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ROLE OF SHODHANA AS PREVENTION AND ITS BENEFITS IN VANDHYATVA

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ABSTRACT

Garbha Dharana is a boon and is a dream of every woman in this society. According to a WHO report, Infertility is a global health issue affecting millions of people of reproductive age worldwide. Forty-eight million couples and 186 million individuals have infertility globally, and 15 to 20 million (25%) are in India alone. *Vandhyatva* has been explained as equivalent to female infertility. In Ayurveda, the development of any disease is linked to the imbalance of *Shareerika, Manasika Doshas, Bahudoshavastha*, and *Agnimandya*, which can lead to the manifestation of *Vyadhi*. Therefore, *Shodhana* is considered the best treatment modality as it helps in eradicating the *Doshas* from its root and clearing *Sroto Avarodha*, ultimately resulting in the *Poshana* of *Dhatus*, preventing *Vyadhi Punarudbhava* and its effect stays for *Chirakalina*. So, in this paper, an attempt is made to understand the role of *Shodhana* in prevention and its benefits in *Vandhyatva*.

Keywords: Bahudoshavastha, Infertility, Shodhana, Vandhyatva

INTRODUCTION

Garbha Dharana is the lifetime dream of every female individual in society. But nowadays, due to fast and hectic lifestyles, the infertility rate is rising among many women in the reproductive age group and men as well. Ayurveda is the science of life that focuses mainly on preventing diseases and curative aspects. As per Ayurveda, a standard conception occurs when Rutu, Kshetra, Ambu, and Beeja (the four factors) unite in normalcy, producing offspring. Bahudoshavastha is the condition every individual experiences with one or the other Lakshana due to lifestyle modification. Shodhana, as a significant treatment modality, maintains the Tridoshas in their Prakruta Sthana and allows Uttarottara Dhatu Poshana by eliminating the excess or Prakupita Doshas or Malas from the body. Hence, this article attempts to understand the role of the Doshas and Bahudoshavastha, which might be influencing the Vandhyatva and its prevention through Shodhana.

VANDHYATVA:

Vandhyatva (Infertility) is mentioned as one of the *Vataja Nanatmaja Vikaras*. ⁽¹⁾ The *Chikitsa Siddhanta* (Treatment principles) in treating *Vandhyatva* are *Shodhana* and *Shamana Chikitsa*.

Vandhyatva is the inability of the couple to achieve/conceive Supraja. In Ayurvedic texts, infertility is explained as Vandhyatva, due to Vata Dosha, and is mentioned in Rasadhatu Pradoshaja Vikara.⁽²⁾ It is considered Yonivvapat, as per Sushruta Samhita. At the same time, Charaka Acharya has explained it as a consequence of the abnormality of Beeja (Pradushta Garbhasaya Beeja Bhaga of Shonita). ⁽³⁾ Madhavkara has quoted Vandhya in Vimshati According to Acharya Charaka, Yonivyapat. Vandhyatva can be classified into three types: Vandhya, Apraja, and Sapraja. (4,5) Acharya Haritha has mentioned six types of Vandhya i.e Kakavandhya (one child sterility or secondary infertility), Anapatya Vandhya (no child or primary infertility), Garbhasravi Vandhya (repeated abortions), Mritavatsa Vandhya (repeated stillbirths), Dhatukshinatva/ Balakshaya Vandhya (loss of strength) and Garbhakoshabhanga Vandhya (injury to the uterus).⁽⁶⁾

ESSENTIAL FACTORS OF GARBHA DHARA-NA:⁽⁷⁾

Essential factors of constituents of *Garbha* (fetus) are 1) *Rutu* (fertile period), 2) *Kshetra* (reproductive organs), 3) *Ambu* (nutritive fluids), and 4) *Beeja* (Ovum). The healthy psychological status and normal functioning of *Vata* (one of the governing factors of the body according to Ayurveda) is essential for *Garbha Dharana. Shadbhavas* (Six factors), like *Matruja, Pitruja, Atmaja, Satvaja, Satmyaja, and Rasaja,* are necessary for the *Garbha Sambhava.* ⁽⁸⁾ The action of *Shodhana* is to maintain the normalcy of *Doshas* and the factors responsible for *Garbha Dharana.*

