

**The Text of Presidential Address by Dr. Prema Ramachandran, President, NAMS at the  
Convocation held on 31<sup>st</sup> October, 2009, at Chhatrapati Shahuji Maharaj Medical University,  
Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh**

Your Excellency the Governor of Uttar Pradesh, our Chief Guest, Dr Bajaj our Guest of Honour, Dr Chooramani Gopal, Chairman of the Organising Committee, distinguished Fellows, Members, delegates and guests

Your Excellency, we are indeed very grateful to you, for having found time in the midst of your busy schedule to be the Chief Guest and grace our convocation. We are very happy that the 49<sup>th</sup> Annual conference of the NAMS is being held in historic city of Lucknow. We are indeed grateful to Dr Gopal, Vice chancellor of the Chhatrapati Shahuji Maharaj Medical University, Lucknow. for hosting the NAMS 2009 Annual Conference in the spacious Science centre with its excellent infrastructure. Dr Gopal, Dr Merhotra and the entire organizing committee have worked tirelessly for months to ensure that the conference arrangements are excellent, the delegates are looked after and their stay made comfortable. NAMS Academic Council under the Chairmanship of Dr Bajaj, the Guest of Honour in this convocation, had drawn up an intellectually stimulating scientific programme for the Conference. I am sure that Lucknow conference will be remembered both for the excellence of the scientific programme and the traditional Lucknow hospitality.

For health professionals learning and skill up gradation are life long processes. Government of India has recognised the Academy as the nodal agency for Continuing Medical Education. Through its Intramural and Extramural Continuing Medical Education Programmes, NAMS has played a very important role in equipping the health care professionals to optimally utilise emerging technologies for improvement in quality of life. The pre-conference CME yesterday on "Life Style diseases" was informative and well attended. I am sure it will of help to the physicians wanting to provide preventive, promotive and therapeutic care at affordable cost to persons with life style related health problems.

The National Academy of Medical Sciences was set up with the mandate of recognising and fostering medical professionals and biomedical scientists who have made major contributions to promotion of knowledge of medical sciences in India and its practical application to improve health status of Indians by awarding Fellowships and Memberships. We have over 783 of Fellows, elected Members 1545 and nearly 2905 Members who have got through the DNB examination. In this Convocation the newly elected Fellows and Members have received their scrolls. I am sure that all of you newly inducted Fellows and Members will follow the traditions set by your eminent predecessors and maintain the highest standards of professional ethics and excellence in all your activities. The country needs your contributions to improve health status of the citizens and the Academy needs your contributions to enable it to achieve greater heights than ever before.

The National Academy recognizes the persons who have contributed to significant advances in biomedical and medical fields and honours them by awarding orations. Your Excellency you have just now presented the awards to eminent medical professionals and the biomedical scientists chosen for the NAMS Orations and NAMS Awards. This morning we listened to some excellent orations on health care to vulnerable segments of the population. Tomorrow morning we will have the privilege to listen to orations dealing with care of persons with some of the emerging public health problems.

Health is one of the essential prerequisites for human resource development. During the current phase of ongoing health transition the country has to face the challenges of having to cope with the existing burden of infectious diseases and maternal child health problems and simultaneously combat emerging problem of noncommunicable diseases and accident and trauma care. This morning we had the NAMS Symposium on Professional Education in Health Sciences aimed at equipping the future health professionals to cope with emerging challenges in providing health care. Dr Bajaj eloquently described how and why education in health sciences is a key determinant of health system's performance. He was followed by three eminent medical educationists discussing

- evidence based professional education,
- structural reforms in planning and management of professional education and

- social and performance audit of professional education.

This symposium had helped in defining the way forward for professional education in health sciences.

Tomorrow younger scientists and teachers who have received Academy Awards for their work will be presenting their studies. The best presentation in this session will be awarded the NAMS Amirtsar Award 2007.

For mentoring and nurturing young professionals in medical colleges, NAMS has a panel of about fifty Emeritus Professors. These Emeritus Professors

- visit medical colleges and mentor the post graduates in different disciplines;
- participate in intramural symposia on topics of current interest
- participate in institution strengthening and capacity building .

The Academy provides facilities for junior and middle level specialists to acquire new skills and learn new techniques at chosen Centres of Excellence. Over hundred professionals have already benefited from this programme; through them, these newer technologies have become accessible to larger segments of population.

Academy honours Fellows who had made outstanding contributions to medical sciences over several decades by awarding them Life Time Achievement Award. This year the Awardee is Dr H. D Tandon who has the distinction of having headed three national institutions - Director of AIIMS, President of National Board of Examinations and President of the National Academy of Medical Sciences.

NAMS will be celebrating the Golden Jubilee of the Academy in 2010-11. The NAMS Golden Jubilee Committee has drawn up a programme for these celebrations. The Fellows have generously contributed for the Golden Jubilee Celebration fund. Efforts are under way to obtain grants from the government funding agencies also. It is indeed a happy augury, that the well equipped NAMS auditorium in Delhi with facilities for tele connectivity will be ready for inauguration shortly and can host some of the of NAMS activities during the Golden Jubilee celebrations. NAMS is trying to optimally utilize the IT enabled services to increase the out reach of its programme. The NAMS PGI centre has been providing tele-connectivity during the CME to medical colleges in Punjab, Himachal and Haryana. With the addition of the NAMS centre at Delhi the reach of the tele-connectivity for CME programmes are expected to increase substantially.

Over the last four decades the Academy has several achievements to its credit. The Golden Jubilee provides us an opportunity to set our goals even higher, travel extra miles and keep our promise to the Nation. I am sure that with the support and guidance from all the Senior Fellows, the dynamism and commitment of the younger Fellows and Members, the Academy will continue to strive for excellence in medical science, medical education and health care.

India is currently reaping the dividends of the demographic transition. We have abundance of the most precious resource - youthful human resource. It is hoped that NAMS will play a pivotal role in preparing and assisting health professional in providing essential health care for all and keep the population healthy. Our healthy and productive population can be the engine propelling rapid socioeconomic and human development and enable us to achieve our dream – *sare jahan se achcha e Hindustan hamara*.