

## Kriya Sharir Perspective On Public Health Through Ayurveda

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**Abstract:** Ayurveda, known as the “science of life,” which is one of the world’s oldest healing systems. Ayurveda is not just a method of treating illness, but it is the way of living healthy life which focuses on bringing equilibrium of body, mind, and spirit. This article explores how principles of Ayurveda aligns with the modern goals of public health like preventing diseases, improving quality of life, and promoting long-term wellness. The basic concept of Ayurveda like Swasthya (health), Dinacharya (daily regimen), Ritucharya (seasonal routine), Pathya (wholesome diet), and Rasayana (rejuvenation therapy) gives very simple, practical ways to stay healthy and prevent illnesses. The increasing incidence and prevalences of non-communicable diseases, other chronic diseases, mental health issues, and elderly diseases signifies need of ayurveda today. Government programs in India have already begun integrating Ayurveda into mainstream healthcare. However, challenges like lack of clinical trials, standardization, and public misconceptions still need to be considered. With the evidence-based research, improving policies and reforming educational systems, Ayurveda can play a powerful role in public health.

**Keywords:** Ayurveda, Public Health, Preventive Health, Lifestyle Diseases

### Introduction:

Ayurveda is "the science of life" and the word Ayurveda is derived from the Sanskrit words "Ayuh" i.e life and "Veda" i.e knowledge. Ayurveda has origin in India more than 5,000 years ago. It is one among the oldest medical systems in the world. Ayurveda is not just a method of treating illness, but it is the way of living healthy life which focuses on bringing equilibrium of body, mind, and spirit. According to Ayurveda, health is not just the absence of sickness but rather a state of equilibrium in the body's systems. Individualised health care is one of Ayurveda's distinctive characteristics. Since each person has a different combination of doshas, the goal of Ayurvedic treatment is to bring the patient's Prakriti back into harmony. It offers particular suggestions for specific recommendations for each season, age group, and even psychological type, reflecting its deep understanding of the interconnectedness of environment and health. Hence in public health, Ayurveda plays an increasingly important role in healthcare system.

Ayurveda explains the concept of "ayu" as multidimensional approach, it classifies ayu as Sukhayu, Dukhayu, Hitayu, Ahitayu.

हिताहितं सुखं दुःखमायुस्तस्य हिताहितम्। मानं च तच्च यत्रोक्तमायुर्वेदः स उच्यते॥<sup>1</sup> cha su 1/41

Along with this, the health according to ayurveda is very deeply explained like

समदोषः समग्निश्च समधातु मलक्रियः। प्रसन्नात्मेन्द्रियमनाः स्वस्थ इत्यभिधीयते॥<sup>2</sup> Su Su 15/ 10

According to the Sushruta Samhita, a person is supposed to be healthy when the three doshas namely Vata, Pitta, Kapha are in samyaawastha (balanced state), Agni (digestive fire) functions properly, Dhatus (body tissues) namely rasa, rakta, mamsa, meda, asthi, majja, shukra, and Malas (waste products) namely purish, mutra, sweda function normally. The Manas (mind), Indriyas (mind), and Atma (soul) are in a state of happiness and clarity. Ayurveda offers integration of physical, mental, and spiritual well-being.

On other hand World Health Organization defines health as complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely an absence of disease or infirmity<sup>3</sup>.

While comparing these two definitions, it is found that essence of both have a similar meaning. Both emphasize holistic well-being, but Ayurveda also includes spiritual and physiological balance. Thus, ayurveda offers a more individualized and comprehensive approach towards health, it aligns closely with modern public health goals.

Public health, it is defined as "the science and art of preventing diseases, prolonging life, and promoting health and efficiency through organized community effort<sup>4</sup>. The definition underlines three significant features, 1.Prevention of disease, 2.Prolongation of life, 3.Promotion of health. Ayurveda also highlights same as aim or prayojana of ayurveda.

