

## PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

Gone are the days when skin diseases could be summed up in 8 words :

“Cause unknown, Diagnosis doubtful, Prognosis bad and Treatment nil”. Also passed are the days when wags used to crack : “Venereologists are an expiring species, but Venereal diseases are thriving”; now the same wags are saying : “Venereal diseases are proliferating in spite of the thriving Venereologists”, thanks to the new patterns of contemporary life. Leprosy is no longer considered a divine curse, but a curable disease. Due to the achievements of modern medicine, people are less and less concerned about diseases which used to take away their lives before adulthood ; they are now more and more concerned about diseases which alter the quality of their lives such as skin diseases. It is in this overall context that we have to take a fresh look at the Aims and Objects of our Association and devise better means of delivering the goods to the teeming millions of this country.

In this national Association consulted by policy makers, when it comes to matters vitally concerning the speciality? Should not the senior members of our speciality with impeccable credentials be designated as Hon. Advisors in each State whose counsels may be sought regarding communicable skin and sexually transmitted diseases and Leprosy? Is the voice of our speciality effectively heard in the halls of modern medical power such as the Medical Council of India the I.C.M.R., etc. and, if not, is it not high time that we had a working group at the national level which will

go into this question in depth and suggest ways and means? We keep on complaining about shortage of medical specialists dealing with skin and sexually transmitted diseases. Is it not true that to some extent atleast this is an artificially occurring scarcity? We do find that due to various administrative exigencies many qualified specialists are posted to general duties or to other specialities atleast in some States. Being a vast country, the problems facing the specialists are different in different regions of India. I would request you to think for a moment whether it suffices the needs of our specialist group to meet just once a year at an Annual Conference or whether we should have regional mid-term meetings also, organised by regional co-ordinators selected from amongst us. We also should have better liaison with other Institutions and Scientific bodies who have more or less similar objects and aims as ourselves so that we do not pull in different directions as we seem to be doing now.

Fellow members of the Association, you have patiently listened to what I have said, perhaps what I had omitted to say and taken for granted are more important than what I have said. You are the best judge. As my first official act as the President I sincerely wish that I could appoint each and every member of our Association to one large ad hoc committee whose sole charge would be to carry out the Aims and Objects of our Association so that this speciality achieves the status which rightfully belongs to it.

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Excerpts from the Presidential Address delivered by **Dr. Gopinathan**, at the X Annual Conference of I. A. D. V. & L. at Hyderabad on 4—1—1982.