evident by the qualities of the *Tvakasara Purusha*. *Charaka* said that the skin of the *Tvakasara Purusha* is *Snigdha*, *Shlakshana*, *Komal*, *Praisanna*, *Sukshama* and *Prabhayukta*.^[13]

2.9 *Rakta Dhatu* in *Varnotpatti*

Charaka has mentioned *Rakta* as a responsible factor for *Sharira Bala*, *Varna*, *Sukha* and *Ayu*.^[14]

The term '*Varna*' includes all parameters like colour, complexion luster and texture of the skin. *Prabha* and *Chhaya* also effect on *Varna*.

Table no:1: Relation of *Prakuti* and *Varna*

<i>Prakruti</i>	<i>Vagbhatta</i>	<i>Charak</i>	<i>Sushruta</i>
<i>Vata</i>	<i>Dhusara</i>	<i>Parusha</i> <i>Vadana-</i> <i>pani,</i> <i>Sphutita</i> <i>Avayava</i>	<i>Sphutita</i> <i>Kara-charan</i>
<i>Pitta</i>	<i>Gaura</i>	<i>Sukumar</i> <i>a</i> <i>Avadata</i> (fair)	<i>Tamra Varna</i> <i>of Nakh-</i> <i>nayan-talu-</i> <i>jivha-ostha-</i> <i>pani-padtala</i>
<i>Kapha</i>	<i>Priyangu,</i> <i>Durva,</i> <i>Padma,</i> <i>Suvarna</i> <i>like</i>	<i>Gaura</i>	<i>Durva,</i> <i>Indivar,</i> <i>Sharakand</i> <i>like Varna</i>

3.0 CONCLUSION

According to Ayurveda, *Varna* not only mean to complexion but it includes a broader aspect of parameters necessary for a healthy skin. *Varna* of an individual depends upon several factors. Among them the prime factor is *Teja Dhatu* i.e. *Agni Mahabhuta*. It forms different color and complexion in combination with other *Mahabhutas*. *Varna* (skin colour) gives sign of healthy being.

According to Modern Science, complexion can be dependent on factors like – Vitamin deficiency, hormonal changes, Excessive iron deposition, Excessive melanin production, Acne or pimple marks. In lighter skin, skin color is also affected by red cells in blood flowing close to the skin. To a lesser extent, the color is affected by the presence of fat under the skin and carotene.^[15]

Complexion can be promoted by internal administration of healthy *Ahara Vihara*, other way is by topical application. *Mala, Agni, Sarata* and *Kala* also affect the natural colour (*Varna*) of an individual. In classics role of diet, exercise and *Rasayana* therapy is also explain for healthy *Varna*.

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