

Assessment of *Acharya Rasayana* in domain of physical, mental and social health in Ayurveda students

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Abstract:

Charaka has mentioned *Acharya Rasayana* for perfect mental, physical, social, spiritual health of human being. *Acharya* means behavioural discipline which guides and motivates the persons to have social happiness and mental stability. In this competitive era with hectic schedules, it's the need of hour to follow *Acharya Rasayana* for leading healthy, mentally peaceful life. Today's youth are deviating themselves by improper or unethical conduct. The purpose of this study is to reveal whether the students of Ayurveda, who are aware of *Acharya Rasayana* are practising it and up to what extent; and secondly to establish an interrelation of *Acharya Rasayana* on their physical-mental health and effect on academic performance as well as social behaviour. 66 students of final BAMS were selected for the survey by an objective questionnaire in a single blind method. On the basis of answered questionnaire, the students were categorized into three groups viz; Poorly following, moderately following and strongly following *Acharya Rasayana*.

Students were also assessed on various observations like health status, academic performance, attendance, participation in co- curricular and extracurricular activities, behaviour with teachers and peers. Out of 66 students, 17 who strongly followed *Acharya Rasayana* were good at academics, enjoying good physical and mental health and friendly reputation among peers. 36 students following moderate *Acharya Rasayana* had variability and were enjoying satisfactory to good physical and mental health, minor health problems, intermittent stress and didn't have healthy peer relation. 13 students poorly followed *Acharya Rasayana* were comparatively slow learners and had low attendance. The study concludes that following *Acharya Rasayana* leads to a good physical, mental and social health.

Keywords- *Acharya Rasayana*, physical health, mental health, social health

Introduction-

Acharya Rasayana is a unique concept in Ayurveda that implies moral, ethical, and benevolent conduct: truth, nonviolence, personal and public cleanliness, mental and personal hygiene, devotion, compassion, and a yogic lifestyle. These behaviors bring about rejuvenation in the body-mind system. One who adopts such conduct gains all benefits of *Rasayana* therapy without physically consuming any material *Rasayana* remedy or recipe, although it can be practiced alone or in a combination with material substance *Rasayana* therapy. The concept of *Acharya Rasayana* is to change our behaviors in order to reverse the disease process and stay in balance. [1]

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Charaka has mentioned the *Aachara Rasayana* for perfect mental, physical, social, spiritual health of human being. *Aachara* means behavioural discipline which guides and motivates the persons to have social happiness and mental stability. *Rasa* stands for the essence and *ayana* is the path to achieve it.

Rasayana Tantra, one of the eight branches of Ayurveda is dedicated to rejuvenation, regeneration, immune modulation, and healthy aging. The scope of *Rasayana* therapy is not necessarily restricted to herb or formulation, but includes a combination of meditation, yoga, daily and seasonal diet, lifestyle interventions, and personal and social behavioural conduct too. All these measures that assist in the maintenance of healthy body tissues consisting of *Saptadhatus* are grouped together as *Rasayana* [2].

Aachara Rasayana is an Ayurvedic strategy for regulating the behavioural, social conduct, which ensures a healthy life in a healthy society. In modern times when individuals are exposed to different types of societies in their life time, the ability to adapt to the behavioural modes of that society alone can ensure social health of the individual. In fact "*Aachara Rasayana*" is of greater relevance in today's highly mobile society than it was when first proposed. [3]

One who speaks truth, who is free from anger, who abstains from alcohol and sexual congress, hurts no one, avoids overstrain, is tranquil of heart, fair spoken, is devoted to repetition of holy chants and to cleanliness, is endowed with understanding, given to almsgiving. Diligent in spiritual endeavour, delights in reverencing the gods, cows, brahmanas, teachers, seniors and elders, is attached to non-violence, is always compassionate, moderate and balanced in his waking and sleeping. is given to regular taking of milk and ghee, is conversant with the science of climate, season, and dosage, is versed in propriety (correctness of behaviour), devoid of egoism, blameless of conduct,

given to wholesome eating, One free from narrowness and having respect for different religions, spiritual in temperament, attached to elders and men who are believers and self controlled and devoted to Vedas. [4]

In this competitive era with hectic schedules and modified lifestyle, it's the need of hour to follow *Aachara Rasayana* for leading healthy, mentally peaceful life for every individual, specially the youth, who are deviating themselves by improper or unethical conduct. In regard to the same a pilot study was conducted.

The purpose of this study is to reveal whether the students of Ayurveda, who are aware of *Aachara Rasayana* are practising it and up to what extent; and secondly to establish an interrelation of *Aachara Rasayana* on their physical-mental health and effect on academic performance as well as social behaviour.

