



## A REVIEW STUDY OF ASHAYA SHARIR W.S.R. TO GHARBASHAYA(UTERUS)

<b>Dr. Reena Nagar*</b>	PG.Scholar(batch2018) Dept. of Sharira Rachana, M.M.M. Govt. Ayurveda College, Udaipur, Rajasthan. *Corresponding Author
<b>Dr. Dinesh Sharma</b>	Lecturer, P.G.Dept. of Sharira Rachana, M.M.M. Govt. Ayurveda College, Udaipur, Rajasthan.
<b>Dr. Jitendra Kumar Sharma</b>	Prof. & H.O.D. P.G. Dept. of Sharira Rachana , M.M.M. Govt. Ayurveda College, Udaipur, Rajasthan.
<b>Dr. Purushottam Das Sharma</b>	Asso. Prof., P.G. Dept. of Sharira Rachana, M.M.M. Govt. Ayurveda College, Udaipur, Rajasthan.

**ABSTRACT**

*Ayurveda* is an ancient science of life. Principles of *Ayurveda* are eternal. Every concept has its own importance. It should be understood with the help of references in different *samhitas*. While doing such study, one should refer the particular *Samhita* only, from which we got the reference to be studied. Meaning of same word may differ in each *samhita*. There are many conflicted concepts or terminologies which should be clarified for better understanding of *samhitas*. One of these is the concept of *ASHAYA* described in *Sushrut Samhita*. In this study, attempt is made to explore the concept of *Ashaya* in *Sushrut Samhita* and interpret it anatomically. This article will help to explain the exact meaning of *Ashaya* with special reference to *gharbashaya* and uterus according to *Ayurveda* and modern.

**KEYWORDS :** Ashaya, Sankhya Sharir, Gharbashaya, Uterus.

**INTRODUCTION :-**

In India traditional *Ayurveda* carries its own concepts of anatomy called *Sharir Rachana*. *Sushruta Samhita* is best in *Sharir Sthana*. In *Sharir sthana* of *Sushrut Samhita*, seven *Ashayas* are described in the body.<sup>1</sup> It is need to explore the concept of *Ashaya* for better understanding. *Tridoshas* are very much important entities for the normal functioning of the body. They are considered as primary and most essential factors in situation of human organism. A deranged condition of these three fundamental humors may bring about its dissolution or death,<sup>2</sup> while on their continuance in a normal state depends the vitality of organism. So, firstly *Ashaya* related to *Tridosha* is mentioned in *Sushrut Samhita*. Even though *tridoshas* are important; they are unable to work separately.<sup>3</sup> They circulate along with Blood in the body.<sup>4</sup> *Sushrut Samhita* has given equal importance to Blood. Three humors in combination with a fourth (Blood), determine the origin, preservation and dissolution of organism and permeate it with their respective properties till the moment of death. So after the *Tridosha*, *Ashaya* for Blood is mentioned. *Anna rasa* nourishes *Dhatu*. During process of digestion, *Ahara* undergoes two stages, *Amavastha* i.e. partially digested food, and *Pakwa Awastha* i.e. Digested food. So, next *Ashaya* given for *Ama Anna* (*Amashya*) and *Pakwa Anna* (*Pakwashaya*). After *Pachana*, *Sara* and *Kitta* *Vibhajan* takes place. *Sara* is absorbed for nourishment while *Kitta* again differentiate into *Purisha* and *Mutra*. *Purisha* remains in *Pakwashaya* i.e. Large intestine. It is the remains of *pakwa anna*. So *Ashaya* for *purisha* is not mentioned separately, but *Mutra* is stored in different site, so next *Ashaya* is mentioned for *Mutra*. According to different *Acharyas* of *Ayurveda* one extra *Aashaya* is considered in women body that is *Gharbhaashaya* it also called *Asthmaashaya*.

**AIMS AND OBJECTIVE -**

To explore concept of *Ashayas* and *Gharbashaya* as defined in various text, Internet and various journals.

To study on *Gharbashaya* ( Uterus) from *Ayurveda* and modern point of view.

**MATERIAL AND METHODS -**

For the material classical texts of *Ayurveda* viz. *Sushruta*

*Smahita*, *Sharangadhara Smaita*, *Astanga Hridaya* are used to clear the concept of *Ashayas*.

