

Psychotropic Medicinal Plants in Ayurveda with Special Reference to Medhya Dravya

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Abstract: Mental and behavioural disorders represent a major global health burden affecting cognition, emotions, and quality of life. Ayurveda, the ancient Indian system of medicine, presents a holistic view of mental health through the integrated functioning of Śarīra (body), Manas (mind), and Ātmā (consciousness). Ayurvedic classics describe numerous medicinal plants exhibiting psychotropic actions by influencing memory, intellect, emotional balance, sleep, and higher mental functions. Among them, Medhya Dravya constitute a unique group known for enhancing Dhi (intellect), Dhṛti (retention), and Smṛti (memory). The present article critically reviews psychotropic medicinal plants described in Ayurveda with special emphasis on Medhya Dravya, their classical references, Ayurvedic mode of action, and contemporary relevance. The concept of Medhya Rasāyana offers a rational, preventive, and sustainable approach to modern mental healthcare.

Keywords: Psychotropic medicinal plants; Medhya Dravya; Manas Roga; Rasāyana; Cognitive enhancement; Ayurveda

