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Review Article

“ROOPA” – THE SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS IN AYURVEDA

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ABSTRACT

The ultimate aim of Ayurveda is the maintenance of positive health and also preventing and curing the diseases appeared in the framework of life. Ayurveda implements its own way of holistic approach throughout the every aspect and every stage of the disease. Ayurvedic approach towards analyzing and interpreting the actual understanding of various diseases and its principles adopted in diagnosis stands unique and distinctive. The reputation of a physician depends more upon his skill in diagnosis and prognosis with the proper interpreting and differentiating the presenting symptoms of a given disease. Hence a very much importance is given in Ayurveda for the diagnosis of diseases with due consideration of the signs and symptoms, with an aim to arrive at a right diagnosis before starting any treatment. Among the *nidana-panchaka's* (five diagnostic methods), Roopa is more precise and holds good for arriving at proper diagnosis. Roopa forms the important diagnostic tool of the detection of a disease and also for examination of the patient. Hence, Roopa plays an important role in understanding or interpreting the nature of the disease, for differential diagnosis, prognosis and ultimately for planning the proper treatment.

Keywords: Roopa, Signs and symptoms, Vyadhi, Doshas, Nidanapanchaka, Vyavachedakanidana, Sthana samshraya, lakshanas.

INTRODUCTION

Hetu, Linga and Aushada are known as ‘*Trisutra*’¹ which is one of the basic concepts of Ayurveda. Ayurveda greatly emphasizes on these *tri-sutras*. Linga (characteristics) is related with both *hetu*(cause) and *aushada*(medicine) in terms of healthy individuals and patients; and also by understanding the *linga*; one can distinguish and interpret the proper *hetu* and *aushada*.

रूपेणव्याधिर्जायते ²In Ayurveda, Every disease is known by its *Roopa* (presenting signs /symptoms) or *lakshanasamudhaya* (group of symptoms) caused mainly due to the *dosha-dushyasamurcchana*(interaction between vitiated body humors and body tissues).

व्याधिबोधकंचकारणनिदानपूर्वरूपरूपोपशयसम्प्राप्तिरूपम् ³ Roopa is nothing but the signs and symptoms of a disease, which is known as important *vyadhi-bhodhaka hetus*³(disease suggesting methods) among *nidana-panchakas*(five methods of diagnosis) for the understanding and interpreting the disease. Roopa gives the knowledge about the involved *dosha*(body humors),*dushya*(body tissues) and their severity.

According to the manifestation of the different *roopas*, one can assess the degree of vitiation of different *doshas and dushyas*, its site, characteristics (like *eka-doshaja, samsargaja or sannipathajavyadhi's*) and thus helps in planning the proper line of treatment.

AIMS: To compile the scattered information with analysis and presentation in a temporal sequence.

METHODOLOGY: For the present study, the primary source for literary compilation and analysis were the classical text books of Ayurveda and recent Ayurvedic texts.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

Roopa is clearly defined and well described in all the classical Ayurvedic texts without any ambiguity. Roopa is that stage which gives the idea about the fully manifested form of distinct clinical features of the disease⁴. The **पूर्वरूपावस्थ**(stage of premonitory symptoms) which has attained the fully developed state with clear-cut manifestation or appearance of the signs and symptoms is known as *Roopa*⁵, or the symptoms that are well established to form a disease. *Linga, Akruthi, Lakshana, Chihna, Samsthana, Vyanjana*, etc, are the various synonyms⁴ which indicates the signs and symptoms.

