

# Postpartum Care in Ayurveda (Sutika Paricharya) and its Implications for Maternal Health Strategies

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**Abstract:** *The ayurvedic concept, the postpartum period is called Sutika Kala and the care during the period is called Sutika Paricharya. Sutika Kala is explained as one and a half month after child birth (that is 6 weeks in modern science) or upto the next menstruation. The transformation of female, from a woman to mother is the happiest lifetime event, but this happiness is gained only after undergoing tremendous physical exertion during labour, so old people used to term labour as women rebirth. Mithyahara vihara during this period definitely results in incurable diseases which are difficult to cure. The mode of Paricharya includes important therapies, nutritional diet and Swasthavrihapalana. The main achievements through Sutika Paricharya are Garbhashayashuddhi, Dhatu – Paripoornata, Stanya Vriddhi. Maternal health is an important aspect for the development of any country in terms of increasing equity and reducing poverty. Maternal mortality ratio is one of the important indicators of the quality of health services in the country. This article explores the Ayurvedic concept of postpartum care, known as Sutika Paricharya, and its implications for Maternal health strategies. The study highlights the importance of specific dietary and lifestyle modifications during the postpartum period in Ayurveda and discusses their potential contributions to improving maternal health outcomes.*

**Keywords:** Sutika, Sutikaparicharya, Mithyahara vihara , Ayurvedic, Maternal, Health.

## 1. Introduction

Ayurveda, an oldest science of life is known for its curative and preventive potential. Ashtanga Ayurveda deals with eight branches of Ayurvedic treatment. Prasuti antra and Streeroga is not incorporated in Ashtang Ayurveda but references of Prasutitantra and Streeroga are found under the heading of Kaumarbhritya which is one of the eight branches of Astanga Ayurveda. Topic related to bharana of kumara, wet – nurse, disorders of milk and their management, diseases of child caused by consumption of alleviation of vata should be the first aim. Maternal mortality rate is one of the important indicators of the quality of health services in the country. India has made remarkable progress in reducing maternal deaths in the last two decades. The highest rates of declines are evident from the years which incidentally coincides with the period immediately after the launch of NRHM and the numerous initiatives taken under the flagship scheme including Janani Suraksha Yojana .

### Sutika Paricharya

The postnatal care is broadly described in Ayurvedic classics and named as Sutika Paricharya. Ancient Ayurvedic scholars have given importance to women' s health during entire pregnancy for a healthy progeny and till 6 months after delivery. Various acharyas have described Sutika Paricharya in their own classical texts. In this article I have tried to compile all the texts.

### Charaka Samhita

Liquid gruel of rice medicated with Pippali (Piper longum), Pippalimula (Piper longum'root), Chavya (Piper retrofractum), Chitraka (Plumbago zeylanica), Sunthi (Zingiber officinale) for 5 - 7 days. Use of Brihanganaga drugs from 6<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> day. [1]

Abhyanga of abdomen with taila or ghrita then udarveshtana with big clean cloth. Bath with luke warm water. [1]

Sarpi, taila , vasa, or majja with Pippali (Piper longum), Pippalimula (Piper longum'root), Chavya (piper retrofractum), Chitraka (Plumbago zeylanica), Shringavera (Zingiber officinale) churna.

Anupana – ushna jala for 5 – 7 nights. [1]

### Sushruta Samhita

Sneha yavagu or kshira yavagu saturated with drugs of Vidarigangandhadi (Desmodium gangeticum) gana from 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> or 7<sup>th</sup> days.

2 meat soup of wild animal saturated with yava (Vulgaris sativus), Kola, (Ziziphus mauritiana), Kulatth (Dolichos biflorus) with cooked shali rice from 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> day to Sutika kala [2].

Abhyanga with bala (Sida cordifolia) taila, then irrigation with decoction of Bhadradaru (Cedrus deodara) etc, drugs capable of suppressing the vata. [2]

Anupana – ushna gudodaka (warm jaggery water) for 2 or 3 days. [2]

### Ashtanga Sangraha

Liquid yavagu prepared with either milk or Vidaryadi gana (Pueraria tuberosa etc) drugs for 3, 5 or 7 days.3 light diet with soup of Yava (Vulgaris sativus), Kola (Ziziphus mauritiana) and Kullattha (Dolichos biflorus) from 4<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> day to 12<sup>th</sup> day.3 meat soup of wild animals, agreeable diet from 13<sup>th</sup> to sutika kala. [3]

Abhyanga with Bala (Sida cordifolia) taila, udarveshtana after massage of abdomen with taila or ghrita, irrigation with luke warm water.

