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RESEARCH ARTICLE

ROLE OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IN CRIME PREVENTION: AN AYURVEDIC PERSPECTIVE ON BEHAVIORAL AND MENTAL HEALTH

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Abstract

Crime is a complex global concern with important social and public health implications. The rising burden of violence, substance misuse, cyber offenses, juvenile delinquency, and interpersonal conflict suggests deeper disturbances in emotional regulation and behavioral control. Emotional intelligence, which refers to the ability to recognize, interpret, manage, and apply emotions effectively, is increasingly recognized as a factor that supports prosocial conduct and may help reduce criminal behavior. Individuals with weaker emotional regulation are often more vulnerable to impulsive reactions, aggression, antisocial conduct, and other forms of harmful behavior. In Ayurveda, mental well-being is understood through principles such as Satva, Raja, Tama, Prajnaparadha, and Sadvritta, which together emphasize psychological balance, ethical discipline, and self-regulation. This review examines how emotional intelligence, and criminal behavior may be related and considers how Ayurvedic principles can contribute to emotional stability, moral development, and social harmony. Integrating emotional intelligence education with Ayurvedic lifestyle practices and psychological support may provide a preventive approach to reducing crime and improving mental well-being.

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Introduction:-

Crime is a complex social phenomenon arising from the interaction of psychological, socioeconomic, cultural, environmental, and biological determinants. Recent global estimates from the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) indicate that nearly 458,000 homicides occur annually worldwide, while countless individuals are affected by various forms of criminal activity, including violent offenses, domestic abuse, cybercrime, and substance-related crimes^[1] In India, crime continues to pose a major public health and social challenge. Data from the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) reported more than 58 lakh cognizable offenses in 2022, highlighting the extensive societal and economic impact of criminal behaviour^[2] Factors such as rapid urbanization, unemployment, substance misuse, weakening family support systems, increased digital exposure, and diminished coping abilities have been implicated in the rising crime burden. Contemporary criminological research has identified emotional instability, poor impulse control, aggression, and inadequate social adjustment as important risk factors associated with criminal tendencies^[3] Consequently, emotional intelligence has emerged as a significant protective attribute capable of reducing antisocial behaviour and promoting constructive social interactions.

Ayurveda offers a holistic perspective for the development of emotional intelligence through concepts such as Satva, Sadvritta, AcharaRasayana, and SatvavajayaChikitsa. Among these, AcharaRasayana occupies a distinctive position as a behavioural and ethical framework designed to cultivate self-discipline, compassion, emotional balance, social responsibility, and moral conduct. These attributes closely parallel the major dimensions of emotional intelligence recognized in modern psychological literature. Ayurvedic philosophy attributes behavioural and emotional disturbances to the vitiation of the ManasikaDoshas—Raja and Tama—along with impairment of Dhi (intellect), Dhriti (self-control), and Smriti (memory).^[4] Such disturbances may culminate in Prajnaparadha, defined as the failure of wisdom or erroneous judgment, which can manifest as impulsive, harmful, or socially unacceptable actions. From this perspective, Prajnaparadha may be viewed as a state of impaired emotional regulation that increases susceptibility to antisocial and criminal behaviour. By promoting Satva, strengthening cognitive and emotional faculties, and encouraging virtuous conduct through AcharaRasayana and SatvavajayaChikitsa, Ayurveda presents a preventive and promotive approach to behavioural health. These principles have the potential to enhance emotional intelligence, minimize Prajnaparadha, and contribute to crime prevention, mental well-being, and social harmony.

Materials and Methods:-

This review was conducted using a narrative literature review approach.

Data Sources:-

Relevant literature was collected from:-

1. PubMed
2. Google Scholar
3. Scopus-indexed journals
4. WHO reports
5. UNODC publications
6. National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) reports
7. Classical Ayurvedic texts including Charaka Samhita, Sushruta Samhita, and Ashtanga Hridaya

Data were analyzed descriptively and synthesized into thematic sections.

