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# A review of concept of *Garbhopaghatakara Bhava* in Ayurveda

Ravindra Singh Baghel<sup>1</sup>, Rita Marwaha<sup>2</sup>, Basanti Guru<sup>3</sup>, Shiba Datta Panda<sup>4</sup>, Arvind Kumar Yadav<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1,5</sup>Post Graduate Scholar, <sup>4</sup>Assistant Professor, P.G. Dept. of Rachna Sharir, Pt. Khushilal Sharma Government Auto. Ayurveda College & Institute Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh, India.

<sup>2</sup>Professor, & HOD, P.G. Dept. of Rachna Sharir, Pt. Khushilal Sharma Government Auto. Ayurveda College & Institute, Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh, India.

<sup>3</sup>Professor, & HOD, Dept. of Stri Roga evam Prasuti Tantra, Pt. Khushilal Sharma Government Auto. Ayurveda College & Institute, Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh, India.

## ABSTRACT

Ayurveda is an ancient system of medicine, along with preventive and curative aspects of health of an individual. It plays an enormous emphasis on the importance of caring for the mother before, during, and after pregnancy. For a woman, reproductive period has a great importance in her life. Becoming mother is a beautiful dream of every woman in the world. Pregnancy is the most crucial and challenging phase in a woman's life. Pregnancy can get affected by enormous factors such as food habits, lifestyle and psychological factors. The foetus, in the intra-uterine life, is in constant relation with the mother for both development and nourishment. While explaining *Garbhini Paricharya*, the great authorities of Ayurveda have explained about the things to avoid in pregnancy called *Garbhopaghatakara Bhavas*. *Garbhopaghatakara Bhavas* are such factors which when accompany during pregnancy can harm or destroy the fetus or its development. A malformed alive fetus is one of the worst aspects of pregnancy. In today's fast-moving life, all women's unknowingly follows certain things which are told as contraindications during pregnancy, due to negligence or ignorance, leading to miscarriage, abortions, and other obstetrical complications. Here, an attempt has been made to analyse *Garbhopaghatakara Bhavas* on the mother and progeny.

**Key words:** *Garbhopaghatakara Bhavas, Garbhasrava, Garbhavyapad, Douhridya.*

## INTRODUCTION

The knowledge of *Sharir* starts with the knowledge of *Garbha*. The knowledge of *Garbha* helps to give rise to conditions for better handling of pregnancy preside to the creation of healthy new procreation. Various detailed are mentioned in *Ayurvedic* literature about the anomalies or congenital defects precipitating in the

fetus. *Garbhopaghatakara Bhavas* deals with the aspects which are going to cause *Upaghata* (harm) to the growing *Garbha*. Thus, *Garbhopaghatakara Bhavas* means the factors which are harmful to pregnancy. Many great authorities of Ayurveda mentioned *Garbhopaghatakara* factors that are responsible for abnormalities of the fetus in terms of appearance, complexion. When we talk on the basis of data, major structural anomalies occur in approximately 3% of liveborn infants and birth defects are a leading cause of infant mortality, accounting for approximately 25% of infant deaths. They are the fifth leading cause of years of potential life lost prior to age 65 and a major contributor to disabilities. In 40% to 45% of persons with birth defects, the cause is unknown. Genetic factors, such as chromosome abnormalities and mutant genes, account for approximately 28%; environmental factors produce approximately 3% to 4%; a combination of genetic and environmental influences (multifactorial inheritance) produces 20% to

### Address for correspondence:

Dr. Ravindra Singh Baghel

Post Graduate Scholar, P.G. Dept. of Rachna Sharir, Pt. Khushilal Sharma Government Auto. Ayurveda College & Institute Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh, India.

E-mail: ravi.baghel3883@gmail.com

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25%; and twinning causes 0.5% to 1%, minor anomalies occur in approximately 15% of new-borns.<sup>[1]</sup> Under the heading of *Gharbhopaghatakara Bhavas* all the great authorities of Ayurveda have explained certain things which should not be done during pregnancy. In today's fast-moving life, all women's unknowingly follows certain things which are told as contraindications during pregnancy, due to negligence or ignorance, leading to miscarriage, abortions, and other obstetrical complications. So, it is necessary to analyse these *Gharbhopaghatakara Bhavas*.

### Garbhopaghatakara Bhava

Different classics of Ayurveda have explained certain factors which should not be done during pregnancy. To understand the depth of this concept explained by the different *Acharyas*, the *Gharbhopaghatakara Bhavas* are as follow.

