

GARBHA SAMBHAV SAMAGRI: AN ANALYTICAL REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda is one of the most ancient healthcare systems in the world. At present time, the existence of everything has been proved practically and scientifically. So, *Ayurveda* needs a deep study and research for proving all the facts established by *Acharyas* in ancient time. In *Ayurveda*, the matter related to the concepts of *Garbha* and *Garbhotpatti* is described systematically. *Acharyas* have explained four important factors as *Garbha Sambhav Samagri* that is *Ritu*, *Kshetra*, *Ambu* and *Beeja*. These factors are very essential for conception. Infertility may occur if there is any abnormality in *Garbha Sambhav Samagri*. So, for the best offspring the factors concerned with conception must be in good qualities. The knowledge of *Garbhotpatti* helps to generate suitable conditions for conception and healthy foetus also. This study will help to know the normal and abnormal features of *Garbha Sambhav Samagri* and also help to know the causes of infertility.

Keywords: *Garbha*, *Garbhotpatti*, *Ritu*, *Kshetra*, *Ambu*, *Beeja*, Foetus, Infertility

INTRODUCTION

Garbha is the first stage of developing *Sharir* (body). When *Shukra* (sperm) and *Shonita* (ovum) are combined with *Atma* (soul), *Prakriti* and *Vikara* in the *Garbhashaya* (uterus), this is known as *Garbha* (embryo)¹. In the other hand, the combination of *Shukra*, *Shonita* and *Jeeva* (soul) inside the *Kukshi* (uterus) is known as *Garbha*². According to *Acharya Sushrut*, *Garbha* is the result of combination of four factors coming together in the proper way, just like *Ritu* (season), *Kshetra* (field), *Ambu* (water) and *Beeja* (seed) coming together to give rise to the *Ankur* (sprout)³.

Ritu -: *Ritu* means menstruation period of females⁴ which is of twelve days duration when *Artava* (menstrual blood) is visible but some *Acharyas* say there is a period of invisible *Artava* also⁵. In female, menstruation starts around twelve year of age and stops at the age of fifty years which has become ripe by old age⁶. The period from first day of menstruation to sixteenth day onwards is called *Ritukaala*. This period is suitable for conception of *Garbha*⁷.

Once the *Ritukaala* is completed, the *Yoni* (vagina) gets closed, as at the end of the day, the flower of

lotus closes its petals. So, to get a child, sexual intercourse should be done in *Ritukaala* except first three days⁸. When pure *Shukra* and pure *Shonita* unite in unimpaired *Garbhashaya* during *Ritukaala* then this definitely results in the formation of *Garbha*⁹.

Kshetra-: The term *Kshetra* indicates the *Garbhashaya* (uterus)¹⁰. It is also called *Garbhashayya* and *Kukshi*. It is eighth *Ashaya* which is present especially in females¹¹. The word *Garbhashaya* is derived by the combination of two words i.e. *Garbha* and *Ashaya*. *Ashaya* means the place or special site for specific *Dravya* (material) of the body. Thus the *Garbhashaya* means the special place where *Garbha* lies and develops¹².

Yoni resembles the *Aavarta* (spirals) of the *Shankha* (conch shell) and having three *Aavarta*. The *Garbhashaya* lies in the third *Aavarta* of *Yoni*. Experts say that *Garbhashaya* is similar in shape and size of the *Mukha* (mouth) of *Rohita matsya* (a kind of fish) which is narrow at the outer part and broad in the inner part¹³. Conception of *Garbha* depends upon the healthy or disease free *Garbhashaya*. The power of implantation is lost, if any impairment occurs in the *Garbhashaya*¹⁴. Similarly, twenty types of *Yoni vyapada* (diseases of vagina) also interferes the conception¹⁵.

Ambu -: The term *Ambu* represents *Rasa dhatu* (nutritional elements) which is formed after complete digestion of *Ahar* (food)¹⁶. The main function of *Rasa dhatu* is *Prinana* which means nourishment.

