



Editorial

# Comprehensive Archives of *Indian Journal of Plastic Surgery* from 1968: A Treasure Trove Published

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Indian J Plast Surg

This is the news I was waiting to announce and the editorial I was longing to write, a momentous occasion for our journal.

The *Indian Journal of Plastic Surgery (IJPS)* holds a significant place in the history of medical publishing, especially within the realm of plastic surgery. When the first issue of the *IJPS* was published in July 1968,<sup>1</sup> there were only two dedicated journals in the world: the *Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery (PRS)*<sup>2</sup> and the *British Journal of Plastic Surgery (BJPS)*<sup>3</sup> both had been in publication since 1946 and 1948, respectively. A year before, in 1967, the *Scandinavian Journal of Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery* also began its publication, which, is currently published under a different title.<sup>4</sup> Published uninterrupted, the *IJPS* is the second oldest plastic surgery journal, only next to the *PRS*, whose title remains unchanged. Being the first Asian journal published in the arena of plastic surgery, the *IJPS* was much ahead of Europe, Australia, and the rest of the world in scientific publication. Later, in 1974, the Korean society began its publication in the local Korean language, followed by the Japanese Society in 1981<sup>5,6</sup> (→ **Table 1**).

## Exceptional Academic Environment

In 1968, Mr. A.B. Wallace, the founding editor of *BJPS*, wrote an interesting article with statistics about how the first 21 years of *BJPS* came of age.<sup>3</sup> What astonished me was the number of subscribers for *BJPS* from India in 1966. There were 76 subscribers from India when the association had just 66 members, including 37 full members! Late Prof. J.L. Gupta, who took over as secretary cum treasurer from another legendary figure, Dr. Charles Pinto, at a Manipal meeting in 1967, mentioned that the association had grown to 66 members by then.<sup>7</sup> Essentially, every plastic surgeon from India had a paid subscription to a British journal, which placed them as the sixth largest subscriber among 60 countries. This was despite the fact that the specialty was in its

infancy and the country was facing challenging conditions of resource constraints. The scientific temperament, zeal, and commitment to high quality of our pioneers were extraordinary and truly inspirational. Several members wrote their articles, but it took too long to get published in surgery journals. Overwhelming clinical work, academic meetings, and growing teaching units created a strong need for a dedicated plastic surgery journal. Under the founding editorship of Dr. R.N. Sinha, the journal was launched and published biannually by the Association of Plastic Surgeons of India (APSI). The journal was printed locally at the editor's place and circulated to members and institutions. The journal was officially published by Medknow, a medical publisher, in 2003, and has since been available for digital submission and access.

## All Articles Now with DOI

The journal, despite being the oldest plastic surgery publication in Asia, did not have any accessible and verifiable records online to substantiate the claims. Prior to 2003, the *IJPS* was available only in print copies and, over the decades, has rarely been available only in a few individual possessions and libraries. In an era of digital revolution, each published article is not citable without a DOI number. DOI, or Digital Object Identifier, is a distinct code that helps readers quickly locate a URL. Compiling printed copies, scanning them, and publishing each article was indeed a challenge. We are indebted to the former editors, Prof. Ramesh Chandra, who preserved all copies of *IJPS*, and Dr. Mukund Thatte, who kept scanned copies of these print issues. We express utmost gratitude to the Thieme India publishers for meticulously compiling each issue and publishing them on the *IJPS* portal, covering decades of data since 1968. The articles are published in PDF files, preserving their original format. These articles are now accessible, readable, and can be cited in references.

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**Table 1** Beginning of plastic surgery journals worldwide (1940–1981)

Year	Journal title	Present title	Official society
1946	<i>Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery</i> <sup>2</sup>	Unchanged	American Society of Plastic Surgeons, Inc.
1948	<i>British Journal of Plastic Surgery</i> <sup>3</sup>	<i>Journal of Plastic, Reconstructive and Aesthetic Surgery</i> (2006)	The British Association of Plastic, Reconstructive and Aesthetic Surgeons (BAPRAS) and European Society
1967	<i>Scandinavian Journal of Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery</i> <sup>4</sup>	<i>Journal of Plastic Surgery and Hand Surgery</i>	Acta Chirurgica Scandinavica Society
1968	<i>Indian Journal of Plastic Surgery</i> <sup>1</sup>	Unchanged	Association of Plastic Surgeons of India
1971	<i>European Journal of Plastic Surgery</i> <sup>15</sup>	Unchanged	
1974	<i>Journal of the Korean Society of Plastic and Reconstructive Surgeons (Korean)</i> <sup>5</sup>	<i>Archives of Plastic Surgery</i> (2012)	Korean Society of Plastic and Reconstructive Surgeons
1978	<i>Annals of Plastic Surgery</i> <sup>15</sup>	Unchanged	Independent
1981	<i>Journal of Japan Society of Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery (JSPRS)</i> <sup>6</sup>	Unchanged	Japan Society of Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery

