

Role of Vadamarga in Ayurvedic Epistemology and Logical Reasoning (Tarka) for Knowledge Validation

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Abstract

Evidence-based research is highly needed for global recognition and acceptance of Ayurveda, which needs further advancements in the research methodology.

The term ‘*Samhita*’ refers to the complete compilation of specific beneficial knowledge necessary for the development of different aspects of life. Time-oriented study methods were needed in every science in this universe. *Charaka Samhita* pursues a different variety of presentation which introduces seminars, debates, etc, in the form of discussion between scholars and learners and as narration of information. The *Vimana Sathana* is a unique and detailed section that has an explanation contributed by *Charaka* on research.

One such learning methodology, right from the inauguration of learning to the attainment of higher education, i.e, *Adhyayana*, *Adhyapana*, *Tadvidya sambhasha*, is mentioned under *Adhyaya “Rogabhishakjitiya Adhyaya”* of *Charaka Samhita*, *Vimanasthana* So So-Called *Vadamargas*, They Are The Tricks Of Manner For An Invariable Debate Competition.

Keywords : *Vaada*, *Vadamarga*, *Charak Samhita*, Debate, Physicians.

Vadamarga, as outlined in the *Charaka Samhita*, is a structured method of debate aimed at intellectual growth, especially vital for physicians, as treatment excellence relies on their knowledge. *Vaada* involves logical discussions based on scriptures, fostering clarity, speech skills, and the elimination of doubt. It has long

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been a tool for sharing and deepening knowledge, remaining relevant in modern education. In a debate, the proponent is the Vaadi, and the refuter is the opponent.

*Aacarya Charaka describes 44 terms that guide scholarly debates, helping ensure meaningful discourse within defined rules, making it a valuable tool in medical and academic practice.*⁶

1. *Adhyayanam*

2. *Adhyapanam*

3. *Tadvidyasambhasha*

Among these, *Tadvidyasambhasha* (discussion/ debate) is of 2 types²

1. *Sandhaya samhasha*

2. *Vigruhya samhasha*

In every debate, acquaintance with the *Vadamargajnana Hetu Pada* helps to determine the course of the debate.⁴

Vada means debate, and *Marga* means method.

There are 44 *Vadamargajnana Hetu Padas* mentioned in *Charaka Samhita Vimana sthana* 8th Chapter.

1. *Vada* (debate):

A debate is that, in which one holds academic discussion with a contending opponent. This is of two types, they are:⁷

A. *Jalpa* (Positive Discourse)

B. *Vitanda* (Negative Discourse)

A) *Jalpa* (Positive Discourse)

It is a statement in which the speaker presents and advances their viewpoint while simultaneously contradicting or challenging the opponent's perspective."

B) *Vitanda* (Negative Discourse) :

It is the opposite of *JALPA*.

The opponent's views are contradicted without advancing an argument in support of the individual's view.

Example : One holds the view that re-births (*Purva-janma*) are there, while the others hold the view just against it.

During Debate, they advance arguments in support of their views and oppose (contradict) the opponent's view – this is *Jalpa*.

Vitanda is in that the speaker, without having any positive approach, only finds fault in the opponent's viewpoint.

2. *Dravya* (Substance):¹

Dravya (Substances including drugs) is where *Karma & Gunas* are located, and the material is the cause of its effect (and is the *Samavayi Karanam*).

3. *Guna* (Property) :

Guna is related with inherence to *Dravya*.

It is devoid of action and is *Samavayi* (non-inherent cause of its effect)¹

4. *Karma* (Action)⁷

It is the reason for *Samyoga* and

Vibaga and is dependent on *Dravya*. *Pryatna aadi* (Efforts, etc.) any kind of *karma* are called *chesta*.⁷

5. *Samanya* (Similarity):

Similarity of all substances is always the cause of an increase.¹

Similarity brings unity and conveys a sense of equality.¹⁰ That which is commonly present in all objects and enables them to be grouped under a single, common name is known as *Samanya*

It is of three types:

- 1) *Dravya samanya*.
- 2) *Guna samanya*.
- 3) *Karma samanya*.

6. *Vishesha* (Dissimilarity):

“Dissimilarity is the cause of distinction or separation. Both *Samanya* (generality) and *Vishesha* (particularity) exert their influence through their respective applications.”

