

Unveiling The Concept of Nidan Panchaka as A Diagnostic Tool

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Abstract: *Nidana Panchaka* is a fundamental diagnostic tool in *Ayurveda*, playing a crucial role in identifying diseases, understanding their causes, and predicting their prognosis. It consists of five essential components: *Nidana*, *Purvaroop*, *Roopa*, *Upashaya* and *Samprapti*. The diagnosis of a disease in *Ayurveda* is closely linked to the *Vridhhi* and *Kshaya* of the three *Doshas* *Vata*, *Pitta*, and *Kapha* which are considered responsible for the onset of any disease. These imbalances arise due to various *Nidana*, primarily related to one's *Ahara* and *Vihara*, *Manasika Bhava*. Accurate diagnosis is a prerequisite for effective treatment. While there are several diagnostic methods in *Ayurveda*, such as *Ashtavidha Pareeksha*, *Dashavidha Pareeksha*, and *Chaturvidha Pareeksha* (fourfold examination), this article specifically highlights the significance of *Nidana Panchaka* in the process of diagnosis of any disease.

Index Terms: *Tridosha*, *Vridhhi*, *Kshaya*, *Ahara*, *Vihara Pareeksha*.

I. INTRODUCTION

Nidana Panchaka is a vital diagnostic framework in *Ayurveda* that examines five critical elements of disease—*Nidana* (causative factors), *Purvarupa* (early or prodromal symptoms), *Rupa* (clinical features), *Upashaya* (relieving or aggravating factors), and *Samprapti* (pathogenesis). This holistic approach enables practitioners to assess diseases at multiple stages, trace their origin, and devise effective treatment strategies based on the specific imbalances of the *Doshas*.¹ Early Disease Detection: By understanding "*Purvarupa*" (premonitory signs) practitioners can identify a disease in its early stages before full manifestation of symptoms, enabling preventive measures.

Holistic Perspective: *Nidana Panchaka* goes beyond just observing clinical symptoms—it emphasizes the interconnected roles of lifestyle, diet, and

psychological factors in the onset and progression of disease. *Dosha-Centric Diagnosis*: By analyzing *Samprapti* (pathogenesis), practitioners can identify the dominant *Dosha* (*Vata*, *Pitta*, or *Kapha*) involved, enabling a more targeted and individualized treatment approach.

NIDANA PANCHAKA:

Nidana (Cause):

पञ्चविधमप्येतद्याध्युत्पत्तिज्ञप्तिहेतुभूतं निदानशब्देनोच्यते ।

M.N 1/4

The word *Nidana* is used in two Different contexts i.e

- Diagnosis of disease -व्याध्युत्पत्ति ज्ञप्ति
- Etiological factors of disease -हेतुभूतं

सेतिकर्तव्यताकः रोगोत्पादक हेतुः निदानं। (मा. नि. १/५ मधुकोष टीका)

The factor which has the ability to perform functions (इतिकर्तव्यता) which will undoubtedly give rise to disease through *Dosha* - *Dushya Samurchhana*, *Samprapti*, etc. is called as a *Nidana*. For example - wrongful lifestyle practices have the ability to vitiate *Dosha* which then through various pathologies give rise to diseases²

Synonyms of *Nidana*:

निमित्तहेत्वायतनप्रत्ययोत्थानकारणे ।

निदानमाहूः पर्यायाई...।। (M.Ni.1/5)³

निदानपर्यायास्तु हेतुर्निमित्तमायतनं कारकः कर्ता

कारणं प्रत्ययः सनुत्तानं मूलं योनिरिति । १०॥ (A.S.Ni 1/10)⁴

Nimitta: Initiator of the diseases

Hetu: Cause of the diseases

Aayatana:- Dwelling of the diseases

Pratyaya:- One which is needed to form the disease, like *Pratyay* need to form the words in Sanskrit grammar)

Utthana: To give rise to disease

Karan: Cause of the disease

Samutthana: Progress of a disease that indicates etiopathology triggering the disease.

PURVAROOPA: (Pre monitory Symptoms):

स्थान संश्रयिणः कुद्धा भावी व्याधि प्रबोधाकम ।

दोषाः कुर्वन्ति यल्लिंगं पूर्वरूपम तदुच्यते ॥ M.Ni.1/5-6
(मधुकोष टीका)⁵

In the pathological process *Doshas* get vitiated and gets lodged at particular space (*Sthanasanshraya*). Amalgamation process started, At this point few symptoms generated called as *Purvarupa*

Purvarupa give us an intimation of the upcoming disease. Early subtle signs or symptoms that indicate an impending disease, allowing for early intervention.

