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**ONE DAY CONFERENCE ON
“INDIAN KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS: REDISCOVERING
THE ROOTS OF TIMELESS WISDOM”**



Date: 09/01/2026

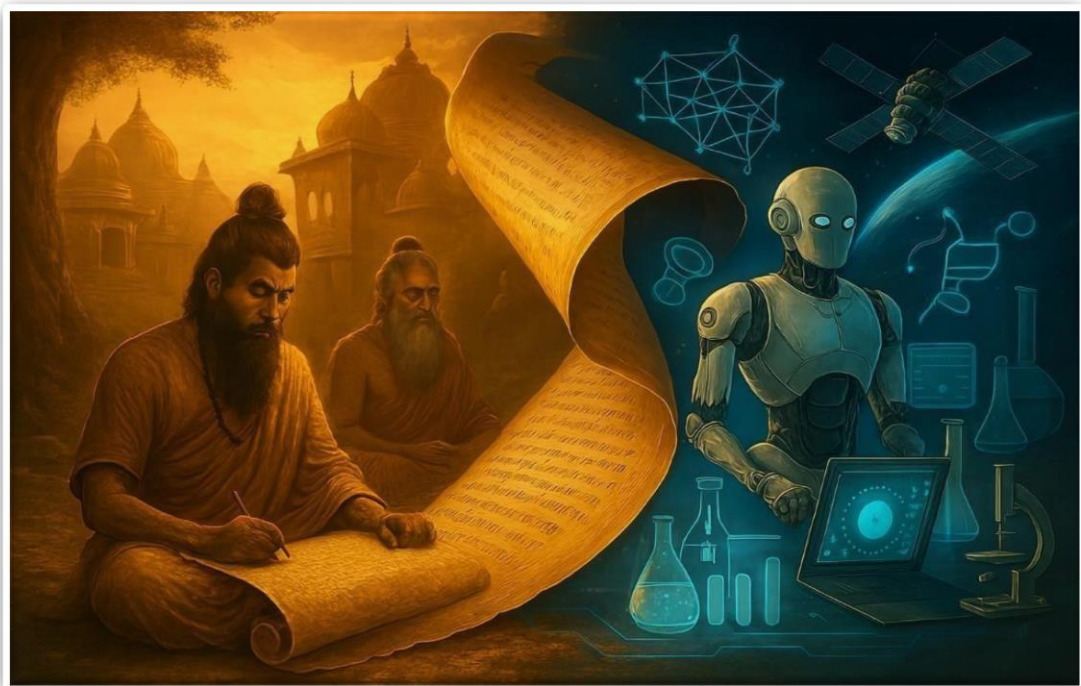
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AYURVEDA: INDIA'S ANCIENT SCIENCE OF LIFE

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Abstract

The ancient Indian knowledge system encompasses a wide range of intellectual traditions that integrate science, philosophy, and spirituality, among which Ayurveda holds a prominent position. Ayurveda, meaning the “knowledge of life,” originated in India during the Vedic period and represents a holistic system of healthcare based on the principles of balance and harmony between the body, mind and environment. Rooted in classical texts such as the Charaka Samhita, Sushruta Samhita, and Ashtanga Hridaya, Ayurveda emphasizes preventive healthcare, individualized treatment, and natural healing methods. The philosophical foundations of Ayurveda, including the concepts of Pancha Mahabhutas and Tridosha, reflect the scientific and ecological wisdom of ancient Indian thought. This abstract highlights Ayurveda as a comprehensive ancient Indian knowledge system that integrates medical practice with ethical living, lifestyle regulation, and sustainability. In the contemporary context, Ayurveda continues to be relevant in addressing lifestyle-related disorders and promoting holistic well-being, thereby contributing significantly to modern healthcare and public health policy.

