

REVIEW ARTICLE

Ayurvedic Insights into Mental Health: A Pathway to Holistic Healing

Ankita Kohli^{1*}, Chhaju Ram Yadav², Bhanu Pratap Singh³

¹PG Scholar, Department of Kriya Sharir, National Institute of Ayurveda, Deemed University, Jaipur, Rajasthan, India.

²Dean (Ph.D.) and Head, Department of Kriya Sharir, National Institute of Ayurveda, Deemed University, Jaipur, Rajasthan, India.

³Assistant Professor, Department of Kriya Sharir, National Institute of Ayurveda, Deemed University, Jaipur, Rajasthan, India.

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: *Ayurveda* is a holistic system of medicine focusing on the interconnectedness of physical, mental, and spiritual health. The term “Ayu” represents life as a union of *Sharir* (body), *Indriya* (senses), *Satva* (mind), and *Atma* (spirit). *Ayurveda* specifically addresses mental health, emphasizing the prevention and management of psychological issues.

Aim: This study aims to explore *Ayurveda*’s holistic approach toward mental health.

Materials and Methods: A comprehensive review of scientific literature and classical Ayurvedic texts was conducted to gather information on the topic.

Discussion: Psychiatric and neurological disorders are often linked to memory loss, cognitive deficits, and impaired mental function. Due to the complex nature of these conditions, modern psychoactive medications have achieved limited success. However, traditional *Ayurvedic* wisdom offers a holistic approach that can lead to effective, personalized interventions for lasting mental well-being. *Ayurvedic* treatment can be categorized into two types: *Dravyabhuta*, which includes *Medhya Dravya* (such as *Brahmi*, *Shankhpushpi*, and *Vacha*), and *Adrvabhuta*, which encompasses practices such as *Sadvritta*, *Satvavajaya Chikitsa*, and *Yoga*. Each of these approaches has its own significance and can be tailored to the individual’s needs based on the specific context.

Conclusion: As the demand for holistic mental health solutions grows, further research into the synergistic effects of *Ayurvedic* practices will be essential in validating and expanding these therapeutic approaches.

1. INTRODUCTION

Mental health is a crucial aspect of overall well-being, and in recent times, there has been an increasing interest in alternative and complementary therapies for fostering mental wellness. One of the oldest and most respected systems of medicine that provides a holistic approach to mental health is *Ayurveda*, an ancient healing tradition that originated in India over 5000 years ago.

In *Ayurveda*, mental health is understood as a state of balance across the sensory, mental, intellectual, and spiritual aspects of an individual. Mental illness, on the other hand, arises due to unhealthy interactions

between the individual and their environment. These interactions are influenced by three primary factors^[1]:

1. *Kala* (time rhythm): This refers to the impact of seasonal changes and the imbalance caused by excessive, deficient, or distorted seasonal influences on the body and mind.
2. *Indriyārtha* (sensory inputs): This involves the sensory experiences an individual encounters. Mental imbalance can occur when there is an overabundance, insufficiency, or distortion of sensory inputs.
3. *Buddhi* (intellect): This refers to intellectual functioning, including an individual’s reasoning, memory, and ability to control their thoughts. When the intellect is disturbed, leading to faulty judgment or wrong actions, it is known as *pragyaparadha*.^[2] This results in distorted thinking and behavior, contributing to mental imbalances.

Corresponding Author:

Ankita Kohli, PG Scholar, Department of Kriya Sharir, National Institute of Ayurveda, Deemed University, Jaipur, Rajasthan, India.
Email: ankitakohli.83@gmail.com

In *Ayurveda*, treatment is essentially about restoring and maintaining the body's tissues in a state of *Samyavastha* (equilibrium). Any action taken to preserve or bring the body's tissues back to this balanced state falls under *Chikitsa Karma* (treatment procedures). These treatments are categorized into two types:

Dravyabhuta (drug therapy) and *Adravabhuta* (non-drug or non-pharmacological therapy).^[3] Both approaches are significant, though their application may vary depending on the condition and context.

