



## UNDERSTANDING THE AYURVEDIC CONCEPT OF CHITTODVEGA IN THE CONTEXT OF GENERALIZED ANXIETY DISORDER AND ITS MANAGEMENT THROUGH AYURVEDA

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### ABSTRACT

Generalised anxiety disorder is among the most common mental health conditions. Up to 20% of people are affected by anxiety problems each year. An ongoing feeling of overwhelm, fear, and concern are signs of generalised anxiety disorder. Generalised anxiety disorder is characterised by excessive, irrational, and persistent worry about everyday issues. This worry may have several aspects, including financial, family, health, and future concerns. Most people with GAD also have additional mental diseases, such as panic disorder, social anxiety disorder, significant depression, or particular phobia. Generalised anxiety disorder can affect both adults and children. The sickness often begins in infancy or adolescence but can begin at any age. GAD is twice as common in women and those assigned female at birth as it is in men and those assigned male at birth. *Charaka* stated the *Manasa-vikara* (mental disorder) *Chittodvega* (anxiety), which is said to be the ideal word to highlight the state of anxiety, namely generalised anxiety disorder. Both as a distinct illness and as a contributing component to other psychological and psychosomatic disorders, *Chittodvega* can occur. According to clinical investigations, anxiolytic med-

ications by themselves have limited long-term effectiveness, and serious side effects such as sedation, drug dependency, and resistance cannot be avoided. *Ayurveda* takes a psychosocial approach to medicine. *Acharya Charaka* describes three forms of treatment for mental and physical illnesses: *Satwavajaya Chikitsa* (Psychotherapy), *Yuktivyapashraya* (Rational therapy), and *Daivavyapashraya* (Spiritual therapy). Apart from these, we can also treat mental illness through counselling. Thus, the current study examines *Chittodvega* from the *Ayurvedic* classics and how to handle it.

**Keywords:** *Chittodvega*, generalised anxiety disorder, *Manasavikara* (mental disorder)

## INTRODUCTION

The development of contemporary science has made human existence faster and more stressful. As a result, the range of mental diseases is broadening today, with anxiety disorders emerging as the most common. In *Ayurveda*, *Manas* (Intellect) are crucial since they are a part of *Ayu* (life), *Tridanda* (self-discipline), the knowledge process, the site of illness development, good health, and restitution. The primary seat of *Manas* is *Hridaya* (heart); it moves throughout the body in *Srotas* (channel) with *Vata* (Air), *Pitta* (Fire), and *Kapha* (Water/ Phlegm) to carry forth its role. Two *Manasika Doshas* (mental imbalances or disturbances), *Raja* (quality of intellect) and *Tama* ((quality of intellect)), vitiate the seat of *Buddhi* (Wisdom), *Hridaya*, impede the *Manovaha srotas* (channels of the mind), and cause various psychological diseases, such as *Chittodvega*, among others. *Ayurveda* claims that because physical and psychic disturbances are interconnected, psychic elements have a role in nearly every illness process. One of the root causes of illnesses is the mind, which has its own *Doshas* (*functional bioregularity system*) (*Rajasa* and *Tamasa*). *Irshya* (envy), *Mana* (conceit), *Mada* (arrogance), *Kama* (passion), *Krodha* (anger), *Lobha* (greed), *Moha* (confusion), *Chittodvega* (anxiety), *Bhaya* (fear), *Harsha* (exhilaration), and many other psychological disorders are brought on by these doshas<sup>1</sup>. *Charaka* described a *Manasavikara* called *Chittodvega*, which is said to be the ideal term for emphasising the state of anxiety, namely generalised anxiety disorder. *Chittodvega* may be a cause of various psychological and psychosomatic disorders, or it may be a distinct illness. Several terms about mental

state have been referenced in *Ayurvedic* texts, including

- *Chitta Vibhramsha*<sub>2</sub> (disturbance or confusion of the mind.)
- *Chitta Kshobha*<sub>3</sub> (Mental agitation)
- *Asvastha Chitta*<sub>4</sub> (disturbed state of mind)
- *Anavasthita Chitta*<sub>5</sub> (unstable or unsettled mind)
- *Chittodvega*

