



## ***Klaibya* (Impotence): A Comprehensive Exploration Through Ayurveda and Contemporary Medicine**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Impotency has emerged as a significant global medical and social issue, with its prevalence believed to be steadily rising with each passing decade. Despite the considerable advancements in medical science in understanding its underlying causes, this condition continues to persist, making it a formidable challenge. A successful marriage often depends on the sexual harmony between partners, and one of the most common barriers preventing a man from engaging in satisfying sexual relations with his partner is referred to as "*Klaibya*" in Ayurveda, and medically known as "erectile dysfunction (E.D.)," or more commonly, "impotency." This condition is a profound misfortune that can rob individuals of the joys and fulfilment of their youthful years. Sexual dysfunction, particularly erectile dysfunction, has become increasingly prevalent in recent times. This review aims to explore the aetiology, pathology, and diagnostic approaches to *Klaibya*, as described in both Ayurvedic and modern medical literature, as well as its overall impact on human life. Additionally, the article advocates for further research in this area to validate the claims of ancient Ayurvedic science and integrate its insights with modern medical practices.

**Keywords:** *Klaibya*, Impotency, Erectile Dysfunction, *Shandha*, *Napumsakatwa*.

### **Introduction:**

The renowned and ancient Indian text on erotic literature, the "*Kama Sutra*", regards "*Kama*" (love and sex) as an art form. This text delves into various aspects of love and sex, highlighting their personal, social, cultural, and medical significance. It outlines 64 different forms of sexual art. In the "*Kama Sutra*" Acharya Vatsayana places significant emphasis on foreplay as a crucial part of sexual interaction, prior to actual intercourse. Today, we live in an extraordinary era, largely due to the advancement of modern technology. These innovations have brought us immense benefits and conveniences, making life without them almost unimaginable. Through the use of computers, machines, and other valuable tools, people can now achieve remarkable goals in a shorter time and with less human effort. While technological advancements have undoubtedly been a blessing to humanity, they also come with a downside. Modern technology has absorbed so much of people's time that they barely have any left for themselves. Many are consumed by competitive work environments and professional responsibilities. Today's lifestyle, marked by unhealthy eating habits such as fast food, canned and preserved foods, and irregular meal timings, combined with mental stressors like fear, anxiety, and tension, has led to a decline in both physical and mental well-being.

This kind of lifestyle generates stress, and the lack of regular physical exercise can further harm the body. Industrialization and modernization have introduced various diseases into people's lives. When these factors are combined with poor sleep and unhealthy habits like smoking and tobacco chewing, they become significant risk factors for sexual health issues. As a result, disorders related to sexual desire, sexual arousal, erectile dysfunction, and other forms of sexual dysfunction are becoming increasingly common in today's world. The condition that hinders a man from fully engaging in sexual activity with his female partner is known as "*Klaibya*." Men affected by *Klaibya* are unable to maintain a sufficiently firm erection during intercourse, which is necessary for both pleasure and fertilization. As a result, *Klaibya* not only affects men directly but also indirectly impacts women. It can be deeply humiliating for a man to feel inadequate during sexual activity, especially when his female partner expects him to provide sexual pleasure and satisfaction throughout the experience. *Klaibya* can be temporary or permanent, and it may occur partially or completely. Although often associated with older age, it can also affect men as early as puberty. Ayurveda offers effective solutions for *Klaibya*, as it holds valuable remedies for addressing sexual dysfunction and infertility-related issues, providing significant benefits to those affected.

### **Etymology**

The term "*Klaibya*" is derived from the root "*klibr*" through the application of the *Sutra* '*lgupadheti*' and the addition of the suffix '*ka*,' as explained in the *Halayudha Kosha*. The literal meaning of the root word "*dhyastrye*" is discipline, but in this context, it refers to masculine assertiveness, boldness, or arrogance. When the prefix '*a*' is added, it signifies the absence of masculine assertiveness, indicating a lack of potency for sexual activity. Thus, the

term "*Klaibya*" literally translates to impotence, behaving like a eunuch, unmanliness, weakness, timidity, or cowardice.<sup>1</sup> *Klaibya* is synonymous with the term impotence. The word "impotence" originates from Latin, composed of "*im*," meaning lack of, and "*potence*," meaning power. Together, the term signifies:

- A lack of power.
- Specifically, a lack of sexual or copulative power in males.

