

## CONCEPTUAL STUDY OF *GARBHASHAYA* WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO UTERUS

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### ABSTRACT

*Ayurveda* is a traditional system of medicine which originated in the ancient times of India. Its comprehensive approach to health and healing addresses not only body but also mind, emotions, spirit and soul. Every concept has its own importance. It should be understood with the help of references in different *Samhitas*. There are many conflicting concepts which should be clarified for better understanding of *Samhitas*. One of these is the concept of *Garbhashaya* in *Sushruta Samhita*. In *Ayurveda*, the anatomy of various organs is described in *Sharira Sthana* of various *Samhitas*. *Rachana of Garbhashaya* is also described in *Samhitas*. In this study, attempt is made to explore the concept of *Garbhashaya* and there is an attempt to collect all

references regarding anatomy of *Garbhashaya* from various *Ayurvedic Samhitas* and texts in a cohesive manner and their correlation with modern science anatomy. This will help to explain the exact meaning of *Garbhashaya*.

**KEYWORDS:** *Sushruta Samhita, Sharira Sthana, Aashaya, Garbhashaya.*

### INTRODUCTION

*Ayurveda* is an ancient science. It is defined as system which uses inherent principles of nature to help maintain the health in an individual by keeping one's mind, body and spirit in perfect equilibrium with nature. The term *Ayurveda* is composed of two words *AYU* (life) and *VEDA* (knowledge) meaning the science which imparts knowledge of life.<sup>[1]</sup>

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*Acharya Sushruta* the pioneer in the field of *Sharira* has gone through evaluating the anatomical structure in relation to all the stages of life along with the evaluation of the universe under different chapters in *Sharira Sthana*. That is why *Sushruta Sharira Sthana* is considered *Shrestha* (paramount) among all the *Sharira Sthana*.<sup>[2]</sup> In *Sharira Sthana* of *Sushruta Samhita* seven *Aashayas* are described in the body.<sup>[3]</sup> As far as human female body is concerned one of the major attributes is continuation of progeny, for this particular function, a specific organ must be present in the body which would act as a space for growth and nutrition of growing foetus as well as a provider of basic entities required for formation of foetus. So there is great need to understand and explore the concept of *Garbhashaya* for better understanding of various organs and system which are responsible for the physiological functioning of the human body so as to sustain the process of reproduction. *Acharya Sushruta* has beautifully described the prerequisites for *Garbha* formation.

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The 4 entities are *Ritu*, *Kshetra*, *Ambu* and *Beeja*. All these are provided by *Garbhashaya*.

So great effort is required to collect the available data in various *Samhitas* related to it. This will help us to understand the process of embryological development of *Garbha* in *Garbhashaya* mentioned in *Samhitas*.

## MATERIAL AND METHOD

- 1) Literary study of *Garbhashaya* from various *Ayurvedic Samhitas* and texts in detail.
- 2) Correlation of *Garbhashaya* with modern science.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

1. Review of literature to access the position of *Garbhashaya*
2. Correlation of anatomical position and shape of *Garbhashaya* as mentioned in *Ayurvedic* literature with modern text

*Aashaya* means space, abode or residence.<sup>[4]</sup> By staying constantly *Vayu* forms *Aashaya*.<sup>[5]</sup>

## Classifications of Aashayas

Sr. No.	Charak	Shushruta <sup>[6]</sup>	Ashtangasangraha Ashtanghridaya <sup>[7]</sup>	Kashyap <sup>[8]</sup>	Shrharangdhar <sup>[9]</sup>	Gannathsen <sup>[10]</sup>
1	-	Vatashaya	Vatashaya			-
2	-	Pittashaya	Pittashaya	Pittashaya		-
3	-	Shaleshmashaya	Kaphashaya	Kaphashaya	Shaleshmashaya	-
4	-	Raktashaya	Raktashaya		Jeev Raktashaya	-
5	-	Aamashaya	Aamashaya	Aamashaya	Aamashaya	-
6	-	Pakwashaya	Pakwashaya	Pakwashaya	Pakwashaya	-
7	-	Mutrashaya	Mutrashaya	Mutrashaya	Mutrashaya	-
8	-	-	-	Malashaya	-	-
9	-	-	-	-	Agnashaya	-
10	-	-	-	-	Kalom	-
12	-	-	-	Krimiashaya	Stanashaya	-
13	-	-	-	-	-	-
14	-	Garbhashaya	Garbhashaya	-		1. Mahagarbha Aashaya 2. Alpagarbha Aashaya 3. Agarbha Aashaya