Anxious status of a mind," or *Chittodvega*, is defined as *Chitta* (mind) + *Udvega* (anxiety). *Manasaroga* (mental disorder), or *Chittodvega*, is caused by the vitiation of *Raja*, *Tama*, *Vata*, and *Pitta*. Its symptoms include restlessness, difficulty focusing, impatience, disruption of sleep, and excessive worry and anxiety. *Shirah Shoonyata* (Lightness or emptiness in the head.), *Udvega* (Anxiety or mental agitation), *Dhyana* (deep concentration), *Hridgraha* (Tightness or constriction in the chest or heart), *Ayasa* (Fatigue), and *Unmattchittatvam* (state of mental derangement or insanity) are symptoms similar to generalised anxiety disorder (GAD) symptoms. Generalised anxiety disorder manifests muscle tension, difficulty focusing, autonomic arousal, a restless or "on edge" feeling, and difficulty sleeping. GAD is a chronic anxiety disease marked by excessive, unreasonable, and/or persistent concern<sup>6</sup>. In *Ayurveda*, a set of mental illnesses referred to as *Unmada* (Mental disorder) have a remarkable resemblance to psychosis. "*Chittodvega*," a prodromal sign of *Unmada*, is not referenced in the classics.

### **Definition:**

*Chittodvega* is a *Manasa Roga*, mainly due to the vitiation of *Raja*, *Tama*, *Vata* and *Pitta*. It is defined as a *Chitta* (mind), meaning mind, and *Udvega*,

meaning anxiety, i.e., *Chittodvega*, meaning an anxious state of mind.

**Nidan:**

*Chittodvega* is a *Manas Roga* (disease) that results from the vitiation of *Pitta*, *Vata*, *Raja*, and *Tama*. Combining the words -*Chitta* (mind) and -*Udvega*, we may characterise *Chittodvega* (an anxious state of mind). *Nidan* (causative factor) is essential, as the main and most important line of treatment is to prevent the etiological component. *Ayurvedic* texts do not specifically describe *Chittodvega* but reference its *Nidan*. However, *Rajas* and *Tamas* are the fundamental pathogenic elements for all *Manasika Vikaras*. *Nidan* of *Chittodvega* might be defined as the elements that vitiate these two. However, *Rajas* and *Tamas* are the fundamental pathogenic elements for all *Manasika Vikaras*. In general, common etiological factors of all *Sharirika* (Physical Diseases) and *Manasika Rogas*<sup>7</sup> have been stated as follows:

1. *Asatmyendriyārtha Samyoga* (deficient, excessive, and perverted use of senses)
2. *Prajnaparadha* (volitional transgression)
3. *Parinama* (deficient, excessive, and perverted incidence of seasons)

*Acharya Charaka* has described a number of *Unmada Prakaran* (systematic explanation of mental disorder) factors that can lead to the derangement of *Raja* and *Tama Doshas*, which affect *Manovaha Srotas* and serve as etiological factors for the development of *Manasik Vyadhi* (mental disorder), including *Alpasatva* (inadequate personality), *Hridaya Pradushya* (since the heart is the seat of *Buddhi*, alteration of *Buddhi*), and *Deva Guru Dwijanams*<sup>8</sup> (condemnation of God, teacher, and *Brahmins* or elders).

**Modern review**

A subjective feeling of uneasiness, dread, or foreboding is called anxiety, and it can be a sign of a main mental illness or a symptom of or response to a primary physical problem. The basic anxiety disorders are categorised according to the presence and kind of precipitants, as well as their length and course.

GAD is precisely defined by the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-V) as excessive concern and anxious expectations about a

variety of events or activities, such as job or school performance, that occur more often than not for at least six months<sup>9</sup>.

**Diagnostic Criteria for Generalized Anxiety Disorder:**

**A.** Excessive anxiety and worry (apprehensive expectation), occurring more days than not for at least 6 months, about several events or activities (such as work or school performance).

**B.** The individual finds it difficult to control the worry.

**C.** Anxiety and worry are associated with three (or more) of the following six symptoms (with at least some symptoms present for more days than not for the past 6 months):

- restlessness or feeling keyed up or on edge.
- being easily fatigued.
- difficulty concentrating or going blank.
- irritability.
- muscle tension.
- sleep disturbance (difficulty falling or staying asleep, restless, unsatisfying sleep).

**D.** Anxiety, worry, or physical symptoms cause clinically significant distress or impairment in social, occupational, or other important areas of functioning.

