

**SHUKRA SHONIT SIDDHANT AND RITUKALA IN RELATION WITH TRADITIONAL SCIENCE****Dr. Avinash B. Chavan\*<sup>1</sup>, Dr. Anand K. Madgundi<sup>2</sup>**<sup>1</sup>Professor and HOD, Rachana Sharir Department, S.G.R. Ayurved Mahavidyalaya, Solapur, Maharashtra, India.<sup>2</sup>Assistant Professor, Rachana Sharir Department, S.G.R. Ayurved Mahavidyalaya, Solapur, Maharashtra, India.**\*Corresponding Author: Dr. Avinash B. Chavan**

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**ABSTRACT**

Ayurveda incorporates *Shukra*, *Shonita* and *Ritukala* as the essential elements of *Garbhadhana* and the creation of a healthy fetus (*Garbha*). These are part of the four essential components which are known as *Garbha Sambhav Samagri*, along with *Kshetra* (uterus) and *Ambu* (nutrition). According to the Ayurvedic texts, *Shukra* is the seventh and final *Dhatu* and represents the essence of all seven *Dhatus* of the body, it is vital for reproduction, vitality and strength. In order for conception to occur, the male must produce *Shukra* in its pure form which is typically described as being white, oily and thick, similar to honey or oil, and is primarily associated with the testes and penis. *Shonita*, also referred to as *Artava*, is the female reproductive element and is critical to have healthy in order for fertilization to occur. *Ritukala* is the fertile time in a woman's menstrual cycle during which the chance of conception is highest, as described in classical texts. *Ritukala* is defined as duration of 12 days, beginning from the 4<sup>th</sup> day of menses, or 16 days from the onset of menses. According to Ayurveda, a healthy union of *Shukra* and *Shonita* during *Ritukala* in a suitable uterine environment, along with the presence of *Atma*, results in the formation of *Garbha*. Any imbalance or impurity in these factors may lead to infertility or abnormal development.

**KEYWORDS:** *Ayurveda*, *Shukra*, *Shonita*, *Ritukala*, *Garbha*.**INTRODUCTION**

*Shukra & Shonit Siddhanta* and *Ritukala* are the basic tenets of how human beings reproduce according to the philosophy of Ayurveda, which has many similarities with modern science, including the process of gametogenesis, fertilization and the menstrual cycle. The two primary reproductive components in Ayurveda, *Shukra* and *Shonita* or *Artava* are required to create *Garbha* and also to provide the genetic material necessary to develop human beings.<sup>[1-3]</sup>

**Shukra**

The *Shukra* or "semen" is described in Ayurveda as the seventh *Dhatu* which is created when nutrients from the food that we eat (*Ahara Rasa*) go through a series of transformations in the body until only reproductive tissues remain. *Shukra* is the essence of all human body tissues and the reproductive tissues are the base for reproduction. According to modern science, the role of *Shukra* in reproduction corresponds to the functions of spermatozoa, seminal fluid and male hormones in

fertilization. *Shukra* is also present from the moment of conception; however, it is not functional until the onset of puberty, which also coincides with the maturation of a male's reproductive system. In Ayurveda, there is a concept of *Shukra Dushti* which refers to the condition of poor quality semen; this will include conditions described in modern terms of oligospermia, poor sperm morphology and low sperm motility, etc.<sup>[4-6]</sup>

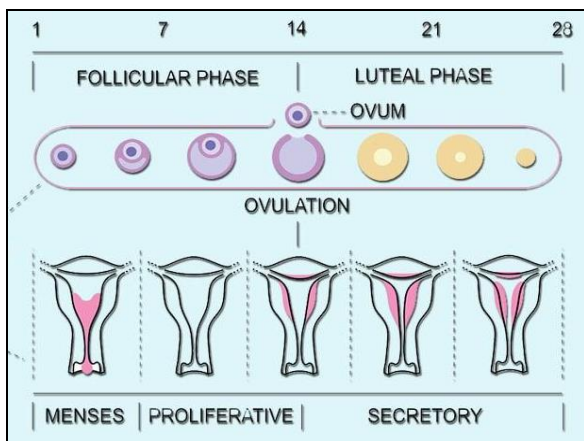
**Shonita**

*Shonita* represents the female reproductive component in Ayurveda, and it also corresponds to the ovum (egg) in modern terms. Furthermore, physiological procedures for the production, maturation and release of oocytes in Ayurveda correspond to the processes described by modern gynecology. Ayurveda refers to *Shuddha Artava* as an indicator of a normal reproductive state, which can also be tied to the concepts of normal ovulation and balance between estrogen and progesterone in modern gynecological terms. In Ayurvedic belief, the union of the sperm and fertilized egg in the *Garbhashaya* is the

most important moment for the development of a *Garbha* (fetus). This event is analogous to fertilization and formation of a zygote as defined in modern embryology. There is also an acknowledgement in the Ayurvedic tradition of the need for an appropriate combination of both male and female gametes for successful conception.<sup>[5-7]</sup>

