

Bidding Adieu...For Greener Pastures!

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Friends, it gives me a sense of accomplishment that I will be relinquishing the office of *Indian Pediatrics* after a satisfying tenure of six years as its editor-in-chief. When I took over as the editor-in-chief of this prestigious journal at a relatively young age of 41 years, there were few apprehensions in my mind – whether I will be able to match the expectation of society’s 25,000 members, and moreover millions of readers; whether I will be able to fulfill the commitments made during my induction [1]; and whether I will be able to carry out (and expand upon) the variety of tasks the journal team had been doing, including training of potential authors, and contribution to advancement of medical knowledge in form of books and research. Now six years later, I leave with a deep sense of gratification that with an extremely dedicated team of editors and journal committee members, and continuous help and support from parent society Indian Academy of Pediatrics (IAP), I could not only execute my duties with integrity and rigor expected of a journal editor, but could also contribute immensely to its growth in terms of reputation, popularity, impact, outreach and finances.

Indian Pediatrics has always been a popular reader-friendly journal besides its recording value of research-based manuscripts. Besides publishing high quality research papers and consensus guidelines, we introduced some new sections – ‘Journal club’, ‘Reminiscences from Indian Pediatrics – A tale of 50 years’, ‘Rational diagnostics’, and ‘Clinical videos’, which helped us in maintaining a reader-friendly format of the journal for the benefit of most ordinary reader who may not understand the intricacies of research and statistical analysis. The section ‘In a lighter vein’ provided a platform to literary readers of the journal to express their ideas and thoughts. We also published four special issues during this period – related to the themes of Polio eradication, Rotavirus disease, Retinopathy of prematurity and Quality improvement in healthcare – with guest editors being the most eminent academicians and researchers in the related fields. Impact statistics of *Indian Pediatrics* showed a steady improvement, with impact factor and 5-year impact factor reaching its all-time high level of 1.163 and

1.392, respectively in 2019. This was despite the fact that we never chased impact factors, and maintained reader-friendly format by publishing popular articles and case reports, which do not help in improving the impact statistics of journal, and rather may adversely affect it.

Indian Pediatrics has always endeavored to train its readers and members of academic fraternity in brushing up their research and writing skills. Besides continuing with our signature workshops on art and science of writing scientific papers, we could develop a 3-day hands-on Research methods workshop. It gained immense popularity within a short time, and we could successfully organize four such workshops with 100% participation in each; the demand for more such workshops are continuously pouring in. We could also publish relevant books – ‘The Art and Science of Writing a Scientific Paper’, ‘The Best of Indian Pediatrics’ (2nd and 3rd edition), and ‘Advances in Medical Education.’ The long-awaited thorough revision of book ‘Principles of Pediatrics & Neonatal Emergencies’ could also be completed under leadership of Dr Piyush Gupta.

The Go-Green exercise by *Indian Pediatrics*, probably the biggest such initiative by any medical journal, was a challenge [2]. It was indeed arduous to make members switch to electronic versions of journal, and inform us of their intent to continue or discontinue print copies. However, with a large exercise continuing over several months, we could successfully reach majority of members of IAP, and could collect their options. This led to 60% reduction in print copies. The gains of this exercise will bear fruit in long-term, leading to tremendous cost-saving, and providing opportunities for further improvement in production quality, including color format and better paper quality. It was necessary that the journal should have tremendous electronic presence before we ask members to opt-out of print copy. We could successfully develop mechanism of making electronic versions reach the members, including posting of monthly e-copy of the journal to member’s unique profile at IAP website and developing mobile application of *Indian Pediatrics*. Dissemination of information published in journal through

social media was also accomplished, with a noticeable presence of journal on Facebook and Twitter.

A long-cherished dream of the members of journal committee as well as of IAP was an office where journal committee and staff could work in a better environment. The procurement process of new journal office is also complete, and by the time this issue of journal is published, we would have inaugurated a swanky new office of *Indian Pediatrics* with facilities of video conferencing, networking and a decent conference hall and library.

I am deeply grateful to all my colleagues: the dedicated team of editors and guest editors who worked day-and-night to convert submitted manuscripts into the best possible published papers; journal committee members who supported and helped them in every decision; reviewers who provided critical and useful comments to help us to reach at balanced decisions on manuscript; readers who provided feedback and pointed out tiniest of error in the journal to motivate us to work towards perfection; and the journal staff who executed the administrative and ground-level work. Also, it has

been a privilege to learn from every manuscript I handled, irrespective of whether it was finally accepted or rejected; and to interact with authors who patiently and graciously accepted all our decisions. I convey my special thanks to Prof. Piyush Gupta, who handed over the reins of the journal in an excellent condition. He was always accessible and resolved my queries promptly and enthusiastically, besides providing encouragement and emotional support during stressful periods. No words can express my thanks to Prof. Devendra Mishra who handled most of the editing and proofreading work, and continuously strived to work for high academic and ethical standard of the journal. It's a pleasure to hand over the baton to him now, and to look forward to new ideas and innovations.

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REFERENCES

1. Shah D. Indian Pediatrics – Change of guard: A milestone but miles to go. *Indian Pediatr.* 2014;51:7.
2. Shah D. From mailbox to mobile: Indian Pediatrics goes green. *Indian Pediatr.* 2018;55:647-8.