



**CHILDHOOD SAMSKARA – RELEVANCE IN HEALTHY GROWTH AND
DEVELOPMENT – A SCIENTIFIC REVIEW**

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ABSTRACT

Hindu methodology described various *Sanskara* outlined from birth to death of an individual. Out of 16 *Sanskara* described, 8 are for children. These deliberate and positive impressions which help create deep and lasting impressions on the mind of a person so as to generate interest, which help bring out a positive personality and free the mind of its negativities. This article analyzed this *Sanskara* in details and gives a critical approach to their relevance in light of modern scientific knowledge. Though primarily considered as religious rites, they were significant in context as religious and provided opportunity for routine examination of child at regular interval. Childhood *Sanskara* revealed that they were aimed at preparing the baby fit for extra uterine life successfully. According to *Upanishad*, *Sanskaras* goes a long way to fulfilling the four pursuit of life i.e. *dharma*, *arth*, *kama* & *moksha*. *Sanskara* are 16 in number which spread from *Garbhadhanato Anteshiti*. Among these 16, only 11 will fall under the period upto childhood. *Ayurveda* also describes different *sanskara* in different period of life to make attainment of different milestones thus ensuring the proper growth and also differentiate them from the child having developmental delay.

KEYWORDS: Ayurveda, Developmental milestone, *Sanskara*.

INTRODUCTION

The science of child health care was cultivated from very ancient time in India. Even in vedic literature, there are references to children's diseases. Religious texts like *Gruhya sutras and Smritis*, etc. are mainly concerned with the description of *sanskaras*. *Sanskara* are those religious impression and protocols which spiritualize the body, mind and intellect. So the person becomes competent for society. In *Ayurveda* the word *Sanskara* is introduced as process for qualities improvement carried out by inclosing specific qualities. *Sanskara* are turning point of life and need to be celebrated –*Sanskaras* are great time tested tools in our traditional system which helps to cure out 'great personality' the primary purpose of *Sanskara* is to attain spirituality and help form *moksha*. At a secondary level the *Sanskaras* are cultural events that provide occasion for family and friends to get together bond that bonds the basis of peaceful life to improve the life with more consciousness. *Sanskara* in *Garbhini Avasta*- this are the *Sanskara* done during the period of pregnancy. This can be reflected to as the prenatal *sanskara*. The three *sanskara* which coincide under *Garbha Samskararaare Garbhadhanam, Pumsavanam & Simantham*. *Sanskara* after birth includes *Jatakarma Samskara, Nishkramana Samskara, Chudakarma Samskara, Upaveshana Samskara,*

Annaprashana Samskara Karnavedhana Samskara, Vedarabha Samskara, Upanayana Samskara which helps to support the developmental milestone. The methodology or procedure to do the *Samskara* and the scientific relevance of those *Samskaras* are described and discussed in the succeeding paragraphs of this article.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

1. To described in detailed the methodology of childhood *Sanskaras* in detailed in today's context.
2. To discuss the scientific relevance of the childhood *Sanskaras* in the growth and development of children.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This review was done by compiling the classical *Ayurveda* literature, *Ayurveda Pediatric* books, modern pediatric books, magazines, research journals, thesis and dissertations Pub med, different databases, CCRAS database, CCIM norms for diseases etc.

CLASSIFICATION OF SAMSKARA

- 1) The *sanskara* can be categorizing given above which range from conception (prebirth) to funeral (post-death) ceremonies as:-

a) **Garbhavastha (Pre-natal) Samskaras:** *Garbhadan, Pumsavana, Simantoonayana.*

b) **Balyavasthantargata (Childhood) Samskaras:** *Jatakarma, Namakarana, Nishkramna, Annaprashana, Chudakarma, Karnavedhan.*

c) **Adhyanartha (Educational) Samskara:** *Vidyarambha, Upanayana, Vedarambha*

d) **Grahashtartha (Marriage) Samskara:** *Vivaha*

e) **Death Samskara:** *Antyeshti.*

2) The *Samskara* in *Balyavastha* may be classified as follows-

1. *Ksheerap kala*

a) **During Neonatal Period:** *Jatakarma, Namakarana*

b) **During Infantile Period:** *Nishkramana, Annaprashan/Phalaprashana, Karnavedhan.*

