Concept of sutika paricharya

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Abstract

Ayurveda elucidate due importance for the care of mother at every phase of her life especially when it comes to antenatal and postnatal care. Post natal care (post-natal) is a period following child birth which can be certainly co-related with Sutika paricharya explained in Ayurveda. In this stage mother should be educated to take care of herself and the new born baby. After delivery woman becomes weedy, also empty bodied due to physical and mental stress and debility at the level of reproductive organs. It is essential for a mother to deepen and gain the mental, emotional and spiritual resources needed to carry her through all the demands of family life, without feeling depleted. This paper highlights on various major components of Sutika Paricharya such as Ashwasana (Psychological Reassurance), Vihara and Aahara (Normal diet in puerperium) etc. Ayurveda prescribes numerous herbs to establish healthy status of the woman after delivery.

Key words: Sutika Paricharya; Ayurveda; Post natal care.

INTRODUCTION-

Ayurveda has always given importance to care the stree (female) at every phase of her life in respect of Rajaswala paricharya (menstrual care), Garbhini paricharya (Antenatal care) and Sutika paricharya (Post natal care). In Ayurveda, the term sutika (puerprial woman) can be used only after expulsion of placenta.
Puerperium is a period following childbirth during which the body tissues especially the pelvic organ revert back to the pre-pregnant state both anatomically & physiologically.

During this time, women are recovering from their delivery and are beginning to care for the newborn. This period is used to make sure the mother is stable and to educate her to take care of the baby. After delivery woman becomes weak and also empty bodied due to unsteadiness or indolence of Dhatus, labour pains & excretion of Kleda (moisture) and blood. Mithyaachar (inappropriate physical and mental behavior) in this period definitely results in incurable diseases or diseases which are difficult to cure.

After following proper puerperial care woman regain all the lost things and reaches pre-pregnancy status.

In this health conscious era, with proper care, a suthika would gain the mental, emotional, and spiritual resources needed to carry her through all the demands of family life, without feeling depleted. In this study, special life style suggested by Ayurveda called Sutika Paricharya is discussed in detail to maintain the health of the delivered woman.

(Duration of post natal phase): Post natal phase is named as ‘sutika kala’ in Ayurveda. This term is obtained from the word ‘prasuta’ (mother following delivery). There are different opinions about the duration of this period, which ranges from six weeks to six months and some believe that it lasts until the reestablishment of menstrual cycle. Ayurveda classics has described management of sutika (post natal woman), but Kashyapa has described in detail about it. He has mentioned that following delivery of child, the placenta is expelled; following that the women is called as ‘sutika’. Charaka has not given any specific time limit, however other classics have advised definite duration, i.e. 1 to 1.5 month for specific dietetic and behaviour regime. Sutika-kala (duration of puerperium/ post natal phase) mentioned by various Ayurveda classics can be tabulated as follows.
Sutika-paricharya (Regimen for post natal woman):

A) Use of amulet – The post natal woman should fix amulet of trivrita (Operculina turpethum – red)

B) General technique of life and diet – In general all Ayurveda classics have advised mardana (massage), oral administration of medicated oils/ghee and decoctions for three to seven days following delivery. Use of medicated rice gruels is recommended in diet. From seventh or twelfth day medicated meat yusha (soup) is directed. Various Ayurveda classics have advised about general technique of life and diet as follows –

I. According to Charaka samhita

• When a post natal woman experiences hunger, she should be recommended pulverized pippali (Piper longum Linn.), chavya (Pepper chaba), chitraka (Plumbago zeylanica Linn.) and pippalimula (Piper longum radix) with ghrita or oil and in the amount which she can assimilate easily.

• Following consuming this, her abdomen should be mardana (massage) and wrapped appropriately with a large clean cloth which produces compression of abdomen and it avoids occurrence of hollow space, which prohibits vitiation of vata.

• Following digestion of ghrita etc., liquid gruel prepared with rice and medicated with pippali (Piper longum Linn.) etc. herbs mentioned above and blended with ghrita should be given.

• During both the times, i.e. morning and evening bath with hot water should precede use of ghrita etc. and rice gruel. Chakrapani has stated that in the morning irrigation should be given before ingestion of unctuous material and should be repeated following its digestion, following-wards rice gruel should be given.

