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Medical Science

A REVIEW ARTICLE ON UTILITY OF UPAMANA PRAMANA IN AYURVEDA

KEY WORDS: Upamana, Pramana, Ayurveda

Sehra Beegum. S*

MD scholar, Department of Samhitha, Sanskrita And Siddhanta, Government Ayurveda College, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala. *Corresponding Author

Braivin Camly. R

Associate Professor, Department of Samhitha, Sanskrita And Siddhanta, Government Ayurveda College, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala.

ABSTRACT

Each Indian philosophy has generally 2 parts, prameya khanda and Pramana Khanda. Prameya Khanda (ontology) discusses about the categories to be identified while Pramana Khanda (Epistemology) deals with the valid knowledge which are utilised to ascertain the truth of the categories. The widely accepted pramanas in Ayurveda are Pratyaksha pramana, Anumana pramana, Aphthopadesa pramana and Upamana pramana. Susrutha Samhitha has accepted upamana pramana along with the above three pramanas. Caraka Samhitha even though utilised upamana in various contexts of the treatises, it has not listed it as a valid instrument of knowledge. Nevertheless analogy (aupamyam) is included as a term in the vadamarga. This study focuses on the utility of upamana pramana in various contexts of Ayurveda

INTRODUCTION

Darsanas have a significant role in Indian literature and are the life for Indian culture. Each Indian philosophy has generally 2 parts, Prameya Khanda(ontology) and Pramana Khanda (Epistemology). Prameya Khanda deals with categories to be known and Pramana Khanda deals with the valid knowledge which are utilised to ascertain the truth of the categories'. Pramanas led an important role in Indian philosophy and are essential tool in acquiring complete and valid knowledge about utpatti, pralaya, athma, avyaktha etc.

According to Gangadhara, the commentator of Caraka Samhitha, pramana is that by which we measure. Thus he considers pramana as an instrument. Acharya Udayana considers real knowledge (yadhartha anubhava) as valid knowledge or prama and the instrument for obtaining the real knowledge is pramana.

Nyaya philosophers have included upamana pramana among their 4 instruments of knowledge. The other 3 being, pratyaksham, anumanam and aptopadesha and also accepted by Tarkika².

Susrutha Samhitha follows Nyaya by accepting these four pramanas in the 1st chapter itself. Caraka Samhitha has utilised upamana in various contexts of the treatises, but has not listed it as a valid instrument of knowledge. Nevertheless analogy (aupamyam) is included as a term in the vadamarga.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

To evaluate utility of upamana pramana in Ayurveda

About Upamana Pramana

- Definition

Upamana is defined as the instrument (karana) of analogical knowledge (upamiti)

It is the knowledge of relation between the name (samjna) and the named (samjni). The relation is a potency or power. By upamana pramana, one can get the knowledge of similarity or sadrushya of a name with the object.

• Example

A person is ignorant about 'gavaya'. He learnt that gavaya is identical to cow from a forester. Later on when he goes to the forest and finds a strange animal which is like a cow and memorises the previously heard knowledge about gavaya and attains the knowledge of gavaya.

In the above example gavaya is a name. The animal is the object. The knowledge of similarity with cow is comparison.

The recollection of an authoritative instruction is the intermediate activity or operation. This animal is denotable by the name gavaya is the analogy.

Types

There are 3 types of analogy.

They are

1. Analogy based on the similarity of object (saadharana dharma-visishta-pinda jnanam)
2. Analogy based uncommon characteristic (asadharana-dharma-vishista-pinda jnanam)
3. Analogy based on dissimilarity of object (vaidharmya-visishta-pinda-jnana)

1. Analogy based on the similarity of object

This illustration of cow and gavaya (blue-bull) is based on similarity. It is because of the similarity of physical appearance between cow and blue bull that the identification of gavaya was made possible.

2. Analogy based uncommon characteristic

Take the instance of rhinoceros. A person who has not seen rhinoceros is told that 'rhinoceros is like an elephant but has a horn on its snout'. Later, former sees a rhinoceros. He will be able to identify the animal with the knowledge of the unique character of having a horn on snout. A single horn on snout is the uncommon characteristic of Indian rhinoceros.

