

NYAYA DARSHANA AS AN EPISTEMOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK FOR AYURVEDIC DIAGNOSTICS

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ABSTRACT

Nyaya Darshana, propounded by *Akshapada Gautama* through the *Nyaya Sutras*, represents a foundational system of Indian epistemology that systematically explains the means of acquiring valid knowledge. By establishing four *Pramanas*, *Pratyaksha* (perception), *Anumana* (inference), *Upamana* (comparison), and *Shabda* (verbal testimony), it provides a structured method for resolving doubt and attaining certainty. This comprehensive literature review critically examines classical *Nyaya* texts, authoritative commentaries, and *Ayurvedic Samhitas* to explore the philosophical foundations, historical development, and clinical relevance of *Nyaya Pramanas* in *Roga-Rogi Pareeksha* (examination of disease and patient). The review traces the evolution of *Nyaya* from *Vedic Anvikshiki* through *Prachina* and *Navya Nyaya* phases, elaborates the sixteen *Padarthas*, and highlights their

application in *Ayurvedic* diagnostic reasoning. Integrative references from *Charaka Samhita* and *Sushruta Samhita* demonstrate that *Nyaya* logic forms the epistemological backbone of *Ayurvedic* clinical assessment. While *Ayurveda* selectively adopts *Nyaya Pramanas*, it also expands the epistemic framework by incorporating *Yukti* as a distinctive reasoning tool. The study establishes that *Nyaya Darshana* significantly enhances diagnostic accuracy, prevents fallacious reasoning, and strengthens evidence-based *Ayurvedic* practice. Renewed emphasis on *Pramana*-based reasoning is essential for advancing contemporary *Ayurveda* in academic, clinical, and research domains.

KEYWORDS: *Ayurveda, Pramana, Roga-Rogi Pareeksha, Nyaya Darshana, Anvikshiki*

INTRODUCTION

Indian philosophical traditions, collectively known as *Darshanas*, evolved from the *Veda* as systematic inquiries into reality, knowledge, suffering, and liberation. These *Darshanas* aim not merely at theoretical thought but at the realization of truth through disciplined cognition. Among the six *Astika Darshanas* that accept the authority of the *Vedas*, *Nyaya Darshana* occupies a unique position as *Pramana Shastra*, the science of valid knowledge.

Nyaya Darshana was systematized by *Akshapada Gautama* in the *Nyaya Sutras*, which comprise 5 *Adhyayas*, 10 *Ahnikas*, and 528 *Sutras*. The primary objective of *Nyaya* is the attainment of *Apavarga* (liberation), which is achieved by the removal of false knowledge through the acquisition of valid cognition. *Nyaya* holds that all human suffering originates from *Mithya Jnana* (flawed knowledge), and therefore emphasizes epistemological discipline as the path to ultimate well-being. *Nyaya* originates from the ancient discipline of *Anvikshiki*, described in classical literature as the science of inquiry combining *Atmavidya* (knowledge of the self) and *Hetuvidya* (science of reasoning). Due to this background, *Nyaya* is also referred to as *Tarka Shastra*, *Vada Vidya*, *Pramana Shastra*, and *Hetu Shastra*. While *Nyaya* shares metaphysical similarities with *Vaisheshika Darshana*, its primary contribution lies in logic, epistemology, and the methodology of reasoning.

The relevance of *Nyaya Darshana* to *Ayurveda* becomes evident in *Roga-Rogi Pareeksha*, where accurate diagnosis depends upon systematic observation, inference, comparison, and authoritative knowledge. Classical *Ayurvedic* texts indirectly adopt *Nyaya* principles while addressing diagnosis, prognosis, and therapeutic decision-making. In the present era of

integrative medicine and evidence-based healthcare, revisiting *Nyaya*'s epistemology is crucial for strengthening *Ayurvedic* diagnostics and research methodology.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study is a qualitative and doctrinal literature review methodology with thematic synthesis. Primary sources include classical *Nyaya* texts such as the *Nyaya Sutras* of *Akshapada Gautama*, *Nyaya Bhashya* by *Vatsyayana*, *Nyaya Vartika* by *Udyotakara*, *Nyaya Vartika Tatparya Tika* by *Vachaspati Mishra*, and *Navya Nyaya* works including *Tattvachintamani* by *Gangesh Upadhyaya* and *Tarkasangraha* by *Annambhatta*. *Ayurvedic* references include *Charaka Samhita* and *Sushruta Samhita*, with particular focus on sections dealing with *Pramanas*, diagnostic principles, and philosophical foundations. Secondary sources, such as *Indian Philosophy* by Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, were consulted for historical contextualization.

RESULTS

Historical Evolution of Nyaya Darshana

Nyaya Darshana has its intellectual roots in the *Vedic* and *Upanishadic* period, where rational inquiry into reality gradually evolved into *Anvikshiki*. *Manu* and *Kautilya* recognized *Anvikshiki* as an independent discipline essential for intellectual clarity and authority. *Gautama* systematized this tradition by composing the *Nyaya Sutras*, providing a structured framework for logic and reasoning.

