

## Exploration of Garbha Sanskar Interventions - The Role of Midwife

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### ABSTRACT

Garbha Sanskar is a holistic therapy, offered to pregnant mothers to initiate them towards a comprehensive knowledge of childbirth. It is an ancient practice of communicating with the fetus, helping it to evolve as a perfect child. The Sanskrit term 'Garbha' refers to the fetus in the womb and "Sanskara" refers to educating the mind.<sup>[5]</sup> The main aim of Garbha Sanskar is to inculcate the knowledge of a holistic childbirth among parents. It is the process of enlightenment to the mother as well as to the unborn child. It is believed that following a healthy lifestyle by the mother, such as a healthy, balanced diet, practicing yoga and meditation, reading spiritual books, listening to music, chanting mantras, positive thinking, and talking with the unborn child, can promote the physical, mental, social, emotional spiritual well-being of both mother and fetus.<sup>[9]</sup>

**KEYWORDS:** Garbha Sanskar, Holistic Therapy, child birth, womb, fetus

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### INTRODUCTION

Health of the nation depends on the healthy citizen. Health of women is an important factor on which the health of the children and family depend. Garbha Sanskar is a holistic therapy, offered to pregnant mothers to initiate them towards a comprehensive knowledge of childbirth. It is an ancient practice of communicating with the fetus, helping it to evolve as a perfect child. It is a systematic, methodical, and proven process of transmitting desired characteristics to the fetus. Pregnant mothers are trained to have access to the psyche of the unborn child. These techniques and methods of educating, guiding the child towards becoming a perfect human being. It is a set of hermetic practices of enlightenment directed towards both the mother and the child. Garbha Sanskar can be learned from expert trainers who will teach the mother about the various practices related to communication with the unborn child.

### MEANING

The Sanskrit term 'Garbha' refers to the fetus in the womb and "Sanskara" refers to educating the mind.<sup>[5]</sup> 'Garbha Sanskar' is the process of choosing and transferring positive influences through various techniques like yoga, meditation, listening to music, reciting mantras reading spiritual books, meditation, prayer, talking with the unborn child as well as wholesome food and upbeat conduct.<sup>[5]</sup>

### HISTORY OF GARBHA SANSKAR

- Garbha Sanskar was first referenced in the Rig-Veda, which was written about 3500 years ago. The significance of suprajā janana, denotes giving birth to a child with a healthy body, mind, and soul, has been referenced in ancient Indian writings. Hindu mythology contains several tales about Garbh Sanskara.
- The Ramayana also mentions that the Agni-devata served Emperor Dashratha "payas" (rice pudding) during the "putra kameshti yagya" preceding the birth of Lord Rama. This can be seen as a type of "Garbha Sanskar" alone.

- Lord Krishna taught Abhimanyu to enter the 'chakravyuha' while he was still in his mother Subhadra's womb, according to a well-known mythical account found in the Mahabharata.<sup>[9]</sup>
- Pralhad's mother used to listen to devotional music while she was expecting him. Consequently, Pralhad became Lord Vishnu's devotee in spite of coming from a Rakshasa (evil).
- The mothers of the Shivaji, Maharana Pratap Singh and Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, the renowned Indian-freedom-fighter, used to recite the valiant tales from the Ramayana and Mahabharata.

The main aim of Garbha Sanskar is to inculcate the knowledge of a holistic childbirth among parents. It is the process of enlightenment to the mother as well as to the unborn child. It is believed that following a healthy lifestyle by the mother, such as a healthy, balanced diet, practicing yoga and meditation, reading spiritual books, listening to music, chanting mantras, positive thinking, and talking with the unborn child, can promote the physical, mental, social, emotional spiritual well-being of both mother and fetus.<sup>[9]</sup>

According to A. Chaudharya, U. Varma, A. Varma, D. Chaudhary, B. Bhatnagar, N. Agrawal, et. al. (2022) conducted a study on effect of Garbha Sanskar on maternal and perinatal outcome among antenatal mothers in a selected Hospital, Delhi. A total of 200 antenatal mothers were selected by using purposive sampling technique. The mothers were attended Garbha Sanskar practices for one year. The study findings revealed that the out of 200 mothers, 20% had LSCS, 6% had an instrumental vaginal delivery and 74% had a normal vaginal delivery. Only 7% developed some medical complications like PIH, GDM etc. Mean stress score decreased from 38 to 12 and mean anxiety score decreased from 40 to 8 after Garbh Sanskar. Only 16% of babies were LBW (< 2.5 kg), 88% had Apgar >7 and only 6% of neonates required NICU admission.<sup>[2]</sup>

