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Role of Satvavajay and Dhyana as a preventive and therapeutic measure through Ayurveda and Yoga: A Review

Archana Dhananjay Inchekar¹, Mrunal A. Tiwari², Dhananjay S. Inchekar³

¹Professor and Head, Dept. of Svasthavritta and Yoga, Manjushree Research Institute of Ayurvedic Science, Piplaj, Gandhinagar, Gujarat, India.
²Professor and Head, Dept. of Agad Tantra, Manjushree Research Institute of Ayurvedic Science, Piplaj, Gandhinagar, Gujarat, India.
³Head of Swami Vivekanand Yoga Kendra, Nanded (YCMOU Affiliated), Head of Diploma in Yoga Teacher Course (YCMOU Affiliated), Karve Institute of Social Services, Pune, Maharashtra, India.

ABSTRACT

Satvavajay is an important Chikitsa to prevent and treat psychological diseases by avoiding unwholesome physical, psychological and verbal acts. Dhyana is a scientific technique of prolonged attention with awareness of mind as per Yoga. Ayurveda is a health science deals with the preventive and therapeutic knowledge to preserve longevity of healthy life. Guidelines in Ayurveda to prevent all type of diseases and to promote health are described at physical, psychological, social, intellectual and spiritual levels. Ayurveda has mentioned Pradnyaparadha as a route cause of all the diseases. Technique to control mind and Indriyas for avoidance of unwholesome practices are helpful to prevent diseases and promote the health status in healthy individual. Raja and Tama are responsible for Pradnyaparadha. Preventive and promotive measures to enhance Satva Guna is one of the objectives of Ayurveda, for mental, emotional health. Susruta has described criteria for Prasanna Manas which is in Satva Guna predominance and all regimens are advised for controlling Rajas and Tamas. Charaka has mentioned Chikitsa for psychological diseases as Jnana (spiritual knowledge), Vidyana (scriptural knowledge), Dhairyat (non-elevation of mind), Smriti (recollection of experienced thoughts) and Samadhi (concentration of a mind into a self by detaching it from senses). Meditation is useful for improving health and to treat diseases in integration. Ancient and modern literature review has been carried out and preventive and therapeutic application of Satvavajay and Dhyana is found helpful.

Key words: Dhyana, Prevention, Promotion, Satvavajaya, Therapy, Yoga

INTRODUCTION

Health is advised to maintain through proper conducts in daily regimen in Ayurveda. Guidelines are described in Ayurveda and Yoga at physical, psychological, emotional, intellectual and social levels to achieve healthy long life.¹ Those measures related to control one through unwholesome practices are important for prevention.² Satvavajay is an important Chikitsa to prevent and treat psychological diseases by avoiding unwholesome physical, psychological and verbal acts.³ Dhyana is a scientific technique of prolonged attention with awareness of mind as per Yoga.⁴ Meditation is a scientific technique to gain control over the mind and to get deep awareness. Ayurveda and Yoga are complimentary sciences in which guidelines and description are given to preserve psychological health too. Control over the mind is essential to gain for healthy long life. Dhayna according to Yoga texts has significant role to maintain health.⁵

Ayurveda also mentioned Pradnyaparadha is a route cause of all diseases.⁶ Diseases are classified as physical, mental and Aagantu in Ayurveda.⁷ Pradnyaparadha and Asatmyentriyartha Samyoga have significant role in manifestation of Physical,
psychological and psychosomatic diseases Manovikaras are mentioned as Krodha, Shoka, Bhaya, Harsha, Vishad, Ershya, Abhyasuya, Dainya, Matsarya, Kam, Lobha etc in Susrut Samhita. Charak has enlisted all above in Mithya yoga of mind. Mental diseases are due to unwholesome practices of Indryas, Manas and Buddhi. Research studies done before have collected in which Satvavayajaya is suggested to be effective for treating mental diseases, Covid 19 related health issues, adolescents’ mental health issues.

