

GARBHOPAGHATAKARA BHAVA – A CONCEPTUAL REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

*Ayurveda* – An ancient system of medicine, along with preventive and curative aspects of health, also explains about obtaining healthy progeny. Pregnancy which is a delicate condition gets affected by enormous factors such as food habits, lifestyle and psychological factors. The foetus, in the intra-uterine life, is in constant relation with the mother for both growth and nourishment. While explaining *Garbhini Paricharya*, the *Ayurvedic* classics have explained about the things to avoid in pregnancy called *Garbhopaghatakara Bhavas*. They are certain factors which when followed by a pregnant lady can harm or destroy the foetus. Data reveals that 10-20% of all pregnancies result in miscarriage, out of which 75% occur before 16<sup>th</sup> week, and 5-10% of the pregnancies lead to Preterm Labor. In today’s fast moving life, all women unknowingly follow certain things which are told as contraindications during pregnancy, due to negligence or unawareness, leading to abortions, preterm labor and other obstetrical complications. Hence, attempt is made to critically study the impact of *Garbhopaghatakara Bhavas* on the mother and progeny.

**KEYWORDS:** Garbhopaghatakara Bhava, Antenatal Care, Abortion, Teratogens.

INTRODUCTION

*Ayurveda* has explained some simple regimen that should be followed by pregnant women throughout her pregnancy for normal and easy process of labour and for getting a healthy child under the heading of *Garbhini Paricharya*. *Acharyas* have explained a detailed and systematic and month wise regimen and a list of do’s and don’ts to be followed in the Antenatal Period. The pregnant women desirous of producing *Uttama Gunayukta* child should give up to be changed to non-congenial diet and mode of life. Certain minor unhealthy habits which may not produce any significant illness in the mother can still cause significant foetal consequences. *Garbhopaghatakara Bhavas* deals with

the factors which are going to cause *upaghata* or *himsa* / harm or destruction to the growing *Garbha*. To avoid the complications caused due to these factors, attempt has been made hereby to analyse the rationality behind the *Garbhopaghatakara Bhavas*.

*Garbhopaghatakara Bhava*

Under this heading, classics have explained certain things which should not be done during pregnancy. To understand this concept explained by the *Acharyas*, we can broadly classify the *Garbhopaghatakara Bhavas* under 3 headings – *Aaharaja Bhava*, *Viharaja Bhava* and *Manasika Bhava*.

*Aaharaja Bhavas*

AHARAJA BHAVAS	
Charaka <sup>[1]</sup>	Ushna, Teekshna, Guru Padartha Sevana, Madakara Aahara Sevana, Madya Sevana, Mamsa Sevana
Sushruta <sup>[2]</sup>	Shushka, Paryushita, Kuthita, Klinna Anna
Ashtanga Sangraha <sup>[3]</sup>	Ati Ushna, Guru, Teekshna, Rooksha anna
Ashtanga Hrudaya <sup>[4]</sup>	Ati Ushna, Teekshna, Guru, Vishtambhi Bhojana
Bhavamishra <sup>[5]</sup>	Devakhatodaka, Mamsa Bhojana
Kashyapa <sup>[6]</sup>	Sheetala Jala, Lashuna Prayoga
Haritha <sup>[7]</sup>	Dvidala Anna Sevana, Vidahi Vastu, Amla Padartha, Mrittika, Soorana Kanda, Rasona, Palandu, Ushna Ksheera
Yoga Ratnakara <sup>[8]</sup>	Kshara Sevana, Dooshita Vishama Anna Sevana

**Teeksha Ushna Padartha Sevana**

It causes *Garbha Srava*, *Garbha Shushka*, *Akala Prasava*, *Garbha Marana*.

Vitiation of the *Vatadi Doshas* causes constriction of blood vessels, hampering the proper supply of nutrients to the foetus and hence *Garbha Shosha* or *Akala Prasava* occurs.

These foods contain chemicals and nitrates which works adversely with RBC and thereby reducing its oxygen carrying role leading to reduced utero-placental flow.

**Shushka, Ruksha, Paryushita Anna Sevana**

It causes *Garbha Shushka*, *Akala Prasava*, *Garbha Marana*.

