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Analysis of *Garbha Sambhava Samagri*

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ABSTRACT

Acharyas have told about the *Garbha Sambhava Samagri*, which refers to the factors needed for conception. The importance of marriage at proper age, conception at proper age was known to them at that time itself. *Acharya Charaka* has told about the importance of progeny as the couple with progeny have many benefits like he is *Bahu Murtitwa*, *Bahu Mukha*, *Bahu Kriya*, *Bahu Chakshu*, *Bahu Gyan*, *Bahu Shakha*. The couple is considered auspicious, famous, lucky and complete and they are considered like a tree with many branches, flowers and fruits and are considered useful to the society. Infertility is very common in today's era. Because of career oriented life, unhealthy life styles, unhealthy food habits etc. the body is getting affected in all the ways. The causes of infertility can be summarized under these four headings of *Garbha Sambhava Samagri*.

Key words: *Garbha Sambhava Samagri*, *Conception*, *Infertility*.

INTRODUCTION

It is the utmost blessing to a couple to have a healthy baby. *Acharya Charaka* has told about the importance of progeny as the couple with progeny have many benefits like he is *Bahu Murtitwa*, *Bahu Mukha*, *Bahu Kriya*, *Bahu Chakshu*, *Bahu Gyan*, *Bahu Shakha*.^[1] The couple is considered auspicious, famous, lucky and complete and they are considered like a tree with many branches, flowers and fruits and are considered useful to the society. Where as the couple without progeny is like a tree which has only one branch and is not capable of giving shade to others.^[2] Infertility is a significant social and medical problem affecting

couples worldwide and it threatens many aspects of couple's life, not only partners relationship with each other but also affects them individually and their relationship with friends and family.

Vandhyatwa

According to *Shabda Kalpa Drum*, a woman who has hinderance of any kind in the normal process of conception is called *Vandhya*. According to *Ayurveda*, infertility is not only the failure to concieve but also includes failure of successful continuation of pregnancy.

Infertility

- Infertility is a disease of reproductive system defined by the failure to achieve a clinical pregnancy after 12 months or more of regular unprotected sexual intercourse. (WHO-ICMART glossary).
- Women of reproductive age (15-49 years) at risk of becoming pregnant (not pregnant, sexually active, not using contraception and not lactating) who report trying unsuccessfully for a pregnancy for two years or more. (Epidemiological definition)

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Types

- According to *Acharya Charak*, *Vandhya* is of three types, viz - *Vandhya*, *Apraja* and *Sapraja*. *Vandhya* refers to inability to conceive due to congenital malformation or genetical disorders. *Apraja* refers to a lady who can conceive after taking some treatment. *Sapraja* refers to a lady who has previous pregnancies but is not able to conceive subsequently.
- According to *Harita Acharya*, there are 6 types of *Vandhya* viz - *Kaka Vandhya*, *Anapatya*, *Garbhsravi*, *Mritavatsa*, *Balakshaya*, *Baalya*.^[3]
- According to modern science, infertility is of two types, viz - Primary and Secondary.
 - **Primary infertility** - denotes those patients who have never conceived. When a woman is unable to bear a child, either due to the inability to become pregnant or the inability to carry a pregnancy to a live birth she would be classified as having primary infertility.
 - **Secondary infertility** - indicates previous pregnancy but failure to conceive subsequently. When a woman is unable to bear a child, either due to the inability to become pregnant or the inability to carry a pregnancy to a live birth following a previous ability to carry a pregnancy to a live birth, she would be classified as having secondary infertility.

Incidence and Prevalence

Available data shows that atleast 50 million couples world wide are suffering from infertility. Infertility is not always a woman's problem. In fact about 20-30% of the time, a man's low fertility is the main obstacle to conception, 20-35% due to female causes, 25-40% are combined causes and 10-20% are unexplained causes. Secondary infertility is more common than the primary one.

