

“FUNDAMENTAL NATURE OF MEDICAL ETHICS IN KAUMARBHRITYA (PEDIATRICS OF AYURVEDA)”

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ABSTRACT:-

Ayurveda is science of life that imparts the knowledge concerned to life, the main aim being to provide guidelines for maintenance and promotion of health as well as prevention and treatment of diseases. Ethics is branch of Philosophy that defines what is good for the individual and for society and establishes the nature of obligations, or the duties, that people owe themselves and one another. Ethics is generated by the Greek word ‘ethike’ means habit, action and character. In simple words, Ethics is a set of philosophical beliefs and practices concerned with the distinction between right and wrong. Medical Ethics is the branch of ethics that deals with moral issues in medical practice. Eight clinical branches are described in *Ayurveda* and *Kaumarbhritya* is one of them. In *Ayurvedic* system of medicine the branch dedicated to health care of children and even the prenatal phase is *Kaumarbhritya*. The generic equivalent of *Kaumarbhritya* in modern medicine is “Paediatrics” and hence it can be considered as “*Ayurvedic* Paediatrics”. The childhood happens to be the most sensitive phase of life; hence need errorless care and this fact will be recognised and emphasized since ancient times. Main classical texts of *Ayurveda* such as *Charaka*, *Sushruta*, *Vagbhata* and *Kashyap samhita* there are no separate sections on ethics. But ethical concepts and description are present through all the texts. To search the ethical content from these large texts is as not easy as extracting sugar from a cup of sweetened milk. Ethical material related to pediatrics of *Ayurveda* (*Kaumarbhritya*) elaboration in all the *samhitas*. The ethical concept are described in reference to quality and ethics of *Vaidya* (doctor) physical and moral conduct of a student, ethical concepts related to deliver dead fetus, Bed and clothes of the child, protection of child from infection, Amulets for the child, behavior of child, beginning of sitting by the child, Play ground and Toys of the child, Initiation of education and treatment of emergency condition in children. So purpose of this review article is to elaborate description of medical ethics in pediatrics of *Ayurveda* (*Kaumarbhritya*).

Keywords: - Medical ethics, *Kaumarbhritya*, *Ayurveda*, Children.

Introduction:-

Ayurveda is the first systematically written record of medicine of the world and incorporating all aspect of human life. Entire subject of medical ethics is intricately inter-woven with other aspects of health and given ethical points had to be understood and appreciated only after going through the texts of *Ayurveda* and understand those in entirety. The high ideals of medical practice and the responsibility of the physician are emphasized by *Acharya Charaka*’s statement: No other gift is better than the gift of life” [1]. Ethics is a branch of philosophy dealing with moral aspects of human behavior. Ethics word is derived from Greek word ‘*Ethike*’ means meaning,

habit action or behavior. Medical ethics is normal sense refers to guide-lines generally written by physician about ideal relationship of physician to his peers and patients. Application of ethical principles to clinical practice, include medical research. Ethics simply means the rules or principles which govern right conduct. Medical ethics is a system of moral principles that concern about the practice of clinical medicine and in scientific research. Medical ethics provide standard set values that professionals can refer, in the case of any conflict. ^[2]

In recent years the term has been modified to bio-medical ethics which includes ethical principles relating to all branches of knowledge about life, health, thus even nursing, pharmacy, genetics, social work, physiotherapy, speech therapy etc. Medical ethics are influenced by socio-cultural status and also religion of the place which differ slightly at different places and times.

In medical field there are several codes of conduct. The Hippocratic Oath narrates about basic principles for medical professionals. ^[3] Both The Declaration of Helsinki (1964) and The Nuremberg Code (1947) are two renowned and well appreciated documents contributing to medical ethics.

The main purpose of *Ayurveda* is prevention of health of healthy and eradication of diseases of diseased. Medicine and its ethics have been running concurrently ever since their origin. Eight clinical branches are described in *Ayurveda* and *Kaumarbhritya* is one of them. In *Ayurvedic* system of medicine the branch dedicated to health care of children and even the prenatal phase is *Kaumarbhritya*. The generic equivalent of *Kaumarbhritya* in modern medicine is “Paediatrics” and hence it can be considered as “*Ayurvedic Paediatrics*”. In *Ayurveda*, a detail description regarding ethics related to medical practice has been given. This article focus only description of ethical practices in *Ayurveda* related to *Kaumarbhritya*.

