

Review Article

Kumari - Pre-Reproductive age

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ABSTRACT:

Kumari is one of the epochs of *balyawastha* in a developing girl. There is obvious domination of *kapha dosha* long with concerned *shareer vrudhikara bhava* which are crucial. There is more predominance in qualities of *hanata*, *bhiru*, *sukumarata* etc. specifically designed in such a way that she is tender for recreation. There would be lot of changes which are expected to rear and care the progeny. Since this is the period of maximum growth and development, she needs to be safeguarded and nurtured well because her body health and menstrual health need to of optimum level throughout.

These adolescent *kumaris* are going to be responsible for the future generations of the world and so they need to be provided with satisfactory, scientific knowledge about reproductive and sexual health otherwise they will be caught as victims for punishment. With increasing population and changing trends in the global society, the young growing girls are becoming more and more vulnerable to improper health practices accompanied by various severe disorders which are of major concern. Managing this phase with proper *aahar*, *vihar*, *rasayana*, yoga and exercises, repeated *satvavajay chikitsa* etc. with the support of *Ayurveda*, is the key for her healthy growth and development. Maintaining sound menstrual health is of utmost importance too. Therefore an attempt has been made to elaborate the phase of *kumari* and its management with personal initiatives, in a scientific manner which will be discussed in the paper.

KEY WORDS: Kumari, kapha dosha, adolescence, menstrual health

INTRODUCTION:

Throughout her life journey, a woman surpasses through different stages right from *baala* to *vrudha*¹. Out of these, the period of life during *kumari-awastha* or adolescence is one of the most important and complex phases of development and growth where maximum physical and psychological changes take place because of obvious domination of *kaphadosha* along with concerned *streekara bhavas*² as it is her first step towards maturity and femininity for completing the core essence of *stree* that is pro-creation. This *kumari* is specifically designed in such a way that she is tender for recreation. If this phase is healthy, only then it will give better scope of progeny hence there would be a lot of changes which are expected in her

body to rear and care the baby. Since this epoch is the period of maximum growth and development, she needs to be safeguarded and nurtured well because her body health and menstrual health need to be of an optimum level throughout.

These adolescent *kumaris* are going to be responsible for the future generations of the world and hence they need to be provided with satisfactory, scientific knowledge about reproductive and sexual health otherwise they will be caught as victims for punishment.

With increasing population and changing trends in the global society of co-heads, the young growing girls are

expected to do multitasking of doing household chores, educating themselves and building a career, looking after the family and managing all expenses because of which they cannot pay proper attention to their health. On the other side, growing girls are also becoming more and more vulnerable to improper health practices like drug addiction, sexual fantasies, fallacies and abuse, violent crimes and other illegal activities at the decision-making point of their lives. These are accompanied by various severe disorders due to negligence towards health which is of major concern namely - PCOD, stress and depression, dysmenorrhoea, menometrorrhagia and amenorrhoea, thyroid related disturbances and infertility etc. Hence proper care and guidance are essential to ensure blissful growth and development.

Some startling facts regarding adolescent are :³

- Young generation below 25 years of age constitutes nearly half of the world population.
- As per NFHS-3 data, more than 8% of girls reported sexual debut before the age states of 15.
- 44% of India is below 20 years of age, out of which nearly 20% comprises of female population.
- According to WHO, about half of the population infected with HIV are under the age bar of 25.
- Globally, complications of pregnancy, abortion & delivery are leading cause of death for girls below 19 years especially.

MATERIALS & METHODS:

Ayurvedic classical textbooks, Compilation books, Census reports, Research articles, Medical journals, Modern literature available

Growth and Development - Effect of Hormones and Pheromones

Due to modifications in *rachanatmaka*, *kriyatmaka* and *manasikabhavas* of the body, the little *bala* starts growing up but the changes happening within her may make her feel confused.

During adolescence, the body grows rapidly and suddenly, there will be a gush of hormones flowing in the bloodstream inside the body preparing the young *kumari* for the next phase which is maturity and adulthood.

Physical Changes: includes the growth-spurt with respect to the development of height and weight, hips and breasts, hair-growth around vagina and armpits.

Physiological Changes: includes menstruation and ovulation cycles along with other changes in systemic functioning.

Emotional and Social Changes: includes sudden stronger emotional reactions.

Table No. 1: Developmental Changes

Intellectual development	Emotional development	Social changes
Identity	Concern about appearance	Parental influence
Integrity	Curiosity about sexual matters	Religious influence
Intimacy	Attraction towards the opposite sex	Neighbourhood and family culture
Independence	Interests in risky matters	
Intellect	Distancing from family and making new relationships	

These may create anxiousness regarding themselves and their surroundings. At the same time, stimulation of pheromones may make the situations even more confusing because of one or more behavioural responses they cause in young adolescents. They may get attracted towards the opposite sex and so may develop various needs to pacify their surge.

