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A CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS ON FUNDAMENTALS OF MULADHARA CAKRA (ROOT CAKRA) IN AYURVEDA

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Abstract: Introduction- First documented description of *Cakra* was found in *Atharvaveda* which advocates presence of *Astacakra* and *Navadvvara* in *Purush*. *Cakras* are the centre of *Pranika* energy in the body, within the auric field. These are the centre of energy that are located throughout the body. They provide pathway for energy to enter and exit human body. They help to regulate flow of various type of physical, mental, emotional and spiritual energy. Human body has seven major and many minor *Cakras*. The seven *Cakras* are situated from base of spine to the top of head and each has specific functions. Among these the first-most basal *Cakra* is named as *Muladhara Cakra*. **Material and Methods-** Various ancient literatures (*Vedas* and *Upanishadas*) *Yogic*, *Tantric* and modern literatures were explored. **Observations and Results-** Most of the literature related to *Muladhara Cakra* started from Vedic to latest available literatures revealed various anatomical, physiological and spiritual aspects. **Conclusion:** A possible correlation between components of *Muladhara Cakra* with Inferior Hypogastric plexus has surfaced, the *Muladhara Cakra* as one of the mainstay of basic essentialities of life. More studies can be done in this aspect of *Muladhara Cakra* to prove the concepts of ancient *Acharyas* on objective parameters. That will certainly add new dimensions to the researches in the field of *Ayurveda*.

Keywords: *Atharvaveda*; *Bija*; Inferior Hypogastric plexus; *Kundalini*; *Muladhara Cakra*

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INTRODUCTION

Just as the womb creates the basic environment for the growth of the embryo, the *Muladhara Cakra* forms the basis for our spiritual development. It is the foundation from which we climb the ladder of the *Cakras*. It is situated at the lowest point of the spinal column below the Coccyx, hence called 'Root *Cakra*' [1].

Muladhara Cakra / Base / Root / *Adhara* / *Brahma* / *Bhumi Cakra*, is related to instinct, security, survival and also to basic human potentiality. This centre (*Cakra*) is located in the region between genitals and anus. *Muladhara Cakra* is one of the seven primary *Cakras* according to Tantric rituals of Hinduism.

In the present explorative literature review, efforts have been made to explain the hidden aspects of *Muladhara Cakra* with clarifications.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

All relevant references regarding *Muladhara Cakra* have been collected from ancient *Vedas* and *Upanishada*, *Yogic* and *Tantric* literature. The modern literatures - books, dictionaries, research papers and review articles on concerned topic were also explored.

Review and General description of *Muladhara Cakra*

The *Muladhara Cakra* is in the shape of a divine womb and has three layers of membrane surrounding it. It symbolizes as a yellow square lotus surrounded by eight shining spears on the sides with four red petals at its corner. It has four *Dala* (Petals) red in colour, with the syllables *Vam*, *Sam*, *Sham*, *Shham*. [2]

The four *Dala* correspond to four *Vrittis* i.e. *Dharma, Artha, Kama* and *Moksa* [3] (**Table 1**)

Table 1. Dala (Petals) and its correlation with four *Vrittis* [3]

<i>Dala</i> (Petals)	<i>Vrittis</i>
<i>Vam</i>	<i>Dharma</i> (psycho-spiritual longing)
<i>Sam</i>	<i>Artha</i> (psychic longing)
<i>Sham</i>	<i>Kama</i> (physical longing)
<i>Shham</i>	<i>Moksa</i> (longing for spiritual liberation)

It is said that our existence has its root in the Earth. Earth is said to be *Tatva* of *Muladhara Cakra* described in *Sat Cakra Nirupana*. [4] With the Divine plan we humans should be protectors of the earth, not its destroyers. Our duty is to develop sympathy and love for nature and all living things. Those who are unable to emphasize with others, will remain at a lower level of consciousness within the animal spheres, far below the *Muladhara Cakra*. [5]

Centre of *Muladhara Cakra* is the meeting place of the three main *Nadis*: *Ida, Pingala* and *Susumna*. The downward-pointing triangle in the *Cakra* indicates these *Nadis*. All the *Nadis* spring from the *Kanda*, which are found in the junction where *Susumna Nadis* connected with *Muladhara Cakra*. [6]

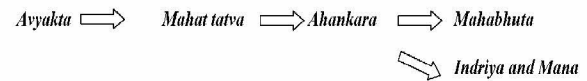
When we study the construction, location and function of the Spinal Cord and the *Susumna Nadis*, we can readily say that the Spinal Cord was called *Susumna Nadis*.

