



A GLIMPSE ON PSYCHIATRY IN AYURVEDA PERSPECTIVE A REVIEW ON CHARAKA SAMHITA

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ABSTRACT Mental health is an essential & integrative part of health. It is the foundation for well being and effective functioning of individuals. The present world is slowly getting consumed by mental health issues every day, with millions are fighting their own battle to survive. Burden of mental disorders has risen over last few decades. Currently mental and behavioral disorders account for about 13% of global burden of the disease. Mental disorders are among the leading causes of non-fatal diseases burden in India, but a systematic understanding of their prevalence, disease burden & risk factors is not readily available now. If we evaluate developments in the field of mental health, the pace appears to be slow. Raising awareness and mobilizing efforts in support of mental health is necessary for addressing the situation. *Ayurveda* has its own identity as most ancient and traditional system of medicine. Being a holistic science, *Ayurveda* explores the symbiotic relationship among the mind, body, soul, the senses and their working. The holistic approach of *Ayurveda* significantly results as a complementary treatment method to Allopathic in various mental disorders. Hence an effort is made by the author for understanding the evolution of various mental issues by exposition of the concepts as per *Ayurvedic* and Modern perspective related to psyche and scientific exploration of the holistic approach of *Ayurveda* towards the mental health related issues.

KEYWORDS : Mana Vibhrama, Prajnapraddha, cognitive distortion, behavior disorder, Sadvritta, Achara Rasayana.

INTRODUCTION:

Health is pivotal for the growth, development and productivity of a society and is vital for a happy & healthy life anywhere in the world. WHO definition of health includes physical, mental, social & spiritual health and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity^[1]. The maxim "there is no health without mental health"^[2] underlines the fact that mental health is an integral and essential component of health. Mental health is a state of well being in which the individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and is able to make a contribution to his/her community. It is also required for the foundation for well being and effective functioning of individuals. The world is slowly getting consumed by mental health issues every day, with millions fighting their own battle to survive. Burden of mental disorders has risen over last few decades. Currently mental and behavioral disorders account for about 13 % of the global burden of disease^[3]. Increasing prevalence of mental ill health is a key public health concern in whole world and India is not far behind in sharing this. Raising awareness and mobilizing efforts in support of mental health is necessary now for addressing the situation. Mental health is a major concern worldwide. Dr Brock Chisolm, the first director-general of WHO in 1954 had presciently declared that without mental health there is no true physical health^[4]. If we evaluate developments in the field of mental health, the pace appears to be slow. The burden of mental disorders is likely to have been underestimated because of inadequate appreciation of the inter-play between mental illness and other health disorders. Again mental health is the foundation for emotion, thinking, communication, learning, resilience and self esteem. It is also the key to relationships, personal and emotional well being and contributing to community or society. Thus it become now opportune to explore the paradigm of mental health awareness as a mean of combating stigma, enhancing prevention, ensuring early recognition and also stimulating simple and practical interventions within the community. Psychological illness is an ongoing dysfunctional pattern of thought, emotion and behavior that can manifest in wide range and causes significant distress. When it persists for long time due to lack of early recognition, it produces a significant adverse impact not only on individuals but also on their parents, families, culture and entire society. *Ayurveda* the ancient system of traditional medicine has also depicted the concept regarding the evolution of wide range of mental illness under the broad umbrella of 'Unmada'^[5]. Entire psychiatric contexts as per modern perspective have been depicted silently under the broad definition of *Unmada*. The author has made an initiation through this article for scientific exploration of wide range manifestation of various mental illnesses, understanding its silent evolution, exposition of their cause of evolution as per the contextual analysis of the *Ayurvedic* classics which may be helpful for early recognition and prevention of global burden of mental health issues.

AIMS & OBJECTIVES:

1) Exploration of evolution as well as manifestation of wide range of mental illness as per ancient & contemporary science.

2) A thorough analysis on various forms of mental illnesses for early recognition and prevention.

3) Exposition of holistic approach of *Ayurveda* through different mean like cognitive therapy, psychotherapy, behavioral therapy etc to promote mental health and raising awareness and mobilizing efforts in support of mental health through *Ayurveda*.