Factors responsible for *Garbhadhana*

Our classics have beautifully mentioned about the factors responsible for conception. *Susruta Acharya*

says that, germination of a seed occurs only when there is favourable season, fertile field, proper irrigation and nutrition to a good quality seed. The same way if these four factors are together then conception occurs.^[4] *Ashtanga Hridayakara* has added *Prakrita Vata* and *Shuddha Hrudaya* along with above factors.^[5]

Vandhyatwa Nidana

Acharya Charaka has mentioned the causes for infertility, saying that if these are present then, the lady who has conceived before, even she will not be able to conceive subsequently.^[6] The factors are -

- **Yoni Pradosha** - factors related to female genital organs.
- **Manaso Abhitapat** - factors related to *Manas*, eg - stress, depression etc.
- **Shukra - Asruka Dosh** - factors related to both *Shukra* and *Artava* eg - *Ashta Shukra Dushti*, *Ashta Artava Dushti* etc.
- **Ahara Dosh** - refers to unhealthy food habits, like not following *Ashta Vidha Ahara Visheshayatan*, eating *Viruddha Ahara* etc.
- **Vihara Dosh** - factors like *Ritumati Paricharya* etc.
- **Akalyogata** - not having knowledge of *Ritukala*.
- **Bala Sankshayat** - factors related to nourishment of *Dhatu*s of both partners.

Analysis of basic factors (*Ritu*, *Kshetra*, *Ambu*, *Bija*)

1. *Ritu*

Ritu Anganaya Rajah Samayah. (*Dalhana*)

Ritu or *Kala* can be understood under two headings - *Vaya* and *Ritukala*.

Ritu as Vaya

Our *Acharyas* have mentioned about *Garbhadhana Kala* as 16 years, because at this age the lady has *Sampurna Virya*. According to modern concept too, a woman's fertility naturally starts to decline in her late 20's. It can impact a woman's hormone levels and cause irregular ovulation. A typical woman will have

about 3 to 4 million eggs at birth, declining to roughly 500,000 to 700,000 at the start of puberty. As a woman ages, not only does a woman have less eggs, the eggs also have a higher chance of being chromosomally abnormal. Many scientists have shown that by age 40, at least 50% of the remaining eggs in a woman's ovaries are chromosomally abnormal. Most chromosomally abnormal eggs will never fertilize or implant. In today's time as the women have become more career oriented, they do not give preference to early marriage and conception at right time. That's why proper age for conception is also to be taken care of along with the busy working life.

Ritu as Ritu Kala

This refers to fertile period, which is defined as period in menstrual cycle during which conception is most likely to occur. It is of 12 days, starting from the stoppage of menstruation.^[7] When once the *Ritu Kala* goes off, *Yoni* gets closed as at the end of the day, lotus flower closes its petals. This can be correlated to the nature of cervical mucus according to the different phases of menstrual cycle. During proliferative phase near to ovulation, under the effect of estrogen hormone, the cervical mucus permits the penetration of sperms; whereas in the secretory phase, under the effect of progesterone hormone, there is hindrance in the penetration of sperm. Hence coitus should take place every 48 hours during fertile period i.e. 10 -18 days after the onset of menstruation.

2. Kshetra

Kshetram Grabhashayah | (Dalhana)

The causes related to *Kshetra* can be divided under three headings - congenital, acquired and iatrogenic.

A. Congenital causes

These arise either due to complete or partial failure of formation of mullerian ducts (complete absence of vagina, cervix, uterus and fallopian tubes individually or combined) or failure of fusion of mullerian ducts (bicornuate uterus, didelphys uterus) or failure of disappearance of fused septum (septate, arcuate

uterus). *Yoni Vyapat* like *Shandi*, *Suchimukhi*, can be considered here.

