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SHUKRAVARDHAK DRAVYAS FROM AAHARDRAVYA VARGAS IN CHARAK SAMHITA :A CLASSICAL PERSPECTIVE ON REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
<p>Article History:</p> <p>Received 13th February 2024</p> <p>Received in revised form 25th February, 2024</p> <p>Accepted 15th March, 2025</p> <p>Published online 28th March, 2025</p>	<p>To understand the <i>Ayurvedic</i> state of well-being, requires a deep exploration of <i>Dosha</i>, <i>Dhatu</i> and <i>Mala</i> which are fundamental concepts of Ayurveda. There are seven <i>Dhatus</i> (body tissues) with <i>Shukra dhatu</i> being the seventh and final one. In <i>Charaka Samhita</i>, one of the foundational texts of <i>Ayurveda</i>, “<i>Shukarvardhak</i>” drugs are those that are believed to enhance vitality, strength, and overall well-being. These drugs are specifically used to support the reproductive system, improve stamina, and promote general health by increasing the body’s natural energy. <i>Charaka</i> describes these drugs in the context of their ability to balance the <i>Doshas</i> (<i>Vata</i>, <i>Pitta</i>, and <i>Kapha</i>), and are primarily classified under the category of <i>Rasayana</i> (rejuvenative therapies) and <i>Vajikarna</i> (aphrodisiac therapy).<i>Shukarvardhak</i> drugs are a key aspect of <i>Vajikarna Chikitsa</i> in <i>Ayurveda</i> as described in <i>Charak Samhita</i> ,aim to increase the production of <i>Shukra Dhatu</i> (reproductive tissue) and <i>Ojas</i> (the essence of vitality) thereby enhancing fertility, sexual potency and overall vitality .These drugs are typically rich in nutritional properties and are believed to support the body’s tissues (<i>Dhatus</i>), strengthen immunity, and slow down the aging processes. According to <i>Charaka</i> ,food plays a fundamental role in maintaining and enhancing <i>Shukra Dhatu</i>.This study explores the various <i>Shukravardhaka</i> foods and herbs categorizing them based on their sources such as <i>Mamsa Varga</i> (meat group), <i>Shaka Varga</i> (vegetable group), <i>Kshira Varga</i> (dairy group), <i>Harit varga</i> ,<i>Ikshu Varga</i> ,<i>Phala Varga</i> (fruits group) and <i>Aaharyogi Varga</i>.</p>
<p>Key words:</p> <p><i>Shukra ,Dhatu ,Varga ,Vajikarna</i></p>	
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INTRODUCTION

In *Ayurveda*, *Shukra Dhatu* represents the most refined and vital tissue within the human body. It is the end product of the complex process of digestion and tissue formation, where ingested food is sequentially transformed into the seven *dhatu*s (tissues). The word “*Shukra*” means pure, bright, and potent, symbolizing its crucial role in sustaining life and ensuring genetic continuity.

Shukra Dhatu is that which generates immense joy (*Pramoda*) in the mind and provides supreme strength (*Bala*) to the body. According to *Charak*, the “*Sthana*” (seat) of *Shukra* is not limited solely to the reproductive organs but is understood to be pervasive throughout the entire body. *Charak* explains this concept with an evocative analogy: Just as sugarcane yields

its juice, curd produces ghee, and sesame seeds offer oil, the refined essence of semen (*Shukra*) is distributed throughout the body. This means that while the generative organs (testes in males and ovaries in females) serve as the primary repository for *Shukra*, its nourishing influence extends to every tissue through the faculty of touch. This widespread presence underlines the role of *Shukra* as the ultimate substrate of vitality, essential for maintaining strength, rejuvenation, and overall health.

Characteristics of Shukra

According to *Charak* the semen should be considered pure, white and crystal clear. It should be unctuous (oily), thick, mucus, sweet and does not decay. If the sperm is white in colour like a crystal gem then it is regarded as pure semen.

NATURE OF SHUKRA

In *Bhavprakash* ,nature of *Shukra* is described as :

- *Saumya* (gentle, cool, and moon-like)
- *Shveta Varna* (white in color)

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- *Snigdha* (unctuous, smooth, and oily in nature)
- *Bala Pushtikara* (providing strength and nourishment)
- *Garbha Bija* (the seed of conception)
- *Vapu Saara* (the essence of the body)
- *Jeevasthanraya* (the supreme refuge of the soul)

When these attributes are diminished or altered, it indicates the presence of *Shukra Dosh*—a condition where the refined, nourishing essence of *Shukra* is compromised.