Ethical practices in Kaumarbhritya:-

Ethical related to *Kaumarbhritya* are described in all *samhitas* such as *Charaka*, *Sushruta*, *Vagbhata* and *Kashyap samhita* etc. all description can be divided in these heading –

- Quality and ethics of *Vaidya*
- Principles of informed consent and permission of Obstetric surgery
- Bed clothes etc. of the child
- Protection of child from infection
- Amulets for the child
- *Upaveshana* (beginning of sitting by the child)
- Play ground and Toys of the child
- Initiation of education in children.
- Emergency treatment in children

1. Quality and ethics of Vaidya:-

Acharya Charak explains about physician that physician should be knowledgeable, pure at heart (*Suchi*). Physicians should have ‘empathy’ (*Karuna*), ‘friendship’ (*Maitree*) and ‘professional detachment’ (*Upeksha*) towards his patient. ^[4]

2. Principles of informed consent and permission of Obstetric surgery:-

Ayurveda mentioned that before handling a case of obstructed labour permission from king / guardian must be obtained ^{[5][6]}. *Vaidya* should not neglect the dead fetus in pregnant women and start treatment immediately. Because this dead fetus kills the mother by producing asphyxia in the same way as an animal dies by asphyxia caused due to distension of abdomen by over eating. ^[7]

3. Bed clothes etc. of the child:-

The cot, chair, bedding, sheet and covering sheets for the child should be soft, light, clean and incensed. Those soiled with sweat, urine or faeces or having contact of insects or other dirt etc. should be discarded if other clothes are not available then the same may be used after cleaning, drying and well fumigating. ^[8] The child and his bed should be covered with linen ^[9]

4. Protection of child from infection:-

The clothes, cot, bed sheet all should be properly fumigated with *Yava* (*Hordeum vulgare* Linn), *Sarshapa* (*Brassica campestris* Linn), *Atasi* (*Linum usitatissimum* Linn), *Hingu* (*Ferula*

asafetida), Gugglu (*Commiphora mukul*), Vacha (*Acorus calamus*) and Rohani mix with *Ghritha*.^[10] on the sixth night of life especially protective measures should be done and family members should remain awake whole night with happy mood.^{[11][12]}

5. Amulets for the child:-

Amulets made of the tip of horn especially right horn of alive rhinoceros deer or Brahmi (*Bacopa monnieri*), Jeevaka (*Microstylis wallichii* Lindl) and Vacha (*Acorus calamus*) are advised by *Acharyas*. Use of these increase longevity, intellect, memory and health of children.^[13]

6. Behavior of the child:-

Ayurveda mentioned that frightening the child should not be done it hampers mental development. If child weeps does not eat or attracted to somebody else. Then parents should not try to pacify or distract him by frightening with names of *pisacha*, *putana* etc. because by frightening the evil spirits seize the child.^[14]

7. Upaveshana (beginning of sitting by the child):-

In fifth or sixth month on any auspicious day, ground should be plastered with cow dung, with religious ceremony the child should be made to sit with support for some time. After that back, hip and legs of child should be massaged. Child should not be permit to sit long time.^{[15][16]}

8. Play ground and Toys of the child:-

The toys of child should be diversified sound producing, beautiful, very light with blunt and rounded ends and of size which cannot enter the mouth. The toys cannot cause fatal injury.^[17] The Play ground of the child should be even, free from pieces of metal, bricks, stone, or gravels. The ground should be sprinkled well with either the water mixed with decoction of *Neemba* leaves (*Azadirachta indica*). The toys should be made with *Jantu* shaped like cow, horse etc. The typical methods to know the psychology or future liking toys is described in *Kashyap samhita*. First attraction of child towards any objects is considerate as indicative of liking of the child, which shapes the future.

9. **Initiation of education:-** As soon as the child is capable of grasping education should be start^[18]

10. Emergency treatment in children:-

In case of emergency routine procedures should not be applied by a *Vaidya* rather quick reaction and action should be there as his own house is on fire^[19]. The cold water should be sprinkled on the patients who is going in shock or is fainting^[20]. Success of treatment depends upon proper planning about dose and period of medicine administration, naturally knower of proper planning stands at the top rather than medicine.

Discussion:-

Ayurveda is the ancient science of life. In *Charaka*, *Sushruta* and *Vagbhata* there are no separate sections on ethics. But ethical concepts are ever-present and an ethical undercurrent runs through all the text. *Ayurveda* also mention about quacks practices and advised to social boycott. In *Charaka Samhita* it is mention that it is better to die rather that to be treated by quacks in which case he is liable to go to Hell (*Naraka*).^[21] Eight clinical branches are described in *Ayurveda* and *Kaumarbhritya* is one of them. In *Ayurvedic* system of medicine the branch dedicated to health care of children and even the prenatal phase is *Kaumarbhritya*. Medical ethics related to

Kaumarbhritya are also mention in all texts of *Ayurveda*. *Ayurveda* mention that infants should be always held comfortably. Children should neither be scolded nor awaked suddenly lest gets frightened. Children should not be snatched or thrown up suddenly as it might aggravate *Vata* or due to fear there may be suppression of natural urges etc. Infants should not be made to sit (before 5th month) as it might produce humpedness. The infants should be protected from strong wind sun, lighting, trees creepers, low place and shadow of planets. The infants should not be felt in unclean or open place, on uneven floor, in heat, wind dust smoke and water. [22][23]

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