



words ayur (life) and veda (science or knowledge).

Do not circulate without permission: priyankakhanna@gdgu.org.in

## DEFINITION

- In the beginning of the first millennium AD, there were mainly three principal medical systems: Ayurveda, Greek and Chinese medicine.
- Ayurveda emerged as one of the world's classical medical practice.

- Ayurveda is one of the oldest natural healing systems of the Vedic Sciences which originated in India approximately 5000 years ago and is often called the 'Mother of All Healing'.
- The literal meaning of Ayurveda is 'The Science of Life'; it's the combination of two Sanskrit
- The main feature of Ayurveda is the emphasis on one's lifestyle. The daily routine of the human being (rest of time, type of feeding, quality of thoughts and feelings) is described in the Sacred books of India as Dinacharya, being pointed as the main source for longevity
  - The roots of Ayurveda are generally traced to the Atharavaveda (circa 1500 BC), which has numerous hymns relating to practical and scientific information on various subjects beneficial to humanity like health, disease, anatomy, philosophy, engineering and astrology. Ayurveda, thus, is an Up-veda or a subsection of Atharveda.

# ORIGIN OF AYURVEDA

- According to Indian mythological concept Ayurveda originated from Brahma, the God of Creation.

- During Vedic period, Ayurveda was like a priestly or religious medical practice, in which the Brahmins who perform religious rituals were considered as Vaidyas.

- The Magical and religious aspect of medicine in the Vedas was gradually supplemented by observations based on scientific thinking.

- An important development in the Vedic medicinal practice was the use of Herbal

formulation for treatment. Thus Ayurveda developed itself as a classical medical system from faith based to reason-based practice.

- Dhanvantari, an avatar of Lord Mahavishnu, is considered as 'Father of Ayurveda' and he is mentioned in the Puranas as the god of Ayurveda.

1) Caraka Samhita (c. 900 B.C.) describes internal health and therapeutic methods.  
2) Susruta Samhita (c. 600 B.C.) describes about surgical orientation and descriptions of  
3) Astangahrdaya: composed by Vagbhata and deals with all aspects of life, health, disease and • Bhava Prakasha composed by Bhava Mishra is considered as the last celebrated work on

## HISTORICAL EVOLUTION

- Development of Ayurveda and its herbal remedies through ages is a part of the cultural heritage of India.
- As mentioned earlier, Atharvaveda is the earliest authentic text of Ayurveda which discusses about the nature of existence, health and disease, and the principles of treatment.
- Based on this, three important medical treatises on Ayurveda were generated in the early times, and these are known as the Trilogy of Compendiums. These three classical texts are:

operations and instruments

treatment

Ayurvedic medicine which was written around 1550. This book is still referred by modern practitioners for its description of approximately 470 medicinal plants.

- These Samhitas and ayurvedic literature were translated to various languages and the science of Ayurveda spread throughout the Asian subcontinent gradually.

condition. The resurgence of interest in Ayurveda owes to scholars like P. S. Varrier at Kottakkal,

Lakshmipathy in Madras, and Ramnath Chopra from Calcutta, among others.

- After Vagbhata, the golden age of Ayurveda is said to have come to an end. A period of stagnation followed Ayurveda over thousands of years without much contribution to this medical practice.
- The knowledge of surgery almost disappeared from the mainstream of Ayurveda and Ayurveda came to be practiced by a limited number of local practitioners who transferred their knowledge to next generation, that too being limited in number.

- In the Medieval period, there was a major withdrawal in the use of Ayurvedic systems.
- British invasion further paved the way for the decline of Ayurvedic system as they introduced western medicinal practices like allopathy and homeopathy in India.
  - Nineteenth century however brought an unprecedented revival of Ayurveda from its stagnant
- Today, Ayurveda has once again emerged as a prominent medical system though still and often considered as complementary or alternative medicine.
  - Vata is the energy of movement. It controls bodily functions associated with motion, including blood circulation, breathing, blinking, muscle and tissue movements, heartbeat and movements of cell membrane. Balanced state of Vata energy will result in creativity and vitality. Imbalanced state of vata creates fear and anxiety.
  - Kapha is the energy of lubrication and structure. This energy controls growth of the body. It supplies water to all condition of kapha is required for the expression of love and forgiveness. Imbalance may lead to insecurity and
  - Equilibrium between these Doshas and their governing factors are required for proper health, which is the central
  - Any

imbalance in a dosha leads to various kinds of ailment (Vikriti) and their symptoms.

