Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I consider this as a great honor to stand before you as President of this August body, The Association of Surgeons of India. I thank you all for having given me this opportunity by electing me as the President of ASI and encouraged me to serve this Association and thereby to the people of our Mother Land. I am happy to preside over this function and address the delegates of the 64th Annual Conference of ASI at this High Tech City, Hyderabad known for its culture - language, literature and arts and its time honored hospitality.

I would like to acknowledge and appreciate the remarkable work done by the Organizing Committee headed by Prof. Shamsundar, assisted and supported by Dr. Mohan Gupta, as Organizing Secretary and Dr. Suresh Chandra Hari, the Treasurer. I would also like to place on record the wonderful work done by the Governing Council Members Dr. M. Nagabhushanam, Dr. A.Y. Chary and Dr. C.L. Venkat Rao, with the advice of senior members of ASI like Dr. P.V. Chalapathi Rao, our Past President of ASI, Dr. A. K. Chari as well as the State Chairman and Secretary. Our appreciation and gratitude are also due to the Honorable Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh and the Govt. of Andhra Pradesh, the Vice Chancellor of Dr. N.T.R. Medical University and a number of others who helped this conference to come up. The conference provides an avenue to all members of our fraternity to learn new concepts in health care as well as to meet and develop camaraderie and friendship.

Availing this opportunity, I would like to place before you certain points lingering in my mind for quite some time.

STRENGTH OF THE ASSOCIATION

I am glad and proud to inform that our membership is increasing from time to time and our current strength is around 11,000 with 341 new members enrolled during 2004. This was possible because of the interest shown by our surgeons - colleagues and the untiring efforts of our central office bearers with the active cooperation of our State Chapters and Sectional Office bearers. We are happy about this but not satisfied. More than a third of our surgeons are still outside our ambit. This shows the reluctance of some of our surgeons to become a member of this August Body. But they should know that our Association is the proper and appropriate platform where they can present their work, interact with senior faculty, expose themselves to new developments in surgery through live workshops, to upgrade themselves through fellowships and seek many other help from the Association whenever they are in need. They can also publish their research papers, exchange views on new procedures and about emerging developments in the field through our journal. Fellow delegates please take upon yourselves this task of prevailing over your colleagues to strengthen our Association through their membership.

OUR ASSOCIATION

Our Association is one of the largest medical association in India. All our state Chapters with their city branches and the sections are functioning well and all of them are organizing CME programs, conferences etc. to cater to the needs of surgeons and post graduate students throughout India. I congratulate them and wish them well in their excellent work.

Our members have organized many cancer detection camps, AIDS Awareness and Health Awareness Programs, Blood Donation Campaigns and so on in collaboration with the State and Central Governments, NGOs and IMAs.

COMMITTEES

Various committees formed by the ASI are functioning well and they are helping our members in all aspects.
For example, legal Cell Committee is helping our members with their CPA issues, if any. Personally I have also advised them whenever they sought my support and help.

FINANCE

I am glad to inform you that financially, we are quite safe through cost cutting exercises. We have downsized the office staff we travel by availing Apex fares and concessional fares taking appropriate routes. We have reduced electricity and telephone bills considerably. At the same time we have increased our income by depositing our funds in safe and income yielding portfolios like RBI Bonds. Through such action we have cleared all our over drafts which were accumulated in the previous years.

On invitation I have attended 13 State Chapter conferences and Sectional Conferences in different parts of the country. I could not attend 3 state and 2 sectional conferences since they overlapped with other programs with prior commitments or I was out of the country. Further I was also an invitee at the Royal College of Surgeons of Thailand conference at Pattaya, American College of Surgeons Conference at New Orleans, USA and also the SAARC Surgical Care Congress held in Dhaka. I am sure you will all be delighted to know that the SAARC Surgical Congress has elected me as the President of SAARC Surgical Care Society. I feel this as a great honor to ASI and not to me. Taking this opportunity we have invited the next SAARC meeting to India. During these conferences colleagues abroad were willing to share their knowledge with us and plans are ahead for arranging exchange programs among SAARC countries and also with other countries.

We are a human organization and therefore the chances of developing differences of opinion and disagreement amongst us also is a possibility. This happened in some state chapters. But I was able to solve the problems with the help and co-operation of the state office bearers and senior members. I thank them all for their readiness in solving the issues.