In *Ayurveda*, nourishment of the foetus is described in two parts. First, when the foetal body parts are not perceptible, it gets nourishment by *Upasneha* (osmosis or diffusion) and by *Upasveda* (absorbing moisture). Second, when the foetal body parts become observable, it receives nutrition by permeation through the *Lomakoopa* (pores of the skin) of the body and the *Nabhinadi* (umbilical cord) also. The foetal *Nabhi* (umbilicus) is attached to the

umbilical cord and umbilical cord to the *Apara* (placenta). The placenta is attached to the mother's heart. The mother's heart plunges the placenta with blood through *Sira* (blood vessels). This nutrition provides *Bala* (strength) and *Varna* (complexion) to the foetus as it contains all essential factors¹⁷.

According to *Ayurveda*, the *Aahar rasa* (essence of food) formed after the digestion of food consumed by mother is divided into three parts. First part nourishes her body, second promotes the formation of milk and third nourishes the *Garbha*¹⁸. *Nabhinadi* of *Garbha* is attached with *Rasavaha nadi* of mother which carries *Veerya* (essence) of *Aahar rasa* (nutritious parts) from mother to the foetus by *Upasneha* (indirect nutrition or diffusion) for development of foetus¹⁹. If the *Garbha* does not get nourishment then it consequently gets *Shosha* (dried up) or miscarriage²⁰.

Beeja -: *Beeja* denotes the *Shukra* (sperm) of men and *Artava* (ovum) of women²¹.

Shukra -: *Shukra* which is like *Sphatika* (white colored rock crystal), *Drava* (liquid), *Snigdha* (unctuous), *Madhura* (sweet) and *Madhugandhi* (having smell of honey) is desirable for producing offspring but some others say that it should be like *Tail* (oil) or *Kshaudra* (honey)²². The quality of *Shukra* is also quoted that the *Shukra* which is *Bahal* (viscous), *Madhura*, *Snigdha*, *Avistra* (devoid of unpleasant smell), *Guru* (heavy), *Pichchhila* (slimy), *Shukla* (white) and *Bahu* (profuse amount) is undoubtedly effective for fertilization of ovum²³.

Other than these qualities the *Shukra* which is vitiated by *Vata*, *Pitta*, *Shleshma*, *Kunapagandhi* (having cadaveric smell), *Granthi* (having coagulated mass), *Puti* (foul smell), *Puya* (pus), *Kshina* (less quantity), vitiated by *Mutra* (urine) and *Purisha* (faeces) will not be capable of producing an offspring²⁴.

Artava -: *Artava* (menstrual blood) which resembles the blood of a *Shasha* (rabbit) or *Laksha rasa* (liquid essence of lac) and that which does not stain the cloth is greatly praised²⁵. Same the pure (normal)

Artava should be similar to color of *Gunja* seed, red lotus flower, lac juice and *Indragopaka* (red insect)²⁶.

Artava is vitiated by three *Doshas* and *Shonita* (blood) each separately, by their combination in two or all together, becomes incapable of producing offspring. Features like *Varna* (color) and *Vedana* (pain) of such vitiated *Artava* should be recognized according to *Dosha*. Among these, those vitiated with *Kunapa*, *Granthi*, *Puti*, *Puya*, *Kshina* and that resembling *Mutra* and *Purisha* in smell are impossible to purify whereas other kinds are purifiable²⁷.

DISCUSSION

The essential factors for conception are *Ritu*, *Kshetra*, *Ambu* and *Beeja*. *Ritu* means *Kala* (time) which can be understood as *Vaya* (age) or *Ritukaala* (menstruation period). In *Ayurveda*, it is mentioned that *Garbhadharana kaala* (conception period) is sixteen years because at this age the woman has *Sampurna Veerya*. According to modern science, a woman's fertility starts to decline in her late 20's. A woman has about 3 to 4 million eggs at birth. As the age increases, a woman has not only less eggs but also have a higher chance of being chromosomally abnormal. These chromosomally abnormal eggs will never fertilize or implant. At present time women haven't become more career oriented, so they do not give preference to marriage and conception at right time. That's why, proper age for conception is very important. In the other hand, *Ritu* denotes *Ritukaala* (menstruation period) during which conception is most likely to occur. According to *Ayurveda*, it is of 12 days starting from the stoppage of menstruation. When once the *Ritukaala* goes off, the conception does not occur. According to modern science, the ovulation may occur on 14th day after menstruation starts. During proliferative phase of menstruation cycle near to ovulation, the cervical mucus permits the penetration of sperms whereas, in the secretory phase, there is hindrance in the penetration of sperm, under the effect of estrogen and progesterone

hormones respectively. So, the most fertile period is 10 to 18 days after the onset of menstruation.

