ABSTRACT

India though a second highly populated country has people suffering from infertility on one side and due to its population, on the other side, has restriction in having more number of children in a family, unlike in olden days. Being restricted to have only one or maximum two children, it's very essential to have a healthy progeny because both parents and children are inter dependent. Today's healthy child will become tomorrow's healthy citizen. Thus to have healthy children and healthy life, 16 samskaras (which remove impurities) have been mentioned in our Vedas from birth till death. Samskaras begin even before the birth of the individual. The present article highlights about the first samskara i.e garbhadana samskara which is done before conception to achieve excellent qualities of progeny. It is believed that the state of parents’ mind during conception affects the quality and well-being of the offspring. Apart from the Ayurvedic texts, Naradapurana, Manu smriti, Parashara smrithi, Brihadaranyaka Upanishad etc. described about the purpose, method and timing of the garbhadana samskara. Ignoring these traditional concepts and rich cultural heritage and following modern way of life is leading to various congenital disorders as well as diseases like autism, mental retardation, ADHD etc. in children after birth. It is high time to recognize our traditional values and follow them.

Keywords Samskaras, Garbhadana, Naradapurana, Manu smriti, Ayurveda, Congenital disorders

INTRODUCTION: Samskara is a purificatory ceremony or rite marking a major event in one’s life that sanctifies the life of an individual. There are 16 such samskaras mentioned in our Indian texts that are to be done from birth of an individual till death. Among the 16 samskaras, garbhadhanasamskara (rite of impregnation) is the first samskara. Manu smriti says that all impurities inherent in the seed of the male and the womb of the female are removed by samskaras. In Garuda purana, Lord Vishnu explains Sree Garuda about garbhadhanasamskara. He says that a woman becomes pure on the 4th day of menstruation. After 7th day she becomes pure enough to take part in the worship of ancestors and deities. If conception occurs within 7 days, the progeny is impure. According to Narada Purana, the state of mind during the placing of the seed into the womb determines the type of child to be born. This is confirmed by medical texts also: Sushruthacharya says that the quality of diet, actions etc., of the man and the woman lead to an offspring with similar qualities.
Table.No.1.Samskaras at different stages of life

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<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. Garbhadana:</strong></td>
<td>The first coming together of the husband &amp; wife for bringing about conception (rite of impregnation)</td>
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<td><strong>2. Pumsavāna:</strong></td>
<td>Ceremony performed when the first signs of conception are seen and is to be performed when someone desires a male or female child.</td>
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<td><strong>3. Seemantōnayanā:</strong></td>
<td>A ceremony of the expectant mother to keep her spirits high &amp; positive.</td>
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<td><strong>4. Játa-karma:</strong></td>
<td>After the birth of the child, the child is given honey &amp; ghee, mother starts the first breast-feeding after chanting of a mantra.</td>
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<td><strong>5. Nāma-karana:</strong></td>
<td>In this ceremony the child is given a formal name. Performed on the 11th day.</td>
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<td><strong>6. Nishkramana:</strong></td>
<td>In this the first darshana of sun &amp; moon is done for the child.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>7. Annaprashana:</strong></td>
<td>This ceremony is performed, when the child is given solid food (annā) for the first time.</td>
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<td><strong>8. Chudākarana:</strong></td>
<td>Chuda means the ‘tuft of hair’ kept after the remaining part is shaved off.</td>
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<td><strong>9. Karna-vedhana:</strong></td>
<td>Piercing of the ears, done in 7th or 8th month.</td>
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<td><strong>10. Upanayana &amp; Vedaramba:</strong></td>
<td>The thread ceremony. The child is thereafter authorized to perform all rituals. Studies of Vedas begin with the Guru.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>11. Keshantā:</strong></td>
<td>Hairs are cut, guru daksina is given.</td>
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<td><strong>12. Samavartana:</strong></td>
<td>Returning to the house</td>
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<td><strong>13. Vivaha:</strong></td>
<td>Marriage ceremony</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>14. Vanaprastha:</strong></td>
<td>As old age approaches, the person retires for a life of tapas.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>15. Sanyasa:</strong></td>
<td>Before leaving the body a Hindu sheds all sense of responsibility &amp; relationships to awake &amp; revel in the timeless truth.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>16. Antyeshthi:</strong></td>
<td>The last rites done after the death.</td>
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**Garbhādhana vidhi according to Ayurveda**

Texts of Ayurveda gave clear detail about garbhādhana vidhi. There is information about the proper age of marriage, proper age of conception, improper age for conception, factors essential for conception, specific acts for achieving conception etc.

**Proper age for marriage**

According to Susrutha, the proper age of man for marriage is 25yrs and the age of woman is 16yrs. The girl should be born in a family not belonging to his parents (atulyagotram), not suffering from any contagious disease, beautiful, modest, possessing good qualities, good body parts, healthy natured etc.

**Age of full maturity / appropriate age for conception**

As per Susrutha, 25 yrs age of man and 16 yrs of woman is age of full maturity, hence is the appropriate age for conception. Charakacharya says that very young and old woman should not be impregnated because the young woman either will not conceive or if at all she conceives will have intrauterine fetal death; if child is born, it would not live long or will have weak organs, ill health & deformed body parts.

