

## CONTRACEPTIVES IN AYURVEDA

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### ABSTRACT

Family planning is important for health of a mother and her children, as well as the family's economic status as parents are responsible for providing education, shelter, clothing, and food for their children. Family planning also known as contraception which includes all measures temporary and permanent, designed to prevent pregnancy due to coital act. According to WHO it is defined as "A way of thinking and living that is adopted voluntarily upon the basis of knowledge, attitude and responsible decisions by individuals and couples, in order to promote health and welfare of the family group and thus contribute effectively to the social development of a country. In *Ayurveda* it is termed as *Garbha Nirodha* which means control of conception. Various side effects have been observed with modern contraceptives. An incantation in the *Rigveda* says "A man with many children succumbs to miseries". This is perhaps the oldest statement with a suggestion against a large family. Some local and oral contraceptives described in the ancient classics and treatises like *Yogaratakara*, *Brihat Yoga Tarangini*, *Tantra Sara Sangraha*, *Brihat Nighantu Ratnakara*, *Rasa Ratna Samucchya* etc are listed. Some claims have been tested scientifically and some yet to be tested. This has been based on the wise knowledge of physiology of conception, healthy methods of fertilization, stressing on the quality of progeny and family welfare.

**KEYWORDS:** *Garbha Nirodha*, Contraception.

### INTRODUCTION

The nature's message is alarmingly precise – multiply and perish or control and survive. If mankind is to have a future, if the dreams and aspirations of every race of humanity is to blossom into reality, voluntary control of population is the only means. Control of population rests upon two important factors – the motivation for control and the means of control. Motivation is closely allied to the social, economic and most important of all the educational status of the citizens. The means employed to control the population is as important as the desire to control.

#### Malthurian Theory

Thomas Robert Malthus came to prominence for his 1798 essay on population growth in it he argued that population multiplies geometrically and food arithmetically, therefore whenever the food supply increases population will rapidly grow to eliminate the abundance. He believed that through preventive checks and positive checks the population would be control to balance the food supply with the population level.

#### Definition

Contraception is a method which allows sexual intercourse and yet prevents the conception. WHO in 1971 defined it as "a way of thinking and living that is adopted voluntarily upon the basis of knowledge, attitude by individuals and couples in order to promote health and welfare of family and thus contribute effectively to the social development of the country." The term contraception includes all measures, temporary and permanent, designed to prevent pregnancy due to the coital act. It is useful to limit the size and age structure of a family is birth control in family planning.

#### Garbha Nirodha

*Garbha* means fetus, *Nirodha* means control, So *Garbhanirodha* means control of conception which prevents further fertilization and formation of fetus.

#### Atharva Veda

In Atharva Veda, we have reference of the use of drugs that render the man infertile.

तम् वीरुधम् श्रेष्ठतम् शिश्रुथरयोशधो । एमम् मे अद्य पुरुषं  
क्लीभ मोपशिनवृद्धि ॥ (अथर्व वेद ६/१३८/१)

ये ते नाड्यो देवे क्रिते यदोस्थिस्तथि त्रिशन्यं। ते ते भिनभि  
शम्ययमुस्य अभिमुश्कयोह॥ (अथर्व वेद ६/१३८/४)

This description has a far reaching implication. This probably is the first documented description in the world, on Vasectomy. Not only that, in all probability it represents the first documented work to reflect the role of testes- thereby also implying the knowledge of the role of semen in conception. One of the earliest to acknowledge this fact was probably an ancient Egyptian Papyrus (1550 BC) written some 4000years ago. It prescribes a method as sophisticated as the use of modern diaphragm- the use of a mechanical barrier, a plug made from the droppings of crocodiles, as means of birth control!

### Charaka Samhita

Acharya Caraka (2 BC.) explained in 'Charaka Samhita' in the chapter 'Jathisuthriyam Shareeram' about procreating excellent progeny.

