

## ***INFERTILITY- AN AYURVEDIC PERSPECTIVE***

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### **ABSTRACT**

Infertility means inability to achieve conception. In today's era it is one of the burning issues globally. It affects the couple both socially as well as psychologically. In Ayurvedic literature, infertility has been described under *Bandhytva*. Infertility can be due to different reasons with respect to male and female. The four factors as mentioned in *Ayurveda* viz. *Ritu, kshetra, ambu, beeja* should be in proper state in order to achieve conception and complete the pregnancy successfully. So, in this study an effort has been put forth to make a conceptual study covering almost all the aspects of female infertility.

**Keywords:** Infertility, *Bandhyatwa*, *Ayurveda*, conception

### **INTRODUCTION**

Infertility implies apparent failure of a couple to conceive while sterility indicates absolute inability to conceive for one or more reasons. If a couple fails to achieve pregnancy after 1 year of unprotected and regular intercourse, it is an indication to investigate the couple. This is based on the observation that 80% of normal couples achieve conception within a year. It is observed that 50% conceive within 3 months of regular, unprotected intercourse, 75% in 6 months and 80-85% conceive within 1 year.<sup>1</sup>

One does not find detailed description regarding the disease in any of the *Ayurvedic* classic except *HaritaSamhita*.<sup>2</sup>

#### **AIM AND OBJECTIVE:**

To do a conceptual study about female infertility.

#### **DESCRIPTION:**

*Harita* has defined *bandhyatwa* as failure to achieve a child rather than pregnancy. Failure of conception will be there during childhood, old age, puerperium and during lactation. It is not considered as infertility. According to Ka-

syapa, couple conceiving naturally and having children with normal growth and development due to their karma and past deeds are fortunate, those who do not require medical intervention.

In *Sushruta Samhita*, one disease named 'bandhya' is included among 20 types of *yonivyapad*. Charaka has referred *bandhya* due to abnormality of *bijamsa*.

*Kasyapa* has mentioned *puspagnijataharini* or other *jataharini* with repeated expulsion of fetuses of different gestational periods. Since in these conditions also, the woman fails to get a successful conception and child, these conditions can be included under female infertility.

#### **Etiology / Nidan<sup>3</sup>:**

- Failure of any of these following 4 factors lead to *bandhyatwa*- *Ritu*, *kshetra*, *Ambu*, *Beeja*
- *Abhighata- dosaabhighata to artavahasrotas* produces *bandhyatwa* along with dyspareunia, amenorrhoea.
- *Sadbhavas-* Any *vikriti* in *sadbhavas- matrija, pitrija, atmaja, satmyaja, rasaja, sattwaja* causes *bandhyatwa*.
- *Artavadosa- Dustaartava* leads to anovulation. Artava afflicted with *vata, pitta, kapha, kunapa, granthibhuta, putipuya, kshina, mutrapurisharetasha*, which is not capable to produce *garbha*.
- *Sodhan karma-* as a complication of *sodhankarma*, destruction of *beeja* and *puspa* in female occur and causes *bandhyatwa*.

#### **Detailed description regarding 4 factors<sup>4</sup>:**

Sushruta equating germination of a seed with achievement of conception said that if *ritu, kshetra, ambu, beeja* assemble together, the conception will definitely occur. (Su/Sha/2/35)

*Ritu-* To get a plant from a seed, the time of planting seed is very important. Like that to get a healthy concept, one has to conceive at a proper time otherwise conception will not be there.

Here proper time can be considered as ovulation time. Without ovulation conception can-

not occur. So, couple should be aware of safe period and risk period of menstrual cycle. If a couple do intercourse during the risk period, and then only conception will happen otherwise not.

*Ritu* means *ritukala*. *Ritukala* is characterized with proliferation of endometrium followed by ovulation.

*Kshetra-* *Kshetra* is also very important factor for conception. For getting a healthy plant, the field should be filled with nutrients. Defective field can't give rise a healthy plant.

*Kshetra* can be considered as female reproductive system. Defective female reproductive system cannot conceive. From ovary to the vulva every part of the reproductive system should be defect free. If there is problem in ovary then ovulation will not be there. If there is problem in fallopian tube then fertilization cannot happen and without fertilization conception will not be there. Like that every part is important for entry of sperm to fertilization to implantation.

*Ambu-*For a plant to sprout from its seed, the most essential element is nutrients. Same rule is applicable for the formation of *garbha*.

*Dalhan* considered *rasadhatu* formed from the *aharpaka as ambu* means the substances which nourish the fetus. If nourishment is not there then conception will not be there or if there will be conception, the fetus cannot grow properly.

Healthy endometrium is necessary for implantation after fertilization so that embryo gets proper nutrition through healthy endometrium. Defect in endometrium like thin endometrium etc cannot give proper nutrition to the embryo.

*Beeja-* *Beeja* means sperm and ovum. For conception healthy sperm as well as healthy ovum are must. If nonmotile sperms are there then it cannot travel towards secondary oocyte and cannot fertilize it. Like that if number of sperms is less, defect in head body tail of sperm then also it cannot fertilize ovum.

Like sperm if there is defect in ovum then also it cannot give rise to an embryo. Defect in

sperm and ovum can lead to congenital anomaly of fetus as mentioned in *Ayurveda*.

### Types:

Classification of *bandhyatwa* has not been given in any classic except *HaritaSamhita*. In *charaksamhita*, *sapraja* in earlier description of etiology and in the clinical features of *asri-jayonivyapad*, the word *apraja* has been given. Considering all these references together *bandhyatwa* can be classified in 3 types according to *charak*-

- *Vandhya*
- *Apraja*
- *Sapraja*

*Harita* classified *bandhyatwa* into 6 types, viz.-

- *Kakavandhya* (one child sterility)
- *Anapatya* (no child)
- *Garbhasravi* (repeated abortion)
- *Mritavatsa* (repeated stillbirth)
- *Balakshaya* (loss of strength)
- *Vandhya* due to *balyabastha*, *garbhako-shabhanga* and *dhatukshaya*

### CONGENIAL ARTICLES:

- *Lasuna*
- Milk
- Root of *langali* (English name: Flame lily, Botanical name: *Gloriosasuperba* L.)  
*Devadali* (English name: Bitter luffa, Bristly luffa, Rag gourd;  
Botanical name: *Luffaechinata*Roxb.)  
*Brihatidway* (English name: Poison berry, Indian nightshade, African eggplant  
Botanical name: *Solanumindicum*Linn. S. *Ferrox* L. Non Ambig)  
*Katutumbi* (English name: Bottle gourd, Long melon  
Botanical name: *Lagenariasiceraria* Standl)

### NON-CONGENIAL ARTICLES:

Articles producing burning sensation and *tikshna* things are contraindicated.

### CONCLUSION

- Infertility is a very depressive state for a woman as well as for the family. So, the 4 factors which are important for conception should be investigated for the cause in case of infertility.
- The couple should be educated about the importance of these four factors.
- Preconception counseling and screening is important. So that the couple should be aware of the problem they have and treated accordingly.
- Counseling plays an important role in cases of infertility; education helps to reduce the stress.

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