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Garbini paricharya: an ayurvedic approach

Singh Amrita^{1*}, Upasana², Singh Rahul³

1. M.S. Scholar, P.G. Dept. of PrasutiTantra & Stree Roga, Rishikul Govt. Ayurvedic College, Haridwar (Uttarakhand)
2. M.S. Scholar, P.G. Dept. of PrasutiTantra & Stree Roga, Rishikul Govt. Ayurvedic College, Haridwar (Uttarakhand)
3. Lecturer, P.G. Dept. of Drava Guna ,Uttanchal Ayurvedic College, Dehradun (Uttarakhand)

*Corresponding author, amritathakur0077@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Every living organism on the planet is concerned with the process of birth. It is a sign of new beginning and growth and perception of soul (*Atma*) or God. But the process is painful and consists of patience and perseverance. In human beings this period is almost a year and nourishing and upbringing for couple of years ahead. Every science, tradition, therapy has tried to make the process safe, less painful and

successful. Our *Ayurveda* is ultimate science of life focusing every minute aspect of various stages of human life. *Garbini paricharya* is one of its concepts explaining the importance of establishment of health of a woman before delivery; directing physicians and *garbini* to adopt certain changes in the daily activities, diet, mental and social behaviour. *Ayurveda* has executed the anti natal care (*Garbini Paricharya*) in a meticulous fashion with a

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scientific background, focusing on every aspect required to cherish and replenish the health of woman and avoid complications during delivery.

The basic principle of *Ayurveda* is “ *Swaasthasya swastha rakshanam aathurasya vikar prasamanam* ” To maintain *swastha rakshanam* of *garbini* our *aacharyas* has developed a concept, about the diet, behaviour, conduct, medication during pregnancy that a pregnant woman should do and don'ts. *Ayurveda* emphasize much on dietetics and daily regimens than the medicines. Medicines have given 2nd priority. The dietetics and daily regimen prescribed for the pregnant women having normal

INTRODUCTION:

Development of a good offspring depends upon the daily and monthly regimen of the mother. *Ayurveda* prescribes some set of rules which are very important for every pregnant woman. It contains various details related to *Ahara* [nutrition], *Vihara* [lifestyle] and *Vichara* [thought process] which women have to follow at the different stages of pregnancy. These are

development of foetus, women remains healthy and delivers the child possessing good health. By use of these regimens foetal membrane, vaginal canal, abdomen, sacral region, flanks become soft, *vayu* moves in right direction, faeces and placenta are excreted or expelled easily by their respective passages. A woman gains strength and easily delivers at proper time. So by following proper *Ayurvedic garbini paricharya* would result in proper development of foetus and prepare pregnant women for *sukhprasava* physically, psychologically and spiritually.

KEYWORDS: *Garbini paricharya*, dietetics and daily regimen, *sukhprasava*

the well-documented description of caring for pregnant women, under the heading of *Garbhini Paricharya* (Antenatal care). The regimen prescribes practices for each month and stage of pregnancy. These systems are, in fact, diligently followed as traditional practices in innumerable households even today. These *Ahara*, *Vihara* and *Vichara* have direct effect on both child and mother. The proper

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“*Garbhini Paricharya*” would results in the proper growth of the foetus, its delivery, the health of the mother and thus her ability to withstand the strain of labour.

The whole *Garbhini Paricharya* can be discussed under three main headings.

1. *Masanumasika Pathya*: month wise dietary regimens
2. *Garbhopaghatakara Bhavas*: regimens and articles that is harmful
3. *Garbhasthapaka dravyas*: substances which are helpful for pregnancy

Masanumasika pathya (month wise dietary regimen): During pregnancy fetus starts to get nutrition from mother through placenta. Adequate nutrition is needed for monthly constant and proper development of embryo. The requirement of nutrition varies according to development of fetus. Thus the dietetic requirements of the mother also changes month wise. By following these dietetic regimens prescribed, the pregnant woman remains healthy and delivers a child having good health, energy, strength, complexion and voice. The child would also be well-built.

Having importance of this change in requirements, the *Ayurvedic aacharyas* have given in detail the month wise dietetic regimen known as *masanumashika paricharya* (monthly regimen) for woman right from the first month up to the ninth month of pregnancy.

