

Narrative Report

Archives of Physiotherapy in India

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The earliest documented origins of Physiotherapy (Physical Therapy) as a professional group date back to 1813 and the 'Father of Swedish Gymnastics', - Per Henrik Ling. Consisting of massage, manipulation and exercises, it was mainly practiced by nurses. Soon, other countries like U.K. and New Zealand followed.

PHYSIOTHERAPY as a profession was established in 1894 by a group of nurses who were trained in massage. It was based on 'movements' which the nurses had mastered to help patients in alleviating their pain.

History provides us with the example of Julius Caesar, who was given massage for Neuralgia, by a Swedish gymnast Per Henrinkling (1776 – 1839)

The foundation for Physiotherapy in India was laid following a major epidemic of Poliomyelitis in 1951-52. At this time, the daughter of a philanthropist Mrs. Fatema Ismail, was also affected and she had to take her daughter to England for treatment.

She took personal interest to learn anatomy and physiology of the body and she gave some knowledge to her daughter also. One day, while climbing a tree, her daughter shouted "Look mamma, my rhomboids are working!" On her return and seeing so many children affected by Polio, she engaged some army trained gymnasts and started a treatment centre in the army barracks of World War II at Haji Ali, Mumbai. The barracks then gave way to the ChildrensOrthopaedic Hospital (COH) which exists even today.

In 1947, the first Physiotherapy centre was started by Mrs. RodhaVakil and Dr. Sethna under the guidance of Dr. Kini, an orthopedic surgeon at

Children's Orthopedic Hospital, Mumbai.

At this time, Mrs. Kamala Nimbkar, an American trained Occupational Therapist started the first school of Occupational Therapy at KEM Hospital, Mumbai. On the insistence of Mrs. Page Mehta, (daughter in law of the then Dean of KEM Hospital - Dr. Jivraj Mehta), a WHO Team was invited to choose a place to start a Physiotherapy training institute. The choice was between Calcutta, Delhi and Mumbai. In 1953, the first school of Physiotherapy was started in Mumbai at the Seth G.S. Medical College and KEM Hospital, with the help of WHO. Mr. Jaques was the first /chief instructor. This was the first Physiotherapy training Institute in the whole of South East Asia, offering a two year Diploma after Inter Science .

Names of the first batch of students:

Manik Shahani : Head - PT School, KEM Hospital, Mumbai

Akshay Muzumdar and Jayant Joshi: AIIMS, New Delhi

B.L. Golhar: Head - Nagpur School of Physiotherapy

M.L. Chainani: All India Institute of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation

H.H. Javle: Started paraplegic sports in India.

Asha Andyal: HOD - Bombay Hospital

Roshan Vania, Neuro Physiotherapist

Ms Devi, Ms. Mudur, Mr Vaaz: The Indian Association of Physiotherapists (IAP) was started on 6th October 1955. Mrs. Kellock was the first President who was working at the Children's Orthopedic Hospital. On 9th, December 1955, IAP was registered under the Society Registration Act

XXI of 1860, with Registration number 3376 of 1955-56. The first General Body meeting was held on 19th. May 1956 at Children's Orthopedic Hospital, Mumbai. Mrs. RodaVakil was Vice-President and Mrs. Page Mehta was the General Secretary, while Mr. Alfred was the Treasurer.

IAP got its first Logo in 1957, which was designed by Mr. Chainani and Mr. Majumdar with the help of the J. J. School of Art, Mumbai.

The first Journal of IAP was published in 1958 under the guidance of Mr. A.V. Majumdar, who was the first Editor-in-Charge. Later, Mr. Manik Shahani and Mr. Mokashi took over.

1967 was a momentous year for Physiotherapy, as the World Congress of Physical Therapy (WCPT) gave formal recognition to the IAP as a Member Country.

The first B.Sc Physiotherapy Program was introduced in Sheth G.S. Medical College and KEM Hospital, Mumbai in 1967. The BPT Program was started in SSG Hospital, Vadodara in 1969, and in Chennai in 1982. In 1978, the first Masters Program in Physiotherapy was started at G.S. Medical College and KEM Hospital, Mumbai. The All India Institute of Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation also offered the Masters Program.

The Films Division, Government of Maharashtra made the first film on Physiotherapy in 1982. The film, made by Prof. Shahani and Mrs. SarojSanghavi, was made in 17 Indian languages.

In 1982, the first Fellowship Awards were conferred on Prof. Shahani, Mr. Jayant Joshi and Mr. Chainani. By the year 2011, 28 Fellowship Awards were conferred.

Commemorating some distinguished Physical Therapists at National and International level:

- The first President of the Chartered Society of Physiotherapists was Sir Thomas Harder, who served from 1926 – 1928.
- Ms. Mary McMilan, Founded the American Physical Therapy Association in 1918 and was its first President who served APTA till 1923.
- Prof. ManikShahani was the first Principal of

the first school of Physiotherapy in India. A man of vision and zeal who was responsible for the progress of Physiotherapy in India. His extensive reading and interest in research especially in neurophysiology has won him several distinguished Awards like the Purkinje Medal for contribution to science at international level. He has contributed chapters in international volumes on Neurophysiology.

- Mr. Jayant Joshi invented the cervical goniometer for which he was given National Award.
- Mrs. Saroj Sanghavi
 - o Appointed to the Ad-hoc Committee of the International Association for Study of Pain. She has been conducting free Physiotherapy camps since 1980.
- Prof. D.H. Dastoor
 - o Worked towards and introduced first Contact practice of Physiotherapy in India in 1972.
 - o Introduced concept of Manual therapy and manipulation to Indian Physios in 1990.
 - o Was elected as the Vice president of the Asia West Pacific region of WCPT in 2001 and in 2003 was elected to the WCPT executive council till 2007.
- Prof. M.G. Mokashi
 - o Has done pioneering work in Physiotherapy and Yogasanas. He has also written a Book on Physiotherapy.
- Mr. N. Palani has done extensive work in the field of Leprosy.

The above information has been collected from old records and there might be some discrepancies in the dates. All the names of the Physiotherapists have been written to the best of my knowledge. Please excuse me if I have inadvertently omitted any names.

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