

Dr. Batra's Clinic:

Conversation with Dr. Mukesh Batra

Dr. Batra's Clinic was founded in 1982 by Dr. Mukesh Batra. It started off as a Homeopathic clinic in Mumbai. Over time it has grown into chain of Homeopathic clinics not only in India but also in other countries. It comprises of a product company, Hair Transplant Clinics, and a charitable foundation. These clinics provide state-of-the-art services to more than half a million people all over the world, with the numbers growing steadily. The fundamental business strategy of Dr. Batra's clinic is to innovate, to excel in production and to build a brand that constantly strives for improvement.

With so much happening around him all the time, Dr. Mukesh Batra also ensure that he fulfills his social responsibility diligently. Today by extending help to the underprivileged and the deprived, the group drives greater meaning to its life. Dr. Mukesh Batra, a visionary entrepreneur, has deftly combined professional excellence and personal achievement with social commitment and contribution. Single-handedly pioneering the modern Homeopathy in India, Dr. Batra has not only set up a colossal corporate spread but also extended the medical benefits of this safe and sure medical system through path-breaking initiatives (such as commercial and charitable initiatives).

Dr. Batra was at IIM Indore to speak on the occasion of the Third Management Consultation on Healthcare in India in March, 2010. The IMJ team led by Dr. N. Ravichandran had a conversation with Dr. Batra on a wide range of issues related to Dr. Batra's Clinic. A brief overview of the conversation is presented here.

IMJ: We know you as a prominent representative in the field of homeopathy, we know you through your aggressive advertisements and innovative methods of communications to the people. Some of the communications give a terse message, scaring the person at first and then assure them that it can be cured. No one can miss the message. Business people may not see you but they see the business of what

you do. It would be a good idea to start the conversation from how and where it all began and where you have reached now.

Dr. Batra: Thank you so much and it's my pleasure to be here. I am in this position because of the public and the medical association. I come from a family of homeopaths. My father is a homeopath my son is a homeopath; we have 100 years of homeopath in our family. So it was the easiest thing I could do. It comes naturally and it was a childhood decision. I used to give medicines to my father's patients. It was a kind of gut feeling and even then as I grew up in an atmosphere of homeopathy.

Gradually in 1973, I realised that medicine cannot actually be inherited; it is a legacy that can be passed on to anybody; you have to earn it yourself like any other professions. Therefore, I decided to start it on my own and not sit with my father. My father was the Principal of an institute and had a decent practice at that time. As soon as I graduated from college, I was one of the first students to be offered a job as a lecturer in the college. I declined the offer and my father was very upset with me. He didn't talk to me for days.

My aim was to become a clinician. I wanted to be with patients and learn from them. I wanted to start on my own, and actually I was under study with a homeopath doctor. Within six months that doctor left the clinic that belonged to my father's friend. My father had contributed significantly in setting up that clinic. When the other doctor was about to leave, my father suggested that I look after the clinic. However, he turned down my father's proposal saying that he wanted someone very senior and well respected and not a rank junior. The lesson I learnt was that in medicine it is age and experience that matters. You need

grey hairs to dispense white pills. I didn't have grey hairs at that time. I grew a mustache and wore spectacles that didn't help much. I was lucky as he allowed me to look after the clinic for two months only on a trial basis. Fortunately I used those two months to visit the grass root level people in the slums and suburbs and tried to convince them to take homeopathic medicine.

It must be borne in mind that when I took homeopathy it was not an accepted profession. When I chose this profession, I was received with mixed feelings. For example, people around me in parties, turned away when they learnt that I was practicing homeopathy. There was no social acceptance. Homeopathy was perceived as something which people can read from books and practise. They wouldn't ever accept that we had spent 5 ½ years in a medical college and had gone through professional study.

In another instance, I was examining a famous lady, who had a history of migraine. I enquired about her periods as part of the history of migraine. She was offended and banged the door. Actually as practitioners, we had to catch hold of people on a one to one basis and convince them that homeopathy works. So for me, the whole profession was a huge mission and I followed it with passion. If it were for money, reputation or something else it would have been died long time ago, or it would have become outdated. But for me it was a passion. I took it as a real challenge. My forefathers struggled to make homeopathy work and to some extent they succeeded. I thought I must take it forward in my own way and I started my practice by setting up my own small clinic in 1982.

IMJ: So, you left the clinic that belongs to your father's friend?

Dr. Batra: Well I rendered my complete free service there for 7 to 9 years.

IMJ: What happened to that two months' agreement on a trial basis?

Dr. Batra: I actually did well there. I doubled the OPD. The patient visits moved up from about 25 to 50 patients a day. The patients include ministers and VIPs. They were very happy with my performance and did not want me to quit. But, like all the directors on board they did not want to admit my contribution.

IMJ: This happened in Bombay, were you born and brought up in Bombay?

Dr. Batra: I was born in Lucknow, and was brought up in Agra. I did my schooling in Lucknow till sixth standard. My father was working as a Principal of an institute there. He was transferred from Lucknow to Bombay. My parents felt that I would be lonely and I came to Bombay in 1963.

IMJ: Was the doctor who gave you a chance, whose clinic was built up by your father in Bombay too?

