

## SOCIAL AND HISTORICAL

# A short history of the development of homeopathy in India

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**Homeopathy was introduced in India the early 19th century. It flourished in Bengal at first, and then spread all over India. In the beginning, the system was extensively practised by amateurs in the civil and military services and others. Mahendra Lal Sircar was the first Indian who became a homeopathic physician. A number of allopathic doctors started homeopathic practice following Sircar's lead. The 'Calcutta Homeopathic Medical College', the first homeopathic medical college was established in 1881. This institution took on a major role in popularising homeopathy in India.**

**In 1973, the Government of India recognised homeopathy as one of the national systems of medicine and set up the Central Council of Homeopathy (CCH) to regulate its education and practice. Now, only qualified registered homeopaths can practice homeopathy in India. At present, in India, homeopathy is the third most popular method of medical treatment after allopathy and Ayurveda. There are over 200,000 registered homeopathic doctors currently, with approximately 12,000 more being added every year. Homeopathy (2010) 99, 130–136.**

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## Origins and early history

There are different opinions about the year in which homeopathy was introduced to India. Some believe that a German geologist came to India with his officials for geological investigations in 1810. He set up an office in Calcutta, during his sojourn he practised homeopathic medicine for the treatment of his workers and the people of that locality. At the same time, a Mr Mullence of the London Missionary Society was known to have distributed homeopathic medicines to the people of Bhawanipur, Calcutta. However, most historians do not accept the year 1810 as the beginning of the practice of homeopathy in India as there is no written documentation about the aforesaid episodes.<sup>1</sup>

John Martin Honigberger (1795–1869), Royal Physician of Punjab during the reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singhji,

claimed in his book titled *Thirty Five Years in the East: Adventures, Discoveries, Experiments and Historical Sketches Relating to Punjab and Kashmir, in Connection with Medicine, Botany, Pharmacy etc., Together with an Original Materia Medica and a Medical Vocabulary in Four European and Five Eastern Languages* published in London in 1852, that he had introduced the homeopathic method of treatment in India in 1839. 1839 is now generally accepted as the year of the introduction of homeopathy in India.<sup>1</sup>

## Colonial period

Maharaja Ranjit Singhji died on 27 June 1839. Honigberger stayed in Punjab for another 10 years and devoted himself to the profession of homeopathy. In 1855, Honigberger moved to Calcutta, where he practised homeopathy during his stay there for 5 years.<sup>1</sup>

The date 16 February 1867 is a memorable day in the history of homeopathy in India. On that day, Mahendra Lal Sircar (1833–1904), then a popular allopathic physician and upholder of Indian science, announced publicly his conviction regarding the homeopathic system of medicine. In

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fact, Sircar was the first Indian who, although institutionally educated as a medical doctor, converted to the practice of homeopathy. Within one year of adopting homeopathy, he published the first homeopathic journal of Asia, *The Calcutta Journal of Medicine*, in January 1868. This journal was received well not only in India but throughout the world.<sup>2</sup>

Meanwhile, homeopathy began to gain ground in other parts of India. In 1867, a Mr Ironside established the first homeopathic hospital in Benares, ignoring strong opposition from allopathic organisations; he appointed Lokenath Moitra as officer-in-charge of the hospital. In 1869, a homeopathic charitable dispensary was instituted in Allahabad, Uttar Pradesh, with the help of some social workers; Babu Priyanath Basu took charge as a visiting physician. In 1870, another homeopathic dispensary was set up in the historic city of Agra, and Babu Gobinda Chandra Roy was appointed Chief Medical Officer there. In the same year Maharaja Bahadur of Jaipur, Rajasthan, invited Dr Salzar, a famous homeopathic practitioner of Calcutta at the time, to treat his vision problem and Salzar was able to bring about much improvement in Raja Bahadur's health and vision by homeopathic medicine. Hence, the Maharaja of Jaipur announced his conviction regarding homeopathy and patronised this method of treatment in Rajasthan.

