

To  
The Editor  
New York Times

**Rejoinder to the News item in NYT (April 17, 2020) with the headline, “Some People Turn to Herbal Medicine for Virus without Proof”**

<https://www.nytimes.com/aponline/2020/04/16/health/ap-as-med-virus-outbreak-alternative-medicines.html?searchResultPosition=7>

Sir/Madam,

To the best of our knowledge, the above news item has been drafted without any inputs from concerned functionaries of the Ministry of AYUSH. This is probably the reason why some of the assertions therein are not aligned to the facts of the matter.

Enhancing the body’s natural defence system (immunity) plays an important role in maintaining optimum health. While there is no medicine for COVID-19 as of now, the Indian Government’s Ministry of AYUSH has recommended self-care guidelines for preventive health measures and boosting immunity with special reference to respiratory health. These are supported by Ayurvedic literature and scientific publications.

As your article itself states, the Government of India has not promoted these measures as cure to COVID-19. It has taken note of the fact that there is no cure for Covid- 19 as yet, and has in fact asked all concerned ASUSH Regulatory Authorities in the States/Union Territories to stop and prevent publicity and advertisement of AYUSH-related claims for COVID-19 treatment in print, TV and electronic media and take necessary action against the persons/agencies involved in contravening the relevant legal provisions and the aforesaid guidelines of National Disaster Management Act.

The advisories of the Ministry of AYUSH proposed simple solutions with proven impact in enhancing disease-resistance and in disease-prevention. Evidence supporting these solutions are numerous, and available in the public domain. The reference in the article to “The Indian government’s push for alternative treatments for COVID-19” is thus at divergence with facts - the push of the Government in this context has been on the adage “prevention is better than cure”, for which some time-tested and proven solutions have been advocated.

References seen in the article that “India is steeped in Ayurveda”, that Ayurveda is a “Hindu system of medicine” and that Ayurveda “revolves around ... dietary restrictions” appear to be unprofessional attempts to revive clichéd stereotypes. I would request the New York Times to kindly have a close look at whether these are in line with the editorial policy of your esteemed institution.

The Government of India has also set up COVID-19 Fact Check Unit at the Press Information Bureau, New Delhi to ensure that people are quickly advised about unverified misleading news capable of causing panic.

It is requested that facts as above may be published to put the facts in proper perspective for your esteemed readers.

Sincerely

With regards,

K.S Dhatwalia  
Principal Director General,  
Press Information Bureau,  
Room No.101, 'A'-Wing,  
Shastri Bhawan,  
New Delhi-110001  
(Tel.No. 23383643)