

## REVIEW ARTICLE ON IMPORTANCE OF NIDAN IN AYURVEDA

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**ABSTRACT**

Ayurveda is the science of life which provides healthy long life as it deals with prevention and promotion of health as well as the treatment of diseases. All the ancient Ayurvedic classics discussed the Tridosha-theory as a base. The equilibrium of tridosha causes health where as disequilibrium of the same leads to different types of diseases depending upon specific pathogenesis. Effect is observed according to the cause as per the well known theory of Karya-karan-vad of Ayurveda. Illness is because of different causes and its effect is seen in the form of linga (symptoms of the disease) for which aushadh is essential to treat that's why ancient seers and sages of Ayurveda propounded the "Trisutra-Ayurveda" namely Hetu, Linga and Aushadha. Hetu is the synonym of nidan in the context of diagnosis of the diseases. It is the first and foremost factor which initiates the pathology and crucial in diagnosis as well as treatment also. Keeping this significance in the mind Acharya Charak has stated that a physician should first diagnose the disease correctly and Chakrapanidatta, the commentator of Charak-Samhita says that successful treatment depends upon the proper knowledge of hetu and linga of the disease. The term 'nidan' in the Ayurveda has been used in two sense mainly i.e. vyadhijanaka nidan and vyadhibodhak nidan. Knowledge of nidan in both the sense is essential for a good physician to get success. Diagnosis is never complete without the elucidation of all the factors related with the disease.

**KEYWORDS:** Ayurveda, Nidan-Panchaka, Nidan, Karan, Hetu, Chikitsa.

**INTRODUCTION**

All the Ayurvedic classics have discussed about Nidan very vividly. It is because of significance of the concept of nidan. Nidan means aetiological factors of disease. It is of two types according to Cakrapanidatta i.e vyadhijanaka nidan and vyadhi-bhodhaka nidan Vyadhi-janaka nidan means causes of disease or diseases (etiological factors). Vyadhi-bhodhaka nidan means which is the mean of diagnosis which includes nidan, purvarupa, rupa, upasaya and samprapti (nidan - panchaka)<sup>[1]</sup> Again Acharya Cakrapanidatta has again discussed the nidan of two types for all the diseases i.e. Sadharana and Asadharana karan in his commentary of Charak-Samhita.<sup>[2]</sup> Nidan, dosha and dushya play a significant role in the manifestation of each and every disease. In this context, nidan means external causative factors which includes faulty diet, life style and accidental causes, dosha are Vata, Pitta and Kapha considered as the samavayi karan of endogenous diseases and dushya means Rasa etc. dhatus and malas which are vitiated by doshas. Diagnosis is never complete without the

elucidation of all the factors related with the disease. This article is mainly concerned with vyadhijanakanidan.

**Nirukti and Definition of Nidan**

Nidan word has been defined by Amar Singh in Amarakosha,<sup>[3]</sup> as –

निदानं त्वादिकारणम् । निदानमिति नितरां दीयते  
असाधारणतया जन्यते अनेन ॥

A Means the entity by which something is produced specifically is known as nidan. He says that nidan can be defined as adikarana which means "Mukhya karana" i.e. main cause. It can be used in medical science in the sense of initiating causes of disease or diseases. Acharya Charaka says that "तत्र निदानं कारणमित्युक्तमग्रे" means nidan word has been used in the sense of causative factors of the disease.<sup>[4]</sup> Acharya Vijayarakshita has mentioned in Madhukosha Tika that the factor which causes disease are known as nidan. Nidan is the process

by which disease is diagnosed. Again Acharya Vijayarakshita has defined that which gives complete knowledge about Vyadhi, is called nidan.<sup>[5]</sup> The word nidan is used in two different contexts i.e. etiological factors and diagnosis of diseases of the diseased one. Further Acharya Vriddha Vagbhata has mentioned in Ashtanga-Samgraha that nidan means one which aggravates vatadi doshas.<sup>[6]</sup> It is due to intake of unwholesome diet and improper activities. Regarding the definition of nidan, Acharya Gananatha Sen in his book Siddhanta- nidan put forward his views that external etiological factors are called nidan. These factors causes either disturbance in equilibrium of dhatus or directly produce various disorders. In this way nidan is of two types. The first one is the cause of endogenous diseases and second is the cause of exogenous diseases. Further explained that the term 'Nimitta' is used to differentiate from Samavayi and Asamavayi Karana of the diseases.<sup>[7]</sup>

### SYNONYMS OF NIDAN

Acharya Charaka has described hetu, nimitta, Ayatana, karta, karana, pratyaya and samutthana as synonyms of nidan in the Nidansthan8. Acharya Vridha Vagbhata has mentioned two more synonyms of the term nidan i.e. mulam and yoni9. Brief information of the synonyms is being given here Hetu- Hetu means the cause. Nimitta- Apart from the cause, Nimitta gives the meaning of Sakuna also. (Vidyotini Hindi commentary of Charak Samhita) Ayatana- The Ayatana word stands for karana. It means the site or region also which gives shelter. The Ayatana word is used in sutrasthana in the context of the cause of diseases. Again in 29th chapter of Sutrasthana of Charaka Samhita, the term Ayatana is used in the context of ten pranayatana. Karta- Means one who is doer. Karana- Means the primary cause. Pratyaya- Pratyaya is used in the sense of faith, suffix also. In the context of nidan, it is the cause of disease. Samutthana- Means by which something gets origin, it is used in the sense of 'Unnati' also which means progress or development. Nidan – According to Amarakosha, it is the initial cause of disease gives the meaning as nishchaya. The nidan is the cause and it is first among nidan -panchaka.

