

IMPACT OF GLOBALIZATION ON INDIAN TRADITIONAL MEDICINES

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ABSTRACT

The term "globalization" refers to the widespread dissemination of information and resources throughout countries. It has had an extensive impact on almost every sector and aspect of society. Traditional medicine, as defined by the World Health Organization (WHO), encompasses a wide range of practices, perspectives, knowledge, and beliefs regarding the treatment of disease that make use of substances derived from plants, animals, and minerals; as well as spiritual therapies, natural techniques, and exercises used independently or in combination to promote health and wellness and treat, diagnose, and prevent disease. Ancient medical practices including Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha, and Homoeopathy have been around for thousands of years, and have stood out amongst the many alternative medicine systems. More nations are adopting this system of medicine than any other because of its holistic focus on lifestyle medical treatment, nutritional health, and very low incidence of side effects.

The ancient Indian medical system, which dates back to the second century B.C., has historically attracted students from all over the world. To bring Ayurveda and other traditional medical

practices up to speed with modern medical techniques, an immense amount of research was done, books were published and seminars were held. Because of globalization, people all over the world have learned about the healing powers of Ayurveda, Unani, and Yoga, transforming the traditional medicine market in India. Due to the effects of globalization on traditional medicine, Ayurvedic, Unani, and other traditional medicines are now publicly accessible or easily accessible in most parts of the world. Since Indian traditional medicine is the major topic of this research, the study will first examine the development of conventional Indian medicine and then examine how globalization has affected Indian traditional medicine.

Keywords – *Traditional Medicine, Globalization, Ancient Medicine, AYUSH, Eco-tourism.*

INTRODUCTION

The word "globalization" has been defined as a mutual exchange of technology and knowledge worldwide. It has been considered a continuous process of transforming something, ideas, or phenomenon into a global product or entity. Globalization has created a space or common platform where people or countries have come together to exchange their cultures, views. The term, which was primarily used in economics has now entered all fields of study, including the medical field as well. The term globalization is often believed to be the origin of the 19th Century. But it has traces in the Indian Maha Upanishad concept of "*Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*," meaning "whole earth like home and nothing is personal for any of its members. "Vasu" refers to earth, and "Kutumbakam" refers to a family. Indian Vedic sages believed that the entire world is like family. As one family, all members and countries have to share their ideas, and knowledge among themselves so that everyone can develop together.¹

No one could suffer from any of the difficulties which may be of a medical or technological nature. This very phenomenon or concept is known as globalization. People or countries cannot disregard this same concept. Globalization has broken shackles, and national boundaries helped in reaching every part of the world. It has made a massive impact on almost all fields and all walks of life. Since the primary focus of the paper has been on traditional

¹ Pandey Kumkum & Gupta Ravi Kumar, *Need for Globalization in Ayurveda: Boom or Bust*, Volume 3, Journal of Biological and Scientific Opinion, Page No. 91-93, (2015), accessed on 05/07/2024.

medicines in India, the article will first deal with the historical analysis of conventional Indian medication, and then focus on the impact of globalization on traditional Indian medicines.

World Health Organization defines "traditional medicines as including diverse health practices, approaches, knowledge, and beliefs in incorporating plant, animals, and mineral-based medications, spiritual therapies, natural techniques, and exercises applied singularly or combination to maintain well-being as well as a treat, diagnose or prevent illness. Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha, and Homeopathy are traditional medication systems with a rich history.² They are ancient methodical medical knowledge systems. Above traditional medication system due to its integrated approach using lifestyle medication, a healthy diet, and fewer side effects has attracted almost all countries around the world.

The Indian traditional medication system, which has begun around the 2nd century B.C., had attracted international students worldwide, including Japan, and China. Ayurveda was at a high place. However, these traditional medicines suffered setbacks during British rule. By the 20th Century, the Indian government set up colleges to boost the conventional medication system.³ A lot of academic work was done, books were written, and seminars were conducted to make Ayurveda and other conventional medication systems on par with modern medicine.

