



International Journal of Applied Ayurved Research ISSN: 2347- 6362

Published online in: <https://ijaar.in>

## UNDERSTANDING AYURVEDIC PERSPECTIVES OF *HETU* OF *STREE VANDHYATVA* WITH REFERENCE TO *GARBHASAMBHAVSAMAGRI*

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<https://doi.org/10.70057/ijaar.2025.61202>

### ABSTRACT

The saying from *Charaka Samhita*, a person with no progeny is considered as a tree without any branches holds true even in today's fast-growing world. Due to various causes, there is trouble in conceiving a healthy progeny. As per Ayurveda texts, *Vandhyatva* refers to inability to conceive alive and healthy offspring. This study aimed to identify the etiological factors of *Stree Vandhyatva* as described in classical *Ayurvedic* texts and to understand the classification told in *Samhita*. This study involves a review of primary classical textual sources such as *Charak Samhita*, *Sushruta Samhita*, *Bhela Samhita*, *Harita Samhita* and *Kashyapa Samhita*. Mainly, the *Hetu* related to the *Garbha Sambhava Samagri* that is – *Rutu*, *Kshetra*, *Ambu* and *beej* were reviewed. From the analysis of the text, it was observed that the *Shashtra* tells a diverse range of *Hetu* for *Stree Vandhyatva*. This study provided strong foundation to understand the *Ayurvedeeya* point of view towards *StreeVandhyatva*.

**Key words:** *Stree Vandhyatva*, Female Infertility, *Nidana Parivarjana*, *Artava Dushti*.

**INTRODUCTION:** Female infertility or *Stree Vandhyatva* is increasing significantly due to its profound impact on individuals and families. *Charaka Samhita*, a foundational text of Ayurveda, poignantly compares a person without children to a tree without branches, illustrating the deep-rooted belief in the importance of motherhood and familial continuity.<sup>1</sup>

This metaphor encapsulates the essence of emotional fulfilment, highlighting how the inability to conceive can lead to feelings of incompleteness and despair. Ayurveda identifies several *Hetus* (Causes) contributing to *Stree Vandhyatva*, including *Yonivyapad*, *Artavadushti*, *Rasa Dushti* and mainly the factors affecting *Garbha Sambhav Samagri*<sup>2</sup> examining these fac-

tors, we gain a comprehensive understanding of how imbalances in the body can affect fertility. The study is to explore these etiological factors, enhancing awareness and understanding of women's reproductive health within the Ayurvedic framework.

### AIMS

- The aim of this research is to explore and analyse the concept of *Vandhyatva* as explained in classics
- To evaluate the role of concepts from texts in understanding the various *Hetu* related to *Garbha Sambhava Samagri* that is - *Rutu*, *Kshetra*, *Ambu* and *Beeja* which consumed in modern day lifestyle and are causing sub-fertility.

## OBJECTIVES

- To review and compile the references regarding *Stree Vandhyatva* from *Samhita*.
- To categorise the *Hetu* based on their nature of affecting one of the *Garbha Sambhava Samagri*.
- To create awareness among female population about these causative factors to avoid potential infertility cases.

### Review of literature:

Concept of *Stree Vandhyatva* (Female infertility) in Ayurveda is articulated in foundational texts such as the *Charaka*

*Samhita*, *Sushruta Samhita*, *Kashyap Samhita*, *Harita Samhita* and *Bhela Samhita* which provide a comprehensive understanding of the causes and treatments related to infertility.

*Charaka Samhita* emphasizes the connection between physiological and psychological health, stating that a woman's ability to conceive is influenced by her overall well-being, nutrition, and emotional state. The text poignantly compares a childless individual to a tree without branches, highlighting the cultural significance of having a progeny.

**Table no 1 . Description related to Vandhyatva**

Sr. no.	Classical text	Description related to Vandhyatva
1.	<i>Charak Samhita</i>	Even if the <i>Stree</i> is <i>Sapraja</i> , there are <i>Yoni Pradosha</i> etc. <i>Hetu</i> which cause delayed <i>Garbha Dharan</i> <sup>3</sup>
2.	<i>Sushrut Samhita</i>	As a <i>Lakshana</i> of <i>Artavavaha Srotas Viddha</i> <sup>4</sup> , also as one of the 20 <i>Yoni Vyapad</i> <sup>5</sup>
3.	<i>Kashyapa Samhita</i>	<i>Sphalita Mutra Kanya – Anapatyakara</i> , <sup>6</sup> also as a <i>Lakshana</i> in <i>PushpaghniJataharini</i> <sup>7</sup> , also as one of the 80 <i>VatajaRoga</i> <sup>8</sup>
4.	<i>Bhela Samhita</i>	<i>Vata</i> does <i>Haran</i> of <i>Raja</i> in <i>Stree</i> causing them <i>Vandhya</i> <sup>9</sup>
5.	<i>Harita Samhita</i>	Mentioned about types of <i>Vandhyatva–Balyavastha</i> , <i>Garbhakosha Bhanga</i> , <i>Dhatukshaya</i> <sup>10</sup> , etc.

