

## **The Soft Power Synergy: Ayurveda and Yoga in Contemporary Diplomacy**

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### **Abstract**

Ayurveda and Yoga which are the part of ancient Indian system of life have become the symbols of India's soft power diplomacy in international forum. These customs and patterns embody the core values of cultural norms and values and have great implications of enhancing overall health and harmony between the soul and the body.

At first, Ayurveda and Yoga play the role of the link and communication between countries in terms of the shared cultural values and ethical standards, which are based on the ideas of health and relaxation. These activities consist of Ayurveda wellness facilities and Yoga diplomacy initiatives to strengthen the two countries' relations while fostering the levels of consciousness and well-being of the global society.

However, in addition to the cultural strategic relations, Ayurveda and Yoga are the other important economic diplomacy of India. The increasing global concern towards natural health remedies makes India, a major exporter of Ayurvedic antibiotics and other well-being products. At the same time, the demand for Yoga generates a lot of business: workshops, professional boot camps, and well-being tourism centres that positively affect India's economy.

Last, between their globalization, Ayurveda and Yoga have faced criticism of cultural imperialism, and between the quality of products and services and their becoming a commodity. India manages these threats through endorsing local culture and ethic, protecting the product originality and fostering proper cultural transfer. Thus, India meets these challenges and raises awareness of Ayurveda and Yoga as an Indian contribution to global health and cultural events and meetings.

The abstract signifies how Ayurveda and Yoga symbiotically develop India's soft power diplomacy, exceeding cultural, social, and economic dynamics. By influencing these old traditions and values, India improves its global impact. It promotes a more interrelated and cordial global society stranded in common and shared values of healthiness, knowledge, and consciousness.

**Keywords-** Yoga, Ayurveda, Soft Power, India, AYUSH, Cultural Diplomacy

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## **Introduction**

Ayurveda and Yoga, two old antiquated Indian practices, have well-established lineage tracking back thousands of years. Ayurveda, mostly referred, as ‘knowledge of life’ is a comprehensive structure of medicine that centres around sustaining both mental and physical health through native medications, nutritive habits and shift in way of life (Mishra, et al., 2001). It encircles an all-encompassing strategy to health, stressing on preventive medical concerns and sustenance of overall welfare of human-being. Ayurveda’s ethics are built on the equilibrium of three doshas- Vata, Pitta and Kapha- which are assumed to control the physical and mental actions (Mishra, et al., 2001). Therapies entails natural medicines, purification of mind and body and maintaining a holistic way of living tailored to individual nature.

Yoga, on the other side it is a method that constitutes physical positions (asanas), respiratory exercises (pranayama), mindfulness activities (dhyana) and following moral philosophies(yamas and niyamas). Emerging thousands of years back in India, Yoga has developed into different shapes and patterns, each focused at promoting self-consciousness and mental peacefulness (Bhattacharya, et al., 2021). The process of yoga focuses to exceed the physical aspect of human life and associate with higher affirmation of consciousness, fostering an impression of peacefulness and balance of calmness and harmony (Mahapatra, 2016)

Both Ayurveda and Yoga are significant to India’s socio-cultural traditions, highlighting its crucial knowledge of human well-being and awareness. For thousands of years, these approaches have exceeded geographical barriers, growing as an international phenomenon acclaimed for their global appeal and transformational possibilities (Bhattacharya, et al., 2021)

In the 21st century foreign policy landscape, the approach of soft power has received momentous attention. Introduced by Joseph Nye, soft power specifies to capability of a nation to persuade others through cultural norms, beliefs, morals and ideas rather than using force or economic incentives (Mazumdar, 2018). In a global era, where everything is interlinked through the process of globalization, the ability to influence and integrate holds considerable swing over international relations.

Soft power exhibits through different medium which includes cultural interactions, academic knowledge-sharing, and advancement of national interests. For India, a nation with an affluent cultural heritage promoting soft power associates with applying its unique cultural resources

to form goodwill, enhancing foreign relations with other nations and increase its influence in the international stage (Mazumdar, 2018).

This chapter critically delves into how India uses Ayurveda and Yoga as a means of soft power diplomacy to build up its global significance. By fostering this traditional knowledge system, India not only advances cultural understanding and mutual appreciation among countries but also benefits on financial aspects and dives into the confrontations of globalization. With the multifaceted perspective, Ayurveda and Yoga develops as a dynamic tool in India's diplomatic front, providing to a more interdependent and amicable global society grounded in mutual beliefs and norms of physical and mental wellbeing.

## **Historical and Cultural Foundation**

### **Origin and Evolution of Ayurveda and Yoga**

Ayurveda and Yoga tracks their source of history to the old civilisation of Indian subcontinent, developing from an extensive understanding of physical environment, and universal being. Ayurveda, which traces its origin over five thousand years, identifies its records of existence in the ancient Vedas, especially the Atharva Veda, where hymns elaborate the therapeutic treatments and usage of curative natural plants (Mishra, et al., 2001). This old-age traditional knowledge network of medicine was farther described in ancient books of Charaka Samhita and Sushruta Samhita which facilitates extensive theoretical accounts on medicines, herbal practices, surgery and doctrine and ideas on wellness of physical healthiness (Mishra, et al., 2001). Charaka, an ancient scholar and physician highlighted the importance of preventive healthcare, on the other hand, Sushruta known for being the ancient surgeon of the subcontinent, wrote extensively on intricate surgical methods and physiological understanding (Mishra, et al., 2001). The Ashtanga Hridaya, written by Vagbhata is one of the significant books consolidates the learning of earlier books, providing a comprehensive understanding Ayurvedic philosophy and therapies and methods (Mishra, et al., 2001).

