

Presidential Address

DR SS DODA

President

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Hon'ble Chief Guest - Dr. Ambumani Ramados, Union Minister - Health & Family Welfare, Government of India; Guest of Honor - Dr A Rajsekaran, Chairman - National Board of Examinations; My predecessor - outgoing President Prof. S. K. Bhargava; Dignitaries on the dais; Distinguished Guests from India & Abroad; IRIA Colleagues; Students; Representatives from the Health Care Industry & Media; Ladies and Gentlemen.

At the outset, I would like to extend hearty greetings and best wishes for the Year 2006 and welcome you all to the 59th Annual Congress of IRIA at Chennai, the city of Indian Culture, Traditions & Spiritualism.

It has been rightly said by Mahatma Gandhi, "I do not want my house to be walled from all sides & my windows to be stuffed. I want the cultures of all lands to be blown into my house as freely as possible. But I refuse to be blown off my feet by any". It is a great pleasure to see people from all corners of the country, to be present here, enjoying each other's company.

I am indeed honored to be addressing this August gathering, as President of the "Indian Radiological and Imaging Association". I stand before you with a commitment of utmost sense of responsibility inherent in this highest position in IRIA. My sincere gratitude to all the members, for giving me the opportunity to serve in this capacity. You have been kind to me in the past & with continued cooperation of all I hope to be able to achieve some additional objectives in the upliftment of the organization & profession as a whole.

Since its inception in 1931 in Calcutta, & its first Annual Congress in 1946 which was held at this very city of Chennai, the IRIA has come a long way. Today, our association is 75 years old, I still feel it's a YOUNG & DYNAMIC organization. I can see plenty of young faces in this large gathering, some on the dais & many past presidents also, who remain full of vitality & charm. My information is, ABOUT 50% of IRIA members are less

than 50 years of age. This means, we have a large young force of imaging experts who are going to be at the helm of affairs in the next 2 decades. And that implies, a vast reservoir of dynamism in coming years. At present, we are a strong family of over 5600 members. This growth has been possible because of tremendous advancements, expansion & addition of high tech glamour which has attracted many of us to the field of Imaging.

We also take pride in the fact that we have a well equipped building as our head quarters, we have a long standing existence of our academic body, the ICRI. Our Journal is perhaps the best in the country & now it is also gaining increasing international recognition. We have cordial relationship with the Healthcare Industry with regular meetings for a number of years. A large number of Indian radiologists are doing outstanding work in US & rest of the western world. We also have some brilliant Radiologists, Ultrasonologists & Administrators, responsible for bringing the latest in Technology in the country. The newest CT's & MR's arrive in this country within a year or two of their worldwide launch.

While talking about technology, today, we are witnessing an unprecedented growth in the medical field, thanks to the development of highly sophisticated super computers. And who knows it better than us, the radiologists. In our scenario, the aim has to be to somehow provide cost effective services to masses at large. We have done well in this regard & our people are doing commendable work in US, CT, MR & now digital radiology is available, I think practically in almost all major towns across the land. The cost of investigations is unbelievably low, especially when you compare it with western countries. Today, in our day to day practice, it is not uncommon to come across a non resident Indian or even a foreigner coming to this country for some medical check up involving imaging. The Government has to take the medical fraternity in confidence & make concerted efforts to further boost the so called medical tourism. The IRIA can provide its own inputs in this regard.

Over the years, IRIA annual congress has effectively served the cause of Radiology Education. Through its academic wing, Indian College of Radiology & Imaging, numerous CME programs, seminars, symposia have been conducted in the past & are being regularly held every year. Unfortunately, due to lack of funds & infrastructure, many radiology institutions in the country are not all that well equipped. This has resulted in non-uniform & to some extent inadequate teaching of post graduates. The syllabus also materially varies from institution to institution. It is important that this factor is addressed at the earliest.

I maintain that education is the prime instrument in our

relationship within IRIA & quality of education is inescapably involved in the quality of our profession. I am happy to inform that IRIA has successfully organized its first ever resident teaching program in Delhi in Oct 2005. Though the program did not involve any fanfare, I consider it to be a landmark event. It was well attended by over 150 residents from northern states of the country. This was an inspiring effort on the part of Delhi IRIA & our young Radiologists must have benefited from it. In the coming times, it is going to serve as a road map for other zones in the country & I am happy to announce that more of such programmes are already under way.

