

## LITERARY REVIEWS OF STRI SHARIRA FROM VARIOUS AYURVEDIC SAMHITAS

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### ABSTRACT

*Ayurveda* is an eternal science of life. Physician should have proper knowledge of anatomy and physiology for proper treatment of any disease. In *Ayurveda* this anatomy and physiology is described in *Sharira Sthana* of various *Samhitas*. Anatomy of female genital organs is also described in *Samhitas* in context with *Stri Sharira*. But it is present in sparse way. So in present study there is an attempt to collect all references regarding anatomy of *Stri Sharira* from various *Ayurvedic Samhitas* and texts in a cohesive manner and their correlation with modern science anatomy. It will help to understand concepts and terminologies regarding *Stri Sharira* with respect to modern terminologies and explore the knowledge of *Stri Sharira*.

**Keywords:** *Ayurveda*, *Sharira Sthana*, *Stri Sharira*, Female reproductive system

### INTRODUCTION

*Ayurveda* is an ancient science. It is defined as system which uses inherent principles of nature, to help to maintain health in an individual by keeping one's mind, body and spirit in perfect equilibrium with nature. *Ayurveda* is Sanskrit term which is comprises of two words, "Ayush" and "Veda". *Ayush* means life and *Veda* means knowledge or science.<sup>(1)</sup> *Ayurveda* mainly consists of eight branches. There is detail description regarding each branch of *Ayurveda*. *Acharya Sushruta* has cited that every physician should have knowledge of all branches of *Ayurveda* so that it will help himself in diagnosis and treatment of any kind of disease. For treating any disease, one feels need of knowledge of knowing pathology of that disease. But before that physician must have proper cognizance about the anatomy and physiology of that specific organ involving in disease so that he can treat that disease seamlessly and

precisely.<sup>(2)</sup> In *Ayurveda*, word "Sharira" encompasses anatomy along with physiology. The science which pacts with body (*Sharira*) including all the systems and their physiology are called as "Sharira". *Acharya Sushruta* has said that *Vaidya* (physician) should have *Sharira Rachnatmaka Dnyana* of every organ for curing any kind of disease from the root. In *Ayurvedic Samhitas*, there are many refinances of several organs of female reproductive system. *Acharyas* have described *Stri Sharira* by numerous views. But this matter is extensively distributed in different texts and parts. There is very much controversy with respect to concept of *Stri Sharir* at present epoch. In present study, we have made efforts to collaborate these references and study *Stri Sharira* by modern point of view so it will help to expound the concept of it in present era.

## MATERIAL AND METHOD

1. Literary study of *Stri Sharira* from various *Ayurvedic Samhitas* and texts in detail.
3. Correlation of *Ayurvedic Stri Sharira* with modern science.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Literary review of Stri Sharir from Ayurvedic Samhitas and texts is as given below -

### Yoni

The word *Yoni* is obtained from “*Yuj*” *Dhatu*. It means to link or join. *Aacharya Sushruta* and *Aacharya Vagbhata* have defined the shape of *Yoni* as “*Shankhnabhyakruti*”.<sup>(3)(4)</sup> That means it is constricted at its commencement, dilated in the middle and narrowed near its uterine extremity. It consists of three *Aavarta* in the inner side. These are like ridges or rugae. *Garbhashaya* is located in third *Aavarta* of *Yoni*. According to *Aacharya Kashyapa* shape of the *Yoni* should be “*Shakhatakruti*”. Also, he has stated the various anomalies regarding the shape of *Yoni*.<sup>(5)</sup> *Vagbhata* has used the word *Yoni* for describing *Stri-Janendriya* (female genitals).<sup>(6)</sup> Also *Yoni* is considered as *Apatyapatha* that is vagina by him.<sup>(7)</sup> While describing *Chikista* of *Garbhapata*, he has mentioned to put the *Pichu* of various *Aaushadhidravyaat Yoni*. He called *Yoni* as *Garbhashaya* in some contexts.<sup>(8)</sup> *Bhavprakasha* has used the word *Manobhavgara* for *Yoni* and *Manobhavgarmukha* for *Yonimukha* in *Garbhaprakaran*. According to him, 3 *Nadies* are present in *Manobhavgara* namely *Samirana*, *Chandramukhi* and *Gauri Nadi*.<sup>(9)</sup> The main *Nadi* is *Samirana Nadi*. In this way, *Aacharyas* used the word *Yoni* as per requirement for different meanings.

