



## Review Article

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### RELEVANCE OF UPAMANA PRAMANA IN UNDERSTANDING THE CONCEPTS OF AYURVEDA

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#### ABSTRACT

Pramana refer "means of knowledge". Upamana is a pramana in which Knowledge is conveyed by analogies. Analogies are the definitive outlines which usually narrate the gist of a subject. Upamana Pramana has a vital role in describing the concepts of Ayurveda in a simple and understandable level. This Pramana is extensively found to describe various factors in all the sections of both Brihattrayi and Laghutrayi. Facts regarding perception of Shareera, identification of medicinal plant and principals of diagnosis and treatment shall be understood in a better way by comparing a known object to that of unknown. By the simple analogies the specifics of Ayurveda are unfolded in an apt manner.

**Key words:** Upamana pramana, Lakshana, Shareera, Analogy.

#### INTRODUCTION

Upamana, the science of resemblance and similarity plays a major role in understanding various aspects of Ayurveda. This pramana is utilized to convey, clarify and direct the fundamentals of Ayurveda. One of the vadamarga (technical rules for debate) as per Charaka acharya and a means of knowledge as per Sushruta acharya, Upamana are comprehensively used to compare and analyze the unknown object from known.

#### Utility of Upamana in various subjects of Ayurveda

Ayurveda, the Science of life deals with the regimens to achieve the ultimate state of health. This Skill and knowledge-based Science is taught in Systemic and universal manner to meet its integrity. Utmost dedication, concentration and memory are the means to achieve knowledge. Upamana Pramana has the key role to play in learning process.

#### Context of Shareera

In both Shareera Rachana and Shareera Kriya Upamana Pramana is used extensively. Analogies were used based on colour, size, shape and textures to clarify and support a context.

#### Based on colour

- Sira Shareera: Aruna Neela, Shukla varnas are used as upamanas to describe types of Sira shareera<sup>1</sup>.
- Shuddha Aartava Lakshana:

Padma (lotus), Alaktaka (one type of paint used for cosmetic purpose) and Gunjaphala seeds are used as upamanas to denote Shuddha Aartava<sup>2</sup>.

Laksharasa (water made from Laksha) and Asruk of Shasha (Rabbit's blood) are also used as upamanas to describe Shuddha Aartava lakshanas<sup>3</sup>.

#### Based on shape /size

Hridaya (Heart) Swarupa: Hridaya is described to resemble Adhomukha Pundarika.<sup>4</sup> (Inverted bud of Lotus)

Netra (Eye) Shareera: While explaining the Swarupa of Netra, Sushruta mentions it as Vritta (round) and resemble Gosthana in Shape<sup>5</sup>.

Garbhashaya (Uterus) Swarupa: Garbhashaya resembles to the spiral whirls of conch shell and Garbhashaya Mukha as mouth of the Rohita matsya<sup>6</sup> (type of fish)

Snayu (ligaments) Aakara: Swarupa of Snayu has been compared to Shana<sup>7</sup>.

Types of Asthi (Bone): Asthi prakaras like valaya (curved bone), Nalaka (long bone) and kapala (flat bone) also mentions about use of Upamana pramana to describe their structure<sup>8</sup>.

Types of Sandhi (Joint): Sandhis are of eight types. Various upamanas denote the structure of Sandhis. Ulukhala Sandhi describes the parts of Sandhi as in Ulukhala shape which are seen in vankshana and Amsa Sandhi (Shoulder joint).<sup>9</sup>

Peshi Shareera: Peshi are of 12 types as per Sushruta where Vritta (round), Pruthu (flattened), Anu (minute), etc denotes the importance of Upamana pramana<sup>10</sup>.

Second month of fetal development, Acharya Sushruta explains that if the developing Garbha resembles the shape of Pinda (round mass) it results in male progeny, if Peshi akara (elongated) female progeny and results in napumsaka if it has a shape of Arbuda (tumor).<sup>11</sup>

To establish the Sarvanga vyapat of Shukra Acharya Sushruta gives two beautiful Upamanas as existence of Ghee in Milk and Jaggery in sugarcane juice.<sup>12</sup>

## Dravya guna (Pharmacognosy and Pharmacology)

Identification and authentication of a medicinal plant has a major role to play in preparation of medicine, formulation etc. Some of the dravyas like Bhoomyamalaki, Shankhapushpi, Krishna

