

# Original Research Paper

Unani Medicine

# A STRUCTURED SUMMARY ABOUT UNANI SYSTEM OF MEDICINE IN PRESENT ERA: AN OUTLOOK

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# **KEYWORDS:**

### INTRODUCTION

The Unani system of Medicine started in Greece and was developed by Arabs into an elaborate medical science based on the frame work of the teaching of Hippocrates (460-370 BC) and Galen(131-210 AD). Since that time Unani medicine has been known as Greco-Arab Medicine. After Hippocrates (460-370 BC) Roman, Arab and Persian scholars enriched the system considerably, of whom Galen stabilized the foundations on which Arab physicians like Razi (850-925 AD) and Ibn Sina (980-1037 AD) constructed an imposing edifice. It was introduced in India by the Mughals and soon it took firm roots on Indian soil. The system found immediate favour from the masses and soon spread all over the country (11). Over the centuries, this system has assimilated so well in the Indian civilization that today it has become an integral part of the healthcare delivery system of India.

The Unani system of medicine is a comprehensive medical system, now regarded as one of the main stream category of Indian system of medicine. In India there a number of government and private institutes which are mainstreaming medical education. It precisely deals with the states of health and disease. Its fundamentals are based on deep philosophical insights and scientific principles. This system fully appreciates and understands the creation of man, his nature, his constitution and his relationship to the environment. The strength of the system is its holistic approach, temperament based prescription and principles of six essential factors of life (Asbab Sitta Zaruriya); which are pivotal for maintenance of health. Its holistic approach focuses on how the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual elements of the body are interconnected to maintain wellness. Toning up organs and immune system is another unique feature of this system. This system offers an effective treatment for various gastrointestinal, respiratory, genito-urinary, musculoskeletal, neurological, cardiovascular, lifestyle and metabolic disorders[2].

Research and Development in Unani medicine is by and large in the hands of the Central Council for Research in Unani Medicine (CCRUM). In 1969, the Government of India established a Central Council for Research in Indian Medicine and Homeopathy (CCRIMH) to develop research in branches of Indian medicine. In 1978, the council was split into four separate research councils, one each for Unani, Ayurveda and Siddha, Yoga and Naturopathy and Homeopathy to further develop these systems in consonance with their basic philosophies <sup>(1)</sup>. The government has accorded great importance to the multi-faceted development of Unani System of Medicine to make full use of its potential in the Indian healthcare delivery.

# 1. Global acceptance of Unani medicine in present era

Unani medicine spreads its roots from the east to the west where in there are a number of Unani wellness clinics being started around the globe. A few of them are having their original roots in the sub continent—India.

Global contribution by USM is unforgettable. In present era the demand for traditional Indian medicine has increased tremendously in India and abroad. Traditional medicine has maintained its popularity in number of Asian countries like China, India, Japan and Pakistan. In China Traditional medicines (Herbal preparations) accounts about 30 to 50% of total medical consumption [3]. Current Global market of Herbal and Ayurvedic medicine is estimated to be more than US\$ 100 billion, out of this E.U (European Union) accounts for about 40%, Japan 20%, USA 10%. The Asian countries together account for 30% of the global market [4]. Nowadays USM courses and practices have been recognized by various countries like Bangladesh (Five year degree course recognized by University of Dhaka and other universities), Sri Lanka (five year degree course in Unani medicine at institute of indigenous medicine university of Colombo), Pakistan (Two universities are offering five year BEMS degree along with M. Phil and PhD) etc. Since its independence Sri Lanka holds a unique position in South Asia by providing free education and quality health care system. The health care system in Sri Lanka is enriched by the mix of Allopathic, Unani, Ayurvedic and other several system of medicine that exist together Traditional medicine in Saudi Arabia is based on herbal remedies and spiritual healing. There is hardly a city or village in the country where traditional medicines are not used or sold [6]. The first institution of Unani medicine was established in 1872 as oriental collage at Lahore in the undivided India. Thereafter many institutions came into existence. Presently alternative or traditional medicines practices in Pakistan are regulated by UAE (Unani, Ayurvedic and Homeopathic) Act of 1965. The Practitioners are to be registered by their respective counsils [4,7].

