

## **A FEW WORDS REGARDING HOMŒOPATHY IN W. BENGAL TODAY**

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Dear Friends and Colleagues,

Conferences, conventions and occasional get-together are not new or rare amongst members of the Homœopathic profession of West Bengal. In fact, it is our State that has witnessed many more such conferences than any other State of India but, alas, while other States have gone far to officially place on record their appreciation and recognition for Homœopathy, our State, the parental land of Homœopathy in India, has not done much. Why?

Is it because of the disunity of the leading homœopaths and the cumulative effect of group-politics in Homœopathy? Is it because of the arrogant attitude of the adherents of the orthodox System of Medicine who are a majority in number in West Bengal, having a strong All-India Association that commands influence on those in authority? Is it because of the paucity of funds of the State Exchequer and difficulties encountered by the administration in recognising a system of medicine other than the one recognised internationally? Is it because of the lack of political influence in favour of Homœopathy in West Bengal? Or is it because of the alacrity of our State Government to endorse the policy of the Union Government in regard to Homœopathy? Or is it because of the prevalence of honest doubts in the minds of many in the Governmental hierarchy about the science of Homœopathy itself? Or is it because the course and curricula of studies in Homœopathy are not up to the requirements of our Government? Whatever may be the reasons I believe, Homœopathy would not have been a neglected branch of medicine had there been unity amongst the rank and file of the Homœopaths of West Bengal. It need not be emphasised that the Homœopathic profession has now been divided into two

camps on points of consideration of (1) Status of the existing homœopaths till the date of recognition of Homœopathy through State Legislature and (2) fixation of proper course and curriculum of studies in Homœopathy to train up real homœopaths. With regard to the status of homœopaths, while the one group advocates categorisation in registering the names of existing homœopaths justifying the actions of the State Faculty, the other advocates non-categorisation and registration of all the practising Homœopaths on equal footing as the courses of studies in Homœopathy and the standard for qualified Homœopaths has yet to be finalised and therefore, categorisation, they maintain, would mean discrimination which is altogether unwarranted and untenable. In precise, one group supports categorisation of the profession dated retroactive and the other supports categorisation dated prospective. With regard to courses and curricula of studies, the one maintains that a two to three years' course with a greater emphasis on the fundamentals of Homœopathy with the inclusion of subjects like Anatomy, Physiology, Pathology etc., (excluding Bacteriology, Ophthalmology and X-Ray Therapy), in a very elementary manner are necessary for producing genuine Homœopaths. The other maintains that a four-year course with all the aforesaid subjects in a less-comprehensive manner is as much necessary as the fundamentals of Homœopathy for producing Homœopaths who should not only be Homœopathic practitioners but also physicians in a more wider sense. Differences in the matter of approach to arrive at truth are not certainly bad in itself; rather they stimulate thought which, if pursued scientifically and humanely, can help all to formulate a comprehensive policy to the nearest perfection. But it is an irony of history that the all-out progress that was to follow and was thought of by the general Homœopaths did not materialise, not because of unsurmountable differences in approach but because of differences arising out of personal factors, consideration of personal prestige, gain and leadership, amongst a few members of our profession. These differences have sullied the sanctity of the science, resulting in the growth of group-politics in the field of Homœopathy in West Bengal, each group claiming a considerable number of

supporters. A bulk of the members of homœopathic profession caught unawares in the game of group politics is also moving like cogs of a wheel.

If we are really serious, then let us not move haphazardly. I believe, a careful persual of the development of Homœopathy in West Bengal will reveal certain salient points which may be considered as pivotal for arriving at a policy commonly agreed upon. So far as I have found out they are as follows:—

1. Homœopathy made its appearance through home-read amateur practice.
2. Success of the home-read amateur practice led some personalities to open up a few Institutions, imparting a more coherent knowledge on the fundamentals of Homœopathy which ultimately turned out a large number of Homœopaths, many of whom became known at a much later date as institutionally trained professional Homœopathic practitioners.
3. Many of the home-read amateur Homœopaths who became successful in their daily practice gradually became professional Homœopaths.
4. Many distinguished Allopathic physicians, attracted by its novel method of cure, started practising Homœopathy and also became professional Homœopaths.
5. There had never been any uniform course and curriculum of studies in Homœopathy, but Homœopathy was taught with all emphasis on Hahnemannian principles and in fact Homœopathy became synonymous with the Homœopathic *Materia Medica*.
6. All Homœopathic practitioners created their own admirers and hardly had any feeling of division amongst them and kept homœopathy moving with the common tape, "A Homœopath."