ROLE OF DOSHA:

In this competitive era, due to various reasons, the lifestyle of an individual and environmental changes affects the physical as well as mental well-being, which contributes to the imbalance in the normalcy of the *Dosha*, *Dhatu*, and *Mala* which constitute the *Shareera*, resulting in the *Bahudoshavastha*. Also, in the context of *Rutucharya*, *Acharyas* have mentioned the *Chaya* (local accumulation of the *Dosha*), *Prakopa* (excessive accumulation of the *Dosha*), and *Prashamana* (Pacification of the *accumulated Dosha*) of the *Dosha* in the specific *Rutus*. *Vata Dosha* gets *Chaya*, *Prakopa*, and *Prashamana* in *Greeshma*, *Varsha*, and *Sharat*, respectively. Similarly, *Pitta* and *Kapha Dosha Varshadi* and *Shishiradi Rutus*, respectively. ⁽⁹⁾

The Chaya, Prakopa Avastha, along with Bahudoshavastha of the Vatadi Dosha, may lead to the manifestation of the various Vyadhi hampering the Prakrutavastha of the Dosha, Dhatu, and Upadhatus. Vata Dosha, which circulates throughout the body, is responsible for the normal functioning of all the Dhatus, especially as it maintains the flow of the Chala Dhatus in its own Srotas without any hindrance. Vata Dosha and its types play an important role in understanding the Vandhyatva. Pitta Dosha maintains the metabolic functions of the body, which is a responsible factor for Uttarottara Dhatu Poshana, and is an essential factor for the Pushti of Shukra *Dhatu*, which is responsible for the *Garbhotpatti Karma*. *Kapha Dosha* is accountable for the *Snigdhata* or *Dridhata* of the *Anga*, which is also essential for conception.

Role of Vatadi Dosha over Garbha Dharana:(10,11)

Vata Dosha: The leading site of *Vata* (especially the *Apana Vata*) is *Pakvashaya* which can be understood as the pelvic area. The major organs of the reproductive system, such as the uterus, vagina, cervix, and broad and round ligaments, can be considered as the site of *Vata* as they are residing at the pelvic region.

Prana Vata: The Karma of Prana Vata is Buddhi Hridaya Indriya Chitadrik. "Soumanasya Garbhadharanam" where the state of Manas is an essential factor for the conception. And any disturbance to it might be the causative factor for the Artava Dushti.

Udana Vata: The leading site of *Udana Vata* is the *Uras*, and functions of *Udana Vata*, such as *Prayatna* and *Urjas*, are considered essential factors in achieving pregnancy.

Samana Vata: The Karma of Samana Vata is Anna Grahana, Pachana, Vivechana, and excretion. Proper Pachana of Ahara led to the formation of Rasadi Dhatus, Upadhatus, and Mala. Artava, being the Upadhatu of Rasa, is nourished by the quality of food intake, which is essential for the excellent quality of the Beejarupi Artava, helping in conception.

Vyana Vata: The site is *Hridaya*, which moves all over the body. *Hridaya* is the *Mulasthana* of *Rasavaha Strotas*, and *Upadhatu* of *Rasa* is *Artava*. It also provides seats to the *Manas* and *Atamaja Bhavas*, which are essential for the *Garbhottpati*. Hence, any disturbances in the *Vyana Vata* may lead to the *Dushti* of the *Beejarupi Artava*, leading to infertility.

