

A new global vision for Ayurveda **(A discussion paper for formation of an NGO for** **Ayurveda in UK and India), 2002**

When we march towards the goal of global acceptance for Ayurveda System, we have to have our hands filled with quality evidences and foolproof documents. For elevating the status of Ayurveda as an independent medical system, the attempts are to be started now and here. We have to have a clear and new global vision for the next ten years. I have received many suggestions, and since I am not an Ayurvedic Doctor nor a scientist, and I might remind you all that I am an Investment Advisor working in the field of foreign investment and Head of a Foreign Institutional Investor in India titled Asia Fund Ltd., I have in my humble way put together various suggestions I have received from over 100 persons and organisations I have contacted since July, 2002. So please forgive me if these thoughts do not appear in some order but I do believe that it will give some ideas and vision for the future.

The main objectives should be:

- Ayurveda community of the entire world should be brought under the single banner of a global federation for Ayurvedic practitioners. It should have a common agenda, a common goal, and a common code of practice. Annual meetings should discuss and update latest R&D findings and current global issues and market potential of Ayurvedic drugs. The Federation should try to make on time representations made to protect the integrity and status of the science.
- In India, there should be a national policy on Ayurveda, which clearly mentions about various aspects like education, clinical practice, medicine cultivation, manufacturing, marketing, exports and the R&D. Separate fund allocation should be given in the budget for Ayurveda. The guidelines in India should be a model for other countries.
- There is a debate continuing within the country and outside to give emphasis for development of indigenous system of medicine, especially Ayurveda. The Government of India can make it mandatory that any hospital in the country to have a small wing for outpatient and in-patient treatment. This will provide opportunity for the patients to take the advantage of these time-tested systems to serve the ailing humanity. It will in turn spread the message of Ayurveda far and wide.

In the short term the Indian Government should give due importance to Ayurveda in the NHS. The concept of integration has to be made practical in a wide level for the welfare of the suffering people around the country. All the leading hospitals both in private and government sector should be urged to open an Ayurveda department and mutual co-operation should be there between the Ayurveda doctors and their Allopathic counterparts. All government Hospitals in India should have an Ayurveda section and the Government can collaborate with leading Ayurveda firms for running the Ayurveda department. The aim is to bring Ayurveda deeper into the public, especially in the villages and semi-urban areas where the principle and practice of the science is sought more.

- The Department of ISM should issue necessary orders to various State Governments to promote Ayurveda by establishing Ayurveda dispensaries

and clinics in every village. Every Taluk must have a Taluk hospital with In Patient facility. One District Ayurveda Hospital should be there in every district, with full facilities for all therapies and all various departments in Ayurveda should be there. In next 5 years, we should ensure that every village in India is having an Ayurveda clinic and Dispensary.

- The medical education in Ayurveda should incorporate their acquaintance and use of modern investigations in the diagnosis and follow up of the patients.

The Indian Government should take initiative in substantially improving the quality of Ayurveda education in India. Colleges should teach pure Ayurveda and modern medicine aspects should only supplement the practice of Ayurveda. Unified syllabus and style should be there and medium of instruction should be English. The students must be taught to incorporate the latest developments of medical engineering and technology for easy diagnosis and documentation of cases.

