

## ***NIDRA AND NIDRANASHA – AN AYURVEDIC CRITICAL REVIEW***

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### **ABSTRACT**

Ayurveda describes the main three pillars of life amongst that *Nidra* is said to be the very important tripod of life. *Nidra* is very important regimen of day to day life if not taken properly can cause severe diseased condition, which will affect the physical and mental health as well. Lack of *Nidra* due to various *doshik* conditions is called as *Nidranasha*. In ancient science the detailed study of *Nidra* and *Nidranasha* along with the different treatments is given in *Samhitas* According to modern scientific view, loss of sleep has many reasons as like illness, stress, elder age, pain, mental illness etc. Ayurveda prescribes several procedures to overcome the situation. Article provides through review of causes, consequences and management of *Nidranasha* with the perspective of Ayurveda. In this study the attempt of critical review study of *Nidra* and *Nidranasha* is done.

**Keywords:** Ayurveda, *Nidra*, *Swapna*, *Upastambha*, *Indriya*, *Nidranasha*, Insomnia.

### **INTRODUCTION**

The *Swasthya* depends on three *Upastambha* i.e. *Ahara*, *Swapna* (*Nidra*) and *Brahmacharya*<sup>1</sup>. In Ayurveda, these are known as tripod of life. Ayurveda is not only the system of medicine but also the way of life. It includes physical, mental and spiritual healthy wellbeing.

Ayurveda has stated Sleep as one of the most important pillars of health associated with happiness and good health and is an outcome of relax physical and mental state.

According to *Charaka*, when the *mana* including the *indriyas* is exhausted and they dissociate themselves from their objects, then the individual sleeps<sup>2</sup>. The disturbance in *Nidra* might be related to the faulty life style, mental tension, changed food habits and stress which ultimately disturb the *Nidra*. *Charaka* has described *Nidra* among the primary tripod of life with its merits and demerits, classification and management.

In *Charaka Samhita* importance of *Nidra* has been stated as *Sukhakar* - Happiness, *Pushtikar* - Nourishment, *Balyakar* - Strength, *Vrishya* - Aphrodisiac, *Dnyanakar* - Learning, *Jeevankar* - Life giving<sup>3</sup>.

### Etymological Derivation of the Word 'Nidra'

**Vachaspatyam:**

निद्रा = नि+द्रा--- भावेअ।

It is always used in Feminine gender. Sleep is a state of unconsciousness of the person. In *Upanishad* and Ayurvedic literature, *Nidra* is considered as one of the essential function of the living organisms.

### Definitions of Nidra

- *Charaka* affirmed that when the mind (as well as soul) gets exhausted or becomes inactive and the sensory and motor organs become inactive then the individual gets sleep<sup>2</sup>.
- *Sushruta* described the sleep occurs when the *Hridaya* the seat of *Chetana* is covered by *Tamas*<sup>4</sup>.
- *Ashtanga Sangraha*, *Vagbhata* stated that the *Manovaha Strotas* become accumulated with *Shleshma* and mind is devoid of sense organs because of fatigue, when individual falls asleep<sup>5</sup>.

### Synonyms of Nidra

In *Amarkosha*, four synonyms have been mentioned –

- 1) *Shayanam* 2) *Svapah* 3) *Svapnah* 4) *Samvesh*

Similarly in *Vaidyaka Shabda Sindhu*, three synonyms are available.

- 1) *Sambhashah* 2) *Suptih* 3) *Svapanam*

In *Charaka Samhita*, *Bhutadhatri* has been used as a synonym and in *Sushruta Samhita* the word *Vaishnavi Maya* is used.