स्त्री पुंसयोरव्यापन्न शुक्र शोणीत गर्भाशयो श्रेयसिम्  
प्रजमिच्यते तदर्थभिनिवृत्तिकर्म कर्णोपदेक्षयमह॥ (च.सु.८/३)

### Sushruta Samhita

Acharya Sushruta specifically explained about spacing of children as a measure to guard the quality of the offspring.<sup>[7,8]</sup>

निवृत प्रसवयस्थु पुनह शद्ब्योवयेभ्य ऊध्वम् प्रसवमनयह  
नार्यह कुमारि अल्पायुर्भवति.... (सु. सु १०/८६)

As Acharyas mentioned in the classics - *Rutu*, *Kshetra*, *Ambu* and *Beeja* are the essential factors for healthy conception. In *Ashtanga Hridaya* mentioned that for conception we need healthy *Garbhashaya*, *Marga*, *Shuddha Rakta*, *Shukra*, proper functioning *Vayu* and *Soumanasata*. If any abnormalities found in the above mentioned factors then it prevents conception.



Vaginal insertion of *Saindhava lavana* and *Taila* before coitus.<sup>[2,4]</sup>



- *Yoni Dhoopana* with *Nimba kastha* after

### Medieval Period

In medieval period (600-1200 AD) that contraception received maximum impetus.

पिप्पलि विडंग टण्कण समचूर्णम् य पिबेत्पयसा । रुतु समये न  
हि तस्या गर्भः समजयते कदपि ॥  
(यो. योनि रोग चिकित्सा १०)

*Yogaratanakara* (17AD) says Administration of *Pippali*, *Vidanga* and *Tankana* powder in equal proportion taken during Menstrual period Prevents conception.<sup>[1]</sup>

तैलविलम् सैन्दव खण्डमादौ निध्या निज योनि मध्ये ।

नरेण स अर्धम् रतिमतनेतिमप्त न लभते कदचित्॥  
(यो. योनि रोग चिकित्सा २)

Keeping a *Pottali* containing *Saindhava* in the vagina & then removing it prior to cohabitation prevents conception.

### Ananga Ranga

A 16<sup>th</sup> century of *Kalyana Malla* says

कदम्बस्य फलम् पदम् माक्षिकय दिन त्रयम् ।  
पीथमुष्णोदकेनैव वन्ध्यत्व प्रतिपदयेत्॥(अनन्ग रंग ७९/६)

*Kadambha phala* with honey taken with hot water for 3 days during the menstrual period will leads to women sterile.

रक्षो भुरुः भीजम् पलर्धम् तण्डुलम्भस। रतौ पीथम् तु सप्तहम्  
वन्ध्यम् कुर्यात् वरन्गनम्॥ (अनन्ग रन्ग ८०/६) Pulp of

*Vibhitaka Beeja* ½ pala (24grams) *Tandulodaka* For 7 days following Menstruation will leads to women sterile.<sup>[6]</sup>

### Garbha Nirodhaka Aoushadi

Applying the paste prepared with the *Palasha Beeja* and *Madhu* during *Rutukala* into vagina.<sup>[2,3]</sup>

*Ritukala*.<sup>[2,5]</sup>

- Vaginal filling with *Dhatturmula Churna* before coitus.<sup>[5]</sup>
- Tying the root of *Dhattura* in waist before coitus.<sup>[4]</sup>



*Yoni Varti* prepared out of *Iksvaku* (*Lagineria vulgaris*), *Danti* (*Baliospermum montanum*, *Pippali* (*Piper longum*), *Jaggery*, *Madanaphala* (*Randia dumetorum*), *Kinva* (Fermented liquid), *Yasti* (*Glyzyrhiza glabra*) and *Snuhi ksira* (Latex of *Euphorbia nerifolia*) induces menstrual flow.<sup>(5)</sup>

#### Oral contraceptives methods in Ayurveda

पाठापत्रमृतुस्नाता पीत्वा गर्भं न धारयेत् ।

(यो. योनि रोग चिकित्सा १०)



- *Pana* prepared with *Patha Patra* given after *Ritukala*.<sup>[5]</sup>
- Administration of *Tanduliyaka mula* with



- *Talisa patra* and *Gairika* in equal quantity of 1

*Karsha matra* should be taken during *Ritukala*.<sup>[5]</sup>

तण्डुलीयकमूलानि पिष्ट्वा तण्डूलवारिणा । ऋत्वन्तेतुत्रहयं  
पीत्वा बन्ध्याः कुर्वन्ति योषितः ॥ (यो. योनि रोग चि )