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### Definition of *Klaibya*

*Klaibya* is defined as a sexual dysfunction in which a man is unable to perform the sexual act or performs it incompletely, leaving his female partner partially or entirely dissatisfied. In other terms, *Klaibya* refers to the inability to achieve and maintain a firm erection, which is crucial for fulfilling his own sexual needs or those of his partner during intercourse.<sup>2</sup> Chakrapani further refines the definition of *Klaibya*, specifically referring to it as erectile dysfunction.<sup>3</sup>

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### According to Acharya Charaka, the common symptoms of *Klaibya* include:<sup>4</sup>

- A person may have a strong sexual desire to engage in sexual activity with a willing and cooperative partner, yet he may be unable to perform intercourse due to insufficient erection or lack of rigidity in his penis.
- Even if he is able to achieve an erection, anxiety can trigger episodes of dyspnoea (difficulty breathing) and excessive sweating. His efforts to engage in sexual activity may lead to feelings of fatigue and frustration, ultimately resulting in failure.
- Absence of morning erections.
- This person's semen is thin and has no odor.
- Erection will not happen at any time of the day or night.
- There is a complete absence of sexual desire, no erection, and sometimes no ejaculation.
- Rapid loss of penile firmness following ejaculation.
- Incomplete or partial erection that lasts only briefly and diminishes before the primary sexual act.
- Premature or early ejaculation.

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### Types of *Klaibya*<sup>5,6</sup>

Charaka has classified *Klaibya* into 4 types -

1. *Bijopaghataja Klaibya*
2. *Dhwajabhangaja Klaibya*
3. *Sukra Kshayaja Klaiby*.
4. *Jaraja Klaibya*.

Sushruta and Bhavaprakasha have classified the same into six types via -

1. *Manasa Klaibya*
2. *Sukra Kshayaja Klaibya*
3. *Dhwajabhangaja Klaibya*
4. *Medrarogaja/Marmchchedan Klaibya*
5. *Sahaja Klaibya*
6. *Shukravedgharanjanya Klaibya*

### Causes of *Beejopaghaataja Klaibya*: -

Factors contributing to this condition include the regular and excessive consumption of pungent, sour, hot, and salty foods, emotional stress such as grief, worry, and anxiety, early initiation of excessive sexual activity, overexertion from intense physical exercise, frequent sexual intercourse, lack of confidence in the female partner, the influence of black magic, depletion of all *Dhatus* due to *Anuloma* and *Viloma*, and engaging in sexual relations

with a partner who lacks interest. As a result of these factors, the aggravated *Vata dosha* affects the *Shukra dhatu*, reducing its quantity and leading to *Beejapaghaataja Klaibya*.<sup>7</sup>

**Symptoms of Beejapaghaataja Klaibya** - A person experiencing this form of *Klaibya* may exhibit symptoms such as paleness, weakness, low vitality, reduced excitement towards women, and be prone to conditions like heart disease (*Hridya roga*), asthma (*Tamaka shawasa*), jaundice (*Kamla roga*), exhaustion (*Klama*), vomiting (*Vaman*), diarrhoea (*Atisara*), colic pain (*Shool*), and fever.<sup>8</sup>

#### **Causes of Dhwajopaghataja Klaibya –**

This type of *Klaibya* can result from various factors, including excessive consumption of sour and salty foods, consuming incompatible food (*Viruddhanna*), severe emaciation due to chronic illnesses, and engaging in sexual relations with an enemy's wife. Other causes include poor personal hygiene, sexual intercourse with very young girls, trauma from teeth or nails, injury to the genital area or nerves, and intercourse with a menstruating woman or one suffering from a chronic disease. It may also stem from a lack of sexual interest in a partner, criticizing the partner, engaging in intercourse with animals, or women during their menstrual cycle, or with women who have vaginal infections. Additionally, excessive use of *Shuka prayoga* (a method to increase penis length) can contribute to this condition.<sup>9</sup>

#### **Symptoms of Dhwajopaghataja Klaibya –**

The symptoms include swelling of the penis and painful ulceration. These ulcers may begin to ooze with a red or cloudy discharge, and can progress to a suppurative discharge resembling rice water, with a reddish-brown or purplish colour. The penis may become hard and rounded. Additional symptoms such as fever, thirst, and vomiting may occur. A burning sensation may be felt in the urinary bladder, scrotum, and groin. The ulcers on the penis can sometimes emit a foul-smelling, whitish, viscous discharge. In some cases, the ulcers heal quickly, while in others, they persist for a long time, becoming infested with maggots and worms.<sup>10</sup>