The Western Anatomy deals with the gross form and functions of the Spinal cord, while the *texts* of ancient times dealt with all about the subtle (*Sukshma*) form of *Susumna Nadis*. It extends from the *Muladhara Cakra* (Second vertebra of coccygeal region) to *Brahmarandhra* (Head region). Spinal cord is dropped or suspended in the hollow of the spinal column. In the same way, *Susumna* is dropped within the spinal canal and has subtle sections. It is of red colour like *Agni* (fire). In this centre, existence of all the six *Cakras*:- *Muladhara, Svadhisthana, Manipura, Anahata, Vishuddha, and Ajna* are found. [7]

Muladhara is a Triangular space in the midmost portion of the body, with the apex turned downwards like a *Yoni*. It houses a source of energy called as *Dakini Shakti*, which represents the sensory impulses travelling through the neuronal plexuses.

She is beautiful, with three eyes and four arms. *Dakini* is usually depicted shining red or white, holding a trident, a skulled staff, a swan, and a drinking vessel, and is seated on a swan. Instead of a swan and drinking vessel, at times she holds a sword and a shield. [8]

Kundalini present in *Muladhara* having the form of a serpent, which is the source of stupendous energy trapped here like a dormant coiled snake. It is necessary for *Kundalini* to lock itself and sleep to enable the human organism to survive. The dazzling vibrating energy of electric impulses running through the Core of *Nadis* in the form of a hair like micro thin filament. Hence this impulse, though present is not awake in the normal person. It can be demonstrated only by a *Yogi* to himself in his own body. *Kundalini* resides at *Muladhara Cakra* with three and half circle recoiled. It demonstrates that *Kundalini* is that serpent which holds the human body alive and imprisons the *Jivatma* in it. [9,10] According to *Bhagavadgita* his serpent represents *Ahankara* which is an inalienable part of *Mayashakti* of *Para Brahma*. Here, three and half recoiling of *Kundalini* as a serpent in *Muladhara Cakra* represents the journey of *Kundalini* from *Avyakta* to the manifestation of human body. It involves three spiral of descent, these spirals are



The Divine power of the *Muladhara* is *Siva* in the form of *Pashupati Mahadeva* (Lord of the animal world). Lord *Siva* represents consciousness and liberation. Liberation also means the elimination and destruction of anything negative and harmful. As “Lord of the Animals” Lord *Siva* keeps the animal forces under control. The *Muladhara Cakra* forms the boundary between animal and human consciousness, and it is here that the transition from the sleeping to the awakened, creative consciousness takes place. Therefore, it is the first “Human *Cakra*” from where spiritual evolution begins. [11]

Bija Mantra of *Muladhara Cakra* is *Lam*. *Bija* means seed. “The *Bija Mantras* are one syllable sound that when said aloud activate the energy of the *Cakras* to purify and balance the mind and the body. When we chant the *Bija Mantras*, we resonate with the energy of the associated *Cakra*, helping us focus upon our own instinctive awareness of our body and its needs.” [12]

In *Vedic* tradition *Bija Mantra* are used as a tool for the expansion and widening of one's mind, by utilizing the power of sound vibrations. *Mantra* is a *Sanskrit* word used as a two syllables *Man* (mind) and *Tra* (liberate). Thus in its most literal translation the word *Mantra* means 'To liberate one's mind'. [13]

The main Symbol of the *Muladhara* is an Elephant with seven trunks. Generally the elephant represents prosperity and wisdom, and in Indian mythology the elephant is the carrier of *Brahma*, the creator, who brought forth knowledge and creation.

General descriptions of *Muladhara Cakra* along with its fundamental elements have been described in **Table 2** and **Table 3** respectively.