## Concept of Garbhashaya

Garbhashaya is made up of two words- Garbhashaya = Garbha + Aashaya<sup>[11]</sup>

Garbha = Fetus & Aashaya = Space, Abode or Residence<sup>[12]</sup>

## Synonyms

1. Vipul Strotas - Acharya Kashyapa has labelled Garbhashaya as Vipulstrotas Kukshi.<sup>[13]</sup>
2. Kukshi, Antkukshi- Acharya Charaka has explained the Garbha Utpatti. He said that Kukshi is nothing but Garbhashaya in which formation and development of Garbha takes place.<sup>[14]</sup>
3. Kshetra - Acharya Sushruta has also called the Garbhashaya as “Kshetra” in Sharira Sthana.<sup>[15]</sup>
4. Garbhakoshtha - Acharya Vagbhata in Astangasangraha has called the Garbhashaya as Garbhakoshtha<sup>[16]</sup>
5. Dhara - Sharangdhara has also called the Garbhashaya as “Dhara”.<sup>[17]</sup> Bhavaprakasha given a term called Dhara for Garbhashaya. He writes ‘the Dhara located between Pittashaya and Pakwashaya is called Garbhashaya.’<sup>[18]</sup>
6. Phala and Phalyoni – Dalhana has used the words Phala and Phalyoni in context with Garbhashaya Also there are various synonym for Garbhashaya such as Kalala, Jarayu, Ulba.
7. Dimba- Vagbhata has enumerated an organ named dimba amongst structures of Koshta i.e. visceral space<sup>[19]</sup>

### Position, shape and location of *Garbhashaya*

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*Aacharya Sushruta* has described the position of *Garbhashaya* as it lies on the Parshwa of *Basti* while describing *Ashmari Chikista*.<sup>[21]</sup> He has also stated that *Garbhashaya* lies between *Pittashaya* and *Pakwashaya* and *Garbha* resides in it.<sup>[22]</sup>

2. *Vagbhata* has given same position of *Garbhashaya* as that of *Sushruta*.<sup>[23]</sup> Also in *Sharira Sthana*, he has mentioned position of *Garbhashaya* in *Tritriya Aavarta* of *Yoni* and he has described its shape like that of *Rohitmatsya Mukha*.

3. *Bhavprakasha* has also given the shape of *Garbhashaya* as that of *Rohit Matsya*. Like *Rohit Matsya*, *Garbhashaya* has constricted mouth and wider belly above.<sup>[24]</sup>

4. Dr. *Ghanekar*, commenter of *Sushruta Samhita* has elaborated the term, *Antargatphalama* in his commentary. As per him *Antargatphalama* can be called as ovary.<sup>[25]</sup>

5. *Dalhana* and *Bhavprakasha* has correlate it with “*Garbhashaya*”.<sup>[35]</sup>

6. According to *Kashyap*, *Garbhashaya* is located amidst *Vipul srota kundela* i.e. coils of intestine covered with *jarayu*.<sup>[26]</sup>

