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INNOVATIVE PUBLICATION

Editorial

Yesterday's roots, today's revolution, tomorrow's vision in dentistry

Bhad WA*[1]

[1]Dept. of Orthodontics, Government. Dental College and Hospital, Mumbai, Maharashtra, India

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The discovery of dental procedures dates back to 7000 BC in the Indus Valley. Archaeological findings, such as drilled molars, suggest that ancient Indians were practicing forms of dental care, possibly to treat tooth decay. This predates other civilizations' known dental practices and indicates an early understanding of dental health.

The reference to Lord Krishna in the Mahabharata is a fascinating link between mythology and early dental practices. The idea of using gold for dental restoration, as in Karna's golden teeth, suggests that rudimentary dental treatments were being performed in ancient India, possibly filling or covering teeth with gold as a form of preservation or decoration. Sushruta, often referred to as the "father of surgery," made significant contributions to medicine, including dentistry. His Sushruta Samhita (600 BC) contains detailed descriptions of surgical techniques, including tooth extractions, the treatment of dental caries (decay), and pain management. His writings laid the groundwork for dental practices in ancient India, influencing medical practices well into the medieval period.

Today the growth of dental education in India has been impressive. With 323 dental colleges across the country, India now graduates approximately 27,000 dental professionals each year.

Dr. Rafuddin Ahmed, Father of Modern Indian Dentistry contributions to India is remarkable. As the first Indian to graduate as a Doctor of Dental Surgery from the University of Iowa, he played a pivotal role in establishing dental education in India. By founding the Calcutta Dental College in 1920 (now Dr. R Ahmed Dental College & Hospital), he created the foundation for the formal study and practice of dentistry in the country. Honouring Dr. Rafuddin Ahmed with a National Dentist Day on December 24th is a fitting tribute to his vision and leadership in shaping modern dental education in India. The celebration helps acknowledge the invaluable role that dentists play in healthcare.

In 1928 second dental college was established in Mumbai, Sir CEM Dental College (Currimbhai Ebrahim Memorial Dental College) within the premises of the prestigious JJ Hospital. This was an important milestone in the establishment of formal dental education in the country, coming just eight years after Dr. Rafuddin Ahmed founded Calcutta Dental College in 1920. The name "Currimbhai Ebrahim Memorial" honoured the philanthropist who contributed significantly to the development of the institution. In 1962, the college relocated to its present site at St. George's Hospital in Mumbai, and it was subsequently renamed Government Dental College & Hospital (GDC&H) Mumbai. This shift not only provided a better infrastructure for dental education but also positioned the institution in a more accessible location in the heart of Mumbai. Dr. K.L. Shourie is credited with playing a crucial role in relocation of the college to its present location. GDC&H Mumbai often referred to as the "mother of all dental colleges**"** in India, as many of the college alumni were instrumental in establishing and shaping dental colleges throughout India, helping to expand dental education and raising the standards of the

*Corresponding author: Bhad WA
Email: vaibhavmisra@gmail.com

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profession. In 1933 Nair Dental College & Hospital was established in Mumbai, and then various institutions that followed helped solidify India's reputation as a hub for dental education in Asia.

Over the years, advancements in dental equipment have significantly improved both patient care and procedural efficiency. Early dental chairs were basic and non-adjustable, while modern chairs are electrically adjustable for better patient comfort and dentist access. Technology like piezoelectric instruments has transformed surgical dentistry, allowing for more precise, less traumatic procedures. Digital X-rays, Cone Beam CT scans, intraoral cameras and surgical microscopes have enhanced diagnostics and treatment planning. Innovations in material science, 3D printing, CAD/CAM technology, teledentistry, minimally invasive techniques, and regenerative dentistry continue to push the boundaries of the profession

While much advanced equipment is imported from countries like China, Korea, and Japan, this drives up the cost, making dental care less affordable in developing country like India. The "Make in India" initiative could help reduce cost by promoting local production of high-quality dental tools and the dental services reaching the deprived section of the society. Today's dentists are not only clinicians but also researchers and educators, contributing to the ongoing evolution of dental care.

Future of dentistry looks very different than the practice of today; no drills, no injections, easier access and shorter treatment time. It may happen you awaken in the middle of night due to throbbing pain in tooth, you head into the bathroom, plug your smart toothbrush into your smartphone…and when you put the brush in your mouth, it scans your teeth. The image automatically uploads to the Cloud. They are analysed by artificial intelligence, which finds a cavity in your aching tooth and a hairline crack in another. The scans and preliminary analysis are transmitted to your dentist for appointment. On appointment the dentist then mixes a 'biologically active" restoration to fill the cavity, but it's not the old -time silver mercury or white acrylic. It uses stem cells to rebuild the tooths dentin beneath the white enamel. For the crack in a tooth, a crown is made in few seconds with a 3-D printer and both procedures that once required multiple visits are completed within an hour.

In conclusion, from humble beginnings to ground-breaking innovations, the evolution of dentistry reflects a journey of progress and possibility—transforming patient care today and paving the way for a future of even greater advancements in oral health. The motto remains "Service to Humanity"

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