

Presidential Address

Nandita Palshetkar¹

Received: 19 December 2018 / Accepted: 20 December 2018 / Published online: 30 January 2019
© Federation of Obstetric & Gynecological Societies of India 2019



Nandita Palshetkar

Respected Seniors, my dear FOGSIANS,

“All that I am, or hope to be, I owe to my angel mother.”—Abraham Lincoln

I am a doctor today because my parents instilled in me from a young age that I had to grow up to be one. So much so that by the time I was in high school I knew it to be my destiny. I am eternally grateful for this great gift. To be in a position to witness the birth of life from such close

proximity. To be able to see every day the joy in the eyes of people when they see their love manifest into a living being.

It is with a sense of immense humility, privilege and responsibility that I assume the office of The President of FOGSI today (9 January 2019). This day would not have been possible without all the love, friendship and support of all the FOGSI members through the length and breadth of our vast and beloved country. Indeed, I will always be indebted to you all for the faith and trust you have instilled in me to lead FOGSI as we march toward 2020, with the sole and determined mission to uplift women’s health in India.

I am lucky to have been blessed by the greatest of teachers. My gratitude to my teachers at JJ Hospital—Dr. K. K. Deshmukh, Dr. C. N. Purandare and Dr. Jasmine Lopez who encouraged me and instilled in me the confidence for which I thank them from the bottom of my heart.

My interest in IVF was kindled during my MD residency years at JJ Hospital, Mumbai. While treating patients there, I was intrigued by the contradictory reactions of couples toward becoming parents. Ironically, half the couples were struggling hard to conceive, while the other half trying to abort. During those days, I often wondered about where the desire to have a child arises from. This quest led me into deep introspective journeys.

After clearing my MD, I got interested in Infertility and decided to passionately pursue IVF and ART as my career choice. Meeting Dr. Hrishikesh Pai was significant in my professional life. It was at a time when I decided to focus

✉ Nandita Palshetkar
nandita.palshetkar@gmail.com

¹ Mumbai, India

all my energies in one direction. It was in 1994 when I stepped into the world of IVF and never looked back thereafter. There were many challenges on the way. However, hard work and perfection led to our success. The first IVF baby was named Ajinkya, the same as my brother's name. Ajinkya, today, is studying to be a doctor himself. The first laser twins we delivered were named Nandita and Hrishikesh, after me and my friend, philosopher, guide and my professional colleague Dr. Hrishikesh Pai, who has always helped and stood by me in my FOGSI journey.

My patients give me purpose. I have thoroughly enjoyed working as an IVF Consultant for the last 25 years. It has given me a reason to wake up every day and work toward achieving perfection. Because perfection in our profession means life. It is God's work. And I try to do it with commitment, empathy and humility. It is fascinating to witness the process of a cell growing into a living being. It's like getting a ringside view of evolution. And I still get just as excited to see a cell through a microscope and then watch it grow into a baby as I did the first time round.

Destiny brought priceless people into my life at the right time—my husband, Pradeep Palshetkar. We got married when I was still in medical school. Right from the start, he has given me the freedom to pursue my dreams; he held my hand to support and encourage me at every step of my journey. He deserves an equal credit for everything I have achieved in my life.

My son, Rohan, is a trained gynecologist. He has been my pillar of strength all along. Rohan I can proudly say is not only my best friend but also an extremely sincere and competent surgeon who exhibits immense compassion toward each of his patients. With Rohan came along Karishma—my daughter-in-law who is more of a daughter to me. She is a wonderful, loving and highly qualified surgical oncologist who believes in service before self with utmost dedication not only toward her professional but also her personal life. They have given me the beautiful gift of a grand-daughter—Zuri, through whom I have started enjoying my next phase of life.

Team FOGSI 2019

“Coming together is a beginning, keeping together is progress and working together is success”

I'm really fortunate to work with a team of highly devoted Vice Presidents: Dr. Rajendra Pardeshi, Dr. Harsh Doshi, Dr. Sudha Prasad, Dr. Rajat Mohanty and Dr. Aswath Kumar who have planned various initiatives and events, which will ensure that FOGSI reaches out to all its members across the length and breadth of our country.

My sincere thanks to the highly efficient and committed FOGSI office bearers—Dr. Jaydeep Tank, Dr. Madhuri Patel, Dr. Suvarna Khadilkar and Dr. Parikshit Tank for your constant support and cooperation in all my endeavours.

My special gratitude to my joint secretary Dr. Ameya Purandare, for his sincerity, creativity and enthusiasm in the planning and execution of activities in my presidential tenure. Our hard work for the last 2 years is finally paying off.

