



Journal homepage: <http://www.interscience.org.uk>

An Alarming Need To Understand The Status Of The Scenario Of Ayurvedic Pharmacy, Pharmacists And Scholars In India

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PURPOSE

The objective of this communication is to spread the awareness of Ayurvedic Pharmaceutical technologies to restore our traditional medicinal system and to bring focus on its specialized pharmaceutical technicians and the newly emerging Ayurvedic pharmaceutical scholars who are now-a-days deviating from their core fields due to negligence, lack of pay, no support from the government neither private organizations or Ayurvedic manufacturing companies nor placement authorities in the Universities.

Ayurvedic Pharmaceutical Academic Structure

Ayurvedic Doctors (for instance, BAMS/MD) and practitioners (for instance, specialized therapists) are heard of but presently renowned universities in India are also imparting their knowledge via full time degree, post graduate and doctoral programs, for instance B. Pharmacy (Ayurveda), M. Pharmacy (Ayurveda) and PhD. in Ayurvedic pharmacy. Some of the renowned universities include; Gujrat Ayurveda University (Jamnagar), Banaras Hindu

University, Bengal Institute of Pharmaceutical Sciences (affiliated to Jadavpur University), Lovely Professional University (Punjab), Manav Bharati University (Himachal Pradesh) etc. The courses are structured under the

University Grants Commission Act. The degree and post graduate programs constitute extensive detailed pharmaceutical subjects similar to those taught in allopathic pharmaceutical programs. In addition to these Ayurvedic technologies are studied, executed and implemented in details to ensure the professionals are equipped enough to deliver standardized Ayurvedic medicine. The primordial objective is to validate Ayurvedic medicines using latest scientific technologies and to restore traditional knowledge by reviving classical medical literature via teaching and specializing on subjects like Rasashastra and Bhaisajya Kalpana (Ayurvedic Pharmaceutics), Dravyaguna Vijnana (Ayurvedic Pharmacology), Namroopa Vijnana (Ayurvedic Pharmacognosy) etc. Despite these, extensive detailed study on Sarir Kriya and Rachana (Anatomy and Physiology), Philosophical and Historical aspects of Ayurveda are also taught (e.g. Darshan, History of Ayurvedic Pharmacy). The four year degree and two year post graduate degree constitutes eight and four semesters respectively and covers all the recent research, Instrumental analysis, Statistics, Numerical management and Computer programming, Pharmaceutics, Pharmacology, Clinical Pharmacy, Quality Control and Assurance, Phytochemistry (The chemistry of plants), all the regulatory guidelines and many more needed to formulate, develop and market a medicine are also taught in details including a final year

research work, consecutive semester practical schedules and management papers also. Over the years impressive research work and scientific communications has been published by young Ayurvedic pharmaceutical scholars from the respective Universities.

PRESENT STATUS

Status in the Government: In India the responsibility of developing traditional system of medicine and to ensure its growth is attributed to the central government body AYUSH (Ayurveda, Yoga, Unani, Siddha and Homeopathy). It is extremely painful to know that AYUSH does not have a governing body of certified Ayurvedic Pharmaceutical Scientists and despite numerous attempts by the students they do not provide registration to B. Pharmacy/M. Pharmacy (Ayurveda) students unlike the allopathic system of pharmacy. As a matter of fact these pharmaceutical professionals are finding it hard to secure a place in the government and since the ruling authorities are doctors majorly, this niche but intellectual group of students are being overshadowed. This is leading to lack of standardization aspects in Ayurvedic medicine and the field is being thoroughly neglected in India while western countries are utilizing it to the utmost effect while the original wisdom, source, tradition lies in India. Survey statistics elucidates that there is no or maybe a few specialized technicians of Ayurvedic Pharmacy who are working in the central government for Ayurvedic research and drug development. Recent reports of JAMA clearly implies that there is lack of quality and consistency in the validation of Ayurvedic medicine and sooner the government should understand that the responsibility of the Doctors and Pharmacists are different as in case of allopathic system of medicine.

Status in the Manufacturing/R and D Industries:

An insight to some of the leading Ayurvedic/Herbal medicine organizations in India ruling globally would reveal that despite these courses being conducted for more than 10 years in India now negligible number of Ayurvedic Pharmaceutical Scientists is working in the R and D sector. Instead, Doctors and MD. are trusted with the responsibility of delivering safe Ayurvedic medicine. Common intellectual logic depicts that from time immemorial doctors were trusted with the skill set of diagnosis and Pharmacists solely deal with medicines. Since changes are in mind first then in actions; due to niche field strength of Ayurvedic Pharmacists, we are not trusted with the knowledge given to us owing to some preconceived but incorrect ideas. The academic course structures are full time technical degrees and it rightfully incorporates standard fees structure which appears to be a substantial amount while looking at the larger picture of twelve semesters i.e. if a student continues his education up to the Masters level. The present scenario in the industry is these meritorious, niche and creative students/scholars passionate to take Ayurvedic medicines forward by using industrial guidance are offered a minimal salary and entry level positions even for the qualified bunch, that goes down to an extent that makes living a serious concern for the individual and they tend to change their fields, deviate from their strengths that is no doubt rare and unique.

