

A CONCEPTUAL STUDY ON DRISTIPRASADANA EFFECT OF PADABHYANGA

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda is a holistic science of life. Prevention of diseases is given first importance. *Dinacharya* is a concept in *Ayurveda* that to design one's daily diet and regiment for balancing his *Doshas*. *Padabhyanga* is one of the prophylactic principles mentioned in the context of *dinacharya*. The hectic computerised life style, faulty food habits, and negligence in following daily and seasonal regimen provoke many eye problems. *Acharya Sharangadhara* has mentioned that *Dristi* (vision) naturally starts decaying from the age of 60 yrs. *Padabhyanga* is an easy and effective *snehana* therapy for *Dristiprasadana*. It is helpful both in preventive as well as curative aspect of *Dristi*.

Keyword: *Ayurveda, Dinacharya, Padabhyanga, Dristiprasadana*

INTRODUCTION

Eyes are organs of the visual system. It is a complex optical system which collects light from surroundings, regulates its intensity through a diaphragm, focuses it through an adjustable assembly of lenses to form an image, converts this image into a set of electrical signals, and transmits these signals to the brain through complex neural pathways that connect the eye via optic nerve to the visual cortex and other areas of the brain. The main functions of human eyes are Visual acuity and Colour perception¹. Normally, vision gets diminishes with increasing age of human being. Secondary causes of low vision or blindness are diabetic retinopathy, retinitis pigmentosa, amblyopia, retinopathy of prematurity, cataracts, glaucoma etc. Vision impairment, or low vision, means that even with eye-glass lens, contact lenses, medicine, or surgery, someone doesn't see well. It can be range from mild to se-

vere. Worldwide, between 300 million – 400 million people are visually impaired due to above mentioned causes. Of this group, approximately 50 million people are totally blind. Approximately 80% Of blindness occurs in people over 50 years of age. However, rate of premature vision impairment are increasing worldwide.

Netra, Dristi and Dristiprasadana – A brief review

Netra is one of the *Pacha-Gyanendriya*, responsible for vision. It is composed of all the *Pancha-Mahabutas*². *Netra* is predominantly site of *Aalochak pitta*, which helps in vision. Moreover, *Bud-dhivaisheshik alochak pitta* is the sole responsible for our organic vision³. *Netra* is the site of *pitta*, for proper vision *Shleshma* is to be removed from *netra*. *Chakshu* is meant for *Indriya*. The term *dristiprasadana* or *chakshuprasadana* correlates with overall

ophthalmic health including vision. The term *Dristi* can be correlated with anatomical structures of eye i.e. pupil, crystalline lens, retina or the main function of eye i.e. vision⁴. When *aatma, indriya(chaksu), maan* and *indriyartha(dristi)* are simultaneously connected to each other in a proper way, then only *Dristi* is produced. Therefore, for distiprasadana all the above *Dristiprasadanakara* factors should be in appropriate manner.

Padabhyanga – A Unique Therapy

Application of oil or any other *sneha dravya* on the feet followed by massage is known as *padabhyanga*⁵. It is a type of *bahya snehana* procedure. *Padabhyanga*, a *upakrama* has been mentioned as a part of *Dinacharya* in *Brihatryee*. *Padabhyga* is done as a part of *sarvanga abhynga* or can be done as individual therapy. The word *abhyanga* is derived from *ang-dhatu* (to smear) and *abhi-upasarga*. The word *pada* denotes lower extremities. Therefore, *padabhyanga* literally means methodical smearing of *sneha dravya* to lower extremities especially to the sole. It should be applied in the *Anuloma* direction¹. It has been advised as daily regimen in *ayurvedic* classics to promote health as it prevents individual from diseases of *netra, paada gridhrasi vaata, sankocha of sira* and *snayu*. In *Brihatrayee*, *padabhyanga* is mentioned as *netra-prasadanakara* or *dristiprasadanakara*.

Padabhyanga - Mother of all Foot Massage

Pada is the site of *vata dosha*, vitiation of which causes 80 types of *nanatmaja rogas*. By means of *Padabhyanga* we can get control over the *vata dosha*. *Padabhyanga* stimulates the *marma* (vital points) of the sole region. *Kshipra, kurcha, talahridaya, kurchashira, gulpha* are the *marma* points in sole which are being massaged during *padabhyanga* procedure. These *marma* are the vital points of body, where *prana* resides. *Padabhyanga* itself restores *prana* by stimulating *marma*.

There are several kinds of foot massage techniques that are being practised in different alternative system of medicine such as Traditional Chinese Medicine, Japanese foot massage, Aroma therapy etc. They are having only some local affect on foot. Whether, *padabhynga* is described as pursuing both local as well as systemic affect on the body.

