



Indian Speech and Hearing Association (ISHA)

Regd. Under the Kamataka Societies Registration Act. Karnataka Act No. 17 Registration No. 25/67-68

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

Presented by



PROF. R. RANGASAYEE

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Distinguished Chief Guest, Office Bearers of the ISHA, dignitaries, Chairman, office bearers and members of the Organizing Committee, Guest Speakers, delegates, invitees, and accompanying family members

Hearty Greetings to you!! Delighted to be at Kochi, a historic city and gateway to Southern Peninsula in the State of Kerala also called as the Gods Own Land. It's indeed a very forward looking State in Sovereign India. We are very privileged that the 46th ISHA Con is being held in this progressive State.

Wish to place on record the calm and methodical approach taken by the outgoing President Prof. Babul Basu. The organization benefitted much from his leadership. Thank you Prof. Basu.

My humble salutations to my teachers, seniors, colleagues, students, clients and well-wishers who have directly and indirectly guided me at all times in my career spanning 39 years. I was President of this august body in 1986-87, at the age of 34 years. Thanks to all of you for electing me to this Chair, again after a gap of 27 years.

Needless to say that promulgation of Rehabilitation Council of India Act 1992, PWD Act 1995, and National Trust Act 1999 are significant milestones in defining the rights of professionals as well as PWDs. By announcing the National Policy for PWDs in 2006, ratifying the UNCRPD in 2008 and by creating the Dept of Disability Affairs in 2012, a much larger responsibility has been assumed by



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the people of India in reaching out to the needy persons with various health conditions leading to activity limitation or participation restriction. Professionals like us have to absorb the salient features of the above said provisions in making the right real for persons with hearing, language and speech impairment.

The World Report on Disability 2011 of WHO gives comprehensive guidelines and best practices in a global context. The Incheon Strategy 2012 to make rights real is a classic publication that calls for a number of actions with a time frame. Inclusion, Right Based, Universal Design and ICF are the key words to be remembered by all of us, including those representing institutions - private or publicly funded.

Be that as it may, I wish to put forward some of the areas in which we may work in the current year

1. The incidence of Speech, Language or Hearing impairment is 37,500 as per NSSO 2001 and 87,500 as per the accepted prevalence of 6.3% if extrapolated to the population of India as per 2012 Census. The number of professionals required is 76870 calculated at the rate of one for every 1,000 clients whereas the number of available professionals is less than 2000. In the 54 Institutions conducting Under Graduate program and 16 Institutions conducting Post Graduate programs, only 1275 students can enrol per year.

It's important to realize that the number of professionals available in the country as well as the number enrolled per year are grossly inadequate. May be, we the members of ISHA need to focus on the use of tele-technology as a potential option to increase the reach of our services.

To bridge the gap between the clinical intervention protocol and the need of the individual in his/her real life situation, our training may include guided living with persons with special needs for at least two days to realize the social, economic, cultural, and environmental factors that influence the outcome of our professional initiatives. Encouraging post graduate students to take up dissertations on enlisted issues may go a long way in the emergence of a new breed of professionals. This initiative may also promote family centered intervention practices and offer a strong data base for tele-therapy programs.



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Nevertheless, it's important that the knowledge, skills and attitudes of our trainees match with those graduating from significant other countries. Initiative to facilitate teachers to undergo a formal short teacher training program periodically will help develop better skills in teaching, grading, conducting examination, attitude towards students, and to be up to date, etc. The National Policy on *Professional Skill Development* states that "as the proportion of working age group of 15-59 years will be increasing steadily, India has the advantage of "demographic dividend". Harnessing the demographic dividend through appropriate *professional* skill development efforts would provide an opportunity to achieve inclusion and productivity within the country and also a reduction in the global skill shortages."

Therefore, renewing our global outlook with the aim of increasing the visibility of ISHA and the profession of Speech & Hearing in India through networking with South Asian countries, Schengan and African countries apart from US, Australia, Middle East and UK is the need of the hour.

To achieve this end we may link with academics like Dr. Anu Sharma, Dr. M N Hegde, Dr. Bopanna, Dr. Hall, Dr. William Martin, Dr. Brooke Hollowell, and Mr. P J Kumar just to name a few familiar persons with significant knowledge and interest in the field of Audiology and Speech Language Pathology in India.

2. The assessment, goal setting, post intervention evaluation, disability certification, building architecture, census and survey, amendment to the compensation act, etc need be reviewed in ICF framework and be incorporated in our system, in larger public interest. Many of these have been done in countries like Japan and Australia.
3. We may effectively participate in implementing the schemes of the Government. Over 50 % of the population in rural areas are not reached; thanks to Sarva Shiksha Abhyan(SSA), there is a better coverage of children with special needs. The women and older adults too need accessible and affordable services. The agony of neglect is acute in these categories. The State Chapters may implement or assist in implementing ADIP Scheme of Govt. of India. We may consider instituting Seva Bhushan award to those members working in the poorer sections of the society and in rural areas. Altruism need to be nourished particularly in emerging market economy.



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4. The Institutions of Excellence have always nurtured an interdisciplinary team and its interaction to achieve its aim. The current developments in related disciplines such as technology, medicine, psychology, education, molecular biology, linguistics, sociology etc focusing on the varied needs of persons with Speech Language and Hearing impairment need to be known to us at least through an update annually. This may be possible by way of holding parallel sessions in ISHA Con. to promote interaction with significant researchers and practitioners in allied disciplines, even though they are not to be full members of ISHA. The only criteria may be that the theme shall address the needs of our clients. Gladly, it's happening now as well, but not critical enough to promote outcome oriented research and development in a vast country like India.

The issues thus flagged will be suitably addressed and taken forward as per the bye laws of our Association.

Thank you

Jai Hind