

CONCEPT OF RAJASWALA PARICHARYA

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda helps women gain better health and add quality to her life by following “*Paricharyas*”-conduct to be followed during different phases of life like *Rajaswala*, *Garbhini*, and *Sootika*. The most neglected *Paricharya* is the *RajaswalaParicharya*. This study is helpful to find out whether the *Rajaswala Paricharya* has an effect on the menstrual cycle and its associated symptoms. *Rajaswala Paricharya* helps women respond healthily to the drastic physical and psychic changes during the menstrual cycle and in relieving most of the associated symptoms of menstrual cycle.

Keywords: *Rajaswala Paricharya*, **Menstrual cycle**, *Garbhini*, *Sootika*

INTRODUCTION

Menstruation is a phenomenon unique to the females. The onset of menstruation is one of the most important changes occurring among the girls during the adolescent years. The first menstruation (menarche) occurs between 11 and 15 years. Menstruation is still regarded as something unclean or dirty in Indian society. Although menstruation is a natural process, it is linked with several misconception and practices, which sometimes result into adverse health outcomes. The reaction to menstruation depends upon awareness and knowledge about the subject. Hygiene related practices of women during menstruation are of considerable

importance, as it has a health impact in terms of increased vulnerability to reproductive tract infections (RTI).

Ayurveda helps women in the journey through different phases of her life with the help of *Paricharyas*-code of conduct to be followed during these phases like *Rajaswala*-Menstruation, *Garbhini*-Pregnancy and *Sootika*-Postpartum. Out of the three main epochs of a female life – *Bala*, *Rajaswala* and *Vriddha*, the *Rajaswala* is the largest and the most important period in the lifetime of a woman as it is the fertile period necessary for reproduction. The *Rajaswala Paricharya* helps women

adapt well to the physiological changes taking place in the body during the menstruation and thus prevent occurrence of diseases. It also helps in conceiving a healthy offspring. However it is seen that the *Rajaswala Paricharya* is not being commonly followed now-a-days. Current generation women are now working hand in hand with the men of the society. Along with their careers, they alone manage the household responsibilities. The nuclear family system has added to her woes. This has made the life of women busier and hectic than it was before. Such demanding lifestyle has made it very difficult for the present day women to follow the *Rajaswala Paricharya*. In the past, knowledge about such methods to be adopted during certain phases of the life like *Rajaswala*, *Garbhini*, *Sootika* were passed down from one generation women to the other. Due to formation of nuclear families, aversion towards ancient rules and traditions and adoption of western ways of living, this knowledge has lost its way somewhere. The other major reason for the *Rajaswala Paricharya* not being followed these days is the information spread by media and manufacturers of sanitary napkins. In order to demonstrate the soaking capacity and the durability of the sanitary napkin, the girls in the advertisements are shown to be running and dancing around. Some of them have their caption as “it’s the time to change”. Some even ask the females to shun the “old-fashioned” way of behaving during the menstrual cycle. This so called “old-fashioned” way of behavior is the *Rajaswala Paricharya* which has almost lost its importance in today’s world. The 20th century has observed a drastic rise in the number of menstrual problems and in the cases of infertility which had little or no existence in the

past. Menstrual problems like PMS, lower back ache, lower abdominal pain, nausea etc. have become so common now-a-days that they are termed as associated symptoms of menstruation.

Ayurveda the eternal system of medicine has nowhere mentioned these symptoms as normal associated symptoms of menstruation. In fact it mentions that the menstrual cycle should be devoid of **unctuousness**, burning sensation and pain. It is a known fact that *Rajaswala Paricharya* being followed by our ancestors as a routine practice. This study is to find out the effect of the *Rajaswala Paricharya* on the physiology of menstrual cycle and its associated symptoms.

Aim and Objectives

Aim

To study the effect of *Rajaswala Paricharya* on physiology of menstrual cycle and its associated symptoms

Objectives

1. To compile and study all references about *Rajaswala Paricharya* and Menstrual cycle from *Ayurvedic* texts and Modern Literature.
2. To analyze the effect of *Rajaswala Paricharya* on physiology of menstrual cycle.
3. To analyze the effect of *Rajaswala Paricharya* on associated symptoms of menstrual cycle.
4. To study the principles behind *Rajaswala Paricharya* and its application in today’s lifestyle.

