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Review Article

SOCIAL HEALTH IN AYURVEDA: AN OVERVIEW

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ABSTRACT	
<p>*Correspondence</p> <p>Muniraju KN PG Scholar, Department of Manasa Roga, Sree Dharmasthala Manjunatheshwara College of Ayurveda and Hospital, Hassan, Karnataka, India</p> <p>DOI: 10.7897/2321-6328.02124</p> <p>Article Received on: 07/01/14 Accepted on: 20/02/14</p>	<p>Psychology and Ayurveda emphasises on the rules of conduct and its effects on social and behavioural aspects of life. It deals with preventive, curative and promotive aspects. The personality of an individual can be enhanced by his personal or social conduct. A self-review could help to judge one's conduct. Ayurveda has discussed conduct under "Sadvritha" (Code of good conduct). A good personal conduct provides good health and a control over individual senses and desires. Sadvritha can be classified as personal (regime of bathing, cleaning of eyes, nose, ears, teeth, oral cavity, nails etc), psychological (one should not feel exhilarated in success and depressed in failure or under continuous grief), social (not using unwashed clothes, dirty or uncomfortable clothes, clothes worn by others, not appropriate to the season, occasion or clothes made from unnatural fibre), emotional (should be self controlled, self virtuous, free from anxiety, fear, shy etc), religious (worship gods, Brahmanas etc, perform religious sacrifice) and occupational conduct (should not tell a lie nor take others possession nor should desire for other women or other's property, should not be inclined to enmity). Emotional disorders which are caused by Prajnaparada (derangement of intellect, restraint and memory), interrupt the social conduct of a person leading to psychosomatic disease. The wise man should control the impulses of emotions which otherwise causes the mental illness. Psycho Social Behaviour changes as Causative factors and Prodromal symptoms of upcoming diseases. By following proper code of conduct, daily regimen, seasonal regimen, Achara Rasayana (rejuvenating regimens) one can lead a healthy life.</p> <p>Keywords: Social health, Social psychology, Sadvritha, Dinacharya, Ritucharya, Achara Rasayana</p>

INTRODUCTION

Social psychology is defined as "an attempt to understand and explain how the thought, feeling, and behaviour of individuals are influenced by the actual, imagined, or implied presence of others"¹. Socialization is a process by which society integrates the individual and the individual learns to behave in socially acceptable ways² and his approach to the society to its physical and mental needs. Social psychology seeks to explain and understand social behaviour. It is a discipline that uses scientific methods to study social influence, social perception and social interaction³. In social psychology attribution involves making inferences about the behaviour of others as well as events around us. Here are some examples of how a person changes himself for a social well being. Ex. King Asoka being a Kshatriya after seeing an outcome of Kalinga War followed the path of non violence and changed his mental aspects and approach in righteous conduct. In Mahabharata king Arjuna facing his relatives in oppose stood helpless as he has to be against to the nature

and it was not acceptable by an individual. According to WHO health is defined as "A state of physical, mental, spiritual and social well being and not merely an absence of disease or infirmity". To maintain normal health even the social aspects of an individual is important and has to follow righteous conduct to lead a healthy life. Social health is a term generally used to refer to two different concepts. In one sense it refers to the health of a person in reference to his or her ability to interact with others and thrive in social settings. It can also refer to the health of a society in general, and how the members of that society are treated and behave toward each other⁴. 3 aspects of social health:

- Preventive
- Curative
- Promotive

Preventive measures

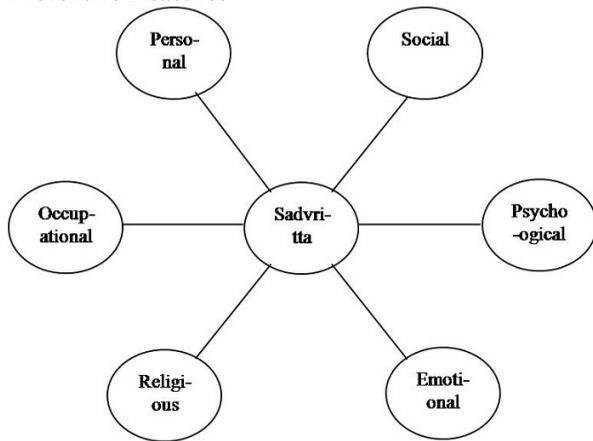


Figure 1: Classification of Sadvritta

In Ayurveda good conduct is called Sadvritta (code of good conduct)⁵⁻⁷. It describes about the rules that are to be followed by which we can acquire good health and contest of the senses. The rules of good conduct has been prescribed in authoritative Ayurvedic text out of which some of them are related to social, emotional, psychological and ethical aspects of life. Sadvritta can be classified as Personal, Social, Psychological, Emotional, Religious and Occupational conduct (Figure 1) as follows.

