

## DOCTORS CAN'T PRACTICE 2 STREAMS OF MEDICINE

The pathetic story of 10-year-old yaseen of Bijapur district makes a compulsory reading for all medical professional who trespass into other areas. It also brings to focus the accountability of doctors towards their professional ethics and to the consumer (patients).

Yaseen, a student of class 4 developed fever and was treated by a licensed homeopathy practitioner. He was given 'septron' tablets for two days and other tables for following days. Within hours of taking septron, the boy developed bubbles throughout the body and he complained of irritation and burning sensation. The same doctor applied a blue medicine which aggravated the case. The boy developed 'erilhenmatous' patches on the whole body.

The agony of the boy and his parents did not end there. Yaseen was taken to another clinic where he was treated as an indoor patient for more than a month While in the hospital, the boy complained loss of eye sight.. The doctors advised the patient be examined by an eye surgeon at Hubli.

Yaseen underwent operations of both eyes but could not get back his vision. The eye surgeon opined that the loss of vision was due to use of sulphur drugs and has named the same as 'Steven Johnson Syndrome'. Even experts who gave evidence felt that septron tablets contain sulphur drugs and was likely to react the way it did on yaseen. The evidence also showed that the boy had become permanently blind.

On a complaint filed against homeopathy practitioner and his associates, the District Forum found that the doctor was negligent per se and ordered to pay a compensation of Rs 2 lakh in addition to Rs.5000 as costs.

This was contested in the Karnataka State Commission. The doctors argued that the patient did not hire the service, there was no evidence to show deficiency of service and the quantum of compensation is out of proportion.

The doctor feels that Rs 2 lakh is 'too high' for loss of eye sight of a promising boy. The doctor has gone to the extent of saying that yaseen was never brought to him and he did not treat him at all.

But in an excellent judgment Karnataka State Commission has upheld the decision of the District Forum. The judgment reveals how medical practitioners, particularly in rural areas, have their own set of ethics (?) who device methods to escape their responsibility. At one place the commission says that 'we are inclined to hold that the doctor has not come out with the truth much less the whole truth'.

Keeping aside the legal implications, it is essential that doctors practicing one system of medicine do not play with the lives of innocent patients by experimenting through another system of medicine.

\*\*\*\*\*