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Sree Sankaracharya Sanskrit University, Kalady
Sandhya P.S

Research scholar

Department of Sanskrit Nyaya

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Topic

Importance of Pratyakṣa Pramāna in Ayurveda and Clinical study of objects with Diagnostic Instruments

In Ayurveda pramāna is stand out as a fundamental concept which related with the essential knowledge, valid proof of the acquired knowledge and means of knowledge. It is used to navigate the complexities of health and disease, also support process of diagnosis. Concepts of pramāna holds significant importance in Ayurvedic research methodology. Ayurveda accepts various forms pramānas they are Āptopadeṣa, Pratyakṣa, Ānumāna, and Yuktī. In these pramānas, pratyakṣa pramāna is an important one.

The Pratyakṣa Pramāna means first hand evidence of Ayurveda. It denotes sensory perception. Here the individual gains knowledge through the medium of sense organs. It is the basis for direct clinical examination of patients which is essential for diagnosing disease. The term Pratyakṣa Pramāna comes from the words "Prati" and 'akṣa' which mean 'in front of the eyes'. There for Pratyakṣa Pramāna is the direct observation in Ayurveda. It is considered as the most primary and important tool for diagnosis, prognosis, inference, conclusion and treatment of the disease according to Ayurveda. It is the means of acquiring knowledge through the medium of sense organs and self experiences. According to Ayurveda Ācharyacharāka has mentioned the word 'Pramāna' for Parikṣa' is a Pramāna by which things are correctly known. Parikṣa means examination and 'Prama' means the result. Hence, despite being synonyms, ' Parikṣa ' emphasizes the means (sādhan) while ' Pramāna ' on the result. According to Ācharyacharāka, things either exist or non-exist and four pramana¹ can examine them.

1. Pratyakṣa (perception) 2, Āptopadeṣa (authoritative testimony) 3, Anumāna (inference) 4, Yuktī (logical reasoning). In Vimānasthāna, Charakachārya mentioned these pramānas Āptopadeṣa, Pratyakṣa and Anumāna.

In Charakasāmhita mentions the cognition which gets through indriyā and mana itself is called Pratyakṣa. Perception is definite and immediate arising from the correlation (coming together) of Atmā, indriyā (sense organ) manas (mind) and the indriyārtha (object) is known as Pratyakṣa.²

Classification of Sensory Perception (Indriyā Pratyakṣa)

The sensory perception (Indriyā Pratyakṣa) can be classified into five types based on the sense organ involved.

1. Auditory perception (Śrotra Pratyakṣa)
2. Tactile Perception (Sparśana)
3. Visual perception (Chakṣuṣha Pratyakṣa)
4. Gustation perception (Rasana Pratyakṣa)
5. Olfactory perception (Ghrañaja Pratyakṣa)

Importance of concept of direct perception is extensively employed for clinical examination of patient, disease and identification of raw as well as prepared drugs.

Application in clinical examination of patient and disease

According to Charaka Vimānasthāna 4th chapter 7 sloka defines the physician gains knowledge about the status of patient condition and disease manifestation with the help of Pratyakṣa Pramāna through sense organs. This constitutes six types of clinical examination with addition of interrogation to know details of diseases (su.sa. sūtra sthāna 10/4)³.

1. Auditory Perception

Auditory perception is useful to understand pathology in various conditions through the medium of sound. Eg. Assessment of voice of the patient, other specific sounds likes hiccups, breath etc. The modern technological advancement led to invention of many instruments that help to assess these sounds.

2. Visual Inspection

Through the medium of visual perception or netra, the varna, shape, location, appearance, form size or measurements altered complexion (cchāya), normalcy, abnormal characteristics, good nourished built (upachāya) malnourished (apachāya) can be assessed. The advent of investigation techniques like Endoscopy, X-ray, Microscopy etc.

3. Tactile Perception

The physician palpates or sparśana patients for examination. Here the tactile perception is medium to gain knowledge about normal or abnormal characters of the body. The heat, coldness, softness, hardness, smoothness, roughness can be perceived. Thus the temperature, skin texture, dryness, roughness of the skin, different organs, hair and lesions on the body can be assessed with the help of this Pratyakṣa.

4. Gustation Perception

This examination is applicable to clinical and taste threshold studies which are not subject to indirect questioning or direct perception of the examiner. In clinical practice, this can't be done by physician himself. It is done indirectly either by interrogation. Example method : Mutre pippilikaabhisārpana as indicated in diabetics with obstinate urinary disorders (prameḥa) this refers to the excessive sweetness in urine and body.

5. Olfactory Perception

In this method, olfactory perception help to examine the smell and body fluids or body odour. The olfactory perception is used to determine the abnormality for examples the blood (rakta) and menstrual blood (artava) have specific smell of blood (vistragāndha) etc.

Application of Pratyakṣa Pramāna of objects with diagnostic instruments

1. B.P apparatus to assess the blood pressure.
2. Ophthal moscope is used to see the cavity of eye ball.
3. E.C.G vibrations send by the heart to the surface of body are recorded
4. X-Ray useful to see the fractures of bones, collection of exudates in cavities etc.
5. Endoscopy useful to visualize the internal channels.
6. Stethoscope useful to visualize very distant objects.
7. Microscopes useful to visualize the microstructures.

Conclusion

Pratyakṣa Pramāna is the direct observation of the clinical examination. It is wide application of practical and theoretical knowledge. It is a vital part of diagnosing disease, including assessing complications and prognosis. It is used to select medicines, purify and process them and determine the course of treatment. Pratyakṣa Pramāna is used in conjunction with diagnostic instruments like X-Ray, MRIS and ECG etc. There for Pratyakṣa Pramāna can benefit ayurvedic research methods and Vaidya Śāstra.

Reference

1. Charaka Samhita of agnivesha elaborated by Charaka & Drudhabala, Hindi commentary by P.D Kashinath Pandey & Dr. Gorakhnath Chaturvedi, Chaukhambha Bharti Academy, Varanasi, Re printed 2009, Sutra Sthana, Chapter 11, Sloka No: 17, P. 2015.
2. Ibid, Sutra Sthana, Chapter 11, Sloka No : 20, P. 217
3. Sushruta, Sushruta Samhita, Edited by Jadavaji Trikamji Aacharya, 8th Ed. Varanasi, Chaukhambha Orientalia, 2005.