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A REVIEW ON GARBHA-STHAPAKA DRAVYAS: AYURVEDIC PERSPECTIVE OF ANTENATAL CARE

Dr. Geetam Sidharth Waghmare[1], Dr. Priya Jayant Walwatkar[2], Dr. Sujata Shrikant Jagtap[3]

[1]PG scholar, [2]Associate Professor, [3]HOD & Professor, Department of Prasutitantra & Striroga, APMs Ayurved Mahavidyalaya, Sion, Mumbai

ABSTRACT

Pregnancy is a unique physiological state that requires a delicate balance of maternal and fetal health. The foundation of a healthy pregnancy lies in the proper conception and sustenance of the fetus. Ayurveda emphasizes the importance of maintaining pregnancy (garbhasthapan) and promoting the nourishment of both mother and fetus through holistic approach including diet, lifestyle and herbal formulations. Garbhasthapak dravyas are the herbs used to maintain and stabilize the pregnancy, preventing complications like miscarriage (garbhastrava) and ensuring a healthy fetal environment. These herbs are known for their garbha-sthapana (pregnancy-sustaining) and rasayana (rejuvenating) properties, contributing to fetal growth, maternal strength, and prevention of complications. These drugs are elaborated in classical ayurvedic text and mentioned as part of garbhini paricharya (antenatal care). This review aims to compile and analyse the classical references regarding Garbha-sthapaka dravyas highlighting their significance in antenatal care.

KEYWORDS – *Garbhasthapaka, Garbha, Garbhastrava, Antenatal care*

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda, the ancient Indian science of life and health, is well known for its ability to both prevent and cure diseases. In *Ayurveda*, a woman is regarded as source of creation. Because of her vital role, taking care of a woman's health is considered very important. In today's time, many women face difficulties in conceiving due to changes in lifestyle. Even after conception, an unhealthy diet or improper lifestyle can cause bleeding during the second or third month, leading to instability of the fetus and sometimes miscarriage. In *Ayurveda*, *Garbha* means fetus or the developing embryo, *Sthapak* means stabilizer or one who maintains. Hence, *garbhasthapak dravyas* are the medicinal substances (herbs) that help to maintain and protect the fetus in uterus there by preventing miscarriage. In *Brihatrayi*, the concept of *Garbha Sharira* (embryology) is explained in the *Sharira Sthana*. According to *Acharya Charaka*, *Garbha* (embryo) is formed by the combination of three main factors — *Shukra* (sperm), *Shonita* (ovum), and *Jeeva* (life element). A healthy *Kshetra* (uterus) is also essential for the implantation, growth, and proper development of the embryo. Ancient *Ayurvedic* scholars believed that through certain rituals and the use of specific herbs, it is possible to support the conception and development of a healthy baby. The group of herbs known as *Garbhasthapana Gana / Prajasthapan dravya* plays a key role in this. These herbs help in maintaining pregnancy and protecting the fetus. *Acharyas* like *Charaka* and *Kashyapa* have recommended some of these herbs for use during pregnancy. Later, *Chakrapani* clarified that *Garbhasthapana* herbs protect the fetus from harmful factors, support its normal growth, and help prevent miscarriage. We aim to study these *Garbhasthapana Gana* herbs to know their benefits in pregnancy care. In *Ayurveda*, *Dravya* (medicine) is considered one of the essential parts of the treatment being one of the four main factors of *Chikitsa Chatuspada*. In the present study, *Dravyas* with *Garbhasthapaka Karma* are explained based on their *Rasa* (taste), *Guna* (properties), *Virya* (potency), *Vipaka* (post-digestive effect), *Prabhava* (specific action), *Doshakarma* (effect on Doshas). Today, infertility and abortion rates are rising, so prevention has become very important, an area where Ayurveda offers great potential. This study highlight the wisdom of *Ayurveda* regarding *Garbhasthapak Dravya* focusing on their pharmacological basis, specific mechanism of action on dosha dhatu & potential for their integration into modern complementary Antenatal care.

