Study of Nidra w.s.r. to Bhutadhatri Nidra

Puspa Priyadarshani¹, Vijay Shankar Pandey²

¹Post Graduate Scholar, Department of Ayurveda Samhita evum Siddhanta, Government Ayurvedic College & Hospital, Kadamkuan, Patna, Bihar, India.
²Professor & HOD, Department of Ayurveda Samhita evum Siddhanta, Government Ayurvedic College & Hospital, Kadamkuan, Patna, Bihar, India.

ABSTRACT

To keep the balance of the body, there is description of three Upastambha. The three Upastambha are Ahara, Nidra and Bramhacharya, which glorifies Nidra as an essential factor for a healthy life. Nidra (sleep) is very crucial for day-to-day life and also for physical & mental wellness of human being. A multi-dimensional approach to Nidra is found in Ayurvedic literature where many Acharyas have given their precious pronouncements and directives regarding sleep. In Samhitas, Nidra and Swapna are regarded as equivalent in many places but Vata and Raja collectively causes Swapna which is termed as Swapna Darshan (dreaming). Qualitative and quantitative sleep that occurs in proper time is appreciated as “Bhutadhatri Nidra” in Ayurveda. It rejuvenates and re-energizes body as well as mind while improper sleep can give rise to harmful effects on health. This article is designed to provide a comprehensive review of concepts, mechanism & effect of Nidra on human body by collecting the facts and information based on Ayurveda classics. In the era of modernization, sedentary life-style and desk bound professions; people are more prone to diseases like diabetes mellitus, obesity, hypertension, heart diseases etc. due to their faulty sleeping habits. Nidranasha (insomnia), Atinidra (hypersomnia), Akala Nidra (untimely sleeping habits), Diva Swapna (day sleep/narcolepsy), Ratri Jagaran (awakening at night) etc. deteriorate their overall health. In ancient times Yogis like Arjun and Laxman had conquered sleep and achieved their goal without facing any noticeable health issues. In contemporary world the concept of Yoga Nidra is brought into vogue due to its beneficial effects on human health. Hence it is always necessary to understand the concept of Nidra, factors affecting it and its role in sustaining a healthy life.

Key words: Traya Upastambha, Nidra, Swapna, Tamoguna.

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda believes in Tridosha theory i.e., Vata, Pitta and Kapha, which is responsible for maintenance of body. Together these three are called Tristhambha (three pillars) which in equilibrium state helps in nourishment and proper functioning of body. Then comes the concept of Traya-Upastambha (supporting pillars), that keeps the body in normalcy state by helping Vata, Pitta and Kapha maintaining their natural physiological action. Traya Upastambha is the amalgamation of three factors; these are Ahar (diet), Swapna (sleep) and Brahmacharya.[1] Swapna / Nidra being one of the main components of Traya Upastambha, assists in nourishment and vitalizing body, mind and spirit. It is the basic need of all living beings. Kapha Dosha and Tamas collectively cause Nidra. Factors like Ahara, Prakriti, external stimuli also affect Nidra. An extensive description of Nidra found in Ayurveda to acknowledge its role on health. Nidra in Sanskrit is feminine gender, the word is derived from Sanskrit word root “Nidi Kustsyaayaam” by adding the suffix “Rak”, it means to sleep, sleepiness, sloth, dream, shutting, budding state, dull, drowsiness etc. Shayana, Swapah, Swapna, Supti, Sushupti, Bhutadhatri, Vaishnavi, Maya etc. are the synonyms of...
Nidra. Swapna is often used as synonymous term for Nidra in Ayurvedic classics. In Sanskrit literature Swapna is a Kriyavachi sabda, which means sleep. This is why in our Samhitas the term Swapna is used primarily for Nidra and secondarily for Swapna (dream).

When the Mana including the Indriyas is exhausted, tired and they dissociate themselves from their objects, at that very time Nidra occurs. Acharya Chakrapani while commenting, simplified the verse. When Mana along with Atma gets Klanta (inactive), also the Indriyas become inert and they do not receive any cognitive information from the outer world, then only Nidra appears.

