

**SCIENTIFIC ANALYSIS OF TRADITIONALLY USED POSTNATAL PRACTICES
[SUTHIKA CHARYA] OF RURAL AREAS IN KOZHIKODE DISTRICT-KERALA****Shamna T V¹, JawharaliB. S²**

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Article Received:29/12/2021 - **Peer Reviewed:**06/01/2022 - **Accepted for Publication:**07/01/2022**ABSTRACT**

Introduction: Suthika or Puerperal woman is the one who needs utmost care as the diseases occurring to suthika are either incurable or are cured with great difficulty. The regimen that helps the woman to regain her lost vitality and helps her body to revert to a pre-pregnant state is called suthikaparicharya. Traditional Knowledge has been time tested and is proved to be effective in rejuvenation after Pregnancy and delivery. But scientific documentation is lacking in this area and the number of women folks who is well versed in suthikaparicharya is decreasing steadily due to modernization of the medical education system and westernization of Human mentality. Therefore, it is imperative to document this knowledge at the earliest. **Objective:** The study aimed to document the existing system of folklore knowledge of puerperal care and find the logic behind it by comparing it with soothing paricharya mentioned in classical textbooks of Ayurveda. **Method:** A survey was done by oral communication with the local people and interviews with traditional practitioners who are well versed in suthikaparicharya in rural areas of Kozhikode district, Kerala. **Result:** The concept of the traditional practice of soothikacharya can be equated with that mentioned in Ayurvedic classics.

Keywords: Suthikaparicharya, traditional practice, Folklore practice

1. INTRODUCTION

The word Suthika refers to a woman who has given birth to a child followed by the expulsion of the placenta. The scientific interpretation of Suthika is a puerperal woman.¹The body of Suthika is thought to be empty after the expulsion of Garbha, Raktha and Kleda.² The woman undergoes physical and mental stress and become very weak after delivery due to many reasons such as the development of the fetus inside the body, instability of body tissues, labour pains and excretion of moisture and blood.³There are different opinions about the duration of this period /soothika kala ranging from 6 weeks to 6 months or until the reappearance of the menstrual cycle.

As per the textbook on modern medical science, the puerperium is the period following childbirth during which the body tissues especially the pelvic organs revert to the pre-pregnant state both anatomically and physiologically.⁴ The Indian figure of maternal mortality ratio is estimated to be 130 per 100,000 live births and the lowest in Kerala that is 43 per 100,000 live births in the 2014-16 survey.⁵

Suthika or Puerperal woman is the one who needs utmost care, as the diseases occurring to suthika are either incurable or are cured with great difficulty^{6,7}. The regimen that helps the woman to regain her lost vitality and helps her body to revert to a pre-pregnant state is called suthika paricharya. Traditional Knowledge has been time tested and is proved to be effective in rejuvenation after Pregnancy and delivery. But scientific documentation is lacking in this area and the number of women folks who is well versed in suthika paricharya is decreasing steadily due to the modernization of the medical education system and westernization of Human mentality. Therefore, it is imperative to document this knowledge and validate it scientifically at the earliest.

2. Aim and Objectives

- To document the Traditionally followed Suthika-paricharya

- To compare The Traditionally followed Suthika paricharya with the Suthika Paricharya explained in classical textbooks of Ayurveda

Key messages

- The traditionally followed suthika paricharya showed a positive effect on maternal health as well as on the health of newborns.
- It is shown beneficial effects on maternal breast milk production.
- Further investigation is needed to explore their pharmacological properties and the physiological changes they do in the body.

3.Method

The study was carried out in rural areas of Kozhikode district, Kerala which is located in the southern part of India and has a rich history of women folk who are well versed in Suthika paricharya.16 out of 20 of the postnatal women interviewed are taking the help of such practitioner's minimum for 28 days to 45 days which accounts 80%.Information was collected by interviewing several folklore practitioners and the women who have utilized this kind of specialized tradition.

