



REVIEW OF GARBHADANA SAMSKARA FROM INDIAN LITERATURE

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ABSTRACT

India though a second highly populated country has people suffering from infertility on one side and due to its population, on the other side, has restriction in having more number of children in a family, unlike in olden days. Being restricted to have only one or maximum two children, it's very essential to have a healthy progeny because both parents and children are inter dependant. Today's healthy child will become tomorrow's healthy citizen. Thus to have healthy children and healthy life, 16 *samskaras* (which remove impurities) have been mentioned in our Vedas from birth till death. *Samskaras* begin even before the birth of the individual. The present article highlights about the first *samskara* i.e *garbhadana samskara* which is done before conception to achieve excellent qualities of progeny. It is believed that the state of parents' mind during conception affects the quality and well-being of the offspring. Apart from the Ayurvedic texts, *Naradapurana*, *Manu smriti*, *Parashara smriti*, *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* etc. described about the purpose, method and timing of the *garbhadana samskara*. Ignoring these traditional concepts and rich cultural heritage and following modern way of life is leading to various congenital disorders as well as diseases like autism, mental retardation, ADHD etc. in children after birth. It is high time to recognize our traditional values and follow them.

Keywords *Samskaras*, *Garbhadana*, *Naradapurana*, *Manu smriti*, *Ayurveda*, Congenital disorders

INTRODUCTION: *Samskara* is a purificatory ceremony or rite marking a major event in one's life that sanctifies the life of an individual¹. There are 16 such *samskaras* mentioned in our Indian texts that are to be done from birth of an individual till death. Among the 16 *samskaras*, *garbhadhanasamskara* (rite of impregnation) is the first *samskara*. *Manu smriti* says that all impurities inherent in the seed of the male and the womb of the female are removed by *samskaras*². In *Garuda purana*, Lord Vishnu explains *Sree Garuda* about *garbhadhanasamskara*. He

says that a woman becomes pure on the 4th day of menstruation. After 7th day she becomes pure enough to take part in the worship of ancestors and deities. If conception occurs within 7 days, the progeny is impure³. According to *NaradaPurana*, the state of mind during the placing of the seed into the womb determines the type of child to be born⁴. This is confirmed by medical texts also: *Sushruthacharya* says that the quality of diet, actions etc., of the man and the woman lead to an offspring with similar qualities⁵.

Table.No.1.Samskaras at different stages of life

1.Garbhadana:	The first coming together of the husband & wife for bringing about conception (rite of impregnation)
2. Pumsavana:	Ceremony performed when the first signs of conception are seen and is to be performed when someone desires a male or female child.
3.Seemantonayana:	A ceremony of the expectant mother to keep her spirits high & positive.
4.Jatakarma:	After the birth of the child, the child is given honey & ghee, mother starts the first breast-feeding after chanting of a mantra.
5.Nama-karana:	In this ceremony the child is given a formal name. Performed on the 11th day.
6.Nishkramana:	In this the first darshana of sun & moon is done for the child.
7.Annaprashana:	This ceremony is performed, when the child is given solid food (<i>anna</i>) for the first time.
8.Chudakarana:	Chuda means the 'tuft of hair' kept after the remaining part is shaved off.
9.Karna-vedhana:	Piercing of the ears, done in 7th or 8th month.
10.Upanayana & Vedarambha:	The thread ceremony. The child is thereafter authorized to perform all rituals. Studies of Vedas begin with the Guru.
11.Keshant:a	Hairs are cut, <i>guru dakshina</i> is given.
12.Samavartana:	Returning to the house
13.Vivaha:	Marriage ceremony
14.Vanaprastha:	As old age approaches, the person retires for a life of tapas.
15.Sanyasa:	Before leaving the body a Hindu sheds all sense of responsibility & relationships to awake & revel in the timeless truth.
16.Antyeshthi:	The last rites done after the death.

Garbhadhanavidhi according to Ayurveda

Texts of Ayurveda gave clear detail about *garbhadhanavidhi*. There is information about the proper age of marriage, proper age of conception, improper age for conception, factors essential for conception, specific acts for achieving conception etc.

Proper age for marriage

According to Susrutha, the proper age of man for marriage is 25yrs and the age of woman is 16yrs⁶. The girl should be born in a family not belonging to his parents (*atulyagotram*)⁷, not suffering from any contagious disease, beautiful, modest, possessing good qualities, good body parts, healthy natured etc.

Age of full maturity / appropriate age for conception

As per Susrutha, 25 yrs age of man and 16 yrs of woman is age of full maturity, hence is the appropriate age for conception⁸.

Charakacharya⁹ says that very young and old woman should not be impregnated because the young woman either will not conceive or if at all she conceives will have intrauterine fetal death; if child is born, it would not live long or will have weak organs, ill health & deformed body parts

Before *garbhadhanavidhi*, it is very important that both man and woman should have pure (*suddha*) *sukra* and *artava* respectively.