**LITERATURE REVIEW**

In *Sharir sthana* of *Sushrut Samhita*, seven *Ashayas* are described in the body; they are *Vaataashaya*, *Pittaashaya*, *Shleshmaashaya*, *Raktaashaya*, *Amaashaya*, *Pakwaashaya*, *Mootraashaya* and *Gharbhaashaya*.<sup>5</sup> It is need to explore the concept of *Ashaya* for better understanding. *Tridoshas* are very much important entities for the normal functioning of the body. They are considered as primary and most essential factors in situation of human organism. *Ashayas* are defined as space or place meant for occupancy. They are occupied by the essential ingredients needed for body functioning (Example, *Rakta* or blood in *Raktashaya* or Liver and spleen) and also by waste materials which needed to be avoided (Example, *Mutra* or urine in *Mutrashaya* i.e. urinary bladder). *Acharya Sushruta* define *Aashaya -Aashaya abhayaasa yogena karoti aashaya sambhavam*, by the virtue of repeatedly staying at a place, the *Vayu* creates *Ashayas*.

*Ashaya* means not a single organ but it the site in the body where seven entities, *Vata*, *Pitta*, *Kapha*, Blood, Partially digested food, fully digested food and Store of Urine are predominantly present, so as to maintain normal functioning in the body. *Tridoshas* are functional entities which are carried with Blood all over the body. Their presence in the *Ashaya* is very important; Without their contribution, not a single process can start. These sites can be considered as the prime functional areas in the body.

S.N.	Aashayas	According to Ayurveda	According to Modern
1.	<i>Vaataashaya</i>	Place or space for <i>Vayu</i>	<i>Vatashaya</i> can be considered as nervous system.
2.	<i>Pittaashaya</i>	Place or space for <i>Pitta</i>	<i>Pittashaya</i> can be considered as all digestive glands, gall bladder and endocrine glands in the body.
3.	<i>Shleshmaashaya</i>	Place or space for	<i>Kaphashaya</i> can be considered as serous

		<i>Kapha</i>	and mucous glands in the body, synovial cavities, chambers of Eye, Lacrimal gland, ventricles, pleural and pericardial, peritoneal cavities.
4.	<i>Raktashaya</i>	Place or space for <i>Rakta</i>	<i>Raktashaya</i> can be considered as Liver and Spleen in foetal life, Only liver after birth
5.	<i>Amashaya</i>	Place or space for <i>Ama</i>	<i>Amashya</i> can be considered as Stomach and duodenum.
6.	<i>Pakwashaya</i>	Place or space for digested food	<i>Pakwashaya</i> can be considered as jejunum, ileum and Large intestine where fully digested food is stored. Necessary nutrients and vitamins are also absorbed.
7.	<i>Mutrashaya</i>	Place or space for urine	<i>Mutrashaya</i> can be considered as urinary bladder where continuous storage of urine take place.
8.	<i>Gharbhashaya</i>	Place or space for <i>Gharbha</i> or foetus.	<i>Garbhashaya</i> can be considered as Uterus where the full development of foetus takes place.

**Function Of Aashayasa-**

**1.)Vatashaya-**

If we observed the functions of *Vata*, it is as similar as nervous system in modern science. Our nervous system, coordinates and controls every function in the body through vital nerve messages and is responsible for all healing, repair and regeneration in your body; and according to *Ayurveda* *Vaat* is the one of the main *Dosha* of basic three *Doshas* which regulates and controls the other two *Doshas* and as well as our body's nervous system which is the basic and most important system which regulates the other systems of body same as *Vaat*; So we can consider nervous system as *Vatashaya*.<sup>6</sup>

**2.)Pittashaya:**

If we observed the function of *Pitta*, it is mainly related to *pachana* which includes the digestion, transformation. *Pitta* prepares material to be absorbed or metabolized at macro or micro levels. This function is seen in chemical activities like digestion and assimilation. So, we can consider all digestive glands present in alimentary canal, gall bladder and endocrine glands as *Pittashaya*.<sup>7</sup>

**3.)Kaphashaya:**

Properties of *Kapha* is given as, oily, liquid, whitish in colour. If we observed the functions of *Kapha*, it is mainly related to various secretions in the body either watery or mucous. From properties and function of *Kapha*, we can compare with : 1) The serous and mucous secretions produced by serous and mucous glands in the body. 2) synovial fluid in synovial cavity is the main cause for free movement of joints in the body. Its function and properties can be compared with *Kapha dosha*. 3) aqueous and vitreous humour in chambers of Eye 4) Secretion of Lacrimal gland 5) CSF in ventricles is important for nutrition of nervous system, as a shock absorber for CNS. These functions are similar to *Kapha dosha*. So, we can consider serous and mucous glands, synovial cavities, chambers of Eye, Lacrimal gland, ventricles in brain, as

*adhishtana* of *Kapha*.<sup>8</sup>

**4.)Raktashaya:**

*Yakrut* and *Pleeha* are given as *adhishtana* of *Rakta*. As per modern science, Blood is stored in Liver. In foetal life it is also stored in Spleen. After birth, this function of spleen is seen only in animals. So, Liver and Spleen can be considered as site of *Rakta*.<sup>9</sup>

**5.)Amashaya:**

Site where Undigested food is present during process of *pachana*. It is seen in *Amashaya* and *Grahani*. According to modern science, digestion is completed in duodenum. So, *Amashaya* and *grahani* i.e. stomach and duodenum respectively can be considered as site of partially digested food.

