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Review Article

TO STUDY THE DIFFERENT CONCEPT OF RATRICHARYA EXPLAINED IN SAMHITAS & THERE UTILIZATION IN PRESENT ERA.

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda, the ancient science of life, emphasizes a holistic approach to health by maintaining balance in physical, mental, social, and spiritual well-being. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), health is not merely the absence of disease but a state of complete well-being. Ayurveda had already recognized this concept centuries ago through its structured daily and seasonal regimens, including Dinacharya (daily regimen), Ratricharya (night regimen), Rutucharya (seasonal regimen), Sadvritta (code of conduct), and Achar Rasayan (ethical conduct for longevity). Ratricharya refers to the set of practices followed during the evening and night to promote restful sleep, aid digestion, and maintain overall health. It includes timely food intake, proper sleep hygiene, regulated sexual activity, and stress management. However, in the 21st century, modern lifestyles, including sedentary habits, irregular sleep patterns, shift work, and increased screen exposure, have led to a decline in adherence to Ratricharya, contributing to lifestyle disorders such as diabetes, obesity, hypertension, mental health disorders, digestive disturbances, and insomnia. Ayurvedic texts like Charaka Samhita, Sushruta Samhita, and Ashtanga Hridayam have emphasized the importance of following an appropriate night regimen for disease prevention and longevity. Proper sleep (Nidra), especially during the night, is considered one of the three fundamental pillars of health (Trayopasthambha). Ignoring Ratricharya disrupts the body's biological rhythm (circadian cycle), leading to metabolic and psychological imbalances.

This article critically reviews the concept of Ratricharya as mentioned in various Samhitas and highlights its relevance in modern times for maintaining overall well-being and preventing lifestyle diseases.

KEYWORDS

Achar Rasayan, Ayurveda, Dinacharya, Lifestyle Disorders, Night Jobs, Ratricharya, Rutucharya, Sadvritta, Samhita, Sedentary Lifestyle, Shift Jobs, Spiritual Well-being

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda is science of life which main aim is to attain copious acts (Dharma). Wealth (Arth), desire (kama) & salvation (Mokshya) by health.^{1,2} Ill health takes away the health & happiness from life. Ayurveda is ancient science which gives importance of long healthy life since antiquity in way of Dinacharya (Daily regimen), ratricharya (night regimen), rutucharya (seasonal regimen). Sadavritta (code of conduct) and achar rasayana. Charya means regimen ratricharya means The regimen that is followed evening hours to night is included under ratricharya , which should be adopted for maintenance of health & prevention of diseases. . In day to day busy schedule of life no one can not give importance to timely schedule for food time, sleep , sexual act & importance of its for prevention of disease hence number of people suffer from lifestyle disorders like diabetes, lipidemia, digestive system disorders , insomnia, mental health illness. This article has mentioned critical review of ratricharya and its importance of its present era by various Samhita.

Aim

To understand the role of ratricharya in prevention of diseases.

Objectives

All the classical texts of Ayurveda were referred for review of literature. The discussion & conclusion is made on the basis of concept.

Avoiding Factors during Sandhyakala

Acharya Bhavprakash enumerated factors which should be avoided during evening . those are Intake of food, sexual intercourse , sleep , study & walking long distance. Intake of food in evening produces diseases, sexual intercourse leads to deformity in foetus, sleeping in evening to loss wealth , reading leads to loss of life span & long walk leads to fear. ³ (bhavpraksah 5/261-262)

In Ashtanga sangraha Acharya Vagbhata make clear that midday, dusk & dawn , night & midnight , one should not stay at a place of crossing of four roads; during night under trees in caitya & catvara (meeting of three roads), also one is prohibited to visit slaughtering place in forest, deserted house & crematorium. ⁴(A.s.su 3/45-46)

Regimens during night

Acharya Bhavprakash explains regimens which should follow during Sandhyakala & Ratri to promote health and prevent diseases.

