

**CONCEPT OF EUGENIC PRINCIPLE IN AYURVED**Partha Biswas<sup>1</sup>, Sonali Biswas<sup>2</sup>, Sushil Chandra Pal<sup>3</sup>

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**ABSTRACT**

The term eugenics which from its Greek roots means “good in birth” was coined by Francis Galton in 1883. Although the technical term Eugenics does not feature in classical Ayurvedic text but the theme of Eugenics is vibrant and emphasize repeatedly almost all classical text especially in Caraka Samhita and Susruta Samhita. It is an outstanding contribution of Ayurveda on Eugenics is being described on the following heads i.e. like marriage between different clan (atulyagotriya), age of conception, therapy applied for pumsavana, how to obtain the purity of sukra (sperm) and sonata (ovum), how to prevent the birth of a physically and mentally handicapped child in different samhitas. Though Ayurveda does not implicate the literary aspect of Eugenics in much detail but its described scientifically and methodically in different Ayurvedic classic and text. The review focuses on the various concept and methods of eugenics described in Ayurved.

**Keywords:** Ayurved, Eugenic, Progeny, Consanguineous marriage

**INTRODUCTION**

The blossoming of the scientific revolution of Eugenic principle has been started five thousand years before Christ which has been described in different Ayurvedic classical text. Though Ayurveda does not implicate the pure and literally aspect of Eugenic in much detail but it has taken up its applied aspect scientifically and systematically under the following heads, like marriage should be arranged between different clan (atulyagotriya) to avoid consanguineous marriage, age of conception of mother and father mentioned in Ayurvedic Samhitas to avoid birth of a malformed child. Therapy applied for *pumsavana* is adopted by Samhitas to get male or female child by choice. How to prevent the birth of a physically and mentally handicapped child? Though the term Eugenic came into existence by scien-

tist sir ‘Francis Galton’, who first used in his book (1883) “**Inquiries into human faculty and its development in modern genetics**”, but the concept was very much well known in Ayurveda.

**Concept of Eugenic in modern genetics**

The word Eugenic was first mentioned by “Galton” and it has been defined as the science of healthy race. Literally the term Eugenic means well born, from the big word Eu (well or good) and Gene (born). It also may be defined the science which deals with all influences that improve the inborn qualities of a race also with those that develop them to the utmost advantage.

**Aims and objective of Eugenic**

The notion of Eugenics involve the principle that the interest of the Human species must

be consider overriding the interest, hopes and needs of individual. The goal of Eugenics is to benefit the species not the individual. The notion of Eugenics also contains the idea of the improvement of the genetics endowment and that future generation will be interested in this, if it is possible and safe. Its general aim is that the people should be well born physically, mentally and spiritual

### Application of Eugenics principle in Ayurveda

According to Ayurveda the five factors are responsible for procreation of healthy child. Among these factors *sattva*, *satmaja*, *atma-ja* factors are consider as a key factor to maintain Eugenic principle (1). Application of proper nourishment helps in the production of a healthy child. They are directly responsible for manifestation of growth of the body, continuity of the strength, satisfaction and enthusiasm aspect of new born (2). *Satwa* or mind provides to unite the *jivatma* with physical body. Each and every individual possess three types of mind, *satwik*, *rajasik*, *tamasik*. Among the 3 types of *satwa*, *satwik* is dominated to express the best qualities of the new born (3).

Ayurveda considered the basic factors which are responsible for promotion of strength. The following factors are (4) birth in a country where people become naturally strength, birth at a season when offspring naturally gains strength, excellent qualities of sperm and ovum ie *sukra* & *sonita* of the parents, the parents possess excellent qualities of psychic.

Ayurveda also mentioned the factors which are also responsible for maintenance of normal life span. The factors are: *Pra-kritisampad*, *Gunasampad*, & *Atmasampad*

(5). *Gunasampad* is the key factor to maintain the excellence of the compactness of the body excellence of hereditary qualities. The suitable age of conception of mother and father and physical condition of the mother has been recommended by Susruta. In this regard Susruta mentioned that the mother below the age of 16 and in case of father below the age of 25 does not allow conceiving (6). A lady who is very old or who has been seeking for a long time should not be allowed to conceive (7). Recent study has shown that maternal age plays a key role in various genetic abnormalities. This concept was established in clinical medicine by Dr. Langdon Down, as named Down's syndrome, now it is well established that there is a strong association between the incidence of Down's syndrome and advancing maternal age (8). Caraka advised for procreation of a healthy child, it is necessary that the male and female should be mutually of a different clan (9) and to avoid consanguineous marriage (10), a consanguineous marriage is the conglomerate between the blood relations who have at least one common ancestors. Several extensive studies have shown that among the offspring of consanguineous marriage there is an increase in both morbidity and mortality with an increase incidence of congenital structural abnormalities.

