

## THE CONCEPTUAL STUDY OF SROTASA SHARIR IN ANCIENT AYURVEDIC SCIENCE

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### ABSTRACT

Ayurveda was proved very beneficial for life, Ayurveda mention that health is mental, spiritual and social wellbeing. For this concept Ayurveda describe dosha (Vitiating factor) Dhatu (Tissue element) and Mala (Waste product) to maintain continuity life cycle this element have to be continuously regenerate, nourished and replaced. The different place where this process take place are known as Srotasa. The Ayurveda science describes Antarmukh and Bahirmukh Srotasa. Srotasa is the channel present throughout the body for the purpose of circulation. The potency of channel is necessary to maintain healthy status of body. The disease state is caused by obstruction in Srotasa lead to illness.

**KEYWORDS:** Ayurveda, Srotas, channels, Dosha, Dhatu, Mala.

### INTRODUCTION

The concepts of Ayurveda are like roots of the tree, one amongst them is Srotas. The human body is a conglomeration of the Srotas as per our classics.<sup>[1]</sup> Body is composed of numerous Srotas which have significant role in the maintenance of the equilibrium of body elements. They are responsible for the maintenance of health as well as diseased condition.<sup>[2]</sup> Srotas are derivatives or modification of the Pancha Mahabhuta especially Akash Mahabhuta. If considered physiologically, Srotas are the channels through which different elements undergo transformation, transmutation, circulation and transportation. Apart from their normal physiological function they are responsible for the normalcy as well as vitiation of Doṣas. Hence in view of Sharira Rachana, Sharira Kriya, Roga Nidana and Chikitsa a detailed & clear knowledge of Srotas become very much necessary as it is responsible for carrying and

transformation of tissue elements there by maintaining the health. Another concept of Srotas is its microscopic description. Their function includes nourishment, circulation, excretion and reproduction. Role of Srotas in the maintenance of health and also in bringing out a pathological condition.<sup>[3]</sup>

## DISCUSSION

**Table no. 1. Showing division of thirteen Sthūla Srotas**

<b>Important most vital conductor</b>	<b>Srotas of Dhātus</b>	<b>Srotas of Malas</b>
Prāṇavaha Srotas	Rasavaha Srotas	Mūtravaha Srotas
Udakavaha Srotas	Raktavaha Srotas	Purīṣavaha Srotas
Annavaḥa Srotas	Māmsavaha Srotas	Swedavaha Srotas
	Medavaha Srotas	
	Asthivaha Srotas	
	Majjāvaha Srotas	
	Śukravaha Srotas	

### Nirukti of Srotas

1. “**Sru – Gatau Kśarane**” Dhātu proves the word Srotas, in which any liquid flows.
2. “**Sravati Iti Srotah**” means where there is Sravaṇa or flow of Doṣa, Dhātu, Mala occurs, that is Srotas. Gati word denotes three meanings, Gyana, Gamana, Prapti. In context of Srotas it means Prāpti or Gamana of Doṣa, Dhatu and Mala.
3. In Ayurveda the main symptom is “**Sravanāt Srotāmsi**”. Here Sravaṇa means Syandana because this meaning is more appropriate for medical science.
4. The word Srotas is originated from the main Sanskrit root “**Sru Srawane**” meaning the structure to flow, Nisārana (to exudates), Pravāhana (to filter), Nirashchya (to ooze), and Ativedhana (permeate).

### Synonyms of srotas

Synonyms of Srotas given by Acharya Charaka are Srotas (channels), Sirā (vein), Dhamanī (artery), Rasayani (lymphatic channels), Rasavāhini (capillary), Nadi (duct), Pantha (passage), Marga (track), Sharira Chhidra (spaces inside the body), Samvrtasamvrata (open or blind passage), Sthana (site, locus), Ashaya (container), Niketa (resorts).<sup>[4]</sup> Srotas are also described as Nadinam, Vibaddha Sira, Chhidram, Marga, Khani, Sira, Rasayani, Patha, Nadi, Randhra and Mukha.<sup>[5]</sup>