Data is searched related to prevention of physical, mental and Agantu diseases. Agantu rogas are mentioned as Bhutaj, Vishaj. All type of diseases may be prevented by avoidance of Pradnyaparadha. Mind control and mental health is important to achieve for complete health. Mind consists positive and negative Guna and Doshas as Sattva, Raja and Tamas respectively. Therefore, fundamental concept of mind control is an effort to enhance Satwa and to diminish Rajas and Tamas.

This article is an effort to study role of Dhyana and Satvavajaya practices as a preventive and therapeutic measures in not only psychological but also in psychosomatic and physical diseases based on the concepts of Ayurveda and Yoga. Previous publications have mentioned application of Satvavajaya and Dhyana in psychological diseases, Rheumatoid Arthritis, psychosomatic disorders and a few more. Dhyana is one of the techniques of Satvavajaya Chikitsa with other tools as counseling may be effective as a preventive and therapeutic measure in most of the diseases including Covid 19. This perspective is studied and enlightened in this article on the basis of ancient and modern literature.

AIM

To study the role of Satvavajaya and Dhyana as a preventive and therapeutic measure through Ayurveda and Yoga.

OBJECTIVES

1. To study Satvavajaya and its effects on health and diseases.

2. To understand role of Satvavajaya as a preventive and therapeutic measure.

3. To study Dhyana and its effects on health and diseases.

4. To understand role of Dhyana as a preventive and therapeutic measure.

METHODOLOGY

Ancient and modern literature are reviewed and relevant references are collected. Research updates from various database, websites are reviewed related to topic. Satvavajaya from Ayurveda texts and commentaries from Yoga and Ayurveda literature are referred. Web libraries like Google scholar, PubMed, Scopus, and Dhara online were used to search by searching keywords as Satvavajaya, Dhyana, preventive measures, therapeutic measures.

Satvavajaya

Satvavayajaya Chikitsa is mentioned for psychologic diseases in Ayurveda by Charak while describing classification of therapies as Daivavyapashray, Yuktiyapashraya and Satvavayajaya. It prevents the disturbances of Dhee, Dhrity and Smriti by controlling mind from Ayog, Heenayoga and Mithyayoga. The word Satwa refers to Mana (mind). Avajaya indicates to win over. Fundamental concepts related to mind, inter relation between body and mind, role of mind for happy life are described in details in Charak Samhita. According to that control of mind is important for prevention of Pradnyaparadha and Asatmyendriyarth Samyoga.

Satvavajaya is a practice of controlling mind to think and act in wholesome way through physical, psychological and verbal acts. Asatmendriyarth Samyoga is mentioned as one of the major causes of disease. Preventing Ati, Hina, and Mithya Yoga of Chintya, Vicharya, Uhya, Dhyeya and Sankalpa is beneficial to cure disorders. Asatmyenndriyarth Samyoga (Incompatible contact of Indriyarthas) is related as one of causes of disease (physical or mental). So, avoidance of Hina Mithya Atiyoga (excessive, deficient and or erroneous) is advised.
Many therapies in Ayurveda are beneficial to promote mental health like Satwavajaya Chikitsa, Daiva Vyapashrya Chikitsa, Adravyabhuta Chikitsa and Yukti vyapashrya Chikitsa. Sadvritta and Aachar Rasayana are mentioned as a preventive and promotive guideline by Charak. Many of guidelines are mentioned to avoid transmission of diseases.

Stable and aware mind is advised to develop for prevention and promotion in Sadvritta. Tools to develop it are described to practice moral conducts, Jap, Dhyan, Shouch, Satya, Akrodha as Sadvritta and Achar Rasayana.

Regular practice of given guidelines helps to maintain hormones and neurotransmitters and chemical mediators like histamines, and interleukins to maintain a normal situation. Regular practices are useful for parasympathetic functions in the body.

