

Tracing Gaming Addiction in Vedic Literature

Piyali Biswas
Assistant Professor in Sanskrit
Acharya Sukumar Sen Mahavidyalaya,
Gotan, Purba Bardhaman,
West Bengal, India
victory.biswas@gmail.com

Structured Abstract:

Purpose:

Nowadays, the love for online video gaming has crossed its limitations and has become an addiction and is recognized as the gaming disorder by World Health Organization. The present article explores the excessive gaming addiction among the Vedic people with special reference to a hymn of the 10th book or *maṇḍala* of the *R̥gveda* (10.34), where a resemblance can be seen between the game addicted people of the *Vedic* era with the game addicts of the modern era. Moreover, this hymn does not have any direct religious context and thus is considered as a secular hymn by the scholars.

Design / Methodology / Approach:

This paper is prepared in English language and the verses are written in Sanskrit language with diacritics. In the beginning of this paper, a list of abbreviations and a list of diacritical markings of the Sanskrit *Devanāgarī* alphabets are given to avoid inconveniences. Titles of books, quoted books and words, cited verses, quotations have been given in italicized fonts. We have put a list for references of the subsequent discussion as the 'Endnotes'. The study is based on secondary and primary data both. Some information from Internet also has been taken and given in the references.

Findings:

The study reveals gaming addiction among the common people of Vedic era.

Originality/Value:

Few works on gaming tradition has been done but not in this angle. In this paper, a comparative study has been made on the tradition of gaming addiction between the common *Vedic* People and today's common people.

Limitations:

The issue mentioned here is very alarming and is being going on ever since but raising awareness among the people with such a research work is very hard.

Keywords:

Introduction, Gaming tradition in early literary references, Gaming addiction shown in the *R̥gveda* hymn 10.34, Conclusion.

Paper Type: Research Paper.

Abbreviations:

AB = Aitareya Brāhmaṇa
APA = American Psychiatry Association
AV = Atharvaveda
AVP = Atharvaveda Paippalāda Saṃhitā
AVP = Atharvaveda Śaunaka Saṃhitā
Br. Up. = Bṛhadāranyaka Upaniṣad
Chān. Up. = Chāndogya Upaniṣad
Comm. = Commentary
Ed. = Edited
GB = Gopatha Brāhmaṇa
ICD = International Classification of Diseases
KS = Kāthaka Saṃhitā
MLBD = Motilal Banarsidas Private Limited
Mun. Up = Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad
N = Nirukta
TB = Taittīriya Brāhmaṇa
Trans. = Translation
TS = Taittīriya Saṃhitā
TU = Taittīriya Upaniṣad
RV = R̥gveda
ŚB = Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa
WHO = World Health Organisation

Sanskrit alphabets in roman transliteration:

अ = a आ = ā इ = i ई = ī उ = u ऊ = ū
ऋ = ṛ क = k र = r
ए = e ऐ = ai ओ = o औ = au
क = ka ख = kha ग = ga घ = gha ङ = ṅa
च = ca छ = cha ज = ja झ = jha ञ = ṅa
ट = ṭa ठ = ṭha ड = ḍa ढ = ḍha ण = ṇa
त = ta थ = tha द = da ध = dha न = na
प = pa फ = pha ब = ba भ = bha
म = ma य = ya र = ra ल = la व = va

श = śa ष = ṣa स = sa ह = ha

Introduction:

The term “Addiction” does not only refer to the dependence on substances such as chemical, drug, alcohol etc. but it also involves an inability to stop partaking in some activities. And these days, internet gaming addiction has become a new threat to our Indian society with the increasing use of internet. These types of games lead us to a sedentary lifestyle¹. The latest list of diseases published by the WHO (ICD-11) includes addiction to the online video gaming². The American Psychiatry Association (APA) has developed nine criteria for characterizing the Gaming Disorder³. Doctors now recognize persistent and compulsive gaming behavior as ‘a mental health disorder’. There are so many games like Dota2, PUBG etc., which are very addictive in nature and makes the gamer neglect personal hygiene, gain or lose significant weight, disrupt sleep patterns, play at workplace, lying etc. Even it may have some or all symptoms of drug addiction. Some states like Gujarat had to ban the online video game PUBG.