Before garbhādhana vidhi, it is very important that both man and woman should have pure (suddha) sukra and artava respectively.

**Suddhasukra lakshanas**
Sphatikabham dravam snigdham
madhuram madhugandhi cha,
Sukram kechittu taila kshaudra
nibham tatha.

Sukram which is like spatika (rock
crystal which is white in colour),
 drava (liquid), snigdha (unctuous),
 madhura (sweet) and madhugandhi (having smell of
honey) is desirable for producing
offspring; some others say that it should be
like oil or honey.

Suddhaartava lakshanas
Sasaasrukpratimam yattu yadva
laakshaa rasopamam,
Tadaartavam prasamsanthi yadvaas na
viranjayet.

The artavam which resembles the blood of
a rabbit or laksha rasam (juice of lac) and
that which does not stain the cloth is
greatly praised.

If the above said qualities are absent or
abnormal then such sukra and artava are
not pure. Treatment for the vitiated sukra
and artava is also being mentioned in
Ayurveda.

In general, the patients suffering from the
disorders of sukra and aartava should be
treated with proper procedure of
uttaravasti after following prescribed
measures of snehana, swedana, vamana,
virechana, aasthapana and
anuvasanavasti.

Rajaswala charya (measures to be
taken during menstruation)
• From the day of onset of menstruation,
  the woman should observe celibacy for 3
  nights.
• Should sleep on the floor (adhah
  shaayini)
• Should avoid diwaswapnam, anjanam,
asrupatam,snanam,anulepanam,
  abhyangam,nakhacchedam, dhawanam,
  hasanam, atisabdasravana, avalekhana,
anila, aayaasa.

• On 4th day she should take head bath,
  wear white coloured dress, white garments
  and should have pleasant mind.
• Swedanam is contraindicatied.

It is said that if she...sleeps during day
time – she gives birth to a sleepy child
• Applies anjanam– child becomes blind
• Cries – vikruthadrushti to the child
• Does snana, anulepana – child
  becomes unhappy
• Does Tailabhyanga– child suffers from
  kushtha

The above said measures are especially
for those women who are anxious to
conceive

Factors essential for conception
When both male and female after
following the dietetic regimen and other
mode of life unite, thus the unvitiated
sukra, passing through healthy yoni,
reaches healthy garbhashaya and gets
mixed with unvitiated aartava, then
conception is definite. This is compared
with a white cloth which can absorb any
dye and also as milk mixed with curd
changes its form into curd, similarly, sukra
also gets changed in the form of garbha.

Susruthacharya says that there are 4 factors
that are responsible for conception. They
are:
• Ritu– season or ritukala
• Kshetra– field or female reproductive
  system
• Ambu– water or nourishing substances
• Beeja– seed or ovum and sperm

According to Vagbhata
(AshtangaHrudaya) – besides healthy
garbhashaya, apatyamarga, aartava and
sukra, properly functioning vayu and
psychological status (happy mood) are also
essential.
As a good seed germinates properly in a good field, in a proper season and with adequate amount of water, similarly a good embryo is formed in a healthy garbhashaya, during ritukala with proper nourishment from mother.

**Preparatory measures**

**Sodhana** : The couple should be treated with sneha and sweda and thereafter accumulated doshas from their body should be eliminated by the administration of vamana and virechana therapies from 4th day of menstruation onwards.
- Then the patient should be brought to normalcy gradually by administering peya etc.
- After the elimination of doshas, the couple should be administered asthapana and anuvasana vasthis.
- The male partner should be given ghee with milk boiled with madhuragana dravya.
- The female partner should be given tilataila and masha to eat.
- After purification of the body, the embryo that is formed by the union of healthy sperm and ovum in healthy womb will also be healthy.

The following are contra indicated:
- Intake of food in excess
- Fasting
- Thirst
- Fear
- Dejection
- Grief
- Anger

A mantra is said to be recited before coitus

**Sahajabala – its importance**

- Sahajabala means natural immunity or strength.
- This bala occurs by birth.

- When an individual possesses this bala, he is free from diseases or he will not be easily prone to diseases.
- An individual born from healthy sukra and artava will possess sahajabala.

**Putreshti yagnya**

Charakacharya and Kashyapa only described about the methods of putreshti yagnya in detail. This yagnya is performed to get the child they desire.

**DISCUSSION**

It is observed that all Indian texts i.e., Vedas, Ayurveda, Upanishads, Puranas & Smritis, gave equal importance to the creation of excellent progeny. In the present day world, there is an increased incidence of crime rate, more negativity is seen especially in youth creating large gap between parents and children, less respect is given to gurus and elders, more attraction towards western culture is seen leaving behind our own culture and tradition whose ultimate goal is moksha. All these are causing negative effect on the whole society leading to destruction of family, society and even nation.

**CONCLUSION**

Hence there is a great need for every citizen to realize the fact that giving birth to a child should not be an act of enjoyment but an act of responsibility. Thus it can be concluded that it is essential to follow the measures described in garbhadhana samskaras so that a child with excellent qualities come into the world.

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