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EDITORIAL

THE VICIOUS CIRCLE

There is a growing concern in homoeopathic circles over the deteriorating standards of practice. Today any act by a physician employing homoeopathic drugs is passed as homoeopathic. A close scrutiny of the actions, however, shows that there is a clear departure from philosophy. The emphasis has clearly shifted from curing a patient to the removal of symptoms. The methods involved in obtaining results matter least.

What happens to the actions which do not have a philosophical base? Such actions tend to be erratic. They are not capable of repetition. What cannot be repeated is not standard and fails to merit of being classified as science. Is Homoeopathy a science?

A stage is reached where the actions have become so automatic that it is questioned whether the art of practice has anything to do with the science. A recent experience with the head of a homoeopathic college in Maharashtra indicated that he was thoroughly convinced that Homoeopathy was an art, and an art alone, quite independent of the science. He argued that Kent practised Homoeopathy according to his own methods quite at variance with the methods followed by Boger or Roberts and each claimed results and were successful prescribers! On the face of it the argument sounds reasonable. But one needs to examine closely the methods practised by them and determine how much of what they practised was at variance with the norms laid down by philosophy.

A casual round taken in the wards of the hospital attached to the above institution revealed that some of the patients received a combination of homoeopathic and allopathic drugs. When questioned, the duty officer remarked, that a combination was arrived at after verifying their compatibility! Who decided the compatibility and what were the criteria that decided the two were compatible? This is a situation obtained in a teaching institution from which at least fifty physicians are released every year into the mainstream of profession after testifying their professional competence. What conviction do they carry with them about homoeopathic therapeutics that

they can function efficiently, when they emerge out of such an institution?

The cause for the failure of physicians in practice is thus carried to the institutions in which they are trained. What ails our institutions? The question raises several important issues. Most of our institutions are managed by private bodies whose members have little knowledge of Homoeopathy or they have designs other than imparting homoeopathic education. Generally, the institutions are poorly equipped both in men and material. The teaching staff comprises persons whose overall devotion to the purpose, integrity and knowledge is far from what is demanded of them by Hahnemann in the first six aphorisms of the *Organon of Medicine*. A teacher can transmit to the students only what is resident in him. No art excels the artist behind it. A product finds market only when it meets the specific standards. Achieving the standard depends on the skill of the producer, how well he handles his finances, manages the technicians engaged in shaping the product and what value he attaches to it in terms of the cost involved and his reputation which is at stake when the product is released in the market. All this involves a careful planning and programming by the investor so that he does not run into needless difficulties. Besides, he has to maintain strict control over each step in the production so that a peaceful harmony is maintained all through.

It raises another issue. Does a financier know all the technicalities involved in the manufacturing operations? Or does he have to depend on the advice tendered by the skilled hand employed by him? Perhaps, a shrewd industrialist doesn't entirely depend on all that is conveyed to him by his staff. He would rather rely on the results and assess the capacity of the staff to advise him by the quality of the work produced. The management of every sick organization today relies on the consultancy service for improving upon its performances. The majority of homoeopathic institutions belong to the category of sick mills and need to be reorganized to a well conceived plan if the country hopes to build a cadre of professionally competent homoeopaths in the near future.

Any plan of reorganization is not complete without making facilities available for reorientation of teachers. Because, they constitute the king-pins around which the entire machinery revolves. The role of a good teacher is like that of a buffer material between the management and the students serving both through proper education. The term education has a wider context than merely delivering classroom lectures or training students to handle a particular job skilfully. Its primary aim should be to create the *right awareness* in every individual of the purpose of his calling and respond to it with a sense of devotion and responsibility. Both devotion and responsibility call for *action* directed towards the set purpose—the *mission*.

The National Institute of Homoeopathy is established with the specific purpose of inculcating the *right spirit* among both the students as well as the teachers admitted for the courses conducted by it. It occupies the position of the sun lending light to the hundred odd satellites orbiting around it. Much

depends on its products, in what manner they succeed in reviving the institutions through the guidance they have received from the parent institution or else, the vicious circle will carry on to eternity!

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