

GLIMPSES ON THE BENEFITS OF SIDDHARS' YOGAM IN ANTENATAL CARE WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO FOOD PRACTICES.

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ABSTRACT

Life of a human being originates from a mother. It initiates from a matured zygote to a developed foetus inside the womb. At the end of tenth month, the foetus comes out of the womb and life begins. It is called as Antenatal period (*Makapperu kaalam*). This period is an important one for the health of the mother and development of the unborn child. A good Antenatal Care (ANC) can be provided by maintaining a good health by Yogic practices and food habits, living in a clean environment etc. It plays an indispensable and vital role in the antenatal period. The Siddha literatures have mentioned about many Gynaecological ailments, Pre-natal and Post-natal responsibilities and care, Herbal, poly-herbal and herbo-mineral formulations for those ailments etc. Siddhars have also mentioned about the Yogic practices in many of their literatures; especially for antenatal care which would be followed by a mother for a salubrious pregnancy. Also, they have mentioned and described briefly about the food habits that have to be followed and those which have to be avoided. In this paper, we have briefly described about the Yoga practices and food regimen to be carried out during pregnancy.

KEY WORDS

Antenatal Care (ANC), Siddha, *Yogam*, Food habits, Healthy pregnancy.

INTRODUCTION

Makapperu kaalam (Pregnancy) is a crucial period in the life of a woman when she has to promote the healthy behaviours and for the development of the baby. The number of c-section deliveries is increasing day by day due to our fast phased lifestyle. It has more than doubled in India in the past decade. In the year 2005-2006, 8.5% of total births is of c-section and in 2015-2016, it has risen up to 17.2% (National Family Health Survey). More maternal deaths are also recorded in the past decades. More women are affected by reproductive ailments from their early stages. Maintaining a sound body during the *Makapperu kaalam* (Pregnancy) is a mandatory one. This can be attained by Yogic practices and wholesome food intake. They are mentioned in the Siddha literatures as *Makapperu kaala nadaimuraigal*. Through this a good and convenient ANC can be attained which is the goal of most public health organizations.

THE LIFESTYLE OF TODAY'S WOMEN

Today our world is moving towards a modernized and sophisticated one. Everyone wants to live a life without any simple obstacles. So, we are depending fully upon the modernized equipments and machineries. Through this we are making our body and mind much sedentary. And hence our mind and body get dumped within the ridiculous effects of modernization. The works which are done by the women in olden days are being done by mixie, grinder, washing machine etc. which have made them lazier nowadays. The food eaten by the women are also not at all healthy. But she is working beyond her normal level. This is making a woman unhealthier. Also, the traditional food practices which are followed during the days of puberty are also not practiced nowadays. The consequence of all these is quiet drastic which will become a major problem during the antenatal period.

EFFECTS OF OLDEN AND SEDENTARY LIFESTYLE IN WOMEN'S HEALTH

Usage of Pistle and mortar (*Urall* and *ammi*), Manual washing of clothes, usage of Indian system of toilets, Putting *Kolams* in front of the house every morning (A form of drawing made using rice flour) are some of the novel practices which are being followed by the Indian women. By these, knowingly or unknowingly they have done many *Yogaasanams* which made their body more flexible; which *in turn* helped them to have vaginal deliveries easily. Also while putting *kolam*, they have done many *mutthiraikal*. This will stimulate different areas of brain and create a special energy circuit in the body.

Nowadays, the usage of machineries has reduced the man power. Also, food practices like white leghorns, half-boiled rice, fast and Junk food; improper timing of food intake will also affect the health of the women. These leads to a list of diseases like Obesity, Poly Cystic Ovarian Syndrome, CA of breast and cervix, cardiovascular diseases, etc which is a major reason for c-section deliveries nowadays. Sexual and Reproductive health issues occupy one - third of the health problem of women (between 15-45 age group).

YOGAASANAM IN PREGNANCY

Pregnancy is a period in which a woman should take care of her health as much as possible. In the year 2015, the World Health Organisation reported that 850 women died each day due to problems in pregnancy and child birth. Yoga and meditation play a major role in getting rid of these complications. And also it will pave way for a healthy motherhood.

First trimester

The symptoms which a women experiences in the first trimester of her motherhood includes Morning sickness, constipation etc. During this time,

- *Baddhakonasanam* (Butterfly pose)
- *Marjariasanam* (Cat Stretch pose)
- *Chakki chalanaasanam* (Churning the mill pose)
- *Utthanasanam* (Squat and rise pose) would give a better relief from the minor complications of this period.

