

Indian Medical Colleges

Lady Hardinge Medical College, New Delhi

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HISTORY

Lady Hardinge Medical College, which is now located in the heart of the capital of India has a unique and interesting history. King George V, during his visit to India in December 1911, announced that the Imperial Government would be transferred from Calcutta to Delhi on 1 April 1912. Consequently, the capital of British India shifted from Calcutta to Delhi in 1912. At that time, Lord Hardinge II of Penshurst was the Viceroy of India (1910–1916). He used to stay in the Viceregal Lodge, north of Shahjahanabad which was the walled city of the Mughals.¹ Lutyen's Delhi had not yet been built. In those days, Delhi did not have many educational institutions and, of course, there was no medical college in the city. The attention of Lady Hardinge, wife of Lord Hardinge, the then Viceroy of India, was drawn to the lack of facilities for imparting medical education to women in India. Only 89 women were receiving medical education in the medical colleges of Madras (present Chennai), Bombay (Mumbai), Calcutta and Lahore (now in Pakistan) at that time. Of these, 73 were Christians and 9 were Parsis or Jews. The position in the medical schools was little better as 96 women, of whom 83 were Christians, were receiving training to become Sub-assistant Surgeons in the schools at Vishakhapatnam, Tanjore, Cuttack, Pune, Ahmedabad, Calcutta, Dhaka (now in Bangladesh), Agra and Patna. It was realized that because women students had to be given education in the mixed classes at men's colleges, 'conservative' Indian women of the 'right type and class' were not coming forward in sufficient numbers to become medical practitioners. The idea of having a separate medical college for women where 'women would be taught by women to attend on women' was conceived in 1912 and given a concrete shape in 1914.

Winifred, Baroness Hardinge of Penshurst started consultations with the leading ruling chiefs and nobles of India for raising funds amounting to Rs 15 lakhs with which a medical college and a hospital for women, as well as a training school for nurses could be built in Delhi. Contributions were received from the Maharaja of Jaipur, Maharaja of Patiala, Nizam of Hyderabad, Maharaja of Baroda, and many others. Rs one lakh received in donation as Punjab Memorial by Lady Hardinge was utilized towards building an outpatient department. It was proposed that the medical college be named 'Queen Mary's College and Hospital' in commemoration of Her Majesty's visit to India in 1911–12 along with King George V.² The training school for nurses was to be named after Lady Hardinge. The college was to be affiliated to a recognized university in India. Thus, the starting of this medical college was the first step towards building educational institutes in the new capital.

The 50-acre plot of land chosen as the site for the proposed

college was surrounded by wild vegetation and was about two miles south of Shahjahanabad and next to Raisina village, where now stands the Rashtrapati Bhawan (Viceregal House), Secretariat and New Delhi (Imperial Delhi) planned by Sir Edward Lutyens. All these buildings, including the monumental plaza—Connaught Place—designed by R. T. Russell came up between 1920 and 1931.³ The foundation stone of the college was laid on Tuesday, 17 March 1914 by Lady Hardinge. On the occasion, she said, 'We shall expect much from future students, a high standard both of character and intellect, combined with all-inspiring desire for a life of service for others, for this must be their crown and glory'. She approved and accorded special sanction in her plans to the concept of division of the hospital into separate units—each complete in itself—containing family wards, two general wards, two small separate wards with a central building for administration and teaching, so that each professor would have her separate laboratory, demonstration room and consulting room and thus professional independence. Unfortunately, this concept has been forgotten over the years and in the present set-up even senior professors do not have a separate unit. She also entrusted the management to a Lady Principal Dr K. A. Platt who was a popular and able clinician. The building was constructed in about two years by Architects Messrs. Begg and Glenn and building contractor Sardar Narain Singh. That was the period when World War I was being fought in Europe. Unfortunately in 1914 itself, just a couple of months after laying the foundation stone, Lady Hardinge expired. To perpetuate the memory of the founder of this project, Queen Mary asked the authorities to name the medical college after Lady Hardinge of Penshurst (Penshurst is a place located about 30 miles south-east of London in the Kent region.) On Thursday, 17 February 1916, the Lady Hardinge Medical College and Hospital and the Nursing School was inaugurated by the Viceroy, Lord Hardinge II of Penshurst, husband of the late Lady

