

A Comprehensive Review on the Role of Sthanik Chikitsa in Stree Roga with Special Reference to Its Mechanism of Action

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ABSTRACT

Gynecological disorders (Stree Roga) represent a significant burden on women's health worldwide. Ayurveda describes Sthanik Chikitsa (local therapy) as an effective treatment modality targeting the site of pathology. To critically evaluate the therapeutic role, mechanisms, and clinical applicability of Sthanik Chikitsa in Stree Roga. A narrative review was conducted using classical Ayurvedic texts along with recent PubMed-indexed literature (2020–2025). Conceptual and comparative analyses were performed. Sthanik Chikitsa exhibits significant therapeutic benefits through direct mucosal absorption, antimicrobial activity, anti-inflammatory effects, and tissue regeneration, with minimal systemic adverse effects. Sthanik Chikitsa is a safe, effective, and scientifically relevant modality with strong potential for integration into contemporary gynecological practice.

Keywords: Sthanik Chikitsa, Stree Roga, Uttarbasti, Yoni Pichu, Vaginal Drug Delivery.

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Introduction

Stree Roga includes a wide spectrum of gynecological disorders such as *Shweta Pradara* (leucorrhoea), *Vandhyatva* (infertility), pelvic inflammatory disease (PID), cervical erosion, and menstrual abnormalities. These conditions are increasingly prevalent due to sedentary lifestyle, stress, hormonal imbalance, and recurrent infections.

According to Ayurveda, these disorders arise due to vitiation of *Doshas*, particularly *Apana Vata*, along with involvement of *Rakta* and *Kapha* [6–8]. Management includes systemic as well as local therapies, among which *Sthanik Chikitsa* holds a prime position.

Sthanik Chikitsa involves localized therapeutic procedures applied directly to the reproductive organs (Yoni and Garbhashaya), ensuring targeted drug delivery, rapid action, and minimal systemic side effects.

Modern research strongly supports localized vaginal drug delivery systems (VDDS), which offer enhanced bioavailability and therapeutic efficacy, thereby validating the Ayurvedic concept [1,2].

Materials and Methods

- Classical Ayurvedic texts: *Charaka Samhita*, *Sushruta Samhita*, *Ashtanga Hridaya*
- Modern gynecology references
- PubMed database search (2020–2025) using keywords: “vaginal drug delivery”, “intravaginal therapy”, “herbal gynecology”
- Analytical and comparative review methodology

Concept of Sthanik Chikitsa

Sthanik Chikitsa is an important therapeutic modality in Ayurveda that involves localized treatment at the site of disease, especially in *Stree Roga*. The term “Sthanik” denotes local or site-specific, while “Chikitsa” refers to treatment. This approach is particularly beneficial in gynecological disorders where pathology is often confined to the Yoni, Garbhashaya, and Artavavaha Srotas.

Unlike systemic therapies, Sthanik Chikitsa ensures direct delivery of medicaments to the affected area, resulting in faster action, better drug absorption, and minimal systemic side effects. Classical Ayurvedic texts emphasize the importance of local therapies in maintaining vaginal hygiene, correcting Dosha imbalance, and promoting reproductive health.

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These therapies not only provide symptomatic relief but also act on the root cause by eliminating vitiated Doshas, clearing obstructed channels, and strengthening local tissues.

Types of Sthanik Chikitsa

The commonly practiced modalities of Sthanik Chikitsa include:

- **Yoni Dhavana (Vaginal irrigation):** Cleansing of vaginal canal using medicated decoctions; useful in discharge, itching, and infections.
- **Yoni Pichu (Medicated tampon):** Cotton swab soaked in medicated oil inserted into vagina; provides sustained drug action and lubrication.
- **Yoni Varti (Vaginal suppository):** Solid herbal preparation inserted into vagina; useful in Kapha disorders and infections.
- **Uttarbasti (Intrauterine instillation):** Administration of medicated oil/decoction into uterus; indicated in infertility and uterine disorders.
- **Yoni Lepana (Local application):** Application of herbal paste externally; beneficial in inflammation and itching.