The Ayurvedic scholar have emphasized specific daily routine of the mother during menstrual flow and before coitus and also before achieving the conception resulting in birth of a desirable quality of child The Acharya emphasize the application of various *samskar* for the child all shows the highest biological tradition, practiced with modesty and meaning among Indian people.

## Method and Measures applicable to get Excellent Progeny

The following popular measures are mentioned in Ayurvedic text in order to conceive the healthiest and most intelligent children. The couple should be treated with *snehan and swedana* therapies and thereafter dosas from their body should be eliminated by the administration of *vamana and virecana* therapies. Then the patient should be brought into normalcy by administering prescribed diet viz. peya or thick gruel etc. After the elimination of dosas, the couple should be administered *asthapan and anuvasana* types of vasti(enema). Male partner should also be taken ghee and milk boiled with drugs having sweet taste. Tila oil and masa (*Phaseolus radiatus* Linn) should be administered to the female partner.(11)

## Regimen to get a son of excellent qualities

It was believed that If desire to have a son with physically white complexioned with the strength like that of lion, with vigour, purity and strong mind the following regimen should be taken from the first day of her pacificator bath (after menstruation) she should be given *mantha*(thin gruel) prepared with white barley by boiling it with the milk of a white cow having a white calf mixing it with ghee and honey in a silver or bronze vessel to drink every morning and evening continuously for one week. In the morning, she should take food preparation made of Sali rice or barley along with curd, honey, ghee or milk. In the evening she should resort to white apartment and use the bed sheet, drink, and apparel and ornaments all of white color. In the morning and evening, she should continuously look at a white & corpulent bull or stallion (horse of high

breed) or paste of white sandalwood. She should be entertained with pleasing and favorite stories. Men and women with good personalities, pleasing words and refined behavior and action, and other white things should form the object of her vision as well as other senses. Her companion as well as her husband should always attend on her in pleasing and favorable manner. They should however refrain from cohabitation during this period. After having adopted the above regimen for seven nights, she along with her husband should take a complete bath and should wear white and unworn apparel as well as white garlands and ornaments (12)

## Method of Pumsavana Kriya

The procedure described in the Vedas to be properly adopted to change sex of the fetus before its manifestation is described. These methods if adapted, in association with excellence of locality and time produce the desired effects invariably. Therefore, the pregnant woman should be administered pumsavana therapy before the manifestation of the sex of the fetus. If the pumsavana therapy is administered in improper place and time this leads to harmful effects (13).

## CONCLUSION

Though the term Eugenics which forms its Greek root means good in birth was coined by Francis Galton in 1883, but actual application of its principle was started at least 3000yrs before Christ. The Ayurvedic scholar had a fundamental knowledge on Eugenics much before the modern geneticist. Though Ayurveda does not implicate the pure and literary aspect of eugenics in much details but has taken up its applied aspect scientifically under the different context. Ayurveda refers to the principle of

eugenics by encouraging desirable types to have more children (positive Eugenic) but discouraging undesirable types to have more progeny (negative Eugenics). It is universally accepted fact that if defective humans are allowed to reproduce their defects become more common in the society. In modern clinical genetics Eugenic defined as the science of improving a species through breeding. But Ayurveda not only describe the methods are applicable in improving the species at all but also advice for improving individual qualities in human beings. Though Ayurveda does not adopt the absolute acceptable Eugenic philosophy, which is being practiced among the Indian society, it is encouraging and important that the Eugenic principle describe in Ayurveda should be open for debate among the Ayurvedic physician and for scientific validation.

In order to create acceptable scientific evidence on Eugenics principle describe in Ayurveda a systemized and scientific approach is needed for scientific validation on the subject. The notion of eugenics involved the principle that the interest of the human species must be considers overriding the interest, hopes and needs of individual. The goal of Eugenics is consider species not the individual. In modern medical genetics notion of Eugenics also possess the idea of the improvement of the genetics endowment and that future generation will be interested in this program if it is possible and safe. According to Ayurveda its general aim is that people should be well born physically, mentally and spiritually which enrich the nation, society or country.

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