

Herbal medicines are processed and packaged using modern equipment at Hamdard. PHOTO COURTESY: HAMDARD

"We have devoted clients whose trust on Sadhana is inherited from their parents and grandparents. And we also have clients who have become regulars after having our medicines only once," says Das, who has been with Shadhana since 2009.

Mohammad Nazrul, a sub-inspector, came all the way from Gazipur to Old Dhaka just to get his mother checked by the practitioners at Sadhana. "I have heard from friends and relatives that Sadhana's medicines can work wonders for every kind of illness. My mother suffers from arthritis and weak bones and we've tried the 'Western' medicines but they don't seem to be doing much good. We've just started the treatment prescribed by the *kobiraaj* here, and my mother says that she can already notice slight difference in her health."

Sadhana Aushadhalaya was founded by the martyred Ayurveda physician and philanthropist Jogesh Chandra Ghosh in 1914. Ghosh was a Fellow of the Royal Society of Chemistry and was also a member of the American Chemical Society. His aim in forming the herbal medical drugstore was to promote natural remedies and offer affordable, accessible medicine to the poor people of the country.

"Even when his family left Dhaka for India during the Liberation War, Jogesh Chandra Ghosh stayed back, as he considered the country to be his own. He didn't want to leave behind Sadhana which he had founded with so much love, and resisted the call of his family to flee the land," says 88-year ayurvedic practitioner Rai Mohan Banik, who has been working with Shadhona for 60 odd years.

The decision to go against the wishes of his family, and remain in Dhaka proved to be fatal for Ghosh. During the East Pakistan genocide in 1964, Ghosh had sheltered several Bengali Hindu families of his neighbourhood in Sadhana's factory in Gandaria. In 1971, when the Pakistani Army began a systematic murder of the intellectual population of the country, all the Hindu staff of the drugstore fled the country to seek refuge in India but Ghosh was adamant about his decision to stay back. On April 4, the Pakistani occupying forces stormed the factory premises and charged the 84-year old Ghosh with providing shelter to rebels before shooting him dead.

His son, Dr Naresh Chandra Ghosh, revived Shadhana Aushadhalaya after the end of the Liberation War. Currently, the factory is run by Jogesh Chandra Ghosh's granddaughters who live in Kolkata but visit the factory from time to time to ensure its smooth operation.

"Ghosh resisted the oppression of the Pakistani occupation army in his own way till his last breath. He might be long gone but his contribution to