

CLINICAL IMPORTANCE OF NIDANA PANCHAKA – A REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

Nidana panchaka is a great tool for diagnosis of diseases in Ayurveda. The Ayurvedic diagnostic approach is of two types comprising of *Rogi Pariksha* and *Roga Pariksha* separately. Among them *Roga Pariksha* gives us the complete knowledge about a disease starting from the etiological aspects to the actual manifestation of disease. In Ayurveda there are five means of diagnosis i.e. *Nidana Panchaka* namely *Nidana*, *Purvarupa*, *Rupa*, *Upasaya* and *Samprapti* which are included under *Roga Pariksha*. Knowledge of *Nidana Panchaka* is not only for diagnosis of disease it also gives information about prognosis, treatment and differential diagnosis of the disease. Each component of *Nidana Panchaka* helps a physician for better understanding of disease process and treatment. A proper diagnosis forms the basis for appropriate treatment where as ignorance of disease or improper diagnosis leads to haphazard. So diagnosis of the disease comes first and foremost.

Keywords: *Nidana Panchaka*, Ayurveda, Clinical diagnosis, *Roga Pariksha*, Ayurvedic diagnostic tools.

INTRODUCTION

The science of Ayurveda originated with the need to understand and cure diseases and to maintain the health of the human being. This basic Ayurveda tenet is best explained in the Sanskrit verse "*Swasthasya swasthya rakshanama aturasya vikara prashamanam cha*"¹. For the completion of this tenet, *Hetu* (cause), *Linga* (symptoms) and *Aushadha* (medicine) i.e. concept of *Trisutra* is also mentioned in Ayurveda². Out of these three *sutras* two are meant for diagnosis of disease and the third one is meant for treatment purpose. That means in Ayurveda, *Roga Pariksha* is not only important rather it is the foremost part for further success results. The correct diagnosis of a disease is

essential in curing the disease. Acharya Charaka has said that before the planning of treatment, the correct diagnosis is of a disease is very much essential³. That means a physician should examine the disease thoroughly before prescribing medicine.

In Ayurvedic classical texts, the only available means of diagnosis were *pramanas* i.e. *Aptopadesha pramana*⁴, *Pratyaksha pramana* (includes five sense organs i.e. Eyes, Ears, Nose, Skin Tongue), *Anumana pramana* and *Yuktipramana*. These methods used for the understanding the *Dosha*, *Dooshya* and site of *Dosha-Dooshya sammurchhna*⁵. Today with the advancement in the Medical field, the diagnosis of the

disease can be done in the beginning and the progress of the disease can be stopped. But sometimes the patient can't afford the costly imaging techniques like CT scan, MRI etc. Thus we have to know the diagnosis according to Ayurveda which helps in reducing the burden on the suffering patients⁶. In Ayurveda there are five means of diagnosis (*Nidana Panchaka*) namely *Nidana* (cause or etiology), *Purvarupa* (Prodromal symptoms or Premonitory symptoms), *Rupa* (Specific sign and symptoms or clinical features), *Upasaya* (Relieving and Aggravating factors), *Samprapti* (Pathogenesis)⁷.

The physician who without properly diagnosing the disease starts its treatment succeeds by chance even if he is well-versed in management with drugs. The one, who knows the character of the disease, is well versed in all the therapeutic measures and is acquainted with the factors such as place, time etc. succeeds undoubtedly⁸. These five elements collectively or selectively help in making the accurate diagnosis. By knowing the concept of *Nidana Panchaka* physician can diagnose the disease at an earlier stage and hence forth can plan for the treatment well there by preventing further complications.

Aim & Objectives:-

1. To understand the concept of *Nidana Panchaka* from the available ancient Ayurvedic texts.
2. To understand the clinical importance of *Nidana Panchaka*.

A) Nidana (Etiological factors):

Nidana is the causative factors of disease. The word '*Nidana*' is used in two different contexts i.e. etiological factors and second is diagnosis of diseases. For example- The etiological factors describe for the *swasa roga* are *vidahi*, *guru*, *vishtambhi* *bhojana* along with *raja*, *dhuma* as an environmental factors. So these are the *vyadhijanak nidana* (etiological factors) for the disease and the diagnosis is *swasa roga* (*vyadhi bodhak nidana*).

Clinical importance of Nidana

Knowledge of Nidana helps in identifying the causes of the disease-

If the *Nidana* is not identified we can't isolate them. If the causative factors are in contact with the body for a longer time, the disease caused by them keeps worsening with time and become incurable.