**Satwavajay Physician for Mental diseases**

Mental and emotional diseases are occurred due to gain and loss of liked and disliked objectives. Overthinking, lack of proper thinking, false thinking is listed reasons for disturbance in mind. Charaka has advised to refer to Tadvidya/ Manas Vyadhi Bheshaj Vedi. This is a scope of Satwavajay Chikitsa for psychological disturbances.

Preventive and promotive measures to enhance Satva Guna is one of the objectives of Ayurveda, for mental, emotional health. Susruta has described criteria for Prasanna Manas which is in Satva Guna predominance and all regimens are advised for controlling Rajas and Tamas. Satva Prakruti and Satva predominant individuals consists following characteristics as described in Ayurveda texts.

**Therapeutic role of Satwavajay**

Charaka has mentioned Chikitsa for psychological diseases as Jnana (spiritual knowledge), Vidnyana (scriptural knowledge), Dhairya (non-elevation of mind), Smriti (recollect of experienced thoughts) and Samadhi (concentration of a mind into a self by detracting it from senses). Body and mind both are site for diseases where both are interconnected. Author Vd. Priyavat Sharma in his text has mentioned Charaka’s equal emphasis on body and mind. Satwavajay is supportive for psychosomatic and noncommunicable disease. It is recommended in Janapadodhwamsa to enhance physical and mental strength.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1: Satva Guna predominant characteristics</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. To perceive proper knowledge</td>
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<td>3. Prasanna</td>
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<td>5. Vicharya</td>
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<td>7. Dhyeya</td>
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<td>11. Krutadnya</td>
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<td>15. Daksha</td>
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<td>17. Tyaktavishadha</td>
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<td>25. Meditative</td>
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</tbody>
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it creates positivity in mind.[23] Satvavajay is helpful as a psychotherapy.[24]

**Dhyana in Yoga**

Dhyana is seventh limb in Ashtang Yoga by Patanjali. Yoga is a science deals with the study of mind, methods to control it. Meditation is a practice to focus mind on a single object with awareness. Dharana (concentration) is an initial practice whereas Dhyana (Meditation) is a continuation of it.[4] Patanjali has described psychology in details as Vrittis and obstacles in pathways of yogic practices of meditation.[26] Role of meditation in gaining strength of mind is mentioned in section Vibhutipada. Kayasampat (excellency in physical health) in extreme is mentioned as benefit of meditation.[5] Detachment from all state of being in meditative is described to have great strength of body and mind by reducing Raja and Tamas (Prakashavaran Kshaya).[26]

Dharana and Dhyana are two practices of concentration and meditation described in Ashtang Yoga. It is helpful for getting control over the mind for sublimation. The same times Meditation is useful for improving health and to treat diseases in integration. Meditation is the art of management of neurobehavioral energy. Meditation practice can be categorized as either open monitoring or focused attention. In a study, Dharana and Dhyana found benefits such as better emotional intelligence as an occupational supportive in one study, and improvement in state of consciousness in another study.[27]

**Dhyana in Ayurveda**

Dhyana is described as a state of mind stable at self by Charaka. Control over the mind is described as Samadhi.[19] Human life consists of union of body, mind, Indrias and self as per Ayurveda. Mind contains Triguna and Rajas and Tamas are said as Doshas among them. Acts performed by body, mind and speech can be modified by training of meditative and Satvavajay practices for preventive and therapeutic effect. Dhyana is described with reference of mind and its role in healthy and happy life. Naithiki Chikitsa is mentioned for sublimation.[28]

**Preventive and therapeutic role of Meditation**

Yogic practices as truthfulness, nonviolence, Japa (repeated chanting of mantra), Samadhi, Dhyana are advised to practice as a preventive measures and therapeutic use. Psychological practices which enhance Satva and diminishes Raja and Tama are effective as a preventive and therapeutic measures. The practice of Yoga generates balanced energy which is vital. In cases of Agantu Rogas as Bhutaj and Vishaj diseases can be prevented by avoidance of Pradnyaparadha in which meditation can be effective. Karmaj Vyadhies are caused by unwholesome deeds where yogic practices are indicated as therapy.[29] In Janapadodwamsa diseases for pacifying Karmas and preventing from death, it is advised to practice Sadvritta and code of conducts.[30]

