



## NATIONAL PROGRAMME OF BLINDNESS & THE CONTRIBUTION OF AYURVEDA

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### ABSTRACT

Netra- Roga is compiled in Shalakya-Tantra. 90% of knowledge, we achieved from the eyes. So one should be very careful regarding to keep his eyesight normal. For long life & enjoyment of life, normal eyesight is most important. So Ayurveda, has given importance to *Netra & Netra roga*. Today's *Aahar, Vihar & food material* is hazardous for eyesight. There is very broadly elaborated the *Netra & Netra roga* in *Sushruta Samhita, Uttara Sthan*. Since that era, our *Maharishi* has known about the importance of eye & eyesight. Our Govt. takes an important steps regarding blindness. But that is not enough. Govt. should involve Ayurveda too, for avoiding blindness. Because in Ayurveda, there are very good *chikitsa-Upkram* for *netra roga* as well as to maintain a normal eye sight. If one should properly followed, he will never suffer from eye problems. These *Upkrama* also helpful for bring down the number of vision. Those people, who know all these, they apply these *Upakramas* on themselves & enjoy the normal eye sight. Govt. should take appropriate steps to bring forward there hidden but most important *upakrama* in Ayurveda for eye & eye disease. *Upakrama* likes *Anjan-vidhi, Netra-tarpan, Netra puta-paaka, Netra Aashchotana* therapy, *Nasya, Padabhyang*, etc. There are also very good side & adverse effectless Ayurvedic medicines for maintaining the normal eye sight as well as for *netra rogas*. Some therapies for *netra roga & prevention of blindness* are illustrated broadly in Ayurveda. If practically thinks, & applied all these & brought in focus, this will definitely beneficial to our society. Definitely, Ayurveda will play a great role in National Programmes of Blindness. AYUSH Ministry & concerned Dept. of Govt. of India, should take necessary steps regarding this & give the proper justification with literature in Ayurveda as well as to entire human beings to avoid blindness.

**KEYWORDS:** National Programme of Blindness & Ayurveda.

### INTRODUCTION

“चक्षुरक्षायां सर्वकालं मनुष्यै.....

यत्नःकर्तव्यो जीविते यावदिच्छा |

व्यर्थो लोकोऽयं तुल्यरात्री दिवानां

पुंसां अंधानां विद्यमानेऽपि विन्ते ||”

Authentic authority of Ayurvedic science, Wagbhata, has very significantly stressed the importance of the eye-sight & faculty of perception. In his version as above, at the very outset, he warns, one should always be sagacious toward eye – sight or otherwise, one has to face the calamity of blindness.

For the blind, says Wagbhat, there is no rising of the sun or no sun-set. All the time, for him, the whole world remains the same. Therefore, he, who is desirous of long-life and wish to enjoy the life, must be watchful and pay grim attention toward maintenance of healthy eye sight.

People, doctors, scientists, research-workers, the leaders and most of ophthalmologists and all the greatmen, they are seen ignorant, they have been kept in dungeon regarding true Ayurveda. Even our Ayurvedic practitioneres and most of the students are also un-aware of the fact. They do not know, there is a thought of expertisation, including the subject ‘*Netra-Rogas*’ in Ayurveda. The fact is, modern ophthalmologists is astonished to know the point, that Ayurvedic ancient literature is replete with the subject of *Netra-rogas* and particularly the description of blindness, the blindness and expected possible contribution of Ayurveda to modern national issue of blindness.

Modern thinkers and ophthalmologists should better take the note, on the following points, which are dealt with thoroughly by Ayurveda and could be called salient features of Ayurveda. This highlights the distinctness of Ayurveda and its views regarding *Netra-rogas*.

1) Eye must be protected every moment because, each and every eye disease or *Netra-roga* may cause blindness consequently.

2) The head or (शिर) - called in Ayurveda, one of the three “*Marmas*”. As other organs, eye balls situated in the frontal part of the head. One should therefore, be always careful to protect the organ, ‘Eye’.

#### Causative factors of *Netra-rogas*

There are certain and particular edible drinks, food, food-stuffs and also acting or behaviouring ways habits, etc. which can cause eye disease & blindness ultimately. Bad habits of man in these days, addictions of various types, must never be ignored in this context.

“अर्थः अत्स्माद्ययैः संयोगः कालः कर्मच दुश्कृतं ॥”

#### अ.हृदय नि.टीका

In the light of this versions,

- If one does not use the eye-sight at all blindness may occur. In this context, I may better make it clear that *Gandhari* (an epic personality) had closed her eyes with cloth pad for merely a specific period.
- Using the eye-sight below normal expectancy.
- Using the eye- sight improper.
- Gazing constantly at any glowing think, like the sun, welding article, etc.
- Looking at the screen pictures closely for a long time.
- Pressure of blowing winds in the reverse direction.

