



Kasyapasamhita: A Treasure Trove Of Child Health Care

1.Dr. Reena B.K, 2. Radhakrishnan P

Instructor in Sanskrit, Research Scholar in Sanskrit,

Kerala Kalamandalam Deemed to be University, Thrissur, Kerala, India

Department of Sanskrit General, Maharaja's College Ernakulam Kerala India

Abstract: The *Kasyapasamhita*, an ancient Ayurvedic text attributed to Sage Kasyapa, is a foundational work in pediatric health care, emphasizing holistic approaches to child health and development. This treasure trove offers insights into various aspects of neonatal, infant, and adolescent care, highlighting preventive and curative methods for common childhood ailments, nutrition, growth, and immunity. Through discussions on breastfeeding, weaning practices, and traditional herbal remedies, the *Kasyapasamhita* underscores the importance of early life interventions for lifelong health. Its teachings deeply rooted in Ayurveda, present a complementary perspective to modern pediatric practices, making it a valuable resource for integrative health care. This paper explores the historical, clinical, and practical aspects of the *Kasyapasamhita*, examining its relevance in contemporary child health.

Keywords: Kasyapasamhita, child health, Ayurveda, pediatric care, neonatal care, infant nutrition, herbal remedies, holistic health.

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda, traditionally considered the upaveda of Rigveda, is the ancient Indian science of health and medicine. The upaveda is a class of writings subordinate to the vedas. Sanctity is attached to Ayurveda as it is associated to the vedic lore. Susruta, the great ancient Indian preceptor of Ayurveda, views it as an upanga or supplement of the fourth veda namely the *Athervaveda*. Indeed, a large part of the rich and varied scientific heritage of India is embedded in her vedangas and upavedas and, therefore, Ayurveda constitutes one of the brilliant aspects of India's scientific legacy. Ayurveda is a Sanskrit term which means science of life.

Kaumṛabhr̥tya or Bṛacikitsa which includes treatment from pre-pregnancy to childhood is the ancient Indian paediatrics that forms one of the eight limbs of Ayurveda.

It is natural that great significance is seen attached to this branch of Ayurveda because it is related to the bringing up of a child since the time of its conception. It is needless to mention that children with healthy mind and body constitute the valuable wealth of any society. So the ancient Indian bioscience took utmost care for child health care. All the significant works in Ayurveda viz. *Carakasamhita*, *Susrutasamhita*, *Ashtangahrdaya*, *Ashtangasangraha* etc. contain several doctrines and methods of child health care.

DEVELOPMENT OF KAUMARABHRITYA – IN INDIA

The image of a child is embedded in the collective unconscious of every country. In Indian psyche the infant image of Krishna is there with all its innocence and charm. If it is infant Krishna here in India, in Europe the infant image is that of Christ, the image of Unniyesu. It is a vital concept with its archetype under atones. According to C.G.Jung several such archetypes are lying embedded in the collective unconscious of any society which get ride in its mythology.

According to Indian tradition the child is considered not only as the beginning as a living being but as the father of next generation. According to Atharvaveda, after the birth of a child the father approaches him and gives a warm welcome with sweet and meaningful verses.

Angadangatsambhavasi hridayadapi jayase
Aatmavai putranamasisanjeevasaradamsatam
Satayu satavarshosi deerghamayuravapnuhi
Nakshatrani diso ratrirahascha tvabhirakshatu.

These verses reflect the attitude of a typical Indian society towards a child. The present generation is seized of genuine concern for the intellectual, cultural, emotional, and physical growth. This seems to be the duty of the present generation for the well being of the future generation.

Kaumarabhritya pointed out an idealistic view on the procreation of the progeny. Among the natural urges, ideal indulgence is considered important for having healthy progeny. Ayurvedic scholars prescribe certain regulations for men and women desiring progeny such as the cleansing of the system, dietary schedules, spiritual practices and adherence to celibacy for a certain period. These are recommended as part of therapeutics to make the couples suitable for bearing child. Mothers are to be in a healthy psychological

state before and after conception till the birth of the child. After delivery, a specific routine is recommended for each month for the mother and the baby.

Child rearing practices of the traditional societies in India have been handed over from one generation to the other, introducing minor changes making them appropriate to their current cultural contexts. It is not difficult to assume that the therapeutic practices for child grew, evolved and developed making use of several ancient folk practices also.

Coming to the age of classical texts, texts which record the practical and theoretical knowledge of Ayurveda are found. At that time Ayurveda was undergoing a stage of development and experiments were conducted, and on the basis of experiments, symposiums were held and recorded and therefore the division of the knowledge of healthcare into eight parts became possible. The classical texts answered the questions and doubts of people scientifically. Ayurveda influenced people through its philosophical, scientific, and spiritual way. Ayurvedic texts were composed of uniformities (sthanas) and the questionnaire method by the authors. It foreshadows the in depth knowledge and skills of the authors of Ayurveda. The texts help the people understand the subject in its simplest way. *Carakasamhita*, *Susrutasamhita*, *Kasyapa Samhita* and *Ashtangahrdaya* gained great popularity in Ayurveda.

KASYAPASAMHITA

All Ayurvedic works contain studies on paediatrics (Kaumarabhritya) But *Kasyapa Samhita* is basically a work related solely to child healthcare.

