



Review Article

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ROLE OF *ADRAVYA BHUTA CHIKITSA* IN MENTAL HEALTH AND BEHAVIORAL DISORDERS W.S.R. *BRIHATRAYI*

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ABSTRACT

Mental health and behavioral disorders are increasingly becoming major health concerns in modern society due to stress, unhealthy lifestyle, emotional instability, and psychosocial disturbances. Ayurveda considers health as a balanced state of body, mind, senses, and soul. Along with medicinal treatment, Ayurveda emphasizes the importance of non-pharmacological therapies for maintaining mental and emotional well-being. *Adravya Bhuta Chikitsa* refers to therapeutic approaches that do not involve the direct administration of medicines and include psychological, spiritual, behavioral, and lifestyle-based interventions. The classical Ayurvedic texts of *Brihatrayi* such as *Charaka Samhita*, *Sushruta Samhita*, and *Ashtanga Hridaya* describe several psychotherapeutic principles including *Satvavajaya Chikitsa*, *Mantra*, *Samadhi*, *Santwana*, *Harshana*, *Vismarana*, and behavioral regulation techniques for the management of *Manasika Vikara*. These therapies mainly aim at controlling the mind, improving emotional stability, promoting positive thinking, and reducing psychological disturbances. *Satvavajaya Chikitsa* is considered the principal

psychotherapeutic modality in Ayurveda and emphasizes control of mind through *Jnana*, *Vijnana*, *Dhairya*, *Smriti*, and *Samadhi*. Various non-drug approaches such as reassurance, counseling, meditation, yoga, exposure to natural environment, and emotional regulation have been described for improving mental health and correcting behavioral abnormalities. These Ayurvedic concepts closely resemble modern psychotherapy, mindfulness therapy, counseling, and cognitive behavioral therapy. The holistic approach of *Adravya Bhuta Chikitsa* not only helps in management of psychiatric disorders but also plays an important role in prevention, emotional balance, and maintenance of psychological health. Integration of Ayurvedic psychotherapeutic principles with modern mental healthcare may provide safe, economical, and holistic management strategies for mental and behavioral disorders.

Keywords: *Adravya Bhuta Chikitsa*, *Satvavajaya Chikitsa*, *Manasika Vikara*, *Brihatrayi*, Mental Health, Behavioral Disorders

INTRODUCTION

Acharya Charaka and Acharya Vagbhata have elaborately described *Adravya Bhuta Chikitsa* as an important non-pharmacological therapeutic approach for management of mental and behavioral disorders. These therapies are performed without direct administration of medicines and mainly act through psychological, emotional, behavioral, spiritual, and lifestyle-based interventions.¹ In *Charaka Samhita*, therapeutic procedures such as *Vismapana* (surprising therapy), *Vismarana* (diversion or forgetting stressful events), *Bandha* (restraint), and *Vadha* (terrorizing or threatening) have been described for management of psychiatric disturbances. Similarly, *Ashtanga Samgraha* mentions therapies like *Upavasa*, *Anila Seva*, *Atapa Seva*, *Chaya Seva*, *Mantra*, *Santwana*, *Dana*, *Trasana*, *Jagarana*, *Harshana*, and *Hasana* as important supportive measures for maintaining psychological balance and emotional well-being.

These therapeutic procedures mainly focus on controlling the mind, regulating emotions, correcting behavior, and improving mental stability. Techniques such as reassurance, emotional diversion, inducing happiness, meditation, laughter therapy, exposure to natural environment, and counseling help in reducing stress, fear, anxiety, grief, and abnormal behavior. In *Unmada Chikitsa*, Acharya Charaka has explained that even after purification therapies, if the patient continues to exhibit abnormal conduct, *Adravya Bhuta Chikitsa* measures may be employed to stimulate the mind, intellect, and body. These concepts

indicate that ancient Ayurvedic scholars had a deep understanding of psychotherapeutic principles, which closely resemble modern approaches such as psychotherapy, behavioral therapy, counseling, and cognitive behavioral therapy.²

AIM AND OBJECTIVES

Aim:

To study the role of *Adravya Bhuta Chikitsa* in mental health and behavioral disorders with special reference to *Brihatrayi*.

