Governing Body and Staff of Cancer Institute wishes all its Donors, Well Wishers and Patients

A Very Happy and Prosperous New Year - 2018
On New Year’s Eve, I have great pleasure in wishing all the staff and patients, a very happy, healthy & successful new year. I thank every one of the staff of all departments for each ones contribution, small or big.

My wishes to all volunteers, donors and survivors, I thank the volunteers and voluntary groups who have been rendering service namely Mahesh Memorial team, including Ms. Chitra Mahesh, Mr. Jeyendra and others who are donating additional beds in the pediatric ward. Mr. Chandrasekhar, a volunteer engineer whose service for over 3 years cannot be quantified. He has been our consultant engineer, who has taken the full responsibility for the Diamond Jubilee Building voluntarily, through—rain, storm or sun. He was truly a God send. Mr. Krishnamurthi taking care of the CMCHIS and Mr. Venkatraman for their service over many years.

My special thanks to Mr. Chandrasekar of Tata Consultancy Service, and our gratitude to Mr. Sharma and his team of 40 Volunteers for their passionate contribution towards many aspects of patient care and satisfaction in the out patient.

The launch of the Diamond Jubilee by the late. Hon.Chief Minister Dr. J. Jayalalithaa was indeed a land mark event. The six facets of the diamond constituted our pledge - Commitment, Cure, Care, Compassion, Challenge and Change. We have maintained satisfactory progress in all directions. We have kept pace with technology – providing state of art, both diagnostic and therapeutic. Precision diagnosis and molecular diagnostics have become routine practice. Research was a passion of late Adviser & stressed on integration of laboratory work with the clinic. Today translational Research is gaining momentum. The laboratory and clinic are not separate entities. The Institute will do its best to enhance research activities in the coming years. The founding of the comprehensive palliative care centre at Sriperumbudur has enhanced our commitment to compassion as part of oncologic care.

Meeting the present day challenge may be difficult, but it is up to us to find the solution. The often repeated saying, if you want a change, you have to be the change. We have to see where we have failed and prepare for a change, a transformation. Any transformation in the existing scenario has to be an organizational effort. Every one of us has a role to play, contribute our share, and accept a responsibility. My thanks and gratitude to staff who have voluntarily accepted the responsibility to bring about the necessary changes towards this transformation.

Patient care and patient satisfaction are the central focus of our work and all efforts are focused on this specific target. I wish to convey to all staff members that staff satisfaction is as important as patient satisfaction. It has always been a major consideration and will continue to be so. To me there has hardly been any self, my only thoughts were and are those centered around the Institute, the dreams of yesterday and dreams for tomorrow.

Let us take a pledge “To strive, To seek and stop not till the goal is reached”
Cancer Institute (WIA) along with Neville Endeavors Foundation organized ‘Dawn to Dusk’ marathon, a cancer fund-raising and awareness marathon on 7th January, 2018 at Anna University. More than 4,500 participants including both adults and kids participated in the event. The event comprised of both running and cycling and was organized at different levels namely 45 Km, 42 Km, 21 Km, 10 Km (running for adults), 10 Km, 5 Km, 3 Km, 1 Km, 800 Mts, 400 mts (running for kids) and 100 Km, 75 Km, 50 Km, 25 Km (Cycling). The 45 Km and 42 Km was flagged off by Dr. E. Hemanth Raj, Executive Vice Chairman, Cancer Institute and Dr. Kannan Pugazhendhi (SPARRC) at 4.30 am. Following that, Mr. Arvind Swami, actor, Dr. C. Sylendra Babu, ADGP and Dr. E. Hemath Raj flagged off the adult run. The kids run was flagged off by Chairman Dr. V. Shanta. Following the running event, more than 300 participated in the cycling event which was flagged off by Dr. S. Selladurai, Chairman, Sports Board, Anna University and Dr. C. Sylendra Babu. The fund thus raised was donated towards treatment for pediatric cancer.
Mr. Chandrasekhar, Chairman, Tata sons, Dr. Sekhar Basu, Chairman, Atomic Energy Commission and Secretary, Department of Atomic Energy

