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A Review of the Concept of *Garbhaja Bhava* in *Ayurveda*

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Abstract: ***The concept of Garbhaja Bhava in Ayurveda encompasses various physiological, psychological, and lifestyle factors that influence the health and well-being of both mother and fetus during pregnancy. Ayurveda emphasizes maintaining balance and harmony within the body to ensure optimal health and prevent disease, extending this principle to pregnancy through dietary recommendations, herbal remedies, and lifestyle adjustments. The concept of Garbhopaghatakara Bhava deals with conditions that could potentially harm the fetus and provides guidance on managing these risks. While not explicitly defined, the essence of Garbhaja Bhava lies in the comprehensive Ayurvedic approach to pregnancy, focusing on understanding and addressing the multifaceted needs of the pregnant woman to support the healthy development of the fetus.***
Keywords: Garbhaja bhav, Fetal development, Applied aspect, Spirituality

I. INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda, a comprehensive health science, has a strong foundation in promoting the health of offspring as well as addressing preventive and therapeutic aspects of health. The Ayurvedic texts describe the *Shad Garbhakara-Bhava* (Six Procreative Factors of Progeny), which include *Matrija* (Mother), *Pitrija* (Father), *Atmaja* (Soul), *Satmyaja* (Healthy Mother Practices), *Rasaja* (Mother's Diet), and *Sattvaja* (psychological). According to *Ayurveda*, healthy parents, a good diet for the mother, the practice of wholesome living and dietary regimen, the parents psychological and mental health and the parents' good deeds from a previous life all play a major role in producing healthy offspring, which contributes to building a healthy family, society, and nation. *Ayurveda* places a strong emphasis on this and recommends certain precautions to reduce the risks. According to Ayurvedic principles, proper preparation from the parents is essential for the health of the progeny. Pre-conception care involves a range of interventions that address social, behavioural and biological risks to the health of the mother and the unborn child. It focuses on health conditions that require action before conception or very early in pregnancy for maximum impact, encompassing both prevention and management.

According to *Ayurveda*, the six procreative components are crucial for achieving the goal of healthy progeny. *Matrija, Pitrija, Atmaja, Rasaja, Satmyaja,* and *Sattvaja* are inherited from parents and previous life experiences. However, *Satmyaja, Rasaja* and, when properly practiced, can alter the intrauterine environment and the mother's psychosomatic health, having a positive effect on the fetus. A combination of these procreative elements is necessary for healthy offspring. A healthy offspring is largely dependent on the physical, mental, social, and spiritual well-being of the person, the mother's correct nutrition throughout pregnancy, and the adoption of a wholesome routine. Lack of attention to any of these causes unhealthy and faulty pregnancies. According to *Aacharya Sushruta*, the *Adibala pravritta* diseases are those that are brought on by the mother and father's inappropriate behaviour (Shukra-Shonita-dushya), and include diseases like *Kushta, Arshas,* etc. The *Matrija* and *Pitruja Vyadhis* are subsets of these Vyadhis. According to *Ayurveda*, the phrase "Forgetting our actual essence as spirit" is the source of all diseases. Understanding a little bit of Sankhya Philosophy can help to further clarify this. *Purusha* joins with *Prakriti* in order to discover its own nature.

The development of the individual soul is a significant process. According to popular belief, illness occurs when a person loses sight of their true identity as spirits. This happens in each lifetime. The causal body acts as a storehouse for karma in each new birth. During incarnation, the Ahamkara takes the form of an astral body, causing disturbances. These mental disturbances disrupt a person's equilibrium, leading to a diseased state in the body.

To produce healthy offspring, the combination of the six procreative elements is crucial. To ensure the health of offspring and consequently build a healthy family, society, and country, it is vital to focus on an individual's physical, mental, social, and spiritual well-being, as well as the mother's diet during pregnancy and the practice of a wholesome routine.

II. AIM AND OBJECTIVES

1) To study how shad *Garbhakara Bhavas* influences foetal development.

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2) To understand the applied aspect *of Garbhaja Bhava*.

III. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Charaka described that there are six factors which are unitedly responsible for appropriate development of an embryo

1) *Matrija* –Maternal factors
2) *Pitrija* –Paternal factors
3) *Atmaja* –Atma (Soul)
4) *Satmyaja*- (Wholesomeness)
5) *Rasaja*- (Nutritional factors)
6) *Sattvaja*- Mann (Psych/Mind)

Above six factors are collectively responsible for the development of the embryo. Not single factors can form and develop embryo properly. Following body parts or organs develop from respective bhavas. When all the six procreative factors are present in concordance, then only a new life can come into existence. When these factors combine under the most favourable conditions and environment, then only a new life can concede.

- *Matrija Bhava* :- The mother is the primary contributor to the development of the fetus. Many of the tissues, organs, and characteristics of the fetus come from the mother and these are referred to as "*Matrija Bhava*" (features emerging from the mother). The features inherited from the mother include the skin, blood, muscle tissue, fat, umbilicus, heart, pancreas, gall bladder, spleen, kidney, urinary bladder, stomach, duodenum, small intestine, large intestine, omentum, rectum, anal canal, and anus. The soft parts of the body develop from the mother.
- .*Pitrija Bhava*:- The second contributor to a child's traits is the father. Without a father, the child will not come into existence. The traits inherited from the father, called Pitrija Bhava, include hair (*kesha*), mustache (*shmashru*), nails a*(nakha*), skin hair (*Loma*), axillary and groin hair, teeth, blood vessels, ligaments, tendons, and semen. These traits constitute the hard part or stable parts (*sthira bhaga*) of the body that come from the father.
- *Atmaja Bhava*:- The third important factor is the soul known as *Chetana Dhatu* or Atma. A new life is the result of the union of an ovum, a sperm, and a soul inside them. The attributes of the soul that the fetus acquires include the ability to be born into specific species, lifespan, self-knowledge, mind, control over sensory organs, breathing, preservation of knowledge, unique appearance, distinctive voice, complexion, happiness, sorrow, desires, aversions, awareness, intelligence, memory, ego, and enthusiasm. These features are known as *Atmaja* (*Atma*=Soul, *ja*-emerging from) *Bhava.*
- *Satmyaja Bhava* :- In order for the embryo to develop properly, it should be provided with suitable factors through the maternal diet. *Satmya* refers to the use of substances that do not harm the body, even if they have different qualities from one's own constitution. The optimal presence of these factors determines the suitability for a new life, known as *Satmya* for the Garbha. The *satmyaja Bhava* is responsible for promoting health, vigor, a non-greedy attitude, serenity, well-being of all organs, quality in voice, skin, and reproductive cells (sperm & ovum), and satisfaction in sexual activity. These characteristics imparted by the *satmyaja* to a Garbha are called *Satmyaja Bhava*, which determine the sustaining capacity and development of the *Garbha*.
- *Rasaja Bhava* :- The digested, absorbed, and assimilated end product of the ingested food influences several factors called *Rasaja bhava*. These factors include the origin of the body, growth, satisfaction, nourishment, enthusiasm, physical structure, maintenance, strength, and decay.
- *Sattvaja Bhava*:- Mana defines the following characteristics, called Sattvaja Bhava, in an individual: attachment, character, purity, aversion, awareness, memory, confusion, sacrifice, jealousy, bravery, fear, rage, enthusiasm, fiery temperament, rude or mild nature, profoundness, and unsteadiness. All living things fall under one of the three constitutions of mana, namely Sattvika, Rajasa, and Tamasa. Even though all human beings possess qualities of all three constitutions, the executed qualities determine whether a person is called Sattvik, Rajasik, or Tamasik."

IV. APPLIED ASPECT

Garbhaja Bhava also known as the state of pregnancy in *Ayurveda*, is a significant concept within the traditional Indian system of medicine that focuses on holistic health and well-being. This state is recognized as a unique period in a woman's life, characterized by various physiological, psychological, and emotional changes. Understanding *Garbhaja Bhava* is crucial for Ayurvedic practitioners and healthcare providers because it influences the approach to prenatal care, dietary recommendations, lifestyle modifications, and herbal remedies tailored to support both mother and fetus during this critical phase.

