



Ayurveda in India

For Prelims: Ayurveda, Ayurveda Initiatives

For Mains: Ayurveda, Challenges in Ayurveda, Government Initiatives

Why in News?

Ayurveda, India's traditional medicine, **has been in practice for close to 3,000 years** and has been serving the health-care needs of millions of Indians.

- Ayurveda, for long, has been facing challenges to address a few areas, which need to be discussed.

What is Ayurveda?

▪ About:

- The word Ayurveda derived from **AYU** and **VEDA**. **AYU** means life, **VEDA** means science or knowledge, **Ayurveda means the science of life**.
- Ayurveda embraces all living things, human and non-human.
- It is divided into three main branches
 - **Nara Ayurveda**: dealing with human life.
 - **Satva Ayurveda**: dealing with animal life and its diseases.
 - **Vriksha Ayurveda**: dealing with plant life, its growth and diseases.
- Ayurveda is **not only a system of medicine** but also **a way of life** for complete positive health and spiritual attainments.

▪ Practice of Ayurveda:

- **The Indian Medical Council** which was set up in 1971 establishes **suitable qualifications** in Indian medicine and recognizes various forms of traditional practice including **Ayurveda, Unani, and Siddha**.
- Ayurveda has both preventive and curative aspects.
 - **The preventive component** emphasizes the **need for a strict code of personal and social hygiene**, the details of which depend upon individual, climatic, and environmental needs.
 - **The curative aspects of Ayurveda** involve the use of herbal medicines, external preparations, physiotherapy, and diet.
 - It is a principle of Ayurveda that the preventive and therapeutic measures be adapted to the personal requirements of each patient.

▪ Significance:

- In Ayurveda it is believed **living man is a conglomeration of three humors (Vata, Pitta & Kapha)**, seven basic tissues (**Rasa, Rakta, Mansa, Meda, Asthi, Majja & Shukra**) and the waste products of the body i.e., **mala, mutra and sweda**.
 - The growth and decay of this body matrix and its constituents **revolve psychological mechanisms of these elements and its balance** is the main reason for the state of one's health.

- The treatment approach in the Ayurveda system is holistic and individualized, having **preventive, curative, mitigative, recuperative and rehabilitative aspects.**
- The principal objectives of Ayurveda are **maintenance and promotion of health, prevention of disease and cure of sickness.**

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

▪ Outdated Ideas:

- On benefits of **physical exercise**, Ayurveda states **“A sense of ease, improved fitness, easy digestion, ideal body-weight, and handsomeness of bodily features are the benefits that would accrue from regular exercise.”**
 - However, such continued validity cannot be claimed for the **physiological and pathological conjectures** the same text contains.
- On **urine formation**, the Ayurveda text posits that **tiny ducts from the intestines carry urine** to fill the bladder. This simplistic scheme of urine formation **has no role for the kidneys at all.**
 - This outdated idea can have no place in current medical education except as an anecdote from history.

▪ 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 Homogeneity:

- The **medical practices in Ayurveda** are not uniform. It is because the medicinal plants used in it **vary with geography and climate and local agriculture practices.**
- Unlike Ayurveda, in modern medicine, **the diseases are classified and treated as per prior set uniform criteria.**

▪ Misleading Propaganda by Ayurvedic Pharmas:

- The Ayurvedic pharmacopeia industry claimed that its **manufacturing practices were consistent with the classic Ayurveda texts.**
- For better market appeal of ayurvedic medicines, the pharmaceutical companies **publicized many medicinal claims about their ayurvedic products without sufficient scientific basis.**
- This led to further **obsession for drugs in the community and ailments requiring lifestyle correction** were instead treated with poly-pharmacy.

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](#)

Way Forward

▪ Reverse Pharmacology:

- It is defined as the science of integrating documented clinical experiences and experiential observations into leads, through transdisciplinary exploratory studies, to develop these into drugs.

▪ [New Millennium Indian Technology Leadership Initiative \(NMITLI\):](#)

- It seeks to **build, capture and retain for India** a leadership position by synergising the best competencies of publicly funded R&D institutions, academia and private industry.

▪ Emulating Kerala Model:

- Kerala has been **promoting Ayurveda as a way of improving immunity in the general population.** It promotes Ayurvedic formulations and recommends Ayurveda

practices to all demographics of its population.

UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Year Question (PYQ)

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

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