

ROLE OF *MANAS PRAKRITI* IN PSYCHOLOGICAL HEALTH ACCORDING TO AYURVEDA AND MODERN PERSPECTIVES: A CRITICAL REVIEW

Dr. Madhuri Todkari^{*1}, Dr. Amit Pethkar², Dr. Sweta Patil³

^{1,3}PhD Scholar, ²Prof. and HOD, Kriya Sharir Dept., Annasaheb Dange Ayurved College,
Ashta, Maharashtra.

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*Corresponding Author

Dr. Madhuri Todkari

PhD Scholar, Kriya Sharir Dept,
Annasaheb Dange Ayurved College,
Ashta, Maharashtra.



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ABSTRACT

In Ayurveda, individual bodily physiology (*Deha Prakriti*) and mental and emotional traits i.e. *Manas Prakriti* are well defined and described. *Manas Prakriti* is governed by the 3 qualities of mind i.e. *Trigunas*—*Sattva* (purity/clarity), *Rajas* (action/passion), and *Tamas* (inertia/darkness). *Manas Prakriti* determines vulnerability to psychiatric conditions, stress coping mechanisms, and behavioural traits. Many scientific studies have documented the relationship between personality traits (*Deha Prakriti*), psychological traits (*Manas Prakriti*) and disorders. Among all these *Manas Prakriti*, *Satvika Manas Prakriti* individuals are less prone to psychological disorders than *Rajasika* & *Tamsika* individuals. According to WHO – health is a being state of complete physical, mental and social well-being.^[20] We find references of *Mana* (mind) and *Manas Vyadhi* (psychological disorders) in our old literature like

Atharva Veda, *Charaka Samhita*, *Sushruta Samhita* and *Vagbhata Samhita* etc. *Acharya Charaka* described some psychological diseases like *Unmada*, *Apsmara*, *Attvaabhinivesha* as disorders affecting *Manas*. Along with these he also described *Mada*, *Murccha* and *Sanyasa* caused by involvement of *raja*. The word *Pradnyaapradha* has great influence in *Manas Vikara* (psychological disorders). The '*Pradnya*' Means *Buddhi* or knowledge when get disturbed by *Trividh Karma* gives rise to *Tridosha Prakopa* and thus foremost to pathology. Ayurveda has highlighted on its treatment modalities like '*Satvavajaya*'. As human beings are

combination of mixed emotions psychology is the medium for expression of these emotions which play an imp role in psychological health. This critical analysis brings together classical *Ayurvedic* concepts of *Manas Prakriti* and modern psychology, neurobiology, and psychopathology to measure its diagnostic, preventive, and therapeutic relevance in present-day psychological health care.

KEYWORDS: *Manas Prakriti, Pradnyaapradha, Psychopathology, Rajas, Sattva, Triguna, Tamas.*

INTRODUCTION

Global mental health strategies increasingly emphasize precision medicine and personalized psychiatric care. Conventional diagnostic manuals like DSM-5 and ICD-11 categorize mental illnesses primarily by symptom clusters, often overlooking baseline individual differences in stress vulnerability, resilience, and baseline neurochemical disposition.

In contrast, Ayurveda frames human health through the *Tridanda* pattern—the triad of Mind (*Sattva/Manas*), Body (*Sharira*), and Soul (*Atma*).^[1] *Manas Prakriti* refers to an individual's innate psychological constitution, formed at the time of fertilization (*Shukra-Shonita Samyoga*) through the subtle interactions of maternal and paternal factors, environmental influences, and past impression dynamics.^[2,3] While physical constitution (*Deha Prakriti*) is governed by the *Tridoshas* (*Vata, Pitta, Kapha*), psychological constitution is shaped by the *Trigunas* (*Sattva, Rajas, Tamas*). Understanding *Manas Prakriti* provides critical insights into why individuals exposed to identical stressors react differently - ranging from high psychological resilience to severe mood or anxiety disorders.

