

## MODERNISM OF AYURVEDA

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## ABSTRACT

The ancient Indian medical system of Ayurveda is examined in this research paper along with the idea of modernism. Ayurveda has a long tradition and has been used for more than 5000 years but in the current era, it has undergone considerable adjustments to make it more applicable and available to modern culture. The paper discusses linking Ayurveda with the modern efforts of strengthening the medical system as well as the present situation of Ayurveda in the world and the upcoming opportunities waiting for it. The implications of combining modern science and technology with the oldest form of medicine are examined in the study, including the incorporation of contemporary scientific research, the adoption of new technologies, and the creation of novel therapeutic approaches. Additionally, the study looks at the difficulties and objections Ayurveda has encountered in its attempts to modernize, including the conflict between tradition and innovation, the requirement for standardization and regulation, and the objection to cultural appropriation.

The paper starts by talking about the History of Ayurveda followed by going through the way of its achievements. It also flashes light on the current scenario and its futuristic goals. The paper also talks about the Hurdles that could be faced by Ayurveda in the near future in terms of its growth among the common people before coming to an important Conclusion.

**Keywords:** *Ayurveda, Modernism, Modern Technologies, Modern medicine, ancient science, Evidence-based research.*

## INTRODUCTION

For estimating the future of Ayurveda, it is required to know about its history. Here are some facts about the ancient system of Ayurveda that have been discussed.

### 1.1 HISTORY OF AYURVEDA

#### 1.1 (a) Origin

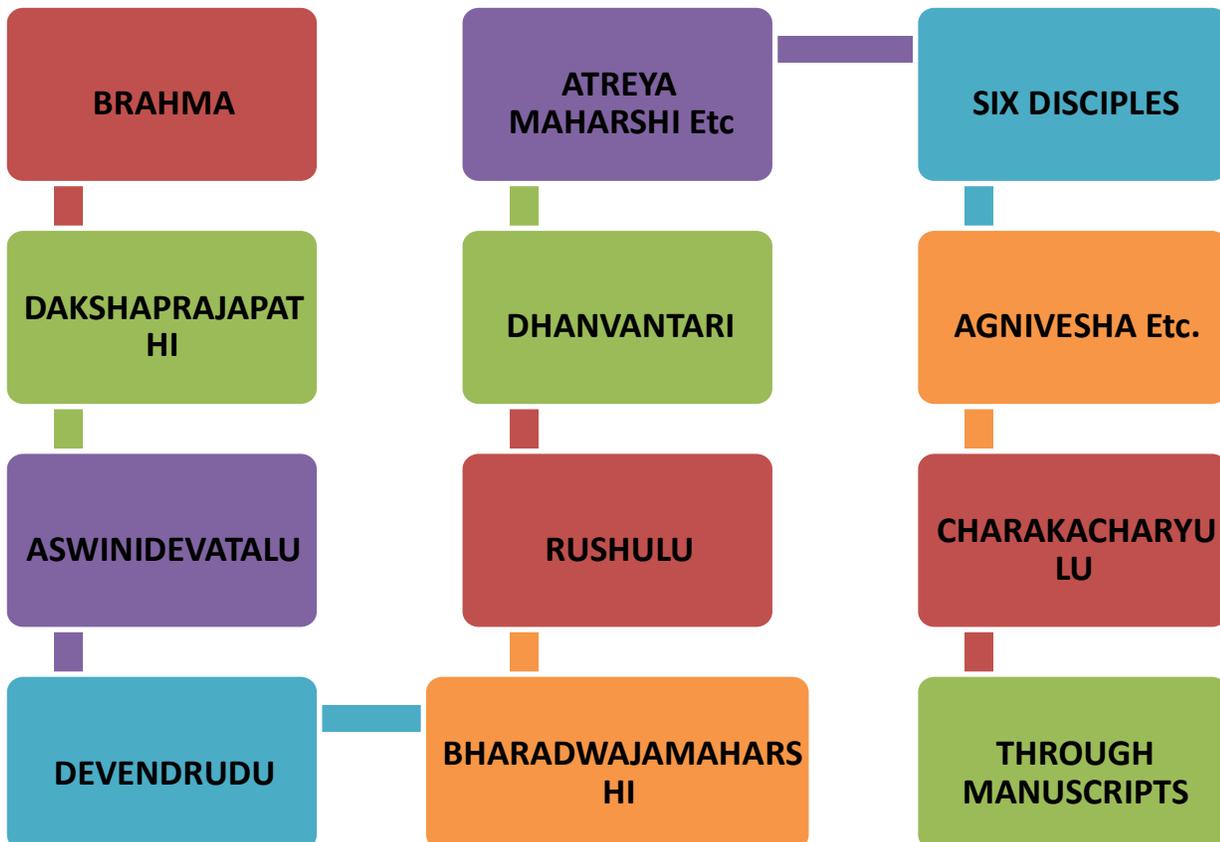
Ayurveda is an ancient medicinal system estimated to have been practiced for the last 5000 years and originated in India. Vedas, the sacred ancient scriptures of Bharat, are mentioned as the ground from which Ayurveda originates. In the Vedas, Ayurveda is mentioned as a holistic approach to healing body and mind.<sup>1</sup> In the course of tracing back history, there is no limit to adding information and data in an article. The estimated history brings our eyes back to 5000 years ago. According to the history of Bharat, the period 5000 years behind is known as Vedic Kaal<sup>2</sup>. The vedic kaal is said to end from 5000 BC to 2700 BC. The origin of Ayurveda is unanimously accepted by lord Brahma.

