



## The Role of *Aahara* in “*Supraja Nirman*” in *Ayurvedic* perspective

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### Abstract-

*Ayurveda* is the science of Life which has insisted more importance on prevention of various diseases and maintenance of health i.e. “*Swasthasya Swasthya Rakshanam*” rather than treating any type of disease. Child development actually begins from the time when it is conceived. The pregnant mother’s food, exercise, thoughts, emotions, joys, suffering everything has an impact on the foetus.

*Ayurveda* has explained *Aahara*, *Viahara* and *Sadvritta* which should be followed by the lady before, during and after conception. The ideal situations for the development of healthy uterus, ovum and sperm at the time of conception are related to wholesome diet and regimen depending of digestive powers and mental condition of both mother and father. According to *Ayurveda*, *Supraja Nirman* is a protocol for maternal care which leads to birth of the best

and healthy progeny and it is important for the sake of better, healthy and ideal society.

**Keywords-** *Aahara*, *Supraja Nirman*

### Introduction-

*Ayurveda* has explained the importance of *Aahara* in maintaining the health of body and mind of an individual [1]. The benefits of *Pathya Aahara* that occurs not only seen or felt on body but also can be seen on psychological and emotional status because there is a psychosomatic effects or inter-relationship which has been explained in *Ayurveda* and it is the uniqueness, speciality of *Ayurveda*. *Aacharya Caharaka* recognized as the Father of Medicine. *Caharak Samhita* has narrated many important Principles regarding healthy diet and healthy diet is very much important in *Supraja Nirman*.

The ‘*Sanskar*’ means transform the qualities for betterment of life. It improves the qualities of *Garbha*. “*Garbha Sanskar*”

is a specialized concept of *Ayurveda* which deals with pre conceptional and antenatal care. *Ayurveda* has mentioned different *Sanskaras* and *Paricharyas* at different stages of women's life. In *Ayurveda*, *Garbhini Paricharya* has been explained in the form of *Aahara* (Diet), *Viahara* (Lifestyle) and *Aushadhi* (Medications). Among these, *Aahara* has immense importance for the better growth of the foetus. *Ayurveda* has explained particular diet according to months for pregnant women.

Pregnancy cravings can be caused by a number of things, including hormones, nutritional deficiencies, a heightened sense of smell and taste. Cravings typically begin during the first trimester and peak in the second trimester, eventually stop in third trimester but can happen anytime during pregnancy. Whatever sense objects the pregnant woman desires to enjoy that should be arranged and provided to her to avoid disorders in foetus. If her desire is fulfilled, she delivers the son with best qualities otherwise there is a risk to foetus or herself [2]. Umbilical cord of the foetus is attached to the *Rasa*-carrying channel of the mother which carries power of food essence of mother to the foetus; by this indirect nutrition the foetus develops; from the conception until parts and sub-parts are distinctly demarcated, the life of foetus is maintained by nutrition supplied by *Rasa*-carrying vessels spread with ramification in all organs of the body by process of diffusion [3]. Physical development, strength, complexion, maintenance and decrease originate from *Rasa* (nutrition).

*Agni(Pitta)*, *Soma (Kapha)*, *Vayu* , *Satva*, *Rajas Tamas*, five sense organs and soul these are known as *Prana* (components of life). *Dalhana* takes 'Soma' as 'Aap' (water) element basic material of *Kapha*, *Rasa*, semen etc. *Tridosha*, *Triguna*, *Panchendriya* and soul these twelve collectively are called as 'Prana' because right from fertilisation, they perform and control the functions of life till death. The nourishment (*Poshan*) of this *Prana* is occurs due to *Aahara*, explained by *Aacharya Caharaka* [4].

#### Definitions-

- 1- *Supraja*- having good children<sup>[5]</sup>
- 2- *Aahara*-It is a substance which is swallowed through throat after eating.
- 3- *Upasnehana*-It is the process to give nutrition to the foetus by the process of diffusion as water of full lake nourishes the plants on bank.

