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**SANDHI SHAREERA: AN INTEGRATIVE
APPROACH TO AYURVEDIC AND MODERN
ANATOMY**

**Dr Gopika Rajeevan¹, Dr Simi C P², Dr Prasanna S³, Dr T
Jagadeesh⁴, Dr Dharshini K M⁵**

1.^{1*} 2 nd year PG scholar, ^{2*} Associate professor, ^{3*} professor & HOD, ^{4,5*} 2 nd year PG scholar,
Department of Rachana Shareera,,SDM College of Ayurveda and Hospital, Hassan

ABSTRACT

Sandhi Shareera is an important branch of Ayurvedic anatomy that deals with the study of joints and their structural and functional importance in the human body. The term Sandhi refers to the union or articulation between two or more body structures, mainly Asthi (bones). Proper functioning of Sandhi is essential for locomotion, stability, support, weight bearing, and maintenance of body posture. Ayurvedic classics have explained Sandhi with reference to its formation, classification, Panchabhoutikatwa composition, Tridosha involvement, and functional aspects. Acharya Sushruta enumerated 210 Sandhis in the body and classified them according to region, structure, and movement. Structures such as Snayu, Peshi, Sira, Dhamani, Shleshmadhara Kala, and Shleshaka Kapha contribute to the stability, nourishment, lubrication, and mobility of joints. Based on function, Sandhis are classified into Cheshtavantha and Sthira types, while structurally they are divided into eight varieties, namely Kora, Ulukhala, Samudga, Prathara, Tunnasevani, Vayasatunda, Mandala, and Shankavarta. Detailed knowledge of Sandhi Shareera is essential for understanding the normal anatomy and physiology of joints as well as the manifestation of Sandhi Vikara. In the present era, the prevalence of joint-related disorders has increased considerably, emphasizing the clinical importance of comprehensive knowledge of Sandhi Shareera in Ayurvedic practice.

Corresponding Author

Dr Gopika Rajeevan

* 2 nd year PG scholar,

Department of Rachana

Shareera,,SDM College of

Ayurveda and Hospital, Hassan

 **gopikarajeevan123@gmail.com**

 **Phone: +91 90740 41943**

KEYWORDS

Sandhi Shareera, Shleshaka Kapha, Shleshmadhara Kala, Asthi Sandhi, Joint Anatomy

1. Introduction

The word sandhi is derived from the root word Sam+Dam+Ki. Sam upasarga had been used. It is originated from Dha dhatu and ki pratyaya. The meaning of sandhi Sandhana Mitti, i.e., joining, binding, or holding together.¹

Our life is completely and purely based on “Art of Locomotion”. And from the theory of evolution, it is believed that human beings evolved from wanderers and hunters. So, for the movement of the body, the anatomy of joints plays a major role in Locomotion.

Our Acharyas explained about Sandhi Shareera in Samhita. Sandhi literally means- for Samyoga, coming together, junction, or joint. Sandhi Shareera means study of sandhi.

Sandhi shareera can be simulated with Ayurvedic arthrology.⁹

अस्थनां तु सन्धयो ह्येते केवलाः परिकीर्तिताः |

पेशीस्नायुसिराणां तु सन्धिसङ्ख्या न विद्यते || (Su sha.5/28)

According to Sushruta Samhita, the Sandhis are innumerable in the body; therefore, only Asthi Sandhis (bony joints) were specifically enumerated by Acharya Sushruta. Other forms of Sandhis, such as Peshi Sandhi (connections between muscles), Snayu Sandhi (junctions of ligaments/tendons or nerves), and Sira Sandhi (connections among arteries, veins, and capillaries), were not individually counted due to their vast number.

In our Samhitas, Acharya has explained briefly about Sandhi, but in today's world, diseases related to Sandhi have progressively increased, so it became very essential for a Vaidya to know detailed knowledge about Sandhi shareera.

