

CONCEPT OF PSYCHOLOGY IN AYURVEDIC PERSPECTIVE: A REVIEW STUDY

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ABSTRACT

Background: Ayurveda, the ancient Indian system of medicine, presents a comprehensive understanding of mental processes long before the formal emergence of modern psychology. Unlike contemporary psychology, which largely focuses on cognitive, behavioural, and neurobiological mechanisms, Ayurveda conceptualizes the mind (*Manas*) within a holistic framework integrating body (*Sharira*), soul (*Atma*), and consciousness. **Objective:** This review aims to explore and synthesize classical Ayurvedic concepts related to psychology and to analyze their relevance in light of modern psychological understanding. **Methods:** Classical Ayurvedic texts such as Charaka Samhita, Sushruta Samhita, and Ashtanga Hridaya were reviewed along with contemporary scholarly articles on Ayurvedic psychology. Conceptual analysis was conducted to identify key constructs related to mind, personality, mental health, and therapy. **Results:** Ayurveda conceptualizes psychology through constructs such as *Manas*, *Triguna* (Sattva, Rajas, Tamas), *Tridosha*, *Prakriti*, and *Satvavajaya Chikitsa*. Mental health is described as a state of equilibrium among these components. Disturbances lead to *Manasika Vikara* (mental disorders). Ayurvedic psychotherapy emphasizes cognitive restraint, ethical living, and lifestyle regulation. **Conclusion:** Ayurvedic psychology presents a holistic biopsychospiritual model of mental functioning. Its preventive and therapeutic approaches offer valuable insights for integrative mental health research.

KEYWORDS: Ayurveda, Manas, Triguna, Satvavajaya, Mental Health.

INTRODUCTION

Human being is the best creature among all other creatures in the earth. Mind is the master controller in human body. Everything in the world perceived by this mind. Mind is the supreme authority that distinguish the supremacy between animate and inanimate. The concept of mind and its relation with the body have been widely vibrated in different

school of Indian philosophy.^[1] *Ayurveda*, mainly indebted for its philosophical ideas on *Samkhya* and *Vaishesika* philosophy have emphasized different aspect of human mind.^[2,3] The scholars of *Ayurveda* had a knowledge about the concept of body and mind are two separate entities. The importance of mind is evident by its inclusion under the component of *Ayu*. The term *Ayu* stands for the combination of body, sense organs, mind and soul.^[4]

Psychology is the study of mind and behaviour.^[5] Psychology is a broad field that encompasses the study of human thought, behaviour, development, personality, emotion. Motivation etc. Understanding of psychology can help people achieve insight into their own actions as well as a better understanding of others. Derived meaning of the word soul or self. There are many others way that psychology used to help people live better, healthier lives. Psychological research can have an impact on public policy, can be used to design public health and can guide approaches to education and child developmental programs.^[6]

Today, psychologist seek to understand many different aspects of human mind and behaviour, adding new knowledge to our understanding of how people think as well as developing practical applications that have an important impact on everyday human lives. Application of psychology include mental health treatment, performance enhancement, self-help, ergonomics, and many other areas that affects health and daily life.^[7]

METHODS

This study is a narrative review of classical *Ayurvedic* literature and contemporary academic publications related to *Ayurvedic* psychology. Primary textual sources included authoritative *Ayurvedic* compendia such as the *Charaka Samhita*, *Sushruta Samhita*, and *Ashtanga Hridaya*. Secondary sources included peer-reviewed journal articles, review papers, and scholarly commentaries focusing on concepts of *Manas*, *Triguna*, *Tridosha*, *Prakriti*, mental disorders (*Manasika Vikara*), and psychotherapeutic interventions such as *Satvavajaya Chikitsa*. Conceptual synthesis was employed to analyze and organize the material into major psychological domains including structure of mind, personality theory, etiology of mental disorders, and therapeutic approaches.