Dr. Batra: Yes, he was in Bombay. That was the first job I did. I worked for nine years and there I learnt my next lesson. After 9 years of service, I took my wife to a nearby hill station for a day's vacation. We sat on the foot board in the train, since we couldn't afford a reserved seat. I went only for one day, and when I came back, I was blasted by one of the patients. The patient was suffering from pain due to Thrombus Veins. There was no phone at that time and as a result they couldn't contact me when they needed my help. I realised that patients could be more demanding and selfish. They think about themselves and not about the doctor. They think that the doctor is only to serve them and there is no personal life of a doctor. He yelled at me and suggested that I become a teacher if I wanted to take holidays. I declined that willful suggestion and started my own clinic in 1982.

IMJ: We would like to know about your siblings?

Dr. Batra: I have two brothers but neither of them is a doctor: one is a chartered accountant who looks after the construction and other is a lawyer.

IMJ: Tell us about your first clinic.

Dr. Batra: I started my first clinic in 1982 in Choupaty. When I went out to borrow money for the clinic, it was virtually impossible to get loans as there was a strong perception among the lenders that a homeopath cannot repay the loans. I needed a computer and at that time it cost Rs.1, 25,000. It was huge one with very big monitor. A filter had to be placed before the screen to prevent damage to the eyes I also got huge & noisy printer.

I did manage to get loan from my friends which took 10 years to repay. I was earning 25000 from practice in some other clinics. The break -even at that time was 65000 Rupees which took 3 times my income. In 1982 I repaid the loans which I took on a personal level from friends at the interest rate of 3% per month (36% per annum), similar to the interest rate in film industry. I think homeopathy was not as risky as film industry but it was perceived to be as riskier as producing a film. The lesson I learnt was that nothing comes without risk. Every entrepreneur has to take a calculated risk which I was willing. Throughout my career I have always taken a calculated risk and never gambled. I don't smoke, I don't drink, I am a vegetarian and a Satwik person.

IMJ: Do you mean that you started your clinic with money borrowed solely from friends? No bank lent you any loan nor you tapped any conventional sources like your in-laws or brothers?

Dr. Batra: No, I never do that. Everything I did was on my own. I am very proud that I am completely a self driven person.

IMJ: This was in spite of your father being a renowned practitioner?

Dr. Batra: I never depend on anyone, my in-laws were doctors and specialists, but I never borrowed from anybody and I just did it on my own.

IMJ: You just wanted to be on your own?

Dr. Batra: I wanted to accomplish on my own. I take pride in whatever I have achieved so far because, I did it by myself, and I did it in the right way. I have always paid the taxes. I have not taken any shortcuts and did nothing silly in my life and that's the thing I feel proud of . Even now people ask me whether I am worried about setting up such a large but compact business. My reply to them is No! I am not worried even if it fails; because I know how to set up this business. In the beginning I didn't know how to do it, now I know it, it's much easier now.

IMJ: Can you give us a idea of how big your company is?

Dr. Batra: It is not a very big company, we are a group of companies, and we are still growing. Our turnover is around Rupees 80 Crores. We have 700 employees and about 250 doctors. We have 55 branches in four countries. We have made our presence in Dubai. Our company is a part of SEC, Dubai health care city and is growing at the rate of hundred percent. Our company in UK is also growing at a rate of hundred percent. We were the first homeopathy company to enter Harley Street which is considered the Mecca of Oral Medicine. No homeopathy doctors were allowed there, but we are running our clinic there since last year.

IMJ: Where is Harley Street?

Dr. Batra: Harley Street is in central London. It is a whole road in central London full of super specialty doctor. It is big thing for us, and people from all part of the world come there for super specialty treatments and the best

surgeons and best doctors in the world practice there. It is a prestigious thing for us. However, we had a tough time convincing them that homeopathy should be part of it because they thought that the presence of a homeopath person may downgrade the prestige associated with Harley Street. So entering Haley Street was a challenge. Similarly, in Dubai we are the only homeopathy company to be in healthcare city. We had to be very stringent, quality conscious, we had something called CPQ to follow the Harvard medical protocol. Because of the processes we built into our company, we found it very easy to be a part of it; we did it all at one shot for the first time. We were also awarded the best new comer in healthcare segment in Dubai last year. It has been an interesting journey so far.

IMJ: In legal parlance are you a public limited or a private limited company?

Dr. Batra: We are a private limited company.

IMJ: Will you continue as one or will you become a public limited company?

Dr. Batra: Honestly speaking, I don't know because it is not my private area. I actually decided to enter into a zero debt policy; whatever we earn, we put back into the company. We never take back money from the company. I own hundred percent of my company; we don't have any partners. We don't have any franchises in India, we own the whole business, and we manage them on our own. We own hundred percent of our company in Dubai and in UK as well.

IMJ: How many clinics do you have in India?

Dr. Batra: In India we have 55 clinics in 20 cities (In 2011 it has become 79 super-specialty clinics spread across 33 cities in India, Dubai and UK).

IMJ: Can you tell us more about how this model work and how you expand the business?

