



GARBHINI SHOTHA: A COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF AYURVEDIC LITERATURE

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ABSTRACT

Pregnancy is a physiological condition defined by a series of anatomical, hormonal, and metabolic changes. Garbhini Pada Shotha (pedal oedema) is one of the common discomforts of pregnancy and is normally seen in the second and third trimesters. Mild oedema is normal but excessive swelling may be an indication of underlying pathological conditions that need to be evaluated urgently. Shotha is one of the common complications during pregnancy which is mentioned in Ayurveda and emphasizes the importance of maternal health with proper dietary, lifestyle and medicinal interventions. Proper Ahara, Vihara and use of safe herbal preparations in Garbhini Paricharya are important in prevention and management of oedema. This review is an attempt to explore the Ayurvedic concepts of Garbhini Pada Shotha, its etiopathogenesis, clinical features, diagnosis and management.

KEYWORDS : Garbhini, Garbhopadrava, Garbhini Shotha, Garbhini Chikitsa**INTRODUCTION:**

Pregnancy (*Garbhini Awastha*) is a physiological state defined by complex anatomical, physiological, hormonal and psychological changes that are necessary for foetal development and maternal health. During this period, women generally suffer from several physiological discomforts, and pedal oedema is one of the common manifestations. Dependent oedema occurs in about 50–80% of healthy pregnant women during the third trimester⁽¹⁾.

Pregnancy is a delicate phase of life and requires special care in the form of Antenatal care (*Garbhini Paricharya*) to maintain *Ahara* (diet), *Vihara* (lifestyle) and psychological status for the health of the mother and foetus. Disturbance of these regimens can lead to *Garbhopadravas*. *Garbhini Shotha* is described by Acharya Harita and Kashyapa.

Although *Garbhini Shotha* is not described as an independent disease in *Charaka Samhita* or *Sushruta Samhita*, both Acharyas recognize pregnancy (*Garbhasampidana*) as an important cause of *Shotha*. The *Kashyapa Samhita* gives a detailed description of its *Nidana*, *Samprapti* and *Chikitsa*.

Garbhini Paricharya is a detailed guideline for the care of pregnant women given by the Ayurveda⁽²⁾. It mentions a month-wise regimen consisting of *Ahara*, *Vihara* and *Vichara*, which directly influence the health of the mother and the developing foetus.

The primary aim of *Garbhini Paricharya* is to preserve proper digestion and to prevent *Agnimandya*. According to Acharya Charaka, *Rasa Dhatu* (nutritive essence formed after digestion of food) in pregnant woman is divided into three parts. The first part feeds and nurtures the body of the mother (*Sva Sharira Pushtaye*), the second part is responsible for the formation of breast milk (*Stanyaya*) in preparation for lactation and the third part helps in the growth and development of the foetus (*Garbha Vriddhaye*)⁽³⁾. If digestion is impaired, improperly digested *Ahar Rasa* gets accumulated in the mother's body and gives rise to various symptoms, discomforts and disorders during pregnancy. All these pregnancy related disorders are called *Garbhopadrava* in totality⁽⁴⁾. The word *Garbhopadrava* was first introduced by Harita who described eight common problems which may take place in pregnancy.

Shotha (oedema) is one of the eight *Garbhopadravas* described by Acharya Harita⁽⁵⁾. *Shotha* is observed

commonly in pregnancy mainly due to *Agnimandya* during 7th, 8th and 9th months. The third trimester is when the *Dosha* and *Mala* related to the growing foetus is increasing. If these waste products are not properly eliminated from the mother's body, they accumulate and lead to the development of *Shotha*.

Literary Review of Garbhini Shotha**1. Charaka Samhita**

- *Shotha* is described in *Trishothiya Adhyaya* and *Shwayathu Chikitsa*.
- There is no direct description of *Garbhini Shotha*.
- In *Trishothiya Adhyaya* while explaining causes of *Shotha*, *Garbha Sampidan* (pressure due to pregnancy) is one of the causes of *Shotha*.