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A. Physiological Aspects

During fetal development, the body undergoes several changes:

1) Increased Blood Volume: The body increases its blood volume to supply nutrients to the growing fetus. This increase requires adjustments in diet and hydration to maintain balance.
2) Hormonal Changes: Hormonal fluctuations are common, affecting everything from digestion to mood swings. Balancing these hormones through diet, meditation, and lifestyle adjustments.
3) Digestive System Adaptation: The digestive system adapts to accommodate the nutritional needs of the fetus. *Ayurveda* emphasizes consuming foods that are easy to digest and rich in essential nutrients.

B. Psychological and Emotional Aspects

The psychological and emotional aspects of *Garbhaja Bhava* are equally important:

1) Emotional Support: Pregnant women may experience a range of emotions, including anxiety, fear, excitement, and joy. *Ayurveda* encourages practices like meditation, *yoga* and spending time in nature to promote mental well-being.
2) Social Support: The social environment plays a crucial role in supporting pregnant women. *Ayurveda* advocates for a supportive community where pregnant women feel valued and understood.

C. Applied Aspects in Ayurveda

In practice, *Garbhaja Bhava* is applied in several ways:

1) Dietary Recommendations: *Ayurveda* prescribes a specific diet called "Sattvic" diet, which includes fresh fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and dairy products. It avoids heavy spices, alcohol, and caffeine.
2) Herbal Remedies: Certain herbs are recommended to support pregnancy, such as *Ashoka* (*Saraca indica*), which is believed to strengthen the uterus and reduce labor pain.
3) Lifestyle Modifications: Regular exercise, adequate sleep, and stress management techniques are encouraged to ensure the overall health of both mother and fetus.
4) Prenatal Massage: Abhyanga, a type of massage using warm oil, is practiced to soothe the nerves, enhance circulation, and prepare the body for childbirth.

Understanding and applying the principles of *Garbhaja Bhava* in *Ayurveda* involves a comprehensive approach that considers the physical, mental, and emotional well-being of the expectant mother. By doing so, *Ayurveda* aims to create a conducive environment for the healthy development of the fetus and the overall well-being of the mother throughout her pregnancy.

V. DISSCUSSION

Garbhaja Bhava is a term that does not appear explicitly in the provided sources, but it seems to refer to a state or condition within *Ayurveda*, a traditional Indian medical system. Although the sources do not provide a direct definition or explanation of Garbhaja Bhava, understanding the foundational concepts of *Ayurveda* can help shed light on what this term might represent.

Ayurveda is based on the belief that maintaining a delicate balance between the mind, body, and spirit is essential for good health and wellness. This balance is maintained through the regulation of three *Doshas*: *Vata*, *Pitta*, and *Kapha*. Each dosha is associated with specific physiological functions and emotional states, and an imbalance among them can lead to disease. Additionally, Ayurveda highlights the significance of *Agni* (digestive fire), *Dhatu* (body tissues), and *Mala* (waste products) in preserving health.

The unique combination of these elements in an individual is referred to as Prakriti, which serves as a blueprint for understanding an individual's health and susceptibility to disease. In the context of *Garbhaja Bhava*, if we were to interpret this term within the framework of *Ayurveda*, it could potentially relate to a state of being or a condition characterized by a particular balance or imbalance of these fundamental elements. Given the holistic nature of Ayurveda, *Garbhaja Bhava* might encompass aspects of physical, mental, and spiritual health, reflecting how an individual's internal harmony affects their overall well-being. However, without explicit definitions or discussions of *Garbhaja Bhava* in the provided sources, this interpretation remains speculative. Ayurveda has a rich tradition that includes various concepts and practices aimed at restoring balance and promoting health. These may include dietary recommendations, herbal remedies, *yoga*, meditation, and lifestyle adjustments. These approaches are personalized based on an individual's unique *Prakriti* and specific imbalances, addressing both the symptoms of disease and their underlying causes.

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For a comprehensive understanding of *Garbhaja Bhava*, it would be beneficial to further explore *Ayurvedic* texts and consult with *Ayurvedic* practitioners. They can provide insights into how this concept is applied in practice and its implications for health and wellness.