Phase 1

- Literary references are collected from Ashtanga Hridaya, Charaka Samhitha, Sushruta Samhitha, Related internet sources and Modern Textbooks.

Phase 2

- A short survey was done by interviewing 10 women folks called "vayattatti" and 20 women who have utilized this kind of specialized tradition were interviewed which includes both Hindu and Muslim religions.
- The information regarding the Puerperal regimen which includes medicated diet, medicinal preparations, external therapies and restrictions they are following are collected and documented.
- The logic behind this regimen is compared with the suthikacharya explained in the classical textbooks of Ayurveda and analyzed critically.

4.SUTHIKA CHARYA FOLLOWED TRADITIONALLY

4.1MEDICATED DIET

1. AJAMODA + LASHUNA + GUDA – 3 days

Ingredients	Quantity
Ajamoda- (Ajwain/ Trachyspermum ammi)	30 g
Lashuna- (Garlic/Allium sativum)	4 cloves
Water	As per need
Guda/ Jaggery	As per need

Method of preparation: Ajamoda should be dried and powdered. Add crushed cloves of Lashuna to this along with an adequate amount of water. It must be mixed well and cooked for 5 minutes. Guda is added

then and made in semisolid consistency. This preparation is advised to take once a day for 3 days and is called “Ayamodakakkoottu” traditionally.

2. METHIKA/FENUGREEK – 3 days

Ingredients	Quantity
Methika (Fenugreek/Trigonella fenumgraecum)	1 /4 glass
Guda	As per need

Method of preparation: Methika must be soaked on the previous day. The liquid portion is strained by squeezing it the next day morning. Boil it by adding sufficient amount of Guda according to the individu-

al's taste. 1 glass of this preparation is advised to take for 3 days. Traditionally it is called “Uluva Marunnu”.

3. ULLIMARUNNU/ LASHUNA YOGA – 3 days

Ingredients	Quantity
Lashuna	2 full legumes
Grinjanaka (shallot/ Allium ascalonicum)	4

Method of preparation:

Peel the garlic, cook with water and keep it closed. Crush the garlic next day morning and add salt. This

yoga is advised to use with **rice** for **3** days and is called “Ullimarunnu” traditionally.

4. MUKKUDI - 7 days

Ingredients	Quantity
Amalaki	500g
Punarnava	500g
Water	16 litres
Jathi, Jathipatra, Jeeraka, Krishna jeeraka, Dhanya	100 g each

Method of preparation: 16 liters of water are taken and added with 500 grams each of crushed punarnava and fresh amalaka as kalka. It is then boiled in a moderate flame until the watery portion gets reduced to 4 litres. Raw drugs of Jathi, Jathipatra, Jeeraka, Krishna jeeraka, Dhanya are taken, dried in sun and made into coarse powder. It is wrapped in a banana

leaf, then in a thin cotton cloth and made in the form of potali. This potali is dipped in 4 liters of Kashaya made out of punarnava and Amalaka, cooked in mandagni for 8 hours and reduced to 4 glasses. The drug inside the potali is then taken out and ground with 4 glasses of kashaya. Saindhava and hingu were added to this mixture with the addition of 8 glasses of

hot water. It is heated and kept aside. This preparation is called Mukkudi and is advised to take ½ glass

morning and evening.

5. PODIMARUNNU /CHOORNITHA YOGA – 30 days

Ingredients	Quantity
Ajamoda, Shathahwa, Sarshapa, Jeeraka, Krishnajeeraka	100g
Thila & Methika	200 g each
Rice	1 Kg

Method of preparation: Raw drugs are taken, fried on mild flame, powdered and kept aside. Then raw rice is also fried and powdered. Both these are mixed well and preserved in an airtight vessel. While eating, guda and grated coconut are added. This preparation is called Podimarunnu or Choornitha yoga and is advised to take for 30 days.

