

# Satwavajaya Chikitsa and Stress - A Conceptual Study

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**Abstract:** *In this present era, “stress” has become a part of a person’s life. Everywhere people seem to be in a hurry. They even don’t have time to take rest or enjoy a simple routine in their daily life like eating meals. With increasing complexity of life, stress is likely to increase. As a result, stress has become an inseparable factor of this modern life. Stress is the non - specific response of the body to any demand for change. Research shows that untreated chronic stress can result in serious health conditions. But by finding positive, healthy ways to manage stress as it occurs, many of these negative health consequences can be reduced. Here comes the role of Satwavajaya Chikitsa as it has promising results. It includes Psycho physical/ spiritual modalities designed to achieve a regulatory mechanism or balance/ equilibrium over human psyche in dealing with environment stressors (Indriyartha) and emotional stressors (Manoarth) It helps in maintaining the equilibrium between the man and his environment and thereby helps him to lead a happy, healthy and stress - free life.*

**Keywords:** Stress, Satwavajaya Chikitsa, Jnana, Vijnana, Dhairya, Smrithi, Samadhi

## 1. Introduction

In this present era, “stress” is a word, all are familiar about. Today the world we live is full of stressful conditions. Everywhere people seem to be in a hurry. They even don’t have time to take rest or enjoy a simple routine in their daily life like eating meals. As a result, stress has become an inseparable factor of this modern life.

Hans selye 1936, defined stress as the non - specific response of the body to any demand for change<sup>[1]</sup>. It can come from any event or thought that makes you feel frustrated, angry or nervous. Stress is the body’s reaction when individual perceive that they cannot adequately cope with the demands being made on them or with threats to their well being. The reasons of stress may vary from person to person like family, work, financial, school, health or social problems etc. In 2018, a survey conducted by mental health organisation in UK revealed that 74% of people have felt so stressed that they have been unable to cope. Younger adults were found to be more prone to stress than older adults<sup>[2]</sup>.

Not all stress is bad. Some stress can be beneficial at times, producing a boost that provides the drive and energy to help people get through situations like exams or work deadlines. However, an extreme amount of stress can have health consequences affecting immune, cardiovascular, endocrinal, nervous systems, and take a severe emotional toll<sup>[3]</sup>. Research shows that untreated chronic stress can result in serious health conditions such as heart disease, depression, obesity etc. But by finding positive, healthy ways to manage stress as it occurs, many of these negative health consequences can be reduced. Here comes the role of Satwavajaya Chikitsa as it has promising results.

Satwavajaya Chikitsa is a unique non pharmacological approach for treating mental disorders. Health is defined as, a state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing and not merely an absence of disease or infirmity<sup>[4]</sup>. So Manas or Satwa plays an important role in keeping person healthy. As the present world where we live is full of

stressful conditions, human beings are suffering from many disorders. Satwavajaya Chikitsa is very useful and plays a major role to get rid of these problems thus providing balance and harmony to once life leading to happy healthy state of individual. So, it is very essential to understand the role of Satwavajaya Chikitsa in the management of stress.

## Satwavajaya Chikitsa

Satwavajaya Chikitsa (Ayurveda Psychotherapy) is one among the concepts put forward by Acharya Charaka<sup>[5]</sup>. It consists of psycho spiritual approach with a non pharmacological treatment modality. Satwa refers to consciousness or mind and Avajaya refers to conquering or win over<sup>[6]</sup>.

