

# Role of *Ayurveda* in Emerging Advances Healthcare and Well - Being and its Continuing Application for Today: Challenges and Opportunities in *Kayachikitsa*

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**Abstract:** *Ayurveda is the world's most ancient system of natural health care and unquestioned patronage in the past. The world today identifies Ayurveda as a science of healthcare. Regarding its preventive and promotive aspects, conventional system of medicine has no any specific measures to neutralize many hazardous problems. While modern medicine tends to focus on the management of disease, Ayurveda provides us with the knowledge of how to prevent the disease and how to eliminate its root cause if it does occur. Kayachikitsa is such a clinical specialty branch in Ayurveda which combines a number of approaches, such as changes in lifestyle, herbal remedies, exercise, and meditation, to strengthen and purify the body and mind and increase spiritual awareness. It follows an integrated approach to the prevention and treatment of illness and tries to maintain or re - establish harmony between the mind, body, and forces of nature. Mainstreaming of the Ayurveda system is necessary in order to help solve the human resource shortage in Indian healthcare system.*

**Keywords:** Healthcare, *Ayurveda*, *Kayachikitsa*, Challenges, Opportunities

## 1. Introduction

New emerging health challenge or issues are those that pose either a threat or relief from threat to the overall health of the population. An emerging issue can be a disease or injury that has either increased incidence or prevalence in the past decade or threatens to increase in the future. It can also be an increased visibility in a long - standing health issue that continues to obstruct the public health goal of reducing death and disability. India is presently in a state of transition - economically, demographically and epidemiologically in terms of health. While the last decade has seen remarkable economic development particularly in terms of gross domestic product (GDP) growth rate, unfortunately this progress is accompanied by growing disparities between the rich and poor.<sup>2</sup>

### A Brief History of *Ayurveda*

The history of medicine is a fascinating subject as it is a saga of man's struggle against disease. As civilization advances and as the disease pattern changes, medical science also changes. *Ayurveda* is the ancient system of medicine that evolved in India with a rationale logical foundation and it has survived as a distinct entity from remote antiquity to the present day. The fundamentals on which the *Ayurvedic* system is based are essentially true for all times and do not change from age to age. These are based on human actors, on intrinsic causes.

*Ayurveda* has an age - old history since the 2nd Century BC. *Ayurveda* has its foundations laid by the ancient schools of *Hindu* philosophical teachings named *Vaisheshika* and the school of logically named *Nyaya*. It is also related to the manifestation framework, well - known as *Samkhya*, and it was established in the same period when schools of *Nyaya*

and *Vaisheshika* flourished. The *Vaisheshika* School preached about inferences and perceptions that should be obtained about a patient's pathological condition for treatment. Whereas, *Nyaya* School propagated its teachings on the basis that one should have extensive knowledge of the patient's condition, and the disease condition before proceeding for treatment. The school of *Vaisheshika* classifies the attributes of any object into six types such as *Dravya* (substance), *Vishesh* (particularity), *Karma* (activity), *Samanya* (generality), *Samavaya* (inherence) and *Guna* (quality). Later, *Vaisheshika* and *Nyaya* schools worked together and jointly founded the *Nyaya - vaisheshika* School. The *Nyaya - Vaisheshika* school, in the later years, brought glory to the ancient knowledge and helped in disseminating the knowledge about *Ayurveda*.<sup>3</sup>

### *Ayurvedic* texts and sources

The origin of *Ayurveda* dates back to the *Vedic* era. Most material relating to health and diseases are available in *Atharva Veda*. *Ayurveda* is a part of *Atharva Veda*. However, *Rig Veda* which is the earliest *Veda* also mentions diseases and medicinal plants. The writings in *Rig Veda* and *Atharva Veda* are attributed to 'Atreya' who is believed to have been conferred with this knowledge from Lord *Indra*, who initially received it from Lord *Brahma*. *Agnivesha* compiled the knowledge from the *Vedas*, and it was edited by *Charaka* and some other scholars and is presently called "Charaka Samhita". *Charaka Samhita* describes all aspects of *Ayurvedic* medicine and *Sushruta Samhita* describes the Science of Surgery. Both these legendary compilations are still used by practitioners of traditional medicine.

The systematized form of *Ayurveda* dates back to the prehistoric period of the *Rishi* Conference which was held in the foothills of Mount Himalaya. The earliest codified document on *Ayurveda* is *Charaka Samhita*. *Sushruta*

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*Samhita* is another codified document. *Sushruta* tradition was said to be descended and propagated by *Dhanvantari* whereas *Charaka* tradition was descended through *Atreya*. *Sushruta* School is dominated by surgical procedures and techniques while *Charaka Samhita* deals with internal medicine.

