

A REVIEW STUDY: ROLE OF AYURVEDA IN WOMEN'S LIFE

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ABSTRACT

Women is the mother of creation. She plays an important role in the formation of Individual, Family, Society and Nation. Women with their splendid physical and mental performance in almost all possible fields have an outstanding outlook and special place in the society. Therefore, there is a need to protect women's health and improve their lifestyle. According to *Ayurveda* the predominance of *Doshas* and different permutations (*Vata*, *Pitta*, *Kapha*) bring about different physiological changes at different stages of a woman's life. Based on these changes she is called by the terms *Kanya*, *Gowri*, *Mugdha*, *Athirooda* and *Vridhdha*.^[1] *Paricharya* have been described in *Ayurveda* to improve the physical and psychological condition of the woman during these stages. Following which, there is no distortion of any kind in the body and mind.

KEYWORDS: *Garbhavastha kala*, *Garbhini Vyapad*, *Paricharya*, *Rajodarsan kala*, *Rajonirvritti kala*, *Yoni Vyapad*, *Sutika Vikara*.

INTRODUCTION

In the present era many changes are seen in the life of women as compared to previous. They have many responsibilities regarding Family, Society and Career. Due to this, many changes are seen in women as compared to men. Many Physical, Psychological and Hormonal changes are seen in the life span of women during different stages, like- *Rajodarsan kala*, *Prajnana kala*, *Garbhavastha kala*, *Rajonirvritti kala* etc. In these changes due to not following proper *Aahar-Vihara*, many types of diseases arise such as Breast Cancer, Cervical Cancer, Ovarian Cancer, Infertility, PCOD, *Garbhini Vyapad*, *Yoni Vyapad*, *Sutika Vikara* along with other systemic disorders such as- Diabetes Mellitus, High Blood Pressure, Obesity etc. According to recent statistics, about 90-92% of women of all ages suffer from one or the other Gynecological disorders. Therefore there is a need for a safe and effective way for the 21st century women to maintain health during each different phase of her life.

AIM AND OBJECTIVES

To explain the specific contribution of *Ayurveda* for women's health in different stages of life which is essential for her health.

MATERIALS AND METHOD

Information will be obtained from *Brihatrayi*, Research Articles, Books, Websites etc.

Ayurveda for Women's Health

Ayurveda is the oldest system of medicine and the Science of Life. Its purpose is to protect the health of a healthy person and to reduce the diseases of the patient. Many subjects related to women are described in *Ayurveda*. Since ancient times, women's physical structure and abilities are different from Men. Due to which special attention is paid to their health.

In *Ayurveda*, various *Acharyas* have described additional body components in women different from Men. In the classical texts of *Ayurveda*, *Acharyas* have well described the specific differences of women's body. Such as- presences of *Garbhaashaya*, *Stanyaashaya*, presences of additional *Peshi*, *Shrotash*. *Ayurveda* describes not only the relationship of *Doshas* and *Dhatus* with Health and Diseases, but also the various stages of Women's life such as *Bala*, *Kumari*, *Rajaswala*, *Ritumati*, *Garbhini*, *Prasavaavstha* and *Sutikaavastha* etc.

In these stages, disease arise due to not following proper

Ahar-Vihar and proper life style. *Ayurveda* prescribes preventive rules in the form of modifications in diet and lifestyle to achieve Health. These diet and lifestyle modifications are known as *Paricharyas*, which are

required different stages to maintain optimum state of Health such as *Ritumati Paricharya*, *Rajaswala Paricharya*, *Garbhini paricharya* etc.

Status of Doshas In Different Epochs of Life.^[2]

Classification of age	Subclassification	Age limit (yrs)	Changes in the body	Status of Doshas
Childhood	1. <i>Bala</i>	10	General development	<i>Kapha</i> +++ <i>pitta</i> <i>vayu</i> +
	2. <i>Kumari</i>	10 to 12	Development of secondary sex characteristics	<i>kapha</i> +++ <i>pitta</i> ++ <i>vayu</i> +
	3. <i>Rajomati</i>	12 to 16	Menstruation start, capable to conceive	<i>kapha</i> +++ <i>pitta</i> +++ <i>vayu</i> +
Middle	1. <i>Yuvati</i>	16 to 40	Maximum reproductive capacity	<i>pitta</i> +++ <i>kapha</i> ++ <i>vayu</i> +
	2. <i>Praudhawastha</i>	40 to 50	Premenopausal symptoms	<i>pitta</i> +++ <i>vayu</i> ++ <i>kapha</i> +
	3. <i>Vridhdha</i>	up to 50	Menopause	<i>Vata</i> +++ <i>Pitta</i> ++ <i>Kapha</i> +
Old	<i>Vridhdha</i>	after 55	general decline	<i>Vata</i> +++ <i>Pitta</i> + <i>Kapha</i> +

