

## **QCI launches certification scheme for traditional healthcare providers across the country**

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In order to give formal recognition to traditional healers in the country, the Quality Council of India (QCI) has launched national voluntary certification scheme for traditional community healthcare providers (TCHP) jointly with Foundation for Revitalisation of Local Health Traditions (FRLHT), Bengaluru to certify the knowledge and skills of traditional healers and bring them in the mainstream.

There are an estimated 1 million traditional healers in the country and yet while they exist in practice, there is no formal recognition for such healers. A large part of India, especially rural and tribal areas, is mostly serviced by traditional healers who rely on the tradition of local health practices for providing healthcare services mostly for the inaccessible far flung areas.

The scheme presently deals with the certification of the TCHPS for six streams of ailments namely jaundice, traditional bone setting, traditional birth attendant, poisonous bites and arthritis. The entire scheme document has been translated into regional languages like Hindi, Oriya, Marathi, Gujarati, Tamil, Kannada, Malayalam, Bengali and Khasi. Assamese and Garo translations are under process for easier understanding.

Government of India (GoI) on January 26, 2018 had conferred Padma awards on 3 such traditional healers from Kerala, Karnataka and Tibet thus bestowing an unprecedented honour to this segment of community healthcare workers.

This recognition has also made other state governments think about utilising the knowledge and skills.

Government of Sikkim has laid the foundation stone of a folk healing centre named the North East Institute of Folk Medicine (NEIFM) established by the union Ayush ministry in Arunachal Pradesh. Chhattisgarh Government has also recognised the valuable service being provided by the traditional healers, especially for rural healthcare. Government of Meghalaya and Karnataka have also come forward to support the traditional healers.

QCI after gaining feedback from the pilot project mentored and funded by the Department of Ayush, GOI and implemented by Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU), New Delhi in collaboration with QCI and FRLHT, Bengaluru have certified 517 healers from one district each for the states of Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Karnataka, Odisha, Rajasthan and Tamilnadu.

Provisional approval under the scheme has been granted to two personnel certification bodies -Etica Clinpharm Pvt. Ltd (ECPL), Raipur, Chhattisgarh, North East Christian University (NECU), Dimapur, Nagaland which have trained and empaneled senior TCHPs as evaluators for the assessment of the skills and knowledge of the TCHPs who voluntarily apply for certification by getting their skills and knowledge evaluated by a 3-tier evaluation process – oral, demonstration and on-site field inspection.

Provisional approval has also been granted to one training institute named the Institute of Trans-Disciplinary Health Sciences and Technology (TDU), Bengaluru since January 18, 2018 for the skill upgradation of the TCHPs who fail to get themselves certified during the assessment.

The first ever certification for the TCHPs was completed for the traditional healers in the states of Tripura and Chhattisgarh in March 2019 by the two QCI approved third party personnel certification bodies – NECU and ECPL.

The three day evaluation for the assessment of the knowledge and skills of the Folk Healers was done by the 3-member evaluation team, headed by an Ayush doctor and two senior folk healers of the stream of practice. The evaluation was conducted at three stages – oral, demonstration and on-site inspection of the healers practice station