Massage, unguent, irrigation and bathing with Jivaniya, Brimhaniya, Madhura and Vatahara drugs. [3]

Volume 12 Issue 6, June 2023

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Sneha with Panchkola (Piper longum, root of Piper longum, Piper retrofractum, Plumbago zeylanica and Zingiber officinale) churna or sneha with Yavani (Trachyspermum ammi), Upkunchika (Nigella sativa), Chavya (Piper retrofractum), Chitraka (Plumbago zeylanica), Vyosha (Zingiber officinale), Piper nigrum, Piper longum) and saindhava

Anupana – ushna jala for 7 nights. [3]

#### Ashtanga Hridaya

Panchkola (Piper longum, Piper longum's root, Piper retrofractum, Plumbago zeylanica and Zingiber officinale) siddhapeya for first 3 days, Vidaryadigana (Pueraria tuberosa etc.) kwatha siddha snehayukta yavagu orkshira yavagu from 4<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> day, after that gradually brimhana diet from 8 – 12<sup>th</sup> day, after 12<sup>th</sup> day meat soup should be used. [4] There is also description of massage of yoni along with body. [4]

Taila or ghritha with Panchkola (Piper longum, Piper longum's root, Piper retrofractum, Plumbago zeylanica, and Zingiber officinale) churna.

Anupana: ushna gudodaka (warm jaggery water) for 2 or 3 days.

#### Kashyapa Samhita

Pippali (Piper longum), Nagar (Zingiber officinalis), yukta and saindhavarahita alpasneha yukta yavagu for first 3 or 5 days, then sasneha lavana yavagu, then sasneha –lavana – amla yukta kulattha (Dolichos biflorus) yush with meat soup of wild animals and ghrithabhrista kushmanda (Benincasa hispida), and moolaka (Raphanus sativus). [5]

Massage of back, pressure of abdomen, and flanks, then udarveshtana.

Sitting over a small chair covered with leather bag filled with bala (Sida cordifolia) taila then sudation in the yoni with oak prepared with priyangu (Callicarpa macrophylla) etc. Hot water bath after proper sudation, fumigation with kustha (Saussurea lappa), gugglu (Commiphora mukul) mixed with ghritha. [5]

Anupana - manda for 3 or 5 days. [5]

#### Harita Samhita

Ushna kullatha (Dolichos biflorus) yush on 2<sup>nd</sup> day, panchkola (Piper longum, root of Piper longum, Piper retrofractum, Plumbago zeylanica, Zingiber officinale) yavagu on 3<sup>rd</sup> day, chaturjataka (Cinnamomum zeylanicum, Elettaria cardamomum, leaves of Cinnamomum zeylanicum, Mesua ferrea) mixed yavagu on 4<sup>th</sup> day, cooked rice of shali or shashtika on 5<sup>th</sup> day. [6].

Vaginal filling with oil and massage followed by sudation with hot water. [6]

Amulet for sutika: the puerperal woman should tie amulet of trivrita (Operculina turpethum) over her head. [7]

Puerperal management according to the sex of child

Oil should be given for drinking to sutika incase of delievery of male child and ghritha incase of female child. [8]

Pathya and Apathya for Sutika

#### Pathya

- 1) Adequate rest and diet is most important.
- 2) Sutika should have bath with plenty of water.
- 3) Parisheka, avagahana etc. are always with luke warm water
- 4) Boiled water should be taken
- 5) She should do udarveshtana
- 6) Snehana and swedana must be done every day.
- 7) Maharshi Kashyapa has given the special indication of manda for sutika.

#### Apathya

- 1) Physical and mental stress, anger etc women experiences lots of physical and mental stress during labour and get exhausted. This may affect their lactation.
- 2) Sexual intercourse involves strain and friction of genital tract which is already lacerated and weakened during the process of labour resulting into the the injury, bleeding and infection.
- 3) Cold water , cold things and cold wind.
- 4) Contraindication of Panchkarma in Sutika.

#### Maternal Health Indicators

The key indicators for Maternal Health are antenatal check – up, institutional delivery and delivery by trained and skilled personnel, post natal care, etc. these indicators are monitored regularly through Health Management Information System (HMIS) and also periodically through District Level Household Surveys (DLHS), National Family Health Surveys (NFHS) and Annual Health Survey (AHS). Independent surveys are also being done like Coverage Evaluation Surveys (CES) by UNICEF.

#### Maternal Health Strategies

- 1) Janani Suraksha Yojana (JSY), a demand promotion scheme as launched in April 2005 with the objective of reducing maternal and infant mortality. It is a conditional cash transfer scheme for pregnant women coming into the institutional fold for delievery.
- 2) Janani Shishu Suraksha Karyakaram (JSSK), Government of India launched Janani Shishu Suraksha Karyakaram (JSSK) on 1st June, 2011 to eliminate out of pocket expenditure for pregnant women and sick new – borns and infants on drugs, diet, diagnostics, user charges, etc. It is absolutely free and no expense delivery. It also provides free transport from home to institution, between facilities in case of a referral and drop back home.

#### Benefits of Sutika Paricharya

It can be concluded that the sutika who is weak due to development of foetus, loss of dhatus, excretion of kleda, blood and exhaustion due to labour pain can regain her pre - pregnancy stare by following this Paricharya.

## 2. Conclusion

As Sutika kala is a critical period for women, it needs a proper management and care with specific diet, mode of life and aushadhi. In Sutikakala, there is vitiation of vata, therefore it is most advisable to take vata shamaka drugs. Abhyanga also plays most significant role to pacify vata dosha. During sutika kala women needs a special management and care for proper and healthy growth of new born baby as well as maintenance of her own health.

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