

CHALLENGES BEFORE AYURVEDIC EDUCATION – SOLUTIONS.

Ayurveda in the present day being praised as the time tested, unique holistic life science that has been rescuing humanity for many centuries. But unfortunately it is not being allowed to rescue humanity to that extent to which it can. The basic reason for this is the various challenges that it is facing in the field of its education and practice. The challenges of Ayurvedic education and that of Ayurvedic practice are interlinked. The solutions for Ayurvedic educational challenges can solve most of the challenges of Ayurvedic practice.

The basic challenges that Ayurvedic education is facing are

1. Non – availability of Literature.
2. Scattered Knowledge.
3. Inadequacy of Knowledge.
4. Lack of adequate clinical exposure.
5. Existence of misinforms / misconceptions.
6. Lack of uniform knowledge.
7. Lack of an effective and uniform professional media of conversation.
8. Reluctant attitude of governing bodies.

I. NON – AVAILABILITY OF LITERATURE:

Except the two sets of Lexicon i.e. – Bhruhatrayee & Laghutrayee so many other important books of Ayurveda are not available to the academic zones. The documentation of knowledge in these two sets of books is very complex and demands high perceptual levels to understand them. Such level of intellect is not expected with every one. Infact even for those with high perceptual levels Sri Surutha acharya advocates to go through various other relevant shastras so as to understand contents of Ayurveda. The various books that were written in latent period are a bit simple and would give certain clues which would unable one to understand the meaning of a complex sentence of Bharuhatravee etc. Therefore it is very important for an Ayurveda professional to go through various Ayurvedic books and related other books to understand the content of Ayurvedic Science. Hence various books like – Chakradatta, Saharayogam, Brundamadhavam, Gadanigraham, Vangasena, Chikitsakalika, Kakshaputatantram commenters etc., must be made easily available to the academic zones for better understanding the science

II SCATTERED KNOWLEDGE

The intention of documentation of knowledge in the form of samhita was seems to be only to preserve the knowledge for the benefit of future generation. The presentation of knowledge in samhitas is entirely different from that of presentation in today's books.

Acharyas could visualize the vast and great expansible nature of the science. They could also see the ultra fine complex arrangements of network of life in the body. Therefore it seems that it was felt difficult and unnecessary to document every aspect of science in detail. Therefore it had become mandatory for them to utilize all modalities of conversation for documentation of knowledge in the form of samhitas viz.. grammar, philosophy, social movement tantrayunktis, tantradoshas etc. This type of documentation of knowledge has not only made information very difficult to understand but also made information be scattered in samhitas. Therefore unless the entire samhita (s) is read in a proper manner, it is not possible for one to understand the real information that acharyas wanted to convey us through a particular sentence. Infact there is every possibility of misunderstanding it readily. Thus the documentation of knowledge in Ayurveda samhita is an indicatory but not explanatory. And thus each statement of samhita demands further explanation to understand its content.

Therefore it has become must and need of the day that there must be a book that would bring all the scattered information from various corners of all samhitas and explain them in a systematic manner so that the present generation would understand the information given in the science. But unfortunately this is not being done. The various publications available today are either samhitas as such or a compilation written as per the CCIM syllabus prescribed for undergraduates. Therefore there is an urgent need of an authentic text that would readily give the sketch of Ayurveda science to the new generations.

III INADEQUACY OF KNOWLEDGE

Owing to the facts explained earlier the teaching faculty of Ayurveda is being deprived of adequate authentic knowledge about various aspects of science. Only those people who could spend time and work into the concepts would be able to understand the content of science and acquire proper knowledge, while others do not. In addition to that there is no compulsion for teaching faculty to undergo regular CME programmes. Further there is no authentic body to regulate CME programmes and bring all updated information to academic zones. All these problems make the teaching faculty of Ayurveda fail to possess adequate knowledge and bring their students into confidence. In fact many a times it leaves the students confused with various contradictory statements on various aspects of science.