- 1) लिंगम्⁶: Any morbid phenomenon experienced by the patient which is the form of symptom indicative of disease is called *linga*. These are the characteristics by which a disease is known surely.
- 2) आकृति⁶: Any physical manifestation of abnormalities in the form of particular shape or appearance denotes the symptoms of a disease are called as *Akruthi*.
For example: *Sharavika, Kacchapika, KaakanakaKusta, Yuvana-Pidaka*, etc.
- 3) लक्षण⁶: It is the subjective evidence of disease or of patient condition experienced by the patient in the form of symptoms which designated towards the disease is called *lakshana*. It denotes the symptoms of a disease.
- 4) चिन्ह⁶: It is a sign/indication of existence of some disturbance and it is perceptible to the examining physician is called *chihnam*. It is a mark or the spot by which a condition or a disease can be identified.
- 5) संस्थान⁶: It is an objective feeling detected by the physician, indicates towards the disease
- 6) व्यंजन⁶: The word “*Vyanjana*” means the root of the disease. That sign which manifests into a disease or it is a manifestation of symptoms that is almost universally associated with a particular disease is called *vyanjana*.

रूपभेद - CLASSIFICATION OF ROOPA:

Roopa can be classified into two types⁷ are as follows; *Samanyaroopa, and Vishesharoopa*.

SAMANYA ROOPA: The general signs and symptoms of a disease are called as ‘*Samanyaroopa*’. For example: *Samanyalakshanas* (general signs and symptoms) of *Jwara* (fever) are; absence of sweating, rise in body temperature and pain all over the body. Similarly *Samanyalakshanas* (general signs and symptoms) of *Gulma*(Tumor), *Amavata*(Rheumatoid arthritis), etc

VISHESHA ROOPA: The specific signs and symptoms of different types of the disease are known as ‘*Vishesharoopa*’. For example: *Vataja Jwara Lakshanas* (*vata* dominant fever symptoms), *Pittaja Jwara Lakshanas*, *Vataja Gulmalakshanas*, *Raktaja Gulmalakshanas*, etc.

Commentator *Gayadasa* has classified the *Roopa* into two types⁸;

- 1) दोषजलिङ्गः *Lakshanas* which are the developed during the course of the *sanchaya, prakopa* and *prasara* stages are mainly due to vitiation of *dosha* and are also designated as *doshajalakshanas* (signs and symptoms of body humors). For example; during the *sanchayaavasta*, stiffness and fullness of the *kosta*, etc; in *prakopavasta*, pain in abdomen and movement of gases within abdomen; and in *prasaravasta*, pain in abdomen due to abnormal movement of *vata* and gargling noise are the *vata doshajalakshanas* caused only due to vitiation of *doshas*.
- 2) व्याधिजलिङ्गः The symptoms which developed during the stages of the *sthanasamshraya* and *bhedhaavasta* of *kriyakala* are designated as *vyadhijalinga/lakshanas* (signs and symptoms of a disease). In *Sthanasamshraya* – the symptoms are not completely manifested or less prominent and it represents the *poorva-roopa* stage of the disease. In *Vyakthaavasta* – the symptoms are completely manifested and

more prominent representing the disease and it represents the actual disease.

Roopa in relation with Dosha:

➤ दोषाएवहिसर्वेषांरोगाणामेककारणम्⁹

Vitiation of *doshas*(Body humors) is the prime reason, responsible for the causation of most of the diseases. In almost all the diseases there will be the vitiation of one or more *doshas*. Various types of symptoms and innumerable conditions can be produced by the vitiation of *doshas*itself.

Roopa in relation with Kriyakala (Stages of the Disease)

पञ्चमयाक्तावस्थक्रियाकाल¹⁰–Stage of actual disease manifestation:

The signs and symptoms are the characteristic manifestations which are completely developed after the stage of *sthanasamshraya*. *Roopa* is the stage of complete manifestation in its fully-blown, clearly identifiable form. The *roopa* can be considered as the advanced form of the warning signs (*poorvarooopa*). The stage of *poorvarooopa* represents the resistance offered by the body tissues or organs to the attacking *doshas* causing a disease, whereas the manifestation of symptoms of a particular disease indicates the body tissues or organs have been overcome by the dominant *doshas*, finally resulting into the disease.