**6.)Pakwashaya :**

Site where digested food is present during process of *pachana*. It is seen in *Antra*. According to modern science, digested food is propelled in jejunum from duodenum. So, part of Small intestine except duodenum and whole large intestine can be considered as site of fully digested food.

**7.)Mutrashaya:**

According to *Sushruta*, *Basti* is the site of *Mutra*. From the shape and function of *Basti*, it can be compared with Urinary bladder which continuously stores urine. So, Urinary bladder can be considered as *adhishtana* of *Mutra*.<sup>10</sup>

**DISCUSSION**

**Garbhashaya:**

Site in the body which provide space for *Garbha*. According to *Sushruta*, *Garbhashaya* is *adhishtana* of *Garbha*. From the description of *Garbhashaya*, we can compare it with Uterus. where normally Foetus remains till full gestational period, So, Uterus can be considered as site of *Garbha*.

**Location of Garbhashaya**

**According to Ayurveda-**

Women possess one extra eighth *ashaya* as *garbhasaya*, which is situated in third *avarta* of *yonis*, behind the urinary bladder in between *pittasaya* and *pakwasaya*; or in between *uipula kundela* of *srotas* (multiple coil of intestine), covered with *jarayu*.<sup>11</sup> It resembles mouth of *rohita* fish. *Dalhana* says that it is hollow inside just like mouth of *rohita* fish; the *vasti* (urinary bladder) is behind the *bhaga* (vulva) and uterus is above this. *Vagbhata* has enumerated *dimbha* amongst the structures of *kostha*, *Arunadatta* says that it is made from essence of *rakta* and *mamsa* and is derived from intestines. According to *Vagbhata*, the location of *Gharbhashaya* is in between *Pittashaya* and *Pakwashaya*.<sup>12</sup> *Sharangadhara* commentary also tells us that, the *Gharbhashaya* is located in the surroundings of *pakwashaya*. Anatomically, the coils of large intestine are in proximity of uterus. *Sushurta* and *Vagbhata* also said that uterus is located behind urinary bladder. Uterus resembles shape of *Rohita matsya mukha* or mouth of *Rohit* fish. *Dalhana*, commentator of *Sushurta Samhita* explains meaning of *rohita matsaya mukha* as 'the structure or organ having narrow opening like that of mouth of *rohit* fish and includes a wider hollow space within'.<sup>13</sup> This simile of uterus with mouth of *rohit* fish might have been given probably due to two reasons; Similarity in shape- both fish and uterus are roughly triangular in shape and also hollow within. Mouth of fish is flat below and slightly convex above. Similarly anterior wall of uterus is slightly flat, while its posterior wall is slightly convex. Lips of fish are fleshy and hanging, teeth are not just behind the lips, rather situated slightly behind these giving appearance of a rounded soft structure, which resembles cervix of uterus.<sup>14</sup> Opening of cervix continues inwards as cervical canal which continues with a wider space of the uterine cavity. In the context of situation of

uterus the word *pittasaya* should not be considered as gallbladder, rather it should be taken as small intestine, the seat of *pittadhara kala pakwashaya* refers to the place of digested food i.e. large bowel. The uterus is above sigmoid colon, behind the urinary bladder and multiple coils of small bowel rest upon uterus, it is covered with peritoneum and is an intraabdominal structure, which has been mentioned by *Kasyapa* and *Dalhana*.

#### According to modern-

Uterus also called womb, an inverted pear-shaped muscular organ of the female reproductive system, located between the bladder and the rectum. Also, as an organ of the female reproductive system it is responsible for the development of the embryo and fetus during pregnancy. It functions to nourish and house a fertilized egg until the fetus, or offspring, is ready to be delivered. The uterus has four major regions the fundus is the broad curved upper area in which the fallopian tubes connect to the uterus; the body the main part of the uterus, starts directly below the level of the fallopian tubes and continues downward until the uterine walls and cavity begin to narrow, the isthmus is the lower, narrow neck region; and the lowest section, the cervix extends downward from the isthmus until it opens into the vagina. The uterus of a female child is small until puberty, when it rapidly grows to its adult size and shape. After menopause, when the female is no longer capable of having children, the uterus becomes smaller, more fibrous and paler. Some afflictions that may affect the uterus include infections.