Of course, the FOGSI Committee Chairpersons, ICOG Office bearers, JOGI Editorial team, national conveners and coordinators play an integral part in activities in my year, and I'm thankful to them for their earnest participation at all times.

I'd like to acknowledge the contribution of Dr. P. C. Mahapatra for whom I ran an IVF center in Bhubaneswar way back in the 1990s. It was then that I started to find my place under the sun. Dr. Mahapatra is probably the first person to recognize my full potential. He saw me work from close quarters and spread the word about it in FOGSI.

“Always find wise and knowledgeable people as your company if you want to succeed. You will always end up doing all that is good for society—Sant Dnyaneshwar”

It was during that time that I first thought of becoming FOGSI President one day. Indeed, it has taken 25 years for this vision to materialize. During this journey, I have been fortunate to have helped bring numerous beautiful lives in this world. And, in the process, I understood Albert Einstein's words that I remember first reading back in school.

“Only a life lived for others is worth living.”

This is the spirit I want to bring to FOGSI during my tenure as its President. The spirit of living and working for others.

And core to our universe at FOGSI is the woman. The woman we treat, whose care, wellbeing, and life is central to our existence.

I would like to bring our focus back to the woman during my year of Presidentship of FOGSI. I would like us to reaffirm to ourselves that the purpose of our lives is to make her **safer, stronger and smarter—this is my vision for the women of India.**

VISION FOGSI 2019

“We for Stree-Safer, Stronger, Smarter” is our FOGSI theme for the year 2019.

Our theme aims to help women from all walks of life, be it urban women entrepreneurs to rural homemakers or aspiring young women, students and our girl child. Under our theme, we aim to structure all the activities as follows:

Safer

Most women in India do not have access to safe health and menstrual hygiene. As FOGSI President, it's my vision to see that we move in a direction that brings about a positive change in this scenario. Through our programs, we aim to make women safer by creating awareness, imparting education through camps run by FOGSI members, and thereby help keep them safe from diseases and also safe from emergencies.

We would like to minimize infections in women and girls, provide training and inculcate habit formation on use of correct products as preventable healthcare measures and eventually reduce the chances of absenteeism from school and workplace ensuring a safe and healthy lifestyle.

We shall also teach them on how to be safe at home and their workplace, how to handle emergencies in their natural environment or while on the road, and how to make them independent and to tackle any hazard.

Stronger

Nutrition and fitness are vital if we have to focus on encouraging more women to explore their true potential. We know how nutrient-rich foods provide energy for - women's busy lives and help to reduce the risk of disease. We shall conduct programs to educate women on how to fulfill the nutritional requirements not only of themselves, but also to help provide balanced and nutrient dense meals for their children and families.

Physical activity plays an important role in women's health helping us with weight control, muscle strength and stress management. We aim to impart knowledge via activities and camps on the importance of fitness and nutrition by collaborating with stalwarts from the sports and food science and nutrition industry.

Smarter

While there are many different approaches to empowerment, a common thread at the core of it all is financial independence which not only instills confidence in women, but also gives them an equal footing in the world ensuring they have more control of their lives. For women to achieve this sense of fulfillment and financial success, we will organize practical skill enhancement sessions and assist in job placements.

The other important aspect to make women smarter is through wealth creation. Women need to realize that there is a value attached to their earnings and that value should be protected. They must begin to take charge of their

money and be aware of the options available for making investments to create the real wealth. During the year, we aim to collaborate with corporates and train women on investment opportunities.

MISSION FOGSI 2019

FOGSI's mission for the year 2019 is the **"We for Stree Abhiyaan"** which consists of ten priorities aimed at the betterment of women's health in India.

The pledge is as follows:

We the Obstetricians and Gynecologists of India, healthcare providers to women, pledge to bring about a lasting change in the lives of women and build an India where women are safer, stronger and smarter:

- Provide optimal ante natal care for the best maternal and fetal outcomes. *#dontforgetmoms*
- Reduce maternal mortality by detecting and treating high risk pregnancies. *#safemotherhood*
- Make childbirth a safe, successful and satisfying experience. *#respectfulmaternalcare*
- Encourage and promote breast feeding practices. *#momsmilkisbest*
- Promote effective contraceptive methods. *#populationstabilisation*
- Ensure abortion is safe and accessible. *#safeabortion*
- Condemn and oppose female feticide. *#betibachao*
- Propagate awareness and screen for genital cancers in women. *#fightagainstcancer*
- Educate adolescent girls on health, hygiene and nutrition. *#healthygirls*
- Diagnose and aggressively treat reproductive tract infections. *#safesex*

This is FOGSI's mission for 2019–2020 and together we will make it happen!

