

ROLE OF KHA VAIGUṆYA IN DISEASE SUSCEPTIBILITY AND LOCALIZATION: A CRITICAL ANALYTICAL REVIEW IN AYURVEDA

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Article Received on 31 August 2026,
Article Revised on 21 September 2026,
Article Published on 01 Oct. 2026,
<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.2303256>

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How to cite this Article: Vd. Bhavana Dande¹,
Vd. Shraddha Karnkumar Shitole^{*2}. (2026).
Role of Kha Vaigunya In Disease Susceptibility
and Localization: A Critical Analytical Review
In Ayurveda. World Journal of Pharmaceutical
Research, 15(19), 132–142.

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ABSTRACT

Kha Vaigunya is a key concept in Ayurvedic pathogenesis explaining the susceptibility and preferential localization of disease in a tissue, organ, or Srotas. Disease manifestation is not attributed solely to systemic Doṣa aggravation; localization occurs when aggravated Doṣas encounter a susceptible site. Classical descriptions in Caraka Cikitsā Sthāna and Suśruta Sūtra Sthāna associate Kha Vaigunya with the site where circulating pathological factors localize and produce disease. This review analyses Kha Vaigunya in relation to Sthānasamśraya, Doṣa-Dūṣya Sammūrchanā, Srotoduṣṭi, disease susceptibility, and localization, drawing on classical literature and selected contemporary sources for conceptual interpretation. Kha Vaigunya represents a condition of local vulnerability facilitating the establishment of pathology at a particular site. Its relationship with Sthānasamśraya explains

the transition from generalized Doṣa disturbance to localized manifestation, and accounts for individual variation, since similar causative exposure may produce different manifestations depending on site susceptibility. Modern concepts such as tissue susceptibility, structural alteration, organ vulnerability, and altered local microenvironment offer conceptual parallels, though not direct biomedical equivalents. A clearer understanding of Kha Vaigunya may aid Ayurvedic disease prevention, localization, prognosis, and individualized management.

KEYWORDS: Kha Vaiguṇya, Sthānasamśraya, Doṣa-Dūṣya Sammūrchanā, Srotoduṣṭi, disease susceptibility, disease localization.

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda explains health on the basis of equilibrium among Doṣa, Dhātu and Mala and considers preservation of this equilibrium essential for maintenance of health. Disease manifestation is understood as a dynamic process involving causative factors, Doṣa aggravation, progression, localization and interaction with the affected tissues.

The process of disease development is described through the concept of Śaṭkriyākāla. Among these stages, Sthānasamśraya represents the stage in which aggravated Doṣas become localized at a particular site and begin to produce the initial manifestations of a specific disease. The occurrence of such localization is closely related to the condition of the site encountered by the circulating Doṣas.

The concept of Kha Vaiguṇya is particularly relevant to this phenomenon. Caraka describes that circulating Rasa becomes established at a site possessing Kha Vaiguṇya and produces pathological changes there, illustrating the phenomenon through the analogy of rain-producing clouds.^[1] Suśruta similarly describes that aggravated Doṣas moving throughout the body become arrested at a site of Kha Vaiguṇya, where disease subsequently develops.^[2]

Thus, Kha Vaiguṇya provides an important conceptual basis for understanding why disease does not necessarily manifest uniformly throughout the body despite systemic Doṣa disturbance.

The concept is also relevant to individual variation in disease manifestation. Individuals exposed to similar causative factors may develop different diseases or different sites of manifestation because the condition of their tissues and Srotas may vary.

The present review therefore examines the concept of Kha Vaiguṇya and its relationship with Sthānasamśraya, Doṣa-Dūṣya Sammūrchanā, Srotoduṣṭi, disease susceptibility and disease localization.

AIM

To critically analyse the role of Kha Vaiguṇya in disease susceptibility and disease localization according to Ayurveda.

OBJECTIVES

To study the classical concept of Kha Vaiguṇya.

To understand the role of Kha Vaiguṇya in Sthānasamśraya.

To analyse the relationship between Kha Vaiguṇya and Srotoduṣṭi.

To understand the role of local susceptibility in Doṣa-Dūṣya Sammūrchana.

To explore the significance of Kha Vaiguṇya in disease localization and susceptibility.