4.2 OTHER REGIMENS

Abyanga: Abyanga done with Dhanwantharam Kuzhambu every day before 20 to 30 minutes of bath

Snana: Nalpamaratwak [Bark of 1. Peral, Ficus benghalensis 2. Ithi, Ficus microcarpa 3. Athi, Ficus racemosa and 4. Arayal, Ficus religiosa] is added in water and boiled on the previous day. On the next day, boiled water is added according to the need of hotness and used for body bath. Hibiscus leaves are crushed on a stone with a hand and its sticky juice is used to apply on head and hair and then washed with normal water.

Veshtana: A long cotton Cloth may be applied with Dhanwantharam kuzhambu is used to bind (veshtana) around the abdomen.

Manjalenna: At the end of Charya, Manjalenna (Turmeric oil) is made and kept for further use for Abyanga.

Method of preparation: Thaila prepared with equal quantity of Thila thaila (Sesamum oil) and Nalikerathaila (coconut oil), Swarasa of Haridra (Turmeric/ Curcuma longa) and Nilamparanda (Thripadi/ Desmodium Trifolium) and coconut milk (2 big coconuts)

Anjana: Oil is prepared out of an equal quantity of Thila thaila and Narilela thaila by using Poovankurunthal/sahadevi (Arrowleaf sida /Sida rhombifolia) as kalkadravya. A varthi made out of cotton cloth is dipped in this oil and ignited. Fumes are collected in a mud pot. Gandharva thaila (castor oil) is added while applying this collerium.

DISCUSSION

Comparison Of Classical Suthika Charya with Traditionally Practiced Suthika Charya:

CLASSICAL ^{7,7a} (Susruthasamhitha shareerasthana and Ashtanga hridaya shareera sthana)	TRADITIONAL
Bala thaila Abyanga & vatagna Aushadha-(SU)	Abyanga with Dhanwantaram kuzhambu and Nadikkashaya
Yamaka sneha & Veshtana (AH)	Veshtana after Dhanwanthatam kuzhambu application
Theekshnoushadhachoorana with gudodaka	Ajamodadi yoga +Guda Methika – Garbhashaya shodhaka & Dugdha vridhikara
Brimhana after 7 days	Fish etc only after 1 week Lashuna – Rasayana, Vathahara Mukkudi, Podimarunnu contain brimhanoushadhas
Sarpi or thaila in amahatimatra mixed with panchakolachoorana with gulodaka	Food prepared with thaila and sarpi is preferred. Instead of green or red chillies they prefer pepper

Analysis: After the baby comes out there will be a vacuum inside the body so also Vataprakopa, which may lead to complications. To cop up this, Bala thaila

Abyanga and Vathaghna Aushadhas are explained in the classics. The traditional charyas like Abyanga with Dhanwantaram kuzhambu and ingredients in

Nadikkashaya with Vatahara quality fulfils this concept. Yamaka Sneha (a combination of two unctuous preparations) is advised by Vagbhata. It is found that Dhanwantharam kuzhambu is nothing but a Yamaka sneha as it contains both Thaila and Ghrita. Binding the abdomen with the cloth fulfils the concept of Veshtana explained in Ashtanga Hridaya. Ajamodadi Yoga with Guda fulfils the need of Theeksh-noushadha with Gudodaka for garbhashaya shodhana (cleansing uterus). Methika can do garbhashaya shodhana along with dugdha vridhikara property (increases breast milk) which is very much desirable for Suthika. It is also noticed that fish, meat etc are given to suthika only after 7 or 10 days which contribute to the concept of Brimhana advised only after 7 days in classics. Lashuna is Rasayana and Vatahara similarly Mukkudi and Podimarunnu contain brimhana dravyas which again gives the importance of Brimhana and time of administration not within a week. Food prepared with thaila (oil) and sarpi(ghee) are preferred which contribute to the usage of Amahathimatra-thaila and sarpi mentioned in classics. Even though usage of Panchakola mentioned in classical textbooks as such is not found in traditional charya, they prefer pepper instead of green or red chillies.