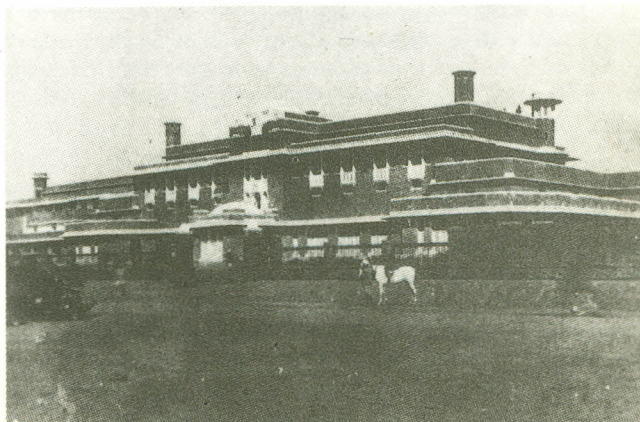


FIG 1. The entrance to the college in 1916

Hardinge, just before his departure from India. The inaugural ceremony took place in the afternoon under a huge shamiana erected in front of the College's main entrance in the same lawn where the foundation stone was laid by Lady Hardinge 23 months previously. The weather, which was very wet in the early morning that day, cleared up in the afternoon and the Viceroy arrived in an open carriage with Diamond Hardinge, attended by outriders and full bodyguards. The inaugural function was attended by Lord Carmichael, Lady Willingdon, Commander-in-Chief and Begum of Bhopal, Maharajas of Gwalior, Bikaner, Patiala, Jhind and Kotah, General Baber Shemsher Jung Rana Bahadur of Nepal, the Hospital Committee and the Viceroy's staff, who were all seated on the dais with the Viceroy. Proceedings of the ceremony opened with the address by Sir Pardey Lukis, Chairman of the hospital committee. The Viceroy in his inaugural speech said that this college was the most fitting memorial which could be raised in the memory of Lady Hardinge, who had tremendous love for India, its women and children. He justified the site chosen for this hospital as it was in the middle of Shahajahanabad and Imperial Delhi and was near the proposed railway station. He also said, 'Ever since I have been in India, the knowledge of the high mortality amongst mothers and infants has been a veritable nightmare to me and the development of medical instruction amongst women, which after all is the highest and most altruistic form of female education that any of us can possibly desire, seems to me to be one of the best means of coping with the evil'.⁴ Lord Hardinge later wrote in his memoirs that the opening of Lady Hardinge Medical College and Hospital for women was his most satisfying achievement as the Viceroy of India. Lord Hardinge left India on 4 April 1916 and was succeeded by Lord Chelmsford who assured Lord Hardinge that Lady Chelmsford would take the greatest interest in the successful implementation of the scheme launched by Lady Hardinge to which he was so emotionally attached.¹

At the time of inauguration, the college building consisted of three blocks—the central block and two science blocks on either side. The central block consisted of a large lecture theatre—the Convocation Hall which still exists, a library which was there till 1989 when it was shifted to a new building, a museum, offices and rooms for students and professors. This block had the main entrance to the college with a sun-clock at the top which is still there and has witnessed the history of this college from day one. The main entrance to the college at Shaheed Bhagat Singh Marg still exists in its original form. The convocation hall in the central block was once visited by Gandhiji where he addressed the students of the college who had invited him during the *Satyagraha* movement and all the students spun khadi thread with their *taklis* (spinning wheels) in the hall.⁶ The science blocks had lecture theatres and well equipped laboratories. The Departments of Anatomy, Physiology and Pathology were there from the beginning whereas the Department of Pharmacology (added in 1940) is located where the premedical science department existed earlier. Beyond the college building was a recreation room for students, where now stands an impressive centrally air-conditioned Swarna Jayanti Auditorium complex built in 1988 with a hall having a capacity of 987 seats, a Computerized Informatics and Research Centre, and the three-storeyed Dr Sujata Chaudhury Library, named after the former Professor of Medicine. This was surrounded on three sides by hostels providing separate accommodation to Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs and Christians. Further on there were hospital buildings with a few cottage wards. The hospital building with 150 beds was under construction and the outpatient department with a dispensary was nearing completion. Besides,

