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REVIEW ARTICLE

Integrating AI and Blockchain for Authentic and Sustainable Supply Chains in Ayurveda: The AyurLink Conceptual Framework

Vishal Chaudhary[1], Aashish Patel[2], Kartik Sharma[3*] and Siddhayya Swami[4]
[1]Consultant Physician at Yukti Herbs Ayurveda Multi-Specialty Hospital Mohali, India
[2]Department of Kayachikitsa (Internal Medicine), KAHER's Shri BM Kankanawadi Ayurveda Mahavidyalaya, Shahapur, Belagavi, Karnataka, India.
[3]Department of Kayachikitsa (Internal Medicine), KAHER's Shri BM Kankanawadi Ayurveda Mahavidyalaya, Shahapur, Belagavi, Karnataka, India.
[4]Department of Dravyaguna, Shri BM Kankanawadi Ayurveda Mahavidyalaya, Shahapur, Belagavi, Karnataka, India.
***Corresponding Author:** Kartik Sharma
Email – shakartik11@gmail.com.
ORCID id: https://orcid.org/0009-0005-3559-7286 (Kartik Sharma)
ORCID id: https://orcid.org/0009-0007-0446-9024 (Aashish Patel)

ABSTRACT
Conventional Ayurvedic value chains in India are confronted with long-standing issues, such as fragmented distribution systems, opacity, and contamination of raw materials, weak farmer empowerment, and inefficiencies in pharma and agriculture. These undermine the authenticity, accessibility, and global reputation of Ayurvedic products. This theoretical paper suggests AyurLink, an end-to-end digital platform utilizing artificial intelligence (AI), blockchain, and decision-support systems to increase transparency, traceability, and efficiency along the Ayurvedic supply chain and to highlight potential advantages, hurdles, and ethical issues. AyurLink is designed as a multi-layered system linking farmers, pharma companies, vaidyas, botanists, and consumers. It has three interconnected layers: (1) a stakeholder interface for direct communication and market reach, (2) an AI-facilitated knowledge and decision-support layer for cultivation advice, demand prediction, and supply optimization, and (3) a blockchain-enabled trust and transaction layer for product authenticity, traceability, and secure transactions. Collectively, the layers form an integrated platform enabling efficient, reliable, and data-driven operations while maintaining the ethos of conventional Ayurvedic practice. The system enables farmers by ensuring fair prices and direct market access, provides on-time availability of genuine raw material for vaidyas and pharma companies, increases consumer confidence, and enables research and biodiversity tracking. It enables sustainable agriculture, rural livelihood growth, and international acceptance of Ayurveda. Challenges could be digital illiteracy, infrastructure limitations, policy issues, and moral concerns like data privacy and AI prejudice. Conclusion: AyurLink is a conceptual map for the technological integration of Ayurvedic supply chains. Empirical proof is needed, but it demonstrates a sustainable, equitable, and scalable way to enhance authenticity, efficiency, and stakeholder empowerment in Ayurveda.
Keywords: *Ayurveda, Artificial Intelligence, Block chain, Supply Chain, Farmers, Sustainability, Traceability.*

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INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda, a system of medicine that is among the World's oldest and most complete, has developed over thousands of years as a philosophy of health and wellness. Over the last few decades, Ayurveda has experienced an unprecedented revival around the world as consumers have sought plant-based, natural, and preventive forms of healthcare solutions. The international Ayurvedic medicine market was at about USD 14.4 billion in 2023 and is expected to grow to USD 76.9 billion by 2030, with a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 27.2% (1). India, the global leader in sources of Ayurvedic products and raw material, has also experienced good growth in the AYUSH sector. The local industry turnover has risen

