

INDIAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND IT'S FUNCTIONING

The Indian Medical Association is the Largest Voluntary organization representing practitioners in the modern scientific system of the medicine.

As the 5th Conference held at Calcutta on 28th December, 1928 under the Presidentship of Dr. G.V.D. Deshmukh of Bombay, a resolution was adopted forming an All India Medical Association with the promotion and advancement of medical and allied sciences in their different branches, the improvement of public health and medical education in India and the Maintenance of honor and dignity of the medical profession. In year 1930, the All India Medical Associations was renamed as the Indian Medical Association and the body was duly registered under the Societies Registration Act, XXI 1860.

The Association had come into being at a time when there was political unrest and the country was passing through a big turmoil. Yet it was matter of great satisfaction that the stalwarts of the medical profession in those days like Dr. K. S. Ray, Sir Nil Ratan Sircar, Dr. B.C. Vyas, Dr. D' Silva, Dr. N. A. Ghosh, Dr. D.A. Chakrvarti, Dr. Vishvanathan and Capt. B.V. Mukherjee actively participated in the promotion of the Association. Some of these Stalwarts were also active in the Indian National Congress and had their terms in the jail for participating in the struggle for Independence of the country.

The Headquarters' office of the IMA was originally located at Calcutta. At the suggestion of Late Dr. S. C. Sen supported by Dr. B.V. Mulay, Dr. Chamanlal C. Mehta and Maj. General Amirchand, the IMA Headquarters was shifted to Delhi in January 1949 after the attainment of independence. The Journal of IMA continued to be published from Calcutta. The Foundation Stone of IMA House was laid by the First President of India, Dr. Rajendra Prasad on September 19, 1958. under supervision of Dr. P. C. Bhatla. The building was completed and inaugurated on September 6, 1964 by the President of India Dr. S. Radhakrishnan.

During the British Rule, some selected members of the profession were members of the British Medical Association which had branches in India. The Stalwarts of the IMA succeeded in reaching an agreement with British Medical Association that they would have no Branches in India and get mutually affiliated, which relationship continues till today, In the year 1964, IMA helped in the organization of the world body viz. the World Medical Association and thus became it's Founder member through the efforts of late Dr. S.C. Sen, Dr. R.V. Sathe, the then president of WMA when met in New Delhi 1962. I.M.A. is also the founder member of the commonwealth Medical Association and hosted a meeting of its Council in December 1976.

Over the period of 70 years, the IMA while maintaining it's glorious tradition, has secured a place of period in the community through it's over 1600 branches with a total membership of about 1,30,000 throughout the Country.

The affairs of the association are managed by the elected members of the Central Council and the working Committee, which lay down the policies and deliberate on the day to day activities of the Association.

The Indian Medical Association organizes study tours to the various parts of the world and thus gives opportunity to its members to visit the medical institution and hospitals in the various countries and to study the progress made by them in the delivery of health care.

The Indian Medical Association is represented on various Government and semi-Government bodies of the Central and State government and on other national institution and thus contributes its views at these for and renders active co-operation within its policy framework. As a voluntary body, the Association has been

focusing the attention of the Governments and on other concerned, to the government and others concerned, to the specific areas in the field of health care in which the voluntary agencies could play a leading role particularly in the implementation of national health programmes for achieving the goal of health for All by 2000 A.D.

It has completed over 70 years of its continued service to the causes of health care, medical education and development of medical profession in the country. It has adopted a constitution to function on a democratic pattern, with clearly defined objectives laid down in the memorandum of the Association, as under:-

1. To promote and advance medical and allied science in all their different branches and to promote the improvement of public health and medical education in India.
2. To maintain the honor and dignity and to uphold the interests of the medical profession and to promote co-operation amongst the members and-
3. To work for the abolition of compartmentalism in medical education, medical service and registration in the country and thus to achieve equality among all members of the profession.

Membership and Functioning

The membership of the Association is open to all persons qualified in modern system of medicine and registered under the Indian Medical Council Act, 1956, as amended. Today, it has over 1, 30,000 member on it's roll through 1800 branches controlled and managed by 28 State, territorial and Direct Branches throughout the country. Besides, there are overseas gone abroad for study and employment or permanently settled there. These members are kept in touch with the affairs of the Association through the monthly publication namely the IMA News and Journal of the Indian Medical Association.

