

POSTPARTUM CARE (*SUTIKA PARICHARYA*) AS A PREVENTIVE STRATEGY FOR WOMAN'S LONG-TERM HEALTH

Aatmika Singh^{1*}, Akshita Gangwar²

^{1*}PG Scholar, Department of Swasthavritta, Uttranchal Ayurvedic College, Dehradun, Uttrakhand.

²PG Scholar, Department of Prasuti Tantra Evum Stree Roga, Vaidya Yagya Dutt Sharma Ayurved Mahavidyalaya, Khurja, Uttar Pradesh.

Article Received on
22 July 2025,

Revised on 11 August 2025,
Accepted on 31 August 2025

DOI: 10.20959/wjpr202517-38263



*Corresponding Author

Aatmika Singh

PG Scholar, Department of
Swasthavritta, Uttranchal
Ayurvedic College,
Dehradun, Uttrakhand.

aatmika.singhz@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Introduction- Postpartum care known as *Sutika Paricharya* in Ayurveda, is a structured 40-60 day regimen followed in India for centuries. While traditionally rooted in holistic principles, its core practices are increasingly finding resonance with modern preventive medicine. The classical Ayurvedic regime for the *Sutika paricharya* is to offers a structured bio-psycho-social framework aimed at restoring *Agni*, pacifying *Vata*, Supporting lactation, and preventing long- term morbidity. This article examines the potential of an evidence-based, integrated approach to postpartum care, aligning ancient wisdom with contemporary science, as a crucial preventive strategy for a woman's long-term physical and mental well-being. *Sutika Paricharya* (the care of the *Sutika*, or postpartum woman) emerges not merely as a cultural tradition, but as a powerful preventive healthcare strategy. *Sutika Paricharya*, the structured 40-60 day postpartum regimen in Ayurveda,

is a holistic protocol designed to promote maternal recovery after childbirth. Its principles of managed rest (*Sutika Avaṣṭha*), specific diet (*Ahara*), oleation (*Snehana*), fomentation (*Swedana*), and medicinal formulations (*Ausadha*) aim not only at short-term recuperation but also at preventing long-term morbidity (*Sutika Roga*). While anecdotally revered, a systematic scientific validation of its long-term preventive efficacy is lacking. **Aims and Objective-** To evaluate the efficacy of a standardized *Sutika Paricharya* protocol in preventing long-term physical and mental health disorders in postpartum women. **Methodology-** A thorough review of literature related to *Sutika paricharya* in Ayurvedic

compendia was performed. Chapters consolidating the concepts from *Bruhatrayi* and other relevant Samhitas have been sorted and included in the manuscript. **Result-** *Sutika Paricharya* as described in *Ayurveda* classics is unique and specific. So by following proper *Ayurvedic Sutika Paricharya* would result in helps to restore her health and revert to normal pre pregnant state and faster recovery of women in terms of her strength and health. **Discussion-** *Sutika paricharya* paying close attention to all the details needed to preserve and replenish a women's health and leads to faster recovery in terms of strength and health.

KEYWORDS: *Sutika, Ahara, Sutika Paricharya, Samanya Sutikaparicharya, Vishishta Sutikaparicharya.*

INTRODUCTION

The postpartum (*Sutika*) period—classically spanning ~6 weeks (up to 45 days or until restoration of cycles and strength)—is characterized by physiological depletion, *Agni mandya*, and *Vata* aggravation due to labor, blood/fluid loss, and sleep disruption. *Ayurvedic* classics prescribe *Sutika Paricharya* to restore homeostasis and prevent future *vyādhi*. This paper examines *Sutika Paricharya* through a preventive lens and presents an implementable protocol suitable for clinics, wellness centers, and community programs. According to *Ayurvedic* biology, the process of childbirth creates a significant imbalance of the *Vata dosha* and a depletion of bodily tissues (*Dhatu Kshaya*). The channels of the body (*Srotas*) are open, and the digestive fire (*Agni*) is weak and variable. This makes her exceptionally susceptible to the invasion of pathogens and the manifestation of new imbalances. Therefore, *Sutika Kala* is a period where the rigorous application of *Swasthavritta* is not just beneficial but mandatory to prevent a slide from this vulnerable health into a state of chronic disease (*Vyadhi*). The traditional system of medicine in India, offers a comprehensive preventive framework: *Sutika Paricharya*. This protocol is designed not merely for recovery but to exploit the body's heightened plasticity post-delivery to prevent chronic diseases and promote longevity. This analysis systematically examines this claim.

तायाश्चापि तत्र स्यादपरा चेन्न निर्गता।

प्रसूताऽपि न सूता स्त्री भवत्येवं गते सति॥ (का०खि ०11/6)

Ayurveda, a woman who has just given birth to a child, followed by expulsion of the placenta is called *Sutika* or puerpera.

Ayurvedic Perspective

Vāta prakopa following delivery (Shunya sharira)^[1] → pain, instability, constipation, anxiety, insomnia.

Agni mandya → poor digestion, malabsorption, ama formation, impaired lactation/energy.

Srotorodha risk if heavy, cold, or incompatible foods are used prematurely.

