

Let Us Know

Mother's Mental – Physical Health Is Necessary For Healthy Country

Dr. Jayesh J. Sheth

'Features of a son are seen from cradle' is a well-known notion. All parents expect that their child will be talented like Einstein or become devotional to parents like Ramkrishna and will be intelligent; but no medicine is discovered for it. It is true that 'Designer Baby' is the gift of 21st century but it can impart only color and appearance, and not the character or intellect. Character, cleverness or intelligence is determined by group of 3 billion nucleotides gifted to us by nature. Only 30,000 Genes are discovered from this group that are responsible for our several activities. This is only like a drop in the sea, because the functionality of these GENES is still not known completely to us. The major reason of it is that the effect of environment is different on each person. It is called Epigenetics. The highest scientific body of USA (NIH-National Institutes of Health) is continuing research work since 2008 on the subject.

It is mainly the study of effect of environment; food and life style on our genes. The nature, intelligence, appearance and immunity against the diseases etc. are not the same amongst the sons and daughters of the same parents staying in the same home. The main reason for this is

that during each pregnancy of the mother, food, reading, surrounding environment, thinking and movement etc. has an effect on the child in the womb. It is known through scientific research that during the pregnancy if good reading, good thinking, and good music are heard by mother, her children will possess a happy mood and have a positive attitude. On the contrary, if the mother during pregnancy has suffered extreme stress, had ghastly reading, suffered home disputes, see horror movies; her child will have insolent and introvert attitude.

According to Journal of Fetal Medicine, the mother who consumes excessive food during pregnancy, the child will have a higher probability to be affected by diabetes.

According to the research of Peter Giuckmam and other scientists (in the scientific Magazine, New England Journal of Medicine, 2008), intrauterine exposure to internal and external environment will determine future chronic deceases to the child. Inadequate nourishment, lesser growth rate during 'in utero' life results into diseases of longer duration like diabetes, heart disease, and blood pressure; that are the major problems of 21st century. Thus, the

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functions to child's genes are assigned with in the womb.

According to a hypothesis "changes in nutrients and functioning of endocrine glands during 'in utero' growth permanently determine the appearance, body built, physical activities etc. of the child". The risk of heart disease, metabolism or endocrine gland diseases are also determined (American Journal of Clinical Nutrition, 2000). If we presume something in addition, we can think; why millions of people suffer from long term deceases like Diabetes, Heart decease, mental stress etc. in spite of so many medicines and research. The main reason for this is the condition of mother during the pregnancy.

Therefore, when a child is developing in the womb, a proper care, guidance, food and movement, thinking, cheerful environment for the mother and scientific research only will make future generations healthy and efficient. Our scientific institutions (ICMR, DBT) etc. have constituted a chief committee. It emphasizes research on the effect of mother's food, influence of nutrition on the child's development right from fertilization to developmental stages of child. According to the findings of a research

project awarded to our institute and other institutions by DBT (Department of Biotechnology), about 30 to 40 % mothers have deficiency of vitamin B12 and folic acid. They are very essential in formation of our genes. Therefore an iron is added mainly with folic acid now a day; but add in vitamin B12 along with proportionate addition of iron is also necessary. The health of the growing child in the womb is also thus improved.

Recently, BBC aired a documentary regarding 9/11 terrorist attack. There it was shown that the pregnant mothers who saw this episode, higher proportion of their children subsequently experienced mental stress as compared to those who did not see this documentary.

A study from Professor John Bartkovaski, a sociologist from Mississippi State University conducted on 16000 children concluded that those children who gained first grade had better self-control. Their behavior during good or bad events and their attitude with colleagues and teachers was influenced by the habit of prayers of their parents. The children whose parents practiced prayers regularly and talk to their children about religion, showed a higher proportion of self-

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control, social expertise and capacity to learn while, the children from parents with differences in religious prayers experienced higher mental stress.

According to Jewish perspective, mother's internal and external environment decides the future of the child to be born. Therefore, mother's womb is the first and sacred home of the child. Once a woman took her five months old child to the great philosopher Sigmund Freud and asked to educate the child, he said 'sister, you are late by 14 months! We get an endorsement from our mythology. When Muni Shri Ashtavakra was in the womb of mother Sunita, he heard a wrong recitation of a text by his father Uddalak and corrected him. Uddalak felt insulted and cursed the child to be born with all deformed eight organs (anga) but due to the knowledge imparted by his mother in the intrauterine life, Astavakra could defeat the Panditas during the discussions of religious books in the court of King Janaka.

Similarly Abhimanyu learnt six kothaas of chakravayuh (bastian strategy) in mother's womb only. While he could not learn the description of the remaining two kothas since the mother Subhadra felt asleep then. The great worrier Shivaji also learned

Sundarkand from mother Jijabai during her pregnancy.

उग्र सेनस्य वीरस्य यदु श्रेष्ठस्य यत् प्रभौ

चरित्र ते प्रपस्यामि शृणुश्वेकमना द्विज !!

The best king among the Yadavas was Ugrasen, was very strong, a great donor, well versed reader of vedas, religious, intelligent, guardian of people; yet his wife Padmavati delivered a monster like Kans. The original reason for this is that a demon named Gobhil deceitfully enjoyed Padmavati and the fetus went on growing for ten years without birth and ultimately Kans was born who was eventually killed by Lord Krishna. Similarly,

गते तसमित्त दुराचारे यानवे पापचारिणी

दुखेन मरतोडडविष्टा नृप कन्या रुरोय !!

Those who offer penance with a desire only to harass others for their joyous instinct then the penance cannot offer them beatitude.

Hiranyakashyap was such a furious ascetic. He inadvertently spoke Narayan Narayan while he was being served by his wife Kayaadhu. She conceived right at that time eventually giving birth to Prahlad. All these mythological and scientific evidences tell us that the programming of genes of a child

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takes place not only after the birth but it gets started from the conception itself. Therefore, the physical and mental health of the mother at the time of conception and prayers, good reading, good food and clean environment only help us build healthy, the best, and apropos country.

According to the opinion of one of the best philosophers of the world- Rabbi Yochanan Ben -, “Blessed be the one who gave birth to him”; means, his outstanding ability is a virtue attained by the blessings of God to the mother who has given him the birth.

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