

# Vyayama culture in ancient India

**Bulti Roy, Junior Research Fellow and Samiran Mondal, Professor**

Exercise Sports and Physiology Laboratory, Department Of Physical Education, Visva Bharati University, Santiniketan, West Bengal, India

## Abstract

Researcher of different allied discipline such as archeologist, epigraphy, genetics and historian reported that Indian civilization is the oldest civilization and cultural heritage in the world. Indian civilization started at last ten thousand years ago. The development of Vedic literature was started in the time of Indus valley civilization (Hindu civilization). Vyayama or Exercise is an importance practice of ancient India as per the evidence of Harappa civilization. Vedic text identified Vyayama is one of the very importance aspect in the human lifestyle. The objective of the present study was to explore the concept of Vyayama as explain in the famous Ayurvedic texts i.e. Caraka Samhita and Susruta Samhita. Ayurveda stated, Vyayama in an essential component for preventive, curative and rehabilitation medicine; given rejuvenation and longevity. This theoretical study was unfolding some fundamental concept of Vyayama as found in the age old authentic Ayurvedic literature.

**Key words:** Vyayama, Ayurveda

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**\*Corresponding Author:**

Bulti Roy, Junior Research Fellow, Exercise Sports and Physiology Laboratory, Department Of Physical Education, Visva Bharati University, Santiniketan, West Bengal, India

E-mail: [asroybulti@gmail.com](mailto:asroybulti@gmail.com)

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### **Introduction**

Ancient Indian history was divided into Early Harappa civilization, Harappa civilization, Post Harappa civilization, Vedic period, Epic Age, Jaina and Buddha period and Hindu period. Up to the Harappan period no searched literature was discovered, unless the seals etc. But in the Vedic period Vedas and Upanishads was develop. There was a very little reflection of Vyayama (Exercise) in Vedas and Upanishads. However, in Ayurvedic text (a major UpaVeda) Vyayama culture was strongly present and it would reflect the culture of ancient India. Ayurveda is the science of long and healthy life and it believe human is the combination of body, mind and soul. For the body, they suggested Vyayama (exercise) and Krida (sports). For mind and soul they suggested Yoga techniques: Asana, Pranayama and Meditation etc. Vyayama is derived from vy (specific) + aa (particular) + yam (control) + ghamg (by which it is done), and in complete sense it means specific and particular body control. There are three major Ayurvedic texts Caraka Samhita, Susruta Samhita and Astanga Hrdyayam. The present researcher collected Vyayama literature from review articles on Caraka Samhita and Susruta Samhita. In the flowing paragraphs the reviews related with the Caraka Samhita and Susruta Samhita was presented, as an evidence of ancient Indian culture on Vyayama.

### **Caraka Samhita and Vyayama Culture**

Caraka Samhita is one of the oldest Ayurvedic literatures in the world. It provided definition of Vyayama (exercise) and application of Vyayama for positive health and therapy. Ancient Indian culture was familiar with science of Vyayama (exercise) and its beneficial effects. It was found

that the Hindu living in this ancient time was focused on matters of personal hygiene, public health and sanitation. It highlighted the fact that Vyayama is for the sustained development of human being. Caraka Samhita emphasized on maintenance of positive health which include proper diet, sleep, rest, active habit, regular exercise etc. It also indicated the negative impact of excessive Vyayama (exercise) such as - exhaustion, consumption, thirst, bleeding from different parts of the body, dyspnoea, cough, fever, vomiting etc. Caraka Samhita described about the Vyayama (exercise) practice as per the different seasons. Vyayama is to be give up in hot summer and during heavy rainy season. Whereas autumn is suitable for swimming and one should habitually resort to Vyayama (exercise) in spring season. Caraka Samhita is a living evidence of exercise therapy which prescribed Vyayama for twenty types of kaphaja (phlegm) diseases and many other diseases to cure or minimize consequences. It also mentioned that two very common life style diseases: diabetes mellitus and obesity, which can cure through the Vyayama (Mondal, 2013, 2014).

### **Susruta Samhita and Vyayama Culture**

Susruta is recognized as a contributor to the history of exercise physiology (Tipton, 2008). Susruta Samhita defines Vyayama (exercise) as a sense of weariness from bodily labor and advised that it should be practice every day. Susruta Samhita referred movements of Vyayama (exercise) and movement associated with walking, running, jumping, swimming, driving or riding and participating in sports such as archery, wrestling and javeling throwing. Susruta Samhita advocated moderate exercise because it

improves the growth of limbs, endurance, muscles stoutness, strength, digestion power, resistance against fatigue, mental alertness, and intelligence. Susruta Samhita believed Vyayama (exercise) should be use for curative and remedial purposes. Susruta Samhita identifies two serious diseases in ancient time that is obesity and diabetes. The sedentary people were suffering more from this two diseases. Susruta mentioned that it can be prevented through Vyayama (exercise). Susruta Samhita believed that Vyayama (exercise) can help in prevention from diseases caused by the elevation in the kapha humor that influenced by inactivity and excessive consumption food and fluid in daily life.

### **Other Ayurvedic Literature and Vyayama Culture**

More than three thousand years old written history says that Vyayama is essential for a person to maintain his/her normal health and helps to carry out daily takes (Ven. Dhammissara, 2008). Ayurveda mentioned that Vyayama should be done in proper time and considering the four season, namely sarat (autumn), sisra (winter), hemanta (early winter), vasanta (spring). Ayurveda described the activities which produce tiredness, stability and strength in the body is known as Vyayama. According to Ayurvedic literature Vyayama help in the appropriate nourishment of the body, induce good skin complexion, increase agni, lightness in the body, but it should be practiced only up to the half of the strength of the body (Tiwari, 2014). Vyayama has so many beneficial responses, but the conditions mentioned in Ayurveda. Also Vyayama should not performed by the individual who having rakta pitta, kara, excessively weak and also very aged people. Vyayama has a relationship with mind and heart

(Moharar, 2014). Ayurveda deals with every aspect of life. It has mainly two aim i.e. protection and promotion of health and secondly cure from the diseases. According to Ayurveda Vyayama is an essential component for preventive health, rejuvenation and longevity (Bagde 2015).

### **Conclusion**

Ayurvedic literature supports the fact that Vyayama (exercise) culture was associated with ancient India. Caraka and Susruta Samhita strongly supported that Vyayama (exercise) is essential for a person to maintain his/her normal health and also prescribed it for prevention, cure and rehabilitation purpose.

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