

Pramana: An Ayurvedic examination method

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In Ayurveda true knowledge is referred as Prama and the means to acquire knowledge are known as Pramana. Pramana Vigyana is defined by Ayurveda as a scientific research tool. Ayurvedic scientific methods are enhanced by these Pramanas, which are useful for diagnosing ailments and patients. Ayurveda uses the term Pareeksha in place of Pramana. Pareeksha establishes an object's reality by thoroughly examine. As stated by Acharya Charak the existent or non-existent of things can be investigated by four Pramana i.e., Aptopadesha, Pratyaksha, Anumana and Yukti. Pramanas play a significant role in accurate diagnosis. The purpose is to investigate the significance of Pramanas as they are described in Ayurvedic literature in relation to disease assessment.

Keywords: Pramana, Aptopadesha, Pratyaksh, Anumana, Yukti

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Introduction

Pramana is the means by which actual knowledge is perceived. The word *Pramana* comes from the words "Ma" dhatu, "Pra" Upsarga, and "Lyut" Pratyaya. *Pramana*, *Sadhana* (source), *Gyana* (knowledge), *Pareeksha* (examination), and *Uplabdhi* (availability) are synonymous terms. There is great historical relevance to the idea of *Pramanas*. Various *Pramanas* were described by numerous philosophers. It serves as the cornerstone for knowledge acquisition and validation. In *Ayurveda*, the term *Pareeksha* is used in place of *Pramana*. [1] *Pareeksha* is the method by which a legitimate understanding of the object's status is investigated and cognised. *Pareeksha* establishes an object's reality by thoroughly examine. According to "Rogamadou Pareekshet Tathonantaram Aoushadam," it is crucial to fully understand *Roga* and *Rogibala* before initiating any treatment plans. [2] Acharya Charaka assert that things are either exist (*Sat/Bhava*) or non-exist (*Asat/Aabhava*) and *Aptopadesha* (Authoritative statement), *Pratyaksha* (Direct Perception), *Anumana* (Inference), *Yukti* (Rationale – logical reasoning) are the four *Pramana* that can be used to study them. [3] *Aptopadesha* is the sources for the theoretical knowledge in this universe. Thus, *Aptopadesha* becomes the first means to acquire knowledge. *Pratyaksha Pramana* corresponds to direct perception of knowledge. Whereas *Anumana Pramana* pertains to inferential knowledge. For instance, Practitioners use *Yukti* to design personalized treatments based on the patient's unique constitution (*Prakriti*) and imbalances. Additionally understanding of these *Pramana* - *Aptopadesha*, *Pratyaksha*, and *Anumana* is necessary for a comprehensive understanding of ailment. [4] An *Ayurveda* practitioner must strike a delicate balance between the fundamentals of *Ayurveda* and contemporary diagnostic instruments. *Pramanas* can play a significant role in the development of these Ayurvedic diagnostic techniques.

Materials and Methods

Various *Ayurvedic* treatise, their commentaries; previous research works and published articles various research portals is explored and thoroughly studied to present a comprehensive analysis of scope of *Pramana Vigyana* in *Ayurvedic* diagnostic method.

There are four primary types of *Pramana* in *Ayurveda*:

***Aptopadesha* (Authoritative Testimony):** *Apta* means learned; the precepts of learned are known as '*Aptopadesha*' which is taken as a *Pramana*. Acharya Charaka has described *Aptas* as persons having pure, obstruction free and doubtless knowledge. They are free from attachment & aversion. They always speak truth. The words and works of *Aptas* form *Aptopadesha Pramana*. [5] Ancient Ayurvedic texts like *Charaka Samhita*, *Sushruta Samhita* and *Ashtanga Hridaya* etc. and teachings from experienced practitioners are used as authoritative sources to guide, diagnosis and treatment. These texts provide time-tested remedies and principles that are adapted to modern contexts. Practitioners often consult these texts for insights into ailments, formulations, treatments, and the properties of herbs.

***Pratyaksha* (Direct Perception):** A mental faculty instantaneously manifested as a result of the proximity of soul, sense faculties, mind & the object is known as *Pratyaksha* and source of acquiring such knowledge is called as *Pratyaksha Pramana*. [6] *Pratyaksha Pramana* is of two types: *Laukika Pratyaksha* and *Alaukika Pratyaksha*. *Laukika Pratyaksha* is the ordinary perception belonging to the actual world. This involves acquiring knowledge directly through the senses. Whereas *Alaukika Pratyaksha* is the extraordinary perception based on transcendental contact. [7] Practitioners use direct observation to assess a patient's physical and mental condition.

