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## A CRITICAL LITERARY STUDY ON OBTAINING *SHREYASI PRAJA* W.S.R.TO *BRIHATRAYEE*

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### ABSTRACT:

In the realm of *Ayurveda*, the pursuit of *Shreyasi Praja*, or the birth of an exceptional offspring, extends far beyond individual aspirations, resonating with a profound societal perspective. Rooted in ancient wisdom, *Ayurvedic Samhitas* highlight the paramount importance of pre-conceptional care, meticulous attention to nutrition, thoughtful lifestyle adjustments, and therapeutic remedies. The collective aim is not merely personal fulfilment but the cultivation of a robust and intellectually gifted generation. *Ayurveda's* focus on promoting fertility, averting genetic disorders, and ensuring optimal reproductive health speaks to its holistic approach. This ancient system of medicine places great emphasis on creating an environment that nurtures the potential of future generations, recognizing the interconnectedness of individual well-being and the vitality of society. Thus, the objective of this article is to explore comprehensively the principles and practices within *Ayurveda* that contribute to the pursuit of *Shreyasi Praja*, an endeavour aligned with the broader mission of building a strong and healthy societal fabric.

**Key Words:** *Shreyasi Praja*, Pre-Conceptional Care, Lifestyle, Optimal Reproductive Health, Fertility.

## INTRODUCTION

It is said that pursuit of attaining an exceptional child carries significant prestige as it liberates from the bonds of ancestors. In treatise, the pursuit of excellent progeny has been a significant aspect of human life for centuries. The significance of exceptional progeny extends beyond individual aspirations, emphasizing a broader vision for fostering a robust society. *Ayurvedic Samhitas* stress the role of proper pre conceptional care, nutrition, lifestyle modifications, and therapies in enhancing fertility, preventing genetic disorders, and ensuring the birth of a child with the highest qualities. Throughout history, *Ayurveda* has provided a holistic framework, recognizing the intricate interplay of physical, mental, and spiritual factors influencing progeny quality.

This study delves into Ayurvedic principles regarding the attainment of *Shreyasi Praja* (child with the highest qualities) and exploring the ancient wisdom found in classical texts like *Charaka Samhita*, *Sushruta Samhita*, and *Ashtanga Hridaya* regarding the same. Through historical perspectives and contemporary research, the study aims to illuminate reproductive health understanding, elucidate factors influencing successful conception, and highlight *Ayurveda*'s role in fostering healthy and intellectually gifted progeny. By revealing

enduring principles and practices, the study investigates their contemporary relevance and impact on reproductive health and genetic well-being. The imperative of obtaining '*Shreyasi Praja*' - a child destined for societal and spiritual welfare - is crucial for the upliftment of the human race in the present era.

## OBJECTIVES

1. To compile the measures to be taken to obtain "*Shreyasi Praja*" w.s.r.to *Brihatrayee*.
2. To critically analyse and interpret the concept of "*Shreyasi Praja*" through *Ayurveda* with the support of other literatures.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

Source of Data: The literary source of the present study is collected from the classical texts of *Ayurveda* with their commentaries and other Ayurvedic texts and Journals. Relevant websites, articles and presentations are also referred. For the literary study the following materials are taken:

1. *Brihatrayee* with commentaries
2. Other *Samhitas* of *Ayurveda*
3. *Nighantu Kosha*
4. Vedic literature
5. *Upanishads*
6. *Puranas*
7. *Ghrhya sutras*
8. Other relevant literatures such as Monier Williams Dictionary,

*Garbhopenishad, Brihat Samhita of Varahamihira, Chanakyaaneeti, Manusmriti, Yajnavalkya smriti.*

Methodology: Present study is a literary research and method is followed as per the objectives of the study.