The principal role of popularising homeopathy in south India was performed by Father Muller (1841–1910). Father Muller was a German priest who studied homeopathy in USA and France. He then went to Mangalore in south India on 31 December 1871 with other missionaries. Soon he gained fame as a medical practitioner. By virtue of his zeal, in 1880, a charitable dispensary was founded in Konkarnari, Mangalore. Father Muller established the General Hospital in 1895.<sup>2,3</sup>

In Bengal, Mahendra Lal Sircar, head of the Allopathic Society, adopted homeopathy and established himself as a homeopath, became the inspiration for many other allopathic physicians. A considerable number of allopathic doctors started homeopathic practice following Sircar's initiative. Pratap Chandra Majumdar, along with M.M. Bose and D.N. Roy established 'The Calcutta School of Homeopathy' on 14 February 1881 by their own efforts. Later, this institution was renamed the Calcutta Homeopathic Medical College. In course of time, this college became the leading homeopathic institution of India. Students from all over the country came in large numbers to learn homeopathy. Many talented persons, after graduating in homeopathy studies from this college, spread out throughout India. Thus, the achievements of this institution in popularising homeopathy in India need to be acknowledged.

M.N. Pillai (1882–1962) came to Calcutta from Trivandrum to study homeopathy and, after completing his medical education at the Calcutta Homeopathic Medical College, returned to his own state to practise there. He was the pioneer of homeopathy in Kerala. Abhi Chandra Rao obtained the MHMS (Master of Homeopathic Medicine and Surgery) degree from the Bengal Allen Homeopathic College in 1921 and returned to Cuttack. Within a short period, he became a renowned homeopathic physician.

He established the first homeopathic medical college in Orissa.<sup>3</sup> Thus, homeopathy, with its roots in Bengal, spread out to other states of India.

### Homeopathy associations in the colonial period

There was no government control on homeopathic training and practice in the colonial period. In this situation, qualified homeopaths tried to obtain government recognition for homeopathy with the idea that homeopathic training and practice may progress appropriately. To fulfil this aim, the homeopaths of Bengal and other states of India came together to form 'The All India Homeopathic Medical Association (AIHMA)' in 1932. It was formed with the initiative of K.N. Katju and other practitioners from Uttar Pradesh and with support from Jitendranath Majumdar. W. Younan, a renowned homeopathic physician of Calcutta, was elected the first president of the first homeopathic association in India, and Jitendranath Majumdar its first general secretary. Yearly conferences were held and the leaders of the association explained to the members of Central Legislative Assembly the urgent need of inclusion of the homeopathic system of medicine under the Central Health Programme. As a result, the first homeopathic resolution was proposed in the Central Legislative Assembly (under British rule) by Miyan Ghiasuddin and was passed on 2 April 1937.

However, not much progress was made, and another homeopathic association – the 'All India Institute of Homeopathy' (AIIH) was formed in 1944, with its headquarters in Delhi. The founder members of the AIIH were – A.N. Mukherjee of Calcutta, Dewan Jaichand of Lahore, Daya Shankar Kayastha, J.P. Srivastava, S.P. Asthana and K.G. Saxena of Delhi. Saxena was elected the general secretary of the association.<sup>1</sup>

In December 1946, a delegation from the AIIH met Mr. Ghaznafar Ali Khan, the then health minister of India. The delegation gave a clear picture of homeopathic practice and training in India and abroad and requested the health minister to recognise and use homeopathy in the future health plan of India. A draft proposal was submitted to the central government on 15 March 1947.<sup>1</sup>

### Modern period

After independence on 15 August 1947, a new avenue was open for homeopathy to move on according to Indian will and need. Rajkumari Amrit Kaur became the first health minister of independent India. The representatives of the AIIH met her with a new hope and requested to implement the proposals that had been submitted to her predecessor. Nevertheless, the Ministry of Health informed the AIIH that nothing could be done unless another resolution was passed by parliament. Representatives of the AIIH persuaded Mr. Satish Chandra Samanta, Mr. Mohun Lal Saxena, Pattavi Sitaramayya, Lala Deshbandhu Gupta and other members of the parliament to move for consideration of the homeopathic resolution that was put up by the Congress Party on 17 February 1948 and unanimously passed by the parliament.

