

SATVAVAJAYA CHIKITSA AND DEPRESSION: THE ROLE OF AYURVEDA IN MENTAL HEALTH OF ADOLESCENTS

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ABSTRACT

In adolescent state, children have physical changes entering puberty. During this time, they have emotional, eating and childhood behaviours which have different type of characters such as emotional behaviours mean anger, sadness, fear of lost etc. Hyperactivity and inattention indicate childhood behaviour and eating behaviour also effect of adolescence due to harmful eating. These all characters co-exist with depression. Mental modification or fluctuation of *Chitta* causes physical and mental diseases like depression is emerged. By 2020, WHO expects that the Depression is the 2nd frequent cause of morbidity in the world. Patients are required to be screened for it that can affect mood dangerously. This literature review seeks that draw parallels between these 2 areas of study i.e. Ayurveda and Modern; and high-light the importance of *Mansik-Chikitsa* as a *Satwavjaya Chikitsa*.

Keywords: *Mana*, depression, emotional-behaviour, *Satwavjaya-Chikitsa*.

INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is the crucial period between 10 - 21 years of age for developing and maintaining social and emotional habits important for mental wellbeing. These include adopting healthy sleep patterns; taking regular exercise; developing coping; problem solving interpersonal skills and learning to manage emotions. Supportive environment in the family, at school, and in the wider community are also important. Adolescents are exposed to the more risk factors and have the greater potential impact on their mental health. They show

different types of behaviours like as emotional/eating/childhood - behaviour etc. Factors which can contribute to stress include a desire for greater autonomy, pressure to conform with peers; exploration of sexual identity; increase access and use of technology. It is estimated that 10-20% adolescents experience mental health conditions, yet these remain underdiagnosed and undertreated. According to *Ayurveda*, *Mana* is said to be *Chanchal* in *Balyavastha* i.e. upto 30 years of age¹, so emotional behaviour such as anger, sadness, fear of

lost and love commonly emerge, childhood behaviour due to hyper activity and inattention which affects education sometimes also associated with judicial symptoms, eating behaviours are detrimental to health which coexist with depression due to harmful eating during this stage of life. In addition to depression or anxiety, emotional behaviour disorders can also experience excessive irritability, frustration or anger. It may additionally develop emotion related physical symptoms such as stomach-ache, headache or nausea. Emotional disorders can be profoundly disabling to an adolescent's functioning, affecting schoolwork, attendance, avoidance of family or the community can exacerbate isolation and loneliness. At this worse condition, depression can lead to suicide. In Ayurvedic classics, depression is mentioned in scattered references. It is present as emotion (*Mansik bhava*) as well as a disease (*Mansik-Vyadhi*). Previous research studies correlate it with *Vishad Awasad*, *Manodukhaj Unmad* and *Kaphaj-Unmad*. Depression is one of the main leading causes of illness and disability and prevalence rate estimated about 21.4% in India. So, this is an unavoidable disease. This review indicates that Ayurveda has a vast knowledge to regulate emotional, childhood etc. behaviour of adolescents with the help of *Satvavajaya-Chikitsa* which could helpful in establishing additional proper treatment of adolescents.

Review of literature:

There are three physical *Doshas* (vitiated element) i.e. *Vata*, *Pitta*, *Kapha*; again 2 mental *Doshas* i.e. *Rajas* and *Tamas*, they vitiated the mind and vitiation of mind-body results in the manifestation of diseases². *Mana* is said that it is made up of three different qualities or character traits, these are referred to as the three *Gunas* i.e. *Satva*, *Raja* and *Tama*: *Satva-Guna* is associated with positive qualities such as self-control, wisdom, spiritual awareness, patience, and happiness; *Raja-Guna* is linked with anger, greed and violence; *Tama-guna* is associated with qualities such as lethargy, depressive symptoms and selfishness³. Mental illness is thought to result when an imbalance occurs in these 3 *Gunas* and *chittavritti*. *Chitta* means comprehensive designation of collocation of 5-vital *Vatas*, 11 *indriyas* including *Mana*, other like *Ahankar*, *Buddhi*

(by *Sankhya-Yoga*) and if these *vrutties* i.e. *pramana*, *viparyay*, *vikalp*, *Smriti*, *Nidra*⁴ are not controlled resultant in sadness, happiness, love, unsatisfactory feeling, anger. Sometimes, *Chitta* gets vitiated crosses the limits of *Vrutties* due to *Ayoga*, *Atiyoga*, *Mithyayoga* of *Asatmedriyarth-sanyog*, *Pragyaapraadh* and *Parinaam*⁵. *Pragyaapraadh* is *Dhi*, *Dhruti*, *Smriti-Vibhransh* result in vitiated *Sharirik* and *Mansik-Doshas* due to abnormal *Karmas*⁶. Mental modification or fluctuation of *Chitta* causes physical and mental diseases like depression is emerged.

