

**Speech of Shri Surjit Singh Barnala, Union Minister of Agriculture & Irrigation on the occasion of
the Convocation of the NAMS on July 03, 1979, New Delhi**

Mr. President, Fellows, Members, distinguished scientists and Ladies and Gentlemen :

It is, indeed, a privilege to be invited to the 17th Convocation of the National Academy of Medical Sciences to address you.

I would like to congratulate new Fellows, members and the recipients of the awards who have done meritorious work in their respective fields. The medical scientists have a great duty towards the country in solving our health problems with appropriate technology in rural and urban areas and make "*Health for all*" possible by 2000 AD.

I am glad to note that this Medical Academy was inaugurated in 1961 by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and the first Convocation was presided over by the President, Dr. S. Radhakrishnan in 1963. Their words of wisdom and advice regarding the maintenance of high standards are as valid today as they were at that time. Institutions like Nations should adapt to the changing times and needs of the Society. I am sure the Academy will do likewise to solve contemporary problems with astuteness and foresight.

The Government of India has rightly established the National Board of Examinations to give prestigious postgraduate qualifications by examination so that our graduates need not go abroad for such qualifications but only for specialized training in the fields that are not available in India. These National Examinations are of great importance not only to attain self-sufficiency but also for the future of Medical Education and Medical and Health Care of our people. That this national task has been entrusted to the Academy is a measure of its stature and I am sure you will prove worthy of the great trust placed in you.

You would agree that developments in Health come not merely as a result of the inputs and activities in the health field but also from Health-related fields such as Agriculture, Water Supply, Drainage and Communications. At the community level, they all need to be integrated. The integrated Rural Development and Family Welfare projects are so vital to National Health and prosperity that it goes without saying that they must be coordinated with Health and Agriculture and Rural Development sectors. The Health of Agricultural labour is an all important factor in Agricultural production and should be given the weight it deserves. As population and food are related factors in Health Development and removal of poverty, I suggest to you that the Academy may give due thought to research in those fields of population planning. Human re-production, conservation of food, and changing nutritional habits of people all require multi-disciplinary approach.

Health and Agriculture are closely inter-related. Without good food and nutrition, higher levels of Health cannot be achieved. I am glad to be associated with this function, as I greatly value your invitation. Food and Nutrition along with Health education, Housing and Employment, are the basic needs of the people without which the quality of life cannot be improved. In the context of improving the quality of life, a doctor's role becomes much wider in the society, especially in a society like ours in which he is not only a healer but a reformer also. I trust, the Academy will endeavour to give this orientation to the young doctors entering the profession. Their concern is Man and the Society.

I have read Dr. Chhuttani's Oration on the Contemporary Health Scene, which he delivered earlier this afternoon. His devotion to Gobar gas programme has pleased me. You, the leaders of the profession from all its disciplines, must actively sponsor this programme. Its twin advantages of providing cheap energy and conserving valuable fertilizer, in these days of steeply rising oil prices, are all important national tasks. The equally important advantage of sanitation through bio-gas plants is also not to be under rated. I also know Dr. Chhuttani's interest in fighting the drug menace.

This is another example of the wider role of doctors I have in mind, for their involvement with the society is total.

I would have gone on to develop further important links, between Medicine and Agriculture but I will mention only two more. Mechanization of Agriculture has its hazards of injuries where you all are relevant in a big way and it is upto you to prevent them by education but once they occur you are vital in their salvage and rehabilitation. How relevant you are in regard to risks of pesticides is pretty obvious. There again your role is vital.

The President in his address has mentioned some of the problems of the Academy and the National Board of Examinations such as Statutory Status, Finance and Building for the Academy. I am confident my distinguished colleague, Shri Rabi Ray, will do all he can to give all facilities to make your organization fulfill its assigned task.

I once again congratulate the Fellows, Members and the recipients of the awards.