### Bhaga

*Amarkosha* has given the synonyms for *Yoni* as *Bhaga*.<sup>(10)</sup> *Dalhana* has quoted that *Yoni* is similar to the *Bhaga*. According to him *Parinaha* of *Yoni* is 12 *Anguli*.<sup>(11)</sup> *Aacharya Charaka* has said that *Bhaga* is 12 *Anguli*.<sup>(12)</sup> By the definition of *Bhaga*, given by *Madhavnidana*, *Bhaga* can be considered as ischio-rectal fossa. Base of ischio-rectal fossa is directed to

the surface of perineum and its apex is at the line joining of the obturator and anal fascia.<sup>(13)</sup> Commenter *Kaviraja Gangadhar* has mentioned “*Bhaga*” as “*Strilingam*”. According to *Vaitaran*, *Basti* lies below the *Bhaga* and *Garbhashaya* lies above it.<sup>(14)</sup> It can be considered as pubes. *Aacharya Sushruta* has specified the definition of *Bhagandara Vyadhi*. As per him, *Bhagandara Vyadhi* takes place in *Bhaga*, *Guda*, and *Basti* due to *Daran* of these places.<sup>(15)</sup>

### Yonikarnika

*Aacharya Dalhana* has elucidated two *Peshies* which are called *Yonikarnika*. These are present laterally on the *Yonimukha* (one on each side). These are circular.<sup>(16)</sup>

*Vishikhant* - *Aacharya Sushruta* has used the word “*Vishikhanta*” while describing the procedure of labour.<sup>(17)</sup> He has said that *Sevika* should massage the *Vishikhanta* from inward to outward direction. *Aacharya Dalhana* has elaborated this term more specifically by saying it as *Apatyamarga*.

*Apatyapatha* - *Apatyapatha* can be considered as vaginal canal or *Yonimarga*. According to *Aacharya Sushruta* *Apatyapatha* consists of 4 *Peshies*. Out of these, 2 *Peshies* lie on inner side of it and two lie outside on the *Mukha* which are circular. The *Peshies* which lie outside on the *Mukha* can be considered as *Yonikarnika* as per *Dalhana*.

### Peshies in Stri Sharira

Females have 20 extra *Peshies* than male. Out of these, ten *Peshies* are present in *Stana* of both sides (5 *Peshies* on each side of *Stana*) which enlarge during puberty and pregnancy. Four *Peshies* present in *Apatyapatha* which has been described as above. Three *Peshies* are present at *Garbhachhidra* and remaining three are present where *Shukra* and *Aartava* enters the *Garbhashaya*. Among these three *Peshies*, two are present at the entrance *Aartava* and one is present at the entrance of *Shukra* in the *Garbhashaya*.<sup>(18)</sup> *Vagbhata* has also explained the same.

### Shroni

*Aacharyas* has given the variance between *Strishroni* and *Purushshroni*. *Strishroni Pramana* is equal to *Purusha Uraha Pramana*. *Strishroni* is wider than *Purushshroni*. *Stri Uraha Pramana* is equal to 18 *Anguli* and it is equal to *Purusha Kati Pramana*.<sup>(19)</sup>

In modern science, this can be termed as pelvis.

*Asthi* and *Sandhi* in *Stri Shroni*

**According to *Aacharya Sushruta Strishroni* has 5 *Asthi*. These are as follows –**

- Two *Nitambasthi* are present on each side of *Shroni*. These *Nitambasthi* are called as *Kapalasthi*. Other *Asthi* present in *Gudpradesha*, *Trikpradesha*, *Bhagpradesh*.<sup>(20)</sup> The *Sandhi* present in between the *Asthi* is of *Samudga* type

As per *Aacharya Charaka*, *Shroni* consist of 3 *Asthi*. Out of these, 2 are present in *Shroniphalaka* and one is present as *Bhagasthi*.<sup>(21)</sup>

*Marma*

*Aacharya Sushruta* has enlightened *Marma* present in pelvic region of female in *Chikista Sthana*. These are eight in number. These are *Sevani*, *ShukravahStrotas*, *Phala*, *Guda*, *Mutraprasek*, *Mutravaha Strotas*, *Yoni*, and *Basti*. These should be protected while performing any operative procedure.<sup>(22)</sup> In this way, these *Marma* have more importance in *Stri Sharira* according to *Ayurveda*.

