

A Review on Avandhya (Unexplained Infertility) & Psychological Upset and Soumanasya Garbhajanam (Role of Healthy Mind in Infertility)

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ABSTRACT

Procreation or desire to have one's own offspring is the greatest desire among human beings. Unexplained infertility is defined when no obvious cause for infertility has been detected following all standard investigations. Infertile couple are psychologically disturbed right from beginning. Manasika abhitap is nowadays most facing problem by infertile couples. Soumanasya Garbhajanam i.e. healthy state of mind leads garbhajanam. Emotional support counselling plays a major role in treating infertility due to psychological upset.

KEYWORDS: *Unexplained Infertility, Soumanasya garbhajanam, Satvavajaya chikitsa, Atindriyatva of manas, Prajnaparadha*

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INTRODUCTION

Procreation or desire to have one's own offspring is the greatest desire among human beings. Since inception of civilization, failure to have one's own baby or infertility has affected countless couples both rich & poor alike. Infertility besides being a health issue is more of a social problem which affect personal, social and mental health of affected person. It is estimated that 10-15% of married couples suffer from infertility. Due to changing social system, professional life & academic achievements more & more couples face this problem. In India commonly held notion about infertility is that it is due to female partner however, in actual life both partners contribute equally to infertility.¹ Acharya Charak has told importance of having a child if a person doesn't have a progeny then he does not have any respect in society and is considered as no value and Ekendriya i.e. he is not fit for any Dharma, Artha, Kaama; called

as *Nindaniya*.² While the man with lot of children is very appreciable.³

Among infertility incidents Unexplained infertility is 10-20%. Unexplained infertility is defined when no obvious cause for infertility has been detected following all standard investigations. The investigations include semen analysis, ovulation detection, tubal & peritoneal factor, endocrinopathy and PCT.⁴ It has been observed that 20% of such unexplained infertile couples succeed in having baby in due course of waiting.⁵

The infertile couple remains psychologically disturbed right from beginning more, so as the investigations progresses couple is psychologically upset⁶. When no obvious cause is found then it is considered as unexplained infertility.

Infertile couples are vulnerable & exploited by several sources even today to 'have a baby at any cost'. In unexplained infertility, psychological patient related outcomes mostly found are negative individual & couple attitudes, low emotional tolerance, psychological vulnerability & relational strains. Patients have emotional strain, religious myths, stigma, moral & ethical dilemmas associated with it. The emotional crisis associated with unfulfilled wish or life goal, long lasting waits creates frustration, disappointments, desperation & additional marital, familial & interpersonal stresses. The intracouple dynamics often get affected as the evaluation & diagnostic procedures impact the intimate lives and personal wellbeing of couples.

Ayurvedic aspect of unexplained infertility:

'*Saprajaapeeti avandhya api sati katham chiren garbha vidanti*' [Ch. Sha.2/5; Chakrapani] Chakrapani while explaining the causes of *Sapraja*, told the term *Avandhya* (capable of conceiving). Here use of word *avandhya* for a childless woman, but with capacity to conceive⁷. In Shareerasthan *Charak* has mentioned that without any problem (*Avandhya*) why the *Garbhadhan* is taking place lately:

1. Yonidosha
2. Manasika Abhitapa
3. Shukrartava dosha
4. Ahara-vihara dosha
5. Akalayogat (after rutukala)
6. Balakshaya⁸.

In above *Manasika abhitap* is nowadays most facing problem by infertile couples due to their lifestyle and stress in professions, social status etc.

Manasika dosha are considered as *Rajas & Tamas* and *Satva* is considered as *Shuddha*.

Satva guna- Laghutva, Prakash, sukha

Rajo Guna-Preraka, chala, dukhakaraka

Tamo guna- Guru, Avaranak, Vishada.

Garbhotpadaka bhava- Acharya Charak has mentioned 6 factors i.e. *Matruja, Pitruja, Atmaja, Satmaja, Rasaja, & Satvaja*. *Manasika bhava* are important in formation of Garbha.

Satvaja Bhava- Bhakti, Sheela, Shoucha, Dvesh, Smruti, Moha, Tyaga, Matsarya, Shourya, Bhaya, Krodha, Tandra, Utsaha, Taikshna, Mardava, Gambhirya, Anavasthitva, Anyobhav.

Balavardhaka bhava is suggestive of *Satvasampat*.

Ordinary people of the world, whose souls are covered with *Raja & Tama*, and due to being trapped

in the circle of *Rajguna & Tamoguna*, they suffer from many types of physical & mental diseases⁹.

Harmony of body and mental defects- By postulating the causality of *Tridosha & raja-tama, Prajnaparadha* has been considered as the main reason because without *prajnaparadha* there is no assimilation of senses.

Attachment to sensual pleasures due to the crime of intelligence (intellect-patience-memory) man losses all the five senses, consumes five types of harmful meanings i.e. objects (*shabdha- Sparsha-rupa- rasa-gandha*). He stops the flow of feces and urine etc & performs courageous acts without caring about his strength. The ignorant person is attracted to the modes of material nature called happiness. The knowledge is not pleased with when it is impure.¹⁰

Atindriyatva of Mana:

'*Atindriyam punarmanah satvasamjnakam*' [cha.Su.8/4]

The mind called *Satva* is transcendental. Some scholars call it '*Chetas*'. The action of this mind depends on the minds own objects, pleasure, pain, thought etc and the effect of the soul. The mind is the chief cause of knowledge of objects such as taste and the knowledge of form and other objects of the senses such as the eye.

