

GARBHOPAGHATKAR BHAVA - A REVIEW ARTICLE

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Article Received on
18 February 2024,

Revised on 09 March 2024,
Accepted on 29 March 2024

DOI: 10.20959/wjpr20247-31855



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ABSTRACT

Ayurved is an ancient system of medicine which deals with preventive and curative aspects of health of an individual. Maintenance and protection of swastha sharir is the main aim of Ayurvedic science. The knowledge of sharir start with the knowledge of *Garbha*. In ayurvedic treatise, the matter related to concept of *Garbha sharir* is described systematically. To get a healthy progeny, great authorities of ayurved have explained *Garbhini Paricharya*. In addition acharyas have also explained about the things to be avoided in pregnancy which can directly or indirectly harms the garbha as a *Garbhopaghatakar Bhava*. *Garbhopaghatakar bhava* are such factors which when accompany during pregnancy can harm or destroy the foetus or its development. Foetal malformation is one of the worst aspect of pregnancy. The importance and concept of this topic can be understood by going through ayurvedic literatures. Acharyas has dealt with clinical features

of abortions, upavistaka, upasuska and bhuthrita garbha etc. foetal disorders and teratological abnormality in detail. In addition, factors responsible for such malformations and the effect of fulfilment and non-fulfilment of dauhrida have been dealt in details. Non-observance of regulation prescribed or negligence during pregnancy, as well as improper management during labour can produce certain abnormalities in the child. In other words, to get a physically and psychologically healthy child, knowledge of *Garbhopaghatakar Bhava* is essential. Present article is an attempt to analyse *Garbhopaghatakar Bhava* on the mother

and progeny.

KEYWORDS: *Ayurveda, Garbiniparicharya, Garbhopaghatakar bhavas, Dauhrida.*

INTRODUCTION

Pregnancy is the most crucial and challenging phase in a woman's life. To deliver and becoming mother of a healthy baby is not only a beautiful dream but also one of her great contribution to human society. Acharya Charaka has explained the factors responsible for normal delivery of normally developed full term foetus. If sukra, artava, atma, asaya and kala etc. all are perfect, dietetics and mode of life advocated for pregnant woman is followed properly, then the healthy, well grown foetus, possessing all his body parts will deliver with ease, at proper period of time.^[1] Garbha or embryo is nourished and maintained by the woman. The growing foetus is dependent over the mother for its growth, development, nourishment and well being. Acharya Vagbhata has said that since welfare and contraindications of mother and foetus are identical, hence the pregnant woman should use desired congenial diet and proper mode of life, avoiding factors likely to harm the foetus.^[2] In today's fast moving life, all women unknowingly follows certain things which are told as contraindications during pregnancy, due to negligence or ignorance, leading to garbhasrava, garbhapata or other complications. The development of the embryo is dependent primarily on genetic influences. However, environmental conditions can also exert an important effect. It therefore, follows that congenital anomalies may occur either as a result of genetic or environmental defects, or by a combination of both. Embryos with major abnormalities are aborted early in pregnancy, and this may occur even before the mother is aware of the pregnancy. According to some estimates the total number of abnormal embryos may be as high as 50% and their spontaneous abortion may be nature's way of reducing the birth of malformed babies. In spite of this fact, 2-3% of infants born alive, show one or more congenital malformations. Some anomalies are not obvious at birth but are discovered later. The total incidence of malformations may, therefore be as high as 5% of live births.^[3] Data shows major structural anomalies occur in approximately 3% of live born infants and birth defects are a leading cause of infants deaths accounting for approximately 25% of it. About 40%- 45% of birth defects are due to unknown cause. Genetic factors such as chromosomal abnormalities and mutant genes, account for approximately 28%, environmental factors produce approximately 3%-4%, combination of both genetic and environmental factors produces 20%- 25% and twinning causes about 1%, minor anomalies occur in approximately

15% of total new borns.^[4] These figures are cited to highlight the great importance of the need to understand the causation of such foetal anomalies. Garbhopaghatkara bhavas deals with the aspects which cause upaghata (harm) to the growing garbha. Thus Garbhopaghatkar bhavas constitutes all those factors which are harmful to foetus, in its intrauterine life.

Garbhopaghatkara bhava

Factors including Dietetics and mode of life which are contraindicated for pregnant woman that are likely to harm the foetus, can collectively be called as *Garbhopaghatkara Bhava*. The depth of this concept can be better understood by going through different classics of Ayurved, as follows.