❖ Classical Ayurvedic Foundations of *Manas Prakriti*

The *Trigunas*: Functional Dimensions of Mind

Ayurveda defines *Manas* (psyche) as a mono-attribute entity characterized by *Mano Guna* (*Anutva*) and (*Ekatva*).^[4] The functional state of the mind is regulated by three primary qualities (*Trigunas*).^[5]

* *Satvika Prakriti Purush*^[6]

सात्त्विकास्तु आ नृशंस्यं संविभागरुविता वतवतक्षा सत्यं धर्म आत्वस्तक्यं ज्ञानं वित्तिर्धेधा

स्मृतवधृवतरनवभषंगश्चः॥

Represents pure awareness, emotional stability, clarity, wisdom, and self-control (*Dhairya*). Strictly speaking, Sattva is a pure psychological state (*Awikara*) and does not cause mental disease.

* Rajas Prakriti Purush^[7]

राजसास्तु दुःखिहुलताऽटनवशलताऽधृवतरहंकार आनृवतकिर्कारुण्यं दम्भो र्ानो हषमः कार्ः क्रोधश्चः ॥

Represents movement, passion, desire, ambition, and agitation. It acts as a mental pathogen (*Manasika Dosha*) when out of balance, inducing anxiety, impulsivity, and restlessness.

* Tamas Prakriti Purush^[8]

तासास्तु विषावदिं नात्वस्तक्यर्धर्मशीलता िुत्विःवनरोधोऽज्ञानं दुरेधस्त्वर्कर्मशीलता वनद्रालुिंिवेत ॥

Represents inertia, ignorance, heaviness, lethargy, and emotional dullness. Like *Rajas*, *Tamas* is classified as a *Manasika Dosha* that precipitates depression, cognitive blunting, and apathy when dominant.

Manas Prakriti Sub-types^[9,10]

Charaka Samhita and *Sushruta Samhita* detail 16 specific *Manas Prakriti* archetypes based on dominant behavioural and moral tendencies:

Category	Count	Kaya (Archetypes)	Key Psychological Traits	Health & Resilience
Sattvika (<i>Adosha</i> , <i>Kalyana</i> <i>Anshtwat</i>) ^[11]	7	<i>Brahma</i> , <i>Arsha</i> , <i>Aindra</i> , <i>Yamya</i> , <i>Varuna</i> , <i>Kauber</i> , <i>Gandharva</i>	Truthfulness, self-control, empathy, high intellect, spiritual inclination, emotional stability	High Resilience: Resistant to psychological pathology (<i>Pravara Sattva</i>)
Rajasika (<i>Sadosha</i> , <i>Rosha</i> <i>Anshtwat</i>) ^[11]	6	<i>Asura</i> , <i>Rakshasa</i> , <i>Paisacha</i> , <i>Sarpa</i> , <i>Preta</i> , <i>Shakuna</i>	Ambition, competitiveness, anger, attachment, excessive pride, impulsivity, sensory indulgence	Moderate Resilience, Vulnerable, Prone to stress, anxiety, and psychosomatic conditions
Tamasika (<i>Sadosha</i> , <i>Moha</i> <i>Anshtwat</i>) ^[11]	3	<i>Pasava</i> , <i>Matsya</i> , <i>Vanaspatya</i>	Ignorance, lethargy, lack of hygiene, poor cognitive discrimination, depressive tendencies	Low Resilience: Highly susceptible to severe psychiatric disorders

❖ Modern neurobiological and psychological correlations

1. Psychometric & Personality Model Cross-Mapping

Modern researchers have correlated the *Triguna* typology with established Western psychological models using psychometric instruments like the Vedic Personality Inventory (VPI) and *Guna* Personality Inventory (GPI):

SATTVA GUNA	RAJAS GUNA	TAMAS GUNA
High Emotional Stability	High Extraversion / Novelty	High Neuroticism / Psychoticism
High Conscientiousness	High Drive / Agitation	High Harm Avoidance / Apathy
High Agreeableness	Moderate Neuroticism	Low Self-Directedness

2. Modern correlate of *Trigunas* with neurotransmitters^[12]

1. Sattva Guna

It represents clarity, calmness and harmony which resembles with the effects of gamma-aminobutyric acid (GABA) & serotonin.

- **GABA** – It is the brain's major inhibitory neurotransmitter, it promotes relaxation & balance, mirroring sattva's wisdom & calmness.
- **Serotonin** – (5-HT) - It regulates emotional stability, mood, and contentment, aligning with peaceful and blissful nature of *Sattva Guna*.

