

Review Article

Rajaswalacharya: A basic tool in Ayurveda eugenics & its clinical importance

Dr. Subhadra Karki¹, Dr Sushila Shar² Dr Sonu Verma,³ Dr Anupam Tamrakar,⁴

1MS(Ayu), PhD Scholar, 2 Ex-HOD, NIA Jaipur, 3 Assistant Professor, NIA, Jaipur, 4

Abstract

Ayurveda has always placed strong emphasis on preventive care, and the classical Regimens, Dinacharya, Ritucharya, Garbhiniaparicharya and Rajaswalaparicharya, reflect this outlook. Among these, Rajaswalacharya, the menstrual regimen described by the Acharyas, is often mentioned but not deeply explored, even though it forms the first step in Ayurveda's broader approach to eugenics (Garbhasamskara). It offers a structured set of dietary and lifestyle measures for women during menstruation, with the intention of safeguarding reproductive health and supporting the possibility of healthy conception.

To review the concept of Rajaswalacharya from Ayurvedic classics, interpret its principles in the light of contemporary physiology, and outline its relevance in modern clinical practice related to women's health and eugenics.

Classical texts including the Charaka Samhita, Sushruta Samhita, Ashtanga Sangraha, Kashyapa Samhita, Bhela Samhita and Bhavaprakasha were examined in detail. Their recommendations regarding diet, behaviour and reproductive measures were compared with available scientific insights from reproductive endocrinology, lifestyle science, epigenetics and menstrual physiology.

The Acharyas consistently advise the use of simple, nourishing and easy-to-digest foods— such as Shali rice, barley, ghee and milk—during menstruation. These choices appear to support reduced digestive strength, tissue depletion and endometrial repair that naturally occur during this phase. Lifestyle guidelines such as abstaining from sexual activity, avoiding strenuous work, emotional strain, day sleep, cosmetic applications and genital washing reflect a deep understanding of menstrual vulnerability. Modern physiology supports these points, linking them to pelvic congestion, altered vaginal pH, risk of infection, hormonal fluctuations and mental stress. By reducing such stressors, the regimen may help maintain the HPO axis and protect the epigenetic integrity of gametes. In this sense, Rajaswalacharya naturally extends into

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*Corresponding Author:

Dr Subhadra Karki - MS(Ayu), PhD Scholar

Ayurveda Consultant at Centre Ayurveda Hospital, Nardevi, Kathmandu, Nepal

E-mail: subhadrakarki21@gmail.com

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the goals of Garbhasamskara, aiming to nurture healthy ovum development and mental stability.

Keywords: Dincharya, Garbhini-paricharya, Ritucharya, Rajaswalacharya,

Introduction

Ayurveda is a holistic management system of life in normalcy or in diseases. *Acharyas* have mentioned about healing, dietetics, mode of life and medicine which is unique to any other existing medical systems in world, which usually focuses only on treatment of diseases. In *Ayurveda*, the importance is given to *Aahaar & Vihaar* as much as the role of medicines in management of diseases. The daily regimen (*Dincharya*), seasonal regimen (*Ritucharya*) ante natal care (*Garbhini-paricharya*), post-natal care (*Sutikaparicharya*), menstrual care (*Rajaswalaparicharya*) are well described in *Ayurveda* classics which are unique of its kind, owing to its importance in preventive approach of health management in women. Following these regimens itself reduce the predisposition

of an individual to certain diseases. The present global health management system also recognises the preventive medicine as an important domain of public health. All the *Paricharyas* mentioned above were in fact, public health preventive approach to enable individuals to remain healthy in changing seasons & stages of life.

Rajaswalacharya (regimen to be followed during menstruation)- It has huge importance in a woman's life, not only for bringing up healthy progeny but also to protect & prevent herself of probable diseases related to reproductive system. *Acharya Charak, Susruta, Vagbhata, Kashyap, Bhavmishra* have mentioned their individual description on this *Paricharya* with some common points. The detailed description of *Rajaswalacharya* show that mode was designed especially for ladies preparing for healthy progeny i.e Eugenics. Thus, *Rajaswalacharya* can be considered as the first step in the whole process of *Garbhasanskara /eugenics*.