Adravabhuta Chikitsa is guided by various factors, including *Karana Dravya* (influences such as mind, direction, and time), the status of *Mansika Dosha* (mental humors), and the interaction between *Sharirik Dosha* (bodily) and *Mansik Dosha* (mental humors). Non-drug therapies are just as crucial as drug therapies in *Ayurveda*, as reflected in the synonyms for *Bheshaja* (drug) found in the *Caraka Samhita*, which include *Pathya* (right practices), *Prayashchitta* (atonement), and *Hita* (well-being). Non-drug therapy is recommended for somatic (bodily) ailments through two distinct methods: *Daivavyapashraya* (spiritual or religious practices) and *Yuktivyapashraya Chikitsa*^[4] (rational or logical therapies). When dealing with psychological disorders, *Acharya Charaka* suggests non-drug treatments such as *Gyana* (spiritual knowledge), *Vigyana* (scriptural wisdom), *Dhairya* (patience), *Smriti* (memory), and *Samadhi* (meditation), all of which fall under *Adravabhuta Chikitsa*. Given the importance of both approaches, it is crucial to integrate *Adravabhuta Chikitsa* with *Dravyabhuta Chikitsa* for more effective treatment of various diseases and to maintain normal physiological balance. This combined approach enhances therapeutic outcomes and supports holistic health.

1.1. Aim

This study aims to explore *Ayurveda*'s holistic approach toward mental health.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

A comprehensive review of scientific literature and classical Ayurvedic texts was conducted to gather information on the topic.

2.1. Ayurvedic Approaches to the Management of Psychiatric Disorders

A psychiatric disorder is characterized by disturbances in cognition (thought processes), conation (actions), or affect (emotions). *Ayurveda* focuses on the preservation and promotion of health, aiming to prevent and cure diseases through an integrated approach that aligns physical well-being with mental health. In fact, the management of mental disorders was a specialized field during the time of *Acharya Charaka*. *Ayurveda* recognizes the unique nature of the mind (*Manas*) and body (*Sharira*), emphasizing their inseparable and interdependent relationship in a living being.

Ayurveda embraces the concepts of *Punarjanma* (reincarnation) and *Karma* (the actions of past lives), which influence the development of mental illness. According to Ayurvedic principles, the main factors contributing to mental disorders are:

1. Genetic factors
2. Personality traits
3. Environmental influences.

In general, mental illness is identified by changes in behavior, which can manifest in a variety of ways. The clinical diagnosis is determined

by observing patterns of behavioral changes, along with specific accompanying symptoms and signs.

According to *Ayurveda*, *Ayu* (life) is defined as the combined state of the body, senses, mind, and soul. Emotional disturbances, volitional transgressions (such as incorrect actions), and unhealthy eating habits are commonly attributed to the root causes of psychiatric disorders. Symptoms of mental disorders, such as those related to *Ubhayatmaka Vikara* (dual disorders such as *Unmada*, *Apasmara*, *Mada*, and *Murcha*), are well-documented. However, there is limited descriptive detail available for conditions such as *Chittoudvega* (anxiety disorders). This could be due to the fact that such conditions are well-understood through terms already in use, such as *Krodha* (anger), *Shoka* (grief), and *Udvega* (anxiety).

