ii. Āyurvedic Formulary of India (AFI)

ii. Āyurvedic Formulary of India (AFI) – Introduction, development and importance

Table Of Contents

Add a header to begin generating the table of contents

The **Āyurvedic Formulary of India (AFI)** is the **official compilation** of **Ayurvedic compound formulations** recognized by India's Ministry of AYUSH. Published under the auspices of the **Ayurvedic Pharmacopoeia Committee (APC)**, it provides **standardized recipes** and **manufacturing guidelines** for multi-herb (and multi-mineral) preparations detailed in classical Ayurvedic texts. Below is a **doctoral-level** exposition of the AFI's **history**, **structure**, **volumes**, and **relevance** to modern Ayurvedic research, industry, and regulation.

Introduction to AFI and the Concept of Formulation

1. **Definition of Formulation**
   - In Ayurveda, a "formulation" (*kalpanā*) is a **multi-drug** compound—**"the use of more than one drug in a medicinal preparation"**—often leveraging synergy among varied ingredients (plant, mineral, animal origin).
2. **Context and Need**
   - Previously, data on **compound formulations** was scattered across multiple classical treatises (*Caraka Saṃhitā, Suśruta Saṃhitā, Bhaiṣajya Ratnāvalī*, etc.).
   - The AFI organizes these references in a **systematic**, easy-to-consult format for researchers, manufacturers, regulators, and practitioners.
3. **First Official Publication**
   - **Part I** of the AFI was published in **1976** (English version recognized in **1978**).
   - Marked the **APC's** inaugural attempt at compiling classical formulations to aid in **pharmacopoeial standard** development under the **Drugs and Cosmetics Act** (1940).

Development of the AFI

Role of the Ayurvedic Pharmacopoeia Committee (APC)

1. **Foundational Efforts**
   - The APC first compiled the **Ayurvedic Pharmacopoeia of India (API)** (for single drugs) and then expanded to produce **AFI** for compound formulations.
   - This synergy ensures both **raw materials** (API monographs) and **final formulations** (AFI) are standardized.
2. **Aim and Objectives**
   - **Consolidate** classical references in a uniform manner, bridging textual synonyms and variant recipe listings.
   - Provide a basis for **pharmacopoeial standards** (identity, purity, potency) and to **fulfill** the legal requirements of the **Drug and Cosmetics Act** and **Schedule T** (GMP).
3. **Single Drugs Listing**
   - An auxiliary step: the **APC** prepared a comprehensive roster of single herbs and minerals (with correct botanical/mineral identification) used in these compound formulations, minimizing confusion over synonyms or adulterants.

Structure and Classification of Formulations

1. **Kasthaushadhi vs. Rasaushadhi**
   - **Kasthaushadhi**: Predominantly **plant-based** preparations (e.g., *āsava, ariṣṭa, avaleha, ghṛta, cūrṇa, taila*).
   - **Rasaushadhi**: *Metals and minerals* (e.g., bhasma, pisti, lauha, mandūra, kupipākva rasāyana).
2. **Volumes**

- **Part I** (1976): 444 formulations.
- **Part II** (2000): 192 formulations.
- **Part III** (2011): 350 formulations.
- **Composition**:
  - Parts I & II emphasize **classical** formulations widely manufactured.
  - Part III includes **hospital pharmacy** formulations (in use > 50 years) and lesser-known but clinically relevant recipes.

3. **General Format**
   - **Title**: Name of the formulation (Sanskrit, sometimes cross-referenced with vernacular).
   - **Method of Preparation**: Step-by-step instructions (proportions, processing, cooking).
   - **Dose**: E.g., 5–10 g or ml, typically referencing classical units converted to metric.
   - **Anupāna**: Vehicle or adjuvant (milk, honey, ghee, water).
   - **Therapeutic Uses**: Indicated diseases, doṣa imbalances, general conditions.
   - **Storage**: Guidelines for container type (glass vs. plastic), shelf-life references.

Overview of AFI Publications and Contents

AFI Part	Year	Number of Monographs (Compound Formulations)
Part I	**1976**	**444** (predominantly classical, widely used formulations)
Part II	**2000**	**192**
Part III	**2011**	**350** (hospital pharmacy formulations in use >50 yrs)

Note: These three parts collectively capture a **majority** of classical formulations, along with their expansions for modern contexts.

Importance and Impact of the AFI

Standardization and Quality Assurance

1. **Legal Mandate**
   - Manufacturers must conform to **AFI** guidelines to claim authenticity and meet **AYUSH licensing**.
   - Minimizes risk of inter-manufacturer variability, ensuring safer, reproducible final products.
2. **Research and Development**
   - Pharmaceutical labs or academic centers rely on AFI monographs for standard recipes to test efficacy or synergy.
   - Facilitates multicentric clinical trials for widely used formulations (e.g., *Chyawanprash*, *Dantī harītakī*, *Aśvagaṇdhā–Ghṛta*) with uniform compositions.

Preservation of Classical Heritage

1. **Consolidation of Classical Recipes**
   - AFI references root texts (e.g., *Bhaiṣajya Ratnāvalī*, *Śārṅgadhara Saṃhitā*, *Caraka*, *Suśruta*) harmonizing variant readings or synonyms.
   - Ensures the textual continuum is not lost or diluted in mass manufacturing settings.
2. **Regulatory Consistency**
   - Regulators, inspectors, and licensing authorities uniformly reference AFI for composition checks, especially in litigation or complaint scenarios.
   - Encourages honest labeling (exact ingredients, ratio) and controls unscrupulous adulteration.

Industry Expansion and Global Reach

1. **Export Validation**
   - Many big Ayurvedic houses (Dabur, Himalaya, Charak) rely on AFI for documenting classical formulas in their product portfolios, essential for **export** compliance.
   - Lays the foundation for bridging with WHO guidelines on herbal products, enabling mutual recognition or GMP alignment.

2. **Innovation**
    - Hybrid or “proprietary” formulations often partially reference classical compositions from AFI, adapting them with new delivery forms (capsules, syrups).
    - Encourages modernization while maintaining classical ethos.

Summation

1. **Historical First**
    - **AFI Part I (1976)** was the earliest consolidated official attempt to unify scattered references on classical **compound** Ayurvedic formulations.
2. **Content**
    - Each monograph indicates **title**, **ingredients**, **dosage**, **anupāna**, **therapeutic uses**, **storage** guidelines.
3. **Future Prospects**
    - Ongoing expansions or new volumes may include advanced analytical standards (HPTLC, HPLC) for each compound formula, bridging with the **Ayurvedic Pharmacopoeia of India (API)** single-drug references.
    - Potential for e-version or AI-based formula cross-referencing to streamline large-scale R&D and supply chain integrity.

In essence, the **Āyurvedic Formulary of India (AFI)** offers a **structured blueprint** for **compound formulations**, safeguarding **classical authenticity** and **scientific rigor**—thereby enabling uniform production, consistent clinical efficacy, and global acceptance of **Ayurvedic** medicine.