A CRITICAL STUDY ON NIDRA AND SWAPA IN CHARAKA SAMHITA

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ABSTRACT

In Ayurveda detailed description of about sleep, sleeping pattern, type of bed etc. is available. There are two different terms that often come across in the context of sleep which are namely Nidra and Swapa. They seem to be synonyms of each other. Acharya Charaka has described Nidra in 21st chapter of Sutrasthana named Astauninditiya. It remains a question always that instead of describing Nidra in Swastha chatushka of Charaka samhita what is the need for describing it in Ashtauninditiya adhyaya of Yojana chatushka. The present study attempts to differentiate between the terms Nidra and Swapa mentioned in Charaka samhita and find out the reason of explaining Nidra in Astauninditiya adhyaya of Charaka samhita.

Key words: Ashtauninditiya, Charaka samhita, Nidra, Swapa.

INTRODUCTION: Ayurveda is a complete medical science which deals with treatment as well as prevention of diseases. For prevention of diseases conducts like Dinacharya, Ritucharya etc. are described.1 Also there is detail description available about sleep, sleeping pattern etc.2 There are two different terms come across in context of sleep which are namely Nidra and Swapa which seems to be synonyms of each other. Acharya Charaka has described Nidra in 21st chapter of Sutrasthana named Astauninditiya. It remains a question always that instead of describing Nidra in Swastha chatushka of Charaka samhita why it has been described in Ashtauninditiya adhyaya of Yojana chatushka?

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES:

1. To differentiate between the terms Nidra and Swapa mentioned in Charaka samhita.
2. To discover the reason of description of Nidra in Astauninditiya adhyaya of Charaka samhita.

MATERIAL AND METHOD: A critical study with the help of Shabdakalpadruma, commentaries on Charaka samhita like Ayurveda dipika, Jalpakalpataru have been referred and interpreted.

NIDRA AND SWAPA: Word Nidra is derived from Sanskrit dhatu ‘nidi-kutsayam’ i.e. despicable which indicates abnormal or undesirable form of sleep. Definition of Swapna by Acharya Charaka and Chakrapani7 and gives the clear-cut idea about normal sleep. In the treatment of Nidra Vega dharana, swapna has been given as a treatment.8 This clearly shows that Nidra and Swapna are two different terms with different meaning. In the context of sleep in day time, the word Divaswapa has been used and is indicated only in Grishma ritu to overcome Vata prakopa caused by a reduced amount of sleep due to short night in Grishmaritu.9
But if it is taken in other riti it is stated to be harmful for health.\textsuperscript{xiii} Acharya charaka, while describing role of sleep in maintenance of health, has used the word Swapna to show its normalcy and any disturbance in normal sleep leads to manifestation of Sthaulya and Karshya.\textsuperscript{ix} At another place\textsuperscript{x} commentator Chakrapani has specified that the word swapna has been used to differentiate it from Nidra. While describing Adravya chikitsa under the heading of Upaya, Acharya Charaka has used the term Swapna.\textsuperscript{xi} Also in the context of Achararasayana, Acharya Charaka has used the word ‘Samajagaranaswapna’.\textsuperscript{xii} In the list of symptoms of kaphaja jwara, the word Atinidra has been used which shows its relation with abnormality.\textsuperscript{xiii}

**DISCUSSION:** After reviewing and interpreting the literary review of Nidra and Swapna it can be said that the word Swapna is related with normalcy and word Nidra is related with abnormality. The word Nidra is derived from such Sanskrit dhatu which is in the meaning of despicable i.e. abnormal or undesirable form of sleep. As in Ashtuuninditiya adhyaya of Charaka samhita in Sutrasthana, eight types of Nindita i.e. undesirable body constituents have been described.\textsuperscript{xiv} This adhyaya is related with undesirable things which directly related with the health. Also it is mentioned that, in the manifestation and treatment of Sthaulya and Karshya, sleep and diet play very important role.\textsuperscript{xv} Alike description about Ahara, (in Trividhakukshiya adhyaya of Vimanasthana, Matrashtitiya adhyaya and Annapanavidhi adhyaya of Sutrasthana) except in the Ashtuuninditiya adhyaya, Nidra is not explained in detail in Charaka Samhita. These two criteria gives a clear-cut idea about its depiction in Ashtuninditiya adhyaya. Now it can be clear that Nidra is related with the abnormal condition while Swapna is related with the normal pattern of sleep.

It still remains a question that why Acharya Charaka while describing the types of sleep has used the term Nidra.\textsuperscript{xvi} Also while stating the importance of sleep\textsuperscript{xvii} why the term Nidra has been used in spite of Swapna. In the first context amongst the 5 types of Nidra, four are abnormal and one is normal i.e. ratri swabhava prabhava and in the 2\textsuperscript{nd} reference Sukha etc. factors depend upon normal type of sleep i.e. Samayoga and Dukha etc. factors depend upon 3 abnormal types of sleep namely Ariyoga, Mithyayoga and Ayoga.\textsuperscript{xviii} By the rule of majority (Chatinogacchantinyaya), normal pattern of sleep has also been included under the heading of Nidra.

**CONCLUSION:** The two different terms namely Nidra and Swapa are not synonyms of each other. In the context of normal sleep, Acharya Charaka has used the term Swapa and in the context of abnormal sleep pattern word Nidra has been used. Derivation of word Nidra indicates abnormal or undesirable form of sleep. As in Ashtuuninditiya adhyaya of Charaka samhita in Sutrasthana, eight types of undesirable body constituents have been described. This adhyaya is related with undesirable things which directly affects the health. Also in the manifestation and treatment of Sthaulya and Karshya, sleep and diet play very important role. Therefore it has been described in this chapter.

**REFERENCES:**

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