To examine possible conceptual parallels between Kha Vaiguṇya and selected modern scientific concepts.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The present work is a conceptual and literary review. Classical Ayurvedic references concerning Kha Vaiguṇya, Sthānasamśraya, Srotas, Srotoduṣṭi and disease pathogenesis were reviewed primarily from Caraka Saṃhitā and Suśruta Saṃhitā, along with relevant commentarial and secondary literature.

Selected contemporary literature was also considered to explore possible conceptual parallels between Kha Vaiguṇya and modern concepts of tissue susceptibility and disease localization.

The analysis was interpretative and conceptual in nature. Classical Ayurvedic concepts were considered within their own theoretical framework. Modern scientific concepts have been used only for conceptual comparison and not as direct equivalents of Ayurvedic terminology.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Classical Concept of Kha Vaiguṇya

The term Kha Vaiguṇya is composed of Kha and Vaiguṇya. Kha may be understood in the context of bodily space, passage or channel, while Vaiguṇya denotes abnormality, defect or altered condition.

A particularly important classical reference is found in Caraka Cikitsā Sthāna 15/37:

“क्षिप्यमाणः खवैगुण्याद्रसः सज्जति यत्र सः ।

करोति विकृतिं तत्र खे वर्षमिव तोयदः ॥”[1]

This verse describes that when circulating Rasa becomes arrested at a site of Kha Vaiguṇya, pathological change occurs at that site, analogous to rainfall occurring at a particular location.

The statement is significant because it provides a classical basis for understanding site-specific disease manifestation. Kha Vaiguṇya is therefore not merely an abstract anatomical defect but a condition that influences where pathological changes become established.

Suśruta also explains the role of Kha Vaiguṇya in disease localization:

“कुपितानां हि दोषाणां शरीरे परिधावताम् ।

यत्र सङ्गः खवैगुण्याद्व्याधिस्तत्रोपजायते ॥”[2]

The verse indicates that aggravated Doṣas moving through the body become arrested at a site of Kha Vaiguṇya, resulting in disease manifestation at that location.

Together, these classical references demonstrate that Kha Vaiguṇya is closely associated with the localization of pathological processes.

2. Kha Vaiguṇya and Sthānasamśraya

Sthānasamśraya represents the localization of aggravated Doṣas at a particular site during the progression of disease.^[3]

The relationship between Kha Vaiguṇya and Sthānasamśraya may be conceptually represented as:

Doṣa Prakopa → Doṣa Prasara → encounter with Kha Vaiguṇya → Sthānasamśraya → Doṣa-Dūṣya Sammūrchanā → Vyādhi Vyakti^[1,3,4,5]

At the stage of Sthānasamśraya, the pathological process changes from a generalized disturbance to a site-specific process.

Kha Vaiguṇya therefore acts as an important facilitating condition for localization. It should not, however, be considered an independent cause capable of producing disease without the involvement of the other components of Samprāpti.

The classical description in Caraka Cikitsā Sthāna 15/36–38 further demonstrates that Rasa circulates throughout the body and that Kha Vaiguṇya influences the site where pathological change becomes established.^[1]

This provides an important conceptual explanation for the selective distribution of disease.

3. Kha Vaiguṇya and Doṣa-Dūṣya Sammūrchanā

Doṣa-Dūṣya Sammūrchanā represents the interaction between aggravated Doṣas and the tissues or bodily components involved in disease manifestation.^[5]

Kha Vaiguṇya provides the susceptible local environment in which this interaction may become established.

The sequence may therefore be interpreted as

Aggravated Doṣa → circulation → susceptible site → localization → interaction with Dūṣya → pathological alteration → disease manifestation.

The importance of Kha Vaiguṇya lies in its ability to explain why the same aggravated Doṣa may produce different manifestations depending upon the site in which it becomes localized.

For example, Vāta predominance associated with a susceptible joint may produce a musculoskeletal manifestation, whereas localization in another susceptible tissue may result in a different clinical presentation. The precise manifestation depends upon the Doṣa, Dūṣya, Srotas and other components of the individual Samprāpti.

Therefore, Kha Vaiguṇya should be understood as one component of a larger pathogenic interaction rather than as a standalone disease-producing factor.^[5]

4. Relationship Between Kha Vaiguṇya and Srotas

The concept of Srotas is fundamental to Ayurvedic understanding of bodily transport and physiological functioning.