## Government bodies and institutions involving homeopathy

### Homeopathic Enquiry Committee<sup>1</sup>

On 30 September 1948, the government announced the terms of references and names of personnel of the Homeopathic Enquiry Committee. Most of the elected members of this committee had been the members of AIH. The committee submitted its report in 1949. It accepted the homeopathic system of medicine and recommended its recognition to the government. This committee also recommended the formation of a Central Homeopathic Council. It visited homeopathic institutions in different states and presented comprehensive reports on how the physicians had been working and to what extent the patients benefited. The survey report was recorded in the 'Report of the Homeopathic Enquiry Committee 1949, Government of India and Ministry of Health'. From this report, the condition of homeopathic colleges as well as homeopathic practitioners at that time could be known to a considerable degree.<sup>1</sup>

### Homeopathic Advisory Committee<sup>4</sup>

The Government of India constituted an *ad hoc* committee on homeopathy in 1952. There were five members of the AIH on this committee, presided over by the Director General of Health Services (DGHS), Ministry of Health. This committee had six sittings between 1952 and 1954 and discussed and resolved various problems pertaining to homeopathy. In 1954, this committee was designated as the Homeopathic Advisory Committee. In 1956, this advisory committee was transferred from the directorate to the Health Ministry with the health secretary as its chairman. The DGHS (Director General of Health Services), the director of medical research and six homeopaths formed the committee. All the homeopathic members were members of AIH. This committee functioned until the formation of the Central Council of Homeopathy in 1974.<sup>4</sup>

On the recommendation of the advisory committee, K.G. Saxena was appointed by the central government as the first honorary advisor in 1962. The advisor was also the secretary of the Homeopathic Advisory Committee. The second homeopathic advisor, Jugal Kishore, was appointed in September 1971 and he worked till December 1979. The third homeopathic advisor, Harish Chand, was appointed on September 1980. The duty of the advisor was to apprise the government of India regarding all matters concerning homeopathy on the basis of which the central government could consider the plans and programmes for the development of homeopathy.

### The Dave Committee<sup>5</sup>

The government of India set up this committee for standardisation in training and regulation of the practice of homeopaths, vaidyas and hakims in 1956. D.T. Dave, the health minister of Saurashtra, was the chairman of the committee.

The recommendations of the Dave Committee were:

1. There should be separate registers for Ayurveda, Unani and homeopathy streams.

2. Registered medical practitioners of Ayurvedic, Unani and Homeopathic systems of medicine should have the same privileges as practitioners in modern medicine.
3. Two councils should be created similar to the Indian Medical Council, to have control over the maintenance of uniform teaching standards in all the institutions: The Central Council of Ayurvedic and Unani systems of Medicine and the Central Council for Homeopathic System of Medicine.
4. A 5.5-year degree course should be introduced for homeopathy (4.5-year course with 1 year's internship). The course for homeopathy would be almost similar to that suggested by the Homeopathic Enquiry Committee (1949).
5. Separate directors for (a) ayurvedic and Unani and (b) homeopathic systems of medicine should be created in the Central Ministry of Health, Government of India, and also in the states as far as possible.

### Homeopathic Pharmacopoeia Committee<sup>6</sup>

Another landmark in the progress of homeopathy in India was the appointment of a Homeopathic Pharmacopoeia Committee in September 1962 with B.K. Sarkar as the chairman. The other members were S.R. Wadia, Diwan Harish Chand and K.G. Saxena. The term of the committee was for a period of 3 years commencing from 17 November 1962, the date of its first meeting. After the expiry of 3 years, the term of the committee was extended by a further period of 3 years. The work of the committee was in connection with the compilation of the Indian Homeopathic Pharmacopoeia.

## Central Council for Homeopathy (CCH)<sup>6,7</sup>

In 1964, a composite Central Council Bill for Ayurveda, Unani and homeopathy systems was introduced in the parliament. A joint parliamentary committee of 36 members of parliament with Bhargava as the chairman was constituted, which submitted its report in 1967 and recommended for separate Central Councils of Indian Systems of Medicine and Homeopathy (ISM&H). The Indian Medicine and Homeopathy Central Council Bill, 1968 was introduced in the Rajya Sabha (upper house of Parliament) on 27 December 1968. In 1971, the Central Council for Indian System of Medicine was formed and a separate bill for homeopathy was raised in the Lok Sabha (lower house) in December 1971. In April 1972, a joint parliamentary committee of 48 members of parliament (MPs) was constituted for homeopathy. The Central Council of Homeopathy Bill was accepted in the Rajya Sabha in July 1973. The Central Council of Homeopathy Act was introduced in 1973 and the government constituted the Central Council of Homeopathy (CCH) in 1974 with A.K. Kisku as the president and Jugal Kishore as vice president. Five principal committees were formed under the central council. They were – (a) educational committee, (b) executive committee, (c) liaison

committee, (d) planning and development cell and (e) council meetings.

