



**A STUDY OF CHRONOLOGICAL EVOLVEMENT OF CONCEPT OF
BALOPASANA IN SANSKRIT LITERATURE AND ITS PRESENT RELEVANCE**

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BACKGROUND

Central concept of this study is 'Balopasana'. It is 'Yogrudh' type of concept in Sanskrit literature. The word Balopasana includes two words, 'Bala' and 'Upasana'. The literal meaning of Bala is 'Samarthyamkriyanirvartankshmata. This is translated as strength, power, fitness, ability or stamina. Upasana suggests worship of something or strive for something. Thus, the meaning of Balopasana becomes worship of Bala or striving for Bala.

This study is oriented towards exploration of the concept of Balopasana in Sanskrit literature and explaining its present relevance.

MATERIALS & METHODS:

Sanskrit literature is very vast and versatile. Primary sources of review of literature of the present study comprises Vedic literature including vedas, upnishads, epics Ramayana and Mahabharat, literature on Ayurveda and Yoga are included. Secondary sources including available literature on Balopasana and Vyayama like Vyayamajnanakoshas, kridajnanakoshas, research literature on physical education, Ayurveda, yoga and sports sciences are reviewed. Review of literature is carried with keywords Bala, upasana, vyayama, Ayurveda, sports medicine and kridavaidyaka.

Review of literature of this study is directed towards the study of evolvement of concept of Balopasana since vedic period and understanding its relevance with present context of kridavaidyaka.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY:

The scope of this study includes understanding the scope of this study includes understanding the relevance of the concept of Balopasana with physical aspects i.e. fitness, strength, with special reference to health and sports, this study aims towards developing an evidence based module of Balopasanabased on ancient Indian philosophy.



This is done by studying the prevalence of application of physical fitness at present and understanding the need of holistic module. Chronological evolvement of concept of Balopsana is studied to develop the holistic module of Balopasana.

DISCUSSION:

Sports and Fitness: Present relevance

Sports and fitness have been integral part of human life since its origin. Today the idea of fitness is dominating the fields of health and recreation. Fitness is defined as the ability of a person to perform a task

without undue fatigue. It is a broad concept. It implies to the capacity of each person to live life most efficiently within less potentialities. Ability to function depends on physical, psychological, social and spiritual components. Generally, it is referred as physical fitness.

Presently we can observe two major streams of fitness, one is directed towards health and wellbeing and another is focused towards sports related fitness. The components of health-related fitness and sports related fitness are different.

The fitness industry has witnessed an unprecedented growth in last two decades across the world. The wellness and fitness market in India has registered a growth with the rate of 18-20% since 2012. Indicators of this increase in fitness sector are, increase in gym memberships, time and money spent on fitness, growth in number of fitness clubs, yoga centers, sports clubs, sports channels, sports tournaments, sports viewership and increased mobile friendly applications and wearable fitness gadgets like mobile watches some activity trackers are the topmost point of these indicators which shows the growing interest in the field of fitness and sports.

Driving forces of health-related fitness trends and sports related fitness trends are different. Health related fitness is driven towards prevention and treatment of lifestyle diseases like obesity, diabetes mellitus, and heart diseases are major driving forces behind the movement of fitness.

Growing participation and success in international competitive sports in past two decades is suggestive of increasing trends of interest of participation in professional sports in India. Success in ICC world cup 2011, consistent top position in all formats of cricket and in ICC women world cup 2016, success in Olympic 2012 and 2016 in wrestling, badminton, shooting and badminton world championship 2017 are symbolic of it. India is being considered as sleeping giant in the field of sports. Sports industry is driven by glamour, dynamism, passion, patriotism and commercials involved in the field. Along with sports participation allied fields like sports sciences are in a great demand which enable athletes for competitive success.

NEED OF THE PRESENT STUDY:

Researcher being medical professional working in the field of fitness and sports has observed that, there is a need of holistic approach to the present fitness and sports practices, which is more inclined towards curative approach currently. Although fitness and sports performance is an outcome of the best physical abilities but it is a complex phenomenon which includes biological rhythm, i.e. harmony of physical, mental and intellectual abilities altogether.

