



**REVIEW OF MOOLA-BANDHA IN ANCIENT & CLASSICAL INDIA**

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**ABSTRACT**

*Yoga* practice promotes holistic healing and the return of the body to its natural state of homeostasis, preventing illness and disorders. *Patanjali Asthanga Yoga* outlines eight limbs: *Yama* (self-control), *Niyama* (self-observations), *Asana* (postures), *Pranayama* (breath control to regulate prana), *Pratyahara* (dissociation between consciousness and the outside world), *Dharana* (focus), *Dhyana* (meditation), and *Samadhi* (identification with original consciousness). *Bandha* and *Mudra* are ancient Indian techniques used to increase internal energy, stimulating prana and Chakra. *Tri Bandha* refers to the three locks or *Bandha*, *Moola Bandha*, *Uddiyana Bandha*, and *Jalandhara Bandha*, which are important in *Pranayama* and *Asana* in *Yoga*. *Moola Bandha* is the principle, key, and primary *Bandha* of the *Yogic* tradition, working on the Prithvi element and the *Mooladhara Chakra*, the seat of *Kundalini*. *Moola Bandha* is a *Yoga-Tantra* practice that involves contracting muscles around the perineal body, focusing on the *Mooladhara Chakra*. It awakens the *Mooladhara Chakra*, strengthens the pelvic floor, tones organs, and improves digestion. *Moola Bandha* is used in *Kumbhaka* to generate vitality and awaken *Kundalini*, purifying the senses and allowing *Kevala Kumbhaka*. It is essential for awakening *Chakra* and *Sushumna Nadi*.

**KEYWORDS:** *Tri Bandha* refers to the three locks or *Bandha*, *Moola Bandha*, *Uddiyana Bandha*, and *Jalandhara Bandha*, which are important in *Pranayama* and *Asana* in *Yoga*.

**INTRODUCTION**

*Yoga* practice promotes holistic healing and the return of the body to its natural state of homeostasis, preventing illness and disorders. It encourages recovery, well-being, and longevity, with many *Yogis* living for hundreds of years in the *Himalayan* region. The World Health Organization (WHO) has expanded its definition of "State of health" to include spiritual health, which is central to *Yoga*. *Ayurveda*, a traditional system of medicine, aims to preserve a healthy person's health and treat sickness. It provides a blueprint for an ideal way of living and prioritizes maintaining health as its first goal. *Yoga Asana*, defined as "that position which is comfortable and steady" in *Patanjali's Yoga Philosophy*, is practiced to cultivate the capacity to sit comfortably in one position for a lengthy period of time, required for meditation. The ancient *Yogic* tradition of *Bandha*, rooted in the *Guru Shishya Parampara*, profounds a synergy between physical and spiritual practices as per the *Yogic* science the *Bandha* is given utmost importance over *Asana*, *Pranayama* & *Mudra*. *Bandha* means lock, dam over a river, arrest, captivate or fasten.

**ETYMOLOGY OF MOOLA-BANDHA**

- ❖ *Moola-Bandha* (मूल बंध) is a *Sanskrit* compound term.
- ❖ *Moola* denotes "root", "base", "beginning", "foundation", "origin or cause", "basis", "source";
- ❖ *Bandha* denotes "bandage", "fetter", "posture", "joining together", and "catching hold of".
- ❖ *Moola/ मूल* - Roots<sup>[1]</sup>, *Bandha/ बंध* -Bandage. One of the terms relating to therapeutics used in *Ayurveda*.
- ❖ *Moola-Bandha/ मूल बंध* -to take or strike root, बद्धमूलस्य मूलं हि महद्वैरतरोः स्त्रिय, *Bandha/ बंध* - Position, Posture in general, आसनबंधधीर.<sup>[2]</sup>

**DEFINITION (PARIBHASHA / NIRUKTI) OF MOOLA-BANDHA**

- The *Sanskrit* word *Moola* means 'root' and the word *Bandha* means 'lock'. Here the word *Moola* means various things, it refers to the *Mooladhara Chakra*, the seat of *Kundalini* and it also refers to the root of the spine or the trunk of the body, the perineum. In English, *Moola-Bandha* can be translated by the cumbersome name the perineum contraction lock.<sup>[3]</sup>

