

**A CRITICAL REVIEW OF ANNAVAHA SROTAS AND ITS ASSOCIATED DISORDERS WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO KRIYAKALA****Asha Sangwan<sup>1\*</sup> and Suketha Kumari<sup>2</sup>**

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**ABSTRACT**

The concept of Annavaaha Srotas holds immense significance in Ayurveda as it forms the primary channel responsible for the digestion, absorption, and assimilation of nutrients. Derangement of its functioning leads to numerous gastrointestinal disorders. This paper presents a comprehensive review of Annavaaha Srotas, its moolasthan, vitiation, and progression through kriyakala (Six stages of disease pathogenesis). Each stage is discussed in detail with classical symptoms, modern correlation, and stage-wise Ayurvedic management. The significance of both shodhana and shamana therapies in restoring the equilibrium of agni and doshas is emphasized. This study is an integrative effort to understand various pathological manifestations like Ajeerna, Grahani, and Amlapitta through the lens of Ayurvedic kriyakala.

**KEYWORDS:** Annavaaha Srotas, Kriyakala, Grahani, Ajeerna, Amlapitta, Agni, Shodhana, Ayurveda.

**INTRODUCTION**

In Ayurveda, the concept of *Srotas* plays a pivotal role in understanding the physiological and pathological processes of the human body. Among the multiple *Srotas*, *Annavaaha Srotas* refers to the vital channels responsible for the ingestion, digestion, absorption, and assimilation of food. These channels are primarily rooted in the *Aamashaya* (Stomach) and *Vama Parshva* (Left side of the abdomen), as mentioned in the Charaka Samhita.

अन्नवहानां स्रोतसामामाशयो मूलं वामं च पार्श्वं, अतिमात्रस्य चाकाले चाहितस्य च भोजनात्  
अन्नवाहीनि दुष्यन्ति वैगुण्यात् पावकस्य च॥१२॥(Ch. Vi. 5/12).<sup>[1]</sup>

*Annavaha Srotas* are integral to the transformation of ingested food into energy and nourishment for bodily tissues (*Dhatus*). Any dysfunction in these channels results in impaired digestion and assimilation, giving rise to various gastrointestinal disorders. These conditions include *Aruchi* (Loss of appetite), *Agnimandya* (Low digestive fire), *Ajirna* (Indigestion), *Anaha*, *Adhmana*, *Atopa* (Abdominal Distension and Discomfort), *Grahani Dosha* (Malabsorption syndrome), *Chardi* (Vomiting), *Gulma* (Abdominal lump), *Amla Pitta* (Hyperacidity), and *Shoola* (Pain associated with food).<sup>[2],[3]</sup>

Pathological manifestations in *Annavaha Srotas* can be classified based on the general types of *Srotodushti* (Vitiation of channels) as outlined in classical Ayurvedic texts. These include:

- **Atipravritti (Hyperactivity):** Conditions such as *Chardi*, *Urdhvaga Amlapitta*, *Visuchika*, and *Bhasmaka*, characterized by excessive or abnormal movement of food, hypersecretion of digestive enzymes, and accelerated peristalsis.<sup>[4]</sup>
- **Sanga (Obstruction):** Disorders like *Adhmana*, *Vistabdhajirna*, *Alasaka*, *Udaragaurava*, and *Arochaka*, caused by stasis or delayed movement of food and accumulation of toxins (*ama*).<sup>[5]</sup>
- **Siragranthi (Structural changes):** Organic or functional obstructions due to internal masses or lesions.
- **Vimargagamana (Erroneous pathways):** Manifestations like *Annaja Hikka* (Hiccups originating from food-related causes) and *Udgaradhikya* (Excessive belching).<sup>[6]</sup>

The prognosis of *Annavaha Srotas Vikaras* varies depending on the stage of pathogenesis. Early stages, such as *Sanchaya* and *Prakopa*, offer favorable outcomes with timely intervention, including dietary and lifestyle adjustments. In the *Prasara* and *Sthana Samshraya* stages, detoxification curatives like Panchakarma become essential. Advanced stages like *Vyakti* and *Bheda* often necessitate palliative and symptomatic management due to potential complications and chronicity.<sup>[7]</sup>

This article aims to explore the pathological aspects of *Annavaha Srotas*, focusing on its vitiation, associated disorders, their classification, and prognostic outcomes, with a holistic perspective drawn from classical Ayurvedic literature.

## OBJECTIVES

1. To understand the role of Annavaha Srotas in digestion and metabolism.
2. To analyze disease progression in Annavaha Srotas as per kriyakala.
3. To explore stage-wise Ayurvedic treatment, including shodhana and shamana therapies.
4. To correlate classical descriptions with modern gastrointestinal disorders.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

This article is a conceptual and literary review based on classical Ayurvedic texts including *Charaka Samhita*, *Sushruta Samhita*, and *Ashtanga Hridaya*. Additional references from modern commentaries and Ayurvedic physiology texts were reviewed for enhanced understanding. Data collection was performed from authenticated sources and Ayurvedic treatises. The classification of disorders was done as per *Srotodushti Lakshanas* mentioned in the classical texts. Prognosis and management approaches were derived under the stage of pathogenesis (*Shatkriyakala*).

