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THE FUNCTIONALITY OF *ĀMSAPHALAKA* MARMA IN THE PURVIEW OF *DHĀTU* AND *SRŌTAS*

*Dr. Rohini Hivarale¹, Dr. Isha Herswani², Dr. Papri Nath³

¹MD Scholar, Department of Rachana Sharir, National Institute of Ayurveda, Jaipur, Rajasthan, India.

²Assistant professor, Department of Rachana Sharir, National Institute of Ayurveda, Jaipur, Rajasthan, India.

³Reader, Department of Rachana Sharir J.B. Roy SAMC and Hospital, Kolkata, India.

*Corresponding Author's Email: rohinihivarale11@gmail.com

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Abstract:

Āmsaphalaka Marma is one of the eight *Asthi Marma* described in the *Ayurvedic* classics and is classified as a *Vaikalyakara Marma*. Although its *Viddha Lakṣaṇa* namely *Bāhu Svāpa* and *Bāhu Śoṣa* are well documented, its functional role in relation to *Dhātu* and *Srōtas* has received limited attention. The present review analyses the classical descriptions of *Āmsaphalaka Marma* from *Suśruta Saṃhitā*, *Aṣṭāṅga Hṛdaya*, *Aṣṭāṅga Saṅgraha* to understand its functional significance. The analysis suggests that *Bāhu Svāpa* reflects impairment of *Sparsā Bhāva* mediated by *Vyāna Vāyu*, *Raktavaha Sirā* and *Raktadharā Kalā* while *Bāhu Śoṣa* indicates localized depletion of *Rasa* and *Māṃsa Dhātu* associated with *Rasavaha* and *Māṃsavaha Srōtas*. As an *Asthi Marma* with predominance of *Soma Prāṇa*, *Āmsaphalaka Marma* appears to preserve the structural and functional integrity of the *Bāhu Aṅga* by maintaining its nourishment and strength. The concept of *Vaikalyakara Marma* further supports its role in safeguarding normal function when intact and producing characteristic dysfunction when injured. Thus, *Āmsaphalaka Marma* may be regarded as a functional gateway of the upper limb and understanding its role through the analysis of *Viddha Lakṣaṇa* provides a rational basis for its selection in *Marma Cikitsā* according to the involvement of specific *Dhātu* and *Srōtas* in disease *Samprāpti*.

Key words - *Āmsaphalaka Marma*, *Asthi Marma*, *Vaikalyakara Marma*, *Bāhu Svāpa* and *Bāhu Śoṣa*.

Introduction

Marma is one of the unique concepts described in *Āyurveda* and is considered an important *Pratyāṅgā*ⁱ of the body. It is formed by the conglomeration of *Māṃsa*, *Sirā*, *Snāyu*, *Asthi* and *Sandhi* where *Prāṇa* particularly residesⁱⁱ. Due to the presence of *Prāṇa*, injury to a *Marma* produces characteristic *Viddha Lakṣaṇa* ranging from deformity to fatal consequences depending on the type of *Marma* involved. While the structural features and clinical significance of *Marma* have been extensively described, its normal functional role remains inadequately explored. Understanding *Marma* in relation to *Dhātu* and *Srōtas* may provide a conceptual basis for its functional and therapeutic significance.

Aṃsaphalaka Marma is one of the four bilateral *Asthi Marma* described by *Ācārya Suśruta*. It is classified as a *Vaikalyakara Marma* with predominance of *Soma Prāṇa* and its injury produces *Bāhu Svāpa* and *Śoṣa* indicates its close association with the functional integrity of the *Bāhu*. Although its anatomical location and *Viddha Lakṣaṇa* are well documented, its functional role in relation to *Dhātu* and *Srōtas* has not been conceptually established. Therefore, the present review aims to explore the functional significance of *Aṃsaphalaka Marma* by analysing its *Viddha Lakṣaṇa* and their correlation with the involved *Dhātu* and *Srōtas* thereby providing a conceptual basis for its therapeutic application.

