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A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF *SADVRITTA* AND ITS IMPORTANCE IN THE PROMOTION OF MENTAL AND SOCIAL HEALTH

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ABSTRACT

Background Mental and social health are essential dimensions of complete health. Rapid lifestyle changes, interpersonal conflicts, excessive competition, social isolation, uncontrolled use of digital media and weakening of ethical values have increased psychological stress and disturbed social relationships. *Ayurveda* describes *Sadvritta* as a comprehensive code of personal, ethical, mental, social and spiritual conduct. Its principles regulate thoughts, speech, behaviour, sensory activities and interpersonal relationships. Regular observance of *Sadvritta* may therefore support emotional stability, self-control, social adjustment and peaceful community living. **Aim and Objectives** To critically analyse the concept of *Sadvritta* described in classical *Ayurvedic* literature and assess its importance in promoting mental and social health. **Materials and Methods** A narrative review of the *Charaka Samhita*, *Sushruta Samhita*, *Ashtanga Hridaya* and relevant contemporary literature was conducted. Principles related to personal conduct, mental discipline, social behaviour and ethical living were identified and classified. Their probable role in mental and social health promotion was interpreted through classical and contemporary perspectives. **Results & Discussion** *Sadvritta* acts primarily through the regulation of *Mana*, *Indriya*, speech and behaviour. Its regular practice may strengthen psychological resilience while developing trust, cooperation and social harmony. **Conclusion** *Sadvritta* is a preventive behavioural framework that connects individual mental balance with collective social health. Its context-appropriate inclusion in education, counselling and public-health programmes may support healthier individuals and communities.

Keywords: *Sadvritta*, mental health, social health, *Achara Rasayana*, ethical conduct, preventive health

Introduction

Health is not limited to freedom from physical disease. It includes the ability to maintain mental balance, perform daily responsibilities, establish meaningful relationships and contribute positively to society. Mental health determines how an individual thinks, feels, responds to stress and interacts with others. Social health reflects the capacity to communicate, cooperate, fulfil social roles and maintain supportive relationships. The World Health Organization similarly recognises mental and social well-being as essential components of complete health.¹

Modern society has witnessed major changes in family structure, working patterns, communication, food habits and recreational activities. Academic pressure, occupational stress, loneliness, sleep disturbance, substance use, aggressive communication and excessive digital engagement can negatively influence mental and social well-being. Many of these problems are connected not only with disease but also with unhealthy behaviour, poor emotional regulation and disturbed interpersonal relationships. Consequently, preventive approaches that develop self-awareness, discipline, compassion and responsible conduct are increasingly important.²

Ayurveda presents a broad concept of health through the balanced state of *Dosha*, *Agni*, *Dhatu* and *Mala*, together with a pleasant state of *Atma*, *Indriya* and *Mana*. It therefore considers psychological and social well-being inseparable from physical health. Among its preventive principles, *Sadvritta* occupies an important position because it guides personal habits, mental discipline, ethical decisions, speech, social relationships and spiritual conduct. It is not merely a collection of moral instructions but a practical behavioural system intended to protect health and promote a balanced life.³

Aim and Objectives

Aim

To critically analyse *Sadvritta* and its importance in the promotion of mental and social health.

Objectives

1. To review the classical concept and major components of *Sadvritta*.
2. To examine the relationship of *Sadvritta* with mental health.
3. To assess its importance in interpersonal relationships and social health.
4. To interpret its relevance in the present lifestyle.
5. To identify possibilities for its application in education, counselling and preventive health programmes.

Materials and Methods

The present work was conducted as a narrative and conceptual review. Primary information was collected from the *Charaka Samhita*, *Sushruta Samhita* and *Ashtanga Hridaya*, particularly the descriptions of *Sadvritta*, *Swasthavritta*, *Acharya Rasayana*, *Dharaniya Vega*, *Prajnaparadha*, *Mana* and control of the senses. Secondary information was obtained from published articles and reports related to mental health, social well-being, behavioural regulation and *Ayurvedic* psychotherapy. The collected principles were classified under personal, psychological, verbal,

social, ethical and spiritual conduct and critically interpreted in relation to contemporary mental and social health.⁴

