



VYAYAM – PHYSICAL EXERCISE, IN CONTEXT TO AYURVEDA; A REVIEW

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Article Received on 29/11/2023

Article Revised on 19/12/2023

Article Accepted on 09/01/2024

ABSTRACT

Ayurveda is a holistic life science. It had addressed each and every aspect of healthy life in a scientific manner. In present context of study, the *Vyayam* – physical exercise is also well defined and elaborately described in Ayurveda classics. Unlike present day exercise regime, the *Vyayam* is not generalized but is more person oriented. Who can perform the exercise and in which intensity is been clearly mentioned in the classics. The resulting benefits of right exercise - *Matravat Vyayam* are been discussed. Here an attempt is made to brief the concept of *Vyayam* mentioned in Ayurveda *Smahita* and to know its contemporary relevance.

KEYWORDS: *Vyayam, Matravat Vyayam, Smahita.*

INTRODUCTION

Human body is composed of number of muscles and bones owing to the locomotive ability of species. To ensure the swift and efficient working of locomotive ability as well as disease free healthy state of physis, one has to keep the muscles and joints thus formed by various bone in active healthy state. Physical exercise is the way to keep oneself active and maintain the muscular health. It also proves to be a preventive as well as curative treatment modality in number of disorders. Now a day's more and more peoples are being health conscious and tend to inculcate some sort of physical exercise in their daily routine. In present scenario the gym culture along with other physical activities like cycling, jogging, bodybuilding, swimming, trekking etc. are undertaken to be physically fit and sound. But it do not specify the degree to which one should carry out the physical activity in order to gain its optimum benefits without causing any harm to health. Here Ayurveda classics had mentioned the benefits, harms of excessive *Vyayam*, signs of proper *Vyayam*, and the individual aspect of *Vyayam* according to variations in season – *Rutu*.

Definition of *Vyayam*

शरीरचेष्टा या चेष्टा स्थैर्यार्था बलवर्धनी |

देह व्यायाम संख्याता मात्रया तां समाचरेत् ||

- Charaka Su. 7/31

According *Acharya Charaka Vyayam* is defined as the activity of the body which is sound for mind also and which confer *Sthirta* – equilibrium in body and increases strength – *Bala*. Here *Acharya* also insisted to perform this physical activity – *Vyayam* in desired degree of intensity - *Matravat*.

शरीरायासजनकं कर्म व्यायाम संद्वितम् |

- Su. Chi. 24

Acharya Sushrut states the activity of body which causes *Aayas* – effort/ causing exhaustion is termed as *Vyayam*. Whereas *Acharya Vagbhata* had mentioned the activities which gives following benefits can be groups under term of *Vyayam*. These benefits are.

लाघवं कर्मसामर्थ्यं दीप्तो ऽग्निर्मदसः क्षयः |

विभक्तघनगात्रत्वं व्यायामादुपजायते ||

- Ashtang. H. Su. 2/10

It is mild form of exercise which is performed up to half capacity of strength and in order to gain above stated benefits.

Vyayam Kala

Ayurveda had mentioned the time for performing *Vyayam* and also the season in which it is indicated along with contraindication. This is stated by *Acharya Sushrut* in *Sutrasthana* chapter 6th.

Rutu	Kala	Time
Vasanta	Purvanha	6 to 9 am
Hemanta	Pratish	4 to 6 am
Prvrat	Aparnha	5 to 7 am

The exercise is contraindicated in *Grishma, Varsha Rutu, Madhyana, Madhyaratri* and just after taking the food.

Matra

Ayurveda had described the symptoms of quantity of exercise one should perform.

स्वेदागमः श्वास वृद्धिर्गान्नाणां लाघवं तथा |

हृदया हृपरोधश्च इति व्यायामलक्षणम् | |

- Cha. Su. 7/31 (1)

The degree to which it should be performed is mentioned in *Brihartrai*.

हृदि स्थानस्थितो वायुर्यदा वक्त्रं प्रपद्यते |

व्यायामं कुर्वतो जन्तोस्तद् बलार्थस्य लक्षणम् | |

- Su. Chi. 24/48

One causes breathlessness and breath out *Hridayastha Vayu* through mouth. This is half capacity of *Vyayam* one can perform.

In commentary of *Charak Samhita*, it is described the symptoms of *Balaridha* as sweating in axial region, on forehead and at tip of nose and dryness in mouth.

Benefits of Vyayam

लाघवं कर्मसामर्थ्यं स्वैर्यं दुःखसहिष्णुता |

दोषक्षयो ऽग्निवृद्धिश्च व्यायामादुपजायते | |

- Cha.Su. 7/32

Laghavm – lightness in body, *Karmasamarthya* – capacity/ strength to perform the physical work, *Sthairya* – body mind stability, can withstand adverse conditions, *Dosha* balancing and optimization of digestive fire.

According *Acharya Sushrut* one attains proportionate healthy body, lustrous skin complexion, enhanced digestive fire, stability in adverse physical and mental counter conditions.

Complications

Ayurveda had also advised the harmful effects of excessive *Vyayam*.

श्रमः क्लमः क्षय स्तृष्णा रक्तपित्तं प्रतामकः |

अति व्यायामत कासो ज्वर शर्दिश्च जायते | |

If exercise is performed in excesses to what is indicated then it results in untoward effects on health. It causes fatigue, *Kashya*, thirst, fever and *Raktapitta*.

Contraindications

अतिव्यवाय भाराध्वकर्मभिश्चतिकर्षिताः |

क्रोध शोक भयायासैः क्रान्ता ये चापि मानवाः | |

बालवृद्धप्रवाताश्च ये चोच्चैर्बहुभाषाकाः |

ते वर्जयेयुर्व्यायामं क्षुधितास्तृषिताश्च ये | |

- Ch. Su. 7/35 (1-2)

One who is indulged in sexual activities, have heavy strenuous work, have anger, grief, scaring nature and one who is child or is old aged are contraindicated for practicing *Vyayam*. This may result in harmful effects.

Inference

We can brief that Ayurveda had described *Vyayam* in its details. Here we can say that it is different from formal Gym exercise and also different from *Yog*. *Vyayam* include physical activity which exerts one and brings tiredness, irrespective of the breadth unlike in *Yog*, it mainly focuses on strength training of body. It also optimizes the quantity of *Vyayam* to be done which is missing in present day Gym activities. Hence the benefits of the same are observed in contrast to modern day Gym training. The goal of *Vyayam* is to make life healthy physically and mentally. Though the definition of health is changed in present day as to build a photogenic physique and not maintaining the sound health.

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