



Review Article

AN AYURVEDIC LITERARY REVIEW ON *KASHTARTAVA* W.S.R. TO PRIMARY
DYSMENORRHEA

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ABSTRACT

Kashtartava, commonly identified as primary dysmenorrhea in modern medicine, is a prevalent gynecological condition characterized by painful menstruation without any discernible underlying pelvic pathology. This condition significantly impacts the quality of life of affected individuals, warranting effective diagnostic and management strategies. This review aims to bridge traditional Ayurvedic insights with contemporary medical perspectives to provide a holistic understanding of *Kashtartava*.

In Ayurveda, *Kashtartava* is attributed to the vitiation of *Vata dosha*, particularly *Apana Vata*, which governs the reproductive system's functioning. Classical texts emphasize the role of dietary habits, lifestyle, and mental well-being in the pathogenesis of this condition, offering detailed descriptions of its symptoms, etiological factors, and therapeutic interventions. The article correlates these Ayurvedic principles with modern pathophysiological findings, including hormonal imbalances, uterine contractions, and prostaglandin overproduction, which are implicated in primary dysmenorrhea.

The review highlights Ayurvedic diagnostic approaches, including pulse diagnosis and the assessment of *Dosha* imbalances, alongside contemporary diagnostic tools such as ultrasound and hormonal assays. Management strategies are explored comprehensively, focusing on Ayurvedic treatments like *Panchakarma*, herbal formulations, and lifestyle modifications.

INTRODUCTION

Kashtartava is derived from two Sanskrit terms: *Kashta* (painful/difficult) and *Artava* (menstruation). It is described extensively in Ayurvedic classics, emphasizing the role of vitiated *Vata dosha* and impaired *Agni*. In modern gynecology, primary dysmenorrhea refers to painful menstrual cramps originating in the uterus due to prostaglandin-mediated uterine contractions. The condition predominantly affects adolescent and young women, impacting their quality of life.

In Ayurvedic literature, numerous references about *Artava* are scattered across various texts. However, this Article focuses on exploring the pathophysiology of *Artava Chakra* (the menstrual cycle) in relation to *Kashtartava* (dysmenorrhea), rather than the explanation of menstrual physiology.

Artava

Nirukti (Etymology) of Artava


ऋतौ भवं आर्तवम् | (अ.ह.शा.1/1, अरुणदत्तटीका)

The term *Ritu* signifies a specific period or season, while *Bhavam* denotes an occurrence or manifestation.

Thus, *Artava* refers to a substance that flows or appears at a specific time or at regular interval.

References and Synonyms of Artava in Ayurvedic Classics

The *Artava*, *Sonita*, *Asrak*, *Raja*, *Rakta*, *Lohita* etc. words are used in the classics to denote menstrual blood or ovum at different places, while *Rudhira* and

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Pushpa denote only menstrual blood and *Bija* is used for ovum. Though commentator *Arundutta* has specifically indicated to consider menstrual blood with word *Artava*^[1], yet in A.H. word *Artava* is used to denote ovum also. To avoid misinterpretation, it is essential to consider the context of these terms before assigning a specific meaning, such as menstrual blood, ovum, and ovarian hormones. Among these synonyms, *Raja* is most commonly used as a substitute for *Artava*.

Presence of *Raja/Sonita* in Female Body

Sonita is present in the female body from birth but become active from the age of 12 years and remains active till the age of 50 years According to *Bhavprakash Samhita*.

Formation and Definition of *Raja/Artava*

- From *Rasa (Dhatu)*, the *Rakta* named *Raja* is formed.^[2]
- *Vayu* brings *Rakta* to *Garbhashaya* and comes out from vaginal opening for three days in every month is called as *Artava*.^[3]
- Hence *Raja* is formed from the essence part of *Rasa*^[4].
- It is described as a periodical discharge of blood that is slightly blackish in color and has a specific odor, expelled through the vagina by the action of *Vayu*^[5].
- *Raja* is identified as the substance that stains the *Yoni* (vagina). The purity or impurity of *Raja* can be accessed through the cloth it stains^[6].

A woman's healthy reproductive physiology is primarily characterized by her menstruation every month. While modern medical texts often consider pain a normal symptom but the Ayurvedic perspective differs significantly. *Acharya Charaka*, clearly stated that normal menstruation should occur without any form of pain. This Statement Shows the depth and precision of physiological understanding achieved during the era of the great sages.

Laksanas of Artava^[7-10]

गुजजाफल सवर्णं च पदमालक्तसन्निभम् ।

इन्द्रगोपसंकाशमार्तवं शुद्धमादिशेत् ॥

मासान्निषिच्छिदाहर्तिपंचरात्रानुबन्धि च ।

नैवातिबहुनात्यल्पमार्तवं शुद्धमादिशेत् ॥ (च. चि. 30/225)

Varna (Colour)

In Ayurvedic classics there are different references for the *Prakrtavarna* of *Artava*. According the Ayurvedic *Samhitas* following *Varnas* are considered to be as normal color of menstrual blood:

- ✓ *Gunjaphala*
- ✓ *Rakta Kamal*
- ✓ *Indragopa*
- ✓ *Sashasrika*
- ✓ *Laksa Rasa*

Gandha (Smell)

The qualities of *Gandha* associated with menstrual blood are described using terms like *Vigandha*^[11] *Madhugandhi*^[12], and *Visrata Amagandhitva*^[13]. According to *Acharya Sushruta*, *Rakta* (blood) possesses a specific odour known as *Visragandha*, attributed to the *Prthivi Mahabhuta*.