Dr. Batra: Basically I have to go back to the story I left unfinished, that actually gave me confidence in my work in my own clinic, I did that till 1996. In spite of doing well, I felt that I was not getting Job satisfaction. I was seeing nearly about 325 patients per day, and people from all over the world would wait in long queues to have my appointment. I kept office timing from 9 am to 6 pm, so that I could be with my family rest of the time. When one sees a lot of patients, one actually doesn't realise whether they are recovering through one's treatment or not. Many years later a patient would say, " you treated my son and he got well !" Some patients may say that treatment didn't work and I had to go to an allopath hospital. So you know, it will never give a satisfaction of doing quality work. Well it was more like a general practice. I soon got disillusioned and I was not quite happy with what I was doing.

IMJ: How much did you charge these patients then?

Dr. Batra: I would charge anywhere between Rs. 150-500. The fee was very nominal according to Mumbai standards.

IMJ: About 300 patients per day, so it would have fetched you lot of money?

Dr. Batra: I did it very well. It was like a business school for me; a lot of money because they were nearly like a 300 patients per day. It was gained after nine years of struggle but I was not willing to chase the money. In 1996, I invited Dr. Manmohan Singh and Mr. Subramanian who was the then Governor of Maharashtra and inaugurated a specialty clinic in homeopathy. It was again a new concept.

Prior to that about a year ago I had invited the Director of Lintas and initiated research with them. We prepared potions. I spent nearly Rupees 10 Lakhs in that research, which was big money in 1996. After doing all that exercise I got two patients. It taught me a moral and gave me a sound business lesson. In

experimental research, we should not bother about the money that we put and what we get in return. It is the perspective that we learn. I was able to learn about diseases.

I learnt about 14 diseases for which people approached homeopathy. I have treated nearly 50,000 people from 1974 to 1996. We have recorded the data. We discovered that we got good results for those 14 diseases, for which there were no proven results in conventional medicines. We put these 14 diseases in a brochure form. That's how the specialty clinic started. I invited Dr. Manmohan Singh to inaugurate that and it all went very well.

Ultimately it was recorded in all the media. Even the first clinic which I started in 1982 was mentioned as the first standardized and computerized clinic in the world, as no one had any medical reports in electronic form at that time. Then all the banks returned and asked me to take their money. All the people who had refused me earlier also came back; but I replied that I do not need it now. So I realized that an idea whose time has come for launch cannot be stopped for want of money or fame.

IMJ: Did this marketing give you an idea of specialty clinic that may be worthwhile for homeopathy?

Dr. Batra: When I reduced my practice I started charging a package fee, which is a first of its kind in the history of medicine. In this scheme, I started treating patients, in a single package or more depending on the disease. I shifted from 325 patients to only two patients and was very happy doing that. I took nearly one year to pick up and in a span of one year all my appointments were booked for the next one year. I did all the planning and like all other professionals, I charged for the time.

The other aspects I realized was that there is no "shelf" life for a professionals' time. It is not a product that can be kept and used later.

The value of time is huge and I set time slots professionally, rather than selling medicines. I realized that people pay for the advice and the experience with the doctors and not for the medicines that were prescribed. I reached a stage when I had no time for any appointment for the next one year. Again I realised that it was a silly thing to do. Again in one year I changed my business model, and realized that I cannot go beyond this.

IMJ: Sir, earlier you practiced as a general practitioner, people came and you provided what they wanted. It was like a transaction. Then you did research but it didn't take you so far in terms of money and popularity. But you said, through research you actually learnt on what homeopathy works on and you specialized in treating about 14 diseases. Later you said you entered the package model. Can you explain what do you mean by that?

Dr. Batra: I took an annual fee in advance, a low membership from the patients. The patients could visit me as many times as they wish but a minimum of one appointment in a month, and take as many medicines as required. In case they can't come, they could also collect the medicines by couriers, but I preferred that they come as often as possible.

IMJ: So the patient is under your healthcare which means they are under your care.

Dr. Batra: Yes, but it is basically limited to the 14 diseases which we are sure can be cured as has been clinically proven in the past. Usually the patients said that they were suffering for a long time, it may be dermatitis, or any other chronic disease like arthritis. I have many of such patients.

IMJ: Is this package deal functional only in Bombay?

Dr. Batra: Yes, this was in Bombay and I was the only doctor with some staffs with me. During this time I started advertising. When I started the

specialty clinic I thought it was necessary to advertise, so that people would know of the services we are offering. People usually do not know that homeopathy can successfully treat many kinds of diseases including long stranding illness. We felt we need to popularize. Till 1996 we didn't advertise, we experimented with small, advertisements, and then we built on it.

When we were doing such advertisements we had a call from Mauritius, requesting us to start a clinic in Mauritius. Actually it was quite exciting for us. We agreed and signed up the MoU and did all the work to be done. I went to Mauritius to launch the clinic and somebody suggested to us to invite the Vice President to inaugurate the clinic. When I approached him, he realized that I was a homeopath. He shouted at me saying that he would put me behind bars, because homeopathy is illegal in Mauritius and is not recognized. I still remember his words "Dr. Batra I am the head of Council; you cannot expect a Vice President of the country to inaugurate a room", and he was furious. I replied saying that I will not do it illegally.

Fortunately, for me he had a illness which I could notice. So I asked him "can I help you ?", but he said, "No, nobody can help me, I have been all over the world". I said "Give me a chance and I'll see to it that you are cured". Finally he became convinced and turned a friend. I assured him that though my clinic was ready, I will not start. I also decided to call for a press conference the next day to let them know that I will not start the practice and will wait till it is recognized. So, we were waiting for the government to legalize us. And from then on I went there in regular intervals for the next six months. I used to sit for hours outside the health minister's cabin and the health secretary's cabin.