2. Rajas Guna

It is characterized by energy, movement and ambition similar to dopamine & norepinephrine which drive focus, alertness & motivation.

- **Dopamine** – It plays vital role in reward – seeking behaviour, ambitious & goal – directed actions – characteristics of *Rajas Guna*.
- **Norepinephrine** – it involved in attention, arousal & stress response correlating with *Raja*.

Excess of *Rajas Guna* can lead to hyperactivity, impulsiveness & stress related disorders paralleling with dopaminergic & adrenergic imbalances like ADHD.

3. Tamas Guna

It represents ignorance, lethargy & inertia, which can be related with melatonin, low dopamine & endorphins.

- **Melatonin** – regulates sleep cycles
- **Low dopamine** – signs to lack of motivation, apathy & depression.
- **Endorphins** – it provides pain relief & sense of detachment

Excess of *Tamas Guna* can leads to excessive sleep, inactivity, dull & passive state of mind and ignorance. Also experiences signs of Major Depressive Disorder (MDD).

3. Big Five Personality Traits (NEO-PI-R)^[15]

- *Sattva* correlates positively with Conscientiousness and Agreeableness, and negatively with Neuroticism.
- *Rajas* correlates with Extraversion and competitive drive, but shows moderate correlation with Neuroticism.
- *Tamas* exhibits high positive correlation with Neuroticism and strong negative correlation with Openness to Experience and Conscientiousness.

4. Cloninger's Temperament and Character Inventory (TCI)^[15]

- *Sattva* aligns with high Self-Directedness and Self-Transcendence.
- *Rajas* maps onto high Novelty Seeking and Reward Dependence.
- *Tamas* aligns with high Harm Avoidance coupled with low Persistence.

❖ Neurophysiological Profiling of *Manas Prakriti*^[13]

Emerging neuropsychological studies suggest distinctive neurochemical and autonomic correlates across the *Gunas*:

- ***Sattva Guna (Optimal Homeostasis)***: Associated with balanced serotonergic signalling, optimal vagal tone, and robust prefrontal cortex (PFC) top-down inhibition over the amygdala. Electroencephalography (EEG) studies typically show dominant Alpha (8–12 Hz) and Theta (4–8 Hz) wave patterns during meditative and *Sattvika* states.
- ***Rajas Guna (Sympathetic Hyper arousal)***: Linked to elevated catecholamine levels (dopamine, norepinephrine) and hyper activation of the Sympathetic Nervous System (SNS) and Hypothalamic-Pituitary-Adrenal (HPA) axis. EEG exhibits predominant Beta (13–30 Hz) activity reflecting high cognitive load, anxiety, or hyper-vigilance.
- ***Tamas Guna (Hypo arousal & Inhibition)***: Associated with excessive GABAergic inhibition, blunted HPA-axis responsiveness, and hypo-dopaminergic states in reward circuits. EEG patterns reflect elevated Delta (0.5–4 Hz) and slow-wave activity during waking hours, characteristic of lethargy and depressive states.

❖ Role in Psychopathology & Disease Vulnerability

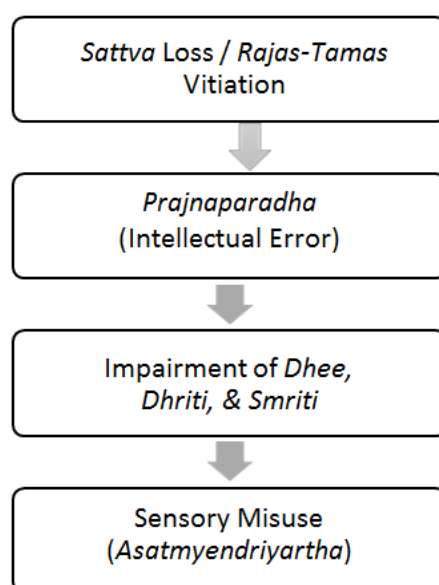
Etiopathogenesis of *Manasika Vikara* (psychological Disorders)^[13]

Ayurveda posits that mental disorders arise when *Rajas* and *Tamas* vitiate the mind

(*Manas*), leading to impairment in three core cognitive faculties:

- * *Dhee*: Perception / Learning faculty.
- * *Dhriti*: Retention / Volitional control faculty.
- * *Smriti*: Recall / Memory faculty.