Matra (Quantity)

नैवातिबहु अत्यल्पमार्तवं शुद्धमादिशेत् ॥ (च. चि. 30/225)

The quantity of *Artava* should neither be excessive nor scanty. The normal amount is traditionally considered to be four *Anjali*. Various factors such as *Desha* (region), *Kala* (time), *Ahara* (diet), *Vihara* (lifestyle), and *Prakrti* (individual constitution) influence the quantity of menstrual blood.

Artava Strava Kala (Duration of Menstrual Flow)

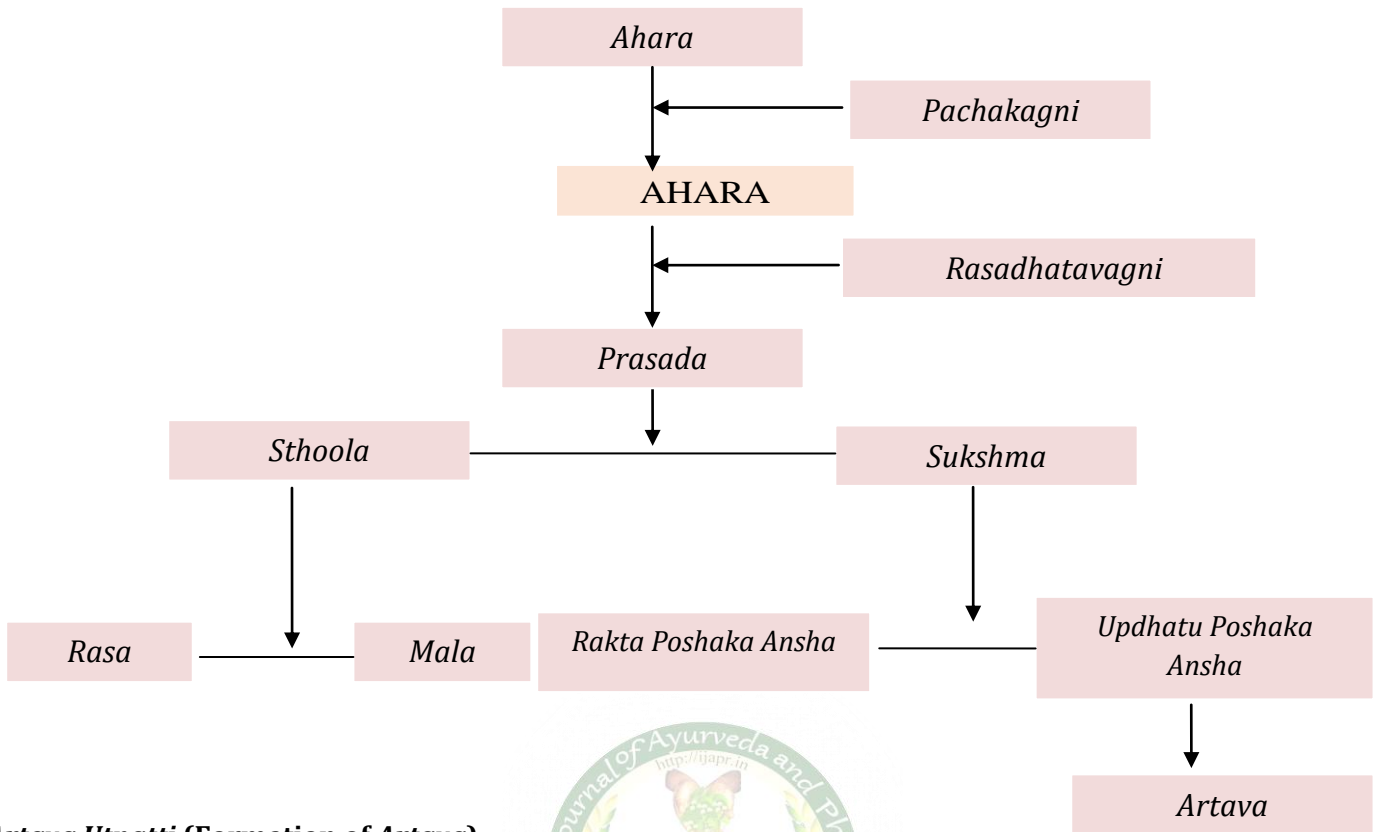
The duration of *Artava Strava Kala* is described differently by various *Acharyas*

- *Vagbhata*: 3 nights^[14]
 - *Charaka*: 5 nights^[15]
 - *Harita*: 7 nights^[16]
 - *Bhela*: 3 nights or 7 nights^[17]
 - *Bhavamishhra*: 3 days, 5 days, or even up to 16 days
- Additionally, the duration of *Artava Pravrti Kala* is linked to a woman's *Prakrti* (constitution):

- *Vata Prakrti*: 3 days
- *Pitta Prakrti*: 7 days
- *Kapha Prakrti*: 5 days

Formation of Artava

(According to *Charaka Samhita Sutra sthana 28/9*) (*Chakrapani tika*) and *Sushruta Samhita Sutra Stahana 14/10*)



Artava Utpatti (Formation of Artava)

Artava is categorized as an *Upadhatu* of *Rasa Dhatu*. The term *Upadhatu* refers to bodily elements that Originate from *Dhatu* but do not directly contribute to nourishment. Instead, they play a supportive structural role in the body. These *Upadhatus* arise as byproducts of *Dhatwagni Vyapara* (metabolic activity of the *Dhatu-agni*).

