

Presidential address

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Thank you, Dr. Bhupendra Ahuja, my immediate predecessor for introducing me with good words and installing me as President of IRIA 2018. Thank you, Sir.

Respected dignitaries on the dais, off the dais, respected invited faculty members from all over the world, dear delegates from the country and abroad, dear family members of the delegates, the ever-supporting technology and trade partners, representatives of the media, press, ladies, and gentlemen, "Wish you all a very happy new year." I also wish you all a very happy Republic Day for tomorrow as it is January 26.

As I stand here as the 74th President of the Indian Radiological and Imaging Association (IRIA) in this great commercial capital of India, Mumbai, my mind goes back to the glorious history of our Association. We started our journey as the Indian Radiology Association on April 21, 1931 at Calcutta, the former capital of British India. In March 1937, the Indian Radiology Association was formally registered with a membership of 24 radiologists. The first annual congress of the Indian Radiology Association was held in 1946 at Madras. Subsequently, our headquarters moved to New Delhi, the national capital of Independent India, and the name was changed to Indian Radiological and Imaging Association. The present headquarters building complex was inaugurated on May 5, 1995.

As on December 31, 2017, we have 15,038 members of whom more than 50% are young radiologists. Thus, our association continues to be young like our country. We have branches in 24 states and very active chapters in most of the cities.

Our prestigious internationally recognized and indexed journal, "Indian Journal of Radiology and Imaging" started its publication in 1947, the year of Independence.

To guide and supervise the academic activities of the association, we have a very robust "Indian College of Radiology and Imaging," which was started in 1976. In fact,

almost every day of the year somewhere in our vast country, radiology academic program may be occurring.

As citizens of a country with the world's second largest population, we realize that our duties and responsibilities as an accredited body of radiologists are really immense. We believe that IRIA is doing this duty with utmost sincerity and commitment.

Before I announce my plans for the year ahead, I feel that I must thank each and every person who made me the 74th President of IRIA. I am proud to say that I am the first person from the southern-most state of the country, that is Kerala, to occupy this prestigious position. This was possible due to the unstinted support of each and every member of IRIA from the entire country. Thank you, Sirs! Thank you, Madams from the depth of my heart. You are all members of my extended family. I must thank my immediate family consisting of my mother Nani Amma, my wife Dr. Parvathi, Prof. of Pediatrics, and my daughter Durga, a Medical student, who have all been supporting me silently every second of my life. Without them, I am nothing.

What is my agenda as the 74th President. Well, we have a system of President and the President being elected for every year.

With the concurrence of Dr. Hemant Patel, the President elect of IRIA 2018, we are declaring certain programs for the next 2 years. I hope this trend will be continuing next year also.

I. Profession first

IRIA is and will always stand for its members. That is and will be our motto at all times. The Association will be there to help any member with any professional problem. Any harassment of IRIA members will be fought legally as well as through political lobbying. There is a feeling all over the country that various other professionals are encroaching into the field of radiology and because of that some of our younger members feel insecure. This is happening in other

countries also. We will have a two-pronged strategy to face this situation.

1. Radiologist should always be far ahead of others. The Association will facilitate intense training for the members so that they will always be the best. IRIA will collaborate with the National Board of Examination (DNB) to start new fellowship courses in various subspecialties under Radiology. IRIA will start subspecialty fellowships and certificate courses for its members. We plan to have dedicated fetal medicine workshops for radiologists alone in all states in India, this year itself. Special training facilities will be made available in Interventional Radiology to all desiring members
2. Through legal provisions, we will ensure that the eligibility criterion for doing ultrasound imaging will be qualification in radiology. We are thankful to the Medical Council of India for endorsing our views in this regard. We hope that the Honorable Supreme Court of India will also support our views and issue appropriate orders.

Now any individual, can purchase, install, and use radiography equipments. Through our active interactions with Atomic Energy Regulatory Board (AERB), we will try to make it mandatory to have a radiology-qualified doctor for operating high-end X-ray machines, computed tomography scans, and Cath. labs. Now, it has become mandatory to have PNDT license to purchase magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) machines. Hence, the presence of a radiologist must be made compulsory wherever MRI machines are installed. The Medical Council of India has made it mandatory to have the signature of a pathologist for every pathology report. Similarly, for any radiology and imaging report, the signature of a radiologist must be made mandatory.

II. Raksha and PC-PNDT

The second flagship program we plan to launch is “Raksha.” This program conceived beautifully by MSB IRIA under the leadership of Dr. Sona Pungavkar will be adopted by IRIA on a national scale. No country can survive if female gender is systematically eliminated. Unfortunately, female feticide is still occurring in some parts of the country. To the best of our knowledge, no IRIA member is a party to this heinous crime. But we still get the blame. We, the radiologists, are committed to protect the female gender—the fetus, the child, the adolescent, and the mother.

