

## A REVIEW: MOST PERMITTED TRADITIONAL SYSTEMS OF INDIAN CULTURE

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### ABSTRACT

Traditional systems of Medicine of India has key role of age-old practice of medicine in the world, has played an essential role in human health care service and welfare from its inception. Likewise, all traditional medicines are of its own regional effects and dominant in the West Asian nations; India, Pakistan, Tibet, and so forth, East Asian nations; China, Korea, Japan, Vietnam, and so forth, Africa, South and Central America. This article is an attempt to illuminate Indian traditional medical service and its importance, based on recent methodical reviews.

**Methods:** online Web search engines for example; Google, Delnet, Science Direct and Google Scholar were employed for reviews as well as for meta-analysis of the current data.

### Traditional Health Practices from India

India is known around the world to be a place of mystical practices and strange cultures. In the depth of this culture lies a century-old tradition that has been set by scholars and philosophers at the time. Although considered as unscientific for a long period of time, scientists and doctors are slowly realizing the positive effects of traditional health care practiced in India.

Today there are many research that are being done on traditional medicine and its presumably magical effects in controlling terminal diseases. Home remedies are present all around the world and only in India it is perfected to the level of an exact science. Indian traditional medicinal practices such as Ayurveda and Siddha is slowly gaining popularity in the global

healthcare sector. This is one of the major reason behind the rising standards of medical tourism in the country.

In this article, we will analyse some of the astonishingly surprising and effective medicinal practices in India and will provide information about the benefits of these treatments. India is a vast country with almost 29 states in total. There are various traditional health practices that are region specific, and we will try and provide you with as much information about these locations in this article.<sup>[1-2]</sup>

## **Traditional Health care system in India**

### **1. Ayurveda**

One of the most famous traditional medical practices in India is Ayurveda. Ayurveda is today considered as a viable alternative to traditional medicine as it has often proven to alleviate some major conditions that western medicines fail to heal. In India, the southern state of Kerala is considered to be the home for Ayurveda. It is an actual course with syllabus today, taught in almost all major medical universities.

Ayurveda was founded during the Vedic times in India, it's also said that Ayurveda was practiced in the Indus Valley civilization too. What makes it different western medicine is the fact that it was developed over a long period of time, allowing it to get better with each generation. The core practices of Ayurveda remain in sync with soul and nature giving it the mystical aura it possesses. It's been passed down through generations using word of mouth and yet remained pious without adulterations.<sup>[3-9]</sup>

### **How is Ayurveda Different from Western Medicine?**

The difference between Ayurveda and traditional medicine is quite simple. Western medicine relies on the feedback the doctor obtains from the current medical condition of the patient, they consider the symptoms and base their treatment on the possible causes of the symptom. In Ayurveda, the symptoms are not such an important factor, they, in fact, observe how the overall condition of the patient's body. In Ayurveda diseases are considered to be highly psychosomatic, their treatment, therefore, is directed to the root cause within the body that is forcing it to react in this particular way while inflicted with any specific disease.

In Ayurveda, different people with the same medical disease and symptoms might obtain different medications, this is because Ayurveda does not seek to cure the disease, instead it

tries to cure the body thus relieving it from any disease affecting it. The internal constitution, lifestyle and the place of origin are some of the important factors that Ayurvedic doctors look into.<sup>[10-13]</sup>

### **Benefits of Ayurveda**

**1. Better looking skin:** Ayurveda is a completely natural treatment. It has proven its mettle to cure any conceivable diseases related to the skin. There are various benefits to your skin if you embark upon an Ayurvedic treatment regimen. The diet prescribed by Ayurvedic doctors help you in maintaining enough and more vitamins.<sup>[14]</sup>

**2. Easy Weight Management:** As it said before, Ayurveda aims for the total wellbeing of a person's body and soul. If you are an obese or overweight person, the first plan in Ayurvedic treatment will be to reduce your body weight through controlled diet and natural supplement medication. Weight management is easy when compared to other dieting techniques prevalent today. Moreover, weight control using Ayurveda comes with no side effects, making it one of the most reliable methods for weight reduction.<sup>[15]</sup>

**3. Alleviates Stress:** All Ayurvedic treatment centres are set up in places where it is in sync with nature. The treatment methods of Ayurveda require the patient to make his body and mind completely free from tensions and other forms of stress. Stress is a major contributing factor in developing major diseases in the future. Combating stress is easy when combined with the almost all meditative treatments of Ayurveda. You will feel like your aura starts to glow again once you start undergoing Ayurvedic treatment in India.<sup>[16]</sup>

