

How to learn Ayurveda ?

Ayurvedic science is getting popular in several countries outside India. It is not only the medical students or doctors but the common man is also interested in this age-old science. The reason for this is, the various side effects from modern chemical drugs and there is no complete remedy for most of the civilized diseases in the western medical system. More than that the high society in western countries especially in Germany, Italy, Switzerland are looking for alternative approaches in common ailments, natural remedies from plants and plant-based products. The growing interest in Vegetarianism, Vegan society is interested in Ayurveda especially the detox treatment, which is well known as Panchakarma. The western society is looking for Prevention of diseases rather than cure which has a good answer in Ayurveda. So the public is also interested to learn ayurvedic sciences to lead a good life style postulated by in it.

So the question is what a common and medical man should learn from this complex Ayurveda system? How can we teach in a more understandable manner this science without deviating from the main principles of Ayurveda ? A normal Ayurveda student in India spends more than 4500 hours in an Ayurveda college around 5 ½ years and still struggles to establish practice and finds it difficult to explain this science system to a general public, or simply prescribing some herbal medicines produced by different companies. The system is reduced to some common Ayurveda medicines which is the usual practice of an Ayurvedic doctor. Is this Ayurveda? Can we achieve health only by prescribing some Ayurvedic medicines? The better way to teach this science to the public as well to the modern medical doctors for complete health, teach the principles of Ayurveda.

The current trends of study in Ayurveda in European countries are just the study of some fragments of it without a proper syllabus. In Germany we have different academies for learning this science for public and modern medical doctors. But each academy is making their own syllabus and make it sometimes so simple and deviates from the main concepts of Ayurveda. A student sometimes is not getting the total outlook . Sometimes it is so many simple conferences like pulse reading in Ayurveda, Abhyanga seminar or Cooking with Ghee, spices and home

remedies, constitution etc. May be it is good for a common man for just to understand or enter in to the field of this complex science. But this makes again a lot of confusions and narrows the spectrum of understanding. Each seminar may costs from 200 to 350 euros per weekend. According to me this is just giving some chocolates and never ready to give a broad spectrum of Ayurveda. It can also mislead and make a negative image for this great science. In another way it is a big business in western counties by selling Ayurveda and making a lot of unbaked studies and quacks.

Unique syllabus and quality control of education.

In such cases we need a quality control of Ayurveda education in all the countries prepared by Ayurveda experts or association of each country requirements. In Germany we adopted 3 different modules:

1. Sutra: This is a one year study with 350 to 500 hours for those who are interested to understand Ayurveda philosophy and principles. This includes the Dosha- Dhatu & Malas, its functions and mal functions, common home remedies to make it balance, Nutrition, local and global available food items and its qualities, its benefits and bad effects, daily routines, seasonal routines depends on the country and Ayurveda principles; Medicinal plants local and global. A house wife , yoga teacher, medical doctors, physiotherapist, Homeopath, Nutritionist and any body who is interested in Ayurveda can join for this course and prevention and individual health maintenance is the main aim of this course. In future this course will tremendously improve the health status of people individually in this country. This study is not for treating a patient but just for the understanding of this science.
2. Chikitsa: The second module is for another 500 hours, which is purely for the person who can do the treatments under the supervision of an Ayurveda doctor. This will be a practical training with different Ayurveda oil applications what is practiced during Panchakarma. Abhynga, Kayaseka, Pinda sweda like 64 Ayurveda treatments should be studied along with Ayurveda pharmaceutical preparations. Apart from this Yoga Asana, Dhyana, Pranayama and its benefits, Yoga therapy for different diseases are included in this course.

3. Bhishak: The third module is purely for medical doctors who are in the other fields of medicine like western medicines, Homeopath, or Healing practitioners' licensed in that country. This will be another 750 hours including the different diseases prevalent in that country. Study includes the locally available plants and global plants, preparations of medicines from the locally available plants and its prescriptions. After completion of this course he will be ready to integrate his practice with Ayurveda. He should be ready to treat a patient with Ayurveda medical system depends on the country rules.