Ayurvedic Review

Meaning and Scope of *Sadvritta*

The word *Sadvritta* is formed from *Sat*, meaning good, noble, virtuous or appropriate, and *Vritta*, meaning conduct, behaviour or way of living. Thus, *Sadvritta* means good conduct or a disciplined mode of life. It includes actions that protect the individual from physical, psychological, social and moral disturbances. Its scope extends from cleanliness and personal discipline to emotional control, respectful communication, ethical earning, social responsibility and spiritual development. It guides a person regarding what should be done, what should be avoided and how one should behave under different circumstances.⁵

Philosophical Foundation of *Sadvritta*

The philosophical foundation of *Sadvritta* lies in the close relationship among body, senses, mind and consciousness. Every action begins with perception, passes through mental interpretation and is expressed through speech or physical behaviour. Improper contact of the senses with their objects, intellectual error and the effects of time are recognised as major causes of disease. Among these, *Prajnaparadha*, or failure of wisdom, is particularly relevant to behaviour. When *Dhi*, *Dhriti* and *Smriti* become disturbed, a person may knowingly engage in harmful actions. *Sadvritta* helps prevent this disturbance by repeatedly directing thoughts and behaviour towards appropriate choices.⁶

Relationship with *Mana* and the Three *Guna*

According to *Ayurveda*, *Mana* is influenced by *Sattva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas*. *Sattva* promotes clarity, patience, discrimination and emotional balance, whereas excessive *Rajas* produces restlessness, anger, ambition and instability. Excessive *Tamas* may lead to ignorance, inactivity, confusion and negligence. Truthfulness, compassion, forgiveness, moderation, disciplined sensory activity and respectful behaviour support *Sattva*. In contrast, aggression, deceit, jealousy, uncontrolled desire and harmful conduct strengthen *Rajas* and *Tamas*. Therefore, *Sadvritta* may be understood as a practical method for improving the quality of *Mana* by promoting *Sattvika* thoughts and behaviour.⁷

Personal Conduct and Self-Discipline

Personal *Sadvritta* includes cleanliness of the body, appropriate dress, regular bathing, maintenance of oral hygiene, proper grooming, moderation in food, adequate sleep and disciplined daily activities. A person is advised to maintain order in personal habits and avoid excessive indulgence, negligence and harmful addictions. Although some classical instructions reflect the social circumstances of their time, their central purpose remains relevant. A clean, organised and disciplined lifestyle develops self-respect, predictability and control over daily activities. Such routine may reduce mental confusion and support confidence, healthy sleep, time management and personal responsibility.⁸

Mental and Emotional Conduct

Mental *Sadvritta* advises an individual to avoid excessive anger, fear, grief, jealousy, greed, attachment, arrogance and hostility. It encourages patience, courage, forgiveness, contentment, compassion and thoughtful action. These instructions do not demand suppression of every emotion. Instead, they advocate recognition and appropriate regulation of emotions before they are converted into harmful speech or action. The concept is closely related to the control of *Dharaniya Vega*, which includes restraining harmful impulses of the mind, speech and body. This behavioural pause between emotion and action may reduce impulsivity, aggression, guilt and interpersonal conflict.⁹

Verbal Conduct and Healthy Communication

Speech is one of the strongest links between mental and social health. *Sadvritta* recommends speaking truthfully, gently, beneficially and at the proper time. Harsh, insulting, false, divisive and unnecessary speech is discouraged. A person should not reveal another individual's weakness merely to cause humiliation and should avoid quarrelsome communication. These principles indicate that truthful speech alone is insufficient if it is delivered without compassion or proper judgment. Respectful communication may prevent misunderstanding, preserve dignity, improve conflict resolution and create psychological safety within families, classrooms, workplaces and communities.¹⁰

Social and Interpersonal Conduct

Social *Sadvritta* includes respect for parents, teachers, elders, guests, scholars and vulnerable persons. It encourages assistance to people in need, gratitude, hospitality, cooperation and non-violence. A person should avoid exploiting others, taking property unlawfully, developing harmful relationships or acting in ways that disturb social peace. These guidelines strengthen mutual trust and create a sense of belonging. When individuals feel respected and supported, they are more likely to communicate openly and seek help during emotional difficulty. Thus, *Sadvritta* connects individual character with the health of the family and the wider community.¹¹

Ethical Conduct and *Achara Rasayana*

Achara Rasayana represents the rejuvenating value of good behaviour. It includes truthfulness, freedom from anger, avoidance of intoxicants, non-violence, calmness, pleasant speech, cleanliness, patience, charity, respect for teachers and regular spiritual practice. The term *Rasayana* usually refers to measures that promote longevity, vitality and resistance to disease. By applying this term to conduct, *Ayurveda* recognises that behaviour itself may produce a restorative effect. Ethical living reduces internal conflict, improves self-esteem and strengthens social support. In this way, *Achara Rasayana* may be considered the health-promoting and rejuvenating dimension of *Sadvritta*.¹²