#### Charak Samhita

In *Charak Samhita*, *Acharya Charak* has mentioned that the pregnant woman should avoid use of *Tikshan Aushadha* (pungent medicine), *Vyavaya* (excessive coitus) and *Vyayama* (excessive exercise).<sup>[2]</sup>

In *Sharir Sthan Acharya Charak* has described following factors which are harmful for the fetus such as- use of excessive *Ushna* and *Tikshan* (hot and pungent substance) *Daruna Cheshta* (activities much beyond one's own capacity) and other factors as instructed by *Acharyas*. She should not wear *Raktavarna Vastra* (red garments) for protection from the effect of gods, demons and their followers; should not use intoxicating substances and *Madya* (wine), *Yana Avrohana* (ride over vehicle on uneven path), use excessive use of *Mansa* (meat) and give up the things contrary to *Indriyas* and other harmful articles; the other things should also be given up as instructed by relatives.<sup>[3]</sup>

#### Sushruta Samhita

*Acharya Sushruta* has mentioned that from the day of conception the women should totally give up *Vyavay* (coitus), *Vyayam* (exercise), *Atitarpan* (excessive sanitation), *Atikarshan* (excessive emaciation), *Diwaswapna* (sleeping in day) and *Ratrijagran*

(awakening in night) *Shok* (grief), *Yanavrohan* (riding on vehicle), *Bhaya* (fear), *Utkatukasana* (squatting), and avoid untimely use of *Senhana*, *Raktamokshana* (bloodletting) and *Vega Dharana* (suppression of natural urges).<sup>[4]</sup> She should not touch *Malin Hina Vikrat Gatra* (dirty or disfigured person possessing less body parts), should give up *Durgandha* (foul smelling), *Drudarsha* (awful looking) substances and *Udvega Katha* (exciting stories), should not eat *Shushka* (dried up), *Paryushit* (stale), *Kuthita* (putrefied) or *Klinna* (wet food). She should avoid *Bahinishkraman* (outing), visit of *Shunyagara* (lonely place), *Chaitya* (haunted tree), *Shamshan* (cremation ground) or *Vriksha Ashraya* (shade of a tree), acts likely to promote *Krodha* (anger) and *Asanshaya* (disgrace), *Uchha Bhashana* (talking in high pitch) etc. all the things likely to harm the fetus. Repeated excessive massage of *Taila Abhayanga* (oil application) and unguents should not be done and she should not fatigue herself.<sup>[5]</sup>

#### Ashtang Sangraha

*Acharya Vagbhatta* has mentioned the view of *Charak*, however alike *Sushruta* he has also given the list of contraindication as - *Vyavaya* (coitus), *Vyayama* (exercise), *Karshana* (emaciation), *Abhighata* (trauma), *Atisankshobha Yana* (conveyance i.e., carriage or animals causing excessive jerks), *Ratrijagrana* (night awakening), *Diwaswapna* (day sleeping), *Vega Dharana* (suppression of natural urges), *Ajirna* (indigestion), *Atapa Sevana* (prolonged stay in hot sun) or *Agni Sevana* (near fire), *Krodha* (anger), *Shoka* (grief), *Bhaya* (fear), *Trasa* (terror), *Upvasa* (fasting), *Utakatasana* (squatting) or *Vishama Asana* (abnormal hard postures), *Kupa Prapata* (falling in pits or wells), *Apriya Lokan* and *Shravana* (looking or hearing disliked things) etc. the parents specially women desirous of having offspring of high quality should make themselves superior. In first month, massage of oil and unguents and upto fifth month use of articles likely to aggravate *Doshas* should be avoided.<sup>[6]</sup>

#### Ashtang Hridaya

*Acharya Laghu Vagbhatta* has also contraindicated besides *Ativyavaya* (excessive coitus) and *Atiayasa* (exercise) other as carrying of *Bhara* (heavy weight),

Guru Pravaranm (covering herself with heavy cloths) etc. Akala Swapna (untimely sleep), Utakatasana (squatting) or abnormal sitting, Shoka (grief), Krodha (anger), Bhaya (fear), Udvega (excitement), Vega Dharana (suppression of desire and urges), Upvasa (fasting), Ati Adhva (excessive walking), use of Tikshna (pungent), Ushna (hot) Guru (heavy) and Vistambhi food, use of Raktavastra (red garment), peeping in a pit or well, use of Madya (wine) or Mansa (meat), Uttanshayan (sleeping in supine position) etc, Raktamokshana (bloodletting), Basti (purifying measure and enemas) up to eighth month should not be used.<sup>[7]</sup>

