

"Ayurvedic Perspectives on Postpartum Care: A Review of Sutika Paricharya"

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ABSTRACT

Pregnant women experience a variety of physiological and anatomical changes during pregnancy, and their bodies attempt to return to their pre-pregnancy states both physically and physiologically following delivery. Ayurveda provides a fairly scientific description of how to treat women during their periods. The name "*Sutika*" in Ayurveda refers to a woman who gives birth to a baby and placenta, but "puerperal women" is the phrase used in modern concepts. *Acharya Charka* has not provided a specific time restriction, although Ayurvedic literature uses the term "*Sutika*" to describe a woman after the placenta explodes between the end of labor and the uterus's full involution. Every classic has specified a time frame for particular dietetics, etc.

Taking care of ladies who are going through puerperium can be regarded as natural. *Acharya Sushruta* has accurately said that "*Sutika Kala*" lasts for one and a half months, or, to put it another way, until she has a regular menstrual cycle. Massage and oral administration of medicinal Ghrita decoctions for three to seven days are used to control *Sutika*.

KEYWORDS: Herbal Formulations, Postnatal Care, Standardization, *Sutika*, *Sutika Paricharya*.

INTRODUCTION

For women, giving birth is a normal physiological occurrence. Numerous physiological changes take place during this time to deal with the incidence. The goal of *sutika paricharya* is the proper repair of body physiology. This review covers the numerous Ayurvedic writings that describe how to properly handle *sutika*. In Ayurveda, a woman who has just given birth is referred to as "*Sutika*," while in modern science, she is named "Puerperal Women."

As a result, the term "puerperium" refers to the time between the end of labor and the uterus's full involution, which is typically 42 days or 6 weeks. About an hour after the placenta is delivered, the postpartum phase, also known as the puerperium, begins and lasts for the next six weeks. The body returns to its non-pregnant form six weeks following delivery, with the majority of the alterations associated with pregnancy, labor, and delivery having subsided.

A woman's postpartum period is a particularly unique time in her life. After giving birth and going through pregnancy, her body needs time to recuperate. A healthy diet during the puerperal phase and proper postpartum care are crucial for a woman's overall health [1].

Etymology of word *sutika*

The Sanskrit root "Su-presage" is where the term "*Sutika*" originates. *Sutika* is the name given to the woman who has experienced *prasava*. Another Sanskrit root, "Su-prerace" (*Tudadigana* of Panini), denotes "instigation" or "expulsion." Accordingly, a lady who expels a kid is called *sutika*. According to traditional

Ayurveda, sutika refers to a woman who expels her placenta after giving birth, meaning that she is considered sutika if she does so while carrying a baby.

Definition of Sutika

After the placenta is expelled, a woman is referred to as sutika. In the Kashyap Samihta, *Acharya Kashyapa* provides a clear explanation of sutika. Here, *Acharya* makes it extremely evident that a woman cannot be referred to as sutika after giving birth to a child unless the placenta is evacuated. In other words, the term sutika can only be used after the placenta has been expelled [2].

Etymology of the word Paricharya

By prefixing the upasarga "pari," the word "Paricharya" is generated from the Sanskrit root "*Char-gatau*." Although the word's general meaning can be interpreted as movement in all directions, "chara" or "charya" in the context of medical science refers to service or attention in all areas. The terms "*uariuashya*," "*Sushrusa*," "*parisarya*," "*upasana*," and others were utilized as synonyms for paricharya by the ancient lexicographers. Therefore, the care given to a lady after giving birth should be collectively referred to as "*Sutika Paricharya*."

Sutika Paricharya [3]

According to standard grammatical doctrine, the term "*Sutika Paricharya*" is made up of two distinct words, "*Sutika & Paricharya*." The term can be understood as "*Yoga-roodha*" or "*Yougika*," and it refers to the care or nursing of a woman after giving birth. Under the heading "*Sutika Paricharya*," all of our Acharyas in the field of Ayurveda describe the appropriate and scientific handling of *sutika*. *Sutika Kala* An idealized description of *Sutika Kala* can be found here. There is no precise time specified by *Acharya Charaka*.

All other classics, however, have specified a time frame for particular Sutika administration, which may be regarded as the typical Sutika duration. *Acharya Sushruta* has eloquently explained that sutika kala lasts for one and a half months. In other words, until a woman has regular menstrual cycles, she should follow dietary and physical restrictions. *Sutika Kala* has been told by *Acharya Kashyapa* in two different ways. Although he doesn't specify a time frame, he advises following the paricharya for a month at the end of the description. He also states that *Sutika* regains all of her dhatus, rakta, and other possessions within six months of the delivery and extends to her typical, natural form. Physiological changes during puberty have been recorded in Ayurvedic scriptures more accurately than physical changes. The description provided by *Acharya Sushruta* has been followed by *Acharya Vriddha Vagbhatta*, *Vagbhatta*, *Bhava Mishra*, *Hariharnath*, and others. Several writings make reference to *Sutika Kala* (Table 1).