Materials and Methodology

Materials

The literary study was done with the help of *Ayurvedic* texts, modern literature as well as the internet in connection with menstrual cycle and *Rajaswala Paricharya*.

DISCUSSION

Role of *Rajaswala Paricharya* on physiology of menstrual cycle. (Role of *Rajaswala Paricharya* in woman health)

After studying the *Rajaswala Paricharya* from various texts, it can be observed that the *Rajaswala* essentially falls into one of the three categories given below:

Table 1:

<i>Ashta-MahadoshkarBhav</i>	<i>RajaswalaParicharya</i>
Talking in loud voices(<i>Uchhai-Bhashya</i>)	No excessive talking/Talking in loud voices (<i>Ati-Kathan</i>)
Travelling in vehicles(<i>Ratha-Kshobha</i>)	No running(<i>Pradhavan</i>),outing and exertion (<i>Anilayaasvevan</i>)
Excessive walking (<i>Ati-Chankraman</i>)	---
Sitting in one place for a long time(<i>Ati-Aasane</i>)	---
Having food in <i>Ajeernaawastha</i> (<i>Ajeernabojan</i>)	Eat food in less quantity (<i>Stoka-Anna</i>), follow prescribed diet (<i>Hitkara-har</i>), <i>Havishyaanna</i> .
Having non-prescribed food(<i>Ahit-bhojan</i>)	
Sleeping during the day(<i>Diwaswap</i>)	No sleeping during the <i>day</i> (<i>Diwaswap</i>)
Sexual intercourse (<i>Maithun</i>)	No sexual intercourse (<i>Maithun</i>)

Due to the physiological changes taking place in a menstruating woman, she has affinity towards various diseases. A menstruating female should be taken care of just as a person undergone *Shodhan* procedure would be taken care of. Whether it is a person undergone *Shodhan* or a *Rajaswala*, these prescribed *Ahaar-Vihaar* mainly aim at avoiding vitiation of *Vata* And *KaphaDosh*, prevention of *AamajVikaar*, restoring the *Bala* and nurturing the *Agni* of the person. This is derived from the study of the effects of the *Ashta-MahadoshkarBhav*. Thus, following the *Rajaswala Paricharya*-

1. A person who has undergone *Shodhan* procedure
2. A person having decreased digestive capacity (*Agnimandya*)
3. A person having a wound (*VranitaVyakti*)

A person who has undergone *Shodhan* procedure

According to *Ayurveda*, menstruation is a naturally occurring *Shodhan* process occurring every month in the life of a woman during the fertile period of her life. It is also evident from the fact that most of the do's and don'ts are exactly the same as that for a person who has undergone *Shodhan* procedure as mentioned in *Ashta- MahadoshkarBhav*.

women respond healthily to the physiological changes by keeping the *Doshas*, *Bala* and the *Agni* of the *Rajaswala* in a balanced state.

A person having *Agnimandya*:

Decrease in appetite is experienced by many menstruating females. The *Agni* of an individual is reduced during or after any of the *Shodhan Upakram* like *Vamana* and *Virechan*. As menstruation is a naturally occurring *Shodhan* process, physiological decrease in digestive capacity (*Agnimandya*) is observed during menstruation. The diet mentioned for the *Ra-*

jaswalais the *Havishyaanna*, which literally means the food suitable for offering in the holy fire. The food substances offered in the holy fire slowly and steadily flare up the fire. The holy fire in the body corresponds to the *Jatharagni*. The *Sansarjankrama* to be followed by a *ShodhitVyakti* also aims at increasing the *Agni* slowly and steadily up to a point where it is able to digest any type of foodstuffs easily. *Havishyaanna* plays the same role in a *Rajaswala*.

The other diet for *Rajaswala* includes *Karshan (Laghu, Ruksha) Aahar, Stokaanna* (less quantity) which is very easy to digest. The substances like *Hingu, Saindhav, Sunth, Elaare-Deepan, Pachan* which ignites the *Agni*. Due to *Agnimandya*, *Rajaswala* should religiously observe the prescribed diet, should not sleep during the day time, should not apply oil or any *Lepa* to the body, should not have a bath and should not do any form of exercise.