Globalization helped the traditional medication system, like Ayurveda to come to a broader picture. It made these traditional medication systems famous around the world. The Indian conventional medication system, due to its rich heritage, is no exception to the global trend. Globalization has revolutionized the Indian traditional medication industry by bringing the countries' attention worldwide and understanding the benefits of Ayurveda, Unani, and Yoga. There is a growing demand for these conventional medications in the global market. The impact of globalization on traditional medicines has been such that Ayurvedic, Unani, and other traditional medicines are made available or readily available worldwide. There has been increasing demand for traditional drugs during Covid 19, as most of them had immunity-boosting contents.

DEMAND FOR TRADITIONAL MEDICINES AT GLOBAL AND LOCAL LEVELS:

² <http://www.who.int/medicines/areas/traditional/definitions/en>, (accessed on 04/07/2024).

³ V. Narayan Swamy, *Origin and Development of Ayurveda: A Brief History*, Volume 1, Ancient Science of Life, Page No. 1-7 (July 1981), accessed on 04/07/2024.

India presently has 15 agroclimatic zones, which grow around eighteen thousand plants, among which there are six thousand medicinal plants. These medicinal plants are used in traditional medical practices like Ayurveda, Unani, Siddha, and homoeopathy. Annually India trades around 970 medicinal plants, out of which 178 species' consumption level is more than 100 tones. According to the All-India Trade Survey of Medicinal Plants 2019, the demand for Indian traditional medicinal plants and drugs has increased by 50 per cent. In 2019 the market for traditional medicinal plants and medicines stood at Rs4.2 billion and was expected to rise at CAGR 38.5% to 14 Rs. billion by 2026. The global demand for herbal products and drugs is assessed at 120 billion U.S. dollars. In 2017-2018, India exported US\$ 330.18 million worth of herbs at a growth rate of 14.22% over the previous year. Also, exports of value-added extracts of medicinal herbs and herbal products in 2017-2018 stood at US\$ 456.12 million, recording a growth rate of 12.23% over the previous year. The demand for herbal/value-added extracts of medicinal herbs is gradually increasing in foreign countries, especially in Europe and other developed countries.⁴

GOVERNMENT INITIATIVE TO PROMOTE TRADITIONAL MEDICINES AT THE GLOBAL LEVEL:

The Indian government has been trying to promote traditional medicines and the medical system globally by adopting various initiatives. The National Medicinal Plant Board has been set up to formulate guidelines and schemes for providing financial assistance to those engaged in the farming, of medicinal plants. The International Cooperation Scheme by the Ministry of AYUSH offers financial aid to exporters to help them participate in trade fairs, organize international business meets & conferences, and avail product registration reimbursements.

In November 2017, the National Medicinal Plants Board (NMPB), Ministry of AYUSH, and Government of India launched a 'Voluntary Certification Scheme for Medicinal Plants Produce (VCSMPP)' to encourage acceptable agricultural practices (GAPs) and good field collection practices (GFCPs) in trading of medicinal plants. The VCSMPP enhances the availability of certified quality medicinal plants and raw materials in the country. It also boosts exports and India's share in the global export of herbs. The government set up the Ministry of AYUSH (Ayurveda, Yoga, Unani, Siddha, and Homoeopathy) in November 2014 to promote the

⁴ <https://www.ibef.org/blogs/high-demand-for-medicinal-plants-in-india>, accessed on 06/07/2024.

country's indigenous alternative medicines, including education and research.⁵ The objectives of AYUSH include the following:

- Upgrading educational standards of the Indian Systems of Medicines & Homoeopathy colleges
- Strengthening existing research institutions and facilitating time-bound research programs
- Outlining schemes for the promotion, cultivation, and regeneration of medicinal
- Evolving Pharmacopeial standards for the Indian Systems of Medicine & Homoeopathy drugs

