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Conceptual study of role of *Tridosha* during Antenatal Period

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda primarily focuses on preventive as well as promotional health. It believes in principles of *Tri-dosha* (three fundamental bio-energies as well as vitiating factors or pollutants) theory. *Tridosha* theory is fundamental framework of Ayurveda. These three bio-energies namely *Vata*, *Pitta* and *Kapha*, when in equilibrium support body like tripod and when vitiated cause various diseases. A journey of every living creature starts from womb of mother (*Beejanda*) and travels towards outer world (*Brahmanda*). This travel of a cell from womb to universe is nothing but true scenario of life. This mysterious and marvelous starting of life journey has many transformations and adaptations which a living being come across in their life span. Human conception takes place in fallopian tube and then *Garbha* (fetus) is carried forward in the uterus for further growth and development. *Garbhini Avastha* (gestational period) is a very complex state of body which involves multiple adaptations necessary for uninterrupted supply of necessary nutrients to support fetal growth and development. *Tridosha* plays a significant role during *Garbhini Avastha* to aid woman in accustomed situations. These are responsible for normal growth and development as well as responsible for abnormal entities like congenital malformations. Current study focuses on significance of role of *Tridosha* during *Garbhini Avastha* or antenatal period with abnormal clinical conditions.

Key words: Ayurveda, *Tridosha*, *Garbhini Avastha*, *Garbha*.

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda is an ancient medical science that has developed gradually and established time-tested principles which can be validated in modern era also. Constant research of investigators, testing in different ways and proving it with logical reasoning made *Ayurveda* to establish strong fundamentals.^[1] It is an ancient medical science which includes everything about life from birth to death. It primarily focuses on

preventive as well as promotional health. It believes in principles of *Tri-dosha* (three fundamental bio-energies) theory.

Tridosha term is derived from *Sanskrit* word - *Tri* means three and *Dosha* means vitiating factors or pollutants. These three bio-energies are namely - *Vata*, *Pitta* and *Kapha*.^[2] Their existence can be recognized based on their *Gunas* or qualities they have. They support right body function when in right amount and destroy right body function when in excess or deficient. They are responsible for physiological function taking place in the human body and are also capable of causing diseases.^[3] Whole body is abode of *Tridosha*, which brings about good and bad results according to their normal and abnormal state. The *Doshas* ensures that all the *Panchamahabhutas* (five fundamental constituents of universe) are held together and exert their functions in synergism for the optimum function of the human body. According to *Acharya Sushruta*, health is a state of equilibrium of *Dosha*, *Dhatu*, *Agni* and *Mala*.^[4] The balance between three *Doshas* is very

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important for comprehensive wellbeing and health of an individual. Existence of man depends upon balanced state of body and mind whose foundation is *Tridosha*. These are present in everyone, but their proportion varies which causes diversity in physique, mental status or temperament and proneness to disease.

A journey of every living creature starts from womb of mother i.e., from *Beejanda* to *Brahmanda*. This travel from womb to universe is life. There are many transformations and adaptations which a living being come across in their life span. So, starting of life journey is mysterious and marvelous. As we know, conception takes place in a fallopian tube and then *Garbha* or fetus is carried forward in the womb of a mother for further growth and development. Pregnancy is a precious period of any woman's life. Life of a woman is not complete without experiencing golden phase of motherhood journey. In Ayurveda, care to be taken in *Garbhini Avastha* of female is beautifully explained by a quote - 'She should be treated just like a completely oil filled vessel as the slightest movement can cause oil spilling out of it, in the same way slightest stimulation can harm mother and fetus both.^[5] Pregnancy is a beautiful journey in which woman gets converted into mother. Within a short span of nine months, several physical, physiological as well as psychological changes occur in the body. Women get less time to adopt with the situation inside her. These changes are required for ensuring growth and development of growing fetus. This is a transitional period which makes women to grow into mother. Pregnancy is a complex state of a body which involves multiple adaptations necessary for continuous supply of needed nutrients to support growth and fetal development. *Tridosha* plays a significant role during *Garbhini Avastha* to aid woman to accustomed situations.

Research Question

Does *Tridosha* plays significant role in *Garbhini Avastha*?

AIM

To study significant role of *Tridosha* in *Garbhini Avastha*.

