

Ashtavidha Shastra Karmas (Eight Surgical Principles) : Application in Gynaecology & Obstetrics

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Abstract

Importance of Ayurveda is increasing day by day and people are looking towards Ayurveda as an alternative to contemporary medicine. AYUSH department is conducting post graduate specialization in various surgical branches like gynaecology & obstetrics. Yet social and legal conditions are not sufficiently favourable for Ayurvedic surgeons. It is the need of time to prove that Ayurvedic surgeons should have equal rights to perform surgeries as it should be for modern surgeons. This article is an effort to co-relate various Shastra Karmas with modern surgical procedures used in gynaecology & obstetrics to prove the efficiency and potency of Ayurvedic surgery.

Key words: Ashtavidha Shastrakarmas, Gynaecology, Obstetrics, Surgery

Introduction

Ayurveda is not only a life science, rather a complete therapeutic science. All the concepts of therapeutics are described in Ayurveda, either in exemplary or in exhaustive form. There is nothing related to management of any disease which is not mentioned in Ayurvedic classics in at least subtle form. There are sufficient evidences to prove that Shalya Chikitsa (Surgery) was in its glorious phase during ancient time. Acharya Sushruta, who is known as the father of Surgery over the history of world, has described all the principles of Surgery in a very systematic way.

His concept of Shastra Karmas is very much scientific and probably no surgical procedure can be invented to overcome the limit of these Karmas. Sushruta has very scientifically classified all the surgical procedures in two groups – Yantra Karmas & Shastra Karmas.

Yantra Karmas are the procedures which contain the use of blunt instruments, while Shastra Karmas contain the use of sharp instruments. In fact, each and every surgical procedure is nothing, but a planned and systematic use of blunt and sharp instruments. Ayurveda insists more upon the principles than any other description. And it seems to be the main factor why Acharya Sushruta described the Shalya Karmas in such a way. Actually, he mentioned the basic principles of Shalya Chikitsa as Yantrakarmas & Shastrakarmas and left the elaboration of those on the wisdom of Shalya Chikitsaka (surgeon), as surgery is entirely concerned with skill and presence of mind of the performer.

Among all these Karmas, Ashtavidha Shastrakarmas are the procedures or the steps which are always the soul of any surgery, because these are the things which are generally the objectives of any surgery to be performed. With a broad vision, Ashtavidha Shastrakarmas can be taken as the base of modern surgery and that may be the reason why Acharya Sushruta is still remembered by not only the Ayurvedic but also the modern surgeons. Though, modern surgery is getting improved and updated day by day, still these Shalya Karmas have not lost their shine, because these are the roots of all the surgeries

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and roots are always more important and essential than the branches.

All the operative procedures used in gynaecology & obstetrics are utilization of

Ashtavidha Shastrakarmas in various ways. An effort to make out such a list consisting the commonest surgical procedures of gynaecology & obstetrics is present below :

Table 1: The commonest surgical procedures of gynaecology & obstetrics

	Shastrakarma		Gynaecology	Obstetrics
1.	Chhedana	Excision	Myomectomy Hysterectomy Cystectomy Polypectomy Enucleation of breast fibroadenoma	Cord cutting Craniotomy in obstructed labour
2.	Bhedana	Incision	Surgical correction of imperforated hymen Surgical correction of vaginal agenesis Laparoscopy	Episiotomy Caesarean section
3.	Lekhana	Scraping	Thermal ballooning Endometrial biopsy	Curettage Manual removal of placenta Episiotomy wound if gapping is there
4.	Vedhana	Puncturing	Laparoscopy Drainage of haematocolpos & haematometra	Amniocentesis MTP with the help of instillation of dye & NS
5.	Eshana	Probing	Hysteroscopy Uterine sounding Dilatation of os	Uterine sounding Dilatation
6.	Aaharana	Extraction	Removal of uterine tumours Removal of polyp by twisting method	Garbhahrana (C.S.) Evacuation (MTP) Manual removal of placenta
7.	Visravana	Drainage	Ovarian drilling	ARM (Artificial rupture of membrane)
8.	Sivana	Suturing	Suturing in all operative procedures	Suturing in all operative procedures

Apart from this, if any of the surgical procedure is taken under consideration, it seems to be the combination of one or more Shastra Karmas. Moreover, most of the surgical procedures are the combination of both, Shastrakarmas as well as Yantra Karmas. Hence, there may be another way to describe the significance of these Karmas, which is as under -

Ashtavidha Shastakarmas in common Gynaecological surgical procedures

- Myomectomy - Bhedana + Chhedana + Aaharana + Sivana
- Thermal balloning - Lekhana+Agnikarma
- Cervical cauterization - Lekhana with Agnikarma or Ksharakarma
- Cervical conization - Chhedana
- Polypectomy - Chhedana + Aaharana
- Hysterectomy

- o Abdominal - Bhedana + Visravana + Chhedana + Aaharana + Sivana
- o Vaginal - Chhedana + Aaharana + Sivana]

Ashtavidha Shastrakarmas in common Obstetric surgical procedures

- Episiotomy - Bhedana + Sivana
- ARM (Artificial rupture of membrane) - Vedhana+ Visravana
- Stripping of membrane - Lekhana
- Dilatation & evacuation - Eshana+ Aaharana+ Lekhana
- Caesarean section - Bhedana+ Visravana+ Aaharana+ Chhedana+ Sivana

The above mentioned list is very exemplary and is just a glimpse of the universal approach of Ayurvedic Shalya Chikitsa. Here, it is important to note that Ashtavidha Shastrakarmas are not the eight surgical procedures, rather these are the eight basic principles of all the surgical procedures which can be used for any surgery. These Karmas contain a short but full description of all the surgeries. Each and every surgical procedure comprises either one or more of them and more interestingly, no surgery till date contains any

step which is beyond the scope of Ayurvedic Shastra Karmas. Hence, it is the need of time that government must take very sincere steps to protect legal rights of Ayurvedic surgeons and rules regarding performing surgeries by Ayurvedic specialists must be very clearly regularized.

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