• Later than use of this regimen for five or seven nights (day and nights) gradual administration of brimhana materials (anabolic) should be done. This schedule is not suitable for the women of anupadesha (marshy land), because in the persons of this area the kapha is dominant. This regimen is suitable for women of jangala (wild or dry) area.
II. According to Sushruta samhita

Subsequent to applying mardana (massage) with bala (Sida cordifolia Linn.) -taila (illustrated under obstructed labour), the post natal women should be advised decoction of bhadradaru (Berberis aristata De.) etc. medicines useful for alleviating vata for oral management or irrigation.

- If some dosha(s) or blood is still left inside (some blood clots are retained in uterus), powdered pippali (Piper longum Linn.), pippalimula, hasti-pippali (ambiguous drug, Chavaka’s fruit) and chitraka (Plumbago zeylanica Linn.) with warm jaggery-water should be given. This should be continued for two or three days till the abnormal blood is properly excreted.

- Following-wards rice gruel prepared with the herbs of vidarigandhadi group and blended with ghrita or cow milk should be given for three days (from 3rd to 7th day following delivery.)

- Then (from 7th or 8th day) cooked shali rice with meat yusha (soup) of wild animals cooked with kola, yava and kulattha (Dolichos biflorus Linn.) should be advised considering her digestive power and strength.

- Generally the women should use hot water and should avoid anger, coitus and exercise. Dalhana has mentioned that irrigation should be done by pouring water in a stream, so that abnormal blood (accumulated in uterus) produced due to irrigation by garbha (delivery) is excreted properly and vata is also balanced.

III. According to Ashtanga Sangraha samhita - Mardana (massage) with bala-taila (oil prepared with Sida cordifolia Linn.) should be given to the post natal women.

- Following that if she feels hunger then she should be given unctuous materials blended with either powered yavani (Trachyspermum amami Linn. Sprague.) or powder of panchakola (a compound of 5 herbs, viz., pippali - Piper longum Linn., pippalimula - Piper longum radix, chavya - Pepper chaba, chitraka - Plumbago zeylanica Linn., nagara - Zingiber officinale Rosoe.), chitraka (Plumbago zeylanica Linn.), chavya (Pepper chaba), sunthi (Zingiber officinale Rosoe.) and
rock salt, in such a volume that she can digest in entire day.

• The women unfit for the use of oily materials should be given decoction of either laghupanchamula or herbs which will alleviate vata.

• Following that oral intake of oily materials or decoction, her abdomen should be mardana (massage)d with ghrita and oil and wrapped with a cloth to avoid vitiation of vata liked to occur due to availability of hallow space.

• Later than digestion of unctuous material, liquid rice-gruel properly with either above revealed herbs or vidaryadi group of herbs or cow milk should be given in quantity which she can digest suitably.

• Throughout this entire period morning and evening irrigation with hot water should be done, utilize ghrita etc. or rice-gruel.

• This regime used for three, five or seven nights should be pursued by use of light diet with yusha (soup) of kola, yava or kulattha (Dolichos biflorus Linn.) following 12th nights following consideration of strength Pournima S. Arankalle: Critical review on post natal care in ayurveda Journal of Ayurveda and Holistic Medicine | April, 2014 | Volume 2 | Issue 4 29 and digestive capacity, gradual satiation or reinforcing should be done by use of meat yusha (soup) of wild animals; besides, oil, ghrita or decoction cooked with brimhaniya, jivaniya, vathamakam and madhura (sweet) taste herbs should be employed for unguent, mardana (massage), irrigation and bathing.

IV. According to Ashtanga Hridaya samhita

• Parallel description as Ashtanga sangraha samhita

• Mardana (massage) of perineal region along with body and use of hot jaggery-water identical to Sushruta.

• Arunadutta has elucidated that if meat recipes are used before 12 days, it calls the danger of infliction by skanda etc. grahas.

V. According to Kashyapa samhita

• Post natal women should use specifically rakshoghna (antiseptic) and beneficial things.

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• Detailed management should be done giving due consideration to place of residence (*desha and videsha* foreign country) and custom of family.

• The women immediately following delivery should be encouraged and made to lie down in hump-back-position with flexed things (either in knee-chest position or in lateral position with thighs flexed over abdomen and lower legs over thigh and back protuberant). Now her back should be rubbed and pressing the abdomen it’s lower portioned should be *mardana* (massage) and compressed in order to expel the *doshas* remained following delivery.