Now, is this tradition of ‘Gaming addiction’ new to India? The answer will be “No”, it’s been going on for a long time back. There is a hymn named *Akśasūktam* in the 10th book of *ṚgVeda*⁴. Where we see a monologue of a repentant gamer who laments the ruin brought on him because of addiction to the dice or *Akṣa*.

Gaming tradition in early literary references:

Not only in *ṚgVeda*, in the 4th and 7th books of *Atharvaveda* also there are hymns for success in Dice gaming⁵. In the 4th *Kāṇḍa* of the *Paippalāda* recension of the *Atharvaveda* the last verse says:

[We, who] want luck in dice against the opposing player, let the victory pour on us; let destroy him, who plays against us like a tree against the thunderbolt (AVP: 4.9.7).

Even, we all know that in the *Sabhāparva* of *Mahābhārata* (II.65.45), Yudhiṣṭhira had to stake his wife Draupadī before the Kauravas after losing everything in the Dice game⁶.

In *Nalopākhyāna* of *Mahābhārata*⁷ also Ṛtuparṇa, an expert in Dice game taught the game to Nala: “Know that I am acquainted with the dice’s secret and that I am an expert on numbers” (26):

“viddhyaksahrdayajñam mām saṅkhyāne ca viśāradam”

In the 7th Adhyāya of *Manusmṛhitā*, Manu has identified ten sins (*kāmaja vyāsana*) and dice gaming is among them⁸:

“mṛgayākṣah divāswapnah paribādah striyo madah

tauryatrikaṃ br̥thātyā ca kāmajo daśako gaṇah”

In later Sanskrit literary texts like the ten-act Sanskrit drama *Mṛcchakaṭika* by Śūdraka, we see a distressed state of a game addict Saṃvāhaka (*Mṛcchakaṭika*, 2nd act).

The early literary references in *Ṛgveda*, *Atharvaveda*, *Mahābhārata* and other texts regarding the sedentary gaming tradition like dice gaming, show a major role in Indian culture.

Gaming addiction shown in the *Ṛgveda* hymn 10.34:

Gaming addiction was very popular among the Vedic people as well. The “Gamester’s lament” is one of the hymns of the *Ṛgveda* which do not have any direct religious context and is found in the late 10th book or *maṇḍala* (RV: X.34), where most of such hymns on miscellaneous topics are found.

H. Luders in his article⁹, *The Game of Dice in Ancient India*, wrote: “How could we imagine the dice game in the most ancient times that is difficult to say.”

M. Winternitz considered the poem to be “The most beautiful amongst the non-religious poems of the *Ṛgveda*”¹⁰. According to A. A. Macdonell “Considering that it is the oldest composition of the kind in existence, we cannot but regard this poem as the most remarkable literary product”¹¹.

The poem testifies to the popularity of gaming among all classes of Vedic people. The hymn contains fourteen verses or *mantras*. Ailuṣaḥ kavaṣaḥ is the seer of this hymn and the deities are - Akṣāḥ, Kitavaḥ and Kṛṣiḥ. The verses are in Tr̥ṣṭup and Jagatī meter. Now if we go through this hymn, we can see that the gamer says that the trembling air born products of

the great *vibhīdaka* tree delight him as they continue to roll upon the dice-board. Like a drink of Soma from the mountain Mujavant, the enlivening *vibhīdaka* dice has pleased him¹²:

na mā mimetha na jihīḷa eṣū śivā sakhībhya uta mahyamāsīt /

akṣasyāhamekaparasya hetoranuvratāmāpa jāyāmarodham // (RV:10.34.2)

The gamester's wife never quarrelled with him nor despised him; she was kind to him and to his friends. But for the sake of the partial dice the man have spurned his devoted spouse. His mother-in-law detests him, his wife rejects him. Even in his need he does not find any comforter.

dveṣṭi śvaśrūrapa jāyā ruṇaddhi na nāthito vindatemarḍitāram /

aśvasyeva jarato vasnyasya nāhaṃ vindāmikitavasya bhogham // (RV:10.34.3)

