

SCOPE OF MITIGATION OF STRESS CONDITION IN EARLY BUDDHISM & AYURVEDA

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ABSTRACT

All the people seem to be in a hurry; it leads to various health problems. Various studies had proved that it is a very serious negative state of the mind. Scholars have argued that this state develops into a tendency to suicide. (Goleman, D. 2000) Therefore, if anybody suffers from stress, it would be a burden to society. Everybody should try to prevent this condition. But it is not very easy. So through this detailed study of facts of *Ayurveda* and *Buddhism* the main aim is to get more satisfactory and beneficial answers for this burden to the world. In this study Ayurvedic elementary books and the books written regarding *Buddhism*, were referred to and analyzed in detail. Both *Ayurveda* and *Buddhism* consider man's mind and body as one entity.

Keywords: *Buddhism, Ayurveda*

INTRODUCTION

The world we live in today is full of stressful conditions. All the people seem to be in a hurry; sometimes we can see they have no time to even rest or take their daily meals. Therefore we can hear, specially working people talking about dissatisfaction in their lives. This condition may be a cause for the breakdown of law and order, the disarray in institutions, and incompetence in places of authority and so on. Because of the competition in society stress has become an inseparable factor of the modern world. The reasons of stress may vary from person to person like family, financial, health and social problems.

The scientist Friedman analyzed data from over 100 studies linking people's predominant emotional status to their health. He found, compared to the average people, those who were unusually hostile and angry, highly anxious, sad, pessimistic, or tense, had double risk of

getting a serious illness, including asthma, chronic headaches, stomach ulcers, heart disease and arthritis¹. Many a study shows that stress leads to various health problems like diseases of the gastro intestinal tract, insomnia, graying of hair and hair and fall, hampering the quality of skin complexion. Psychological stressors are the factors which produce negative emotions in our minds, such as anger, hatred, jealousy, enmity, frustration, annoyance, arrogance, loneliness, fear, anxiety, depression, worry, guilt boredom and indecision. An increasing number of people encounter these negative factors almost on a daily basis, causing stress in them. And this is an unfortunate condition in the world².

In 2000, a survey in the United Kingdom (U.K) revealed that, 70% of adults experience stress at work³. This condition they defined as sick building syndrome. In this condition office workers were bound to develop various non-specific symptoms such as headaches,

nasal congestion, and fatigue and eye irritation. A recent survey in the United Kingdom involving over 4,000 office workers proved that these features were due to stress related conditions.

The American Institute of USA had noticed that 75% to 90% of all patients visiting health Centers had disorders related to stress⁴. Stress is a leading cause for the development of depression. Various studies had proved that it is a very serious negative state of the mind. Scholars have argued that this state develops into a tendency to suicide⁵. In general or from a religious perspective, a birth in the human species is regarded as superior to that of other living beings.

Humans want to live their life fully and happily as well as trying to maintain physical well being by all positive ways. In this process they often suffer. Therefore, if anybody suffers from stress, it would be a burden to a good society. According to the above facts, stress is a burning issue throughout the world. Everybody should try to prevent this condition. But it is not very easy. So through this detailed study of facts of *Ayurveda* and *Buddhism* its main aim is to get more satisfactory and beneficial answers for this burden of the world.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

1. To identify causes that develops stress conditions in the humans
2. To identify the solutions given for them.
3. To provide opportunities to use these solutions in effective ways regarding those who are suffering from stress.

MATERIALS & METHODS

In this study *Ayurveda* elementary books and the books which had been written regarding early *Buddhism*, were referred to and analyzed in detail. Special attention is paid to facts included in books

such as *Caraka Samhita*, *Susruta Samhita*, *Bhava Prakasa*, *Madhava Nidana* and *sarangadhara Samhita*. Also attention is paid to elementary facts included in the books related to the early *Buddhist* era and special attention is paid to the *Sutta Pitaka* (Discourse). To solve the problems related to these books primary and secondary sources as well as *Atuva* books (commentaries) which are written on them have been used.

Review: Both *Ayurveda* and *Buddhism* consider man's mind and body as one entity. Because of this *Ayurveda* defines the healthy person thus.