Tata trusts and Tata Consultancy Services have got together with Tata Memorial Cancer Centre to create Digital Nerve Centre Lab - DiNC. The Centre would act not only as an information centre, but would also support a patient through the period of investigations and treatment. Digital nerve centre is a platform that deploys software applications to provide ‘Virtual Enablement Services’ connecting the seekers of cancer care to the right health care provider. It will help in getting treatment with the help of experts. In case of a patient not turning up for treatment, either he or his relative would be contacted by the centre and this would help in avoiding break in the treatment of cancer patients.
Transcript from Chairman’s speech at the
Launch of the Digital Nerve Centre on 21.05.2017

The “Digital Nerve Centre” is a concept born in the mind of Mr. Chandrasekar as part of his vision to transform health care in India. This is an effort to give back to society the fruits of Research and Technology to the community. I thank the Tata group especially Mr. Chandrasekar for including the Cancer Institute (WIA), Chennai to be one of the recipient of this innovative concept and technology. It was most unexpected. As an NGO, we always had only low priority. My personal grateful thanks to Mr. Chandrasekar not only for the Digital Nerve Centre but Tata Group’s full support and commitment for the ongoing Med Mantra.

The area of research which has involved the largest number of people at all levels, transcending physical and national boundaries during the last 6 decades in a united endeavor is cancer. Billions of dollars and millions of researchers are engaged 24 hours a day on this absolutely biological, biochemical and yet human enigma. The sun never sets on Cancer Research. I had the unique opportunity to be a witness to the changing cancer scenario, from an era of virtually nil or minimal technology in cancer care, to an era of phenomenal proliferation in scientific knowledge and technology and today we are in the genomic era and personalized medicine.

The revolutionary change that Med Mantra made in enhancing quality of medical records, patient care and its role in creating a research data base is to be experienced. On behalf of the staff and patients of the Cancer Institute our grateful thanks to Mr. Chandrasekar.

To Tatas, cancer care has been a major priority. The Digital Nerve Centre is an innovative patient centric one – a speciality targetted towards patient satisfaction, education of patients, creating awareness about cancer, providing easy access to medical professionals, dispelling myths about cancer, plugging gaps in the treatment cycle, coordination of patient care, reducing the burden on doctors and many more. If successful, the impact can be far reaching. It may however take a long time. Technology can help only up to a point. It is men and women who make the nation strong. We need men and women, medical professionals, teachers, nurses and technicians who are committed to work, work with passion for cancer care, with humanity and wisdom. I quote,

“Not gold but only men can make A people great and strong”

It will be our earnest endeavor to give our best for a successful “Digital Nerve Project”

“To do ones best in whatever work you do, it is its own reward” – That was Mahatmaji
Reunion Day - 17.06.2017

Reunion day brought together cancer patients, survivors and care-givers. The event saw survivors sharing the stories of resilience, spread awareness that cancer was curable.

Former Health Secretary of the Government of India, Keshav Desiraju was with us on the reunion day, while addressing the gathering he said as some of the survivors were from different states, they could setup cancer help centers in their States as this will make public overcome the fear of cancer. He added while the approach to dealing with cancer must change, we must also fight all preventable forms of cancer. He added that general awareness of cancer would help reduce the disease burden. The stigma attached to the disease adds to the trauma, said Dr. Shanta stating that cancer is not as lethal anymore. “We have better treatment now and with several forms of treatment, cancer is curable or can at least be treated.

“Cancer! You dare not go beyond me!” exclaimed patient Vijayalakshmi, a retired teacher of Kendriya Vidyalaya, a marathon runner detected with cancer in March 2004 and treated at the Institute. “she battled cancer head-on,” and said What got me through was the hope that my children gave me and the message I want to give all care-givers is that cancer is curable and more easily so if you fight it with the full co-operation”.

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The Noble Middle path for Cancer Care for All

Dr. Raju spoke on Introduction of Nuclear particles for cancer treatment. He said, “We have recently seen enormous development in technology and science, but we have not nurtured an ethical base as yet. Greatest scientists of the past did not patent their findings, as they wanted to help humanity. People like Dr Krishnamurthi are an ideal example of selfless service to society. If each of us follow similar ethics, I am sure we can definitely bring in a sea of change in the development of humanity.” Dr. Krishnamurthi and Dr. Shanta’s strong belief in selflessness and dedicated path are bound to be the model for the future not only for cancer but also for rest of other medical care.

