

DR. ASHOK KUMAR GUPTA

M. S. (Surg.), M. Ch. (Plast. Surg.), M. N. A. M. S. (Plast. Surg.),
D. N. B., F. A. S. I., F. R. C. S. (Ed. Hon.), D. Sc. (Hon.), F.N.A.M.S.

CONTRIBUTIONS DEVELOPMENT OF SPECIALITY RECONSTRUCTIVE MICROSURGERY SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY WORK

During his years as an undergraduate medical student for MBBS, as a postgraduate student for Master of Surgery (M.S.) General Surgery, as a post-doctoral student for the degree of M. Ch. in Plastic Surgery and thereafter as Lecturer (Teacher) at the department of Plastic Surgery at the Government Medical Colleges, Nagpur, Dr. Ashok Gupta had shown high levels of leadership quality in social and community work, education, scientific research and publications, sports (hockey, mountaineering/ high altitude trekking), as well goodwill ambassador at inter-community and inter-collegiate activities.

After obtaining the post-doctoral degree of M.Ch. (Plastic Surgery), he proceeded to **United Kingdom** for advanced training in **Plastic Surgery** and **Reconstructive Microsurgery** at some of the best-known centers of learning such as the **Birmingham Accident Hospital** (Midland Region), the **Nuffield Research Centre and Department of Plastic Surgery and Burns** at the **Stoke Mandeville Hospital**, Aylesbury (Oxford Region), The **Derriford Hospital**, Plymouth (Deven Port Region), the **Royal Marsden Hospital** and the **St. George's Hospital**, London, United Kingdom from 1980 to 1982.

On returning from U.K. about 34 years ago, as a **Reader/ Associate Professor of Plastic Surgery** in the **Department of Plastic and Maxilla facial Surgery** at the Grant Medical College, Sir J. J. Group of Hospitals, the Gokaldas Tejpal Hospital, Mumbai and the Bombay Hospital and Medical Research Centre, Mumbai, he had opportunity to establish and develop Reconstructive Microsurgery Specialty in India. In the following years, Dr. Gupta did the same in close association with various other departments like the ENT, Head & Neck Surgery, Pediatric Surgery, Neuro Surgery and the Orthopedic

Surgery and undertook a number of complex life-saving microsurgical procedures as well developed a number of surgical techniques.

Dr. Ashok Gupta had been credited by the **Director, Medical Education and Research, Govt. of Maharashtra** for performing the first ever complex micro surgical procedure of surgical reconstruction of the face in a two year old child successfully in 1983, at the Government Grant Medical College and Sir J. J. Group of Hospitals, Mumbai.

Dr. Ashok Gupta developed a new technique for the Esophageal Reconstruction (oro-pharynx, cervical and the thoracic part) in a young child of 9 months using the latissimus dorsi muscle flap at the Grant Medical College, Sir J. J. Group of Hospitals, Mumbai. Later this case report was published as the first case report of such reconstruction in the specialty of Microsurgery in the English literature, which set a milestone in surgical protocol for reconstruction of the myocardium using the latissimus dorsi muscle.

Dr. Gupta was recognized as a **Post Graduate Teacher and Examiner** for the post-doctoral degree of M. Ch. (Plastic Surgery) at the Grant Medical College and Sir J. J. Group of Hospitals and the Bombay University, Mumbai in 1983 and also at the Bombay Hospital & Medical Research Centre, Mumbai. Dr. Ashok Gupta continued working on extensive life threatening / life impairing surgical reconstructions achieving excellence through microsurgery.

While training under one of the acclaimed teachers **Dr. J. S. P. Wilson**, he had mentioned that in a surgeon's life "**It is not important that how many good surgeries one has performed, but is laudable that how many good surgeons one has trained.**" Dr. Gupta gave back the advantage of his specialized professional skills and knowledge to his associates, fellows and the residents and conducted several hands-on training sessions in microsurgical technique, cadaveric flap dissection course as well didactic lectures in reconstructive microsurgery from 1982 onwards at a number of major Institutes in India, namely- The Grant Medical College and Sir J. J. Group of Hospitals, The Institute of Medical Sciences, Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi, S.M.S. Medical College, Jaipur and Dayanand Medical College and Hospital, Ludhiana.

Dr. Gupta continued his zeal to teach and travelled across the globe to conduct hands on training workshops, live operative demonstrations and participated in seminars/ Continuing Medical Education (CME) programs keeping alive the idea of constant development of the specialty of reconstructive microsurgery.

To further his expertise in reconstructive microsurgery, he visited the Department of Plastic Surgery, the **University of Tokyo** and the **National Cancer Centre, Tokyo**, Japan for advanced training in Head & Neck reconstructive micro surgery in 1985. On return from training in Reconstructive micro surgery at Japan, he undertook some of the most challenging microsurgical reconstructions.

In the year 1990, he was awarded the **International Travelling Fellowship** instituted by the Association of Plastic Surgeons of India, to undergo advanced post-doctoral training in microsurgery for brachial plexus injuries/ facial paralysis at the **International Micro Surgical Research Centre, Eastern Virginia Graduate School of Medicine, Norfolk, Virginia, USA**, in the year 1990-91 under the guidance of **Prof. Julia Terzis**.

