



RESEARCH ARTICLE

A REVIEW ARTICLE ON PHALAPRASHAN AND ANNAPRASHAN SAMSKARA

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ABSTRACT

Hindu mythology describes various *Samskaras* (sacraments/religious rites) outlined from birth to death of an individual. Out of the sixteen *Samskaras* described eight are for children they are *Jatakarma*, *Namakaran*, *Nishkraman*, *Annaprashan*, *Chudakarma*, *Karanvedbana*, *Upanyan*, *Vedarambha*. This article analyzed only *Phalaprashan* and *Annaprashan* *Samskaras* in detail and gives a critical approach to their relevance in light of modern scientific knowledge. They were significant in context of child health, provide strong digestive system and prepares one for the next stage of growth. They were aimed to preparing the body for life successfully, developed proper feeding habits, ensure adequate nutrition, prevent from diseases and immune the body to environment for further survival. It took care of not only physical but also mental development of child.

INTRODUCTION

Childhood under nutrition is an underlying cause of estimated 35% of all deaths under 5 yrs. According to national family health survey (NFHS-3) carried out in 2005-06, 40% under the age of three are underweight, 45% are stunted, 23% are wasted. Prevalence of under nutrition is higher in rural areas 46% than in urban population 33%. Punjab, Kerala, Jammu, and Kashmir, Tamilnadu account for the lowest proportions (27% -33%) of underweight. while Chhattisgarh, Bihar, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, report the maximum (52%-60%) levels of underweight children. The proportion of under nutrition starts rising after 4- 6 months of age because of the introduction of unhygienic foods that cause infections such as diarrhea, late introduction or (early) of complementary feeding and inadequate food intake leads to increase predisposition food under nutrition like hypoglycemia, hypothermia dehydration infections electrolytes imbalance etc. India has a rich cultural heritage which affects the life of a person at all stages of life. Hinduism is one of the oldest world religions prevailing in Indian subcontinent. *Ayurveda* is the science of life it is the *Upveda* of *Atharvaveda*, many references in

Ayurveda correlate well with religious texts of ancient India. Ancient Hindu mythology described sixteen *Samskara* for a person. *Phalaprashan* and *Annaprashansamskara* provide adequate nutrition and essential in early childhood to ensure healthy growth, proper organ formation and function, for a strong immune system, neurological and cognitive development. According to *Ayurveda* a child should prescribe various fruits after six month or later after eruption of teeth or in tenth month. Starting the intake of various fruits juices offers energy as well as essential vitamins and minerals to baby. Throughout the first year many physiological changes occurs that allow infants to consume food of varying composition and texture. For proper growth and development an infant must abstain an adequate amount of essential nutrients by consuming appropriate quantities and type of food.

Ayurvedic Review

First feeding of semi-solid food or feeding of cereals is called *Phalaprashan* or *Annaprashan Samskara*. In 6th month *Phalaprashan* is advised by *Acharya Kashyapa*. Where *Annaprashan* is suggested by *Sushrata* and *Vagbhata*. In 10th month *Annaprashan Samskarais* indicated by *Achrya Kashyapa*. *Achrya Kashyapa*¹ has described *Phalaprashan*

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Samskara in detail, here they advised feeding of various fruits in sixth month. After eruption of teeth or in tenth month the feeding of cereals or *Annaprashan* should be done during auspicious day in *Prajapatya* constellation after worshipping the gods and Brahmins by cereals with meat and donations. Later *Acharya Kashyapa*² gives some yoga for nourishment of growing child as:

- Prepare an *Avleha* by combination of old husk free and well washed *Sathi or Sashti* rice mixed with oleaginous substances and salt. The powders of wheat and barley also should be given according to congeniality.
- *UshanaLeha* (electuary) cooked with *Vidanga, Lavan*, oleaginous substances is beneficial to the one having diarrhea (*Kado* should be mixed).
- To the one having predominance of *Pitta Mrdvika* with honey and *Ghrta* should be given and in predominance of *VataDosh* diet with juice of *Matulunga* and salt.
- The one knowing *Desh* (place of living) *Agni* (digestive power) strength and period when ever observes the child as hungry, should give him the food according to congeniality with the gap of one or two periods.

According to *Acharya Sushruta*³ the child at the age of six month, should be given light and *Hitkar* food. *Acharya Vagbhata*⁴ advised that solid food should be afferent to child gradually simultaneously with discontinuing breast - milk.

Importance of Annaprashan and Phalaprashan Samskara

At age of 6 months breast milk now not enough to fulfill the requirement of growing child. So it is the accurate time to introduction of supplementary feeding as *Phalaprashan* (juice of fruits) because breast milk is deficient in nutrition's like as iron, calcium and vitamin A, B12, D, K, C, etc. *Phalaprashan and Annaprashan* ceremony at this time with breast feeding can reduce the deficiency of related essential vitamins and minerals. Fruits are universally promoted for good health, includes a diverse group of plants foods that vary greatly in content of energy and nutrients. Additionally fruits and fiber intake is linked to lower incidence of cardiovascular disease and obesity. Fruits also supply vitamins and minerals to the diet and are sources of phytochemicals that functions as antioxidants, phytoestrogens, anti-inflammatory agents and other protective mechanisms.

Nutritional requirement of infants

Daily nutrient requirements and recommended dietary allowances for Indian children (Based on the 2010 recommendation of Indian council of medical research).

The importance of weaning to an infant health

First, breast feeding teaches has a child how to take in needed nutrients.

