

CONTRIBUTION OF AYURVEDA IN ACHIEVING TOTAL HEALTH IN THE COMMUNITY

DR.JAYASHREE K. S., GOVERNMENT AYURVEDA MEDICAL COLLEGE, BANGALORE, INDIA

Ayurveda is the most ancient medical science of the world having evolved about 5000B.C. that has the basis of Hindu philosophy. The science has many concepts in all the aspects of the science which are relevant even today.

Indian thought about the health was never a an individual oriented instead it has the focus the whole community not belonging to one part of the globe or locality. 'Vasudhaiva kutumbakam' which means the whole world is one single family and hence 'sarve janah sukhino bhavantu sarve santhu niramahaha,' refers to the well being of every individual without any suffering. To achieve goal the health focus cannot be on one physiological system of one individual or one family. It is the total health achievement inclusive of spiritual, social and mental health in addition to the physical health.

Ayurveda as the very nomenclature means is not a system of medicine. On other hand it is the science which promotes the knowledge about what is beneficial to the body and which is not beneficial at what proportion thus promoting complete health. Ayurved is defined as the science which promotes knowledge about the life.

Ayurveda has the two main objectives as follows-

- ❖ Svasthasya svasthya rakshanam- maintenance of health in healthy people,
- ❖ Athurasya roganuth- Alleviating the diseases in the patients.

The first priority is to promote health and maintaining health hence the life style is given the main focus in achieving health.

Total health can be achieved by following the righteous life style. What has become a recent realization that the major number of diseases can be reversed, modified, prevented by the proper lifestyle was well known to Ayurvedic physicians. Thus under life style there is a holistic approach which includes-
Dina charya- Regimen to be followed during the day that covers oral hygiene, regulation in excretory functions, balancing the nutrition, improving physical stress endurances.. Ritu chrya- keeping in mind the influence of seasonal variations and their impact on the human system, and In order to prevent the diseases occurring due to seasonal influence the suitable alterations in the life style to be made are discussed unser the Ritu charya. Finally and most importantly the mental heath through adaptation of proper code of conduct which influences not only the individual's mental health also bring the community health and spiritual health.

Thousands of years earlier itself Ayurveda has identified the eight branches of specialties namely Ashtangas(eight branches) which are as follows-

1. Kayachikithsa-compared with general medicine,
2. Kaumarabhruthya-paediatrics,
3. Graha chikithsa- psychiatry,
4. shalya chikithsa-surgery,

5. Shalakyā chikithsa-Eye, ear, nose ,Throat and Dentistry,
6. Visha chikithsa- poisons, poisonous bites, and remedial measures,
7. Jara chikithsa-Geriatrics,
8. Vrūsha chikithsa- Sexology with virilificatory therapeutics.

This emphasizes the standard approach our ancients had in the field of medicine.

This science of life is very nearer to the nature because the philosophy of Ayurveda is “Nature nurtures us if we nurture it” thus the basic concept upheld is Loka purusha samya vada ie what ever the principles found in the universe are also found in the body also. Hence the deficits occurring in the body is rectified by utilizing the naturally available resources. While utilizing this, the preceptors of Ayurveda were able to appreciate that everything available in this universe has a medicinal value if used skillfully.

In the management of the diseases, the preliminary focus of the physician will be to rectify the Agni –a factor which is responsible for the conversion, transformation of the food into an assimilable, acceptable, factor to the body. It is strongly and widely accepted by the physicians of Ayurveda that all the diseases are caused by the impairment is this factor. Hence initially this is rectified and then the other factors in a diseased state are attended to.