The mind is supersensous. This has to understood from many perspectives.

Atindriya means having special qualities rather than the power of senses.

The illusion of diversity of mind occurs because the same person is sometimes religious, sometimes sensual, sometimes greedy, sometimes cruel, sometimes kind and sometimes disinterested. In looking at all these different natures, there is a strange feeling that there are many minds and the reality is that there is only one mind but it is pleural and unstable; hence it is not always the same but is always thinking about the subject it resolves.

Similarly if there is excess of *Satva guna* one becomes religious, if there is excess of *Rajoguna*, one is interested in social subjects and if there is excess of *Tamoguna*, one becomes ignorant, childish & dull.

Without the association of mind there is no knowledge of any sense subjects.¹¹

Relation of Mana to gunas -Although the 3 gunas of *satva, raja & tama* remain in the mind & the mind gets influenced by from time to time, still the mind of a man gets influenced by the *guna* which he mostly follows again and again. The mind of a man is said to have the same qualities according to that quality he is

considered to have that quality. Excess of *satva* is called *satvika*, excess of *raja* is called *rajasik* & excess of *Tama* is called *Tamasik*.¹²

Ovarian and consequently the menstrual cycle are affected by various emotional and environmental factors. There are numerous connections to pituitary gland as well as other areas of the CNS from hypothalamus e.g. amygdala, hippocampus (limbic system) to thalamus and pons.¹³

Various pharmacological agents, psychological factors which affects the brain catecholamines are likely to affect the pulsatile release of GnRH.

Acharya Charaka mentioned about healthy state of mind leads to *Garbhajanana*. i. e. ‘*Soumanasya garbhajanana*’. It is one of the ‘*Adravya chikitsa*’.

Acharya Charaka has advised *Gyana* (spiritual knowledge, Vigyan, scriptural knowledge), *dhairya* (patience), *smriti* (memory) & *samadhi* (meditation) which are related to *Adravayabhuta* chikitsa.

While defining ‘Ayu’ it is defined that life is combined state of body, senses, mind & soul.

Manas (mind) is an important component of Ayu (life) in addition to the other three components- *Sharira*, *Indriya* & *Atma*.¹⁴

The existence of Manas (mind) has been accepted by both the ancient as well as the modern school of science & philosophy.

Charaka described ‘*Satvavajaya chikitsa*’, in that he advocates *Ashwashana* (reassurance and explanation) which plays important role in treating unexplained infertility. *Suhrut vakya* (friendly advice and guidance) helps in dealing with coital problems, erectile dysfunctions due to psychological issues. Reassurance relieves fears, boosts self confidence & promotes hope in a patient.

Assurance, replacement of emotions, regulation of thought process, reframing of ideas, channeling of presumptions, correction of objectives & ideas, proper guidance & advice for taking right decisions, proper control of patience, awareness of mind helps in treating unexplained infertility due to psychological upset.

Acharya Charaka while explaining *vajikaran bhavas* he told about measures for gladness of mind as walking in gardens, river banks, blossom mountains, woman causes pleasure to mind, garlands, various *Gandha mala dharan* and close friends¹⁵.

Charaka has also indicated *Harshan* (laughter) & proper state of mind are needed in *Garbhadharana*.¹⁶ *Harshan* creates a happy mood. When person is happy

several neuro chemicals will get released, so that treatment *Harshana* will counteract the pathological changes happening by the ill effecting emotions. A good laughter completely decongests one’s brain & an increased amount of blood rushes there to nourish those ill fed areas. This is how laughter helps in healing, also in addition to the psychological benefits like removal of depression, sadness, worry etc.

- Psychological interventions that promote mental health in infertile women like
- Hope oriented counseling
- Positive psychotherapy based on belief to good
- Psychological empowerment therapy
- Dialectical behaviour therapy
- Acceptance commitment therapy
- Psychological intervention
- Emotional focused therapy
- Music therapy
- Online psychoeducational support
- Positive reappraisal & problem solving skill training
- Relaxation.

Emotional support counselling play a major role in treating infertility.

DISCUSSION-

Infertility besides being a health issue is more of a social problem which affect personal, social and mental health of affected person. Ayurveda describes three gunas of mind named as *Satwa*(balance), *Raja* (Arrogance) & *Tama* (Indolence). Mind is called *manas*. *Rajas* and *Tamas* are doshas of mind. Mind serves as an important instrument in the process of perception. The role of *manasika bhava* is important in infertility, so healthy state of mind helps in *garbhadharana*.

CONCLUSION-

Ayurveda aims in preservation & promotion of health with prevention, cure of disease through the concepts of positive physical and accordance with mental health. *Satvavajaya* helps to attain stable & harmonious equilibrium between man and his environment needed to reduce man’s vulnerability and permit him to lead more productive & satisfying life. A stable & harmonious balance between man & his surroundings is required to reduce unexplained infertility and achieve progeny.

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