For instance, it has become a very common habit, in the youth to neglect or connive at the forceful wind in frontal direction, while riding any vehicle. It causes an earlier effect on the eye sight, even upto blindness.

- Frequent and excessive use of bitter testing foodstuff, astringents and pungents and hot things like chilly of both types green and red. Spicy-dried things like fried grams, roasted chaffs and other articles.
- Living in slum-areas, in the atmosphere of polluted air, smokes, etc. are also the causative factors.
- Suppression of natural urges is at present a great powerful factor causing heart diseases. Our present way of life, makes us helpless to do so, if suppose one is busy and much more engrossed with one’s valuable task or with one’s job and their’s nature’s call for passing the stool or urination, one can not many times, leave the job & tries to retain the urge. This stands to be a habit with thousands of workers affecting their health and particularly the health of eye- sight.
- Some times the case is reverse. One has to go to his office in time & attend the duty assigned, one has to take food even if one does not feel hungry, one has to make-out forcefully urination eventhough one has no natural call for urination, one has to evacuate bowels forcibly even though, no urge is there for passing.

This type of behavior or conducts, are causative factors of weak eye-sight, says Ayurveda, which we can visualise in thousands of children with specs, today.

This basic theory has been stressed in all Ayurvedic literature.

“धारण-उदिरण-निशाजागर-अत्युच्चभाषणे ॥”

Says Wagbhat.

- Keeping awake one-self for a long time in the night, cultivation of the habit of taking sleep in the day time, specifically after the dinner or lunch.
- Want of expected nutritious food- “मधुरप्रायं षडरसं”, diet in which sweet and unctuous articles are prominently present and other food articles of rest of the five tests are normally present. It is to be noted & administered for this practical purpose, Ayurveda advocates “षडरसं आहार” is better for the healthy eyesight and not “चौरसआहार”.
- Feeling of constant fear to some ones, sorrowful morning, lamentation, distress, anger and constantly weeping all these may lead to eye; affliction in the long run.
- Excess quantity of drinks particularly of liquers, dry vegetables, dry flesh-eating, dry foods, decoded food articles, more and frequent use of fatty food-stuffs.
- For want of timely body- purification or non observation of *panch-karma* therapy of times.
- Get one-self engrossed in reading various types of literature, day and night without any interruption.
- External attacks-wounds –extreme heat, poisonous substances- injuries-sudden and accidental calamities pointed and short weapons and articles-dust-mud-wood-glass and other articles are all causing items of eye disease or even blindness.

- Some more wonderful causes in Ayurveda in Sushruta and other original volumes are also quoted here for the deep consideration of our learned modern workers in this field :-

“उष्णाभितप्तस्य जलप्रवेशाद्, दूरेक्षणात् स्वप्नविपर्ययाच्च ।

प्रसक्तसंरोदनकोपशोक क्लेशाभिघातादतिमैथुनाच्च ॥

शुक्तारनालाम्लकुलत्थमाष, निषेवणाद्वेगविनिग्रहाच्च ।

स्वेदादथो धूमनिषेवणाच्च, छर्द्विघाताद्वमनातियोगात् ।

बाष्पग्रहात् सुक्ष्मनिरिक्षणाच्च, नेत्रे विकारान्जनयन्ति दोषाः ॥”

सुश्रुत उत्तर स्थान - 1 / 26-27

- He, who feels body is burning, due to its exposure to the scorching heat of Sun rays, if he sudden enters into the cold water, (or an alikes) becomes the victims of eye diseases and even he can become blind ultimately.
- He, who stares always at such a thing which is situated at a long distances.
- Those, whose busyness has a deep concern with minutely observing some objects, as Gold-smiths, artists, sculptures, some technician, etc. also are victims of blindness.
- Suppressions of the urge for vomits and extreme frequency of vomiting process.

“उर्ध्व-जत्रु विकारेषु स्वप्नकाले प्रशस्यते ॥”

The medicines for the ENT diseases should be administered at bed-time, says Wagbhata. In the light on this theoretical base, one realises anything consumed bed-time, acts on the upper portion of the collarbone (head). Taking this particularly view of Ayurveda into account, it is witnessed that those persons, who are addicted to take sweets-sour things or cold drinks and milk water and alike liquids, when they go to bed, require to wear spectacles at an earlier age or develop “*Ling-nash*” or the eye disease ‘Cataract’ at an early stage. Longstanding use of these above mentioned substances and the habits cause gradual deposition or accumulation of unwanted substances (*kaph* like) in the cavity of eye-ball and cause the disease.

-Glaucoma (*Kaach-bindu*) could also be formed due to such habits, which create blindness ultimately.

All of these above said causes are, I suppose, noted only in Ayurvedic literature & not in the modern one.