Impairment of these faculties causes *Prajnaparadha* (intellectual error/volitional transgression), leading individuals to make unhealthy lifestyle choices, overindulge sensory faculties (*Asatmyendriyarthasamyoga*), and yield to emotional distress.



MANASIKA VIKARA / PSYCHOPATHOLOGY^[13]

- * **Rajasika Prakriti**: Highly susceptible to anxiety disorders (e.g., Generalized Anxiety Disorder, Panic Disorder), OCD, mania, burnout, bipolar spectrum disorders, impulse control disorders, type-A hypertension, and stress-induced cardiovascular conditions.
- * **Tamasika Prakriti**: Highly susceptible to Major Depressive Disorder (MDD), dysthymia, chronic fatigue syndrome, catatonia, substance abuse, psychosis, and cognitive decline/dementia.
- * **Sattvika Prakriti**: Highly resilient to psychological stressors (*Pravara Sattva*); even under severe adversity, they rarely develop major psychiatric illness due to high emotional adaptation and coping faculties.

❖ Critical Analysis & Methodological Gaps^[16,17]

Despite the wide-ranging nature of the *Manas Prakriti* framework, several key methodological and scientific challenges exist:

1. Diagnostic Tool Heterogeneity

Numerous manas prakriti & prakriti assessment tools have been developed, including VPI, GPL, Mysore *Triguna* Scale, AyuSoft and CCRAS – based tools. However these instruments differ considerably in item construction, scoring system, psychometric validation and diagnostic criteria which limit comparability across studies. Also they lack standardized, universally accepted scoring cut-offs and international clinical validation.

2. Trait vs. State Ambiguity: Baseline *Manas Prakriti* is considered constitutional (trait), yet the *Trigunas* fluctuate dynamically based on acute stress, circadian rhythm, and diet (state). Disentangling dynamic states from permanent mental traits remains a key diagnostic hurdle.

3. Biomarker Validation: While conceptual links between *Gunas* and neurochemical pathways exist, robust empirical studies directly measuring fMRI patterns, neuroendocrine markers, and gut microbiome profiles across verified *Manas Prakriti* types remain sparse.

4. Confounding with Deha Prakriti: Psychological symptoms are also influenced by physical body typologies (*Vata, Pitta, Kapha*). Isolating pure *Manas Prakriti* from *Deha Prakriti* in clinical settings requires sophisticated multi-variate modelling.

❖ Preventive & Therapeutic Implications

Ayurveda provides targeted interventions to transform *Rajasika* and *Tamasika* states toward *Satvika* (*Sattvavajaya Chikitsa*):

* *Sattvavajaya Chikitsa* (Ayurvedic Psychotherapy)^[19]

Non-pharmacological mental re-conditioning aimed at restraining the mind from harmful sensory objects and strengthening volitional control (*Dhriti*).

* *Medhya Rasayana* (Nootropic Neuroprotective)

Botanical formulations such as *Brahmi* (*Bacopa monnieri*), *Mandukaparni* (*Centella asiatica*), and *Ashwagandha* (*Withania somnifera*) modulate neuroplasticity, regulate cortisol, and support cognitive recovery.

* *Acharya Rasayana* (Behavioural Therapeutics)^[18]

Mindful conduct, truthful speech, adherence to sleep hygiene (*Nidra*), and structured meditation modulate neurochemical tone and enhance *Sattva Guna*.

CONCLUSION

The Ayurvedic concept of *Manas Prakriti* offers a refined, multidimensional framework for

understanding human personality, emotional resilience, and psychiatric vulnerability. By categorizing mental constitution through the *Triguna* dynamic, modern psychiatry can move beyond rigid categorical diagnoses toward a personalized model that incorporates baseline resilience, neurochemical tendencies, and individualized lifestyle modifications. Future multi-centre trials pairing psychometric mapping with fMRI and metabolomics profiling will be vital in validating *Manas Prakriti* as an integrative psychiatric assessment framework.

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