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Role of *Shodhana* in pre-conception care

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ABSTRACT

Pre-conceptional care is the care of a woman before achieving pregnancy. In view of *Ayurveda*, the *Garbhadhana Vidhi*, use of *Garbha Sthapana Aushadhas* and *Pumsavana Karma* are some of the procedures which could be categorized under the topic of pre-conceptional care. The traditions of supporting and promoting pregnancy as well as the procedures which could be followed during pre-conceptional care have been clearly mentioned in *Ayurvedic* texts. *Shodhana* in pre-conception care are very widely and commonly practiced by *Ayurvedic* physicians that additionally provides benefit to the woman seeking to cleanse and renew her body in order to achieve successful conception. *Shodhana* during pre-conceptional period aims in getting a good progeny. The purpose is not only to purify the body but also it serves the purpose of *Garbhashaya Shodhana* where the healthy gametes after fertilization will get implanted. This will ensure the mother to remain healthy and stable throughout her pregnancy without much complications and ensuring delivery with minimal aid. As the purpose of *Shodhana* is to expel out the excessively aggravated *Doshas*, thus *Doshas* will be maintained in equilibrium and the body will give healthy response to the growing fetus. This article aims at achieving a healthy motherhood and healthy progeny with the help of *Shodhana* during pre-conceptional care.

Key words: Pre-conception, *Shodhana*, *Garbhadana*, *Garbhashthapana*.

INTRODUCTION

Pregnancy is a blissful event in woman's life and achieving pregnancy has become one of the challenging issues for woman in today's era due to various reasons which could be due to nutritional status, environmental, or even sometimes social background. *Ayurveda* emphasizes on certain basic principles to be followed that helps in achieving, supporting and promoting pregnancy. The pre-

conception is a period before conception where both of the couples should follow certain procedures which will help in correction of the *Doshas* and maintain the equilibrium of the body. In order to achieve this, *Shodhana* proves to be one of the effective methods." When couples approach to a physician for the purpose of achieving conception as due to failure in their previous attempts, they should be provided with services that can give the best outcome and also pre-conceptional counselling at this point of time plays its important role.^[1] We can always make it clear while counselling about the effect of *Shodhana* which gives the ultimate results in achieving conception.

AIM

तदा हि तौ प्रासवीर्यो वीर्यन्वितमपत्यं जनयतः | (अ.सं.शा.1/3)

The study aims in providing pre conceptional care to woman by using *Shodhana* procedure in order to achieve healthy spermatozoa and healthy ovum which will result in proper nidation or implantation of the fertilized ovum in the healthy reproductive system of the woman.^[2]

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Garbha Sambhava Samagri (Four Essential Elements of Conception)

ध्रुवं चतुर्णां सान्निध्यात् । ऋतुक्षेत्राम्बुबीजानां सामग्र्यादगर्भः
स्याद् विधिपूर्वकंङ्कुरो यथा ॥ (सु.सं.शा.2/35)

The basic elements for conception: Timing (*Rtu*), The Field (*Kshetra*), Healthy and Nutritious Fluids (*Ambu*), Seed (*Bija*) and the quality of these four can be improved with the help of *Shodhana*.

Rtu refers to as the period of ovulation. Thus, timely release of ovum will be ensured by process of *Shodhana*.

Kshetra refers to as *Garbhasya* which should be free from any diseases and a healthy endometrium is achieved by following *Shodhana* which becomes the seat for growing foetus.^[3]

Ambu : According to *Dalhana*,

अम्बु पुनराहारपाकजो व्यापी रसधातुः...

Shodhana improves the *Jatharagni* and inturns improve the nutritious level of body. Thus, *Ambu* or the nutrition which is one of the criteria for conception gets its best quality after *Shodhana*.^[4]

Beeja: *Shodhana* not only ensures timely ovulation but also improves the quality of *Beeja* as seen clinically, evident in many cases where AMH level was very low have shown drastic improvement by following *Shodhana* and *Ayurvedic* treatment. Thus, improving ovarian reserves as well as quality of ovum.