Review of literature -

Etymology of *Aṃsaphalaka Marma* -

The term *Aṃsaphalaka* is derived from two words *Aṃsa* and *Phalaka*. *Amarakośa* explain *Aṃsa* as the upper part of the body adjoining the *Uras* and *Prṣṭha* denotes *Bhujā Śira*ⁱⁱⁱ while *Śābdakalpadruma* derive the word from roots denoting division, junction and support indicating the region where the *Bhujā* articulates with the *Skandha*^{iv}.

The word *Phalaka* refers to a flat, broad and protective structure. *Amarakośa* describes it as a shield (*Kheṭaka*)^v whereas *Śābdakalpadruma* also mention its meanings as a bony plate, wooden board and flat supportive structure^{vi}. Thus, the term *Aṃsaphalaka* denotes the flat bony structure situated in the shoulder region and forms the base for *Aṃsaphalaka Marma*.

Description in Classical Texts -

According to *Suśruta Saṃhitā*, situated on the upper part of the back on both sides of the *Prṣṭhavaṃśa* in relation to the *Trika*. It is one among the *Vaikalyakara Marma* and injury to this *Marma* results in *Bāhu Svāpa* and *Bāhu Śoṣa*^{vii}. The commentator of *Suśruta Saṃhitā*

Ḍalhaṇācārya have acknowledged the term "*Trikasambaddhe*" as junction between both side of *Aṁsa* and *Grīvā*.

Aṣṭāṅga Hṛdayakāra ^{viii} and *Aṣṭāṅga Saṅgrahakāra* ^{ix} describes the *Marma* location on both sides of the *Prṣṭhavaṁśa* near the *Bāhu Mūla* producing the same *Viddha Lakṣaṇa Bāhu Svāpa* and *Bāhu Śoṣa*.

Viddha Lakṣaṇa -

According to *Hemādri* and *Arundatta tika*, *Svāpa* resembles a *Supta Avasthā* where the *Aṅga* becomes *Nīścetana* as in sleep the same way limb loses its awareness^x. The *Bāhu* becomes *Nīścetana* and weakened when *Aṁsaphalaka Marma* is afflicted. The *Lakṣaṇa Svāpa* also found in *Sarvāṅgagata Vātavyādhi*, *Ardita*, *Kuṣṭha* and *Āmaja Jvara* which is given in the table.

Table No.1: Showing Condition of Viddha Lakṣaṇa Svāpa.

Condition of Viddha Lakṣaṇa Svāpa	References
In Context of <i>Sarvāṅgagata Vāyu</i>	स्तम्भनाक्षेपणस्वापशोफशूलानि Su.Ni.1/31
In Context of <i>Ardita (Vātavyādhi)</i> <i>Tvaci Svāpa</i> .	वायुरूर्ध्वं त्वचि स्वापस्तोदो मन्याहनुग्रहः तमर्दितमिति प्राहुर्व्याधिं व्याधिविशारदाः Su.Ni.1/72
In Context of <i>Kuṣṭha (Vātaja)</i> and <i>Kṣudra Kuṣṭha lakṣaṇa</i> .	वातेनारुणाभानितनूनिविसर्पीणितोदभेदस्वापयुक्तान्यरुणानि Su.Ni.5/8 कुष्ठेषु तु त्वक्सङ्कोचस्वापस्वेदशोफभेदकौण्यस्वरोपघाता वातेन Su.Ni.5/18
In Context of <i>Āmaja Jvara</i> .	स्वापः स्तम्भो गुरुत्वं च गात्राणां वह्निमार्दवम् मुखस्याशुद्धिरग्लानिः प्रसङ्गी बलवाञ्ज्वरः लिङ्गैरेभिर्विजानीयाज्वरमामविचक्षणः Su.Utta.39/118

The term *Śoṣa* denotes emaciation or wasting. Classical literature describes *Śoṣa* in relation to several disease conditions including *Rājayakṣmā*, *Rasa Kṣaya*, *Oja Kṣaya*, *Vātavyādhi* and as a manifestation of injury to *Rasavāha* and *Māṁsavāha Srōtas*.