Methods:

66 students of final BAMS (34 students of batch 2008-09 and 32 students of batch 2009-10) were selected for the study. These students were assessed by an objective structured questionnaire by four point likert scale on 18 items with a total of 72 points. The contents of questionnaire included the daily regimen, food habits, physical and mental health and social values. It was a single blind study. On the basis of points of answered questionnaire, the students were categorized into three groups. [Table I]

Also students were assessed on various parameters like academic performance, attendance, participation in co-curricular and extracurricular activities, behaviour in college and hostel by obtaining feedback from teachers, administrative staff, attendants, seniors, peers and the preceptors.

Observation and Result-

As per the gradation, 66 students were grouped as follows.

The academic performance of the students

Table 1: Classification of students into Groups based on observation

Groups	Gradation	No of students
Group I	54 to 72 points - strongly following <i>Aachara Rasayana</i> (SFA)	17
Group II	36 to 53 points - moderately following <i>Aachara Rasayana</i> (MFA)	36
Group III	18 to 35 points - Poorly following <i>Aachara Rasayana</i> (PFA)	13
Total		66

were assessed through their scores of formative assessment from the examination cell of Institute. As depicted in Table II nearly three fourth of the students of SFA group were good at academics with a score of more than 70%, whereas rest one fourth were medium level achievers scoring in a range of 50 to 70% marks. In MFA group more than 80% of the students were medium level achievers, 15% high achievers and 5% low achievers. In PFA group none of the students scored above 70%. Maximum of them scored in a range of 50 to 60% marks.

The attendance of the students was assessed through the current and progressive attendance data available from the attendance cell of Institute. On comparing the attendance of the three groups (Table II), 40% of the students of SFA group, 30% from MFA had attendance above 80% whereas none of the students from PFA group were into this range. Approximately same percentage of students (55 to 58%) from SFA and MFA group had satisfactory attendance in a range of 60 to 80% whereas comparatively less number of students from PFA group were into this range of attendance. 17% students from MFA group and more than 50% students of PFA group were in the range of 40 to 60% attendance. No students from SFA group were in this range.

Observations regarding the physical and mental health were collected from the structured questionnaire. As shown in table III, 60 to 70% of the students from all the three groups were sometimes ill with minor complaints. Approximately 15% of the students from MFA and PFA group reported of frequent illness.

The observations regarding mental health (table IV) shows that 46% of the students of PFA group and 20% of MFA group experienced intermittent stress. 47% of the students from SFA group, 36% from MFA and 23 % from PFA group experienced stress during examination. Maximum number of student's i.e. 53% from SFA group, 44% from MFA and 31% students from PFA group had stress related to completion of the task. In regard to the sleep, 65% Students from SFA, 53% from MFA and 39% from PFA group experienced sound sleep. Maximum student's i.e. 62% from PFA group, nearly 47% from MFA and 35% from SFA group had disturbed sleep during the exams.

Data for participation in co-curricular, extracurricular activities and sports was collected from the student's welfare cell of Institute.

As shown in table V, 41% of students of SFA group, 28% from MFA and 16% from PFA group actively participated in the co-curricular and extracurricular activities. Moderate participation was seen by approximately 45 to 50% of the students in all the three groups. Least participation was seen by 12% students of SFA group, 20% of MFA and 39% students of PFA group. Approximately similar types of observations were noted with a minor difference in all the three groups in relation to participation of sports.

The observations regarding the relationship with teachers and on teaching and peer relation was collected through feedback from the preceptors, teachers, nonteaching staff, hostel wardens and direct observation. As depicted in table VI, 48% of the students of SFA and MFA group and 39% from PFA group had high respect towards teaching and nonteaching staff. 41%, 50% and 46 % student from SFA, MFA and PFA group respectively were moderately respectful. Maximum 155 of students of PFA group were found to be least respectful.

In regard to the peer relations (table VII) 58% students of SFA and MFA group and 69% enjoyed friendly relation with their peers. 30% from SFA and PFA group and 40% from MFA group had rare disputes. Nearly 12% of students of SFA group had often disputes, whereas only 3% from MFA group and none of the student in PFA group fell into this category.

Discussion

Implementation of *Achara Rasayana* into the daily routine and assessing its effect on physical, mental and social health was successfully pilot tested in Ayurveda students.

On the basis of points of answered questionnaire, the students of all three groups were assessed on various parameters like Academic performance, Attendance, participation in co-curricular and extracurricular activities, Behaviour in college and hostel by obtaining feedback from teachers, administrative staff, attendants, seniors, peers and the preceptors

In regard to the Academic performance,

Table II: Comparison of Academic performance & Attendance

Range of Score in academics & attendance (%)	SFA Group		MFA Group		PFA Group	
	Percentage of students (Academic)	Percentage of Students (Attendance)	Percentage of Students (Academic)	Percentage of Students (Attendance)	Percentage of Students (Academic)	Percentage of Students (Attendance)
91 to 100	0	17.65	0	5.57	0	0
81 to 90	23.52	23.52	5.55	22.22	0	0
71 to 80	52.94	41.18	8.33	30.55	0	15.38
61 to 70	17.65	17.65	44.44	25	23.08	30.77
51 to 60	5.88	0	38.89	13.89	61.54	30.77
41 to 50	0	0	5.88	2.78	15.38	23.68

