



Review Article

A LITERARY REVIEW ON PUMSAVANA KARMA

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda is the science of life and it is one of the most ancient healing methodologies in the world. This system is transmitted from immortals to mortals. There are various Samhitas written by our *Acharyas* related to health of the human beings. *Pumsavana karma* is one of the most important *Samskara* mentioned in Ayurveda. It is one of the *Shodasha Samskaras* performed in various stages of life in ancient India explained by scholars of Ayurveda. It can be done before the conception or immediately after the conception to achieve healthy and desired progeny during *Pushya nakshatra*. In Ayurveda, *Pushya nakshatra* is often considered a favourable time for various health related activities. It is believed that beginning Ayurvedic treatments during *Pushya nakshatra* can enhance their effectiveness and yield better results. It deals with the technique of genetic engineering and it can be considered to have some action on human genetics to ensure healthy progeny. Moreover, the complexion, glow, mental health of child can be improved through *Pumsavana karma*. In this article the importance of *Pumsavana karma* has described that which is not only for desired sex but also to achieve healthy progeny by using different formulations mentioned in various *Samhitas* was explained.

INTRODUCTION

Pumsavana karma is one of the *Shodasha Samskara* and it can be performed before the conception or immediately after the conception. *Pumsavana* means "*Pumsatvamiti pumsatva karakam karma*"^[1]. This process is to be adopted to achieve progeny of desired sex is known as *Pumsavana*. It brings the changes in the qualities and refinement which will take place in the embryo. It is one of the prenatal Hindu religious ceremonies described in our *Vedas*. Out of sixteen *Samskaras Garbhadhana, Pumsavana* and *Seemantham* are the prenatal *Samskaras*. All remaining postnatal *Samskaras* are also explained by our *Acharyas*.

Importance of *Pushya Nakshatra*

In Astrology total 27 *Nakshatras* are present. Among them 14 *Nakshatras* are *Purusha nakshatras* and remaining 13 are *Stree nakshatras*. *Pushya nakshatra* is one of the *Purusha nakshatra*^[7].

Among 14 *Purusha nakshatras, Pushya nakshatra* considered as the best in terms of auspiciousness and also suited for doing auspicious medicinal preparations and treatment administrations^[7]. *Pushya nakshatra* is an important lunar constellation. In Ayurveda starting from pregnancy care to treating poisonous conditions, *Pushya* lunar constellation is given due importance^[7]. The day of *Pushya nakshatra* holds special significance and it appears on every 27th day and it has been told in classics that on the day of *Pushya nakshatra* the absorption capacity of medicine in the body is increased^[8]. If prepared medicine is instilled in her right nostril, possibility to get the male child^[1]. If prepared medicine is instilled in her left nostril, possibility to get the female child^[1].

Literature of *Pumsavana Karma*

To get the healthy progeny one must adopt the procedure prescribed in *Vedas*. The methods adopted in association with the excellence of locality and time to produce the desired effects invariably. *Dalhana*, the commentator of *Susrutha Samhita* has explained that this process is done with three objectives^[3].

1. *Garbha grahanartha*: Preconception for achievement of conception.

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2. *Garbha sthapanartha*: Immediately after the conception for its proper implantation.
3. Post conception within two months for having healthy progeny^[3].

OBSERVATIONS

Acharya Charaka described that before the conception, initially both the male and female partners should undergo procedures like *Snehana*, *Swedana* followed by *Sodhana karma* i.e., *Vamana*, *Virechana* for the elimination of *Doshas*^[1]. Afterwards the couple should undergo *Asthapana* and *Anuvasana vasthi* procedures^[1]. *Vasthi* should be done only after the procedures of *Vamana*, *Virechana*^[1]. If the body is not properly purified *Vasthi* should not be conducted^[1]. Later on, the man should be given milk and ghee processed with *Madhura rasa* drugs (promote the quantity of semen) and woman should be given *Masha* and *Tila taila* for intake^[1]. The woman after her menstruation, on the fourth day should involve in sexual activity with her partner having pleasant mind and love^[1]. If the couple desire to beget the male progeny, copulation should be done on even (4th, 6th, 8th, 10th, 12th) days^[1]. If the couple desire to beget the Female progeny, copulation should be done on odd (5th, 7th, 9th, 11th, 13th) days^[1].

In Kasyapa Samhita describes that if the couple desires to get male progeny, copulation should be on even days. If the couple desires to get female progeny, copulation should be on odd days^[5].

Acharya Susruta described that when the conception is known to taken place, on the same day, three to four drops of juice of *Lakshmana*, *Vatasrngas*, *Sahadeva*, *Vishvadeva* or such other macerated with milk should be put into right nostril of the woman^[3].

Acharya Vagbhata described that before the conception the man who has taken food consisting of ghee, milk and boiled rice should climb on the bed, keeping his right foot first. The woman should next keeping her left foot first from the right side of her husband after taking food consisting of *Masha* to get desired and healthy progeny^[4].