Baddhakonasanam



- Helps in loosening the hip and knee joint
- Relieves tension from inner thigh muscles.

Marjariasanam



Step 1

- Provides flexibility to the muscles of the back, spine.
- Tones the female reproductive system



Step 2

- Provides flexibility to the neck and shoulder

Chakki chalanaasanam



Step 1



Step 2



Step-3

- It nourishes the organs and nerves of the pelvis area and also the abdomen.
- It tones the muscles of the back.

Utthanaasanam



Step 1

- Helps in releasing the pelvic floor muscle and thigh, tones the cervix



Step 2

- Provide proper stretching to the pelvic region, hip bones.

Second Trimester

Mild stomach ache, Urinary Tract Infections, Leg cramps, Respiratory ailments are the symptoms of this trimester. During this period,

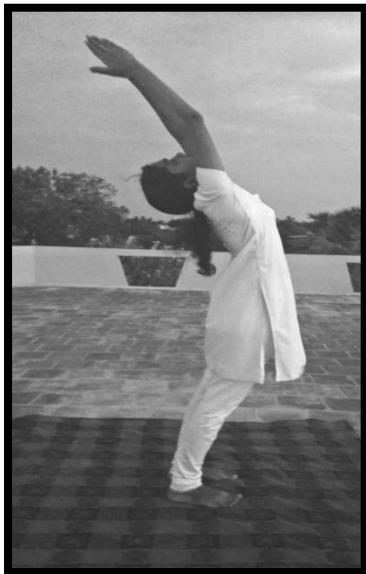
- *Vajraasanam* (Thunder bolt pose)
- *Hasta Utthanaasanam* (Hand Rising pose)

Vajraasanam



- Improves digestion and stimulates blood circulation in the pelvic region

Hasta Utthanaasanam



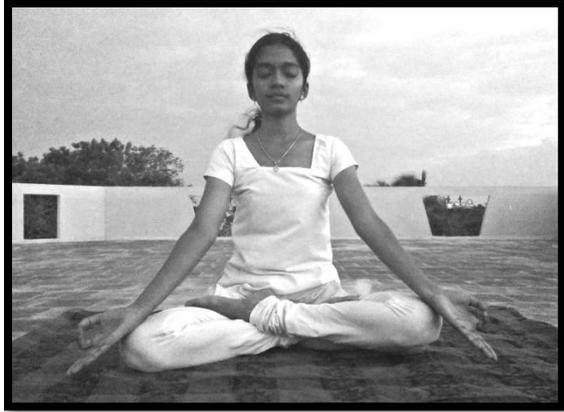
- Improves respiration
- Stretches and tones the muscles of the abdomen

Third trimester

The third trimester is quite challenging one even to the physicians because of the symptoms such as Hypertensive disorders, Pre-eclampsia, Gestational diabetes etc. The Yogic practices that have to be followed during this period are

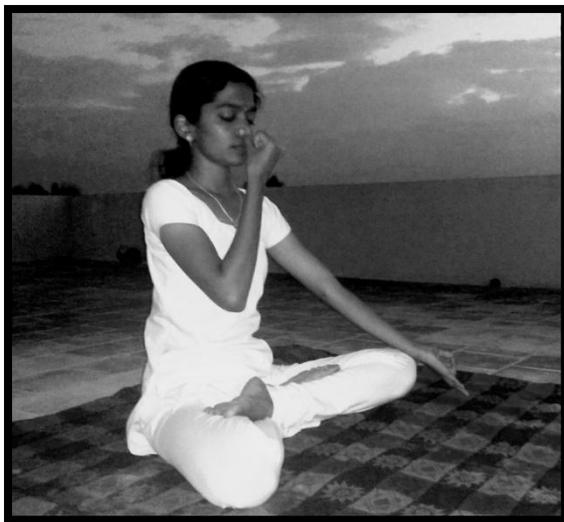
- *Baddhakonasanam* (Butterfly pose)
- *Padhmaasanam*
- Meditation and *Pranayamam*

Padhmaasanam



- Allows a proper circulation of blood throughout the body
- Helps relaxing the mind thereby reducing Hypertensive disorders

Pranayaamam



- Improves the blood circulation
- Improves respiration

FOOD REGIMEN WHICH NEED TO BE FOLLOWED AND AVOIDED DURING PREGNANCY

To be added:

- ★ *Samba* (*Oryza* sp.), *Gothumai* (*Triticum aestivum*) , *Thuvarai* (*Cajanus cajan*) and other cereals are commonly recommended as food for the pregnant women since it contains a high content of protein.
- ★ *Paal* (Milk), *Morr* (buttermilk), *Nei* (Ghee), Fresh fruits and vegetables, eggs act as good nutritives for the women.
- ★ Mild diuretics such as barley can be given; so that there would be no urinary tract infections and problems. And also it will make them to get rid of edematous problems.