He cannot discover what the enjoyment of the gamester any more than he can perceive what the happiness of a worn-out hack horse. Others pay court to the wife of the man whose wealth, is coveted by the impetuous dice. His father, mother, brothers cry out, "We know nothing of him; take him away bound!"

anye jāyāṃ pari mṛśantyasya yasyāghṛdhad vedane vājyakṣaḥ /

pitā matā bhrātara enamāhurna jānīmo nayatābaddhametam // (RV:10.34.4)

When he resolves not to be tormented by them because he is abandoned by his friends who withdraw from him, yet as soon as the brown dice, when they are thrown, make a rattling sound he goes to their rendezvous like a woman to her paramour.

The gamester comes to the assembly hall glowing in body, asking himself "Shall I win?"

sabhāmeti kitavah pṛcchamāno jeṣyāmīti tanvāśūsūjānaḥ / (RV: 10.34.6)

The dice inflames his desire by making over his winnings to his opponent. Hooking, piercing, deceitful, vexatious, delighting to torment, the dice dispense transient gifts and again ruin the winner; they appear to the gambler covered with honey. Their troop of fifty-three disports itself, itself disposing men's destinies like the God Savitr whose ordinances never fail. They bow not before the wrath of the fiercest. The king himself makes obeisance

to them. They roll downward, they bound upward. Having no hands, they overcome him who has. These celestial coals when thrown on the dice-board scorch the heart though are cold themselves.

The destitute wife of the gamester is distressed, and so too is the mother of a son who goes she knows not whither. In debt and seeking after money the gambler approaches with trepidation the houses of other people at night.

It vexes the gamester to see his own wife and then to observe the wives and happy homes of others. In the morning he yokes the brown horses — the dice; by the time when the fire goes out, he has sunk into a degraded wretch.

Lastly, he prays to the axis *akṣa* holding out his ten fingers to the east in reverence “I withhold wealth by playing dice, this is truth I say.”

Never play with dice; practice husbandry/cultivate; rejoice in the prosperity, esteeming it sufficient. Be satisfied with the cattle and the wife, the god advises.

akṣairmā dīvyah kṛṣimit kṛṣasva vitte ramaṣva bahumanyamānaḥ /

tatra ghāvaḥ kitava tatra jāyā tan me vicaṣṭe savitāyamaṛyaḥ // (RV:10.34.13)

In the last *mantra* he says “O dice! Be friendly to us and do not forcibly bewitch us with your magical power. Let your wrath and enmity now come to rest. Let others than we be subject to the fetters of the brown ones.”

mitraṃ kṛṇudhvaṃ khalu mṛḷatū no mā no ghoreṇa caratābhi dhṛṣṇu /

ni vo nu manyurviśatāmarātiranyo babhrūṇāṃ prasitau nvastu // (RV:10.34.14)

The piteousness of the sedentary gamester in this *Rgvedic* hymn 10.34 resembles to the distressed state of the game addicted of this decade.

Conclusion:

So, from the above discussion, we can say that this gaming addiction is not new in Indian society. It is an old scar of Indian civilization and unlike the other scars, which gradually starts to disappear; this scar is becoming more prominent day by day. Playing sedentary games like dice also shows great cultural influence with respect to the socio-economic and the political conditions of the respected period of India. Moreover, from this *Rgvedic* hymn,

we also come to know that this gaming tradition was not confined among the Kings and upper-classes people but was popular among the all classes of the society.

Endnotes:

1. A sedentary lifestyle is a lifestyle involving little or no physical activity.
2. Cf. WHO, 2018, *International Classification of diseases*.
3. Cf. Petry N. M, Rehbein F, Gentile D. A, Lemmens J. S, Rumpf H. J, Möble T, (2014). *An international consensus for assessing internet gaming disorder using the new DSM-5 approach*. *Addiction*.109.
4. Cf. RV: X. 34.
5. Cf. AVP: 4.9, AVŚ: 7.109.
6. Śakuni commits Yudhiṣṭhira to stake Draupadī, and to this he agrees. It is said (II, 65, 45): *saubalas tu abhidhāyaivam jītakāṣī madotkataḥ / jītam ity eva tān akṣān punar evānvapadyata //*
7. Cf. MBh III, 72. For further information see Jarret, T. *Nalopākhyānam* or the tale of Nala. Cambridge University Press, January, 2014.
8. Cf. *Manusamhitā*, VII. 47.
9. See Lueders, H. *The Game of Dice in Ancient India* (1907) reprinted in *Philologica Indica*, 1940.
10. Cf. Winternitz, *HIL*, vol. I, P-112.
11. Cf. Macdonell, A. A, 1990, p. 127-8.
12. In the ancient India the dices or *akṣas* were made of the fruits of *Vibhīdaka* tree.