Ayurved *Sutra* equates *Rasa* itself with *Rakta* and state that menstrual blood (*Raja*) is not distinct from the blood circulating within the body. This Justify the inclusion of fluid under *Upadhatu*, as *Artava* closely resembles *Rasa Dhatu* in its properties and plays a crucial role in body regulation, particularly menstruation.

Hetus^[18] (Factors Responsible for Artava Formation)

Ancient *Acharyas* identify the following factors as *Artava utpatti* factors for the formation of *Artava*:

- *Kala* (time)
- *Karma* (actions)
- *Dhatu Paripurnata* (nourishment of *Dhatu*s)
- *Vayu* (movement regulated by *Vayu*)

Transporting and Accumulation Medium

- Channels responsible for carrying and excreting *Artava- Artava-vaha Strotas*
- Forming Material- (*Ahara Rasa, Rasa Dhatu, Rakta Dhatu*)

The *Artava-vaha Strotas* are two in number, originating from the *Garbhashaya* (uterus) and *Artava-vaha Dhamani* (uterine vessels). These channels facilitate the transportation and excretion of *Artava*.

Garbhashaya^[19,20,21] (Uterus)

The *Garbhashaya* is the eighth *Ashaya* in women, located posterior to the urinary bladder and between the *Pittashaya* and *Pakvashaya*. It is surrounded by coiled structures of the intestines and covered with *Jarayu* (membranes). Its appearance is likened to the mouth of a *Rohita Matsya* (rohu fish).

Artava-Vaha Dhamani^[22](Uterine Vessels)

Acharya sushruta has stated that *Adhogami dhamani* consist of two types of *Artava-vaha Dhamani*

1. Vessels responsible for *Pradurbhava* (formation of *Artava*).
 2. Vessels facilitating *Visarga* (excretion of *Artava*).
- Injury to these vessels or their associated channels can lead to *Bandhyatva* (infertility), *Maithuna-asahishnutva* (pain during intercourse), and *Artava-nasha* (cessation of menstruation).

Sources of Artava Formation

Ancient classical texts have given proper explanations regarding the origin of *Artava* or the process by which *Artava* is formed.

According to *Charaka, Sushruta, and Ashtanga Hridaya: Artava* is formed from *Rasa Dhatu*.

Charaka Samhita

रसात् स्तन्यं ततो रक्तं असृजम् ॥ (च.सू.28/4)

Sushruta Samhita

रसादेव स्त्रिया रक्त रजः सञ्ज प्रवर्तते ॥ (सु. सू.14/7)

Ashtanga Hridaya Samhita

मासि मासि रजः स्त्रीणारसजं स्रवति त्र्यहं ॥ (अ. ह. शा. 1/17)

While according to *Ashtanga Sangraha*: *Artava* is formed from *Rakta Dhatu*.

तथा रक्तमेव च मासे मासे गर्भकोष्ठमनुप्राप्यं त्र्यहं

प्रवर्तमानमार्तवमित्याहः ॥ (अ. सं. शा. 1/9)

Process of Artava Formation^[23]

मासेनोपचितं काले धमनीभ्यां तदार्तवम् ।

ईषत् कृष्णं विगन्धं च वायुर्योनिमुखं नयेत् ॥ (सु.शा. 3/10)

The blood is collected over a month by the uterine vessels and capillaries (*Dhamani*). The blood is characterized by its slightly black and distinctive odor. This blood is gradually brought to the vaginal orifice by the *Vayu* for excretion.

In reproductive-age women, the uterine *Rajovaha Sira* facilitate the monthly collection of *Artava* in *Garbhashaya* processed through *Artava-agni* acting upon *Rakta Dhatu*. Afterward, this *Artava* is expelled cyclically per month for 3- 5 days.

Role of Dosha in Artava Chakra

Menstruation results from changes within the vascular apparatus of the uterus over the course of a month, reflecting the cyclical changes in the endometrium. The effect of *Doshas* can be understood in different phases of menstruation as follows:

Ritukala (Proliferative Phase)

This phase is predominantly influenced by *Kapha*. The proliferative phase in Ayurveda resembles the excess *Kapha*, contributing to the endometrial growth. *Kapha* operates through *Rasa*, which correlates with the body's plasma, including the interstitial fluid and lymph. Thus, plasma's role in the proliferation of the endometrial lining is evident.

Rituvyatitakala (Secretory Phase)

In this phase, *Pitta* becomes the dominant *Dosha*. As *Pitta* increases, *Kapha* starts to decrease.

Rajakal (Bleeding Phase)

This phase is primarily governed by *Vata*. Once menstruation begins, *Pitta* levels begin to decrease. While *Vata* remains active throughout the phase. The bleeding process is influenced by *Apana Vata*.

Role of Vata in Artava Niskramana**Importance of Vata**

Among the three *Doshas*, *Vata* plays the most significant role in the physiological and pathological states of the body. In female reproductive physiology, *Vyana* and *Apanavata* play important role rather than other three *Vata*.