Rajaswala Paricharya

A Woman's body undergoes many changes during menstruation (*Rajaswala*). Twelve is the Age of *Rajodarshana* (Menarche). For care of *Rajaswala* to maintain the balance of *Doshas* and help in proper menstruation, our *Acharyas* of *Ayurveda* suggest some Dos and Don'ts in the form of *Rajaswala Paricharya*.

According to *Ayurveda* From the day of onset of Menstruation the lady should observe chastity, should avoid sleeping in the day time, application of collyrium, shedding of tears, ablution, bathing, anointing, massaging, paring of nails, running, laughing and talking loudly, hearing loud noises, combing hair and fast winds as well as excessive exercise. She should sleep on a *Darbha* mattress, and take her food processed with *ghrta* on the palms, earthen pots or on leaves etc.^[3]

Apart from these, many cultural and traditional restrictions in the form of taboos of menstruation are prevalent in the societies of many states of our country, in which religious activities like worship and sexual activities, segregation, domestic work etc. In the olden times, all these restrictions were strictly followed. But today in the age of science in the 21st century, it is not followed. Women of the 21st century see these restrictions as a burden and a hindrance to their empowerment but the science behind following certain rules is not emphasized.

Many chemical changes take place in the body during menstruation. These changes lead to the release of certain pharmacological and chemical reactions such as Menotoxin into sweat, saliva, Menstrual blood, milk and other secretions in menstruating women. The function of Menotoxin is almost like that of Necrosin which is a toxic substance. There are other chemical compounds such as pheromones, these chemical compounds affect the Menstrual cycle of other women who come into contact.^[4]

Due to all these facts, there was a provision of restriction

during Menstruation in the olden times. Due to non-compliance of certain rules and restrictions and changes in Diet and Life style, many diseases related to reproductive health in women like infertility and PCOD etc.

Ritumati Paricharya

Many rules and lifestyle have been described by our *Acharyas* from conception to the attainment of best children in women. These life style and rules are known as *Ritumati Paricharya*.

In *Ayurveda*, emphasis has been laid on the attainment of perfect children. For this, all the processes from Partner selection to Conception have been described in detail. There is also a detailed description of Marriageable age and suitable age for conception. In *Ayurveda*, the proper age of marriage and conception has been given as 25 years for Men and 16 years for Women.^[5,6]

The best period for conception is termed as *Ritukala* which is after the stoppage of menstruation till next 12 days.^[7] The female during this period is termed as *Ritumati*. After stoppage of menstruation, taking a head bath, offering prayers and preparing herself by using scents of flowers and good clothes.^[8] All these act as aphrodisiac and favors conception.

The phase is characterized with proliferation of endometrium followed by ovulation. The reconstruction of tissue or regeneration is done by *Prithvi* (solid) and *Jala* (liquid) which are *bhautika* components of *kapha*.^[9] During this period, the body prepares the uterus properly for conception and creates the right environment for conception after the fertilization of Sperm and Ovum.

Garbhini Paricharya

After conception, some rules have been described by the *Acharyas* for the Health of the pregnant woman and proper growth and nutrition of the fetus. These modifications are known as *Garbhini Paricharya*.

During the Gestational period, a woman's body undergoes major changes that affect her Health. During this it has to provide adequate nutrition for the fetus. The diet, life style and mental state of the mother during pregnancy affect the Physical and Spiritual development of the fetus.^[10] Also according to the physical, mental and emotional state of the mother, the development of the gross functional functions and cognitive functions of the fetus varies.

In *Ayurveda*, *Garbhini Paricharya* has been described in these ways- *Samanya Paricharya* and *Vishesha Masanumasik Paricharya*.

Samanya Paricharya- General Antenatal Care

Vishesha Masanumasik Paricharya^[12]- Month wise Antenatal Care.