- ★ If there is complication such as constipation, mild laxative such as *Sittraamanakku nei* (Castor oil can be taken before bed).
- ★ Easily digestible foods are better.

To be avoided:

- ★ Hardly digestible foods
- ★ Spicy and much salty food
- ★ Meat

FOOD AND TREATMENT REGIMEN BY SIDDHARS

Some major food regimens are mentioned in Siddha literatures for women. This has to be followed during every month of pregnancy for a healthier antenatal period (under the guidance of an expert) and for a normal delivery.

Months	Herbs	Usage
I	<i>Thaamarai poovin kaai</i> (Fruit of <i>Nelumbo nucifera</i>) <i>Sandhanam</i> (<i>Santalum album</i>)	Grinded; mixed with milk and is given
II	<i>Neitharkizhangu</i> (<i>Nymphaea pubescens</i>) <i>Mutthakaasu</i> (<i>Cyperus rotundus</i>) <i>Ganja</i> (<i>Cannabis sativa</i>) <i>Mathuram</i> (<i>Glycyrrhiza glabra</i>) <i>Inji</i> (<i>Zingiber officinalis</i>)	Grinded; mixed with milk and is given
III	<i>Sandhanam</i> (<i>Santalum album</i>) <i>Thakaram</i> (<i>Cassia tora</i>) <i>Koshtam</i> (<i>Costus speciosus</i>) <i>Thaamarai</i> (<i>Nelumbo nucifera</i>) <i>Alli</i> (<i>Nymphaea nouchali</i>) <i>Seenthil thandu</i> (stem of <i>Tinospora cordifolia</i>)	Grinded with cold water and is given
IV	<i>Neitharkizhangu</i> (<i>Nymphaea pubescens</i>) <i>Seenthil thandu</i> (stem of <i>Tinospora cordifolia</i>) <i>Nilappanai kizhangu</i> (<i>Curculigo orchoides</i>) <i>Nerunjiver</i> (Root of <i>Tribulus terrestris</i>)	Grinded with milk and is given
V	<i>Saaranai kizhangu</i> (<i>Tianthema portulacastrum</i>) <i>Iluppai poo</i> (Flower of <i>Madhuca longifolia</i>) <i>Azhinjil vithai</i> (Seed of <i>Alangium salvifolium</i>)	Grinded with milk and is given

	<i>Thakaram</i> (Cassia tora) <i>Ellu</i> (Sesamum indicum) <i>Neitharkizhangu</i> (Nymphaea pubescens)	
VI	<i>Muyalin Pithu</i> (Bile of Rabbit)	Grinded with water and is given
VII	<i>Kacholam</i> (Kaemferia galanga) <i>Aamanakku ver</i> (Root of Ricinus communis) <i>Neitharkizhangu</i> (Nymphaea pubescens)	Grinded and stirred in water and is mixed with honey and given
VIII	<i>Mathuram</i> (Glycyrrhiza glabra) <i>Thaamarai vithai</i> (Seed of Nelumbo nucifera) <i>Mutthakaasu</i> (Cyperus rotundus) <i>Vilaampinju</i> (Unripened fruit of Limonia acidissima) <i>Yaanaithippili</i> (Scindapsus officinalis) <i>Neitharkizhangu</i> (Nymphaea pubescens)	Grinded and mixed with milk and is given
IX	<i>Vattuvithai</i>	Powdered; Mixed with honey and is given
X	<i>Mutthakaasu</i> (Cyperus rotundus) <i>Thraatchi</i> (Vitis vinifera) <i>Neithar thandu</i> (Stem of Nymphaea pubescens)	Grinded; Mixed with honey and is given

With the use of *Yogam*, Proper and healthy food practices and regular check-ups, maternal deaths, miscarriages, birth defects, low birth weight and other neonatal problems can be reduced.

CONCLUSION

A healthy and safe ANTENATAL period can be achieved by following these Yogic practices (under an expert's guidance) and food habits, which is very essential for both mother and child. In this paper, we have just given an overview of the Pre-natal care (Both *Yogam* and food). Further research works related to this are to be done in future.

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