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Evaluation of 'Nadi Pariksha' as a Diagnostic Tool in Modern Perspective: A Conceptual Study

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ABSTRACT

Nadi Pariksha is one of the important parameter mentioned under Ashtvidha Rog Pariksha by Yogratnakar. He has given so much importance to this Pariksha that he placed Nadi at the topmost position under Ashtvidha Pariksha. One can determine the healthy and diseased state of the individuals as well as normalcy or disequilibrium of Dosha, Dhatu,, Mala and Agni is assessed through the behaviour of different types of Pulses. The Concept of Nadi Pariksha found in various ancient Ayurvedic Samhitas like Sharangdhar, Bhavprakash, Yogratnakar Ravansamhita, Kanad etc. Acharya Sharangdhara flourished it in his work as a means of diagnosis and prognosis. The aim of this work is better understanding of the different characters of Pulse mentioned in Ayurvedic literatures in modern perspective.

KEYWORDS

Nadi Pariksha, Rog pariksha



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INTRODUCTION

Nadi Pariksha is one of the important parameter mentioned under Ashtvidha Rog Pariksha by Yogratnakar¹. He has given so much importance to this *Pariksha* that he placed *Nadi* at the topmost position under *Ashtvidha Pariksha*. *Nadi Pariksha* is being practised as a diagnostic tool by the Ayurvedic physicians since the time immemorial. It is a non-invasive technique that enables to reach the root cause of health issues and not just address the symptoms. One can determine the healthy and diseased state of the individuals as well as normalcy or disequilibrium of *Dosha*, *Dhatu*, *Mala* and *Agni* is assessed through the behaviour of different types of Pulses. The information about *Nadi* is available in the form of *Shlokas* in ancient literatures. The information in the *Shlokas* regarding *Nadi Pariksha* is written in concised manner and decorative language Ayurvedic Physicians (*Vaidyas*) described the Pulse as mirror of whole body. They stressed the importance of examination of Pulse for understanding the pathogenesis, diagnosing various disease states and giving a reasonable prognosis.

NADI PARIKSHA: REVIEW

Description of *Nadi Vigyana* is very brief in Ayurvedic texts as well as the term '*Nadi*'

has not been used for *Nadi Vigyan*, but it is used for various meanings, e.g. *Nadi Vrana*, *Garbhanadi*, *Shaka* etc. There are some references in Samhitas, on the basis of which we can say that our Acharyas of samhita period were very well conscious of the importance of *Nadi Vigyana* but they didn't pay much attention to it and their knowledge related to *Nadi Vigyana* was limited only up to the prognosis of disease, not for the diagnosis.

Acharya Charak has described *sparsha Pariksha* (palpation & percussion), which is concerned with diagnosis as well as prognosis of the disease. According to him when a pulsatile area becomes non-pulsatile, it is said to be having bad prognosis². He has also described that the absence of pulsation at those places where continuous pulsation is always present, it indicates death³.

Nadi Pariksha is supposed not to be the original contribution of Indian system of medicine. Perhaps it has been introduced by other contemporary system of medicine to India. For the first time in India, followers of siddha system like *Kanada* and *Ravana* described in detailed about *Nadi Pariksha*, and later on it was adopted by disciples of Ayurveda, like *Sharangdhara*, *Bhavprakash*, *Yogaratanakar* etc. *Sharangadhara* wrote his work on therapeutics, known as *Sharngadhara-*



Samhita. Sharngadhara's description to Pulse examination is condensed only in eight verses (Shlokas)⁴. First verse of the beginning deals with anatomical position of the artery showing its clinical significance as the Pulse. Rest verses deal with fifteen types of Pulses, which can be categorized as below: (a) Pulse in certain physiological states of the body. (b) Pulse in certain mental states. (c) Pulse in certain pathological states of the body⁴.

Further *Bhavprakash* specify about the root of which hand should be examined for *Nadi Pariksha*. He mentioned that *Nadi Pariksha* should be done in the left hand of the females and right hand of the males⁵. He also mentioned about the contradictory condition for the *Nadi Pariksha*. For eg. *Nadi Pariksha* should not be done, when the patient has taken his bath immediately or is thirsty or has come just from the Sun or is tired due to exercise⁵. *Bhavamishra* indicates clearly about the use of three fingers namely, index (*Tarjani*), middle (*Madhyama*) and the ring (*Anamika*) for Pulse examination⁵. These fingers indicate the position of *Vata, Pitta and Kapha Nadi* respectively.

Further *Yogratnakar* described about the methodology of the Pulse examination. First the elbow (*Kurpar*) of patient should be slightly flexed to the left and the wrist slightly bent to the left with the fingers

distended and dispersed. In this position the physician should examine the Pulse in the first three hours (*Aik Prahar*) of the morning⁶. Physician after attaining concentration of mind should examine the Pulse repeatedly for three times by pushing and releasing the pressure alternately over it. By this procedure he should decide the condition of *Doshas* in their respective places.