Rupa (Clinical Features):

प्रादुर्भूतलक्षणं पुनर्लिङ्गम ।

तत्र लिङ्गमाकृतिर्लक्षणं चिह्नं संस्थानं व्यञ्जनं
रूपमित्यनर्थान्तरम् ॥९॥ (C.S.Ni 1/9)⁶

Signs and symptoms that are representations of the occurrence/existence of the disease are called *Rupa*.

तदेव व्यक्ततां यातं रूपमित्यभिधीयते । (C.S.Ni.1/5)⁷

संस्थानं व्यञ्जनं लिङ्गं लक्षणं चिह्नमाकृतिः । (A.H.Ni.1/5)⁸

The unexpressed prodromal sign and symptoms that exhibit themselves with the disease's prognosis are called *Rupa*.

Signs and symptoms of a fully developed disease are called as *Rupa*. The manifested signs and symptoms

observed in the patient, including physical examination findings.

II.CONTEMPORARY APPROACH

1. Clinical features play a vital role in both diagnosis and prognosis, serving as key indicators of disease presence and progression.
2. The manifestation of symptoms reflects the severity and intensity of the disease, guiding the physician in selecting appropriate therapeutic interventions based on the clinical presentation.
3. In asymptomatic stages, where signs and symptoms are not evident, diagnostic evaluation relies on investigative tests involving biological fluids such as blood, urine, semen, sputum, stool, and cerebrospinal fluid.
4. Modern medical science heavily depends on clinical features for accurate diagnosis and for designing effective treatment protocols tailored to the disease condition.

UPASHAYA (Aggravating and Mitigating Factors):

औषधान्नविहाराणामुपयोगं सुखावहम् ।

विद्यात उपशयम व्याधेः सही सात्म्यं इति स्मृतः ॥

विपरीतो नुपशयो व्याध्य सात्म्य इति स्मृतः ।(A.H.Ni.1/6-7)⁹

Upashaya - when a therapeutic test results in lowering the symptom it is called *Upashaya*. For example, if due to hot fomentation joint pain relieves pain it is *Upashaya*.

Anupashaya - when a therapeutic test results in increasing symptoms it is called as *Anupashaya*.

For example, if oil massage (*Snehana*) in joint pain increases pain then it is *Anupashaya*.

Factors that worsen or alleviate the disease process, helping in dietary and lifestyle management.

SAMPRAPTI (Pathogenesis):

यथादुष्टेन दोषेण यथा चानुविसर्पता ।

निवृत्तिरामयस्यासौ सम्प्राप्तिर्जातिरागतिः ॥८॥(A.H.Ni. 1/8)¹⁰

सर्वस्यामपि चिकित्सायां सम्प्राप्तिविनाशनमेव प्रधानम प्रयोजनम् ॥(A.S.Ni 2/4)¹¹

Samprapti means pathogenesis. The term signifies the mechanism starting from vitiation of *Dosha* till the origin and complete manifestation/development of the disease.

Synonyms: सम्प्राप्तिर्जातिरागतिरित्यनर्थान्तरं व्याधेः ॥११॥(C.S.Ni. 1/11)¹²

Synonyms: *Jati* and *Agati*

Samprapti Process

व्याधीजनक दोष व्यापार विशेषयुक्तम व्याधिजन्मेह
संप्राप्ती

Explains the pathway of disease development, including which *Doshas* are vitiated, the involved tissues (*Dhatu*s), and the affected channels (*Srotas*).

Components of *Samprapti*:

- *Dosha*
- *Dushya*
- *Agni*
- *Srotas* and *Srotodushti*
- *Adhistana*
- *Udbhava Sthana*
- *Sancharasthana*
- *Rogamarga*
- *Vyakta Sthana*
- *Vyadhi Swabhava*

III.LIMITATIONS OF *NIDANA PANCHAKA*

Subjectivity:

Accurate diagnosis relies heavily on the practitioner's clinical expertise and ability to interpret patient history and subjective experiences.

Complex Interpretation:

Understanding the intricate relationships between various components of *Nidana Panchaka* can be challenging, especially for beginners.