Table 2. General descriptions of *Muladhara Cakra*^[14]

General Description	Explanation
<i>Sanskrita</i>	<i>Muladhara</i>
English	<i>Base Cakra</i>
<i>Mantra</i>	<i>Lam</i>
Color	<i>Red</i>
Representation	Four petal Lotus
Location	<i>Perineum</i>
Plexus	Inferior Hypogastric plexus
Gland	<i>Adrenal</i>
Function	<i>Fight, Flight response, Bone and Skeletal structure</i>
Main Issue	<i>Survival, Physical needs, Tribal Association</i>
<i>Ayurvediya Marma</i>	<i>Guda</i>
<i>Siddha Varmana</i>	<i>Kundalini</i>
<i>Ayurvedic Element</i>	<i>Prithvi (Earth)</i>
<i>Chinese Element</i>	<i>Water or (Earth)</i>
When excessive	Sedentary stuck
When Blocked	Flighty and disconnected
When in balance	Grounded stable
<i>Mudra</i>	<i>Apana Mudra</i>
Gem stone	Garnet

Anatomical position

Muladhara Cakra is said to be located near the basal end of the spinal column (coccyx or butt bone) in the vicinity of the Coccygeal plexus beneath the sacrum, while its *Kshetram* or area of superficial activation point is located between the perineum and the coccyx.

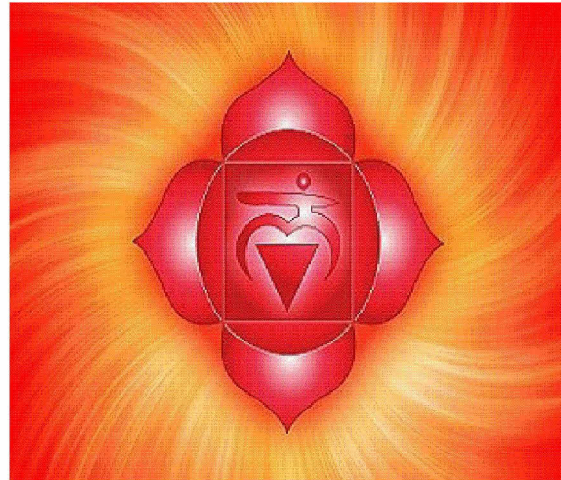
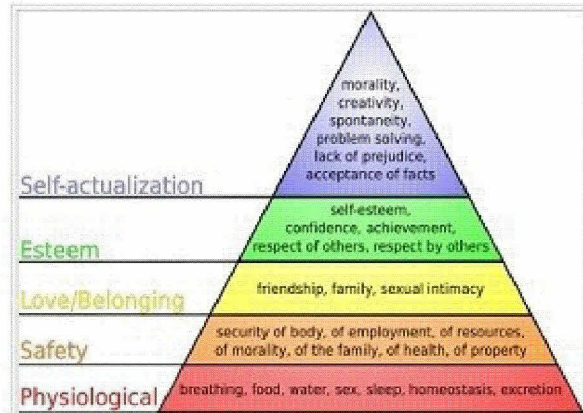
Table 3. Elements of *Muladhara Cakra*^[15]

	<i>Muladhara Yoga Cakra</i>
Situation	At the base of Spinal column, between <i>Yoni</i> and <i>Guda</i> , which is a Place of <i>Kula Kundalini Shakti</i>
Shape of <i>Yantra</i>	Quadrangular
Colour of <i>Yantra</i>	Yellow (Golden)
Triangles in the square bears	<i>Svayambhu Linga</i> which is <i>Yantra</i> of <i>Kula Kundalini</i> and meeting place of <i>Ida, Pingala</i> and <i>Susumna</i>
<i>Bija Mantra</i>	<i>Lam</i>
<i>Bija Colour</i>	Golden yellowish
Letters of Petal	<i>Vam, Sam, Sham, Shham</i>
Vehicle	<i>Airavata</i> (Elephant)
<i>Saptadhatu</i> symbolises the seven levels of consciousness	Unconsciousness, sub-consciousness, dream consciousness, waking consciousness, astral consciousness, supreme consciousness and cosmic consciousness
Quality of <i>Cakra</i>	Protection
Element	<i>Prithvi</i> (Earth)
Shape of Element	Quadrangular
Quality	Smell
<i>Jnanendriya</i> (Sense organ)	Nose
<i>Karmendriy</i>	<i>Guda</i>
<i>Vayu</i>	<i>Apana</i>
<i>Loka</i>	<i>Bhu</i> (Earth)
<i>Graha</i>	<i>Mangala</i>
Deity	<i>Brahma</i>
Power of Deity	<i>Dakini</i>
Petals of Lotus	Four
Petals Colour	Red
<i>Mudra</i>	Meeting of Thumb and Little Finger
Taste	Sugarcane like
<i>Prahari</i> Deity	<i>Ganesa</i>
Mantra	<i>Gam Ganpataye Namah</i>
Numbers of <i>Mantra</i>	600
Deity of <i>Mantra</i>	<i>Ganesha</i>
Predisposition of <i>Cakra</i>	Resolution of Fear
Effect of Meditation	Free from disease, Complete knowledge about Earth element, Achievement of Excellent power.