Functions of Apana Vata

- *Dharana* and *Vikshepana* are regulated by *Apana Vata*. Proper *Dharana* of the *Dhatu*s is essential for the body's functioning, while the proper *Vikshepana* of *Mala* helps the body to keep it clean.
- *Apana vata* is very essential for retention and expulsion in a proper direction. This applies to substances such as *Garbha* (embryo), *Mutra* (urine), *Mala* (waste), and *Artava* (menstrual blood) for their retention or expulsion^[24].

Functions of Vyana Vata

- *Vyana Vayu* governs all body functions^[25] by controlling movements such as contraction, relaxation, and extension. It also has a significant role in the functioning of *Yoni* (vagina) and *Garbhashaya* (uterus).
- Our classics have stated that *Vyan vata* is remain active in whole body^[26]

Mode of Action of Vata in Menstrual Cycle

- *Vyan Vata* helps in the *Vikshepana* of the ovum from the ovary through the fallopian tube.
- If fertilization occurs, *Vyana Vayu's Seetaguna* (cool) qualities support the retention (*Dharana*) of the *Garbha* (embryo).
- In the absence of fertilization, *Vyana Vayu's Chala guna* (movement) qualities facilitate the shedding of the endometrial lining, as menstrual bleeding thus aiding the *Vikshepana*.
- The cessation of menstrual bleeding, or the drying up of the menstrual blood at the end of the bleeding phase, is facilitated by the *Ruksha* and *Khara* qualities of *Vyana Vayu*.

Vitiation of Vayu in Kashtartava

Vitiation of *Vata* is a primary cause of many gynecological pathological conditions. The dysfunction of *Apana* and *Vyana Vayu* can lead to conditions like *Kashtartava*. The imbalance in *Vata* arises from various factors such as improper diet (*Ahara*), lifestyle (*Vihara*), improper retention of urges (*Vega Dharana*), and mental stress. When *Apana Vayu* and *Vyana Vayu* do not function in coordination, *Avarana* occurs, resulting in menstrual pain. Thus, we can say that when there is *Apana vata dushti* there must be menstrual pain. Additionally, conditions like lower back pain, urinary tract infections, and constipation often accompany menstrual pain due to the common involvement of *Apana Vayu* in pelvic organ dysfunction. While *Vyana vata* and *Apana vata* remain in equilibrium then there is no gynecological disorders originate.

Suchimukhi Yonivyapad is described as a condition where the opening of the *yonis* is small due to an imbalance in the mother's *Dosha*. *Acharya Charaka* refers to it as *Suchimukhi Yoni*, while *Acharya Sushruta* refers to it as *Suchivaktra*.

Kashtartava as a Disease (Painful Menstruation)

Painful menstruation is classified as a disease due to the imbalance of the *Doshas* (*Vata*, *Pitta*, and *Kapha*). When these *Doshas* become imbalanced, they disturb the natural functioning of the body, causing alterations in structure and function, leading to pain and discomfort during menstruation. This imbalance can occur due to factors such as stress, dietary disturbances, or physical trauma.

Vata Prakopa (Aggravation of Vata)

The above-mentioned factors contribute to the aggravation of *Vata*, via two main processes known as *Dhatukshaya* (tissue depletion) and *Margavarodha*^[27] (blockage in channels).

✓ **Dhatukshaya:** when we use more *Vata vardhaka nidanas* in terms of *Ahara* in our diet and daily working activities in term of *Vihaar* then *Vata* becomes aggravated, it leads to depletion of bodily tissues such as *Rasa* (plasma) and *Rakta* (blood), causing reduced formation of menstrual blood (*Artava*). Because *Artava* is known as the *Updhatu* of *Rasa dhatu*^[28]. This further causes *Vata* to be increased and make a disturbance in *Garbhasahya* which further results in insufficient or painful menstruation. On the other hand, due to *Dhatu kshaya* the mental strength i.e., *Satwaguna* in the body become less and patient undergo in *Hina satwa*. Thus, her pain threshold range is lowered^[29]. In this way due to *Vataprakopa* and *Dhatu kshaya* there are many mental manifestations arised like *Krodha*, *Chinta*, *Bhaya*, *Shoka* etc. this further proceed into *Vataprakopa* resulting into *Kashtartava*.

✓ **Margavarodha:** *Margavarodha* or blockage of Channel is caused by *Prakupita vata* and *Kapha* separately and in combination^[30]. So, blockages in the channels of the reproductive system, caused by an imbalance in *Vata*, lead to impaired flow of menstrual blood, causing pain and discomfort during menstruation.

Association of other Doshas

Prakupita Pitta, especially the types responsible for digestion (*Ranjaka* and *Pachaka*), can also contribute to painful menstruation. When *Pitta* is disturbed, the process of digestion and tissue formation becomes weak, leading to improper production and flow of menstrual blood. This combined imbalance of *Vata* and *Pitta* can impair the normal function of the reproductive organs, contributing to the pain and irregularity of menstruation.

DISCUSSION**Samprapti**

Samprapti refers to the process through which the disease progresses, outlining the sequential steps

where the *Doshas* manifest their pathogenic effects in a specific manner^[31]. A thorough understanding of the disease pathogenesis (*Samprapti*) is essential for effective treatment (*Samprapti Vighatana*).

