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A LITERARY REVIEW ON THE ROLE OF RASADISHADBHAVAS IN GARBHAVRIDDHI

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ABSTRACT

In Ayurvedic embryology (*Garbha shareera)* the formation and development of *Garbha*, are attributed to the synergy of six procreative factors known as *shad garbhakara bhavas. These are Matruja, Pitruja, Atmaja, Rasaja, Satmyaja, Satvaja.* The conglomeration of all six factors is essential for the creation of healthy progeny while *matruja, pitruja, atmaja* factors are considered predetermined at conception, the *rasaja, satmyaja, sattvaja* factors can be influenced by the mother's life style and diet during pregnancy to ensure optimal fetal outcomes. Each procreative factors (*shad garbhakarabhavas*) is assigned with a certain organogenesis / functional /psychological phenomenon to develop the foetus during intrauterine life. If there is impairment in these factors leads to physical, functional/psychological defects which can be contributed by the respective factor. Ancient Ayurveda Acharya's has given great emphasis on intake of *ahara rasa* as best source for nourishment that play prime role in growth and development of foetus during pregnancy. The ancient science of life not only has given priority to *swasthavritta palana* (daily and seasonal healthy regimen) but also given attention to ANC (antinatal care) for healthy progeny. The concept of *shadbhava* in Ayurveda

represents the holistic framework integrating physical, psychological, spiritual aspects of foetal development. Classical references emphasize that harmonious interaction of these factors determines normal embryogenesis, while any imbalance may lead to congenital anamolies or impaired growth of foetus.

KEYWORDS: *Shadbhava, Garbha,* Ayurveda, Embryology, *Matruja, Pitruja, Atmaja, Rasaja, Satmyaja, Satvaja,* Organogenesis.

INTRODUCTION

Shadbhavas are also known as *garbhanirmapaka /garbhotpadakara* bhavas. These are procreative factors which are responsible for growth and development of foetus.

According to charaka samhita the *garbha* is formed when a man with healthy /unvitiated *shukra* and women with healthy *shonita*, *yoni a*nd *garbhashaya* unite during proper *rutukala* the soul enters into *garbhashay*a triggered by the *sattva.* Formed *garbha* provided with *satmya rasa* and cared with proper *upachara* grows without any defects / anamolies. For well development of foetus the *shadbhavas* are needed.[1]

Ayurveda lays great emphasis on ensuring holistic nutrition. Ahara is the prime requirement of every living Organisms. So in ayurveda, it is considered as one of the *Trayopasthambha.*[2]

Ayurveda is the life science which deals with maintaining physical, mental, spiritual health. The primary aim of the ayurvedic science is to maintain the health of the healthy person and secondly is to treat the diseased. To fulfill this aim, knowledge of *Shareera Rachana* is essential. Hence in the classics of Ayurveda a separate *sthana* is mentioned for dealing with different aspects of *shareera* called the *shareera sthana.*

Ayurveda not only given importance on preventive and promotional health, but also has strong footings in the field of healthy progeny.

Foetal development is the continuous process of maturation of structures, it involves three periods of gestation, those are germinal, embryonic, foetal period.

Ayurveda scholars have mentioned six procreative factors *(shadbhavas*) such as *Matruja Pitruja, Atmaja, Rasaja, Satmyaja, Satvaja*. All these six factors in conglomeration are needed for the development of healthy progeny. Proper conglomeration of *Shadbhavas* are

necessary for achieving the *shreyasi praja*, otherwise it may leads to *Garbha vyapad* especially in 4th month of pregnancy as mentioned by *acharya Sushruta*.[3]

According to classics purusha is born and grows from *ahara rasa*. It is the well digested product of the food taken by pregnant women which nourishes mother as well as foetus. So ayurveda has given more importance on *Garbhini paricharya.* The health of *garbhini* measures by physical, mental, social, and spiritual contents, and practice of healthy regimen during pregnancy. Among *shadbhavas, the rasaja bhava* and *satmyaja bhava* comes from maternal diet, nutrition during preconception and intra natal period is having more importance otherwise it leads to *garbhavyapaths.*

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The present study has been undertaken to understand the significance of shadbhavas impact on Garbhavriddhi. It is literary study based on information available in relevant Samhitas.

