UNIT- 7 ASANAS –CULTURAL POSTURES (PRONE)

UNIT STRUCTURE

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7.1 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

7.2 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 meant for meditation. However, over time, they have evolved into a comprehensive physical movement system thatimproves flexibility, strength, balance, and relaxation.

7.3 ASANAS –CULTURAL POSTURES (PRONE)-

7.3.1 Shalabhasana



The word *Shalabhasana* has been derived from the Sanskrit word शलभासन. It consists of two words: *shalabh*, meaning "locust" or "grasshopper," and *asana*, meaning a yoga posture. In the final stage, the asana resembles a locust with its legs raised, hence the name.

Technique: Lie flat on your stomach with your legs straight and feet together.Place your arms alongside your body, palms facing downward.Rest your chin on the floor and keep your neck relaxed.Inhale deeply and raise your legs as high as possible, keeping them straight and together.Simultaneously lift your chest slightly off the ground, maintaining balance on your abdomen.Keep

your arms firmly pressed against the ground for support.Hold the posture as long as comfortable while breathing normally.Exhale and slowly bring your legs and chest back to the floor.Relax in the prone position for a few breaths before repeating.

Benefits:

- Strengthens the back muscles and improves posture.
- Enhances flexibility and strength in the spine.
- Stimulates abdominal organs and improves digestion.
- Relieves lower back pain and sciatica.
- Helps reduce fat accumulation around the abdomen, hips, and thighs.

Precaution: Avoid this asana if you have severe back orspinal injuries.Not suitable for individuals with hernia, ulcers, or recent abdominal surgery.Pregnant women and those with severe neck pain or headaches should avoid this posture.

7.3.2:Dhanurasana



The word Dhanurasana has been derived from the Sanskrit word धनुरासन. It consists of two words: *dhanur*, meaning "bow," and *asana*, meaning "yoga posture." In the final stage, the asana resembles the shape of a bow, hence the name.

Technique: Lie flat on your stomach, arms at your sides, and legs extended.Bend your knees and bring your heels close to your buttocks.Reach back with your hands and grab your ankles firmly. Inhale deeply and lift your chest, head, and thighs off the ground while pulling your ankles upward.Your body should form the shape of a bow, with the torso as the bow and the arms as the string.Look straight ahead and hold this position while breathing normally.Exhale and gently release the pose by lowering your chest and thighs to the ground.Return to the starting position by releasing your ankles.

Benefits:

• Strengthens the back and abdominal muscles, improving posture.
• Stimulates the organs of the abdomen, helping indigestion.
• Relieves backache and menstrual discomfort.
• Improves flexibility of the spine, hips, and shoulders.

Precaution: People with high blood pressure, hernia, severe back pain, or neck injuries should avoid this asana.Pregnant women and individuals with recent abdominal surgeries should refrain from practicing this pose.Those with migraines or severe headaches should practice with caution.

7.3.2: Naukasana



The word Naukasana has been derived from the Sanskrit word नौकासन. It consists of two words, *nauka* and *asana*. The meaning of *nauka* is a boat, and

asana is a yoga posture. In the final stage, the asana resembles the shape of a ship, hence the name.

Technique: Lie flat on your back with your legs and arms by your sides.Keep your arms and legs straight and inhale deeply.As you exhale, lift your chest, head, arms, and legs off the ground simultaneously.Keep your gaze forward and balance your body on your hips.Ensure that your arms and legs are parallel to each other and the floor.Hold the position as you are long as comfortable while breathing normally.To release the pose, exhale and slowly lower your back, arms, and legs to the ground.

Benefits:

• Strengthens abdominal muscles and tones the core.
• Improves the flexibility of the spine and strengthens the back.
• Enhances digestion and stimulatesabdominal organs.
• Helps reduce belly fat and improveposture.

Precaution: Avoid if you have severe back pain, hernia, or spinalinjuries.Not suitable for people with low blood pressure or recent abdominal surgery.Pregnant women should avoid this asana.

7.4 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, standing, sitting, forward bending, backward bending, twisting, inverted, and balancing postures.
- Regular asanas enhance physical health, mental clarity, and spiritual awareness.
- Along with pranayama (breathing techniques) and meditation, asanas form the foundation of a holistic yogic lifestyle.

7.5: FURTHER READINGS:

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

7.6: ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS:

Ans to Qn1. Shalabhasana, or Locust Pose, strengthens the lower back, glutes, and core. To perform it, lie on your stomach with your legs extended and arms by your sides. Inhale and lift your chest, arms, and legs off the floor simultaneously, engaging your core and squeezing your glutes. Hold for 20-30 seconds and breathe deeply before lowering your body.

Ans to Qn 2. Dhanurasana is a backbend where your body forms the shape of a bow. To perform it, lie on your stomach, bend your knees, and grasp your ankles. Inhale and lift your chest and thighs, pulling your feet toward your head, creating a bow shape with your body. Hold for 20-30 seconds.

Ans to Qn 3. Naukasana, or Boat Pose, is a core-strengthening pose. Sit on the floor, lift your legs, and lean back while keeping your back straight. Extend your arms forward, forming a V-shape with your body. Hold for 20-30 seconds, engaging your core.

7.7 MODEL QUESTION:

Q1. Write in detail about Shalabhasana
Q2. Write down the techniques and benefits of Dhanurasana.
Q3. Write in detailaboutNaukasana.
Q4. Write two benefits of shalabhasana.
Q5. Write two benefits of Dhanurasana.
Q6. Write two benefits of Naukasana.

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