



DIRECTOR'S SPEECH

38th AIIMS Annual Convocation, New Delhi, 1st October, 2010

Respected Prime Minister of India, Dr Manmohan Singhji, Honourable President of AIIMS and Minister for Health & Family Welfare, Govt. of India, Shri Ghulam Nabi Azad sahib, esteemed Members of the Institute, distinguished guests and members of the press, my esteemed colleagues the Dean, the Registrar and the faculty, dear students, respected parents, ladies and gentlemen:

On the occasion of the 38th Annual Convocation of the All India Institute of Medical Sciences, I extend a very hearty welcome to you all.

AIIMS was established in 1956 and we have celebrated the 55th foundation day, just a week back, on 25th September, with a day long programme consisting of an Exhibition on Public Health and a panel discussion on "Towards Building Public Trust in Medical Profession".

During its journey over half-a-century, AIIMS has made significant contribution in the field of medical education, research and quality patient care. The institute has not only proved its leadership in many areas but also has established itself as the best service provider.

AIIMS has a manpower of over 10,000 including 625 faculty members, supported by resident doctors, nurses, paramedics, scientists, non-medical officers and staff. Till date, the institute has produced a large number of specialists, super-specialists (DM/M.Ch.), MBBS doctors, Ph. D. scholars and also allied health and basic sciences experts, including nurses and paramedical professionals.

We are awarding 425 degrees to successful students, today in different disciplines. I congratulate all the recipients of their well-deserved degrees. This is a unique day for you in your life, full of joy and a feeling of achievement. I urge you young friends and colleagues to always uphold the dignity of your institute and the motherland.

During the last academic year the faculty and the scientists of the institute have published over 1600 research papers in national and international journals and 285 chapters in books. Various departments organised over 152 medical conferences, workshops, CMEs, both national and international, during the year.

The institute is committed to high quality research. Our faculty and scientists are busy in frontline research in areas like molecular medicine, proteomics, radiocrystallography, newer

diagnostics through imaging sciences, immunogenetics and transplant surgeries, cancer-therapy, and technology-based innovations including biocompatible implant devices for joint replacement, and implants and stents in cardiology, otology, trauma-related clinical research and also newer surgical practices.

We have also projects in cutting-edge research such as nanotechnology, stem cell therapy and a host of contemporary research areas of national and global perspectives. Over 500 research projects are in progress from extramural research grants of Rs. 50 crore besides the institutional funds.

Presently, the AIIMS hospitals have a total bed strength of 2424, including day care beds. During the preceding year, the institute attended to over 24 lakh OPD patients, admitted 1.48 lakh patients and performed 1.24 lakh surgical procedures, which included highly sophisticated procedures too. The institute has maintained an ideal parameter in patient-care services with an average bed occupancy of over 80%, and average hospital stay of about 6 days. The AIIMS hospitals reported a net death rate of below 3%.

We are aware that people have great expectation from the institute.

We have tried and succeeded in providing cheapest specialised medical care in the country. No wonder, the people, in general, and our patients, in particular, have reposed great trust in us. I, on behalf of my colleagues, would like to assure all those coming to us that we shall never shirk our responsibility. I take this opportunity to thank all my faculty colleagues for their contribution and commitment to nation building activities in the health sciences sector.

I have no hesitation to say that we have lived up to the mandate given to us by the Parliament. Our work and commitment have been eminently endorsed by the public as well as the people in high places including the Hon'ble Prime Minister himself.

It is, therefore, not surprising that AIIMS has assumed a brand value, which has been recognized by the Government of India as well as the State governments and institutes across the country. The central government's decision to open six AIIMS-like institutes in different States would not only provide quality health care to a much larger population in far-flung parts of the country but also would help us in acquiring valuable data about health parameters of these regions.

Our brand value has unfortunately attracted a large patient load which has forced us to compromise on our other priorities. As Dr. Valiathan Committee Report has observed, with the proposed expansion of patient-care facilities and new centres, the institute would become a mega medi-city, which may dilute the academic and research activities of the Institute. This is indeed a big challenge for all of us. The government and the Parliament have to consider this issue carefully and give necessary direction.

We are fully aware that we cannot rest on our past laurels. We have to keep pace with the advances in science and technology, particularly in the field of medical sciences. As a public-

funded institute we have also to see the cost of technology and the paying capacity of the average patient.

With the support from the government and the honorable Prime Minister and our Health Minister, the institute is about to start its expansion programmes for improving its capabilities and capacity.

A separate Out Patients block, Parking area and a knowledge and innovation centre, besides upgradation of the existing facilities, increase of faculty strength, research-scientists, resident doctors and nurses are in the advanced stage of consideration and implementation. The government has recently allocated a budget of Rs. 750 crore for these expansion and innovation activities, expected to be completed in next 2 years.

India is on the move as a growing knowledge-based society. The whole world is looking at us. We have to carefully plan for our future generation. It is indeed a huge responsibility to maintain the quality and the pace of growth, which is essential in the health-care sector.

The Government of India has launched the National Rural Health Mission to improve the health care for the people of India. With the Government's emphasis on universal right to education and quality health care for all, the country would require a large number of trained manpower. I am confident that the AIIMS would play its limited but important role in assisting the government in its endeavour to provide a better quality of life to our people.

On behalf of the faculty, staff and students and on my own behalf, I express a deep sense of gratitude to you, respected Mr. Prime Minister, for your august presence on this occasion.

I am equally grateful to the honorable AIIMS President and Minister for Health and Family Welfare, who has been always a source of strength and inspiration to me personally as well as for his continuous support and guidance for the future growth of the institute.

I thank you all for your kind indulgence.

JAI HIND

Professor Ramesh C. Deka

Director/CEO, AIIMS, New Delhi