FIRST AROGYA IN ARUNACHAL PRADESH

Arunachal Pradesh, located in the North East extremity of India, is inhabited by 26 tribes and their associated subtribal groups. The state is hilly to mountainous, and climatic conditions vary from tropical through subtropical, temperate, to alpine. Various types of health problem are observed, depending on the climatic zone, looking similar to specific types of disease, but differing in other respects. Large numbers of joint pains and rheumatic conditions are reported, but pathology and biochemical tests do not match with rheumatoid arthritis, as in most cases RA factors are absent.

In Arunachal Pradesh, diseases are usually managed by Allopathy, Ayurveda or Homoeopathy. Unani and Yoga are less developed in the state. Indian Systems of Medicine and Homoeopathy, where treatments are based on herbs and animal products are found developed to various degrees. The diverse climatic conditions range from tropical to alpine zones with corresponding ranges of biodiversity, and yield large variations in types of medicinal plant. Local folk healers use these locally available herbs, and also animal parts, in the management of different ailments.

The Department of AYUSH, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India in association with the Government of Arunachal Pradesh, Department of Health and Family Welfare, organized a five day Arogya campaign at Itanagar, Arunachal Pradesh from 17 to 21 March, 2010, inclusive [Figure 1].

The Arogya was organized in three parts: (1) an exhibition of all Department of AYUSH activities, as well as different schemes launched and implemented for the state of Arunachal Pradesh by e.g. the Central Council for Research in Ayurveda and Siddha, the Central Council for Research in Unani Medicine, the Central Council for Research in Homoeopathy, the Central Council for Research in Yoga and Naturopathy, and the National Medicinal Plants Board; (2) free clinics of Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy, Unani and Homoeopathy; and (3) lectures by the experts in different field of management of diseases and Natural resources.

Many local organizations participated: the Patanjali Yoga Centre, Itanagar; Art of Living, Itanagar; and Prajapati Brahma Kumara, Itanagar; also, State Government projects like the National Rural Health Mission, Government of Arunachal Pradesh, all of which are also directly linked with health management through herbal medicines and Yoga. Separate stalls were arranged by each discipline and Councils running under the department. Mission and vision statements of the various participants were displayed, and charts, brochures, powerpoints and audiovisual demonstrations of their activities, achievement and methodology of management in the various systems of medicine. During the Inaugural session, a brief introduction to the AROGYA was given by B.T. Chidanand Murthy, Director, Central Council for Research in Yoga and Naturopathy, Department of AYUSH, Government of India. Next, the Deputy Commissioner, Capital Complex, Itanagar, compared the status of various aspects of Indian Systems of Medicine in Arunachal Pradesh to the allopathic system of medicine. B.S. Sajwan, Principal Chief Conservator of Forest, Government of Arunachal Pradesh and former Chief Executive Officer, National Medicinal Plants Board, Department of AYUSH, Government of India, presented the important vision and mission statements of AROGYA around India, as well as in Arunachal Pradesh. To reassure the Department of AYUSH, he described the organisation of AROGYA in every accessible part of North East India. This was followed by the speech of the Chief Guest, Shri Tanga Byaling, the Minister of Health and Family Welfare, Government of Arunachal Pradesh, who emphasized the need for the people of the state as a whole to obtain more benefit from Arogya. This was followed by a speech from A.B. Shukla, Secretary for Health and Family Welfare, Government of Arunachal, who gave a comprehensive account of AYUSH in Arunachal Pradesh, and promised to develop modern facilities in AYUSH hospitals in the state.

Figure 1: Inaugural function
Shri Pavitro, Parliamentary Secretary, Health and Family Welfare, Government of Arunachal Pradesh emphasized implementing AYUSH activities in the state, in accordance with the guidelines specified by the Government of India.

In his deliberation, B.T. Chidanand Murthy, Director, CCRYN, New Delhi, discussed the prospects of Yoga and Naturopathy system in Arunachal Pradesh, emphasizing the need for a mega Yoga Campaign at Itanagar. In support, Dr Hajarika of the Regional Research Institute for Yoga and Naturopathy, Guwahati demonstrated methods used by Yoga for various disorders, and discussed the introduction of various aspects of Naturopathy in health management, specifically joint pain etc. Various aspects of Yoga and Naturopathy were similarly discussed by different experts from e.g. the Art of Living, Itanagar branch, and Patanjali Yoga Kendra, Itanagar.

Rajiv Rastogi from CCRYN, New Delhi gave details of Yoga management of Spondylitis, and demonstrated various yoga postures for its management with the help of a group of 4 expert workers in the region. In his series of talks, Dr. Rastogi discussed major diseases like vata pain and other joint pains, arthritis, diabetes and hypertension management through yoga.

S.P. Bhattacharya from the Government Ayurvedic College, Guwahati spoke on management of Ayurveda in the North East, where, as his statistics showed, drug addiction is a major problem. De addiction through Ayurveda management, now includes counseling, training addicts in yoga, panchakarma (Snehana, Swedana, Vamana, Virechana etc. are highly effective), as is administration of Ayurvedic medicines for neural disorders. B.P. Sarma, Government Ayurvedic College, Guwahati spoke about uses of panchakarma therapy to manage geriatric disorders. He emphasized using Lekhanvasti to manage cardiovascular disorders, and Bastikarma and Anuvasana in urinary disorders; Nasyakarma and Shirodhara as remedies for ENT disorders; Vamana, Virechana and Kshirvasti for gastrointestinal disorders; and Snehana, Swedana and Patrapindaswedana in locomotor disorders.

K.K. Brahma of the Ayurveda Regional Research Institute (ARRI), Itanagar, shared his views on the role of Ayurveda treatment in the management of geriatric disorders, and emphasised using Ayurvedic medicines together with specific Anupana supervised by an Ayurvedic physician for geriatric disorders of all kinds. D.S. Rotwar, also from ARRI, Itanagar, also discussed management of Rheumatoid arthritis through Ayurvedic Snehana and Swedana karmas. Arunachal Pradesh being a state with one of the highest biodiversities, has diverse types of vegetation including medicinal plants; their utilization in Ayurvedic Pharmaceutics was described by Rama Shankar, also of ARRI, Itanagar.

Choudhury, RRC Silchar, CCRUM, spoke about managing diseases using Unani medicines, and various CCRUM programmes in North East India. B.V.S. Murty from the Directorate of Health for Arunachal Pradesh spoke about the ongoing programmes of AYUSH ‘Wings of Health’ in the state of Arunachal Pradesh. Dusu Laji, from Naharlagun discussed perspectives on homoeopathy in various health disorders, particularly emphasizing precautions recommended when using homoeopathy medicines. Similarly Karshma, NE Homoeopathy College, Itanagar, discussed use of homoeopathy medicines for several specific disorders, including injuries caused by eating fish spines. Bhattarjee from Naharlagun's General Hospital gave an overall picture of Homoeopathic management of health in th North East region's various climatic conditions.

At the free health check-up clinics for both specific patients and general complaints, a total of 1542 patients (861 male and 681 female) were examined, and given health guidelines accompanied by Ayurvedic medicines. Practical yoga asanas (postures) and pranayama exercises were demonstrated, and patients were given literature related to AYUSH disciplines to keep for use in their homes, and as home remedies. Overall, the entire event represented a new approach to health management for the local community.

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