

Mainstreaming of Ayurveda: Challenges and Opportunities

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Abstract: *Ayurveda is an ancient science. It is in an appropriate way, called as 'science of life'. It has roots in Indian culture. Due to some reasons the science has lost its identity in its own place, India, though it is emerging as a new system of medicine in foreign countries. Other than being ancient and so called 'old' science, there are many other problems that come in the way of mainstreaming of Ayurveda. These problems must be solved in order to find a way to represent our science in front of public as eternal one. There are many issues needed to be focused to know the benefits areas of new research challenges ahead of Ayurveda and future opportunities. The issues come from various fields like the curricular level, marketing strategies, standardization, government authorities, higher level bodies and so on. But there are few ways to solve these issues and we can emerge again as a new face of healthcare system.*

1. Introduction

Different healthcare systems in this world such as acupuncture, naturopathy, acupressure etc. every system has its own importance, his own concept, his own views and his own methods for treating various ailments, although it is understood that Ayurveda is the oldest and basic healthcare system in which all other systems can be emerged. Due to the downfall in Ayurveda which was started from the attack of Bakhtiyar Khilji who burned nearly all literature of Ayurveda in Nalanda, Takshsheela and Vikramsheel University; Ayurveda become unrecognized healthcare system for some decades. Present era is advanced and competitive. In this competitive world Ayurveda is trying to establish itself as an eternal science. Changes in life style, food habits, work load, speed of life etc. in present scenario demand a lot of change in Ayurvedic system of medicine. To withstand in this competition and to achieve goals few modifications has been required in the present system and few miraculous ways mentioned in Ayurveda for increasing longevity of life and maintaining the health status of human being can be included e. g. Rejuvenation therapy. Thus, there is need to discuss mainstreaming of Ayurveda, challenges, their solutions and future opportunities in Ayurveda related field. Many of the issues are well known, but ignored. Some of the issues, though difficult to understand as well as resolve. The process demands involvement at all levels like private practitioners, governing bodies, pharmaceutical industries etc.

Lack of refreshing the knowledge is one of the important issues. Being in a profession dealing with public health, it is quiet demanding that knowledge of professionals and academicians are refreshed at regular intervals. It is seen that people of our stream rarely possess knowledge regarding recent advancements. We feel immense pleasure in discussing greatness of Ayurveda among ourselves only. The Ayurveda is banned in Canada, in South Africa the Ayurvedic doctors are only for suggest yoga and dietary things only etc. Nobody is bothered about how much people outside our circle count us. Governing body is also not concerned about practices outside the academic sections. In

addition to these there is no compulsion for teaching faculty to undergo regular CME programs. Further there is no authentic body to regulate CME programs and bring all updated information to academic zones. No regular workshops are carried out to refresh their knowledge with current researches, so that it will reach up to the students. Due to all this, Ayurveda is falling to give up its image as a non - scientific hypothetical system of medicine and to tune up with the modernized society. Though it seems to be difficult to bring in force, it is important that renewal of registration for practice should be compulsory at a definite interval and should be done only after qualifying exams. The exams should be based on practical applicability of knowledge and also on recent researches and advancements. Training programs and workshops may be required to be introduced for Ayurvedic academicians, where training may be given in planning the research protocols, preparing the research projects and in other various areas of research methodology. Regular CME programs and attending seminars must be a compulsion for academic people.

Across the globe, Ayurveda is emerging as a traditional healing system, but it is not gaining popularity with respect to its value. It is counted in foreign countries along with additives to food products which are very unfortunate. In spite of promising power of Ayurveda in curing major disorders, it has not significantly proved its efficacy globally. Questions on safety and efficacy of Ayurvedic products are also being raised based on insignificant number of doubtful cases. The main issue is with the faithfulness of Ayurvedic preparations containing heavy metals. There are no standards properly set that are followed by all manufacturers. Whichever are established, they are not followed by all industries and that's why standard drug preparations are not available. Any doubt on the safety of a preparation will lead to rejection of that preparation at the regulatory level. However, it is not possible to maintain percent proportion of metals/minerals in Ayurvedic formulations as per WHO guidelines because most of Rasaushadhi contain large proportion of Bhasma which mostly 100 to 1000 times more than permissible limit. Hence there is big scope for research on Ayurvedic formulations

and it is satisfying to mention that CCRAS, AYUSH, ICMR etc. are providing funds for such works.