Şada Kriyakala

The concept of *Şada kriyakala* describes the stages and mechanisms through which a disease develops^[32]. *Kriyakala* refers to the identification of a disease's stage, and based on this, appropriate interventions such as medicines, diet, and lifestyle modifications are recommended to counteract the disturbances caused by imbalanced *Doshas*. This process involves different stages: accumulation (*Sanchya*), excitation (*Prakopa*), spreading (*Prasara*), localization (*Sthanasamshrya*), full manifestation (*Vyakta*), and complications (*Bheda*). The progression of *Vata*-related disorders can be understood through these six stages in the development of *Kashtartava*. In the early stages of *Sanchya*, *prakopa*, and *Prasara*, *Vata*-related symptoms appear, but *Krchartava*-specific signs are not yet evident. These stages are as follows:

First Kriyakala (Sanchyaavastha)^[33]

Stage of accumulation during this stage, exposure to improper diet and lifestyle, along with mental factors like stress, leads to an accumulation of *Vata*. Symptoms include stiffness and fullness in the abdomen, indicating a buildup of *Vata*.

Second Kriyakala (Prakopavastha)^[34]

Stage of excitation in this stage, the accumulated *Vata* becomes aggravated due to specific causative factors and starts to spread beyond its usual seat. This leads to symptoms such as pricking pain and irregular movements in the abdominal area. The aggravated *Vata* shows qualities such as roughness (*Ruksha*), lightness (*Laghu*), and coldness (*Shita*), which further intensify the discomfort. *Vata's* excitation may occur in two ways:

Svadhata Vaishhamya

When a person consumes foods and engages in activities that aggravate *Vata*, the *Dosha* becomes disturbed. The imbalance of *Vata* leads to various disorders once it settles in the *Garbhashhaya* (uterus). Vitiating *Vata* disrupts the normal functioning of the *Vyana* and *Apana Vayu*, which are responsible for the contraction and relaxation of the uterine muscles. This dysfunction impairs the flow of menstrual blood, leading to pain and irregular periods, which are commonly observed in *Vataja Yoni Vyapada* and *Vataja Artava Dushti*.

Unmarga Gamana

In this type of pathogenesis, an alteration in the direction of *Apana Vayu* causes a reversal in its movement. In conditions like *Udavarta Yoni Vyapada*, where *Apana Vayu* moves upward (*Urdhva gamana*)

instead of downward, it causes pain and other complications. The upward flow of *Vata* in the *Yoni* (uterus) results in a painful discharge of menstrual blood with difficulty.

Third Kriyakala (Prasaravastha)^[35]- Stage of spread at this stage, the aggravated *Vata* begins to spread throughout the body. The movement of *Vata* is facilitated by its inherent quality of mobility (*Rajasika*). *Vata*, as the bio-motor force, circulates through various channels in the body, extending the effects of the disease. This leads to swelling, abdominal distension, and gurgling sounds, as well as abnormal movements of *Apana Vata* (*Vimarga Gamana*).

Fourth Kriyakala (Sthana samshryavastha)^[36]- Stage of localization during this stage, the aggravated *Dosha*, after spreading throughout the body, becomes localized in specific areas. This marks the onset of particular diseases related to those tissues or organs. Vitiating *Vata* spreads to the *Yoni* (uterus) and *Garbhashaya* (womb) through the *Artavavaha Srotas* (channels associated with menstrual flow). Once *Vata* localizes in the *Yoni*, it can lead to various conditions affecting the reproductive organs, such as *Yoni Vyapada*, which results in *Kashtartava* (painful menstruation). This stage represents the prodromal

phase, during which *Dosha* and *Dushya* interact and influence each other, leading to the development of the disease.

Fifth Kriya kala (Vyaktavastha)^[37]- Stage of Manifestation This stage marks the clinical manifestation of the fully developed disease, characterized by *Pravyakti Lakshanata*, which refers to the clear and distinctive symptoms associated with the condition. When the *Doshas* are balanced, the individual remains healthy. However, when *Vata* becomes aggravated, its symptoms reflect the severity of the imbalance- whether excessive, moderate, or mild. The appearance of these symptoms indicates the full expression of the disease.

Sixth Kriyakala (Bhedavastha)^[38]- Stage of complication if the disease progresses without appropriate treatment, complications arise, leading to a chronic condition, which is referred to as *Dirghakala Anubandha Lakshana*. *Kashtartava* becomes chronic when inadequately treated or neglected for a prolonged period. The unresolved issues with *Vata* imbalance can lead to further complications, such as infertility, *Gulma* (abdominal masses), *Arsha* (hemorrhoids), and *Pradara*^[39] (excessive discharge).