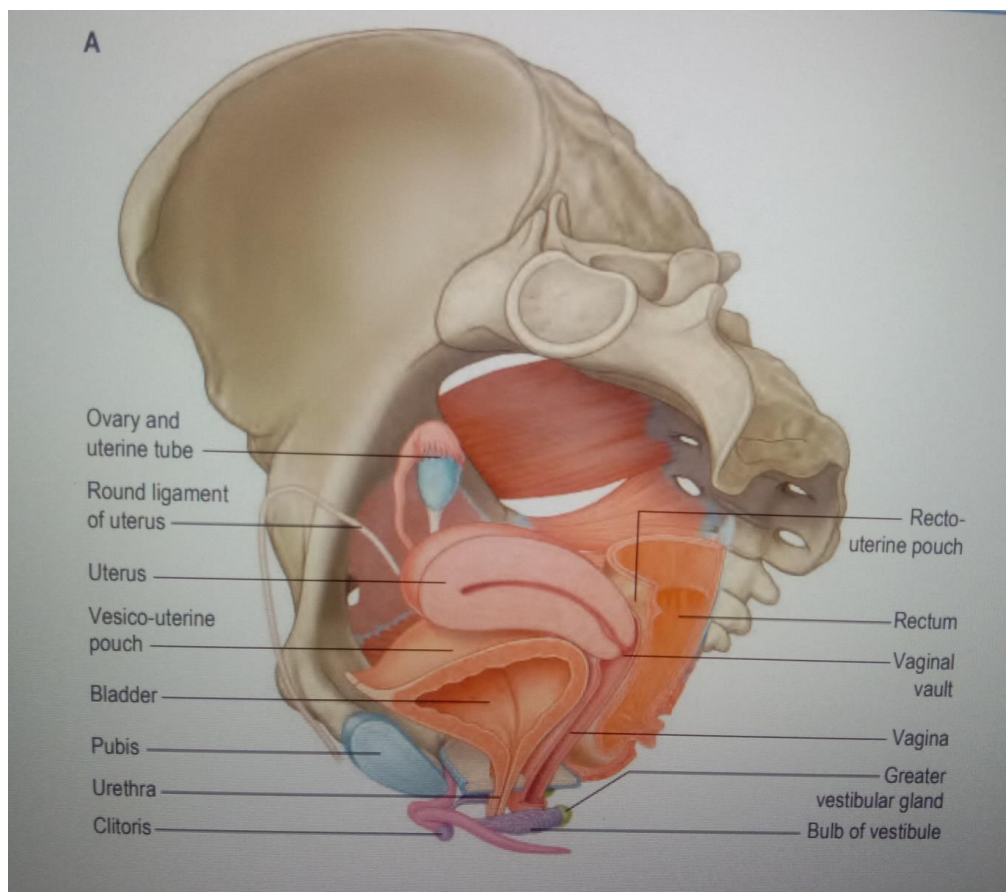
7. *Garbhashaya* is located between *Pittashaya* and *Pakwashaya* in which fetus lives.<sup>[35]</sup>

8. *Ashtanghridaya* also have the same opinion that *Garbhashaya* is located between *Pittashaya* and *Pakwashaya*, found only in women. It is the eighth *Aashaya*.<sup>[36]</sup>

9. POSITION OF *GARBHASHAYA* ACCORDING TO AGE- According to age, there is a difference in the position of the *Garbhashaya*. During pregnancy and for sometime after birth, the *Garbhashaya* is located above the pelvic cavity, that is, in the abdominal cavity. That may be the reason that *kukshi* is one of the synonym of *Garbhashya*. It is slightly enlarged during menstruation. After conception, its size becomes too much large and reaches the *Kauri*-region in the 8<sup>th</sup> month. After *prasuti* (parturition) it is almost undone, but the gap inside remains somewhat enlarged. In old age, the *Garbhashaya* shrinks and becomes very small and hard and its internal orifice and sometimes external orifice gets closed.<sup>[27]</sup>

**Uterus**-The uterus is a thick-walled, muscular organ situated in the pelvis between the urinary bladder and the rectum.

It lies posterior to the bladder and uterovesical space, and anterior to the rectum and recto-uterine pouch; it is mobile, which means that its position varies with distension of the bladder and rectum.<sup>[28]</sup>



**Diagram Showing Anatomical relations of the Uterus with Rectum & Bladder**

**Size and Shape-** The uterus is pyriform in shape. It is about 7.5 cm long, 5cm broad, and 2.5 cm thick. It weighs 30 to 40 grams. It is divisible into an upper expanded part called the body and a lower cylindrical part called the cervix. The junction of these two parts is marked by a circular constriction. The body forms the upper two-thirds of the organ, and the cervix forms the lower one-third.

