

# 1989 CONGRESS IN NEW DELHI – THE FIRST IEC IN THE DEVELOPING WORLD

This was the first ILAE Congress to be held outside the US, Japan or Europe, and reflected the growing interest of the ILAE in the developing world. It was held at the Taj Palace Hotel on Sardar and was a sumptuous affair. About 1,000 delegates showed up, in spite of last minute decision by the Ministry of External Affairs to impose severe restrictions on delegates from Israel, Taiwan and South Africa. Speakers at the inaugural session included the acting chief justice of India, the Lt Governor and the redoubtable K.S. Mani, president of the congress. Mani was a marvelous lecturer, well known for his on-stage impersonations of epileptic seizures – more vivid than video-telemetry

The programme was extremely varied, but had a distinctive emphasis on the problems of epilepsy in developing countries. Around 2,500 authors were listed in the papers and posters. The main topics were: Epilepsy and Surgery, New Developments in Antiepileptic Drugs, Epilepsy and Education: Cognitive Factors in Learning and Behaviour, Prognosis in Epilepsy, Epilepsy and Risks, Primary Health Care and Epilepsy International Community-Based Epilepsy Research Group (ICBERG). There were 4 satellite symposia, including for the first time an International Merritt-Putnam Symposium – the delivery of quality care with limited resources – and this was to become a permanent and important fixture of subsequent conferences.

Social activities included an evening visit to the Red Fort for son-et-lumière, and a magnificent banquet and dance. Accompanying persons could choose among a panoramic tour of new and old Delhi, a visit to the Crafts Museum and the Railway Transport Museum, shopping at the handicraft emporium, and displays of hair styles (an event intriguingly titled 'Hair Styles Through the Ages'), hand painting and bangles, as well as a sari wrapping demonstration and competition. The identity of the best wrapped winner unfortunately is not recorded.

