

BRIEF HISTORY OF THE INDIAN ACADEMY OF NEUROSCIENCES

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1.0 PRODROMAL DEVELOPMENTS INSTRUMENTAL IN THE FOUNDATION OF THE INDIAN ACADEMY OF NEUROSCIENCES

Concurrent with the development of highly refined experimental and analytical techniques that enabled in-depth investigations at levels of intensity and with a degree of precision not attainable earlier, occurred an upsurge of interest in the multidisciplinary Neurosciences in India in the late seventies. It was then fully realized that the contribution of one discipline was hardly known to investigators in other fields of brain research. A plea for having such an organization was made at an International Symposium on Central Synaptic Transmission held at Central Drug Research Institute, Lucknow in October 1974 and attended by neuroscientists from 11 countries besides India and several other symposia etc. in various parts of the country.

A pressing need was felt to bring researchers engaged in different disciplines of neurosciences (viz. Neuroanatomy, Neurophysics, neurophysiology, Neurochemistry, Neurobiology, Neuropathology and clinical disciplines like Neurology, Neurosurgery and Psychiatry along with Bioengineering and Mathematical modelling of the brain, etc.) together on a common platform where their knowledge and methodology could be shared and a road-map for a future effective collaborative interdisciplinary research of the highest standards be designed.

2.0 THE MOUNTING INTEREST IN MULTIDISCIPLINARY NEUROSCIENCES IN INDIA DEMOLISHES PSEUDO - BARRIERS OF WATER-TIGHT DISCIPLINES

2.1 Late Prof. K.P. Bhargava, the then. Director-Professor of Upgraded Department of Pharmacology and Therapeutics and Principal of King George's Medical College Lucknow, in collaboration with Prof. B.N. Dhawan of Central Drug Research Institute and Dr. P.K. Seth of Industrial Toxicology Research Centre, Lucknow approached eminent neuroscientists of the country for establishing a Society of Neurosciences (India). The response to this proposal was overwhelming.

2.2 Consequently, a meeting of prominent neuroscientists was held at the Central Drug Research Institute, Lucknow on February 10 and 11, 1982. which was addressed by Prof. Merton Sandler, an eminent neuroscientist from the United Kingdom. Everyone present agreed that a Neuroscience Society of India (NSI) be established. It was later found that a society with the same objectives and the same name was already registered in Chennai but was

not very active. Prof. K.P. Bhargava requested his former student Prof. Mahdi Hasan, the then Director of the Interdisciplinary Brain Research at Jawahar Lal Nehru Medical College, Aligarh to approach Prof. B. Ramamurthi, the then President of the Neuroscience Society of India for the organization of a Conference of Neurosciences Society of India (NSI) at Aligarh so that its activities and membership could be enlarged. Accordingly Prof. Hasan obtained the consent of Late Prof. Ramamurthi and organized a meeting of Neurosciences Society of India at Jawahar Lal Nehru Medical College, AMU, Aligarh on February 5 and 6, 1983. Prof. Ramamurthi sent his presidential address but on the day of the conference he communicated his inability to attend and preside over the conference. Other office bearers of NSI also stayed away from the meeting.

3.0 THE BIRTH OF THE INDIAN ACADEMY OF NEUROSCIENCES AT ALIGARH

- 3.1 On February 5, 1983, seventy neuroscientists from all over the country and USA gathered at Aligarh to attend the Neuroscience Society of India Conference (NSI) felt distressed over the absence of the office-bearers of the NSI.
- 3.2 The need for a continuously active forum of neuroscientists of India was stressed by all the participants. The consensus was that NSI was unlikely to meet the aspirations and needs of the neuroscience community of the country. Prof. S.S. Parmar of the Department of Physiology, University of North Dakota School of Medicine, Grand Forks, USA and an international votary of multidisciplinary Neurosciences, thereupon proposed that a new organization should be formed with wider spectrum of membership and activities. It was decided to form Indian Academy of Neurosciences and get it registered as a new organization.
- 3.3 Prof. Parmar assured the gathering that large number of Indian neuroscientist from USA will form the Academy and actively contribute to its activity.
- 3.4 A general body meeting approved the formation of the Academy and adopted its constitution. It would be named Indian Academy of Neurosciences (IAN) and would build up international linkages and welcome foreign neuroscientists as members. For this purpose, the post of a Secretary, International Affairs was provided in the new constitution. The first elections to the various posts of the IAN were held and Prof. P.N. Saxena, Head of Pharmacology presided over the conference at Aligarh. Besides a plenary lecture by Prof. S.S. Parmar, 45 research papers were presented and a poster session was held.

4.0 REGISTRATION OF THE ACADEMY

Dr. P.K. Seth, the former General Secretary of the Indian Academy of Neurosciences, got the Academy formally registered at Lucknow under the Societies Registration Act of 1860 on July 9, 1984.

