



The Mother of Bioethics in India



***Remembering
Dr. Vasantha Muthuswamy
12 July, 1948- 21 February, 2023***

December 2023

Compiled by ICMR Bioethics Unit

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Leadership in Bioethics

Dr Vasantha Muthuswamy's tenure as the Chairperson of the ICMR-Central Ethics Committee on Human Research (ICMR-CECHR) from 2020 to 2023 marked the pinnacle of her distinguished career. Her association with the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) spanned over three decades, which she had joined under the Talent Search Scheme, and held key roles such as Senior Deputy Director General and Chief of the Division of Basic Medical Sciences, Traditional Medicine & Bioethics, and Division of Reproductive Health & Nutrition and Director In charge, National Institute of Immunohematology, before her retirement in 2008. Undoubtedly a towering personality with qualities of a great scientist, administrator, ethicist, and a loving human being.

Dr Muthuswamy's contributions to ICMR were extensive, playing a pivotal role in advancing research across diverse domains, from fundamental areas like Anatomy, Anthropology, Biochemistry, and Physiology to specialized fields such as Drug Development, Traditional Medicine, Genetics and Genomics, Hematological Disorders, Biomedical Research Ethics, and ICMR-Short Term Studentship program. During her tenure, she supported a large number of multicenter Task Force studies as well as Centers for Advanced Research in specialized areas. She ensured the incorporation of ethics committee information in the Clinical Trial Registry of India and contributed to contributed to several policy documents.

In my early days as a Research Officer at ICMR, I had the privilege of closely working with Dr Muthuswamy and received invaluable mentorship guidance. Despite juggling numerous responsibilities, her prompt understanding, clear reasoning, and decision-making was noteworthy. Traveling opportunities with her for various national and international meetings provided insights into the rich history of research ethics at ICMR, showcasing her extensive knowledge and grasp of variety of subjects. She was always approachable, warm, and helpful.

She was deeply passionate about biomedical and research ethics and being a prolific speaker participated in or organized hundreds of trainings in research ethics across India. Even post-retirement she continued to pursue her passion in the area of ethics. Between 2009 and 2014, she played a vital role in drafting The Biomedical and Health Research Regulation Bill and served on the ICMR-Central Ethics Committee on Human Research. In 2015, she was appointed as the Chairperson of the Ethics Advisory Committee, which guided the development of national ethical guidelines as well as several tools in research ethics. Her leadership between 2015 and 2017 was

pivotal in the revision of the national ethical guidelines which involved extensive consultations, sub-committees, as well as public consultation events. The core group Chaired by herself tirelessly went line by line and finalized the guidelines released on 12th October 2017. During this time, she was also guiding the development of national ethical guidelines for research on children released on the same day. Between 2017- 2019, ICMR Bioethics Unit organized Dissemination Programs for Ethical Guidelines across the country and was able to reach out to thousands of stakeholders. In 2019, these guidelines became legally binding for all biomedical research in India through the New Drugs and Clinical Trial Rules, 2019. Her relentless efforts contributed to the widespread acceptance of these guidelines

In 2016, the ICMR Bioethics Unit became an independent entity and under her guidance, took up numerous newer initiatives, including expert consultations, meetings on emerging concerns, and the development of essential documents and tools. Her recent and notable contributions include the ICMR Common Forms for Ethics Committee Review 2018, Handbook on National Ethical Guidelines for Biomedical and Health Research Involving Human Participants 2018, ICMR Consensus Guideline on 'Do Not Attempt Resuscitation (DNAR)' 2020, Draft ICMR Guidelines for Common Ethics Review of Multicenter Research and Ethical Guidelines for Application of Artificial Intelligence in Biomedical Research and Healthcare, 2023. In the year 2020, the ICMR Bioethics Unit was designated as a WHO Collaborating Centre for Strengthening Ethics in Biomedical and Health Research and this feat was only possible because of her strong mentorship and support.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, she chaired the Covid-19 National Ethics Committee (CoNEC), contributing to the swift development of National Guidelines for Ethics Committees Reviewing Research in April 2020 making India amongst the first countries to prepare a national guidance document in a short time frame. In May 2020, the ICMR-Central Ethics Committee on Human Research (ICMR-CECHR) was reconstituted under her chairmanship and this committee reviewed all major high-priority large multicenter research studies of ICMR. Under her dynamic leadership, this committee ensured robust quality despite a very short turnaround time of 48-72 hours.

Dr Vasantha Muthuswamy's leadership, dedication, and tireless efforts have left an indelible mark putting us at the forefront of biomedical and health research ethics. The ethics ecosystem in India will continue to thrive on the foundation laid by her. She left the world a little too soon but has influenced many and will remain alive in our memories. Her contributions are enormous and her leadership is deeply missed, and all efforts will be made to take her legacy to greater heights. She will be remembered as the **"The Mother of Bioethics in India"**.

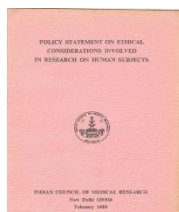


Dr. Roli Mathur

and

All Staff at ICMR Bioethics Unit

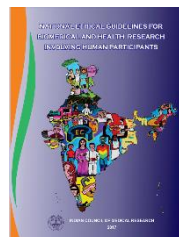
ICMR Bioethics Publications



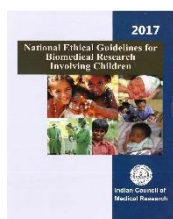
Ethical Guidelines for Biomedical research on Human Subjects, Indian Council of Medical Research, New Delhi, 2000



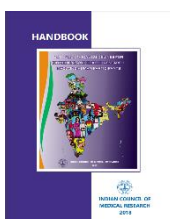
Ethical guidelines on Biomedical research in Human Participants, ICMR, 2006



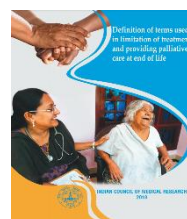
National Ethical Guidelines for Biomedical and Health research in human participants, ICMR, 2017.



