



## A REVIEW ON RAJASWALA PARICHARYA W.S.R TO MENSTRUAL HYGIENE IN PRESENT ERA

Soniya<sup>1</sup>, Meenakshi Pandey<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>PG Scholar- Dept. of SRPT,<sup>2</sup>Assistant Professor, Dept of SRPT, All India Institute of Ayurveda Sarita Vihar, New Delhi, India

Corresponding Author: [sonu.nagar90@gmail.com](mailto:sonu.nagar90@gmail.com)

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### ABSTRACT

A woman plays an important role in society. Future of the society and the universe revolves around a woman as she is the only person who can give birth to healthy progeny. A woman plays many roles being a daughter, a wife, a mother, and a caretaker. Due to changing lifestyle, physical and mental stress, and bad food habits, women in the reproductive age group suffers from various conditions related to the menstrual cycle like menorrhagia, dysmenorrhea, irregular menses, PCOD, endometriosis, etc. which seriously affect their health and happiness and also proves to be great discomfort. In the present era, women are now working and along with their careers, they have to manage household responsibilities also. This demanding lifestyle has made it very difficult to pay attention to their health and it disturbed the normal menstrual cycle causing serious disorders related to it. Ayurveda helps women to gain better health and quality of life by following *Paricharya* mentioned in ayurveda classics like *RajaswalaParicharya*, *GarbhiniParicharya*, and *SutikaParicharya*. This study is helpful to find out whether the *RajaswalaParicharya* affects the menstrual cycle and its associated symptoms. *RajaswalaParicharya* helps women respond healthily to the drastic physical and psychic changes during the menstrual cycle and in relieving most of the associated symptoms of the menstrual cycle.

**Key words:** Ayurveda, Hygiene, Menstrual cycle, *RajaswalaParicharya*, lifestyle

### INTRODUCTION

Throughout the life journey, women have to be passed from three phases –*Bala*(childhood), *Rajaswala* (menstruation/reproductive phase), and *vrid-*

*dha* (Old age-menopause)<sup>1</sup> Out of these *Rajaswala* periods is the largest and most important period as it is the fertile period necessary for reproduction. If this

phase is healthy then it will give better progeny. A female is called *Rajaswala*, during the menstruation period. In women, the *Raja* (menstrual blood) which is the product of *Rasa*, flows out of the body for 3 days, every month, after the age of 12 years and undergoes diminution by the age of 50 years<sup>2</sup>. In Ayurveda, the Codes and Conduct are mentioned for the *Rajaswala Stree* called *Rajaswala Paricharya*<sup>3</sup>. *Acharya* has mentioned following this *Rajaswala Paricharya* from the moment of appearance of Menstrual flow, for a period of three days. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, it has been observed that the incidences of various conditions related to the menstrual cycle like menorrhagia, dysmenorrhea, irregular menses, PCOD, endometriosis, and infertility increased<sup>4</sup>. So, it is necessary to follow again ancient *Rajaswala Paricharya* to get relief from such conditions and to gain a better healthy life.

### Aims and Objectives

- To compile and study all references about *Rajaswala Paricharya* and the Menstrual cycle from Ayurvedic texts and Modern Literature.
- To analyze the effect of *Rajaswala Paricharya* on the physiology of the menstrual cycle.
- To study the principles behind *Rajaswala Paricharya* and its application in the present era.
- To maintain the quality of menstruation by following some codes and conducts.
- To use *Rajaswala Paricharya* as a preventive measure against the complications related to menstruation.

### Materials and Methods

Ayurvedic texts like *Charak Samhita*, *Sushruta Samhita*, *Astang Sangraha*, and *Astang Hridaya* were thoroughly studied, and the results of the study were assessed classically. All the valuable articles were collected from [www.iamj.in](http://www.iamj.in), [www.wjpr.net](http://www.wjpr.net), [PUBMED](http://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/), <http://wjcpmt.com>, and [www.ijppr.humanjournal.com](http://www.ijppr.humanjournal.com).

*Rajaswala Paricharya* helps women to deal with her physiological changes taking place in the body during the menstrual period. It will help women to become healthy both physically and mentally. Hygiene during this period prevents various gynaecological disorders. *Rajaswalaparicharya* acts as an important element to enhance the fertility of a woman<sup>5</sup>. A healthy woman is needed for a healthy baby. Maintaining hygiene during the menstrual period avoids the chances of occurrence of infertility. *Acharyas* have mentioned

*Aharas* and *Acharas* which are indicated and contra-indicated for maintaining the health of the women during the *Rajaswala* period<sup>6</sup>. Along with activities balanced and, nutritious food is also important as menstrual bleeding is a type of *Shodhana* process<sup>7</sup>.