### Aims and objects of CCH

The CCH had the following aims and objects:

1. to lay down minimum standards to be observed in homeopathic education;
2. to recommend recognition or withdrawal of medical qualification granted by the homeopathic medical institutions in India;
3. to maintain the central register of practitioners of homeopathy in the country;
4. to lay down the standards of professional conduct, etiquettes and code of ethics to be observed by the practitioners of homeopathy;
5. to negotiate with institutions located in other countries imparting training in homeopathy for recognition of their qualifications on reciprocal basis;
6. to advise both the central and state governments on all matters concerning education and practice in homeopathy.

Currently, the CCH approves two courses:

**BHMS:** (Bachelor of Homeopathic Medicine and Surgery) This course spreads over 5.5 years, including internship of 1-year duration after passing the final-year degree examination.

**MD (Hom):** (Postgraduate Degree Course) The CCH has prescribed postgraduate degree courses in homeopathic subjects, for example, Materia Medica, Homeopathic Philosophy and Repertory, spread over 3-years' duration including 1 year of house job or equivalent thereof.

### Central Council for Research in Homeopathy (CCRH)<sup>8</sup>

Before 1947, research on homeopathy depended entirely upon the non-governmental financial support. With a view to expediting research since independence in 1947, it was felt that government grants in the form of finance and approval were necessary. On 23 May 1969, the government of India formed the Central Council for Research in Indian Medicine and Homeopathy and Yoga. In 1970, under the advice of K.G. Saxena, the then honourable advisor on homeopathy, the central government decided to found the Central Homeopathic Research Institute. The first homeopathic research institute in India, which was also the first in Asia, was established in Howrah, West Bengal.

CCRH, one of the successor organisations to the erstwhile Central Council for Research in Indian Medicine and Homeopathy (CCRIMH), was established as an autonomous organisation at New Delhi in 1978. Ever since, CCRH remains a unique organisation, which is engaged in various research studies in homeopathy.

### The main objectives of the CCRIMH<sup>9</sup>

1. to formulate aims and patterns of research on scientific lines in homeopathy;

2. to undertake any research or other programmes in homeopathy;
3. to prosecute and assist in research, propagate knowledge and experimental measures generally in connection with the causation, mode of spread and prevention of diseases;
4. to initiate, aid, develop and coordinate scientific research in different aspects – (e.g., fundamental and applied aspects of homeopathy) and to promote and assist institutions of research for the study of the diseases, their prevention, causation and remedy, etc.

### Areas of research<sup>8</sup>

1. Survey, collection and cultivation of medicinal plants
2. Drug standardisation
3. Drug proving
4. Clinical verification
5. Clinical research
6. Literary research

### Achievements<sup>10</sup>

1. Raw drugs supplied: 439; medicinal plants cultivated: 56.
2. Pharmacognostic study of 233 plants, physicochemical study of 214 drugs, pharmacological study of 124 drugs; the number of drugs studied in all three aspects: 106.
3. A total of 76 drugs have been proven, while six others are in progress.
4. As many as 52 drugs have been verified, while verifications of 32 others are in progress.
5. The total number of concluded projects is 97. Studies of 18 diseases based on standard protocols and scientific parameters have been undertaken.

### Homeopathic Pharmacopoeia Laboratory (HPL)<sup>11</sup>

The HPL in Ghaziabad, was founded in September 1975 under the Fifth Plan (1975–80). The HPL is a subordinate institute to the Department of ISM&H, Government of India. It is also recognised by the Department of Science and Technology, Government of India, as a scientific, technological and research institution. The laboratory is functioning as a standard setting and drug testing laboratory at the national level. Standards of homeopathic drugs are covered under second schedule of the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940. Standards as worked out by the laboratory and approved by the Homeopathic Pharmacopoeia Committee are published in the form of Homeopathic Pharmacopoeia of India (HPI). So far, six volumes of HPI have been published consisting of standards on 706 basic drugs and standards on 159 finished products. Volume VII of HPI consisting of standards on 101 drugs is ready for publication.