Therapeutic aims of *Sutika Paricharya*

1. Rekindling Agni (*dīpana/pācana*) and preventing āma.
2. *Vātaśamana* through *snigdha*, *uṣṇa*, *mṛdu* interventions (*snehana/svedana*, *Ushna Jala*,^[2] warm light diets, rest).
3. Supporting *stanya utpatti* (lactogenesis) with appropriate *āhāra* and herbs.
4. Gradual *bala* restoration (graded activity, *abhyanga*, *rasāyana* at appropriate time).
5. *Yoni*/uterine cleansing and involution support.

Core Principles of *Swasthavritta* in *Sutika Paricharya*- The entire regimen of *Sutika Paricharya* can be mapped directly to the foundational pillars of *Swasthavritta*:

Dinacharya (Daily Regimen) for the *Sutika* The standard *Dinacharya* is modified into a more intensive, therapeutic daily routine for the postpartum mother.

मुक्तगर्भापरां योनिं तैलेनाङ्गं च मर्दयेत् ॥ (अ० हु० शा० १/९९)

Abhyanga (Oil Massage): This replaces the typical self-massage. Daily full-body massage with warm, *Vata*-pacifying oils like sesame or *Bala Taila* is prescribed. From a *Swasthavritta* perspective, this practice:

- Prevents *Vata* Disorders: Pacifies the aggravated *Vata*.
- Strengthens Tissues (*Dharana Karma*): Nourishes the skin and deeper tissues, promoting their repair after stretching and trauma.

Parisheka (Fomentation):^[3] Gentle herbal steaming follows the massage. This acts as a deep cleansing process (*Srotoshodhana*), helping to expel metabolic toxins (*Ama*) that accumulate in the open channels, preventing their stagnation and the future development of inflammatory conditions.

Sadvritta (Ethical/Mental Hygiene) and *Achara Rasayana Swasthavritta* places great emphasis on mental and emotional well-being as a cornerstone of physical health. *Sutika Paricharya* inherently provides *Achara Rasayana* (behavioral rejuvenation). *Vihara* and *Manasika Swasthavritta* (Mental & Environmental Hygiene) The texts emphasize creating a protected, stress-free environment, a key aspect of *Sadvritta* and *Achara Rasayana*.

सूतिकागारं सम्पाद्य शुचि स्निग्धं सुगन्धि च ।

... न चैनां व्यथयेत्किंचित् मनोवचनकर्मभिः ॥ (अ.ह.उ.१/४२-४३)

The *Sutika's* room should be clean, smooth (comfortable), and fragrant... One should not aggrieve her in any way by thought, word, or deed.

The practice of confinement and rest creates a stress-free, protected environment (*Prasuta Shakha*). This shields the new mother from external stressors and emotional drains, allowing her nervous system to recover. This is a direct preventive measure against postpartum depression, anxiety, and burnout, which can have long-term psychological consequences.

Bonding with the newborn in a calm atmosphere fosters positive mental health and secure attachment, benefiting both mother and child.

Ahāra: *Peya/yavāgu*^[4]/*manda*^[2], *yūṣa*^[2], *māmṣarasa*^[2] (as indicated), *ghṛta*, *Panchakola*^[5] (*Pippali*, *pippali moola*, *Chavya*, *Sunthi*, *Nagar*) based formulations; avoidance of *guru*, *śīta*, *viruddhāhāra* early on. The Primary Preventive Tool in *Swasthavritta*, diet is the first and most important medicine. The *Sutika's* diet is a perfect example of *Pathya Ahara* (wholesome and suitable diet). Warm, Freshly Cooked, Oily Foods: Designed to pacify *Vata* and kindle the weakened *Agni*. A strong *Agni* is the bedrock of health, as it ensures proper digestion, prevents toxin formation, and allows for the efficient building of new tissues (*Dhatu Poshana*). This prevents a lifetime of weak digestion, bloating, and malabsorption.

स्निग्धं मधुरं भोज्यं हितं स्यात्सूतिकाया विशेषतः ।

यवगूं सर्पिषा सिद्धां पिबेत्सर्पिर्विशेषतः ॥ (अ.ह.उ.१/४७)

Especially for the *Sutika*, unctuous and sweet food is beneficial. She should particularly drink gruel (*Yavagu*) prepared with *ghee* and also (consume) *ghee* itself.

Specific Rejuvenative Foods: The use of *Shatavari ghrita*, milk processed with herbs, and nourishing gruels (*yavagu*) directly aims to rebuild the seven tissues (*Sapta Dhātu*) that were depleted during pregnancy and childbirth. This is a direct investment in long-term strength, immunity (*Ojas*), and prevention of conditions like osteoporosis and anemia.

प्रायश्चैनां प्रभूतेनोष्णोदकेन परिषिञ्चेत् ।

क्रोधायासमैथुनादीन् परिहरेत् ॥ (सु० सं० शा० १०/१६, १८)

Vihāra/Dinacharya: *swedana* (mild), *abhyanga* (e.g., *bala taila*), warmth, adequate sleep, supportive *bandhana* (abdominal binding), sexual abstinence till lochia stops and strength returns.