### Types of Nidra

*Acharya Charaka* has classified *Nidra* in following manner according to causes<sup>6</sup>

- *Tamobhava*- caused by *tama*
- *Shleshmasamudbhava*- caused by vitiated *kapha*
- *Manah-sharirshramasaambhava*- caused by mental and mental exertion
- *Agantuki*-indicative of bad prognosis leading imminent death
- *Vyadhyanuvartini*- caused as a complication of other disease like *Sannipataja jwara* etc.
- *Ratri-swabhavaprabhava*- caused by the very nature of the night

*Acharya Dalhana* has classified *Nidra* into three types on the basis of *Sushruta Samhita*<sup>7</sup>

- *Tamsik*- when *sangyavaha strotas* become filled with *shleshma* dominated by *tamoguna*, *Tamsi Nidra* is produced
- *Swabhaviki*- this type of *Nidra* occurs naturally and daily in all living beings
- *Vaikariki*- If there is any disturbance in *mana* and body, *Nidra* does not occur. But if *Nidra* is occurred, it is *vaikariki Nidra*.

*Acharya Vagbhat* has classified in seven types as following manner<sup>8</sup>

- *Kalawabhawaj*- it is produces at the accustomed time. i.e. nights
- *Amayaja*- it is produced due to effect of diseases
- By fatigue of *mana*- when *mana* is exhausted
- By fatigue of *sharira*- when body is exhausted

- *Shleshmaprabhavaj*- it is produced due to predominance of *kapha*
- *Agantuka*- this type of *Nidra* is produced by external factors e.g. traumatic etc.
- *Tamobhava*- it is produced by predominance of *Tamoguna*

### Physiology of *Nidra*

When *Mana* is exhausted then sleep occurs this phenomenon can be understood in this manner. According to Howell, sleep is due to cerebral ischemia. Cerebral cortex is the seat of higher centres like pre and post central gyres, association area etc., which have the correlation with mental activities described in Ayurveda. So due to the reduction in cerebral blood supply *Mana* becomes *Klanta* that causes sleep (*Nidra*). Further during sleep, *Indriyas* (*Jnanendriya* and *Karmendriya*) become inactive by the detachment from their sense organs or from their work.

### Importance of *Nidra*<sup>3</sup>

*Ahara*, *Nidra* and *Brahmacharya* are the three factors which play an important role in the maintenance of a living organism. In the Ayurvedic literature, these factors i.e. *Ahara*, *Nidra* and *Brahmacharya* have been compared with the three legs of sub-support and have been termed as the three *Upastambhas*. The inclusion of *Nidra* in the three *Upastambha* proves its importance.

While describing the importance of *Nidra* Ayurveda mentioned that

- It creates Happiness in life.
- It maintains the consistency of the body.
- It increases the strength.
- It increases the power of brain & mind.
- Lastly it prevents the life.

### Etymological Derivation of *Nidranasha*

The word *Nidranasha* is formed by composition of two words i.e. *Nidra* & *Nasha*.

#### ***Nidra*:**

निद्रा = नि+द्रा---भावेऽ।

*Nidra* is the state where mind and intellects are rest.

#### ***Nasha*:**

नाश = नश + भावेऽञ्।

Based on the above *Nirukti* the term *Nidranasha* can be broadly defined as the loss of sleep or the derangement in the quality and quantity of sleep

#### **Synonyms of *Nidranasha***

Synonyms of *Nidranasha* according to different Acharyas,

- 1) *Anidra*
- 2) *Alpanidra*
- 3) *Asvapna*
- 4) *Jagarana*
- 5) *Nidranasha*
- 6) *Nidravighata*
- 7) *Nidradaurbalya*
- 8) *Nidrabhransha*
- 9) *Nidrakshay*

#### ***Nidana* of *Nidranasha***

There is no direct reference regarding the causative factors of *Nidranasha*. In *Charaka Samhita*, *Ashtanga Hridaya* and *Ashtanga Sangraha* the Acharyas are explained the *Chikitsa* procedure of *Atinidra* and in this context they mentioned that if any *Atiyoga* occurs to these *Chikitsa* procedures it may leads to *Nidranasha* condition. So *Atiyoga* of these *Chikitsa* procedures may be taken as causative factors of *Nidranasha* by considering the *charkas* opinion<sup>9</sup>

- *Atiyoga* of *Vamana*

- Atiyoga of Virechana
- Atiyoga of Nasya karma
- Atiyoga of Rakta mokshana
- Atiyoga of Dhoomapana
- Ati Chinta
- Ati Krodha
- Vata Vriddhi
- Pitta Vriddhi
- Manastapa
- Dhatukshaya
- Abhighata