MATERIALS & METHODS:

1) A thorough review of *Charaka Samhita* along with *Chakrapani* commentary is made for contextual analysis related to psyche.
2) Some online journals related to psychology is referred for understanding the analysis of psychological illness as per contemporary science, getting updated knowledge about their prevalence, fatality etc in present global health scenario.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

Ayurveda, being a holistic science explores the symbiotic relationship among the body, mind and soul and their working^[5]. Broad definition of health has been described in *Sushruta Samhita* which includes physical, mental, sensorial and spiritual health under the umbrella term of health^[6]. Core knowledge of *Ayurveda* is not only limited to body or physical symptoms but also give comprehensive knowledge about spiritual, mental and social health. Mind has been conceived to be functional element of Atman (soul)^[7]. A critical analysis about the broader aspect of health may reveal that restoration of mental health has been played the key role for attainment of other aspects of health. Again *Ayurveda* accepts the body and mind both jointly & severally constitute the substrata of diseases & happiness. Utmost equal importance has been given on the pathogenic factor related to mind & body. Being a part of evolution the *Panchabhautika Sharira* is not devoid from the influence of *Satva, Raja & Tama*^[8]. Even if the basic body humors like *Vata, Pitta* and *Kapha* having the dominance of *Satva, Raja & Tama* and their strategy and physiological function are accelerated by dominance of *Manas Doshas*. Again *Asatmendriya Samyoga, Prajnapraddha* and *Parinama* are considered as the three-fold leading cause for onset of any diseases either somatic, psyche or psychosomatic in origin^[9]. After thorough critical analysis regarding the above mentioned three-fold leading cause, it is revealed that *Prajnapraddha* (Intellectual error) may be considered as the foremost leading cause even behind unwholesome conjunction and invariable association of with various unrighteous action in existing as well as previous life. *Acharya Charaka* has clearly mentioned that whatever intellectual pseudo conception and improper conduct being represented due to intellectual blasphemy all this falls under the purview of mind^[10].

Hence restoration of mental faculties in healthy state is the prime need not only for prevention of psychological illness but also for prevention and eradication of somatic & psychosomatic disorders and overall

conductance of virtuous/righteous action in regard to fulfillment of human pursuits. Manifestation of any misery i.e., *Adhyatmika*, *Adhibhautika* or *Adhidaivika*, all are only due to own mis deeds followed by dysfunction of mental faculties and which is experienced with maturity of time and action^[11].

Mental illness are the health conditions involving changes in emotion, thinking, conduct, behavior etc and are associated with distress or problem functioning in social, work or family activities. It varies from individual to individual depending on the circumstances. However, a sudden change in personality or behavior of particular one which is not related to obvious events often indicates a problem. Because healthy people differ significantly in their overall personality, mood and behavior. *Acharya Charaka* has clearly depicted that wide range of manifestation psychological illnesses in context of *Unmada Nidana* which are characterized by the perversion of mind, intellect, consciousness, knowledge, memory, desire, manners, behavior and conduct^[12].

Perversion of mind (*Mano Vibhrama*):

Thinking is the object of mind. It has been described by *Acharya Chakrapani's Ayurveda Deepika* commentary that due to perversion of mind, the individual does not think of such things which are worth thinking, in the other way thinks such things as ought not to be thought of^[13]. This feature can be correlated to thought disorder in modern perspective in which the individual experiences irrational, inflated thoughts or beliefs instead of logical thinking. Logical thinking is the act of analyzing a situation and coming up with a sensible solution. It promotes the reasoning skill of the human being to study a problem objectively which will allow him/her to make a rational conclusion about how to proceed. This assists in decision making process in every stressful situation and ensures every human being that they are consistently putting their best foot forward. In thought disorder, *Mano Vibhrama* results disorganized way of thinking that leads abnormal ways of expressing language when speaking & writing by any individual. Disorganized speech like Alogia, Blocking, Circumstantialities, distractible speech, Echolalia etc lead to an inference of disorganized thought.

Alogia is a form of thought disorder which is characterized by poverty of speech, the person experiences brief and unelaborated response to question and rarely speak unless prompted which may found as the cardinal feature of *Kaphaja Unmada* according to *Acharya Charaka*^[14]. Excessive retention in *Vak Pravartana* is due to predominance of *Tama Guna* in *Kapha Dosh*^[15]. Blocking is form of thought disorder in which the person often interrupt themselves abruptly in mid sentence, they might pause for several minutes and change the topic of conversation, mostly found in schizophrenia. Circumstantialities type of thought disorder often include excessive irrelevant details in speaking and writing which may found as the cardinal feature of *Vataja Unmada* according to *Acharya Charaka*^[16]. Excess *Vak Pravartana* is due to lack of restraint is due to predominance of *Rajo Guna* in *Vata Dosh*^[17].

