

Etiology, Classification, Definition of Mental Disorders (Ayurvedic Concept)

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In Ayurved and other vedant literature a detailed description of Mind (manas), the function of mind (mana-artha & karma), the mode of working, control of Mind on sensory and motor organs, the method of control of mind itself, mental disorders and their treatment have been daborately described. It is for the scientists, physicians and research scholars to understand, to treat the patients and conduct research on the above and work for the benefit of Mankind.

Mind and its Functions

Any living being on the earth is composed of three main components :-

(1) Saltwa (mind), (2) Atma (spirit or soul) and (3) sharir (body). These are like a tripod (Tridand) on which all the living creatures stand. The proper combination or unification (samyoga) in the human being is called Puman, Cherna. This is the main stand (Adhikaran) of Ayurved.

For the proper functioning of human being, ober and above the three indriyas (Sensory) and motor organs are necessary. Their structural and functional integrity (sanyoga) is called Dhari and Jeetan (life). Life is a continuous process (Nityaga) and amibandha.

Thus, Satwa (mind) has been given equal, if not more, importance, in the living being and specially in the human beings. Even the animals like cow, ox, and buffalo have got mind but the development of mind in human beings is maximum. A human being can express the feelings like his likes, dislikes, thoughts, desires etc. An animal can not do so and express its feelings.

The Objects (Mana-Arthas) and Qualifies (Guna) Of Mind

The functions of mind are very diverse and complex; so also mind works with the sense – objects for knowledge. The ideas change very often; the temperature like satwa, rajas and tamas change every time in the same person. That is why it may be felt that there are more than one (Aneka) mind in the body, but this is wrong. In the same way mind seems to work at many places and also thinks in various ways. This creates doubt that Manas is all pervasive (vibhu), but both these qualities are false. The mind cannot work at the same time at many things, cannot concentrate many things at the same time. So mind is Anu (molecular) and Eka (single one).

The Function of Mind

Swartha (minds own functions), they are Chintya (thinking), Vicharya (thoughtfulness), Oohya (discussion), Dheyaya, Sankalpa (conclusion – drawing) and other things to be known etc.

Indriya – Arthas (Objects of Sense Organs)

There are five sense organs viz. eyes, ears, nose, tongue and skins. There are 5 objects of the organs viz. seeing or observing, hearing, smell, taste and touch. These objects are reaching the mind; the mind analysis and concludes the object and the knowledge is gained.

Sankalpa (Decision)

Decision are also taken according to time (kala) and Desha (place). The decisions are also various and diverse.

Satwa – Rajas and Tamas

These are temperaments. The temperaments may be changed at the same time or at different times or according to Desha (place) or atmosphere or circumstances and kala (time).

According to predominance of the type of temperament the person is classified as satwik, rajasika or tamas. For example, satwa quality is lagu (light) so the person may be light in nature, ready to gain knowledge and sees objects in a correct manner. Rajas is of unstable nature and Tamas is mainly guru and observing.

The Other Functions of Mind

- (1) Indriya – Abhigraha (control of the sense organs),
- (2) Swa – nigraha (control over the mind itself),
- (3) Ooha (discuss the pros and cons)
- (4) Vichara (thinking deeply); afterwards the buddhi (discussions) are taken.

The changes in temperament and mood affect the body and these changes may produce disease, which are called psyclio-somatic disorders. In the same way, the body or physical disorders disturb the mind and produce disorders.

Etiological Factors of Manorogas

There are six mental conditions called as Shad – Ripu (six enemies), which are considered as main causes of mental disturbances. They are –

- (1) Kama (wrong or right desires), the word 'Kama' is mainly used for sexual desire but its real meaning is all types of desires.
- (2) Krodha (anger or irritability)
- (3) Lobha (greed)
- (4) Moha (personal over attachment or likes and dislikes)
- (5) Mada (ego or arrogance) and Matsa (jealousy, envy etc.)

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Out of the above, six kama or desire and nonfulfillment of desire is the greatest and most important factor of mano-rogas.

Upadha :- Kama or upadha or different types of desires is the greatest cause. Says Charaka in sharir sthana chapter 'Upadha is the main etiological factor to produce pain (mental) to the body. Avoidance (tyaga) of all types of Upadha (desires) removes all types of physical and mental disturbance.

Upadha Hi paro Hetuh Dookha – dookashrayapradhan

Tyagah savopadhanam too sarva dookha vyaphoakah II (Ch Sharir)

Charaka compares upadha with a cob – web. He says –

Koshakarah Hi yatha Anshun upadatte Vadhpradan I

Upadatte Tathartherbhah Trisnam Agnah Sada anirah II (Ch. Sha – 1)

Thus the root cause of majority of mental and psychological diseases is non fulfillment of one's own desires.

