

HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT OF NATUROPATHY IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT

Yōga & Naturopathy are very old sciences based on well founded philosophy. In ancient texts we find mention of health promotive, disease preventive, curative and rehabilitative values of different Yogic practices and Nature Cure modalities. Till recent past Naturopathy was considered as minority health movement, so was *Yōga*, but as per a recent estimate about 15 million Americans include some form of *Yōga* in their daily fitness regimen. This indicates the growing popularity these sciences enjoy as on today.

The systems of *Yōga* & Naturopathy have flourished in the country mainly on non-government initiatives. Recognizing and realizing the need for developing these systems as per their own fundamental principles, the Government of India established three organizations named Central Council for Research in *Yōga* & Naturopathy (CCRYN), New Delhi, National Institute of Naturopathy (NIN), Pune and Morarji Desai National Institute of *Yōga* (MDNIY), New Delhi.

Gandhiji was influenced by the book 'Return to Nature' written by Adolf Just and became a firm believer of Naturopathy. This gave a momentum to spread of these sciences. Presently there are hundreds of Institutions working in the field of *Yōga* & Naturopathy having indoor and outdoor treatment facilities and are serving the suffering masses with full dedication. Their number is increasing day by day.

In this paper the author giving historical development defines the role that these systems can play in realizing health for all and stressing need to give these sciences due importance they deserve in the National Health Programmes. The author also discusses the limitations of these sciences and true scope for them.

Keywords: Naturopathy, *Kudarati Cikitsā*, Fasting, Vegetarianism

Introduction

Yōga and Naturopathy are the twin systems of health care. These are called as the science of healthy living. Both are drugless systems of healing based on well founded philosophy. *Yōga* and Naturopathy have their own concepts of health and disease and also principles of treatment. These systems lay more importance on the preventive

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aspect of health care rather than curative one. This is one of the reasons that *Yōga* & Naturopathy systems are gaining popularity day by day.

Naturopathy is a system of man building in harmony with constructive principal of nature of physical, mental, moral & spiritual planes of living. It has great promotive, diseases preventive and curative as well as restorative potential.

Naturopathy is also defined as system of medicine for the cure of diseases by encouraging natural curative reactions inherent in every diseased cell through methods and treatments based upon the five fundamental laws of which govern health.

The difference between Naturopathy and other systems of medicine is that in Naturopathy the methods and treatments used to encourage the inherent curative reaction within each cell are based upon the five fundamental laws which govern health. The cure is obtained, not by reactions to the medicines introduced but because the very vitality and the health of diseased cells improve with the help of the methods and treatments used.

History

Naturopathy has been used in India since time immemorial. Fasting, *Uṣaḥpānam*, *Dugdha Kalpa* and taking bath in holy rivers etc. are some of the modalities used by Indians in those days. Hindus, Chinese and Egyptians used water, sunlight, fasting, massage and exercise for curative purposes in 3000 B.C. (approx.). Fasts were enjoyed as a religious observance among the Hindus on fortnightly days, viz., the eleventh day after the full or new moon (called *Ēkādaśī*), and the new moon day (*Amāvasyā*).

Naturopathy and Nature Cure are synonyms. In India, the servival and spread of Naturopathy started by the translation of Germany's Louis Kuhne's famous book "The New Science of Healing". In 1894 Shri D. Venkatachalpatty Sharma, a close associate of Louis Kuhne propagated Kuhne's treatment in South India by translating Kuhne's books in Telugu. Later in 1904 *Śrōtriya Kṛṣṇa Svarūpa* published Hindi and Urdu translation of Kuhne's books and thus helped to spread Kuhne's treatment in the Northern India.

During the year 1920-21 Dr. Dinshah started developing techniques of Naturopathy based on modern lines. Among other things he first cured himself, his family members and many friends of chronic malaria without any anti malarial drugs, thereby developing

immunity to malaria. In 1929, he started Nature Cure Clinic and Sanatorium at Tadiwalla Road, Poona. Later, he started the branch of the Poona institution in a picturesque place at Sinhgadh situated at a height of about 1,500 meters above the sea level, 25 Km. from Poona. He also started two Nature Cure Clinics in Bombay, one indoor and the other outdoor.