A person having a wound:

The menstrual blood indicates an active wound in the body that is the shedding of endometrium. Based on this, the *Rajaswala* can be considered as a *VranitVyakti*. Moreover, the *Pathya-Apathya* prescribed for *Rajaswalais* almost the same as that prescribed for a wounded person or a person who has undergone surgery. The *Pathya-Apathya* found common for both are as follows:

- **Pathyakar:**

1. Food like *Yava, Godhum (Wheat), Shashitik Rice, Masoor, Moong, Brinjal, Saindhav, Ghee*.
2. *Laghuaahar, Agnisandeepanaahar*, in proper quantity, easily digestible.

- **Apthyakar:**

1. Sleeping during the day time
2. *Maithun Karma* (intercourse) - thinking about a female, touching her, seeing her, or whatever stimulates the *ShukraDhatu*, is prohibited
3. *Aayas* (exertion of any form)
4. *Tikshna, Ushna* (hot), *Katu* (spicy), *Amla* (sour), *Lavan* (salty), *Atisnigdha* (too oily), *Atiguru* (heavy to digest), *Vidahi, Vishthambhi* foods should be avoided.

This *Pathya-Apathya* for a wounded person is prescribed so that the wound of a person heals up quickly without any complications such as swelling, induration, suppuration, necrosis, itching, pain or fever. This applies to the wound present in the menstruating female also. Thus, not following the *Rajaswala Paricharya* may be one of the causes of *Yonivya-pat* or *Rajodushti* like *KunapRaja* (foul smelling menstrual blood), *Pooya Raja* (pyogenic menstrual blood) and *GranthiRaja* (clotted menstrual blood) which indicates necrosis or pyogenesis. It may also give rise to less severe symptoms like those mentioned in “associated symptoms of menstruation”. It can also be postulated that, in the long run it may be the causative factor of some of the major problems faced by several women these days like polycystic ovarian disease and infertility. The above relation between *Rajaswala* and *VranitVyakti* indicates that utmost care should be taken of a menstruating female just as a wounded person would be taken care of, to avoid dire consequences.

Table 2: Effect of *Rajaswala Paricharya* on associated symptoms of menstrual cycle.

Symptom	Cause	<i>Paricharya</i> relieving the symptom
Pain in lower abdomen and lower backache	Contraction of uterus to expel retained menstrual blood caused by <i>Apan-VayuAvarodh</i>	<i>KoshtaShodhan, KarshanAhaar, Stoka Anna, Havishya Anna, Deepan, Paachan, Vaatanulomak Anna</i> are easy to digest, clears the bowel easily relieving <i>ApanVayu Avarodh</i> .
Pain/Cramps in calf muscles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>ShakrutSang,</i> • <i>VataPrakop,</i> • <i>Pandu</i> 	Diet relieves <i>ShakrutSang</i> . Prohibition of exertion, talking less, no laughing and diet prevents <i>VataPrakop</i> .
Headache/Migraine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dysmenorrhea • <i>ShakrutSang</i> 	Above mentioned.
Nausea/Vomiting	Severe dysmenorrhea or severe menstrual migraine	Above mentioned.
Weakness	Blood loss, <i>Shodhan</i> of the body, <i>VataPrakop</i> by exertion etc.	Prevention of <i>VataPrakop</i> by following <i>Paricharya</i> .
Excitability/ Irritability/Depression	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>VikrutRasaDhatu,</i> • <i>Manas-Rasa-Raja relationship.</i> 	Good and virtuous thoughts, no crying, <i>Satwik Ahara</i> .
Breast tenderness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>ApanAvarodh-</i> • <i>Raja Avarodh-</i> • <i>Raja Urdhwagami-</i> • Breast Heaviness And Tenderness 	Relieving <i>ApanAvarodh</i> as above
Increased frequency of motions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Agnimandya-</i> • <i>ApathyakarAhar-</i> • <i>Atisaar</i> 	Avoid <i>Apathya Ahaar</i> , follow diet.
Increased frequency of micturition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Agnimandya-</i> • <i>ApathyakarAhar-</i> • <i>AamRas-</i> • <i>Bahumutrata</i> 	Avoid <i>Apathya Ahaar</i> , follow diet.
Pimples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Agnimandya-Apathyakar Ahaar-</i> • Vitiating Of <i>Kapha, Vata</i> And <i>Rakt-</i> • Pimples 	Avoid <i>Apathya Ahaar</i> , follow diet.