ASI WEBSITE

Our website is functioning well. We have been updating information on the ASI. It is gratifying to note that the number of visiting hits on our web pages is increasing day by day. I am sure that our website is useful to all our members. Our new members are welcome to visit our website www.asiindia.org

JOURNAL

I am happy that our Journal is being published regularly on time. The chief editor Dr. S. K. Shukla and the Editorial Board Members are keen in raising the standard of the journal. I congratulate and appreciate them for their good work. I request our members to send their articles and the significant work done by them to the journal for publication.

LIVE WORKSHOP

I feel strongly that transfer of knowledge and skills should be in an academic environment and therefore operative workshops should be organized only in teaching hospitals. I don not approve of equipment manufacturers sponsoring workshops. If such sponsorships are unavoidable then it should come from a consortium of manufacturers. Otherwise the surgeons would become salesmen rather than service providers.

I feel that if foreign surgeons are invited they should have the requisite license to perform surgeries in India granted by the MCI or the concerned State Medical Council. This is not only a legal requirement but also an ethical one. Such expert surgeons should have enough time to study the patient and examine whether he is fit for demonstration surgery. Such experts should have a checklist of required equipments, instruments, surgical assistants and other qualified supportive staff and should be fully satisfied with the facilities available before starting the demonstration. If the proposed surgery could not be followed, the expert should abandon it and go in for open procedure or adopt the next best mode of treatment. Failure is part of the game and no one should shy away from it. But failures due to negligence are unpardonable.

I feel that a teaching hospital, duly authorized by the university should offer courses in a set of new technologies or techniques for which experts should be carefully selected. Along with the theatre, its equipments and the supportive personnel should conform to the international standards.

The Medical Council of India and the Association of Surgeons of India are seized of the matter and one can expect effective guidelines to regulate the conduct of live operative workshops to help surgeons learn new techniques without compromising on patient safety and ethical values.
PROTOCOLS

To help the surgeons and to save them from CPA, I made a request to all sections to provide us with a Protocol in managing the patients. But it did not have the desired effect as many sections have not responded till now. I repeat my appeal to come out with a protocol, in the near future in order to help our members.

SERVICE TO THE SOCIETY

Our learning - academic, scientific and technical - are for the benefit of mankind only. There is no doubt that our learning is growing in many ways. But our growth has to be at even pitch and on par with other societies. If there are endogenous reasons for our slow growth we have to work together to rectify them. Our existing efforts are showing signs of success. The mere fact that the patients of other countries are coming to India to avail the services of our surgeons shows our ability to stand on equal footing with western counterparts. At the same time our treatments costs have to be affordable to our people. That state has not come yet. Hence our aim should be for the day when all people of our country could get the best of treatment with the least of expenditure.

I like to emphasize the proverb “A hand that helps is holier than the lips that pray”

I request you all to stand united together to sacrifice our life in alleviating the sufferings of the humanity.

I also like to inform our people that we are for you and we are your friends forever.

AN APPEAL TO THE GOVERNMENT

I request the Central and State Governments to help the Doctors to have a free hand so that they can treat the patient without any fear and apprehension. I also request the Governments to understand the difficulties the Surgeons has to face in dealing with acute and emergency cases and not to harass them and protect them in any case of eventuality.

DEVELOPMENT IN SURGERY

In the last decades of the last century science and technology have revolutionized surgery enabling us to perform complicated major surgeries with ease and without much discomfort to the patient.

Wireless Transmission Cardiograms, Wrist Watch ECG Monitoring, Bandages made of fibers that can detect bacteria and other microbes, electromyography and electroencephalography are all cases in point. The internet and telemetry have come into use to transfer medical and surgical information throughout the world. Telesurgery and Telemedicine are accomplished facts today.

All of us know that there was a time when blood transfusions were done even without grouping and typing. But today transplantation of body parts, like renal, cardiac, pulmonary, Pancreatic. Limb and liver are done with sophisticated typing and matching. Zeno Transplantation of organs from non-humans to humans is in the process of investigation. Role of prosthesis has also significantly increased.

Robotic Surgery is now being experimented and is utilized in multiple surgeries. A whole new field of surgery has developed using the robotic assist such as AESOP, the Zeus, the Hermes and the Socrates. Combining robot and the telemedicine enables one to literally operate from across the world of a patient without over being in the operation theatre.

