

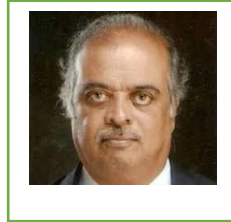


Indian Speech and Hearing Association (ISHA)

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

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

Presented by



PROF. N. P. NATARAJA
2003, CHENNAI

Dear Members,

WISH YOU ALL A HAPPY AND PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR, 2003.

First of all, I would like to express my sincere thanks to the members of ISHA, for the bestowing me this office of the president of ISHA, for the second time. I would also like to convey my gratitude for permitting to serve as an office bearer of ISHA for the past 25 years, in various capacities.

I had assumed the office of president of ISHA, for the first time in 1984 in this historical city, then Madras. It is so incidental that again I am taking over as president of ISHA, in 2003, in the same place. Then my former teacher, late Mr. P D Manohar had handed over the office and now my former student Dr. Subba Rao has handed over the office to me. For the past 20 years there have been considerable changes in ISHA and in the profession, in our country as well as outside the country.

ISHA, which is in its late 30's like any average Indian has been facing lot of adversaries in gaining recognition. Introspection about the growth of ISHA and the profession for the past 35 years would help in recognizing the achievements and the failures. Yes, there have been considerable changes in the past 15-20 years in the profession and ISHA. ISHA, which was given birth in this very state, Tamil Nadu, (in Vellore in 1967) has been nurtured well by many stalwarts, in the profession of otolaryngology, of Tamilnadu, like Dr. Cooper, Dr. Satyanarayana, Dr. Y. P. Kapur, Dr. Kameshwaran and others. Based on the solid foundations laid by our seniors, with all endurance in the process, the profession and ISHA have achieved some standing in the society in the country as well as outside the country. We are grateful to our seniors for their efforts and foresight.



Indian Speech and Hearing Association (ISHA)

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

One significant change that has been noticed is in terms of manpower development. The number of training centres has increased two to ten within last twenty-five years and hence the number of professionals coming out has been increasing steadily. However the number of professions working in the country at present is small, not even the thousand, considering the number required in the country. This is partly due to the brain drain. The solution for this problem is only to train more people. But at this juncture it is necessary to look into the existing training programmes. It must be admitted that the present training programmes need to be strengthened in terms of infrastructure like staff, equipment, library and clinical facilities. That apart, several members have also express their concern regarding the course contents, during of the courses, clinical training and others, adopted by different training programmes in the country. With the present shortage of manpower and problem in manpower development the possibilities of super or sub specialties remain unrealized and it may take much more time even to consider these possibilities.

In the last two decades, the number of clinics in the country has increased considerably,. But these clinical facilities are in no way sufficient to meet need of the handicapped of the country. The lack of manpower has led to non-availability of clinical facilities even in cities where there are training centres. (for example, even the bedside evaluation and treatment or counselling the family members of aphasics is not available in cities like Mumbai or Bangalore Or Mysore and others.) This being the situation, reaching the needy population of the rural area would remain as a dream.

In terms of research, a review shows that considerable attempts have been made to study various aspects of Speech, Language and Hearing and the disorders. But, hardly one can point out as a substantial work in any specific area, may be with expectation of one or two. And further, failure to use the clinical data which is in abundant, to derive useful information, is very glaring. Hopefully, the training centres would consider enlightening the future professionals to use the same meaningfully by systematically recording and storing, using computers. It is also noticed that the interaction of Speech and hearing professionals with allied professionals is weaning. It is necessary to have great interaction, with the spirit of give and take, with others professionals for better growth of the field. ISHA would take steps to improve its relationship with other professional bodies, at least within the country.

It must be noted that even through there is a high prevalence of Speech & Hearing disorders in the country the number of patients using the available clinical facilities are limited. This is because of lack of awareness. However, the public education through different media by various government and NGO's has made more number of people to seek treatment. But there is a definite need for great effort to educate more people.



Indian Speech and Hearing Association (ISHA)

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

It is heartening to note that the Rehabilitation Council of India has been working on many of the problems of the Speech & Hearing Handicapped of the country. It has invited nominees of ISHA to take part of members of its various committees. It has also been supporting different organizations in conducting workshops seminars and other professional activities. A greater interaction and co-ordination between ISHA and RCI would help the handicapped and the professionals of the country in long way. ISHA would work in this direction.

It must be admitted that ISHA being the only national professional body has not been active to the extent that is required and hence has not made enough impact on the decision making bodies like government and universities. Even now, it is not too late to take active part and guide the profession in the country. There is a need to look into the problems of the profession seriously. ISHA being aware of the problems would take steps to provide a platform to its members to discuss and to interact with government agencies like RCI to a greater extent and find solutions. All this would be possible only with the co-operation and active participation of the members, in whatever the capacity that they can.

ISHA proposes to prepare status report on various aspects of professional activities, set up a National library and information centres in Speech & Hearing, to hold at least four CEPs/Workshops with the help of other organizations and to interact with allied professional organization in the coming year. The details of these proposals will be presented in the General Body meeting of ISHA.

This is the fourth time that ISHA is holding its annual conference in this historical place. The members of ISHA have always enjoyed the well-known hospitality of Tamilnadu and have gathered in good number this time also. I thank the organizers for their efforts in making our stay comfortable, pleasant and useful.

Thank you all.