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‘ROLE OF LEHANA (SUVARNAPRASHAN) IN PAEDIATRIC CARE.’

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Abstract:

The paediatric age group is the foundation of adulthood. Proper care of children in this phase results in excellent growth and development, in turn, is reflected in healthy adulthood. A strong immune system provides a child with the natural defences to fight off diseases. A child's growth and development can be influenced by poor Immune system. Children are more vulnerable to Infection because of underdeveloped Immune system. In Ayurveda, concept of *Vyadhikshamatva* is described as a state of equilibrium of *kapha*, *bala* and *oja*. *Acharyas* have described several such formulations to promote and maintain the equilibrium, of *kapha*, *bala* and *oja* in various texts of Ayurveda. Attenuation of the manifested disease and prevention of the manifestation of disease are the two fundamental parts of Immunity (*vyadhikshamatva*). For this reason, different techniques are explained in the classics- following ideal *ahar-vihar*, *lehana karma*, *samskar*, *Rasayan*, *sadvritta*, *jeevaniya dravya*, *balya dravyas* etc. As per *Aacharya Kashyapa's Ayurvedic Perspectives* "Lehana " refers to electuaries recommended as supplements to paediatric community. It means formulations prescribed for licking. *Lehana* is also one among these immunity-enhancing tools which show a positive effect on children's health. *Aacharya Kashyap* has given importance to *lehana karma* as he mentioned it's in the first available chapter of *sutrasthan*. He stated that *sukha* and *dukha* of a child depends on *lehana*. Which means it enhances the growth and development of children along with providing immunity against infections.

KEYWORDS: Ayurveda, Children, *Lehana*, Immunity, *Vyadhikshamatva*, *paediatrics*

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INTRODUCTION:

Infancy and childhood are very delicate periods of life. It is an important period of Life because the foundation of adult life depends on it. The Growth and development of children are two sides of the same coin. *Acharya Charak* bifurcated *balyavastha* into *Aparipakwa* (0-16 years) where the *dhatu* are not fully matured/ karma yet to be developed and *Vivardhman Dhatu* (16-30 years) where there is proper growth and development of the *dhatu* & able to do the *karma*. At this time if a *lehana* method is introduced, it will be a boon in the field of preventive paediatrics. *Lehana* is said to promote intellect, enhance complexion and protect the child from various diseases by increasing the strength. This results in longevity of life. *Vyadhikshamatva*¹ is described as a state of equilibrium of *kapha*, *bala*² and *oja*³. For this reason, different techniques are explained in the classics- *Rasayan*⁴, *Vajikaran*⁵, *sadvritta*⁶, *ahar*⁷-*vihar*⁸, *lehana karma*, *samskar*, *jeevaniya dravya*, *balya dravyas*. *Lehana* is one among them. In modern medicine, immunity is developed by Vaccination against specific antigens. But Vaccination gives immunity against some specific antigens only. Many diseases have no vaccines yet. Also, these vaccines have no effect on the mental health or Intelligence of the children unlike that mentioned in the benefits of *Lehan*.

LITERATURE REVIEW:

Nirukti: "*Leha*" word framed from '*lih*' *dhatu* and '*ghaj*' *pratyaya*.

The term *lehana* implies licking or passing the tongue over something.

LEHAHA KARMA:

Children are very susceptible to infections. There are so many traditional measures available to combat it & protect from the hostile environment in which drug is mixed with honey or *Ghrita* are given. The process is called *lehana*⁹. So, it is the ideal way of administering drugs in children because it increases the palatability of the drug taken with it and can be easily taken up. This is the most accepted mode of the drug administration to the child.

Purpose of lehana Karma:¹⁰

1. Health promotion.
2. Nutritional supplement.
3. Growth and development.
4. Promotion of intellect.
5. To build immunity.

