

**POLICY FRAMEWORKS FOR AYUSH DISCIPLINES AND  
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**ABSTRACT**

AYUSH system of medicine is our rich traditional medical heritage, which plays a vital role in India's healthcare system. Since independence, the government has consistently taken significant policy-level interventions to institutionalise and mainstream Ayush disciplines. Policy frameworks like the national Ayush Mission 2014 and the NCISM/NCH Acts 2020 are standardising these disciplines with research-oriented education so that interdisciplinary collaboration can be encouraged. Despite all these, challenges persist, like inadequate funding, inconsistent regulatory standards, regional disparities in implementation, etc. To elevate AYUSH as a sustainable and inclusive healthcare model, we must address all the Challenges in its path. This Review provides an overview of the evolution, structure, and impact of current policy frameworks governing Ayush disciplines and education in India.

**KEYWORDS:** AYUSH, Traditional medicine, Policy frameworks, Integrative healthcare, medical education, Challenges, India.

**INTRODUCTION**

"Policy Frameworks for AYUSH Disciplines and Education in India" refers to the structured governance system regulating India's traditional medical systems—Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and Sowa-Rigpa, and Homoeopathy (AYUSH). Recognising their potential to contribute to universal health coverage and holistic well-being, the

Government of India has developed comprehensive policy frameworks to regulate, promote, and integrate AYUSH disciplines into the national healthcare system.<sup>[1]</sup> It aims to integrate these practices with modern medical sciences, while conserving its fundamental principles, concepts and virtues.

### **Evolution of AYUSH Policy Frameworks**

In 1995, the Department of Indian Systems of Medicine and Homoeopathy (ISM&H) was established under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.<sup>[1]</sup>

In 2003, it was renamed the Department of AYUSH, and in 2014, an independent Ministry of AYUSH was formed.<sup>[1]</sup>

The National Health Policy (NHP) of 2017 further solidified the role of AYUSH by its integration into mainstream healthcare.<sup>[2]</sup>

The Ayushman Bharat initiative, launched in 2018, incorporated AYUSH systems into Health and Wellness Centres (HWCs) to provide healthcare at the grassroots level.<sup>[3]</sup>

### **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

The policy framework of a government refers to the system by which policies (laws, rules, and strategies) are made, implemented, and interpreted. While it's not technically divided into the three organs of government—विधायिका (Legislature), कार्यपालिका (Executive), and न्यायपालिका (Judiciary), for understanding the policy framework, these can be nicely used.<sup>[13]</sup>

1. विधायिका (Legislature) – Policy Formulation
2. कार्यपालिका (Executive) – Policy Implementation
3. न्यायपालिका (Judiciary) – Policy Interpretation & Review

#### **1. Legislature (Vidhayika)**

The legislative branch, comprising the Parliament of India (Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha) and state legislatures, is responsible for making laws and establishing statutory bodies.

It is Accountable to the public through elections and parliamentary debates. Laws are passed transparently.

They define rules at the legislative level, which are then implemented by executive bodies (Karyapalika) and enforced by quasi-judicial bodies (Nyayapalika). It creates the legal backbone by enacting Acts that establish Statutory bodies.<sup>[13]</sup>

### **Key Acts and Statutory Bodies**

#### **1. National Commission for Indian System of Medicine Act, 2020**

It replaced the Indian Medicine Central Council Act of 1970, establishing the National Commission for Indian System of Medicine (NCISM) to regulate education and practice in Ayurveda, Unani, Siddha, and Sowa-Rigpa.<sup>[4]</sup>

##### **a. National Commission for Indian System of Medicine (NCISM)**

It was created under Section 3 of the National Commission for Indian System of Medicine Act, 2020 (Act No. 14 of 2020), as the apex statutory body for regulating Ayurveda, Unani, Siddha, and Sowa-Rigpa.<sup>[4]</sup>

It responds to legislative queries (e.g., parliamentary questions, policy clarifications) by enacting subordinate legislation (regulations) under the Act. For example:

NCISM (Minimum Standards of Education in Indian Medicine) Regulations, 2022: Specify infrastructure (e.g., 100-bed hospitals), faculty (postgraduate degrees), and curriculum (60% traditional, 40% modern sciences).<sup>[5]</sup>

##### **b. Advisory Council for Indian System of Medicine**

It was created under Section 7 of the NCISM Act, 2020, as a statutory advisory body under NCISM. It advises on state coordination and recommends education policies.<sup>[4]</sup>

#### **2. National Commission for Homoeopathy Act, 2020**

It established the National Commission for Homoeopathy (NCH) to regulate homoeopathy education and practice, replacing the Central Council of Homoeopathy (CCH).<sup>[6]</sup>

##### **a. National Commission for Homoeopathy (NCH)**

It was created under Section 3 of the National Commission for Homoeopathy Act, 2020 (Act No. 15 of 2020), as the apex statutory body for homoeopathy. It formulates Homoeopathy education/practice policies and defines Standards.<sup>[6]</sup>

**b. Advisory Council for Homoeopathy**

It was created under Section 7 of the NCH Act, 2020, as a statutory advisory body under NCH.