Charakaacharya says in the first chapter that as far as life, health and its maintenance is concerned Ayurveda is Anantam. And at the end in the last chapter it is said that if at all there is any knowledge in the universe it is well available in Charaka Samhita. These two sentences affirmatively indicate the vastness and density of knowledge existing in the form of small slokas in Samhitas. But unfortunately no effort is being seriously made to reveal these facts. There are certain important basic concepts of Ayurveda like:

1. Concept of Doshasanchara
2. Concept of Marma
3. Concept of Vyadhighatakas
4. Concept of Rogamargas
5. Concept of Kriyakalas

These concepts are so important that without understanding of which one cannot really understand even the sketch of Ayurveda. But unfortunately these concepts are not well analyzed and explained to the student community. And these concepts are not put in practice by most of the Ayurvedic professionals. In fact it has become as if these important concepts have been left abandoned. Owing to this it has become very difficult and scary for an Ayurvedic doctor to understand and manage a complex and critical pathological situation in a given patient. These are those important concepts on which other concepts of Ayurveda are depended. Therefore there is an urgent need to have clarity and uniform opinion on these concepts in order to bring out and educate about the real sketch of Ayurveda to the student community. And at the same time it is important to put these concepts in practice so as to make Ayurvedic practice more rational. Until then it would not be wrong if it is called inadequacy of knowledge to put Ayurveda into practice.

IV LACK OF ADEQUATE CLINICAL EXPOSURE:

It is an open secret that doing is the best way of knowing. Therefore it needs no mention that to understand the real meaning of a statement of ayurveda one needs to put it in practice with an inventive vision. Only then one can analyze it in different angles and come to know the real sense that acharyas wanted to convey us through that sentence. And only this would help an Ayurvedic doctor utilize that knowledge in an appropriate situation and serve humanity. But unfortunately this is not being done. The Ayurvedic community is not getting adequate clinical exposure. In fact even the clinical teaching faculty members too are not provided with enough provisions to have adequate clinical exposure. Because of which many of vast sections of knowledge of Ayurveda are left untouched. And even those touched sections are also not worked to the adequate level. As a result of which the important basic concepts of ayurveda and management method of various diseases, could not be analyzed properly and layed in an uniform manner. All to gather it has become very difficult for an Ayurvedic doctor to be confident of assessing prognosis of a pathological condition in a given patient. And in tern it has also become very difficult for teaching faculty to bring ayurvedic students into confidence towards the science. Therefore all necessary provisions must be made for teaching faculty to have adequate clinical exposure enabling them to understand the science and serve humanity in a better way.

V. EXISTENCE OF MISCONCEPTIONS / MISINFORMS:

There are various misconceptions and misinforms about many important concepts & statements of Ayurveda. They have been existing there for such a long period that they changed the out look of Ayurveda in the view of common man in general and professionals in specific. Owing to the conversational method of narration and certain story live content of samhitas Ayurveda is considered as more historical and philosophical rather than practical and scientific. And this misconception has generated reluctant attitude and failed to have analytical thought while understanding them. This in turn made either total loss of information or created a misinformation about the concept. viz:

>The concept of Marma has fallen into the trap of misinform. The most of the Ayurvedic professionals are in the view that acharyas have identified certain parts in the body which are considered as vulnerable therefore cautioned not to injure them during surgery or any other interventions otherwise they cause various grave problems including death. This misconception has led to total loss of a great information that acharyas wanted to give us. And created a misinform among professional and students that the concept of marma is a war-fare event, noticed and documented by Acharyas. Hence the concept of Marma is totally neglected and not being utilized in practice.

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But the fact is that, the concept of marma is like a mirror reflecting the supreme-perceptual levels of acharyas in understanding bodily mechanisms. The marmas are not just vulnerable parts but also vital parts of the body which require not only just protection but also more attention to understand them. Because they play a very vital role in smooth run of various activities the body understanding of which would help a lot in better understanding of body, assessment of prognosis of a disease, its method of management and perhaps its prevention.

The concept of Ojus is one another concept suffering from misconceptions. The information about Ojus is relatively less and is available as a side line information while explaining some other aspects. This sort of presentation has made this important concept fall into the trap of misconception. Today the common opinion on the concept of Ojus among professionals & students is that there is a substance in the body called Ojus said to be present in the body right from the stage of foetus to the last day of life. Though it is said to be present all over the body the more important one present in the heart and destruction of which leads to death. Etc.

As the modern medical science has not identified so far any such substance in the body with which the Ojus may be correlated, the ayurvedic professionals have not paid attention to understand the concept and ultimately the important concept has fallen out of use. But when we work into the concept it seems to be a great knowledge acharyas have given to us. This concept reflects the supremacy of Ayurveda over all other health sciences in understanding the bodily mechanisms. The Ojus seems to be a highly complex chemical substance that has a strong control over functions of various fundamental elements of the body and co-ordination among them. It seems to play an exordinary role at a higher level in maintenance of life in the body. Unless we clearly understand Ojus understanding functional mechanism of body would not be completed. Until then the rationality of our treatment (including that of modern methods of treatment of any diseases) remain doubtful.

