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Enlightening the Principles of Traditional Learning Methods through Ayurveda

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ABSTRACT

Traditional knowledge is employed to mean knowledge, innovations and practices. It is valid and necessary, and awaits its currently relevant wider application for human benefit. Ayurveda is nectar of Indian traditional knowledge gives a great contribution for well being of humanities. The seed of knowledge of Ayurveda have embedded in *Veda*. The ultimate goal of Ayurveda is also attaining wisdom as in philosophies of Indian system. The three canonical texts of classical Ayurveda *Charak Samhita*, *Susruta Samhita* and *Astang Hridayam* revealed a multidisciplinary ways of learning and as per *Acharya Charaka Adhayan* (study), *Adhyapan* (teaching) and *Sambhasa* (participating debate). *Susruta Samhita* exhorts that knowledge of medicinal plants should be gained from of cowherds, hermits, hunters, forest dwellers and those who gather plants of forest for the food. On the importance of studying other sciences, opinion of *Susruta* is if a person studied one science only, will not be able to arrive at a correct decision, hence we should be known to many sciences and reading many sciences but unable to interpret its meaning is just like a donkey carrying a bundle of sandal wood. Ultimate goal of every knowledge is attaining wisdom. Principles like *Pargyapradha*, *Achar Rasayan*, *Sadvritta* are described in *Ayurvedic* scriptures which helps in attaining pure knowledge.

Key words: *Adhyayana*, *Adhyapana*, *Sambhasa*, *Achar Rasayan*, *Traditional knowledge*.

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda is nectar of Indian traditional knowledge and always gives a great contribution for the well being of humanities. Traditional knowledge is employed to mean knowledge, innovations and practices. It is valid and necessary, and awaits its currently relevant wider application for human benefit. *Vedas* are mother of all universal knowledge *Sanskrit* is mother for all universal languages, Ayurveda is a life science, a philosophy and

a healing science. The ultimate goal of Ayurveda is also attaining wisdom like all other philosophies of Indian system. *Acharya Charaka* says that a wise consider the entire universe as their preceptor it is the unwise who consider it to be their enemies.^[1]

In previous Era, vast knowledge could be summarized and transmitted to next generation as *Shruti* i.e., heard knowledge. In *Samhita* period (200 BC - 400 AD), *Guru-Shishya Parampara / Gurukula* system of education was main way of teaching. A teacher or *Guru* used to live with his family in a place called as *Gurukula* and trained the students

Before the learning (*Adhyayan*) process is begun, the disciple should examine the *Shastra* and *Acharya* and the one with the highest qualities should be selected.^[2]

1. Examination of the *Shastra* (Treatise)
2. Examination of the *Acharya* (Teacher)
3. Method of learning/obtaining knowledge

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AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

AIM

To review various learning methods for obtaining knowledge used in Ayurveda.

OBJECTIVES

1. To understand knowledge acquiring modes of *Samhita*.
2. To understand the basic concept of traditional learning.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The ancient learning methods available in Ayurvedic classical books were examined and literature regarding modern learning methods were also studied and collected from various books and internet. The methodologies of learning from both streams of knowledge were compared and critically analyzed.

Ancient Teaching and Learning Skills

In Ancient India, the learning of individual was based on "Gurukula" system of education which was also followed in Ayurveda.

Acharya Charaka describes three methods of obtaining knowledge:

1. *Adhayan* (study)
2. *Adhyapan* (teaching).
3. *Sambhasa* (participating debate).

Beside this *Acharya Charaka* also said that for a wise man entire universe is act as a preceptor. According to *Vagbhata, Patha, Bodh, Anusthan* are the stages of any learning process.^[3] This shows that in ancient system of teaching or learning there was more emphasis on meaningful learning of the subject' and not only cramming without trying to understand its implication. As we know *Lord Dhanwantri* is the chief treatise of its surgical school and etymologically *Dhanwantri* itself signifies full expertise in surgery.

