CHAPTER – 2

ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE NATURE CURE SYSTEM

2.1. Introduction

Good health cannot be purchased from a shop or a health care centre. One has to follow certain rules of conduct to achieve it. Health is the source of all development. Nature has prescribed certain rules to be followed to gain good health and conserve energy. Health does not mean the absence of sickness alone. It has a wider perspective. Prevention of illness, promotion of health and the cure of disease are the three major aspects, which need to be tackled simultaneously for the welfare of the human beings. People are at the crossroads, not knowing where to go and what to do to be healthy. They have been trapped in the present day consumeristic tendencies where it is almost impossible to find the time to care for their own health. The very essentials of the health preservation are usually neglected. Health promoting habits such as rational eating, physical exercise, inner and outer cleanliness etc. We poison the food we eat, the air we breathe, the water we drink and we take poisonous drugs also. We are committing blunders in the name of scientific advancement. It is noting but a sort of slow suicide, leaving the world poorer in the matters of physical, mental and spiritual well-being.

Now-a-days there are only a few individuals who are found to enjoy perfect health. Majority of the people do not seem to be living in
accordance with the laws of Nature. The result of the violation of natural laws are seen in the form of lowered vitality, abnormal composition of blood and lymph, accumulation of waste matter and poisons in the body system. It is being increasingly realized that if one has to live a healthy life, one must identify the basic nature of the body system and without causing unnecessary interference in the form of its misuse or abuse, one must make all efforts to strengthen it as it has been bestowed to us.

It is the vital force (prcnasakthi) which keeps you alive being a bulwark against disease and decay. This vital force is the storehouse of one's physical strength and vigour. It's ebb and flow determines the state of one's health. One way of retaining and regaining of the vital force is rest and sound sleeping. It not only gives freshness but also replenishes the body system to conserve maximum energy.

Popular health care systems say bacteria cause diseases, but it has not been possible to banish disease by killing all bacteria. The situation is the same as it was when the apostle of the germ theory, Louis Pasteur came on the scene. The presence of germs in human body is merely a symptom of a disease, not its cause. Traditional medicine has identified many bacteria, which are supposed to cause various diseases, but the banishment of the causative agents has not diminished the maladies which mankind is afflicted with. The safest way to deal with such disease appears to be the Naturopathic way. That it is indeed possible to develop such natural immunity to
infectious diseases is being proved positively by the ever-increasing number of faithful adherents to natural way of living and of treating human ailments.\(^3\)

2.2. **Definitions of Nature Cure**

There are many misconceptions about Nature Cure or Naturopathy. Hence it is necessary to consider some of the important views of eminent Naturopaths of the world.

a. **Louis Kuhne**

Louis Kuhne defines Nature Cure, "as the natural method as hitherto applied, which far excels the other systems, is the foundation of the new art of healing without drugs or operation."\(^4\)

b. **Harry Benjamin**

According to Harry Benjamin, "Nature Cure is a philosophy of disease and healing, which restores to nothing but the simplest, most natural and instinctive measures to bring about results."\(^5\)

c. **Henry Lindlahr**

Lindlahr explains Nature Cure, "as a system of man building in harmony with the constructive principle in Nature on the physical, mental and moral planes of being."\(^6\)

d. **L.M. Harrison**

According to L.M. Harrison, "Nature Cure is a system of medicine that relies upon the use of only 'natural' substances for the treatment of disease rather than drugs."\(^7\)
Gouri Shankar defines Naturopathy as “Nature Cure, which occupies a special position in comparison with other therapies. It has some characteristics, which other lack. No poisonous or intoxicating medicine is administered by it. Secondly it is a way of leading an ideal life, which, if adopted, none will ever be ill. Thirdly along with simple living it eliminates or rather uproots the disease.”

J.M. Jussawalla

To Jussawalls, “Nature Cure is a comprehensive term applied to all methods of treating diseases which aim at cooperating with the natural forces and defensive mechanism of the body. It is a distinct system of healing based upon its own philosophy of life, health and disease.”

P.K. Bolar

Boalar explains Nature Cure “as a distinct philosophy and science, which strengthen the age-old faith in the correction of bodily disorders and restoration and maintenance of health through elements freely available in Nature. The basic fact that healing is brought about by the inherent curative powers of the body.”