#### **Causes of Shukrakshayaja Klaibya<sup>11</sup> –**

Factors contributing to this condition include daily consumption of dry foods and drinks, eating foods that are unsuitable for the body, emotional stress such as worry, sorrow, and anger, severe emaciation caused by chronic diseases, withholding semen during ejaculation<sup>12</sup>, suppression of natural bodily urges, and prolonged fasting. When *Rasa dhatu* in the heart is depleted, it leads to the depletion of subsequent tissues, including *Rakta*, *Mamsa*, and ultimately *Shukra*. If a person continues excessive sexual activity without taking aphrodisiac preparations, their *Shukra* becomes quickly exhausted, potentially leading to serious illness or even death. To recover, abstinence or regulated sexual activity should be maintained until *Shukra* is restored to its normal level.

#### **Jarasambhavja Klaibya –**

This type of *Klaibya* naturally occurs with aging, as all *Dhatus*, including *Shukra dhatu*, undergo depletion. Without consuming an aphrodisiac diet, *Shukra* is not nourished, leading to weakness, loss of vitality, and diminished strength of the sense organs. If the person engages in strenuous activities or fasting, it can cause age-related *Klaibya*, resulting in a malnourished appearance, loss of complexion, and weakness.<sup>13</sup>

#### **Manasika Klaibya -**

Worry, grief, fear, anger, and a lack of trust towards women can cause sensory inhibition in the brain, leading to psychogenic impotence. This condition may arise from disinterest in the female partner, mistrust, a forced marriage, a lack of attraction towards the woman, or illness in the female partner. Psychological and environmental factors can include concerns about sexual performance (performance anxiety), unrealistic performance expectations, stress related to financial issues, work or home anxiety, low self-confidence, poor communication between partners, emotional pain, and unresolved conflicts.<sup>14</sup>

#### **Sahaja Klaibya –**

This condition is congenital, present from birth, and caused by factors leading to impotence. It involves the imbalance of *Vata dosha*, specifically *Vyana* and *Apana*, during conception, resulting in improper union of *Shukra* (sperm) and *Shonita* (ovum), leading to underdeveloped sexual organs. This is known as *Sahaja Klaibya*, and can be linked to chromosomal or genetic defects affecting sexual organ development during embryonic or foetal stages.<sup>15</sup>

#### **Sadhyaasadyata (prognosis) of Klaibya –**

Acharya Charaka stated that impotence caused by conditions like *Dhwajabhanga* (erectile dysfunction), congenital factors, or due to degeneration is incurable. Additionally, impotence resulting from the amputation of the penis or testicles is also considered incurable.<sup>16</sup>

#### **Modern view –**

Erectile dysfunction (Impotence) occurs when a man is unable to get or maintain an erection firm enough for sexual intercourse. Occasional difficulties aren't usually a concern, but persistent issues can lead to stress, relationship problems, and lower self-confidence.

**Causes** - Male sexual arousal is a complex process involving the brain, hormones, emotions, nerves, muscles, and blood vessels. Erectile dysfunction can arise from issues in any of these areas. Stress and mental health problems can also contribute, and often a combination of physical and psychological factors is involved. For example, a minor physical issue may trigger anxiety, which can further worsen erectile dysfunction.

#### **Physical causes of erectile dysfunction -**

Erectile dysfunction is often caused by various physical factors. Common contributors include heart disease, clogged blood vessels (atherosclerosis), high cholesterol, high blood pressure, diabetes, and obesity. Additionally, metabolic syndrome, which involves elevated insulin levels, abdominal fat, and cholesterol, can also play a role. Other conditions such as Parkinson's disease, multiple sclerosis, and low testosterone may lead to erectile dysfunction. Peyronie's disease, characterized by scar tissue in the penis, and certain prescription medications can further contribute to the problem. Lifestyle factors such as tobacco use, alcoholism, and substance abuse are significant risk factors as well. Finally, treatments for prostate cancer or an enlarged prostate, along with surgeries or injuries affecting the pelvic area or spinal cord, can also lead to difficulties in achieving or maintaining an erection<sup>17</sup>.

#### **Psychological causes of erectile dysfunction**

The brain is essential for initiating the physical processes that lead to an erection, beginning with feelings of sexual excitement. Various factors can disrupt these feelings and contribute to or exacerbate erectile dysfunction. These factors include depression, anxiety, or other mental health issues, as well as stress and relationship problems stemming from stress, poor communication, or other concerns.