Objectives:

- To explore the concept of *Adravya Bhuta Chikitsa* in Ayurveda.
- To study Ayurvedic concepts of mental and behavioral disorders.
- To evaluate the role of *Satvavajaya Chikitsa* in psychological disorders.
- To analyze non-pharmacological therapies described in *Brihatrayi*.
- To correlate Ayurvedic psychotherapeutic approaches with modern mental healthcare.

Materials and Methods:

The present study is a conceptual and literary review based on classical Ayurvedic texts including *Charaka Samhita*, *Sushruta Samhita*, *Ashtanga Hridaya*, and *Ashtanga Samgraha*, along with their commentaries, published research articles, review papers, and relevant modern literature related to mental health and psychotherapy. References regarding *Adravya Bhuta Chikitsa*, *Satvavajaya Chikitsa*, *Manasika Vikara*, and various non-pharmacological therapeutic approaches were systematically collected, compiled, analyzed, and interpreted to evaluate their significance in the prevention and management of mental health and behavioral disorders.

CONCEPTUAL STUDY

Adravyabhuta Chikitsa in Charaka Samhita

A. Bhaya Darshana

Bhaya Darshana means creating fear in selected psychological conditions to divert the disturbed emotions of the patient into another direction. According to *Charaka Samhita*, excessive emotions such as anger, desire, and emotional excitement can be controlled by inducing fear. In conditions like *Kama Jwara* and *Krodha Jwara*, fear is mentioned as a therapeutic measure. Violent or disobedient psychiatric patients may be safely restrained

and kept in a protected environment. Showing frightening objects such as snakes or threatening situations was believed to alter the patient's emotional state and help in restoring mental balance.

B. *Vismapana*

Vismapana refers to creating surprise or astonishment through unusual experiences or magical exhibitions. This therapy helps in changing the emotional status and mental attitude of the patient. It acts by diverting the abnormal thought process and is considered useful in certain psychiatric and emotional disorders.

C. *Vismarana*

Vismarana means forgetting stressful memories or disturbing events. It is a psychological method in which the patient is encouraged to engage in work, recreation, or entertainment to divert the mind away from emotional trauma and mental stress. This therapy helps in reducing anxiety and emotional disturbances.

D. *Kshobhana*

Kshobhana means stimulation or shaking through mechanical methods. It is used to stimulate the body and mind and remove pathological conditions. In certain disorders such as *Asmari*, this method is advised for therapeutic stimulation and correction of abnormal functions.

E. *Harshana*

Harshana means inducing happiness and creating a pleasant mental state. Ayurveda explains that positive emotions help in reducing the harmful effects of grief, fear, stress, and emotional disturbances. In conditions such as *Kama*, *Soka*, and *Bhaya Jwara*, *Harshana* is advised to improve emotional stability and mental well-being.

F. *Bhartsana*

Bhartsana refers to scolding or stern verbal correction. It is used in certain psychiatric conditions where sudden behavioral or emotional correction is required. This method may help in controlling violent or abnormal behavior by producing an immediate psychological impact.

G. *Bandha*

Bandha means restraining the patient during violent stages of mental illness. According to Ayurveda, restraint may be necessary when the patient poses danger to self or others. The

purpose of *Bandhana Karma* is protection, behavioral control, and prevention of harmful activities.

H. Swapna

Swapna or proper sleep is considered essential for mental and physical relaxation. Sleep restores the normal functioning of the mind and body, reduces mental fatigue, and helps in emotional stabilization. It is an important supportive therapy in psychological disturbances and stress-related disorders.

I. Samvahana

Samvahana means gentle massage or soothing tactile stimulation. This therapy promotes relaxation, improves circulation, calms the nervous system, and creates a feeling of well-being. *Samvahana* is particularly useful in insomnia, stress, anxiety, and mental fatigue.

Adravyabhuta Chikitsa in Ashtanga Samgraha

A. Upavasa

Upavasa means fasting or abstaining from food for a specific period of time. In Ayurveda, *Upavasa Rupa Langhana* is advised for promoting *Ama Pachana*, as *Ama* is considered the root cause of many diseases. By reducing the digestive load, the body gets sufficient time to restore normal physiological and metabolic functions. *Anila Seva*, such as morning and evening walks in fresh air, is also included under supportive non-pharmacological therapy for improving mental freshness and physical well-being. *Atapa Seva* or sun exposure is another important therapy that stimulates bodily functions naturally and helps in maintaining physical and psychological health.