- First all the information related to the measures to be followed in order to obtain *Shreyasi Praja* were compiled from *Brihatrayee, Nighantu kosha* and other texts of *Ayurveda*.
- Other relevant literary references from major ancient scriptures were referred compiled and interpreted in order to generate review.
- In the methodology, the study has been done under these sections:
  - a) *Shreyasi Praja*
  - b) *Vivaha Samskara*
  - c) A healthy reproductive system
  - d) Creating the atmosphere and culturing the seed
  - e) *Garbhadhana Samskara*
  - f) *Garbhavakranti*
  - g) *Pumsavana Samskara*
  - h) *Garbhinicharya*
  - i) *Prasava*
  - j) *Sootika*
  - k) *Stanya Sampat*
  - l) *Jaatakarma*
- Interpretation of each method is done.

- Subsequently, a thorough comprehension of the principle was undertaken, and conclusions were derived from the aforementioned analysis.

## OBSERVATION

This study was undertaken with specific objectives aimed at contributing to future research studies and clinical practice. The investigation was conducted with a focus on addressing each crucial step in the pursuit of obtaining "*Shreyasi Praja*."

- A. *Shreyasi Praja*: The complete study has been focused on the concept of "*Shreyasi Praja*", which translates to "an excellent or virtuous progeny" <sup>[1]</sup>. As mentioned by *Acharya Charaka* in *Jaatisutriya Adhyaya of Sharira sthana* <sup>[2]</sup>, extensively discuss the measures to attain such a progeny. *Shreyasi Praja* encompasses the desire to have children who are not only physically and mentally healthy but also possess spiritual and social virtues. It emphasizes the importance of raising intelligent, morally upright, and healthy children.
- It is observed that, different *Acharyas* have used various terms to express the idea of *Shreyasi Praja*, such as *Satputra, Mahagunaan, Saadhavah*

*Putra, Suputra, and Veeryanvitam Apatyam*. All these terms points towards the highest aim of obtaining an excellent progeny. It is believed that having a *Shreyasi Praja* can help alleviate the debts of the parents (*Rna*) and lead to salvation <sup>[3]</sup>.

- The critical analysis of the concept highlighted that achieving *Shreyasi Praja* is not as simple as perceived in modern times. It involves peri-conceptual care, which is crucial in ensuring the birth of intelligent, attractive, and healthy offspring.
- It is noted that, in present era, addressing challenges such as lifestyle changes, stress, and genetic issues needs a proactive approach towards planned pregnancies and peri-conceptual care, ensuring improved overall well-being and a higher quality of life for the future generations.

B. *Vivaha Samskara*: In the study the following points were observed - regarding premarital counselling and the significance of *Vivaha Samskara* in obtaining *Shreyasi Praja*.

- Marriage: Obtaining *Shreyasi Praja* goes beyond peri-conceptual care and begins with the fundamental aspect of *Vivaha Samskara*. The

process of selecting the right partner should not solely focus on external factors, but also consider the compatibility of *Gotra*.

- Different *Gotra(s)*: In the *Atulyagotriya Adhyaya* <sup>[4]</sup>, the significance of selecting partners from distinct *Gotras* is stressed. This practice ensures genetic diversity and minimizes the likelihood of genetic anomalies in the progeny.
- Ideal Time: *Maithuna*, should take place post the cessation of menstruation. Adhering to the correct timing is vital to maximize the likelihood of conception and ensuring the birth of a healthy progeny <sup>[5]</sup>.
- Purpose of Union: The purpose is specifically oriented towards acquiring *Shreyasi Praja* and should not be exclusively centered on sexual satisfaction. Both partners should possess tranquil minds and a shared intention of nurturing a healthy and virtuous child <sup>[6]</sup>.
- Peaceful environment: The couple should select a location free from any disturbances during their union <sup>[7]</sup>. Establishing a serene and harmonious environment increases the likelihood of conceiving a healthy child.

- Informed Decisions: (Well-considered Choices) The *Acharyas* exhibit a profound comprehension of the concept of obtaining progeny, taking into account every subtle factor in the process. Informed and reflective decisions made during premarital counselling play a pivotal role in ensuring a healthy and flourishing next generation <sup>[8]</sup>.