there were three bungalows for staff members. The whole compound was surrounded by a high wall. In 1956, a new block was added to house the Departments of Pathology and Microbiology. The Department of Preventive and Social Medicine came into existence in 1958.

MANAGEMENT AND FACULTY

In the draft scheme for managing the college and school of nursing, it was decided to have 8 Governors consisting of a Lady President, 3 persons nominated by the Government of India and 3 by the Lady President to represent the subscribers, and the Lady Principal of the College. The internal management was in the hands of the Principal and the College Council. At the time of inauguration, it was decided to get grants of Rs 1 lakh per annum from the Government of India, Rs 20 000 from the Countess of Dufferin's fund and Rs 3500 from the Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir towards recurring expenditure. The Countess of Dufferin's fund Council had started an All-India Women's Medical Service and was providing medical help to the women and children of India at that time.⁵ Therefore, this body was closely associated with the development of the college and they deputed senior members of their medical service to this institution. After 1947, the All India Women's Medical Service was dissolved and subsequently the staff selection was made by the Board of Administration which was constituted by the Central Government. In 1978, the college was taken over by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India and thereafter the faculty is being provided by the Central Health Services. At present, the college and associated hospitals receive a grant of approximately Rs 30 crores per annum from the Ministry of Health, Government of India.

Dr K. A. Platt was the first Principal of the college from 1916 to 1921 and the first Indian to become the Principal was Dr D. P. Bali (1948–50). The first male principal was Dr Amir Chand (1950–51). Presently Dr Kusum Sahgal, an ex-student of this institution, is the twenty-sixth Principal of the college.

TEACHING

Since Delhi University came up only in 1923, the college was first



FIG 2. Dr K. A. Platt, the first principal of the college

affiliated to the Panjab University for the MB,BS course. The other medical college affiliated to the Panjab University was King Edward Medical College, Lahore. The students were required to go to Lahore for their professional examinations.⁶ The postgraduate course affiliated to the Panjab University was started in 1954. It was as late as 1950 and 1956 that the college was affiliated to Delhi University for the undergraduate and postgraduate courses, respectively. Initially, the number of students admitted to the MB,BS course was 16 and the course was of 7 years duration including 2 years of a premedical course. In 1937, with the growing needs of the medical college and the shortage of space, the premedical course was abandoned and the students were admitted to a 5-year degree course.⁷ During the national emergency in 1962–63, the Medical Council of India reduced the period of training from 5 to 4.5 years with one year of compulsory housemanship and in 1964 the system of 4.5 years course with one year of compulsory rotatory internship was introduced. A system of competitive examinations for admission was introduced in 1954. These examinations were held at four centres, viz. Delhi, Bombay, Calcutta and Madras. Presently, the admission is through a competitive test of Delhi University and the Central Board of Secondary Education. Since 1970, the number of admissions to the course have increased to 130. There are two hospitals in the campus, viz. Smt. Sucheta Kriplani (S.K.) Hospital and Kalawati Saran Children's Hospital associated with the college, which were earlier treating only female patients and children. Training on male patients was provided to students at Civil Hospital, Irwin Hospital, Safdarjung Hospital and from 1955 at Willingdon (Ram Manohar Lohia) Hospital, where the teaching units of the departments of medicine and surgery worked. But for the last 7 years, male patients are also treated at S.K. Hospital to provide training facilities to students within the campus. Even now, in addition to S.K. Hospital, the teaching units of the college in medicine, surgery and orthopaedics also function from R.M.L. Hospital. The faculty has also changed over the years from all females to both males and females and since 1970, males are also admitted for postgraduate courses. At present, there are about 120 postgraduate students. The college is recognized for postgraduate degree courses in almost all clinical, pre- and paraclinical subjects and for various diploma courses. At present, there are no super-specialty degree courses in the college.