The *Bahya Laukika* (external) is the perception of the outer world by the five sense helps in direct perception of *Shabda*, *Sparsha*, *Rupa* & *Gandha* except *Rasa*. These five varieties of external perception are-

A) *Ghranaja* (Olfactory perception) The sensation of the *Gandha* (smell) through the *Ghranendriyae*. the organ of olfaction, Nose. Assessing the patient's body odour like acetone ('pear drops' or nail varnish remover) in Diabetic ketoacidosis, ammonia-like in hepatic failure, mousy in uraemia, Halitosis in suppurative lung diseases and in gingivitis due to poor dental hygiene. [8]

B) *Rasana* (Gustatory perception) Observation of *Rasa* (taste) perceived through *Rasanendriya*, tongue which is organ of gustation.

C) *Chaksusaja* (Visual perception) - The perception of the *Darshan*(vision) through the *Darsanendriya*, eye, the organ of vision. It includes inspection. Assessing the patient's overall appearance, built, complexion, posture, GALS (gait, arms, legs, spine), nutrition, obesity, oedema, pallor, cyanosis, nails, eyes, lips, tongue, teeth, gums, buccal mucous membrane, tonsils, tremors, scars, body hairs, skin lesion. It also helps in the assessment of the signs of the disease and subsequent diagnosis. The presence of the swan neck deformity in rheumatoid arthritis. Mask face, pill rolling tremor in Parkinson, Monkey face in marasmus, moon face in Kwashiorkor.

D) *Sparsanaja* (Tactile sensation) The perception of the touch by the *Sparsendriya*, skin which is the organ of tactile sensation. It includes palpation, percussion. Temperature, oedema, texture of skin i.e., soft, hard, smooth, rough, *Nadi-pareeksha* (pulse diagnosis), lymph node enlargement, tumour, masses, tenderness, rigidity, organomegaly.

E) *Srotaja* (Auditory perception) - This is the *Shabda*(hearing) perception which is done by the auditory organ which is the ear. It includes auscultation. Assessing the patient's speech, breath sounds, crepitus, bowel sounds, bruits.[9]

Ashtavidha Pareeksha is also based on above *Pratyaksha Pareeksha*, *Nadi* and *Sparsh Pareeksha* can be done by *Sparshendriya*, *Sabda Pareeksha* by *Sroteindriya*, *Mala*, *Mutra*, *Jivha*, *Drik*, *Aakriti Pareeksha* by *Chakshuindriya*.

Abhyantara Laukika (internal) - Perception accomplished through the inner sense *Mana/psyche* is termed as the *Manasa Pratyaksa* or the *Atma Pratyaksa*. The perception of the emotions and feelings like the pleasure, displeasure, attachment and detachment etc.

Anumana (Inference): Inferring knowledge of unknown from the known facts is called as *Anumana*. It is the indirect knowledge or logical conclusion based on reasoning. The knowledge perceived after perception of *Pratyaksha* & *Aptopdesha* is called *Anumana*.

The source of *Anumiti* is called *Anumana*. *Anumana Pramana* is of two types – a) *Swarthanumana* is the cause of assumption of logical inference in one's own mind. b) *Pararthanumana* is used to impart information to others.

It is demonstrative inference which refers to demonstrating the self-inferred knowledge to others with the help of *Panchavayavivakya* (5 components of reasoning). *Panchavayavivakya* contains *Pratigya* (Proposition), *Hetu* (Reason or Cause), *Udaharana* (Example), *Upanaya* (Justification), *Nigamana* (Conclusion).[10] Logical reasoning is applied to deduce disease and underlying cause of it, based on observed symptoms. Some of the examples of the application of *Anumana* in diagnostics are

Pathological manifestation Inference

Ruja (Pain) *Vata Dusti* (Vitiation of *Vata*)

Daha (Burning) *Pitta Dusti* (Vitiation of *Pitta*)

Sopha (Swelling) *Kapha Dusti* (Vitiation of *Kapha*)

Prabha Haani (loss of lustre) *Pitta Ksaya* (Diminution of *Pitta*)

