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Connecting Systems; Bridging Disciplines

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PRE NOTE

Cross Faculty Learning and Need for New Pharmaceutical Courses for AYUSH & Natural Products

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Quality and costs of medical care are issues of global concerns. CAM as referred internationally and AYUSH as in India are expected; and have potential to play an important role. The present government is much committed to develop AYUSH Systems. However, I am reminded of the famous Scottish proverb 'If Wishes Were Horses, Beggars will Ride'. The responsibility is not only of the administration but also, with us as citizens, as professionals and as scientists. The role of AYUSH cannot be only of secondary skilled human resource. It will not help. Blind increase of jacketed institutionalization without objectivity of learning will not provide solutions. India has suffered due to lack of cross faculty learning and growing; that has affected our innovativeness, which has limited our capabilities, that has limited our adaptability to new technologies, and that has restricted our reach. *It has impacted our global competitiveness.* What is needed is **meaningful integration based on true spirit of scientific enquiry** with an objective to develop modalities that will help create health care delivery tools to provide safe and effective care at lower cost.

Maybe the unique recognized pluralistic structure of our health care has helped to maintain the ethos of each of the system but it has also compromised its capabilities to deliver. There is urgent need to bridge scientific disciplines. Pharmaceutical sciences and food technologies can contribute significantly to bridge the gaps experienced by the professionals and consumers; and can take up challenges of standardization and validated care. Pharmaceutical sciences, I firmly believe have most significant role to help AYUSH Systems to connect with consumer and to take on challenges of standardization and validation, and to develop into evidence based institutionalised medicine with its own globally competitive products and AYUSH industry.

The most important issue that is faced by AYUSH systems is that of quality. Though the quality as a concept is relevant to the AYUSH systems as a whole to achieve the quality of AYUSH products within the realms of the principles of the systems is the biggest challenge. With now available advances in bio technology and nanotechnology, pharmaceutical science has the most pivotal role to play. Newer and novel modalities for integration are the only

solutions. Consumer compliance and developmental activities are necessary to industrialisation and institutionalised health care. Role of advances in bio technologies or nanotechnology have potential to protect holistic nature of traditional products. AYUSH and natural products will be required to be developed into modern dosage forms for such a rendezvous.

A need was always felt and efforts were made over last several decades to develop courses that will help use of pharmaceutical sciences for development of Ayurvedic products. These initiatives were taken by Ayurvedic University and academic institutes. Interesting, during last decade several pharmaceutical colleges or institutes have also made efforts to frame short term diploma or certificate courses to provide expertise in the field of herbal technologies or natural product development.

The outcome of these efforts though encouraging and marginally helpful to the industry have not evolved into a regular and reliable source of skilled human resource either for industry or for enhanced development of the sector or to attract new talent.

Being involved with industry for a prolonged period and having been a referee examiner to post-graduate examinations of both pharma and Ayurvedic courses I have also been witness to some of these efforts. It is noteworthy that the want of specially qualified and trained personnel for AYUSH and natural products has amplified for various reasons and requirements. I remember of being asked to make a presentation to a parliamentary committee to discuss need of qualified personnel for the sale of Ayurvedic products in line with that of pharmacists as followed for medicinal products. Obviously, the proposal at that time was neither realistic nor feasible. However the issue of quality and safety of AYUSH products and its rational use has remained unattended. While both, the sector and the administration remain undaunted the issue is becoming bigger and complex.

The disappointment is due to failure of the post graduate courses to satisfy tangible needs. These courses were developed within the framework or as an extension of existing educational program either within Ayurvedic or pharmaceutical systems. Evolving methods to carve out a new path with properly defined roadmap are essential elements of any cross faculty needs or integration of two

knowledge systems.

With eclectic requirements there is need for such a syllabus that will not only help to update with present day needs and technologies but that will recognise the basic tenets of the knowledge based system and will provide a systematic method to adapt to the newer advances in pharmaceutical sciences. Identifying integrative needs and developing well defined tools of training for such a course will be the key to success of such advanced course. Such a course will not only attract talent but will be looked after by industry and research institutes to further their developmental and quality activities.

The initiative by Prof. Ramesh Goyal, the Vice chancellor at DPSRU has potential to offer a trendsetting initiative of such a post graduate syllabus. At the brainstorming session held in Delhi it was satisfying to observe that the process that has been initiated is sensitive to earlier happenings and is eager to move in a step wise fashion. As I mentioned at the session what not to do is essential to overcome chances of failure experienced earlier.

A comprehensive look for facilities and requirements of training tools and the framework and basis of course curriculum in itself will be a major challenge. It needs to be in line with present day requirement of research. It will also be desirable that the proposed syllabus and system be framed in such a way to keep it dynamic in nature.

An important point that surfaced at the session is lack of enthusiasm for taxonomical and pharmacognostic studies. Similarly, the lack of ability of Ayurvedic professionals, unlike earlier days, to recognize medicinal plants of use were discussed. The experts felt an urgent need for revival of interest in these disappearing methods of knowledge.

The Delhi event was unique for integration of AYUSH and Pharmaceutical sciences to help to consider a path of integration for global competitiveness. I am happy that IASTAM once again played an important role to bridge two different disciplines. This event has given new ideas, approaches, and development and helped to address the purpose of system and science.

This has been a great experience to work with Prof. Goyal for productive outcome. We look forward to further consultative meets to further this agenda.

