

**CLASSIFICATION OF AGE GROUPS W.S.R. TO KAUMARBHRITTYA: AN  
AYURVEDA REVIEW**

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**ABSTRACT**

*Kaumarbhritya* is one of the Ayurveda's branches amongst the eight branches of this ancient science. This branch focused on diseases related to childhood age. The big portion of the population falls within these age categories, therefore knowledge about pediatric physiology is crucial. The disorders of children are explained by *Kaumarbhritya*, along with their causes, pathophysiology, therapy, and prevention. The children of different age groups shows varied range of susceptibility and the physiological constitution also varies in children of different age groups thus the knowledge of childhood age and its classification is very important to diagnose and treat diseases related to the children belonging from different categories of age group. Considering this fact present article explores Ayurveda view on classification of childhood age groups.

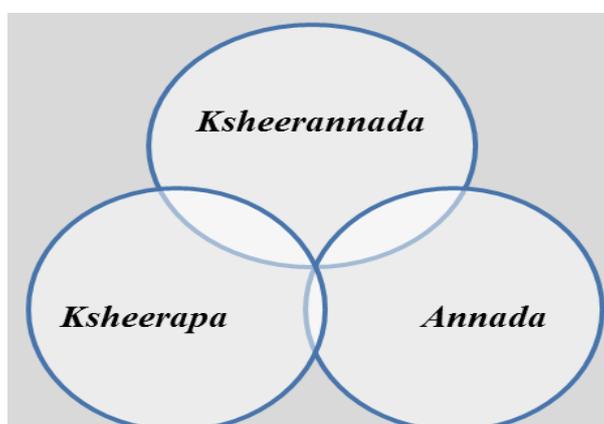
**KEYWORDS:** *Ayurveda, Kaumarbhritya, Ksheerannada, Annada, Ksheerapa.*

**INTRODUCTION**

Pediatric Ayurveda was at its height in antiquity, all of Ayurveda's subcategories had their own specialized texts available at the time, but as study progressed, more and more texts were added. However, as a result of the passage of time, invasions from other countries, and religious conversion, this knowledge quickly lost its significance, and the medicine and its texts slowly began to disappear. The only scripts that have withstood the test of time are those that were concealed here and there, along with the original and any translated versions that were taken by foreigners.<sup>[1-4]</sup>

The *Vridhajeevak Tantra* is currently the most authoritative work on pediatric Ayurveda (*Komar Bhritya*). Even before and during the time of *Kaashyap*, there were notable paediatric ayurvedic teachers, other key pediatric ayurvedic texts include: *Vridha Kaashyap Sahita, Parvatak Tantra, Bandhak Tantra, Harinyaksha Tantra* and *Kumar Tantra*.

These all Ayurveda texts placed a strong emphasis on kids' nutrition to keep them healthy, on the basis of food; it divided kids into three groups as depicted in **Figure 1**.



**Figure 1: Various stages of childhood age.**

1. *Ksheerannada* (From age 1-2 years): Kids eat both breast milk and food.
2. *Annada* (Beyond 2 years of age): Child takes food comparable to an adult.
3. *Ksheerapa* (From birth to 1 year): Who exclusively nurse by mother.

Ayurveda promotes supplemental feeding in the form of *Annaprashan/Phalaprashana Samskara* (first food/fruit eating ritual in children), which calls for exclusive breastfeeding up to that point. For the maintenance of children's nutritional wellness, early breastfeeding initiation, exclusive breastfeeding, refraining from bottle feeding, hygienic practices and suitable complementary feeding are crucial.<sup>[4-6]</sup>

There are several *Siddha* texts that discuss the particular class of medicinal plants appropriate for paediatric patients, the illnesses that affect children at different stages of development, and how to treat them. This demonstrates depth understanding of the treatment of childhood ailments. The period from one to sixteen years old is regarded as childhood in paediatric ayurveda. They are split into three sections as follows:

- ✓ *Chirab*: From infancy to one year.
- ✓ *Chiranath*: From 2 to 3 years old.
- ✓ *Annad*: From 4 to 16 years.

*Samhita* also split the human lifespan into six periods, three of which are associated with childhood this can be described as follows:

1. *Garbhavasta* from conception to birth.
2. *Balyavasta* from birth to one year.
3. *Komaravasta* for ages 1 through 16.
4. *Chirab* is the period when the infant is solely reliant on the mother's milk. This stage lasts from birth to about a year old.
5. *Chiranath* this developmental stage occurs when a youngster begins to consume food other than breast milk, typically between the ages of 2 and 3 years.
6. *Annad* refers to the developmental period when a child is no longer dependent on breast milk and is able to consume a typical adult diet; between the ages of 4 and 16 years.

These stages don't have a distinct boundary between them, and they overlap. However, this categorization has value all on its own. Each stage represents a distinct part of the child's growth in terms of development. The proper treatment in the right dosage can be found by using this classification to identify the disease's underlying cause.<sup>[2-8]</sup>

The early growing age from birth to development stage further divided into 10 stages based on the physical development and activities. Name of these stages in *Siddha* terminology mentioned as follows:

1. *Kaappu paruvam*: Below 3 months
2. *Senkeerai paruvam*: 3-6 months
3. *Thaala paruvam*: 6-9 months

4. *Chappani paruvam*: 9-12 months
5. *Muttha paruvam*: 12-15 months
6. *Varugai paruvam*: 15-18 months
7. *Ambuli paruvam*: 1 ½-2 years
8. *Sitiril paruvam*: 2-2 ½ years
9. *Siruparai paruvam*: 2 ½-3 years
10. *Siruthaer paruvam*: 3-3 ½ years

#### Classifications according to social factors

1. *Navjaat* (Newborn): From birth to 1 month of age.
2. *Shishu* (Infant): From 2 months to 2 years of age
3. *Balak* (Child): From 3 years to 12 years of age
4. *Kishor* (Adolescent): From 13 to 16 years of age.

#### Other routinely followed classification of childhood age

- *Jaat mantra*: The period after birth during which the child is still attached to the umbilical cord and the placenta.
- *Satojaat*: It encompasses the new born stage (Period of neonate).
- *Baalak*: This is the stage during which the child develops maximum physical and mental maturity.
- *Pogat*: The stage from 5 to 10 years has been described as *Pogat*. Some have described this as a stage from 5 to 16 years.

#### Modern perspective in childhood age groups:

1. Preterm newborn infants
2. Term newborn infants (0 to 27 days)
3. Infants and toddlers (28 days to 23 months)
4. Children (2 to 11 years)
5. Adolescents (12 to 16-18 years (dependent on region).

#### CONCLUSION

In Pediatric Ayurveda, ages from 1-16 years are considered as part of childhood. They are divided into 3 parts namely; *Chirab*, *Chiranath* and *Annad*. *Chirab* is the period in which a baby is solely reliant on breast milk. This stage lasts from birth to about a year old. *Chiranath* is developmental stage in which youngster begins to consume food other than breast milk, typically between the ages of 2 and 3 years. The term *Annad* refers to the developmental period when a child is no longer dependent on breast milk and is able to consume a typical adult diet. Another classification includes *Garbhavasta*, *Balya avasta* and *Komar avasta*. *Garbhavasta* from conception to birth, *Balya avasta* from birth to 1 year and *Komar avasta* from 1 year to 16 years.

Each stage represents a distinct part of the child's growth in terms of development.

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