



## Review Article

# Indriya: The route of perception

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### Article Information

Received: 05 August 2023  
Revised: 29 November 2023  
Accepted: 13 December 2023  
Published: 31 December 2023

### Academic Editor

Prof. Dr. Christian Celia

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### Keywords

Indriya, gyanendriya, mahabhuta, budhhi, indriya panch-panchak, arishta

### Abstract

According to *Ayurved Samhitas* (classic ancient texts), *Indriyas* i.e. sense organs are apparatus to attain knowledge for *atma*. Sense organs i.e. gyanendriya that perceive image/light, touch, sound, smell, taste, etc. So, these are tools for obtaining knowledge. When the soul, sense organs, mind and object come together, perception takes place. The *gyanendriya* (sensory faculties) present inside the body conjoins with *mana*(mind) which unites with *atma*. Therefore, knowledge is perceived. Lastly, the *budhhi* (intellect) aspect of the respective knowledge of *indriya* is gained. *Indriyas* are *panchabhautika*. Each *gyanendriya* dominates of one *mahabhuta* and particular *indriya* receives only *Guna* of that *mahabhuta* in the form of stimulus. This is the reason behind the reception of specific sensation by its respective *indriya*. E.g. *Prithvi mahabhuta* dominates *gyanendriya* and receives knowledge of *gandha*. Considering the above said present paper focuses on critical analysis of the physiological aspect of *indriya* i.e. route of perception in the body. Understanding the concept of *indriya* is an important step in learning of *Kriya Sharir*. It enables Ayurveda scholars to learn the normal physiology of *indriya* (senses) to diagnose any illness related to it. Ayurveda physicians should use their five senses for direct or clinical diagnosis of the disease of the patient. Physicians should diagnose sounds in the abdomen, joints of the patients, speech and quality of voice of patient with his ear. Physicians should diagnose colour of the patients, their apparent signs and symptoms and any obvious defect in any system with the eye. Physician should take the judgement about normal and abnormal smells coming from the patient. Similarly, in taste and touch, a physician should use his logic to come down to a diagnosis. For example, if flies are sitting on the body, patient's body must be bearing sweet *rasa*. When life comes to an end, *arishta* symptoms are expressed to judge whether a patient is worth treating. Because *Charaka Samhita* advises ayurveda physicians to treat curable disease. Less life span in dying patients, totally incurable diseases are left alone.

## 1. Introduction

When the term *indriya* comes, it includes both *gyanendriya* i.e. sense organs and *karmendriya*. The eye, ear nose, tongue, and skin are the organs for sense perception. These sense organs perceive information with the help of mind [1]. The mind then analyses right or wrong and then decides about the object. This is how information is received by sense organs [2]. Together of soul, mind, object and special sense organs advocate perception. Knowledge is zero with any factor among the four is missing.

*Indriya* is an apparatus which exhibits symptoms of life or concerns about the vitality of life [3]. *Indriyas* are formed by the *sara* part of *srotas* of *kapha* and *rakta*. The *mahabhutagni* of *srotas* of *kapha* and *rakta*. The *mahabhutagni* of *srotas* of *kapha* and *rakta* is responsible for the origin of *indriya* [4]. It takes nearly three months in a newly formed *zygote* after fertilization for the development of *indriya* with its related organs.

When the soul (*atma*), special sense organs (*indriya*),

mind (*mana*) and object (*arth*) remain in contact with each other (*sannikarshat*); then perception (*vyakta*) takes place, which is without any hallucination or illusion. So, this knowledge is called as eye witnessed knowledge [5]. In short, soul and mind unite; mind unites with *indriya*. *Indriya* unites with the object and then the person perceives the external entity. It is a mechanism of perception of objects by the special senses i.e. *gyanendriya* [6]. The aim of the article is to review the route of perception of *indriya*.

## 2. Materials and methods

Various *Samhita*, textbooks, journals, etc., were reviewed for the current study. All related literature regarding *indriya* was collected.

### 2.1 Review of literature

To achieve this aim, literary matter and examples of concept of *indriya* were collected from *Ayurveda Samhita*. Also, their preventive and curative aspect relative to diseases have been explained.

Meaning of the word *Indra* is *prana* [7]. The meaning of the word '*indriya*' is apparatus which exhibits symptoms of vitality. In intrauterine life, the generation of *indriya* from *mahabhutagni* of *srotas* for *kapha* and *rakta*; these *indriya* get produced. In the unicellular zygote, everything is present in the microform. Yet for special senses and for other sense organs to develop and differentiate, it takes the third month of the trimester of pregnancy [8].

By continuous usage of matter in sense organs undergo catabolism and reduction. It has to be replenished. When the food of choice is eaten, the mind is in a good mood. Food by way of smell, taste, etc. And by way of its *panchabhautika* structure; replenished, nourished and refreshed *indriya* [9].

There are a total of 11 types of *indriya*. Including five *gyanendriya* and five *karmendriya* and one *mana*. *Gyanendriyas* are eye, ear, nose, tongue, skin (sense organ). *Karmendriya* are hand, leg, anus, genital and mouth. And one *ubhayatmak mana*.

### 2.2 Indriya panch-panchaka

There are five sense organs i.e. *panchendriyani*, five *mahabhutani* i.e. *panchendriy-dravyani*, five mechanical apparatus for sense perception (*panchedriyadhishthan*), five objects i.e. *panchedriyarth*; five interpreting centers (*panchendriya budhhi*) are present in each individual [10].