The Naturopathy movement commenced mainly in the States of Andhra Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Bengal, Maharashtra and Gujarat etc. long back. The places quite famous for Naturopathy Centres in those days were Bhimavaram in Andhra Pradesh, Pudukottai in Tamilnadu, Gorakhpur, Lucknow, Allahabad and Magarwara in Uttar Pradesh, Calcutta in Bengal, Dhulia, Bombay and Sevagram in Maharashtra, Jasidih and Ranipatra in Bihar, Jaipur in Rajasthan and Sabarmati Ashram in Gujarat. The Naturopathy Centres started working in those days were *Ārōgya Mandira*, Gorakhpur in 1941, *Nisargōpacāra Āśrama*, Urulikanchan near Poona in 1946 and *Prākṛtika Cikitsālaya*, Jaipur in 1950. Some of the Naturopaths did foundation work in the revival of Naturopathy and devoted their lives in different States among them Dr. Mahavir Prasad Poddar, Dr. Janaki Sharan Verma, Dr. Sharan Prasad, Dr. Khushi Ram 'Dilkash', Dr. S.J. Singh, Dr. Hiralal, Dr. Vitthal Das Modi, Dr. Kularanjan Mukherjee, Dr. Sukhram Das, Dr. J.M. Jussawala, Dr. Vegi Raju Krishnam Raju, Dr. B. Venkat Rao, Dr. B. Vijay Laxmi, Dr. Ganga Prasad Goud 'Nahar', Shri Dharam Chand Saravagi and Acharya K. Laxman Sharma etc. are worth mentioning. The names of Dr. M. M. Bhamgara and Dr. Sukhbir Singh Rawat are mentionable with reference to present day context of Naturopathy. Rai Bahadur Dr. D.N. Choudhuri, retired Civil Surgeon of Jabalpur, turned a Naturopath and wrote a remarkable book 'The Ideal Diet'. The books written by these eminent Naturopaths are of immense value and most of the books are a part of curriculum of Naturopathy now a days.

Gandhiji the "Father of Nation" was highly influenced by the book 'Return to Nature' written by Adolf Just (published in 1902) and gradually became a firm believer of Naturopathy. For the benefits of the readers of the Indian Opinion (South Africa) he wrote a few articles under the heading "Guide to Health" in or about the year 1906. He did several experiments of Naturopathy on himself, on his family members and on the residents of ashram. Convinced by his experiments he included *Kudarati Cikitsā* (Naturopathy) in his constructive programmes. He wrote many books on Naturopathy based on his

experiences which are quite popular among the followers of Naturopathy. These books are Key to Health, Nature Cure, *Rāmanāma* and Diet & Diet Reform. The highlights of these books are that these are written in a simple language easily understandable to a common man.

Gandhiji had a passion to tender the sick and the poor. He valued life close to nature for its simplicity and evolved and practised simple rules of health. He had almost a religious faith in vegetarianism which led him to carry out dietetic reform based on pragmatic result obtained from personal experiments. He was tremendously influenced by the writings of Dr. Kuhne on Nature Cure. He believed that Human body, mind and spirit could be maintained in a state of perfect health by observance of simple rules. He attempted to discover causes of ordinary ill health and improvised simple remedies of Nature Cure. On June 14, 1944, Gandhiji first went to Dr. Dinshah's Nature Cure Clinic, Poona. Since his first visit to his institution to August 6, 1946 when he left Poona and never returned there because his presence was needed in other part of the country, Gandhiji visited Dr. Dinshah's Institution 12 times and spent 156 days there.