Tabel No. 1 *Rajaswalacharya* details by various *Acharyas*

<i>Acharya</i>	<i>Aahar</i>	<i>Vihara (do's)</i>	<i>Vihara (dont's)</i>
<i>Sushruta</i>	<i>Habishyabhojan</i> (<i>Ksheer Sanskrit Yavanna</i>)	* <i>Kushashanshayan</i> * <i>Mitti/pattal</i> * <i>Bathing, wearing new clothes, decoratives & jewelleryes,</i> * <i>Swastikavachana & contact.</i>	* <i>Brahmacharya</i> * <i>Divaswapna</i> * <i>Anjana</i> * <i>Ansupata</i> * <i>Shnan</i> * <i>Anulepana</i> * <i>Abhyanga</i> * <i>Nakhacheda,</i> * <i>Running, laughter</i> * <i>Speaking loud sounds,</i> * <i>Keshaprasadhana</i> * <i>Vayu/ parishrama</i> * <i>Nashya</i>

<i>Charak</i>	-	4 th day= Ubtana, bath from head, wear white clothes, pus-pamaladharana, Prasannamana.	*Bhramacharya (1-3 rd night *Bhoomishayan *Ajarjarpatrabhojansewan *Prakshalan
<i>Vagbhat</i>	<i>Yavanirmitbhojan(kosthavishodhan/kashanartha)</i>	<i>As that of A.Susruta</i>	*Swedan *No decoratives & ornaments
<i>Kashyap</i>	<i>As that of A Susruta</i>	<i>After 4th night with stable mind, Swetavastradharana, Hawan, Ishwar, Vishnu, skanda, Surya, Chandramapujan go for contact</i>	*Nashya *Vaman
<i>Bhela /Bhavmishra</i>	“	“	*Sambhoga nished

The above chart can be interpreted in two broader aspects of Diet (*Aahara*) and Lifestyle (*Vihara*).

The Diet (*Aahara*) modalities as explained by *Acharyas*-

1) *Acharya Susruta*: *Havishyabhojan* (*Shali* rice processed in milk) is considered *Pathya*. *Guna* of *Shali* rice is considered to be *Shrestha* among *Dhanyas*. Its *Balakarak*, *Varnya*, *Tridoshanasak*, *Mutrajanak*, *Jatharagnivardaka*, *Jwar*, *Visha*, *Vrana*, *Daha* pacifying in nature. *Havishya Bhojan* here signifies as like offering made in *Yagyas* (rice, pulses, ghee, barley, sesame etc) the *Hawan* fire ignites more with offerings the *Jatharagni* of lady is ignited well with intake of *Shali*, *Ghee* etc which is in weak condition. *Shali* rice, ghee, milk are the most valued food in Ayurveda. As they are very nutritious also as per demand of body at that time.

2) *Acharya Vagbhatta*: Food items made up of *Yava* should be given in smaller amount with the purpose of *Koshtha-Vishodhana* & *Karshana*. *Yava* is *Kashaya*, *Tikta rasa*, *Katu vipaka*, *Medha Jatharagnivardhaka*, *Balaakarak*, *Guru*, *Pichilla*.

The *Agni* of a menstruating lady is generally in diminished state as there is *Dhatukhsya* and *Rakta srava* going on at that time. Also the *Acharyas* advocating the fact of eating *Alpa /Stokam* (in small quantities) also suggest a state of diminished *Agni*.

The clinical interpretation of dietetic model:

The cereal that is highly advocated is either barley or *Shali* rice. Barley has low glycaemic index (25) lowest among the grains, which makes it a long term energy source as it releases energy sustainably in moderation, unlike of other carbohydrates that spikes blood sugar levels.

Shali Dhanya is one of the *Shrestha Aahar* according to Ayurveda. Using in *Odana* form (cooked rice) is further suggestive of its light property. Rice is easily digestible, light and nutritious. The rice it talks about is what we understand today as a brown rice (which has again a low glycaemic index and a lots of nutritional benefits).

