



Research Article

## Importance of Sharirasthana in Charaka Samhita: A Comprehensive Review

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### Abstract

**Background:** Sharirasthana is the fourth section of Charaka Samhita and consists of eight chapters dealing with the origin, constitution, development, anatomy, physiology, embryology, genetics, pregnancy, fetal development, and philosophical aspects of human life. It provides a holistic understanding of the human body by integrating physical, mental, and spiritual dimensions.

**Objective:** To review the importance of Sharirasthana and evaluate its contribution to Ayurvedic anatomy, embryology, preventive medicine, reproductive health, and its relevance to modern medical science.

**Materials and Methods:** The review is based on classical Ayurvedic literature, particularly Charaka Samhita with Chakrapani commentary, standard Ayurvedic textbooks, and published review articles.

**Results:** Sharirasthana provides systematic knowledge regarding the origin of life, embryogenesis, fetal development, hereditary factors, antenatal care, neonatal care, anatomy, and philosophical concepts of Purusha. Many principles correlate with modern embryology, genetics, obstetrics, and preventive medicine.

**Conclusion:** Sharirasthana forms the scientific basis of Ayurvedic understanding of the human body and remains highly relevant in present-day education, clinical practice, and research.

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**KEYWORDS:** Charaka Samhita, Sharirasthana, Embryology, Garbha, Genetics, Anatomy, Ayurveda.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Charaka Samhita is one of the principal classical texts of Ayurveda, comprising eight Sthanas and 120 chapters. Sharirasthana is devoted to the comprehensive study of the human body (Sharira), covering its origin, structure, growth, fetal development, and philosophical basis. Unlike modern anatomy, it presents the body as an integrated union of body, mind, senses, and consciousness.

### AIM

To review the importance of Sharirasthana of Charaka Samhita and its relevance in contemporary Ayurvedic education and healthcare.

### OBJECTIVES

1. To explain the concept of Sharirasthana.
2. To analyse the importance of its eight chapters.
3. To evaluate its contribution to embryology, anatomy, and reproductive medicine.
4. To correlate classical concepts with modern medical science.

## 2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

This review is based on classical Ayurvedic texts, Chakrapani commentary, standard textbooks, and published peer-reviewed literature related to Sharirasthana.

## 3. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

### Concept of Sharirasthana

The word Sharira means the living body, which is the seat of consciousness (Chetana). Sharirasthana explains the constitution of the human body, embryological development, hereditary factors, fetal nutrition, anatomical structures, and reproductive health in a logical sequence.

### Overview of Eight Chapters

1. Katidhapurusha Sharira
2. Atulyagotriya Sharira
3. Khuddika Garbhavakranti Sharira
4. Mahati Garbhavakranti Sharira
5. Purusha Vichaya Sharira
6. Sharira Vichaya Sharira
7. Sharira Sankhya Sharira
8. Jatisutriya Sharira

These chapters collectively explain human constitution, genetics, embryology, fetal development, anatomy, pregnancy care, and childbirth.

### Clinical Importance of Sharirasthana

#### 1. Concept of Purusha

Explains the relationship between Atma, Manas, Indriya, and Sharira, forming the philosophical foundation of Ayurvedic medicine.

#### 2. Embryology (Garbhavakranti)

Describes fertilization, embryogenesis, organogenesis, and month-wise fetal development. These concepts show remarkable similarities with modern embryology.

#### 3. Genetics (Beeja Siddhanta)

The concepts of Beeja, Beeja-Bhaga, and Beeja-Bhagavayava explain hereditary transmission and congenital disorders, representing an early understanding of genetics.

#### 4. Pregnancy and Antenatal Care

Detailed descriptions of Garbhini Paricharya emphasize maternal nutrition, lifestyle, and psychological well-being to ensure healthy fetal development.

#### 5. Anatomy

Explains body organs, tissues, bones, joints, muscles, and anthropometric measurements, providing the anatomical basis for Ayurvedic practice.

#### 6. Neonatal Care

Describes Jatamatra Paricharya, including immediate newborn care and measures to promote healthy growth and immunity.

#### 7. Preventive Medicine

Highlights healthy conception, avoidance of consanguineous marriage, proper reproductive practices, and maternal care for disease prevention.

#### 8. Holistic Health

Integrates physical, psychological, ethical, and spiritual dimensions, emphasizing that true health depends on harmony among body, mind, and consciousness.

### Modern Relevance

The teachings of Sharirasthana remain valuable in:

- Human embryology
- Genetics
- Obstetrics and gynaecology
- Neonatology
- Preventive medicine
- Reproductive health
- Medical ethics
- Holistic healthcare

Several modern reviews have highlighted its relevance to genetics, antenatal care, postnatal care, and national maternal and child health programmes.

## 4. DISCUSSION

Sharirasthana is unique because it combines philosophy with biological science. It explains the origin of life, fetal development, hereditary principles, anatomical organization, and maternal care in a systematic manner. The concepts of Beeja Siddhanta, Garbhavakranti, and Garbhini Paricharya demonstrate an advanced understanding of developmental biology and preventive medicine. These principles continue to inspire research in Ayurveda and provide a holistic framework that complements contemporary medical knowledge.

## 5. CONCLUSION

Sharirasthana is one of the most scientifically significant sections of Charaka Samhita. It provides comprehensive knowledge of embryology, anatomy, genetics, reproductive health, fetal development, and holistic human biology. Its teachings continue to support Ayurvedic education, clinical practice, preventive healthcare, and interdisciplinary research. Integrating these classical concepts with modern biomedical sciences can strengthen evidence-based Ayurveda and improve maternal, fetal, and community health.

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