

Presidential Address - 1997

Dr. P. F. Kotur *

Honourable Chief guest, dignitaries on the dais, honoured guests, distinguished colleagues, delegates, members of the media, ladies and gentlemen,

'To know how to, grow old is the master work of wisdom' - Henri Amiel.

I wish, we all had known the above saying early in life rather than trying to correct the wrong things now, when we have already grown or the society has grown older. Even though wrong traditions have already stuck very hard and it seems difficult to correct them, it is never too late for any thing at any time,

Fortunately there is a tendency for change in all of us in every walk of life including our profession. Change is a must and is the key to itself but the change must be for the good of humanity

So ladies and gentlemen,

I am taking this opportunity put forth in front of you all, my heart felt feelings about our profession which I have been having since the time, I have taken up Anaesthesia way back in 1976 i.e. 21 years back and more so during the last two years tenure as President of I.S.A. Karnataka State.

The problems, our anaesthesia community has been facing which I am going to discuss, will be dealt by me in three steps viz

1. What is the problem ?

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2. Why is the problem ?

3. What is the solution ?

1. Recognition of an Anaesthesiologist :

Unfortunately till today an anaesthesiologist is being considered as an 'Yes' man of surgeons or a subordinate or an underdog in many parts of the world more so in India. We Anaesthesiologists always feel that we are not being given due recognition for the amount of work we do as compared to other clinical doctors, surgeons, physicians and gynaecologists. We are ourselves responsible for this impression as we mostly remain in OT behind masks & gowns, seldom react meaningfully with the patients and other clinicians.

If we try to find the other reasons for this we realise that it is mainly because of a) Our high threshold of tolerance to suppression and b) Lack of public awareness of anaesthesia c) The anaesthesiologists are exploited morally as well as monitorily by the surgeons in many parts of the world.

So my dear colleagues, it is high time for all of us to initiate and participate in the ardent struggle which is going on all over the world to get recognised as a front line medical speciality second to none. We hardly communicate with the patient. We thrive on rendering him mute, immobile, unconscious, devoid of aesthesia and thus devoid of any feeling. Come out of the self imposed prison of OT! come out of caps and masks! Wear white coat, establish anaesthesia CPD's, pain clinics take ward rounds, establish

important points relevant to case. No discussion or reference list will be printed.

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to the State Government to implement on similar basis during the formulation of Nursing Home Act.

More important than any of these Govt. notifications, the professional fees have to be revised in each of the cities. In this regard the role of various city branches is very important. We have now a branch in almost all major cities of Karnataka and if all of the members of the respective city branches unitedly bring out a policy of the practice of anaesthesia, both the problems of the equipments and also of the professional fees can be solved. Then depending upon all these city branch policies, an uniform policy can be thought of, applicable to the entire state. In this regard I request all the members of various city branches to meet regularly and discuss amongst yourselves and bring out the necessary changes at the earliest. At this time I invite the anaesthesiologists of other cities to establish city branches. I dream of ISA KS, with branches established at all the district places of our state.

Another problem which must be mentioned now is the occupational hazards of the anaesthesiologists. We are exposed to chronic hypoxia, constant stress, anaesthetic agents etc., and are at risk for developing of many of the diseases like hypertension, diabetes, coronary artery disease and also more prone for road traffic accidents which has been documented and established also. What is the solution ? Please dont work continuously for long hours, stick on to regular time schedules, and regular food habits. This hint is more beneficial to the freelancing anaesthesiologists who have to cater to the surgeons whims and fancies of anaesthetising elective patients at odd hours and many a times foregoing the lunches or

break fasts etc., I earnestly appeal to all our practising colleagues to maintain regular habits, relax in between and care for their own health ISA Karnatak State has also sent a representation to the Govt. of Karnataka to sanction special occupational leaves to all the anaesthesiologists.

3. Updating of the knowledge and skill:

Due to day to day evolution of technology and changing trends of the practice of anaesthesia, the anaesthetic set up, knowledge and skill has to be revised regularly. We are all aware that there is no dearth of conferences now a days. In these past 2 months, there were more than half dozen national, regional conferences and CME's at various places of the country. These conferences play a very important role in upgrading our professional knowledge skill and exchanging our ideas. The participations and the scientific presentations by the delegates is not encouraging - both quantitatively and qualitatively. It has to increase and improve upon. To keep abreast, we have to run and I don't need to over emphasize the importance of the habits of study, reading, attending conferences, communication etc.