Role of Shodhana in pre-conceptual care

अथाप्येतौ स्त्रीपुंसौ स्नेहस्वेदाभ्यामुपपाद्य, वमनविरेचनाभ्यां
संशोध्य, क्रमेण प्रकृतिमापादयेत् । संशुद्धौ ।

चास्थापनानुवासनाभ्यामुपाचरेत् उपाचरेच्च

मधुरौषधसंस्कृताभ्यां घृतक्षीराभ्यां पुरुषं, स्त्रियं तु तैलमाषाभ्याम्

॥४॥ संजातहर्षो मैथुने चानुकूलाविष्टगन्धं स्वास्तीर्णं सुखं

शयनमुपकल्प्य मनोनं हितमशनमशित्वा नात्यशितौ ।

दक्षिणपादेन पुमानारोहेद् वामपादेन स्त्री ॥ ७॥ (च.सं.शा.8/4-7)

In woman's life, puberty, pregnancy, lactation and menopausal stage are the stages where it is required to give her the attention to maintain her

health and stability along with this, there are certain other phases, where we need to interfere which will help during her reproductive journey, thus, pre-conceptual stage is considered to be a phase where the woman need to prepare for her next phase i.e., pregnancy. As nowadays many miscarriages and other pregnancy complications and toxemia have become very common. There is a need of taking action during pre-conceptual period for healthy pregnancy and safe delivery. *Shodhana* during pre-conceptual helps in balancing the *Agni*, *Dhatu*s and the *Doshas*. Thus, ensuring a healthy growth and development of fetus and uncomplicated pregnancy.

The treatment starts after 4th day of menstruation where *Poorvakarma* like *Snehana*, *Svedana* should be done followed by *Pradhankarma* (*Vamana*, *Virechana*, *Asthapana*, *Anuvasana*, *Nasya*) and *Samsarjana Karma* (After *Shodhana* use of *Ghrta* (*Phala Ghrta* and *Kalyanaka Ghrta*) and milk medicated with *Madhura Gana Dravya* and ghee).^[5]

Snehana Karma

Sneha Dravya's are used in pre-conception in two forms:

Ghrta: *Phala Sarpi*,^[6] *Kalyanaka Ghrta*,^[7] *Panchagavya Ghrta*,^[8] *Dhatrayadi Ghrta*,^[9] *Brahmi Ghrta*,^[10] *Mahakalyanaka Ghrta*.^[11]

Taila: *Maha Narayana Taila*,^[12] *Dhanvantara Taila*,^[13] *ksheera Bala Taila*,^[14] *lasuna Taila*.^[15]

The above formulation can be given to woman having *Vandhyatva*, *Yoni Vyapat* like *Putraghni*, *Vamini* etc.

Indication

ये स्युः प्रक्षीणमज्जानः क्षीण शक्रौजसाश्च ये ॥

बल पुष्टिकरं तेषां एतत् स्यादमृतोपमम् ॥ (च.चि.28/126)

तंद्रा क्लैव्यमति स्थौल्यमालस्यं गुरु गात्रता ॥

इंद्रियः स्रोतसां लेपी बुद्धेर्माहः प्रमीलकः॥

शोफाश्वैवं विद्याश्चान्ये शीघ्रमप्रति कुर्वतः॥ (च.सू.23/6-7)

Charakacharya has explained that *Snehana* given pre-conceptionally is beneficial in *Ksheena Shukra* and is *Ojakara, Bala Pushtikar*.^[16] It helps in improving *Durabala Agni* and improves the function of *Indriyas* and moistens the *Srotas* and this it will be useful in treatment of *Klaibya, Sthoulya* and *Gurugatrata*.^[17]

Svedana karma

Mode of Action of Svedana in pre conceptional care

स्वेद साध्या प्रशाम्यमति गदाः वातकफात्मकाः। च. सू. (14/3)

Svedana as *Pradhana Karma* in *Sveda Sadhya Vyadhi* like *Vataja Yoni Vyapads* where *Svedana* acts as *Vatahara* procedure. Thereby, further helps in conception and ensures stability of *Garbha* due to equilibrium maintained by *Vata*.^[18]