Lack of Standardization:

Some aspects of *Nidana Panchaka* may require further research to develop standardized diagnostic criteria for specific diseases.

DIAGNOSIS BASED OF *NIDANA PANCHAKA*

<i>Nidana Panchaka</i>	Diagnosis role
<i>Nidana</i>	Causative factors
<i>Samanya Nidana</i>	General causative factors
<i>Vishesha Nidana</i>	Confirmatory diagnostic tool (Pathology)
<i>Purvaroopo</i>	Clinical diagnostic report of the premonitory disease
<i>Samanya Poorvaroopo</i>	Provisional diagnostic tool
<i>Vishasha Poorvaroopo</i>	Provisional diagnostic tool regarding specific disease
<i>Roopa</i>	Clinical diagnostic report of the disease
<i>Samanya Roopa</i>	General symptoms of disease
<i>Vishesha /Pratyatma Roopa</i>	Pathological diagnostic report
<i>Upashaya</i>	Confirmatory in terms of <i>Ahara</i> and <i>Vihara</i> , <i>Aushada</i> .

NIDANA:

Importance of *Nidana*:

संक्षेपतः क्रियायोगो निदान परिवर्जनम् (सुश्रुत संहिता)

A disease can often be cured by eliminating its root cause. If the *Vaidya* (physician) accurately identifies the *Nidana* (etiological factor), effective treatment can be achieved by addressing and removing that cause—thereby halting further pathogenesis and preventing complications.

In situations where the diagnosis is uncertain, analyzing the *Nidana* (etiological factors) can help clarify the nature and stage of the disease. For example, *Vata Dosha* may become vitiated due to one or more contributing factors such as *Sheeta Guna* (cold quality), *Ruksha Guna* (dryness), *Kashaya Rasa* (astringent taste), *Katu Rasa* (pungent taste), *Ativyayama* (excessive physical exertion), *Avarana* (obstruction of *Vata's* normal functions by other bodily elements), or *Dhatukshaya* (tissue depletion).

POORVAROOPA:

Importance of *Purvaroopo*:

For guessing the probable disease.

For Prognosis of Disease:

To determine the *Sadhyasadhyatwa* of the disease e.g all the *Purvarupa* are seen in *Jwara*, is considered as a *Asadhya*

For Diagnosis of Disease:

e.g. *Acharya Charaka* has told in *Chikitsa Sthana* chapter 17th, *Nidana* of *Hikka* and *Swasa* are identical. But disease can be diagnosed in its *Purvaroopo Awastha*.

For Differential Diagnosis of Disease:

e.g. *Prameha* and *Raktapitta*. colour of urine may help in the diagnosis.

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*, such patient should not be diagnosed as *Prameha Rogi*, on other hand it diagnosed as *Raktapitta*

ROOPA:

Importance of *Roopa*:

For Differential diagnosis, Diagnosis, Prognosis
Treatment of disease.

For Diagnosis of Disease

Few diseases have no prodromal symptoms like *Vata Vyadhi*, *Ksataksheena* and their diagnosis is made only by observing its clinical feature (i.e. In *Rupa-Avastha*). By seeing 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*.

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. *Kshataja Kasa* and *Kshaya Kasa*, *Annadravasoola* (Pain is aggravate after intake of food) and *Parinamadrasoola* (Pain is relief after intake of food) only few symptoms are common

Clinical Importance of *Upashaya*

Importance of *Upashaya*:

1. Therapeutic testing (*Upashaya-Anupashaya*) serves as a valuable tool in identifying the predominant *Dosha*, especially in cases where clinical signs and symptoms alone are insufficient for a conclusive diagnosis.
2. *Upashaya* (palliative response) and *Anupashaya* (aggravating response) assist in designing a suitable *Pathya-Apathya* (wholesome and unwholesome) regimen during treatment planning.
3. Therapeutic tests are particularly useful in differentiating between diseases with overlapping symptoms, such as distinguishing *Sandhigata Vata* from *Amavata*, or *Vata Vyadhi* from *Urustambha*.

For Diagnosis of Disease:

When a disease presents with vague or atypical symptoms, identifying relieving or aggravating factors becomes crucial for accurate diagnosis. These responses help clarify the underlying condition when conventional signs are insufficient or unclear.

