A Critical Review of *Nidra* and *Nidranasha* – Ayurveda Perspective

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**ABSTRACT**

Ayurveda is a complete science of life that emphasizes physical and mental wellness and it also includes preventive strategies. Ayurveda incorporates several principles to sustain health and cure disease. The body of a human being is supported by three pillars that are *Ahara*, *Nidra*, and *Brahmacharya*; these three elements are regarded as the *Trayopastambha* of life. *Nidra* is considered as the second pillar of life next to *Ahara*. If any of these three pillars is disturbed from its usual healthy state, it produces a number of disorders in the human body. *Nidranasha* is one among them. Nowadays, *Nidranasha* is a major lifestyle disorder, since people are not following the codes and conducts of life, such as *Dinacharya* and *Ritucharya*, and as a consequence, they are suffering from a variety of issues and psychological disorders. In today’s world, numerous sleep disorders are becoming more common as a result of working at night, transmeridian travel, exposure to various electronic devices, and so on. In contrast with modern science, Ayurveda clearly explains *Nidra* and *Nidranasha*, and different treatment principles are used to deal with the *Nidranasha* condition. Because there is no fruitful management in modern science drugs have also created several complications. This article provides a thorough review of the causes, consequences, and management of *Nidranasha* from an Ayurvedic perspective. In this study, an attempt of critical review on *Nidra* and *Nidranasha* is done.

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1. **INTRODUCTION**

Ayurveda is not only the system of medicine but also the way of life. It comprises physical, mental, and spiritual well-being. *Nidra* is one of the *Trayopastambh*\(^1\) in Ayurvedic literature and is necessary for the physical and mental well-being of the body. Sleep, according to Ayurveda, is one of the most essential foundations of health connected with happiness and well health and is the result of a relax physical and mental state. It is one of the 13 *[Adharanceeya vegas]*\(^2\). Like food, water, and air, sleep is the vital for all living beings on the earth, including plants. It is possible to prepare for new tasks by getting enough sleep. A good night’s sleep regenerates the mind and body’s ability to embrace new challenges, sustain health, and emotional well-being. According to *Acharya Charak*, when the *mana* along with the *indriyas* is exhausted and they detach themselves from their objects, then a person falls a sleep.\(^3\)

*Nidranasha* is the difficulty in initiating or maintaining sound sleep, or waking up early with a fatigued feeling. The disturbance in *Nidra* might have been caused by a faulty lifestyle, mental stress, and change in dietary habits. In the context of *Vataja Nanatmaja Vyadhi*, *Nidranasha* is regarded as a separate disease entity and also considered as a symptom of a variety of physical and psychological problems.

*Acharya Charak* classified *Nidra* as a fundamental life tripod, encompassing both advantages and disadvantages, classification, and management. According to *Charak Samhita*, the importance of *Nidra*\(^4\) has been mentioned as *Sukhakara* (Happiness), *Pushtikara* (Nourishment), *Balyakara* (Strength), *Vrishya* (Aphrodisiac), *Jnanakara* (Learning), and *Jeevanakara* (Life Providing).

1.1. **Aim and Objectives**

The objectives of the study are as follows:
1. To study about *Nidra* as one of the Trayopastambha.
2. To review on *Nidranasha* available in Ayurvedic texts.

2. **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

The article content is compiled from ancient books/Teeka such as *Charak Samhita*, *Sushruta Samhita*, *Ashtanga Hridaya*, *Ashtanga Sangraha*, and various articles, web, authentic books, inquire about paperwork, and courses.
2.1. About Nidra
It is only used in the feminine gender. Sleep is a state in which a person is unconscious. Nidra is regarded as an important function of living beings in Upnishad and Ayurvedic literature.

