



India's Traditional Medicine Knowledge System: Library Projects

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Abstract:

India's age-old traditional medicine practice has significantly contributed to healthcare. Additionally, all traditional remedies have their own regional effects. A protracted debate has arisen between modern and traditional medical systems, focusing on therapeutic activity, side effects, and other factors. Discussing different Indian traditional medicinal systems and their importance based on recent reviews, this article presents a preliminary outline of the development of traditional Indian medicine. It brings attention to government programs as well as the library's job of preserving and giving information concerning India's traditional medicines.

Keywords: Traditional medicine, Traditional medicinal practice, India, Ayurveda, Siddha, Unani, Homeopathy, Yoga, Government initiatives, Role of library.

Introduction:

Traditional Indian knowledge is abundant, particularly its medicinal aspects. Vedic literature contains the theory of traditional Indian medicine. Diseases, in old medical beliefs, stemmed from humor imbalances curable through medicine and therapies.

India's traditional medicine wisdom comes from medicinal ideas of Indian origin or part of its culture. Ayurveda, Siddha, Unani, Yoga & Naturopathy, and Homeopathy are some exclusive medicinal practices

available in India. Homeopathy arrived in India during the 18th century, becoming part of its traditional medicine.

Objectives:

For this study, the considered objectives are:

- To know about the various traditional medical systems and their development;
- To discuss about the future of Indian traditional medical systems.
- To discuss about the role of library to preserving information regarding Indian traditional medical systems.

Various types of Traditional Indian medical system:

Ayurveda:

The name 'Ayurveda' originates in Sanskrit where 'Ayur' signifies life, and 'Veda' signifies science or knowledge. From 1400 to 600 BC, the 'Aryans' controlled India and established the Vedic culture. Vedic literature, mainly divided into Rigveda, 'Samaveda', 'Yajurveda' and Atharvaveda, describes various knowledge and philosophical thoughts. Among these four parts, 'Atharvaveda' comprises various medical information related to disease, medicine, treatment, etc.

During 1500 to 1000 BC, the Ayurvedic medicine, which was deduced from Vedas divided into two schools of thoughts. Those were "Atreya Inner Medicine School" and "Dhanvantari Surgery School". After that, the scholars of these two schools wrote two popular medicinal books known as, "Charak Samhita" and "Sustuta Samhita" respectively.

With ancient Indian literature, a good deal of evidence of Ayurvedic medicine practice has been found in Roman, Greek and Buddhist literature that show towards its vast popularity.

The Ayurvedic medical system is which mainly based on five natural elements and three humoralisms (dynamic energies). The five natural elements are: Earth (Prithvi), Water (Jala), Fire (Agni), Air (Vayu) and Ether (Akasha). Again, the three humours - Gas (Vata), Bile (Pitta) and Mucus (Kapha), well known as "Tridosha", are the basic substance of human body composition. Disease may occur when any distortion has found in these fundamental standards.

Because of traditional acceptance and easy acceptability, the research on Ayurvedic medicine has increased from last few decades. R&D section of various Ayurvedic drug industries also concentrate to develop quality, stability and safety of Ayurvedic medicines.

Siddha:

The word 'Siddha' shows "holy harmony" and this medical practice was developed in 'Saiva' philosophy. According to ancient Hindu literature, lord Shiva taught this medical system to his wife Parvati. Then Goddess Parvati passed this concept to Nandi and then Nandi taught to Nine 'Devatas'. It is one of the oldest medicinal practices, especially in South India, developed by utilizing various natural resources like Ayurveda. Around 10,000 to 40,000 BC, the Siddha medicinal system was introduced. Accumulation of seven (07) basic materials, three (03) humors and the discarded products are considered as components of the human body. Philosophical principals of this medicinal system were explained by 96 principals. The Siddha philosophy became unique by providing equal weightage to the inner soul and outer body. Among various diagnosis practices, physical check-up, yoga therapy and application of metals and minerals are very popular. Examination of speech, pulse, complexion, tongue etc., are included in the check-up process; then Yoga therapy used to enhance sensory functions and the psychosomatic system can be re-established through dispensing metals and minerals along with various natural products.

