

# Kanny Lall Dey– Pioneer Proponent of Indigenous Drugs

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## Abstract

Kanny Lall Dey (1831-1899) made a name world-wide through his studies and propagation of the Indian indigenous drugs. His collections were displayed at several international exhibitions in Europe which were much appreciated. The Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain recognized his status by conferring on him Honorary Membership of the Society. Dey started his career with appointment as sub-assistant surgeon at his alma mater, the Calcutta Medical College. Looking to his professional performance the Government bestowed on him the coveted title of Rai Bahadur. He continued in the Government service there till his retirement. He remained active after superannuation as well. He was elected a president of the Pharmacology Section of the Indian Medical Congress (1894). Several of the suggestions he made in his address led to the appointment of the Central Indigenous Drugs Committee by the Government. Dr Dey published extensively on Indian indigenous drugs. His celebrated work, *Indigenous Drugs of India*, was first published in 1867. The thoroughly revised and enlarged second edition appeared in 1896. The book received encouraging comments.

**Key words:** Calcutta Medical College, Central Indigenous Drugs Committee, Indian Materia Medica, Indian Pharmacology, Indigenous Drugs of India, Indigenous Drugs and International Exhibitions, Medical Jurisprudence.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The first English book in the 19th century which exclusively dealt with the properties and uses of the Ayurvedic drugs was by O'Shaughnessy (Singh and Joshi, 1982). He held the chair of Professor of Chemistry and Materia Medica at the Medical College in Calcutta<sup>1</sup>.

He authored the *Bengal Dispensatory and Pharmacopoeia Volume I – Dispensatory* in 1841, generally referred to as the *Bengal Dispensatory* (O'Shaughnessy, 1841; Singh, 1994, pp 30-33). Later in 1844, O'Shaughnessy published the *Bengal Pharmacopoeia and General Conspectus of Medicinal Plants*, generally known as the

*Bengal Pharmacopoeia* (O'Shaughnessy, 1844; Singh, 1994, pp. 33-38).

The above was the major literature available in English on Ayurvedic drugs when Kanny Lall Dey appeared on the scene and was to later make a name world-wide for his works on indigenous drugs.

A mention may also be made of a contemporary publication *Pharmacopoeia of India* 1868 edited by Edward John Waring of the Madras Medical Service (Waring, 1868; Singh, 1994, pp. 46-54), and its supplement prepared by Moodeen Sheriff of the Triplicane Dispensary, Madras, a year later (Sheriff, 1869; Singh, 1994, pp. 54-57). The *Pharmacopoeia* included all the

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<sup>1</sup> Basu, B. D. Indian Medical Celebrities XXX—Sir William O'Shaughnessy Brooke, *Medical Reporter*, 5 (1895): 204-205. He had been known as William Brooke O'Shaughnessy; in 1861 he assumed the name William O'Shaughnessy Brooke. He was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society, London, in 1843.



Fig. 1. Kanny Lall Dey  
(1831-1899)<sup>2</sup>

and organic substances included in the *Pharmacopoeia*, with exploratory and descriptive remarks, in fourteen languages.

Kanny Lall Dey was an eminent Indian investigator and propagator of Indian materia medica during the nineteenth century. The coverage on him here is placed under the sections: Life and Career – Selected Features; Indigenous Drugs Display and Recognitions; *Indigenous Drugs of India*, 1867; Rai Bahadur Title; Indian Medical Congress (1894), Kanny Lal Dey's Address, and Central Indigenous Drugs Committee; *Indigenous Drugs of India*, 1896; and Epilogue.

To start with brief biographical descriptions by Basu (1893, p.380) and Mair (1896, p`p. xiii-xx) on Dey will be of interest.

## 2. LIFE AND CAREER – SELECTED FEATURES

Kanny Lall was born in Calcutta on 24 September 1831. His father Rai Radhanath Dey, was a Deputy Collector. ‘.... young Kanny Lall discovered early the peculiar bent of mind, and he was fortunate in the opportunity of following its directions. His aptitude for chemistry and medical jurisprudence, while yet a diligent and

successful student of the Calcutta Medical College and winner of its most coveted prizes, marked out these departments of science as his speciality (Mair, 1896, pp. xiii-xx).’ He obtained the college diploma, at the age of 22. It was a real distinction in those pre-University days. The University of Calcutta was established in 1857.