So, Practicing Garbha Sanskar during the pregnancy has an impact on reducing the level of stress, anxiety, depression, and fear of childbirth and reducing the pregnancy complications like preterm delivery, low birth weight, etc.; it promotes a positive and healthy environment for both mother and fetus.

#### **PURPOSES OF GARBHA SANAKAR<sup>[9]</sup>**

1. To promote a healthy pregnancy and healthy fetus.
2. To promote the physical, mental, social, spiritual, and emotional well-being of both mother and fetus.
3. To enhance the cognitive development and language development of the fetus.
4. To promote the intellectual development of the fetus.
5. To reduce the level of stress, anxiety, and depression among the antenatal mothers.
6. To reduce the risk of complications during pregnancy and labor.
7. To improve the immune status of the antenatal mother.

#### **BENEFITS OF GARBHA SANSKAR**

- ✓ It strengthens the mother-child bond.
- ✓ It significantly affects both the mother's and the child's health.
- ✓ It promotes positive thinking and attitude.<sup>[9]</sup>
- ✓ It promotes the physical well-being of the mother.
- ✓ It keeps the baby more active at birth, more alert, confident, contented with better sleeping habits, and, more content, better at breastfeeding, and bonding with parents.<sup>[9]</sup>

#### **SCIENTIFIC EVIDENCE**

According to current scientific studies, 100 billion neurons are created in a baby. Every minute, about 2.5 lakh neurons are created. It has been demonstrated through research that unborn children are capable of hearing and remembering. It is therefore advised to exercise caution when speaking to expectant mothers. Even after birth, the fetus can remember the sounds it heard from its mother and the environment.<sup>[4]</sup>

**Language learning starts in the womb:** According to recent studies, infants as young as one hour old can distinguish between the sounds of their home tongue and a foreign language.

**Impact of Negativity and Stress on Pregnancy:** According to recent research, excessive negativity, stress, and anxiety during pregnancy can shorten the gestation period and may unintentionally result in preterm delivery; on the other hand, a positive outlook and the mother's participation in activities that keep her mentally contented and happy and increase the connections between neurons. So, pregnant mothers need to practice various methods to communicate with the unborn child.

#### **TYPES OF ACTIVITIES OF GARBHA SANSKAR<sup>[5]</sup>**

- ❖ Omkar Meditation
- ❖ Listening to Songs

- ❖ Chanting Mantras
- ❖ Reading spiritual books
- ❖ Garbha Samvad
- ❖ Yoga and Pranayama
- ❖ Pregnancy diet

### **Omkar Meditation**

A key component of Garbha Sanskar is meditation, which calms the mind and benefits the body. To improve attention and promote calm and tranquilly, it entails entering a "zero state of mind."<sup>[4]</sup> Omkar chanting helps to lower the blood pressure, reduce stress and anxiety levels during pregnancy. It also aids in the infant's spiritual growth.<sup>[3]</sup> During meditation, imagining favorable aspects of the unborn child can strengthen the mother-child bond and have a beneficial effect on the growing fetus. Mothers should practice Omkar meditation for 10-15 times daily.<sup>[4]</sup>

### **Listening to Music**

According to ancient literature, a newborn begins to hear and react to its environment during the fourth month of pregnancy.<sup>[5]</sup> Since it is believed that a fetus can respond to external stimuli from the 7th month onwards, music's power to be healing can be crucial according to Garbha Sanskar.<sup>[6]</sup> According to research, classical music triggered the greatest level of fetal reaction (tongue and mouth movement) at 84%, followed by local, traditional music at 79%. Both the flute and the veena, a string instrument, offer melodies that may calm the spirit and the mind.

