

SADVRITTA: A HOLISTIC APPROACH TO PHYSICAL, MENTAL AND SOCIAL WELL-BEING – AN AYURVEDIC AND MODERN PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

Sadvritta, an essential principle in Ayurveda, encompasses ethical, moral and behavioral guidelines that support overall well-being. Deeply rooted in ancient wisdom, it underscores the significance of discipline, cleanliness, virtuous conduct and social cohesion in sustaining physical, mental and social health. These fundamental values closely align with modern approaches to lifestyle management, psychological well-being and public health, establishing Sadvritta as a timeless strategy for comprehensive wellness. From a physical perspective, Sadvritta emphasizes maintaining personal hygiene, consuming a balanced diet, engaging in regular physical activity and adopting preventive healthcare measures, mirroring contemporary health guidelines. Mentally, it fosters self-regulation, emotional balance, mindfulness and stress reduction, aligning with principles of modern psychology and behavioral sciences. Socially, it advocates for moral integrity, compassion, mutual respect and societal harmony, reinforcing current ideals of social well-being and emotional resilience.

By blending Ayurvedic traditions with modern scientific perspectives, Sadvritta provides a holistic framework for attaining long-term health and wellness. This paper delves into the

role of Sadvritta in fostering overall well-being and its applicability in today's healthcare practices.

KEYWORDS: Sadvritta, Ayurveda, holistic health, mental well-being, social harmony, preventive healthcare, lifestyle management, ethical conduct, modern health science, emotional stability.

INTRODUCTION

Health is a multidimensional concept that extends beyond the mere absence of disease. Ayurveda, the ancient science of life, emphasizes a holistic approach to well-being, incorporating physical, mental and social aspects. One of its core principles, **Sadvritt** refers to ethical, moral and behavioral guidelines that promote overall health. It advocates for a disciplined lifestyle, personal hygiene, righteous conduct and social harmony, all of which contribute to sustainable well-being.

In modern healthcare, holistic wellness is increasingly recognized as essential for disease prevention and overall quality of life. Contemporary medical research highlights the impact of lifestyle choices, emotional stability and social interactions on an individual's health. Interestingly, these modern findings align with the principles of Sadvritta, reinforcing the relevance of ancient wisdom in today's world.^[1]

This paper explores the role of Sadvritta in fostering physical, mental, and social well-being from both an Ayurvedic and modern perspective. By examining its principles in light of contemporary health science, this study aims to highlight the significance of integrating traditional wisdom with modern healthcare practices to achieve holistic wellness.^[2]

What is Sadvritta

Sadvritta: The Ethical Code of Ayurveda

Sadvritta is a fundamental concept in Ayurveda that refers to ethical, moral and behavioral guidelines essential for maintaining holistic health. It is a set of universal principles that govern an individual's personal, social and mental conduct, ensuring a balanced and harmonious life. The term "Sadvritta" is derived from Sanskrit, where "Sat" means good or righteous and "Vritta" means conduct or behavior.^[3]

Sadvritta According to Charaka, Sushruta and Vagbhata

Sadvritta, a crucial principle in Ayurveda, is the ethical and moral code that ensures a disciplined, healthy, and harmonious life. The classical texts of Ayurveda—Charaka Samhita, Sushruta Samhita, and Ashtanga Hridaya (by Vagbhata)—describe Sadvritta as a fundamental aspect of health maintenance and disease prevention. Each of these texts emphasizes the importance of righteous living, hygiene, balanced behavior, and ethical conduct in promoting holistic well-being.

1. Sadvritta in Charaka Samhita.^[4]

Acharya Charaka, in the Charaka Samhita (Sutra Sthana, Chapter 8), elaborates on Sadvritta as an essential component of a healthy life. He categorizes it into physical, mental, and social aspects.^[5]

➤ Sharirika (Physical) Sadvritta.

- Maintain personal hygiene, bathe regularly, and wear clean clothes.
- Follow a balanced diet and avoid overeating or harmful foods.
- Engage in regular exercise and avoid excessive strain on the body.
- Practice seasonal regimens (Ritucharya) to maintain health.