Ayurveda in the present day being praised as the time tested, unique holistic life science that has been securing humanity for many centuries. But unfortunately, it is not being allowed to secure humanity up to its best level. The basic reason for this is the various challenges that it is facing in the field of its education and practice. The challenges of Ayurvedic education and that of Ayurvedic practice are interred linked. The solutions for Ayurvedic educational challenges can solve most of the challenges of Ayurvedic practice. The basic challenges that Ayurvedic education is facing are:

Non – availability of all classical Literature:

Most of the classical text has been lost due to some unfortunate reasons and most of the available literature is in compilation form which needs to be explored in scientific way, some literature has been translated and available in foreign countries. Such literature should be brought back and should be utilized to increase the preciousness of our knowledge.

Scattered Knowledge:

It is not exaggeration to mention that Ayurveda is ocean of knowledge but on the other hand it represents great difficulty in compiling necessary information and presenting in systematic way. This is the reason behind scattered information in many classical texts such as classification of drugs and diseases in Charak and Sushruta samhita, missing chapter from Kashyap samhita.

Inadequacy of Knowledge:

During ancient time Ayurveda was taught in Guru - Shishya parampara format and most of the terminology, procedures, drug identifications etc were simply known. Hence detail of everything is not mentioned by ancient seers which today may look as inadequacy of knowledge. Such knowledge needs to be expressed and evaluated in terms of modern science.

Lack of adequate clinical exposure:

Ayurvedic students are not allowed to observe clinical cases till their final year. The gap of 3 years without any touch with clinical experience leads to negative view towards Ayurveda and inadequate understanding of applied Ayurvedic concept.

Lack of an effective and uniform professional media of conversation:

This challenge is posing a major threat to Ayurvedic science. In spite of so many hurdles involved in understanding and practice Ayurveda there are many persons/doctors who could acquire good conceptual and practical knowledge of Ayurveda. Some of them are very much interested to give their knowledge to others. There are also people who are eager to take knowledge from them. But the purpose is not being solved. Because the persons who are interested to give information are not able to do so because the conversational media, they use is not conveying his intension precisely to the audience. The various terms used in samhita as conversational media of Ayurvedic science are having wide

applicability and when this media of conversation is used as it is the audiences are not able to understand the new information precisely. Therefore, there is an urgent need of an effective & uniform professional media of conversation for the faculty of Ayurveda. Until then the treasure of knowledge of Ayurveda remains unrevealed and untouched and no scientific research in Ayurveda can be meaningful.

There are basically two sets of challenges - Pre - Globalization and Post Globalization.

Acceptability:

These are related with acceptability of Ayurveda national system of healthcare, the slow and limited acceptability of Ayurveda in society is due to some common reasons such as

- Lack of awareness – Spreading the awareness
- Difficulty in explaining the system – Explaining Ayurveda in simple terms
- Bad perception of Herbo - mineral system of medicine – Research on herb mineral medicines
- These are the future areas increasing the acceptability of Ayurveda

Many countries don't recognize Ayurveda as a system of medicine:

Recent finding of heavy metal poisoning cases and some research papers are published on these issues, caused serious damage to Ayurvedic system, some countries have banned on practicing Ayurvedic medicines and permitted Ayurvedic physician to work only as health and diet consultant. Providing evidence based scientific data on related concern and conducting seminars for dispersing awareness towards Ayurveda will help in not only removing ambiguity but also it increases the professional opportunities in foreign countries.

Process of standardization of health care service:

Standardization is needed to maintain the consistency in results. In India Ayurveda is originated and flourished in different regions and every region developed some best measures for treating some common diseases. Such measures need to be standardized and to let know everyone. This will increase the success rate of treating diseases and will reduce the duration of treatment. Even prescription products need branding today. Ayurveda will need to be branded – as a positive brand and then individual products will be branded. These days even branding takes the help of science. It is easier to sell shoes if you can tell the customers that it has been designed using a patented scientific method (e. g.; Nike) and you sell more shampoo if it has some active ingredient that is known to make hair healthier! It shouldn't be difficult for a 5000 - year - old science to do so once we are able to get our act together.

Quality controls:

QC is the most important and must factor for every science. Even during ancient time seers of Ayurveda where well known about the QC but the ancient's parameters of QC are macroscopic and they are limitedly helpful in globalization of Ayurveda. Moreover, today's Ayurvedic practitioners are largely depends on drug manufacturing companies hence the guidelines given by the government must be followed by

everyone to maintain the safety, efficacy and quality of medicine.