Some other *Nidana* factors which may also causes the *Nidranasha* according to *Ashtanga Sangraha* are as follows

- *Lobha* (Grief)
- *Harsha* (Happiness)
- *Vyatha* (Sorrow)
- *Ati Maithuna* (Excessive Intercourse)
- *Ati Kshudha* (Excessive Hunger)
- *Rukshanna Sevana* (Intake of Dry Food)
- *Anjana* (Collrium)

So considering all these *Nidana* factors the *Sharirika Doshas* such as *Vata*, *Pitta*, and

- *Ati Bhaya*
- *Ati Vyayama*
- *Ati Upavasa*
- *Asukhashayaa*

Further *Sushruta* has mentioned some extra *Nidana* factors which may cause *Nidranasha*<sup>10</sup> *Manasika Dosha Raja* may be the principal causative factors for *Nidranasha*.

All these *Nidana* factors have been described in under following headings

- 1) *Aharaja Nidana – Rookshanna sevana*
- 2) *Viharaja Nidana – Vyayama, Upavasa, Asukhashayya*
- 3) *Manasika Nidana – Bhaya, Chinta, Krodha Purvarupa*

*Purvarupa* of *Nidranasha* is not mentioned in any Ayurvedic classics. As *Charaka* included the *Nidranasha* in 80 *Nanatmaja Vata Vikaras*, *Charaka* has mentioned that *Avyakta lakshana* are the *purvarupa* of *vatavyadhi*.

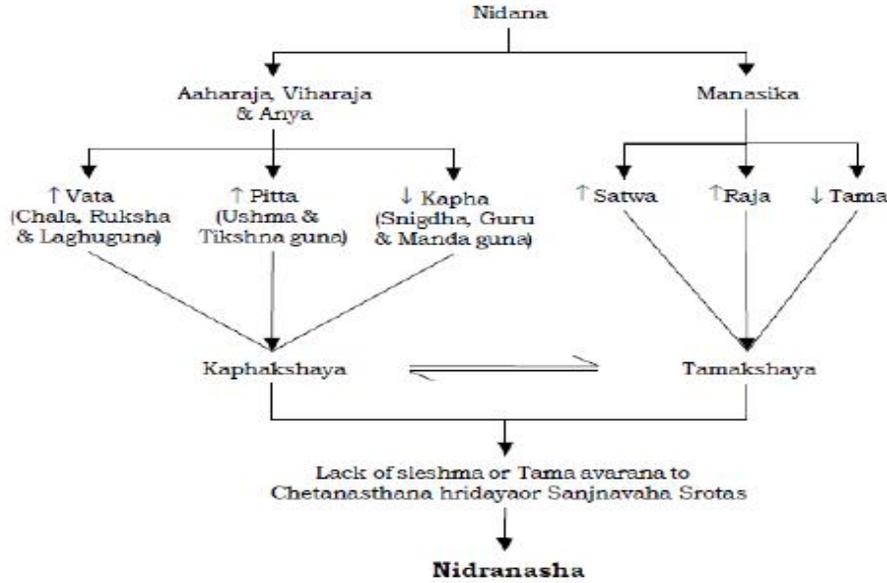
### **Rupa**

**Table 1:** In Ayurvedic classics some symptoms are mentioned are as follows

<i>Rupa</i>	<i>Charaka Samhita</i> <sup>11</sup>	<i>Sushruta Samhita</i> <sup>12</sup>	<i>Ashtang Hrudaya</i> <sup>13</sup>	<i>Ashtang Sangraha</i> <sup>14</sup>
<i>Jrumbha</i>	+	+	+	+
<i>Angamarda</i>	+	+	+	+
<i>Tandra</i>	+	+	+	+
<i>Shiroroga</i>	+	–	+	–
<i>Shirogaurava</i>	–	+	+	+
<i>Akshigaurava</i>	+	+	–	–
<i>Jadya</i>	–	–	+	+
<i>Glani</i>	–	–	+	+
<i>Bhrama</i>	–	–	+	+
<i>Apakti</i>	–	–	+	+
<i>Vataroga</i>	–	–	+	+

