

The Role of Ayurveda in Promoting Healthy Living and Environmental Sustainability

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Introduction:

For over 5,000 years, Ayurveda is a traditional Indian system of medicine based on the principle that the human body is a microcosm of the natural environment. It emphasizes that health is achieved through the interconnectedness between human well-being and the balanced harmony of physical elements, mental, and spiritual well-being. Ayurveda also recognizes environment, and promotes practices that are both beneficial for human health and environmental sustainability. According to Acharya Charaka's "Loka Purusha Samayata Siddhanta," an Ayurvedic theory, each person reflects every element in the cosmos. According to this theory, all living things and the environment are interconnected, and achieving total well-being necessitates harmony and balance. With the onset of the Anthropocene, ecological harm can be avoided by reorienting human existence toward harmony with nature. Although each human being has their own Prakruti (constitution), Sarata (strength), and Aahar (diet), all are influenced by common factors like location and air. These factors can lead to illnesses and, in severe cases, death when they are disrupted or tainted. This is called "Janapadodhwans," and it arises from the disruption of Kala (time), Jala (water), Desh (region), and Vayu and air. The goal of Ayurveda is to regulate and correct air, water, region, and time disruptions. The sun's rays purify the air by eliminating pollutants, and fire likewise purifies the air by eliminating impurities. Ayurveda presents a simple approach to healthy living, supported by scientific principles essential for maintaining overall health and well-being. Nowadays people are becoming much more aware of healthy lifestyle and immune system. Ayurveda has evolved from ancient traditional practice to scientifically proven modern recent advancement. This has made Ayurveda more attractive than conventional system of medicine in many parts of the world. The role of Ayurveda to ensure healthy lifestyle and promote wellbeing for all at all ages. 2. The United Nations Organization (UNO) has defined 13 targets for Sustainability Development Goal-3. Ayurveda promotes healthy living by offering a holistic, nature-based lifestyle (daily routines, seasonal eating, yoga, herbal remedies) that balances mind, body, and spirit, reducing stress and chronic diseases, while inherently supporting environmental sustainability by its trust on local, organic, plant-based resources, minimal processing, and principles of living in togetherness with natural cycles, thereby minimizing pollution and waste.

Its core philosophy views humans as interconnected with nature, making individual well-being and planetary health inseparable.

Here are some ways Ayurveda promotes healthy living and environmental sustainability:

1. **Emphasis on natural remedies:** Ayurveda uses natural remedies such as herbs, spices, and oils to treat illnesses and maintain overall health. This promotes the use of natural pieces of equipment and reduces the utilization of synthetic chemicals that can be harmful to the environment.
2. **Sustainable harvesting and processing of medicinal plants:** Ayurveda relies heavily on medicinal plants, and recognizes the importance of sustainable harvesting and processing to ensure the long-term availability of these resources. Ayurvedic practitioners often use wild-crafted or organically-grown herbs and promote sustainable harvesting practices.
3. **Promoting a plant-based diet:** Ayurveda recommends a plant-based diet that is rich in fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. This not only promotes good physical health but also minimizes the environmental impact of meat production, which is an appropriate contributor to the emissions of greenhouse gas as well as deforestation.
4. **Mindfulness of the environment:** Ayurveda stresses the relevancy of being mindful of the environment and our effect on it. This includes practices i.e. waste reduction, recycling, and using eco-friendly products.
5. **Promotion of eco-friendly practices:** Ayurveda promotes eco-friendly practices such as relying on renewable energy, promoting sustainable transportation, and minimizing water consumption.

Ayurveda advocates a holistic view of health and well-being, emphasizing the close connection between human health and environmental health. By promoting sustainable practices, Ayurveda helps to support environmental sustainability and promote healthy living for individuals and communities.

Case Studies of Successful Science of Life (Ayurvedic Practices) in India:

Here are a few examples of successful Science of Life Ayurvedic practices in India.

1. **The Kerala Ayurvedic Healthcare system:** The state of Kerala in India has a long history of Ayurvedic practice and is known for its successful Ayurvedic healthcare system. The state government has established Ayurvedic hospitals and clinics throughout the state, which offer a range of services. The Kerala Ayurvedic Healthcare approach remains successful in promoting traditional Ayurvedic practices while also integrating modern medical techniques.
2. **The Birla Institute of Scientific Research:** The Birla Institute of Scientific Research in Jaipur, India, has conducted extensive research on the medicinal properties of Ayurvedic herbs and has developed Ayurvedic medicines for a range of health conditions. Their research has been successful in

demonstrating the effectiveness of Ayurvedic treatments and has contributed to integrating Ayurvedic practices into modern medicine.

