

Role of Pranayama in Yogic Management of Vata Diseases

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Abstract:- At present an astonishing awareness of health and natural remedies by Yoga and Pranayama has been observed in the population of the whole world, which has proved to be an effective way of improving health apart from prevention and management of diseases. Along with the increasing scientific researches of yoga, the search for its medical aspects is also continuing. On the basis of important studies related to the balancing of Vata doshas, management of Vata diseases and its effects on physical health of Pranayama, it was found that the practice Pranayama, besides being an efficient practice in the treatment of Vata diseases, has proved to be very beneficial for the physical health of the person besides maintaining the Vata dosha in a balanced state. Currently, among the alternative therapies for treating Vata diseases, yoga management is the most popular way to treat Vata diseases naturally and balance Vata dosha. Pranayama has been exclusively discussed in the yogic methods of management of Vata diseases in the major yogic scriptures such as Hatha Yoga Pradipika, Hath Ratnavali, Asan Pranayama Mudra Bandha, and Gherand Samhita. Under which the place of Bhastrika Pranayama and Suryabhedhi Pranayama is prominent due to the Vata balancing benefits obtained from them. Hence the importance of Pranayama has been clarified under the Yoga Shastras to emerge from these conditions naturally and to balance the Vata Dosha (Mallinson, 2004; Muktibodhananda, 2012; (Gharote, Devnath, & Jha, 2002). Suryabhedhi and Bhastrika Pranayama are considered to be the best for the management of Vata doshas among the different types of Pranayama described under the major Hatha Yogic texts. Therefore, in the present research study, a descriptive study of the role of Pranayama in the management of Vata diseases has been done on the basis of major Yoga texts.

Keywords:- Vata dosha, Yoga, Pranayama, Health.

I. INTRODUCTION

Negative experiences in life can lead to stagnation in the bodily systems due to irregular lifestyle, unbalanced eating habits, inactivity and imbalance of all the three doshas in the body. Due to which life energy gets blocked. When prana becomes weak due to blocked prana energy, then one experiences fatigue, lethargy, negative mood, as well as due to imbalance of tridoshas, the body suffers from various types of aagantuja or nanatmaja diseases caused due to tridosha. Especially when the vata dosha of the body loses its balance due to the above mentioned factors, then a person can be a victim of any of

the 80 types of Vata diseases and along with feeling unwell, one goes on losing health. Regarding Vata dosha, it is mentioned in the 28th sutra of Charak medical science that - "देहे स्त्रोतांसि रिक्तानि पूरयित्वा अनिलो बली, करोति विविधान् व्याधीन् सर्वं अङ्ग एक अङ्ग संश्रयान्" (Joshi, 2018, verse-28), according to this verse, due to the aggravation of Vata, Vata fills up in the empty sources or places and sensitive nerves of the body (Dutt, 2018). Occupying sensitive sources, contaminated vata causes manyekanga (confined to a particular part of the body) or sarvanga (affecting the whole body) diseases. Consumption of dry food, consumption of cold foods, eating very little or lack of food, excessive fasting, excessive indulging in sexual activities, excessive awakening at night, excessive elimination of doshas, excessive bleeding, tissue loss, weakness due to chronic illness, inhibition of natural urge, indigestion of food in the body, accident, trauma, excessive consumption of astringent, bitter and pungent, cloudy and rainy weather etc. are prominent in the form of irritability of Vata or the cause of Vata diseases. Due to the above factors, when the vata dosha becomes unbalanced in the body, it gets accumulated in the following places of the body; Basti (bladder, urinary system), Purishadhana rectum), Scwith (waist), Padau (thighs and legs), Asthi (abdomen). Of these, Pakshashaya (colon) is considered to be the most important place of Vata. Generally Vata dosha has the following properties like roughness, coldness, lightness, conduction, formless, unsteady etc. These properties of Vata dosha are helpful in showing how this Vata manifests itself in various diseases. Due to the imbalance of Vata dosha, the following symptoms appear completely or partially in the body such as the interphalangeal joints contract and become crooked and rigid, movement of the fingers and toes is hindered, bone dislocation or fracture, hysterical or unconscious speaking, stiffness and stiffness of the hands, back, and head, Lameness, Dwarfism, Swelling or numbness of body parts, Sleeplessness, embryo death, Abortion, curvature of head, nose, eyes, clavicular region and neck, splitting pain, prickling pain, etc..