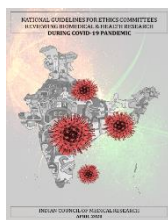
National Ethical Guidelines for Biomedical research involving children, ICMR, 2017



Handbook on National Ethical Guidelines for Biomedical and Health Research Involving Human Participants, 2018



ICMR Report - "Definition of Terms Used in Limitation of Treatment and Providing Palliative Care at End of Life"



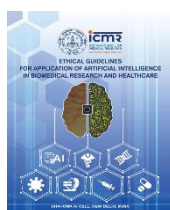
National Guidelines for Ethics Committees Reviewing Biomedical & Health Research During Covid-19 Pandemic, 2020



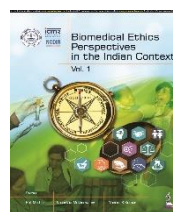
ICMR Consensus Guidelines on 'Do Not Attempt Resuscitation'. Indian Journal of Medical Research. 2020 Apr 1;151(4):303., DOI: 10.4103/ijmr.IJMR_395_20



ICMR Consensus Guidelines on 'Do Not Attempt Resuscitation'. Natl Med J India, DOI: 10.4103/0970-258X.284970



Ethical Guidelines for Application of Artificial Intelligence in Biomedical Research and Healthcare, 2023



Biomedical Ethics Perspectives in the Indian Context Vol.1-2022"

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She made great strides in furthering the development of all disciplines under BMS such as stem cell research, genomics, drug development, adverse drug reactions, clinical pharmacology, bio-informatics, traditional systems of medicine, and haemoglobinopathies. Under her leadership, the division of BMS even set up a Medical Innovation Fund. She took care of the administrative and scientific interests of the Institutes at the ICMR Headquarters, namely the National Institute of Pathology, National Institute of Immunohematology and the Regional Medical Research Centre, Belgaum, which she and the Centre at Belgaum was finally established in 2006 as an Institute (now renamed as the Institute of Traditional Medicine). She was always supportive and helpful to them. She positively addressed their each issue based on sound logic, pushing judgemental opinions, steering clear of emotional biases.

Dr Muthuswamy got unwavering encouragement and guidance from Prof N K Choudhary (1998-2007). He remembers her as a person who not only framed the ICMR's ethical guidelines but also she lived them. 'She was a person of conviction. Even when she was sick, she discharged responsibilities conscientiously, never acknowledging defeat. She was a colleague whom you could completely rely on. She shared her knowledge with no one. Her life was very unassuming and she had a very positive attitude. Her death is a huge loss to the Nation'.

Judiciously utilizing the opportunities provided by the WHO-Fellowships, she trained a critical mass of people also from the Headquarters trained in bioethics at some of the institutions. Her efforts paved the way for the up of an ICMR Bioethics Unit. It has blossomed as a part of the Global Network of WHO Collaborating Centres for Strengthening Ethics - the first of the WHO South-East Asia Region. Even a superannuation, the ICMR Bioethics Unit maintained a close association with her till her last days, the recent SARS-CoV-2 pandemic, Vasantha formulated national guidelines for ethics committee to review COVID-19 research. She guided on a large number of workshops for their dissemination across the country.

Prof P.N. Tandon, former Head, Neurosurgery, AIIMS, worked with Vasantha for more than a

initially as a member and later as the Chairperson of the Central Ethics Committee on Human Research of the ICMR and of the Scientific Advisory Committee of the division of BMS. Recalling his association with her, he said, 'She provided unparalleled support to the committee throughout her professional career earlier (in 2000 and 2006) as an anchor and later (in 2017) as Chair of the Ethics Advisory Group. She initiated the program for capacity building in biomedical ethics in the country which she passionately followed even after her superannuation. It is a matter of great personal grief

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Obituary



Vasantha Muthuswamy (1948-2023)

Vasantha Muthuswamy, the best-known face of bioethics in India, died on 21 February 2023 in Mumbai, surrounded by the family she loved. She was 74.

Dr Vasantha was almost legendary among bioethicists. She was respected for her wisdom and vast knowledge. She was a pioneer and intellectual leader in bioethics, she put India on its global map.

In recognition of her contributions to the development of bioethics in India, Vasantha was conferred Lifetime Achievement Awards by the *Indian Journal of Medical Ethics*, Indian Society for Clinical Research, Centre for Ethics, Yenepoya University and The Forum for Ethical Review Committees in the Asian and Western Pacific Region (FERCAP). She was a sought-after speaker in conferences and had delivered innumerable talks, orations and keynote addresses on bioethics and allied areas in national and international meetings.

We had a long and close association with her spanning several decades, and known her both as a colleague and a mentor. We will miss her dearly. We celebrate not only the years in her life but also the life in those years.

Vasantha started her career at the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) Headquarters, New Delhi, in July 1983, when she joined as Senior Research Officer in the Division of Basic Medical Sciences (BMS). She would spend the next 25 yr in the Division moving through ranks to become Senior Deputy Director General. She led the Division of BMS as its Chief for 18 yr before superannuating in 2008.

The turning point of her professional life was in 1997 when she went on a WHO-Fellowship to the Kennedy Institute of Ethics, Georgetown University, Washington DC. Upon return, Vasantha played a key role under the guidance of Hon'ble Justice M.N. Venkatachaliiah in preparing the revised 'Ethical Guidelines for Biomedical Research on Human Subjects' released in 2000. She saw these guidelines as living documents and had revised them from time to time in light of the new developments in the field of science and technology. The next revision was released in 2006. Although she had superannuated from the ICMR, her expertise was utilized by roping her in as Chair of the Ethics Advisory Group to guide the 3rd revision, which took the *avatar of the National Ethical Guidelines for Biomedical and Health Research involving Human Participants*, 2017.

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Quick Response Code

MUTHUSWAMY

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and received scholarships. She was an all-round excelling in sports (a badminton player), academics and extracurricular activities.

Vasantha obtained her MBBS degree and in Gynaecology and Obstetrics from R G Kar College, Calcutta, and did MD in 1979 from the University of Madras. After completion of MBBS, she successfully cleared the coveted ICMR National Talent Search Fellowship (1975-1979). So strong was her commitment to the ICMR that except for a brief period (one and a half years) when she moved to be husband, Prof M. Muthuswamy, who taught Science and Constitutional Law at the Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration services training institute on public policy and administration in Mussoorie, she devoted her entire life of over four decades working with the

Vasantha was predeceased, in August 2013 by her husband, Shri M. Muthuswamy whom she married in 1974 and is survived by her son Mahesh, two sisters and a nephew.

With Vasantha's death, our country has lost a great bioethicist. That loss, thankfully, is not absolute. The legacy of Dr Vasantha Muthuswamy will continue to influence Indian science and medicine. We owe her a debt of gratitude in propelling the teaching, training and practice of bioethics in India to the next level.

Acknowledgment: We are grateful to many of Dr Vasantha Muthuswamy's contemporaries who have generously shared their recollections about her (Arun Sharda, Bela Shah, Dipika Mohanty, G S Sandhu, Mukesh Kumar, Nandini Kumar, R Ravi, Sanjiva Khokute, Sunita Saxena and many others).

