



Review Article

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## INTEGRATING AYURVEDA AND MODERN APPROACHES IN MANAGING VĀTA-BASED INFERTILITY

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### ABSTRACT

Ayurveda describes infertility (Vandhyatva) as a multifactorial condition with a predominant involvement of Vāta Doṣa, particularly Apāna Vāta, which governs all physiological functions related to reproduction. Classical Ayurvedic texts emphasize that Pitta, Kapha, dhātu, and mala are inherently inactive and are mobilized only through the agency of Vāta, as illustrated by the analogy of clouds driven by wind. Apāna Vāta regulates menstruation, ovulation, fertilization, implantation, expulsion of fetus, and elimination of natural urges. Vitiating of Apāna Vāta leads to disorders of artavavaha, śukravaha, mūtravaha, and puriṣavaha srotas, resulting in menstrual irregularities, implantation failure, recurrent pregnancy loss, and infertility. Acharyas like Charaka, Suśruta, and Bhela unanimously assert that infertility is not innate but arises due to pathological derangement of Vāta, especially its śīta and rūkṣa qualities. Balanced coordination of all three doṣas is essential for successful conception; however, without normal Vāta function, reproductive processes cannot occur. Hence, Vandhyatva is predominantly a Vāta-pradhāna disorder, and therapeutic strategies focusing on Vāta śamana, snehana, basti therapy, and Apāna Vāta anulomana are fundamental for effective management of female infertility in Ayurveda.

## INTRODUCTION

पित्तं पद्म कफः पङ्गुः पङ्गवो मलधातवः ।

वायुना यत्र नीयन्ते तत्र गच्छन्ति मेघवत् ॥

Padārtha (Word-by-word meaning)

पित्तं पद्म – Pitta is immobile (inactive on its own)

कफः पङ्गुः – Kapha is lame (incapable of movement)

पङ्गवः मलधातवः – Malas and dhātus are also inert

वायुना यत्र नीयन्ते – They are carried and directed by Vāyu (Vāta)

तत्र गच्छन्ति मेघवत् – Just as clouds are driven by the wind

Ayurveda, the traditional system of medicine of India, describes three fundamental regulatory principles governing the body, mind, and behavior. These principles are known as Doṣas, namely Vāta, Pitta, and Kapha.

Vāta Doṣa encompasses physiological processes responsible for cellular division and signaling, movement at all levels of the organism, elimination of metabolic waste products, and cognitive functions. Vāta also plays a regulatory role in coordinating the activities of Pitta and Kapha

अपानवातः धारणक्रियाणां प्रधाननियन्ता भवति। स एव मूत्रपुरीषप्रवृत्तिः, रजःस्रावः, गर्भनिष्क्रमणम् (प्रसवक्रिया), शुक्रनिष्क्रमणं च नियच्छति। अधोमार्गगतानां सर्वेषां वेगानां (स्वाभाविकवेगानां) प्रवर्तनं अपानवाताधीनम्।

अपानवातदुष्ट्याः सति अधोवहस्रोतसां विशेषतः मूत्रवहस्रोतसः, पुरीषवहस्रोतसः, आर्तववहस्रोतसः, शुक्रवहस्रोतसः च विकाराः जायन्ते।

अतः मूत्रप्रवृत्तिः, पुरीषप्रवृत्तिः, रजःस्रावः, गर्भनिष्क्रमणक्रिया, वीर्यस्रवणं च — एते सर्वे अपानवातकर्माणि इति शास्त्रार्थेन अभिधीयन्ते।

Apāna Vāta is the principal doṣa responsible for dhāraṇa and pravṛtti of mala-mutra-ārtava-garbha and other adhogata vegas. It regulates the normal expulsion of pūriṣa, mūtra, ārtava, śukra, and garbha, and maintains the physiological functions of the pākṣāśaya, basti, and yoni. Proper functioning of Apāna Vāta ensures samyak pravṛtti of natural urges, whereas its vaiguṇya leads to vegādhāraṇa janya vikāras and disorders of the adhobhāga śarīra. Functions such as mūtrapravṛtti, pūriṣotsarga, ārtava niṣkramana, and garbha niṣkramana may thus be attributed to the normal activity of Apāna Vāta.