OBJECTIVES

1. To study the literature related to *Tridosha* during *Garbhini Avastha*.
2. To find out probable significance of *Tridosha* in *Garbhini Avastha*.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

For this article, various references are collected from classical *Ayurveda* texts, commentaries, modern literatures, research journals available in institutional central library. Online databases are reviewed and analyzed to frame this article.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Concept of *Tridosha*

Tridosha means three pollutants or vitiating factors. These bioenergetics are made up of qualities which support right body function in right amount and destroy right body function in case of excess or deficiency condition. Physiological functions of body depend on them, but they are also capable of causing disorders. Whole body is abode of *Tridosha* which brings about good and bad results according to their normal and abnormal state.^[6] They are namely - *Vata*, *Pitta* and *Kapha*.

Vata Dosh

The composition of *Vata* includes *Akasha* and *Vayu Mahabhuta*. It mostly stays in lower aspect of body. Its qualities are *Ruksha* (dry), *Laghu* (light), *Sheeta* (cold), *Khara* (rough), *Sukshma* (minute) and *Chala* (unstable).^[7] *Vata* is mainly responsible for movement in the body.

Pitta Dosh

The composition of *Pitta* includes *Agni Mahabhuta*. It lies in the middle part of the body. Its qualities are *Sneha* (oily), *Teekshna* (piercing), *Ushna* (hot), *Laghu* (light), *Visra* (bad smell), *Sara* (movement) and *Drava* (liquid form).^[8] *Pitta* is mainly responsible for digestion and transformation.

Kapha Dosh

The composition of *Kapha Dosh* includes *Jala* and *Prithvi Mahabhuta*. It lies roughly in the upper part of

the body. Its qualities are *Snigdha* (oily), *Sheeta* (cold), *Guru* (heavy), *Manda* (slow), *Slakshna* (slimy), *Mrutsna* (viscous) and *Sthira* (stable) [9]. *Kapha* is mainly responsible for stability and bonding.

The *Doshas* ensure that all *Mahabhutas* are held together and exert their functions in synergism for the optimum function in human body. *Doshas* are made up of the same elements (*Panchmahabhutas*) which forms our body i.e., *Akash*, *Vayu*, *Agni*, *Jala* and *Prithvi*. These three doshas are considered as three pillars of the body. The body is kept healthy by balance between them is maintained. When these *Doshas* are balanced, they support body. When they are vitiated or disturbed, they cause pathogenesis and cause many diseases. Balance of three *Doshas* is very important for comprehensive well-being and health of an individual.

Garbhini Avastha

Garbha is formed by union of *Shukra*, *Shonit* and *Aatma* in a womb of a woman according to *Ayurveda*.^[10] And *Garbhini* means a woman who carries *Garbha* or fetus. *Avastha* means phase. So, it is the phase or span in the woman's life when she is pregnant.

Garbhini Avastha or Pregnancy is a precious period of any woman's life. Life of a woman is not complete without experiencing golden phase of motherhood journey. In *Ayurveda*, care to be taken in *Garbhini Avastha* of female is beautifully explained by a quote - 'She should be treated just like a completely oil filled vessel as the slightest movement can cause oil spilling out of it, in the same way slightest stimulation can harm mother and fetus both.' Pregnancy is a beautiful journey in which woman gets converted into mother. Within a short span of nine months, several physical, physiological as well as psychological changes occur in the body. Women get less time to adopt with the situation inside her. These changes are required for insuring growth and development of growing fetus. This is a transitional period which makes women to grow into mother. Pregnancy is a complex state of a body which involves multiple adaptations necessary for continuous supply of needed nutrients to support growth and fetal development.

Role of Vata Dosh in Garbhini Avastha

1. *Tantrayantradhara*^[11] - The term '*Tantrayantradhara*' may be interpreted either as sustainer of the organs of the body (*Tantra*) or the sustainer of the joint (*Yantra*) of the body. In *Garbhini*, as many transformations are occurring in her body *Vata* helps her to sustain stress of pregnancy.
2. *Pravartak Chesthanam*^[11] - It prompts all type of actions. It triggers cell division after conception in embryo. In *Garbhini*, after conception, *Sadyogruhit Garbha Lakshanas* (early features of conception) appear which include fatigue, languor, thirst, heaviness in thighs, retention of menses and quivering in the vagina, etc.
3. *Vayurvibhajati*^[12] - Under dominance of *Vata*, division of cells after fertilization takes place. During the first month of embryonic life *Kalal* stage is mentioned in *Ayurvedic* classical texts. Also, it aids in sorting similar cells in a group. For better understanding, we know after fertilization, single cell undergoes multiple mitotic divisions and morula, blastula etc. stages are formed eventually during growth as days passes. Basically, these cells are totipotent but then they are further divided into three germinal layers - ectoderm, endoderm and mesoderm. During second month, classification in *Ghana*, *Peshi* or *Arbuda* stages are mentioned.
4. *Sarva Indriyanam Udyojaka*^[11] - It is regarded as the bearer of the objects of all the sense faculties; it is through *Vata* that all the sense faculties enjoy their respective objects. The *Vata* being directly related to tactual perception and the tactual sense faculty being a common factor no sense faculty can enjoy its object without the help of *Vata*. In embryo, sense organs start developing in third month itself. Then as heart and *Chetana Dhatu* is expressed in fourth month, *Garbhini* is termed as *Douhridini*. As the *Garbha* is completely dependent on the *Garbhini* during his life in the womb, his desires are expressed by *Garbhini*. One should respect *Douhrida* of *Garbhini*.

