

***Anapanasati: (mindfulness of breathing) an access to insight.*****Mahesh Talekar\*<sup>1</sup>, Rajesh Kolarkar<sup>2</sup>**

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**\*corresponding Author:** email: [mktalekar78@gmail.com](mailto:mktalekar78@gmail.com) ; Mob.: 9323153191**ABSTRACT**

Depression let's talk- WHO is leading a one-year global campaign on depression. Depression comes under psychiatric disorders. According to WHO healthy person definition is health is complete state of physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. *Vipassana* meditation technique is very useful for balancing of mind. *Ānāpānasati* breathing technique is first step of *Vipassana*. *Ānāpānasati*, the meditation is in-and-out breathing, is the first subject of meditation expounded by the Lord Buddha in the *Maha Satipatthana Sutta*, the Great Discourse on the Foundations of Mindfulness. *Ānāpānasati* is a natural object of *Samadhi* in which a person's observes his/her breathing as it is for the concentration of mind. This mental aspect is addressed effectively using *Ānāpānasati*. Moral education and *Ānāpānasati* are the foundation of *Vipassana* meditation technique. As per Maharashtra government rule (G.R) 2012 *Ānāpānasati* meditation practice should be conducted in every school. This path of

*sīla, samādhi, paññā, and nibbāna* (morality, concentration, wisdom, and liberation) is absolutely universal, and acceptable to all nationalities. Meditation has been beneficial to large number of adults, while researchers have not focused on studying the impact of meditation on children or adolescents.

**Objectives-**

Literature review of *Ānāpānasati* (mindfulness of breathing) first step of *vipassana* meditation.

**Methods**

The available Classical *Pālī* literature Buddhist Literature *Vimuttimaggā* and *Visuddhi Magga*, Concepts of meditation in *Āyurvedic* literature. Modern research papers regarding *Ānāpānasati* Literature are reviewed.

**Conclusions:**

Experimental studies using *Ānāpānasati* meditation was very much needed for further studies in adolescents.



**Key words:** *Ānāpānasati*, meditation, *Vipassana*, Depression, *Vimuttimaggā*, Mind, Breathing technique.

## INTRODUCTION

World wide 10-20% of children and adolescents experience mental disorders. Half of all mental illness begins by age of 14 and three-quarters by mid-20s. Neuropsychiatric conditions are the leading cause of disability in young people in all regions. If untreated these conditions severely influenced children's development, their educational attainment and their potential to live fulfilling and productive lives. Children with mental disorders face major challenges with stigma, isolation and discrimination, as well as lack of access to health care and education facilities, in violation of their fundamental human rights [21]

*Yoga* is the remedy for all types of misery. *Yama*, *Niyama*, *Asana*, *Dhyāna*, *Dhāraṇa*, *Samādhi* etc. are parts of yoga. [18] Eightfold path (*Aṣṭāṅga Marga*) described in detailed in *Pali* literature. *Ānāpānasati* is a natural object of *Samādhi* in which a person's observes his/her breathing as it is for the concentration of mind. The English translation of the word *Ānāpānasati* is Mindfulness of breath. It means awareness of respiration on the incoming and outgoing breaths. *Ānāpānasati* -*Ana* means incoming breath and *apana* means outgoing breath. Simply defined, *Ānāpānasati* is to feel the sensations caused by the movements of the breath in the body as is practiced in the context of mindfulness meditation.[1]

Ethics, Moral education and *Ānāpānasati* are the foundation of *Vipassana* meditation technique. Meditation technique has been

systematically explained in Buddhist literature.

As per Maharashtra government rule 2012 *Ānāpānasati* meditation practice should do in every school.[9] Childhood Psychiatric conditions such as anxiety and depressive disorders, schizophrenia and autism spectrum disorders have each been associated with stress in childhood.[10,11,12,13,14] The neurobiological and psychosocial implications of early adversity have also been associated with the development of other disorders in which stress plays a role, such as cardiovascular disease, Type 2 diabetes and obesity.[15,16,17] Psychiatric disorders are projected to become the second leading cause of morbidity in 2020.[19].



## AIM

Literature review of *Ānāpānasati* first step of *vipassana* meditation technique..