C. Healthy reproductive system: A healthy reproductive system is one of the basic requirements for obtaining *Shreyasi Praja*. The following key points were noted and analysed critically during the study.

Peri-conceptual care in reproductive age:

- Right Age of Marriage and Conception <sup>[9]</sup>
- Peri-conceptual Care in Early Reproductive Age
- Specific Lifestyle and Diet for *Rajaswalacharya* <sup>[10]</sup>
- *Beeja Shuddhi* and *Kshetra Shuddhi* <sup>[11]</sup>
- Comprehensive measures for ovum development
- Importance of *Stree* (the female partner) <sup>[12]</sup>
- Epigenetic impact of *Rajaswalacharya*
- Focus on Epigenetics

Factors essential for a healthy conception <sup>[13]</sup>:

- Importance of Proper Timing (*Rtu Kaala*)
- Role of *Beeja*
- Conditions of the *Kshetra*
- Adequate Nourishment (*Ambu*)
- Role of *Vata* <sup>[14]</sup>
- Influence of Mental and Emotional State (*Hridaya*) <sup>[15]</sup>
- Genetic Factors
- Impact of Past Actions (*Karma*) <sup>[16]</sup>
- The Role of *Atma* (Soul)
- Impact of environmental factors
- *Shad Garbhakara Bhavas*
- Genetic inheritance
- Importance of *Garbhavrdhikara Bhavas* <sup>[17]</sup>

D. *Garbhadhana vidhi*: Several importance points were noted in this context.

Creating the atmosphere and culturing the seed <sup>[18]</sup>:

- *Shodhana* Procedures
- Specific diets and lifestyle practices for both partners
- Role of Mind during peri-conceptual phase
- Manifestation of thoughts
- Influence of thoughts and sights
- Role of *Atma* in the process of procreation
- *Rtu Kaala* and Copulation
- *Brahmacharya* after *Garbhadhana*

E. *Garbhavrdhi* <sup>[19]</sup> and *Garbhinicharya* <sup>[20]</sup>: The *Garbhini paricharya* outlined in the *Samhita* is intricately linked to the *Garbhavrdhi* process, showcasing a meticulously planned approach that takes into account subtle factors influencing the development of the *Garbha*. The following points were observed during the study.

- *Acharyas*, while describing *Garbhavrdhi*, align with organogenesis in the sequential formation of major organ systems. However, they also observe and explain the development of subtle elements like *Indriyas*, *Manas*, *Chetana*, *Buddhi*, *Ojas*, etc., which contemporary science does not acknowledge.
- Importance of *Garbhini Paricharya*
- Inter-relation of *Masanumasika Garbhavrdhi* and *Paricharya*
- *Pumsavana Samskara*
- Diet in *Garbhini Paricharya*
- Lifestyle Guidelines
- Importance of psychological well-being
- The guidelines are adapted based on the stage of pregnancy and the unique needs of the mother and the developing baby.

F. *Sootika paricharya* <sup>[21]</sup> and *Jaatakarma* <sup>[22]</sup>: Regarding significance of *Sootika paricharya* and *Jaatakarma* were observed with regard to obtaining *Shreyasi Praja*.

- *Sootika charya*
- Management of *Vayu*
- *Jaatakarma Samskara*
- *Suvarna Prashana*
- Holistic Approach

The methods recommended by the *Acharyas* for attaining a desired and healthy offspring are observed to be highly scientific, surpassing the current understanding of contemporary science in peri-conceptual care. These guidelines are not only profound but also practical and safe. Adhering diligently to these time-tested practices can substantially enhance the likelihood of having the desired excellent progeny.