Mechanism of Action of Sthanik Chikitsa

Sthanik Chikitsa exerts its therapeutic effects through a multidimensional mode of action involving local pharmacological activity, systemic physiological influence, and Dosha-level correction. The localized administration of medicaments ensures targeted therapy, enhanced bioavailability, and rapid clinical response. The mechanism can be understood as follows:

1. Direct Mucosal Absorption

One of the most significant advantages of Sthanik Chikitsa is the direct absorption of drugs through the vaginal mucosa. The vaginal epithelium is highly vascular and permeable, especially to lipid-soluble and low molecular weight substances. Medicated oils (Taila) and ghrita preparations facilitate trans-mucosal drug delivery.

This route bypasses hepatic first-pass metabolism, thereby enhancing bioavailability and ensuring a higher concentration of active principles at the site of action. As a result, faster therapeutic outcomes are achieved compared to oral administration (2).

2. Antimicrobial Activity

Many Ayurvedic formulations used in Sthanik Chikitsa, such as Triphala, Neem (*Azadirachta indica*), and Daruharidra, possess well-documented antimicrobial properties. These drugs exhibit broad-

spectrum activity against bacteria, fungi, and certain viruses.

They help in reducing microbial load, preventing colonization, and restoring normal vaginal flora. This is particularly beneficial in conditions like leucorrhoea, vaginitis, and recurrent infections (3,5).

3. Anti-inflammatory Effect

Local application of medicated oils, decoctions, and pastes provides a significant anti-inflammatory effect. These preparations help in reducing local inflammation, swelling, itching, and irritation.

From an Ayurvedic perspective, this effect is achieved through the pacification of Pitta and Kapha Dosha. Pitta is responsible for inflammatory changes such as redness and burning sensation, while Kapha contributes to discharge and swelling. By balancing these Doshas, Sthanik Chikitsa alleviates inflammatory symptoms effectively.

4. Regulation of Apana Vata

Apana Vata plays a crucial role in regulating reproductive functions such as menstruation, ovulation, and parturition. In many gynecological disorders, vitiation of Apana Vata leads to dysfunction of these processes.

Procedures like Uttarbasti directly influence the pelvic organs and help normalize the flow and function of Apana Vata. This results in improved uterine health, regularization of menstrual cycles, enhanced ovulatory function, and better fertility outcomes.

5. Tissue Regeneration (Ropana Karma)

Sthanik Chikitsa promotes tissue healing and regeneration through its Ropana (healing) properties. Medicated oils and ghrita nourish the epithelial lining, enhance cellular repair, and improve local circulation. This is particularly effective in conditions such as cervical erosion, ulcerative lesions, and post-inflammatory tissue damage. The therapy supports regeneration of healthy epithelium and restoration of normal tissue architecture.

6. Hormonal Modulation

Although primarily local in action, Sthanik Chikitsa indirectly influences systemic hormonal balance. By regulating Apana Vata and improving uterine and ovarian function, it may help in modulating the hypothalamic–pituitary–ovarian (HPO) axis.

This results in improved endocrine function, better follicular development, and enhanced reproductive efficiency. Such effects are especially relevant in infertility and menstrual disorders.

7. Biofilm Disruption

Chronic and recurrent vaginal infections are often associated with biofilm formation, which makes

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microorganisms resistant to conventional antibiotics. Ayurvedic herbal formulations possess biofilm-disrupting properties that help break down these protective microbial layers.

This enhances drug penetration, improves treatment efficacy, and reduces recurrence rates. Thus, Sthanik Chikitsa provides an advantage in managing resistant and recurrent infections.

