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Garbhasanskara : Boon for pregnant woman

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: As the good nutritional food provides physical health, the unborn child in the womb require *Sanskara* to acquire mental health to thrive. The activity of mother during pregnancy in the form of prayer (good rational thoughts), *Manshakti* (positive emotion), conversation with fetus (talk) or expressing feeling (touch) is not only recognised by unborn baby but it has a positive effects on physical and mental health. Hence, *Garbhasanskara* is scientific way of moulding mental health of unborn child. **Method:** Ayurveda classics, textbook of obstetrics and internet publications were consulted and reviewed for carrying out the present work. **Result:** The sanskrit word '*Garbha*' means fetus in the womb and *Sanskara* means educating the mind. So, *Garbhasanskara* essentially means educating the mind of the fetus. The fundamental principle underlying *Garbhasanskara* is that unborn baby is able to sense, feel, listen, dream, respond to outside stimulus. Even, Ancient Indian medicine has recognized the need for the mental, spiritual and physical preparation of mother-to-be for the momentous event of childbirth. Ayurveda describes this theory as "*Supraja Janan*" or eu-maternity. This "*Supraja Janan*" involves the preparation of couple planning pregnancy, 3 months prior to conception. It can be achieved by regular practice of *Garbhasanskara* which includes music therapy, *Mantra* therapy, proper *Ahara* and *Vihara*, *Yoga* and meditation. To develop the desired qualities in the baby every mother should follow the process of *Garbhasanskara*. **Discussion:** *Garbhasanskara* is a process of nurturing the baby in womb. It is also process of training the baby as well as mothers mind during pregnancy. It helps in positive state of mind throughout pregnancy, enhances chances of normal delivery, good health of mother during pre and post conception upto delivery and pregnancy occurs without any complication which is the need of current situation due to unhealthy lifestyle habits. So, a broad expanse of this is described in the present paper.

Key words: *Garbhasanskara*, *Pregnancy*, *Normal Delivery*.

INTRODUCTION

"Sanskaro Hi Gunaantaradhanam"

Sanskara means to replace bad qualities from good ones. Simply we can state as making changes.

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Sanskara is the process which changes the property of the thing on which it is done. Here, example of an artist who changes a big stone in a good sculpture. He gives good look to the good sculpture. He implants expressions in the stone which result to a good sculpture. This is because of his continues and hard efforts to change the stone to a good expressive sculpture. The process of *Garbhasanskara* is the same. If good, hard and continues efforts are taken by the parents specially by mother to implants the good properties in the baby in womb, this in result will explore the good qualities of baby and a baby with good and desired qualities can be born.

Garbhasanskara is a process of training the baby as well as mothers mind during pregnancy. Pre-planning for pregnancy (*Supraja Janan*), preparing the body well in advance before conceiving will help greatly in

having a healthy pregnancy. Even partner's health is important for conception to occur as healthy sperms are required for getting pregnant. A healthy pregnancy will lead to a healthy childbirth. Ancient Indian medicine has recognized the need for the mental, spiritual and physical preparation of the mother-to-be for the momentous event of childbirth. Ayurveda describes this theory as "*Supraja Janan*" or eu-maternity. This "*Supraja Janan*", as conceptualised in Ayurveda, involves the preparation of the couple planning pregnancy and *Dehashudhi* three months prior to conception.

Pregnancy should be by choice. The beginning is by *Pinda Shuddhi* or the purification of the gametes (sperm and ovum). If the couple is not in a state of mental stability and calmness, even if they are physically fit, they cannot give birth to a healthy child. This mental calmness and stability (*Satwa Guna*) of mind is closely related to one's food habits and many other factors. Abstinence from spicy foods and addictive substances is advised. Ancient reference (The story of *Abhimanyu*) one of the most famous and well-known tales is that of *Abhimanyu* from the *Mahabharata*. When *Arjuna's* wife was pregnant with their son *Abhimanyu*, he told her about how to penetrate the *Chakravyuha*, a particular war formation. He could only learn to decode and enter the trap because by that time her mother felt asleep. This was one of the reasons why he was killed because he did not know how to come out of the trap.^[1] *Garbhasanskara* includes *Garbhini Paricharya*, *Yoga*, *Mantra Chikitsa*, music therapy and *Panchakarma*.

