



Review Article

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HOLISTIC APPROACH OF *GARBHSANSKAR* IN THE HEALTHY DEVELOPMENT OF FETUS AND MATERNAL WELL-BEING: A REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

Garbh Sanskar training has gained popularity in recent years as a holistic approach to pregnancy and childbirth that associate traditional practices with modern medical techniques. *Garbh Sanskar* is a practice to educate the fetus in womb. *Garbh* indicates the fetus in the womb and *Sanskar* is to educate the mind. Basically, we can say, it is a method of selecting and transferring positive influence by means of *Yoga*, reading, thinking, praying, healthy eating and cheerful behaviors. *Garbh Sanskar* practice maintains well-being of mother and child, these effects successively reflects in the later stages of pregnancy and after the child birth. Now a days we can observed hampered pattern of life style which significantly decline health of women carrying fetus, this may cause problem in normal child birth or disrupt health of new born. Therefore practices of *Garbh Sanskar* become important in modern's day life style to prevent mother and child from the harmful effects of stressful pattern of current situation. This review article comprises complete discussion about *Garbh Sanskar* and its importance in modern scenario.

Keywords: Ayurveda, Prenatal Development, *Garbh Sanskar*, Pregnancy, Fetus, Mother

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INTRODUCTION

Garbh Sanskar is a holistic process that highlights the importance of a mother's mental and emotional state all through pregnancy to support ideal fetal development and welfare of both the mother and baby. The word "*Garbh Sanskar*" ascends from the *Sanskrit* words *Garbh* and *Sanskar*. *Garbh* means the fetus which develops in mother's womb and *Sanskar* is *Sanskaro hi gunaantaradhanam* means to transform the qualities. ^[1] In the classical texts of Ayurveda, *Sanskar* is mention in a means of training, education, enhancement, polishing, embellishment, cultivation, beautification and ornament, a ritual to modification the qualities.^[2] *Garbh + Sanskar* mean reforming, polishing, ultimate molding and cultivating the unborn. Basically, we can say, it is a process of choosing and transferring positive impact on unborn baby by means of *Yoga*, reading, thinking, praying, healthy eating and cheerful activities.^[3] Here are some examples of "*Garbh Sanskar*" that found in many mythological stories.

- The story of Abhimanyu is very well known. In the Mahabharata, Abhimanyu was a son of Arjuna. When he was in his mother's womb, he learned how to enter the *Chakravyuha*. He recalled his father's story when he became a fighter in the Kurukshetra war.
- Prahlad was son of demons family but his mother listened to devotional prayers and stories about lord Vishnu, while he was in her womb. As an outcome, he became a follower of lord Vishnu.
- The mother of lord Hanumana was a devotee of Mahadeva. When she was pregnant, she ate a holy dessert which was meant to bless divine children. Thus, Hanuman was born with divine supremacies.

Some examples from the modern world are below.

- Veer Savarkar' mother used to read the brave stories from Ramayana and Maharana Pratap to her son when he was in womb.^[4]
- When Zakir Hussain (tabla vada) was in mother's womb, his father, Ustad Allah Rakha, used to beat lightly with his fingers on his mother's abdomen.^[5]

MODERN SCIENCE ABOUT LIFE IN UTERO

Modern science also confirm life in utero, the baby can hear, smell, taste and see before birth. Fetus starts to swallow amniotic fluid at 12 weeks of gestation age and can learn tastes experienced from prenatal. Fetus favorites its mother's meal and picks up the food taste culture in the womb.^[6] From 16th week, Touch sensation starts and at 23rd week, it fully improves.^[7] The fetus can hear the sounds from mother's womb and her surroundings from the 7th month and also responds to them. It also noticed that fetal heart rate slow down when the mother is speaking. It suggests that fetus can hear and identifies the sound. Fetus favors mother's voice and comforted by it and also notices that fetus responds to loud voice. Newborn favors a story read to it repeatedly when it was in the womb.^[8]

THE GOAL OF *GARBHA SANSKAR*

Garbh Sanskar are used to create positive environment for fetus's mental, physical, and spiritual development. It is based on principles from classic texts and traditions. Various techniques are used in The *Garbh Sanskar* training. And had aim to endorse the physical, mental, and spiritual development of the fetus. It embraces rehearsing mantras, engaging in meditation and yoga, listening music, reading classic texts, and following a healthy nutritious diet.

THE PRINCIPLES OF *GARBH SANSKAR*

Now a day, People prefer *Garbh Sanskar* during pregnancy but actually it should starts before conception. The beginning of *Garbhasanskar*, start by *Beejasanskar*. Quality of *Beeja* (Sperm & Ovum) is essential for healthy baby. *Dushit Beeja* (defect) is always resulting into abnormal fetus which is concerned with the parts developing from that *Beeja*. If a couple wish to have excellent offspring (*Shrestha* progeny), there must be *Adushita shukra* (healthy sperm), *Artava* (Healthy ovum) and *Garbhasaya* (Uterus) and *Yoni*.^[9] Conception must start with *Shodhana* (Purification process). Simply, *Shodhana* is one of the *panchkarma* process which help in cleansing of body. Harmful elements can be assemble inside the human body due to a various of factors, and *shodhana* helps to eliminate them by the excretory system.^[10] The principles of *Garbh Sanskar* were spread through the oral tradition across generations. But

the practice of *Garbh Sanskar* descent as modern medical practices had gain admiration with changing time. Now, its need of time to encourage people goes through *Garbh Sanskar* practice for mentally and physically healthy offspring. Mainly, center of *Garbh Sanskar* tradition is an expectant mother. But it was also expected to participation the father and other family members for taking part in different rituals and practices. Involvement of close ones helps to improve Mother's mental and physical health. ^[11] For example, the father would chant mantras to guard the child from negative energies and raise positive energies and also perform yoga and exercise with mother for mental support.