### CLASSIFICATION OF NIDAN

According to Charaka Samhita, there are three types of causes of diseases in general i.e. excessive utilisation, nonutilisation and wrong utilisation of objects, acts and time10. These are Asatmyendriyarthasamyoga, Prajnaparadha and Kala. Madhavakara has also discussed the similar causes. The objects of senses are five and further subdivided each into three, so totally 15 varieties of unwholesome conjunction of sense organ is observed and it is the root cause for the manifestation of diseases. Asatmyendriyarthasamyoga means unwholesome contact of Chakshurindriya, Shruvanendriya, Ghranendriya, Rasanendriya, and Sparshanendriya with their objects. Prajnaparadha means wrong utilisation of speech, body and mind. Some says even sinful acts also responsible for intellectual blesphemy. Kala is known as

transforming or consequence. Kala is the unit of time comprises of hemanta ritu, grishma ritu and varsha ritu characterised by cold, hot and rain respectively. Unhealthy season is considered one of the causes of the diseases.

Cakrapanidatta has discussed nidan of two types for all the diseases in the living beings- Sadharana and Asadharana karana. Among these Asadharana karana include Ahara etc. which is responsible for vitiation of vatadi doshas in individual and sadharana karana means which are shared commonly by all the persons of a locality viz. Vata, Jala, Desha and Kala described in Janpadoddhvansa-Viman chapter of Charak-Samhita. As per Madhukosh- tika of Madhav-Nidan, nidan is classified in to four types- Sannikrishta hetu, Viprakrishta hetu, Vyabhichari hetu and Pradhanika hetu11.

### SANNIKRISHTA HETU

The factors which causes the prakopa of the doshas and do not expect the sanchaya etc. stages. For examples- Diurnal variation of doshas takes place routinely i.e. during night, day and during digestion, for this sanchaya of doshas is not essential, it manifests naturally. It is the proximal/ immediate cause of the disease. For example; intake of ruksha etc. Diet in Jwara roga is sannikrishta karan where as Rudra-kopa can be taken as viprakrishta karan.

### VIPRAKRISTA HETU

It is the distant cause for the production of disease. For examples- Sanchaya of kapha doshas in Hemanta ritu produces disease in Vasanta ritu (spring season). It is also accepted that Javara manifest due to warth of God Rudra is also the viprakrishta karana.

### VYABHICHARI HETU

The cause which is weak and unable to produce the diseases, but act as a carrier. When favourable situation arises for the manifestation of diseases, due to certain factors, even unwholesome food does not produce diseases immediately. PRADHANIKA HETUIt is the powerful cause which produce diseases instantaneously like poison, Accumulation of doshas is not necessary, sudden manifestation of the symptoms are seen. Again as per Madhukosh- tika of Madhav-Nidan, nidan has been classified in to three types - Doshahetu, Vyadhi hetu and Ubhaya hetu.

### DOSHA HETU

Normal accumulation, aggravation and pacification of doshas take place in respective seasons due to madhura etc. rasas is called dosha hetu. Means factors responsible for the aggravation of doshas comes under the heading 'dosha-hetu' in the context of nidan of diseases.

### VYADHI HETU

Vyadhi hetu are those which are responsible for the development of specific disease by specific etiology. For

example: regular consumption of 'mrit' (clay) manifest mritbhakshanajanya pandu roga.

#### **UBHAYA HETU**

Specific factors which aggravate vata and rakta and simultaneously manifest vatarakta-vyadhi. Here causative factors aggravate dosha & simultaneously manifest diseases. Again as per Madhukosh- tika of Madhav-Nidan, nidan has been classified into two types - Utpadaka hetu and Vyanjaka hetu.

#### **UTPADAKA HETU**

Utpadaka-hetu are those which favour accumulation of respective dosha in respective season due to seasonal effect. For example: in hemant ritu due to madhura rasa, accumulation of kapha is observed.

#### **VYANJAKA HETU**

Vyanjaka hetu are those which stimulate the development of diseases. For examples: accumulated kapha in hemant ritu produces disorders of kapha in vasanta ritu due to effect of sun. Here effect of sun is the Vyanjaka hetu. Again as per Madhukosh- tika of Madhav-Nidan, nidan has been classified into two types - Bahya hetu and Abhyantara hetu.