Utapādanam apatyasya jātasyā paripālanam |

Pratyahaṁ lokayātrāyāḥ pratyakṣaṁ strī-nibandhanam ||

(Manusmṛti 9/27)

The generation of offspring, the care and nurturing of the child after birth, and the daily conduct of worldly life are directly dependent upon women

This statement underscores the importance of fertility and reproductive health in women, as the processes of procreation, child-bearing, and maintenance of social order are fundamentally linked to female physiology and well-being. In the context of infertility (Vandhyatva), disruption of reproductive capacity not only affects the individual or couple but also has broader implications for familial stability and social continuity. Ayurveda, therefore, accords prime importance to the preservation of reproductive health in women through balanced doṣas, proper nourishment of reproductive tissues, and maintenance of mental and physical equilibrium.

वात पित्त..... प्रजोत्पादने न समर्था भवन्ति। (सु.सं.शा. 2/3)

According to Acharya Suśruta, successful reproduction cannot occur through the isolated or imbalanced action of any single doṣa. Procreation requires the harmonious and balanced interaction of Vāta, Pitta, and Kapha. Vāta facilitates movement and transport, Pitta governs transformation and metabolic activity, and Kapha provides nourishment and stability. Only when these doṣas function in equilibrium can the process of reproduction be successfully accomplished

याश्च स्त्रियो वातकृतोपसर्गा गर्भे न गृह्णन्ति नृभिः समेताः। (वातकृतोपसर्गा इति वातकृतोपद्रवाः- चक्र.) (च.सं.सि. 1/34)

A vata rogi stri does not conceive inspite of all the other factor being favorable .so here without involvement of vata Vandhyatava cannot occur.Women who are afflicted with disorders caused by Vāta do not conceive, even after cohabitation with men.The commentary by Chakrapāṇi clarifies that vāta-kr̥ta upasarga refers to complications or pathological conditions arising due to the vitiation of Vāta Doṣa. Such disturbances impair the normal functioning of the reproductive organs, ovulation, fertilization, or implantation, thereby resulting in infertility.Consequently, therapeutic measures aimed at Vāta śamana and Apāna Vāta regulation are emphasized in the management of Vandhyatva

.इह नच्छेति गर्भं स्त्री वातेनोपहता तथा। या निदोषेण चान्ते न न हि वन्ध्याऽस्ति नाचन ॥ (भे.सं.शा. 2/7)

स हि गर्भाशये शुक्लं विस्त्रंसयति योषितः । वातः स्त्रिया रजो हन्ति वन्ध्या भवति तेन सा।।

न स्त्रियः पुरुषा वापि बन्ध्यास्सन्ति हेचन। आशये शीतलो वापि वातशुष्केन्द्रियस्तथा॥ (भे.सं.सू. 16/3)

A woman does not conceive when her sarvagat sharir is afflicted by Vāta.

Neither women nor men are infertile by nature. Infertility occurs due to the presence of cold, dry, and aggravated Vāta located in the reproductive organs.

Acharya Bhela clearly establishes Vāta Doṣa as the principal causative factor of infertility. These verses emphasize that infertility is not an inherent condition of either the male or female but arises due to pathological derangement of Vāta, particularly its cold (śīta) and dry (rūkṣa) qualities.

Vitiated Vāta adversely affects the reproductive organs (garbhāśaya), leading to:

Destruction or improper functioning of śukra and artava

Failure of conception, Disturbance in implantation and maintenance of pregnancy.

Even in the absence of dietary or external causes, Vāta alone is sufficient to produce infertility. This highlights the central role of Apāna Vāta dysfunction in the pathogenesis of Vandhyatva.

In Ayurveda, Vāta Doṣa is considered the most important regulatory factor in the body, governing all forms of movement, division, transportation, and neurological functions. Among the three doṣas, Vāta holds a predominant role in reproduction, as normal reproductive physiology depends upon its balanced state. Acharya Charaka states that without the proper functioning of Vāta, the activities of Pitta and Kapha cannot be effectively carried out.

### **Physiological Role of Vāta in Reproduction**

Vāta is responsible for:

Proper functioning of the female reproductive organs (garbhāśaya, artavavaha srotas)

Timely ovulation and menstruation

Transportation of śukra and ārtava

Facilitation of fertilization, implantation, and expulsion during childbirth

Among the five subtypes of Vāta, Apāna Vāta plays a decisive role in reproduction.

