



# RAJASWALA PARICHARYA (MENSTRUAL HEALTH) - A VITAL PERSPECTIVE ON WOMEN'S WELL-BEING THROUGH AYURVEDIC PRINCIPLES

Dr. Shobha G<sup>1</sup>, Dr. Seema Sajjanar<sup>2</sup>, Dr. Deepshikha Kumari<sup>3</sup>, Dr. Swarnalatha<sup>4</sup>

Associate Professor<sup>1</sup>, PG Scholar<sup>2,3,4</sup>

Department of Rachana Shareera, SDM College of Ayurveda & Hospital, Hassan

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## ABSTRACT

Ayurveda is recognised for its health-promoting, healing, and therapeutic practices. The primary goal of Ayurvedic therapies is to encourage a healthy lifestyle through appropriate nutrition, disease prevention, and tailored treatments based on specific diagnoses. Ayurveda says *Swasthasya Swastha Rakshanam Aaturasya Vikara Prashamanam*. To fulfil this, they have mentioned many *charya* (code of conduct) like *Dinacharya*, *Rutucharya*, *Ratricharya*, etc, in the same way, Various *Acharyagana* outline different practices for women for preserving health, such as *Garbhini Charya*, *Soothika Charya*, and *Rajaswala Charya*. The term *Rajaswala* refers to a female in her fertility period, who is experiencing vaginal bleeding, while *Paricharya* pertains to the types of dietary practices and lifestyle choices that she should adopt during the period. It assists women in managing the physiological changes occurring in their bodies. The *Acharya* has mentioned specific dietary practices (*Ahara*) and behaviours (*Acharas*) that are beneficial and those that should be avoided to maintain health.

**Aims and objectives:** To promote and maintain the overall well-being of Menstruating Women during their fertility period, which may indirectly influence the health status of women even beyond menopause, using the principles of Ayurveda.

**Methodology:** All the material and data are collected from ancient treaties, Ayurvedic books, Research papers under Google Scholar, PubMed, Research Gate, etc. search engines.

**Result:** The knowledge, application and practice of *Rutumati Paricharya* as mentioned in various *Samhitas*.

**Discussion:** The influence of society and processed foods has a detrimental impact on women's reproductive health, leading to irregular menstrual cycles and issues with infertility. In ancient times, it was thought that inappropriate dietary and lifestyle habits were linked to the emergence of various female reproductive disorders and menstrual irregularities. *Rajaswala Paricharya* emphasises the concept of producing healthy offspring, known as *Supraja Jananam*. It begins with the initial phase of *Rajaswala paricharya*. At present, with the increasing prevalence of women's health issues such as *PCOD* and infertility, there is an urgent need to adopt *Rajaswala paricharya*. Addressing the negative impacts on women's health has become a significant concern.

**Conclusion:** Thus, *Rajaswala Charya* enables women to adapt positively to the significant physical and cyclical transformations that occur during their menstrual cycles.

**KEY WORDS:** Ayurveda, *Rajaswala*, *Rajaswala Paricharya*, Menstrual health.

## INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda is recognised for its health-promoting, healing, and therapeutic practices. The primary goal of Ayurvedic therapies is to encourage a healthy lifestyle through appropriate nutrition, disease prevention, and tailored treatments based on specific diagnoses.

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## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

### Rajaswala

It refers to a female in her fertility period, who is experiencing vaginal bleeding.

The *nirukti* of *rajaswala* suggests “*Raja asya Asti Iti*” means one who possesses *Rajas*.<sup>1</sup>

- क्षामप्रसन्नवदनां स्फुरच्छ्रोणिपयोधराम्||२०||

स्वस्ताक्षिकुक्षिं पुंस्कामां विद्यादतुमतीं स्त्रियम्|



पदमं सङ्कोचमायाति दिनेऽतीते यथा, तथा॥२१॥

ऋतावतीते योनिः, सा शुक्रं नातः प्रतीच्छति। As. Hr. Sh  
1/ 20-21

A woman whose face is slightly emaciated, but pleasant. Pelvis & breasts having throbbing pain, eyes & abdomen slightly dropping down. Who longs for male (for company and copulation) should be understood as a menstruating woman.<sup>2</sup>

#### Charya

It means "to eat, consume, to be involved in, to be busy with, to live" in literature.<sup>3</sup> Char, according to the Yates Sanskrit English dictionary, means to practice or follow. To live a healthy life, one strives to monitor certain practices related to *ahara-achara*. Various *charyas*, or codes of behaviour for maintaining good health, such as *garbhini*, *sutika*, and *rajaswala-charya*, are referred to as *acaharya* in classics.