As per Acharya Vagbhatt –

ब्रह्मा स्मृत्वायुषो वेदम् , प्रजपतिम् अजीगरहत । सो  
अश्विनौ तौ सहस्रत्रक्षम्, सो अत्रिपुत्रादिकान् मुनीन् ॥

This shloka clarifies that Ayurveda was first remembered by lord Brahma, then transferred to Daksh Prajapati, from where it was given to Ashwini Kumaras and then to Muni Atri and his disciples. Here is a diagrammatic representation of the above information with the help of flow chart given below<sup>3</sup>, which also shows that ancient Ayurveda came into existence.

Flow chart Detail: *Source - www.vanchintaluru.com*



Although many sages appeared in the frame for practising and working on Ayurveda, some are known to do remarkable works. The three acharyas, Charak, Sushruta, and Kashyapa, have worked in different fields of study of human health. Acharya Charak worked on “Kaya chikitsa”<sup>4</sup>, Acharya Sushruta worked on Shalya chikitsa<sup>5</sup> and Acharya Kashyapa worked on Kaumarbhritya (Pediatrics).<sup>6</sup> Although the origin of Ayurveda has been unanimously accepted, the thought of expansion of Ayurveda contains different views and votes. Three accepted theories were put forward over the expansion of Ayurveda. These theories were manifested by Muni Atreya, Acharya Bhavprakash and Bhagwan Dhanwantari.<sup>7</sup>

### 1.1 (b) Texts

Among the four Vedas, the Atharvaveda is considered as the womb of Ayurveda.<sup>8</sup> There are also several texts available that not only simplify but also expand the original sense of Ayurveda for humanity. In this practice, among the first texts are Brahm Samhita and Ksharpani Samhita. The Brahm Samhita contains one thousand chapters & one lakh shlokas. The texts are divided into two sections: those with lengthy descriptions and more shlokas are given the term *Brihattryee*, and those with a short description and compressed information are put under the section *Laghutryee*. The *Brihattryee* contains three Samhitas, those are Sushrut Samhita, Charak Samhita & Ashtanghridayam (by Acharya Vagbhatt). The *Laghutryee* section includes Madhav Nidan, Sharangdhar Samhita & Bhav Prakash Samhita. This is the summarised view of the ancient system of medicine, which proves that Ayurveda is not just a subject that should be believed in but also a subject to deal with its application for fetching out windfall results. It would be interesting to know that the knowledge that has traversed such a long way of around 5000 years has achieved what it has in this modern era and how it is marching parallel with this technical world.

