



IMPORTANCE AND UTILITY OF ADHYAPANA VIDHI (TEACHING METHODOLOGY) IN THE PRESENT ERA: A REVIEW

Dr. Shyamsundar Sahu¹, Prof. (Dr.) Manoj Kumar Sahoo², Prof. (Dr.) Krishna Mohanty³

¹PG Scholar, Department of Ayurveda Samhita Siddhanta, Govt. Ayurvedic College & Hospital, Balangir, Odisha, India

²Professor & Principal, Department of Ayurveda Samhita Siddhanta, Govt. Ayurvedic College & Hospital, Balangir, Odisha, India

³Professor, Department of Ayurveda Samhita Siddhanta, Govt. Ayurvedic College & Hospital, Balangir, Odisha, India

ABSTRACT

Background: Ayurveda developed through a structured system of knowledge transmission known as the Guru–Shishya Parampara. Adhyapana Vidhi, the teaching methodology described in classical Ayurvedic texts, plays a vital role in the dissemination and preservation of medical knowledge. Detailed descriptions of teaching methods are available in the Charaka Samhita, particularly in the Rogabhishagjitiya Adhyaya of Vimanasthana.

Objective: To analyze the concept of Adhyapana Vidhi described in classical Ayurvedic literature and explore its relevance in the present educational system.

Materials and Methods: The present study is a qualitative conceptual review based on classical Ayurvedic texts such as Charaka Samhita, Sushruta Samhita, and Ashtanga Hridaya along with contemporary literature related to Ayurvedic education. Relevant references regarding teaching methods, teacher–student relationships, and pedagogical tools were compiled and analyzed thematically.

Results: Classical Ayurvedic texts describe various teaching methods including textual recitation, interpretation of verses, question–answer discussions, logical reasoning, practical demonstration, and scholarly debates. These methods were aimed at developing intellectual, practical, and ethical competence among students.

Conclusion: The classical concept of Adhyapana Vidhi demonstrates a comprehensive educational philosophy that integrates theoretical knowledge, clinical training, and ethical conduct. The integration of traditional Ayurvedic pedagogy with modern educational approaches can significantly enhance the quality of Ayurvedic medical education.

KEYWORDS: Adhyapana Vidhi, Ayurvedic pedagogy, Guru–Shishya parampara,

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda is one of the most ancient systems of medicine, which evolved through centuries of scholarly tradition and systematic knowledge transmission. In ancient India, education was primarily conducted through the Guru–Shishya parampara, where knowledge was transmitted directly from teacher to disciple. This educational system ensured both theoretical understanding and practical training of the student.

The teaching methodology in Ayurveda is referred to as Adhyapana Vidhi. The term Adhyapana literally means instruction or imparting knowledge. Classical Ayurvedic literature describes Adhyapana as one of the major methods of acquiring knowledge, along with Adhyayana (self-study) and Tadvidya Sambhasha (discussion with experts). The Charaka Samhita provides extensive guidance regarding teaching methods, particularly in the Rogabhishagjitiya Adhyaya of Vimanasthana^[1]. According to this text, a proper educational process requires competent teachers, disciplined students, structured methods of teaching, and continuous intellectual dialogue. Ancient Ayurvedic scholars recognized that effective teaching requires adaptation according

to the intellectual capacity of the students. Therefore, teaching methods were designed to address different categories of learners, including slow, moderate, and advanced learners.^[2] In modern times, medical education has undergone major transformations due to technological advancements and institutional training systems. However, several challenges still persist, including reduced interaction between teachers and students, limited practical exposure, and increasing dependence on theoretical teaching.

Revisiting the classical concept of Adhyapana Vidhi may provide valuable insights for improving modern education.^[3] The integration of ancient pedagogical wisdom with modern educational technologies can help develop competent physicians capable of addressing contemporary healthcare challenges.^[4]

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study is a qualitative conceptual review based on classical Ayurvedic literature and contemporary research related to Ayurvedic education.



Sources of Data

Primary data were obtained from classical Ayurvedic texts including *Charaka Samhita*,^[5] *Sushruta Samhita*,^[6] and *Ashtanga Hridaya*.^[7] Special emphasis was given to the *Rogabhishagjitiya Adhyaya* of *Vimanasthana* in *Charaka Samhita*, which describes educational principles and teaching methods.^[8]

Secondary data were collected from peer-reviewed research articles, textbooks on Ayurvedic philosophy and pedagogy, and publications related to medical education.

