



ICFAI hosts 13th N J Yasaswy Memorial Lecture

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The ICFAI Foundation for Higher Education, Hyderabad, recently hosted the 13th N J Yasaswy Memorial Lecture on “Possibility of Health Care for Everyone: Our Experience”.

Delivering the lecture, Dr. Gullapalli N Rao, founder-chair, L V Prasad Eye Institute, said, “Innovation aimed at human welfare is a great necessity, and it is possible through visionary leaders who build great institutes of learning”. N J Yasaswy was the founder of the ICFAI Group of Educational Institutions and a pioneer in promoting higher education in the private sector in the country.



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shared his experience of addressing the gap in the healthcare sector by making eye care accessible to patients even in remote locations through L V Prasad Eye Institute (LVPEI).

Established in 1987 with the vision 'To create excellent and equitable Eye care systems that reach all those in need', LVPEI continuously strived to treat anyone with any eye problem irrespective of their ability to pay. Dr Rao traced the journey of LVPEI and how it developed the Eye care Pyramid Model. Under this model, at the bottom are the Vision Guardians, who monitor eye health in a community of 5,000 people. Any issues are referred to Vision Centers, which cater to the primary eye health needs of a village cluster staffed by local personnel.

Next on the pyramid are Secondary eye care centers, which also perform cataract surgeries. The tertiary care hospitals provide comprehensive services. The doctors from these centers visit the secondary eye care centers to offer their services. The Centers of Excellence that treat complex eye diseases are at the top of the pyramid. To make the services accessible, LVPEI introduced mobile diagnostic vehicles carrying the latest equipment, which travel to remote locations.

Dr Rao said that through this pyramid system, 38 million patients were treated, and 2.3 million surgeries were performed, with over 50,000 corneal transplants, the highest in the world. LVPEI replicated this model in Liberia at the request of its President. Dr Rao explained how LVPEI catered to the economically disadvantaged and provided them with free eye care while charging those who could afford it, thus meeting 91 percent of all the expenses. Dr Rao said that the institute was looking to make primary eye care accessible to more people in the country.

Dr C Rangarajan, chancellor of ICFAI Hyderabad, presided over the function. He pointed out that while education and health are crucial, social expenditure on education is more than expenditure on health. He stressed the importance of universal healthcare and said that the mechanism through which healthcare services are affordable for the not-well-to-do needs to be in place. He said the country needs more institutions like LVPEI that cross-subsidise healthcare. While demanding higher allocation for healthcare, he said that it is important to ensure that it is well spent before increasing expenditure.

In his welcome address, Dr. L S Ganesh, vice chancellor, ICFAI Foundation for Higher Education, recalled the contribution made by Yasaswy in building great institutions and setting them on the path of excellence.