▪ Charaka samhita

Acharya Charaka has mentioned that the pregnant woman should avoid use of *tikshana aushadha* (Pungent medicine), *vyavaya* (Excessive coitus), and *vyayama* (Exercise) in *sutra sthana*.^[5] Again in *sharir sthana*, *Acharya Charaka* has described following factors which are harmful for the foetus such as – use of excessive *ushna and tikshana* (hot and pungent substance), *Daruna cheshta* (Activities much beyond one's own capacity) and other factors as instructed by *acharyas*. She should not wear *Raktavarna vastra* (Red garments) for protection from the effects of gods, demons and their followers; should not use intoxicating substances and *Madya* (Wine), *Yana avarohana* (ride over vehicle on uneven path), use excessive use of *Mansa* (meat) and give up the things contrary to *Indriyas* and other harmful articles, the other things should also be given up as instructed by old ladies or relatives.^[6]

▪ Sushruta samhita

Acharya Sushruta has also mentioned prohibited conducts during pregnancy as- Immediately on the ascertainment of her pregnancy, a woman should avoid all kinds of physical labour, sexual intercourse, fasting, causes of emaciation of the body, day sleep, awakening at night, grief, fright, journey by carriage or in any kind of conveyance, sitting on her haunches, excessive application of *sneha karmas* etc., and venesection at an improper time i.e. after the eighth month of gestation and voluntary retention of any natural urging of the body. The child in the womb feels pain in the same part of its body as the one in which its mother feels any; whether this pain may be from any injury or through the effect of any deranged *dosha* of her organism.^[7] Again in *sharir sthana*, *Acharya Sushruta* has mentioned some general rules for expectant mother. An expectant mother, from the first day of conception, should not touch, nor come in contact with unclean, deformed or wounded persons and should avoid foul

smelling things, dreadful sights, noisy sounds, dry, stale and dirty food as well as that prepared overnight. Long walking, resorts to cremation grounds or to a solitary retreat, or to a *chaitya*, and sitting under the shadow of a tree, should be strictly prohibited. Indulgence in anger, fear, and other agitating emotions of the mind should be deemed injurious. Carrying a heavy load, loud talk, sexual intercourse and all other things which might occasion injury to the foetus, should be strictly avoided. The practice of constant oil massage, and the cleansing of the body with *amalaki*, *haridra* etc. should be given up; all fatiguing exercises should be discontinued and the rules laid down by the for the guidance of a woman in her menses should be strictly followed.^[8]

▪ **Ashtanga samgraha**

Acharya Vagbhata I has corroborated the views of *Acharya Charaka*, alike *Acharya Sushruta* he has also given the list of contraindications as- *Garbhini* woman is best/ chief among those which to be spared from strong medicines (or therapies), sexual intercourse and exercises.^[9] The following are the factors which bring about disorders of the pregnancy; sexual intercourse, exertion by exercise, assault (Trauma), journey in vehicles which is very strenuous, keeping awake at night, sleeping during day, suppression of the urges of the body, indigestion or ingestion of uncooked foods, exposure to sunlight and fire, anger, grief, fear (Getting frightened suddenly), fasting, abnormal postures, such as sitting on one's heels and on uneven, hard seats (For long periods), gazing the sky and peeping into deep wells, ravines (Valleys) seeing and hearing of unpleasant things and sound etc., In brief, all kinds of foods and drinks which are very hard (To digest), hot (Heat producing), penetrating (into the tissues) and dry (Moistless) and activities which are very strenuous. Further to avoid the wrath of god and also the risk of development of foetus, the pregnant woman should not wear red coloured cloth, ride in vehicles, eat meat or drink wine. Any other thing which the elderly woman forbid.^[10] She should not indulge in anointing and massaging of the body. All such activities which have been described as harmful (To the foetus) should be avoided, especially till the fifth month.^[11]

▪ **Astanga hridaya**

The pregnant woman should avoid excess of sexual activities, exertion, carrying heavy loads, heavy coverings, sleeping or keeping awake at improper time, sitting on hard seats, and on heels; she should avoid grief, anger, fear, emotions, suppression of urges of the body and controlling of desires, fasting, long distance walk, eating foods which are strong (Pungent,

eroding the stomach) hot heavy (Hard for digestion) and constipating; wearing red cloth, peeping into deep pits or wells, alcoholic drinks, eating meat, lying with face upwards, and any such acts which elder women forbid. Similarly bloodletting, purifactory therapies and enema therapies activities embryo might be either expelled premature, dries up inside on even dies.^[12]

▪ **Kashyap samhita**

Acharya Kashyap has given entirely different types of contraindications. The pregnant woman should not look at declining moon, setting sun and both the rahus. Knowing about solar or lunar eclipse, should go inside or middle of the house, busy in religious rites and oblation and pray for freedom of planets. She should not hate the guest, offer alms to the beggars and not turn them out. For pacification, should perform oblation in spontaneously burning fire. She should not oppose or tie the ewer filled with water, ghrata, garland, the pot filled with ghrata and curd. The pregnant woman should not obstruct or tie anything by thread and thin rope, should avoid daily coitus and keep all her bands (cloths) etc. loose.¹³ Use of cold water and garlic is also contraindicated to pregnant woman.^[14]