स्वस्थस्य स्वास्थ्य रक्षणं आतुरस्य विकार प्रशमनं च<sup>5</sup>Cha Su 30/26

"Swasthya" means health, "Rakshanam" means protection; "Aturashya" means of the patient, Vikara" means disease, "Prashamanam" means alleviation. The primary aim of Ayurveda is "Swasthasya Swasthyarakshanam" (Maintaining the health of the healthy through preventive measures) and "Aturasya Vikaraprashamanam," (Treating diseases of the sick with individualized therapies) the quote explains the importance of maintenance and promotion of health in healthy, along with treating diseases<sup>5</sup>. Therefore, Ayurveda underlines the protection of the health of a healthy individual, which means that if a person is healthy, their health is ensured.

These principles align closely with public health objectives, particularly in disease prevention and health promotion. Hence, we can consider that ayurveda can contribute to public health greatly. In existing healthcare systems, lot of challenges are emerging out regarding non-communicable diseases, mental health issues, and aging populations etc. Ayurveda offers complementary strategies that can enhance public health outcomes. Together, they represent two complementary paths toward sustainable health.

## Discussion:

To understand the aims of ayurveda ie. Prevention of diseases and curing of disease, one must understand the concept of Swasthya. Swastha that is health is achieved by balancing Dosha, Dhātu and mala.

Kriya shareer is the part of Ayurveda which describes about physiological aspect of human body. It describes three different types of Doshas, namely Vata, Pitta, and Kapha. Ayurveda also describes seven different types of dhātu, namely Rasa, Rakta, Mamsa, Meda, Asthi, Majja, and Shukra. Each Dhātu originates from a previous Dhātu. For example, Meda is originating or nourished by Mamsa, Mamsa is from Rakta, Rakta is from Rasa, etc. The

saptadhatu like Rasa, Rakta, Mansa, Meda, Asthi, Majja, and Shukra are ruled by Vata, Pitta, and Kapha. Thereafter, body continues to function normally and helps in conduction of daily life activities. Malas are Waste products. Ayurveda is based on the Dosh-Dhatu-Mala concept. If all of these work well, it results in good health. If anything gets imbalanced in this chain of activity, then it results in sickness. In opposite to this to achieve healthy state of body and mind we need to maintain normal status of these dosha, dhatus and mala's.

The first aim of ayurveda describe promotion of health and preventing diseases. For this purpose, ancient texts of Ayurveda advocate numerous lifestyle interventions like Dinacharya, Ritucharya, Pathya, Rasayana Vajikarana, Yoga, Sadvrutta etc

**Dinacharya:** Dinacharya explains all the daily practices ancient sages followed for the promoting health and preventing disease. It includes all personal hygiene activities like tooth brushing, mouth wash, tongue scraping, bathing, exercising, eating, sleeping, etc. Dinacharya helps balance dosha's dhatu's and mala's and it maintains health. Ayurveda concerns chiefly with living healthy life, dincharya is the way for that. Therefore, the idea of public health in Ayurveda, while if it applies to people of all ages, is essentially focused on each person's capacity to age healthily in order to live a full and satisfying life<sup>6</sup>. It also regularizes a person's biological clock, improves digestion, absorption, excretion and generates discipline, peace, happiness, and longevity.

**Ritucharya** is the regimen and diet to be followed in the different seasons of the year. It gives guidelines for adaptation of diet, lifestyle, and habits according to the changing seasons to maintain balance of dosha, dhatu and mala's to prevent disease. It constitutes six ritu's (seasons) in a year and advices specific routines for each season. For example, during summer, cooling foods and rest are recommended, while in winter, nourishing, warm foods and exercise are advised. Ritucharya helps in enhancing immunity, preventing seasonal disorders, and promoting overall well-being. Ritucharya is the change in lifestyle adapted according to nature's rhythm in order to prevent diseases and promote health.

**Pathya:** Pathya in Ayurveda refers to a wholesome and beneficial diet and lifestyle that supports health and support disease management. It includes ahara (foods) and vihara (habits, and routines) that are suitable to one's Prakriti, ritu (season), and health condition. Pathya helps maintain the balance of doshas and enhances Agni (digestion). It plays key role in both preventive and curative aspects of Ayurveda. Following pathya ensures faster recovery during illness and promotes long-term well-being.

