

**ADDRESS BY THIRU BANWARILAL PUROHIT, HON'BLE GOVERNOR OF  
TAMIL NADU AT 78<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF THE ASSOCIATION  
OF SURGEONS OF INDIA – ASICON 2018 – CHENNAI AT CHENNAI TRADE  
CENTER, NANDAMBAKKAM, CHENNAI ON 27.12.2018 AT 6.00 P.M**

**Anaivarukkum Maalai Vanakkam**

**Thiru. Edappadi K. Palanisami**  
Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu

**Thiru. O. Panneerselvam,**  
Deputy Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu

**Dr. Dhilip Gode,**  
President, ASI

**Dr. Shiva K. Mishra,**  
Immediate Past President, ASI

**Dr. K.Vinayak Senthil,**  
Organising Secretary

**Dr. Arvind Kumar,**  
Vice-President, ASI

**Dr. A. Rathnaswamy,**  
Organising Chairman

**Dr. K. Vivekananda Subramania Nathan,**  
Organising Treasurer

**Distinguished Invitees**

**Ladies & Gentlemen**

It is a matter of pleasure to be here for the inauguration of the 78<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of the Association of Surgeons of India. I am informed that the Association was established in 1938 to realise a long standing wish among the Indian surgeons to provide a platform to come together for sharing each other's experiences and enhancing their surgical skills.

Lt. Col. Krishnan Gopinath Pandalai was the Founder President of the Association. He was at that time working in the Government General Hospital with

conjoint duties as a Professor at the Madras Medical College. There were not many medical institutions in the country at that time. And among the states of India Tamil Nadu or the Madras Presidency as it was then called, was the leader. And I am happy to observe that it continues to be the leader even after 80 years.

Tamil Nadu was the first State to enact the Public Health Act. The Government General Hospital and the Government Eye Hospital in Chennai are among the oldest in Asia. Private sector involvement in the establishment of hospitals for medical treatment has been in existence in Tamil Nadu for more than 100 years. Today the State enjoys an excellent network of hospitals and colleges all over the state making it one of the finest locations for medical diagnosis and treatment in the eastern part of the globe.

The State attracts about 40% of those who come into India for medical treatment. It has been estimated that about 15 lakh patients come into Tamil Nadu for diagnosis and treatment every year and that the arrival of medical tourists coming into Tamil Nadu is growing by more than 20% annually. The presence of a robust infrastructure coupled with specialised medical care provided by the doctors and para medical staff is one of the most important reasons for this heavy inflow into Tamil Nadu.

Another major reason as to why patients are drawn towards Tamil Nadu is the affordable cost of medical treatment. The American Medical Association has provided the cost comparisons. For example, a knee replacement surgery costs about 40,000 dollars in the USA and about 13,000 dollars in Singapore. In Tamil Nadu the cost is much lower. Similarly, for a bone marrow transplant, the cost is about 400,000 dollars in the US while in Tamil Nadu it is much much lower.

The medical profession is a noble profession.

The famous French philosopher Voltaire once said

“Those who are occupied in the restoration of health to others, by the joint exertion of skill and humanity, are above all the great of the earth. They even partake of divinity, since to preserve and renew is almost as noble as to create.”

The delivery of modern health care depends on groups of trained professionals and para professionals coming together to form inter-disciplinary teams. This includes professionals in surgery, medicine, psychology, nursing, physiotherapy working along with many others such as community health workers, so as to be able to provide the

best health care services to the people. But beyond all this it is also necessary to psychologically relate to the patient.

As Dr. Donald M. Berwick rightly said, “Those who suffer need you to be something more than a doctor; they need you to be a healer. And, to become a healer, you must do something even more difficult than putting on your white coat. You must recover, embrace and treasure the shared, frail humanity and the dignity in each and every soul.”

Our country has a great and glorious past in medical sciences.

Sushruta, Jivaka Kumarabhacca, and Charaka were famous medical experts who showed the world how to treat diseases and illnesses. At a time when surgeries in England were done primitively, the most complex surgeries were being performed in India by well trained surgeons.

Sushruta is credited with performing advanced surgeries, including plastic and reconstructive surgery. Sushruta was not just a great surgeon, but also a great teacher. He used to advise his students that however well-read they are, they are not competent to treat disease until they have practical, hand-on experience. He taught his students surgical skills by making incisions on the skin of fruits. He also taught them how to remove foreign bodies from flesh by demonstrating the extraction of seeds from fruits. His students were known to have practiced on dead animals and on leather bags filled with water, before they performed surgeries on human beings.

Advances in technology have helped the surgeon enormously in diagnosing faster and in performing the operations with greater precision.

You are all aware that the Capabilities of endoscopy have increased over the past few years. The technique is no more only diagnostic, but also therapeutic.

‘Third Space Endoscopy’ envisages creation of a sub mucosal tunnel and cutting the muscle layer and removing early cancers in toto.

Orthopaedic surgery has evolved and advanced technologically over the years. The most recent advancement in Orthopaedics is key-hole surgery of joints wherein a 4

mm scope with camera is introduced into joints like knee, shoulder, ankle, elbow, wrist and hip to identify and treat any injury to the ligaments, muscles and cartilage.

The use of Robots to perform eye surgery which was first successfully practiced in 2016 in the John Radcliffe Hospital of the University of Oxford is designed to eliminate tremors in the surgeons hand, so that manoeuvres can be safely carried out within a small organ such as eye.

Advances in Electronic Imaging technology have also been greatly beneficial. While the use of computers with X-rays, resulted in CT scan or Computed Tomography Scan, the MRI scan based on magnetic resonance which uses powerful magnets to produce accurate and detailed pictures of internal body structures is a giant leap forward.

While I can go on and on, I have mentioned a few instances for the benefit of easy understanding. I am sure that the contributions at the conference will be providing valuable inputs on these and so many other issues of importance to the medical fraternity.

I congratulate the President, Members of the Executive Committee and Organizing Committee of the Association of Surgeons of India for having organised this conference in a befitting manner. I am sure that with the support and involvement of its large membership, the Association will rise to a position of greater strength in the coming years. My best wishes and greetings to all of you for a glorious future.

Nandri Vanakkam.....

Jai Hind.....