The monthly regimen helps in:

1. Softening of placenta (*apara*), pelvis, waist, sides of the chest and back
2. Downward movement of *vata (vataanulomana)* - this is needed for the normal expulsion of foetus during delivery.
3. Normalization of the urine and stool and their elimination with ease
4. Promotion of strength and complexion
5. Delivery with ease of a healthy child endowed with excellent qualities in proper time

Diet and Dietetic rules have been given greater importance. It changes in accordance with the growth of the fetus in the womb and at the same time ensures health of the mother. By following these dietetic regimens prescribed, the pregnant woman, having normal development of foetus, remains healthy and delivers a

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child possessing good health, energy, strength, complexion and voice. The child would also be well built. They are recommended for the pregnant woman right from the first month up to the ninth month of pregnancy.

First month:

As soon as pregnancy is suspected, mother should take non-medicated milk separately in desired quantity according to her digestive power and strength¹. Good food should be taken in the morning and evening. Massage with oils should be given but rubbing of ointments should be avoided.

Second month:

Lady should take milk medicated with drugs having *Madhura Rasa* and liquids which are sweet and cold².

Third month:

In this month lady should take milk with honey and ghee and *Shashtika Shali* (a variety of rice) cooked in milk³.

Fourth month:

Butter extracted from milk in the quantity of one *Aksha* (approximately 10 grams) or milk with butter should be given in this month⁴. *Cooked Shashtika Shali* with curd,

pleasant food mixed with milk & butter and meat of wild animals can also be given⁵.

Fifth month:

Ksheera sarpi - Ghee prepared with butter extracted from milk is given in this month. Food

Advised in fourth month can also be given but instead of butter, ghee is given in this month⁶.

Sixth month:

Lady should take *Ksheera sarpi* medicated with *Madhura oushadhas*⁷. Ghee or rice gruel medicated with *Gokshura* (*Tribulus terrestris*) should be given in this month⁸. In this month in pregnant lady we commonly observe the swelling, retention of urine, *Madhura gana* drugs and *Gokshura* helps as diuretics.

Seventh month:

The regimen of seventh month is same as that of sixth month⁹. Ghee medicated with *Vidarigandha* etc drugs can also be given which helps in the proper development of the foetus¹⁰.

Eighth month:

Basti i.e. Medicated enema, is administered during the eighth month. As

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Vata plays an important role in the whole process of delivery. *Sushruta* has advised *Asthapana basti* (a medicated enema with non unctuous substances like *kashaaya*) with decoction of *badari* (*Zizyphus jujube*) mixed with *Bala* (*Sida cardifolia*), *Atibala* (*Abutilon indicum*), *Shatapushpa* (*Foeniculum vulgare*), *Palala* (pasted *Sesamum* seeds), milk, curds, *masthu* (sour buttermilk), oil, salt, *Madanaphala* (*Randia dumentorum*) honey and *ghruta* and followed by *Anuvasana basti* (amedicated - unctuous enema) with oils medicated with milk and decoction of drugs of *Madhura* group. These would help in clearing the retained faeces and helps in downward movement of *Vata*¹¹.

Ninth month:

In this month, the pregnant lady should be given the *Anuvasana basti* with the oil medicated with *Madhura* group of drugs. The *Pichu* (Vaginal tampons) with the same oil is also administered for the lubrication of the vaginal passage¹².

Garbhoghathakara bhavas: Regimens and Articles which are harmful to foetus:

Some of the food article and the activities are harmful for both mother and the baby, thus they should be avoided by the pregnant lady. The food articles which are having excessive *Teekshna* (Sharp), *Katu* (pungent), *Ushna* (hot), *Guru* and *Vishtambhi* (Heavy and hard to digest) properties should be avoided. She should also avoid the intoxicating substances like wine and also excessive intake of meat. She should also avoid the food substances which cause constipation and which are *Vidahi*. The food stuffs like yam, garlic and onion etc are also to be prevented. Even the *Kshara* foods (alkalis) are to be avoided. Among the activities, the pregnant lady should avoid excessive strenuous exercise and coitus, harsh, violent activities, travelling in uneven surface. She should avoid sleeping in day hours and awakening at night, *Utkatasana*, suppressing the natural urges oleation therapy and bloodletting procedures. It is said that the mental state of the mother can influence the outcome of pregnancy as well as the child to be born. In this regard she should always be in a pleasant state and she should neither touch nor see