Yoga's source of history is similarly ancient, with its foundation background which can be trace down to the Vedic and pre-Vedic era of Indian subcontinent. The tradition of yoga is thoroughly mentioned in the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali, composed near the early years of centuries 400-500 CE, which classifies the elements and applications of Yoga into 8 limbs, or Ashtanga Yoga (Jarry et al., 2017) These limbs include principle regulations (yamas and niyamas), physical postures (asanas), breath control (pranayama), sensory withdrawal (pratyahara), concentration (dharana), meditation (dhyana), and ultimate absorption (samadhi)

(Raina & Singh, 2015) Furthermore, the Bhagavad Gita a distinguished holy book, highlights Yoga as a route to self-consciousness and divine learning and awareness and incorporating it into a wider landscape of traditional Indian knowledge system (Chapple, 2006). It is also mentioned in the sacred Hindu religious books of Upanishads and Mahabharata, signifying its comprehensive importance in ancient Indian philosophical ethics and beliefs.

### **Cultural Importance and Absorption into Daily Life in India**

In India, Yoga and Ayurveda are re-graded not only as a practice of maintaining the balance between body and mind but also seen as an important dynamic of everyday practices, laced into socio-cultural framework. Ayurveda's philosophy leverages day-to-day life including food habits, seasonal patterns, and cultural practices, stressing stability with natural world and the surroundings (Jayasundar, 2010). Ayurvedic methods which includes oil massage, treatments from medicinal plants, practising detoxification methods are usually adopted to balance physical fitness and restrain illness and sickness (Islam, 2009). The theory of 'Dinacharya' (daily routine) and 'Ritucharya' (seasonal regimen) highlights the Ayurvedic principles in associating regular tasks with ecological cycle fostering equilibrium and wellness (Nepal, et al., 2023). Occasional festivities, ceremonies and regional traditions generally integrate Ayurvedic practices, highlighting their assimilation into Indian community.

Yoga, with its impact on physical and psychological comfort and wellness is extensively followed in India. Starting from the flourishing city areas to the peaceful green villages, Yoga is regarded as a route to overall comprehensive health. Educational, religious and private institutions, most of the times organise yoga training and workshop programs like Surya Namaskar and the practice of meditation are introduced into regular cycle of everyday life (Venkatesh & Vandhana, 2022) Celebrations and occasions for instance celebrating International Yoga Day on 21st June every year, stresses the importance and broad popularity (Pardeshi, 2016). In most of Indian houses, it is followed as a daily routine activity, and its knowledge are handed down through generations, highlighting its persisting cultural significance.

The amalgamation of Ayurveda and Yoga into everyday practice highlights India's panoramic perspective where individual's both physical and mental state of mind is seen as a balance and reconciliation within individual and outside surroundings. These approaches are profoundly ingrained in religious norms, socio-cultural values and local traditional customs, highlighting their ethical and sacred values and significance. In conventional Indian families, Ayurvedic

medications are generally the first line of therapy for prevalent diseases and Yoga is performed to balance human body, highlighting their widespread impact on Indian way of life.

### **Early International Influence and Dissemination**

The worldwide promulgation of Ayurveda and Yoga commenced on many decades ago, promoted by commerce and trade, expedition and socio-cultural discourses. Old commercial pathways, for instance Silk Road, allowed the sharing of skills and practices among India and other societies. Ayurvedic medicinal plants followed to regions of like East Asia, Iran and the Middle Eastern region, impacting regional medical structure and processes (Singh, 2016). Significantly, the impact of Ayurveda can be seen in local Chinese and Unani healthcare system which integrated Ayurvedic concepts and approaches. Indian traders, explorers and intellectuals performed an important part in propagating Ayurvedic learnings while foreign intellectuals travelled Indian hubs of knowledge and education centres to learn these old-traditional processes (Singh, 2016).

Yoga's dissemination beyond India can be tracked to the beginning of 19th and 20th centuries, when Indian philosophical scholars and Yogis started to visit the Global North spreading their knowledge with international followers. Swami Vivekananda's speech at the Parliament of the World's Religion Centre in Chicago in 1893 noted a crucial event in Yoga's global navigation (Baier, 2019). His speech on Vedanta and Yoga enchanted Western spectators driving admiration and respect for these Indian traditional knowledge-system. Thereafter, spiritual leaders like Paramhansa Yogananda performed significant part in promoting Yoga through their trainings, compositions and the introducing Yoga centres in different parts of the world (Neumann, 2019). Yogananda's 'Autobiography of a Yogi' became a popular and inspirational book, encouraging innumerable Western audiences to know more about Yoga and search for spirituality and divinity.

The mid of twentieth century saw an increase in worldwide fascination in Yoga and people visited India in quest of divine knowledge getting back with them the approaches and principles that reverberated with a wider spectator (Thurston & Bloyce, 2020). This interval of time also saw the publishing of different books and translation of ancient holy books, making Yoga and Ayurveda more prominent and effortlessly reasonably priced to worldwide readers. Yoga centres started to develop and increase in diverse countries, providing to an increasing call for holistic wellness approaches (Thurston & Bloyce, 2020).

Presently, Yoga and Ayurveda have surpassed socio-cultural restrictions and have been embraced for their holistic approach to both psychological and physical well-being. Their worldwide influence has cleared the route for global recognition of these ancient spiritual knowledge ideas and concepts, signifying their perpetual importance and potentials for transforming practices. Yoga and Ayurveda are now renowned across the continents with international seminars, training centres and research development centres conducted on regular basis which are dedicated to these philosophies. The comprehensive acceptance of these practices highlights their broadly appealing nature and the enormous impact they continue to have on overall health and well-being.