Suddhasukra lakshanas¹⁰

*Sphatikabham dravam snigdham
madhuram madhugandhi cha,
Sukramicchanti kechittu taila kshaudra
nibham tatha.*

Sukram which is like *sphatika* (rock crystal which is white in colour), *drava* (liquid), *snigdha* (unctuous), *madhura* (sweet) and *madhugandhi* (having smell of honey) is desirable for producing offspring; some others say that it should be like oil or honey.

Suddhaartava lakshanas¹¹

*Sasaasrukpratimam yattu yadvaa laakshaa
rasopamam,
Tadaartavam prasamsanthi yadvaaso na
viranjayet.*

The *artavam* which resembles the blood of a rabbit or *laksha rasam* (juice of lac) and that which does not stain the cloth is greatly praised.

If the above said qualities are absent or abnormal then such *sukra* and *artava* are not pure. Treatment for the vitiated *sukra* and *artava* is also being mentioned in Ayurveda.

In general, the patients suffering from the disorders of *sukra* and *aartava* should be treated with proper procedure of *uttaravasti* after following prescribed measures of *snehana*, *swedana*, *vamana*, *virechana*, *aasthapana* and *anuvasanavasti*.

Rajaswala charya¹² (measures to be taken during menstruation)

- From the day of onset of menstruation, the woman should observe celibacy for 3 nights.
- Should sleep on the floor (*adhah shaayini*)
- Should avoid *diwaswapnam*, *anjanam*, *asrupatam*, *snanam*, *anulepanam*, *abhyangam*, *nakhacchedam*, *dhawanam*,

hasanam, *atisabdasravana*, *avalekhana*, *anila*, *aayaasa*.

- On 4th day she should take head bath, wear white coloured dress, white garments and should have pleasant mind.

- *Swedanam* is contraindicated.

It is said that if she...sleeps during day time – she gives birth to a sleepy child

- Applies *anjanam*– child becomes blind
- Cries – *vikruthadrushti* to the child
- Does *snana*, *anulepana* – child becomes unhappy
- Does *Tailabhyanga*– child suffers from *kushtha*

❖ The above said measures are especially for those women who are anxious to conceive

Factors essential for conception¹³

When both male and female after following the dietetic regimen and other mode of life unite, thus the unvitiated *sukra*, passing through healthy *yoni*, reaches healthy *garbhashaya* and gets mixed with unvitiated *aartava*, then conception is definite. This is compared with a white cloth which can absorb any dye and also as milk mixed with curd changes its form into curd, similarly, *sukra* also gets changed in the form of *garbha*.

Susruthacharya says that there are 4 factors that are responsible for conception. They are:

- *Ritu*– season or *ritukala*
- *Kshetra*– field or female reproductive system
- *Ambu*– water or nourishing substances
- *Beeja*– seed or ovum and sperm

According to Vagbhata (*AshtangaHrudaya*) – besides healthy *garbhashaya*, *apatyamarga*, *artava* and *sukra*, properly functioning *vayu* and psychological status (happy mood) are also essential¹⁴

As a good seed germinates properly in a good field, in a proper season and with adequate amount of water, similarly a good embryo is formed in a healthy *garbhashaya*, during *ritukala* with proper nourishment from mother.

Preparatory measures¹⁵

Sodhana : The couple should be treated with *sneha* and *sweda* and thereafter accumulated *doshas* from their body should be eliminated by the administration of *vamana* and *virechana* therapies from 4th day of menstruation onwards.

- Then the patient should be brought to normalcy gradually by administering *peya* etc.
- After the elimination of *doshas*, the couple should be administered *asthapana* and *anuvasana vasthis*.
- The male partner should be given ghee with milk boiled with *madhuragana dravya*.
- The female partner should be given *tilataila* and *masha* to eat.
- After purification of the body, the embryo that is formed by the union of healthy sperm and ovum in healthy womb will also be healthy.

The following are contra indicated:

- Intake of food in excess
- Fasting
- Thirst
- Fear
- Dejection
- Grief
- Anger

A mantra is said to be recited before coitus¹⁶

Sahajabala – its importance

- *Sahajabala* means natural immunity or strength.
- This *bala* occurs by birth.

- When an individual possesses this *bala*, he is free from diseases or he will not be easily prone to diseases.

- An individual born from healthy *sukra* and *artava* will possess *sahajabala*.

Putreshti yagnya

Charakacharya¹⁷ and Kashyapa¹⁸ only described about the methods of *putreshti yagnya* in detail.

This *yagnya* is performed to get the child they desire.

DISCUSSION

It is observed that all Indian texts i.e., *Vedas, Ayurveda, Upanishads, Puranas & Smritis*, gave equal importance to the creation of excellent progeny. In the present day world, there is an increased incidence of crime rate, more negativity is seen especially in youth creating large gap between parents and children, less respect is given to gurus and elders, more attraction towards western culture is seen leaving behind our own culture and tradition whose ultimate goal is *moksha*. All these are causing negative effect on the whole society leading to destruction of family, society and even nation.

CONCLUSION

Hence there is a great need for every citizen to realize the fact that giving birth to a child should not be an act of enjoyment but an act of responsibility. Thus it can be concluded that it is essential to follow the measures described in *garbhadhana samskaras* so that a child with excellent qualities come into the world.

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