Table 1. Daily energy requirement of infant (recommendation of Indian council of medical research 2010)

Age	Energy (kcal/kg)	Protein (g/kg)	Visible fat (g/kg)	Ca(mg)	Fe(mg)	Zn (mg)	Mg(mg)
<6 month	92	1.16	-	500	46	-	30
6-12 mo.	80	1.69	19	500	05	-	45
1-3 yr.	1060	16.7	27	600	09	5	50

Table 2. Daily Vitamins requirement of infant (recommendation of Indian council of medical research 2010)

Age	Vit. A retinol	Vit. A β.carotene	Vit b1(mg)	Vit. B2(mg)	Vit. B3(μg/kg)	Vit B6(mg)	Folate(μg)	Vit. B12(μg)	Vit. C(mg)
< 6 month	350	-	0.2	0.3	710	0.1	25	0.2	25
6-12 month	350	2800	0.3	0.4	650	0.4	25	0.2	25
1-3 yr.	400	3200	0.5	0.6	8	0.9	80	0.2-1.0	40

Table 3. Nutrients of different fruits (Based on nevo foundation, Netherlands nutrition center)

S. No.	Fruits	Energy (kcal.)	Fiber (g)	Protein (g)	Vit. A(mg)	Vit. C(mg)	Vit.B1(mg)	Vit. B2(mg)	Vit. B3(mg)	Vit. E(mg)
1.	Apple	207	2.3	0.4	2	15	0.02	.01	.05	.05
2.	Banana	375	2.7	1.2	3	10	.04	.03	.36	.03
3.	Blackberry	170	8.7	2.0	30	150	.09	.04	.07	1.0
4.	Fig	340	2.0	1.0	10	3	.06	.05	.11	-
5.	Grapes	274	2.2	0.5	-	3	0.03	.01	.08	.6
6.	Guava	306	5.3	1.0	30	218	.04	.04	.14	-
7.	Mango	255	1.0	-	210	53	.05	.06	.13	1.0
8.	Papaya	136	0.6	-	40	46	.03	0.04	0.04	-
9.	Pineapple	211	1.2	0.4	20	25	.07	.02	.09	.1
10.	Orange	198	1.8	1.0	2	49	.07	.03	.06	.1

Table 4. Nutritional valves of cereals (National institute of nutrition Hyderabad on nutritive value of Indian food)

Cereal & pulses	Quantity (gm)	Energy (kcal.)	Cho (gm)	Protein (gm)	Fat (gm)	Na (mg)	K (mg)
Wheat flour	25	80	17	3	0.4	5	80
Rice	25	66	19	2	.2	2	17
Bread	25	61	13	2	.1	120	20
Wheat Dalia	25	87	18	3	0.3	1	87
Rajmah	25	87	15	6	.2	-	-
Soya beans	25	89	18.2	3	1.5	3.2	33.6
Khichri(rice+dal)4:1	25	89	18.2	3	1.5	3.2	33.6
Milk (cow)	250 ml	166	11	8	10	40	350
Milk (buffalo)	250 ml	238	12.5	11	16	47	225
Meat	100 g	191	-	18.5	13	33	270
Egg	50 g	77	0.90	6.0	5.35	52	63

Then weaning teaches how to take in other foods that require two new aspects of digestion. (A) Breaking down the new foods into nutrients. (B) excreting out the unusable wastes. There are many necessary parts to this phase of infant development. A healthy weaning supports all these things and correlates with these development. These development are to the healthy independence of child and his separation from his mother, Separation anxiety, Fear of strangers, Beginning of language, Beginning of crawling and later walking, Teething, Development of digestion of solids, Development of waste out processes. The trauma of losing a mother's breast milk, seems to be a way to better protect and build the infant. Similar to *Phal/Annaprashan* introduction in Ayurveda, same principle followed in modern paediatrics as after six month of age weaning (which is the process of gradually introducing an infant to adult diet and withdrawing the supply of its mother's milk) starts as:- Offer foods which are soft, easily digestible and avoid foods with high allergenic potential (cow's milk, eggs, fish, nuts, soybeans). For feeding, parents should advise to make use of a cup rather than a bottle. Fluids other than breast milk, formula, and water should be discouraged. Give no more than 4–6 oz/day of fruit juices. IMNCI recommendation for breastfeeding and complementary feeding for 6-12 months are given as:- Breastfeed as often as the child wants. Give at least one *Katori* at a time of Mashed roti, rice/bread/biscuit mixed in sweetened undiluted milk or Mashed roti/rice/bread mixed in thick *Dal* with *Ghee*/oil or *Khichadi* with added oil/*Ghee*. Add cooked vegetables or *Dalid/Halwa/Kheer* prepared in milk or any cereal porridge cooked in milk or Mashed boiled/ fried potatoes. Offer Banana/Biscuit/Papaya/Cheeko/Mango as snacks in between the serving.

Conclusions

Future of any nation depends on physically and mentally healthy children. *Samskara* described in *Ayurvedic* texts are based on the various stages of child growth and developments and hence provide a rational guideline toward his care during celebrating different ceremonies from very conception to childhood. Child growth is internationally recognized as an important public health indicator for monitoring nutritional status and health in populations. Children suffer from growth retardations as a result of poor diets, recurrent infections tend to have more frequent episodes of severe diarrhea and are more susceptible to severe infectious disease such as malaria, meningitis, pneumonia and protein energy malnutrition etc.

Morbidity and malnutrition are very proportionate with each other that one increase so other also increases. In an ancient *Ayurvedic* classics *Phalaprashan* and *AnnaprashanSamskaras* is quite essential for child's proper growth and development. We talk of the importance of breast feeding which are many but *Phalaprashan* and *AnnaprashanSamakara* also has its importance and positive aspects.

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