IMJ: But you did not give up....

Dr. Batra: No, I never gave up and I visited regularly for six months. I started meeting the President, Vice President, Health Minister and the whole lot of other ministers and finally they all became friends. But they did not legalize it. Ultimately something good happened. They said they were now convinced and would pass it in the parliament. I was proud to think that I was instrumental in getting homeopathy recognized in that land. After that they beamed my bio-pic in prime time, on television as a person who brought medicine to a country. That was an interesting phase in my life.

The same was introduced in gulf countries too. Homeopathic medicine contains alcohol which is considered anti-Islamic. Somehow we managed to first introduce it in Oman. They recognized homeopathy and there we entered into a partnership with a hospital named Lama Polyclinic. Still we have one floor in that hospital for homeopathy. There we have diagnostic staff. From Oman, we went into Dubai health care city and then to London. That is the international business aspect of our company.

During the same time in 1996, I planned to start a branch in Bangalore which was incidentally inaugurated by Mr. Shatrughan Sinha who was the Governor at that time. Then we went to Baroda. One of the doctors working with me said, "Sir, I am getting married in Baroda and can I work for you in Baroda ?", and I said " ok, let's start". It was all unplanned. It was like a gift because people who worked with me volunteered this decision.

We never do any marketing research. We carried on wherever is possible. It was like a calling for us. I used to work from Monday to Friday in Mumbai, weekends in other Clinics, once in a month in Mauritius and Bangalore. All these put a huge strain on me physically. It was like nearly 700 to 800 patients

and I had to see them in those two days. But it was working successfully as Dr. Batra's clinic. People were very happy and it worked well. It was like a collection of doctors in a clinic.

Even though all were separate clinics, they kept all case sheets ready and when I visit the clinic they discuss with me and prepared the prescription and it worked like that. I thought this cannot be the end, and I was convinced in the next step. I felt, I should replicate myself into 100 to 500 Dr. Batras and if I am unable to do that then I can't withdraw from all these things.

In 2001, I turned my company into a Corporate and slowly started withdrawing from my practice. Over a period, our company was rated among the last according to a market survey report. Our patients would say the following: " The clinic means Dr. Batra but Dr. Batra is not to be seen," and second, they were happy to pay any amount of money and get treated, but only by Dr. Batra and not by his assistants. Third, they would say that Dr. Batra is great in his treatment and we wish we could be healed only by him but not by his juniors. We don't trust them.

It was a huge and conscious exercise to get out from the dependency of people because I was also a public figure in many ways at that time. I was worshiped like a Hero and Dr. Batra was a household name over the countries in the world. It was very difficult to disassociate from that. I consciously hide myself for five years to withdraw and not to practice. I also wanted to set up these companies; so I built it as a corporate structure, with a back office support and a front office. It took me 5 to 6 years, to set up all the process. Now it is nearing ten years and is not yet complete.

I felt I should train doctors and they need to work independently. By and large they work

independently even now. Now we have a network, which started five years ago. We have all our doctors networked together, and we have all case histories archived and if I have to look at any case, I could see the case history and I could advice. After five years of setting up the company I felt I was missing my practice. Being a professional, I wanted to get back. People said that I was so gifted and talented and wondered why I didn't use it for benefit of people.

Administrative work is tough but still we wanted to extend our services to many people. Like you would want to shake hands with your students; I wanted to shake hand with my patients. So I started working one day in my clinic in Bombay and one day in Delhi which I still do. I meet my patients who have been visiting me for the last 20 to 30 years; I've taken them back and their families; some difficult cases, second opinion, advice, and usually such things. So now I am a combination of a doctor and an administrator, predominantly an administrator and less of a doctor. I also teach my doctors at least once in a month all over the country.

IMJ: Facilitated through Video conferencing, is it?

Dr. Batra: In Bombay and Delhi it is live training, but in other places training is done through video conferencing.

IMJ: How does this model work? Can you please tell us about that? You said you started up clinic in Baroda as one of your doctors was getting married there. As she was relocating there you setup the clinic with facilities. What is the need for you and what is the need for the doctor? How does it work?

Dr. Batra: The need for the doctor is life time opportunities for her as she is relocating there, she is nearby and she can work and continue with her profession. There are not many opportunities. The gain for me is plain luck,

because that made me to open a clinic in Baroda.

IMJ: Who owns the clinic at Baroda?

Dr. Batra: It is still owned by me and the doctors are paid by me. My doctors are paid very fancy salary, with accommodation; sometimes with a car and driver depending at what level they are. The highest amount paid to some of our doctors is 3 lakhs per month. The lowest amount paid to the doctors is between rupees 12000 to 15000 per month. Out of the 250 doctors about 10 to 11 doctors are in the highest pay bandwidth and the average payment to the doctors is about Rupees 50,000 to 60,000 per month. The payments are made either by cash or cheque.

IMJI: How do you sustain this?

Dr. Batra: They are good people and they pay for themselves. They bring of business, moving around everywhere they contribute in terms of quality. There is no risk involved in this model. My doctors are paid incentives depending on the number of cases and the results they bring to the clinic.