*Charaka Samhita* also mentions the names of the earliest disciples of *Atreya* as *Agnivesha*, *Bhela*, *Jatukarna*, *Parashara*, *Harita* and *Ksharpani* and they separately created their treaties in the field of internal medicine. Out of these six, *Charaka Samhita* and *Bhela Samhita* are available in the authentic form today.<sup>4</sup>

#### Medical pluralism - Ayurveda view

India is medically a pluralistic society. This medical pluralism is one of the biggest lessons the world could learn from India. Health policy in India does reflect medical pluralism, however, and even though the policy is largely not implemented, its existence is a step forward for the recognition of diversity in medical choice. The majority of the Indian population has employed *Ayurvedic* health care for hundreds of years. Despite several invasions of India, *Ayurveda* has survived, although in changed form, for a number of reasons. Firstly, it is an effective system of health promotion, disease prevention and treatment. Secondly, most *vaidyas* are geographically located near the majority of the populace - in villages. Thirdly, practitioners tend to be members of the local community, thus sharing many of the cultural values of the people. Fourth, it is connected to the cosmology of the Indian people, emanating from the same root. Many people tend to implicitly understand and trust *ayurvedic* remedies and suggestions. Fifth, *Ayurvedic* consultations traditionally do not cost more than clients can reasonably afford, though there have always been exceptions, especially for civilization therapies. And lastly, *Ayurvedic* treatments, when properly employed, do not usually produce harsh side effects. This system of medicine has been adapted to many parts of the world, including Tibet, Thailand and other Central Asian nations, Indonesia, Indo - China and Mongolia.<sup>5</sup>

#### Health care Yesterday; Today - a Vision

The Indian healthcare scenario presents a spectrum of contrasting landscapes. At one end of the spectrum are the glitzy steel and glass structures delivering high tech medicine to the well - heeled, mostly urban Indian. At the other end are the ramshackle outposts in the remote reaches of the "other India" trying desperately to live up to their identity as health sub - centers, waiting to be transformed to shrines of health and wellness, a story which we will wait to see unfold. With the rapid pace of change currently being witnessed, this spectrum is likely to widen further, presenting even more complexity in the future [Fig: 1].

Our country began with a glorious tradition of public health, as seen in the references to the descriptions of the Indus valley civilization (5500–1300 BCE) which mention "Arogya" as reflecting "holistic well - being." This brings into sharp focus the WHO theme of 2018, which calls for "Universal Health Coverage - Everyone, Everywhere."<sup>6</sup>

#### Aims of Ayurveda

*Ayurveda* has two basic aims - First, to preserve the health of healthy people, and to treat illness and second to help them to attain the four *purusharthas* (four principle aims of life). Four *purusharthas* are *Dharma* (righteousness), *Artha* (prosperity), *Kama* (pleasure) and *Moksha* (liberation); Thus, the *Ayurvedic* definition of health by *Sushruta*: One whose *doshas* are in balance, whose appetite is good, whose *dhatu*s are effective normally, whose *malas* are in balance, and whose physiology, mind and senses are always full of ecstasy, is called a healthy person. Health, according to *Ayurvedic* theory, is defined as: uninterrupted physical, mental, spiritual happiness and fulfillment; a true balance of systems, psyche and spirit, and balanced and creative relationships with fellow creatures and nature as a whole, balance and harmony of the three *doshas*. According to the *Charaka samhita*, well - being is a "disease free state" to be pursued for the attainment of "virtue, wealth and gratification". A person who's self, mind, and senses are harmonious and cheerful is healthy.<sup>7</sup>

#### Health Promotion

Defining health promotion as lifestyle and behavior which enhance wellness, *Ayurvedic* theory is highly cultured. *Ayurvedic* theory shares much with health promotion. A focus on wellness is another camaraderie, although *Ayurveda* has treatment and cure as an additional part of its medicine. A focus on the environment and its connections to human health is another commonality. *Ayurvedic* nutritional guidelines would also make sense within the healthy eating focus of health promotion. *Ayurvedic* theory could thus be made generous with an understanding of structural determinants of health. Health promotion concepts, on the other hand, may be enriched by an understanding of *Panchamahabhutas*, *Tridosha* theory, ecological health concepts, *yoga* and nutrition from *Ayurveda*.<sup>8</sup>

#### Speciality in Ayurveda - the 8 folds of Ayurveda

In *Ayurveda*, there are two types of medicines: those which promote resistance of the body and promote vitality and those which cure disease. *Rasayana* and *vajikarana* are one of them, use of rejuvenating and virilizing agents to prevent aging, impart longevity, immunity against disease and assist in improving mental faculties. The second aim of *Ayurveda* is to relieve the misery of suffering patients with the attempt to cure disease. In this regard, there are eight main branches of *Ayurveda*:

- *Kaya chikitsa* (General Medicine)
- *Balachikitsa* (Children's health)
- *Shalyachikitsa* (Surgery)
- *Urdhwangachikitsa* (Eyes, ear nose and throat)
- *Grahachikitsa* (Mental health)
- *Damshtrachikitsa* (Toxicology)
- *Jarachikitsa* (Geriatric care)
- *Vrushachikitsa* (science of aphrodisiacs).