Data Collection

Relevant references describing teaching methods, teacher–student interaction, and educational principles were collected systematically from classical texts and modern literature.^[9]

Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed through thematic analysis. Classical educational concepts were categorized under different themes such as teaching methodology, ethical training, practical training, and intellectual development. These concepts were then interpreted in relation to modern educational theories.^[10]

RESULTS

Analysis of classical Ayurvedic literature revealed several important principles related to *Adhyapana Vidhi*.

Qualities of the Teacher (Acharya Parikshya)

Contemporary medical science has attempted to put forth the qualities of a good medical teacher. Student perception studies have also been undertaken to match the demands of students. Medical teachers' few desirable qualities are commitment to work, interaction and good communication with students, deep knowledge of the subject, leadership, good clinical skills, encouragement of creativity and skills in students, etc.^[11] A teacher or preceptor (acharya) shall have ideal qualities to guide those who make the learning understanding of the basics and complexities of science.

The qualities of acharya are as follows

1. Clear and comprehensive knowledge of the subject (*pariyavdashrutam*) coupled with the practical experience (*drishta karmata*)
2. Diligent (*daksha*), devoid of confusions (*avamabuddhi*), dexterous (*dakshina*), virtuous and pure-hearted (*shuchi*) with skilled hand (*jitahasta*)
3. He is equipped with instruments and means of teaching and learning (*upakaranavanta*). Chakrapani mentioned that if the teacher is not well equipped, he is unable to adequately demonstrate the treatment procedures to students.^[12]
4. He possess all the senses in normal condition or having competent sensory perception. (*sarva-indriya upapanna*)
5. He is acquainted with physical and psychological constitutions, and normalcy (*prakritignya*), is well-versed in courses of

emergency management, and is quick in taking actions and making decisions. (*pratipattignya*)

6. The teacher should be having uncensored and authentic knowledge (*anupaskrita vidyam*)

7. The teacher should be free from ego (*anahankrita*), devoid of envy (*anasuyaka*), devoid of anger (*akopana*), forbearing or hard-working (*kleshakshama*)

8. Caring and paternal to disciples (*shishya vatsala*)

9. Having characteristics of a good teacher (*adhyapaka*) and fit to imbue understanding (*gnyapana samartha*).

10. The teacher holding such qualities quickly inculcates physician's grades in his disciple as the seasonal cloud furnishes good crops in a suitable land.

Ancient methods of teaching

Following teaching methods were applied in ancient times.

These methods are rarely used nowadays in the education system. The teacher should examine the student before commencing the task of teaching. Teaching should be with the following pre-requisites

1. When the sun is in the northerly course or during the phase of *uttarayana* or *aadana kala* i.e. during winter (*shishira*), spring (*vasanta*), summer (*greeshma*) and during the full moon phase (*Shukla paksha*) i.e. lunar fortnight- waxing moon phase.

2. The course work should only commence on an auspicious day (*prashasta diwase*), the moon having conjunction with one of the *Tishya* (*pushya*), *Hasta*, *Shravana* and *Ashvayuja* constellations in *Kalyanekarana* and *Maitra muhurta*.

3. The student should have undergone the *mundana Sanskara* (shaved head) after following fast (*krita-upavasa*), had bath (*snana*), wearing ochre-coloured or *kashaya* clothes and possessing sacred thread and wearing the fragrances.

Before commencing the study work, the students perform the *homa* and *havana* (sacred or fire rituals) in the presence of teachers, where the offerings of many holy and auspicious materials are offered. The enchanting of righteous prayers and sacred *mantras* is done paying homage to the holy fire. According to *Sushruta Samhita*, the students were welcomed into the course through the *Sanskara* termed as "*Shishyopanayana*," where rituals and sacred proceedings are done before enrolment. Like *Charak Samhita*, the proper student selection was done before enrolment. *Sushruta Samhita* also mentions the teacher's responsibility after the *Shishyopanayana Sanskara* to teach the students with interest, honesty and integrity.