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unpleasant things of disfigured persons (with some physical defects) scary objects, nor listen to exciting and scary stories and advised to listen the scriptures as per their religion. She should not talk in high voice and avoid thoughts which would promote her anger or fear. She should give up foul smelling, ugly sight and exciting story, should not eat dried up, stale, putrefied or wet food. She should avoiding outing, visit of lonely place, crimination. Thus all the harmful physical and mental activities should be avoided which would harm the foetus¹³.

Garbhasthapaka aushadhi - Substances beneficial for maintenance of pregnancy and those drugs which are help in the proper maintenance of the *Garbha* by counter acting the *Garbhopaghatakara Bhavas*. These drugs can also be used in the recurrent abortion. The drugs like *Brahmi* (*Bacopa monnieri*), *Shatavari* (*Asparagus racemosus*), *Doorva* (*Cynodon dactylon*) etc are some of the *Garhashtapaka Dravyas* which helps in proper growth of the foetus and also gives the strength to the mother¹⁴. The

medicated ghee or milk prepared from these drugs can be taken orally or the bath with cold decoction of these drugs should be given in *Pushya Nakshatra*. They can also be tied to the right arm of the mother so that they are in close contact with her.

Discussion:

Ashwasana (Psychological assurance) is the most important to stabilizes and support the psychology of pregnant women. During first trimester of pregnancy most women experience nausea and vomiting, thus cannot take proper diet. Use of cold and sweet liquid diet and milk will prevent dehydration and supply required nourishment. Apart from that drugs of *madhura* group being anabolic will help in maintenance of proper health of mother and fetus. Fourth month onwards muscular tissue of fetus grows sufficiently requiring more protein which is supplied by use of meat soup. By the end of second trimester most of the women suffer from edema of feet and other complications of water accumulations. Use of *Gokshura* a good diuretic in sixth month will prevent retention of water as well as its complication. The drugs of

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vidaryadigandhadi group are diuretic, anabolic, relieve emaciation and suppress *pitta* and *kapha*, their regular use in severing the function of myometrium during labour. Tampon of oil may destroy pathogenic bacteria of vaginal canal and prevent puerperal sepsis. It may also soften and relax vaginal passage thus help in normal labour. Some of the text book like *Arogya kalpadruma*, a *sampoorna balachikitsa* book explains medicated milk with *Shatavari* in the ninth month, as it enhances the production of breast milk. Though *Sushruta* has not specified any particular dietetic regimen for ninth month, on the other hand in the regimen of eighth month after use of enema continuous use of unctuous gruels and meat soup of wild animals' up to the period of delivery is advised. This indicates that the same diet mentioned is indicated in ninth month also. Milk and *madhura* groups of drugs have been advised for entire pregnancy period. Milk is a wholesome diet, the *madhura* groups of drugs are anabolic, and thus use of these will help in maintenance of proper health of mother, growth and development of fetus. During anti- natal care, *Garbhini*

has been advised to avoid factors which produce psychological or physical strain such as *Vyayama* (Exercise), *Maithuna* (Sexual Intercourse), *Krodha* (Anger). Though normal *Maithuna* and *vyayama* are beneficial, their excessive use or psychological trauma, sudden shock may precipitate abortion especially in women who prone for the same. Pregnant women, who carries over weight, riding vehicle may precipitate abortion due to sudden increase in intra abdominal pressure, prolonged squatting in abnormal postures and supine position may influence placental and uterine blood flow thus cause abortion, intrauterine death of fetus and other abnormalities. Excessive use of meat, wine, pulses and spices should be avoided during pregnancy, as it may cause the digestive abnormalities. Over eating in pregnancy may results in increase body weight of mother as well as fetus. It may cause pregnancy toxemia and difficulty in labour. *Panchakarma* procedures like emesis, purgation can also precipitate abortion due to reflex stimulation of the myometrium.

Conclusion:

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Singh Amrita

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