

CONCEPT OF EUGENICS IN AYURVEDA***¹Dr. Neelam Sagwan**¹M.D. Scholar P.G. Department of Sharir Rachana Nia, Jaipur.Article Received on
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Corresponding Author*Dr. Neelam Sagwan**

M.D. Scholar P.G.

Department of Sharir

Rachana Nia, Jaipur.

ABSTRACT

The term eugenics in Greek roots means “good in birth “was coined by Francis Galton in 1883. Although the technical term Eugenics does not feature in ancient text but the theme of Eugenics is vibrant and emphasize repeatedly almost all classical text especially in *Charaka* and *Sushruta Samhita* It is an outstanding contribution of *Ayurveda* on Eugenics is being described on the following heads i.e. like marriage between different clan (*Atulyagotriya*), age of conception, therapy applied for *Pumsavana*, specific regimen for both the partners who desire to have a healthy child before cohabitation. Though *Ayurveda* does not implicate the literary aspect of Eugenics in much detail but its described scientifically and methodically in our *Samhita*.The review focuses on the various concept and methods of eugenics de- scribed in *Ayurveda*.

KEYWORDS: Eugenics, *Pumsavana*, *Atulyagotriya*.**INTRODUCTION**

In present scenario the prevalence of congenital diseases is increasing. According to WHO 24 out of 1000 births are suffering from birth defects. *Ayurveda* has a deep insight about the congenital diseases which is explained in *Samhitas* by our *Acharyas*. They were very well versed with the concepts of genetics during that era. Various concepts have been explained by our *Acharyas* like the concept of *Atulyagotra*, proper age for conception, *Pumsavana Karma*, specific regimen for both the partners who desire to have a healthy child before cohabitation etc. Eugenics which is one among the emerging branches of Genetics, which aims at improving the genetic quality of human population.

Francis Galton coined the term, meaning “good in birth,” in 1883 who defined it as “the study of agencies under social control that may improve or impair the racial qualities of future

generations, either physically or mentally".^[1] Eugenics aims to skew allele frequencies in future generations by allowing only people with certain genotypes perceived as valuable to reproduce, for the supposed benefit of the population as a whole. The goal of medical genetics, in contrast, is usually to skew allele frequencies in order to prevent suffering on a family level.^[2]

Eugenics can be divided into two types: Negative & positive eugenics Under negative eugenics, people with inferior and undesirable trait are prevented from reproducing.

Under positive eugenics, people with better & desirable traits are encouraged

NEGATIVE EUGENICS^[3]

Negative eugenics has as its goal the prevention of the deterioration of the human race through a reduction of the birth rate among the defectives so that they do not produce more children than are produced by the normal members of society.

Consanguineous Marriages

The prohibition of consanguineous marriages is a negative measure which would have no effect on the actual frequency of undesirable genes, but would diminish the proportion of persons who show certain undesirable traits. Most societies have some sort of tabbos or restrictions on marriage between close relatives. These may have arisen as a result of the observation that such marriages often produced defective children. As we have repeatedly emphasized in the study of genetics, most harmful traits are recessive and are, therefore, most likely to appear in the children of parents who are closely related. About the only practical extension of the present laws would be to extend the prohibition of cousin marriages to those states which do not now have such laws. If this were done, according to Haldane, it still would stop only about 56 % of the consanguineous matings, since many of these are incestuous or take the form of other relationships which are already prohibited by law. In the course of time, however, a law of this kind probably cause a significant reduction in the proportion of persons showing rather rare hereditary defects. Haldane has estimated that such a law would bring an eventual reduction of 2.5% of mental defects in the population as a whole – a small yet worth – while reduction.

Appropriate age of conception: Down's syndrome, most common congenital anomaly due to numerical aberration. This condition is commonly seen in primigravida.