Increased scope for innovation and change in progress:

Ayurveda have attracted attention of whole world by its incredible way of treating chronic and recurrent diseases without causing any major untoward effects. Therefore, if one considered modernization of Ayurveda then it means finding too many ways for those diseases which are considered hard to cure and even incurable one. To achieve such modernization, study in Ayurvedic concept with modern point of view is the basic requirement which will need finding truth behind fundamental concept of Ayurveda. Till date no one has discovered Vata, Pitta, Kapha, Panchamahabhut, Jatharagni etc. in laboratory which means the modern laboratory methods have limited scope for Ayurveda. It's clearly suggesting that to evaluate Ayurvedic concepts researcher have to study them with Ayurvedic point of view up till finding of above - mentioned factors in laboratory.

Job Opportunities:

Ayurveda is said to be helpful in achievement of the Trivarga that is Dharma, Artha and Kama. But in present era, rather the stage of life in which we complete the graduation in Ayurveda, demands more for the 'Artha' factor. The job security for Ayurveda graduates is very less as compared to those in other fields. There is a smaller number of vacancies for medical officers, research officers, teaching staff as compared to the number of students completing graduation and post - graduation per year. This is one of the important reasons why students select Ayurveda not by choice but by force. Most commonly, they do so because they have no other option to become a 'Doctor'. At the edge of completing the degree or P. G. course, students are most of the times frustrated as they are not sure with availability of the ways to earn their living. Many times, it is difficult to start with private practice alone. It takes an ample amount of time for proper establishment so as to be enough to meet the financial requirements of the family. Students perceive this problem to be a more serious one in comparison to teachers. This indicates that there is a considerable level of career - related anxiety among students. This anxiety is noticeably less among teachers because they are already into a job.

Number of jobs for Ayurveda graduates need to be increased at all levels. Government is required to look into the matter related to the creation of job opportunities for BAMS graduates in certain departments like Railways and Defense. In teaching institutions too, some posts like tutors and medical officers may be created for BAMS graduates. Ayurveda may be included as an optional subject in the entrance examinations leading to Indian Administrative Services (IAS) just like modern medicine. If the quality of education is improved, some job opportunities may open up in research institutes and in other places in the health care industry as well. Private sector can also be encouraged in order to invest in various fields of Ayurveda to help generate vacancies.

The whole world of Ayurveda is divided into various levels, like the students, academicians, research workers,

practitioners, professionals, and people from governing bodies. There is no proper source of communication between all these levels so that there can be sharing of knowledge at various levels. In ancient period also, Sambhashaparishads were carried out to meet this purpose. This challenge is posing a major threat to Ayurvedic science. There are many practitioners those have a thorough knowledge of Ayurveda and know how to apply it in this period of time. There is a tendency of some senior consultants not to share their special experiences in practice with their juniors. Still, many of them are eager to share their secrets in practice. Even there are some students who are thirsty for knowledge and not merely for a college degree. But due to communication gap, the sharing of knowledge faces many problems. Many researches are going on at various levels but there is no proper platform to keep them in front of all. Many important concepts need to be cleared wherever there are disputes between two streams. Also, there is a general tendency towards agreement that Ayurvedic academicians do not figure anywhere in authoring the scientific and evidence - based papers in reputed international journals and they do not voluntarily participate in international platforms to present their research data. Common platforms should be increasingly created where people in all levels can meet and share their knowledge with each other. They may be in any form like seminars, CMEs, research journals, social media, news media etc. Everyone related to the field should be encouraged to share their experiences through the media.