If the present wide-spread popularity and success of Homœopathy owe its inspiration to the aforesaid previous state of affairs, what essential features do we get for consideration?

These are nothing but the facts that Homœopathy is unique in itself and has its own axioms, style and physiognomy, its own language, classification and analysis, its own doctrine and

principles and therefore any individual having gone through the fundamental tenets of Homœopathy, either through an institution or at home, can prove to be a successful Homœopath, even when being away from a protracted regular study in subjects like Anatomy, Physiology, Pathology, X-Ray Therapy etc. We should not forget that the practical side is no less important—rather, at times, more important than the theoretical side; and that the qualities of self-control, tact, courage, honesty, resourcefulness, steadiness in emergency cases and a personality that inspires respect and confidence at the bed side of a patient can never be ascertained by an examination. If we consider these as facts and not as fictions, we should unhesitatingly be unanimous in approving of Registration of all the bonafide practising Homœopaths on equal footing.

By bonafide practising Homœopaths I mean to exclude those practitioners who like to be known as Homœopaths and display themselves likewise to the public without any regard to the law of similars and find more at home with Penicillin, Streptomycin and pathological reports than with Homœopathic medicines and symptomatology to arrive at the correct remedy for their patients and include those who believe in the law of similars, in the Hahnemannian three parallels and practices on symptomatology with due regard to the Homœopathic principles prescribing Homœopathic medicines for their patients.

Now the question of unanimity arises in respect of the course and curriculum of studies for Homœopathy. Here also, if we regard History as a beaconer, we find that Anatomy, Physiology, Pathology, Surgery, X-Ray Therapy, Bacteriology, Ophthalmology etc. are indeed subjects accredited for their merits, and these are essentially necessary for training in Allopathy, Materia Medica of which has been built on tissue changes, but these are not at all so far training in Homœopathy, Materia Medica of which is based on Symptomatology. It still remains to be thought out and formulate as to what extent and in which manner these subjects can be made use of and can be made to fit in with the homœopathic studies.

It is, therefore, a pertinent question as to whether one should proceed to know at the expense of considerable time,

energy and money only to discover that he is unable to fit in those knowledge in his daily practice of Medicine. Many of you may be aware that, of late, many distinguished and front-ranking Homœopathic Physicians from all corners have acknowledged the fact that subjects like Anatomy, Physiology, Pathology, Surgery etc. etc. that have found place in the course and curriculum of our Homœopathic State Faculty are so heavy in comparison that the students do not get sufficient scope and time to learn Homœopathy comprehensively. We can, therefore, reasonably be unanimous in declaring that Homœopathic studies that should always cover Organon, Homœopathic Philosophy, Homœopathic Materia Medica, Nature of chronic diseases and Repertory study with the inclusion of subjects like Anatomy, Physiology, Pathology etc. in an elementary manner are enough to turn out qualified Homœopathic practitioners. As to the period of studies, I think, a two to three years' course can meet the purpose for Licentiates and three to four years for Degree Holders.

Now I appeal to you all including the distinguished and front-ranking Homœopaths of West Bengal to devote some time and sit together to finally throw away the debris that have accumulated in our camp. I also appeal to the Manufacturers of the Homœopathic medicines, without whose co-operation and services Homœopathy can hardly remain alive and cannot spread by leaps and bounds, to think about the propriety of advertising of fundamentals of Homœopathy or a few characteristics of Medicine within the available space than to advertise the self-concocted Homœopathic Tonics and Specific Medicines which are preposterous and alien to the conception of Homœopathy.

I also beg to remind our State Government as well as our Union Government that by refusing to recognise Homœopathy, they are forcing a number of honest citizens to be liars and even tempting the Practitioners of the only medical science they hold in high esteem to the path of dishonesty (by issuing false certificates on cases under care of Homœopaths), which is ironical enough for our Governments that uphold the sacred principle 'Truth alone prevails' (Satyameva Jayate). The moral repercussion of this policy on the nation is easily imaginable.

I hope this conference will lay a concrete foundation for bringing out a detailed curriculam of studies for future Homœopaths, keeping in view the uniqueness of the Similia Similibus Curentur and discuss and try to solve many other problems that Homœopathy encounters to-day and, which have not been discussed by me for obvious reasons. As for me, I have no hesitation to state that I always stand to be corrected and am willing to extend my co-operation to the fullest extent for any well thought-out policy which really aims at gaining recognition for the science and practice of Homœopathic Medicines.

Thank you, friends, in the name of Hahnemann and Homœopathy.\*

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\* Read at the West Bengal State Homœopathic Practitioners' Conference, Purulia, on 25-12-61.