

SIGNIFICANCE OF NIGHT REGIMEN IN AYURVEDA – A CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda is one of the ancient systems of medicine for health which explains many non pharmacological methods to prevent the diseases and promote health. Those comprise *Dinacharya*, *Ratricharya*, *Ritucharya*, *Sadvritta*, *Acharya Rasayana* and *Pathya Apathy on Vihara* according to specific diseases. Above mentioned all non pharmacological methods one of the important regimen is *Ratricharya* which plays significant role in preventing life style, sexually transmitted disorders and psychosomatic disorders. This study is conceptual hence all available literature about *Ratricharya* has been collected from different *Ayurveda* classical text to explain importance of *Ratricharya*. Significance of night regimen has been discussed and study has concluded with importance of incorporating these regimens in daily life to prevent diseases and promote health of a healthy individual which is prime intend of *Ayurveda*.

Keywords: *Ratricharya*, *Ayurveda*, *Ahara*, Health, *Vihara*.

INTRODUCTION

To achieve *Chaturvidha Purusharthas* like *Darma*, *Artha*, *Kama* and *Moksha*, individual has to require healthy and disease free life. Health is one of the important components in living beings; world health organization defined health has ‘Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing and not merely an absence of disease or infirmity’^[1]. On same context *Ayurveda* defines health as equilibrium condition of *Dosha*, *Dhatu* and *Agni*, proper excretion of *Malas*, along with mental, sensory and spiritual pleasantness and happiness.

Ayurveda is a science of life gifted by sages to living beings, explains importance of health, prevention of diseases and promotion of health by following non pharmacological methods like *Dinacharya*, *Ratricharya*, *Ritucharya*, *Sadvritta* and *Acharya Rasayana*, by incorporating these methods in daily life individual can leave healthy. Above all these methods *Ratricharya* plays important role in maintenance of healthy well being. The regime which followed from sunset hours to night is included beneath *Ratricharya*, which should be supposed

to incorporate in daily life for promotion of health and prevention of diseases.

AIM AND OBJECTIVES:

Aim of this study is to collect and compile all available references from *Ayurvedic* classical texts and other reference texts regarding *Ratricharya* and to make easy understanding of topic.

Analyze the importance of *Ratricharya* in *Ayurveda* classics, and also discuss the significant role of night regimen in promotion and maintenance of health.

CONCEPT OF RATRICHARYA:

Ratricharya is time in between sunset to complete night hours is incorporated, night regimen is not only includes sleep, but also it includes functions during *Sandhyakala*, contraindications during *Sandhyakala*, time of consuming supper, using of *Anjana* and *Prathimarsha Nasya* during night, Physiological desire for sex and at last sleep is described under *Ratricharya*. Hence night regimen starts with sunset at this point some avoiding factors are explained during *Sandhyakala*.

AVOIDING FACTORS DURING SANDHYAKALA:

Acharya Bhavaprakasha enumerated factors which should be avoided during sunset those are consuming of food, involving in sexual intercourse, sleeping, reading books and walking for long distance. In same context *Acharya* explains adverse effect by doing these activities those are taking food leads to diseases, sexual intercourse brings deformity in fetus, wealth will be loosed by sleeping in *Sandhyakala*, reading books reduces lifespan and long walk brings fear.^[2]

In *Ashtanga Sangraha Acharya Vagbhata* make clear that during midday, dusk and dawn, night and midnight individual should not stand in crossing of four roads, should not be under tree, one should avoid visiting slaughtering places, forest, deserted house and crematorium.^[3]

REGIMENS DURING NIGHT:

Conventional text of *Ayurveda* furthermore explains regimens which should follow during *Sandhyakala* and *Ratri* to prevent diseases and promote health under same context effect of moon light as been explained which is mentioned beneath.