As science and surgery develop in research and techniques, newer disease problems also pose a challenge to the profession. We have to train our surgeons to face this challenge through absorption of appropriate tools and techniques that sciences can offer.

Even 2000 years before itself, the Great Saint Thiruvalluvar said - Diagnose the disease, its causes; ascertain the means of cure and apply remedies appropriate to the patient.

YOUNG SURGEONS

“A lot of young people thin the future is closed for them, that everything has been done. This is not so. There are still plenty of avenues to be explored.”

Walt Disney

Our younger surgeons are the pillars of our society. They should vow to work hard to make this nation a disease free, healthy nation and bring laurels to our “Mother India”. I call upon them to follow our traditions and develop a sense of service. Service to mankind is service to God. Work is worship. While upholding the traditions of surgery our youngsters should open
themselves for the new and the modern and keep the flag of surgery to fly high.

FEDERATION OF ASSOCIATIONS

My earnest desire is to bring all the Association of Medical Fraternity together and form a Federation of Association to frame certain rules and regulations, syllabus for Under-Graduate and Post-Graduate programs, etc. These can be placed before the MCI, Central and State Governments to improve the standard of medical education and health care. We have moves to have one or two representatives from our Association to the MCI and in all the health programs of the Government.

It many not be out of context to recall my memories and think of the sacrifice made by my parents and my family for educating me and molded me tot his extent. I also thank my teachers and my good friends who were guided me and helped me in all my endeavors in all these years. I thank late Prof. Dr. T. Subramanian, Prof. Dr. E. D. Rajasekaran, our Director of Surgical Education, Prof. Dr. P. Jagadeesa Pandian, Prof. Dr. P. Sivalingam, Prof. Dr. N.T. Srinivasan, Prof. Dr. M. Kalyanasundaram, Prof. Dr. N. Sivaprahasam, Dr. S. Babu, and all my medical colleagues in Madurai and in all other parts of India for helping me in my endeavors.

I thank all the Governing Council Members, State Chapter and Sectional Office bearers and all the committee members for their kind co-operation and help rendered during my tenure. A man cannot run a show without the guidance of senior persons. Such guidance cam in abundance from Prof. Dr. a. Venugopal, Prof. Dr. C.R.Sundararajan, Prof. Dr. T. Dorairajan, Prof. Dr. S. Vittal, Prof. Dr. B. Krishna Rau, Prof. Dr. K.S. Shekar and all other Past Presidents. I thank all of them. I also thank Dr. B. D. Pujari, Dr. R.S. Sinha and Dr. H.S. Bhanushali, our Past Presidents for their valuable advises. I cannot forget the help done by Prof. K.N. Parimelazhagan, our Immediate Past President and the President Elect Dr. R. B. Singh for their timely suggestions. In every effort there should be a person to shape your ideas for execution. I was lucky to have an untiring, active and enthusiastic person, in my younger brother Prof. Dr. M. N. Kamaludeen, our Honorary Secretary, who stood with me shoulder to shoulder to share my responsibilities. I thank him profusely. Finance is troublesome portfolio in any organization and our Honorary Treasurer; Dr. U. Vasudeva Rao handled it with zeal and necessary acumen to get over the financial crisis of our ASI by consulting and co-operating with us. I owe him serious thanks.

One’s thinking may be fast but execution could be slow. Others have to keep pace with your speed. Our office staff stood up to my expectations and acted fast on many occasions knowing the importance of the work. Many fell ill during the last 3 months. In spite of that all of them did and excellent work and co-operated with us throughout our tenure. I thank Mr. Balasubramaniam, the new CEO., an the entire senior and junior staff of our Central Office for their excellent work in running the Association in a smooth and nice manner. I also thank my patients who came to me for treatment in spite of my frequent non-availability. I will be failing in my duty if I do not mention about my family members who stood the test of time, co-operated with me, and encouraged me in all my association activities. They did not wither during my absence, took everything in their stride by showing a cheerful face during my involvement in ASI. I am grateful to all of them especially to my wife Dr. J. Pitchaiammal whose love towards me is immeasurable.

I request all of you to extend your co-operation in all my future endeavors also. Whether I am President of ASI or not, I will be always your “JOTHI”. If I burn myself in your hearts, your memories will brighten me forever.

Finally, I thank the Almighty who gave me power and courage to run and improve the Association.

I wish you all a Happy, Healthy and Prosperous New Year.

"Jai Hind"

“Long Live ASI”