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A Comparative Study of *Trividha Nadis*; *Ida*, *Pingala* & *Sushumna Nadi*

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ABSTRACT

The *Nadis* are energetic irrigation system of human body as they keep us alive. There are 72000 *Nadis* in number, in which three are most important viz., *Ida*, *Pingala* & *Sushumna*. The term *Ida*, *Pingala* & *Sushumna* are used vastly by different *Acharya* in respect to nervous system. *Ida* performs the function that controls all the mental processes. *Ida* is related to left nostril and, and situated at left side of *Sushumna*. *Pingala* is full of energy with high temperature, physical strength, adding vitality and efficiency. It is related to right nostril and situated at right side of *Sushumna*. Out of all *Nadi*'s *Sushumna* is a root that extends from *Muladharachakra* to *Brahmarandhra*. It appears that these *Nadis* are a part of nervous system also they have an anatomical location in the body. *Sushumna Nadi* can be compared with spinal cord whereas *Ida Nadi* with parasympathetic & *Pingala Nadi* with sympathetic activities of the body.

KEYWORDS

Ida, *Pingala*, Nervous system, *Sushumna* and *Trividha Nadi*



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INTRODUCTION

The Sanskrit word *Nadi* derived from the root *Nad*, means flow, motion or vibration. The words suggests the fundamental nature of a *Nadi* - to flow like water, finding the path of least resistance and nourishing everything in its path¹. *Nadi* is Sanskrit word that can be translated as “Tube” channel or flow. It refers to the network of channels through which energy travels throughout the body². According to many *Tantric* texts, in human body the *Prana* reaches every cell through *Nadi*. Some are wide and rushing; others are a mere trickle. When these systems flow freely, the health is maintained³. According to *Shiv Samhita* there are three and half lakhs of *Nadis* in the body of a human being. Out of these *Nadis* fourteen are of major importance. (1)*Sushumna* (2)*Ida* (3)*Pingala* (4)*Gandhari* (5)*Hastijihva* (6)*Kuhu* (7)*Saraswati* (8)*Pusha* (9)*Shakhini* (10)*Payaswini* (11)*Varuni* (12)*Alambusha* (13)*Vishwodari* (14)*Yashaswini*⁴. According to *Gorakh Samhita* there are seventy two thousands of *Nadis* and they arise from *Nadi Kanda*. Among them most important ten *Nadis* these are (1)*Ida* (2)*Pingala* (3)*Sushumna*(4)*Gandhari* (5)*Hastijihva* (6)*Pusha* (7)*Yashaswini* (8)*Alambusha* (9)*Kuhu* (10)*Shakhini*⁵.

Among them three are most important namely *Ida*, *Pingala* and *Sushumna*. These terms are used vastly by different *Acharya* in respect to nervous system. It appears that these *Nadis* could be the part of nervous system and also have an anatomical existence in the body⁶.

PURPOSE (OBJECT)

To explore the ancient knowledge of *Ida*, *Pingala* & *Sushumna Nadis* and to correlate these concepts with modern science.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

For the present study each and every context related to the concept of *Trividha Nadis* explain in the *Tantrik* literature and *Yoga Shastra* like *Shiva Samhita*, along with the review of basic *Vedic* literature have been taken as a source material. Various books related to anatomy have been revised and released information necessary for study.

ORIGIN OF NADIS:

उर्ध्व मेढ्रादधोनाभेः कन्दयोनिः खगाण्डवत् ।
तत्र नाड्यः समुत्पन्नाः सहस्राणां द्विसप्ततिः ।।
(गो. सं.)

Nadi Kanda is the origin or birth place of *Nadis*. *Nadi Kanda* is like an egg of a bird and is situated above the pubis and below the umbilicus. The above mentioned



quotation concludes that seventy thousands *Nadis* take origin from *Nadi Kanda*⁷.

Conus Medullaris: It also known as the medullary cone is the distal end of the spinal cord. Its location varies, and in adults it tapers at approximately the first and second lumbar vertebra, ranging from T11 and L3. Grogan et al. (1984) studied the characteristics of CT scans found that the conus has a distinctive oval configuration, an anterior sulcus, and a posterior promontory on CT⁸.

Triveni Point: *Ida*, *Pingala* & *Sushumna* these three *Nadis* meet at a point known as Triveni Point. The *Triveni* point lies at the site of *Adnya Chakra* behind the centre of two eye brows. *Ganga*, *Yamuna* and *Saraswati* are three rivers which can be compared to *Ida*, *Pingala* and *Sushumna*, respectively and their meeting point is termed as *Triveni*⁹.

Trividha Nadi: *Ida* and *Pingala* are situated on lateral aspect of *Sushumna* out of which *Ida* lies on left side of *Kanda* and traced at left nostril whereas *Pingala* is placed on right side. Spinal cord provides primary path and accommodation for autonomous nervous system.

