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Garbha Sharir A Ayurvedic Prospective: A Review Article

Vikash¹, Sakshi², Subhas Upadhyay³

¹PG Scholar, ²Sriganganagar College of Ayurvedic Science & Hospital, Tantia University, Sri Ganganagar,
³Principal, Sriganganagar College of Ayurvedic Science & Hospital, Sri Ganganagar, Rajasthan

Abstract

Science is the result of curiosity of human being through which human being has studied, analyzed and come to the results of various natural processes occurring in body. Today practically and scientifically the existence of everything has been proved. Ayurveda, being a part of this science also needs a deep study and research for proving all the facts established by Acharyas in ancient time. In Ayurvedic treatise, the matter related to the concept of Garbha Sharir is systematically described in “Sharir Sthana”. Ayurvedic texts have very systematic description of various facts responsible for better progeny. Acharya Charaka has described “Garbha” as combination of three factors, i.e. Shukra, Shonita and Jeeva (Atma) whereas Garbhashaya as Kshetra (field) for implantation, proper growth and development of Garbha. In Ayurveda, which is based on an outcome of continuous efforts of thousands of years, experience, experimentation and wisdom of ancient Acharyas, very minute, scientific and excellent description of Bija i.e. Shukra, Shonita, Garbhavakranti, Garbhadhana is available. The term “Garbhavakranti” in Ayurveda, though analogically stands parallel to the embryology but is more comprehensive. In real senses it deals with the process of fertilization and development of the fetus starting from their parental units, their union, implantation, successive growth and finally the full term delivery. The embryology has been always a subject of curiosity. How an organism develops from a single cell is quite intriguing. Embryology is the key that helps to unlock such secrets as heredity, the determination of sex and organic evolution. It conceives a comprehensive and rational explanation of the intricate arrangement of human anatomy. The concept of Garbha Sharir mentioned in Ayurveda and in Modern science is quite similar in many point of views.

Key word- Ayurveda, Garbha Sharir, Bija, Garbhavakranti, Garbhadhana

Corresponding Author:- Vikash, (PG Scholar), Sriganganagar College of Ayurvedic Science & Hospital, Tantia University, Sri Ganganagar, vikashverma24852@gmail.com

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INTRODUCTION

Human body creation was not a random accident of nature. It is the work of cosmic intelligence of a divine plane for definite higher purposes. Occurrence of human body in proper shape, size and weight is a wonder of nature. The embryology has been always a subject of curiosity. How an organism develops from a single cell is quite intriguing. Embryology is the key that helps to unlock such secrets as heredity, the determination of sex and organic evolution. It conceives a comprehensive and rational explanation of the intricate arrangement of human anatomy. As mentioned in Ayurveda, Swastha Sharir is needed for reaching the Purusharatha Chatushtaya i.e. Dharma, Artha, Kaam and Moksha

Maintenance and protection of Swastha Sharir is the main aim of Ayurvedic science. In Ayurvedic treatise, the matter related to the concept of Garbha Sharir is systematically described. Specific Sthana of the Samhitas where the whole development, embryology and genetics of the organs is described is known as “Sharir Sthana”. Historical Aspect Vedas have the concept that mature age of woman including physical and psychological both are an essential factor for a good progeny. The proper time of insemination, the gradual and sequential stages of embryonic

development have been minutely observed and well described in ancient literature. In Vedic literature, the importance of heredity and environment has been also not left untouched as they could recognize the intimate interaction between the developing embryo and the immediate environment which its body, organ and tissues experience. In Samhitas, the matter related to concept of Garbha Sharir is systematically described. It has well recognized the paternal units taking parts in development of Garbha more precisely. The terms employed for these embryonic components and their stages of developments appear to be more appropriate and scientific, if viewed in the light of present advances. Modern Aspect The literal meaning of term “Embryo” in modern science signifies the developing ovum during the early months of gestation and the branch of science popularly known as embryology. In its widest sense means the growth from one cell stage to adult one, but the term frequently is restricted to mean the period of growth and development before birth.

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The development of an organism is characterized by a progressive alteration of form and proportions, both externally and internally.