from INR 85.5 billion in 2010 to INR 280.4 billion in 2019, while export earnings of herbal medicine and nutraceuticals have gradually increased (2). The World Health Organization has also facilitated the adoption of traditional medicine into national health systems, with more than 90 nations now having formal policies to promote traditional and complementary medicine (3). While such encouraging trends are exhibited, the Ayurvedic supply chain for raw drugs continues to be fragmented and inadequately controlled. Most of the raw drugs are obtained from small-scale growers or wild gatherers, frequently with unsatisfactory quality control, leading to inconsistency in therapeutic activity (4). Adulteration and substitution are two of the most critical issues here. Multiple instances of intentional adulteration, accidental substitution, and contamination of raw herbals with heavy metals, pesticides, or chemical drugs have been reported in various studies, all of which undermine patient safety and erode international confidence in Ayurvedic products (5). Substitution of *Saussurea lappa* (Kushta) with cost-effective roots is a common report, whereas *Tinospora cordifolia* is frequently adulterated by morphologically close allies (6). Farmer disempowerment is also an important challenge. Most of the cultivators and producers are outside formalized markets, marketing their output to middlemen at exploitative prices. Middlemen corner much of the profits, with farmers having no access to demand projections, scientific cultivation advice, or value addition opportunities (7). Cultivation of medicinal crops is therefore usually not sustainable, with loss of biodiversity and ecological imbalance presenting further hazards (8). Further, vaidyas—experienced traditional practitioners—and botanists—who are the purveyors of species authentication—are one and all excluded from formal supply chain processes despite their being the guarantee of authenticity and therapeutic quality (9). These organizational flaws prevent the development of the Ayurvedic industry when the global demand for evidence-based, safe, and traceable material is greater than ever. To enable India to continue as a global leader in Ayurveda and fulfill both indigenous and export orders, modernization of the supply chain in a manner that is compatible with the traditional ethos of this system is the need of the hour. New digital technologies like Artificial Intelligence (AI), blockchain, and digital health platforms have extraordinary possibilities in this context. AI has proven to be useful in a variety of applications, such as plant authentication using image recognition, natural language processing for multi-lingual farmer advice, predictive analysis for demand planning, and metabolomic fingerprinting for adulteration identification (10). For example, AI-enabled image recognition has been effectively utilized to identify morphologically close plant species with high accuracy, whereas machine learning algorithms can analyze soil and climatic parameters to suggest best cultivation practices (11). Blockchain technology, concurrently, offers a secure platform for traceability, transparency, and authenticity. Its capacity to produce unalterable transaction records also makes it a valuable instrument to minimize adulteration and fraud across herbal supply chains. Effective pilots, like HerBChain in China, have proven blockchain's potential to trace medicinal plants from cultivation through to end formulation, providing assurance to regulators, companies, and consumers alike (12). Within the pharmaceutical sector, blockchain applications have been implemented to solve the worldwide problem of counterfeit drugs, facilitating real-time verification and secure goods transfer between supply chain nodes (13). Although these technologies are promising in themselves, there is a lack of integration of current applications. Existing initiatives narrowly target a single factor—e.g., species authentication, farmer advisory services, or supply chain transparency—without bringing all stakeholders within an overall ecosystem. In Ayurveda specifically, there is no such framework that will at the same time empower the farmers, authenticate authenticity by botanists, include therapeutic knowledge by vaidyas, and help out pharmaceutical companies and traders with traceable and reliable sourcing. Since this need was identified, there is an urgent need for an integrated conceptual framework that will integrate all stakeholders holistically, guarantee authenticity and sustainability, and re-establish trust in Ayurvedic supply chains. The model under consideration, AyurLink, fills this gap by integrating AI-powered support tools with blockchain-based track and trace to build a clean, sustainable, and farmer-centered ecosystem. By merging digital innovation with ancient wisdom, AyurLink can establish a new benchmark for supply chain management in Ayurveda, thus consolidating India's dominance in the international herbal medicine market and enhancing the legitimacy of traditional systems of medicine.

BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

The past two decades have witnessed a rapid increase in the application of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in agriculture and medicine, and significant influence on traditional medicine industries such as Ayurveda. In agriculture, AI systems have been applied to improve crop monitoring, soil maintenance, pest detection, and yield forecasting. Image recognition programs and machine learning algorithms are able to categorize plant species, identify disease, and provide farmers with personalized cultivation advice in real time (14). For instance, convolutional neural networks (CNNs) can effectively distinguish morphologically