2. *Ksheerannad/Annada kala*

a) **During Toddler Period:** *Chudkarana Samskara.*

b) **During Preschool and school Age:** *Upanayana Samskara, Vedarambha Samskara*

THESE SAMSKARA ARE AS FOLLOWS

(A) PRE-NATAL SAMSKARA

GARBHADHAN (CONCEPTION)

The word *Garbhadhana* is 'Implanting the *bija*, *bijabhag* and *bijaavayava* in the womb' and the aim of this *sanskara* is to get high quality and healthy progeny. 'Getting fit for pregnancy' means *garbhadhan*. According to *Ayurvedait* includes traditional diet planning, the use of herbal preparation, yoga, music and medicine which all are used in harmony. Both the parent should be *Purnaviryaman* & should purify their bodies first by undergoing *Shamana Chikitsa* and if necessary *Shodhana chikitsa*. The auspicious day and time are fixed for *garbhadhana* and the sacrament follows a set guide. The articulated mantras represents in this *Samskaras* are essentially prayers offered to God to help the bride (female) conceive a good son. The significance of this *Sanskara* is highly important, as these ceremony purify and refine field (woman 'reproductive system) and seed (sperms), thus the born child will possess high qualities.

PUNSAVANA SAMSKARA

The process which is adopted for achieving progeny of desired sex is known as *Punsavanakarma*. According to *Acharya Charak*, this should be performed after conception but before *vyaktibhava* of organ i.e. up to 6 week, According to *Sushruta* up to 2 months while just after achievement of conception. This *Sanskara* is performed basically with three main intention, *Ishtyapatyagrahanam*, *Garbhdharanam* & *Garbhstapana*. Here is the juice expressed from pestle root of *Shwetbrihati*, or drugs like *Lakshmana*, *Sahadeva*, *Vishvadeva* & *Vatashringa* pestled with cow's

milk & expressed juice, Then 3-4 drops should be instilled in woman's nostril, right nostril for getting male child & left nostril for getting female child. The significance of this *Samskara* is to invoke celestial (or divine) and excellent qualities in the child.

SIMANTONAYANA

It is usually performed in 4th to 8th month. All the women in the family & friend circle get together & perform this *Sanskara*. They offer her fresh flower, ornaments, new clothes & variety of food with *haldi -kumkum* & rice grain. The word *Seemantonayan* means, *Seemant* - line of parting hair, *Unnayan* - combing hair from side to top means drawing the hair from side to upward, As a result pleasant frequencies enter her body through the *Shadchakra* & facilitates proper growth of foetus. Just as having a child is important it is equally important that he /she should be born without deformities, good health & intelligence. Making pregnant woman happy & for protect assurances. For the normal development of foetus, it becomes viable after 28 wks., before this period if the delivery occurs then the chance of survival of foetus is less.

(B) NEONATAL SAMSKARA

JATAKARMA SAMSKARA

The word *Jata* means "Born or Bought into existence" According to *Charak* after initial stabilization of baby & cord cutting, *Jatakarma* should be performed. After the cord cutting child should be given honey & *ghrita*. Thereafter milk from right breast should be given to the child. *Acharya Sushruta* has opined *Jatakarma* as by cleaning the vernix on new-born's body, cleaning the new-born's mouth by *saindhav* & *ghrita* & placing ghee soaked cotton on baby's scalp. This is followed by cutting of umbilical cord at the distance of 8 *angula* from baby's skin & tying it by a thread which is tied to the baby's neck. After this baby should be given to lick gold *bhasma* with *ghrut* & honey.

Significance of *Jatakarmasamskara*

A. Rooting and sucking reflex as well as sucking-swallowing-breathing coordination is assessed while offering honey and ghee.

B. The *Jatakarma* can also prove as an efficient tool of examination to rule out oral anomalies such as cleft palate, natal teeth, fissured tongue, ankyloglossia, tracheo-esophageal fistula etc.

C. Benefit of breast-feeding

a. Breast feeding at the earliest just after delivery by healthy baby proves beneficial to him and mother. Benefits of breast-feeding include its nutritional (as right amount of Fatty acid, lactose, water and amino acids for human digestion, brain development and growth, immunological superiority, anti-infective properties, and benefit to mother as helps uterine involution, reduces postpartum hemorrhage incidence and protection against pregnancy etc.

b. Delayed initiation of breastfeeding (hour to day 7) increases more risk of neonatal mortality.

