

AN AYURVEDIC LITERATURE REVIEW ON STREE VANDHYATVA

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ABSTRACT

Infertility has been one of the yet unsolved major complaints of womanhood. The system of modern medicine has discovered many of its etiological factors and provide measures for its management. The school of Ayurveda mentions a few principles about *Vandhyatva* and describes some measures to combat the same. As the subject matter discussed in Ayurveda, it becomes necessary to study, understand and prove them particularly in light of modern scientific parameters in the present era. So the field of research in the *Vandhyatva* opens a broad scope for a worker. Women are considered as one of the most essential factor for continuity of life. According to definition of woman or "*Stri*" - i.e. one who lodges a *Garbha* or foetus is known as *Stri*. Acharya *Charaka* said that woman is the origin of progeny. She is called mother only when she gives birth to a child. To attain the motherhood is the aim of every woman in this world. (childlessness) is called

Vandhyatva. So present study is an attempt to elaborate literary study of *Vandhyatva*.

KEYWORDS: Infertility, *Stri*, *Vandhyatva*, Ayurveda.

INTRODUCTION

God "The creator" has empowered every human being to reproduce itself. The function of reproduction is the noblest. God has given this magnanimous gift only to woman. Motherhood is described as the pleasing punishment to woman. The children cement a marriage. Infertility is inability to conceive. It is seldom, if ever, a physically debilitating disease. But it may, however, severely affect the couple's psychological harmony, sexual life

and social functions. The failure to ovulate is the major problem in approximately 40% cases of female infertility. This can be anovulation or severe oligoovulation. In the latter case even though the ovulation does occur, its relative infrequency decreases the woman's chance of pregnancy. The spectrum of ovarian dysfunction also includes development failure of an adequately functioning corpus luteum subsequent to ovulation.

AIMS

To study conceptually *Vandhyatva*.

OBJECTIVE

1. To take various references related to *Vandhyatva*.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Literature review is done through all available Ayurvedic texts, various research papers available in Journals and online data available.

Review of literature

▪ Vyutpatti

Vandhya: The word "*Vandhya*" is derived from the root "*Vandha*" with 'Yak' suffix which means barren, unproductive, fruitless and useless.

▪ Nirukti

Vandhya: The woman in whom there is hindrance of any kind to the normal process of conception is *Vandhya*.

▪ Definition

A woman whose *Artava* is perished is called *Vandhya*.^[1]

▪ Synonyms

- ♦ **Vasa** - The woman who does not conceive even if she is submissive is called *Vasa*.
- ♦ **Avatoka** - The woman having missed abortion is called *Avatoka*.
- ♦ **Avakeshi** - The woman who is devoid of *Putrasukha* and *Prasavasukha* is called as *Avakeshi*.
- ♦ **Sravatgarbha** - The woman who miscarries frequently is termed as *Sravatgarbha*.
- ♦ **Aphala** - The woman without progeny is *Aphala*.

▪ Classification

Vandhyatva has been classified in the following ways according to different *Acharyas*.

1. Charaka samhita: In *Charaka Samhita*, classification is not given but considering the references together it can be as follows:

- (1) **Vandhya** - *Vandhya* refers to incurable congenital or acquired abnormalities resulting into absolute sterility.
- (2) **Apraja:** Infertility in which woman conceives after treatment.^[2]
- (3) **Avandhya:** This word has been described by *Chakrapani*. The word *Avandhya* suggests a childless woman, but capacity to conceive with quite delay.
- (4) **Sapraja:** *Sapraja* is a condition in which woman in her active reproductive age does not conceive, after giving birth to one or more children.