It advises on state coordination and recommends homoeopathy policies.<sup>[6]</sup>

**3. Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940**

It was enacted by the colonial legislature and amended by Parliament.<sup>[7]</sup>

**a. Ayurvedic, Siddha, and Unani Drugs Technical Advisory Board (ASUDTAB)**

It was created under Section 33-C of the Drugs and Cosmetics Act of 1940, as a statutory advisory body. It advises on drug regulation and defines quality standards.<sup>[7]</sup>

**2. Executive (Karyapalika)**

The executive branch, including Central/State Governments, Ministries (e.g., Ministry of AYUSH), and regulatory bodies, is responsible for implementing laws.<sup>[15]</sup>

It is accountable to the legislature and judiciary. It must implement laws within the legal framework and be subject to judicial review.

The executive, comprising the Ministry of AYUSH, Central and State Governments, and regulatory bodies, implements legislative Acts through rules, guidelines, and programmes.<sup>[15]</sup>

**Key Rules, Guidelines, and Programs****a. National AYUSH Mission (NAM) Operational Guidelines, 2014 (Updated 2021)**

Issued by the Ministry of AYUSH, these guidelines outline NAM's framework for strengthening AYUSH infrastructure, services, and education.<sup>[8]</sup>

**b. Drugs and Cosmetics Rules, 1945**

Notified by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, these rules govern AYUSH drug manufacturing, testing, and licensing. Schedule T mandates Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP).<sup>[7]</sup>

**c. National Health Policy (NHP), 2017 Guidelines**

Issued by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, these guidelines promote AYUSH integration into public health through HWCs, school health programs, and research funding.<sup>[2]</sup>

**d. AYUSH Scholarship Scheme (under ICCR)**

Administered by the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) under the Ministry of External Affairs, it offers fully funded AYUSH courses for international students.<sup>[9]</sup>

**Bodies Established by Acts and Rules for AYUSH Disciplines and Education****1. National Commission for Indian System of Medicine (NCISM)**

It formulates policies and defines curriculum/accreditation rules in its executive role.<sup>[4,14]</sup>

**2. Board of Ayurveda (Under NCISM Act, 2020)**

It was created under Section 10 of the NCISM Act, 2020, as an autonomous board under NCISM. It develops Ayurveda curricula and resolves educational queries.<sup>[4]</sup>

**3. Board of Unani, Siddha, and Sowa-Rigpa (Under NCISM Act, 2020)**

It was created under Section 10 of the NCISM Act, 2020, as an autonomous board under NCISM. It develops system-specific curricula and resolves queries.<sup>[4]</sup>

**4. National Commission for Homoeopathy (NCH)**

It formulates Homoeopathy policies and defines education rules as its executive role.<sup>[6]</sup>

**5. Homoeopathy Education Board (Under NCH Act, 2020)**

Created under Section 10 of the NCH Act, 2020, as an autonomous board under NCH. It develops homoeopathy curricula and resolves educational queries.<sup>[6]</sup>

**6. Ayurvedic, Siddha, and Unani Drugs Consultative Committee (Under Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940)**

It was created under Section 33-D of the Drugs and Cosmetics Act of 1940, as an executive body to support ASUDTAB. It defines drug licensing/quality rules and advises state authorities.<sup>[7]</sup>

**7. Pharmacopoeia Commission for Indian Medicine & Homoeopathy (PCIM&H)**

It is a subordinate technical body under the Ministry of AYUSH responsible for the preparation and publication of official pharmacopoeias and formularies for Ayurveda, Siddha, Unani, and Homoeopathy.<sup>[1]</sup>

Implementation of AYUSH policies is carried out by various executive-level authorities, from the central to the institutional level. Official designations in the Executive section

1. Union Minister of AYUSH- Leads the Ministry
2. Minister of State for AYUSH – Assists in specific areas under the Ministry.
3. Secretary, Ministry of AYUSH – Chief bureaucrat managing the Ministry's operations
4. Joint Secretary (AYUSH Education/Drugs/Policy divisions) – Supervises division-specific execution.
5. Director General, CCRAS (Central Council for Research in Ayurvedic Sciences) – Oversees Ayurveda research activities [10].
6. Director General, CCRUM (Unani) / CCRS (Siddha) / CCRH (Homoeopathy) – Heads of respective research councils
7. Chairperson, NCISM / NCH – Governs Ayurveda, Unani, Siddha/ homoeopathy education, licensing, and ethics [14].
8. President / Chairpersons of Autonomous Boards under NCISM and NCH
9. Directors of various Apex institutes like Director, All India Institute of Ayurveda, Faculty of Ayurveda, Banaras Hindu University, Institute of Post Graduate Teaching and Research in Ayurveda (Jamnagar), National Institute of Ayurveda (Jaipur), National Institute of Homoeopathy (Kolkata), National Institute of Siddha (Chennai), National Institute of Unani Medicine (Bengaluru) Morarji Desai National Institute of Yoga (Delhi), National Institute of Naturopathy (Pune) etc.
10. Registrar, Central/State AYUSH Councils – Maintain professional registers.
11. Principal Secretaries/Directors, State AYUSH Departments – Execute AYUSH-related policies in the state.