- *Iyengar* defines *Moola-Bandha* as a posture where the body from the anus to the navel is contracted and lifted up and towards the spine.<sup>[4]</sup> *Moola-Bandha* is the base or master key in *Yogic* science as it works on the *Prithvi* element which is necessary for maintaining the healthy body.
- *Moola-Bandha* as practiced in ancient times was not merely a physical posture but was a holistic approach as it integrated *Asana*, *Mudra*, and *Pranayama* (different breathing patterns) at the same time as guided by the *Guru*. It was an integral part of *Ashtang Yoga* involving the Physique (physical aspect) and Psychic (mental and spiritual aspects) of *Yogi*. During *Moola-Bandha* practitioners followed *Ashtang Yoga* and adhered to the sequence *Yam* to *Samadhi*.

Generally speaking, there are four Types of *Bandha*.

- 1) *Jalandhar Bandha* (throat lock)
- 2) *Uddiyan Bandha* (abdominal lock)
- 3) *Moola-Bandha* (root lock)
- 4) *Maha Bandha* (great lock)

*Moola-Bandha* is an important *Yoga-Tantra* practice that is widely mentioned in the *Yogic* scriptures. The *Moola-Bandha* is described in the *Upnishada*, *Puran*, *Samhita*, and ancient *Yogic* and *Tantric texts*.

#### AIMS AND OBJECTIVE

- To study and understand the role of *Jalandhar Bandha* mentioned in various *Samhita*, and all classical texts.

#### REVIEW OF MOOLA-BANDHA IN UPANISHADA PERIOD

##### • YOGTATTAVA UPNISHADA

According to *Yogtattava Upnishada* pressing the heel firmly against the anus, *Moola-Bandha*, *Prana* and *Apana* as well as *Nada* and *Bindu* are united and give success in *Yoga*; there is no doubt about this.<sup>[5]</sup>

##### • YOGCHUDAMNI UPNISHADA

In *Yogchudamni Upnishada* involves supporting heels against the perineum, contracting the pelvic floor, and pulling *Apana* upwards, known as *Moola-Bandha*. This technique merges *Apana* with *Prana*, shrinking urine and faces, and aiding in the sublimation of sexual energy, symbolizing nature's return.<sup>[6]</sup>

##### • YOGKUNDALINI UPNISHADA

In *Yogkundalini Upnishada* *Apana* which has a downward tendency is forced up by one bending down. This process is called *Moola-Bandha*. When *Apana* is raised up and reaches the sphere of *Agni* (fire), then the flame of *Agni* grows long, being blown about by *Vayu*. Then *Agni* and *Apana* come to the *Prana* in a heated state. Through this very fiery *Agni*, there arises in the body the flaming (or the fire) which rouses the sleeping *Kundalini* through its heat. Then this *Kundalini* makes a hissing noise, becomes erect like a serpent beaten with a

stick, and enters the hole of *Brahmanadi* (*Susumna*). Therefore, *Yogi* should practice *Moola-Bandha* often.<sup>[7]</sup>

##### • TEJOBINDU UPNISHADA

*Yama* (forbearance), *Niyama* (religious observance), *Thyaga* (renunciation), *Mouna* (silence) according to time and place, *Asana* (posture), *Moola-Bandha*, seeing all bodies as equal, the position of the eye. *Pranayama* (control of breath), *Pratyahara* (subjugation of the senses), *Dharana*, *Dhyana*, and *Samadhi* – these are spoken of as the parts of *Yoga* in order.<sup>[8]</sup> That is called the *Moola-Bandha*, which is the *Moola* (root) of all worlds and through which the *Moola Chitta* is (*Bandha*) bound. It should be always practiced by the *RajaYogi*.

##### • YOGSHIKHO UPNISHADA

In the *Yogshikho Upnishada* pressing the anus with the heel, (the practitioner) should forcibly draw up the vital air in such a way that the air would move upwards stage by stage.