Adhyayan

The learner should be healthy and solely devoted to study, get up early in the morning or in the last quarter of the night, perform ablution and offer prayers to the

gods, sages, teachers etc. and then sit comfortably in a clean place. Recite the sutra orally repeat his recitation with a view of removing his own deficiency.^[4]

According to *Vagbhata, Patha, Bodha, Anusthan* are the stages of any learning process. Out of these *Paatha* means 'to make by heart' likewise repeated reading or reciting *Shlokas*. *Bodha* is the second stage of learning wherein the *Shishya* is empowered by the Guru to analyze the meaning of the verses with *Purva-Prasna Sambhandha (Arthasharya)*. *Anushthana* means to follow the methods/guidelines as quoted in texts or do as directed i.e. the implementation or application of conceived meaning.^[5]

Prabhasan

Acharya Sushruta says that even after anything studied; if it is not properly interpreted in its meaning then it will only be causing exertion just like the donkey carrying a load of sandal wood.^[6]

Adhyapana

Charak Samhita is a series of lectures. *Maharshi Atreya* delivered lectures and his six disciples listened to it carefully. Every chapter of it starts with the word *Vyakhyasyamah* means to tell, to deliver a thought. A student asks the *Prashana* (question) and the *Prasnartham* should be studied according to - *Vakyasah, Vakyarthasah* and *Arthavayavasah*.^[7]

Arunadutta commentator of *Ashtanga Hrudaya* explain the teaching methods beautifully. According to him teacher should explain every verse with following points.^[8]

- *Padatah* - Word to word.
- *Arthatah* - With proper meaning of the word.
- *Prayojanatah* - Utility according to context
- *Chodyatah* - Doubts/questions
- *Pariharatah* - Clarification of the doubts.
- *Sambandhatah* - Relation with the aim.
- *Abhidheyatah* - Subject matter to be described.

Learning is the process of acquiring new knowledge or skills by study, instruction, or experience. Learning is

the precondition for the brain to store experiences and use those experiences in our actions to gain benefits and prevent damage. In our ancient science of Ayurveda for obtaining knowledge the important factor described is *Buddhi*. *Buddhi* consists of three important component; *Dhee*, *Dhriti*, *Smruti*.

Causative factors of memory

Eight factors that bring about a good memory:

- Knowledge of cause.
- Knowledge of form
- Knowledge of similarity
- Knowledge of contrast
- Concentration of mind
- Repetition
- Attainment of metaphysical
- Subsequent partial communication of an event.

Sadvritta and Achara Rasayana

Achara Rasayana is a unique concept in Ayurveda that implies ethical, moral, and benevolent conduct: truth, nonviolence, personal and public cleanliness, mental and personal hygiene, devotion, compassion, and a yogic lifestyle. These behaviors bring about rejuvenation in the body-mind system.

To achieve wisdom that is true knowledge regarding life both *Sadvritt* and *Achara Rasayan* play a key role in every one's life.

DISCUSSION

As per Bloom's taxonomy there are three learning domains - Cognitive domain (Knowledge), Affective domain (Attitude) and Psychomotor domain (Skill). Cognitive domain deals with knowledge and development of intellectual skills, Affective domain deals with moral values, emotions, and attitude and Psychomotor domain deals with physical movement, co-ordination and use of the motor skill areas. All these three domains are very important in a student's life. Wisdom is the ability to discern and judge which aspect of the knowledge are true, lasting, and applicable to your life.

Sambhasha is the most powerful weapon to increase intellect as per *Acharya Charak*

Benefits of Sambhasha

- *Gyana Vriddhi* - enhancement of knowledge
- *Vaak Shakti Vriddhi* - mastery over speech and vocabulary
- *Suyashas* - popularity, fame
- *Vishaya Spashtataa* - clarity of unclear topics and subjects leading to precise and comprehensive knowledge.

CONCLUSION

Adhyayan (learning/study) and *Adhyapan* (teaching) and *Tadvidyasambhasha* (discussion) are important aspect in teaching learning progress. It may help to improve knowledge, decision making skill, co-ordination, interest in topic and also to improve the level of confidence newer teaching learning techniques like delivering lecture, helping students to learn, handouts, notes, mini quiz, brain storming activities were also conducted in ancient era for obtaining knowledge. *Sadvritt*, *Achara Rasayan* and *Lok Purush Samya Siddhanta* are the ancient principals of achieving spirituality through which a person can achieve *Moksha* that is ultimate wisdom of life.

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