

Revisiting the Concept of Krimi in Vedic and Ayurvedic Literature: An Indian Knowledge Systems Perspective under NEP 2020

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ABSTRACT

The significance of Indian Knowledge Systems under the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 has encouraged scholars to re-examine classical Indian texts as structured bodies of empirical and philosophical knowledge. Within this context, Vedic and Ayurvedic literature offers valuable insights into early understandings of health, disease, and living entities that are not directly observed through unaided eyes. The concept of *krimi*, frequently mentioned in these texts, refers to organisms associated with spoilage, illness, and bodily changes. Although as expressed in a pre-modern intellectual framework, these descriptions appear to arise from sustained observation of disease patterns, environmental influences, and physiological responses rather than single thought alone. This article examines selected interpretations along with primary Vedic and Ayurvedic sources to explore how *krimi* were understood in terms of their origin, classification, and role in the diseases occurred. The analysis highlights the connection between traditional textual concept of *krimi* with factors such as improper diet, lack of personal cleanliness and hygiene, environmental conditions, and disturbances within the body. Focus is centred on prevention and therapeutic measures recommended in these sources, including dietary regulation, daily routine, hygienic practices, and the use of herbal preparations, reflecting a complete preventive orientation toward health. Instead of directly comparing these ideas with modern microbiology, the study looks at them within their own traditional ways of thinking, letting the original knowledge system explain itself. By doing so, emphasis is laid on the internal logic of the Indian Knowledge System in addressing questions of health and disease. In association with NEP 2020, this study supports ongoing academic efforts to bring classical Indian knowledge traditions into modern interdisciplinary research and higher education.

Keywords: *Indian Knowledge System, National Education Policy, Krimi, Vedic Literature, Ayurvedic, Higher education*

The idea of *Krimi* (कृमि) constitutes one of the earliest systematic reflections on pathogenic life in the Indian intellectual tradition. It is translated as “worm,” and the term encompasses a wider variety of organisms than merely intestinal parasites. Vedic and Ayurvedic texts describe *krimi* as living beings capable of disturbing bodily

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equilibrium and producing disease. These organisms may inhabit the body internally, by attaching to surface externally, or arise under specific pathological conditions.

Unlike modern germ theory, isolates pathogens as independent biological agents, Ayurveda interprets *krimi* within a relational framework. Disease emerges when internal imbalances particularly of the doṣas (Vāta, Pitta, and Kapha) create conditions favourable to pathogenic proliferation. Hygiene, diet, seasonal variation, and behavioral patterns all influence this process. In recent years, renewed interest in indigenous medical knowledge has been encouraged by India's National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, which emphasizes the integration of Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) into mainstream academic courses. Within this framework, the study of *krimi* provides a great case for exploring traditional medicine bridging disciplines without simply reducing ancient concepts to modern medical terms. This paper therefore explores the historical, medical, and pedagogical significance of *krimi* as segmented in primary Sanskrit sources and interpreted within current academic literature.

METHODOLOGY

This study involves references from Ayurvedic and Vedic texts as reported in secondary sources, situated within the Indian Knowledge Systems framework which qualitatively analysis traditional descriptions of *krimi* by them such as classification, causes, symptoms and management without imposing modern microbial interpretations. The key ideas are supported with textual references to maintain accuracy and faithfulness towards original sources.

Vedic Foundations of the *Krimi* Concept

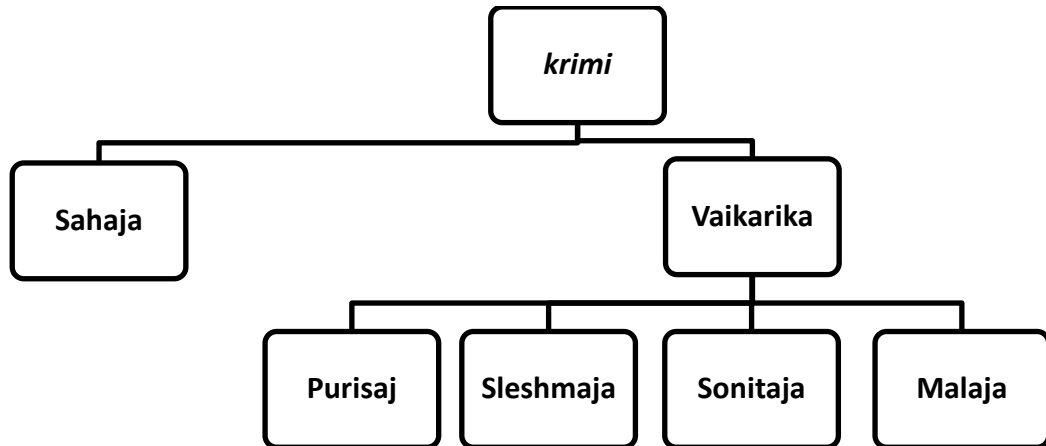
The earliest references to *krimi* appear in the Atharvaveda, a compilation of healing, protection, and everyday well-being. Hymns in this text reflects *krimi* as harmful beings residing in diverse environments, soil, water, plants, animals, and the human body. They are described as both visible and invisible entities, capable of inducing pain, fever, and causing various diseases. A classical aspect of the Atharvaveda is its association of sunlight with the destruction of *krimi*. Verses invoke the purifying power of solar rays in dispelling disease-causing organisms and suggesting awareness of environmental hygiene. Additionally, the text employs symbolic terms such as Rakṣasa, Piśāca, and Yātudhāna to describe harmful entities. Mythologically this terms are interpreted as demonic or chaotic forces but within the medical context they appear to function in pathogenic roles. Later Ayurvedic authorities (Charaka, Sushruta, Vagbhata) classify *krimi* into external (bahya) and internal (abhantara), further subtyped by humoral (dosha) associations.