Current Trends and Statistics of Crime:-

Global and Indian Crime Scenario:-

Global Scenario:-

Crime continues to represent a significant challenge to public health, social stability, and economic development across the world. Estimates from the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) indicate that nearly 458,000 homicide deaths occur globally each year.^[1] Young males constitute a disproportionately large share of both offenders and victims involved in violent crimes.^[1] Furthermore, substance abuse remains a major contributor to interpersonal violence, domestic abuse, and other criminal activities, highlighting the close relationship between behavioural health and crime.^[5]

Indian Scenario:-

The burden of crime in India remains substantial. According to the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) report for 2022, more than 58 lakh cognizable offences were registered across the country.^[2] Crimes against women accounted for over 4.4 lakh reported cases, reflecting ongoing concerns regarding gender-based violence and safety. Juvenile involvement in offences such as theft, assault, and cyber-related crimes has also shown an increasing trend. Additionally, the rapid expansion of digital technology has been accompanied by a significant rise in cybercrime incidents over the past decade.^[2] These observations suggest that punitive and legal approaches alone may not adequately address the underlying causes of criminal behaviour, emphasizing the need for preventive psychosocial and behavioural interventions.

Factors Contributing to Rising Crime:-

Rates Crime is rarely the result of a single factor and is generally influenced by a dynamic interaction of personal, familial, social, and environmental determinants.

Emotional Dysregulation ^[6]:-

Difficulty in managing emotions such as anger, frustration, jealousy, and hostility can lead to impulsive actions and aggressive behaviour. Individuals with poor emotional regulation are more likely to engage in violent acts and antisocial conduct, particularly during situations involving stress or interpersonal conflict.

Family Disintegration ^[7]:-

The family serves as the primary environment for emotional and moral development. Parental conflict, neglect, domestic violence, inconsistent parenting, and lack of emotional support can adversely affect personality development and increase vulnerability to behavioural problems and delinquent conduct.

Substance Abuse ^[5]:-

Alcohol and psychoactive substances impair judgment, reduce self-control, and increase impulsivity. Numerous studies have demonstrated a strong association between substance abuse and violent crime, domestic violence, road traffic offences, and other forms of criminal behaviour.

Socioeconomic Stress ^[8]:-

Persistent poverty, unemployment, financial insecurity, social exclusion, and limited educational opportunities may create conditions that increase frustration, hopelessness, and susceptibility to criminal activities. Socioeconomic disparities often contribute to both individual and community-level crime risk.

Digital Influence ^[9]:-

The widespread use of digital media has introduced new behavioural challenges. Excessive exposure to violent content, cyberbullying, online gambling, digital addiction, and social media-driven aggression may influence attitudes and behaviours, particularly among adolescents and young adults, potentially normalizing aggression and antisocial conduct.

Decline in Moral and Ethical Values ^[10]:-

Weakening social cohesion, reduced community engagement, and declining emphasis on empathy, self-discipline, and ethical responsibility may contribute to the emergence of antisocial behaviour. The erosion of value-based education can adversely affect decisionmaking and interpersonal relationships, thereby increasing the risk of criminal conduct.

Emotional Intelligence and Crime Prevention ^[11]:-

Emotional intelligence (EI) refers to the capacity to perceive, understand, regulate, and effectively utilize emotions in oneself and others. It plays a crucial role in adaptive behaviour, interpersonal relationships, and responsible decision-making.

According to Daniel Goleman's model, emotional intelligence encompasses five major domains:-

1. Self-awareness
2. Self-regulation
3. Motivation
4. Empathy
5. Social skills

Individuals possessing higher levels of emotional intelligence are generally better equipped to manage emotional challenges and social interactions. They tend to demonstrate improved impulse control, greater empathy toward others, effective conflict-resolution abilities, lower levels of aggression, and healthier interpersonal relationships. In contrast, deficiencies in emotional intelligence have been linked with maladaptive behavioural patterns, including aggressive tendencies, poor judgment, impaired decisionmaking, antisocial personality traits, and increased susceptibility to criminal behaviour.[12] Research conducted in offender populations has consistently shown lower levels of emotional awareness, empathy, and emotional regulation compared with non-offender groups.[13] These findings highlight the importance of emotional intelligence as a protective factor capable of reducing antisocial behaviour and promoting socially responsible conduct.

Ayurvedic Understanding of Criminal and Antisocial Behavior:-**Prajnaparadha: An Ayurvedic Perspective on Antisocial Behaviour:-**

Although Ayurveda does not explicitly define crime in legal or criminological terms, it provides profound insights into the psychological and behavioural factors that lead individuals toward harmful actions. Among these, Prajnaparadha (intellectual blasphemy or failure of wisdom) is regarded by Charaka as one of the fundamental causes of physical, mental, and social disturbances.^[4]

Prajnaparadha arises when the higher faculties governing human behaviour become impaired. This includes disturbance of Dhi (intellect and discriminatory capacity), weakening of Dhriti (self-restraint and emotional control), and deterioration of Smriti (memory and moral awareness). Under such circumstances, an individual may engage in inappropriate or harmful actions despite possessing prior knowledge of their adverse consequences.