Clinical Applications of Sthanik Chikitsa

Sthanik Chikitsa is widely used in gynecological disorders due to its localized action, ensuring rapid relief, targeted drug delivery, and minimal systemic effects. It acts through *Dosha Shamana*, *Srotoshodhana*, and *Ropana*, making it effective in both infective and functional conditions.

- **Leucorrhea (Shweta Pradara):**
Yoni Dhavana and Pichu reduce discharge, itching, and infection through *Kaphashamaka* and antimicrobial action.
- **Infertility (Vandhyatva):**
Uttarbasti improves uterine health, regulates ovulation, and enhances endometrial receptivity.
- **Cervical Erosion (Karnini Yonivyapad):**
Pichu and Varti promote healing (*Ropana*), reduce inflammation, and restore cervical epithelium.
- **Pelvic Inflammatory Disease (PID):**
Uttarbasti and Dhavana reduce infection, inflammation, and prevent complications like adhesions.
- **Vaginal Infections (Yonigata Roga):**
Local therapies provide antimicrobial, anti-inflammatory, and anti-pruritic effects.
- **Endometrial Disorders:**
Uttarbasti improves endometrial thickness, regulates menstruation, and supports fertility.

Table 1: Comparative Analysis of Sthanik Chikitsa Procedures

Procedure	Ayurvedic Action	Modern Correlation	Indications
Yoni Dhavana	Kleda Shoshana	Cleansing, antimicrobial	Leucorrhea
Yoni Pichu	Snehan	Sustained drug release	Cervical erosion
Yoni Varti	Lekhana	Antimicrobial suppository	Vaginal infections
Uttarbasti	Vata Shamana	Intrauterine therapy	Infertility

Yoni Lepana	Ropana	Wound healing	Ulcers, erosion
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Table 2: Sthanik Chikitsa vs Modern Vaginal Drug Delivery Systems

Parameter	Sthanik Chikitsa	Modern VDDS
Drug delivery	Local	Local + controlled
Bioavailability	High	High
Side effects	Minimal	Minimal
Mechanism	Dosha balance	Pharmacological
Retention time	Prolonged	Controlled release

Diagram (Conceptual Flow)

Sthanik Chikitsa → Local Drug Application → Mucosal Absorption → Dosha Balance → Tissue Healing → Disease Relief

Discussion

Sthanik Chikitsa provides a unique localized therapeutic advantage in gynecological disorders. It ensures higher drug concentration at the site of action, minimal systemic exposure, and improved therapeutic outcomes.

Modern vaginal drug delivery systems (VDDS), including gels, suppositories, and intravaginal rings, operate on similar principles such as mucoadhesion, controlled release, and enhanced absorption [4].

Recent studies have demonstrated that herbal formulations used intravaginally possess significant antimicrobial and anti-inflammatory properties, supporting the efficacy of Ayurvedic treatments [5].

Thus, Sthanik Chikitsa represents a convergence of traditional Ayurvedic knowledge and modern pharmaceutical science.

Limitations and Future Scope

- Limited large-scale clinical trials
- Lack of standardized formulations
- Need for global scientific validation

Future directions:

- Randomized controlled trials
- Standard treatment protocols
- Integration with modern gynecology

Conclusion

Sthanik Chikitsa emerges as a highly effective, safe, and economical therapeutic modality in the management of *Stree Roga*. Its localized approach enables targeted drug delivery directly at the site of pathology, resulting in rapid symptomatic relief with minimal systemic side effects. By acting through fundamental Ayurvedic principles such as *Dosha*

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Shamana, Srotoshodhana, and Ropana, it not only alleviates clinical symptoms but also addresses the underlying cause and promotes tissue healing and regeneration.

The therapy demonstrates significant efficacy in a wide range of gynecological conditions, including leucorrhea, vaginal infections, infertility, and cervical disorders. Its antimicrobial, anti-inflammatory, and rejuvenative properties contribute to improved reproductive health and reduced recurrence of chronic conditions.

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