The *Prana* and *Apana* (vital airs), as also the *Nada* (Intellect) and the *Bindu* (mind), becoming one by means of the *Moola-Bandha*, bestow the successful accomplishment of *Yoga*. Herein there is no doubt.<sup>[9]</sup>

##### • DHYANBINDU UPNISHADA

One becomes young even when old through performing *Moola-Bandha* always. Pressing the *Yoni* by means of the heels, contracting the anus, and drawing up the *Apana* is called *Moola-Bandha*.<sup>[10]</sup>

##### • VARAH UPNISHADA

This *Bandha* is said of all *Nadi*. Through the grace of this *Bandha*, the *Devata* (goddess) becomes visible. This *Bandha* of four feet serves as a check to the three paths. This brightens up the path through which the *Siddha* obtained (their *Siddhis*). If *Prana* is made to rise up soon *Udana*, this *Bandha* checking all *Nadi* goes up. This is called *Samputa-Yoga* or *Moola-Bandha*. Through the Practicing of this *Yoga*, the three *Bandha* are mastered. By practicing day and night intermittingly or at any convenient time, the *Vayu* will come under control.<sup>[11]</sup>

#### MOOLA-BANDHA IN PURANA

##### • SKANDA PURANA

The *Purana* says that because in *Kashi*, bathing in *Ganga* is *MahapApana shini MahaMudra*, the one who practices this *Mudra* attains salvation. The one who flies from all the countries towards *Kashi* is capable of getting freedom from this great bondage called *Uddiyana Bandha*. The water generated from the bath of *Viswanathan*, which is held in the forehead, is a rare *Moola Bandha* for all the gods. A wise man who does not leave *Kashi* even when he is surrounded by hundreds of obstacles is said to be the *Moola-Bandha* that cuts the roots of sorrow.<sup>[12]</sup>

## REVIEW OF MOOLA-BANDHA IN VARIOUS SAMHITA AND YOGIC TEXT

### • SIVA SAMHITA

The *Moola-Bandha* is a practice that involves drawing upwards the *Apana*, destroying decay and death. By uniting the *Apana* with *Prana Vayu*, it becomes the *Yoni-Mudra*. Sitting in *Padmasana* posture, the *Yogi* moves through the air. To achieve this, practice in secret.<sup>[13]</sup>

### • GHERANDA SANHITA

The *Mudra* involves pressing the left foot between the anus and scrotum, contracting the rectum, pressing the intestines, and placing the right heel on the pubis, a technique known as *Moola-Bandha*, to control *Vayu (Prana)* and cross the ocean of Existence.<sup>[14]</sup>

### • HATHA YOGA PRADIPIKA

*Moola-Bandha* is a *Yogi* practice that involves pressing the perineum/vagina with the heel and contracting the rectum to force the downward-moving *Apana Vayu* upward. This practice unites *Prana/Apana* and *Nada/Bindu*, leading to total perfection. Constant practice results in decreased urine and stool, and even an old person becomes young. The intense heat aroused the sleeping *Kundalini*, straightening it and entering *Brahma Nadi*.<sup>[15]</sup>

### • HATHATATTVAKAUMUDI

*Moola-Bandha* is a *Yoga* technique that involves pressing the perineum between the genital and anus, promoting upward movement of *Apana* and *Prana*, reducing internal conflict, enhancing body fire, and achieving *Hatha* in *Yoga*.<sup>[16]</sup>

### • HATHRATNAVALI

*Moola-Bandha* is a practice where the perineum is pressed with the heel, contracting the anal sphincters to lift the *Apana Vayu* upwards. This forceful contraction unites *Nada* and *Bindu*, leading to success in *Yoga*. Consistent practice reduces urine and feces, and even an old person becomes young. The *Agni* and *Apana* intensify the bodily fire, resulting in *Kundalini* becoming straight and entering the *Brahmarandhra (Susumna)*.<sup>[17]</sup>