2.2. Classification of Mental Disorders

In Ayurvedic texts, the majority of disease classifications focus on physical ailments, and there is limited direct reference to the classification of *Manasaroga* (mental disorders). However, by examining diseases that involve *Manas Dosha* – particularly *Rajas* and *Tamas* – it is possible to classify and categorize mental disorders described in *Ayurveda*. For *Manasik Vikara* (mental disorders) such as *Udvega* (anxiety), *Kama* (desire), and *Shoka* (grief), the mind is typically affected first, followed by the body. These conditions, primarily influenced by disturbances in the mind, are therefore referred to as *Manodhisthika Manas Vikara*. Certain disorders, such as *Vishada* (despondency), *Tama* (darkness), and *Asabdasravana* (impaired hearing), are caused predominantly by imbalances in one of the three *Sharira Dosha* (*Vata*, *Pitta*, or *Kapha*), and are classified as *Nanatmaja Manasa Vikara*. In cases of *Ubhayatmaka Vikara* (dual disorders) such as *Unmada* (madness), *Apasmara* (epilepsy), and *Madatyaya* (alcohol-induced disorder), both the mind and body are affected; hence, they are termed *Mana Sariradhisthita Vikara*, involving both mental and physical elements. Another group of conditions, such as *Shokaja Atisara* (diarrhea caused by grief), *Bhayaja Atisara* (fear-induced diarrhea),^[5] and *Kamaja Jwara* (fever caused by lust) or *Krodhaja Jwara* (anger-induced fever),^[6] are initially triggered by an imbalance in *Rajas* and *Tamas*, but they are alleviated only when the mental doshas are addressed. A thorough study of the Ayurvedic classics provides clinically relevant insights for the classification of *Manasavikara* (mental disorders). The chapters on *Dinacharya* (daily regimen), *Ritucharya* (seasonal regimen), and *Sadvritta* (ethical conduct, encompassing aspects such as *Sheela* – behavior, *Cheshta* – effort, and *Aachara* – practice) offer practical guidance for understanding and diagnosing these conditions.

In *Ayurveda*, treatment methods are divided into two categories:

1. *Dravya Chikitsa* (drug therapy), which involves medicines derived from *Bhouma* (earth), *Audbhida* (plant), and *Jangama* (animal sources), with specified formulations, dosage, and sources.
2. *Adravaya Chikitsa* (non-drug therapy), which does not involve the use of medicines and is based on *Upayas* (methods) with a different mode of action.

Dravya Chikitsa is considered *Murtha Chikitsa* (material treatment), whereas *Adravaya Chikitsa* is regarded as *Amurta Chikitsa* (immaterial treatment).

Adravabhuta Chikitsa, which encompasses practices, such as *Upavasa*, *Anilaseva*, *Atapaseva*, *Mantra*, and *Santwana*, given by different acharya.

Here in this article, we are mainly going to discuss *Sattvavajaya Chikitsa* and *Yoga*. Each of these approaches has its own significance and can be tailored to the individual's needs based on the specific context.

2.3. *Sattvavajaya Chikitsa*- The Ayurvedic Psychotherapy

Sattvavajaya Chikitsa in Ayurveda is one of the three main therapeutic approaches, specifically designed for treating mental illnesses. *Acharya Charaka* describes it as the practice of restraining or withdrawing the mind from unhealthy attachments or distractions (*Arthas*) (Ch. Su. 11/54). The focus of *Sattvavajaya* is on controlling the mind, helping an individual stay rooted in their true self by understanding the true nature of the soul and reaching a state of spiritual wisdom (Ch. Sa. 3/31).

Sattvavajaya, in its core, is a comprehensive form of psychotherapy as outlined in Ayurvedic literature. *Acharya Charaka* was the first scholar to introduce the term "*Sattvavajaya*," and his definition allows for considerable expansion and practical application in mental health treatment.

"*Sattvavajaya Punah Ahitebhyo Arthebhyo Manognigrah*". (Ch. Su. 11/54) "*Dhi. Dhairyatmadi Vijnanam Manodosausadham Param*. (As.Hr.Sha.1).

The term *Sattvavajaya* refers to a therapeutic approach aimed at addressing mental and emotional stress, as well as disturbances. It is achieved most effectively by restraining the mind from desiring unwholesome objects and instead directing it toward wholesome ones. This is accomplished through the cultivation of *Jnana* (knowledge), *Vijnana* (wisdom), *Dhairya* (courage), *Smrti* (memory), and *Samadhi* (meditation). These practices help develop control over the *Manas* (mind), which is inherently unstable.

In *Sattvavajaya Chikitsa*, the focus is on enhancing the *Satva guna* (mental clarity and purity) while reducing the influence of *Rajas* (restlessness) and *Tamas* (inertia).

In the 11th chapter of *Charaka Samhita*, *Sutrasthana*, *Sattvavajaya* is defined through the combination of three key principles: *Ahita*, *Artha*, and *Manonigraha*. Here, *Ahita* refers to what is harmful or unwholesome, *Artha* pertains to the objects of the senses, and *Manonigraha* refers to the control of the mind. The practice involves guiding the mind away from cravings for unwholesome objects and preventing it from becoming engaged in abnormal mental activities. *Samadhi* (meditation) is considered the most effective way to achieve control over the mind.