## **1.2 AYURVEDIC INITIATIVES & CHALLENGES: INDIA & GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE**

Now let’s have a look at what this system has achieved in this due course of time. It would be nice to know that Ayurveda is not only limited to the line drawn by its ancient scriptures and Saints but also trying to raise its head high to shower ambrosia with its never-lasting knowledge with the help of modern technologies for the welfare of humanity for its welfare.

Ayurveda, an ancient Indian system of medicine, is experiencing a revival in interest and research in recent years. Here are some of the new researches in Ayurveda:

**1.2 (a) GWAS (Genome-Wide Association Studies):** GWAS is an applied genomic study that has been used to identify the genetic factors that are associated with Ayurvedic body types (i.e., *Doshas*) and susceptibility to specific health conditions.<sup>9</sup> It could be believed that the outcomes of this study or the studies related to gene programming are going to establish revolutionary changes in the treatment policy of Ayurveda, as knowing the Prakriti of the patient in the initial state of diagnosis is of the foremost importance following which an

Ayurvedacharya initiates its treatment. Integrating Biochemistry, Biophysics, bioinformatics, and biotechnology along with this traditional medical system, which hides the treasure of human health in its womb, is not only going to empower the practices of *Modernism of Ayurveda* but also a powerful weapon for the health workers to fight against any of the chronic or lethal diseases with great potential. Adding *genomics* to the syllabus of Ayurveda graduates has become the need of the hour.

1.2 (b) Ayurvedic herbs in cancer treatment:

Ayurvedic herbs, such as Ashwagandha and Curcumin, have been studied for their potential in treating cancer and reducing the side effects of chemotherapy.<sup>10</sup> From the author's point of view, this should be considered in the remarks that chemotherapy in the cancer treatment process contains high-potential drugs needed to counter the disease. Here in ayurvedic treatment, natural products are being used and given to the patient by studying their *Prakriti*. It should be

taken into consideration that the drugs given under the ayurvedic method of treatment have not only any proven side effects on human health but also give positive results.

### 1.2 (c) Ayurvedic interventions for mental health:

Ayurvedic interventions, including meditation, yoga, and herbal supplements, have been studied for their potential in treating mental health conditions such as anxiety, depression, and schizophrenia. According to the author's view, on the one hand, where the modern medical system is using different kinds of drugs like Tranquilizers, Anti-depressant, Anti-anxiety, etc., which leads to severe complications such as constipation, headache, dizziness, hair loss, weight gain, etc., by the time, on the other hand, the ayurvedic treatment process leads to almost no proven complication but gives complete relief to the diseased. Under Ayurvedic treatment, the patient is often not compelled to go through the medication. Still, it is majorly treated only by ways of meditation and allows patients to undergo a healthy and stress-free lifestyle through yoga. This should be accepted worldwide as a sure-shot treatment method for stress diseases so that a vast number of innocent suffering human society could get rid of these harmful medications and shift themselves to a better lifestyle through meditation and ayurvedic treatment methods.

### 1.2 (d) Ayurvedic diet and lifestyle interventions:

Ayurvedic and lifestyle interventions have been studied for their potential in managing chronic health conditions such as diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, and obesity.<sup>11</sup> However, where it is believed in society that a disease can be treated by medicines only, and until one is compelled to undergo medication, one is considered healthy. Ayurvedic treatment focuses on the patient's lifestyle, and the main objective of Ayurveda is to cure the diseased person and maintain the health of a healthy person. As stated in Charak Samhita.

स्वस्थस्य स्वास्थ्य रक्षणं । आतुरस्य विकार

प्रशमनम् च ॥ (च.सू. २०/३६)

This could be taken as a suggestion that the governing bodies of any state or country should work on establishing "ayurvedic health care centres", which are specifically meant for the maintenance of the health of

a healthy population so that preventing the population from encountering severe lifestyle diseases such as depression, diabetes, thyroid, sleeplessness, etc. These healthcare centres would help remarkably in maintaining a healthy society and lessen the patient load from doctors in the future. This practice could be proven as a milestone in the direction of human health.

