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# A conceptual review of *Artavavaha Srotas* and its *Viddha Lakshan*

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## ABSTRACT

According to *Ayurvedic Samhitas*, *Srotas* is a structural and functional unit of the body. *Srotas* are the hollow spaces or channels which are responsible for any movement or transformation. There are many types of *Srotas* mention by *Acharyas*. *Maharshi Charaka* explains *Srotas* as a medicinal aspect and *Maharshi Sushruta* explains *Srotas* according to surgical aspect. *Artavavaha Srotas* is *Antarmukh Srotas* which are also known as *Yogawahi Srotas*. It is similar to the female reproductive system in modern medical science. As per *Maharshi Sushruta*, *Artavavaha Srotas* are two in number and their *Moolsthana* is *Garbhashaya* and *Artavavahi Dhamanya*. Any trauma to this *Srotas* causes *Bhandhayatva* (infertility), *Artavanasha* (amenorrhea) and *Maithuna Asahishnuta* (dyspareunia). In this study description of *Ayurvedic* concept along with discussion regarding the patho-clinical perspective of *Artavavaha Srotas* and its *Viddha Lakshan* in light of modern science.

**Key words:** *Srotas*, *Artavavaha Srotas*, *Moolasthana*, *Bandhyatva*, *Maithuna Asahishnuta*, *Artavanasha*.

## INTRODUCTION

*Maharshi Charaka* has described the concept of *Srotas* in the 5<sup>th</sup> chapter of *Viman Sthana*. He has defined *Srotas* as meaning the structure, through which the process of *Sraavanam Karma* (oozing, flowing) takes place.<sup>[1]</sup> He said that *Srotas* have colour similar to that to their own *Dhatus*, they may cylindrical, either *Sthula* or *Anu*, *Dirgha* or *Pratana*.<sup>[2]</sup> He described thirteen main *Srotas* which are *Prana*, *Udaka*, *Anna*, *Rasa*,

*Rakta*, *Mamsa*, *Medo*, *Asthi*, *Majja*, *Shukra*, *Mutra*, *Purisha* and *Swedavaha Srotas*.<sup>[3]</sup> *Maharshi Sushruta* has stated that which originates from vacant spaces and spread throughout the body and purveys materials are to be understood as *Srotas* and apart from *Sira* and *Dhamani*.<sup>[4]</sup> In *Sushruta Samhita Dhamani Vyakarana* 9<sup>th</sup> chapter of *Sharir Sthana*, has described about *Srotas*. He has described eleven pairs of *Srotas* specially in the context of injury and symptoms of piercing as its roots. He has excluded the *Asthi*, *Majja*, and *Swedavaha Srotas* in his counting and included one additional *Artavavaha Srotas* in his list. As per consideration of *Srotas* the *Artavavaha Srotas* is the unique in female body and perform important function of reproduction.

As per *Maharshi Sushruta* the *Artavavaha Srotas* are two in number and their *Moolasthana* is considered as *Garbhashaya* and *Artavavahi Dhamanya*.<sup>[5]</sup> *Garbhashaya* is the uterus which is the reservoir of *Artava* (menstrual blood) in the endometrium up to the date of menstruation.

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*Garbhashaya*, it consists of two words *Garbha* and *Ashaya* means the organ holds the *Garbha* called *Garbhashaya*. It is situated between *Pittashaya* and *Pakvashaya* and is located in third *Avarta*.<sup>[6]</sup>

As per *Acharya Vagbgata, Sushruta* and *Bhavprakash* the structure of *Yoni* is similar to that of a conch shell and it is made up of three *Avarta* and *Garbhashaya* is situated in the third *Avarta*. It refers to the uterine cavity which is shaped like *Rohita Matasya Mukha*.<sup>[7]</sup>

*Maharshi Sushruta* has described the channels carrying the *Artava* (menstrual blood) out of the body during menstrual cycle called *Artavavaha Srotas*. He has defined "*Artavavahe Dwe*" that means *Artavavaha Srotas* is present in pair and their *Moola Sthana* are *Garbhashaya* (uterus) and *Artavavahi Dhamanya* (uterine tube), injury to these leads to *Bandhayatva* (infertility), *Maithuna Asahishnuta* (dyspareunia or intolerance to compulsion) and *Artavanasha* (amenorrhea).<sup>[8]</sup>

According to modern science the uterus is a hollow muscular organ located in the female pelvis between the bladder and rectum.<sup>[9]</sup> The ovaries produce the ovum that travel through the fallopian tubes. Once the ovum has left the ovary it can be fertilized and implant itself in the lining of the uterus. It is a pear-shaped organ that plays a critical role in menstruation, fertility and pregnancy.

## AIM AND OBJECTIVES

1. Conceptual study about *Artavavaha Srotas* with its *Moolsthana*.
2. Comparative study of *Artavavaha Srotas* and its *Vidha Lakshan* with modern point of view.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

1. Review of *Ayurvedic* literature from *Ayurvedic* classics including relevant commentaries.
2. Relevant modern literature is also included for comparative study.
3. Other online information, journals, print media are also searched for according to the need of the topic.

