



AYURVEDIC CONCEPTS OF *SUTIKA* AND *SUTIKA KAAL*, WITH SPECIAL EMPHASIS TO *SUTIKA PARICHARYA*

Dr. Asha K.^{1*} and Dr. Mandeep Kaur²

¹Professor, *Prasuti tantra & Stree roga* Dept., Karnataka Ayurveda Medical College, Mangalore, India.

²Asst. Professor, *Panchakarma* Dept., Govt. Ayurvedic College, Patiala, Punjab, India.

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*Corresponding Author: Dr. Asha K.

Professor, *Prasuti tantra & Stree roga* Dept., Karnataka Ayurveda Medical College, Mangalore, India.

ABSTRACT

Ayurveda lay a lot of stress on the treatment of women, especially during the *Garbhini* and *Sutika* periods. Ayurveda practices holistic care in a woman throughout her life at critical transitional times like *Rajaswala*, *Garbhini* and *Sutika* with preventive and promotive care for overall wellness. The postnatal period, referred to as *Sutika Kala* in Ayurvedic literature, starts immediately after the birth of the baby and the expulsion of the placenta and may extend up to six to twelve weeks. This time, commonly known as the puerperium, is one of physical as well as mental fatigue caused by the expenditure of blood and body fluid during delivery. As a result, the new mother is more susceptible to illnesses and needs committed care, known as *Sutika Paricharya*. *Sutika Paricharya* is a particular regime bringing back the mother's health and her body to pre-pregnancy condition. It consists of a mixture of correct *Ahara*, *Vihara* and *Aushadhi* together with prescribed *Pathya* and *Apathya*. Therefore, well-designed *Sutika Paricharya* is important not just for the recovery and rejuvenation of the mother but also for the promotion of the health of the newborn.

KEYWORDS: *Ayurveda*, *Rajaswala*, *Garbhini*, *Sutika*, *Pregnancy*.

INTRODUCTION

In Ayurveda *Sutika* is a woman who has just given birth and has experienced expulsion of the placenta. At this time, the woman is generally weakened by the physical labor involved in pregnancy and childbearing as well as the breakdown of body tissues due to fetal growth. To regain her health and establish normal functions of her body, "*Sutika Paricharya*" a highly regulated postpartum treatment is necessary. If this regime is not followed in a correct manner, the mother becomes more prone to several disorders. These conditions are generally hard to cure and can even become incurable if ignored. Thus, timely and proper management is essential for recovery.^[1-3]

The puerperium, or postnatal state, is understood as the duration after childbirth where the mother's body, most importantly the organs of the pelvic region, readjusts over time to their pre-pregnant anatomical and physiological characteristics. Postnatal care during the period includes the systematic evaluation of both the newborn and the mother, as well as the issue of appropriate instructions to facilitate recovery in the

mother and overall good health. In this context Ayurveda described several concepts or terms which includes; *Sutika*, *Sutika Kala* and *Sutika Paricharya*.^[3-5]

Sutika

In Ayurveda, the word *Sutika* is applied to a woman during the postnatal period. *Sutika* is a word derived from the Sanskrit root 'Su', which signifies "to produce" or "to give birth." She is called *Sutika* directly after childbirth, that is, after the expulsion of the placenta.

Sutika Kala

Sutika Kala is the postnatal stage in Ayurveda, a period that has been outlined with different lengths of time by different classical authors and scholars. No strict agreement can be found in the Ayurvedic literature as to its definite duration. Some hold that the period of *Sutika Kala* extends from 12 days to six months, while others suggest that it continues until the woman enters her usual menstrual cycle.

Acharya Charaka did not state any specific time limit for *Sutika Kala*, *Acharya Sushruta* described one and a half

months' duration and also reported another view that the woman continues to be *Sutika* until the menstrual period reappears. *Bhavaprakasha*, *Yogaratanakara* and *Acharya Vagbhata* all give to the view of approximately 45 days or till the first menses after delivery. The classical texts provide the following views on *Sutika Kala*.^[4-6]

- ✓ *Sushruta Samhita*: 6 weeks or until menstruation returns
- ✓ *Ashtanga Sangraha*: 6 weeks or until menses resumes
- ✓ *Ashtanga Hridaya*: 6 weeks or until menstruation recurs

- ✓ *Bhavaprakasha*: 6 weeks or until menses returns
- ✓ *Kashyapa Samhita*: 6 months to completely heal bodily tissues

From a contemporary point of view, puerperium is the name given to the postnatal period, starting right after the placenta expulsion and continuing for about six weeks. Throughout this period, the uterus and other reproductive organs slowly go back to their pre-pregnancy condition. The puerperium is usually separated into three phases as mentioned in **Figure 1**.^[6-8]

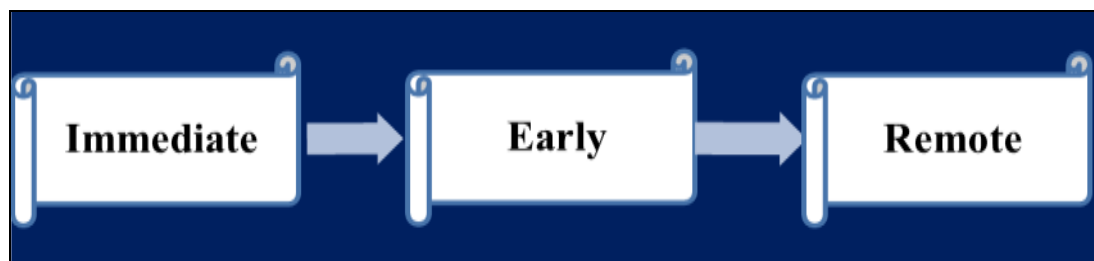


Figure 1: Various phases of puerperium.

