

## Breast Milk and Breast Feeding – An Ayurveda Outlook W.S.R. To World Breast Feeding Week

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### ABSTRACT:

Breast milk feeding is the right of every mother and newborn. Unquestionably breast milk is the complete food as well as remedy for newborn babies. Ayurveda system of Indian medicine, not only emphasized on the quantity of breast milk but also on the quality of breast milk, through the process of breast milk purification (*Stanya Shodhana*). According to Ayurveda breast milk gets vitiated with Dosha (houmer viz. Vata, Pitta and Kapha) and causes different diseases including growth and developmental disorders. In order to treat those diseases, purification of milk *Stanya Shodhana* (breast milk purification) and *Stanya Janana Upaya* (breast milk secretion enhancing measure) explained in Ayurveda. Globally millions of newborns suffers from mortality and morbidity due to inadequate breast feeding. In order to improve the coverage of breast feeding globally, World Alliance for Breast Feeding Initiatives (WABI) along with World health Organization (WHO) and UNICEF has been started the celebration of breast feeding week in first week of August with different theme every year, since last 25 years. Through this campaign is successful in mass awareness and in training of mothers, the outcome can be improved with the use of Association of these Ayurveda measures with World Breast feeding Week Program could be very promising and helpful to today's health community to reduce the neonatal mortality and morbidity. This article highlights the importance of the role of awareness about this Ayurveda *Stanya Shodhana* and *Stanya Janana Kashaya* through World Breast Feeding Week to improve the outcome of the alliance.

**Key World:** Ayurveda, *Stanya*, *Stanya Shodhana*, *Stanya Janana*, World Breast Feeding Week (WBW), World health Organization (WHO)

### INTRODUCTION:

Every animate has tendency to produce progeny. After the birth rearing of the newborn is very crucial task for parents, especially the mother, as mother has to breast feed the baby for long duration. Breast milk is the right of every mother as well as the baby. Breast milk is the only complete and holistic food as well as remedy for newborn baby. In ancient time breast feeding was practiced as main practice with caution, care and priorities.

Ayurveda the ancient and indigenous system of Indian medicine describes about the maternal care, pregnancy, care during labour, post natal care, care of mother during breast feeding and the child rearing under the heading of *Kaumarabhritya*. In Ayurveda breast milk is called as '*Matru Stanya*'. According to Ayurveda '*Matru Stanya*' is the only congenial diet available to newborn baby which is easily digestible and at the same time having potential for healthy growth of the baby [1]. Hence, *Stanya* is the only complete and healthy food for neonates. Ayurveda described the process of formation of *Stanya* [1] along with the different causes of vitiation of breast milk [2], and procedures to purifying the breast milk (*Stanya Shuddhi* [1]) and measures to enhance the quantity of breast milk [2].

According to theory of Ayurveda newborn is completely depend on mother for nutritional and emotional care. Newborn is not getting exposure to external environmental factors till 6-8 month independently, in addition digestive capacity is less and digestion function is very poor, therefore maternal milk is the only source to get way to disease causing factors. Therefore, all diseases get spread to newborn through maternal breast milk.

### **Theory of milk production, vitiation, and purification in ayurveda**

*Stanya* or breast milk is produced from the diet consumed by the mother. The qualities of breast milk are depending on the quality of diet consumed by mother. Diet consumed by mother get distributed in three parts, one for maternal nutrition, second for fetal nutrition and last one for milk production. If mother is taking non congenial diet during pregnancy and lactation, it will cause production of milk vitiated with Dosha. Such a vitiated breast milk whenever consumed by child, it causes different diseases in the breast feed babies. *Vata*, *Pitta* and *Kapha Dosha* cause eight different types of *Stanyadushti* (vitiating of breast milk). These different eight types of *Stanyadushti* is the leading cause of all infantile diseases ranging from simple cold to life threatening sepsis. Therefore as per Ayurveda vitiated breast milk is the unique and prime etiological factor in almost all breast feed babies for almost all diseases other than trauma. In addition there is no other food or medicine other than maternal milk is indicated in newborn babies for nutrition and treatment.

Considering this fact about the physiology and etiology of diseases of breast feed babies, it is very clear that, the ideal way to treat such diseases is to purify the breast milk of mother. This breast milk purification is very unique and scientific treatment modality explained in Ayurveda.

Ayurveda described the treatment of *Stanya* related ailments as administration of *Stanya Shodhana* and *Stanya Janana Kashaya* along with healthy feeding techniques. Though the time has been changed in multiple centuries the basic fundamentals of the Ayurveda treatments are the same and can be followed as it is in today's technical and scientific era.