B. Mantra

Mantra therapy is described as a method that protects and stabilizes the mind. The phrase "*Mananat Trayate Iti Mantra*" explains that mantra protects the individual through mental concentration and spiritual influence. It is considered a form of behavioral and spiritual therapy. In psychiatric disorders such as *Unmada*, specific mantras including *Mahavidya Mantra* and *Mayuri Vidya Mantra* are recommended for improving mental strength, emotional stability, and positive energy.

C. Santwana

Santwana means consolation, reassurance, and emotional support to the patient. It is considered an essential preliminary step before initiating any therapeutic procedure.

Through reassurance and compassionate communication, the patient develops confidence, emotional comfort, and mental relaxation, which helps in improving therapeutic outcomes.

D. Dana

Dana means charitable giving or offering useful things to others without expectation. Ayurveda considers *Dana* beneficial in reducing guilt, emotional burden, and psychological stress. It promotes positive emotions, satisfaction, and mental peace. In conditions such as *Bhoota Grahabadha*, *Dana* is recommended as a supportive psychotherapeutic measure.

E. Trasana

Trasana refers to frightening or shock-based therapy used to control abnormal behavior and bring the patient within proper behavioral limits. It is advised in conditions such as *Unmada* and *Hikka*. This therapy acts by producing sudden psychological stimulation and correcting disturbed mental states.

F. Jagarana

Jagarana means controlled wakefulness or avoiding sleep during night in selected clinical conditions. It is specifically indicated in disorders such as *Kaphaja Madatyaya* and certain throat disorders. Therapeutically regulated wakefulness helps in reducing excessive *Kapha* and correcting associated disturbances.

G. Hasana

Hasana means laughter therapy. Ayurveda explains that laughter produces mental relaxation, improves circulation, and creates a feeling of freshness and positivity. It helps in reducing depression, sadness, anxiety, stress, helplessness, and emotional tension. Modern research also supports that laughter stimulates release of beneficial neurohormones, thereby improving psychological well-being.

Satvavajaya Chikitsa – Ayurvedic Psychotherapy

Satvavajaya Chikitsa is one of the three major therapeutic approaches in Ayurveda and is specifically indicated for mental and emotional disorders. Acharya Charaka defines it as restraining the mind from unwholesome objects and directing it toward healthy and positive thoughts.

“*Satvavajaya Punah Ahitebhyo Arthebhyo Manonigraha*” (*Charaka Samhita* Su. 11/54)³

“Dhi Dhairyatmadi Vijnanam Manodosausadham Param” (Ashtanga Hridaya)

The main objective of *Satvavajaya Chikitsa* is to control emotional disturbances, mental stress, and abnormal behavior through development of *Jnana* (knowledge), *Vijnana* (scientific understanding), *Dhairya* (patience), *Smriti* (memory), and *Samadhi* (meditation). This therapy strengthens *Satva Guna* and reduces the effects of *Rajas* and *Tamas*, thereby promoting emotional balance, confidence, mental discipline, and psychological stability.

Examples of *Adravyabhuta Chikitsa*

1. *Jwara* (Fever)

In *Jwara*, therapies such as *Langhana*, chanting of *Vishnu Sahasranama*, *Bandhana*, *Aveshana*, and worship practices are advised, especially in conditions associated with psychological or spiritual disturbances. These methods help in emotional calming, fear reduction, and mental reassurance.

2. *Raktapitta* (Bleeding Disorders)

In bleeding disorders, *Shita Upachara* or cold comforting therapies are recommended. Cooling measures help in reducing mental irritation, emotional agitation, and physical discomfort.

3. *Unstambha* (Stiffness and Spasticity of Thighs)

Therapies such as swimming against water current, exercise, and walking on rough surfaces are advised. These activities improve circulation, reduce *Kapha*, and enhance physical as well as psychological strength.

