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Critical analysis on physiological understanding of *Indriya*

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ABSTRACT

According to *Ayurveda* classic texts *Indriyas* (Sense organ) are the apparatus to attain knowledge for *Atma*. These are the tools for obtaining knowledge. The *Gyanendriya* (sensory faculties) present inside body conjoins with the *Mana* (mind) which is unites with *Atma* and thereafter knowledge is perceived. Lastly the *Buddhi* (intellect) aspect of the respective *Indriya* knowledge is gained. *Indriya* are *Panchabautika*. Each *Gyanendriya* has dominance of one *Mahabhuta* and particular *Indriya* receives only *Guna* of that *Mahabhuta* in the form of stimulus. This is the reason behind reception of specific sensation by its respective *Indriya*. E.g., *Prithvi Mahabhuta* dominates *Ghranendriya* and receives knowledge of *Gandha*. Considering the above said, present paper focuses upon critical analysis on physiological aspects of *Gyanendriyas*. Understanding the concept of *Gyanendriya* is an important step in learning of *Kriya Sharir*. It enables scholars of *Ayurveda* to learn normal physiology of *Indriya* (senses) to diagnose any illness related to it.

Key words: *Indriya, Gyanendriya, Buddhi, Panchamahabhuta.*

INTRODUCTION

According to *Ayurveda* *Indriyas* (sense organ) are the apparatus to attain knowledge for *Atma*. These are the tools for obtaining knowledge. In other words, we can say that knowledge (sensory or motor) which is perceived, analyzed, given or received by *Atma* and the tool which is helpful in reception of the same is termed as *Indriya*.^[1] *Acharya Charaka* described *Indriya* as basic instrument in differentiating the living and non-living matters.^[2]

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According to *Ayurveda* there are total eleven type of *Indriyas* are present in *Sharir*. They are *Gyanendriya* (*Chakshu, Srotra, Rasana, Sparshana, Grana*), *Karmendriya* (*Vaak, Upastha, Pani, Pada, Payu.*) and *Ubhayendriya* (*Mana*).^[3]

Indriya are *Panchabautika*. Each *Gyanendriya* has dominance of one *Mahabhuta* and particular *Indriya* receives only *Guna* of that *Mahabhuta* in the form of stimulus.^[4] *Acharya Sankhya* (philosopher and sage) opined that *Indriyas* are formed by *Trividha Ahamkara* i.e., *Satvik, Rajasik and Tamasik Ahamkara*.^[5] Although *Indriyas* are composed of five elements still specific *Mahabhuta* dominates precise *Indriya*. This is the reason behind reception of specific sensation by respective *Indriya*, e.g., *Prithvi Mahabhuta* dominates *Ghranendriya* and receives knowledge of *Gandha*.

Panchabautika components of *Panchagyanendriya*^[6]

<i>Indriya</i>	<i>Guna</i>	<i>Mahabhuta</i>
<i>Chakshu</i>	<i>Teja</i>	<i>Agni</i>
<i>Shrotra</i>	<i>Shabda</i>	<i>Akasha</i>

Jihva	Rasa	Ap
Twak	Sparsha	Vayu
Grana	Gandha	pratvi

Indriya Panchapanchaka

The *Gyanendriya* (sensory faculties) present inside body conjoins with the *Mana* (mind) which is synchronous with *Atma* (soul) and thereafter knowledge is perceived. Lastly the *Buddhi* (intellect) aspect of the respective *Indriya* knowledge is gained. All this learning and intellectual process needs an instrument to gain the stable knowledge of the same which is *Indriya*. For this instance, *Acharya Charaka* has mentioned the intellectual aspect depending on the five *Gyanendriya* present inside body which is also of five different types. This is termed as *Indriya Panchapanchaka*. It includes *Indriya*, *Indriya Dravya*, *Indriya Adhithana*, *Indriya Artha* and *Indriya Buddhi*.^[7]

Indriya	Indriya Dravya	Indriya Adhithana	Indriya Artha	Indriya Buddhi
Chakshu	Jyoti (Teja)	Netra (Eyes)	Roopa (vision)	Roopa Buddhi (Visual centers in brain)
Shrotra	Kha (Akasha)	Karna (Ears)	Shabda (Sound)	Shabda Buddhi (Auditory centers in brain)
Rasana	Apa (Jala)	Jihva (Tongue)	Rasa (Taste)	Rasa Buddhi (Centre for gustatory sense)
Sparshana	Vaayu	Twak (Skin)	Sparsha (Touch)	Sparsha Buddhi (Centre for tactile sense)
Grana	Bhu	Nasika	Gandha	Gandha

	(Pruthvi)	(Nose)	(Smell)	<i>Buddhi</i> (Olfactory centre in brain)
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Center of sense organs and their tracts

As the sunrays are connected with sun, in the same manner *Indriyas* connected with their *Srotas* with *Indriya Buddi* present in the *Shira* (brain).^[8]