Table 1: Sutika kala mentioned by various texts.

Text	Duration
<i>Charaka</i>	5 to 7 days
<i>Sushruta</i>	1&1/2 months
<i>Ashtang Hridaya</i>	1&1/2 month
<i>Ashtanga Samgraha</i>	1&1/2 months
<i>Bhavaprakash</i>	1&1/2 months
<i>Yogaratnakar</i>	1&1/2 months
<i>Bhavaprakash, Sushruta</i>	4 months
<i>Kashyap</i>	6 months

Paricharya Kala

Sutika paricharya has no time limit specified by *Maharshi Charaka*. For *Sutika paricharya*, *Maharshi Kashyap* and *Acharya Bhavamishra* have set various deadlines of six and four months, respectively. *Acharya Bhavamishra* states that *Sutika* should adhere to the "*paricharya*" for four months in order to become trouble-free and a clean or healthy woman. All of the "Ayurvedic" classics discuss *Sutika paricharya*. In contrast to other people's descriptions, *Maharshi Kashyapa* has provided a very thorough account of *Sutika Paricharya*. According to "*Desha*," "*Jati*," and others, he has stated certain particular management.

Because "*Desha*" (a particular geographic location) and "*jati*" (a certain genetic composition) each have unique qualities and have a significant impact on a person's health and state of illness [4,5].

Samanya Paricharya (General Care)

In general, all of the classics have recommended massage, the use of medications and decoctions for three to seven days following delivery, and the oral administration of fats with medications. Beginning on the seventh or twelfth day after delivery, a diet of medicated rice gruel is recommended. Additionally, medicated beef soup is recommended. There are, however, minor disagreements among the writers regarding the list of medications.

According to *Acharya Charaka*, *Sutika* should be given powdered *Pippali* (*Piper longum*), *Pippalimula* (*Piper longum*), *Chavya* (*Piper retrofractum vahl.*), *Citraka* (*Plumba gozeylanic*), and *Shringabera* (*Zingiber officinale*) with any combination of *Ghritha*, oil *Vasa* (animal fat), or *Majja* (marrow) when she feels hungry. This should be done in a quantity that she can easily digest. *Charak* also suggests *sutika* massage for the abdomen. A large, clean cotton cloth should be used to thoroughly wrap the abdomen after the massage. Because of the constriction of the abdomen caused by these wrappings, there is no hollow space, preventing the vitiation of the *vayu*. rice-based liquid gruel infused with *pippali* (*Piper longum*), etc.[6].

stated above and combined with *ghrita* ought to be administered both in the morning and at night. The hot water irrigation bath should continue. According to *Acharya Cakrapani*, rice gruel should be administered after the morning irrigation, which should come before the digestion of an oleaginous substance. Following five or seven days of this regimen, *bhrihana* drugs (anabolic or prone to promote flesh and energy) should be administered gradually. The *kapha* is strong among the people of *Anupadesa* (marshy land), hence this regimen is inappropriate for the women living there.

The women in the *Jangala* (Wild ordry) region can follow this regimen. According to *Acharya Sushruta*, a puerperal woman should be given a decoction of *bhadradaru* (*Cedrus deodara*) and other *vata*-suppressing medications for oral consumption after receiving a massage with *bala* tail. Powdered *pippali* (*Piper longum*), *pippalimula* (*Piper longum*), *hastipippali* (*Scindapsus officinalis*), *chitraka* (*plumba gozeylanic*), and *shringabera* (*Zingiber officinale*) should be administered with warm jaggery water if there is still some blood inside (some blood clots are retained in the uterus). Until the aberrant blood (*Lochia rubra*) is appropriately expelled, this should be done for two or three days.

Her strength and digestive capacity should be taken into consideration when prescribing cooked *sali* rice with meat soup of wild animals prepared with *yavagu*, *kola*, and *kulattha*. After that, she should be given rice gruel made with the drugs of the *Vidarigandhadi* group and mixed with *ghrita* or milk for three days (from the third or fourth day to the sixth or seventh day after delivery) [7]. Hot water fomentation is typically recommended for the women. According to *Acharya Dalhana*, fomentation should be carried out by pouring water into a stream. This will ensure that *vata* is subdued and that aberrant blood that has gathered in the uterus as a result of discomfort from *garbha* (delivery) is correctly expelled.