Personal

One's regime of bathing, cleaning of eyes, nose, ears, teeth, oral cavity, nails etc One should not pronounce words in low, high, weak, or deranged voice, without proper accents, neither too fast nor too slow, with excessive impotency and neither with too high nor too low pitch of sound.

Psychological

Importance has been given to the company of a person as it affects the way of life of a person. One should not live under continued grief. One should not feel exhilarated in success and depressed in failure. One always keeps his constitution in mind. One should always be confident of the effect of cause and as such should always initiate the cause. One should not assume that now nothing is to be done, one should not give up courage nor should one remember his scandals.

Social

One should speak useful, measured, sweet and meaningful words should avoid places with dirty clothes, bones, thorns, impure articles, hairs, chaff, garbage's, ash, etc. One should behave kith and kin to all living beings, pacify the anger, console the frightened, help the poor, be truthful, peaceful, tolerated of others harsh words, remover of intolerance, One should not laugh loudly, release flatus with sound, set in yawning, sneezing, laughter with uncovered mouth, deform the none, grind the teeth, sound the nails, strike the bones, scrapes the earth, cut the grass, press the earthen lumps, perform any abnormal action in body parts. One should not use unwashed clothes, dirty or uncomfortable clothes, Clothes worn by others, not appropriate to the season, occasion or clothes made from unnatural fibre.

Emotional

One should be self controlled, self virtuous, jealous in cause and not in effect, free from anxiety, fearless, shy, wise, great, courageous, skilful, forbearing, religious, positive, devoted to teachers, accomplished person and who are superiors in modesty, intellect, learning, calm and age.

Religious

One should worship gods, cows, Brahmanas, preceptors, elderly people, accomplished and teachers. One should honour fire, one should put on auspicious herbs, one should have presence of mind even in difficult circumstances, should offer oblation, perform religious sacrifices, donate, pay respect to road crossings, offer Bali (religious offerings), entertaining guests, offers Pinda (rice balls) to forefathers. One should adopt auspicious conduct. One should not go through keeping the respectable and the auspicious on left and others on right side. One should not excrete sputum, faeces and urine in front of wind, fire, water, the moon, the sun, the Brahmanas, and neither preceptors nor one should urinate on road, in crowded places and while taking food.

Occupational conduct

Should always look at the qualities of peaceful life and should alleviate the causes of attachments and aversion. One should not tell a lie nor take others possession nor should desire for other women or other's property, should not be inclined to enmity, should not indulge in sexual acts, should not be vicious to sinners, should not speak out others defects, nor should try to know others secrets. One should not keep company of unvirtuous, hated by kings, lunatics, fallen person, foetus killers, wretched and wicked. The knowledge of authoritative instructions of Apta Purusha (noble person) and its right application are the two factors necessary for the prevention and cure of diseases. Sadvrittas are regarded as one of the measures to prevent diseases. The role of Sadvritta is more of preventive in nature. It also plays a great stress on personal cleanness of body and mind. It acts as shield and strains of life under which we are constantly put in this world⁸. The activities as therapies which are adopted during the epidemics which can easily save life of individuals. Air, Water, Place and Time are the epidemic producing factors being deranged. The persons managed with preventive therapy remain immune against the diseases. Truthfulness, compassion for living beings, charity, sacrifices, prayer to the gods, adoption of preventive measures, tranquillity, protections of the self by mantras etc. Search for the things as they are good for the self, residence in auspicious localities and observance of Brahmacharyas (celibacy). Serving to those observing Brahmacharyas, discussions of religious scriptures, great sages and who have self controlled and constant association with religious, Saattvika (great sages) and learned persons. This is the protection of life for those whose death is not certain during the Epidemics⁹.