Month	Paricharya
1st to 3rd	Sweet, cold and liquid diet should be taken. <i>Sastika</i> rice should specially be taken during third month with milk.
4th	Cooked <i>swastika</i> rice with curd, palatable food should be taken processed with milk and butter, along with the meats of wild animals.
5th	Cooked <i>swastika</i> rice with milk, meat of wild animals alongwith dainty food mixed with milk and <i>ghrta</i>
6th	<i>Ghrta</i> or rice gruel medicated with <i>Goksuru</i>
7th	<i>Ghrta</i> medicated with <i>Prthakparnyadi</i> group of drugs.
8th	<i>Asthapana</i> and <i>Anuvasana Basti</i> should be given with decoction of many drugs.
9th	<i>Anuvasana Basti</i> (acc. <i>Charak</i>), should be enter the maternity home (acc. <i>Sushruta</i>)

This *Paricharyas* help in proper growth and development of fetus, soften the birth canal and help in normal delivery.

Sutika Paricharya

After delivery the diet of the woman is known as *Sutika Paricharya*. A woman's body undergoes drastic changes after delivery. The main objective of this *Paricharya* is to nourish all the *Dhatus* in the woman's body after delivery, increase physical strength, protect the mother from sepsis or other diseases and promote proper lactation.

In general all the classics have advised massage, hot water bath, wrapping cloth on abdomen-wrist area, oral administration of fats with medicines and decoction of *Vatahara* drugs like *Bhadradaru* etc. This all helps in relieving pain and preventing *Vata Prakopa*. If some *dosahas* or blood is still left inside, powdered *Pippali*, *Pippalimula*, *Hastipippali*, *Chitraka* and *Sringabera* with warm jaggery-water should be given.^[13] Use the medicated rice gruel and medicated meat soup is prescribed in diet. This food is rich in Carbohydrates and is digestible.

The woman becomes weak or emaciated due to development of fetus and also empty bodied due to unsteadiness of all the *dhatas*, labour pain an excretion of *kleda* and blood. With this regimen she attains all the lost tings and reaches her pre-pregnancy stage.

The Woman from the first day of Pregnancy should remain in high spirit, pious, decorated with ornaments, wear clean white clothes and get engaged in peace, good deeds, and worship Gods, *brahmanas* and preceptor. She should not touch the body of a dirty, deformed person. She should avoid foul odors, bad scenes and bad stories. She should not eat dry, stale, fermented food. She should avoid outing, visiting a lonely house, haunted tree, a cremation ground and shade of a tree. Negative emotions like anger, fear, talking loudly, jealousy, shock etc should be avoided. sleeping on soft mattress, not be very high, should be perfect and very comfortable. She should use palatable, liquid, sweet and unctuous substances treated with appetizing things.^[11] This mode of life should be continued till delivery.

Rajonirvritti (Menopause)

Permanent stoppage of menstruation is called Menopause (*Rajonirvritti*). It is a natural event that happens in the life of any woman. During menopause, both physical and mental changes take place in a women's body. Often these changes are so slow and minor that the woman does not feel any discomfort, but some women have a special problem.

The age of menopause can vary from woman to woman due to geographic, racial, nutritional and other factors. The average age of menopause in India is between 45 to 50 years. According to *Ayurveda*, also the age of menopause is between 50 years.^[14]

This is really a turning point in a woman's life. At the beginning of this period, symptoms such as depression in the mind, restlessness of the body, sleeplessness, pain in the head and in different parts of the body, various types of discomforts, or restlessness, weakness of digestion power etc. Fatality comes in the body of many.

DISSCUSSION AND RESULT

The women's life undergoes several changes and in each stages her requirement towards health entirely different. And the *Ayurveda* has very understood these all aspects of health and the described various lifestyle, *Paricharyas* and Dietary regimen which are suitable for maintaining the Health in perfect way. *Paricharyas* are described

according to the status of *Dhatus* and *Doshas* during different phases.

CONCLUSION

Ayurveda has well recognized the need of women in different stages of life. For thousands of years, *Ayurveda* has provided a respectful and supportive approach for women in every stage of life for restoring and maintaining balance of *Vatta*, *Pitta* and *Kapha*. *Ayurveda* Texts describe safe, effective and economical methods as *Paricharyas*. And the adopting these *Paricharyas* can help to maintain the Health and face all changes which the women face in the present era.

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