▪ Nidana of vandhyatva

In classics specific causative factors of *Vandhyatva* are not given. Acharya *Sushruta* equating germination of seed with achievement of conception quoted that if *Rutu* (Period near ovulation i.e. *Rutukala*), *bija* (Ovum and Sperms), *Kshetra* (Female reproductive system) and *Ambu* (Nourishment) assemble together the conception will definitely occurs.^[3]

▪ Nidana of vandhyatva w.s.r. to abijotsarga (Anovulation)

Failure of the ovary to produce a matured ovum is anovulation. Menstrual cycle without having a mature ovum is called as anovulatory cycle, and is the main cause of infertility. Some conditions with their *Nidanas*, are available in classics, which seems to be related with *Abijotsarga* causing *Vandhyatva* are being mentioned here:

(1) Revati jatharini (Puspaghni)

Under the description of *Jatharinies*, *Kashyapa* has mentioned one *Puspaghni*, the woman affected menstruates in regular interval but is unable to conceive. The other symptoms given are, she has corputent and hairy cheeks. The cause of initiation of *Revati* is *Adharma*.

(2) Ashtartava dushti

Acharyas have mentioned that *Ashtartava Dushti* if remains untreated or not properly treated then it causes *Abijata* i.e. it is unable for *Prajotpadana* *Sushruta*, just after describing eight disorders of *Shukra*, has enumerated eight disorders of *Artava*.^[4] *Dalhana* has clarified that the clinical features of *Artava* are identical to those for *Shukra*. Both the *Vagbhatas* have expressed similar views.

Disorders of *Artava* have been classified by *Sushruta* on the basis of predominance of Doshas and disorders of *Shukra* on the basis of main clinical feature. Actually there is no difference in both these, at one place (in *Artava*), the causative factor has been given the importance and at other, the clinical features.

Nidana of artavadusti

Authors have not described any specific etiology of these *Ashtartava dushti*. But as it is similar to that of *Shukra Dusti*. We can correlate *Shukradushti Nidana* with its causative factor in some extent.^[5]

- (1) *Viharajanya* - Excessive sexual indulgence, untimely sexual congress, sexual abstinence, sexual congress with an unresponsive woman, suppression of the natural urges
- (2) *Aharajanya* - Habitual use of unwholesome diet, habitual use of dry bitter, astringent very saltish, acid or hot articles,
- (3) Other - Owing to old age, worry grief or lack of mutual confidence, injury by weapons, caustics or fire, owing to fear, angry, black magic, emaciation due to disease, vitiation of body elements

Yonivyapada

Acharya Charaka mentioned that Yoni (reproductive system) of woman when afflicted with Doshas or diseases, causes, *Apatyavighata*, does not retain *Shukra* and *Garbha*, i.e. become infertile. Also causes *Upadravas* like *Gulma*, *Arsha*, *Pradara* and other *Vata* disorders, *Stambha* and *Shula*.^[6,7] Some specific *Yonivyapada* related to *Vandhyatva*. W.S.R. to *Abijotsarga*.

Acharana yonivyapada

Dalhana mentioned that in this disease the woman is *hyperexcited* during coitus than the man or she feels excessive itching and therefore i.e. fertilization also not occurs.^[8] *Madhava Nidana*, *Bhavaprakasa* and *Yogaratanakara* also mentioned the same description.

Aticharana

Sushruta explained that *Aticharana Yonivyapada* is cause due to excessive sexual act and she does not retain the *Bija*. While commenting *Dalhana* quotes that is woman does not achieve conception.^[9]

Putraghni/Jatagni

The aggravated Vata due to predominance of *Ruksha* property, repeatedly destroy the foetus. *Dushta Shonita* is also a causative factor which was given by *Sushruta* also in different manner as "*Raktasansravat*".^[10,11]

▪ Classification

(1) On the basis of causative *dosa*

- (a) *Vataja*
- (b) *Pittaja*
- (c) *Shlesmaja*
- (d) *Raktaja*
- (e) *Vata Pittaja*
- (f) *Pitta Kaphaja*
- (g) *Vata Kaphaja*
- (h) *Tridoshaja*

(2) On the basis of specific clinical features

- (a) *Vataja*
- (b) *Pittaja*
- (c) *Kaphaja*
- (d) *Kunapa Gandhi*
- (e) *Granthi - Bhuta*
- (f) *Putipuya Kshina* and *Mutrapurisa Tulya* or *Malatulya*

▪ Clinical features

(1) Vataja artava dushti: The *Artava* Vitiated by *Vata* is -

- (a) Red, black or dark violet in colour.
- (b) Thin dry, frothy and scattered.
- (c) It is excreted slowly and with pain specially perforating or piercing type pain.