**4. Deep cleaning for the body:** Ayurvedic treatment such as the panchakarma are treatments oriented to keep your body clean of harmful toxins accumulated through food and poor lifestyle choices. It's not easy to cleanse your body without strong medication in any other methods of treatments. The Ayurveda practitioner uses certain special natural extracts from medicinal plants that are used for this process. Since most of the problems in your body are caused due to an influx of foreign toxins and elements into your body, the cleansing treatment as a part of Ayurveda makes it more easy for you to lead a healthy life.<sup>[17]</sup>

**5. Helps you sleep better:** Insomnia is a prevalent symptom for most chronic diseases. It's really difficult for your body and mind to remain functional if you are not giving it enough rest. Ayurveda has a proven track record in curing problems with sleep. They have various

natural concoctions that have the ability to keep your sleep patterns back to normal without introducing harmful toxins to your bloodstream as the western tablet does. Sleeping better will invariably mean that you are having a better circadian rhythm and that helps your body to heal itself sooner. Apart from this Ayurveda has a wide range of other health benefits including being extremely useful in the treatment of inflammation and reduces the effects of diabetes without any side effects. In India, there are many places that provide Ayurvedic treatment, however, the southern state of Kerala is told to be the authentic practitioners of Ayurveda with differences in style through the topography of the state.<sup>[18]</sup>

## 2. Siddha

Siddha is yet another traditional treatment method from the southern states of India. Mainly practiced in Tamil Nadu, Siddha is an age-old traditional treatment method that offers lasting solutions for many chronic conditions. The Siddha System of Medicine (SSM) is a recognized alternative treatment in India. Siddha is widely considered as a psychosomatic treatment method as its ruling principles aim at the balance between the five governing factors of one's health. Known as the "Panchabootham" it mainly covers the elements of fire, water, earth, space, and air.

Siddha always encourages patients to attain an unbreakable balance between the mind and the soul. This is the most important part of Siddha treatment. According to ancient scriptures pertaining to the practice of Siddha, there are 4,444 types of diseases. They have an exact count of blood vessels and nerve tissues. For a traditional medicine, Siddha is highly organized and structured.

Siddha practitioners are basically sages who have attained revelations. These sages keep the year-old practice alive without any adulteration. Siddha medicines are highly effective for patients suffering from chronic conditions relating to liver, anaemia, peptic ulcers, piles, prostate enlargement etc. There is also research stating that Siddha medicines have a high efficacy when it comes to managing the symptoms of HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). Siddha is also highly effective in the treatment of Cancer, diabetes, and arthritis.<sup>[19]</sup>

### Benefits of Siddha

Siddha treatments come with a load of benefits. Since all medications used in this particular form of treatment is natural, there are no side effects the patients have to deal with.

Moreover, Siddha is a form of treatment that aims at bringing an overall balance to your body and soul. And its extensive practice will make sure that you have a better functioning immune system to fight diseases in the future.

When considering chronic diseases like diabetes, normal western medicine heavily relies on insulin supplementation and other strong medications. In Siddha however, Diabetes is treated with an aim to treat the underlying issue. They keep the patient in touch with the surrounding nature, encouraging them to indulge in practices that alleviate stress and normalizes blood function. All extra medications took for treating the disease are derived from natural elements and is in sync with the diet prescribed for the patient.

Siddha sometimes uses heavy metals from nature to perform the function of internal cleansing, highly controversial in nature, this treatment method involving heavy metals are dangerous according to the standards of western medicine, although it's very important to the practitioners of Siddha and they have successfully managed to keep this form of treatment intact without having any issues with radiation poisoning.

Siddha treatment for terminally ill people suffering from cancer or AIDs highly benefit from Siddha. The traditional treatments ability to curb the symptoms of these terminal diseases are unmatched with any other form of treatment.<sup>[20]</sup>

### **3. Unani**

Unani is yet another traditional medicine in India, that has foreign roots. It's safe to say that Unani medication was introduced to India during the invasion by the Mughals. Unani is presumed to be originated in Greece, and Hippocrates is deemed to be the father of Unani. It's safe to say that Unani is a Greek-Arab format of medicine, drawing inspiration heavily from both the cultures.

Unani is basically another psychosomatic form of medication. It is recognised as an authentic ISM (Indian System of Medication). There are various methods for the implementation of Unani treatment. The medications used for the treatment under Unani are all derived from natural elements. The authenticity of the medication is often in question however its effectiveness remains unparalleled.