▪ **Harita samhita**

Acharya Harita has contraindicated use of pulses, edibles producing burning sensation (In abdomen) heavy or sour substances, hot milk, clay, surana, garlic and onion. Surana and other constipating edibles should be taken with their juices. She should avoid coitus, exercise, anger, grief, and walking etc. Avoidance of all the measures gives happiness to be woman.^[15]

▪ **Bhavprakash**

Acharya Bhavprakash has followed *Acharya Sushruta* with addition of sitting or sleeping in very soft and high place, going to river bank, temple or garden, drinking of rain water, use of meat, association of woman whose child has died etc. in the list of contraindications.^[16]

The effect of various dietetics etc. has been elaborately described by *Acharya Charak* and *Acharya Vagbhata I* which is compiled in following table.

S. No.	Dietetics or mode of life	Effect on the foetus or child
1.*	Squatting or sitting in abnormal position; suppression of natural urges, improper and	Intrauterine death of foetus or premature delivery or abortion or
	Excessive exercise, use of pungent, hot edibles or less quantity of food.	Foetus becomes dry.
2.*	Trauma and compression in lower abdomen, peeping or falling in deep pit or well, riding in	Premature delivery or abortion.

	jerky vehicle, listening to unpleasant words.	
3.	Sleeping in supine position with stretched extremities.	Umbilical cord encircles the neck of foetus and troubles it.
4.	red in open place or nightwalking.	Insane or extravagant (<i>Unmatta</i>).
5.	Oral and physical strife or pugnacious.	Epileptic (<i>Apasmara</i>)
6.	Over indulgence in sex.	Deformed, impudent or lazy and henpecked
7.	Always distressed or grieved.	Poltroon, slender, short lived or less digestive etc. power.
8.	Psychologically malevolent or constantly worried.	Nature of troubling others, jealous and henpecked.
9.	Thief or robber.	Industrious, spiteful.
10.	Intolerant.	Furious, deceitful, insidious, calumnious
11.	Over sleepy.	Sleepy, ignorant and possess less digestive fire.
12.	Using wine daily.	Over thirsty, short memory and fickling mind.
13.	Often use of meat of iguana.	Suffers from bladder stone, gravel or slow stream of urine.
14.	Often using hog's meat (pork).	Red eyes, rough body hair and snoring.
15.	Using daily fish.	Fixed eyes or delayed eye blinking.
16.	Daily or excessive use of sweet articles except milk. (<i>Madhur rasa</i>)	Suffers from prameha, obese and dumb
17.	Using (Excessively) daily sour articles. (<i>amla rasa</i>)	Suffers from <i>raktapitta</i> , skin and eye disorders.
18.	Daily excessive use of salty articles. (<i>lavana rasa</i>)	Early wrinkling, greying of hair and baldness.
19.	Daily excessive use of bitter articles. (<i>Katu rasa</i>)	Weak, possesses less <i>shukra</i> , infertile.
20.	Daily excessive use of pungent articles. (<i>tikta rasa</i>)	Suffers from emaciation, or edema, weak, scraggy, less digestive power etc.
21.	Daily use of astringent articles. (<i>Kasaya rasa</i>)	Swarthy, suffers from <i>anaha</i> (Flatulence) and <i>udavarta</i> (Eructations).

(Note: * Not mentioned by Vagbhata I, Vagbhata II has just mentioned that use of articles likely to harm the foetus results either in abortion or intrauterine dryness or death of the foetus.)

The effects of non-fulfilment of dauhrida

At the time when sense organs of foetus are manifested, at that very time it attains free flow of consciousness and mind gets associated with feelings, from then onwards the foetus starts pulsation, in the embryo, expresses the desires based on experience of previous life, this is

called *dwaihrudaya*. The heart derived from the maternal part gets connected maternal heart through *rasavahi* (Nutrient carrying) channels, and the foetus desires are expressed through shaking and communicated to the maternal heart through these vessels. Due to this very reason disrespect to these desires of the foetus should not be done. Due to disrespect of his desires there may develop death or morbidity of the foetus. In certain aspects the mother becomes similar in *yogakshema* for security (Well-being, welfare and security). Therefore proficient expert manage/ treat the pregnant woman specifically with things desired by her and wholesome things.^[17] *Acharya Chakrapani* has clarified that suppression of acute desires causes death of the foetus while that of mild ones the abnormalities. If desires of foetus expressed by the mother are suppressed then due to direct association of these desires with delicate foetus, its *vayu* gets vitiated and injures it.