Acharya says moonlight is having cold in effects , it enhances sexual desire , mitigates thirst, pitta & burning sensation. Mist of the night is slightly less effect than moon light , aggravates vata & kapha. Darkness gives to fear, delusion, confusion in recognizing directions, mitigates kapha, enhances sexual desire causes exhaustion.⁵ (Bhav Prakash 5/ 263-264)

Rules for Supper

Meals should be taken within the first prahara (three hours) of the night be slightly less in quantity than the afternoon & devoid of things difficult for digestion.⁶ (Bhav Prakash 5/265)

Activities after Supper

In Ashtanga Sangraha Sutrasthana Acharya explains rules after Bhojanottara karma , i.e.

1. Food taken in night easily digestible and wholesome.
2. one should go to bed, with absorbed mind. being clean & after praying gods.
3. one should lie down on his bed which is in a clean place two or three trustworthy servants.
4. Bed should be of the height of one's knee, soft & auspicious. One should sleep with head towards east or south
5. One should lie without directing the legs towards teachers & elders.
6. One should always be engaged in Dharma during the first & last parts of night ⁷. (A.s.su.3/45-46)

Importance of Anjana in Ratricharya

Eye is full of Tejas & high risk of troubles especially from kapha, during ratri hence Rasanjana should be used once a week, to drain kapha.

According to charakcharya Rasanjana is applied once in five or eight days at night for lacrymation of eyes.^{8,9} (A.h.su2/5), (ch.su.5/16)

Use of Pratimarsha nasya in Ratricharya

The nasya should be performed daily with katu tila etc. Oils in case kapha predominance , it should be done in the morning, in pitta after noon, in vata evenings should be preferred.

The daily practice of Nasya imparts , pleasant face, sweet speech, cleans the body & prevents vali, palitya i.e. ageing & graying of hair etc.¹⁰ (Yog ratnakar 35)

Acharya Sushruta was mentioned regular use of pratimarsha nasya in evening it makes person to sleep & awaking easy¹¹. (Su.chi 40/50)

Rules for sexual desire

Desire for sexual act is a physiological phenomenon in every living creature, non indulgence in the natural activity leads to causation of prameha, medovruddhi, & derangement of body tissues.^{12,13} (Yog ratnakar ratricharya 4, Bh. Prakash 5/266)

The age classification of women mentioned in Samhita are

Upto sixteen years of age – Bala

Above sixteen years to thirty two years – Taruni

Thirty two years to fifty years of age – Atirudha or Prouddha

Above fifty years of age – Vruddha

One should not indulge in sex with vruddha women , who are devoid of any sexual drive as such they should be avoided^{14,15}. (yog ratnakar ratricharya 9,10; bhav Prakash 5/267)

Acharya further explain Sex desired person in summer can indulge in sexual intercourse with a bala , in winter with Taruni & in varsha & vasant ritu with prouddha these practices are stated as Hitakara or beneficial^{16,17} (Yog Ratnakar 11, Bhav Prakash 5/269)

If one indulges in sex with a Bala daily his strength increases, sex with Taruni his power declines & sex with prouddha aging process set quickly & he becomes Vruddha early.^{18,19} (Yog ratnakar ratricharya 12, Bhav Prakash 5/270)

Factors which enhance strength

Fresh meat, new rice, bala stree, milky food, ghee & warm water or hot water bath these six factors increase the strength.^{20,21} (Yog ratnakar ratricharya 13, bhav Prakash 5/271)

Factors which reduce strength

Fermented food, aged women, half formed curds, sex in early hours of the day & sleeping in early hours of a day decreases the strength of an individual.^{22,23} (Yog ratnakar ratricharya 14, Bhav Prakash 5/272)

Sexual intercourse in different season & Time

Individual should indulge in sexual intercourse night time in cold season, day time in summer season, day or night in spring season during thunder in rainy season & individual feels the sexual desire one should indulge in sexual activity in autumn .