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176. [Human anatomy in Atharvaveda: with special reference to hymn 4.7 of the Atharvaveda Paippala[̄] da Sam[̄]hita[̄] \(Odisha\)](#)

PIYALI BISWAS; Acharya Sukumar Sen

Mahavidyalaya (The University of Burdwan), West Bengal, India

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Human anatomy in Atharvaveda: with special reference to hymn 4.7 of the Atharvaveda Paippalāda Saṃhitā (Odisha)

PIYALI BISWAS

Assistant Professor in Sanskrit

Email Id: victory.biswas@gmail.com

Acharya Sukumar Sen Mahavidyalaya (The University of Burdwan), West Bengal, India

Abstract:

The present article provides study of a hymn of the 4th *Kāṇḍa* of the *Atharvaveda Paippalāda Saṃhitā* (hymn 4.7), where we can trace an acquaintance of various human body parts, which in medical term is called 'human anatomy'. *Atharvaveda*, being the last one among the four Vedas though is designated as the second one by some scholars, has always been less studied. But this Veda contains vast information about the topics related to the medical science and once had influenced later *Āyurvedic* literatures like *Caraka Saṃhitā* and *Suśruta Saṃhitā*. This study also offers new interpretation of a hymn (4.7) from the newly discovered *Paippalāda* recension (*śākhā*) of the *Atharvaveda* from Odisha by a Vedic Scholar, Prof. Durgamohan Bhattacharya.

Keynotes:

Introduction

Atharvaveda Paippalāda Saṃhitā of Odisha hymn 4.7

History and discovery of the *Paippalāda Saṃhitā*

Organs mentioned in the AVP hymn 4.7

Conclusion

Abbreviations:

AV= Atharvaveda, AVP= Atharvaveda Paippalāda Saṃhitā, AVPO= Atharvaveda Paippalāda Saṃhitā of Odisha, AVPK= Atharvaveda Paippalāda Saṃhitā of Kashmir, AVŚ= Śaunaka Saṃhitā of the Atharvaveda, K= Kashmirian Paippalāda, Or= Odishan Paippalāda, Kauś S= Kauśika Sūtra, KSS= Kashi Sanskrit Series, MSS= Manuscripts, PS= Paippalāda Saṃhitā, ṚV= Ṛgveda, TB= Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa.

Introduction:

Atharvaveda though the last one in the enumeration of the four Vedas viz. *RgVeda*, *Sāmaveda*, *Yajurveda* and *Atharvaveda*, is of prime importance in delineating the institutional history of the Vedic people. So, some scholars think it is only next to the *Rgveda* in its importance and antiquity. The *Atharvaveda* contains heterogeneous material consisting of hymns and stanzas for the cure of diseases, prayers for a healthy and long life, charms for the prosperity of home and children, cattle and fields etc., thus it is nearer to the common people. Because of its contents, it is also known as *Bhaiṣajyaveda*¹. A reference to this *Veda* as a *Veda* of medicines also occurs in the *Tāṇḍyamahābrāhmaṇa*² of the *Sāmaveda*. Sāyaṇa, in the introduction part of his commentary on *Atharvaveda* stated that while the other three Vedas only deal with non-worldly matters, *Atharvaveda* deals with both worldly and non-worldly matters³.

AV carries a large number of hymns for healing diseases and the cause of the diseases. It also mentions a large number of human body parts, which in medical terms is called 'human anatomy', while describing the method of diminishing diseases from the body. The later *Āyurvedic* Śāstras were greatly influenced by this *Veda*. Thus *Āyurveda* is also considered as the *Upaveda*⁴ of the *Atharvaveda* according to some scholars.