GARBHINI PARICHARYA^[2]

This *Garbhini Paricharya* can be studied into three parts i.e.

1. *Masanumasika Pathya* (Monthly Dietary Regimen)
2. *Garbhopaghatakara Bhavas* (Activities and substances which are harmful to foetus)
3. *Garbhasthapaka Dravyas* (Substances beneficial for maintenance of pregnancy).

1. Masanumasika Pathya

Table 1: Showing *Masanumasika Paricharya*^[3]

Texts	Dietary Regimen
During 1st month	
<i>Charaka Samhita</i>	Non medicated milk
<i>Sushruta Samhita</i>	Sweet, cold and liquid diet
During 2nd month	
<i>Charaka Samhita</i>	Milk medicated with <i>Madhura Rasa</i> (sweet taste) drugs
<i>Sushruta Samhita</i>	Sweet, cold and liquid diet
During 3rd month	
<i>Charaka Samhita</i>	Milk with honey and <i>Ghrita</i>
<i>Sushruta Samhita</i>	Sweet, cold and liquid diet
During 4th month	
<i>Charaka Samhita</i>	Milk with butter
<i>Sushruta samhita</i>	Cooked <i>Shasti</i> rice with curd, dainty and pleasant food mixed with milk and butter and meat of with animals
During 5th month	
<i>Charaka Samhita</i>	<i>Ghrita</i> prepared with butter extracted from milk
<i>Sushruta Samhita</i>	Cooked <i>shasti</i> rice with milk, meat of wild animals along with dainty food mixed with milk and <i>ghrita</i>

During 6 th month	
Charaka Samhita	Ghrita prepared from milk medicated with madhura (sweet) drugs
Sushruta Samhita	Ghrita or rice gruel medicated with gokshura
During 7 th month	
Charaka Samhita	Ghrita prepared from milk medicated with madhura (sweet) drugs
Sushruta Samhita	Ghrita medicated with prithakaparnyadi group of drugs
During 8 th month	
Charaka Samhita	Kshira Yawagu mixed with ghrita
Sushruta Samhita	Asthapana basti with decoction of badari mixed with bala, atibala, shatapuspa, patala etc., honey and ghrita. Asthapana is followed by Anuvasana basti of oil medicated with milk madhura drugs
During 9 th month	
Charaka Samhita	Anuvasana basti with oil prepared with drugs of Madhura (sweet) group, vaginal tampon of this oil.
Sushruta Samhita	Unctuous gruels and meat-soup of wild animals upto the period of Delivery

2. Garbhopaghatakara Bhavas

Table 4: Showing Garbhopaghatakara Bhavas^[4]

SN	Text	Garbhopaghatakara Bhavas
1.	Charaka Samhita	Pungent drugs, Exercise, Coitus
2.	Sushruta Samhita	Coitus, Exercise, Excessive satiation, Excessive emaciation, sleeping in day and awakening in night, Grief, Riding on vehicle, fear, quating, Oleation, Bloodletting, suppression of natural urges etc. ^[39]

3. Garbhashtapaka Dravyas

Garbhashtapaka Dravyas counter act the effect of the Garbhopaghatakara Bhavas and help in the proper maintenance of the Garbha. They can also be used in the treatment and prevention of abortion. These are to be used as a routine as they are beneficial for the maintenance of proper health, growth and development of the mother and fetus. Some of the Garbhashtapaka Aushadhis are Aindri (*Bacopa monnieri*), Braahmi (*Centella asiatica*), Satavirya (*Asparagus racemosus*), Sahashravirya (*Cynodon dactylon*), Amogha (*Stereospermum suaveolens*), Avyatha (*Tinospora cardifolia*), Shiva (*Terminalia chebula*), Arista (*Picrorhiza kurroa*), Vatyapushpi (*Sida cardifolia*), Vishwasenkanta (*Callicarpa macrophylla*) etc.^[5] These should be taken orally as preparations in milk and ghee. A bath with cold decoction of these drugs should be given during Pushya Nakshatra. These should be kept in close contact with the mother and can be used as amulets around the right arm and on the head. Drugs of the Jivaneeya Gana can also be used in a similar way. Kasyapa has advocated that amulet of Trivrit (*Operculina tharpethum*) should be also tied in the waist of pregnant woman.^[6]

