

An Ayurvedic Conceptual Review on The Effect of Indian Classical Raga Bilhari in the Management of Chittodvega (anxiety disorder)

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Abstract—Mental health disorders have become increasingly prevalent in modern society due to rapid urbanization, sedentary lifestyle, emotional stress, excessive sensory stimulation, and disturbed daily routines. Anxiety disorders are among the most common psychological disturbances affecting quality of life, emotional stability, sleep, concentration, and interpersonal relationships. Ayurveda explains psychological disturbances under the broad concept of Manasika Vikara, where imbalance of Raja and Tama Dosha, along with vitiation of Manovaha Srotas, plays an important role in disease manifestation.

Chittodvega, a condition characterized by mental agitation, fearfulness, emotional instability, excessive worry, and disturbed mental equilibrium, closely resembles anxiety disorders described in modern psychiatry. Classical Ayurvedic texts emphasize the importance of emotional balance, mental discipline, proper sensory regulation, and maintenance of Satva for preservation of psychological health. Excessive stress, overthinking, emotional suppression, disturbed sleep, and improper lifestyle contribute to Manovaha Srotodushti leading to Chittodvega.

Music therapy, known traditionally as Gandharvaveda or Raga Chikitsa, has been recognized in Indian knowledge systems as an important supportive modality for emotional healing and mental relaxation. Indian classical ragas influence emotional and neurophysiological responses through auditory

stimulation and modulation of autonomic nervous system activity. Among various ragas, Raga Bilhari is traditionally considered uplifting, soothing, and emotionally balancing. Contemporary studies suggest that music therapy may reduce anxiety, improve sleep quality, stabilize mood, and reduce sympathetic overactivity.

The present review critically evaluates the role of Indian Classical Raga Bilhari in the management of Chittodvega with special reference to anxiety. The article integrates Ayurvedic principles of Manovaha Srotas, Raja-Tama imbalance, Satvavajaya Chikitsa, and Nada Chikitsa with modern neuropsychological understanding of anxiety, emotional regulation, and music-based interventions. The review also explores possible neurobiological mechanisms underlying the therapeutic effects of music on emotional health.

Index Terms—Chittodvega, Anxiety, Raga Bilhari, Music Therapy, Ayurveda, Manovaha Srotas, Satvavajaya Chikitsa, Nada Chikitsa, Emotional Disorders, Mental Health.

I. INTRODUCTION

Health is not merely the absence of disease but a state of complete physical, mental, emotional, and social well-being. Ayurveda, the ancient science of life,

gives equal importance to Sharirika and Manasika Swasthya. Preservation of mental equilibrium is essential for maintaining overall health and quality of life.

Ayurveda describes the primary objective of medical science as:

“स्वस्थस्य स्वास्थ्य रक्षणं आतुरस्य विकार प्रशमनं च।”

This principle emphasizes both prevention and treatment. Mental health disturbances have become increasingly common in modern society due to excessive competition, emotional instability, social isolation, sleep disturbance, technological dependence, and stressful lifestyles.

Among psychological disorders, anxiety represents one of the most prevalent conditions affecting individuals of all age groups. Anxiety is associated with excessive fear, emotional restlessness, irritability, autonomic disturbances, impaired concentration, and sleep disturbances. Persistent anxiety negatively influences physical health, immune function, cognition, interpersonal relationships, and occupational performance.

Ayurveda correlates such disturbed emotional states with Chittodvega, a condition involving instability and agitation of mind. Chittodvega is associated with emotional disturbances including fear, anger, grief, jealousy, excessive worry, and mental overactivity resulting from Raja-Tama predominance and Manovaha Srotodushti.

Classical Ayurvedic literature also recognizes the therapeutic role of sound and music. Music therapy, traditionally referred to as Gandharvaveda or Nada Chikitsa, has been used for emotional healing and mental relaxation since ancient times. Indian classical ragas are believed to influence consciousness, emotions, and physiological functions through specific tonal arrangements and vibrational patterns.

Raga Bilhari, a melodious Carnatic raga, is traditionally associated with positivity, emotional upliftment, relaxation, and mental clarity. Its rhythmic and tonal characteristics may help reduce emotional tension and autonomic hyperactivity associated with anxiety.

Recent scientific evidence suggests that music therapy can influence neuroendocrine activity, autonomic regulation, dopamine release, stress hormone secretion, and emotional processing centers within the

brain. These findings support the traditional Ayurvedic understanding of music as a therapeutic modality for mental disorders.

The present review aims to critically analyze the therapeutic role of Raga Bilhari in Chittodvega with special reference to anxiety from both Ayurvedic and modern scientific perspectives

II. AIM

To critically review the therapeutic effect of Indian Classical Raga Bilhari on Chittodvega with special reference to anxiety.

III. OBJECTIVES

Primary Objective

- To study the role of Raga Bilhari in the management of Chittodvega w.s.r. to anxiety.