**Rasayana and vajeekarana:** Rasayana is a branch of Ayurveda focused on rejuvenation, longevity. It enhances immunity, memory, and vitality through herbs, diet, and lifestyle. It promotes tissue nourishment, delays aging, and improves overall health. Vajikarana is branch of ayurveda which deals with enhancing reproductive health, sexual vitality, and fertility in both men and women. It supports hormonal balance and emotional well-being. Both are important for maintaining physical strength and quality of life, especially in the context of healthy aging and public health.

**Yoga:** Yoga is an ancient Indian practice that helps in achieving harmony between the body, mind, and spirit through various asanas i.e physical postures, Pranayama i.e breathing techniques and dhyana i.e meditation. By daily practice of yoga, one can achieve good mental and physical health, it enhances immunity and balances tridoshas. Along with this the other beneficial effects of yoga includes stress management, improves flexibility, strengthens body.

Collectively regular yoga practice supports both preventive and therapeutic aspects of health.

**Sadvritta:** Sadvrutta refers to the code of conduct one should follow in day today activities. It includes detailed explanation of ethical, moral, and social conduct. It includes principles like truthfulness, compassion, self-discipline, cleanliness, respect for others, and mindful behaviour. By following Sadvritta, one maintains equilibrium between the mind and body, which is essential for self-well-being and for healthy society. Sadvritta is considered a key aspect of Ayurvedic lifestyle for sustainable health. in Ayurveda that promotes mental clarity, emotional stability, and overall well-being.

The second part of the aim of Ayurveda describes curative health, which means a treating the disease. The classical texts like Charaka Samhita, Sushruta Samhita, Ashtanga hrudya etc not only provide a deep understanding of aetiology, pathology, and therapeutics but also explains community-level health promotion practices like sanitation, epidemiology, and even occupational health. According to Ayurveda, diseases manifest due to imbalances in this healthy state of body and mind by vitiation of dosha's dhatu's mala's. Ayurvedic treatment modalities are directed toward correcting this imbalance and enhancing digestion and bring these dosha's to samyavastha i.e equilibrium. Some modalities will helps in early diagnosis such as Nadi pariksha (examination of pulse), Darshana (inspection), Sparshana (palpation), and Prashna (interrogation), etc., And some modalities help in treatment of diseases which includes Shaman (alleviation) & Shodhana (purification). Shamana is treatment modality which will do suppression of dosha's to bring them to equilibrium. Shodhana is the procedure which will take the vitiated dosha's out of different ways like through mouth (Vamana), through anus (Virechana), through nose (nasya) etc. All panchkarma procedures fall under shodhana.

### **Special contribution of Ayurveda in public health**

#### **Prevention of Lifestyle diseases:**

Increasing incidence and prevalence of lifestyle diseases are increasing these days due to faulty lifestyle and unhealthy heating habits. This causing marked increase in morbidity and mortality worldwide. There is demand of certain ways to reduce the mortality and morbidity against these diseases. Ayurveda provides fruitful principles regarding same by the measures in managing and preventing lifestyle disorders like diabetes, hypertension, obesity, mental health, cardiovascular disorders is reducing mortality globally. Ayurveda's emphasis on lifestyle modification, dietary control, mental stability, and personalized medicine offers effective strategies to manage these diseases. Ayurveda also offers significant expenditure reduction on health services.

#### **Maternal health and child care:**

Ayurveda offers a comprehensive framework for maternal and child care. The Garbhini Paricharya explains in detailed about pre-conceptional care, antenatal care and postnatal recovery which are very well implemented in this era as well. Ayurveda also provide comprehensive knowledge about child care, child immunization practices like Swarna Prashana which aim to ensure the health child. Ayurveda provides logical and culturally acceptable practices that align well with Mother and child health care goals. These practices are increasingly being adopted by population and into public health programs to improve maternal and child health outcomes.

#### **Geriatric care and healthy aging:**

Ayurveda provides certain measure to delay aging and care of elderly. Rasayana

therapy is especially indicated here as it focuses on rejuvenation and prevention of degenerative diseases. Research also indicates that Ayurvedic approaches significantly improve physical and psychological quality of life in elderly populations.