A budget of Rs. 3,400 crore (US\$ 464.68 million) is set aside for the next five years—towards Ayush Wellness Centers under the National Ayush Mission. The Centre has contributed towards the wellness sector by revamping the existing 1.5 lakh health centres across the country.⁶

THE ROLE OF WHO IN THE PROMOTION OF TRADITIONAL MEDICINE

On November 14, 2020, the World Health Organization announced that it will set up a Global Centre for Traditional Medicine in India, as it has emerged as the 'pharmacy of the world'. It will help to strengthen the evidence, research, training and awareness of traditional and complementary medicine. The present Government has planned to establish Ayurveda centres in Jamnagar (Institute of Teaching and Research in Ayurveda) and in Jaipur (National Institute of Ayurveda).⁷

Amongst the mandates of the United Nations, the health of mankind is the thrust area of the UN through the World Health Organization (WHO). Planning and execution of policies for mainstreaming of traditional medicines of respective countries along with the conventional system of medicine (allopathy), first in the country of origin followed by the international arena, is the priority agenda of operations of WHO. Within the Indian context, WHO accorded prime focus to Ayurveda in its activities related to traditional medicines. Sponsorship and encouragement of studies substantiating parameters of standardization, safety and efficacy of

⁵ <https://www.ibef.org/blogs/high-demand-for-medicinal-plants-in-india>, accessed on 06/07/2024).

⁶ <https://www.ibef.org/blogs/india-emerging-as-a-global-wellness-and-ayurveda-hub>, accessed on 06/07/2024).

⁷ <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/who-to-set-up-centre-for-traditional-medicine-in-india/article33091388.ece>, accessed on 04/07/2024.

herbal medicines of Ayurveda are under chief consideration of WHO. Department of Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and Homoeopathy (AYUSH), Central Council of Research in Ayurveda and Siddha and numerous other collaborative centres of WHO in India are assigned with several Appraisal Project Work (APW) and Direct Financial Cooperation (DFC) projects that will strengthen Ayurveda as evidence-based medicine for its global acceptance. Implementation of a pharmacovigilance program in Ayurveda, publication of documents for rational use and initiatives to prepare consumer guidelines for the appropriate use of Ayurvedic medicines are some other contributions of WHO toward the advancement of Ayurveda at the national as well as global levels.

CONCLUSION

Traditional medicine plays a vital role in the maintenance of health, as it has many immunity booster values, and it is of natural contents, which are abundantly available through our mother nature. The inclusion of traditional herbal medicine in clinical practice will help us achieve the target 'health for all'. We should stress on bringing Ayurveda knowledge out of books, scriptures and home remedies and developing this ancient knowledge as per modern needs. There is new research being done in the country by combining information received from the modern science of the 21st century with India's ancient medical knowledge. Three years ago, the All India Ayurvedic Institute was established in India, and we can say that Ayurveda is not just an alternative today, but one of the key basis of the country's health policy.

Indian traditional medicine like Ayurveda and others, has a sound scientific background of effectiveness and is acknowledged by recent research. However, efforts are needed to overcome barriers like irrational use, quality control and standardization issues, high pharmacovigilance etc. Strict implementation of rules, monitoring and periodic revision of regulations are essential to promote Indian traditional medicine. As a whole, adequate knowledge about the system, high-quality clinical trials, and accurate information about such drugs and their effectiveness among common people are very much required towards the promotion of such medicine. Integration of Ayurvedic and other Indian traditional medicine into clinical practice will be a vital step in promoting the health of people who cannot access modern medicine properly. Utilization of such medication and the conventional drug will surely put more value to promote health or cure diseases better.