For want of extra sufficient money, spare time, necessary means, etc. even though self experience is much encouraging the concerned vaidyas become helpless. They can not publish it extensively and the other important point is, our Govt. has no time to peep into such issues. Therefore, we earnestly request our Govt. to pay real attention to this with a constructive partial view.

In the field of *Chikitsa* or the treatment of eye diseases and the blindness, Ayurveda has its own view, which high-lights the distinctness of basic concepts of Ayurveda.

It is of two kinds- 1) treatment of eye diseases, which may lead to blindness and 2) preventive measures to be observed to avoid blindness.

In the first place, Ayurvedic treatment is of two kinds. The medicinal and some therapeutical.

Medicinal treatment for eye diseases, which if not properly administered, the blindness occurs.

There are certain single herbal drugs that are recommended for eye diseases. They are particularly ‘*Madhu Yashti*’, *Hirda*, *Behda*, *Amla*, *Lodhra*, white colored *Maricha* or *mire*, *Chandan*, *Eranda*, *Waywama*, *Haridra*, *Daruharidra*, *Manjistha*, *Palash*, *Shigru*, *Draksh*, *Manuka* (*Mridwika*), *Lashuna*.

It brought to the notice of modern eye- specialists, experts and modern scholars they not only dis-believe, they ridicule contemptuously calling such things totally unscientific. Ask the proof in the statistics of such patients from Ayurvedic practitioners. By ill luck, patients of eye diseases hardly know that Ayurveda also holds such a faculty of knowledge. Very rarely it is seen, that even sufficient number required for percentage of

such patients does not approach to Ayurvedic practitioners. This number is so meagre, that is not even sufficient to maintain statistical work of data recording.

We, firmly believe, Ayurveda is a science of complete life. It is not a literature as novels for entertainment. Those Ayurvedic practitioners, who are well known for their indepth knowledge of Ayurveda & practice, it should be converted at a platform of present their valuable experience regarding prevention of eye diseases & blindness.

#### Important lists to prevent blindness

Some more herbal drugs in Ayurveda advocated to prevent blindness. *Triphala*, *Trikalu*, *Koshtha*, *Devdar*, *Shunthi*, *Punarnava*, *Ela* (*Velchi*), *Kamala pushpa*, *Jyotishmati*.

#### Some minerals and others

*Suvarna* (Gold), *Raupya* (Silver), *Tamra* (Copper), *Yeshada* (Jasta), *Kharpar* (Maikhapri), *Makshik*, *Shukti*, *Mauktika* (Pearl), *Samudra fena*, *Shaiwaal* (Moss), *Ushir* (Khush), *Netra walak*, etc., some more like - *Go-ghrit* (ghee of cow), *Aja-ghrit* & milk of both of these, *Honey* (*Madhu*), *Gulkands*.

#### Prepared Medicine

*Srotanjanam* (Collyrium), *Langhu-soota-shekhara*, *kaam-dudha*, *Suvarna-maalini-vasant*, *Laghu-malini-vasant*, *Trivanga Bhasma*, *Raupya-Makshik-Triphala choorna*, *Triphala Ghrita*, *Triphala Guggulu*, *Lohabhasm*, *Akshabeeja Gutika*, *Shatavari Ghrita*, *Pashupata Yoga*.

#### The corns—foods & food-stuffs, etc.

There is special mention by Wagbhat of the list of those things which are particularly useful in maintaining health & eye-sight. If one observes this list in daily practically routine, no fear of blindness. Govt. should divert their attention.

Toward these things which could surely be Ayurvedic contribution to Govt.’s ‘National campaign on Blindness’.

The list follows:-

Barley-Wheat-Rice –Rice namely *Shashtik* & *Kordu-Pignut* (*Mooga*) all of these grains stored for one year, to acquire such a property. They become *laghu* (easily digestible) & are useful to gain whole some health. The foods & recipes of these grains mixed with pure cow ghee, vegetables also which diminish prominently *pitta* and *kapha* doshas, non-veg. preparations—especially of “*Jangala*” animals, Pomegranate fruits, Candied sugar (*Khadi-sakhar in Marathi*), rock-salt (Saindhav)-*Triphala*—grapes—dried grapes—prunes—naturally distilled water (*Divyambu*) all these are described in Ayurveda as holding the property in useful to the eye & the eye-sight. By the proper use of these all blindness could surely be avoided.

**Some therapies & prevention of blindness**

- Performing *Panchkarma* systematically & timely,
- Observance of '*Shodhana Nasya*' (causing sneezing with scientific discipline) & '*Shaman Nasya*' (oils or ghee-medicated or singly to subside provoked '*doshas*'). (this also is to be done in particular certain conditions of ENT diseases.)
- Gentle massaging all over the body in general & soles of the feet, the upper & side portions of the head near the ears in particular.