Practical research, has done by the Scottish government, NHS on hearing and listening in the womb from 0 to 24 weeks and then till birth. The findings stated that between 0 to 16 weeks, the unborn baby is surrounded by sound, vibrations and emotions that are felt through the skin. At 16 weeks the unborn baby is particularly receptive to its mother's voice. It is fascinating that around 24 weeks, the babies develop preferences for music while in womb.<sup>[8]</sup>

Listening to Raagas like Komal Asavari, Kalyani, or Yaman and Bairagi during pregnancy and special types of music like the sounds of veena, flute, samveda mantras and trimester wise ragas with specific frequency for pregnant mothers<sup>[7]</sup> may help to improve the secretion of endorphins, which helps to reduce the level of stress and anxiety and acts as a pain blocker. It also reduces the secretion of cortisol levels during pregnancy. The mother ought to listen tunes that are melodious Indian classical ragas (songs or instruments) during pregnancy to help with better physical, psychological, intellectual, and spiritual development of the child.

### **Chanting Mantra**

The use of music in the form of mantras and shlokas enhances the effectiveness of Garbha Sanskar since a child's subconscious mind can effectively absorb the rhythmic sounds. Mantra is a combination of transcendental sounds to relieve anxiety.<sup>[5]</sup> Chanting a mantra will cause the left and right hemispheres of the brain to synchronize. Experience and experiments have demonstrated that the right mantra sound frequency, when paired with the right intention, helps oxygenate the brain, lower blood pressure and heart rate, and promote peaceful brainwave activity. It can prevent pregnancy-induced hypertension, gestational diabetes, and IUGR.<sup>[8]</sup>

The commonly used Garbha Sanskar Mantras are the Beej Mantra, Garbha Raksha Mantra, Santan Gopal Mantra, Mahamrityunjaya Mantra, and Gayathri Mantra. These mantras should be recited with faith and devotion. Chanting mantras benefits a baby's spiritual growth and bestows moral principles and good health upon them. The important qualities of leadership, bravery, creativity, and love for all can be cultivated in the child by listening to specific mantras.

### **Reading spiritual books**

According to Garbha Sanskar, reading spiritual literature can make one feel satisfied and content. The personality of the unborn child is shaped by the educational books they read.<sup>[7]</sup> Reading during pregnancy can help to pass the wisdom to the unborn child. Garbha Sanskar recommends reading moral values or mythological stories to the pregnant mothers. It can create a positive environment and spiritual well-being for the fetus.

### **Garbha Samvad**

It is a practice of communication with the unborn baby in the womb. The mother can start communicating with the child as early as from the first month itself. Hearing is the first sense stimulated in the fetus that promotes the development of the neural pathways. Noises from the placenta, maternal organs and maternal voice plays a significant role in utero auditory stimuli, forming memories of the fetus.<sup>[8]</sup>

The unborn baby can hear from 20 weeks onwards. The auditory system is fully functional by the 25th week. So, by the 5th month of pregnancy, the baby can hear the voice of the mother. So, talking, singing, or reading to the baby in your

womb can help the baby's brain development. The mother should talk aloud, not in her mind; tell a story with morals; tell the father also to talk; turn off background noises like that of the TV or phone when talking; or sing a song to the baby.

### Benefits of Garbha Samvad

- ✓ Bonding with the baby: It can help to create a positive impact on the mother's mental and emotional well-being.
- ✓ It promotes emotional development in both the mother and baby. It can reduce the level of stress and anxiety in the mother.
- ✓ It can help to improve cognitive function and promote language development.
- ✓ It helps to create a positive and nurturing environment for the unborn child.
- ✓ It helps to encourage a feeling of safety and health in the baby.

### Yoga and Pranayama

Garbha Sanskar recommends Yoga or some other mild exercise, such as padmasana, butterfly pose, squat or utthanasana, and cat stretch pose or Marjari Aasana, to the pregnant mothers.<sup>[1]</sup> It increases flexibility, improves blood circulation, reduces morning sickness and nausea, and reduces backache during pregnancy. It also enhances full-term normal vaginal delivery with minimal labor pain.

Pranayama (yogic breathing), such as Anulom Vilom Pranayama (nostril breathing), Bhramari Pranayama (humming), and Ujjayi Pranayama (deep, slow breathing), involves the voluntary control of the breath and is practiced widely in yoga and meditation. Pranayama shifts the autonomic nervous system from the fight-or-flight sympathetic state to the calming parasympathetic state that helps to keep calm, purify the body, promote relaxation, improve circulation, and promote physical and mental health during pregnancy.