Hridaya is delineated as Chetana Sthanam and when it is engulphed by Tamoguna, Nidra occurs. Nidra is caused by Tamoguna while Jagaran (awakening) is due to Satvaguna. The concept of dominance of Tamoguna over others in Nidra was popularized among the Acharyas of ancient India, it also reflected in Rigveda where it was said that, the Gods, Apta Purusha etc. are said to have no sleeping patterns due to lack of Tamoguna.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES
1. Study the fundamentals of Nidra.
2. Study the usefulness of Nidra in health as well as morbid conditions.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Materials

Primary resources:

Keeping in the view of the functionality and utility of Nidra on human body, Brihat-Trayee along with their commentaries and other classical literatures had been included under primary sources.

Secondary resources:

Articles, research papers, previous thesis papers etc. by PG and Ph.D. scholars and internet sources had been considered under secondary resources. The key word “Nidra” was used in online search.

Methods

Above mentioned materials had been gathered to study the diverse references of Nidra. Some concepts of Nidra had been devised in tabular form for easy understanding.

RESULTS

1. In many places of Ayurveda Samhitas, Swapna is used as a synonym of Nidra, while some commentators have differentiated these two terms in specific verses and used the term “Swapna Darshan” (dreaming).

2. Sleep is disturbed by dominance of Vata, Raja Guna which results in Swapna Darshan.

3. In Brihat-Trayee, Nidra is classified according to the cause which gives rise to it.

Table 1: Types of Nidra according to Acharyas.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Swavavik - this type of Nidra occurs naturally on a daily basis in all living beings.</td>
<td>Ratriswabhavat - sleep produced due to the nature of night, occurs naturally in all living beings.</td>
<td>Kalaswabhavaj - routine sleep induced with effect of time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vaikariki - occurs due to diseases.</td>
<td>Sleshmasamudbhava - due to excess of Kapha dosha.</td>
<td>Kapha Prabhavaj - due to effect of Kapha.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>Mana - Sharirshramasambhav - due to mental and physical fatigue.</td>
<td>Chittakheda Prabhavaj - due to mental exertion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Dehakheda Prabhavaj - due to physical exertion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>Vyadhianuvartini - appears in many</td>
<td>Amayakheda Prabhavaj -</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Puspa Priyadarshani et al. Study of Nidra w.s.r. to Bhutadhatri Nidra

ISSN: 2456-3110

REVIEW ARTICLE

November 2023

Journal of Ayurveda and Integrated Medical Sciences | November 2023 | Vol. 8 | Issue 11

72

diseases as a symptom. due to diseases.

| - | Agantu - occurring due to external factors. | Agantu - due to exogenous factors. |
| Tamasi - when Sangyan Vaha Srotas filled with Sleshma dominated by Tamoguna. It is known as Anavabodhini (Agyanakaraka). Occurs during Pralaya Kala (death). | Tamobhava - due to excess of Tamas quality. | Tamobhavaj - due to the effect of Tamo Guna. |

4. A substantial collection of various other sleep that mimics with sleep put together to facilitate the understating of Nidra which is tabularized below,

**Table 2: Classification of Prakrit/ Vikrit/ Kritrim/ conditional Nidra.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prakrit / Swabhavik (Natural)</th>
<th>Vikrit / Aswabhavik (Unnatural / indicative of disease)</th>
<th>Kritrim (man-made)*</th>
<th>Conditional</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ratri-swabhavaprabhav</td>
<td>Tamobhava / Tamasi / Tamobhavaj</td>
<td>Droni-Praveshik a Rasayana</td>
<td>Hibernation (Shita Shupti)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shubhavik</td>
<td>Mana-Sharir Shramasambhav / Chittakheda Prabhavaj, Deha Kheda Prabhavaj</td>
<td>Yoga Nidra (Yogic Sleep)</td>
<td>Aestivation (Grishma-Shupti)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kalaswabhavaj</td>
<td>Shleshmaprabhavaj / Kapha Prabhavaj</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>Vyadhi-Anuvartini / Vaikritik / Amayakheda Prabhavaj</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. Among all types of Nidra, ideally Bhutadhatri Nidra is of the most important one for human health. It comes when there is fragmental lessening of Satvik Guna and slight increment in Tamas Guna whereas Jagaran (awakening state) is just opposite of it.

6. A good sleep pattern is regarded as Tridosha-Samyakara, Dhatu Samyakara, Balya, and improves Vyadhikshamatva.

7. Acharyas have stated that proper quantity of sleep is necessary for all. Sleeping time as per different Acharyas has been summarized below.

