

Recent Trends in Ayurvedic Pharmacy Education in India

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Ayurvedic Pharmacy (AP) is emerging as an independent science largely due to global acceptance of Ayurveda. Although Ayurvedic Pharmacy is not new subject but recently it has faced drastic transition. Ayurvedic Pharmacy has roots in *Dravyguna*, *Ras-Shastra* and *Bhaishjya Kalpana*. Ayurvedic Pharmacy utilizes drugs of composite origin including plant, animal, mineral and marine sources.

Education in Ayurveda has two distinct disciplines:

1. Medical
2. Pharmaceutical

Bachelor of Ayurvedic Medicine and Surgery (B.A.M.S) is studied for five and half years of intensive learning and six months of internship in a hospital or dispensary. Career can be enhanced by pursuing education at postgraduate and doctorate levels. The traditional curriculum has been followed for decades in Ayurvedic schools and it recently the need of introducing pharmacy courses at mass level was felt.

Ayurveda education at pharmacy level came into limelight after establishment of Institute of Ayurvedic Pharmaceutical Sciences at Gujrat Ayurvedic University. The university took the initiative of introducing pharmacy course related to Ayurveda ranging from diploma to doctorate level. The Institute of Ayurvedic Pharmaceutical Sciences has played pivotal role in recognisatiron of Ayurveda at international level. Establishment of Rajasthan Ayurvedic University is another milestone in the history of Ayurveda. Some institutes have started pharmacy course related to Ayurveda on modern footing keeping in mind the era of technical advancement and lack of trained manpower in Ayurvedic drug industry. National Institute of Pharmaceutical Education and Research (NIPER), Mohali has initiated Masters Program in Traditional Medicine on persistent demand of the industry.

Ayurvedic pharmacy course taught in traditional mode is known as *upvaid*. The term highlights Ayurvedic dispenser or chemist. The course so far has remained in hibernation either due to non availability of job prospects or non-popularity of Ayurveda. Recently, industry has witnessed increasing demand of trained Ayurvedic professionals. At present, 1, 5000 Ayurvedic or herbal products are available in the Indian market. According to one estimate, India manufactures Ayurvedic drugs worth 6,000 crore and drug worth 1, 5000 crore are exported. Approximately 20,000 Ayurvedic drug manufacturing pharmacies exist in India. In view, of above statistics, there is acute requirement of trained manpower in ever expanding Ayurvedic Drug Industry. On the contrary, it is difficult to explain the actual situation but Pharmacies are really short of trained manpower.

Formulation is Ayurveda are of two types:

1. Traditional formulations
2. Patented and proprietary medicines

Traditional formulations are based on methodology mentioned in ancient pharmacy lexicons related to Ayurveda. A traditional medicine finished product should mention the source of manufacturing (standard reference book or text). It is but obvious that traditional medicine formulations can not be patented. Recent times have witnessed decrease in sales of traditional formulations. Patented medicines are in more demand and it is supported by the fact that several multinational companies have set up units for patent formulations.

AYUSH, the prime body dealing with Ayurvedic education and regulatory affairs related to Ayurvedic drug industry has issued several guidelines related to drug manufacturing. Appointment of Ayurvedic physician or pharmacist is mandatory for Ayurvedic drug manufacturing industries. Lack of trained manpower has added to the problems related to Ayurveda. Promotion of indigenous drugs is in priority list of Indian Government and under prevailing circumstances, there is strict need of introduction of career oriented Ayurvedic pharmacy course or to revise the existing ones.

The courses available in Ayurvedic pharmacy are in initial phase and strict master plan is required for enhancing quality education. Due regard should be given to eligibility criteria as far as admission to the courses are concerned. Intake of students with medical background should be made mandatory keeping in view the requirement of trained man manpower and globalization of Ayurveda. We need to enhance the teaching skills keeping in mind the growth of Ayurvedic drug industry. The teachers having qualification in Ayurveda should undergo refresher courses particularly at industrial level. Scarcity of indexed and quality journals devoted to Ayurvedic research has always been felt in institutional libraries. We need to address the practical problems immediately so that justification should be done to emerging discipline of Ayurvedic Pharmaceutical Sciences.

Recently Lovely professional University in Punjab has taken the initiative of launching diploma, degree and masters programs in Ayurvedic pharmacy. Curriculum for M.S. Pharma (Traditional Medicine) issued by National Institute of Pharmaceutical Education and Research (NIPER) can act as benchmark for enhancing popularity of courses related to Ayurvedic pharmaceutical sciences. J.J.S College of Pharmacy, Octamund has taken the initiative to bridge the gap between traditional and modern pharmaceutical sciences by introducing course in Phytopharmacy. The course gives due attention to Ayurveda or other traditional medicinal systems with stress on modern aspects.

The purpose of the short communication is not to promote or rebuke any course related to Ayurvedic pharmaceutical sciences, but to stress to take essential steps for welfare for education in Ayurveda keeping in mind the recognition of traditional system of medicine by World Health Organization. Traditional Chinese System (TCM) can act as role model for imparting quality education in Ayurvedic Pharmaceutical Sciences. Pharmacy education in Western Herbal Medicine or phytotherapy is highly developed curriculum and recently subjects like phytopharmacotherapy and phytopharmacovigilance have been added to increase the viability of the subject.

We wish to train the student perusing career in Ayurvedic Pharmaceutical Sciences both at traditional and molecular levels. The Ayurvedic/herbal /nutraceutical market is hot and it is right time to improve educational standards in Ayurvedic pharmaceutical sciences. To conclude, teaching model for Ayurvedic pharmaceutical sciences must be based on intergraded approach rather than emphasis on one mode. The need of the hour is to separate facts from myths, after all plant based medicine has definite role to offer in future healthcare system when drug resistance and cost effectiveness of synthetic drugs are posing major problem to the pharmaceutical industry.