Material Used in Padabhyanga

For *padabhyanga* non medicated/medicated *sneha dravya* (*ghrita, taila, vasa, majja*) is used. *Tila taila* can be used on daily basis. It is *tridoshahara* and *chakshushya*. Medicated *sneha dravya* can be prescribed according to *prakriti* of a healthy person to promote his eye health. *Himsagara taila-vata prakriti, Chandanadi taila, Chandana bala lakshadi taila, Ksheerbala taila- pitta prakriti, Triphaladya taila-kapha prakriti*, and *Asanabilvadi taila- sama prakriti* person⁶. For cure of especially ophthalmic diseases *triphala ghria* can be used in *padabhyanga*.

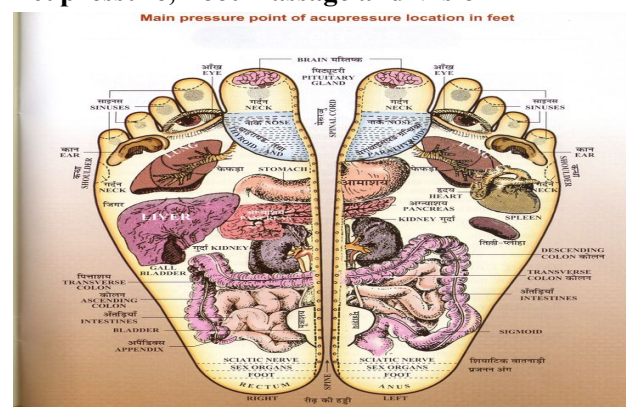
The Procedure- Padabhyanga

Morning time in an empty stomach before bath is ideal time of *Padabhyanga* for routine practice in healthy person. The client is asked to lie down on *abhyanga* table. Oil for application is heated in boiled water approximately up to 40°C. This warm oil is to be smeared to the feet both in its planter and dorsal aspects up to the ankle. Following this, massage should be done by moving his palms in distinct directions. The whole procedure is completed around 35 minutes. After the procedure the foot is to be wash with lukewarm water and then patient is asked to take rest for at least 15 minutes.

Reflexology, Foot massage and Vision

Reflexology is a complementary therapy where pressure is applied to reflex points for particular organs. The reflexology points of eye are situated on the undersides of second and third toes. Doing massage on these points maintains the eye health and benefits in digital eye strain, dry eye, computer vision syndrome, myopia etc. by nourishing the eyes.

Acupressure, Foot massage and Vision



Principles of acupressure states that massage to the fingertips and toe tips reinforces eyesight. When we massage or pressurize this particular part methodically, it enhances vision as well as eye-health.

DISCUSSION

Every principle in *Ayurveda* is being written in sutra form. Detailed description of *padabhyanga* and its procedure is not available in the classics of *Ayurveda*. The effect of *padabhyanga* is mentioned in all the three texts of *Brihatrayee*, have commonly mentioned as *dristiprasadana* or *netraprasadana*⁷.

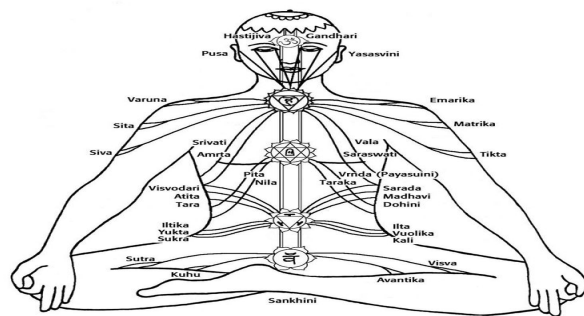
Tila taila is best option of choice, as a daily regimen of *padabhyanga*, *Tila* is *Kapha-Vatahara* and *Chakshushya*. It is an antioxidant as it contains vitamin E. This oil is rich in minerals (copper, calcium, zinc, iron) and penetrates skin easily. This oil has alkaloids like saponin, flavonoid, tannin, phenol etc. These pharmacological components make *tila taila* as good option for eye-health.

Netra is *gyanendriya* and *pada* is *karmendriya*. In the description of *masanumashik garbha vridhhi*, *pada* and *netra* are mentioned to be formed in the same month i.e. third month of intra uterine life. *Netra* and *pada* both are included under *Aatmaja bhava*. In the context of *Shristi utpatti karma*, *netra* and *pada* both are originated from *vaikarik* and *rajashik ahamkara*. Thereby, it is meant that both *pada* and *netra* are many similarities from embryological point of view. Therefore we can say in the light of *Samanya-Vishesh siddhanta* that *abhyanga* to the *pada* region will have the beneficiary effect on *netra*.