(2) Pittaja artava dushti: The *Artava* vitiated by *Pitta* is -

- (a) Yellowish or bluish in colour.
- (b) It is free from unctuousness, smells like pus fungus blood or has putrid smell.
- (c) At the time of excretion is hot, associated with severe burning and feeling of heat.

(3) Kaphaja artava dushti: The *Artava* vitiated by *Kapha* is -

- (a) Whitish or slightly yellowish in colour mixed with *Majja*.
- (b) It is too much thick, slippery or lubricous, unctuous and settles down if put in the water.

(4) Kunapa gandhi artava dushti: The *Artava* vitiated by *Rakta* -

- (a) It smells like a dead body
- (b) *Artava* discharged more and red like fresh blood
- (c) It is also associated with heat and burning etc. features of *Pitta*.

(5) Granthibhuta artava dushti: The *Artava* vitiated by *Vata* and *Slesma* -

- (a) It has clotted appearance
- (b) Associated features are of both the *doshas* (pain due to *Vata* and unctuousness due to *Kapha* etc.)

(6) Putipuya or Puya artava dushti: The *Artava* vitiated by *Pittakapha*-

- (a) *Putipuya* means it is putrid and purulent
- (b) It is characterised with other features of *Pitta* and *Kapha* (burning, fever, heat due to *Pitta* and heaviness etc. due to *Kapha*).

(7) Ksina artava dusti: The *Artava* vitiated by *Pitta* and *Vayu* -

- (a) It is scanty, less in quantity and delayed.

(1) Samprapti ghataka

- ♦ *Dosa* - *Tridosa* with predominant *Vata*
- ♦ *Dhatu* - *Rasa*, *Rakta*
- ♦ *Upadhatu* - *Artava*
- ♦ *Srotasa* - *Artavavaha*
- ♦ *Srotodusti* - *Sanga*
- ♦ *Udbhavasthana* - *Pakvasaya* (*Mulasthan of Vata*)
- ♦ *Adhisthana* - *Yoni*
- ♦ *Vyadhisvabhava* - *Chirakari*
- ♦ *Marga* - *Abhyantara* (*Garbhasaya as Kosthanga*)

The specific aetiological factors mentioned previously cause provocation of *Vata*, *Pitta* and *Kapha*. *Vata* the main *Dosha* vitiates with its own causative factors also. *Vata* on account of its quality of subtleness (*Sukshmatvata*) is really the impeller of other two humours. Vitiating

Vata agitates the other two humors and throw them in the place having *Kha Vaigunya*. Here the *Khavaigunya* is in *Artavavaha Srotasa* specially in the *Bijagranthi*.

Due to *Nidana Sevana*, *Dosha* and *Agni* get vitiated. *Mandagni* is the main cause of *Ama* formation. The *Ama* formed executes hazardous effects, it adheres to *Srotasa* and forms *Avarodhatmaka Dushti*. *Ama* spreads throughout the body, propelled by the vitiated *Vata* along the *Rasavaha Srotasa* and in modern physiology, a variety of transforming and transmitting substances present in the body like enzymes, hormones, catalysis etc. when these are unable to function properly entirely different metabolites are formed which the body is not acquainted to process. These accumulated in the body in different systems affecting the normal mechanism of that particular system. These may be formed as *Ama*. Due to hypofunctioning of *Jatharagni*, *Dhatvagni Mandya* also occurs. Due to *Mandagni* and *Nidanasevana*, *Rasa*, *Rakta Dhatu* get vitiated. Also the *Dhatvagnimandya* causes the *Kshayatmaka* effect on the *Artava* i.e. the production of *Artava*, *Upadhatu* of *Rasadhatu* or *Raktadhatu* becomes less. Thus it is the *Upadhatvatmaka dusti*.