2.4. Aims of *Sattvavajaya Chikitsa*

1. To assist the individual in distinguishing between their thoughts and actions.
2. To redirect the mind and encourage the person to engage with dedication in a new or subsequent activity.
3. To help the individual differentiate between real and imagined threats, allowing them to respond selectively to each.
4. To inspire devotion (*Bhakti*) or strengthen belief in their chosen deity (*Ishta-Daivam*).
5. To eliminate phobias by raising awareness of the subject and providing true, factual knowledge.

2.5. Methodology of the *Sattvavajaya Chikitsa*

The objective form of *Mano Nigraha* refers to the practical application of *Sattvavajaya*, which requires the physician's intervention in

controlling the patient's mind. This can be accomplished through several methods [Figure 1]^[7]:

2.6. Dimensions of *Sattvavajaya Chikitsa*

2.6.1. *Trivarga Anveksana*^[8]

One should avoid adopting mental tendencies that lead to mental disorders. Instead, individuals should strive to abstain from unwholesome pursuits related to *Dharma* (virtue), *Artha* (wealth), and *Kama* (sensory pleasures or desires), and focus on following wholesome practices. Therefore, one should practice this discipline and make efforts to understand the nature of the *Atma* (self), *Desha* (place), *Kala* (time), and *Shakti* (strength and capacity) appropriately.

2.6.2. *Tadvidyaseva*^[9]

Service should be rendered to those who are well-versed in sacred knowledge and the treatment of mental disorders, as they are the experts in providing mental therapy. It appears that during this period, *Sattvavajaya Chikitsa* was administered by specialists with in-depth expertise.

2.6.3. *Atmadi Vijnanam*^[8]

This refers to the acquisition of knowledge about the *Atman* (self), *Desha* (place), *Kula* (family or lineage), *Kala* (time), *Bala* (strength), and *Shakti* (capacity). In this context, *Jnana* (knowledge) specifically refers to spiritual knowledge for practical purposes. The enhancement of *Prajna* (cognition) and its components, such as *Dhi* (intellect), *Dhrti* (ability to control), and *Smrti* (memory and recall), are integral parts of *Sattvavajaya Chikitsa*.

2.6.4. *Psycho-supportive techniques*

These include *Ashwasana* (reassurance and explanation), *Suhritvakya* (guidance and suggestions), *Dharmarthavakya* (education of the individual and family), *Ista Vinasana* (verbal shock or milieu therapy), *Adbhuta Darsana* (showing extraordinary things), *Tadana* (physical shock), *Trasana* (mental shock), and *Santwana* (rehabilitation and reassurance), all of which are considered forms of psychological intervention.

2.6.5. *Promotion of Jnana*^[10] (cognition)

In this context, *Jnana* (cognition) refers to spiritual knowledge that is applied in practical ways. The methods to enhance *Prajna* (cognition) and its components, such as *Dhi* (intellect), *Dhrti* (control), and *Smrti* (memory and recall), are integral to *Sattvavajaya Chikitsa*.

2.6.6. *Promotion of Vijnana*^[10]

This encompasses the knowledge required to live harmoniously in the world, including an understanding of scriptures, the activities of the physical world, personal conduct, body-mind interactions, dietary guidelines, and rules for managing disease states. This helps to alleviate anxiety and calm the disturbed mind.

2.6.7. *Pratyatma Chikitsa (individual psychotherapy)*

Ayurveda emphasizes that every individual is unique in their *Deha Prakriti* (psychosomatic constitution), *Manas Prakriti* (psychic personality), *Desha* (habitat), *Kala* (time), *Vaya* (age), and *Pratyatma Jeevana Vritta* (life circumstances). Therefore, each patient should be treated as a distinct individual, with treatment decisions based on these unique factors. *Acharya Charaka* highlights the importance of personalized therapy, using the term *Purusham-Purusham Viksaya* (Ch. Su. 1/124), which underscores individualized treatment for both physical and psychological issues. This approach is systematic and standardized, and is now used in treating long-term conditions and diverse populations.