Therefore, in the human body all the three doshas are present in all the parts of the body. These doshas lead to good health in a state of normal balance. When they are balanced, they cause upchay, bala and varna prashad that is, nutrition of the body, improving strength and immunity, improving skin health and diseases. Among the three doshas Vata acts as a major driving force behind all body movements in a balanced state through activated by the Rajas quality. However, due to imbalance of Vata dosha, about 80 types of diseases can arise in the body. Vata disorders include a wide range of

neurological or neurological neuromuscular, musculoskeletal disorders and degenerative disorders. If Vata can be kept in a healthy and normal state through healthy lifestyle and diet then one can avoid the risk of collapses and disasters caused by Vata. Thus, knowledge of Vata Vyadhi and its diagnosis helps in planning and administering comprehensive treatment towards combating Vata Vyadhi effectively.

Currently, among the alternative therapies for treating Vata diseases, yoga management is the most popular way to treat Vata diseases naturally and balance Vata dosha. Pranayama has been exclusively discussed in the yogic methods of management of Vata diseases in the major yogic scriptures. Under which the place of Bhastrika Pranayama and Suryabhedhi Pranayama is prominent due to the Vata balancing benefits obtained from them. Hence the importance of Pranayama has been clarified under the Yoga Shastras to emerge from these conditions naturally and to balance the Vata Dosha (Mallinson, 2004; Muktibodhananda, 2012; (Gharote, Devnath, & Jha, 2002). Suryabhedhi and Bhastrika Pranayama are considered to be the best for the management of Vata doshas among the different types of Pranayama described under the major Hatha Yogic texts.

II. LITERARY REVIEW

In order to review the currently completed research studies related to the research topic under the current research work, the research works published up to the latest 2022, keeping in mind the inclusion criteria, were systematically searched under the related research journals from major well-known databases. Various combinations of the code words named yoga, pranayama, vata dosha management, health were used to trace previous research work.

In this context, summarizing the health effects of the practice of pranayama, it has been found that the practice of yogasanas along with breathing exercises contributes greatly in promoting one's health (Franklin, Butler, & Bentley, 2018; Akhtar, Yardi, & Akhtar, 2013; Woodyard, 2011). Along with regular doses of the combined practice of breathing and yoga postures, it has been shown to improve physical health, psychological balance, and feel body-mind lightness (Anand, *et al.*, 2018; Frank, Bose, & Schrobrenhauser-Clonan, 2014; Malhotra, 2017). According to the study by researchers Pal, Saini, & HH (2018), the most common form of hypertension under vata vyadhi, 'raktagata vata' refers to the involvement of blood by contaminated air. It is also known as primary hypertension or idiopathic, affecting 95% of patients with hypertension. This study was done to look at the effect of Nadi Shodhana Pranayama and the effect of meditation on blood pressure symptoms. As a result, it has been found that yoga practice has a positive effect on the agna chakra, regulates the autonomic nervous system, and improves the quality of life of arthritis patients by improving and controlling blood pressure symptoms. Similarly, hyperlipidemia, which is a lifestyle disorder described in Ayurveda, is currently increasing in prevalence. It can be correlated with

medorudhi or medorog. In a study conducted by researcher Jadhav (2020), 20 hyperlipidemia patients randomly selected were treated with Bhastrika Pranayama to observe the effect on symptoms of lipid levels. The patients were trained to perform the Bhastrika Pranayama procedure for 15 days and were asked to continue it at home for the next 45 days. As a result, meaningful results were obtained.