“ Satwavajayah punah ahitebhyo arthebhyo mano nigraha”<sup>[7]</sup>

Satwavajaya Chikitsa is the treatment of Psycho physical/ spiritual modalities designed to achieve a regulatory mechanism or balance/ equilibrium over human psyche in dealing with environment stressors (Indriyartha) and emotional stressors (Manoarth)<sup>[8]</sup>. L. R. Wolberg in 1977 defined psychotherapy as, “Psychotherapy is the treatment, by psychological means, of problem of an emotional nature in which a trained person deliberately establishes a professional relationship with the object of removing, modifying, or retarding existing symptoms, mediating disturbed patterns of behavior, and promoting positive personality growth and development”<sup>[9]</sup>. This description matches Ayurvedic explanation on Satwavajaya Chikitsa. Satwavajaya Chikitsa constitutes:

4 methodologies to control the Manas<sup>[10]</sup>

- Chintya – By regulating the thought process
- Vicharya – By replacing or analysing the thoughts and ideas
- Uhya – By channelling the presumption’s
- Dhyeya – By polishing the objectives
- Sankalpa – By proper guidance and advice for taking right decisions

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3 Domains <sup>[11]</sup>

- Dhee – Uplifting intelligence
- Dhairya – Boosting confidence and intelligence
- Atma Vijnana – Stimulating the consciousness or setting self realization

5 lines of treatment or techniques <sup>[12]</sup>

- Jnana – insight - oriented approach
- Vijnana – Educative approach
- Dhairya – Supportive approach
- Smriti – Cognitive approach
- Samadhi – Psycho philosophical approach

**Role of Satwavajaya Chikitsa in stress**

Satwavajaya Chikitsa in Ayurveda is equivalent to modern psychotherapy. According to Acharya Charaka, it was used where Satwa (mind) balance is interfered <sup>[13]</sup>. Stress is a natural physical and mental reaction to life experiences. Satwavajaya Chikitsa not only prevents the impairments of Dhee, Dhriti and Smriti but also brings them back to the normal state, playing significant role in the maintenance of harmonious state between these three factors ultimately leading to stress free, happy healthy state of individual <sup>[14]</sup>.

- **Jnana therapy**

“Jnanam adyatma jnanam” <sup>[15]</sup>

Goal: To provide support to the patient to develop an insight about himself

## Techniques:

- 1) To assess the personality (prakruti) of the patient
- 2) To bring up and discuss issues regarding attitudes, feelings, beliefs and experiences related to self
- 3) Support to reveal and understand the source of his problem
- 4) Self - evaluation and monitoring

- **Vijnana therapy**

“Vijnanam shastra jnanam” <sup>[16]</sup>

Goal: Providing guidance to understand the nature of illness and improve his coping capabilities.

## Techniques:

- 1) Identification of irrational beliefs about the disease
- 2) Providing a theoretical knowledge of his problem to the level of his understanding
- 3) Educating about the probable emergencies, complications and risk factors

- **Dhairya Therapy**

“Dairyan anunati chetasaha” <sup>[17]</sup>

Goal: Development of coping abilities

## Techniques:

- 1) Counseling based on support concerning to problem solving

## 2) Family support

- 3) Identification and modification of the environment which maintain the symptoms
- 4) Identification of the negatively based ideas and boost up patient's confidence
- 5) Reassurance
- 6) Better coping abilities
- 7) Better inter - person relationships
- 8) A change from negativity to positivity

- **Smriti Therapy**

“Smriti anubhothattha smaranam” <sup>[18]</sup>

Goal: To understand the exact nature of the stress

## Techniques:

- 1) Probing the past to develop an insight about the present problem
- 2) To make the patient understand the unrealistic nature of his problem

- **Samadhi Therapy**

“Vishayebhyo nivruthya atmani manaso niyamanam” <sup>[19]</sup>

Goal: To achieve higher level of awareness

## Techniques:

- 1) Meditation and other oriental techniques
- 2) Reading books on spiritual and philosophical aspects of life
- 3) Avoiding temptations
- 4) Following code of conduct
- 5) Education about the meaning and purpose of life

**2. Conclusion**

Satwavajaya Chikitsa is a non pharmacological therapeutic technique to treat mental disorders and it is indeed very effective in the treatment of stress. Substitution or replacement of emotions with opposite ones are followed here. It helps the individual to discriminate between his thoughts and actions. Satwavajaya helps in maintaining the equilibrium between the man and his environment and thereby helps him to lead a happy, healthy and stress - free life.

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