

# Significance of *Shashtika Shali* as a Weaning Food in *Bala*

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**Abstract:** In the world, every infant and child has the right to good nutrition according to the “convention on the rights of the child.” Exclusive breast feeding is recommended until the baby is 6 months. Then weaning can be adopted for attaining the nutritional requirement in the baby. Ayurveda also suggests *Stanyapanayana* from the 6<sup>th</sup> month onwards. As per WHO, Undernutrition is estimated to be associated with 2.7 million child deaths annually or 45% of all child deaths. The first 2 years of child's life are particularly important, as optimal nutrition during this period lowers morbidity and mortality. *Shashtika Shali* is a variety of rice well known for its medicinal properties. It is harvested in 60 days. *Shashtika* means the number 60 and the word *Shali* means rice. Many Ayurveda *Acharyas* including *Kashyapa* has mentioned about *Shashtika Shali*. Hence an attempt will be made to study significance of *Shashtika Shali* as a weaning food in *Bala*.

**Keywords:** *Shashtika Shali*, *Stanya*, *Stanyapanayana*, Weaning.

## 1. Introduction

Breast milk is an important component and the initial source of nutrition in every being's life. Ayurveda uses the term *Stanya* for breast milk. Ayurveda and modern medicine recommends exclusive breast feeding up to 6 months.

*Acharya Kashyapa* described that good breast-feeding results in good growth, strength, longevity and good health of child as well as not causing any troubles or diseases for children.

Ayurveda has beautifully explained the method for baby care and nutrition. This science emphasizes physical as well as mental factors responsible for wellbeing of mother and child.

Ayurveda conveys extensive information regarding introduction of solid foods to babies under the term *Stanyapanayana*.

*Stanyapanayana* is recommended after *Annaprashana samskara*.

WHO states that it will be important to realise that, breast milk alone will no longer enough to meet an infant's nutritional requirements after certain age. Which leads to nutritional disorders [1].

According to WHO, globally in 2020, 149 million children under 5 were estimated to be stunted (too short for the age), 45 million were estimated to be wasted (too thin for the height).

Few children receive nutritionally adequate and safe complimentary foods; in many countries less than a fourth of

infants 6-23 months of age meet the criteria of dietary diversity and feeding frequency that are appropriate for the age and also mentioned that introduction of nutritionally adequate and safe complementary foods at 6 months together with continued breast feeding up to 2 years of age or beyond.

In *Ayurveda Samhitas*, different food supplements that are reaching the nutritional values has mentioned.

*Acharya Vagbhata*, mentioned about different *Modakas*, Eg: *Priyala Majjadi Modaka* etc. [2].

*Shashtika Shali* is considered as *Shreshta* variety of *Vrihi* and is having many medicinal properties.

The cereals are the important and main source of food in different parts of India. They form an important source of energy, iron, protein in the Indian diet and also supply certain amount of fat [3].

*Shashtika Shali* made in to *choorna* and is given traditionally as porridge as weaning food for children.

### A. *Stanya*

Breast milk is considered as the nectar to the child. It contains 3%-5% fat, 0.8%-0.9% protein, 6.9%-7.2% carbohydrate calculated as lactose, and 0.2% mineral constituents expressed as ash. It's energy content is 60-75Kcal/100ml. Ayurveda and Modern science suggests exclusive breast feeding up to 6 months. *Stanya* is *Rasa Prasada Bhaga*. It means, *Stanya* is formed from *Rasa* which is manifested from the *Ahara* which had taken by the mother [4], [5].

*Acharya Kashyapa* mentioned that, *Stanya* is formed from *Rakta* during the pregnancy period [6].

*Susrutha* says that, the milk is ejected from the breast by thought, touch, sight, and physical contact of the baby. This physiology is almost similar to the one in ejaculation. Maintenance of lactation is mainly by the uninterrupted affection towards the baby [7].

Additional food or liquid not required in infants feeding on breast milk during first 6 months, as breast milk completely supplies nutritional requirements of child and also protects child from infection, providing immunity [8].

As per *Kashyapa*, unimpaired strength, body parts and longevity, sufficient growth and development in a disease free state along with comfortable state of child indices of the child, best measures the quality and quantity of the *Stanya* from the

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mother [9].

**B. Stanyapanayanam (Weaning)**

The definition says that, wenian means ‘to accustom’. Weaning means accustoming the infant to nourishment other than mother’s milk. The weaning foods should be culturally acceptable, adequate, locally available and inexpensive, easily prepared at home, clean and hygienic etc.

Around the age of 6 months, an infant’s need for energy and nutrients starts to exceed what is provided by breast milk, and complimentary foods are necessary to meet those needs. An infant of this age group are also developmentally capable for other foods or if they are given inappropriately, an infant’s growth may affect.

Vagbhata opines that, well cooked soft semi solid form of food is given initially and which should have Sarvarasa. WHO also says the same.

Balanced diet is defined as the diet that should be nutritionally adequate and appropriate with micro and macro nutrients to ensure proper growth and development. Balanced diet helps to stay healthy and disease free. A combination of carbohydrate rich food, protein source and fat rich food along salt makes nutritionally adequate complimentary food [10].

**C. Time for Weaning**

Weaning is the crucial time for upgrading your baby’s nutrition. It is a period of gradual shift of functioning of Gastro intestinal tract from digestion of milk to digestion of more complex foods [11].

The time for weaning is mentioned as Annaprashana in contemporary science. Acharyas such as Susrutha, Vagbhata, Sarangadhara, and Bhava Prakasha had told 6<sup>th</sup> month is the appropriate time for Annaprashana.