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Ayurvedic review

Sandhi can be defined as joining place of two bones. According to Acharya Sharangadhara, sandhi can be defined as the place where two body parts or segments join with the help of Kapha. In general, sandhi means the union of any two or more structures, such as Peshi, Snayu, and Sira of the body, but the meeting point of such structures is innumerable, so the word Sandhi belongs to Asthi Sandhi only.²³

Embryological development:

During the third month of intrauterine development, five distinct pindakas emerge, which subsequently differentiate into the major body parts, namely the head, two upper limbs, and two lower limbs. As described in the Garbhopanishad, the development of Padapradesha takes place during the third month of gestation, whereas the Gulpha (ankle region), along with the Jathara and Kati Pradesha, develops during the fourth month.¹³

Table 1: Panchabhoutikatwa of sandhi:7

Si no	Panchamahabhoota	Structures in Sandhi
1	Akasha mahabhoota	Space between articular surfaces.
2	Vayu mahabhoota	Various movements like prasaran, akunchana, gamana, etc.
3	Agni mahabhoota	Warmness seen after movements in joints
4	Jala mahabhoota	Synovial fluid (shleshaka kapha)
5	Pruthvi mahabhoota	Meeting points of sandhi

Sandhi & Tridosha

According to Ayurveda, joint stability is maintained by Kapha dosha, and the active movements are controlled by Vata dosha. Any inflammatory condition affecting joints are due to vitiated by Pitta dosha.⁴

सन्ध्यश्चाङ्गसन्धानादेहे प्रोक्ताः कफान्विताः ३७

According to Sharangadara, sandhi are the junctions of the various parts of the body; they are the seat of shleshaka kapha.²³

Sandhi- Prakrithi ⁷

Person of Vata prakriti is Krisha and produces sound on movement. Pitta prakriti people have shithila sandhibandhana and Mamsa. Kapha prakriti person has gudha, Snigdha, and slishtha sandhi asthi Mamsa.

Table 2: Enumeration: ^{7,15,17,20,21,25}

Acharyas	SushruthaSamhit ha	Charaka Samhita	Ashtanga Sangraha	Sargathara samhitha	Ashtanga Hrudaya	Kashyapa	Ashtanga Hrudaya
Total	210	200	210	210	210	381	2000(sand hiwithPesi, Snayu)

Table 3: Classification of Sandhi based on Shadangatva Acc Sushrutha ¹⁴

Si no	Pradesha	Number of sandhi
1	Shakha Pradesha	68
2	Koshta	59
3	Greeva Prathyordwam	83
	Total	210

Table 4: Enumeration of Sandhi in Shakha Pradesha 14

Shakha Pradesha	
Padanguli	$3 \times 4 = 12$
Pada Angushta	02
Janu	01
Vankshana	01
Gulpha	01
Total	$17 \times 4 = 68$

Table-5: Enumeration of Sandhi in Koshta Pradesha ¹⁴

Kati Kapala	3
Prushtavamsha	24
Parshva	24
Uras	8
Total	59

Table-6: Enumeration of Sandhi in Greeva and Urdhwa ¹⁴

Greeva	8
Kanta	3
Hridaya Or Kloma Nadi	18
Dantamula	32

Table-6: Enumeration of Sandhi in Greeva and Urdhwa ¹⁴

<i>Kakalaka</i>	1
<i>Netrashritha Vartma Mandala</i>	2
<i>Ganda</i>	2
<i>Karna</i>	2
<i>Shanka</i>	2
<i>Hanu sandhi</i>	2
<i>Bhruvopari</i>	2
<i>Shankopari</i>	2
<i>Shira Kapala</i>	5
<i>Murdha</i>	1
<i>Nasa</i>	1
Total	83

SANDHI AND SLESHMADHARA KALA^{5,7}

चतुर्थी श्लेष्मधरा सर्वसन्धिषु प्राणभृतां भवति ||(su.sha.4/14)

The fourth kala, called Shleshmadhara kala (synovial membrane), is in the joints and enables them to move freely by preventing friction.

स्नेहाभ्यक्ते यथा ह्यक्षे चक्रं साधु प्रवर्तते |

सन्धयः साधु वर्तन्ते संश्लिष्टाः श्लेष्मणा तथा || (su.sha.4/15)

As oil (Sneha) is applied to the axis (Hyakshe), the wheel moves better (Chakram Sadu pravarthate). By the same method, with the help of shleshma (synovial fluid) of Shleshmadhara kala, all joints work well.

Modern correlation of Shleshmadhara kala: synovial membrane is a specialized connective tissue that lines the inner surface of capsules of synovial joints and tendon sheath.