Source of Data

Literary study will be undertaken by the data compiled from.

1. Brihatrayi.
2. Laghutrayi and other classical texts.
3. Journals, Presented Papers.
4. Previous research works are collected, analysed and correlated with contemporary science.

Relevant references of Shadbhavas – definition, types, functions are well explained in Samhitas are compiled with foetal development, risk factors, foetal circulation and it's applied anatomy explained in modern embryology. Modern concept of embryology is collected and analysed from medical texts, research journals, articles etc.

DISCUSSION

The process of Garbha Nirman (embryogenesis) in Ayurveda is considered a complex and coordinated event involving multiple factors that contribute to the proper growth and development of the fetus. Ayurvedic classics explain that development of Garbha depends upon six essential factors called Shadbhavas. These include Matrija, Pitrija, Atmaja, Satmyaja, Rasaja, and Sattvaja Bhavas. Among these factors, Rasaja Bhava occupies a unique position because it directly supports nourishment, growth, and sustenance of fetal tissues throughout gestation.

The reproductive system has important role to play in propogation of species. Reproduction is the process by which continuity of life is maintained. In Brihatrayi detailed information of Garbha is mentioned. Acharyas have mentioned about six Garbhakara bhavas are involved in this process. Shadbhavas are responsible for formation of Anga-pratyangas of Garbha. These are not only responsible for structural growth of fetus but they plays important role in the development of psychological, spiritual and emotional factors.

The concept of Shadbhavas occupies an important place in Ayurvedic embryology and explains the six fundamental factors responsible for the origin, growth, and development of the fetus (Garbha). Classical Ayurvedic texts describe that the formation of Garbha is not merely a result of the union of Shukra and Shonita, but depends on the harmonious contribution of six procreative factors. These factors collectively influence structural development, physiological functions, psychological attributes, and hereditary characteristics of the developing fetus. [4]

Following chart showing parts of the body formed from Shadbhavas, Opined by different acharyas.[5, 6, 7]

SL No	BHAVA	PARTS OF BODY (According to Sushruta)	(According to Charaka)	(According to Vagbhata)
1	*Matruja*	*Mamsa, Rakta, Meda, Majja, Hridaya, Nabhi, Yakrit, Pleeha, Antra Guda*, and all other soft parts of the body.	*Twak, Lohita, Mamsa, Meda, Nabhi, Hrudaya, Kloma, Yakrut, Pleeha, Basti Vrikka, Purishadhana, Amas haya, Pakwashaya, U ttarguda, Kshudantra, Vapa, vapavahan.*	*Mridu(soft) Rakta, Mamsa, Majja Guda, etc. .*
2	*Pitruja*	*Kesha, Shamashru, Loma, Asthi, Danta, Sira, Snayu, Dhamani, Shukra, and other hard parts of the body.*	*Kesha, Smashru, Nakha, Loma, Danta, Asthi, Sira Snayu, Shukra, etc.*	*Sthira(stable things), Shukra, Dhamani, Asthi, Nakhaetc.*
3	*Saatmyaj a*	*Veerya, Arogya, Bala, Varna, Meda, Analasya, Alo lupatva, Swarasampath,*	*Arogya, Analasya, Alolupatva, Indriyap rasada Swarnabeejasampath, Praharshabhuyasatv*	*Ayu, Arogya, Analasya, Prabha, Bala etc.*