Relation of Roopa with Vyadhi (Disease)¹¹

- One symptom may be common to many diseases.
For example; *jwara*(fever) may be common symptom of many diseases having irregularity as their onset.
- One symptom may be related to only one disease.
For example; *santhapa* (hyperpyrexia) is the symptom of fever alone.
- Many symptoms may be related to only one disease.
For example; many symptoms like irregularity in onset may be common to many diseases.
- Many symptoms may be common to many diseases.
For example; many symptoms like irregularity in onset may be common to many diseases like fever, asthma, hiccup, etc.

Nomenclature of a Disease:

In Ayurveda, every disease is often named on the basis of its main symptom or chief complaint. For Example: कसनात्कासः¹²Kasa is named based on its symptom, i.e-repeated coughing.

- अतिसरणमतिसार | (Gayadasa)
- हिक्किहक्करोतिइतिहिक्किः।

Roopa in relation with Swapna (Dreams):

Similarly the dreams seen at any stage of diseases are also very important, such as in *Madatyaya* (Alcoholic intoxication) and *Garavisha* (type of poisoning) etc. For example; seeing terrifying and inauspicious objects is a symptom seen in *Madatyaya* (alcoholic intoxication)¹³. Inauspicious dreams and dreams of talking with devils are especially seen in *Garavisha*¹⁴.

FACTORS RESPONSIBLE FOR FORMATION OF ROOPA:

In Ayurveda, *Doshas* (abnormal body humors) due to various forms of permutation and combination brings about the variation in the presentation of typical and distinctive clinical features of the disease¹⁵. Depending upon the permutation and

combination of the various fractions (*amsha*) of the *doshas* and their location within the body, there will be difference in the presentation of different pain, color, shape, specific manifestation, etc of the disease.

For example: *Guna-vikalpa* of different *doshas* was well reflected in all the *Kushta's* (skin diseases)¹⁵. The production of different presentations of *Kushta* (skin disorders) is based on;

- *Amshamshabhedam* - depending upon the permutation and combination of the various fractions of dosha.
- *Anubandhabedham*- due to its association with other *doshas*.
- *Stananisarvadeha* - depending on the location in the body.
- *Varna* - due to variation in color.
- *Samstana* - due to variation in shape.
- *Prabhava* - due to variation in effect.
- *Nama* - Nomenclature.

There will be innumerable presentation of the diseases, based on रज- different types of pain; वर्ण- different types of color; समुत्थान- different causative factors; स्थान- different sites, organs, tissues and संस्थान- different clinical signs and symptoms¹⁶.

For example: In *Vata-vyadhi* (~CNS Disorders), vitiation of *vata* is responsible for the causation of different typical presentations, is mainly based on *hetu* (causative factors) and *sthana* (site).¹⁷

ASSESSMENT OF ROOPA

Any *Vikara* (disease) is examined by its *vikruthi* (morbid manifestation). This *vikruthi* should be examined by; हेतु (causative factors), दोष (body humors), दूष्य (affected tissues), प्रकृति (body constitution), देश (living place), काल (time factor), बल (strength of the disease and patient) and especially with exhibited signs and symptoms. If the causative factors are numerous and too strong, then the signs and symptoms of the disease will be too strong. Similarly, if causative factors and other above factors are weak, then signs and symptoms of a disease is also less strength and if the above factors are moderate, then signs and symptoms of a disease will be of moderate nature¹⁸.

EXAMINATION METHODS FOR ASSESSING THE ROOPA

Roopa, the signs and symptoms forms the most important diagnostic criteria which will be helpful in the examination of a disease as well as the patient.

