



Review Article

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AN UNDERSTANDING TOWARDS THE MODE OF ACTION OF BENEFITS OF MANTRA CHANTING

Kulkarni Akshar Ashok ^{1*}, Joshi Abhijit H ², Gadgil Neha D ¹

¹Ph D Scholar, Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapeeth, Pune & Assistant Professor, SDM College of Ayurveda & Hospital, Hassan, Karnataka, India

²Guide and Head, Department of Ayurved, Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapeeth, Pune, Maharashtra, India

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*Corresponding author

E-mail: draksharashok@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

There exist numerous Mantras by countless sages. All of these aim the welfare of each individual on the earth. There is need to recognize the process by which these Mantras act & advantage the human body, mind & spirit. For the complete benefit of Mantra, Chandas (Chanting style) play key role. Physical and psychological factors facilitate action of these Mantras only if the Mantras are recited properly.

Keywords: Mantra, Vayu, Agni, Buddhi, Mana, Veda, Chanda

INTRODUCTION

India has got rich cultural, arts, science & spiritual heritage. The knowledge in India existed in Sanskrit language. Most of it lived in the form of oral recitation, rather than written form. So came in focus the Mantra style of expression. It is easy to remember & recite the poetic forms of literature than essay forms. There are countless Mantras by innumerable sages. All of these aim the wellbeing of each creature on the earth. It is said in each of such Mantras that proper chanting of these Mantras gives several physical, psychological and spiritual benefits to the individual.

Vedas are inseparable parts of Indian heritage. These are one of the oldest manuscripts in the history human life. These are the source of huge knowledge. Vedas also contain such Mantras which directly help enhance the state of individual. There is need to understand the process by which these Mantras act & benefit the human body, mind & spirit. Here is an attempt to explore the mode of action.

Probable mode of action

To understand probable mode of action of benefits of Mantra chanting on human body, one must know the process of Shabda Utpatti (physiology of speech) according to Paniniya Shiksha – the text which paved the grammar of Sanskrit language and explained extensively the scientific basis for production of speech. It is explained as¹ -

Examination of Vishaya (objectives) by Atma (spirit) & Buddhi (intellect). Atma (spirit) along with Buddhi (intellect) makes Manas to indulge in Vishaya (objectives). Mana (mind) kindles Kayagni (entity which brings about all types of digestions). It gives stimulus to Vayu (one of the Tridosha). Vayu moves in the Uras (thorax region). In Uras (thorax) Vayu generates Mandra (yielding) Swara (resonance). Swara (resonance) produced by Vata Dosh in Uras, moves to Moordha (head region). Getting the way to Moordha (head region) words are expressed as speech by Vaktra (mouth).

DISCUSSION

From the above explanation one can understand there are several vital factors involved in the Shabdopatti (production of speech). These are Buddhi (intellect), Manas (mind), Agni (digestive factor) and Vayu (one of the Tridosha). These are psychological & physiological factors. The role of all these entities in the process of speech is as follows.

Vayu is very important for the process of production of speech. In particular, Udan² Vata is responsible for Vakpravrutti (process of speech). Moreover, Vayu is the Prakruti (foremost cause) of Speech³. It is also responsible for the normal functioning of all the organs. It is pivotal in perceiving the objects of all Indriya⁴ (organs).

Vacha i.e. speech is the function of Karmendriya Vak. It is controlled by Vayu⁵.

Agni (digestive factor) is important for all the body functions. It is essential for the healthy life and all the physicochemical activities of body⁶.

The role of Mana (mind) is to mediate the functions of Indriya. In case of speech, it mediates the function of Vak Indriya⁷.

Mana is said to be Ubhayatmaka Indriya (dual nature organ) – Jnanendriya (sensory) and Karmendriya (motor)⁸. Thus it holds essential part in process of speech.

Role of Buddhi (intellect) is to receive Vishaya of Jnana (object of knowledge), analyze it and reply in the form of speech or action⁹.

Effect of divine Mantra with proper Mantra chanting method (called as Chanda/Vritta Vedic meters – which are discussed in later part of this article) might help improve the quality of functions of these psychological & physiological factors consequently enhancing overall performance of these entities.

The attention processes involve network of brain regions such as the prefrontal and temporal (including the para-hippocampal gyrus) cortices, in addition to the anterior cingulate gyros¹⁰. Brain is the seat of all processes. It is indicated by the word Moordha (head region) in the above process quoted in Paniniya Shiksha.

Regulation of Vata Dosha leads to overall better status of body performance, as functions of all the organs, including vital organs, are controlled by Vata¹¹. Same way Agni which plays very important role of keeping the Vata along with other Dosha in equilibrium¹² is normalized. Alike are in concern with Buddhi and Manas. If they are normal, they influence whole body with this normalcy. Ultimately the aim of absolute mental, physical and spiritual wellbeing is achieved. Same is stated as a result of chanting of the Mantra.

Systematic scientific study also found that Mantra (sutras of scriptures) and spiritual hymns (prayers) encompass optimistic authority on several physiological and psychological functions of the body. For example, during both prayers and mantras, there was an increase in the synchronicity of cardiovascular rhythms when they were recited 6 times a minute. These findings suggested that the recitation of the rosary and certain Mantra, at specific frequencies, tempt favorable psychological and physiological effects¹³.

The consequence of recitation of "Om" in twelve experienced meditating subjects found fine changes in mental state indicated by decrease in the skin resistance¹⁴.

Omkara Dhyana produces benefits at many levels of life. It simultaneously influences body, emotions, mental functioning and relationships¹⁵.

In a match paired control study using chanting Vedic hymns showed enhancement in persistent concentration in teenaged school learners of residential setup of analogous ambience¹⁶. Chanting style of Mantra is called as Chanda¹⁷. It deals with the rhythmic syllable arrangements in poetic meters. The main topic of Chandas consists of two types: Vrutta (based on number of letters) and Jati (based on matra or phonetics). Single Jati may have multiple Vrutta.

There are various types of Chanda based on number of sections and number of letters it contains. Commonly & frequently used Chandas are Gayatri, Anushtup, Trishtubh and Jagati etc.

Gayatri Chanda contains three Pada, each of eight Akshar (letters). Totally it contains 24 Akshar (letters). Anushtup Chanda is having four Pada. Each Pada contains eight letters. Thus has 32 letters in total. Trishtubh Chanda has four Pada. Each Pada has 11 letters, thus comprises 44 letters over all. In Jagati Chanda 48 letters are present entirely. Four Pada, each one includes 12 letters.

The significance of Chandas is – Chandas guard the meanings of Ved Mantra. Only if the Mantras are recited properly, the meaning is conveyed correctly and effectively. Moreover because of Chandas the Mantra becomes pleasant for listening, thus gratifying Manas. Therefore, for the fullest benefit of Mantra, Chandas play crucial role. This is why 'Chanda' is one of the Vedanga (one of the Six important subparts of Veda).

CONCLUSION

Mantra recitation is the part of process of speech. Physiological factors Vata Dosha and Agni, psychological factors Manas and Buddhi perform the function of speech. The consequence of divine Mantra facilitates advance the excellence of functions of all these factors. All these entities play decisive responsibility in all other body activities. Ultimately the aim of absolute mental, physical and spiritual wellbeing is achieved. Same stated as benefits of chanting the Mantras. Chandas have major role for the proper action of Mantra.

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