

‘India Decades Ahead in Offering Pluralistic Care’: Rachel Roberts

Ms. Rachel Roberts, Chief Executive, Homoeopathy Research Institute and an associate of Faculty of Homoeopathy, U.K., who was on a week-long visit to India, called on Shri. Shripad Yesso Naik, Minister of State (IC), Ministry of AYUSH at Hon. Minister’s office in Goa in the early part of her visit. In the meeting, Ms. Roberts told the Minister that the international homeopathic community looked up to India for the integrated healthcare model being adopted by India. She said every person should have the freedom of choosing the treatment method for their health, and that India was a fine example of how it can be made possible.



Ms. Rachel Roberts calls on Sh. Sripad Yesso Naik, Minister of AYUSH

During her visit, Ms. Roberts met various practitioners, educators, students and researchers of Homoeopathy in a series of meetings organised by Central Council for Research in Homoeopathy (Ministry of AYUSH) in Delhi (25th & 27th January 2018), Kolkata (29th January 2018) and Kerala (31st January and 1st February 2018). The idea behind these meetings was to strategize on the ways to promote an accurate image of Homoeopathy to the world. Ms. Roberts, while her interactions, got to learn more about the Homoeopathy sector in India, particularly the institutionalization of

Homoeopathy in public health. She told that Homoeopathy Research Institute (HRI) based in U.K. is committed to undertake quality research, as well as disseminate existing research in Homoeopathy. In the light of a report on Homoeopathy by National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) in 2015, she highlighted the reasons why the analysis in the report was dubious and its interpretation rather questionable. She said to overcome such reports, it is important to speak out and bring forth the existing evidence, and generate more credible, scientific data. She also suggested that since science, politics and media are inter-related today, it is important to strike a balance among the three and see how these can be used to promote Homoeopathy effectively. She requested everyone associated with Homoeopathy to connect with one another and join the “My Health My Choice” campaign which is about freedom of choice of healthcare one wants. She further informed that HRI is coming up with its first basic research laboratory in Germany, which will focus on finding answers to big questions like how homeopathy works, etc.



Ms. Rachel Roberts deliberating on NHMRC report in Kolkata

While addressing the delegates in Delhi, Sh. Vaidya Rajesh Kotecha, Secretary, Ministry of AYUSH, said that

being an AYUSH physician himself, he understood that the challenges of these systems are different from conventional, and even the means to finding solutions to those are different. He pointed out that the policymakers and stakeholders of Homoeopathy should not get deterred by the questions posed to them regarding plausibility and effectiveness. Nevertheless, he said we must stay committed to research and delivery quality outputs, besides taking Homoeopathy to grassroots level. He said he was confident that Homoeopathy can be effectively used for public healthcare in suburban and rural areas, from where the doctors can always refer a serious case to the nearest Primary Health Centre (PHC).



Sh. Vaidya Rajesh Kotecha, Secretary, Ministry of AYUSH, giving inaugural address in Delhi

Sh. Roshan Jaggi, Joint Secretary, Ministry of AYUSH seconded Sh. Kotecha on enabling use of Homoeopathy in public healthcare in the interiors and said that public needed healthcare support for day to day illnesses, which are an outcome of today's lifestyles. He further said that if Homoeopathy could help the public in epidemic diseases like chikungunya and dengue, it would be a great boon to our country. He said that efforts are being taken to expand AYUSH services in public health as well as to improve the quality of education in colleges giving any of the AYUSH degrees.

Dr. Raj K. Manchanda, Director General, CCRH elaborated to the delegates the need and purpose of these strategic meetings organised by CCRH. He said that Homoeopathy in India can create big, quality data, as required by the scientific community, but that would only come from serious, quality research work from the all sectors – industrialists, practitioners, students as well as researchers. He urged that a part of the revenue generated by the industry and private medical colleges should be used in high quality homoeopathic research. He further stressed that emphasis for research should be laid right from the education stage of a doctor, so that students

can conduct quality research and documentation in their careers later. He pointed out that the onus to make India the strategic leader of Homoeopathy in the coming time lies with all the stakeholders. He also urged the homoeopathic professionals to make right use of technology and connect with people on social media to spread right messages about Homoeopathy.



Dr. Raj K. Manchanda gives his opening remarks in Kottayam

One of these meetings was organised in Sirifort auditorium in Delhi where Ms. Rashmi Krishnan, Secretary (Health), Govt. of NCT of Delhi addressed homoeopathy doctors and students. She said that it is very important that homoeopathy doctors, as well as students start documenting their data and contribute in overall replicability of their clinical experiences with various medicines. She remarked that we should take inspiration from Samuel Hahnemann, who painstakingly recorded all his observations, which we are using till date to treat patients. She urged the students to exert dedicated efforts to their professions as only then can Homoeopathy can get the dignity it deserves.