It was on his becoming a diplomat Kanny Lall was appointed Sub-Assistant Surgeon with the Bengal Medical Establishment. In the official records which have become available pertaining to fixation of his salaries at some stages it comes out that he started with his job in December 1853 (Government of Bengal, Municipal Department, Medical Branch, August 1860, Government of Bengal, General Department, Medical Branch, September 1860, Government of Bengal, General Department, Education Branch, November 1871). He worked as Assistant to Professor of Chemistry and Chemical Examiner to Government at the Calcutta Medical College (Government of Bengal, Municipal Department, Medical Branch, August 1860), a position he was to hold till 1869. In 1862 he was also appointed Professor of Chemistry in the Presidency College, Calcutta (Mair, 1896, pp. xiii-xx). During a portion of the same year he officiated, during the absence, on furlough, of Dr. F. N. Macnamara, as Professor of Chemistry and Chemical Examiner to Government, and again acted in the same capacity in 1877. In 1867 he was appointed Additional Chemical Examiner to Government, a position he retained till 1872 (Mair, 1896, pp. xiii-xx). A document pertaining to the request for special honorarium by K. L. Dey (Government of Bengal, General Department, Education Branch, January 1873: File 4) has become available.

In 1869 he was appointed Teacher of Chemistry and Medical Jurisprudence to the vernacular classes of the Calcutta Medical College, which appointment he continued to hold

<sup>2</sup> Basu, B. D. Indian Medical Celebrities IV — Rai Bahadur Kanny Lall Dey, *Medical Reporter*, 2 (1893): 380. A full page photograph appended. Basu was Surgeon-Captain in the Indian Medical Service.

until his retirement from the Government Service in 1884 (Mair, 1896, pp. xiii-xx). His tutorial record concluded with an Examinership in Medical Jurisprudence and Chemistry, to which he was appointed by the Syndicate of the University of Calcutta in 1878, and subsequently till 1891. The great want in those days of suitable text-books in the vernacular induced Dr Kanny Lall to undertake the preparation of several, including translations of some standard works into Bengali, which appeared from time to time.

### 3. INDIGENOUS DRUGS DISPLAY AND RECOGNITIONS

The establishment of the formal medical instruction centres in the country also advanced our knowledge of indigenous drugs. The alumni of the medical colleges and schools directed their attention to the subject. Some who recognized the importance of the study of indigenous drugs and made a mark were Kanny Lall Dey, Uday Chand Dutt, and Moodeen Sheriff. Kanny Lall who is the subject of the present study showed keen interest in the line.

It was realized that exhibitions were the important means in increasing our knowledge of indigenous drugs. The great commercial value of International Exhibitions and their educational and economic interest, had been demonstrated by the Great Exhibition of 1851 (Mair, 1896, pp. xiii-xx). Dr Kanny Lall Dey was invited by the Government of India to the second International Exhibition, held in London in 1862. He forwarded indigenous drugs and medicinal oils for which he was awarded two medals. Another drug collection, contributed in the same year to the Paris Exposition Universale, brought him a gold medal and certificate of honour.

By now he was well in the eyes of the world's scientific community. In 1863 the Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain recognized abilities as a pharmacognosist of Kanny Lall Dey by electing him as an Honorary

Member of the Society (*Pharmaceutical Journal and Transactions*, 1863-64). The Transactions included a list of the world's fifty-six most eminent men of science related to pharmacy who by then had become honorary members of the Society; the other familiar name in the list was that of Sir William Brooke O'Shaughnessy who had worked in India (Basu, 1895).

Continuing with coverage on contributions by Kanny Lall Dey for displays to different exhibitions and museums and also for some publications (Mair, 1896, pp. xiii-xx), it may be mentioned that report on indigenous drugs was sent by him for the *Pharmacopoeia of India 1868* (Singh, 1994, Waring, 1868) which was in making and this was duly acknowledged (Waring, 1868, p xiii).

A note has been taken earlier about his contributing display material for the Paris Exhibition Universale where he got gold medal and certificate of honour. Subsequently he sent a collection to Paris to the Exhibition of 1878, for which he was similarly rewarded, earned for him in addition congratulations and thanks of the Viceroy, for his services in developing the drug resources of the country (Mair, 1896, pp. xiii-xx). This collection was ultimately presented by Dr Kanny Lall Dey to the Museum de Pharmacia of Paris, for which he received the acknowledgements of the French Government. Among other similar collections which may be listed, omitting many local to India, are: one forwarded in 1870 to the University of Virginia, U.S., for which he received the thanks of the Senate; and others, to the Vienna Exhibition of 1872, for which he received a gold medal, a diploma and two certificates of honorable mention; the Melbourne Exhibition, 1880; the Amsterdam Exhibition 1883; the World's Centennial Exposition, New Orleans, U.S.A., 1884-85; and the Colonial and Indian Exhibition, London, 1886, for all of which he was suitably rewarded.