Acharya Charak referred to sleep as Bhutadhatri, which comes naturally at night and nourishes all living beings.[5]

It was classified as a Swabhavika roga by Acharya Sushruta.[6]

According to Acharya Charak, like Ahara, enough sleep is essential for physical maintenance.[7]

On a metaphorical language, Acharya Sushruta named Nidra of “Vaishnavimaya” a physiological process that supplies nutrition to the living organism and maintains health.[9]

Sleep was emerged from Tamas at the beginning of this existence; it is another aspect of Tamas that manifests when Tamas is prominent in general at night.[9]

Yogaratnakar has mentioned four natural instincts or basic human requirements. These are the desires for food, drink, sleep, and have sexual pleasure.[10]

According to Sharangadhara, Nidra is a condition characterized by the predominance of Kapha and Tamas.[11]

2.2. Definition of Nidra
- Acharya Charak stated that when the mind, including Jnanendriya and Karmendriya, gets fatigued and they dissociate themselves from their objects and then an individual falls asleep.[3]
- Acharya Sushruta narrates that once the Sanjavaha Srotas are filled with Kapha and Indriyas are separated from their respective objects of perception, the person goes asleep.[8]
- According to Astanga Sangrah, Avarana of the Manovaha Srotas by shlesmas and Shrarna of both sorts of Indriyas occur, which dissociates them from their respective senses, and then Nidra occurs.[12]
- According to Astanga Hridaya, when the sensation transmitting pathways of the body is blocked or filled up by Shlesmas, and if this Shlesma is over saturated with the Tamasika quality, then the living beings fall sleep.
- According to Manduhya Upnishad, Nidra is a state in which “Atma” has no dreams or desires, and this state is referred to as “susupri.[13]"
- Maharshi Patanjali affirmed that sleep is the mental operation having the perception of absence for its grasp. Sleep is the non-deliberate absence of thought, waves, or knowledge.[14]

2.3. Synonyms of Nidra
In Amarkosha, four synonyms have been mentioned: (1) Shayanam, (2) Swapah, (3) Swapnah, and (4) Samvesh

Similarly, three synonyms are present in Vaidyaka Shabda Sindhu: (1) Sambhashah, (2) Suppti, and (3) Svapanam

Bhutadhati is used as a synonym by Acharya Charak, while Vaishnave Maya is used in Sushruta Samhita.

2.4. Types of Nidra
- According to the causes, Acharya Charak classed Nidra as follows:[15]
  - Tamobhava – caused by tama guna
  - Shleshasamudbhava – a condition caused by vitiated kapha.
  - Manahsharirshramaasambhava – a mental and bodily exhaustion.
  - Agantuki – indicative of a poor prognosis and impending death.
  - Vyadhyamavartini – a complication of other diseases such as Sannipataja jwara, etc.
  - Ratri swabhavaprabhava – caused by the nature of the night.

- According to Acharya Sushruta[8]
  - Tamasi – Dominated by tamoguna, then sleep known as Tamasi, from which the person cannot be taken; this occurs at the time of death.
  - Svabhavika/Vaishnavi – Sleep happens naturally in people with a predominance of Tamo guna throughout the day and at night. In those with Raja Guna dominance, it can happen at any time. It happens at midnight among those with a Satva Guna preponderance.
  - Vaikariki – Whenever any disturbance occurs in mind and body, then Nidra does not arise. If Nidra is arise, it is termed as Vaikariki Nidra.

- Acharya Vaghbhat has classified in seven types as following manner:[16]
  - Kalaswabhawaja – it is produced at the usual time, that is, at night
  - Amayaja – it is formed as a result of disease
  - By exhaustion of mana – when mana becomes depleted
  - By fatigue of sharira – when body is exhausted
  - Shleshaaprabhava – it is formed due to kapha dominance.
  - Agantuka – this type of Nidra is caused by external factors such as trauma etc.
  - Tamobhava – this type of Nidra is caused by Tamoguna predominance.

2.5. Physiology of Nidra
Sleep occurs when Mana is exhausted. This phenomenon can be interpreted in this way. Howell says that sleep is caused by cerebral ischemia. The cerebral cortex is the region of higher centers such as the pre- and post-central gyres, the association region, and so on, all of which are associated with the mental functions outlined in Ayurveda. As a result of the decrease in cerebral blood supply, Mana turns into Klanta, resulting in sleep (Nidra). In addition, Indriyas (Jnanendriya and Karmendriya) become inactive during sleep due to detachment from their sense organs.