Spiritual Conduct and Inner Stability

Spiritual conduct within *Sadvritta* includes self-reflection, respect for noble values, gratitude, prayer, meditation and awareness of the consequences of one's actions. These practices are not restricted to any single religious identity. Their broader purpose is to reduce excessive ego-centred behaviour and develop meaning, responsibility and inner stability. A person with a clear

sense of purpose may tolerate adversity more effectively and is less likely to react impulsively to temporary difficulties. Traditional mental-health-promoting practices in *Ayurveda*, including correct conduct, self-knowledge and meditation, may therefore complement psychological care by strengthening insight, hope and resilience.¹³

Major Components of *Sadvritta*

	Important principles	Probable health contribution
Personal conduct	Cleanliness, appropriate routine, moderation and self-discipline	Self-respect, confidence and organised living
Mental conduct	Control of anger, greed, fear, jealousy and harmful impulses	Emotional balance and reduced psychological stress
Verbal conduct	Truthful, gentle, beneficial and timely speech	Healthy communication and fewer conflicts
Social conduct	Respect, cooperation, compassion, hospitality and service	Trust, belonging and social support
Ethical conduct	Honesty, non-violence, responsibility and fair dealings	Reduced guilt, exploitation and social disharmony
Sensory conduct	Appropriate use of sensory objects and avoidance of excess	Reduced overstimulation and impulsive behaviour
Spiritual conduct	Self-reflection, gratitude, meditation and meaningful living	Inner peace, resilience and sense of purpose
Environmental conduct	Clean surroundings and avoidance of harmful public behaviour	Community hygiene, safety and social responsibility

Classification of *Sadvritta*

1. *Sharirika Sadvritta*

It includes bodily cleanliness, proper dress, controlled physical actions, protection of the body and avoidance of violence, theft, addiction and harmful physical behaviour.

2. *Manasika Sadvritta*

It includes emotional regulation, patience, courage, contentment, compassion, self-awareness and control of anger, fear, greed, jealousy and hatred.

3. *Vachika Sadvritta*

It includes truthful, gentle, meaningful and beneficial speech and avoidance of lies, abuse, gossip, humiliation and divisive communication.

4. *Samajika Sadvritta*

It includes respect for others, fulfilment of duties, cooperation, protection of vulnerable persons, gratitude and responsible participation in society.

5. *Naitika Sadvritta*

It includes honesty, non-violence, fairness, accountability and avoidance of exploitation or misconduct.

6. *Adhyatmika Sadvritta*

It includes self-examination, prayer, meditation, gratitude, respect for higher values and development of a meaningful purpose in life.

Role of *Sadvritta* in Mental Health Promotion

Regulation of Thoughts and Emotions

Regular self-observation makes a person aware of emerging anger, jealousy, fear and harmful desire. This awareness provides an opportunity to regulate the emotion before it becomes destructive behaviour.

Development of Self-Control

Moderation of sensory activities, food, sleep, speech and desires develops behavioural control. Self-control protects individuals from impulsive decisions, addictions and avoidable conflicts.

Reduction of Psychological Stress

Truthful and responsible living reduces fear of exposure, guilt and internal contradiction. A disciplined lifestyle also decreases uncertainty and creates a feeling of stability.

Promotion of Positive Emotions

Compassion, gratitude, forgiveness, charity and service promote satisfaction and a sense of connection. These emotions may counter loneliness, resentment and hostility.

Improvement of Resilience

Patience, courage, self-reflection and meaningful living improve the ability to face difficulties without losing emotional balance.

Prevention of Harmful Behaviour

Control over mental, verbal and physical impulses may reduce aggression, self-destructive behaviour, substance misuse and risky conduct.

Strengthening of Self-Esteem

A person who behaves according to personally accepted ethical values develops self-respect and confidence. This form of self-esteem is based on character rather than external approval.

Role of *Sadvritta* in Social Health Promotion

Healthy Relationships

Respect, truthful communication, empathy and forgiveness support stable relationships and reduce unnecessary interpersonal tension.

Development of Social Trust

Honesty, accountability and non-exploitation make behaviour predictable. Predictable and responsible behaviour is essential for trust within families and communities.