Researcher being a student of Sanskrit, Ayurveda and Yoga, has studied that In Sanskrit literature, the concept of Balopasana is described in a very holistic way. It is the journey of development of physical, mental, intellectual and spiritual abilities. Hence researcher feels that exploration of the concept of Balopasana from Sanskrit literature will be able to give the holistic approach to present practices of sports sciences. Hence, to understand the concept of Balopasana thoroughly this review study was conducted.

CHRONOLOGICAL EVOLVEMENT OF CONCEPT OF BALOPASANA

Researcher started to study the evolution of the concept of the Balopasana from Sanskrit literature to understand its development thoroughly with the relevance of time, societal requirements.

The fitness industry has come a long way from local akhadas to providing international services. Throughout the pre-historic time man's quest for fitness is driven by his desire to survive and he did it in various forms like hunting, exercising, wars and entertainment. If we take a close look evolution of concept of fitness, we come across the concept of Balopasana in Sanskrit literature. It dates to the human origin. Vedas being oldest heritage of literature of oldest human civilization in the world i.e. indus valley civilization.

Historical study of sports and exercise in India starts from Vedic period and further it can be divided as follows:

1. Vedic period and pre-historic period (B.C.E- 2000-600)
2. Medieval age and historical period (B.C.E 600 to B.C. 1750)
3. Pre-independence period (B.C 1750 to 1947)
4. Post-independence period (post 1947)

During these respective periods, the need and purpose of pursuing physical exercise and sports were different.

1. Vedic period and pre-historic period (B.C.E- 2000-600)

Vedic and pre-historic period is early age of human civilization. The basic need was existence and self-defense. In Vedas, the concept of Bala (Power) is discussed in various contexts ranging from physical fitness, armory strength to spiritual abilities ultimate divine i.e. Moksha. Physical strength is discussed as the prime attribute of Bala. Since the basic disease-free state of physical fitness is needed for spiritual sadhana. "Nayamaatmabalinlabhyate" (M.U.3/2/4). "Shariramaadyamkhalu dharma sadhanam"

Vedas give evidences of *mrigaya* (hunting), *ashwarohan* (horse-riding) and *nriya* (dance) as sports for entertainment. Digging is mentioned as the form of exercise for attaining physical strength. Dhanurveda is upveda dedicated for war techniques; it includes archery, fencing, boxing etc. *Mushtiyudha*(boxing) is considered as the best war force. *Rigveda* gives the evidence of use of herbs to enhance *bala*. Dhanurveda depicts evidences of use of herbs and ghee to treat war injuries.

Ayurveda is upveda of Atharvaveda. It is the science of life and discusses everything about life. It is primarily conservation of healthy long-life and then towards treatment of diseases. In Ayurvedic texts concept of bala, vyayama(physical exercise), is discussed in detail for healthy long-life and as a treatment modality too. Bala is one of the physical parameter in Ayurveda. Types of bala, assessment methods and various practices to enhance bala including vyayama, swasthavrutta, medicinal treatments and panchakarma. This will be explored in detail in this study to design practically relevant module of kridavaidyaka.

Chhangodyaupnishada provide the direct reference of Balopasana. There it has been advised that one who aspires to attain strength of action should meditate on Vyana. In commentary by Sahakaracharya it has been stated that it is better to meditate upon the stronger because it brings about superior results. Upnishdas give references of use of Aryavaidyashastra i.e. Ayurveda; for conservation of bala and long-life. It is needed for highest spiritual attainment of brahmanprapti.

Yogashastra is dedicated for control of mind (*Yogahcittavrittinirodhah*). Ashtang Yoga is the path of life advocated for attaining the ultimate divine. In Yogashastra physical strength, steadiness and disease-free state are considered as prime attributes towards mental and spiritual sadhana. For attaining these physical characteristics asana, pranayama, are dedicated aspects of ashtang yoga. Yama, Niyama includes also include lifestyle aspects for physical health. In Yogshastra also Ayurveda is advocated for treatment of physical ailments and enhancing physical strength.