2.6. Importance of Nidra
The three components, Ahara, Nidra, and Brahmacharya, have been compared to the three legs of subsupport and are known as the three Upastambha in Ayurvedic literature. The inclusion of Nidra in Trayopastambha attests to its significance.

a. Getting enough sleep at the right time brings happiness, nourishment, strength, virility, knowledge, and longevity.[17]

b. Just as real knowledge brings about siddhi in yogis, getting enough sleep brings about happiness and longevity in humans.[18]

c. A person who gets adequate sleep at the right times will not become ill, their mental state will be calm, they will acquire strength, have a good complexion, good virility, an appealing figure, and they will not be too lean or obese, and they will live up to 100 years.[19]
d. Akala Nidra and Atinidra will destroy one’s happiness and life in the same way that Kalaratri (Night of Destruction) did.[20]
e. Yuktipurvaka Nidra is good in preserving Swashty and Sukha in the same manner as proper Ahara is beneficial for Shareera Dharanā. Sthānlya and Karshya, are particularly, depend on Ahara and Nidra.[7]
f. According to Acharya Kashyap, one of the characteristics of good health is getting adequate sleep at the proper time.[21]
g. According to Vaidyakīs Subhastīam, if the Rogi is receiving proper Nidra, it signifies that half of the Roga has been treated, and when the Kshudhā is proper, that is, Agni is in a normal state, it shows that the Roga has been totally eradicated.[22]

3. CONCEPT OF NIDRANASHA

The word Nidranasha is a combination of two words, that is, Nidra and Nasha. Based on the Nirukti, the term Nidranasha can be generally defined as a lack of sleep or a disturbance in both the quantity and quality of sleep.

Acharaya charak classified Aswapna as one of the “80” varieties of vataja nanatma jīva.[23]

Ayurveda does not explain Nidranasha as a distinct disease.

Inadequate Nidra (Nidranasha) intake causes a variety of issues including Dukhā, Karshya, Abala, Klibhata, and Ajnana, as well as death.[4]

3.1. Synonyms of Nidranasha

According to different Acharyas, the following are synonyms for Nidranasha: (1) Anidra, (2) Alpanidra, (3) Aswapna, (4) Jagarana, (5) Nidranasha, and (6) Nidrābhṛtanas

3.2. Nidanas of Nidranasha

There is no specific reference regarding causative factor of Nidranasha. The Acharyas detailed the Chikitsa procedure of Atinidra in Charak Samhita, Ashtanga Hridaya, and Ashtanga Sangraha and in this context, they pointed out that if any Atiyoga occurs to these Chikitsa procedures, it may lead to Nidranashas state. As a result, the Atiyoga of various Chikitsa strategies could be considered as causative factor for Nidranasha.


According to Ashtanga Sangraha, some other Nidanas that may produce Nidranasha are Lobha (Grief), Harsha (Happiness), Vyātha (Sorrow), Ai Maithuna (Excessive Intercourse), Ai Kshudhā (Excessive Hunger), Rukshanna Sevana (Intake of Dry Food), and Anjana (Collyrium).

Manasika Dosha Raja may be the primary cause of Nidranasha. All of these Nidana factors are classified under the following headings –

Table 1 Roopa of Nidranasha

| 1. Aharaja Nidana – Rookshanna sevana. |
| 2. Viharaja Nidana – Vyayama and Upavasa. |

3.3. Poorvarupa of Nidranasha

Poorvarupa of Nidranasha is not mentioned in any Ayurvedic classic. As Acharya Charaka included the Nidranasha under 80 Nanatmaja Vata Vikaras, he stated that Avyakta lakshana are the poorvarupa of vatasyadhi.

3.4. Roopa

Jrumbha, Amangarda, Tandra, Shirogaurava, Akshigaurava, Jāduya, Gliani, Bhrama, Apakli, Vataroga etc.

3.5. Samprapti

It is clear that the Vata, Pitta, Raja, Hridaya, and Sanjnavahā Srotas play a key role in Nidranasha’s Samprapti. As a result of the deterioration of these elements, Nidranasha develops.

3.6. Upadraya

According to Ashtanga Sangraha, increased Vayu as a result of Nidranasha creates Kaphakshaya, and this decreased and dry Kapha adheres to the walls of Dhamanis and causes Srotarodha. This leads to exhaustion that the patient’s eyelids remain open and watery secretions from the eyes. This hazardous tiredness is Sadhya up to 3 days and later develops into Asadhyā.