Keywords: Indian knowledge system, Ayurveda, lifestyle and Healthcare

Introduction

India possesses a rich heritage of ancient knowledge systems that have shaped human civilization in fields such as philosophy, science, mathematics, astronomy, and medicine. Among these, **Ayurveda** stands out as a comprehensive and holistic medical system developed in ancient India. The term *Ayurveda* combines *Ayur* (life) and *Veda* (knowledge), signifying the “knowledge of life.” Rooted in Indian philosophy and culture, Ayurveda represents an integrated ancient Indian knowledge system that emphasizes balance, prevention, and harmony between humans and nature. Ayurveda aims at promoting overall well-being and longevity. It considers health as a balanced state of physical, mental, and spiritual well-being. This paper examines Ayurveda as India’s ancient science of life and its relevance in the present era.

Origins and Philosophical Foundations

Ayurveda traces its origins to the **Vedic period**, particularly the *Atharva Veda*, which contains references to health, disease, and healing practices. The theoretical framework of Ayurveda is closely linked to Indian philosophical schools such as **Samkhya**, **Nyaya**, and **Vaisheshika**. These philosophies explain the nature of existence, matter, and consciousness, which form the basis of Ayurvedic thought.

Central to Ayurveda is the concept of **Pancha Mahabhutas** – earth (*Prithvi*), water (*Jala*), fire (*Agni*), air (*Vayu*), and space (*Akasha*). These elements combine to form the **Tridosha system**:

- **Vata** (movement and communication)
- **Pitta** (metabolism and transformation)
- **Kapha** (structure and stability)

Health is maintained through the balance of these doshas, while imbalance leads to disease.

Classical Texts and Knowledge Preservation

The ancient Indian knowledge system of Ayurveda has been preserved through authoritative texts known as **Samhitas**. The most important classical texts include:

- **Charaka Samhita** – foundational text on internal medicine
- **Sushruta Samhita** – detailed treatise on surgery, anatomy, and surgical instruments
- **Ashtanga Hridaya** by Vagbhata – a systematic and concise compilation of Ayurvedic knowledge

These texts reflect the scientific temper of ancient India, incorporating observation, logic, experimentation, and ethical principles. Knowledge transmission followed the **Guru-Shishya Parampara**, ensuring moral discipline and experiential learning.

Preventive Healthcare and Lifestyle Science

A unique contribution of Ayurveda to the Indian knowledge system is its emphasis on **preventive healthcare**. Ayurveda advocates daily routines (*Dinacharya*), seasonal regimens (*Ritucharya*), proper diet (*Ahara*), and disciplined conduct (*Sadvritta*) to maintain physical and mental well-being. It recognizes individual body constitution (*Prakriti*), making treatment personalized rather than generalized.

Therapeutic Practices and Medical Innovations

Ayurveda employs diverse therapeutic methods, including herbal formulations, mineral medicines, detoxification therapies (*Panchakarma*), massage (*Abhyanga*), and rejuvenation therapies (*Rasayana*). The **Sushruta Samhita** documents advanced surgical techniques such as rhinoplasty, cataract surgery, and fracture management, highlighting India's early medical innovations.

Ayurveda and Indian Cultural Ethos

Ayurveda is inseparable from Indian culture and spirituality. It integrates **Yoga, meditation, ethics, and spirituality**, recognizing mental and emotional health as essential components of overall wellness. The principle of living in harmony with nature reflects India's ancient ecological wisdom.

Relevance of Ayurvedic Knowledge in Modern Era

In modern times, Ayurveda has gained global attention for its holistic approach to managing lifestyle-related diseases, stress, and chronic disorders. Government initiatives such as **AYUSH** have strengthened education, research, and integration of Ayurveda with modern healthcare systems. Ayurveda emphasis on sustainability, natural medicine, and preventive care aligns with contemporary global health goals.

Conclusion

The ancient Indian knowledge system embodied in Ayurveda represents a timeless science that integrates medicine, philosophy, ethics, and ecology. Its holistic and preventive approach offers valuable insights for addressing modern health challenges. Revitalizing and scientifically validating Ayurvedic knowledge can contribute significantly to sustainable healthcare and human well-being in the present and future.

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