After attainment of *sara* by the foetus, if *Garbhini* uses these type of food materials, due to improper nutrients there will be inadequate flow of *Rasa* to the foetus. Due to this the foetus does not grow properly and there will be *Garbha Shosha*.

Inadequate calorie intake magnifies the effect of malnutrition during pregnancy and is also associated with lower birth weight in infants' leading to an impaired foetal growth.<sup>[9]</sup>

**Vidahi Anna Sevana**

It causes *Garbha Shosha*, *Akala Prasava*.

Eg. Caffeine found in the beverages such as tea, coffee and chocolates acts as stimulants and should be avoided in pregnancy. Caffeine crosses the placenta and enters foetal circulation and there by leads to adverse effect.<sup>[10]</sup> Tannin present in the tea interferes with iron absorption.

**Guru Padartha Sevana and Ati Tarpana**

Use of over satiation may excessively increase the body weight of mother.

Excessive weight gain increases antepartum and intrapartum complications including foetal macrosomia.

Over weight of the foetus may cause difficulty in labour.<sup>[11]</sup>

**Madya Nityata**

The foetus will be *Trishnalu* (thirsty), *Alpa Smriti* (short memory), *Anavashita Chitta* (fickle mindedness)

Drinking alcohol during pregnancy can cause abnormal foetal development and FAS (Foetal Alcohol Syndrome).<sup>[12]</sup>

Alcohol is especially toxic during the first trimester leading to foetal abnormalities.

**Mamsa Sevana****1. Varaha Mamsa** (Often usage of pork meat)

Causes *Raktaksha* (red eye), *Ati Parusha Roma* (rough body hair), obstructed breathing, snoring in the foetus

Pig can harbor a range of parasites (Eg. *Toxoplasma gondii*,<sup>[13]</sup> – an intracellular protozoan parasite)

If mother is having this type of meat during pregnancy, there will be higher risk to get this type of infection.

Maternal to foetus transmission occurs almost when primary infection is acquired during pregnancy.

Foetal consequences are more severe if infection takes place within the first 10 weeks of conception.

It may cause miscarriage or foetal abnormalities.

Neonatal features of infection vary and include – hydrocephalus, microcephaly, chorioretinitis, intracranial calcification and developmental delay.

**2. Matsya Mamsa (Use of fish meat)**

Causes *Sthabdaaksha* (fixed eyes), *Chiranimesha* (delayed blinking of eye) in the foetus

The mercury in fish can lead to raised mercury levels in the mother.<sup>[14]</sup> This mercury can be passed on through placenta to the developing foetus.

The foetus appears to be most sensitive to the effects of mercury during the third and fourth month of the pregnancy.

The effects on the brain and nervous system may not be noticed until developmental milestone such as walking and talking are delayed.

Memory, language and attention span may also be affected.

**3. Godha Mamsa (Use of iguana meat)**

Causes *Sharkarashmari* (renal calculi), *Shanairmeha* (urinary problems)

Contains nitrates which adversely effect the red blood cells by reducing oxygen carrying capacity leading to reduced utero-placental flow. This can lead to IUGR, oligohydromnios, IUD, still birth, etc.

Rasa as Garbhopaghatakara Bhava		
<b>Madhura Nitya</b>	<i>Prameha, Ati Stoola</i>	There is a direct relationship between the level of maternal glucose & macrosomia (>4kgs). <sup>15</sup> The carbohydrate surplus available to foetus leads to increased insulin secretion & foetal hyperinsulinemia (diabetes)
<b>Amla Nitya</b>	<i>Rakta Pitta, Tvak Roga, Akshi Roga</i>	
<b>Lavana Nitya</b>	<i>Sheeghra Vali palita Khalitya</i>	Excessive consumption of salt leads to water accumulation, precipitates HTN & PET
<b>Katu Nitya</b>	<i>Shosha, Alpa Shukra, Anapatya</i>	Contains irritants, chemical and nitrates which works adversely with RBC and thereby reducing oxygen carrying role leading reduced utero-placental flow
<b>Tikta Nitya</b>	<i>Shosha, Balaheenatva, Daurbalya</i>	
<b>Kashaya Nitya</b>	<i>Shyama Varna, Anaha, Udavarta</i>	Causes constipation