Nidana gives a clue towards the chronicity of the disorder-

E.g. If the patient having liver cirrhosis has a history of consumption of alcohol for long time, we can speculate that the disease is a chronic one and has got stubborn (depending on the periodicity of drinking alcohol).

Knowledge of Nidana helps in making a correct diagnosis-

In case of uncertainty about the diagnosis of any disorder, analysis of *Nidana* or etiological factors will help to clarify the state of the disease. E.g. In case of *Vata*, it can be vitiated by one or more factors like *sheeta guna* (cold quality), *ruksha guna* (dry quality), *kashaya rasa* (astringent taste), *katu rasa* (pungent taste), *ativyayama* (excessive exercise), *avarana* (obstruction of activities of *vata* by other elements of the body) etc. The knowledge of each of these etiological factors which aggravate *Vata* will help the physician to make good prognosis, make the exact diagnosis of the disease, correlate the causes with the effect (disease and its symptoms), help the patient to keep away the causative factors and plan for right treatment protocol.

Knowledge of Nidana will help in planning specific treatment-

In each case, the treatment will differ and will depend on the cause. E.g. If *Pitta* is vitiated by *ushna guna* (hot quality), the treatment and medicines should be antagonistic to *ushna* i.e. *sheeta upashaya* and *chikitsa* (comforts and treatments predominant in cold potency) should be preferred.

Knowledge of Nidana helps in rectifying the causative factors causing the disease-

'*Sankshepataha Kriya Yogo Nidana Parivarjanam*'⁹.

The best and simplest form of the treatment is avoiding the causative factors, which are responsible for

causation of disease and it is the primary step to prevent further pathogenesis. The understanding of *Nidana* helps a physician to counsel the patient to keep away the factors, foods and activities which are contradictory to them. It will not only aid in framing a right treatment protocol, it will also help in designing a good diet and lifestyle protocol where in many disorders can be avoided while following the wholesome and good parts of life.

B) Purvarupa (Prodromal features):

The symptoms which give indication of a future disease are known as prodromal symptoms¹⁰. These are the symptoms which are not expressed clearly and appeared before the manifestation of a disease. These prodromal features helps to know the *dosha* responsible for that particular disease but not the nature of forthcoming disease. Basically there are two types of *puravrupa*, one which indicate the forthcoming disease but doesn't specify the involvement of *dosha* is known as *samanya purvarupa* (general prodromal symptoms). Second variety of *puravrupa* is known as *vishishta* (specific) *purvarupa*, in which appearance of prodromal symptoms observed specifically by specific *dosha*.

Clinical importance of Puravarupa

For diagnosis of disease-

If two diseases are having identical *Nidana*, then *Purvarupa* help in making correct diagnosis. E.g. Acharya Charak told in *chikitsa sthana* chapter 17th, *Nidana* of *Hikka* (Hiccup) and *Swasa* (Dyspnea) are identical¹¹. Here disease will be diagnosed in its *Purvarupa avastha* (Stage) with the help of specific prodromal symptoms such as heaviness in throat and chest, astringent taste in mouth and gurgling sound in abdomen are the prodromal symptoms of *Hikka*¹² while hardness in bowel, pain in sides, compression in cardiac region, miss passage of vital breath are prodromal symptoms of *Swasa*¹³.

For differential diagnosis-

E.g. If the color of the urine is either yellow or mixed with blood eliminated through the urine without the manifestation of prodromal symptoms and sign of *Prameha* (Diabetes), such patient should not be diag-

nosed as *Prameha rogi* (Diabetes), on other hand it diagnosed as *Raktapitta*¹⁴ (Bleeding disorder).

For treatment of disease-

With the help of knowing *puravrupa* of disease we can detect the disease at an earlier (i.e. before the actual manifestation of disease) stage and plan for treatment can be started to prevent further manifestation of disease. E.g. In *Jwara*, *Langhana chikitsa* is indicated in *Purvarupa*¹⁵ and in *Ashmari*, *Snehadi karma* is indicated in *puravrupa avastha* to cure the disease from root¹⁶.

For prognosis of disease-

If number of prodromal symptoms is few, then the disease is easily curable¹⁷. If *Purvarupa* manifest with moderate intensity then disease is *krichhasadhya* (difficult to cure). If all the prodromal features are present in a patient then the disease is going to be incurable.

C) Rupa (Specific sign and symptoms):

Rupa of a disease indicate the actual onset of the manifestation process. When the *rupa* appears, the disease become more pronounced obvious and clearly defined symptoms. The pathogenesis gives rise to various symptoms of the disease. These symptoms and *doshas* are inseparably associated with each other throughout the disease. Hence the pathogenesis (*Dosha dushya sammurcchana*) occurring inside the body is expressed externally as the symptoms of that disease¹⁸. i.e. It indicates the specific disease by manifesting specific symptoms of that disease¹⁹. E.g. Burning sensation in shoulder, sides of the chest, hands, feet and fever is the cardinal symptoms of *Rajyakshma*²⁰ (Tuberculosis), excessive unclean urination in *Prameha*²¹ (Diabetes).