During my presidential year, my mission via the FOGSI activities will be prioritized as simply the **ABC of FOGSI:**

A- **Academics and Evidence based practice**

B- **Bridging Collaborations**

C- **Community Health Initiatives**

A. ACADEMICS and EVIDENCE BASED PRACTICE:

Numerous academic events in the form of conferences, CME's, Yuva FOGSI's, Webinars and workshops covering key issues in ObGyn conceptualized on evidence based clinical practice have been planned for the year 2019.

The details of all these academic activities are enlisted in brief as follows:

1. FOGSI CONFERENCE CALENDAR 2019:

Event name	Date	City
All India Congress of Obstetrics and Gynecology (AICOG 2019)	8–12 January 2019	Bengaluru
North Zone Yuva FOGSI	1–3 February 2019	Noida
Review of FOGSI Training Curriculum on Ultrasound, Endoscopy and Infertility and FOGSI Core Committee Meeting	12–13 February 2019	Mumbai
MedInspire	15–17 February 2019	Navi Mumbai
FOGSI—Wellness of Women (WOW) TOT	15–17 February 2019	Manesar, Delhi
ISAR Annual Conference	1–3 March 2019	Mumbai
FOGSI SAATHI NACO National TOT	13–14 March 2019	Mumbai
6th FOGSI Gestosis Conference	23–24 March 2019	Lucknow
South Zone Yuva FOGSI	29–31 March 2019	Coimbatore
Dialogue 2019	6–7 April 2019	Mumbai
FOGSI Managing Committee Meeting	27–28 April 2019	Hyderabad
FOGSI—National Congress on Technology, Advances and Infections in ObGyn	21–23 June 2019	Hyderabad
Optimising Obstetric Outcome	6–7 July 2019	Bengaluru
FOGSI POGS Clinico-Legal Conference	26–28 July 2019	Pune
Saving Mother's Conference	2–4 August 2019	Gorakhpur
National Youth Conference	17–18 August 2019	Patna
FOGSI Conference on High Risk Pregnancy	24–25 August 2019	Ahmedabad
33rd AICC RCOG Conference	5–7 September 2019	Kolkata
AOFOG Reproductive Endocrinology Committee and Belgian Society of Reproductive Medicine—Course on Infertility	12–13 September 2019	Mumbai
Gynecology and Infertility Chronicles	14–15 September 2019	Mumbai

Event name	Date	City
Breaking Silos across Adolescence to Menopause	21–22 September 2019	New Delhi
FOGSI Managing Committee Meeting	28–29 September 2019	Mumbai
EMA—FOGSI Congress	17–19 October 2019	Dubai
East Zone Yuva FOGSI	1–3 November 2019	Shillong
World Conference on Conception to Delivery-C2D2	23–24 November 2019	Mumbai
FOGSI ICOG	30 November–1 December 2019	Bhubaneswar
FOGSI World Yuva Summit	6–8 December 2019	Kolkata
Sonocon 2019	13–15 December 2019	Aurangabad
Horizon 2019	20–22 December 2019	Thrissur
West Zone Yuva FOGSI	3–5 January 2020	Gandhinagar
48th MOGS Annual Conference	18–19 January 2020	Mumbai
All India Congress of Obstetrics and Gynecology AICOG 2020	29 January–2 February	Lucknow

2. CME'S LIST 2019:

“The only source of knowledge is experience—Albert Einstein”

During my Presidential year, we plan to have various CME's on important topics beneficial to women's health. The different CME's are as follows:

- Healthy Pregnancy
- Ovarian Health
- Hello Tomorrow CME Series—ObGyn Panel Discussions
- Maximizing Outcomes Towards Motherhood (MOM) CMEs
- Pre- Eclampsia (PPP): Prevent, Predict & Prepare)
- Violence Against Women
- Ageing Gracefully
- Micronutrients and Metabolism
- PPH (Prepare, Prevent and Halt)
- Freedom from Fibroids CME
- MMM (Menarche, Motherhood and Menopause)
- PCOS and Male Infertility CME Series/Masterclass
- FOGSI Athena Consensus Meet
- AUB: Current Concepts
- Key Issues in Gynecology
- Contraception & Maternal Nutrition
- P G Force Program

- FOGSI Quiz & Surveys
- Fertility Enhancing Endoscopic Surgery: CME Series
- Know Anemia to No Anemia: CME Series
- FOGSI—Indian Thyroid Society Thyroid Disorders Education Initiative
- FOGSI CEMAST Endoscopy Training Workshops.