### **Management of Non-Communicable Diseases:**

The rise of non-communicable diseases presents a significant public health challenge. Ayurveda offers various interventions for managing conditions like diabetes, hypertension, and arthritis. For instance, herbal formulations and lifestyle modifications prescribed in Ayurveda have shown promise in managing these conditions. A study by Walia et al. (2023) found that nearly 30% of patients with NCDs used Ayurvedic medicine, indicating its relevance in contemporary healthcare<sup>7</sup>.

**Other areas:** Ayurveda plays significant role in preventing metabolic, genetic disorders, allergic, autoimmune diseases, Seasonal variations, geriatric diseases. Ayurveda also offers alternative therapy to allergic disorders, autoimmune disorders, Rheumatoid arthritis & other collagen disorders, Parkinson's disease, Alzheimer's disease, Skin disorders, gastrointestinal disorders. The other complementary area which can be managed by ayurveda are cancer, DM, IHD, CVA, iatrogenic disorders, bronchial asthma, neuromuscular disorders, psychosomatic diseases like Ulcerative colitis, IBS, psychological disorders - Stress syndromes, anxiety neurosis, sleep disturbance and many more.

### **Integration with national health program:**

Government has taken initiative in the establishment of the Ministry of AYUSH to promote traditional medicine systems. Collaborations with WHO is an effort to integrate Ayurveda into global health frameworks, including the development of traditional medicine modules. Implementation of Ayurveda-based health camps and wellness centres in rural and urban areas as a part of community health programs is again a way to introduce ayurveda into public health.

Integration with National Health Policies National Health Policy (2017) supports pluralism and integration of AYUSH into mainstream healthcare<sup>8</sup>. National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) Under NRHM, the concept of "Mainstreaming AYUSH" was launched to integrate traditional medicine systems into public health delivery. AYUSH doctors are now placed in PHCs, CHCs, and even district hospitals. National Programme for Prevention and Control of Cancer, Diabetes, Cardiovascular Diseases and Stroke (NPCDCS) This program now includes AYUSH interventions like yoga and diet in its strategies<sup>9</sup>. Programs like Swasthya Rakshan Program (SRP), Tribal Health Care Research Program (THCRP), and AYUSH Wellness Centres are delivering Ayurvedic care to marginalized populations<sup>10</sup>.

### **Strength of Ayurveda in public health**

- Total Health care, Lifestyle consultation, psychological consultation, Spiritual way of life, Rasayana therapy, Panchakarma therapy which rejuvenates biological systems of the body, manages lifestyle disorders, chronic diseases etc.
- Balances body, mind, and environment
- Affordability and accessibility: Especially beneficial in rural and tribal areas
- Cultural resonance: Deeply rooted in Indian traditions and beliefs
- Potential in health promotion and rehabilitation.

### **Challenges and limitations**



- Inadequate evidences of efficacy of ayurvedic medicine.
- Difficulty in establishing suitable placebos because of the taste and aroma etc.
- Lack of standardization and quality control of the ayurvedic medicines
- Wide disparity in the duration of treatments using herbal medicines.
- Misconception among the public regarding the delayed effect of Ayurvedic drugs

#### **Future Directions and Strategic Recommendations Evidence Generation:**

- Conduction of multicentric, large-scale trials to scientifically test and confirm the effectiveness of Ayurvedic treatments.
- Strengthening institutional support through government funding and inclusion in universal health coverage schemes
- Promoting Ayurveda in WHO's traditional medicine strategy through academic partnerships and research consortia
- Incorporating Ayurveda into national digital health records for tracking outcomes and patient management. Add integrative medicine courses in both medical and AYUSH colleges so future

#### **CONCLUSION:**

Ayurveda offers more than just managing diseases, it teaches us how to live a healthy, balanced life. Basic principles of ayurveda like dinacharya, ritucharya, pathya, rasayana, vajikaran, sadvrutta helps to attain good health by bringing equilibrium in dosha's dhatu's and mala's. By preventing disease formation and by treating diseases ayurveda plays vital role in achieving aim of public health. Many theories related to public health, like infectious diseases, immunity, nutrition, etc., have been described in the classical texts of Ayurveda. Despite its ancient origins, Ayurveda remains relevant today, especially in the context of integrative medicine in public health.

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