**Table 3: Recommended sleep as per Ayurveda.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acharyas</th>
<th>Sleeping time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sushrut</td>
<td>Time for Diva Swapna should be half of the time of night awakening.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vagbhatta</td>
<td>2-3 Yama (6-9 hours) for Swabavik Nidra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dalhan</td>
<td>1 Muhurta (48 minutes) for Diva Swapna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nivandha Samgrah Teeka on Sushrut Samhita</td>
<td>1 Muhurta (48 minutes) for Diva Swapna</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8. Improper sleep like Ratri Jagaran causes aggravation of Vata-Pitta, Diva Swapna causes Tridosha-Prakopa. Its ill-effects can be reduced by elevating Satvik Guna and diminishing Raja-Tamo Guna by taking Satvik Ahar-Vihar. Complication and harmful effects of Irregular sleep can be controlled to normalcy by Padamshika Krama Vidhi and Okasatmyata.

9. People who indulge in Ratri Jagaran can implement the habit of Aseenaprachalayitam (sleeping while sitting) and should sleep half of the time of Ratri Jagaran in day time.

10. Nidra has been kept under Adharaniya Vega (non-suppressible urges). That means it is a natural...
phenomenon of human body which should not be suppressed. On suppression it causes Jrumva (yawning), Angamarda (malaise), Tandra (drowsiness), Siraroga (diseases of head), Akshigaurav (heaviness in eyes) etc.[7]

11. There are so many factors which affect Nidra like Doshas, Prakriti, diseases etc.

**Table 4: Characteristics of Nidra according to Shareerika Dosha.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Shareerika Dosha</th>
<th>Swabhavika Avastha</th>
<th>Vridhi Avastha</th>
<th>Kshaya Avastha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vata</td>
<td>Less and disturbed sleep</td>
<td>Loss of sleep (Nidra Nasha)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pitta</td>
<td>Moderate sleep</td>
<td>Less sleep (Alpa Nidra)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kapha</td>
<td>Sound sleep</td>
<td>Excess sleep (Atinidra/ Tandra)</td>
<td>Prajagaran</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 5: Types of Nidra according to Manasika Prakriti[8]**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Manasika Prakriti</th>
<th>Characteristic features</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Satvika</td>
<td>Sleep occurs in midnight as there is slight reduction in Satva Guna and increase in Tamoguna.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rajashika</td>
<td>Animitta (without any cause), Aniyat Kala (untimely sleep).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tamasika</td>
<td>Although Nidra occurs due to Tamoguna, but here due to excessive accumulation of Tamas leads to Tamasika Nidra.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 6: Sleep pattern and disease.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sleep pattern</th>
<th>Disease</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Diva Swapna</td>
<td>Kasa, Swasa, Pratishyaya, Shira Gaurav, Angamarda, Arochoka Etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ati-Nidra</td>
<td>Snigdha, Santarpaniyajanya Raga</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

12. **Yoga Nidra** (yogic sleep): In ancient Hindu scriptures Lord Vishnu is believed to be in the state of “Yoga Nidra”. In modern world Yoga Nidra is practiced by taking the individual in Savasana and inducing guided meditation, which helps in physical, mental and spiritual wellness.

**DISCUSSION**

During sleep all the Indriyas dissociate themselves from their objects but Mana remains intact hence Swpana occurs.[9]

Non-existence of Bodha (state of awakening) is Swapah i.e., Swapna. The things perceived by sense organs which are collected in the form of Smruti (memories) or the things which are felt by body and inner mind of the individuals when affected by Rajaguna, Swapna occurs which is known as Swapna Darsana.

When a human sleeps, due to his Raja Yukta Mana he receives certain things in his mind and this is known as Swapna (dream).[10]

Ratriswabhadvat / Swabhavik / Kalaswabhavaj Nidra are the natural sleep which occurs in all living beings in night. Vaikariki Nidra characterized by some factors that occurs due to anomalies includes Sleshmasamudbhava/ Kapha Prabhavaj, Mana-Sharirshramasambhav/ Amayakhedha - Chittakheda-Dehakheda Prabhavaj, Vyadhianuvartini, Agantuki/ Agantuja etc. Nidra like Tamobhava/ Tamasi/ Tamobhavaj etc. occurs due to dominance of Tamaguna in excess.