#### Brief Introduction of Kayachikitsa

*Kayachikitsa* is a pioneer branch among 8 branches of *Ayurveda*. According to modern points of view it can be correlated with General Medicine. It deals with all types of diseases like *Jwara*, *Raktapitta*, *Sosha*, *Unmada*, *Apasmara*, *Kushta*, *Atisara* etc. Among the 8 major clinical specialities branches, *Kayachikitsa* is supreme as it deals with all types

of pathology and treatment related to human bodies. *Kayachikitsa* is derived from 2 word i. e. *Kaya* and *Chikitsa*. The word '*Kaya*' means Body and *Chikitsa* means Treatment. The word *Kaya* has many synonyms to which each having different meaning. They are *Kalevar*, *Gatra*, *Vapu*, *Sharira*, *Varshma*, *Vigraha*, *Deha*, *Murti*, *Tanu* etc. For easy to analysis, the word *Kaya* is divided into 3 major types *Mana*, *Sara* and *Prakruti*. As we all know majority of diseases arises from *Mana*. *Prakruti* plays a major role in accessing the diagnosis to reach proper treatment. *Sara* shows a stability of a person while diagnosing the disease. So *Mana*, *Sara* and *Prakruti* are basic and important tools in *Kayachikitsa* from diagnosis to treatment of patient.<sup>9</sup>

#### Role of Ayurveda in the current scenario

Ordination with nature. Man with the evolution of contemporary science has forgotten the basics of healthy lifestyles and prone to sedentary life, which is impacted in causing many lifestyle disorders. Hence 21st century is an era of Non - Communicable diseases. Non - Communicable diseases mandatorily need lifestyle modifications with cumulative treatment to establish the normalcy in physiological parameters. Based on these parameters, a new dimension of calculative life has been started in living form in the modern fraternity. But according to the environmental conditions, these parameters vary from individuals defined by daily and seasonal changes. This is what *Ayurveda* has been good at explaining how to respond to these variations to maintain health. The concept of *Ayurveda* stands based on normal *Dosha* (bodily humour), *Dhatu* (tissues) and *Mala* (excretions) which are dependent on important factors like *Ahara* (food), *Dinacharya* and *Rutucharya* (Daily and Seasonal Regimens) and Concept of *Vega Dharana* and *Adharana* (Urges).<sup>10</sup>

**Ahara:** The main and sole source of energy throughout life. Hence nature of food, the pattern of intake and source of food etc. play an important role in health.

**Dinacharya and Rutucharya:** Daily and Seasonal regimen are the necessary activities that are to be followed right from awaking to the time of sleep, which is to be followed following *Tridosha*, these are again influenced by external factors like temperature, air, environmental changes, etc.

**The concept Vegadharana and Adharana:** Urges like hunger, sleep, thirst, etc are the natural expressions of internal functions of the different systems. These urges should not be suppressed so that the body is going to be in harmony. *Ayurveda* also explained psychological urges like fear, anger, sorrow; desires etc. are to be suppressed. Otherwise, they impact mental status leading to diseases. To conclude the paper, co - ordination of these three fundamentals i.e., *Ahara*, *Dinacharya*, *Rutucharya* and *Vega* concept which plays an important role in preventive health and building immunity of an individual.

#### Scope of Atyayika Chikitsa in Ayurveda

It is a belief in common public that *Ayurveda* can treat only chronic diseases and not acute and emergency diseases. This belief is wrong, misguiding and devaluating *Ayurveda*. From the *Ayurvedic* texts it is very clear that even emergency diseases or acute diseases were very well treated by

*Ayurvedic* treatment. *Ayurvedic* has been criticized for no availability of emergency management, which is mere a belief. There is documentation in the literature of *daruna* and *ashukari* (emergency) diseases, which implies that emergency was managed using *Ayurvedic* medicines. There are 3 types of emergencies viz. medical emergency in which the treatment can be given with only medicines. Certain are surgical where surgical interference is necessary and third are Gynecological emergencies.<sup>11</sup>