# Global Demand Of Herbal Medicine

Besides the research based activities medicinal plants are important source of income for the country. It is a global need to cultivate and conserve medicinal plants. In Russia 50000 tons of medicinal plants are used annually. Lucknow, a state in Indian, grows medicinal plants of 100 crore US dollars annually and the European Union uses 3000 kg of Glycerrhiza each year for which 400 tons plants roots are needed. By the year 2000 the total output of Chinese pharmaceutical companies was 28 billion US dollars and by the year of 2010 the share of Chinese traditional medicine in international market is improved to 15% from the existing 3%  $^{\rm [4]}$ . WHO reported in 2001 that in Malaysia, 500 million US dollars has been spent annually on traditional medicine as compared to

300 million US dollars on orthodox medicine. One third of American adults have also used alternative medicine and nowadays CAM (Contemporary and Alternative Medicine) system is fast growing in the developed country (WHO, 2001) . India is called "Botanical Garden of the World". India has accepted USM as one of the alternative health care system and has given it official status. It is the largest producer of medicinal herbs. Out of more than 25000 medicinal plants, only 10% are used for their medicinal value. Around 1800 species are systematically documented in the Indian System of Medicine (ISM). On the basis of current commercial consumption level in the ISM sector is of 5.9 lakh US dollars and the export level is of 7.2 lakh US dollars only on crude drugs, it has been estimated that commercialization of medicinal plant cultivation was 13 lakh US dollars for the year of 2001-2002 in India [9]. The forests of Himachal Pradesh supply 80 percent of all Ayurvedic drugs, 46% of all Unani drugs and 33% of all Allopathic drugs developed in India

The nano branching of the Unani system is more popular than the mainstream. The branches which are now in a lager practice are part of the regimental therapy i.e Ilaj-bit tadabeer, these are: Massage (Dalak), Bathing (Hamam), Diet and restrictions (Ghiza aur parhez).

#### 1. Research at international level

Department of AYUSH, Govt. of India has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the department of Pharmacognosy university of Mississippi's and established the National Centre for Natural Products Research, where scientists are researching the efficacy of many Indian plants and herbs. More than 13000 plants have been investigated during past five years [11]. WHO's new strategies will help to validate the Traditional Medicine practice at international level. Global Unani Medicine and Research Foundation (GUMRF) are incorporated under the Law of United States of America. The Head Quarter of the foundation is at Chicago and has 5 regional offices in Asia, Europe, Middle East, Africa and Australia. The basic aim of the GUMRF is to provide platform to Unani scientists, practioners and well-wishers from all over the world to give financial support to Unani Medicine research and Health care programs in order to popularize the importance of Unani Medicine worldwide [4]. For the international co-operations 0.62 lakh US dollars were granted to the 11th five year plan (2007-2012) working group on AYUSH.

# The key achievements were [12]:

Deputation of AYUSH experts and officers in 95 international events.

17 foreign delegations hosted to explore opportunities of international collaboration.

Support provided to 38 experts for presentation of scientific papers in international conferences.

AYUSH entrepreneurs were supported to participate in 17 international exhibitions/fairs, road shows etc.

12 conferences/research collaborations supported through Indian Missions.

16 fellowships granted to foreign students for studying AYUSH in India.

One AYUSH Information Cell set up in Malaysia.

 $2\ \mbox{AYUSH}$  books translated and published in foreign languages.

Indo-US Centre for Research in Indian Systems of Medicine has been set up in the University of Mississippi, USA to undertake scientific validation and development of scientific information on ASU medicines through collaborative research and advocacy.

MoUs drawn/entered in to with China, Russia, SAARC and ASEAN Countries.

Eight community herbal monographs prepared and submitted to EU.

The fund 2.46 lakh US dollars were granted to 12th Five Year Plan (2012-2017) for international co-operation and collaboration of AYUSH research on Global health problems and needs.