In modern, depression is characterised by persistent and pervasive sadness that lasts for at least 2 weeks and may be associated with other features like fatigue, anhedonia (lack of interest in pleasurable activities), alteration of sleep/wake cycle, appetite, negative cognitions, psychomotor retardation and even suicidal ideas and attempts. The most prominent symptoms of depression are usually sad or irritable mood and /or loss of interest in all or most activities; Patients may also experience guilt despite having done nothing worrying, feeling hopeless, wanting to die, kill or otherwise harm themselves also; It shows physical symptoms also like as tiredness and low energy level; travels sleeping particularly early morning waking, sleeping too much; aches or pains, especially headaches, muscle's cramps, digestive problems⁷. It has both types of sign and symptoms - physical and mental, because *Mana* follows the body and vice-versa⁸. According to modern, there is no specific causes of depression, but a widely accepted theory is a change in brain structure and chemistry specifically substances called neurotransmitters are out of balance in depressed patients resulting in physical sign and symptoms⁹. But Ayurveda said that it happens due to *Mana's vikruti*.

So, the treatment of *Mana* for this disease is necessary. There are three types of *Chikitsas* mentioned i.e. *Dai-vavyapashraya*, *yuktivaipashraya*, *Mansik Chikitsa* i.e. *Gyan*, *Vigyan*, *Dhairya*, *Smriti* and *Samadhi*¹⁰ these can be used as *Satvavajaya-Chikitsa*.

Gyan means *Adhyatma-gyan* i.e. sacred knowledge and knowledge leading to liberation; *Vigyan* means *Shashtra-gyan*; *Dhairya* means absence of *manodvega*¹¹.

Smruti means remembrance, recollection memory; Thinking of, calling to mind, understanding¹².

Samaadhi is the deep state of meditation where a person forgets about everything including himself unaware of surroundings¹³.

In modern, there are 2 types of treatment i.e. medications and psychotherapy. Apart from medications, psychotherapy has an important therapeutic role in mental disorders. It includes cognitive behavioural therapy, interpersonal therapy, psychodynamic therapy. Cognitive behavioural therapy aims at helping patient identify the negative thoughts and beliefs and challenges them with rational thoughts and explanations. Interpersonal therapy aims at helping the patient to deal more effectively with current interpersonal problems and improve social function through more effective communication. Psychodynamic therapy aims at developing insight about the cause and developmental genesis of the cognitions related to depression¹⁴.

DISCUSSION

In adolescent state, children have physical changes entering puberty. Due to it, they are quite emotional resulting in mental changes. They have low self-esteem; mood swings, aggression and even depression are common. They become more willing, able to think about the future, striving for independence, think about forming romantic relationship. All these things make stressful individuals. Stress results in sadness gradually. Long-time sadness converts in depression. Threshold of emotional behaviour decreases in this age. So, symptoms frequently aggregated with high reaction. If it happens for a long time, they become emotionally sick due to *Rajas* and *TamaGunas of Mana's* balance disturbances. Vitiating *rajas* and *tamasdoshas* disturb *ShareerikDoshas*. So, maximum functions of body get disturbed like as endocrine secretions, hormonal imbalance, so decrease the level of GABA, serotonin and activity of dopamine increase the activity of alpha-2 noradrenergic receptors in depression¹⁵. *Vata* is *Rajo-bahula* resultant in irritable mood, travels sleeping particularly early morning waking; aches or pains, especially headaches, muscle's cramp etc. *Pruthvi-mahabhuta* is *Tama-Bahula* which *Guru, Mand, Sthir, Sthula* etc.

resultant in sleeping too much, hopeless, lack of physical activity, low energy level tiredness, sadness etc.

So, for balancing of *Raja* and *Tamadoshas for Chittavrutti-Nirodh* is necessary. It is attained by *Satvavajaya-Chikitsa*.

