

## STUDY OF KARNAVEDHANA: ANCIENT AND CONTEMPORARY METHODS

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**ABSTRACT**

**Background** - *Karnavedhana Sanskara* is one of Important *Sanskara*. The process of ear piercing is known as *Karnavedhana* mentioned in ayurvedic text. In today's era goldsmith, physician, beautician and *Boharin* performs *Karnavedhana*. Whether these performers are aware of method explained by *Acharya Sushruta*? To find answer to aforesaid question this observational survey is carried out. **Aim** - Understanding the different methods of *Karnavedhana* i.e. ear piercing. **Objectives** - To understand different methods, different performers and proper site of *Karnavedhana*. **Material** - *Ayurvedic* literature i.e. *Sushruta Samhita*; Survey sheet; Research papers; Articles; Journals; Internet. **Methods** - **Type of study** – Observational study. **Conclusion**- There are four *Karnavedhana* performers in society viz 1. Goldsmith, 2. Physician, 3. Beautician 4. *Boharin*. Commonly used methods are goldsmith and physician. No above performer has knowledge of scientific method of *Karnavedhana* explained in *Sushruta Samhita*.

**Keywords:** *Daivkrutachhidra*, *Karnavedhana*, ear piercing, *Boharin*.

**INTRODUCTION**

The important cultural events in an individual's life, from birth to death, are grouped under the term *Sanskara*. *Sanskara* have their origin in post *Vedic* litera-

ture, such as the *Grihya-sutras*, the Epics, the *Puranas* and the *Ayurveda*. Though the number of *Sanskaras* varies in different places, the customary *Sanskara* are

sixteen <sup>[1]</sup>in number and the same is mentioned in *Ayurveda* too.

**Karnavedhana Sanskara** is one of the important *Sanskara* with socio-cultural relevance. In *Ayurveda*, it is mentioned that *Karnavedhana* is performed for ornamental purpose as well as to protect the child from untoward health hazards like *Graha*<sup>[2]</sup>. Hence quoted as “**Raksha aabhushannimittajam**”<sup>[3]</sup>.

Steps of *Karnavedhan*a procedure mentioned in *Ayurveda* are as follows

- Piercing site -called as *Daivkrutachhidra*.
- Identification of piercing site i.e. *Daivkrutachhidra*.
- Benefits of piercing at proper site and hazards of piercing at improper site.

Now a day's ear piercing is done by different performers like Goldsmith, Physician, Beautician and *Boharin*.

- Whether these performers have the same method of ear piercing?
- Whether these performers know the proper method of ear piercing mentioned in *Ayurveda*?
- Whether these performers have the knowledge of *Daivkrutachhidra*?
- Whether these performers are aware of benefits of piercing at proper site and hazards of piercing at improper site?

To find the answers to aforesaid questions this observational study is carried out.

#### Materials and Methods-

##### Material -

- Ayurved literature* i.e. *Sushruta Samhita*-To collect the information
- Questionnaire to interview the ear-piercing performers. (Copy attached)

- Human babies to collect data

##### Inclusion criteria-

- Babies of either sex.

##### Exclusion criteria-

- Babies having gross congenital anomalies of ear lobule.
- Babies having ear lobe infection.

##### Methods -

- Verbal survey is conducted to identify the methods of *Karnavedhana*.
- After survey researcher came to know that Goldsmith, Physician, Beautician and *Boharin* are the *Karnavedhana* performers.
- To know the detail procedure of *Karnavedhana* done by *Karnavedhana* performer questionnaire is prepared. (copy attached)
- This questionnaire is used to interview the *Karnavedhana* performers.

#### OBSERVATIONS

**A. From literature-** It is observed that

**Method of Ayurveda or Sushruta** - In *Ayurveda Karnavedhana* should be done at a specific point on earlobe and that point is known as *Daivkrutachhidra*<sup>(3)</sup>(DC).

**Identification of location of DC** – By holding ear lobule in left hand, sunlight is illuminated on ear and from other side, the ear is examined. (Instead of sunlight torch light is used in this study.) The maximum translucent point present on ear lobule is *Daivkrutachhidra*. Piercing at DC facilitate no bleeding after piercing<sup>(3)</sup>.

According to *Acharya Sushruta Daivkrutachhidra* is thin area without *Sira* and it is identified by translucency test hence DC is translucent as indicated in photograph no.1.

**Photograph 1:**

Showing location of D.C. at translucent point in translucency test.



**Piercing method-** Confirm the position of *Daivkrutachhidra*; Hold ear lobule properly. Hold piercing needle in right hand and then by locating the proper point of piercing (DC), slowly-slowly pierce ear lobule. Same procedure is executed for another ear<sup>(4)</sup>.

**B. From survey –** It is observed that

There are 4 different methods of *Karnavedhana* in practice. - A. method of Goldsmith, B. method of Physician, C. method of Beautician and D. method of *Boharin*.

