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A conceptual study of rutuchakra (menstrual cycle)

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Abstract:-

Ayurveda is an ancient science, which has both aspects of Prophylactic and Curative. To fulfil these purposes, *Ayurveda* has mentioned various *Siddhantas* (Basic principals), Anatomy, Physiology, Various diseases with etiology, sign and symptoms, treatment etc.

In womanhood important physiological manifestation is *Rutuchakra* i.e. menstrual cycle further which gives her identity of motherhood. Menstruation is a cyclic process and repeats every month. If it is affected by various etiological factors then women have to face different disorders eg. *Aartavakshaya*. Therefore this study was taken into consideration which has main objective to review menstruation in different Ayurvedic classic texts, to compare and

evaluate data available on menstruation. It was reviewed in classic texts namely *Charaka Samhita*, *Sushruta Samhita*, *Ashtang Sangraha*, *Ashtang Hridaya* and *Kashyapa Samhita*.

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*.

Ayurvedic texts have mentioned the different approach of menstruation than that of Modern science and are helpful to know physiology of menstruation and to cure the diseased condition.

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Key words:-

Rutuchakra, Menstruation, Menstrual cycle

Introduction:-

Ayurveda is a ancient science, Which has both aspect of *swasthyarakshana* (Prophylactic) and *Vikarprashamana* (Curative) which is the aim of *Ayurveda*¹ according to *Acharya Charaka*. To fulfil these purpose, *Ayurveda* has mentioned various *Siddhantas* (Basic principals), Anatomy, Physiology, Various diseases with etiology, sign and symptoms, treatment etc.

Among various basic principals and physiologies described in *Ayurveda* *Rutuchakra* ie. menstruation. Which is important physiological manifestation in women further which gives her identity of motherhood. *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 ie. *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*, age etc. If it is affected by such factors then causes different menstrual disorders. Therefore it is necessary to study the Basic principals and physiological concept in *Ayurveda* to derive proper meaning and clinical aspect of that concept to cure and prevent disease.

Aim and Objective:-

1. To review *Rutuchakra* in different Ayurvedic classical texts.
2. To study *Rutuchakra* in detail.
3. To compare and evaluate literary data available on *Rutuchakra*.

Materials and Methods:-

Material-

Only literary material ie. Ayurvedic classical texts (*Charaka Samhita*, *Sushruta Samhita*, *Ashtang Sangraha*, *Ashtang Hridaya* and *Kashyapa Samhita*) and commentaries were reviewed to collect the data during work.

Methods-

Literary data collected was compared and analysed on classical background to find similarities, dissimilarities and clinical approach in accordance to modern science.

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Literary review:-

Rutuchakra is normal physiological process indicating womanhood. It is cyclical process and repeats every month. Each period of one month is divided in three i.e. *Rajahsrava kala*, *Rutukala*, *Rutu vyatitakala*.²

Rajahsrava kala is different according to various *Acharyas*. It is 5 days every month according to *Charkacharya*³, 3 days according to *Vagbhata*⁴, 7 days according to *Bhel* and *Harita*.⁵

Various terms are used in classic to denote menstrual blood and ovum at different places. *Artava*, *Shonita*, *Rajah*, *Rakta*, *Lohita*, *pushpa*.

According to *Sushrutacharya*, Twelve and fifty years is the age of menarche and menopause respectively. Where *Kashyapa* mentioned the age as sixteen years. According to *Arundatta* there may be slight variation in individual cases⁶.

Acharyas has mentioned characters of normal menstruation. According to *Charkacharya* normal menstruation is that which is not associated with pain or burning sensation, excreted blood is not unctuous, not very scanty or excessive in amount, According to *Sushrutacharya* colour resembles the red juice of lac, rabbit's blood.

Rutuchakra is also governed by three *Doshas* where each *Dosha* predominates at a particular phase of menstruation.

Ayurveda Also has mentioned different *Pricharyas* (mode of living during menstruation).

It is clear that, Ayurvedic classical texts had provided detailed approach on the topic of menstruation. Such profundity about this topic will hardly ever found in Health Science branches other than Ayurveda.

Observation and Results:-

After collecting literary data, It is observed that all texts has mentioned in one and same direction with few dissimilarities.

Menstruation is a physiological process which may vary person to person in normal range eg. Duration of menstruation 3-7 days for every cycle.

There were no statistical data as this is only conceptual study.

Dissscussion:-

Ayurveda is complete life science including prevention as well as cure. Concepts of Ayurveda are focused to avoid disease, its recurrence and to cure it from base. Therefore Ayurveda has mentioned detailed

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physiology of menstruation which gives various aspects than that of mentioned in modern science.

As per collected data, some conditions are discussed here on the classical base.

Ayurveda has mentioned various words in which *Artava*, *Shonita*, *Rajah*, *Lohita* are used to denote menstrual blood or ovum at different places, while *Rudhira* and *Pushpa* denote only menstrual blood. *Bija* is used for ovum. Commentator Arundatta has specifically indicated to consider menstrual blood with word *Artava*⁷.

Various factors influences the menstrual cycle ie. *Rasa*, *Rakta*, *Dhamnee*, *Dosha*. *Rajah* is said to be an *Updhatu* of *Rasa*, which supplies nourishment to body. Commentator Arundatta has said *Rajah* as symonyms of *Rakta*. And *Bhavmishra* has mentioned *Rajah* as an *Updhatu* of *Rakta*. Ie. in classics *Rajah* is said to be formed from *Rasa* or *Rakta* which is actually two stages of its formation. The blood collected for whole month by both the *Dhamnees* is brought down to orifices by *Vayu* for excretion. Specially *Apan Vayu* is responsible for this action.⁸

Physiological process of menstruation is goverened by *Doshas* viz. *Vata*, *Pitta*, *Kapha*. Where each predominate in particular phase of menstruation⁹.

- *Rutukala*- This phase is mainly influenced by *Kapha*. According to Ayurveda for regeneration and growth *Kapha* is essential. It is a period of resembling proloferative phase.
- *Rutuvyatitakala*- This phase is influenced mainly by *Pitta*. According to Ayurveda *Pitta* is essential for various secretions in the body. It always act through medium of *Rakta*. Therefore this phase resembles the secretry phase .
- *Rajahsravakal*- This phase is mainly influenced by *Vata*. *Vata* always act through *Dhamanees*. In the phase of menstruation the spasm in the straight stem arterioles as a causative phenomenon of bleeding is similar to action of *Vata* through *Dhamanees*.

The proper balanced state of these 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, should avoid exertion. Her diet should be light. The female is also advised to live in a happy calm mood.

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Conclusion:-

- All classical texts had described almost same about menstruation.
- Ayurveda has given various aspects of physiology of menstruation than that of modern science which are helpful to aware of menstruation.
- As menstruation is goverened by *Doshas*, their imbalance causes abnormality. Therefore it is necessary to have balance state of *Doshas*.

This conceptual study has its own limits up to reviewing concept.

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