S.J. Singh

According to S.J. Singh, “Nature Cure is a science of disease elimination without drugs. It is based on the principle of cooperation with the natural laws of life, which are forever working within as well as outside the body, and it makes use o
only the natural agencies like Water, Air, Light, Heart, Exercise, Food, Electricity etc., for the purpose of curing disease.\footnote{11}

i. H.K. Bakhru

Bakhru defines Nature Cure “as a constructive method of treatment, which aims removing the basic cause of disease through the rational use of the elements freely available in Nature. It is not only a system of healing, but also a way of life in tune with the internal vital force of natural elements comprising the human body. It is a complete revolution in the art and science of living.”\footnote{12}

j. M.K. Gandhi

According to Gandhiji, “the science of Natural Therapeutics is based on the use of the five elements i.e., \textit{panchabhutha} which constitute the human body, \textit{Panchabhutha} are Earth, Water, Sunlight, Air and Ether.”\footnote{13}

k. K. Lakshmana Sarma

According to K.L. Sarma, the universe has its root in the Supreme Being, and derives its sustenance from that Source. This graphically described in the \textit{Kthopanishad} and in the \textit{Gita}, thus, “The phenomenal world is a Pipal Tree, with its roots above, in God, and its branches below’. This must be understood to mean that all creatures alike, who live in this world, derive life and all else they need from God Himself. It will be a great gain for the follower if he wholeheartedly accepts this teaching. Knowledge and the skill to work; but the fruits there of are in His power, to give or not to give, according to the laws of Nature, which derive their virtue from Him.”\footnote{14}
Acharya C.R.R. Varma defense Nature Cure, “as a philosophy and a set of principles and practices based on science that lead to an extraordinary level of personal health and happiness. It recognizes the unity of all life and reveals that physical, mental and spiritual health is inseparably interconnected”\textsuperscript{15} Varmaji says that personal health, environmental health and community health are parts of a whole and he gave emphasis to the unity of disease and cure.

When we analyse the above definitions, we find that Nature Cure basically tells us the ways of healthy life rather than a mode of treatment. It is an art of living and by following and practicing this art we can maintain good health. If anybody gets sick, the treatment is possible through \textit{panchabhutas}. Thus it can be said that Nature Cure is a science as well as an art in which natural means are applied to eliminate morbid matter and waste from the body and thereby increase vitality, which leads to health promotion. It teaches that the best way to achieve optimal health is right living, developing self-esteem and a positive attitude towards life, eating fresh whole natural food items, exercise regularly, getting plenty of rest, sleep, fresh air, sunshine, learning to handle stress and avoiding all negative influences of life.

In brief, Nature Cure is a distinct philosophy and science that follows definite physical, physiological, biological, mental and spiritual laws for the restoration and maintenance of health and the correction of bodily disorders.
2.3 **Meaning of Nature Cure**

Nature Cure is a way of life. It covers the whole life since conception. The central message of Nature Cure as a way of life is attempted to be explained as follows:

NATURE CURE is a life process

N – Nascency i.e., beginning of life
A – Absolute i.e., pure and perfect
T – Tabling i.e., setting in order
U – Umbrella i.e., all round security
R – Rationale i.e., reasoned exposition
E – Effective i.e., remarkable activities
C – Conscientious, i.e., scrupulous, obedient to conscience
U – Unity of disease and unity of treatment
R – Right habits
E – Elimination of morbid matter

Nature Cure starts its influence from the very beginning of life. It is always pure and perfect. It provides all-round security and safety for those who follow the principles and laws of Nature. If one gets sick, it helps in eliminating the toxic matter by using natural means such as diet control, fasting, pranayama, yoga, sun bathe, water treatment and so on. Nature Cure practitioners do not place much emphasis on diagnosis as they believe in unity of disease and unity of treatment. The basic purpose of Nature Cure is to make people aware of adopting healthy habits.
2.4 Origin and Development of Nature Cure (Western View)

The history of Nature Cure is the history of mankind in many respects. This healing science is as old as man but its progress has been irregular. Nature Cure as a system of Health care may be as old as the traditional medicine, and the right thinking physicians for more than two millennia have practiced it.