वातलां कर्कशां स्तब्धामल्पस्पर्शां तथैव च ।

कुम्भीस्वेदैरुपचरेदन्तर्वेश्मनि संवृते। धारयेद्वा पिचुं योनौ

तिलतैलस्य सा सदा ॥ (Bh.Pr.Ch.70/37)

Pre-conceptionally, *Kumbhi Sveda* which is indicated in *Vataja* type of *Dushti*. Similarly, can be adopted in other types of *Vataja Yoni Vyapad's* like *Acharana, Aticharana, Suchimukha, Shuska, Shandi Yoni* (In all conditions, the woman faces difficulty to conceive) helps in alleviating *Vata Dosha*.^[19]

वातस्योपक्रमः स्नेहः स्वेदः संशोधनं मृदुः ॥ अ. ह. सू. १३-१

अग्नेसि मार्दवं त्वक् प्रसादं । भक्तश्रद्धां स्रोतसां निर्मलत्वं ॥

कुर्यात्स्वेदो हंति निद्रां स तद्रा ॥ संधीन् स्तब्धांश्चेष्टायेदाशु युक्तः

॥। स्नेहकिलन्ना (कोष्ठगा) धातु संस्थाश्च दोषाः ॥ स्वस्थानस्या

येच मार्गेषु लीनाः ॥ सम्यक् स्वेदैर्योजितैस्ते द्रवत्वम् ॥ प्राप्ता कोष्ठं

शोधनैर्यात्यशेषम् ॥ सु. चि. (32।21-22)

Svedana as *Poorvakarma* of *Shodhana* when adopted pre-conceptionally, does *Agni Deepti*, increases the appetite and alleviates vitiated *Vata* and it clears the obstructed *Srotas*. Thus, helps in pacifying *Doshas* from *Aartavavaha Srotas* and thereby, it helps further

for the process of *Koshta Shodhana*. Thereby, does *Shodhana* of *Garbhasaya* and maintains reproductive function of the female.^[20]

Vamana karma

Mode of Action of Vamana in pre conceptional care

तत्र संशोधनमाग्नेयानां च द्रव्याणां विधिवदुपयोगः ॥ (सु० सं० सं० (15/16)

संशोधनमिह सामान्यम्' इति केचित्, 'संशोधनमिह वमनं न विरेकः इत्यपरे', कुताः ? विरेचनेन हि पित्तक्षयादार्तवस्य क्षय एव स्यादिति, वमनेन तु सौम्यधातौ निर्हते आग्नेयधातौ वृद्धे आर्तवमाप्याय्यते । आग्नेयानां च द्रव्याणामिति तिलमाषसुराशुक्तादीनाम् ॥ (सु० सं० सं० (15/16) डल्ह.टीका) ।

Vamana karma is given pre-conceptionally where *Dusti* of *Artavavaha* is noted by *Kapha Dosha* and there is direct indication of *Vamana* are mentioned in classics like *Aartava Kshaya* where the woman faces problems with conception also. *Acharya Sushruta* has mentioned *Samshodhana Karma* along with the use of *Agneya Dravya* in the treatment of *artava kshaya*. *Dalhana* clarifies that in cases of *Artava Kshaya*, *Vamana Karma* is more beneficial rather than adopting *Virechana* as *Virechana* leads to *Kshaya* of *Pitta* and in turn decreases the *Artava*. Thus, *Vamana* helps in *Nirharna* of *Soumya* substances and clears up the *Srotas* and further helps in regulation of menstruation, thereby, the goal of conception achieved.^[21]

Virechana Karma

Mode of Action of Virechana in pre conceptional care

विरेचनं तु सर्वोपक्रमेभ्यः पित्ते प्रधानतमं मन्यते भिषजः। तद् हि आदित एवं आमाशयमनुप्रविश्य केवलं वैकारिकं पित्तमूलमपकर्षति। तत्रावजिते पित्तेऽपि शरीरान्तर्गतः पित्तविकाराः प्रशांतिमापद्यते, यवाग्नौ व्यपोढे केवलमग्नि गृहं शीति भवति तद्वत् ॥ (च.सू.20-19)