Annaprashana is a Samskara related to feeding of solid food for the first time to the baby.

Vagbhata says that, the child should be gradually taken away from breast feed after the teeth eruption. Laghu and Brimhana Ahara is indicated [12].

As per Kashyapa, 10<sup>th</sup> month is the appropriate time for Annaprashana. He advises Phalaprashana in 6<sup>th</sup> month [13].

The quantity equal to thumb after making it soft given to child in mouth 3 or 5 times after feeding “Pakoshna Leham Hitam”. In this, hot electuary is preferred for the baby [14].

**2. Factors Influencing Weaning Period**

Acharya Kashyapa says that, the physicians should consider the factors such as Desha, Kala, Agni Bala and according to congeniality.

As per WHO, energy need of complimentary foods for infants with average breast milk intake in developing countries are mentioned below.

Table 1

Energy Requirement	Age
200 Kcal/Day	6-8 Month
300 Kcal/Day	9-11 Month
550 Kcal/Day	12-23 Month

**A. Shashtika Shali**

Ayurveda mentioned that, Shashtika Shali is a variety of rice well known for its medicinal properties and is harvested in 60 days.

Shashtika in Sanskrit means 60, and Shali means rice.

Botanical Name: Oryza sativa

Fmily: Gramineae

**B. Qualities of Shashtika Shali [15]**

Rasa: Madhura

Guna: Laghu, Snigdha,

Virya: Sheeta

Karma: Tridoshaghna

Acharya Bhava prakasha, mentioned Shashtika Shali in Dhanya varga, and he explains that Rakta shali is the best variety when compared with Shashtika Shali, and also explained indications such as is Balada, jwara harini etc.

Dhanwantari Nighantu mentioned Shashtika Shali in Suvarnadi Varga.

Kayyadeva Nighantu mentioned this in Dhanya Varga, and he explained some extra qualities of Shashtika Shali, that is:

Guna: Sthira

Karma: Garahi

Raja Nighantu mentioned this in Shalyadi Varga and he explained that, it is Pathya, Deepana and having the property of Virya vridhhi.

Ashtanga Hridaya says that, Shashtika is considered as Sreshta among all types of Vrihi.

White variety of Shashtika Shali is considered as Sreshta and blackish variety is slightly inferior in quality.

As per Bhojana Kuthuhalam first chapter, Shashtika Shali is of white and black variety. The former one imparts taste, is cold in potency and cures effects of doshas, it is strength providing and wholesome in quality, it stimulates Agni and promotes virility. The black variety is of inferior quality compared to the white variety.

**3. Morphology**

Annular Grass

Length: Up to 50-150cm.

Stem: Erect, Smooth, Hair less and Hollow

Leaves length: 15-30 cm with ligule and auricle

Inflorescence: Terminal panicle

Rice grain: Oblong in shape

Distribution: Widely cultivated in Kerala

Vernacular Names:

English: Paddy, Rice

Hindi: Chaval, Dhana

Kannada: Matta

Malayalam: Navara

Table 2  
Classical categorization

Text book	Varga
Bhavaprakasha Nighantu	Dhanya Varga
Dhanwantari Nighantu	Suvarnadi Varga
Kaiyadeva Nighantu	Dhanya Varga
Raja Nighantu	Shalyadi Varga

#### 4. Traditional Remedies of *Shashtika Shali*

Cooked *Shashtika* rice porridge with ghee is beneficial for infants with low weight.

It is also good weaning food.

Diet for pregnant lady: Broth prepared with *Shashtika Shali* and *Mamsa* is good to increase foetal weight.

For Internal wounds: This rice is cooked with milk and other *Dravyas*.

Psoriasis: *Shashtika Shali Lepa* Externally.

Peptic Ulcer: *Shashtika Shali* with Jaggary

Urinary Tract Infections: Boiling water with *Navara* root for drinking is a di uretic.

*Shashtika Shali* as weaning food [16]:

*Acharya Kashyapa* says that, licking of the cooked liquid made with husk free *shashtika* rice or *purana shali*, mixed with oleaginous substances and salt then cooked in to *Lehya* form. It will promote the nourishment of the child.

#### 5. Discussion

*Shashtika Shali* is the best variety of *Vrihi*, which was used traditionally to given as a weaning food for infants.

*Acharya Kashyapa* had mentioned the recipe prepared with *Shashtika Shali* mixed with *snigdha dravyas* and salt. It is considered as *Brimhana* for the child. *Lavana rasa* is known to enhance appetite and remove *Srotorodha* ensuring maximum bio availability of nutrients. *Lehya* has been indicated so that the food is given in the semi solid form for better deglutition.

This *Shashtika Shali* is having *Madhura Rasa*, and *Laghu, Snigdha Guna*. So, it will be easily digestible to the child.

*Raja Nighantu* mentioned that, it is having *Deepana* and *Grahi* property. So, it will be more compatible for the child.

Different *Acharyas* have been mentioned various indications such as *Balada, Jwaraghna, Tridoshaghna, Virya vriddhi* etc.

Thus, this *Shashtika Shali* not only act as *Brimhana Dravya*, but also acts as a remedy for different diseases.

#### 6. Conclusion

*Shashtika* Variety of *Shali* is having large amount of medicinal values. So, it has been used as a remedy for many

diseases since ancient time. Due to its *Madhura Rasa, Laghu, Snigdha Gunas* and *Sheeta Veerya*, will make it more adaptable for children as a weaning food and is having *Balada* and *Virya vriddhikara* properties. So, we can assume that *Shashtika Shali* will act as a weaning food which is having high nutritional value to attain the nutritional requirement of an infant's body.

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