

SHARADA DHANVANTARI HOSPITAL

*(on the occasion of the Foundation Stone Laying Ceremony
of the Maternity Block of*

By Hon'ble Sri R. Gundu Rao
Chief Minister, Government of Karnataka)

I offer my respectful pranams to His Holiness Sri Abhinava Vidyathirtha Mahaswamigalu, the Jagadguru of Sharada Peetam, Sringeri, and to His Holiness the Sannidhanam Bharathithirtha Mahaswamigalu.

Dear and esteemed Hon'ble Sri R. Gundu Rao and Hon'ble Minister Begane Ramaiah, friends, ladies and gentlemen,

I deem it a great honour to welcome you all to this function. We are proud to have in our midst today not only our dear and Hon'ble Chief Minister but also Hon'ble Minister Sri Begane Ramaiah. When we approached our Hon'ble Chief Minister and invited him to visit Sringeri to lay the foundation stone of the Maternity Block of the Sharada Dhanvantari Hospital he readily acceded to our request in spite of his busy schedule of work. Since he has occupied this new office we have heard him from different platforms and are impressed by his statesmanship. His immense interest in the professional activities in different fields and his eagerness to understand their difficulties and shortcomings, his fairmindedness and sense of concern for his fellow beings in general and service organisations like this one in particular, have earned a place for him in our hearts. To

Welcome Address by Dr. V. Parameshvara, Chairman Sri Abhinava Vidyathirtha Mahaswamigal Peetarohana Silver Jubilee Commemoration Medical Foundation On the occasion of the Foundation Stone Laying Ceremony of the Maternity Block of Sharada Dhanvantari Hospital Sringeri - 17th April 1981.

you, Sir, I extend a cordial welcome.

We are also proud and privileged to have the Hon'ble Minister for Rural Development and Panchayatraj, Sri Begane Ramaiah, who also represents this constituency. Right from the inception of the Sharada Dhanvantari Hospital Mr. Ramaiah has shown tremendous interest in its activities and guided its destiny along progressive and proper channels. Mr. Ramaiah is a man of many parts, easily approachable, meticulous and sincere in his dealings, wielding both brain and brawn and anxious that this institution grows from strength to strength and reaches the cadre of All India as well as International Institutions of healing and medical education. Hence it is in the fitness of things that he is to preside at this function. Sir, we extend a hearty welcome to you.

A short resume of the activities of the Sharada Dhanvantari Hospital at this juncture would I am sure be of great interest to this august gathering.

The hospital was started by His Holiness's devotees on the 11th February 1979 to mark the twenty-fifth year of the Peetarohanam (assumption as Pontiff of the Sharada Peetam, Sringeri) by His Holiness the Abhinava Vidyathirtha Mahaswamigal. The beneficiaries of this venture are the inhabitants of Sringeri and its surrounding areas. Hence it had the blessings of His Holiness who has generously contributed towards its construction and maintenance and has also been evincing a keen interest in its proper functioning. Thanks to the spontaneous contributions made by persons from all walks of life, the hospital has grown with remarkable rapidity.

Sir, you were kind enough to declare open the Diagnostic Block of this hospital on 9th March 1980 and extolled the service rendered by this hospital to the poor and needy.

The hospital is well equipped with a modern clinical laboratory, round-the-clock emergency service and theatres for major and minor surgery. The average out-patient attendance is about 200 a day. Child welfare and maternity clinic and immunisation programmes are a part of its activities. So far, more than 66,000 persons have been treated as out-patients and 200 persons as in-patients in the hospital. Besides the regular staff, from all over the State, highly qualified doctors have been rendering voluntary

service in the hospital. Many of them are eminent persons in their own fields. The high quality of treatment in the hospital is mostly due to their co-operation.

We have ambitious but practical programmes for expanding the hospital by increasing its facilities for in-patients and purchasing the best available equipment so as to enlarge the scope of its service to the public. An extensive research programme in Ayurveda has also been undertaken. A Herbarium in a plot of 18 acres and a Library of Ayurvedic Literature are in the process of being set up. A team of research scholars has taken up the study of the existing flora of the area and the identification of the medical herbs in the region. Research has also been undertaken to study in depth the traditional family medicines of the area so as to assess their utility and mode of application under modern conditions.

The entire hospital complex with all these facilities requires more land and buildings. We are confident that our request to the Government of Karnataka to endow an area of 4 acres adjacent to the hospital along with the existing Taluk Office building will be viewed sympathetically.