This concept bears a striking resemblance to contemporary psychological theories that associate criminal behaviour with impaired judgment, deficient impulse control, and emotional dysregulation.

Dhi Vibhramsha:-

Distortion of judgment and reasoning -Faulty decision-making.

Smriti Vibhramsha:-

Loss of moral awareness and ethical remembrance Recurrent misconduct and repeated offences.

Dhriti Vibhramsha:-

Impaired self-control and emotional restraint Aggression, and impulsivity, violent behaviour.

Manasika Doshas and Criminal Tendencies ^[14]:-

Ayurveda explains human behaviour through the dynamic interaction of the three mental attributes (Triguna)—Satva, Raja, and Tama. These psychological qualities influence emotional regulation, decision-making, interpersonal relationships, and behavioural responses.

Satva, Raja, and Tama in Relation to Emotional Intelligence:-**GunaBehavioural and Emotional Characteristics:-**

1. Satva -Clarity, empathy, patience, self-awareness, emotional balance
2. Raja- Restlessness, anger, impulsivity, competitiveness, aggression
3. Tama- Ignorance, apathy, poor insight, confusion, impaired judgment

Individuals with predominance of Satva generally demonstrate greater emotional stability, empathy, and social adaptability, characteristics closely associated with higher emotional intelligence. Excessive Raja may predispose individuals to emotional reactivity, aggression, and impulsive behaviour, whereas dominance of Tama can impair self-awareness, moral reasoning, and decision-making capacity.

Emotional Intelligence Through the Ayurvedic Lens:-

Several core components of emotional intelligence described in modern psychology find conceptual parallels within Ayurvedic psychology and philosophy.

Emotional Intelligence Domain- Ayurvedic Correlation:-

Self-awareness – Atma Jnana

Emotional regulation-Manonigraha

Empathy – Karuna

Moral reasoning-Dhi

Self-control- Dhriti

Social competence- Sadvritta

Positive motivation-Satvika Bhava.

Ayurvedic Approaches to Crime Prevention:-**Sadvritta (Code of Ethical Living) ^[15]:-**

Sadvritta represents a systematic code of personal and social conduct intended to promote individual well-being and harmonious social relationships. It emphasizes virtues such as truthfulness, compassion, non-violence, respect for

others, discipline, and self-restraint. Regular adherence to these principles fosters emotional maturity, responsible decision-making, and socially acceptable behaviour.

Satvavajaya Chikitsa^[16]:-

SatvavajayaChikitsa is a psychotherapeutic approach aimed at strengthening mental resilience and improving behavioural control. Its objectives include regulation of emotions, cultivation of positive thought patterns, correction of maladaptive behaviours, and enhancement of selfawareness. In many respects, its principles resemble contemporary psychological interventions focused on cognitive restructuring, behavioural modification, and emotional regulation.

Achara Rasayana and Emotional Intelligence^[17]:-

Among the various Ayurvedic strategies for promoting mental and behavioural well-being, AcharaRasayana occupies a distinctive position as a non-pharmacological approach to personality development and psychosocial health. Described in the Charaka Samhita, it comprises a set of ethical, behavioural, and lifestyle practices designed to nurture psychological stability and positive character traits. Many of its principles correspond closely with the domains of emotional intelligence recognized in contemporary psychology. By encouraging self-awareness, emotional restraint, empathy, effective interpersonal communication, ethical conduct, and responsible decision-making, AcharaRasayana contributes to the development of emotionally intelligent behaviour. Through the cultivation of these qualities, it may help reduce behavioural disturbances, discourage antisocial tendencies, and promote constructive social engagement. Consequently, AcharaRasayana can be viewed as a traditional preventive model that supports emotional intelligence, mental wellbeing, and socially responsible behaviour.

Akrodha (Mastery Over Anger):-

Among the various emotions that influence human behaviour, anger is recognized as a major contributor to aggression, impulsive actions, interpersonal conflicts, and violent conduct. Ayurveda associates excessive anger with the predominance of Raja Guna, which disturbs mental equilibrium and impairs rational decision-making. The principle of Akrodha advocates emotional restraint, patience, and the ability to respond thoughtfully rather than react impulsively. Individuals who cultivate Akrodha are better able to regulate negative emotions and maintain behavioural control even under stressful circumstances. From the perspective of emotional intelligence, Akrodha strengthens emotional self-regulation and impulse control, thereby reducing the risk of aggressive and antisocial behaviour.