Nature Cure System in Egypt, China, Rome and Greece

Hippocrates, (400 BC) who is known as the Father of Medicine, approached diseases strictly from a naturalistic viewpoint. He said that diseases were part of the order of Nature and could therefore be cured by natural means. He stressed two ways of preserving health and preventing diseases i.e., by ensuring a healthy environment and by personal hygiene. He sets down his observations in his famous book, 'Air, Water and Places'. He believed that Nature is the healer of diseases. The task of the physician is to help Nature; to him the symptoms of illness were the symptoms of healing.

In ancient times Rome was famous for using natural methods for the treatment of various ailments. Roman Emperors constructed huge public baths. There were provisions for both hot and cold baths as well as for hot air and steam baths. Asclepiades employed water in different form; hot and cold baths, douches, compresses etc. Father Sebastian Kneipp of Bavaria used the water cure method and formulated many useful laws.
During the Middle Ages, the Arabic physicians advocated the use of bath for fevers and in chronic diseases. M. Barr of Lyons, published a book on the use of water for therapeutic purposes entitled "L'usage de la Glace, de la Neige et de la Froid" (The use of ice snow and cold). Lanzani, an Italian physician wrote a thesis on the use of water for the treatment of fevers in the early part of the 18th century. Fr. Bernadino acquired the name of cold-water doctor for using ice water in the treatment of indigestion, nervous disorders, haemorrhages etc. John Wesly, founder of the Methodist Church, published a book 'Primitive Physick' in 1747 in which he described the use of water in a variety of ailments. Culler, in his treatise on fever, recommended natural water as a sedative, when used for supporting and increasing the action of the heart and arteries.

Nature Cure in England

Sir John Floyer introduced the Nature Cure system in England in 1697. He published a book entitled 'History of Cold Bathing' in which he described various methods of cold packs. He also started a water cure centre at Litchfield. John Hancock, in 1723 published a book 'Febrifugum Magnum' in which he demonstrated the value of water drinking for the treatment of scarlet fever, small pox, etc. Two English Physicians, Curie and Jackson, in the last part of the 18th century, made a scientific study on the use of water in fevers. They taught that cold water application for a short duration should not be made in case of high fever on account of their tendency to increase the
temperature. They observed that the use of a wet pack (wet blanket) relieved delirium. Crawford in 1781 recognized that cold water increases the difference in colour between arterial and venous blood, while heat lessens this difference in colour. Harry Benjamin has done a great job by writing the book 'Everybody’s Guide to nature Cure'.

**Nature Cure in America**

In 1794, Dr. Benjamin of Philadelphia used cold water with success in the treatment of rheumatism, gout, small pox, measles, and many other maladies including yellow fever. Dr. Bard and Dr. Hosack of the New York Hospital began to use cold water in fevers in 1793. Augusta Me published her work on the use of water in 1799. Henry Wilson Loucette of Virginia conducted experiments on water curing diseases, which were published in 1801.

Dr. Henry Lindlahr brought about a revolution in the field of Nature Cure in the United States of America in the first part of the 20th century. He established the Lindlahr System of Natural Therapeutics for three reasons:

1) To provide suitable environment and facilities for the care and treatment of patients desiring to be cured of acute and chronic ailments.

2) To train young men and women in the art of natural healing so that they could work as qualified nurses and physicians and,
3) To publish literature for the purpose of educating the public in the proper care of the body and mind.\textsuperscript{19}

His main publications are 'The Philosophy and Practice of Nature Cure' and 'Practice of Natural Therapeutics'. These are the great contributions in this field.

Dr. J.H. Kellogg wrote a number of books on Naturopathy, Diet, Message, Heliotherapy etc. His most famous book in this field is 'Rational Hydrotherapy'. He established a unique sanitarium where many Natural Therapies such as Hydrotherapy, Diet therapy, Electrotherapy etc. were employed.

Barnarr Macfadden's contributions were very significant in the field of Nature Cure. His books - 'Fasting for Health' and 'Macfaddens Encyclopedia for Physical Culture' are famous. He also wrote a number of books on Naturopathy.