Caraka describes the general factors responsible for Srotas disturbance:

“आहारश्च विहारश्च यः स्यादोषगुणैः समः ।

धातुभिर्विगुणश्चापि स्रोतसां स प्रदूषकः ॥”^[6]

Thus, dietary and behavioural factors possessing qualities similar to Doṣa and unsuitable in relation to Dhātu may contribute to Srotas Praduṣaṇa.

Caraka further describes the general features of Srotoduṣṭi

“अतिप्रवृत्तिः सङ्गो वा सिराणां ग्रन्थयोऽपि वा ।

विमार्गगमनं चापि स्रोतसां दुष्टलक्षणम् ॥”^[7]

The four classical features are Atipravṛtti (excessive flow or activity), Saṅga (obstruction),

Sirāṇām Granthi (nodular or abnormal structural changes), and Vimārga Gamana (movement through an abnormal pathway).

The relationship between Kha Vaiguṇya and Srotoduṣṭi requires conceptual distinction. Kha Vaiguṇya refers primarily to a susceptible or defective site, whereas Srotoduṣṭi describes pathological disturbance of Srotas.

Therefore, they should not be treated as synonymous. Kha Vaiguṇya may provide a favourable site for localization, while Srotoduṣṭi represents a specific form of pathological disturbance associated with the concerned Srotas.

5. Kha Vaiguṇya as a Determinant of Disease Localization

One of the most significant implications of Kha Vaiguṇya is the localization of disease.

The classical descriptions indicate that aggravated pathological factors circulate throughout the body but become established where a suitable site is encountered.^[1,2]

This principle can explain why similar causative factors may produce different diseases in different individuals, why a disease may preferentially affect a particular tissue or organ, why recurrence may occur at a previously affected or vulnerable site, and why local tissue condition may influence the progression of systemic Doṣa disturbance.^[5]

Thus, Kha Vaiguṇya can be viewed as a bridge between systemic pathology and local disease expression.

6. Factors Contributing to Local Susceptibility

Kha Vaiguṇya should not be represented as having a universally accepted fourfold classical classification such as structural, functional, congenital and acquired. Rather, different factors described in Ayurvedic literature may contribute to the development of a vulnerable site.

Structural alteration, functional impairment, previous disease, and dietary and behavioural factors may contribute to local susceptibility. Caraka identifies inappropriate Āhāra and Vihāra as important contributors to Srotas Praduṣaṇa.^[6]

The specific factors producing local susceptibility may vary according to the disease and its Samprāpti. Therefore, rather than defining a rigid universal classification, Kha Vaiguṇya should be understood as a functional pathological principle of local vulnerability.

7. Disease Susceptibility and Individual Variation

Ayurveda recognizes individual variation through concepts such as Prakṛti, Agni, Bala, Dhātu status and Vyādhikṣamatva.

Kha Vaiguṇya adds a further local dimension to disease susceptibility.

Two individuals may be exposed to similar Nidānas but may not develop identical manifestations. This can be interpreted through differences in the condition of their tissues, Srotas and susceptible sites.

Therefore, disease susceptibility may be considered at two interconnected levels: systemic susceptibility, including Prakṛti, Doṣa status, Agni, Bala and Vyādhikṣamatva; and local susceptibility, including the condition of the relevant Dhātu, Srotas, organ or bodily site.

Kha Vaiguṇya therefore contributes to an individualized understanding of disease manifestation.

8. Kha Vaiguṇya and Srotoduṣṭi: Conceptual Distinction

Kha Vaiguṇya represents local susceptibility or vulnerability, whereas Srotoduṣṭi represents pathological disturbance of Srotas. Kha Vaiguṇya facilitates localization, while Srotoduṣṭi describes abnormal functioning or flow of the concerned Srotas.

The two concepts are related but not identical. Equating Kha Vaiguṇya with Srotoduṣṭi would therefore oversimplify the Ayurvedic pathogenesis.^[5]

9. Clinical Significance

Understanding Kha Vaiguṇya has potential clinical implications.

Identification of vulnerable sites may help in preventive assessment. Maintenance of proper Āhāra, Vihāra, Agni and tissue integrity may help reduce susceptibility. Treatment may be planned according to the involved Doṣa, Dūṣya, Srotas, site and stage of disease rather than treating systemic Doṣa disturbance in isolation. The condition and extent of local involvement may also influence prognosis.