The classical and traditional foundation of Yoga and Ayurvedic philosophies highlights their persisting importance and the routes in which they have structured and persist to shape, universal health dynamics and socio-cultural interactions and communications. With the help of these approaches, India provides the global world an all-inclusive perspective to health and exceeds borderlines and promotes a stronger relation to individuals and external environment.

### **Soft Power and Diplomatic Strategy**

Soft power, a phrase used by International Relations thinker, Joseph Nye, specifies to capability of a nation to persuade others through cultural norms, beliefs, morals and ideas rather than using force or economic incentives (Mazumdar, 2018).. Contrary to hard power, which depends on the military and economic power, soft power is constructed on non-material resources of socio- cultural aspect, ideas, beliefs, ethics and customs that assembles appreciation and aspirations (Mazumdar, 2018). Soft power is mainly constituted of 3 basic principles:

**1. Culture:** This comprises of artworks and crafts, literatures and compositions and music and other artistic aspects and characters which reverberates globally. A nation's cultural allure can fascinate people to its ethics and style of living.

**2. Political Values:** The philosophies and the fundamental principles which a nation endorses including equality, freedom, justice, democracy, can be appealing to overseas spectators, especially when they are seen as a being frequently practiced both domestically and globally.

**3. Foreign Policy:** The approach through which a nation practices its foreign policies with another nations, specifically when policies are precise to be authentic and ethically legitimate, can strengthen its soft power. Policies which endorse international public benefits, for instance human rights, development, harmony and ecological responsibilities can substantially advance a country's soft power.

## **Significance of Cultural Diplomacy in International Relations**

Culturally diplomacy, crucial dynamic of soft power, comprises the sharing of values, ideologies, beliefs and ethics and other cultural dynamics to make stronger relations and influence socio-cultural relations harmony, and foster national interests (Clarke, 2014). It provides many significant objectives in international relations:

**1. Constructing Mutual Understanding:** Cultural diplomacy provides a higher level of recognition and respect of diverse culture, which can restraint misinterpretation and confusions. It aids in developing a link between countries, promoting a feeling of global society.

**2. Developing National Image:** By promoting its cultural heritage and traditions, a nation can enhance its appearance and status on the international podium. Positive responses can result in powerful diplomatic relations and considerable impact in global affairs.

**3. Enhancing Economic Interests:** Cultural interactions can lead the way for establishing markets for cultural and artistic sectors.

**4. Enhancing Alliances:** Exchanged cultural accounts and values can strengthen relations and cooperation, forming a mutual ground for collaboration in different sectors which comprises commerce, strategic associations and state affairs.

## **Records of Successful Soft Power Developments by Other Nations**

### **1. South Korea: The Korean Wave**

**Cultural Influence-** South Korea has positively spread its culture in the era of globalisation specially exporting the popular K-Pop culture, K-dramas and music and dances such as Bangtan Boys and South Korean television programs have gained recognition and admiration from the international community strengthening South Korea's image in the global society (Jang & Paik, 2012).

**Economic Profits-** The global recognition of South Korean culture has endorsed its tourism sector, elevated foreign investment in South Korea and fostered its local brands in the global stage (Jang & Paik, 2012).

**Diplomatic Success-**K-pop culture has enhanced South Korea's reputation internationally and cultivated cordiality, heading to powerful diplomatic and financial relations with other nations.

## 2. Japan: Cool Japan

**Cultural Influence**-Japan's Cool Japan ambition fosters its pop-culture, counting anime, manga and computer and video games and Japanese literature and fashion industry (Daliot-Bul, 2009). Famous Ghibli movies, Japanese series in Netflix and local outfits called kimonos have gained an international recognition and popularity among today's youth.

**Economic Prosperity**- This cultural labelling has accelerated Japan's artistic production hubs and cultural centres and promoting tourism industries, welcoming thousands of foreign tourists every year and fostering Japanese goods and commodities (Daliot-Bul, 2009).

**Diplomatic Benefits**-By promoting its unique cultural aspects, Japan has fostered its international cultural existence and succeeded in global collaborations, improving its soft power influence.

## 3. United States: Hollywood and Higher Education

**Cultural Impact**-Hollywood films and American series shows have a large influence in the rest of the world and have a broad number of international audiences, creating impression of American lifestyle and beliefs (Lovric, 2016). The American universities and colleges also appeal to foreign students to its well-known academic scholarships, creating an international connection of alumni who are generally influenced to American values and principles (Nye, 2002).

**Economic Prosperity**- The entertainment and fashion industry is an important contributor to the American financial sector and foreign students add millions of dollars to the academic industry.

**Diplomacy Engagement**- The comprehensive claim of American culture and the impact of its academic centres increases the American's capability to build international perspectives and policies, progressing its navigation in foreign relations (Nye, 2002).

## Ayurveda: Developing Health Diplomacy

### Role of Ayurveda in Advancing Health Diplomacy

Ayurveda with its insistence on promoting integral health and welfare has appeared as an important instrument in fostering health diplomacy. The Ayurvedic outlook to health prioritizes on maintenance of mental and physical health through use of holistic medicines including medicinal plants and herbs, changing food habits, way of living and maintaining overall spiritual wellness of body and mind (Patwardhan, et al., 2005). This broad system focuses not



only the indications of ailments but also the source of origin, focusing to avoid sickness and balance long-term well-being.

