

## INFLUENCE OF PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS ON DIGESTIVE CAPACITY IN THE CONTEXT OF AJIRNA (INDIGESTION)

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### ABSTRACT

*Ayurveda*, with its profound understanding of human physiology, highlights *Agni* as the cornerstone of health. *Ajirṇa* (indigestion) arises when this digestive fire is impaired, leading to disease through the formation of *Ama*. While dietary factors are commonly implicated, the subtle yet powerful influence of *Mansika Bhava* (mental states) on *Ahara Shakti* (digestive capacity) remains underappreciated. This article explores classical *Ayurvedic* insights on the mind–gut connection, linking emotions such as worry, grief, fear, and anger to *Dosha* vitiation and *Agni* disturbance. Modern science, through the brain–gut axis concept, validates these ancient observations. An integrated therapeutic approach addressing both diet and mind is essential for effective management of *Ajirṇa*. *Mansika Bhava*, the mental and emotional framework of an individual, is believed to significantly influence digestive capacity, or *Ahara Shakti*. Negative

emotional states such as stress, anxiety, and depression are thought to disrupt the balance of *Agni*, thereby impairing *Ahara Shakti* and contributing to the development of *Ajirṇa*. This mind-body connection is a cornerstone of *Ayurvedic* understanding, emphasizing that mental well-being is crucial for maintaining optimal digestion. This article aims to explore the intricate relationship between *Mansika Bhava* and *Ahara Shakti* in context to *Ajirṇa*.

**KEYWORDS:** *Ajirṇa*, *Ahara Shakti*, *Mansika Bhava*, *Agni*, *Satvavajaya*, Brain–Gut Axis.

## INTRODUCTION

*Ayurveda* is an ancient medicine system of the Indian subcontinent. It is said to have originated in India about 5000 years back. The prime objective is to maintain the wellbeing of healthy individual and prevention of illness. That is why, *Ayurveda* holds a great position in health world even in this modern era. The scientific approach of *Ayurveda* is based on the detailed study of almost every natural element. The text also shows keen observations on the impact of human activity regarding the specific disease.

Grossly there are two types of disease *Sharirika* (Somatic) and *Mansika* (Psychic) according to the location of disease. *Acharya Charaka* mentioned about the involvement of *Mansika* and *Sharirika Dosha* in each other over time. In this era poor dietary habit, irregular meal timings, processed food and sedentary lifestyle play an important role in producing various diseases, stress also plays key role in diseases.

*Acharya Charaka* said in *Vimana Sthana* that any wholesome food, even if taken in the right quantity, does not get digested if the mental state of the person is riddled with *Chinta*(anxiety), *Shoka*(grief), *Bhaya*(fear), *Krodha*(anger), or restless and irritability due to lack of sleep.

This article explores these classical insights and their resonance with modern scientific understandings.

The etiological factors according to types of *Ajirna* are not described by any *Acharya*. Only general etiological factors are described in classics are as follows. Due to intake of excessive water, taking meal irregularly, suppression of the natural urges and irregular sleeping habits, the food taken by a person is not digested even it has been taken at a proper time. The food taken by a person under the influence of envy, fear, anger, greed or improper sleep pattern is also not properly digested.

In this contemporary world we see that psychological stress is prevailing in all sections of society. *Acharya Charaka in Vimana Sthana* has clearly mentioned that besides the dietary and lifestyle indiscretion psychological stress alone or in combination with other factors may result in disruption of *Agni*.

Dyspepsia, commonly known as indigestion, refers to a group of symptoms affecting the upper gastrointestinal (GI) tract. These symptoms often include discomfort or pain in the

upper abdomen, bloating, nausea, and belching. It is a prevalent condition that can have various underlying causes, ranging from benign to more serious conditions.

The gut-brain axis refers to the complex communication network that links the gut and the brain, involving biochemical signaling between the gastrointestinal (GI) tract and the central nervous system (CNS). This connection plays a key role in maintaining homeostasis, influencing not just digestive health but also mood, behavior, and cognitive functions.

The disturbances within the gastrointestinal-brain axis (GBA) play a crucial role in influencing alterations in intestinal motility and secretion. These disruptions contribute to visceral hypersensitivity and bring about cellular changes within the entero-endocrine and immune systems.

The gut micro biome and its metabolic byproducts have the potential to escape through the altered gut barrier resulting from stress, consequently eliciting an inflammatory response.

## DISCUSSION

In Ayurveda, *Mansika Bhavas* (psychological states) are believed to have a profound impact on both the body and the digestive fire (*Agni*). Classical Ayurvedic texts such as the *Charaka Samhita*, *Ashtanga Hridaya*, and others mention that negative emotions like grief, fear, anger, anxiety, and guilt can lead to the suppression or disturbance of *Agni*, resulting in impaired digestion.

This psychological imbalance reduces both *Ahara Shakti* (desire or ability to take food) and *Pachana Shakti* (digestive power), thus playing a central role in the pathogenesis of *Ajirṇa*. From a modern biomedical perspective, this aligns with the concept of the "gut-brain axis," where mental stress directly affects gastrointestinal function by altering autonomic nervous system responses and digestive secretions.

Furthermore, classical texts also highlight that positive emotions like joy (*harṣa*), contentment (*santoṣa*), and faith (*śraddhā*) help stimulate *Agni* and promote healthy digestion. Thus, maintaining a balanced mental state is crucial for optimal digestion.

## CONCLUSION

Psychological factors (*Mansika Bhavas*) play a significant role in modulating *Ahara Shakti* and the onset of *Ajirṇa*. Ayurveda clearly emphasizes the interconnection between the mind

and the body, where mental disturbances can lead to digestive dysfunction. Hence, the management of indigestion should not be limited to dietary regulation and medications alone, but must also address mental well-being.

Incorporating mind-calming interventions such as yoga, pranayama, meditation, and Ayurvedic psychotherapeutic approaches may offer a more holistic and effective strategy in the treatment of *Ajirṇa*. Future research should explore these dimensions further to develop integrative and evidence-based protocols for digestive disorders.

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