D. Honey used during this ceremony provide following benefit as

a. Madhu has sheet, guru, madhur and kashaya (in rasa), raktapitta and kapha-nasaka as well as chhedan (Charaka Samhita Sutrasthana 27/245, hridya, tridosharetc (Sushruta Samhita Sutrasthana 45/132).

b. Honey also acts as source of energy because it contains mainly fructose (about 38.5%) and glucose (about 31.0%) as well as vitamins and multi minerals.

c. Honey has antimicrobial properties (antibacterial activity against coagulase-negative staphylococci).

d. Honey also used in wound dressing

E. Ghee has following effect on body

a. According to Charaka, ghee is useful to *rasa*, *shukradhatu* and *oja* (immunity), *pitta-anilahara*, *svravarna-prashadanum* (Charaka Samhita Sutrasthana 13/14).

b. By Sushruta, ghee increases *samriti*, *medha* (intellect), *kaanti*, voice, *oja*, strength, *vishahar*, *rakshoghan* (Sushruta Samhita Sutrasthana 45/96).

c. Ghee also has lubricating property. So, results in lubrication of the G.I. tract mucosa.

d. Ghee contains fat soluble vitamins such as A, D and E. It contains saturated fatty acids but of short chain fatty acids.

F. Benefit of use of suvarna (Gold)

a. Use of gold (suvara-prashan) increases intellect, digestive and metabolic power, strength, *aayusha* (provide longevity), increase complexion (*varnaya*), *grahamapahum* (Kashyapa Samhita Lehaadhyaya).

b. Shudhasuvarna also said *Vatashamaka*, *Rasayana*, *Dipana*, *Netrya*, *Medhya* etc. (*Bhaisajyaratnavali* 2/99-100).

c. Gold compounds have Immunomodulatory effects.

7. Jatakarma ceremony is an appropriate opportunity for physicians to encourage maternal confidence through proper guidance and education for better breast feeding practices during infantile period.

NAMKARAN SANSKARA

With the evaluation of language, man has tried to give names to thing which are daily use of their life. Men themselves were also named with the progress of social consciousness.

Grhya sutra-On the 10 th day

Charaka-On the 10 th day

Sushrut & Laghu Vagbhat-10 th day onward
Vrudha Vagbhat- 10th day to 100 th day of life

The mother & child should bath in water treated with fragrant & medicinal herbs like sandalwood, white mustard & *lodhra*. The mother should put on light new & clean garment & baby should be wrapped in new clothes. Baby's head should be placed in north or east. The father of child should give it two names denoting the constellation under which the baby is born (*NAKSHATRA*) & the other of intending meaning (*ABHIPRAYIK*). According to *Paraskar Gruhyasutra*, the name should be of two syllables or of four syllables. The meaningful name should have a consonant for its first letter & a semi vowel for its last letter & should be free of diphthongs. It should be reminiscent of one of the three ancestors namely, parent, grand parent, & great grandparent.

Significance of Namakarana samskara

a. A person name is foremost and defining aspect of his identity.

b. It is an important tool for socialization.

c. The child should be named in a manner that is meaningful and reflects a dignified quality.

d. During this ceremony, education is given to parents and other family members that the child should be given the atmosphere where his/her inherent qualities can be awakened.

e. Name of a baby promotes the healthy psychology, good physical and mental development.

f. Acharya Charaka has described *Ayupariksha* after naming ceremony, which is deciding the healthy and diseased condition of the baby (*Charaka Samhita Sharirsthana* 8/51).

g. Starting of late neonatal period.

h. Disappearance of physiological jaundice. Persistence of jaundice after tenth day in neonate should be considered serious.

i. Baby regains the birth weight.

j. Umbilical cord falls normally after 5 to 10 days but may take longer.

(C) INFANTILE SAMSKARA NISHKRAMAN SANSKARA

It is the ceremony of evoking God's blessing to expose the new comer to the outside world & to pray for well-being of the baby. The time for performing the *nishkramansanskara* varied from 12th day to 4th month. *Bhavisyapurana*-12th day, *Kashyap*, *Ashtangasangrah*-4th month *Yama*-Between 3rd & 4th month. In the 4th month

after giving bath baby should wear new clothes 7 ornaments & should be taken to the family temple ie out of the house for the first time. The should be blessed by priest & elders, & taken back home.