To learn from mother country.

Even the courses are conducted in other countries the students should come to the mother country of Ayurveda- India and to observe the common practices done by the traditional vaidyas. Visiting Ayurveda herbal gardens, factories, Panchakarma centers in the colleges, interaction with Ayurveda students and teachers in India etc. will benefit a lot for the Ayurveda student of other countries. There should be such facilities in India or co-operations with the academies of other countries for genuine propagation of Ayurveda globally.

Student selections

The selection of students should be in a manner that there should be a medical knowledge about anatomy and physiology for therapist (Chikitsa course). Physio therapists, nurses and Yoga teachers, Pharmacologists only should be selected for this second module. The Ayurveda doctor course should be designed only for medical professional from the other fields.

Distant education program

If any of the deemed university or AYUSH department is interested, there can be a distant education program of BAMS like in India by collaborating with the universities or academies of other countries. This will give more seriousness in the education and the Indian Ayurveda doctors will have job opportunities in other countries. But the syllabus of BAMS should be reconsidered before doing such projects.

Global and local information on Ayurveda

It is not the aim for us to implement Ayurveda, what is practiced in India should not be exported to other countries. That will never work in other countries. The culture, food items, food combinations, climate, the pattern of diseases, mental attitude, physical strength etc. are completely different in each country. So the principles of Ayurveda should be exported or taught but not the local practices of Ayurveda. The Global Ayurveda principles with the local practices of each country should be explained and corrected according to that. For example: basmati rice with Mung dhal curry with a mango lassi is not suitable in a cold country like Germany. Instead of that the German locally available food items can be used according to the Ayurveda principles should be the aim of teaching. The seasonal variations, individual specific, disease specific etc. are very important in local considerations.

The teachers: A teacher in Ayurveda should be a person who is able to communicate with the local language of that country and interested in genuine propagation of Ayurveda. He should know the culture, food culture, common diseases prevalent in that country and how to tackle with Ayurveda principles and local herbs if necessary. He should be able to communicate in an understandable manner with students. It should not be the aim of the teacher to explain Ayurveda through modern medicine. Those will always makes confusions since modern science is changing in every 10 years! And more than that the students are interested to know Ayurveda not the modern explanations. He should be able to explain Ayurveda through Ayurveda terms but in a good illustrative way. And every Ayurveda teacher should be a minimum qualification of BAMS or post graduate from the Indian Ayurveda universities recognized by AYUSH. Five years of teaching experience in Indian universities should be a must so that there will be a standard of education.

The focus of teaching should be to understand the principles of Ayurveda in its original sense without avoiding the Sanskrit terms but at the same time to explain in a vivid manner to the students. Since the students are more than above 25 years there will be a deep interest in Ayurveda not like our Indian students of 17 years which are joining in Ayurveda colleges without any interest. There are also Sanskrit universities, Yoga centers recognized in European countries, this would contribute and enhance the knowledge of Ayurveda. Explaining Ayurveda through modern medical ways or finding out through modern medical research methodologies will not give proper understanding. There should be Ayurvedic way of thinking style should be developed in students; it is to develop a different thought process, that should be the aim of the teacher. For e.g.: It is better to explain, *Gugguluthiktakam Kashayam* is good in a condition of *Vata Rakta* with its Ayurveda properties like *Rasa-Guna – Veerya Vipaka* than the pharmacological properties of *Guggulu* and its alkaloids. Such explanation will only generate more confusions and away from the Ayurveda principles and only to add that medicine in the modern pharmacology. That never promotes the principles of Ayurveda. Chinese medicine, Acupuncture etc. are established in European countries with its original explanations and not deviating even from the Chinese language. We should not forget this and the Europeans are ready to accept this kind of originality. We have the prejudice that European cannot understand Ayurveda and trying to explain Ayurveda knowledge in modern ways and that will be a failure. To understand things easily and to establish Ayurveda in other countries we should stop our single drug research and try to do the clinical research with the compound formulations and the total protocol of treatments. We should be very clear that one drug or one Ayurveda formulations will not give any results and we should focus that the total care including individual specific, compound formulations, *Purva* and *Panchakarma* with *Rasayana* treatments are the total care in Ayurveda. Now a days in Europe Ayurveda means some massage centers, Aswagandha or Satavari or Turmeric capsules. This is what even the Indian Ayurveda companies are interested and to come in European market.