Apana Vata: The main sites include the pelvis region, and this particular Vata is responsible for Shukra Artava Utpatti and Garbha Nishkramana Kriya. Among all the Pancha Vata, Apana Vata governs all the reproductive activities of the body. During labor, the same Apana Vata is called Prasuta Maruta, which controls the mechanism of labor. Its vitiation may lead to Vandhyatva, Nashtartava, Garbhapata, Garbhasrava and Moodhagarbha. *Pitta Dosha*: If *Pitta Dosha* gets *Prakupita*, it burns the *Kapha* and dries out the *Vata Dosha*, which in turn will hinder the normal functions of *Vata Dosha*. Also, *Pitta Dosha* is responsible for the maintenance of the metabolic processes of the body, which is the prime necessity for the *Uttarottara Dhatu Poshana* to take place.

CONCEPT OF BAHUDOSHA:

The word Bahu refers to Bahulya Vaishishtyam, which means much, many, frequent, great, and considerable in quantity. (12) Shareerika and Manasika Doshas can get vitiated due to their respective Nidanas and initiate the Samprapti (Pathogenesis) process. ⁽¹³⁾ The condition where the *Dosha* moves from its site is due to Dosha Prakopita Nidana Sevana, leading to the Bahulata of Dosha. Also, the Chayapurvaka Prakopa occurring during seasonal changes, if left untreated or ignored, can give rise to Bahudoshavastha. These reasons vitiate the normalcy of the Vatadi Dosha and Dhatus in the body, leading to the manifestation of certain Lakshanas like Avipaka, Aruchi, Sthoulya, Panduta, Gourava, Klama, Pidaka, Kota, Kandu, Arathi, Alasya, Sharma, and many more. (14)

Among them, Charaka Acharya has mentioned Kalibyata/Vandhyatva as one among Bahudosha Lakshanas.⁽¹⁵⁾ To remove the effects of Agnimandya and Dosha Prakopa that generally cause Vyadhi, addressing the Doshas in their Utkleshita or Bahula Prakupita Avastha is recommended. In the latter, the Doshas are already in Bahula Pramana in the Shareera, so administering proper Shodhana by considering factors like Dosha Vriddhi, Deha Prakriti, Bala, etc., will help in attaining Agnisandhukshana (Increasing the digestive capacity) and eliminate the Doshas from the Shareera. (15) Bahudoshavastha indicates Shodhana, which has several benefits, including the Vrushyata effect. (16) Shodhana helps in maintaining overall health by removing Bahula Doshas and preventing the Vyadhi,

ROLE OF SHODHANA IN CORRECTING BA-HUDOSHA AVASTHA:

Shodhana is a technique used to balance the *Tridoshas* by restoring them to their natural state,

known as *Prakruta Avastha*. To maintain the *Tridoshas, Vamana*, and *Virechanadi Shodhana Karmas* have their respective roles. They are beneficial in removing the *Sroto Sanga* (Obstruction to the channels) and maintaining *Agni* (Digestive fire) in its natural form. Classical texts have several references to treat infertility (*Vandhyatva*) using the *Shodhana* method. According to *Sushruta*, the most effective treatment for any state of infertility is *Basti Chikitsa*. ⁽¹⁷⁾ Another effective method could be *Nasya*, which stimulates the normal functioning of the hypothalamic-pituitary-ovarian axis, a fundamental requirement for fertilization to occur.

BENEFITS OF SHODHANA:⁽¹⁵⁾

According to Acharya Charaka, the first benefit of Shodhana is the achievement of the Abhivardhana (Increasing) of Agni, which is essential for Rasadi Dhatu Poshana, leading to nourishing the Updhatus. Vyadhihi Upashamyati Prakritihi Cha Anuvartate: after proper Shodhana, i.e., Vyadhi (Disease) gets Upashamana (Elimination) and Doshas to attain their Prakruta Avastha (Normal functioning). Doshas, especially Vata Dosha, function appropriately on their own Sthana without getting vitiated, which may prevent infertility. After Shodhana, Indriya, Manasa gets Prasidayati, which increases the person's Bala Pushti, an essential factor for fertilization. Shodhana leads to Jara Kruchrena Labhate (Delay in aging process), which is critical to maintaining the excellent quality of gametes in the reproductive age and benefits Apatyam Cha Vrushata Jayte. This shows the significance of the Shodhana Karma in the preconception period or before the planning of offspring.