similar crop species, and predictive models have been used to maximize irrigation and fertilizer applications (15). These developments point to the capability of AI in assisting growers of medicinal plants, who in large numbers struggle because they are not adequately privileged with agronomic information and market insights. In the health sector, AI has been used more and more for disease prediction, drug discovery, diagnostic imaging, and support for clinical decisions. Such technologies as natural language processing (NLP) have enabled patient data analysis, and machine learning algorithms have enhanced prognosis forecasting and personalized treatment protocols (16). In Ayurveda specifically, early efforts have involved research into applying AI to prakriti (constitutinal type) testing, symptom pattern assessment, and physician decision support (17). These efforts help to point toward the potential of AI not just for contribution in cultivation but also to quality control and therapeutic decision-making in mainstream systems of medicine. In parallel with AI, blockchain technology has proven to be a great facilitator of traceability, transparency, and trust in both pharma and Agri-supply chains. The intrinsic strength of blockchain is its ability to build immutable, distributed ledgers to track each and every transaction across the supply chain, hence minimizing the scope for fraud and counterfeiting. Blockchain solutions have been tested for drug traceability within the global pharmaceutical sector, allowing regulators and firms to identify counterfeit products, verify batches, and verify compliance with Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP) requirements (18). Likewise, blockchain-based agricultural systems have been utilized to track the origin, quality, and flow of produce from farm to table, ensuring food safety and fair trade (19). For the herbal industry, systems such as HerBChain have been created for Chinese herbal drugs, enabling complete traceability from plantation to processing and distribution, thus building consumer confidence (20). Even with these advances, adoption of AI and blockchain in Ayurveda is still at a nascent stage. While there are single studies here and there—e.g., AI-powered verification of medicinal plants, blockchain frameworks for tracing herbal products, or digital platforms for farmer advisory services—these efforts are still disjointed and domain-specific (21). The majority of existing initiatives target a single stakeholder segment or a limited slice of the value chain. For instance, some apps give agronomic recommendations to farmers, whereas others deal with GMP in the pharmaceutical industry. Few initiatives engage traditional practitioners like vaidyas, without whom it is impossible to evaluate therapeutic efficacy, or botanists, on whose scientific verification plant authenticity depends (22).

Such fragmentation causes a number of systemic issues:

- Farmers continue to be isolated from direct markets and continue to earn low returns.
- Pharma firms are unable to source contamination-free, verified raw materials that are international-standard.
- Traders function in silos with no visibility to solid demand analytics.
- Vaidyas and botanists with their domain knowledge are still underutilized in contemporary supply chains.
- Adulteration, substitution, and loss of biodiversity continue to erode safety as well as sustainability.

Therefore, the research gap is evident: whereas AI and blockchain have been implemented successfully in agriculture, healthcare, and pharma, no cohesive framework exists at present linking farmers, vaidyas, pharma companies, traders, and botanists in Ayurveda's raw drug supply chain. The lack of such a model maintains inefficiencies, fosters adulteration, and dilutes global confidence in Ayurvedic products. To fill this vacuum, the current paper suggests AyurLink, a conceptual model that utilizes AI and blockchain technology and brings all key players in the Ayurvedic supply chain together. By integrating digital tools with the ancient knowledge pool of Ayurveda and Vrikshayurveda, the model aims to bring authenticity, traceability, and sustainability to the entire supply chain. This is an approach not just to address the present challenges but also to enable Ayurveda to satisfy increasing international demands on transparency, safety, and quality in herbal medicine.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK: AYURLINK MODEL

AyurLink is conceived as a multi-layered digital space that unites all the stakeholders of the Ayurvedic raw drug supply chain, from farmers to consumers, through leveraging the collective power of artificial intelligence and blockchain. The framework has three interwoven layers: the stakeholder layer, the AI and knowledge layer, and the blockchain-based trust and transaction layer. Collectively, these layers constitute an open, authenticated, and farmer-empowered system to ensure quality while enabling sustainability and fair benefit sharing. On the stakeholder side, the system provides personalized dashboards for different value-chain players. The farmer dashboard allows farmers to register their crops by uploading geo-tagged images, showing the cultivation method, and entering yield estimates. Artificial intelligence-powered solutions integrated into this module assist in detecting diseases and species and thereby reduce authenticity errors at the source. Farmers are also given price guidance depending on