Clinical importance of Rupa

For diagnosis of disease-

Few diseases have no prodromal symptoms like *Vata vyadhi*²², *Ksataksheena*²³ and their diagnosis is made only by observing its clinical feature (i.e. In *Rupa-avastha*). By seen the cardinal sign and symptoms of disease we can diagnose the disease. E.g. Distention of abdomen, gurgling sound in abdomen, edema in legs and hands, diminish power of *Agni*, smoothness

of chin, emaciation are the cardinal signs and symptoms of *Udara roga* (Ascites).

For differential diagnosis of disease-

By observing the signs - symptoms and detailed history of patient we can diagnose the disease which has similar sign and symptoms. E.g. Cough and Tuberculosis, *Annadravasoola* (Pain is aggravate after intake of food) and *Parinamadrasoola* (Pain is relief after intake of food) only few symptoms are common.

For treatment of disease-

Knowledge of *Rupa* is very much important for planning specific treatment of disease. E.g. *Mansa gatavata* and *Mansa aavrta vata*. If we know the exact sign and symptoms of these disease than only we can start the specific treatment. For *Mansa gatavata*-Purgation, non-unctuous enema and pacificatory measures are applied and for *Mansa aavritavata*- fomentation, massage, meat soup, milk and unctuous substance are applied. In *Jwara*, *Aamjwara* (*Langhan*), *Pachyamajwara* (*Deepan*, *pachan* drugs), *Niramajwara* (*Virechana* - purgation).

For prognosis of disease-

If all the symptoms of disease are produced, then that disease is difficult to cure.

For detection of cause-

The symptoms help in detection of cause. E.g. In leprosy (*Kushtha*) the symptoms like pain, dryness, black discoloration etc. indicate involvement of *vata dosha*. This also indicates that the patient must have taken *vata* provoking diet in past.

D) Upasaya (Relieving and Aggravating factors):

When a patient is relieved of symptoms and feel comfortable by the diet, daily regimen and medicine, then these relieving factors are called as *Upasaya*. The relief should not be temporary. The symptoms should be reduced permanently. E.g. Cold water gives relief to thirst and burning sensation in case of *Nava jwara* for a short period but later aggravate the condition. This doesn't come under *upasaya*. And opposite to this, the aggravating factors are called as *Anupasaya*. These factors help in making correct diagnosis. The relieving factors are having properties opposite to that of cause of disease or disease itself or both. Acharya Chakrapani has told about 18 types of *upasaya*.

Clinical importance of Upasaya

For diagnosis of disease-

Relieving factors helps in making correct diagnosis, when it is difficult to diagnose a disease due to obscure or mysterious manifestation. Then by the use of aggravating or relieving factors we can diagnose the disease. E.g. In obstructive jaundice the medicine "*Trikatu* powder" will give relief. But if it is not an obstructive jaundice then the symptoms will aggravate due to hot and sharp property of the medicine.

For treatment of disease-

This *upasaya* and *anupasaya* also help in treatment of disease. If we know the causative factor of any disease simply we can plan for specific treatment with the help of *Hetu vipreeta upasaya*. E.g. Remain awake at night to reduce *kapha* increased by day sleep. Acharya Charaka has said that if *Hetu vipreeta* treatments not effective then we can plan for *Vyadhi vipreet or Hetu Vyadhi vipreeta* treatment. E.g. Usage of turmeric in diabetes is *Vyadhi vipreet* treatment. Usage of swelling and *vata* reducing drug (*Dashmoola kwath*) in edema due to *vata* is *Hetu Vyadhi vipreeta* treatment.

E) Samprapti (Pathogenesis):

As long as three *Doshas* (Functional entities), seven *Dhatus* (Structural entities) and three *Mala* (Excretory products) are in normal (Balanced) state there is no disease occur. When etiological factors disturbed this balanced state then disease will be manifest. The changes which take place in the body from initiation of the etiological factors to the manifestation of symptoms are collectively known as *Samprapti* (Pathogenesis). The *Dosha* vitiated due to various causes are moving in various directions in the body. Depending upon the cause or type of vitiation and direction or route followed by the vitiated *doshas*, there is a settlement (*Dosha-dushya sammurchchhana*) at the defective site (*kha-vaigunya*) or organs and produce variety of disease. E.g. when provoked *doshas* get settled in Abdomen- they give rise to diarrhea, flatulence, ascites, abscesses, tumors etc.