3.7. Chikitsa of Nidranasha[29,30]

In the treatment of Nidranasha, one should rely on measures with Vatashamakam, Vedanashamakam, and Roganivaraka effects, as well as pacifying effects on mental functions. The methods of treatment described for Nidranasha in Ayurvedic Samhitas are generally the same.

Management modalities can be categorized as follows, according to many classics:

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

3.7.1. Bahya Upachara for Nidranasha

Abhyanga, Utsadana, Samvahanā, Akshi-tarpāna, Shiro-Lepa, Karna-Purana, Shiro-Basti, Shiro-Dhara, and Moordhī Taila are described as bahya upachara.

3.7.2. Manasika Upachara for Nidranasha

Acharya Charak mentioned Manonukula vishaya graham, Manonukula Shabda graham, and Manonukula gandha graham, as Manasika upacharas.

3.7.3. Ahara Upachara for Nidranasha

Acharya Charaka mentioned Gramya mamsa rasa, Aanopa mamsa rasa, Jaleeya mamsa rasa, Mahisha ksheera, and Piyusha as ahara upacharas.

3.7.4. Anya Upachara for Nidranasha

- Maintain a consistent routine for sleep.
- Avoid smoking, tea, coffee, and alcohol before going to bed.
- Do not do any work or studying till late at night.
- Before going to bed, any thoughts and tensions should be released.
- Listening to peaceful music or favorite tunes might also help you sleep.
- 5–10 min of meditation before going to bed.
- Offering a prayer before going to bed.
- Washing hands, feet, and face before going to bed.
- Stay away from day sleep.
4. DISCUSSION

About 30% of the population suffers from insomnia, which is very common. A wide range of everyday functions, including those in the emotional, social, and physical spheres, is hampered by insomnia, which also affects cognitive and physical functioning. People who experience frequent sleep disturbances are more likely to have accidents, experience greater rates of absence from work, perform worse on the job, have lower quality of life, and use more medical services compared to people who sleep well. Age, gender, and concomitant medical and psychological problems are a few risk variables linked to an increased prevalence of chronic insomnia. About 40% of persons who suffer from insomnia also have a diagnosable mental illness, most commonly depression. According to Ayurveda, one of the triads for sustaining life is sleep, or nidra. The classics use the term “Nidranasa” to explain how the same might change, how etiopathogenesis works, and how to regulate it. Nidra, in conjunction with Ahara and Brahmacharya, provides important physiological implications and promotes the body and mind in remaining healthy. According to Ayurveda, Nidra is an essential pillar of life that is vital to maintaining regular physiological functions. The physical and mental status merely depends on Nidra; it additionally promotes mental as well as physical relaxation. Nidra also boosts immunity, allowing it to resist the pathological initiation of common diseases, and protects against early aging symptoms. Proper sleep nourishes the body, decreases stress and anxiety, hence preventing mental illness. A person who gets enough sleep has a spiritual belief and is in touch with nature. It also promotes in the attainment of longevity, youthfulness, luster, and complexion. Nowadays, people are not getting enough sleep due to their hectic schedules and work pressure. As a result, sleep hours have turned into work hours. Initially, a lack of sleep only manifests physical symptoms; however, as this progresses, it affects the mental state and leads to a variety of health problems as well as disturbances in social life. Nidranasha is the state of insufficient sleep or insomnia. The Nidranasha causes ailments which include digestive problems, depression, mental illness, and fatigue etc. The implementation of a regular daily and dietary regimen, as well as purifying methods and natural medicines, helps in the relief of Nidranasha symptoms.

5. CONCLUSION

As one of the sub-pillars of our body, Nidra plays a significant role in our life; therefore, to maintain proper health physically, mentally, and socially, the regimen of Dinacharya, Ritucharya, and Shadavritta should be followed along with an adequate amount of Nidra to achieve a balanced state. The primary objective of this article is to overview and enlighten the main study on Nidra, as presented in different Samhitas. The overview of Nidranasha with an attempt to overlook to its all aspect is done. Nidra and Nidranasha are highly significant issues to be studied in today’s era because many sufferers complain about it and fail to get relief due to a lack of extensive study and therapy. As Acharyas had already explained the causes, symptoms, and medication in our Samhitas, an attempt is done here to lighten up the study on Nidra and Nidranasha.

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10. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

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11. DATA AVAILABILITY

This is an original manuscript and all data are available for only review purposes from principal investigators.

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