INDICATIONS OF LEHANA¹¹

1. Lactational failure/absence of breast, milk produced is not sufficient, vitiated breast milk, *dushprajata*, *vyadhipidita*.
2. Should be given to children having *Vata-pitta pradhan prakruti* and *kaphavarjita* (submissive of *Kapha dosha*)
3. Not satisfied and cries after drinking milk.
4. *Anidra* (do not get proper sleep)
5. *Mahashana* (excessive consumption of breast milk)

6. *Alpa mutra purisha* (elimination of urine & faeces in very less quantity),
7. *diptagni* (good appetite)
8. *Niramyasch tanavo* (child is not having any diseases, but still the baby is weak /thin)

CONTRAINDICATIONS OF LEHANA:¹²

Children having improper digestion, lethargy, passing excessive amounts of urine & stool and suffering from various disorders like ENT illness, fever, diarrhoea, jaundice, inflammation, anaemia, heart disorders, asthma, cough, diseases of bladder-abdomen, vomiting, anorexia etc. Different formulations mentioned by *Acharyas* are as follows:

1. Acharya Kashyapa:¹³

Madhu and *ghrita* in different doses should be given to the newborn baby in *vidangaphala matra* for the first time. Then the dose should be increased monthly but it should not exceed *amalaka matra*. *Suvarna prashana*-Pure gold (in small quantity) is rubbed in water on a clean stone & given with *madhu* and *ghrita*, resulting in health promotion, growth, complexion & strength. *Panchagavya ghrita*, *Brahmi ghrita*, *Abhaya ghrita*, *Samvardhan ghrita*.⁴

2. Acharya Sushruta:

He has described this topic in *sharirsthana* 10th *adhyaya Garbhiniyakaranashariram* in which he explained the *jatakarma paricharya* of a newborn baby. *Sushruta* also mentioned about *swarnaprashana*¹⁴. *Madhu* and *sarpi* along with *ananta churna* i.e., *Suvarna bhasma* should be given to the newborn baby with the little finger.

He also described 4 recipes ¹⁵ (containing gold) which provide general immunity, and body resistance, and are helpful in growth & development and enhancing intelligence.

- *Suvarna bhasma with Kushta, vacha, madhu & ghrita.*
- *Suvarna bhasma with a paste of brahmi, sankhpushpi, Madhu & ghrita.*
- *Suvarna bhasma, arpushpi, vacha, madhu & ghrita.*
- *Suvarna bhasma, khaidarya, sweta durva, ghrita.*

3. Acharya Vagbhata: *Sarshvata ghrita*, a combination of *Vacha & Suvarna bhasma, Madhu & ghrita*, etc.¹⁶

4. Acharya Charak: *Panchgavya ghrita, Brahmi Ghrita*, etc.

BENEFITS OF LEHANA KARMA:

- Children are reluctant in taking the medicine in the form of *vati, churna or Kwatha*. *Lehana* is palatable and easy to consume, as they are in a semisolid form mixed with *Madhu* and *ghrita*.
- As the classical texts explained that *lehana* should be administered for a month, two or six months, and one should have patiently followed it for desirable effects.
- *Lehana* is a supplementary feed for the proper growth and development (both physical and mental) of children.
- Growth of nervous tissues is very fast in the first five years and the *lehana* drugs are mostly *medhya* in nature. Thus, it affects the intelligence part.
- Nutritional deficiencies can be corrected by *Lehana*.
- According to *Acharya Kashyap*, *Lehana* is responsible for the happiness and sorrow in

future life. By keeping this in mind one can say that *lehana* is also an essential procedure for infants and children.¹⁷

DISCUSSION:

Swasthasya swasthya rakshanam is the main fundamental principle of Ayurveda, in which we include the prevention, use of *rasayan* drugs and diet for staying healthy. The *Rasayan*, *Lehana* and *suvarnaprashan* drugs are supposed to increase all the *shariradhatu*, both qualitatively and quantitatively. These drugs also improve the quality of *rasadhatu* and by this the entire status of the body. It is an approach towards positive health care for children by increasing the *vyadhikshamatva*. As *Acharya* describes *vyadhikshamatva* is "The individual's resistance to disease which includes both the capacity of attenuation of the manifested disease as well as the prevention of the un-manifested one.

CONCLUSION:

Children are more vulnerable to infection because their immune system is less or underdeveloped. During this period our attempt should be specified in the prevention of diseases and to enhance the physical, mental and social well-being of children. Ayurveda provides the concept of *lehana* and *Suvarna prashana* which helps in the prevention of recurrent infections and also provides nutritional supplements which are necessary for the proper physical & mental growth of a child.

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