Virechana does *Shodhana* of *Amasayagata Pitta* and thereby, does *Shodhana* of vitiated *Pitta* present in other parts of body. According to *Charaka*, as a house

caught on fire gets overheated. To get rid of heat, the fire has to be extinguished first which will control the heat all over, similarly, *Shodhana* of vitiated *Pitta* from *Amasaya* with the help of *Virechana* will also lead to *Shodhana* of *Pitta* from other parts of the body. Vitiated *Pitta* in *Yoni Pradesha* can lead to hormonal imbalance and menstrual disturbances which may be one of the causes for delay in conception. Thus, *Virechana Karma* helps in *Shodhana* of the *Yoni* and it also helps in balancing the hormones thereby leading to healthy conception.^[22]

कारयेद्रक्तपित्तघ्नं शीतं. पित्तकृतासु च ॥४२॥ पित्तलानां तु योनीनां
सेकाभ्यङ्गपिचुक्रियाः । शीताः पित्तहराः कार्याः स्नेहनाथैर्घृतानि
च ॥६३ ॥ (पित्तघ्नौषधसिद्धानि कार्याणि भिषजा तथा) ।
(च.सं.चि.30/42,63)

Based on *Charakacharya's* reference, in cases of *Yoni* affected by vitiated *Pitta* should be treated with *Pittahara Kriyas*. Thus, *Virechana* done in vitiated *Pitta Dushti* affecting the *Yoni* helps in conception soon after the *Shodhana*.^[23]

स्थितं स्थितं हन्ति गर्भं पुत्रघ्नी रक्तसंस्त्रवात्।

चतसृष्वपि चाद्यासु पित्तलिङ्गोच्छयो भवेत्। (सु.सं.उ.3.38/13-14)

According to *Sushrutacharya*, as in cases of *Putraghni* where woman suffers from repeated abortion caused due to vitiated *Pitta*. Thus, *Virechana* will be helpful and the woman can conceive and continue her pregnancy without complications.^[24]

Basti

Mode of action of Basti in pre conceptional care

इह खलु बस्तिर्नानाविध द्रव्यसंयोगात् दोषाणां संशोधन संशमन संग्रहाणि करोति। क्षीणशुक्रंवाजीकरोति, कृशं बृंहति, स्थूलं कर्शयति, चक्षुः। प्रीणयति, बलीपलिनमपहंति, वयः स्थापयति। शरीरोपचयं वर्णबलमारोग्यमायुषः करोति। परिवृद्धिश्च बस्तिः सम्यगुपासितः। (सु.चि.35/3,4)

Basti is one of the best treatments explained in *Ayurveda*. Its action is seen not only at the level of *Pakvasaya* but it has effects on systemic disorders also. The drugs which are used in *Basti* based on their

properties can do *Shodhana*, *Shamana*, *Lekhana*, *Brihmana*, *Vajikarana*, *Vaya Sthapana* etc.^[25]

बस्तिर्वातेच पित्तेच कफे रक्तेच शस्यते।

संसर्गे संन्निपाते चा बस्तिरेव हितः सदा ॥ (सु.चि.35/6)

Basti does *Shodhana* of *Mala*, *Vata*, *Pitta*, *Kapha* and *Mutra*. It also helps in improving the qualities of *Shukra* and strengthen the *Dhatu*s.^[26]

बस्तिर्वयं स्थापयिता सुखायुर्बलाग्निमेधा स्वर वर्ण कृच्च।

सर्वार्थकारी शिशुवृद्धायूनां निरत्याः सर्वगदापहश्च ॥

विटक्षेष्मपित्तानिल मूत्रकर्षो दाह्यावहः शुक्रबलप्रदश्च।

विश्वगुस्थितं दोषचय निरस्य सर्वान् विकारान् शमयेन्निरुहः ॥

(च.सि.1/27,28)