The main functions of HPL are:

1. Laying down of standards for identity and purity of homeopathic drugs.
2. Finding indigenous substitutes for plants.
3. Addition of standards on nosodes.

4. Verification of standards of drugs included in other homeopathic pharmacopoeia and confirmation of work of pharmacopoeial importance done elsewhere for adoption or improvement of standards already laid down. Revision and updating of standards of pharmacopoeial importance.
5. Testing of samples referred under different provisions of the Drugs Act, which include legal samples forwarded by the State Drug Control Authorities; samples referred by the port authorities; samples referred by the state government purchase organisations; consumers; etc.
6. Survey and collection of samples of homeopathic drugs for the verification of adulteration trends or quality of drugs marketed under such cases; reports are sent to licensing authorities for taking remedial measures.
7. Supply of standard drug samples to scientific organisations.

#### **Ayurveda, Yoga & Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and Homeopathy (AYUSH)<sup>12</sup>**

The ISM&H was established in March 1995. Its name was changed to Department of AYUSH in November, 2003. The department is working constantly for upgradation of AYUSH educational standards, quality control and standardisation of drugs. It is also working on improving the availability of medicinal plant material, research and development and awareness generation about the efficacy of the systems domestically and internationally.

The objectives of AYUSH are:

- To upgrade the educational standards in the ISM&H colleges in the country.
- To strengthen existing research institutions and ensure a time-bound research programme on identified diseases for which these systems have an effective treatment.
- To draw up schemes for promotion, cultivation and regeneration of medicinal plants used in these systems.
- To evolve pharmacopoeial standards for ISM&H drugs.

#### **National Institute of Homeopathy (NIH)<sup>13,14</sup>**

To develop an indigenous system of medicine and homeopathy, the government of India launched a programme for application of these systems. The programmes were intended to boost education and research, leading to the establishment of the NIH on 10 December 1975.

The NIH, affiliated to the University of Calcutta, has been conducting the regular degree course in homeopathy (BHMS) since 1987. The BHMS Course is of 5 years' duration, including 1-year compulsory internship. The institute has introduced postgraduate courses namely MD in homeopathy under the Calcutta University for BHMS degree holders in three subjects: (1) homeopathic materia medica and homeopathic therapeutics; (2) organon of medicine and philosophy, chronic diseases and psychology; and (3) repertory.

Current clinical research areas of the NIH are:<sup>15</sup>

- (a) Thyroid diseases
- (b) Tonsillitis and otorrhoea
- (c) Diabetes mellitus
- (d) Degenerative joint diseases

- (e) Leucoderma
- (f) Cataract

## **Homeopathic associations**

### **Indian Institute of Homeopathic Physicians (IIHP)<sup>16</sup>**

The All India Institute of Homeopathy (AIH) was formed in 1944 by a team including M. Gururaju, A.N. Mukharjee, Diwan Jaichand, Daya Shankar, J.P. Srivasthava, S.P. Asthana with K.G. Saxena as the founder secretary general. It was later renamed as the Indian Institute of Homeopathic Physicians (IIHP).

### **Homeopathic Medical Association of India (HMAI)<sup>17-19</sup>**

In 1975, two homeopathic associations, the All India Homeopathic Medical Association (AIHMA) and the Indian Institute of Homeopathy, held an all-India conference in Calcutta, and opted to coalesce, resulting in the HMAI.

The objectives of the HMAI are<sup>20</sup>:

- To promote and advance the science of homeopathy and homeopathic education in India in accordance with the basic principles of homeopathy, as enunciated by Hahnemann.
- To improve public health in accordance with homeopathic principles as applied to the prevalent public health methods.
- To maintain the honour and dignity and to uphold and safeguard the interests of the homeopathic profession.
- To promote co-operation among the homeopathic fraternity by forming a unitary national organisation of homeopaths.

The present president of HMAI is S.P.S. Bakshi.