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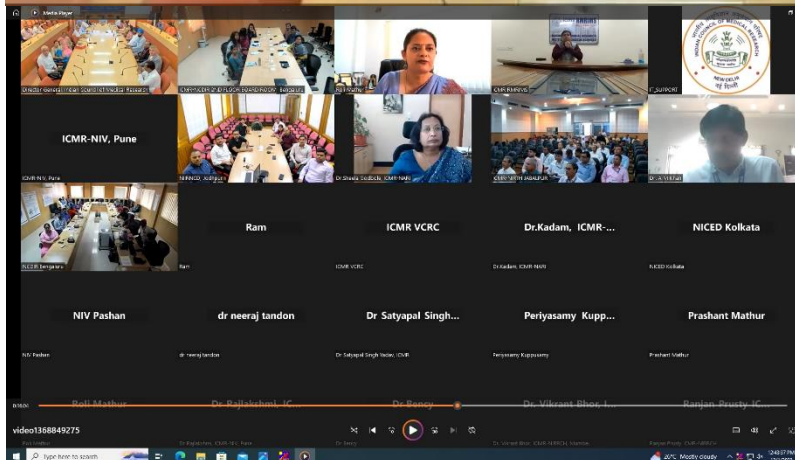
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Link: https://journals.ww.com/ijmr/fulltext/2023/02000/vasantha_muthuswamy_1948_2023_18.as

ICMR Condolence Meeting



A Condolence Meeting was organized by the ICMR Bioethics Unit in hybrid mode to pay homage to Dr Muthuswamy.

It was chaired by Dr Rajiv Bahl, DG ICMR & Secy DHR and attended by ICMR Scientists & Staff from ICMR Headquarters and ICMR Network of Institutions

Condolence Messages

National

Albina Arjuman- Very sorry to hear about Dr Vasantha....such a big loss. I think she had the longest association with you... I've had two interactions with her...such a brilliant and clear-headed person she was.

Amitabh Dutta - May her soul find a place in the heavens and her memories in the hearts of those who were so fortunate to have known her closely through her life and works. She was an inspiring mentor to me and often surprised me with her energy, tenacity, and consistency for what she was well known across the globe, i.e. teaching and spreading bioethics among the relevant stakeholders. I do hope that we all will carry her flame within us and extend her work much beyond and around.

Amar Jesani - Dr Vasantha Muthuswamy was a good friend of IJME and a member of the editorial board for many years. She was felicitated for her contribution to research bioethics at the Third National Bioethics Conference of IJME/ FMES. The IJME has also lost a friend and strong supporter. We felt shocked to learn about her passing. Only a few months back she wrote an obituary of Dr Ramalingam in the IJME and thereafter I talked with her a couple of times. But every time she said she was getting better. We at IJME mourn her passing.

Akoijam Joy Singh - Earliest flag bearer of Research Ethics in India. A Great teacher always. A great loss to the Ethics community. May her soul rest in peace. Condolences to the bereaved family

Anju Sinha - Very sorry to hear about Dr. V. Muthuswamy. Rest in peace. Om Shanti. We remember her as a motherly figure. Never came across such a lovely and lively person. God will give you strength to overcome the grief.

Ashok Shenoy K - We have lost the Doyen of Bioethics and Mine of Knowledge and a major guiding force in the field of Bioethics. Condolences to the bereaved family

Anil Raina - Just saw your message regarding ma'am. Really very shocking, Can't believe she is no more. Unfortunate that we lost her.

A K Karunamoorthy - This is great loss for the field of bioethics. Perhaps she will be missed. Rest in peace.

Amit Kumar - Rest in peace. Dr. Vasantha Muthuswamy. She was always there to guide and support our endeavors.

Ashu Grover - Oh that's really really sad. Om Shanti.

Arunita T Jagzape - Deepest condolences. May her soul rest in peace

Anuj Trivathi - परमपिता परमात्मा दिवंगत पुण्यात्मा को अपने श्रीचरणों में स्थान दें। ॐ शान्ति ।

Anita Kar – Remembering her passion and dynamism. Rest in peace.

Anil Raina – Very sad to hear this. Rest in peace.

Anita & Malay Mukherjee- Oh So sad. May her soul rest in peace.

Anitha Nath - May her soul rest in peace.

A M Khan - My heartfelt condolences.

Amudhan M – Rest in peace mam.

Balu Gopal - Great loss ma'am, Vasantha ma'am always looked happy and always had given a personal touch in all communications made even if interactions were minimal. Anyway...this has put an end to the ongoing pain she was going through. May her soul rest in peace.

Bhawna Sharma - May her soul rest in peace an amazing inspiring and lovely warm lady our beloved Muthuswamy Mam

Bhagirathi Dwibedi- My deep condolences

Banappa S Unger - Really sad. May her soul rest in peace.

Barna Ganguly - My deepest condolences

Bency Joseph - May her soul rest in peace

Chandrim Sengupta - A beautiful person with a smile she would always carry. Professionally or personally she was a person you would loved to interact with. She had a different vibe and always a moral booster. She will be missed. Om Shanthi

Centre for Ethics - We mourn the passing of Dr. Vasantha Muthuswamy. A Great loss.

Chandrika KS - Very sad news. Deepest condolences. May her soul rest in peace

Deepika Rathna- Sorry for your loss ma'am. I can't imagine how personal it must be for you. She had been fighting so bravely and even between her hospital sessions she spoke with so much excitement about the Bioethics Textbook. She will continue to live through you.

GS Sandhu – Very sad and shocking news. Heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family, may the almighty rest the noble soul in peace. Om Shanti

Heena Tabassum - My deepest sympathies during this difficult time for madam's family and loved ones. May God grants her highest place in heaven: Amen

Harish Siddhiraju - Very sad news. Deepest condolences. May her soul rest in peace

Himanshu Bansal – Rest in Peace

Indian Journal of Medical Ethics - With the passing of Dr. Vasantha Muthuswamy, the ethics movement has lost a dedicated scientist, a vigorous builder of ethical systems, and a warm, generous human being. We at IJME mourn the passing of Dr. Vasantha Muthuswamy. Dr. Vasantha Muthuswamy was a good friend of IJME and a member of the editorial board for many years. She was felicitated for her contribution to research bioethics.