The development of *Nyaya* can be broadly classified into two phases: *Prachina Nyaya* and *Navya Nyaya*. *Prachina Nyaya* focuses on foundational concepts such as *Pramana*, *Prameya*, and *Panchavayava Vakya*. *Navya Nyaya*, inaugurated by *Gangesh Upadhyaya* through *Tattvachintamani*, introduced refined analytical language to remove ambiguity in cognition. This development significantly influenced later Indian logic and debate traditions. Throughout its history, *Nyaya* involved in difficult philosophical debates with Buddhist and Jain schools, leading to further refinement of its epistemological tools. Despite historical challenges, *Nyaya* maintained its relevance and continued to influence allied systems such as *Ayurveda*.

Fundamental Concepts of Nyaya Darshana

***Padarthas* of Nyaya Darshana:** *Nyaya* enumerates sixteen *Padarthas*, which together constitute a complete system of inquiry: *Pramana* (means of valid knowledge), *Prameya*

(objects of valid knowledge), *Samshaya* (doubt), *Prayojana* (purpose), *Drishtanta* (example), *Siddhanta* (established doctrine), *Avayava* (components of syllogism), *Tarka* (hypothetical reasoning), *Nirnaya* (ascertainment), *Vada* (constructive discussion), *Jalpa* (wrangling), *Vitanda* (destructive criticism), *Hetvabhasa* (fallacy), *Chala* (quibble), *Jati* (false analogy), *Nigrahasthana* (point of defeat). These *Padarthas* function not merely as philosophical categories but as practical tools for disciplined reasoning and debate.

Pramana in Nyaya Darshana: *Nyaya* accepts four *Pramanas* as valid means of knowledge.

1. Pratyaksha: It refers to direct perception through the senses. It is classified into *Nirvikalpa* (indeterminate) and *Savikalpa* (determinate) perception, as well as *Laukika* (ordinary) and *Alaukika* (extraordinary) perception. In *Ayurveda*, it forms the basis of clinical examination through *Darshana*, *Sparshana*, and other observational methods.

2. Anumana: It is inferential knowledge based on *Vyapti* (invariable concomitance). *Nyaya* classifies *Anumana* into *Purvavat*, *Sheshavat*, and *Samanyatodrishta*. The *Panchavayava Vakya*, *Pratijna*, *Hetu*, *Udaharana*, *Upanaya*, and *Nigamana* ensure logical validity. In *Ayurvedic* diagnostics, it is essential for understanding *Dosha* involvement, disease progression, and prognosis.

3. Upamana: It refers to knowledge gained through comparison. It enables recognition of unfamiliar entities by analogy with known objects. In *Ayurveda*, it assists in identifying new or uncommon diseases by comparing them with classical descriptions.

4. Shabda: It is authoritative verbal testimony derived from reliable sources. It is classified into *Vaidika* and *Laukika*. In *Ayurveda*, it corresponds to *Aptavakya*, encompassing the authority of *Samhitas*, experienced teachers, and classical commentaries.

Nyaya Darshana and Ayurveda

Ayurveda, by its very nature, is a logical and rational science. It shares a common epistemological foundation with *Nyaya* while adapting it for practical clinical application. *Ayurveda* accepts *Pratyaksha*, *Anumana*, *Upamana*, and *Shabda* as primary means of knowledge.^[1] Additionally, it introduces *Yukti* as a unique reasoning tool for therapeutic planning, which is not separately accepted in *Nyaya Darshana*. *Nyaya* contributes significantly to *Ayurvedic* diagnostic methodology by providing clarity in observation, inference, and debate. Concepts such as *Samshaya*, *Tarka*, and *Nirnaya* are especially useful

in differential diagnosis. *Vada* principles guide scholarly discussions and clinical reasoning in *Ayurvedic* education.

However, the ultimate goals of the two systems differ. *Nyaya* primarily aims at liberation through correct knowledge, whereas *Ayurveda* focuses on the maintenance of health and alleviation of disease. Despite this difference, their epistemological harmony strengthens *Ayurvedic* diagnostics.

Clinical Application of *Nyaya Pramana* in *Roga-Rogi Pareeksha*

In clinical practice, *Nyaya Pramanas* are applied in an integrated way. For example, in a case of *Vataja Gridhrasi*, *Pratyaksha* reveals gait abnormality and dryness, *Anumana* infers Vata aggravation from etiological factors, *Upamana* compares the condition with classical descriptions, and *Shabda* confirms the diagnosis through authoritative texts. This integrated approach minimizes diagnostic errors and prevents fallacious reasoning.