I am happy to inform you that the hospital is an entirely free institution and serves every individual patient without any discrimination. We consider that the efforts and resources spent on health care as not an expenditure but an investment on our people. The Director of Health and Family Welfare Services of the Government of Karnataka has recognised it as a 'Charitable Institution' with the benefits accruing therefrom and the Commissioner of Income Tax has exempted all donations made to this Institution from tax liability under Section 35 CCA of the Indian Income-tax Act. The Indian Council of Medical Research, New Delhi, has recognised Sri Abhinava Vidyathirtha Swamigal Scientific Research Academy and Sharada Dhanvantari Hospital under the category of "Scientific Research Association" in the field of medical research and has generously recommended tax exemption benefits under Section 35 (1)-(ii). We are grateful to the authorities for these valuable concessions which will enable contributions to flow from the generous public more freely than ever before.

It is pertinent to recall the words of our President Sri Sanjeeva Reddy

of India who, while laying the Sanjay Gandhi Post-Graduate Institute of Medical Sciences at Lucknow on the 14th December 1980, said: “. Suitable conditions should be created so that the doctors coming out of medical colleges decide to stay within this country and serve the rural people, particularly those who require their services. The medical facilities available at present, particularly in the rural areas, are highly inadequate. Patients have to travel hundreds of miles to be able to reach a medical centre wherein sophisticated equipment and specialised services of experts are available to deal with chronic and complicated cases. In many cases, the patients do not even reach their destination. Only at a critical stage when it becomes unavoidable they undertake the journey for highly specialised treatment. One way in which the benefits of advancement in medical services could be extended to the people is to set up more such institutions.”

The Government of India and the Medical Council of India have been trying to draft a National Medical Educational Policy so as to suit the needs of our country. Their efforts have a twofold aim—firstly, to utilise the available knowledge of ancient and modern systems of medicine and secondly to re-orientate medical education to the needs and aspirations of the Indian community in the rural areas.

This clarion call by the President has found a ready response in our minds and hearts. Sri Abhinava Vidyathirtha Mahaswamigal Peetarohana Silver Jubilee Commemoration Medical Foundation, Sringeri, has a secret aspiration and this we hope can be transformed into reality by our beloved Chief Minister. Our proposal is for a rural medical college to be called “Sharada Dhanvantari Institute of Medical Sciences” at Sringeri, which will be in the heart of Malnad. The salient features of this new experiment would be:

1. Both the medical college and the hospital will be in the surroundings in which the people live and not in an atmosphere which is alien to the people who have to be treated.
2. Students would live in a rural environment so that on completing their career they may be able to better serve the rural population. Our research in Ayurvedic medicine would also help the medical graduates to synchronise ancient medical knowledge with modern techniques. This college would, therefore, turn out a new type of

medical graduates who would be part of the new rural life which is emerging in this country as an integral process of national revival in socio-economic development.

A doctor of this type would not merely be a curative technician but would also be a learned guide in matters of health and hygiene to the common folk, *i.e.*, prevent diseases as well as cure them. In the olden days the institution of the family physician was common. Now specialisation is the order of the day and the attempt to cure an ailment often dominates the treatment, forgetful of the fact that it is a human being who is ill and that what requires to be treated is not just a malfunction of a particular organ. Our attempt, therefore, is to hearken back to a more humane approach in medical treatment which is rurally oriented.

Modern trends in treatment of medical and surgical cases have so far been confined mainly to cities and towns; but in a country where the majority live in villages and have developed a particular way of life which is both healthy and simple, "Ruralisation of Medical Treatment" is mandatory. The health of the farmer and his family is of paramount importance to the nation. His social standing and capacity for increased production, culminating in economic prosperity can be achieved only through institutions such as the one we have described. Indeed, one may say with pardonable pride that this type of institution may well be the forerunner of other similar institutions spanning the length and breadth of our country.

Hon'ble Chief Minister, all of us are fully aware of your keen interest in any project which would advance the interests of the people of Karnataka. We are also fortunate, Sir, that you are very receptive to new ideas and your enthusiasm and dynamism would pave the way for us to realise our aspiration, namely, the Sharada Dhanvantari Institute of Medical Sciences.

Ours is a humble venture but, like the small beginnings of a mighty river, we hope that its expansion and the creation of similar institutions elsewhere will make it a real pioneering effort in the interests of the people of this great country.