

Ayurveda, Yoga, and Indigenous Wellness Practices: Reviving India's Traditional Knowledge through Startups

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Since ancient times Indian Knowledge system (IKS) is the vast body of knowledge, practice and philosophies developed in India with key pillars of Philosophy (metaphysics, ethics and epistemology, Science & Technology (AYUSH, architecture, Vedic mathematics, astronomy, metallurgy), Arts & Culture and Social Sciences. Indian Knowledge System is characterised by its holistic approach, interdisciplinary nature, emphasising on wellbeing, experiential learning through observation, experience and experimentation with “*Guru-Shishya Parampara*” and harmonious living with nature. Ayurveda as a practice of traditional wellness system is one of them and now it has been integrated with other traditional medicine of India and wellness practices and it is renamed as AYUSH (Ayurveda, Yoga, Unani, Siddha and Homeopathy). The affordability and effectiveness of AYUSH therapies have contributed to a surge in domestic and international interest, positioning India as a hub for traditional medicine research and practice.

In tandem, the 10th International Yoga Day on 21st June 2025 has been celebrated as Yogas global appeal along with twin objective on its growing role in employment generation and skill development (Ministry of AYUSH, Govt of India, 2025). The theme of International Yoga Day-2025 is: “YOGA FOR ONE EARTH, ONE HEALTH,” emphasising the unity of Human, Animal and Environmental well-being (PIB, 2025). The International Day of Yoga, celebrated in over 190 countries, showcases India's soft power. The reinstated Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS), Entrepreneurial Ecosystem with Digital Ecosystem, Treasure of Cultural Capital, Wellness Economy Framework and Ayush Global Reach particularly in Southeast Asia, Europe and America gives boost to emerge AYUSH as a community based and sustainable movement to position India as a Global Wellness Destination through AYUSH, Yoga and Wellness Tourism. The significantly increasing number of MSME (Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises) in the Ayush industry indicates its potential in terms of revenue and employment. Synergistically economic contributions of tourism industry with 10% of the GDP and 8% of the employment both in the organised and unorganised sector (FICCI, 2022).

The Indian Ayush industry is projected to grow from US\$ 43.3 Billion in 2024 to US\$ 200 Billion by 2030 reflecting an exponential growth of eight times over the past decade (IBEF, 2025). The Ayush and Herbal drugs export reached from US\$ 527 million in the first ten months of financial year of 2024 up from US\$ 518 million in the same period of the previous fiscal year. The leading destination of wellness, yoga, meditation are Kerala, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand (Rishikesh) and Uttar Pradesh (Varanasi) and many more are entering in the wellness network of India. The trio of AYUSH-TOURISM-ICT&AI have the immense potential to contribute towards the target of 5 trillion dollar economy.

Startups and Wellness

Health and wellness tourism is a rapidly growing sector in India, particularly in states like Kerala, Uttarakhand, and Goa. Startups play a critical role in packaging and promoting immersive healing experiences. Platforms like **Ayurooms** and **Soukya** curate traditional therapies like Panchakarma, detox treatments, and Yoga retreats for international clients. By leveraging digital booking systems, verified practitioner networks, and multi-lingual support, these startups are globalizing the traditional wellness tourism model.

Startups are also innovating with products rooted in IKS. Traditional herbs, recipes, and healing formulations are being transformed into health supplements, organic cosmetics, herbal teas, and even functional foods. These products blend tradition and modernity through contemporary branding, evidence-based marketing, eco-friendly packaging, and digital commerce. Startups are also investing in clinical validation and R&D to address global consumer expectations. From Ayurveda-inspired nutrition to AI-powered fitness, Indian entrepreneurs are creating innovative wellness brands that are transforming how the world views health. The Indian wellness startups are expanding globally, driving industry change, and inspiring a new generation of health-first businesses.

India's policy environment has become increasingly favorable for wellness-based startups. Key initiatives by the government include **Startup India for incubation support**, **Ministry of AYUSH for policy support** through certification, quality control, and research & development and **AYUSH Grid for digital backbone of Ayush services**, contribution of different chambers of commerce like **FICCI and research group IBEF Reports (2025) which are highlighting India's leadership potential in global wellness.**

Leading Startups and Entrepreneurs:

Leading Startups of the Indian wellness market are **writing new history of startups with** scaling and digitalisation of India's traditional wisdom in competitive global markets. These startups offer holistic approach to health and well-being with a diverse Ayush based treatments including traditional massages, herbal remedies, yoga, and meditation, all aimed at to align the Mind, body and spirit in both domestic and global market are:

1. **Patanjali Ayurveda** - a large conglomerate, Haridwar, Uttarakhand,
2. **Cure.fit (now Cult.fit)**, Fitness & Holistic Wellness, Bangalore
3. **makeO (formerly Toothsi + Skinnsi)**, Beauty-Tech, Oral & Skin Wellness, Mumbai
4. **HealthifyMe**, Health-Tech, Nutrition, Bangalore
5. **Mindhouse (now Shyft)**, Mental Wellness & Holistic Health, Gurgaon
6. **Truweight (now Possible)**, Health & Nutrition Coaching, Bangalore
7. **Akayu**, Ayurveda, Personal Wellness, India
8. **Pee Safe**, Intimate Hygiene, Personal Care, Gurugram
9. **Soulfull (Tata Group)**, Healthy Food, Millets, Bangalore (Acquired by Tata in 2021)
10. **FITTR, Sector: Fitness Tech**, Social Wellness, Pune
11. **NadiPulse Prognostics Pvt. Ltd**, Ayurveda-Tech, Health Diagnostics, Gujarat
12. **Kapiva Ayurveda**, Leading online brand in wellness.