• Later than this, abdomen and flanks should be wrapped with clean big cloth, by this wrapping abdomen reaches its proper place and *vata* also subsides.

• She should always sit over a small chair covered with leather-bag filled with hot *balataila* (oil prepared with *Sida cordifolia* Linn.), with this her yoni becomes healthy.

• *Svedana* (sudation) in the yoni (perineal region and vagina) should be given with oil prepared with *priyangu* etc. herbs.

• Following proper *svedana* (sudation), hot water bath should be given followed by rest.

• After overcoming the tiredness fumigation with *agaru* (*Aquilaria agallocha*), *guggulu* (*Commiphora mukul* Hook ex stocks.) and *kushtha* (*Sassurea luppa*) blended with *ghrita* should be done.

• As per her strength and digestive power scum of boiled rice should be given for 3 or 5 days. Then the women using beneficial diet should take orally unctuous recipes (oil, *ghrita* etc.).

• Following digestion of this oil etc. salt free rice gruel blended with little quantity of unctuous material and pulverized *pippali* (*Piper longum* Linn.) and *sunthi* (*Zingiber officinale* Roscoe.) should be given. This should follow (following sixth or seven days) use of rice gruel blended with sufficient quantity of salt and unctuous materials, then meat *yusha* (soup) of wild animals and *yusha* (soup) of *kulattha* (*Dolichos biflorus* Linn.) blended with unctuous material, salt and sour recipes and *kushmanda* (*Benincasa hispida* Thum.), cucumber, radish etc. vegetables fried in *ghrita*.
• Following delivery the women should use snehana (oleation), svedana (sudation) and hot water for a month.

The management of post natal women should be with due consideration of customs as well as beneficial things or diet of the family and also place of residence.

V. According to Harita Samhita

• Following delivery the decoction of Arjuna (Terminalia arjuna), lodhra (Symplocos racemosa Roxb.), devadaru (Cedrus deodara), kadamba (Anthosepalhus indicus A. Rich.) and bijaka (Pterocarpus marsupium Linn.) should be given for cleansing rakta (blood) and yoni (uterus). Vaginal filling with oil and mardana (massage) followed by svedana (sudation) with hot water should be done.

• Following fasting for 1st day, on 2nd day in the morning sunthi and haritaki with jaggery, then in the following noon warm yusha (soup) of kulattha (Dolichos biflorus Linn.) should be given. Rice-gruel blended with chaturjataka (a compound of 4 herbs, viz., tvak – Cinamonum zeylonicum, ela – Eletlaria caromomum, tamalapatra – Cinamonum tamal, nagakeshara – Musua ferrea) or panchakola (a compound of 5 herbs, viz., pippali - Piper longum Linn., pippalimula - Piper longum radix, chavya - Pepper chaba, chitraka - Plumbago zeylanica Linn., nagara - Zingiber officinale Rosoe.), should be given on 3rd and 4th day correspondingly, on 5th day cooked shali or shastika prescribed in diet. This regimen should continue for 10 or 15 days.

• The wise physician should allow the post natal women to see or meet other women on 12th day.

VI. According to Bhava-prakasha

• Post natal women should use congenial diet and mode of life; give up exercise, coitus, anger and cold air. • She should use unctuous, light, congenial diet and daily svedana (sudation) and mardana (massage) for one month with full alertness.

VII. According to Yoga- ratnakara

• Immediately following delivery her vaginal canal should be pressed to avoid entry of air. IX. According to Sharangadhara samhita

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• He has advised svedana (sudation) and use of bala taila (oil prepared with Sida cordifolia Linn.) following delivery. C) Prohibited panchakarma (purificatory therapies) – Use of asthapanap-basti (enema), siravedha (venesection), nasya (sternutatory administration of herbs through nose), virechana (purgatives) and svedana (sudation) - are contra-indicated, however, Sharangdhara has advised svedana (sudation) and use of bala taila following delivery. Asthapana basti is contraindicated because it increases ama-dosha. If nasya is given to post natal women, she develops emaciation, anorexia and body ache. Benefits of above regimen: The women become weak and emaciated due to growth of foetus, and also empty body due to instability of all the dhatus, labour pains and excretion of kleda (moisture) and rakta (blood). With this regimen she attains all the lost things and reaches her pre-pregnancy stage.30

Specific advice on the basis of place of residence:

Kashyapa has described the post natal management on the basis of residence place as follows –

I. For anupa dehsa (marshy land) - In marshy land usually diseases of vata and kapha occur. Because of supremacy of humidity in this area initially fat should not used; instead scum of boiled rice treated with appetizing and strength producing things should be given. Svedana (sudation), sleeping in air free place. Employing maximum ushna (hot) herbs is useful. Chakrapani has clarified that unctuous material should be prohibited.