local market forces and demand analysis and can directly negotiate with consumers in the form of smart contracts, eliminating middlemen. Most significantly, the platform also has a local language knowledge hub supported by a multilingual Chabot to offer cultivation advice based on both modern agronomic practice and Vrikshayurveda philosophy. Pharma companies and traders interact with each other through an autonomous dashboard that is aimed to support advanced supplier searches, demand postings, and procurement decisions. Customers can specify quality specifications, certification requirements, and delivery dates, while also being able to see traceability records tracing raw material from farm to formulation. This not only guarantees compliance with GMP and AYUSH but provides an added assurance for export markets where quality and authenticity are rigorously scrutinized. Vaidyas and botanists, who were traditionally excluded from modern commercial circuits despite their expertise, are at the center of AyurLink's verification. Vaidyas add information about therapeutic quality, geographical variations of potency, and classical textual citations, which are integrated into the platform's knowledge repository. Botanists, meanwhile, authenticate plant identity through image-based verification techniques and scientific identifiers. Their evaluation, coupled with laboratory analyses where applicable, are part of a "Therapeutic Authenticity Score" for every batch. Their ongoing engagement of traditional and scientific specialists solidifies authenticity, enforces compliance with classical Ayurvedic parameters, and resists adulteration. The knowledge and AI layer supports all the stakeholder modules. Crop images are analyzed by artificial intelligence modules that utilize convolutional neural networks that have been trained on authenticated data sets to recognize plant species with high precision. The models also detect possible adulteration when morphological characteristics diverge from established patterns, flagging them for further checking by botanists. Predictive analytics models, especially time-series forecasting-based models, utilize the past market trends, seasonal fluctuations, and local cultivation patterns to forecast demand and recommend appropriate price strategies for the farmers. Concurrently, a multilingual natural language processing-based chatbot offers customized advisory services to both semi-literate and literate users. This knowledge platform based on AI combines information from pharmacopeias, modern scientific research, and Ayurvedic literature to provide context-related advice on cultivation, therapeutic application, and regulatory requirements. Supporting the AI layer is the trust and transaction layer based on blockchain technology, where all supply chain engagement is documented on a permissioned ledger. All transactions, from crop registration through to end procurement, are stored immutably, thus avoiding data tampering and providing traceability. Smart contracts trigger financial transactions by making payment only after pre-defined quality parameters are achieved, securing both farmers and buyers. Escrow functions built into the block chain lower default risks, while access based on roles ensures data privacy and security. Regulators can also access unchangeable audit trails from the block chain ledger, which improves monitoring and verification of compliance. Overall, the AyurLink model addresses the fragmentation and lack of transparency that affect the Ayurvedic raw drug supply chain. By combining AI and block chain technologies with local knowledge systems, it not only guarantees authenticity and traceability but also supports farmer empowerment, cuts down on adulteration, and boosts confidence among global consumers in Ayurvedic products. The system is scalable with modular components that can be introduced gradually and customized for different regions and crops. This are shown in Table 1 and figure 1.

Anticipated Benefits

The AyurLink platform adds significant value throughout the Ayurvedic value chain, helping farmers, drug companies, vaidyas, botanists, and end consumers. It offers farmers a direct way to market their high-quality medicinal plants at fair prices with fewer middlemen. It also encourages the use of traditional farming methods like Vrikshayurveda. Pharmaceutical companies gain access to quality assured, traceable raw materials, which reduces contamination and improves product consistency. This access also helps with predicting demand and planning purchases. Vaidyas receive timely supplies of authentic herbs along with personalized growing tips, leading to better clinical results. Scientists and botanists can use the platform for real-time data collection, plant identification, and monitoring biodiversity, which aids in scientific documentation and conservation work. For consumers, the platform ensures transparency, product authenticity, and adherence to quality standards, building trust in Ayurvedic medicine. Additionally, AyurLink promotes sustainability by encouraging organic farming, reducing resource waste, and simplifying regenerative agricultural practices. It supports rural communities with economic opportunities, knowledge sharing, and skill development, promoting social fairness. By incorporating AI and block chain technology into traditional knowledge, the platform strengthens the global credibility of Ayurveda. It aims to present itself as a scientifically valid and technology-driven system that fits modern healthcare and global trade.

