

अखिल भारतीय आयुर्विज्ञान संस्थान  
अंसारी नगर, नई दिल्ली -110029



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66<sup>th</sup> Independence Day Celebration – 2012

**DIRECTOR'S SPEECH**

Friends,

Greetings to you all on the occasion of the 66<sup>th</sup> Independence Day Celebration of our republic. While celebrating this great day in the history of our nation with joy and happiness, we shall fail in our duty if we do not remember the great sacrifice made by thousands of our brave men and women who struggled for almost a century to get free from the British rule.

Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak, 'the father of Indian unrest', sowed the seed of political freedom with his clarion call "Swaraj is my birth right" at the dawn of 20th century but how difficult was it to get this Swaraj. It took decades of struggle and untold sacrifices by our people and leaders to achieve Swaraj. It was Mahatma Gandhiji who led his unique non-violent movement and gave us freedom. We would be in a better position to appreciate the value of our freedom and the democratic fabric only if we are aware of this difficult phase of our freedom movement.

We are fortunate to be living in a democracy as proud citizens of a free country. This is particularly significant if we look around the world and the extent of human misery where mankind is still struggling for freedom in the 21st century.

In a free nation we have the freedom to pursue our chosen vocation and to exploit our potential to the fullest extent. At the same time we have the onerous responsibility of being accountable to our country, the society around us, the profession we are in and to the people we are mandated to serve. Freedom is like wealth. You have to earn it, preserve it and enjoy it with diligence.

We have chosen a profession whose hallmark is hard work and dedication. A doctor or any health care professional has a very special identity in the society. We deal with human lives—the most precious thing in the god’s creation. Once we remember this our job becomes easier as the sense of service flows with a spontaneity that not only elevates your spirit but also adds a new meaning to the purpose. Needless to say that this is the most satisfying experience in our profession and each one of us realizes it at the end of the day.

We are indeed privileged to be part of the most prestigious medical institute of the country. AIIMS has become a brand and our flag is flying high. Some of us have been associated with the institute for a long time, others may have a shorter association and there are some who have joined recently as faculty, resident doctors and also MBBS students among you. We all are part of a big family. Like any other good family tradition, it should be our duty to support each other, to facilitate each other and be an active change agent in the growth of this big family. I would appeal to the senior MBBS students and also the resident doctors to guide and mentor the freshers with care and love. Our faculty are also entrusted with the responsibility of mentoring the students, both socially and academically.

At this point, I would like to remember Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Raj Kumari Amrit Kaur whose vision gave us this institute. I would also like to pay my tribute to Dr. B.B. Dikshit, the first Director of the institute, who laid the foundation for dedication, quality and excellence as defining character of this institute. The successive Directors have tried to take this culture further. When each one of the family contributes in a synchronized manner and with a purpose, then the growth is more visible and satisfying.

I would like to emphasize here that the guiding principle for all our actions — in academic, research, patient-care or administration—should be excellence and utility. During the past few years, there have been debate about the future growth model for the Institute, particularly in view of the growing emphasis on globalization. Ultimately, we have to keep in mind that AIIMS was established by the Indian Parliament and we have to follow its mandate which expects AIIMS to be a symbol of quality and to serve as a model for similar other institutes in the country. The Parliament has declared AIIMS as an institute of national importance. We should also remember that AIIMS is the leading centre for training medical teachers and super-specialists in the country. The distinction of AIIMS is in quality; not in quantity.

As we all know, medical science has undergone a sea change over the last 40 years or so. Technology such as imaging and platform based molecular diagnostic methods, has revolutionised the practice of medicine. Unfortunately, it has also distanced the common man from enjoying its benefits by boosting commercialization of medicine. Over the last two decades the private health sector has registered a significant growth and a large number of these hospitals have hi-tech facilities. However, limited studies suggest that this has neither improved significantly the quality of care nor accessibility for the common man. The argument of course is the high investment cost. In other words, the technology-driven medicine is meant only for the rich. At the AIIMS that is not the issue the poor and the poorest also get the best of health care here as it is fully funded by the Government to meet all necessary cost. The high cost of health care has even shaken the economy and the social conscience of the USA and the Obama-care is expected to help change this scenario. Can we adopt a similar model in India?

We have a large number OPD patients visiting AIIMS everyday. There are reports about difficulty being faced by patients at the OPDs, particularly at the registration counters. I would request all the consultants to give a thought to this problem and suggest if we can find a solution. We have of course a plan to build a separate OPD block in the near future for providing better facility at Masjid Moth area.

It is heartening to report that research activities among the faculty, scientists and also the resident doctors have significantly increased during last 3 years. Attitude for quality research at AIIMS has been visible through a large number publications from relevant research projects. AIIMS excellence award in research for the best original publication in the academic year has been introduced and those selected will be recognized with cash prizes on the Institute Foundation day on the 25th September. Our intramural research grants to young faculty have been significantly enhanced and many faculty have undertaken new research projects through this scheme. We have made a road map for over 100 newly recruited assistant professors this year for their career development through innovative orientation and training programmes in research, epidemiologic methods and patient care. Our faculty have succeeded in bringing significant international research grants in frontier and cutting edge biomedical areas like structural biology, viral hepatitis, immunology, biotechnology, virology, neonatology, fetal medicine, diabetes, epidemiology and cancer. I would congratulate my colleagues on this achievement of theirs. Hopefully, these projects would lead to impressive results and benefit our people.

I would like to mention that we have introduced a new orientation programme for newly admitted MBBS students for their personality and academic enrichment. I hope the students would benefit from this initiative.

We have upgraded some disciplines like pulmonary medicine, surgical oncology and geriatric medicine. Postgraduate degrees will be awarded in these new disciplines. I am sure the patients would enjoy the commensurate benefit from the new facilities.

The construction work for the underground parking, convergence centre, underground tunnel from main campus to the trauma centre and the hostel complex for the students and junior doctors are in progress. An outreach OPD facility in the Jhajjar complex, at Badsha Village in Haryana, is due to be commissioned in October this year. Various other areas in the AIIMS campus have been renovated and a new sample collection area has also been made and it has decongested the OPD registration area. We are going to have few more additions including a new OPD block in Masjid Moth and residential quarters in Ayurvigyan Nagar campus.

Needless to say that infrastructure development must be backed by necessary service input. Although we have a large patient load to manage, AIIMS is known for its commitment to service. AIIMS has been known for its brand value and we have to strive to maintain it with all sincerity and honesty through hard work. I take this opportunity to sincerely thank the faculty, the resident doctors, the research cadre, the nurses, the paramedical staff and the administrative staff who are the foundation and essence of the brand called AIIMS.

Ladies and gentlemen! Let us resolve that we shall take this brand value further to a greater height.

At the end, I wish you health and happiness on this joyous and auspicious occasion of Independence Day today.

**JAI HIND**

New Delhi  
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