Dr. Gupta was admitted as the Member of the International Society of Reconstructive Microsurgery (ISRM) and the International Microsurgical Society (IMS) which merged together to form **World Society of Reconstructive Microsurgery (WSRM)**. He was elected as the Founder Member of the later in 2003.

In the process of his academic and professional pursuits, Dr. Gupta's zeal to reach out to the downtrodden and underprivileged patients who required major reconstructive surgery never faded but only increased as he undertook several surgical sessions at remote and tribal areas in different states in India.

Dr. Gupta was nominated as "**Ethicon Professor**" in Microsurgery for the year 1992 - 93, and "**Ethicon Professor**" of Plastic Surgery for the year 2004-05, instituted by the Association of Plastic Surgeons of India and conducted numerous workshops as well CMEs in the field of Reconstructive Microsurgery and Plastic Surgery.

Recognizing his outstanding contributions in the field of Reconstructive Microsurgery, Dr. Gupta was awarded the coveted **Fellowship of the Royal College of Surgeons FRCS (ED)**, Edinburgh, UK in August 2004.

Dr. Gupta was also nominated the Founder Member of the World Society of Reconstructive Microsurgery and then was elected as the **Member at Large** (Member of the Executive Council) for the biennial terms 2007–2009 and 2009–2011 and the **Host Chairman** of the **8th Congress of the World Society of Reconstructive Microsurgery**.

Considering Dr. Gupta's immensely valuable contributions to the field of Reconstructive Microsurgery, his profile has been included in the Book "**World History of Microsurgery**" 2007, compiled and edited by **Dr. Terzis**.

Dr. Gupta holds two World Records for "Life through Reconstructive Microsurgery" as outstanding reconstructions in literature.

- a. Maximum number of major microsurgical / flap procedures in a single patient (Seven flaps: Full Report annexed).

A middle aged man was run over a speeding truck. The extent of injury to his Abdomen, Urinary Bladder, Scrotum, Testes, Phallus and Thighs (R + L) was so extensive, that his life was in danger. After admission, he was being looked after by a **Team of Surgical Specialists**, including General Surgeon, Orthopedic Surgeon, Uro-surgeon, Thoracic Surgeon and Neuro Surgeon. With continuous and dedicated care, his condition improved.

This patient had to be operated upon on more than 65 occasions, out of which 5 were supra-major procedures, lasting over 16 - 30 hours. This patient's details were presented as the **Maximum number of Microsurgical Reconstructive surgical procedures done on an individual**, at the **Inaugural Conference** of the **World Society for Reconstructive Microsurgery**, at Taipei, 2001.

b. Longest warm / cold ischemia time for proximal replantation

A young engineer whose Left **Arm** was cut off from the body following an industrial accident was initially treated at the local hospital and then transferred to Bombay. There was an unduly delay in transfer of the patient (30 hours).

As soon as he was admitted to the Hospital, he was attended to and taken to the Operation Theatre within a short time and following a major and **unusual microsurgical procedure, spreading over 18 hours**, and the blood circulation in his arm could be **successfully re-established** and had remained successful throughout.



Under special circumstances, with **proper cooling** of the part, such a procedure is safe and effective only **up to 12 hours**. Having **achieved life in the near-completely cut off arm after 40 hours** of no circulation, itself is an **extra-ordinary surgical achievement**.

Case details of this patient were also presented at the **International Conference** of the **International Society for Reconstructive Microsurgery**, as one of the **Longest Ischemia** time in the world literature (Longest being that of 75 hours for finger in USA).

Below is a list a few of the events exhibiting Dr. Gupta's leadership skills for social and community work as a medical student at the Govt. Medical College & Hospital, Nagpur:

- a. Dr. Ashok Gupta Volunteered as **CAMP LEADER** at the High Altitude **Himalayan Trekking Program** run by the Youth Hostels Association of India, for three years from 1969 to 1971 and helped participants overcome problems like frost bite, high altitude sickness and other high altitude medical elements.
- b. Dr. Ashok Gupta elevated to the Rank of **Senior Sergeant** at the National Cadet Corps (NCC), Government Medical College & Hospital, Nagpur, from 1968 to 1970 as well attended the Army Attachment Training camp for 2 months at the Infantry Battalion, Armed Forces Medical College, Pune.
- c. As a final year medical student, Dr. Gupta had offered **Clothing and Footwear** to about 200 Leprosy affected inmates of Leprosy Home on 2nd October 1971 celebrated as "Gandhi Jayanti" also being the "Leprosy Day" by collecting new as well as used clothing from the fellow students/ friends at the Medical College by making door-to-door visits, making them usable by washing and stitching torn patches and also packing them all by himself.
- d. As an Intern, Dr. Ashok Gupta participated as the member of the **"Medical Relief Team"** for the rapid response relief work in drought affected areas of Western Maharashtra and provided vaccination and other medical relief to over 1000 people for 3 months in 1971.

Since obtaining the Master's Degree in General Surgery, Dr. Gupta during these 40 years has performed over **7500 Free Reconstructive Plastic Surgical procedures** on underprivileged children at **remote and tribal areas** of different States like **Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Bihar, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana** and other parts of the country. There is a large economically backward poor tribal population in these states who find it difficult to make both ends meet. Even thinking of approaching a specialist doctor for plastic and reconstructive surgery is beyond their means and imagination which has made Dr. Gupta's generous service a blessing to the poor and downtrodden.