Secondary Objectives

1. To review Ayurvedic concepts of Chittodvega and Manovaha Srotas.
2. To understand anxiety from modern medical perspective.
3. To evaluate the neurophysiological effects of music therapy.
4. To study the therapeutic significance of Raga Bilhari.
5. To explore integrative approaches for anxiety management.

IV. CONCEPT OF MENTAL HEALTH IN AYURVEDA

Ayurveda considers mental health an essential component of holistic well-being. A healthy mind is characterized by emotional stability, proper intellect, balanced sensory perception, and controlled psychological responses.

Manas and Mental Functions

Manas acts as the controller of sensory and motor activities and plays an important role in cognition, perception, memory, and emotional regulation.

Functions of Manas

- Thinking

- Analysis
- Emotional processing
- Decision making
- Sensory coordination
- Memory retention

Manovaha Srotas

Manovaha Srotas are channels responsible for mental functioning and psychological processing.

Moola of Manovaha Srotas

- Hridaya
- Dasha Dhamani

Disturbance of these channels leads to emotional instability, cognitive dysfunction, and psychiatric manifestations.

V. CONCEPT OF CHITTODVEGA IN AYURVEDA

Chittodvega is derived from two words:

- Chitta – Mind or consciousness
- Udvega – Agitation, anxiety, restlessness

Thus, Chittodvega refers to an anxious or disturbed state of mind.

Acharya Charaka has described Chittodvega under Manodosha Vikara along with emotions such as Kama, Krodha, Lobha, Moha, Irshya, Mana, and Shoka.

The condition mainly involves vitiation of Rajas and Tamas along with aggravation of Vata Dosha. Excessive mental stress, fear, overthinking, grief, emotional trauma, and suppression of natural psychological urges contribute to the pathogenesis.

Emotional Factors Associated with Chittodvega

- Kama
- Krodha
- Lobha
- Moha
- Irshya
- Shoka
- Bhaya
- Chinta

These emotional disturbances collectively contribute to mental imbalance and anxiety-like conditions.

Etiopathogenesis of Chittodvega

तयोर्विकाराः कामक्रोधलोभमोहेर्ष्यामानमदशोकचित्तो(न्तो)द्वेग भयहर्षादयः।

चातपित्तश्लेष्माणस्तु खलु शारीरा दोषाः। (cha.vi. 6/5)

- Nidana Atichinta (excessive thinking)
- Bhaya (fear)
- Shoka (grief)
- Krodha (anger)
- Mental trauma
- Sleep disturbances
- Irregular lifestyle
- Emotional suppression
- Excessive sensory stimulation
- Disturbed social relationships

Dosha Involvement

- Raja Dosha aggravation
- Tama Dosha predominance
- Vata aggravation

Dushya

- Manas
- Rasa
- Majja

Srotas Involved

- Manovaha Srotas
- Rasavaha Srotas

“रसवाहीनि दुष्यन्ति चिन्त्यानां चातिचिन्तनात्”

meaning excessive thinking vitiates Rasavaha Srotas and subsequently affects mental health.

Samprapti (Pathogenesis)

The probable Samprapti of Chittodvega can be understood as follows:

1. Exposure to psychological stressors
2. Aggravation of Rajas and Tamas
3. Vitiation of Prana Vata, Sadhaka Pitta, and Tarpaka Kapha
4. Disturbance of Manovaha and Rasavaha Srotas
5. Impaired mental equilibrium
6. Development of anxiety symptoms

The pathological process ultimately affects cognitive functions, emotional regulation, sleep, and autonomic stability.

VI. MODERN CONCEPT OF ANXIETY

Anxiety is a psychological and physiological state characterized by excessive fear, apprehension, autonomic arousal, and emotional tension.

Symptoms of Anxiety

Psychological Symptoms

- Excessive worry
- Fearfulness
- Irritability
- Emotional instability
- Poor concentration

Physical Symptoms

- Palpitations
- Tremors
- Sweating
- Sleep disturbance
- Fatigue
- Muscle tension

Neurobiology of Anxiety

Anxiety involves dysregulation of several neurochemical and neuroanatomical pathways.

Brain Structures Involved

- Amygdala
- Hippocampus
- Prefrontal cortex
- Hypothalamus

Neurotransmitters Involved

- Serotonin
- Dopamine
- GABA
- Norepinephrine

Chronic anxiety activates the sympathetic nervous system and hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal axis leading to increased cortisol secretion and autonomic imbalance.

Concept of Music Therapy

Music therapy is a therapeutic intervention using sound, rhythm, melody, and musical patterns for emotional, cognitive, and physiological healing.

VII. MUSIC THERAPY IN AYURVEDA

Ayurveda recognizes music under Gandharvaveda and Nada Chikitsa.

Benefits of Music Therapy

- Mental relaxation
- Emotional stabilization
- Reduction in stress
- Improved sleep
- Enhanced concentration
- Regulation of autonomic functions

VIII. CONCEPT OF RAGA CHIKITSA

Raga Chikitsa refers to therapeutic application of Indian classical ragas for physical and psychological well-being.

