COZENAGE IN ADVERTISEMENTS OF *AYURVEDIC* MEDICINE: CLAIMS VS. REALITY

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***Abstract*—** Deception in the advertising of *Ayurvedic* medicines is a serious public health problem, where companies claim miraculous cures for incurable diseases without sufficient scientific evidence. In India, brands like *Patanjali Ayurveda* have misled consumers by making false claims about products like *Chyawanprash* and *Coronil*, leading to action by the Delhi High Court and the Supreme Court. The Drugs and Magic Remedies (Objectionable Advertisements) Act, 1954, prohibits such advertisements, but enforcement is weak. In Telangana, medicines making false claims of curing kidney stones and fever were seized.
In reality, many claims of Ayurveda are not supported by modern evidence such as Randomized Controlled Trials (RCTs). For example, IME-9 and BGR-34 are promoted for diabetes, but complaints of side effects such as constipation and increased blood sugar have been received. The Ministry of AYUSH has banned miraculous claims, yet 800 complaints have been registered on the GAMA portal. Suggestions include stricter licensing, strengthening pharmacovigilance, and increasing consumer awareness. Preventing misleading advertising while preserving the legitimacy of *Ayurveda* is essential to safeguard public health.

***Index Terms*—** *Ayurvedic* Advertisements, misleading claims, Drugs and Magic Remedies Act 1954, *Patanjali* case, AYUSH guidelines, consumer deception, scientific evidence, etc.

INTRODUCTION

Exaggerated claims in advertisements for *Ayurvedic* medicines mislead consumers, where promises of miraculous cures do not align with scientific evidence. This analysis examines fraudulent advertising practices prevalent in India, including the legal framework, real-world examples, and regulatory challenges[1,2,3]. *Ayurveda* is India's ancient system of medicine, but exaggerated claims in recent advertisements for its products are eroding consumer trust. Some brands have sparked controversy by claiming to cure COVID-19[4,5], while the DMR (Drugs and Magic Remedies) Act- 1954 prohibits claims of curing specific diseases[6,7]. This document attempts to compare the claims made with reality[8].

REGULATORY TEXTURE

The DMR Act, 1954 considers advertisements with magical claims a criminal offense[9]. Under Rule 170 of the Drugs & Cosmetics Rules 1945, advertisements for *Ayurvedic* medicines are only permitted with a license[10]. The Ministry of AYUSH imposed a clear ban on miraculous claims in 2024[11]. The Supreme Court restrained a specific pharmacy from making claims about curing 25 diseases[12,13].

EXAMPLE OF ILLUSIVE PUBLICITY

A pharmacy's *Chyawanprash* advertisement promoted its product by falsely claiming that other pharmacies' products were fraudulent, which the Delhi High Court deemed misleading[14,15].
The Telangana government's DCA (Drugs and Cosmetics Act) seized medicines claiming to cure kidney stones and fever[16].
Complaints were filed regarding the "no side effects" claim of the IME-9 diabetes medication[17].
A sexual health scam in Bengaluru defrauded victims of ₹48 lakh[18].

Table: Some products – Claim and Reality

S.No.	Product	Claims	Reality
1-	*Patanjali Chyawanprash*	51 Herbal Drugs, Other Claims	Discredited Category, High Corte imposed a ban
2-	IME-9	Diabetes cure, No side effect	Constipation developed, Diabetes worsened
3-	Folklore Medicine	Sex problems eliminated from the root	Kidney Damage, Rs. 48 lakh fraud

CLAIMS VS. SCIENTFIC REALITY

Many *Ayurvedic* claims are not supported by clinical trials.
Endocrinologists raised questions about CCRAS AYUSH-82 (IME-9)[19].
The *Charaka Samhita* calls for evidence, but modern RCTs (Randomized Controlled Trials) are lacking[20].
Misleading advertising has increased self-medication.

CHALLENGES AND EFFICACY

Enforcement is weak: and action at the state level is limited.
Consumer health risks: include side effects from counterfeit medicines.
Economic losses:include reduced brand trust.
Approximately 809 complaints were received by GAMA[21].

CONCLUSION AND INDICATIONS

Hence, consumers are advised before taking such tele-products they should search its clinical trials, safety measures, side effects etc. thoroughly. It is always advised to the patient that before taking such tele-products he should consult the qualified doctor. National Commission for Indian System of Medicine (NCISM, a top most governing body for AYUSH system) also created a guideline of pharmacovigilance, digital monitoring (AYUSH Suraksha Portal). Consumer education literacy is necessary to prevent misleading advertising[22].

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