Kshetra (uterus) provides a space for development of *Garbha* and also protects the *Garbha* from external pressure or trauma. Inside the uterus, the *Garbha* lives the intrauterine life of 9 months. The *Shuddha Garbhashaya* (normal uterus) is very essential for the safe conception and development of foetus also. Any abnormality related to uterus gives rise to infertility. If any diseases in uterus, the power of implantation is lost. Similarly, *Yoni vyapada* (diseases of vagina) can cause deformity in uterus and there by interfere with conception. Anomalies of cervix like *Suchimukhi* or *Shithilamukha* may become cause of abortion. Modern science has described many causes related to abnormality of uterus in which some are congenital and some are acquired causes. The complete or partial failure of formation mullerian ducts, failure of fusion of mullerian ducts, failure of disappearance of fused septum are congenital causes whereas inflammation or obstruction of vaginal canal, polyp, erosion, cancer, fibroid uterus, endometriosis etc. are the acquired causes. If any types of condition mentioned above are present then the high risk of infertility persists.

Ambu represents the *Rasadhatu*. Its function is *Prinana* (nourishment). The *Garbha* gets nourishment by *Upasneha* and *Upasveda* when *Apara* (placenta) is not developed. When placenta is developed then it gets nourishment through *Nabhinadi* (umbilical cord). The *Garbha* is completely dependent on the mother's nutritional status for nourishment. If there is any improper diet taken by mother, it may directly affect the *Garbha* and may end up in various *Garbhaj vikriti* (foetal anomaly) such as *Garbhasrava* (abortion), *Mritagarbha*, *Upavishtaka*, *Nagodara*, etc. According to modern science, after fertilization till the implantation, the blastocyst receives nutrition partly from the substance stored within the ovum and partly by diffusion from the uterine secretion. After implantation endometrium of uterus provides

nutrition. The endometrial stromal cells contain extra quantities of protein, glycogen, lipids and minerals which are necessary for the conceptus. From 8th week onwards gradually it is taken up by the placenta. Umbilical cord also plays an important role in foetal nourishment by establishing a connection between the placenta and the foetus through which the foetal blood flows to and from the placenta.

The term '*Beeja*' represents the *Shukra* and *Artava*. In *Ayurveda*, the quality of *Shuddha Shukra* (ideal semen) like white colored rock crystal, honey like smell, viscous, profuse amount etc are explained. Here, *Shuddha Shukra* means which is capable for fertilization of ovum. Sometimes semen is vitiated by various factors like *Vata*, *Pitta*, *Shleshma*, *Mutra*, *Purisha* etc. vitiated semen is incompetent to produce an offspring. Similarly, the *Shuddha Artava* is also capable to produce an offspring. If any type of abnormality in ovum, the quality of producing offspring is lost. So, only the *Shuddha Shukra* and *Shuddha Artava* are acceptable as the term '*Beeja*', explained under the four *Garbha Sambhav Samagri*. According to modern science, menstrual disorders, anovulation, cervical factors etc are causes of female infertility. A man's fertility generally depends upon the quality and quantity of sperm. If the number of ejaculated sperm is low or the sperm are of a poor quality, it will be difficult and sometimes impossible to cause a pregnancy.

CONCLUSION

Ayurvedic texts have very systematic description about the concept of *Garbha Sambhav Samagri*. In this concept, *Ritu*, *Kshetra*, *Ambu* and *Beeja* are referring to ovulatory phase, healthy uterus, proper nourishment and unvitiated semen of male and unvitiated ovum of female respectively. These are very essential for conception and ultimately the better offspring. All the factors responsible for infertility described in modern science can be included under these four factors. Developmental anomalies of foetus are also possible due to the

abnormalities in these factors. So, the concept of *Garbha Sambhav Samagri* is described to bring healthy offspring into the society.

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