# PRINCIPLES OF AYURVEDA

- Ayurveda identifies that there are three basic types of energy (doshas) in the body: vata, pitta and kapha.

- Pitta is the energy of digestion and metabolism. It controls the body's metabolic systems, including digestion, absorption, assimilation, nutrition and temperature. In balanced state, pitta leads to contentment and intelligence while in imbalanced state, pitta cause ulcers and arouse anger.

body parts, moisturizes the skin, lubricates the joints and bones and maintains the immune system. Balanced envy.

dogma of Ayurveda.

- Imbalance in the central dogma of Ayurveda can be caused by external factors like unhealthy

diet, bad habits, more mental stress and climatic changes. Equilibrium or balance is regained for maintaining health by implementing new lifestyle, appropriate diet and use of herbal drugs. changing the lifestyle and diet to eliminate the errors of the doshic imbalance.

- According to ayurvedic texts, Ayurvedic compendium known as Astanga Ayurveda comprises

eight branches of

- 1) Kayacikitsa (internal medicine)

- 2) Salya tantra (surgery)

- 3) Alakya tantra (ophthalmology: eye disorders, and ENT)

- 4) Kaumara brhitya (paediatrics, obstetrics and gynaecology)

- 5) Agada tantra (toxicology: concerned with the nature, effects, and detection of effects of

chemicals)

- 6) Rasayana (geriatrics: health and care of old people and nutrition)

- 7) Vajikarana (sexology)

## TREATMENT

- 8) Bhuta vidya (psychiatry and demonology)

- Ayurvedic system recognizes the fundamental importance of examining a patient by direct

perception• Once diagnosis is determined in terms of imbalance in doshas, Ayurvedic therapy

starts with mild measures like

treatment:



- Physician prescribe treatment regime based on the perturbed doshas.
- Ayurvedic therapy emphasizes on prevention of disease, stabilizing body system and finally improving the lifespan.

## TREATMENT

- Ayurvedic formulations are of multi component mixtures, containing plant and animal-derived products, minerals and metals. Most of the ayurvedic therapeutics is polyherbal formulations. This is based on the fact that the therapeutic efficiency of the herbal constituents of plants is

enhanced by the synergistic efficacy of other plants. • Various metallic compounds like cinnabar, gold pyrites, lead compounds, mercury, copper compounds, borax, iron pyrites, etc., are also used in ayurvedic formulations. • Several pretreatments including sand heating, boiling, smoking, steam heating, sublimation, evaporation, condensation, oxidation, etc. are done on these chemical compounds prior to their addition in herbal formulations.

- Ayurvedic medicines are administered externally as eye drops, ointments, etc. and internally as drugs.
- The concept of Anupaan or vehicle for drugs is quite significant in Ayurvedic treatment. Various vehicles like milk, honey, cold water, etc. are used in Ayurveda. They accelerate circulation, absorption and assimilation of the drug in the body and enhance therapeutic efficiency.
- Time and duration of medicinal intake is significant in case of ayurvedic drugs, which is disease specific.
- Ayurveda is a complex science in which all the components are equally important for the cure of disease and maintaining balance of body, mind, and consciousness.

1. Use of natural herbs

2. No side effects

3. Cost effective

4. Associated with finding the root of the disease and cure is therefore

## Advantages

usually permanent

- While Ayurveda is experiencing a renaissance among the

consumers through out the world, it still has a marginal status. a)

Lack of evidence based standard profile since it works uniquely on

individual profiles it lacks a standard method or procedure for

ailments. b) Quality and safety aspects of Ayurvedic formulation are

also matters of major concern since it cannot be put to laboratory

tests. c) Duration of treatment is usually longer than other

treatments.

## CHALLENGES

- There are three major reasons for the impediment to the popularity

of Ayurveda: • Due to these, this traditional herbal medicinal

system faces a major risk of extinction and the way forward as

suggested by several medical practitioners is perhaps its

amalgamation with modern medicine that would help its

preservation and advancement.