		Varnasampath, Beejasampath, Praharshasampath.	*am, etc.*	
4	*Rasaja*	*Shareerutpatti, share era vriddhi, Prananuban dha, Trupti, Pushti, Ut saha.*	*Sharirasyabhinivrutt, abhivriddhi, prananubhandha, trupti, pushti, Utsaha.*	*Janma, vrritti, Vriddhi, Vapus Alolata etc.*
5	*Satvaja*	*Shuchi, Astikya, Shukl adharma, Ruchi Saatvika guna Bahubhaasa, Mana, Krodha, Matsara - Rajasika guna Bhaya, Ajnana, Nidra, Alasya, Vishada - Tamasika guna*	*Bhakti, Sheela, Shoucha, Dwesha, Smriti, Moha, Tyaga, Matsarya, Shourya, Bhaya, Krodha, Tandra, Utsaha, Mardavam, Gambhirya, Anavasthitatva etc.*	*Shoucha, Aasthikya, Shukladharma, Ruchi, Mati, etc.*
6	*Atmaja*	*Indriyam, Jnana, Vijn ana, Ayu, Sukha, Dukh a, etc.*	*Ayu, Atmajana, Mana, Indriya Prana, Apana, Prerana, Dharana, Akruti, Swara, Varna Sukha, Dukha, Iccha Dwesha Chetana, Dhriti, Buddhi, Smriti, Ahankar and Prayatna.*	*Chitta, Aksha, Nanayonishu janma(birth in different yoni)etc.*

RASAJABHAVA IMPORTANCE IN GARBHA VRIDDHI[8]

Rasajabhava is the foundation of structural and functional development of fetus, with its impairement leading to significant developmental disorders. following are the functions formed by *Rasaja Bhava in Garbha*.

1. Pushti

It represents the state of being well-nourished, strong.

Ahara Rasa transforms sequentially to provide Pushti to the body.

2. Abhivriddhi

Rasaja Bhava provides essential nutrition to the fetus, directly impacting its growth and development.

3. *Bala* (stamina).

Bala relies entirely on the proper digestion of food into *ahara-rasa.* If *Rasa is* deficient, all tissues degrade causing loss of *bala* (strength).

Bala is the actual kinetic and functional unit of body.

4. Varna (complexion).

Varna is one of the important factor of *twak shareera*. It is formed at the time of 6th month of foetal development in pregnancy. *Varna* of an individual *garbha* is determined on the basis of dominance of *panchamahabhuta* and is influenced by *matruja, rasaja*, *satmyaja*, *aatmaja bhava*.

Acharya Sushruta and Charaka has explained *Varna Utpatti in* the 6th month of pregnancy. The colour of diet used by the mother influences the *Varna.*

Garbhavriddhikara bhavas mainly influence the *varna* of foetus.

According to Charaka *Saatmyaja, Rasaja, Matrija & Atmaja bhavas* influences the *Varna* of foetus According to Vagbhata 1 *Satmyaja bhava* influences the *Varna*. He stated that if pregnant woman has used milk, etc sweet substances & bathing or swimming then the *varna* would be Fair. Complexion also depends upon *desa, kula*, mode of livelihood.

4. It ensures the continuous development of *dhatus from the Ahara Rasa*.

5. *Shareera Upachaya (*anabolic growth)

It refers to the physical development, tissue accumulation, and structural growth of the body. The fetus achives *Shareera Upachaya by the* essence of *Ahara-Rasa*

*6. Prana (*life force*)*

The growth of foetus involves participation of the factors which are collectively known as *Garbhaprana.*

They are *trigunas* namely *Satva, Raja, Tamas* &the five sence organs *Bhootatma, Agni*, some of these represented by *Kapha, Vayu* that maintains a balance.

7. *Utsaha*(enthusiasm)

It reprents the enthusiasm, motivation.

Utsaha is the *Rasaja bhava*.

If *Rasa Kshaya* occurs there will be *Alasya, Tandra, Avasada, Anavasthitachitta.*

8. *Trupti* (satisfaction)

When *Rasa dhatu* successfully circulates and performs *Tarpana*, the cellular fullfillment is achived.