Deficit of logical thinking have long been considered a hall mark of schizophrenia, bipolar and delusional disorders. In schizophrenia the patient experiences dysfunctional or unusual way of thinking and alternate episodes of depression & mania in bipolar disorder is also related to frequent shift of thought and reflected through behavior & speech. In delusion in spite of the belief not being grounded in reality, the person believes it to be true. It may present in other mental disorders such as mania & depression.

In Obsessive compulsive disorder excessive unreasonable or unwanted thoughts (obsessions) lead to urge for repetitive behaviors (Compulsion) and its prevalence is more among the various form of mental disorder. *Vataja Unmada* is characterized by frequent shift of thought, mood and incoherent speech^[17].

Perversion of intellect (*Buddhi Vibhrama*):

Impairment of intellect cannot discriminate merits/demerits, advantages/disadvantages, useful/harmful effect etc. It leads to interpret the eternal things as ephemeral and useful things as harmful due to cognitive distortion^[18]. Distortion means the act of twitching or altering something out of its true, natural or original state. Cognitive distortion is always preceded by perversion of thought that leads the individuals to perceive reality inaccurately. The sensory and motor organs are instructed to conduct or express anything as per the determinative knowledge made by the intellect. In long run dysfunctioning of mental faculties result for the manifestation of in organized manner, conduct & behavior.

Perversion of consciousness and knowledge (*Sajna Jnana Vibhrama*):

Due to the perversion or loss of consciousness, the patient is unable to have perceptual knowledge like cannot experience burns causes by fire^[19]. Normally the brain can quickly adjust its own level of activity and consciousness as needed. The brain makes these adjustments based on information it receives from sensory organs. The degree of impairment of consciousness can range from slight to severe. Different levels of impairment of consciousness are lethargy, obtundation, delirium, stupor etc.

Lethargy –it is a slight reduction in alertness and mild mental foginess in which the people tend to be less aware of what is happening around them and thinks more slowly than usual. Obtundation is an imprecise term refers to a moderate reduction in alertness or moderate clouding of consciousness. Delirium is a state in which disturbance of consciousness and mental function occurs in which people cannot pay attention or think clearly or may not know where they are. Stupor is an excessively long or deep state of unresponsiveness. Impairment of consciousness may arise to severe brain injury, less blood supply to brain and addiction of toxic substances & alcohol.

Perversion of memory (*Smriti Vibhrama*):

Inability to remember events for a period of time, disruption or breakdown of memory impairs the recognition or perception ability of any individual. These symptoms can interfere with person's general functioning including social & work activities even relationships. In dissociative amnesia, patients experiences loss of information from memory usually as a result of chronic disease condition or injury to the brain. The memory still exists but is deeply buried within the person's mind and cannot be recalled.

Perversion of desire (*Bhakti Vibhrama*):

Acharya Chakrapani has described '*Bhakti*' means desire /inclination towards something^[20]. Disinclination develops for the things desired previously in some mental disorders. hence disinclination to normal habit, selection of diet, specific life style etc may be observed in a particular individual what he/she has been desired previously. From sudden disinclination for desired food, the loved one whom you liked most, observance of silence, habitual aversion from cleanliness in daily lives, remaining sleepy in daily routine, the dominance of *Kapha* and *Tama* may be inferred^[21]. Similarly in the other way, if the person shows irrelevant behavior like dancing, singing, playing in inappropriate time it shows the dominance of *Rajo* and *Vata* Dosh which has been described in context of *Vataja Unmada*^[22].

Perversion of habit (*Seela Vibhrama*):

Deviation of normal habit can be noticed in particular individual either excessively or complete retention from it such as urge to something again & again or not to do at all.

For ex in OCD (Obsessive Compulsive Disorder), people may have the symptoms of obsessions, compulsions or both. Obsessions are repeated thoughts, urges or mental images that cause anxiety which affects our daily routine. The people affected by this are urge to do some behaviors unlikely such as excessive cleaning & hand washing, repeatedly checking the things, ordering or arranging things in a precise way etc.