According to the *acharya*, menstruation lasts for three days from the start. According to *Rajaswala Charya*, ladies should think positively and follow the customs with delight at this period. Vanita can cope with the functional and psychological changes that take place in the body during this time. *Rajaswala Charya* promotes the mental and physical well-being of women throughout their periods. This procedure serves as a vital instrument for increasing productivity. A woman must be healthy for her child to be healthy.

This protects female reproductive health and helps avoid gynaecological disorders. Menstrual bleeding is a sort of

natural purifying process; therefore, maintaining good cleanliness is crucial to preventing the chance of infertility. Appropriate ahara and achara are also crucial.

#### CONTRAINDICATIONS OF RAJASWALACHARYA:<sup>4</sup>

- ऋतौ प्रथमदिवसात् प्रभृति ब्रह्मचारिणी दिवास्वप्नाञ्ज नाश्रुपातस्नानानुलेपनाभ्यङ्गनखच्छेदनप्रधावनहसनकथ नातिशब्दश्रवणावलेखनानिलायासान् परिहरेत् |su.sha 2/25
- *Divaswapna* (day sleeping)
- *Anjana* (application of collyrium)
- *Rodhana* (weeping)
- *Snanam* (bathing)
- *Abhyanga* (oil massage)
- *Nakhaapakaratana* (Paring of nails)
- *Pradhavana* (fast running)
- *Hasana* (laughing)
- *Pralapa* (over talking)
- *Atishabdha sravana* (over hearing)
- *Avalekhana* (Combing the hair)
- *Marutaayasa Sevana* (Exposure to the breeze and too much) exertion

ACTION OF MOTHER	ABNORMALITIES OF THE FOETUS
<i>Divaswapna</i> (day sleeping)	<i>Swapnasheela</i> (oversleeping)
<i>Anjana</i> (application of collyrium)	<i>Andha</i> (Partial blindness)
<i>Rodhana</i> (weeping)	<i>Vikrita drishti</i> (defective vision)
<i>Snanam</i> (bathing)	<i>Dukhasheela</i> (sadish)
<i>Abhyanga</i> (oil massage)	<i>Kushti</i> (Skin disorders)
<i>Nakhaapakaratana</i> (Paring of nails)	<i>Kunakhi</i> (deformity of the nail)
<i>Pradhavana</i> (fast running)	<i>Chanchala</i> (Unsteady both mentally and physically)
<i>Hasana</i> (laughing)	<i>Shyava danta, osta, talu, jeevha</i> (the black colour of the lip and thumb)
<i>Pralapa</i> (over talking)	<i>Atikathanat</i> (talkative)
<i>Atishabdha sravana</i> (over hearing)	<i>Badirya</i> (deafnce)
<i>Avalekhana</i> (Combing the hair)	<i>Khalita</i> (baldness)
<i>Marutaayasa Sevana</i> (Exposure to the breeze and too much) exertion	<i>Unmatta</i> (mentally trouble)

#### INDICATIONS OF RAJASWALA CHARYA:<sup>5,6,7</sup>

- दर्भसंस्तरशायिनीं करतलशरावपर्णान्यतमभोजिनीं हविष्यं, त्र्यहं च भर्तुः संरक्षेत् |  
ततः शुद्धस्नातां चतुर्थेऽहन्यहतवासःसमलङ्कृतां कृतमङ्गलस्वस्तिवाचनां भर्तारं दर्शयेत् |  
तत् कस्य हेतोः? ||२५|| su sha 2/25
- ततः पुष्पात् प्रभृति त्रिरात्रमासीत ब्रह्मचारिण्यधःशायिनी, पाणिभ्यामन्नमजर्जरापात्राद्भुञ्जाना<sup>1</sup>, न च काञ्चिन्मृजामापद्येत् |  
ततश्चतुर्थेऽहन्येनामुत्साद्य सशिरस्कं स्नापयित्वा शुक्लानि वासांस्याच्छादयेत् पुरुषं च | ch. Sh 8/5

