

## LITERARY REVIEW ON MEDHYA RASAYANA IN THE MANAGEMENT OF ANXIETY DISORDER

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### ABSTRACT

Anxiety is a fundamental human emotion that serves as a natural response to stress and potential threats. However, for a significant portion of the global population, this feeling of worry and fear becomes persistent, excessive, and debilitating, interfering with daily life and functioning. These experiences are characteristic of anxiety disorders, a category of mental health conditions that are among the most common worldwide. Medhya Rasayana refers to a specific group of Ayurvedic herbs known for their beneficial effects on cognitive function, mental health, and rejuvenation. Many clinical and experimental evidence highlights the anxiolytic efficacy of these herbs, including Mandukaparni (*Centella asiatica*), Yashtimadhu (*Glycyrrhiza glabra*), Shankhpushpi (*Convolvulus pluricaulis*), and Guduchi (*Tinospora cordifolia*). This paper synthesizes the literary review of Medhya Rasayana supports anxiety disorder management.

**KEYWORDS:** Anxiety Disorder, Ayurveda, Medhya rasayana.

### INTRODUCTION

Anxiety is a normal and often temporary response to stress and fear while anxiety disorder is a persistent, excessive, debilitating conditions that interferes with daily life. Anxiety disorders are among the most prevalent mental health conditions worldwide, characterized by symptoms such as persistent nervousness, palpitations, insomnia, irritability, and impaired concentration.

**Anxiety disorders** encompass several specific conditions, each with unique features but sharing the central elements of excessive fear or anxiety. The main types include:<sup>[1]</sup>

1. **Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD):** Chronic, excessive worry about everyday matters for at least six months. Accompanied by symptoms like restlessness, fatigue, difficulty concentrating, irritability, muscle tension, and sleep disturbance.
2. **Panic Disorder:** Recurrent, unexpected panic attacks and persistent concern about having more attacks.
3. **Phobias:** Intense, irrational fears of specific objects or situations, leading to avoidance behaviours and significant distress.
4. **Social Anxiety Disorder:** High levels of fear and worry about social situations where the person may feel embarrassed, humiliated, or judged.
5. **Agoraphobia:** Fear of situations where escape might be difficult or help unavailable, often leading to avoidance of public places.
6. **Separation Anxiety Disorder:** Excessive fear or worry about being separated from people to whom an individual is emotionally attached.
7. **Selective Mutism:** Consistent inability to speak in certain social situations, while communicating freely in others (primarily affects children).

### Pathophysiology of Anxiety Disorder

Category	Component	Role in Anxiety Pathophysiology
<b>1. Neural Circuits</b>	Amygdala	Overactivity leads to exaggerated responses to perceived threats.
	Prefrontal Cortex (PFC)	Impaired connectivity with the amygdala reduces inhibition, amplifying anxiety
	Hippocampus	Altered function is associated with impaired regulation of stress and anxiety
<b>2. Neurotransmitter Systems</b>	Serotonin (5-HT)	Low activity in specific brain regions contributes to symptoms
	Norepinephrine (NE)	Overactivity leads to physical symptoms of anxiety (e.g., palpitations, sweating) and heightened arousal
	Gamma-aminobutyric acid (GABA)	Reduced function leads to increased neuronal excitability, making individuals more susceptible to anxiety
	Glutamate	Enhanced transmission is linked to stress and anxiety; antagonists show anxiolytic effects
<b>3. Hormonal &amp; Stress Pathways</b>	Hypothalamic–Pituitary–Adrenal (HPA) Axis	Dysregulation results in altered release of CRF, ACTH, and cortisol, leading to sustained anxiety.
	CRF and Neuropeptides	Increased CRF levels are associated with heightened anxiety and stress responses

Treatment Approach for anxiety disorder:

- **Pharmacological Treatments:** SSRIs and SNRIs are first-line therapies but many patients have a partial response or relapse.
- **Psychotherapeutic Interventions:** Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT), Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) etc.

### General method of treatment for Manasik roga in Ayurveda

Ayurveda consider mind as an integral part of the life, it accomplishes the balanced state of vata, pitta, kapha, rajas and tamas to maintain psychosomatic health. Ayurvedic treatment for anxiety disorder integrates medicines (Ashwagandha, Brahmi, Jatamansi, medhya rasayana etc.), Panchakarma therapies (Abhyanga, Shirodhara, Nasya), dietary and lifestyle modification, yoga and meditation (pranayama), and Satvavajaya chikitsa<sup>[2]</sup> (Ayurvedic psychotherapy) etc done to restore doshic balance, improve resilience, and reduce anxiety symptoms.