Acharya says moon light is having cold in effects, increase sexual desire, alleviate thirst, removes *Pitta Vikaras* and burning sensation, comparatively for moonlight the mist of night is having less effect, which will aggravates *Vata* and *Kapha*, fear increases due to darkness, impossible to recognize directions, alleviate *Kapha*, increases sexual desire and causes exhaustion.^[4]

RULES FOR SUPPER:

Traditional text of *Ayurveda* explains individual should consume supper with in the first *Prahara*, which is one *Prahara* is three hours, first three hours during sunset is considered as first *Prahara*. In addition person should consume less in quantity comparatively to forenoon and keep away from things hard for digestion.^[5]

ACTIVITIES AFTER SUPPER:

In *Ashtanga Sangraha Sutrasthana Acharya* explains *Bhojanottara Karma*, those includes individual after consuming easy digestible and wholesome food one should go for bed, person should engrossed mind, subsequent to praying god and being clean one should lie down in his own bed which is in clean place, without many persons and with only few trust worthy servants, bed should comfortable without uneven, having broad pillow, one should sleep with head towards east and south and legs should not direct towards elders and teachers. Individual should think about *Darma* at first and last parts of night.^[6]

IMPORTANCE OF ANJANA AND PRATHIMARSHA NASYA:

Ayurveda explains *Ratri* as *KaphaKala* eyes are having *Tejoguna* hence it is jeopardy of acquiring *Kaphaja Vyadhis*, so individual should apply *Rasanjana* once in a week, to drain *Kapha*.^[7]

Acharya charaka having little different opinion *Rasanjana* should apply for lacrimation of eyes once in five or eight days.^[8]

Acharyas clarify importance of *Prathimarsha Nasya* one should perform *Nasya* with *Katu Taila* regularly, in case of *Kapha* predominance one should perform *Nasya karma* during morning by using *Taila*, noon for *Pitta* and evening for *Vata* preferably. The regular practice of *Nasya* will provide pleasant face, sweet voice, purifies the body and prevents aging, avoid graying of hair.^[9]

Acharya Susrutha elucidates regular practice of *PrathimarshaNasya* in evening make individual to sleep and awake easy and in proper time.^[10]

RULES FOR SEXUAL INTERCOURSE:

Acharyas also high lights desire for sex, sexual act is one of the physiological phenomenons in all living being, avoiding this natural activity lead to causation of Diabetes, Obesity and derangement of body tissues.^{[11][12]}

The classification of age in women mentioned in classics are till sixteen years considered as child, up to 32 years as youth or *Taruni*, later up to 50 years women is considered as *Proudha* or *Adhirudha*, later on she is called as *Vridhdha*. Individual should avoid sexual intercourse with old women because she is not inclined towards sex in this age.^{[13][14]}

Above said classifications *Acharyas* further explain individual desire to have sex in summer and autumn should indulge with *Bala*, during winter with youth and rainy and spring season with middle aged women. Further *Acharyas* says sexual intercourse with young girl regularly will increases strength, regular intercourse with *Taruni* decreases strength and sex with middle aged women will ageing process will onset quickly and leads to old age.^{[15][16]}

A courageous, healthy and young individual after consuming food which contains milk and ghee should enjoy sex with his women lonely, confidentially, well decorated, fragranced and listening to soft music and songs one should indulge in sexual intercourse.^[17]

SEASON AND TIME FOR INTERCOURSE:

Classical *Ayurveda* text also describe time and season wise sexual intercourse, individual should indulge in sexual intercourse night time in cold season, day time in summer season, day or night in spring season, during thunder bolts in rainy season and also when there is sexual urge.

Further *Acharyas* describe in *Hemantha Ritu* as per individuals desire one can participate in sexual intercourse by taking proper *Vajikarana Dravya*, same in *Sisira Ritu* also, however in *Vasanta* and *Sharad Ritu* once in three days, once in fifteen days in *Varsha* and *Greeshma Ritu* individual should indulge in sexual intercourse.^{[18][19]}

Addition to same context *Acharyas* explain a wise person should indulge in sexual intercourse once in three days in all season, where in *Greeshma Ritu* once in fifteen days, avoid sex during day time because it causes *Ayukshaya*.