>Similar is the case with the concept of Manasa rogas especially Grahavesha. This concept of Ayurveda is one that has seen no height so far. The basic reason for this is the method of narration about the concept in various samhitas. This method sounds so typical that it is readily assumed as superstitious by modern generations and kept it aside. But when we work into the concept of Adhyathmika dravyas and try to understand their role in the network of functional aspect of the body we can visualize a clear scientific path getting into this concept. Understanding of which could be a path break in the field of life science. And the modern science and society would need to rectify their opinion towards the everlasting Indian traditions.

>The one more important concept of Ayurveda suffering from misconception is the concept of Arishtalakshanas. This concept is once again an unique information Ayurveda contributes to the modern science.

However the entire concept is kept untouched because of its contents. The content of Indriyasthna sounds readily more illusional than practical. Because the information given there in rages from simple various signs & symptoms that we encounter is various diseases to highly imperceptible and impossible like features. And this probably made professionals to conclude to a misconception that acharyas have documented this information at random on the backdrop of social and technological scenario of those days.

But after working into the concept to certain extent I strongly feel that this concept is highly extraordinary and very much closely related to the concept of Adhyathmika dravyas. And it demands for a very high level probe and execution into the sequences of network of functional aspects of the body. It is nothing to do with the social and technological scenario of any period to time.

Thus these are some of the big sections of Ayurveda suffering from misconceptions & misinforms and rendering a great science to a mere story. Because these are those important aspects of science that can be compared with the doors of temple of Ayurveda without opening of which one cannot even visualize the real pleasant idol of Ayurveda. A part from these there are also certain other important aspects suffering from the same viz. Mode of action of a drug, method of examination of patient, the art of diagnosis, method of management of a pathological situation etc. Therefore this challenge needs to be overcome at an earliest possible. Otherwise we may have to learn the same science from others.

VI. LACK OF UNIFORM KNOWLEDGE

This is one challenge that needs to be immediately overcome. Because this challenge is the sole cause for delay in progress of Ayurvedic science.

We have seen earlier that there are so many problems involved in understanding and bringing Ayurveda to the rescue of humanity. As a result of which the content of the science understood so far is relatively less. And even this amount of information is not uniformly available among all Ayurvedic professionals themselves. Because of which though a lot of work is being done and many young scientists are coming up with appreciable, innovative knowledge on various aspects of the science they have been confined to that regional belt of professionals and its true validation remained doubtful. This is happening because there is no one to take care of the knowledge and see that it spreads in a uniform manner among all Ayurvedic professionals across the country. And this ultimately rendering the entire work to be in vain and hamper interest of the scholar. Apart from this the same challenge is responsible for converting many scientific seminars/conferences into boredoms now a days.

Therefore we should have a Technical governing body for Ayurveda to take care of various aspects of the science including its development. And this body has to primarily do two important works - 1. Publication work 2. Co-ordination work.

PUBLICATION WORK: The body has to publish all classical ayurvedic books and only those books should be considered as authentic one till date across the world. And the content of only these books should be considered authentic one for all future references. First Bhruhatrayee & Laghutrayee should be published in a relevant order. And these books should be published as such with all relevant, viable explanations available so far on every aspect of the science in a samhita with due references and acknowledgement to the author. After publication of first edition of the book a copy of it should be sent to all ayurvedic institutions across the country inviting for open suggestions and viable contributions from any scholars regarding any aspect of the science with relevant and adequate references / explanations in support of it. And these suggestions & contributions received by the body should be verified properly and incorporated in its next edition with due acknowledgement to the author. When once the second edition is released it should be pronounced as the only authentic book across the Country/World and should be prescribed for all purposes. Thus all classical ayurvedic books should be published and made authentic in this manner.

Thus the content of these books should be revised appropriately incorporating various innovations on various aspects of the science given in a samhita without disturbing its original slokas. In addition to the classical books the body has to publish a book intended to give the entire sketch of ayurvedic science discussing about all its basic aspects in detail in a systematic manner with all possible references and explanations so that the students would readily understand the science at one stretch without difficulty. And this book should invariably contain only the contents of the classical books published by the body. And thus it stands an authentic one till date.