3. FOGSI CONSENSUS CONCLAVES 2019:

To discuss key topics in ObGyn by key opinion leaders from all over India, postgraduate teachers, practising clinicians to establish key practice points and protocols in practice.

Dedicated consensus conclaves will be held which will surely benefit practising clinicians in patient management.

4. FOGSI Post Graduate Education Activities:

I strongly believe that if doctors in training (postgraduates) are appropriately and adequately trained by imparting knowledge and skill, it will definitely result in better treatment outcomes in patients. Hence, various educational activities have been planned involving India's premiere teaching institutes and top teaching faculty.

Teachers are priceless in one's life, and hence, we will felicitate them with the **FOGSI Diksha Awards** to acknowledge and appreciate their lifetime efforts.

The various educational activities planned are as follows:

i. FOGSI GURUKUL:

It will be an online and web-based case discussion format involving KOL's through panel discussions. The eligible young doctor/s shall be rewarded the FOGSI Inspire Awards.

ii. P.G. FORCE PROGRAMME:

This popular Post Graduate Training Program will be further expanded and will comprise of a unique module involving PG teachers and students from medical colleges across India which will surely help in providing knowledge to the PG students during their training.

iii. E-PATHSHALA (Digital Learning Initiative):

A first of its kind teaching initiative will comprise of Ward Rounds conducted by eminent senior and respected teachers at premier academic institutes all over India. These sessions will be relayed live and also uploaded on to an App as a further reference tool for the students.

Some of the digital learning initiatives are as follows:

- W.I.S.E. Webinars on High Risk Pregnancy
- Medico-legal Webinar series

- FOGSI GDM e-learning initiative
- Grand Rounds
- Monthly E-lecture series

iv. MENTOR–MENTEE PROGRAM:

The program will be conducted in each zone during the YUVA FOGSI Conferences, and ObGyns below the age of 40 years shall be eligible for this initiative. ObGyns will be invited to spend a day with a mentor of their choice in order to maximize their skills from the experience and expertise of these highly accomplished mentors in ObGyn.

B. BRIDGING COLLABORATIONS and CONNECTIONS:

Bridging collaborations is the most apt way of human communication. More often than not, collaborations result in greater strength, larger resources and wide spectrum of thoughts and ideas. All these are useful for the betterment of not only individuals but more significantly communities at large.

This year FOGSI envisions to establish partnerships with various professional organizations and NGO's. Additionally, we plan to prioritize in partnering with the Government of India for various women's health-care projects and initiatives involving policy making and implementation roles.

Some of the proposed collaborations are as follows:

- National: IMA, ISAR, IAGE, ISOPARB, ISPAT, FPAI and IMS
- International: FIGO, RCOG, AOFOG and SAFOG
- Government: MOHFW, State and Central Govt Health Departments and NGOs.

I also strongly believe that FOGSIANS should be well connected for which various publications in the form of FOGSI Focus with updated academic content and FOGSI Insights—the newsletter highlighting FOGSI events and news—will be circulated throughout the year. These will carry content by FOGSI members which will surely be interesting and insightful. Additionally, a series of FOGSI Handbooks aimed at providing quick reference for clinical situations are being compiled and are planned for release in the upcoming months of 2019.

In order to collate information through feedback, we will be conducting **Quiz and Surveys** for taking the pulse to determine the current trends and the surveys shall be carried out for stimulating a learning experience. The data collected from all these shall be great learning and reference material for all my dear FOGSI colleagues and friends.

The various FOGSI Focuses highlighting important and practical issues in ObGyn to be released during my Presidential tenure over 2019–2020 are as follows:

1. FOGSI FOCUS: 2019:

- Ageing Gracefully
- Fibroids: Management Options
- Management of Pregnancy at Risk
- Micro-Nutrients in Infertility
- Endometriosis
- Pre-term Labour
- Medico-Legal Issues in ObGyn
- Tackling Complications during Childbirth
- Infertility: Practical Management
- Fertility Enhancing Endoscopy Surgery
- Reproductive Tract Infections
- Contraception
- Oncology
- Uro-Gynecology

2. FOGSI TEXTBOOKS & HANDBOOKS:

- Expanding Horizons: Options and Opportunities (Textbook)
- FOGSI Handbook on Antenatal Care (Combining Anaemia, Nutrition & Pregnancy)
- FOGSI Handbook on Endometriosis
- FOGSI Handbook on Recurrent Pregnancy Loss
- FOGSI Handbook on ObGyn and Fertility Drugs