POSITIVE EUGENICS^[4]

Positive eugenics attempts to enlarge the proportion of the children born by those in the population who have the most desirable hereditary characteristics. Some individuals, like the Nobel prize –winning geneticist, H.J Muller, have suggested not only increasing the number of children in the family of such persons, but that, through artificial insemination, outstanding men could serve as fathers to many more children than would be otherwise possible. Artificial insemination is already widely practiced to permit women whose husbands are sterile or have some serious hereditary affliction to bear children. In most of these cases, however, little consideration is given to the eugenic values involved.

Ayurvedic concept

- 1. Concept of Atulyagotra:** *Acharya Chakrapani* in his commentary states that when the person get married in the same *Kula* or *Gotra* it will be considered as *Adharma* because their children will be effected with genetic deformities.^[5]
- 2. Appropriate age for conception:** *Acharya Charaka* opines that a man desirous of longevity should not undergo coitus before the age of 16, after 70 years of age.^[6] Very young or old woman should not be impregnated. If a woman below 16 is impregnated by a man of below 25, either she will not conceive, or if at all conceives, she will have intrauterine death of the fetus, if the child is born, it would not live long or will have weak organs, ill health, deformed body parts etc, aged woman also should not be impregnated.^[7]
- 3.** The method by which the man with unimpaired *Shukra* and the woman with unimpaired *Shonita* and *Garbhashaya*, desirous of an excellent progeny can achieve their obejective. The couple should be treated with *Snehana* and *Swedana* therapies and thereafter *Doshas* from their body should be eliminated by the administration of *Vamana* and *Virechana* therapies. Then the couple should be brought to normalcy by following the *Sansarjana Karma*. After the elimination of the *Doshas*, *Asthapana* and *Anuvaasana Basti* should be administered to the couple. Man should also be administered *Ghrita* and *Ksheera* processed with *Madhura Aushadhas*. The woman should be given *Tila Taila* and *Masha* to eat.^[8]
- 4. Pumsavana Karma:** There is a process where quality and characters of foetus are improved by *Sansakaar*. It is called as *Pumsavana Sansakaar*. The process by which healthy progeny of desired sex can be achieved after conception like *Vatashung*, *Urda*, yellow mustard and curd are mixed and taken in *Pushyanakshatra* and flour of rice along

with water should be taken as *Nasya* in right nostril if a male child is desired and left nostril if a female child is desired at suitable time.^[9] This is a major contribution in the field of genetics.

DISCUSSION

All the living beings have a tendency to pass its traits and characters to its progeny. Eugenics which deals with the enhancing the genetic quality of a society. In the above literature two types of eugenics has been dealt with. Positive eugenics deals with improvement of better and desirable traits which are beneficial to the society. On the other hand negative eugenics deals with the prevention of undesirable traits. By artificial insemination, goal of positive eugenics is achieved. In this method desirable traits present in the sperm and ovum are preserved under favourable conditions in banks. Which can be used for longer period of time. In *Ayurveda*, a couple desirous of having a healthy and excellent progeny, certain regimens are proposed before cohabitation which aim at enchancing the genetic quality of the sperm and of ovum. Similarly after conception, but prior to manifestation of sex in the fetus, *Pumsavana Karma* is done, so that a child of desired sex and with best qualities is born. by avoiding marriages in close blood relations i.e consanguineous marriages, autosomal recessive disorders can be prevented. Age also plays a very significant role in the manifestation of congenital disorders. Downs syndrome is one such example. In *Ayurveda* also marriage between same *Gotra* is prohibited, it is considered as *Adharma*, leading to congenital deformities in the child. Appropriate age is necessary for a healthy progeny. If conception occurs at very young age, leads to intrauterine death due to immature sperm and ovum. On the other hand at older age the child will be born with deformities, due to aging of the ovum.

CONCLUSION

From above discussion the following headings can be grouped as follows:

Under positive Eugenics: *Pumsavana Karma* and specific regimen for both the partners who desire to have a healthy child before cohabitation.

Under negative Eugenics: Concept of *Atulyagotra* and appropriate age of conception.

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