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 *Ushna* and *Teekshna Guna* of the medicine

Upashaya and *Anupashaya* helps in diagnosing a complicated and untraced disease i.e *Guda Linga Vyadhi*

For example: In case of *Vatavyadhi* and *Urustambha* symptoms are similar, that's why it is very difficult to diagnose without the help of *Upashaya* i.e If patient gets relief after application of oily therapy indicates *Vatavyadhi* otherwise *Urustambha*.

SAMPRAPTI:

Importance of *Samprapti*:

- Diagnosis of the disease
- Subtle knowledge of disease
- For *Chikitsa* purpose
- Identify the *Sthana Samshraya*
- To rule out *Sadhyasadhyatwa* of the disease.

- It helps to know the actual pathogenesis of disease occurred and its complications (*Samprapti Ghataka*).
- Knowledge of *Samprapti* is helpful to cure disease by achieving '*Samprapti Bhanga*'.

IV.DISCUSSION

Nidana:

DiagnosticAspect:

In certain conditions, such as *Kushta* and *Prameha*, the *Purvarupa* (premonitory symptoms) may appear similar, making diagnosis challenging. In such cases, careful analysis of the *Nidana* (etiological factors) becomes essential for accurate diagnosis. Similarly, for differential diagnosis, such as distinguishing between types of *Udara Roga* (abdominal disorders) like *Yakrutodar* (liver-related disorders), *Nidana* plays a critical role.

TherapeuticAspect:

As emphasized by *Acharya Sushruta*, *Nidana Parivarjana*—the elimination of causative factors through changes in diet and lifestyle—is considered the most effective approach to treating disease.

PrognosticAspect:

The intensity of the causative factors influences the prognosis of a disease:

- If the *Nidana* is mild, the disease is *Sadhya* (easily curable).
- If moderately strong, the disease is *Kruchchha Sadhya* (difficult but possibly curable).
- If the causative factors are intense and deeply rooted, the disease becomes *Asadhya* (incurable).

Purvarupa (Premonitory Symptoms):

- Diagnostic Aspect: *Purvarupa* helps distinguish between diseases with similar *Nidana* (causative factors). For example, *Jwara* (fever) and *Gulma* (abdominal distension) share similar etiological factors, making *Purvarupa* crucial for differential diagnosis, along with conditions like *Kasa* (cough) and *Hikka* (hiccough).
- Therapeutic Aspect: In *Jwara* (fever), *Langhana* (fasting) is often initiated following the

appearance of *Purvarupa*, as part of the treatment process.

- Prognostic Aspect: The severity of the *Purvarupa* symptoms helps determine the disease's prognosis—if the symptoms are mild, the disease is curable; if severe, it may be incurable.

Roopa (Clinical Features):

- Diagnostic Aspect: *Roopa* aids in differentiating diseases with similar symptoms, such as distinguishing between *Raktapitta* (bleeding disorders) and *Prameha* (diabetes) by their specific clinical features.
- Therapeutic Aspect: The detailed clinical features provided by *Roopa* help guide the treatment approach.

Upashaya (Relieving and Aggravating Factors):

- Diagnostic Aspect: *Upashaya* is particularly helpful in the diagnosis and examination of *Vatavyadhi* (diseases related to *Vata*), such as *Urustambha* (stiffness of the thighs), by identifying the factors that alleviate or worsen symptoms.
- Therapeutic Aspect: It provides essential insights for adjusting treatment strategies based on the patient's response to various therapeutic interventions.

Samprapti (Pathogenesis):

- Diagnostic and Therapeutic Aspect: *Samprapti* helps determine the stages of disease formation, enabling practitioners to identify when the disease is still treatable. By understanding the sequence of disease progression, appropriate interventions can be implemented.
- Therapeutic Importance: *Nidana Parivarjana* (elimination of causative factors) stops disease formation, and treatment during the *Purvarupa* stage increases the likelihood of cure. *Roopa* gives vital information on the disease's nature, while *Upashaya* helps clarify diseases with unclear symptoms. After analyzing *Samprapti*, the imbalanced *Dosha* and *Dushya* (bodily

tissues) can be corrected, preventing the disease from recurring.

V.CONCLUSION

Overall, *Nidana Panchaka* provides a comprehensive and holistic approach to disease diagnosis in *Ayurveda*, enabling practitioners to identify the root cause of a disease and design personalized treatment plans based on individual factors rather than solely relying on symptoms.

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