SANDHI- MARMA⁷

जानुकूर्परसीमन्ताधिपतिगुल्फमणिबन्धकुकुन्दरावर्तकृकाटिकाश्चेति सन्धिमर्माणि || (su.sha.6/7)

Table-7 - Enumeration of Sandhi Marma

<i>SANDHI-MARMA</i>	<i>NUMBERS</i>
<i>Janu</i>	2
<i>Kurpara</i>	2
<i>Seemanta</i>	5
<i>Adhipathi</i>	1
<i>Gulpha</i>	2
<i>Manibandha</i>	2
<i>Kukundara</i>	2
<i>Avartha</i>	2
<i>Krukkatika</i>	2

Viddha Lakshana of Sandhi Marma^{7,10,24}

वस्तु शूकैरिवाकीर्णं रूढे च कुणिखज्जता।

बलचेष्टाक्षयः शोषः पर्वशोफश्च सन्धिजे॥ (A.hr.sha.4/51)

In case of injury to sandhi marma, the site of injury feels as though full of thorns (Vastu shookairivikiranam), even after healing of the wound there is shortening of the arm (Kuni), lameness (khanjata), decrease of strength and movement (Balacheshta Kshaya), emaciation (shosha) of the body and swelling of the joints (parva Sopha sandhije).

CLASSIFICATION OF SANDHI^{2,3}

Can be classified into 2 types

A) Kriyanusara (On the basis of Movements.)²

B) Rachananusara (On the basis of structure or shape)³

Kriyanusara vargeekarana

Based on functions, there are 2 types

1) Cheshtavantha (Movable joints).²

Chala/cheshtayuktha sandhi (movable joints)- the joints where movements take place, known as Cheshtavantha sandhi. Cheshtavantha is divided into Bahuchala and Alpachala sandhi

- **Bahuchala sandhi**- these joints are present at Shakha(limbs), Hanu sandhi (temporomandibular joint), which permits more movements.
- **Alpachala sandhi**-joints are present at Prushtavamsha (vertebral column), i.e., intervertebral joints, which permit less movement.

2) Sthira / Achala (immovable joints/synarthrosis).²

Excluding Cheshtavantha sandhi, the rest of all joints are immovable joints.

e.g. joint between skull bones, joints between facial bones, and the teeth are fitted into the alveolar sockets of the maxilla and mandible, etc.

Rachananusara vargeekarana^{3,19}

Acharya Sushruta has described 8 types. they are

- 1) Kora
- 2) Ulukhala
- 3) Samudga
- 4) Prathara
- 5) Tunnasevani
- 6) Vayasatunda
- 7) Mandala
- 8) Shankaavartha

1. KORA SANDHI⁹

A piece of metal or yantra that fastens the edge of a door or window is called kora, so a joint in which one bone swings against another in one direction, like the swinging of a door, is called kora sandhi.

These are in the shape of hinges and are totally mobile in one direction while partially mobile in the opposite direction.

A hinge joint is a common class of synovial joints. Hinge joints are formed between two or more bones where the bones can only move along one axis to flex or extend.

तेषामङ्गुलिमणिबन्धगुल्फजानुकूपरेषु कोराः सन्धयः। (Su.sha.5/27)

Examples: Anguli sandhi (interphalangeal joint)

Manibandha sandhi (wrist joint)

Gulpha sandhi (ankle joint)

Jaanu sandhi (knee joint)

Kurpara sandhi (elbow joint)



Fig.1.1

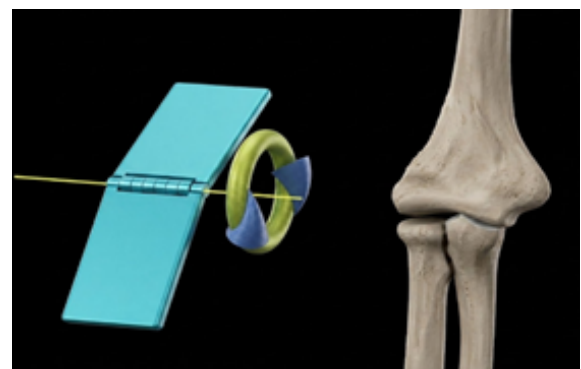


Fig.1.2

2. ULUKHALA SANDHI ⁹

Resemble the shape of a mortar, i.e., stone grinder.

कक्षावङ्क्षणदशनेषूलूखलाः| (Su.sha.5/27)

Kaksha Sandhi- Glenoid cavity of Scapula with head of Humerus- Shoulder joint.

Vankshana Sandi-Acetabulum with head of Femur- Hip joint

Fibrous Joint- Gomphosis- Under Ulukhala Variety

Roots of teeth are fitted in the alveolar process of the mandible and Maxilla.