- All pharmacists in India should have a research and development activity at least to provide rationale to the products that they want to sell in the market. Failing to do this thing is detrimental to the interest of the system and its genuinity.
- The cultivation of medicinal plants and procurement of raw material should be more systematic and be organised on scientific methods and norms to bring life to the Ayurvedic medicaments.
- Ayurveda industry should incorporate the latest advances of Science and Technology in the manufacturing process and clinical practice. This modernization should be done without diverting from the basic principles of Ayurveda, and within the traditional criteria for good manufacturing and practice standards. The Ayurvedic practitioners should update their knowledge system in pace with the developments in modern medicine and from time to time, conduct scientific researches based on Ayurvedic principles for handling the new coming challenges to human health.
- We should have a website, which provide all the required data in Ayurvedic industry and practice. Bodies should be there for generation and collection of data to standardize the medicines, assure the quality and the methods for the same, the Good Manufacturing Practice regulations and its enforcement, latest R&D findings, raw material standardization, procurement, re-generation, trade information, market information, academic information and everything that comes under the scope of Ayurveda.
- Definite standardization has to be there for medicines as well as practice. Same medicines of different batches made by different companies should all have same composition, same taste, same appearance and a standard action.
- The science of Ayurveda is presented to human kind by the great Indian sages not to be practised only in India for the Indians alone. We have to establish the authority and merits of this system of medicine around the whole world. The concept of "Western Ayurveda" has to be replaced by the new concept of classical Ayurveda and the Ayurveda doctors have to be treated in par with their modern medicine counterparts.

- India has resources and potentials to conquer the world market of herbal exports. We should widen the scope of export to the whole range of Ayurveda products. Aim should be to grow at a rate of 100% per year. We have to have at least a share of 10% of the total global market for CAM.

Having dealt with the main objectives of the current debate on acceptance of our age-old traditional Ayurveda system of medicine, I am summarising a few important milestones that should be borne in mind under the five headings I outline hereunder:

1. Public awareness, information, counselling, introduction in the society

- I urge the Government of India to undertake a comprehensive review on the question of acceptance of Ayurveda system of medicine throughout the world and initiate a major political initiative at the Cabinet level. I understand that our Hon'ble Prime Minister and the Minister for Human Resource Development have personal commitments to this cause as referred to by me earlier.
- I would urge the government, through the presence of the Hon'ble Minister of Health at this World Ayurveda Conference to set up a separate department for Ayurveda within the DISM&H with an Additional Secretary and a Junior Minister of State to implement Cabinet's new political initiative on this subject. If we fail now, India will be a major loser. Apart from the fact that there is a tremendous commercial potential of billions of Dollars worth of exports, we would have failed miserably to promote our own age-old tradition and culture of the wholistic Ayurveda system of medicine.
- Govt of India, Indian Embassies/Consulates have to take job of propagation of Ayurveda. For the purpose Govt of India, Foreign affairs personnel themselves are to be given capsule introductory programmes in Ayurveda of around 20 hours.
- Govt of India has to take the matter of propagating Ayurveda through print media, electronic media and by providing manpower and other facilities for organizing Seminars/Symposias in foreign countries.

2. Ayurvedic education

Institutions/ persons conducting Ayurvedic education/training in foreign countries should be categorized and accreditation process for these institutions at an appropriate level should be evolved. The gradation may be as follows:

- Public awareness campaigns/self health care level programs
- Courses available to make a person an Ayurvedic physician and may do treatment at primary health care level. This may include health counsellors, dieticians, massures etc.
- Qualified Ayurvedic physicians (i) Qualified modern medicine doctors having the course of 1000-1500 hours (ii) basic Ayurvedic physicians (having courses of more than 3000 hours with six months internship).

3. Ayurvedic drugs

- a. A strict GMP code for Ayurvedic pharmaceuticals
- b. Establishment of separate Ayurvedic drug controller and its regulatory body and department.
- c. Export licensing process for Ayurvedic/herbal pharmaceuticals, drugs suppliers and physicians should be evolved. They should be subjected for a strict quality control and drug safety rules.

4. Cultivation production of herbs

- a. Many herbs are under endangered species. A clear list of drugs should be published for exportable and non-exportable licence.
- b. A joint effort from the department of ISM & H in collaboration with the department of Forestry, Agriculture and Rural development may be made so that sufficient herbs are available for export.
- c. Village level herbal cooperative societies should be developed so that the farmers and tribals can be trained in identification, cultivation, conservation and marketing of valuable Ayurvedic drugs.