Definition Of Garbha - Acharya Charaka says that the Samyoga of Shukra, Shonita and Jeeva (Atma) inside the Kukshi is named as Garbha. Garbha is generated due to intermingling of Panchamahabhutas in each other's. Acharya Sushruta states that a combined state of "Shukra" and "Shonita" in the Garbhashaya, intermixed with the "Prakritis" (Mula-Prakriti along with its eight categories) and "Vikaras" (her sixteen modifications) and ridden in by the Atma is called "Garbha". Vriddha Vagbhata corroborating the views of Charaka explains that due to effect of Raga (desires) etc. and impelled by deeds of previous life the Mana propells Jeeva to come to the Kukshi (uterus) and formation of Garbha occurs. The term "Garbhavakranti" in Ayurveda, though analogically stands parallel to the embryology but is more comprehensive. In real sense it deals with the process of fertilization and development of the fetus starting from their parental units, their union (fertilization), implantation, successive growth and finally the full term delivery. It comprises of two words, i.e., the "Garbha" and "Avakranti", which

literally gives an idea about descent of a dormant embodied life principle

Garbha Sambhav Samagri (Factors Essential For Formation Of Garbha)

Four factors i.e., "Ritu" (menstrual period) "Kshetra" (uterus) "Ambu" (Ahara Rasa) "Bija" (Shukra and Shonita) are the essential raw ingredients for the production of Garbha, provided Bija (Shukra and Shonita) should be pure. It means Ritu, Kshetra, Ambu and Bija contribute in the formation of Garbha but afterwards different organs develop in the Garbha with the help of different Bhavas. Characteristics of Shukra and Shonita for good progeny should be as described below.

Shukra: The male factor which is taking part in the formation of Garbha is called as Shukra. It is composed of Vayu, Agni, Jala, Prithvi Mahabhuta. This Shukra is formed by the food substances having all the six Rasa. Shukra Guna: Shukra is Shukla (white) in Varna, Sphatika (crystal) like appearance, Madhura (sweet) in taste, Madhu in Gandha, Snighda, Picchila, Sandra, Guru in consistency and overall appearance like Taila and Kshoudra. Shukra possessing these characters, only called as Shuddha Shukra and capable to produce Garbha.

Shukra Pramana: Quantity of the Shukra Dhatu is Ardha (½) Anjali in human body.

Artava/Shonita/Raja: From Rasa (Dhatu), the Rakta named as Raja is formed. Artava is Agneya, has characteristics of Rakta, forms Garbha and is also essential for life. The Artava becomes Vyakta in a female body from the age of twelve years and persists up-to fifty. Thus it is physiologically absent before twelve years and after fifty years. Rakta reaching Yoni (uterus) and coming out for three days in every month is called Artava. The blood collected for whole month by both the Dhamanis assuming slight black colour and specific colour or odour is brought downwards to Yoni-mukha (vaginal orifice) for excretion.

Shuddha Artava: Artava should be unctuous, bright red in colour like Padma (red lotus) / Gunjaphala (abrus seed) / Laksha Rasa (lac juice) / Indragopa (cochneal) / Shasha Asrik (like rabbit's blood), and free from pain or burning. This menstrual blood does not impart permanent stain on the cloth. The quantity is not very scanty or very excess. Artava Pramana: It is four Anjali (approximately four ounces). Panchbhautikta of Garbha The fusion of Shukra and Shonita (sperm and ovum) in the Kukshi (womb) mixed with Prakritis and its sixteen modifications known as Vikaras and Aatma give rise to Garbha (an embryo). Acharya Sushruta has clearly stated the role of

'Panchamahabhutas' and the self-consciousness in the Garbha.

1. Vayu Bhuta divides this mass into Dosha, Dhatu, Mala, Anga and Pratyanga etc.
2. Tejas Bhuta gives rise to the metabolism of the tissue.
3. Aap Bhuta keeps it in liquid state.
4. Prithvi Bhuta is embodied in the shape of its species.
5. Akasha Bhuta contributes to its growth and development. A fully developed Garbha with all its parts, such as the hands, feet, tongue, nose, ear, buttocks etc. and the sense organs is called "Shariram". This is how the fetus develops.

On putting lime light on monthly development and organogenesis in Ayurveda, different Acharyas have different views.

Garbhavakranti comprises of two words, i.e., the "Garbha" and "Avakranti", which literally gives an idea about descent of a dormant embodied life principle. Charaka says that when between a man of unvitiated Shukra (semen) and a woman of unvitiated Yoni (vagina), Shonita (ovum) and Garbhashaya (uterus), mating takes place during the night time, and when, moreover, the spirit descends, by the agency of the mind into that union of the Shonita fertilized by Shukra formed inside

the Garbhashaya (womb), as a result Garbha is formed. Due to constant use of congenial diet by the pregnant woman this Garbha grows normally and gets delivered at appropriate time with all Indriyas (sensory and motor organs), complete body parts, Bala (energy), Varna (complexion), Satva (endurance) and Samhanana (compactness) along with Matrija (maternal), Pitrija (paternal), Atmaja, Satmyaja and Rasaja Bhavas (physical and psychological components) having constant association of Mana. Sushruta opines that the Teja or heat generated at the time of coitus activates Vayu, then the Shukra excreted due to the action of both Vayu and Teja reaches Yoni gets mixed up with Artava, thus formed Garbha (zygote) with the union of Agni (Artava) and Soma (Shukra) stays in Garbhashaya (uterus). The additional differentiating factors put forth by Vagbhata are mainly “Panchakleshas” (i.e. Avidhya, Asmita, Raga, Dvesha and Abhinivesha), and “Swakarmas” (deeds of previous life). It can be briefly stated that the Garbha comes into existence inside the Garbhashaya soon after union of Shukra and Shonita governed by “Panchakleshas” and previous deeds of life and subsequently influenced by “Jeevatma” along with the Mana. The entire process of Garbhavakranti is controlled by Satva and

