

Prof Gourie Devi

As Director/Vice Chancellor of National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro Sciences (1997 to 2002)

Continued from the narrative published in "Evolution of Neurosciences in India" ..page 282.

National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro Sciences became a Deemed University in 1994 under the stewardship of Dr.SM Channabasavanna as the Director/Vice Chancellor and I was appointed as the Dean. To conform to the rules and regulations of University Grants Commission, major changes in administrative , academic and educational structure were made with considerable time and effort. These administrative responsibilities further increased with my appointment as Director /Vice Chancellor of NIMHANS in 1997, which also provided an opportunity and a challenge to take the institute to further heights and fulfill the vision and dreams of former Directors, Dr.RM Varma, Dr.GN Narayana Reddy and Dr.SM Channabasavanna.



Through a series of measures after collective deliberation and a thorough analysis of the existing situation, keeping in mind the current developments and envisaging the future perspectives in Mental Health and Neurosciences, thrust areas were identified. To achieve the defined goals, major restructuring with strengthening of infrastructure including computers and connectivity, up gradation and addition of equipments and introduction of cutting edge technology was done. New training programs to create a critical mass of specialists in MPhil Neurosciences, Post doctoral Fellowship Programs in Neuropathology and Neuroanesthesia, DM in Neuroradiology and enhancement of postgraduate seats in neurology, neurosurgery and psychiatry, strengthening of molecular genetics and molecular neurobiology were some of the important measures to galvanise the academic and research activities were established. Steps were initiated with Medical Council of India to start DM in Child Psychiatry. To strengthen and create specialized clinical facilities, Stroke unit, Advanced centre for Ayurveda in Mental Health and Neurosciences and Child psychiatry block were created. Research

collaboration with Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Advanced Research (JNCAR), National Centre for Biological Sciences (NCBS), Tata Institute of Fundamental Research and Defense Bioengineering and Electromedical laboratory (DEBEL) were facilitated through Memorandum of Understanding.

There was a long felt need of facilities for holding conferences at the institute, hence a state –of- art Convention Centre with adequate seating capacity and excellent infrastructure for audio-visual system was constructed. The convention centre was inaugurated in September 2002 by Dr.AB Maalaka Raddy, Hon'ble Minister of Medical Education, Government of Karnataka. I will be failing in my duty if I do not record the passionate efforts and commitment of Prof.Ramakrishna, an international expert in acoustics, for his advice and guidance. With development in all spheres which was possible due to overwhelming and unstinted support of faculty and staff, I retired from my 'Karma Bhoomi' in November 2002, with the satisfaction that NIMHANS is one of the finest institutions for delivery of clinical services, high standard of teaching and training and for conducting research ranging from public health to clinical, molecular and neurobiological aspects in the field of Mental Health and Neuro Sciences and will script a new phase in the history of neurosciences in the country. I am confident that the rich legacy of NIMHANS will be carried forward by the future Directors and the faculty.

Role at National level

It was possible to contribute to the development of neurological sciences in India as Expert member of numerous research organisations of Government of India, to name a few; (i) Programme Advisory Committee in Neurobiology, Department of Science and Technology (DST); (ii) Task Force on Medical Biotechnology, Immuodiagnosics, Vaccines and Neurosciences, Department of Biotechnology (DBT); (iii) Medical Sciences Research Committee, Council of Scientific & Industrial Research (CSIR); (iv) Council of the National Academy of Medical Sciences; (v) Advisor for Neurological Research and Chairperson of Core Committee of Neurological Sciences, Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) and (vi) Management Council of the Society for Biomedical Technology, Defense Research and Development Organisation (DRDO),

Ministry of Defense. I am continuing to function in many of the committees as Expert Member.

As a component of activities of National Neuroscience Information Centre established by Department of Science and Technology at NIMHANS, I took the initiative to develop "Neurology India on CD" covering full text of articles published in the journal 'Neurology India' during 45 years from 1953 to 1997 expending considerable effort in retrieving old issues of the journal. As one of the founding members of the Indian Academy of Neurology and the first Vice President, I played a critical role in the formation and growth of this society. A new journal, Annals of Indian Academy of Neurology, was launched by the Indian Academy of Neurology and I had the honour of being the Founding Editor. From giving a name to the journal, registration, soliciting authors, trying to attract contributions and nurturing the newborn was an exacting task, which became possible with the energetic effort of the Associate editors, Dr.Satishchandra and Dr.Taly.

