



**IJAYUSH**  
*International Journal of AYUSH*  
AYURVEDA, YOGA, UNANI, SIDDHA AND HOMEOPATHY  
<http://internationaljournal.org.in/journal/index.php/ijayush/>

International Journal  
Panacea  
Research library  
ISSN: 2349 7025

Review Article

Volume 11 Issue 4

July-August 2022

## LITERARY STUDY ON DESCRIPTIONS OF *SROTAS* IN ANCIENT AYURVEDA TEXTS

**Dr. Pradeep Kumar Chouhan**

Associate Professor & HOD, Rachana Sharir Dept., Govt. Ashtang Ayurved College, Indore,  
India

### Abstract

*Srotas* are defined as micro-channels of biological system involve in transportation of bio-materials. *Srotas* are branches of large tubules which can be correlated with *Dhamanis* and *Sira* on the basis of their functional similarities. *Srotas* are considered as channels of transportation inside the body, the ancient Ayurveda texts described *Srotas* in various means and some literatures presented unique knowledge on *Srotas*. The *Vedas* described *Srotas* in very concise manner. Here other terms used to describe *Srotas* or related structure in *Vedas* such as *Hira*, *Antreshu*, *Asrava*, *Gavinyau*, *Dhamani*, *Srotyah*, *Panth*, *Khani*, *Srawanti*, *Dwar* and *Nadi*, etc. Similarly Ayurvedic *Samhitas* described anatomico-physiological and pathological aspects of *Srotas*. Ayurveda *Samhitas* considered *Srotas* as channels of circulation which carry *Prana*, *Jala*, *Anna*, *Dhatus* and *Malas*, etc. The ancient descriptions on *Srotas* encompass huge information about the anatomical and physiological perspectives of these micro-channels.

**Key-Words:** *Ayurveda*, *Srotas*, *Micro-channels*, *Samhitas*

## Introduction

Ayurveda classics described *Srotas* as channels of body which play important role towards the physiological activities of body and govern many processes related to the transportation of bio-materials. *Srotas* exhibited interconnected network lying in the whole body which also serves as circulatory system of body. The *Ayanmukha*, *Chhidra*, *Marga*, *Ayan*, *Nadi*, *Niketa* and *Sthana*, etc. are other synonyms of *Srotas* [1-4]. The **Figure 1**, depicted specific functions of *Srotas*.



**Figure 1: Specific functions of *Srotas***

According to *Charaka* *Srotas* possess relevant appearance to the transportable *Dhatus*, may be cylindrical in shape, may appear as long or straight or reticulate and macroscopic or microscopic in size. According to *Sushrut* there are eleven pairs of *Srotas* and their *Srotomulas*. It is stated that excluding the *Sira* and *Dhamani* the *Srotas* appears as a structure originated from its *Mula*. The description of *Srotas* differs according to the different texts of Ayurveda. This study presented descriptions of *Srotas* according to various ancient texts [4-6].

### **Aim & Objectives:**

1. To summarize descriptions on *Srotas* according to various ancient texts and Ayurveda *Samhitas*.

### **Material & Method of Literary Study:**

1. To compile the literature regarding *Srotas* according to various *Ayurvedic* classics, commentaries and research work carried out by different scholars.
2. The conclusion obtained from the study is presented in a systemic manner after proper discussion.

Since this study was planned purely on conceptual basis, the classical and modern literatures were used as principle materials for the study. After a literary study the logical conclusion was made on the basis of evidence and data interpretation.

### **SROTAS DESCRIPTIONS IN ANCIENT VEDAS:**

#### ***Atharva Veda:***

There are several words used in *Atharva Veda* for the *Srotas* including *Hira*, *Antreshu*, *Asrava*, *Gavinyau*, *Pantha*, *Dhamani*, *Path*, *Khani*, *Srotya*, *Srawanati* and *Dwara*, etc.