**1. Holistic Health Philosophy-** Ayurveda's fundamental philosophies rotate around the maintenance of 3 doshas- Vata, Pitta and Kapha- which are considered to regulate all physical and mental actions (Patwardhan, et al., 2005). By personalising therapies to individual self, Ayurveda fosters customised health maintenance and wellness program, which is growingly appreciated in advanced medicine era.

**2. Preventive Care-**Ayurveda highlights preventive care through changing way of living, nourishing food in the health chart and following a holistic life. Approaches which include everyday oil-massage, detoxification and the usage of medicinal products promotes protection from illness, counters infections, placing with worldwide trends towards precautionary and foresighted health system (Padma, 2005)

**3. Blending with Contemporary Medicine-** Ayurveda's comprehensive perspectives and principles can align with contemporary medical care, providing integrating health responses (Patwardhan, et al., 2005). This collaboration is significantly crucial in controlling long-term sickness, depression and anxiety, and lifestyle disorders, which are common globally.

### **Government Leadership-Developing Ayurvedic Medical Hospitals and Therapy Centres in Foreign Lands**

The Indian government has been in forefront in enhancing Ayurveda as a part of its health diplomacy approach, developing many Ayurvedic medical institutions and therapy centres through the world. These developments aspire to contribute India's traditional old-age knowledge system, influence socio-cultural dialogues and strengthen bilateral relationships.

**1. Ayush Ministry Initiatives-** The Ministry of Ayurveda, Yoga, and Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha, and Homeopathy (AYUSH) has been significantly working in enhancing Ayurveda's worldwide reach. (Patwardhan, et al., 2005). The ministry backs the formation of Ayurvedic institutions in different nations, building infrastructure, instructions and materials.

**2. International Collaborations-** Through partnerships and cooperation with foreign nations and different international and regional organisations, India has established many Ayurvedic institutions including America, East Asia and other developed nations (Raj, et al., 2011). These therapeutic institutions provide trainings, treatments, holistic activities and spiritual teachings,

offering Ayurvedic principles to distinct communities and societies of different regions around the world.

**3. Ayurveda at Diplomatic Missions-** Many Indian embassies and consulates organise conferences and trainings on Ayurveda, enhancing the interests of Ayurvedic healthcare among the regional populations (Wele, 2018). These approaches not only strengthen India's soft power but also gives easy access to medical care solutions to foreigners and domestic populations.

### **Collective Research and Cooperation with Global Health Organisations**

To further endorse and assimilate Ayurveda into global medical structures, collective research and cooperation with global health institutions are significant. These partnerships focus to scientifically analysed Ayurvedic approaches, provide knowledge sharing and fosters integral health methods.

**1. Research Collaboration-**Indian research organisations and academic schools and colleges participate with international correspondents to organise clinical research, verify Ayurvedic therapies examine their adequacy in dealing different health cases (Prasad, 2017). These studies assist in forming a scientific approach for Ayurveda, fostering its reliability and recognition in global stage.

**2. Partnerships with WHO-** India works jointly with World Health Organisation (WHO) to develop ancient Ayurvedic approaches and its philosophies. The WHO Traditional Medicine Strategy 2014-2023 highlights blend of ancient and modern health system into national health structures and the nation's involvements to this approach signifies its influence in the ground (Burton et al., 2015)

**3. International Health Meetings and Seminars-**India engages in global health meetings and seminars, calling attention to research analysis, finding best solutions and supporting aligning of Ayurveda with international health system (Morandi, 2015). These global forums promote exchanges of discussions, partnership and cooperation and advancement of comprehensive health processes.

**4. Academic Exchanges and Training Activities-** Joint academic research, projects and training activities with global organisations aids in publicize Ayurvedic principles and approaches (Prasad, 2017). These approaches not only train medical practitioners internationally but also inculcates collective understanding and admiration for conventional long-established health systems.

## **Case Studies of Successful Initiatives**

**1. Ayurvedic Centre in Dubai-** Developments of the Ayurvedic Information Centres UAE and other Gulf countries highlights an important landmark in fostering Ayurveda in the Middle-Eastern region of the world (Abraham, 2020). This institution provides dialogues and discussions, academic programs, therapies and healing sessions serving to the growing demand for comprehensive health development initiatives in the Middle-eastern area.

**2.Partnering with US National Cancer Institute for research developments-** Joint research programs and initiatives between AYUSH (Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha, and Homoeopathy) with prominent medical institutes like US National Cancer Institute stresses upon the incorporation of Ayurvedic approaches into contemporary medical science (White et al., 2018) These research projects centres around the field of interests which includes coping up with mental health and other psychological issues, persistent illness and metabolic sickness, showcasing the possibilities of Ayurveda in integrating traditional treatments.

**3.WHO Collaborating Centre for Traditional Medicine-**The formation of WHO Collaborating Centre for Fundamental and Literary Research in Traditional Medicine, in India signifies the nation's dedication to developing international medical system by ancient health approaches ("WHO Designates CCRAS-NIIMH, Hyderabad as Collaborating Centre for Traditional Medicine Research," n.d.-b) This institution aims on research analyses, learning and development in Ayurveda, focusing on advancement of traditional medical methods.

## **Yoga: Uniting Mind and Body Globally**

### **Global Popularity and Adoption of Yoga**

Yoga being practiced since the times of ancient India has spread its roots across the globe and is now being practiced widely. This being a comprehensive exercise regimen that involves the physical, mental, and spiritual aspects of the individual it has gained popularity among people of all ages across the globe.

