



GUEST ARTICLE:

PRESENT TREND OF AYURVEDA IN RUSSIA AND UK

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Ayurveda, the centuries old health knowledge of India, is being increasingly recognized by the rest of the world. India has been recognized as central point of attraction as the seat of Teaching and Researches in Ayurveda. As back as 2nd Century BC, India has attracted the attention of the whole world through its great knowledge bank of ancient Indian wisdoms, mainly Ayurveda. Evidences reveal that the students from Far East and even Europe were coming to the University of Takshashila to learn Ayurveda. In 2nd-7th Century AD, University of Nalanda and Kashi offered Ayurvedic courses for the students from Japan, China etc.

Recently, in the last decade, this Science has got a very big boost in the West, because of its holistic approach and great success in handling the psychosomatic ailments and also for the promotion of positive Health. It has gained popularity in Europe and America in a much distorted form because of Panchakarma therapy. World health organization explored the potentiality of Ayurveda and has recognized it as an alternate system of medicine. Based on this, several European countries have also given the same status and so many individualistic attempts have been made to institutionalize the study of Ayurveda.

Russia:

Amrita Ltd.-A company of Ayurvedic preparations and equipments at Moscow near Kremlin in Russia is one such well-planned institution. In Russia, the Government has recognized Ayurvedic system of medicine. They are fed up with modern medicine and are afraid of surgery. Russians are now looking into alternate system of medicine like Chinese,

Indonesian, Japanese and Indian system of medicines. Russians are very much beauty conscious people and they are not only interested in Ayurveda for its natural way of life style advises and Pancha karma therapies, but also for its cosmetic effects.

United Kingdom:

In recent past, there is a wide increase in the awareness about Ayurveda in UK. About 200 Ayurvedic doctors are practicing in UK irrespective of the hostile attitude of the government to recognize Ayurveda as a medical system with Independent status. One Ayurveda college is being run in London called Middle Sex University of Ayurveda which offers a B.Sc (Hons) Ayurveda degree to the students with a part time 3 year course with 1000 hours of Internship programme. The B.Sc (Hons) Ayurveda is a comprehensive programme of learning. It will provide the learner with the opportunity to acquire health assessment and diagnostic skills, knowledge of treatments and an ability to appraise their effectiveness in maintaining the health and wellbeing of the individual. The student will emerge from this programme with an understanding of the scope of their knowledge and skills, and a commitment to taking continuing responsibility for self-development as a practitioner of the Ayurvedic system of health care. University envisages this degree to be a platform for further clinical training which would lead to registration as a practitioner of Ayurvedic medicine by the statutory regulatory body in the UK. Middlesex University of Ayurveda also offers an M.Sc (Hons) Ayurveda degree along with B.Sc (Hons) Ayurveda degree to the students. At present

United Kingdom allows the sale of Ayurveda medicines under the label Herbal Medicine.

Panchakarma Research and Applicability in the West:

Could classical Panchakarma therapies be practiced in the West? I think that Panchakarma is a divine gift to the whole humanity. It fulfils the aims of Ayurveda and as such is an ultimate line of treatment. Its immense applicability in health and disease cannot be overlooked by the human race. However, as a result of strong regulations in medical practice in the West, the most commonly practiced Ayurvedic treatments in the West are massage, dietary and herbal advice, even though there is limitation on the use of some of the herbs. The whole world is driven by the evidence-based medicine. And also if a classical Panchakarma is to be practiced in the West it has to be scientifically tested. This work has already begun in India. However, critics object to the lack of rigorous scientific studies and clinical trials of many Ayurvedic products and therapies. The National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine states that “Most clinical trials of Ayurvedic approaches have been small, had problems with research designs, lacked appropriate control groups, or had other issues that affected how meaningful the results were.”

In India, scientific research in Ayurveda is largely undertaken by the statutory body of the Federal Government, the Central Council for Research in Ayurveda and Siddha (CCRAS), through a national network of research institutes. A large number of non-governmental organizations are also conducting research work on different aspects of Ayurveda. However, clinical studies that would satisfy the liberal criteria of WHO (World Health Organization) have been alarmingly few from India, in spite of patients crowding in Ayurvedic hospitals.

