

## A CRITICAL REVIEW ON RAJASWALA PARICHARYA

\*<sup>1</sup>Dr. Laxmi Mahala, <sup>2</sup>Dr. Rashmi Sharma and <sup>3</sup>Dr. Renu Bala<sup>1</sup>PG Scholar (batch 2019), <sup>2</sup>Associate Professor, <sup>3</sup>PG Scholar (batch 2019)PG Department of Prasuti Tantra Evam Stree Roga, Dr. S.R. Rajasthan Ayurved University,  
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**\*Corresponding Author****Dr. Laxmi Mahala**PG Scholar (batch 2019),  
PG Department of Prasuti  
Tantra Evam Stree Roga,  
Dr. S.R. Rajasthan Ayurved  
University, Jodhpur.**ABSTRACT**

*Rajaswala Paricharya* is the mode of living during *Rajahstrava kala* (Menstruation). *Rajahstrava kala* (Menstruation) is a period where the women undergo tremendous physiological and psychological changes in her body. Variations in *Doshas* play an important role in the process of menstruation. Due to changing lifestyle, physical and mental stress and bad food habits during menstruation, women in the reproductive age group suffers from various conditions related to menstrual cycle like dysmenorrhea, menorrhagia, irregular menses, PCOD, endometriosis etc. which seriously affect her physical and mental and also increased incidence of infertility. Hence an urgent need is seen to educate the society regarding the *Rajaswala Paricharya* put forth in

Ayurveda in order to maintain the *Doshas*, which helps women to respond healthily to the physical and mental changes during menstrual cycle and in relieving symptoms associated with it.

**KEYWORDS:** *Rajaswala Paricharya*, *Rajahstrava kala*, menstrual cycle.**INTRODUCTION**

Ayurveda helps women to gain better health and quality to her life during different phases of life like *Rajaswala Paricharya*, *Garbhini Paricharya* and *Sutika Paricharya*. *Aacharya Kashyapa* has been mentioned that, throughout the life journey, women have to be passed from various phases like - *Bala* (childhood), *Kumari* (Adolescence), *Rajaswala* (menstruation/reproduction phase) and *Vridhdha* (Old age-menopause). Out of these *Rajaswala* period is largest and most important period as it is fertile period necessary for reproduction. If this phase is healthy then it will give better progeny and healthy life. With

the onset of menarche, *Stree* enters the 'reproductive' age of her life. Menstruation or *Rajahstrava* heralds the progression of *Kumari* to *Rajaswala*.

*Rajaswala* having *Rutuchakra* (menstrual cycle) during her life period and the meaning of Chakra means wheel, which revolves continuously. In *Stree Shareera* it can be seen in form of bleeding through vagina termed as menstruation which occurs every month for the purpose of reproduction. Entire period of 1 month (Chandramaasa-28 days) is divided in to three phases i.e. - *Rajahstrava kala* (Menstruation)-3 to 5 days, *Rutukala* (Proliferative phase including ovulation) - 12 or 16 days and *Rutuvyateetakala* (Post-ovulatory phase including Secretory phase) - 9 or 13 days. *Rajahstrava Kala* is a period when there is expulsion of *Rajah* from the *Garbhashaya*. *Artava/Rajah* flow lasting 5 days and not associated with any burning sensation or associated pain in the *Shareera* is defined as normal *Rajahstrava*. During this period the effect of *Vata Dosha* is predominant. Due to the heightened presence of *Chala Guna* of *Vata* there is corresponding increase in the movement of *Vayu* which further enhances the movement of *Dravyas* in the *Garbhashaya*. One of the types of *Vata* i.e., *Apana Vayu* is responsible for the elimination of *Mala*, *Mutra* and *Rajah*.

*Ayurveda* describes *Rajahstrava kala* as a physiological process like many other naturally occurring processes governed by *Doshas*. During menstruation each individual of different *Prakriti* is governed by different *Doshas*.

### ***Rajaswala Paricharya* Mentioned In Various *Ayurveda* Classics**

*Rajaswala Paricharya* is a mode of living during menstruation is mentioned various *Ayurveda* Classics such as *Charaka*, *Sushruta*, *Ashtanga Sangraha*, *Ashtanga Hridayam*, *Kashyapa*, and *Bhava prakasha*.

*Aacharyas* explain how a *Stree* should live during *Rajahstrava kala* as under, from the first day on the onset of *Rajahstrava* it is advised that the *Stree* should follow celibacy, abstain from all sorts of physical activities including household activities other than those that are absolutely necessary for her day to day life, not sleep during daytime, not apply *Kajala* and avoid combing her hair. Not shed tears, not bathe nor anoint self with decorative ornaments and also desist from paring of nails. She should avoid talking and laughing loudly. She should not fast during these days and should consume foods like *Havishya* i.e., meal made of ghee, Shali rice and milk, *Yawaka* i.e., meal made of barley & milk and the same should be cooked in a clean unbroken vessel made of clay. She should sleep on a mattress

made of *Darbha* (holy grass used in sacred ritualistic practices in Hinduism) and the mattress should be laid on the floor. She should avoid *Panchakarma* therapies like *Nasya*, *Swedana* and *Vamana* etc.

| Indicated Activities And Diet   | Contraindicated Activities And Diet   |
|---|---|
| Always concentrate on thinking good and auspicious things.  | Avoid sleeping during day time. She should be sleep over bed made up of <i>Darbha</i> (specific sacred leaf plant spread over ground) |
| Should eat <i>Havishya</i> (meal made up of ghee, Sali rice and milk) and <i>Yawaka</i> (meal made up of barley and milk) in utensils made up of clay and leaves. | Application of <i>Anjana</i> , crying, massaging, laughing, talking too much and exercise should be avoided.                          |
|   | Use of <i>Swedana karma</i> , <i>Vamana</i> and <i>Nasya karma</i> are contraindicated  |
|   | No adorn own self, not wear ornaments   |
|   | Coitus is contraindicated   |
|   | Avoid pungent ( <i>Tikshna</i> ), spicy ( <i>Katu</i> ) and salty food  |