Aim - To study and review *Garbhasthapaka dravyas* according to various *Ayurvedic classic text.*

Objectives

To review the classical ayurvedic references describing *Garbhasthapaka dravyas.*

To analyse the pharmacological properties of these drugs.

To evaluate the mechanisam of action of *garbhasthapak dravyas.*

To assess therapeutic potential of the drugs in preventing *garbhastrav.*

Material - The literature review with reference to *Garbhasthapaka dravyas* is made from various *Ayurvedic classic text* & detailed study of herbs is done from *Dravyaguna vidyana* and *Nighantus.*

- **According to Acharya Charaka[1]**

In *Charaka samhita sutrasthana* 4th chapter, *Charaka* has enlisted almost 500 *kashayas* along with their actions. Among these, *Charaka* mentioned *Prajasthapanani Kashaya Gana* which includes 10 drugs. These have some specific actions called ' *Prabhava'*. In *Charaka Samhita Sharira Sthana* 8th chapter, same drugs are mentioned as *Garbhasthapanani* drugs.

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ऐन्द्री ब्राम्ही शतवीर्या सहस्त्रवीर्याऽमोघाऽव्यथाशिवाऽरिष्टा
वाट्यपुष्पी विष्वसेन कान्ता इति दशेमानी प्रजास्थापनानि भवन्ति ।। (च.सु. ४-४९)

Dravya[2,3]/ Gana	***Latin name/ family***	***Rasa***	***Guna***	***Virya***	***Vipak***	***Doshghnta***	***Prayojya ang***	***Action On dhatu***	***Chemical content***
1.Aindri (Balya, Praja-Sthapan)	*Bacopa monnieri/ Scrophularia-cae*	*Kashay tikta*	*laghu*	*shita*	*madhur*	*Vata-pittahara*	*panchang*	*Rasayan Medhya Svarya, Smriti-prada*	*Bramhin, Harpestin, Betulic-Stigmaste-rol*
2.Brahmi (tikta-Skanda, Praja-Sthapan, Vaya-Sthapan)	*Centella asiatica/ umbelliferae*	*Kashay tikta*	*laghu*	*shita*	*madhur*	*Vata-pittahara*	*panchang*	*Dipan, Medhya, Hridya*	*Hydrocoty-Line Alcaloids Asicatico-Side Bramhino-Side Bramhinic acid*
3-4. Durva Dwaya (Praja-Sthapan, Varnya)	*Cynodon dactylon Graminae*	*Tikta Kashay madhnur*	*laghu*	*shita*	*madhur*	*Kapha pittahara*	*panchang*	*Prajan-ankar, tripati-kar, trushna-har, Garbha-stravhar*	*Protein 10.47% Carbohy-drate 36.16%*
5. Amalaki (vaya-Sthapan, Virecha-Nopaga, Praja-Sthapan)	*Embilika-Officinalis Euphorbiacae*	*Amla-Pradhan Lavan-Varjit panchras*	*Guru Ruksha shita*	*shita*	*madhur*	*Tridosh-har*	*fruit*	*Vrishya Rasayan Chaksh-ushya sarva-dosha har*	*Gallic Acid, Tannic Acid, Albumin Cellulose Calcium Vit c*
6. Guduchi (vaya-Sthapan Stanya-Shodhan, Dahapra shaman trushna nigrahan Trupti-Janak)	*Tinospra Cordifolia Menispermi-aceae*	*Tikta Katu kashay*	*Guru Snigd-ha*	*ushna*	*madhur*	*Tridosh-har*	*stem*	*Rasayan Balya Dipan Vrishya Sangra-han*	*Berberin Giloin Oil starch*
7. Haritaki Praja-Sthapan Jwarghna Kushta-Ghna Kasghna Arsho-ghna	*Terminalia Chebula combretaceae*	*Kashay Pradhan Lavan-Varjit Panch rasa*	*Laghu ruksh*	*ushna*	*madhur*	*Tridosh-har*	*fruit*	*Rasayan, Medhya, Dipan Anuloman Vaya-Sthapan Vrishya anuloman*	*Tannin, Cheblic acid 18 amino acids*
8. Katu-Rohini (bhedni-Ya, Lekhniya Stanya-Shodhan Katu-Skandha)	*Piccrorhiza-Kurroa Scrophulari-aceae*	*Katu tikta*	*Ruksha laghu*	*shita*	*katu*	*Kapha-pittahar*		*Bhedan Dipan hridya*	