Thus this sort of activity would enable to have an uniform knowledge about an aspect of science among all ayurvedic professionals across the country / world. And this in turn would help all research & developmental works in ayurveda run smoothly and in a proper direction.

2. CO-ORDINATION WORK: The next important work that the body should immediately do is to design various developmental programmes into three important fields of the science i.e. 1. Research 2 .Education 3. Service

to public, to see that the motto of Ayurveda “ CARE OF HEALTH & CURE OF DISEASE” is achieved. And this is possible only when it takes responsibility to coordinate these activities by laying down proper and adequate regulations. It should also see that the out come of these developmental activities are incorporated in relevant publications of the body so that they are simultaneously and uniformly communicated among all ayurvedic professionals across the country.

VII LACK OF AN EFFECTIVE & UNIFORM PROFESSIONAL MEDIA OF CONVERSATION.

This challenge is posing a major threat to Ayurvedic science. In spite of so many hurdles involved in understanding and practice Ayurveda there are many persons/doctors who could acquire good conceptual and practical knowledge of Ayurveda. And some of them are very much interested to give their knowledge to others. There are also people who one eager to take knowledge from them. But the purpose is not being solved. Because the person who is interested to give information is not able to do so because the conversational media he uses is not conveying his intension precisely to the audience. Because the various terms used in samhita as conversational media of Ayurvedic Science are having vide applicability and when this media of conversation is used as it is the audience are not able to understand the new information precisely. Therefore there is an urgent need of an effective & uniform professional media of conversation for the faculty of ayurveda. Until then the treasure of knowledge of Ayurveda remains unrevealed and untouched. And no scientific research in Ayurveda can be meaningful.

VIII RELUCTANT ATTITUDE OF GOVERNING BODIES

The various institutional, government and autonomous bodies like CCIM etc are not giving adequate importance and paying attention towards the system. In the sense that the science is not being supported adequately in the manner it requires today. It is only in the very recent past that the government has taken up certain steps in the interest of the system by increasing funds and bringing Ayurvedic dispensaries under one shelter together with allopathic hospitals. This has certainly boosted up the moral support of ayurvedic doctors and provided a good chance to be in reach of the needy. But this is a meager help. What the system really requires today is – all ayurvedic teaching hospitals and district hospitals must be furnished with latest medical equipments so that Ayuvedic doctors get an opportunity to deal with acute conditions of various diseases if not emergencies. It is only a misinform that the ayurvedic medicine works slowly hence acute conditions cannot be managed by them. No doubt ayurvedic medicines as they are being prepared and made available today certainly require a bit longer time to work only when compared to the allopathic medicines.

But the onset of action is not that slow that acute conditions can not be managed by them. Therefore all provisions must be made to enable ayurvedic doctors treat acute conditions so that they get a chance to further understand the science in a better manner and get confidence in managing various acute conditions of diseases. And this in turn would enable them to have a chance to prepare ayurvedic medicines that can meet an emergency which is the need of the day.

Similarly Ayurveda must be considered in various national health programmes like Malarial Eradication, Leprosy Eradication, T.B. eradication programmes, Family planning programmes, HIV/AIDS control programmes etc. Though AYUSH 64 is considered as a good anti malarial drug and incorporated in programme it has not been widely propagated. Similarly in 1980s the Textbook of Gynecology by Shah has incorporated few Ayurvedic classical preparations as found to be very effective and safest contraceptives for females. But they have not been given adequate propagation. Moreover no governing body has taken care of them therefore they are vanished from the book in next editions.

Ayurvedic system has given a lot of information regarding T.B., Leprosy etc. including their management methods. A recent study in Government Ayurvedic College, Hyderabad showed very encouraging results in management of T.B. with Ayurvedic medicines even in drug resistant cases. Similarly there are so many medicines available for the leprosy, and there are good number of methods and drugs to modulate immunity which can be very much useful for the management of HIV/AIDS like diseases also.

These are all certain important aspects about which the various governing bodies concerned with Ayurveda should immediately pay attention. This would help not only for better understanding of the science but also for better service to humanity. Therefore governing bodies should take up all necessary steps to see that Ayurveda play a contributory role in all national health programmes and allow it to serve humanity to the extent it can.

CONCLUSION: When all these challenges are met the various demands existing before ayurvedic practice today can be overcome correctly and easily. And then the so called an alternative science "Ayurveda" would soon be proved as the Ultimate Health Science rescuing humanity.

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