

1. **Garbhadhana** (means conception) is the first samskara among them. It is practiced on the first night of the marriage for the newly married couple in which Aahuti's (traditional offering with the help of Agni Deva) are offered by chanting Mantras. It also involves chanting some special mantra by laying a hand on the bride's forehead. **Garbhadhana** purifies the couple's soul and body thereby ensuring to conceive a pure and healthy foetus.
2. **Pumsavana** (samskara for having male child) is the second samskara practiced four months after conceiving a baby for having a male child. It is believed that Pumsavana helps one to have healthy and brave offspring
3. **Seemanta** (for having Normal delivery) is the third samskara practiced during the seventh month of pregnancy for having Normal delivery of the child. In case the mother who is conceiving the baby has any worries/negative feelings and / or anxiety, Seemanta gives strength to the mother as well as the infant and

help them to overcome any depression (anxiety neurosis).

4. **Jaatakarma** : The fourth samskara is Jaatakarma done after the child's birth. This samskara is of very much importance, as it is believed that Jaatakarma enhances the baby's growth. It is also a practice to get the horoscope of the new born baby to know about its future.
5. **Naamkarana** (naming ceremony) is the fifth Samskara wherein we decide the name of the child for his / her identity. The child is then placed in the Cradle with a prayer, seeking blessing for the child.
6. **Nishkraman** is the sixth Samskara wherein we introduce the child to the external world (that means the child is shown the external surrounding for the first time). The child is first shown the Sun, the Moon, stars. Also we believe every directions has its own lord (sides in clockwise direction)

7. **Annapraashana** (initial Food intake) is the seventh samskara wherein the child eats food for the first time. The food is to be fed with the help of Golden /Silver spoon. On this day, for the first time nivedita anna will be eaten by the child.
8. **Karnavedha Samskara** – usually performed in the sixth or seventh month after birth, consists of the piercing of the baby’s ear lobes, so ear rings may be worn.
9. **Choodakarma** is the eighth samskara in which hair of the infant is shaved off for the first time. Normally it is done when the male child is in the 3<sup>RD</sup> year. It is a big ceremony in Hindus. Some people have the tradition of giving the first hair to Tirupathi Timmappa in the very first year itself.
10. **Aksharabhyaasa:** begins a student’s primary education by ceremonially introducing the child to the alphabet
11. **Upanayana** (Thread Ceremony), the ninth samskara marks the beginning of *“Gurukul Vrata” and*

*'Bhramacharya'* . This samskara is done to purify the soul of the child and it enhances the grasping power and the intellect of the child. During the samskara the child pledges to live life in a particular way (as per Gurus instructions) and adhere to all kinds of hardship without complaining.

12. **Samaavartana** is the fifteenth samskara that ends the *'Bhramacharya'* and the pupil is free from all his pledge undertaken during *Upanayana* . Now he is a grown young man and has to choose his way towards life amongst *Pravruti* (Married life) and *Nivruti* (Sanyaas). Once he decides his way towards leading his life he seeks *Guru'*s consent for his choice of life and is accordingly blessed by his guru.

13. **Panchamahayagna** - A married couple performs the panchamahayajna, or five great sacrifices, daily. In this Samskara, one honours, in turn, the rishis (ancient seers of Truth), the gods, the ancestors, humankind, and all created beings.

14. **Vivaha** (Marriage) is the last, sixteenth Samskara wherein one decides to marry a girl / boy of his/ her choice. Marriage is always a big ceremony across the world. Only the customs are different. In India traditionally marriage takes place in presence of the entire community along with Special *Yagnya* . The groom and the bride pledge to be honest and loyal to each other. The mantra influence ones marital life and enhances their mutual love. It also blesses the married couple by showering upon all the pleasures and brings prosperity.
15. **Vanaprastha Samskara** – According to the Vedic tradition, vanaprastha is the third stage of life, following brahmacharya (Vedic student/disciple) and grihastha (householder). Here, a man leaves behind his life in the world and retires to the forest (with or without his wife), to live an ascetic life devoted to study of the scriptures and to meditation.
16. **Antyeshti Samskara** – The final samskara, the funeral rites, are known as antyeshti Samskara.