Droni-Praveshika Rasayana is a form of Rasayana treatment, where the person is advised to take stomach full of special kind of formulation made up of 38 herbs and made to lie down (unconscious) in a wooden casket for a period of 6 months.
**Yoga Nidra** (Yogic sleep): Yoga Nidra is linked to meditation in Shaiva and Buddhist Tantras, while some medieval Hatha yoga texts use “Yoga Nidra” as synonym for the meditative state of samadhi. In Upanishads and Mahabharat a state called “Yoga Nidra” is also mentioned. In ancient time Yogi, Apta Purush etc are said to practice Yoga Nidra by increasing Satvik Guna and took the advantage of Nidra even without following sleeping patterns. In Hinduism Lord Vishnu is pictured in a state of Yoga Nidra. One can take the benefit of Bhutadhatri Nidra by practicing Yoga Nidra. It is a state of consciousness between waking and sleeping, induced by a guided meditation, immensely powerful meditation technique and one of the easiest form Yoga practices to develop and maintain healthy mind and spirit. In modern times, Satyananda Saraswati claimed to have experience Yoga Nidra. In this Yoga Nidra, the practitioner rests comfortably in Savasana and the systematic meditation takes it through the Pancha Maya Kosha (five layers of self), leaving with a sense of wholeness.

**Hibernation** - It is a state of minimal activity and metabolic depression undergone by some animal species. It is characterized by low body temperature, slow breathing and heart rate and low metabolic rate, commonly occurs in winter season.

**Aestivation** - It is characterized by inactivity and low metabolic rate, that is entered in response to high temperature and arid condition. It takes place during times of heat and dryness, which are often the summer season.

**Bhutadhatri Nidra**[12]

The Nidra that comes naturally due to the effect of night is known as RatriSwabhavPrabhav Nidra. It is otherwise known as Bhutadhatri Nidra. Here Acharya Chakrapani beautified the term Bhutadhatri, Bhuta i.e., Prani (all living beings) + Dhatri i.e., nursing mother, so this is the Nidra that gives nourishment, strength, care and support to the body as of a nursing mother.

It is a form of sound, good sleep and indicative of good health, causes refreshment of both body and mind, improves happiness and restores the natural symmetry of Dosha, Dhatu, Mala in human body. It also assists in keeping mental health in a jovial and enthusiastic condition.

When sleep is taken properly provides Sukha (pleasure), Pushhti (growth and development), Bala (immunity/ vitality), Vrishata (sexual vigor), Gyanam (knowledge/ intellect) and Jeevanam (longevity). Taking sleep in appropriate time and amount causes Dhatusamya (equilibrium state of dhatu), Bala Vridhi (increases power of body and mind), Anga Pushhti (nourishment of body), Ayuh Sthirata (gives stability to life span).[14]

Improper and inadequate sleep has harmful effects on both body and mind. The consequences of improper sleep include Karshyam (emaciation of body), Abalam (loss of strength), Dukkha (grief), Kleevta (impotency), Agyanam (ignorance).[15]

In Ayurveda literature improper sleep majorly described as Nidra Nasha (lack of sleep/ reduced sleep time) and Ati Nidra (excess of sleep). Prolonged awakening often associated with some serious physical and mental morbid condition, improper function of sense organs, thought process and causes abnormal behavior.

When an individual stays up night or lack good sleeping pattern, it causes increase of Vata Dosha which causes emaciation and roughness of body. Nidra Nasha caused due to many factors but main five reasons are Karya (workload), Kala (time), Vikara (diseases of body and mind), Prakriti (constitution of body and mind), Vayu (Vata Dosha).[16] It is also caused by Vata, Pitta, Manah Santap (sorrowful mind), Sharirik Khsinata (weakness of body), Abhighata (traumatic condition of body).[17]

Ati Nidra is characterized by excess sleeping. Aggravated Kapha Dosha and Tamoguna obstruct the Srotas (channels) and cause heaviness of body developing laziness, drowsiness, and increased amount of sleep. When an individual involves in excess sleeping, it causes Kapha Dosa increment in body which in turn gives rise to denseness of body mass and unctuousness of body.
Avoid *Nidra* in all seasons except *Grishma Ritu* (summer season). However, children, old aged persons, persons who have become weak due to excessive coitus, persons having low amount of *Meda-Sweda-Kapha-Rasa-Rakta* can take sleep during daytime. The persons, who stay up in the night, should take day sleep (preferably half of the time of night awakening).[18]

