UNIT- 6: ASANAS CULTURAL POSTURES (SUPINE)

UNIT STRUCTURE

6.1 Learning objectives
6.2 Introduction
6.3 Asanas –Cultural Postures (Supine)-
6.3.1 Viparit-Karani,
6.3.2 Halasana,
6.3.3 Matsyasana,
6.3.4 Bhujangasana
6.4 Let's Sum Up
6.5 Further Readings
Answers to check your progress
6.6 Model Question

6:1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- will be able to practice the asanas
- will understand the methods of practicing asanas
- will be able to practice the techniques
- will be able to perform various asanas with proper alignment and technique
- will understand the benefits and effects of different asanas on the body and mind
- will be able to develop flexibility, strength, and balance through regular practice
- will learn the connection between breath and movement in asana practice

6.2 INTRODUCTION:

Asanas are physical postures or poses practiced in yoga to promote physical health, mental well-being, and spiritual growth. The word **"asana"** is derived from the Sanskrit root **"ās"**, which means "to sit" or "to be present." Traditionally, asanas were primarily seated postures intended for meditation. However, over time, they have evolved into a comprehensive system of physical movements that improve flexibility, strength, balance, and relaxation.

6.3 ASANAS: CULTURAL POSTURES (SUPINE)

6.3.1 Viparit-Karani



The word ViparitaKarani is derived from the Sanskrit term विपरीतकरणी. It consists of two parts: Viparita, which means "inverted" or "reversed", and Karani, which means "action" or "doing". In this asana, the body is inverted in a restful position, which leads to the name "ViparitaKarani" or "The Inverted Action".

Technique: Sit next to a wall with your right hip against it, knees bent, and feet on the floor. Place your hands behind your hips and lean into them to lift your feet off the floor. Swivel to face the wall and lift your legs torest against it. Adjust

your position so hips are close to the wall and your body forms an "L" shape. Place your arms by your sides in a comfortable position. Close your eyes and relax for 5–20 minutes.To come out of the pose, slowly bend your knees, roll to one side, and rest for a moment before sitting up.

Benefits:

- Helps in improving circulation and relieving tension in the lower back and legs.
- Stimulates the lymphatic system and promotes detoxification.
- Aids in reducing anxiety, stress, and fatigue.
- Helps in improving digestion and relieving indigestion.
- Strengthens the legs and tones the abdominal muscles.
- It can help alleviate symptoms of mild insomnia and headaches.

Precaution: People with neck or back problems, including herniated discs, should avoid this asana.Pregnant women should consult a healthcare provider before attempting this pose.Those with high blood pressure or eye conditions such as glaucoma, should avoid this posture.Avoid if you have shoulder injuries or if you are unable to comfortably support your back and hips in the position.

6.3.2: Halasana



The word Halasana has been derived from the Sanskrit word हलासन. It consists of two words: 'hala' meaning plow and 'asana' meaning a posture or seat. The final position of the asana resembles the shape of a plow, hence the name.

Technique: Lie on your back on a yoga mat with your arms at your sides and palms down. Inhale and raise your legs until they form a 90-degree angle with your torso. Lift your hips off the floor and support your back with your hands. Raise your legs over your head and try to touch the floor behind your head with your toes. Extend your arms along the floor behind your back and interlace your fingers if possible. Hold the pose for up to two minutes. To exit the pose, gently lower your back to the floor, vertebra by vertebra, while keeping your legs extended.

Benefits:

1. Strengthens the muscles of the back, legs, and core.
2. Improves flexibility of the spine, hips, and shoulders.
3. Stimulates the abdominal organs and improves digestion.
4. Reduces stress and tension, promoting relaxation.
5. Helps with reducing belly fat and toning the abdominal muscles.
6. Enhances blood circulation to the brain, improving mental clarity and focus.

Precaution: People with neck, back, or spinal issues should avoid this asana.Those with high blood pressure, heart problems, or glaucoma should refrain from practicing Halasana.It should not be practiced during pregnancy.Avoid the pose if you have a hernia or are recovering from surgery.

6.3.3: Matsyasana



The word Matsyasana has been derived from the Sanskrit word मच्छ्यासन. It consists of two words: "Matsya," meaning Fish, and "Asana," meaning posture or seat. This asana is called Matsyasana because, in its final position, the body resembles the shape of a fish, with the chest lifted and the back arched.

Technique: Start seated in a cross-legged position or Padmasana(lotus pose). Slowly lean back and lie on your back. Support your weight with your elbows and forearms. Lift your chest and create an arch in your upper back.Place the top of your head on the floor. Hold the pose for 10–15 seconds, breathing deeply and steadily. To release, place your palms on the ground and gently lift your head.

Benefits:

- Improves spinal flexibility and stretches the chest and neck.
- Stimulates the throat, heart, and lungs, aiding in respiratory and circulatory health.
- Relieves tension in the back and neck, promoting relaxation.
- Enhances posture by strengthening the back muscles and improving balance.
- Helps in stretching and toning abdominal muscles.

