



## Review Article

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### AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR TOWARDS AYURVEDIC MEDICINE AND PRACTICES: A REVIEW

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#### ABSTRACT

In current Marketing trends, the study of consumer behaviour has become crucial. Consumers are the king of markets. Without consumer no business or organization can run. All the activities of the business concern end with consumer's satisfaction and consumer satisfaction gives us a clear picture of product performance. Ayurveda system of medicine has uniqueness in treating the patients because it focuses on symptoms and root cause. In this article, a set of dimensions are identified, which can be used to characterize and differentiate the various perspectives on consumer research. This article aims to identify different streams of thought that could guide future consumer research towards Ayurveda system of medicine and from the review it is found that some consumer like to consume Allopathic medicine in case of fast relief and emergency. On the other hand, consumers/patients have a positive opinion towards Ayurvedic system of medicine due to no side effects, natural ingredient and less surgical practices.

**Keywords:** Consumers, Ayurvedic Medicine and Practices, Consumer behaviour, Allopathic Medicines

#### INTRODUCTION

All human beings are consumers. They consume things of daily use. They also consume and buy these products according to their needs, preferences and buying powers.<sup>1</sup> No matter who are they- urban or rural, male or female, young or old, rich or poor, educated or uneducated or whatever- but all are consumers. Consumer behaviour has two aspects: the final purchase activity which is visible to us and the decision process which may involve the interplay of a number of complex variables not visible to us<sup>2</sup>. In fact, purchase behaviour is the end result of a long process of consumer decision making. A consumer buying behaviour is influenced by cultural, social, personal and psychological factors. Most of these factors are uncontrollable and beyond the hands of marketers but they have to be considered while trying to understand the complex behaviour of the consumers.

Now, people are becoming more aware about good health and they are moving towards natural products and therapies, because they believe that the herbal or Ayurvedic products represent the protection in contrast to the artificial that are considered to be unsafe to the human and environment. On the other side, some people prefer Allopathic medicine system as they consider that these medicines gives quick relief and also easily available everywhere at any time.

In India, drugs of herbal origin have been used in traditional systems of medicines such as Unani and Ayurveda since ancient times. The Ayurveda system of medicine uses about 700 species, Unani 700, Siddha 600, Amchi 600 and modern medicine around 30 species<sup>3</sup>. About 8,000 herbal remedies

have been codified in Ayurveda. Of the 2, 50,000 higher plant species on the earth, more than 80,000 are medicinal. India's one of the world's 12 biodiversity centres with the presence of over 45,000 different plant species<sup>4</sup>.

In this paper a literature review is provided and also an explanation that how consumers have been reacting on Ayurveda medicines and practices, their preferences and behaviour. It has become very essential to know the factors that create the desire of consumers to purchase a product. Hence, the present study contributes to the field of consumers' buying behaviour towards the Ayurvedic medicines and their practices.

#### THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK

Ayurveda (pronounced as Ao-yer-vay-da) is considered one of the world's oldest healing science, originating in India at least 5000 years ago. Its name is a Sanskrit word that means "the wisdom of life" or "The knowledge of longevity".

#### Importance of Ayurveda

Ayurveda is a branch of medicine which originated and is practiced in India for more than 5000 years<sup>5</sup>. It is as fresh and useful to humans today as it was in the ancient times yet more relevant and applicable in these modern times. Its use provides a holistic approach to our daily lives.

The Ayurvedic 'Dincharya' or daily schedule helps to bring about peace and harmony in one's life<sup>6</sup>. Ayurvedic daily life routines are meant to enhance the total health of man, both mental and

physical. They are easy to follow and are not liable to cause trauma of any kind to the body or mind.

The aim of this system is to prevent illness, heal the sick and preserve life. This can be summed up as follows:

- To protect health and prolong life ("Swasthyas swasthya rakshanam")
- To eliminate diseases and dysfunctions of the body ("Aturasya vikar prashamanamcha")

Ayurveda is a holistic lifestyle system that teaches the practical details of the arrangement of food, body work, rest periods, and work, which aims to achieve balance of body, mind, and soul. Today, Ayurveda has been widely used in modern medicine systems<sup>7</sup>.

