



POST NATAL CARE – AYURVEDIC PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

The mother who has just given birth to a baby is termed as *Sutika* and the care during this phase is termed as *Sutika Paricharya* according to *Ayurveda*. *Sutika* period lasts for 6 weeks. During this period she should need more rest and diet which increases the digestive power, alleviates the *Vata* and provides strength to the body. Chances of infection are more during puerperal phase so she needs more antiseptic precautions. By proper post natal care she regains the energy and strength after pregnancy and delivery and helps to attain anatomical & physiological pre pregnancy stage. This review study is managed to fulfill this purpose.

Keywords: *Ayurveda*, *Sutika*, *Sutika Paricharya*, Digestive power, *Vata*, Pre pregnancy stage.

INTRODUCTION: The transformation of a female, from a woman to mother is the happiest lifetime event, but this happiness is gained only after undergoing tremendous physical exertion during labor; so old people used to term, 'labor' as women's rebirth. The woman becomes extremely debilitated physically and mentally, after the delivery. In addition she now has an extra responsibility of feeding and taking care of her baby, which is possible only if she is fit and strong. It is therefore very important to take utmost care of the newborn mother as well. The mother who has just given birth to a baby is termed as '*Sutika*' in *Ayurveda*, and the care is termed as '*Sutika Paricharya*'. *Sutika* phase lasts for 6 weeks, which means she should take the much needed rest, care, nutritious diet at least for 6 weeks and let her body regain all the lost energy and bring the imbalanced *Doshas* to normalcy. During this period, the expanded uterus shrinks back to normal position. Ligaments, muscles and tendons associated with uterus starts gaining back the lost power.¹ The initial week soon after delivery is of immense importance. Both

mother and the newly arrived guest need attention and special care. *Ayurveda* explains in detail regarding mother care. The process of child delivery is caused due to *Vata* activity. *Vata* will be immensely increased soon after delivery. The digestion power, hygiene and immunity will also be very low in the mother. Hence special care to balance *Vata* and to strengthen the mother is very necessary.²

AIMS

- To regain the energy and strength after pregnancy and delivery.
- To attain anatomically & physiologically pre pregnancy stage.
- To give over all attention to restore the health status of the mother.

OBJECTIVES:

- To prevent and reduce the common complaints of *Sutika* like backache, over weight gain etc.
- To prevent infection.
- To take care of the breast, including promotion of lactation and nursing of the child.

MATERIALS AND MATHOD:For the review study classical books, modern books, published articles as well internet

source had been referred. Collection of the material was carried out by concise manner from these sources.

SUTIKA PARICHARYA³:

- **To expel remaining Doshas (placental clots):** The woman immediately after delivery should be encouraged and made to lie down in knee chest position (*Nubja*). Now her back & lower abdomen should be massaged and compressed in order to expel the *Doshas* (placental clots) left over after delivery.
- **Abdominal binder (Udara Pattbandhana):** Abdomen and flanks should be wrapped with clean big cloth. This wrapping produces compression of abdomen, avoids presence of hollow space, so the *Vayu* does not vitiate and thus prevent the *Vata* vitiation.
- **Cleansing of external genital organs (Yoni) & fomentation (Swedana):** Irrigation (*Yoni Pariseka*) with hot water should be done in the morning and evening during entire period of puerperium → it maintains local hygiene and reduces the local pain (*Yoni Vedana*).
- **Fumigation of vagina (Yoni Dhupana):** Fumigation of vagina should be done with *Saussurea lappa* (*Kustha*), *Commiphora mukul* (*Guggulu*), *Aquilaria agallocha* (*Agaru*), *Mustard* (*Sarshap*) with *Ghrita* → which reduces pain in the vagina and prevents the infection by killing organisms.
- **Massage:** Massage of whole body with *Sida cordifolia* (*Bala*) oil → it reduces the physical exhaustion which was produced due to labour.
- **Bath to a puerperal woman:** She should bathe with water medicated with *Azadirachta indica* (*Nimba*) leaves along with powder of *Elettaria cardamomum*

(*Ela*) and *Cinnamomum zeylanicum* (*Twak*).

- **Toning up the perineal muscles:**

The puerperal woman should always sit over a small chair covered with leather bag filled with hot *Sida cordifolia* (*Bala*) oil.

- **Fumigation:** Fumigation of postnatal ward (*Sutikagara*) with antiseptic (*Rakshoghna*) drugs like *Commiphora mukul* (*Guggulu*), *Aquilaria agallocha* (*Agaru*), *Mustard* (*Sarshap*) etc. for the prevention of infection.

- **Following diet should be taken:**

After feeling of hunger, she should be given congenial oleaginous substances (oil or *ghrita*) mixed with either powdered *Piper longum* (*Pippali*), root of *Piper longum* (*Pippali Moola*), *Java*, long pepper (*Chavya*) *Plumbago zeylanica* (*Chitraka*) and *Zingiber officinale* (*Shunthi*) or powder of *Trachyspermum ammi* (*Yawani*), in the quantity which she can digest easily.

The woman unfit for use of oily substances should be given decoction of either *Tribulus terrestris* (*Gokshura*), *Solanum indicum* (*Bruhatee*), *Solanum surattense* (*Kantakaree*), *Uraria picta* (*Prushniparnee*) and *Desmodium gangeticum* (*Shalaparnee*) or drugs capable of suppressing *Vata*. After digestion of oily substances or decoction, liquid rice gruel properly prepared with above mentioned drugs should be given in the quantity which she can digest properly. The above regimen should be followed for three, five or seven days. Along with the above regimen, she should be given light diet and *Brumhaniya* substances.

- **Following drugs should be administered:** *Acharya Susruta* says that, the puerperal woman should be given decoction of *Cedrus deodara* (*Bhadradaru*)

etc. drugs capable of suppressing the *Vata* for oral administration. If some *Dosha* or blood is still left inside, powered Piper longum (*Pippali*), root of Piper longum (*Pippali Moola*), Plumbago zeylanica (*Chitraka*) and Zingiber officinale (*Shunthi*) with warm jaggery water should be given. This should be continued for two or three days till the abnormal blood is properly excreted.

• **Contraindications during puerperal period:** The woman should avoid anger, exercise and coitus. *Basti* should not be given during puerperal period. Use of *Basti* increases *Ama Dosha*. *Nasyakarma* should not be prescribed during puerperal period. Using *Nasyakarma* produces emaciation, anorexia and body ache.

DISCUSSION: As mentioned earlier *Sutika* phase lasts for 6 wks after delivery, it is this time where the uterine muscles starts to regain its previous size and shape, which is equally important considering the female health and cosmetic aspect. The *Sutika Paricharya* is essential for regaining previous figure and adequate breast milk for the baby, prevention of infection as well as prevention of future degeneration of body tissues. She also regains her emotional and hormonal balance. *Sutika Paricharya* changes majorly in terms of diet and medicines. Oil massage, *Udarapattabandhana*, *Yoni Dhoopana* etc. are to be continued till the end of 6 weeks or *Sutika Kaal*. The woman who had undergone the stress and strain of the labour needs some time to recover completely.⁴ Even after birth, the child is dependent on the mother, hence increasing

her responsibility to nourish herself as well as nurturing the child too.

CONCLUSION: Though this is not a stage of illness, but there is an increased need of supplementation for food and special nutrition. As a woman bears a child and is the foundation of a society, her health should be given utmost importance and care which is provided by *Sutika Paricharya*.

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