Table 1: AyurLink Framework Components

Component	Function/Description	Key Benefits
Farmers Dashboard	Upload geo-tagged images, cultivation details, yield estimates; AI-assisted detection	Reduces authenticity errors, price guidance, empowerment
Pharma/Trader Dashboard	Supplier search, demand posting, procurement, traceability viewing	Efficient procurement, quality assurance, export-ready
Vaidya Contribution	Therapeutic quality input, classical citations, regional potency variations	Integration of traditional knowledge, authenticity scoring
Botanist Verification	Plant identification, image verification, lab analysis	Ensures plant identity, prevents adulteration
AI Modules	CNN-based species recognition, adulteration detection, predictive analytics for demand & pricing	Minimizes errors, forecasts trends, improves decision-making
Knowledge Center/Chatbot	Multilingual advisory, combines modern research and Ayurvedic texts	Supports cultivation guidance for semi-literate & literate users
Blockchain Ledger	Immutable recording of all supply chain transactions	Ensures transparency, traceability, compliance
Smart Contracts & Escrow	Payments triggered by quality compliance; default risk minimized	Secures farmers & buyers, automates transactions
Regulator Access	Direct access to audit trails	Facilitates monitoring, strengthens compliance

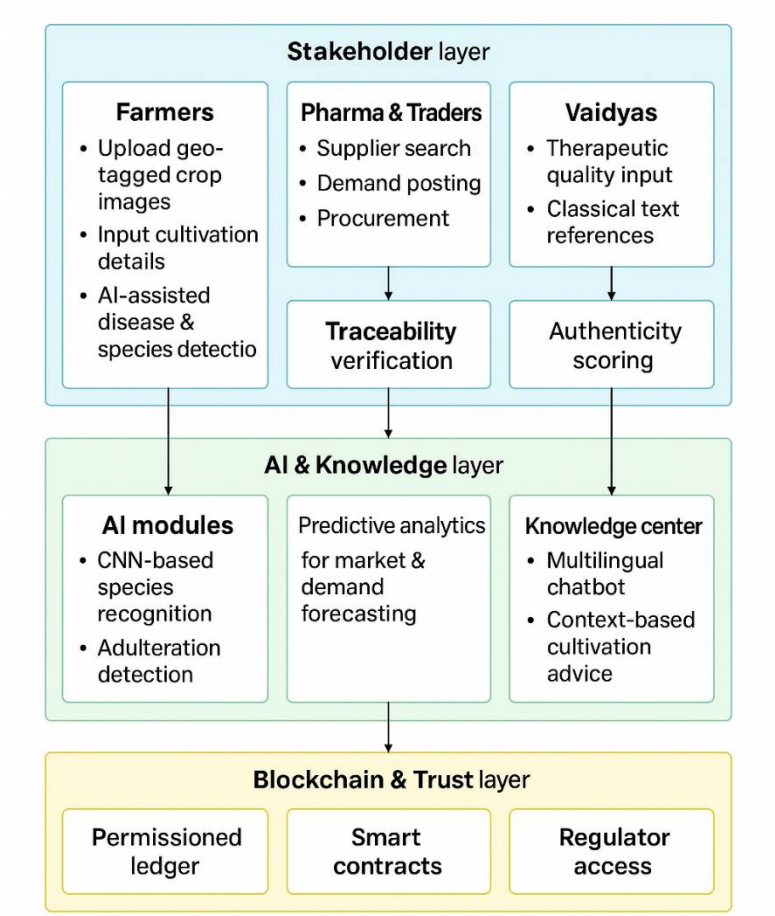

Figure 1: AyurLink Conceptual Flowchart

DISCUSSION

The diffusion of information technologies into agri- and pharma-value chains presents a catalytic opportunity to reverse longstanding inefficiencies, raise transparency, and build system resilience, particularly in developing nations where disintegrated supply chains, inadequate infrastructure, and poor