Ayurveda classifies pathological *Trupti* as one of the 20 distinct metabolic disorders exclusively caused by vitiated *kapha Dosha.*

10. *Sthiti (*existance of the body in normalcy)

Without proper maternal nutrition, *sthiti* of foetus collapses, leading to structural decay *(hani*) or miscarriage.

RASAAS DHATU[9]

Body constituents which support and nourish the body and help it to grow are called as *dhatu*. There are seven *dhatus* in the body.

GENERAL FUNCTIONS OF DHATU[10]

Dhatus	General functions
Rasa	*Prenan (to supply nutrients)*
Rakta	*Jeevan (tissue oxygenation)*
Mamsa	*Lepan (to cover body parts)*
Meda	*Snehan (lubrication)*
Asthi	*Dharan (to maintain body posture)*
Majja	*Puran (to fill up cavities)*
Shukra	*Garbhotpadana (reproduction)*

RASA AS AHARA RASA[11]

Panchabhautika & shad rasatmaka food undergoes the process of digestion and from digested part of food, subtle, pure and tejobhuta Ahara -rasa is formed. That ahara rasa is responsible for achiving the healthy progeny. All the rasadi dhatus are formed in Garbha and nourished by ahara -rasa after birth. Sushruta acharya in shareera sthana 3/32 said that, growth of Garbha depends entirely on the nutrients supplied by maternal blood through placenta.

Ahara Rasa nourishes *rasa, rakta, mamsa, meda, asthi, majja, shukra* and *ojas.* Twentyfour *dhamanis* emerging from heart carry *ahara rasa* to all the parts of body and performs functions of *Tarpana, Vardhan, Dharan, Yapan.*

RASAAS AMBU (GARBOTPADAKARA BHAVA)[12]

The term *Ambu* represents *Rasadhatu,* which is formed after complete digestion of *Ahara*. The blood and inter cellular fluid of endometrial tissue with healthy and required nutrient without any abnomality is helpful for the formation and development of foetus. The growth of fetus is the result of the effect of *ahara rasa* of mother. Entire nutrients absorbed after digestion of food taken by mother is divided into three parts one part is supplied by filteration

to the fetus for development. Umbellical cord of the fetus is attached to placenta (*Apara*) is attached to the mother's heart. It plunges the placenta with blood through blood vessels.

Bala (strength), *Varna*(complextion), to fetus is provided by this factor. The life of fetus is maintained by nutrition supplied by *rasa* carrying vessels spreads to all organs of the body by process of diffusion. Due to deficiency of *Rasa* it can leads to to *Garbhashosha*. The vayu moving upwards dries *rasavahi* channels of fetus thus it suffers from *vata* disorders, emaciated and remains in uterus. If Ahara rasa of mother is vitiated by *Vata* leads to growth retardation of foetus. Deprivation of nutrition leads to *Garbhavyapad* like *Upavishtaka, Nagodara, Garbhashosha*. Ambu plays vital role in providing nourishment to foetal development.

- *Rasadhatu* is having all the nutrients required to nourish the body. so, Acharya mentions human body as product of *Rasa*. As *Rasadhatu* nourishes the body and helps to keep it healthy, one should protect the *Rasadhatu*. This can be achieved by consuming healthy food and healthy life style.
- It is also important element for female reproductive system in terms of *Artava* formation, for implantation of the conceptual product and its growth and for nourishment through breast milk.
- *Rasaja Bhava* is responsible for the overall maintaince of vitality (oja), which is essential for the sustance of *garbha*, sustanance of the embryo, particularly for avoidence of *garbha vyapad.*
- It provides the initial nourishment necessary for the conversion of zygote into a developed structure in 1st trimester.
- *Matruja Ahara- Vihara* plays great role in the formation & proper growth of foetus, if *Garbhini* consumes *mityaahara-vihara*, it may cause chromosomal abnormalities or congenital anamolies or mentally challanged /handicapped newborn.
- Acharya Charaka has also said that if *Garbhini* has habit of taking more *tikshna, Ushna, & atimatra ahara in Garbhavstha*, there will be chances of *Garbhakshaya, Garbhashosha, Nagodara, Upashushka* etc. .
- Charaka view of congenital abnormality are due to specific morbid condition of *beeja*(sperm &ovum), *Atmakarma*(deeds of previous life), *Ashya* (uterus), *Kala* (time factors) &Matruja ahara-vihara (diet&regimen of mother). Beeja is further elaborated as *beeja, beejabhaga, bheejabhagaavayava*. Their abnormalities collectively indicate abnormality of chromosomes, gene, and DNA material which causes morbidity in

