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A Review study on role of Kunkum w.s.r. to Pregnancy Karande L.A.,¹ Sheikh S.,² Gupta M.S.³

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Abstract:

Introduction: Pregnancy is the most energetic and challenging phase in a women's life. It brings about emotional & physiological changes as well as poses extra demands on the body. The diet during pregnancy has to be rich in calories, proteins, vitamins, minerals & balanced. Not only extra but also special nutritious diet & herbs are required to produce a healthy progeny. Kunkum (saffron) is one of the herb which is commonly used in pregnancy for good complexion. Along with this property Kunkum (saffron) has more uses in pregnancy is to study & discuss in this present study. **Method:** All the Ayurvedic & modern literature & contemporary texts including websites reviewed. **Discussion:** From the basic concept, scientific review & all findings in literature, observation & discussion done. **Result:** On the basis of discussion result is drawn.

Keywords: Pregnancy, *Kunkum*, healthy progeny.

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INTRODUCTION-

Pregnancy is the time during which one or more offspring develops (gestates) inside a woman's uterus. It is the state through which one life journey from womb to the world. Getting good care before, during and after the pregnancy is very important. It can help the baby grow and develop and keep both healthy. Prenatal care reduces complications during pregnancy.

Kumkum i.e, Saffron is often recommended by elderly women to expecting mothers owing to its therapeutic properties like aiding digestion and improving the appetite of the pregnant woman. It is commonly said that 'Have enough saffron. It will improve your baby's complexion'. Is it really true? Saffron is a exotic spice that benefits expecting mothers in numerous ways. Not only for good complexion, there are also other benefits of saffron in pregnancy which we have to study in this review article.

ABOUT THE HERB KUNKUM (SAFFRON)-

Kumkum is a spice derived from the flower of *Crocus sativus*, commonly known as 'Saffron Crocus'. The vivid crimson stigma and styles called threads, are collected and dried for use mainly as a seasoning and coloring agent in food. Saffron's taste and iodoform like or hay like fragrance result from the phytochemicals picrocrocin and safranal. It also contains carotenoid pigment, crocin which imparts a rich golden yellow hue to dishes and textiles¹.

MORPHOLOGY-

Kumkum is a herb, growing in Kashmir, Baluchistan, Spain and France and cultivated for its costliest flowers. It grows to height of 15-25 cm with a basal corn. Leaves- long, thin like grass. Flowers-blue, lavender color. Saffron is the stigma of flower which is used in medicines. Stigmas- about 12 mm length with fimbriated end, dark red to yellowish, brown in color and are attached to the style². Scientific name - *Crocus Sativus*, Linn.

Family- Iridaceae

English name- Saffron

Hindi -Kesar

Sanskrit- *Kunkumam*

Synonyms -

Ghusrna, Rakta, Kasmira, Pitaka, Vara, Sankoca, Pisuna, Dhira, Bahlik and Sonitabhida³.

Ayurvedic properties-

Kula -Kesar kula

Rasa- Katu, tikta

Vipaka- Katu

Virya- Ushna

Doshaghnata -Kaphavatashamak

Guna -Snigdha

Rogghnata-

Varnya, Sirorogaghna, Vranaropana,

Krimighna, Chhardinigrhana, Sugandhi,

Dipan, Pachana, Udveshtanharā,

Manahprasadkara, Ruchikara, Kamottejak,

Vishaghna, Artavajanan, Mutrala,

*Vedanasthapana*⁴.

Dose: 25-50mg of the drug

TYPES-

Kumkum grown in the fields of Kashmir is having thin small 'kesar' is of slight red color and having the smell of like that of Padma flower. This is best in quality. The *Kumkum* that is grown in Bahlik desha (modern Balkhan states-Baluchistan, Afganistan, Iran) is whitish red, has the smell like the flower of the *Ketaki*, thin small kesar. This is medium or moderate in quality.

Kumkum grown in Parasika desa (Persia, Arabia) is slightly whitish(red), has the smell of honey and thick big kesar, this is of inferior quality⁵.

THERAPEUTIC USES-

The main use of *Kunkumam* (saffron) is in cooking, due to its ability to impart color, flavor and aroma to foods and beverages. However, from time immemorial it has also been considered a medicinal plant because it possesses therapeutic properties.

- 1) In retention of urine, flowers are soaked in honey, then mixed with water and given.
- 2) In infantile rhinitis, saffron mixed with milk, gives immense relief.
- 3) In menorrhoea and dysmenorrhoea, it is given along with cardamom seeds⁶.
- 4) It enhances complexion of body⁷.
- 5) To prevent abortion, *Kalk of Nilotpal*, *Mrunal*, *Kesar* and *Padmak* with water can be given in fifth month⁸.
- 6) It eradicates skin complaints⁹.
- 7) It is useful in *Kasa*, *Shwas*, *Kanthroga* and liver disorders¹⁰.
- 8) It is a health rejuvenator that improves sexual stamina¹¹.
- 9) It prevents toxicity¹².
- 10) It works as a *Hasyakaram*¹³.
- 11) It prevents hiccups and vomittings¹⁴.
- 12) It is used as a *Katupaushitik* and *Rasayan*¹⁵.