Indu Verma - Very sad news. May her soul rest in peace

Indian Research Scholars - Rest in Peace

Jeyalalitha Rathinam - Even though I do not know Madam personally, I was always greatly inspired by her activities in the field of Biomedical Ethics. She will always remain in the hearts of people

who are passionate about ethical medical practice and serving humanity. May the great soul rest in peace. It's a great loss indeed. My heartfelt salutations to Dr. Vasantha Muthusamy Madam. May her light lead us all in the correct pathway always.

Jitendra Arora: Heartfelt condolence. प्रभु दिवंगत की आत्मा को शांति प्रदान करे।

Jimson S – Heartfelt condolences. It is indeed a great loss

Jayasankar - May her soul rest in peace

Jyothi Datta – Rest in peace Dr...

Kala Kotnala- We will always remember and miss madam.

Kavyashree S P- May her soul rest in peace.

Krishna Ravi Srinivas – Very true. her passing away leaves a void that cannot be filled I had earlier worked with her in preparing draft of a proposed bill and Sachin Chat and me have written a journal article with her. Passion & commitment to bioethics were hallmarks of her work.

Kamal Narayan – Oum Shanthi

Kusum Verma- I learnt today from Dr Gourie Devi the sad news about passing away of Dr Vasantha. She was quite okay. We have lost a wonderful person.

Lalit Kant- Dr Vasantha was almost legendary among bioethicists. She was respected for her wisdom and vast knowledge. She was a pioneer and intellectual leader in bioethics, she put India on its global map.

Lalita Savardekar– My respects to maam, she is taken further now. We will always remember and miss her.

MG Sridhar – Madam Vasantha had a simple, down-to-earth, no nonsense method that always added value and fine-tuned research proposals making them more ethically compliant. It was a wonderful learning experience to sit on ethics committees with her. May she attain 11adgati. Will miss her wise counsel.

Madhur Gupta- It's a huge loss. Condolences.

Malatesh Undi – Extremely sad to hear this. May her soul rest in peace. Deep condolence. A wonderful human being and legendary expert in the field. Great loss to the country.

Mala R – Dr. Vasantha Muthuswamy, a doyen of the bioethics movement in India passed away yesterday evening. A great loss to all of us fellow travelers in the movement.

Mariam Easow- Rest in Peace.

Madhusudan M - Deeply saddened by her loss. May her soul rest in peace.

MK Sudarshan – I pray for her soul to rest in peace.

Medha Joshi – Saddened by the news. Heartfelt condolences to her family and pray for sadistic or the departed soul. It's indeed a great loss to all of us and to entire Bioethics community. A leading light is lost and will be missed always. Om shanti

Mishra – Very sad. Om Shanti. She was guardian of new researchers. Heartfelt condolences to the family members.

Meesha Chaturvedi - I pray that God would give her soul peace

Manoj Grover - Rest in peace

Mukesh Kumar- She was the guiding light in ethics and will miss her dearly.

Nita Mawar - Sadly, would miss the loss of a pioneer of Medical Ethics in India. She was a bundle of knowledge, wisdom, positivity, happiness and would share the same with everyone. Knowing her for four decades she remained the same, caring, sharing and humble. It's a loss to our Ethics community. May she rest in peace. Om Shanti Shanti Shanti

Nandini K. Kumar - I recall our last meeting when she was more confident of conquering her health condition. I have lost a close friend whose association led me to what I am today.

NK Arora – No words. One of the most lovable and brave human beings. Also one of the finest human being. Mothers of medical ethics movement. My deepest reverence. Om Shanthi

Narges Mahaluxmivala - A great loss to Ethics Community. May soul rest in peace!

Neena Valecha - So sad to learn about Dr. Vasantha. I still remember her passion for ethics

Neeraj Tandon: You shall be missed forever Madam

Olinda Timms – I was so sorry to hear the sad news. May her good soul rest in peace.

Pooja Sharma – I heard some news about Dr Vasantha. Is it true that she is no more with us. My heartfelt condolences to you. I know she was a strong mentor. She had the cutest smile. We will all miss her. Om Shanti.

PN Tandon - it is a matter of great personal grief for me to learn about the sad demise of Dr. Vasantha Muthuswamy with whom I had the privilege to work together for more than a decade first as a member and later as a chairman of the Central Ethics Committee on Human Research at ICMR. She provided unparalleled support to the committee throughout her professional career she was an anchor introducing the ethical guidelines for biomedical research on human subjects in 2000 and 2006 and as a valuable resource for the updated document in 2017 as chairperson of the ethics advisory group. She initiated the program for capacity building on the subject of biomedical ethics in the country which she passionately followed even after her superannuation. The country has lost an outstanding scientist and I personally a remarkable human being.

Pallava Bagla- Very sad. I will miss her very much.

Prashant Mathur- With great sorrow, this is to inform that we lost one of the most loving member of ICMR family. Dr Vasantha Muthuswamy has passed away a short while ago in Mumbai. The mother of bioethics in India, the guiding light, and the most caring and humble soul is no longer with us.

Padmaja Marathe - We will miss Vasantha Madam very much. I pray for peace and sadgati to the departed soul. You appropriately described her to be a caring loving human being and mother of bioethics in India. She was my mentor to being mentor of my mentor, Dr Thatte. She always gave me opportunities like Thatte Mam did and made me learn and grow. Forever grateful to be

Pooja Suri – Deepest Condolences. Om Shanti

Poonam & Sarita- Rest in peace. We will miss you madam.

Prabha Desikan: Very sad news. Deepest Condolences.

Pratibha Pareira- I am blessed to have a long conversation with her. Her voice will always be ringing in my ears. She will remain with us always.

Princy Louis Palaty - My heartfelt condolences.

Priyanka Das - May her soul rest in peace

Rajib Kishore- Got the news of Vasantha Mam. It is really very sad news. She was supportive and helpful. In spite of being very new she really gave us lot of courage and guidance. The entire country will really miss her guidance. May her soul rest in peace.

Ravi Chandran- Our Deepest Condolences Madam.

Rati Ram- Deepest Condolences.

Roli Mathur – You were truly an inspiration, so full of energy, love and compassion, touching the hearts of all you came across, left behind words of wisdom. The legacy will live on and your contributions will continue to be remembered inspiring hearts and minds and improving the understanding in ethics till eternity. Mourning loss of the most inspiring and respected voice of research and ethics in India. Rest in peace. You were a true leader, your decades of work at ICMR Delhi will live on and be taken forward.

Reba Kanungo - Dr. Vasantha was a doyen in the field of bioethics. She helped hone the skills of many ethics committee members across the country with her vast knowledge and practical outlook. Offer sincere condolences to the family and prayers for her soul to rest in peace.