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9. Bala (balya, Brihniya Praja-Sthapan Madhur-skanda	*Sida Cordifolia Malvaceae*	*madhur*	*snigdh*	*shita*	*madhur*	*Vata-pitta*	*panchang*	*Balya Vrishya Rasayan Sangrahi*	*Ephidrin Mucin Potassium nitrate*
10. Priyangu Praja-sthapan	*Callicarpa Macrophylla verbenaceae*	*Tikta Kashay madhur*	*Guru ruksh*	*shita*	*katu*	*Kapha-pitahar*	*Mula Tvak Pushpa phala*	*Mutra-Virajniya Purish-sangrahi*	*Calliterpen-One, Lidenocalli-Teprenone, Calliterpen-None mono acetate*
11. Kadali	*Musa Paradisiacal Musaceae*	*madhur*	*Guru snigdh*	*shita*	*madhur*	*Pitta-Kapha-vatahar*		*Vrishya Balya Rakta-Stambhan Vishtam-bhi*	

According to Acharya Charaka, the term "Avyatha" can refer to any one of the three drugs — Kadali, Guduchi, or Amalaki. Therefore, all three have been included in this study.
These herbs can be used in different ways:
Since they are listed under the group of *Mahakashayas*, they are mainly used in the form of decoctions (herbal water extracts).

- Amulets made from these herbs can be tied on the head, right arm, or wrist.
- Milk or ghee prepared with these ten herbs can be taken internally by drinking.
- Processed water or cold decoction can be used for bathing during Pushya Nakshatra.
- Above mentioned drugs should be kept in close contact with the pregnant lady.
- **According to Ashtanga Hridaya[4]**
  Acharya Vagbhata II also recommended the use of the same *Prajasthapaka* herbs in the *Sutrasthana* section.
- **According to Ashtanga Sangraha[5]-**
  Acharya Vagbhata I mentioned the use of the same *Prajasthapaka* herbs in the *Sutrasthana* section, following *Pumsavana Karma*. As per Indu's commentary, these herbs help in preventing miscarriage.
- **According to Kashyapa[6]-**
  Kashyapa advised that pregnant women should regularly use *Prajasthapaka* herbs, as they help maintain the health, growth, and development of both the mother and the fetus.

  He also mentioned that these herbs should be carefully used following the *Prajapathya Vidhi* method, and then tied as an amulet on the arm of the expecting mother during the *Pushya Nakshatra*.

  बहुपुत्रामनन्तां च ईश्वरी मुदितां तथा । ब्राम्ही च सहदेवा च तथा चैवेन्द्रवारुणीम | जीवकर्षभको भार्गी समङ्गा च तथैव च । रोहपादान वटशुङ्गा नाल गुप्ता तथैव च |
  अरिष्ट पूतनां केशी शतवीर्या च पार्थिव । सहस्त्रवीर्या चैतानि प्राजापत्येन संहरेत ।
  संदधेद च पुष्पेण धारयेदुत्तरेषु च ।।(का.स.खि. १०/ १७७-१८०)

