

The 30th Annual Convocation was addressed by Mr. Sam Pitroda, Advisor to the Prime Minister on the Science and Technology Mission on March 25, 1995. Congratulating the graduates, he wished them a happy, prosperous, meaningful, enjoyable, and fulfilling career.

Talking on management of politics in India, Mr. Pitroda said that it was very critical to the future of India and to the future of many developing countries. He regretted that it did not receive enough attention, as most of the education and training for management focussed on business and institutions. Somehow, the whole issue of political management did not get the kind of focus it should get. He said that from his own experience of the last ten years in India, he had learnt that what really mattered was very careful management of politics. Unfortunately, there was political interference in almost everything one tried to do. Many hardworking, dedicated, committed, concerned, professionals did not get the kind of freedom they needed to do their job.

"At the same time", pointed out Mr. Pitroda, "there is a great deal of goodwill in this nation. You try to do little bit and people appreciate it. People in the street corners are on the lookout for some visible impact; some visible development." He said that Indians all over the world thanked him and the people of the Telecom Department for the STD facilities all over the country. Though it is such a small little thing, people did notice it and appreciated it, and were looking for many developmental issues to be tackled by professionals.

Mr. Pitroda admitted that politics was all pervasive and could be seen on every front, right from homes to institutions to countries, as it was an integral part of life. However, he said that it is the politics which pushes personal agenda, narrow interest, concern for a few, which people should worry about. "When the level of performance and public service is restricted for personal gains, it means that there is political interference," he averred. Public was always concerned when performance or productivity got affected because of perk, privilege, patronage, personal goals, and personal gains; norms and procedures got violated; and real agenda was misunderstood.

Worldover politicians, remarked Mr. Pitroda, were being discredited due to corruption, scandies, or gains. In many countries politics was becoming irrelevant. He narrated an instance where someone highly religious in Mexico gave an interview and said that even if the Pope became the President of Mexico, he would not trust him. "It has nothing to do with the person, it has to do with the power in politics," he stated.

Mr. Pitroda felt that politics in the country needed to be decentralised, and democratized. Though it is hard in our feudal hierarchical system to build a vibrant true democracy, where people could make a difference in guiding their destiny, he believed, it is possible to make a difference, and exhorted the graduating students to make a dent in the system.

A good government, according to Mr. Pitroda, required a teamwork between politicians, democracy and business not just for their gains, but for larger public gains. This team should keep in mind that the real challenge is the 300 million people below poverty line looking for basic human needs. In India, he regretted that politics had become a mere profession. As a result, professionals did not enter politics. He told the students that having learnt a great deal about business administration, it was time that when they went to real life situation, they learnt a bit about politics and political interference.

Talking about what politics could learn from business, Mr. Pitroda observed that strategic business plan and even operating plan which focussed not just on financial numbers but on deliverables was something politics also needed to learn. All over the world corporate environment was being down sized. He felt that governments all over the world could also learn a lesson in down sizing their own structures. Just as people's participation was critical to produce quality and performance in business, it was equally true in running a government, he pointed out.

Before concluding his address, Mr. Pitroda warned the graduating students to beware of politics in their organization. He asked them not to get discouraged, but to learn to manage it. He said, "Help redefine

politics in your own way to improve governance. Make sure that this politics is used for public purpose. I know you can make a difference. Every one of us in the country can make a dent. I encourage you to move on, make hard decisions, identify issues that will begin to derail your agenda, stick to your own goals, work hard and I am sure that success is waiting for you. Go beyond simple personal tasks and goals and look at larger corporate goals because that will make your job easier, challenging, interesting and enjoyable."

In his welcome address, Mr. S.K. Khanna, Chairman, IIMA Board of Governors said that management education in the country, along with the rest of technical education was poised for an unprecedented growth. Thanks to the open door policy of the Government, scores, perhaps, hundreds of new institutions in the private sector had entered technical fields or were about to enter them. While this headlong growth was welcome, he said, there was also concern to ensure high academic standards in these institutions. It was not just a question of spelling out standards of recognition and of monitoring them but also a question of institution building for excellence. "We expect that IIMA... will make a significant contribution both in evolving standards and in helping other institutions to become excellent," stated Mr. Khanna.

Proposing a vote of thanks, Prof. Pradip Khandwalla, Director, IIMA said that Mr. Pitroda was in many ways a role model for the IIMA community. "He is one of those who has been able to blend very successfully entrepreneurial vision, commitment to a social mission, technological competence, and outstanding managerial ability. He has got much from life - money, fame, power. He is, however, one of those few who have given far more than what he has got from society. We need many more like him to take the country forward," he stated.

He told the young graduates that they were bright, but it was not enough to be bright. They must have a passion, not the passion of greed but the passion of giving, the passion of making an indispensable contribution. "In choosing your path you will have to listen not only to your mind but also to your heart. For while the mind is swayed by the transient and the glittering, it is the heart that gives you intimations of your destiny; listen to it well," he urged.

The Post Graduate Diploma in Management was awarded to about 200 students including 27 lady students. The Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad medals for scholastic performance were awarded to Ashutosh Padhi, Niten Malhan and Sanjay Purohit The title of Fellow of IIMA was conferred on seven students.