

**PHALPRASHAN AND ANNAPRASHAN SANSKARA W.R.T TO COMPLIMENTARY FEEDING – A REVIEW****Dr. Shubhangi K. Thakur\***

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**ABSTRACT**

*Sanskara* (Sacraments) are a religious customs (rite), rituals sacrifices a religious ceremony. *Sanskara* also build a wakefulness of the attainment of social status and rights for the individual. In *Ayurveda*, the word *sanskara* also introduced as “*Samskarao hi Gunaantradhyanum*” means qualitative improvement is carried out by incorporating the specific qualities. Hindu mythology describes various *Sanskaras* (sacraments/religious rites) outlined from birth to death of an individual. Out of the sixteen *Sanskaras* described, eight are for children. This article analyzed ‘*phalprashan and annaprashan Sanskaras*’ in detail and gives a critical approach to their relevance in light of modern scientific knowledge. They were significant in context of child health and provided opportunity for routine examination of child at regular intervals. *Sanskara* developed proper feeding habits, providing strong digestive system, ensured adequate nutrition, prevented diseases and malnutrition. *Sanskara* took care of not only physical but also mental, social and spiritual growth and development of child.

**KEYWORDS:** *Sanskara, phalprashan, annaprashan, malnutrition, growth and development.***INTRODUCTION**

Childhood undernutrition remains a major health problem in resource-poor settings. Approximately one-third of children less than five years of age in developing countries are stunted (low height-for-age), and large proportions are also deficient in one or more micronutrients. Recent data shows that just over half of 6-9 month olds are breastfed and given complementary foods and only 39 per cent of 20-23 month olds are provided with continued breastfeeding. Nearly half of all deaths in children under 5 can be attributed to undernutrition. This translates into the unnecessary loss of about 3 million young lives a year. Malnutrition is more than a lack of food. It is a combination of factors: insufficient protein, energy and micronutrients, frequent infections or disease, poor care and feeding practices, inadequate health services, and poor water and sanitation. The lack of or inadequate breast feeding practices alone result in almost 12 per cent of all deaths among children under age five.<sup>[1]</sup>

It is well recognized that the period from birth to two years of age is the “critical window” for the promotion of optimal growth, health, and development. Insufficient quantities and inadequate quality of complementary foods, poor child-feeding practices and high rates of infections have a detrimental impact on health and growth in these important years. Even with optimum

breastfeeding children will become stunted if they do not receive sufficient quantities of quality complementary foods after six months of age. An estimated six per cent or six hundred thousand under-five deaths can be prevented by ensuring optimal complementary feeding<sup>1</sup>. Hence prevention of nutrient deficiencies and to promote growth and development *phalprashan* and *annaprashan sanskar* discussed here.

**MATERIALS AND METHODS**

The materials were collected from the classical *Ayurvedic* literatures, magazines and research journals. Modern aspect were collected through modern text, research journals.

**Complementary feeding**

Complementary feeding is defined as the process starting when breast milk alone is no longer sufficient to meet the nutritional requirements of infants, and therefore other foods and liquids are needed, along with breast milk. The transition from exclusive breastfeeding to family foods – referred to as complementary feeding – typically covers the period from 6–24 months of age, even though breastfeeding may continue to two years of age and beyond. This is a critical period of growth during which nutrient deficiencies and illnesses contribute globally to higher rates of under nutrition among children under five years of age.<sup>[1]</sup>

Ensuring that infant's nutritional needs are met requires that complementary foods be.

- **Timely** – meaning that they are introduced when the need for energy and nutrients exceeds what can be provided through exclusive breastfeeding;
- **Adequate** – meaning that they provide sufficient energy, protein and micronutrients to meet a growing child's nutritional needs;
- **Safe** – meaning that they are hygienically stored and prepared, and fed with clean hands using clean utensils and not bottles and teats;
- **Properly fed** – meaning that they are given consistent with a child's signals of appetite and satiety, and that meal frequency and feeding are suitable for age.
- Caregivers should take active care in the feeding of infants by being responsive to the child's clues for hunger and also encouraging the child to eat.<sup>[2]</sup>

### AYURVEDIC REVIEW

First feeding of solid food or Feeding of cereals, In 6th month- *Phalaprashan* is advised by *Kashyapa* whereas *Annaprashan* is suggested by *Sushruta* and *Vagbhata*. In the 10<sup>th</sup> month, *Annaprashan Sanskar* is indicated by *Kashyapa*, *Acharya Kashyapa* has described *annaprashana sanskara* in detail. Here, they advised feeding of various fruits in the sixth month. After eruption of teeth or in tenth month, the feeding of cereals (*annaprashan*) should be done during auspicious day in *prajapatya* constellation, after worshipping the gods and brahmanes by cereals with meat and donations. Later *Kashyapa* give some yoga for nourishment of growing child as:-