- * Dwividha Pareeksha: Pratyaksha (Direct perception) and Anumana (Inference)
- * Trividha Pareeksha: Aptopadesha (Authoritative Texts), Pratyaksha and Anumana; Darshana (inspection), Sparshana (palpation) and Prashna Pareeksha (interrogation)
- * Chaturvidha Pareeksha: Aptopadesha, Pratyaksha, Anumana and Yukti (proper planning)
- * Shadvidha Pareeksha: Panchendriyapareeksha (examination of senses) and Prashna Pareeksha (interrogation)

- * Ashtasthana Pareeksha: Nadi (pulse), Mala (end products of digestion), Mutra (urine), Jihva (tongue), Shabda (hearing), Sparsha (skin), Drik (vision) and Akrti (physical examination)

UTILITY OF ROOPA

सोपद्रवारिष्टनिदानलिङ्गोनिबध्यतेरोगविनिश्चयोऽयम् ॥¹⁹

The knowledge of the above mentioned five means of diagnosis is very essential for understanding diseases and ultimately proper diagnosis. Roopa is that which exhibits the specific nature of the disease, *dosha-dushya* involved, *adhithana*, *avastha* of a disease and strength of a disease. By having the above information, there will be a complete picture about disease with proper diagnosis. Finally it helps the physician for planning a better line of treatment based on *roopa*. The knowledge of disease cannot be gained only with help of *nidana* and *poorvaroop*, but *roopa* will be useful as an important diagnostic criterion for gaining the complete knowledge of a disease.

Role of Roopa in Understanding a Disease:

The presenting symptoms of a disease will be helpful in achieving the absolute knowledge of;

- * हेतु or निदान's (etiological factors)
- * दोष-दूष्यसमूच्छान, स्रोतोदुष्टि, अग्निदुष्टि, धातुदुष्टि, etc (vitiated components of the body)
- * अधिष्ठान: शरीर-मानस, बाह्य-आभ्यन्तरलक्षण, धातुगतलक्षण, etc (site, chronicity, tissue level morbidity)
- * Nature and Intensity of रज-स्राव-वर्ण-गन्ध-आकृति-अभिघातजअंगविकृति, etc. (nature and intensity of pain, discharge, color, smell, deformity, etc)
- * उपशय – अनुपशय of a vyadhi (Relieving and aggravating factors of a disease).

Differentiation of specific stage of a disease:

Roopa are also indicative of specific stage of a disease, like *ama-avasta*, *pachyamanaavasta* or *pakva-avasta*, etc of a *vyadhi* (different phases/stages of a disease).

For example: *Ama-jwaralakshanas*, *pachyamanajwara lakshanas*, etc. Similarly, *Ama*, *Nirama*, *Pachyamana* or *Pakvaavastalakshanas* of a *vyadhi* are also seen especially in *Gulma*, *Vrana*, *Shopha*, *Vranashota*, *Nadivrana*, etc. In the same way, symptoms of the disease can be differentiated based on the various *dhatugatalakshanas* (body tissue level morbidity which is seen in *Jwara*, *Kushta*, *Vata-vyadhi*, *Masurika*), *bahya-abhyantaralakshanas* (internal and external presentations), *uttana-gambhiraavasta* (acute and chronic conditions), different *sthanas* (sites), *varna* (discolorations), *srava* (discharges), etc.

Role of Roopa in Prognosis:

The Roopa (signs/ symptoms) are those by which a disease exhibits itself. Without knowing the symptoms of a disease, one cannot differentiate its complete set of specific characteristics. Further, one cannot know whether it is curable or incurable.

Features of साध्यव्याधि²⁰ (Easily curable diseases): The Characteristics of an easily curable disease are: the causes, premonitory symptoms, actual signs and symptoms are of mild nature.

Features of कृच्छ्रसाध्यव्याधि²⁰ (Diseases cured with difficulty): A disease is said to be difficult to cure, if the given premonitory symptoms, actual signs and symptoms are of moderate strength.

Features of असाध्यव्याधि²⁰ (Incurable diseases): A disease is said to be incurable, if the signs and symptoms are of deep-rooted, located in many tissues, organs, vital points, joints, etc and is of chronic nature.

