



Concept of Sattvavajaya Chikitsa (Ayurvedic Psychotherapy) in the Management of Vishada (Depression)

Dr. Jayshri Namdeo Tayade^{1*}

1* Assistant Professor, Department of Rachana Sharir, Dr. D. Y. Patil College of Ayurved & Research Centre, Pimpri, Pune-18.

ABSTRACT:

Ayurveda is science of health and longevity, philosophy and system of healing the whole person body and mind. In Ayurveda health that is Swasthya means Atma, Indriya and Manas are in excellent state of person. Swastha is defined as “Sama Dosha Samaagnischa Sama Dhatu Mala Kriyaha Prasanna Atma Indriya Manaha Swastha Ityabhidhiyate” which highlights the importance of mental health for a healthy individual. Mental health state of wellbeing in which every individual realizes the own potential can cope with normal stress of life can work productively and fruitfully and is able to contribute to community.

The science of mental disorders describes extensively conditions from mild anger and greed to severe psychoses. There are more than 200 types of mental health disorders like Anxiety disorders, Mood disorders, Eating disorders, Personality disorders, Psychotic disorders, Disruptive behaviour disorders, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), Neurodevelopmental disorders etc. Out of which Depression is common psychological disorder. Depression is a type of mental illness that negatively affects how you feel, the way you think and how you act. It causes feelings of sadness or a loss of interest in most of the activities. If the same symptoms persist for at least two weeks or more, it is considered to be a period of depression. This condition originated from apprehension of failure resulting in incapability of mind and body to function properly. So, this balancing nature of mind nowadays is getting deprived under the influence of growing stress and strain in life. It is considered as “Vishada” in Ayurveda and Ayurveda may provide better treatment modality in controlling or curing these than other existing sciences as treatment is not absolute in the modern science.

In Ayurveda, Chikitsa is broadly classified into 3 categories - Daivavyapashraya, Yuktivyapashraya and Sattvavajaya out of which Sattvavajaya Chikitsa plays an important role in Manasika Vyadhis. Sattvavajaya is achieved by adopting “Ahitebyo Arthebyo Manonigraha”. It is Agraya Bhoota Chikitsa by which depression can be overcome easily. It is the first of its kind and if developed can really prove much useful. So Sattvavajaya plays major role to get rid of Vishada (Depression). So, it is very much essential to understand the concept of Sattvavajaya Chikitsa in Depression.

Keywords: Psychological disorders, mental health, Sattvavajaya chikitsa, Vishada

1) INTRODUCTION

Mental health is the state of emotional, psychological and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel and act, it also determines how we handle stress, relate to others, and make choices. It's important at every stage of life, from childhood and adolescence through adulthood.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), “Health is a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity”. Definition of Swastha according to Ayurveda is Prasanna-Atma-Indriya-Manaha Swastha Ityabhidhiyate which highlights the importance of mental health for a healthy individual.

The science of mental disorders describes extensively conditions from mild anger and greed to severe psychoses. There are more than 200 types of mental health disorders, including:

1. Anxiety disorders: Includes panic disorder, phobias, and social anxiety disorder
2. Mood disorders: Includes depression, bipolar disorder, and disruptive mood dysregulation disorder
3. Eating disorders
4. Personality disorders: Includes borderline personality disorder and antisocial personality disorder
5. Psychotic disorders: Includes schizophrenia
6. Disruptive behaviour disorders: Includes oppositional defiant disorder and conduct disorder
7. Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)
8. Obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD)
9. Substance use disorders: Includes drug addiction and alcohol use disorder
10. Neurodevelopmental disorders: Includes autism spectrum disorder (ASD)
11. Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)

Depression is a significant mental health issue that will impact most people's lives in one way or another. It can diminish someone's quality of life and have a negative impact on their ability to work and maintain relationships. The worst-case scenario for severe depression is suicide. There still exists a societal stigma around depression due to its prevalence, suffering, dysfunction, morbidity, and financial burden.

Currently, 80% of individuals with depression are not receiving any treatment. Historical Ayurvedic literature sporadically mentions depression as both an illness (Manasika Vyadhi) and an emotional state. The purpose of the study was to assess the comprehensive Ayurvedic management strategy for depressive disorder.

So, to get rid of these problems it is very much essential to understand the concept of Sattvavajaya Chikitsa. So, this paper throws light on the concept of Sattvavajaya Chikitsa in Ayurveda and its utility in Chikitsa.

2) MATERIALS AND METHODS

The classical texts of Ayurveda with their commentaries, other Ayurvedic texts and journals, relevant websites, articles and presentation were referred.

The method of treatment in Ayurveda as a whole has been classified into three categories as Trividha Aushadha by Acharya Charaka:

1. **Daiva Vyapasrya – Divine therapy**
2. **Yukti Vyapasrya – Rational therapy**
3. **Sattvavajaya – Psychotherapy**

1) Daiva Vyapashraya:

It is a sort of divine therapy derived mainly from Atharvaveda. It is a faith therapy used in management of Manasaroga. Faith is a part and parcel of human psychology and this treatment is a play of faith where in patient should have full belief in the medicine and the method of treatment.