The Branches of the Association elect their respective office bearers once a year. Every State branch has a state Council on which the local branches under its jurisdiction have representation. The State Council and their working Committees meet as often as necessary to transact business concerning their multifarious activities in the field of health care, community services etc. and various problems facing the medical profession. State Conference every year during which, besides discussing organizational matters, session for the benefit of their members from different areas.

All local branches have representation on the Central Council of the IMA which necessarily must meet at least twice a year to take stock of the working during the year, lay down polices for the ensuing year, adopt the accounts pass the budget for next year and elect office bearers of the Association at headquarters and it's Journal Office and other publication at the annual meeting of the Central Council.

The Association's day to day working as the Headquarters' office is carried out as per policies and directives of the Central Council under the supervision and guidance of the Working Committee which meets three times a year. The Working Committee has representative from all states and it deliberates over the current issues. Particular problems are studied by the expert Standing Committees on different subjects prior to consideration by the Working Committee. There are 20 such Standing Committees and a special committee for action to take action on matters of importance to the profession in general. The continuity of these Standing Committees is maintained by electing one-third members every year. The retiring members are, however, eligible for re-election. Definite terms of reference are laid down for this committee.

Academic Wings

For Carrying out the academic activities and continuing medical education programs for its members, IMA has established two academic wings namely, the IMA College of General Practitioners and IMA Academy of Medical Specialties.

Besides the Journal of IMA, IMA News, Continuing Education Bulletin and annals of the Academy, the IMA is also published two journals namely 'Your Health' in Hindi from Varanasi, for imparting health education to lay public. Both these publication are playing a useful role in promoting healthy living among the masses.

Representation on various Bodies

IMA has the unique distinction of representation on Various Government and semi Government bodies at the Centre where it contributes its views and also renders its active co-operation. The state branches are also being given such representation on state and local bodies by State Government.

Awards

To encourage talent, community Service and research, the IMA has institute several awards which are given away every year for which endowments have been created by certain donors and the Association.

Benevolent Fund

Leaders of the profession did not lose sight of the need of having fund to help some of its indigent members and for their families in times of need or calamity. To meet this, a Benevolent Fund was created by allocating a small amount out of the annual subscription which has, over the years, grown in to a sizeable sum. Out of the interest of this found, loans/grants are given to deserving and needy members after due consideration by the Management Committee of the Fund on recommendation of State branches concerned.

International Field

The IMA in the Year 1946 helped in the organization of the world body, namely, World Medical Association and thus became its founder member However, due to admission of the Medical Association of South Africa in the World Medical Association the IMA withdrew from its membership in 1984 because of South Africa's policy of apartheid. Besides, IMA is a member of the common Wealth Medical Association and Confederation of Medical Association of Asia and Oceanic (CMAAO). It is mutually affiliated to the British Medical Association and the Nepal Medical Association. The IMACGP is the founder member of World Organisation of Medical Colleges. Academies and Academic Association of General Practitioners / Family Physicians (WONCA). IMA has also played a pivotal role in the formation of South Asian medical Association (SAMA), a common forum of national medical association of Bangladesh, India, Nagpal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka with representative from Bhutan and Maldives.

Over the period of seventy while maintaining its glorious traditions has been rendering yeoman's service in the field care delivery, disease control and eradication. Its services to the community during natural calamities like earthquakes, droughts and floods, famines and epidemics in the pre and post-Independence periods, have been highly lauded. It has been involved in the formulation and implementation of National Health Programmes e.g. Family Welfare, Maternal and Child health, Universal Immunization, Oral Rehydration Therapy, promotion of Oral Contraceptive Pill, Pulse Polio. Etc. and its role has received recognition by the Central and State Governments. Its Branches have established family welfare Clinics, Immunization Centers, ambulance service, Blood Banks etc. The IMA's rapport with the Government has been the result of hard and selfless efforts of many of its pioneering honorary workers.

The Association has enormous tasks before it for the nation with adequate medical care through methods that are in consonance with the needs of the population and conform to modern standards. It has to carry a crusade of reform in to the areas of medical education. Its history is being continuously written by those stepping into the shoes of the pioneers whose names are now a legend and there is no doubt that many more memorable achievements of the Association shall be written in the years to come.