Rema Devi - Very sad to hear the news of demise of madam. She has been a stalwart in ethics and profound energy. May her soul rest in peace. Family to have enough strength to bear the loss. With warm regards

Rajni Kaul - I am deeply pained to hear about the sad demise of madam. She was a wise, learned, passionate, loving and caring person. We have lost a great lady. May her soul rest in peace. Om Shanthi!

Rajni Khurana- May her soul rest in peace.

Rajnikant Srivastava- Deepest Condolences. She will be fondly remembered.

Ragini Kulkarni - Deepest condolences. Madam will be remembered always and is indeed a role model for all of us.

Rajlakshmi - Om Shanti. Heartfelt condolences. Madam will remain a role model for us

Rakesh Kumar Sharma - My sincere condolences. May the departed soul Rest in peace. Om Shanti

Ramesha NM- Very sad news. Deepest condolences. May her soul rest in peace.

Roselind FS - May her soul rest in peace

Reeta Raseily – Extremely sorry to know about madam. May her noble soul rest in eternal peace. Indeed she was a motherly figure. She kept taking classes and attending meetings online even when she was unwell. Great person, hats off to her.

Samiran Panda - received this sad news last night. A great loss indeed.

Shally Awasthi - Heartfelt condolences. Dr Vasantha was a dynamic compassionate and helping person. She will always be remembered for her contributions to the country and to so many of us at a personal level. Om Shanti

Santhakumar Aridoss – It is a great loss to the field of bioethics in India and beyond. Madam's contributions to developing ethical guidelines and research in the field of health and biomedical ethics will be remembered, and her legacy will continue to influence future generations of bioethicists. Rest in peace.

Sanjiva Kholkute - She will be remembered for her support and encouragement to so many ICMR institutions, person like Vasantha madam are immortal. Long live her memories.

Sachin Chaturvedi - Dr. Vasantha shaped policies and discussions on bioethics in India. At RIS New Delhi, we had great honor of working with her. My condolences.

Sharda – It's a huge loss. She was a great lady.

Shilpi Sharma- My heartfelt condolences maam.., please take care..

Soumya Swaminathan- Very sad to know. Will be remembered for her work.

Sujata Sinha - Rest in peace Vasantha Ma'am

Sundar Raj - She is a Mentor like a candle - it consumes itself to light the way for others. Madam, because I knew you, I have been changed for Good

Sufiyan – Vasantha Muthuswamy, chairperson of the ethics advisory committee of the ICMR's bioethics cell "By general experience, a month to decide whether to release a vaccine is a very short time, Even if you fast-track it, it will take a minimum of one year".

Saumil - Rest in peace. One of the finest teachers and mentors in bioethics. She leaves behind a legacy that is a source of inspiration for students like me.

S S Narayanan - Dr Vasantha Muthuswamy was an affable teacher well-versed in the Field of Medical Ethics. She will be sadly missed

Smita Deshpande - Dr Muthuswamy, a gracious officer and sincere helper. She will be deeply mourned and warmly remembered.

Sangeeta Desai – Rest in peace. We will remember her and miss her presence.

Sabnam Ara Begum - My heartfelt condolence to her family, May her soul rest in peace. We need this meeting

Sheela Godbole - Sad loss. Apart from her achievements I have such fond personal memories of her loving nature

Sanish Davis - Om Shanti. She was very collaborative and supportive for bioethics in India and region

Shinjini Bhatnagar - Felt so bad. She was such a pillar. She will be dearly missed.

Sanhita Roy - Very sad news, learned a lot about bioethics from her in short interactions we had. Regards

Smita Nimkar - My deepest condolences!! A great loss to the Ethics community! May her soul rest in peace!!

Sridevi Seetharam - Very sad to hear this. Irreplaceable and towering personality. May she attain sadgati. Om Shanti.

Sujak Rao - Oh no...she was a fine scientist and a lovely person. Sorry to hear this news. Rest in peace.

Sridhar Sivasubbu – A champion of bioethics. We will miss her. Deepest Condolences

Sathish - Very sad news. Deepest condolences. May her soul rest in peace

Shalini Singh - Truly loved and shall be badly missed. Rest in peace

Sukanya R - Deeply saddened by her loss. May her soul rest in peace

Stravya Reddy – Great loss. My deepest condolences

SP Kalantri – May her soul rest in eternal peace.

Shakuntala - May her soul rest in peace

Sivan Y.S - Deepest condolences.

Sunil Babu -May her soul rest in peace

Tapasya S – Oh no...so sorry to hear of this. She was a stalwart in bioethics teaching and training. Was among the first/ second batch of trainees under her guidance. Her insights truly broadened hoe we looked at the field. A wonderful and warm person. Condolences to the family.

Triptish Bhatia - Very sad to hear. Heartfelt condolences. She was stalwart in ethics in India. May God bless her soul.

Tomcy Thomas - Deeply saddened by her loss. May her soul rest in peace

Thilagavathi R- May her soul rest in peace

Urmila Thatte- This must be devastating for you. She was like a mother to you. Pl take strength in the fact that she will always be remembered as the mother of bioethics. We will institute an oration in her name at FERCICON.

Vinay Urs K S - Very sad news. Deepest condolences. May her soul rest in peace

Vani Srinivas - Deeply saddened by her loss. May her soul rest in peace

Vijayachari Paluru - We are all from RMRC extremely sorry to know about demise of Dr Vasantha Muthuswamy, Formerly Sr. Deputy Director General and Head, Division of Basic Medical Sciences (BMS). All Scientists & Staff, RMRC, Port Blair

Vineet Bhatia – Sorry to hear this. May her soul rest in peace.

Vaitheswaran K - I pray that God would give her soul peace

Venkat – Condolences upon her demise

Vina Vaswani - The Centre for Ethics deeply mourns the death of Dr Vasantha Muthuswamy, a human par excellence. She was a simple person who dedicated her entire career for the development of bioethics in India. She encouraged the Yenepoya University Ethics Committee (YUEC as it was then called) to achieve greater standards in functioning including guiding us with application for FERCAP. As a teacher, she was

much loved by students and faculty alike and was conferred the Life Time Achievement Award by Yenepoya deemed to be University. She continued to maintain her schedules despite inconveniences in health. In her we have lost a person who made indelible mark in research and regulatory guidelines for India in the world map. Rest in Peace Dr Vasantha Madam. Aum Shanti.

Vinita Agarwal: This is so sad. We heard her in the meeting we organized in October. She has been a guiding force and played an important role in shaping ethical standards in our institute. May her soul rest in peace. Heartfelt Condolences.