**E.** The disturbance is not attributable to the physiological effects of a substance (e.g., a drug of abuse, a medication) or another medical condition (e.g., hyperthyroidism).

**F.** The disturbance is not better explained by another mental disorder (e.g., anxiety or worry about having panic attacks in panic disorder, negative evaluation in social anxiety disorder [social phobia], contamination or other obsessions in obsessive-compulsive disorder, separation from attachment figures in separation anxiety disorder, reminders of traumatic events in post-traumatic stress disorder, gaining weight in anorexia nervosa, physical complaints in somatic symptom disorder, perceived appearance flaws in body dysmorphic disorder, having a serious illness in illness anxiety disorder, or the content of delusional beliefs in schizophrenia or delusional disorder).

**Treatment:**

The absence of mental disease is not the only indicator of mental wellness. The capacity to react to life's experiences with adaptability and a feeling of direction is a sign of good mental health.

These three fundamental therapy modalities can be used to treat *Chittodvega*<sup>10</sup>. They are as follows:

### 1. *Sattvavajaya Chikitsa* and *Daivavyapashraya Chikitsa*:

*Acharya Charaka* expanded the category of *Adra-vyabhuta Chikitsa* (Non-material treatment methods in *Ayurveda* that do not involve physical substances like herbs or medicines) to include the nonmaterial healing methods of *Sattvavajaya* and *Daivavyapashraya*. *Adra-vyabhuta Chikitsa* of *Mansika Vikaras* also lists additional techniques, such as *Bhaya Darshana* (frightening), *Vishmapana* (causing surprise), *Vismarana* (forgetting, occupied with other chores), *Tadana* (beating), *Kshobhana* (administrating shock), and others. It covers therapy techniques including *Mantra* (sacred chant), *Mani* (jewel), *Mangala* (Auspiciousness), *Bali* (ritual sacrifice), and *Upahara* (token of gratitude). The elimination of anxiety and negative inclinations indirectly helps patients gain confidence and aids in the management of *Manovikara*.

### 2. *Yuktivyapashraya Chikitsa*:

It deals with the uses of *Ahara* (food), *Vihara* (physical activity) and *Aushadha Chikitsa* (medicinal treatment) to cure the disease:

#### *Ahara* and *Vihara*:

Food has a close and direct relationship with the mind and is essential to its composition; for example, a *Sattvic Ahara* (nourishing diet) can help to calm the mind; excessive consumption of hot, dry, spicy, sour, or pungent foods can also have negative effects. Foods that are cold, tasteless, smell bad or have leftovers raise *Tamas Manas Dosha* (mental dullness), in addition to increasing *Rajas Manas Dosha* (mental dullness), which stimulates the mind. The etiological aspects of *Manas Roga* can also be attributed to *Viharas*, like *Vishmacheshti* (abnormal movements and actions), which is characterised by unusual motor activity such as improper posture, excessive exercise, and violations of good behaviour.

### *Aushadha Chikitsa*:

#### *Antahaparimarjana Chikitsa* (internal purification or detoxification therapies):

- *Shodhana Chikitsa* (detoxification treatment) - it includes *Virechana* (Purgation therapy), *Brihmana Basti* (Nourishing enema therapy), *Snehana Nasya* (nasal oleation).

- *Shamana Chikitsa* (palliative treatment) -

1. *Aushadhasidha Ghrita* (medicated Ghee) :  
*Brahmi Ghrita*, *Kalyanaka Ghrita*
2. *Ekal Dravya*: *Shankhapushpi*, *Ashwagandha*, *Jatamansi*, *Brahmi*, *Gilloy*
3. *Rasayana* : *Brahmi Rasayana*
4. *Arishtha*: *Ashwagandharishta*, *Saraswatarista*

#### *Bahirparimarjana Chikitsa* (external purification therapies):

- *Shiro Abhyanga/ Shiro Pichu*
- *Shirodhara*

#### *Pathya Apathya*<sup>11</sup> -

- *Pathya Ahara* - wheat, cow milk, *Shatadhouta Ghrita*, *Brahmi* leaves, grapes, etc.
- *Pathya Vihara* - meditation, fixed sleeping time (only at night), proper programming of any work.
- *Apathya Ahara* - alcohol, oily and spicy food etc.
- *Apathya Vihara* - suppresses the urges for thirst, sleep, hunger, day sleep, etc.

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