Various views over the anatomical position of *Muladhara Cakra* as per ancient literature are mentioned in **Table 4**

Table 4. Anatomical position of *Muladhara Cakra* [16]

Sr. No.	Scripture	Site of <i>Muladhara Cakra</i>
1.	<i>Bhuta Suddhi Tantra</i>	Midmost portion of the body
2.	<i>Yogsikhopnisad</i>	In between the Anus and genitals
3.	<i>Yogcudamaddhyopnisad</i>	Situated in the anus and the rectum.
4.	<i>Jabaladarsanopnisad</i>	which is 2 fingers above the anus and 2 fingers below the genitals
5.	<i>Saubhagya Laksyopnisad</i>	<i>Brahma Cakra</i> is situated in <i>Muladhara</i>
6.	<i>Gauraksa Paddhati</i>	at the place of the anus
7.	<i>Siva Samhita</i>	Two digits above the rectum and two digits below the organ
8.	<i>Siva Paddhati</i>	Two digits above the rectum and two digits below the organ
9.	<i>Dhyanbindupnisad</i>	<i>Adhara</i> of the anus
10.	<i>Sat- Cakra Nirupana</i>	Placed below the genitals and above the anus.
11.	<i>Sri Tatvacintamani</i>	At the genital region
12.	Lights in the <i>Tantra</i> by M.P.Pandit	The centre at the root of spine called
13.	<i>Pratyaksha Shariram</i>	At the base of spinal column.

**Figure 1** Petals of *Muladhara Cakra* with its related symbol <https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/f/f8/Mooladhara.jpg>**Figure 2.** Maslow's hierarchy of needs https://c1.staticflickr.com/4/3466/3779974493_cfd4f5ebf.jpg**Table 5.** Correlation of *Muladhara Cakra* with various plexuses

<i>Akshara of Dala</i>	Correlated plexuses According to Dr. Athwale[18]	Correlated plexuses According to Dr. Mahendra Singh [19]	Mauroy <i>et al.</i> [20]	Correlated plexuses (B.C. Joshi) [21]	Correlated plexuses According to Researcher
<i>Vam</i>	Inferior haemorrhoidal plexus	Inferior haemorrhoidal plexus	Inferior haemorrhoidal plexus	Middle haemorrhoidal plexus	Middle haemorrhoidal plexus
<i>Sam</i>	Vesical plexus	Vesical plexus	Vesical plexus	Vesical plexus	Vesical plexus
<i>Sham</i>	Vaginal plexus /Prostatic plexus	Vaginal plexus / Prostatic plexus/	Vaginorectal plexus	Vaginal plexus /Prostatic plexus	Vaginal plexus /Prostatic plexus
<i>Shham</i>	Uterine plexus / Spermatic plexus	Uterine plexus / Spermatic plexus	Uterine plexus	Cavernous nerves	Uterine plexus / Spermatic plexus

These references also signify that, place below genitals and above anus are just a landmark but the whole region of pelvis (perineum) is area of *Muladhara Cakra*. Certain evidences from the ancient literature prove the triangular structure of *Muladhara Cakra*. *Muladhara Cakra* is anatomically represented by Inferior Hypogastric

plexus. **Mauroy *et al.*** in his study mentioned inferior Hypogastric plexus (IHP) to be triangular in structure. So this study somehow proves close resemblance in between *Muladhara Cakra* and IHP.[17]

The possible correlation of *Muladhara Cakra* with various nerve plexuses of pelvic region is mentioned in **Table 5**.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The word *Cakra* signifies a wheel. There are different views related to number of *Cakras*. These may be 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 13 or innumerable. But among all Six *Cakras* (*Muladhara*, *Svadhithana*, *Manipura*, *Anahata*, *Vishuddha*, *Ajna*), are said to be main *Cakras*.