Table No.2: Showing references of Viddha Lakṣaṇa Śoṣa.

Condition of Viddha Lakṣaṇa Śoṣa.	References
In Context of <i>Rājayakṣmā</i> .	रक्तेक्षणत्वं प्रततं शोषो दाहोऽतिधूमकः Ash. Sang.Ni.5/45

	संशोषणाद्रसादीनां शोष इत्यभिधीयते । क्रियाक्षयकरत्वाच्च क्षय इत्युच्यते पुनः ॥ Su. Uttā.41/4
In Context of <i>Rasa Kṣaya</i> .	रसक्षये हृत्पीडा कम्पः शोषः शून्यता तृष्णा च” इति पठन्ति, व्याख्यानयन्ति च- “शोषः शरीरस्य ॥ Su.Su.15/9 Ḍalhaṇa Ṭikā
In Context of <i>Vātavyādhi</i> - <i>Vātaja Nānatmaja Vikāra</i> .	Cha. Su.20/11 - Vātaja Nānatmaja Vikāra.
In Context of <i>Oja Kṣaya</i> .	Su.Su.15/24 Ḍalhaṇa Ṭikā
In Context of <i>Rasavāha Srōtas Viddha Lakṣaṇa</i> .	रसवहे द्वे, तयोर्मूलं हृदयं रसवाहिन्यश्च धमन्यः, तत्र विद्धस्य शोषः प्राणवहविद्धवच्च मरणं तल्लिङ्गानि च ॥ Su. Sha.9/12
In Context of <i>Māṃsavāha Srōtas Viddha Lakṣaṇa</i> .	मांसवहे द्वे, तयोर्मूलं स्नायुत्वचं रक्तवहाश्च धमन्यः, तत्र विद्धस्य श्वयथुर्मांसशोषः सिराग्रन्थयो मरणं च ॥ Su.Sha.9/12
In Context of <i>Raktapitta Updrava</i> (<i>Rakta Atipravṛtti</i>)	उपद्रवास्तु खलु दौर्बल्यारोचकाविपाकश्वासकास ज्वरातीसारशोफ शोषपाण्डुरोगाः स्वरभेदश्च ॥ Ch.Ni. 2/7

Discussion

Aṃsaphalaka Marma is classified as a *Vaikalyakara Marma* with predominance of *Soma Prāṇa*. *Vaikalyakara Marma* not only produces deformity or dysfunction after injury but by applying *Tantrayukti* also indicates its role in preserving the normal function and integrity of the related *Aṅga* when it is intact. Since the *Viddha Lakṣaṇa* of *Aṃsaphalaka Marma* are *Bāhu Svāpa* and *Śoṣa*, its functional domain is the *Bāhu Aṅga*.

Svāpa denotes impairment of *Sparśa Bhāva* due to loss of *Sparśendriya Avabodha* as described in conditions such as *Kuṣṭha*, *Āmajvara* and *Sarvāṅgagata Vyādhi*. Perception of *Sparśa Bhāva* is mediated by *Vyāna Vāyu* through *Tiryagvaha Dhamanī*^{xi} and *Raktavaha Sirā*^{xii}, which is perceived through the *Mūla* of *Māṃsavaha Srōtas*^{xiii} *Twak* and *Raktadharā Kalā* as its *Sthāna*.^{xiv}