The hymn, selected here, describes about various body parts of a human body while



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The importance of the Paippalāda recension (Odisha) of the Atharvaveda

Piyali Biswas*

Abstract :

Like the other Vedas, the Atharvaveda also once upon a time existed in several recensions. Out of those only the two - *Śaunaka* and *Paippalāda* have been survived.

The *Paippalāda* version, whose existence has been known since the 1870s while a single mutilated manuscript was discovered from Kashmir and better Manuscripts with the living tradition later from Odisha by Durgamohan Bhattacharya in 1956, is considered as the most important product of vedism. According to M. Bloomfield its one-eight or one-ninth is original, being found neither in *Śaunakīya* nor in any other Vedas.

This *Atharvaveda* (A.V.), though was known as *Paippalāda* recension, yet was quite different from the discovery of Kashmirian *Paippalāda* recension for a number of reasons. Professor Bhattacharya started to edit it but could publish only one volume comprising 1st *kāṇḍa* out of 20 due to his premature death. Now the full edition is available by his able son Dipak Bhattacharya from Asiatic Society, Kolkata what took nearly 45 years.

This Odishan edition is important for more than one reason. Primarily it is bigger in size than the *Śaunaka* by nearly 2000 verses and *Paippalāda*, edited by L.C. Barrett, by 1500 verses. That means this edition supplies more materials than both *Śaunaka* and *Paippalāda*. Even the first *kāṇḍa* out of 20 *kāṇḍas* is enhanced by 95 verses than the *Śaunaka*.

The new discovery is again important because the new materials available in the Odishan recension unveils a number of questions; for example the nomenclature of '*Brahmaveda*', though stamped by M. Bloomfield as a late dated matter, yet Bādarāyaṇa's indebtedness to the *Paippalāda Samhitā* makes it clear that the A.V. had once a direct relation with Vedānta philosophy. Again the linguistic peculiarities, social facts as prevalent among the Vedic scholars and historians may be retold, if we carefully examine the new recension of the *Paippalāda Samhitā*.

Keywords : Introduction, history of Paippalāda Atharvaveda, importance of Paippalāda recension (Odisha), conclusion.

* Assistant Professor & H.O.D, Department of Sanskrit, Acharya Sukumar Sen Mahavidyalaya (The University of Burdwan), Purba Bardhaman, West Bengal

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REMOVAL OF ARROW-TIP FROM HUMAN BODY PARTS: ATHARVAVEDA PAIPPALĀDA HYMN 4.14

□ Piyali Biswas*

ABSTRACT

The present paper aspires to an annotated translation of an Atharvavedic hymn (4.14) of Paippalāda recension, not known to any other Vedic literature. Being the last one, among the four Vedas, though designated as the second one by some scholars, Atharvaveda has been less studied but had great influence on later Āyurvedic literature. The hymn selected here is from the Paippalāda recension of the Atharvaveda which was discovered and edited by a Vedic scholar of Bengal Durgamohan Bhattacharya. It contains verses to remove an arrow-tip from different body parts that has been pierced in a human patient's body. The study of this new hymn offers new insights of the Vedic Indians as well as it reveals the concept of surgery of that time.

Methodology:

This paper is prepared in English language though the verses of the selected hymn are written in Sanskrit language and Devanāgarī script. In the beginning of this paper, a list of abbreviations is given to avoid inconveniences. Titles of books, quoted books and words, cited verses, quotations have been given in italicized fonts. We have put a list for references of the subsequent discussion at the end of every page as foot note. A list of Bibliography is also given at the end of this paper following the APA style for references.

Keywords: Introduction, Historical background of the Paippalāda Saṃhitā, The Paippalāda hymn 4.14

Translation of the hymn with notes.

Abbreviations:

AV = Atharvaveda, AVP = Atharvaveda Paippalāda Saṃhitā, AVPO = Atharvaveda Paippalāda Saṃhitā of Odisha, AVPK = Atharvaveda Paippalāda Saṃhitā of Kashmir, AVŚ = Śaunaka Saṃhitā of the Atharvaveda, K = Kashmirian Paippalāda, Or = Odishan Paippalāda, Kauś S = Kauśika Sūtra, KSS = Kashi Sanskrit Series, Mss = Manuscripts, PS = Paippalāda Saṃhitā, RV = Rgveda, TB = Taittiriya Brāhmaṇa.