In the today's era of modernization the human life passes through technologies and development which makes the life style busy for women. Women start to work in every province of the civilization and therefore they can offer very less time for child rearing. Especially this situation upset the breast feeding practices more as it is the issue of privacy, beauty, and esteem for each and every woman. On one hand there are multiple problems to establish healthy and complete breast feeding, while on the other hand there is increased prevalence of neonatal mortality and morbidity. Considering these important facts about the breast feeding, different health societies, medical professionals and researchers has been started to work to establish healthy breast feeding practices in all the strata's of the societies in all the countries. Very first step in this direction was started with World Alliance Breastfeeding Initiative [WABI]. Later the initiative of WABI was join with World Health Organization [WHO] and United Nation International Child Emergency Fund [UNICEF] and the mission is transformed into the annual event as World Breastfeeding Week [WBW] and is celebrating on the first week of August since 1992. There is a continuous education and awareness programs under the world breastfeeding day since last 25 years with different themes to improve the standards of breastfeeding practices and to reduce the neonatal mortality and morbidity. There is a very positive impact of this initiative globally and the event is celebrated in around 225 countries on first week of August. All these aspects of breast milk and breast feeding have been discussed in insightful way along with qualities of breast milk in Ayurveda.

Apart from the social awareness and technical issues, quality and quantity of breast milk is also the important area that should be looked to. This article highlights the importance of concept of Ayurveda '*Matru Stanya*' and its purification and quality to improve the healthy neonatal outcome. This is key message to modern health world that Ayurveda principles should be adjoined with the theme of modern WHO campaign like WBW.

## AIMS & OBJECTIVES:

- To discuss on Ayurveda outlook of breast milk and breast feeding and highlights its importance in today's context of World Breast Feeding Week.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS:

For the present review work, different editions of Ayurveda classical books, along with Sanskrit and Hindi commentaries were critically reviewed. Data on health care practices and national health care policies were accessed from websites and literatures of official ministries, especially Ministry of Health & Family Welfare [1], Government of India, textbooks of pediatrics [1,2,3] Family Welfare Survey Documents [4] etc. Other relevant documents were also screened from digital sources. Data accessed from the official website of World Breast Feeding Week [1].

## OBSERVATIONS:

Considering the importance of breastfeeding, and in order to increase the coverage of breastfeeding and to reduce the post natal complications, WABI along with WHO and UNICEF has organized the World breastfeeding week in the last 25 years with different themes.

Over a period of time achievements regarding the tasks of breast feeding has been achieved, but on continuous surveillance it has been found that continuous mass education, awareness, and training is still required and therefore annually first week of August is celebrated as the breast feeding week.

**Table 1:** Year wise theme of WABA and WBFW [1].

WBFW Year	WBFW Theme
1992	BFHI – What you can do to assure your neighborhood hospital or health facility is baby friendly!
1993	Women, work and breastfeeding: everybody benefits! – Mother friendly workplace initiative action
1994	Protect breast feeding: Making the code Work – MAMMA
1995	Breast Feeding: Empowering Women – Support women to breast feed. Breastfeeding is a woman's right!
1996	Breast Feeding: A community responsibility
1997	Breast Feeding: Nature's Way – WABA 97
1998	Breast Feeding: The Best investment – WABA 98
1999	Breast Feeding: Education for life – WABA 99
2000	Breast Feeding: Breast Feeding it's your right – we protect, promote and support your right to breast feed – WABA 2000
2001	Breast Feeding in the information age – WABA -2001
2002	Breast Feeding: Healthy Mothers and Healthy Babies WABA-2002
2003	Breast Feeding in a globalized World for peace and justice
2004	Excusive Breast Feeding: the Gold Standard – SAFE, SOUND, SUSTAINABLE
2005	Breast Feeding and Family Foods: Loving and Healthy
2006	Code Watch 25 years of protecting Breast Feeding since 1981
2007	Breast Feeding - The 1 <sup>st</sup> Hour – Save One million babies!
2008	Mother Support: going for the gold – everyone wins

2009	Breast Feeding – A Vital Emergency Response Are You Ready?
2010	Breast Feeding: Just 10 Steps – The Baby friendly Way
2011	Talk to me! Breast Feeding – a 3D experience?
2012	20 <sup>th</sup> World Breastfeeding week – Understanding the past, planning for future
2013	Breast Feeding Support: Close to Mothers
2014	Breast Feeding: A winning Goal for Life
2015	Breast Feeding and Work: Let's Make it works
2016	Breast Feeding: A key to Sustainable Development
2017	Sustaining Breast Feeding Together
2018	Breast Feeding: Foundation of Life
2019	Empower Parents: Enable Breastfeeding
2020	Support Breast Feeding for Healthier Planet
2021	Protect Breast Feeding: A Shared Responsibility
2022	Set up for breast feeding – Educate and Support
2023	Enable Breast Feeding- Making Difference for working planet