### • GORAKSASATKAM

That *Yogi* who knows *Maha Mudra*, *Nabho Mudra*, *Uddiyana*, *Jalandhara* and *Moola-Bandha* becomes a receptacle of miraculous powers. Pressing the *Yoni* (the space between the anus and the testes) with the heel, one should contract the anus and draw the *Apana* upwards. This is called *Moola-Bandha*.<sup>[18]</sup>

### • YOGA MAKARANDA

The *Yogi* explained there are twenty types of *Mudra*, Among those is *Moola-Bandha Mudra*: With the left heel, firmly press the *Kandasthana* which is between the rectum and the genitals, and pull the heel in tightly in order to close the anus. Pull in the stomach firmly and press it against the bones in the back (the spine). Bring in the right heel and place it on top of the genitals. This is

in *Hatha Yoga*. Benefit: Because of this, we can conquer the *Prana Vayu* and bring it under our control.<sup>[19]</sup>

### • DATTATREYA YOGASHASTRA

The *Yogi* mentions that the person who regularly practices the *Moola-Bandha* is an expert at *Yoga*. They should press his anus with his heel and forcefully contract his perineum over and over again so that his breath goes upwards. Becoming united by means of the root lock, the upward and downward moving breaths, and the *Nada* and *Bindu* are sure to bestow complete success in *Yoga*.<sup>[20]</sup>

### • VIVEKMARTANDA

*Apana* & *Prana* merge into each other through the continuous practice of *Moola-Bandha* and it prevents aging and also reduces the focal outcome. Pressing the perineum with the heel and raising the *Apana* the anus is to be contracted. This is known as *Moola-Bandha*.<sup>[21]</sup>

### • YOGABIJA

*Moola-Bandha* has been given first place in 'Yogbija'. It has been said in 'Yogbija' that *Bandha* are the main ones, by whose daily practice the *Vayu* is controlled and are *Moola-Bandha*, *Uddiyana Bandha*, and *Jalandhar Bandha*.<sup>[22]</sup>

### • SHAMBHAVI TANTRA

In *Moola-Bandha* Compress the anus with the root of the foot and, with good advice, draw the cave drink and gradually close it. This *Moola-Bandha* is supposed to destroy old age and death. who makes the unity of the breath and the life force stronger.<sup>[23]</sup>

### • PATANJALI YOGA PRADEEP

*Moola-Bandha* is a practice that involves closing the opening of the anus and perineal region by placing the left foot firmly in the middle, compressing the perineum area, and pulling downward air upwards. This practice is beneficial for *Siddhasana*, promoting upward movement of *Apana Vayu* and unity with *Prana*, and aiding in constipation removal and semen production.<sup>[24]</sup>

### • APAROKSHANUBHUTI BY SRI SHANKARACHARYA

*Raja-Yogi* practices the practice of "sucking in the root" (*Moola-Bandha*) to attain the Infinite State of total awakening. This involves controlling the senses, mind, renunciation, silence, space, time, posture, and the Supreme, who is the root of all existence. By restraining the mind's attention and merging it into the Supreme State of Pure Consciousness, students can reach the Infinite State of total awakening.<sup>[25]</sup>

### • INTEGRAL YOGA HATHA YOGI RAJ SRI SWAMI SATCHIDANANDA

*Moola-Bandha* or The Anus Lock -Contract the sphincters, situated at the rectum. Feel as if you are sucking the entire rectum upward, and holding it. This *Bandha* can be practiced during *Pranayama*. *Moola-*

*Bandha* directs the sex energy upward, from its normal downward course. It helps to keep in check nocturnal emissions and aids in maintaining celibacy. It also increases the benefit of *Pranayama* during retention.<sup>[26]</sup>

• **YOGA-MIMAMSA BY SRIMAT KUVALAYANANDA**

*Moola-Bandha* is an exercise that involves forcibly contracting the anal sphincters, requiring the perineum to be closely pressed by the heel, as described in *Siddhasana*. It can be practiced as part of *Siddhasana* or independently.<sup>[27]</sup>

