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Satva Sarata in Ayurveda: Conceptual Foundations, Psychological Correlates, and Relevance to Resilience and Personalised Mental Healthcare

¹Dr. Akash Barsainya (MD Scholar), Dept. of Kriya Sharir, Pt. Khushilal Sharma Govt. (Autonomous) Ayurveda College & Institute, Bhopal, Madhyapradesh, India
E-mail Id- akashgupta2320@gmail.com
Contact No.- 8085146136

²Dr. Shuchi Dubey, Associate Professor, Dept. of Kriya Sharir, Pt. Khushilal Sharma Govt. (Autonomous) Ayurveda College & Institute, Bhopal, Madhyapradesh, India

Abstract: **Background:** *Satva Sarata* is an Ayurvedic construct describing the excellence of *Satva*, encompassing mental strength, emotional stability, intellectual capacity and positive behavioural qualities. It is assessed under *Sara Pariksha*, one of the ten components of *Dashavidha Atura Pariksha*, and its classical description includes qualities such as *Smriti* (memory), *Bhakti* (devotion), *Krutajnata* (gratitude), *Prajna* (wisdom), *Dhira* (courage) and freedom from excessive grief.^{1,2}

Methodology: This is a narrative review. Classical Ayurvedic texts, principally the *Vimana Sthana* of the *Charaka Samhita*, were consulted for the conceptual basis of *Satva Sarata*. Contemporary literature was identified through PubMed, Google Scholar and Ayurveda-specific databases, including DHARA, using the keywords 'Satva Sara', 'Satva Sarata', 'Manas Prakriti', 'resilience', 'emotional maturity' and 'Chittodvega'. Peer-reviewed articles published in English between 2012 and 2025 were prioritised; classical commentaries were included irrespective of publication year. As a narrative rather than systematic review, no formal quality-appraisal protocol was applied.

Discussion: Several classical attributes of *Satva Sarata* show conceptual overlap with contemporary psychological constructs, particularly resilience^{3,4} and emotional maturity.⁶ Empirical studies linking *Manas Prakriti* to stress, anxiety and depression provide preliminary evidence for psychological correlates of *Satva*-related constructs,⁵ although validated, standardised instruments for *Satva Sarata* itself remain limited.⁸

Conclusion: *Satva Sarata* offers a multidimensional Ayurvedic framework for understanding individual differences in mental strength. While conceptually related to resilience and emotional maturity, it remains a distinct construct that should not be treated as their equivalent. Further validated, standardised research is required before it can be meaningfully integrated into personalised mental healthcare.

Keywords: *Satva Sarata*, *Sara Pariksha*, *Manas Prakriti*, *Chittodvega*, resilience, emotional maturity, Ayurvedic psychology, personalised healthcare

1. Introduction

Ayurveda defines health as the balanced functioning of the body together with the mind, senses and soul. *Manas* governs perception, emotional response, decision-making and interaction with the environment, and *Satva* represents the quality of mental functioning associated with clarity, stability and appropriate behaviour.¹

Sara Pariksha, one of the ten components of *Dashavidha Atura Pariksha*, evaluates the excellence of the seven bodily *Dhatus* together with *Satva*, thereby providing the physician with information on an individual's overall strength and constitution.² Among the eight recognised types of *Sara*, *Satva Sara* is unique in describing excellence at the level of the mind rather than the tissues.

The classical description of *Satva Sara Purusha* lists memory, devotion, gratitude, purity, enthusiasm, wisdom, skillfulness, courage and freedom from excessive grief as defining qualities.¹ Taken together, these suggest a stable, capable and adaptive mental state, and *Satva Sarata* may therefore be read as an Ayurvedic framework for describing dimensions of mental strength.

Contemporary psychology defines resilience as the capacity to adapt positively to adversity, stress and difficult life circumstances.^{3,4} Several qualities described under *Satva Sarata* appear conceptually related to this understanding; however, *Satva Sarata* is rooted in a distinct philosophical framework and should not be treated as directly equivalent to resilience or to any single modern psychological measure.⁴ The present review examines this relationship by considering the classical description alongside available empirical work on *Manas Prakriti* and psychological outcomes.