- Use of *Tanduliyaka Mula* pounded in rice water



*Tandulodaka* after *rutukala* for three days.<sup>[5]</sup>

आरनालपरिषेपितं ऋयं या जपाकुसुममत्ति पुष्पिणी ।  
सत्पुराणगुडमुष्टिसेविनी सा दधाति नाहि गर्भमन्गना ॥  
(यो. योनि रोग चिकित्सा २)



- Administration of *Aaranaala pushpa* along with *Kanji* and *Guda* for three days.
- Administration of *Japa Pushpa* pounded with *Kanji* followed by intake of *Guda* during *Ritukala* for three days.<sup>[5]</sup>

तालीसगैरिके पीते बिडालपदमात्रके । शीताम्बुना चतुथेअह्नि  
बन्ध्या नारी प्रजायते ॥ (यो. योनि रोग चिकित्सा २)

taken after *Ritukala* for three days.<sup>[5]</sup>

- Administration of Fried *Jyotismati* Leaf paste along with *Japa puspa* and water initiates the menstruation.<sup>[5]</sup>
- Administration of paste prepared with of *Tandula* along with *Devadaru* and *Durva* initiates the menstruation.<sup>[6]</sup>



- Administration of 3 years old Jaggery for 15 days induces permanent sterility.<sup>[6]</sup>
- Administration of *Kashaya* prepared with Rice *Tandulodaka* and *Chitraka Mula* after *Rutukala* for three days.
- Administration of *Vibhitaki bija* with *Tandulodaka* during *Rutukala* for seven days.<sup>[6]</sup>



### Garbhanirodhaka Dravyas

There are various plants used as contraceptives, we can

classify them according to their activity such as estrous cycle disruptors, antiestrogenic, anti-implantation.

**Table 1: Herbal Plants acts as Antioestrogenic Agents.**

Sl. no	Ayurvedic Name	Latin Name	Family	Parts used
1	<i>Aragvadha</i>	<i>Cassia fistula</i>	Caesalpinioideae	Seed
2	<i>Palasha</i>	<i>Butea monosperma</i>	Fabaceae	Root
3	<i>Tambula</i>	<i>Piper betel</i>	Piperaceae	Petiole
4	<i>Tulsi</i>	<i>Ocimum gratissimum</i>	Labiataeae	stem

**Table 2: Herbal Plants acts as Anti-implantation agents.**

Sl no.	Ayurvedic Name	Latin Name	Family	Parts used
1.	<i>Arka</i>	<i>Calotropis procera</i>	Euphorbiaceae	Root
2	<i>Eranda</i>	<i>Ricinus communis</i>	Euphorbiaceae	Seed
3	<i>Haridra</i>	<i>Curcuma longa</i>	Zinziberaceae	Rhizome
4	<i>Madayantika</i>	<i>Lawsonia inermis</i>	Lythraceae	Leaves
5	<i>Japa</i>	<i>Hibiscus rosa-sinensis</i>	Malvaceae	Flower
6	<i>Palandu</i>	<i>Allium cepa</i>	Liliaceae	Bulb
7	<i>Tulsi</i>	<i>Ocimum sanctum</i>	Labiataeae	Leaves
8	<i>Uruman (Khumani)</i>	<i>Prunus armeniaca</i>	Rosaceae	Kernels

**Table 3: Herbal Plants acts as Estrous Cycle Disruptors Agents.**

Sl no.	Ayurvedic Name	Latin Name	Family	Parts used
1	<i>vidanga</i>	<i>Embelia ribes</i>	Myrsinaceae	Berries
2	<i>Nimba</i>	<i>Azadirachta indica</i>	Meliaceae	Flowers and seeds
3	<i>Karvellaka</i>	<i>Momordica charantia</i>	Cucurbitaceae	Seeds
4	<i>Haridra</i>	<i>Curcuma long</i>	Zinziberaceae	Rhizome
5	<i>Vyaghraernad</i>	<i>Jatropha gossipifolia</i>	Euphorbiaceae	Seeds
6	<i>Durva</i>	<i>Cynodon dactylon</i>	Graminaeae	Whole plant
7	<i>Amlavetas</i>	<i>Garcinia cola</i>	Guttifereae	Seeds
8	<i>Patha</i>	<i>Cissampelos pareira</i>	Menispermaceae	Leaves
9	<i>Chitraka</i>	<i>Plumbago zeylanica</i>	plumbaginaceae	Leaves
10	<i>Shatapushpa</i>	<i>Anethum graveolens</i>	Umbellifereae	Seeds