**Anjana Vidhi**

Use of collyrium-*Rasanjana* is advocated specifically. This process of '*Anjana*' is said to be totally unscientific by the modern educated class. *Afgani* people & *Sindhi* people, who traditionally use '*Anjana*' everyday, we can see the percentage amongst them of eye-diseases & blindness is, (I believe) statistically at a low rate or it is very less. This is a point which deserves attention to be paid by the modern World.

**Netra -Tarpana**

It is a specific process of filling up of medicated oil or ghee, etc. with a discipline on the eye ball.

Sluggish movement -stragant conditions of eye-sight, redness of eyes, great pain due to some irritation & when the eye-sight indication blindness, in all of these conditions this process or therapy of *Netra-Tarpan* is very much advisable. It avoids the Cataract formation process & help to maintain normal eye sight.

**Netra Puta-paaka**

A ball like thing prepared of flesh & some medicinal drugs, is covered with the leaf of Castor tree (*Erand*), put on fire, heated & while becomes red hot, cooled, opened & juice it & use to put in the eye. This therapy is used for the some purpose & is stated & recommended for the same diseases & should be perform under expert senior Ayurvedic Ophthalmologist.

**Netra-Aashchotana therapy**

It is stated to be a must for all of the eye-disease. Among all other treatments of eye-diseases, *Aashchotan* ranks the top. This is nothing but practising an eye-drops therapy. The drops are from some useful medicinal herbs.

**Nasya (the nasal medication therapy)**

“नासा हि शिरसः द्वारम्।”

Passage of the nose is the entrance gate of the internal portion of the head. If any sense-organ is damaged, even the eye, it should be treated through the nose. The expected medicine is to be dropped & incerted in the nostrils and it reaches gradually to the affected part (even in the eye). Thus, with the help of '*Nasya*' medicine, reaches the eye-ball & fruitful results is acquired.

In addition: *Paadabhyanga* (massaging the soles of the foot) & *Moordha taila* (gentle massaging to the head), *Shiro-basti* (particular oleation method on the upper

head, lying fix a specific belt around the head & pouring medicated oil in it, this therapy is practised for some diseases that might lead to blindness.

Protection of the head by this or that way, keeps one away from blindness.

Some exercises are also to be regularly observed for general health & for the healthy eye-sight. Some are *Baddha Padmasan*, *Yoga mudra*, *Shambhavi mudra*, *Vala neti*, *Sutra neti*, *Vipashyana*, *Tratak*, *Shirshasana*, etc. Chanting of *Gayatri* Mantra & some other, '*Siddha Mantras*'.

Daily as views - '*Chakshushopanishada*' is a caption of some hymn of ancient Indian literature. We have clinically found it successfully in nearly hundred of cases. Recitation with a scientific discipline of this Sanskrit version is found useful for many eye- diseases. The number of spect glass comes down by nearly half, it this is regularly performed for one year.

It is assured that, in the family no-body would become blind, those who undergoes. Moreover, it is a must of the day, it should be practically again examined & scrutinised that- we come -across in Ayurvedic authentic literature, the lists of those eye diseases, which are noted to be incurables (*असाध्य*) eye diseases, in the light of modern scientific research & advanced literature regarding eye disease, we have to see how far the statements like this as above are correct? we firmly believe, all the statements & commitments in ancient Ayurvedic literature is correct & true. We are lagging behind only because, Ayurvedic practitioners are never given sufficient opportunities, means & monetary aid & assistance by the Govt. & that vaidyas are not in so much sound position that they could afford thousands of rupees per second for the necessary publicity.

The concerned Govt. authorities would surely, take constructive note on this peep into the field of contributing views of Ayurvedic in the subject of blindness sprouting with the open eyes- I may conclude saying & uttering an interesting & intellectual version of Wagbhat as -

“अश्मनो जन्म लोहस्य तत एव च तीक्ष्णता।

उपघातोऽपि तेनैव तथा नेत्रस्य तेजसः ॥”

वा.सू.

The metal of iron originate from the stone-mine. The iron weapon is sharpened on the stone. The sharpness of the edge is destroyed also by the stone. All life of the iron weapon is related with the stone.

Same way, the eye-sight originates from the, 'Sun' or '*Teja*'. It is empowered by the *teja* or the sun-light & if improperly used the power of eye-sight is hampered over also by the Sun or *Tej*. One should always be

watchful towards eye-sight otherwise it would fetch the greatest calamity of blindness.

### **CONCLUSION**

Contribution of Ayurveda in maintaining the normal eye sight & avoidance of blindness has very high significance. Only need to pay attention of our AYUSH Ministry & other concern Dept. for involving Ayurveda in our National Programme of Blindness. It will definitely beneficial to entire society of human beings.

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