



## **SPEECH TRANSCRIPT OF Dr. G.N. RAO AT OSMECON - 2014**

“So at the very onset, I would like to thank the organisers of OSMECON for giving me this opportunity to speak to you this morning. I am particularly pleased because this opportunity will allow me to speak to young friends coming from all across India, people who are representing the future generation of the medical profession in our country.

If you look at the healthcare situation in our country today, we have exciting opportunities and at the same time, we also have challenges which look daunting. We are a country of 1.2 billion people, we have the highest magnitude of every possible disease in the world and in the years to come we are also going to have a ‘convergence’ of what we may call the diseases of the past, the neglected communicable diseases which are associated with lifestyles such as diabetes, cardiac diseases and cancer etc. We have to ask ourselves this question: Are we prepared to address these challenges?

Let us look at some of the socioeconomic determinants that influence the healthcare of 1.2 billion people. According to the government estimates, 22% are below the poverty line but I think the more interesting index came out recently from the research done by the McKinsey Global Institute. They came with an index that is a composite of multiple factors that we all require for a minimum standard of living which includes food, healthcare, education, energy, sanitation, safe drinking water etc. When we apply this index to our population in the year 2012, nearly 56% of all of us in India are below that empowerment line.

On one end, we have exciting technological progress in the country, and on the other, we have the challenges of poverty. So that is the socio-economic milieu in which medical professionals have to function, while all of us would like to do well and there is nothing wrong with that aspiration, we also have to be cognizant of our realities, realities of the society that we are living

in, a society for which we are responsible, our responsibility increases because we got the privilege of education in this country and we also got the additional privilege of becoming professionals in this respected medical profession. All these add to the burden of responsibility on our shoulders.

As you look into the future, many exciting possibilities exist today. Today, you have the assistance of various forms of technology like mobile technology, information technology, design, engineering etc. and all of them can make our job much easier provided we know how to exploit them properly.

As medical students you have gone through a particular process, and if you look around the world there are newer ways of education, newer ways of teaching and newer ways of learning because a medical professional is a lifelong student. The moment you have chosen this profession and entered the portals of a medical school you have committed yourself to lifelong learning. o

Only when you make that kind of commitment, can you provide the kind of care that is required for people because while we have a duty, the duty is also a privilege for us. In our profession, we have this privilege, of combining two things.

Several years ago, I saw a poster while travelling in the USA and it was profound poster for me, it's like "Go out into the world and do well but more importantly go out into the world and do good" Here is the profession of ours where we can do well and at the same time do lot of good. Doing well is for ourselves and doing good is for society, so we can combine our self-interest with the larger societal good that is the uniqueness of our profession.

We keep hearing and reading all types of criticism about the lowered ethical and moral standards of the medical profession, we get that criticism from every corner, while every one of those pieces of criticism is true, we can still be proud that our profession is still the most philanthropic of all the professions anywhere in the world. There is no other profession where people get free service and paradoxically people don't expect any free service from other professions, so from that perspective you belong to a very unique profession, a profession where you can do well and do good.

When we talk to our trainees in our institute we urge them because ours is a surgical speciality to become 3 H doctors-

1. Doctors who use their **Hands** because they are surgeons combine that with a
2. Thinking **Head** to understand what they are doing and then
3. Have the **Heart** to make you a real medical professional, a real doctor. I hope to look at you sitting in this auditorium, the future generation medical professionals of India you will tilt that to a higher percentage of 3H doctors. I also say that if you just have the hands you are the fair doctor, if you have the hands and the head together you become a good doctor and if you have all the three Hs you will become an excellent doctor and these three if you add another small E called ethical practice you'll become an exceptional doctor. I want each of you at this stage of your career to decide which of these categories you would like to belong to in the long run as you become a medical professional in future.

We can also talk about some of the exciting opportunities you have. No longer do you have to confine yourselves to the silo of clinical medicine. Those of you who have the aptitude to perceive other areas of healthcare have unlimited opportunities. For example, in the area of public health that's where the prevention of disease and promotion of normal health falls, it's a huge opportunity for many of you to get into. You have an entire area of research it could be our clinical research working with your patient data basis both prospective and retrospective studies, you could participate in the development of new products in the clinical trials or you could pursue basic laboratory research either going out and learning all those skills or you could collaborate with basic scientist calling and learn while you are on the job, it is this kind of collaboration that leads to what is called translational research, "bench to bedside" today that translation has almost become instantaneous, we can even do better in the area of translational research, extend it one more step i.e ' bench-bedside- to the community' after all whatever we do, if it doesn't impact the community, it has no value.