Acharya Charaka has mentioned mainly four types medhya Rasayana:<sup>[3]</sup>

1. Mandukaparni
2. Yashtimadhu
3. Guduchi
4. Sankhapushpi

Medhya Rasayana drug are two types:<sup>[4]</sup>

1. Sheeta Virya and Madhura Vipaka Dravya, it Promotes Kapha and enhances Retention / dharana Karma. Eg. – Yashtimadhu, Sankhpusphi.
2. Ushana Virya and Tikta Rasa Dravya, it promotes pitta and enhances Grahana/Grasping, Smriti/Memory. Eg. – Guduchi

Table<sup>[5]</sup>

Sanskrit Name	Ayurvedic Properties	Active compounds	Actions	Mental health benefits
<b>Mandukaparni</b> ( <i>Centella asiatica</i> )	Tikta, kashaya Madhura Sheeta virya Madhur vipak	Asiaticoside, madecassoside, asiatic acid (implied from Centella); modulates dopamine, serotonin (5-HT), noradrenaline	Enhances learning and memory; reduces stress; modulates neurotransmitter system	Improves concentration; anxiolytic effect; reduces anxiety
<b>Yashtimadhu</b> ( <i>Glycyrrhiza glabra</i> )	Madhur, Sheeta virya Madhur vipaka	Glycyrrhizin, glycoside, isoliquiritin, liquiritin, steroid estrogen, hispaglabridin B, isoliquiritigenin, paratocarpin B	Increases cerebral blood flow; regulates blood sugar; antioxidant protects neurons.	Reduces oxidative brain damage; enhances memory and cognition

<b>Guduchi</b> ( <i>Tinospora cordifolia</i> )	Katu, Tikta, kashaya rasa; Ushna virya Madhur vipaka	Tinosporone, tinosporic acid, cordifolisides A–E, syringin, berberine, giloin, gilenin, glucan polysaccharide	Maintains alertness; normalizes stress-related neurotransmitter changes	Improves grasping and retention; prevents cognitive decline
<b>Sankhapushpi</b> ( <i>Convolvulus pluricaulis</i> )	Tikta, kashaya rasa, sheeta virya, Katu vipaka	Convolidine, confoline, phyllabine, subhirsine, scopoline	Brain stimulation; controls stress hormones (adrenaline, cortisol)	Reduces anxiety and stress; enhances memory, mood, and concentration; slows brain aging.

### Mechanisms of Action<sup>[5,6]</sup>

- **Neurotransmitter Modulation:** Medhya Rasayana herbs regulate dopamine, serotonin, noradrenaline key neurotransmitters involved in mood and anxiety regulation.
- **Stress Hormone Suppression:** Lowering of circulating corticosterone and cortisol, mitigating stress-induced anxiety symptoms.
- **Antioxidant Activity:** Elevation of superoxide dismutase, glutathione peroxidase, and glutathione levels, protecting against oxidative brain stress.
- **Neuroprotective and Adaptogenic Effects:** Enhanced neuronal growth, improved synaptic density, and increased resilience to environmental and psychological stressors.

### DISCUSSION

Medhya Rasayana offers a holistic, evidence-supported approach to the management of anxiety disorders. By modulating key neurotransmitter pathways, suppressing stress hormones, and providing neuroprotection, these Ayurvedic nootropics present a viable alternative or adjunct to conventional psychiatric medications, especially for mild to moderate anxiety. This literary study effectively covers connection between traditional Ayurvedic concepts with modern biological understanding. The study reviews that these herbs normalize the secretion of key neurotransmitters like dopamine, serotonin, and acetylcholine, which are essential for mood, memory, and cognitive processing. This provides a strong basis for further research and demonstrates a potential synergy between traditional and contemporary medicine.

### CONCLUSION

Anxiety disorders are common, disabling, but highly treatable conditions. Increased awareness, early detection, and expanding access to evidence-based treatments are essential for reducing the global burden of disease posed by anxiety disorders. This review study

concludes that the four Medhya rasayana herbs Mandukaparni, Yashtimadhu, Guduchi, and Shankhapushpi offer a promising and accessible approach to mental health. Their ability to enhance intellect, retention, and memory demonstrates a holistic mechanism that goes beyond simple symptom management.

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