

faces

Large cover story

Dr R Murugesan

He has been practising cosmetic plastic surgery for 30 years now and specialises in face-lifts, liposuction, breast enhancement and baldness procedures. Dr Murugesan is also the president of the Indian Association of Aesthetic Plastic Surgeons and a senior cosmetic surgeon at Apollo Hospital, Chennai.

India connect: "In the old days, my clientele mostly included women from the upper strata. Now, more people from the middle-class are coming forward. Even men are shedding their inhibitions to undergo treatments like male-breast removal," says Dr Murugesan. "Even the rural population is opting for baldness treatment and liposuction procedures." This could indicate that cosmetic surgery is getting better exposure or that social pressures are increasing.

When faced with Priyanka Chopra's lush lips or Salman Khan's chiseled body, people opt for the shortcut. You won't have to sweat it out in the gym for a year to get that perfect body when cosmetologists like Dr Murugesan could give you what you want in a few sittings. "It is not that easy though. We ensure that our clients are counselled by in-house psychiatrists before opting for any procedure," he says. Referring to how cosmetic surgery is a form of value-addition, Dr Murugesan says, "Getting your breast augmented or vagina tightened after child-birth can be a boon to your marital life."

That said, he points out that lunchtime makeovers is not an Indian trend. "No one just walks in and decides to have a surgery or even a minor cosmetic treatment. After the first consultation, they go back to their personal physician for a second opinion and discuss it at length with their family before making a decision," says Dr Murugesan.

Calling card: While he has male clients from ages 20 to 65 visiting him regularly for male-breast removal or hair transplant, girls as young as 15 approach Dr Murugesan for breast-related issues. He is also the sole practising cosmetologist in the country to perform Endoscopic Cosmetic surgeries. The procedure, where a face-lift or breast alteration is done through a pin-hole incision, is not popular in India, but has taken the West by storm.

Treatment most wanted: "About 60 per cent of my clients opt for procedures that involve the face," says Dr Murugesan, adding that wrinkle treatment featuring Botox or hydraulic fillers is also popular. Rhinoplasty is also common, as is body contouring and breast enhancement, lip injections and fillers, and baggy-eye treatment. "More women are going for fat-injections to make their cheeks look fuller," he adds. There is a preference for abscution among men, as is the demand for chin implants to make them look more masculine.

Last word: There is a boom in the industry, he admits. "With a growing corporate population, more people have the purchasing power to invest a little money in looking great. Also, cosmetic procedures are relatively cheap in India," he adds. "The difference between a cosmetologist and a dermatologist is slowly fading."

drmurugesan.in



The Transformers

Meet top cosmetic specialists in the country who are shaping faces, redefining beauty and boosting careers, especially in the corporate field. By Maryann Thomas & Amrita Sampathkumar

If you often find yourself in front of a mirror, contemplating an eyebrow lift or an under eye correction, you're not alone. A growing number of women and men in our metros are comfortable about taking a cosmetic shortcut to correct what they consider as "imperfections." Neeraja Rao, Head of the Sociology department, Stella Maris College, agrees that this is an urban phenomena. "The concept of beauty has changed because of the media and growing awareness about keeping the body fit or enhancing one's appearance," she admits. Now, everyone, not just celebrities, has a shot at physical perfection, provided he or she can pay for it. Here's what four top cosmetologists have to say about the latest treatments and trends in the country and, in particular, Chennai:

Dr Karthik Ram

At 34, Dr Karthik Ram is Chennai's youngest practising cosmetic surgeon and he is getting very popular. His age, he says, "makes it easier for me to understand the needs of my clients, who mostly come from the younger segment."

India connect: Dr Ram agrees that over the last few years, the numbers have doubled as far as cosmetic surgeries are performed. "In Mumbai and Delhi, where there has been sufficient exposure right from the beginning, reception of cosmetic surgery has always been good," he says. However, it is only now that there seems to be a sudden demand in places like Chennai and Bangalore and migration and better awareness could be the deciding factors.

Calling card: "Most of the surgeries that I perform are liposuction, hair transplant, rhinoplasty or breast-related," Dr Ram says. He is popular with the younger male population for his abdominal-etching treatment, where a client can get a natural looking six-pack. Though this is not necessarily a positive trend if you go by health-indicators, Dr Ram says. "It is safer than doing exhausting physical workouts, and being on highly-potent steroids. At the least, you will not end up

with renal failure." It is safe and quick, he adds, with the patient going back home the same day.

Treatment most wanted: Dr Ram says that liposuction and hair transplant are the most common treatments among his clients. "Unlike Mumbai and Delhi, where face-related treatments like Botox and fillers are very common, people in Chennai opt for relatively functional treatments." Elucidating on the 'functional' aspect, he offers, "Male-breast correction or breast size reduction in young girls have many takers here." However, Dr Ram says, "Plastic surgery in Chennai or Bangalore is influenced by demand, rather than being market-driven."

Last word: About clients who wish to change their appearance completely, he says, "A cosmetic surgeon can only improve your looks." And unlike popular perception, cosmetic surgery is not scar-free. He also advocates a healthy lifestyle even if one opts for liposuction because, "there is no short-cut to looking and feeling good."