*Sama dosha samaagnisca
samadhatumala.kriyah*

*Prasannatmendriyamana svastha
ityabhidiyathe.*

Buddhism shows that the mind has an impact on actions. That is why it is written "*ManoPubbamgama dhamma*" in the *Dhammapada*⁶. Initially the symptoms caused by the stressful mind have been observed. Then a study has been made first on the causes which initiate these symptoms. This is because neither *Buddhism* nor *Ayurveda* treats the causes of stress conditions as a separate subject. But we can find facts pertaining to this subject all through the *Tripitaka*. In the same manner the causes leading to stress conditions can be found in the *Ayurveda* vision.

As shown in the *Caraka Sutra*, mental disposition can change due to mental constitutions. Also, not getting what is desired and getting what is undesired can cause changes in the mental make-up. Then *Acarya Caraka* described how grief and sorrow follow these mental changes; they in turn produce various sicknesses. *Acarya Caraka* explains that there are two mental attributes. They are *Rajas* and *Tamas*⁷. According to their

pattern of behavior they can be further classified as lust, excessive anger, greed, foolishness, jealousy, and arrogance, grief, thought patterns, feelings of fear, mockery and so on. There are three main facts causing mental illness

1. *Asatmyaindriyarthā Samyoga*- Impact of external objects on the senses in a disproportionate manner.
2. *Pagnaparadha*- Knowingly indulging in unhealthy habits.
3. *Parinama*- Accumulation, Aggravation and Alleviation of *doshas* in different seasons.⁸

Ayurveda explains that because of the above causes there can hoist uncountable mental diseases or psychiatric problems. The teacher *Sushruta* explained that it could change the mental channels (*Manovaha srotas*) could change due to this condition. With reference to *Sushruta Samhitā*, the following have an influence on mental confusion

1. Frightened by robber
2. Loss of material goods
3. Loss of relations
4. Not getting the lady of one's choice (According to the Author of *Acarya Madhava* the inability to get the women or the wife one desires is also a cause).

As we study this further we realize that when the *vata* and *Pitta* are aggravated symptoms similar to mental stress can be seen. According to this finding it is important to observe conditions in which *Vata* & *Pitta* are aggravated. Some of the conditions mentioned are, extreme fatigue both mental and physical, not taking appropriate meals, breaking rest (night), hunger, thirst, extreme grief, unreasonable fear and excessive thinking⁹. Likewise among reasons which aggravate *pitta* are excessive anger and fasting. As mentioned in *Buddhism* the main causes of

mental stress are lust, hatred and delusion. All along the *Sutta Pitaka* we can find many causes connected to these triple causes. They can be thus summarized.

1. Grief due to inability to be with people one likes
2. Grief because one has to be with people one does not like.
3. Unreasonable thinking about the past.
4. Unreasonable thinking about the future.
5. Feelings about what one did not get.
6. Uncontrollable fear
7. Uncontrollable lust (*Samkappa Jataka*)
8. Excessive covetousness (*Gothami Sutta*)
9. Grief because one is unable to have Children, missing one's own children or the death of one's own children¹⁰.
10. Over indulging in ones desires for luxuries and comforts. (*Devadatta Sutta*)
11. Excessive anger (Fury)
12. Unbreakable hatred
13. Ingratitude
14. Stubbornness
15. Excessive competitiveness
16. Pride, Haughtiness
17. Arrogance
18. Procrastination (postponing or delaying)

DISCUSSION

When we analyze deeply the mentioned facts we realize that they cause mental stress directly or indirectly. As we study these facts we come to the conclusion that they are common to bygone societies as well as to the present ones; we also realize that in all ages the way man's mind works is the same. As we compare ancient and modern societies we realize that as the present world is more mechanized, mental and even physical stress are inevitable. Therefore it will be fruitful to study the ways and means

offered by *Ayurveda* and *Buddhism* to be delivered from these causes of stress.

As we study the characters of the Buddha as well as the basic teachings of *Ayurveda* we come to know that both give importance to the daily timetables. The Lord Buddha begins his day by carefully dividing his time according to a timetable. Facts are mentioned not only about the daily timetables but also about seasons. *Ayurveda* gives so much attention to health that it is attentive to each and every area of the body¹¹. Through all these we can conclude that to be set free from mental stress, one need to be organized in one's daily activities. It is also important to bring our attention to the procedures indicated to balance aggravated *Vata* & *Pitta* conditions.