The contributions of Benedict Lust are also remarkable. He is one of the famous Naturopaths of America, who started a monthly magazine 'Kneipp's Water Cure' and established a College of Naturopathy. He was the founder of the American School of Naturopathy and Chiropractic.

Nature Cure in Germany

Vincent Pressinitz is known as the Father of Modern Naturopathy. He met with a serious accident at the age of seventeen and doctors pronounced him a candidate for death. Since he firmly
believed in hydrotherapy (water cure) he started using cold water and got cured shortly. His confidence in the healing power of water was more firmly established. In addition to the use of water in different forms, he insisted on proper exercise and diet and mental catharsis in curing different diseases.

Johann Schroth, a contemporary of Pressinitz, was a Nature loving child and a keen observer of it. He found that sick domestic animals left their food practically untouched and drank little or no water until they felt better. He also noticed that they remained quiet as long as they fell ill. He concluded that sick people too would benefit if they temporarily deprived themselves of solids and fluids and later changed their diet. There were three areas of his treatment. The first was Introductory Cure in which his aim was to prepare the patient for the radical change of living. The second was the Principle of Strict Diet. The third was the cure in which he prepared the patient for bringing him back to his normal diet and habits.

One of the greatest teachers of Naturopathy was Dr. Louis Kuhne, who had lost his health when he was only twenty. When he was disappointed with traditional medicine he turned to Nature Cure with remarkable success. His treatments included Sunbath, Hipbath, steam bath, and the like. According to him, cleanliness, both internal and external of the whole body is essential for good health and also it is the proper remedy to disease. Kuhne propounded the Principle of the Unity of the Disease and the Unity of Treatment. His works
include 'The New Science of Healing' and 'The Science of Facial Expression'.

A contemporary of Johann Schroth (1821) was Fr. Sebastian Kneipp, a teacher and a social worker turned Naturopath who carried on the good works for 45 years. He mainly used water at different temperatures for different ailments. He taught the world that water at different temperatures dissolves the morbid matter in the blood, leaving the blood cleansed. He wrote a remarkable and wonderful book entitle 'My Water Cure'.

Adolf Just (1838) was another great teacher known for his discovery of the healing properties of clay. He emphasized walk with bare foot so that the life giving properties of Mother Earth may touch a person's body. In his famous book 'Return to Nature', he presented one of the most practical life styles for healthy living. This was in fact the book that so profoundly influenced Mahatma Gandhi, that he not only adopted Nature Cure as his philosophy of life, but also established a Nature Cure Centre for the relief of the poor in Uruli Kanchan near Pune. Adolf Just believed that disease was a punishment for disregarding the laws of Nature.

Nature Cure According to Other Important Learned Persons

The founder of 'Hygienic Therapeutic College' in Florence, Dr. Russell T. Thrall, was another American exponent of Naturopathy. The prime position among the Naturopaths of the United States of
America goes to Dr. J. H. Tilden who taught that the real cure lies in mending one's habits. His well-known work 'Impaired Health', explains various aspects of health in detail. Dr. Bendiet Lust, a disciple of Fr. Sebastian Kneipp gave prime importance to Nutrition. Dewey, Alfred W. Mc Lane, the renowned American dietician, Dr. Andrew H. Still, the discoverer of Osteopathy and Daniel D. Palmer who was renowned for a later development of the manipulative science Chiropractic and Rickli, famous for hydrotherapy in the last century et. al. contributed very much in the field of Nature Cure. Rickli developed a system of Atmospheric Cure, in which he used water, air and sunlight for treating patients. He believed in vegetarianism also.

2.5 The Nature Cure System: A Conceptual Analysis

Nature as Physician

Nature eliminates he waste matters and toxins from the body through the natural methods of excretion. There is natural immunity in the body, which protects the body from various kinds of diseases. Nature functions as a great physician, which always guards the well being of the body and mind. For example, if a few drops of water enter the larynx while drinking, coughing starts immediately. Nature Cure believes that the patient gets relief from diseases by his own Vital Power (Pranasakthi). The Naturopath only accelerates his natural immunity through different procedures. His function is to help the body in its natural function of healing.
Causes of Disease

The vital power of the body excretes waste, morbid and foreign matters continuously and keeps the body in working order. But if one takes unnatural food and follows an unnatural life - style, the accumulation of waste matter increases to a level that the vital power is unable to throw out all these waste matters. These accumulated morbid matter causes different types of diseases to occur. For example, respiration is the basic element of life and for this, nature has given us unlimited air to cope with the needs of he body. But the human being has polluted the air and environment, which has become the cause of many diseases. Nature has formulated certain laws for leading a happy and peaceful life. So we must obey the laws and lead a rather better natural life.