#### Scope of Lifestyle Disorders in Ayurveda - an Opportunities

Life style disorders refer to diseases associated with the way a person or group of people lives. These disorders are the outcome of unhealthy choices made by the people. The important causative factors of the lifestyle disorders are malnutrition, poor physical fitness, lack of sleep, fast food habits, stress, worry and poor health habits like smoking and alcohol. All these have bad impact on health. The common lifestyle disorders are Hypertension, Alzheimer's disease, arthritis, atherosclerosis, asthma, cancer, chronic liver disease, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, Type - 2 diabetes, heart diseases, osteoporosis, depression and obesity. All the Lifestyle disorders are preventable if principles of *Ayurveda* are understood and followed. *Acharya Charaka* has described the *siddhanta* of regular intake of the type of *ahara dravya* which maintain the health and prevent the diseases to occur. *Acharya Sushruta* has also advocated the *siddhanta* of *nidanaparivarjana*. Aforesaid *Kayachikitsa* plays a pivot role in treating above said diseases by means of *Samshodhana* therapy, *Panchakarma* therapy, *Yoga* etc.<sup>12</sup>

#### Healthcare Challenges and Opportunities in 21<sup>st</sup> Century - an Ayurveda Initiative

##### Challenges:

- Increase in rate of population.
- Shifting disease burden from communicable disease to non - communicable diseases.
- Increase in incidence of lifestyle - related diseases in urban India.
- Accessibility to healthcare services is extremely limited to many rural areas of the country.
- In addition, existing healthcare infrastructure is unplanned and is irregularly distributed.

In 21<sup>st</sup> century various pandemic diseases comes forward like H1N1, Chikungunya, Ebola, Fibromyalgia, Restless Leg syndrome, Swine - flu and now COVID19. *Ayurveda* has enough potential and possibilities to be employed both for prevention and treatment of COVID - 19. This provides an important opportunity for learning and generating credible evidence. It is pertinent to reiterate that participation of *Ayurveda* in addressing the COVID - 19 challenge in India should not remain limited and seen as the extension of healthcare services and support to bio - medical system. Implementation of proposed action is likely to provide evidence - based insights strengthening the scope of *Ayurveda* beyond preventive health care and care for non - communicable diseases. AYUSH system across the country has been put on alert for being called anytime to serve the nation. India is the country where the world's oldest living



health care system originated and therefore it is being carefully watched by the world community for how it handles the crisis using its own resources.<sup>13</sup>

### Envisaging speciality clinics in Ayurveda: need - based strategies are required

Looking at various clinical subspecialties in *Ayurveda* and matching them with the patient's input, the primary focus area for *Ayurvedic* practitioner seems to be the one where people have trust in its efficacy. To recognize the share of *Ayurveda* in easing out the disease burden and to utilize the huge patient input available at *Ayurvedic* outdoors, recognition of the clinical entities in dual diagnostic terms, both *Ayurvedic* as well as modern is required. Making a dual diagnosis in *Ayurvedic* clinics may come as a great help in quantifying the real contribution of *Ayurveda* in clinical conditions recognizable by the health care policymakers. Subsequently, by observing the benefits based on deliverables, the impact of *Ayurvedic* interventions in such clinical entities can be measured and quantified. This will give *Ayurveda* a credit for its services which remained unrecognized for a long. From a health policy perspective, this will help a more thoughtful, rational and proportionate resource allocation to *Ayurveda* in a ratio of its actual contribution to effective health care.

Building up speciality clinics in *Ayurveda* seems to be the most pragmatic way to cherish these long term goals of defining clearly, what a system is contributing to the total health care delivery in the country.<sup>14</sup>

## 2. Conclusion

This paper has served as an exploration of one system of holistic medicine, to further develop and concretize a broader discussion of holism and holistic medical practices. *Ayurvedic* healthcare concentrates on the health and well-being of the individual as a whole, and as a member of society. The complete management of health and body comes under approaches of *Kayachikitsa* that mainly involves diagnosis and treatment of health ailments using medicine and other modalities. These therapies help to maintain balance of *Vata*, *Pitta* and *Kapha*, potentiate *Dhatu*, enhance nourishment, regularize circulatory process and detoxify body thus prevent disease prevalence and also combat against adverse effects.

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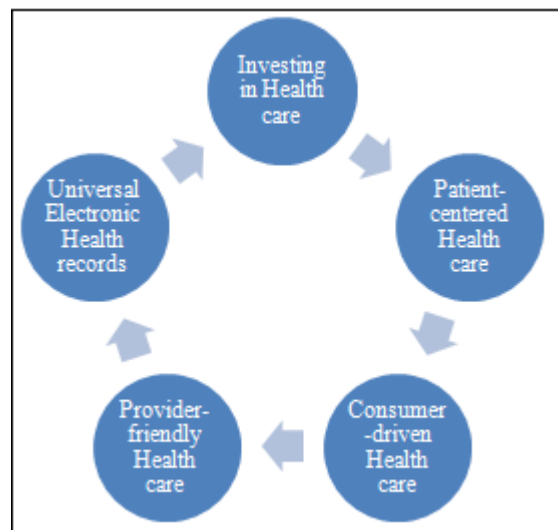


Figure 1: Vision of 21st Health care System