

STUDY ON TRADITIONAL TOOLS USED FOR FEEDING IN KSHIRAPA PERIOD

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Total life span of a person classified into several age groups considering various factors in Ayurvedic texts. According to Sushruta and Kashyapa Samhita, *Kshirapa* is the period up to one year of age, after the birth of a baby. In the *Kshirapa* period breast milk was the only compatible and wholesome food for infants. Breast milk contains all nutrients and antibodies a baby needs in the first 6 months of life, with right proportions. Its composition even changes according to the baby's changing needs. The mother should be in good physical and mental health, though she has sufficient breast milk to feed, and also the baby should be able to suck breast milk. When the baby cannot suck the breast milk directly or in absence of breast milk, expressed breast milk or supplements should be given to the baby using various tools. Main objective of this study was collecting and analyzing data about strategies which were used in ancient times in Sri Lanka. This research project was conducted as a qualitative study. Data was collected and compiled from Indigenous medical text, ola leaves, relevant lexicons, different web sites and discussions with Ayurveda and indigenous physicians. Organized data into logical themes and analyzed them according to theme-list and content analysis methods. Findings revealed that the Krishna Vata (*ficus benghalensis*) is one of the leaves used for that because of its natural appearance. Other tools are used by hereditaries like cloth wick, spoons, jack leaf (*Artocarpus heterophyllus*) and Gansooriya leaf (*Thespesia populnea*). The metal tool '*paaladaya*' was found by one of the traditional practitioners. By using these tools breast milk, other milk (*Ashta kshira*), porridge or medicated water can be fed. Using these environmentally friendly and easily available tools do not cause any side effects like currently using plastic tools. It is important to find out other feeding techniques which were used in traditional culture and make awareness of mothers and encourage them to practice.

Keywords: *Kshirapa*, Krishna vata, *kshira*, *paaladaya*, *Traditional Tools*