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# Strategic Roadmap for Making Ayurveda Global: NITI Aayog's Vision for Globalising India's Traditional Healthcare System

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## Recent Developments:

- NITI Aayog has released the "**Strategic Roadmap for Making Ayurveda Global**", outlining a phased strategy from **2025 to 2047** to expand Ayurveda's global footprint.
- The roadmap analyses the reasons behind the stronger global presence of **Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM)** compared to Ayurveda and proposes institutional, regulatory and scientific reforms to bridge this gap.
- The strategy seeks to transform Ayurveda from a largely domestic traditional healthcare system into an internationally recognised, evidence-based and globally integrated medical system.

## Current Global Status of Ayurveda:

### *Global Expansion and Recognition:*

- Exports of **Ayurveda and herbal products** increased from **USD 1.09 billion (2014)** to **USD 2.16 billion (2023)**, with products reaching nearly **150 countries**.
- Ayurveda has received formal recognition in nearly **30 countries** through licensing arrangements, academic partnerships and regulatory mechanisms.
- Ayurveda research activities are now being conducted across nearly **70 countries**, reflecting increasing international scientific interest.

### *Human Resources and Academic Presence:*

- India possesses a strong domestic ecosystem with over **355,000 trained Ayurveda practitioners**.
- Nearly **95%** of qualified practitioners continue to practice within India, limiting Ayurveda's international availability.
- **Ayush Chairs** established in foreign universities promote Ayurveda education, research and academic collaboration, although a globally standardised curriculum is yet to be developed.

### *Global Institutional Recognition:*

- The **WHO Global Traditional Medicine Centre (GTMC)** established at **Jamnagar, Gujarat**, has strengthened international cooperation in traditional medicine.
- The **World Health Organization (WHO)** has incorporated **Ayurveda, Siddha and Unani (ASU)** into the **International Classification of Diseases (ICD-11)** through the supplementary **Traditional Medicine Conditions (TM-2)** module.
- **WHO** has also initiated coding of **ASU interventions** under the **International Classification of Health Interventions (ICHI)** to facilitate global documentation, research, billing and health system integration.

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## SWOT Analysis of Ayurveda Globalisation:

### *Strengths:*

- Ayurveda emphasises **preventive healthcare, holistic wellness and personalised treatment**, aligning with evolving global healthcare priorities.
- The **Prakriti-based** approach provides individualised healthcare based on constitutional characteristics.
- More than **5,000 years** of traditional knowledge and the worldwide acceptance of **Yoga** enhance Ayurveda's cultural credibility.
- Ayurveda complements modern medicine, particularly in **preventive healthcare, chronic disease management, rehabilitation and lifestyle disorders**.

### *Weaknesses:*

- Ayurveda lacks uniform legal recognition as a medical system across many countries.
- Absence of internationally standardised education, licensing and regulatory mechanisms restricts professional mobility.
- Personalised treatment approaches make large-scale **Randomized Controlled Trials (RCTs)** comparatively difficult.
- Variations in manufacturing quality, regulatory compliance, certification standards and insurance coverage reduce international acceptance.

### *Opportunities:*

- **Ayush Chairs, Ayush Scholarships** and the **Ayush Visa** can significantly expand global outreach.
- Greater collaboration with the **WHO Global Traditional Medicine Centre (GTMC)** and wider adoption of **ICHI** coding can strengthen global integration.
- Expansion of the **USD 1 trillion global wellness market**, rising demand for nutraceuticals, preventive healthcare and **Medical Value Travel (MVT)** provides significant growth opportunities.
- Stronger scientific validation and international collaborative research can improve global credibility and market acceptance.

### *Threats:*

- Weak coordination among researchers, practitioners, industry, academic institutions and regulators slows international expansion.
- Many Ayurvedic products continue to be marketed internationally as dietary supplements instead of regulated medicines.
- Rapid global expansion of **Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM)** supported by strong governmental investment intensifies competition.
- Balancing classical Ayurvedic principles with evolving international scientific and regulatory standards remains a continuing challenge.

## Ayurveda and Traditional Chinese Medicine: Comparative Assessment

### *Global Practitioner Base:*

- **Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM)** has over **34,000 licensed acupuncturists** in the **United States** alone and is regulated across **47 US states**.
- Ayurveda currently has nearly **5,000 practitioners** outside India, with international practice largely supported by the Indian diaspora.

### *Global Market and Manufacturing:*

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- **Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM)** exports are valued at approximately **USD 5.4 billion**, supported by overseas **WHO-GMP/GMP** manufacturing facilities.
- Ayurveda exports reached **USD 2.16 billion (2023)**, while manufacturing remains predominantly concentrated within India.

#### *International Institutional Presence:*

- **Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM)** operates through more than **30 overseas centres**, supported by the **Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)**.
- Ayurveda expands internationally through the **WHO Global Traditional Medicine Centre (GTMC)** and **Ayush Information Cells** established in partner countries.

#### *Insurance Coverage:*

- **Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM)** receives insurance support under **Medicare** in the **United States** and several other countries including **Japan** and **Germany**.
- Ayurveda currently enjoys substantial insurance support mainly within India, while international insurance coverage remains limited.

#### *Standardisation Framework:*

- **Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM)** benefits from a dedicated **ISO Technical Committee** for international standard development.
- Ayurveda presently lacks a dedicated international **ISO Technical Committee**.

