

Traditional Practice Using Various Medicinal Plant During Postnatal Care in Buldhana District Maharashtra

Pranjali J. Deshmukh

Department of Botany

Mahatma Fule Arts, Commerce and Sitaramji Chaudhari Science Mahavidyalaya, Warud distr. Amravati

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Abstract—Traditional postnatal care in Maharashtra integrates medicinal plants and cultural practices to support maternal recovery after childbirth. Although modern healthcare services are increasingly prevalent, many communities — particularly in rural and tribal regions — continue to use herbal remedies for lactation support, uterine involution, inflammation control, and nourishment. This paper explores these practices, documents commonly used species, and discusses their cultural significance and potential health benefits.

Index Terms—Ethnomedicine, medicinal plants, Maharashtra, postnatal care, Traditional medicine

I. INTRODUCTION

Postnatal care encompasses healthcare provided to women and newborns during the first six weeks after childbirth and is essential for preventing postpartum complications. The World Health Organization recommends multiple postnatal visits to reduce risks such as haemorrhage, anaemia, infections, delayed lactation, and psychological disorders. Although India contributes significantly to global maternal mortality, notable progress has been achieved through national health interventions, with postnatal care recognized as a key strategy for improving maternal and neonatal outcomes.

In Maharashtra, traditional and Ayurvedic postnatal care practices continue to be widely followed, particularly in rural and tribal regions. These practices are rooted in the Ayurvedic concept of *Sutika Paricharya*, which emphasizes restoration of strength, balancing *Vata dosha*, promotion of lactation, and prevention of postnatal ailments through regulated diet, herbal medicines, massage, and herbal baths. Indigenous knowledge related to postnatal care is primarily preserved and transmitted by traditional midwives and elderly women.

Medicinal plants such as *Embelia ribes* (Vavding), *Lepidium sativum* (Aliv), *Chrysopogon zizanioides* (Khaskhas), *Asparagus racemosus* (Shatavari), *Withania somnifera* (Ashwagandha), *Curcuma longa* (Turmeric), and *Trigonella foenum-graecum* (Fenugreek) are commonly used for their galactagogue, anti-inflammatory, and rejuvenating properties. Despite their widespread use, systematic documentation of these traditional practices remains limited. Therefore, documenting and analyzing indigenous Ayurvedic postnatal care practices in Maharashtra is essential for preserving traditional knowledge and supporting its integration into modern maternal healthcare systems.

II. METHODOLOGY

This study is based on systematic literature review and ethanobotanical surveys focusing on published research from Maharashtra and India. Sources included academic journals, ethanobotanical compilations, and databases documenting traditional medicinal plant use during postpartum care. Primary literature on plant species and postnatal practices was reviewed to compile documented species and uses.

The study was conducted in selected villages of (Wadner Bholaji and Nandura) of Buldhana district, Maharashtra. The district is located in the westernmost part of the Vidarbha region. Their culture places highest value on agriculture, Marathi is the major language by the people in the area, respectively.

Study Participants

The target participants were selected based on the convenience sampling method with the help of village health nurse (VHN) and local village informants. The study population comprised married women who

experienced traditional practices during using medicinal plant products during postnatal period. a woman care taker with traditional knowledge pertained to postnatal care, ingredients of herbal formulations, method of preparations, period of

consumption and dietary regimen followed during postnatal care. We conducted a questionnaire-based survey along with focus group discussion and it was conducted in selected villages with groups of 10 women.

Table: Medicinal plants used in traditional practices during postnatal care

Sr. No.	Botanical name	Family name	Marathi name	Part used
1.	<i>Embelia ribes</i>	Primulaceae	Vavding	Fruit
2.	<i>Anethum graveolens</i>	Apiaceae	Balant-shopa	Fruit
3.	<i>Linum usitatissimum</i>	Linaceae	Jawas	Seeds
4.	<i>Lepidium sativum</i>	Brassicaceae	Aliv	seeds
5.	<i>Prunus dulcis</i>	Rosaceae	Badam	Seeds
6.	<i>Zinziber officinale</i>	Zingiberaceae	Sunth	Stem
7.	<i>Cuminum cyminum</i>	Apiaceae	Jira	Fruit
8.	<i>Asparagus racemosus</i>	Asparagaceae	Shatavari	Roots
9.	<i>Trigonella foenum-graecum</i>	Fabaceae	Fenugreek	Seeds and Leaves
10.	<i>Spinacia oleracea</i>	Amrantaheae	Palak	Leaves
11.	<i>Amaranthus spinous</i>	Amrantaheae	Tanduljira	Leaves
12.	<i>Allium sativum</i>	Amaryllidaceae	Garlic	Fruit and
13.	<i>Curcuma longa</i>	Zingiberaceae	Halad	Fruit
14.	<i>Papaver somniferum</i>	Papveraceae	Khaskhas	Seeds
15.	<i>Hibiscus sabdariffa</i>	Malvaceae	Ambadi	leaf
16.	<i>Anacardium occidentale</i>	Anacardiaceae	Godambi	Seeds
17.	<i>Elettaria Cardamomum</i>	Zingiberaceae	Elaichi	Seeds
18.	<i>Myristica fragrans Hott.</i>	Myristicaceae	Jaiphal	Fruit
19.	<i>Anacardium occidentale L.</i>	Anacardiaceae	Kaju	Fruit
20.	<i>Azadirachta indica</i>	Meliaceae	Neem	Leaves
21.	<i>Allium sativum</i>	Amaryllidaceae	Lasun	Peel

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The following herbal formulations were prepared during post-natal period helps to rejuvenate and warming the body, improves contraction of the uterus and encourage proper blood flow, improves digestion and prevents excess of vaginal discharge, increases breast milk secretion.