➤ Manasika (Mental) Sadvritta:

- Cultivate positive thinking and emotional stability.
- Avoid negative emotions such as anger, jealousy and greed.
- Practice meditation and self-discipline to control desires.
- Develop patience, compassion and a stress-free mind.

➤ Samajika (Social) Sadvritta:

- Speak the truth, be humble, and maintain ethical relationships.
- Respect elders, teachers and guests.
- Avoid harming others and practice non-violence (Ahimsa).
- Live in harmony with society and contribute to the welfare of others.

Charaka highlights that following Sadvritta leads to longevity, disease prevention, and mental peace.^[6]

2. Sadvritta in Sushruta Samhita.^[7]

Acharya Sushruta, in the Sushruta Samhita (Sutra Sthana, Chapter 24), discusses Sadvritta in the context of surgical hygiene, personal conduct, and community well-being. His focus is more on hygiene, physical discipline, and ethical living.

- Personal Hygiene.
 - Maintain oral and bodily cleanliness.
 - Trim nails and hair regularly to prevent infections.
 - Keep the surroundings clean to avoid environmental health hazards.
 - Avoid consuming stale, contaminated, or unhealthy food.
- Physical and Mental Discipline:
 - Follow a regulated daily routine (Dinacharya) for physical fitness.
 - Engage in regular oil massage (Abhyanga) for skin and muscle health.
 - Practice self-control in speech, thoughts, and behavior.
 - Develop courage, resilience, and an optimistic mindset.
- Social Conduct:
 - Avoid unethical actions such as lying, stealing, or harming others.
 - Respect and protect nature, animals and all living beings.
 - Be compassionate and provide service to the needy.
 - Promote unity and peace in society.

Sushruta emphasized that hygiene, ethical living, and mental discipline are essential for good health, especially in the prevention of diseases and surgical complications.^[8]

3. Sadvritta in Ashtanga Hridaya (by Vagbhata)

Acharya Vagbhata, in the Ashtanga Hridaya (Sutra Sthana, Chapter 2), provides a more detailed and practical approach to Sadvritta. His teachings integrate Charaka's medicinal wisdom with Sushruta's surgical expertise while simplifying daily lifestyle recommendations.^[9]

- Daily and Seasonal Regimen:
 - Wake up early (Brahma Muhurta) and practice prayer or meditation.
 - Cleanse the body through proper bathing and oral hygiene.
 - Eat according to one's digestive capacity (Agni) and follow seasonal adjustments.
 - Exercise regularly but avoid excessive strain.
- Mental and Emotional Well-being:
 - Maintain a calm and composed mind.
 - Avoid indulgence in sensory pleasures that lead to imbalance.
 - Practice gratitude, humility and forgiveness.

- Control excessive desires and greed.
- Social and Ethical Behavior.
- Always speak truthfully and politely.
- Avoid causing harm to others through actions, speech, or thoughts.
- Be respectful to family, teachers and society.
- Engage in acts of charity and help those in need.

Vagbhata emphasized that by following Sadvritta, one can achieve physical strength, mental clarity, emotional balance and spiritual fulfillment.

Importance of Sadvritta in Health^[10]

- **Prevention of Diseases:** By maintaining hygiene, discipline and ethical conduct, Sadvritta helps in disease prevention and overall wellness.
- **Mental and Emotional Stability:** Practicing self-control, mindfulness and positive thinking enhances emotional well-being.
- **Social Harmony:** Ethical and moral behavior strengthens relationships, reducing conflicts and stress.
- **Longevity and Quality of Life:** A disciplined and righteous lifestyle ensures long-term health and inner peace.

Sadvritta is a timeless principle that integrates seamlessly with modern health practices, emphasizing a holistic approach to well-being. It not only promotes physical and mental health but also fosters a harmonious and ethically sound society.

