

AYURVEDA DESCRIPTION OF VANDHYATVA, MODERN CORRELATION WITH FEMALE
INFERTILITY AND CLINICAL MANAGEMENT

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ABSTRACT

Infertility is defined as the inability of a female to conceive, even after engaging in unprotected sexual activities for a year. It not only imposes social stress but also places a significant psychological burden on women, as the absence of the joy of motherhood can be distressing. In Ayurveda, infertility is referred to as *Vandhyatva*, as per Ayurveda disturbance or imbalance in factors such as *Ritu*, *Kshetra*, *Ambu* and *Beej* can lead to infertility. Ayurveda identifies various causes of infertility, such as *Yonidosha*, *Kshetra Vikruti*, *Sahaj Vikruti* and *Yoni-roga*, etc. Similarly, modern medical science has also identified several factors contributing to infertility, including hormonal imbalances, polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS), menstrual disturbances, tubal blockages, genetic factors and genital tissue injuries, etc. Ayurveda offers numerous approaches for managing infertility, including maintaining a good daily regimen, herbal remedies such as *Ashwagandha*, *Satavari*, *Dasmoola* and *Punarnava*, etc. Ayurveda also advocates various detoxification techniques like *Vaman*, *Nasya*, *Virechan* and *Vasti* for managing female infertility.

KEYWORDS: *Ayurveda, Vandhyatwa, Infertility, Stree, Prasooti.*

INTRODUCTION

Bandhyatwa refers to the condition of female infertility, Ayurveda provides a comprehensive understanding of this condition and outlines various measures to address it and promote fertility in women. According to Ayurveda, there are several factors that can contribute to infertility, including *Abhighata*, *Sadbhavas Vikriti*, *Anovulation* and abnormalities in *Artavahasrotas*, etc. Ayurvedic philosophers believed that any pathological disturbances related to *Ritu*, *Kshetra*, *Ambu* and *Beeja* could result in infertility. **Figure 1** depicted some common causes of female infertility.^[1-4]

**Figure 1: Various causes of *Bandhyatwa*.**

Ayurvedic philosophers have categorized the severity of *Bandhyatwa* based on the possibility of curing the disease. Infertility associated with *Beejdosha* is considered incurable, while infertility caused by secondary factors like *Anapatya* and *Kakvandhya* is considered curable. Both Ayurveda and modern science have presented various causes of infertility that can be correlated with each other.

Harita Samhita mentioned several other terms associated with infertility. *Kakavandhya* resembles a condition of secondary infertility, *Anapatya* refers to a state of complete sterility, *Garbhasravi* denotes repeated abortions, *Mritvatsa* signifies repeated stillbirths and *Balakshaya* represents diminished *Bala*.

The condition of infertility is closely linked to the vitiation of *Dosha*, *Srotasa* and *Dhatu*. Among the *Tridosha*, *Vata* is primarily involved in this condition, along with *Artavavaha Srota* and *Rasa Dhatu*. Additionally *Yoni*, *Garbhashaya* and *Yoni Marga* are considered as the *Adhishthana* of infertility.^[4-7]

According to Ayurveda, four vital factors - *Ritu*, *Kshetra*, *Ambu*, and *Beej* play crucial roles in ensuring the healthy development of progeny and successful childbirth. *Ritu* refers to the appropriate time of ovulation and fertilization, and considering the *Ritu Kala* enhances the chances of conception after intercourse. *Kshetra* represents the location where fertilization and fetal development occur, making it essential to have a proper size, shape, and functioning of *Kshetra* for the successful progression of pregnancy. *Ambu* signifies the process or elements through which the fetus receives essential nutrients. Any improper functioning of *Ambu* can lead to deformities and improper fetal growth. Lastly, *Beej* refers to the seeds, i.e., sperm and ovum, which are involved in the process of fertilization. Any abnormalities in *Beej* can result in sterility or infertility.^[7-9]

In modern science, the term "primary infertility" is used to describe the condition when a female is unable to deliver her first child. Similarly, Ayurveda uses the term "*Anapatya*" to refer a similar condition of childlessness. Understanding these distinctions is important in determining the appropriate approach for managing and treating different types of infertility in both Ayurvedic and modern medical contexts.

The prevalence of infertility is rising due to the influence of diverse daily routines and the effects of modernization, which can disrupt physiological factors and lead to irregular menstruation, polycystic ovary syndrome, fallopian tube blockage, ovulation disorders, endometriosis, uterine abnormalities and hormonal imbalances, etc. The detrimental effects of changing environments and pollution also contribute to the rise of infertility cases. Factors such as depression, obesity and stress, etc. also induce pathogenesis of infertility.