Formulation 1

Medicated Water: - Water given to the new mother is boiled with *Embelia ribes* (Vavding seeds) (anti-parasitic/worm-destroying) and filtered. This lukewarm water is used for drinking purpose for 3 months after delivery.

Formulation 2

Aliv Kheer: - Aliv Kheer (*Lepidium sativum*) is a highly nutritious, traditional Maharashtrian pudding made from Aliv seeds (Garden Cress), milk, and jaggery. Known for its warming properties, it is commonly consumed in breakfast to boost immunity, highly recommended for lactating mothers to increase milk production, improve haemoglobin levels, and promote bone strength.

Formulation 3

Badam Halwa: - *Prunus dulcis* (Almond) and *Papaver somniferum* (poppy seed) powder is soaked in milk overnight.

In the morning, the soaked mixture is cooked in ghee in a pan.

Sugar is added and the mixture is cooked well. It helps in reducing stress and improves overall recovery after childbirth.

Formulation 4

Lapsi: Clarified butter is seasoned with *Cuminum cyminum* (cumin seeds) and wheat flour is added and roasted for few minutes and then water is added to it. When water starts boiling jaggery is added. The final product is a semiliquid preparation. This Lapsi is used for lunch and dinner for 5 days after delivery to mother.

Formulation 5

Dry Fruit Laddus: Dry roast almonds, cashew nuts, walnuts, pistachios, Godambi, Dry Dates, Coconut powder separately, allow them to cool, and grind them coarsely. Fry the edible gum in ghee until it puffs up and then crush it lightly. Heat ghee in a pan, add the powder of all dry fruit add Fenugreek seed powder, Sunth, Cardamon and nutmeg mix well on a low flame. Cook the mixture for a few minutes until it binds together and releases aroma. While the mixture is still warm, shape it into small laddus and allow them to cool.

Formulation 6

Mukhwas: Dry roast balant shopa, sesame seeds, flax seeds, and carom seeds separately on low heat until they release a mild aroma. It gives to Mother 2-3 times. it Improves digestion and relieves gas and bloating and it also helps uterine cleansing and postpartum recovery.

Formulation 7

Medicated bath: - In postnatal care, powdered *Curcuma longa* is applied externally, followed by gentle abdominal massage with gingelly oil. Medicated bath water is prepared by boiling coarse powder of *Curcuma longa*, a minimal quantity of *Piper nigrum*, and the leaves and bark of *Mangifera indica* Linn, and is used for bathing women after childbirth. This medicated bath helps in maintaining hygiene, prevents microbial infections, reduces inflammation, promotes wound healing, relieves body pain and fatigue, improves blood circulation, and supports overall physical recovery of the mother.

Medicated Smoke Exposure: -

The use of medicated smoke is a traditional postnatal practice in which selected medicinal herbs and aromatic substances are burnt to generate therapeutic smoke, to which the new mother is gently exposed. Commonly used materials include *Azadirachta indica* (neem) leaves, *Curcuma longa* (turmeric powder), *peel of Garlic burnt on* dried cow dung cakes. This practice is believed to have antimicrobial and antiseptic properties that help reduce the risk of postnatal infections. Medicated smoke exposure also helps maintain body warmth, relieve body pain and fatigue, support uterine involution, and promote overall recovery and well-being of the mother during the postnatal period.

The vegetables commonly used during the postnatal period include *Abelmoschus esculentus*, *Spinacia oleracea*, *Trigonella foenum-graecum*, *Amaranthus spinosus*, *Papaver somniferum*, and *Sesamum indicum*. These selected vegetables are incorporated into the diet throughout the postnatal period, usually for 40 days. It is traditionally believed that the medicinal plants used in postnatal formulations and dietary practices possess heat-producing properties that help warm the body and prevent exposure to cold conditions during the postnatal phase. Such warm ingredients aid in expelling wind from the uterus, maintaining body warmth, improving digestion, enhancing breast milk secretion, and acting as mild laxatives.

IV. CONCLUSION

The present investigation provides valuable insights into traditional postnatal care practices prevalent in the Buldhana district of Maharashtra, India. The study systematically documents medicinal plants used as formulations, along with decoctions and dietary preparations during postnatal care. Similar studies across different regions of Maharashtra are essential to further enrich and preserve this traditional knowledge.

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