IMPORTANCE OF RUTU SHODHANA CON-CERNING VANDHYATVA

While explaining *Rutu Shodhana, Acharya Vagbhatta* has mentioned that the elimination of *Chaya Purvaka Dosha Kopa* in the particular *Rutus* prevents the manifestation of the *Vyadhi* and *Doshas* will remain in their own *Prakruta Sthanas*. ⁽¹⁸⁾ Also, in the benefits of *Rututshodhana, Acharya Vagbhatta* has mentioned "*Tesham Na Punarudhbhavah*" "*Rasayanani Sid-dhani Vrushyayogamscha Kalavit*" that is, it prevents the chances of reoccurrence of the disease as well as

it promotes the effect of Rasayana and Vrushya Yogas. (19) Acharya Vagbhatta has also explained the administration of Brimhana therapies after Rutu Shodhana will provide the Vrushyata (Aphrodisiac effect) and Deergha Ayushyam (Longitivity), which in turn benefits in maintaining the Shuddhata of the Beeja and, hence prolonging the fertile period. (20) Acharya Charaka mentions the one who undergoes Rutu Shodhana will benefit from the Rogastatha Na Javate (Disease will not manifest), Prakrutistheshu Dhatushu (normalization of Dhatu functioning), Dhatavascha Abhivardhanam (Increasing the quality of Dhatus) and Jara Mandyamupaiti (Delaying the aging process). ⁽²¹⁾ Reducing the impact of any Dosha Dushti which may lead to the Vandhyatva, maintenance of the Prakruta Avastha of Dosha, Dhatu, and Upadhatu, and improvement in the quality, as well as quantity of the Rasaraktadi Dhatu and Jara Mandyata, are the benefits that one can attain on undergoing the Rutu Shodhana.

All these benefits of *Rutu Shodhana* play an essential role in maintaining good *Dosha* and *Dhatu Pramana*, a cozy environment for the *Garbha Sambhava Samagri*, which are indispensable factors in preventing or curing the *Vandhyatva*.

ROLE OF SHODHANA BEFORE ADMIN-ISTRATION OF RASAYANA, VAJEEKARANA DRUGS

Shodhana removes all *Sroto Sanga;* its effect lasts *Chirakaleena* and prevents *Vyadhi Punarudbhava,* which is a necessary milestone for the administration of any *Yogas* of the *Rasyana Vajikarana Chikitsa* for achieving desired fruitful outcomes.⁽²²⁾

Acharya Charka, while explaining the importance of *Shodhana* as *Purvakarma* to the administration of *Rasayana* or *Vajeekarana Yogas*, mentions if these *Yogas* are administered without doing proper *Sho-dhana*, it will not serve the desired purpose; just like dying the *Malina Vastra* will not absorb any color. ⁽²³⁾ Therefore, if domestic partners undergo *Shodhana* followed by *Rasayana Chikitsa* before conceiving, they can have healthy progeny.

IMPORTANCE OF SHODHANA IN PRE CON-CEPTIONAL-CARE:

Acharya Charaka, in Shareera Sthana, explains that those who have the desire for Shreyah Prajajanaka Gunadhanartha, for the Vyapanna of Shukra, Shonita, and Garbhashya, Stree, and Purusha should undergo the Sneha Svedadi Karma followed by Vamana Virechanadi Samshodhana Karma and later one should follow the Peyadi Samsarjana Krama; which will restore the Prakruti of the Dhatu and Doshas. After Samshodhana, Acharya Charaka mentioned a diet and regimen to attain healthy conception and progeny. ⁽²⁴⁾ Hence, Shodhana balances the Agni, Dhatus, and the Doshas during pre-conception. Thus, ensuring the healthy growth and development of the fetus and an uncomplicated pregnancy.