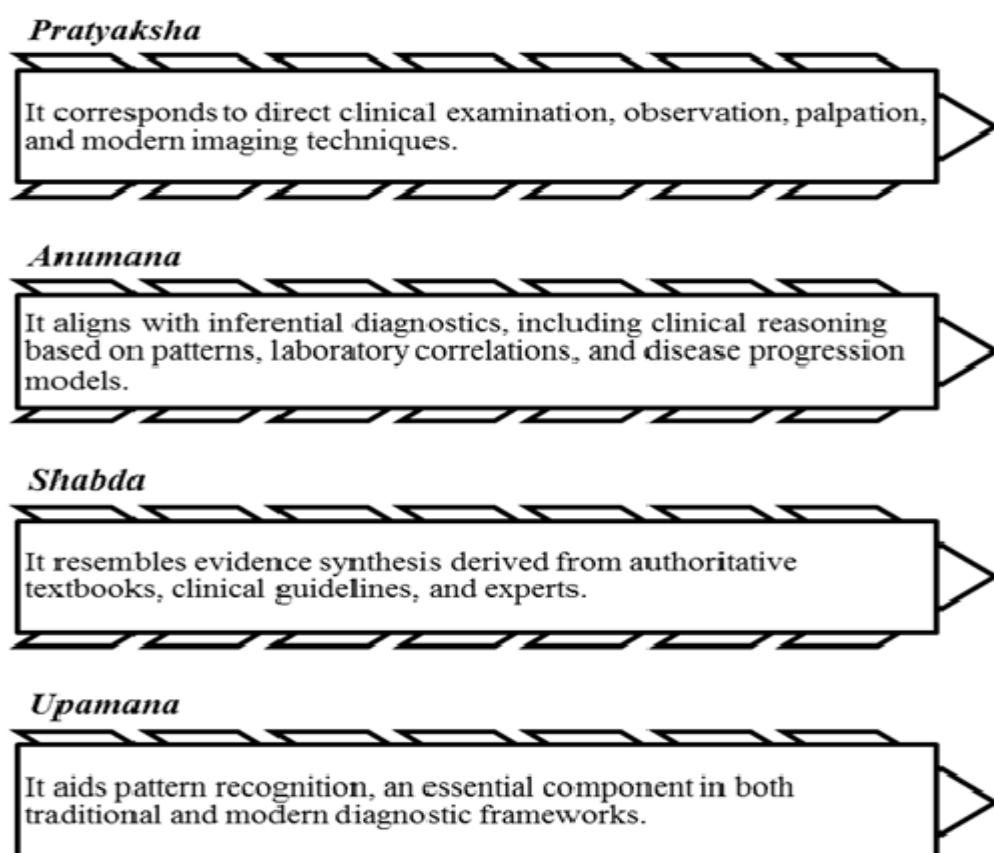


Figure 1: *Nyaya Pramanas* Equivalence with Modern Diagnostic Methodologies.

DISCUSSION

Nyaya Darshana provides a highly structured epistemological and logical framework that elevates *Ayurvedic* diagnosis from predominantly experience-based or intuitive judgment to a disciplined process of validated cognition. By systematizing the acquisition of knowledge through well-defined *Pramanas* and *Padarthas*, *Nyaya* ensures that clinical conclusions are derived through rational study rather than assumption. This is particularly significant in *Ayurveda*, where an accurate understanding of *Dosha*, *Dushya*, *Srotas*, and *Samprapti* is essential for effective management. From a contemporary perspective, *Nyaya Pramanas* demonstrate parallels with modern diagnostic methodologies (Figure 1).

Despite these conceptual alignments, the structured and clear application of *Pramana* theory in contemporary *Ayurvedic* research and clinical documentation remains limited. Diagnostic reasoning is often implied rather than systematically articulated using *Pramana*-based frameworks. This gap weakens the epistemological transparency of *Ayurvedic* practice, particularly in interdisciplinary and integrative healthcare settings. Formal incorporation of *Nyaya*-based reasoning models could enhance methodological clarity, reproducibility, and academic acceptance of *Ayurvedic* diagnostics.

Furthermore, *Nyaya*'s emphasis on logical debate and critical examination is especially relevant in *Ayurvedic* education. Training students to consciously apply *Pratyaksha*, *Anumana*, *Upamana*, and *Shabda* during *Roga-Rogi Pareeksha* raises analytical thinking, reduces repetition, and strengthens clinical confidence. Such an approach aligns with the classical vision of *Ayurveda* as both a science and an art grounded in rational inquiry.

CONCLUSION

Nyaya Darshana offers a crucial epistemological foundation that significantly strengthens *Ayurvedic* diagnostics. Its *Pramana*-based framework provides clarity, objectivity, and methodological discipline to *Roga-Rogi Pareeksha*, ensuring that clinical knowledge is acquired, analyzed, and validated through systematic reasoning. By transforming perception, inference, comparison, and authoritative testimony into structured tools of diagnosis, *Nyaya* enhances both diagnostic accuracy and therapeutic decision-making.

The integration of *Nyaya* principles into *Ayurveda* reflects a union of philosophy and clinical science. While *Ayurveda* retains its unique practical orientation and introduces additional reasoning tools such as *Yukti*, *Nyaya* supplies the logical support necessary to prevent error,

bias, and ambiguity in diagnosis. This integration reinforces *Ayurveda*'s scientific credibility without compromising its holistic foundations. Contemporary evidence-based and integrative medicine calls for a renewed and deliberate use of *Nyaya* reasoning within *Ayurvedic* education, clinical practice, and research. Incorporating *Pramana*-based diagnostic models, structured case documentation, and logical validation methods can significantly enhance reliability, research reproducibility, and interdisciplinary communication.

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