Ayurvedic treatment can be broadly divided into two:

- Shamana Chikitsa (Alleviating Therapy)
- Sodhana Chikitsa (Purification Therapy)

**Shamana Chikitsa** is a mild treatment procedure and is used to treat minor ailments or problems and correct slight imbalance in the Doshas, Dhatus, Malas and Agni. Intake of medicines forms the main treatment method in this therapy. In this process there is no elimination of toxic by products and the effect of the treatment is of shorter duration than Sodhana Chikitsa.

**Sodhana Chikitsa** is a stronger treatment procedure and involves the elimination of harmful materials deposited in the body. There are primarily five procedures in this therapy, collectively called Panchakarma (See the page on Panchakarma for more details). Through this procedure, which is considered to be superior to Shamana Chikitsa, the root cause of diseases is removed and the imbalance in Tridoshas is eliminated. Accordingly the results of this treatment last longer.

There is a summary which explains real importance of Ayurveda.

There are lot of features which make Ayurveda a complete package for human health. It increases immunity system to fight with disease which gradually helps patients to improve their health. Or In case of any imbalance and derangement Ayurveda maintain the equilibrium to repair. In Ayurveda environment also has its importance because Ayurveda believe in natural species which gives equal importance to mental health too. Ayurveda assist each individual for their existing patterns to bring about health and peace and it gives equal importance to both preventive and curative aspects.

Hence, Ayurveda is the system which does not only deal with your diseases but also work for whole body. It also deals with some important medical subjects such as genetics, gynaecology, aetiology, surgery, physiology, biology, diet, ethics, personal hygiene, social medicine, and allied subjects like animal biology, botany, cultivation, pharmacognosy, chemistry, and cosmology<sup>8</sup>.

#### Literature review and critical analysis of consumer behaviour towards in various medicines

Sr No	Author (Year)	Research Topic	Types of Study	Results and Findings
1.	Gupta V.K., Gupta C.D., Patel J.R. (2012)	Assessment of Awareness and Attitudes towards Over-the-Counter (OTC) Drugs amongst Urban Population: A Questionnaire Based Study	Descriptive Study	The findings from this study highlights the striking prevalence of the use of OTC drugs, the lack of knowledge and the risks associated with them. OTC drugs are widely used and so it is very difficult to restrict them. Also as the main factor found to influence the people to use OTC drugs was pharmacist recommendations. <sup>9</sup>
2.	Kong F.H., Man L.K., Shetty R.S., Kamath V.G. (2013)	Knowledge, Attitude and Practice of Complementary and Alternative Medicine (CAM) among Medical Practitioners	Descriptive Study	In this study they found that Half of the doctors opined that CAM is better than Allopathic in treating certain cases; is cost effective and carries fewer side effects. Majority thought that integrated treatment would be more effective than allopathic treatment alone. <sup>10</sup>
3.	Dr. Vijayendra Murthy	Women's attitudes towards Complementary and Alternative Medicine (CAM) in Their Choice of Self-Prescribed Herbal Medicines for Back Pain	Descriptive Study	The reasons for CAM use that there is dissatisfaction with conventional medical treatment, long waiting hours for appointments with doctors and lack of access to conventional medical care. <sup>11</sup>
4.	Dr. M U Subrahmanian, Dr. R. Prasanna Venkateshan (2011)	Awareness on Ayurvedic system of Medicine in Chennai City	Descriptive Study	Respondent believe that the Ayurveda is a medical science and aware on its efficacy in healing process. Almost are aware about Ayurveda as an alternative healthcare choice through either obtaining treatment for themselves or family members taking Ayurvedic treatment for their health problems. <sup>12</sup>
5.	Pragna Patel, Arpit Prajapati, Barna Ganguly, Bharat Gajjar (2013)	Study on Impact of Pharmacology Teaching on Knowledge, Attitude and Practice on Self-Medication among Medical Students.	Descriptive Study	They found that students prefer self medication (Ayurvedic Medication) in case of minor ailments, Allopathic for quick relief, to save time and past experience. <sup>13</sup>
6.	Ariela Keysar, Barry A. Kosmin, Umesh Gidwani (2013)	Traditionalism, Professional, and the Identity and Attitudes of Academics and Physicians in India towards Alternative medicine.	Descriptive Study	They found in the study that alternative medicines are symptoms focused, external manifestation and there are no side effects even low cost. <sup>14</sup>

