



DOCTORS' DAY

Why it is Important to us....

'**Doctor's Day**', is celebrated in India on July 1 every year, holds special significance for medical practitioners in India. Just like Mothers' Day we pay tribute to our Mothers, Fathers' Day to our Fathers, Teachers' Day to our teachers, Children's Day to children; it is on this day that Doctors are felicitated for their irreplaceable roles that they play in our lives. From dentists to neurosurgeons, homeopaths to heart specialists, physicians to pediatricians, Doctors' Day is the time to pay tribute to the entire medical profession. This is in commemoration of the Birth & Death Anniversary of Eminent Physician and Patriot Dr. Bidhan Chandra Roy.

The history of this special day dates back to the 1800's when an American, Dr. Crawford W. Long became the first physician to use anesthesia in an operation that he performed on March 30, 1842. To commemorate this unprecedented event, March 30 was declared as National Doctors' Day in the United States.

The red carnation was chosen as the official symbol of Doctors' Day because of the colour of the flower denotes love, charity, sacrifice, bravery and courage, all of which are synonymous with the medical profession.

Interestingly, the story of Doctor's Day in India is quite different and few people actually know why it is celebrated. First of July happens to be the Birth & Death Anniversary of a famous Indian physician, Dr. Bidhan Chandra Roy who was born on this day in the year 1882, in Patna, Bihar. After his medical graduation at Calcutta, he completed his MRCP and FRCS at London and returned to India in 1911. His career as a physician began in 1911, after he returned to India. Thereafter, he joined the Calcutta Medical College as a teaching staff, then moved to Campbell Medical School (now known as NRS Medical College & Hospitals) after which he moved to the Carmichael Medical College (now known as RG Kar Medical College & Hospitals). He excelled not only as a physician and educationist but even as a freedom fighter, joining Mahatma Gandhi in the Civil Disobedience Movement. He was instrumental in starting many institutions including hospitals and for caring for thousands of patients. Dr Roy's dedication to the upliftment of Indian society and his love for serving the people led him to the political arena, where he first became leader of Indian National Congress and later Chief Minister of West Bengal. After a life of work and service, the Doctor passed away on July 1, 1962, on his birthday.

Doctors' Day thus pays tribute to all doctors like Dr. Bidhan Chandra Roy, who spend their lives helping others. The nation had honoured Dr. Roy with Bharat Ratna and instituted Dr. B.C.Roy National Award in 1976.

Majority people are of the opinion that Doctors' Day is the Birth & Death Anniversary of Dr. Bidhan Chandra Roy and it is observed in many places paying homage to the legendary figure.

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It was Indian Medical Association, Kidderpore Branch, Calcutta who first came out with the proposal of "Doctors' Day" in the year 1989 with Dr. Santanu Banerjee (President) and Dr. Pradip Kumar Chatterjee (Secretary) and designated 1 July in commemoration of the Birth & Death Anniversary of Eminent Physician and Patriot Dr. Bidhan Chandra Roy, which was passed first in State Working Committee, IMA Bengal State Branch and then in Bengal State Council Meeting in 1989 with Prof. Ashok Chaudhuri (State President) and Dr. Subir Gangopadhyay (State Secretary) and forwarded to IMA Central Working Committee and passed in CWC meeting 24-25 April 1991 under the then National President Dr. Ram Janam Singh (Bihar). IMA Hqrs. directed all its branches to observe 1 July as "Doctors' Day" from 1 July 1991. The IMA Hqrs. then persuaded the Government of India and after a long process ultimately "National Doctors' Day" got official recognition in India only in the year 1991 by Dept. of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India, 29 years after the death of Dr. Bidhan Chandra Roy. Dept. of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India instructed all State Governments to organize & observe 'National Doctors' Day' and 1 July 1992 became the most important date for Doctors all over India when "National Doctors' Day" was observed for the first time with Government extending financial support to IMA.

This special day is an ideal opportunity to remind people of the critical role doctors' play in our lives. Being a doctor is not just a 'job'; it is a challenging commitment to service that requires high levels of skill and precision. To make a tough job even tougher, doctors also have to deal with the reality that even a small professional mistake could drastically affect a patient's life. Doctors' Day is the perfect time for patients to acknowledge the high-pressured job and appreciate their Doctors' ability to comfort and heal.

Doctors' Day is also a significant day for doctors themselves as it provides them with an opportunity to revitalize and rededicate themselves to the practice of medicine. All doctors begin their professional lives with the noble ideals of serving humanity and healing those in need. Doctors' Day is thus a time for doctors to reflect on their own careers, realize the responsibility they bear and redirect themselves onto an ethical path of healing those in need.

Unfortunately, the medical profession today is witnessing a rapidly deteriorating patient-doctor relationship, with people losing faith in their doctors. The easy availability of medical information, and misinformation, from the media and the Internet is also responsible for clouding a patient's view of their doctors' advice. Nowadays, doctors are more often the victims of criticism while their successes are overlooked. It is true that the medical profession carries a heavy responsibility with it, but people need to realize that behind the white coat and stethoscope is a normal human being and like in all other professions, doctors too need appreciation for their work and efforts.

On this Doctor's Day, make an effort to honour doctors for their skill and commitment. Single out a family doctor and show them your gratitude for the care they have provided you and your loved ones. This day provides students and those who work in hospitals, nursing homes or other medical facilities with the ideal opportunity to express their thanks to doctors for mentoring, being supportive and encouraging. Give your doctor a card, a single red rose, a gift or just say a simple, heart-felt "Thank You": it will brighten up their day and make them feel respected and appreciated.

Wish all my colleague **"A Happy Doctors' Day" !**