The second *Viddha Lakṣaṇa*, *Śoṣa* reflects depletion of *Rasa* and *Māṃsa Dhātu* as observed in *Rasa Kṣaya*, *Oja Kṣaya*, *Rājayakṣmā* and *Rasavaha* and *Māṃsavaha Srōtas Duṣṭi*. Since *Vyāna Vāyu* governs *Rasa Saṃcāraṇa* and *Raktavaha Sirā* is the *Mūla* of *Māṃsavaha Srōtas*^{xv}, their involvement explains the localized manifestation of *Śoṣa* in the *Bāhu Aṅga*. Thus, *Aṃsaphalaka Marma* may be functionally correlated with maintenance of *Sparśa Bhāva*, *Puṣṭi*, and *Vṛddhi* of the *Bāhu* through the coordinated role of *Vyāna Vāyu*, *Raktavaha Sirā*, *Raktadharā Kalā* and *Māṃsavaha Srōtas*.

Aṃsaphalaka is an *Asthi Marma* with predominance of *Soma Prāṇa*. The predominance of *Asthi Avayava* possessing *Rūkṣa* and *Kāṭhinya Guṇa* remains in harmony with the *Snigdha* nature of *Soma Prāṇa* to preserve the structural and functional integrity of the *Marma*. According to *Ḍalhaṇa*, *Vaikalyakara Marma* is characterized by *Trihīna Saṃvāya*^{xvi}. In *Aṃsaphalaka Marma*, the predominance of *Asthi* along with *Māṃsa* and *Sirā* constitutes this structural combination. As *Marma* is also related to *Caturvidhā Sirā*^{xvii}, the involvement of *Raktavaha Sirā*, the *Mūla of Māṃsavaha Srōtas*, further supports its structural and functional significance.

Aṃsaphalaka Marma may be considered the gateway of *Bāhu Aṅga*, as it is functionally associated with the maintenance of *Sparsā Bhāva* and *Puṣṭi Bhāva* through *Vyāna Vāyu* and *Raktavaha Sirā*. This concept is supported by the classical indication of *Sirāvedha* in conditions such as *Bāhu Svāpa* and *Śoṣa*. In traditional practices like *Kuṣṭī*, *Kabaddī*, and *Daṅgala*, tapping over the *Aṃsaphalaka* region before competition has long been practiced as a part of warm-up, which may be interpreted as an attempt to stimulate the functional activity of the *Bāhu Aṅga* and enhance its performance.

The functional understanding of *Aṃsaphalaka Marma* provides a rational basis for its selection in *Marma Cikitsā*. As the *Viddha Lakṣaṇa* of this *Marma* are *Bāhu Svāpa* and *Śoṣa*, it may be inferred that when intact or therapeutically stimulated, it supports the maintenance of *Sparsā Bhāva*, *Puṣṭi*, and functional integrity of the *Bāhu Aṅga* through the coordinated action of *Vyāna Vāyu*, *Raktavaha Sirā*, *Māṃsavaha Srōtas*, and the associated *Dhātus*. Therefore, the selection of *Aṃsaphalaka Marma* in *Marma Cikitsā* should be based on the involvement of these *Dhātu-Srōtas* components in the *Samprāpti* of the disease rather than solely on its anatomical location. This illustrates that understanding the functional role of *Marma* through its *Viddha Lakṣaṇa* provides a conceptual foundation for the rational application of *Marma Cikitsā*.

Conclusion

Based on the analysis of the *Viddha Lakṣaṇa*, *Aṃsaphalaka Marma* appears to have a close functional association with the structures responsible for the strength and normal function of the upper limb. The characteristic manifestations following its injury suggest that this *Marma* plays an important role in preserving *Bāhu Bala* and movement. Therefore, *Aṃsaphalaka Marma* may be considered a functional gateway for the upper limb. From the perspective of *Marma Cikitsā*, appropriate stimulation of this *Marma* may help maintain or improve its associated functions. Traditional physical practices such as *Daṇḍa* and *Kuṣṭī* warm-up exercises may also derive part of their beneficial effects through the stimulation of *Aṃsaphalaka Marma*, thereby supporting the functional efficiency of the upper limb.