Role of Vital Power in Nature Cure

The body has the capacity to deal with any emergency both internal and external. But when there is accumulated impurities in the body is very high compared to the immunity of a human being, the vital power fails to respond effectively. Here the Naturopath comes to the rescue by providing assistance through natural resources. All the methods of Nature Cure aim at elimination of the accumulated impurities from the body in order to purify it. In other words Nature Cure accelerates the vital power of the body to function more effectively.
Diseases as Natural Responses of the body

There is continuous production of morbid matter, waste products and toxins in the body, which are excreted through the pores of skin, kidneys, lungs, and anus. If these gateways are blocked, the waste products and other foreign matters are excreted from the body in the form of disease. Fever, diarrhea, coughing, sneezing etc are some of the results. Nature Cure believes that diseases eliminate the morbid and waste matters from the body and thus, treat themselves. Thus diseases are indeed the natural response of the body to meet the casualty.

2.6 Nature Cure; a way of life

The principles and laws of Nature Cure are much dependent on the theory of morbid matter, theory of vital force, theory of Five Great Elements (Punchabhutha), theory of vibration of the elements of the cells. They are universally accepted as true. Our great Rishis and Yogis were great scientists who made their own bodies into laboratories, for their experiments in natural methods. Nature Cure believes in the purification of the body through Punchabhutas by leading a life in time with Nature.

2.7 Scope of the Nature Cure System

The Scope of Nature Cure System includes mainly six areas viz., the promotion of health, prevention of diseases, treatment of diseases,
modification of behaviour, increase of functional capacity, and social, psychological and medical rehabilitation.

The scope of Nature Cure system categorizes three classes of people (1) Those who are well (2) Those who think that they are well and (3) Those who are ill.

Now a days only a few individuals enjoy perfect health. Their number is surprisingly small. Even those who are perfectly well cannot expect to remain so for long, if their habits of living are not in accordance with the laws of Nature. It is commonly heard from these patients that in youth their digestive power was so strong that it digested anything and everything, and hen they have arrived at a stage where even the light type of food caused discomfort. This shows that however strong the constitution may be one cannot afford to abuse the system for long. 'As you sow so shall you reap'.

According to Nature Cure principles of diagnosis, from a look in to the eyes, one can find out all kinds of hereditary and acquired encumbrances and deformities. On further questioning they admit of being afflicted with headaches, indigestion, constipation, nervous disorder and other chronic ailments. When asked, whether they call the disorders concomitant of perfect health, they answer in surprise 'Why everybody suffers from such things, but surely they are not diseases'. The fact is that, disease has become so nearly a universal habit among people of so called civilized countries that people have come to think that they are well as long as they are not bed ridden. If the human beings would put their bodies in perfect condition through
right living and treatment, acute diseases, as far as they are concerned, would become a rare possibility. As a rule, people take to Nature Cure only when their acute and incurable chronic conditions deteriorates as a result of their wrong ways of living and suppressive treatments.

The mental and emotional attitude must be harmonious and constructive in order to ensure perfect working of the great life force—the healing power—on which depends the purification and regeneration of the human organism. Nature Cure, as a perfect science is as old as life itself, still holds the key to the relief of ailments and diseases, which result from our modern and deviated civilization. It should be noted that Nature Cure, being effective does not limit itself to any one rigid method but combines and adopts various means, which are in accordance with the laws of Nature. It is inclusive of all systems of drugless healing.

2.8 Conclusion

This chapter gives in nutshell, the origin and development of the Nature Cure System in the West. Though Nature Cure System in considered to be originated in the East especially in India, it established as a scientific health care measure in the West. To get a wholistic view of the Nature Cure System, we shall discuss in the coming chapter, the origin and development of Nature Cure System in India.
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