The results of the above research work show that the research work mainly related to the effect of Pranayama in health promotion and management of Vata diseases is limited. Under which there was also a lack of explanation of the theoretical side of Pranayama on the management of Vata doshas and physical and mental health of persons suffering from Vata diseases. Therefore, in this present research work, the role of Pranayama in the management of Vata doshas has been critically studied with reference to the main Yoga texts. So a clear statement of the present research problem is as follows:

A. Problem statement

"What is the role of Pranayama in the management of Vata diseases?"

B. Research design

Here, the hypothesis of the research work is as follows

"Regular practice of selected pranayamas according to the major yogic texts is an efficient practice in the management of Vata diseases and promotion of health."

C. Need of the study

Knowledge of natural and effective techniques like Pranayama to avoid and get rid of various types of Vata diseases and to improve physical and mental health is taking the form of an important requirement of the general public. That is why, in the present research work for prevention of Vata diseases and improvement of health, in addition to clarifying the concept of Vata Nivarak Pranayama theoretically, the health effects of Pranayama have been highlighted.

D. Objectives of the study

Keeping in view the need of the study, the following objectives of the present research have been set:

- The main objective of this study is to pertinently discuss the concept of Pranayama suitable for the management of Vata diseases based on the major ancient yogic texts.
- Throwing light on the importance of practicing appropriate Pranayama in the management of Vata diseases.
- To discuss in detail the method of suitable Pranayama for the management of Vata diseases.
- Throwing light on the role of appropriate Pranayama in the management of Vata diseases in the present context.

The methodology of the present research work to achieve the appropriate objectives is as follows:

E. Research methodology

This present research work being a descriptive

research study, the nature of this research is completely qualitative and the research method used for this research work is descriptive research method, as well as the reliability of this research work is completely based on secondary data.

III. VATA DOSHA

According to Yoga Shastras, the human body is made up of five elements which are earth (prithvi), water (jala), fire (agni), air (vayu), sky (akash). Out of these Panchmahabhutas, Akash and Vayu Mahabhut together form vata dosha. Vata is one of the three doshas. As a result, the vata dosha has rajas and sattva qualities, of which the rajas quality is dominant. Activated by Rajas Guna, this Vata acts as a major driving force behind all the activities of the body (Sharma, 2011). Of the tridoshas, both the doshas called pitta and kapha and all the activities of dhatus and mal depend on vata. That is why Vata is also called the king of doshas.

On the contrary, when this Vata becomes unbalanced it disrupts all the events of the body and causes various types of Vata diseases. Vata diseases are considered to be painful diseases (Singh, & Palawat, 2019). Vata diseases are described in Ayurveda scriptures. In the 20th chapter of the Sutra place of Charaka Samhita, a total of 80 types of Vaetaj-Nanatmaj diseases have been discussed.

IV. ROLE OF PRANAYAMA IN YOGIC MANAGEMENT OF VATA DISEASES

As the name suggests, Pranayama means 'Prana' and 'Ayaam', where 'Vayu/Vayu or life force' in the body is called 'Prana', and 'Ayam' means 'regulation' or 'Air Expansion'. Therefore, the literal meaning of Pranayama is the expansion or regulation of life force or pranvaayu (Mallinson, 2004). For thousands of years, yogis have developed techniques for working with this energetic system through the practice of pranayama, which as a means of balance and well-being of body and mind. It has been proved by many research works completed in the present time that the rhythm of pranic energy can be controlled with pranayama and a healthy body and a healthy mind can be attained.

Pranayama is mainly defined in yoga texts such as Hatha Ratnavali, Shiva Samhita, Vashishtha Samhita, Asana Pranayama Mudra Bandha, Patanjali Yoga Sutras and Ghera Samhita, and Kumbhaka in Hatha Yoga Pradipika, which give a detailed description of the different types of pranayama. According to these yogic texts the main purpose of pranayama is to regulate life energy, protect health and achieve wellness.