Vikas Dandekar – Very sad news. Om Shanthi

Yashashri Shetty - It's very sad to hear of her untimely death. She is called the mother of bioethics in India. We visited her place in Mumbai and paid our last homage

Yogesh- May the departed soul rest in peace

International

Abraham Aseffa - Sincere condolences to the family and all her friends! May she rest in peace.

Angela Du - Sending my most profound sympathies and prayers to the family.

Chandanie Wanigatunge- So sad to hear the news. Vasantha was a good friend and a mentor to all of us at the FERCSL. Please convey our deepest sympathies to her son and family. We will remember her with love and affection. May her soul be at peace

Doris Schroeder - Dr Vasantha's loss is very tragic for us and we were glad that we could retweet the message from two project accounts. We only just started with a new EU-funded initiative, to which she contributed. I am writing an obituary with Nandini Kumar for the big EU project, where Vasantha led the Indian part.

Cristina Torres - We are filled with deep sorrow to know that Dr. Vasantha Muthuswamy, one of the original founders of FERCAP and a staunch supporter of our advocacy, a dear friend and colleague has passed on to the next life. We hope that ICMR will continue the collaboration with FERCAP that she has left behind. With deepest sympathy from her FERCAP family.

FERCAP Association - We have lost a giant in the health research ethics community with the passing of Dr. Vasantha Muthuswamy. Dr. Vasantha was the Founding Secretary of FERCAP and for many years, she served as a FERCAP Steering Committee Member and our FERCAP Local Coordinator for India. Her contributions to promoting health research ethics, especially in the Asia-Pacific region cannot be overstated enough. We mourn with her family and friends.

Francis P Crawley – You must feel so fortunate to have followed in the footsteps of this most amazing woman. I can only begin to imagine the pride you brought to her as she saw how you matured into the enormous responsibilities you now have. And even more, the happiness she had knowing how she was respected and loved by you. The global bioethics community has lost Dr. Vasantha Muthuswamy. She leaves behind a legacy of unprecedented achievements for the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), for having placed India on the map in bioethics.

Gigi Berroya - Condolence to the family. May she rest in peace.

Im Hee Shin, Maria - It's Great Sorrow. Dr. Vasantha Muthuswamy is a great friend to FERCAP members. We will remember her devotion and much effort for research and bioethics throughout her life. I will pray for her and her family. Rest in Peace

Juntra Karbwang Laothavorn - So sad to hear the news. Please convey our Condolence to the family. May our dear Vasantha rest in peace My Dear Friend Vasantha, it is hard for me to accept that you have left us so soon, but it is a fact of life. We have known each other for twenty-four years, but it seems too short. We met almost every year at the Annual FERCAP Conferences from 2000 to 2019. We had a good time every time we met at each of FERCAP countries where the conferences took place, but the most memorable time for me was in India when you organized the Annual FERCAP Conference in Delhi. I would like to thank you for all your efforts in promoting FERCAP activities in India. You will always be remembered for your contribution to founding, shaping and nurturing FERCAP throughout the 23 years of FERCAP life. Just for the record, you were the one who organized the contest that determined the design of the FERCAP logo and said that the Logo means "the light for human rights". Our FERCAP colleagues and I will continue to faithfully carry out FERCAP activities so that when you look down from where you are, you can always proudly watch over the organization you co-founded. You told me that you wish to see FERCI flourish and I will try my best to work with your colleagues in India to ensure that your wish comes true. My dear Vasantha, please rest in peace; you have already done a lot for human research protection. The people whom you left behind appreciate your work and will always miss you, particularly during the Annual FERCAP Conferences...

Jacinto Blas Mantaring - This is very sad. Please convey our deepest condolence to the family. May she rest in peace

Jeff D'Souza - My deepest condolences to Dr. Vasantha Muthuswamy's family and friends.

Jennyfer Ambe - It is with great sadness that I read your piece about Dr Muthuswamy. Please accept my condolences. Blessing to you and the work you do.

Kesara Na Bangchang - The news of her passing was received by us with great sadness. I would like to express my deep compassion to her family. She will always be remembered.

Littler Katherine - This is really sad news. A great loss and a lovely lady!

Magdarina Jakarta - I am deeply sorry to hear about the news. Please convey our deepest condolences for Vasantha's family. May dear Vasantha rest in peace.

Manuel Emerson Donaldo - My prayers and sincere condolences to the bereaved family

Marita Reyes - This is really SAD news!! We will miss her presence in ethics conferences!

Marie Jeanne Beltran Berroya - Condolence to the family. May she rest in peace

Namita Ghimire - Very sorry to hear... My prayer of peace for the departed soul. Rest in Peace

Nandita Chopra - I am very sorry to hear this. Condolences from all of us at NIH.

Ockjoo - May Vasantha find eternal peace. Please send the deepest condolences to her son and his family. Vasantha's extending caring heart and her dedication to research ethics will last with us.

Prepared EU – Another world is not only possible, she is on her way. On a quiet day, I can hear her breathing" - Arundhati Roy. We recently lost a beloved mother member of PREPARED, Dr. Vasantha Muthuswamy. A pioneer of bioethics, our colleagues pay tribute.

Prakash Ghimire - So sorry to hear the sad news. She was more than a friend to all of us in Nepal. Please convey our condolences to her son and daughter-in-law. Our thoughts are with them and all of you in India at this time. May her soul attain moksha.

PhaikYeong Cheah - That's very sad to know. Thank you for letting us know

Qi Lu - So deeply sorry to hear that. Please bring my concern to her family and colleagues from India. It was a great loss for India and FERCAP. Rest and Peace

Reidar K. Lie - I am so sorry to hear about the passing of your mother, Vasantha. She was a dear and close friend and a trusted colleague. We spent a lot of time together in various places in the world since I first met her in Delhi in the early 1990s. She was immensely important for the development of clinical research ethics in India, in the region, and worldwide. She had a direct influence on policies in India, Sri Lanka, and Nepal, in addition to contributing to the policy discussion in numerous other countries. The last time I met her, we talked about her wish to go to Norway and visit. We had planned for a workshop in the Spring of 2022, but that was canceled due to the pandemic. I had hoped we could fulfill that wish this year or next, but that was not to be. We are continuing the work she started in India, but will miss her good advice and always sound judgments.