different ways. *Atmakarma* is included in this category which exhibit vulnerability of one's unknown chance for suscepetiblity of environmental factors.

- Acharya Sushruta Stated that birth defects are due to *Adibala &Janmabala*. *Adibala* is due to *Matrija*(maternal) and *Pitruja*(paternal). *Janmabala* is due to *Rasakrita*(daitary indiscretion) and *Dauhridabimana*.
- Vagbhata mentioned *Sahaja* and *Garbhaja* in this context. The *Adibala* & *Sahaja* exhibit genetic abnormality due to autosomal dominant, autosomal recessive and sex linked dominant. while abnormalities caused by *Janmabala* & *Garbhaja* are due to morbid nature of dait and regimans of mother during *garbhavastha*.
- Abnormalities due to excessive unrighteous behavior of the mother causes congenital malformations, where fetus exhibit characters like- *sarpa (*snake), *vrischika*
- (scorpion), *kusmanda*(field of pumpkin) etc. Disorders caused by *Dauhridabhimana* are *Kubja, Kuni, Pangu, Muka, Minmina* etc.
- Ayurveda considers *Rasa* and maternal nutrition as essential for fetal growth. Disturbance in this mechanism leads to pathological fetal changes.
- Rasa is one among the six etiological factors responsible for origin & development of fetus. According to charaka, Matrijadi shadbhavas have influence on growth of Garbha.
- Matrija Bhava refers to maternal contributions toward fetal development. Classical texts explain that soft organs and structures of the fetus are predominantly derived from maternal factors. Structures such as skin (Twak), blood (Rakta), muscles (Mamsa), liver, spleen, and soft tissues are considered maternal derivatives. Maternal nutrition, physical health, emotional condition, and intrauterine environment play a major role in determining fetal development.
- Pitrija Bhava denotes paternal contribution to fetal formation. Hard structures including bones (Asthi), teeth (Danta), nails (Nakha), hair (Kesha), and vessels are mainly attributed to paternal factors. From a modern perspective, paternal inheritance contributes genetic material through sperm chromosomes that determine inherited traits and influence fetal characteristics. Genetic abnormalities or chromosomal defects originating from paternal factors may contribute to congenital anomalies.
- Atmaja Bhava refers to attributes governed by the Atma (soul). Ayurveda considers Atma responsible for consciousness, individuality, lifespan (Ayu) and vital activities. Classical literature suggests that intellectual and spiritual aspects, inclination, desires, and individual identity arise due to Atmaja Bhava. Although modern science does not correlate directly with the concept of Atma, the individuality of a person involving

consciousness and behavioral characteristics may be considered analogous to complex genetic and neurodevelopmental interactions.