These include proneness in certain lifestyle patterns and trends with respect to- Vague fashion,

Peer grouping and Peer pressure, Drug addictions, Aggressive and anti-social behaviour, Improper Growth, Sexual perversions/fantasies/ abusing, Risk of HIV / STI etc diseases, Pregnancy, Mental

deterioration etc issues which are alarming danger signs.

Menstruation - Myths and Science

When talking about menstruation or *rajaswalakaala* (continuous shedding of blood for a period of 3-7 days) of *rutuchakra*, it is one of the major onset characteristics of *kumari-awastha* in developing girls. There is *purana rajah shuddhi*⁴ during this phase for *nutanotpatti*⁵ of *beeja* and *rajah* in accordance with *rutuchakra*. Along with this, there are menotoxins⁶ (menstrual poison) flowing out of the *garbhashaya* which are considered to be *apavitra* because of their considerably proven negative effects. Proper diet,

care and hygiene should be followed by the growing girls during *rajaswalakaala* of *rutuchakra*.

DISCUSSION:

Care and Management

The problems faced during the *Kumari-kala* should be managed and addressed on time and if not cautiously handled, it may affect the young girls, her family and the whole society in return. Intensive care should be taken during the *rajaswalakaala* of *rutuchakra* as well.

This care includes basic principles of *Ayurveda* that is *aahar*, *vihar*, *satvavajaychikitsa*, *yoga* etc.

Aahar

Do's

Aahar should be consumed according to *rutus*, following the *ashtaaaharvidhi visheshayatana*⁷ and *aaharvidhi vidhana*⁸ daily and accordingly balanced food even during the *rajaswalakala*.

It should be in accordance with respect to *prakriti* (*swabhava*), *karana*, *samyoga*, *rashi*, *desha*, *kaala* (*timely*), *upayogasamstha* and *upayokta*. The *aahar* should be wholesome, nutritious and *anulomakain* nature. While consuming the *bhojana*, it should be eaten warm, unctuous, in required quantity only (*anapayimatra*), non- antagonistic in nature, after digestion of previous meal, in a pleasant place with all accessories, neither too fast nor too slow consumption, not laughing and talking while eating and with full concentration with due consideration of

self. Consumption of juicy ripened fruits, salads, fresh juices should be included in daily diet.

Especially during the *rajaswalakala*, it is advised that the girl should *have laghu, satwikaahar, ghrutaksheerayuktyava or shaaliodana* etc. (*haavishyanna*)⁹ because it helps in *anulomana, srotasshuddhikarana* and is *jeevaniyain* nature.

Dont's

Eating *tikshna, ushna, katu, amla, lavana*, in *ati-matra, vidahi, vishthambhiaahar* should be avoided because all these things act as *hetu* for *vyana-apanadushti, atirajapravartana* etc conditions.

Consumption of *viruddhanna*, junk miscellaneous and processed food etc. should never be encouraged because of their bad properties.

Vihar

The growing *kumarishould* wake up at *brahma muhurta* (dawn) and should regularly practice *yogasanana* like *pavanamuktsana, vajrasana* etc. and *suryanamaskara, pranayama*, exercises for proper healthy growth of body and its systems. She should follow practically *sadvritta*¹⁰ (code of conduct), worship daily the gods, *brahmanas, gurus, vrudha, sidhha-purusha* and other elders and practice all the *dinacharyas* according to classical references regularly for positive impact over growth and development.

During the *rajaswalakala* of *rutuchakra*, *rajaswala paricharya*¹¹ should be followed by the young *kumari*.