A few years ago, I had the opportunity to attend the graduation ceremony of Harvard University, The main speaker at the ceremony was J.K.Rowling the author of Harry Potter and the last sentence that she told the Harvard graduates in class was 'By getting a degree from this most famous university of the world you are automatically becoming very powerful, but unless you use that power to help the most powerless in the world, it will have no value' and I thought it was a very powerful statement coming from her and the same thing holds good to all of us whether you do clinical medicine, public health, research all these ultimately should have to have that impact on the community and the people. Because it is the communities that support all these activities when you look at the big picture any funding for the development of educational institutions, hospitals, research laboratories, and research enterprises comes mostly from the public sector which is the money of the people that is allocated to all these areas and if you want to get more and more of this support from the public for our work, for our evolution, for our development, we have to win their hearts..and how to win their hearts..?? Only by showing the impact of our work.

We, as clinicians, focus on the care of individual patients. When it comes to a public health program like a polio program for example it impacts millions of people, When you become a policy maker and influence policy through advocacy you again impact societies, so in each of these areas you have to play a role. So as we are going towards that convergence of diseases and as of you were all those who get into medical schools in our country are some of the brightest of the high school products and these bright people, all of you should be able to contribute to an incremental improvement in our situation, on the one hand, and some of you also have to contribute to transformational improvement, completely deviate and change the paroline, some of you should contribute to the change in para line that's what the future generation will look for, don't just follow what you learn you have to question each statement what you read in the books, journals.

Nobody is God, the people who publish journals, and write textbooks are as human as you and me, so we have to question every statement by using the intelligence that you're gifted with and that's the job of future generations more and more. The more combinations you look at the better your opportunities. While we have all this wonderful medical knowledge we can diagnose disease, we can treat disease, we can prevent disease but we should have constant advancement and for that, we need entrepreneurs..why can't medical professionals be entrepreneurs...? Some of you who have that aptitude should pursue that, there are many success stories around the world of people who have become physicians and successful entrepreneurs.

One of the aspects that I would like to touch upon with you is the opportunity for global leadership. I urge you to pursue that leadership and you should become that global leader and you should aspire to become that global leader in your field of endeavours whatever that might be, Don't just keep your sights on becoming the best locally, try to become the best in the world some of you can, many from India have become that so why not you..? It's just a relentless pursuit of excellence that will take you there and most of you sitting in this room have that capacity and it's you who have to decide whether you have that capacity or not some of you become global leaders from our institute. I think we have to create an enabling environment to succeed in that and for those of you who have come from different parts of India, this mingling together is a good opportunity to exchange ideas, to understand about each other, and to make lifelong friends.

In my career I have benefitted from those kinds of interactions, I have made lifelong friends with many people all over the world and those friends have helped in my maturation, my growth and making me what I am today and that's the kind of opportunity that you should exploit fully in a meeting like this. Just little a while ago a couple of two young friends came to me and expressed their desire to pursue post-graduation at All India Institute, That's a great institute, and what I learnt from there is phenomenal as a PG when I was studying there, but even more importantly I have matured a lot in those 4 yrs. Why are there no such institutions in our cities and places, it is possible and again you should take that leadership in transforming. Why every medical college is not equal to a medical institute the opportunities they have there are because of the better infrastructure, very dedicated faculty and the systems they have put inside many many years ago and the same thing is possible you put all these in the matrix of success, once that happens there is no problem but in the process, the students should play a pivotal role the students should put a positive pressure for the reaction, looking for a positive outcome that would have a longer lasting impact if the community and the society realize that our actions ultimately will benefit everybody you will have support for your actions on the other hand if that is perceived to be a selfish act there will no support, so these are all some of the things that we have to determine. I am very fond of Osler. I don't know how many of you know the name Osler. William Osler is considered to be the best physician ever born and I would like to end by using a quote from him " We would like each of you to become busy, useful and happy. Busy you will certainly be if the demand is great usefully our lives must be as you care for those who cannot care for themselves and a happy life shall be yours because you have chosen an occasion which satisfies the soul.

Ladies and gentlemen young friends thank you all for giving me this opportunity to share some of my views with you I deliberately did not talk on any topic because you hear that from many others who will probably do a better job than I, so thank you all again.”