Ghee- Ghee is *Shrestha Agni-Dipaka*. As per Ayurveda it's a *Rasayan* one can take daily. Milk- Milk is also one of the most fulfilling food of humankind. It is rich in all the nutrients necessary for proper development and functioning of the body.

Along with bleeding phase of menstrual cycle regeneration phase also occurs simultaneously, so ghee and milk are best known *Rasayana* as per Ayurveda and also modern science advocates its

benefits as per high source of energy, protein, vitamins, micro-nutrients as well.

Use of *Ushna*, *Lavan*, *Katu Rasa* is prohibited. They have a natural tendency to increase *Dra-vatwa* (*artava* flow in this context) which may lead to excess bleeding at that cycle or also may bring forth inter-menstrual bleeds. Also it may impact the regeneration process in the endometrium and follicular genesis in ovaries. As per Ayurveda regeneration is always facilitated by drugs or food with of *Brimhana* qualities. *Brimhana* is possible with *Madhura rasa*, *Snigdha*, *Mridu guna* and *Shita virya* which are fulfilled by *Yava* and *Shali* Rice. *Ushna* and *Katu* drugs may hasten the process of folliculogenesis and resulting in early maturation of ovaries which will further contribute into different forms of *Artavadusti* like *Asrigdara* (increased flow or short cycles).

The avoidance of salt, along with nourishing light diet, help in relieving symptoms of Pre Menstrual Symptoms. There are water retention symptoms like abdominal bloating, breast tenderness, swelling of extremities, weight gain) there is natural tendency of mild oedema in whole body, fullness of breast during periods under influence of oestrogens and progesterone. So Acharya might have thought for *Karshana* action to bring back the body weight or those associated symptoms in normal state.

The concept of Lifestyle (*Vihara & Achara*) is detailed as following:

Brahmacharya and Coital Act:

It is the most stressed point in *Rajaswalacharya* by all *Acharyas*. *Brahmacharya* in a broader sense can be understood as a discipline in diet and mode of living along with *Asta-Maithun* activities. The health of the husband is compromised, referred to as *Ayunashaka*. *Acharya Sushruta and Vagbhata* have clearly mentioned the demerits of having coitus during periods (S.S.Sh 2/33), (A.S.Sh 1/5). If conception occurs in the 1-3rd day of cycle then various types of foetal complication including their premature deaths, congenital malformations, neonatal death, and various unhealthy outcomes are described. Also it is associated with *Alaxmi*. *Laxmi* is symbolised as goddess of wealth. Health is

wealth, when there is no health there is no wealth and healthy body is a biggest asset of human lives. In this context, when *Acharyas* are telling *Alaxmi* it's a state of unhealthy condition.

Considered one among *Triupastambha* (pillars of life), *Brahmacharya* is to be strictly followed by woman. It must have been told with purpose of conservation of vital energy of the body. Since the body is itself in stage of internal *Shodhana*. When *Acharyas* are mentioning that the expulsion of old blood (*Purana raja*) every month, the lady becomes pure (*Masi Masi Vishudhate*), they are indirectly giving reference of internal purification.

There is vasoconstriction of basal arteries during, or just before the start of bleeding, that result into ischemia, apoptosis and necrosis. The blood pool beneath the epithelial lining of endometrium is filled with cell debris and inflammatory exudates, all these are expelled out from body. This is also one form of purificatory process. There is a high chance of *Vata* provocation during this period. The provoked *Vayu* predisposes a woman into many types of *Yoni Vyapad*. Taking the broader sense of *Brahmacharya* in mind, it is also trying to exhibit the importance of focusing the mind, energy in tune with nature. Since the peace of mind & sense of acceptance really help to cope up with hormonal emotional issues. Ladies today are messed up with mismanaged lifestyles & higher stress levels in studies and career.

