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Physiological understanding and factors affecting *Rutuchakra* - A Review

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ABSTRACT

Among various basic principles and physiologies described in *Ayurveda Rutuchakra* (menstruation) that is menstruation. Which is important physiological manifestation in women further which gives her identity of mother hood. *Rutuchakra* is cyclic process and repeats every month in reproductive age of women. Various terms are used in classic to denote menstrual blood and ovum at different places i.e., *Artava*, *Raja*, *Shonita*, *Lohita*, *Pushpa*, *Bija*. Also has mentioned role of *Doshas* on menstruation i.e., like all other physiological processes' menstruation is also governed by three *Doshas* viz. *Vata*, *Pitta* and *Kapha* it is influenced by different factors like *Doshas*, *Vaya*, *Srothas*, *Prakruthi* etc. If it is affected by such factors then causes different menstrual disorders. Therefore, it is necessary to study the Basic principles and physiological concept in *Ayurveda* to derive proper meaning and clinical aspect of that concept to cure and prevent disease.

Key words: *Rtuchakra*, *Dosha*, *Agni*, *Kala*, *Vaya*.

INTRODUCTION

The menstrual cycle occurring in females has been termed in *Ayurveda* as *Rutuchakra*. The word '*Chakra*' signifies its regular onset at regular intervals, just like a cycle. The women health is greatly dependent on normal cyclic menstrual pattern (*Rutusrava*). The proper *Artavautpatti* (formation) and its *Nishkramana* (expulsion) is necessary to regulate the women health. A single *Rutuchakra* covers a period of one *Chandramasa* (28 days) and it has been divided into three phases - the *Rajahsrava Kaala*, the *Rutu Kaala*

and the *Rutuvyatita Kaala*. From the essence part of *Rasa*, the *Upadhatu Artava* is formed. *Artava* is *Agneya*, which has characteristics of *Rakta*. *Artava* possess the same characteristics as that of *Rakta* and helps in the formation of *Garbha*. It is one of the most important physiological processes which enable the formation of *Garbha*. *Artava* can be understood as Menstrual flow (In *Samhitas* the word *Artava* is used to denote menstrual blood) and as Ovum (*Artava* is used to denote ovum at number of places in relation to fertilization).

FORMATION OF ARTAVA

The production of *Artava* is described as a part of "*Dhatu Utpatti Prakriya*".^[1] All *Acharyas* (Cha. Chi. 15/17, Su. Su 14/6, A.S.Sha 5/63, A.H.Sha 1/17 and B.P. Pur 3/204) Has considered *Artava* as the *Upadhatu* of *Rasa*, but *Acharya Sharangadhara* has mentioned it as the *Upadhatu* of *Rakta* (Sha. Pu. 5/16).^[2]

Prathama Rajodarshan Kaala' (Age of menarche) and '*Rajonivritti Kaala*' (Age of menopause). The *Rutuchakra* does not occur in young girls (before menarche) because their *Yoni* (reproductive system) is

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Heena (under developed). As they grow elder, all the bodily systems get matured and menstruation also starts, the first menstruation in life is called menarche which is one of the signs of puberty, this has been called as '*Prathamrajodarshan Kaala*' (menarche). On the other hand, menopause means permanent cessation of menstruation at the end of reproductive life due to loss of ovarian follicular activity; it has been termed as '*Rajonivritti Kaala*' (menopause).

Rajahsrava Kala is different according to various Acharyas. It is 5 days every month according to *Charaka*,^[3] 3 days according to *Vagbhata*,^[4] 7 days according to *Bhel* and *Harita*.^[5]

Entire period of one month of *Ritu Chakra Kala* is divided into three phases;

1. *Rajasravakala* - 3 to 5 days
2. *Ritukala* - 12 to 16 days
3. *Rituvyatitakala* - 9 to 13 days

Rajahsrava Kaala (Menstrual Phase)

The *Rajahsrava Kaala* or the menstrual phase comes at an interval of one month. The duration of this phase varies according to different *Acharyas*. In general, the duration is from three to five days.^[6]

Different opinion regarding the duration of the bleeding time;

- *Harita* - 7 days
- *Charaka* - 5 nights
- *Vagbatta* - 3 nights
- *Bavamisra* - 3 days

As per modern science 4 to 5 days.^[7]

Shuddha Arthava Lakshana

Criteria	Specificities
Varna (Colour)	Like <i>Gunjaphala</i> ^[8] (fruit of jequirity) Like <i>Padma</i> ^[9] (Red lotus flower) Like <i>Alaktaka</i> ^[10]

	Like <i>Indragopa</i> ^[11] (A red insect) Like <i>Shashaasrika</i> ^[12] (Rabbit's blood) Like <i>Laksha Rasa</i> ^[13] (Red juice of lac) Bright red (Modern text)
Matra (Amount)	Neither very scanty nor excessive ^[14] Four <i>Anjali</i> ^[15] 50-80ml
Gandha (Odour)	<i>Madhugandhi</i> ^[16] <i>Visra (Amagandhitva)</i> ^[17]

Rutukaala (Follicular Phase)

Rutukaala is that phase of *Rutuchakra* which comes after the *Rajahsravakaala*. The duration of this phase is twelve days according to *Acharya Sushruta*. *Acharya Vagbhata* considers this duration as twelve days or sixteen days or it may also be of one month. *Acharya Kashyapa* has given a different concept depending upon different races of the society. It is called *Rutukaala* because during this phase of a woman's menstrual cycle, if her *Garbhashaya* receives the seeds (sperms), there are chances of conception (just like the breeding season). The reason for conception during *Rutukaala* has been explained very well as follows – As the Lotus flower closes itself after sunset, similarly the Yoni of women gets constricted after *Rutukaala* and does not accept *Shukra* or the entry of *Beeja* (sperms) into its inner components i.e., uterus, fallopian tubes etc