5. Patenting

- a. Under the new WTO & TRIPS regimes care should be taken that all Ayurvedic traditional wealth is preserved and patented by the Govt of India itself or a legal process should be evolved that no patents can be taken for traditional Ayurvedic prescriptions in any country.
- b. No pharmaceutical industry should be allowed to market and patent a drug as Ayurvedic proprietary drug unless it is proved effective as per Ayurvedic principles.
- c. All Ayurvedic drug manufacturers should be compelled to have proper R&D lab.
- d. The pharmacies not having R&D should send their samples to Govt. established labs and after approval only can market the product. For the purpose Govt. may establish self financed R&D labs being financed by pharmaceutical industries.

Our immediate campaign and the proposed Ayurveda Trust: A strong lobby, both in India, UK/European Union countries and world over.

Since July, 2002, a lot of people have responded to me; a few of the contacts have given a lot of information; I am now in touch with Ayurveda activists throughout the world. The knowledge I have gained is phenomenal and it has made me aware that so much needs to be done. In the past we have either neglected or not done enough to promote our ancient system of Ayurveda.

My friends and colleagues in London, Dr. Vishal Gulati, an eminent Solicitor Shri D.K. Singh, a well known Indian socialite and activist Shri Vinod Tailor, a retired international bureaucrat Smt. Saroj Patel (former PRO International Nursing Organisation, Geneva) and many other friends from European and Indian communities intend to establish an NGO, The Ayurveda Trust in the UK as a truly

representative body for promoting safe practice and safeguard the heritage of the ancient Indian art and science of healing. This proposed Ayurveda Trust will lobby the necessary organisations both in India, UK and Europe to contribute genuinely to this cause. This proposed structure is based on extensive consultation of stakeholders from round the world. We have received encouraging support from India's eminent Ayurvedic experts/professionals/scientists, and many other trade/commerce/industry organisations. We would welcome further suggestions and comments regarding the proposed Trust and I am happy to give you the outline of it today. In the past three months, I have personally worked extremely hard and contacted all the individuals and experts worldwide, who are eager to participate in the ongoing debate to globalise Ayurveda and its acceptance in the EU countries. We are also in touch with the Ministry of Health, Government of India. The key words in our endeavours will be professionalism, presentation and credibility when it comes to dealing with governments abroad. Every word will be measured, checked for accuracy and appropriateness. There are too many missed opportunities in the past and we should not allow that to cause problems in the future, and therefore, we have decided to set up the Ayurveda Trust and I have outlined the current thinking and proposal for this conference. Those of you, who wish to join hands with us, I would suggest that you contact us and remain in touch with us.

Proposal for setting up The Ayurveda Trust (The Trust) in the UK as a representative body for promoting safe practice and safeguarding the heritage of the ancient Indian art and science of healing.

Objectives of the Trust:

1. Provide Access to the Ancient Medical System to all: The Trust believes that the ancient Indian heritage of healthy holistic living and alleviating natural imbalances using natural means should be accessible to all. To this end the Trust will promote:
 - a) Standardisation b) Safety c) Quality d) Integrity and e) Authenticity of the practice and the product of Ayurvedic Medicine
2. Promote globalisation while maintaining the originality of the art: The Trust believes in promoting the ancient art globally but not at the expense of losing the originality of the art. The Trust recognises that modernisation of methods of study of the utility and efficacy of traditional systems is necessary. This should be done with the minimum alteration in the original spirit of the art.
3. Serve as a body to voice the issues and concerns of the stakeholders of the art. The purpose of such voice will be to defend the interests of the stakeholders and to promote their wellbeing.
4. To serve as an interpreter and an interlocutor between various voices, languages, systems and scientific disciplines.
5. To promote education of Ayurvedic medicine

STRUCTURE OF THE TRUST:

Board of Trustees

The board of Trustees will be the supreme body of the Trust and shall comprise of individual of good standing who have interest in defending ancient heritage in general and of

traditional medical systems in particular. There will be 5 founding Trustees of the Ayurveda Trust

The Trustees will meet once every 2 calendar months. Meetings will be chaired by the Chairman of Trustees who will be elected by simple majority among the founding Trustees. The Chairman of Trustees will nominate a secretary who will be responsible for organising the meetings. In the case of any Trustee being not available in person an attempt will be made to attend the meeting by telephone or by video conference.