13. **Yog Naturopathy Panchkarma Treatment & Research Centre** (Yog Gram), Uttarakhand
14. **Holistic Integrated Institute of Medical Hospital (HIIMS)** a chain of 38 Ayush Hospitals with multiple locations in India.
15. **Ayursoukhyam:** A chain of Healing and Wellness Centres in Kerala and Maharashtra.

Emerging Opportunities

Entrepreneurship opportunities in the Ayush sector are expanding rapidly in India, driven by both government initiatives and a growing global demand for holistic and traditional health systems (Ayurveda, Yoga, Unani, Siddha, Homeopathic). Entrepreneurship in the wellness industry is all about identifying, creating and developing new products and services in response to the emerging potential, changing needs and demands of consumers. By Combining diplomacy, education, digital infrastructure, skill development and entrepreneurship in Ayush and Yoga is launchpad for million to explore sustainable and respected career path aligned with India's global wellness leadership.

These emerging paths reflected the Ayush sector's evolution from tradition to innovation, opening diverse and meaningful careers for India's youth. Rising awareness of preventive and mental health care, both in India and globally. WHO collaboration supporting traditional medicine and validating practices. National Ayush Mission actively promoting Ayush services nationwide. The Govt of India is actively supporting the skill development and certification of aspiring Yoga teachers and Ayush professional through various schemes, institutions and digital Platform. The following professionals are in demand to boost further for successful entrepreneurship in Ayush sector of India are **Clinical Practitioners and Therapist, Ayush practioners, Yoga instruction, Wellness retreat coordinators, ayurveda tourism experts, Clinical Researcher for Research and Development in Ayush pharmacology, Management teams for Startups which offers Ayush Product lines, Cross-Cultural Wellness Experts for Global market opportunities as Ayush experts, yoga experts through ICCR, MEA, Ayush officers, public health advisors for government hospitals and policy making**

Government Initiatives

The Govt of India actively supports the skill development and certification for aspiring AYUSH (Ayurveda, Yoga, Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and Homeopathy) professional and Yoga teachers through various schemes, institutions and digital platforms. The Ministry of AYUSH establishes YOGA CERTIFCATION BOARD to standardise and certify Yoga professionals and promotes Ayush Health and Wellness Centres (HWCs) as part of Ayushman Bharat Initiative to promote Yoga based and traditional wellness intervention to provide employment for certified Ayush practitioners and Yoga instructors.

The Skill India Misson led by the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) supports skill building for Ayush professionals through National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) to provide supports training providers under the Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana(PMKVY). Simultaneously the Healthcare Sector Skill Council (SSCs) and Beauty & Wellnes

Sector Skill Council offers training modules and certification in Yoga and wellness. Government initiatives such as the **Heal in India** campaign and AYUSH-certified wellness centers further empower these ventures to ensure safety, authenticity, and international credibility.

The Central Council for Research in Yoga & Naturopathy (CCRYN) offers fellowship and research grants to conduct research, training programmes and orientation for Yoga teachers. In order to supplement the initiatives, the National Institute of Naturopathy (NIN), Pune conducts continuing medical education programmes for AYUSH professionals. While providing educational support and scholarship, the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) offers Ayush Scholarship to Indian and international students who pursue UG, PG and Ph.D. programmes in the Ayush disciplines.

The SWAYAM platform provides free certified online courses in Yoga and Ayurveda. The Ministry collaborates with DIKSHA and other Ed-Tech platform to deliver digital content.

State Government and Universities Initiatives

Several States run State Ayush Mission with central Funding. Institutions like Morarji Desai National Institute of Yoga and Banaras Hindu University offers structured training and certification.

Himachal Pradesh plans to introduce Yoga as a separate subject in senior secondary schools. The, Himachal Pradesh is drafting the syllabus and formulating Recruitment Rules (RRs) for recruitment, training and promotion of Yoga teachers. Jharkhand integrates Yoga into daily school life under the Yoga Olympiad Initiative and Yoga clubs are being created to provide specialised training to the selected students. Uttar Pradesh Government is setting up Integrated Ayush College in every division and made Yoga and Naturopathy Centres mandatory in all such institutions.

Conclusion

Despite the growing opportunities, startups facing the challenges like **Scientific Validation, standardization**, lack of **Regulatory framework and Perception Barriers for use and authentication** of traditional wellness systems in the global markets. While addressing these challenges industry requires collaborations between research institutions, regulatory bodies, and entrepreneurs for **Invest in Research and Evidence for the IKS-based products**, **International Collaborations** for credibility and outreach and **Training and Certification** to develop globally recognized certification programs for IKS based traditional wellness practitioners.

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