#### ***Yajur Veda:***

*Shukla-Yajurveda* consist term *Nirabhi-Srawanati* which signifies *Srotas*. The synonyms and functionally (physiological aspect) *Hira* and *Srawanati* are used for *Srotas*. In another hymn, the meaning of *Pathin Panthah* is the singular and *Pathibhih* is plural of *Marga*, which is synonym of *Srotas*. The *Pranasya Pantha*, which denotes the *Parnavaha Srotas* and the functions of *Prana-Vayus* and *Vyan-Vayus*, are also indicated. Some other words are also used in *Yajurveda* with respect to *Srotas* as *Srutya* (narrow path), *Pathya* (large path), *Kulya*, *Sarsya* (path), *Nipya* and *Katya*. The words with case endings like *Panthanah*, *Pathi* and *Patha* denotes the meaning of *Marga*, which are synonyms of *Srotas*. The word *Patho* is used for the sense of *Annavaha Srotas*.

### ***Rigveda:***

*Rigveda* mentioned the terms like *Patha*, *Pantha* and *Akah* in the sense of *Marga*, which are synonyms of *Srotas*. The word '*Antra*' is used in the sense of *Annavaha Srotas*.

### ***ShrimadBhagawatGeeta:***

The term '*Dwar*' in *Bhagawat Geeta* has been used in the sense of *Srotas* in the context of *Navadwara*, which are nine external openings of the body. The word *Srotas* is used for the river in *Srotasmasmi Janhavi* [6-9].

### ***SROTAS DESCRIPTIONS IN UPNISHAD:***

#### ***Atmopanishad:***

*Srotas* has been used for the water, falls due to its constantly flowing nature in this ancient compendium.

#### ***Shwetashwaropanishad***

The meaning of *Srotas* signifies as flowing characteristics of water due to its originating and constantly flowing nature of river and the term *Srotas* was used in the reference of *Manovaha Srotas*. The word *Pantha- Navadwara* was used in the sense of *Marga* and external opening of the body.

#### ***Dhahyayana Grihya Sutra***

This text described clear concept about *Vahya Srotas*.

#### ***Brahma Purana***

*Brahma Purana* described the term *Path* as *Marga*, which can be considered synonym of the *Srotas*.

#### ***Padma Purana:***

This text described *Srotas* in *Sharirotpatti Adhyaya*; here *Srotas* of body compared with the overflowing falls, which originating from the mountain and flowing continuously as like *Srota*.

### ***SROTAS DESCRIPTIONS IN AYURVEDIC SAMHITAS:***

The Indian system of medicine; Ayurveda described *Srotas* in well defined manner and *Ayurvedic Samhitas* elaborated anatomical, physiological and pathological concepts of *Srotas*. They are described as channels of circulation that carry *Prana, Anna, Jala, Dhatus* and *Malas*.

#### ***Charak Samhita:***

*Charak Samhita* described some facts and observation about the availability of *Srotas* inside the body, it defined *Srotas* as structure through which the '*Srawanam*' takes place in the sense of cardiovascular system. The types of *Srotas* are same as *Murtimanto-Bhav-Vishesh* and several synonyms of *Srotas* as described by *Acharya Charak* as follows:

1. *Srotasmsi*
2. *Sira*
3. *Dhamanis*
4. *Rasayanya*
5. *Rasavahinya*
6. *Nadya*
7. *Panthan*
8. *Marga*
9. *Sharir-chhidra*
10. *Samvrita-asamvrita*
11. *Sthanas*
12. *Ashayas*
13. *Niketa*
14. *Ayana*

The further description of *Charak Samhita* involve information about *Srotomukha Ayan* which consisting of two words; *Ayan* and *Mukha*. *Ayan* means movement or motion or going on i.e. the structure through which different *Dravyas* going on the one place to another. The word *Mukha* is formed by much "*Mukhachedey Dhatu*", which means to drop or to be free or entrance. According to *Chakrapanidutta*, the word *Ayanani* means inlet or outlet, and *Mukha* means opening or pores.

### ***Sushrut Samhita:***

*Acharya Sushrut* has mentioned about the numbers, kinds and functions of *Srotas* in the context of *Srotoviddha Lakshanas* (symptom of injuries), as may have been inflicted on their *Mulas* as origin. He has described eleven pairs of *Srotas*, which called *Yogavahi Srotas*. *Sushrut* has also mentioned the differentiation of *Srotas* as from *Sira* and *Dhamanis*.