## 2. Policy planning by WHO

WHO defines the Traditional Medicine as "Sum total of knowledge, skills and practices based on the theories, beliefs, and experience indigenous to different cultures, whether explicable or not, used in the maintenance of health as well as in the prevention, diagnosis, improvement or treatment of physical and mental illnesses. More than 80% of the world population is using medicines made from Herbal and Natural products (WHO). The Director General of WHO (1966) has observed that the doctor shortage would be "one of the World's great challenges for years to come". Over the last few decades traditional medicine has gained worldwide acceptance. The WHO formulates the policies with appropriate regulations about alternate system of medicine and encourages member states of developing countries to support traditional medicine (WHO, 2001). WHO has launched the traditional medicine strategy 2014- 2023 to mainstream the traditional medicine along with allopathic system of medicine because millions of people living in rural areas relay on it for their basic health care needs [13]

Health promotion is the process of enabling people to increase control over and to improve health.

It is not directed against any particular disease but is intended to strengthen the host through a variety of approaches or interventions. The well-known interventions in this area are health education, environmental modification, notional interventions, life style and behavioural changes. Unani medicine considers many factors in maintaining health and divides the body in a number of ways to define this wisdom. The first way that Unani medicine defines the body is to describe it in terms of the four humours. It further defines the state of the body into three different stages: health, disease and neutral. In the footsteps of both the Quran and hadiths, Unani medicine sees illness as an opportunity to serve, clean, purify and balance the physical, emotional, mental and spiritual planes. It also emphasises compounds that belong to the human body and the avoidance of allergy rendering foods. The balance between mind and body is also crucial in the metabolic processes, and counseling is usually offered towards this goal  $^{[4,5]}$ . The best possible ways of health promotion in this holistic system of medicine are improvement of Tabiyat (Medicatrix naturae or Immunity) by immunomodulators, restoration of balanced temperament, maintenance of balance in the quality and quantity of humours, moderation of Asbaabe Sitta Zarooriya (six essential factors for life) and adoption of Ilaj Bil Tadabeer (Regimental therapy), Munzij wa Mushil (concoctive and purgative) therapy and  $\mathit{Ilaj\,bil\,ghiza}$  (Dieto-therapy)  $^{\scriptscriptstyle{(6,7)}}$ .

Unani physicians recommended improving the body immunity and strengthening the Tabiyat by restoration of health and the management of diseases. For this purpose they have mentioned various drugs under the headings of Muqawwi-i-Azae raisa (tonic for vital organs), Muqawwi-i-Aam (general body tonic), Muqawwi-i-Asab (nervine tonic), Muqawwi-i-Qalb (cardiac tonic), Muqawwi-I-Jigar (liver tonic) etc. In contemporary systems of medicine, the concept of immunomodulators means the sources of the enhancement of

the immunity  $^{\tiny{(10)}}$ . Unani medicine offers a number of drugs of plant, mineral and animal origin that have immunomdulation activity and effective to strengthen and increase the immunity system, hence such drugs can be safely used in auto-immune diseases like ulcerative colitis, Crohn's disease, cancer, AIDS, rheumatoid arthritis, etc.

The research programme of the Council has been so devised that not only the Unani system could stand on solid scientific foundations and be acceptable to the scientific world at large, but also its benefits could be extended to the common man, particularly the deprived communities living in rural areas. Emphasis is also placed on achieving national priorities. The areas of research chosen by the Scientific Advisory Committee include clinical research, standardisation of single and compound drugs, literary research, survey and cultivation of medicinal plants and family welfare research. The work in the Council has been streamlined and research conducted on various aspects is regularly published. Scientific evaluation of the various aspects of research are discussed at national and international workshops, seminars and symposia organised by the Council as well as other interdisciplinary flora. Similar research activities are also in progress in the post graduate departments at Ajmal Khan Tibbiya College, Aligarh and Nizamia Tibbi College, Hyderabad. The various systems of medicine—whether eastern or western—merely represent different approaches to medical science, as practised in different ages and in different parts of the world. The aim of all systems is the maintenance of health and prevention of disease. Any thing of value in them should be utilised for the benefit of humanity as a whole without any reservation.

