

Report of the 1ST Dr. Rashbehari Sinha Memorial Lecture, Berhampore Girls' College Berhampore, Murshidabad, West Bengal

Dr. Kaushik Bharati was invited by the Principal of Berhampore Girls' College, Murshidabad to deliver the 1st Dr. Rashbehari Sinha Memorial Lecture, which was highly prestigious as it was the inaugural lecture. The event took place on Thursday, 2 March, 2023 in the college auditorium.

Dr. Rashbehari Sinha established the Department of Physiology at Berhampore Girl's College in 1981. Hence, he was the founder Head of the Department of Physiology. He was extremely active and fully devoted to the development of the department. He was particularly instrumental in establishing the labs so that students could do experiments and gain hands-on experience on the

various areas of the subject. He was an ideal teacher who, by his knowledge, character, and day-to-day life, left a profound influence on the intellectual and moral character of his students. He was, therefore, successful in performing his duties as a teacher. He was a unique individual who not only instructed his students but also inspired them. He bore a very high moral character and was much respected by everyone at Berhampore Girls' College. He passed away on 8 October 2021 and this lecture has been instituted in his memory which was delivered for the very first time by Dr. Kaushik Bharati.

Before the commencement of the lecture, a commemorative volume published by the

One-Day National Seminar

Department of Physiology, Berhampore Girls' College cordially invites you to Dr. Rashbehari Sinha 1st Memorial Lecture on
"Snakebite and its Management – The Indian Scenario"

Honourable Speaker
Dr. Kaushik Bharati
 Ph.D., MIPHA, FRSPH (London)
Team Lead
 COVID-19 RESEARCH TRACKERS-UNESCO
 NEW DELHI

Venue: Conference Hall Date: 02/03/2023 Time: 12 Noon

Poster of the National Seminar

Department of Physiology, Berhampore Girls' College was launched on the life, educational contributions, and professional achievements of Dr. Rashbehari Sinha. The volume was inaugurated by Dr. Hena Sinha, Principal, Berhampore Girls' College, Dr. Bhaskar Mahanayak, Coordinator, IQAC, Dr. Sentu Sarkar, Head, Department of Physiology, and Dr. Kaushik Bharati.

After the book inauguration, the speaker was introduced by Dr. Smritiratan Tripathy, Assistant Professor and former Head, Department of Physiology, Berhampore Girls' College. Dr. Bharati's topic of the lecture was "*Snakebite and its Management – The Indian Scenario*". He began by talking about snakes, which have fascinated mankind since time immemorial. The issue of snakes has ignited the imagination of people across the globe for millennia and captivated their minds. They have been revered and worshipped by many civilizations of diverse cultures, races, ethnicities, and religions. He highlighted the fact that mention of snakes has been found in ancient Egyptian texts as far back as 5,000 years ago. He went on to talk about the

diversity of Indian venomous snakes, which include over 270 species spread across the length and breadth of the country. He indicated that there are five families of venomous snakes, namely, *Viperidae* (Russell's viper and saw-scaled viper), *Elapidae* (cobras and kraits), *Crotalidae* (bamboo pit viper), *Colubridae* (boomslang), and *Hydrophidae* (sea snakes like black and yellow sea snake, among others). He mentioned that venomous snakes are classified in various ways, but most commonly by the type of venom they possess. In general, vipers and hemotoxic (attack the blood), while cobras, kraits and sea snakes are highly neurotoxic (attack the nervous system). He didn't forget to mention the king cobra, the longest venomous snake in the world, for which no antidote is available. After touching upon the sea snakes, he dwelled briefly on the non-venomous snakes too, such as the Indian rat snake, common vine snake, checkered keelback, Indian rock python, ornate flying snake, and the



Lecture in progress

red sand boa. He also talked about snake venom itself – its production by the venom glands, its composition, toxicity, and the diverse signs and symptoms it produces. He even mentioned the many life-saving allopathic drugs have been derived from snake venom. The auditorium was



L to R: Dr. Bhaskar Mahanayak, Dr. Kaushik Bharati, Dr. Hena Sinha, and Dr. Sentu Sarkar



Felicitation by other distinguished dignitaries



Felicitation by the Principal, Dr. Hena Sinha

jam-packed with students and faculty and there was pin-drop silence during the lecture, hinting at their attentiveness and keen interest in the topic.

Dr. Bharati then entered the realm of the snakebite problem with particular reference to India and provided important statistical data on mortality and morbidity among the Indian population and compared them with the global data. This revealed something very alarming, that half of all global snakebite deaths are from India alone, while the remaining 50% are from the rest of the world.

He completed his hour-long lecture by mentioning in detail the treatment strategies that are currently available, including first aid and definitive treatment using antivenom. He also highlighted how antivenom is produced, where it is available, and which companies manufacture this life-saving medicine.

The lecture was well received by the audience and there were many questions from the students and faculty alike. After the lecture, Dr. Bharati was felicitated by the Principal and other distinguished faculty members.

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