As many of the diseases affecting during her reproductive phase of woman are due to vitiated *Vata*. Sometimes, affecting the fertility and hampers conception. The principle line of treatment in such cases are such which help in stabilizing *Vata* and one such best procedure adopted is *Basti* including *Anuvasana* and *Aasthapana Basti*. As OPD procedure, *Matra Basti* also proves to be beneficial. *Basti* completely removes the *Vikriti Vata* from *Pakvasaya* and followed by *Shamana* of other *Vata Vikaras*.^[27]

यथा वनस्पतेर्मलेच्छिन्ने स्कंधशाखा प्ररोह कुसुम फलपलाशादीनां नियतो विनाशस्तद्वत् ॥ (च सू. 20/15)

Charakacharya has explained that if the root of a tree is destroyed, it also destroys the whole tree along with the branches, flowers and fruits. Similarly, if *Shodhana* of vitiated *Vata* that is present in *Pakvasaya* is done by giving *Basti*, it does *Shodhana* of *Dushit Vata* present all over the body and cures all *Vata Vyadhis*.^[28]

Examples of *Basti* used in pre-conceptional care;

- 1) *Musta Yapna Basti*.^[29]
- 2) *Madhutailic Basti (Shukrakrit Basti)*.^[30]
- 3) *Balaguduchyadi Taila Basti*.^[31]
- 4) *Shukra and Mamsaprada Basti*.^[32]
- 5) *Rasayan and Vajikarana Basti*.^[33-34]

Uttara Basti**Benefits of Uttara Basti**

स्त्रीणामार्तवकाले तु प्रतिकर्म तदाचरेत्। गभसिना सुखं स्नेहं तदाऽऽदत्ते द्वारा गर्भं योनिस्तदा शीघ्रं जिते गृह्णाति मारुते। (च.सं.सि.9/62-65)

Uttara Basti helps in alleviating *Vayu*, particularly which is present in the *Garbhasya*, it not only does *Shodhana* of *Yoni* but helps in conception immediately.^[35]

बस्तौ रोगेषु नारीणां योनिगर्भाशयेषु च।। योनिविभ्रंशशूलेषु योनिव्यापयसृग्दरे मूत्रकृच्छविकारेषु।। (अ.ह.सू.19/70,78)

Uttara Basti is given in woman who is having *Basti Rogas* and *Yoni Garbhasyagata Rogas*. The *Uttara Basti* is considered as best treatment as medicines are instilled directly into the *Garbhashaya* and the medicines action are seen locally.^[36]

Mode of action of Uttara Basti Karma

The right time for *Uttara Basti* is *Ritukala* which is compared with proliferative phase of menstruation. In this phase, the blood vessels stumps which are broken starts regenerating and new arterioles are formed along with growth of glands. At this phase, medicine administered absorbed easily and the desired action of medicine are seen.^[37]

दुष्टं शोणितं चाङ्गनानां, पुष्पोद्रेकः तस्य नाशं च कष्टम् । मूत्राघातान्मूत्रदोषान् प्रवृद्धान्, योनिव्याधिं संस्थितिं चापरायाः। (सु.सं.चि.37/125)

In Ayurvedic practice, administration of medicines like: *Phala Ghrita*,^[38] *Shatavaryadi Ghrita*,^[39] *Kalyanaka Ghrita*^[40] etc. *Uttara Basti* used as a *Dravyas* pre-conceptionally helps in improving the quality of ovum and also facilitates implantation.

Role of Nasya in pre-conceptional care

लब्धगर्भायाश्चैतेषु -----। (सु० सं० शा० २/३२)

चकारादलब्धगर्भायाः पूर्वमेव लक्ष्मणादीनां नस्यदानं सहस्राभिहतं गर्भग्रहणाय पश्चाद् ग्राम्यधर्मसेवनमिति । --- लब्धगर्भायाश्च लक्ष्मणादिनस्यदानं गर्भस्थापनार्थं, स्थितगर्भायाश्च

मासत्रयाल्पान्तरे पुत्रापत्यजननार्थं नस्यदानमिति ।। सु०सं० शा० २/३२ की डल्ह० टी०)

The administration of certain drugs through nose has been mentioned by *Acharya Sushruta* soon after the lady becomes pregnant for the purpose of *Pumsavana Karma*.^[41]

Acharya Sushruta mentioned the installation of specific *Dravyas* through right nostril for a desired male child and that of through the left nostril will be a desired female child.