Acharya Dalhan in *Sushrut Shamhita* commentary has mentioned *Padabhynga* as *vatashamak* and having *netraprasadana* activity by improving the circulation of eye⁸

Acharya Vagbhata has mentioned that there are two *siras* situated in the centre of feet, which are directly connected to the both *netra*. These *siras* transmit the potency of medicine applied over the feet in the form of *padabhynga*⁹. *Nadi Darpan*, a text of *Yogik Darshana* has mentioned 10 *nadis* situated in the head. *Gandhari* and *Hastijihva* are related to the left and right *netra* respectively. *Gandhari* surrounding the *ida nadi* extends from the *paada* and ends in left *netra*.

Likewise, *Hastijihva* surrounding the *pingala nadi* extends from the *paada* and ends in right *netra*.



Acharya Bhela has mentioned that the site of *alochaka pitta* is *pada*. *Alochaka pitta* is responsible for *rupa* in the *netra*. Therefore, it clearly states that *padabhyanga* surely has beneficial effect on *dristi*.

Acharya Dalhana, commenting *Sushruta* describes that in *abhyanga*, the medicated oil applied to the skin gradually passes through one by one *dhatu* level and in 900 *matra* potency of oil reaches upto *majja dhatu*. *Netra* is the *upadhatu* of *majja dhatu*. *Padabhyanga* nourishes *majja dhatu* hence, indirectly the *netra* is nourished.

Acharya Charak has described that *vayu* dominates in the *sparshanendriya*, i.e. tactile sensory organ, and this sensory organ is lodged in the skin. *Abhyanga* is exceedingly beneficial to skin as it balances *vata*. *Indriyas* are of close contact to mind, hence if *indriya* remain healthy mind automatically remains healthy. This will enhance the proper perception *chakshu-buddhi*.

In *Padabhyanga*, the drugs which are beneficial to eyes are processed with oil or ghee applied to the sole. When the medicament is rubbed against the skin surface of foot, the active principle of the drug dissolves through the stratum corneum without molecular dispersion and gets diffused through the barrier. In this way we can say that massaging on foot with *chakshushya* drugs shows its affect as *dristiprasadanakar*.

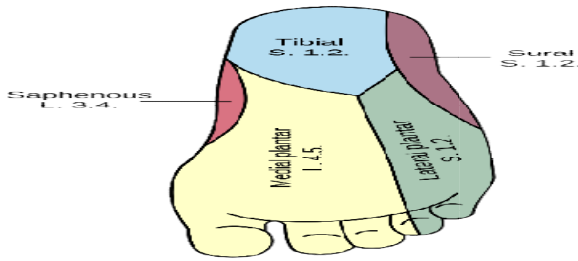
According to modern physiology the skin functions as an enormous sense organ. Its millions of nerve endings serve as receivers for the body, keeping it informed of changes in the environment. Specialized receptors make it possible for the body to detect sensations of light touch (Meissners corpuscles) and pres-

sure (Pacinian corpuscles) as well as pain, heat, cold. Massage soothes the two master system of our body i.e. Nervous System and Endocrine System.

Study reveals that massage on the sole region of individual decreases the alpha and beta rhythm in EEG in the fronto parietal cerebral area. This induces sleep. Good sleep relaxes eye muscle and maintains the physiology of eye.

Serotonin plays a role in sleeping and visual orientation processing. Studies reveals that during padabhyanga level of serotonin is increased in blood. Serotonin plays a role in sleeping and visual orientation processing¹⁰.

The sole is innervated by tibial nerve, sural nerve, saphenous nerve, medial planter and lateral planter nerve. The piezoelectricity derived from pressure of padabhyanga increases the conductivity of nerve. Simultaneously it increases the neurotransmitter serotonin.



CONCLUSION

Padabhyanga is commonly practised *Panchakarma* therapy. It has been also practised traditionally in various Indian cultures since time immemorial. The practise of foot massage is also prevalent in different indigenous system of medicine like Traditional Chinese Medicine, Acupressure Therapy, Reflexology, Aromatherapy etc. *Padabhyanga* has both systemic and local beneficial effect. *Ayurveda* advocates *padabhyanga* to perform as a part daily routine in the morning. Whereas we can use it as an unique therapy for the treatment of many local and systemic diseases both as preventive and curative aspect. *Padabhyanga* is helpful in the improvement of vision along with management of different ophthalmic disorders.

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