Kshama (Forgiveness):-

Kshama represents the capacity to forgive and is regarded as an important attribute of a Satvika personality. Forgiveness enables individuals to overcome resentment, hostility, and desires for retaliation that may otherwise contribute to interpersonal disputes and violent behaviour. Contemporary psychological research has demonstrated that forgiveness is associated with improved emotional well-being, reduced stress, and healthier social interactions. In the context of emotional intelligence, Kshama fosters emotional resilience, empathy, and constructive conflict management. By encouraging reconciliation rather than retaliation, this principle contributes to the maintenance of social harmony and reduction of aggressive tendencies.

Daya (Compassion and Empathy):-

Daya signifies compassion, kindness, and sensitivity toward the suffering of others. It closely parallels the concept of empathy, which is considered a cornerstone of emotional intelligence. Empathy allows individuals to appreciate the emotions, perspectives, and needs of others, thereby discouraging harmful actions and encouraging prosocial behaviour. Deficits in empathy have frequently been associated with antisocial conduct, delinquency, and violent crime. Through the cultivation of Daya, Ayurveda promotes emotional sensitivity, social responsibility, and humane behaviour, ultimately strengthening interpersonal relationships and community well-being.

Satya (Truthfulness and Ethical Integrity):-

Satya emphasizes honesty, sincerity, and adherence to ethical principles in thought, speech, and action. Ethical behaviour is closely linked with emotional intelligence because it requires awareness of consequences, self-regulation, and commitment to moral values. Deceptive or unethical conduct often arises from impaired judgment and emotional imbalance. By encouraging truthfulness and accountability, Satya enhances moral reasoning, personal integrity, and responsible decision-making. These qualities serve as protective factors against behaviours such as fraud, corruption, exploitation, and other forms of social misconduct.

Priyavadita (Pleasant and Respectful Communication):-

Priyavadita refers to the practice of communicating in a respectful, considerate, and pleasant manner. Effective communication is essential for maintaining healthy relationships, preventing misunderstandings, and resolving conflicts peacefully. Harsh or offensive speech can intensify emotional reactions and contribute to interpersonal disputes. Priyavadita encourages individuals to communicate with empathy, sensitivity, and emotional awareness. In contemporary models of emotional intelligence, this corresponds to social competence and relationship management. By fostering respectful communication and constructive dialogue, Priyavadita supports social cohesion and reduces the likelihood of conflict-driven behaviour.

Role of AcharaRasayana in Crime Prevention:-

The collective practice of Akrodha, Kshama, Daya, Satya, and Priyavadita promotes the development of a Satvika mental disposition characterized by emotional balance, empathy, ethical awareness, and self-control. These qualities directly oppose many of the psychological factors associated with criminal behaviour, including impulsivity, aggression, hostility, poor emotional regulation, and impaired moral judgment. Consequently, AcharaRasayana may be viewed as a comprehensive behavioural model for enhancing emotional intelligence and preventing maladaptive conduct. Its application within educational institutions, community programs, and public health initiatives may provide a culturally grounded strategy for promoting prosocial behaviour, reducing violence, and fostering social harmony.

Yoga and Meditation ^[18]:-

Yoga and meditation constitute important components of Ayurvedic and holistic mental health practices. Growing scientific evidence suggests that regular engagement in these practices can improve emotional regulation, reduce stress, enhance empathy, and decrease aggressive tendencies. By promoting self-awareness, mindfulness, and psychological resilience, yoga and meditation may contribute to the prevention of behaviours associated with emotional dysregulation and antisocial conduct. Their incorporation into preventive mental health programs may therefore support crime reduction efforts and improve overall societal wellbeing.

Medhya Rasayana ^[19]:-

MedhyaRasayana drugs are traditionally indicated for enhancing cognitive functions, mental clarity, memory, and emotional stability. Classical examples include Mandukaparni (Centellaasiatica), Yashtimadhu (Glycyrrhiza glabra), Guduchi (Tinosporacordifolia), and Shankhapushpi (Convolvulus pluricaulis). These herbs are believed to support higher mental functions and improve psychological resilience. By promoting cognitive stability, emotional balance, and sound judgment, MedhyaRasayana therapies may indirectly contribute to the prevention of impulsive and maladaptive behaviours.