THE UNIQUE SKILL SET

This group of technicians and scholars possess both technical and professional skill sets that are at par with the modern technological advances in medical science as well as in the corporate sector for instance;

- o Ayurvedic/Herbal Formulation, Development and Standardization

- o Cosmoceuticals
- o Quality Assurance and Quality Control
- o Regulatory Compliances
- o Scientific writing
- o Structural elucidation of polyherbal/herbomineral compounds o Plant Biotechnology
- o Clinical Research
- o Computer Applications/Information Technology o Agricultural technologies
- o Drug safety Associates o Instrumental Analysis o Statistics

OBSTACLES AND CHALLENGES

Now these groups of qualified scientific professionals are finding it difficult to incorporate their strengths due to lack of systematic development in Ayurvedic medicine. Below listed are some of the immediate problems that are being encountered:

No registration of B. Pharmacy (Ayurveda) in the Central government which is stopping them to secure a place in the government research institutions.

Students who aspire to be lecturers/professors are considered to be a second option after doctors even in Ayurvedic Pharmaceutical colleges.

Insincerity and negligence is stopping the scholars in these field to pursue Doctoral degree or research works as most of the Universities does not permit M. Pharmacy (Ayurveda) to pursue a PhD. In Ayurveda. In case if they do, the field and options are much narrower for the M. Pharmacy

(Ayurveda) students.

- o Very few of the passed out students are working in the R and D sectors, majority of them tend to deviate from their field and choose marketing as an option due to more pay structure. This implies that serious talent is being wasted.

- o M. Pharmacy (Ayurveda) students are even working as pharmacists in organizations.

Eligibility in the Healthcare sector appears to be a serious concern for these people until initiative steps are taken by the government.

THE SOLUTIONS

Registration of B. Pharmacy (Ayurveda) students with immediate effect.

A separate body of young scholars and experienced technicians specialized in this field only must be formed by the government.

Manufacturing industries should mandatorily employ at least two B. Pharmacy (Ayurveda) and one

M. Pharmacy (Ayurveda) scholar with separate pay structure for both so that the dignity of the knowledge is restored.

AYUSH should allocate separate funds for Ayurvedic Pharmacy rather than Ayurveda and the sole responsibility of Ayurvedic medicine must be left to the Ayurvedic pharmacists and scholars.

Universities should accept these students in higher studies even if some of them wants to pursue a PhD. in Pharmaceutical Sciences as validation of Ayurvedic medicinal research is a necessity as this branch of science restores brilliant lead compounds. B. Pharmacy/M. Pharmacy (Ayurveda) are not allowed to right examinations even in Ayurvedic research colleges.

AUTHORS MESSAGE

Ayurveda is known as the science of life. Classical medical literature clearly specifies technologies to prepare Ayurvedic medicines. In an era of technological advances there is an utmost need to scientifically integrate, standardize Ayurvedic medicine and even develop a cross functional synergy amongst various R and D functions. The knowledge of Medical writing, Pharmacovigilance, Information technology to inculcate the diversified database of Ayurvedic/Herbal medicine is needed and these activities can be best performed by the students who are trained specifically for this purpose. Being Master of Pharmacy in Ayurveda, I understand the responsibility that we have but preconceived traditions must be changed and changes must be welcomed. Lastly, I will like to raise a few questions that; are doctors the rightful person for medicine? Who should be trusted with the responsibility of reducing drug interactions in Ayurvedic medicine? Why should Ayurvedic doctors be allowed to teach Ayurvedic pharmacy? How many of the B.Pharma/M.Pharma Ayurveda students are devoted towards the development of Ayurvedic medicine in the Industry? Why not standardize Ayurvedic database using

Information Technology? How many of these people are working in AYUSH? This paper was an attempt to bring focus on the various B. Pharmacy and M. Pharmacy (Ayurveda) students all over India and it is the need of the hour that they should be allocated with specific responsibilities as they are few in numbers and thus a very special talent for our country. The rest is up to the reader to decide that who are the appropriate person to take this field of Medicine forward.