

IASTAM

INDIA

NEWSLETTER

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"Bridging the Gap between Knowledge and Action."

- Steven Hawk

PRE NOTE

Reforms in Ayurvedic Education, A Predicament

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It was as early in 1988 when a Regional Seminar was organized at Gujarat Ayurveda University, Jamnagar on 'Teaching Methods in Ayurveda'. An announcement invite was received where participants were to make 8 to 10 minute paper presentation made me write to the university about how a subject on teaching methods could be deliberated through papers. To my surprise the then Vice chancellor Shri Vasant R. Mehta, whom I had never met made it point to look for me and meet near airport on one of his trips. Over an hour or so he learnt of my views and inquired whether I was ready to share it publicly. He ensured that I did so. Similarly, sensitized on the subject, Smt. Shailaja Chandra, secretary at Dept. of ISM under Ministry of Health in 1999 decided to form a committee headed by Prof. R. H. Singh, that never took off, once she left the department. In 2005 IASTAM as a part of its silver jubilee Conclave on Transforming Traditions for Tomorrow's Health had 'Education Reforms' as its focus. This conclave was designed after several discussions on the subject to derive the best outcomes. The proceedings were much acclaimed by stakeholders and administrators like Mrs. Malti Sinha and Shri Shekhar Dutt, former secretaries and Shri Taradutt, former Joint Secretary. I recollect Mr. Shiv Basant, former Joint Secretary saying that he used to refer to the conclave proceedings as a bible to understand related issues. Thereafter several sincere efforts have been made at different levels in the form

of discussions, reorientation programs and projects. However, these efforts have not delivered the desired results. Rather, if viewed from need of contributions from Ayurveda on its own footing in the medical care, it has become more complex. Quality of Ayurvedic education prevails to be confused of methodology and lacks on clarity of purpose. While Central Council of Indian Medicine [CCIM] has rightly tried to bring in changes, mainly revisiting the syllabus or bringing in changes in curriculum and such, this is not enough as there is need to examine the basic flows in functionality and purpose for reforms.

31 years have passed since 1988 when need for change in method of Ayurvedic education was felt but now the challenge with its expanded base is bigger than ever. This necessitates a careful relook at the whole approach and process of reforms.

What is Education?

Education is the method of enabling learning, or gaining of information and knowledge, ideas and ideals, theories and views, skills and capabilities, ways and means and traditions and practices. Presently, education requires instruction and training from a teacher or a group of teachers - faculty supported by an institutional agenda and framework. Use of singular or composed literature and practical experience under supervision of an experienced guide are essential components of present-day education. Educational methods include

teaching, discussion, training, guidance, experiencing outcomes and guided research and such other activities. These activities represent *functionality* to achieve the *objective* or the *purpose*.

What are 'Reforms'?

Reforms are modifications made for improvement and reorganization of a system for advanced development. Reforms are changes made to improvise on inappropriate or unsatisfactory elements or methods in a system.

Changing responsibilities or liabilities are imperative for improved performance.

Form is a shape that indicates a functional entity. A functional entity that signifies meaning or a purpose. If a form denotes meaningful or purposeful activity, then the reform must aim at fulfillment of the purpose. Any failed or inadequate fulfillment of purpose requires to relook at either clarity of the purpose or improvisation in its functionality or both. Redefining of purpose and analysis of functional outcomes of the system are vital for transformation or reorganization. Focus will be on what is the purpose of reforms.

Purpose of Reforms in Ayurveda Education

The purpose of Ayurvedic education could be broadly be categorized into four objectives.

1. To deliver economic health and medical solutions having different base other than the prevailing conventional medicine-based system that is found to be limited in its delivery.
2. To preserve, protect, enrich and expand Indian heritage, ancient knowledge and traditional wisdom, for its continuity and universal use.
3. To develop pool of teaching, training, research and administrative pool for its maintenance, development, expansion and reach.
And most important
4. To provide an Ayurvedic professional (doctor) to contribute to health and medical care in individual capacity and as a support to industry, corporate, environment, society and such other.

Reforms should aim at above objectives to bring in changes or improvisation in knowledge, information, skills and capabilities to satisfy the above needs. Reforms must aim at enablement of individuals and the institutions, both public and private, to deliver appropriately defined societal and national gains.

Risks for Failure of Reforms

Reforms without clarity of purpose, if deprived of comprehensive thought, that fail to address constituent functionality or enacted in a piece mill manner are bound to fail. Differently handled and alienated reforms without shared objectives in the areas of teaching, skill development, capacity building and infrastructure will not serve the basic purpose of reforms.

Reforms designed or planned within the prevailing realms without new vision or implemented within the existing framework will not provide desired results as such reforms will alienated objectives and will be devoid of constituent synergy that is vital for success.

Vital Considerations for Reforms

Re-Defining Purpose - Defining main purpose and redefining objectives are very vital to any reform. It is therefore necessary to examine what has not been achieved, what has not happened and what is required to be achieved. Identifying its role and possible contribution based on its own strengths and weakness will help right purpose.

