

Editor Speak

Dear Readers,

PANDEMIC, PANIC, PREVENTION AND POSSIBILITIES

The quest to understand the causation of diseases and search for its protection existed in every civilisation from antiquity. Based on the ethos, tools of treating sickness and means of survival in harmony with nature got evolved. Theories on causation of diseases emerged from the primitive demonic presumption to the modern multi-factorial concepts. The casual relationship of *germs* and *diseases postulated* by Louis Pasteur (1860 and 1864) gave birth to the *germ theory* in medicine. The biological agents as the primary source of diseases lead to dependence on the principle of *Tolle causam* (identify and treat the cause), thereby pushing back the so far prevailed notion of *Tolle Totum* (Treat the total person).

Biological agents as cause of diseases directed the search for specific pharmacologically active substances to treat diseases. That has lead to the foundation of a deductive reasoning in biomedicine and brought in a paradigm shift in the treatment of the sick from patient centric to a disease oriented health care approach. The Hippocratic medicine, that Dr Hahnemann labelled as Allopathy was, thus, reformed by Sir William Osler (1849-1919) to scientific medicine and he came to be known as the father of Modern medicine.

The advent of targeted pharmacologically active therapeutic modalities opened better treatment of infectious diseases. The invention of inoculation/ vaccination transformed the concept of preventive medicine and a race for vaccines to almost every disease started. This made the way for framing the health policies. The health care has become synonym with sick care, leading to flourishing of multispecialty corporate hospitals and health care gradually became an Industry.

The epidemiological triad theory teaches a co-relation of the host-environment-agent as the factors for causation of diseases. The theory gives importance to nurturing ecological system, maintenance of quality standards of the host and careful management of the agents of diseases. However, with more focus on deductive medical experimental models gave precedence on agents to environment and host.

The contribution of public health & hygiene had dramatically helped to contain several contagious diseases, reducing the mortality and improving living standards. Awareness on diet and nutrition, exercise, improved sanitation, ventilated housing etc is the contribution of public health. The elite clinical experts consider the Public Health & Hygiene practitioners as "*toilet doctor"* and therefore, changed the name of the subject to *Community Medicine*. However, what we see is that this important subject becomes insignificant in medical teachings and its practitioners denigrated to trivial positions.

The century's most devastating calamity has engulfed every part of the world in the sordid form of *Covid 19*. Both developed and developing countries are its victim. The WHO, on 31st December, 2019 issued the advisory on the outbreak on a peculiar pneumonia in Wuhan at China with suspected severe mortality (??) sending a panicky message. As on now it has spread to all continents. In India, the first case was detected on 30th January 2020 which spread in a short time inspite of severe restrictions on public activities and movements.

While exploring multi-dimensional solutions on Covid19, the country has ignored in tapping the resources avail-

able in Homeopathy. When the biomedicine demands *invitro* evidences and diseases centric treatment, Homeopathy proceeds to adopt a patient centric care on the basis of disease expressions. Homoeopathy is the second largest healthcare fraternity of the world and contributed heavily on several pandemics in the past. Evidence on these interventions in the past epidemics cannot be simply ignored, though those could be before the emergence of the current epidemiology and contemporary vaccines. The question is when no effective interventions are available in the dominant system, why there is reluctance to encourage the safe Homeopathic approaches, which has treatment options with the notified safety measures. The perception of Homoeopathic modalities become unscientific is only when looked through the prism of biomedical concepts. Homoeopathy is effective in viral infection and, therefore, consider this as any other viral infection with a difference in pace and depth of expressions. Practitioners may use the knowledge to treat such diseases along with notified general immune boosting measures.

Survival is an instinct in every living organism. In the ecosystem every organism adopts to live with oddities of nature and circumstances. Viruses are the agents that at times threaten an evolved life. Covid19 is not the last virus threat in our lifetime. Lockdown and isolations are not the answers to keep them at bay. Vaccines and medicines are not the means to end, but only tools to buy time to adopt. The wisdom teaches to learn to live with such threats. For this there is a need for to be policy modification in health care, awareness on personal responsibilities, environmental safeguards etc. India has rich heritage to preserve health with an elite wisdom on dietetics, yoga, naturopathy, homeopathy etc.

Claims and uncertainties prevail across all medical systems on medication and prevention for Covid. Untested medicines are tried on patients as repurposed on one side with doubtful health safety; however, the same with better safety records in Homeopathy are not encouraged. Dominance of one system on the other and direction to follow ICMR Guidelines on treatment and research by AYUSH systems are ill advised policies. Co existence of Allopathy with AYUSH with mutual respect and understanding shall make us to face such challenges in health care. What is required is to pool the strength of different medical systems and face the threat unitedly. By that way, India could become the role model to the most developed countries. Instead of waiting for another threat to the mankind, a new order of mutual respect of different systems in health care needs to evolve, sooner the better.

Dr. Eswara Das
Chief Editor