However if mother's own desires are suppressed the vitiated *vayu* of mother reaches the foetus, because welfare of both is same, and this aggravated *vayu* influencing *mana* of foetus produces various abnormalities.^[18] *Acharya Sushruta* has mentioned that the expectant mother in fourth month is *Dauhrada* at the time, whose wishes and desires not being honoured and gratified lead to the birth of a paralysed, hump backed, crooked armed, lame, dwarfed, defect eyed, and a blindchild. Hence the desires of the expectant mother should be gratified, which would ensure the birth of a strong, vigorous and long lived son.^[19] In addition in context of labour and labour pains he has also mentioned about harmful effects of bearing down efforts made by the woman in absence of labour pains or *aavi*. An urging in absence of any real pain may lead to deafness, dumbness and deformity of the jaw bones of the child or subject it to attacks of coughs, asthma etc. or lead to the diseases of head or to the birth of a haunchbacked or deformed child.^[20] According to *Acharya Vagbhata* the desires of the pregnant woman should not be denied, as its foetal heart is maternal in origin and is connected with the heart of the mother, and refusal of the longings may lead to abnormalities in the foetus, so even unhealthy things mixed with healthy ones in small quantity should be given to her.^[21]

DISCUSSION

All the *Garbhopaghatakara bhava* or contraindications can be grouped under following headings.

- a) Those which produce psychological or physical strain such as grief, exercise etc.: Though normal coitus and exercise are beneficial, however their excessive use or psychological

trauma may precipitate abortion specially in ladies prone for the same.

- b) Avoidance of visit to cremation ground etc.: Sudden shock may produce abnormality specially abortion.
- c) Overweight carrying or vehicle riding may precipitate abortion due to sudden increase in intraabdominal pressure; prolonged squatting in abnormal postures and supine position may influence placental or uterine blood flow (due to pressure of gravid uterus on iliac vessels) thus cause abortion, intrauterine death of the foetus or other abnormalities.
- d) Dietetics regulations: Diet of pregnant mother is very important for maintenance of her own health, proper nourishment and growth of the foetus. Texts have contraindicated use of meat, while it is already prescribed in fourth and fifth month by Acharya Sushruta, thus here excessive use of meat of aquatic animals should be taken. Excessive use of wine or alcohol leads to Foetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS). Maternal cigarette smoking reduces Foetal Breathing Movements (FBM)²². It is difficult to explain contraindications for use of pulses, garlic and onion etc., it is just possible that their excess use may produce digestive abnormalities.
- e) Use of over satiation may excessively increase the body weight of mother and foetus, over- eating is one of the cause of pregnancy toxemia. Over-weight of foetus may cause difficulty in labour.
- f) *Acharya Sushruta* has described almost similar things under the heading of *dauhrada* mentioned earlier. Actually there is no difference between these descriptions, because the pregnant woman will eat only when she has longings for these things, or has *dauhrada* and since these are likely to produce certain abnormalities in foetus, hence can be grouped under harmful category. Abnormal longings of pregnant woman are probably the source of this description. The suppression of desires may influence psychology of mother and foetus as well.
- g) Specific rays emitted during eclipse may produce abnormalities of foetus.
- h) Emesis etc. purifying measures can also precipitate abortion due to reflex stimulation of myometrium.
- i) *Acharyas* has mentioned the precautions to be taken before conception as *Ritumati Paricharya*, during pregnancy as *Garbhini Paricharya*, and also precautionary measures are mentioned for the time of labour to avoid any type of abnormality. Even after birth of baby, *Sutika Paricharya* and *Navjaat shishu Paricharya* are mentioned for safe motherhood; so that a lady could deliver a healthy progeny without any malformation or abnormality keeping herself healthy and safe.

CONCLUSION

On basis of formal discussions and information collected after going through ayurvedic classics, it can be concluded that ayurvedic texts have very systematic description of various factors responsible for better progeny. If longings of pregnant woman are not fulfilled definitely it will affect physical as well as mental health of either mother or foetus. In addition factors which are mentioned as harmful for foetal development should be strictly avoided. Such descriptions help us to understand factors responsible for mal-development of foetus which can assist us in preventing or treating abnormalities. Causes of congenital anomalies or diseases are associated with lack of care, awareness, supervision and prevention through diet, mode of life style habits and mental health. So, counselling is to be done for patient's care, awareness with social education, and genetic counselling. Prenatal diagnostic techniques should be used. Thus there is need to explore and analyse these to have greater understanding of the subject. In this light, this study would be able to further apply these concepts and make it yuganuroopa.

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