

Thrusting Ayurveda: Constructive Build up, not Hype



Ayurveda is on the crossroads - quote unquote. Being the native soil of this ancient but precious healthcare system, Government of India is keen to stand by patronizing Ayurveda from unseen grass root levels to global landscapes. It's there everywhere, on the billboards and inside the households. It's knowledge and skills being imparted in the colleges and universities, showcasing thousands of clinics and hospitals across the country. Overall, the picture looks bright.

This is to argue the case of a grim image of the Ayurveda academy at present in our country. As on August 2023, a total of 31874 BAMS seats exist in 449 Ayurveda Medical Colleges across India being approved by the National Commission for Indian Systems of Medicine (NCISM). There is National level entrance examination NEET for the aspirants. In the current year, the cut-off percentile ranged from 40 to 50 percentile across various categories, even adopting certain tie-breaking criteria. This allowed aspirants with lesser ranks too, to enroll for the course.

That's not the only concern. A recent report from Kerala, supposed to be the hub and haven of Ayurveda projected a substantial 30% BAMS seats lying vacant! And it is reported that the category of self-financing colleges sector foresee a big crisis considering the non-availability of students in the yester years. The trend is gradually expected to creep into government sector colleges too. This situation is alarming to every stakeholder of Ayurveda.

It is a fact that there is a drift of aspiring students to go abroad after the higher secondary program. Migrating to the West has become the fashion and education fairs are rampant everywhere to attract prospective clients. Banks are on the doorstep, ready to approve educational loans for enrolling in foreign universities. One

can dispute that this emerging movement is applicable to all Degree courses in India. As for Ayurveda, are there other reasons worth pondering?

The employability of a BAMS doctor in India is to be reviewed in this context. After completing the Degree, almost 4500 (7%) aspirants might enroll for Post- Graduate program. Rest of them is looking for a job or some of them joining other streams unrelated to Ayurveda. Hooking onto a job in the government sector is rendered ideal, but slots are limited. Professional and industrial sectors are not lucrative as the earnings are not meeting the job profile or the needs of the individual as a doctor. Many graduates are ready to migrate, if there is a half chance elsewhere. Policy makers at the centre should study this pertinent case of Ayurvedic Medicine in our country and decide upon the future course of action. Most important components of a medical system are qualified and competent doctors using potent medicines. Ill-equipped physicians coupled with practice of Ayurvedic medicines of which the quality factor is on the wrong side, prospects of the system goes off-track.

Dr. N.K.M. Ikbal
Executive Editor