- ततः पुष्पेक्षणादेव कल्याणध्यायिनी त्र्यहम् ||२३||  
मृजालङ्काररहिता दर्भसंस्तरशायिनी |  
क्षैरेयं यावकं स्तोत्रं कोष्ठशोधनकर्षणम् ||२४||  
पर्णे शरावे हस्ते वा भुञ्जीत ब्रह्मचारिणी |  
चतुर्थेऽहनि ततः स्नाता शुक्लमाल्याम्बरा शुचिः ||२५||  
इच्छन्ती भर्तृसदृशं पुत्रं पश्येत्पुरः पतिम् | As.Hr. 1/23-24
- *Bramhachara* –Observe Celibacy
- *Darbhasamstharashaayini* - should sleep on the bed made or darbha spread over the ground.
- *Adhashayini* – Sleeping on the ground
- *Karatala sharavaparnaanyatama bhajini* - keeping the food directly over the palm or in a utensil made of clay or leaves or an unbroken utensil, hand in hand



- *Havishya bhojini* – the meals made up of ghee, sali rice, and milk.
- Fourth day – take a purifying bath, put on new white clothes, beautify with ornaments, etc.

## MENSTRUAL CYCLE<sup>8</sup>

The menstrual cycle is a remarkable and intricate physiological process, expertly regulated by hormones, that occurs in women of reproductive age. Lasting anywhere from 21 to 35 days, with an average of 28 days, this cycle plays a vital role in preparing the female reproductive system for the possibility of fertilisation and the implantation of a developing embryo. This sophisticated process is driven by dynamic interactions among key players: the hypothalamus, anterior pituitary gland, ovaries, and uterus. The cycle can be effectively understood through its four distinct phases: menstrual, follicular, ovulatory, and luteal, each contributing essential functions to the overall reproductive health of women.

1. Regulation of the Hypothalamic-Pituitary-Ovarian Axis- The regulation of menstrual physiology is primarily governed by the hypothalamic-pituitary-ovarian (HPO) axis. The hypothalamus releases gonadotropin-releasing hormone (GnRH) in a pulsatile manner, which stimulates the anterior pituitary gland to secrete follicle-stimulating hormone (FSH) and luteinizing hormone (LH). These gonadotropins play a crucial role in regulating the development of ovarian follicles and the production of steroids. In turn, these hormonal changes influence the endometrium through the secretion of estrogen and progesterone.
2. Menstrual Phase (Days 1–5) This phase marks the start of the menstrual cycle and involves the shedding of the functional layer of the endometrium. This process occurs due to declining levels of estrogen and progesterone, following the degeneration of the corpus luteum when pregnancy does not occur. The menstrual flow consists of blood, mucus, and endometrial tissue.
3. Follicular Phase (Days 1–13) The follicular phase, which overlaps with the menstrual phase at the beginning, is marked by the maturation of ovarian follicles under the influence of follicle-stimulating hormone (FSH). As the follicles develop, they produce estradiol, a hormone that promotes the proliferation of the endometrial lining and exerts negative feedback on FSH secretion. This feedback limits the number of follicles that can mature. By the middle of this phase, one dominant follicle is selected to continue growing, resulting in a surge of estrogen levels.
4. Ovulatory Phase (Around Day 14)\*\* During the ovulatory phase, rising levels of estradiol positively influence the anterior pituitary gland, resulting in a surge of luteinizing hormone (LH) secretion. This LH surge is crucial as it triggers ovulation, which is the release of a mature oocyte from the dominant follicle into the peritoneal cavity. The oocyte is then captured by the fimbriae of the fallopian tube and is transported toward the uterus.
5. Luteal Phase (Days 15–28)\*\* After ovulation, the ruptured follicle transforms into the corpus luteum, which secretes high levels of progesterone and moderate

levels of estrogen. These hormones stabilise and maintain the endometrial lining, promoting changes that prepare the uterus for implantation. If fertilisation does not occur, the corpus luteum degenerates into the corpus albicans, leading to a decline in progesterone and estrogen levels. This decrease in hormones triggers the shedding of the endometrial lining, initiating a new menstrual cycle. If fertilisation does occur, the trophoblast cells of the developing embryo produce human chorionic gonadotropin (hCG), which sustains the corpus luteum and maintains progesterone production until the placenta is fully functional.