FIG 3. Winifred Baroness Hardinge of Penshurst, 1868–1914

The School of Nursing at Lady Hardinge Medical College was the first one to come up in Delhi in 1916 and was shifted to its new building in the campus in 1969. Initially, the course was of 4 years duration with General Nursing being taught for 3 years and Midwifery for 1 year. Students had to pass the examination under the 'North Indian United Board of Examinations' till 1944, when the Panjab Registration Council came into being. Since 1987, the training period has been reduced to 3 years.

ASSOCIATED HOSPITALS

Smt. Sucheta Kripalani Hospital, earlier called Lady Hardinge Hospital, has existed since the inception of the College in 1916 when it had 80 beds for the Departments of Medicine and Obstetrics and Gynaecology. The Medicine Department was headed by the then Principal of the College Dr (Miss) K. A. Platt and the Obstetrics and Gynaecology Department was headed by Dr (Mrs) Houlton. The Department of Surgery was clubbed with Obstetrics and Gynaecology and was separated in 1920 with Professor Wilson as its head. The Departments of Ophthalmology, ENT and Radiology were added in 1922. A new outpatient block was added to it in 1958 and the blood bank was started in 1968. The Department of Anaesthesia, which was a part of the Department of Surgery, was given an independent status in 1956 and the combined departments of ENT and Ophthalmology were also separated in the same year. A Medical Records Department was established in 1959 for maintaining records of indoor patients. A new block was added in 1989 and houses a nursing home and the Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology. A CT scan centre was added to the hospital in 1995. In the past, this hospital was known for providing maternity and gynaecological services to women. However, today it has developed into a large crowded multi-specialty teaching hospital under the Ministry of Health, Government of India, with a bed strength of 836, catering to the needs of all sections of society.

The Kalawati Saran Children's Hospital was inaugurated on 17 March 1956 by Lady Edwina Mountbatten. It was built from the proceeds of the property donated by Mr Raghubir Saran and Mr Raghunandan Saran of New Delhi and was named after the wife of late Mr Raghubir Saran. It has a separate department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation for which the initial electrical and electronic equipment was donated by the Government of

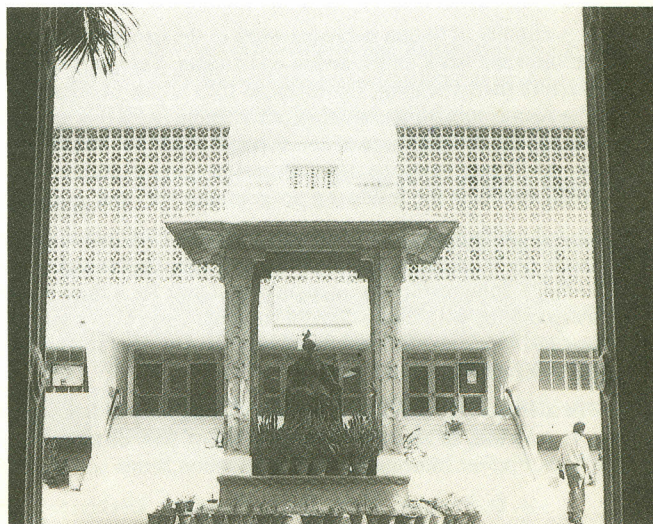


FIG 4. A view from inside the entrance of the college

USSR (Soviet Union). At present, it has 317 beds; another wing with 150 beds and operation theatres is being added under the Japanese International Co-operation Agency Project at an estimated cost of Rs 46 crores.⁸ This new wing is likely to be functional soon.