Conceptual Framework

Sadvritta and Physical Health

Prevention from Communicable Diseases Codes of conduct are wisely planned preventive measures of communicable diseases. Ayurveda consider them under Daivabala pravrutta vyadhi. Acharyas were well aware about the modes of transmission too. We can see the glimpses of knowledge regarding this at various contexts.

- Prasanga (Close contact for a prolonged time)
- Gaatra samsparsa (Skin - skin/ mucosal contact)
- Nishwasa (Droplet infection)
- Sahabhojana (Food borne)
- Saha shayyasana (Sit or lie with)

- Malyanulepana (Sharing the belongings) - (Su. Ni) Various terms were also used for addressing communicable diseases.
- Janapadodhwamsa – Charaka (cha. vi 3)
- Aupasargika roga - Susruta (su. ni 5)
- Maaraka - Susruta (su. su 6)
- Kuprasangaja vyadhi - (Bha. pra. utt)
- Janmaar - Bhela (bhe. su 13)
- Sanchari roga - Vagbhata (A. H Ni 14 sarvangasundari)

In ayurveda, there is a unique concept of Rtu, Kshetra, Ambu and beeja. Even though this is concerned with embryological development of foetus, it can be considered in the context of communicable/ infectious diseases too. Here Rtu can be correlated with the favourable season/ conditions of disease transmission, Kshetra as the host body, Ambu as the nutritional and other factors contributing to the transmission of pathogen and Beeja is the Pathogenic organism itself.

कालार्थकर्मणा योगो हीनमिथ्यातिमात्रकः। सम्यग्योगश्च विज्ञायो रोगारोग्यैक कारणम्॥ (A. H Su 1/19)

Among the basic causes of diseases, we can consider the Mithyayoga of Kala, Indriyarth and Karma as the main reasons for infectious diseases. Even though the effects of kala are unpreventable, we can control the bad effects of seasons like adopting special measures in rainy season. Sadvritta regarding kala are contributory to this.

- Don't wander in rain
- Don't go outside without wearing shoes etc Mithyayoga of indriyarth are elaborately explained in the context of sadvritta.
- Don't over use your senses. (Avoidance of close contact with others, don't enjoy sexual pleasure abundantly with immoral people, etc)

Mithyayoga of karma is Prajnaparadha itself, which is major cause of Janapadodhwamsa. Intellectual error leads to adharma. The essence of Sadvritta is avoiding prajnaparadha itself. It is considered as the golden rule for preventing all types of ailments.

Sadvritta concerned with prevention of infectious diseases are.

A. Prevention of disease transmission by direct contact.

- Don't go to crowded place, squares etc
- Always use umbrella and footwear while going out.

- Don't twist your nose
- Don't cohabit with immoral person (prevention of STDs) etc
- B. Prevention of droplet infection
 - Never sneeze, cough or laugh without covering the face
 - Avoid athibhashana etc
- C. Transmission through soil
 - Do not unnecessarily scratch on earth
 - Do not climb over heaps of metal/ gravel etc
 - Don't defecate/ urinate in open spaces
 - Always wear shoes while going out
 - Always make sure to clean your orifices especially legs after coming from outside. etc
- D. Vehicle borne diseases
 - Take food in a clean isolate place
 - Don't swim in over flowing river
 - Never receive food offered by immoral people, harlots, in crowd etc
- E. Vector borne diseases
 - Trim your hair, beard etc thrice in a fort – night
 - Bath twice daily
 - Don't spend time with sick animals etc
- F. Air - bone diseases
 - Don't live in place where infectious diseases are spreading
 - Do fire rituals (homa, japa etc)
 - Avoid direct exposure to wind
- G. Fomite transmission
 - Change the dress after bathing.
 - Don't use others belongings.
 - Don't unnecessarily touch anywhere.
 - Fumigate your belongings periodically.
 - Don't cover the upper body with clothing of lower body.
- H. Uncleansed hands/ fingers
 - Do not eat food without cleaning hands.
 - Don't bite the nails.