Significance of Nishkramana

1. During bath of baby, it is also good time for check any deformity by *Vaidya* as well as clearing any stress or anxiety of parents related to baby.

2. At fourth month age (during this ceremony), following development changes appear in infant: At fourth month, infant able to reaching out for objects with both hand (Bidextrous reach), able to rolls over the bed, recognizes the mother and responds to her voice, anticipate the feeds, laugh loudly when talked by someone, responds to sound well, starts cooing, curious and shows interest in surrounding environment, Able to fix eyes on external objects and adaptation to external environment begins.

3. Disappearance of grasping reflex (3- 4 months), placing reflex (3-4 months), stepping reflex (3-4 months), rooting reflex (3-4 months), tonic neck (2-6 month), Moro's reflex (3-4 months). But persistence of these reflexes indicative of cerebral palsy.

4. At 4 month of age, infants are described as "hatching" socially, becoming interested in a wider world.

5. According to Acharya Kashyapa (*Kashyapa Samhita Sutrasthana* 20), the teeth inseeded in fourth month are weak, decay early and are afflicted with many diseases. It should be diseased and weak.

ANNAPRASHAN SANSKARA (giving the child solid food for 1st time).

Annaprashan has very important role in the child life, child receives only milk before this ceremony .According to *GruhyaSutra* -5/6th month & *Kashyapa* - 10th month & provision of *Phalaprashana* at the age of 6th month (only fruit juices). On the day of ceremony in '*PrajaptyaNakshtra*' cooked food is placed in between the square place prepared by besmearing of cow dung. The sign of *swastik* made on it. A pitcher filled with water also placed there, after offering food to *agni*, the remaining part of the food is offered to the child. The food should be mashed properly before giving & mouth should be cleaned by water after feed.

Significance of Annaprashana

1. Fruit juices should be given to the child from sixth month which are source of vitamins especially vitamin C.

2. First meal offer to infant would be easily digested, light and soft as advised by *Kashyapa*.

3. At age of 6 month, breast milk now not enough to fulfil the requirement of growing child. So, it is the accurate time to introduction of supplementary feeding as *phalprashan*.

4. Breast milk is deficient in iron, viamin A, D, K and calcium (6), so by offering *phalprashan* and *annprashan* ceremony at this time with breast milk, we can reduce the deficiency of related essential vitamins.

5. We can examine the six month infant which has following milestone (6): Starts sitting with own support (Sits in tripod fashion), Unidextrous reach, recognizes strangers or develops stranger anxiety, pronounce monosyllables (pa, ba, da etc.), lift the head and chest off the surface with weight bearing on hands, may roll from prone to supine, able to bear most of the weight on legs when holding the child in standing position. Similarly tenth month corresponding milestones may also examine e.g. bisyllables, standing with support, sitting without support, waves bye-bye etc.

6. Primary teeth also start erupted e.g. Central incisors (5-7 month), Lateral incisors (7-11 month, First molars (10-16 month).^[17]

7. Similar tophal/annaprashan introduction in *Ayurveda*, same principle followed in modern pediatrics as after six month of age weaning (which is the process of gradually introducing an infant to adult diet and withdrawing the supply of its mother's milk) starts as:- Offer foods which are soft, easily digestible and avoid foods with high allergenic potential (cow's milk, eggs, fish, nuts, soybeans). For feeding, parents should advise to make use of a cup rather than a bottle. Fluids other than breast milk, formula, and water should be discouraged. Give no more than 4-6 oz/day of fruit juices. Phytate intake should be low to enhance mineral absorption.

8. IMNCI recommendation for breastfeeding and complementary feeding for 6-12 months are given as: Breastfeed as often as the child wants. Give at least one *katori* at a time of Mashed roti, rice/bread/biscuit mixed in sweetened undiluted milk Or Mashed roti/rice/bread mixed in thick dal with ghee/oil or khichadi with added oil/ghee. Add cooked vegetables Or Dalid/halwa/kheer prepared in milk or any cereal porridge cooked in milk Or Mashed boiled/ fried potatoes. Offer Banana/biscuit/papaya/cheeku/mango as snacks in between the serving.