2. Materials and Methods

This article follows a narrative review format appropriate to a conceptual and integrative discussion rather than a clinical intervention question. Classical sources were drawn primarily from the *Vimana Sthana* of the *Charaka Samhita* (Chapter 8), supplemented by the *Sutra Sthana* and *Chikitsa Sthana* for material on *Sattvavajaya Chikitsa* and *Medhya Rasayana*.^{1,2,9}

Contemporary literature was identified through PubMed, Google Scholar and Ayurveda-specific databases (AYUSH Research Portal, DHARA) using combinations of the terms '*Satva Sara*', '*Satva Sarata*', '*Manas Prakriti*', '*Triguna*', 'resilience', 'emotional maturity', 'stress', 'anxiety' and '*Chittodvega*'. Articles published in English, primarily between 2012 and 2025, were prioritised for relevance and recency; earlier foundational papers were retained where directly relevant to review.

Because this is a narrative rather than a systematic review, article selection was purposive rather than exhaustive, and no formal risk-of-bias or quality-appraisal tool was applied. This is stated explicitly as a methodological limitation in Section 11.

3. Conceptual Basis: Manas, Triguna and Satva

Ayurveda describes *Satva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas* as the three *Gunas* underlying mental functioning.¹ *Satva* is associated with clarity, knowledge and balanced functioning, while *Rajas* and *Tamas*, when dominant, are associated with activity, disturbance, inertia and impaired mental functioning. The relative predominance of these *Gunas* determines an individual's *Manas Prakriti*, classified as *Satvika*, *Rajasika* or *Tamasika*.

This classical framework has begun to receive empirical attention. In a cross-sectional study of 450 healthy young women at Banaras Hindu University, *Satvika Prakriti* was associated with significantly lower levels of stress and anxiety and minimal depression compared with *Rajasika* and *Tamasika Prakriti*, using the *Manas Prakriti Assessment Inventory* alongside standardised stress, depression and anxiety scales.⁵ While the study population was limited to young adult women and cannot be generalised without further replication, it offers preliminary quantitative support for the classical association between *Satva* predominance and psychological stability.

The strength of the mind is separately described as *Satva Bala*, and differences in this strength are said to influence how individuals respond to stressful circumstances and emotional disturbance.² *Satva Sarata* assessment can therefore be understood as one clinical application of the broader *Triguna* framework, focused specifically on excellence rather than mere classification of mental constitution.

4. Sara Pariksha and the Assessment of Satva Sarata

Ayurveda describes eight types of *Sara*: *Tvak*, *Rakta*, *Mamsa*, *Meda*, *Asthi*, *Majja*, *Shukra* and *Satva*.² *Satva Sara* is distinct among these in describing the excellence of the mind rather than a physical tissue, and its assessment therefore extends *Sara Pariksha* beyond somatic evaluation into the psychological and behavioural domain.

This individualised approach is significant because Ayurveda recognises variation in responses to physical and psychological challenges across individuals. Assessment of *Satva Sarata* may consequently add a dimension to clinical evaluation that is not captured by tissue-level *Sara* assessment alone, potentially providing additional information about emotional and behavioural characteristics relevant to clinical care.

5. Classical Description of Satva Sara Purusha

Acharya Charaka describes *Satva Sara Purusha* through a defined set of psychological, behavioural and cognitive characteristics: *Smriti*, *Bhakti*, *Krutajnata*, *Shuchi*, *Mahotsaha*, *Prajna*, *Daksha*, *Dhira*, *Samara Vikranta Yodhi*, *Tyakta Vishada*, *Suvyavasthita Gati*, *Gambhira Buddhi Cheshta* and *Kalyana Abhinivesha*.¹ Table 1 summarises these attributes alongside contemporary psychological constructs with which they show conceptual, though not equivalent, overlap.

Classical Attribute	Ayurvedic Meaning	Potential Contemporary Psychological Parallel	Nature of Conceptual Similarity
Smriti	Retentive memory; ability to recall knowledge and experience	Memory and recall	Conceptual similarity with cognitive aspects of adaptive functioning
Bhakti	Devotion, sincerity and commitment	Sense of purpose and meaning	Parallel, not a validated equivalence
Krutajnata	Gratitude for support received	Gratitude (positive psychology)	Surface similarity; measured through different instruments
Shuchi	Purity of body, mind and speech	Behavioural and moral self-regulation	Ethical dimension without a direct psychometric analogue
Mahotsaha	Enthusiasm and willingness to act	Motivation and self-efficacy	Related to sustained goal-directed behaviour
Prajna	Wisdom and sound discrimination	Practical wisdom; judgement and decision-making	Broad conceptual overlap
Daksha	Competence and skillfulness	Perceived competence / self-efficacy	Conceptual parallel
Dhira	Courage and mental steadiness	Emotion regulation and distress tolerance	Conceptually related to coping and emotional stability
Samara Vikranta Yodhi	Ability to face difficult or adverse circumstances with courage	Active/approach-oriented coping under threat	Conceptually close to resilience process models
Tyakta Vishada	Freedom from excessive grief or despair	Emotional stability and adaptive coping	Conceptual similarity with adaptive coping outcomes