#### Need and Rationale of Study-

1. To find out importance of *Pathya Aahara* in *Supraja Nirman* which we can be use for maintaining the health and to prevent or to cure the diseases.
2. Healthy progeny is important for the sake of better, healthy and ideal society.

**Aim-** To understand the concept of *Aahara* and its important role in *Supraja Nirman* explained in *Ayurvedic* compendia.

#### Objectives-

- 1- To understand the role of *Aahara* and its significance for maintaining the health and preventing diseases.

- 2- To understand the concept of *Supraja* and its significance.
- 3- To understand the factors affecting the proper digestion and absorption of *Aahara*.

#### Material and Methods-

1. Literary review for *Aahara* and *Supraja* from the basic *Samhitas* of *Ayurveda*, *Brihatrayi* and *Laghutrayi*.
2. Supportive text books for guideline.
3. References from searching internet and various journals.

#### Type of Study-

- It is a fundamental study, literary review of *Aahara* and its significance in *Supraja Nirman* given in the *Ayurvedic* compendia.

#### Observation and Result-

Instead of assuming suitable food supplements & behaviours for particulars person, *Ayurveda* points towards the direct prescriptive path that is developed for every unique body type based on *Prakriti*, season, age, sex, *Jataharagni*, *Annavaaha Strotas*, *Mana Avastha*, *Pittadaharakala* etc. This takes all the presumption out of getting health [6].

The *Aahara Vargas* like *Shooka dhanya* (cereal grains), *Shami dhanya* (legumes), *Mamsa* (meat) and *Shaka* (vegetables) etc cannot be used without applying *Kalpana*. So in *Ayurveda*, *Acharyas* have mentioned *Kritanna Vargas* to explain the different *Kalpanas* made by *Dravyas* of other *Aahara Vargas*, the different type of food items like *Manda*, *Peya*, *Yavagu*, *Anna*, *Vilepi*, *Yusha*, etc.



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Sr. no.	Classification according to <i>Ayurveda</i>	In modern	<i>Aahara Kalpana</i>
1	<i>Shooka Dhanya</i>	Corns with Bristles, cereals	<i>Yavagoo, peya, odana, mantha</i>
2	<i>Shami Dhanya</i>	Pulses	<i>Yoosha, Paayasa, Soopa</i>
3	<i>Shaka</i>	Vegetables	<i>Shaka, khada</i>
4	<i>Mamsa</i>	Meat	<i>Veshvara, Rasa</i>
5	<i>Phala</i>	Fruits	<i>Vimardaka, Panaka</i>
6	<i>Harita</i>	Salads, green leafy vegetables	<i>Asuta, kaambalika</i>
7	<i>Ambu</i>	Water	<i>Peya</i>
8	<i>Gorasa</i>	Milk and Milk	<i>rasaala, dadhimand</i>

		Products	
9	<i>Ikshuvikara</i>	Products of Sugar Cane Juice	<i>leha , rasa praleha</i>
10	<i>Madya</i>	Alcohol-Wines	<i>Sura</i>
11	<i>Krutanna</i>	Food Formulation	<i>Vyanjana</i>
12	<i>Aaharaayogi</i>	Accessory Food articles	<i>Vyanjana</i>

According to Modern Science, the food which we eat contains a variety of nutrients, which are used for building new body tissues & repairing damaged tissues. It has also a vital role to maintain life because it is the only source of chemical energy.

A balanced diet is defined as the diet which provides adequate amounts of all the nutrients. A balance diet provides energy, heat to our body, which nourished & replenished each & every cell of our body for the maintaining of good health & physical efficiency of an individual. A balanced diet provides appropriate amounts of nutrients for the growth, development, wear & tear of the body. A balanced diet should include following basic food groups -

1. Body building food group - Protein rich legumes, beans, nuts, milk, milk products, meat, egg, fish etc.
2. Protective food groups - Rich in vitamins & minerals. It includes green leafy vegetables, other vegetables & various fruits.
3. Energy giving food group- It includes Cereals such as rice, wheat, *bajra, jawar* etc. millets, Nuts.