Jeeraka, Swarna ksheeri and many more have their popular name on the basis of famous Upamana. Each dravya is identified by morphological characters. Some of them are listed below as examples

Table 1: Concept of Upamana pramana for Nomenclature of Medicinal plants

External features	Size/shape	Colour	Texture
Gandharvahasta Chitra beeja These refer to Eranda	Bruhataphala Valliphala These refer to Kushmanda	Tamra pallava Hemapushpi These refer to Ashoka	Khara patra-Parijata
Kankatika- Atibala	Sukshma- Ela	Nilapushpi- Atasi	Kshurapatra-Kusha
Chaturangula-Aaragvadha	Mahaskandha- Jambu	Tamrapushpi- Dhataki	Kharamanjari-Apamarga
Ghritapura Naktamala These refer to karanja	Vritta phala – Dadima	Peeta pushpi in- Atibala	Karkasha- kasamarda
Dadhiphala- Kapittha	Pinditaka- Madanphala	Dhavala Swetachada These refer to Arjuna	Kharashaka- Bharangi <sup>13</sup>

In the above-mentioned table various colour, texture, shape and size of known things are utilized to identify medicinal plants by its morphological characters.

## Significance of Upamana in Nidana (Diagnosis)

An accurate diagnosis is the key to Success. Upamana pramana has been used extensively in the context of Nidana panchaka (five diagnostic principles).

Namakarana Siddhanta: Nomenclature of the disease is based on the presentation of disease.

- Gridhrasi is named as the gait of the patient resembles to Gridhra.
- Rapid nature of spread of disease– Visarpa. (erysipelas)
- Growth disorder like a bush – Gulma. (type of lump)
- Disease resembling a stone- Asthila.
- Rigid spasm of the body with fever- Dandaka Jwara.

Nidana panchakas are the basic tools for final diagnosis. Upamana pramana is used vividly to describe the Pradhana vedana of the disease in terms of inspection and palpation findings.

## Darshana Pariksha (Inspection)

- Galganda (goiter): Swelling at neck which resemble to that of Mushkavat (scrotum).<sup>14</sup>
- Valmeeka: Disease which resembles to a Valmeeka (Ant hill) in its presentation<sup>15</sup>.
- Types of Bhagna (Fracture): Types of Bhagna such as Ashwa karna, churnita, vakra are examples where Upamana influence their nomenclature.<sup>16</sup>
- Kshudra roga (Minor diseases): Among 44 kshudra rogas explained by Acharya Sushruta many of the conditions were named based on their inspection. E.g. yavaprakhya, Kachhapika, Pashana Gardabha, Padminikantaka<sup>17</sup> etc
- Pitta and Kaphaja Vidradhi lakshana: Pakwaudumbara (fig) and sharaava are respectively used as upamanas to describe the colour and extent of inflammation<sup>18</sup>.
- Prameha pidaka (carbuncles): All the ten types of Prameha pidakas are named based on inspection findings with suitable upamanas. E.g. Sharavika, Sarshapika, Vidarika and so on<sup>19</sup>.

- Types of Bhagandara (Fistula-in-ano): shataponaka, shambookavarta Ustragreeva etc are the types of Bhagandara and named as per their clinical presentation.<sup>20</sup>
- Types of Ashmari: Ashmari lakshanas have the influence of Upamana. E.g. Vataja Ashmari as Kadambapushpa sadrusha, Pittaja Ashmari as Bhallatakasthi sadrusha and Kaphaja Ashmari as Madhukapuspavarna sadrusha<sup>21</sup>.
- Pittaja Gulma Lakshana: Haridra and Harita varnas are used while describing the appearance of skin, nails, eye, urine and stool in Pittaja Gulma<sup>22</sup>.
- Saptavidha kushta Lakshanas: Various colors like Raktabha, Neela, Peeta, syava Aruna etc and Ruksha (dryness), Parusha (rough) and Mandala upamas are used to describe Saptavidha kushta Lakshanas.<sup>23</sup>
- Sparshana Pariksha (Palpation)
- Kaphaja Granthi: Pashanavat Mahan (broad) and Ghana (thick) nature has been explained in kaphaja granthi<sup>24</sup>.
- Vatasteela: Asteelavat (Stony hard) consistency is used to describe the lakshanas of Vatasteela during Palpation<sup>25</sup>.
- Pashanagardabha: Sthira (stable) and kathina (hardness) are pratyatma lakshana of Pashanagardabha<sup>26</sup>.