Therefore, mainstreaming Indian System Medicine (ISM) along with allopathic medicines and a healthy lifestyle will be helpful to provide healthcare service in the best possible way to all people not only in India but around the globe. If we consider only allopathic doctors (English medicine) in India, then the doctor-patient ratio is 1:1700. But if we include the AYUSH practitioners as well, then the ratio reduces to 1:800. This is much better than the WHO recommendation of 1:1000. At present, there is an acute shortage of allopathic doctors in India, especially in the rural areas and remote areas as well, as their presence is significantly less. However, AYUSH practitioners have a much broader presence in rural and remote areas.⁸

Therefore, we can conclude that there is a massive opportunity for the Indian herbal industry in global exports despite numerous challenges for the industry, regulatory authorities and research institutions to overcome problems of quality, efficacy, safety and standardization to compete in the International market successfully. There are also many opportunities to promote Ayurvedic education and eco-tourism based on Ayurveda in India for the international community. India already has adequate infrastructure and innovation eco-system in place to make significant strides in these directions. Meanwhile, the challenges of integrating Ayurveda in all its manifestations with modern medicine and education will continue to exist. We have also seen that the consumption of Ayurveda has increased during Covid-19 due to its immunity-boosting value and this thought-process in our Indians can be said that when some grave diseases emerge, Indian Traditional Medicine is what we choose first.

SUGGESTIONS

1. Integration of Ayurvedic practice with modern medicine

The amalgamation of the practice of Ayurveda with modern medicine is most desirable in the Indian context, and the Government seems to be quite keen to address this issue. Establishing Ayurvedic departments in allopathic hospitals is the most important step towards the direction of achieving the globalization of Indian Traditional medicine. Also, further integration of the AYUSH sector in national health programs such as mental health, AIDS control, cancer control, tobacco control, diabetes, non-communicable diseases (NCDs) etc., by utilizing its impressive

⁸ Roy V. *Time to sensitize medical graduates to the Indian Systems of Medicine and Homeopathy*; Indian J Pharmacol. 2015;47:1-3; accessed on 07/07/2024.

infrastructure is important. It is equally important that the mainstream health system integrates its health delivery strategies with AYUSH in a meaningful way.⁹

2. Introducing Ayurveda as a subject

The Government should make steps in introducing Ayurveda as a subject, not only in college but in schools as well. The future of the country, that is, the children should be aware of our country's heritage in medicine as that would help in bringing awareness in our country as well. With the help of technology, this can be spread globally.

3. Safety & Clinical Trials

The country may adopt policies and programs that are in line with global herbal medicine strategies. It is necessary to conduct pre-clinical and clinical research to obtain scientific evidence to support the efficacy, safety, and quality of traditional and herbal medicines and therapies based on them.

4. Marketing Support and Promotion

To support small players in the market, an umbrella institution may be created by the Government for marketing support and a common brand or banner. This can be done by the Government by creating a brand or a 'geographical indication' of its own for Indian Ayurvedic products and offering the franchise to small companies producing standard products of assured quality.

5. New Drug Discovery Programs

New drug discovery programs based on leads from Ayurveda may be launched at a big enough scale with the involvement of research institutes, universities and private sector institutions and industry. India possesses more than six thousand medicinal plants found in the Himalayan region, around its coastline, the deserts and the rainforest ecosystems of which only about one-fourth species are reported in Ayurveda. In addition, around 4000 species are used in local health care and tribal traditions. There are immense possibilities for developing new improved

⁹ Planning Commission: Government of India. Report of the steering committee on AYUSH for 12th five-year plan (2012-2017) http://planningcommission.gov.in/aboutus/committee/strgrp12/st_ayush0903.pdf, accessed on 02/07/2024.

Ayurvedic formulations that can be duly protected by patents and find easy markets throughout the globe.

6. Ayurveda and Eco-tourism

India has, today, a complete ecosystem and infrastructure to emerge as an ultimate destination for Ayurvedic education and health resorts with rich content of Ayurvedic therapies and massages and also emerge as the main source of high-quality Ayurvedic medicines both offline and online. The Government may quickly develop and implement a road map for eco-tourism based on Ayurveda.¹⁰

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¹⁰ Roy V. *Time to sensitize medical graduates to the Indian Systems of Medicine and Homeopathy*; Indian J Pharmacol. 2015;47:1-3; accessed on 07/07/2024.