7.	Peter B. James, Abdulai J. Bab (2014)	Awareness, use, attitude and perceived need for Complementary and Alternative Medicine (CAM) education among undergraduate pharmacy students in Sierra Leone: a descriptive cross-sectional survey	Descriptive Study	Students found CAM effective and less harmful. They are aware and used (expect Ayurveda) at least once of the listed CAM modalities. <sup>15</sup>
8.	Kushagra Nagori, Mukesh Sharma, Abhishek Agrawal, Ankur Kumar Agarwal, Amal Sharma, Harsh Verma, P.K. Tripathi	General Awareness on Allopathic, Ayurvedic and Homeopathic System of Medicine in Chhattisgarh, India.	Descriptive Study	People prefer Ayurvedic medicine because of its efficacy and especially in case of long term disease. And for Allopathic people responded that it's good in case of emergency and convenient to use. <sup>16</sup>
9.	Ram Harsh Singh (2009)	Exploring Quantum Logic in Ayurveda with special reference to SROTOVIJNANA of Ayurveda	Explorative Study	As regards the tools of health care and cure, Ayurveda emphasize the role of healthy diet, Positive life style and nutraceuticals medication. Ayurveda always considers promotion of health and prevention of disease with greater emphasis than therapeutic care. <sup>17</sup>
10.	Vani Nikhil Laturkar	Consumer Behaviour Towards Over-the-Counter Herbal Products in India	Descriptive Study	The findings revealed that people prefer herbal products because of changing socio-economic structures and functioning of society. Consumers get more influenced primarily because of advertisement and followed by advice of family relatives and friends. Consumers are loyal towards herbal medicines. <sup>18</sup>
11.	Pankaj K Dasana, Manoj K Jangra, Ankit Gupta, Sandeep K Singh(2014)	Switching Trends from Allopathic to Ayurvedic System of Medicine : A survey in Ayurvedic Hospital of Latitpur (U.P.)	Descriptive Study	The findings from the present study revealed that maximum number of people undergoing Ayurveda therapy for their illness had shifted from Allopathic system of medicine. The basic reason shifting towards Ayurveda and herbal are the time taking process of Allopathic to reach the root cause of chronic disease. Having side effects and economical cures. <sup>19</sup>
12.	Manjusha K Borde, H.N. Lalao, I.P. Seeta Mohanty Ray, T. Sanjeeva Kumar Gond (2014)	Health Awareness and Popularity of Allopathic, Ayurvedic and Homeopathic System of Medicine among Navi Mumbai Population.	Descriptive Study	In this study the most important factor for choosing Ayurveda medicine is its efficacy and no side effects. Where for Allopathic medicine, consumers prefer it in case of emergency. <sup>20</sup>
13.	Government of NCT of Delhi Report (2006)	Evaluation Report on Ayurvedic Dispensaries of Delhi Govt. September-2006	Report	Indigenous medicine, less side effects, cheap, effective for chronic disease, faith in the system, past experience. <sup>21</sup>
14.	Emily Carroll, Younes Lattenist, Jatin Luthia, Marija Sarac( 2008)	Ayurvedic Medicine Entrepreneurship & Innovation Strategy	Descriptive Study	In this study they found that people feel Ayurvedic medicine is a Fresh Medicine, safe. There is less cost and even develop high immunity with no side effects. <sup>22</sup>
15.	Dr. Arun Bhatt (2005)	Ayurvedic Herbal Industry: QUEST for Global Acceptance	Review Paper	Herbal medicine products have become popular because of perceived safety and economy and time taking process of Allopathic to cure everything. <sup>23</sup>
16.	Susan Harmon (2007)	Complementary and Alternative Medicine: Awareness and Attitude.	Descriptive Study	women are traditionally more involved in health issues and decisions Than are men, awareness of the CAMs did not differ significantly except for meditation. Nearly half of the women were familiar with this as a medical approach, while less than one-third of the men were. <sup>24</sup>
17.	Soretha Du Plessis (2012)	A Survey to Determine the Attitude towards Complementary and Alternative Medicine by Users in Cape Town	Descriptive Study	It was found that people focused on homeopathy because there is no side effect. Perception regarding CAM is effective and safe to use. <sup>25</sup>
18.	Bodhisattwa Maiti, Nagon B.P., Rambir Singh, Pragati Kumar, Nishant Upadhyay (2011)	Recent Trends in Herbal Drugs: A Review	Review Paper	A major factor impeding the development of the medicinal plant based industries in developing countries has been the lack of information on the social and economic benefits that could be derived from the industrial utilization of medicinal plants. <sup>26</sup>
19.	Rajeev Sawant (2013)	Consumer's Perception For Ayurvedic Therapy In Rural Market With Special Reference To Nashik District.	Descriptive Study	Findings about consumer's perceptions regarding the Ayurvedic Products indicated that mostly people use Ayurvedic Products on regular basis, while rest are using with other medications, and some of them have used once or twice. Analysis revealed that, there is no significance difference between male and female consumers on their experience for Ayurvedic products. The rural area consumers know and preferred Ayurvedic products at large. <sup>27</sup>

