



**DR. GNANAMBA:
THE FIRST WOMAN INDIAN NATUROPATH**

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ABSTRACT

Nature Cure is one of the traditional medical systems of India. It is purely a drugless system and any kind of injections and surgical operations will not administer in the system. The system is more effective in regard preventive, curative and promotional aspects of health. In India, the Nature Cure system was firstly introduced in 1897 by Dronam Raju Venkatachalapathi Sarma by the translating of Louis Khune's works in to Telugu. Later, the system has gained popularity and propagated in different parts of India. So many of nature cure lovers, sympathizers, followers of country dedicated their lives for the cause of Nature Cure system which is most suitable to our country's economical, traditional cultural context. Especially the Nature Cure movement in India started from Bezawada town of Madras State from the year 1919 onwards. Narisheshetty Hanumaiah was one of the pioneers of nature cure established *Prakriti Karyalaya Trust* at Bezawada in 1919. Gnanamba was the sister of Hanumaiah who dedicated her life for the cause of Nature Cure movement in Andhra Province. Gnanamba was the first woman Naturopath of India.

The present research paper deals about Gnanamba's life background, her Nature Cure activities and her publications.

Key Words: *Prakriti Karyalaya Trust, Prakriti*, Indian Naturopath, Nature Cure Training Camps.

Introduction:

Narishetti Gnanamba the first Indian woman Naturopath who was born in *Pedakanherla* village, Vinukonda Taluk, Guntur District of Andhra Province. She was sister of Late. Narishetty Hanumaiah. Gnanamba's brother was an employee in the Postal Department during the British period. He resigned to his job and came to Bezawada (presently known as Vijayawada) town and he started own printing press. Gnanamba came to Bezawada where her brother running a printing press. She used to go to her brother's printing press to look after the press work. Gnanamba happened to read an article about 'composing and printing' in an encyclopedia book¹. Later, by following that essay she herself learnt about composing

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of printing letters, proof reading by practicing on the treadles of her brother's press. Thus she gained knowledge, experience and became an expert in composing and printing works.

Gnanamba's brother was an ardent lover of Nature Cure. In 1919 her brother established *Prakriti Karyalaya Trust*, at Beazawada. He was the founder Secretary to the trust. *Prakriti Karyalaya Trust* was the first one established to publish Nature Cure literature and books in the field of Indian Nature Cure system. In 1919 *Prakriti Karyalaya trust* started publishing '*Prakriti*' a Telugu monthly journal, and in 1924 '*Indian Naturopath*' English monthly journal from her brother's printing press. These two journals which were being published by *Prakriti Karyalaya Trust* are first of its kind in nature cure system of our country. The trust was the only one which was started for publishing Nature Cure journals in the country.

Gnanamba used to assist her brother in composing, proof reading and printing of naturopathy books and journals. While working in press Gnanamba gained much knowledge about nature cure. Gnanamba was born in a family who take non-vegetarian diet. Though she gave up non-vegetarian food and became a pure vegetarian. She followed her brother's philosophy and footsteps. She firmly decided to dedicate her life for the noble cause of nature cure movement. For this cause, she was actively involved in propagation and writing of several nature cure books in Telugu.

Gnanamba and her brother Narishetty Hanumaiah worked laboriously day and night and successfully brought out 12 volumes of *Prakrithi* monthly from 1923 to 1933 and about 6 volumes of *Indian Naturopath* monthly journal from 1924 to 1928 and books in Telugu and English.²

The First Nature Cure Camp in India on 'Return to Nature' was sponsored and conducted by Nadimpalli Subba Raju from 1st May to 30th May 1933 in *Inavalli* village of East Godavari District of Andhra Province. In the first Nature Cure Training Camp she delivered a lecture on '*Prakrityabhi Gamanamu*' to the trainees³. In the same way the Second Nature Cure Training Camp was also conducted in the same village from May 6th to 6th June 1934 in that camp also she delivered lecture to the participants. In the same year Gnanamba was also appointed as a Trustee member to the *Prakriti Karyalaya Trust*, Bezawada in 1934. She delivered lectures on 'spiritualism' to the trainees of 5th Nature Training Camp held from May 5th to 25th 1937 at Bezawada.

Gnanamba's publications in Telugu

A part, attending several works of *Prakriti Karyalaya trust*, worked in printing press and delivered lectures to the trainees of Nature Cure camps. And also Gnanamba translated several works from English to Telugu.