Basically there are two types of *samprapti* i.e. *Samanya samprapti* (It includes *Shatkriyakala*- 6 stages for the better understanding of pathogenesis and appropriate time for treatment, and it is common

for all disease) and *Vishista samprapti* (It includes *Samkhya, Pradhanya, Vidhi, Vikalpa, Bala, Kala*).

Vishistasamprapti i.e Samkhya, Pradhanya, Vidhi, Vikalpa, Bala, Kala samprapti.

Samkhya samprapti (Enumeration of disease):

After the diagnosis of disease it is classified according to specific pathogenesis into further types. This total number of the types is known as *Samkhya samprapti*. E.g. Seven types of *kushta* (Leprosy), Seven types of *Pidaka* (Carbuncles), six types of *Atisara* (Diarrhea).

Pradhanya samprapti (Degree of doshic vitiation):

This *samprapti* helps in identification of dominance of *dosha* in case of two or more *dosha* are involved. If two *doshas* are vitiated, the comparative term i.e. *Tara*, is used to indicate the predominant one. If all the three *doshas* get vitiated then superlative term “*Tama*” is used to indicate the most predominant one. It required dominant *dosha* should be treated first. The subordinate *dosha* may be treated afterwards.

Vidhi samprapti (Variety of disease):

It is a subtype of disease like two varieties Endogenous (*Nija*) and Exogenous (*Aagntuja*). Four varieties of disease based on prognosis i.e. curable, incurable, mild, acute. E.g. Haemorrhagic disorder (*Rakta pitta*): Three types according to route of the bleeding i.e. upwards, downwards, oblique. According to prognosis, the disease is curable, incurable and difficult to cure. So this *samprapti* helps in prognosis of disease. If disease is *Asadhya* (incurable), then physician shouldn't treat the disease otherwise lead to loss of money, knowledge, *Yasha* etc.

Vikalpa samprapti (Proportional analysis of dosha):

When two or more vitiated *doshas* are involved in pathogenesis their symptoms produced. The different character is reflected in the symptoms according to level of vitiated *doshas*. The *doshas* having greater degree of vitiation produce more symptoms. This is also known as “*Anshansh kalpna*”. The *doshas* may get vitiated by all the character of them or by only one character. E.g. Pain is produce by *vata*, when provoked by its dry and cold qualities. The Pea and Sugarcane possess all these qualities, so eating of peas and sugarcane causes provocation of *vata* (i.e. intensity of pain will be increase).

Bala samprapti (Strength of disease):

The strength of disease is more when the severity of provocation of *dosha* is more. Such diseases are incurable or very difficult to treat. When all the causative factors are there, all the premonitory symptoms and main symptoms are expressed clearly then that disease is more severe. The disease involving important body elements (Like *Marma*) and vital organs are more severe.

Kala samprapti (Time factors):

The effect of day, night, period of digestion, season on the *dosha* brings about variations in the pathogenesis and symptoms of disease. The symptoms are increased or decreased according to the time. E.g. In *Vatika Gulma* intensity of pain increase after digestion of food (i.e. in empty stomach) and become mild after taking food. In *Pittaj Gulam*, intensity of pain increase during digestion of food. Whether the disease is curable or incurable is also depend on time or season. E.g. *Kaphaj jwara* in *vasanta ritu* is curable.

CONCLUSION

Ayurveda says that before the planning of treatment, the correct diagnosis of the disease is very much essential which means a physician must examine the disease thoroughly before prescribing medicine. *Nidana panchaka* is a tool for diagnosing a disease at various stages. Naming of disease is not given that much importance, but knowing the definite etiological factors, *dosha* vitiation, pathogenesis or progress of disease and to check it at early stage is given prime importance. In short, avoiding the causative factor is an important part of treatment of any disease. In modern concept of medicine, treatment of a disease starts after actual appearance of a disease. But in Ayurveda, good knowledge of *purvarupa* may help physician to curb a forthcoming disease in its early stages because treatment at this stage would require minimal or simpler modalities. *Rupa* stage helpful for planning of specific treatment. *Upashaya* plays an important role in diagnosis as well as treatment of disease. The *samprapti* gives knowledge about provoking *doshas*, route of the disease, involved *dhatus* and *srotas* (system or organ) affected. This is useful in deciding the

specific treatment. Each component of *Nidana Panchaka* individually as well as collectively helps in diagnosis of disease. If one component indicates towards a disease then other aspects of *Nidana Panchaka* confirm the diagnosis.

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