Fig.1.3

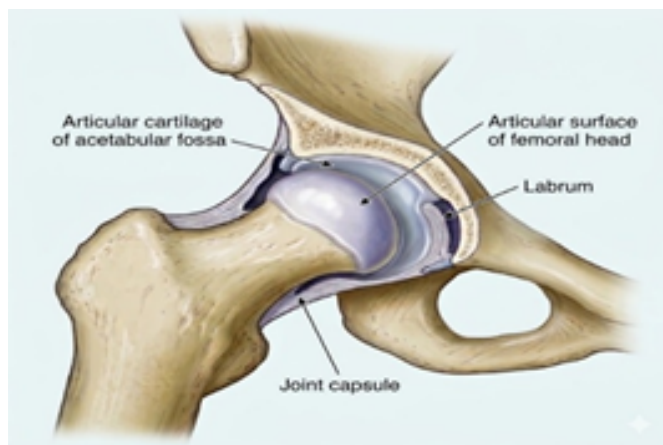


Fig.1.4

3. SAMUDGA SANDHI ⁹

Samudga means a box with a lid or covering. In this type of joint articulating surfaces of the bones are slightly convex and concave.

Is present in,

अंसपीठगुदभगनितम्बेषु सामुद्राः| (Su.sha.5/27)

Amsapeeta – Acromioclavicular Joint

Guda –Sacrococcygeal Joint

Bhaga –Pubic Symphysis

Nitamba –sacroiliac Joint.

These types of joints are box-shaped or plate-shaped.



Fig.1.5

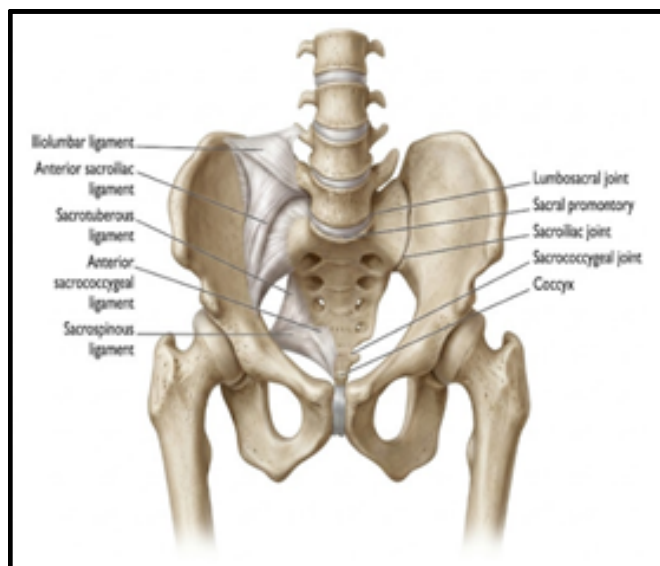


Fig.1.6

4. PRATHARA SANDHI ⁹

The articulating surfaces of the bone forming this joint are plane and permit only gliding movements.

is present in,

ग्रीवापृष्ठवंशयोः प्रतराः (Su.sha.5/27)

Greeva vamsha- cervical vertebra

Prushta vamsha-dorsal or thoracic vertebra

While explaining in the commentary, it is described as Bhelaka, which means a yacht, like wood arranged one on another; same in this Sandhi, bones are fitted one on the other.