RESULTS

Structure and Functions of Mind

Ayurveda describes *Manas* as a subtle, atomic, and dynamic entity that acts as an intermediary between the soul (*Atma*) and the sensory-motor organs. It is referred to as *Ubhayendriya*, meaning it participates in both sensory perception and motor response.^[8] The functions of mind include cognition (*Jnana*), memory (*Smriti*), desire (*Ichha*), aversion (*Dvesha*), pleasure (*Sukha*), and pain (*Dukha*).^[9] The coordination between mind, intellect (*Buddhi*), and ego (*Ahamkara*) determines behavior and decision-making.^[10]

Triguna Theory and Psychological Traits

The psychological foundation in *Ayurveda* is primarily based on the *Triguna* theory—*Sattva*, *Rajas*, and *Tamas*. *Sattva* represents clarity, harmony, and intelligence; *Rajas* signifies activity, passion, and restlessness; and *Tamas* denotes inertia, ignorance, and dullness. Mental well-being is achieved when *Sattva* predominates, while excess *Rajas* and *Tamas* contribute to emotional disturbances and maladaptive behaviour.^[11] These mental qualities shape temperament and personality, forming an early typology comparable to modern trait theories.^[12]

Tridosha and Psychological Constitution

The *Tridosha*—Vata, Pitta, and Kapha—though primarily physiological principles, also influence psychological characteristics. Individuals with dominant Vata constitution may exhibit creativity and anxiety; Pitta dominance may manifest as intelligence and irritability; Kapha dominance may produce calmness but also attachment and lethargy.^[13] This constitutional framework, known as *Prakriti*, provides an individualized psychological profile that predicts behavioural tendencies and vulnerability to mental disorders.^[14]

Etiology and Classification of Mental Disorders

Ayurveda identifies three primary causes of disease: *Prajnaparadha* (intellectual error), *Asatmya Indriyartha Samyoga* (improper sensory engagement), and *Kala Parinama* (effects of time and seasonal changes).^[15] Mental disorders (*Manasika Vikara*) such as *Unmada* (psychosis-like conditions), *Apasmara* (epilepsy), and anxiety-related states are described with detailed symptomatology and etiological explanations. Imbalance of *Guna* and *Dosha* plays a central role in psychopathology.^[16]

Therapeutic Approaches: Satvavajaya Chikitsa

Ayurvedic psychotherapy, termed *Satvavajaya Chikitsa*, focuses on restraining the mind from harmful objects and strengthening positive cognitive processes.^[17] It includes reassurance, cultivation of knowledge, ethical conduct (*Sadvritta*), meditation, regulation of lifestyle, and use of cognitive-enhancing herbal formulations (*Medhya Rasayana*).^[18] This approach closely resembles cognitive restructuring and mindfulness-based therapies in modern psychology.^[19]

DISCUSSION

The Ayurvedic perspective on psychology presents a comprehensive biopsychospiritual framework that integrates physiological, emotional, cognitive, and ethical dimensions of human life. Unlike reductionist models that isolate mental processes within neurobiology, Ayurveda situates psychological functioning within a dynamic interplay of bodily constitution, environmental factors, moral conduct, and spiritual awareness. The *Triguna* and *Prakriti* theories offer individualized personality models, while *Satvavajaya Chikitsa* provides structured psychotherapeutic principles emphasizing self-regulation and cognitive discipline.

Many parallels can be drawn between Ayurvedic psychology and contemporary integrative and holistic mental health models. The preventive orientation of Ayurveda, focusing on daily routine, diet, ethical behaviour, and meditation, aligns with modern approaches to positive psychology and lifestyle psychiatry. However, translation of classical constructs into standardized psychological measures remains a challenge. Empirical research validating Ayurvedic psychological models through clinical trials and psychometric tools is essential for broader acceptance in global mental health discourse.

CONCLUSION

Ayurvedic psychology offers an ancient yet sophisticated model of understanding the human mind. Through concepts such as *Manas*, *Triguna*, *Tridosha*, *Prakriti*, and *Satvavajaya Chikitsa*, Ayurveda provides a holistic and individualized approach to mental health. While further scientific validation is required, its integrative framework holds significant potential for enriching contemporary psychological theory and practice.

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