## OBJECTIVES

- Classical *Pālī* literature search in Buddhist Literature *Vimuttimaggā*
- Detailing of *Ānāpānasati*
- Concepts of meditation in *Āyurvedic* literature.
- Modern research papers regarding *Ānāpānasati*
- Benefits of *Ānāpānasati* in day today life

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

Literature review was done from various sources like *Bṛuhatrāyī*, *Pālī* Literature *Vimuttimaggā*, *Visuddhi Magga* and various scientific research papers and articles and other related sites.

### The Meaning and need of Meditation [1]

Meditation is the very opposite of wandering thoughts or even of a directed train of thinking. Early writers have referred to it as training the mind or as a way of understanding what is going on within the mind. Training the mind is assumed to be the task of formal education in schools and universities. By learning the facts and figures and techniques of the various academic subjects it is assumed that the mind is trained. The knowledge one gains through formal education may be of immense value, but it is not the same as training of the mind. Thinking skills gained through formal schooling can be useful to an individual, provided he/she has some power over the way in which thoughts arise and the direction which they take. Very often thoughts arise involuntarily and unbidden, and set off typically on their own course, with associations giving rise to each other. Happy thoughts, sad thoughts, anxieties, memories, hopes of the future and regrets of the past, each of them goes its own way and exerts its own power over the individual. The same is true for feelings and emotions.

Intelligence, knowledge and thinking abilities allow the mind to be very good at handling the outside world, but they may be of little value in helping an individual control his inner life.

Many children and adolescents often find it difficult to focus on their studies or on important tasks given to them. They recognize that most of their difficulties come from thoughts, which dominate, obsess or in other ways trouble their minds. Even though they may know that these thoughts are unhelpful and often

untrue and counterproductive, they can do nothing to stop their incessant flow. Meditation is one way to help them train their minds to focus on the tasks at hand.

In order to concentrate the mind, the object should be neither pleasant nor unpleasant; and for which there should be neither craving nor aversion in the mind. At the same time, the object of concentration should help to keep the mind continuously alert and protect us from getting immersed in any kind of delusion; protect us from self-hypnotism and hypnotism by others; protect us from sleep-inducing meditation. [2]

We should also bear in mind that the object of concentration does not restrict the meditator within the bounds of any particular religion; that the object is not a form, colour, or word symbolising a particular religion, which people of other religions may find difficult to accept. This path of *sīla, samādhi, paññā, and nibbāna* (morality, concentration, wisdom, and liberation) is absolutely universal, and acceptable to all nationalities. Therefore, while walking on this path, the object that is chosen for attaining concentration of the mind should be universal, eternal, and acceptable to all nationalities. It should be easily grasped by all, acceptable to all. [2]

### Ānāpānasati Courses [4]

At present, *Ānāpānasati* can be learnt through one of the following way:

- 1] Children's courses
- 2] MITRA UPAKRAM

### Benefits of practicing *Ānāpānasati* [4]



Many students have reported the following benefits by the regular practice of *Ānāpānasati* Meditation: Effective tool to deal with the fears, anxieties and pressures, Increased concentration of mind, Improved awareness and alertness of the mind, Memory becomes sharp, Decision-making power improves, Mastery over the mind, Increased self-confidence, Decreased agitation, fear, tension, nervousness and stress, Increased capacity to work, Better performance in studies, sports and extra-curricular activities, Better ability to understand and express, Mind becomes healthy, wholesome and strong, One becomes full of good wishes for others.

## RESULTS

### Research papers and notifications -

- Effect of *Ānāpānasati* sat meditation technique through electro photonic imaging parameters: A pilot study Int J Yoga. 2015 Jul-Dec; 8(2): 117–121.doi: 10.4103/0973-6131.158474 PMID: PMC4479888 Guru Deo, Kumar Itagi R, Srinivasan Thaiyar M, and Kushwah K Kuldeep[20]
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- “*Viśuddhimagga*: The path of Purification” Buddhaghosha (1976) Translated by B.Nyanamoli. Berkeley: Shambala.[1]
- Courses on *Vipassana* meditation have been held in jails since 1975. Courses conducted at the Central Jail, Jaipur, in 1975 and 1975-77 (Shah, 1976) and in Gujarat

in 1991-92 (Unnithan and Ahuja, 1977) have revealed many positive changes in inmates. There are some studies documenting the efficacy of Vipassana in Drug Addiction and other psychiatric disorders (Hammersley & Cregan 1986).[1]

