

5. Traditional Medicine – Science and Technology

Traditional medicine is seeing a global surge, with India's AYUSH sector growing rapidly due to a worldwide shift towards preventive healthcare. India is capitalizing on this by establishing the WHO's Global Centre for Traditional Medicine, introducing a special "Ayush Visa," and promoting scientific research.

Global Status of Traditional Medicine

Traditional medicine is experiencing a significant resurgence worldwide, marked by growing acceptance and a rapidly expanding market.

Widespread Practice – According to the World Health Organization (WHO), traditional medicine is actively practised in 88% of its member states, which translates to 170 out of 194 countries.

Growing Acceptance & Market Expansion – Analysts project the global traditional medicine market to reach \$583 billion by 2025. This growth is driven by impressive annual growth rates of 10% to 20%.

Shift in Healthcare Philosophy – This expansion signifies a fundamental change in how health is perceived—moving away from purely reactive treatment models towards proactive and preventive approaches that address the root causes of illness rather than just the symptoms.

Country-wise Market Valuation

The table below highlights the market size of traditional medicine in key countries.

Country	Traditional Medicine Sector	Market Value
China	Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM)	\$122.4 billion
India	Ayurveda, Yoga, Unani, Siddha, Homoeopathy (AYUSH)	\$43.4 billion
Australia	Herbal Medicine Industry	\$3.97 billion

India's AYUSH System – An Overview

The Government of India actively promotes its traditional systems of medicine under the umbrella of AYUSH, aiming to integrate them with modern healthcare.

AYUSH– AYUSH is an acronym for the six traditional Indian systems of medicine – **Ayurveda**, **Yoga** and **Naturopathy**, **Unani**, **Siddha**, and **Homoeopathy**.

Primary Aim – The core objective of the Department of AYUSH is to provide accessible and affordable healthcare services to the public through these traditional streams.

Key Features of the AYUSH Systems

The table below outlines the distinct principles and practices of each component of AYUSH.

System	Core Principle / Focus	Methods and Treatments Used
Ayurveda	Holistic healing; emphasizes balance in body, mind, and spirit.	Herbs, specialized diets, lifestyle changes, and detoxification therapies.
Yoga & Naturopathy	Promotes physical, mental, and spiritual well-being.	Physical postures (asanas), breathing exercises (pranayama), and meditation.
Unani	Originating from Greek medicine; focuses on bodily balance.	Herbal remedies, dietary practices, and balancing the body's four "humors".
Siddha	A traditional system from South India.	Alchemy, herbal medicine, minerals, and metals to rejuvenate the body.
Homoeopathy	Based on the principle of "like cures like."	Uses highly diluted natural substances to stimulate the body's healing process.

India's Ayurvedic Transformation & Global Footprint

India has successfully transformed its traditional medicine sector into a thriving industry with a significant global presence.

Rapid Industry Growth – The AYUSH industry, which comprises over 92,000 micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), has expanded nearly eight-fold in less than a decade.

Strong Export Performance – India now exports AYUSH and herbal products worth \$1.54 billion to more than 150 countries.

International Recognition – Ayurveda is officially recognized as a system of Traditional Medicine in more than 30 countries. So far, more than 50 Unani and Ayurveda products have been registered in 8 countries – Kenya, the USA, Russia, Latvia, Canada, Oman, Tajikistan, and Sri Lanka.

Key Global Initiatives

Ayush Visa – The Ministry of Home Affairs has introduced a new "Ayush Visa" category for foreign nationals seeking treatment through traditional Indian medicine, including therapeutic care, wellness, and yoga.

WHO Global Centre for Traditional Medicine (GTMC) – In collaboration with the WHO, the Ministry of Ayush has established the world's first and only GTMC in **Jamnagar, Gujarat, India**.

International Day of Yoga – The UN General Assembly unanimously adopted a resolution in 2014 to observe **June 21st** as the International Day of Yoga every year.

Key Government Initiatives to Promote AYUSH

The Indian government has launched several focused initiatives to develop, regulate, and promote its traditional medicine systems both domestically and internationally.

Ministry of Ayush – Established in 2014, this dedicated ministry is responsible for promoting traditional medicine, ensuring quality control, and regulating practices.

National AYUSH Mission (NAM) – A Centrally Sponsored Scheme implemented through state and UT governments to promote AYUSH systems nationwide. A key component is the AYUSH Gram concept, which promotes AYUSH-based lifestyles in villages through education and the use of local medicinal herbs.

Ayush Export Promotion Council (AYUSHEXCIL) – Established by the Ministry of Ayush and supported by the Ministry of Commerce, its primary goal is to promote AYUSH products and services on a global scale.

Scientific Validation and Research – India has invested heavily in research through premier institutions like the All India Institute of Ayurveda and the Central Council for Research in Ayurvedic Sciences. The focus is on clinical validation, drug standardization, and developing integrative care models.

Global Expansion and Cooperation – India has signed 25 bilateral agreements and 52 institutional partnerships. 43 AYUSH Information Cells have been established across 39 countries to disseminate authentic information.

Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) – The Ministry actively undertakes promotional activities, including organizing AROGYA fairs, running multimedia campaigns, and distributing publicity materials to raise public awareness.

Source – <https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/the-growing-relevance-of-traditional-medicine/article70081640.ece#~:text=For%20billions%2C%20particularly%20in%20low,nutrition%20security%2C%20and%20sustainable%20livelihoods.>