Table No. 1: Developmental Changes

Paricharya	Principle	Application
No <i>shrama</i> (No running, laughing loudly, excessive talking, outings, overexertion, over-time work)	To avoid <i>vyanadushti</i>	Avoiding physical strain and exertion by rest and energy restoring; as much as possible
Good and virtuous thoughts	To avoid mental stress and bring in peace.	Keeping mind calm and relation by avoiding stress with the help of <i>dhyana</i> and <i>pranayama</i> .
No <i>rodana</i> , no <i>nakhaapakartana</i>	<i>Beeja-dushti</i> may be caused if not followed	<i>Apatya vikruti</i> will be seen if not followed.
No <i>diwaswapa</i>	Prevention of vitiation of <i>kapha</i> and <i>pitta</i> and <i>aama</i> formation	Avoiding day sleep
Not doing <i>shrungara</i> , not wearing <i>abhushana</i> , No application of <i>anjana</i>	It may instigate ascetic thoughts, it may cause <i>vyanadushti</i> and <i>manakshobha</i>	Adorning oneself, make-up and ornaments, <i>anjana</i> etc. should not be practised.
Sleeping on <i>Darbha</i> mat	To ensure <i>vatanulomana</i>	Sleeping on <i>Darbha</i> mat will reduce body ache and back pain
Not having bath (<i>snana</i>)? (Can be interpreted in terms of head bath)	To avoid <i>vyana-dushti</i> . To avoid more stimulation of pituitary gland which may lead to excessive bleeding.	Rather following basic hygiene like cleaning genitals, hands, feet and face.
Not listening to loud music (<i>atishabdashravana</i>)	To avoid <i>manakshobha</i> and <i>indriyaaparadh</i>	Avoiding listening to loud, irritating music to keep the mind and body relaxed
No application of <i>taila</i> and <i>lepa</i>	As it can manifest <i>kushtha</i> in the <i>apatya</i>	No application of <i>taila</i> and <i>lepa</i>
No <i>maithuna</i>	It aggravates <i>apanavata</i> does <i>shukradushti</i> , causes male related disorders, <i>kshobha</i> of the system	Complete abstinence is to be followed until maturity

Apart from the above-mentioned points, following proper **General body hygiene**

- Use of Sterile / Clean pads
- Trimming, Shaving of genital parts from time to time to avoid disorders.
- Thinking twice before any action

Sexual Health Care

- Saying "NO" to early marriage.
- Going for planned pregnancy only after mature age and body development.
- Planning for safe delivery.
- Sex is not "so-called love"; staying away from unwanted physical contact.
- Keeping healthy and one partnered loyal sexual relationship after marriage.

Satvavajay Chikitsa

This *kumari* is like a very tender and unbloomed flower. That is the reason with the help of *satvavajay chikitsa* we need to increase the *satvaguna* within her and thus decrease the negative impact of *raja and tama* which are considered to be the *manas doshas* to ensure positive effects.

Following the principles of *yama, niyama, dharana, dhyana, pranayama* daily, we to inculcate in her the habits of -

- Healthy friendship
- Good habits and positive thinking
- Personality development
- Goal setting and decision making
- Self-respect and self-esteem beliefs
- Active participation in creative activities to channelize her energy and vigor

Principle of Values and beliefs

- Love and mutual understanding between parents and kumaris
- Valuing relations with parents, siblings, elders, spouse
- Patient effective conversations

Knowledge and Education

- Knowledge about physical changes in secondary sexual characters.
- Education regarding *rutu chakra*
- Special seminars for explaining the progress of *kumarikala*.
- Stress management programs

By practising the proper *aahar, vihara* and *satvavajaychikitsa*, we are expecting excellent growth and development of the *kumari* for future prospectives. We get to observe that practical application of care and management leads to *shareershuddhi, yoni-shuddhi, punah-nutana raja utpatti*, proper *beejotpatti* (best quality of seed- ovum), hormonal balance, *prakrutaawastha* of *garbhashaya*, receptive endometrium. All this is preparing her for maturity of the body and mind for reproducing which is the sole crux of *streetva*.

Aushadhi

This age doesn't require the need for any *ausadhi*. Just *nityasevana* of mentioned *aahar* and following *yogyavihara* will lead to rapturous growth and development. However if the young *kumari* is lacking the qualities of *balya, vrudhi, mamsanirmana, pachana* etc, depending upon the needs, the medicines either in *brimhana* and *tarpana, shamana* or *shodhana* form can be given.

Personal initiatives

Dr. Geeta Patki under the banner of **Adolescent Reproductive & Sexual Health (ARSH)** has conducted several sessions and seminars for students of high school, higher secondary and college. The students were also circulated with the questionnaire before and after the sessions to evaluate their degree of understanding regarding this topic of *adolescence and their reproductive and sexual health*. More than 1100 children altogether were educated by this medium regarding the changes, challenges and management of the adolescence phase.

CONCLUSION:

As a responsible medical practitioner of holistic science; considering socio-cultural importance of India as well as of the world, this is an utmost important topic and star-guide for growing adolescent *kumaris*. Since she is mainly responsible for the continuation of a family, her health is very important to obtain healthy progeny. Thus proper scientific knowledge and counselling for care and management of this phase of *kumari-awastha* is required for maintaining **ARSH (Adolescent Reproductive & Sexual Health)**.

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