



ISSN: 2230-9926

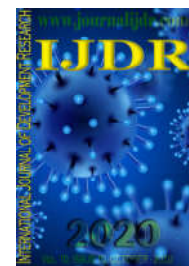
Available online at <http://www.journalijdr.com>

IJDR

International Journal of Development Research

Vol. 10, Issue, 10, pp. 41757-41759, October, 2020

<https://doi.org/10.37118/ijdr.20305.10.2020>



RESEARCH ARTICLE

OPEN ACCESS

REVIEW OF PRINCIPLES FOR BEHAVIOR MODIFICATION IN AYURVEDA, ON THE BACKGROUND OF REDUCING SOCIAL CAPITAL DURING COVID-19

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ARTICLE INFO

Article History:

Received 28th July, 2020

Received in revised form

14th August, 2020

Accepted 20th September, 2020

Published online 30th October, 2020

Key Words:

Pandemic like COVID-19, Trustworthiness, Connections Among Individuals.

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ABSTRACT

The outbreak of a pandemic like COVID-19 in world has resulted in bringing changes even to the social connections of an individual. The measures adopted to prevent the diseases like isolation is weakening an individual's social capital or the "connections among individuals – social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them."¹ This weakened social support has triggered mental health issues in many individuals. The methods to tackle a person's stress by expanding his Self-awareness and integrity would be beneficial in this situation. This paper attempts to review the principles of Ayurvedic psychology which are described for behavioral modification by self-integration.

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Citation: Thushara Joy, 2020. "Structural and electrical properties of the ceramics based on spinel $Mn_xCo_{1-x}Al_2O_4$ compounds", *International Journal of Development Research*, 10, (10), 41757-41759.

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda defines health in a broader plane incorporating wellbeing of *Atma*, *indriya* and *mana* [spiritual, mental and sensory wellbeing]². Along with Spiritual and mental aspects. Sensory wellbeing is a concept, which is given specific importance in Ayurveda classics. Prime importance is given to it, as senses connect an individual to the world around him. The sensory inputs give rise to thoughts, and thoughts in turn, determine the overt behavior. Hence regulating the perception and maintaining *Indriyaswasthyam* [sensory wellbeing] becomes essential in establishing a healthy social life. In this perspective a person is said to be free from mental illness and has the healthy mental status³, when he attains.

- Clarity in sensory perception [*Indriyaindriyarthaprasada*]
- Clarity in Thinking [*Manaprasada*]
- Clarity in decision making [*Budhiprasada*]
- Precision in knowledge assimilation and memory [*Atmaprasadam*] and
- A healthy physique [*Prakrutistadhaatu*]

The initial four levels are collectively termed as *Adhyatmadravyagunasamgraha* [the elements related to the internal self of individual]⁴. Ayurveda thus emphasizes that a person grows up with proper coordination of internal self and that of expressed emotions. In a person who is unable to balance the interactions of internal world with the external world, shows disharmony in health sprouts. This relation of one's self with the outer is denoted by the theorem of "*Loka purusha*"⁵.

Lokapurushasiddhanta- doctrine of self and the world: Everything that occurs in this world has a reflection upon an individual's self – is the statement put forward by this doctrine. The individual is thus not an independent entity, instead, is a part of a social unit. This also brings forth the generalization rule that each individual experience can have a similar counterpart in the world and the situations have an inherent transient nature to perish of in time. To arise to that level of awareness, a person should have proper self-awareness and integration in his thoughts. This state of balanced, overt and covert behavior, with expanded self-awareness, has been incorporated into the mental health definition in Ayurveda.

Principles for integrating covert and overt behavior in Ayurveda: Behavioral therapy measures in Ayurveda involve assessment of an individual's self-awareness and the covert behavior. Corrections are provided to an individual in both these levels after evaluation. The components of evaluation and the principles applied in treatment are enlisted in Table 1.0.

Table 1.0. Ayurvedic principles for behavioral correction₆

| Components of behavioral correction | Principles adopted |
|---|---|
| Thought and perception [<i>Manaprasadam</i>] | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sensory regulation and avoiding overindulgence or addiction [Na indriyavasagasyat] Mindfulness of emotions [Jitendriyaraagaadinam] Mindfulness of thoughts [Na cancalammanoanubramet] |
| Decision making [<i>Budhiprasadam</i>] | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discriminative judgment [Nityam-anityam; Hitam-ahitamvivecanam] |
| Integrated memory [<i>Smrutiprasadam</i>] | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reflection of reality [Prakrutimanusmaret] Repression of haunting memories [Na apavadamanusmaret] |
| Desire regulation [<i>Bhakti samata</i>] | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Practice of detachment [Vinaupadhacikitsa] |
| Habit modulation [<i>Samasheelata</i>] | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Practice of good conduct [Sadvrutta] |
| Activity scheduling [<i>SamaCeshata</i>] | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Balancing the actions [Mano vak kaya karmanamdhamam] |
| Obligation to existing norms [<i>Acarasamata</i>] | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Practice of Respect to righteous norms [Desakalapramanaja] |

Manaprasadam- realm of thought & perception: The clarity in sensory perception and thought process, is the prime requirement for mental health. It determines the nature in which an individual perceives the world around him and its experiences. Faulty perception leads to fallacy in thought process and it affects the further domains of cognition.