(D) SAMSKARA IN PRESCHOOL AND SCHOOL AGE

Some minor *sanskara* which are performed during childhood are *Surya chandradarshan* - (exposing baby to sun & moon). After completing the immediate management of the child, showing of the rising sun along with its worship & showing of moon is first part of night should be done in the 1st month.

CHUDAKARMA SANSKARA (Hair cutting / shaving)
The hair of the child's scalp is cut for the 1st time. The purpose of the *sanskara* is to achieve long & healthy life. This *sanskara* is performed in order to attain legality, strength & radiance. The small portion of hair facilitates the entry of *sattva* frequencies from the universe through the '*Bramharandhra*'. The most important feature of this *sanskara* is the arrangement of top hair or *Shika*. These top hairs are arranged according to the family custom but *Sushruta* has given its explanation, according to him, inside the head, near the top is the joint of *sira&sandhi*. Any injury to this part may cause sudden death. There in the eddy of hairs is a vital spot called '*Ahipati*'.

Significance of Chudakaram

1. Acharya Charaka (*Charaka Samhita Sharirsthana* 8/51) described general examination of infant in detail. During examination of skull or cranium, skull without defect, well formed, slightly larger than usual, yet not disproportionate to the body and resembling an open umbrella is deemed favourable.

2. At one year age *balaavastha* changes to *annadaavastha* (*Kashyapa Samhita Khilasthana* 3/73) and according to *Sushruta* (*Sushruta Samhita Sutrasthana* 35/34), *ksherrapa* changes to *ksheerannada* at one year, at three year age starts *annada* stage.

3. Diagnosis of Phakka roga (1year) made as by acharya *Kashyapa* (*Kashyapa Samhita Chikitsasthana, Phakachikitsitum*).

4. After shaving of head, the size and shape of the head should be documented carefully for normal or abnormal findings.

5. A tower-head, or oxycephalic skull, suggests premature closure of sutures and is associated with various forms of inherited craniosynostosis.

6. Marked venous distension may be observed during inspection of the scalp for any vein prominence because of increased ICP and thrombosis of the superior sagittal sinus. During scalp examination, inspect any cutaneous abnormalities such as cutis aplasia or abnormal hair whorls as they may suggest an underlying genetic disorder).

7. Various neurodevelopmental abnormalities may be revealed by gross evaluation of anthropomorphic aspects of the face.

8. Palpation of scalp carefully may also reveal cranial defects or craniotabes, a peculiar softening of the parietal bone so that gentle pressure produces a sensation similar to indenting a Ping-Pong ball.

9. Auscultation of the skull is an important adjunct to a neurologic examination.

10. The anterior fontanel (AF) is the largest fontanel and is placed at the junction of the sagittal suture, coronal suture and frontal suture. The anterior fontanelle is not completely closed until about the middle of the second year (between 12 to 18 months of age). Examination of anterior fontanel is useful clinically as excessively large AF and its delayed closure is present in following condition: Malnutrition, Hydrocephalus, Cretinism, Down syndrome, Trisomies 13 and 18, rickets, pituitary dwarf etc. Bulging anterior fontanel is sign of raised intracranial pressure exclude crying infants, hydrocephalus, vitamin A poisoning, Urea cycle enzyme defects, Vitamin D dependent rickets etc.

11. The skull may be unduly small as in microcephaly or generalized craniostenosis, Trisomies 13 and 21, Lissencephaly, cerebral dysgenesis etc. or large in hydrocephalous, hydrocephaly, cerebral gigantism, porencephaly, and intracranial tumors etc.

12. At one year infant following milestones developed such as walk without support, mature pincer grasp developed, starts turning pages of book and scribble, playing simple ball game, First molar eruption occurs (16-20 month) (6).

KARNAVEDHAN SANSKARA

According to *sushruta&Vagbhata* age for *Karnavedhana Samskara* is 6-8 months, according to *Parasharagruhyait* is 3 – 5th month. According to *sushruta*, inauspicious *tithi*, *muhurta*, *nakshatra* the child be placed in the lap of mother consoling him with toys. Then the physician pulling the ear with his left hand should pierce the ear where the skin is thin with his right hand slowly evenly by needle in case of thin and thick lobes respectively against sunlight. In male child, first their right ear should be pierced but in female child left ear should be pierced first. Then the *pichu varti* should be instilled. The *karnavedhanasamskara* should be done mostly in winter season. It may prevent the child from diseases like hernia and hydrocele.