Precaution: Those with neck, back, or spinal injuries should avoid Matsyasana or practice it under the guidance of an experienced instructor.People with heart conditions or high blood pressure should consult a healthcare provider before attempting the pose.Pregnant women should avoid Matsyasana or perform it with caution after consulting a doctor.

6.3.4: Bhujangasana



The word Bhujangasana has been derived from the Sanskrit word भुजंगासन. It consists of two words: *bhujanga* and *asana*. The meaning of *bhujanga* is Cobra, and *asana* refers to a yoga posture. In the final stage, the asana resembles a cobra with its hood raised, hence the name.

Technique: Lie down on your stomach with your legs extended and feet together, toes pointing outward.Place your palms flat on the ground under your shoulders, elbows close to your body. Inhale deeply and slowly raise your head, chest, and abdomen while keeping the navel in contact with the floor.Arch your spine and stretch backward, looking upward.Keep your shoulders relaxed and elbows slightly bent, pointing backward.Hold this position, breathing normally, as far as your capacity allows.Exhale and slowly return to the starting position (lying on the stomach).

Benefits:

• Strengthens the spine and improves flexibility.
• Relieves stress and fatigue.
• Improves blood circulation and stimulates abdominal organs.
• Beneficial for asthma patients as it expands the chest and lungs.
• Tones the abdomen and helps in reducing belly fat.

Precaution: People with severe back problems, hernia, or ulcers should avoid this asana.Pregnant women and individuals with recent abdominal surgeries should not perform this posture.Those with carpal tunnel syndrome or wrist pain should avoid this asana.

6.4 LET'S SUM UP

- Asanas are physical postures in yoga that promote overall well-being.
- They improve flexibility, strength, balance, and relaxation while reducing stress and anxiety.
- Asanas are classified into different types, such as standing, sitting, forward bending, backward bending, twisting, inverted, and balancing postures.
- Regular practice of asanas enhances physical health, mental clarity, and spiritual awareness.
- Along with pranayama (breathing techniques) and meditation, asanas form the foundation of a holistic yogic lifestyle.

6.5: FURTHER READINGS:

- Saraswati. S.S.(2009). *Asana Pranayama Mudra Bandha,* Yoga Publications Trust, Mungar, Bihar, India.
- Muktibodhananda.S.(2016). *Hatha Yoga Pradipika,* Yoga Publications Trust, Mungar, Bihar, India.
- Saraswati. S.N.(2012). *Gherenda Samhita,* Yoga Publications Trust, Mungar, Bihar, India.

ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS:

Ans to Qn1. ViparitaKarani improves blood circulation, reduces stress, and helps in relaxation by calming the nervous system.

Ans to Qn 2. Halasana stretches and strengthens the spine, improves flexibility, and relieves tension in the back and neck.

Ans to Qn 3. Matsyasana activates the Vishuddha Chakra (Throat Chakra), enhancing communication and self-expression.

Ans to Qn 4. Bhujangasana strengthens the spine, improves posture, relieves lower back pain, enhances lung capacity, and stimulates digestion.

Ans to Qn 5. ViparitKarani, also known as the "Legs-Up-the-Wall Pose," is a gentle inversion that involves lying on your back with your legs elevated against a wall. It is often used to promote relaxation, reduce stress, and encourage blood flow.

Ans to Qn 6. Technique of Halasana- Lie on your back on a yoga mat with your arms at your sides and palms down. Inhale and raise your legs until they form a 90-degree angle with your torso. Lift your hips off the floor and support your back with your hands. Raise your legs over your head and try to touch the floor behind your head with your toes. Extend your arms along the floor behind your back and interlace your fingers if possible. Hold the pose for up to two minutes. To exit the pose, gently lower your back to the floor, vertebra by vertebra, while keeping your legs extended.

Benefits of Halasana:

1. Strengthens the muscles of the back, legs, and core.
2. Improves flexibility of the spine, hips, and shoulders.
3. Stimulates the abdominal organs and improves digestion.
4. Reduces stress and tension, promoting relaxation.
5. Helps with reducing belly fat and toning the abdominal muscles.
6. Enhances blood circulation to the brain, improving mental clarity and focus.

Ans to Qn 7. The word Matsyasana has been derived from the Sanskrit word मच्छ्यासन. It consists of two words: "Matsya," meaning Fish, and "Asana," meaning posture or seat. This asana is called Matsyasana because, in its final position, the body resembles the shape of a fish, with the chest lifted and the back arched.

Ans to Qn 8. The word Bhujangasana has been derived from the Sanskrit word भुजंगासन. It consists of two words: *bhujanga* and *asana*. The meaning of *bhujanga* is Cobra, and *asana* refers to a yoga posture. In the final stage, the asana resembles a cobra with its hood raised, hence the name.

⍰ 6.6 MODEL QUESTION:

Q1. What is the primary benefit of ViparitaKarani?

Q2. How does Halasana benefit the spine?

Q3. Which chakra is activated by Matsyasana?

Q4. What are the therapeutic benefits of Bhujangasana?

Q5. Write in detailabout on Viparit-Karani.

Q6. Write down the techniques and benefits of Halasana.

Q7. Write in detail about Matsyasana.

Q 8. Write in detailabout Bhujangasana.

*** ***** ***