The style and culture of the Institute have been shaped by the values of simplicity, austerity, hard work with a service orientation, belief in science as the harbinger of progress, commitment to national development not motivated by monetary rewards. Dr. Krishnamurthi and Dr. Shanta embodied all this in a personal way.
Transcript of Chairman’s speech at the Inauguration of Mahaveer Rajasthani International School

The Rajasthani Community of Chennai is known for their service ethos and activities. We at the Cancer Institute (WIA) have had a long association with them. My hearty congratulations and prayers for your continued service to the community, especially the underprivileged. Your objectives, thought and vision for the school are commendable and inspiring. I will take the opportunity to share some of my thoughts or education, role of education, quality of education, role of teachers and last but not the least my message to the children.

Schools and educational institutions are not just for education and academics. These are institutions for character building, molding the mind of the child and the most impressionable age period. Quality of education depends on the type of children that are turned out. Education is not only for examinations, grades and prizes. It is what students could be in future, how they have utilized the knowledge in life and what they achieve in life.

Values and Principles have to be inculcated in the mind of the child/student, the important components are work discipline, punctuality, good conduct, cleanliness concepts of service, sensitivity to environment kindness, compassion, honesty and many more. What is good conduct – is ones behavior, courtesy and respect to elders, way of communication, the words one use, the dress you wear and the environment you live in. One should respect all human beings, courtesy does not cost you anything. It only earns goodwill.

Our lives can be meaningful by being kind, gentle and fair. One should not hesitate to say “sorry” whenever it is needed. A few words like I am sorry, forgive me, thank you, greeting with a “hello”, “Namaskar”, enquiry like “how are you” can make all the difference in changing the entire environment and personal relationship. Words cannot be only from the lip but from the heart – especially when you are dealing with sick patients, those in distress due to whatever reasons, ie. empathy and compassion can create a new life. Our minds must be sensitive to our surrounding – environment. We see poverty, malnutrition, social injustice and many other distressing situations. In these situations, try to do what you can. A good action will always yield results, which you may not be aware of at all.

Your school/college days will never come back. Mahatma Gandhi said, “In whatever you do, do your best – That is its own reward”. Treat your school/college with respect and be proud of the institution that has made you what you are. Always think of what you can give back. One must strive to practice what you have learnt to real life.

Service without expectation is service to God.
Breakthrough: First time in India - Human clinical trials in Cervical cancer patients

DENDRITIC CELL VACCINE

Phase II Human clinical trials using dendritic cell based vaccine in cervical cancer patients

Joint Collaboration of Cancer Institute and National Institute of Immunology, New Delhi.

Immune system as a means to fight cancer

In India, cervical cancer is the most common woman-related cancer, followed by breast cancer. Cervical cancer patients are often diagnosed with advanced stage disease, for which available chemotherapy and radiotherapy is less effective. Furthermore, cervical cancer patients carry a higher risk of disease recurrence in addition to poor prognosis. Therapeutic cancer vaccines rely on the immune system to eliminate tumor cells. In contrast to chemotherapy or radiotherapy, therapeutic vaccines aim to reset patients’ immune systems to achieve this goal. In this context, dendritic cells are part of the immune system and are very potent in antigen presentation to important cells of the immune system including T-cells and B-cells. Once a cancer develops the immune system is suppressed to allow the growth of the cancer. Among the factors which lead to the immune system losing its potency is suppression of the dendritic cell function in the tumour area. One can help reactivate the immune system by developing dendritic cells derived from the patient’s own blood cells and then prime them with cancer antigens [derived either from the patient’s own tumour or use a novel cancer antigen like SPAG9] and then return the mature primed dendritic cells back to the patient. SPAG9 is a cancer specific antigen and was discovered by Dr. Anil Suri, Convener, Cancer Research Program National Institute of Immunology [NII], New Delhi and will be used for these trials. If successful, this will be an important advance and an example of translational research outcome from persistent work of high quality.

