

Review article on Annaprashan Sanskara in Balaka

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ABSTRACT India has a rich cultural heritage which affects the life of a person at all stages of life. Hinduism is one of the oldest world religions prevailing in Indian subcontinent. Hindu mythology describes various Sanskaras (sacraments/religious rites) outlined from birth to death of an individual. Out of the sixteen Sanskaras described, eight are for children. These are Jata Karma (birth rites), Namakaran (naming), Nishkraman (taking baby out of home), Annaprashan (starting solid feeding), Chudakarma (head shaving), Karnavedhana (piercing of the ear), Upanayan (thread ceremony) and Vedarambha (start of formal education).

Sanskara (Sacraments) are a religious customs (rite), rituals sacrifices a religious ceremony. Sanskara also build a wakefulness of the attainment of social status and rights for the individual. In Ayurveda, the word sanskara also introduced as "Samskarao hi Gunaantradhanum" means qualitative improvement is carried out by incorporating the specific qualities. Hindu mythology describes various Sanskaras (sacraments/religious rites) outlined from birth to death of an individual. Out of the sixteen Sanskaras described, eight are for children. This article analyzed „phalprashan and annaprashan Sanskaras' in detail and gives a critical approach to their relevance in light of modern scientific knowledge. They were significant in context of child health and provided opportunity for routine examination of child at regular intervals. Samskara developed proper feeding habits, providing strong digestive system, ensured adequate nutrition, prevented diseases and malnutrition. Samskara took care of not only physical but also mental, social and spiritual growth and development of child.

KEYWORDS: Sanskara, phalprashan, annaprashan, malnutrition, growth and development

I. INTRODUCTION:

Childhood undernutrition remains a major health problem in resource-poor settings.

Approximately one-third of children less than five years of age in developing countries are stunted (low height-for-age), and large proportions are also deficient in one or more micronutrients. Recent data shows that just over half of 6-9 month olds are breastfed and given complementary foods and only 39 per cent of 20-23 month olds are provided with continued breastfeeding. Nearly half of all deaths in children under 5 can be attributed to undernutrition. This translates into the unnecessary loss of about 3 million young lives a year. Malnutrition is more than a lack of food. It is a combination of factors: insufficient protein, energy and micronutrients, frequent infections or disease, poor care and feeding practices, inadequate health services, and poor water and sanitation. The lack of or inadequate breast feeding practices alone result in almost 12 per cent of all deaths among children under age five.

It is well recognized that the period from birth to two years of age is the "critical window" for the promotion of optimal growth, health, and development. Insufficient quantities and inadequate quality of complementary foods, poor child-feeding practices and high rates of infections have a detrimental impact on health and growth in these important years.

Childhood under nutrition is an underlying cause of estimated 35% of all deaths under 5 yrs. According to national family health survey (NFHS-3) carried out in 2005-06, 40% under the age of three are underweight, 45% are stunted, 23% are wasted. Prevalence of under nutrition is higher in rural areas 46% than in urban population 33%. Punjab, Kerala, Jammu, and Kashmir, Tamilnadu account for the lowest proportions (27% -33%) of underweight. while Chhattisgarh, Bihar, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, report the maximum (52%-60%) levels of underweight children. The proportion of under nutrition starts rising after 4- 6 months of age because of the introduction of unhygienic foods that cause infections such as diarrhea, late introduction or (early) of complementary feeding and inadequate food intake leads to increase predisposition food under nutrition like hypoglycemia, hypothermia dehydration infections

electrolytes imbalance etc. India has a rich cultural heritage which affects the life of a person at all stages of life. Hinduism is one of the oldest world religions prevailing in Indian subcontinent.

AYURVEDIC REVIEW

First feeding of solid food or Feeding of cereals, In 6th month- Phalaprasanis advised by Kashyapawhereas Annaprashanis suggested by Sushrutaand Vagbhata. In the 10th month, AnnaprashanSanskaris indicated by Kashyapa,AcharyaKashyapahas described annaprashanasanskarain detail. Here, they advised feeding of various fruits in the sixth month. After eruption of teeth or in tenth month, the feeding of cereals (annaprashan) should be done during auspicious day in prajapatyaconstellation, after worshipping the gods and brahmanes by cereals with meat and donations. Later Kashyapagive some yoga for nourishment of growing child as:-

□ Prepare avlehab combination of old, husk free and well washed sati or sashtirice, mixed with oleaginous substances and salt. The powders of wheat and barley also should be given, according to congeniality.

□ Ushnaleha(electuary) cooked with vidanga, lavan, oleaginous substances is beneficial, to the one having diarrhoea, kodoshould be mixed.

□ To the one having predominance of Pitta, mrdvikawith honey and ghritashould be given, and in predominance of Vata, diet with juice of matulungaand salt.

□ The one knowing desh(place of living), agni(digestive power), strength and period, whenever observes the child as hungry, should give him the food according to congeniality with the gap of one or two periods. According to Sushruta, the child at the age of six months, should be given food light and hitkar (appropriate wholesome food).[3] AcharyaVagbhataadvised that solid food should be offered to the child gradually simultaneously with discontinuing breast – milk

Relevance: Modern day pediatricians recommend exclusive breast feeding till six months, supplemental food should be started only after that. This is exactly the same as recommended by our authors. The food is properly mashed to avoid difficulty in deglutition. Cleaning by JalAcamana(water) indicates the highly developed sense of oral hygiene. Specific food which is beneficial in respective diseases is also prescribed. Starting the intake of fruits offers energy as well as vital vitamins and minerals to baby. This ceremony can also be useful for assessment of

developmental milestones like rolling over, sitting with own support in tripod fashion, unidextrous reach, stranger anxiety and monosyllabic speech at sixth month. Teeth eruption in children also begins around this age. Hence proper dentition is also to be looked for. Similarly annaprashan at tenth month offers assessment of bisyllabic speech, waving bye-bye, immature pincer grasp and standing with support. Weight of child can also be assessed.

II. CONCLUSIONS

Future of any nation depends on physically and mentally healthy children. Samskaradescribed in Ayurvedic texts are based on the various stages of child growth and developments and hence provide a rational guideline toward his care during celebrating different ceremonies from very conception to childhood. Child growth is internationally recognized as an important public health indicator for monitoring nutritional status and health in populations. Children suffer from growth retardations as a result of poor diets, recurrent infections tend to have more frequent episodes of severe diarrhea and are more susceptible to severe infectious disease such as malaria, meningitis, pneumonia and protein energy malnutrition etc

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