Contemporary methods of teaching

The contemporary practices, however, have revolutionized over time, where the student's admission into the course is ensured through various national or international entrance tests, and an extensive course module comprising of 4 and half years involving the various subjects of medicine and surgery are taught to students. The teaching and learning involve classroom teaching, practical demonstrations and bedside clinics. This also involves practical training in internships at various community health centers.^[13] The National Commission for Indian System of Medicine (NCISM) has also introduced a



transitional curriculum for the newly admitted undergraduate and *Sanskara* program for postgraduate scholars to orient the scholars with the upcoming course curriculum and prospects.^[14] The *Shishyopanayan Sanskara*, similar to that mentioned in the *Ayurveda* texts, is also performed in many *Ayurveda* institutions across the country.

Code of conduct to be followed by the student as preached by the teacher

The teachers should advise the students to follow the rules above and regulations while undergoing the coursework:

1. One should observe brahmacharya with abstinence, maintain traditional appearance, avoid meat, alcohol, sinful acts, weapons, and the company of immoral individuals.
2. One should always speak the truth, remain righteous, free from jealousy, and engage in pure, intellectual (*medhya*) activities.
3. Students must strictly follow the teacher's instructions, trust their guidance, and consider their recommendations in all matters of study.
4. Students should live with the teacher like devoted sons, servants, and humble disciples, with modesty, alertness, focus, humility, and without finding faults in others, and should not leave without permission.
5. One should sincerely perform assigned tasks with full effort, undertake sacred rituals before study, and pray for the welfare of cows, brahmanas, and all living beings.
6. Scholars should aim to promote health for all beings, treat patients with compassion without hatred, and maintain moral and righteous conduct.
7. One should maintain modest attire and behavior, avoid addiction, sinful acts, and bad company, while being soft-spoken, grateful, truthful, and communicating appropriately according to time and place.
8. The scholar should possess good memory, remain dedicated to continuous learning, progress, and excellence in knowledge and practice.
9. Ethical practice should be followed by not treating persons of improper conduct, examining female patients only in the presence of a guardian or attendant, and ensuring proper conduct during home visits.
10. Confidentiality must be maintained, informed consent should be taken before procedures, and even after gaining knowledge, one should remain humble and avoid boasting.

Ayurvedic Teaching Methodology

Ayurveda describes a systematic and student-centric pedagogy for the effective transmission of knowledge. Classical texts emphasize that teaching should be structured in a way that accommodates different intellectual capacities and facilitates comprehensive understanding through analytical, practical, and experiential methods.

1. Intellectual Types of Students (*Trividha sishya buddhi hitam*)

According to *Charaka Samhita*, students possess three levels of intellect—*manda* (low), *madhyama* (moderate), and *uttama* (high). The teaching process should therefore be designed

so that learners of all intellectual capacities can grasp the subject matter effectively. Explanations should neither be excessively brief nor overly elaborate, as both extremes hinder comprehension. Balanced presentation of knowledge ensures that concepts are accessible and meaningful to every category of student. The classical description of the fifty groups of decoction drugs (*Panchashat Kasaya*) is cited as an example of this balanced instructional style.

2. Methods of Textual Comprehension (*Vakyashah–Vakyarthashah–Arthavayavasaha*)

Ayurvedic pedagogy emphasizes a three-stage process for understanding classical texts. Initially, the verse is recited verbatim (*vakyashah*). Subsequently, the literal meaning is explained (*vakyarthashah*). Finally, the deeper interpretation is analyzed by examining grammatical, linguistic, and contextual components (*arthavayavasaha*). This structured approach facilitates thorough comprehension of complex classical literature.

3. Prashnashaka (Eight Analytical Questions)

The Prashnashaka method provides a hierarchical analytical framework for studying Ayurvedic texts. It involves understanding the text (*tantra*), its primary objective (*tantrartha*), divisions of the text (*sthana*), content of those divisions (*sthanartha*), chapters (*adhyaya*), chapter objectives (*adhyarthartha*), specific topics (*prasna*), and their intended meanings (*prasnartha*). This systematic analysis enables organized presentation and structured learning of the subject.

4. Vada Marga (Scientific Debate)

Debate and scholarly discussion are important pedagogical tools in *Ayurveda*. The Vada Marga includes multiple principles that guide logical discourse and critical evaluation of ideas. Through structured debate, students develop analytical thinking, interpretative skills, and deeper understanding of classical concepts.