Vayu. First Vayu deposits Shukra in Yoni, then Shukra passes through the Trayavarta of Yoni, there it gets absorbed by Vata and Vata facilitates its union with Artava, thereby Shukra Shonita Sammurchana takes place. After this, Satva acts as an instrument and paves the way for descent of Atma into the Shukra Shonita Sammurchita mass. So that in formation of Garbha the role of Mana has been recognised first, and subsequently the “Atma” gets entered to co-opt the attributes of Mana. The time while imprinting upon the attributes of “Manas”, the “Atma” first creates the “Akasha” and then subsequently other “Bhutas” are created in their sequence of evolution.

Garbha Vriddhikara Bhava

1. **Shatbhava Sampat:** Excellence of Matrija, Pitrija, Satvaja, Satmyaja, Rasaja, Atmaja Bhava.
2. **Ahara, Vihara of Mother:** Dietary regimen prescribed for Garbhini.
3. **Upasneha and Upasweda:** By diffusion and heat conduction.
4. **Kala Parinama:** By time factor.
5. **Svabhava:** By nature. The development of Garbha mainly depends upon the inflation done by Vayu and nourishment supplied by Rasa is the opinion Sushruta and Bhavamishra. Behind the umbilicus there is definitely the location of

“Jyotisthana” (the place of light or fire). The Vayu by its blowing action excites or stimulates this fire, which in turn performs development of body.

Garbhashaya-Antar Garbha-Stithi

The Garbha stays in Garbhashaya with all its body parts fully flexed, and facing towards the back of the mother. Charaka has mentioned the position of head as upwards. Sushruta mentioned position of head in downwards direction in Garbhashaya. Vriddha Vagbhata has added the Garbha lies inside the Garbhashaya facing the mother's back, keeping both its hands on the forehead, with its body contracted, and if it is male it's situation is more on right lateral side of the Kukshi; if female then on left lateral side and if a Napumsak then it remains centrally situated. Garbha Paratantrata Garbha is totally dependent on mother for nutrition so it is said that Garbha is in Paratantra stage.

Pachana Kriya in Garbha (Digestive Functions): After the Pachana Kriya, formed Rasa from the mother enters into Garbha through Garbha Nabhinadi. This Rasa gets metabolised by Garbha Kayagni present in Pakvashaya and utilized for Garbha Dhatu Pushti. Major Pachana Kriya is not necessary in Garbha as Rasa is available in Prasada Rupa.

Mala Kriya in Garbha (Excretory Functions): Sthulamala formation or excretory function does not take place in Garbha due to two reasons.

- Absence of Pakvashyagata Vayu.
- Receiving of Prasada-Rupa Rasa.

Rodanam in Garbha (Cry): Garbha does not cry inside the Garbhashaya, the reasons being.

- Covering of Mukha with the Jarayu (fetal membranes)
- Obstruction of Vayu Marga Garbha

Prakriti: The Prakriti is defined as the aspect which is stable from birth to death and which is formed at the time of conception due to self-aggressiveness of Shukra and Shonita. This Prakriti consist of Vikararahita Doshas at the preliminary stage. This Prakriti is influenced by 4 factors when the Garbha is in the womb of mother.

These factors are

1. Shukra Shonita Prakriti,
2. Kala Garbhashaya Prakriti
3. Maturahara Vihara Prakriti
4. Mahabhuta Vikara Prakriti.

CONCLUSION

Even though the Ayurvedic classics describe many aspects of Garbha like Garbha Vikas, Garbhadhana Vidhi, Garbha Vridhhikara Bhava, Garbha Poshan, Aanuvanshik Siddhant and Garbha Samskar etc. these references have

not been carefully understood and explored in context of present era. Garbha Sharir helps us to understand the factors responsible for mal-development assists us in preventing, or treating such abnormalities. This knowledge helps us understand many complicated facts of adult anatomy. In this way the knowledge of embryology is essential for the study of Anatomy, Pathology, Surgery, Obstetrics and Pediatrics. There is thus need to explore and analyze these to have greater understanding of the subject. In this light, this study would be able to further the knowledge of Garbha Sharir and make it Yuganuroopa.

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