Dr. Anil Khurana, Deputy Director General, CCRH, while thanking the dignitaries and delegates, reiterated the need of research in Homoeopathy and said that the ongoing projects of Council are high quality and aim at some very important research questions. Dr. V.K. Gupta, Chairman, Scientific Advisory Committee, Prof. K.S. Dhiman, Director General, Central Council for Research in Ayurvedic Sciences, Dr. Mridula Pandey, Deputy Director (Homoeo.), Dept. of ISM&H, Dr. Kamlesh Gupta, CMO (I/C), AYUSH, NDMC and other eminent homoeopathic doctors like Dr. Mohammad Quasim, Dr. A.K. Gupta, Dr. Man Singh, Dr. J.D. Daryani, Dr. Mohit Mathur, Dr. Kusum Chand attended the event on the two days.

In Kolkata, the meet was held at two venues Dr. Anjali

Chatterji Regional Research Institute of Homoeopathy (DACRRIH) and National Institute of Homoeopathy (NIH), which were inaugurated by an eminent homoeopath Dr. Rathin Chakraborty, Mayor, Howrah Municipal Corporation and Member, Scientific Advisory Committee, CCRH. Dr. Chakraborty highlighted the strengths of Homoeopathy in India and its rich history in Bengal. He stressed that homoeopaths in Bengal can bring about the required change and that biased reports like NHMRC cannot deter the millions of patients benefitting from homoeopathy each day. He encouraged students to focus on quality education and research. Dr. Abhijit Chatterjee, Director, NIH apprised the stakeholders about the controversial NHMRC report and its questionable conclusion. Dr. D.B. Sarkar, Officer In-Charge, DACRRI extended vote of thanks to the dignitaries and delegates.

At Kottayam, the meetings were held at the National Homoeopathy Research Institute in Mental Health (NHRIMH). The participants included representatives from the South Indian Homoeopathic Pharma industry, eminent members from the various committees of CCRH and CCH as well as principals, faculty members, and undergraduate/postgraduate students and members of organisations from the Southern part of India. Dr. K. R. Janardanan Nair, Officer Incharge/Principal, NHRIMH, Kottayam welcomed the guests and emphasized that such events would go a long way in sensitizing the Indian Homoeopathic community against the anti-Homoeopathy campaigns.

Dr. R. Reji Kumar, State Programme Manager (Homoeopathy), National AYUSH Mission gave a very comprehensive viewpoint on the 'Kerala Model of Homoeopathy' in his inaugural address. He showcased the rich heritage the state of Kerala has in popularizing & institutionalizing Homoeopathy and effectively integrating it into the public health care delivery systems. He also emphasized on the need for simultaneous development of research database of all the innovative projects in Homoeopathy, the state of Kerala is implementing. He said that these efforts were essential to counter the biasness of reports like the Australian government, NHMRC Report tainting the efficacy of such a well accepted medical system globally. Dr. Eswara Das, former Advisor(H), Ministry of AYUSH appreciated the efforts of Ms. Roberts in fighting against all odds and called her a one woman army and urged all to support her endeavours.

During the open discussion fora, several questions were asked to experts like importance of inclusion of

case reports in evidence of research as level IV, aspects of Indian Homoeopathy covered in movie can be expanded with more footage given to government initiatives etc. There were many ideas from the industry, faculty and students which were discussed briefly, and feedback forms of the event were also collected from the participants.

A documentary 'Just One Drop' featuring many compelling facts and success stories about Homoeopathy was exclusively screened at these meetings. The film is developed by Laurel Chiten, a non-homoeopath who initially was non-believer of Homoeopathy later became firm believer of the system. The film explores the controversy, reveals the rich history, dispels myths and misconceptions, and asks whether homeopathy has been given a fair share. The movie features first-hand account of several patients who have benefitted from Homoeopathy, interviews of policy makers & members of committee who conducted the NHMRC review, opinions of skeptics and investigations done to uncover the truth by researchers. The movie is produced by crowd funding and is available for group screenings to initiate discussions and get the buzz going on for Homoeopathy.

The event garnered an overwhelming response from all sectors of Homoeopathic community, and the delegates felt that more such meetings and movies should come up for projecting the accurate image of Homoeopathy to the world.

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