In recent days, it is found that various preparation for those containing nanoparticles of metals and minerals became more effective in chronic diseases, that concept first introduced in Siddha medical practices.

Unani:

The Unani medicine, also known as Arabian medicine or Islamic medicine, started in Greece and then urbanized by Arabs. The framework of this medical system was introduced by Greek philosopher and physician Hippocrates during 460 to 377 BC. During the 'Caliphate movement' (the political-religious Muslim state), a huge Greek literature was translated into the Arabic language. The Unani medical practitioners popular as Hakims are mostly concentrating on natural healing based on principals of harmony and balancing among physical, mental and spiritual world.

According to Unani outlook the human body is a combination of seven components as, Temperature (Mizaj), Organs (Anza), Resources (Quo), Components (Arkan), Spirits (Arawh), Humors (Aklath) and Capacities (Afal). These are the key components to manage good health and control disease condition. Again, four living entities 'arz' (earth), 'maa' (water), 'nar' (fire) and 'hawa' (air) are not only the primary components of the human body but also construct all the components of the universe. These four elements are mainly responsible for various states' formation and degradation occurred because of their continuous changes. The Unani practitioners can diagnosis various diseases through observing such states. Four essential 'mizaj' or attitudes are hot, cold, wet and dry. An individual's health can suffer because of the changing of these natural attitudes.

Hippocratic hypothesis also introduced four humors or fluids of body based on their colour, i.e., blood, yellow bile, dark bile and mucus. The quality, quantity and humeral appearance may vary from person to parson that helps to balance single aliment or disease.

Unani medicinal system is a comprehensive medication where crude drugs are prepared either in single or in formulation. This system provides a prolonged solution in gastrointestinal disorder, nerve-disorder and cardiovascular disorders.

Yoga and Naturopathy:

The word 'Yoga' means 'Unity' is derived from a Sanskrit word 'Yuj' that means "to join". Therefore, the word unity or joining shows towards the spiritual approach of the individual conciseness. It is the science of right living that intended to be incorporated into daily life. Yoga is one type of cognitive therapy, emphasis on training exercise to improve physical and mental health.

The word 'naturopathy' is first coined by John Scheel in the year 1895 and originated from two words 'natura' and 'pathos'. 'Natura' is a Latin word means "root for birth" and 'pathos' Greek word means "root for suffering". Naturopathy is also popular as naturopathic medicine, which developed from a combination of traditional practices and health care approaches mostly popular in Europe. Various natural methods are mostly concerned for the diagnosis purpose. The aim of this medicinal system is to prevent illness through stress reduction, changing lifestyle pattern and diet, etc. Naturopathy is used for various health-related purposes as primary care, overall well-being and treatment of illnesses. The ideology of naturopathy is based on philosophical theories and community-based medicine rather than evidence-based medicine.

However, Yoga and naturopathy are based on different drugless treatments as acupuncture, dieting, fast therapy, mud therapy, hydrotherapy, electrotherapy, meditation, exercise, counseling, etc.

Homeopathy:

Homeopathy is an alternative medicinal system conceived in the year 1796 by Samuel Hahnemann, a German physician. The word "Homeopathy" was derived from Greek words "Homois" and "Pathos". "Homois" means similar and "Pathos" means suffering. Two main principals are adopting in this medicinal practice. These are "Like cures Like" that a substance that causes certain symptoms can also help to remove those symptoms, and "Infinite dilution" that describes that the therapeutic activity can enhance by repeated dilution. During the 19th century the homeopathy medicine received enormous popularity in Europe and United States. Since 200 years, the homeopathy practice became prominent in India.