Aushadha/Yoga: *deepana-pachana* (e.g., *pippalī/sunṭhī/jeeraka* -based), *dashamūla* preparations (clinical discretion), gentle breathing/relaxation, later pelvic floor work.

Ritucharya (Seasonal Regimen) Adaptation a key aspect of *Swasthavritta* is adapting one's lifestyle to the season.

प्रसूता या पुनर्बाला मासार्धं सूतिकाभवेत् । (अ.सं.शा.३/५२)

A woman after delivery is considered *Sūtikā* for one and half months.

मासार्धं सूतिकाख्या स्यात् प्रायशः पुनर्बला ॥ (अ.ह.शा.२/५६)

The 45-60 day *Sutika Kala* is treated as a distinct "micro-season" within a woman's life. The rules are tailored to this specific phase of extreme *Vata* aggravation and tissue depletion, just as one would follow a specific regimen for winter or summer.

रक्तक्षयात् प्रजायन्त्या वायुः प्रकुपितो भृशम् ।

सूतिकां सर्वरोगैश्च व्याधिभिः प्रपीडयेत् ॥ (अ.ह.उ.१/४६)

Due to the loss of blood during delivery, *Vata* becomes severely aggravated. This aggravated *Vata* can afflict the new mother (*Sutika*) with all types of diseases. This *shloka* establishes the core pathogenesis: *Raktaksaya* (depletion of *Rakta dhātu*) leading to *Vataprakopa* (severe vitiation of *Vata dosha*). *Vata*, in its aggravated state, is the primary etiological factor for

over 80 diseases. Without proper care, this imbalance becomes the seed (*bija*) for future morbidity. The role of *Swasthavritta* is to prevent this seed from taking root.

***Sutika Paricharya* as a Long-Term Preventive Strategy**

By adhering to this structured regimen, a woman systematically addresses the root vulnerabilities created by childbirth:

- **Prevents Musculoskeletal Issues:** By pacifying *Vata*, it prevents chronic back pain, joint pains, and pelvic floor dysfunction.
- **Builds Metabolic Resilience:** By strengthening *Agni*, it lays a strong foundation for metabolic health, preventing obesity and related disorders.
- **Fortifies Mental Health:** By providing mental and emotional sanctuary, it drastically reduces the risk of long-term mood disorders.
- **Enhances Immunity (*Ojas*):** Through *rasayana* (rejuvenative) herbs and diet, it builds a robust immune system, reducing susceptibility to infections and autoimmune conditions later in life.

DISCUSSION

Sutika Paricharya anticipates modern priorities: thermal comfort, early mobility without strain, guided nutrition, sleep protection, and mind-body regulation. The phased approach prevents premature exposure to heavy, cold, or incompatible foods that could perpetuate *āma* and *Vāta* aggravation. Coupling classical measures (*abhyanga*, *mṛdu svedana*, *dīpana* -*pācana*, *rasāyana*) with structured pelvic floor.

CONCLUSION

Sutika Paricharya is the highest application of *Swasthavritta*. It moves beyond the concept of mere "rest" to a proactive, physiological and psychological recalibration. It recognizes that the health of a mother is the foundation of the family's and society's health. By investing in a period of intensive, preventive care, we are not just helping a woman recover from birth; we are safeguarding her future, ensuring she emerges stronger, healthier, and more resilient for the decades of life and motherhood ahead. It is a timeless protocol that modern healthcare systems must recognize and integrate to ensure the holistic, long-term well-being of women. It can serve as a powerful preventive strategy for long-term women's health—supporting metabolic, musculoskeletal, reproductive, and mental well-being. Embedding this protocol

into public health and clinical practice, with safety screens and measurable outcomes, can bridge classical wisdom with contemporary evidence-based prevention.

REFERENCES

1. Shrimad Vagbhat or Vruddha Vagbhat, Sashilekha Sanskrit commentary by Indu, AshtangaSangraha, Edition: 2002, Chaukhambha Sanskrit series, Varanasi, 2002; Chp.3/39.
2. Vruddhajivak, revised by vatsyahindi commentary by vidyotini, Kashyapa Samhita, or Vruddha Jivakiya Tantra, Edition 7th, Chaukhambha Prakashan, Varanasi, 2012; (Khil Sthana Chp.11).
3. Maharishi Sushruta, Shridalhanacharya, Dr.Ambikadutta Shastri, Sushruta Samhita, Edition:Reprint: 2021 Chaukhambha Sanskrit Sansthan, Varanasi, 2021; (Sharira Sthana 10/16).
4. Charaksamhita of Agnivesa, Edited by Vaidhyamanorama Hindi Commentary by Acharya Vidhyadhar Shukla and Prof. Ravi Dutt Tripathi, Reprint 2017; Chaukhambha Sanskrit Pratishthan, Delhi. (Sharira Sthana Chp.8).
5. Shrimad Vagbhat, Nirmalahindi commentary by Dr Brahmananda Tripathi, Ashtanghridyam, Edition: 2003, Chaukhambha Sanskrit Pratishthan, Delhi, 2003; (Sharira Sthana Chp.9).