VI. CONCLUSION

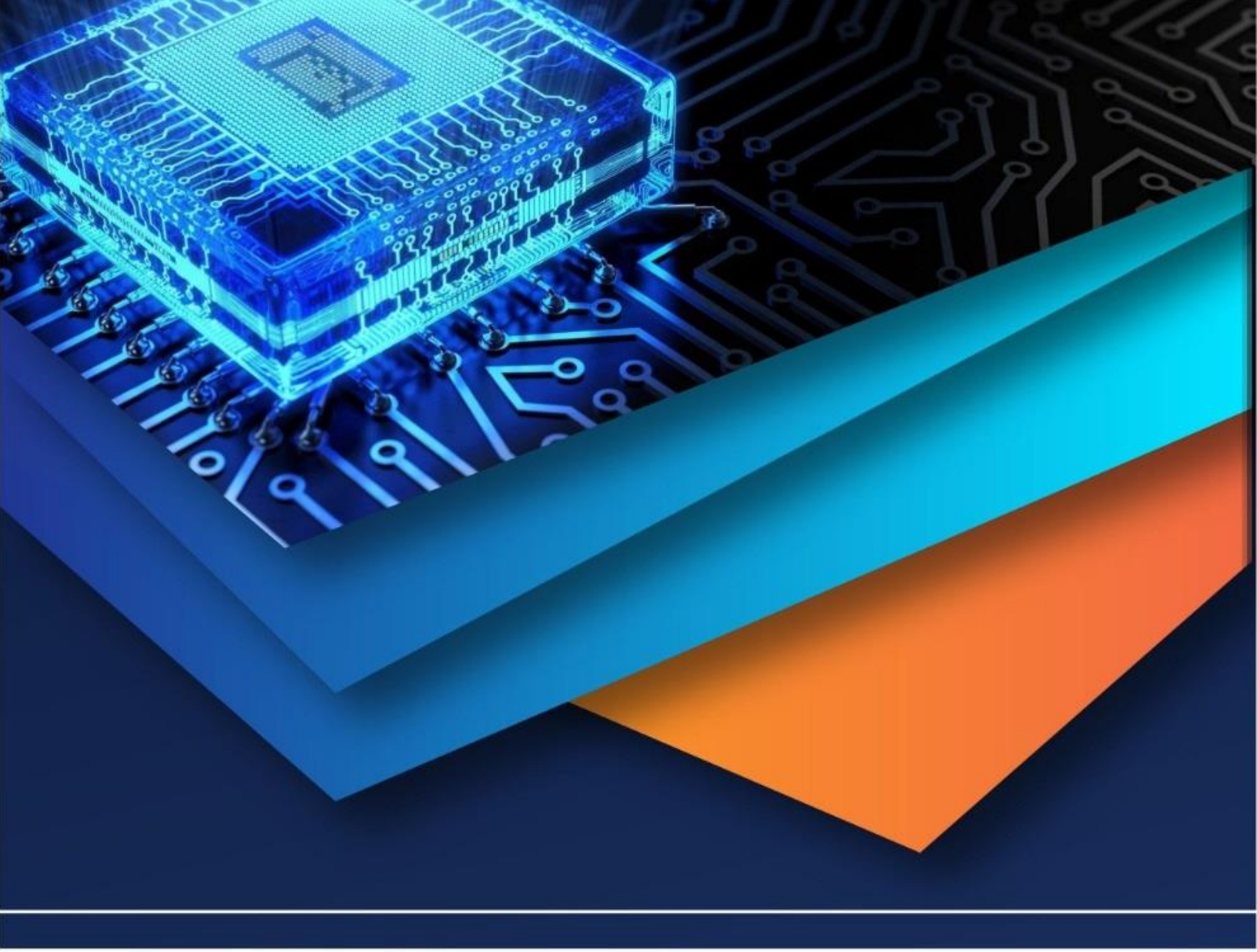
Ayurveda is a science that combines medicine with spirituality.

The fundamental concepts of *Ayurveda* are also spiritually related. *Ayurveda* text cover the physical, psychological and spiritual aspects of fetal development. In therapeutic practice, we also consider the basic principle of *Ayurvedic* text. Any illness stated in *Matrija Bhava* that affects the soft portions of the body should be treated with consideration for the mother-child bond. If a condition is related with a paternal feature, consider how a father-child bond can help. Spiritual engagement can aid to boost intellectual property. Ayurveda treats medical problems by addressing the patient's body, mind, and spirit which are all present during fetal development. Certain patients do not respond well to *Ayurveda* because they are not spiritually developed.

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