A review study has mentioned that three main Chikitsa modalities of Ayurveda Yuktiyapashray, Daivavyapashray and Satvavajay are stepping stones in the management of ASDs (which is a life-long condition), giving a ray of hope and indicating the need towards more research in this area.[31]

Meditation is the art of management of neurobehavioral energy by being in an absence of reactive pattern of mind with continuous observation of the object. Review of published articles consists details related to topics as parasympathetic activity is improved by Yoga. It creates balance in the autonomic nervous system. It is mentioned as Yoga has effects on GABA (Gamma-Amino Butyric Acid) and Yoga reduces stress hormones such as cortisol.[32]

**Effects of Yoga on Health**

Yoga improves the blood circulation in order to supply the oxygenated blood. Modern neuroscience has identified the function of nervous system of to focus on oneself under natural, mind wandering conditions; termed the “default mode network” (DMN). Meditation helps to enhance psychological well-being and reduces relativity.[33] Yogic practices inhibit the areas responsible for fear, aggressiveness and rage, and stimulate the rewarding pleasure centres in the median forebrain and other areas leading to a state of bliss and pleasure as per recent research. This
inhibition results in lowering anxiety, heart rate, respiration.  

Yoga has been shown to be beneficial in heart disease and hypertension. Yoga reduces anxiety and promotes well-being too. It improves quality of life. It may be used as complementary therapeutic regimen under medical supervision and is appropriate and could be worth considering.  

**DISCUSSION**

Somatic, psychological and Agantu diseases can be prevented by practicing Sadwrittta, moral conducts, avoidance of Pradnyaparadha and Asatmyendriyarth Samyoga. Mind has a physiological role to control itself and Indriyas from unwholesome practice. Satvavajay is mentioned as one of the treatment for psychological diseases which must be practiced for preserve and promote mental health. Controlling mind from unwholesome physical, psychological and verbal acts, overthinking, lack of thinking and false thinking is Satvavajay. Methods of practicing are not mentioned in detail. Guidelines for management of psychological diseases can be applied in the context of Satvavajay, Dhairya, Samadhi are mentioned to practice. Preventive importance of Samadhi is mentioned by Charakacharya. According to Patanjali, Dharana, Dhyana and Samadhi are continuation of meditative practices whereas Samyama is mentioned as outcome of the three. Jnana, Vigyana, Dhaibra, Smriti and Samadhi are factors which are developed in Satvavajay Chikitsa. Many studies are reviewed related to the topic. Meditation may be helpful as a preventive, promotive and therapeutic measure. Yoga is a science as per its aim not directly described for health, it is found beneficial for health. Yoga can be helpful to enhance immunity during Covid 19. Yoga can be a valuable complementary therapy for individuals with rheumatoid arthritis. The practice of Yoga encompasses various elements, including Asana (physical posture) Pranayama (breath regulation), Dharana (concentration), and Dhyana (meditation), all of which contribute to the improvement of physical and mental health in individuals with RA. 

Conducted research shown that a regular practice of Yoga can protect the individual against inflammatory diseases by favourably altering pro-inflammatory cytokine levels. Review suggests that regular practice of Yoga has positive changes on the hippocampus, amygdala, prefrontal cortex, and cingulated cortex.  

Awareness of self through meditation, being a Satva predominant is a key for mental and emotional health. Review of related literature have mostly therapeutic and a few occupational references. Satvavajay and meditation have shown improvement in diseases and further it may be a part of life style as a preventive and promotive measure. Satvavajaychikitsa may consists all other multi-modal treatments as counselling, meditation and breathing awareness.  

**CONCLUSION**

Satvavajay may be effective as a preventive and therapeutic measure. Meditation is effective as a therapy as well as preventive measure. 

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