Ida Nadi: it is situated on the left side of *Sushumna*, and is related to left nostril. *Ida Nadis* is *Sheeta* and also white in color and its *Guna* are closely related to *Chandra* so it is also called as *Chandra Nadi* (pertaining

to qualities of *Chandra* or moon God)¹⁰. Function of *Ida Nadi* also matches to the *Chandrama* because *Chandrama* provide calmness and stability and nourishes the whole universe. It is associated with lunar energy. *Ida Nadi* controls all of the mental processes and carries *Pranic* energy. It nourishes and purifies the body and mind. It is the channel that gives energy to our emotional aspect¹¹.

Preganglionic parasympathetic axons are myelinated and occur in the oculomotor, facial, glossopharyngeal, vagal and accessory cranial nerve and in the second to fourth sacral spinal nerves. In the cranial part of the parasympathetic system there are four small peripheral ganglia:-

- Ciliary ganglia
- Pterygopalatine ganglia
- Submandibular ganglia
- Optic ganglia

The vagus nerve contains preganglionic parasympathetic fibers which arise in its dorsal nucleus and travel in the nerve and its pulmonary, cardiac, esophageal, gastric, intestinal and other branches¹².

According to *Charak Samhita* in two upper limbs, two lower limbs, trunk and head, other viscera, consciousness, sense faculties, five objects of sense, soul together with its qualities like happiness etc. mind and objects of the mind all are



located in the heart¹³.

Pingala Nadi: Among the innumerable number of *Nadis* in our body, *Pingala Nadi* is one of the three important *Nadis*. The location of *Pingala* in our body can be traced on the right side of *Meru* i.e. vertebral column and it terminates at the right nostril¹⁴. According to *Shiv Samhita* *Pingala Nadi* is situated on the right side of *Sushumna* and is related to right nostril. It is named as *Surya Nadi* or the one related to god sun¹⁵. The *Pingala Nadi* is related to the sun because of its *Usna* nature and dark complexion. It is also related to the *Yamuna* river due to its similar complexion with the slimily nature and the dark color of the water of *Yamuna* river. It starts from the right side of *Sushumna* and courses from the right testicle in male and culminates in the right nostril¹⁶.

These sympathetic chain includes the two ganglionated trunk and their branches, plexuses and subsidiary ganglia. It has a much wider distribution than the parasympathetic as it innervates all sweat glands the arrectores' pilorum, the muscular wall of many blood vessels, the heart, lungs and respiratory tree, the abdomen-pelvic viscera, the esophagus, the muscles of the iris in the eye and non-striated muscle of the urogenital tract, the eyelids and elsewhere¹⁷.

Table 1 Comparison of *Ida* and *Pingala Nadi*¹⁸

Features	<i>Ida</i>	<i>Pingala</i>
Breath	Traced nostril	left Traced right nostril
Temperature	Cold	Hot
Sex	Female	Male
Quality	Mental	Physical
Metal	Silver	Gold
Color	Blue	Red
Energy	Negative	Positive
Nerves	Parasympathetic	Sympathetic
River	Ganga	Yamuna
Planet	Moon	Sun

Sushumna Nadi: It is considered as the root of all the *Nadis*, unlimited nerves emerge from the five *Paravs* (knot like structure) of *Sushumna*. *Sushumna* (spinal cord) is present in the Centre of *Merudanda* i.e. Vertebral column and it travels from downwards (caudal end) i.e. *Nradhkama* to upwards (cephalic end) i.e. *Sahastra chakra*. Six circular structures are present in the path of *Sushumna Nadi* known as *Shad Chakras*. This *Chakra* represents the physio-anatomical entities of activities and their regulating centers in the brain and nervous plexuses near the effector organs. *Nadis* which take the shape of circle or wheel, those are grouped six in number. Hence these are called *Shad-Chakars*. The Western deals with the functions and gross form of the spinal cord, while the *Yogins* of ancient times dealt with the subtle (*Sukshma*) nature.

DISCUSSION

After the concept of *Nadi* i.e. *Ida*, *Pingala* & *Sushumna*, are considered that these structures can be correlated as follow:



Ida Nadi is situated on the left side of *Sushumna* and is related to left nostril. It controls all of the mental processes and gives energy to our emotional aspect. Therefore, *Ida Nadi* may be correlated with parasympathetic nervous system of the body.

Pingala can be traced on the right side of *Meru* i.e. vertebral column and it terminates at the right nostril. It is full of energy with high temperature, adding vitality, physical strength and efficiency. Therefore, position and function of *Pingala Nadi*'s may be correlated with sympathetic nervous system of body.

Sushumna extends from the *Muladhara Chakra* (second vertebra of coccygeal) to *Brahmarandhra*. *Canalis centralis* is a central canal in the spinal cord. Spinal cord is suspended in the hollow of the spinal column and made up of grey and white brain-matter. In the same way, *Sushumna* is dropped within the spinal cord and has subtle sections¹⁹. When we study the construction, location and function of the spinal cord and the *Sushumna Nadi*, We can readily say that the spinal cord can be considered as *Sushumna Nadi*.

CONCLUSION

From a discussion it can be concluded that *Ida Nadi* can be correlated with

parasympathetic activities whereas *Pingala Nadi* with sympathetic activities and *Sushumna Nadi* with spinal cord of the body.



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