TECHNIQUES OF *GARBH SANSKAR* ^[12]

- **Nutritional guidance-** Well-balanced and nutritious diet during pregnancy guided by healthcare professionals and nutritionists which includes foods rich in essential nutrients and avoiding harmful substances.
- **Positive assertions** - Pregnant women are recommended to repeat positive assertions to them, such as "I am healthy and my baby is healthy." This is supposed to help in the development of a positive mindset and reduce stress.
- **Prenatal yoga and exercise-** engaging in prenatal yoga classes and exercises specifically designed for pregnant women can promote physical fitness, flexibility, and overall well-being during pregnancy.
- **Massages:** Massages can help improve blood circulation, reduce stress and anxiety, and promote relaxation. Ayurvedic massages with herbal oils are commonly used during *Garbh Sanskar*. Ayurvedic massages, also known as *Abhyanga*, are believed to be beneficial for pregnant women.
- **Mantras** - *Mantra* is a Sanskrit word indicates a specific structure or sonic forms which are implied in syllables and vowels that work as a spiritual tool; help to release the mind from ignorance, delusion and evil instincts. There are many *Mantras* which are suggested to be recited during pregnancy are *Kula devata mantras*, *Gayatri mantra*, *Ramraksha*, *Hanuman chalisa* etc. By reciting "aaaaaaa", mother can feel the sensation and thus it resonance to nervous system on the stomach and chest region. Chanting "ooooo" makes vibrations in throat and chest region. Likewise,

humming “mmmm” works on the nasal cavity as well as skull\brain region.

- **Meditation and mindfulness:** Practicing meditation and mindfulness techniques can help expectant mothers relax, reduce stress, and cultivate a positive mindset, creating a calm and nurturing environment for the fetus.
- **Music therapy:** Listening to soothing and calming music, specifically designed for the prenatal period, can have a positive impact on both the mother and the fetus, promoting relaxation and emotional well-being.
- **Emotional bonding:** Engaging in activities that promote emotional bonding between the mother and the fetus, such as talking, singing, and reading aloud, can help establish a strong connection and promote a sense of security for the unborn child.
- **Positive Thinking:** The mother is advised to maintain a positive outlook and avoid negative thoughts and emotions. It is supposed that the mother's thoughts and emotions can have a insightful impact on the mental and emotional well-being of the child.
- **Supportive environment:** Creating a supportive and nurturing environment that includes the involvement of the partner, family, and loved ones. This involves providing emotional support, understanding, and encouragement to the expectant mother throughout the pregnancy journey.

RECOMMENDATION FOR PRACTICING *GARBH SANSKAR* ^[13]

- It is recommended as early as possible.
- Follow a healthy lifestyle which includes a balanced diet, regular exercise, and sufficient rest to mother and avoid unhealthy habits such as smoking and drinking.
- Rehearsal relaxation techniques such as meditation, *yoga* and breathing exercises.
- Connecting with baby by talking to baby, listen to soothing music, and engage in activities that promote bonding between mother and baby.
- It is most important to take guidance from a qualified practitioner of traditional Indian medicine to confirm that you are practicing *Garbh Sanskar* correctly and safely.

BENEFITS OF *GARBH SANSKAR*

- It encourages proper diet and healthy lifestyle choices
- *Garbh Sanskar* practices can aid in promoting a healthy pregnancy by lowering stress levels.
- *Garbh Sanskar* practices like yoga, meditation, and listening to calming music encourages the physical and mental development of the fetus.
- *Garbh Sanskar* exercises like yoga and meditation can ease anxiety, promote calm, and build the mother's strength and stamina in order to better prepare her for childbirth.
- It works on building mental and physical wellbeing of the mother and fetus.
- *Garbh Sanskar* practices including mantra recitation and listening to calming music helps to improve quality of sleep.
- *Garbh Sanskar* techniques like singing, talking, and reading to the unborn child can promote a close emotional connection between the mother and the child which means Strengthens maternal-fetal bond.

CONCLUSION

We are living in world with rising stress levels, unhealthy lifestyle choices, and environmental factors impacting maternal and fetal health while *Garbh Sanskar* provides a time-honored method to enhance physical, emotional, and mental well-being. *Yoga*, meditation, positive affirmations, and a nutritious diet help to alleviate anxiety associated with modern's day stressful lifestyle and also promotes emotional balance and support health of fetus. More research is needed to fully understand the mechanisms behind these benefits and to develop scientific rationale of *Garbh Sanskar* practices.

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