Role of Nasya in Pumsavana Karma:⁽²⁵⁾

The administration of certain drugs through the nose has been mentioned by *Acharya Sushruta* soon after the *Stree* achieves pregnancy for *Pumsavana Karma*. *Acharya Sushruta* mentioned the installation of specific *Dravyas* through the right nostril for a desired male child and that a desired female child would be through the left nostril.

Dalhana has well explained the purpose of *Nasya* for three specific reasons:

1) Before conception: followed by intercourse; to achieve conception.

2) Immediately following conception: for the maintenance of pregnancy.

3) Before three months of the pregnancy: for the desired male or female child.

Examples of the *Dravyas* to be instilled nasally before conception are:

1) Lakshmana Moola, Vata Shrunga, Sahadeva, Vishvadeva.

2) *Shveta Bruhati* leaves of *Utpala* and *Kumuda*. etc. *Acharya Charaka* also mentioned the inhalation of the *Dravyas* through nostrils during *Pushya Nakshatra*. Hence, pre-conceptionally, administration of *Dravyas* through the nostrils, i.e., *Nasya Karma*, ensures the achievement of the conception, maintenance, and growth of the progeny in a healthy environment, which in turn may contribute to the prevention of the *Vandhyatva*.

DISCUSSION

ANALYSIS OF *BAHUDOSHAVASTHA* WITH INFERTILITY:

- <u>Avipaka and Aruchi</u> The Shareerika, as well as Manasika Dosha, gets Prakupita due to various Nidana Sevana leading to the Agnimandya and formation of the Ama, which in turn will lead to the Vatadi Dosha Prakopa and Annavaha Sroto Dushti. This Dushti results in hindrance to the Kramat Dhatu Poshana. This highlights that improper indulgence of the Ahara and Vihara will hamper the digestive capacity, leading to nutritional insufficiency of the body.
- <u>Sthoulya</u> Medasvi Purusha, or the one who indulges in the Kapha Vardhaka Ahara and Vihara, suffers from the Medo Dhatu Dushti because of its 'Samanyam Vriddhi Karanam' property. Continuous indulgence will lead to the Poshana of only Medo Dhatu, leading to the Kshaya of Kramita Dhatus, i.e., Asthi, Majja, and Shukra because of the Margaavarodha. Also, it makes the person with less enthusiasm, i.e., Sphoorti Abhava, Sukumarata, and the Guru Guna of the Medo Dhatu, make person Sthula. This may cause the person to experience difficulty in Vyavaya.

As per WHO data, the estimated prevalence of primary infertility among reproductive age group women in India is 11.8%. In females, obesity may lead to menses irregularities, chronic oligo anovulation, polycystic ovary syndrome, and increased risk of miscarriages. It also increases insulin resistance, leading to increased levels of androgen, which results in the absence of follicular growth, leading to anovulation. This throws a light on how obesity may end up causing infertility.

• <u>Panduta</u> – Pitta Pradhana Tridosha Prakopa leads to the Dushti (Vitiation) of the Rasaraktadi Dhatuvaha Srotas. This may cause the Shithilata and Gauravata of Uttara Dhatu, leading to the Kshaya of the Bala, Varna, Sneha, and Ojas of the body.

When iron stores fall into an unhealthy range, it prevents red blood cells from developing. Low red blood cells result in low hemoglobin levels. This decreases the oxygen-carrying capacity of the body's tissues, including the ovaries and uterus. Good oxygen capacity in the blood supply is essential to the uterine layers and tissue, providing a healthy environment for healthy implementation.

Insufficient oxygen delivery to reproductive organs may affect the timely maturation and expulsion of the ovum. Without a healthy egg, conception becomes near impossible, resulting in infertility.