Globalization of Ayurveda:

Finally, what we call as a stream is the general public. We are what they recognize us. But unfortunately, ours is not a famous healthcare system. Till date, a major bulk of people never considers Ayurveda as a science. This is obviously due to lack of awareness and communication with the general public. People in today's era want quick relief from ailments where Ayurveda lags a little behind. It is most important to convey the various aspects of Ayurveda to the general public. It can be done through various health camps, creating awareness through mass media. It should be presented in front of people in a way that it proves to be most practical and easy to be adjusted with daily routine. It is true that modern medicine offers prompt relief; rather it is the only option for medical emergencies. But apart from that, Ayurveda has many additional advantages that can be focused in order to gain popularity in general public. Health promotional aspect is one of them especially in these times when people are encircled with lifestyle disorders. Ayurveda aims towards maintenance of health of a healthy person. This aspect is many times overlooked. Ayurveda has an advantage over other health systems as such type of regimes are described only here. If we consider the importance of this aspect, we can not only play an important role in creating a healthy society but also can make Ayurvedic science gain more importance in the society over other health systems. People in this era are much conscious about health maintenance. If this aspect is projected, Ayurveda can reach up to a large bulk of population. Private practitioners should emphasize on this point while interacting with patients. Various institutes of Ayurveda that have the capacity of creating large teams for mass work can help by arranging health promotion camps among cities and health

awareness camps in remote areas. There are many diseases where modern medicine can't find ways of management. They can be effectively cured or managed with Ayurveda. This specially includes lifestyle disorders which are causing a big headache to the healthcare system. This load can be minimized by our stream but it should be well focused and projected to general public.

2. Other Scopes

There are opportunities and only we will be blamed for missing them. Our Yogis invented Yoga thousands of years ago. We forgot about it and it was rediscovered in the West and we re - imported it as YOGA. Today it is hard to find a Yoga teacher in London who has any training whatsoever in the actual practice in Yoga. Not many books about Yoga are written by Indian experts. Ayurved has already turned into Ayurveda!! We shouldn't wait until we have to buy Ayurvedic drugs from a multinational pharmaceutical company!!

For the past 37 years (since establishment of the Council) the syllabus of Under - Graduate and Post Graduate courses of Ayurveda, Unani and Siddha were in Sanskrit, Urdu and Tamil languages respectively. The language barrier was hindering the path of success and popularity of these systems inside and outside the country. The present Council came forward & took steps to popularize the Indian System of Medicine and successfully completed the task of translating the whole syllabus of three systems into English language which is a globally accepted language.

The syllabus of Under - Graduate and Post Graduate courses of Ayurveda, Unani and Siddha were not updated since long and the present Council updated the UG and PG syllabus of all three systems, and this is applicable from this session in all over the country. To provide specialized services of ISM systems and to enhance the benefits of these ancient systems, the Council has designed new Ayurveda PG Diploma courses in 16 subjects. The aim of introducing new PG Diploma courses in Ayurveda is to produce specialists of Ayurveda who can practice Ayurveda more efficiently and successfully.

Standard of the ISM colleges is reflected from the graduates and post - graduate's scholars before the year 2008 - 09, number of sub - standards colleges were running and ruining the future of the students. The present Council took the matter seriously and without making any compromise with the standard of education, it withdraws its recommendations which eventually led the stoppage of admission in such sub - standards colleges. After observing the Minimum Standards and Requirements of these college & hospital a strict scrutiny of the visitation report was carried out and 84 Ayurveda, 26 Unani and 03 Siddha colleges (2008-09) and 64 Ayurveda, 01 Siddha and 08 Unani colleges (2009-10) and 55 Ayurveda and 01 Unani colleges (2010-11) have not been permitted to take admission. It is also noteworthy to mention here that not a single college was denied for to take admission by the council /GOI prior to the commencement of this present Council.

To improve the actual assessment of teaching and practical training facilities along with the teaching staff in conformity with the Minimum Standards laid down by CCIM some actions have been initiated like preparation of the data base of the teaching staff, appointment of teaching staff in Ayurveda, construction of the building of college & hospital, improvement of the functioning of the hospital.

Present Council hold many meetings with all subject experts/eminent teachers of three systems in order to make ISM system more practically. So, the qualified ISM doctors may become more skilled practitioners, researchers and scientists and can provide the best services to the community.

3. Conclusion

Ayurveda is a good healthcare system and it working for benefit of humanity. It is duty of every Ayurvedic physician to put his best for serving peoples and making efforts to stand for its own sake in the world as science of life and to prevent the world from the increasing numbers of diseases. Problems and limitations arise due to ignorance. Knowledge brings solutions and scope. It can be interpreted that number of opportunities in Ayurvedic field is far more than the challenges ahead but most of the Ayurvedic peoples focused their attention on fear of challenges and thus missing opportunities. Hence sincere and devoted study of Ayurveda is must and basic requirement by which people of Ayurveda will be not only able to face all challenges but also will obtain treasure of opportunities.