

Greetings to your beloved and respected Chancellor Dr Bradley Deaton the Dean Dr Robert Churchill, Vice provost Dr.Handy Williamson, Professor of Physics Dr Robert White, Dr Kattesh Katti and Dr Kannan Raghuraman,

Please allow me to thank your Chancellor, the Dean, the Vice provost and the others connected with this unique function, and conferring an honorary degree on me today. This is not only, a prestigious award conferred on me but also on the institutions I represent. They are namely Sankara Nethralaya, Medical and Vision research foundations of Chennai, India.

India is a fascinating country of contrasts in many aspects. It is a country of unity amidst diversity .It is a country that welcomed and provided shelter for three major religions of the world namely Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. It gave birth to three highly evolved, philosophically rich religions, namely Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism.

Health care problems of India:

India has emerged as a leading developing country. It has registered a 9% economic growth over the past 3 years. However it has many problems to overcome. Improvements in Education & employability are two basic problems we need to address urgently among the other problems. It is clear, from health indices for Kerala and other states of the union where education and earning power are better, they are

better developed overall and have done well. The maternal mortality, the infant mortality are lower .The longevity of life has improved. It is now around 65years compared to 48 about 60 years ago, at the time of our independence. However the importance of education and earning capacity as a reason thereof, should not be forgotten. . It is predicted by the economists, that liberation from abject poverty, is likely by 2020.Combined with Spiritual adherence to values, India has an opportunity and potential to develop better human beings, on this planet

Sankara Nethralaya is a 32 year old, Ophthalmic health care institution. It has a 1500 employees, amongst whom 62 are ophthalmic consultants. Every day we see 1500 to 1700 outpatients and carry out 125 major ophthalmic surgical procedures. 40% of the surgeries are carried out, totally free of cost, however complex the required surgery may be.

We are recognized for ophthalmic postgraduate education by the National board of examinations of the Government of India, and "The Tamilnadu Dr MGR medical university". We collaborate with the Birla institute of Technology and Sciences, Pilani, Rajasthan and also the Indian institute of Technology, Madras.

The institution has emerged as a premier research organization as well, utilizing as it does the carefully maintained medical records. Quality healthcare, education and research conducted by the institutions, have won many awards and prestigious collaborations. Year after year, we have been adjudged as the best ophthalmic institution in India by national public polls.

Beautiful enlightening poems of Saint Vallalar, a Tamil poet reads "Emmadhamum Sam madhame" meaning that all religions are equal and equal. Salvation is the ultimate goal of every human being. According to Hinduism's Karma theory, underperformers are reborn and reincarnated, over and over again until, they have overcome

their karma by good deeds and attain Lord's feet. Karaikal Ammaiyar another Tamil Savant's poem piously prays "Pirava Varum vendum" and Adi Sankara's Bhaja Govindam emphasize the same fact in poetic lyrical beauty praying for release from rebirth.

We consider "Manava Seva", that is service to mankind is "Mahewara Seva," that is service to the Lord. Let me reiterate that service to suffering human being is, as good an act, as the service rendered to the good Lord Himself. Amongst the various good deeds, Karmas, Charity (Giving Alms) is one of the best acts. Amongst them all, the supreme one is Vidhya Dhana (Giving knowledge as alms). If we can offer education and make knowledge available continuously and brighten and illuminate the lives, with joy of happiness, what else could be a nobler act and better modus operandi for salvation..

One of the basic objectives and philosophy of Sankara Nethralaya is to provide proper education to the young and capable in India to perform the Maheswara seva.

I had my education and training in Ophthalmology in the United states. I strongly uphold the view that the Residency training I had, in Ophthalmology was the best in the world. It made an individual like me, to become self confident, armed with practical knowledge. American education and training prepares and assures deliverance of quality care. It creates a wholesome human being and not just a doctor with post graduate qualification.

The great Mother India needs to be free from poverty and thus truly gain freedom. The education is the answer. It is not a mere education but that which also builds wholesome character.

What I and We seek from you "Give us" the opportunity for American Education.

Together, We shall make the world a better place to Live.

Dr. SS Badrinath