

Importance of *Ahar* and *Poshan* in Prevention of *Garbhavyapad*

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Abstract

In today's clinical practice it is found that several diseases are caused by combination of faulty selection of food, malnutrition, adulteration in food and wrong food processing methods. Nutrition being a prime life support, its importance sustained at every stage of life, including intrauterine life of human being. Number of disorders related to foetal growth and development called *Garbhavyapada* are explained in *Ayurved* texts which are having close concern with maternal diet, nutrition and lifestyle. Rather food and nutrition is prime responsible factor for growth and development. As per texts *Mithya Aahar Sevana* is basic cause of *Garbhavyapada*. In recent era various types of fast food recipes with delicious tests, flavour and colours are available but their nutritional values are suspicious. In spite of availability of better medical services and diagnostic technology, evidence of gestational foetal disease (*Garbhavyapad*) is persistent over a period of decades. Traditional home made food properties as well as *Ayurvedic* concepts of diet and nutrition are very much essential to correct these conditions. Concepts of *Laghu*, *Guru*, *Snigdha*, *Balya*, *Rasayana*, *Jivaniya*, *Santarpan*, *Poshana* are having multidimensional action on body elements and resulting into better nourishment. It not only supports maternal health but also beneficial for proper nourishment and development of upcoming generations. Pre conceptional as well as antenatal role of diet and nutrition will definitely help to reduce the evidence of *Garbhavyapada* with improvement in quality of pregnancy outcome.

Keywords

Garbhavyapad, *Aahara*, *Poshan*



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INTRODUCTION

Dietary and nutritional needs of women at her different life stages are much specific and very much essential for her health. In childhood, during puberty, reproductive years, antenatal period, lactating phase and also menopausal years are special zones which are concerned with diet and nutrition. Nutritional diet helps to achieve optimum growth during adolescent age and restores body nutrients before pregnancy. Nutritional deficiency is not so differ in urban and rural society. In rural society lack of food is present while in urban society food processing, adulteration and faulty food products are responsible for ill nutrition. Hence it is very much essential to concern this issue of nutrition and reproductive health to prevent *Garbhavyapad*. *VikrutAhara* or *MithyaAhara Sevana* i.e., consumption of faulty food is one of the prime causative factor which results into defective pregnancy outcomes. Spontaneous abortions, intra uterine growth retardation, oligohydramnios, premature labour and small for gestational age newborns are some of the complications which can be entitled under *Garbhvyapadas*. In modern science, nutrition is defined in terms of basic elements like vitamins, minerals,

micronutrients, antioxidants while diet is explained in terms of carbohydrates, proteins, fats, and calories. In *Ayurveda* texts it is explained in terms of *PathyaAahar*, *Aahar Rasa*, and *Dhatu Poshana*. By understanding *Ayurvedic* dietary concepts with collaboration of modern technology will help to support maternal health and will prevent nutritional deficiencies of foetus during gestational period.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

1. To review complete *Ayurved* literature related to *Ahar* and *Poshan*.
2. To review complete literature related to *Garbhavyapada*.
3. To establish role of *Ahar* (diet) and *Poshana* (nutrition) in *Garbhavyapada*.

AYURVED LITERATURE REVIEW:

Importance of *Aahara* (Diet or food)¹: All living animals pursuits for *Aahara*. *Aahara* is responsible for existence of colour and lustre of skin, voice, life activities and happiness. It is also important for satisfaction, nourishment, strength and intelligence hence food is having its special importance in life of animal. One should not eat *Aahara* out of his greed .He must



consume it willingly and by knowing it properly. Living body grows only on *Aahara* hence it is very important to examine it before its consumption.

Ahara Sevan Abhav (Effects of starvation)²: In the state of poor intake of *Aahara* the person will lose his voice, skin lustre, vision and becomes thin. In further state it leads to difficulty in speech, tiredness, pain in the heart, giddiness after extreme starvation.

Description of Ahara:

1. Food is best mean for healthy status of body³.
2. Person who eats healthy food with all rules and regulation can live disease free and will survives up to 36000 nights i.e. hundred years with blessings of good peoples⁴.
3. There is nothing other than food which supports life and there is no better medicine than food⁵.

AaharVidhiVisheshaytanani (Factors deciding special features and efficacy of food)⁶:

There are eight factors which are responsible for processing of food from its production metabolism. Not all dietary supplements are always useful for body or none of the food product is waste. The nutritional efficacy of food depends upon these factors as follows.

1. Prakrati (Nature of food): Basic constitutional properties of *Ahara* are very much important for its action on body. *Ahara* may be of *Guru, Laghu, Ushna, Tikshna, Snigdha, Ruksha* qualities which decides anabolism or catabolism in the body. *Snigdha* causes weight gain while *Ruksha* causes weight loss.

2. Karan (Food processing): Preparation of food from raw material and the methods used for it has significant effect on nutritional quality of food. Homemade recipes will be always of better nutritional quality than outside prepared food from same material.