4. High energy food group- It includes carbohydrates, sugar, jaggery & fats such as butter, ghee, cooking oil etc.

#### **Components of food-**

The food we eat is the only natural source from which our body acquires all the essentials nutrients which are vital for providing energy, regular functioning of body, growth & development as well as for protecting the body from different diseases.

The major components of food are divided into following types-

- 1) Carbohydrates
- 2) Proteins
- 3) Fats
- 4) Minerals
- 5) Vitamins & Water

In addition, a balanced diet should provide other nutrients such as dietary fibres, antioxidants, Spices like turmeric, ginger, Cumin, garlic & cloves are rich antioxidants. The First five components together are called Nutrients. They provide adequate nutrition required for the overall functions & development of the body. Water is also required for all the metabolic activities during digestion. <sup>[7]</sup>

#### **Composition of a balanced diet-**

The ratio of proteins, fats & carbohydrates should be 1:1:4.

- 1) Proteins Provides 10-15% of total calories
- 2) Lipids provides 15-25% of total calories
- 3) Carbohydrates provide 60-70% of total calories preferably starch.

#### Factors affecting balanced diet-

- 1) Energy requirement- It depends on the age, sex, weight, physiological state & type of physical activity.
- 2) Cost- The balanced diet which is being planned should be affordable to an individual & hence as per the economic status.
- 3) The Digestibility & Palatability of food.
- 4) Easy availability of various articles of balanced food.

#### Discussion-

Particularly, the pregnant should take diet consisting mainly of sweet, cold and liquids in first, second and third months; particularly in the third month she should be fed with boiled *sastika* rice with milk; in fourth, fifth and sixth months with curd, milk and ghee respectively – thus say some; However, in the fourth month she should be given food mixed with milk and butter and relishing food with meat of wild animals; in fifth month, that should be mixed with milk and ghee; in the sixth month she should be given to drink adequate quantity of ghee processed with *goksura* or liquid gruel; in the seventh month, ghee processed with *vidarigandhadi* drugs should be given, thus foetus is fully nourished. In the eighth month, non –

unctuous enema should be applied to her with *badara* decoction mixed with *bala*, *atibala*, *satapuspa*, sesame paste, milk, curd-water, oil, salt, *madana* fruit, honey and ghee in order to eliminate accumulated faces and *carmination* of wind; then she should be given unctuous enema with oil cooked with milk and decoction of sweet (*kakolyadi*) drugs as, on *vayu* occupying normal course, parturition becomes easy and free from complications. Thereafter she should be managed with unctuous gruels and meat-juice of wild animals until the time of delivery [8]. Thus managed, she stays unctuous, strong and delivers easily and without complications.

First six months, child must be on breast milk only. As milk is suitable to children, milk of Goat or cow may be given to them in appropriate quantity. The child, at the age of six months, should be given food-light and wholesome.

In *Ayurveda*, *Aahara Kalpana* (Concept of Diet) includes the planning of meal for *Rugna* (Patient) as well as *Swastha Vyakti* (Healthy Person). The *Trayopastambha* (*Aahara*, *Nidra*, *Brahmacharya*) are briefly explained in *Ayurveda*. These are the pillars of our body. In *Ayurvedic Compendia*, the exclusive concept of *Aahara* explained by *Caharakacharya*.

*Kshirada*, *Kshirannada* and *Annada* these are the *Trividha Avastha* explained in *Ayurveda*. For the newly born babies- breast milk is the first and well balanced diet. *Aahara* gives energy to body and this Bio-energy is supplied by the nutrition in the form of Proteins, Carbohydrates, Fats, Minerals, Vitamins and Water. In *Ayurveda*,



*Aahara* is classified by so many categories, like *Swarupa* (Appearance), *Utpatti*, *Prabhava*, *Karya* (Function), *Upayoga*, *Rasa*, *Guna*, *Panchabhautikatva*, etc. So with all aspects of *Aahara*, *Ayurveda* gives us the knowledge about the *Aaharavidhividhana*, *Aaharavidhivisheshayatana*, *Aahara Parinamkara Bhava* etc. *Caharakacharya* has explained *Aahara kalpana* in *Sutrasthana* and *Vimansthana*.