2. Sushruta Samhita

- The word *Shophya* is used in place of *Shotha*.
- No direct mention of *Garbhini Shotha* is made.
- *Shotha* (*Shophya*) is described in a general way.

3. Ashtanga Hridayam

- *Shotha* is explained under *Shwayathu Chikitsa*.
- *Garbha* is said to be one of the causes of *Shotha*.
- *Garbhini Shotha* is not described in a direct manner.

4. Kashyap Samhita

- *Garbhini Shotha* is described as one among the *Garbhopadravas*.
- It has been discussed in *Garbhini Chikitsa Adhyaya*.
- The *Nidana Panchaka* of *Shotha* is also described.

Table: Classification of Shotha According to Different Ayurvedic Classics

Sr. No	Ayurvedic Text	Classification of Shotha
1.	Charaka Samhita ⁽⁶⁾	<i>Ekavidha: Shotha</i> (common swelling). <i>Dwividha: Neej, Aagantuja</i> <i>Trividha: Vataja, Pittaja, Kaphaja</i> <i>Chaturvidha: Vataja, Pittaja, Kaphaja, Aagantuja.</i> <i>Saptavidha: Vataja, Pittaja, Kaphaja, Vata-Pittaja, Pitta-Kaphaja, Vata-Kaphaja, Sannipataja</i> <i>Ashtavidha (8 types): Vataja, Pittaja, Kaphaja, Vata-Pittaja, Pitta-Kaphaja, Vata-Kaphaja, Sannipataja, Aagantuja.</i>

2. Ashtanga Hridaya ⁽⁷⁾ (Vagbhata)	Navavidha (9 types): <i>Vataja, Pittaja, Kaphaja, Vata-Pittaja, Pitta-Kaphaja, Vata-Kaphaja, Sannipataja, Abhigataja, Vishaja</i> . Based on distribution: Sarvangaja and Ekangaja.
3. Sushruta Samhita ⁽⁸⁾	Panchavidha (5 types): <i>Vataja, Pittaja, Kaphaja, Sannipataja, Vishaja</i> .
4. Kashyapa Samhita ⁽⁹⁾	<i>Vataja, Pittaja, Kaphaja, Sannipataja</i> (4types)

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Information from Ayurvedic Classics was collected to prepare this review article. The gathered information has been systematically compiled and analysed under the headings of *Nidana, Samprapti, Lakshana, Chikitsa*.

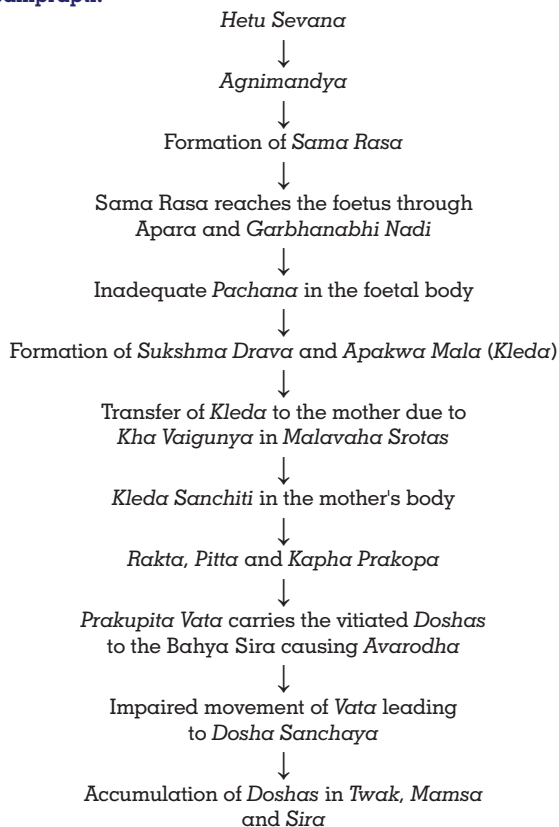
Nidan Panchak

- Synonyms of Shotha: *Shophra, Shvayathu*
- *Dosha: Tridosha (Vata, Pitta, Kapha)*⁽¹⁰⁾
- *Dushya: Rakta, Sira*⁽¹⁰⁾
- *Strotas: Rasavaha, Mutravaha Vyadhi*
- *Marga: Bahya*⁽¹⁰⁾
- *Ashraya sthan: Twak, Mamsa*
- *Sadhya-asadhyatva: Sadhya*⁽¹¹⁾
- *Swabhav: Darun*⁽¹¹⁾
- *Malas: Mutra, Sweda*
- *Avayava: Vrukka, Basti*