5. Pramaṇa (Means of Valid Knowledge)

Ayurvedic education emphasizes the use of *pramana*—methods for validating knowledge. These include direct perception (*pratyakṣa*), inference (*anumana*), analogy (*upamana*), logical reasoning (*yukti*), and authoritative testimony (*aptopadesa*). Incorporating these tools into teaching strengthens scientific reasoning and encourages evidence-based learning, particularly during clinical demonstrations.

6. Smṛti-Karana (Techniques to Enhance Memory)

Classical texts describe several methods for improving memory retention. These include understanding causative factors, perception of forms, comparison with similar or contrasting objects, focused concentration, repeated practice, acquisition of knowledge, and repeated exposure through hearing and observation. Such techniques facilitate long-term retention and effective recall of Ayurvedic concepts.



7. Tantrayukti (Interpretative Devices)

Tantrayukti refers to specific interpretative principles used to analyze and understand classical texts. These literary tools assist students in comprehending the contextual meaning, structure, and logical organization of textual content. Proper application of *Tantrayukti* enables accurate interpretation and prevents misinterpretation of classical teachings.

8. Pada–Paada–Sloka Method

Sushruta describes a pedagogical method for mastering classical verses. In this approach, the meaning of individual words (*pada*), half-verses (*paada*), and the complete verse (*sloka*) are studied sequentially. Repetition and detailed explanation of each component enhance both memorization and conceptual clarity.

9. Paatha–Avabodha–Anusthana Approach

Acharya Vagbhata highlights a three-fold learning process. *Paatha* involves recitation and memorization of the text, *Avabodha* denotes thorough comprehension of its meaning, and *Anusthana* refers to practical implementation of the learned principles. This approach integrates cognitive understanding with clinical application.

10. Yogya Vidhi (Practical Training Method)

The *Yogya Vidhi* focuses on developing practical skills through simulation and hands-on training. Surgical procedures and therapeutic techniques are practiced using models such as fruits or vegetables to enhance procedural proficiency. Such experiential learning methods cultivate psychomotor skills and prepare students for clinical practice.

DISCUSSION

The classical Ayurvedic education system provides a well-organized method of teaching that aims to develop knowledge, clinical skills, and ethical values in students. *Adhyapana Vidhi* explains how teaching should combine theory, reasoning, and practical training.

The concept of *Trividha Shishya Buddhi* (*manda*, *madhyama*, *uttama*) shows that students have different levels of understanding. Therefore, teaching methods should be adjusted according to the learner's ability, similar to modern student-centered education.

Methods like *Vakyashah*, *Vakyarthashah*, and *Arthavayavashah* help in better understanding of texts by focusing on meaning rather than memorization. *Prashnashtaka* helps in organizing knowledge, while *Vada Marga* encourages discussion and critical thinking.

The concept of *Pramana* shows a scientific approach to gaining knowledge through observation, inference, reasoning, and reliable sources, which is similar to evidence-based learning. *Smriti-karana* includes techniques like repetition and experience to improve memory and retention.

Tools such as *Tantrayukti* and methods like *Pada–Paada–Shloka* and *Patha–Avabodha–Anusthana* help in understanding, remembering, and applying knowledge in practice. *Yogya Vidhi*

emphasizes practical training through demonstration and simulation.

Overall, *Adhyapana Vidhi* presents a holistic teaching method that combines knowledge, thinking skills, values, and practical training, and it remains useful for modern Ayurvedic education.

CONCLUSION

The concept of *Adhyapana Vidhi* described in classical Ayurvedic literature represents a well-structured and comprehensive educational framework. Ancient scholars developed a systematic approach to teaching that addressed different intellectual abilities of students while emphasizing analytical thinking, ethical conduct, and clinical competence.

The pedagogical principles described in texts such as *Charaka Samhita*, *Sushruta Samhita*, and *Ashtanga Hridaya* demonstrate that *Ayurveda* recognized the importance of structured curriculum design, interactive learning, evidence-based reasoning, and practical training long before the development of modern educational theories.^[15]

Many of these classical teaching methods—including textual interpretation, logical debate, practical demonstration, and memory enhancement techniques—show remarkable similarities with contemporary medical education strategies. Integrating these traditional pedagogical principles with modern teaching methodologies may help strengthen education and produce competent physicians capable of addressing present-day healthcare challenges.

Thus, revisiting and incorporating the classical concept of *Adhyapana Vidhi* into modern educational systems may significantly enhance the quality, depth, and effectiveness of medical training.

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