Comparative study of method of *Sushruta*, Goldsmith, Physician, Beautician and *Boharin* explained in table below

**Table 1:** Comparative Study of Procedures

NO.	Procedure	<i>Sushruta</i>	Goldsmith	Physician	Beautician	<i>Boharin</i>
1	PURPOSE	Ornamental & to protect from untoward health hazards	To wear ornament	To wear ornament	To wear ornament	To wear ornament
2	Period in age	6 <sup>th</sup> or 7 <sup>th</sup> month	Random	Random	Adults	Random
3	Position	Sitting	Sitting or lying down	Lying down	Sitting or lying down	Sitting or lying down
4	Identification of D.C.	With the help of sunlight	No knowledge of D.C.	No knowledge of D.C.	No knowledge of D.C.	No knowledge of D.C.
5	Piercing site	<i>Daivkrutachhidra</i>	X	As per site marked by parent	X	x
6	Preferred lobule Rt. Or Lt.	Male-right. Female –left	Random	Random	Random	Random
7	Site other than D.C.	Avoided. If taken-suggested <i>Upadrav</i> .	Not specific	Not specific	Not specific	Not specific
8	Local application	If pierced at <i>D.C.</i> -no local application suggested. If <i>Siravedhana</i> -treated according to <i>Dosha</i> .	Not specific.	No any local application	No any local application	Turmeric and coconut oil

- A. By the detail interview of Goldsmith and physician and observing them, their methods were acknowledged. Commonly, people prefer these two performers for ear piercing in society.
- B. By the interview of Beautician, it is observed that people do piercing from beautician as part of body piercing and not as the *Sanskara*. Beauticians are practicing only in city area or developed areas. People do not prefer to pierce ear lobule of child from beautician whereas adults use to pierce ear from beautician.
- C. Method of *Boharin* is written on the basis of known facts in the society and what researcher heard from the elderly people who know *Boharin*. *Boharin* are now a day less in practice and they are practicing in peripheral area in society.

## DISCUSSION

1. According to the conducted survey there are four *Karnavedhana* performers. 1. Goldsmith, 2. Physicians, 3. Beauticians, and 4. *Boharin*.

### 2. *Karnavedhanavidhi*-

#### A. Different methods of *Karnavedhana*-

*Acharya Sushruta* explained in detail the procedure of *Karnavedhana*. After understanding *Acharya Sushruta's* method of *Karnavedhana*, a verbal survey is carried out. The conducted survey revealed 4 different methods of *Karnavedhana* other than *Acharya Sushruta*. From this survey it is observed that goldsmith and *Boharin* have somewhat same technique and physician and beautician have same technique.

#### B. *Karnavedhana* site-

*Acharya Sushruta* mentioned specific site to pierce ear lobule and is known as *Daivkrutachhidra*. *Sushruta* also explained the complications of piercing at improper site and these symptoms are known as *Upadrava*. According to *Sushruta* DC is a point which is very thin and devoid of Sira hence pain and bleeding are absent after piercing this site. Piercing other than DC causes pain and bleeding and other *Upadras*. To avoid these *Upadras*, performer should have knowledge about DC.

After this survey it is observed that these four performers do not have any knowledge of DC.

#### C. Period of *Karnavedhana*-

According to *Acharya Sushruta*,

a. ***Kaalof Karnavedhana*** is 6<sup>th</sup> or 7<sup>th</sup> month. Though *Acharya Sushruta* mentioned the period in terms of month, it is not cleared whether the month is a calendar month or age of child in month. But *Acharya Dalhana* in his commentary on *Sushruta Samhita* cleared that the month should be considered as calendar month. *Acharya Dalhana* stated to consider '*Bhadrapada*' month as first month of year, it means 6<sup>th</sup> month is '*Magha*' and 7<sup>th</sup> month is '*Phalguna*'. In '*Magha*' and '*Phalguna*' month *Bala* of the body is naturally at its optimum level. Hence, *Acharya Dalhana* comments to consider these months for *Karnavedhana*.

b. From survey it is noted that in today's era *Karnavedhana* is done commonly at the age of 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> month. People perform *Karnavedhana* from 12<sup>th</sup> day of birth up to one year. From verbal communication it is also observed that some people do it at the age of 3<sup>rd</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> year.

#### D. Which ear should be pierced first-

*Sushruta* suggested to pierce first right ear of male child and left ear of female child. Though *Sushruta* specified it but the same is not observed in practice by ear piercing performers. It is done randomly by them.

#### E. Metal and instrument used for piercing -

**Material**-Now a day's Goldsmith use gold-wire to pierce, Physician and Beautician use gold plated copper studs, *Boharin* use copper or brass metal wire to pierce ear lobule. *Acharya Sushruta* did not mention specific metal for *Karnavedhana*.

**Instrument**-*Acharya Sushruta* mentioned *Suchi* or *Aari* as instrument for piercing but in present scenario Goldsmith use gold-wire, Physician and Beautician use piercing gun and *Boharin* use copper or brass metal wire as instrument.

## CONCLUSION

There are different methods of *Karnavedhana* in society. Commonly used methods are goldsmith and physician's method. Peripheral or rural areas where goldsmith and physician are not available Boharin perform *Karnavedhana*. In some cities Beautician perform *Karnavedhana* but it is observed that they are not performing *Karnavedhana* in babies, rather they perform in elderly people.

The method of physician and beautician is same, and both use same instrument i.e. piercing gun for *Karnavedhana*. Method of Goldsmith and *Boharin* are nearly same but the difference is in metal used for piercing. Goldsmith use gold -wire and *Boharin* use copper or brass metal wire as instrument. From this survey it is clear that no performer from above four have known *Acharya Sushruta's* method of *Karnavedhana*. Neither goldsmith and physician nor beautician or *Boharin* are aware of *Daivkrutachhidra*.

## Questionnaire

### For Interview of Goldsmith/Physician/Beautician/Boharin

- Do you perform ear piercing procedure? - -----Yes/No
- Since how many years you are in this profession? - -----Years
- Do you have any traditional family background of this profession?- --- ----Yes / No
- Do you know the method of ear piercing explained by *AcharyaSushruta*.
- Do you have any specific method (other than *AcharyaSushruta*) of piercing?-----Yes / No
  - If yes-Procedure-
    - i. Identification of site-
    - ii. Piercing instrument-metal -specify-----
    - iii. Procedure -
  - Straight stroke -----Yes/No
  - Type of stroke-----Slowly / fast

Source of Support: Nil

Conflict of Interest: None Declared

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