



GARBH SANSKARA AND IT'S NEED IN TODAY'S ERA

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Article Received on 15/05/2017

Article Revised on 05/06/2017

Article Accepted on 26/06/2017

ABSTRACT

A word 'Garbh sanskara' is self explanatory. *Garbha* (fetus) means a new life taking shape in a woman's womb. *Garbh sanskara* or building the physical or mental character of a child during pregnancy is an ancient truth. It is scientific fact as mentioned in *Ayurveda* thousands of years back. It is traditionally believed that a child's mental and behavioural development start as soon as conception occurs. Child's personality begin to take shape in the womb and this can be influenced by the mother's state of mind during pregnancy. Every couple wants intelligent, healthy and cultured child but are unaware that they can choose to do so as per the science of *Ayurveda*. To compete in today's overgrowing population and resulting race our future generation needs to be very intelligent, resourceful and creative. The process of purification of body before conception, selecting and transmitting positive influences by means of *aahara* (food), *vihara* (life style), *mantra*, *yoga*, *pranayama*, meditation and *aushadhi* is known as *garbha sanakara*. The advantage of *Garbh sanskara* is not only that people educate their child but there is also development of bond between the mother and the child.

KEYWORDS: *Garbh sanskara, Garbha, Yoga, Aahara, Vihara.*

INTRODUCTION

The Sanskrit word *Garbha* means the union of *shukra* (sperm), *shonit* (ovum) and *atma* (soul) inside the *kukshi* (uterus). Means it is the fetus inside the womb.^[1] The word *Sanskara* means improving the qualities by educating the mind of the fetus.^[2] *Garbha Sanskara* can be traced back to ancient Hindu text like the *Vedas* which date to 1500-500 BC.^[3] In *Mahabharata* also there is well known mythological story as how *lord Krishna* had taught *Abhimanyu* to enter in "Chakravyuha" when he was in his mother *Subhadra's* womb. The story of *Pralhada* is from the *Puranas*. *Pralhad* was born into a family of demons who were wreaking havoc on the gods in heaven. His mother listened to devotional prayers and stories about *lord Vishnu* while he was in her womb. As a result he became a devotee of *lord Vishnu*. He stood by good and renounced all evil. This led to downfall of his demon father's evil empire.^[4] These stories too prove the fact that men during mythological period too believed the concept of *garbha Sanskara*. So we should accept this method of influencing the fetus with good values. It has also been scientifically proved that subconscious mind of a fetus can be influenced more powerfully than conscious mind of grown up child after birth.^[5]

MATERIAL AND METHODS

This is conceptual type of research. Various Ayurvedic classic texts have been used for this study as source materials. All sorts of references has been collected & compiled from various ayurvedic classics texts like *Charaka Samhita*, *Sushruta Samhita*, *Vagbhata Samhita*, *Kashyapa Samhita* and available commentaries on it. Apart this various research article published till date are also searched from various websites are also been used for this. All relevant matter is compiled and analyzed for the discussion and attempt has been made to draw some conclusions.

A] Beeja shuddhi (Purification of body)

Nowadays, young couple planning pregnancy, desiring to become parents would like to take advantage of *Garbh sanskara* for their forthcoming baby in making it a "precious baby". According to *Ayurveda*, preparation before achieving conception is necessary for good progeny. Four things are essential for *prakrut garbhadhan* (normal conception). These are *ritu* (season) means suitable period for conception i.e. period near ovulation. *Kshetra* (field) means normal and healthy uterus. *Ambu* (water) i.e. nourishing substance and *beeja* (seed) i.e. healthy female ovum and male sperm. As these four things are important in farming in the same manner this is much more important in conception where

detoxification of the body is done.^[6] Here increased *dosha* (impurities of body) are removed & body is prepared for conception. *Ayurveda* involves the preparation of the couple planning for pregnancy. The beginning by *pinda shuddhi* (purification) by *Panchakarma*. If the couple is not in a state of mental stability and calmness, even if they are physically fit, they cannot give birth to healthy child, which can be achieved in *Garbh sanskara*.^[7] *Charakacharya* says after menstruation i.e. 4th day onward the couple after being purified by use of oleation, emetics, purgatives and brought to normal condition should be given *asthapana* (evacuative enema) and *anuvasana vasti* (enema with oils). After these purifying measures, the man should use the *ghrita* (ghee) and milk medicated with the drug of *madhura varga* (group of sweet drugs) and the woman should consume oil and *masha* (*Phaseolus mungo* Linn.).^[8]