Dissimilarity causes diversity.

Dissimilarity is the opposite of *Samanya*.

Vishesha distinguishes or separates one from the other.

It is of three types:

- 1) *Dravya vishesha*.
- 2) *Guna vishesha*.
- 3) *Karma vishesha*.

7. *Samavaya* (Inference):

Inherence is the inseparability of

Prithvi, etc, *Dravyas* with their *Gunas* like *Gandha*. Etc. This is eternal because no *Dravyam* is devoid of property (**GUNA**).⁹

8. *Pratijna* (Proposition)⁶

“*Pratijña* refers to the assertion that needs to be demonstrated or established. For instance, ‘*Puruca* (the Self) is eternal.’”

9. *Sthapana* (Justification):

“The validity of the *Pratijña* (proposition) is solidified through the five components of inference: *Hetu* (reason), *D[cmanta* (example), *Upanaya* (application or correlation), and *Nigamana* (conclusion).”

Self is eternal – this is *Pratijna* (Proposition)

Because of not being created – reason

Instance – ‘as sky’

Correlation – ‘as the sky is Uncreated and is eternal, so is the self.

Conclusion – ‘Therefore self is eternal’.

10. *Pratisthapan* (Counter Argument / Establishment)²

“*Praticmhapana* involves establishing an alternative viewpoint by presenting a counter-argument or reasoning that challenges the opponent’s claim.”

Self is non-eternal is a proposition, which is the counterargument for the opponent. Reason – Because of being perceived by the senses.

Instance – ‘As Pitcher’

Correlation: A pitcher, which is perceived

through the senses, is inherently non-eternal.
Conclusion – ‘therefore -self is non-eternal’.

11. *Hetu* (Cause):²

Hetu (reason) is the cause of knowledge or how knowledge is obtained.

It is of 4 types:

***Pratyaksha* (Perception)**

***Anumana* (Inference)**

***Aithihya* (Tradition)**

***Aupamya* (Analogy)**

What is revealed by these reasons (sources are reality)?

12. *Dristhatha* (Instance/Example)³

“It is that which stimulates understanding in both the ignorant and the wise, offering a vivid and clear representation of the object.”

For instance, fire is hot, water is liquid, earth is stable, and the sun is illuminating; similarly, the knowledge of Sankhya philosophy is also illuminating.

13. *Upanaya*:

Sub -summative correlation/co-relation

14. *Nigamana*

Conclusion

15. *Uttaram* (Rejoinder)²

“*Uttara* (rejoinder) is the statement that highlights the dissimilarity in what was presented as similar, and vice versa.”

As Acharya Charak mentioned

In a debate, one may say, “Disorders resemble their cause, as ‘*Sitaka*’ (cold) disease is caused by exposure to cold waves.” The opponent replies, “Disorders differ from their cause; for example, burning sensations and suppuration have causes unlike cold waves.”

This is a rejoinder with contrary statements.

16) *Siddhantha* (Theory)

“A truth that is established through extensive examination and reasoning is known as *Siddhanta*.”

Acharya Charak mentioned types of *Siddhanta*:

Sarvatantra Siddhantha

Pratitantra Siddhantha

Adhikarana Siddhantha

Abyupagama Siddhantha

a) *Sarvatantra Siddhantha*:

Sarvatantra-siddhanta (universal theory) is that which is accepted universally by all the schools, such as-there are causes, there are diseases. And there are remedies for the curable disorders.

b) *Pratitantra Siddhantha*:

Pratitantra Siddhanta (restricted theory) is a view held by only one school and is not universal. For example, some schools recognise eight *Rasas* while this one accepts six; some list six sense organs while this one accepts five; others attribute all diseases to *Vata*, but this school includes *Bhutas* as causes too.

c) Adhikarana Siddhantha:

Adhikarana Siddhanta (implied theory) is a view established through implication.