**1. Physical and Mental Benefits:** It is for this reason that Yoga is popular because it involves all round benefits. In the physical aspect it enhances flexibility, strength, and balance of the body and mentally, it has stress relieving properties, increases focus, and improves one's mental state of mind (Tiwari, 2016). This has created a dual effect, and thus it has become popular in various places including fitness centres, companies, and schools.

**2. Adaptability and Diversity:** Due to its versatility Yoga has been able to change or rather modify itself to suit anybody's needs or even level of practice. The four branches of Yoga include Karma Yoga- action, Bhakti Yoga- devotion, Jnana Yoga- Self-study and Raja Yoga- will-power. each of which delivers a distinctive way of attaining the balance between the body and mind (Tiwari, 2016). This variety enables the trainers to select a type that they feel comfortable with and meet their training objectives.

**3. Celebrity Endorsements and Media Influence:** Likelihood of the same has also been propelled by the embrace of Yoga by stars together with its depiction in the mass media. Many celebrities such as Dylan Warner and Melissa West, among others, have taken Yoga sessions in the limelight, and made others follow suit (Malenović, 2016). As a result, switching to social networks, Yoga communities were created, where people post their recommendations, schedules, and experiences, thus promoting the practice of Yoga.

**4. Institutional Support and Research:** It is common these days to find universities and research institutions across the globe carrying out research on the benefits of Yoga and adding the scientific backup to the practice (Galan, et al., 2017). This research has been very useful in the incorporation of Yoga as a form of treatment and wellness in the society.

### **International Day of Yoga: Evolution and Impact**

The International Day of Yoga is observed on 21st of June every year since the year 2014, and this was decided by the United Nations following a proposal made by the Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi. The day is to promote the awareness of the world on the Importance of practicing Yoga.

**1. Evolution:** Yoga as a concept was presented at the UN General Assembly by Prime Minister Modi in September of 2014 wherein, he proposed the notion of an International Day of Yoga, the proposal was adopted and was supported by most of the countries which co- sponsored the resolution (Manjunath, 2023)

**2. Global Participation:** The International Day of Yoga celebrates every year with the massive involvement of people from all around the world, people of different countries, cultures, and professions engage in Yoga every day (Manjunath, 2023) Occasions are conducted in parks, sports complexes, club houses, and even popular tourist destinations like the Times Square in New York and Eiffel Tower in Paris.

**3. Cultural Exchange and Unity:** The day is a day of unity and cultural diversity where people come together and perform Yoga. It emphasized that Yoga is a practice that has no nationality and helps create the feeling of people's unity across the world.

**4. Health and Wellness Promotion:** It has also been noted that the celebration of the International Day of Yoga also focuses on health and wellbeing. It is a time when governments, NGOs, and health care centres spread awareness about the significance of living a healthy life and how yoga can be beneficial if included in one's lifestyle.

### **Yoga Diplomacy: Case Studies of Diplomatic Events and Initiatives**

Yoga has, therefore, become an essential component of India's soft power with New Delhi using the practice to cultivate goodwill, cultural interchange, and ties with other nations.

**1. India's Yoga Outreach in the United States:** The Indian Embassy in the United States of America celebrates the International Day of Yoga through holding Annual Yoga events. Such occasions that are frequently conducted in famous spots, such as the National Mall in Washington D. C, draw in many people such as diplomats, local authorities, and people who practice Yoga. It's fascinating to know that the more than 37 million of population in USA spends more than sixteen billions of dollars in yoga training classes and practices signifying its reach among the West nations (Siegel, et al., 2022)

**2. Yoga in the European Union:** India has signed MOUs with several European countries for the propagation of Yoga. Organisations like European Yoga Federation, British Wheel of Yoga has been holding mass exercises in Yoga with people from various European countries joining in, and these events demonstrate the values of health and harmony, thus contributing to the idea of the European unity through Yoga (Siegel, et al., 2022).

**3. Yoga and China:** Thus, the political and economic relations between India and China have always been strained but Yoga has acted as a cultural link between the two nations. The Indian Government have used its soft power policy in spreading the holistic approach of Yoga which has been accepted by Beijing. China-India Youth Traditional Culture Exchange and Films like Kung-Fu-Yoga are some initiatives taken by both the two countries to develop and promote Yoga among the masses (Jingwei, 2022). Such events are quite popular among the local citizens and help to strengthen the cultural relationships and interactions.

**4. United Nations Yoga Event:** The first International Day of Yoga was observed in the year of its declaration, 2015 and the United Nations in New York saw a huge yoga session which

was graced by the UN officials, diplomats, and yogis and yoginis across the globe (Manjunath, 2023). This event was rather symbolic of the UN's acknowledgement of Yoga as an international practice and India for propelling wellness culture.

**5. Yoga in Latin America:** The Indian embassies have been quite instrumental in promoting Yoga in countries such as Brazil, Argentina, and Uruguay through workshops, training of teachers, and public demonstrations (Gnerre, 2017). All these have immensely helped in promoting Yoga and establishing good relations between India and the Latin American countries.

### **Economic Opportunities and Market Expansion**

#### **Commercialization of Ayurvedic Products and Yoga-Related Services**

With the growing global interest in natural and holistic medicine, products and services related to Ayurveda and Yoga have been increasingly commodified. This emerging market presents a large business prospect for India and the country's rich history as a source to foster new age health and wellness needs.

