

KSHEERPAKA IN PREGNANCY: A LITERARY REVIEW

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Article Received on 30 April 2026,
Article Revised on 19 May 2026,
Article Published on 01 June 2026,

<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.20438706>

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How to cite this Article: ¹*Dr. Lina Sarma,
²Dr. Yanbeni Humtsoe. (2026). Ksheerpaka In
Pregnancy: A Literary Review. World Journal of
Pharmaceutical Research, 15(11), 293-298.
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ABSTRACT

Nutritional status at time of pregnancy refers to adequate nutrition before and during pregnancy which has greater potential impact for the long term health of a child. Ksheerpaka refers to a medicated milk decoction where herbs are processed with milk and water on mandagni(mild fire) until only the milk remains. During pregnancy, this is considered a good garbhaposhaka and garbhasthapak ausadhi kalpana. Brihatrayis, laghutrayis, Sahasrayogam and Arogyakalpadruma are important Ayurvedic texts which have exclusive references and preparation techniques on Garbhini Ksheerapakas. To assess the benefits of this preparation during pregnancy with ayurvedic and modern view is the aim of the study. Furthermore its modern day challenges and future scope to make it accessible is the secondary aim of the study.

KEYWORDS: Ksheerpaka, Garbhini paricharya, Pregnancy, Antenatal care, Milk decoctions.

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda regards the women and her ability to produce and care for children as the basis of family life, which is the very basic foundation of society .Because, if women of a society will be healthy, only then the society will be healthy. Thus, Nutritional status at time of pregnancy refers to adequate nutrition before and during pregnancy which has greater potential impact

for a long term health of a child. Ksheerapaka refers to a medicated milk decoction where herbs are processed with milk and water until only the milk remains. During pregnancy, this is considered a good garbhaposhaka and garbhasthapak ausadhi kalpana. Brihatrayis, laghutrayis, Sahasrayogam and Arogyakalpadruma are important Ayurvedic texts which have exclusive references on Garbhini Ksheerapakas. As per this reference, different drugs in the form of Ksheerapaka (medicated milk decoction) are advocated monthwise throughout pregnancy. These Garbhini Ksheerapakas have added benefit of the effect of drug along with milk to prevent or relieve minor ailments like pedal oedema, backache, constipation and prevent complications like diabetes, eclampsia, pre-term labour etc. Additionally Brihatrayis have mentioned milk as an important dietary regimen during pregnancy. This study aims to evaluate the efficacy of ksheerpaka formulations during pregnancy.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

A thorough research is done accordingly through ayurvedic texts and literature for preparing the results of the study.

Ksheer

Ksheer (milk) is considered as Rasayana(rejuvenative), *Jeevaneeya* (life-sustaining) and *Satmya* (wholesome) to all human beings from birth. The classical scriptures describe milk as possessing a sweet taste (*Madhura Rasa*), a cooling potency (*Sheeta Virya*), and a heavy, unctuous quality (*Guru* and *Snigdha Guna*), which allows it to effectively pacify Vata and Pitta doshas while nourishing the seven *Dhatus* (bodily tissues). While cow's milk is considered as the most superior for its *Rasayana* and brain-*Medhya* properties, the classics meticulously details seven other varieties—including buffalo, goat, and camel milk—each with distinct therapeutic uses ranging from treating insomnia to managing respiratory distress. Beyond its role as a food, Ksheer serves as a *Sahapana*(vital medicinal medium) in Ayurvedic treatment, used in the preparation of *Ksheerapaka* (medicated milk decoctions) and as an *Anupana* (adjuvant) to enhance the absorption of herbal formulations and mitigate their potential harshness.

Ksheerpaka

Traditionally categorized under *Pancha-vidha Kashaya Kalpana* (five basic forms of medicine), it serves as a bridge between nutrition and therapeutics. There are more than fifty formulations described in the classics of ksheerpaka which are prepared from different herbs. Milk is the main ingredient and used as a media for the formulation. Ksheerpaka is

categorized as a Samskara (processing method) that transforms milk into a potent medicinal vehicle.

Benefits of Ksheerpaka Kalpana

1. Tikshnata of the processed drugs gets reduced.
2. Increases guna(quality) of the drug.
3. Increases palatability.
4. Increases Digestibility.

Importance of Ksheerpaka kalpanas during pregnancy

1. **Bio-availability:** Milk is *Guru* (heavy) and *Sheetal* (cooling). Boiling it with herbs and water reduces its heaviness, making it easier for the pregnant woman's *Agni* to process.
2. **Targeted Action:** By using specific herbs like **Shatavari** (*Asparagus racemosus*) or **Bala** (*Sida cordifolia*), the milk acts as a *Garbhashthapaka*—an agent that stabilizes the foetus and prevents miscarriage.
3. **Dosha Management:** It primarily pacifies *Vata* (nervous system and movement) and *Pitta* (metabolic heat), both of which can fluctuate significantly during gestation.
4. **Micronutrient density:** While modern prenatal vitamins provide isolated minerals, Ksheerpakas provide a whole-food matrix of nutrients, including Vitamin B12, Phosphorus, and herbal polyphenols.