PROHIBITION FOR INTERCOURSE:

Ayurveda also explains unsuitable time for sexual intercourse those are early hours of morning and evening, *Parvadina*, *Amavasya*, *Ekadasi*, *Sankranti*, *Purnima* and during time cows out, mid night and after noon is not allowed.^[20]

Individual should avoid participating in sexual intercourse place where near to teachers house, place where quite open or publicly, where weeping sound is perceptible.^[21]

FACTORS AUGMENT AND DCREASES POTENCY:

Person wish to indulge in sexual intercourse should consume fresh meat, new rice, *BalaStree*, food made up of milk, ghee, and take bath with warm water or hot water these above mentioned six factors will enhances strength. The factors which decreases strength includes fermented food, old age women, partially formed curds, indulging in sexual intercourse in early hours of the day, sleeping in early hours of the day. Further *Acharyas* explains regular sexual intercourse with *Taruni* will make person

younger, dissimilar with old women person becomes weak. [22] [23]

PREPERATION FOR SEXUAL INTER-COURSE:

Individual who wish to indulge in sexual intercourse should well bathed, applied with paste of sandal wood, well composed, contented, must consume nutritive food, decently clothed, after chewing *Tambula*, person having deep love and lust and desire to have male child should indulge in sex with his wife in comfortable bed. [24] [25]

ELIGIBLE AND INELIGIBLE WOMEN FOR SEX:

Acharyas explain eligible women for sexual partner women processing similar qualities, good character, Kula, having sexual desire, mentally calm, and wearied all garments and ornaments. [26]

Women during the period of *Rajaswala* or menstruation, not having sexual desire, dirty, ugly, belonging to upper caste, diseased, belonging to same *Gotra*, women of *Guru* and Nun are not eligible for sexual intercourse. [27]

BENEFITS OF SEXUAL INTERCOURSE:

Individual who follows rules and regulations according to *Ayurveda* with respect to regular sexual activities persons health will increases, ageing process will slow down, colour, complexion and strength of the body will enhance and individual will acquire proper maintenance of physical body. [28]

EFFECTS OF ATIVYAVAYA:

Acharyas also describe causes due to Excessive indulging in sexual intercourse those includes *Akshepaka*, *Sula*, *Kasa*, *Swasa*, *Jwara*, *Karshyatha* and *Panduroga*. [29]

DIETS AFTER SEXUAL INTERCOURSE:

Individual after indulging in sexual intercourse should have bath, apply paste of sandalwood, expose to cool air, eat sweets, cool drinks, milk added with

sugar, soup prepared of mutton, and drink *Sura*, person should happy above said measures and then go for sleep to prevent loss of strength. [30]

IMPORTANCE OF SLEEP AND SEXUAL PLEASURE:

In *Yogaratanakara Acharya* describe four natural instincts for the human beings which are given more importance in night regimen those are Desire to take food, Desire to take water, Desire to have sleep, Desire for sexual contact for pleasure these are considered as the basic needs in *Ratricharya*, From the above quotation it is quite evident that the sleep and sexual intercourse are fundamental need of every living human being. [31]

SLEEPING POSTURES:

Acharya Bhavamishra furnish importance of sleeping postures in *Ratricharya*, after consuming food merely sitting leads to *Tandra*, sleeping causes chubbiness of body or leads to obesity, therefore short and slow walking brings long life, running after meal causes death. Once having meal person has to lie down with face up for period of eight breathing, to the right side twice a period and left side double than the earlier at last person can sleep as his convenient. [32]

IMPORTANCE OF SLEEPING POSTURES:

Further *Acharya* says benefits of postures person by sleeping in left side enhances digestion as *Agni* present in the left side above umbilicus, sleeping on cot is *Tridoshashamaka*, swing will alleviates *Vata* and *Kapha* *Dosha*, sleeping on plane ground leads to *Brumhana*, *Vata* *Dosha* will increases by sleeping on wooden planks but alleviates *Pitta* and *Raktha*. [33]

Additional *Acharya* says for the better nourishment of body, pleasing, good sleep, to increase stability, relieve fatigue and as aphrodisiac person as to sleep on comfortable bed. Exclusively opposite effects will be there by sleeping on uncomfortable bed. [34]

DISCUSSION

Ayurveda is a science of life which gives importance for both curative and preventive aspects, after collecting all available references thoroughly *Ayurveda* predominantly explains preventive aspects and promoting health. The majority of *Ayurveda* literatures the early chapters are dedicated to maintenance of life style in preventing diseases those are also named as life style disorders. These are unique technique and non pharmacological method to comprehensive process of preventing disease and promoting health of an individual. *Ayurveda* treaties have mentioned such techniques in numerous one among them are *Ratricharya*.

Ratricharya is time in between sun set to sun rise, hence *SandhyaKala* also includes in night regimen, and factors explained under *SandhyaKala* are unique avoiding sleep, reading, going walk for long distance and sexual activity which are contraindicated in *SandhyaKala* are unique concepts explained under *Ratricharya* are having significant role in preventing diseases and promoting health. Regarding effect of moon light on body which is exceptional concept mentioned in *Ayurvedic* treaties.

Night regimen also highlights supper individual should consume food during first *Prahara* of night only that is first three hours of sun set. Further person has to consume light and conducive diet during night and walking hundred feet after food, this concept of *Bhojana Karma* and *Bhojanottara Karma* both are exclusive and accepted by modern science also, as person not having any physical work during night time one should consume light diet, gap between meals and sleep should be minimum two to three hours.

Concept of *Anjana*, *Nasya* and *Dhumapana* which is described under *Ratricharya*, having own role in preventing *Kaphaja Vyadhi*, as this *Sandhyakala* and *Ratrikala Kapha* predominance will be there, by regular practice of *Anjana*, *Prathimarsha Nasya* and *Dhumapana* will prevent *Kaphaja Vyadhi* and diseases related to *Urdvajatrugata*.

Ayurveda classics in addition emphasize sexual intercourse in night regimen, concept regarding time and season wise sexual intercourse, place for sexual intercourse, preparation and diets before sexual intercourse, description of fit and unfit male and female for sexual intercourse, all these methods are to prevent psychological disturbances and to improve psychological health, also prevent sexual harassment in society these practices are helpful.

Further *Acharyas* as well give details concerning *Nidra*, importance of *Nidra*, measures to induce good sleep, sleeping postures, and sleeping equipments, everything plays important role in preventing postural deformities and diseases related to back bone, prevent effect due to *Anidra*, further good sleep will enhance physical and psychological health.

CONCLUSION

This conceptual study on *Ratricharya* are unique method which we can find in only *Ayurveda* texts, these non pharmacological methods gives importance for living beings in preventing life style disorders and sexually transmitted diseases. Each and every procedure in *Ratricharya* like *Varjana Karma* in *Sandhyakala*, Importance of moon light, *Ratri bhojana*, importance of *Anjana* and *PrathimarshaNasya*, Sexual desire and *Shayana Vidhi* are having its own importance in preventing diseases and promoting health.

This conceptual study on *Ratricharya*, after referring all available classical texts on *Ratricharya* it can be concluded that by following principles of *Ayurveda* especially regimens like *Dinacharya*, *Ritucharya*, *Ratricharya*, *Sadvritta* and *AcharaRasayana* person can stay healthy by physically, Mentally, Socially and Spiritually. *Ratricharya* is exceptional concept find only in *Ayurveda* classics by incorporating these regimens in daily life individual can attain highest state of well being.

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