### Viharaja Bhavas

VIHARAJA BHAVAS	
<b>Charaka<sup>[1]</sup></b>	<i>Vyavaya, Vyayama, Daruna Cheshta, Uchha Bhashana, Utkata Vishama Kathina Asana, Vegadharana, Abhighata, Koopa Avalokana, Snehadi Kriya, Rakta Vastra Dharana, Yana</i>
<b>Sushrutha<sup>[2]</sup></b>	<i>Vyavaya, Vyayama, Atitarpana, Atikarshana, Divaswapna, Ratri Jagarana, Yana, Utkutukasana, Ekantata, Snehadi Kriya, Vegadharana, Sparshana of Malina vikruta heena gatra person, Durgandha, Durdarshana, Udvejaniya Katha, Uchai Bhasha, Travelling to Shoonyagara, Chaitya, Smashana alone</i>
<b>Ashtanga Sangraha<sup>[3]</sup></b>	<i>Vyavaya, Vyayama, Karshana, Abhighata, Yana, Ratri Jagarana, Divaswapna, Vegavidharana, Atapa Sevana, Utkataka, Vishama KATHina Asana, Koopa Prapata, Apriya Avalokana, Darunashcha Cheshta</i>
<b>Ashtanga Hrudaya<sup>[4]</sup></b>	<i>Vyavaya, Ayasa, Bhara, Guru Pravaraana, Akala Jagara Swapna, Kathina Utkata Asana, Rakta Vastra, Uttana Shayana, Shodana Karma</i>
<b>Kashyapa<sup>[6]</sup></b>	Looking at declining moon, setting sun, <i>Rahu Darshana, Grahana, Hasya</i> , Wearing tight garments, Looking at <i>Ghruta</i> filled pot
<b>Haritha<sup>[7]</sup></b>	<i>Vyayama, Maithuna, Chankramana</i>
<b>Bhavamishra<sup>[5]</sup></b>	<i>Vyayama, Apatarpana, Vyavaya, Atitarpana, Ratri Jagarana, Yana, Vegadharana, Utkatasana, Touching Malina, Vikrutakara, Heenangi, Apriya Katha, Bahirnishkramana, Uchai Bhasha, Taila abhyanga, Udvaratana, Atyuccha shayanasana</i>
<b>Yogaratnakara<sup>[8]</sup></b>	<i>Swedana, Vamana</i>

### Uthana Shayana

Taking rest in lateral recumbent position promotes utero-placental blood flow & prolonged sleep in other positions may reduce the utero-placental blood flow and there by leading to foetal hypoxia.

Umbilical cord encircles the neck of the foetus and troubles it.

Supine position can cause low back pain, swelling of feet and pressure on intestine and large veins (inferior venacava), which can disrupt the foetal circulation.

In the mother, it can effect the blood pressure, and increased blood pressure can cause pre-eclampsia and foetal distress and hence may lead to abortion or Intra Uterine Death of the foetus.

### Kukkutasana and Vishamasana

Prolonged squatting and abnormal postures may influence placental and uterine blood flow.

Even though the uterine muscles are largely under hormonal control, sympathetic innervations may cause uterine contraction & vasoconstriction.

It increases intrauterine pressure causing miscarriage or premature labor.

### Koopa Avalokana

During pregnancy, the centre of gravity of the pregnant woman will be altered because of the gravid uterus.

This might be one of the reasons for restriction not to peep into a *Koopa* as there is possibility of losing the balance and falling into the *Koopa*.

### Vyavaya

Even though normal coitus and exercise are beneficial, however their excessive use or physiological strain may

precipitate abortion, especially in women prone for the same.

Sex during pregnancy carries a threat for abortion or premature delivery as orgasms causes uterine contractions (Braxton – Hicks contractions),<sup>[16]</sup> but they do not cause cervical dilatation and hence usually do not initiate labor in normal instances.