Proposed Integrative Model for Crime Prevention:-

An effective crime prevention strategy requires a multidimensional approach that addresses both individual and societal determinants of behaviour.

Drawing upon contemporary psychological principles and Ayurvedic concepts, the following interventions may be considered:-

1. Integration of emotional intelligence education within school curricula.
2. Parenting and family-based programs aimed at nurturing emotional development.
3. Community mental health initiatives focused on behavioural and emotional well-being.
4. Incorporation of yoga and meditation practices into preventive health programs.
5. Application of Ayurvedic counselling and SatvavajayaChikitsa for psychological support.
6. Promotion of Sadvritta and AcharaRasayana values to strengthen ethical behaviour and social responsibility.

Such an integrated framework may enhance emotional intelligence, reduce behavioural risk factors associated with crime, and contribute to the creation of healthier and more harmonious communities. Such an integrative approach may reduce aggression, improve emotional resilience, and foster socially responsible behavior.

Discussion:-

One of the most significant contributions of Ayurveda to crime prevention is its emphasis on behavioural development and character formation. Unlike conventional approaches that often focus on controlling criminal behaviour after its manifestation, Ayurveda adopts a preventive perspective by addressing the psychological and moral factors that predispose individuals to harmful actions. According to Ayurvedic philosophy, disturbances in behaviour arise from the predominance of Raja and TamaGunas, leading to impairment of Dhi (intellect), Dhriti

(selfcontrol), and Smriti (memory). This state ultimately culminates in Prajnaparadha, which may be interpreted as erroneous judgment and failure of emotional and moral regulation. Ayurveda proposes a multidimensional framework for behavioural transformation through the cultivation of emotional intelligence, ethical awareness, and psychological resilience. AcharaRasayana promotes virtues such as compassion (Daya), forgiveness (Kshama), truthfulness (Satya), pleasant communication (Priyavadita), and control over anger (Akrodha), thereby strengthening empathy, emotional regulation, and moral conduct. Similarly, Sadvritta provides practical guidelines for ethical living and socially responsible behaviour, fostering respect, discipline, self-restraint, and harmonious interpersonal relationships.

The role of SatvavajayaChikitsa is particularly relevant in this context, as it focuses on strengthening mental faculties, regulating emotions, and developing mastery over negative thoughts and impulses. Its principles closely resemble modern psychological approaches aimed at cognitive restructuring and behavioural modification. Furthermore, practices such as Yoga and meditation enhance self-awareness, mindfulness, stress management, and emotional stability, all of which are recognized protective factors against aggression and antisocial behaviour. Ayurveda also emphasizes the importance of MedhyaRasayana in promoting cognitive clarity, memory, judgment, and emotional balance. By improving higher mental functions and supporting psychological well-being, these interventions may facilitate adaptive decisionmaking and reduce susceptibility to impulsive or harmful behaviour. Taken together, AcharaRasayana, Sadvritta, SatvavajayaChikitsa, Yoga, meditation, and MedhyaRasayana contribute to the development of emotional intelligence, ethical responsibility, and social harmony. These principles directly address many of the psychological determinants of crime, including impulsivity, aggression, poor emotional regulation, and deficient moral reasoning. Therefore, Ayurveda may be viewed not only as a system of healthcare but also as a comprehensive behavioural model for crime prevention that promotes individual well-being and societal harmony through the cultivation of Satva and the reduction of Prajnaparadha.

Conclusion:-

Crime is a multifactorial phenomenon influenced by emotional, psychological, social, and environmental determinants. Growing evidence suggests that emotional intelligence plays a crucial role in reducing aggression, impulsivity, antisocial behaviour, and poor decision-making by enhancing self-awareness, empathy, emotional regulation, and interpersonal competence. Ayurveda offers a unique preventive framework for addressing these underlying determinants through the concepts of Prajnaparadha, Satva, Sadvritta, Achara Rasayana, Satvavajaya Chikitsa, Yoga, meditation, and Medhya Rasayana. These approaches aim to strengthen emotional resilience, ethical awareness, self-control, and social responsibility, thereby fostering emotionally intelligent and socially responsible behaviour. The integration of emotional intelligence training with Ayurvedic behavioural and mental health principles may provide a holistic, culturally relevant, and sustainable strategy for crime prevention and social well-being. Future interdisciplinary research is warranted to evaluate the effectiveness of such integrative approaches in educational institutions, community settings, and correctional rehabilitation programs.

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