## DISCUSSION

*Ayurveda* mentions the *Garbhashaya* and *Artavavahi Dhamanis* as a *Mool Sthana* of *Artavavaha Srotas*. *Garbhashaya* is responsible for the *Artava's* creation, production and expulsion, from origin point of view. It shows same structural and functional characteristics of uterus along with ovaries and both have same pathological, clinical circumstances after injury.

*Artavavahi Dhamani* can be defined as uterine tube, oviduct and fallopian tubes that move *Artava* (ovum) in the direction of uterus during menstrual phase and ovarian and uterine vessels, *Dhamana* word defined as contraction, therefore in this study as through contracting fallopian tube conduct the ovum so it works like an *Artavavahi Dhamani*. *Dhamani* described as artery. *Dhamani* shows great importance because without *Dhamani* there is no nutrition in *Artavavaha Srotas*, no menstruation is possible and no conception has occurred.

Due to injury in any part of *Artavavaha Srotas* leads to *Bandhayatva* (infertility), *Maithuna Asahishnuta* (dyspareunia) and *Artavanasha* (menstrual disturbance).

*Bandhayatva* (infertility) is the first clinical feature of injury in *Artavavaha Srotas*. Infertility is not an independent disease; it is a symptom of so many diseases. According to modern medical science, infertility is when a couple of mature age cannot get conceive despite having normal coitus during appropriate of menstrual cycle regularly at least for one or more year. *Ayurveda* has defined *Bandhayatva* as infertility. Mention in *Ayurveda* specific role of *Ritu* (time of fertilization), *Kshetra* (reproductive organs), *Ambu* (nourishment) and *Beeja* (ovum and sperm) for the healthy progeny and any defect in these four factors leads to infertility. In modern medical science described various factors responsible for infertility like menstrual disturbance, hormonal imbalance, PCOS tubular blockage, genital tissue injury and genetic factor etc. The uterus has two types of tissue one is Endometrium that sheds each month with menstrual cycle and the other Myometrium. Both of these tissue types are sensitive to become tumors. Polyps are the

pathological conditions which are formed when the lining tissue expands. Similarly, fibroids are the tumors caused by the proliferation of muscle tissue. Fibroids mostly produces abnormal uterine bleeding and infertility.

*Maithuna Asahishnuta* (dyspareunia), it has been described as the second clinical feature of injury to *Artavavaha Srotas*. According to modern medical science dyspareunia means that the coital act is difficult. Causes of dyspareunia depending upon the site of pain it can be superficial, vaginal or deep. Superficial is one where the pain is restricted to vulva, due to factors like tough hymen, vulvitis, narrow introitus etc. vaginal dyspareunia is burning pain along the barrel of vagina, either during or after intercourse due to factor like vaginal septum, vaginitis, secondary atresia, surgical scar tenderness and tumor etc. deep dyspareunia is when the penis penetrates deep into the vagina, due to factor usually involving pathology like endometriosis, chronic cervicitis, chronic PID, retroverted uterus etc.

*Artavanasha* (amenorrhea), it has been described as third clinical feature of injury to *Artavavaha Srotas*. According to modern medical science amenorrhea is a defined as the absence of menstruation during the reproductive years of a women life. It is not a disease but a symptom of an underlying disorder of female reproductive system. The pathological causes of amenorrhea are uterine infection, tubercular endometriosis, ovarian causes, pituitary causes, hysterectomy malignant growth and tumor etc.

We can consider as *Artavavaha Srotas* to the entire female reproductive system. Because the any injury in any a part of *Artavavaha Srotas* there can be infertility, amenorrhea and dyspareunia. It can appear because of the injury of uterus, uterine tubes, vaginal wall cervix and their surrounding viscera.

The concept of *Aratavaha Srotas* can be understand through its function, origin point and symptoms produced due to injury [*Vidha Lakshan*] occurs in *Aratavaha Srotas*. *Ayurveda* and modern medical science accept that fertilization, implantation, nutrition and development of fetus take place in

*Garbhashaya*. Any injury of *Aratavaha Srotas* cause symptoms like menstrual disturbance, dyspareunia and infertility and that is also accepted and well described by modern medical science.

## CONCLUSION

The *Artavavaha Srotas* consist of various structures that are related to the female reproductive system. *Artavavaha Srotas* is found in female as described by *Maharshi Sushruta*. *Artavavaha Srotas* could be compared with female reproductive system because the root of *Artavavaha Srotas* is *Garbhashaya* and *Artavavahi Dhamanya*. Here *Garbhashaya* is uterus and *Artavavahi Dhamanis* are the uterine tubes or arteries which play a role in suppling uterine blood and further in the menstrual process. Fertilization, implantation, nutrition and fetal development all of these take place in *Garbhashaya* and *Artavavahi Dhamani*. Any injury to the *Artavavaha Srotas* and its root causes symptom such as menstrual irregularities, dyspareunia, even infertility. All of these are accepted and comprehensively described by modern medical science. So, we can conclude that, the concept of *Artavavaha Srotas* is well explained by modern medical science in term of female reproductive system as well as its anatomy, physiology, clinical and pathological conditions.

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