In *Ayurveda*, *Shukra Kshaya* refers to the depletion or deficiency of high-quality semen (*Shukra Dhatu*). This condition is not simply about a reduction in reproductive tissue; it signifies a broader decline in the body's vital energy, since pure *Shukra* is intimately linked with *Ojas*—the essence that underpins physical strength, immunity, and mental clarity.

The depletion of *Shukra* can result from a range of factors, such as :

1. Old age(*Vridhavastha*)
2. Worry(*Chinta*).
3. Disease(*Roga*).
4. Excessive physical exertion.
5. Overeating
6. Excessive sexual activity

These six factors led to the depletion of *Shukra*. Thus, *Shukra Kshaya* is considered a critical imbalance in *Ayurvedic* physiology, affecting both the physical and mental domains. Addressing this condition typically involves restoring proper digestive function, balancing the doshas, and adopting lifestyle and dietary practices that nurture the production and maintenance of high-quality *Shukra*.

In *Charak Samhita* various food groups are classified based on their effects on the body ,including their ability to increase *Shukra Dhatu* .

Below is a detailed list of *Shukravardhak Dravyas* categorised under different food groups:

Table 1. <i>Mamsa Varg</i> (Meat Group)				
Sanskrit Name	Scientific Name	Family	Action	Reference
<i>Mayur</i> (Peacock)	<i>Pavo cristatus</i>	Phasianidae	<i>Shukravardhak</i>	ch.su.27/65
<i>Hans</i> (swan)	<i>Cygnus</i>	Anatidae	<i>Shukravardhak</i>	ch.su27/66
<i>Murga</i> (chicken)	<i>Galusgallus domesticus</i>	Phasianidae	<i>Shukravardhak</i>	ch.su.27/67
<i>Goriya</i> (sparrow)	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	Passeridae	<i>Shukravardhak</i>	ch.su.27/75
<i>Varah</i> (pig)	<i>Susscrofa domesticus</i>	Suidae	<i>Shukravardhak</i>	ch.su.27/79
<i>Mahisha</i> (buffalo)	<i>Bubalus bubalis</i>	Bovidae	<i>Shukravardhak</i>	ch.su.27/80
<i>Kachapa</i> (tortoise)	<i>Testudines</i>	Testudinidae	<i>Shukravardhak</i>	ch.su.27/83
<i>Matsya</i> (Fish)	Subphylum Vertebrata		<i>Shukravardhak</i>	ch.su.27/75

Table 2. <i>Shaka Varga</i> (Vegetable Group)				
Sanskrit Name	Latin Name	Family	Action	Reference
<i>Makoi</i> (Black Nightshade)	<i>Solanum Nigrum</i>	Solanaceae	<i>Shukravardhak</i>	ch.su 27/89
<i>Pui</i> (Malabar Spinach)	<i>Basella alba</i>	Basellaceae	<i>Shukravardhak</i>	ch.su27/93
<i>Munjataka</i>	<i>Orchis Latifolia</i>	Orchidaceae	<i>Shukravardhak</i>	ch.su27/120

Table 3. <i>Phala Varga</i> (Fruits group)				
Sanskrit Name	Latin Name	Family	Action	Reference
<i>Draksha</i> (grapes)	<i>Vitis Vinifera</i>	Vitaceae	<i>Shukravardhak</i>	ch.su27/125
<i>Aamrata</i> (mango)	<i>Mangifera indico</i>	Anacardiaceae	<i>Shukravardhak</i>	ch.su27/129
<i>Kharjura</i> (dates)	<i>Phoenix dactylifera</i>	Arecaceae	<i>Shukravardhak</i>	ch.su27/127
<i>Vatada</i> (almond)	<i>Prunus amygdalus</i>	Rosaceae	<i>Shukravardhak</i>	ch.su 27/157
<i>Akhrot</i> (walnut)	<i>Juglans Regia</i>	Juglandaceae	<i>Shukravardhak</i>	ch.su27/157
<i>Abhishuk/Jardalu</i>	<i>Prunus armeniaca</i>	Rosaceae	<i>Shukravardhak</i>	ch.su27/157
<i>Mukulak</i> (pistachio)	<i>Pistacia vera</i>	Anacardiaceae	<i>Shukravardhak</i>	ch.su27/157
<i>Nikochak</i> (Pine nuts)	<i>Alangium salvifolium</i>	Cornaceae	<i>Shukravardhak</i>	ch.su27/157
<i>Urmaan</i> (<i>Khurmani</i>)	<i>Prunus Armeniaca</i>	Rosaceae	<i>Shukravardhak</i>	ch.su27/157