- Chandiramani, et al (1994) studied the impact of *Vipassana* Meditation on the Jail inmates' (Tihar Jail) personality, anti social tendencies and certain psychological aspects such as well-being, hostility, hope and helplessness. They found a considerable reduction in the neurotic predisposition, hostility and feelings of helplessness reported by the prisoners while the sense of hope and well-being were enhanced following *Vipassana* courses. [1]
- Khosla (1994) presented case studies demonstrating the efficacy of *Vipassana* meditation on the improvement in the mental health of individuals with mental disorders. [1]
- Kabat-Zinn and associates (1984) have used Mindfulness Meditation for the self-regulation of chronic pain. They found that Mindfulness Meditation Training in the context of a stress reduction and relaxation program can be highly effective in reducing self-reports of both pain and pain-related behaviour in the majority of patients referred to it for chronic pain. [1]
- Forty-eight adults who were diagnosed with mild-moderate essential hypertension were evaluated for electrophysiological

changes following biofeedback technique (Dixit, S.P, Agarwal, A. & Dubey, and G.P.1994). Twenty-eight cases were trained in *Vipassana* meditation. Electrophysiological parameters showed a significant effect of the meditation in regulating blood pressure. [1]

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- *Yashada* Pune, Circular providing Vipassana training to all newly recruited officers in Maharashtra 24 Feb.2004
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## DISCUSSION

*Ayurveda* is the oldest science of life, the traditional healing system of India. It is the Medical side of all *Darshana*. The teaching of the Buddha is collected in *Tripitaka* and *Tripitaka* is an ocean of knowledge as well as *Dhamma*. *Dhamma* is a healthy harmonious wholesome way of life. It is a

life of morality of ethics. It is an art of living.

Study is done to see the Buddhist philosophy in *Carak Samhitā*, *Pāli* literature and *Ayurveda*. Life beyond life towards pristine purity and the last and important goal is how to attain emancipation (*Nirvana*)

The path of emancipation is *sīla*, *Samadhi* and *Pradnyā*. When ones see all entities in all condition have become identical with awareness he becomes free from rebirth.

*Ānāpānasati*, the meditation on in-and-out breathing, is the first subject of meditation expounded by the Buddha in the *Maha Satipatthana Sutta*, the Great Discourse on the Foundations of Mindfulness. The Buddha laid special stress on this meditation, for it is the gateway to enlightenment and *nibbāna* adopted by all the Buddha's of the past as the very basis for their attainment of Buddhahood.

*Vipassana* means "to see things as they really are"; it is a logical process of mental purification through self-observation. For self-observation, one penetrates one's entire physical and mental structure with the clarity of insight. For this, we need a medium, a tool, which will lead us to the root level of the mind, from where the negativities and impurities arise - that medium is the breath. Observing the breath is called *Ānāpānasati*.

*Ānāpānasati*, "mindfulness of breathing", or breath meditation is a core contemplative practice of Buddhism. Its practice builds mindfulness and concentration through the relaxation and stilling of body, feelings, and mind. Ultimately, according to the Buddha,



meditation's goal is the attainment of *nibbāna* (Nirvana), the extinction of suffering.

*Pradnyāparadha* (Derangement of wisdom) is the main cause of disease therefore lord Buddha said about the development of wisdom.(C.S.1/103) While describing *Manas roga* *Carakacharya* says neither the god, nor *gandharva*, nor *pisaccha*, nor *rakshasa* nor other intellect a person affects by his own deeds. Intellectual error is the cause of diseases. Lord Buddha says you are your own master; you make your own future therefore discipline yourself. *Bhesajjakhandaka* of *Vinayapitaka* gives full information regarding all *Āyurvedic* therapies and medicines Mind and body are explained in *Abhidhammapitaka*.

## CONCLUSION

One should choose a convenient time for meditation and practise with utmost regularity, reserving the same period each day for one's practice. One may begin by briefly reflecting on the abundant virtues of the Buddha, extending loving-kindness towards all beings, pondering the repulsiveness of the body, and considering the inevitability of death. Then, arousing the confidence that one is walking the very road to Nibbāna walked by all the enlightened ones of the past, one should proceed forth on the path of meditation and strive with diligent effort.

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