Perversion of conduct & behavior (*Achara and Chesta Vibhrama*):

Conduct disorder is a serious behavioral and emotional disorder in which the individual may display a pattern of disruptive and violent behavior ranges from mild to severe. The individual violates the right of others, going against accepted norms of behavior, resorts to such activities as are against the rules prescribed in religious works^[23]. In general symptoms of conduct disorder fall into four categories, like aggressive, destructive, deceitful behavior and violation of rules. Aggressive behaviors are threaten and cause physical harm and may include fighting, bullying, being cruel to others, using weapons forcing another into sexual activity etc. Destructive behavior involves intentional destruction of property. Violation of rules persistently by any individual may be considered under conduct disorder in which the person goes against accepted rules of society or engages in such behavior which is not appropriate for the religion, community or entire society. Excessive aggressiveness, over daringness, irritation & anger, impulsive action, excessive excitement on inappropriate occasions etc are due to impairment of patience, lack of discrimination capacity from which the dominance of *Pitta* may be inferred^[24]. In the other way excessive sluggishness in speech or activities, observance of silence, liking to stay in lonely places in daily life etc is due to excessive retention of mind from which the dominance of *Tama* and *Kapha* may

be inferred^[25]. Episodes of depression and mania are due to episodic dominance of *Tama & Kapha* and *Rajo & Vayu* respectively. In bipolar disorder from episodic manifestation of mania or depression, it may be inferred the dominance of *Vata & Kapha*. In present scenario perversion of conduct is observed most commonly in teenage and adolescent period. Child abuse, low academic achievement, poor parental supervision, unemotional parental attitude, antisocial parents or peers, poverty, living in a high crime neighborhood are the predisposing factors behavioral and emotional disorders in present society. Much greater awareness, early recognition, improved diagnosis and enhanced treatment are all required to reduce the burden on society of the severe behavioral conditions and conduct disorder.

As per the reference of verse no *Acharya Charaka* has clearly depicted that psychological illness can be manifested in various form as mentioned above ranging from mild to severe.

Doshic approach in mental illness:

The basic fundamental of *Ayurveda* is based on *Doshic Siddhanta*. *Dosha* either *Sharira* or *Manasa* are the basic humor responsible for manifestation of any abnormality. The features of various mental disorders are specified to outside as per the dominancy of *Dosha*. From the manifestation of different range of psychological illness in any form like thought impairment, cognitive impairment, behavior impairment etc, concern *Dosha* may be inferred as mentioned above. Similarly unlike physical constitution, three types of mental constitution like *Sattvika*, *Rajasa* and *Tamasa* have been described in classics of *Ayurveda*^[26]. Among three mental faculties, the *Sattvika* is free from defects as it is endowed with auspiciousness. In the other way *Rajasa* and *Tamasa* variety are considered as defective as they promote the individual towards wrathful disposition and ignorance respectively. As respective *Dosha* are compatible towards concern Physical constitution even after their predominance since from the birth, just like that respective *Manas Dosha* are compatible towards concern Mental faculties, but still they should be mentioned in balance state instead to provoke it excessively. The characteristics of different mental constitution has been well acknowledged in classics of *Ayurveda* and proper understanding as well as keen observation of the characteristics may be helpful to infer the dominance of *Manasa Dosha*. Hence with due knowledge about the characteristics of *Manasa Pakriti*, different measures like cognitive approach, behavioral approach, adoption of universal law of conduct etc can be advised to practice in daily lives for gradual upliftment of *Sattva* and alleviation of *Raja & Tama*.

Cognitive & behavioral approach in mental illness:

Ayurved, the science of divine origin has been focused on restoration of health than symptomatic relief. *Charaka Samhita*, the great compendium on *Chikitsa* is based on the fundamental that “*Karyam Dhatusamyam*”^[27]. This verse of *Acharya Charaka* itself highlights the holistic approach of *Ayurveda* and indicates that every measure either from therapeutic or preventive point of view should have the aim for restoration of lost homeostasis rather than only obtaining symptomatic relief^[28]. In connection to wide range of mental illness, approach should be for restoration of *Manasa Dosha* in balance state rather than providing temporary relief. Recurrence of any misery is due persistent attachment towards *Rajo* and *Tama*. Dominance of *Rajo* and *Tama* play the key role for improper manifestation of sense faculties as well as motor activities. Day to day activity, behavior, conduct, speech etc in response to any situation of an individual are instructed by intellect after preceding through proper cognitive analysis regarding the pro & con of the particular situation. Functional aspects of mental faculties i.e. logical interpretation & proper cognition as well as cognitive distortion come under the purview of mind directly and the egoism (*Ahankara*) overwhelmed by dominance of *Manas Dosha* indirectly. Excessive excitement/temperament without judging the subject followed by dominance of *Rajo* and excessive retention due to ignorance followed by dominance of *Tama*, both are meant for cognitive distortion. Impairment of intellect, patience & memory followed by intellectual blasphemy behind any action comes under the purview of dysfunction of mental faculties^[29]. Hence upliftment of *Sattva* is the key factor for prevention of cognitive distortion as well as perversion of mind, intellect, patience, memory etc.