YOGA

Yoga is an ancient discipline designed to bring balance and health to the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual dimensions of the individual.^[7] On the counter part pregnancy is an integral part of life of a woman which changes her physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually for rest of her life. To balance all these dimensions Yoga can be postulated as requisite for normal and complication free pregnancy. Pregnancy in a woman is a condition in which woman changes both from inside as well as outside. Fear and apprehension often cloud the mind, the moment pregnancy is confirmed. Child birth is surely the greatest act performed by the woman. It can be great emotional experience. The physical and psychological aspects cannot be separated. For most of women, labour is a time of apprehension of fear and agony. These changes create obstacles or hurdles in the normal life of a pregnant woman and Yoga in

pregnancy can help the woman to cruise through these changes and challenges.^[8]

Table 5: First trimester Asanas^[9]

SN.	Asanas (Postures)	Benefits
1.	<i>Utthitatrikasan</i> (Extended Triangle pose)	It strengthens the pelvic floor muscles, thighs and calf muscles. Increases the flexibility of spine and improves digestion.
2.	<i>Virbhadrasan</i> (Warrior pose)	It stretches the groin area, strengthens the body and back muscles and tones up the lower body. Increases stamina and flexibility and relieves backache .
3.	<i>Vrikshasan</i> (Tree pose)	It stretches the legs, back and arms which invigorates the body. It helps to improve concentration .

Table 6: Second trimester Asanas^[10]

SN	Asanas (Postures)	Benefits
1.	<i>Vajrasana</i> (Thunderbolt pose)	This <i>Asana</i> enhances digestive system which increases the energy uptake. Alters blood flow and nervous system impulses in the pelvic region. Relieves stomach ailments like hyperacidity and it is the only <i>asana</i> that can be practiced after taking meals
2.	<i>Matsyakridasan</i> (Flapping fish pose)	Stimulates digestion and relieves constipation. It relaxes the nerves of legs and this is an ideal <i>asana</i> for relaxed sleep. It improves blood circulation .
3.	<i>Marjariasan</i> (Cat stretch pose)	Is very helpful in toning the female reproductive system and muscles of pelvis. This <i>asana</i> increases the flexibility of neck, spine and shoulders muscles

		which are essential for bearing down efforts during labour.
4.	<i>Tadasan</i> (Mountain pose)	Stretches the entire spine and helps to clear the congestion of spinal nerves. It also helps in developing physical and mental balance. It stretches and strengthens the rectus-abdominus muscle which an accessory muscle for bearing down ^[10] .
5.	<i>Bhadrasan</i> (Gracious pose)	This <i>asana</i> benefits the digestive system and helps in relieving various stomach ailments. It helps in toning the muscles of female pelvic region. Along with meditation, it relieves mental stress.
6.	<i>Kati Chakrasana</i> (waist rotating pose)	Tones up the muscles of waist, back and hips. It induces the feeling of lightness and relieves physical and mental stress.