2.6.8. *Pratidvanda Chikitsa*^[11] (replacement of emotions)

This approach in Ayurveda involves replacing negative emotions with their opposites (e.g., replacing *Kama* with *Krodha*) as part of psychotherapy (*Sattvavajaya*). When mental disturbances are caused by excesses of desires, grief, joy, jealousy, or greed, they can be mitigated by introducing contrasting emotions that neutralize the prevailing ones, restoring balance.

2.6.9. *Ashwasana*^[12] (reassurance)

Reassurance helps alleviate fears, enhances self-confidence, and fosters hope in the patient. Through *Ashwasana Chikitsa*, the nature of the disease should be openly and honestly explained to the patient, allowing them to gain insight into their condition.

2.6.10. *Friendly advice and guidance*

This involves offering advice from friends, family, or other well-wishers whom the patient trusts most. The focus is on practical aspects such as budgeting, personal hygiene, and nutrition. The goal is to encourage the patient to replace unhealthy habits with healthier ones. The physician should explain the nature of the disturbance and the importance of adopting a positive outlook and a new perspective on life. This advice is particularly useful when the patient faces multiple alternatives in a situation and feels overwhelmed in making a decision. They are guided to make an informed choice by considering their circumstances.

2.6.11. *Changing the thought process*

This method involves verbal psychological shock therapy, which aims to alter the patient's environment and thought processes. By providing specific information that can transform the internal mindset, this technique helps restore normal behavior and mental balance in the patient. Patients are rehabilitated according to their level of understanding and capacity, which helps them lead longer and healthier lives.

2.6.12. *Mano Kshobha Chikitsa* (psychoshock therapy)^[3]

Psychoshock therapy is an important Ayurvedic treatment method described for managing acute episodes of mental disorders. It falls under the broader category of *Sattvavajaya Chikitsa*. This therapy involves techniques such as intimidation, *Trasana* (threatening), coaxing, *Harsana* (exhilaration), gratification, to disrupt their mental state and *Vismarana* (combat forgetfulness). These methods are used to shift the patient's ideas and bring their mind back from a disturbed or psychotic state to its original, balanced condition.

The Practical applications of *Satvavajaya Chikitsa* can be summarized as follows [Figure 2]:

The principles and techniques of *Satvavajaya Chikitsa* align closely with the modern therapeutic approach of cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT), particularly in how both aim to manage thoughts, emotions, and behaviors to improve mental well-being.

2.7. Yoga For Mental Health

In the Indian tradition, *Yoga* has been seen as a path to achieving joy, liberation from suffering, and attaining mental harmony and peace. Since ancient times, those seeking self-realization – often referred to as *Rishis* or *Yogis* – have utilized yogic practices to restore balance between the mind and body, preparing themselves for spiritual awakening and enlightenment.

2.7.1. *Asanas* (postures)

Yogic Asanas are physical postures that help stretch, strengthen, and relax various muscles and parts of the body. They are performed

with a focus on relaxed awareness. According to the *Yoga Sutras*, an *Asana* is a posture that is comfortable and stable. These postures were developed by observing the positions of animals in nature. Practicing *Asanas* revitalizes the autonomic nervous system, massages the internal organs, and releases emotional blockages, helping to center the mind in the present moment.^[13]

In the yogic tradition, after mastering *Asanas*, the next step is the practice of *Pranayama*, or breath control, which plays a crucial role in regulating mental states. This practice involves various techniques of inhaling, exhaling, and holding the breath, and in more advanced forms, it includes visualizing the intake of vital energy without physical breathing. *Pranayama* is well-known for its ability to reduce stress and enhance both physical and mental well-being.^[14]

2.7.2. *Meditation*

In recent years, there has been an increasing body of evidence supporting the effectiveness of various meditative techniques. These include focusing attention on the present moment or on a specific stimulus like one's breath, using imagery, or observing thoughts without engaging or suppressing them. Meditation has been shown to have positive effects on well-being, benefiting both healthy individuals and those with severe health conditions. In the short term, meditation helps reduce heart rate, respiration, skin conductance, and cortisol levels, while increasing alpha brain waves. It also promotes overall health, cognitive function, creativity, and empathy. Over the long term, meditation has been found to be effective in managing conditions such as hypertension, chronic pain, anxiety, and depression.^[15]