- Prepare a *avleha* by combination of old, husk free and well washed *sati* or *sashti* rice, mixed with oleaginous substances and salt. The powders of wheat and barley also should be given, according to congeniality.
- *Ushna leha* (electuary) cooked with *vidanga*, *lavan*, oleaginous substances is beneficial, to the one having diarrhoea, *kodo* should be mixed.
- To the one having predominance of *Pitta*, *mrdvika* with honey and *ghrita* should be given, and in predominance of *Vata*, diet with juice of *matulunga* and salt.
- The one knowing *desh* (place of living), *agni* (digestive power), strength and period, whenever observes the child as hungry, should give him the food according congeniality with the gap of one or two periods. According to *Sushruta*, the child at the age of six months, should be given food light and *hitkar* (appropriate wholesome food).<sup>[3]</sup>

*Acharya Vagbhata* advised that solid food should be offered to the child gradually simultaneously with discontinuing breast – milk.<sup>[4]</sup>

### DISCUSSION

In Ayurveda, the word *sanskara* also introduced as “*Samskarao hi Gunaantradhyanum*” means qualitative improvement is carried out by incorporating the specific qualities<sup>[5]</sup> various *Sanskara* from time to time for religious/spiritual motivation during this passage of life. *Sanskara* are rites that are meant to purify and positively influence our lives throughout our growth and development, from conception until death.

At the age of 5 month infant gain the weight double from birth weight, so demands of the infant becomes double and breast milk not enough to fulfil the requirement of growing child. First meal offer to infant would be easily digested, light and soft as advised by *Kashyapa*. So, it is the accurate time to introduction of supplementary feeding as *phalprashan*. *Phalprashan* means Fruit juices should be given to the child from sixth month which are source of vitamins especially vitamin C Breast milk is deficient in iron, vitamin A, D, K and calcium,<sup>[6]</sup> so by offering *phalprashan* and *annprashan* ceremony at this time with breast milk, we can reduce the deficiency of related essential vitamins.

Eruption of teeth becomes started around this age hence, according to *Acharya's* this is accurate time to start *annaprashan sanskara* with continuation of breast feeding.<sup>[7,4]</sup> In *annaprashan sanskara* choice of food should be *laghu*, *brihan dravays* in the form of *peya* and *aveleha*. *Acharya kashyapa* also says that diet should be given according to *Desh Bala*, *Agni*, and *Satmyata* of the child.<sup>[3]</sup>

*Peya* has the properties of *vatanuloman*, *deepan*, *pachan*, and *arogyastapak*.<sup>[8]</sup> *Avleha* which is easily palatable. *Laghu*, *brihan dravays* like *Sali*, *sathi*, *priyal*, *madhuk* has properties of *deepan*, *pachan*, *madhur rasa*, protein, sugar and oil<sup>9</sup>. This properties of *dravays*, *peya*, *aveleha* which help to full fill the requirements of the child and prevents from GIT disorders and nutritional disorders, and which gives optimum physical and mental growth of the child.

According to modern science, Continued breastfeeding beyond six months should be accompanied by consumption of nutritionally adequate, safe and appropriate complementary foods that help meet nutritional requirements. when breastmilk is no longer sufficient. From 6-12 months, breastfeeding – if implemented optimally – should continue to provide half or more of the child's nutritional needs, and from 12-24 months, at least one-third of their nutritional needs. In addition to nutrition, breastfeeding continues to provide protection to the child against many illnesses and provides closeness and contact that helps psychological development. Appropriate complementary foods can be readily consumed and digested by the young child from six months onwards and provides nutrients - energy, protein, fat and vitamins and minerals - to help meet the growing child's needs in addition to breast milk.<sup>[1]</sup>

Initiating complementary feeds too early or too late can lead to malnutrition. The early introduction of complementary feeds before the age of six months can lead to displacement of breast milk and increased risk of infections such as diarrhea, which further contributes to weight loss and malnutrition. Besides this, it is thought that babies are also not physiologically ready to receive complementary feeds under six months due to immaturity of the gastrointestinal and neurodevelopmental systems and the kidney.<sup>[10]</sup>

## CONCLUSION

*Sanskara* are rites, performed with an objective of imparting positive qualities in a person. *Sanskara* 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. Infants and young children are at an increased risk of malnutrition from six months of age onwards, when breast milk alone is no longer sufficient to meet all their nutritional requirements. To prevent mortality and morbidity of infants and young children due to malnutrition and infectious diseases in *ayurvedic* science, describe the *phalprashan* and *annaprashan* *sanskara* ceremony and in modern science complementary feeding at the age of 6 month. *Phalprashan* and *annaprashan* *sanskara* gives positive aspect towards physical, mental and social development of infant and young children.

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