Unani medicated follows the principles set by Hippocrates which states that the human body is composed of 4 types of fluid humor. They are blood, phlegm, yellow bile, and black bile,

the correlation and temperamental balance of all four fluid humor are the most basic diagnostic tool the Unani practitioners depend on.<sup>[22]</sup>

According to Unani, optimal health is when one's body is in perfect balance with the six elemental forces that govern it. The six essential elements of health are:

- Air
- Food and Drinks
- Retention and Excretion
- Sleep and Wake cycles
- Retention and tolerance to physical activity
- Mental activity and adequate rest.

Since these are the major governing factors of one's health according to Unani, any disease will be treated with an approach to get the required balance to attain health.

The main three modes of treatment used in Unani are Ilajbil Tadbeer, Ilajbil Dava, and Ilajbil Yad meaning Regimental Therapy, Pharmacotherapy and Surgery respectively.<sup>[23]</sup>

### **Benefits of Unani**

**1. A high success rate for recurring diseases:** Unani medications have some proven track record in being extremely efficient in curing recurring diseases such as asthma and joint pain. Some studies also show that Unani medicines for skin can heal serious medical conditions such as psoriasis and even skin related leukaemia up to an extent. Its unique effects are also helpful for patients with cardiovascular problems and stomach troubles and mental illnesses. These results go to show the importance given to Unani treatments in India.<sup>[24]</sup>

**2. Highly effective for Aids:** Terminal immunodeficiency diseases like aids are very lethal and almost life-threatening all the times. Unani medicine practitioners claim that if given through a proper course of treatment, Unani medications can be very effective for patients suffering from Aids. Since Unani deals with the overall health of the patient by attaining a level of mental balance along with physical harmony regarding the elements of life, the overall immune system of the patient is set to perform in a better fashion. In aids patients, the immune system is considerably weak, still with Unani medication, the immune system can perform better and develop a level of resistance that will go a long way in protecting the life of the people affected by it.<sup>[25]</sup>

**3. Treats Sexual Sickness:** Unani treatments by far are the most effective method of treatment for curing sexual illnesses. Issues pertaining to sexual performance or maladies to your sex organs are best cured with Unani medications. Unani powerful medications are prescribed to increase your libido and also to ensure that any nervous issues connected to your sexual prowess in rectified.

Unani is also told to be extremely effective in treating sterile conditions among women, thus eradicating the need for costly medical treatments such as the IVF.<sup>[26]</sup>

Unani medication is administered locally mostly through oral intake like western medicine, this allows easy comparison between the both. While considering the serious side effects of using allopathic medication, Unani becomes a truly wonderful option. Apart from the above-listed ailments, Unani treatment in India is also said to have powerful effects in treating serious medical conditions such as cerebral palsy. There are results which shows a great deal of improvement in young patients suffering from cerebral palsy when administered with Unani medication and health practices.

The above three are the most famous traditional medication from the various parts of India. However, there are many more of this magical medical practice that exists in different areas of the country. Naturopathy in Rajasthan and the highly secretive medical practices of the Mishing, a tribal community in the northeast section of the country are also highly effective forms of traditional medicine, solely based on products derived from the surrounding nature and thus eliminating any chances of side effects.<sup>[27]</sup>

#### **4. Yoga and naturopathy**

Yoga is a Sanskrit word, composed and spoken limitedly in India. Sanskrit is popular fundamentally in mainstream Indian ceremonial settings, for example, Hinduism, Jainism, and Buddhism. The word yoga has changing interpretations yet is most usually comprehended as significance union. Yoga explores preventive and curative aptitudes as a training exercise for people to improve mindfulness. Dialectical behavior therapy has its underlying foundations in cognitive behavior therapy, a different model of mindfulness happens for cognitive therapy practices, known as care based subjective treatment.<sup>[28,29]</sup>

Naturopathy is a particular type of essential drugs that balances age- old healing traditions with logical progress and current research. Naturopathy is guided by an interesting

arrangement of the rule that perceives the body's inborn healing capacity, emphasizes disease prevention, and urges singular responsibility to get ideal well-being. Naturopathic hypothesis, the disease is seen as a procedure of disturbance to well-being and consequent recovery with regard to natural healing systems.<sup>[30]</sup>