Prevention of Conflict

Gentle speech, emotional control and consideration of time and context reduce verbal aggression and misunderstanding.

Support for Vulnerable Individuals

Compassion, charity and service encourage individuals to assist children, older persons, patients and socially disadvantaged people.

Community Cooperation

The fulfilment of duties and respect for collective welfare encourage participation in family, professional and social responsibilities.

Social Inclusion

Hospitality, respect and non-humiliating behaviour create an environment in which individuals experience dignity and belonging.

Responsible Citizenship

Cleanliness, non-violence, lawful conduct and concern for public welfare support safe and healthy communities.

Results and Findings

- *Sadvritta* was found to be a multidimensional code covering personal, mental, verbal, social, ethical and spiritual behaviour.
- Its primary psychological action is the regulation of *Mana*, *Indriya* and emotional impulses.
- The concept provides a behavioural method for preventing *Prajnaparadha* by strengthening *Dhi*, *Dhriti* and *Smriti*.
- Truthfulness, compassion, contentment, forgiveness and self-control promote *Sattva* and support mental stability.
- Regulation of anger, greed, fear, jealousy and excessive desire may reduce stress, impulsivity and harmful conduct.
- Gentle, truthful, beneficial and timely speech supports healthy communication and conflict resolution.
- Respect, cooperation, hospitality and service strengthen social trust and a sense of belonging.
- *Acharya Rasayana* demonstrates that ethical conduct can have health-promoting and restorative value.
- The principles of sensory moderation are relevant to excessive digital-media use and continuous sensory stimulation.

- The concept may be applied in schools, colleges, families, workplaces, counselling centres and community-health programmes.
- *Sadvritta* supports preventive mental healthcare but cannot substitute for professional treatment in established mental disorders.
- Some classical instructions require contextual interpretation according to current scientific knowledge, equality, human rights and changing social conditions.

Discussion

The present review indicates that *Sadvritta* is more than a moral or religious code. It is a structured behavioural approach linking individual choices with psychological and social consequences. Its emphasis on self-awareness, emotional restraint, moderation and beneficial communication resembles important elements of contemporary mental-health promotion. When an individual repeatedly controls harmful impulses and adopts constructive behaviour, these practices may gradually become stable habits. Such habits can reduce avoidable stress and strengthen the capacity to respond thoughtfully to difficult situations. Contemporary discussions of positive psychiatry in *Ayurveda* also recognise wisdom, resilience, self-awareness and disciplined conduct as important resources for mental well-being.¹⁴

The social importance of *Sadvritta* arises from the understanding that mental health develops within relationships. Anger, humiliation, dishonesty and exploitation harm both the person performing the action and those exposed to it. Conversely, empathy, respectful speech, fairness and service create trust and emotional safety. Social support developed through such conduct can protect individuals during stress, illness and loss. Therefore, the benefits of *Sadvritta* are not confined to personal peace. They extend to family stability, workplace cooperation and community harmony. This is consistent with the contemporary understanding that social, economic and environmental conditions substantially influence mental health.¹⁵

Critical interpretation is necessary before applying *Sadvritta* in the present era. Classical principles emerged within a particular historical and cultural environment, and every instruction should not be applied mechanically. Universal principles such as non-violence, cleanliness, honesty, compassion, moderation and respectful communication remain broadly relevant, while context-dependent directions require adaptation according to scientific evidence, constitutional values, gender equality and personal dignity. The available literature is mainly conceptual, and direct clinical evidence for *Sadvritta*-based interventions remains limited. Future studies should develop measurable educational and behavioural modules and examine their effect on stress, emotional regulation, interpersonal conflict, social connectedness and quality of life.¹⁶

Conclusion

Sadvritta is a comprehensive preventive approach that connects disciplined personal behaviour with mental balance and social harmony. Its principles regulate thoughts, emotions, sensory activities, speech and interpersonal conduct. Through the promotion of *Sattva*, control of *Prajnaparadha* and strengthening of *Dhi*, *Dhriti* and *Smriti*, it may support emotional stability, self-control and psychological resilience. Its social principles develop trust, compassion,

cooperation and responsible community behaviour. Although classical instructions require context-sensitive interpretation and further scientific evaluation, the essential values of *Sadvritta* remain highly relevant. Their careful integration into education, counselling, family guidance, workplace wellness and preventive health programmes may contribute to healthier individuals and more supportive communities.

Conflict of Interest -Nil.

Source of Support- None.

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