## DISCUSSION

***Shreyasi Praja*:** The concept of *Shreyasi Praja* underscores the aspiration for children who excel not only in physical and mental health but also in spiritual and social attributes. It highlights the significance of nurturing children who are not just healthy and intelligent but also morally upright. The term *Shreyah* signifies the best or excellent and also conveys meanings such as auspicious, bright, and fortunate. *Shreyasi* is understood as

‘*Atishayena Prashasya*,’<sup>[23]</sup> indicating something more splendid, beautiful, excellent, distinguished, superior, preferable, or better. In this context, *Prashasya* implies being praised, praiseworthy, or desirable.

The word *Praja* means procreation, propagation, offspring, family, race, progeny. *Praja* also mean *Gotra* or *Santati*, which means race or lineage which is pure, and the progeny which brings good fortune in both *Iha* and *Para* the *Lokas*.

Notably the word *Shreyah* also has the meaning *Mukti*, which directly tell the significance of getting *Shreyasi Praja*. *Acharya Sushruta* says that ‘*Rnasya moktarah*’<sup>[24]</sup> i.e., by following insisted measures, the couple will be blessed with a progeny which helps to get rid of *Rna* (debt) of the parents. It is told that among the *Rnatrayas* (*Rshi Rna*, *Deva Rna* and *Pitr Rna*), the *Pitr Rna* can be repaid by giving birth to *Satpraja*.

#### **Pre conceptional care in reproductive age:**

The term ‘peri’ means whole, and therefore the term ‘periconceptional’ is used to encompass not only the pre-conception period but also the early post-conception period. *Acharyas* have explained the significance of right age of marriage and conception. *Samhitas* mention the consequences of conception in inappropriate age. *Ayurveda* has stressed the peri conceptional care in early

reproductive age itself. Specific lifestyle and diet for *Rajaswalacharya* are explained in *Samhitas*. This care in early reproductive age plays a significant role in getting *Shreyasi Praja*. It is well understood that *Beeja Shuddhi* and *Kshetra Shuddhi* are necessary in order to have a healthy progeny. To ensure the development of a healthy ovum, it is essential to implement comprehensive measures well in advance, not shortly before conception. To ensure that the endometrium and ovum are of the highest possible quality, one should start making lifestyle and dietary changes as soon as menarche occurs.

**Essential factors for conception:** In *Brihatrayee*, prerequisites for obtaining *Shreyasi Praja* are outlined, emphasizing the highest quality of factors like *Garbha SamBhava Samagri*, *Shad Garbhakara Bhavas* and *Garbhavrdhikara Bhavas*. *Acharya Sushruta* highlights the utmost significance of *Beeja* quality in the chapter titled ‘*Shukra Shonita Shuddhi Shariram*,’<sup>[25]</sup> exclusively dedicated to emphasizing the importance of *Beeja* qualities. He underscores that the systematic association of *Rtu*, *Kshetra*, *Ambu*, and *Beeja* is crucial for stable *Garbha* implantation. Conception, as per *Sushruta Acharya*, is likened to seed germination, requiring suitable weather conditions, fertile soil, irrigation, and nourishment. *Ashtanga*

*Hridaya* introduces additional components, *Marga*, *Hridaya*, and *Vayu*, enriching the understanding of conception causes. It is said that when all *Garbhasambhava samagri* and *Shadbhavas* are normal with appropriate diet and regimen of mother, the foetus is nourished by rasa derived by *Upasneha* and *Upasweda* gradually. Hence, it is evident that the foetus is directly impacted by the food consumed and the psyche of the mother during pregnancy. Careful attention to the mother's diet and lifestyle choices is essential to ensure the healthy development of the unborn child and to minimize the risk of congenital disorders and other adverse effects on the foetus. The *Samhitas* emphasize the significance of not just physical aspects but also psychological and spiritual factors in the endeavour to attain a healthy progeny.