20.	Kumar Sunil, Times of India (2012)	Keralites prefer Allopathy to Ayurveda, says survey	Survey Method	A survey conducted by Kerala Sasthra Sahithya Parishath (KSSP) revealed that only 6.6% of the population opted Ayurveda, while 87% preferred allopathic and the reason found that Insurance coverage is not considered in Ayurveda system of medicine. <sup>28</sup>
21.	Dixit Kapil, Times of India (2013)	People Prefer Going for Ayurvedic Treatment	Survey Method	Be it a common disease like fever, cough and cold, constipation or diarrheal, arthritis and urine problem, the Ayurvedic drugs are in great demand with patients approaching AYUSH doctors for the treatment. <sup>29</sup>
22.	Unnikrishan Payyappallimana (2009)	Role of Traditional Medicine in Primary Health Care: An Overview of Perspectives and Challenges	Descriptive Study	The study concluded that It is evident that any model of healthcare based on a single system of medicine will find it difficult to cope with the health care demands in near future. It is also obvious that traditional and cultural medical knowledge has a catalyzing effect in meeting health sector development objectives and will continue to be so in both the worlds. But there exist major differences in the usage of TCAM (Traditional Medicine/Complementary and Alternative Medicine) in developed and developing world. <sup>30</sup>
23.	Surinder M. Bhardwaj (1975)	Attitude toward different systems of medicine: A survey of four villages in the Punjab—India	Descriptive Study	Social Characteristic ( Cast, Level of education, Occupation) <sup>31</sup>
24.	Vikrant Arya, Ranveer Thakar, Suresh Kumar, Sanjeev Kumar (2012)	Consumer Buying Behaviour towards Ayurvedic Medicines/Products in Joginder Nager- A Survey.	Descriptive Study	The findings revealed that 64.8% of the consumers preferred Ayurvedic medicines in comparison with Allopathic (32.6%), Homeopathic (1.8%), and Unani (0.8%) medication/therapy. In terms of reliability 73.6% consumers purchased the Ayurvedic medicines with sample of 500 consumers at distinct places of Joginder Nagar. <sup>32</sup>
25.	Dr. Pavan Kumar Kulkarni, Dr Maseer Khan, Dr. A Chandrashekhhar (2012)	Self Medication Practices Among Urban Slum Dwellers in South Indian City.	Descriptive Study	The study found that most of the people use Allopathic medicine for self treatment. Especially for minor disease like pain, cold, cough and fever. The reason for self medication is high fees of doctor, poor quality of care in government hospitals and the most important they don't feel needed to take advices from the doctor in case of minor ailments. <sup>33</sup>
26.	S.Mohan, Dr. S. Saravanan (2011)	A Study on Problems Faced by the Women Entrepreneur in Health Care Industry in Erode.	Descriptive Study	It is found that respondent believe that the Ayurveda is a medical science and aware on its efficacy in healing process. They are aware about Ayurveda as an alternative healthcare choice through either obtaining treatment for themselves or family members taking Ayurvedic treatment for their health problems. <sup>34</sup>
27.	Malvi Reetesh, Bigoniya Papiya, Jain Sonam (2011)	Study on Impact of Pharmacology Teaching on Knowledge, Attitude and Practice on Self- Medication among Medical Students.	Descriptive Study	The study found that self medication is mostly taken by males. They got information mostly from either chemist or advertisements. They prefer it because of quick relief and have less time. They take it in case of common ailments. <sup>35</sup>
28.	Padam Singh, R.J. Yadav, Arvind Pandey (2005)	Utilization of Indigenous Systems of Medicine & Homoeopathy in India	Descriptive Study	Those who preferred ISM&H, the reasons were mainly 'no side effect' and low cost of treatment. Slow progress was the main reason for not preferring the indigenous systems. <sup>36</sup>
29.	Vivek Sharma, Saurav Thakur, Nikhil Bhatt, Rajendra Guleria, Ranjit Singh (2012)	Self Medication and Drug Use Patterns in a Town of Himachal Pradesh: A Survey.	Descriptive Study	The study showed that the prevalence of self medication was high in the educated group rather than uneducated group. Self medication was mostly employed for pain, cough, fever, and cold and also protein/vitamin supplementation was evident in common people. Chemists/ Pharmacists followed by TV print media were the major source of information for self medication, followed by friends and advertisement. <sup>37</sup>
30.	A. Krishnan, P. Bagyalakshimi, S. Ramya, R. Jayakumaraj (2008)	Revitalization of Siddha Medicine in Tamilnadu, India - Changing Trends in Consumer's Attitude: A Survey	Descriptive Study	The study revealed that Less number of subjects used Siddha medicine from the beginning and majority of subjects switched from other traditional system of medicine like Ayurveda, Allopathic, Unani and Homeopathic. <sup>38</sup>

