



## October at LVPEI

Our Institute was built on the foundation of innovation: in the systems of patient care we started with; in the development of various cadres of our human resources; in the education programmes; in the manner in which we pursued our research endeavor; in our approach to rehabilitation; in the model of eye banking relevant to developing countries; the model, high quality comprehensive eye care delivery, the provision of universal care and in several other aspects.

Given our history, it was but a progression for us to launch a technology innovation hub this month. "SRUJANA" in Sanskrit conveys creativity and innovation. This is the name we have chosen for our Innovation Centre, inaugurated this month by former President of India, Dr.Kalam. The centre's first program is in collaboration with the Camera Culture group MIT Media Lab and Tata Centre for Technology and Design, Cambridge, USA. Creating new technological tools and disrupting the existing ones with the aim of taking the best of eye care to everyone in the world will be the main focus of this programme. The impetus for this came from the success of a workshop our two groups had along with Birla Institute of Technology and Science (BITS Pilani), Hyderabad campus, few months ago. Over 100 students of engineering, design and computer technology participated and developed about 25 prototypes of equipment for early diagnosis, improving delivery of care and assisting the visually challenged, in a span of one week. With the approval of our Board, we decided to go ahead with this launch. We are grateful with the pace with which the financial support was provided by Infotech Enterprises and its Chairman and Managing Director, Mr. B V R Mohan Reddy. We are excited of the possibilities. This effort will be led by Dr. Virender Sangwan of our institute.

October 17<sup>th</sup> is our Foundation Day. The day was celebrated along with a reunion of our alumni. This year's event was marked by a special feature – an INK Salon conducted by its founder, Lakshmi Pratury. In addition to a walk down the memory lane with my wife Pratibha and I on the evolution of our Institute since we first came up with the thought, Lakshmi also invited three individuals of exceptional strength. This was demonstrated through the way one of them - still in his teen years - created a wheelchair powered by the breathing of its occupant; another youngster had shaped his life from that of a ragpicker to a world class photographer and a third person demonstrated his outstanding musical talent. Each of them is an example of what is possible when potential is translated into performance through perseverance and hard work.

In our continuing journey in pursuing our "village vision", we have broken ground for yet another rural secondary care centre in Berhampur in the state of Odisha. Mr. Naveen Patnaik, Chief Minister of the state, who represents this legislative constituency, did the honors. We are now in the process of mobilizing the funding for this project. While on the subject, this month, we celebrated the 15th anniversary of our second ever secondary centre in the village of Thoodukurthy (this is the centre most of our visitors would have visited), a tiny village in the economically underdeveloped district of Mahabubnagar. Much has happened between Thoodukurthy to Berhampur - we have extended now into two more states, support has become mostly local from being mostly international earlier, and



the rural eye care component has evolved into an integrated complex of community, primary and secondary eye care.

Again this month, many of our colleagues and alumni made us proud with awards from national and state meetings. Congratulations to each of them.

The second Thursday in October is "World Sight Day" and this was celebrated with special programmes all across our network. Indeed this has become an important tool of advocacy for the prevention of blindness since its inception about 15 years ago. Our Institute contributed much in making it popular in the earlier years and we continue to join this worldwide commemoration each year.

Gullapalli N Rao