1. Red colors of the Petals are represented by electrical impulses in neural axis. This means energy and vitality. This electrical embodiment controls all the pelvic functions through *Muladhara* mechanism.

2. *Dakini Shakti* represents sensory impulses travelled through neuronal plexuses. It consists of those peripheral ganglionic cells which receive the sacral parasympathetic afferents from all four petals or sub-plexuses of *Muladhara Cakra* [22].

3. The main symbol of the *Muladhara Cakra* is an Elephant with seven trunks. The seven trunks of the elephant represent the seven basic materials of the body, as well as the *Saptadhatus*, the seven minerals and the seven precious gems that are found in the earth. The *Saptadhatus*, also symbolise the seven levels of consciousness: Unconsciousness, sub-consciousness, dream consciousness, waking consciousness, astral consciousness, supreme consciousness and cosmic consciousness [11].

4. Spinal cord is the axis of all the *Cakras* and structurally it has three layers of membrane which can be defined the term "*Triavrtta*". The cord is ensheathed in the same three meninges as is the brain: the pia, arachnoid and duramatter.

5. Regarding *Prithvi Tattva* of *Muladhara Cakra* it has been said that our existence has its roots in the earth. The nervous system sprouts as a necessity of nature to distribute the *Prana* (impulse) to all body organs and *Muladhara* is that nerve station which gets associated in the administration of the basic biological mechanism rested in *Prithvi Tatva*. Thus it is *Dhara* or *Prithvi* which forms core of *Muladhara Cakra*.

6. In the light of modern anatomy *Muladhara Cakra* literally may be correlated as Inferior Hypogastric plexus. Inferior Hypogastric plexus works as axle of this *Muladhara Cakra* or wheel. It is a definite neuro-endo-vascular entity in the vicinity of pelvis, which governs, regulate and mediate the all pelvic functions through small plexus to all pelvic organs and by purifying and regulating it, beneficial effect is seen in the pathologies of these organs.

7. From the anatomical point of view the four *Dalas* representing four sub plexuses of inferior

Hypogastric plexus which are Uterine, Vaginal, Middle rectal and Vesicle plexus.

Muladhara Cakra functions similar to Maslow's Hierarchy of needs

Muladhara Cakra literally means root base nerve station. It is the first centre which has been utilized for *Hatha yoga* since the time of *Rigveda*. It is our connection to the earth and to our roots. It is the connection that anchors our mind into our body and our body to the earth. It also represents physical vitality, survival instinct and fears security through belonging and a home, the basic essentials of life. It represents structure and support, it is our foundation. Root *Cakra* affects the functioning of every other *Cakra*, it is similar to Maslow's Hierarchy of needs, i.e. you can't move to the higher level until the lower needs are met. Only in the *Cakra* system, the *Muladhara* represents the three levels-Basic (Physiological), Safety and Belonging. On the physical level, this *Cakra* is related to the adrenal glands, the kidneys and the spinal column. It is responsible for the fight and flight response when survival is under threat. Physically, *Muladhara Cakra* governs sexuality, mentally it governs stability, emotionally it governs sensuality, and spiritually it governs a sense of security. When this *Cakra* is underactive we get diseases like constipation, piles, varicose veins problem, knee problem, body pain and jaundice. If this *Cakra* is over-active, we become materialistic, greedy, obsessed with being secure and resist change. The concentration and meditation on *Muladhara Cakra* helps rectify disorders of these functions and enhance inner stability and balance. [23]

CONCLUSIONS

The present study has been done from various aspects to provide a significant information regarding *Muladhara Cakra*, the study had included a literary study consequently throwing new light on the important concepts. More studies can be done in this aspect of *Muladhara Cakra* to prove the concepts of ancient *Acharyas* on objective parameters but certainly it will add new dimensions to the researches in the field of *Ayurveda*. The present study outcome can be used for revealing many forgotten facts which are equally rationale as modern concepts of sciences.

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