Prakritianyathabhava (Alteration in the innate nature) by *Arista Lakshana* (Imminent death), *Viparita Gunnecha* (Desire for substances having opposite qualities) by *Dosha Chaya* (Accumulation of *Doshas*), digestive fire by the patient's power of digestion, strength by his capacity for exercise, sense-organs like ear etc. by their amity of perception, mind by the power of concentration, understanding by the purposeful nature of the action, passion by the strength of attachment, infatuation by the lack of understanding, anger from actions of violence, grief by hopelessness, joy by happiness, pleasure from the sense of satisfaction, fear by depression, memory by the power of recollection, disease with latent symptoms by testing with therapeutic or provocative medication, the degree of morbidity by the intensity of provocative factors, the imminence of death by the severity of the fatal prognostic signs, the expectation of recovery from whole-some inclinations, the clarity of mind from the absence of disorder, the hard or soft-bowelled condition, the dreams seen, the cravings, the likes and dislikes, pleasure and pain by interrogating the patient.[11]

Yukti (Logical Reasoning and experimental knowledge): The knowledge which sees the things produced by combination of multiple causative factors is *Yukti*. It is true irrespective of times and helps in achieving the three objects (*Dharma, Artha and Kama*).[12] *Yukti* involves the integration of reasoning, experience, and creativity to address complex situations.

Yukti helps the practitioner understand the intricate interplay of various factors (like *dosha* vitiation, time, place, individual constitution, and lifestyle) that contribute to the manifestation of a disease. It helps to integrate knowledge from different sources and disciplines within *Ayurveda*. This enables moving beyond surface-level symptoms and delving into the underlying cause or etiopathogenesis to arrive at a complete understanding of the process of the disease. The correct application also determines the right dosage, route of administration, and timing of the therapy for the best possible outcome. *Yukti* helps in combining different herbs and techniques to create innovative solutions.

Discussion

In *Ayurvedic* education, *Pramanas* are taught as foundational tools for understanding & applying *Ayurvedic* principles. They help students bridge gap between theoretical knowledge & practical application. In recent practices, ***Pramanas*** continue to play vital role in ensuring that treatments & methodologies are both effective & evidence-based.

Philosophical Roots: *Ayurvedic* scholars' scientific and rational approach is reflected in the *Pramanas*, which have their roots in Indian philosophy and were adopted into *Ayurveda* to guarantee that knowledge regarding health, illness, and treatment was correct and trustworthy.

Guiding Framework: Ancient physicians used *Pramanas* such as *Pratyaksha* (direct perception), *Anumana* (inference), *Aptopadesha* (authoritative testimony), and *Yukti* (logical reasoning) to observe, analyze, and interpret the complexities of the human body and natural phenomena. Using this framework, they were able to create logical and efficient medical procedures.

Research and Diagnosis: *Pramanas* were instrumental in the research methodology of *Ayurveda*. They provided tools for systematic investigation, diagnosis, and treatment planning, ensuring that medical practices were evidence-based and logical.

Preservation of Knowledge: By relying on authoritative testimony (*Aptopadesha*), ancient scholars ensured that the wisdom of *Ayurveda* was preserved and passed down through generations. This method also helped in integrating knowledge from various sources into a unified system.

Adaptation to Modern Practices: The principles of *Pramanas* continue to influence modern *Ayurvedic* research and practice, showcasing their timeless relevance.

Conclusion

These *Pramanas* are not only used for diagnosing and treating diseases but also serve as tools for research and teaching in *Ayurveda*. The diagnosis of the disease and ascertaining the condition of the patient, the treatment cannot be undertaken pragmatically. It is noteworthy that all the investigations are based on the authoritative statements as they are the guiding principles of the diagnosis. The change of complexion of the body and its entities like the faeces and urine play an important part in the assessment of the *Dosha* vitiation. In addition to this, the laboratory investigations are included under *Anumana* as the results are depicted as inference and the clinical findings are correlated to come to a definite conclusion. Customized treatments, formulation of medicines are achieved by *Yukti*. *Nidan Panchak* of the disease again involves all the three *Pareeksa Vidhi* and consequently the proper diagnosis the disease leads to the planning of the appropriate treatment. Disease wrongly examined, explained and diagnose may confuse the physician. Therefore, the *Ayurveda chikitsa* depends on the *Pareeksha Vidhi* relies on the *Pramana Vigyana*. These applications demonstrate how *Ayurveda* remains relevant and adaptable in the modern world while staying true to its ancient roots. Each *Pramana* complements the others, creating a holistic and systematic approach to understanding and treating health issues in *Ayurveda*.

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