B] Aahara

There are few general pregnancy diet rules that mother can follow. Throughout the day the woman should eat preferably 5 times a day i.e. three regular meals and two small meals or snacks during the day.^[9] During pregnancy (*garbhavstha*) *Acharya Charaka*^[10], *Sushruta*^[11] and *Vagbhata*^[12] have given a detail monthwise dietary regimen. According to this diet *Acharya's* advised milk, sweet (*madhur*), cold liquid diet (*sheetal drava aahara*), honey, *ghrita* in the first trimester. Because *madhur rasa* has properties of making body stout (*sthairyakara*), anabolic (*balya*), *prinana*, maintain refreshment of body (*jivana*)^[13] and cold drugs (*Sheetal dravya*) has properties like liquification (*vishyandan*), *sthirikaran*, *balya*^[14] etc. During first trimester of pregnancy, most women experience nausea, vomiting and^{[15][16]} thus can not take proper diet and fails to get proper nourishment. Thus, the use of milk and *madhura*, *sheetal*, *drava aahara* (liquid diet) will prevent the dehydration produced due to vomiting and supply required nourishment. Milk medicated with honey and *ghrita* provides instant energy. Drugs of *madhura* group being anabolic will help in the maintenance of proper health of both mother and fetus.^[17] Along with this diet, vitamin B₉ i.e. folic acid is essential for *garbhini* (pregnant women), because deficiency of vit. B₉ causes neural tube defect in fetus.^[18]

In second trimester, *Acharya's* advised milk with butter and *ghrita* medicated with *madhur aushadhi dravyas*, cooked *shasti* rice (kind of rice) with curd and milk along with pleasant food mixed with milk, butter, meat of wild animals, *ghrita* medicated with *gokshura* (*Tribulus terrestris* Linn.). Fourth month onwards muscular tissue of fetus grows sufficiently^[19], requiring more protein which is supplied by the use of meat soup and *ghrita*. By the end of second trimester, most women suffer from oedema of feet and complication of water accumulation.^[20] Use of *gokshura*, a good diuretic helps in prevention of water retention as well as its complications. *Gokshura* also has property of

prajananasansthan (fertility promoters) as a *garbhasthapan* (sustainers of pregnancy) and *vrushya* (aphrodisiacs).^[21] In third trimester, *Acharya's* advised *ghrita* medicated with *madhur varga dravyas*, *ghrita* medicated with *Vidarigandhadi dravyas* (*pueraria tuberosa* DC. etc.), *yavagu* (gruel) prepared with milk and mixed with *ghrita*, *asthapana vasti* followed by *anuvasana vasti*, *snigdha yavagu* and meat soup of wild animal should be given till delivery. In this trimester the abdominal cavity is mostly occupied by the growing fetus so less space is available for the stomach and intestine to accommodate even moderate quantity of food and it also takes long time for its digestion and absorption thus peristaltic movements are decreased causing constipation, so easily digestible and easily absorbable *yavagu* is advised. Use of enema in eighth month will relieve this constipation. The drugs of *vidarigandhadi* group are diuretic, anabolic, relieve emaciation and suppress *pitta* and *vata*.^[22] *Mamsarasa* (meat soup of wild animal) helps in suppressing *vata* and provides nourishment to the fetus and hence is considered ideal for this period.^[23]

C] Vihara

Charakacharya says if the woman desires to have a son of tall, fair complexion, energetic, endowed with the qualities of goodness then daily in the morning and evening she should look at white ox, white horse, sandal wood. She should be entertained with favourite and pleasant stories. She should look at man and women of charming personality, speaking pleasant words, gentle behaviour. Husband and other female companions should always be pleasant and gentle with her.^[24] A pregnant woman desiring to give birth to intelligent, courageous, good looking and healthy child should listen and read the biographies of peoples with great qualities.^[25] The woman should give up negative thinking but should always listen to such things which can influence her mind with positive thoughts and good *sanskaras*. *Charakacharya* says that the mind of foetus is fully assimilated with its parents, whichever stories, songs and music a pregnant woman listens and would consequently influence the mind of her fetus. Also according to *Acharya's* the environment and psychology of woman should be identical to the person of the country, whose complexion, size, features she wishes to be emulated by her child. She should practice similar behaviour in terms of faith, hearing, truth, honesty, humanity, charity, politeness as she wishes to be the nature of her child.^[26]

I] Role of Mantra's during pregnancy

Mantra's were chanted for healthy, harmony and happiness at the individual, family and social levels. Chanting of the *mantras* generate a particular resonance pattern which produces special effects in body.^[27] Like *omkar* chanting helps to lower the blood pressure, reduce mental tension and stress. It also helps in the spiritual development of the baby because of the sound and positive vibrations.^[28]

II] Role of Yoga during pregnancy

Yoga in pregnancy is multi-dimensional physical, mental, emotional and intellectual preparation to the challenges faced by a pregnant woman. The challenges of pregnancy are revealed by the state of happiness and stress while *yoga* is the skill to calm down the mind. Pregnancy in a woman is a condition in which woman changes both from inside and outside. *Yoga* in pregnancy help the woman to face these changes and challenges. *Yoga* soothes the mind, refocus the energy and prepare the woman physiologically and psychologically.^[29] Benefits of *yoga* include decrease in pain, improves quality of sleep, increased maternal confidence.^[30]