Preparation of Ksheerpaka kalpana

Samhitas	Drug	Milk	Water	Reduced to
Sarangadhar	1 part	8 parts	32 parts	8 parts
Yadavji Trikamji	1 part	15 parts	15 parts	15 parts

Method of preparation- Make the drug part in yavakuta (coarse powder) form. This increases the surface area for better extraction, then combine the drug, milk, and water in a stainless steel in the above fixed ratio. Place the mixture on mandagni(low flame). It is crucial to use low heat to prevent the milk from burning or curdling and to allow the active principles of the herb to infuse slowly. Continue boiling and stirring occasionally until all the added water has evaporated and only the milk part remains. Once the volume reduces back to the original quantity of milk used, remove it from the heat and strain the mixture through a clean muslin cloth while it is still warm. Ksheerpaka is typically consumed fresh and warm.

Some Ksheerpaka kalpanas mentioned in classics

1. Milk processed with kasmari, madhuka and sita is beneficial for garbha sosha or vata avipanna garbha (Ch.Chi.95/28). Vagbata also mentions the use of above drugs for garbha sosha(IUGR foetus) and vata affected garbha.
2. Charaka opines the use of milk and Madhura-Siddha Ksheera (milk processed with sweet herbs) throughout the first seven months. The use of Gokshura Ksheerpaka in the 6th month to prevent edema as well as urogenital problems is one of the important aspect of Masanumasik Gabhini paricharya.
3. Shalaparni and prishniparni (vidarigandhadi gana) ksheerpaka is beneficial to stabilize the foetus and prevent garbha sosha during last two trimesters of pregnancy (Su.Sha.10)
4. Madhura ausadhi (yastimadhu, shatavari, aswagandha) siddha ksheerpaka is beneficial for the mother to prevent muscle wasting, promoting fetal growth as well supporting pregnancy (As.Hr.Sha.1)
5. Nyayopam ksheerpaka is mentioned in Sahasrayoga, a Keraliyan Ayurvedic classic for balancing vata disorders in pregnancy. It also mentions ksheerpaka prepared with laja, ambu to control garbhini chardi(emesis gravidarum). Sahasrayoga mentions 9 drugs and its ksheerpaka formulations during 9 months of pregnancy consecutively first Bala, Lakshmana, Bruhati, Amsumathi, Amruta, Nidigdiga, Yavaka, Morada and Shatvari. All of them ensures tridosha samana and bala vardhana(increasing strength) during pregnancy.
6. Arogyakalpadrum another Keraliyan ayurvedic text mentions about Garbhini Ksheerpakas same like the sahasrayoga except for Lakshmana or Puskarmoola during 1st month, Bruhati, Ksheerivriksha Kwath during 3rd month and Shatavari, Jeeraka, Nagara during 9th month.
7. In the Keraliyan tradition (rooted in ancient texts), the Bala Ksheerpaka is perhaps the most vital. It is believed that the *Siddha Ksheera* (medicated milk) acts as a "Preconception to Postnatal" bridge, ensuring that the mother's *Dhatus* (tissues) do not deplete while the fetus grows.

Modern view of Ksheerpaka kalpana

The modern view of this process bridges the gap between Ayurvedic principles and contemporary pharmacology, focusing on bioavailability, lipophilic extraction, and palatability. From a modern perspective, milk is a complex emulsion consisting of water, proteins (casein) and fats. In Ksheerpaka kalpana due to the preparation technique following

benefits are seen-

- **Dual Extraction:** Many phytochemicals are either water-soluble or fat-soluble. Milk acts as a comprehensive solvent that can extract both. Protection of the heat sensitive compound is another advantage as milk protein masks the important phytochemicals of the compound.
- **Bioavailability:** The fat globules in milk facilitate the absorption of lipophilic (fat-loving) drugs across the intestinal membrane, acting much like a modern **lipid-based drug delivery system (LBDDS)**.
- **Buffering Action:** Milk proteins can act as a buffer, reducing the gastric irritation often caused by potent herbs (e.g., *Guggulu* or *Lasuna*).

From preparation point of view, scientifically it is found that the prolonged boiling with water ensures that the water-soluble active principles are extracted first, while the subsequent reduction to a milk-only consistency concentrates the fat-soluble components and creates a stable, homogenized medicated liquid.

CONCLUSION

The literary review of Garbhini Ksheerpaka underscores its significance as a specialized therapeutic and nutritional intervention in Ayurvedic prenatal care (*Garbhini Paricharya*). In the modern era, the primary challenge facing Ksheerpaka Kalpana is its extremely short shelf life, as the high moisture and protein content make it a prime medium for microbial growth. Also daily consumption during pregnancy is a tiresome job. To address this, contemporary pharmaceutical science often employs spray-drying or freeze-drying (lyophilization) to convert the medicated milk into a stable, instant powder that retains its phytochemical integrity while being easier to transport and store. Further more, the global rise in lactose intolerance has led to the exploration of plant-based emulsion though these require further standardization to match the fat-extraction efficiency of cow's milk. There is also an increasing focus on analytical standardization, where techniques like HPTLC and HPLC are used to ensure that the boiling process effectively transfers active markers from the raw herb into the milk matrix, moving the practice from traditional "rule of thumb" preparation to a precise, evidence-based pharmaceutical protocol.

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