2.7.3. *Dravya Bhuta Chikitsa*

Dravyabhuta Chikitsa, in Ayurveda, refers to the therapeutic use of substances (*Dravyas*) and their inherent qualities (*Bhutas*) to restore balance in the body and mind. This approach emphasizes the healing power of natural ingredients such as herbs, minerals, and other medicinal substances, which are categorized based on their elemental properties (earth, water, fire, air, and ether). According to Ayurveda, "*Medhya Rasayana*" presents herbal therapeutics that boost memory, restore cognitive deficits, and improve mental function.

Here, we are going to discuss the therapeutic effects of some *Medhya Dravyas*.

2.8. *Brahmi* (*Bacopa monnieri*)

Bacopa monnieri, commonly known as *Yendri*, has been traditionally used as an *Ekala Dravya* (single therapeutic substance) to address mental health issues, particularly those related to anxiety, cognitive function, and memory impairments. The extract of *Brahmi*, along with its isolated active compounds, has been extensively studied for its nootropic effects, antioxidant properties, antimicrobial action, and analgesic benefits, among other therapeutic qualities.

2.8.1. *Therapeutic uses*

Apasmara, *Unmada*, *Kustha*, *Sotha*, *Mutrakracchra*, and *Masurika*.

2.8.2. *Pharmacology*

A clinical study on 24 patients with various mental disorders found that both crude aqueous and defatted alcoholic extracts of *Bacopa monnieri* (*Brahmi*) improved learning and corrected abnormal behavior in epileptic patients. The defatted alcoholic extract (2–4 mg/kg body weight) was more effective than the aqueous extract in reducing epileptic seizures when taken twice daily for 5 months.^[16] Research using a rat model of clinical anxiety found that a *Bacopa monnieri* extract (BME) with 25% bacoside A exhibited anxiolytic and anti-depressant effects

similar to lorazepam, a commonly used benzodiazepine. Notably, the BME did not cause memory loss, a common side effect of lorazepam, and instead enhanced memory function.^[17] Earlier studies identified a sedative effect from glycosides called hersaponins. Further research on albino rats and dogs demonstrated that both alcoholic and aqueous extracts of the plant had tranquilizing effects.^[18]

2.9. Vacha (*Acorus Calamus*)

Vacha (*Acorus calamus*) or sweet flag belongs to the family Acoraceae; it is a high-value medicinal plant that grows almost all over India. Studies show that the rhizomes of *Vacha* contain an aromatic essential oil with notable anticonvulsant effects. *Vacha* roots are effective in treating memory loss, Alzheimer's disease, tremors, anxiety, depression, and pain disorders of neurological origin. The oil of *Vacha* contains several chemical compounds, with β -asarone, a phenylpropanoid, being the main component. However, β -asarone has carcinogenic properties, which is why the Ayurvedic system uses *shodhit* (detoxified) *Vacha* in its formulations.

2.9.1. Therapeutic uses

Medhya, *Apsmara*, *Kanthyha*, and *Vibandhhar*.

2.9.2. Pharmacology

Vacha has been scientifically proven to be effective in treating epilepsy.^[19] Pharmacological studies show that *Acorus* rhizome and its compounds, especially α - and β -asarone, exhibit a variety of biological activities, including sedative, central nervous system (CNS) depressant, behavior-modifying, anticonvulsant, acetylcholinesterase-inhibitory, and memory-enhancing effects.^[20] It is *Medhya*, *Shamak*, *Sangyasthanan*, and *Akshepsama*. As it is *Shamak*, it is used in *Chinta* and *Shoak*. Because it is *Manasdosahar*, it is used in *Unmada*, *Apsmara*, etc.