### Pregnancy diet

A balanced and nutritious diet is important for the mother to ensure that they are getting all the essential nutrients necessary for the healthy pregnancy and healthy foetus. During pregnancy, the Garbha Sanskar diets should contain a balanced amount of calcium, iron, and folic acid. Freshly cooked, nutrient-rich food that combines all five tastes - salty, bitter, sweet, sour, and pungent - is referred to as sattvik cuisine.

Food rich of dairy products which includes milk, yogurt, cheese, egg etc., is essential for a pregnant woman daily. A pregnant woman must have at least 8 glasses of water daily. Garbha Sanskar recommends daily supplements of folic acid to prevent cleft palate in the baby. Iron and calcium rich diet and supplements may be prescribed during second trimester. Foods such as frozen food, cold drinks, chicken, mutton, cigarettes, alcohol, tobacco and pan masala may be avoided during pregnancy.

[1]

### Diet Regimen and its effect

1. First Month :- Cold milk as per tolerance twice a day- It helps to relieve vomiting, dehydration and anaemia <sup>[8]</sup>
2. Second Month :- Milk with sweet medicines Like Shatavari and Sugar etc..-It helps to meet the nutrition demand of both mother and foetus.
3. Third Month :- Milk + ghee + Honey and rice with milk- It helps to reduce vomiting and diarrhoea. It improves appetite.<sup>[8]</sup>
4. Fourth Month :-Milk with Butter (saay ) approx. 10 gms / day rice with curd. It helps for the fetal tissue development.
5. Fifth Month :- Cow Ghee, rice with milk. It helps for the brain development of the fetus.
6. Sixth month :- lots of ghee and rice. It helps to reduce the pedal edema in mother.
7. Seventh month :- rice, fruits khir ghee. It act as a diuretic, anabolic and relives emacitation. <sup>[8]</sup>
8. Eight month :- Rice gruel prepared with milk mixed with Ghrita. It act as an enema to clear retained faeces.<sup>[8]</sup>
9. Ninth month :- ghee with madur rasa - It helps for lubrication of cervix and vagina. It increases the elasticity of birth canal. <sup>[8]</sup>

### HURDLES TO PRACTICE GARBHA SANSKAR

- Time constrains
- Lack of support
- Lack of knowledge
- Lack of interest Cultural and religious differences
- Unplanned pregnancy

- Change in lifestyle
- Environmental changes
- Quality of food and medicine
- Physical exhaust
- Addiction to mobile, internet and television
- Modern medicine
- Financial constraints

All these hurdles are common among urban women especially working women to practice Garbha Sanskar during pregnancy, where traditional practices may be less common. Creating awareness about the traditional practice of Garbha Sanskar through proper education helps to overcome these hurdles and promote the benefits of Garbha Sanskar. [7]

### **ROLE OF NURSE MIDWIFE IN GARBHA SANAKAR**

- ✓ The nurses should disseminate the knowledge of holistic practices to be adopted by pregnant mothers.
- ✓ The nurses should teach the scientific evidences of Garbha Sanskar to the nursing personnel
- ✓ The nurses must create awareness about the Garbha Sanskar practices among antenatal mothers in ANC.
- ✓ The nurses should encourage the pregnant mothers to practice Garbha Sanskar interventions throughout their pregnancy period.
- ✓ The nurses must keep abreast of the recent discoveries and developments of Garbha Sanskar.
- ✓ The nurses should conduct mass education programme about the various methods of Garbha Sanskar and sensitize the people about the importance of teaching the unborn child.

### **CONCLUSION**

The Garbh Sanskar scheme or policy should be adapted at the national level. In addition to strengthening the mother-child attachment, Garbh Sanskar Therapy aids in the baby's brain development. The first step has been taken at Bhuvanesar, Varanasi, where the state-run hospital's Ayurvedic department will introduce pregnant women to "Garbh Sanskar therapy." Garbh Sanskar is the need of the hour. It should be implemented through all state-run hospitals and institutions to provide the holistic interventions to antenatal mothers in all the states of India.

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