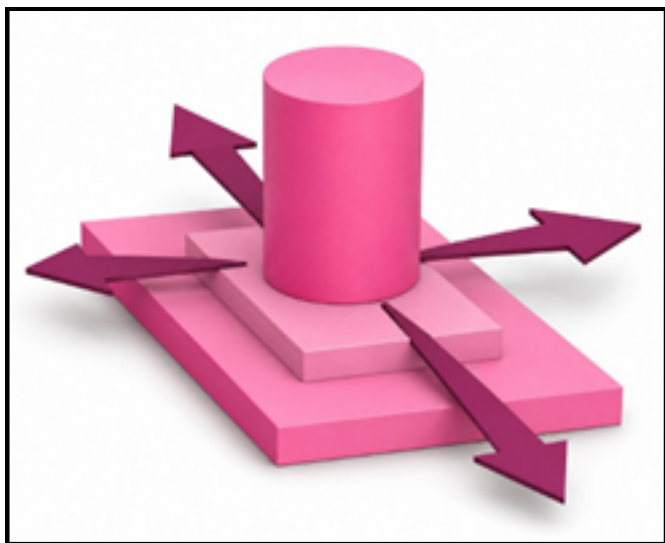


Fig.1.7

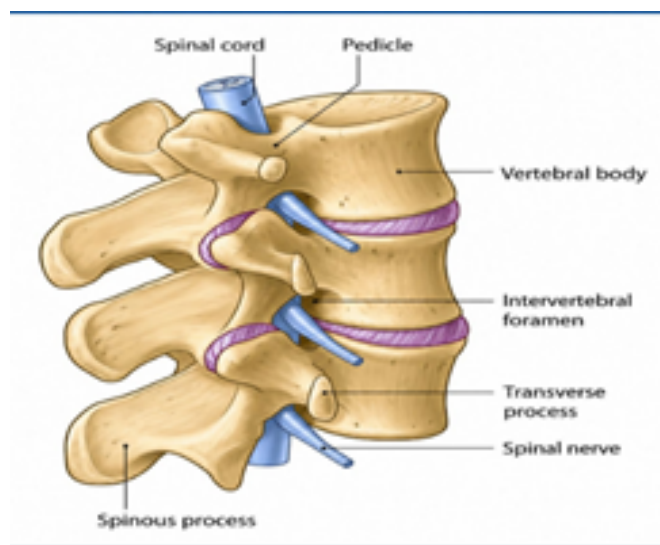


Fig.1.8

5. TUNNASEVANI⁹

The forming of this joint has serrated edges and looks like stitched part; hence the name Tunnasevani.

Is present in

शिरःकटीकपालेषु तुन्नसेवन्यः | (Su.sha.5/27)

Shiraha Kapala (sutures of skull)

Kati Kapala (sutural joints of pelvic bones)

These joints are in the form of stitches between 2 bones. These joints can be compared to sutural joints of fibrous joints.

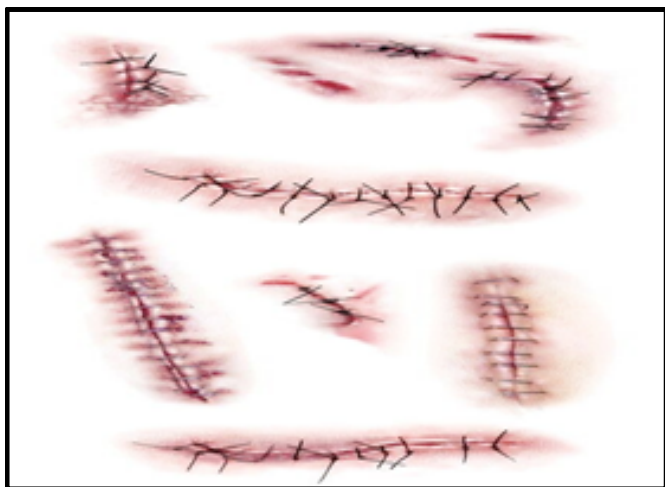


Fig.1.9

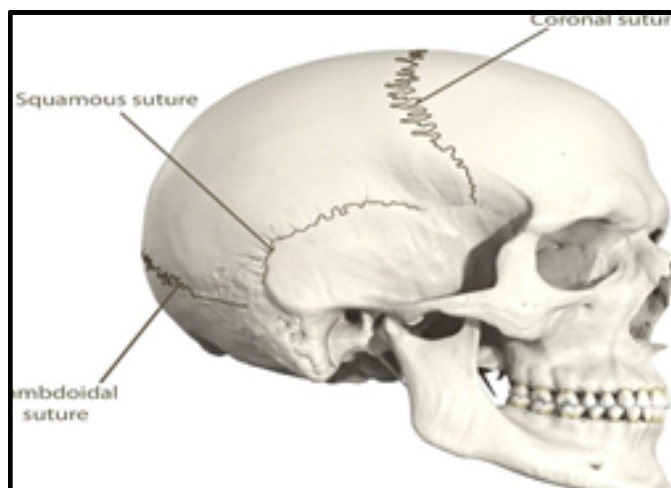


Fig.2.0

6. VAYASATUNDA⁹ (KAKATUNDA)

Vayas means crow, and Tunda means beak. The shape of the joint resembles the beak of a crow. The articulating area of one bone has a beak-like projection, and the other bone has a concave articulating area.

Present in,

हन्वोरुभयतस्तु वायसतुण्डः | (Su.sha.5/27)

Hanu sandhi (Temporomandibular Joint)-

This joint is in the shape of the beak of a crow. The condylar process of Mandible articulates with the mandibular fossa of the temporal bone.