Budhiprasadam- realm of decision making: Proper situational judgment is the factor which helps an individual understand what is momentary and what has long lasting results. That which is conducive and non-conducive to the person's physique, place he lives and the time. Incorporating such considerations make a decision making process comprehensive.

Smrutiprasadam- integrated memory: Memories are the source of energy for a person's active living. Each experience is converted into memory which is further condensed in *cetas* [part of *mana* attributed for integration of memories.] Each action and the emotions arising are coloured by the memories created in the past. Clarity in memory is maintained through repressing the unnecessary memories into unconscious mind and recollecting only those necessary for the situation. Living in the past memories of hard times make an individual pessimistic [naapavadamanusmaret]. Hence the rule of reflecting upon reality and practicing to 'let go' unwanted memories, is the principle advised for clarity in memory.

Bhakti prasadam -Desire regulation: Desires streamline a person into action. The natures of desires are identified as satvika-pure, rajasika- selfish, tamasika- those hurting others. An individual's personality determines the nature of desire he inculcates. The awareness that the desires, one has, are destructive and their nature can be modified, reduces the impact of unfulfilled desires.

Samasheelata -Habit modulation: The habits of a person play a significant role in regulating his physical and mental health. Sedentary habits create a state of inertia and thus have a negative impact upon mind. Excessive activities at the same time create mental exhaustion and subsequent strain. Habits in turn are formed by the social structures one belongs to, and the nature of upbringing one has had. It determines to what extent an individual is productive in his society.

SamaCeshata-Activity scheduling: Activities and exercises are considered to have influence upon three spheres- of mind, body and speech [*Mano, vak and kaya*]. In all these three spheres, the prime quality to be maintained, is *ahimsa* [non-injury to others]. Thus *ceshtaswastyam* or balanced activities, results in healthy social living.

Acarasamata -Obligation to existing norms: Social, religious and cultural norms act as the binding forces of a society. The gatherings and rituals, performed as a part of it, do satisfy the social needs of one's ego. Hence showing least resistance to the norms or *Acaras* transforms an individual's social relations into a healthier plane. The components of behavioral correction in an individual through the Ayurvedic principles have been categorized into two strata, as those related to Self and those related to the society of the individual. It is graphically depicted below in figure 1.0

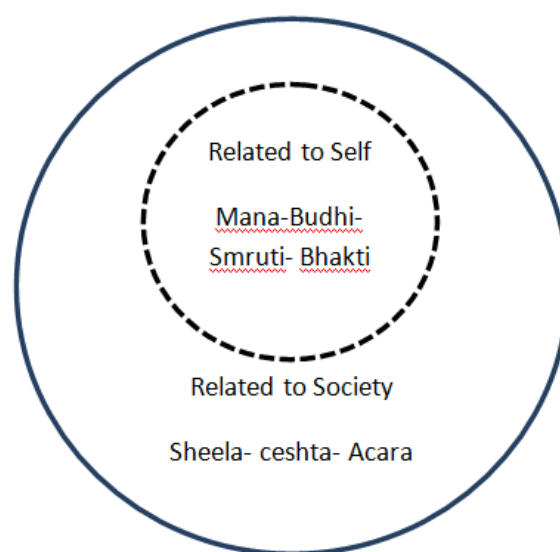


Figure 1.0 Ayurvedic principles for behavioral correction in individual

DISCUSSION

Ayurveda psychology emphasizes upon principles, which balances a person's traits of introversion and extroversion, in order to bring in change to the person's behavior. Excess engagement in the sensory world outside, reduces one's self-awareness. This extroversion is the prime reason for mental stress during isolation. If a person allocates a few hours for self-reflection and contemplation in daily life, the balance between overt and covert behavior can be attained. Specific methods and tools advised for behavior correction in individuals are based on these Ayurveda principles.

Conclusion: Behavior correction principles of Ayurveda are thus focused upon expanding internal self-awareness and regulating the external social interactions. A pragmatic shift

from externalization to internalization can help one to overcome the stress aroused as a part of the situations like social distress and isolation.

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