He was invited to represent India at the International Pharmaceutical and Medical Congress held in London in 1881. It was perhaps due to religious prejudice that prevented him from crossing the 'black water,' but he sent the results of some original observations which were published in the Proceedings (Mair, 1896, pp. xiii-xx).

Kanny Lall Dey was selected by the Secretary of State, in 1874, to make a collection, to which he devoted two years, of the drugs of Bengal in illustration of the *Pharmacopoeia of India* for the Museum at Netley Hospital, for the benefit of surgeons joining the Indian Medical Service (Mair, 1896, pp. xiii-xx). It was perhaps all too little made use of. He wished to all knowledge of *Indian Materia Medica* taught in the training schools of India's medical officers. In 1877, he prepared under order of Government, five complete sets of the indigenous drugs of India for five medical schools of Bengal, for which he received thanks of the Government.

In 1872, he was appointed to the Permanent Committee for the collection of Indian products for the Kensington and Vienna Museums, and later in 1874, to the Select Committee appointed on the occasion of the foundation of the Museum of India at Calcutta (Mair, 1896, pp. xiii-xx). He acted as juror in no less than fifteen sections of the Calcutta Exhibitions of 1883-84. All this shows acknowledgement of his services in helping economic progress of India. On the occasion of Queen Victoria's assumption of Imperial title on the dissolution of the East India Company, Dr Dey received a certificate of honour from the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, in recognition of his services to the State as a practical chemist and teacher of chemistry.

Dr Kanny Lall Dey was elected a Fellow of the Calcutta University in 1867 (Mair, 1896, pp. xiii-xx). In 1880 he was elected as a Fellow of the Chemical Society, London. In the same year he became a Fellow of the Society of Sciences,

Letters and Arts of London. Later, in 1886, he became a Corresponding Fellow of the College of Physicians, Philadelphia.

At the close of thirty years of continuous Government service on his retirement in 1884, he was decorated with the dignity of a Companion of the Most Eminent Order of the Indian Empire, "in recognition of valuable services rendered to Government and his professional and scientific attainments (Mair, 1896, pp. xiii-xx)."

#### 4. INDIGENOUS DRUGS OF INDIA (1867)

Dr Kanny Lall Dey was actively propagating the importance of the indigenous drugs for several years. His first collection of the drugs was sent to the International Exhibition at London and for the exhibitions in Paris as covered in the preceding section. The descriptive catalogue of the Indian indigenous drugs which he had contributed to Universal Exhibition at Paris, was in the press, and of which Kanny Lall showed some portions to the Principal Inspector General of the Medical Department. The latter thought that it might serve a useful purpose for the medical men in India and encouraged Dr Dey to print larger number of copies of the catalogue to also cover for distribution among Government medical officers, both European and Indian, in the Bengal Presidency. Governmental support for the purpose of printing larger numbers of the catalogue was assured. This prompted Kanny Lall to think of bringing out a book on the subject.

Dr Dey of recent had published a series of papers in the *Indian Medical Gazette* under the heading of 'Indigenous Drugs.' These papers were on demulcents and emollients (Dey, 1866, pp 19-22), diuretics (Dey, 1866, pp. 76-77), and purgatives (Dey, 1866, pp. 197-199), respectively. These in expanded forms and also covering anthelmintics, astringents, diaphoretics and emetics an emenagogue, rubefacients, a sialagogue, and tonics, led to the publication

*Indigenous Drugs of India* (Dey, 1867). It contained short description notices of the medicines, both vegetable and mineral, in common use in India.

In a review it was noted that this manual will necessarily be useful to medical officers in the Mofussal, as a book of reference for practical purposes. As such, it is well worthy of our readers' attention, and should be in the hands of every officer in charge of a dispensary or civil hospital (*Indian Medical Gazette*, 1867).

In a review from a Madras journal which became available, it is stated that 'On the whole, the style of this little compilation is good – and its value considerable' but critical comments were made on the contents and utility for different reasons (*Madras Quarterly Journal of Medical Science*, Second Series, 1869).