### Ahara indicated during menstruation

In Classics, it is mentioned that the *Agni* of an individual gets reduced during or after any type of the *Shodhana Prakriya*<sup>8</sup>. As menstruation is the natural *Shodhana*, it will decrease the appetite. There is increased pressure on the body during the menstrual period, so it reduces the bile secretions and thus leads to the *agnimandhya*<sup>9</sup>. So, to increase the *agni* (digestive power) proper diet should be used. *Acharyas* have mentioned *Havisya* or *Yavaka* as good *Agni Vardhaka Ahara*<sup>10</sup>. It should be taken directly placed on palm, leaves of banana, or in clay utensils<sup>11</sup>. *Yava* is mixed with milk to reduce the properties of *Guru*, *Sheetha*, and *Sara Guna* as it will increase the *Vata*<sup>12</sup>. *Havisya* is the food offering in the holy fire made up of *Ghee*, *Shali* rice, and milk<sup>13</sup>. The food offered in the holy fire slowly and steadily flares up fire. The *Jatharagni* present in the body can correspond to the holy fire. The banana leaves are natural antioxidants that fight against free radicals and thus help in preventing diseases<sup>14</sup>. The utensils are made up of clay which has alkaline properties. It neutralizes the pH balance of the food by interacting with acids in food. All of these will enhance digestion along with the proper diet<sup>15</sup>.

### Ahara contra-indicated<sup>16</sup>

She should avoid *Tikshna* (pungent), *Katu* (spicy) and *Lavana* (salty) *Ushna* (hot), *Amla* (sour), *Atisnigdha* (too oily), *Atiguru* (heavy to digest), *Vidahi*, *Vishtambhi* foods because it increases the flow of menses leads to *Atiraktasrava* and *vataprakopa*. *Brimhanaahara* is also avoided as it has *Guru* and *Stambhaka* properties which will lead to many digestive problems ultimately leading to *Vaatprakopa*.

**Acharas indicated:** *Darbhasamstharashayini*<sup>17</sup> – *Acharyas* have mentioned that during the time of menstruation, she should sleep on the bed made up of *Darbha* spread over the ground. From the Vedic time, onwards *Darbha* is having its importance in rituals. The kusha grass protects the body from negative energies and toxic radiations. Even though it is difficult to practice, in present days the usage of *Darbha* grass by a *Rajaswala* help to protect her from mobile phone radiation.

### Acharas contra-indicated<sup>18</sup>

- *Divaswapna* – She should avoid sleeping in the daytime. Sleeping in the daytime leads to the production of *Kapha Dosha* which further produces *Ama*.
- *Ajanam* - She should avoid the application of *Anjana*.
- *Ashrupata* – Avoid shedding tears during the time of *Rajaswala*.
- *Snana* – *Acharyas* mentioned that ‘*Snanam-dukhasahatvena*’. If she does it, then the *Stambhana* occurs and menstrual bleeding decreases. So, she should avoid *Snana*.
- *Anulepa and Abhyanga* – Avoid oil massaging and smearing with sandal paste in the body.
- *Hasana and Kadana* – Laughing and talking too much is contraindicated.
- *Nakhachedana* – She should avoid plucking of nails. During the time of menstruation, the body became weak. After the *Ritucharya Shodana*, the circulation of blood i.e., the nutritional supply occurs rapidly by accepting more nutrients.
- *Pradhavana and Vyayama* – Running and too much exercise should be avoided. During the time, the body became weak due to the *Raktasrava* and there will be hormonal changes. Excess exertion leads to *Vataprakopa* and *Rasa Dusti*. *Athivayama* eradicates the body like the lion destroys the elephant which is of a bigger size.
- The use of *Swedana karma, Vamana, and Nasya Karma* is contraindicated because the body is weak during that period, and it causes *Dosha Prakopa*.
- Coitus is contraindicated during menstruation. Intercourse during this time only going to worsen the condition for the well-being of the women and infections also may occur. Coitus during menstruation is one of the causes of endometriosis.
- She should not use ornaments to avoid sexual attraction.
- If a woman does not avoid the activities due to ignorance, neglect, greed, or fortune the vitiated dosas reach the fetus producing the following abnormalities<sup>19</sup>:

Table No 1:

Rescripted activities	Abnormality in child
Day sleeping	Over sleepy
Use of collyrium	Blindness
Weeping	Abnormality of vision
Bathing	Sad
Oil massage	Leprosy and other skin problems
Paring of nails	Deformity of nails
Laughing	The black colour of teeth, lips, and tongue
Fast racing	Wanton/fickle
Over hearing	Deafness
Over talking	Garrulous
Combing	Baldness
Exposure to drought and exertion	Insane
Scrapping or digging of earth	Falls during walking
Use of <i>Nasya</i>	Menstrual abnormalities

