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TRENDS IN CONSUMPTION OF AYURVEDA

KEY WORDS: Ayurveda, Medical practice, Wellness

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda refers to the science of life. It originated in ancient India and is supposed to have influenced other forms of medical practices also. Influence of Ayurvedic practices in modern medicine is also mentioned by the father of allopathic medicine 'Hippocrates'.

The challenges faced by Ayurveda in the current times range from lack of standardization in practice, lack of promotion, and lack of faith in the medical practice by Indians themselves mainly due to the fall in status of the practice in face of Allopathy under the hundred year colonial rule. We can take a lesson or two from the steady growth and popularization of the Chinese Herbal Medicines and Acupuncture which has kept its 2200 years of tradition alive. Yoga is one Indian practice which has seen a revival in enthusiasm to adopt the practice by Indians primarily because of the global acknowledgement it has received. Ayurveda, similarly needs acknowledgement on a global front to become popular and to be accepted as the first line of treatment rather than as the last option.

This paper is an attempt to understand the consumer preference for Ayurveda for different purpose.

INTRODUCTION:

Ayurveda is an ancient Indian medical practice which has seen many turbulences in its sustenance from records ranging from Vedic scriptures to spread of the practice around the world.

Under the British rule, Ayurveda saw a steady decline in its status in direct comparison to allopathic medicine which brought about immediate recovery. The British considered Ayurveda as unscientific and did very less to promote or sustain it. Hundred years of colonization left a deep impact on the Indian psyche. Indians were proud of everything English, be it the language or the medicine. Only after a good forty eight years after independence, did the government establish in 1995, a department of Indian system of medicine and homeopathy (ISM&H) which was subsequently renamed to Department of Ayurveda, Yoga & Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and Homeopathy (AYUSH) in 2003. The Department was later given a new 'avatar' and transformed into a ministry of AYUSH in 2014 with the objective of improving the standard of education in the Indian system of medicine and Homeopathy in the country and promoting research in the field. The efforts of the ministry are also directed at developing strategies to deal with promotion of growth of medicinal plants and development of Pharmacopoeia standards for Indian System of Medicine and Homeopathy drugs.

Popularity of Yoga on an international level as a non-intrusive form of health care system has enhanced the scope of promotion of Ayurveda which too is a non-intrusive form of medical practice. Today the world is moving towards naturopathy, herbalism and veganism. Ayurveda with its all natural ingredients and no side effects is seeing an increase in

followed by the British were the main causes of decline of the practice and spread of Ayurveda. Post-independence, Ayurveda found a champion in Prime Ministry Atal Bihari Vajpayee. The author also credits the popularization of Ayurveda packages and 'panchkarma' practice in the west to Dr. Deepak Chopra and Maharshi Mahesh Yogi. The writer laments the degradation in status of Ayurveda practice to mere massage system and the discrimination in the status of the doctors practicing Ayurveda versus those practicing allopathy. The writer underscores the fact that promotion of Ayurveda in India is being done by the tourism sector instead of the health sector. The writer points out the dilemma of promoting Ayurveda in the international market when the practice in its own country is not given importance. The major block to Ayurveda come from the disorganized and non-standardized manner of practice and manufacture of medicine. Added to this is the lack of quality control measures, availability of genuine raw material and the lack of sharing of knowledge amongst the Ayurveda practitioners.

Muralidhar S. & Dr. Karthikeyan P. (2016) recognize the low acceptance of Ayurveda globally and the lack of statutory regulations and rampant unethical practices which can hamper the practice and promotion of the service on an international platform due to strict directives on medical practices. The researcher also moans the comparison of Ayurveda practices to herbal medicines. The study attributes the attraction of tourists towards Ayurveda because of its natural ingredients and lack of side effects.

Arya, V, Kumar, S & Kumar S. (2012) did a study in Himachal Pradesh on acceptance of Ayurveda products and found that people were comfortable taking over the counter medicines