2) Yukti Vyapashraya:

The term 'Yukti' refers to union, connection, reasoning device, strategy, artifice, expedients and application. In medical context the word however is in the sense of application of reason to diagnose and treat the diseases. Charaka counts Yukti among the means of Pramana (valid knowledge) and defines it as utilization of rational faculties by the physician, both for understanding the causes and the nature of the diseases and for deciding upon proper course of treatment.

3) Sattvavajaya Chikitsa:

As there is detailed description of Yukti Vyapashraya Chikitsa (rational therapy) for the treatment of Sharirika Roga (Somatic diseases) in Ayurvedic texts, specific line of treatment is essential for the management of Manasa Roga.

To normalize Manasa Doshas similar to the Tridosha theory related to bodily disorders, it should be different from Daiva Vyapashraya Chikitsa, which to some extent also include treatment of psychiatric disorders. So, considering these factors Sattvavajaya, a special method of treatment especially for mental diseases has been found very effective. It was Acharya Charaka,

who introduced Sattvavajaya Chikitsa for mental disorders which is a non-pharmacological approach equivalent to modern psychotherapy.

The word Sattvavajaya comprises of 'Sattva' and 'Avajaya'. The word 'Sattva' is derived from the Sanskrit root 'Sat' by adding suffix 'Ktva'. The word 'Avajaya'- Ava + Ji – Achaparajaye 'Yenendralokhavajayaya' means overcoming, victory, conquer and the word 'Satvavajaya' refers to self-command, strength of mind or character. Acharya Charaka was the first person to use the word Sattvavajaya but detailed description of Sattvavajaya is not available in Charaka Samhita. "Sattvavajaya" word is never mentioned anywhere else in the ancient literature. It seems that Acharya Charaka used the word to name the treatment of the diseases where Satva's balance is interfered with. Hence, he has defined it as a method of controlling or restraining the mind from unwholesome objects. It can be achieved by increasing Satva to subdue the exaggerated Rajas and Tamas.

The definition gives a lot of scope for expansion i.e. "Satvavajayah Punah Ahitebhyo Arthebhyo Mano Nigraha". A look at the above definition shows 3 words i.e. Ahita, Artha and Mano Nigraha.

1) Ahita: Does not carry any special meaning, it just conveys that something is unwholesome to the other.

2) Artha: It is a wide variety of objects each Indriya has its own object that only it can perceive, i.e. Gandha is the object of Ghranendriya etc. Satva which is considered as Ubhayendriya has been referred to as having at least five Artha. Apart from these five, anything that can be perceived by Satva can also be included in this category. It can be inferred that Artha can be either Panchendriyarth or Mano Artha. But in Satvavajaya, it is quite logical to consider Mano Artha, though it may not be objectionable to include Panchendriyarth because ultimately it is Satva that materializes the perception of the objects, not Indriyas. Asatmendriyarth Samyoga is regarded as one of the principal causes of disease. So, avoidance of Ati, Hina, and Mithya Yoga of Chintya, Vicharya, Uhya, Dhyeya and Sankalpa should serve to cure the Psychiatric disorders.

3) Mano Nigraha (Control of mind):

This mind control can be both subjective and objective. "Self-control of mind" is one of the most difficult tasks and need a perfect combination of desire, determination and dedication. It can be achieved as per Lord Krishna in Bhagavadgita through Abhyasa (practice) and Vairagya (detachment).

In Rigveda, the controlling of the mind, has been described by comparing it with binding of yoke with a strap. The other types of Mano Nigraha which are physician's interference with patients mind control. This can be achieved by various ways:

1. By regulating the thoughts process – Chintya
2. By analyzing the thoughts and ideas – Vicharya
3. By channeling the presumptions with logical reasoning – Uhya
4. By polishing the objectives by concentrating on it – Dhyeya
5. By proper guidance and advice for taking right decision – Sankalpa

While describing the principles of treatment Acharya Charaka prescribes the line of treatment for Manasa Roga specifically caused by Manasa Dosha:

1. Jnanam (Spiritual knowledge or true understanding)
2. Vijnanam (Specific knowledge or scriptural knowledge)
3. Dhairya (Patience or controlling power)
4. Smriti (Memory or recall)
5. Samadhi (Mental equanimity, meditation or concentration)

Application of Sattvavajaya Chikitsa in Vishada (Depression)

a) Jnana Chikitsa

Aim: To provide support to the patient to develop an insight about himself.

Technique:

- To assess the personality (Prakriti) of the patient and educating about it to them.
- To bring up and discuss issues regarding attitudes, feelings, beliefs and experiences related to self.
- Support to reveal and understand the source of the problem.
- Self-evaluation and monitoring.

b) Vijnyana Chikitsa

Aim: Providing guidance to understand the nature of illness and improve his coping capabilities.

Technique:

- Identification of irrational beliefs about the disease i.e. depression.
- Providing a theoretical knowledge about disease to level of his understanding.
- Educating about the probable emergencies, complications and risk factors.

c) Dhairya Chikitsa

Aim: Development of coping abilities.