### Concept of *Ritukala*

The Ayurveda concept of *Ritukala* further clarifies the timing of conception and is defined as the occurrence of conception during one of the phases of a woman's menstrual cycle, when conception is most probable. This is known in Ayurveda as the period of time after the *Rajahsrava Kala* and before the beginning of the next *Rajahsravana Prati*. The average duration of *Ritukala* is 12-16 days, which corresponds closely to the proliferative and ovulatory phases of modern reproductive physiology (**Figure 1**). During this time of *Ritukala*, there are physiological events which promote conception. There are also features of a woman's body during this fertile period, referred to as *Ritumati Lakshana*, which correspond to increasing levels of estrogen and the physiological changes associated with ovulation that modern science has documented. During this timeframe, the female body becomes physiologically ready for conception, characterized by increased activity of *Kapha dosha* and positive reproductive conditions. There is also another period of time after the period of ovulation and before the start of the next menstrual cycle, referred to as the period of *Yoni Sankocha*. This corresponds with the physiological changes after ovulation in modern science, like thickening of the cervical mucus and reduced receptivity of the vagina for sperm. *Ritukala* emphasizes the significance of appropriate time for conception, while *Shukra Shonit Siddhant* stresses the purity and quality of gametes. They demonstrate that ancient Ayurvedic scholars possessed a profound and useful understanding of the principles underlying human reproduction. Together, they serve as the foundation for Ayurvedic approaches to preconception care, fertility regulation and reproductive health.<sup>[6-8]</sup>



**Figure 1: Phases of the Menstrual Cycle and Timing of Ovulation in Relation to *Ritukala*.**

### Related Diseases and Management

If a man has an excessive amount of *Shukra*, he can develop many different reproductive disorders such as low sperm count (*Kshina shukra*), decreased sperm quantity (*Alpa shukra*), poor sperm quality (*Dusta shukra*), erectile dysfunction (*Klaibhya*) and obstruction of the pylorus where the seminal fluid passes. The management of *Shukra* disorders requires the use of both *Nidana parivarjana* and *Vrishya ahara*. Certain Ayurvedic herbs can also be effective in improving *Shukra* quality and quantity (e.g., *Ashwagandha*, *Kapikacchu*, *Shatavari* and *Gokshura*). *Panchakarma* therapies (*Basti* and *Virechana*) and *Rasayana* and *Vajikarana* therapies can also help to restore *Shukra* health.<sup>[7-9]</sup>

*Shonita* is the female reproductive element that consists of both ovum and endometrial tissue that is necessary for fertility and menstrual health. Disorders of *Shonita* include scanty menstruation (*Artava kshaya*), irregular menstruation (*Artava vridhhi*) and no menstruation (*Anartava*), and various gynecological problems (*Yonivyapad*). All of these disorders are typically the result of imbalances in the *Vata* and *Pitta doshas* of the body. Management focuses on achieving a proper balance of food consumption, adequate nutrition intake, proper healthful living style, and using certain herbs such as *Ashoka*, *Lodhra*, *Dashmoola* or *Kumari*. Also included in management are certain *Panchakarma* procedures like *Uttara Basti* and *Virechana*, which help to maintain normal menstrual functions and correct hormonal imbalance.

*Ritukala* or ovulatory phase is the optimal time for conception and is critical to *Garbhotpatti*. There are several disorders associated with *Ritukala*: irregularities in ovulation, infertility and *Beej Dushti* are some of the more common ones, as are hormonal imbalance and complications associated with anovulation. In management, ensure that there are *Ritucharya* lifestyle activities that coincide with the optimal conception window for coitus (between Days 12-16 of the menstrual cycle) for optimal reproduction, as well as taking care of physical and emotional health. The use of certain restoration herbs, such as *Shatavari*, *Phala Ghrita* and *Putrajeevaka*, will assist with ovulation and improve fertility. In managing the disorders of the reproductive system, several *Panchakarma* therapies should be used to restore and maintain the normal physiological functioning and coordination of *Vata Dosha* which is critical for ovulation and maintaining reproductive capability.<sup>[8-10]</sup>

### CONCLUSION

The Ayurvedic theories of *Shukra* and *Ritukala*, along with *Shonita*, together create a complete, whole person oriented view of the mechanics of human reproduction that is congruent with modern day understandings of gametic creation, ejaculating sperm into an egg and accumulating fluid during one's monthly period. The

three components of *Garbha Sambhav Samagri*, which are *Shukra*, *Shonita* and *Ritukala*, in addition to *Kshetra* and *Ambu*, create a system for sperm and egg conception that consists of one's total ability to conceive. *Shukra* is the male's total ability to function; in other words, it is how healthy and fit the male is for creating sperm. *Shonita* refers to how well the female anatomy works and is structurally integrated so as to assist in helping to give the sperm a right path to fertilize the egg. *Ritukala* emphasizes the appropriate timing of conception to produce the ideal result, guaranteeing that a woman is physiologically ready and able to receive the sperm, fertilize her egg, and go through the various experiences of pregnancy. Disturbances of *Shukra* or *Shonita* and either inappropriate timing of *Ritukala* can produce infertility or abnormal fetal development. This is why Ayurveda focuses on a preventive and promotive approach to conception using an appropriate *Ahara*, *Vihara*, *Panchakarma*, *Rasayana* and *Vajikarana*.

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