## Samprapti

The schematic diagram of Samprapti of Nidranasha can be represented as follows:



## Samprapti Ghatak

Dosha	Vata, Pitta (Vridhhi), kapha (kshaya)
Dushya	Rasa
Agni	Jatharagni
Strotasa	Manovaha, Rasavaha
Strotodushti Prakara	Atipravritti
Adhithana	Hridaya
Udbhavasthana	Hridaya

## Upadrava

In *Ashtanga Sangraha*, it is mentioned that increased *Vayu* due to *Nidranasha* produces *Kaphakshaya*, this decreased and dried *Kapha* sticks in the walls of *Dhamanis* and causes *Strotorodha*. This, results in so much exhaustion that eyes of the patient remain wide open and watery secretion from eyes. This dangerous exhaustion is *Sadhya* up to three days, and then becomes *Asadhya*.

## Pathya-Apathya

**Pathya** is the wholesome regimen which does not impair the body system and which is pleasant to the mind. If one follows certain principles and controls the activities and makes changes in the regimen, as mentioned earlier in the form of *Ahara* and *Vihara* management, he can get a sound, normal and good sleep.

**Apathya** those which adversely affect the body and mind are considered to be unwholesome

(Apathya). It may be said that etiological factors of *Nidranasha* are *Apathya* in the disease, because they increase the disease.

### **Chikitsa of Nidranasha**<sup>15,16</sup>

The *Chikitsa* of any disease in simple word is- The giving up of the causative factors. In the treatment of *Nidranasha*, one should depend upon the measures having *Vatashamaka*, *Vedanashamaka* and *Roganivaraka* effects as well as pacifying effects on mental activities.

The treatments which are described for *Nidranasha* in Ayurvedic *Samhitas* are mostly same. The management modalities according to various classics can be classified as:

- *Bahya Upachara*
- *Manasika Upachara*
- *Ahara Upachara*
- *Anya Upachara*

These are as follows,

#### **Bahya Upachara for Nidranasha**

*Charaka* mentioned *Abhyanga*, *Utsadana*, *Samvahana*, *Abhyanga*, *Akshi-tarpana*, *Shiro-Lepa*, *Karna-Purana*, *Shiro-Basti*, *Shiro-Dhara*, *Moordhni Taila* as *bahya upacharas*.

#### **Manasika Upachara for Nidranasha**

*Charaka* mentioned *Manonukula vishaya grahana*, *Manonukula Shabda granaha*, *Manonukula gandha granaha*, as *Manasika upacharas*.

#### **Ahara Upachara for Nidranasha**

*Charaka* mentioned *Gramya mamsa rasa*, *Anupa mamsa rasa*, *Jaleeya mamsa rasa*, *Mahisha ksheera*, *Piyusha* as *aahara upacharas*.

#### **Anya Upachara for Nidranasha**

Some other measures, which can be advised to the patient of *Nidranasha*, though are not mentioned in Ayurvedic texts, are as follows,

- Maintaining regular time for going to bed.
- Avoid smoking, tea, coffee or alcohol at night before going to sleep.
- Not indulge in any type of work or reading till late night.
- Should devoid of thoughts tensions before going to bed.
- Hearing soft music or favorite songs also induces sleep.
- 5-10 minutes meditation before going for sleep.
- Offering prayer before sleep.
- Washing of hand, feet and face before goes to sleep.
- Avoiding a *Divaswapna*.
- Proper evacuation of stool and urine.
- Avoid mosquito bites.
- Maintenance of adequate privacy and free from disturbance.

### **CONCLUSION**

Here the main aim of this article is to overview and lighting up the main study of *Nidra*, already given in different *Samhitas* and comparing it with today's era. Here the overview of *Nidranasha* and an attempt to overlook it's all aspects is done. In today's era *Nidra* and *Nidranasha* are the very important factors to be studied for as many of the sufferers are there who complaints it and did not get relief because of the lack of detailed studies and treatment. As in our *Samhitas* Acharyas had already told the causes, symptoms and treatment, so here an attempt to lighten up the study of *Nidra* and *Nidranasha* is done.

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