Table 6: Third trimester Asanas^[10]

SN	Asanas (Postures)	Benefits
1.	<i>Ardhatitaliasan</i> (Half butterfly)	Is an excellent <i>asana</i> for loosening of hip joints, which enables fast and easy delivery .
2.	<i>Pornatitaliasan</i> (Full butterfly)	Tones up pelvic girdle. It is relieves the tension from inner thigh muscles and removes the tiredness of legs. This <i>asana</i> increases the stretching ability of perineum
3.	<i>Chakkichalanasan</i> (Churning mill pose)	Is an excellent <i>asana</i> for toning the nerves and muscles of pelvis and abdomen and prepare them for delivery.
4.	<i>Utthanasan</i> (Squat and rise pose)	This <i>asana</i> strengthens the muscles of back, uterus, thighs and ankles. It tones up the pelvic girdle and this <i>asana</i> is

		equivalent to sweeping floor. Thus enables fast and easy delivery.
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MANTRA CHIKITSA

'Manana Trayate Iti Mantra'

Mantra is that which saves from repetitiveness. A repetitive thought is a worry. *Mantra* help to free from worries. The meaning of every mantra is infinity. It is the sound vibration beyond the cognition of mind. When the mind is unable to cognize it simply dissolves and moves into a meditative space. *Mantra* is like the seed. Every seed has the potential to become a tree. Similarly, these sound vibration contains all the possibilities of creation. Some *Mantras* are in seed form called *Bija Mantras*. Others are fully expressed such as *Gayatri Mantra*. Regular chanting of *Mantras* with devotion and belief can develop a positive energy in the person. These *Mantras* also affect the human body and energy flow within the body.

Benefits are;

- Reduces anxiety and depression.
- Releases neuroses.
- It is soothing.
- Engenders compassion.
- Boosts immunity.
- Opens intuition.
- Increases radiance.
- It is empowering.

Some are the *Mantras* which are recommended to be chanted during pregnancy are,

1. *Gayatri Mantra*.
2. *Ramraksha*.
3. *Hanuman Chalisa*.
4. *Om*
5. The *Mantras* of specific Gods (*Kula Devta*).
6. *Atma Shatakam*

MUSIC THERAPY

"OM" is called as a basic character of music. Music is based on 7 *Sutras*.^[11]

Sa Re Ga Ma Pa Dha Ni Sa

According to Ayurveda music acts on *Akasha Mahabhuta*.

These are the basic *Swaras* of music. Permutation and combination of these *Swaras* form *Ragas*. These *Ragas* are bases on the psychological feelings of the person which gives bad good effect to the mind. Music therapy for pregnant woman are also based on same concept. There are many mood swings in the pregnant women. These mood swings cause trouble to the mothers mind. Music helps the lady to stabilize the moods. It helps the lady to calm her mind and experience the joy of music.

Ancient sages have explored the depth of human being and given the knowledge of *Pancha Kosha* that addresses every level of a human being. These *Pancha Kosha* are - *Annamaya, Pranamaya, Manomaya, Vigyanamaya, Anandamaya Kosha*. Music acts on each *Kosha* and purifies it to give the joy of music to the mind of pregnant women which in term affects the mind of the baby.

Benefits that can be expected are;

- Stress relief
- Early bonding and strengthening the attachment to the baby.
- Nurturing an early communication.
- Supporting physical, emotional, mental and spiritual well being.
- Stimulating a holistic development of the baby in the womb.
- Promoting creativity and imagination, qualities needed for parenting.
- Creating a transition from the baby's inner environment of the womb to the outer world through lullabies and the womb song.

- Individual preparation for labour and delivery during the birth of baby.
- Perinatal support

PANCHAKARMA

Fetus dwells in uterus of a pregnant women and has an ability to listen group of commands to which it is subjected. Ayurveda provides awareness to bring about such an intervention which would help to produce a healthy progeny. This includes use of Ayurvedic *Shamana* and *Panchakarma* therapies in order to bring about purification of the bodies of a man and a woman who wish to conceive a healthy baby. This purification or detoxification is necessary as it would help to revitalize the *Purusha Beeja* (sperm) and *Stree Beeja* (ovum).

CONCLUSION

Garbhasanskara is a process of nurturing the baby in womb. It is also process of training the baby as well as mothers mind during pregnancy. It helps in positive state of mind throughout pregnancy, enhances chances of normal delivery, good health of mother during pre and post conception upto delivery and pregnancy occurs without any complication which is the need of current situation due to unhealthy lifestyle habits.

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