For example, fruits of action, emancipation, self, and the other world are inferred from the statement, “The emancipated does not engage in consequent actions due to the absence of desires.”

d) Abyupagama Siddhantha:

Abhyupagama Siddhanta (hypothetical theory) is a temporary, provisional view held by physicians during debate, despite being unproven, untested, or irrational—for example, proposing that *Dravya*, properties, or *Virya* is predominant.²

17) Shabda (Word):

Word is an aggregate of letters. According to Aacharya Charka, this *Shabdham* is of four types:

***Drishtartha* (observable meaning / based on observations)**

***Adrishtartha* (based on unobservable phenomenon)**

***Sathya* (factual/consistent)**

***Anrutha* (false/inconsistent)**

A) *Drishtartha* (observable meaning / based on observations):

Drishtartha is that which connotes observable meanings.

Doshas aggravated by 3 etiological factors, they are pacified by 6 therapeutic

measures, the sense objects (sound, etc) are perceived if the sense organs (Auditory, etc) exist.

B) *Adrishtartha* (based on unobservable phenomenon):

Adrishtartha is based on an unobservable phenomenon.

Example: there is life after death, and there is salvation.

C) *Sathya* (factual/consistent):

Sathya is that which is consistent with the facts, such as there are instructions of *Ayurveda*, remedial measures for the curable diseases and the result of action.

D) *Anrutha* (false/inconsistent):

Anrutha is contrary to *Sathya* (words contrary to facts or false)

Example: There are no prescriptions in the science of medicine.²

18) *Pratyaksha* (Direct Observations / Perception):

²*Pratyaksa* (perception) refers to the knowledge directly acquired by the self through the interaction of the sense organs with external objects.

Example: happiness, pain, desire, aversion, etc, are perceived by the self himself, while sound, etc., are perceived by the sense organs.

19) *Anumana* (Inference):

Anumana (inference) is knowledge

derived from reasoning and logical argument, supported by an invariable concomitance (necessary connection) between two phenomena.

Knowledge of Agni by the power of digestion, that of strength by the power of exercise, auditory organs, etc.⁶

20) Aithihya (Tradition / Words Of Divine Origin):

Aithihya (tradition) refers to words of divine origin that come from an authoritative source of knowledge.

Example: The *Vedas* were transmitted by lord brahma.

21) Aupamya (Analogy) :

Aupamya (analogy) is the statement of similarity between things.

As Acharya Charka explained, the disease *Dandaka* is explained as similar to *Danda*, the disease *Dhanu%sthmbha* to *Dhanu* (bow) and that of the provider of health with the archer.²

22) Samsaya (Doubt):

Samśaya (doubt) is the state of indecision about the concerned entity.

Example: On observing that both types of persons, having or not the signs of longevity and adopting or not the therapeutic measures-die early and live long, doubt arises as to whether there is untimely death or not.⁶

23) Prayojana (Object):

To accomplish a goal, various measures

or methods are adopted, and these measures constitute the object of focus.

If there is a possibility of premature death, getting treated with drugs that promote longevity and avoiding unwholesome regimen will help in avoiding premature death.

24) Savyabhichara (Statement with exception/uncertain statement):

A statement with exception / which has uncertainty, is called *Savyabhichara*.

Example : such statements might create doubts as to whether a given medicine would be appropriate for a particular disease or not.²

25) Jijnasa (Inquiry) :

An enquiry to examine a thing is known as *Jijnasa*.

Example: examination of drugs.

26) Vyavasaya (Determination / Decision):

Vyavasaya is *Nischaya* (Decision).

Example: this disease is purely *Vatika*, and this is the medicament for its cure.²

27) Arthaprapthi (Implied Meaning):

Arthaprapthi (acquisition of implied sense) refers to the process where an unstated or implicit idea is conveyed through a stated expression.

Example 1: When one says that the disease is not to be managed with saturating

therapy, it implies that it is to be managed with desaturation therapy.

Example 2: He should not eat during the day implies that he should eat at night.

28) Sambhava (Source):

Something from which another thing originates is regarded as *Sambhava* / Source.²

Examples: The Six *Dhatus* are the source of the embryo.

Unwholesome things of diseases.

Wholesome things of health.

29) Anuyojyam (Questionable Statement/ Defective Statement):

Anuyojya refers to a sentence or expression that is incomplete or ambiguous, requiring further clarification or prompting additional questions to fully understand its meaning.

