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*Original Research Article*

# Exploring Chittodvega through the Lens of Manasa Pariksha Bhava in Ayurveda: A Bridge between Classical Insight and Modern Psychopathology

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***Abstract***: Mental health disorders, especially anxiety and related conditions, are among the most prevalent non-communicable diseases worldwide. Ayurveda, the traditional Indian system of medicine, offers a psychospiritual perspective through concepts like Chittodvega (psychic agitation) and Manasa Pariksha Bhava (mental examination parameters). This paper explores Chittodvega using classical Ayurvedic texts, correlating it with modern psychological disorders such as Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD), and presents Manasa Pariksha Bhava as a diagnostic and therapeutic tool. Select Sanskrit shlokas support classical references, and parallels are drawn to enhance clinical relevance in integrative mental health care.

**Keywords**: Chittodvega, Manasa Pariksha Bhava, Ayurveda, Anxiety, GAD, Mental Health, Satvavajaya, Psychopathology.

## INTRODUCTION

Modern psychiatry defines anxiety as a feeling of apprehension, tension, or uneasiness resulting from the anticipation of a real or imagined danger, often accompanied by autonomic symptoms. In Ayurveda, such disturbances of the psyche are conceptualized under the term Chittodvega, which denotes an agitated state of Chitta (mind/consciousness). It is not an explicitly named disorder in classical texts but is understood through symptom complexes resembling

 

anxiety disorders.

Ayurveda emphasizes the holistic evaluation of mental states through Manasa Pariksha Bhava—ten parameters used to assess mental function and psychological stability. Understanding Chittodvega through these parameters provides an effective model for both diagnosis and management in contemporary integrative psychiatry.

**2. Concept of Chittodvega in Ayurveda**

The term Chittodvega is composed of:

- Chitta – representing the aspect of the mind responsible for memory, cognition, and emotion.
- Udvega – referring to agitation, restlessness, or mental unrest.

"Chittasya udvegaḥ Chittodvegaḥ iti."
(Definition derived from etymology; not a direct classical shloka but based on terminological interpretation.)

Though not categorized as a Vyadhi in the classics, Chittodvega can be inferred from descriptions of Manasika Dosha, Unmada (insanity), and Vishada (depression).

**Clinical Correlation:**

Chittodvega aligns with Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD) in the DSM-5, characterized by:

- Excessive anxiety and worry
- Restlessness
- Fatigue
- Difficulty concentrating
- Sleep disturbances

**3. Nidana of Chittodvega**

According to Ayurveda, mental disturbances arise from:

A. Aggravation of Manasika Doshas:

- Rajas – initiates hyperactivity, irritability, and restlessness
- Tamas – causes confusion, indecisiveness, and withdrawal

**B. Key Causative Factors:**

- Prajnaparadha – intellectual blasphemy
- Asatmyendriyartha Samyoga – unwholesome contact of sense organs
- Parinama – effect of time and transformation
- Vega Dharana – suppression of natural urges

"Prajnaparadha Asatmyaindriyartha Samyoga Kaalaparinama cha |
Trividham Manovikara Hetutvam."
— Charaka Samhita, Sharira Sthana 1/102

4.Manasa Pariksha Bhava: A Classical Mental Assessment Tool Manasa Pariksha Bhava: A Tool for Mind Evaluation Ayurvedic classics, especially Charaka Samhita, outline ten parameters for assessing the qualities of the mind, known as Manasa Pariksha Bhava. These include:

1. Satva (Mental strength)
2. Smriti (Memory)
3. Medha (Intellect)
4. Bhakti (Inclination or devotion)
5. Shraddha (Faith)
6. Abhyasa (Habituation or practice)
7. Viveka (Discrimination)
8. Vrutti (Mental tendency)
9. Avastha (State of mind)
10. Achara (Conduct or behavior)

Each of these qualities, when disturbed, contributes to the manifestation of Chittodvega.

**Correlation Between Chittodvega and Manasa Pariksha Bhava**

| **Manasa Pariksha Bhava in Chittodvega** | |
|---|---|
| **Satva** | Weakness of mental strength leads to poor coping with stress. |
| **Smriti** | Impaired memory due to constant worry or mental distraction. |
| **Medha** | Reduced clarity in thought and problem-solving abilities. |
| **Bhakti & Shraddha** | Loss of interest or disconnection from personal values. |
| **Abhyasa** | Difficulty in maintaining routines or disciplined habits. |
| **Viveka** | Confused judgment, impulsive decisions. |
| **Vrutti** | Negative thought patterns dominate. |
| **Avastha** | Mind frequently agitated, unable to settle. |
| **Achara** | Changes in behaviour, isolation, irritability. |

**The Charaka Samhita outlines ten mental evaluation factors:**

| **Bhava** | **Meaning** | **Relevance in Chittodvega** |
|---|---|---|

 

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Satva | Mental strength | Diminished coping ability |
| Smriti | Memory | Forgetfulness due to worry |
| Medha | Intellect | Impaired decision-making |
| Bhakti | Inclination/devotion | Loss of interest |
| Shraddha | Faith | Existential doubt |
| Abhyasa | Practice/habitual action | Inconsistent routines |
| Viveka | Discrimination | Impaired judgment |
| Vrutti | Mental tendency | Obsessive worry |
| Avastha | State of mind | Agitation or turmoil |
| Achara | Behaviour/conduct | Social withdrawal or irritability |

**Charaka Samhita, Vimanasthana 4/8**
These ten traits help assess not just disease states but the patient's Manasika Prakriti and resilience, thus enabling personalized care.

**5. Chittodvega and Modern Psychological Parallels**
Modern neuropsychology attributes anxiety to HPA axis dysregulation, amygdala overactivity, and prefrontal cortex impairment—which closely mirror the Ayurvedic understanding of imbalanced Rajas and Tamas disturbing Chitta.