The establishment and teaching of Ayurveda should be a total life care and that is what the public or medical doctors are interested in the

western world. That will be the good business ideas so that the Ayurveda, Doctors, therapists and the pharmacies from India can enter in Europe in a genuine way. Other way the single drug researches and aswagandha capsules is will make this as purely business which will give a negative feed back on Ayurveda. Genuine study of Ayurveda principles can only establish a total health care or life style improvement.

What to study?

Since the philosophy of India is very much connected with Ayurveda we should not ignore this. This will change the attitude of life in a different way and understands the health and disease also in a different way. What is missing in western countries is the attitude of Life, the aim of life and what we have to achieve in life. The materialistic thinking is the main etiology of diseases which results in stress and civilized diseases in western countries. *Dharma, Artha, Sukha* are the main achievement in our life according to Ayurveda. So this concept is well accepted in these countries for a better understanding of life. If we avoid these philosophies and only trying to concentrate on medical part of Ayurveda that will again will not fulfill the total concepts of Ayurveda.

Galen, the great physician AD 129, was concerned to combine philosophical thought with medical practice, as in his brief work *That the Best Physician is also a Philosopher*. He regarded medicine as an interdisciplinary field that was best practiced by utilizing theory, observation, and experimentation in conjunction.

Why India is accepted by the high society of western countries are this medical pluralism, spiritual pluralism but converging in oneness not diverging. The Vedas, *Upanishads* ; *Yoga* and *Samkya* like shad *darsanas*. Indian art, Indian dances, even Bollywood dances, Indian cuisine and so on has a uniqueness that what make India as India in other countries. An Indian is proud of his country because of our traditions & culture. I am not telling that you should sell this culture but to educate and lead the others if it is having a good influence for promoting health and character of the people / patients.

Daily routines, Cleansing of the senses with theoretical and practical ways, seasonal routines depends on the countries, cooking the breakfast, lunch and dinner in Ayurvedic ways, important spices, medicinal plants explained in Ayurveda and local herbs in each country, home remedies, specific diseases and its approach in Ayurveda should be the step by step studies for a modern man who seeks while approaching Ayurveda. Education of a Patient, Education of a therapist, Education of a normal medical doctor, and Education of Ayurveda principles at the school level must be the highlight for an Ayurveda study. I can show you that the new generation has no idea of cleaning the senses in the early morning, even the qualities of a shower or bath like simple daily routines are ignorant among the most of the children. This is what Ayurveda emphasizes on preventive medicine. So teaching of Ayurveda should be in the grass root level for maintaining health.

Check List:

1. Teacher should have a minimum qualification of BAMS
2. Teaching of local herbs in the each country along with special herbs which are explained in Ayurveda that are not be substituted by the local plants.
3. A minimum 3 modules of Ayurveda education like Sutra for common man; Sutra & Chikitsa for Therapists; Sutra, Chikitsa and Bhishak for medical professionals.
4. And there should be an association or co-operation with Indian Universities / colleges or AYUSH for the quality control of education.

Some of the Education centers at Germany:

1. Ayurveda Care : Berlin, Munich www.ayurveda-care.de
2. European Academy of Ayurveda: Birsten: <http://www.ayurveda-akademie.org>
3. Seva Ayurveda Academy: Munich <http://www.seva-ayurveda.de>

Dr. Jeevan. E.P

Ayurveda consultant & Teacher

info@ayurveda-care.de

www.ayurveda-care.de