*Ayurveda* gives immense importance to *Agni*, *Annavaha Srotas*, *Pittadahara Kala*, *Mana Sthiti*, *Aaharasevan kala* for the digestion and absorption of *Aahara*. Lifestyle disorders are mainly due to ignorance and unawareness towards our health [9].

According to *Acharya Kashyapa*, the diet is known as *Mahabheshaja*. Well balanced Diet itself acts as a medicine. *Dinacharya* and *Hritucharya Palana*, *Achar rasayana*, *Sadvritta Palana*, *Swasthavritta Palana* plays important role to maintain the health of an individual.

Importance of Study of *Aahara Kalpana*- *Acharya Caharaka* has explained in *Sutrasthana*, the effects of *Aahara* on body. *Ayurveda* explained that *Aahara* must be *Shadrasayukta* (wholesome food with six *rasa*), if consumed in proper quantity in appropriate season and keeping in mind *Jataharagni*, the digestion capacity, *Annavaha Srotas*, *Pittadahara Kala*, *Mana Avastha*, *Pathyapathya* then *Aahara* provides *tushti* (satisfaction), *pushti* (nourishment), *buddhi* (intellectual power, skills), *dhruti* (firmness), *Paurusha* (valour), *Bala* (strength), *Swara* (appealing

voice), *Oja*(immunity), *Teja* (sharpness), *Jivana* (sustains life), *Pratibha* (cleverness), *Prabha* (luster, radiance).

*Aahara Kalpana* must be used in *Dinacharya* and *Rutucharya*, these are suggested in various places in *Ayurveda*, in the *Swasthavrutta* (daily life routines to maintain the proper health). It is very necessary for the patients to have the food which will keep their *Doshas*, *Dhatus* (body tissue) in a healthy state and will not let them get vitiated more from *Doshas*. So the patients must follow the “healthy food consumption” i.e. *Pathya*. *Aahara kalpana* is also used in *Panchakarma* as a *samsarjana krama* to boost *Jataharagni*, to regain the healthy stage from weakened one (which happened during the process of purification).

In *Ayurveda*, the nature of food is analyzed by the *Guna* -properties of food on its individual basis depending upon both the nature of the food and the nature of digestive capability of the patient who is going to consume that particular food. This obviously changes from person to person. Even it also changes as per the age-sex-living area-adaptability-habits -status of mind- volume of the body, etc. In modern dietetics, the nature of food is analyzed by weighing the dominance of one of types of the basic contents of the food as - carbohydrates, Proteins & Fats.

### Conclusion-

*Aahara* itself is *Mahabheshaja*, it is described by *Acharya Kashyapa*. “*Pathya Aahara Kalpana*” makes our food healthy and Suitable to our body and mind also. *Jataharagni* (digestive capacity) of the patients is equally important to that of the

*Guna*- properties of the *Bheshaja*. A balanced diet that is *Pathya Aahara* covers all the nutritive values as it provides food having all the six tastes (*Shadrasa*). *Aahara Kalpana* also makes the food pleasurable thus it acts over both Physical (body) and Mental status (mind). So *Pathya Aahara Kalpana* should be followed in our daily diet regime to achieve the basic aims (*Prayojana*) of *Ayurveda*. The essence of food taken by mother is divided in three parts- one nourishes her body, the other promotes her breast milk for the child and the third portion nourishes the foetus. As sprout comes out by the aggregate of season, soil, water and seed, conception takes place positively. If these four factors (woman's period of ovulation, uterus, **pervading rasa dhatu (Ambu) formed by digested food,** ovum of woman and sperm of man) are of good quality then it gives the better progeny. Five elements mean *Panchamahabhutas* are the causative factors of development of foetus at the time of conception and afterword also. The formation (*Nirman*) and nourishment (*Poshan*) of these elements is basically occurs through the *Aahara* of pregnant woman.

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