Also, in the different types of pranayama described under these Hatha Yoga texts, two such pranayamas have been described, through whose practice a person balances the vata dosha in the body and plays an important role in the management of vata diseases as well as in health promotion. These two pranayamas capable of balancing Vata are Bhastrika Pranayama and Suryabhedhi Pranayama

respectively.

Bhastrika Pranayama

Basically Bhastrika Pranayama is breathing at a fast pace. In which by taking a deep breath from both the nostrils, after filling the lungs with air, exhale completely with the sound of 'hiss'. According to major yogic texts such as Hatha Yoga Pradipika, Hath Ratnavali, Shiva Samhita, Vashishtha Samhita, Asana Pranayama Mudra Bandha, Patanjali Yoga Sutras and Gherand Samhita, the detailed description of Bhastrika Pranayama is as follows (Mallinson, 2004; Gharote, Devnath, & Jha, 2002; Muktibodhananda, 2012)-

- According to Gherand Samhita, for doing Bhastrika Pranayama, as air is filled with bellows by a blacksmith, in the same way air will be filled completely in your stomach through the nostrils.
- After that, while doing the practice of Antah Kumbhaka, we will rotate the stomach slowly by stopping the air inside the body.
- In this way will repeat this exercise 20 times.
- After that, the air will come out through the nose just like the air coming out of the blacksmith's washer.
- This type of pranayama is called Bhastrika Pranayama by yoga scholars.
- By the practice of Bhastrika Pranayama, the seeker becomes free from all kinds of diseases and attains complete health.
- Similar to the Gherand Samhita, the Hathratnavali and Hathapradipika yoga texts mention the use of the fingers of the hands while inhaling and exhaling, in addition to obtaining a similar description of the method of Bhastrikapranayama.

Following are the major benefits of Bhastrika Pranayama:

‘वातपित्तश्लेष्महरं शरीराग्निविवर्धनम् ।

ब्रह्ममनाडीमुखे संस्थ कफाघर्षाल नाशनम् ।

विषेषेणैव कर्तव्यं भस्त्राख्यं कुम्भकं त्विदम् ।।’ (Hatharatnavali 2/25)

According to the above verse 25 of the second chapter of major hathayogic text named Hathratnavali, Bhastrika Pranayama removes the disorders arising from the imbalance of the tridoshas (Vata, Pitta, Kapha) (Gharote, Devnath, & Jha, 2002). The gastric fire can be stimulated by its practice. Bhastrika Pranayama removes phlegm etc. Similarly, according to the second chapter of Hathapradipika, Bhastrika Pranayama removes Vata-Pitta-Kaphajanya disorders (Muktibodhananda, 2012). To get the above benefits, special emphasis should be given on doing Bhastrika Pranayama. Bhastrika Pranayama should be practiced at least 3 times a day. Bhastrika Pranayama is placed under a dynamic pranayama, the practice of which requires a lot of physical strength. Therefore, after practicing once, you can rest for a while. During the practice of Bhastrika Pranayama one should be aware of breathing, abdominal movement and mental calculation. The practice should be stopped immediately in case of heart disease, hernia, Dizziness, hyperacidity, ulcer,

epilepsy, stroke and feeling faint.

A. Suryabhedhi Pranayama

The literal meaning of Suryabhedhi Pranayama is to pierce or purify the pingala nadi. Suryabhedhi is made up of two words- 'Surya' means 'sun or heat', and 'Bhed' means- 'to pierce'. Generally in this pranayama one inhales through the right nostril and exhales through the opposite nostril. According to Gherand Samhita, the detailed description of Suryabhedhi Pranayama as the best Pranayama by Maharishi Gherand is as follows(Mallinson, 2004)-

- To practice Suryabhedhi Pranayama, one should first apply Jalandhara Bandha, Kumbhaka while breathing maximum through Surya Nadi or right voice or right nostril.
- After this, the breath should be exhaled slowly through the left nostril. Thus it is said to be a complete cycle of Suryabhedhi Pranayama.
- To practice again, practice Kumbhaka by filling it with the right nostril and exhaling through the left nostril.
- Pranayama performed by this method is called Suryabhedhi Pranayama. Maharishi Gherand has suggested repeating this exercise.
- This Suryabhedhi Pranayama destroys old age and death, it helps to ignite the fire of the body.