According to *Acharya Vagbhata*, puerperal ladies should have massages with *bala* tails. When she feels hungry, she should be fed a congenial oleaginous material in an amount that she can digest throughout the day, combined with either powdered *panchakola* or powdered *yawani*, *upakuncika*, *chavya*, *chitraka*, *vyosha*, and rock salt. Drugs that suppress *vata* or *laghu panchamula* decoction should be administered to ladies who are unsuited to use oily substances. To avoid vitiation of *vayu*, which is likely to occur due to the availability of hollow space, her abdomen should be rubbed with *ghrita* and oil after this oral intake of an oily substance or decoction, and then covered with a cloth.

Following the breakdown of the oleaginous material, she should be given a suitable amount of liquid rice gruel made with the aforementioned medications, the *vidaryadi* group of medications, or milk. Throughout this time, using *ghrita*, etc., or rice gruel should be preceded by morning and evening fomentation with hot water [8]. After three, five, or seven nights of this regimen, a light food consisting of *yava*, *kola*, and *kulattha* soup should be consumed. Also, a mutually agreeable diet or beverages should be provided. Additionally, *Acharya Vagbhata* II described *Vagbhata* in a manner that was nearly identical.

Like *Sushruta*, he has suggested using hot jaggery water and massaging the body and even the *yoni*. According to *Arunadatta*, using meat preparations before the twelve-day mark increases the risk of illness. According to *Kashyapa*, puerperal ladies should use *Raksoghna* (antiseptic) and other appropriate products. Careful administration should be carried out, taking into account the family's traditions and the place of residence

(desa and videsa). After giving birth, the woman should be reassured by kind words and placed in a hunched-over position.

In order to expel the leftover dosas after birth, she should now massage her back, press her abdomen and flanks, and then compress her abdomen after vayu has moved it (the entire abdominal musculature responds with force due to the action of apana vayu to remove the fetus). Next, put a clean large cotton cloth across the abdomen and flanks. It facilitates the uterus' return to its typical pre-pregnancy position. A little chair wrapped with a leather bag filled with hot bala tail is the ideal seating arrangement for puerperal women. Her vaginal organs get healthier as a result of this activity [9].

It is recommended that the vaginal area be fumigated with dry priyangu medication powder. Following appropriate fumigation, a hot water bath and rest are recommended. Fumigation with *Kustha* (*Sausarialappa*), *guggul*, and *agaru* along with ghrta should be performed once the fatigue has subsided. Given her strength and digestive capacity, the woman should now be given scum of boiled rice for three or five days. After this, she should take oleaginous items (oil, ghrta, etc.) orally. After digesting these items, she should be given salt-free rice gruel combined with a small amount of oleaginous substance, as well as powdered pippali and nagara.

The usage of rice gruel combined with a sufficient amount of salt and oleaginous substance should come next (after 6 to 7 days), followed by meat soup from wild animals and soup of kulattha combined with oleaginous substance, salt, and sour items, as well as kushmanda (a type of pumpkin-gourd), radish, cucumber, etc. Sutika should be fed veggies that have been fried in ghrta. For a month following delivery, women should utilize hot water, sudation, and oleation while being completely vigilant. Puerperal women's care should not be handled in a vacuum; customs, as well as items or foods that are good for the family and the home, must be taken into account.

In order to purify the blood and yoni, Acharya Harita has recommended that after delivery, a decoction of the available medications from the *Lodhra*, *Arjuna*, *Kadamba*, *Devadaru*, *Bijaka*, and *Karkandhu* be administered. It is recommended to fill the vagina with oil, massage it, and then sedate with hot water. Following the first day of fasting, *Sutika* should be given *Nagara* and *Haritiki* with jaggery in the morning of the second day, followed by warm kulattha soup in the afternoon. On the third and fourth days, respectively, rice gruel along with panchakola or chaturjatak should be administered.

The diet calls for cooked sali or sastika rice on the fifth day. Ten to fifteen days should be the duration of this regimen. On the twelfth day, the prudent doctor should allow the puerperal ladies to view or interact with other women. In Bhavaprakasa, a very brief summary has been provided. It states that a woman going through puberty should adopt a compatible diet and lifestyle; she should also abstain from cold air, activity, coltus, and wrath. For a month, she should maintain a healthy, light, and pleasant diet and have daily massages and sudations while being completely attentive.

In order to prevent air from entering, *Yoga Ratnakara* has recommended that she should press her vaginal canal as soon as possible after giving birth. It is not recommended to use purgatives, sudation, sternutatory medications, venesection, or asthapanabasti (evacuative enema). Sharangdhara, however, has suggested sudation following delivery. Using manda is also beneficial.

Benefits of this Management

Due to the development of the fetus, the woman becomes weak or emaciated. She also becomes empty-bodied as a result of labor pains, kleda (moisture) and blood excretion, and unsteadiness or languor of all the dhatus. She regains all she lost and reaches her pre-pregnancy stage with this routine.