3. The Ayurvedic Village: The Ayurvedic Village in Pune, India, is a wellness resort that offers a range of Ayurvedic treatments and therapies. The resort promotes sustainable and eco-friendly practices, e.g. the use of solar energy, rainwater harvesting, and organic farming. The Ayurvedic Village has been successful in promoting Ayurvedic practices while also promoting sustainable tourism and environmental conservation.

4. The Arya Vaidya Pharmacy: The Arya Vaidya Pharmacy is a renowned Ayurvedic pharmacy in Coimbatore, India, which produces a range of Ayurvedic medicines and products. The pharmacy has been successful in promoting sustainable and ethical practices, e.g. the use of organic and wild-crafted herbs, sustainable harvesting practices, and fair trade principles. The Arya Vaidya Pharmacy has also been successful in promoting Ayurvedic practices and educating the public about the benefits of Ayurveda.

These case studies demonstrate the success of Ayurvedic practices in India and their potential for promoting sustainable healthcare and environmental conservation. They also highlight the advantages of uplifting sustainable and ethical practices in the production and use of Ayurvedic medicines and products.

The Need for Integrating Ayurveda and Traditional Medicine with Modern Healthcare Systems:

The integration of Ayurveda and other traditional medical systems into modern healthcare has been widely discussed for many years. In recent times, there has been growing recognition of the value of combining traditional knowledge with contemporary medical practices, particularly in addressing chronic and lifestyle-related diseases. Integrating these systems can enhance healthcare delivery in several important ways.

Holistic approach:

1. Ayurveda and traditional medicine emphasize a holistic view of health, recognizing the interconnectedness of the body, mind, and spirit. This perspective complements modern medicine, which often focuses on diagnosing and treating specific diseases or symptoms, by promoting overall well-being and long-term health maintenance.

2. Patient-centered care: Ayurveda and the traditional medicine often prioritize patient-centered care, which involves treating the patient as a whole person and taking into account their individual needs and preferences. This can lead to better patient outcomes and improved patient satisfaction.
3. Cultural sensitivity: Integrating Ayurveda and stereotyped medicine into modern healthcare can improve cultural sensitivity and accessibility for patients who may prefer or be more comfortable with traditional approaches.
4. Sustainable healthcare: Ayurveda and stereotyped medicine often emphasize the use of natural remedies and sustainable healthcare practices, which can reduce the reliance on synthetic drugs and improve the environmental sustainability of healthcare systems.
5. Research and innovation: Integrating Ayurveda and old medicine into current healthcare can provide opportunities for research and innovation, leading to the rise of new treatments and therapies. Integrating Ayurveda and old medicine into modern healthcare systems has the potential to improve patient outcomes, promote sustainable healthcare practices, and increase cultural sensitivity and accessibility. However, it is important to ensure that any integration is done in a safe and evidence-based manner, with appropriate training and regulation of practitioners.

Role in Healthy Living

- **Holistic Approach:** Focuses on balance between physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual health, not just disease treatment.
- **Lifestyle Practices:** Encourages **Dinacharya** (daily routines like waking early) and **Ritucharya** (seasonal eating/living) to align with nature.
- **Diet:** Promotes fresh, local, seasonal, plant-based foods, reducing processed items and supporting gut health.
- **Mind-Body Practices:** Incorporates yoga, meditation, and breathing exercises (like Sudarshan Kriya) for stress reduction and mental clarity.
- **Natural Remedies:** Uses herbs (Ashwagandha, Brahmi) and minerals (Shilajit) for vitality, immunity, and detoxification, reducing reliance on synthetic drugs.

Role in Environmental Sustainability:

- **Natural & Local Sourcing:** Prioritizes local, organic herbs, reducing food miles and chemical inputs, preserving biodiversity.
- **Minimal Waste:** Practices involve less processing and fewer synthetic additives, creating less pollution and non-degradable waste.
- **Harmony with Nature:** Core principle of interconnectedness (Loka Purusha Samayata) encourages respecting ecological balance, viewing environmental harm as a threat to human health.

