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Headline: Looking Ayurveda and modern biology

Linking Ayurveda and modern biology

MEET 

There is need to train a new generation of teachers and students on how Ayurveda and modern medicine can complement each other, says Madan Thangavelu in conversation with C. Maya.

Nearly a decade after he began his work on the development of single DNA molecule and single-cell techniques for genome analysis at Trinity College, Cambridge, Madan Thangavelu realised that he didn't have all the answers.

"Since 1999, I had been working on developing single DNA molecule and single cell approaches for analysis of genomes, genome dynamics and genome variation when I found that I had reached a roadblock. There were some uncertainties and I suddenly realised that modern biology could only take me so far - I had reached the limit of the existing knowledge and experimentations and I needed a new framework to go on," says Dr. Thangavelu.

"Ayurveda gave me a new path to tread and directed me towards where I could go for my answers. It was a revelation that after so many years of research, science had come a full circle," Dr. Thangavelu said.


Talking to *The Hindu* on the sidelines of the Global Ayurveda Fest in the city, Dr. Thangavelu, a genome biologist, spoke about his incredible journey into the world of ancient knowledge which began some eight years ago. He found that Ayurveda had a system of logic and thinking which helped him find the missing details in the theory of biology. "The teachers of the Indian system of medicine in Kerala - the Kottakkal and the Moos families - and the Arya Vaidya Pharmacy in Coimbatore, with their generations of experience and knowledge, helped me interpret some of the vexing questions. In genomic research, it is a new information that some of the answers that all scientists are searching for might be found in this 3,500-year-old science," Dr. Thangavelu said.

It was shocking that the knowledge and awareness about these ancient texts were virtually all among people in Kerala, which was said to be the land where Ayurveda had its birth. Dr. Thangavelu said. "It is also a matter of concern whether in these times, there are clinicians or qualified Vaidyas who can interpret the wisdom in these texts correctly," he added.

"We need to train a new generation of teachers and students in how both systems can complement each other. The Institute of Ayurveda and Integrative Medicine (IAIM) in Yelahanka, Bangalore, is a new initiative which recognises that we need to do something in this direction," he said.

"The IAIM has launched a 'Vaidya-Scientist' fellowship programme - for which I am a mentor - where 18 Ayurveda MD doctors are being trained in modern biology and how to integrate proven health knowledge of both systems. These 'Vaidya-Scientists' will be the agents of change, who will take to the world the ancient wisdom of Ayurveda and the insights of modern biology," Dr. Thangavelu said.

Talks were also on with the Kerala University of Health and Allied Sciences to promote integrated medicine packages for illnesses such as stroke, where Ayurveda could do a lot of good on the rehabilitation side.



'Knowledge of ancient texts is virtually nil among people in Kerala.'

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Headline: Gizmos steal show at Ayurveda Festival

Gizmos steal show at Ayurveda festival

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The traditional forms of Ayurveda treatments are getting mechanised as 'Dharayantram', a unique machine that could perform 'dhara' in a cost-effective manner, has been introduced at the Global Ayurveda Festival being held at Kanakakkunnu.

A key feature of 'Dharayantram' is that the temperature of the oil or other fluid used for dhara could be maintained steadily throughout the process, which is not possible in the traditional method, said Dr Sathyendran from Palakkad who designed the device.

The machine also helps to recycle the oil or other fluids used for 'dhara' for the same patient, which again is not possible in the traditional system, he said.

Dr. Sathyendran is with Poornima Panchakarma Equipment. The price of 'Dharayantram' is around ₹20,000.

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Headline: Inauguration on Cultural Meet in Global Ayurveda Festival



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Headline: Global Ayurveda fest in Kanakakunnu



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Headline: Ayurvedic Biology will be the Science of tomorrow: Dr. M.S Valiathan



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Headline: Delegates in the Global Ayurveda Festival



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