3. Analogy based on dissimilarity of object

If a person who has not seen a camel is told that camel is like a horse but differs from a horse as camel is very high, has a long neck and there is a hump on its back. Later, when the first man sees a camel he will be able to identify it from the dissimilarities the camel has with the horse.

Upamana in Ayurveda

Eventhough Susrutha samhitha has accepted Upamana as a valid means of knowledge, the treatise has not provided a definition to Upamana. Dalhana, the commentator of the treatise provides a definition that analogy is the understanding of the unknown object which is minute, covered(masked), or distant utilising known similarity. The examples given by Dalhana are, a small hyperpigmented area on skin named mashaka is similar to black gram(maasha) etc³. Ayurvedic texts contain analogies or similes such as bean shaped, pear shaped, spindle shaped etc.

Charaka Samhitha has considered upamana only as a term in debate. Instead of the term upamana, the book has used the term aupamyam in this context. Some examples are provided in Caraka Samhitha is worth considerable.

1. the disease dandaka where the patient is rigid, is analogous to rod (danda)
2. the physician is similar to an archer⁴.

Utility of upamana pramana in Ayurveda

In Ayurveda upamana pramana is considered as a diagnostic method of the disease. It is useful in treatment also. The identical doshas and dhatus are increased if the drugs identical with doshas and dhatus are used because of the similarity. There are so many aspects in Ayurveda which use Upamana pramana.

1) In embryological concepts

Susrutha while describing the qualities of sukra and artava states that the colour, smell, consistency of sukra is compared with sphaatika(alum), honey(madhu) and taila, ksoudra respectively⁵

2) In anatomical concepts

In osteology, the nalakasthi and kapalasthi are compared with nalaka and kapala respectively. The hridaya is compared with pundarika in anatomy.

3) In physiological concepts

The raktha samhanam(blood circulation) is compared with sabda, archi, and jala. The blood circulates like sabda in all the direction, upward like fire and downwards like water.

4) In pathological concepts

In tamaka swasa, the respiration of the patient is compared with the warbling of kapota⁶.

In mahaswasa, the swasa is compared with that of matta rsabha (furious bull)

Name of many plants are also indicative of similarity. Even if the doctor has not seen the plant before, he is able to identify the plant by the similarity expressed by their names. Aakhu-karnee(meaning the ear of mouse), sasakarnee(meaning the ear of rabbit etc) are examples.

5) In concept of prakrithi and dhatu sarata

Concept of 'Anukatva' in vatika, paithika and kaphaja prakrithi is an example of utilisation of upamana pramana. Acharya Susrutha has given the word anukatva which means behaviour, activity or family. The resemblance in the features of the constitution and the features of the animals in the context of characters, behaviour, activity, structure and psychological aspects is called as anukatva

6) In performing sashtra karma

In Yogya suthreeya chapter, Acharya Susrutha has emphasised that students should do experimental surgery even after he has thoroughly mastered the interpretations of all the scriptures. He has given the items on which experiments of sashtra karma can be performed. Here upamana pramana plays an important role in the list of items given by acharya as he had compared the items with the organs or disorders of human in which specific sashtra karma should be performed.

7) In Dravyaguna Vijnana

Dravyaguna deals with the study of oushadha and ahara rupa dravyas. An important treatise named Raja Nighantu in the field of Dravya guna has assigned names and synonyms to plants on seven bases and upama is one among them.

CONCLUSION

In Ayurveda, Susrutha Samhitha accepts upamana as a means of knowledge. Charaka Samhitha has considered upamana only as a term in debate. Instead of the term upamana, the book has used the term aupamya in this context. Upamana pramana is considered as a diagnostic method of the disease. It is useful in treatment also. Ayurveda has widely utilised

upamana pramana and its application is seen at many places from the level of srishti utpatti to mrityu. It is useful in anatomical and physiological aspects. Besides in every branch of Ayurveda upamana pramana is of very importance.

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