## DESCRIPTION OF SROTAS

### Charaka Samhita

Srotas are Vritta (cylindrical), Sthūla (macroscopic), Aṇu (microscopic), Dīrgha (large) or Pratāna (Reticulated) in shape.<sup>[6]</sup> According to Acharya Charaka, Srotas is the structure through which Sravaṇa takes place. Because of transudation they are called as Srotas.<sup>[7]</sup> The pure as well as waste products (of digestion and metabolism) enter into the various channels of circulation and circulate through them.<sup>[8]</sup> With above example in Charaka Samhita, Srotas are channels of circulation which carry the Dhātu (tissue elements or their constituents), undergoing transformation to their destination. Srotas are pathway of Rasādi Dhātus. To elaborate the concept, Charaka has used the term “Pariṇāmamāpadyamānānām” (meaning undergoing transformation), which is suggestive to the fact, that the channels carry such of the tissue elements as are undergoing transformation from their previous state, like Rasa to its subsequent state Rakta, Rakta to Māmsa and Māmsa to Meda etc. Use of the term “Ayanārthena Dhātu” meaning to their destination (products), but only such of the moving Dhātus (products), as are destined to be transformed to another Dhātu situated elsewhere, are carried by them.<sup>[9]</sup>

### Chakrapanidatta

Chakrapanidatta in his commentary explain the Sravaṇa Karma. It is that by which Pośaka Rasa is taken to the Pośya Dhātu.<sup>[10]</sup> Sushruta Samhita: Acharya Sushruta has defined Srotas as the hollow channel except Sirā and Dhamanī which originating from root space spreads in the body and circulate and exude of the specific entities. The channels of circulation carry the Dhātu (tissue elements or their constituents undergoing transformation) to their destination. Acharya Sushruta stated that Dhamanī and Sirā are quite different from Srotas because they are different in Lakśana (symptomatology), Mūlasanniyamāt (system of origin), Karma (function) and textually.<sup>[11]</sup>

### Ashtanga Sangraha and Ashtanga Hridaya

The form of these Srotas is like Visranala and minute apertures and they are highly extended in long length in which they transport the Dhātus.<sup>[12]</sup> The term Srotas refers, in particular to microscopic channels of transport, as seen from Charaka’s observation that Malas (waste products) are removed from Dhātus (tissues) with appropriate nutrition to the extent as required.

### Formation of Srotas and its Pānchabhautic Composition

Under the caption of function of Vāyu, Acharya Charaka has stated that Vāyu creates the gross and the subtle channels which dominated by Ākāśa Mahābhūta.<sup>[13]</sup> Acharya Charaka also said about Srotas in Sharira Sthana; Vivikta (vacant space/pores), Vibhakta and Ākāśa Mahābhūta is main factor in creation of small and large Srotas. Ākāśa Mahābhūta is main factor in creation of Srotas.<sup>[14]</sup> According to Acharya Sushruta, Vāta along with sufficient Pitta acts in the Vidīrnata (tear) of Srotas.<sup>[15]</sup>

### SWARUPA (STRUCTURE) OF SROTAS

According to Acharya Charaka, Srotas have their color similar to that of the Dhātu transported through it. Srotas may be cylindrical, Sthūla (macroscopic), Aṇu (microscopic or small), Dīrgha (large) and Pratāna (reticulated) in shape.<sup>[16]</sup>

**Varṇa of Srotas:** Srotas are very clear and transparent like glass so they called “Svadhātu Samavarṇāni.” Srotas which carry blood they have Rakta Varṇa etc.<sup>[17]</sup>

**Table no. 2. Showing Varṇa of Srotas according to their constituents.**

Sr.No	Constituents of Srotas	Varṇa of Srotas
1	Srotas which carry blood	Rakta Varṇa
2	Srotas which carry Dūṣita blood	Śyāva or Nīla Varṇa
3	Srotas carrying Rasa or Lasīka	Gaur Śukla Varṇa
4	Srotas which store faeces	having colour same to them
5	Srotas which store Nīla (Pakva) Pitta	Nīla Varṇa

### IMPORTANCE AND FUNCTION OF SROTAS

All Bhāvas in Puruṣa never appear nor degenerate without Srotas because Srotas transfer the Dhātus from one place to another. Srotas gives nutrition to all over body.<sup>[18]</sup>

If Srotas are in Prakritavastha (healthy) state then our body would also be healthy.<sup>[19]</sup> They do excrete Malas from body. They do Vahana Karma (transfer) of Prāṇa, Vegas of Viṣaya (subject) and Vegas of Cheṣṭa (activi-ties) in all over body. Function of Srotas is Abhivahana means transport Rasa from one place to another place. It is necessary for entry of one substance, shifting of that substance and exit of that substance in Abhivahana. The process between entrances to exit is called Abhiva-hana. It is a common symptom of each Srotas but they have different functions too.