**1. Ayurvedic Products:** Global wellness has boosted the demand of Ayurvedic products in various categories such as health care, pharmaceuticals, nutrition, beauty, and personal care (Patwardhan et al., 2004). Patanjali, Dabur and Himalaya have evolved as big companies which have diversified products and export them to many countries. Ayurvedic products are positioned as the ones containing natural ingredients, with a minimum of side effects and offering comprehensive impact on the user's health (Patwardhan et al., 2004).

**2. Yoga-Related Services:** The commercialization of Yoga includes a number of services that are offered to the consumer including yoga centres, training of yoga teachers, residential yoga centres and wellness tourism (Manjunath, 2023) Yoga studios contain classes for all the levels of training, and for various styles of Yoga, and teacher's training programs, which allow new instructors to join the worldwide Yoga community. Wellness retreats and tourism link Yoga with travel to provide tourists with a chance to do Yoga in scenic places; this is for the domestic and international tourists (Manjunath, 2023)

#### **Export Promotion Policies and Market Penetration Strategies**

Therefore, to tap the increasing market for Ayurvedic products and yoga services, both the government of India and the private sector have laid out several export promotion measures and market entry strategies.

## **1. Government Initiatives:**

**AYUSH Export Promotion Council:** The setting up of AYUSH Export Promotion Council will facilitate the promotion of exports of AYUSH products and services. This council involves in conducting market research, market identification and helps the business to understand the international trade laws (Kotecha, 2022).

**Incentives and Subsidies:** Incentives and subsidies are offered to the companies for the manufacturing and exports of Ayurvedic products by the government (Kotecha, 2022). Some of these are tax holidays, grants for establishment of industrial units and financial assistance for attending foreign trade fairs and exhibitions.

**Standardization and Quality Control:** As a way of increasing the credibility and recognition of Ayurvedic products in the international market, the government of India has stressed on standardization and quality assurance (Kotecha, 2022). Programs such as the AYUSH Standardization and Certification Scheme helps to make sure that the products are of international standard.

## **2. Private Sector Strategies:**

**Brand Building:** Major Ayurvedic organisations spend their revenues on brand creation and promotion to penetrate international markets. This entails advertising online, working with celebrities, and attending international expos on wellness (Ahmed et al., 2018).

**Partnerships and Alliances:** Working with the foreign distributors, retailers and wellness centres, Indian firms can expand their business into the new territories. These partnerships help in boosting the market access, distribution channels, and the relationship with the customers (Ahmed et al., 2018).

**Product Innovation:** This also aims at explaining how to satisfy the consumers' needs and wants, through research and development of new products that combine the ancient knowledge of Ayurveda with the contemporary science (Chandran et al., 2020). This involves formulation and packaging innovation as well as the easy-to-use formats including capsules, teas, sachets and ready to use products.

## **Economic Benefits and Challenges in Global Markets**

Thus, the penetration of Ayurvedic products and Yoga services in international markets offers numerous economic opportunities and, at the same time, raises several questions.

## **Economic Benefits:**

### **1. Revenue Generation:**

The global wellness economy is estimated to grow around seventy billion of US dollars by 2025 and presents significant business revenue streams for Ayurvedic and Yogic ventures (“Year-End Review: Ministry of Ayush: 2023,” n.d.-b). Export receipts help to augment the country’s income and foster economic development besides generating employment in the connected industries like production, transport, and travel.

**2. Market Diversification:** Entering new markets leads to the decrease of the company’s dependence on the home market, which is helpful in case of economic crises. This diversification assists in managing the business’s operations and revenues to be less affected by market fluctuations.

**3. Promotion of Cultural Heritage:** The process of Ayurveda and Yoga is being globalization through commercialization shows India’s culture globally. Thus, this cultural export helps increase India’s soft power and creates goodwill and fosters good diplomatic relations.

## **Challenges in Global Markets:**

**1. Regulatory Hurdles:** The processes of working with the legislation of different countries may be difficult. Ayurvedic products have to meet a number of standards, certifications and labelling requirements which in turn can be quite a time consuming and expensive process (Banerjee, 2004).

**2. Intellectual Property Issues:** Preservation of those rights such as the rights in traditional knowledge and proprietary formulations should be safeguarded to avoid exploitation by foreign markets.

**3. Cultural Sensitivity:** Focusing on identifying how and to what extent Ayurvedic and Yoga practices can be synthesized into various cultural settings while keeping their originality and values intact. Distortion or intentional alteration affects the culture in question and results in cultural appropriation and backlash.

**4. Market Competition:** Dominance of the global wellness market is characterized by the presence of many well-known brands and products. To compete well in the market Indian companies must strive to provide quality product, new ideas and good marketing strategies to get their market share (Banerjee, 2004).



## **Case Studies of Success and Challenges:**

### **1. Patanjali's Global Expansion:**

**Success:** Patanjali Ayurveda Limited is an Indian based Multi-National Company which has marked its supremacy in the markets of USA, Canada and UK. Due to effective advertising, proper collaborations, and a wide range of products, Patanjali has become a big brand across the globe (Ahmed et al., 2018).

**Challenges:** Some of the problems that the company encountered include compliance issues, and the quality of food and products exporting across various regions (Ahmed et al., 2018). Coordination of the quality of the products and the supply chain over a large number of regions also demanded a lot of resources and knowledge.

### **2. Yoga Alliance International:**

**Success:** Yoga Alliance International has helped in popularizing Yoga across the world by registering Yoga schools and teachers and therefore enforcing certain standards (Siegel, et al., 2022). This accreditation has enabled increased development of Yoga studios and training of Yoga teachers all over the globe.