Dr. Dinshah became Gandhiji's personal nature cure physician. He managed two of the three world renowned 21-day fasts of Gandhiji and many other shorter ones; cured him of malignant tertian malaria without anti-malarial drugs and treated him till the end of the latter's life in January 1948.

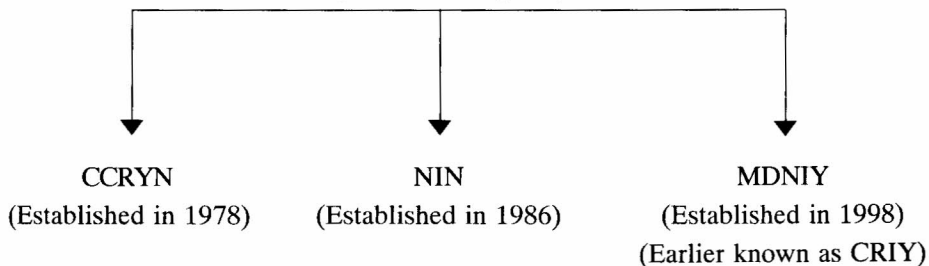
In 1946 Mahatma Gandhi opened his Nature Cure Center at Urlikanchan (Poona) in pursuance of his belief that the poor could not afford costly medicines and remedies and that he owed it to them to let them have the benefit of his long life experiments in Health and Hygiene and acted as the physician-in-charge. He added *Rāmanāma* as a method of faith healing to the already existing methods of Nature Cure healing.

In the year 1924 the basic research and development work on *Yōga* was started by Swami Kuvalayanandji in Lonavla. He established *Kaivalyadhāma* in Lonavla, Pune which later became a pioneer institute in the field of research in *Yōga*. Some more institutes like Bihar School of *Yōga*, Munger, *Vivēkānanda Yōga* Research Foundation, Bangalore and Vemana *Yōga* Research Institute, Hyderabad, *Kṛṣṇamācārya Yōga Mandiram*, Chennai, The *Yōga* Institute, Santacruz, Mumbai, Umachal *Yōgāśrama*, Guwahati, Divine Life Society, Rishikesh etc. also done commendable work.

Development

Later the Government of India also recognized the need of systematic research for the development of *Yōga* & Naturopathy systems and thus formed three organizations to look after the development of these systems which are the autonomous bodies of Ministry of Health & Family Welfare under the Department of AYUSH. The Central Council for Research in *Yōga* & Naturopathy (CCRYN), New Delhi established in 1978 is one of them. The other two are National Institute of Naturopathy (NIN), Pune and Morarji Desai National Institute of *Yōga* (MDNIY), New Delhi.

Govt. Organizations for the development of *Yōga* & Naturopathy in India



The system of *Yōga* & Naturopathy flourished in the country mainly on non-government initiatives. These non-government institutions were largely instrumental in popularizing these systems among the masses. They also helped in the development of these systems on modern lines. In the recent past some of the State & Central Government have taken some interest and started patronizing these systems. Presently there are hundreds of Naturopathy and *Yōga* Hospitals spread across the country, providing health care services to common masses of rural as well as urban areas in an effective manner with or without any support of Government. Some of the institutes like Institute of Naturopathy and Yogic Science, Bangalore, *Nisargōpacāra Āśrama*, Urulikanchan, Pune, *Ārōgya Mandira*, Gorakhpur, *Prākṛtika Cikitsālaya*, Jaipur and Govt. Naturopathic Medical College and Govt. Naturopathy Hospital, Hyderabad etc. are not only known all over the country but are quite popular among the believers of *Yōga* & Naturopathy in foreign countries as well.

Today Naturopathy is accepted as an independent system of treatment by all and eleven colleges affiliated to respective Universities are imparting a 5½ year course leading to Degree of Bachelor of Naturopathy and Yogic Sciences (BNYS).