5.0 ANNUAL CONFERENCES OF IAN

- 5.1 The third annual conference of the IANS was organized at Lucknow by the Industrial Toxicology Research Centre in collaboration with IBRO on Feb. 4-6, 1984. Also, an ITRC-IBRO symposium on “Neurotoxic Substances and Human Health” was held concurrently.
- 5.2 The Fourth Annual Conference of the Indian Academy of Neurosciences was held jointly with the Asian Congress of Pharmacology at New Delhi which Prof. K.P. Bhargava presided.
- 5.3 Thereafter, successive annual conferences of IAN were held at Tirupati (1987), Calcutta (1988), Chandigarh (1989), Lucknow (1990) and Delhi (1991).
- 5.4 At the Annual Conference of IAN held at Jawahar Lal Nehru University, New Delhi, presided over by late Dr. Darab Dastoor, efforts were made for the merger of the Neuroscience Society of India (NSI) and the Indian Academy of Neurosciences into one common Neuroscience organization but unfortunately the initiative did not succeed.
- 5.5 The 11th, 12th, 13th, 14th and 15th Annual Conferences of the Indian Academy of Neurosciences were successfully held at Lucknow (1992), Jhansi (1994), Vellore (1995), Mumbai (1996) and Bangalore (1997) respectively.
- 5.6 During the Bangalore conference, a symposium on “Molecules to Behaviour” was organized jointly with the Neuroscience Society of India as a tribute to the memory of Prof. B. K. Bachhawat, an eminent neuroscientist of the country and a former president of IAN.
- 5.7 The 16th – 23rd Annual Conferences of the IANS were held at New Delhi (1998), Gwalior (1999), Lucknow (2001), Kolkata (2002), Udaipur (2003), Hyderabad (2004), Gwalior (2005) and Bangalore (2005).
- 5.8 The 24th annual conference marked the beginning of Silver Jubilee Year of the Academy and was organized at Lucknow from December 17 – 20, 2006. Prof. P.N.Tandon, Presided over the Conference. The 25th annual conference of the Academy was held at Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi from November 22 – 25, 2007 and was presided over by Prof. B.N.Dhawan.
- 5.9 Regular features of the annual meeting are plenary lectures and symposia on current topics in neurosciences in addition to the oral and poster

presentations. Workshops on techniques of neurosciences have also been organised. The annual meeting and symposia bring together basic scientists and clinical researchers to discuss common problems inherent in their area of research. The Academy encourages the participation of young neuroscientists so that they get an opportunity to interact with eminent senior colleagues. The endeavor has been helpful to stimulate and widen their outlook for future research.

6.0 INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIA / WORKSHOPS

In addition to organizing the Annual National Conference, the Academy has been sponsoring and co-sponsoring International Symposia and Conferences to promote the cause of neurosciences and to create awareness in public regarding the progress of various facets of brain research.

A list of major International Symposia / Workshops co-sponsored by the IANS is given below:

1. ITRC-IBRO Symposium on Neurotoxic Substances and their Impact on Human Health, at Industrial Toxicology Research Centre, Lucknow 1984.
2. Neuroscience Component of the Asian Congress of Pharmacology at Hotel Ashok, New Delhi on January 15 - 19, 1985.
3. Satellite symposium of the Asian Congress of Pharmacology on "Brain Neurotransmission Mechanisms and Hypertension" held at the Upgraded Department of Pharmacology, King George's Medical College, Lucknow, January 21 – 22, 1985.
4. Indo-U.S. Workshop on Chemistry and Biology of Centrally Acting Peptides, Central Drug Research Institute, Lucknow 1987.
5. Indo-US Workshop on Current Approaches for Receptor Studies in Neurobiology Central Drug Research Institute, Lucknow (1991).
6. 2nd Congress of Toxicology in Developing Countries, New Delhi (1991).
7. Colloquium on Cellular and Molecular Advances Neuropharmacology Central Drug Research Institute, Lucknow (1992).
8. Colloquium on Advances in Neurotransmitter Receptors: Cellular in and Molecular mechanisms Central Drug Research Institute, Lucknow (1994).
9. Symposium on Cellular and Molecular Mechanisms of Centrally Acting Agents Industrial Toxicology Research Centre, Lucknow (1997).
10. International Symposium on Molecular Toxicology and Environmental Health Industrial Toxicology Research Centre, Lucknow (2003).

7.0 MEMBERSHIP AND FELLOWSHIP

The Academy has sizable number of dedicated neuroscientists as life members spread all over the country and abroad. The Academy also elects eminent neuroscientists as Fellows and Honorary Members.