Indian sages recognized the healing power of sound vibrations and their influence on consciousness. Music therapy is described under Gandharvaveda and is considered beneficial for balancing both body and mind.

According to Ayurvedic principles:

- Pleasant sound calms Manas
- Rhythmic vibrations stabilize Vata
- Emotional expression reduces mental suppression
- Harmonious frequencies improve Satva Guna

Review of Raga Bilhari

Bilhari is a Carnatic raga known for its uplifting and pleasant emotional quality. It is considered spiritually energizing and mentally refreshing.

The raga is described as an asymmetric Audava-Sampurna Raga.

Structure of Raga Bilhari

Arohana (Ascending Scale)

S R₂ G₃ P D₂ Ś

Avarohana (Descending Scale)

Ś N₃ D₂ P M₁ G₃ R₂ S

The arrangement of swaras in Bilhari is believed to produce cheerful, soothing, and stabilizing effects on the nervous system.

Probable Mode of Action of Raga Bilhari

The probable therapeutic effects of Raga Bilhari may be explained through both Ayurvedic and neurophysiological mechanisms.

Ayurvedic Perspective

1. Balancing of Manasika Doshas

The soothing vibrational quality of the raga may reduce Rajas and Tamas while enhancing Satva.

2. Stabilization of Prana Vata

Pleasant music regulates mental activities controlled by Prana Vata.

3. Action on Manovaha Srotas

Music therapy may improve the functional integrity of Manovaha Srotas and reduce psychological disturbances.

4. Reduction of Atichinta

The calming effect diverts excessive mental activity and promotes emotional relaxation.

IX. MECHANISM OF MUSIC THERAPY IN ANXIETY

Neurophysiological Effects

Music influences:

- Limbic system
- Autonomic nervous system
- Neuroendocrine pathways
- Emotional processing centers

Hormonal Effects

Music therapy may reduce:

- Cortisol
- Adrenaline
- Sympathetic over activity

Psychological Effects

- Emotional catharsis
- Relaxation response
- Reduced fear perception
- Improved emotional resilience

Correlation Between Chittodvega and Anxiety

Ayurvedic Concept	Modern Correlation
Chinta	Excessive worry
Bhaya	Fear and anxiety
Raja aggravation	Hyperarousal
Vata aggravation	Restlessness
Nidranasha	Insomnia
Manovaha Srotodushti	Psychological dysfunction

Role of Satvavajaya Chikitsa

Satvavajaya Chikitsa is the Ayurvedic approach for psychological control and emotional regulation.

- Emotional restraint
- Positive thinking
- Mental discipline
- Behavioral control
- Sensory regulation

Music therapy can be considered a supportive modality of Satvavajaya Chikitsa.

Integrative Role of Raga Bilhari

Raga Bilhari may help in:

- Reducing sympathetic overactivity
- Improving emotional stability
- Enhancing relaxation
- Improving sleep quality
- Reducing psychological stress
- Stabilizing mood fluctuations

Its therapeutic role may be beneficial in mild to moderate anxiety conditions.

X. DISCUSSION

Anxiety disorders represent one of the leading mental health concerns globally. Increasing psychological stress, technological dependence, sleep deprivation, and emotional instability contribute significantly to the rising prevalence of anxiety-related disorders.

Ayurveda provides a comprehensive understanding of emotional disturbances through concepts such as Chittodvega, Raja-Tama imbalance, Manovaha Srotodushti, and Prajnaparadha. Disturbance of emotional equilibrium affects both physical and psychological health.

Music therapy has emerged as a non-pharmacological and cost-effective intervention for emotional regulation. Indian classical ragas possess structured melodic patterns capable of influencing emotional and neurophysiological responses. Raga Bilhari appears particularly useful for emotional upliftment and reduction of mental tension.

Modern scientific evidence supports the beneficial role of music therapy in reducing autonomic arousal, stress hormone secretion, and emotional distress. Auditory stimulation influences limbic structures

involved in emotional regulation, thereby producing anxiolytic effects.

The integration of Ayurvedic principles with music-based interventions may provide safer and holistic approaches for anxiety management. Such interventions are especially valuable because they are economical, non-invasive, culturally acceptable, and associated with minimal adverse effects.

XI. CONCLUSION

Chittodvega described in Ayurveda shares significant similarities with anxiety disorders recognized in modern medicine. Emotional instability, excessive fear, disturbed sleep, irritability, and mental restlessness are common manifestations in both conditions.

Raga Bilhari, through its soothing melodic structure and emotional vibrational effect, may help reduce anxiety and improve mental relaxation. Ayurvedic concepts of Nada Chikitsa and Satvavajaya Chikitsa support the therapeutic application of music in psychological disorders.

An integrative approach combining Ayurvedic psychological principles, lifestyle regulation, Yoga, meditation, and music therapy may offer promising outcomes in anxiety management. Further clinical and experimental studies are necessary to establish scientific evidence regarding the therapeutic efficacy of Raga Bilhari in Chittodvega.

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