According to *Sushrut*, *Srotas* means, the ducts emanating from the *Mula Khat* (cavity of the heart) other than the *Siras* (veins) and found to course through the whole body, but *Charak* says it is not differentiated *Sira* and *Dhamani* from *Srotas*.

Some point in favour of differentiation *Srotas* from *Sira* and *Dhamani* are as follows:

1. Difference in structure
2. Difference in *Mula*
3. Difference in functions

In spite of differentiation of *Srotas* from *Sira* and *Dhamani* the consideration of following points suggested in context to the differentiation:

1. *Paraspara Sannikarishata*
2. *Sadrashagamanata*
3. *Sadrashakarmatwata*
4. *Shoukshamyachcha*.

All these facts about the function of *Srotas* but these function seems to be similar i.e. it is believed that except large structures *Siras* and *Dhamanis*, other tubular structures which responsible for transportation of *Dravyas* are *Srotas*.

### ***Ashtang Sangrah:***

The *Vradha Vagbhatta* described *Srotas* in similar manner as described by *Acharya Charak*. According to *Ashtang Sangrahar*, there are innumerable numbers of *Srotas* in the body and minute *Srotas* as form a network inside the body. The human body is composed of *Srotas* and *Srotas* are same in number as the structural entity in it. *Acharya Vagbhatta* has described two types as external and internal *Srotas*. External *Srotas* are nine in male and twelve in female and internal *Srotas* are thirteen in the body.

### ***Ashtang Hridaya:***

*Ashtang Hridaya* described *Srotas* in similar manner as described in *Ashtang Sangrah*. The *Manovaha* and *Sangyavaha Srotas* have been included in the treatment of *Unmaad* and *Apasmar*.

### ***Bhel Samhita:***

*Bhel Samhita* has no separate chapter for description of *Srotas*, but the distinct matters about *Srotas* are found in several chapters. In *Chikitsasthan*, the term *Srotas* with its synonyms used in a number of diseases in the sense of *Srotodushti*.

### ***Kashyap Samhita:***

*Acharya Kashyap* has also given the facts regarding the *Srotas*. He described two types of *Srotas*; *Sukshma* and *Mahan*. *Sukshma Srotas* are *Nabhi* (umbilicus) and *Romakoopa* (hair follicles), and *Mahan Srotas* are nine in number, in which two are in the lower part of the body and seven in the head region.

### ***Sharangdhar Samhita:***

*Acharya Sharangdhar* at the place of *Srotas* mentioned the word *Randhra*. The word *Randhra* is used as the synonyms of *Srotas*. He told that each blood and flash has large orifices namely one in each of eyes, nose and ears, one in urethra, one of the rectums, one

of the mouths and tenth is in the head. Females have three in extra, one each in the two breasts and third in the uterus. He also described innumerable minute pores that are situated in the skin. According to *Sharangdhar, Man, Prana, Anna, Jala, Dosha, Dhatu, Updhatu* and its *Mala, Mutra* all those transportation passages are called *Srotas*.

### ***Bhavprakash Samhita:***

*Srotas* are same as described in *Sharangdhar*; they are innumerable and not countable.

### **Discussion**

*Acharya Sushrut* had given more emphasis on knowledge of structure and function of human body so that the surgical inventions may be applied in case of diseased condition.

The ancient knowledge of *Srotas* is stored in Ayurveda compendia like *Charak Samhita* and *Sushrut Samhita* etc. The *Ayurvedic* personnel have been paying full efforts to acquaint the modern knowledge to compare with ancient knowledge and to explore the same.

*Charak Samhita*, where the *Dhamanis* are synonymised for *Srotas* and *Sira* is the context of *Hridaya*, the heart. Thus what is said by *Charak Samhita*, that the *Dhamani, Sira* and *Srotas* are as synonymous and opposed by *Sushrut Samhita*. However, the *Dhamanis* and *Siras* are also hollow organs and take part in transportation of liquid. In the same way under caption of *Dhamani-Vyakarana*, a division of upwards *Dhamanis* includes channels for *Shabda, Sparsha, Rupa, Rasa* and *Gandha*, whereas all the five are not in liquid form nor soluble in liquid nor portable by liquid. *Acharya Sushrut* had something different ideology regarding *Dhamani* and *Sira*. The knowledge of *Srotas* in anatomy starts from the *Vedic* era and descends to modern age. The references found in *Vedic* literature are mainly related with the human body structure, the anatomical concept of *Srotas* had been established scientifically with the descent of Ayurveda and the same was used in defining the pathogenesis and treatment of diseases [7-11].

