

## Kerala ayurveda firm's name change irks experts

Experts of the traditional Indian science of ayurveda have questioned the name change of leading firm Kerala Ayurveda Pharmacy Ltd (KAPL) to Kerala Ayurveda Ltd, saying it could mislead patients and tourists.

The Kochi-based KAPL has been a leading name in Kerala's ayurveda sector and its fame rose when it merged with the Mauritius-based Katra Health Care Ltd, which is involved in agri-business and healthcare apart from other sectors.

'The new name of Kerala Ayurveda Ltd was decided at a special meeting of KAPL on Jan 31,' S.K. Arunkumar of Kerala Ayurveda Ltd told IANS.

The company's new name has irked people who say that Kerala's ayurveda is a unique medical system that has a long history and tradition, leading to objections to the name 'Kerala Ayurveda' being monopolised by one company.

Jacob M. Titus, ayurveda drugs controller, said he wasn't aware of the change of name because he had not received any communication in this regard.

'Yes, the name is misleading. But I have limitations because if the Registrar of Companies has cleared the name, then I will have to go by that. No doubt there is every likelihood that this could be challenged,' said Titus.

The ayurveda system of Kerala is herbal based and its treatment methods are said to be different from the ayurveda systems practised elsewhere in India. The treatments and luxurious massages are now extremely popular among tourists, especially foreigners, churning up considerable business for the state's tourism industry.

'This name change is nothing but a marketing strategy, which has been well thought out by the company. This is of course not right but then is there anything that can be done against it?,' asked Vasudevan Nampoothiri, principal of the Ayurveda College here.

Arunkumar clarified that Kerala Ayurveda Ltd has forwarded the details of the name change to the Registrar of Companies.

'We have no problems and we will handle it if there are any problems raised from any quarters because there is nothing wrong in it,' he stated.

E.M. Najeeb, a leading player of the tourism industry, said it was high time the Kerala government took steps to patent its ayurveda system.

'I have had several complaints from foreigners that ayurveda is being misused here. Moreover, countries like Sri Lanka are also promoting ayurveda in a big way and it is here that the government should step in,' said Najeeb.

But John Muthoot, another industry member, said it would only benefit Kerala if an international company like Katra promoted Kerala ayurveda.

'The biggest gainer would be Kerala because more people from across the world would come to Kerala to experience ayurveda,' said Muthoot.

*Sanu George* ( © IANS / India eNews)