**6. Management of Chittodvega in Ayurveda**
**A. Satvavajaya Chikitsa (Psychological Therapy)**

- "Manonigraho hi Satvavajayah" (Charaka, Sutra Sthana 1/58)
- Satvavajaya is the restraint of mind from unwholesome objects
- Cultivating self-discipline, cognitive control
- Developing Viveka (discriminative knowledge)
- Replacing negative thoughts with Shraddha and Bhakti
- Yoga and meditation

**B. Yuktivyapashraya Chikitsa (Rational/Pharmacological Treatment)**

•Medhya Rasayana: Brahmi (Bacopa monnieri), Ashwagandha (Withania somnifera), Shankhpushpi

•Shirodhara, Abhyanga, Nasya for neurocalming effects

**C. Daivavyapashraya Chikitsa (Spiritual Therapy)**

- Mantra, Japa, Homa, Tirtha Yatra to increase Sattva Guna
- Restoration of faith (Shraddha) and hope

## DISCUSSION

The Ayurvedic concept of Chittodvega offers a comprehensive understanding of anxiety-like mental states through a lens of doshic imbalance, cognitive disruption, and loss of self-regulation. In contrast to the symptomatic categorization of anxiety in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5), Ayurveda evaluates the root causes, mental constitution (Manas Prakriti), and spiritual alignment of the individual.

**7.1. Chittodvega and Anxiety Disorders**
Modern psychiatry classifies anxiety under several categories such as Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD), Panic Disorder, and Social Anxiety Disorder. These conditions are commonly linked to amygdala hyperactivity, HPA-axis dysfunction, and altered neurotransmitter levels like serotonin and GABA [1]. Ayurveda, meanwhile, attributes these symptoms to the derangement of Rajas and Tamas, which agitate the Chitta (mental faculty), leading to restlessness, fear, and cognitive impairment [2].

"Rajo-tamo abhivyaktam manaso vishamam lakshanam syat" – this highlights the link between Rajo-Tamasic aggravation and psychiatric symptoms [3].

**7.2. Utility of Manasa Pariksha Bhava in Diagnosis**
The ten Manasa Pariksha Bhava act as qualitative markers for evaluating subtle disturbances in thought, behavior, and emotion. Unlike modern mental status examinations (MSE), which are standardized but surface-level, these Bhava consider the Gunas (Satva,

 

Rajas, Tamas) and individuality of a patient. This supports precision mental health, akin to the biopsychosocial model in modern psychiatry.

• Satva parallels psychological resilience.

•Medha and Viveka relate to executive functions and prefrontal cortex activity [4].

•Bhakti and Shraddha are important in assessing value orientation and spiritual coherence, which influence long-term outcomes in psychotherapies [5].Thus, Manasa Pariksha Bhava enables a holistic diagnosis beyond symptom clusters.

### 7.3. Integrative Psychotherapy: Satvavajaya and CBT

Satvavajaya Chikitsa emphasizes cognitive control, behavioral discipline, and faith-based redirection. This overlaps conceptually with Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), which focuses on identifying and restructuring irrational thoughts, habituating new behavior, and enhancing coping skills [6].

"Satvavajaya hi mano nigrahaḥ" — the restraining of the mind from unwholesome thoughts is a therapeutic principle in Ayurveda [3].

Recent studies suggest that Ayurvedic psychotherapeutic strategies like Abhyasa (repeated discipline) and Viveka (discrimination) improve cognitive clarity and reduce anxiety levels [7].

### 7.4. Medhya Rasayana and Neuroprotective Adaptogens

Ayurvedic herbs such as Brahmi (Bacopa monnieri), Ashwagandha (Withania somnifera), and Mandukaparni (Centella asiatica) have shown anxiolytic and neuroprotective effects in both classical texts and modern research.

- Ashwagandha is a proven adaptogen that reduces serum cortisol and improves resistance to stress [8].
- Brahmi enhances memory, reduces anxiety, and supports synaptic activity through antioxidant and cholinergic mechanisms [9].
- Mandukaparni supports memory and reduces stress-induced oxidative damage.

These herbs act on key neurochemical pathways (GABA, serotonin, BDNF), paralleling modern anxiolytics [10].

### 7.5. Cultural and Spiritual Dimensions in Mental Health

Modern psychiatry often neglects the spiritual aspect of healing, while Ayurveda integrates Daivavyapashraya Chikitsa (spiritual therapy) as a core component. Incorporating Japa, Mantra, and meditation has shown to modulate default mode networks, reduce cortisol, and enhance emotional stability [11].

Moreover, the Bhavas like Shraddha (faith) and Bhakti (devotion) serve as protective factors against despair and existential anxiety, especially in chronic conditions. In multicultural clinical settings, such insights could promote culturally responsive care.

### 7.6. Chittodvega in Contemporary Clinical Practice

Though Chittodvega is not classified as a formal Vyadhi, its understanding is vital in conditions such as:

- Anxiety spectrum disorders
- Adjustment disorders
- Premenstrual syndrome with affective symptoms
- Somatoform disorders

Its inclusion in Ayurvedic diagnosis allows practitioners to contextualize mental distress in spiritual and lifestyle dimensions and prescribe therapies that balance Manasika Doshas while nurturing Satva.

## CONCLUSION

Chittodvega, though not classically defined as a separate disorder, is a relevant Ayurvedic construct for understanding anxiety and related disturbances. Manasa Pariksha Bhava offers a detailed assessment model for evaluating psychological health, with deep parallels in modern psychological theory. By integrating classical wisdom with contemporary clinical models, Ayurveda provides a valuable framework for managing anxiety in an individualized, comprehensive, and spiritually enriching way.

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