➤ According to the second chapter of Hathapradipika by Maharishi Swatmaram ji, the method of Suryabhedhi Pranayama has been described as follows(Muktibodhananda, 2012)-

“आसने सुखदे योगी बद्ध्वा चैवासनं ततः।

दक्षनाडया समाकृष्य बहिस्थं पवनं शनैः।।”(Hatha

Pradipika 2/48)

“आकषादानखाग्राच्च निरोधावधि कुम्भयेत्।

ततः शनैः सव्यनाडया रेचयेत् पवनं शनैः।।”(To

practice Suryabhedhi Pranayama, by laying any posture, sit on it in the starting position.

- After that, by slowly pulling the outside air from the right nostril inwards, keeps it inside the body for as long as possible.
- And then slowly exhale through the left nostril. This type of pranayama is called Suryabhedhi Pranayama.
- Therefore, this Suryabhedhi Pranayama should be practiced again and again.
- Surya Bhedi Pranayama should be practiced at least 10 times daily.
- People suffering from heart disease, epilepsy, high blood pressure should not practice Suryabhedhi Pranayama.

➤ It is clearly described in the yogic book called Hattanavali that- The practice of Suryabhedhi Pranayama is mainly beneficial in the prevention of Vata dosha(Gharote, Devnath, & Jha, 2002)-

आलस्यं वातदोषघ्नं कृमिकीटं निहन्ति च।

पुनः पुनरिदं कार्यं सूर्यभेदाख्यकुम्भकम्।। (Hatharatnavali 2/12)

- It removes rheumatism, lethargy and stomach worms
 - The practice of this pranayama clears the sinuses.
- According to the 50th verse of the second sermon of Hathapradeepika by Maharishi Swatmaram ji (Muktibodhananda, 2012)- कपालशोधनं वातदोषघ्नं कृमिदोषहत्।

पुनः पुनरिदं कार्यं सूर्यभेदनमुत्तमम्।। (Hatha Pradipika 2/50)

- On the basis of this verse practice of suryabhedhi pranayama destroys diseases related to Vata, purifies the head area and removes the worm defect present in the stomach.

Thus it is clearly mentioned in major yoga texts that regular practice of Suryabhedhi Pranayama and Bhastrika Pranayama balances the Vata dosha in the body and at the same time it is a completely capable exercise to prevent Vata disease.

V. DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

In the present research work, the importance of suitable and effective yoga methods for yogic management of Vata diseases described in the scriptures has been discussed in detail. Under which, explaining the meaning and methods of Pranayamas in very practical, natural, and useful yogic practices suitable for maintaining equilibrium and balance of irritable or unbalanced Vata, their method has been described in detail on the basis of major yogic texts such as Hatha Yoga Pradipika, Hatha Ratnavali, Asana Pranayama Mudra Bandha, and Gherand Samhita. Understanding the methods of Suryabhedhi Pranayama and Bhastrika Pranayama useful for the management of Vata diseases, the benefits and precautions obtained in relation to the removal of Vata doshas are briefly described. Also, in the present perspective, the role of Pranayama in the management of Vata diseases and overall health development has been highlighted. Thus, the main objective of yogic management of Vata diseases is to describe to the general public the remedies for effective management of various types of Vata diseases arising as a result of imbalance of Vata dosha. Under which an attempt has been made to understand the methods of Suryabhedhi pranayama and Bhastrika pranayama in a very simple and practical way for the management of these diseases.

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