**Challenges:** The only disadvantage that has been experienced is the challenge of preserving the originality of Yoga as it is introduced to the international market. To obtain the optimal results and to preserve the core principles of Yoga while integrating it into the lives of various people, life styles and situations, certain amount of effort is needed (Siegel, et al., 2022).

## **Challenges and Criticism**

### **Cultural Appropriation vs. Cultural Appreciation**

As Ayurveda and Yoga persists to earn international recognition, they most of the time turns into matter of cultural appropriation. Considering the difference between cultural appropriation and cultural appreciation is important for balancing the sincerity and legitimacy of these traditional approaches.

**1. Cultural Appropriation-**Cultural Appropriation requires accepting aspects of a culture, mostly out of the culture, without considering and referring their roots and importance. This can result in distortion or reduction of socio-cultural customs. For instance, in yoga cultural appropriation can demonstrate as concentrating on physical postures (asanas) meanwhile overlooking the holistic and rational dynamics. Likewise, Ayurvedic approaches might be

commodified as distant and unfamiliar medical methods without accepting their traditional and ancient sources of origins.

**2. Cultural Appreciation-** Cultural appreciation implies a reverent and illuminated affiance with another culture, and acknowledging and respecting its roots, approaches and importance. For instance, exponents and clients who take time to gain knowledge about the traditions, practices, and principle approaches of Ayurveda and Yoga are more generally to practice and learn these field of studies genuinely and courteously.

**3. Balancing Act-** Fostering academic understandings that stresses the cultural and traditional environment of Ayurveda and Yoga can promote authentic admiration. Conferences, meetings and socio-cultural exchange activities can play a crucial part in this aspect. Joint partnership with traditional intellectuals and exponents can assist in in assuring that these approaches are highlighted and practiced in a manner that respect their roots.

### **Standardization and Quality Control Issues in Ayurvedic Products**

The global popularity for Ayurvedic products has given rise to major difficulties including uniformity and quality assurance. Assuring the security, protection, efficiency and genuineness of these products is important for balancing customer trust and achieving global regulatory norms.

**1. Lack of Standardization: Variability-** Ayurvedic products many times have face critiques incoherent composition and doses due to customary methods which can differ broadly. This difference may affect the quality of the product as well as the efficiency. This is because when it comes to standardization manufacturing practice and standard of quality is crucial for gaining an international recognition and confidence (Krishna, et al., 2020).

**2. Quality Control:** It is crucial to maintain the hygiene and efficacy of Ayurvedic products and thus requires standard methods of quality control to prevent contamination with heavy metals, toxicants and adulterations (Krishna, et al., 2020). The solution to the problems is to ensure that the company complies with the Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) and other international quality standards.

**3. Regulatory Compliance:** Comparing and contrasting the rules and regulations of different countries is a challenging task since every other country has its set of rules and regulations for plant-based and pharmaceutical products. Investments in studies, records and adherence are crucial in order to guarantee that the products are in compliance with the international norms.

**4. Scientific Validation:** To gain credibility in the international market, Ayurvedic products need to have- scientific proof through research investigations and inquiries (Krishna et al., 2020). Joint research initiatives with other global organisations can assist in developing the efficiency and security of Ayurvedic therapies, increasing their compliance and incorporation into contemporary and advanced medical health practices.

### **Critiques Regarding Commodification and Commercialization of Yoga**

The promotion of Yoga has led to significant critiques, particularly regarding its commodification. Yoga, traditionally a holistic spiritual practice, is often reduced to physical exercise in various regions of the world.

#### **1. Commercial Exploitation:**

Critics have reviewed that Yoga has been materialised to the point that sometimes it falls out of its nature and substances. Yoga centres, resorts and commodities are branded firmly, many a times putting importance to financial gain over originality. This commodification can compromise the holistic and philosophical dynamics of Yoga, limiting to simple a bare body fitness (Anastasia, 2017)

#### **2. Cultural Sensitivity:**

The representation of Yoga in mainstream culture, frequently by those not acquainted with its more profound meaning, can helm to cultural ignorance. Adapted or modified form of yoga can misrepresent the approach, leading to a shallow knowledge among the professionals. Cultural sensitivity programs and activities for Yoga trainers and workshop organisers can assist them in knowing the socio-cultural importance of Yoga and encourage courteous approach.

#### **3. Inclusivity and Accessibility:**

While Yoga has become broadly reachable, the expensive trainings, sessions and certification courses can make it confined, restricted to those who can able to support it. This confinement differs with Yoga's source of roots as an approach meant for all every human being, irrespective of their financial status. Providing charge less or affordable yoga training and therapies in community halls, educational institutions and neighbourhood areas can make Yoga much broad and comprehensive and approachable.

**4. Spiritual Dilution:** Motivating yoga centres to incorporate moral guidelines, spiritual meditation and breathing exercises along with the physical fitness trainings and practices can assist in conserving the spiritual norms and values of Yoga.

### **Addressing the Criticisms**

#### **1. Education and Awareness:**

Encouraging a thorough knowledge of Yoga and Ayurveda with the help training, teaching and outreach campaigns can assist in improving the challenges of cultural appropriation and commercialisation. Conducting programs, conferences and seminars, resources which examines the classical, philosophical and holistic aspects of these approaches can advance absolute appreciation.

#### **2. Quality Assurance:**

Adopting binding quality control standards and sticking to global criterion for Ayurvedic products can form customer trust and assure security and safeness. Supervisory agencies and professional organisations can play a significant part examining and verifying products.