### 5. RAI BAHADUR TITLE

Dr Kanny Lall Dey received several honours and recognitions to which references have been made at different places in the body of this article. As during the times of history in which Dr Dey lived, it was something special, the conferring of the Rai Bahadur title has been singled out for a separate coverage.

At instance of the College Council, Dr Norman Chevers the Principal of the Medical College on 2 April 1872 wrote the letter which made a recommendation with his communication partly reading as: '.....The remarkable merits of Baboo K. L. Dey are perfectly well known to the majority of my colleagues; but it will be right to submit to Government that he has been attached to this college for eighteen years, that he possesses a knowledge of chemistry and a power of teaching it which have rarely, if ever, been acquired by any native of India who has not enjoyed opportunities of study in Europe, and that for many years past he has in most liberal and kind spirit helped himself at all times in readiness to delight large

audiences with his demonstrations and experiments. Much of his scanty leisure has been devoted to the extremely important task of developing the drug resources of India (Government of Bengal, General Department, Medical Branch, May 1872). In the letter he went on to enumerate the display of his collection of indigenous drugs at London and Paris Exhibitions, his knowledge of toxicology and medical jurisprudence etc., ending the letter by the recommendation, 'I have no hesitation in saying that I regard him as being eminently qualified to hold the rank of Rai Bahadoor.'

The recommendation by the Principal Dr Chevers was duly endorsed at different official levels before it reached the Lieutenant Governor, who in turn endorsed it and finally the Viceroy and Governor-General conferred the title of 'Rai Bahadoor' upon Baboo Kanny Lall Dey 'in recognition of the valuable services rendered by him to the cause of medical science in India (Government of Bengal, Political Department, Medical Branch, June 1872). The *Sunnud* for the honour was presented to Babu Dey by the Principal, Medical College, Calcutta, at a public meeting on 16 June 1872 (Government of Bengal, General Department, Medical Branch, July 1872).

William Mair noted,

The London Times of 3<sup>rd</sup> October 1872, reporting that 'the Native press is quite enthusiastic on the subject. The title is equivalent to our order of Knighthood, and is highly estimated in India. (Mair, 1896, pp. xiii-xx).

### 6. INDIAN MEDICAL CONGRESS (1894), KANNY LALL DEY'S ADDRESS AND CENTRAL INDIGENOUS DRUGS COMMITTEE

Rai Bahadur Kanny Lall Dey's election as a President, the other President was Dr G. Watt, Pharmacology Section of the Indian Medical Congress, held at Calcutta in Christmas week of 1894, was a graceful tribute on part of the medical

profession in India (Mair, 1896, pp. xiii-xx). In the section of Pharmacology and Indian Drugs at the Congress, eight papers were read on the use of indigenous drugs, the most important being those by Dr G. Watt, M.B., C.M., F.I.L., and Rai Bahadur Kanny Lall Dey, F.C.S., C.I.E. (Government of Bengal, Municipal Department, Medical Branch, File 2D/17 4, November 1895). The text of Dey's presentation has become available (*Indian Medical Gazette*, 1895, Dey, 1896).

Dr Kanny Lall Dey's paper entitled 'Indian Pharmacology – A Review' traced the progress of pharmacology, in particular laying emphasis on the developments pertaining to Indian indigenous drugs, during the nineteenth century. Coming to his own experience of the preceding forty years, forming a major part of the Address, he provided coverage and suggestions, on international exhibitions, status of use of indigenous drugs, identification of drugs, reliable preparations, medicinal plant farms, and drug adulterations. He concluded his address by drawing attention to his paper which was presented on his behalf at the International Pharmaceutical Congress held in London in 1881, wherein he suggested eleven Indian drugs which were worthy of inclusion in a proposed revision of the *British Pharmacopoeia*.

In his address, Rai Bahadur Dey made the following particular suggestions:

- Definite pharmacological preparations of certain indigenous drugs should be made at the Medical Store Depots for distribution to various hospitals and dispensaries for trial and report;
- Medicinal plant farms should be laid out in the districts most suited to the plants which it proposed to grow; and
- A drug emporium for India should be established at Calcutta (*Indian Medical Gazette*, 1895, Dey, 1896).

Resolution was recorded by the Pharmacological section of the Indian Medical Congress, to the effect that the Government of India should consider the desirability of extending the use of indigenous drugs in India. In consideration of the papers presented, the Indian Medical Congress recorded the resolution "That it be recommended to the consideration of the Government of India that an extended use of indigenous drugs is most desirable (*Indian Medical Gazette*, 1895, Dey, 1896)."