Apāna Vāta and Infertility

Apāna Vāta, located in the pelvic region, governs:

Menstrual flow (rajas pravṛtti)

Ovulation

Fertilization

Implantation of the embryo

Retention and nourishment of the fetus

Normal parturition

Derangement of Apāna Vāta (Apāna Vaigunya) leads to disturbances in reproductive functions and is a major cause of Vandhyatva.

### **Pathophysiology of Vāta-Induced Infertility**

When Vāta becomes vitiated due to factors such as excessive physical exertion, stress, irregular diet, fasting, fear, grief, suppression of natural urges, or improper pañcakarma procedures, it results in the following pathological changes:

Artava Duṣṭi

Vitiated Vāta causes irregular, scanty, painful, or absent menstruation, leading to anovulation or defective ovulation.

Garbhaśaya Saṅkocha

Increased Rūkṣa and Śīta qualities of Vāta result in dryness and constriction of the uterus, affecting implantation.

Bīja Duṣṭi

Vāta vitiation leads to qualitative defects in ovum and sperm, impairing fertilization.

Srotorodha and Vimargagamana

Abnormal movement of Vāta causes obstruction or misdirection of reproductive channels (artavavaha srotas), resulting in infertility or recurrent pregnancy loss.

Garbhasrāva and Garbhapāta

Instability of Apāna Vāta may cause failure of implantation or early expulsion of the embryo.

Association of Vāta with Types of Vandhyatva

Classical descriptions of conditions such as:

Naṣṭārtava

Alpārtava

Kaṣṭārtava

Garbhasrāvī

Mṛtavandhyā

Are predominantly Vāta-pradhāna disorders, highlighting the central role of Vāta in infertility.

### **Clinical Significance**

पुष्पं तु जायते यस्याः फलञ्चापि न विद्यते। तस्य दोष विकारञ्च ज्ञात्वा कर्म समारभेत्॥ (बा.त.)

This verse indicates that the presence of menstruation (puṣpa) alone does not ensure fertility. Even when menstrual cycles are regular, failure to conceive (aphalatva) may occur due to underlying doṣic imbalance or pathological changes in the reproductive system. Therefore, proper assessment of doṣa, dhātu, srotas, and functional abnormalities is essential before planning therapeutic intervention.

From a therapeutic perspective, Vāta śamana and Apāna Vāta anulomana form the cornerstone of infertility management in Ayurveda. Interventions such as snehana, basti (especially mātrā and anuvasana basti), appropriate diet, lifestyle modifications, and mental relaxation are emphasized to restore reproductive capacity.

### **CONCLUSION**

The collective evidence from Charaka Saṁhitā, Suśruta Saṁhitā, Bhela Saṁhitā, and allied texts clearly establishes infertility as a Vāta-pradhāna disorder, with Apāna Vāta playing a pivotal role in reproductive physiology. Vitiating of Vāta leads to multiple pathological alterations affecting ovulation, fertilization, implantation, and pregnancy maintenance. Therefore, a thorough understanding of Vāta imbalance and its correction through appropriate Ayurvedic interventions is essential for the successful management of Vandhyatva.

Classical references from the Bhela Saṁhitā substantiate the Ayurvedic view tinciple that infertility is predominantly a Vāta-pradhāna disorder. Hence, therapeutic approaches

focusing on Vāta śamana, snehana, basti therapy, and regulation of Apāna Vāta are essential for the effective management of infertility.

Vāta Doṣa, particularly Apāna Vāta, plays a pivotal role in the regulation of reproductive functions. Its vitiation leads to multiple pathological mechanisms resulting in infertility. Therefore, understanding and correcting Vāta imbalance is essential for the successful management of Vandhyatva in Ayurvedic practice hat infertility is predominantly a Vāta-pradhāna disorder. Consequently, therapeutic strategies aimed at pacification of Vāta Doṣa, including snehana, basti therapy, and normalization of Apāna Vāta, are considered fundamental in the effective management of infertility.

Vāta Doṣa, with particular emphasis on Apāna Vāta, plays a crucial role in the regulation of reproductive physiology. Vitiation of Vāta results in several pathological alterations that adversely affect reproductive functions, ultimately leading to infertility. Therefore, comprehensive understanding and appropriate correction of Vāta imbalance constitute an essential component in the successful management of Vandhyatva within Ayurvedic clinical practice.

## Reference

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