



## An October Note

We celebrated our 36th foundation day on October 17th, with Mr Kode Durga Prasad, IPS (Retd.), former Director General, Central Reserve Police Force & former Director, Special Protection Group, as the Chief Guest. Speaking at a small ceremony that evening, Mr Prasad talked about LVPEI's impact on the society at large. He wished to see the LVPEI model replicated in other parts of our country and even other developing nations. It was a good reminder of the distance travelled and the many more milestones before us. As I heard him speak about our work that evening, it took me back to my own association with this institution, now at nearly 29 years. April 1, 1993: My first day at LVPEI, is still a very fresh memory. I was delighted to observe that compassionate care was available here, both for the affluent and for the people who couldn't have afforded it. By then LVPEI had already established its reputation as a centre of excellence in eye care and many of its staff were global leaders in their respective areas. My first tenure was for three months as a short-term trainee, but it had created a bond like no other. Work took me away from the organisation for two and half years, but I remained in touch, and was delighted to come back to a more long-term role on January 1, 1996.

This year's anniversary celebrations made me reflect on how LVPEI is my lifeline and my own role in the LVPEI family. I must thank Mr Durga Prasad for taking me down memory lane and reminding me of my bonds and my sense of responsibility and accountability to my alma mater.

LVPEI at 36 years is a marvel of goodwill and good intent. The foundation stone was laid in 1986 by Dr N T Rama Rao, then Chief Minister of united Andhra Pradesh. But this place had shimmered into being even earlier, in the minds of our founding Chair Dr G Nageswara Rao and Ms Pratibha Rao. Despite a very successful career and a comfortable life in the US, in 1981 the couple decided to return to India and make an impact in the field of eyecare. Registered as the Hyderabad Eye Institute, we became the L V Prasad Eye Institute to honour the generosity of the late Mr L V Prasad, a legendary film producer, and his son Mr Ramesh Prasad. The entire construction and setting up of the eye care facility was completed in a mere 9 months. LVPEI came into being on June 1, 1987. The first two patients were a young child from a well-to-do family and an elderly tribal, putting in place our commitment and values from day one and forever into the future.



The very first secondary service centre was set up in Mudhole, a remote, most underdeveloped tribal town. Today, we are present in 264 locations, most of which are in remote and rural areas, organised in a pyramidal model (LVPEI's Pyramidal model of eyecare) ensuring the full spectrum of eyecare. Today, besides being a centre of excellence for eye care, research, learning, and eye banking we are a place of cure and care for everyone who need us.

All of this is made possible by Nag Rao's vision, Pratibha's unconditional support—along with the entire Gullapalli family--our committed teams, the trust of our patients, communities, and trainees and support from friends around the globe who help us with their Time, Talent and Treasure: the three Ts. My sincere gratitude to all of them.

LVPEI's beautiful journey of 36 years will continue. On October 1, 2021, when I took over the responsibility of leading this institution, I was fully aware that my team and I are accountable and responsible for the trust you all have reposed in us. I can assure you that I will put all my strengths towards ensuring that this journey continues. I picked up the baton from our founding leader, and I'm buoyed by an excellent and committed team, in every aspect of our work: clinical, scientific, or administrative. LVPEI remains a responsive and responsible organization. We will build a world where no one is needlessly vision impaired, and everyone achieves their full potential. This last year, my team has not only settled well but has already started working on different areas of emerging need.

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*You will notice that this newsletter has a different style. This change is based on my own reflection and feedback from my colleagues. Going forward, I hope to write missives that focus less on LVPEI news (which you should be getting from our newsletters circulated by our communication team) and will focus more on specific aspects of our work that inspire me and will, perhaps, move you too. I would love to hear from you and know what you think.*

-Prashant Garg