IMJ: How do you ensure the quality and the way they behave, their treatment, their prescription? How does homeopathy work actually? Is it opinion based or protocol based?

Dr. Batra: It is opinion based and very difficult to standardize like most of the other systems of medicine. By and large to standardize it we follow a process, i.e. we follow international protocols. For example if it is a skin disease, we ensure that these are the things to be checked and the ERP program does not let you proceed to next level unless these are ticked the standardization of fundamentals is done this way and the rest is done through training. It is one single Dr. Batra's method of prescribing homeopathic medicine, which is followed in clinics all over the world. So

they have freedom to choose within that method.

IMJ: But they have to sustain within that method, which is a limitation in some sense because the doctor is young and not Dr. Batra.

Dr. Batra: It is not a limitation, everything comes out of experience. There is a wide scope for variations within that system, and it is not restrictive. It is a larger philosophy and within that you have to find your own mission

IMJ: How do you actually know if your diagnosis is right or wrong? For example, I walk up to a clinic for skin treatment and the doctor keeps on giving me something without telling what is happening to me. I just go with a faith in him and I know it's not a life threatening disease; at the worst I may become ugly. If I don't get better treatment, I go to the next doctor. It is the general thinking of a patient. So how do you know your diagnosis is correct and you can cure the patient?

Dr. Batra: It is not purely based on opinion. When we follow all these protocols, there are mandatory tests that we have to do for particular diseases. We make sure that we do this. For example if it is rheumatoid arthritis in women not in men, it is mostly due to thyroid and the rest due to anemia. 30% of them are thyroid patients and 20% are anemic; the rest are caused due to stress. Because it is basically an autoimmune disease, for these patients, we do a thyroid test. If it is abnormal we correct them. When we do that it automatically sets right, for example, in the case of hair loss among women, we found lower levels of serum ferritin. Their hair is ok but the iron absorption and binding capacity is low so when we give homeopathic iron supplement they get cured completely.

And we also found that patients who lose hair generally have little hair in their chin, face; suffer from irregular periods. These symptoms are enough for our diagnoses. We take

sonography and confirm whether there is cyst. Our doctors are all well trained in clinical sciences. Dermatologists from European society train our doctors. The person who did the first hair transplantation trains our society. We have the best doctors to train our doctors; we have our own dermatologists and Pediatricians. When a patient goes to a doctor who can not make a diagnosis; he will refer the case to a Dermatologist, he may prescribe medicine on his own. But we have our own dermatologist, they work for us, and they give a second opinion in that particular case and allow us to continue our homeopathic medicine.

For example in case of psoriasis, when it enters erythrodermal stage it is highly fatal. It is a very serious disease and requires hospitalization. It needs an intervention at the right time and if it is not done it becomes fatal. If we are not well trained to do it we could miss things like that. There are about 2000 diseases and problems that have to be cured; there are many syndromes and manifestations of many diseases. We have introduced a system called second opinion; we also have an interesting practice: if a patient visits us thrice and is not cured or the condition is not improving, we take up the issue in the medical audit committee. The world's finest doctors are there in the committee and when the condition remains unchanged or gets worse, they give advice to the patient free of charge through video conferencing to ensure that he gets well.

IMJ: Do you combine allopathic with homeopathy medicine? You mentioned pediatrics like ?

Dr. Batra: We don't combine medicine with homeopathy we combine clinical medicine with homeopathy. For example we can show CT Scans to the patients. We can show polyp to the patient and we can show how it dissipates in homeopathic medicine.

IMJ: So Dr. Batra is a network of doctors who follow protocols in studying the disease, the ERP system facilitates the process. The doctor monitors all the patients and when something goes wrong the audit committee discuss that case and there is a strong feedback system.

Dr. Batra: We have a very strong customer feedback system.

IMJ: Who developed the ERP and how was it developed ?

Dr. Batra: First I did it with two software engineers. It was a small basic model in 1982 and it lasted for 25 years, five years ago we shifted to datamatics we have our own team of doctors and datamatics software engineers. We have developed good software which records the details of all the patients who visit our clinic.

IMJ: Even if a patient visits once or twice?

Dr. Batra: A patient has his prescription; what was recorded and what was prescribed to the patient everything is seen even in a mobile phone.

I actually update every day. Two years ago we didn't have that audit meet. Only now we developed it. We also have complaint system. You can log on to Dr. Batras.com from your mobile phone. Everything is centralized. Today my biggest goal other than training is looking at the future.

I stopped looking at my balance sheets. There is no top line, bottom line. The first thing I do every day is to look at the complaints of my internal customers and ensure that the complaints are addressed on a day to day basis. Even though I have a discharging team, being in a service industry we have to satisfy our internal customers. When we don't do that, it gets passed on to other customers. I have huge network now. In a latest survey it was seen that 86% of our internal customers are satisfied with us.

Now my job is to satisfy the rest 14% and so I am making strong HR changes so that I can get close to 100%. After all very small things can lead to very big things and the people get troubled.

The second thing I do is to look at external customer complaints. I have a customer care person and she has to report all external complaints to me. Any patient who has a complaint in any part of the world should be reported to me, and within 24 hours it has to be addressed and within 30 days it has to be resolved. We have kept the duration of 30 days because the frequency of visit of a patient is once in a month, and by the time the patient makes the next visit, the grievance must be addressed.