Dravya	***Rasa***	***Guna***	***Virya***	***Vipak***	***Dhoshghnta***	***Action on dhatus***	***Karma***
Bahupatra (Bhumyamlaki) Phyllanthus niruri	*Tikta Katu Amla madhur*	*Laghu ruksha*	*shita*	*madhur*	*Kapha pittahar*	*Raktashodhak*	*Dipan, pachan, Shothahar,balya Vranaropan, Anuloman, kushtaghna*
Ananta (sariva) Hemidesmus indicus	*Madhur tikta*	*Guru snigdha*	*shita*	*madhur*	*Tridosha-har*	*raktashodhak*	*Dipan, pachan, Anuloman, Dahprashaman Shothahar Garbhasthapan rasayan*
Ishwari Aristolochia indica	*Tikta Katu kashay*	*Laghu ruksha*	*ushna*	*katu*	*Kapha-vatahar*	*raktashodhak*	*Vishaghna, Vranashodhan, Shothahar,dipan Garbhashay-Sankoch, mutrala, shoolaprashaman*
Mudita (shivlingi) Bryonia laciniosa	*Katu tikta*	*Laghu ruksha*	*ushna*	*katu*	*Kaphahar pittakar*	*Shukra-vardhak*	*Rasayan, Uterine tonic Spermatogenic Sidhmakushtha-har*

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Sahadevi Veronia cinerea	*tikta*	*Laghu ruksha*	*ushna*	*katu*	*Kapha-vatahar*	*raktashodhak*	*Shothahar, Vedanasthapan Jwaraghana Krimighna Kushthaghna swedajanan*
Indravaruni Citrullus colocynthis	*Tikta katu*	*Laghu sara*	*ushna*	*katu*	*Kapha-pittahar*		*Gabhashay-Sankochak,rechan, Gulma pliharoga Prameha kamala Udar shwasroghar*
Jivaka Microstylis wallichii	*madhur*	*Picchil snigdha*	*shita*	*madhur*	*Vata-pittahar*	*Raktavikarhar shukravardhak*	*Rasayan,Vajikaran Vandhyatva, shwas, Daha, kas,karshya, shosha*
Rishabhak Microsytis muscifera	*madhur*	*Picchil snigdha*	*shita*	*madhur*	*Vata-pittahar*	*shukraprada*	*Daha, jwara, Raktapitta,vandhyatva virekanut*
Bharangi Clerodendrum serratum	*Tikta kashay*	*Laghu ruksha*	*ushna*	*katu*	*Kapha-vatahar*	*raktashodhak*	*Shothahar,amapachan Vranapachak, Swedajanan kasashwashar*
Samanga Biphytum-sensitivum	*Madhur Tikta kashay*	*ruksha*	*shita*	*katu*	*Kaphapittahar*	*Rakta-sthambhak*	*Grahi,sandhaniya Yonidoshahar, shwas, Atisara, daha,kushtha, Vrana, jwara, raktapitta*
Rohapadan Vatashunga leaf bud of Ficus bengalensis	*kashay*	*Guru ruksha*	*shita*	*katu*	*Kapha-pittahar*	*Raktashodhak Shukra-sthambhan*	*Vedanasthapan, Vranaropan, Garbhashay shothhar chakshushya*
Atmagupta / Kapikacchu Mucuna – pruriens	*Madhur tikta*	*Guru snigha*	*ushna*	*madhur*	*Vatahar Kaphapitta-kar*	*aartavjanan*	*Yonisankochak, Balya, brimhan, vrushya*
Keshi (jatamansi) Nardostachys jatamansi	*Tikta Kashay madhur*	*Laghu snigdha*	*shita*	*katu*	*tridoshahar*	*aartavjanan*	*Dahaprashaman, Varnya,balya, Medhya,dipan,pachan Sandnyasthapana, Vajikaran, keshya*

Need of fetal protection (*Garbharaksha)* -
Our *Acharyas* have explained that *Prajasthapana* drugs help remove all the problems in a pregnant woman's body that can interfere with conception, cause fetal abnormalities, or lead to abortion. Among these, *Garbhasrava* or *Garbhapata* (abortion or miscarriage) is considered the most serious condition.

Causes of Miscarriage/Abortion (Ayurvedic Perspective - *Garbhasrava):*

1. Vitiation of *Vata Dosha*: Increased *Vata Dosha* causes uterine contractions, leading to the expulsion of the fetus.
2. *Dauhrida Avamana*: Neglecting the specific cravings and desires (*Dauhrida*) of the pregnant woman, which directly impacts fetal health.
3. *Durbala Garbhashaya* (Weak Uterus): Lack of strength or proper nourishment of the uterine tissue.
4. *Mithya Ahara-Vihara*: Following an improper diet and lifestyle during pregnancy.