Changes of uterus with Age- At birth, the uterus lies in the false pelvis; the cervix is much longer than the body.<sup>15</sup> In childhood, the proportion is maintained but reduced to 2:1. At puberty, the body is growing faster under the action of ovarian steroids (estrogens) and the proportion is reversed to 1:2 and following childbirth, it becomes even 1:3. After menopause the uterus atrophies; the overall length is reduced; the walls become thinner, less muscular but more fibrous. position of the uterus; The normal position of the uterus is anteversion and ante flexion. Anteversion relates the long axis of the cervix to the long axis of vagina which is about 90°. Ante flexion relates the long axis of the body to the long axis of the cervix and is about 120°. <sup>16</sup> In about 15–20%, normally the uterus remains in retroverted position. In erect posture, the internal os lies on the upper border of the symphysis pubis and the external os lies at the level of ischial spines.

#### Embryology Of Uterus :-

The uterus develops from the paramesonephric (Müllerian) ducts, which are the primordial fetal structures of the female reproductive tract. More specifically, the uterovaginal primordium is formed by the fusion of the caudal, vertical parts of the paramesonephric ducts. This primordium will give rise to the lower part of the uterus that will slowly enlarge during development, ultimately resulting in the fundus and body of the uterus in the adult female. One can begin to see clear signs of the uterine body at a gestational age of 9 weeks. The endometrium and the muscular wall of the uterus develop from the mesenchyme of the genital coard.

Uterus is developed by the fusion of the intermediate horizontal and the adjoining vertical part of the Müllerian ducts, which begins at 7–8 weeks (22 mm CR length) and completes by 12th week. Cervix is developed from the fused lower vertical parts of the two paramesonephric ducts. The cervix is differentiated from the corpus by 10th week. The intervening septum disappears during the 5th month of intrauterine life. The lining epithelium and the glands of the uterus and cervix are developed from the coelomic epithelium. Myometrium and endometrial stroma are developed from the mesoderm of the paramesonephric ducts.

#### Functions Of Uterus –

The uterus plays an important role in human reproduction.

The uterus functions by nurturing the fertilized ovum, which passes through the fallopian tube. The ovum then implants into the endometrium, where it receives nourishment from blood vessels, which exclusively developed for this purpose. As the embryo grows and matures, the uterus expands to accommodate the developing fetus. During normal labour, the uterus contracts as the cervix dilates, and this results in the delivery of the infant. Furthermore, it helps pushing out the baby during birth through muscle contraction.

#### Clinical Importance Of Uterus –

Prolapse of the uterus – The great importance of the tone of the levatores ani muscles in supporting the uterus has already been emphasized. The importance of the transverse cervical, pubocervical, and sacrocervical ligaments in positioning the cervix within the pelvic cavity has been considered. Damage to these structures during child birth or general poor body muscular tone may result in downward displacement of the uterus called uterine prolapse. It most commonly reveals itself after menopause, when the visceral pelvic fascia tends to atrophy along with the pelvic organs. In advanced cases, the cervix descends the length of the vagina and may protrude through the orifice. Because of the attachment of the cervix to the vaginal vault, it follows that prolapse of the uterus is always accompanied by some prolapse of the vagina.

#### Agensis Of The Uterus-

Rarely the uterus will be absent as the result of a failure of the paramesonephric ducts to develop.

#### Infantile Uterus-

Some adults may have an infantile uterus, a condition in which the uterus is much smaller than normal and resembles that present before puberty. Amenorrhea is present, but the vagina and ovaries may be normal.

#### Bicornate Uterus-

Incomplete fusion of the embryonic paramesonephric ducts from which the uterus is formed results in a variety of congenital anomalies, ranging from formation of a unicornate uterus (receiving a uterine duct only from the right or left) to duplication in the form of a bicornate uterus (doubled uterine cavities, or a completely doubled uterus (uterus didelphys)).

#### CONCLUSION

*Ashaya* means not a single organ but it is the site in the body where seven essential entities should be predominantly present. *Garbhashya* or Uterus is the engine which plays the important role of female reproductive system. *Garbhashaya* can be considered as Uterus where the full development of foetus takes place. The incidences and prevalence of uterine disorders nowadays clearly point out the contribution of erratic life style and wrong food choices along with severe stress in modern day life. So *Garbhashaya* is the most of the importance in female reproductive life.

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