### Kashyap Samhita

Acharya Kashyap has given entirely different types of contraindications. She should not look at declining Shashi (moon), setting Bhaskara (sun) and both Rahu. Knowing solar or lunar eclipse, she should go in the centre of home and carry out religious prayerful and offer oblation to free the planets from the clutches of Grahas. She should not have Dvesha (spite) with Atithi (guests), offer alms to beggars instead of turning them out, perform oblation of Ghrita in burning fire for pacification, should not oppose full ewer, Ghrita garland and pot filled with Ghrita or curd, should not tie anything form thread or thin rope and loosen her all the bonds or wear very loose garments. She should not remain for long in acutely erect or flexed posture and carry heavy weight for long, avoid trembling, Atihasya (excessive laughing) and Abhighata (trauma) etc. use of cold water and garlic is also contraindicated.<sup>[8]</sup>

### Harita Samhita

Acharya Harita has contraindicated use of Vidala Anna (pulses), Vidahi Anna (edible producing burning sensation), Guru (heavy) or Amla (sour) substances, Ushna Kshira (hot milk), Mratika (clay), Surana, Rasona (garlic) and Palandu (onion), Surana and other constipating edibles should be taken with their juices. She should avoid Vyavaya (coitus), Vyayama (exercise), Krodha (anger), Rosha (grief) and Chakramana (walking) etc. avoidance of all these measure gives happiness to the woman.<sup>[9]</sup>

### Bhavprakash Samhita

Acharya Bhavmihsra has followed the concept of Acharya Sushruta with addition of sitting or sleeping in very soft and high place, going to river bank, temple or garden, drinking of rainy water, use of meat, association of woman whose child has died etc. in the list of contraindications.<sup>[10]</sup>

Again, Acharya Charak has described various types of Garbhopaghatakara Bhava which led to disease in foetus.<sup>[10]</sup>

SN	Pregnant women consuming constantly	Effect on Progeny
1.	woman sleeping is open place and moving out in night	Insane ( <i>Unamtta</i> )
2.	indulges in quarrels and fights	Epileptic ( <i>Apsmara</i> )
3.	indulged in sexual intercourse	ill-physique, shameless and devoted to women,
4.	always under grief	timid, undeveloped or short-lived
5.	thinking of others to harmful	envious or devoted to woman
6.	always think to thief	exerting, wrathful or inactive
7.	always remain intolerant	Fierce, deceitful and jealous
8.	sleeps constantly	drowsy, unwise and deficient in digestion power
9.	Wine	thirsty, poor in memory and unstable in mind
10.	Iguana	gravels, stone or <i>Shanermeha</i>
11.	Pork	red eyes, obstructed, respiration and very rough body hair
12.	Fish	delayed closure of eye or stiff eyes



13.	<i>Madhur Rasa</i>	Diabetes ( <i>Prameha</i> ), Dumb ( <i>Mook</i> ), or over-obese ( <i>Atishoulya</i> )
14.	<i>Amla Rasa</i>	internal haemorrhage ( <i>Raktapitta</i> ), eye disorder ( <i>Akshiroga</i> ) and skin disorder ( <i>Twakroga</i> )
15.	<i>Lawan Rasa</i>	wrinkles and grey hairs ( <i>Valita Palita</i> ) and Baldness ( <i>Khaliya</i> )
16.	<i>Katu Rasa</i>	weakness ( <i>Durba</i> ), deficient in semen ( <i>Alpashukra</i> ) and infertile ( <i>Anapatya</i> )
17.	<i>Tikta Rasa</i>	consumptive ( <i>Shosh</i> ), weak ( <i>Abala</i> ), under developed ( <i>Anupchita</i> )
18.	<i>Kashaya Rasa</i>	Blackish colour ( <i>Shyav Varna</i> ), <i>Anaha</i> and <i>Udavarta</i> .

### Negligence of 4<sup>th</sup> month

In the fourth month all the limbs and organs (of the body of the embryo) become more potent and the foetus is endowed with consciousness owing to the formation of viscus of the heart. As heart is the seat of consciousness, so as the heart becomes potent, it is endowed with consciousness and hence it expresses its desire for things of taste, smell etc. (through the longings of its mother). The *Garbhini* is called as *Dauhradya* at that time, whose wishes and desires, not being honoured and gratified lead to the birth of a paralysed, hump-backed, crooked-armed, lame, dwarfed, defect-eyed, and a blind child.<sup>[12]</sup>

The concepts which are mentioned by different great authorities of Ayurveda has its scientific base.

### View of modern science

The modern science also accepts that above listed thing should be avoided during pregnancy or even after that. For example, generally, coitus is not restricted during pregnancy. Release of prostaglandins and oxytocin in with coitus may cause uterine contractions.