#### **3. Promoting Authenticity:**

Building yoga training centres and retreat hubs, supporting trainers and yoga teachers to respect the ancient originality of Yoga can assist in security the morality and virtue of Yoga, including norms and values, philosophies, respiratory exercises aligning with body fitness practices can protect its genuineness.

**4. Inclusivity Initiatives:** Forming Yoga more comprehensive and broader and affordable through non-profit ventures, reasonable courses and fellowships for practitioners can help in standardize the process. Assuring that Yoga continues to be the approach, which is inclusive of all the individuals, irrespective of their financial and social status, corresponds to its initial intent.

### **Future Prospects and Recommendations**

India is fast emerging as a soft power giant and Ayurveda and Yoga hold a lot of promise to strengthen India's global outreach further. The following recommendations outline how the effect of these ancient practices can be enhanced to the greatest possible extent:

## **1. Strategic Recommendations for Enhancing India's Soft Power through Ayurveda and Yoga**

### **Institutional Support and Policy Framework:**

**Government Initiatives:** Ayurveda and Yoga, the government of India can continue the efforts to strengthen the Ayurveda and Yoga policies to make them an important part of India's culture and health diplomacy. This would mean, providing funds for the Yoga and Ayurveda centres in different parts of the world, education and encouraging research and development.

**Global Alliances:** As a way of increasing its power, India ought to forge alliances with countries that have the same interest in the health of the whole person. These partnerships can be in the form of health projects, research works and even organizing of international conferences on Ayurveda and Yoga.

### **Cultural Diplomacy Programs:**

**Cultural Exchanges:** Promoting and enhancing cultural diplomacy on Ayurveda and Yoga would go a long way in enhancing the appreciation of the practices across the globe. Such programs could include the dispatch of Indian experts and academics to other countries and the arrival of foreign students and academic in India.

**Global Wellness Tourism:** Wellness tourism can be marketed to India to bring in tourists in search of Ayurveda and Yoga treatments for the treatment of diseases and spiritual enlightenment respectively. Specialized wellness retreats together with Ayurveda hospitals meant for international tourists can also be an added advantage to this sector.

## **2. Leveraging Digital Platforms and Social Media for Outreach**

### **Digital Transformation:**

**Online Platforms:** The availability of the digital platforms on the international level makes it easier to popularize Ayurveda and Yoga. Creating integrated online platforms and applications that can offer people a chance to get real Ayurveda consultations, Yoga classes and learn more about the subject can thus open up the whole world to India.

**E-Learning Courses:** Providing online classes and certification in Ayurveda and Yoga can help the people to learn these concepts at their comfort of their homes and across the globe. Collaborating with different institutions of learning to offer approved courses may also help to boost their reputation.

### **Social Media Engagement:**

**Content Creation:** To spread the message about Ayurveda and Yoga, one can use social media channels like Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok and produce relevant content that can be interesting for the younger audiences. Content can include video tutorials and live classes of Yoga as well as Ayurveda tips and people's transformation stories.

**Influencer Collaborations:** Marketing Ayurveda and Yoga can be made more effective by partnering with global influencers and celebrities interested in lifestyle health. These collaborations can go in a long way in promoting such practices to other people and thus create a good impression of India's culture.

### **3. Strengthening Educational and Research Collaborations**

#### **Academic Partnerships:**

**Global Universities:** It would be beneficial to sign memoranda of understanding with the international universities, research centres and other partners for the improvement of the credibility of Ayurveda as well as Yoga. Joint research programs, exchange programs, and collaborative studies can help the members of the global academic community comprehend these practices in a better way.

**International Chairs:** It is a good idea to create chairs in Ayurveda and Yoga at the world's leading universities to encourage the academic study and practice of the subjects. This can also give Indian scholars a chance to participate in the discourse on traditional knowledge systems of the world.

#### **Research and Development:**

**Clinical Trials:** Strengthening the clinical trials and research to prove the efficacy of Ayurveda and Yoga can make a way for its acceptance in the modern medical world. Partnership with global health organizations can help in the creation of research infrastructure and capacity.

**Innovation in Products and Services:** Promoting innovation of the Ayurvedic products and Yoga related services including the formulation of new products, wellness products and therapeutic measures will go a long way in enhancing the roles of these practices in the current health care system. Collaborating with the biotech firms and the wellness firms can help foster this innovation.

#### 4. Expanding Global Reach through Multilingual and Multicultural Approaches

**Language Accessibility:** To make Ayurveda and Yoga more understandable for the people, who do not have English as their first language; it is useful to provide the information in several languages, as well as courses and other materials. It is possible to translate the main texts, applications and online platforms into different languages and thus increase its audience.

**Culturally Adapted Practices:** The application of Yoga and Ayurveda to meet the cultural and social needs of the different areas while at the same time following the fundamental principles will lead to their acceptance and inclusion.

#### Conclusion

This research paper explores how India uses Ayurveda and Yoga through knowledge diplomacy as foreign policy tool. These practices have been in existence for thousands of years as part of the Indian culture and have developed into worldwide representations of the wholesome living thus increasing India's power. India has also used diplomacy to promote the health of the world and its relation with other countries, for instance through the International Day of Yoga and opening of Ayurvedic centres in other countries. But there are difficulties, including cultural appropriation, commodification, and the problems of standardisation. To this end, the conservation of these issues through educational out reaches, digital media, and international relationships will be important in maintaining their importance in the contemporary world. In conclusion, Ayurveda and Yoga, thus, are powerful tools in India's soft power diplomacy as a way of fostering cultural diplomacy, economic diplomacy, and diplomatic diplomacy to the rest of the world.

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