IMJ: Which are the 14 diseases you mentioned ? Does the list include blood pressure ? What are the main aspects?

Dr. Batra: No it does not include blood pressure. The main ones which we focus are hair in terms of trichology and skin. There are 40 different diseases.

IMJ: What is Trichology?

Dr. Batra: Trichology is the science of hairs. It is a super specialty and my son is a trichologist. He is the first Vice President of UK trichologist society. He has brought in a lot of changes. We have instruments by which we can look at your hair and say if you will become bald in next five years. We can diagnose diabetes even 5 years before it manifests and that too from your hair. That is how we work in trichology and it is a specialty. Having said that we cannot treat about 30-40% of hair patients because they are in different grades, and we cannot tell them. Hence, we have collaborated with a new American Company for hair transplantation. We set operation theaters at Bombay and within six hours we send our patients back home with hair. It is

a different business and we have financial and technical staff in the American Company, we have 51 percent stake and they have 49 percent stake in this business.

IMJ: Have you any plans to popularize homeopathy in masses in the country?

Dr. Batra: I think to a large extent we have popularized homeopathy through our writings, our business model and advertisements.

IMJ: It is a belief that we can follow either homeopathy or allopathic; only one of them.

Dr. Batra: No, you can follow both. As discussed earlier, we treat 14 different types of skin diseases. 45% of our business today is in the hair segment, 30% in skin segment and rest 25% in the last resort. We get diabetic failures, neopathies, and cancer patients in their last stage; we get all kinds of cases.

IMJ: Do you have any treatment for them?

Dr. Batra: We try to palliate them and make them comfortable. They must have been to several doctors across the world. They are at the last resort, and it is cheaper. It is not that they do not have any other options. Other options are not only expensive, but are also painful. Sometimes it is better not to intervene, but allow the patient to be peaceful and calm. It is a non-invasive medicine. It builds up the immunity; it has no side effects as it is not chemical based. So it helps in such cases. This way we treat some cancer patients, we send for pathological reports and show them. But it does not happen always but still people come to us. We have nearly 5% patients with respiratory problems, and a lot of asthma patients. They respond very well to homeopathy, not only asthma but also elderly patients with, Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) come to us.

IMJ: Do you think homeopathy helps in critical disease?

Dr. Batra: Homeopathy helps significantly in these problem. We basically deal with, these two diseases because these are two diseases which are not advertised. We are very ethical in what we do and call it magic and we never claim any cures and we have no conformation to cure anything.

We are now all over the world, we are in London and, we are in Dubai. The ministry of health is very strict. We are clear in what we do. We are allowed to advertise only cosmetic diseases and not medical diseases. So we don't advertise what we are not supposed to do. We have huge experience in this segment as we treat 150000 patients at a given time, out of which nearly 45% are hair patients; we see nearly 70000 hair patients at any given time. That makes us the largest hair clinic in the world and the experience we have in these diseases is huge. Even the dermatologists who are with us say they have never seen such cases before in any hospital; it is because we have super specialty and that is successful.

IMJ: Before I started this meeting, I learnt that you are a photographer, a singer and you have a lot of other intrests and characteristics. Can you please tell us how you pursue all these, because you are a busy man, and many people say they are busy and don't have time?

Dr. Batra: As you rightly said, you must have some time to do what you love, that is what I believe. It is all in time management and dedication. Unless you dedicate yourself, you will not get time to do anything for yourself. It all depends upon some priorities; it is what we love the most. I love my work and I have passion for it but I need not be present there to do it all the time. Today my work runs automatically, whether I am there or not, the clinic runs on its own.

IMJ: It is still surprising, you have not gone to any management school, and you do ERP, develop

standard procedures, strive for customer care, and gain better rewards. You attend to all of these so that it becomes sustainable. How come you do all that?

Dr. Batra: It is all hands on practice. I don't think that one has to learn all these in a management school. Apart from the hands-on training, I learnt from other people, by observing how they run companies, by listening to the lectures of people in management schools, by reading few books, by interacting with a lot of people who run big companies, industries.

IMJ: What is that "inner source"? Is it reading or listening to people?

Dr. Batra: I listen to people. The practical thing I have gained the way I have treated all kinds of citizens from top to bottom, politicians, film stars and so on. I have an insight into all kinds of professions.

IMJ: What is the trigger to learn photography or singing?

Dr. Batra: I believe, in medicine we see many patients who are suffering from ailments constantly. This at times makes you insensitive as a doctor. To keep the sensitivity alive in life a doctor has to do something in fine arts. I didn't know how to sing a line, but now I have learnt quite a bit and it has turned into a hobby. I also learnt how to put my hobbies like photography to use through charity.

Next week I have my sixth exhibition. This time it is NCP. They are very strict about the standards of photography. Tata theatre's Board decides if it is fit enough and whether to exhibit a work or not, they sell it to all the Tata theaters, galleries. All of the proceed belongs to them. This is there acceptance of my work.

I have managed to get there in these six years. It is not that just I do for hobby, but I do it well. Earlier I used to think my first exhibition which was sponsored by Mr. Sibbi Roy as

great; but over the years I know it was terrible. I have improved greatly and am still moving ahead. I think it is a passion for professionals, who strives to improve every year. It is actually the pursuit for excellence which I try to do in my work and it is only an extension of that.

