

**Presidential Address Of Mrs Maya Sanghi delivered on 5<sup>th</sup> February 2016 at 48<sup>th</sup> ISHACON at Mumbai.**

**Our distinguished Chief Guest -Dr. Kirtane, our guest of Honour -Dr. Sanjiv Badhwar, Dr. Pratibha Karanth, Prof. Oza, Chairperson, Organising Committee, Mrs. Madhvi Tambay- President, MISHA, all the members of the Organising Committee, Office Bearers Of ISHA, our guest speakers, our invited guests and delegates**

**Warm Greetings! It is indeed an honour to assume the position of the President of ISHA on this special occasion of our academic programs, in India, having completed the GOLDEN FIFTY years. The two pioneering colleges, namely Audiology & Speech Therapy School at the T. N. Medical College, Mumbai, my alma mater, and the All India Institute of Speech and Hearing, Mysore, were established in 1966, five decades ago. Professor Ramesh Oza and Dr. Ratna were the main forward thinking stalwarts who were responsible for starting these training programs which have seen a large number of their students achieve excellence, in their chosen career paths, within the broad umbrella of speech Pathology & Audiology. This indeed is testimony of how magnificent our training programs have been. We remain, forever, indebted to them both, as well as to our senior teachers, for their invaluable contribution. And of course, it is an even greater pleasure and honour to have both Dr. Ratna and Professor Oza amidst us today, actively involved in this monumental celebration. Their very presence inspires us all to take our profession to greater heights. This is an appropriate occasion to respectfully remember Dr. L.H. Hiranandani, who provided unconditional support and drive for our profession right from its inception. This very significant milestone, I am sure, gives each one of us in the profession a great sense of pride and renewed purpose. It is time to now not only count our achievements but also take stock of what more needs to be planned, and more importantly, executed.**

**I am stepping into this position knowing well that my predecessors have put forth great ideas and given their best to the organization. I surely appreciate all their efforts and thank them for being inspiring leaders. My special thanks to Dr. Pratibha Karanth for having handed over the baton to me**

and, most importantly, I would like to thank you the members for having instilled your faith in me and having given me this opportunity and privilege to lead the organization. I assure you that I will serve to the best of my ability.

As incoming President, I feel fortunate that I will be working with ISHA when it has made remarkable progress in the area of technology. ISHA is now better positioned with an infrastructure having reestablished an office with a full time administrative staff. This certainly is a welcome minimum prerequisite, if we are to see our plans to fruition. ISHA's use of technology has improved efficiency measurably, given we had 4 web enabled meetings that facilitated successful discussions of our agenda since 2015. Friends, the time is certainly ripe to act as we stand at the threshold of enormous opportunities.

EC of ISHA has been mindful of the expectations of the members' needs and vision which should rightly be given importance to fuel the growth of our profession. With this in mind, ISHA attempted "A Needs Assessment" of its members via a feedback form urging the members to respond. We have received 193 responses thus far. This certainly is a small number, considering we have 2600 life members. We required a minimum of 300 responses to appropriately assess the needs of our members. Nevertheless, the quality of the initial responses is encouraging and, on behalf of the EC, I thank each one of you who responded. With this first step, we can now take achievable goals and work towards them in the coming years for which we certainly need the participation of many young professionals to move ahead step by step and stage by stage. To quote our late Ex-President Dr. Kalam "One CANNOT STOP at thinking and asking questions. There is need to ACT to solve the problems and that requires hard work and perseverance."

On the Global front, you will be proud to know that ISHA has made its way on the international map. The American Speech and Hearing Association has come forward with suggestions to collaborate with us. Dr. Kalyani Mandke, one of our senior members, has been awarded a "Certificate of recognition for outstanding contribution in International achievement". Also, Dr. Rajshekhar has won the outstanding contribution award in the Asia Pacific Region. So friends, ISHA is certainly moving ahead and plans to continue to do so in leaps and bounds if we have your unconditional support and dedicated hard work.

Given that the earlier presidents have realised that not much can be achieved in a one year term I would like to propose that the EC would benefit from prioritizing ongoing goals for next 5 years and from working in a focused manner during this period. The next incoming presidents could oversee this ongoing growth in the coming years with their additional inputs. That being said, I now wish to share my vision for ISHA and if agreed upon we can work collaboratively to move ahead

1. My first goal is to increase our membership, at a faster pace. Since the American Speech & Hearing Association (ASHA) has often served as the benchmark of our progress we need to know the growth rate of its members and compare it with that of ISHA. ASHA was established in 1925 with a membership of only 22 which grew to 5000 members by 1959 and today ASHA has a membership of 1,50,000. In 48 years our membership has grown to only 2600. We have about 100 members joining us each year. I would like to see this number rise to 250 this year. I suggest energetic lobbying towards this goal. If each one of us can motivate 2 professionals to join us, we can grow in numbers at a faster pace. An organization with a larger membership undoubtedly spurs growth and prosperity.