### 2.3 Panchendriya

The eye, ear, nose, tongue and skin are five sense organs [11].

### 2.4 Panchendriya-dravya

Whatever *mahabhuta* is responsible for predominantly structuring sense organs is called *indriya dravya*. Five *mahabhuta* are *akash*, *vayu*, *teja*, *aap*, *Prithvi* [12]. The constitution of sense organs is *panchabhautika*. But *teja* is predominant in the eye. *Akash* is predominant in the ear. *Prithvi* is predominant in the nose. *Aap* is predominant in taste organs. *Vayu* is predominant in touch perception [13].

### 2.5 Panchendriya-adhishthan (mechanical apparatus of sense organs)

There are five *adhishthanas* – 2 eyes, 2 ears, 2 nasal cavities, tongue and skin [14]. *Adhishthan* is support. Whatever apparatus is working to gather information; to send to *budhhi* for interpretation of object is called *adhishthan*. It is the mechanical instrument through which and object gets perceived.

### 2.6 Panchendriyarth (objects of sense organs)

Objects of *indriya* are stuff, they perceive. Objects of the five special senses are sound, touch, image, taste and odour [15]. Sense organs are capable of perception of only one object. That only one object depends on which *mahabhuta* is predominant in each of these five sense organs.

### 2.7 Panchendriya- budhhi (interpretation of objects sense organs)

Here, five types of *budhhi* which spell out understanding or interpretation of perception need a union between the object and the perceiving apparatus. Then it is conveyed through special senses to the soul by means of mind [16].

### 2.8 General route of perception

soul and mind unite; mind unites with *indriya*. *Indriya* unites with object and one perceives the external entity. It is a mechanism of perception of an object by sense organs. The togetherness of soul, mind, object and sense organs advocate perception. Knowledge is zero with any factor among the four missing.

For final perception what is needed is *indriya-budhhi*. Object and bodily perception are sometimes like conjugation, sometimes togetherness; however soul intimating center of perception has to merge with the mind, the mind has to merge with the sense organ and

the sense organ has to merge with the object. Like, the conduction of sound waves, which is part of physics. Like waves on the lake, which are concentric in nature. Just like that, Sound waves make contact with the hearing system.

Perception of the mind depends upon its status (*satva- raja-tama-gun-yogachcha*). If the mind is in high quality of mood (*satva-gunयोग*) object appears different than when the mind is in active status (*raja-guna*). Hence mind shows colors of its own status in perception of objects [17]. Sense organs are able to function properly when the mind is present as a conveyor [18].

Perception helps in, to judge colour of the skin of a patient seen with eyes - like dryness, blackish or greyish tinge etc, voice, odour, taste the patient feels in his mouth, touch whether soft or hard, mind, behaviour, his memory, shape, prakriti, strength, giddiness, his learning abilities, diet, movements, his collective signs symptoms of disease, his sensation of pain, complications, luster, the effect of medicines on patient etc [19]. Should be examined by Ayurveda physician to know how much the patient is sick.

### 3. Results and discussion

In total of 11 *indriya*, the cognition from Ayurveda science depends on the nature of sense object conjunction i.e. *sannikarsha*. The wholesome and uninterrupted *sannikarsha* between atma *indriya* of any principle behind it. Scholars have tried the general route of perception as per *indriya panch-panchaka* in ancient ayurveda treatise.

Soul and mind unite; mind unites with *indriya*. *Indriya* unites with object and one perceives the external entity. That's mechanism of perception of object by special senses. This is from Ayurveda point of view. However, modern science logic also exists for practice, which is aware of different laws meant for perception by special senses. Like, e.g. conduction of sound waves, is already described above.

Also, the mind at a time doesn't indulge in many moods, however, perception is different. Every time depending upon the status of the mind. Further explaining this, the mind is so quick and it is not necessary that it will remain in the same status. At any moment, it may change its status. The one-minute mind may think about work and the next second it

may be thinking about traveling vacation. When it is thinking about work, it is 'working' mood. Also, when it is thinking about traveling on vacation, it is in 'fun enjoyable' mood. Both are two sides of the same mind. In the mood of enjoying vacations, the mind is unable to think about work. So, it remains in one mood at a time.

### 4. Conclusions

There are six different types of conjunction between *indriya* and its respective *indriya arth*, extensively discussed in Ayurveda which signifies the vitality of cognition and its impairment. The soul is present or not, can be examined by non-perception of the object in an individual with properly functioning sense organs. When the soul, mind, sense organs, and object come together, ultimately perception takes place and knowledge has been acquired. Even if a soul is present in the body, it is unable to perceive any stimuli from outside. Sense organs are needed to be present in the body to perceive external and internal stimuli.

### Authors' contributions

All authors contributed equally

### Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank all Kriya Sharir department staff. Also special thanks to Dr. Shilpa Ingle, Assistant Professor, Dept of Kriya Sharir, Govt. Ayurveda College Nanded, for her valuable advice regarding the *indriya* topic.

### Funding

The author did not receive any financial aid.

### Availability of data and materials

All relevant data are within the paper and its supporting information files. Additional data will be made available on request according to the journal policy.

### Conflicts of interest

The authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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