Introduction:

Though the name of Atharvaveda comes after the name of the three other Vedas namely Rgveda, Sāmaveda and Yajurveda, it is the Veda of practical importance and is nearer to the common people, their beliefs, rituals,

practices and thus is connected with a social sentimentality. There are various appellations of the AV viz. Brahmaveda, Bhaiṣajyaveda, Mahāveda, Atharvaveda, Atharvāṅgīrasa, Bhr̥gvāṅgīrasa and so on depending on its subject matters and the priestly families. These nomen clatures show the richness of the subject

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ATHARVAVEDA PAIPPALĀDA SAṂHITĀ HYMN 4.5: TO RECOVER THE VIRILE POWER WITH A PLANT

□ Piyali Biswas*

ABSTRACT

The present paper aims at the annotated translation of a hymn in the 4th book of the Paippalāda recension (4.5) of the Atharvaveda, parallel of the Śaunaka recension hymn 4.4 of the Atharvaveda (AV), which was discovered by Durgamohan Bhattacharya, a Vedic scholar of Bengal in nineteenth century. This is an early Sanskrit text consisting of eight verses that were used by priest to accompany ritual act for sexual vigour with an herb. The Paippalāda Saṁhitā of the Atharvaveda, being the last important text of Vedic corpus not yet to have been edited and translated in its entirety, its critical philological study offers many examples to illustrate the problems of Indian textual criticism. Moreover, the Atharvaveda is called the "Bhaiṣajyaveda", for it has mentioned large number of plants for alleviating the diseases. The hymn selected here, concerns for recovery of virility with a plant.

Methodology:

This paper is written in English language and the verses are written in Sanskrit language with diacritics. At the beginning of this paper, a list of abbreviations and a list of diacritical markings of the Sanskrit Devanāgarī alphabets are given to avoid inconveniences. Titles of books, quoted books and words, cited verses, quotations have been given in italicized fonts. We have put a list for references of the subsequent discussion at the end of every page as foot note. Important informations, comparative texts and suggested readings are given at the end of every mantra with bullets. A list of Bibliography is also given at the end of this paper following the APA style for references.

Keywords: A short history of Paippalāda Saṁhitā, A few words about the Paippalāda hymn 4.4, annotated translation of the selected hymn.

Abbreviations: AV= Atharvaveda, AVP= Atharvaveda Paippalāda Saṁhitā, AVPO= Atharvaveda Paippalāda Saṁhitā of Odisha, AVPK= Atharvaveda Paippalāda Saṁhitā of Kashmir, AVŚ= Śaunaka Saṁhitā of the Atharvaveda, K= Kashmirian Paippalāda, Or= Odishan Paippalāda, Kauś S= Kauśika Sūtra, KSS= Kashi Sanskrit Series, MSS=

Manuscripts, PS= Paippalāda Saṁhitā, RV= R̥gveda, TB= Taittiriya Brāhmaṇa.

Sanskrit alphabets in roman transliteration with diacritical markings:

अ = a आ = ā इ = i ई = ī उ = u ऊ = ū
ऋ = ṛ ॠ = ṝ लृ = l̄

*Assistant Professor, Acharya Sukumar Sen Mahavidyalaya, West Bengal, India

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Assistant Professor, English Department,
Acharya Sukumar Sen Mahavidyalaya, Gotan, East Burdwan.

[He is credited with the compilation of answers from Mahabharata, Machhakatika, Arjyanamshakuntalam, The Iliad and Metamorphoses.]

Ramprasad Dutta

M.A. in English Literature, Guest Lecturer in Acharya Sukumar Sen Mahavidyalaya,

[He has contributed answers of Oedipus the King, Put of Goli and has translated the Summaries of all the texts in Bengali.]

Atanu Sarkar

Assistant Professor, City College, Kolkata,

[He has contributed answers of Kadambari.]

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