Among strategies indicated for *Vata* conditions, applying and massaging the body with oils in a methodical way is indicated¹². Applying oil and massaging the head also brings comfort. Among strategies concerning aggravated *Pitta* conditions are, application of appropriate medicinal powders made of substances such as *Kapuru* (*Karpur*) and *Savandara* (*Ushir*) on the body, bathing with aromatized water, having good friendships, listening to small children's chatter, living close to cool waters and green spaces. Paying attention to these strategies will be fruitful. Also it is important to be mindful about factors which affect peace of mind positively or negatively. Furthermore it is said that in order to produce mental wellbeing it is important to use wisdom and intelligence in a positive manner, and to take advice from wise people. The Lord Buddha shows that we must see reality with wisdom, that we must not get attached to anything and that we must be free of lust and hatred; he further goes on to say that we must get rid

of bondages or attachments of the mind like we pick a *Kumudu* blossom which bloomed in a pond in spring¹³.

He also states that as man is continuously a prey to mental stress we must be alert to it. As *Buddhism*, *Ayurveda* too has a great regard for the middle path. (*Samayoga*) Lord Buddha shows that we must stay away from noisy environments as far as possible¹⁴. The stories of *Visakha* and *Bimbisara* make it clear that doing mental exercises makes lay life more productive and that it enhances mental health. The sermons of the Buddha show that mental comfort is more important than physical comfort¹⁵.

Astangahridaya Samhita, reveals that mental disciplines such as sound doctrines, healthy friendships, not being jealous of other people's success and pleasant speech will help decrease mental stress. In an article on *Ayurveda Sameeksha* written by Prof. Sumanapala Galmalgoda, it is indicated that mental health, spiritual development, simple life style, satisfaction, cultural relationships and religious devotion also will contribute to alleviate mental stress. As *Caraka* indicates, if anyone's mind is pure he has a pure, true intelligence; it also states that as one breaks the bonds of delusion or deception it will bring enlightenment in all areas and that it is defined as knowledge, discernment, sagacity, judiciousness, intelligence, erudition and prudence¹⁶. In order to achieve peace of mind *Ayurveda* indicates that we must enhance attributes of *satva*. To attain this we have to forgive offenses, speak the truth, not be wicked, practice control in eating, avoid procrastinating (postponing and delaying) be courageous and have a well established mind. The Buddha shows that we must always act with presence of mind and that it is a difficult task¹⁷. He further says that

one must avoid deep attachment to worldly treasures and that this attachment always leads to grief. (*Nandani Sutta*) Apart from that *Ayurveda* discloses

sicknesses which can be brought about through mental reasons. This means that among various other reasons, mental reasons too can have its place.

The above analysis proves that mental depression can cause various diseases.

Flatulence	<i>Gulma</i>	by Grief
Skin diseases	<i>Kushta</i>	by Grief, fear
Myopathy	<i>Kshaya</i>	by fear, hatred, jalousie, disappointment
Senility	<i>Unmada</i>	by lust, covetousness, anger, excessive, happiness, fear, delusion, grief, too many thoughts, aggression
Hemorrhage	<i>Arshas</i>	by anger, grief
Excessive thirst	<i>Thrushna</i>	by anger grief
heart diseases	<i>Hruth Roga</i>	by too much thinking, fear
Catta	<i>Pinasa</i>	by Anger, sleeplessness
loss of appetite	<i>Arochaka</i>	by anger, grief, fear covetousness
increasing weight of thigh	<i>Urustamba</i>	by excessive fear

CONCLUSION

As we make a deep study of *Ayurveda* and *Buddhism* we can reach the undeniable deduction that in both cases causes, are indicated for mental stress. We find a deeper analysis in *Buddhism* than in *Ayurveda*. It is timely to be attentive to the strategies indicated to decrease mental stress. It will be more productive if these are made more relevant to modern times. If this brings some comfort to the burning issue of our time, which is mental stress, it will surely be a blessing. To solve the problems related to these, books primary and secondary sources as well as *Atuwa* books (commentaries) which are written on have been used.

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