Day sleep is regarded as *Vikriti* (diseased condition). *Adharma* (non-righteous things) and *Sarva Dosha Prakopa* (vitiation of all doshas) is said to occur by taking day sleep. From the vitiated Doshas diseases like *Kasa, Swasa, Pratisayya, Siragaurav, Angamarda, Aruchi, Jwara, Agnimandya* etc. takes place.[19] Children, old aged, weak persons, people involved in *Adhyayan*, weak due to *Madya, Stree* and excessive work, *Ajirna, Kshatakheena, Trishna, Atisara* etc. can take sleep at day time.[20]

Due to *Ratri Jagaran Vata- Pittaj* diseases arise; therefore it should be avoided. But people with *Kaphaj, Medaj Prakriti* and suffering from *Visha Vyadhi* can practice *Ratri Jagaran*.[21]

*Ratri Jagaran* causes *Ruksha* (roughness) in body and *Divaswapna* causes *Snigdhata* (unctuousness). *Aseenaprachalayitam* (Sleeping while sitting) doesn’t give rise to such conditions.[22]

One should not remain awake late at night deliberately and should not take sleep at day time as *Doshas* gets aggravated in these two conditions so one should compliance timely sleep. By practicing such one can become free from diseases, can have a joyful state of mind. It also increases *Bala* (immunity/ strength), complexion of skin, libido, maintains body weight and opulence.[23]

**Sleeping posture:**

It is always advised to sleep in left lateral position[24] because *Graham* which is the site of *Agni* lies in the left side of the body above the *Nabhi* (umbilicus), which helps in proper digestion.

Now-a-days people with stationary and helter-skelter lifestyle are likely to get less/ disturbed/ untimely/ over sleep. They can prevent themselves just by following the directives of sleep stated in *Samhitas*. People who cannot have sleep at night due to their profession (night-shift workers) can reduce the ill-effects on their health by practicing *Okasatmyata*. People with disturbed sleep pattern should first avoid its causative factors, if in special conditions they are unable to do so, they can increase *Satwik Guna* by taking *Satwik Ahara-Vihar*, reducing the deleterious effects of improper sleep on health by *Padamska Krama Vidhi*.

In ancient time of *Ramayana, Mahabharat* there is also mention of *Nidra*. In *Ramayana*, Laxman is said to remain sleepless for 14 years this is why he is known as *Nidrajayee*. In *Mahabharat*, Arjun is well known as *Gudakesh* (*Gudaka - Nidra + Ish - Devata*) i.e., who has mastered over sleep.[25] This depicts if we can get control over our sleep, we can achieve goal of our life.

**CONCLUSION**

*Nidra* is one of the salient components of human physiology and its importance can be understood from inclusion in *Traya-Upasthambha*. Health and longevity can be obtained by quantitative and qualitative sleep as it is needed for every individual to maintain balance of body, mind and soul. The physical and mental status of an individual merely depends upon sleep. The ultimately goal here is to get sound sleep by increasing *Satwik Guna* and diminishing *Tamas* and averting all the factors that affect sleep. People who wish to take day sleep but do not want to get diseased should practice *Aseenaprachalayitam*. Habits of irregular and untimely sleep and its effect on health can be reduced with the help of *Padamshika Kram* and *Okasatmyata*. More research and studies should be conducted to record the consequences of reducing irregular sleep by *Padamshika Kram* and *Okasatmyata* on human health. Relaxing mind, stress- free lifestyle, *yoga, pranayama*, proper diet etc. can help to achieve good sleep.

**REFERENCES**


How to cite this article: Puspa Priyadarshani, Vijay Shankar Pandey. Study of Nidra w.s.r. to Bhutadhatri Nidra. J Ayurveda Integr Med Sci 2023;11:70-76. http://dx.doi.org/10.21760/jaims.8.11.9

Source of Support: Nil, Conflict of Interest: None declared.

Copyright © 2023 The Author(s); Published by Maharshi Charaka Ayurveda Organization, Vijayapur (Regd). This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and perform the work and make derivative works based on it only for non-commercial purposes, provided the original work is properly cited.