Ayurveda is the only system that has a well established concept of cleansing the body to remove the morbid factors those can be compared with the free radicals, toxins, waste materials etc.. Through the Panhchakarma (five therapeutic measures) that eliminate the unwanted materials through the natural apertures used in the normal cours. This is achieved through inducing vaman-Vomitting, Virechana-purgation, Basthi-medicated rectal administration of medicines, Nasya-Transe nasal administration of medicine, Raktha mokshana-blood letting through application of leech or other methods. These procedures are adapted in the healthy individuals seasonally in order to prevent season specific diseases as well as to maintain the health. The same procedures are also adapted as therapeutic one in the management of diseases.

Ayurveda has also developed some very special techniques and are very effective even today. Few to quote are-

- KASHARASUTRA-medicated thread used for cutting the sinus, fistulae etc, which prevents recurring of these conditions.
- RAKTHA MOKSHANA-Blood letting Apart from the three doshas the fourth one the blood is also considered as dosha .the vitiation of blood, can give rise to various conditions and these as well as the major varieties of skin affections are treated with bloodletting therapy. Among the various methods leech application is also one.
- AGNIKARMA-cauterization was another well established tool in the treatment of neoplasm. It was well appreciated that the cauterization followed by surgery the recurrence is prevented.
- BHAGNACHIKITSA-bone setting is an art and is even today practiced in various part of the country by native vaidya. The medicinal application used during the management is well appreciated by the orthopedic surgeons also.

- VRANOPACHARA-management of wound is another area where in Ayurvedic scholars have achieved expertise. Depending upon the nature, area, type of wound, tissue affected specific remedies are advocated.

Women health was given prime importance in the health practices. Life cycle approach which is a new thought in the field of medicine was adapted about thousands of years ago. The important role played by women are acknowledged and it is said that whatever may be the case, women health need to be protected by adapting all possible measures without compromising because women is the root cause for progeny and if she is protected she in turn will protect the whole family and then the community.

Thus right from the beginning the girl child is cared. At the onset of puberty the girl is administered with special types of foods and also of certain medicines for the better development and growth of the reproductive as well as the whole system. The care during pregnancy –Garbhini charya focuses on both mother and the child. Simple formulations of herbs to be used regularly during certain part of pregnancy, is advocated. During labour, during lactating period, and during menstrual period and further during geriatric period both prophylactic and therapeutic measures are planned and advocated. Which emphasizes the Ayurveda approach is holistic and also life cycle approach.

In paediatric care is another specialized area in Ayurveda. Knowing the intricate interrelation between gynecology, midwifery, obstetrics Ayurvedic saints have identified Kaumarabhruthya as one of the eight branches. The care starts with the child so as to make him or her to be a better parent and the parent to propagate for a healthier and better generation. Ayurveda also has promising results in the management of cerebral palsy, mentally challenged children, malnutrition etc..

In spite of all these virtues there are many challenges Ayurveda need to face, equip itself to be in the front line:

- Ayurveda has to enter the national health programmes
- Prevention, as therapeutic modalities for HIV-AIDS, Viral hepatitis, Diabetes, etc.
- Therapeutic of add on therapeutic modalities in the management of malignancy,
- To improve the treatment for the evidence, suitable, appropriate research methodologies had to developed.
- Monitoring the innumerable and indiscriminate formulations,
- Measures to have sustainable supply of med plants.
- Monitoring, reporting ADRs if observed with the use of Ayurvedic medicines.
- Establishing inter-disciplinary approach.
- Better education strategies

Ayurveda at community level

- Training programmes for-
- Propagation of Ayurveda,
- Prakruthi typing,

- Guidelines for better life style,
- Suitable regimen during diseases state,
- Use of simple home remedies,
- Detection of changes in the body.
- Knowledge about the method of preparation of simple specific dietary recipes,
- Specific food practices during various phases of life namely Child hood, after menarche, pregnancy, lactation, menopausal phase, geriatric phase of life.
- Season specific life style,
- Management of chronic diseases.
- First aid
- Raising home gardens.

With the original acceptable principles Ayurveda can be the future science of health in the world. This can be achieved only when the principles are understood without mimicking the other systems , with proper documentation.