Ayurvedic classification of *krimi*

The Caraka Saṃhitā and the Suśruta Saṃhitā give formal taxonomic Ayurvedic classification by detailed taxonomies, etiologies, and treatment protocols. Later works such as the Aṣṭāṅga Hṛdaya of Vāgbhaṭa synthesize earlier knowledge while preserving core classifications.

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Classification chart:



Etiology and Pathogenesis

Ayurveda locates the origin of pathogenic *krimi* in a combination of, digestive impairment, dietary indiscretion, environmental exposure, and behavioral negligence. The accumulation undigested or improperly metabolized material is frequently cited as a source for their growth. Common etiological factors include excessive consumption of sweet and sour foods, heavy incompatible dietary combinations, directly sleeping after meals, poor sanitation and contaminated surroundings. The emphasis on hygiene is consistent across all the related texts. Cleanliness of body, clothing, and environment must be mandatory. The practice of sun-drying garments, maintaining clean water sources, and adhering to daily cleansing rituals reflects an early option for preventive health orientation. Disease not arises merely from external invasion but also from an internal ecological imbalance.

Clinical Manifestations

Descriptions of *krimiroga* in classical texts present a broad spectrum of symptoms. These includes fever (jvara), abdominal pain (sula), anemia, anorexia, diarrhea or constipation, itching and skin eruptions, fatigue and mental instability. The diversity of symptoms demonstrates awareness that disease due to *krimi* can affect multiple organ systems. Therapeutic approaches outlined by Charaka had threefold strategy including: Apakarṣaṇa (Expulsion), Prakṛti-vighāta (Disruption of Habitat), Nidāna-parivarjana (Avoidance of Causes).

Krimi within the Framework of Indian Knowledge Systems and NEP 2020

The contemporary relevance of *krimi* studies gains particular significance in light of India's National Education Policy 2020. The policy engages systematic integration of Indian Knowledge Systems across disciplines, including medicine, life sciences and environmental science. Rather than treating Vedic knowledge as an isolated traditional system, NEP 2020 envisions interdisciplinary engagement. Within this framework, the study of *krimi* offers multiple possibilities:

1. Comparative exploration of traditional and modern understandings of parasitic disease and its etiology.

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2. Research on plant-based anthelmintic and natural pharmacology products.
3. Integration of hygiene-based preventive models in health education system.
4. Framing curriculum modules bridging classical texts and modern biomedical science.

By fostering dialogue between Ayurveda and modern science, NEP 2020 encourages a model of knowledge that is rooted, innovative and perpetual. The revival of classical medical strategies can stimulate culturally sensitive research methodologies and enhance academic discourse. Ancient Indian texts developed a sophisticated theory of *Krimi*, anticipating many aspects of parasitic and microbial disease without modern instrumentation. These sources classify *krimi* by origin and effect, describe their symptoms, and prescribe holistic remedies grounded in Ayurvedic logic. By revisiting these ideas through an IKS lens, we appreciate Ayurveda's internal coherence.

In the context of NEP 2020, this traditional knowledge acquires new relevance. The policy's emphasis on integrating indigenous knowledge in higher education and research creates an avenue to study *krimi* not as outdated belief but as a system of thought with potential insights for modern science. For example, Ayurvedic formulations may inspire natural-product drug discovery and educationally, *krimi* illustrates the value of ancient scientific traditions. As the Indian Knowledge Systems initiative declares, drawing on this "rich heritage" can help solve "current and emerging challenges".

CONCLUSION

The present study demonstrates that the concept of *krimi* in Vedic and Ayurvedic literature reflects a systematic and observation-based approach to understanding health, disease, and the interaction between the human body and its environment. In the context of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, which emphasizes the integration, preservation, and promotion of India's traditional knowledge systems, this study reinforces the academic relevance and pedagogical value of classical Indian texts as structured sources of scientific and philosophical inquiry. By examining these concepts within their original texts, the study pronounces that Indian Knowledge Systems offer unique perspectives on interdisciplinary research rather than merely serving as historical curiosities. Such engagement encourages intellectual diversity, critical reflection and culturally rooted scholarship in higher education. Furthermore, the findings underscore the importance of incorporating IKS into academic curricula and research to foster a more inclusive and contextually grounded knowledge ecosystem. The preventive and holistic health principles reflected in the concept of *krimi* align with contemporary global emphasis on sustainable health practices and preventive medicine, thereby demonstrating the continuing relevance of traditional knowledge. In alignment with NEP 2020, this study contributes to the ongoing effort to bridge classical knowledge traditions with modern academic frameworks, promoting an integrative and balanced approach to education that values both contemporary scientific inquiry and indigenous intellectual heritage.

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Conflict of Interest

The author declared no conflict of interest.

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