### Parts of Uterus




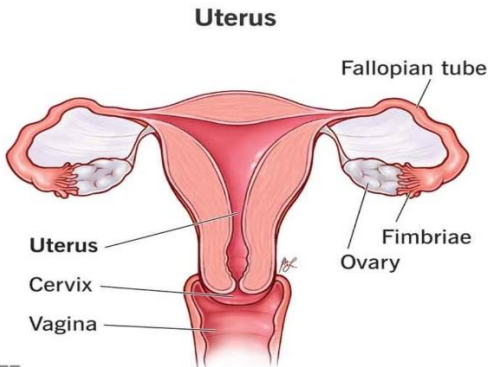
1. Cervical Canal– fusiform longitudinally, flattened transversely. It communicates with uterine cavity via internal os. Two longitudinal ridges one on each anterior and posterior wall gives off small oblique palmate folds.
2. Uterine Body- Pear Shape, gradually narrows from fundus down to internal os.



**Normal position and Angulation-** Normally, the long axis of the uterus forms an angle of about 90 degrees with the long axis of the vagina. The angle is open forwards. The forward bending of the uterus relative to the vagina is called anteversion. The uterus is also slightly flexed on itself: this is referred to as anteflexion. The angle of anteflexion is 125 degree.<sup>[29]</sup>

## DISCUSSION

**Correlation of anatomical position and shape of *Garbhashya* as mentioned in *Ayurvedic* literature with modern text**

	In <i>Ayurveda</i>	In Modern
<b>Shape</b>	<i>Rohit</i> matasya mukha <sup>[30]</sup>	Triangular
<b>Opening</b>	Small outer mouth	Smaller outer orifice <sup>42</sup>
<b>Cervical canal</b>	Lips of fish are fleshy and hanging	Opening of uterus continues inwards as cervical canal which continues with a wider space of the uterine cavity
<b>Uterine Cavity</b>	Mouth of fish is flat below and slightly convex above.	anterior wall of uterus is slightly flat, while its posterior wall is slightly convex
		
		

In pregnant women, due to blockage of *artavavaha strotas* by growing fetus menstrual flow stops, hence the menstruation of pregnant women is not visible. Menstrual blood, instead of going down, collects upwards, which is called '*Apara*'. Rest of the *Aartav* is received by the breasts, due to which engorgement of breasts of the pregnant woman occurs.<sup>[31]</sup>

**AARTAVAVAHA STROTAS**

*Aartavavaha Srotas* are two in number. They have their *Moola* in *Garbhashaya* and *aartavavahi dhamanis* responsible for carrying menstrual blood. Injury to these structures produces *bandhayata*, *methun Asahishnuta* and *artavanasha*.<sup>[32]</sup>

**ADHOGAMI DHAMNIYAN**

Channels tending downwards carry menstrual blood in a downward direction. Males have two arteries for formation of semen and two for its secretion. Similarly, women have two arteries for formation and two arteries for excretion of menstrual blood.<sup>[33]</sup> These arteries can be compared to ovarian arteries.<sup>[34]</sup>

**CONCLUSION**

On collection of scattered matter available in different *ayurvedic* text and correlating it with the modern anatomical text available, it can be concluded that *Garbhashaya* is nothing but the Uterus. The following points mentioned below helped to reach the said conclusion-

1. *Shape of Garbhashaya* mentioned by *Acharyas* is *Rohit Matsya Mukhakriti*. Just as the *Rohitmatsya* has constricted mouth, and wider belly above, the Uterus is also wider above (fundus part) and is constricted in lower part (cervix part).
2. The position of *Garbhashaya* given by *Acharya Sushruta* in *Ashmari Chikitsa* states the position of *Garbhashaya* in accordance with *Basti* and *Pakwashaya*. Grossly, *Basti* can be taken as Bladder. Commenter *Gananatha Sena* has described the *Pakwashaya* as *Malashya* as a part of *Bruhadantra*. As per modern science also, the uterus lies between bladder and rectum.
3. The role of *Aartava vaha Strotasa* described by *Acharya Sushruta* in *Sharira Sthana* chapter 4, *Aartavavaha Strotasa* can be considered as uterine vessels as these have major role in menstruation and development of foetus.

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