These are some preventive measures for infectious diseases. Releasing natural urges in public and crowded places may lead to occurrence of various diseases depending on the bio - substance released. Sneezing in public and crowded places may lead to the spread of influenza, SARS, PTB etc. Similarly releasing human excreta in public places may lead to development of Acute Diarrheal Diseases. It is needless to mention that the open air defecation practiced in rural areas is the leading cause of diarrheal disease.^[11]

It has been found that the sexual behaviors, attraction and identity vary by age, marital or cohabiting status, education and race and Hispanic origin. These behaviors and characteristics are relevant to birth and pregnancy rates, as well as to the incidence of sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), the virus that causes acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS). About one - half of all STIs occur among persons aged 15–24, and the direct medical cost of these diseases for that age group alone was estimated at \$ 6.5 billion in the year 2000. In 2008, CDC estimated that rates of Chlamydia increased and the largest numbers of reported cases of Chlamydia and gonorrhea were among teenagers aged.

Prevention from Non - Communicable Diseases

As the diseases are caused by prajnaparadha, the sadvritta help us to stay healthy. Non - communicable diseases come under Nija vyadhi. Charaka says that for the prevention of both nija and aganthu vyadhis, follow the rule - avoid prajnaparadha, control over sense organs, smriti, proper orientation and awareness and obey the codes of conduct.

Mental Health

Just like the body, the mind also constructed by special Gunas – Satwa, Rajas and Tamas. When these 3 gunas are in a balanced state it contributes to the equilibrium of mind. Both the body and mind are inter - connected, and so the imbalance of one affects the other. Most of the sadvritta and achara rasayana addresses the good behaviours that contribute to balanced psych. Charakacharya says that, the mind will absorb what we are seeing/ doing/ hearing daily (Cha. Su 8). This reveals the importance of code of conducts for attaining a sound mind. The principles of Satvavajaya chikitsa are similar to Sadvritta and achara rasayana. Sattavajaya chikitsa is aimed at the control or restrain of the mind. Charaka defines it as a method of restraining the mind from unwholesome arthas. This permits occupational, behavioral therapies as well. The goal of Satvavajaya chikitsa is attained through jnanam (knowledge), vijnanam (analytical thinking), dhairya, (courage), smriti (memory), and

samadhi (concentration) Mental disorders are mainly caused by kama (excessive desire) soka (grief), bhaya (fear) krodha (anger), harsa (delight), irsyā (jealousy), moha (agreed) should be countered by inducing the opposite passion in order to neutralize the causative ones. And the principles of Psychotherapy are (a) Assurance. (b) Replacement of emotion (c) Regulation of thought process (d) Retraining of Ideas (e) Channelization of presumptions (f) Correlation of objective and ideals (g) Proper guidance and advice for making decisions (h) Proper control of patience (i) Fear therapy or psycho shock therapy. Another mechanism is Lifestyle modification therapy.^[12]

It includes the following components.

- Self - monitoring
- Self - monitoring records
- Problem - solving
- Contingency management
- Stimulus control
- Stress management
- Social support
- Cognitive restructuring

As satvaguna is increased in mental constitution, intellectual power is increased in any individual. Also, the capability of thinking and reaction in different circumstances and in different parts of society is also improved and always ends with positive results.^[13,14]

Social Health

- Behaviour in public
- Good body language
- Behaviour towards women, senior citizen, preceptors, socio - economically poor etc
- Codes of conduct in work place.^[15]

Physiological Effects of Sadvritta on Holistic Health and Mental Well-being.

Sadvritta, the ethical and moral code in Ayurveda, has profound physiological effects on holistic health and mental well-being. Its principles of discipline, hygiene, balanced lifestyle and righteous conduct influence various physiological systems, ensuring overall wellness.^[16]

1. Physiological Effects on Holistic Health.

Sadvritta positively impacts multiple bodily functions, contributing to overall health.