The coitus is allowed after 4 days of last cycle as *Acharyas* allow for *Pati Darsana* (seeing her husband). Here *Pati Darsana* can be used in two ways one is only for *Darsana* as the visual impact of the desired person creates a healthy and pleasant psyche in female body which can be helpful in building up the complex of the upcoming baby. It is said that whatever is the thinking of lady who is trying to conceive will impact the overall health of the upcoming baby. The next is for the purpose of having coitus. Woman is allowed for coitus after 4th day considering the fact that her bleeding has stopped till then. In addition, *Acharyas* have also highlighted the importance and benefits of conceiving a baby in later days of last menstrual cycle or *Ritukala* owing to the highest virtues like *Dirgyau*, *Ayusya*, *Sobhagyashali* etc.

The clinical interpretation of *Brahmacharya* model:

Overall, it should be understood that coitus is to be withheld till bleeding during cycle and it's safe to have coital act after that for a regular couple. The blood flow towards the reproductive organs increases during sexual excitement and activities so there will be chances of pelvic congestion if sexual activities are continued during periods. This can thereafter increase the menstrual blood flow. Along with that, the p H of menstrual blood is also alkaline than normal condition so chances of getting infection during this period is naturally higher than not bleeding days. The chances of getting infections are raised during menstrual cycles as ascending up of infections is easy with open external and internal o.s. Also the vaginal p H during menstrual cycle is towards the alkaline side which makes it vulnerable to catch vaginal infections. Vaginal infections can further ascend up into uterus and adnexa also.

***Bhumishayan*:**

This is for the purpose of isolation from the husband as well as family members. The purpose of isolating from husband is to prevent unhealthy and unplanned pregnancies since during those times early marriages were evident. Similarly, isolating from family members to give her proper rest. *Tantra & Jyotish Shastra* explain the body of menstruating lady emits different energy and toxins so she must be isolated from her daily activities.

***Darbhasastar Sayani*:**

Darbha has a natural cooling property. Floor mats made of *Darbha* are used for hygiene purpose. It also indicates the available resources of those times. The people then were close to nature and has the tendency to simple living.

The clinical interpretation of *Bhumishayan* and *Darbhasastar Sayani* model:

Bhumisayan and *Darbhasastar sayani* were solely for the purpose of isolating the menstruating women from sexual activities with husband, tiresome work routine with other family members and resting in a natural bedding available at that time. This may not be equally applicable for working urban ladies, but we can still see rural ladies fol-

lowing the concept.

***Ajarjarpatra Bhojanam*:**

The intake of food in clean & undamaged earthen plates / leaves was advised to protect her from probable infection. The intake of right food in right way was given crucial importance.

***Prakshalana*:**

Women are not encouraged for any form of washing/purification treatments. *Prakshalan* here can be understood in two ways. One is general *Prakshalan* i.e. *Sodhana* cleaning/detoxification of whole body and other being *Prakshalan* of genital organs like douching. *Acharyas* have clearly prohibited any forms of *Sodhana* treatments in this time- *Nasya*, *Vaman*, *Virechan*, *Basti* and have clarified its adverse effects in health.

The clinical interpretation of *Prakshalan* :

Similarly douching during periods is further avoided as there is high chance of ascending of external fluids (used for douching) inside the uterine cavity as external o.s is open in this period. Besides it will also alter the normal pH levels in the canal as menstrual blood itself is alkaline in nature thus predisposing the vaginal canal into more infections than in normal days.

***Divaswapna*:** It leads to *Aama* formation & thus derangement of *Doshas* and *pacification of the Agni*. The lady is meant to undergo *Vishodhana / Karshana*, this process will be hampered due to day sleep.

The clinical interpretation of day sleep (*Divaswapna*):

Some studies have suggested that excessive sleep and daytime naps are associated with higher levels of C-reactive protein, a marker for systemic inflammation (which has been linked to a host of ills, including cancer, diabetes, depression and heart disease). Yet other research suggests naps can improve immune function. Various studies in various populations have found that too much sleep, too little sleep, frequent naps and infrequent naps can all be linked to elevated C-reactive protein.