Women with increased risk of miscarriage or preterm labor should avoid coitus if they feel such increased uterine activity.<sup>[13]</sup>

Heavy drinkers ( $\geq 3$  oz) have major risk to the fetus (6%). Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS) is defined as the presence of at least one characteristic from each of the following three categories. The first is Growth restriction before and/or after birth. Second is Facial anomalies: Small palpebral fissures, indistinct or absent philtrum, epicanthic folds, flattened nasal bridge, short length of nose, thin upper lip, low set and unparallel ears and retarded midfacial development. Third is CNS dysfunction: Microcephaly, mental retardation, abnormal neurobehavioral development (attention deficit with hyperactivity).<sup>[14]</sup> In view of the fact that smoking is injurious to health, it is better to stop smoking not only during pregnancy but even thereafter. Heavy smokers have smaller babies and there is also more chance of abortion. Similarly, alcohol consumption is to be drastically curtailed or avoided, so as to prevent fetal maldevelopment or growth restriction.<sup>[15]</sup>

Travel by vehicles having jerks is better to be avoided, especially in first trimester and the last 6 weeks. The long journey is preferably to be limited to the second trimester. Rail route is preferable to bus route. Travel in pressurized aircraft is safe up to 36 weeks. Air travel is contraindicated in cases with placenta previa, preeclampsia, severe anaemia and sickle cell disease. Prolonged sitting in a car or aeroplane should be avoided due to the risk of venous stasis and thromboembolism. Seat belt should be under the abdomen.<sup>[16]</sup>

### Prevention of *Garbha Vikriti*

*Garbha Vikriti* produced by maternal exposure to various exogenous agents during pregnancy are preventable, if these agents are identified and avoided. *Acharya* has mentioned that what precaution is needed to protect the fetus from any abnormality. *Acharya* has significantly mentioned the *Ritumatiparicharya* and *Garbhani Paricharya* and *Sutikaparicharya*. Before conception what measure is to be taken is mentioned in *Ritumati Paricharya*, during

pregnancy measure are given in *Garbhani Paricharya*. After the birth of baby pregnant lady is termed as *Sutika*. *Acharyas* has mentioned rules for *Sutika* to avoid various types of infection to mother and baby. These *Paricharya* has direct scientifically approach towards development of healthy fetus inside the womb of pregnant mother without having any birth defect. It plays a significant role in stabilization of *Garbha* along with meet the essential nutrient and energy requirement necessary during pregnancy.

## DISCUSSION

There are various references available in the classics of Ayurveda which gives an idea that the *Acharyas* had depth knowledge about the embryogenesis, teratogens and the resultant congenital malformations, maternal and fetal complications. They have mentioned *Aharaj Nidana*, *Viharaj Nidana* and *Mansik Nidana* under *Garbhopaghatakara*. The psychological or physical factors like *Shoka* (grief), *Bhaya* (fear), *Krodha* (anger) etc. and heavy exercise may precipitate abortion. Overweight or heavy weight lifting may lead to abortion due to sudden increase in abdominal pressure, prolonged in abnormal postures may influence the uterine blood flow can cause abortion or intrauterine death of fetus. Most of the factors described earlier, vitiate the normal functioning of *Dosha* and *Agni*, thus hampering the proper growth and development of the fetus. The increase in incidences of Intra Uterine Growth Retardation, miscarriage, Abortions, abnormal presentation during delivery, fetal distress or cord around neck etc. present may be due to indulgence of the *Garbhini* in one or the other *Garbhopaghatakara Bhavas* and not following the *Garbhini Paricharya*. Acharya *Charak* says that a *Garbhini* should be taken care just like a *Tailapurna Patra*. Even the slightest agitation could spill the *Taila* from the *Tailapurna Patra*, similarly complete attention should be given to *Garbhini* in order to prevent *Upaghata* to growing fetus.<sup>[17]</sup> Ayurvedic physician should analyse these factors and advice the patient to avoid them during pregnancy for safety of fetus.

## CONCLUSION

There are various types of congenital anomalies which may arise due to the various factors such as, genetic, environmental and others. Causes of congenital anomalies or diseases are associated with lack of care, awareness, supervision and prevention through diet, mode of life style habits and mental health. A counselling is to be done for patient's care, awareness with prevention by social education, population screening, genetic counselling, and the availability of prenatal diagnostic technique should be adopted. By following the various principles mentioned in *Ayurveda* i.e., Dietary regimen related to *Garbhini Paricharya*, avoiding *Garbhopaghatakar Bhava* and *Tridosha* vitiating diet during pregnancy can avoid various anomalies and diseases during pregnancy. Hence the desires of the *Garbhini* should be gratified, which would ensure the birth of a strong, vigorous, healthy and long-lived baby.

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