31.	Ajay Kumar Meena, Praveen Bansal, Sanjeev Kumar (2009)	Plants-Herbal Wealth as a Potential Source of Ayurvedic Drugs	Descriptive Study	Ayurvedic medicinal plant products are most Convenient and have greater acceptance amongst the users due to their easy availability easy biodegradability, easy to handling, economic cost, mankind and environment friendly nature both and minimum side effect. <sup>39</sup>
32.	Rajesh Uttam Kanthe (2010)	Self Medication, Doctor and Marketing of OTC Products	Descriptive Study	They found that OTC products are marketed and advertised freely so that maximum consumers are educated and treat minor ailments at home Using OTC products as first line of defence. It is used mainly with the influence of advertisements. They don't have enough trust on doctors and time saving. <sup>40</sup>
33.	Dr. Vaijayanthi, Reena Roy, Bikramaditya Roy, (2012)	Strategic Marketing Model for Practice of Ayurvedic Medicine- A Case Study of Tiruchirapalli and Thanjavur Districts, Tamilnadu.	Case Study	The findings of the study indicate that paucity of scientific endorsement (clinical tests) to be the most heavily felt impediment to Ayurvedic practice. With the presumption that scientific testing is feasible. <sup>41</sup>
34.	Neha Mehta (2011)	The Interactions of the Traditional and Modern Healthcare Systems in Gujarat	Exploratory Research	In this study 500 surveys were orally administered. The results from this study do indicate that the aforementioned factors affect health system choice. <sup>42</sup>
35.	Sunil Jawla, A.K.Gupta, Rachit Singla, Varun Gupta (2009)	General Awareness and Relative Popularity of Allopathic, Ayurvedic and Homeopathic Systems	Descriptive Study	According to the survey (500 responses) 41.1% people were satisfied up to 50-75% with efficacy of Herbal drugs. A large portion of population up to 50% prefers Allopathic, 28% prefer Ayurvedic and 20% prefer homeopathic system of medicines. In case of medical emergencies people prefer Allopathic and In case of common ailments people prefer Ayurvedic medicine. <sup>43</sup>
36.	Swati Kewlani, Sandeep Singh (2012)	Prospects of Traditional Therapy: Consumer's Perception an Empirical Study of Rural Market with Special Reference to Indore District.	Empirical Study	Research finding about the consumers' perception regarding the Ayurvedic products In rural areas and around Indore indicated that 68% people use Ayurvedic products and 32% of the people use Homoeopathic and Allopathic products. Findings further showed that the percentage of people using Ayurvedic medicine is very less and restricted to only 25% of the whole population i.e. 200 <sup>44</sup>
37.	Trambak Mukherjee (2006)	Prevalence and Pattern of Use of Allopathic and Ayurvedic Medicines in Hypertension, Diabetes, Asthma, and Arthritis Patients in a Tertiary care Hospital in Mysore	Descriptive Study	A total 148 patients were reviewed of which 32 patients were found to use both systems of medicine together giving a high incidence rate of 21.62% of concomitant use of Ayurvedic and Allopathic Medicine. There was quite high incidence rate of concomitant use of both systems of medicines especially in case of asthma and arthritis because these are diseases which affect the quality of life the most. <sup>45</sup>
38.	Charlee Thongruang (2008)	Consumer Purchasing Behaviour for Herbal Medicine in Drugstore in Bangkok	Descriptive Study	The findings are that most of the respondents prefer herbal medicine to cure their own illness or health prevention and to enhance their health. The source of information is physicians, pharmacists or nurses. <sup>46</sup>
39.	Katarina Boström (2011)	Consumer Behaviour of Pharmacy Customers	Descriptive Study	Results show that in order of importance based on average results, the top three reasons behind the consumer's choice of pharmacy is the following; location (being by far most important), product range, staff. Likewise the top three order for choosing OTC medicines is; pharmacist's opinion and recommendation, families and friends opinion and recommendation, product brand or producer. <sup>47</sup>