The figure below gives an overview of the protocol for generation of mature primed Dendritic cells [DC]. The maturation and priming of the DC’s is done in-vitro.
Dr. T. Rajkumar, was funded by Department of Biotechnology between 2002 – 2006 to develop and characterize the dendritic cells and to conduct the Phase I clinical study. One of the patients who had persistent cervical cancer even after treatment with radiotherapy had also developed lung metastasis. She was included in the trial and with 3 doses of the dendritic cell vaccine her local disease cleared but the lung metastasis continued to grow. She was later given cisplatinum chemotherapy following which she achieved complete regression of the lung lesion. While cancer usually comes back within 18 months, this patient is disease free now for more than 10 years.

Dr. T. Rajkumar has been funded by Department of Science and Technology, Govt. of India, to establish a Centre for Cancer Immunotherapy at the Institute and to conduct a Phase II study. The Centre has been established and the Phase II study which will be a 3 arm study has been cleared by Institute’s Ethical Committee and DCGI. Therapeutic grade SPAG9 to be used for this study has been discovered and provided by Dr. Anil Suri, Convener, Cancer Research Program, National Institute of Immunology, New Delhi and funded by Department of Biotechnology, Govt. of India.

The study will be a Phase II, Randomized, Double blind [Patient and treating Radiation and Medical Oncologists blinded], three arm trial. Stage III-B cervical cancer patients with positive HPV status and positive SPAG9 protein expression will be included in the study and randomized to one of the three arms:

Arm 1 : Conventional concurrent chemo-radiotherapy with placebo (saline given intradermally)

Arm 2 : Conventional concurrent chemo-radiotherapy with DCs primed with patient’s own whole tumour cell lysate given intradermally

Arm 3 : Conventional concurrent chemo-radiotherapy with DCs primed with recombinant SPAG9 protein given intradermally

Each arm will have 18 patients [total 54 patients]

The Team headed by Dr. T. Rajkumar, has also developed a p16 Double ELISA test for screening of cervical cancer, which can replace the conventional PAP smear and HPV Testing. This test can be done at the PHC level and has minimal expertise requirement and can be done and interpreted by a Technician. Additionally, it is expected to cost a little more than Rs.200. The technology transfer has been done to HLL Life Science, Trivandrum. It is to undergo independent validation and once done and shown to be effective, can then be used for Population based screening for cervical cancer in our country as well as in all lower socio-economic countries. Thus the Department of Molecular Oncology has made the possibility of early detection and also developed novel therapy for late stage cervical cancer.
Launch of the Tamil Nadu Palliative Care Group at the Institute on the occasion of World Palliative Care Day - 14.10.17

It was a coming together of government resources and non-governmental organizations. The Palliative Care Group comprises of a committed care of professionals from across the State who work together with the sole objective of improving palliative care. The group will work towards increasing public awareness of pain relief and palliative care, ensure that palliative care is fully integrated within the health system.

Speaking at the launch, Dr. Radhakrishnan, Health Secretary, said that with regard to the care aspect, the State government encouraged working with NGOs. There is a need to look at all aspects of healthcare. Concerns related to palliative care at present are with regard to how to effectively communicate to people about the care needed and how to coordinate with various providers of healthcare facilities,” he said. Tracing the history of palliative care in the State, Chairman Dr. Shanta said that the Jeevodaya initiative in 1990 was the first to bring about palliative care in the State and that they had subsequently opened a centre in 1993. “While there also needs to be an upgrade of palliative care as a super specialty, the focus should be on the necessity to add a scientific component to palliative care,” she said. Although the concept of Palliative Care was enunciated way back in 1967 by Madam Dame Cicely Saunders, it was not till 1986 that the first Hospices in India was set up in Bombay – Shanti Avedna Ashram by a charitable trust. The first such effort in Chennai was conceived by Jeevodhaya in 1990 and a centre was inaugurated in 1993. Palliative care is now an integral component of the National Cancer Control Programme. Palliative care has also been recognized as an independent specialty and accepted as a multidisciplinary specialty. Today, we have accredited centres for training in Palliative Care, both medical and para medical. “Tamilnadu State Palliative Care Group” is a committed group of palliative care professionals, either palliative care trained, anesthetists trained in palliative care and those interested in palliative care have come together with an objective of improving palliative care in Tamilnadu. This is certainly a commendable effort to improve quality of palliative care and discuss subjects that have been avoided over the past years. I am sure that all oncologists will participate and contribute to their effort.

