

SCIENCE CALLED HOMOEOPATHY

Human knowledge has become unmanageably vast. Every science has begotten a dozen more, than the rest. The entire corpus of medical knowledge has split into a thousand isolated fragments. Homeopathy is one among them.

Two centuries back, a German physician amazed the medical world discovering a scientific technique to establish the curative power of substance in infinitesimal dilutions. Homeopathy came to India during the lifetime of Samuel Hahnemann, founder of homeopathy, through a German physician and geologist. The latter came to India in 1810 for geological investigation and remained in Bengal, where he distributed homeopathic medicines. Homeopathy took its root in Punjab in 1839 when Honigberger visited India and treated Maharaja Ranjit Singh.

The knowledge of medicine has a long history but a slow evolution, and homeopathy is no exception to this. In India, a Homeopathy Resolution was placed before Parliament in 1948. An inquiry committee was appointed to find the scientific basis of homeopathy. In 1949, the committee declared homeopathy is a scientific system of medicine. It is science practised as a legally accepted system of treatment.

Besides its popularity and distinction, the Central Council of Homeopathy Act was passed in 1973 to standardise the education and treatment for providing professional guidance. In 1978, the Central Council for Research in Homeopathy was constituted as an autonomous organisation under the Society Registration Act XXI of 1960.

In the Orissa Assembly a Homeopathy Act was passed in 1956 conferring official status to homeopathic self-made practitioners to practice under legal protection. A system of treatment which was not accepted as a therapeutic procedure in the pre-Independence era has now gained popularity among various strata of society because of its efficacy, low cost and absence of side effects. The Union government has given due credence to the system by creating a separate department called "Indian system of medicines and homeopathy"

Coming to Orissa, the development and growth of homeopathy is substantial and visible in comparison with the pre-Independence era. While there was no homeopathic hospital in the state before independence, now there are four hospitals. Now there is a bed strength of 125 in the hospitals against zero bed strength before Independence. Before Independence the number of dispensaries in the state was only four. This has soared to a whopping 460.

Similarly, there was no government pharmacy or homeopathic college in the pre-independence period. But now there is one government pharmacy and there are four government and two private colleges. The student strength at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels are 150 and 12 respectively.

Homeopathy has been growing although the state is small and has resource constraints. There are more than 4,000 homeopathic physicians. Now there are a few pharmaceutical concerns to cater to the needs of the physicians, who were procuring medicines from outside the state earlier. Retailing has grown to a considerable extent with medicine shops even in small towns and gram panchayats. The number of consumers has increased fourfold.

Despite all this growth, there are many problems in the field of homoeopathic. The colleges, hospitals and dispensaries need a qualitative augmentation in form of infrastructure development and more quality in service. Teachers and physicians are not at par with their counterparts in allopathy as far as the salary structure is concerned. The Drug control Act for homoeopathy medicines needs to be stringent so that genuine medicines are available to the consumers. More money should be allocated for research and development in homoeopathy. A separate directorate headed by a technical person is imperative for fostering development of this science.