- Satmyaja Bhava is related to adaptability and compatibility acquired through habitual exposure to diet and environmental factors. It influences health status, immunity, strength, and resistance against diseases. In fetal development, maternal nutritional habits and environmental adaptation influence the fetus significantly. Contemporary studies also emphasize the role of epigenetic modifications and maternal environmental influences on fetal growth and later-life health outcomes.
- Rasaja Bhava originates from Rasa Dhatu and is responsible for nourishment and maintenance of fetal growth. Ayurveda states that fetal development depends greatly upon proper nutrition supplied through maternal circulation. The concept can be correlated with placental physiology and fetal nutrition in modern embryology. Adequate supply of nutrients, oxygen, vitamins, proteins, and minerals through the placenta is essential for normal growth and organogenesis. Nutritional deficiencies may lead to intrauterine growth restriction and developmental defects.
- Charak enlisted “shareera abhinivrutti & abhivriddhi i. e embryogenesis and its development as the function of Rasaja bhava. He also stated that ahara taken by garbhini will forms the ahara rasa, that is responsible for nourishment of Garbha.
- Sattvaja Bhava contributes to mental and psychological development of the fetus. Qualities such as memory, intellect, emotional tendencies, behavior, and mental strength are attributed to this factor. Ayurveda explains that maternal mental status during pregnancy influences fetal psychological development. Modern studies also indicate that maternal stress, anxiety, and emotional disturbances during pregnancy may affect fetal neurobehavioral development and long-term psychological outcomes.
- Six procreative factors have an important role as causative factors for congenital, hereditary, and genetic anamolies before and at the time of conception and after conception. The principles of Shadbhavas may be interpreted in the context of contemporary concepts such as genetics, epigenetics, fetal nutrition, environmental influences, and psychological development. Thus, the classical Ayurvedic description provides a multidimensional understanding of embryogenesis and can be useful in establishing correlations with modern scientific perspectives.
- Different types of Garbha vyapad are explained by our acharyas in classics, caused by vitiation of doshas due to imparement in the ahara -rasa of garbhini. Adverse effects on human progeny have been observed in the form of abortion, congental malformations like

low birth weight and increased perinatal loss when father has been exposed to lead, anaesthetic agents, somiking / caffeine ingestion. these agents alter the morphology of spermatozoa or cause some change in the composition of the semen. The deficiency of glocuse, amino acids and oxygen etc, in the mother causes IUGR. deficiency of iron, folic acid, vitamin B12, protin causes hypoxemia and in turning to death. Maternal intake of alcohol, drugs and malnutrition leads to congenital malformations.

CONCLUSION

- The present literary study on Shadbhavas with special reference to Rasajabhava in the development of Garbha highlights the profound understanding of embryogenesis described in Ayurvedic classics. Shadbhavas-namely, Matrija, Pitrija, Atmaja, Rasaja, Satmyaja, and Sattvaja, Bhavas collectively contribute to the proper formation, growth, and development of the fetus.
- Among these, Rasajabhava occupies a significant position as it is directly related to maternal nutrition and nourishment of the developing fetus. Classical texts emphasize that Rasa Dhatu, formed from the matruja ahara-rasa and acts as the primary nutritional source for fetal growth and sustenance. Adequate and qualitative Rasa ensures proper development of fetal structures, strength, complexion, vitality, and overall well-being of the fetus, whereas impairment of Rasa may adversely affect fetal growth and development.
- The literary analysis also indicates that the concept of Rasajabhava can be correlated with modern concepts of maternal nutrition, placental transfer, and fetal nourishment. fetal development is not merely a physical process but a multifactorial phenomenon influenced by genetic, nutritional, psychological, and environmental determinants.
- Concept of upasneha, upasweda, ambu, apara, and nabhinadi considered under the rasajabhava that causes Shareera abhivriddhi and provides Pushti to fetus.
- Improper intake of prenatal nutrition described in ancient science such as absorption, histotrophic transfer & hematotrophic nutrition i. e rasajabhava is responsible for the anatomical structural deformities of fetus such as Spina bifida, Anencephaly, cleft lip, cleft palate, congenital heart disease.

Therefore, the study concludes that Rasajabhava serves as one of the essential determinants in Garbha Vridhi and development, and understanding its role through the framework of

Shadbhavas provides a holistic approach toward ensuring healthy progeny and maternal-fetal well-being.

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