Table 3: Principles behind *Rajaswala Paricharya* and its application in today's lifestyle

<i>Paricharya</i>	Textual reason (effect on child)	Principle	Application in today's lifestyle
Diet	-	<i>Deepan, Pachan, Agnipradipti, Vaatanuloman</i>	Eating the prescribed things for 3 days of menstruation
No running	Unsteady	To avoid exertion and vitiating of <i>Vata Dosh</i> . Restore energy of <i>Rajaswala</i> during the period	Avoid physical work and take rest as much as possible. Avoid strenuous work, travelling, and long working hours.
No laughing loudly		Blackish Teeth, lips, palate, tongue	
No excessive talking		Talkative child	

No outing		Insane child	
Good and virtuous thoughts	-	Avoid mental stress.	Keep mind as calm and relaxed as possible and avoid anxiety/stress.
No crying		Ophthalmic disorders	
No sleeping during the day time	Sleepy child	Prevent vitiation of <i>Kapha</i> and <i>Pit-ta</i> and formation of <i>Aam</i> .	No sleeping during the day time
Not adorn oneself, not wear ornaments, not apply make-up	-	Instigate ascetic thoughts.	Not adorn oneself, not wear ornaments, not apply make-up
Sleep on a <i>Darbha</i> mat	-	Sleep on a <i>Darbhamat</i> if available or drink <i>Darbha</i> decoction	Sleep on a <i>Darbha</i> mat if available or drink <i>Darbha</i> decoction
No having bath	Unhappy child		Not have a complete bath (Follow basic hygiene like cleaning genitals, hands, legs and face)
No listening to music	Deaf child	Prevent <i>VataPrakopandRasa Dushti</i>	No listening to music/hearing at low voices
No applying any creams/oil to the body	Unhappy child/skin disorders	<i>Lepa</i> and <i>Abhyang</i> contraindicated in <i>Agnimandya</i>	No applying any creams/oil to the body
No cutting nails	Bad nails	Cannot be understood exactly	No cutting nails
No applying corrylium	Blind child	No applying corrylium	No applying corrylium

According to UNICEF 1 in 10 school-age Africans girls ‘do not attend school during menstruation , or drop out at puberty because of the lack of clean and private sanitation facilities in school’

Table 4:

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 leads to skin irritations
Wiping from back to front after urination or defecation	Entry of bacteria from the bowel into 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 materials	Risk of infecting others especially with Hepatitis B Blood
Insertion of unclean material into vagina	Bacteria enters into the cervix and the uterine cavity
Frequent douching (forcing liquid into the vagina)	Facilitate the entry of bacteria into uterine cavity
Lack of hand washing after changing a sanitary towel	Facilitate the spread of infections viz. Hepatitis B

CONCLUSION

- Effect on physiology of menstrual cycle: *RajaswalaParicharya* helps women respond healthily to the drastic physical and psychic changes during the menstrual cycle.

- Effect on associated symptoms of menstrual cycle: *RajaswalaParicharya* is helpful in relieving most of the associated symptoms of menstrual cycle.

Today millions of women are suffers of RTI and its complications and often the infection is transmitted to the pregnant mother.

At the time of *Samhita Kala* they were explained these things according to their living style but now a days we can't follow all of these because it needs cleanliness.

1. Should take bath every day and maintain cleanliness of private parts
2. Use of sanitary napkins
3. Changing of sanitary napkins
4. Disposal of used napkins
5. Hand wash with soap

Types of menstrual pads:

Disposable menstrual pads:

These are several different types of disposable menstrual pads, designed to absorb daily vaginal discharge. **E.g. Panty liner**, Ultrathin, Regular, Maxi /Super, Overnight, Maternity etc.

66% of girls know nothing about menstruation until they starts their menses. Therefore, increased knowledge about menstruation right from childhood may escalate safe practices and may help in mitigating the suffering of millions of women.

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