### **Conclusion:**

The *Vedas, Upnishad, Grahya-Sutra* and *Puranas* described various terms in the sense of *Srotas*. The comprehensive meaning of *Srotas* is expressed in *Charak Samhita*. *Sushrut* differs while defining the *Srotas* different from *Sira* and *Dhamani*. According to *Vagbhata*,



the fine passages and pores resembling to the structures of lotus-stem are the *Srotasas* in the human body. *Charak Samhita*, described *Srotas* in different context of body composition. *Charak* mentioned *Srotasas* as material parts in human body, where as *Sushrut Samhita* mentioned *Srotasas* in *Sharir-Sankhya-Vyakarana* chapter in the context of a developing fetus in a womb. There is the reason to differentiate the *Srotas* from other structures laid down in *Charak Samhita* and *Sushrut Samhita*. In *Charak Samhita*, *Arthe-Dasha-Mahamuliya* ten grand vessels intact to heart described as *Dhamani*, *Srotas* and *Sira* synonymously, whereas in *Sushrut Samhita*, *Dhamani-Vyakarana* the *Srotas* as are said to be quite different from *Dhamani* and *Sira*. However all major texts of Ayurveda mentioned the term *Srotas* as unite of transportation and circulation. This study concluded that ancient Ayurveda texts/*Vedas*, *Samhitas* and *Upanishad*, etc. all are presented description which are directly or indirectly related to the *Srotas*.

## References

1. Agnivesha, Srotasam Vimanam 5th chapter, vimanasthan in Sharma RK and Dash B. Charaksamhita (with English translation and critical exposition based on Chakrapanidutt's Ayurveda dipika) vol II, Chowkhambha Sanskrita Series, Varanasi, sixth Edition; 2000. p. 171.
2. Susruta, Sharir Sankhyavyakarana 5th chapter, sharirsthan in Murthy Shrikant KR, Susruta Samhita Vol. I, English translation Chowkhambhaorientalia, Varanasi, Reprint edition; 2008. p. 81.
3. Astanga Hrdayam Angavibhagsariram 3 rd chapter, sharirsthan by Prof KR. Srikantha Murthy, English translation Vol.1 Krishnadas Academy, Varanasi, Fifth edition; 2001. p. 402.
4. ShastriKashinathPt, CharakaSamhitha of Agnivesha, Chakrapanidatta by Chaukamba Sanskrit Sansthan Varanasi, 2011; I.
5. Kottur S.B, A Textbook of Ayurvedic Physiology, ChaukambhaOrientalia, Varanasi, 2007.

6. Prof. Srikantha Murthy K.R., Sushruta of SushrutaSamhitha with Dalhana commentary with English translation, Vol I, ChaukambhaVishwabharathi Varanasi Reprint, 2010.
7. P. V. Sharma editor–translator. CarakaSamhitaVol-I. Reprint ed. Varanasi: ChaukhambaOrientalia; 2011. Vimansthana V/25, p.333.
8. Charaksamhita, Vimanasthana, Srotasamvimanam, 5/3, Sharma RK and Dash B. English translation based on Chakrapanidatta's Ayurveda dipika, Volume- II, 6th edition, ChowkhambhaSanskrita Series, Varanasi, 2007; 171.
9. AbhinavaSharirm: By Vadhya Pt. DamodharSarma, Gaur, Part 1st and 2nd, shriBaidyanathAyurvedBhawan Ltd., Nagpur, 1982.
10. Bhav-Prakash: ShriBhava Mishra, vidyotini Hindi, Commentary by ShriBhram-Shankar Shastri, Chaokhambha, Sanskrit Sansthan, Varanasi, 9<sup>th</sup> ed., VikramSamwat 2056.
11. KashyapSamhita: Varadh-JeevakTantra, by Pt. Khemraj Sharma, Chaukambha Sanskrit Sansthan, Varanasi, 2006.