Curative measures

Emotional disorders like Kaama (desire), Kroda (anger), Bhaya (fear), Shoka (grief), Nairlajya (vanity and also of shamelessness), Ati Raga (excessive attachment), Irshya (envy), and Abidhya (desire for taking another's property)¹⁰ etc are caused by Prajnaparadha. It interrupts the social conduct of a person. Wrong social conduct is the basis of most psychological and many physical diseases¹¹. So these

factors are to be avoided in overcoming the normalcy as itself be the measures to cure the upcoming disease.

Promotive measures

Dharaniya vegas (urges which are to be restrained), Achara Rasayana (rejuvenating regimens), Dinacharya (daily regimen) and Ritucharya (seasonal regimen) are important promotive aspects which are to be followed for the maintenance of healthy life.

Dharaniya vegas

Dharaniya vegas are those urges which are to be restrained and Adharaniya vegas are those urges which are not to be restrained. The urges that are to be restrained are immensely related to mental hygiene and are called Dharaniya vegas. Those who are desirous of their welfare both in this and next world should restrain themselves from the rash and evil impulses of the mind. The wise man should control the impulses of emotional factors like greed, grief, fear, angry, vanity, impudence, jealously, excessive attachment and malice¹⁰. Otherwise if they cross the boundary of normalcy, they will be the base of so many mental disorders. This concept of Dharaniya vegas if properly followed will lead to proper mental health.

Achara Rasayana

Some of social conduct and behaviour will be endowed with all the qualities mentioned in Achara Rasayana (rejuvenating regimens) therapy. Persons attain the effects of rejuvenative therapy one who are truthful and free from anger, devoid of alcohol, sex indulgence, who do not indulge in violence, who are peaceful and pleasing in their speech, who practise Japa (muttering prayers) and cleanliness, who are Dheera (courage), who regularly practise charity and Tapas (undergo austerity). Who regularly offers prayers to the gods, cows, Brahmanas, teachers, preceptors and old people who are compassionate. Who habitually take milk and Ghee, who are experts in the knowledge of rationality, whose period of awakening and sleep are regularly, who are free from ego, whose conduct is good, who are not narrow minded, who have love for spiritual knowledge, who have an excellent sense organs, who have reverence for seniors, Astikas (one who believe in god) and persons, having self controlled and who regularly study Dharmashashtra (religious hymes) get the best out of rejuvenation therapy¹².

Dinacharya and Ritucharya

In Dinacharya (daily regimen)¹³ the procedures and methods to follow in day to day life which leads to happy well being. Personally this in turn develops good social relation with the society and good psychological feeling. Ex: If we do not follow daily regimen, take bath, or brush regularly or maintain cleanliness then people start avoiding and regarded as low grade community. This hampers the relation in between the society and leading to psychological disorders like anxiety etc. In Ritucharya (seasonal regimen)^{14,15} we have to go hand to hand with seasonal changes and follow regimen explained according to seasons if not may leads to the psycho somatic disorders.

Psycho Social Behaviour changes as Causative factors and Prodromal symptoms

In Ayurveda the main causative factors of diseases are Ahitaahara (unwholesome food), Ahitavihara (unwholesome

regimen), Asathmendriyartham (unsuitable conjunction of sense organs with their objects), Prajnaparadha (derangement of intellect, restraint and memory/intellectual error) and Parinama (succession of time/consequence), among these even psychic factors include which are responsible for diseases.

Unmada (Psychosis)