### 3. Unani Medicine: The Indian Scenario

After independence Govt. of India at first constituted Unani pharmacopoeia Committee in 1964, consisting of Unani experts and scientists with a view to maintain uniformity in the standards of drugs and to prescribe standards for compound formulations. And also to prescribe tests for identity, purity, efficacy and quality of the drugs. Pharmacopoeia Laboratory of Indian Medicine at Ghaziabad was established under Govt. of India to workout standards and drug testing for Indian System of Medicine at national level

### Education

The Unani Medicine education in India is governed by Central Council of Indian Medicine (Govt. of India). Forty three colleges impart five and a half years' Bachelor of Unani Medicine and Surgery (BUMS) degree after 12 years of schooling. The BUMS courses are either affiliated to universities or are run by deemed university. The students learn basic / pre-clinical (e.g. anatomy, physiology), pre-clinical (e.g. pharmacology, pathology, hygiene) and clinical subjects (e.g. Unani medicine, surgery). BUMS course essentially involves a one year rotatory internship. BUMS can be followed by specialised courses in the form of house job training or post graduation.

3 year post graduate courses – MD (Unani medicine) or MS (Unani surgery) are offered by a number of institutions across India in one or more of the following branches:

- 1. Unani internal medicine (Moalajat)
- 2. Unani Pharmacology (Ilmul Advia)
- 3. Principles of Unani medicine (Kulliyat-e-Tib)
- 4. Gynaecology & Obstetrics (Qabalat wa Amraz-e-niswan)
- 5. Preventive & Social Medicine (Tahaffuzi-wa-samaji Tibb)
- 6. Unani surgery (Ilmul Jarahiyat)
- 7. Dermatology and Cosmetology (Amraz-e-Jild wa Tazeeniyat)
- 8. Unani Pharmacy (Ilmul Saidla)
- 9. Regimental therapy (Ilaj-bit-Tadbeer)
- 10. Unani Pathology (Mahiyat-ul-Amraz)
- 11. Physiology (Munafae-ul-Aaza)
- 12. Anatomy (Tashreeh-ul-Badan)

13. ENT (Amraz-e-Uzn, Anaf wa Halaq)

# Professional practice

Clinical practice is undertaken by Unani graduates after registration with a duly constituted government registration board / council. They work in government and private establishments as Unani medical officers, research officers, clinical registrars, teaching staff members, manufacturing chemists and as Unani drug inspectors with drug control authorities. Few of the graduates and post graduates serve in the funded-research projects as research fellows or research associates. A sizeable number opts to work as Unani general practitioners. A minority of the Unani postgraduates are able to get the coveted Lectureships in the teaching institutions. These academicians have the opportunities to become Readers (Associate Professors) and Professors in the academic hierarchy.

#### Research

The academic research is mostly undertaken by Post-Graduates-in-training under the supervision of Unani academicians; sometimes; in collaboration with experts from other fields such as pharmacy, modern medicine and science. Dept. of AYUSH (Ayurveda, Unani, Siddha andHomoeopathy) under the Central Ministry of Health and Family Welfare is involved in the extra-mural research project funding to academic departments in Unani Institutions. The in-house research is undertaken by Central Research Council for Unani Medicine, New Delhi through its country-wide network of clinical, survey of medicinal plants and drug standardization units. Pharmacopoeial Laboratory of Indian Medicine, Ghaziabad under Central government is also involved in standardization of traditional remedies. Some Unani manufacturing companies also have their in-house research departments.

