

A Literature Study of the Social Attitudes towards Ayurveda Practices Related to Menstruation in Sri Lankan Society

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Menstruation is a natural and a universal process that every woman goes through in her lifetime. Menstruation can be identified as a process in which the uterus sheds blood and tissue through the vagina. According to Ayurveda practices menstruation is a natural unique phenomenon in women's lives and the female is called as *rajaswala* during the menstrual period. It is considered to be mirror of reproductive health. *Charya* or *Paricharya* means certain measures to be followed regarding food habits and lifestyle for healthy life, the *charyas* or code of conduct mentioned for a *rajaswalastree* is termed as *rajaswalacharya* and is the most neglected part in the society. Research problem is nowadays menstrual hygiene management is very poor and it can negatively affect the women's health. Ayurveda has stated *rajaswalaparicharya* is prevention of gynecological problems. The objective of this study was to sociologically analyze Ayurveda rituals and practices related to menstruation social acceptance towards the contemporary society. The review followed the PRISMA guidelines for systematic review. Secondary data collection includes inclusion criteria of ayurvedic authentic text books. Studies were limited to research studies published between 2019 and 2022 and in English. Findings of the study explained that there is a wide range of practices and traditional beliefs related to menstruation persisting in Ayurveda starting from menarche in Sri Lanka. Ayurveda practices emphasizes certain negative practices during menstruation such as sleeping during daytime, use of collyrium, crying, bathing, oil massage, nail pairing, running, laughing, indulging in long conservation, combing, exposure to wind, fatigue work. Ayurveda has given a set of *Rajaswalacharya* to preclude and cure the gynecological diseases. Females take a huge part in the formation of offspring. *Rajaswalacharya* remain unpopular among women even though it generates valuable and healthy life style for women. Especially some restrictions make women to adapt patriarchal values to fit in to stereotype gender roles as wife or mother.

Keywords: Menstruation, *Rajaswalacharya*, Contemporary society,
Ayurveda practices