II. For jangala desha (wild or dry place) - She should be given ghrita or oil or any other unctuous recipe in good quantity using decoction of pippali etc. herbs (described under general management). For strong women this unctuous material and to the weak women rice gruel should be given for 3 or 5 nights. It should follow the use cereals blended with unctuous things in regularly increasing method.
She should often be irrigated with good quantity of hot water and should avoid anger, exercise and coitus.33 Kashyapa has mentioned that in such places diseases of vata and pitta frequently takes place. As unctuous materials are affable in this areas that should be used in large amount. Chakrapani has also mentioned that oily materials should be used in superior amount.

III. For sadharana desha (ordinary or neither marshy nor dry place) -
Average (in use of neither to unctuous nor dry material) management is advantageous.

IV. For women of mleccha cast (foreigners) - Utilize blood, meat yusha (soup), rhizomes, eatable roots and fruits throughout this phase. Bath of post natal woman: Vagbhata has described that on auspicious period of 10th or 12th day, according to customs of family, the bathing ceremony of post natal women should be performed. Ashtanga hridaya samhita has mentioned ‘sutikothana’ (coming out of the house) in its place of bath.

**Discussion:** Sutika paricharya (post natal care in Ayurveda) is thoroughly explained in classical texts of Ayurveda.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Drugs</th>
<th>Action</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sunthi (Zingiber officinale Rosoe.)</td>
<td>Increases digestive power as well as does garbhashaya shodhana to remove lochia and other retained products of conceptus.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haritaki (Terminalia chebula)</td>
<td>Does vatanulomana which helps to wash out the abnormal contents from uterus.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jaggery</td>
<td>Supports digestive power as well as balances</td>
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</tbody>
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### Kulattha (*Dolichos biflorus* Linn.)
- Cleanses abnormal blood through uterus as well it will decrease *kleda* (abnormal moisture).

### Chaturjataka, panchakola
- These drugs are digestive and possessing nice odour which will helpful improving digestive power and makes pleasant to eat by soothing mind

### Oils/ghee.
- Strengthen digestive system, balances *vata* and helpful in evading cold infection

### Pippali (*Piper longum* Linn.), pippalimula (*Piper longum radix*), chavya (*Pepper chaba*), chitraka (*Plumbago zeylanica* Linn.)
- Improves weak digestive power, gives good odour to eatables and also acts as *garbhashaya shodhaka*

### Bala-taila
- Assists to strengthen the muscles, ligaments, joints and tendons of the whole body. It is also useful for soothening skin and relieving pain

### Irrigation
- Abnormal blood (accumulated in uterus) is excreted properly, balances *vata* and enhances process of involution

### Mardana (massage)
- Rapid penetration of oil deep into tissues; consequently supports appropriate operation of *vata* and body channels by improved transdermal assimilation of nutrients

### Wrapping of abdomen
- Produces compression of abdomen and it avoids occurrence of hallow space, which prohibits vitiation of *vata*.

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We can summarize benefits of post natal cares in *Ayurveda* as follows –

1. Strengthen and improves digestion power
2. Tones muscles, calms nerves and greases all joints

3. Helps woman’s body reverse into her normal shape

4. Increases psychological alertness, apparent thinking and emotional steadiness

5. Effortless lactation and more restful feeding

CONCLUSION:

Ayurveda is ultimate science of life focusing every minute aspect of various stages of human life. Sutika paricharya is one of its concepts explaining the importance of reestablishment of health of a woman after delivery; directing physicians and Sutika to adapt certain changes in the daily activities, diet, mental and social behaviour. After a thorough review of various classical texts, it can be concluded that Ayurveda has executed the post natal care (Sutika Paricharya) in a meticulous fashion focusing on every aspect required to nurture and replenish the health of woman and avoid postpartum complications.

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