- ⁱ Sushruta Samhita - Nibandhasaṅgra Commentary of Shri Dalhanacarya, Edited by Yadavaji Trikamji Acarya; Chaukhamba Orientalia Varanasi, 9th Edition 2020- 364 p
- ⁱⁱ Sushruta Samhita - Nibandhasaṅgra Commentary of Shri Dalhanacarya, Edited by Yadavaji Trikamji Acarya; Chaukhamba Orientalia Varanasi, 9th Edition 2020- 371 p
- ⁱⁱⁱ Amarasiṃha. *Amarakośa*. Aṣṭādhyāyī Sanskrit Database. Available from: <https://ashtadhyayi.com> .
- ^{iv} Śabdakalpadrūma. Aṣṭādhyāyī Sanskrit Database. Available from: <https://ashtadhyayi.com>.
- ^v Amarasiṃha. *Amarakośa*. Aṣṭādhyāyī Sanskrit Database. Available from: <https://ashtadhyayi.com> .
- ^{vi} Śabdakalpadrūma. Aṣṭādhyāyī Sanskrit Database. Available from: <https://ashtadhyayi.com>
- ^{vii} Sushruta Samhita - Nibandhasaṅgra Commentary of Shri Dalhanacarya, Edited by Yadavaji Trikamji Acarya; Chaukhamba Orientalia Varanasi, 9th Edition 2020.- 374 p.
- ^{viii} Ashtanga Hridaya with the commentaries Sarvāṅgasundar of Arundatta and Ayurveda Rasayana of Hemadri, edited by Pandit Hari Sadasiva Sastri Paradakara Bhisagacarya; Chaukhamba Orientalia, Varanasi, Reprint -6th edition – 411 p.
- ^{ix} Ashtanga Hridaya with the commentaries Sarvāṅgasundar of Arundatta and Ayurveda Rasayana of Hemadri, edited by Pandit Hari Sadasiva Sastri Paradakara Bhisagacarya; Chaukhamba Orientalia, Varanasi, Reprint -6th edition – 411 p
- ^x Ashtanga Samgraha with Hindi Commentary, by Kaviraj Atrideva Gupta, Chaukhamba Krishnadas Academy, Reprint 2005
- ^{xi} Sushruta Samhita - Nibandhasaṅgra Commentary of Shri Dalhanacarya, Edited by Yadavaji Trikamji Acarya; Chaukhamba Orientalia Varanasi, 9th Edition 2020.- 385 p.
- ^{xii} Sushruta Samhita - Nibandhasaṅgra Commentary of Shri Dalhanacarya, Edited by Yadavaji Trikamji Acarya; Chaukhamba Orientalia Varanasi, 9th Edition 2020.-377 p.
- ^{xiii} Sushruta Samhita - Nibandhasaṅgra Commentary of Shri Dalhanacarya, Edited by Yadavaji Trikamji Acarya; Chaukhamba Orientalia Varanasi, 9th Edition 2020.- 386 p.
- ^{xiv} Sushruta Samhita - Nibandhasaṅgra Commentary of Shri Dalhanacarya, Edited by Yadavaji Trikamji Acarya; Chaukhamba Orientalia Varanasi, 9th Edition 2020.-355 p
- ^{xv} Sushruta Samhita - Nibandhasaṅgra Commentary of Shri Dalhanacarya, Edited by Yadavaji Trikamji Acarya; Chaukhamba Orientalia Varanasi, 9th Edition 2020.-386 p
- ^{xvi} Sushruta Samhita - Nibandhasaṅgra Commentary of Shri Dalhanacarya, Edited by Yadavaji Trikamji Acarya; Chaukhamba Orientalia Varanasi, 9th Edition 2020.-371 p
- ^{xvii} Sushruta Samhita - Nibandhasaṅgra Commentary of Shri Dalhanacarya, Edited by Yadavaji Trikamji Acarya; Chaukhamba Orientalia Varanasi, 9th Edition 2020 – 372 p