Pancha Indriya Buddhi is representing association cortices of the brain. *Chakshu*, *Shrotra*, and *Sparshana Buddhi* represents visual, auditory, and somatosensory association areas of the brain, respectively, whereas *Ghraana Buddhi* denotes the functions of piriform cortex, amygdale, and orbito frontal regions of the brain. *Rasana buddhi* represents the gustatory functions of insula/operculum/anterior temporal area of the brain. The functions of the common integrative area and prefrontal cortex or frontal association area clearly denote the functions of "*Buddhi*" as explained in *Ayurvedic* classics. The pathological states of *Indriya Buddhis* cause different types of "*Buddhi Vibramsha*".^[9]

Dhamani related to Indriya

Acharya Sushruta has mentioned the *Dhamanis* related to *Indriya*. There are two types of *Dhamanis*.^[10]

- *Urdvaga Dhamani* - related to perception of five sensory stimulus i.e., *Shabda*, *Sparsha*, *Rupa*, *Rasa* and *Gandha*.
- *Thiryag Dhamani* - touch through skin i.e., perception of general sensations.

DISCUSSION

Indriyas (sense organs) are just like the door from which the sensory stimuli are received. *Ayurveda* has described two types of *Indriyas* – *Gyanendriya* (sensory faculties) and *Karmendriya* (motor faculties). *Gyanendriyas* are helpful in sensory process and *Karmendriyas* in motor process. Out of five *Gyanendriya*, *Shrotra* (auditory sense organ) and *Chakshu* (visual sense organ) are the most

important in learning process. Perception of other sense organs, i.e, *Ghraana* (olfactory), *Rasanaa* (gustatory), and *Twak* (tactile) are stored as *Anubhoota* (memory).

Process of perception of stimulus

Initially, during the process of perception, the desire for knowledge comes in *Atma*, which is then transferred to *Manas*. *Manas* further in association with *Indriya* perceive the respective *Indriyaartha* or the object of perception. This perception is purely mental in the beginning (primary information processing). The practical advantages or disadvantages are ascertained thereafter. The *Buddhi* (intellect), which determines the specific properties of the object, impels an individual to speak or act intelligently (complex processing of information/cognition/higher mental functions). Thus *Atma*, *Manas*, *Indriya*, and *Indriyaartha* are basic four components required for perception. In "*Buddhi Vibhrama*" (functional impairment of intellect), the person will not be able to judge the things properly.



Regulation of function of Indriya

- All the *Indriyas* are regulated by *Manas*, as *Indriyabhigraha* is one of the functions of *Manas*.
- *Vata Dosh* also regulates the functions of *Indriya*

Functional regulation of Indriya by Tridosha

1. Vata Dosh

- a) *Pranavata* - regulates *Buddhi*, *Hrudaya*, *Indriya*, *Chitta* and *Drik*.
- b) *Udanavata* - performs physiological functions like *Smriti*, *Vak Pravrat* etc.
- c) *Vyanavata* - related with taste sensations, it performs both the activity i.e., sensory and motor activity.

2. Pitta Dosh

- a) *Sadhaka Pitta* - it helps in functions of *Manas*, achieving desire functions.

- b) *Alochaka Pitta* - responsible for *Rupa Grahana* i.e. perception of vision.
- c) *Brajaka Pitta* - related with skin helps in touch sensation.

3. Kapha Dosh

- a) *Tarpaka* - Provides nutrition to part of *Indriya* located in *Shira*
- b) *Bodhaka* - helps for *Rasanendriya*.

Role of Indriya in homeostasis and health

Balance functional state of *Indriya* is important to determine Health and Disease as per Ayurvedic definition of health. Along with optimal *Dosha Dhātu & Mala*, the *Atma Indriya & Mana* should be in optimal or pleasing condition. The *Mana* and *Indriya* are important determinant of health. *Acharya Charaka* has explained that main cause of the disease is *Asatmenendriya Samyoga*, *Prajnaparadha* and *Parinama*. Unwholesome nature, duration or point of contact of *Indriya* with its respective *Indriyaartha* leads to disorders related to *Indriya*. The actual wealth or richness of an individual is decided who have overcome and controlled own *Indriya* (senses).

CONCLUSION

Understanding concept of *Gyanendriya* is an important step in learning of *Kriya Sharir*. It enables scholars of *Ayurveda* to learn normal physiology of *Indriya* (senses) to diagnose any illness related to it. Functions of *Pancha Indriya Buddhis* resemble with the functions of association cortices of the brain and the pathological states of *Indriya Buddhis* denote different types of *Buddhi Vibramsha*. *Indriya* are components of cognitive faculties responsible for perception of knowledge after coming in contact with the *Indriyaartha* as working stimulus from external environment. All sense organs play important role in every human beings' life one should protect these to lead healthy, happy and long life.

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