7.1 The Academy has over 800 life members.

8.0 CREATION OF FELLOWSHIP AND ELECTION OF FOUNDER FELLOWS AND THE FIRST CONVOCATION OF THE IANS

8.1 The Fifth Annual Conference of the IAN was held at Aligarh on December 7-9, 1986. It was decided to create a new category of membership designated as Fellow to be elected from among the members on basis of their distinguished contribution

8.2 The following eight Founder Fellows were elected:

1. Dr. B.N. Dhawan, Lucknow
2. Dr. D.K. Ganguly, Kolkata
3. Dr. D.K. Dastur, Mumbai
4. Dr. Mahdi Hasan, Aligarh
5. Dr. S.S. Parmar, Grand Forks, USA
6. Dr. V.K. Selvarajan, Chennai
7. Dr. P.K. Seth, Lucknow
8. Dr. K.C. Singhal, Aligarh.

8.3. The first convocation of IAN was presided over by Dr. John Autian, from USA on December 7, 1986 at the Auditorium of the M.U. Institute of Ophthalmology, Gandhi Eye Hospital, Aligarh.

8.4. Fellows have been elected every year and Fellowship conferred at convocation at the next Annual Conference of the Academy.

8.5. The total number of Fellows is 42.

9.0 HONARARY MEMBERS

9.1 Eminent Indian and Foreign scientist whose association with the Academy will be valuable for its activities are elected Honorary Members of the Academy. They enjoy all the privileges of the members but do not have to pay membership or admission fee.

9.2 The Academy currently has 21 honorary members.

10.0 AWARDS OF THE ACADEMY

10.1 Prof. B.K. Bachhawat Memorial Life Time Achievement Award

The Academy has initiated an annual award in the memory of late Prof. B.K. Bachhawat, one of the stalwarts of Neuroscience in India and former President of the Academy. The award is given to an outstanding Neuroscientist, on the basis of his/her research contributions and consists of a scroll and a plaque. The awardee has to give an oration on the topic of his/her choice preferably at the annual conference and to provide a manuscript of the oration for publication in the Annals of Neurosciences.

The Awardee must be a Fellow/ Honorary Member / Life Member of the Indian Academy of Neurosciences and have a standing of at least 10 years in Neurosciences.

The neuroscientist to be honored is selected by the Executive Committee based on the recommendation of the search committee and the award is announced during the inaugural function of the annual meeting of the Academy. Prof. P.N. Tandon (2003), Prof B.N. Dhawn (2004), Prof. Mahdi Hasan(2005), Prof. P.K. Seth (2007) and Prof. S.S. Parmar (2008) have been honored with the award.

10.2 Tulsabai Somani Education Trust Award

The award is given for best oral presentation at the annual conference of IAN by young neuroscientist and carries cash prize of Rs. 1,500/- (Rupees One thousand five hundred only), memento and certificate

Eligibility: The candidate / nominee should essentially be a member of Indian Academy of Neurosciences and below 40 years of age at the time of conference.

Procedure: Requisite copies of the abstract clearly marked as PAPER FOR TULSABAI SOMANI EDUCATIONAL TRUST AWARD should be forwarded to the Organizing Secretary before the last date of abstract submission. A copy of the abstract should also be sent to the General Secretary / Secretary (HQ). The papers awarded shall be published in the official journal of the Academy 'Annals of Neuroscience'.

10.3 Dr. D. M. Kar Prize

The award is given for best oral presentation at the annual conference of IAN by young neuroscientist and carries a memento and a certificate.

Eligibility: The candidate / nominee should essentially be a member of Indian Academy of Neurosciences and below 35 years of age at the time of conference.

Procedure: Requisite copies of the abstract clearly marked as PAPER FOR Dr. D. M. KAR PRIZE should be forwarded to the Organizing Secretary before the last date of abstract submission. A copy of the abstract should also be sent to the General Secretary / Secretary (HQ). The papers awarded shall be published in the official journal of the Academy 'Annals of Neuroscience'.

10.4 Professor S. S. Parmar Research Foundation Award

There are two awards, which are given for best papers presented in the Poster session. The award carries cash prize of Rs. 500/- (Rupees Five hundred only) and certificate.

Eligibility: The candidate / nominee should essentially be a member of Indian Academy of Neurosciences and below 35 years of age at the time of conference.

Procedure: Requisite copies of the abstract clearly marked as PAPER FOR PROFESSOR S.S. PARMAR RESEARCH FOUNDATION AWARD should be forwarded to the Organizing Secretary before the last date of abstract submission. A copy of the abstract should also be sent to the General Secretary / Secretary (HQ). The papers awarded shall be published in the official journal of the Academy 'Annals of Neuroscience'.

