

Speech of the President

**FUNCTION ORGANIZED BY DR. PRASANTA BANERJI
HOMOEOPATHIC RESEARCH FOUNDATION TO COMMEMORATE
150 YEARS OF ASSOCIATION
OF DR. BANERJI'S FAMILY WITH HOMOEOPATHY**

Kolkata: August 22, 2016 (Monday)

1. I am happy to be a part of this function, named "The Legacy to Humanity: Celebrating 150 Years of Homoeopathy". This event has been organized by Dr. Prasanta Banerji Homoeopathic Research Foundation to commemorate 150 years of association of Dr. Banerji's family with homoeopathy.
2. The generational association of Dr. Banerji's family with this traditional form of medicine dates back to the mid-nineteenth century. Dr. Banerji's grandfather, Ishan Chandra, was Pandit Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar's brother. Vidyasagar was once treated for migraine with homoeopathy by Babu Rajen Dutta who had studied this medicinal system from the Europeans. Pleased with the results, Vidyasagar convinced his brother Ishan Chandra to pursue this line of treatment.
3. Ishan Chandra learned homoeopathy and took to treating the poor as a charitable cause. Ishan Chandra's son, Pareshnath Banerji, practiced homoeopathy in a village in Bihar named *Mihijam*. His fame attracted patients from far and wide. He became a pioneer in homoeopathic medicinal mixtures in India. Dr. Prasanta Banerji, the second son of Pareshnath Banerji, is the third generation practitioner of homoeopathy in this illustrious family line. His son, Dr. Pratip Banerji, has kept the family tradition alive.
4. The Homoeopathic Research Foundation was established by Dr. Prasanta Banerji and his son, Dr. Pratip Banerji, in 1993. It was set up with the objective to make homeopathy a scientific and effective mode of alternative medicine. The Foundation is rendering yeoman's service to the masses through provision of wide-ranging homoeopathic healthcare.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

5. Homoeopathy is a system of alternative medicine propounded on the doctrine of '*similia similibus curentur*', which means 'like cures like'. Some trace the origin of this therapeutic system to around 400 BC, when Hippocrates treated mania by prescribing a small dose of mandrake root, which in larger quantities is known to cause mania.
6. Paracelsus, a Swiss-German physician and botanist, had asserted in the sixteenth century that small doses of 'what makes a man ill also cures him'. It was however Samuel Hahnemann, a German physician, who coined the term 'homoeopathy'. He established its principles in the late eighteenth century and systematized them into a distinct medical strand.
7. Hahnemann had studied medicine and qualified as a doctor in 1779. He was, however, displeased with the practices associated with conventional medicine during that time. He felt that procedures like bloodletting harmed a patient more than to cure him. He gave up medical practice and worked as a translator of scientific and medical books for some time.
8. When he was translating William Cullen's treatise on *Materia Medica* from English to German in 1790, he came across the claim of cinchona bark having healing properties for malaria. To research this aspect, he experimented on himself by ingesting the bark. He began experiencing malaria-like symptoms. This led him to hypothesize in 1796 that what can produce a set of symptoms in a healthy individual can treat a sick individual manifesting similar symptoms. This principle of 'like cures like' formed the foundation of homoeopathic approach.

Friends:

9. Hahnemann believed that diseases occur due to the physical, mental and spiritual status of health. He endorsed an immaterial and vitalistic view of the functioning of living organisms. This led to another fundamental principle of homoeopathy that the healing response to an illness starts within the body. The vitality of the body initiates through the administration of homoeopathic preparations or 'remedies'.

10. Hahnemann discovered that if doses of drugs were administered undiluted, they could cause reactions, which could sometimes prove to be harmful. To propel a sick body's healing response, a stimulus of the medicine is only required in the dose. By reducing potency, Hahnemann advocated lowest possible doses to mitigate any side-effect. The principles of homoeopathy constructed by Hahnemann continue to be followed till today though much has evolved in this discipline over the last century.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

11. Homeopathy is practiced in over hundred countries today and is the largest complementary medical system in the world. Due to characteristics like personalized yet cost-effective treatment, significant progress in evidence-based research, and mild and easy-to-administer medicines, public preference for homoeopathy is increasing. As concerns about drug toxicity and side-effects of some medicines have emerged, the homoeopathic line of treatment has become more acceptable as the first point of cure for common ailments. Homeopathy is especially popular for the treatment of children's ailments, allergic disorders and behavioral problems. The number of people relying on homoeopathic treatment is increasing by the day. There are over two lakh homoeopathic practitioners in India, which is the largest in the world.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

12. Universal health coverage is a challenge developing nations are still grappling with. At the same time, more and more patients are looking for simpler therapies to improve their quality of life. This has led to the rapid growth of Alternative Medicines worldwide. Recognizing that a unitary medical system alone will not be sufficient to meet the health needs of a huge population, India has adopted a pluralistic healthcare system. This approach is also based on the fact that every medicinal system exhibits strength in remedying specific lines of ailments.
13. Homoeopathy has been found to be particularly effective in addressing chronic and sub-acute disorders pertaining to skin, respiration, infection and digestion. Through a holistic approach, we can combine the finest of all the branches of alternative medicine to offer best therapies to the patients. For that, there is a need to create synergy amongst all the Indian systems of medicine and homoeopathy. In this context, the Government of India has encouraged research and development of integrated treatment protocols, wherein a patient can avail treatment of his or her choice.

14. Seized of the need to promote these alternative healing systems, the Department of Indian Medicine and Homoeopathy was created in 1995. It was re-named Department of AYUSH in 2003 and became a full-fledged Ministry last year.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

15. Focused attention on research is crucial to unearth greater scientific understanding of homoeopathy. Like other medicinal systems, homoeopathy has its share of limitations. In cases of irreversible organic changes, or diseases induced by medicinal substance abuse, or emergencies where surgery is essential, homoeopathy has restricted application. Use of latest knowledge like nano-technology and genomics could pave the way for cutting edge research in this field. It could lead to the affirmation of homoeopathic medicines in fundamental and clinical conditions.
16. It is heartening to note that the Dr. Prasanta Banerji Homoeopathic Research Foundation is involved in active research. It accrues data about various life threatening diseases like cancer and renal failures from the treatment it administers using The Banerji Protocols. Over 40,000 cases with one lakh recorded visits provide this research body an impressive patient database to refine their healing procedures.
17. An international collaborative research consortium formed by the Foundation in 2012 has expanded the scope of application of The Banerji Protocols. I am sure that with more advanced research backed by robust data this Research Foundation would further strengthen homoeopathy as an effective alternative system for a host of diseases. I wish the Foundation Godspeed in its endeavours. I also wish all of you present here the very best for the future.

Thank you.

Jai Hind.