Objectives of *Garbhasthapak Dravyas*[7] :

1. Pacification of Vata Dosha (*Vata Shaman*).
2. Strengthening the Uterus (*Garbhashaya Balya*).
3. Nourishment of both the mother and the fetus (*Brumhana/ poshan)*

From the detailed review of the *Prajasthapana Gana* drugs, it is clear that their actions work through multiple properties — *Rasa*, *Guna*, *Virya*, *Vipaka*, and *Prabhava*.

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Specific action of *Garbhasthapak dravyas*

1. *Garbhasthapan* (fetal stabilizing) action- This is the primary function, the herbs are believed to strengthen the uterine muscles and tissues, making the uterus a better field 'kshetra' and enhance the endometrial receptivity, which is crucial for proper implantation and retention of fetus.
2. *Madhur rasa* - Majority dravyas having *madhura rasa*. *Madhura rasa* contains *prithvi* and *aap mahabhuta*. *Prithvi mahabhuta* is having *guru* and *sthira* property which gives strength to the organs of mother hence gives stability to the fetus.
3. *Shita virya* (cold potency) – Vitiation of *pitta dosha* attribute to condition like spontaneous abortion. *Many garbhasthapan dravyas* having kashay, tikta rasa and *shita virya* .The astringent and cold properties help in Rakta stambhan (stop bleeding), which is crucial in preventing abortion associated with internal hemorrhage. They reduce the risk of bleeding.
4. *Vata dosha shaman* - *Vata Dosha* is the main factor which is responsible for the organogenesis. If the *Vata Dosha* is not in its normal state, the anomaly can be developed in fetus. Imbalance of vata can cause uterine instability. *Vata* pacification reduces uterine contractions, stabilizing the fetus.
5. *Brimhan and Balya* - Tissue Building and Tonic Properties. These herbs nourish the bodily tissues (Dhatus), especially *Rasa* (plasma), *Rakta* (blood), and *Shukra*/Ojas (vital essence). They provide strength to the uterine and placental tissues, supporting the growing fetus.
6. Hormonal Balance (Correlation with Modern View): Compounds in herbs like Shatavari are known to contain Phytoestrogens (like saponins) which may help support the function of Progesterone, thereby aiding in the maintenance of pregnancy.
7. Drugs having *Rasayan* (rejuvenating) properties enhance the mother's overall strength and ojas (the essence of immunity and vitality) enabling her to better withstand the physical and emotional demands of pregnancy, also provide strength to uterine tissue to ensure stability.
8. These drugs can help in clearing the bodily channels (*stroto-shodhan*) to ensure efficient delivery of nutrients to the placenta and the fetus, and proper removal of waste products.
9. Certain *garbhasthapaka dravyas* also have a calming and soothing effect (*garbhaprasadak)* which reduces maternal anxiety, stress and fatigue creating a peaceful environment for fetal development.
10. Prabhava (specific, unexplainable action) – In ayurveda, an action that can not be logically explained by *rasa, guna, virya, vipaka* of a substance is attributed to its *prabhava*. The ultimate *Garbhasthapan* action – the ability to specifically hold and maintain the fetus – is considered Prabhava of these specific herbs .