ACCORDING TO MODERN VIEW-

One tablespoon (2 gm) of dried Saffron contains 65% carbohydrates, 6% fat, 11% protein and 12% water 29% of manganese. Chemical analysis has shown that the presence of more than 150 components in the stigmas of saffron¹⁶. In addition to the three main components in saffron (Crocetin esters, Picrocrocine and Safranal), it also contains other Carotenoids, fats, anthocyanins, flavonoids, vitamins (riboflavin and thiamine), minerals and many other elements which confer nutritional properties and are beneficial to health^{17, 18}. In the last decade, numerous scientific reviews have highlighted the biomedical and pharmacological properties of saffron or its metabolites, including a lot of bioactions related to the disorders of the nervous, blood, cardiovascular, respiratory, renal, digestive and endocrine systems. These bioactions include the enhancement of oxygen

diffusivity, increment of ocular blood flow, inhibition of tumor cell proliferation, chemoprevention and protective effects against atherosclerosis, hepatotoxicity and hippocampal disorders^{19,20}.

The spice's high antioxidant capacity explains most of its preventive or healing properties in relation to chronic or degenerative diseases. Picrocrocine has been shown to have antiproliferative activity in human cell cancers²¹. Studies has shown that Safranal shows an antidepressant, inducer of satiety property and as an anticonvulsant, Safranal combats oxidative stress in neurons, scavenging free radicals.

TOXICITY-

An extract from the 1987 European commission monograph about saffron discussed the dangers of dosages in food: "to a daily maximum dose of 1.5 gm there has not been any risk documented. Lethal dose is 20 gm and the abortive dose 10 gm because as such it was employed in the past due to its stimulating actions on the smooth muscles of the uterus. 5gm daily dose can already cause in toxication accompanied by vomiting, blood diarrhoea, hematuria, skin hemorrhages in nose, lips and eyelids, vertigo and dulling. The skin and mucus membranes take a yellowish color similar to jaundice." High doses of saffron should be avoided during pregnancy (Quantities more than 5gm, greater than that used in food, can act as a uterine stimulant and have abortifacient effects²²).

USES IN PREGNANCY-

Saffron is famous for giving good complexion to the fetus in pregnancy. It is often recommended. Other than that property saffron has other health benefits as follows-

- 1) Combats mood swings- The hormonal surges during pregnancy, can make you cranky and impulsive. Saffron acts as an antidepressant by boosting blood flow to

your brain, producing serotonin a hormone that will raise your spirit.

2) Reducing blood pressure- Saffron helps in reducing cholesterol levels. The compounds in saffron prevents the clogging of arteries and increase the level of oxygen in your body. Adding 3-4 strands of saffron in milk can reduce blood pressure in pregnant woman.

3) Increases metabolism- Saffron relaxes the muscles, promotes blood flow to digestive system and increases metabolism.

4) Eases morning sickness- It can help you to fight nausea, dizziness during pregnancy.

5) Curing anaemia- Regular intake of saffron in the food will boost hemoglobin in the blood curing your anaemia.

6) Saves against heart diseases- Packed with high antioxidants, potassium and crocetin contents, saffron protect you and your baby's heart by reducing cholesterol and triglycerides.

7) Promotes sleep- Warm cup of saffron milk at night can put to a peaceful goodnight's sleep.

8) Fights allergies- Saffron infused milk holds the power to soothe cough, asthma, allergies and relieves congestion.

9) Promotes skin health- Saffron purifies the blood and helps to combat hormonal imbalance, pimples and skin darkness.

10) Baby movement- You can feel the baby movements the body heat increases with saffron.

11) Relieves cramps- Due to the hormonal changes, cramps occur more frequently during pregnancy. These cramps can be easily prevented by using saffron.

12) Aids in digestion-The slowing down of the digestive system is common during pregnancy. Saffron boost the blood flow to an individual of digestive system and helps to enhance metabolism²³.

DISCUSSION-

The nine months pregnancy journey are no less than a roller coaster ride, It's an emotion that cannot be explained in words. A balanced diet, good habits and staying happy are the key points to being healthy during pregnancy. Talking about a healthy diet, saffron with milk is a good food item that is highly recommended during the nine months of pregnancy. Milk, again a great source of calcium that you need a lot of in pregnancy.

Kunkumam i.e, saffron helps in pregnancy in following ways-

Helps in tackling mood swings, helps in good sleep, relieves cramps, boost heart function, prevent allergies, reducing blood pressure, aids digestion, decreases morning sickness, bite the zits, cures skin problems.

Pregnant woman can start taking the recommended dosage of saffron at any time during the pregnancy.

RESULT- With all above benefits, it is highly recommended that add saffron to your diet during pregnancy but in moderation and under doctor's supervision.

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