## Enduring Commitments of Founders

This pioneering initiative of our founding fathers signifies a crucial moment in the development of plastic surgery as a specialized discipline in the country. It also underscores the journal's role as a pivotal platform in recording decades of scientific data. Particularly for the association, APSI, which is again one of the oldest in the world, the journal is a testament to its evolution, members' contribution, and significant milestones. The secretary cum treasurer regularly wrote and published updates on the developments and activities of the association. Dr. R.N. Sinha holds the distinction of being a founder secretary of APSI and founder editor of this journal. There are several crucial and interesting pieces of information on how progressive our association was during the first few decades of its establishment. Our members, though a small family, then collaborated excellently with the world leaders of the specialty, traveled extensively, and participated in international meetings. They invited global leaders to visit India and bid hard to get international conferences to India.

The Second Asia Pacific Congress was held in India in 1970 under the direct patronage of the prime minister of India and the union health minister. Participants from over 30 countries took part in an extraordinarily successful first international meeting conducted in India. The meeting was ably guided by Drs. R.L. Manchanda, J.L. Gupta, and R.N. Sinha. Further, a large Indian delegation went to Australia in 1971 to bid for the International Confederation of Plastic Surgery Congress for 1975. Although it was awarded to France, India received a special honor.

Late Dr. Suresh Gupta, who served as the secretary, editor, and president of the association, utilized government machinery to help the association. Railway concession passes were issued to help members travel for conferences. Through the government of India, Air India was even persuaded to finance and print invitation brochures to attract many international participants arriving in Delhi for the Asia Pacific Congress.<sup>8</sup>

It is a fascinating experience to read about the association's events, growth, and members' activities, just as it is to travel back in time. Despite being a small group, they met twice a year, called the "summer meeting" and the "winter meeting," with a specific symposium for each meeting. Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) sponsored seminars for burns and cleft lip and palate, were held during 1972. Several pioneering awards and orations were initiated. The first Peet Prize session was held in 1972, and Dr. M.H. Keswani was the first recipient. The Kilner Memorial Award for the best essay was started in 1978. The prestigious Gillies Memorial Oration was initiated by Dr. Noshir Antia, who took immense pains to collect funds under the presidency of Dr. Rustom Manekshaw,<sup>9</sup> and the first oration was delivered by Prof. R.N. Sinha on September 3, 1971 at the Jaipur summer conference.<sup>10</sup> The journal published regular reports from the secretary, conference proceedings, presidential addresses, and Gillies orations each year. Cherishing this tremendous treasure trove of historical facts is a humbling experience.

## Seminal Research Work and Data

Several defining works published in the contemporary era went unnoticed and never received any credit because they were not available or accessible for reading and citation. By claiming this history, the *IPS* reaffirms its status as a trailblazer in the academic output. Prof. C. Balakrishnan's "Indian classification for cleft lip and palate," widely followed in the country, was not available to the rest of the world though it was published in 1975. The article has now been published and is accessible for validation and reference.<sup>11</sup> The journal also published theme issues following symposiums held at meetings, such as teaching and training in plastic surgery.<sup>12</sup>

Several key articles with large datasets were published on congenital anomalies such as clefts, hypospadias, hand anomalies, and so on, which are significant compared with contemporary data.<sup>13</sup> Undoubtedly, Ancient India is well

known and credited for reconstructive surgeries;<sup>14</sup> it is now time for us to rediscover the progress of plastic surgery in modern times, which is at par with the rest of the world. Being one of the oldest plastic surgery journals in the world, the *IJPS* has the authority and advantage that comes along with history. The publication of a comprehensive archive has been one of the momentous achievements of this year. This treasure trove and contributions deserve recognition from the rest of the world!

#### Conflict of Interest

None declared.

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