Mahaveer Ashray – Palliative Care Centre

Mahaveer Ashray – Palliative Care Centre for Terminally Ill Underprivileged Patients was inaugurated in Smt. Chandrabai Singhvi Campus at Sriperumbudur on 21.06.2017. The 50-bedded state-of-the-art facility built in 4.60 acres of land, the Ashray would provide emotional support, physical comfort and medical attention to patients enabling them to spend their last days peacefully and emotional support to their families. “Drawing inspiration from an idea expressed by our beloved adviser Dr. Krishnamurthi and Chairman Dr. Shanta, the Singhvi Charitable Trust established in 1974 by Shri. N. Sugalchand Jain has come up with the Palliative Care Centre. Shri Jain who strongly believes in the universal philosophy “Live and Let Live” of Bhagwan Mahaveer and who has an immense desire to help the needy and assist the underprivileged and continues to be a great support to the Institute.

We thank the Singhvi Charitable Trust. We thank Shri N Sugalchand Jain and his entire family and other generous donors and supporters of the Trust.
National Conference Physiotherapy in Oncology - 18.11.2017

Department of Physiotherapy organised the first national conference on “Physiotherapy in Oncology” in collaboration with Sree Balaji college of Physiotherapy. Dr. Kanagasabhai, Vice Chancellor, BIHER(Deemed to be University) was the chief guest. Chairman Dr. V. Shanta, inaugurated the conference and addressed the gathering: Physiotherapy plays a vital role in improving quality of life and reducing morbidities. The role of physiotherapy and physiotherapists in oncologic care is an important one. The physiotherapists must be kind, compassionate and have good communication skill to be of help to the patients. Importance of physiotherapy in oncologic care did not find a place in the routine curriculum of physiotherapy training: A comprehensive physiotherapy care including restoration and supportive components will significantly add to the contribution of physiotherapy in oncologic care. Cancer related fatigue is a major morbidity and is under extensive research and has not been solved yet.

Center News

- Lecture by Prof. Veerapandiyan on ‘Qualitative Research’ for the M.Phil Scholars was conducted at the Institute (WIA) in June.
- Department of Psycho-oncology and RCTC in association with Rotaract Club of Women’s Christian college, Raj Hair Intl Pvt. Ltd. & Green Trends Salon organized a hair donation drive at Cancer Institute (WIA) on 28th June, 2017. Around 250 wigs were donated to the cancer patients as a part of the drive.
- Mr Rangarajan, Scientific Assistant, on Limb salvage in bone tumors and was awarded Prof Arcot Gajaraj Best paper award – First prize at Coimbatore organised by SNM(I)-SC in September.
- Dr. Arvind Krishnamurthy organized the "Interventional Pulmonology and VATS Workshop" in September at the Institute, it was a 1 day CME program with lectures, video presentations and Hands on Workshop with around 60 participants.

International

- Dr. Sunil, paper ‘Clinical and oncological outcomes of young patients with hepatocellular carcinoma after hepatectomy’ at HPB Surgery Week 2017 at Jeju, Korea in March 2017 and a paper ‘Clinical and oncological outcomes of young patients with hepatocellular carcinoma after hepatectomy’ at THE LIVER WEEK 2017 in June at Incheon, Seoul, Korea.

Lecture by Prof. Veerapandiyan on ‘Qualitative Research’ for the M.Phil Scholars was conducted at the Institute (WIA) in June.
- Dr. Arvind Krishnamurthy, “Management of locally advanced thyroid cancer”. Indian Society of Oncology meeting held at Guwahati, in July.

- Participated as a Faculty for the Government Surgical Training program on Video Assisted Thoracic Surgery (VATS), in September in Mumbai.