Table 1: Samprapti Ghataka

Dosha	Vata Dominant Tridosha: <i>Vata - Vyana, Apana</i> Pitta: <i>Ranjaka, Pachaka</i> Kapha: Present as an accompanying <i>Dosha</i>
Dushya	Dhatu: <i>Rasa, Rakta, Artava</i> Upadhatu: <i>Artava</i>
Agni	<i>Jatharagni, Rasagni, Raktagni</i>
Srotasa	<i>Rasa, Rakta, and Artavavaha Srotasa</i>
Srotodushti	<i>Samga and Vimarga gamana</i>
Udbhava sthana	<i>Amapakvashaya</i>
Roga Marga	<i>Abyantara</i>
Sthana Samshraya	<i>Garbhashaya</i>
Vyakti Sthana	<i>Garbhashaya</i>

Purvarupa

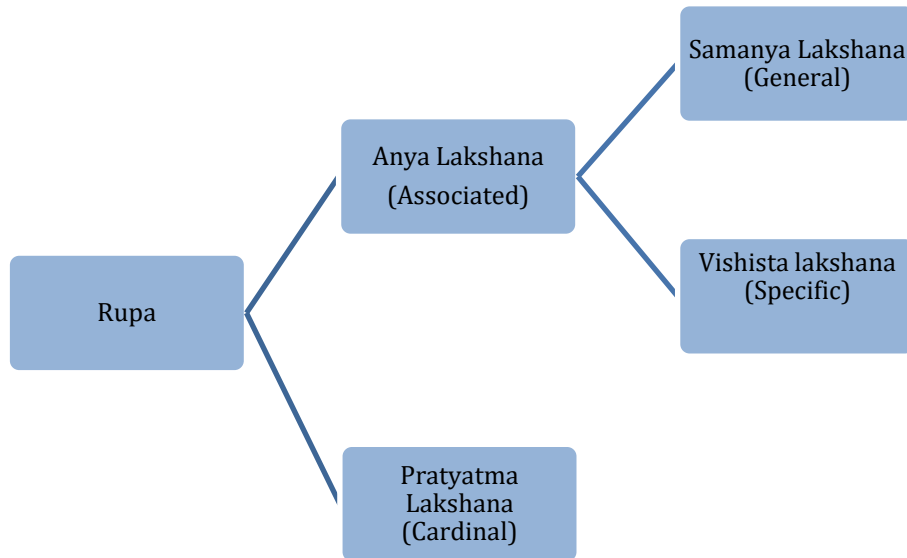
There is no distinct *Purvarupa* (prodromal stage) for *Kashtartava*, as it is not considered an independent disease in classical texts. The vitiation of *Dosha* does not occur abruptly but evolves gradually, showing early symptoms. In *Kashtartava*, primarily *Vata Dosha* is vitiated. Therefore, the *Purvarupa* of *Vata Vyadhi*, i.e., *Avyakta*^[40], should be considered as the *Purvarupa* of *Kashtartava* as well.

Rupa

Rupa refers to the full manifestation of the disease, which corresponds to the *Vyakti* stage in *Shad kriyakala*. The distinctive display of disease signs and symptoms is called *Lakshana*. There are three states of *Dosha* in the body: *Sathana* (balanced), *Vridhhi*

(aggravated), and *Kshaya* (diminished). When a *Dosha* is diminished, it does not show its typical signs or symptoms^[41], which are necessary to cause diseases by vitiating other *Dhatu*s^[42]. Deficiency in a *Dosha* can also result in an increase in the action of its opposite qualities^[43]. The discomfort caused by a deficient *Dosha* generally does not require intensive treatment. As the disease progresses, the *Rupa* may fluctuate, though the cardinal feature of dysmenorrhoea- pain and discomfort during menstruation- remains constant throughout the disease course. For *Kashtartava*, a distinct *Rupa* is not clearly outlined, but it can be understood by considering *Artava Dusti*, *Vata Prakopa*, and the associated *Doshas*.

Flow Chart of Rupa and its Variants



Pratyama (Cardinal Symptoms)

Pain during menstruation is the key symptom of *Kashtartava*.

Samanya Lakshana (General Symptoms)

Features common in other menstrual disorders associated with *Kashtartava*.

Anya Lakshana (Associated Symptoms)

Symptoms specific to *Kashtartava* but not exclusive to it.

Vishishta Lakshana (Specific Symptoms)

Symptoms that are distinctive to particular diseases associated with *Kashtartava*.

Concept of Pain Related to Kashtartava

Kashtartava is a disorder of the reproductive tract (*Yoni Roga*) that affects the pelvic region, which is considered the primary site for *Vata Dosha*^[44]. Gynecological diseases do not arise without the vitiation of *Vata*^[45], and *Kashtartava* is no exception, showing a strong connection with *Vata Dosha* both in terms of its origin and the affected system^[46]. Therefore, pain associated with *Kashtartava* arises due to the vitiation of *Vata Dosha*, often in combination with other *Doshas* as well.

Characteristics of Pain in Kashtartava

The nature of the pain in *Kashtartava* helps identifies the underlying pathology. The pain can manifest as:

- **Arti**: This type of pain is likened to a swelling caused by internal rupture, which is associated with obstruction in the uterus. The pain occurs as *Vata* tries to overcome the obstruction.
- **Toda**: A sharp, striking pain, which occurs due to obstruction to the flow of *Apana*. When *Vata* finds an outlet, the pain subsides.
- **Bheda**: A splitting or breaking pain, which resembles tissue separation. This pain is more intense than *Toda* and occurs due to *Vata Prakopa*

from *Dhatu Kshaya*, resulting in dryness (*Rukshata*) and roughness (*Kharata*).

Anya Lakshana (Associated Features)

Various features described for other diseases associated with *Kashtartava* can be considered as *Anya Lakshana*. These features can either be general or specific to particular conditions.