FOGSI FELLOWSHIP EVENTS:

FOGSI is one large family whose members are indeed blessed with talent and creativity. More often than not, these are hidden as their professional activities don't allow the members to exhibit them. Hence, we have planned FOGSI events where all members can display their talent and I am sure that these will be highly entertaining and recreational. To acknowledge and appreciate them, we have initiated various awards which are briefly enlisted below:

1. FOGSI SUPERSTAR AWARDS:

These will be talent-based awards in different categories such as Singing, Dancing, Dramatics/Mimicry, Instrumental Music and lastly it will be followed by a Personality Round. The FOGSI Superstar Awards will be conducted at the YUVA FOGSI Conferences in each of the four zones wherein three entries per category shall be shortlisted, and the final performance will be showcased at AICOG 2020 in Lucknow. The three entries will be awarded a first prize, second prize and third prize according to the three shortlisted

candidates at each of the zonal YUVA FOGSI events, and the grand prize winners will be rewarded at AICOG 2020.

2. FOGSI LEADERS of TOMORROW AWARDS:

The FOGSI Leaders of Tomorrow are the academic awards for the young FOGSI fellow members who are below the age of 40 years. Each applicant must submit a short CV, bio-precise and also a 500-word essay on the FOGSI Presidential Theme of 2019: "We for Stree-Safer, Stronger, Smarter".

3. FOGSI SUPERHEROES AWARDS (WE FOR STREE AWARDS):

Special awards shall be given to women from different walks of society based on exemplary work done toward upliftment of women's health, community health services, social causes or issues of public interest, innovation in fields of sports/technology/medicine or any other achievements which have brought glory to our nation—India.

C. COMMUNITY HEALTH INITIATIVES for WOMEN:

"True strength comes from sincere service—Mahatma Gandhi"

I believe that all of us are privileged in many ways and it is our duty to share our blessings with others. I request my fellow FOGSI members to devote one day a month to treating people without any vested interests attached. There is real contentment in 'giving' with no personal agenda. It is my wish & request that we all experience this pure joy.

Our priority this year is to positively impact the health of India's women. With this sole purpose, we are proud to launch community health initiatives so that maximum number of FOGSI members can participate and contribute toward the upliftment of women's health in India. These social initiatives involve women in all phases of their lives with the ultimate aim of wellness in women.

These FOGSI social initiatives would have only been possible due to collaborations and support from various NGO's and CSR activities.

The various social initiatives are:

- Health for Her camps—Health camps for girls and women (Partnered by Reliance Foundation)
- FOGSI Champions of Motherhood—Adopt a childbirth initiative (Partnered by Zuventus)
- Strong Bones Strong India—Guinness World Record event on Calcium and Osteoporosis (Partnered by Torrent)

- Freedom from Fibroids—Walk and Adolescent Girls Health Awareness Programme (Partnered by Samarth LifeSciences)
- Know Anaemia—Screening and detection of anaemia health camps (Partnered by Alembic)
- Cervical cancer awareness programmes for CRPF personnel and their families. Antibiotic Awareness Week—A WHO initiative for awareness regarding the rational use of antibiotics to prevent antibiotic resistance November 11–17, 2019 (Partnered by GSK)
- FOGSI Wellness of Women (WOW) Forum—Breast and cervical cancer awareness programme for healthcare providers (Partnered by Bramhakumaris)
- FOGSI Respectful Maternal Care initiative – End MMR Awareness and knowledge dissemination to encourage active management of 3rd stage of labour and prevent PPH (Partnered by Zydus)

“A developed India by 2020, or even earlier, is not a dream. It need not be a mere vision in the minds of many

Indians. It is a mission we can all take up and succeed—APJ Abdul Kalam”

Friends, thank you for putting me in a position where I can impact our women positively and leave a lasting impression. I can do it only with the support and active participation of each one of you. Thank for your continued support in all these years. And, with your help, we will make this year a truly memorable one for FOGSI and the women we are meant to serve.

Finally, to conclude I would like to quote the highly inspiring words of wisdom which are the motto of my respected father—**Padmashree Dr. D.Y. Patil** which I have imbibed and use as my life’s mission:

“I shall pass through this world but once.

Any good, therefore, that I can do or any kindness I can show to any human being, let me do it now... for I shall not pass this way again—Padmashree Dr. D.Y. Patil”

Thank you!