Rituvyatita Kaala (Luteal Phase)

This is the phase of *Rutuchakra* just after the *Rutukaala* and it ends with the onset of the *Rajahsrava Kaala*. This phase has been mentioned in very short as the phase of the *Rutuchakra* when there occurs the closure or constriction of the *Yoni*. Because of this closure, entry of sperms is not allowed so any conception in this phase. The *Rituvyatita Kaala* is the secretary phase of the menstrual cycle which represents preparation of the uterus for implantation of the fertilized ovum.^[6]

Role of Dosha in Rutchakra

Role of Kapha	Role of Pitta	Role of Vata
<i>Rutukala</i> - This phase is mainly influenced by <i>Kapha</i> . According to Ayurveda for regeneration and growth <i>Kapha</i> is essential. It is a period of resembling proliferative phase.	<i>Rutuvyatitakala</i> - This phase is influenced mainly by <i>Pitta</i> . According to Ayurveda <i>Pitta</i> is essential for various secretions in the body. It always acts through medium of <i>Rakta</i> . Therefore, this phase resembles the secretary phase.	<i>Rajhsravakala</i> - This phase is mainly influenced by <i>Vata</i> . <i>Vata</i> always act through <i>Dhamanees</i> . In the phase of menstruation, the spasm in the straight stem arterioles as a causative phenomenon of bleeding is similar to action of <i>Vata</i> through <i>Dhamanees</i> .

Hence, all the three *Doshas* have the influence at different stages of *Rutu Chakra*, any impairment in these *Doshas* leads to *Artavavyapads*.

Role of Agni

The root cause for any *Artavavahasroto Vikara* would be *Agni Dushti*. As *Agni* places a important role in formation of *Artava*. This is cleared when we understand the process of *Artava* in relation with its *Utpatti*, *Vahana* & *Nishkramana*. Any disturbance in this process leads to *Dushti* of *Artava* leading to many disorders of women.

Role of Srotas

Artavautpatti, *Vahana*, *Nishkramana* process takes in its respective *Srotas*. *Artavavaha Srotas*, having its *Moola* as *Garbhashaya*. *Susruta Samhita* mentions that any injury to this *Srotas* results in infertility, etc. The *Sarabhaga* enters the *Garbhashaya* through *Siras* & also as *Rasa Sara Bhaga* which is *Saamyaguna*, gets converted to *Artava* by attaining the *Agneya* quality, *Artava* gets nourishment in its respective *Srotasi*, *Artavavahasrotas* & is expelled in form of "Raja" through *Srotas*. So, any obstacle formed in *Siras* or *Srotas*, gives rise to problems like irregular menstruation, PCOD, infertility etc. due to *Srotorodha*, *Dushtavata* & *Kapha* are active in *Artavavaha Srotas*.^[18]

Role of Prakruthi and Kala

Ritu Chakra (menstrual cycle) is under the control of three *Doshas*. Physiological changes in *Doshas* due to influence of *Kala* and *Prakruthi*. With the help of classical *Tantrayuktis*, the relation between *Kala*, *Prakruti* and *Rutchakra* can be established. As *Tantrayuktis* are keys to provide better understanding of classics & are the basic principles in understanding the *Samhitas*. Thus, the entire impact of *Prakruti*, *Kala* on *Rutusrava* can be understood by applying *Yoga Tantrayukti*.^[19]

DISCUSSION

Thus, we see that menstruation has been very well explained in Ayurveda. The complete physiology of menstruation, age of onset, age of withdrawal, duration of the menstrual blood in a normal condition has all been explained in detail. There are so many diseases in women which are associated with abnormal menstruation. Most of them are curable if diagnosed properly. The knowledge of pathophysiology plays important role in every aspect of treating & to understand the symptoms exhibited. It's necessary to know every pros & cons factor responsible for manifesting the disease. Here in this article an effort has been made to understand the factors involved in causing the menstrual disorders.

The proper balanced state of three *Doshas* cause normal menstrual cycle while any sort of imbalance causes abnormality.

Ayurveda has also given mode of living in menstruation. Right from the beginning of menstrual flow, Woman should observe *Brahamacharya*, she should not take bath, should not sleep during day time, and should avoid exertion. Her diet should be light. The female is also advised to live in a happy calm mood. *Agni*, the *Prana* of *Shareera*, plays important role in formation & regulation of *Artava*. In case of *Agnidusti*, it hampers the process of regulation of menstruation. The *Vahana* (transportation) & *Nishkramana* (expulsion) of *Artava* is mainly carried through *Adustasrotas*. Whenever there is disturbance in the harmony of *Tridoshas* in *Rutchakra*, the

formation of *Artava* gets impaired causing certain conditions like *Artavakshaya*, *Anartava*, etc. Hence mainly Role of *Tridoshas*, *Agni & Srotas* have been explained. *Tridoshas* are mainly influenced by *Kala* and *Prakruthi* so with the help of *Tantrayukti* we can understand the influence of *Prakruthi* and *Kala* on *Rthusrava*.

CONCLUSION

All classical texts had described almost same about menstruation. Ayurveda has given various aspects of physiology of menstruation. As menstruation is governed by *Doshas*, their imbalance causes abnormality. Therefore, it is necessary to have balance state of *Doshas*, *Rthuchakra* also influenced by different factors like, *Agni*, *Srothas*, *Prakruthi* and *Kala*.

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