**Garbhadhana:** *Garbhadhana vidhi*, begins with selecting the right partner, choosing the optimal method of conception, maintaining a balanced diet, adopting a healthy lifestyle, and detoxifying while normalizing vitiated *Dosha*. This foundation aims to produce healthy offspring and contribute to a thriving society. Pre-conceptional care in *Ayurveda* involves three dimensions <sup>[26]</sup> i.e., 1. Physical Dimension: Maintaining equilibrium in *Doshas* and *Dhatus* ensures the physical entities of the *Shareera* are in balance, nurturing traits like

*Prakrti*, *Sara*, *Samhanana*, and *Pramana*. 2. Psychological Dimension: Balancing *Mano Gunas* and soothing *Sattva* helps develop psychological traits like *Dhi*, *Dhriti*, and *Smriti*, promoting mental well-being. 3. Dimension of Consciousness: Acknowledging the soul's pivotal role in Ayurvedic embryology, suggestions and encouragements for sacrifices and oblations are made to invoke the soul of higher origin.

**Garbhavrdhhi and Garbhini paricharya:** *Garbhavrdhhi* and *Garbhini paricharya* explained in our classics are interrelated. Every minute details of *Garbhavakranti* and *Garbhavrdhhi* are explained in *Samhita*. Not only the physical development of the foetus but also the subtle aspects like growth and expression of *Manas*, *Buddhi*, *Dauhrda* desires are also mentioned. The *Ahara*, *Vihara* and *Vichara* of *Garbhini* are planned accordingly. *Pumsavana* one among the *Shodasha Samskaras* also play a significant role in maintaining the pregnancy and fetal health.

**Sootika paricharya and Jaatakarma:** After the birth of the *Shreyasi Praja* as desired, it is equally important to continue providing necessary care and protection to maintain the health of the newborn and safeguard them from external harmful factors. *Sootikacharya* and *Jaatakarma* are essential in this regard. These measures are crucial as the newborn is



dependent on the mother's breast milk i.e., until the *Annaprashana Samskara*.

Upon careful review and analysis of the mentioned elements, it becomes evident that *Shreyasi Praja* is more intricate than commonly perceived in modern times. While peri-conceptual care is often viewed as the primary means to ensure intelligent, attractive, and healthy offspring, this notion is only partially developed. The *Acharyas* possessed profound insights that extended beyond the physical realm into the realm of consciousness. Understanding their true intentions may be challenging, but it is certainly not impossible. With accurate descriptions and application aided by *Yoga* and *Jyotishya Shastras*, producing such auspicious progeny is undoubtedly achievable. The objective of achieving *Shreyasi Praja* extends beyond individual desires for a child; it is deemed a noble endeavour contributing to the welfare of society and future generations. As per the *Acharyas*, peri-conceptual care holds paramount significance in ensuring the birth of an exemplary child endowed with optimal physical, mental, and spiritual qualities.

## CONCLUSION

Reproduction plays a crucial role in shaping the future world, but complexities in human sexual relationships have resulted in societal

problems. *Ayurveda* provides a distinctive approach to reproduction, emphasizing pre-conceptual care for socio-spiritual benefits. Elevating reproductive standards can enhance the physical and psychological constitution of the next generation, aspiring for the birth of a virtuous and contributing child, i.e., *Shreyasi Praja*. This method addresses pathological conditions and promotes a better future.

This work suggests incorporating these ancient holistic concepts into clinical practice and integrating them into education, benefiting future generations, society, and the nation at large. Based on a literary study and in-depth analysis of ancient Ayurvedic scriptures, particularly the *Brihatrayee*, valuable observations have been made regarding obtaining "*Shreyasi Praja*," an excellent and virtuous progeny. These observations have significant implications for future research studies and clinical practices in the field of peri-conceptual care and reproductive health.

The measures prescribed by the *Acharyas* are not only scientifically profound but also practical and safe. By following these ancient wisdom-based guidelines, individuals can enhance their chances of experiencing a smooth and uncomplicated journey towards obtaining a desired and healthy progeny. Also, planned pregnancy ensures both *Sukhayu* and

*Hitayu*. The concept of *Shreyasi Praja* is not just about having children but about bringing forth virtuous and healthy individuals who can positively impact society. *Ayurveda* offers a comprehensive and thoughtful approach to achieve this noble goal.

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