#### **BAHYA HETU**

Various unwholesome diets, activities, ill effects of season and such other external factors producing disease, are called bahya hetu.

#### **ABHYANTAR HETU**

Abhyantara hetu means internal factors of the disease such as the dosha and dushya involved. Again as per Madhukosh- tika of Madhav-Nidan, nidan has been classified In to two types - Prakrita hetu and Vaikrita hetu.

**PRAKRITA HETU** - Prakrita hetu are those which causes aggravation of dosha/doshas naturally. For example: Kapha prakopa in vasanta ritu, Pitta prakopa in Sarad ritu, Vata prakopa in varsha ritu is due to the seasonal effect.

**VAIKRITA HETU**-Vaikrita hetu are those which cause dosha prakopa or vyadhi irrespective of seasonal effects. For example: in vasanta ritu – pitta-vayu prakopa, in varsha ritu – kapha-pitta prakopa, in Sarad ritu – kapha-vata prakopa. Again as per Madhukosh- tika of Madhav-Nidan, nidan has been classified into two types - Anubandhya hetu and Anubandha hetu.

**ANUBANDHYA HETU** - It is the prime cause.

**ANUBANDHA HETU** - It is the secondary cause. Acharya Gananatha Sen has classified nidana into two types i.e. Samanya nidana and Vishista- nidana.

**SAMANYA- NIDAN** - Unwholesome Ahar and vihar are general etiological factors.

**VISHISHTA- NIDAN** - Shastra, agni, krimi and sarpa etc. are called specific etiological factors. Further he has explained that the specific etiological factors are nimitta for Agantuja roga which directly produce the disease. Among specific etiological factors visha, Shastra, agni, sthula krimi, sarpa and dansa are gross specific etiological factors. Microorganism, sukshma krimi etc. are the minute specific etiological factors.

#### **SIGNIFICANCE OF NIDAN**

Hetu is the prime factors for the causation of disease. That's why both Acharyas Charak and Sushrut have advised to avoid the etiological factors<sup>12</sup> and it is the primary step in the management of any disease. Hetu gives an idea to diagnose the disease and as well as some time clue to predict the forthcoming disease. Nidan or hetu are of two types i.e. samanya and vishishta. Samanya nidana helps to know the effect on the doshas where as vishishta nidana help to predict specific disease such as; Mridbhakshanajanya Pandu-roga, Makshika-bhakshanajanya-Chhardi etc. Hetu or nidana is useful to know the prognosis as it is well versed in the text that intake or indulgence in all the etiological factors causes severe disease resulting in incurability<sup>13</sup> where as intake of less hetu causes mild disease which is easy to cure<sup>14</sup>. It is equally important in treatment also as physician advice the chikitsa considering the cause such as diseases caused by extreme effect of cold are treated by hot substances and vice versa. Diseases which are caused by over indulgence in fatty substances are treated by non-unctuous substances and many other examples of karananurup-chikitsa can be quoted in this context. Therefore, nidana is useful in diagnosis, prognosis, and treatment and even in protection of health.

#### **DISCUSSION**

Different Acharyas have discussed nidana in their own way which enriches the concept of nidana. Different classifications of nidana are available and each of them is useful in clinical practice. Different types can be justified by the quotation of Acharya Charaka<sup>15</sup> - "भेत्ता हि भेद्यम् अन्यथा भिन्नति" Each and every classification gives an important idea about the nature of the etiological factor such as Pradhanik hetu is quite different from vyabhichari hetu, similarly sannikrishta and viprakrishta hetu, utpadak and vyanjak hetu, prakriti and vaikrit hetu are either opposite in nature or play different type of role in the manifestation of disease. For instance if we check the disease process at the level of utpadak hetu, it is easy to cure, but when vyanjak hetu takes place definitely more aggravation is there. Treatment of asatmyendriyarth samyog is not similar to prajnaparadh and vice versa. That's why different classifications give different messages which are altogether useful in clinical practices. Nidana word has been used in Ayurveda in both the sense i.e. vyadhijanaka and vyadhibodhak but this article is mainly focused on vyadhijanaka nidana.

**CONCLUSION**

Nidan is defined as the external cause/causes of the disease. Elucidation of nidan is necessary for the proper identification of Dosha, the Roga, Rogavasta, Roga Bala, and Sadhyata- Asadhyata of disease. The knowledge of nidan is useful for diagnosis, prognosis and treatment. Even one can protect his health if he knows about the nidan of various diseases. The first line of treatment is nidan - parivarjana (to avoid causative factors) of diseases. Acharya Charaka says that a physician should first of all diagnose the disease and then he should select proper medicine. Thereafter, he should administer the therapy applying the knowledge of the science of medicine. A physician who initiates treatment without proper diagnosis of the disease can accomplish the desired object only by chance; the fact that he is well acquainted with the knowledge of application of medicine does not necessarily guarantee his success.

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