The menstruating woman has to follow the *Rajaswala Paricharya* during the menstruation for the first 3 days and on the 4<sup>th</sup> day, the female should take bath and wear white garments with flowers and ornaments and worship god. Then she should indulge in sexual intercourse for achieving good progeny. If the woman does not follow the paricharya properly, then the dosha vitiation occurs and it further affects the foetus<sup>20</sup>. If the copulation occurs on the first day of

menstruation, it affects the health, lusture, and vision of the husband. During the time, the entry of sperm into the canal is not possible and does not result in pregnancy. So acharyas indicated brahmacharya at the time of menstruation otherwise it will worsen the condition of the well-being of the women. Even though it is difficult to get pregnant during the time of menstruation, *Acharya Kashyapa* describes the effect on the child if pregnancy occurs<sup>21</sup>.

Table No 2:

Menstruation	Effect on the Baby
First Day	No pregnancy/intrauterine death
Second Day	Abortion/ Stillbirth
Third-Day	Defective body parts and short life
Fourth Day	Normal and healthy life

In modern science also if a woman does not pay attention to menstrual hygiene, she may develop many infections and gynaecological problems. According

to UNICEF 1 in 10 school-age African girls 'do not attend school during menstruation, or drop out at puberty because of the lack of clean and private sanitation facilities in school'<sup>22</sup>

Table No 3:

Practice	Health problems
Unclean sanitary pads/materials	Bacteria may cause local infection or ascending Infection up to the vagina and uterine cavity
Changing pads infrequently	Wet pads lead to skin irritations
Wiping from back to front after urination or defecation	Entry of bacteria from the bowel into the vagina
Unprotected sex	Risk of sexually transmitted infections
Use of tampons when not menstruating	Lead to vaginal irritation and unusual vaginal Discharge
Unsafe disposal of used sanitary pads	Risk of infecting others, especially with Hepatitis B
Insertion of unclean material into the vagina	Bacteria enter the cervix and the uterine cavity
Frequent douching (forcing liquid into the vagina)	Facilitate the entry of bacteria into the uterine cavity
Lack of hand washing after changing a sanitary pad	Facilitate the spread of infections e.g., Hepatitis B

## DISCUSSION

As per Modern Science, Menstruation all depends on the hormonal levels of oestrogen, progesterone, and testosterone<sup>23</sup>. These hormones have specific control over the emotions of a female, over the temperature of the body, over the physiology of digestion, and also over the sexual act of a female. Though these changes are not unusual but hamper the equilibrium of health. During these phases, if the factors which aggravate the changes are consumed by a female, it will result in many complications related to menstruation such as PCOS, infertility, uterine fibroid etc<sup>24</sup>. Similarly, it can also transfer the infections such as UTIs, STI, and even HIV. During the phase of menstruation, the female's mind is so vulnerable, that she becomes impulsive. This may lead to many psychotic problems. Hence, it is always better to avoid the factors which triggered the complication during menstruation. But, now-a-days, in the era of globalization, it is quite impossible to follow the *Rajaswala Paricharya* as it is mentioned in the Classics. But it can be followed to some extent such as

- The menstruating woman should harbour good thoughts with the help of reading books that are inspirable.
- She should avoid head baths and also a bath with too hot or cold water, but personal hygiene should be maintained.
- She should eat in less quantity and at the proper time when hunger is felt. Fast food and spicy food should be prohibited. Instead, she should take milk, fruits, wheat, barley (*Yava*), a high-fibre diet, etc.
- The menstrual function should be explained to young girls in a very understandable and simple way that menstruation is the physiological phenomenon of our body to excrete out the noxious substances to purify (*Shodhan*).
- A woman should proud of it that God has created them to stand strong and to live with all these manifestations that a man can't do.
- There is no need for them to stop playing games and there is no harm to continue their usual life activities instead they should be encouraged to live their usual life.

In this way, these modifications in the RajaswalaParicharya will help to maintain her equilibrium of health during the most sensitive period of menstruation. This RajaswalaParicharya acts as a preventive major for the complications related to menstruation.

## CONCLUSION

The combination of *Kamaugdha Rasa [Moti Yukta]* and *Shatavari Ghritam* has provided significant results on the parameters of *Amlapitta*. Based on the present clinical study, it can be concluded that said formulation is efficacious for the management of *Amlapitta*. No adverse effects were reported during the entire study period. The present clinical study was carried out on a limited number of patients so an extensive study will be carried out for more significant results.

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