- **Nervous System Regulation:** Adhering to ethical conduct and maintaining a disciplined lifestyle reduces stress and enhances parasympathetic nervous system activity, promoting relaxation and mental clarity.
- **Endocrine System Balance:** Practicing mindfulness, self-control and positive thinking reduces the secretion of stress hormones like cortisol and supports hormonal equilibrium, which is essential for metabolism, immunity and emotional stability.
- **Cardiovascular Health:** By encouraging stress management, emotional stability and a peaceful mindset, Sadvritta helps maintain healthy blood pressure and reduces the risk of cardiovascular diseases.
- **Digestive System Function:** A well-regulated lifestyle and dietary discipline (Ahara-Niyama) improve gut health, enhance digestion and support optimal absorption of nutrients, which are essential for physical and mental well-being.
- **Immune System Enhancement:** Following ethical and hygienic practices strengthens immunity by reducing exposure to infections and promoting a balanced state of body and mind.^[17]

2. Physiological Effects on Mental Well-being

Mental health is closely linked to physiological functions, and Sadvritta plays a key role in enhancing cognitive and emotional well-being.

- **Neurotransmitter Regulation:** Ethical conduct and a balanced lifestyle enhance the production of serotonin and dopamine, improving mood, motivation and overall emotional health.
- **Cortisol Reduction and Stress Response:** Practicing honesty, self-discipline and contentment reduces psychological stress, leading to lower cortisol levels and improved resilience against anxiety and depression.
- **Improved Sleep Cycle:** Following a disciplined daily routine (Dinacharya) supports melatonin production, ensuring restful sleep and mental rejuvenation.
- **Cognitive Function Enhancement:** Mental clarity, focus, and decision-making abilities improve due to reduced mental distractions, mindfulness practices and adherence to ethical living.

- **Autonomic Nervous System Balance:** Sadvritta fosters a state of emotional stability by balancing sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous system activity, preventing chronic stress-related disorders.

By influencing physiological systems, Sadvritta helps achieve a balanced state of body and mind, ensuring holistic health and long-term mental well-being. Integrating these Ayurvedic principles with modern scientific understanding enhances overall quality of life.^[18]

Physiological Effects of Sadvritta on Preventive Healthcare, Lifestyle Management, Ethical Conduct, Modern Health Science and Emotional Stability.

Sadvritta, the ethical and moral code in Ayurveda. it has profound physiological effects on various aspects of health, including preventive healthcare, lifestyle management, ethical conduct, modern health science and emotional stability. By influencing bodily systems and neurophysiological functions, Sadvritta provides a holistic approach to overall well-being.^[19]

3. Physiological Effects on Preventive Healthcare

Sadvritta plays a vital role in disease prevention by maintaining homeostasis and supporting immune function.^[20]

- **Enhancement of Immunity:** Following hygiene practices and a disciplined lifestyle strengthens the immune system, reducing the risk of infections and chronic diseases.
- **Hormonal Regulation:** Balanced daily routines (Dinacharya) and seasonal regimens (Ritucharya) help regulate the endocrine system, reducing lifestyle disorders like diabetes and thyroid imbalances.
- **Gut Health and Metabolism:** Proper diet and ethical eating habits improve digestion, gut microbiota and metabolism, preventing gastrointestinal disorders.
- **Detoxification and Organ Function:** Ethical conduct and mindfulness reduce stress-related toxins (Ama) in the body, promoting detoxification through liver, kidneys and skin.

4. Physiological Effects on Lifestyle Management

A disciplined lifestyle, as advocated in Sadvritta, positively affects various physiological processes.

- **Circadian Rhythm Regulation:** Following Dinacharya supports the body's biological clock, enhancing sleep quality, metabolism and cognitive function.
- **Cardiovascular Health:** A balanced lifestyle reduces stress and regulates blood pressure, lowering the risk of hypertension and heart disease.

- Energy Homeostasis: Mindful eating and physical activity regulate insulin sensitivity and prevent obesity-related disorders.
- Respiratory Health: Ethical living and meditation promote controlled breathing (Pranayama), improving lung capacity and oxygenation.