Historical Review - History and analyses of more than five decades of institutionalization are vital as without that we cannot understand what has gone wrong. The path adopted, reasons thereof and outcome of what has happened necessary. Taking cognizance of societal, economic, medical situation then and now and needs felt of Ayurveda and role it can play in present situation are equally important. Health care delivery is a dynamic ongoing process and should be considered accordingly. Reforms cannot be undertaken in isolated of relevance.

Paradigm - There is need to change the paradigm on which the present system based on conventional medicine system was adopted and established. Though evolved based on principle of medical pluralism, it has become secondary to an existing and align system. Present paradigm has not helped Ayurveda to grow its own identity, reliability, quality, applicability and acceptance as envisaged. The present system based on socio-economic and political environment of 1960s require a major transformation. Whereas the conventional medicine does have its own dynamics to be sensitive to the changing needs as to adopted from general paradigm of health care delivery, Ayurveda as a system fails to cope up with it due to different paradigm. This is the basic issue.

Integration - Undoubtedly integration is an essential component for relevance. However, in order to be relevant, it has lost its own principles and practices. The model of integration is required to be addressed based on purpose and objectives defined based on its own strength and capacity. The integration must aim at innovation rather than adjustments and compromises of its own strengths. This has been disastrous for the system. Several countries and several areas of activities have succeeded in developing their own modalities to serve their needs. It can be done.

Innovative Approach to Modalities - The present system is borrowed from conventional medicine which in turn itself has borrowed from west. Even though it is found wanting the western model has served its people

well to most of the extent. However, it is aligning to the needs of an oriental system. While adhering to institutional infrastructure as prevalent and necessary for societal needs it is not impossible to evolve a new model within the present framework.

There is need to revisit, deliberate on and innovate novel functional modalities at different levels to serve purpose and objectives. The IITs and IIMs are examples of such customised modalities to develop our systems and to serve our people. An innovative approach, a new modular integrated structure of learning and training based on Ayurvedic principles is required. Such an approach could be supported by development of suitable means, methods, tools and techniques.

Urgency - There is a recognized loss of our heritage, traditional knowledge and practices. Knowledge and contact with basic principles, strengths of its universality and uniqueness are being felt. We are behind times. Challenges have compounded. *Reforms must be driven by a determined resolution to provide meaning to the whole process for fulfillment of the purpose for which activity is undertaken. It is a drive to bring in changes that will help achieve the objectives for an activity*

A reference could be cited as -

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undertaken. 'Earliest and accelerated Reforms' is the only solution.

Looking Forward - The word 'impact' is essential to reforms. Unless we bring changes there won't be an impact. Reforms must be objected towards improving the learning and creativity of thought process, thinking process. The impact must have an objective and measurable outcome. *Ayurveda has potential to serve the people and to the growth of the nation.*

'Sense of insecurity', 'inferiority complex', 'secondary existence', and 'pseudo existence' must be replaced with true confidence and capabilities based on its inherent strengths to satisfy contemporary needs with strong, alternative, economic and effective care.

There is a need to look at the AYUSH sector with such a radical change that has objectivity, accountability, and responsibility. Otherwise, it will remain limited in stature and restrained in delivery.

These thoughts are based on my 11 years earlier career as a teacher and recent association for 4 years with an academic institute for its research outcomes. Further deliberations on constituents of reforms will be of interest. Your views are welcome. ○○○

International IASTAM President, Prof. Dr. Angelika Messner will be in India

IASTAM - India will be delighted to have one more honoured Guest at the IASTAM Award Function 2019 and Conclave on AYUSH in Cancer in February at Kochi. Prof. Dr. Angelika Messner, President of IASTAM International and Head of China Centre, Kiel University, Germany will be participating at our next important event. Following Prof. A. L. Basham, Prof. Charles Leslie and Dr. Waltraud Ernst, she will be the 4th President to visit India. She believes Traditional Asian medicines can play a significant role in improving the well-being of people worldwide, both as health care systems in their own right and as resources for biodiscovery projects and has been always eager to integrate the diverse forms of knowledge and ways of practice in Asian Medicine and AYUSH. *We are delighted that she has accepted our invitation. We look forward to expand our horizon through her position in IASTAM and other International linkages.*



Prof. Dr. Angelika Messner
President, IASTAM International

13th Global Ethnomedicine and Ethnopharmacology Conference

Group Participation

April 15-16, 2019 | Hong Kong

Theme: 'Explore the new horizons in Ethnomedicine & Ethnopharmacology'

IASTAM is planning for a collaboration with Ethnomedicine 2019 To deliberate on 'Asian Medicine / AYUSH' and for Group Participation To Exchange Knowledge, Information and Recent Developments.

Ethnomedicine 2019 aims at sharing new ideas and technologies amongst the professionals, industrialists and students from research areas of Ethnomedicine and Ethnopharmacology Conference.

For Details visit: <https://ethnomedicine.pharmaceuticalconferences.com/>

Contact IASTAM office for further details