*Aartavah Strotasa*

*Aacharya Sushruta* has described mainly two types of *Strotasa*. These are *Bahirmukhi Strotasa* and *Antaramukhi Strotasa*. He has described 9 *Bahirmukhi Strotasa* and 11 pairs of *Strotasa* which are called *Yogavahi Strotasa* or *Antarmukhi Strotasa* common in both male and female. But he has added 3 more *Strotasa* in female viz. 2 *Stana* and 1 *Rajovaha Strotasa* or *Aartavavaha Strotas*.<sup>(23)</sup> He has expressed *Aartavaha Strotasa Viddha Lakshane* and their *Moolsthana*. *Moolsthana* of *Aartavaha Strotasa* are *Garbhashaya* and *Aartavavahi Dhamnya*. *Viddha Lakshane* are *Vyandhtwa* (sterility), *Maithunahishnuta*, and *Aartava-nasha*.<sup>(24)</sup> During pregnancy *Aartavaha Strotasa* becomes *Avruddha* that is it gets block. So there is loss of menses during preg-

nancy. Some of this *Avruddha Aartava* helps in formation of *Apara* and some helps in development of breast.

*Vagbhata* has also prearranged the definition of *Aartava*. As per him, the blood which excretes for 3 days from the *Garbhakoshtha* is called as *Aartava*.<sup>(25)</sup> Commenter *Arundatta* has given the definition of *Shuddha Aartava*. As per him, the blood from *Yoni-marga* expels out at regular interval. This expelled blood is called as *Aartava*.

During every month, menstrual bleeding occurs generally at fix period. If there is failure to conceive by a lady then ovum excretes out along with menstrual blood which is called *Aartava* as it is excretes from *Aartavaha Strotasa*. It can be considered as *Bahipushpa*. On the other hand, if ovum takes part in fertilization, thereby leading to formation of embryo then it is can be called as *Antapushpa* or *Bija*. In this way *Aartava* can be categorized as per its physiology.

*Shuddha Aartava Lakshane* – It is like hare blood, *Laksharasa*. It does not have fowl smell. It does not causes discoloration of clothes. It is easily washable.<sup>(26)</sup>

*Garbhashaya*

*Nirukti of Garbhashaya* - As per *Vachspatyama*, it is the *Garbha-aadhar Sthan* that is it is place which gives support to developing foetus. He has given the synonym as *Garbhashayya* for *Garbhashaya*.

Synonyms for *Garbhashaya* –

*VipulStrotas* – While describing genesis of organs *Aacharya Kashyapa* has labelled *Garbhashaya* as *Vipulstrotas*

*Kukshi* – *Aacharya Charaka* has explained the *Garbha Utpatti* in detail in *Sharira Sthana*.<sup>(27)</sup> He said that *Kukshi* is nothing but *Garbhashaya* in which formation and development of *Garbha* takes place. He has also used the word *Antkukshi* for it. *Aacharya Vagbhata* used both the words *Garbhashaya* and *Kukshi* as a site for *Garbhautapatti*.<sup>(28)</sup>

*Kshetra* - *Aacharya Sushruta* has also called the *Garbhashaya* as “*Kshetra*” in *Sharira Sthana*.<sup>(29)</sup>

*Garbhakoshtha* - *Aacharya Vagbhata* in *Astangsangraha* has called the *Garbhashaya* as *Garbhakoshtha*, in *Sharirasthana* of *Samhita*.<sup>(30)</sup>

*Dhara* - *Sharangadhara* has also called the *Garbhashaya* as “*Dhara*”.<sup>(31)</sup>

*Phala* and *Phalyoni* – *Dalhan* has used the words *Phala* and *Phalyoni* in context with *Garbhashaya*. Also there are various synonym for *Garbhashaya* such as *Kalala*, *Jarayu*, *Ulba*.