1. *Varna Chikista (1929)*
2. *Varna Vaidyam*
3. *Lakshmana Jala Chikista (Lakshmana's Book)*
4. *Kuhne Maharshi Bhodha*
5. *Nirvichara Bhavi Jeevitham*
6. *Pachhi Thindi Valana Labhaalu*
7. *Thella Chekkera Valana Vipathu*
8. *Teneeru (Tea) Vishathulyam (1937)* (Translation of Dr. Willium A. Alcot Book)
9. *Oushadha Moka Ooha Shastramu (1936)* (Bernarr Macfudden's English lecture)
10. *Aahara Rasayana Shastramu (1936)* Alma Thompson Leverton's English artiel delivered at 'Health Home', USA e named ' Food Chemistry and Health'
11. *Arogyamu Kameshha* (Bernarr Macfudden's English book on Health and Sex)⁴

Dr. Gnanamba was the student of *Maharshi* Seetarama Avadootha who started 'Health Home' at Patamata Lanka,Bezawada. She belongs to the first generation of Naturopaths of our country. She worked with very prominent Naturopaths of south India viz., Prof. Putcha Venkatramaiah,,Padma Sri. Iyyanki Venkata Ramanaiah, Kolipaka Adi Narayana, Chennubotla Bhanumurthy, Sistla Dhakshina muthy, Vegiraju, Krishnam Raju, Prof. Lakshmana Sarma, Bolla pragada Sundara Gopala Rao, Donda Saheb, and Dr. Rama raja Yogindrulu⁵. She demised on 29-6-1942⁶.

Conclusion

Dr. Gnanamba a great woman Naturopath. She lived on natural life principles like eating of fruits, raw diet and milk. Never the less she was married woman, she observed strict celibacy with the permission of her husband. She dedicated her life for propagation of nature cure system in Andhra Province. She played a prominent role in nature cure movement for 22 years and demised on 29-6-1942. Dr. Gnanamba is the first Indian woman Naturopath and her contribution is one of the major land marks in the history of development of Indian Naturopathy. Dr. Gnanamba's contribution will be useful for ever and she is role model for the present and future generations of Naturopaths.

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2. *Prakriti*, vol.48 No.1, May 1970, p.11
3. *Ibid*, p.1
4. *Prakriti Grandha Mala*, Prakriti Karyalaya Trust, Bezawada,1936.
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सारांश

ज्ञानाम्बा - प्रथम महिला भारतीय प्राकृतिक चिकित्सक

प्रो. रामेश्वरम

भारत की पारम्परिक चिकित्सा पद्धतियों में से प्राकृतिक चिकित्सा एक है। यह शुद्ध रूप से एक द्रव्यहीन पद्धति है एवं इस पद्धति में किसी प्रकार के इन्जेक्शन और शल्यक्रिया का प्रयोग नहीं होता। यह पद्धति निवारक, रोगहर और स्वास्थ्यवर्धक पहलूओं में अधिक प्रभावी है। भारत में प्राकृतिक चिकित्सा पद्धति सर्वप्रथम 1897 में द्रोणम् राजु वेंकटाचलपति शर्मा द्वारा लूईस खुने के कार्य का तेलुगु में अनुवाद करते हुए आरम्भ हुई। बाद में यह पद्धति भारत के विभिन्न भागों में लोकप्रिय और प्रचारित हुई। इसलिए देश के बहुत से प्राकृतिक चिकित्सा प्रेमी, समर्थक और अनुयायियों ने हमारे देश की आर्थिक, पारम्परिक सांस्कृतिक सन्दर्भ में अत्युपयुक्त प्राकृतिक चिकित्सा पद्धति के उद्देश्यों पर अपना जीवन समर्पित किया। विशेष रूप से भारत में प्राकृतिक चिकित्सा आन्दोलन मद्रास राज्य के बेज़वाडा शहर से सन् 1919 से आरम्भ हुआ। प्राकृतिक चिकित्सा के पथप्रदर्शकों में से एक नरिशे पी हनुमय्या ने सन् 1919 में बेज़वाडा में प्रकृति कार्यालय ट्रस्ट स्थापित किया। ज्ञानाम्बा हनुमय्या की बहिन थी, जिसने अपनी जिन्दगी आन्ध्र प्रदेश में प्राकृतिक चिकित्सा आन्दोलन के कार्य के लिए समर्पित की। ज्ञानाम्बा भारत में प्रथम महिला प्राकृतिक चिकित्सक थी।