Samanya Lakshana of Kashtartava

Common menstrual symptoms observed in several disorders associated with *Kashtartava*.

✓ **Alpa (Reduced Quantity)**: Caused by either insufficient production or excessive absorption. *Vayu* increase leads to *Dhatu Kshaya*, especially in *Rasa* and *Rakta*, which results in *Alpa Artava* production. Vitiating *Apana Vayu* also causes excessive absorption, leading to diminished menstrual flow.

✓ **Krishna, Aruna, and Shyava Varna**: Normally, *Artava* is compared to the color of *Gunjaphala*, *Laksharas*, and *Alaktaka*. However, when vitiating by *Vata*, its color may turn *Krishna* (dark), *Aruna* (reddish), or *Shyava* (bluish or blackish).

Vishista Lakshana

Specific symptoms related to associated diseases.

Upashaya - Anupashaya

The appropriate use of *Aushadha* (medication), *Ahara* (diet), and *Vihara* (lifestyle practices) can have either a synergistic or antagonistic effect, depending on the physician's judgment. Successful treatment depends on this precise application. *Upashaya* brings relief from symptoms, while *Anupashaya* exacerbates them. Although *Upashaya* and *Anupashaya* are not explicitly described for *Kashtartava*, references from various texts, such as treatments for *Udavarta* and *Vatala* conditions, can be used to guide treatment

strategies, particularly focusing on *Vata Shamana* (pacifying *Vata*).

Upashaya (Therapeutic Measures)

Aharaja (Dietary Remedies)

- **Vata Shamaka (Vata pacifying foods):** *Madhura* (sweet), *Amla* (sour), and *Lavana* (salty) *Rasa* (taste), *Ushna* (hot), *Laghu* (light), and *Snigdha* (unctuous) foods^[47].
- Specific foods include:
 - *Yava* (barley)
 - *Havishya* (meal made from ghee, *Sali* rice, and milk)
 - *Yawaka* (meal made from barley and milk)

Viharaja (Physical Practices)

- **Sneha (Oils) and Sweda (Sweating treatments)**
 - Bathing with lukewarm water.
 - *Kumbhi Sweda* (a type of local steaming therapy).

Anupashaya (Contraindicated Measures)

Aharaja (Dietary Contraindications)

- *Vatakaraka* (*Vata* aggravating foods): Brinjal, ladies finger, potatoes, chickpeas, etc.
- Foods with *Tikshana* (sharp), *Ushna* (hot), *Katu* (pungent), *Lavana* (salty), and *Ruksha* (dry) qualities should be avoided.

Viharaja (Physical Practices to Avoid)

- *Vata Prakopaka*^[48] (*Vata* aggravating physical activities)
- *Ratri jagarana* (staying awake at night)
- *Ati chankramana* (excessive physical activity)
- *Vega Dharana* (suppressing natural urges like urination, defecation, and menstrual flow)
- *Divasvapna* (daytime sleep)
- Excessive exercise, *Shitodaka Sanana* (cold water baths), *Udavartana* (therapeutic massage with powders) should also be avoided.

Pathya (Therapeutic Guidelines)

- *Sura*, *Arista*, *Asava*, and *Lashuna Swarasa*^[49] (garlic juice) in early morning for *Avarana* (obstructive conditions).
- For *Dhatu Kshaya* (tissue depletion), *Kshara*, *Mansa Yukta Bhojana* (meat-based meals) are recommended.
- *Yavanna* (barley meal), *Abhayarista*, *Sidhu*, *Taila* (oil), *Pippali Churna* (Piper longum powder), *Loha Bhasma* (iron ash), and *Pathya Churna* (prescribed powders) with *Madhu* (honey).
- *Bala taila*, *Mishraka Sneha*, *Sukumara snehapana*^[50]

Apathya (Contraindicated Therapies)

Manda Prayoga (use of improper or weak treatments) is contraindicated^[51].

Sadhyasadyata^[52](Prognosis)

Although specific *Sadhyasadyata* (curability) is not defined for *Kashtartava*, it can be considered as *Krccha Sadhya* (difficult to cure). According to *Sushruta*, *Eka Doshaja yonivyapad* (single *Dosha*-related gynecological disorders) are treatable, and *Vataja Artava dushti* (*Vata*-related menstrual disorders) is curable according to *Ashtanga Sangraha* and *Sushruta*^[53]. However, it is considered *Kracchasadhya* (difficult to cure) according to *Ashtanga Hridaya*^[54].

Upadrava (Complications) ^[55-57]

The *Samanya updrava* (common complications) of *Yonivyapad* (female genital disorders) include:

- Infertility
- *Gulma* (abdominal masses)
- *Pradara* (abnormal vaginal discharge)
- *Vatadipiḍa* (*Vata*-induced pain)
- *Arsha* (hemorrhoids)

Chikitsa (Treatment)

There is no specific treatment (*Chikitsa*) mentioned for *Kashtartava*, but general treatment principles found in classical texts are applicable. The treatment should focus on addressing the root causes and restoring *Dosha* equilibrium. The main therapeutic approach involves treating *Vata prakopa* (aggravated *Vata*) and eliminating the causative factors.

Principle

Since *Vataprakopa* is the main cause of the disease, treatments should focus on vitiated *Vata* and remove the cause the main treatment principle must be focused on following things.