2.10. Shankhpushpi (*Convolvulus Pluricaulis*)

Shankhpushpi is a plant and is known as the best brain tonic medicine, which is classified under the four *Medhya Rasayana* by *Acharya Charaka*. It is a well-regarded Ayurvedic herb used for enhancing cognitive functions, reducing anxiety, and supporting mental health. Known for its neuroprotective, anti-inflammatory, and antioxidant properties, *Shankhpushpi* is often recommended as a brain tonic and for treating conditions such as anxiety, depression, epilepsy, and dementia. Pharmacological research suggests its ability to reduce oxidative stress, promote relaxation, and balance hormonal responses, which are beneficial in stress-related conditions.

2.10.1. Therapeutic uses

Medhya, *Apsmara*, *Unmada*, *Anidra*

2.10.2. Pharmacology

Convolvulus pluricaulis contains compounds such as shankhpushpine, scopoletin, ceryl alcohol, the flavonoid kempferol, and the steroids phytosterol and β -sitosterol. These compounds, which act as GABA-A agonists, are likely responsible for its CNS depressant effects. The plant notably demonstrated a significant reduction in motor activity.^[21] *Convolvulus pluricaulis*, also known as a cognitive booster, is studied alongside *Canscora decussata*, a related variety. The ethanolic extract of *Canscora decussata* showed significant effects on nerve growth factor, which may explain its cognitive-enhancing properties.^[22] In Indian tradition, *Shankhpushpi* is a trusted natural remedy, often given to children with cow milk or honey to improve memory.^[23] A neuroprotective study conducted on rats with aluminum-induced brain

toxicity showed that administering an aqueous extract of *Convolvulus pluricaulis* for 3 months helped prevent neurotoxicity and reduce oxidative stress. The treatment also had a positive impact on the altered protein activity at various levels of the cholinergic synapse.^[24]

2.11. Rasapanchak of These Herbs

In *Ayurveda*, the healing properties of plants are understood through principles such as *Rasa* (taste), *Guna* (qualities), *Virya* (potency), *Vipaka* (post-digestive effect), and *Karma* (action), which together describe how a plant influences the body and mind [Table 1].

3. DISCUSSION

Although psychotherapy is often considered a modern concept in contemporary medicine, it is not new to Ayurveda. The ancient system of Ayurveda has long recognized the importance of psychological treatments. In fact, psychotherapy has been an integral part of Ayurvedic medicine from its earliest history, alongside drug therapy.

In Ayurveda, *Prajnaparadha* is considered the primary cause of mental illness and can be addressed through psychotherapy or *Sattvavajaya Chikitsa*. *Sattvavajaya* is a therapeutic approach aimed at restoring the patient's intellect (*Dhi*), mental strength (*Dhrti*), and memory (*Smrti*) to a balanced and healthy state. Derived from the teachings of *Acharya Charaka*, this therapeutic method aims at restoring mental equilibrium by redirecting the mind from harmful distractions and attachments (*Arthas*) to wholesome pursuits. Central to this practice is the enhancement of *Satva guna* (mental clarity), while reducing the influence of *Rajas* (restlessness) and *Tamas* (inertia). The practice emphasizes understanding the true nature of the self (*Atman*) and attaining spiritual wisdom through knowledge, meditation, and self-control.

The key components of *Sattvavajaya Chikitsa* include the regulation of thoughts (*Chintya*), replacing negative ideas (*Vicharya*), and refining one's goals (*Dheya*), among others.

One notable dimension of this approach is its alignment with modern psychotherapy techniques, particularly CBT. Both systems aim to manage the interaction between thoughts, emotions, and behaviour to improve mental well-being. Techniques such as emotional replacement, thought process regulation, and reframing beliefs share similarities with CBT interventions, demonstrating the timeless relevance of Ayurvedic practices in contemporary mental health care.

In the Indian tradition, Yoga was conceived as a pathway toward the attainment of joy in life, freedom from sorrows, mental balance, and peace. Research suggests that yoga is highly effective in reducing anxiety, stress, and depression. It has a positive impact on mood-enhancing neurotransmitters, alpha-wave activity, vagal tone, and serum prolactin, while also lowering oxidative stress, lipid levels, and serum cortisol. Yoga helps regulate the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal axis and improve body alkalinity, which makes it particularly useful for calming feelings of arousal, tension, sadness, guilt, and suicidal thoughts. Additionally, it promotes a sense of harmony, balance, tranquility, and deep relaxation at a neurobiological level. Regular practice of yoga postures can also improve distress tolerance and reduce emotional eating during stressful moments.

