



Challenges of Ayurvedic Practitioners

This editorial is based on [“The hardships of a career in Ayurvedic practice”](#) which was published in the Hindu Business Line on 06/03/2023. It discusses the Issues faced by Ayurvedic Practitioners in India and ways to address the same.

For Prelims: Ayurveda, National Ayush Mission, Aahaar Kranti Mission, New Portals on Ayush Sector, ACCR Portal and Ayush Sanjivani App

For Mains: Ayurveda, Challenges in Ayurveda, Government Initiatives

Ayurveda, the **traditional system of medicine that originated in India thousands of years ago, is gaining popularity worldwide**. While this ancient healing system has been embraced by many, those who choose to pursue a career in Ayurvedic practice in India face a number of challenges and hardships.

Despite its rich history and cultural significance, **the Ayurvedic profession in India is fraught with difficulties ranging from lack of proper recognition** and support from the government to limited employment opportunities and low salaries.

Additionally, the industry is largely unregulated, **leading to concerns about the quality and authenticity of Ayurvedic treatments being offered**. In this context, aspiring Ayurvedic practitioners in India must navigate a complex landscape and overcome numerous obstacles to achieve success and make a meaningful contribution to the field.

What are some of the Challenges faced by an Ayurvedic Practitioner?

- **Diminished Evidence-based Quality:**
 - There is a **trust deficit in Ayurveda because of the diminished evidence-based quality of treatments**. Archaic theories are often peddled as sophisticated dogmas, and treatments are not subjected to straightforward experimental scrutiny.
- **Perception of Slow Healing:**
 - There is a common perception that Ayurvedic treatments are slow to heal.
 - However, this view is a half-truth since Ayurveda emphasizes sustainable patient benefit, which requires a gradual transition from illness to wellness.
- **Limited usable Knowledge:**
 - Ayurveda is a vast corpus of ancient medical wisdom, and only a part is practically usable. Practitioners have to depend on themselves to discover treatments and approaches that work, leading to a lot of trial and error.
- **Limited Scope of Practice:**
 - Ayurveda can be used safely and efficaciously only in about 60%-70% of primary-care illnesses.

- For the rest, patient interest necessitates complementing Ayurveda with modern medicine. However, most states prohibit the practice of modern medicine by Ayurveda graduates, limiting the scope of their practice.
- **Lack of Research and Science Ecosystem:**
 - Ayurveda does not have a vibrant ecosystem of science and research, which makes it difficult for practitioners to keep pace with intellectual and scientific advances.
- **Gimmickry and Publicity:**
 - Some Ayurvedic practitioners resort to gimmickry and publicity to entrap gullible patients. This makes it difficult for conscientious practitioners to be heard and creates a negative image of Ayurveda.

Why is it Important to Address the Challenges Faced by Ayurvedic Practitioners in India?

- **Health Care Needs:**
 - India has a large population with diverse health care needs. Addressing the challenges faced by Ayurvedic practitioners can help meet the primary health care needs of both urban and rural areas.
- **Traditional Medicine:**
 - Ayurveda is a traditional system of medicine that has been practiced in India for centuries. Preserving and promoting this system can **help preserve India's cultural heritage and provide alternative options for medical treatment.**
- **Evidence-based Practice:**
 - **Addressing challenges such as a lack of evidence-based practice can improve the quality of Ayurvedic treatment** and enhance public trust in this system of medicine.
- **Primary Care:**
 - Ayurvedic practitioners can **play a crucial role in providing primary care services in India.** Addressing the challenges faced by these practitioners can help rejuvenate primary care and address the shortage of primary care doctors in India.
- **Empowerment of Practitioners:**
 - Addressing the challenges faced by Ayurvedic practitioners can **help empower them to provide safe and effective care,** enhance their reputation and practice, and improve their financial stability.
- **Combating Scams:**
 - Addressing the challenges **faced by Ayurvedic practitioners can help combat the proliferation of scams and unethical practices in the field of Ayurveda,** which can harm patients and damage the reputation of this system of medicine.

What Initiatives has the Government taken for Development of Ayurveda?

- [National Ayush Mission](#)
- [Aahaar Kranti Mission](#)
- [New Portals on Ayush Sector](#)
- [ACCR Portal and Ayush Sanjivani App](#)

What are the Key Challenges faced by Ayurveda in the Modern World?

- **Ineffective Treatment in Emergency Cases:**
 - The inadequacies of Ayurveda in treating acute infections and other emergencies including surgery, and lack of meaningful research in therapeutics continue to limit the universal acceptance of Ayurveda.
 - Ayurveda therapeutics are complex and there are too many dos and don'ts.
 - Ayurvedic medicines are slow to act and heal. It is difficult if not impossible to predict a response or prognosis.
- **Lack of Standardization:**

- One of the biggest challenges faced by Ayurveda is the lack of standardization in the preparation and use of medicines. Unlike modern medicine, where drugs are synthesized in a laboratory under strict regulations, Ayurvedic medicines are prepared using natural substances, which can vary in quality and potency. This can lead to inconsistency in the effectiveness of the medicine.
- **Lack of Research:**
 - While Ayurveda has been practiced for centuries, there is a lack of scientific research to back up its claims. The lack of evidence-based research makes it difficult for Ayurveda to be accepted as a mainstream medical system.
- **Integration with Modern Medicine:**
 - Ayurveda and modern medicine are often seen as two separate systems of healthcare. Integrating Ayurveda with modern medicine can be a challenge, as it requires changes to the way healthcare is delivered.

What should be the Way Forward?

- **Evidence-based Appraisal:**
 - The Ayurvedic system **needs to undergo a rigorous evidence-based appraisal to identify what works and what doesn't**. This will help in sifting the usable parts from the obsolete ones, and will help practitioners in making informed decisions about treatment.
- **Modernization:**
 - Ayurveda **needs to be modernized to keep pace with the intellectual and scientific advances of the times**. Archaic theories need to be replaced with modern scientific principles and practices, and Ayurveda needs to be made more evidence-based.
- **Policy-Making:**
 - Appropriate policy-making can solve a lot of the problems faced by Ayurveda practitioners.
 - This includes allowing Ayurveda graduates to practice modern medicine in stipulated primary care areas, which can help create a workforce that can function effectively to meet the primary health-care needs of India.
- **Public Awareness:**
 - There **needs to be greater public awareness about the benefits and limitations of Ayurveda**. This can be achieved through education campaigns and other initiatives that aim to promote a better understanding of the Ayurvedic system.
- **Research and Development:**
 - Ayurveda has a lot of potential in treating many diseases, but there is still a lack of scientific research to back up its claims. The government and private organizations should invest in research and development of Ayurvedic medicines and practices to validate their effectiveness and safety.
- **Training and Education:**
 - There is a shortage of trained and qualified Ayurvedic practitioners in India. The government and private organizations should focus on training and education programs to increase the number of practitioners and improve their quality of training.

Drishti Mains Question

Despite its rich history and cultural significance, the Ayurvedic profession in India is fraught with difficulties. Discuss. Also suggest some measures to bridge the gap between Ayurveda and modern system of medicine.

UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Year's Question (PYQs)

Mains

Q.1 How is the Government of India protecting traditional knowledge of medicine from patenting by pharmaceutical companies? (2019)

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