Example: If somebody says ‘the disease is to be managed with evacuative therapy’, it invites further questions as to Whether it is to be managed with emesis or purgation.²⁷

30) Ananuyojyam (Unquestionable Statement):

When a statement can never be questionable, it is *Ananuyojyam*.
A given disease is incurable.

31) Anuyogam (Scriptural enquiry / Question):

Anuyoga refers to the process of posing a query—either wholly or partially—on a text or a section of it during scholarly discussions. This is done as a means of testing one’s learning, understanding, articulation, and the ability to engage in contradiction or debate. As mentioned by Acharya Charka, in the statement of ‘self is eternal’, somebody says, ‘What is the reason?’ This is *Anuyoga*.²

32) Pratyanyogam (counter-question / scriptural counter enquiry):

Pratyanyoga is questioning the questions,

Example: One may ask what the reason for this question is.

33) Vakyadosha (Syntactical defect):

Vakyadosa (syntactical defect) is of five types:

Nyūna (deficiency)

Adhika (superfluity)

Anarthaka (meaninglessness)

Aparthaka (deprivation of meaning)

Viruddha (Incongruity).

Without these, there is no damage to the contextual sense.

A) Nyunam:

A deficiency arises if even one of the five essential propositions—reason, instance, correlation, proposition, and conclusion—is missing. Similarly, if multiple reasons are provided, but only one is used to prove a point,

it is also considered a deficiency.

B) Adhikam (Superfluity):

Superfluity is the opposite of deficiency and refers to unnecessary or excessive information. For example, in discussions about *Ayurveda*, mentioning irrelevant texts, such as those composed by *Brhaspati* or *Usanas*, would be considered superfluous. Even if the references are relevant, their repetition would also fall under superfluity, as it adds no new value to the discussion.

Repetition is of two types:

Arthapunaruktham (Semantic repetition)

Sabdapunaruktham (Verbal Repetition)

1) Artha Punaruktham:

It consists of the repetition of the same idea by different words, such as *Bheshaja*, *Aushadha*, and *Sadhanam*.

2) Shabdha Punaruktham:

It consists of the repetition of the same words, such as *BHESHAJA*, *BHESHAJA*.

C) Anarthakam (Meaninglessness):

Anarthakam is a statement without meaning or where there is only a jumble of Alphabets devoid of any sense.

D) Aparthakam (Deprivation of Meaning):

Deprivation of meaning occurs when otherwise meaningful words lack a mutual connection or are improperly combined, making

the overall expression incoherent. For instance, phrases like *cakra-na (ta) krava msa-vajra-nisakara* lose their intended meaning because the words are not linked in a meaningful way, leading to confusion or ambiguity.

E) Virrudha (Incogruity):

Incongruity is considered about illustration, theory and convention.

Conventions are of three types:

1) Ayurvedic Samaya:

Ayurvedic convention, such as four-legged therapy.

2) Yajnika Samaya:

Ritual convention such that animals are sacrificed by scarifying persons.

3) Moksha Shastrika Samaya :

Ethical conventions such as Non-Violence towards all creatures.

The statement is incongruous with the respective convention and is taken as incongruous. Thus are the syntactical defects.²

34) Vakyaprashamsam (Syntactical Commendability):

Vakyapradamsä (syntactical commend ability) is where the statement is free from.

त्वन्यूनम् (Free from Deficiency)

अनधिकम् (Free from Superfluity)

अर्थवत् (is meaningful)

अनपार्थकम् (devoid of deprivation of meaning)

अविरुद्धम् (Devoid of incongruity)

अधिगतपदार्थ (Comprehensible)

There is no place for any question; such statements are considered s excellent type.

35) Chhalam (Casuistry / Knavery / Deceitful disputation):

Chhala stands for confusion created by a play on words, not relevant to the question, nonsensical in nature, and only apparently having some meaning.

Aacharya Charka mentioned two types:

Vakchala (Verbal knavery).

Samanya chala (Knavery in general).

A) *Vakchhalam* (Verbal Knavery):

If someone calls a physician ‘*Navatantra*’ (nine texts), the physician replies, “I have only one, not nine.” The other says, “I meant your practice is ‘*Nava*’ (new).” The physician retorts, “I have practised it many times, not newly. This is verbal trickery.”