These contractions may increase intrauterine pressure causing foetal distress and IUD.

There may be chances of early rupture of membranes during coitus in the last weeks of pregnancy. This may increase the risk of infection because there will not be any protective barrier.

### Yana

Causes *Akala Prasava* (premature delivery) or *Garbha Srava* (abortion).

Travel as a whole should be abstained by the pregnant lady, but if inevitable should be strictly avoided in 1st and 3rd trimester.

A long distance travel on 2 or 4 wheelers or long flight is discouraged due to risk of venous stasis and thromboembolism.

Vehicle riding may precipitate abortion due to sudden increase in intra-abdominal pressure.

### Manasika Bhavas

Manasika Bhavas	Effect on Fotus
<i>Kalahasheela</i>	<i>Apasmarini Santana</i>
<i>Shoka Nitya</i>	<i>Bheeru, Apachita, Alpayusha Santana</i>
<i>Abhidhyayini</i>	<i>Paropatapi, Irshalu Santana</i>
<i>Stena</i>	<i>Ayasa Bahula, Ati Drohini, Akarmasheela</i>
<i>Amarshini</i>	<i>Chanda, Aupadika, Asuyaka</i>

### Stress

Stress or negative emotional status will lead to insatiability or excitability of autonomic nervous system leading to causation of abortion.

It disrupts the normal hypothalamo-pituitary axis by excessive production of stress hormone, the cortisol.

It also leads to reduced immunological condition.

### DISCUSSION

The various references available in the classics gives an idea that the Acharyas had in depth knowledge about the embryogenesis, teratogens and the resultant congenital malformations, maternal and fetal complications.

The development of the fetus mainly depends on the influence of *Vata* and the *Agni*. Most of the factors

Travel in pressurized aircraft is safe upto 36 weeks. It is contraindicated in cases with placenta previa, pre-eclampsia, severe anaemia, sickle cell disease

### Rahu Darshana

Exposure to both lunar and solar eclipse may make pregnant woman to be exposed to harmful radiations leading to foetal defects and growth problems.

### Abhighata

*Abhighata* can occur in case of *Koopa Prapatana, Yana*, etc. It may result in

- Traumatic placental abruption leading to placental separation.
- Foetal maternal haemorrhage – Uterine rupture; considerable abdominal force cause lacerated placenta leading to life threatening foetal maternal haemorrhage.

### Vegadharana

Maintenance of normal functioning of the *Apana Vayu* is very important for the maintenance of the pregnancy.

*Vegadharana* leads to vitiation of the *Vata Dosha* causing various *Vata* related disorders like *Garbha Srava, Garbha Shosha, Akala Prasava*.

### Ratri Jagarana and Atidivaswapna

*Ratri Jagarana* leads to vitiation of *Vata Dosha* causing *Garbha Srava, Garbha Shosha, Akala Prasava*.

*Ati Divaswapna* leads to *Kapha Prakopa* which causes obstruction in the *Rasavaha Nadi* leading to reduced nourishment to the foetus causing IUGR.

described earlier, vitiate the normal functioning of *Vata dosha* and *Agni*, thus hampering the proper growth and development of the fetus.

The increase in incidence of IUGR, Habitual Abortions, LSCS due to fetal distress or cord around neck in the present era may be due to indulgence of the *Garbhini* in one or the other *Garbhopaghatakara Bhavas* and not following the *Garbhini Paricharya*. *Ayurvedic Vaidyas* should analyse these and advice the patient to avoid them during pregnancy.

### CONCLUSION

Maternal lifestyle with good diet and avoidance of the *Garbhopaghatakara Bhava* play a protective role on the maternal and foetal health. *Acharya Charaka* says that a

*Garbhini* should be taken care just like a *Tailapurna Patra*. Even the slightest agitation could spill the *Taila* from the *Tailapurna patra*, similarly complete attention should be given to *Garbhini* in order to prevent *Upaghata* to growing foetus. This can be achieved by educating the mother about following *Garbhini Paricharya* and to avoid the *Garbhopaghatakara Bhava* during the *Garbhini Avastha*. These factors are important to create a new life, healthy generation and a good society in future.

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