## DISCUSSION

### Contraindication<sup>9</sup>

#### 1. Divaswapna –

During *Rajaswala* already there is state of *Mandagni*. *Divaswapna* causes *Kapha* vitiation, which further causes *Mandagni* and formation of *Aama*. This causes *Aamaj* and *Kaphaj* diseases related to *Artava*, thus affecting the menstrual cycles and consequently the reproductivity health of the woman.

#### 2. Anjana –

It obstructs the *Srotas*, so that there will be improper nourishment of *Rasaadi Dhatu* and causes congestion and pain during menstruation.

#### 3. Snana

*Snana with Sheeta jala* causes *Raktastambhak* effects. Similarly, it may also lead to aggravation of *Vata* and *Kapha Dosh*, which leads to *Srotodushti of Artavavahi Srotas*. Thus, causes hindrance in the proper flow of menstrual blood.

#### 4. Abhyanga

*Abhyanga* is contraindicated in the state of *Ksheenawastha of Dhatu*. Menstruation is a condition of weakened *Agni*, so the use of any kind of *Snehana* will lead to *Abhisyanda and Srotodushti*.

#### 5. Rodhana

To keep our minds calm and relaxed, to avoid stress and anxiety.

#### 6. Pradhavana

Fast running and strenuous exercise can lead to external injuries; if your *Aartavahava srotas* becomes injured, it may result in *Bandhyatava* (infertility), *Maithun Asahishnuta* (dyspareunia), or *Aartavanasha* (amenorrhea).

#### 7. Atishabdha Shravana

It avoids *Vataprakopa and Rasadusti* to keep the mind calm.

#### 8. Tikshna (pungent), Katu (spicy) and Lavana (salty) Aahara

It increases the menstrual flow and thus results in *Vataprakopa*. *Brimhana Ahara* should also be avoided because it causes *Stambhana*.

### Indications<sup>10</sup>

#### 1. Bramhacharya

During menses, the vaginal mucosal lining is thinner alkaline vaginal PH during menses hinders the natural microflora of vaginal epithelium and also facilitates the growth of pathogens.

#### 2. Darbhasamstharashaayini –



From the Vedic time onwards, *Darbha* has had its importance in rituals. The *Kusha* grass protects the body from negative energies and toxic radiation.

It's having the properties of *Madhura*, *Kashaya Rasa*, *Snigdha*, *Laghu Guna*, *Madhura Vipaka*, *Sheeta Veerya*, *Tridosha* (mainly *pitta*) *Shamaka* property.

### 3. *Haavishya anna*

*Aartava* is the *Upadhatu of Rasa*. Menstruation is associated with a predominance of *Pitta* within the body. The ovum, referred to as *Artava*, is influenced by the *Agni Tatva*. To maintain a balanced *Dosha* state, *Rajaswala Paricharya* recommends consuming cooling and nourishing foods such as milk, ghee, rice, and moong dal, which combat the effect of *Pitta*.

## CONCLUSION

- To achieve conception, *Susrutha* has outlined four crucial factors for fertility: *Ritu* – a normal menstrual cycle or the proper fertile period, *Kshetra* – healthy and physiologically adequate reproductive organs, *Ambu* – a good nutritional status of the mother, and *Beeja* – healthy ovum and sperm. The contribution of females is more significant in the creation of offspring due to the relevance of these four factors to them.
- *Ayurveda* emphasises preventive measures and elaborates on "*Rajaswala Charya*," which refers to the care during menstrual cycles and menarche in females to help prevent and treat gynaecological issues.
- Adhering to the *Rajaswala Paricharya*, with a few adjustments, can support overall health balance during the delicate phase of menstruation. The *Rajaswala Paricharya* aids women in managing the significant physical and cyclical transformations that occur throughout the menstrual cycle.

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