Result

Sr No.	Conditions creating obstacles For prajasthapan in female	Probably fruitful action	Application of contrast Action of dravyas	Dravyas that can be used
1.	Organ abnormalities (uterus, cervix) (*garbhashay dourbalya*)	*Mamsa dhatu* Correction (increasing muscle Strength)	*Mamsa & meda shaithilya Nashan, mamsa prasadan, Mamsa Vardhan, Mamsa dhatvagni vardhan*	*Guduchi, Durva, Vatyapushpi, Haritaki*
2.	Expulsion of premature Fetus : (Bleeding tendency)	Controlling and Correcting the causes Of bleeding tendency In female	*Shonitadi pravritti nashan Rakta skandan, Rakta stambhan, Raktagata pitta vata shaman*	*Vatyapushpi atibala Priyangu, durva Kadali, guduchi*
3.	Fetal organ malformation (*Garbha avayava Vikriti)*	Correcting circulation Problems (*rasrakta samvahan*) Correcting *rakta – vikriti* as *rakta* has has role in fetal organ development	*Rakta dhatvagni Vardhan, Raktagat ama pachan, Raktagat tridosha shaman, Jivan, prasadan*	*Durva, guduchi, Kutaki, haritaki*
4.	Deep rooted disease pathology In mother	Correcting circulation Problems (*rasrakta samvahan*) & Giving disease treatment	*Dravyas* with specific *Rogaghnata in prajasthapan*	Ex. *Prameha- bramhi, kutaki Raktapitta- durva, patala Kushtha- guduchi, bramhi*

DISCUSSION

From the properties of *Prajasthapana* drugs described by *Acharya Charaka* and *Acharya Kashyapa*, it can be understood that these medicines help remove obstacles in conception and support a healthy pregnancy. Proper *Prajasthapana* occurs only when all *Garbhasambhava Samagris* are balanced and healthy. These *dravyas* are not just medicines; they are part of a complete fetal protective therapy that ensures the holistic health of both the mother and fetus.Their use is an essential component of Ayurvedic Antenatal Care (*Prasavapurva Paricharya*).

- Weakness of the uterus or reproductive organs may affect conception. Since the uterus is a visceral organ made of smooth muscles, nourishment of *Mamsa Dhatu* helps strengthen it. Drugs like **Guduchi**, **Durva**, **Vatyapushpa**, and **Haritaki** are useful for this purpose.

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- Sometimes the embryo gets expelled outside before it gets viable, Spontaneous and threatened abortions are common due to vitiation of *vata*,*Rakta*, and *Pitta*. Drugs such as **Priyangu**, **Durva**, **Guduchi**, **Kadali**, and **Kutaki** purify *Rakta* and help control bleeding, thus preventing miscarriage.
- Many *Prajasthapana* drugs also act on other systems of the body by treating diseases like *Prameha*, *Jwara*, and liver disorders, which indirectly support pregnancy.
- *Avayava Utapatti* is also concerned with the *Dhatu.* If the *Rasa Dhatu* is proper, the *Uttarottara Dhatu* will be proper according to *Dhatuposhana Nyaya*. Use of *garbhasthapan dravyas* help in *dhatuposhan.*

Hence, the *Garbhasthapan Gana* drugs mentioned by our *Acharyas* are beneficial in conception, maintaining pregnancy, and preventing complications.

CONCLUSION

The comprehensive analysis of *Garbhasthapak Dravyas* (fetal-stabilizing herbs) shows there significance within the specialized field of Ayurvedic obstetrics, particularly in *Garbhini Paricharya* (antenatal care). The review of *Garbhasthāpana Dravyas* highlights their significant potential in supporting early pregnancy through mechanisms aligned with both classical Ayurvedic principles and emerging scientific understanding. These drugs, described primarily in the *Garbhasthāpana* and *Prajasthāpana Ganas*, exhibit properties such as *Garbhasthirikarana*, *Dhātu-poshana*, *Balya*, and *Rasāyana,* which collectively contribute to embryo stabilization and uterine receptivity. They function by promoting a conducive environment for implantation, nourishing the developing fetus, and enhancing maternal physiological resilience, thereby acting as a powerful preventive measure against threatened and recurrent pregnancy loss. However, the current body of evidence remains limited, emphasizing the need for well-designed pharmacological, clinical, and translational studies to validate their efficacy and safety. Identification of the specific Phytochemicals that interact with uterine receptors and pregnancy hormones is also needed. We urge for continued Future investigations focusing on standardization, mechanism-of-action profiling, and clinical outcome assessment which can help to bridge traditional knowledge with modern obstetric science, ultimately contributing to evidence-based Ayurvedic interventions in early pregnancy care and their benefits into reproductive health protocols, ensuring the safe and successful passage of life from conception to birth.

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