Persistent local susceptibility may contribute to recurrence in an already vulnerable site; however, recurrence should always be interpreted in relation to the complete Samprāpti and not attributed solely to Kha Vaiguṇya.

10. Modern Conceptual Correlation

Contemporary biomedical science recognizes that disease susceptibility varies between tissues and individuals. Genetic predisposition, structural alteration, previous tissue injury, chronic inflammation and local microenvironmental changes can influence where pathological processes develop.^[8]

These observations may provide conceptual parallels to Kha Vaiguṇya. Possible parallels include tissue susceptibility, organ vulnerability, structural abnormalities, previous tissue injury, altered local microenvironment, chronic inflammatory changes and genetic predisposition.^[8]

However, these concepts should not be regarded as direct equivalents of Kha Vaiguṇya. Ayurvedic pathogenesis operates through an integrated framework involving Doṣa, Dūṣya, Agni, Srotas and Samprāpti. Modern scientific correlations are therefore useful primarily for interdisciplinary interpretation and should not replace the classical meaning of Kha Vaiguṇya.

11. Critical Analysis

The major strength of the Kha Vaiguṇya concept lies in its explanation of selective disease localization.

If aggravated Doṣas circulate throughout the body, an important question arises: why does disease manifest at a particular site rather than uniformly throughout the body?

The classical explanation is that pathological factors become established where a susceptible site or Kha Vaiguṇya is present.^[1,2]

Thus, Kha Vaiguṇya can be viewed as a pathogenic interface between systemic Doṣa disturbance and localized disease expression.

At the same time, Kha Vaiguṇya should not be considered sufficient by itself to explain every disease. Disease manifestation involves multiple factors, including Nidāna, Doṣa, Dūṣya, Agni, Srotas and the stage of Samprāpti.^[3,4]

A further important distinction is that Kha Vaiguṇya is not synonymous with Srotoduṣṭi. Srotoduṣṭi describes particular forms of disturbance of Srotas, whereas Kha Vaiguṇya emphasizes the susceptibility of the site at which pathological processes may become

localized.

The concept therefore has greater explanatory value when integrated with the broader Ayurvedic model of Samprāpti.

12. Preventive and Therapeutic Implications

The concept of Kha Vaiguṇya suggests that disease prevention should not be limited to avoiding immediate Nidānas. Preservation of the normal integrity and function of tissues and Srotas is also important.

Appropriate Āhāra and Vihāra, maintenance of Agni, preservation of Dhātu Bala and disease-specific preventive measures may contribute to maintaining a healthy internal environment.

Where a susceptible site is already present, treatment should be directed according to the complete Samprāpti, including Doṣa, Dūṣya, Srotas, Agni and Adhiṣṭhāna.

Therefore, the clinical application of Kha Vaiguṇya is primarily in identifying susceptibility, understanding localization, preventing progression, selecting individualized management and reducing recurrence risk.

CONCLUSION

Kha Vaiguṇya is an important concept in Ayurvedic pathogenesis that explains the susceptibility and preferential localization of disease. Classical descriptions in Caraka Saṃhitā and Suśruta Saṃhitā demonstrate that circulating pathological factors may become established at a site of Kha Vaiguṇya and produce disease at that location.^[1,2]

Its relationship with Sthānasamśraya and Doṣa-Dūṣya Sammūrchanā provides a conceptual explanation for the transition from generalized Doṣa disturbance to localized disease manifestation.

Kha Vaiguṇya should therefore be understood primarily as a condition of local susceptibility that facilitates disease localization, rather than as an independent disease-producing factor. It is also conceptually distinct from Srotoduṣṭi, although both may interact during disease development.

Modern concepts of tissue susceptibility, structural alteration, organ vulnerability and altered local microenvironment may provide useful conceptual parallels; however, they should not be

considered direct biomedical equivalents of Kha Vaigunya.

A clearer understanding of Kha Vaigunya may contribute to individualized Ayurvedic assessment, preventive strategies, interpretation of disease localization and understanding of recurrence. Further textual and clinical research is required to explore the practical application of this concept across specific disease conditions.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The authors acknowledge the Department of Sanskrit Samhita Siddhant, Shree Saptashruni Ayurveda Mahavidyalaya and Hospital, Nashik, for academic guidance and support.

FUNDING

No external funding was received for this review.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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