4. *Atikrisha* (Emaciation)

In emaciated individuals, therapies like proper sleep, happiness, comfortable bedding, pleasant surroundings, and emotional satisfaction are advised. These measures help in mental relaxation and physical nourishment.

5. *Atisthula* (Obesity)

For obesity, Ayurveda recommends *Vyayama*, *Jagarana*, and increased physical activity. Mental and physical engagement helps in reducing excess body weight and improving emotional confidence and motivation.

6. Prameha (Diabetes)

Exercise, walking barefoot, and regular physical movement are advised in *Prameha*. These therapies improve metabolism, mental freshness, and emotional stability.

7. Rajyakshma (Tuberculosis)

Yagya or fire rituals are mentioned as supportive therapies. These spiritual and environmental approaches provide psychological support and emotional positivity.

8. Unmada (Psychosis/Insanity)

In *Unmada*, therapies such as *Ashwasana*, *Bhaya*, *Trasana*, *Pratidvandva Chikitsa*, *Rudra Puja*, and *Mantra Uchara* are used. Counseling, emotional reassurance, controlled fear induction, spiritual chanting, and worship are employed to stabilize disturbed mental states.

9. Shankha Visha (Suspicious Poisoning)

Mantra Uchara and reassurance are advised in patients with fear or suspicion of poisoning. These therapies help in reducing anxiety and restoring mental calmness.

10. Atisara (Diarrhea)

In psychologically induced diarrhea, emotional therapies are used. *Harshana* is advised in fear-induced diarrhea, while reassurance and consolation are useful in grief-induced diarrhea.

11. Madyatyaya (Alcoholism)

Music therapy, pleasant company, enjoyment, and psychotherapy-like approaches are recommended in alcoholism. These therapies reduce emotional stress and improve mental satisfaction.

12. Atattvabhinivesha (Psychic Perversion)

Therapies like *Vijnana*, *Dhairya*, *Smriti*, and *Samadhi* are advised. These methods help in improving understanding, patience, concentration, emotional stability, and psychological awareness.

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| Topic / Concept | Reference |
|--|---------------------------------|
| <i>Satvavajaya Chikitsa</i> definition & Control of mind from unwholesome objects | Ca. Su. 11/54 ⁴ |
| Spiritual wisdom and self-control | Ca. Sa. 3/31 ⁵ |
| “ <i>Dhi Dhairyatmadi Vijnanam Manodosausadham Param</i> ” | As.Hr.Sha.1 ⁶ |
| <i>Jnana, Vijnana, Dhairya, Smriti, Samadhi</i> | Ch. Su. 11/54 ⁷ |
| Regulation of thoughts (<i>Cintya</i>), Replacement of ideas (<i>Vicharya</i>), Channeling presumptions (<i>Uhya</i>), Proper guidance (<i>Samkalpa</i>) | Ch. Su. 11 ⁸ |
| <i>Trivarga Anveksana, Tadvidyaseva, Atmadi Vijnanam</i> | Ch. Su. 1 ⁹ |
| Psycho-supportive techniques, <i>Aswasana and Santwana</i> <i>Adbhuta Darshana and Trasana</i> | Ch. Chi. 9 ¹⁰ |
| Yogic psychotherapy and <i>Samadhi</i> | Pa.Yo.Su. 1/2 ¹¹ |
| Individual psychotherapy (<i>Pratyatma Chikitsa</i>) | Ch. Su. 1/124 ¹² |
| Replacement of emotions (<i>Pratidvanda Chikitsa</i>), Friendly advice (<i>Suhrta Vakya</i>), Verbal psychoshock therapy (<i>Ishta Vinasana</i>), <i>Mano Ksobha Chikitsa, Vismarana and Vismapana</i> | Ch. Chi. 9 ¹³ |
| Correlation with CBT | Tripathi JS, 2012 ¹⁴ |
| Ayurvedic psychotherapy concept | Singh RH, 2009 ¹⁵ |

Results and Findings

- The study revealed that *Adravya Bhuta Chikitsa* is an important non-pharmacological therapeutic approach described in Ayurvedic classics for management of mental and behavioral disorders.
- *Satvavajaya Chikitsa* was identified as the principal psychotherapeutic modality in Ayurveda aimed at controlling the mind from unwholesome thoughts and emotions.