Importance of Pulse Examination

Pulse throws light on the condition of various doshas i.e *Vata, Pitta, Kapha* in the body. It offers one of the important clues for diagnosis of various diseases and also predominant dosha responsible for them even if the patient is unconscious, mentally retarded, deaf and dumb, insane or infant where history taking is not possible.⁷

Necessity of the knowledge of the Pulse
The physician who is well experienced in Pulse examination is able to know any type of abnormality in the patient. The physician who does not know the various examinations of the Pulse, urine and tongue soon kills the patient and is equivalent to Yama. The Pulse felt by the hand can bring light to the various symptoms of the disease just like the strings of a lute give expression to all the musical notes.

How to examine the Pulse -

The Pulse should be examined in left hand of the females and right hand of the males



as per Ayurvedic classics. First the individual should be advised to sit peacefully and comfortably. Next, the forearm should be slightly flexed with the little flexion and a little bit medial rotation of the wrist with fingers dispersed and extended then the three fingers (index, middle and ring finger) of the physician gently touches the skin over the radial artery. The index finger is comfortably placed at the base of the thumb and the other two fingers are placed next to it.

Prohibited time for Pulse Examination⁸-

- The Pulse should not be examined just after the *Tailabhyanga*, sleeping and after finishing meal.
- Person who is hungry, thirsty or heated or who is fatigued due to exercise.
- The Pulse cannot be felt properly in exhaustion after exercise, in crying, after sexual intercourse, after drinking liquor, the unsound condition of mind, after taking bath, after swimming in water, in epilepsy and in asthma.

Qualities of Physician for *Nadi Pariksha*

-
- The Physician who is stable minded, who is of pacified heart and who has got the imaginative power in its highest degree, should with his three fingers feel the Pulse of the right hand and ascertain its movements.

- The Physician who is single minded, who has controlled his passion and who is attentive should feel the Pulse.

- According to Acharayas, that physician is only capable of feeling the Pulse who is attentive, is free from any disease, seated comfortably and in calm position.

Significance of Pulse in relation to *Dosha*⁹:

- The form of *Vatika* Pulse has been standardized with the movement of the *Sarpa* (snake) and *Jaluka* (leech).
- The form of *Pittaj* Pulse has been standardized by correlating it with the movements of *Mandook* (frog).
- The form of *Kaphaja* Pulse has been standardized with the movement of *Hans* (goose).

Assessment of different *Gati* of *Nadi* -

Acharaya sharangdhara has given various similes for the different types of the Pulse. *Vatik* Pulse has been correlated with the movement of snake and leech. The pattern of movement of these animals can be considered as creeping and tremulous. So the correlation with the movements of these animals suggest *Vatik* Pulse that have following graphical characteristics-

- Low amplitude and stroke volume as compared to the *Paittik* and *Kaphaj* Pulse.



- *Vatik* Pulse have conical summit because of sharp rise and sharp fall nature of the Pulse.
- Least sustainability of the Pulse as compared to other type of Pulse.
- Least time interval between two Pulse waves as compared to the *Paittik* and *Kaphaj* Pulse.

The simile given to the *Paittik* Pulse is of *Manduka gati* i.e frog. This simile is given because of the jumping movement of the frog. The Pattern of movement of frog can be considered jumping movement. So the correlation with the movement of frog suggest *Paittik* Pulse which have following graphical characteristics

- Maximum amplitude and stroke volume as compared to the other type of Pulse.
 - Medium sustainability of the Pulse as compared to *Vatik* and *Kaphaj* Pulse.
 - Medium time interval between two
- Pulse waves as compared to the other type of Pulse**
- *Paittik* Pulse also have prominent dicrotic notch.

The simile given to the *Kaphaj* Pulse is of *Hans gati* i.e swan. This simile indicate the stable movement of the animal. So the correlation with these animals movement suggest that *Kaphaj* Pulse have following graphical characteristics

- Medium amplitude and stroke volume as compared to the other type of Pulse.
- Maximum sustainability of the Pulse as compared to *Vatik* and *Paittik* Pulse.
- Maximum time interval between two Pulse waves as compared to the other types of Pulse. Therefore persons with *Kapha dosha* dominancy in his Pulse have lower side of the normal Pulse rate.

In this way we can understand the character of the different types of Pulse mentioned in Ayurvedic literatures in modern perspective which will be beneficial in the estimation of doshas in healthy and diseased state which in turn can be helpful in diagnosis and prognosis of various diseases.

CONCLUSION

The traditional method of *Nadi Pariksha* has become extinct nowadays. The main reason for this is very little research and practice regarding this technique as well as emergence of modern diagnostic tools and techniques. Moreover, due to the commercialization of the conventional diagnostic tools everyone can't afford them while *Nadi Pariksha* is non invasive and cost free diagnostic technique which can be boon for poor patients to rule out the



underlying disease condition. so an attempt is made by this work for the better understanding of the different characters of Pulse mentioned in Ayurvedic literatures.



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