As a consequence the Government of India in the Home Department appointed a Committee with the following membership (Government of Bengal, Municipal Department, Medical Branch, File 2D/17 4, November 1895):

Brigade-Surgeon-Lieutenant-Colonel G. King, M.B., F.R.S., C.I.E., Superintendent of the Royal Botanic Garden, Howrah, to serve also as President of the Committee.

Surgeon-Lieutenant-Colonel J.F.P. McConnell, M.B., F.R.C.P., Professor of Materia Medica and Clinical Medicine, Medical College, and Second Physician, Medical College Hospital, Calcutta.

Surgeon-Lieutenant-Colonel C. J. Warden, M.D., Medical Store-keeper, Bengal Command.

Dr G. Watt, C.I.E., Officer in charge of the Economic and Art section of the Indian Museum.

Rai Bahadur Kanny Lall Dey, F.C.S., C.I.E.

The points to which the Government of India desired in particular to invite the attention of the Committee with a view to their careful consideration were the practicability, as the utility, of:

- (a) encouraging the systematic cultivation of medicinal plants, indigenous to India;
- (b) encouraging the increased use in medical departments of drugs of known therapeutic value; and

(c) sanctioning the manufacture of stable preparations of certain drugs at the depots.

The records which have become available to me of the meetings of the Central Indigenous Drugs Committee, are of the first and second meetings held respectively, on 3 and 9 January 1896, with all the members attending (Report of the Central Indigenous Drugs Committee of India, 1901).

At the first meeting Dr Watt was appointed Honorary Secretary of the Committee. A view emerged that convenient preparations made upon some definite standard might with advantage be subjected to actual therapeutic test. The enquiry might be conducted in relation to disease. For example, the better known indigenous drugs that may be used for ordinary fevers, for dysentery, etc. A sub-committee was appointed consisting of Dr Watt and Rai Bahadur Kanny Lall Dey to submit to next meeting lists of the drugs most worthy of enquiry as suitable for malarial fevers and bowel complaints. It was considered desirable to summon before them better known *Kabirāj* and *Hākim* and to question them as to the properties of drugs they use and diseases for which they are employed. The proceedings of the second meeting available were incomplete.

The Reports of the Central Indigenous Drugs Committee can form a separate subject for studies; the composition of the Committee may have changed from time to time. The findings may project the official thinking on use of Indian indigenous drugs around the close of the nineteenth century.

Those who may engage in studies on Central Indigenous Drugs Committee, also need to examine the contents of documents pertaining to appointment of a Local Committee to consider the question of encouraging the cultivation of medicinal plants indigenous to India and increased use in medical depots of drugs of known therapeutic value, as also of sanctioning the

manufacture of stable preparations of certain drugs at the depots (General Department, No. 1041, 1896; General Department, No. 1041, 1900).

### 7. *INDIGENOUS DRUGS OF INDIA (1896)*

Kanny Lall Dey's celebrated *Indigenous Drugs of India* first appeared in 1867 as discussed earlier. Several decades had passed and its revision was called for. A great mass of information had become available during forty years of study by the author and the new edition was made available (Dey, 1896). The book was dedicated to the Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain of which Dey had become honorary member.

The original work extended to 130 pages. The new edition was re-written and considerably enlarged. The useless were eliminated and concentrated attention was given to the valuable indigenous drugs. In preparing the edition the author was assisted by William Mair, who had earlier worked with Royal Infirmary Dundee, and was now at Calcutta. Mair was Associate of the Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain. The book was written for students, with claim for becoming a textbook for the Medical Schools.

Before covering the indigenous drugs of India, arranged in alphabetical order, there were placed the Preface written by George Watt; information about British Indian Weights and Measures and Equivalents; Prefatory Memoir of Kanny Lall Dey by William Mair; Introductory by Kanny Lall Dey, and Indian Pharmacology – A Review, text of the Presidential Address delivered by Dr Dey at the Indian Medical Congress, December 1894. After main body of the drugs running to 334 pages, there were appendices: *Aconitum napellus*, Aconite Collection in the Himalaya; *Alianthus excelsa*; Fluid Extracts of Indian Indigenous Drugs; and Foods of India. Finally there was given Botanical Classification in Natural Orders of Plants enumerated in this work, followed by good index.

Kanny Lall Dey approached the Government of Bengal soliciting patronage to the second edition in making of his work on the Indigenous Drugs of India (Government of Bengal, Municipal Department, Medical Branch, March 1895, File B/3).