2. My second focused initiative would be to ensure that ISHA employs full time professionals for specific projects. This is already planned but needs implementation. We need funds to pay professionals employed a decent remuneration. Although ISHA is much better financially today, we need to sustain our economic growth. Therefore, I invite members to propose specific strategies to increase our revenue. My personal proposal would be to request a nominal annual renewal fee and the amount collected will be utilized for specific projects.

I am fully aware that the next three initiatives will remain long standing with each incoming President blessing them with oversight and reshaping progress, as indicated, while at the same time pursuing their individual goals.

3. Clinically, I have had the vision of having uniform assessment and reporting format across all the disorders and which need to be reviewed every 5 years. ISHA did attempt this in 1990. Recently, Maharashtra (MISHA) and Manipal Chapters of ISHA, have each taken the first step. The assessment and reporting format for hearing aid selection and for children with communication disorders has been completed by MISHA and the Manipal Chapter has come up with the hearing assessment protocols. These will be soon circulated to members for their valuable input before

**finalizing. This challenging concept can gain momentum and become feasible if each of the regional branches, along with the specific special interest group, can take up one disorder and work towards its format and send it to ISHA. We should aim at completing 5 protocols in 2016. The uniform assessment protocols will facilitate the collection of a large amount of clinical data and give immense opportunities to fuel inter-clinic and inter- institutional research a much needed area of growth. This will further lead to opportunities for the clinicians to look at evidence based practice and thereby focus on administering effective and efficient management programs.**

**4. Fifty years of academic training in our profession, in our country, should make us envision many more training colleges, if, we need to meet the demand for services for the Speech and Hearing impaired. Affordable and quality education for all interested students is crucial for the future of our profession. We certainly need to increase the number of professionals, but, need to exercise caution. The quality of training our programs needs to be monitored even more stringently. Our training programs thus far have been good. Nevertheless, a word of caution can be taken by us from the following statement of Dr. Anand Krishnan, professor at AIIMS. I quote, “The quality of medical education, especially at the undergraduate level is an issue of grave concern to all health professionals in India. Just focusing on quantity will be extremely detrimental to patients.” (Midwifing Efficient Healthcare, Times of India, September 2015). So let us advocate stringent standards to monitor quality training before we move on to increase the number of colleges. One of the measures we can take is to have the Teachers’ Training programs, at regular intervals, as suggested by Professor Geeta Gore, President -2010. This will help in honing the teaching skills of the teachers. There were many members who were keen to have such training programs started when this idea was suggested in one of the sessions at Manipal conference last year. This should be feasible for ISHA to implement, as we now have technological arrangement available for web enabled seminars.**

**5. The last initiative we need to focus our energy on is having books written by our very own members. It would be a great day when we can say that we have books written for each subject on the syllabus. This certainly is an enormous task and a long term goal but we can make a beginning this year and, slowly but steadily, have a good number of books. Towards this end, I would humbly request all the senior members of ISHA to give this initiative its due consideration. With e-books becoming popular, the aforementioned goal may be feasible. I am sure this would serve as a valuable next step for teachers and students in academia.**

**The other aspects which need an attention on an ongoing basis are early intervention programs, ready public service announcement material, in regional languages, for advocacy of our profession, especially during designated awareness weeks, and strengthening our out reach programs.. Yes, the list can be long but we can focus on a few areas every year and grow consistently.**

**I wish to conclude by calling upon each one of you to make IMPLEMENTATION our buzz word going forward. We need to take pride in being skilled service providers to the hearing and communicatively impaired. Dignity and prestige is associated with our profession. Let us ask ourselves how we can ensure that ISHA, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, remains determined to the commitment of hard work and progress and remains focused on our ultimate goal, of rendering the best service, to satisfy the needs of the individuals we serve.**

**As I take this responsibility, I will always remember my alma mater, my teachers and mentors, my colleagues, my friends and, of course, my students and clients, for giving me challenging and timely learning opportunities through all stages of my rewarding career.**

**Mrs. Maya Sanghi**