MODERN CONCEPT	PROBABLE COMPARISON IN AYURVEDA
Following safe periods practice or coitus interrupts or abstinence.	Avoiding coitus during <i>Rutukala</i>
Antiovolatory drugs	Changing the normal functioning of <i>Beeja</i>
Intra Uterine contraceptive devices	Altering the functioning of <i>Kshetra</i> by means of mechanical devices.
Vaginal diaphragms / condoms/ surgical methods of contraception	Mechanical barriers in the <i>Marga</i> that prevents the union of reproductive seeds
Oral pills / implants etc.	Alters the physiological status of <i>Ambu, Rasa Dhatu &amp; Artava</i>

## DISCUSSION

- *Rasa Panchaka* of Pippali,<sup>[9,10]</sup> *Rasa* is *katu*, *Vipaka* is *Madhura*, *Virya* *Anushnasheeta*, *Guna* *Laghu*, *Snigdha*, *Tikshna* which acts as antifertility activity.
- *Rasa Panchaka* of Chitraka,<sup>[11]</sup> is *Rasa* *katu*, *Vipaka* *katu*, *Virya* *Ushna*, *Guna* *Laghu* *Ruksha* *Tikshna*, which acts as Anti-implantation activity.
- *Rasa Panchaka* of Nimba,<sup>[12]</sup> are *Rasa* *Tikta*, *Kshaya*, *Vipak* *Katu*, *Virya* *Sheeta*, *Guna* *Laghu*, which acts as spermicidal agent.
- *Rasa Panchaka* of Dhatura,<sup>[13]</sup> *Rasa* *Tikta*, *Katu*, *Vipaka* *Katu*, *Virya* *Ushna*, *Guna* *Laghu*, *Ruksha*, *Vyavayi*, *Vikasi*, which acts as Anti-implantation activity.
- Above mentioned plants which include *Gossypium herbaceum*, *Azadirachta indica*, *Achyranthus aspera*, *Calotropis gigantea* and *Daucus carota* etc., among others. None of these available today fully satisfy the criteria of good contraceptive in Ayurveda.
- The regional research laboratories under the control of central council for research in Ayurveda and Siddha also actively participated in identifying plants having Anti-fertility activity. A number of methods are available as fertility control measures like Oral pills, Vaginal diaphragms, Condoms, Steroidal injections, Implants, Intrauterine devices, Permanent Sterilization techniques etc. But, unfortunately none of these methods provide 100% success. On the other hand they produce a wide range of adverse effects. Keeping this in view; it is felt that, well designed clinical studies are very essential in re-establishing these experimental results of the herbal remedies. Several research establishments at the national and international level are intensely engaged in contraceptive research. In India, investigations on several plants were carried out at the central drug research institute, Lucknow.

## CONCLUSION

Contemporary science has explained various methods for contraception like OCP's, condom, intrauterine devices, skin patches etc. Even Ayurveda has mentioned various single drugs as well as compound formulations as orally and locally, possessing ant fertility activity. These have been used to control the fertility and rural population of developing nations like India. Control of the population during ancient era could have only be dealt by following *Brahmcharya* or by use of certain herbs or *Dravyas*. But use of *Dravyas* may not give effective and safe method to prevent conception as no details are available in any of the *Ayurvedic* classics which gives any assurance in prevention of conception. The validated drugs possess spermicidal, antispermatogenic, anti-ovulatory, anti-implantation, anti-estrogenic activity. These drugs need further evaluation to explore their pharmacological activity as well as toxicity or adverse effects. After complete satisfaction regarding their efficacy as well as safety contraceptive dosage form should be prepared in future by using these drugs.

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