5. *Sarv Sharirdhatu Vyuhakara*^[11] - It segregates all the tissue elements and brings compactness in the body. Differentiation of body parts begins by the appearance of five *Pidka* in third month. All the major and minor body parts become well differentiated in seventh month.
6. *Sandhankara Sharirasya*^[11] - It brings together different parts of the body. All organs in *Garbhini* co-ordinates and equilibrium are maintained.
7. *Samiranogne Dosha Sanshoshana* - It stimulates digestive fire and absorbs the *Doshas*.
8. *Kshepta Bahirmanlanam*^[11] - It throws out excretory material out of the body of *Garbha* as well as *Garbhini*. The metabolic waste formed during the cell division and nutrition is excreted out of the cell with the help of *Sukshma* and *Chala Guna* of *Vata*.
9. *Stulanustrotasam Cha Bhetta*^[11] - It creates gross and subtle channels. *Vata* has *Ruksha*, *Laghu*, *Khara*, *Sukshma* and *Chala* qualities which is responsible for formation of various *Strotas*.
10. *Karta Garbhakrutinam*^[11] - It molds shape of the embryo as explained earlier.
11. *Yogavahi* property - It means instead of manifesting its own attributes it manifests the attributes of the *Dosha* with which it is combined.
12. *Akasham Vivardhayati*^[12] - As *Vata* is made up of *Vayu* and *Akasha Mahabhuta*, it is responsible for growth. Due to *Laghu* and *Chala* properties, room is created for growth of fetus in the womb.
13. *Ucchavasaa Nishwasa*^[13] (inspiration and expiration) - *Ucchavas* and *Nishwasa* are function of *Vata Dosha*. In humans, fetal breathing movements are detectable at around fifteenth week of gestation.
14. *Bahusho Bhinne Yathaswam Bavhapatyata* - Multiple pregnancies are occurred due to activity of *Vata* which divides the products of conception rapidly in early stage.

Role of Pitta Dosha in Garbhini Avastha

1. Maintenance of body temperature - *Pitta Dosha* has *Ushna* quality, which helps the body to

maintain temperature. Basal temperature rises by around 0.5°C during pregnancy and remains at that level.

2. Digestion - There are two types of digestion. Extracellular digestion represents the process of food digestion. *Jathragni* is also called as '*Bhagwan*' or God.^[15] This *Agni* lies inside *Pitta* and its function of digestion takes place. Digestive fire is required for digestion of food material we eat. So, all the nutrients are absorbed after digestion and provided to all body parts of *Garbhini* as well as fetus. According to *Acharya Harita*, *Jathragni* starts functioning in fetus in 8th month.^[16]
3. *Ushma Pachati* - Intracellular digestion occurs inside the cell itself. *Pittantargat Ushma* is required for *Pachana* or transformation.^[17] At cellular level, this process of digestion can be used for both i.e., for energy extraction and for removing foreign substance out of the cell.
4. *Varna - Bhrajaka Pitta* is a subtype of *Pitta Dosha* which lies inside skin and responsible for giving color to skin.^[18] During the sixth month of pregnancy *Garbha Varna* improves on the contrast there is loss of *Varna* in *Garbhini*. According to modern literature, increased hormones during pregnancy cause changes in skin pigmentation and cause darkening of skin.
5. *Darshanam*^[16] - *Aalochaka Pitta* present inside eyes is the cause of vision.
6. *Kshudha* and *Trushna*^[13] (Hunger and thirst) - Expression of *Kshuda* and *Trushna* is due to *Pitta*. Daily energy requirements are increased by about 250 kcal per day during pregnancy.