Thus, Roopa forms the important prognostic tool in a clinical practice for distinguishing the curable conditions, incurable conditions and chronicity of the condition which further helps in planning the appropriate line of treatment.

Role of Roopa in Differential Diagnosis:

Each and every disease will have its own presenting signs and symptoms known as 'Pratyatmalakshanas' (specific signs and symptoms). But same lakshanas can also be found in other diseases too. In such circumstances, it is very difficult for a physician to ascertain or to arrive at a proper diagnosis.

Here the रोगनिर्णयोपाय's (diagnostic methods) like *nidana* (etiological factors), *poorvaroopa* (premonitory symptoms), etc helps in ascertaining or predicting the accurate disease by distinguishing the symptoms on the basis of *sthana*, *ruja*, *samsthana*, etc. Such differentiations were implemented with the other similar, possible conditions/diseases and ultimately to achieve the proper diagnosis. Such technique is known as "व्यवच्छेदकनिदान" or "सापेक्षनिदान" (differential diagnosis). *Vyavachedakanidana* helps for proper *vyadhi-vinischaya* (proper diagnosis).

For example: सरक्तमूत्रता (Hematuria) is a *lakshana* (clinical feature) seen in रक्तपित्त, प्रमेह, अश्मरी and also in मूत्रमार्गगतशल्य. In such instance, physician should distinguish the following factors to arrive at a proper diagnosis.

तएवापरिसङ्ख्येयाभिद्यमानाभवन्तिहि
रुजावर्णसमुत्थानस्थानसंस्थाननामभिः ||¹⁶

Table showing the *VyavachedakaNidana* - Ayurvedic perspective of Differential diagnosis:

व्याधि (Disease)	रुज (Type of pain)	वर्ण (Type of color)	समुत्थान/हेतु (Etiological factors)	स्थान (Site)	संस्थान/लिंग (Symptoms)
रक्तपित्त (Hemorrhage)	No pain during micturition	color based on <i>dosha</i> involved	Pittapradhanaahara-viharasevana(ushna,teekshna,katu rasa excess intake)	Yakruth, pleeha (liver, spleen)	flow of blood is seen in Vataja,Pittaja, and Kaphajatypes
प्रमेह (Diabetic condition)	No pain	Manjistavarna in Raktajameha	Kapha-pradhanahetu	Basti (Urinary bladder)	Prabhuthaavilamutrata (turbidity with excessive urination)
अश्मरी (Renal Calculi)	Pain atumbilicus, bladder, etc	Gomedasankanshamutra	Vataprakopakaahara-vihara, H/O Suppression of urge of urine	Basti (Urinary bladder)	Mutravisheernadhara, pain in nabhi, basti, etc
मूत्रमार्गगतशल्य (foreign body in Urinary T.)	Painful voiding of urine	Shuddharakta	H/O Injury, entry of foreign body in urinary tract	Basti, mutramarga (Urinary tract and bladder)	Shuddharaktaagamana (Hematuria), mutrakruchrata

Role of Roopa in Chikithsa (Treatment):

As Roopa is a well-defined, complete manifested state of a disease, so the line of treatment should be most appropriate to the condition.

लाक्षणिकचिकित्सा (Symptomatic treatment): Every disease should be treated based on their presenting signs and symptoms or even *avasta* (stage or condition) of a disease.

For example: In *Atisara*(Diarrhea), *Raktapitta*(Hemorrhage), etc

Doshas are the body humors, which in their normal state maintains the body and in their abnormal state they produce various disease and even destroys the body. There is no disease without the involvement of *doshas* (vitiated body humors) in the causation of the diseases. If a disease/condition is of unknown or which is of strange presentation, then in such circumstances it should be treated on the basis of presenting signs and symptoms²¹.