Classical Attribute	Ayurvedic Meaning	Potential Contemporary Psychological Parallel	Nature of Conceptual Similarity
Suvyavasthita Gati	Organised and appropriate conduct	Behavioural regulation; conscientiousness	Parallel with trait-level self-organisation
Gambhira Buddhi Cheshta	Depth of intellect and purposeful action	Reflective cognition; deliberate, goal-directed action	Conceptual overlap with executive/metacognitive function
Kalyana Abhinivesha	Inclination toward beneficial, virtuous conduct	Prosocial orientation; value-congruent behaviour	Conceptual parallel

This mapping is offered as a conceptual heuristic rather than a claim of psychometric equivalence. A widely validated and standardised instrument for Satva Sarata remains lacking, and the correspondences in Table 1 should be read as hypotheses for future empirical testing rather than established findings.¹

6. Satva Sarata and Contemporary Psychological Constructs

6.1 Resilience

Resilience is defined in contemporary psychology as the capacity to adapt positively to adversity, trauma or significant stress, without implying the complete absence of distress.³ *Dhira* (courage), *Mahotsaha* (sustained motivation), *Prajna* (judgement) and *Tyakta Vishada* (freedom from despair) may show conceptual resonance with resilience as currently defined.^{1,3,4}

However, resilience research has itself struggled to arrive at a single agreed definition, spanning trait, process and outcome conceptualisations across disciplines.³ This heterogeneity should temper any attempt to equate *Satva Sarata*, a philosophically distinct construct, with resilience as a unitary modern category.⁴

6.2 Emotional Maturity

Emotional maturity involves appropriate regulation of emotion, balanced response to circumstance and effective interpersonal functioning. An observational study of 60 participants aged 20–40 years found a statistically significant association between *Satva Sarata* and emotional maturity ($p < 0.001$), using a proforma based on classical descriptions of *Satva Sara* alongside a standardised emotional maturity scale.⁶

This is one of the few empirical studies directly linking *Satva Sarata* assessment with a psychological outcome measure. Its modest sample size and single-centre design limit generalisability, and replication in larger, more diverse samples is needed before firmer conclusions can be drawn.

6.3 Stress, Anxiety and Manas Prakriti

As noted in Section 3, *Satvika Prakriti* has been associated with significantly lower stress and anxiety and minimal depression relative to *Rajasika* and *Tamasika Prakriti* in a sample of 450 healthy women.⁵ Because *Satva* predominance is conceptually related to, though not identical with, *Satva Sarata*, this finding lends indirect support to the proposition that *Satva*-based assessment carries measurable psychological correlates, while underscoring the need for studies that assess *Satva Sarata* specifically rather than *Manas Prakriti* more broadly.

6.4 Chittodvega: The Converse Construct

Chittodvega, literally ‘agitation of the mind’, has been discussed in the Ayurvedic literature in relation to presentations resembling generalised anxiety disorder, on the basis of its etymology, symptomatology and clinical course.⁷ It is described as arising from vitiation of *Rajas* and *Tamas* together with *Vata* and *Pitta*, in contrast to the stability associated with *Satva* predominance.^{1,7}

Chittodvega and *Satva Sarata* may therefore be viewed as conceptually related from opposite directions: one describing disturbance and the other excellence of mental functioning. Neither should be treated as a direct equivalent of a specific modern psychiatric diagnosis or psychometric scale.⁷

7. Standardisation Efforts: Toward Validated Assessment Tools

A recurring limitation across this literature is the absence of a widely validated, standardised instrument for *Satva Sarata* specifically. A recent critical review of Ayurvedic constitutional assessment tools identified 64 distinct instruments developed since 1987, of which only 20 had undergone any form of validation, and just two met the majority of recommended psychometric criteria.⁸ Similar methodological challenges may also be relevant to *Satva Sara* assessment, which has generally relied on proformas derived from classical description rather than psychometrically validated scales.