Ultimately, more work needs to be done to understand what patterns of night time and daytime sleep are healthy, and for whom (Sleep Medicine, 2015). Siegel tracked the sleep patterns of hunter-gatherer groups in Tanzania, Namibia and Bolivia. These people are thought to live much like our ancestors did some 10,000 years ago. And while nearly all of them took a break from the sun during the heat of midday, none of the 94 individuals they followed took regular naps. "I'm not saying we should do everything our ancestors did, but it suggests that napping is not a part of the ancient human physiology".

Ayurveda has exclusions about day sleep. Only on *Grishma ritu*, diseased patients are allowed to sleep at day time.

Short naps seem to be helpful and a new adaptative human behaviour with time and need of this present era. Much research on how day sleep can impact the neuro hormonal behaviour and circadian rhythm is needed.

Acharya Susruta further clarifies in his not to do rituals like day sleep, use of collyrium, crying, use of body treatments, massage, nail cutting, running, excess laughing, over talking, exposure to loud sounds for long time, excess stress and strain. These are clinically important with the view of epigenetic that if pregnancy occurs in the same cycle where the lady has been exposed to the various stress stimuli like over walking, talking, listening, cosmetics use, day sleep etc then the upcoming fetus is likely to have following abnormalities like blindness, diminished vision, skin diseases, discolouration of teeth, lips, deafness, baldness etc.

Most of these action explained by *Acharya Susruta* seem to stimulate pituitary gland in one or the other way. The discoordinated stimulation of pituitary may further contribute in derangement of hypo-thalami-pituitary-ovarian axis. This will definitely alter the normal mechanisms of menstrual and ovum health. Individual ovum and sperm health is taken in deep consideration in Ayurveda which can alter the fecundity in both females and males. This a huge field of research to be carried out.

A single celled spermatozoa and ovum

when fused bears all the possibility of giving a full-fledged body of fetus. The various genetic makeup that develop, differentiate the various organs of a fetus are all situated in a single cell of ovum and spermatozoa that makes zygote. Thus the impact of various stress and stimuli during the process of gametes formation can't be denied which can bring out changes in genetic expressions inside those cells. So following the *Rajaswalacharya* regimen means lesser exposure to those stress and stimuli. Thus a healthy outcome as a healthy fetus is only possible through a healthy sperm and ovum.

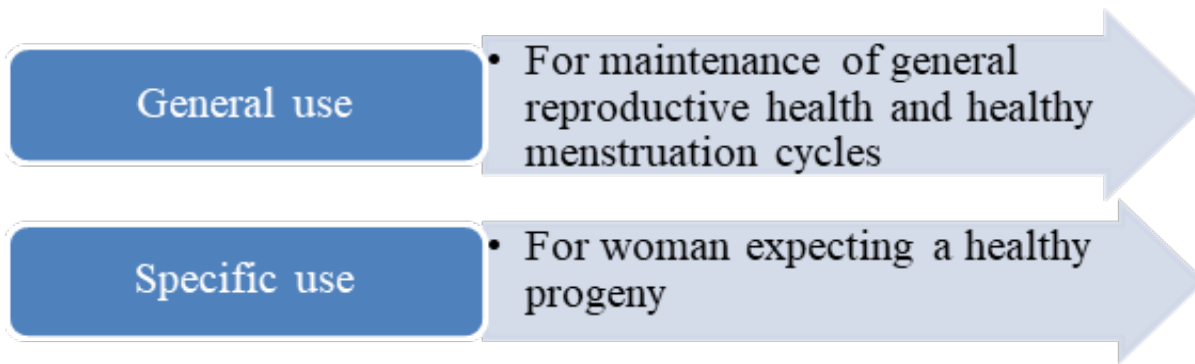
Acharya Kashyap adds *Kalyanadayani* to highlight the importance of mental well-being during *Rajaswala* period. As neuropsychiatric symptoms (like irritability, depression, mood swings, forgetfulness, restlessness, increased appetite, tearfulness, anxiety, tension, confusion, headache in cases of pre-menstrual tensions) are quite evident these days. *Kalyandhayani* refers to overall positive mental and emotional state. It can be achieved by physical and mental relaxation through *Yoga, Pranayama, Mantra* chanting and meditation.