**1.2 (e) Ayurvedic pharmacology:** As can be seen, various Ayurvedic drugs are available in the market made by multiple pharmaceutical companies. This could be only possible due to modern pharmacological techniques used to extract essential components from the targeted plants and make the desired formulation to treat the particular disease.

### 1.2 (f) Ayurvedic ways of treatments for diabetes:

Some more studies have been done to determine the results of ayurvedic medication and ways of living, such as yoga and meditation, on diabetes, which have proven their remarkable effects on the disease. There are some recent examples from all over the world that people can cure their diabetes by wholly relying upon the Ayurvedic treatment method. These efforts and results are encouraging not only for ayurvedic practitioners that their ancient knowledge of medicine is not just a fairy tale but also for all of the medical sectors that they are getting an additional mode of treatment for counteracting severe chronic diseases.

### 1.2 (g) Ayurvedic treatment for cardiovascular health:

Several studies have demonstrated the potential of ayurvedic treatments, which include both natural herbs as medication and lifestyle modification, in dealing with cardiovascular diseases and managing cardiovascular conditions.

**1.2 (h) Ayurvedic herbs for mental health:** It has been scientifically proven that certain ayurvedic herbs, like *Brahmi* and *Ashwagandha*, can be effectively used for managing depression, anxiety, and schizophrenia-like mental disorders.

Another point to be taken as a suggestion here is that the ayurvedic herbs used for medication should be made famous by the governing bodies among the standard population so that these herbs are considered sacred and used and preserved by every home, recognising their medicinal values. This initiative should be seen as of paramount importance as

witnessing the increasing demands of ayurvedic herbs for treatments; there should not be any doubt that if not done so, we will soon suffer from a shortage of medicinal plants and would be compelled to rely on modern medicines which will bring other consequences during the treatment.

The highlighted initiatives above prove how Ayurveda, although an ancient mode of medicine, leaves no stone unturned to merge with the latest technologies and find the best version of itself just for the human cause and its welfare. Various new research in Ayurveda provides scientific evidence to support the traditional knowledge and practices of Ayurveda and pave the way for innovations in Ayurvedic medicine. Currently, Ayurveda is establishing various milestones, as discussed above, and also attracting different nations worldwide to accept it into their primary health structure or as an alternative system of medicine. Other countries are also interested in developing this medicinal system as they feel that Ayurveda is only for the welfare of their people. For this, various nations are planning different projects in their country for the upbringing of Ayurveda, using multiple creative ways.

### **1.3 CURRENT STATE OF AFFAIRS & FUTURISTIC GOALS**

Currently, the world has slightly shifted its interest towards Ayurveda. This ancient system of medicine has now established its name in the medical arena of the world, as it is now being recognised as an alternative form of therapy in several countries, including the United States of America, Canada, Australia, and different parts of Europe. Ayurvedic products, such as herbal supplements and skin care products, have also become increasingly popular globally, leading to the commercialisation of the Ayurvedic industry. Several governments, particularly in India, have taken steps to promote and support Ayurveda, including establishing research centres and including Ayurvedic education in the mainstream education system. Several countries have also planned different goals to achieve to not only make Ayurveda a better option of treatment in their country but also to empower it for the public welfare. This will pace up the rejuvenation and promotion of this stream of medical science. Here are some

examples citing different steps taken by other countries and also some futuristic goals decided by them -:

**1.3 (a) India:** The government of India has started many programs and policies to promote Ayurveda, such as the National Ayush Mission and the Ayurveda Education Quality Improvement Program. Other than this, the Indian government has also decided to open Ayush units in AIIMS.

**1.3 (b) United States:** The US government has already taken steps to empower and promote Ayurveda in their country. The government is also trying to increase its people's awareness of the benefits of Ayurvedic medicines and modes of treatment. There are several functional clinics in the United States where many Ayurvedic practitioners serve people using this ancient treatment system.

**1.3 (c) Germany:** Germany is also among nations that recognise Ayurveda as a complementary form of medicine. The “German Ayurveda Association” has been established to promote Ayurveda practice and research in the country.