UPANAYAN SANSKARA (Threading ceremony)

It is school entrance initiation ceremony. This was an important *sanskara* & was performed when a boy was handed over by his father or guardian to the teacher for education. It is also called as '*Yagnopaveet Sanskara*'. At the age of 8 yr the son is initiated by *acharya* with a thread called as *Yagnopaveet*. According to *Gruhya sutra*, it is performed as in *Brahman's* - 8 yr, *Kshatriya* - 11yr, *Vaishya*- 12yr. According to *Manusmriti* - in *Brahman* age for *Upanayana* is - 5 yr, in *Kshatriya* it is - 6yr, and in *Vaishya* it is - 8 yr.

VEDARAMBHA SANSKARA (Study of veda&scripture)

It is also called '*Vidyarambha*', '*Akshararambha*', or '*Akshara-lekhan'sanskara*'. After bathing the child should sit facing west, while the *Acharya* should sit facing east. Saffron & rice are scattered on silver plate.

With the help of silver pen the child is made to write letters on the rise. It signifies the student's commitment towards learning & the teacher's towardsteaching.

DOLASHAYAN SANSKARA- (keeping baby in cradle for 1st time)

It is done on 12th & 13th day for male & female respectively.

UPAVISTAN SANSKARA

On an auspicious occasion in the 5th month or 6th month, the infant should be made to sit on ground with support for some time. The place should be cleaned, levelled & should be away from water, fire & sharp instruments. The baby should not be allowed to sit for a long time as it may lead to kyphosis, exhaustion, weakness of waist, stiffness of body.

DISCUSSION

Sanskara can be understood as important cultural, religious and social event in an individual's life from birth to death processing with medical significance. It infers assessment of proper growth & developmental milestone achieved providing with periodical screening. It provides sound mental & physical health & confidence to face life's challenges. They can increase physical strength & stamina, rejuvenate the mind & enhance concentration. In the span of growth & development person passes through the different phases of motor, sensory, social & mental development which termed as developmental milestone. Ayurveda also described different *Sanskara* in different period of life to announce attainment of different milestone. Thus ensuring the proper growth & also to differentiate from the child with developmental delay. Exposing the baby to early morning sun is essential for photo conversion by the ultra-violet band of sunlight for synthesis of vitD.

Knocking way of teaching good things to budding baby is a *Samskara*. There is a scientific effect of hormonal secretion. The significance of this *Sanskara* is to get a child with good health & intellect. The significance of this *sanskara* is to evoke celestial and excellent qualities in the child. Inserting the juice of Banyan tree was a device meant for preventing abortion. In the opinion of *Acharya Sushruta*, the Banyan trees has got the properties of removing all kind of troubles during pregnancy e.g. Excess of bile, burning and to identify & support the conception & for the welfare of child and to bring prosperity to mother & long life to unborn child.

Jatakarma is the birth elaboration which helps the baby to outmatch from intrauterine life to extrauterine life. According to *Charaka*, child should be given honey & *ghruta*, for the assessment of rooting & sucking reflex in neonates. Honey also serves as a mild allergen which gives the first opportunity to baby's body to start the synthesis of antibodies. Also the first feed initiates gastrointestinal movements & activates the gut. Honey contains 'Hemin' which is good for cleansing the

Respiratory tract. Breast feeding is to be given on first day so as to ensure nutrition & protective immunoglobulin present in colostrum. Early initiation of breast feed also stimulate prolactin reflex. According to *Sushruta*, cleaning the vernix provides tactile stimulation to baby to make it breath or cry, cleaning the mouth secretion clear the airways & prevent aspiration. Placing cotton soaked in ghee on head maintain temp of the body & provides insulation. Tying the cord to baby's neck by thread prevent bleeding from cord & minimise the chance of infection of cord by soiling in stool & urine. *Suvarnaprashana* is given to the baby by gold *bhasma*, which gives physical protection to baby, enhances brain development. Honey & *ghrta* serve the purpose of both Nutrition & Immunisation. Honey & *ghrta* have a high caloric value & giving energy to baby whose previous source of nutrition from placenta has stopped.