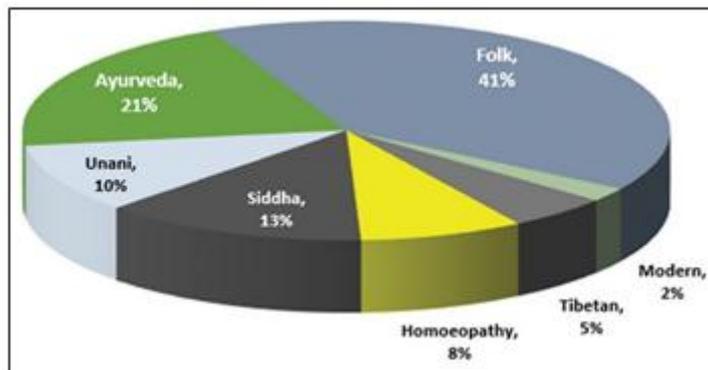
## 5. Homeopathy

The principle of Homoeopathy stays one of the most debatable therapeutic practice and been known Hippocrates from Greece around 450 BCE. The present-day practice of Homoeopathy is better recognized by a German doctor, Dr. Samuel Hahnemann (1755CE–1843CE). The word “Homoeopathy” has been derived from Greek words, “Homois” which means similar and “pathos” which means suffering. Homeopathy is a therapeutic technique utilizing arrangements of substances whose impacts when regulated to healthy individuals match to the appearances of the illness in the individual patient.<sup>[31,32]</sup> The methodology is believed to work on two main principles<sup>[33]</sup>:

1. “Like cures like;” a healthy individual would manifest the same symptom with the drug, that particular drug is the cure for the same illness.
2. “Infinite dilution;” therapeutic activity is enhanced by repeated dilution and succession even when diluted beyond Avogadro's number.

Homeopathy essentially implies treating illnesses with cures, which are equipped for producing symptoms identical to the disease when taken. For example, bark extract of *Cinchona officinalis*, which contains quinine, if administrated by a healthy individual, would then produces exactly the same symptom than that of malaria. Homeopathic methods are polished since over 200 years in India and are now practiced throughout the world. It has mixed so well into the roots and customs of India and has been perceived as one of the recognized systems of medicine in health-care service.<sup>[34]</sup>

Indian traditional medicine has its origin in India that evolved through a continuous process of transformation from its *Vedic* period and a single drug or blends in crude shape are favored over many fold formulations. In spite of the fact that the starting points and advancement times of these traditional medication process are different, however, there is a common background through this foundation, is in their basic standards and practices by utilizing the plants and plant-based preparations in the medicinal services. The extent of utilization of plants in a different system of medications appears in Fig. 3. Moreover, around 85–90% Indian population depends on the traditional system for essential medicinal services.



## DISCUSSION

Despite the fact that, 5000-year-old, Indian traditional medicine, had to face the greatest misfortune when Lord Macaulay settled the argument about whether India should support traditional medicines or western medicines. According to his choice, western medicines should solely cultivate in all zones administered by East India Company. In this manner, Indian traditional medicine was effectively disheartened, and the Western solution was perceived as the main legitimate system of medicine to be taken after.<sup>[35,36]</sup>

However, nowadays, many modern medical practitioners are realizing and starting to recommend alternative (natural) remedies to their patients when modern medicines do not work, it is also because natural remedies have less or no side effects, are less dangerous for prolong use, rather than allopathic synthesized medicines; those endorse toxic side effects and may sometimes lead to death. Conversely, there is a developing confirmation to demonstrate that ingredients of NPs act synergistically which may neutralize side effects in the proper blend. The civil argument between modern medicine and traditional medicines comes down to a basic truth; each person, regardless of education or sickness, ought to be educated about the actualities concerning their illness and the associated side effects of medicines.<sup>[37]</sup>

Advancement of Ayurveda and plant-based solutions for medicinal services through everyday experiences is a part of the social legacy of India. The WHO, additionally, appraises that around 80–85% of the population living in the developing countries relies on complementary or alternative pharmaceutical for fundamental therapeutic administrations and necessities. In all the conventional frameworks of medication, the medicinal plants assume to play a noteworthy influence and constitute the backbone. It is hard to get exact figures for the aggregate number of medicinal plants on earth; as appeared by some estimation, around

35,000–70,000 plant species are being used worldwide in human health-care services, and Indian pharmacopoeia alone incorporates more than 3000 drugs of natural origin.<sup>[38]</sup>

## CONCLUSION

The knowledge of Indian traditional medicine has combined various traditional approaches with similar or different theories and methodologies, which are of important significance. After independence, in 1951, planning commission took birth. Much later, in 1995, a different department called Department of Indian System of Medicine and Homoeopathy (ISM&H) was molded. The acronym, AYUSH, which stands for Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha, and Homoeopathy was the new name of ISM&H in 2003 as a detached Department under Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India. Due to mastery of current pharmaceuticals notwithstanding open confidence and trust, Indian traditional medicines are in inimical hindrances. A need has developed to combined the entire whole traditional medicinal system and systematize it with a very strong optimistic approach in spreading our own medical tradition is the need of great importance. Consequently, phytochemical and biochemical research with a continuous focus for the revival and spreading of Indian medical inheritance for the welfare of the society at large is needed.

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