• **YOGA OF GITA EXPOUNDED BY SAINT SHRI DNYANESHWAR**

The *Moola-Bandha* applied between the *Mooladhara* and the *Svadhishthana Chakra* for initiation of the *Prana* and the *Apana* actions such that they start flowing toward each other and ultimately meet. Normally, the *Apana* is restricted to the portion below the navel in the body and the *Prana* is restricted to the portion above the navel up to the *Anahata Chakra*.<sup>[28]</sup>

• **YOGA SAMHITA**

The *Yogi* explains that the *Pranayama Kosha*, or vital sheath, is formed by *Prana*, the energy that manipulates the physical body and is the universal life of all. It is worshipped as *Brahman*, granting the full span of life. *Yoga* teaches methods to control *Prana* and attain a blissful union with the Lord through *Pranayama* and *Bandha*. *Moola-Bandha* is a *Yogic Kriya* that helps students ascend *Apana* and sex energy, promoting contemplation and maintaining *Brahmacharya*.<sup>[29]</sup>

• **SARNGADHARAPADDHATI**

The person should apply *Khecari Mudra*, and *Jalandhara* on the neck, the root lock (*Moola-Bandha*) on the *Apana* breath and *Uddiyana* on the stomach.<sup>[30]</sup>

• **AAGAM RAHSHY**

*Moola-Bandha* is a practice that involves closing the opening of the anus and penis by placing the left foot firmly in the middle, compressing the perineal area, and pulling downward air upwards. This practice promotes upward movement of the *Apana Vayu*, unity with *Prana*, *Kundalini Shakti*, and is beneficial for removing constipation, illuminating the stomach, and making semen upwards.<sup>[31]</sup>

**MOOLA-BANDHA IS WIDELY MENTIONED IN VARIOUS MODERN LITERATURE**

• **ROOT OF YOGA**

The Root Lock (*Moola-Bandha*)-The person who regularly practices the root lock is an expert at *Yoga*. Who should press his anus with his heel and forcefully contract his perineum over and over again so that his breath goes upwards? Becoming united by means of the root lock, the upward and downward moving breaths, and *Nada* and *Bindu*, are sure to bestow complete success in *Yoga*.<sup>[32]</sup>

• **WHEELS OF LIFE AUSER'S GUIDE TO THE CHAKRA SYSTEM**

The *Moola-Bandha* or anal lock tones the *Mooladhara Chakra*. It is practiced by tightening the perineum and anal sphincter after inhalation while the breath is held. This stimulates sleeping *Kundalini*.<sup>[33]</sup>

**DISCUSSION**

- In this paper we have discussed the available and known history of *Yoga* and how this knowledge gradually traveled and spread to the Western world from the Indian subcontinent.
- We have also studied the difference in Indian approach and western approach towards *Yoga* specifically *Moola-Bandha*. In the Indian approach, this knowledge is practiced for the attainment of *Moksha* and was practiced in *Guru Shishya Parampara* but in the western world due to globalization and in the era of information technology a lot of free text is available and interpretation of *Yoga* and practice of different *Mudra* and *Bandha* is for attainment of health which is contrary to Indian approach.

**CONCLUSION**

Indian and Western philosophy differ in their practical approach, with Indian philosophy focusing on the continuity of soul, reincarnation, and liberation, while Western philosophy believing in single life. *Ashtang Yoga*, a set of advanced esoteric practices, is secretly delivered by the *Guru* to the disciple, with *Shishya* bound not to disclose it. *Moola-Bandha* is very skillful practice of *Nath Sampradaya* and other cults. It is a combination of *Yama*, *Niyama*, *Asana* (*Padmasana*, *Siddhasana*, *Sukhasana*), *Bandha* (*Jalandhara*, *Uddiyana*, *Moola*), *Mudra* (*Ashwini*, *Vajroli*, *Khechari*, *Shambhavi*), *Hast Mudra* (*Abhay*, *Prana*, *Gyan* etc.) *Pranayama*, *Pratyahar*, *Dharana*, *Dhyan*, *Samadhi* for the person who are on the path of *Yoga* for self-liberation.

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