The purpose of *Nasya* have been well explained by *Dalhana* for three specific reasons.^[42]

- 1) Before conception followed by intercourse. This is to achieve conception.
- 2) immediately following conception for maintenance of pregnancy.
- 3) Before three months of pregnancy for desired male or female child.

Examples of the *Dravyas* to be instilled nasally before conception are:

- 1) *Laksmana Moola, Vata Shrunaga, Sahadeva, Viswadeva*.^[43]
- 2) *Shweta Bruhati*, leaves of *Utpala* and *Kumuda*.^[44]
- 3) *Narayana Taila Nasya*.^[45]
- 4) *Shatapushpa Taila Nasya*.^[46]

Acharya Charaka, additionally mentioned about inhalation of the *Dravyas* through nostrils during *Pushya Nakshatra*. Pre-conceptionally, administration of *Dravyas* through nostrils have been mentioned by *Acharyas* as a part of *Pumsavana Karma* which is not as part of *Shodhana*.

OBSERVATIONS**Conception in Healthy Yoni**

A female's multifaceted life undergoes series of physiological changes in each and every phase. Her active reproductive phase is bestowed with highest orientation of physical and psychological balance for maintenance of harmony in her life.

एवं योनिषु शुद्धासु गर्भं विन्दन्ति योषितः।।

अदुष्टे प्राकृते बीजे जीवोपक्रमणे सति । (च.चि.30/125)

After achievement of healthy state of *Yoni* with the help of treatment, conception occurs with the union of healthy seed (*Sukra, Sonita*) possessing all its normal qualities and descendance of *Jiva* propelled by the deeds of previous life, is the opinion of *Carakacharya*.^[47] This verse indicates the importance of uterus and female genital system of women being the focus of family, maintenance of her reproductive health is family expanding years and overall health in later period is of prime importance.

प्रतिदोषन्तु साध्यासु स्नेहादिक्रम इष्यते ।

दद्यादुत्तरबस्तींश्च विशेषेण यथोदितान् ॥२१॥

शुक्रवदयो दोषाः स्तनरोगाश्च कीर्तिताः ।

क्लैव्यस्थानानि मूढस्य गर्भस्य विधिरेव च ॥३१॥

गर्भिणीप्रतिरोगेषु चिकित्सा चाप्युदाहता ।।

सर्वथा तौ प्रयुञ्जीत योनिव्यापत्सु बुद्धिमान् । (सु.उ.38/29,30-32)

A woman suffering from any of the *Yoni Vyapad* describe in *Ayurvedic* measures should be used in proper sequence i.e., First *Snehana*, *Svedana* followed by *Shodhana* like *Vamana*, *Virechana*, *Uttara Basti* and adopting procedures like *Aasthapna* and *Anuvasana Basti*. Based on *Acharaya Sushruta's* explanation, these procedures will help in curing *Shukra Arthva Dushti* and also helps in treating *Stana Roga*, *Klaibya*, *Moodha Garbha* or any kind of complications which a pregnant lady may have to face any time of pregnancy.^[48]

DISCUSSION

Pre-conception care had focused on women who had previously an unfavorable outcome but it can also be given in woman who are desirous of healthy pregnancy irrespective of her status whether she had an unfavorable outcome earlier or she is seeking pre-conceptual counselling for first time. *Shodhana* could be planned in both cases. Woman approaching *Ayurvedic* system of medicine are explained about the

role of *Shodhana* in achieving healthy progeny and also maintenance of pregnancy without any undue complication.

CONCLUSION

Ayurvedic modality can provide global solution to those women's who are seeking advice pre-conceptionally. Pre-conception care is essential to prevent complications to mother and foetus. Thus, *Shodhana* in pre-conception proves to be beneficial to achieve healthy progeny. It can be easily achieved if the lady follows all regimes. *Shodhana* in pre conception should be adopted as a standardized technique.

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