- As the gynecological diseases do not happen without the vitiation of *Vata* then it must be noticed that we should use the drugs which not vitiate *Vata dosha*^[58,59] as it will deteriorate the disease.
- *Kshira* is *Yonirogahara*^[60]
- For *Avritta Apana vata*, the line of treatment must be *Agnideepaka*, *Grahi*, *Vatanulomaka*, and should be *Pakvashaya Shuddhikara*.^[61]

Therapeutic measures should be directed toward calming the *Vata dosha* and addressing the underlying causes of the condition.

Samanya Chikitsa (General Treatment of Yonivyapad)

Shodhana Chikitsa (Purification Therapy)

Shodhana (Detoxification): In the treatment of *Yonivyapad* (female reproductive disorders), after performing proper *Snehana* (oil massage) and *Swedana* (sudation), all five measures should be used in a mild form^[62]. These treatments include:

- *Vamana* (emesis)

- *Virechana* (purgation), which is particularly beneficial for *Yoni Rogas*^[63,64] (female reproductive diseases).

After completing the five *Shodhana* measures, *Uttar Basti*^[65] (medicated enema) should be given along with other *Sthanika chikitsa* (localized therapies).

Shamana Chikitsa (Palliative Treatment)

- *Bhrihat Shatavari Ghrita* (a preparation of *Shatavari* with ghee)
- *Phala Ghrita* (fruit-based ghee preparation)
- *Triphaladi Ghrita* (ghee prepared with *Triphala*)
- *Maharasnadi Kwatha* (herbal decoction with *Rasna* and other ingredients)
- *Jeerakadi Modaka* (herbal preparation with cumin)
- *Nyagrodadi Kwatha* (herbal decoction with *Nyagrodha*)

Various Types of Basti (Medicated Enemas)

- *Palasha Niruha Basti* (enema with medicinal decoction of *Palasha*)
- *Shatavaryadi Anuvasana Basti* (enema with *Shatavari* -based oil)
- *Guduchyadi Rasayana Basti* (enema with *Guduchi*-based medicinal preparations)
- *Baladi Yamaka Anuvasana Basti* (enema with oil and *Baladi* herbs)
- *Shatavaryadi Rasayana Basti* (*Rasayana* therapy-based enema with *Shatavari*)

Other Sthanika Chikitsa^[66] (Localized Therapies)

1. *Abhyanga* (oil massage)
2. *Parisheka* (pouring of medicated oils or liquids)
3. *Pralepa* (medicated pastes applied to the body)
4. *Dharana* (pouring of medicinal liquids)
5. *Picchu* (use of medicated cotton swabs)
6. *Uttara Basti* (medicated vaginal enema)

Vishista Chikitsa (Specific Treatment for Kashtartava)

Dysmenorrhoea is often a symptom of various *Yonivyapad* like *Vatala*, *Udavarta*, *Paripluta*, and *Vataja Artava Dushti* (*Vata*-related menstrual disorders). Specific treatments for these conditions are as follows:

Udavartini Yonivyapad^[67], (Obstructed Menstrual Flow)

- *Dashamoola Ksheera Basti* (enema with *Dashamoola* and milk)
- *Anuvasana* and *Uttar Basti* with *Traivrta Sneha* (oil-based enema with *Traivrta*)
- Use of *Gramya*, *Audaka*, *Anupa Mansa Rasa* (local meats and milk-based food)

Vataja Yonivyapad^[68] (Vata-related Female Reproductive Disorders)

- *Guduchyadi Taila Pichcu Dharana* (application of *Guduchi*-based oil swabs)

- *Guduchyadi Taila* or *Amla Dravya Yukta Taila Uttarabasti* (vaginal enema with *Guduchi*-based oil or sour medicinal oil)
- *Sukhoshna Taila Abhyanga* and *Himsra Kalka Dharana* (warm oil massage and application of herbal pastes for relaxation)
- *Kashmaryadi Ghrita*, *Shatavaryadi Ghrita* – *Pana* (oral administration of medicated ghee)

Paripluta Yonivyapad (Swollen Uterus or Prolapsed Uterus)

- *Shallaki*, *Jingini*, *Jambu*, *Dhava*, and *Panchavalkala Sadhitha Sneha Picchu* (medicated swabs with herbal pastes from these herbs)

Vataja Artava Dushti (Vata-induced Menstrual Disorders)

- *Ghrita* medicated with *Bharangi*, *Madhuka*, and *Bhadradaru* (ghee with *Bharangi*, *Madhuka*, and *Bhadradaru* herbs).
- *Priyangu* and *Tila Kalka* (herbal paste of *Priyangu* and sesame) should be applied in the vagina for soothing and corrective action.

These treatments aim to balance the aggravated *Vata dosha* and restore proper functioning of the menstrual cycle, addressing underlying causes like obstruction, pain, or prolapsed.

CONCLUSION

In summary, the Ayurvedic understanding of *Kashtartava* (painful menstruation) involves the disturbance of *Vata* and *Pitta doshas*, resulting in reduced or painful menstrual flow. Correcting this imbalance through dietary modifications, lifestyle changes, and herbal remedies can help restore balance and alleviate symptoms. Additionally, addressing emotional and mental stress is crucial in managing and preventing *Kashtartava*.

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