IMJ: In a different domain?

Dr. Batra: Yes! It is in a different domain to retain the sensitivity in my life. That's why I made it compulsory for all my doctors. They are all young guys, sitting in comfortable air conditioned room, having VIPs waiting outside for 2 to 3 hours to see them. They think they are great and right always. To make them understand the value of that, they must voluntarily spare a half day to do CSR among poor people. We have lots of old age homes across the country. We work with Sanjay Gandhi Animal Welfare and take care of 900 dogs. My doctors provide free homeopathy treatment. We work with Moffusil areas and treat AIDS patients. We work with about 400 visually handicapped children. For the last 25 years we have been doing various things there.

IMJ: So Charity has been a part of your scheme?

Dr. Batra: Yes, but not always.

IMJ: When did it start?

Dr. Batra: As a person, it was always there, but as a doctor, I am always sensitive to people's needs. When people cannot afford for treatment I would put my hands in pocket and give whatever I have. As an individual, I tell to my patients to forget about my fees but pay their daughter's school fees. When I turned 50, which was 8 years back, I decided to formulate a trust and I started Dr. Batra's foundation which was inaugurated by the Chief Minister of Maharashtra. The foundation received some money from the Chief Minister's corpus fund. I also put in my own money. We adopted a good system while organizing the Trust.

I have introduced one percent contribution system. I encourage all my employees to contribute one percent of their salary to the foundation. As the number of employees increases and services grow, the foundation also grows. I also insist on a contribution of 1 percent from all my products and profits.

IMJ: That's your contribution.

Dr. Batra: No my personal contribution is separate, I try and fund it in many ways. We pay the entire fee for 5 ½ years for homeopaths which is pretty expensive. In this way we help them qualify as doctors and there are no conditions. In every city we run a free clinic and we treat around 1000 patients every month. There are no condition and our treatment is complete. We conduct many free health camps, not that we are giving to the society but basically we learn from these experiences.

My doctors learn the human values which otherwise they miss out. They get the chance to look at the other side of life, which generally they forget; these experiences make their life sensitive and they are sensitive to pain and suffering which otherwise they don't feel, that is why CSR is needed. It is not that we are only changing the society but in a sense it flows back in a better way i.e. the doctors are never insensitive. They think that the next person after a patient X may be worse than X and thus, why waste time with X.

I have been associated with film-fare awards. I have been on the censor board for five years, I used to take off on Wednesday and watch censored movies. This is all because I want to do something creative, outside medicine. It has also built an insight into the problems, people and situations. Today as a photographer, I feel I have seen a lot more which otherwise I might have overlooked. When I go for a walk I usually watch all things that move with me and I would form a visual memory of a photographer, which

other people would have missed. The duty of photographer is to capture beauty for posterity and bring it to people and share with other people to enjoy.

Then I hand it to apparently blind children who cannot see, so you know for me that's a huge thing. In many ways it inspires my life, and I am very passionate about photography. I almost died when I went to take a picture. I developed high attitude pulmonary edema, I collapsed and fell on the floor. I was lying two days outside the toilet, then in a Hospital and they helped me to regain life. They charted a special helicopter and saved my life. Being passionate about photography, I put out my head in-60degree in Switzerland so that I could see the track turning with all the snow falling.

IMJ: But you should not have done that...

Dr. Batra: Yes, but we lost everything at that time and we don't think, having done all these, I also wanted to do a little bit of it. At the end of the day if I feel distressed I sing for one hour. I have already given a public performance. Now I will be able to give a huge public performance in front of 1000 people. It also gives you space and comfort level of doing things that you want to do. Retirement is the age for valuing your own time and setting your own ways of worth. I am able to do that so I am retired. But it does not mean I am not working, because I am working all the time, still I am combining work and hobby. Today I am in Indore; I was in Delhi yesterday and in Pune the day before.

For me, staying at home is a rare thing but I am equally comfortable in living a life out of suitcase, where ever I am, I enjoy each moment of life. It is all learning how to live your life and not use your professional time for personal work. I make sure that I have all time for what I wanted to do I love to sing. But I had no classical background ever before, about I had a terrible voice, but now I am confident about giving public performances.

IMJ: You don't take the answer 'NO' for anything, you don't take any failure. Rather you push ahead and achieve things.

Dr. Batra: I am not an easy going person and I make sure that I do everything that it takes and all means to achieve.

IMJ: Do you have any disappointment in your life?

Dr. Batra: Yes, I have a disappointment somewhere on personal front, otherwise I have a fulfilling life. I am very happy and the happiest thing in my life is that I am in a position to give. As a professional I never need to ask but as a business man I have to take permission. It has been very traumatic to do that role, when I had to go and ask for license, for permission to run something, as a professional. I have never done that because I had always given. But as a business man I had to do that. It has been a dichotomy and it was very difficult to manage in earlier stages of career.

But now I have professionals to do that. I am very happy that I am in a position to give rather than to take. And I am happy to help people all around the world. I can give my time, whenever I can. I am happy that I can help people any time and it does not take anything from me.

IMJ: What would be your advice to homeopaths who are not in your system?