In order to augment the efforts of the already existing NPCDCS, and promote health preservation, disease prevention and management of such Lifestyle diseases, the Directorate General of Health Services, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare with Ministry of AYUSH undertook a pilot project to integrate AYUSH systems with NPCDCS in 2015-16 to utilize the services of AYUSH doctors and yoga experts through AYUSH Research Councils. (14)

The main Objectives of this integration project are health promotion, prevention of NCDs, opportunistic screening, capacity building, providing cost effective AYUSH treatment, outreach activities, yoga interventions and also support the development of database of NCDs to monitor and check NCD morbidity and mortality. (15)

# Present Scenario of Unani Medicine (16)

Registered Medical Practitioners – 51,110 Unani Dispensaries:1621,

Unani Hospitals: 259

# Priority Areas of Unani Medicine

- Pharmaceutics
- Food Technology
- Regimental Therapies
- Medicinal Plant cultivation and management
- Technology intervention in Clinical Traditional Procedures
- Cosmetology

## Research Frontiers

- Drug Standardization and authentication
- Stability of Unani Drugs
- Validation of Efficacy claims of drugs used in Unani Medicine
- Standardization of Traditional Clinical Procedures

# Present Research Status Treatment leads Achieved in:

- · Skin-Vitiligo, Eczema and Psoriasis
- Liver Diseases-Acute and Chronic Hepatitis
- Musculoskeletal Disorders- Rheumatoid and Osteo Arthritis
- Sinus Diseases-Sinusitis
- · Communicable Diseases-Malaria

#### Potential for industry In Unani medicine

- Pharmaceutical Industry
- Drug Development and marketing
- Food Suppliments
- Agricultural Industry:- Cultivation of Medicinal plants, Utilization
- · Food Industry-Harira, Halwa, Nisasta, Achars, Nabeez,
- Cosmetics:- Kohl, ubtan, Face washes, Hair dyes, Ghaza, Ghalia
- Dentistry:-Sanoon, Manjan
- Perfumery:- Lakhlakha, Shamoom (Awad sultanate manuscript)

### 4. FUTURE PROSPECTS OF UNANI SYSTEM OF MEDICINE

- Integration model of NPCDCS for other districts: The integration of Unani Medicine in NPCDCS-AYUSH project is a working model of integration of AYUSH systems with conventional healthcare and this model can be replicated in other districts too.
- Integration with other national health programmes: Considering the fact that the Government of India is implementing various other National Health Programmes too which deal with NCDs in one way or the other. Therefore, this NPCDCS-AYUSH project can be integrated with other health programmes also viz.-a-viz. National Tobacco Control Programme (NTCP), National Oral Health Programme (NOHP), National Mental Health Programme (NMHP), National Programme for Health Care of the Elderly (NPHCE), Revised National Tuberculosis Control Programme (RNTCP), Rashtriya Bal Swasthya Karyakram (RBSK)/Rashtriya Kishor Swasthya Karyakram (RKSK), etc (17)
- Inclusion in National Health Policy (NHP) 2017: An important objective of the latest NHP released in 2017 was 'Integration with AYUSH' for promoting pluralism in healthcare through cross-referrals across all systems of medicines. Therefore, support for NPCDCS-AYUSH integration project can be drawn from NHP 2017.
- Inclusion in state program implementation plans (PIPs):
   One of the mandates in State PIPs under Financial Management Report (FMR) code reflects AYUSH integration component. In view of this, the states may be sensitized to propose for NPCDCS-AYUSH integration project as well, along with their proposals for other National Health Programmes.
- AYUSH Health & Wellness Centre (HWC): AYUSH Health & Wellness Centres are being established by Ministry of AYUSH under Ayushman Bharat scheme, through State/UT Governments within Centrally Sponsored Scheme of National AYUSH Mission (NAM) on the analogy of National Health Mission (NHM). The AYUSH Health & Wellness Centres are created by upgrading existing AYUSH dispensaries and Sub Health Centre. (18)

The CCRUM has entered into collaboration with some leading scientific institutions, like Indian Council of Medical Research, All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi, Vallabhbhai Patel Chest Institute, Delhi, and Deccan Medical College, Hyderabad.

# 5. CONCLUSION

There is no doubt that the Unani system of medicine has been accepted worldwide because it is affordable, easily accessible and free from severe side effects. It is a need of the hour to establish herbal strategies in order to support the Greco-Arab medicine globally. The Unani system has an exceptional potential to become a Global Healthcare System

and it has to be strengthened worldwide by the efforts of Government health policy makers and agencies to ensure its overall upgradation, standardization and improvement, in order to provide a promising medical health care system in the current challenging diseases.

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