

THE
Journal of Obstetrics & Gynaecology
of India

VOLUME XXVII, No. 6

DECEMBER 1977

COMMENCEMENT AND GROWTH OF THE JOURNAL

by

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The Journal is in its 28th year. A generation of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists has passed during these years and it is in fitness of things that the present generation should know about the commencement and growth of the Journal. Although the Federation of Obstetric and Gynaecological Societies of India was formed in 1950, several years before that the senior members of our profession from the four pioneer societies of India,—Madras, Bombay, Calcutta and Northern India discussed the feasibility of starting an All India Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology at their bi-ennial Congresses. Implementation always bogged down in regard to financial liabilities associated with the venture. Dr. Chamandal Mehta was the one who persistently urged that the Journal should be started and that we must not develop "Cold feet" over finances. I vividly recollect his firm conviction that should the Journal run into financial difficulties, the senior members would give financial assistance by subscribing to the Debentures that would be floated for this venture. The break through came at the All India Congress in Obstetrics and Gynaecology held in Bombay in 1947 where late Sir

Laxmanswamy Mudaliar undertook to publish the Journal from Madras. After a delay of two years the Madras Society expressed regret for its inability to publish the Journal. It was finally decided to publish the Journal from Bombay.

The first team consisted of four honorary persons Dr. J. Jhirad as the Editor, myself as Associate Editor, Dr. G. N. Vazifdar as the Secretary and Mrs. Shirin K. Engineer, Chartered Accountant to scrutinise and certify the accounts of the Journal.

We could not afford to rent separate premises for the office and late Dr. N. A. Purandare came to our rescue by offering a spacious room on the top floor of his hospital building, "Purandare Griha" at Chowpatty Sea face, free of rent. After the death of Dr. N. A. Purandare, his four illustrious sons, perpetuated the wishes of their father and upto today (for 27 years) the Journal office is in "Purandare Griha". In this special December issue of the Journal on the occasion of birth centenary of Dr. N. A. Purandare, we pay homage and acknowledge with deep gratitude his generous gesture.

Our office staff in 1950 consisted of "half" a clerk and "half" a peon. The office clerk, Mr. Borker, worked for us early in the morning before going to his full time office employment and after office hours till late in the evening. He did all kinds of clerical work including keeping accounts. The peon, Balu Parmar worked as a part time peon with the Bombay Obstetric and Gynaecological Society and gave part time services to the Journal office.

The financial position of the Journal was very thin. We ventured to publish the journal without a single rupee in the account. Dr. Vazifdar and myself personally went to the offices of different pharmaceutical firms to explain the mutual advantages that would accrue from advertising in the journal. We did manage to convince some firms to advertise in our journal. With the help of subscription from the members of the societies affiliated to the Federation and the amounts received from the advertisements we just "floated" financially.

The greatest anxiety was to have sufficient number of contributions for publication for atleast two forward issues. The first article in the first issue of September 1950 was by the internationally famous cancer surgeon, late Dr. E. Borges of the Tata Memorial Hospital, Bombay on Cancer of the Cervix and the second article was by Dr. M. K. K. Menon. The articles by well known senior obstetricians and gynaecologists of our country in the early issues boosted the prestige of our journal in great measure.

Today from pioneering four societies in 1950, there are fifty-five societies affiliated to the Federation. With increasing recognition of the Journal, the work of the Journal office increased. Our part time

clerk resigned as he could not cope with the work. We were fortunate to have services of a retired person Mr. D. R. Bharucha as a full time clerk who for nearly fifteen years did the office work carefully inspite of failing health, until his death. It was largely due to his persistent efforts that the number of advertisements more than doubled and our financial position became sound. The Journal pays its humble tribute to this very devoted gentleman.

Now the "shoe is on the other foot". The enthusiasm of our junior and senior members to get their articles published is so great that we have a large back-log of papers awaiting publication. To meet the situation the quarterly issues were made bi-monthly since 1965 but this was ineffective in reducing the back-log of papers. The back-log increased to nearly 300 papers, and an article received for publication did not appear in the Journal for nearly two years. That expectedly created disappointment and dissatisfaction in the minds of the contributors and there were requests from many at the meetings of Annual Congresses to publish the issues monthly. Due to rising cost of paper and printing and office expenses, publishing the journal monthly would increase the present subscription to three times or even more. After realising the difficulties a compromise was arrived so as to keep the journal bimonthly but add fifty more pages to each issue so that about ten more articles would be published in each issue with just an increase of ten rupees over the existing subscription.

Our Journal has been given recognition by the Cumulative Index and is on their list. Our Journal is almost entirely clinical and very few articles on fundamental research are published. However, in recent years, original contributions of

high standard are received from some of the upgraded medical institutions.

Two pioneers, Dr. Chamanlal Mehta and Dr. J. Jhirad are still alive to witness the progress of the Journal. The Editor and the Secretary Dr. G. N. Vazifdar, have been associated with the journal since its commencement and have fond recollections of the many events that have helped the progress of the Journal. Mrs. S. K. Engineer, Hon. Auditor resigned after celebrating the Silver Jubilee of the Journal because of her multifarious professional commitments.

The present younger team consists of Dr. V. N. Purandare, Dr. R. D. Pandit, Dr. M. N. Parikh, Dr. S. P. Mehtaji and Dr. A. E. Dastur and the Journal can confidently look forward to the future for greater and greater progress. Our peon Mr. Balu Parmar has been with us since 1950 and will be with us as long as he is able to work. Our office staff now consists of two full time clerks, Miss

Bhandarkar and Miss Samani and two peons, Mr. Balu Parmar and Mr. Suresh Halde.

Our Journal has been printed from the first issue by the Popular Press. In the beginning when we were inexperienced in publishing, the proprietor late Mr. Balkrishna Gandbhir guided us with his mature experience. The present proprietor, Mr. Manohar Gandbhir has continued his father's tradition. One other person in the press, Mr. V. V. Ghurye, has been largely responsible for printing the Journal in time and we acknowledge his help for the last twenty seven years.

This progress of the Journal has been possible because from the founding of the Federation and the Journal, a spirit of oneness exists among the members. Implicit faith is placed in the Office Bearers of the Journal in matters of policy and day to day administration. With this spirit of unity the future of the Journal is assured.