A CONCEPTUAL STUDY ON DRISTIPRASADANA EFFECT OF PADABHYANGA

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ABSTRACT
Ayurveda is a holistic science of life. Prevention of diseases is given first importance. Dinacharya is a concept in Ayurveda that to design one’s daily diet and regimen for balancing his Doshas. Padabhyanga is one of the prophylactic principles mentioned in the context of dinacharya. The hectic computerised life style, faulty food habits, and negligence in following daily and seasonal regimen provoke many eye problems. Acharya Sharangadhar has mentioned that Dristi (vision) naturally starts decaying from the age of 60 yrs. Padabhyanga is an easy and effective snehana therapy for Dristiprasadana. It is helpful both in preventive as well as curative aspect of Dristi.

Keyword: Ayurveda, Dinacharya, Padabhyanga, Dristiprasadana

INTRODUCTION
Eyes are organs of the visual system. It is a complex optical system which collects light from surroundings, regulates its intensity through a diaphragm, focuses it through an adjustable assembly of lenses to form an image, converts this image into a set of electrical signals, and transmits these signals to the brain through complex neural pathways that connect the eye via optic nerve to the visual cortex and other areas of the brain. The main functions of human eyes are Visual acuity and Colour perception¹. Normally, vision gets diminishes with increasing age of human being. Secondary causes of low vision or blindness are diabetic retinopathy, retinitis pigmentosa, amblyopia, retinopathy of prematurity, cataracts, glaucoma etc. Vision impairment, or low vision, means that even with eyeglass lens, contact lenses, medicine, or surgery, someone doesn’t see well. It can be range from mild to severe. Worldwide, between 300 million – 400 million people are visually impaired due to above mentioned causes. Of this group, approximately 50 million people are totally blind. Approximately 80% of blindness occurs in people over 50 years of age. However, rate of premature vision impairment are increasing worldwide.

Netra, Dristi and Dristiprasadana – A brief review
Netra is one of the Pacha-Gyanendriya, responsible for vision. It is composed of all the Pancha-Mahabutas². Netra is predominantly site of Aalochak pitta, which helps in vision. Moreover, Budhivaisheshik alochak pitta is the sole responsible for our organic vision³. Netra is the site of pitta, for proper vision Shleshma is to be removed from netra. Chakshu is meant for Indriya. The term dristiprasadana or chakshuprasadana correlates with overall
ophthalmic health including vision. The term Dristi can be correlated with anatomical structures of eye i.e. pupil, crystalline lens, retina or the main function of eye i.e. vision\(^4\). When *aatma, indriya(chaksu), maan* and *indriyartha(dristi)* are simultaneously connected to each other in a proper way, then only Dristi is produced. Therefore, for distiprasadana all the above *Dristiprasadanakara* factors should be in appropriate manner.

**Padabhyaanga – A Unique Therapy**

Application of oil or any other sneha dravya on the feet followed by massage is known as padabhyaanga\(^5\). It is a type of bahya snehana procedure. Padabhyaanga, a upakrama has been mentioned as a part of Dinacharya in Brihatruey. Padabhya is done as a part of sarvanga abhyanga or can be done as individual therapy. The word abhyanga is derived from ang- dhatu (to smear) and abhi- upasarga. The word pada denotes lower extremities. Therefore, padabhyaanga literally means methodical smearing of sneha dravya to lower extremities especially to the sole. It should be applied in the Anuloma direction\(^1\). It has been advised as daily regimen in ayurvedic classics to promote health as it prevents individual from diseases of *netra, paada gridhrasi vaata, sankocha of sira and snayu*. In Brihatruey, padabhyaanga is mentioned as netraprasadanakara or dristiprasadanakara.

**Padabhyaanga - Mother of all Foot Massage**

*Pada* is the the site of *vata dosha*, vitiation of which causes 80 types of nanatma jraugas. By means of Padabhyaanga we can get control over the *vata dosha*. Padabhyaanga stimulates the marma (vital points) of the sole region. *Kshipra, kurcha, talahridaya, kurchashira, gulpha* are the marma points in sole which are being massaged during padabhyaanga procedure. These marma are the vital points of body, where prana resides. Padabhyaanga itself restores prana by stimulating marma.

There are several kinds of foot massage techniques that are being practised in different alternative system of medicine such as Traditional Chinese Medicine, Japanese foot massage, Aroma therapy etc. They are having only some local affect on foot. Whether, padabhyaanga is described as pursing both local as well as systemic affect on the body.

**Material Used in Padabhyaanga**

For padabhyaanga non medicated/medicated sneha dravya (*ghrita, taila, vasa, majja*) is used. *Tila taila* can be used on daily basis. It is tridoshahara and chakshushya. Medicated sneha dravya can be prescribed according to *prakiti* of a healthy person to promote his eye health. *Himsagara taila-vata prakriti, Chandana taila, Chandana bala lakshadi taila, Ksheerbala taila- pitta prakriti, Triphaladya tailakapha prakriti*, and *Asanbilvadi taila- sama prakriti* person\(^6\). For cure of especially ophthalmic diseases *triphala ghria* can be used in padabhyaanga.

**The Procedure- Padabhyaanga**

Morning time in an empty stomach before bath is ideal time of Padabhyaanga for routine practice in healthy person. The client is asked to lie down on abhyanga table. Oil for application is heated in boiled water approximately up to 40\(^{\circ}\)C. This warm oil is to be smeared to the feet both in its planter and dorsal aspects up to the ankle. Following this, massage should be done by moving his palms in distinct directions. The whole procedure is completed on around 35 minutes. After the procedure the foot is to be wash with lukewarm water and then patient is asked to take rest for at least 15 minutes.