 <u>Alasya, Shrama, Dourbalya, Dorgandhya,</u> <u>Balapranasha</u> – These Shareerika symptoms indicate Prakopa of the Vatadi Dosha, which may lead to the Srotas Vaigunyata by causing Atipravriti, Sanga, Vimarga Gamana and Granthi which hinders the Kramat Dhatu Poshana. <u>Mano Avasada, Nidranasha, Atinidrata, Tandra</u>

 These contribute to creating the imbalance at the Manasika level due to Vatadi Dosha Prakopa leading to giving rise to Chinta, Shoka, Bhaya etc Lakshanas.

The person suffering from stress, anxiety, depression, and other psychosomatic causes has an increased risk of suffering from infertility. The mental status or condition affects the pituitary and hypothalamus, leading to impairment in the HPO axis, which results in insufficient secretion of GnRH, FSH, LH, and other hormones. This leads to reduced production of estrogen and progesterone, leading to irregular cycles, no follicular growth in the ovary, no proper development of uterine lining, etc., in females adding to infertility.

CAUSES OF INFERTILITY IN RELATION WITH BAHUDOSHA LAKSHANA:

Table:1 Comparison of Bahudosha Lakshana with the causes of Infertility

Bahudosha Lakshana	Causes of Infertility
Sthoulya, Panduta	Obesity, PCOD/PCOS, Anaemia
Dourgandya	Pyometra
Manoavasada	Psychosomatic factors
Shleshma-Pitta Samutklesha/	Vaginitis, Cervicitis, PID, etc. diseases responsible for the
Shleshma Pittaja Yonivyapat	Infertility
Nidranasha, Atinidrata, Tandra	HPO axis impairment
Klaibyata	Infertility/Sterility

NEED FOR PLANNED CONCEIVING

The preconception period (3 to 6 months before pregnancy) is the time to make life changes, that can help boost fertility, reduce problems during pregnancy, and assist in recovery from birth. Properly planned conceiving also benefits from the sound and sufficient amount of the all-essential hormone levels required for conception; it helps to carry out an event-free pregnancy and contributes to the healthy progeny developing a healthy society.

SUCCESSFUL STORY:

Case Study: Role of *Panchkarma* in Anovulatory Infertility:⁽²⁶⁾

The patient's serum LH and other hematological investigations showed improvement after undergoing *Virechana Karma* and *Basti Karma* (*Lekhana Basti* and *Uttara Basti*). The subsequent follicular study

and USG impression showed the expected results after the treatment, and the patient could conceive successfully. This highlights the importance of *Sho-dhana* in both preventing and treating *Vandhyatva*.

CONCLUSION

Prevention and management of infertility can be achieved through corrective measures towards the factors that affect fertility and lifestyle modifications. Due to improper lifestyle and eating habits, *Bahudoshavastha* is commonly observed in most of the population in the present era. As *Klaibyta* or *Vandhyatva* is one of the *Bahudosha Lakshanas*, it demands its prevention. Understanding the benefits of *Shodhana Chikitsa* in preventing *Vyadhis* like infertility by following *Dosha Vaigunyata* and the manifestation of *Vyadhi* highlights its significance. A recent report by WHO, released in April 2023, states that infertility affects 1 in 6 people globally, and India, being the most populous country, is highly involved. Hence, adequately planned *Shodhana* helps to maintain the balance between *Tridoshas, Dhatus, Upadhatus,* and *Srotas,* providing a healthy environment for *Garbha Sambhava Samagri,* namely *Rutu, Kshetra, Ambu, Beeja,* which are the prime factors for fertilization. Therefore, considering *Shodhana* according to the *Dosha-Dhatu Dushti,* vitiated *Srotas,* etc., factors magnify the chances of fertility by preventing the risk of infertility, giving rise to promising *Supraja.*

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