As mentioned above the “immediate phase” is considered during the first 24 hours, “early phase” referred until to 7 days and remote phase prolong for 6 weeks.

The treatment given to a woman in the puerperium stage in Ayurveda is called *Sutika Paricharya*. As per Ayurvedic scriptures, *Sutika Paricharya* enforces a

regulated regimen of *Ahara* and *Vihara* which help the mother to recover and regain her pre-pregnant condition. The various therapeutic principles of *Sutika Paricharya* are depicted in **Table 1** and regimen of *Sutika Paricharya* as per different *Acharaya* is mentioned in **Table 2**. Adherence to the regimen in the correct manner helps in quicker recovery, enhanced vitality and enduring well-being of mother as well as child.^[7-9]

Table 1: Therapeutic principles/object of *Sutika Paricharya*.

S. No.	Therapeutic object	Description
1	<i>Vata Shamana</i>	Soothing irritable <i>Vata dosha</i> .
2	<i>Agni Dipana</i>	Awakening digestive fire to restore normal metabolism.
3	<i>Pachana</i>	Digestion and support in removal of <i>Ama</i> .
4	<i>Rakta Vardhana</i>	Supporting blood production and replacement of lost blood.
5	<i>Stanya Vardhana</i>	Augmenting lactation and improving the quality of breast milk.
6	<i>Yoni Sanrakṣaṇa</i>	Cleanliness and preservation of reproductive organs.
7	<i>Garbhasaya & Koṣṭha Shodhana</i>	Purification of the uterus and intestines.
8	<i>Dhatu Puṣṭi</i>	Strengthening and nourishing <i>Dhatus</i> .

Table 2: Various regimen of *Sutika Paricharya*.

<i>Acharya</i>	<i>Ahara</i>	<i>Vihara</i>
<i>Charaka</i>	<i>Ghrita/Taila/Vasa/Majja</i> with <i>Panchakola Churna</i> , <i>Pippalyadi Yavagu</i> with <i>Ghrita</i> for 5–7 days post- <i>Parisheka</i> .	<i>Udara Abhyanga</i> with <i>Ghrita</i> or <i>Taila</i> , <i>Udaraveshtana</i> with soft cloth.
<i>Sushruta</i>	<i>Parisheka</i> , <i>Pippalimula</i> , <i>Hastipippali</i> , <i>Chitraka</i> , <i>Shunthi</i> with warm <i>Gudodaka</i> , after seven days <i>Jangala Mamsa Rasa</i> , <i>Kulattha</i> , <i>Shali</i> and <i>Yava</i> , etc.	Daily <i>Abhyanga</i> with <i>Bala Taila</i> , avoidance of <i>Krodha</i> , <i>Maithuna</i> and <i>Shrama</i> .
<i>Vagbhata</i>	Initially <i>Snehayogya</i> , <i>Snehapana</i> with <i>Panchakola</i> , that after <i>Jangala Mamsa Rasa</i> , <i>Jivaniya</i> , <i>Brimhaniya</i> , <i>Vatahara Dravyas</i> and <i>Madhura</i> , etc.	<i>Udara Abhyanga</i> , <i>Bandhana</i> and <i>Bala Taila Abhyanga</i> , etc.
<i>Kashyapa</i>	<i>Mandapana</i> , <i>Snehapana</i> and <i>Mridu Bhojana</i> , etc. that after <i>Lavana Yukta Snehayukta Yavagu</i> , in later stage <i>Kulattha Yusha</i> , <i>Kusmanda</i> , <i>Mamsa Rasa</i> and <i>Eravaruka</i> , etc.	<i>Aswasana</i> , <i>Rakshoghna Dhupana</i> , <i>Bala Taila Pottali Sweda</i> , <i>Snana</i> and <i>Yoni Dhupan</i> , etc.
<i>Harita</i>	Immediately <i>Lodhadi Kwatha</i> , <i>Upavasa</i> , <i>Guda</i> , <i>Kulattha Yusha</i> , followed by <i>Panchakola-Chatujrata Yavagu</i> and <i>Shastika Shali</i> , etc.	<i>Abhyanga</i> , <i>Yoni Shodhana</i> and <i>Mangalavachana</i> , etc.

Role of Specific Drug in *Sutika Paricharya*^[8-10]

- ✚ *Sunthi* increases *Agni* and serves as a *Garbhashaya Shodhana*, facilitating the removal of *Lochia* and any retained products of conception.
- ✚ *Haritaki* encourages *Vatanulomana*, which helps in the removal of abnormal uterine contents.
- ✚ *Jaggery* aids digestion and balances *Vata dosha*, thus being useful in the postpartum period.
- ✚ *Kulattha* purifies the uterus by removing abnormal blood and also decreases *Kleda*.
- ✚ *Pippali*, *Chavya* and *Chitraka* are very good for increasing weak digestive power, imparting a sweet fragrance to food, and also act as uterine cleansers.
- ✚ *Bala Taila* makes the muscles, ligaments, joints, and tendons of the body stronger. It calms the skin and relieves pain.

CONCLUSION

Sutika Avastha is a very sensitive and important stage in the life of a woman, where she is more prone to several diseases. Hence, it is important for a woman in this stage to observe the principles of *Sutika Paricharya* mentioned in ancient Ayurvedic texts. The dietary and lifestyle advice recommended by various *Acharyas* is aimed at facilitating a speedy recovery of a mother and suitable growth and development of the baby. Ayurveda's strategy towards *Sutika Paricharya* is holistic, aiming not just to regain the strength and vitality of the mother but also to prepare her body for subsequent childbirths. At the same time, it lays great stress on the health of the baby.

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