III] Role of Pranayama during pregnancy

Pranayama is also known as yogic breathing or controlled deep breathing. *Prana* means energy in Sanskrit. Pregnancy and new motherhood is often described as the most rapidly transformational time in women's life. Not only does a woman experiences phenomenal changes in her physical body, but she also goes through tremendous change emotionally, mentally, and spiritually.^[31]

IV] Role of meditation during pregnancy

Meditation is the integral part of *yoga*. Also known as *dhyana* in Sanskrit. It helps to achieve a harmonious balance between body and mind. Meditation helps to reduce anxiety, restore the normal functioning of the immune system during pregnancy and childbirth.^[32]

D] Aushadhi (medicine)

As the *aahara vihara* is useful for pregnant women and it kept the woman healthy with giving birth to healthy baby. Naturally there is no need of taking medicine for the healthy pregnant women but for the development and maintenance of *garbha* and *garbhini* along with above dietary regimen some medicine are important to use. For this Ancient *Ayurveda* describes "*Garbhsthapaka drugs*".^[33] *Charaka* and *Kashyapa* have prescribed certain drugs during pregnancy. *Kashyapa* has advised these to be used as a routine by pregnant woman. Routine use of these drugs might be beneficial for maintenance of proper health, growth and development of mother and fetus respectively. *Charaka* enumerated *aindri* (*Bacopa monnieri* Linn.), *bramhi* (*Centella asiatica* Linn.), *shatvirya* (*Cynodon dactylon* Pers.), *sahastravirya* (type of *Cynodon dactylon*) or *durva*, *amogha* (*Stereospermum suaveolens* DC.), *avyatha* (*Terminalia chebula* Retz.), *vatyapushpi* (*Sida rhombifolia* Linn. Mast.), *vishwaksenkanta* (*Callicarpa macrophylla* Vahl.) and has advised the oral use of milk or *ghrita prepared* with these drugs.^[34] The bath with these drugs (cold decoction of these drugs) during *pushya nakshatra* should also be taken. These drugs should also be kept in close contact of mother, amulets of these be tied in head or right arm. Similarly the drugs of *jivaniya* group should also be used. *Kashyapa* has also advocated *Ayurvedic* drugs to be given after enchanting them with mantras and tied as amulet during *pushya*

nakshatra.^[35] Amulet of *trivritta* (*Operculina turpethum* Linn.) should also be tied in the waist of pregnant woman.^[36] Ancient Indian medicine has recognized the need for the mental, spiritual and physical preparation of the mother to be for the momentous event of childbirth.

DISCUSSION

Scientists are creating a startling new picture of intelligent life in the womb.^[37] By nine weeks a developing fetus can hiccup and react to loud noises. By the end of second trimester it can hear. The fetus experiences rapid eye movement in sleep of dreams. Fetus can distinguish between the voice of mom & that of a stranger & respond to a familiar story read to it.

1) Fetal Hearing

Researches shows that sound like gurgling & rumbling of mother's stomach & intestine, her voice, voice of other people's reaches the fetus through the amniotic wall. When mother is speaking fetal heart rate slows suggesting that the fetus not only hears & recognizes the sound but is calmed by it.^[38]

2) Fetal Vision

There may be just enough visual stimulation filtered through the mother's tissues that a fetus can respond when the mother is in bright light.^[39]

3) Fetal Learning

The fetus can listen, learn & remember at some level.^[40]

4) Fetal Personality

Behaviour doesn't begin at birth. It begins before & develops in predictable ways.^[41]

Ayurveda explains month wise development of fetus during pregnancy. There is development of different *angaavyava* (body parts), *chetna* (consciousness), *buddhi* (intellectual ability), *vedna* (pain) in different month. Like *Kashyapa* elaborates that in third month of pregnancy the embryo starts quivering, develops consciousness and can feel pain.^[42] In fourth month manifestation of heart and consciousness associated with heart have been added by *Acharya Sushruta*.^[43] According to both the *Ayurvedic* and modern researches shows that fetus give responses to the stimulation during fetal period. Thus child's mental, behavioural development and personality begins to take shape in the womb. So it is the best period for fetal development which can achieve by means of *garbh sanskara*.

CONCLUSION

The people now getting the importance of *Garbh sanskara*. The ancient concept of having many children have become outdated. Today the slogan is like "Small Family Happy Family" is considered more appropriate. Now it is necessary to bring this single child more intelligent with good personality. During this period *Garbh sanskara* plays an important role in fetal

development. So we can perform *Garbh sanskara* to produce healthy progeny.

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