## DISCUSSION:

The Ayurvedic approach to understanding *Stree Vandhyatva* (Female infertility) offers a holistic perspective that encompasses physical, psychological, and environmental factors. The framework of 4 essential factors -*Rutu*, *Kshetra*, *Ambu*, *Beeja* is critical in diagnosing and treating infertility. These four essential components of conceptions are influenced by various pathological conditions, including *Yonivyapad*, *Artava Dushti* and *Rasa Dushti*. The interplay of these factors, as explained in classical Ayurvedic texts, provides insights into the complex causes of infertility that modern medicine also recognizes, albeit through different lenses.

### 1. *Rutu* and *Artava Dushti*:

In Ayurveda, *Rutu* refers to the correct timing for conception, which aligns with a woman's fertile window during her menstrual cycle. An imbalance in this factor, often due to *Artava Dushti*, results in irregular or dysfunctional menstrual cycles, directly affecting fertility.

The menstrual cycle is fundamental in Ayurveda, influencing fertility and overall health. Ayurveda identifies various phases of the *Rutu*, each linked to specific physiological and emotional states. Disruptions in the *Rutu*, such as *Anartva*, or *Vataj* etc *Artava Dushti*<sup>11</sup>, can indicate underlying imbalance of the *Doshas*. In Ayurveda Classics, there is mentioning of

Rutumati Charya<sup>12</sup> and Rajswala Paricharya<sup>13</sup>. In current days, due to workload, not every woman is able to follow the Paricharya or regimes explained in it. For an example, travelling, standing a lot can cause Vata Prakopa especially Apana Vayu Dushti, whereas Nidra Viparyaya and Diwaswapna can lead to Kapha Prokopa leading to various Yonigata Rogas (diseases of reproductive tract) Certain Hetu which are commonly practiced in now a days:

1. Travelling during menstruation.
2. Diwaswapnam during menstruation.
3. Ratri Jagaran during menstruation.
4. Vyavaya (indulging in intercourse) during menstruation.
5. Apathya Sevana ( unwholesome food ) during menstruation.

#### 2. Kshetra and Yonivyapad:

The Kshetra refers to the uterus as the site for conception and gestation. Ayurveda emphasizes the importance of a healthy Kshetra for successful fertilization and implantation.

Various Hetus related to Kshetra are:

Congenital structural abnormality:

It includes various congenital conditions in which there is improper development of Tryavarta yoni, such as -

#### 1. Shandhiyoni:<sup>14</sup>

It is the condition in which the female is said to be Nrudweshini, Astani which means she will be devoid of secondary sexual characters like growth of breasts, menstrual cycle etc.

#### 2. Antarmukhi Yoni:<sup>15</sup>

It is condition occurring due to Vatapra-kop in the Streegarbha due to Hetusevan by her mother causing the inward turning of Mukha of Yoni. It can be correlated with the modern day condition of inverted uterus.

#### 3. Suchimukhi Yoni:<sup>16</sup>

It is condition occurring in which, due to Rauksha occurring due to Vatacara Aharvihara by mother, due to Matrudosha, the opening of yoni will be minute as that of Suchi (pin hole)

Functional abnormalities

It includes various Yonivyapadas or the diseases of female reproductive tract. They are 20 in number. The Upadravas<sup>17</sup> or the complications of the Yonivyapad include;

1. It does not retains Shukra.
2. The female becomes infertile.
3. She suffers from Gulma, Arsha, Pradaradi Vyadhis and also Vatavyadhis.

Currently in this era, following things can be considered as a Hetu (causative factors) for Dushti of Kshetra-

1. Garbhapat/ Garbhasrava (Abortion or Miscarriage).
2. Recurrent Curettage (Shastrakarma).
3. Invasive Investigations.
3. Ambu (Nourishment)

Ambu denotes the nourishment necessary for sustaining life and reproductive health. In the context of fertility, it encompasses the quality of Dhatus (tissues) and the essence derived from proper nutrition. The Dhātu Poshan depends on good Bala of Agni<sup>19</sup>. Here are some Hetus which affect the Agni<sup>20</sup>.