Srotas maintain or nourish the structural entities of the body to prevent their destruction.<sup>[20]</sup> Any abnormality in Dhātus cause abnormality in other Dhātus and Srotas leading to a disease.<sup>[21]</sup> The Srotas in abnormal state not only deteriorate the state of Dhātus but also cause abnormality in the functioning of nearby Srotas leading to many local disorders like Pratiśyāya effects nasal cavity and pharynx leading to Kāsa and vice versa.<sup>[22]</sup>

In overall, **the function of the Srotas are as given below**

1. All the structural entities are originated from Srotas.
2. As long as these channels of circulation (Srotas) perform their normal functions the body remains free from disease.
3. Srotas carry the elements (Dhātus or their constitu-ents) undergoing transportation to their destination.
4. Srotas maintain or nourish the structural entities of the body to prevent their destruction.
5. They excrete the waste products (Mala) from the body.
6. Carry the vital breath for good health.
7. All the Doṣa, Dhātu, Mala, Updhātu, Manas, Prāṇa, Anna, Udaka, Malākhyā and Prasādakhyā Dhātus are transported in the body through Srotas.
8. Any abnormality in Dhātus causes abnormality in other Dhātus and Srotas leading to a disease.
9. Development and nourishment of different Bhāvas of the body is not possible without Srotas.
10. The Vāta, Pitta and Kapha Doṣas are transported from the Srotas.
11. Mana is transported in Chetana Sharira by the Sro-tas.

According to modern view all functions of Srotas are held by different structures in body. Thus the functions performed by the Srotas at different places in the body by various structures are -

1. Grahāṇa Karma (storage): It is the function of all sinuses and membranes of liver
2. Pāchana Karma (digestion): It is the function of mu-cous membrane of stomach.
3. Poṣaṇa Karma (nutrition): It is the function of cell membrane of lymph and blood vessels.
4. Nisaraṇa Karma (elimination): It is the function of membrane of eyes, nose and urinary tract.
5. Sravaṇa Karma (secretion): It is the function of all membranes of the body.

6. Śoṣaṇa Karma (absorption): Absorption of digested food is carried out by specially mucous membrane of small intestine and other structures also perform it like skin.
7. Vahana Karma (carrying): It is the function of endo-thelial lining of vessels (arteries and veins).
8. Vivechana Karma (selectivity): It is the function of mucous membrane of duodenum and kidney.

All the above functions are intervening by the Srotas.

### TYPES OF SROTAS

According to Acharya Charaka many types of Srotas are present in the body. The meaning of “Murtimān Bhāva” is the matter or a substance which has definite shape or limits existed in the body.<sup>[23]</sup> We notice that number of Srotas as per Acharya Charaka are been considered as 13,<sup>[24]</sup> but in the above Shloka he was very clear about the number of Srotas. Further Sushruta also mentioned about the number of Srotas.<sup>[25]</sup>

**Table no. 3. Showing different Srotas as described by Acharaya Charaka and Sushruta.**

Sr.no	Srotas by Acharaya Charaka	Srotas by Acharaya Sushruta
1	Prāṇavaha Srotas	Prāṇavaha Srotas
2	Udakavaha Srotas	Udakavaha Srotas
3	Annavaha Srotas	Annavaha Srotas
4	Rasavaha Srotas	Rasavaha Srotas
5	Raktavaha Srotas	Raktavaha Srotas
6	Māmsavaha Srotas	Māmsavaha Srotas
7	Medovaha Srotas	Medovaha Srotas
8	Asthivaha Srotas	.....
9	Majjāvaha Srotas	.....
10	Śukravaha Srotas	Śukravaha Srotas
11	Mūtravaha Srotas	Mūtravaha Srotas
12	Purīṣavaha Srotas	Purīṣavaha Srotas
13	Swedavaha Srotas	.....
14	.....	Aartavavaha Srotas

Instead of these Srotas, Charaka described Aarta-vavaha Srotas in the context of Garbha Prakarana. Su-shruta has omitted the Asthi, Majja and Swedavaha Srotas in his counting.

### MŪLA OF SROTAS

The Mūlasthana or the source is so considered that without which the origin, maintenance and destruction of the specific carrier of the body nutrient cannot be possible and the place

which controls the entire functional dealings and processes of that specific carrier.<sup>[26]</sup> These data lend support to the observation made by Punarvasu Atreya that no structure in the body can grow, develop, waste or atrophy, independent of Srotānsi that transports Dhātus which later on are constantly subjected to transformation. The Srotānsi sub-serve the needs of transportation.

