

Address by Dr. Vijaypat Singhania, Chairman, Board of Governors, IIMA

Hon'ble Prime Minister Sir, Madam Governor, Respected Chief Minister, Members of the Society, the Board of Governors, parents, students, ladies & gentlemen.

Good evening and welcome to the convocation in the Golden Jubilee year of the Institute.

It is indeed a privilege to have Dr. Manmohan Singh with us this evening. We welcome Dr. Singh not just as the Prime Minister of the country but as an erudite academic. His presence reaffirms the commitment of the government of India to continue to support institutions of excellence. I also welcome the Governor, Dr. Shrimati Kamla and Honourable Chief Minister of Gujarat, Shri Narendra Modi. Their gracious presence reflects the support the Institute has always received from the state government. Your presence here today means a lot to us!

Winds of change are blowing in the education sector. From six IIMs so far, the Government have decided to more than double the number. This increase coincides with a significant increase in the number of students seeking admission to business schools. The significant increase at the pace planned, will indeed be a test of our ingenuity & skill, but more importantly our sincerity of purpose to ensure that the quality of education offered is not compromised at the altar of numbers. IIMs are supposed to be iconic institutions. Any dilution in quality would not serve the higher purpose they are supposed to serve. While the physical infrastructure required can be created, but ensuring that they are staffed by quality faculty would be a challenge.

There is an urgent need for the government to take steps to address the perennial shortage of quality teachers in our academic institutions. I would urge the government to frame appropriate policies on this issue. On behalf of IIMA, I would like to assure that the Institute would be willing to work with the government in framing and implementing policies to augment the supply of quality teachers, particularly in the field of management education.

The matter has become all the more urgent in view of the Foreign Universities Bill 2010. The home grown institutions need to be supported to augment their resources, to be able to compete with the best foreign academic institutions. IIM Ahmedabad is confident that given the right policy environment that ensures an equitable environment for domestic institutions vis-a-vis foreign institutions, they would emerge as Institutes that are globally recognized for the quality of their academic processes and output.

Graduates from IIMA occupy key positions in a variety of organizations including the government. They have made a mark not only in commercial organizations but also in NGOs. A significant proportion of graduates of the Institute have become entrepreneurs and set up organizations that are working among the less privileged members of society. Over the years, they have contributed immensely to both the economic and social development of the nation. On the occasion of the Golden Jubilee year, we rededicate ourselves as an Institute to work for the nation to create an equitable social order where opportunity to succeed in life, is not contingent on the situation of an individual by birth.

I would urge the graduating students to get inspired by the contributions your illustrious predecessors have made to nation building. I would urge you to go out with a commitment in thought and action to uplifting the lot of millions of Indians who are significantly less privileged than you, no matter what kind of organization you work for. I hope your actions will be guided by Mahatma Gandhi's call for service to the deprived. The happenings around us show that the nation is desperately in need of such spirit of service from its young. Only then would the sacrifices made by your parents to educate you at IIMA, not go in vain.

I wish you the very best in life.

Jai Hind.