Bheeru (timid), Upaklista Satwa (those with distressed mind), Vishmachara (apply trantrika practices improperly), Sharirachesta Vishama (practise other body postures in a complicated way), whose mind inflicted with Kama (desire), Lobha (greed), krodha (anger), Harsha (excitement), Bhrama (dizziness), Moha (passion), Shoka (grief), Chinta (excessive thinking), Udvega (anxiety), Prachilita Buddhi (perverted intellect) etc¹⁶ are some of psychic and emotional factors which are causative factors for producing Unmada. Some physical and psychological changes like constantly moving about, sudden movements of eyes, eye brows, shoulders, jaw, forearms, legs and others parts, constant and incoherent speech, foaming of mouth, frequently and inopportune smiling, laughing, dancing, singing, playing, musical instrument, imitating un calmly the sounds of flute, lute and conch. Moving on non vehicle decorating with non adoring materials, lagging for non available eatables while disregard and strong, dislikes for the available ones, emaciation, roughness, projected and reddish eyes, Intolerance, anger, inopportune excitements, inflicting injury to own people or with weapons, bricklets, whips, wooden sticks and fists; running about, desires for shade, cold water and food, excessive heat for long, coppery greenish yellowish and congested eyes. Standing in one place, observing silence, little walking, oozing of saliva and nasal mucous aversion to food, liking loneliness, loathsomeness, dislike for cleanliness, frequent sleeping, swelling on face, white, moist and dirty eyes¹⁷ are prodromal symptoms for the upcoming disease called Unmada.

Apasmara (Epilepsy)

Throwing aside of eyes brows, frequent abnormal movements of eyes, hearing of sounds in its absence, excessive oozing of saliva and nasal mucous, aversion to food, mental confusion, dreams of narcosis, dancing, piercing, arching, trembling, falling etc¹⁸. If a person behaves in such a way which are not socially acceptable then we can predict the upcoming disease as Apasmara.

DISCUSSION

The basic principle followed in the Ayurvedic system of medicine is Swasthyasya Swasthya Rakshanam, which means to maintain the health of the healthy, and Aturasya Vikara Prashamanancha, means to cure the diseases of the diseased. For this purpose the Sadvritta (rules of good conduct), Dinacharya (daily regimen) and Ritucharya (seasonal regimen) have been described in the authoritative texts of Ayurveda¹⁹. The man who uses wholesome diet and behaviour, moves cautiously, is unattached to sensual pleasures, donates, observes equality, is truthful, forbearing and devoted to the persons of authority becomes free from diseases. One who is endowed with excellent intellect, speech and action leading to happy consequence, submissive mind, clear understanding, knowledge, penance and continued effort in yoga, does not fall a victim to diseases²⁰. Diseases do not afflict an individual who is endowed with excellence

of thoughts, speech and act which are ultimately blissful, independent thinking, clear understanding, knowledge, observance of spiritual prescriptions and love for meditation²⁰. Forsaking the intellectual errors, pacification of sense organs, memory, sound knowledge of place, time and self and following the code of good conduct is the way for prevention of exogenous diseases.⁸ If a person does not follow social behaviour and develops sinful acts like greed, angry, attachment and ego, some people may start fighting themselves with a view to killing their own people or the enemy²¹.

CONCLUSION

Social health often deals with how people relate to each other, and how an individual is able to socialize with other people and form relationships. Social health is often considered of great importance in regards to individual health, and how social interactions can assist in improving other forms of health. Along with physical health and mental health, social health forms the last of the three fundamental and vital forms of health for a person. Physical and mental health typically deal with an individual and how well his or her body and mind are functioning and keeping his or her various systems running properly. Social health, on the other hand, often indicates how that person interacts with other people, as well as the consequences or benefits of such interactions in relation to the well-being of that person. Social health has become of increasing importance within the greater overall concept of human health and well-being. Ayurveda has always emphasized to maintain the health and prevent the diseases by following proper diet and lifestyle regimen rather than treatment and cure of the diseases. For this purpose Ayurveda has explained social health under Preventive, Curative and Promotive aspects. The psychic, emotional, social and behavioural changes are also responsible for producing psycho somatic diseases. Ayurveda has explained codes of good conduct under Sadvritta which are related to social, emotional, psychological and ethical aspects of life. By following them individual is able to maintain physical, mental and social health and also able to socialize with the society. It is more of preventive aspects which help on personal cleanliness of body and mind. Emotional factors which are main root cause for many psychosomatic disorders can be cured by following the good conduct and restraining the urges which are to be restrained; individual by restraining themselves from rash and evil impulses of the mind. By following regimen of good conduct, behaviour, personal hygiene and coping up with seasonal changes can promote the health of an individual. All these measures are endowed with a view in ceasing the diseased person and promoting physical, mental and social health.

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