### 3. Judiciary (Nyayapalika)

The judicial branch, including quasi-judicial bodies established by Acts, is responsible for interpreting laws, resolving disputes, and enforcing compliance. Though Nyayapalika in a constitutional sense means courts, not these bodies; these bodies perform only judicial-like functions within the executive framework.

Accountable to Vidhayika's laws and public interest. Quasi-judicial rulings are binding but appealable to courts.<sup>[13]</sup>

Under the Nyayapalika framework, the following bodies, created by Acts and Rules, hold quasi-judicial authority to define and enforce rules.

**1. National Commission for Indian System of Medicine Act, 2020****a. Ethics and Medical Registration Board (Under the NCISM Act, 2020)**

Created under Section 10 of the National Commission for Indian System of Medicine Act, 2020, as one of four autonomous boards under the NCISM.

It resolves licensing and misconduct queries and maintains the National register.<sup>[4,16]</sup>

**b. Medical Assessment and Rating Board (Under NCISM Act, 2020)**

Created under Section 10 of the NCISM Act, 2020, as an autonomous board under NCISM.

It audits colleges and resolves accreditation disputes.<sup>[4]</sup>

**2. National Commission for Homoeopathy Act, 2020 (NCH Act)****a. Board of Ethics and Registration for Homoeopathy (Under the NCH Act, 2020)**

Created under Section 10 of the National Commission for Homoeopathy Act, 2020, as an autonomous board under NCH.

It handles homoeopathy licensing, misconduct queries, and maintains the National register.<sup>[6]</sup>

**b. Medical Assessment and Rating Board for Homoeopathy (Under the NCH Act, 2020)**

Created under Section 10 of the NCH Act, 2020, as an autonomous board under NCH

It audits homoeopathy colleges and resolves rating disputes.<sup>[6]</sup>

**3. Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940.****a. Ayurvedic, Siddha, and Unani Drugs Technical Advisory Board (ASUDTAB) (Under Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940)**

Created under Section 33-C of the Drugs and Cosmetics Act of 1940, as an advisory and quasi-judicial body.

It resolves drug licensing and quality disputes and advises on standards.<sup>[7]</sup>

These bodies ensure compliance without court intervention by defining rules during disputes (e.g., licensing, accreditation), though appeals can escalate to the Courts.

Yoga is also a core AYUSH discipline, fully recognised under the Ministry of AYUSH. Many institutes offer a Bachelor of Naturopathy and Yogic Sciences (BNYS) degree. The Yoga



Certification Board (YCB) and the Central Council for Research in Yoga and Naturopathy (CCRYN) are dedicated to this discipline.<sup>[1,17]</sup>

Naturopathy is also associated with AYUSH. It is paired with Yoga and regulated under the Ministry of AYUSH.<sup>[1,17]</sup>

## DISCUSSION

Since the Legislature does not directly run these bodies. It creates them via Acts, but once formed, they function under the Executive or Quasi-Judicial category. NCISM/NCH was created by Vidhayika but is functionally executive in day-to-day work. Similarly, the Ethics and rating board is quasi-judicial under the executive. ASUDTAB is also mixed (advisory, quasi-judicial and sometimes executive), so these may often fall in the Legislative, executive or quasi-judicial category according to its transition between sections.

Ayush policy framework has positively impacted the society, like increased healthcare access, workforce development, economic contribution and global recognition. The Ministry of AYUSH collaborated with the World Health Organisation (WHO) through the Global Centre for Traditional Medicine in Gujarat (2022).<sup>[11]</sup> Some other recent impacts include standardised examinations like NEET<sup>[12]</sup>, NExT, NTET and nationwide campaigns like Desh ka prakriti parikshan Abhiyan.

## CONCLUSION

Despite all these progresses, a lot of Challenges are also there. Like Scientific Validation, Educational Disparities, Integration barriers, public perception, etc. Resistance and criticism from allopathic practitioners about its limited clinical trials hinder AYUSH-Allopathy collaboration. This can be solved by funding research. Public-private partnerships can help in it. A lot of variations exist between college's quality, so strengthening of accreditation processes has been done for AYUSH institutions. Due to this, a large no. of them are failing NCISM audits every year.<sup>[4,16]</sup> So much misinformation about Ayush's treatments is also affecting public perception of it. Public perceptions can be changed by public awareness campaigns like Annual Ayurveda or yoga days.<sup>[1]</sup> By addressing all these challenges, AYUSH disciplines can play a great role in holistic healthcare.

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