Furthermore, in order to successfully practice the classical Panchakarma, it has to be standardized in consideration of today’s need. To develop a uniform practice of classical Panchakarma across the world – exact procedures, dosage schedules, medicaments, effects and side effects need to be standardized. Therapeutic trials of Panchakarma procedures to demonstrate their use and possible complications are a must in the world of evidence-based

medicine. This type of work has been already carried out across India. The work of Singh et al, Kasture HS and Yadaiah P cannot be underestimated. However, there is still not enough work carried out in Panchakarma research. Mostly, the sporadic work in this area was carried out to create general awareness about the importance of these therapies and lack scientific methodology. Nevertheless, utilising even small resources, the teachers and practitioners of India are trying to produce clinical and practical results. As mentioned earlier, if Panchakarma is to be practiced in the West then a well-planned and thoroughly conducted research is a must in an evidence-based world of medicine. Then this unique therapeutic modality may be practiced scientifically. Furthermore, if Panchakarma is ever to be fully practiced in the West, there are a number of other obstacles to overcome. Firstly, it would have to be rigorously regulated by an Ayurvedic statutory body such as Ayurvedic Council. Secondly, the practitioners would have to be able to get full assurance and legal protection to cover them against any untoward claims. And thirdly, a financial support from government to run Ayurvedic Panchakarma hospitals would have to be in place.

The problems in the practice of Ayurveda in Russia and UK are manifold. For Example:

Problem of availability of Ayurvedic drugs: Each and every Ayurvedic drug should be exported to Russia and UK from India because no such drug is available there and if any drug is available it may not be genuine. Importing genuine medicines from Indian market to Russia and UK is too expensive either by air or by sea. Indian government can easily come to their rescue by import subsidies and tax concessions.

Registration of Medicine: To Register an Ayurvedic medicine in Russia as an internal medicine is very expensive and costs about 25,000 to 30,000 US Dollars per product and as a cosmetic and food supplement it is some what 5,000 US Dollars per product. It is highly exorbitant.

Lack of governmental support: One of the hurdles in the practice of Ayurveda in Russia and UK is the lack of government support. Economic supremacy may be the ultimate aim of

the globalisation movement even though there are so many advantages in the Ayurvedic treatments. All the multinational companies on the other hand aim at amassing wealth as part of the globalization. These multinational companies have very strong influence over the government and try to lobby their interests. Modern drug companies interested only on the products based on western medical system so far have changed their minds now. Till now, they didn't allow any other system of medicine to thrive there, arguing that medicines of all other systems are lacking research orientation and efficacy. Now they find the field of Ayurveda and herbal medicines as their infinite destinations. They prefer to accommodate the herbal medicines in their pharmacopoeias; put to research programmers to establish the potency. If this is materialised, in no way, it will promote Ayurveda.

Lack of properly trained personnel: Even though new Ayurvedic schools have been started in Russia and UK, they find it very difficult to obtain properly trained doctors. This gap is filled up by Indian doctors. Hence, there is an abundant opportunities for Indian Ayurvedic doctors abroad. For offering some massage therapies a short-term preliminary course may be enough, but to be a complete physician in Ayurveda, rigorous learning and practice are needed. Russians and British are more interested to learn each and every aspect of this science of life; so our government along with Russian and British government should join hands in this matter for the benefit of the mankind.

Fast changing life style: Besides, offering an excellent way of treatment of incurable diseases as propounded by the ancient sages like Charaka, Sushruta and Vagbhata, Ayurveda renders meticulous scope for skin therapy, beautification of the facial skin, cosmeticianality and increase vigour and vitality, postponement of ageing etc. which are all possible not by modern medicines, but by Ayurveda.

Conclusion:

It is least exaggerated to say that Ayurveda must be given a whole hearted support not only by all modern governments under socio-economic consideration, but also by drug manufacturing companies without having vested interest in amassing wealth. A few such attempts have been made in Russia and UK today to

impart specialised knowledge of Ayurveda specially Panchakarma therapy and a series of short term courses have been conducted on an experimental basis in recent times as a result of which students of Ayurveda have shown above average and excellent interest in the study of Ayurveda. This shows that there is going to be a very bright future for Ayurveda in both oriental and occidental countries.

As a result of popularity of Ayurveda there has been an increased pressure of demand for Ayurvedic medicines. In other words India can be a very good market for Ayurvedic drugs for the foreigners.

Research experience have proved in India that all medicines used for external application have shown excellent results and that is the reason why our cosmetic drugs, balms, oils etc. are increasingly exported abroad specially to Russia, U.K, Canada, Malaysia, West Indies, Singapore and other countries. The present and future Indian Ayurvedic experts need to give more attention to explore Ayurveda Universally.

At the outset, I am of the opinion that importance of Ayurveda has been a matter of neglect in the West because of fear of infections. It is apparently true to a certain extent because most of the Ayurvedic preparations are herbal oriented, administered directly to the human body without being properly analysed. But actually this is not so. Ancient sages and physicians of India have invented the suitability and practicability of the administration of the Indian medicines on various occasions and on various patients and proved that Ayurveda renders magic results. This is where we have failed to convince the foreigners. If sufficient experimentation and research are conducted jointly at the International level on a collaboration basis, I think we would not only be able to convince the foreigners but also can capture foreign markets. This is how we can popularise Ayurveda abroad.

“Long Live Ayurveda”

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