

## Harmonising Ayush and Modern Medicine

### Why in news?

Modern medicine practitioners are being urged to be more open to working with the traditional or alternative systems of medicine, to move towards an integrated medicine.

### Integration Models

- AYUSH stands for Ayurveda, Yoga & Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha, and Homeopathy, they are practiced in India and are based on well-defined medical philosophies.
- Integrated medicine is the combination of modern medicine and traditional or alternative system of medicines for the larger good of patients.
- **3c approach**- It provide a framework for understanding the different approaches to integrating traditional and modern medicine namely **Competitive, Coexistent and Cooperative.**
- **Competitive model**- There is rivalry between modern and traditional medicine, with disputes and litigation at the association level.
- **Coexistence model**- Both systems recognize each other's legitimacy, with clear boundaries set to avoid encroachment<sup>1</sup>.
- **Cooperative model**- The ideal scenario where both systems work together to provide the best care, acknowledging each other's strengths<sup>2</sup>.

### What are the challenges?

- **Trust deficit**- There's a lack of trust between modern medicine and Ayush practitioners, often due to anecdotal evidence and unsupported claims of cures by Ayush.
- **Heterogeneity**- AYUSH is diverse, and each of these therapeutic disciplines requires separate consideration.
- **Contention over prescription**- The compatibility of dosha based management with modern medicine's protocol is debatable.
- **Operational complexities**- For a team-based approach, members must understand their limits and others' strengths, which is hindered by a lack of knowledge about AYUSH among modern practitioners impacting decision making.
- **Lack of awareness**- Patients may not be well informed to make choices between AYUSH and modern treatments.
- **Regulatory challenges**-The integration faces significant regulatory hurdles, particularly in ensuring that practitioners do not prescribe treatments outside their expertise.
- **Problematic prescription**- Modern medicine practitioners sometimes prescribe Ayurvedic treatments without fully understanding them.
- **Lack of accountability**- There is a lack of confidence in professional councils to enforce regulations and hold practitioners accountable for their actions.
- **Curriculum challenges**- The addition of AYUSH subjects to the already extensive

MBBS curriculum may not be feasible.

### What can be done?

- **Evidence based approach-** There is a need for evidence to bridge the trust gap and suggest building composite standard treatment guidelines.
- **Promote research-** Developing standardized protocols for integration where evidence exists and promoting further research for areas lacking evidence can aid in addressing technical challenges.
- **Enhance operational efficiency-** Establish clear roles, responsibilities, and referral pathways within healthcare teams.
- **Regulatory framework-** A strong regulatory framework is crucial to ensure safe, coordinated care and clear accountability.
- **Holistic approach-** The regulatory framework should address issues such as insurance coverage, quality control of medicinal products, and mechanisms for handling disputes or adverse events.
- **Medical education-** Optional or elective courses within MBBS curriculum may be a viable approach, provided they are adequately resourced and incentivized to encourage uptake.
- **Selective integration-**It involves teaching basic principles and concepts of AYUSH modalities alongside modern medicine, promoting interdisciplinary understanding among future healthcare professionals.
- **Pilot projects-** It can serve as testing grounds for integrated healthcare models, allowing stakeholders to assess feasibility, efficacy, and acceptability in real-world settings.

**Steps taken by Ministry of AYUSH to harmonise AYUSH and modern medicine**

- **Co-location strategy-** AYUSH facilities are co-located at Primary Health Centres, Community Health Centres, and District Hospitals, offering patients a choice of medical systems under one roof.
- **Training-** AYUSH doctors and paramedics receive support and training from the *Department of Health & Family Welfare*.
- **Financial assistance-** It is provided through the *National AYUSH Mission* (NAM) for the establishment and operation of AYUSH facilities, it helps in infrastructure development, procurement of equipment and medicines, as well as the training of AYUSH personnel.
- **State Annual Action Plan-** States and UTs can obtain financial aid for AYUSH facilities through the State Annual Action Plan as per NAM guidelines.
- **Evidence based approach-** Collaboration between the Ministry of AYUSH and the Directorate General of Health Services for initiatives such as the *National Programme for Prevention and Control of Cancer, Diabetes, Cardiovascular Diseases, and Stroke* (NPCDCS) demonstrates a concerted effort towards evidence-based practice and integration of traditional and modern medicine.
- **Research-** The Ministry of AYUSH collaborates with health services to *manage non-communicable diseases* through research councils, integrating Ayurveda with modern medicine in various health programs and studies.
  - Central Council for Research in Ayurvedic Sciences (CCRAS),
  - Central Council for Research in Unani Medicine (CCRUM) and
  - Central Council for Research in Homoeopathy (CCRH)
- **Promotion of Yoga-** The *Morarji Desai National Institute of Yoga*, under the Ministry of AYUSH, operates 4 yoga therapy centres in collaboration with various government medical hospitals in Delhi.
- **Siddha system integration:** *The National Institute of Siddha* in Chennai has signed MoUs with institutions such as *National Institute of Epidemiology* and *AIIMS Raipur* to create a synergy with modern medicine

## References

1. [Indian Express- Ayush and modern medicine can work together](#)
2. [PIB- Harmonising Ayush and modern medicine](#)