3. Sanyoga (combination): Mixing of certain food products will change food quality and property e.g. milk causes production of cough but if it is taken with turmeric it will help to reduce cough. Ghee and honey are useful for better nutrition but when they consumed in combination, will turn to poison.

4. Rashi(Quantity): Food quantity is very much important as concerned to nutrition. Quantity of food material and of its constitutional elements are most important for nutrition. Selection of food quantity for



individuals depend upon their requirements and digestive capacity called *Agni*.

5. *Desh* (Region): Nutritional property of food strictly depends upon the geographical area where it is cultivated e.g. dates produced in gulf countries are always having better quality than of Indian origin.

6. *Kala* (Time): Season of production of food material is very important concerned to its nutritional property. Any non seasonal fruit will definitely have different contents than same fruit produced in its particular season.

7. *Upyogsanstha* (System using food): Surroundings around consumer and circumstances while consumption of food will definitely affect nutrition as well as efficacy of food. State of full relaxation with happy mind and soul with desperate affinity towards food will be definitely favourable for body. Controversially a good quality and well processed food if consumed at dirty place, with fear in mind, with hurry or interaction by other disturbances will not be useful for body at expected level.

8. *Upayokta* (Consumer): The process of nutrition by food is ultimately depends upon the person who eats the food. His *prakruti*, *agni*, *bala*, general health, habits of food

consumption and suitability of food with him will affect metabolism .

***DhatuPoshana*⁷ :** Human body constitutes its basic elements called *dhatu* which are nourished by process called *DhatuPoshana*. This concept states that in the process of digestion, food is converted into useful part called *Aahar* and wastage called *mala*. *Ahar* rasa having potential to nourish all body *dhatu* . *Ahar* rasa and its metabolism is responsible for proper nutrition and development of *dhatu*.

Role of *Madhura* rasa in *DhatuPoshana*⁸ : It is forever suitable for body from childhood to old age. By satisfying body it enhances all seven *dhatu* and extends lifespan. *Madhur* rasa increases strength, colour of skin and destroys acidosis, toxicity, burning tendencies and thirst from body. It makes hair strong and gives stability to body and helpful for production of breast milk. *Madhur* rasa is having healing property and it makes vision more clear.

***Ahara* having *Madhur* rasa:** Ghee, wheat, rice, milk, butter, jaggery, sugar, *shatavari*, *bala*, meat of desert (*Jangal*) animals etc.

***Ahara* indicated for *Garbhini*^{9a,9b} :** Almost all *Ayurved* texts have advised month wise additional diet plan, with routine diet to pregnant lady to have better nutrition and



maternal well being. In brief it can be understood by following chart.

Table1. Showing month wise additional diet plan for *Garbhini*.

Month of Pregnancy	Diet Plan	Month of Pregnancy	Diet Plan
1	<i>Madhur, Satmya Ahara</i> , milk	6	<i>MadhurAushadhi</i> , Milk, Ghee, <i>Gokshur</i>
2	<i>MadhurAushadhi</i> , Milk	7	<i>MadhurAushadhi</i> , Milk, Ghee
3	Milk, honey, ghee, <i>Madhurahar</i>	8	Milk, <i>MadhuraAushadhi</i>
4	Milk, butter, meat of <i>Jangal</i> animals	9	<i>MadhurAushadhi</i> , <i>Mansrasa</i>
5	Milk and ghee, Rice with Milk		

Garbhaposhan (Nourishment of foetus):

Aahar rasa formed in the maternal body from the food eaten by her gets divided in three parts¹⁰. One part for maternal nourishment, second for foetal development and third is for production of breast milk. Foetal umbilicus receives nourishment from *garbhnadi* (umbilical cord) which is attached to *Apara* (placenta) at the other end. Placenta is indirectly connected to maternal heart and receives *Ahar* rasa from it by anastomosis of vessels around placenta. *Matruj*, *Pitruj*, *Rasa*¹¹, *Satmyaj*, *Satvaj*, *Aatmaj* are six factors responsible for growth and development of foetus. *Rasaj* factor itself denotes importance of nourishment for foetal growth. *Sushruta* explained existence of *Rasavahanadi* for transportation of *Aahar* rasa from mother to foetus.

Role of PanchMahabhuta in

Garbhposhan:¹² *Vayu*(*Vat*) causes division, *Teja*(Heat) causes *pachan* (conversion) ,*Aap*(Water) causes *Kledan*(

liquefaction), *Prutvi* (Earth) causes *Sanhanan*(solidification) and *Aakash* (*Space*) causes *Vivardhan*(growth) of foetus.

Effect of non adopting the indicated diet by pregnant women¹³: Regular excess use

of *Ushna*, *Tikshna Ahara* or consumption of inadequate food by pregnant women may leads to *Garbhasrava*(miscarriage) , *Garbhapata*(abortion), *GarbhaShosh*(IUGR), *AntarmrutGarbha*(IUD) and *Akalprasav* (premature labour).