Role at International level

I was (i) **Vice-Chairperson** of "Standards for Neurological Care and Technology Committee", World Federation of Neurology; and **ExpertMember** of a number of academic bodies namely: (ii) World Federation of Neurology Research Committee on Neuroepidemiology; (iii) World Federation of Neurology Research Group on Neuromuscular Diseases; (iv) World Federation of Neurology Research Group on Tropical Neurology; (v) International Federation of Societies for Electroencephalography and Clinical Neurophysiology; (vi) Board on Global Health, Nervous System Disorders in Developing Countries, Institute of Medicine, Washington; (vii)World Health Organisation Expert Advisory Panel on Neurosciences, 2004 till date; (viii) Fogarty International Brain Disorder Review Committee, National Institute of Health, USA, 2003 to 2010; (ix) World Health Organisation International Advisory Group for the Revision of ICD -10 Diseases of the Nervous System, 2009 to 2015 and (X)Advisory Committee for development of guidelines for management of Guillain-Barre syndrome in the context of Zika virus 2016. Through these various international organisations I was able to reflect the views of Indian neurologists and also facilitate

international collaborative research. I am continuing to function in many of the committees as Expert Member.

Awards, Honours, Distinctions

I am a Fellow of a number of Academic bodies, National Academy of Medical Sciences, Indian Academy of Neurology, Andhra Pradesh Akademi of Sciences and National Academy of Sciences. More than 30 orations in prestigious universities and Academic Organisations in India and abroad have been delivered. DSc (Honoris Causa) was conferred by NTR University of Health Sciences, Andhra Pradesh and I was also a recipient of notable awards, some of them are: (i) Basanti Devi Amir Chand Prize of Indian Council of Medical Research, in recognition of contribution to the field of Neurology and Neuroepidemiology in 1997; (ii) Om Prakash Bhasin Award by Shri Om Prakash Bhasin Foundation Trust for outstanding contributions in the field of Health and Medical Sciences in 1998; and (iii) Dr.B.C.Roy Award in the highest category of Eminent Medical Person, Medical Council of India, 2001.

Life time Achievement Awards have been conferred by Institutions and Professional Associations: National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro Sciences, 2011; International Congress on Neurology and Rehabilitation, 2012; NeuCon Lifetime Achievement Award, 2013, Delhi Neurological Association, 2016, BK Bachawat Lifetime Achievement Award of Indian Academy of Neurosciences, 2016 and Indian Epilepsy Society 2017.

It was extremely gratifying that International Federation of Clinical Neurophysiology has conferred the prestigious "Kugelberg Award Lecture" for outstanding contributions to Clinical Neurophysiology; award will be given at the 31 International Congress of Clinical Neurophysiology, Washington, USA, in May 2018.

Activities Post Retirement, 2002 onwards

It was a major decision to move from Bangalore to New Delhi due to personal reasons. The appointment as Emeritus Professor of Neurology for life, at the Institute of Human Behaviour and Allied Sciences, by the Government of National Capital Territory (NCT) of Delhi in 2003, has given me a unique opportunity to pursue research and

teaching. I also have an assignment from 2003 of Senior Consultant Neurologist and Chairman of the Department of Clinical Neurophysiology Department at Sir Ganga Ram hospital at New Delhi. As Advisor for Neurological Research and Chairperson of Core Committee of Neurological Sciences, Indian Council of Medical Research, I continue to play an active role in promoting research in Neurological Sciences in the country and the assignments in World Health Organisation and National Institute of Health, USA provided a global platform to address practice, policy, trends and perspective of public health and research issues in the domain of neurological sciences.

The clinical and research contributions have been documented in 180 publications in peer reviewed journals and many chapters in books. At Sir Ganga Ram Hospital in New Delhi, I continue to see patients, teach students and do research particularly in Motor neuron diseases and Monomelic Amyotrophy with emphasis on clinical and genetic profiles.

It is just not only professional commitments, but I am also very interested in sports and play badminton, table tennis, have keen interest in photography, and enjoy listening to carnatic classical music and playing veena.

As I come to the end of my narrative, I wish to respectfully acknowledge the guidance and impact of my mentors Prof. Baldev Singh, Lord John Walton, Prof. PK Thomas and Prof. PN Tandon in my pursuit of seamlessly blending clinical, academics and research in Neurosciences. There are no words to convey my appreciation to colleagues and students who formed my family in these endeavours. Trials, tribulations and challenges which had to be faced to achieve the envisaged goals, hopefully may provide guidance and solace to some young aspiring neurologists. I wish to end this narrative with the words of wisdom from Upanishad:

***You are what your deep, driving desire is;
As your desire is, so is your will;
As your will is, so is your deed;
As your deed is, so is your destiny.***

.....Brihadaranyaka Upanishad IV. 4.5