Route of Administration and Action of Drug

Route of drug administration is through oral and transnasal route because "*Nasa hi shiraso dwaram*" i.e., nose is gateway of head. The drug enters into the body with more efficacies through nasal route. The drugs used for *Pumsavana karma* directly or indirectly acts on the pituitary gland and stimulates the secretion of hormones responsible for the particular gonadal and sex organs development in male or female baby^[5]. For desirable results one should follow the methodology of *Pumsavana karma* as explained by Acharyas.

The commentator Chakrapani says that before the manifestation of distinct sexual characteristics^[2]. That means until the formation of sexual organs as in

male and female embryo, it is very much possible to change the sex of foetus by adopting procedures prescribed in Ayurveda. Determination of sex happens in the foetus during the second month of pregnancy. In second month the embryo is in compact form. In the third month major and minor body parts are formed. Since the body parts do not manifest in the second month of pregnancy the foetus is in nodular shape, *Pumsavana karma* can be done upto second month^[2].

Acharya Susruta says that when the conception is known to have taken place, on the same day, three or four drops of juice of *Lakshmana*, *Sahadeva*, *Visvadeva* or such other plants macerated with milk should be put into to the right nostril of the woman if a son is desired, she should not spit it out^[3].

The commentator Dalhana says that in ancient times *Pumsavana* was considered as essential to beget a male child and so it was being performed as necessary ritual. Its underlying principle was *Garbha sthapanartha* (ensuring the existence of foetus for the full period of pregnancy. And he gives some information about the plants e.g., *Lakshmana* is shaped like a baby, its bark or leaves as having red colour, small spotted appearance, with the smell of goat and it bestows sons. *Vata srnga* are the leaf buds of *Nyagrodha* tree, *Sahadeva* is a variety of *Bala*, *Visvadeva* is *Gangeruki*. Identification of *Lakshmana* is still doubtful, but the *Sweta kantakari* is also known as *Lakshmana*^[3].

Acharya Vagbhata says that in the first month, during first seven days, the embryo becomes a *Kalala* and it is unmanifested, hence the *Pumsavana karma* done in first month. Because the powerful *Purusakara* (actions of present life) will overcome the *Daiva* (actions of previous lives)^[4].

Drugs

- On the day of *Pusya nakshatra*, the collected *Vata srngas* should be mixed with curd and blended with two grains of *Masa* or *Sarsapa* and to be given to the mother to drink.
- Milk processed either separately or jointly with the paste of *Jivaka*, *Rsabhaka*, *Apamarga*, *Sahachara*.
- Drink the handful of water along with *Kudyakita* (type of insect) or *Matsya* on the day of *Pusya nakshatra*.
- The idols of a man made of gold, silver, iron are to be heated up to red hot and immerse it in a handful measure of curd or milk or water on the day of *Pusya nakshatra*. Then the woman should be instructed to drink the entire quantity without leaving any remnant.
- The pregnant woman should be instructed to inhale the steam coming out of *Sali* rice while cooking on the day of *Pusya nakshatra*.

- Take the liquid extracted from the paste of *Sali* rice with a cotton swab after adding water and then pour into her right nostril by herself^[1].
- *Lakshmana, Vata srnga, Sahadeva, Visvadeva* such other plants should be macerated with milk should be put into right nostril of woman^[3].
- According to Kashyapa Samhita, *Sharira sthana* in *Jati sutriya adhyaya* describes that just before going to conception the husband making the wife lie down on bed and should take the drug *Lakshmana* mixing with water and reciting the mantras related to *Putresti yajna* ^[5].

DISCUSSION

For attaining the efficacious result of *Pumsavana karma*, the nasal route and oral route are selected as the routes of drug administration. The anatomical and physiological pathway which might be causing their impact on the determination of sex during different period of intrauterine life. The drugs used for *Pumsavana karma* has the diuretic property. These drugs have their effect on the pituitary gland^[6]. Ayurveda said that route of drug administration is through transnasal route because *Nasa hi shiraso dwaram* i.e., nose is the gateway of head. Through this the efficacy of drug enters into body. So, until the formation of distinct sexual characteristics such as male and female it is very much possible to change the sex of foetus by adopting the prescribed procedures in Ayurveda. The procedure *Pumsavana karma* is being performed according to *Desa, Kala*^[2]. It gives the desired effects healthy progeny.

CONCLUSION

Ayurveda provides methods of naturally producing healthy progeny by methods mentioned in *Pumsavana karma* which should be used wisely to

combat the problems of repeated abortions and infertility as well as to produce healthy, intelligent, beautiful progeny with strength, vigor, longevity etc. The *Samskara pumsavana karma* has to be propagated and given popularity on the basis of its effect as *Garbhagrahanartha* and *Garbhasthapanartha* rather than only prioritizing it for begetting the healthy progeny.

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