Here one point requires to be clarified. Some people believe that non – human elements like demons, gods, ghosts etc. enter the body and produce mental disorders. According to Charaka, though charaka has described such mental disorders like Dev – unmada (psychological disturbances caused by entering of god), Bhoot – unmada (due to ghost) etc. clearly states that 'neither the gods, nor the gandharvas, neither the pishachas (goblins) nor the demons, nor other such elements torment the man, who is not tormented of himself. (Ch. No.7). This shloka (verse) clearly states that the belief of entering of other non physical elements is wrong. It is the psychology of the persons that behaves in a particular way. Thereby uneducated person believes that particular element has entered the body. In fact the behavioural abnormalities present the symptoms resembling those in the element. But these elements can never enter the other person.

The Doshas

The biochemical substances produced during nerve functions and in the brain may provoke doshas, which may disturb mental function also.

According to Sushrut and Vagbhatta, Sadhaka Pitta is responsible for mental and nerve functions.

Vagbhatta Says –

Buddhi medha Abhimanadyeh Abhipretartha Sadhanat I

Sadhakam Hridgatam pittam

Sadhaka pitta is responsible for Buddhi (intelligence) medha (remembrance), Abhiman (ego – superego) and performance of function for achieving the goal.

While Bhela has described Alochaka Pitta. Bhela has divided Alochaka pitta into two parts (1) Chakoshur – vaisheshika i.e. what is directly observed and (2) Buddhir – vaisheshika (internal perception). The man can see the substances, which are not visible but the development of mind is so great that he can see from a very great distance or in future etc. This may be termed as sixth sense. Many people even today have an intuition by which they can forecast many events. Thus Buddhir – Vaisheshika alochaka pitta is concerned with decisions and other mental functions & super natural functions.

What material or materials or biochemical substances are produced during mental functions is a matter for further research.

The Etiological Factors of Mental Disorders

Acharyas of Ayurved have summed up the causes into three divisions; they are (1) Asatmya – indriyatha samyoga (the abnormal use i.e. no use, excessive use or faulty use of sense organs) (2) Prajna – aparadha volitional misuse of motor organs i.e. Body, mind and speech. (3) Parinama i.e. abnormal changes in the season etc.

Classification of Mental Disorders

The mental disorders can be divided into three –

- (1) Adyatmic i.e. pertaining to self. This may be genetic or Adibala pravritta, congenital or Janma bala pravritta or due provocation of doshas or Dosha bala pravritta.
- (2) Adhibhautika or due to external factors like trauma or due to insect – bites etc.
- (3) Adhidaivika may be swabhav – bala – pravritta due to age etc. e.g. senile degeneration causing senile dementia etc or may be kala – bala – pravritta i.e. seasonal or idiopathik.

Definition of Mental Disorders

The disorders related to the behaviour of an individual are considered as mental disorders. Failure to make satisfactory adoption to life, environment and other members of the society are also considered as mental or psychological disorders.

Classification of Mental Disorders

According to Ayurved, mental disorders are classified into four main groups viz.

- (1) Unmad group: - They are associated with excitement, depression and / or predominance of ideas.
- (2) Atatwa – abhinivesha:- The mental disorders associated with wrong judgement due to anxiety, neurosis, neurasthenia, obsession and abnormal behaviour.
- (3) Apasmar :- The diseases inferring the memory, knowledge etc. The main symptoms are convulsions, transient or long standing loss of memory, retention power and mental retardation.
- (4) Mada – moorcha – sanyasa: - Giddiness or vertigo or upsetness, unconsciousness and coma etc. These may be purely psychic or be associated with some other type of physical disorders or psychosomatic.

As said previously the psychology and temperament has got a very great impact on the body and its function. For example, Hypertension, certain types of heart diseases, digestive disorders like hyperacidity, indigestion, peptic ulcer, ulcerative colitis (shokatisora) veritable Lowell syndrome (bhaya-ansara) and many other diseases of digestive disorders; liver diseases like gall stones etc. sexual disorders, even certain types of skin disease are either caused or provoked by impaired psychology and they are called psychosomatic disorders.

That is why Maharshi Charak has said Sharir (body) affects psycho and psychology affects the body.

The treatment of most psychological and psychosomatic disorder is to pacify the mind. The best way for tranquilizing the mind is Dhyana – yoga (meditation) an important procedure of yoga. It may be clarified that there are three methods of pacifying the mind. They are (1) Dhyana yoga or meditation (2) Hathayoga or Ekagrata or concentration and (3)

Stuti or Contemplation or prayer. Out of these three Dhyana yoga is the safest way for pacifying the mind.

There are medicinal treatments also but the subject is lengthy and so it cannot be dealt here.