access to quality inputs have long created barriers to efficiency and equitable distribution [23,24]. Traditional medicine supply chains are at higher risk of more frequent stockouts, poor-quality products, delayed deliveries, and excessive reliance on intermediaries, undermining public health as well as economic resilience [25]. Traditional agri-food supply chains also suffer from post-harvest losses, poor transportation and storage facilities, lack of cold chains, and information asymmetry, each contributing to reduced revenues at the farm level and limiting consumer access to authentic, high-quality products [26,27]. The planned blockchain-based digital model of the supply chain, with AI, IoT, and other innovative technologies, addresses these critical issues by enabling real-time tracking of information, traceability, and instant market connection and thus reducing the dependency on intermediaries and ensuring the authenticity and quality of farm products and pharma raw material supplies [28,29]. One of the strengths of this strategy lies in its capacity to enhance value chain transparency: blockchain technology has the potential to provide a tamper-evident record of tracking products from farm gate to movement and handling and then to the consumer, and in so doing, to remove the risk of adulteration from drugs and enable accurate market representation of farmers' products [30, 31]. AI-driven analytics also optimize the efficiency of the supply chain by anticipating demand, managing stock, and identifying possible bottlenecks and hence cutting down on stockouts, wastage, and inefficiencies that have long plagued such businesses [32]. Farmers have direct access to markets, receive equitable prices, and gain knowledge on sustainable agriculture from the online platform, leading to increased incomes, improved livelihoods, and poverty alleviation [33, 34]. Consumers gain from exposure to quality, authentic products, with supply chain trust and public health being promoted [35]. The system also favors research and monitoring of biodiversity because it allows botanists, researchers, and policymakers access to aggregated, true data on crop yields, medicinal plant development, and soil health to guide conservation, policy-making, and innovation in products [36]. Though these benefits exist, a digital supply chain encounters great hurdles in its adoption. Digital literacy continues to be a principal stumbling block in rural and semi-urban regions with less access to smartphones, internet connectivity, and exposure to digital devices, hence limiting the use of technologically advanced platforms [37]. Infrastructure shortcomings, such as flaky power supplies, poor transportation networks, and lack of cold storage facilities, add complexity to deployment and scalability. Economic limitations are also a key factor, with initial capital investment for technology acquisition, training, and maintenance being excessively high for smallholder farmers, local businesses, and community cooperatives. Policy and legal frameworks are usually in arrears with advances in technology, which give rise to uncertainties regarding legal compliance, intellectual property rights, and international trade, thus slowing down large-scale adoption. Ethics are also a priority: the use of AI and online platforms is also raising concerns about data protection, security, and bias in algorithms [37]. Transparency and confidentiality must be balanced to ensure that there is accountability without endangering sensitive commercial and personal information. Furthermore, an overdependence on technology might unintentionally exclude communities with no access to or skills in using digital media, risking widening socio-economic inequality if there is not an effective implementation of inclusive practices. In sum, although the emerging digital supply chain model is much better than what exists today—through improved visibility, product authenticity, farmer empowerment, market efficiency, and consumer confidence—it is not without challenges. Its success will hinge on collaborative action among governments, regulatory agencies, technologists, researchers, and the private sector to overcome infrastructure, policy, literacy, and ethical governance hurdles. Through strategic blending of digital innovation, conventional supply chain know-how, and local contextual insights, the platform can help ensure sustainable agriculture, assured medicine supply, rural economic empowerment, and international recognition of Ayurveda and associated healthcare systems. This strategy can be replicated to change other resource-deprived supply chains globally, enabling social equity and economic sustainability while ensuring that digital intervention is accessible and ethically deployed for all stakeholders.

CONCLUSION

The present paper introduces the conceptual framework of AyurLink, an integrated digital platform harnessing artificial intelligence, blockchain, and IoT to build a transparent, traceable, and sustainable supply chain for Ayurvedic raw materials and allied products. The originality of the framework is in its multi-layered structure that addresses the concerns of farmers, pharmaceutical companies, vaidyas, botanists, and consumers at the same time and ensures authenticity, fair price, and rural empowerment. By utilizing cutting-edge digital technologies in a classical system of knowledge, AyurLink provides a distinct path to product quality management, adulteration control, and enhancing worldwide credibility of Ayurveda. Generally speaking, the model underscores the essence of combining technological

innovation with conventional practice to build sustainable, fair, and reliable supply chains, serving as the basis for future applied research and policy-making.

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