DATE OF KASYAPA SAMHITA

Available *Kasyapa Samhita* is incomplete. The first seventeen chapters are missing and some parts of other chapters are also lost and in some of the chapters neither number nor title is found. According to Prof. Tiwari the original *Kasyapa Samhita* has been written between sixth century BC and second century AD.

MODE OF PRESENTATION

Method of presentation of *Kasyapa Samhita* is unique. In every chapter except khila-1, just like all other classics last word is vyakhyaśyamah. However, in khila-1 it is “vakĀyamah”. The last sentence of every chapter is “itihasmaḥ Bhagawan kasyapah is similar to that seen in Caraka i.e., itiha smaha Bhagavanatreyah.”

The subject is discussed in questionnaire method similar to *Carakasamhita*, however the author and redactor of *Kasyapa Samhita* i.e. Vridhajivaka and Vatsya respectively are found to be participating in discussions.

VRIDDHA JIVAKA, THE AUTHOR

As per description of *Kasyapa Samhita*, vridhha is also referred to as jivaka, sthavira and sthavara. Jivaka and Bhargava are the scribes, who have recapitulated the preaching's of Kasyapa. Jivaka, the son of sage Ricika received the knowledge from Kasyapa just at the age of five and recapitulated after summarizing it.

CONTENT OF KASYAPA SAMHITA

Kasyapa Samhita has a total two hundred chapters, out of which only 78 are available now. These are incomplete in the beginning, end or middle. K.S has nine sthanas. They are:

Sl.No.	Sthanas	No. of chapters
1	Sutra sthana	30 chapters
2	Nidana sthana	8 chapters
3	Vimana sthana	8 chapters
4	Sarira sthana	8 chapters
5	Indriya sthana	12 chapters
6	Cikitsa sthana	50 chapters
7	Siddhi sthana	12 chapters
8	Kalpa sthana	12 chapters
9	Khila sthana	80 chapters

Kasyapa Samhita, though a source book of Kaumarabhritya i.e. obstetrics, gynecology and paediatrics, has made remarkable contributions for the advancement of knowledge of other branches of Ayurveda.

KAUMARABHRITYA (CHILD HEALTH CARE) – THE CENTRAL THEME OF KASYAPA SAMHITA

Vimanasthana reveals the meaning of Ayurveda and the authorities entitled to teach and study it. Even though the eight branches of Ayurveda are mentioned kaumarabhritya is given foremost importance. Medicine, dosage schedule, method of application and diagnosis are also particular. According to Kasyapa

the childhood is divided in to three i.e. garbha (intra uterine life), bala (childhood), and kaumara (adolescence).

The tenth chapter of khilasthana deals with the treatment of pregnant women. Treatment for snake bite and poisons for the pregnant women is described here. Bad prognostic features of pregnant women are discussed here.

The eleventh chapter discusses the treatment or management of puerperal woman.

Twelfth chapter discusses the management of the child after jatakarma showing of rising sun and moon during first month.

Method of initiating sitting and playing with toys is described. It prescribes feeding of fruit juice in sixth month and cereals only after twelve months that too in small doses.

The *Kasyapa Samhita* is the only work which describes the dentition broadly. The period of exception, auspicious or inauspicious eruption and cause of easy eruption in girls and with trouble in boys are also described here.

Kasyapa Samhita has dealt with dosage schedule for children. The diseases like phakka, visarpa along with story about its origin and carmadala have not been described by any other author.

In the chapter vedana, he describes how children prior to speaking age suggest their pain by movements and contortions of the body. Detailed discussion on vasti for the children which is considered even as a nectar and also useful for producing vrimhana effect, specific oleaginous substances namely surisukasneha to be used in enema along with nasya to be given to the children are mentioned. Though fumigations are described by other authors, the long list of fumigations of dhupa, kalpa and dhyana for various purposes, other than those mentioned by other authors and also clarification of pratidhupa, anudhupa etc. are contributions of *Kasyapa Samhita*. *Kasyapa Samhita* has dedicated one complete chapter to mention the pain and diseases of children.

In *Kasyapa Samhita* description of grahas affecting the children is a bit different. According to *Kasyapa Samhita* the ten grahas are: skanda, skandapasmara, skandaputra, pundarika, naigamesha, revati, sushkarevati, sakuni, mukhamandika and putana. However treatment for andhaputana, sitaputana and kataputana are also prescribed. Thus thirteen stories of grahas are included in this chapter.

Kasyapa Samhita the Bible of ancient Indian Paediatrics stands as a timeless gem in the realm of child healthcare, offering invaluable insights into pediatrics and neonatology. Rooted in the ancient wisdom of Ayurveda, this classic text provides detailed guidance on all aspects of child health, including prenatal care, neonatal care, childhood nutrition, common childhood diseases, child related rituals and preventive health measures. The comprehensive approach of *Kasyapa Samhita* not only emphasizes the physical well-being of children but also addresses their mental and emotional health, underscoring the holistic nature of Ayurvedic medicine. Its principles, though thousands of years old, remain relevant, inspiring contemporary practices in pediatric care and reinforcing the importance of nurturing healthy, balanced lives from infancy.

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