(2) Chikitsa

Management of *Vandhyatva W.S.R.* to *Abijotsarga* can be broadly classified into:

- (1) *Samanya cikitsa*: *Samanya Cikitsa* means general management of *Yoniroga* which includes *Shodana* and *Shamana Cikitsa*.
- (2) *Vishesa chikitsa*: *Vishesa Chikitsa* includes *Uttarabasti* as the best treatment for *Yoniroga* and *Artavadushti*.

Samanya chikitsa

(A) *Sodhana panchakarma chikitsa*

- (1) '*Yoniroga*' '*Yoni Sukrasaya roga*' are mentioned as *Virechana Sadhya* diseases.^[11,12]
- (2) *Niruhabasti* was advocated for many diseases one of them is "*Rajonash*".^[13]
- (3) *Niruha* and *Anuvasana basti* can be given for "*Yonishula*" and "*Shukra Artava Stanyanasha*".
- (4) *Niruha Basti* works as a nector for woman.
- (5) *Snehana*, *Swedana*, *Vamana*, *Virechana*, *Niruha*, *Anuvasana* and specially *Uttarabasti* are to be employed in the treatment of *Artava dusti*.
- (6) For *Yoniroga* patient should be treated with *Kalka*, *Pichu*, (*Yoniprakashalana*), *Abhyanga*, *Parisheka*, *Pralepa* etc.

(B) General / Aushadha chikitsa

- (1) The therapeutic measures mentioned for *Pradara Raktatisara*, *Shonitapitta*, *Raktarsha*, also can be adopted for *Yoniroga Chikitsa*.^[14]
- (2) The line of treatment described for *Shukra Dosha*, *Artavadosha*, *Stanya Roga*, *Klaibya*, *Mudhagarbha*, *Garbhiniroga*, *Apprajata roga*, can be adopted for *Artavadushti Chikitsa*.
- (3) *Rasayana* and *Vajikarana* drugs are also useful.
- (4) *Shukradosahara Auhsada* may also be useful.
- (5) *Kshira* only or medicated with *Jivaniya* drugs is useful for treatment.
- (6) '*Mutradoshapratishedhokta*' drugs can be used in *Yoniroga*.

- **Sadhya - asadhyata**

It depends upon the specific causes of *Vandhyatva*, i.e. the *Vandhya* described by *Charaka* as a congenital disease is incurable. *Harita* explains that first five types of *Vandhya* are curable. Infertile woman, who has coitus before her menarche gets cured with difficulty. *Anapatya* gets cured with treatment. *Vandhyatva* due to loss of *Dhatu* is also curable. *Vandhyatva* caused due to anovulation is *Krucchasadhya*.

Pathya

- (1) Coitus during *Rutukala* is beneficial.
- (2) Milk is beneficial use of this help in achievement of pregnancy.
- (3) Meat increases *Artava*, gives nourishment and helps in getting pregnancy.
- (4) *Lashuna* is also *Pathya* for infertile woman.

❖ DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

All beings have received the ability to create from the Supreme Being. The creator of universe has empowered the women to carry out the most noblest and reverent labor of mankind and that is the work of reproduction. The most important component for the continuation of the human race is the female. As per *Acharya Charaka*, a woman is the source of her offspring. Fertility has been important to the human species from the dawn of recorded history. According to the Judeo-Christian tradition, the value of reproduction is ingrained in man from the moment of his creation: "Therefore, God made man in his own image, in the image of God, and male and female He created them. After bestowing them with blessings, God told them to multiply, bear fruit, replenish the world, and conquer it. The behavior of and toward persons who are childless is the most striking example of the significance of fertility to the individual. In today's society, a woman who is unable to bear a

living child experiences the same sadness that our ancestors did. Losses related to health, status, or prestige are among the categories of losses that have been classified by recent research as adult losses, which are the most significant etiological factors in depression. The four necessary components for conception—*Rutu*, *Kshetra*, *Ambu*, and *Beeja*—have been described by *Acharya Sushruta*. When these four conditions are met, we can be certain about motherhood.

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