

DSAI: NOT JUST "ANOTHER" ASSOCIATION (www.dsaindia.org)



The world has seen a lot since the turn of the new millennium- destruction of the twin towers of the World Trade Centre by terrorists, start of America's war against terrorism, death of hundreds of people in communal riots of Gujrat, Hotel Taj attacked being by terrorists in Mumbai, Air Malaysia plane gone missing, India being successful in its maiden Mars mission, and many more. And what were the dentists of India doing all this time? The same they have been doing all these years- ruing about their choice to pursue dentistry as a career, blaming the government for the lack of job opportunities and the sorry state of affairs of the dentists, and lowering their self esteem by competing with "quacks" to make a living. To represent dental professionals across the country, the Indian Dental Association (IDA) was founded in 1945 by Dr. R. Ahmed. It has been committed to create

awareness among public about oral health care and advancement of dental profession through its initiatives in education, research and development of standards. Since its inception, the IDA has been doing a commendable job in creating public awareness and raising the general standard of dentistry in the country. However, little has been done to safeguard the rights of dental professionals, which have been overlooked till date by the authorities. Apart from this, there is also a need to unite dental surgeons to lend a helping hand to each other in times of crisis. To counter the problems being faced by the dental professionals, an organization named Dental Surgeons Association of India (DSAI) was established. DSAI was formed out of its sister organization- Dental Students Welfare Association of India (DSWAI), which had been working continuously to safeguard the

interests of the dental students across India, to work towards the betterment of the dental profession in India. Objectives of this organization initially were laid down with certain key points, which included safeguarding the interest of the dental professionals, to work for the welfare of dental surgeons as well as the patients, to make the authorities aware of the irregularities in the working of various dental colleges and to make sure that a proper and timely action is taken, to prevent the commercialization of education, especially dental education, so that a person belonging to any class has access to it, to make the general population aware of proper oral health and to organize lectures, seminars, national conventions and meetings to promote the art and science of dentistry, to work for integrated development of dental practitioners so that they develop themselves socially, economically as well as professionally, and to organize various activities with the help of other government and non-governmental organizations which would be beneficial for all. DSAI is currently running three projects in association with DSWAI. In addition, the framework of a number of future projects has been laid, which would be launched in the near future. The project Swatantrata: Ek Mukti was launched with the aim to fight against oral cancer. The project is being executed with the help of oncologists, by conducting seminars and conferences at school and college levels to demonstrate the harmful effects of tobacco, with free counseling also being provided to youngsters. The aim of this project is to make at least one person in each and every household aware of the basics of oral cancer as well as the deleterious effects of tobacco. Dental camps (Project Aarogya)

were initiated to make people aware about oral health. Several teams from a number of dental colleges organize dental check up camps on a weekly basis in different areas and also perform basic dental procedures free of cost in the camps. Project Milap has been launched to make the dental surgeons of India interact with their counterparts abroad so as to make them gain exposure on a global level. The association also conducts a number of voluntary programs with the help of International Association of Dental Surgeons and young dentists worldwide in which a team of dentists from all over the world try and we reach every possible corner of the country to spread awareness among the public about oral health care. The association also sent its team of dentists to Sudan for voluntary work. Apart from the above mentioned works, the association has also done quite a few things to safeguard the rights of dental students and professionals all across the country, and plans to continue with the same zeal. The office bearers of DSAI have been contacting the managements of various colleges where the interns are not being paid for their compulsory paid internship, and have ensured that their monthly stipend is paid. DSAI has filed an RTI regarding number of sanctioned posts of dental surgeons in various states and the number of dental surgeons appointed till date, as compared to the number of vacant posts of dental surgeons. The details of dental surgeons appointed as well as the requirement of dental surgeons at government hospitals and rural centers have also been sought. It

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also includes a query on the appointment of dental surgeons under centrally sponsored schemes like the National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) along with the details of the guidelines of dentist-population ratio being followed by the government for recruitment of dental surgeons. A memorandum was submitted by DSAI to the Union Health Minister regarding the inclusion of dentistry in national health policy 2015 under various schemes like NRHM, anti-tobacco campaign, school dental programs etc. throughout India, which has been accepted. Another proposal of this association was accepted by the Dental Council of India (DCI) which demanded that every dental college would have to adopt at least 4 villages, which along with providing proper oral health care to these areas, would also create more than 3000 job opportunities across the country. DSAI, founded and being run by Dr. Chandresh Shukla (President), also a member of DCI, and his associates, is constantly striving for the upliftment of dental profession and a secure future of dental surgeons in the country. The association endeavors to meet the needs and expectations of the Indian dental practitioner. It acknowledges that oral health is an integral part of general health and well-being, which can be uplifted only if the providers are working in a stress-free environment, free from any distractions. The members of this association pledge their knowledge, experience and expertise for the advancement of dental profession.