### Consequences due to Non-Avoidance of Restricted Acts Mentioned in Classics

If a woman does not avoid earlier described acts due to ignorance and neglect, the vitiated Doshas reaching the foetus produce following abnormalities.

| Restricted activities              | Abnormalities in child                |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Day sleeping                       | Over sleepy                           |
| Use of collyrium ( <i>Anjana</i> ) | Blind                                 |
| Weeping                            | Abnormalities in vision               |
| Bathing                            | Sad                                   |
| Oil massage                        | Skin diseases                         |
| Paring of nails                    | Deformity of nails                    |
| Fast running                       | Wanton / fickle                       |
| Laughing                           | Black colour of teeth lips and tongue |
| Over talking                       | Garrulous                             |
| Over hearing                       | Deafness                              |
| Combing                            | Baldness                              |
| Exertion                           | Insane                                |
| <i>Nasya karma</i>                 | Menstrual abnormalities               |

It is difficult to explain all these consequences; it may be to follow *Rajaswala Paricharya* strictly due to fear of consequences. Abnormalities in born child due to performed coitus during menses are also mentioned. It is might have possible that this might have been prescribed to deter the couples from coitus.

## DISCUSSION

Ayurveda describes that during *Rajaswala Paricharya* (menstruating woman) should practice Celibacy (Brahmacharya) because it is to be noted that if the menstruating women engages in coitus then this causes imbalance in energy levels which is deleterious to her health. Acharya Sushruta has been mentioned that the conception, if it occurs, the ensuing offspring will either have congenital deformity or short life span and lifespan of husband also shortens and he tends to lose virtuousness and glory.

As mentioned in the *Sushruta Samhita* and *Aangirasa Smriti* any physical exertion is to be avoided due to the heightened presence of *Rajah* in her body. If there is any physical exertion (including talking and laughing loudly) over a long period of time then she will not be able to be in a healthy condition due to imbalance of Doshas, and any future child may face severe health problems. It is also said that she should avoid cooking because when she is in a state of *Rajasika* there will be a conflict of energy since it is believed that food are the carriers of positive energy.

As mentioned by Acharya Sushruta, the women during *Rajahstrava kala* must not bathe nor sleep during the daytime, apply *Kajala* and adorn ornaments etc. due to the imbalance of Doshas. For e.g. there is already *Agnimandhya* in *Rajahstrava Kala*, sleeping during the daytime increases the *Kapha* there by increasing the intensity of *Agnimandhyatva*. Segregation is also advised as part of austerity and purification process or *Shodhana*. This is for obvious reasons that segregation is necessary for the management of blood loss hygienically. In modern times the use of sanitary pads has reduced this segregation but it is advisable that she being in the heightened state of *Rajasika* does not transfer negative energy to others through touch and the same principle holds true if she is also allowed to cook.

As per *Sushruta Samhita* consumption of food should be moderate because during this period there is *Jataragni Mandhyatva* and therefore should abstain from consuming *Katu*, *Teekshna*, *Amla*, and *Lavana Yukta Aahara* for better digestion. It is better that *Rajasika* food made of meat or meat products is avoided for inhibiting the *Prakopa* of Doshas. In summation it is advised that the menstruating woman eats only *Shatwika* foods for maintenance of her physiological health.

As per tradition, it is also advised that the woman should not perform any religious rituals or enter a temple because a consecrated temple is a place of spiritual enlightenment of the

conscience. High positive energy emanates from a consecrated temple and when a menstruating woman who has heightened *Rajasika* enters then there is obvious imbalance of energy which leads to great physiological damage to her health. Therefore, *Dharma Shastras* say that a menstruating woman should abstain from entering a temple for her own spiritual and physiological well-being.

Finally, in summation, the Stree who is on menstruation should follow certain rituals on the fourth day of her menstrual cycle. *Aacharyas* say that on the 4th day she should take a sacred ritualistic bath, use unguents and wear white garments. She should also adorn herself with ornaments, carry garlands made of flowers chanting with piousness sacred hymns and look at her husband. Further, it is also mentioned that she should with purity of thought and mind offer oblations and pay obeisance to *Agni Deva*, *Lord Vishnu*, *Skandas*, *Brahmans*, *GouMata* etc., this helps her in increasing *Shatwika Guna* which will eventually help her in producing a healthy offspring. *Rajaswala Paricharya* if is not followed properly may lead to *Ashta Aartava Dushti* or *Yonivyapda* which is associated with present era menstrual problems like dysmenorrhea, menorrhagia etc., Hence it is necessary to follow *Rajaswala Paricharya* during *Rajahstrava kala*.

## CONCLUSION

*Rajaswala Paricharya* is helps women for respond healthily to the drastic physical and psychic changes during the menstrual cycle and *Paricharya* as prescribed by the *Aacharyas* can be followed by modern women to a large extent for minimizing the pain and associated symptoms adhering to *Aahara-Vihara Paricharya*. Consuming of *Aahara* which are *Satmya* to individuals like *Snigdha*, *Laghu*, *Madhura rasa yukta Aahara* etc., and *Vihara* like *Yoga* and *Meditation* are help the women in overcoming most of symptoms. So it is necessary to follow again ancient *Rajaswala Paricharya* to get relief from such conditions and to gain better healthy life.

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