**Reflexology, Foot massage and Vision**

Reflexology is a complementary therapy where pressure is applied to reflex points for particular organs. The reflexology points of eye are situated on the undersides of second and third toes. Doing massage on these points maintains the eye health and benefits in digital eye strain, dry eye, computer vision syndrome, myopia etc. by nourishing the eyes.

**Acupressure, Foot massage and Vision**

![Image of reflexology points on the feet and a diagram showing main pressure point for vision location in foot.](image-url)
Principles of acupressure states that massage to the fingertips and toe tips reinforces eyesight. When we massage or pressurize this particular part methodically, it enhances vision as well as eye-health.

**DISCUSSION**

Every principle in *Ayurveda* is being written in sutra form. Detailed description of *padabhyanga* and its procedure is not available in the classics of *Ayurveda*. The effect of *padabhyanga* is mentioned in all the three texts of *Brihatrayee*, have commonly mentioned as *drapistprasadana* or *netraprasadana*.

*Tila taila* is best option of choice, as a daily regimen of *padabhyanga*. *Tila* is *Kapha-Vatahara* and *Chakshushaya*. It is an antioxidant as it contains vitamin E. This oil is rich in minerals (copper, calcium, zinc, iron) and penetrates skin easily. This oil has alkaloids like saponin, flavonoid, tannin, phenol etc. These pharmacological components make *tila taila* as good option for eye-health.

*Netra* is *gyanendriya* and *pada* is *karmendriya*. In the description of *masanumashik garbha vridhdi*, *pada* and *netra* are mentioned to be formed in the same month i.e. third month of intra uterine life. *Netra* and *pada* both are included under *Aatmaja bhava*. In the context of *Shrishi utpatti karma*, *netra* and *pada* both are originated from *vaikarik* and *rajasik ahankara*. Thereby, it is meant that both *pada* and *netra* are many similarities from embryological point of view. Therefore we can say in the light of *Samanya-Vishesh siddhanta* that *abhyaanga* to the *pada* region will have the beneficiary effect on *netra*.

*Acharya Dalhan* in *Sushrut Shamhita* commentary has mentioned *Padabhyanga* as *vatashamak* and having *netraprasadana* activity by improving the circulation of eye.

*Acharya Vagbhata* has mentioned that there are two *siras* situated in the centre of feet, which are directly connected to the both *netra*. These *siras* transmit the potency of medicine applied over the feet in the form of *padabhyanga*. *Nadi Darpan*, a text of *Yogik Darsana* has mentioned 10 *nadi* situated in the head. *Gandhari* and *Hastijihva* are related to the left and right *netra* respectively. *Gandhari* surrounding the *ida nadi* extends from the *paada* and ends in left *netra*.

Likewise, *Hastijihva* surrounding the *pingala nadi* extends from the *paada* and ends in right *netra*.

*Acharya Bhela* has mentioned that the site of *alochaka pitta* is *pada*. *Alochaka pitta* is responsible for *rupa* in the *netra*. Therefore, it clearly states that *padabhyanga* surely has beneficial effect on *dristi*.*

*Acharya Dalhana*, commenting *Sushruta* describes that in *abhyaanga*, the medicated oil applied to the skin gradually passes through one by one *dhatu* level and in 900 *matra* potency of oil reaches upto *majja dhatu*. *Netra* is the *upadhatu* of *majja dhatu*. *Padabhyanga* nourishes *majja dhatu* hence, indirectly the *netra* is nourished.

*Acharya Charak* has described that *vayu* dominates in the *sparshanendriya*, i.e. tactile sensory organ, and this sensory organ is lodged in the skin. *Abhyaanga* is exceedingly beneficial to skin as it balances *vata*. *Indriyas* are of close contact to mind, hence if *indriya* remain healthy mind automatically remains healthy. This will enhance the proper perception of *chakshubuddhi*.

In *Padabhyanga*, the drugs which are beneficial to eyes are processed with oil or ghee applied to the sole. When the medicament is rubbed against the skin surface of foot, the active principle of the drug dissolves through the stratum corneum without molecular dispersion and gets diffused through the barrier. In this way we can say that massaging on foot with *chakshushya* drugs shows its affect as *drapistprasadakar*. According to modern physiology the skin functions as an enormous sense organ. Its millions of nerve endings serve as receivers for the body, keeping it informed of changes in the environment. Specialized receptors make it possible for the body to detect sensations of light touch (Meissner corpuscles) and pres-
s sure (Pacinian corpuscles) as well as pain, heat, cold. Massage soothes the two master system of our body i.e. Nervous System and Endocrine System. Study reveals that massage on the sole region of individual decreases the alpha and beta rhythm in EEG in the fronto parietal cerebral area. This induces sleep. Good sleep relaxes eye muscle and maintains the physiology of eye. Serotonin plays a role in sleeping and visual orientation processing. Studies revels that during padabhyanga level of serotonin is increased in blood. Serotonin plays a role in sleeping and visual orientation processing.

CONCLUSION

Padabhyanga is commonly practised Panchakarma therapy. It has been also practised traditionally in various Indian cultures since time immemorial. The practise of foot massage is also prevalent in different indigenous system of medicine like Traditional Chinese Medicine, Acupressure Therapy, Reflexology, Aromatherapy etc. Padabhyanga has both systemic and local beneficial effect. Ayurveda advocates padabhyanga to perform as a part daily routine in the morning. Whereas we can use it as an unique therapy for the treatment of many local and systemic diseases both as preventive and curative aspect. Padabhyanga is helpful in the improvement of vision along with management of different ophthalmic disorders.

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