#### NITI Aayog's Strategic Roadmap:

##### *Short-Term Strategy (Up to 2029): Building the Foundation*

- Establish a high-level **Mission Steering Group (MSG)** chaired by the **Minister of Ayush** to coordinate research, education, trade and international cooperation.
- Develop a **Global Ayurveda Register (GAR)** aligned with **WHO** standards for practitioner credentialing and **Continuous Professional Development (CPD)** under the **National Commission for Indian System of Medicine (NCISM)**.
- Create a comprehensive **Global Information Portal** providing country-specific information on licensing, visas and regulatory requirements.
- Accelerate certification of manufacturers according to **WHO-GMP-equivalent** standards and publish a public database of certified facilities.
- Develop an export-oriented **Ayurvedic Pharmacopoeia** supported by **Good Agricultural and Collection Practices (GACP)** and contaminant profiling.
- Establish a real-time **Ayurveda Trade Dashboard** while aligning products with appropriate **Harmonized System (HS) Codes** to maximise benefits under **Free Trade Agreements (FTAs)**.

##### *Medium-Term Strategy (Up to 2035): Market Integration*

- Secure product registrations under international regulatory frameworks such as the **European Union Traditional Herbal Medicinal Products Directive (THMPD)**.
- Introduce pilot insurance coverage for Ayurveda in selected **Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)** countries.
- Promote international professional mobility through **Mutual Recognition Arrangements (MRAs)** with countries and regional groupings including **G20, BRICS** and **ASEAN**.
- Introduce Ayurveda electives and micro-credential programmes in foreign medical institutions through the **Ayush Chair** initiative.

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- Develop international **Medical Value Travel (MVT)** hubs beginning with **Mauritius**, supported by integrated **Ayush Visa** packages.
- Expand multinational clinical research through **WHO Collaborating Centres** while strengthening the **Traditional Knowledge Digital Library (TKDL)** for intellectual property protection.

### *Long-Term Strategy (Up to 2047): Systemic Global Integration*

- Achieve formal recognition of Ayurveda within at least **20 national healthcare systems**.
- Secure insurance coverage for selected Ayurveda treatments in at least **10 countries**, particularly for chronic diseases, musculoskeletal disorders, metabolic conditions, stress-related disorders and women's health.
- Establish a worldwide network of **International Ayurveda Centres of Excellence** integrating clinical services, education, laboratory facilities and research.
- Develop Ayurveda as a globally trusted, scientifically validated healthcare brand supported by robust evidence.

### **Significance of the Roadmap:**

#### *Healthcare Significance:*

- Greater international acceptance can strengthen preventive healthcare and integrative medicine.
- Scientific validation can improve confidence among healthcare professionals and policymakers.
- Expanded research collaboration can enhance evidence-based traditional medicine.

#### *Economic and Strategic Significance:*

- Expansion of Ayurveda can generate employment, exports and investment in the healthcare sector.
- Greater international acceptance can strengthen India's cultural diplomacy and soft power.
- Medical tourism and wellness services can contribute significantly to economic growth.

### **Challenges Ahead:**

#### *Implementation Challenges:*

- Uniform international regulatory recognition remains a major policy challenge.
- Large-scale clinical evidence consistent with global scientific standards needs further expansion.
- Manufacturing quality and regulatory compliance require continuous strengthening.
- International insurance integration and professional mobility will depend upon sustained diplomatic engagement.

### **Conclusion:**

- The **Strategic Roadmap for Making Ayurveda Global** provides a comprehensive framework for transforming Ayurveda into a globally recognised healthcare system by combining traditional knowledge with scientific validation, regulatory harmonisation and international institutional cooperation.
- Successful implementation can strengthen India's healthcare diplomacy, expand global acceptance of traditional medicine and position Ayurveda as an important pillar of global integrative healthcare by **2047**.

### **Value Addition for UPSC:**

#### *Important Concepts:*

- **Ayurveda:** Traditional Indian system of medicine based on preventive healthcare, holistic wellness and individualised treatment.

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- **Prakriti:** Individual constitutional profile forming the basis of personalised diagnosis and treatment in Ayurveda.
- **Medical Value Travel (MVT):** Cross-border travel undertaken to obtain healthcare, wellness and medical treatment services.
- **Integrative Medicine:** Healthcare approach combining evidence-based modern medicine with scientifically validated traditional medical systems.
- **Evidence-Based Medicine:** Clinical decision-making supported by systematic scientific research and validated medical evidence.

*Important Institutions and Initiatives:*

- **NITI Aayog:** Apex public policy institution responsible for long-term strategic planning and policy recommendations.
- **World Health Organization (WHO) Global Traditional Medicine Centre (GTMC):** International centre established at **Jamnagar, Gujarat**, to strengthen research and global cooperation in traditional medicine.
- **National Commission for Indian System of Medicine (NCISM):** Statutory regulatory body responsible for education and professional standards in Indian systems of medicine.
- **Traditional Knowledge Digital Library (TKDL):** Digital repository documenting India's traditional medicinal knowledge to prevent biopiracy and protect intellectual property.
- **Ayush Visa:** Special visa initiative facilitating international access to treatment under India's traditional systems of medicine