**1.3 (d) Nepal and Sri Lanka:** The other two neighbouring countries to India, Nepal and Sri Lanka, have established an objective of promoting Ayurveda as a means of promoting tourism and turning it into a significant healthcare system. To advance Ayurveda practice and research, the government of Nepal created the Ayurveda Research and Training Centre and the Ayurveda Hospital in Kathmandu. In contrast, the Sri Lankan government has established the Department of Ayurveda and the Ayurveda Teaching Hospital to promote Ayurveda practice and research.

These initiatives demonstrate the growing recognition and promotion of Ayurveda in different countries, with efforts to standardise and regulate its practice, promote research and development, and increase access to Ayurvedic healthcare. These steps that have been taken or planned for the future to uplift Ayurveda and give it worldwide recognition should be applauded, as Ayurveda has to deal with many issues in its growth path. Establishing the actual glory of Ayurveda in today's world would be possible one day. Still, it is essential to see all the difficulties waiting to halt its way.

## **1.4 ISSUES AND CHALLENGES FOR AYURVEDA**

Although it is an ancient science related to health, Ayurveda is currently in the course of establishing its trust among the people and struggling for its growth in the medical stream. Like any other field, it will face some hurdles shortly. Among those, some are listed below -:

**1.4 (a) Scarcity of standardisation:** Since now it is well known that Ayurveda is thousands of years of medical science, this could be the reason of fact stated above that there is an almost scarcity of standardisation, which would lead to several complications during the manufacturing of different medicines. Hence, if there were no standardisations available, then there would be a quality and efficacy hamper seen in the products.

**1.4 (b) Limited scientific evidence:** Being an ancient system of medicine, the major hurdle that Ayurveda has to face shortly is that it needs more scientific evidence to treat several diseases.<sup>12</sup> Despite being able to cure some chronic diseases, if there were no scientific evidence to prove how that disease was cured, it would make it more difficult for Ayurveda to gain acceptance worldwide to become the mainstream medicine.

**1.4 (c) Competition with modern medicine:** Ayurvedic medicines are often taken as an alternative to modern medicines. The presence of solid scientific evidence enhances the credibility of modern medicine in the market. Many other reasons ensure Ayurveda's Establishment's worth among the people, even when modern medicine has already proven its effects, which is a huge hurdle.<sup>13</sup>

**1.4 (d) Lack of trained practitioners:** When Ayurvedic practitioners are required for the renewable and revival process of Ayurveda, we need expert and trained Ayurvedic practitioners. This scarcity is slowing the pace of the concerned developing stream and is also hazardous for public health. Trained Ayurvedic practitioners are the backbone of this ancient medical system; sadly, it lacks it and is thus facing a big hurdle.

**1.4 (e) Regulatory challenges:** The regulation of Ayurvedic medicines and practices can vary widely

from country to country, creating challenges for practitioners and manufacturers.<sup>14</sup> In some cases, Ayurvedic products may be banned or restricted due to safety concerns.

**1.4 (f) Integration with Modern Medicine:** Ayurveda is often viewed as an alternative or complementary system of medicine, but there is a need for it to be integrated with modern medicine. This integration can be challenging, as the two systems of medicine have different approaches to healthcare.<sup>15</sup>

**1.4 (g) Quality Control:** The quality control of Ayurvedic medicines is another challenge that needs to be addressed. There have been instances of adulteration of Ayurvedic medicines, which can be harmful to the patient.

While Ayurveda has gained popularity in recent years, it may face several hurdles shortly. However, with continued research, standardisation, and training, Ayurveda may overcome these challenges and continue to provide a valuable alternative to modern medicine.

## **CONCLUSION**

The overall conclusion that could be drawn from this research is that although Ayurveda is an ancient science of medicine that is being practiced by the human race since time immemorial (Appx. 5000 years back, as mentioned above under the heading "History of Ayurveda") and had a considerable angle of range of human health-related problems, the present-day scenario is offering it a significant number of challenges shortly. The "Modernism of Ayurveda" is also facing the threat of being called "copied" or "complementary or substitution of modern-day medicine" side by side. Dealing with these criticisms, along with strengthening the ancient-most medical science system using modern-day science technologies and research, will not be easy. The good part of this hustle is that the wind is blowing in the same direction where Ayurveda could be seen in the next era of medical science. The global acceptance of Ayurveda has grown dramatically over the last decade. People are in great demand for Ayurveda products and medicines around the globe.

