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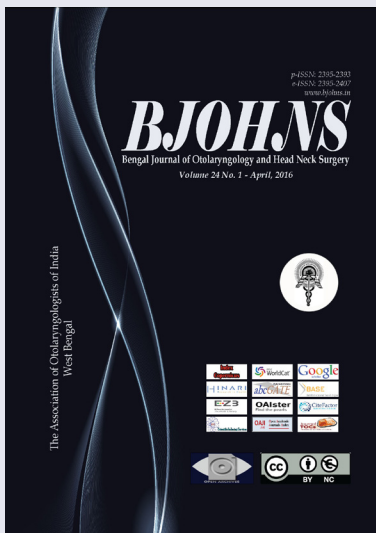
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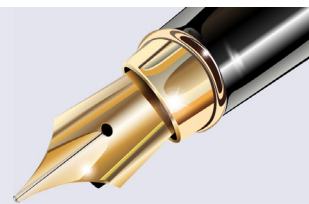
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# *From the Desk of the Editor*



During the last few decades, the traditional healing art of medicine has been transformed into a business entity. The transformation of the modest medical centres run by doctors into sprawling medical industrial complexes managed by corporate HMO (Health Maintenance Organizations) had active encouragement of the Government, media and the public in general. The rise of corporate health care has been coupled with decline of the Government hospitals, mainly due to Governments' reluctance to increase budgetary allocation to shoulder the increased health care expenditure which was needed to keep pace with the modern scientific developments.

Promotions and advertisements came in a big way. The scientific medicine, powered with the cutting edge technology, has been projected to have the potential to cure all ailments. Society places a much higher premium on using technology than on listening or counselling. Treatment protocols were formulated on scientific data; communicating with an ailing person was discounted. Doctors had been projected to be highly skilled scientists with the ability to salvage every situation. The cost of treatment in a scientific curative medical centre may be astronomical but people knew that every good thing comes at a cost. A dream has been sold and 'the public was led to expect miracles and these were not forthcoming. The result is disillusion and anger'.

The members of the society must appreciate that they themselves subscribed to the belief that investor-owned health maintenance organizations were the only option to improve the quality of health care delivery. The health industrialists entered on the invitation of the Society, started employing the doctors as mere employees of the health industry and marketised their product professionally. The society supported the business model of health system. It is again the Society, which believed that bracketing the doctors with the businessmen by placing them under the purview of the Consumer Protection Act, would force them to perform better. Now the Society screams that too much business has been done.

It is time for the Society to introspect and choose if it wants to run the healthcare sector as an essential public service or it wants the healthcare industry to take charge. It cannot have its feet on two boats and hope to cross the river. It is for the Society to decide if doctors should be allowed to be guided by the Hippocratic Oath or should they be governed by corporate philosophy. The Society would get the healthcare it deserves.

Dr Saumendra Nath Bandyopadhyay  
Editor,  
Bengal Journal of Otolaryngology and Head Neck Surgery

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