Moreover, Ayurveda's focus on *Medhya Dravyas* (brain tonics), such as *Brahmi* (*Bacopa monnieri*), *Vacha* (*Acorus calamus*), and *Shankhpushpi* (*Convolvulus pluricaulis*), offers additional therapeutic support. These herbs have been extensively researched for their

nootropic effects, aiding in cognitive function, memory improvement, and the reduction of anxiety and depression. The pharmacological properties of these plants, such as *Kapha-Vata Shamaka*, and their actions are characterized by an abundance of *Sattva Guna*, promoting balance and clarity in the mind and body. Because of *Laghu Guna*, their action is *Prakashak*, *Tikta* rasa in them is considered *Medya* because it has a stimulating and clarifying effect on the mind, promoting intelligence, mental clarity, and enhancing cognitive functions. The *Katu Vipaka* is *Kapha* and *Tamanashak*. *Ushna Veerya* (hot potency) enhances *Dhee*, *Dhruti*, and *Smriti* by stimulating the digestive fire and invigorating the mental faculties. These highlight Ayurveda's holistic approach to mental health by leveraging natural substances in the healing process.

4. CONCLUSION

This review explores both herbal and non-herbal remedies used in the Ayurvedic system, which are well-documented for treating a variety of brain-related disorders. It concludes that *Sattvavajaya Chikitsa* (Psychotherapy) and *Yoga* form a profound integration of the mind, body, and spirit, focusing on mental discipline, spiritual wisdom, and natural healing methods. In addition, herbal medicines have been scientifically validated for its mental healing properties, supported by numerous medicinal plants with potential therapeutic effects. The Ayurvedic approach offers a comprehensive framework for addressing mental health concerns, and its holistic principles continue to align with contemporary psychological and medical practices, demonstrating the enduring relevance of Ayurvedic healing.

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6. AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION

All authors give equal contribution in making of this manuscript.

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8. ETHICAL STATEMENT

Ethical approval was not required for this study as it was a review article with data obtained through a literature search.

9. CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

10. DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The data analyzed in this review were obtained from publicly available sources, including peer-reviewed articles, observational studies, and surveys accessible via databases.

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Table 1: *Rasapanchak* of Brahmi, Vacha, and Shankpushpi

<i>Rasapanchak</i>	Brahmi ^[25] (<i>Bacopa monnieri</i>)	Vacha ^[26] (<i>Acorus calamus</i>)	Shankpushpi ^[27] (<i>convolvulus pluricaulis</i>)
<i>Rasa</i>	<i>Tikhta</i>	<i>Katu, Tikhta</i>	<i>Tikhta</i>
<i>Guna</i>	<i>Laghu</i>	<i>Laghu, Teekshna</i>	<i>Snigdha, Pichhil</i>
<i>Veerya</i>	<i>Ushna</i>	<i>Ushna</i>	<i>Sheeta</i>
<i>Vipaka</i>	<i>Katu</i>	<i>Katu</i>	<i>Madhur</i>
<i>Prabhava</i>	<i>Medhya</i>	<i>Medhya</i>	<i>Medhya</i>

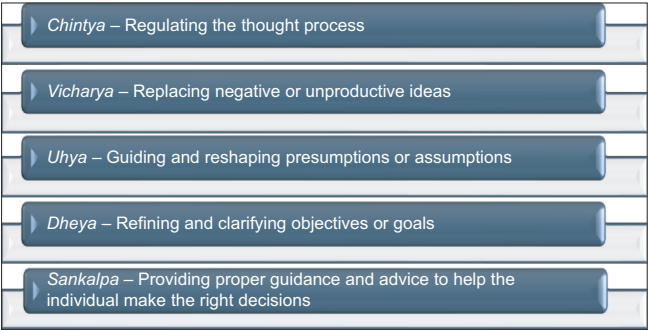


Figure 1: Methodology of the Satwavajaya Chikitsa



Figure 2: Practical applications of Satwavajaya Chikitsa