Aharaj Hetus :

1. Adhyashana.
2. Vishamashana.
3. Samashana.
4. Viruddha Ahara.
5. Paryushit Bhojana.
6. Atyambu Paana.
7. Ajeerna.

Here, the Bala of Agni also plays an important role as it is the one which transforms the Aharrasa into Rasadhatu. If the Hetusevan leads to Agnimandya, Amaut-

patti can occur which in turn may lead to Dhatu Pradoshajvikara.

Rasadushtikara Bhavas<sup>21</sup>:

1. Gurubhojana – heavy to digest.
2. Shitadravya Sevana – cold foods.
3. Atisnigdha – Too much unctuous food.
4. Atimatra Ashana – Eating in excess quantity.
5. Samashana – Pathya and Apathyahar Sevana together.
6. Atichintana – Excessive thinking.

The Rasadhatu is essential, as it is Aadyadhātu and it does Poshana of other Dhatus. Also, Artava is Upadhātu of Rasa, so for Prakruta Artavotpatti is Saaravaana Rasa Dhatu is required.

4. Beeja and Shukra Dushti:

Beeja (ovum), or the seed of reproduction, must be healthy and viable for conception to occur. There is mentioning about Stree Beeja that is Artava is required to be Shuddha (having best possible qualities) for Garbhotpadana Karma<sup>22</sup>. Beeja Bhaga Avayava Dushti<sup>23</sup> is understood as a significant cause of Vandhyatva in Stree. As Charak Acharya mentions in Sharir Sthana about certain conditions related to Garbhashaya and Shonita (Artava) are a result of Hetu Sevana done by the mother of female child in pregnancy such as Varta, Vandhya, PutiPraja<sup>24</sup>, akin to modern issues such as chromosomal defects or genetic mutations that prevent successful fertilization or implantation.

#### Role of Apana Vayu

Sthana of Apana Vayu- Shroni, Basti, Medhra, Uru<sup>25</sup>

Apana Vayu does the Karma of Nishkrama of<sup>26</sup>

- Shukra.
- Artava.
- Shakruta.

- Mutra.
- Garbha.

The Garbhashaya lies in Shroni region. So any Vikruti related to Apana Vayu, can affect Garbha Dharana ability of Garbhashaya. Apana Vayu Dushtikara Hetu<sup>27</sup> These are the factors which affect the normal functioning of Apana Vayu.

- Aaharja Hetu

1. Rukshabhojan- Excessive Dry food consumption.
2. Guruanna- Consumption of heavy to digest food.

- Viharaj Hetu

1. Vegaghata- Vegavidharan – Suppression of natural urges.
2. Ati Vahana – Excess riding.
3. Yanayana - Excess travelling.
4. Aasan – Excessive sitting.
5. Chankramana – Excess walking.

#### Classification of Stree Vandhyatva

As per Harita Samhita<sup>28</sup>

1. Balya, Garbhashaya Kosha Bhanga, Dhatukshaya.
2. Kakavandhya.
3. Anapatya.
4. Garbha Sravi.
5. Mruta Vatsa.
6. Bala Kshaya.

**CONCLUSION:** The exploration of Stree Vandhyatva through the lens of Ayurveda reveals a multifaceted understanding of female infertility, integrating both physiological and psychological dimensions. By examining key concepts such as Rutu, Kshetra, Ambu, and Beeja, we appreciate the importance of timing, the health of the reproductive system, nutritional factors, and the quality of reproductive tissues in the conception process. The Ayurvedic perspective emphasizes that disturbances in these areas—particularly due to Yonivyapad, Artava Dushti and

*RasaDushti*,—can significantly contribute to infertility.

Ayurvedic approaches to treatment, including dietary modifications, detoxification therapies like *Panchakarma*, and the use of rejuvenating herbs, offer holistic and personalized interventions that complement modern medical practices. By integrating Ayurvedic wisdom with contemporary reproductive technologies, healthcare providers can adopt a more comprehensive strategy to address infertility, enhancing the chances of successful conception and promoting overall reproductive health. Ultimately, understanding *Stree Vandhyatva* within the framework of Ayurveda not only highlights the complexity of female infertility but also underscores the necessity of a balanced lifestyle, proper nutrition, and emotional well-being in achieving reproductive goals. Future research should continue to explore these intersections, aiming to create integrative models that can better serve individuals facing infertility challenges.

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Source of support: Nil Conflict of interest: None Declared

Cite this Article as : [Understanding Ayurvedic Perspectives of Hetu of stree Vandhyatwa with Reference to Garbhasambhavsamagri] [www.ijaar.in](http://www.ijaar.in)  
:IJAAR VOL VI ISSUE XII JAN - FEB 2025Page No: -543-549