

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF AYUSH**

**RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1931
TO BE ANSWERED ON 18TH MARCH, 2025**

“Preservation of traditional knowledge and practices”

1931 Shri Ayodhya Rami Reddy Alla:

Will the Minister of *Ayush* be pleased to state:

(a) the manner in which the Ministry of AYUSH can balance the need to preserve traditional knowledge and practices with the imperative to foster interdisciplinary research collaborations, involving modern scientists and AYUSH experts, to develop evidence-based AYUSH therapies and products; and

(b) the frameworks and guidelines that can be established to ensure that AYUSH research is conducted with rigorous scientific methodology, transparency, and accountability, while also respecting the philosophical and cultural underpinnings of traditional Indian systems of medicine?

**ANSWER
THE MINISTER OF AYUSH
(SHRI PRATAPRAO JADHAV)**

(a) The Ministry of Ayush through its Research Councils and National Institutes are working towards the preservation of traditional knowledge and practices while fostering interdisciplinary research collaborations for evidence based research. The Ministry is working to ensure that traditional knowledge is preserved and systematically documented while being subjected to scientific validation through interdisciplinary research.

Research Councils under the Ministry are the apex bodies of research in their respective field in India for undertaking, coordinating, formulating, developing, and promoting research on scientific lines in their respective fields. These Councils carry out Clinical Research, Drugs Standardization Research & Quality Control, Pharmacology Research, Literary Research, Fundamental Research, Survey & Cultivation of Medicinal Plants & Research oriented Public Healthcare Programmes etc. through their peripheral institutes located all over India and also through their collaborative studies with various Universities, Hospitals and Institutes.

(i) The Central Council for Research in Ayurvedic Sciences (CCRAS), through its Literary Research and Documentation Programme, undertakes medico-historical studies and is engaged in the collection, transcription, translation, and publication of classical treatises, their commentaries, and important or rare works available in the form of manuscripts, unpublished texts, etc. The National Institute of Indian Medical Heritage (NIIMH), Hyderabad, a unit under CCRAS, functions with the mandate of literary research, documentation, and the revival and retrieval of texts from ancient manuscripts and rare books. NIIMH, Hyderabad, maintains a medico-historical library with a significant collection of manuscripts, rare books, and literature on Ayurveda, Siddha, Yoga, Unani, and Homoeopathy. Additionally, the Institute publishes the Journal of Indian Medical Heritage (JIMH). Since its inception, CCRAS has been engaged in documenting Local Health Traditions and Ethno medicinal practices through surveys, with the outcomes published in the form of books, monographs, and articles.

The CCRAS has also developed three guidelines for validation /research of the Ayush approach and drugs namely:

- General Guidelines for Drug Development of Ayurvedic Formulations.
- General Guidelines for Safety / Toxicity evaluation of Ayurvedic formulation.
- General Guidelines for Clinical Evaluation of Ayurvedic Interventions.

Further, the Council is in active collaboration with institutes of national repute such as AIIMS New Delhi, Banaras Hindu University (BHU), Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Delhi, Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), Council of Scientific & Industrial Research (CSIR), Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) etc.

(ii) The Central Council for Research in Unani Medicine (CCRUM) is conducting literary research program for preservation of the classical knowledge and practices of Unani Medicine by

translating it from Persian and Arabic to Urdu, English and other Indian/foreign languages. Classical Books are also re-printed to preserve the knowledge. The Council is also documenting the folklore claims collected during the ethnobotanical surveys. This knowledge is used to foster the inter-disciplinary research in collaboration with renowned academic and scientific research organization. The Council involves Unani Medicine experts and modern scientists including Pharmacologists, Bio-chemists, Botanists, Pathologists, Microbiologists and Chemists etc. for planning and finalization of the Intra-mural and collaborative studies protocols. These studies are monitored by Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) and Research Sub-committee at Headquarters and Institutional Multidisciplinary Research Advisory Committee (IMRAC) & Institutional Ethics Committees (IEC) at Peripheral Institutes. All these committees involve multi-disciplinary experts so that evidence-based Unani Medicine therapies and products may be developed.

(iii) The Central Council for Research in Yoga & Naturopathy (CCRYN) is a part of the ICMR Task Force on Multi-centric Study project on Heart Failure across the country.

(iv) The National Institute of Ayurveda (NIA) has established a Department of Manuscriptology dedicated to preserve ancient and traditional knowledge found in manuscripts. NIA is actively engaged in collecting, preserving, translating (when necessary), and publishing this valuable knowledge for the benefit of practitioners, scientists, academics, and researchers. Additionally, NIA has been designated as the National Nodal Agency for Ayurveda Manuscriptology by the Ministry of Ayush, Govt. of India. NIA, in collaboration with the National Innovation Foundation is undertaking various research projects based on the leads provided by the grass root traditional healers of the country. This endeavor is in the direction of preserving as well as scientifically proving the efficacy and safety of traditional practices.