- **HETU (Nidan):** It is the root cause of the disease which directly acts upon the equilibrium of three *Dosha*.
- All *Neej Hetu* of Shotha are classified as 1) *Aharaj* 2) *Viharaj* 3) *Upadrava*.
- **Samanya Hetu:** As far as *Grabhopadrava, Garbhasampidanat*⁽¹²⁾

Garbhaopadrava Shotha is mostly seen in seven, eight and nine months of pregnancy because in last trimester quantity of dosha and mala comes from *Garbha* is more. When this mala does not go out and accumulate inside, *Shotha* is seen.

Samprapti:



↓
Garbhini Shotha

Purvarupa⁽¹³⁾ (premonitory Signs):

- Warmth at the place where the swelling develops.
- *Davathu* (sensation of heat in the eyes and other sense organs).
- *Sira Aayam* - pressure in the veins.

Rupa⁽¹⁴⁾ (clinical Features):

The common clinical features of *Shotha* are:

- Body heaviness or heaviness in the affected area (*Sagauravam*).
- Swelling instability: The swelling can increase or decrease in size and can move from one area to another.
- Swelling or elevation (*Utsedha*).
- More warmth in the affected area.
- Veins prominent or fine.
- Horripilation (*Loma Harsha*).
- Change of color of affected parts of body (*Vivarnata*).

Garbhini Shotha Chikitsa

Pregnancy is a special condition and the principles of treatment of diseases in pregnancy are different to some extent from those under normal conditions as the use of strong medications may be harmful to the foetus. With this in view, the Acharyas have described the general principles of treatment of diseases occurring in pregnant women. They have also mentioned some of the specific disorders which occur in women only during pregnancy.

While explaining the importance of treating diseases during pregnancy, Maharshi Kashyapa said that treating diseases during pregnancy helps in the growth and protection of both the foetus and the mother⁽¹⁵⁾.

The general principles of treatment and some specific disorders of pregnancy have been discussed by Maharshi Charaka, Sushruta and Vagbhata. Maharshi Kashyapa has devoted two complete chapters to this subject, namely *Garbhini Chikitsa* in the *Chikitsa Sthana* and *Antarvatni Chikitsa Adhyaya* in the *Khila Sthana*. Yogaratnakara and Acharya Bhavamishra have also mentioned the names of specific medicines used in the treatment of certain diseases during pregnancy.

1. Samanya Chikitsa (general Principles Of Treatment For Pregnant Women) According To Various Acharyas:

Acharya	General Principles of Treatment for Pregnant Women
Charaka ⁽¹⁶⁾	• Diseases of pregnant women should be treated with <i>Mridu</i> (mild), <i>Madhura</i> (sweet), <i>Sheeta Virya</i> (cool potency), <i>Sukhakara</i> (comforting), and <i>Sukumara</i> (gentle) drugs, along with suitable diet and gentle therapeutic measures. • <i>Vamana, Virechana, Shirovirechana, Raktamokshana, Asthapana Basti</i>, and <i>Anuvasana Basti</i> should generally be avoided. • In <i>Atyayika</i> (emergency) conditions, mild <i>Asthapana</i> and <i>Anuvasana Basti</i> may be administered if absolutely necessary. • After the eighth month, disorders curable by <i>Vamana</i> may be managed with <i>Mridu Vamana</i> or other suitable alternative therapies. • Treatment should be given with great care, just as one handles a vessel filled with oil, to avoid <i>Garbhalava</i> (foetal injury) and <i>Garbhapata</i> (abortion). • Tikshna medicines, excessive exercise, and sexual intercourse should be avoided during pregnancy.