Fig.2.1

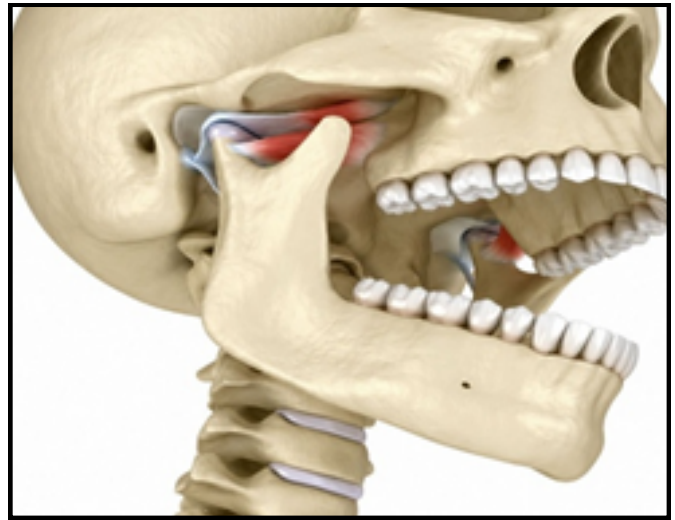


Fig.2.2

7. MANDALA SANDHI ^{8, 9, 22}

कण्ठहृदयनेत्रक्लोमनाडीषु मण्डलाः। (Su.sha.5/27)

Present in

Kanta Nadi (Larynx)

Hridaya (Heart)

Netra (Eyes)

Kloma Nadi (Trachea)

These are round, fixed, and cartilaginous joints present in some structures of the body, which are mentioned above.

Mandala Sandhi is the cartilaginous joints. These cartilaginous joints are circular in nature, which includes Tarunasthi.

Tarunasthi is a type of Asthi according to Ayurveda. It is synonymous with the cartilages of modern science. All the three types of cartilage, i.e., Hyaline cartilage, Fibrocartilage, and elastic cartilage, constitute an Ayurvedic term 'Tarunasthi'.

Kanta Nadi and Kloma Nadi ^{8, 22} –Joints between Cartilages of larynx and Trachea with lumen for passage of air and patency of tube maintained always without collapse.

- Kanta should be considered as larynx, and 3 joints mentioned in Kanta Pradesha are concluded as Cricoaarytenoid joint, Cricothyroid joint, Thyroepiglottic joint.
- In the context of Sandhi Sharira, Kloma Nadi means Trachea. The attachment between the C-Shaped cartilaginous rings is to be considered as Sandhi located in the trachea.
- The first mandala sandhi is counted in between cricoid cartilage and the first C-shaped cartilaginous ring of trachea. Considering the crico-tracheal junction as 1 st mandala sandhi. ⁷

**Fig.2.3: Larynx****Fig. 2 .4 Larynx along with trachea and esophagus****Fig.2.5 Larynx along with all cartilages****Fig.2.6 Trachea along with cartilaginous rings****Netra-Mandala ^{8,22}**

Spherical ring-like layers communicating with each other, related to the bony orbit

Pakshma Mandala (Ring of Eyelashes)

Varthma Mandala (Ring of eyelids)

Shukla Mandala (Sclera)

Krishna mandala (Cornea) and

Drusti mandala (Lens with retina)

Bony Orbit – formed by various bones articulating to form a deep socket for lodging the eyeball.

- The two joints located in the Varthma Mandala (Eyelid), which are formed by the Tarunasthi (Tarsal plates), the connectivity between the superior and inferior tarsal plates in the eyelid is concluded as Mandala Sandhi in Netra Pradesha.



Fig.2.7: Inferior tarsal plate

Hridaya mandala sandhi ^{8,22} - Fibrous Skeleton of Heart that maintains the patency of orifices and controls the passage of blood during systole and diastole.

- There is a condensation of fibrous skeleton present in the valves of the Heart.
- It acts as an insulator against the flow of electrical current across the heart, and without the heart's fibrous skeleton, its ability to pump blood would be considerably reduced.
- These valves form a circular junction within the heart. Hence valves of the heart are concluded as Mandala Sandhi in Hridaya Pradesha.
- Sushruta has not specified the number of sandhi present in Hridaya, but the presence of four fibroskeletal rings in the valves are correlated to Mandala sandhi.