Name of an individual signifies his identity & individuality. This is the time when child has successfully passed vulnerable early neonatal period, which bears maximum risk of infection, sepsis, neonatal jaundice. Bathing of mother & baby with medicinal water also ensure hygiene & disinfection. As the name given by father, it helps to develop a parental bonding with baby. Name of the baby promotes the healthy psychology good physical & mental health.

This *Sanskara* is performed during 4th month which is appropriate, as by this time baby develops enough immunity & tolerance to external environment. Presence of *Vaidya* on this occasion provides an opportunity for examination of normal milestone development in baby, like neck holding, no head lag when pulled to sit, head above the plane of the trunk on ventral suspension, hand eye coordination, laughing loud, social smile, recognition of mother. By exposure to external environment, infant develop resistance power to adjust in different atmosphere. By seeing moon & sun, the macular fixation & pupillary adjustment of the child can be observed. The reaction of the child with the sound produced from the bells of the temple, may give the clue to rule out hearing defect.

Child receives only milk before this ceremony but due to rapid growth & develop of child, different type of food are required. As the demand for breast milk decreases, the mother supply gradually diminishes. Therefore it is the time when weaning should be initiated. Prolong breast feeding after this period may develop rickets, scurvy, & anaemia to the children. Thus the *Annaprashan* is not only a religious ceremony but it draws the attention of parents to start supplementary feeding from the stipulated period. The concept of *phalaprashana* is more scientific because both breast as well as cow's milk are poor source of vitamin C therefore it is important that, vitamin diet must be supplemented with vitamin C, citrus fruits are best source of vitamin C.

This ceremony provides the chance to examine & care the anterior fontanel. Normally it closes upto the age of two years. Delayed closure may due to craniotabes, various serious disorders like dehydration, meningitis. Detection of abnormalities like craniocynostosis, wide sutures, microcephaly, macrocephaly, elevated or depressed fontanelle, palpation of scalp, may also reveal cranial defects.

Ear piercing inflicts a small injury and triggers active immune mechanism of body .It thus prepared the immunity of baby against any passive infection. Selection of winter season also decreases the chance of infection. Holding ear lobule against sun visualised course of fine vessels to avoid bleeding. The placed described for piercing the ear , which is used for treating cardio –respiratory problems by Acupuncture.

It helps to control the fear of separation from parents & helps overcome to anxiety of entering a strange place. According to modern the brain growth of the child complete up to the age of 5 yr, therefore the concept of *Manusmruti* regarding initiation of this *Sanskara* is more logical .The thread tied around the waist may serve the purpose to assess the physical growth to rule out malnutrition.

Starting formal education at 5 yrs is act in today's era also, as by this time a normal child learns to walk, run, climb stairs, tell his name, gender, play co-operatively in a group, say song, poem, story, feed by himself, & can go to toilet alone. It is also a time for assessment of mental growth of child.

This ceremony signifies that the baby is kept on mother's bed before 12th day. Placing baby on stable bed instead of cradle prevent chance of intraventricular haemorrhage. Swinging movement induces the sleep & the baby can survive by its own. It also aids for vestibular stimulation.

6th month is appropriate age for developing sitting with support milestone of baby. So this is the time when *Acharya Kashyapa* recommends the *Upaveshana Sanskara*. Baby is allowed to sit only for a short time as it may leads to complication.

CONCLUSION

In this article, it caught glimpse of Shodash *Sanskaras* with scientific relevance in today's era which covers the entire life span of a person and takes him to the door steps to truth. It can be concluded that *Sanskara* are solemn ceremonies of life and are to be perform in accordance with set procedures. The ritual prepares the mind to assimilate not only the Vedic knowledge but also make a person healthy and disease free. *Sanskara* described in Ayurvedic texts are based on the various stages of child growth and developments and hence provide a rational guideline toward his care during celebrating different ceremonies from very conception to childhood. The childhood *sanskara* aim at preparing the

baby for extra-uterine life successfully, develop proper feeding habits, ensure adequate nutrition, prevent diseases, & environment for further survival.

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