Further, NIA has established six interdisciplinary departments designed to promote both the practice and research of Ayurveda by incorporating the expertise of specialists from Ayurvedic and modern scientific fields. These departments aim to facilitate collaboration between traditional Ayurvedic practitioners and contemporary scientists, encouraging innovative approaches that blend ancient wisdom with modern methodologies. NIA has launched dual Ph.D. degree programs in collaboration with the Academy of Scientific and Innovative Research (AcSIR), which is the degree-awarding body for the Council of Scientific and Industrial

Research (CSIR). This facilitates research endeavors that adhere to strict scientific methodologies, emphasizing transparency and accountability, while simultaneously honoring and preserving the foundational principles of the ancient Indian knowledge System (IKS). This interdisciplinary approach not only nurtures scholars who are adept in modern scientific research methodologies but also equips them with a deep understanding of the rich heritage of Ayurvedic practices.

(v) The All India Institute of Ayurveda (AIIA) collaborates with institutions specializing in modern medicine, biotechnology, Genome, Integrative Biology and pharmacology to validate Ayurvedic principles through contemporary scientific methods. Joint research projects are undertaken with institutions like the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), IITs, Universities and global research bodies to develop evidence-based therapies. Training programs and collaborative workshops are conducted for researchers and practitioners to encourage interdisciplinary approaches while maintaining the sanctity of traditional practices.

AIIA established a dedicated Manuscript Unit on October 20, 2023, at the Ayurveda Samhita Siddhant Department of AIIA, New Delhi. This unit focuses on surveying, documenting, and conserving India's rich Ayurvedic manuscript heritage to ensure its accessibility for scholars and researchers. The Institute is involved in clinical trials and translational research to ensure traditional practices are scientifically validated.

(vi) The Institute of Teaching & Research in Ayurveda (ITRA) has 7000+ handwritten manuscripts, out of which more than 500 manuscripts are related to Ayurveda. Many manuscripts being digitalized, many are being translated and published and many are being critically analyzed. The manuscripts digitalized by ITRA are available in free online platform at www.ayurvedamanuscripts.com. Traditional practices are also being preserved by research collaboration, involving modern medicine to develop evidence-based AYUSH therapies and products.

(vii) The National Institute of Sowa Rigpa (NISR), established by the Govt. of India for preservation of Sowa Rigpa traditional knowledge has signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with leading institution like Council of Scientific and Industrial Research–Indian Institute of Integrative Medicine (CSIR–IIIM), National Institute of Pharmaceutical Education &

Research (NIPER) and Indian Council of Forestry Research & Education - Himalayan Forest Research Institute (ICFRE – HFRI), etc. for inter disciplinary research.

(viii) The Ministry of Ayush is implementing a Central Sector Scheme namely AYURGYAN with the aim to support education, Research & Innovation in Ayush by providing academic activities, training, capacity building, Research & Development activities in the field of Ayush since 2021-22. The Scheme has three components viz. (i) Capacity Building & Continuing Medical Education in Ayush; (ii) Research & Innovation in Ayush from FY 2021-22; (iii) Ayurveda Biology Integrated Health Research (ABIHR) from FY 2023-24. Under the Research & Innovation in Ayush and ABIHR components, financial assistance is provided for Ayush research projects focused on generating evidence-based validation of Ayush drugs and therapies, efficacy, safety, standardization, and quality control of Ayush products, integration of the Ayush system of medicine with existing conventional therapies, fundamental research in Ayush systems and high-end research to strengthen and advance Ayurveda Biology, covering fundamental, drug development, and clinical research.

The Ministry of Ayush has been implementing the Central Sector Scheme namely Ayurwashya Yojana since 2021-22 with two components viz. (i) Ayush & public health (PHI) component and (ii) Upgradation of facilities to the Centre of Excellence. Under the Centre of Excellence component, financial assistance is provided to support creative and innovative proposals of prestigious organizations with well-established buildings and infrastructure and wish to work for Ayush systems to the level of Centre of Excellence. Total nine organizations of National repute such as Tata Memorial Centre, (TMC) Mumbai, Central Drug Research Institute (CDRI), Lucknow, Jawaharlal Nehru University, (JNU) New Delhi, Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Delhi, Indian Institute of Science (IISC) Bengaluru, Centre for Integrative Medicine and Research (CIMR), AIIMS New Delhi, National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (NIMHANS), Bangalore, Institute of Liver and Biliary Sciences (ILBS), Indian Institute of Technology, (IIT) Jodhpur have been funded under the Centre of Excellence component of Ayurwashya Yojana under the activity-based/research-based Centre of Excellence for enhancing interdisciplinary research in Ayush involving modern scientists.

(b) The Research Councils and National Institutes under the Ministry of Ayush undertake clinical studies by adopting prevalent guidelines such as Good Clinical Practices Guidelines for ASU drugs (GCP-ASU), Ministry of Ayush and Ethical guidelines for Bio-Medical Research (ICMR), as per requirement to generate evidence on clinical efficacy and safety of classical formulations and therapies in various disease conditions. The preclinical studies are being carried out in line with Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) guidelines, New Drugs and Clinical Trials Rules (NDCTR) and International Council for Harmonisation (ICH) guidelines. Scientific validation of new combinations (coded drugs) are conducted through systematic process of drug development viz. drug standardization and quality control, preclinical safety/toxicity studies and biological activity studies (as appropriate) and clinical trials as per requirement.