**Risk factors** – Several risk factors can lead to erectile dysfunction, including: -

- Medical conditions, especially diabetes and heart disease.
- Tobacco use, which impairs blood flow to veins and arteries; long-term use can result in chronic health problems contributing to erectile dysfunction.
- Being overweight, particularly if classified as obese.
- Specific medical treatments, such as prostate surgery or radiation therapy for cancer.
- Injuries that damage the nerves involved in erections.
- Certain medications, including antidepressants, antihistamines, and those prescribed for high blood pressure, pain, or prostate cancer.
- Psychological issues, such as stress, anxiety, or depression.
- Drug and alcohol use, especially if you're a long-term drug user or heavy drinker.

**Complications:** - Erectile dysfunction can lead to several complications, including an unsatisfactory sex life, increased stress or anxiety, and feelings of embarrassment or low self-esteem. Additionally, it may cause marital or relationship problems and can hinder the ability to conceive with a partner<sup>18</sup>.

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#### **Diagnostic Methods –**

##### **A. Subjective Methods: -**

- International index of erectile function (IIEF)<sup>19</sup>
- DSM-IV TR diagnostic criteria for ED<sup>20</sup>

##### **B. Objective Methods: -**

- Audio-visual reaction time (AVRT)<sup>20, 21</sup>
- Galvanic skin resistance (GSR)<sup>22, 23</sup>
- Duplex USG<sup>24, 25, 26</sup>
- Penile nerve function<sup>27</sup>
- Dynamic infusion Cavernosometry<sup>24, 26, 28</sup>
- Penile biothesiometry<sup>24, 26, 27, 28</sup>
- Nocturnal penile tumescence [NPT] testing<sup>24, 26, 28</sup>

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## Discussion:

Sex is a way for individuals to experience immense pleasure that cannot be matched by any expensive alternative. Successful intercourse alleviates daily stress and promotes physical and mental relaxation. However, when a man struggles with sexual dysfunction, the resulting tensions often increase not only within himself but also in his partner. *Klaibya*, or male sexual dysfunction, refers to a man's inability to engage in a fulfilling sexual relationship. This condition may include difficulties with achieving an erection, problems with emission or ejaculation, retarded ejaculation, and retrograde ejaculation. These various disorders related to male sexual response can ultimately lead to male sterility as well. In Ayurveda, disorders related to sexual dysfunction are categorized under *Klaibya*. Sexual capacity is not constant and varies among individuals as well as at different stages of life. Some men can engage in sexual activity frequently, while others may have fewer encounters. Ayurveda acknowledges this variability in sexual potency by citing examples from different animals, such as horses, sparrows, bulls, and elephants. It highlights that sexual strength and attitudes differ from person to person; a physically strong individual may have low sexual activity, while someone who appears weak may be sexually potent and capable of fathering many offspring.

According to modern definitions, erectile impotence is characterized by a consistent inability to achieve and maintain a firm erection for more than 50% of sexual attempts over a six-month period. In Ayurveda, *Klaibya* is associated with various diseases, known as *Nidanarthkara* conditions, such as *Grahani* (sprue), *Arsha* (piles), and *Halimaka* (a type of jaundice), which can negatively affect sexual performance, leading to reduced sexual activity and impotence. Additionally, poor sleep quality can contribute to a decline in sexual function and potency, with Acharya Charaka emphasizing that a man's virility heavily relies on adequate sleep. Ayurveda recognizes the significant role of mental factors in sexual response, considering them a primary cause of *Klaibya*.

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## Conclusion:

The review concludes that the root causes of *Klaibya* (male sexual dysfunction) are linked to modern stress and lifestyle factors like poor sleep, mental tension, and fatigue. Different types of *Klaibya* are attributed to various causes: *Bijophagataja* to sperm abnormalities, *Dhvjabhangaja* to penile inflammation, *Sukrakshayaja* to reduced semen due to lifestyle factors, and *Jaraja Klaibya* to lower testosterone in old age. *Mansika Klaibya* to Erection, vital for good sexual intercourse, relies on physical, emotional, and mental health. A successful marriage depends on sexual harmony, and women may struggle to love a man with *Klaibya*, regardless of his strength or wealth. Lack of sexual knowledge, fear, and anxiety are common causes, so counselling, sex education, and reassurance should precede drug treatment for *Klaibya*.

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