In spite of its phenomenal growth, the institute has its share of problems. First of all, most of the S.K. Hospital is housed in an 82-year-old building which requires frequent repairs and is difficult to maintain. The number of beds for male patients are inadequate and there is a need for a separate block for them. There is also need for a separate operation theatre block. There are no superspecialties other than Paediatric Surgery and one has to depend on other hospitals for specialized services. The residential accommodation for the faculty is highly inadequate.

ACHIEVEMENTS

The College, its faculty and students have contributed significantly towards the development of medical science, and rendering patient care in India. By and large, they have fulfilled the hopes and aspirations of its founders. The faculty members have presented research papers in national and international conferences and have been selected for various fellowships and awards. The students of this college are occupying prestigious positions both in India and abroad. The services provided by Kalawati Saran Children's Hospital in all branches of Paediatrics are noteworthy. Community service in terms of patient care provided by the Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology over the last 82 years is enormous. The Department of Microbiology of Lady Hardinge Medical College has won international acclaim for its *Salmonella* Phage Typing and is a World Health Organization Collaborating Centre for reference and training in streptococcal diseases for South-east Asia. It is also a surveillance centre for AIDS. The Department of ENT and Head Neck Surgery, which is one of the best equipped departments in Delhi, is known for its work in paediatric bronchoscopies and nasal endoscopic sinus surgeries.

Hardonian Dr S. Chawla had the honour of receiving the Dr B.C. Roy award. The Hari Om Sharan Alembic award for research has been received by Drs C. Anand, Hem Lata Gupta, K. Prakash

and Usha Nayar. Hardonians Drs S. Bhargava and Sheila Mehra have been bestowed with the Padmashri award. This year, Dr Hem Lata Gupta received the Padma Bhushan for her work in Neurology. Hardonians have also contributed to national politics—Dr Susheela Nayyar, former Health Minister of India.

FUTURE PLANS

A large, well-equipped multi-specialty paediatric wing, which will be attached to the present Kalawati Saran Children's Hospital, will be opened shortly. This is part of a Japanese International Co-operation Agency Project. Besides, a new radiotherapy block is going to be added soon. The radiotherapy department, which was the first to come up in the city, ceased to function long ago. Approval has also been obtained for setting up a large new accident and emergency wing.

If this institution is given more grants, facilities and better working conditions, it can be upgraded to the nation's best medical college because of its location, the number and variety of patients coming here for treatment, the bright medical students seeking admission to the college and the highly qualified faculty employed here.

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Association of Rural Surgeons of India

A large number of Indian surgeons work in the peripheral towns of our country providing yeoman service to 70% of our population. These surgeons work under severe constraints. Yet many of them achieve remarkable results. This only shows their motivation and devotion to their vocation. However, as they are an unorganized group they suffer from academic as well as intellectual isolation.

The Association of Rural Surgeons of India (ARSI) is an organization started in 1992 by surgeons interested in rural surgery. It is devoted to the development of better surgical and health care of the rural population and the economically backward people in urban slums. ARSI motivates the development of surgical technology that is suited to rural Indian conditions.

ARSI conducts the following programmes for rural surgeons:

1. Annual conferences and Continuing Medical Education programmes.
2. Hands-on-Workshops to train rural surgeons in techniques useful in rural surgery.
3. Shimoga Scholarship—a financial assistance for a rural surgeon to learn a new technology in any centre.
4. In association with Indira Gandhi National Open University, New Delhi, the ARSI is developing a distant education course in Rural Surgery, which is to be introduced very shortly. This will help doctors with some surgical training to practice rural surgery with safety and confidence.

The membership of ARSI is open to all surgeons with postgraduate qualifications in general surgery or any of its branches. MB,BS doctors may join as associate members and if 50% or more of their practice happens to be surgical work, they too may become full members. Further information and application forms can be obtained from:

R. D. Prabhu, Shree Dutta Hospital, Tilaknagar, Shimoga, Karnataka