## DISCUSSION

Overall, it is argued many times that the study of consumer behaviour is rapidly developing as researchers identify and implement new techniques and perspectives to understand the nature of purchase and consumption behaviour. However, the arena of consumer research goes far beyond the managerial perspective, when primary focus is placed on consumption.<sup>48,49</sup> It is found from the literature review that people prefer and consume Ayurvedic system of medicine because there are no

side effects; it is cost effective, natural drugs and cure disease from the roots. On the other side some people also prefer to consume Allopathic system of medicine because in their opinion it gives fast relief, easily available and most important people use Allopathic medicine in case of emergency. It is also found that some people prefer to take both the type of medicine at a time. Researcher can focus on all the aspects which influence the consumer behaviour towards Ayurvedic and Allopathic medicines and practices. Research on consumer behaviour in other areas like practitioner's attitude towards the different

medicines is welcomed as future research. Although, as per the literature review, Gujarat has a unique importance for Ayurveda but somewhere it is lacking to study the consumer or patient's behaviour towards different medicines.

### MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

This study will be contributing to the growing literature on consumer behaviour towards Ayurvedic medicines and practices through a profound survey. Manufacturer can benefit from such study and develop some strategies that consider the importance of these medicines in particular circumstances. Studying consumer behaviour particularly towards Ayurvedic medicines and practices may introduce new opportunities or ideas for Ayurveda practitioners and also may help to consumer by making them aware about the treatments available for different diseases.

### CONCLUSION

Based on the literature review It can be concluded that India has maintain an extensive usage of many herbal medicines like Ayurveda, Unani, Siddha, Homeopathy etc but these systems are steadily swapped by Allopathy or modern system of medicine due to easy availability, worldwide usage, fast healing, more number of practitioner and hospitals.

Many practitioners fear that the popularity of Allopathic medicines threatens the survival of the traditional systems. Modern medicines have contributed a great deal to controlling a number of dreaded disease but we can't avoid the equal contribution of the traditional medicines in India and even few neighbouring countries.

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