**Table no. 4. Showing Mūla Sthana Srotas as described by Acharaya Charaka and Sushruta.**

Sr.no	Name of Srotas	Acharaya Charaka	Acharaya Sushruta
1	Prānavaha Srotas	Hridaya, Mahāsro-tas	Hridaya, Rasavāhini Dhamanī
2	Udakavaha Srotas	Tālu, Kloma	Tālu, Kloma
3	Annavaha Srotas	Āmāshaya, Vāma-pārshva	Āmāshaya, An-navāhini Dhamanī
4	Rasavaha Srotas	Hridaya, 10 Dha-manī	Hridaya, Rasavāhini Dhamanī
5	Raktavaha Srotas	Yakrita, Plīha	Yakrita, Plīha and Raktavāhini Dhamanī
6	Māmsavaha Srotas	Snāyu, Twaka	Snāyu, Twaka and Raktavāhini Dhamanī
7	Medovaha Srotas	Vrikka, Vapāva-hana	Kati, Vrikka
8	Asthivaha Srotas	Meda, Jaghana Pradeśa	.....
9	Majjāvaha Srotas	Asthi, Sandhi	.....
10	Śukravaha Srotas	Vriśana, Śepha	Stana, Vriśana
11	Mūtravaha Srotas	Vasti, Vankśana	Vasti, Medhra
12	Puriṣavaha Srotas	Pakvāśaya, Sthūla Guda	Pakvāśaya, Guda
13	Swedavaha Srotas	Meda, Loma Kūpa	.....
14	Ārtavavaha Srotas	.....	Garbhāśaya, Ārtavavāhini Dhamanī

#### Determination of Mūlasthāna of Srotas

For the determination of the Mūlasthana of Srotas some points have been logically and categorically counted in the various classics such as

- A. Utpatti Sthana (Mūlasthana related with origin point of view)
- B. Sangraha Sthana (Mūlasthana related with storage)
- C. Naidanika Dristikona (Mūlasthana related with di-agnostic point of view)
- D. Chikitsatmaka Dristikona (Mūlasthana related with clinical point of view)

Among the above mentioned points some points are considered in combination in some texts and considered separately in some contexts to determine the source of Mūlasthana. But the clinical standpoint has been considered in all the cases of determination of the Mūlasthana.

Hence justification of the consideration of Srotas Mūlasthana of respective Srotas in the preview of above points is the contextual need and subject matter.

### **Causes of Srotoduṣṭi**

It means that food and conducts which is similar to Gunas of Vātadi Doṣas and opposite to Gunas of Dhātu are causes of Srotoduṣṭi. Causes of Srotorodha are day sleep except in summer, taking cold water after process of Snehapana, Aṅguvasana, Vamana, Virechana, Niruha Vasti etc.<sup>[27]</sup>

### **Types of Srotoduṣṭi**

Symptoms of Sroto Duṣṭi are obstruction or excessive flowing of materials in Srotas, Granthi formation in Sirā and going to opposite direction of flowing material as Mala going to Mūtra Mārga.<sup>[28]</sup>

### **Symptoms Of Srotoviddha**

Symptoms of Srotoviddha are Moha, Kampana, Ādhmāna (flatulence), Chardi (vomiting), Jwara (fever), Pralāpa (delirium), Śūla (pain), obstruction of urine and stool and leading to death. So in the case of Srotovid-dha, Vaidhya should remove that particular Shalya and treat like acute wound.<sup>[29]</sup>

### **Pathogenesis of Diseases due to Srotoduṣṭi**

Doṣas get obstructed due to Sroto Vaiguṇya, then there disease originates. “Kha” Vaiguṇyata means Sroto Vaigunta according to Dalhana. Diseases which are originated due to Sroto Duṣṭi are Klama, Jwara, Rājay-akśma, Udara Roga, Āmvāta etc.

### **CONCLUSION**

Srotas represents the inner transport system of the body. The term Srotas refers, in particular to microscopic channels of transport, exchange and excretion. Srotas includes almost all range of structural and functional entities of the body. Srotas along with their Mūla have been described in Samhitas to know their physiology and pathology. Srotas plays an important role in under-standing the concept of Srotovaiguṇya which is vital step in pathophysiology of disease which in turn helps the physician to take decisions precisely with respect to treatment and prognosis.



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