



Indian Speech-Language & Hearing Association (ISHA)

Regd. Under the Karnataka Societies Registration Act, Karnataka Act No. 17 Registration No. 25/67-68

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

Presented by



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“The future depends on what you do today” - Mahatma Gandhi

Bridging the past to the future – Reflect, Consolidate, and Promote Quality

Respected Chief Guest, my friends on the dais Prof. S P Goswami, Past President, and Dr. Suman Kumar, Gen. Secretary of ISHA, Mr. Achaiah, Treasurer and other honourable members of the EC of ISHA, ISHA awardees this year, organizing chairperson, secretary, and members of the organizing committee, resource faculty, my senior colleagues and teachers, member delegates and student delegates, invitees, ladies and gentlemen: Vanakkam!

I am humbled and at the same time honoured and delighted to take the leadership passed on to me today as the President of this tall association. This coveted responsibility was charmed by several giants in our field, and ‘I am standing on their shoulders to look ahead’ and deliver to the changing time and needs of our members. I have had the privilege to participate and witness the past half-life of our association, i.e. from 1995, I have been in some form associated with activities of ISHA. I began as a ‘student member’ like several of you today – attending the conference, presenting papers, and meeting the doyens of our field. Later, as a member delegate to contribute in the scientific fiesta, and learn the advancements and transformations in the industry. I also had the chance to serve ISHA on its Executive Committee in various capacities such as EC member, Chairperson Committee of Ethics and Educational Standards, and as its



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Hon. Treasurer in the past. Being a witness to ISHA's evolution over time, I think one of the important tasks of the generation I represent is to **serve as a bridge to the experiences of past, and the need of the future.**

One of the activities I want to initiate as the president is to find avenues to **gauge and improve the Peer-percept and the General Public Percept** of our fraternity and the various activities of ISHA. This will require a joint effort of several of us as individual ASLP practitioners, as members of state chapters and branches of ISHA, members of teaching community in the academic institutes, and student members who are the future of our profession. The idea is to look for and create partnership avenues to work together and help improve the perception about ISHA.

To this effect, the EC of ISHA has come-up with several proposals, my predecessor Dr. Goswami has initiated a few, I hope to continue, shape it further, and develop new ones to help achieve its purpose in the coming year. To name a few:

1. Activities have begun to revamp the ISHA website and introduce an ISHA App. ISHA hopes to be in your palms every day. Communication and information sharing about ISHA activities for awareness and advocacy will be shared almost instantaneously via the app and social media handles such as twitter and Instagram. We need more participation to strengthen these actions. It's all of us who make ISHA, let's make our voices heard louder and stronger!!
2. Partner or liaise with other professional associations regionally, nationally and internationally in their conferences and academic meetings. ISHA will seek avenues to collaborate and network with these professional associations.
3. Facilitate the organized functioning and ensure a consistent communication between the parent body and the state branches via regular meetings and discussions. An initiative to connect with members "baat karo ISHA ke Saath" has already begun, and we have had two meetings in the last year. This will continue in the current year too and the aim of such meetings is to foster deeper connections with ISHA chapters and branches. The EC is



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committing to participate and support a variety of activities that the state chapters and branches propose to organize in the coming years. We will adopt a bottom-up approach to achieve this connection. You the branches and its members will propose, and ISHA as the parent organization shall support, participate and help execute the goals of the chapters.

4. Popularize ISHA activities via student support programs. The EC is committing to talk to students of training programs in person or via tele- mode to strengthen its bonds with the future members from their early and formative years. ISHA conference grant and means scholarship are two other initiatives for students.
5. Strengthen and support speech and hearing awareness week to impress on the general public. We are also looking at ways to create ways to promote public sensitivity to people with challenges in communication, community empowerment to deal with problems due to ageing and other related issues that ASLPs deal with. Resource pages of the ISHA website shall be modified for general public to access information on clinics, services, and ASLPs in various towns/cities in India. The public domain pages shall be populated with educational materials related to our field.
6. Represent issues of our community to responsible persons and bodies in the government, follow up and support legally when required.

Over the last five decades, our colleagues have produced several test tools, therapy aids, and materials that are not readily available or accessible easily. ISHA as an activity to consolidate resources will initiate a drive to pool resources across the country, and provide a platform to host the list of various vernacular resource material, contact person and a way to access these materials. This will be the next phase of the already initiated 'uniform terminology' document that is available on the ISHA website. The terminology document provides proforma format, the recommended assessment tools and also a reporting format that befits medico legal requirements. I appeal to all clinicians/private practitioners and training institute to put this in to regular practice, so that it becomes the '**standard practice of care**' for the Indian scenario. Once



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the list of tools and materials are consolidated, we will initiate the process to publish it if the authors are willing to have it as an ISHA publication.

The third aspect of my proposed work is to institute and to layout a framework of working guidelines for a **'quality cell'** of ISHA, that will work independently on various activities to influence 'quality' in academic training and evaluation, and patient care and clinical service. Today, the government emphasizes and encourages heavily to transform the curriculum based on the NEP 2020. RCI had recently constituted a high-committee task force to develop a curriculum for speech and hearing in both UG and PG programs based on NEP 2020, UGC's NCrf 2022 and incorporation of the RPWD act 2016 in the admission policies of our training programs. This will soon be rolled out and with a mandate to implement from AY 2024-25 onwards. To support this transition and transformation, and to partly address the concerns of quality compromise and issues in patient care, encroachment of our practice by less qualified or unqualified persons in various parts of the country, ISHA proposes to have a quality cell that will train, evaluate and certify 'quality' of our clinics and academic programs based on certain yardsticks, metrics and benchmarks. The quality cell of ISHA will also involve in creating modules for training on quality benchmarks and periodically assess to provide guidelines on matters related to quality. Participation to certify ourselves on these quality parameters shall be completely voluntary. The quality certifications of institutes and clinics shall be publicized on ISHA website, and also will be permitted for public display in any form. This is a new initiative and will, I hope evolve with all your support, to address many of our future needs.

All the three aspects – improving the perception about ISHA, consolidation of resources, and promotion of quality are inter-linked in its conception and execution. I hope, my team and I will be able to deliver and further advance the activities of ISHA in the coming year.

I take this opportunity to thank all my teachers, senior colleagues, peers and the members of ISHA for your faith in me, and having provided me this chance to serve for ISHA. Before I conclude, I want to assure you that my team shall stay on top of affairs, will hear you out, and facilitate communication with all of you, and also keep track of how far we have come and how far we have to go.



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Everything starts in a small way. Today as I assume this responsibility as the president of ISHA, I too believe this small beginning will add to the path of evolution of this great association. I quote Mahatma Gandhi, *“The future depends on what you do today”, so here I am set to bridge the past to the future via Reflection, Consolidation, and Promotion of Quality.*

I humbly accept this honour and solicit all your cooperation to deliver the best to all of you.

Thank you, Jai Hind!