10.5 Jyotsnamoyee Raghunath Bhattacharya Prize

The award is given for published research paper and carries cash prize of Rs. 1,000/- (Rupees One thousand only), medal and certificate.

Eligibility: The paper should be in the field of basic neuroscience including the disciplines - Neuroanatomy, Neurophysiology, Neurochemistry, Neuropharmacology, Neuroimmunology and Neurotoxicology and should have been published during the past 2 years. The work should have been done in India. In case of multi-authored publication, the awardee should be the first author and at least one of the authors should be a member of the Academy.

Procedure: Requisite copies (generally three) of the reprint / paper clearly marked as PAPER FOR JYOTSNAMOYEE RAGHUNATH BHATTACHARYA PRIZE should be sent to the General Secretary / Secretary (HQ) of the Academy before the last date for peer reviewing.

10.6 John Miller Travel Award(s)

The Academy provides John Miller travel Award(s) that covers for a round trip II Class Sleeper travel to the candidate presenting a paper at the annual conference on competitive basis. Depending on availability of funds two travel awards upto the maximum of Rs. 800/- each may be provided.

Eligibility: The age of the candidate / nominee should not exceed 35 years.

Procedure: Interested persons should send an application duly forwarded by their mentors along with required copies of the abstract of paper and a certificate of II Sleeper class fare to the Organizing Secretary. A copy of the same should also be sent to the General Secretary and Treasurer (Dr. A.K. Agrawal) on or before the last date. The selected candidate(s) are informed before the conference and actual fare towards travel by II Class Sleeper is provided at the time of conference.

10.7 Professor R. Nath Memorial Travel Award(s)

The academy awards Dr. R. Nath Memorial Travel Fellowship to the candidates seeking support for participation in the annual conference of Indian Academy of Neurosciences. Six to eight travel awards consisting of actual travel reimbursement by AC-3 tier upto a maximum of Rs. 1,500/- are available. The traveling fellowships will be provided on competitive basis and selection will be made by the Organizing Secretary by constituting a committee in consultation with Treasurer and Secretary (HQ).

Eligibility: The applicant/ nominee should be below 35 years of age and present a paper at the annual conference essentially and may not be receiving travel support from other sources.

Procedure: Interested persons should send an application duly forwarded by their mentors along with required copies of the abstract of paper. They should send a statement of about 250 words how his/her participation will help in further research send a letter of support from the Guide / Supervisor.

The above papers should reach the Organizing Secretary before the last date as advertised. A set of papers should also be sent to the Treasurer on or before the last date. The selected candidate(s) will be informed before the conference and reimbursement of fare will be done on the last day of the conference.

11.0 PUBLICATIONS

1. Annals of Neurosciences – Quarterly scientific publication of the Academy Started in 1991 and currently published 15 volumes
2. Newsletter – Started in 1985 and being published once / twice a year.

3. Membership Directory – Published at regular intervals.

12.0 INTERNATIONAL LINKAGES

The Academy has established International linkage with the following major International Neuroscience Organization

1. International Brain Research Organization
2. Federation of Asian and Oceanic Neuroscience Societies
3. Neuroscience Division of Association of Scientist of Indian origin Federation, USA

13.0 LOCAL BRANCHES

To promote the activities of neuroscience in a region it was decided that a branch of the Academy may be formed in the city having more than 10 members. At present the Academy has local branches at Aligarh, Gwalior, Kolkata and Lucknow.

14.0 SILVER JUBILEE CELEBRATION OF INDIAN ACADEMY OF NEUROSCIENCES

Starting the journey from Lucknow in 1982, the Academy completed 25 glorious years of its existence in 2006. It was decided to commemorate the silver jubilee with the organization of 24th Annual meeting of the Academy at Lucknow on December 17 – 20, 2006 followed by year-round activities at various neuroscience centers and IAN local chapters. The silver jubilee celebrations were concluded at Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi with the organization of 25th Silver Jubilee Conference on November 22 -25, 2007. A number of eminent neuroscientists from different parts of the country and globe participated in these conferences to make the events successful and memorable. Following symposia were held to commemorate the silver jubilee of the Academy in the year 2007.

- I. Symposium on The Expanding Frontiers of Neurosciences, May 11th, 2007, Department of Psychiatry, University of Illinois at Chicago, 1601 W. Taylor St., Chicago, IL, 60612.
- II. Symposium on Neurodegeneration and Neuroregeneration : Current Trends and Future Strategies, July 30, 2007, Industrial Toxicology Research Centre Lucknow.
- III. Symposium on Current Trends in Auditory Research, September 21 – 22, 2007, Department of Anatomy, Maulana Azad Medical College, New Delhi
- IV. Symposium on Glial Neurobiology, October 23, 2007, School of Neurosciences, Jiwaji University Gwalior