- **Resource Conservation:** Promotes mindful consumption and traditional ecological wisdom, aligning with green business models.
- **Low-Resource Practices:** Activities like yoga and meditation require minimal resources, cutting down carbon footprint.

Integration & Future:

- Ayurveda offers a blueprint for sustainable living, providing eco-friendly alternatives to modern healthcare's high environmental cost.
- It supports green entrepreneurship in wellness and cosmetics, fostering innovation in environmentally responsible practices.
- Blending Ayurvedic wisdom with modern science can create a resilient, balanced future for both people and the planet.

How to integrate Ayurveda into a sustainable lifestyle:

Ayurvedic lifestyle adjustments are about making mindful choices regarding habits that genuinely benefit you mentally, physically and spiritually. Finding harmony and balance within and with nature helps you feel more grounded and stable. Focussing on maintaining wellness rather than pill-popping as a cure. Living as naturally as possible through lifestyle choices and diet helps us deal with a majority of health issues because our bodies slowly start to benefit from the nutrition found in seasonal fruits and vegetables. You will be advised on a diet that benefits your dosha composition so as to keep your digestive system healthy which helps absorb nutrients well and rid the body of toxins and impurities.

The ancient life science is inherently followed the principles of sustainability – nurturing the deep relationship between humans and the natural world and how the two are interdependent to maintain all forms of life. Ayurveda considers the quality and conditions of the surroundings as a reflection of ourselves. Even Ayurvedic skincare focuses on gentle methods of cleaning and nourishing using natural ingredients. This is in direct contrast to the mass-produced cosmetics and skincare ranges found in the market today. However, even these popular mass brands are looking to adopt natural ingredients to their products.

Ayurveda is not just a system of medicine but is a way of living, a lifestyle that focuses on bringing back purity to the mind, body, soul and the environment. When more people adopt a sustainable way of living it shifts the priorities of humanity overall with emphasis on preserving our planet.

In a world full of quick fixes and fast food, Ayurveda reminds us that food is the most powerful medicine. This ancient Indian system of health doesn't just focus on what you eat but how it nourishes your body and soul. According to Ayurveda, what you put on your plate is one of the three pillars of

life, alongside sleep and a balanced lifestyle. If you get this right, you've got the recipe for a long, healthy life.

Ayurveda and Green Wellness: A Sustainable Approach to Health

In an era where sustainability is at the forefront of global discussions, integrating ancient wellness practices with eco-conscious living is becoming more relevant than ever. Ayurveda, the traditional system of medicine from India, presents a common and beneficial approach to health that aligns seamlessly with green wellness principles. By emphasizing natural remedies, seasonal eating, and lifestyle harmony, Ayurveda provides a sustainable path to well-being.

Conclusion:

Ayurveda approaches nature as a source of healing and so places great emphasis on maintaining a sustainable life. Ayurvedic principles centre aligning our individual rhythms with nature to maintain balance and harmony and so promote using medicinal plants and Ayurvedic herbs found in nature i.e. the Neem plant to sustain a healthy connection in between the body, mind and soul. Usage of natural ingredients – Ayurveda is about sourcing nature, using plants and minerals for remedies and not depending on medicines that have been produced in a lab and which generate pharmaceutical waste. Emphasis on seasonal food in Ayurvedic diets – In keeping regarding the principle that nature is a source of healing; Ayurveda encourages a healthy plant-based diet with an emphasis on eating seasonal fresh fruits and vegetables. Plant-based diets have been recognized as benefiting both the human body and the planet. Ethical sourcing – Responsible sourcing of herbs, oils and plants for remedies and treatments is of great importance in Ayurveda as it always promotes sustainable practices that do not cause harm to the environment. Basically, Ayurvedic practitioners will always aim to source ingredients locally and ethically. Ayurveda and green wellness go hand in hand, offering a sustainable approach to health that prioritizes harmony with nature. By adopting Ayurvedic principles, individuals can achieve holistic well-being while contributing to environmental preservation. From herbal remedies to mindful living, the collaboration of Ayurveda into recent lifestyles provides a natural and effective path to wellness. Now the world is shifting towards sustainable health solutions, Ayurveda remains a timeless and eco-friendly practice that continues to inspire well-being for generations to come.

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