



Shahid Akhter, editor, ETHealthworld talks to **Dr. G. G. Gangadharan**, Bangalore and author of recently published book “Ayurveda”, to know more about options and opportunities for Ayurveda to co-exist with modern medicine.

**In the middle of the pandemic, Ayurveda and modern medicine are entangled in a war of words. Your views on the ongoing polarisation.**

Science is universal and it has no boundaries or reservations. The present antagonism by the politically dominant, socially respected and financially superior modern science, specifically the biomedical stream of it, is making biased

observations against a science of holistic paradigm without any substantial scientific basis.

If one looks critically at the allegations against traditional medicine, one can see that it is coming mainly from the clinical representatives of modern medicine rather than its scientific stream. The professional health space fully occupied by modern medicine so far has recently been challenged and intruded by AYUSH stalwarts and institutions, which possess a threat to their unchallenged existence. This will go on till AYUSH stream becomes stronger and more productive.

As I said in my book in the initial chapter, it needs institutions of calibre like IITs and IIMs to promote the cause and evidence base for AYUSH sector. The scientific rigour of traditional medicine can be seen from the growth of the National Centre for Complementary and Alternative Medicine (NCCAM) of NIH, US to a billion dollar budget in 2020-21, which was started in 1990 as a mere office of Alternative Medicine (OAM). The rapid growth of

this institution itself shows the worth of traditional medicine and its contribution to health and healing.

**Ayurvedic doctors in places like Uttrakhand, are allowed to prescribe select allopathic medicines.**

**Your views.**

**It has to be seen from two perspectives.**

- i) There are administrative issues in Indian villages in serving rural masses during acute health conditions. So, allowing AYUSH practitioners to use selected components of allopathy is only understandable.
- ii) But it will in no way help the AYUSH sector to grow from its roots. It actually weakens the AYUSH sector in the years to come.

For example, in 1960`s and 70`s many states in India came up with integrative degrees for AYUSH practitioners like DAM, GCIM etc.. These courses were abandoned due to its ill effects on AYUSH practitioners and system.

The way forward for Ayurveda in the healthcare road map of India. How the potentials of Ayurveda can be harnessed without disturbing the ethos of modern medicine.

The public health part of Ayurveda is a highly neglected area. If Ayurvedic aspects are harnessed with public health programs of India, a sea change can be brought in our health targets. For example, for the last 70 years, 97% of the health budget is continuously spent on the modern biomedical system, through which public health reach even today is not more than 35%. So, we have to explore ways to reach a larger population. One of the ways is the approach of integrative medicine where the goodness of all systems are channelised and appropriately integrated.

Towards this, we need to create institutions to work on this idea on a long term basis with appropriate policy support.

In your book “AYURVEDA” you talk about listening to our bodies, but in the age of so advanced diagnostic tools, we need to trust them more than our instinct. Your views?

When I say listen to your bodies, what I mean is be sensitive to the internal rhythm and wake up calls by following the natural way of living, making optimum use of your sense organs, mind, intellect and soul. One has to use advanced diagnostic tools, wherever or whenever they are needed. As I explained in my book, Ayurveda explains 15 self observable subjective and objective signs and symptoms to understand the body's state of physical and mental health.