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Foreword

Reproduction is one of the basic features of all living beings; it ensures the perpetuation of the species. In human beings it has wider implications; it ensures the continuation of the family lineage.

Excessive births contribute to pregnancy-related mortality and morbidity besides draining the finite natural resources of planet earth. There is strong evidence to suggest that the use of contraceptives is associated with the improvement of maternal health and reduction of population overgrowth. It is also well known that the present range of contraceptives is inadequate to meet the diversified individual needs. What are relatively little known are the arduous efforts that have been going on incessantly to develop better and improved contraceptives.

The inability to procreate is the other side of reproduction; infer-

tility is a health problem which can be alleviated by medical and technological interventions. A number of Medically Assisted Reproductive Technologies (MARTs) have been introduced during the last few years. Each of these innovative technologies has its own technical, ethical and moral problems.

Efforts to improve the quality of Life through the development of newer contraceptives as well as achieve better pregnancy rates through MARTs have been made globally. It would indeed be impractical to document all the major efforts that have gone towards this end in a single volume of any journal. Nevertheless, the papers included in this Special Issue would give an idea of the complex issues involved in the making of new contraceptives as well as in developing novel ways to conceive.

All the contributors to this Special Issue are acknowledged leaders in the field of Human Reproduction. I wish to record my personal gratitude for their having responded so positively to our request to contribute articles. It is also important to acknowledge the contributions of the many referees, who shall have to remain anonymous, for having so carefully adjudged the articles and suggesting changes aimed at improving the presentation.

I must also record my appreciation to the Editors of *Current Science* for having chosen the subject of Human Reproduction as worthy of a Special Issue of the journal and for having invited me to be the guest editor. I have enjoyed this task. I trust the readers would share my joy in reading the articles.

T. C. ANAND KUMAR