



# Editorial

## Ayurveda in Public Health: An Urgent Attention for Its Main Streaming

Ayurveda Day is being celebrated every year on the occasion of Dhanvantari Jayanti; this year, it is celebrated on 5<sup>th</sup> November. The Ministry of AYUSH, Government of India has celebrated it with a core theme focused on 'Ayurveda in Public Health' which is the need of the hour.

Ayurveda has been accepted as one among the credible healthcare modality in the country and the core principles of Ayurveda lies as an undercurrent across different cultures in the country.

India enjoys the distinction of having the largest network of AYUSH health care, which is fully functional with a network of registered practitioners, government dispensaries and hospitals, research institutions and licensed pharmacies, etc. Ayurveda focuses on holistic health and well-being of humans.

Public healthcare delivery system in India functions in the premise of national health policy. It is well documented that India is going through epidemiological transition and having dual burden of diseases. In relation to health, number of reforms in the area of national health program design, management, financing, economics, insurance, etc. are taking place. State has started considering health as assets and prioritized it to a greater extent. After the advent of National Rural Health Mission in 2005, with an objective to mainstream AYUSH in Public health, initiatives were taken ranging from upgrading AYUSH hospitals, co-locating AYUSH specialists at district hospitals, etc., however, such an objective of mainstreaming AYUSH in Public Health later revised from the NRHM mandate and might have lost its priority.

The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India has framed National Health Policy-2017 encompasses various component related to AYUSH system. The Policy envisages as its Goal ***'the attainment of the highest possible level of health and well-being for all at all ages, through a preventive and promotive healthcare orientation in all developmental policies, and universal access to good quality healthcare services without anyone having to face financial hardships as a consequence.'***

It is emphasized that the healthcare system in the country must prioritize public health and shift from being curative to preventive, public health is the science of protecting and improving the health of families and communities through promotion of healthy lifestyles, research for diseases, injury prevention, detection and control of infectious diseases.

As Ayurveda systems lay emphasis as its prime objective in prevention of disease and retaining health of an individual (स्वस्थस्य स्वास्थ्यरक्षणम्...), it can play an important role in prevention and management of diseases of national importance. There is need to identify Ayurveda based public health interventions for immediate adoption for introduction in the public health systems (primary, secondary and tertiary care) focusing adequately on the role these systems for providing health care to a large population which has little access to healthcare services.

For introduction of AYUSH in public health, extensive work for formulation, strengthening and preparation of organizational structure of AYUSH systems of medicine in public health is needed.

The Ministry of AYUSH and CCRAS has successfully organized a brainstorming session, 'AYUSH in Public Health: Strategy and framework' to evolve a strategy and framework for successful introduction of AYUSH in Public health across the nation through a consultative process of stakeholders in this sector. It will definitely pave the way toward shaping of the future health policies with integration of AYUSH in Public health.

**Prof. Vaidya Kartar Singh Dhiman**

Editor-in-chief

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