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Review Article

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Ayurveda View on Bal-Samskara and their Contribution in Human Life

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Abstract

Samskara means sacraments which are religious conducts and rituals of religious ceremony. *Samskara* fulfill needs of social completion and gives rights to the individual total attainment. *Samskara* introduced some essential qualities by means of qualitative improvement and some ritual conducts. The number of *Samskara* varies from 16-40, but the major practicable *Samskara* are 16 only (*Shodash*) which spreads from *Garbhadan* to *Anteysthi samskara*. *Samskara* described for the growth and developments of child and provide religious guideline toward the care of children. *Samskara* incorporates qualities, begins from the conception and remain inherited to the age of adolescence. *Samskara* as religious rituals are very important for mental, physical, social and spiritual development of child. Present article explored Ayurveda view on concept of *Bal-Samskara*.

Keywords: *Samskara*, Sacraments, Child, Growth, Bala

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1. Introduction

As per Indian philosophy the every stage of life is sacred, therefore stages from the conception to death cremation are distinguished as special rituals. The *Samskaras* are performed for the physical, social, and religious development of the individual. The sacrament encompasses God's worships and *Mantras* used for *Samskara* purpose. (1-3)

Samskara are religious rites and rituals of a religious ceremony, the person receives higher sacredness after

Samskara. *Samskara* cover the whole life of person begins from the mother's womb till the completion of whole life period. Sacrament also ensure some promise, symbol and sacred influence.

The *Samskara* serve as rites of passage which govern person's progress from a state to another state of psychological development. The word *Samskar* itself used for the sense of cultivation, education, training and qualities of intrinsic worth. (3-5)

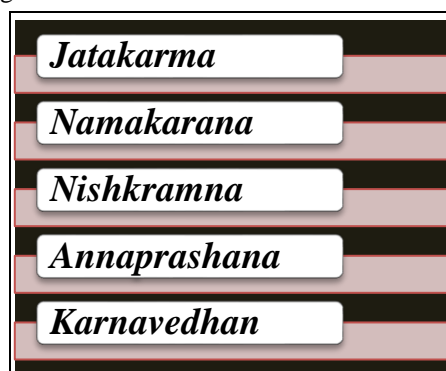


Figure 1. The specific *Samskara* for *Balyawasthantargata* (childhood)

Samskara improves overall development and removes undesirable attributes; *Samskara* helps to understand philosophy of *Vedas* and religious texts. *Samskara* in early childhood gives religious and spiritual knowledge which signifies the meaning of life during the various stages. *Samskara* offers mental purification and influence positively the character of individual. *Samskara* motivates person towards his/her *Dharma* and provides good levels of morality and spirituality. The specific *Samskara* for *Balyawasthantargata* (childhood) is depicted in **Figure 1**.

2. Purposes of Bala Samskaras

- *Samskaras* brings better things in life and eliminate harmful powers.
- *Samskara* offers good health, intellect and social happiness.
- *Samskaras* build wakefulness of attainment of social status.
- *Samskaras* gives cultural knowledge and religious belief.
- *Samskaras* contributed towards the good personality physically as well as mentally.
- *Samskaras* imparts spiritual connection and connect people from their culture and nature.
- *Samskaras* cleaned impurities and provides discipline for life conduct.

3. Number of Samskara

The applicable *Samskara* are 16 in number as per the various texts of *Kaumarbhritya*, these are as follows:

- a) *Garbhadan*
Sacrament of Impregnation or Conception
- b) *Pumsavana*
Engendering a male issue
- c) *Simantonayana*
Hair-parting
- d) *Jatakarma*
Birth rituals e.g. at the time when the child is being born
- e) *Namakarana*
Naming ceremony
- f) *Nishkrama*
First outing or outing ceremony
- g) *Annaprashana*
Feeding ceremony
- h) *Chudakarma* or *Mundan*
Shaving of head
- i) *Karnavedhan*
Piercing the earlobes
- j) *Upanayana*
Sacred thread initiation

- k) *Vedarambha*
Beginning of vedic study
- l) *Samavartan*
End of studentship
- m) *Vivaha*
Marriage Ceremony
- n) *Vanprastha*
Renouncing the householder's life
- o) *Sanyyas*
Leading the life of a monk
- p) *Anteyeshti*
Death cremation

4. Types of Samskara

- A. *Garbhastha* (Pre-natal) *Samskaras*:
 - *Garbhadan*, *Pumsavana*, *Simantonayana*
- B. *Balyawasthantargata* (Childhood) *Samskaras*:
 - *Jatakarma*, *Namakarana*, *Nishkramna*, *Annaprashana*, *Chudakarma*, *Karnavedhan*.
- C. *Adhyyanartha* (Educational) *Samskara*:
 - *Vidyarambha*, *Upanayana*, *Vedarambha*
- D. *Grahashtartha* (Marriage) *Samskara*:
 - *Vivaha*
- E. *Death Samskara*:
 - *Antyeshti*.

Pre-natal Samskara:

Garbhadhan Samskara:

This *Samskara* related to the conception, it is related to the environmental factors, dietetics to be followed during this period and cleansing measures, etc. This involves consideration of factors which can affect reproductive capabilities and imparts physiological as well as psychological significances. (4-6)

- Proper age for marriage and first conception
- Consideration of age of mother, should not be adolescence and old woman
- Specific rituals to be permitted by preceptor means of *Putriya vidhi* sacrament.
- The method of performing *Putreshti yajana*
- Effect of psychology of the woman on the foetus

5. Types of Samskara in Balyawastha for children are as follows

Ksheerap Kala:

During Neonatal Period: *Jatakarma* and *Namkarana*.

During Infantile Period: *Nishkramana* and *Karnavedhan*.

Ksheerannad/Annada kala:

During Toddler Period: *Chudkarana Samskara*

During Preschool and school Age: *Upnayana* and *Vedarambha Samskara*

6. Conclusion

Samskara (sacraments) are the religious rituals which sacrifice specific religious ceremony. *Bala Samskara* is different depending upon the various stages of childhood. *Bala Samskara* affects growth and developments of children thus provide ways for the caring of children. The *Samskara* imparts beneficial effects from the period of conception to the childhood.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article.

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