DISCUSSION ON INGREDIENTS USED

Ajamoda is considered to have katu-thiktha in rasa, theekshna and ushna in guna, katu in vipaka, Vata-kapha hara, Aruchihara, hrudya, balya in karmukatwa. It contains Ascorbic acid and gallotanins as chemical composition.⁸ Gallotanins causes the contraction of the body tissues and is typically used to reduce bleeding from minor abrasions.⁹ Similarly Ascorbic acid/ Vitamin C plays a major role in collagen formation and Hemoglobin regulation in the blood which is very much essential in the puerperium. Its deficiency may lead to easy bleeding tendency and delayed wound healing¹⁰.

Rasona or Lashuna is Vedanasthapana (analgesic), Uttejaka (stimulant) and Vatahara drug. It allays provoked Vata and Kapha dosa and is appreciated as Rasayana and Medhya especially for increasing or promoting functional power of Indriya (sensory organ) and vision in particular. A separate chapter itself

is given in detail for Lashuna in Kashyapa Samhita. It is proved to improve autonomic nervous system which in turn improves the blood supply of endometrium and ovary and give relief in menstrual disturbances.¹¹

Methika's principal constituents-diosgenin and trigonellin, are phytoestrogens that produce variations in oestrogen and progesterone release in the body, resulting in regulated uterine contractions and controlled release of prostaglandins, and thus relieving pain. Antispasmodic and spasmolytic activity of Methika relieves excessive muscular contractions, further leading to a reduction in pain. Its ability to block platelet aggregation and reduce blood viscosity leads to liquefaction of menstrual blood clots and prevent further development.¹²

Punarnava is related to uterine health and is also indicated in urinary disorders and oedema. Krishna jeeraka is Deepana, paachana, vatanulomana, stan-yajanaka and garbhashyashodhaka. Amalaki is rich in Vitamine C and is Rasayana and Vayasthapana. Dhanyaka is said to have agni deepana and ama pa-chana action along with improving the functions of eyes and vision¹³. It has even better efficacy against the strain of Escherichia coli and Candida albicans and thereby prevents sexual and urinary tract infections¹⁴. The ingredients like Hingu contain Phytoestrogens which binds to the oestrogen receptors and could induce oestrogenic actions. Studies on ferutinin a component of Hingu also suggest an oestrogenic activity in ovariectomized non-oestrogen primed female rat¹⁵. Jatiphala, Myristica fragrans Houtt of family Myristicaceae have been utilized therapeutically as medicine as well as a spice. Researchers suggest its Antidiarrheal, Hypnotic, Analgesic, Antimicrobial and Anti-depressant actions and are also used in Sexual dysfunction. It may even prevent postpartum psychosis.

There may be changes in visual acuity during pregnancy and after delivery. It is also seen that refractive errors in the first trimester of pregnancy may continue after postpartum. This myopic shift in vision is not only due to changes in hormones but also overweight has its retributive role.¹⁶ At this stage Anjana has its

effects by enhancing the functional capacity of eyes without disturbing other bodily functions.

CONCLUSION

All of the traditional Soothika charya practices observed in rural Kozhikode are extremely similar to that of Ayurvedic classics. Ashtanga hridaya recommends continuing soothika charya for another 1 ½ months or until the next Artava darshana. Traditional practitioner's remedies are also found to be finished in 45 days, demonstrating the deep expertise behind traditional methods. The only distinction is that they use locally accessible Dravyas for this purpose and follow the same process regardless of prakruthi, Dosha or Dooshya of the Suthika. So, after examining all the above criteria, Soothika charya which has been followed traditionally can be implemented effectively according to the Yukthi of Vaidya. More Research studies are needed in the field of Suthika charya for both healthy and unhealthful circumstances while keeping the conventional practice as the basic framework.

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