According to season Acharya describe in Hemant ritu as per individuals desire one can participate in sexual intercourse by taking proper Vajikarana Dravya , same in Shishir ritu also, however in vasant & Greeshma ritu individual should indulge in sexual intercourse.^{24,25} (Yog Ratnakar ratricharya 17, 18, Bhav Prakash 5/275,276)

Time for sexual intercourse

According to some other opinion ; a wise man should have sexual encounter once in the three days, except in Grishma (summer) , where in one can indulge in fifteen days.^{26,27} (Yog Ratnakar 19, bhav Prakash 5/278)

According to some other opinion, a wise man should have sexual should indulge in sexual intercourse once in three days in all season, where in Greeshma ritu once in fifteen days, avoid sex during day time because it causes Ayuikshaya²⁸. (Yog ratnakar ratricharya 20)

Unsuitable time for sexual intercourse

Indulgence in sexual intercourse during early hours of morning & evening time, Parvadina i.e. Amavasya , ekadasi, samkranti, Purnima etc; Gosarga i.e. during the time, when cows move out to forest etc for eating, midnight, afternoon etc. is prohibited.^{29,30} (Yog ratnakar ratricharya 22, Bhav Prakash 5/279)

Place for sexual intercourse

Person who had consumed food that contained ghee, milk, who is un-fearful , healthy & young should enjoy sex with his women at a lonely , confidential place, well decorated, scented & where in soft music & songs are audible. In such beautiful setting in he should indulge in sex with his beloved woman³¹. (Yog ratnakar ratricharya 23-24)

Prohibited place for sexual intercourse

One should not participate in sexual intercourse in a place, which near to his teachers residence or in a place which is quite open, or in place where weeping sound are audible. All such places should be avoided for sexual pleasures.³² (Yog Ratnakar ratricharya 25)

Preparation before to sexual intercourse

Individual who wish to indulge in sexual intercourse should well bathed, scented with sandal wood etc, well composed & happy, who had taken nutritive food, well dressed, attractive, who is chewing Tambula, who is in deep love & lust, such person is desiring a male child . should indulge in sexual intercourse with his wife in a comfortable bed. ^{33,34}(Yog ratnakar ratricharya 26-27, bhavprakash 5/282)

Unfit for sexual intercourse

A person who had heavy meals, who is fearful , hungry , who has no desire for love, who is incompatible with pain etc. thirsty, children aged & who passes urine etc should not indulge in sexual intercourse^{35,36} (Yog ratnakar ratricharya 28, bhav Prakash 5/284)

Eligible female for sexual intercourse

An individual should indulge in sexual activity with a women, who is possessing similar qualities, character, good family, having sexual desire, mentally composed & wearing good ornaments.^{37,38} (Yog ratnakar ratricharya 29-30, bhav Prakash 5/285)

Un eligible women for sexual intercourse

Women who are not eligible for sexual intercourse, Rajaswala i.e. menstruating women, no sexual desire,dirty,ugly,belonging to higher caste,diseases, ill developed, belonging to same gotra, women of guru, nun etc ^{39,40}.(yog ratnakar 34-35, bhav Prakash 5/286-288)

Benefits of sexual intercourse

If person follow the rules & methods with respect in his routine sexual activities. His life span increases , aging process also become normal in accordance with age,colour,complexion & strength of the body is maintained & his body physique also maintained well.^{41,42} (Yog ratnakar ratricharya 16, Bhav Prakash 5/274)

Effects of excessive sex

Over indulgence in sexual intercourse causes Akshepaka, sula, kasa, jwara, shwas, karshyata & panduroga etc.^{43,44} (Yogratnakar ratricharya 47, bhav Prakash 5/299)

Diet after sexual intercourse

After completion of sexual intercourse , one should have bath, application of sandal wood paste etc., expose to cool air, consume sweets, cold drinks, mutton soup & sura and should be happy. All these measures prevent loss of strength. ⁴⁵(Yogratnakar ratricharya 45)

After sexual intercourse , one should take refreshing bath, sugar added milk, sweets, mutton soup. Then one should go for sleep^{46,47} (Yogratnakar ratricharya 46, Bhav Prakash 5/298)

Sleeping Postures

Acharya Bhavmishra Simply sitting after food produces stupor & sleeping leads to plumpiness of the body but short & slow walking leads to long life , run a person after meals cause death.

