

# Emotion Regulation Mechanisms and Ayurveda

Aswathy V, Abhilash M

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## ABSTRACT

The basic concept of emotional equilibrium revolves around the mechanisms to reinforce positive emotions and restrain from negative emotions. The application of Ayurvedic principles of dharaneeya vegas and sadvritta has role in the prevention and treatment of various emotional disturbances. Incorporating the concepts of tridosha and triguna from Ayurveda parallel to the mo-

ern physiological understandings can bring about harmony not only in the psychosocial well-being, but also in the principles and practice of integrative medicine.

**Key Words:** *Ayurvedic psychology, Dharaneeya vega, Sadvritta, Emotion regulation*

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## DESCRIPTION

The role of emotions in the social well-being of humans and their impact on physical and mental health has been a great concern and topic for discussion in recent times. The physiological changes during the emotional responses and their after effects have been studied in detail. But, when it comes to its psychological and psychosocial explanations, the knowledge gap in the modern medical literature is evident. Here, the concepts from Ayurveda can be applied to get direction for further studies and developments. This process is mutually benefited as both the knowledge streams gets updated and made fit for clinical application.

Emotional equilibrium has to be maintained in accordance with various other homeostasis mechanisms occurring inside and outside the body. Emotional regulation can be explicit or implicit. In explicit emotion regulation, there is conscious effort from a person to regulate his/her emotions. Implicit emotional regulation acts on a non-conscious level. The five instances in which emotion regulation may occur are situation selection, situation modification, attention deployment, cognitive change and response modulation. In Ayurvedic perspective, emotion regulation is achieved by a series of interactions between tridoshas of body and trigunas of mind. The balance between trigunas with influential role of satwa can lead to psychological well-being. Mental disequilibrium may be caused by extreme or minimal indulgence in mano-arthas, which can be

repaired or prevented by correct application of Dhee, Dhriti and Smriti. Mano-arthas are Chintyam (thoughts), vicharyam (reasoning), uhyam (speculation), dhyeyam (concentration) and sankalpyam (assumption). Dhee is one's intellectual capacity to observe things and to evaluate the right or wrongness of a situation. Dhriti is one's ability to make and stick to a decision which he/she things right based on his/her dhee. Smriti is knowledge registered as good or bad things associated with previous experiences. Using these factors aptly, Ayurveda insist to control certain urges termed as dharaneeya vegas (instincts to be restrained from) and the means are called as sadvritta (the regimens for moral hygiene). Dharaneeya vegas are greed, grief, fear, anger, egoism, shamelessness (impudence), jealousy, excessive affliction (in anything), and desire to acquire someone else's wealth. Verbal urges like Harsh talks, excessive talking, that which intends to harm others or backbiting, lying and untimely speech (improper words at improper time) are to be restrained during speaking and Physical actions intended to trouble others, excessive indulgence in sex, stealing, violence (persecution), etc. should be controlled. [1]

The connection between tridoshas and trigunas can be understood by considering the physiology of vegas mastered by different fractions of vata. The impact can be clinically elicited in conditions like aavarana, the pathophysiology of which can be interpreted as interference to the activity of vata in general or to any of the fractions of vata by any

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Department of Kriyasareera, Government Ayurveda college, Thiruvananthapuram, India.

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Correspondence: Aswathy V, Department of Kriyasareera, Government Ayurveda college, Thiruvananthapuram, India. Telephone +91-8547025927, e-mail draswathynair@gmail.com

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other form of dosha, dhatu or mala. [2] So, in all clinical conditions, the impact of tridoshas and trigunas should be considered before deciding on the physical or psychological corrective measures. The inherent nature of the person with respect to prakriti and saara is very much important in determining the fate of the disease and treatment. Hence, applying precise tools for the determination of prakriti [3] and satwa saara [4,5] in particular, can be good choice for practicing personalized Ayurveda in emotional disequilibrium states. The synchronization of body with the corrective measure adopted at physical, psychological, emotional and spiritual domains can yield best results here.

**Table 1: Effect of Behavioural Therapy Techniques on body-mind equilibrium**

INTERVENTIONS	EXAMPLES	EFFECTS
Education	<i>Satatam adhyayanam</i>	Strengthens <i>dhee</i> , Conditions the activity of <i>vata</i>
Persuasion	<i>Moksham</i>	Strengthens <i>dhriti</i> , Prevents <i>vata-pitta</i> provocation
Incentivisation	<i>Artham, kamam</i>	Strengthens <i>smriti</i> , Controls <i>tridosha</i>
Coercion	<i>Karmaja vyadhi, dushpraja</i>	Strengthens <i>dhriti</i> , Corrects physical and spiritual domains also
Training	<i>Satvavajayam</i>	Strengthens <i>smriti</i> , Corrects physical and psychological domains also
Restriction	<i>Dharaneeya vega</i>	Strengthens <i>dhee</i> , Corrects physical, psychological and spiritual domains also
Environmental restructuring	Community level practice	Strengthens <i>dhriti</i> . Contributes to social well-being and <i>Corrects physical and spiritual domains</i>
Modelling	<i>Apta</i>	Strengthens <i>dhee</i> . Corrects physical, psychological and spiritual domains also
Enablement	Making available to everyone	Strengthens <i>dhriti</i> . Corrects physical, psychological and spiritual domains also

## CONCLUSION

Sadvritta advocates humans to always engage in learning (search for truth), persuades a person with ultimate aim of salvation by following right conduct; incentivisation with incentives on health and prosperity; coercion through fear of diseases, rebirths, bad offspring's; training through detachment; restriction by morality; environmental restructuring by execution in community level; modelling with reference to aptas and enablement by teaching it to everyone. If sadvritta is practiced from childhood onwards, it enhances creative reappraisal and whatever may be the personality type, dysregulation of emotions can be prevented to a great extent. In light of modern evidences, creative reappraisals can bring about visible changes in the emotional brain, and can stimulate the person to experience more positive emotions. A person with good *dhee*, *dhriti* and *smriti* can effectively regulate his emotions and raise his threshold for *dharaneeya vegas* as it is impossible to demolish them completely. They can develop good emotional discipline and resist stress and associated psychosomatic disorders to a great extent facilitating social and spiritual well-being.

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