

Icon of the last issue

Prof. C. Balakrishnan

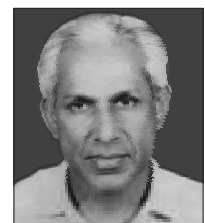
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Prof CBK was a Guide and Guru to many of the senior Indian plastic surgeons. He was most concerned with the patients' welfare and commitment to the profession rather than his personal stature, recognitions and awards.

He had tremendous reconstructive surgical innovative skills with which he developed his own techniques; however, hardly he ever thought of publishing them. He was a devoted surgeon and a great teacher who took pains in teaching untiringly. He always believed in stressing the importance of treatment planning sessions wherein each problem was discussed before surgery in a three dimensional view, always keeping the final functional and aesthetic result in mind. He always analyzed the problem by recreating the defect and planning it in reverse with the help of pieces of lint or rubber sheet and hand-drawn sketches towards planning management in most accurate detail. He always believed in common sense in planning and execution so as to obtain the least morbidity. He taught us to anticipate possible complications at each stage and be ready with solutions whenever problems arose. A typical example was to keep the tourniquet ready at the bed-side of every electrical burns patient to deal with the torrential secondary hemorrhage.

His discipline in treating cleft children was remarkable and he had developed a protocol for team approach for their long term



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management. He improvised and had his own style of using *fascia lata* slings to narrow the nasopharynx for better speech. He used to encourage his residents to practice suturing and surgical knots in the depths inside a tumbler. He always liked to teach practical points in day to day management rather than giving didactic lectures.

CBK was a man of few words and low tone. He was always known for his punctuality, honesty, discipline, and straight forwardness without any diplomacy or hesitation in expressing his views which made him a terror in discussions.

But behind such an intimidating veneer lay a loving, fatherly affection and a soft natured soul which could be felt by his closest associates. I cannot forget the days when I was pregnant during my residency; he never missed to enquire about my food, well-being and stamina to be able to continue the demanding night duties. He silently used to appreciate my courage to go through residency with out a break and I learnt later that he used to talk about it at home to his family.

He always believed and taught us that the attitude of a plastic surgeon should be appropriate in understanding the needs and fears of the patient more than the technical and surgical skills as those could be acquired with practice in due course.