- Talk on “Margin Controversy in Breast Cancer” Target- Breast imaging and interventions program. IC and SR auditorium, IIT, in October.

- Dr. Prasanth Ganesan, presentation on “Experience with managing chronic myeloid leukemia and acute myeloid leukemia” at the Myeloid malignancies conclave conducted by Tata Medical Center, Kolkata, in September at Kolkata.

- Presentation on “Experience in managing diffuse large B cell lymphoma at Cancer Institute” at the Biosimilar medicine conclave in Hyderabad in September.

- Presentation on “experience with treating teenage and young adult patients with hematological cancer” at the TYACAN at Tata Memorial Hospital, in September.

- Introduction to Oncology for Physiotherapists in the symposium on Oncology for Physiotherapists at Institute.

- AML: Update during the symposium on Myeloid malignancies in Chennai I in July.

- Dr. V. Surendran, ‘Ill effects of tobacco and cancer prevention’ at Kumararani Meena Muthaiah College of arts and science and Department of Physiotherapy at the Institute in July.

- ‘Psycho-oncology’ at the Department of Clinical and Counseling Psychology, Banyan Academy of Leadership in Mental health, Chennai and ‘Trends and Challenges of Psycho-oncology in India’ at the Department of Psychology, Rajagiri College of Social science, Kochi, Kerala in August.

- ‘Psychosocial issues and challenges of cancer patients and caregivers’ at Department of Psycho-oncology, MOP Vaishnav College in September.

- Dr. C. Sundaramoorthy ‘Non-communicable diseases’ for NSS program officers at Madras School of Social Work in July.

- Mr. Divyaraj Prabhakar, at CPCL Polytechnic College, Manali in July and at St. Charles Hr. Sec. School, Tiruthani in August.

- Ms. Revathy, ‘Ill effects of tobacco and non-communicable diseases’ for students of Perunthalaivar Kamarajar Govt. GHS School, Ambattur and ‘Psycho-oncology’ for the students of Banyan Academy of Leadership in Mental health, at the Institute in August.

- Programme on ‘Tobacco cessation and control’ was conducted by the Department of Psycho-oncology and RCTC for the SDB training mangers at the Institute in August.

- The Department of Psycho-oncology and RCTC has initiated a technique by reaching out to the larger public through social media, by texts and messages, to enroll more tobacco users for cessation. The message that is being circulated is attached below.

"தமிழில் பொருள் எழுத்து, தமிழில் பொருள் எழுத்து, தமிழில் பொருள் எழுத்து, தமிழில் பொருள் எழுத்து, தமிழில் பொருள் எழுத்து, தமிழில் பொருள் எழுத்து, தமிழில் பொருள் எழுத்து, தமிழில் பொருள் எழுத்து, தமிழில் பொருள் எழுத்து, தமிழில் பொருள் எழுத்து, தமிழில் பொருள் எழுத்து, தமிழில் பொருள் எழுத்து, தமிழில் பொருள் எழுத்து, தமிழில் பொருள் எழுத்து, தமிழில் பொருள் எழுத்து, தமிழில் பொருள் எழுத்து, தமிழில் பொருள் எழுத்து, தமிழில் பொருள் எழுத்து, தமிழில் பொருள் எழுத்து, தமிழில் பொருள் எழுத்து, தமிழில் பொருள் எழுத்து, தமிழில் பொருள் எழுத்து, தமிழில் பொருள் எழுத்து, தமிழில் பொருள் எழுத்து, தமிழில் பொருள் எழுத்து, தமிழில் பொருள் எழுத்து, தமிழில் பொருள் எழுத்து, தமிழில் பொருள் எழுத்து, தமிழில் பொருள் எழுத்து, தமிழில் பொருள் எழுத்து, தமிழில் பொருள் எழுத்து, தமிழில் பொருள் எழுத்து, தமிழில் பொருள் எழுத்து, தமிழில் பொருள் எழுத்து, தமிழில் பொருள் எழுத்து, தமிழில் பொருள் எழுத்து, தமிழில் பொருள் எழுத்து, தமிழில் பொருள் எழுத்து"
Transcript of Chairmans speech at “The release of the Amaravathi Declaration towards women’s empowerment by the Hon.Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh”

The invitation was most unexpected - for a while I wondered whether I was competent to address this gathering on women’s empowerment but I soon realized that I come from an Institution founded by Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddy, a legend in her life time, a pioneer in her fight for social and political upliftment of women in India, an inspirational force for generations of helpless women and children and felt that I should certainly take the opportunity.

Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddy’s achievements as a legislator and social reformer had everlasting impact on the lives of women. Dr. Reddy was the first woman medical graduate in India, the first woman legislator in the world. She is the founder of the Cancer Institute (WIA) of which I am a part.

For an effort of the magnitude envisaged in the Amaravathi Declaration for women’s empowerment, comprehensively covering Women’s Education, Women’s Legal Rights, Women’s Health and Nutrition, Women in Entrepreneurship, Women in Research and Innovation, Women in Politics, Women’s Social Protection, Women and Sustainable Development Goals, Women’s Social Development,& Women’s Digital Literacy to be successful, it has to be accepted as a mission. It has to be a clarion call for women in general to be part of what is happening around them to bring back values and principles in life and for women to understand and appreciate their respective roles and responsibilities. It has to be a mass movement, a working women’s group totally committed, motivated and dedicated with a passion to achieve and follow the below tenets:

**Mahatma Gandhi said**, “Freedom has to be universal. Political freedom, economic freedom importantly social freedom.”

**Swamiji said**, Awake, Arise Stop not till the goal is reached.

**Dr. Kalam said**, “We need to operate in a mission mode with a vision for the nation, for the organisation you are working for.”

Empowerment starts with good education. It is not just graduation or post-graduation. Education provides awareness and is the basis of understanding. An empowered woman is an educated individual who undertakes her responsibility, can take independent decisions, can asset herself and is economically independent. Every right carries a responsibility. Empowerment of women can be achieved only by women helping themselves. Gender equality is not superiority or inferiority. It is a balance respecting each other. It is not going to pubs, smoking or consuming alcohol. Empowerment cannot be given on a platter. It has to be earned. It has to come from within. This is possible only with good education and economic independence. The days when women could be just house wives and be silent spectators to
whatever happens around them will have to be past history. No doubt, there are considerable handicaps and problems for working women. She has not only to work but run a home. This implies a capacity to adapt to multiplicity of duties, care of the family, upbringing of the child, in addition to her vocation. The upbringing of children today is a more difficult task than in the yester years because children do not accept everything blindly. Women have to learn to be good mothers & wives. The environment provided by the parents, especially the mother will be a major determinant that moulds the character of the child and shape his/her future. I wonder whether the present educational system is geared for these complexities. Marriage is a sacred event in one’s life. It cannot be treated casually as is happening now.

There is no greater truth than what Dr.Muthulakshmi Reddy said in 1927. Laws and Legislations are there only for sanction. It is up to women to get them implemented and for action. Empowerment can come only with sweat and toil. It has to be the responsibility of empowered career women to take on the lead and create role models around them.

What is needed is a sea change in the mind set of women. Women continue to live with an inferiority complex. Even in married life, the woman continues to see the man as superior. It is not inferiority or superiority. They should feel equal and this is possible only when women are economically independent.

Despite obstacles and challenges, there have been women achievers. I just like to mention Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddy, hailing from a socially handicapped environment in an era when girls were born only to be married, had to struggle against an environment that was not just unfavourable but hostile.

She was the first girl student to be admitted to the Maharaja College in Pudukottai against a crescendo of protests from the Hindu orthodoxy and yet became the first women medical graduate in India and the first women legislator in the world. Her contributions to women’s welfare uplift and empowerment of women in 1930s would have earned a Nobel Prize.

The other inspiring achiever is the Nobel laureate 2012 – Ley Mah Ghowee. She was 39 years, a Liberian who said when she heard of the award,

Don’t wait for Gandhi; don’t wait for King; Don’t wait for Mandela You are your own Gandhi, You are your own King.

This reinforces the need for confidence in one self, that we can achieve and there is nothing that cannot be achieved. We need dedication, commitment, motivation and most importantly passion. This passion must be contagious.


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