After meals the person may lie down for a period of eight breathing with face up , for a period of twice that number on right side, for double that time on his left side, afterwards as found convenient⁴⁸ (Bhav prakash dincharya 184-185)

Importance of sleeping postures

Agni is present on the left side, above the umbilicus; hence the person after taken meals should lie down on his left side for better digestion.

Sleeping on a cot mitigates all the three doshas, on a swing mitigates vata & kapha, on the ground is stoutening the body & aphrodisiac & on wooden planks causes increases vata,dryness & mitigates the pitta & rakta⁴⁹ . (Bhav Prakash dincharya 186-187)

Sleeping on a comfortable bed is pleasing , nourishes the body, good sleep & stability , relieves fatigue , aggravation of vata & is aphrodisiac. Sleeping on uncomfortable bed result opposite to effects,

The Trayopasthambhas are the subsidiary pillars, which supports the body throughout the life span, by providing the qualities like bala varna, upachaya etc. They are considered as subsidiary or secondary as principal pillars of life are the three doshas. But their importance in normal functioning of the body cannot be over looked. The Trayopasthambhas are Ahara , nidra & Brahmacharya.

Each one of these deserves due importance because these factors are concerned with the basic needs of living system & over indulgence or total abstinence of any of these may be harmful to life.

The ahara is mainly concerned with the energy production & maintenance of living tissues.

The nidra is the one which provide complete relaxation to the body & mind & there it restores the potentials of the individual.

The Brahmacharya is concerned with disciplined mode of sexual life & reproduction.⁵⁰ (Bhav Prakash dincharya 188)

Nidra

Charakacharya explains Nidra is a special state of mind in which the mind is not associated with any type of Indriyas. This detachment from the Bahya vishaya is result from the tiredness of the body as well as mind.⁵¹ (Ch. Su. 21/35)

Hridya is the seat of Chetana & when it is dominated by covered by Tamas the person gets sleep.⁵² (Su. Sa 4/34)

Effect of sleep

- Happiness
- Misery
- Nourishment
- Emaciation
- Weakness
- Sterility
- Virility
- Knowledge
- Ignorance
- Life and death.

All the dependent on proper or improper sleep.

Untimely sleep & excessive sleep take away both happiness & longevity in human beings as real knowledge brings about spiritual power in a yogi.⁵³ (Ch. Su 21/36 , 38)

Indication of Day sleep

For most, day sleep is contraindicated but sleeping during the day time can be prescribed for those who are

- Exhausted
- Singing
- Study
- Alcoholic drinks
- Sexual act
- Elimination therapy
- Carrying heavy weight
- Walking long distance.
- Those suffering from
- Phthisis
- Wasting diseases like tuberculosis
- Thirst
- Diarrhoea
- Colic pain
- Dyspnea
- Hiccup
- Insanity

Those who are old, too young, weak & emacinated;

Those injured by fall & assault

Those exhausted by journey a vechile

Anger

Grief

Fear

Those who are accustomed to day sleep i.e. they are working in night.⁵⁴(ch.su.21/39-41)

Benefits of Day sleep

Equilibrium of Dhatus & strength are maintained & kapha nourishes the organs & ensures longevity. In summer season, nights become shorter & vata gets aggravated in the body to the absorption of fluid (adan kala). Therefore, during this season, sleep during the daytime is prescribed for all⁵⁵. (Ch. Su.21/42-44)

Contraindications of day sleep

Sleeping during the daytime in the seasons other than summer is not advisable as it causes vitiation of Kapha & Pitta.

Persons with excessive fat.

Those who are addicted to taking unctuous substances

Those with kapha constitution

Those suffering from diseases due to vitiation of kapha

Those suffering from artificial poisoning should sleep during day time.

If one violates the prescription regarding sleep during the day time, he would subject himself to halimaka (Type of jaundice), headache, feeling as if body is covered by wet blanket, heaviness of the body, malaise, loss of digestive power, hridya – alepa (a feeling as if adhered to the heart), edema, anorexia, nausea, sinusitis, rhinitis, hemicranias, urticaria, eruption, abscess, pruritus, drowsiness, coughing, diseases of throat, impairment of the memory & intelligence, obstruction of the circulation channels of the body, fever, weakness of sensory & motor organs & enhancement of the toxic effects of artificial poisons.