### **International Homeopathic Congress held in India**

*International Homeopathic Congress 1967<sup>21</sup>*: The congress organised by the International Homeopathic Medical League was held for the first time in India, in New Delhi, in 1967.

Zakir Hussain, the third president of India, the patron-in-chief of the International Homeopathic Congress, in his inaugural address, said, "*The large numbers of Homeopathic Practitioners in India can play a special role in rendering medical aid to the vast rural population at cost which they can afford*". Mr V.V. Giri, the fourth president of India, the vice president in 1967, in a message to the congress, wrote "*The attractive attributes of Homeopathic Medicine, which is efficacious, cheap, harmless, palatable and portable, have been largely responsible for its growing popularity among the ailing humanity. I have myself been a firm believer in homeopathy and am fully aware of its beneficent value as a preventive as well as curative measure*".

*International Homeopathic Congress 1977<sup>21</sup>*: The XXXII International Homeopathic Congress was held at the Vigyan Bhavan, New Delhi, from 5 to 11 October 1977. The Indian Post and Telegraph Department printed and circulated 2 million postal stamps to mark the congress. The design of the stamps depicts the profile of Samuel Hahnemann. Alongside were shown cinchona plants. On

the stamp, it was inscribed that "Cinchona Bark was to Hahnemann, what the falling apple to Newton and the swinging lamp to Galileo". The stamp was released on 6 October 1977.

#### Appointment of a homeopathic doctor to president

Since 1950, a homeopathic doctor was included in the group of honorary physicians of the president of India. The first homeopathic honorary physician was K.G. Saxena, on the president's personal staff in 1950. Currently, Ramakrishnan holds this post.

#### Distinguished users and supporters of homeopathy

Many respected persons and intellectual giants of India have supported homeopathy. In this connection, the name of Pandit Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar comes first. He was attracted to homeopathy after his own recovery from a complicated disease by homeopathic treatment under Babu Rajendra Lal Dutta. Pandit Iswar Chandra was indeed a friend of the wretched and the poor. He studied homeopathy under Rajendra Lal Dutta's guidance to treat poor patients without charge.

Rishi Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay and Sarat Chandra Chattopadhyay, the great novelists of Bengal, were in favour of homeopathic treatment. Rabindranath Tagore, the Nobel Laureate for literature in 1913, used homeopathy regularly. The poet treated some of his admirers. This was evident from his many letters containing prescriptions of homeopathic medicine for those who wanted his advice. Rabindranath took homeopathy seriously; in fact, he sent his son-in-law, Satyendranath, to America to pursue a foreign homeopathic degree in addition to his degree in allopathic medicine. Tagore said: "I have long been an ardent believer in the science of homeopathy and I feel happy that it has got now a great hold in India than even in the land of its origin. It is not merely a collection of a few medicines, but a science with a rational philosophy as its base. We require more scientific interest and inquiries into the matter with a special stress upon the Indian environments". (30 August 1936, Uttarayan Santiniketan).

Swami Vivekananda had a high opinion of the homeopathic philosophy. Thakur Shri Ramakrishna preferred homeopathic medicine and he generally advised his disciples to be treated by homeopathy for their illness. Swami Vivekananda in his speech on Rajyoga passed a high remark on homeopathy by saying: "An allopath comes and treats cholera patients and gives them his medicines. The homeopath comes and gives his medicines and cures perhaps more than the allopath does, because the homeopath does not disturb his patients, but allows nature to deal with them". Shri Aurobindo, a great Indian philosopher, commented, "Homeopathy deals with the physical personality, while allopaths go by diagnosis which does not consider the personality".

The outlook of Mahatma Gandhi regarding homeopathy is also memorable. He opined, "Homeopathy is the latest and refined method of treating patient economically and unviolently. Government must encourage and patronise it

in our country. Just as my non-violence will never fail, homeopathy never fails. But the followers of homeopathy may fail owing to faulty application of the principles".

S. Radha Krishnan, the great philosopher and second president of India, while he was the vice president, in his inaugural speech at the 3rd All India Homeopathic Congress in New Delhi in 1953 said, "Homeopathy did not merely seek to cure a disease but treats a disease as a sign of disorder of the whole human organism. This was also recognised in the Upanishadic thought which spoke of human organism as combination of body, mind and spirit. Homeopathy would play an important part in the public health of the country along with other systems. Medical facilities in India are so scanty that Homeopathy can confidently visualise a vast field of expansion".