Gyan: *Adhyatma-gyan* includes the process of understanding the external and internal world or the reality. Interpersonal therapy can be correlated with it which helping the patient to deal more effectively with current interpersonal problems and improve social function through more effective communication. It creates hope in one's life, enhances *Satva-Guna* and improves *Dhi* and *Dhruti*.

Vigyan: *Shastra* teaches the path of *Pravrutti* (engagement in worldly affairs) or *Nivrutti* (renunciation) to the people. The science is called by the word *Vigyan* in India as it demands a methodological study of subjects. Cognitive behavioural therapy can be correlated with it. It helps the individual to alter the ways of thinking and behaviour that may lead to depression and identify the negative thoughts like dying itself, killing others, harm themselves and beliefs and challenges them with rational thoughts and explanations. It can divert the mind with the help of *Sadvrutt-sevan*, reading of spiritual books like *Bhagvatgeeta*.

Dhairya: The aim is to bring strength or firmness to the disturbed mind also perceiving the mental stability because the depressed person always is afraid. It can be examined by inference of courage from strength of the mind, even one is in dangerous situation¹⁶. It can be attained by using of sound therapy create positive vibrations to result in calmness of mind which help in generating a hope in a patient to live life. This support is to give maximum empathy and create a matured level of awareness and judgement. It can be said the level of patience.

Smriti: The capacity to call up the desired object before the mind repeatedly using that energy because memory is impaired in depression due to vitiating *Rajas* and *TamasGuna*. There are people who live in their past experiences even though the past beyond recall. Their sad or happy memories keep them chained to the past and they can't break their fetters. Psychodynamic therapy can be included in this category because it

helps in developing insight about the cause and developmental genesis of the cognitions related to depression which helps the sufferer to understand how issues from their past may consciously affect their current mood and actions.

Samadhi: Concentration of *Chitta* or *Pragya* on a single object with a view to stopping all dispersiveness. During meditation, where there is only consciousness of the object and no concurrent consciousness of mind. At lower states of meditation, the object's deeper reality shows itself slowly. During this state, self-consciousness of mind disappears, so that the object (*mana*) and subject (soul) become one. Once *Samaadhi* has been attained you can still live practical life, things remain the same but the background changes, and your vision is completely purified. It overcomes suffering and achieves everlasting happiness by removal of vitiated *Raja-TamaGunas*. So, 5-vital *Vatas*, 11 *Indriyas* including *Mana*, other like *Ahankar*, *Buddhi* work properly which can improve the level of neurotransmitters with hormones and enhancing *Satva-Guna* of *Mana*; relieve in symptoms in which Patients experience guilt despite having done nothing worrying, alteration of sleep/wake cycle.

So, it can be said that *Vigyan* is better than *Gyan*, *Dhairya* is better than *Vigyan*, *Smruti* is better than *Dhairya*, *Smaadhi* is better than *Smruti*.

Gyan > Vigyan > Dhairya > Smriti > Samadhi

Hence, all these five steps of *Chikitsa* help in normalisation of mental symptoms with physiological functions by balancing *Doshas* or hormonal level or neurotransmitters of body. So, there is no doubt or any wrong statement, if it is said that Ayurveda has many methods as comparison to modern and other one thing is that, depression can be treated without medications.

CONCLUSION

Nowadays, in adolescent's stress age, psychosomatic disorders like depression are gradually increased. It is clear that a disorder is the end product of disturbed body metabolism resulting from a defiled mind with a weak mental state. It's not a sign of weakness or a character flaw. It's a real and treatable medical illness. Ayurveda strongly advocates mental health care for

keeping sound mental hygiene. One becomes wise by proper holding his mind under control. An uncontrolled mind goes astray and provokes disruptive activities. Otherwise, controlled mind leads the body in a proper orderly manner. For this purpose, it must be learnt how to withdraw the mind and bring it closer to the inner self. So, *Gyan* is used as insight oriented; *Vigyan* is learning oriented; *Dhairya* is tolerance oriented; *Smruti* is cognitive oriented; *Samaadhi* is psycho-philosophical oriented approach. Hence, it can be concluded that *Satvavajaya-Chikitsa* is a non-pharmacological approach and its aim is to control the mind from unnecessary objects and physiological disturbances. It's tried to establish of detailed additional proper treatment of adolescent's depression and suggested that if research work is done on it, it will be effective in clinical form and literary form because *Satvavajaya Chikitsa* is present in scattered form in Ayurveda texts.

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