- Classical Ayurvedic texts of *Brihatrayi* describe several psychological and behavioral interventions such as *Santwana*, *Harshana*, *Vismarana*, *Bhaya Darshana*, *Mantra*, *Samadhi*, and *Yoga* for mental well-being.
- The therapies mainly focus on strengthening *Satva Guna* and reducing vitiation of *Rajas* and *Tamas*, which are considered responsible for psychological disturbances.
- Practices such as *Jnana*, *Vijnana*, *Dhairya*, *Smriti*, and *Samadhi* were found useful in improving emotional stability, concentration, confidence, and behavioral control.
- *Anila Seva*, *Atapa Seva*, *Hasana*, *Dana*, and meditation-based practices were found beneficial in reducing stress, anxiety, fear, and emotional imbalance.
- Ayurvedic psychotherapeutic concepts showed close similarity with modern psychotherapy, counseling, mindfulness therapy, and cognitive behavioral therapy.
- The study observed that *Adravya Bhuta Chikitsa* not only helps in management of psychiatric disorders but also plays a preventive role in maintaining psychological health and social well-being.
- The holistic approach of Ayurveda emphasizes individualized mental healthcare through regulation of lifestyle, emotions, behavior, and spiritual practices.
- Integration of Ayurvedic non-pharmacological therapies with modern mental healthcare may provide safe, economical, and patient-centered treatment strategies for mental and behavioral disorders.

DISCUSSION

Psychotherapy is considered an important branch of modern mental healthcare, but the concept of psychological treatment has already been extensively described in Ayurveda since ancient times. Ayurvedic scholars were well aware of the role of mind in health and disease and explained various psychotherapeutic approaches under *Satvavajaya Chikitsa*. Ayurveda considers *Manas* as an important component of life and explains that imbalance of *Rajas* and *Tamas* causes emotional disturbances and psychological disorders. These disturbed mental states may lead to fear, anxiety, anger, stress, grief, abnormal behavior, and other *Manasika Vikara*. Therefore, control and stabilization of the mind are considered essential for maintaining mental health and emotional well-being. In modern, mental-health, psychotherapy is defined as the treatment by psychological means, of problems of an emotional nature in which an expert deliberately establishes a professional relationship with the patient with the object¹⁶ of removing and modifying or retarding existing symptoms,¹⁷ of

mediating disturbed pattern of behavior,¹⁸ of promoting positive personality growth and development.

Satvavajaya Chikitsa described by Acharya Charaka can be correlated with modern psychotherapy and cognitive behavioral therapy. It mainly focuses on restraining the mind from unwholesome thoughts and promoting positive mental states through *Jnana, Vijnana, Dhairya, Smriti, and Samadhi*. According to Ayurveda, *Prajnaparadha* is the major causative factor responsible for mental illness, and correction of disturbed intellect, memory, and emotional responses forms the basis of treatment. Therapeutic measures such as reassurance, counseling, emotional replacement, meditation, guidance, and behavioral regulation help in improving emotional stability, confidence, concentration, and positive personality development. Thus, Ayurvedic psychotherapeutic principles provide a holistic, preventive, and effective approach for management of mental and behavioral disorders.

CONCLUSION

Adravya Bhuta Chikitsa and *Satvavajaya Chikitsa* described in Ayurvedic classics provide a holistic and scientific non-pharmacological approach for the management of mental health and behavioral disorders. Ayurveda emphasizes that imbalance of *Rajas* and *Tamas* along with *Prajnaparadha* leads to psychological disturbances, and restoration of mental equilibrium can be achieved through mind control, emotional regulation, spiritual practices, counseling, meditation, reassurance, and behavioral modification. The principles of *Satvavajaya Chikitsa* closely resemble modern psychotherapy and cognitive behavioral therapy by focusing on correction of thoughts, emotions, memory, and conduct. Therefore, integration of Ayurvedic psychotherapeutic principles with contemporary mental healthcare can provide safe, economical, preventive, and patient-centered management strategies for psychological and behavioral disorders.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST – NIL

SOURCE OF SUPPORT –NONE

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