Conceiving a baby:

On 4th day start to bath from head then whole body, afterwards white clothes to be worn, garlands of white flowers, sweet fragrances, with positive & stable mind two desirable couple can contact with the purpose of healthy progeny. Woman wearing new clothes (white preferable) garlands, jewelleryes should see her husband with chanting of *Swastikamantras*. *Acharya Kashyap* adds worship of *Brahman, God, Deities, Vishnu, Skanda, Surya, Hawan* should be done before seeing husband.

White colour is a sign of purity and auspiciousness. Use of white, new (disinfected) cloths can help in maintaining hygiene of female. Wearing of garlands, jewelleryes definitely create a beautiful pleasant psychology among the couples. It also signifies a moment of celebration. *Puja, Hawan, Yagya*, chanting all contribute in mental relaxation thus increasing *Satwa* of couples planning for conception. In past times conceiving a baby is itself a huge celebration one among the 16th *Sanskaras*.

Chart no.1. For **clinical point of view** we can use concept *Rajaswalacharya* in two ways:



General *Rajaswalacharya*: For woman of reproductive age group for general well-being, especially considering the fact that menstrual cycles are disturbed due to various conditions nowadays. The altered lifestyle, environmental factors which is in almost vitiated form, the dietetics and mode of life (de-stressing techniques) can be used by almost all ladies who have attained their menarche. Young ladies with (PCOD, Dysmenorrhoea, Oligo-menorrhoea, Hypomenorrhoea, Irregular cycles, Pre-menstrual tension) can follow the regimes with aim of regulating their cycles by taking care of their food & lifestyle.

Specific *Rajaswalacharya*: For woman expecting a healthy progeny i.e. healthy and happy children with superior intellect, strong immune systems sound moral & spiritual conduct. She should follow the principles laid by *Acharyas* from *Rajaswalakaal* to *Ritukaal*.

Modern physiology pertaining to menstrual cycles don't advocate in maintaining of *Brahmacharya* (abstinence), there are some concepts advocating coitus during cycles can be beneficial. Modern day ladies are subjected to lot of work (physical/mental) irrespective of menstrual days. They are exposed to loud sounds, walking, thinking and physical activities. The stress is more in both levels like familial and professional life. The associating symptoms like pain, irritation, anxiety, flatulence, cramps during cycles are increasing. On the other hand Ayurveda explains all these symptoms under *Artavadusti* which needs treatment. Normal cycle should be pain free, stain free as per Ayurve-

da principles. Considering the cases in OPDs these days majority of ladies are having *Artavadusti* in one or the other sense. This can be managed in two ways either preventive (by following rule of *Rajaswalacharya*) or curative (with medicines).

There is a recent trend of giving leaves during menstrual cycles & countries like Italy, Japan, China, South Korea, Hongkong & some multinational companies like Nike are allowing a female staffs to remain in leave in necessary cases. Rest & right food with right mode of life is necessary for every woman who is menstruating. Ayurveda has emphasized over the matter years ago & continues to emphasize the idea of *Rajaswalacharya*.

As *Rajaswalacharya* is a preventive methodology with main aim of contributing a healthy progeny as well as in today's context a healthy, normal menstrual cycle. *Acharyas* have covered almost all the dimensions of diet and lifestyle that can contribute its aim. The lady wanting progeny should follow the further steps as described in classics. Unmarried ladies can start normal routine after *Rajaswalakaal* is over as per *Dincharya* and *Ritucharya* principles for healthy life. The concept of *Rajaswalacharya* needs global awareness & acceptance if the health of a lady is of prime concern to a nation. Since a healthy daughter is a foundation of healthy family.

Conclusion:

Rajaswalacharya offers a well-rounded preventive approach for menstrual and reproductive health. Many of its principles remain relevant for current concerns such as irregular cycles, PMS, dysmenorrhea, PCOS tendencies and stress-related menstrual disturbances. For women preparing for

conception, it can act as an initial and essential preparatory phase consistent with Ayurvedic eugenic concepts. Recognizing and incorporating this regimen into present-day women's healthcare may support healthier cycles, better reproductive outcomes and broader public health benefits.

Conflict of Interest

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