## Upamana pramana in the context of Chikitsa (Treatment)

### Kshara Application (Application of caustics)

In internal hemorrhoids, selected Pratisarana kshara (external application of alkali) has to be applied and retained at the pathological site for 100 Matra kala, till samyak kshara dagdha lakshanas appear as pakwa jamboophala sadrusha (black plum)<sup>27</sup>.

### Samyak Dagdha lakshana

While explaining the Samyak Dagdha lakshana Talavarna has been mentioned<sup>28</sup>.

In the above therapies Samyak dagdha lakshanas are indicated by a suitable Upamana.

### Design of surgical instruments

The surgical instruments including their primary classifications are influenced by Upamana. E.g. Talayantra (spatula),

Mandalagra (circular knife). Surgical instruments are designed based on their utility and named after the Upamana used.<sup>29</sup>

### Rules of Incisions

Bhedana is one of the important Shashtra karma where incisions are taken as per the pathological presentation and its extent. In Sushruta Samhita 5<sup>th</sup> chapter enlists them as Chandramandala (circular incision), Ardachandrakruti (semicircular incision) etc and also mentions about their standards.<sup>30</sup>

Incisions should be strictly followed or else it results in complications.

### Concept of Arishta (fatal signs of disease) lakshana

For the prognosis of the disease Arishta lakshanas also play a crucial role. Brihatrayi document abundant examples of Upamana pramana in this regard too. In Charaka Samhita; all the 12 chapters of Indriya sthana discuss fatal signs of the disease with suitable Upamanas.

- Odor of wine, sandal, jasmine and lotus from wound, reddish appearance with black colour discharge, etc are considered fatal signs with respect to Vrana<sup>31</sup>.
- Jamboophala sadrusha Oshtha, (black plum) Shyava Danta, (bluish black teeth) are considered as fatal signs in relation to Avayava vikruti lakshanas.<sup>32</sup>
- In Darshanendriya Arishta, Perception of Akasha as Ghaneebhuta (thick) has been mentioned.<sup>33</sup>

### DISCUSSION

Pramanas are the means to understand knowledge. Pratyaksha (direct perception), Anumana (inferential reasoning), Yukti (logical management) and Upamana pramanas help to understand the concepts of Ayurveda.

Upamana pramana finds the prime place by utilizing the famous analogies to unfold the treasures (concepts and principles) of Ayurveda. It uses common/known elements of nature to describe the hidden/unknown facts of Ayurveda. The analogies used in micro level (2<sup>nd</sup> month of fetal development) and macro level are appreciable.

Upamana utilizes every possible element from nature maybe it is living, non-living, herbal, animal origins etc with which the facts can be conveyed in a convincing manner.

Upamana pramana plays a key role in diagnosis and treatment aspect where it gives leading diagnostic and therapeutic indicators to diagnose and treat effectively.

Upamana pramana is very crucial in narrating fatal signs of disease.

In contemporary science also the theory of Analogy has a role to play. Use of analogies to describe anatomical structures like camera for Eye, A pump for Heart, blooming of flower to process of dilatation of cervix and so on. Even this theory is used in counseling the patients by comparing their affected organ with that of Analogies. E.g. Cardiovascular system: For Myocardial infarction the analogy of Rubber band is mentioned it narrates as- When you have a heart attack, it is similar to placing a tight rubber band around your little finger. First it hurts, then after a while, you don't feel anything. Your finger turns blue and can be permanently damaged.

In Dermatology for Wound healing it is compared to caring of a plant. "If you let the plant dry out or let the weeds flourish, it will not grow well. You need to keep the wound moist with antibiotic ointment and prevent the scab from growing".<sup>34</sup>

Even the Analogies speak less about the context to which they are referred, but they convey the relevant facts for common understanding. Along with other Pramanas, Upamana definitely contribute for knowledge perception.

### CONCLUSION

Upamana pramana is the easy tool to validate the unknown facts by using a familiar analogy. Upamana Pramana is a helpful guide in nidana as it addresses the pratyatma lakshanas of the diseases both in Darshana and Sparshana aspects. Various fields of Ayurveda have great contribution and clarity by Upamana pramana, as it narrates the facts in a convincing manner. Samyak lakshanas of Para-surgical procedures are indicated by suitable upamanas. By its wide range, scope and approach Upamana pramana is rightly quoted as fourth pramana in Sushruta Samhita and one of the important vadamarga by Charaka acharya.

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