Ultimately cognitive approach has been highlighted in *Charaka Samhita*, a great compendium on *Chikitsa* for reconciliation of pathogenic factor of mind. Enlighten of *Sattva* and reconciliation of dominance of *Rajo & Tama* can possible taking course of spiritual & scriptural knowledge, various mean of *Yogic* therapy such as *Dhyana*, *Dharana*, *Samadhi* etc^[30]. By virtue of absence of dominance of *Manasa Dosha*, real knowledge related to the eternal truth can be

obtained. It promotes the individual from absolute detachment of all unwholesome contacts and drive away from all mis conducts and all type of unrighteous action. Cognitive approach directly or indirectly aware the individual by creating self realization how to get rid from all ailments and later on it may be considered as an indispensable guide for enrichment of own deed in existing as well as in next life. Sometimes mental illnesses are diagnosed as diseases of unknown origin, any specific predisposing factor cannot be found against it. In this connection *Acharya Charaka* has directly blamed to the own deeds only either held in previous life or present life. In connection to manifestation of different form of mental illness of unknown origin. One should not blame the god, ancestors etc still one should hold himself responsible for all happenings^[31]. *Karmaphala* and *Karmaja Vyadhi* cannot be subsided by scientific methods or therapeutic approach^[32]. Hence without apprehension cognitive enhancement is advised to by following mean to follow the path of propitiousness^[33].

Jnanam-'Adhyatma Jnanam'^[34] which is meant for enhancement spirituality and helps the person to tolerate stress by generating peace, purpose and forgiveness. It guides an individual to identify the life lessons, even from challenging situations, understanding the meaning of life and teaches compassion, forgiveness and gratitude. Practice of reading spiritual texts no doubt influences mental health and emotional well being.

For ex, practice of learning the *Bhagvat Geeta* teaches 'be yourself means we must embody our innate nature. embrace our idiosyncrasies and we have a duty to follow our own path, 'Do without expectation' means allow yourself to accept the outcome without any specific result and always should have no attachment when doing your duties, 'moderate your life' i.e. live a life of moderation, limit intake and mitigate excessiveness in every domain^[35].

Vijnanam: 'Sastra Jnanam'^[36]. Reading of different scriptural texts in daily practice keeps the mind engaged we grow older. Research shows that practice of reading in daily life improves brain connectivity, empowers to empathize with other people, reduce stress, prevents cognitive decline in all ages and overall contributes to a longer life.

For ex, understanding the core knowledge of *Ayurveda* aware the individual for prevention of cognitive distortion which is considered as the key factor for declining the mental health. Critical study of classics of *Ayurveda* helps to well acknowledge about concept of psyche, its nature of manifestation in different form in daily lives, their early recognition for prevention and how can it prevented by zero cost of treatment like adopting practice of *Sadvritta* (universal law of conduct), *Acharya Rasayana*, practice to hold suppressible urges (excessive greed, anger, worry, fear etc) in daily life & other mean of righteous path towards liberation.

Dharya, Smruti and *Samadhi*^[37] -Enhancement of patience, reformation of memory and self restraint from undue attachments which can possible by *Yogic* Practice (*Astanga Yoga Sadhana*). Meditation helps the individual to raise higher level of consciousness.

DISCUSSION:

Mental fitness is just as important as physical fitness and should not be neglected. Global burden of mental health issues has been a wake-up call for greater awareness and it's the time to urgently address this pandemic situation and we promote mental wellness by giving our community the tools to recognize and intervene mental health problems in themselves, their friends, their family and others. *Ayurveda*, the traditional & society has been focused for the holistic health of the individual & society through public education values prevention, educational outreach, early detection and early intervention to reduce the burden of global prevalence of mental illness. It encourages cognitive enhancement for self awareness, to act in accord their values, to escape instead of reacting and for avoidance behaviors that typically make problems worse etc.

CONCLUSION:

Self awareness through cognitive reformation is the key to taking care of mental health and well being. Self awareness include personality traits, personal values, habits, emotions and psychological needs that drive our thought, behavior, conduct in a rational way. Not only the prevalence of psychiatric illness but also constitution of a healthy society free from all antisocial activities, conflicts & wars can be challenged by self awareness, reformation of own thought, behavior and action from grass root level. “*Atmanam eva manyate Kartar Sukha Duhayoh*”, the verse of *Acharya Charaka* indicates that everyone is solely responsible for his/her own action. My misery is my creation as

much as yours is your own. Hence eradication of any type of misery either physical ailments or mental ailments can possible by provoking self realization of any individual about own action.

Conflict of Interest: Nil

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