Table III: Comparison of Illness

Illness	% of students SFA Group	% of students MFA Group	% of students PFA Group
Rarely ill	35.29	13.89	23.08
Sometimes ill	64.71	72.22	61.54
Often ill	0	13.89	15.38

Table IV: Comparison of stress and sleep

Stress	% of Students SFA Group	% of Students MFA Group	% of Students PFA Group
Stress during exams	47.06	36.11	23.08
Stress related to completion of task	52.94	44.44	30.77
Intermittent stress	0	19.44	46.15
Sleep			
Sound sleep	64.71	52.78	38.46
Disturbed Sleep during exams	35.29	47.22	61.54

Table VI: comparison of Respect towards teachers & non-teaching staff

Level of Respect	% of Students SFA Group	% of Students MFA Group	% of Students PFA Group
Highly respectful	47.05	47.67	38.46
Moderately respectful	41.18	50	46.15
Least respectful	5.88	8.33	15.38

Table VII: Comparison of Peer Relation

Peer relation	% of Students SFA Group	% of Students MFA Group	% of Students PFA Group
Friendly relation	58.82	58.33	69.23
Rare disputes	29.41	38.89	30.77
Often disputes	11.76	2.78	0

Table V: Comparison of Participation in co-curricular & extracurricular activities& sports

Level of participation	% of students SFA Group		% of students MFA Group		% of students PFA Group	
	co curricular& Extracurricular activities	Sports	co curricular& Extracurricular activities	Sports	co curricular& Extracurricular activities	Sports
Active participation	41.18	23.53	27.78	30.55	15.38	30.77
Moderate participation	47.05	41.18	52.78	44.44	46.15	38.46
Least participation	11.76	23.53	19.44	25	38.46	30.77

nearly 75% of the students of SFA group were good at academics, the MFA group predominantly had average learners with a few high achievers, whereas in the PFA group maximum students were comparatively slow learners with a few achieving mediocre marks. No students in this group were able to cross a score of 70% marks. We interpret that those strongly following *Aachara Rasayana* had comparatively more satva guna in which pitta dosha is predominant and *Dhi, Dhruti and Smriti* are the characteristics of *Pitta* which reflects the academic performance.

Attendance in SFA group was quite high whereas in MFA group it was found to be satisfactory to good for most of the students. No students from PFA group had high attendance; on the contrary one fourth of them had significantly low attendance. Commonest reasons for low attendance are ill health and lack of interest in studies. Significant number of students of this group had reported of frequent illness, which might be the cause of low attendance. Also it was observed that maximum number of students who practiced yoga and meditation and regular exercise had good attendance. These practices would have helped in enhancing the energy and retention of enthusiasm resulting in good attendance.

With respect to the physical health approximately 15% of the students of PFA group reported frequent illness. Mental health was assessed on the parameters of stress and sleep. Those strongly following *Aachara Rasayana* had comparatively less stress and enjoyed sound sleep as compared to those who poorly followed *Aachara Rasayana*. These findings emphasizes the concept that practice of *Aachara Rasayana* leads to good physical mental health. Also less intake of junk foods, drinking milk, having breakfast, consumption of fruits are the contributing factors.

Most of the students of SFA and MFA groups had moderate to active participation in co-curricular and extracurricular activities, whereas a significant number of students from PFA group exhibited least participation. Regarding participation in sports approximately one fourth of the students in each group had least participation.

Maximum students of all the three groups were respectful toward the teachers and non-teaching staff. Few students from PFA group were found to be least

respectful. With respect to the peer relation, more number of students from the PFA group had friendly relations with their peers as compared to the other two groups. Some of the students reported about the disputes with their peers.

Conclusion:

Based on the observations, the study concludes that practicing *Aachara Rasayana* contributes to good physical and mental health. It certainly showed a positive relation with the academic performance and attendance. Participation in various activities and sports cannot be perfectly correlated with the practice of *Aachara Rasayana*, but still a comparatively least participation from the PFA group depicts that *Aachara Rasayana* may indirectly help in these activities. The same observations in relation to their social behavior with the teachers and peer relation in all the three groups did not reflect in favour of the concept. It suggests that more parameters should have been used for assessing the social health.

Optimal health is achieved by cultivating mental, physical and dietary habits that are conducive to physical and spiritual well being. Therefore there is an immense need of *Aachara Rasayana* for today's life style.

Further scope of study:

The present study was conducted at a preliminary level. This study can be further extended by considering various objective health parameters for physical health like BMI, CBC, *Bala parikashan* and *Sara parikshan*.

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