



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

MR. MAHENDRA SARAP

1999, Chandigarh

The honour and privilege of President ship of India Speech and Hearing Association (ISHA) bestowed upon those great, distinguished and dedicated persons in yester years, has been now reposed on me, by this August body – Indian Speech and Hearing Association in the concluding year of the present century and the millennium as well. I feel greatly honoured by the affection and confidence extended by you and my words fail to express adequately my gratitude and thanks to all the members.

In the history of last three decades of the ISHA, leading and pioneering efforts of those distinguished persons have raised the Speech and Hearing profession in this country to the present state of distinction like any other branches in Medical Sciences. I express my sincere gratitude and thanks to them. The joys as well as miseries involved in building our profession in this country are stupendous in magnitude and every member of ISHA has his / her own share of those, more so the pioneers in the profession in the early difficult years of its development. It will not be out of context to mention that I will be no match to many of those predecessors who have left indelible mark in building and uplifting the profession. Maintaining that dignity and work culture bequeathed by them. I will strive to put all my sincere efforts to further the interest of the field in days to come.

With the advancement of technology in management of speech and hearing problems in this country, our professionals are expected to work sincerely and diligently to build-up confidence in the mind of the large population of Speech and Hearing Handicapped without discrimination of



Indian Speech and Hearing Association (ISHA)

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

any kind. This will definitely help to receive necessary recognition for a better status from the relevant administrative set up in different states of the country as well as the Government of India. A uniform service placement throughout the country, like any other medical branches, is the need for the profession. I urge upon the Govt. Of India and all State Governments to give the minimum status of class II – Gazetted / Group – B Grade to a Speech and Hearing Specialist at the entry point of career, as in the case of Medical or Engineering specialities. It is heartening to note that a few states like Orissa and Tamilnadu in their Health Department, have taken a lead in this regard. The time has come now for the Association and the individual members at their level to urge upon other State Governments in the country to follow suit so that a Specialist in Speech and Hearing when employed should be assured of an honourable status. Such a step will create a congenial working condition for the Speech and Hearing specialist in the country.

Apart from a small number of our professionals, pursuing a career in teaching and research in leading Institutes imparting Graduate and Post – Graduate education, a much larger number of them work in Medical and Rehabilitative set up, where diagnosis, clinical application and treatment in Speech and Hearing problems have been their main concern. Even though the discipline of our has established its own special identify, it is disheartening to note that there do not exist separate Department for Speech and Hearing Sciences in many leading Medial Institutes of the country except a very few. It is time to initiate adequate steps to place the matter before the Government of India as well as State Governments to create separate Department for the faculty in Medical Colleges in the country. Government of India, in 1969 in response to the initiative taken by the Director of All India Institute of Speech and Hearing, Mysore, issued instructions to all State Governments and Union territories to establish Speech and Hearing Units at teaching Hospitals as a part of the IV Five Year Plan. This had its own impact and number of such units grew in sequence. Similar steps have to be initiated from the leading institutes to press the Government of India to issue instructions to State Governments in establishing at the minimum one Speech and Hearing unit in each District Head Quarters Hospitals headed by qualified Speech and Hearing personnel as part of the Five Year Plans. Honourable members should contribute their effort as individuals and groups to pursue the matter at appropriate levels of the Government.



Indian Speech and Hearing Association (ISHA)

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

This plan of expansion and improvement when implemented will definitely take our services nearer to the vast population of Speech and Hearing handicapped in the country.

Though at least one tenth of the population suffer from speech and hearing disorders in some form or other and the number of Speech and Hearing professionals is slowly but steadily swelling year after year, we still do not have a separate Speech and Hearing Council to look after the basics of the profession and professionals at the administrative level. The amalgamation of the profession into a wider and more generalised body like the Rehabilitation Council of India does not serve the distinct interest and concern of Speech and Hearing Specialists. It is therefore necessary to establish a separate "Speech and Hearing Council of India" in line with Medical Council of India to meet the specific challenges and hurdles in the process of rehabilitation of Speech and Hearing handicapped in the country.

The annual scientific deliberations of conferences have been a routine affair every year and it has to be maintained with improved standard. Let us not, however make other ISHA deliberations an annual affair at the conference only. The individual members and the executive body in particular have to widen the scope of ISHA activities throughout the year and work to achieve its objectives ceaselessly. I believe that no effort put in right time and right place goes in vain. Let us resolve to work together to give a new and strong thrust to the activities of the Association.

The Speech and Hearing Institutes, Imparting Bachelor and Master Degree though very few, have been doing commendable work for the profession in organizing seminars and workshops in various subjects from time to time to update knowledge of our professionals staying far away from the houses of knowledge. This trend has to be maintained in collaboration with UGS, UNICEF, RCI and other bodies who finance the projects. But what further we need is seminars on "working condition of Speech and Hearing profession and status of the professionals" in the country so that current knowledge in these areas can be utilised to evolve plans in pursuing to safe-guard the interest of the profession. This will also lead to eliminate the existing inter-state disparity in placement of personnel of the faculty. Although the well being of the communicatively



Indian Speech and Hearing Association (ISHA)

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

handicapped is our constant focus, sometimes the stress and strain encountered in our endeavour, handicap us for lack of independence in the working condition due to inappropriate hierarchical system. This has to be taken care of before it is too late.

Friend, our is a rapidly expanding profession in the world and more so in this country. The larger population has yet to become aware of the critical importance of communication and the devastating effects of its disorders. The menders and advocates of these handicapped persons are none other than people of our profession and hence let us whole heartedly motivate ourselves to serve this group of population. The profession of speech and hearing has reached adulthood almost a decade back, and now we have to prove it responsible to help the communicatively disordered population.

Chandigarh, the city beautiful has got the unique distinction of holding the 31st National Conference at the turn of the century as well as the millennium and this occasion will definitely occupy a most selective place in our memory lane.

Before I conclude, on behalf of the Association, I thank the Chairman, Organising Committee and other members for the invitation extended to us for holding this conference in their beautiful city.

JAI HIND