Technique:

- Counselling based on support concerning to problem solving.
- Family support.
- Identification and modification of the environment which maintains the symptoms.
- Identification of the negatively based ideas and boost up patients confidence.

d) Samadhi Chikitsa

Aim: To achieve higher level of awareness.

Technique:

- Meditation and other oriental techniques.
- Reading books on spiritual and philosophical aspects of life.
- Avoiding temptations.
- Following code of conduct.
- Education about the meaning and purpose of life.

DISCUSSION:

Sattvavajaya is a therapeutic technique described specifically for the management of psychological disorders. It refers to control the mind by withdrawing it from undesired objects. Information available in Ayurvedic classics reveals that as there is a detailed description of rational therapy for somatic diseases, similarly Sattvavajaya implies the remedies for psychological imbalance and disturbance. Although elaborate descriptions of psychotherapeutic techniques are available not only in Ayurvedic texts but also in spiritual, philosophical compendia like Shrimad Bhagawad Gita. Lord Krishna was the first counsellor who delivered the message of Gita to Arjuna in the battlefield of Mahabharata when the latter got depressed. This is a beautiful example of counselling, a sort of psychotherapy.

On exploring the literature, it has been found that concept of Sattvavajaya i.e. psychotherapy has been described in brief and concise form in Ayurvedic literature. Controlling or restraining the mind from desire for unwholesome objects is nothing but Sattvavajaya, which can be achieved by increasing Sattva to subdue the vitiated Manasa Dosha i.e. Rajasa and Tamasa.

Rajas is responsible for all the activities, while Tamas regulates and at times inhibits the actions. In depression, all activities are reduced due to improper functioning of Rajas and excess functioning of Tamas. Among Trividha Chikitsa Sattvavajaya is one.

Sattvavajaya Chikitsa is withdrawal of mind from unwholesome Arthas. Dhi-Dhairya-Atmadi Vijnyana here Dhi - faculty of intellect, which is discriminative and judging helps patient to know about good and bad thoughts. Dhairya - will power gives confidence to handle any situations. Atmadi Vijnyana - orientation to self in time, place and person. Jnana Chikitsa - insight orientation, Vijnana - education approach, Dhairya - supportive approach, Smriti - cognitive approach and Samadhi – Psychophilosophical approach. In this way concept of Sattvavajaya in management of Vishada (Depression) is well discussed in this paper.

CONCLUSION

Depressive disorder is mood disorder as a “whole body” illness involving individual’s body, mood and thoughts. It is not a sign of weakness or a condition that can be willed or wished away. People with the depressive illness cannot merely pull themselves together and get better, but they need due attention and psychological health care which can be well handled by adopting Sattvavajaya Chikitsa which is beautifully explained in Ayurveda which is a holistic science of life.

REFERENCES

1. Sushruta, Sushruta Samhita, Nibandha Samgraha Commentary of Sri Dalhanacharya and Nyaya Chandrika Panjika on Nidanasthana Commentary of Sri Gayadasacharya, by Vaidya Yadavji Trikamji Acharya, Chaukhamba Orientalia, Varanasi, reprint-2014, Sutra sthana Chapter 15, verse-41, pp: 824, pg-75.
2. Agnivesha, Charaka Samhitha, Ayurveda Deepika Commentry of Chakrapani, edited by Vaidya Yadavji Trikamji Acharya, Chaukhamba Orientalia, Varanasi, reprint-2015; Sutra Sthana, chapter-11, Verse-54, pp-738; pg-77.
3. Agnivesha. Charaka Samhita. Revised by Charaka and Dridhabala with the Ayurveda Dipika commentary of Chakrapanidatta. Edited by Yadavji Trikamji Acharya. Reprint ed. Chaukhambha Sanskrit Sansthan. Varanasi. 2004;77.
4. Agnivesha. Charaka Samhita. Revised by Charaka and Dridhabala with the Ayurveda Dipika commentary of Chakrapanidatta. Edited by Yadavji Trikamji Acharya. Reprint ed. Chaukhambha Sanskrit Sansthan. Varanasi. 2004;07.
5. Beck AT. Depression: Causes and Treatment. University of Pennsylvania Press; 1967.
6. American Psychiatric Association. Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5). 5th ed. Washington, DC: American Psychiatric Publishing; 2013.
7. Hofmann SG, Asnaani A, Vonk IJ, Sawyer AT, Fang A. The efficacy of cognitive behavioral therapy: A review of meta-analyses. Cognitive Therapy and Research. 2012;36(5):427–440.
8. Davidson RJ, Kabat-Zinn J, Schumacher J, et al. Alterations in brain and immune function produced by mindfulness meditation. Psychosomatic Medicine. 2003;65(4):564–570.
9. Keng SL, Smoski MJ, Robins CJ. Effects of mindfulness on psychological health: A review of empirical studies. Clinical Psychology Review. 2011;31(6):1041–1056.
10. Seligman MEP, Csikszentmihalyi M. Positive psychology: An introduction. American Psychologist. 2000;55(1):5–14.
11. Sharma H, Clark C. Ayurveda and the Mind: The Healing of Consciousness. Lotus Press; 2012.