## DISCUSSION AND RESULTS

The Annavaha Srotas, encompassing the Amasaya (Stomach) and Antra (Intestines), is a crucial component of the gastrointestinal system, facilitating digestion and nutrient absorption. When the Doshas become vitiated due to faulty dietary and lifestyle habits, they disturb the function and integrity of this Srotas, leading to various disorders such as Ajeerna (Indigestion), Amlapitta (Acid dysregulation), and Grahani (Malabsorption syndrome).<sup>[8]</sup>

The Shat Kriyakala—six stages of disease manifestation—offers a logical framework to identify and manage diseases early, preventing full-blown clinical conditions and complications. This model is particularly effective in gastrointestinal disorders, where early signs are often subtle and overlooked.

### 1. Sanchaya (Accumulation)

In the early stage, doshic accumulation begins, with Kapha building up in the stomach, Pitta in the small intestines, and Vata in the colon.<sup>[9]</sup> Clinically, this can manifest in various symptoms such as heaviness, lethargy, and loss of appetite. If caught at this stage, correction is relatively simple using Deepana (Appetizers) and Pachana (Digestives) like *Agnitundi Vati*, *Panchakola Churna*, and *Trikatu*.<sup>[10]</sup> These herbal and herbo-mineral formulations stimulate the Agni (Digestive fire) and prevent progression to later stages.

## 2. Prakopa (Aggravation)

Here, the accumulated Doshas become more active and begin to irritate the Srotas. Pitta aggravation may manifest as sour belching and burning sensations, while Kapha may cause nausea and anorexia.<sup>[11]</sup> *Avipattikara Churna*, *Bhunimbadi Kashaya*, and *Sootasekhara Rasa* are commonly employed at this stage to balance the Doshas and protect the integrity of Annavaha Srotas.<sup>[12]</sup> Preventive care at this level avoids deeper vitiation and Dosha movement.

## 3. Prasara (Spread)

In this stage, Doshas overflow from their primary sites and spread systemically, disturbing other organs. This stage may be marked by systemic symptoms like headache, excessive burping, bloating, or restlessness.<sup>[13]</sup> This is also where psychosomatic involvement may begin, necessitating support with Medhya Rasayanas such as *Brahmi Vati*, *Ashwagandha Churna*, and *Samritisagara Rasa*.<sup>[14]</sup> Targeted medicines like *Kamdugha with Mukta* or *Godanti Bhasma* also benefit Pitta-related symptoms.<sup>[15]</sup> If untreated, this stage allows Doshas to localize in vulnerable sites (Kha Vaigunya).

## 4. Sthana samshraya (Localization)

In this stage, the vitiated Doshas localize in weak tissues or organs, interacting with Dushyas and resulting in the early signs of disease (Purvarupa).<sup>[16]</sup> In Annavaha Srotas, this may include early Grahani symptoms or erosive/eosinophilic gastritis. Kapha-Pitta interactions here may lead to inflammation and mucosal dysfunction.<sup>[17]</sup> *Bhunimbadi Kashaya*, *Chitrakadi Vati*, and *Hingwashtaka Churna* are effective in reducing inflammation and clearing Ama. At this stage, patient history and Dosha-Dushya correlation become crucial for diagnosis and treatment.<sup>[18]</sup>

## 5. Vyakti (Manifestation)

Vyakti is the stage of full-blown disease, where classical symptoms are clearly expressed. For example, Amlapitta may show intense acid regurgitation, nausea, and gastritis-like symptoms; Grahani may exhibit alternating diarrhea and constipation with undigested food in stools.<sup>[19]</sup> Management shifts to Vyadhi Pratyanka Chikitsa (Disease-specific treatment), involving Shamana therapies like *Sootasekhara Rasa*, *Kamdugha*, and *Takra Siddha formulations* depending on Dosha dominance.<sup>[20]</sup> Dietary control, Anupana (Vehicles), and pathya-apathya (do's and don'ts) are strictly followed.

## 6. Bheda (Complication)

This final stage involves the complication of the primary disease. In Amlapitta, complications may include ulcers, anemia, or chronic acid reflux, leading to Atisara (Diarrhea) or Pandu (Anemia).<sup>[21]</sup> Grahani may complicate into malabsorption, nutritional deficiency, or even Manovaha Srotas involvement (Anxiety, depression). Treatment at this stage is complex and often involves both *Shodhana* (Detoxifying therapies like Virechana) and *Shamana* (Palliative) approaches. Formulations like *Arogyavardhini Vati*, *Kutajarishta*, and *Takrarishta* are used with lifestyle modifications for long-term control.<sup>[22]</sup>

The application of Shat Kriyakala in gastrointestinal disorders enables a systematic, stage-wise treatment model. It helps clinicians identify the preclinical and prodromal stages, providing scope for early intervention. Moreover, it aligns with preventive medicine principles by arresting disease before tissue damage becomes irreversible.

## CONCLUSION

The Shat Kriyakala framework offers a structured and logical approach to diagnosing and treating Annavaha Srotas disorders in Ayurveda. Recognizing each kriyakala stage empowers clinicians to tailor interventions to the disease's progression, enhancing therapeutic outcomes and minimizing complications. Disorders like Amlapitta and Grahani, if treated in early kriyakala stages with suitable Deepana-Pachana and Dosha-balancing therapies, can be reversed effectively without progression to chronicity. A comprehensive understanding of Dosha-Dushya Sammurchhana, Srotodushti types, and Rogamarga is vital in interpreting the Kriyakala concept clinically. Early detection, individualized treatment plans, and proper Anupana & Pathya play pivotal roles in successful management.

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