Dr. Batra: First thing, never be in a hurry. In healthcare trust is the main thing. Trust in chronic cases comes only with reports which come after months, years and not instantaneously. Something being immediately successful is a myth. It can be due to your touch but you can not last long. To have a sustained success, you have to create strong fundamentals. You have to make sure your value systems are correct. I strongly believe that a person who is not a good human being can never be a good doctor. Empathy towards people comes only when dealing with people. One, who is not a happy

doctor, is a frustrated doctor. His frustration actually comes in dealing with his own patients.

You have to be satisfied in your worth from within. You must have a healing touch. You must not only know how to treat people but also how to heal people; that is, you must go beyond physical diagnostic things. You must motivate people, for motivation among patients is important. If your patient is not motivated he will not take up your treatment till he gets well. These days he has many options. He can go left, right or centre wherever he wants but in that bargain he may still not get well. But when your patient is motivated he will take up your prescription and he will follow your treatment till he gets well. Now-a-days the youngsters are in a hurry. They want to earn quick money. They collapse all systems. They think they are doctors and hence, can prescribe anything and become multimillionaires. It is not that easy, they have to earn trust because to build trust is the main thing in healthcare. It takes time.

IMJ: What is your advice to allopath?

Dr. Batra: Follow homeopathic principles. Homeopathy never likes suppression, and don't suppress anything. It is always better to deal with an honest person rather than to beat around the bush. You have to be clear cut in the association you have. There is no disappointment, if you treat from the grass root level. That is what homeopathy does. I have to say to all doctors that everything starts with a small descent; small frustration go on and on. So when you are engaged with people, you will always do well if you believe in the fact that 'customer engagement is the correct engagement'. But if you isolate yourself and sit in high towers, something can always go wrong.

Since you don't know what is happening at ground level you will always think that things are going wonderfully well. Positive skills, calculated risks are fundamentals; no risk, no gain. Benefit analysis is a thing which you have to do in homeopathy as well.

IMJ: You have not entered any management school, you have not learnt anything formally but you do many things in management. What is your advice to corporate managers, people who want to manage industries?

Dr. Batra: First thing I would like to say is leadership differentiates a good leader from a manager. Leadership has to be exemplary and need not be enforced through training. It has to come from within. It comes from setting examples to others. All the time people are watching you, when you come late to office, when you swipe your card wrongly, when you go for lunch and don't come back on time, it is all that is observed by people all the time. Therefore you cannot be exemplary.

A manager must have good leadership quality, must be honest, must be passionate about himself in his own life, he must be more comfortable in both process and people. You know some managers are more oriented towards processes but are not comfortable with people, and some managers are more oriented towards people, but they are not process oriented. I think we need to have a combination of both. In my company I have managers who are both process and people oriented; but it is difficult to find both qualities together.

IMJ: Do you read Books?

Dr. Batra: I read a lot of books related to philosophy, self-improvement, medical books like a new clinic model and management based books. Reading helps me in developing insights and fosters different thoughts.

IMJ: What is your reaction to life now?

Dr. Batra: I think you are very lucky as long as you work hard; as long as you want to do things which you want to do, and luck also depends on how much planning one does in accomplishing the work. This is all I want to mention. Generally, we always make long term plans and never follow of believe in those plans and we drift towards something else.

I think opportunities keep coming. A good business man exploits every one's job. As business men, we face many speed breakers all our way, but we bypass those speed breakers and find our own way. We slow down for some time and then we catch up the speed, so I think luck is very important, and it must be there in every one's life. But I have seen persons who are all lucky and also insist hard work.

IMJ: According to you how do you think they work hard?

Dr. Batra: I think all people who are lucky are also good planners. They work very hard and they are very passionate about their work in whatever business they do. They have clear direction followed by proper planning and they know how to reach the goal. I see many people mainly young people, lacking this focus.

IMJ: You are not only ambitious but also hard working. Perhaps this combination worked well for you.

Dr. Batra: I am ambitious about my dreams including singing. I have not done anything wrong or compromising on anything to achieve that. I have followed the model of the Tata group. The value systems we follow in the company are very important and they are very accessible to people. Just to give an example, right in the middle of a multi-crore marketing campaign, I asked my marketing manager to quit, as he signed himself in the company. It is not the money that we lose, but we certainly gave importance to the values that we believe. We never paid our employee in cash.

IMJ: You have your own principles to follow?

Dr. Batra: Yes, I have my own principles and I do follow them. The thing in which I take real pride is I have set up an organization which is really very artistic. Nobody tells lies, never cheats others, does nothing wrong thing neither with the customers or with the internal members. These are the practices that make my campaign successful. That is the thing which I have achieved.

IMJ: Thanks a lot for sharing your ideas with us. It was a very open talk and it gave us a great insight into you as a medical practitioner, a businessman and a sensitive human being.

Mukesh Batra is a homeopathy practitioner and the Chairman and Managing Director of Dr. Batra's Positive Health Clinic Pvt Ltd. Mukesh Batra has been the recipient of several awards including Padma Shri for his dedicated contribution to the field of healthcare and medicine. Mukesh Batra's organization (Dr. Batras' Positive Health Clinic Pvt. Ltd., also known as Dr. Batra's) was the recipient of the Retailer of the Year award and also topped some of India's leading service brands in 2009. Apart from being a doctor, he is a philanthropist, a photographer and a writer.

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