Different countries are also trying to promote the Ayurveda system of medicine as their primary health system management stream. Besides all these discussions, one should not forget that modernism has contributed to the growth and expansion of Ayurveda, making it more accessible and relevant to people worldwide. It is the high need of the hour that Ayurveda should get more attention from the power holders for its rejuvenation and for humanity to rely on the beautiful science of medicine to cure many hard-to-operate diseases.

The biggest problem the health sector faces across the globe is the inability to purchase costly medicines for poor populations. This issue could be resolved if the traditional medical system, ayurveda, is considered a vast field of research with tremendous opportunities to find a better way of living for the human race, with more interest, dedication, and logical thinking. As the Ayurvedic medical system is entirely based on natural herbs or resources and yoga/meditation practices, the cost of medicine is likely cheaper as it could be affordable to the last person in the queue. These medicines, if provided to the people by the government, would also record a massive difference in the national health expenditure load. Thus, reasonable and affordable treatment could be accessed by all.

As it is believed in Ayurveda that along with treatment of the diseased, the prevention of the health of a healthy person is also of the same importance, this belief should be made the core motive of the health care sector. The diseased person takes a long time and several medications to get back to a healthier state, whereas a healthy person only needs to maintain discipline to retain their health. The ruling bodies should establish Ayurvedic health care centers for a healthier society. People would be asked for regular visits to be in check condition to confirm if they are prone to any disease shortly. For every visit, people would not only be diagnosed thoroughly but also be given personal advice and guidance by expert Ayurveda practitioners to learn what changes are needed for that particular person (according to their prakriti and past health history) concerning changes in the nature/environment or across the world. This practice would also allow the governing body to have

the health records of almost every citizen of the state/country.

It is now well known that the treatment of some chronic diseases such as cancer and rheumatoid arthritis involves evidence-based ayurvedic treatment with a complete cure to the patient without any severities. Since Ayurveda has proven that it can deal with significant diseases, it should be compulsory that the students of Ayurveda medical science be taught modern medicines. Contemporary medical science students should be given the teachings of Ayurveda. This is because of this, the spread of Ayurveda would be favoured, and along with that, the Ayurveda students would find themselves connected with the modern world, which would help them in recollecting new ideas on the medicines and treatments, hence would give birth to new research. The necessity of Integrating modern technologies with traditional Ayurvedic science should be realised soon. Many historical texts written on ayurveda thousands of years ago needed to be decoded and their true essence, for which they were written at that time, squeezed out. As different sages and acharyas quote countless shlokas, it won't be possible for people to unravel each thread of knowledge from different shlokas. We should consider using artificial intelligence to fetch out all the elixir. Some Software could also be developed which has all the information regarding ayurveda available to us, such as the Vedic language, Sanskrit, all available texts, history, different herbs and their uses, new research, etc., and then compiling all this information it could be expected that it would give the best possible meaning and remarks on the shlokas asked from it. Many simulated ayurvedic practitioners are roaming around who fool people in the name of ayurvedic and cheap medicines and sell them anything which is neither from an authorised pharmaceutical company nor has any proof to claim a safer drug that could be consumed. There should be strict laws to be made and implemented at the earliest so that we can get rid of these illegal practices and not only save people from these spurious Ayurvedic practitioners but also stop defaming Ayurveda. Here we have seen that probably from where Ayurveda started and travelling a long scale of time, it is still beautifully appearing in the

frame and attracting everyone's focus on itself in the name of hope of a reliable system of medicine for humanity that could be the leading treatment method for humans in future. This paper proves that there is a wave flowing in the right direction of approaching Ayurveda for a reliable source of treatment. Various nations are taking different innovative and creative steps to achieve this. If some clauses are considered, those strictly need to be rectified; there is no way more complicated for Ayurveda to prepare as a leading medical treatment option for the world.

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