Treatment from Dr Kathik Ram starts from Rs 50,000 onwards (including hospital and other charges). Details: www.thecosmeticsurgery.org, drkarthikram@gmail.com



Pic:Shiba Prasad Sahu

Dr Kalpana Sarangi

In the industry for the last 15 years, Kalpana Sarangi started as a dermatologist and subsequently established herself as the head of the cosmetology centre at Mumbai's Nanavati hospital. "Cosmetology concerns the aesthetic appearance of the skin, hair and nails and procedures which aim for the improvement of the appearance of these can include oxidation, surgery, botox, fillers, creams and several other non-invasive treatments," she explains. "The main reasons people go in for these are due to social pressure or to simply look good." Among the popular treatments are those that address acne, skin pigmentation, hair fall and rejuvenation of skin, she offers.

India connect: "Beauty concerns a decade back started off with problems with acne, but now I have clients who are as young as 15 years who opt for treatments," she says, adding that elderly women and men are more open about going in for various procedures. Sarangi mentions that 60 per cent of her clients are top actors from Bollywood, while 40 per cent are regular people, including college students. She says there is a peak in treatment around festivals like Diwali,

Navarathri, New Year's Eve and the marriage season.

Calling card: Procedures to remove skin pigmentation, acne and skin-polishing. "The elderly go in for chemical peels, botox injections and Hyaluronic acid fillers, which add volume to depressed areas in the skin, improves the facial contour and removes age lines," she explains. Clients from the media come to me in their 20s," says Sarangi, adding, "It's important to be well-aware of procedures suited to you."

Treatment most wanted: Laser liposuction or radio frequency tighteners are used for fat on the abdomen, love handles, upper arms, near the under-arms, upper thigh and so on, while laser hair removal (which requires a minimum of five sittings) is popular for all parts of the body.

Last word: She says the future of cosmetology in India is in stem-cell therapy. "It can be used to treat a host of skin problems - heal damaged tissue, restore rejuvenation and even skin diseases like psoriasis etc," she offers. A word of advice? "I recommend that it is always best to under do, rather than over do," says Sarangi. "Looking as natural as possible is the way to go."

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Dr Rashmi Shetty

Often referred to as the 'Bollywood doctor,' Dr Rashmi Shetty started out as a cosmetic physician more than 12 years ago. Apart from film stars and TV celebrities, Dr Shetty has among her clients "top industrialists and entrepreneurs, bankers, housewives, students and college-going kids." Noting a preference in the cosmetic industry for non-invasive procedures over surgery, she says, "You don't have to go under the knife, what with fillers and injections offering the same effect." Non-invasive methods are quick, temporary and reversible if you don't like the results.

India connect: She admits that we have moved on from procedures like laser hair removals and skin peels to skin tightening, injectables for lines and addressing pigmentation.

Calling card: Offering services for the face, body, skin and hair, including nose sculpting, botox, mesotherapy for the face and thermage, Dr Shetty says, "I love doing injectables, especially the liquid face lift, an age prevention treatment where I use a little bit of filler under the eye to give a beautiful contoured look for your face." The ideal age to start

is between 30 to 35, she confides. "I also enjoy using minimal botox procedures to keep the face young by lifting the crown-line of your face or getting rid of drooping lines." Dr Shetty agrees that cosmetic procedures give people a confidence boost. "When you look good, you feel good and tend to interact with people better, get more productive and do a better job on the whole," she affirms.

Treatment most-wanted: "Oxygen Infusion or vitamin treatments, where antioxidants and nano-hydraters are introduced to the skin through oxygen to leave skin firmer. Men go in for treatments to remove frown lines between the eyebrows. Shetty notes that people don't want to look younger these days, but wish to maintain their appearance. "Even women in their 40s don't want to look younger, just fresher," she says. Another trend? People prefer to get an even skin tone over lighter skin, signifying that women are finally accepting their natural skin tone.

Last word: "Go to experienced doctors who have busy cosmetic practices," she says, adding, "Take care of your skin, it won't remain the same forever." Details: drrashmishetty.com

The trend in the city is towards non surgical procedures as it is a simple outpatient procedure where recovery period is quicker. Chennai is definitely a conservative city, and the most popular treatments are for lip filling and Botox to address wrinkles.

— Maya Vedamurthy, consultant dermatologist at Apollo Hospital



NOSE — Injection Rhinoplasty Procedure is a non-surgical 15 minute procedure. Cost: ₹10,000 onwards. Risk: Possible bruising. Celebrity proponent: Shruthi Hassan

HAIR — Hair transplant Procedure: Natural hair from the back of the head or your nape is implanted in the bald patches. Cost: ₹70,000 onwards. Risk: Considered safe. Celebrity proponent: Akshaye Khanna, Wayne Rooney

LIPS — Where Hyaluronic acid fillers are used in lip augmentation and removal of under-eye pigmentation. Cost: ₹25,000 onwards. Risk: Swelling. Celebrity proponent: Hema Malini

ARMS — Lipo-dissolve Procedure, which dissolves stubborn fat deposits in areas like love handles, lower tummy, upper back and under-arms. Cost: ₹25,000 per sitting. Risk: Blistering. Celebrity proponent: Britney Spears

LIPOSUCTION — Liposuction Procedure: An area-specific method where fat-cells are removed from stubborn areas through a small incision in hidden areas. Cost: ₹75,000-1.5 lacs. Risk: Change in skin tone, bumpy patches, infection. Celebrity proponent: Tara Reid