GarbhaVyapad (diseases of foetus)¹⁴

:*Upavishtak*, *Nagodara*, *Makkal*, *Mudhgarbha*, *Vishkambha*, *Gudhgarbha*, *Jarayudosh*a and *Garbhapat* are eight disease of foetus explained by *Sharangdharsamhita*. These conditions show signs of abnormal foetal development.

Causes of Garbhavyapad: Number of causes responsible for *Garbhvyapad* are described in texts. Their causes related to diet and nutrition are as below.



1. Practicing prohibited factors for foetal growth leads to *Garbhapata*¹⁵.
2. Habitat to excess thirst and starvation may leads to *Garbhapata*¹⁶.
3. *Upawas, atiruksha, katutiktabhojanacan* cause *Garbhapata*¹⁷.
4. If foetus does not get adequate food will leads to *Garbhashosha*¹⁸.
5. Practicing starvation or keeping fast, hesitance towards *Snigdha Ahara* and use of *Vataprakopak Ahara* leads to *Nagodara* or *Upshuska*¹⁹.

Clinical presentation of *Garbhavyapada*:

1. *Garbhasrava and Pata*¹⁷: If products of conception, up to four month gestation, flows out of uterus then it is *Garbhasrava* and if it occurs in fifth or sixth month is called as *Garbhapata*. In modern science these conditions are described under hemorrhage in early pregnancy which includes miscarriage and abortion. Amongst many causes malnutrition is one of the causes of abortion.

2. *Upavishtak*²⁰: Faulty diet by pregnant women leads to abnormal secretion from genital tract and due to this further growth of the fetus is restricted. This condition is called as *Upavishtak* which resembles to intra uterine growth retardation in modern science. According to *Ashtangasangrah* due

to consumption of non indicated diet by *Garbhini* after fourth months of pregnancy, compression of *Rasavahanadi* occurs due to vitiation of *vata*. This result into interruption of further growth of foetus called as *Upasushak* or *Upavishtak*.

3. *Nagodar*¹⁹: Long and repeated starvation, hesitation to consume *Snigdha* (fat) food by *Garbhini* leads to dryness of fetus with no growth seen in it, called as *Nagaodar*. Such foetus may remain inside the uterus for longer time period and will not shows pulsation (or movements).

4. *Lingarbha*²¹: Due to high influence of *vatadosha* on *stota* foetus lies inside uterus without any growth and pulsation (or movements) which further results into death of foetus is called as *Lingarbha*. It can be compared with severe IUGR.

Observations: The literary review from various *Ayurved* texts regarding *Aharposhan* and *Garbhvyapad* shows following outcomes.

1. Food is basic life support and it is best medicine for prevention of diseases.
2. Nutritional potential of food depends upon *Aharvidhivisheshayanani*.
3. *Ayurveda* texts have detailed description about nourishment of foetus from maternal *Ahar rasa* with well organized



transportation system made up of *Apara*, *Garbhnadi* and *Nabhi* of foetus.

4. *Garbhvyapdas* are derived from non disciplinary orders of food consumption.

5. *Madhur* rasa is best for nourishment, strength and it is desperately indicated in pregnancy diet.

6. *Ayurveda* has additionally indicated consumption of rich sources of proteins, fat, calcium and iron in the form of milk, ghee, butter and meat of desert animals.

DISCUSSION

Good quality food with enriched nutritional properties is essential for growth, development and existence of healthy life. From very beginning i.e. gestational time, nutritional demands are fulfilled by various mechanisms of digestive system with help of blood circulation. Growth is affected by genetic combination, surroundings, lifestyle habits, mental peace and available food sources. Lack of these factors may lead to intrauterine restriction of growth and development. Such conditions directly affect the life of growing foetus or new born. It has to face lifelong complications and the life quality affected at extensive level. Such disorders have been described in *Ayurved* texts under concept of *Garbhvyapad*.

Ayurveda essentially deals with preventive aspects of human life by means of specific rules and regulations called *Swasthvritta*. Guidelines for food, sleep, exercise, bath, sexual act, seasonal adaptations are thoroughly described in different parts of *Ayurved Samhitas*. The concepts regarding diet and nutrition described in *Ayurveda* are highly considerable regarding intrauterine growth. Lack of food, faulty combinations of food or non transportation of food by body system will leads to *Garbhavyapaadas*. Planning for good food and nutritional diet is very essential aspect and it will result into better pregnancy outcomes. Additional diet advised for pregnant women in terms of meat of desert animals, milk and butter, ghee will provide enough quantity of iron, calcium, proteins, fats essential for foetal growth. People should get educated about diet and concept of balanced diet which has to be implemented. Importance of *Aharvidhivisheshaytanani* should be considered to improve availability of good food and its impact on body.

CONCLUSION

Above references and discussion can definitely conclude the role of *Ahar* and

Poshan in prevention of *Garbhavyapadas*.
Implementation of the basic principles behind diet, nutrition growth and development will surely reduce the intrauterine foetal complications and will improve pregnancy outcome.



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