Role of Kapha dosha in Garbhini Avastha

1. *Sthiratva*^[13] - According to *Acharya Charaka*, in the fourth month of gestation *Garbha* attains *Sthiratva* or stability. While in *Garbhini*, there is feeling of heaviness in body. This is due to *Guru Guna* of *Kapha Dosha*. *Garbha* stays inside womb for nine months.
2. *Snigdhatva*^[13] - During pregnancy, increased hormonal levels (androgens and progesterone)

stimulates the oil glands present in the skin to secrete more oil. That keeps skin oily.

3. *Sandhibandha*^[13] - *Bandha* means bonds, tied up or ligature. Due to *Guru, Sthitra, Snigdha Guna* of *Kapha* joints get tied up with strength. *Shleshaka Kapha* keeps them well lubricated.
4. *Gourava*^[19] - Heaviness is felt in body during fourth month of pregnancy due to *Guru Guna* of *Kapha*. The amount of weight gain during whole pregnancy is roughly around 11 to 16 kgs.
5. *Balam/ Ojas*^[20] - *Shleshma* or *Kapha* in normal functional state form has been considered as *Bala* or *Ojas*. *Pramana* of *Apara Ojas* is *Half Anjali* as per classical texts. It is the key for maintenance of overall health, energy and liveliness. During eighth month of gestation, *Ojas* becomes unstable, and it travels from mother to fetus and vice versa.

Role of Tridosha in formation of Prakriti

Prakriti stands for temperament or nature of the person, and it is decided at the time of conception.^[21] In development of fetus, due to its own reasons *Dosha* become intensified. This *Prakriti* or nonpathogenic intensified status of *Dosha* lasts unchangeable from birth till death is called as *Prakriti*. By nature, the types of constitution do not get aggravated, perverted, or diminished except at the end of life. Thus, *Prakriti* is not output of those *Dosha*, which undergo constant variations. *Dosha* which remains constant are responsible for *Prakriti* and they change only at the time of death. According to *Acharya Kashyapa*, fetal body gets *Tridosha* during the seventh month of gestation.^[22]

Some abnormal clinical conditions during Garbhini Avastha

1. **Effects of Vata Prakopaka diet consumption:** If *Vata* vitiating diet is consumed by couple during fertile period or suppresses natural urges, then aggravated *Vata* leads to *Rakta* and other *Dhatu* vitiation which results into hoarseness of voice, nasal voice, deafness.^[23]
2. **Effects of Pitta Prakopaka diet consumption:** Vitiation of *Pitta* can produce baldness, premature

graying of hairs, discoloration of nails, skin and hairs with other *Pitta Pradoshaja* abnormalities.^[24]

3. **Effects of Kapha Prakopaka diet consumption:** Regular consumption of *kapha* vitiating food products by pregnant women can cause *Kustha* (leprosy), *Shwitra* (leucoderma), *Kilasa* which is a skin condition, congenital tooth eruption and *Pandu* i.e. anemia.^[25,24]
4. **Garbhshosha (intra-uterine growth restriction):**^[26] This is a clinical condition where no growth of fetus is seen according to gestational period and believed to be caused by *Vata Dosha*. *Acharya Sushruta* states that drying of *Rasa Dhatu* by *Vata* is cause of *Garbhshosha*^[27] (IUGR).^[28]

OBSERVATIONS

The various references cited and described above from ancient *Ayurveda* texts as well as some online published articles shows that *Tridosha* which are basic constitutional and functional elements of human body are also responsible for formation of new progeny along with its growth and development. *Vata, Pitta, Kapha* has their independent roles in the process of fetal development. *Tridoshas* also responsible for congenital malformations of fetus during intra uterine life.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Vata is primarily the *Dosha* of movement and it is the initiating and controlling factor in so many ways, pregnancy embodies this quality. *Pitta Dosha* is controller of metabolic activities. It is concerned mainly with digestion and maintaining body temperature. *Kapha Dosha* possesses grounded quality which is responsible for binding and growth. *Prakriti* is a unique concept in *Ayurveda* which determines inherent nature of a person. It is determined at the time of conception by dominant *Dosha* and cannot be changed till death. Hence, *Tridosha* plays significant role during *Garbhini Avastha* as it helps *Garbhini* to cope with physiological changes taking place inside the body as well as in *Garbha* for its proper growth and nourishment.

Also, any cause which leads to vitiation of different *Dosha* can lead to congenital malformations as per

different *Doshas*. Hence, it is important to consider different *Doshas* for fetal growth and development but on other side any excess quantity of *Dosha* also causes deformities in fetus. So, a sensible clinician should advice dietary and adaptive lifestyle to a pregnant woman or who desires for conception keeping balance state of *Dosha* in her body, which will not only help her to reproduce a healthy but also physically normal new child for society.

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