The publication received encouraging comments. The *Pharmaceutical Journal* noted:

“Whilst, they (K. L. Dey and others) have endeavoured to bring the work into touch with the most recent advances and research in pharmacology, it is intended to some extent for general use in India as a guide to the use of indigenous medicaments, in cases where medical aid is not readily attainable, more than this, however, it should serve as a convenient manual of ready reference and as an introduction to such standard works as ‘*Pharmacographia Indica*’ and Watts’ ‘*Dictionary of Economic Products of India*.’”

(*Pharmaceutical Journal*, 1896)

In a review in the *Indian Lancet*, it was stated, ‘Dr Dey’s book can with confidence be recommended as the book which every medical man in India should keep as a handy work of reference on native drugs (*Indian Lancet*, 8, 1896).’

A review in the *British Medical Journal* elaborated on contents of the book by writing: ‘The work includes three classes of drugs and products – namely, first, the true indigenous, known and used mostly or solely in India, for example, *bael*, *kurchi*; secondly, the partly indigenous, cultivated and collected in India, but also known elsewhere and imported into India from Europe in the form of pharmaceutical preparations, for example, aconite, belladonna; and, thirdly, the acclimatised exotics such as cinchona. On each of these classes the information given is all that is desirable, and the work might with great advantage be used as a textbook in medical schools, especially instructed with the view to service in India (*British Medical*

*Journal*, 1896).’ Interestingly, the reviewer also expressed admiration for Kanny Lall Dey by stating, ‘The author of this work is an example how a native graduate of an Indian college and member of the subordinate medical service may by ability and industry rise to high position, fame and fortune (*British Medical Journal*, 1896).’

## 8. EPILOGUE

Kanny Lall Dey’s major publications were on indigenous drugs and toxicological and therapeutic topics; he also expressed himself on reform of Hindu sociology. He delivered an address on Hindu Social Laws and Habits at the third anniversary of the Bengal Branch of the British Medical Association in March 1866 (Dey, 1866, pp. 1-29).

Dr Dey helped very considerably in the establishment of the Indian Association for the Cultivation of Science. The role he played during the creation of the institution comes for reference in the centenary publication (*The Early Period. A Century*. Indian Association for the Cultivation of Science, Calcutta 1976).

He on retirement in 1884 had an extensive medical practice which he rapidly acquired on his relinquishing the Government service, but remained as he had always been, a student and his time was devoted to clinical chemistry and its application in medical diagnosis, while maintaining his intimate acquaintance with the literature of his studies (*Indian Lancet*, 14 1899). His services as a physician were still requisitioned by old and grateful patients, and he was retained as medical adviser by several of the princely families of Calcutta.

He was called upon to give evidence before the Hemp Drugs Commission held in India in 1894, and before the Royal Commission on Opium in 1895 (*Indian Lancet*, 14, 1899).

Kanny Lall was deeply religious and although adherent of the Brahminical faith, was

not conservative; he had a fine conception of true religion in its highest and most practical ideals (Mair, 1896, pp. xiii-xx). His dignified bearing, courteous and gentlemanly demeanour, begotten of his long-continued, intimate intercourse with men of eminence in official and professional circles, his perfect command of the English language, allied to the subtle perception innate to Bengali, and his sterling, integrity of character, are distinguishing personal characteristics which won for him the respect and esteem of his many friends – European and Indian.

Rai Bahadur Kanny Lall Dey, C.I.E., Hon. M.P.S., F.C.S., a noble man and savant of the nineteenth century Indian investigators and advocates of the indigenous drugs of India, passed away on 16 August 1899 at Calcutta (*Indian Lancet*, 14, 1899; *Pharmaceutical Journal*, 63, 1899; *Chemist and Druggist*, 55, 1899).

Prafulla Chandra Ray in his Presidential Address “Dawn of Science in Modern India” at the Indian Science Congress, 1920, while talking of early contributors to development of science in India, mentioned the name of Kanny Lall Dey, ‘evidently the first Indian to acquire fame as a pharmacologist (*The Shaping of Indian Science*, 2003).’

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Several institutions were visited for search of archival material on Kanny Lall Dey at different periods during the last over two decades. I may particularly acknowledge the facilities extended by the National Library and State Archives of West Bengal at Calcutta and the Archives Department Maharashtra State, Bombay. I shall ever remain grateful to the Indian National Science Academy and the University Grants Commission for sanctioning projects, during the tenures of which I built a massive archival collection which makes it possible for me to continue with the research on history of science.

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