At this juncture, I like to express my painful feelings about the conduct of state level conferences every year. Why are we not having regular annual conferences of our state chapter, when we boast of maximum number of medical colleges, and highest number of city branches of ISA ?. We all the members of ISA Karnataka State have to accept the bitter truth that we are lacking interest in ISA activities. Some of the very old medical colleges have not hosted the conference even once also till today. Only I know, how much we struggled to persuade

rapport and trust with your patients create awareness amongst the patients Counteract surgeons suppression by your knowledge and skill in the pre;intra-and post operative period. Indulge in active post operative pain management, follow the patients until they go home, win the hearts of the patients. You will be recognised and rewarded Anaesthesiologists working in institutions! involve yourself as much as possible in ICCU, ICU,NICU SICU, ITU etc.,

2. Quality of Anaesthesia / Professional standards: Till today in many parts of India,, not only in private practice but also in many of teaching, non teaching institutions, district hospitals the quality of anaesthesia I dont say it is poor but it is definitely primitive. The joke is that hardly metres away you have the endoscopic laser surgery with most sophisticated anaesthesia and a few meters away you have torch light surgery with an ether bottle where in there is no anaesthesia machine, no monitors, no oxygen therapy/ resuscitative equipments and drugs. Anaesthesiologists are made to carry their instuments and drugs. Such practices not only put the patients but also anaesthesiologists life into risk. We are all aware of CPA and we do read the anaesthesiologists being sued for ignorance and mal-practices quite frequently, in news papers in recent years. So my dear friends, insist upon minimum mandatory equipments and monitors necessary for the safe conduct. In this regard ISA, KS has already sent to all the members of anaesthesia, the xerox copies of the guidelines, issued by ISA, which were published in Indian Journal of Anaesthesia. Only thing is that it needs to be implemented strictly by all of us every where. Friends refuse the cases without these facilities. Initially you might be put on to transient loss of monitory benefits but

within no time every thing will be set right, You are safe, your family is safe and the patient is also safe.

Now a days anaesthesia technician's are available Insist upon an assistant for you. If you dont have one train one as per your requirements He/ She will be of immense help to reduce your strain and tension and increase the patient's safety.

At this time, I like to discuss about the professional fees for the anaesthesiologists. It is very very meagre as compared to the time spent, tension undergone and the quantity of adrenaline we secrete. Even though in many institutions it is 1/3 rd of surgeon's charges, (in private nursing home it is still more less) it is definitely disproportionate to the efforts.

When we secrete more adrenaline than surgeons , when we take more risk than surgeons, our charges have to be equal to or more than that of surgeons. In this regard I would like to tell you that West Bengal government had already published a government notification way back in 1967 No.7745/73-14/6611 dated 29-11-1967 which reads "..... the operation charges realised..... should be apportioned between surgeon's and anaesthetists participating..... in the following percentage

Surgeon's	55%
Anaesthetists	45%

..... Sd/-

Secretary "

Keeping the same as basis, ISA Karnataka State has already sent twice represatations

the colleagues of Kolar to shoulder the responsibility of hosting state level conference this time. Many years have elapsed in the past, without we having a state level conference. Is it not an insult to all of us? Even if we adopt a time table, the turn will come once in 15-20 years. Is it so heavy and cumbersome to shoulder the responsibility once in 2 decades?. Definitely not. So my dear friends, come forward to do something for our speciality.

Our conferences as we all know lacked an "Oration" The department of Anaesthesiology K.L.E. Society's J.N.M.C. Belgaum, has come forward to sponsor an oration in its name every year during the time of conference. The ISA Karnataka State is very much obliged to them. The oration is aimed not only at honouring the pioneers who have dedicated their lives to the cause of anaesthesia, but also it distributes or spreads the rich and valuable experience of the orator, to all the members. At this juncture I request the organisers of the conferences (including the present one) to encourage or drag the young anaesthesiologists in the academic scientific presentations by keeping attractive awards for best papers or presentations.

The ISA Karnataka State is proud to have its own mouth piece - i.e. Karnataka Anaesthesia Journal (the only state in the country to have its own journal) When the idea of having a journal was conceived to cater the scientific aspirations of our local community, the main fear in our mind was the lack of funds but now the difficulty in continuing our privileged journal is not money but it is lack of scientific articles. In spite of repeated requests and reminders, the response from our members is luke warm.

Is it that we don't have enough scientific material in the state or we don't have scientific talents or minds in the state? Definitely not. I know the reasons are, lack of time, and laziness on our part as well. We have to come out of "frog in well" attitude. Can I request my members from each corner of our state to awake arise and help to survive the Karnataka Anaesthesia Journal? Our aim is to make the journal into an indexed one - known nationally and internationally.

Anaesthesiology, the most dynamic speciality amongst all medical branches which precedes and succeeds surgery has a very long way to go. We should take an oath to recognise and to remove our lacunae. We all have come together which is a very good beginning. We all are keeping together, which means we are all progressing as well. Let us work together to a success. Our satisfaction should lie in the efforts we make, not in attainment. Full effort is full victory.

Ladies and Gentlemen, what ever may be my deficiencies as a President they were the result of my constraints and not out of lack of interest to put in my best.

I feel I have lived up to your expectations, faith and confidence which you have been generous enough to vest in me 2 years back. I conclude, by thanking my all office bearers, colleagues and friends and all those who have helped me directly and indirectly in carrying out my responsibilities in the past 2 years as a President of ISA Karnataka State.

**Long Live ISA
Karnatak State Branch**

JAI HIND