DISCUSSION

Roopa forms the important diagnostic tool of the detection of a disease among the *nidanapanchakas*. Among the *nidanapanchaka*'s, Roopa is more precise and holds good for better diagnosis. Chakrapani, the commentator of Charaka

samhitha describes Roopa is that stage which indicates the *vataidoshas* and the stages of the disease, i.e- *ama* stage or *pakva* stage or advanced stage of the disease and is a distinct stage from that of *nidana*, *upashaya* and *samprapthi*²².

Gayadasa describes that Roopa is that which is formed due to the interaction between the *dosha* and *dushya* and is capable of producing the *vyadhi*. The symptoms are the characteristic manifestations which developed after the stage of *sthana-samshraya* and later which are considered as *roopa*²³. The *roopa* can be considered the advanced form of the warning signs (*poorva-roopa*). The stage of *poorvaroopa* represents the resistance offered by the body tissues or organs to the attacking *doshas* causing a disease, whereas the manifestation of symptoms of a particular disease indicates the body tissues or organs have been overcome by the *doshas* resulting in disease.

When *roopa* appears, the disease becomes more pronounced with obvious and clearly defined (स्पष्ट) symptoms which will help for carrying out necessary laboratory investigations to arrive at a proper diagnosis. Hence Roopa of a disease indicates the actual manifestation of the disease.

Samsthana- site of origin and manifestation, Chakrapani says that *samsthana* is the appearance, shape, structure, etc¹⁶.

Samsthana can be considered as the site of origin and manifestation of actual disease. *Samsthana* is the manifested form of the *sthanashrithadoshas* (localized vitiated body humors) originate actually. The vitiated *doshas* gets originate at one place and also shows its effect at another place. Here one can consider the effect of *sthanika* and *agantujadoshas*. *Chinha* can be considered as signs, as they will be experienced by the patient itself.

Doshajalakshanas: These symptoms are formed mainly due to the vitiation of *doshas* itself. There will not be any involvement of *dushya* (includes body tissues and end-products) until the stage of *sthanasamshraya*. There will not be the process of *dosha-dushyasammurchana* which would ultimately results in the manifestation of the disease and also there will not be involvement of any body organs or tissues. The treatment is directed towards normalization of affected/vitiated *doshas*. During the *sanchaya*, *prakopa* and *prasara* stages, symptoms are not clearly exhibited and they can be subsided easily by respective *doshopakrama* measures.

It is said that, *Roopa* is not the disease but the abnormal condition of the body which causes these symptoms, is called as a 'disease'. A name given to the group of symptoms, or a symptom alone is accepted as the name of the disease. Acharya Charaka himself has given his consent; for the nomenclature of a disease, it may be done as convenient for the identification and treatment of a disease²⁴, and some of those that have been mentioned as the symptoms of diseases appear as independent diseases; as long as they exist secondarily, they are called symptoms and not diseases. A symptom is referred as the temporary state of disease, but is not the disease itself. For example- feature of *aruchi* (tastelessness) in the disease *jwara* (fever) is *paratantra* (Secondary disease); however *aruchi* can also manifest independently (*swatantra*~primary).

CONCLUSION

Roopa is the stage of complete clear-cut manifestation of distinct clinical features of the disease. *Roopa* is that which exhibits the specific nature of the disease, *dosha-dushya* involved, *adhithana*, *avastha* of a disease, and strength of a disease. Different *lakshanas* of a *vyadhi* are produced due to *dosha-dushyasamurcchana*, *doshaguna-vikalpa*, and so on. *Roopa* forms the most important diagnostic tool helpful for the examination of a disease as well as patient. Among the *nidanapanchaka*'s, *Roopa* is more precise and holds good for arriving at a proper diagnosis. *Roopa* is helpful in understanding the nature of a disease, for Differential diagnosis of a disease, for treatment of a disease and prognosis of a disease. Hence, very much importance is given in Ayurveda for the diagnosis of diseases with due consideration of presenting signs and symptoms, with an aim to arrive at correct diagnosis before starting any treatment.

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