5. Physiological Effects on Ethical Conduct

Ethical conduct influences neurophysiological and biochemical pathways, contributing to overall well-being.

- Neurotransmitter Balance: Truthfulness and righteous actions increase serotonin and dopamine levels, leading to happiness and mental peace.
- Reduction in Stress Hormones: Ethical living reduces cortisol production, minimizing the risk of stress-induced disorders.
- Heart-Brain Connection: Compassionate behavior activates the vagus nerve, enhancing parasympathetic activity and promoting cardiovascular stability.
- Cognitive Clarity: Ethical mindfulness reduces cognitive overload, improving memory, focus and decision-making.

6. Physiological Effects in Modern Health Science

Sadvritta aligns with modern scientific principles by promoting long-term physiological balance.^[21]

- Psychoneuroimmunology (PNI): Ethical behavior and emotional stability enhance the mind-body connection, improving immunity and disease resistance.
- Gut-Brain Axis Influence: A righteous lifestyle affects gut microbiota, influencing mood, cognitive function and metabolic health.
- Oxidative Stress Reduction: Mindful living and stress management lower free radical damage, reducing inflammation and chronic diseases.
- Genetic and Epigenetic Impact: Healthy lifestyle practices modify gene expression, preventing hereditary diseases through epigenetic regulation.

7. Physiological Effects on Emotional Stability

Emotional stability, a key outcome of Sadvritta, has significant physiological benefits.^[22]

- Limbic System Modulation: Ethical living and self-discipline regulate emotions by balancing the amygdala and hippocampus functions.
- Autonomic Nervous System Regulation: Mindfulness and ethical behavior enhance vagal tone, reducing anxiety and promoting relaxation.

- Endorphin Release: Compassionate acts and positive behavior stimulate endorphin secretion, reducing pain and enhancing overall well-being.
- Improved Sleep Quality: Reduced mental agitation and ethical living improve melatonin production, ensuring restorative sleep.

DISCUSSION

- Sadvritta, as described in Ayurveda it is a holistic approach to health that integrates physical, mental and social well-being through ethical living, self-discipline and moral conduct. Its principles align closely with modern health science, emphasizing preventive healthcare, emotional stability and social harmony.
- Physically, Sadvritta promotes personal hygiene, balanced nutrition, regular exercise, and seasonal regimens, which parallel modern preventive healthcare practices aimed at reducing lifestyle diseases. Mentally, it emphasizes mindfulness, self-control and stress management, aligning with modern psychology's focus on emotional resilience and mental well-being. Socially, it advocates ethical behavior, empathy and harmonious relationships, which modern sociology and public health recognize as essential for community well-being.^[23]
- The integration of Ayurvedic wisdom with modern scientific insights demonstrates that Sadvritta remains a timeless and effective approach to achieving holistic health. By incorporating its principles into daily life, individuals can enhance their physical vitality, mental clarity and social harmony, leading to a healthier and more fulfilling life.

CONCLUSION

- Sadvritta, as described in Ayurveda, serves as a comprehensive guideline for achieving holistic health by integrating physical, mental and social well-being. Rooted in ethical conduct, personal discipline and lifestyle management, it aligns closely with modern health principles, making it a timeless and practical approach to overall wellness.^[24]
- Physically, Sadvritta promotes hygiene, balanced nutrition, regular exercise and disease prevention, which correspond with contemporary preventive healthcare practices. Mentally, it emphasizes emotional stability, mindfulness and stress management, paralleling modern psychology and behavioral sciences. Socially, it advocates for ethical behavior, empathy and harmonious living, reinforcing the foundations of a healthy society.^[25]

- By combining ancient Ayurvedic wisdom with modern scientific insights, Sadvritta provides a sustainable framework for long-term health and well-being. Its relevance in today's fast-paced world underscores the importance of ethical living, self-discipline and holistic health practices. Incorporating Sadvritta into daily life can lead to improved physical health, emotional resilience and social harmony, ultimately fostering a balanced and fulfilling life.

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