Position and shape of *Garbhashaya*

*Aacharya Sushruta* has described the position of *Garbhashaya* as it lies on the *Parshwa* of *Basti* while describing *Ashmari Chikista*.<sup>(32)</sup> He has also stated that *Garbhashaya* lies between *Pittashaya* and *Pakwashaya* and *Garbha* resides in it.<sup>(33)</sup> *Vagbhata* has given same position of *Garbhashaya* as that of *Sushruta*. Also in *Shariraa Sthana*, he has mentioned position of *Garbhashaya* in *Tritriya Aavarta* of *Yoni* and he has described its shape like that of *RohitMatsya Mukha*.<sup>(34)</sup> *Bhavprakasha* has also given the shape of *Garbhashaya* as that of *RohitMatsya*. Like *RohitMatsya*, *Garbhashaya* has constricted mouth and wider belly above. Other *Aacharyas* also have defined the shape of *Garbhashaya* same as above.

*Antargatphalama*

Dr. Ghanekar, commenter of *Sushruta Samhita* has elaborated the term, *Antargatphalama* in his commentary. As per him *Antargatphalama* can be called as ovary. *Dalhana* and *Bhavprakasha* has correlate it with “*Garbhashaya*”.<sup>(35)</sup> Also *Haranchandra*, commenter of *Sushruta Samhita* considered *Antargatphalam* as fallopian tube.

## DISCUSSION

Word *Yoni* can be used in context with whole female genital system. *Aacharya Vagbhata* used the word *Yoni* with reference to *Apatyapatha* that is only vagina. *Aacharya Dalhana* has used the word *Vishikhanta* for *Apatyapatha*. This *Apatyapatha* can be considered as the vagina as per modern science. *Yonikarnika* described by *Dalhana* can be called as labia majora as mentioned in modern science.

*Aacharya Sushruta* has described *Aarvtavaha Strotasa Moolsthana* as *Garbhashaya* and *Aartavavahi Dhamnya*. Also he has described its *Viddha Lakshne* such as *Vyandhtwa (sterility)*, *Maithunasahishnuta*, and *Aartava-Nasha*. In present era, fallopian tubes are cut during the procedure of tubectomy leading to sterilization in females. From this, fallopian tubes can be considered as *Aartavavahi Dhamanya*.

*Garbhashaya* is one of the *Aashaya* which is present only in female. It is the *Moolsthana* of *Aartavavaha Strotasa*. It is the main site of conception of *Garbha*. This *Garbhashaya* is nothing but the Uterus. *Aacharyas* have given the shape of *Garbhashaya* as *RohitMatsya Mukhakruti*. It can be elaborated as the *RohitMatsya* has constricted mouth, and wider belly above. Uterus is also wider in above in the form of fundus and it has constricted lower part in the form of cervix. This shows the micro-observation of *Aacharya* at that era though they didn't have proper tools for the study.

*Aacharya Sushruta* has given the position of *Garbhashaya* in relation with *Basti* and *Pakwashaya*. Grossly, this *Basti* can be taken as Bladder. Commenter *Gananatha Sena* has described the *Pakwashaya* as *Malashya* as a part of *Bruhadantra*. Also *Sharangadhara* has also described 7 *Aashaya* similar to that of *Aacharya Sushruta*. But he has said *Malashya* inspite of *Pakwashaya* as per *Aacharya Sushruta*. *Malashya* can be considered as rectum which is part of large intestine. In this way, he has given the position of *Garbhashaya* in accordance with bladder and rectum. As per modern science also, the uterus lies between bladder and rectum. This also denotes the minute reflection of *Aacharyas* though they had lack instruments for learning.

As per the role of *Aartava Strotasa* described by *Aacharya Sushruta* in his *Sharira Sthana* chapter number 4, *Aarvtavaha Strotasa* can be considered as uterine vessels as these have major role in menstruation and development of foetus.



## CONCLUSION

There is scattered description of *Stri Sharira* in different Ayurvedic text. But in correlation with present era, *Aacharya* has described almost all organs of female genital system. *Garbhashaya* described by them is uterus. *Yoni* word can be used in relation with whole female reproductive system or vaginal fold as per condition. *Apathyapatha* or *Vishikhanat* can be considered as vagina. *Aartavvahi Dhamnya* words are used for fallopian tubes. *Bhaga* described in *Ayurvedic* texts can be correlated with ischiorectal fossa. *Aartavaha strotas* has relation with uterine vessels. *Shroni* word can be used for pelvis. *Aand* and *Phala* indicates ovary. Thus this overall study shows the microscopic view of *Aacharyas* at that olden epoch instead of having deficiency in resources for collection of knowledge.

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