Table 4. Harit Varga (class of greens)				
Sanskrit Name	Latin Name	Family	Action	Reference
<i>Palandu</i> (onion)	<i>Alium cepa</i>	Amaryllidacea	<i>Shukravardhak</i>	ch.su 27/175
<i>Lehsun</i> (garlic)	<i>Alium sativum</i>	Amaryllidaceae	<i>Shukravardhak</i>	ch.su27/176

Table 5. Goras Varga (class of milk and its products)			
Sanskrit Name	English Name/ Scientific name	Action	Reference
<i>Dadhi</i>	curd/yoghurt	<i>Shukravardhak</i>	ch.su27/225
<i>Piyush, Morat and Kilat</i>	<i>Piyush</i> -milk , <i>Morat</i> -colostrum , <i>Kilat</i> -whey	<i>Shukravardhak</i>	ch.su27/235

Table 6. Ikshu Varga (Sugarcane and its product)				
Sanskrit Name	Latin Name	Family	Action	Reference
<i>Ikshu</i> (sugarcane)	<i>Saccharum officinarum</i>	Poaceae	<i>Shukravardhak</i>	ch.su.27/236
Sugar			<i>Shukravardhak</i>	ch.su.27/241

Table 7. Aaharyogi Varga			
Sanskrit Name	English Name/ Scientific Name	Action	Reference
<i>Majja</i>	Marrow	<i>Shukravardhak</i>	ch.su.27/295
<i>Vasa</i>	Meat fat	<i>Shukravardhak</i>	ch.su27/295
<i>Shunthi</i> (ginger)	<i>Zingiber officinale</i>	<i>Shukravardhak</i>	ch.su27/296
<i>Shushk pippali</i> (long pepper)	<i>Piper longum</i>	<i>Shukravardhak</i>	ch.su27/298
<i>Sendha Namak</i> (rock salt)	Sodium Chloride	<i>Shukravardhak</i>	ch.su 27/301

Foods to Avoid :-(*Shukra dushti karka Ahara*)

1. Excess, spicy, salty and sour foods (aggravate *Pitta* and affects sperm quality)
2. Processed/ junk foods, excessive caffeine and alcohol (reduce sperm count)
3. Excessive fasting and malnutrition (weakens *Shukra Dhatu*)

DISCUSSION

To enhance the quality and quantity of sperm *Charak Samhita* emphasises the importance of *Aahar Dravya Vargas* that nourish and strengthen *Shukra Dhatu*. These drugs are primarily aphrodisiac (*Vrishya*) ,unctuous (*Snigdha*) ,energizing (*Balya*) and tonic (*Rasayana*) in nature. These drugs share properties such as *Guru* ,*Snigdha* ,*Manda* ,*sthira Guna* ,*Madhur Rasa* ,*Madhura Vipaka* and *Sheeta Veerya*. Due to their inherent similarity with *Shukra Dhatu* ,these herbs act as direct *Rasayanas* for male reproductive health. Their cooling and nourishing nature prevents depletion and helps in managing *Shukra Dosha* by promoting spermatogenesis ,decrease mount legacy and increase libido, delay ejaculation in PME ,prevent exhaustion during intercourse, alleviate symptoms and maintain reproductive health. When *Shukra* become vitiated, it should be treated with Dietary support ,Lifestyle and behavioural practices (*Brahmacharya* and *Dinacharya*) ,*Rasayana* therapy such as *Chyawanprash*, *Vajikarna Lehyam* and Gold based preparations strengthen *Shukra Dhatu* and

prevent degeneration and *Panchkarma* Detoxification such as *Virechana*, *Vasti* and *Abhyanga* removes toxins that weaken reproductive function.

CONCLUSION

The concept of *Shukravardhak Dravyas* in *Charaka Samhita* emphasizes the holistic approach of *Ayurveda* in maintaining reproductive health and overall vitality. A well balanced diet ,intake of milk, ghee, rice, black gram, fruits, nuts, and aphrodisiac herbs ensures proper nourishment of *Shukra Dhatu* ,enhancing sperm quality, libido and overall vitality. By following a proper diet and avoiding harmful foods one can maintain reproductive strength and prevent conditions like *Ksheena Shukra* and *Kleebata*.

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