IRIA, today is a vibrant body of highly qualified & proficient professionals. On the one hand, it has joined and co-operated at every step with Government of India for proper implementation of PNDT act. On the other, it has also not failed to engage top lawyers to contest in the highest court of the land against avoidable harassment of our members. Nevertheless, a lot needs to be done. I gather to know from last "Central Supervisory Board Meeting" that about 27000 ultrasound centers are registered in the country, which do millions of ultrasound examinations every year. Out of these, 24 cases of violation were detected & only 3 of these against actual sex determination. Some of the violations involved trivial deficiencies, such as, the signatures of the ultrasonologist are missing on an occasional form F. I urge the hon'ble minister to look into the matter, evolve a process of differential punishment based on the gravity of deficiency. For example, a person caught for doing sex determination should be given the severest of punishment. However, for minor lapses, a warning and/or fine may be imposed considering that the intension has not been to do sex determination, which is the sole purpose of the act. The IRIA also needs to expand the present PNDT committee & do some statistical research work, to help the government in providing more scientific inputs. Let us also not promote semi, para, indigenous & unqualified manpower in this field. Our society is already fed up with quacks running x-ray & ultrasound clinics. The world is fast marching ahead. It is high time for us, the IRIA to start a public campaign, take a lead in the society & say a big NO to sex determination. Only then, the public & Govt will feel confident about our intentions. Let us resolve & get rid of the long standing social evil of favoring the male child. I am sure the Government of India and Ministry of Health will certainly welcome suggestions & advice from IRIA.

At international level, we have been an integral part of Asia Oceania & International Societies of Radiology. The RSNA has been regularly contributing for the cause of Radiology education all over the world. This year too, we are having some of the highly acclaimed international speakers sponsored by RSNA to deliberate on various issues in Imaging. On behalf of IRIA, I wish to convey my thanks to the RSNA for this gesture.

It is heartening to note that the organizers of last Annual Congress, held at Agra were able to save a sum of Rs 80 Lacs, which is a major contribution to IRIA. This could not have been possible but for the professional approach of the organizers. The Health Care Industry equally

deserves the credit for the financial support to our activities. Money saved is money earned. Its so painful to go through losses, for the organizers, for the executive & for all of us. We certainly need to concentrate on improving the income for IRIA. We have to have a sound, safe & strong financial foundation. This is important. Because, more & more research & statistical projects are to be conducted by IRIA. Optimal imaging protocols need to be worked out on behalf of IRIA. A digital library at IRIA house may record the incidence etc of diseases detected by all of us with their indexing. All this will be possible only if the infrastructure at the IRIA Headquarters is strong. I visualize major contributions through savings from annual conferences. We all have been a witness to the history. Our building came through savings of AOOR. Imagine if it was not so. It is high time that for our annual conferences, we have a central guiding committee, a local monitoring committee under state branch & an independent professional management company looking after the organizational part, with an assurance of definite major financial contribution to IRIA at the end of the day. 4-6 WELL EQUIPPED CONVENTION CENTERS spread over the country may be used by rotation for the event. Till then, I hope, we will continue to have major contributions from the organizers of annual conference in future too.

Ladies & Gentlemen, Chennai has had unprecedented rains during last 2 months. We all have had our share of anxiety. I have been constantly in touch with Dr Kandasamy & Dr Kulasekaran. Look around & you will find, the organizers have already sailed through the storm & you are attending one of the best organized conferences. I am sure a little support from all of you will help ease the stress which has been around for the organizers. After all, this is our conference. Hope you enjoy every bit of this conference, the scientific feast, the South Indian delicacies & not the least the great Indian hospitality.

I take this opportunity to pay regards to my 96 years old father, who even today, walks at same pace as mine, whose sense of honesty & determination has always inspired me. I must thank my wife Veena and children, Ruhani and Ananya for their patience in not only tolerating me but extending moral support and giving me strength on occasions when I am deeply engrossed in IRIA affairs.

My dear colleagues, IRIA is our home & we are a family. Our learned past presidents have put in years of hardship, love & affection together to build it up, brick by brick. We shall always remain respectful to them. And now, you have chosen to make me the head of this family for certain time. It will be my endeavor to make this home strong & beautiful, a worthy organization with space for each one of us. Let us begin 2006 with a positive note. Let us join & resolve, "Together we shall leave no stone unturned to bring about positive changes in the working of IRIA, in the organization of 'STATE OF THE ART' conferences & in improving the standards of Radiology education & practice at all levels".

Thank you very much once again. Hope you have an enjoyable 2006. My best wishes for you all.

JAI HIND !!!