

CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF PRANAYAMA IN SWAASTHYA RAKSHANA – A REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

Prana is the breath of life of all beings in the universe, they are born through and live by it. When they die their individual breath dissolves into the cosmic breath. The practice of Pranayama helps to cleanse the *Nadis* (tubular structure through which energy flows). There are several *Nadis* in the body and most of them start from the areas of the heart and navel. Pranayama keeps the *Nadis* in a healthy condition and prevents their decay. This in turn brings about changes in the mental attitude of the individual. The rate and depth of reaching are self-regulated through the nervous system to meet the purpose of breathing to supply in a regulated and controlled way the fresh oxygen which is constantly needed by the cells and to discharge the carbon dioxide accumulated in them. Hence a proper pranayama techniques like *Nadi shuddi*, *Shitali*, *Shitkari*, *Bramari* practice along with moderate, nutritious diet can regulate the lungs and nervous system to function efficiently and promotes better and healthier life.

KEYWORDS: *Pranayama, Nadi.***OBJECTIVE**

1. To develop inner stamina in the body
2. To discipline body and mind

INTRODUCTION

Pranayama comprises of two words *Prana* and *Ayama*. The word *Prana* means breath, respiration, life, vitality, wind, energy or strength. *Ayama* means lengthen, expand, stretch or restraint. Thus *Pranayama* means control the breath.^[1] when impurities present in *Nadis* and *Chakras* *Prana Vayu* does not enters *Sushumna* till the *Nadis* are purified. Through constant practice of *Pranayama* can achieve *Nadi Shuddi*.^[2] When *Prana Vayu* moves the mind wavers, when *Prana vayu* becomes stable the mind also becomes stable.^[3] To achieve this stage regular practice of *Pranayama* in a proper place, time and diet are important. It should be practiced with proper *Puraka* (inhalation), *Kumbaka* (withhold breath) and *Rechak* (expiration).

Time of Practice of Pranayama

Pranayama can be Practice in four specified times they are early morning, midday, evening and midnight. Early morning means one and half hour before sunrise i.e *Brahma Muhurta*, at this time the subconscious mind is active. Evening, around the time of sunset is called *Sandhya Kala*. *Sandhya* is the meeting of day and night. It represents the time when *Ida* and *Pingala* merges with *Sushumna* in *Ajna Chakra* affects body rhythm and

function. Similarly at midnight and midday there is a changeover in the external and internal energies leads to tranquility.^[4]

Place: Pranayama should never be practiced in a closed room. Keep the doors and windows open to ensure that pure air can enter. Place should not be so airy inside the room.^[5]

Foods to be used during Pranayama Practice

Practitioner should consume moderate, balanced diet. Eating unsuitable or unseasonable food leads to physical ailments. The suggested foods are rice, barley, wheat flour preparations, pulses such as Green gram, Black gram, Jack fruits, root vegetables, Berries, Bitter gourd, Cucumber, Figs, Plantain stem root, Eggplant and seasonal fresh leafy green vegetables. Foods which are easily digestible, agreeable, lubricating, strengthening and acceptable to the mind should be eaten. One should avoid bitter, sour, salty and astringent foods, fried foods, curd, buttermilk, heavy vegetables, wines, palm nuts, over ripen jack fruit, horse gram, lentils, garlic, asafetida, milk, jaggery, daal, pomegranate, avoid stale, hard, polluted, heating, extremely cold and hot foods.^[6]

Cautions^[7]

- ✓ Early morning bathing and fasting, which cause discomfort to the body should be discarded.

- ✓ Having only one meal a day, not eating at all or eating between meals should be discarded.
- ✓ Beginners must have milk and ghee daily.
- ✓ Eat two meals a day i.e. in noon and evening.

Method and benefits of *Pranayama*

Nadi shuddi pranayama- sitting in *Badda Padmasana*, inhale through the left nostril and hold the breath to capacity and exhale through the right nostril. Then inhale through the right nostril gradually fill the abdomen perform *Kumbhaka* then exhale completely through the left nostril. When practiced for three months all the *Nadis* are purified.^[8]

Sheetali Pranayama – Fill the abdomen by sucking air through the tongue retain the air for a short duration in *Kumbhaka* and expel it through both nostrils. It Cures and prevents digestive disorders and *Kapha-Pitta* disorders.^[9]

Shitkari Pranayama

By drawing the breath in through the mouth, make a hissing sound without gaping the mouth and exhale through the nose. One becomes beautiful like a *Kama deva*.^[8]

Bramari Pranayama

Breath in quickly, making a reverberating sound like the male black bee and exhale slowly while softly making the sound of the female black bee. By practicing this mind is absorb in bliss.^[8]

Improper *Pranayama* Practice

Improper *Pranayama* Practice give rises to many diseases like *Hikka* (Hiccups), *Shwasa* (Dyspnoea), *Kasa* (Cough), *Vedana* (Pain) in *Shiras* (Head), *Karna* (Ears) and *Akshi* (Eyes) *Pradesha* due to *Vata Prakopa*.^[10]

DISCUSSION

Action of pranayama on different systems

- ✓ The lungs are directly concerned with the disposal of carbon dioxide in the venous blood and preventing ammonia, ketones and aromatic amines from building up to toxic levels. The lungs need to be kept clean and free from bacterial diseases by an efficient circulation of blood and lymph. *Pranayama* helps here by keeping the lungs pure and by increasing the flow of fresh blood.
- ✓ The liver also has an active wanders in the blood lymph, picking up solid wastes, foreign cells and their products after breakdown or storage, all these activities are stimulated by *Pranayama*. The intra renal pressure, correct position, shape and state of tension in the kidney are aided by *Pranayama*.
- ✓ The rhythmic use of the diaphragm and abdominal muscles in *Pranayama* directly stimulates the peristaltic and segmenting movements of the intestines as well as promoting intestinal circulation. Thus it helps the intestine in its functions of absorbing food materials and disposing of solid

waste, mainly unabsorbed food and products of our friendly bacteria, the colonic flora, residual secretions from liver (bile), pancreas and intestines.

- ✓ Spleen acts as a filter to purify the circulating blood of worn out oxygen carrying red cells. Much of the splenic circulation is within lymphatic structures and is stimulated by *Pranayama*.
- ✓ *Pranayama* helps to maintain the flow of pure blood, which tones the nerves, brain, spinal cord and cardiac muscles thus maintaining their efficiency. The sweat glands acts as accessory micro kidney stimulated by pranayama.
- ✓ Regular practice of *Pranayama* prevents and cures diseases. Improper practice may cause *Asthma*, cough, hypertension, and pain in the heart, ears and eyes. *Pranayama* purifies the *Nadis*, protects the internal organs and cells, and neutralizes lactic acid which causes fatigue so that recovery is quick. It increases digestion, vigour, vitality, perception and memory. It frees the mind from the grasp of the body, sharpens the intellect and illumines the self.
- ✓ *Pranayama* practice quietens the upsurge of the senses and desires. Thus the mind becomes sacrosanct or free of thoughts. The *Sadhaka's* words, thoughts and deeds becomes clean and pure. He maintains firmness in the body and steadiness in the mind.
- ✓ As wind drives away smoke and impurities from the atmosphere and its inherent quality is to burn and purify the area. *Pranayama* is a divine fire which cleanses the organs, senses, mind, intellect and ego.^[11]

CONCLUSION

Pranayama techniques like *Nadi shuddi*, *Shitali*, *Shitkari*, *Bramari* practices in a proper place and time along with moderate, nutritious diet can regulate the lungs and nervous system to function efficiently and promotes better and healthier life.

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