B. Acquired causes

- i. Vaginal factors - mainly two causes are involved i.e. inflammation or obstruction. Inflammatory conditions like *Trichomonas vaginitis*, *Candidiasis*, *Chlymadiol vaginitis* etc. alters the pH of vaginal mucosa which results as spermostatic or spermicidal.
- ii. Cervical factors - the anatomical factors like elongated cervix, pin hole os, polyp, erosion, cancer etc. prevent the ascent of sperm. The physiological factors like antisperm antibodies interfere with capacitation, acrosomal reaction.
- iii. Uterine factors - the factors like polyp, fibroid uterus, endometriosis, DUB etc. make the endometrium non responsive for nidation or growth of fertilized ovum.
- iv. Tubal factors - Include damage or obstruction; these are due to tubal infections. The risk of infertility after a single episode of PID is significant, and it increases with subsequent episodes of infection. Incidence of tubal infertility has been reported to be 12%, 23% and 54% after one, two and three episodes of PID respectively.^[8]

C. Iatrogenic causes

Kashyapa has mentioned about this in brief, saying that if *Tikshna Shodhana* is given to a person with *Mridu Koshtha* then it leads to *Vata Prakopa* which causes destruction of *Bija* and *Pushpa*.^[9] There are few examples in modern science; Asherman's syndrome which occurs as complication of D & C; cervical stenosis as complication of conical biopsy or cauterization or amputation; peritubal adhesions and mid segment block as complication of pelvic or abdominal surgeries. There are few drugs as well which cause hormonal imbalance and lead to anovulation or cervical mucus; eg. DES, colchicines, NSAID, opiates, OCP.

3. Ambu

Ambu Punarahar-pakajo Vyapi Rasa Dhatu. (Dalhana)

Function of *Rasa Dhatu* is *Prinana*. *Prinana* refers to nourishment and normal functioning of systems. Mother's nutritional status affects the pregnancy directly as well as affects the fetus. In our body endocrine system plays a very imp role in normal functioning of and nourishing female reproductive system. GnRH is responsible for pulsatile release of FSH and LH. FSH causes growth of follicles, synthesis of self and LH receptors; converts androgens to estrogens in granulosa cells. LH causes secretion of progesterone, synthesis of PG; helps in physical act of ovulation; formation and maintenance of corpus luteum. Estrogen is responsible for proliferative changes in the endometrium. Progesterone causes secretory changes in the endometrium. Even thyroid hormone has effect on the menstrual cycles. So endocrine system should work properly for normal cycles to occur. Stress is a very common factor which affects the pulsatile release of GnRH, FSH and LH, which ultimately lead to menstrual irregularities and anovulation.

Hence *Manaso-Abhitapaata* is one factor told by *Acharyas*, which is one reason for *Vandhya*. In *Agrya*, *Acharya Charaka* mentions about the importance of *Manas* as *Saumanasya Garbhadharanam Shreshtha*; i.e. calm mind is the most essential factor for *Garbhadharana*.^[10]

4. Beeja

Bijam Pumsayoh Shukre Bijam Stree Artava. (Dalhana)

Disorders of ovulation account for about 30-40% of all the cases of female infertility. Ovulatory dysfunction is mainly because of disturbance in hypothalamo pituitary ovarian axis either primary or secondary from thyroid or adrenal dysfunction. Few conditions are; LUF (luteinized unruptured follicle) where ovum is trapped inside the follicle which gets luteinized. Premature ovarian failure due to decreased ovarian reserve. PCOD is the most common disease of ovaries characterized by increased level of androgen production leading to anovulation. Savage's syndrome also called as resistance ovarian syndrome, where ovaries do not respond to hormones properly resulting in no growth of follicle.

CONCLUSION

All the factors responsible for infertility which are explained in modern science can be summarized under the four factors told by *Acharyas* i.e. *Ritu*, *Kshetra*, *Ambu* and *Bija*. *Ritu* can be correlated to fertile period and the age; *Kshetra* refers to vagina, cervix, uterus and tubes; *Ambu* refers to the nutritional status of mother and the endocrine system and *Bija* refers to ovum in female and sperm in males. *Acharyas* has given a beautiful explanation about *Garbhadhana Vidhi* keeping in mind all the above mentioned factors, to have a healthy progeny. Hence proper education to society, marriage at proper age, conception at right time, following healthy life styles is very much essential.

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