Sonologists, sonography technicians, and all kinds of quacks are committing this crime. We, the qualified radiologists, must ensure that each and every such individual causing or helping the crime of female feticide is caught and put behind the bars. By this, we, the radiologists, will be able to practice safely. The PC-PNDT Act was passed by the Indian Parliament without much discussion and, therefore,

it has many deficiencies and draconian provisions. Giving minor clerical errors, the same punishment as female feticide is absurd. “Form F” should not be used as a weapon for punishing innocent radiologists. Limiting the services of a qualified radiologist to two centers only is again unreasonable. The Association will use all its might to correct all these irrational clauses in the PC-PNDT Act, at the same time, we must realize that this is currently the law of the land and therefore we have to obey this Act, in letter and spirit. At this juncture, we would like to impress upon the government that PC-PNDT Act alone will not save the female gender. The government should make proactive laws so that every girl child is protected by their own family. Government can consider depositing an amount of Rs. 1 lakh in the name of a girl child immediately after birth. Withdrawal of this amount should be permitted only after the girl attains the age of 18. By this time, the amount would have grown to Rs. 5–10 lakhs, if invested prudently. Education of girls should be made compulsory and free, both in government and private institutions. The state of Kerala has achieved gender equality with more females than males in the general population simply by improving social conditions and female literacy. This can be replicated in the rest of the country also.

Radiology Education and Research

The science of radiology is growing exponentially. What we learn today will become obsolete within months or even days. Continued up-scaling of the knowledge is needed for survival. This responsibility will have to be undertaken by professional associations. IRIA is committed to this. The Indian College of Radiology, which now represents the entire members of IRIA, will be sufficiently empowered to lead from the front. We already have a Speaker bank that consists of leading faculty in the country. This will be updated regularly without any bias. We propose to have a list of IRIA-approved national professors. Services of these eminent teachers can be utilized by institutions. Online CME and talks by leading radiologists will be provided by IRIA officially. Similarly, online picture/film sharing will be introduced to create a discussion forum to improve academics.

Many diseases we face in our country are unique to us and the imaging features of the same will have to be documented by us. Similarly, we have to device appropriate technology with significant cost reduction for Interventional Radiological procedures. All these are possible if we are willing to undertake research. Again, it is the duty of the professional organization to give leadership in relevant country-specific research, and IRIA is willing for that.

All these require committed members and funding. We have sufficient number of radiologists in the country and abroad to help us. We must plan to mobilize funds from institutions,

agencies, and individuals, so that educational and research activities can be continued without hindrance. IRIA will acknowledge the donors, during the Annual Conference and give wide publicity for their generosity. IRIA will ensure that this fund is used for education and research only.

Trade Issues: Supply and Service of Equipment

With the newly introduced GST scheme, there is a lot of confusion regarding tax for radiology equipments and consumables. IRIA will spend time and energy to get clarity on these issues so that there won't be any harassment of the members. Radiology equipments are lifesaving equipments and so they should be in the Nil Tax Bracket. We will pressurize the government for reducing the taxes on all radiology equipments.

We will ensure good relation with technology partners so that world-class equipments are made available in the country at reasonable cost. We will also insist that prompt service is provided. Through collective bargaining and negotiation with companies, we will try to reduce the cost of equipment's and consumables for the benefit of members.

Relationship with the Government

IRIA believes in good relation with the government. There are several decision-making committees under Government of India on health-related matters. Very often, when many other specialists are included, radiologists are generally excluded. This causes problems. Authorities are not aware of the point of view of radiologists. Even in the central supervisory committee of PC-PNDT, there is no official representation for IRIA. This must be changed and we need the support of all members to make the government change this.

Before I conclude my presidential address, I must thank the really committed and dedicated leaders of IRIA who made this mega event possible. I have no hesitation to say that Dr. Jignesh Thakker is the real hero behind the success of this conference. In 2015 when Dr. Jignesh Thakker took over the Presidentship of IRIA at Cochin, I had the fortune to be the organizing chairman of the Cochin National Conference. Now when I am taking over Presidentship of IRIA at Mumbai, Dr. Jignesh Thakker is the organizing chairman. Life is really beautiful. Thanks to Dr. Jignesh for your wonderful work. The co-organizing chairman Dr. Bhavin Jankharia, as we

all know, is a great academician and leader. Thank you, Sir, for leading from the front. Dr. O.P. Bansal, former President of IRIA, is a great organizer. As the organizing secretary, he has produced wonderful results. The co-organizing secretaries Dr. Shailendra Singh and Dr. Sanjeev Mani are very committed silent workers who made everything possible. Thank you, Sirs, for your sincere work. The entire conference is made possible because of the untiring work of a large number of committed members of IRIA, mainly from Maharashtra. I thank each and every one of you for making this conference very successful.

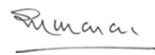
It is always possible to do great things if all of us join together and work sincerely.

Let us unite to improve our own profession, that is radiology, and also for meeting the aspirations of the millions of the fellow citizens of our country.

Jai IRIA!

Jai Hind!

Yours sincerely,



(Dr. Mohanan K.)

President, IRIA 2018

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Access this article online	
Quick Response Code:	Website: www.ijri.org
	DOI: 10.4103/ijri.IJRI_114_18

Cite this article as: Mohanan K. Presidential address. Indian J Radiol Imaging 2018;28:3-5.