

Dental Education

India as a developing nation is facing a multitude of challenges on various fronts, of which Medical Professional Academics needs a special mention and Dentistry is an integral part of the medical discipline. In a country like ours it becomes imperative to promote the advancement of dental education and research in all concerned institutions. Globalization has come to dental education. Dentistry as a profession as well as from the research and training perspective has grown tremendously. Various Dental Institutions that were already there and many more that have come up in the last couple of years shoulder an important responsibility of providing current and didactic modes of training to the young dental professionals. Dental education should be such that it is able to promote and encourage research in the methods and techniques for the teaching and knowledge transfer from the teacher to student in an Institution, hospital, clinical and related environments. It should be able to encourage and facilitate the presentation, discussion and publication of the related scientific research. Regular conduct of various seminars and discussions is essential where dental educators, scientists and clinicians meet at a common forum or platform and assess the latest academic, tutorial and research technology. We as health care providers can encourage and facilitate co-operative effort and achievement by stimulating the production, exchange and dissemination of ideas and information among dental educators, educators of other health care professions, and that of the community dealing with higher education. It is high time now that we divert our attention towards correcting the mal-distribution of dentist: population ratio, rendering quality dental care to one and all, facilitating indigenous research and producing graduates who are proficiently trained to the global standards. We have to

reach out to the people in the villages and other backward areas and spread awareness regarding primary prevention of oral diseases. This can only be done by incorporating community health programs and rural postings and organization of dental camps compulsorily at the undergraduate level as a part of their curriculum. Increasingly, Dental Institutions are integrating the required rotations in community health set ups in dental clinics, hospitals, and private practices located within the reach of such Institutions. Maintaining liaison with governmental and other appropriate agencies may further aid in the development, support and improvement of dental education research and service. Dental students master clinical skills through the experience of providing services to patients in dental school clinics under direct supervision, in combination with didactic instructions. Service-learning has become an important component of higher education. Integrating outreach training into dental and dental hygiene curricula will foster graduates who are better prepared to work effectively among diverse populations and to function dynamically in the health policy arena. Dental professionals are a reservoir of oral health knowledge and have the potential for shaping the optimum health related public policy. Dental education teaches students to understand the science of dentistry and, through service-learning, that knowledge can be put into action thereby, enhancing the potential for equitable access to care, effective oral health promotion, public health action, and eventually the improvement of oral health. The leaders in the Dental profession must continue to ensure that an adequate emphasis is always laid on these important issues for a continuous growth of the profession.

Dr. Krishan Gauba

Director Principal and Professor & Head
Dr. H.S.J Institute of Dental Sciences and Hospital,
Chandigarh