Ayurveda gave a prime importance to Stanya and Stanyapana in classical texts. As per Ayurveda Dosha Siddhanta (fundamental theory), Stanya (Breast Milk) gets vitiated with the, Dosha which ultimately gets vitiated because of faulty life style and diet of mother. Three fundamental Dosha (*Vata*, *Pitta* and *Kapha*) causes eight different types of Vitiations in breast milk called as *Stanyadosha*. These eight *Stanyadosha* causes different diseases like

**Table 2: Ashtavidha Stanya Dosha according to Ayurveda [1]:**

Sl. No.	Pradhana Dosha	Dushti Prakara	Vyadhi
1	<i>Vata</i>	<i>Vairasya</i>	<i>Karshya, Aruchi</i>
2		<i>Phenasanghata</i>	<i>Kshamaswara, Baddha Vit Mutra, Krichchhrat Stanya Pravartana, Vatika Shirsha Roga, Pinasa</i>
3		<i>Raukshya</i>	<i>Balarhasa</i>
4	<i>Pitta</i>	<i>Vaivarnya</i>	<i>Nila, Pita, Asita Varni Stanya, Ushna Sharira, Stanya Nabhinandati</i>
5		<i>Daurgandhya</i>	<i>Pandu, Kamala</i>
6	<i>Kapha</i>	<i>Atisnigdha</i>	<i>Chhardi, Kunthana, Lalau, Nidra, Klama, Shwasa, Kasa, Praseka</i>
7		<i>Paichchhilya</i>	<i>Lalalu, Shunavakra, Jadya</i>
8		<i>Gaurava</i>	<i>Hridroga</i>

From Ayurveda perspective, not only the quantity of the breast milk but also the quality of the breast milk is essential for the healthy growth and development of newborn. There are certain measures has been mentioned in Ayurveda regarding the purification of breast milk.

## DISCUSSION:

Unquestionably maternal milk is the only complete food for newborn babies. Secondly human milk is species specific. As it is species specific, only maternal milk have potential to increase the immunity, memory, intellectual, growth and development of baby at optimum level. According to Ayurveda the purity of breast milk is very essential for the healthy growth and development. If maternal milk is vitiated with *Dosha* like

*Vata, Pitta and Kapha* it is not able to offer the baby healthy growth, despite it causes the diseases and affected growth and development.

*Vata, Pitta and Kapha Dosha* produces different diseases explained in table no. 1. Malnutrition, failure to gain weight, heart diseases, anemia, jaundice, facial edema, breathlessness, pneumonia, excess salivation, vomiting, cough etc [1].

Hence though there are multiple program and medical trainings has been running under breast feeding week there is less success in preventing the neonatal mortality and morbidity. Therefore addition of some new policies on Ayurveda background in breast feeding week which focuses on *Stanya Shodhana* or breast milk purification is essential and should be added at least at national level.

For *Stanya Shodhana* or maternal milk purification, Ayurveda *Shodhana* or *Panchakarma* [Ayurveda body procedures] and administration of herbal drugs should be added to maternal diet and medicine. Once there is purification of breast milk there is an indication of administration of herbal powders which enhances the maternal breast milk secretion, called as *Stanya Janana Dravya* [1]. *Stanya Shodhana Dravya* improves the maternal metabolic biochemical reactions and improves the quality of maternal milk. Once metabolism is improved galactagogue [breast milk secretion] are administered and should be continued for optimum feeding demanding the need of newborn babies. Table no 2 shows the list of drugs having *Stanya Shodhana* and *Stanya Janana* properties.

**Table 2:** Stanya Shodhana and Stanya Janana Kashaya.

Name of Kashaya	Drugs
<i>Stanya Shodhana Kashaya</i>	<i>Patha, Mahaushadha, Suradaru, Musta, Moorva, Guduchi, Vatsakaphala, Kiratatikta, Katurohini, Sariva</i> [2]
<i>Stanya Janana Kashaya</i>	<i>Virana, Shalishashtika, Ikshuvalika, Darbha, Kusha, Kasha, Gundra, Itkata</i> [3]

After analysis of the alliance and progress of breast feeding week it is cleared that, Ayurveda principles and policies could be added for better running of breast feeding week and improves the coverage and success of program to reduce the neonatal mortality and neonatal morbidity.

Along with the work on social issues which are focused and tackled through World Breast feeding Week campaign additional efforts on quality of breast milk or *Matru Stanya* helps to enhance the effectiveness of breast feeding and could help to reduce the neonatal mortality and morbidity significantly.

## CONCLUSION:

World breast feeding week is the global maternal and neonatal health initiative works at social and community level through different health alliances, organizations, and health disciplines. The alliance of this global health initiative with Ayurveda principles and policies look to be more promising and fruitful for better coverage and outcomes of the program.

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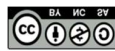
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