Government initiative to develop traditional Indian medicine:

In the year 1995, Department of Indian System of Medicine and Homoeopathy (ISM&H) was decomposed. Then, in 2003, ISM&H was renamed as Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and Homeopathy (AYUSH) by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India. Again, this department was upgraded to a full-fledged Ministry of AYUSH on 9th November, 2014. The Ministry of AYUSH has been made to look after the Medical Systems such as Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and

Homeopathy (AYUSH) with focused attention on development of education and research in Ayurveda, Yoga & naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and Homoeopathy systems.

The aim of this department is to provide various health-related services, education and research activities, promoting growth of medicinal plants, encourage preparing various home remedies and herbal foods, facilitating to introduction of yoga in working places, supporting naturopathy for better health, etc.

Ayush comprises several national institutes, research organizations, state wise organizations, hospitals & dispensaries to regulate all the functional activity of the Indian Pharmaceutical system.

Future of traditional Indian Medicine:

According to the WHO report, 80% population of the world has a confidence in traditional medicine than synthetic medicine because of their side effects. India is a rich source of medicinal plants and herbs those have good popularity among people for their therapeutic effectivity.

Traditional Indian medicine has a well popularity throughout the world. However, in developing countries like India, few challenges have been faced during promotional activity. Therefore, to overcome those obstacles following steps should be considered:

1. Identification of actual quality and quantity of active components to reach the therapeutic level is one of the major challenges. Similarly, “different names for the same things” or “different things with the same name” is a very common problem in the case of traditional medicine.

2. More Government level initiatives should be needed to increase growth of medicinal plants, herbs, etc. While the pharmaceutical companies affect the existing medicinal resources.

3. Many traditional Indian medicines are not manufactured and sold according to international market standard, which is another reason for decrease popularity.

Traditional Indian medicine is not only used for medical treatment but also helps to maintain a healthy lifestyle. With compare to western synthetic medicine, traditional Indian medicine is in a clumsy position. Although, Indian medicine is well popular among two distinction level: first, people in undeveloped rural areas those who cannot enjoy western medicines still depend on various traditional medicines. Expensive application of various essential oils, aromatherapy etc. are very popular among upper-class society. At present, the first world country people shown their interest to take life courses and experience a full Indian medicine regimen, including diet, yoga, meditation, still sitting, massage, and spiritual lectures. This shows a new era for the future of traditional Indian medicine.

Role of library to preserve traditional medical knowledge:

Traditional Knowledge Digital Library (TKDL):

Documenting historical wisdom and using patents to prevent its misuse, specifically in medicine such as Ayurveda, Unani, Siddha, and Yoga. The multilingual database is accessible to international patent offices and protects against incorrectly issuing patents on traditional knowledge.

National Digital Library of India (NDLI):

The National Digital Library of India (NDLI) is a project for a digital information resource repository, including traditional knowledge. A number of e-governance initiatives were organized through this project. The following are mentioned below:

Preserving information in the digital age: Digitization aims to make traditional knowledge and culture available to the public.

Indian Knowledge System's Segregation: to foster multidisciplinary research on Indian knowledge systems through integrating traditional wisdom and advanced scientific methods. IKS is sponsoring seminars, publications and scholarly study on traditional Indian wisdom.

Indigenous Knowledge Documentation: Tribal knowledge, customs and practices are documented and promoted by Tribal Research Institutes (TRIs). Research and documenting of the many cultural traditions of India's indigenous and tribal tribes are carried out by the Anthropological Survey of India (AnSI).

Conclusion:

Knowledge of traditional Indian medicine forced towards various traditional approaches. However, development of the entire whole traditional medicine has a great importance to spread worldwide. In the present-day situation, evidence based more scientific research should be introduced to upgrade and enrich acceptance of the traditional Indian medical systems.

India utilizes initiatives such as the National Digital Library of India (NDLI), Traditional Knowledge Digital Library, and AYUSH support to ensure its ancient wisdom is documented, maintained, and accessible. One more time, the Indian government started something to advance innovations and global acceptance of its native proficiencies using both current technology and age-old techniques.

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