Fig.2.8: All Valves of the Heart

8.Shankaavartha ¹⁰

The structure of this joint is complicated, circular, or spiral, which resembles the Shankavarta (spiral turn of the conch)

Present in,

श्रोत्रशृङ्गाटकेषु शङ्खावर्ताः | (Su.sha.5/27)

Examples: Srotra (ear), Sringhataka (Labyrinth), Cartilaginous part of external ear, along with Internal bony and membranous parts of the ear.



Fig.2.9

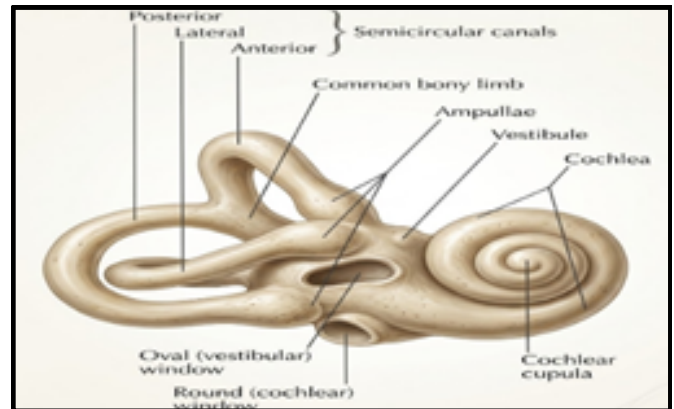


Fig.3.0

DISCUSSION:

Sandhi is an important anatomical structure in Ayurveda responsible for stability, support, and locomotion of the body. The classification of Sandhi described by Acharya Sushruta shows remarkable similarity with the modern classification of joints. The concept of Panchamahabhoutikatwa provides a comprehensive explanation for the structural and functional dynamics of Sandhi. Akasha Mahabhuta represents the joint cavity and inter-articular space essential for free movement. Vayu Mahabhuta governs all types of joint movements, including flexion, extension, rotation, and locomotion. Jala Mahabhuta is represented by Shleshaka Kapha or synovial fluid, which lubricates the joints, reduces friction, and nourishes the articular surfaces. Prithvi Mahabhuta provides firmness, strength, and structural stability to articulating bones and supporting tissues. Agni Mahabhuta regulates the metabolic and transformative activities within the joint and is responsible for the warmth generated during movement. Thus, Ayurveda considers Sandhi not merely as the union of bones, but as a highly organized and dynamic functional complex responsible for stability, mobility, and maintenance of musculoskeletal integrity.

Sandhi Shareera occupies a pivotal position in Ayurvedic anatomy as it provides a comprehensive understanding of the structures responsible for stability, support, mobility, and coordinated locomotion of the human body. Although the concept of Sandhi is primarily interpreted as the articulation between bones, Ayurvedic literature presents a broader perspective by considering Sandhi as a functional and structural union that facilitates the integrity and harmonious functioning of various body components. This holistic approach demonstrates the profound anatomical insight of the ancient Acharyas.

The Panchamahabhoutika constitution of Sandhi offers a unique framework for understanding joint anatomy and physiology. Akasha Mahabhuta represents the articular space necessary for movement, while Vayu Mahabhuta governs all dynamic activities of the joint, including flexion, extension, rotation, and locomotion. Jala Mahabhuta is manifested through Shleshaka Kapha, which provides lubrication and nourishment to the articulating surfaces. Prithvi Mahabhuta contributes structural strength and stability through bones and supporting connective tissues, whereas Agni Mahabhuta is responsible for metabolic activity and maintenance of tissue vitality within the joint. This multidimensional interpretation highlights the integrative nature of Ayurvedic anatomical concepts and their relevance in explaining normal joint function.

A comparative analysis of the classifications described by Acharya Sushruta reveals significant parallels with modern arthrology. Kora Sandhi closely resembles hinge joints, permitting movement predominantly in a single plane, as observed in the interphalangeal, wrist, elbow, knee, and ankle joints. Ulukhala Sandhi corresponds to ball-and-socket joints such as the shoulder and hip joints, which provide a wide range of multidirectional movements. The inclusion of gomphosis under this category further reflects the broad anatomical interpretation adopted in Ayurveda. Samudga and Prathara Sandhi demonstrate characteristics comparable to gliding and plane joints, where stability is prioritized over extensive mobility. Tunnasevani Sandhi bears a striking resemblance to fibrous sutural joints of the skull, emphasizing structural protection rather than movement. Similarly, Vayasatunda Sandhi can be correlated with the temporomandibular joint, which exhibits specialized condylar mechanics. These correlations indicate that Ayurvedic scholars recognized variations in joint morphology and function centuries before the development of modern anatomical classification systems