Future Prospects

Yōga and Naturopathy systems have enormous potentially. In the scientific age of today these systems can prove their efficacy if due patronage is given to these systems to develop as per their own principles. These drugless systems are more effective in many of the life style related chronic disorders i.e. Coronary Artery Disease (CAD), Diabetes Mellitus, Asthma, Arthritis, Hypertension and Anxiety etc. where other systems have failed to provide any sort of relief. In fact *Yōga* and Naturopathy sciences are time tested and the new trend of integrating their practices in ameliorating suffering of patients by leading practitioners of other systems speaks of the importance they enjoying today and the role they are likely to play in future. It can be said with confidence that the dream of health for all which is yet to be realized despite passing of the targeted year 2000 can well be realized in comparatively a shorter period of time if these systems are given due importance they deserve by Health Planners and popularized globally.

Conclusion

While discussing the future prospects it should also be kept in mind that *Yōga* & Naturopathy have lot of merits but there are certain limitations also specially of Naturopathy. People say that Naturopathy is a time taking process, although the reason behind this, the attitude of patient in taking Naturopathy as last resort. In accidents and surgical cases Naturopathy is not having much to contribute. However, in post operative cases Naturopathy can prove its metal.

The authorities may consider giving these old & traditional systems due importance in the National Health Programme (NHP) and National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) not only to cut down the increasing expenses in health care delivery but also to build a healthy and strong nation.

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सारांश

भारत में प्राकृतिक चिकित्सा का इतिहास एवं विकास

राजीव रस्तोगी

योग एवं प्राकृतिक चिकित्सा सुदृढ़ सिद्धांतों पर आधारित अति प्राचीन विज्ञान है। प्राचीन ग्रन्थों में विभिन्न योगाभ्यासों एवं प्राकृतिक उपचार विधियों के स्वास्थ्य संवर्धनात्मक, रोग प्रतिरोधक एवं उपचारात्मक मूल्यों के अनेक संदर्भ मिलते हैं। विगत समय तक प्राकृतिक चिकित्सा एवं योग को एक अल्पसंख्यक स्वास्थ्य आंदोलन के रूप में जाना जाता था पर नवीन आकलन के अनुसार लगभग १५ करोड़ अमरीकियों ने अपनी दैनिक स्वास्थ्य चर्या में योग को शामिल किया है। यह इन विज्ञानों की बढ़ती लोकप्रियता की ओर संकेत करता है।

देश में इन पद्धतियों का विकास मुख्य रूप से गैर सरकारी प्रयासों से हुआ। भारत सरकार ने इन पद्धतियों के विकास की आवश्यकता को अनुभव करते हुए केन्द्रीय योग एवं प्राकृतिक चिकित्सा अनुसंधान परिषद्, नई दिल्ली, राष्ट्रीय प्राकृतिक चिकित्सा संस्थान, पुणे तथा मोरारजी देसाई राष्ट्रीय योग संस्थान, नई दिल्ली का गठन किया। राष्ट्रपिता गांधी जी “एडोल्फ जस्ट” की पुस्तक “रिटर्न टू नेचर” से काफी प्रभावित हुए और प्राकृतिक चिकित्सा के प्रबल समर्थक बन गए। इससे प्राकृतिक चिकित्सा के विकास को बढ़ावा मिला। आज देश भर में बाह्य रोगी विभाग, अन्तः रोगी विभाग तथा प्राकृतिक उपचार सुविधाओं से सुसज्जित अनेक संस्थाएँ इन पद्धतियों के प्रचार-प्रसार तथा रोगियों की सेवा में पूरे समर्पण भाव से लगी हुई हैं।

यह पत्र इन पद्धतियों के ऐतिहासिक विकास का वर्णन करते हुए “सबके लिए स्वास्थ्य” के लक्ष्य को प्राप्त करने तथा राष्ट्रीय स्वास्थ्य कार्यक्रम में इन पद्धतियों की भूमिका तथा आवश्यकता को रेखांकित करता है साथ ही इन पद्धतियों की सीमाओं तथा वास्तविक उपयोगिता को भी प्रस्तावित करता है।