2. Medieval Age and historic period (B.C.E 600 to B.C. 1750):

During this period, various empires were spread across India. The concept of bala was referred for maintaining the winning war streak for protection of land from invaders like muslims and protecting religion and cultural heritages. Wrestling, boxing, horse-riding fencing, archery, javellion throw were the forms of war techniques.

Sports like Mrigaya (Hunting), ashwarohan (horse-riding), nriya (dance), sangeet(music) and natya (drama) were the forms of entertainment. Pranayama, Suryanamaskar were followed as the form of exercise for physical and mental fitness.

During this time Samartha Ramdas Swami initiated campaigning of Balopasana across India. Lord Hanumana was worshiped as lord of bala. This campaign of balopasana was initiated for protection of Hindu religion, as muslim invaders were being stronger during this time. Hindu people were not united, so to bring about the revolution and for protection of religion and self-defense Samartha Ramdas Swami selected the Lord hanumana as symbol of strength for this campaigning of Balopasana. He established temples of hamunama in most part of India. He educated youth to band together, to combat despots and plunderers. He stressed importance of courage and knowledge. He established well-equipped akhadads in each temple of Hanuman and advocated suryanamskaras and physical exercises insisting that the weak is not able to bring the change. Sit-ups, push-ups, lathi-kathi, dandpatta, wrestling were the other forms of exercises included in akhadadas. This was the period of Maratha Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaja from Maharashtra, who fought against Mughal muslim empire with the help of army of local people called Mavala. Further in Peshava empire this tradition of youth for wars was continued. Mallakhamb, mallavidya and war trainings were included to strengthen the physique of army.

3. Pre-independence period (B.C 1750 to 1947)

British empire originated in India with overseas possessions and trading posts in late 16th century and continued till early 18th century. During this period, traditional Balopasana practices were continued but were hindered under influenced by british culture. Freedom fighters continued to follow traditional physical exercises for strengthening physique and mind. Traditional war techniques like fencing, boxing, javellion throw, dandpatta, lathi kathi remained as exhibition or demonstration and overlooked as an entertainment. British people started various team games like Football, cricket and individual games like badminton in India. They initiated these sports and physical exercises for entertainment. They incorporated physical education as a part of formal education system.

4. Post-independence period (B.C 1947 onwards)

India got freedom British empire in 1947. After this, sports and physical education was included in formal education curriculum. Sports development was included in five-year government planning. Curriculum of physical education was formed and various institutions were originated e.g. Rani Laxmibai Physical Education University, Sports Authority of India, Indian Olympic Association and Federations of various games. Various national, state, district level competitions were started.

Thus, the concept of Balopasana in India has evolved through various transitions with the need of respective time and societal needs. Same is observed across worldwide. If we study the movement of Olympism

After reviewing the present prevalence of fitness and sports and its chronological evolvement in India, we have observed that, the concept of bala and balopasana is eternal since human origin. Expression and display strength is one of the basic needs of human being. The way of expression of bala or strength is varying with the time, place and need. Earlier it was a need for existence and self-defense, further it was expressed through conquering in wars and by geographical invasions etc. Then there was a need of peaceful establishment of society but maintenance of winning streak was constant, hence it sports and competition arise as the way of peaceful way of expression of superiority and entertainment was achieved out of it. With the industrial development, physical fitness became a need of maintenance of health and well-being it gave rise to the health-related fitness field.

Present Relevance of KridaVaidyaka and The Concept of Balopasana:

As seen in chronological evolvement of concept of Balopasana; physical fitness has always been an important part of it, whether it is leading towards spiritual journey to the ultimate divine or not. Since physical body is the medium or vehicle of this journey. In this way, Indian philosophy gives the holistic approach to the concept of Balopasana, still maintaining the urge winning in sports intact.

After reviewing of the chronological evolvement of the concept of Balopasana since vedic period and observing the present prevalence, it can be concluded that, the concept of balopaana has evolved according to time and societal needs and physical fitness for sports and health related fitness becomes presently relevant prevalent aspect of it.

Further Implications of the study:

Based on exploration of the concept of balopasana in Sanskrit literature researcher aims to design the holistic module of Balopasana for sports persons and study its practical applicability of the same.

Significance of the study:

This study will be pioneering attempt of an interdisciplinary study in Sanskrit literature and sports sciences.

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