Christine Grady, Head of the Department of Bioethics at the US National Institutes of Health, and **David Wendler** a colleague in the Department, also give their condolences and thoughts to you and your family. They had met Vasantha in some of the workshops we conducted together in India. With best wishes to you and your family. My thoughts are with you

Rose Bernabe - My deepest condolences to the family, friends, and other loved ones of Dr. Muthuswamy. Asia has lost one of its pillars in bioethics. Without a doubt, her memory remains and her legacy continues

Salome Vios - My condolences to the bereaved family.

Taiwan Association of Institutional Review Boards - We are sorry to hear the news, may her beautiful soul rest in peace. Please convey our condolences to her family and friends in India.

Tada Sueblinvong - Very sorry to hear, Rest in peace, Dear Dr. Vasantha

Vichai Chokevivat - I first met Vasantha in Geneva in 1990s when AIDS was a serious global problem. We were invited by UNAIDS to be members of the Ethical Review Committee of UNAIDS. That was the beginning of our long friendship. During our first meeting in Geneva, we were approached by Dr. Juntra Karbwang Laothavorn, a leading staff of WHO TDR, to work together to strengthen the ethical review system in the world, beginning in Asian and Western Pacific region. We then met in Chiangmai, Thailand, at a meeting organized by Dr. Juntra. We were successful in forming the Forum for Ethical Review Committee in Asian and Western Pacific (FERCAP). And we had supported the same Forum in other regions of the world. Then a global network of these forums was formed, i.e., Strategic Initiative for Developing Capacity in Ethical Review (SIDCER). Our first product, in parallel with the formation of FERCAP, was a book entitled The Operational Guidelines for Ethics Committees That Review Biomedical Research. This book was then published in the year 2000 by WHO TDR. It was widely accepted and translated into many languages. This book was called "Silver Book" due to its silver color cover. Then a companion of the "Silver Book" entitled Surveying and Evaluating Ethical Review Practices: A Complimentary Guideline to the Operational Guidelines for Ethics Committees Ethics Committees That Review Biomedical Research was published by WHO TDR in 2002. Then the "Silver Book" was revised to be a new version entitled Standards and Operational Guidance for Ethics Review of Health-Related Research with Human Participants, also published by WHO TDR in 2011. These publications were very useful tools to strengthen

ethical reviews in many countries. National chapters of FERCAP were formed in many countries. And we have organized international conferences on ethical review of research every year since 2001. The last time I met and hugged Vasantha was at the 19th International Conference of FERCAP in Penang, Malaysia on 24th – 27th November 2019. Last year, the Conference was held in Daegu, Republic of Korea from November 28-30, 2022. It was the 22nd International Conference of FERCAP. I was so sorry that Vasantha can not join that meeting. Vasantha was a very knowledgeable, very kind, very warm, very responsible and very hard-working. She was one of the key successes in the strengthening of ethical review in the world, especially in the Asian and Western Pacific region. In addition to the key role in formation of national chapter of FERCAP in India, FERCI, she had helped development of ethical reviews in many countries. Please rest in peace, Vasantha. You departed us only your body. Your works and spirit will be with us and some people who benefited from your works forever.

Vajira Dissanayake - So sorry to hear the sad news. She was more than a friend to all of us in Sri Lanka. Please convey our condolences to her son and daughter-in-law. Our thoughts are with them and all of you in India at this time. May her soul attain moksha

Young-Mo Koo - It's so sad to hear the news! May the great soul rest in peace. I'll pray for Vasantha

Zaw Zaw Oo - She is the remarkable figure in our FERCAP. Great loss to us. Rest in peace, Senio



Awards

ICMR National Talent Search scheme award – 1975 to 1979.

Annie Besant Memorial Oration Award in Biomedical ethics, University of Madras, 2002

Silver Jubilee Oration award in “Ethical issues in Drug development,” All India Association of Biomedical Scientists, Chennai, 2003

Radha Shanmugasundaram Oration Award in Basic Medical Sciences on “Ethical issues in Genetics and Genomics – Emerging new technologies”, PGIBMS, Taramani, Chennai, 2004

JIPMER Annual day Oration on “Stem cell research in India-Hope or Hype”- JIPMER, Pondicherry, April, 2007

Dr. P.K. Devi Memorial Oration on “Recent advances in Pharmacology” at Kasturba Health Society, Mumbai, 2007

Dr. H.M. Bhatia Memorial Oration Award on “Contemporary issues in Biomedical ethics”, Bhatia Memorial Trust, NIIH, Mumbai Feb. 2008

ISCR Special Award for Contributions to Clinical research fraternity, at the 3rd ISCR Annual Award function, Hotel Taj Westend, Bengaluru, Aug., 2010

Lifetime achievement award and Felicitation at the 3rd National Bioethics Conference organised by Indian Journal of Medical ethics for contributions in Biomedical ethics, AIIMS, New Delhi, 17-20, Nov., 2010

FERCAP Special Award for contributions in Bioethics for India at the Xth FERCAP annual conference at Hotel Equatorial, Shanghai, China from 22-25, Nov., 2010

Life Time Achievement award and Felicitation from Centre for Ethics, Yenopoya University, Mangalore, India, August, 2015

First B.N. Dhawan Memorial Oration, IEC, SGPGI, Lucknow, November, 2017.

Plenary speaker at European Parliament on “Ethics Dumping – Looking for Justice” under the TRUST Project funded by EC at Brussels, June, 2018

First Dr. B.N. Dhawan Memorial Oration on “Evolution of Biomedical ethics in India”, SGPGI, Lucknow, 2020

International Women’s day oration, NIIH, Mumbai. March 2020

International Bioethics day oration on “Ethical issues in Stem cell research” at Seth G.S. Medical college, Mumbai, 2020

Lifetime achievement Award for twenty years of contributions to FERCAP, FERCAP Steering Committee meeting, 2020