Sushruta ⁽¹⁷⁾	- Similar principles to Charaka are advocated. - In <i>Atyayika</i> (life-threatening) conditions, <i>Vamana</i> may be administered when necessary. - Anulomana should be given with drugs mixed with <i>Madhura</i> and <i>Amla</i> substances. - All Shamana drugs should be <i>Mridu Virya</i> (mild in potency) and administered with appropriate <i>Anupana</i>. - The pregnant woman should consume <i>Madhura</i>-dominant, mild, and foetus-friendly food. - Only <i>Garbha-Aviruddha</i> (non-harmful to the foetus) and gentle procedures should be adopted.
Ashtanga Sangraha ⁽¹⁸⁾	- Diseases should be treated with <i>Mridu</i>, <i>Madhura</i>, <i>Shishira</i> (cool), and <i>Sukhakara</i> medicines along with appropriate diet and lifestyle. <i>Vamana</i>, <i>Virechana</i>, and <i>Raktamokshana</i> should generally be avoided. - From the eighth month onwards, <i>Asthapana</i> and <i>Anuvassana Basti</i> may be administered according to the condition and <i>Dosha</i>. - Disorders requiring <i>Vamana</i> should be treated with <i>Mridu Vamana</i> or disease-specific beneficial medicines. - Treatment should be carried out cautiously, like handling a vessel filled with oil. <i>Tikshna</i> medicines, excessive exercise, and sexual intercourse are contraindicated during pregnancy. - In <i>Atyayika</i> conditions, even strong therapeutic measures may be employed carefully to save the mother's life.
Ashtanga Hridaya ⁽¹⁹⁾	Diseases of pregnant women should be treated with <i>Mridu</i> (mild), <i>Sukhakara</i> (comforting), and <i>Atikshna-varjita</i> (non-potent) medicines.

2. Vishesh Chikitsa of Shotha(oedema/inflammation)

A. Internal Administration (oral Use)

- A decoction of the roots of *Varshabhu* (*Punarnava*) mixed with the paste of *Devadaru* and *Murva* or *Bhadradaru* alone along with honey should be given to a pregnant woman suffering from *Shotha*⁽²⁰⁾.
- The decoction of *Prishniparni*, *Bala* and *Vasa* are useful for *Garbhini Shotha*⁽²¹⁾.

B. External Application (external Use)

- In *Shotha* due to complication of pregnancy sudation (*Swedana*) with hot water should be done⁽²²⁾.
- An *Lepa* prepared from *Chandana*, *Madhuka*, *Ushira*, *Nagakeshara*, *Tila*, *Ajashringi*, *Manjishtha*, *Ravi Moola* and *Punarnava* are beneficial in the management of *Shotha* especially in pregnant women⁽²³⁾.

C. Contraindication In Shotha

- A learned physician shall not administer strong purgatives (*Daruna Virechana*) to a patient suffering from *Shotha*⁽²²⁾.

APATHYA⁽²⁴⁾ (Contraindicated Diet and Lifestyle in Shotha)

Patients suffering from *Shotha* should avoid the following:

- Meat of *Gramya* (domestic), *Jaliya* (aquatic), and *Anupa* (marshy land) animals.
- Excessive salt.
- Dry leafy vegetables.
- Newly harvested grains.
- Food preparations made from jaggery.
- Rice flour.
- Curd.
- Food preparations made from sesame (*Tila*).

- Picchila* (slimy) food preparations.
- Alcoholic beverages (*Madira*).
- Sour (*Amla*) substances.
- Dhana* (roasted sprouted barley).
- Vallura* (dried meat).
- Samashana* (consuming wholesome and unwholesome foods together).
- Heavy (*Guru*), incompatible (*Asatmya*), and burning (*Vidahi*) foods.
- Daytime sleep (*Divasvapna*).
- Sexual intercourse (*Maithuna*).

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