As soon as it is practicable the Founding Trustees will elect further members of the council to include representatives of stakeholders or others who are seen as able and willing to advance the objectives of the Trust to bring the overall membership of the Board of Trustees to seven.

Executive Board:

The executive board will be responsible for the overall running of the activities of the Trust. This shall comprise of A CEO, a secretary and a treasurer (part time).

The executive board will report to the Board of Trustees.

Advisory Councils:

General Advisory Council: The general advisory will comprise of representatives of the commercial, academic, Ayurvedic practitioners and the government. There will be a permanent position on the General Advisory Council of a representative of the Union of India. It is proposed that the First Secretary [commercial] of the High Commission of India in London be the representative. Necessary formal approval and permission for this will be sought. The General Advisory Council may be a real or a virtual body that will carry out its activities.

Scientific Advisory Council: The council shall comprise mainly of practitioners and scholars of Ayurvedic Medicine from around the world. The composition of the council will be such that there is room for progressive thinking on the issues of practice of Ayurveda in a modern world while retaining the fundamental principles of life. Practitioners and scholars and other medical systems may be members of this council if it is deemed necessary to incorporate the views from other systems.

Commercial Advisory Council: The Trust is aware of trade and commerce around products and services related to Ayurveda and supports such commerce in a fair and open system abiding the laws of the country in which it is practiced. Views of commercial organisations can be voiced through this council. Members of this council will be made aware that neither this council nor the Trust will be a platform for advancement of commercial interests of one party at the expense of others. The Trust is committed to exclusion of any commercial interests from its activities if they do not abide by these guidelines or if they contravene any of the Trust's objectives. The board of Trustees will have the power to exercise this right where necessary.

It is my earnest hope and prayer that all committed activists in the field of Ayurveda will join hands to work together with a view to genuinely and successfully work towards globalisation of Ayurveda and I hope this modest contribution of three papers from me and my colleagues Dr. Vishal Gulati and Dr. Pandey will provide a global vision for the next decade. For my part in the UK, I can assure you that if all of you give us your wholehearted support, then we will win this battle: it reminds me about what Mahatma Gandhi did to start his many struggles in South Africa and he brought these struggles to India to win the Indian independence from the British Raj

and I assure you that we can win this battle for Ayurveda abroad more easily than what you can achieve in India. Once we are successful abroad, I am sure it will help us get Ayurveda its due full-fledged recognition as an independent system of medicine within our own motherland!

CONCLUSION

In spite of all the discrimination and neglect shown by the Western people and at home, notwithstanding the inert and disorganized nature of the Indian Ayurveda community, the Science of Ayurveda is definitely spreading its roots in the West. World Health Organisation has estimated that 80% of the world population depend on alternative medicine for their immediate health care. With 80% of the health budget going to the modern medicine sector, the CAM therapies survive amidst deficiencies and difficulties. Ayurveda stands high on the list of CAM therapies in popularity. Through ages, Ayurveda has survived worse discriminations, suppressions and destruction during invasions by Mughals & British, and still this eternal knowledge of human life and philosophy has resurrected like a phoenix to serve the ailing humanity. Come what may, I am sure that this ancient boon of India will win over, establish its integrity and honor through its credibility, simplicity, and the most important, closeness to Nature - the mother of humanity and life itself!

Note: Since this discussion paper was launched and distributed to friends amongst Ayurveda community, the International Ayurveda Foundation was set up in the UK followed by an entity in India and a representative office in Geneva, Switzerland.

We should salute the untiring efforts of Dr. Vishal Gulati and Dr. Hemalatha Potti who worked with Praful Patel to set up this organisation. They were the pioneer founders of International Ayurveda Foundation.