Pathya & Apathya for Sutika

Because sutika is less active in Sutika kala, vata vitiation is extremely likely to occur. Even a modest amount of vatala diet consumption might lead to a lot of issues. Thus, it is necessary to comprehend the sutika's pathya and apathya. Pathya Anything that is in accordance with one's preferences and does not affect one's pathya (of the body) is considered pathya (wholesome). It is recommended that Sutika adhere to the following pathyas.

1. A large amount of warm water should be used in Sutika's bath.
2. It is recommended to drink boiled water.
3. Sutika constantly benefits from Parisheka, Avagahana.
4. She needs to perform udaravastana.

5. Jeevaniya and Brimhaniya medications should be used to prepare food and beverages.

6. She ought to follow the snigdha (unctuous) diet at all times.

7. Sutika must consume less calories from any diet than she usually consumes.

8. According to desha, kala, etc., snehana and swedana must be performed daily.

Apathya Apathy is that which is harmful to pathya (of the body) and is not according to liking (which is certainly not at all desirable). The puerperal women should be advised to avoid the following.

1. The sexual encounter.

2. Anger, physical strain, and the indulgence of uncontrollable emotions.

3. Heat and prepare for a minimum of 12 days.

4. Sheeta-seva: cold water, cold wind, cold objects, etc.

5. Sutika should not be treated with panchakarma.

A. The "ama" dosha of sutika would rise as a result of administering the Asthapanabasti.

B. Sutika would get anorexia and physical aches as a result of Nasya karma emaciation.

Exercise, sexual activity, alcohol, a salty and spicy diet, and the repression of one's natural impulses, anger, and pulses have all been listed as Apathyas for Shoola patients in Vrinda Madhava. By following the advice of the aforementioned pathyas and apthyas, a woman who is weak from the development of the fetus and also empty-bodied from labor pains, the lack of all the dhatus, and the excretion of blood and Kleda can return to her pre-pregnancy condition [10].

DISCUSSION

Ayurveda, the ancient Indian system of medicine, emphasizes the importance of holistic health and well-being, especially for women during the postpartum period. Sutika (the postpartum woman) and Sutika Paricharya (postnatal care) hold immense significance in Ayurveda, as this phase is critical for the mother's physical and mental recovery as well as the newborn's health. Despite advancements in modern medicine, the traditional Ayurvedic approaches to postpartum care remain relevant due to their focus on rejuvenation, nourishment, and long-term health.

However, there is a pressing need for standardization in the preparation and application of herbal formulations used in Sutika Paricharya. Without standardized protocols, there is a risk of variability in efficacy and safety. Additional scientific research is required to validate and optimize these traditional practices, ensuring they align with contemporary healthcare needs while maintaining their Ayurvedic essence.

Furthermore, the unique role of women as mothers underscores the importance of prioritizing their health during the postpartum phase. Sutika-related care is not merely a response to a condition but a proactive measure to prevent potential health issues that could arise later in life. The ancient wisdom embedded in Sutika Paricharya deserves recognition and integration into modern healthcare frameworks to benefit mothers globally.

CONCLUSION

One of the most important times in a woman's life is the postpartum period. Postpartum illnesses and even depression can result from inadequate knowledge about correct care, excessive worry for the child, and an incapacity to handle motherhood. A comprehensive postpartum health regimen known as Sutika Paricharya is described in the Ayurvedic medical system. The goal of managing puerperium is to give the woman the tools she needs to heal both physically and mentally while also gaining experience caring for her baby under supervision. This includes the following guidelines:

1. To improve the mother's health. 2. To avoid infection. 3. To promote breastfeeding and take care of the breasts. 4. To take care of the infant. 5. To encourage and provide guidance on family planning. 6. To provide health education depending on need. All of these techniques assist the body in regaining and restoring its physiological and anatomical state while battling the stress experienced during pregnancy and labor. During the puerperium phase, a lot of things might happen that affect the mother's death rate. Therefore, it's critical to provide early and appropriate puerperium care.

The patient's age, number of children, and any complications that could worsen her pregnancy or that the pregnancy causes should all be taken into account while choosing a method of contraception. Herbal and Ayurvedic medications guarantee both mental and physical well-being without causing adverse consequences. Herbs' natural components aid in bringing "arogya" to the human body and psyche. "Arogya" means "disease-free." The earliest writings state that Ayurveda aims to prevent and promote the body's

natural ability to maintain and balance itself. Ayurvedic medicine can be used safely as an alternative therapy or in conjunction with traditional therapies because it is non-invasive and non-toxic.

Ayurveda currently requires standardization for herbal formulations and additional research on sutika treatment. God has given women the unique ability to be proud mothers, and the significance of sutika and sutika paricharya outweighs other illnesses that affect women.

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