The first president of India, Rajendra Prasad, in a message welcoming the formation of Society for the Advancement of Homeopathy on the 14 September 1955, said, "I hope the society will take up its work in right earnest and push it forward as homeopathy is not yet receiving State patronage, at any state on a scale which it deserves; it naturally falls upon those who are interested in it to convince those who do not accept it as a method of cure, in its efficacy and scientific basis. It is well known that in a poor country like India even today there is a very large number of people who take advantage of it and derive benefit from it".

### The current situation<sup>22</sup>

The prevalence of homeopathic medical treatment is far greater in India than in any other country. At present there are 178 homeopathic medical colleges; among them, 35 are government colleges, while the rest are managed by

**Table 1** Condition of homeopathy in different states

Name of state	Homeopathic Act passed in the year	Number of homeopathic colleges at present	Number of postgraduate homeopathic colleges
Andhra Pradesh	1956	4	1
Arunachal Pradesh	—	1	0
Assam	1956	3	0
Bihar	1953	14	1
Chandigarh	—	1	0
Chhatisgarh	—	3	0
Delhi	1956	2	1
Goa	—	1	0
Gujarat	1963	16	2
Haryana	1965	1	0
Himachal Pradesh	—	1	0
Jharkhand	—	2	0
Karnataka	1965	11	5
Kerala	1957	5	2
Madhya Pradesh	1951	20	0
Maharashtra	1952	45	8
Orissa	1956	6	1
Punjab	1966	5	0
Rajasthan	1969	6	1
Tamilnadu	—	10	0
Uttar Pradesh	1951	9	3
Uttaranchal	—	1	0
West Bengal	1963	13	2

private bodies. 26 of these institutions offer postgraduate study in homeopathy. There are over 200,000 registered homeopaths currently, with approximately 12,000 more being added every year. There are more than 300 homeopathic hospitals and the number of homeopathic dispensaries exceeds 8000. Prior to 1947, homeopathy was practised largely by individuals, including missionaries, officers of civil and military services and even retired people. In 1973, the government-recognised homeopathy as one of the national systems of medicine, and set up the CCH to regulate homeopathic education and practice. Now homeopathy can only be practised after completion of a 5.5-year degree course, which includes 1 year of compulsory internship. This has led to better practitioners and more effective treatment. Regarding higher studies, a number of universities in India have introduced the postgraduate (MD) course in homeopathy. In India, homeopathy is the third most popular method of treatment after allopathy and Ayurveda. The legal status of homeopathy in India is very much at par with the conventional medicine. The size of the homeopathy drugs market is also expanding at a rapid rate. Table 1 illustrates the growth of homeopathy in the various states in India.

## Conclusions

I have presented an overview of the history of homeopathy in India from its advent to the present. Homeopathy was introduced in the 19th century. In spite of colonial bitterness, urban Indians welcomed Europeans with homeopathic knowledge and missionary zeal and novelty. Homeopathy became extremely popular and spread all over India. Hanemann's conception regarding health, disease and cure coincides with ancient Indian philosophy: the source of health and disease is not material but spiritual, that is, in the material life principle, which is integrated with body and mind in the human organism. Anything which affects the life principle morbidly must do so qualitatively and the medicine which cures diseases also does the same qualitatively.

Until the coming of sulpha drugs and antibiotics in the middle of the 20th century, allopathy had progressed very little and was very expensive. Villagers and city dwellers with small incomes could hardly afford allopathic treatment. However, homeopathic treatment is relatively inexpensive and safe. Homeopathic drugs are extremely dilute substances and are not known to produce any toxic or adverse effects.

Homeopathy has limitations; it can be used as complementary and supplementary therapy to allopathy and can co-exist with other modern methods. More investigation,

exploration and research in the laboratory and in homeopathic treatment on patients is required. More and more meritorious students are qualifying, so it can be reasonably hoped that more and more avenues of modern research in homeopathy will be opened. Patients suffering from difficult-to-cure diseases will benefit.

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