Among the eight varieties, Mandala Sandhi deserves special attention because its interpretation extends beyond conventional skeletal articulations. Classical descriptions involving the larynx, trachea, heart, and ocular structures suggest that Ayurveda recognized functional junctions formed by cartilaginous, fibrous, and specialized supporting tissues. The correlation of Kanta Pradesha with laryngeal joints, Kloma Nadi with tracheal cartilaginous rings, Hridaya with the fibrous skeleton of the heart, and Netra with tarsal plate connections reflects an advanced anatomical understanding that encompasses both locomotor and visceral structures. Such descriptions illustrate the broader Ayurvedic concept of Sandhi as a site of structural continuity and physiological coordination rather than merely a junction between bones.

The concepts of Shleshmadhara Kala and Shleshaka Kapha provide an excellent example of the functional correlation between Ayurvedic and modern anatomical knowledge. Shleshmadhara Kala may be compared to the synovial membrane, while Shleshaka Kapha exhibits similarities with synovial fluid. Both are essential for lubrication, nutrition of articular cartilage, reduction of friction, and preservation of joint integrity. This correlation demonstrates how classical Ayurvedic principles can be interpreted through the lens of contemporary anatomy and physiology without compromising their original philosophical foundation.

The Tridosha-based understanding of Sandhi further enriches the physiological interpretation of joint function. Vata governs movement and neuromuscular coordination, Kapha maintains stability, lubrication, and structural cohesion, while Pitta regulates metabolic and inflammatory processes within the joint. Disturbance in the equilibrium of these factors may lead to various Sandhi Vikaras. This functional model offers a holistic framework for understanding the pathogenesis of musculoskeletal disorders and highlights the clinical relevance of Sandhi Shareera in contemporary Ayurvedic practice.

Ayurveda recognizes Sandhi not merely as the articulation between bones but as a broader concept encompassing the junctions of structures such as Peshi, Snayu, Sira, and other tissues. This reflects a holistic understanding of the human body, wherein Sandhi serves as a site of structural continuity, functional integration, and physiological coordination. Such a comprehensive perspective highlights the depth of anatomical knowledge described in the classical texts and distinguishes Ayurvedic anatomy from a purely morphological interpretation. The notable correlations between classical Ayurvedic descriptions and modern arthrological principles underscore the scientific relevance of these concepts and provide a valuable foundation for integrative anatomical and musculoskeletal research.

Clinical Significance of Sandhi Shareera

The concepts of Sandhi Shareera have significant clinical relevance in understanding the pathogenesis and management of musculoskeletal disorders. Conditions such as Sandhigata Vata, Amavata, traumatic joint injuries, degenerative arthritis, and inflammatory arthropathies can be interpreted through the principles of Tridosha, particularly the roles of Vata, Pitta, and Shleshaka Kapha. Degeneration of joint structures may be correlated with Vata predominance, whereas inflammatory manifestations indicate the involvement of Pitta and Ama. The concepts of Shleshmadhara Kala and Shleshaka Kapha provide a theoretical basis for understanding lubrication, nutrition, and preservation of joint integrity. Thus, a thorough knowledge of Sandhi Shareera is essential for accurate diagnosis, preventive strategies, and therapeutic interventions in Ayurvedic clinical practice.

CONCLUSION

Sandhi Shareera represents one of the most sophisticated components of Ayurvedic anatomy, encompassing the structural, functional, and physiological aspects of joints and articulations.

Sandhi Shareera represents a remarkable contribution of Ayurveda to the understanding of human anatomy and biomechanics. The classical descriptions of Sandhi by Acharya Sushruta reflect a sophisticated knowledge of joint structure, function, and movement, many aspects of which show notable parallels with modern arthrology. Concepts such as Panchamahabhoutikatwa, Tridosha involvement, Shleshmadhara Kala, and Shleshaka Kapha provide a holistic perspective on joint health and function. Integrating these Ayurvedic principles with contemporary anatomical knowledge not only enhances academic understanding but also strengthens the clinical relevance of Sandhi Shareera in the study and management of musculoskeletal disorders. Thus, Sandhi Shareera continues to serve as an important bridge between classical Ayurvedic wisdom and modern anatomical science.

Conflict of interest:

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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