Ayurveda Management of Infertility

Acharya Sushruta emphasized the significance of four factors - *Ritu*, *Kshetra*, *Ambu*, and *Beej* - in the process of reproduction. The ancient texts provide guidelines for couples, including codes of conduct, *Panchkarma* therapies, and dietary regimens, aimed at instilling good qualities in the *Beeja* (sperm and ovum).

In cases where infertility is caused by *Beejadosha*, Ayurveda offers treatments using *Panchkarma* techniques such as *Vaman*, *Virechan*, *Vasti* and *Nasya*, etc. These therapies are employed to address and correct the underlying imbalances, promoting the purification and enhancement of the *Beej*, thus increasing the chances of successful conception and a healthy pregnancy.

Ayurvedic detoxification techniques play a vital role in removing accumulated toxins from *Srotas*, ensuring a healthy menstrual flow, and treating obstructions in the *Arthava Srota*. Additionally, it is recommended that females avoid stress and anger to prevent anxiety induced hormonal disturbances. *Phalagarta*, *Shatavari* and *Shatapushpa*, etc. improves health of the female reproductive system. *Rasayana* and *Vajikarana* drugs are also effective in treating infertility.

The inclusion of herbs like *Agaru*, *Haridra*, *Shilajatu rasayana*, *Pippali*, *Yashtimadhuk*, *Bhrungraj*, *Rasna* and *Manjishtha* can help to alleviate infertility. *Nasya karma*, a therapeutic nasal treatment, plays a role in maintaining hormonal regulation by stimulating the pituitary and hypothalamus functioning and regulating endocrine activities. These holistic approaches in Ayurveda provide comprehensive strategies for addressing infertility and promoting reproductive health.^[6-8]

Medhya rasayana combined with *Arthava*-increasing drugs can be beneficial in managing conditions of menstrual disturbances. *Anulomana* treatment can help in the management of endometriosis. Herbal preparations such as *Varunadi Ksheera Kashaya*, *Kalyanakam Kashaya* and *Drakshadi Kashaya*, etc. are considered effective in relieving adipose tissue deposition over the ovary.

Inflammatory conditions associated with *Trichomonas vaginitis* can be addressed with *Nirgundyadi Kashaya* and *Maharasnadi Kashaya* along with *Basti* therapy. *Sthanik chikitsa* like *Yoniprakshlan*, *Yoni varti* and *Pichu* are beneficial in treating vaginal infections and abnormalities of the cervix.

Panchakarma therapy, especially *Basti*, plays a significant role in pacifying *Vata Dosha*, offering therapeutic benefits in genital tract disorders associated with *Vata Dosha*. *Basti* helps in removing obstructions from the reproductive organs, and *Uttrabasti* aids in boosting the functioning of the uterus, contributing to *Kshetra Nirmana*. Similarly, *Uttar Basti* and *Anuvasana Basti* provide relief in conditions like tubular blockage and reproductive difficulties, etc.

Ayurvedic drugs with *Sheeta Virya*, *Madhura Vipaka* and *Tikta Rasa* exert *Vatapittashamaka* effects, helping to regulate *Vata* and maintain the physiology of the reproductive system. These drugs initiate the process of cell regeneration from the endometrial layer. *Bala*, *Shatavari*, *Ashwagandha* and *Yashtimadhuk* helps in

achieving optimal hormonal levels. They effectively control the follicular and luteal phases by regulating endometrial changes related to proliferation and secretion.

Deepan Pachan effect of Ayurvedic drugs improves *Jatharagni*, enhancing the potency of *Ahara Rasa* and promoting nourishment for both the mother and fetus through *Ambu*. These combined effects contribute to supporting reproductive health and facilitating a healthy pregnancy.

Shodhana therapy not only enhances the bioavailability of drugs but also effectively cures ailments. These cleansing procedures help open occluded channels in the body, regulating hormones and maintaining homeostasis, leading to better health. *Basti* therapy plays a crucial role in normalizing *Apana Vayu*, leading to *Vatanulomana* and regulating its functioning, which results in the extrusion of the ovum. By pacifying aggravated *Dosha* and balancing *Vyana Vayu*, *Basti* promotes the formation of *Samyaka Rasa Raktadi Dhatu*.^[7-11]

CONCLUSION

Bandhyatva is a health issue related to disturbances in the female reproductive system, primarily considered as *Yonivysapada*. Pathological conditions such as vitiated *Vata*, abnormalities in *Ambu* and *Beeja*, infrequent ovulation, uterine polyps, fallopian tube blockage, PCOS, etc., can lead to infertility. Ayurveda suggests conducting *Sadavritta*, using *Vatanulomana* drugs, *Sodhana* therapy, along with dietary modifications and *Yoga*, to alleviate infertility and promote overall reproductive health. Drugs with *Sheeta Virya*, *Tikta Rasa* and *Madhura Vipaka* are used to maintain normal physiology of the reproductive system. *Rasayana* and *Vajikarana* drugs are also considered effective in treating infertility.

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