

**TEXT of Speech of Shri Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed,
President of Republic of India on the occasion of the
inauguration of the International Symposium on
Pigmentary Disorders, Workshop on Communicable
Dermatoses and the 4th Annual conference of the
Indian Association of Dermatologists, Venereologists
and Leprologists held at All India Institute of Medical
Sciences, New Delhi, in February, 1967.**

I am very happy to be in the midst of specialists in the field of dermatology, venereology and leprology from various parts of the world. I am pleased to learn that this is the first international dermatological meet being held in India under the aegis of the International Society of Tropical Dermatology, in collaboration with the Indian Association of Dermatologists, Venereologists and Leprologists.

The subject that you have selected, namely, pigmentation and communicable skin disorders is of considerable importance. Pigmentary problems such as Leukoderma and excessive pigments in the skin are some of the relatively common problems in this part of the world. They are important enough to be studied not only as diseases but also because of social and psychological effects they cause. Communicable dermatoses such as leprosy, scabies fungal infection cause considerable morbidity and loss of man-hours. One should direct attention towards the treatment of these diseases as also their prevention through development of potent vaccines.

Dermatology has been a relatively neglected speciality till a couple of decades ago. Due to hard and good work put in by the dermatologists all over the world, great advances have been made. In India also, increasing attention is being paid to dermatology. From a relatively small number of skin specialists we have today skin specialists practically in every medical school and most of the bigger hospitals. Some of the contributions made by the dermatologists from India have been recognized all over the world. I hope that extensive clinical, applied and fundamental research will continue in this field, thereby ensuring availability of better services to the patients.

Venereal diseases and leprosy have affected humanity ever since the dawn of civilization. There are accounts of various sexually transmitted disorders in the ancient literature both in India and other countries. With the advent of antibiotics it was hoped that the venereal diseases will be controlled, a hope that has been belied. An increased resurgence of sexually transmitted diseases has been reported from all quarters of the world, particularly amongst the younger generations, which should be a cause of

great concern to us all. With better education on sex and emphasis on moral and social values we should be able to control the spread of this evil. The importance of health education in this regard need not be over emphasized.

Venereal Diseases and such other problems are generally found in the slum areas of big cities. This is a problem which has to be tackled not only by doctors but also by sociologists. The voluntary agencies have a special role to play and I feel that not only in the field of leprosy but also in the field of Venereal Diseases more and more voluntary agencies should be drawn through liberal grants etc., from Government.

Health education also plays an important part and suitable material should be developed and made available to schools etc. so that our people are made aware of how these diseases spread and what can be done to prevent them.

Leukoderma which is going to be a major subject of discussion in this symposium has been treated in the indigenous systems of medicine in India. Further effort in the understanding of genetics and causation of leukoderma may help in the control of this disorder. The peculiar ashy grey pigmentation which has been recently described in India is reported to be common and needs to be investigated more thoroughly. I am happy to learn that various subjects including the electron microscopic studies of pigmentary disorders have been taken up in this country and elsewhere.

During the next four days you will have an opportunity of discussing in detail various aspects of skin disorders and I hope your deliberations will be fruitful.

I have great pleasure in inaugurating this International Symposium.

I wish the Symposium and the conference all success.