So one should consider the merits & demerits of sleep in various situations. So that it may bring happiness & health to him. Just because you feel like you need to nap during the day, it doesn't mean it is beneficial for you.⁵⁶ (Ch. Su. 21/45-49)

Ratri Jagarana -Effect of night awakening

Awakening during night causes roughness in the body; sleep during daytime causes unctuousness & sleeping in sitting posture does neither cause roughness nor unctuousness.⁵⁷ (Ch.su. 21/50)

Like the proper diet, proper sleep is essential for maintenance of the body, Proper sleep increases weight induces obesity whereas less sleep produces emaciation.⁵⁸(ch.su21/51)

Proper way to sleep

Over a comfortable bed in home & at proper time at which sleep is accustomed, one should go to sleep.⁵⁹(Ch. Su. 21/54)

Usah Jalp

He who drinks eight prasrti of water at the time of early sunrise, shall live for a hundred years & more free from diseases & more free from diseases & old age.

Haemorrhoids, dropsy, duodenal disease, fever, enlargement of the abdomen, old age, leprosy, disorders of fat tissue, suppression of urine, bleeding disease, pain of the ears, throat, head & pelvis, eye disease produced by vatapitta kapha & rakta- all will be cured by water consumed at the end of the night cultivated as a habit. (304)

He who gets up in the morning when darkness disappears drink water through his nostrils daily, becomes endowed with great intelligence, eyes (vision) resembling that of an eagle, devoid of wrinkles of the skin & grey hairs & free from all disease.

DISCUSSION

Aahar, nidra & Bramacharya are three pillars of life. These three pillars are most important for being healthy life style for that one should follow information given for wholesome diet, proper time of sleep & sexual act in various ancient classical text. Ayurveda enlightened instructions given for night regimen & contraindications. Ayurveda explains ratricharya means time in between sunset to sunrise, hence sandhyakala also includes in night regimen, & factors explained under sandhyakala are unique avoiding sleep, reading, going walk for long distance & sexual activity which are contraindicated in sandhyakala are unique concepts explained under ratricharya are having significant role in preventing diseases & promoting health. Ayurveda classical text has exceptional concept regarding moonlight & its on body.

Food should be consumed first prahara of night i.e. only that is first three hours of sunset is mentioned night regimen. One should consume light & conducive diet during night & walking hundred feet after food, this

concept of Bhojana karma & Bhojanottara karma both concept are unique and accepted by modern science also.

Ratricharya is also described concept of Anjana, nasya & dhoompana its having role from preventing kaphaja vyadhi because in sandhyakala & ratrikala Kapha is predominance.

In addition Ayurveda classical text has described sexual intercourse in night regimen , concept regarding time & season wise intercourse , place for sexual intercourse , preparation & diets before sexual intercourse , description of fit & unfit male & female for sexual intercourse, all these methods are necessary for proper physiological & psychological fuction of body. These sexual practices are also helps for healthy progeny & avoid deformity in newborn.

Further , Acharya also mentioned details about nidra, importance of nidra, measures induce good sleep , sleeping postures, & sleeping equipment's , everything plays important role in preventing postural deformities & diseases related to spine , prevent effect atinidra . anidra. Sound sleep helps as to prevent from psychological disturbances & diseases related to physiological disturbances of body.

CONCLUSION

Ayurveda classical text who only gives detailed knowledge of ratricharya its special concept of Ayurveda which is not described in modern science also. While study critical review of ratricharya we concluded that one should follow ratricharya indications & contraindications get prevent life style disorders & sexually transmitted diseases. Each concept related to ratricharya like importance of moonlight, Ratribhojan vidhi, nasya , Anjana, dhoompana, importance , sexual act & shayanvidhi are having its special importance to prevent diseases related to lifestyle & helps to promote health.

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