B) *Samanyachhalam* (Knavery in general):

When someone says, “A medicament alleviates disease,” the other replies, “How can one existent alleviate another? Both disease and medicament exist; if existents alleviate existents, then cough could alleviate wasting. This is a fallacious argument.”³⁰

36) *Ahetu* (Fallacious reason):

Ahetu (fallacious reason) is of three types:
PrakaraGasama (similar to topic)

Samśayasama (similar to doubt)

Varnyasama (similar to object)

Ahetu is also called as *Hetwabhasa*.

A) *Prakaranasama* (Similar to Topic):

The reasoning “the self, being other than the body, is eternal” is fallacious because it commits a logical error by assuming the minor term (*Paksha*) as the reason. It wrongly concludes that, since the body is non-eternal, the self must necessarily be eternal due to their dissimilarity. This is a faulty inference, as the dissimilarity between the body and the self does not automatically imply the eternity of the self. The argument overlooks the possibility of other factors influencing the nature of the self.

B) *Samshayasama* (Similar To Doubt):

The reason similar to doubt is that which though being cause of doubt is used as cause of eliminating the same such as- ‘He has said only a part of *Ayurveda*, it creates doubt as to whether he is a physician or not, on this somebody says- ‘as he has said a part of *Ayurveda*, he is a physician’. This does not make a reason for eliminating the doubt; thus, it is a fallacious reason because that which is the cause of doubt can’t be the cause of removing the same.

C) *Varnyasama* (Similar to object):

A reason similar to the object is not distinct from the object itself. For example, saying “*Buddhi* (intellect) is non-eternal due to the absence of touch, like *sabda* (sound),” is fallacious—since both *Buddhi* and *sabda* are objects, the reason lacks distinction from

the object and thus is invalid.⁴

37) अथातीतकालम् (Delayed statement):

Atitakala (delayed statement) refers to something that should have been stated earlier but is presented later, making it ineffective or unacceptable. For example, if one fails to counter an opponent's point at the right time and brings it up later in an unrelated context, the delayed response loses its relevance and impact.

38) Upalamba (Defective causality):

Upalambha is pointing out defects in causality.

39) Parihara (Refutation / Correction):

Parihara (refutation) is correcting the defects pointed out concerning the proposition. The signs of life are available constantly till the self is in the body, and are not available after it goes out. Therefore, the self is different from the body and is eternal.²

40) Pratijnahani (Shift from the original stand /Loss of proposition):

Pratijnahani refers to a situation where someone makes a statement or claim, but when challenged or attacked by opponents, they contradict or withdraw their statement. This inconsistency weakens their position and undermines the credibility of their argument.

Example: somebody puts a proposition as 'the personal self is eternal' in the beginning, but when questioned, says that as non-eternal.⁵

41) Abhyanuḥjā (Admission of argument / Confessional retort):

Abhyanuḥjā – At the time of *Vada*, acceptance of the desired as well as the undesired situations.

42) Hetwantaram (Imperfect reason / Fallacy of reason):

Hetwantara – It is when, instead of relevant reasoning, an irrelevant reasoning is given.²

43) Arthantharam (Irrelevant statement):

Arthanthara refers to a situation where something unrelated or irrelevant is mentioned instead of the intended or relevant subject. This diversion leads to a misdirection or misunderstanding, as the focus shifts away from the actual topic of discussion.

For Example, if one has to say the symptoms of fever, but instead, he says those of *Prameha*.²

44) Nigrahasthanam (Reason of Defeat / Clincher):

Nigrahasthanam is that by which one is defeated.

It consists of not understanding a thing, even if repeated thrice in a learned assembly, or questioning where it is not pertinent, and not questioning where it is pertinent.

The above are the reasons for defeat.²

Importance of *Vadamargas*:***Vaadamarga* Padas: Tools of Timeless Relevance :**

These Padas are not confined to narrow definitions—they serve multiple purposes across various fields. Essential for learning, teaching, clinical practice, research, and validating *Ayurvedic* principles in the modern era, they also aid in evaluating scriptures, teachers, students, medicines, and even during interviews or oral exams. Their value extends beyond *Ayurveda*, proving useful in politics and everyday decision-making. Mastering *Vaadamarga Padas* is the key to unlocking their wide-ranging benefits. To truly harness their potential, one must study them in depth.

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