Releases



Conference/ Training/ Workshops



ICMR – Central Ethics Committee for Human Research



ICMR-Ethics Advisory Committee



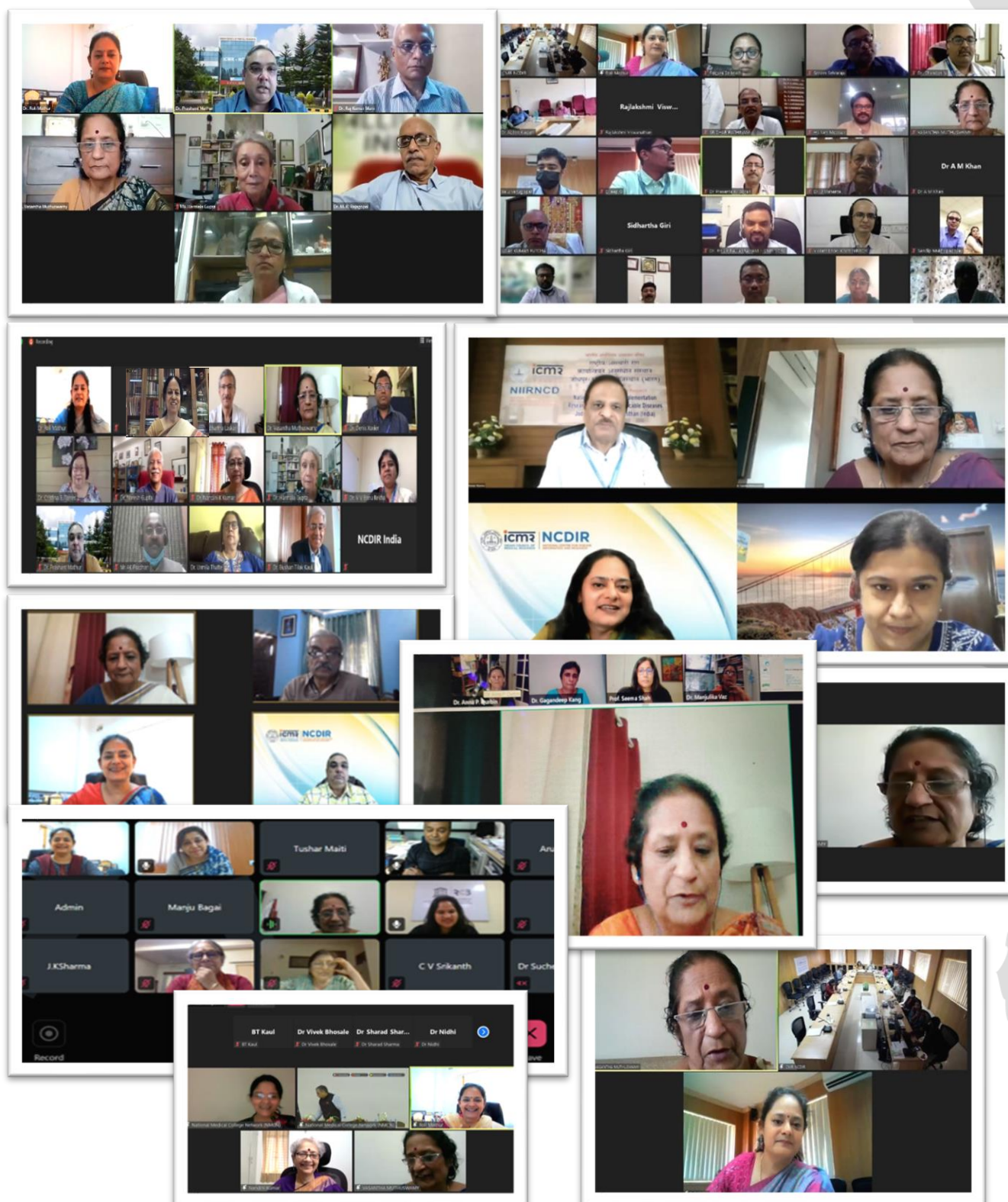
Consultations



Disseminations

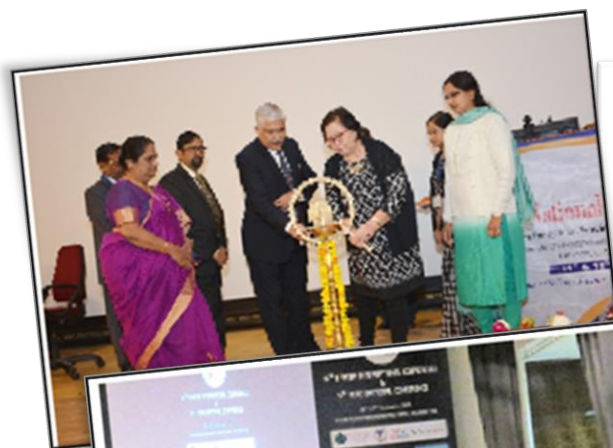


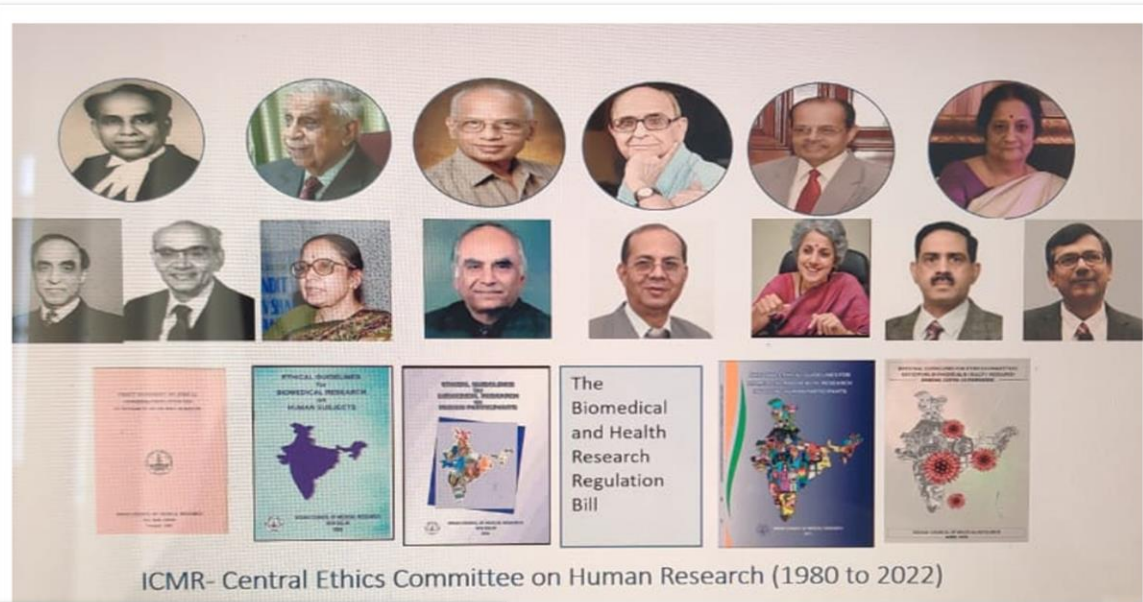
Online Training Programs



International Meetings







Family



Her Grand daughters- Maitreyi and Mythili



With her ICMR family on her Retirement



ICMR Bioethics Unit

ICMR Bioethics Unit, Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), Bengaluru