Related efforts on the *Manas Prakriti* side — including pilot inventories subjected to face validation and larger-scale studies using purpose-built assessment tools — illustrate a plausible path toward more rigorous *Satva Sarata* instruments, but such development work remains at an early stage for *Satva Sarata* itself.⁸

8. Therapeutic Relevance: Sattvavajaya Chikitsa and Medhya Rasayana

Ayurveda offers specific therapeutic approaches directed at strengthening *Satva*. *Sattvavajaya Chikitsa*, often described as Ayurvedic psychotherapy, aims to withdraw the mind from unwholesome objects and thoughts through methods and techniques involving knowledge, restraint, memory and concentration.^{9,10} *Medhya Rasayana* is separately discussed in the classical literature in relation to the promotion of cognitive and mental function.⁹

A recent review of *Sattvavajaya Chikitsa* describes it as comprising five methodologies, two guiding principles, three dimensions and five techniques, with contemporary interest in its application to psychiatric, psychological and psychosomatic conditions.¹⁰ The relevance of such approaches to a given individual should be judged according to their specific condition, constitution and clinical context, and *Satva Sarata* assessment may serve as one input into that individualised judgement rather than as a standalone diagnostic tool.

9. Relevance to Personalised Healthcare

A central strength of *Satva Sarata* as a concept is its emphasis on individual variation. Ayurveda does not assume that all individuals respond to physical or psychological challenge in the same way, and *Sara* assessment, including *Satva Sara*, is intended to contribute to individualised clinical understanding.²

In the context of mental health, this framework may help clinicians consider differences in emotional stability, cognitive capacity, motivation and coping style when planning supportive care. The broader movement toward standardised, validated constitutional assessment tools in Ayurveda supports the feasibility of eventually integrating *Satva Sarata* into such personalised frameworks, provided this is grounded in systematic research rather than assumed equivalence between traditional and modern constructs.⁸

10. Critical Appraisal and Research Gaps

The conceptual basis of *Satva Sarata* is clearly described in classical literature,^{1,2} but empirical research directly examining the construct remains limited to a small number of studies, most notably the emotional maturity study discussed in Section 6.2. The larger body of *Manas Prakriti* research provides useful but indirect evidence, since *Manas Prakriti* and *Satva Sarata* are related but not identical constructs.⁵

The wider Ayurvedic assessment-tools literature indicates a validation gap: many available instruments lack test–retest reliability data, contextual validity testing across diverse populations, or dimensionality analysis.⁸ Similar limitations may be relevant to *Satva Sarata* assessment, which remains less developed than the broader *Prakriti* assessment literature.

11. Limitations of the Present Review

This review is narrative rather than systematic; article selection was purposive, and no formal quality-appraisal or risk-of-bias tool was applied, which may introduce selection bias relative to a fully systematic approach. The number of studies directly examining *Satva Sarata* in relation to modern psychological constructs remains small, and the conceptual mapping in Table 1 is offered as a heuristic rather than an empirically validated correspondence. Similarities between classical description and contemporary psychological language should not be interpreted as evidence that the underlying constructs are identical.

12. Future Directions

Priority areas for future research include the development and psychometric validation of a dedicated *Satva Sarata* assessment tool, following the standardisation frameworks now emerging for *Prakriti* assessment more broadly;⁸ replication of the emotional maturity findings in larger and more diverse samples;⁶ and studies examining *Satva Sarata* specifically (rather than *Manas Prakriti* generally) in relation to validated resilience and stress instruments.⁵

Longitudinal designs would help clarify whether *Satva Sarata* behaves as a relatively stable trait or changes in response to life experience, occupational stress and therapeutic intervention such as *Sattvavajaya Chikitsa*.¹⁰ Comparative studies across occupational and age groups may further help delineate the population-level variation in *Satva Sarata* that the concept implies.

13. Conclusion

Satva Sarata represents a clearly described Ayurvedic concept of excellence of mental functioning, encompassing memory, wisdom, courage, enthusiasm, gratitude, commitment, competence and emotional steadiness.¹ These qualities collectively describe a multidimensional construct of mental strength rather than a single psychological trait.

Several features of *Satva Sarata* show conceptual similarity to resilience, emotional maturity and adaptive functioning as understood in contemporary psychology, while limited empirical evidence provides preliminary support for measurable psychological correlates of *Satva*-related constructs.^{5,6} *Satva Sarata* nonetheless remains philosophically and methodologically distinct from these modern constructs and should not be equated with them.⁴

Systematic, validated research — particularly the development of a dedicated, psychometrically sound *Satva Sarata* assessment tool — is required before this classical concept can be meaningfully integrated into personalised mental healthcare alongside contemporary psychological assessment.

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Declaration of Generative AI in Scientific Writing

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