

11th Annual Convocation of the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad
(April 10, 1976)

CONCLUDING ADDRESS BY DR SAMUEL PAUL, DIRECTOR OF THE INDIAN INSTITUTE
OF MANAGEMENT, AHMEDABAD.

Mr Chairman, Professor Dandekar, Ladies & Gentlemen,

I am deeply grateful to Prof. V M Dandekar for addressing the 11th Annual Convocation of the Institute. It is extremely gracious of you to have accepted our invitation and participated in this function as our chief guest. I am sure that your valuable advice and mature thoughts will have an abiding influence on the young men and women who are graduating from this Institute today. Once again, on behalf of the Institute, I would like to express our appreciation to Prof. Dandekar and all other guests for being with us on this occasion.

The class of 1976 to whom we are bidding farewell this evening has some special features which deserve to be noted. First of all, this class is the largest that we have sent out so far. This applies to the Fellow Programme also which has presented four candidates for graduation this year. Secondly, the class of '76 includes for the first time a group of students with specialization in agricultural management. All of them have completed the two year post-graduate programme unlike their predecessors who went through a one year programme until just a couple of years ago. Thirdly, PGP '76 had to adjust to a new academic schedule and placement programme which were designed to minimize the adverse effects of campus

recruitment on the academic programme. The graduating students as well as industry and other recruiting agencies cooperated with us in introducing the new system. In spite of this change and fears about its consequences, this year's placement record has been extremely good. I hope, however, that the message has been conveyed, loud and clear, that we uphold the academic programme as our primary task and that the placement service must fit into its requirements.

Nothing brings out the importance we attach to the academic programme more eloquently than the time-consuming exercise that we have just completed on the quality and integration of its first year curriculum. May I express my sincere appreciation to the Chairman and faculty of the Post Graduate Programme for the excellent work they have done in restructuring and integrating the courses with a view to sharpening the programme's focus and relevance?

Another innovation which was introduced during this year is the concept of non-credit courses for second year students which was meant to expose them to important areas and issues not adequately covered in the regular courses. Under this programme, several significant topics were discussed by eminent speakers from industry, government and other organizations. The series on public sector management which was organised as part of this programme deserves special mention.

During the past year, the Institute held 19 management

development programmes including programmes for university teachers and the programmes organised by the Centre for Management in Agriculture and the Centre for Regional Management Studies. While most of these programmes are established ones, there were also new programmes like the programme on agricultural management, organised at the invitation of the North-East Council in Shillong for one of our least developed regions and the programme on Working Capital Management which evoked considerable interest. Perhaps, the most important development is our decision to launch a new six month long management education programme on the campus for young managers with about five years experience. For organisations which do not find the two-year Post-Graduate Programme and the conventional short programmes either feasible or appropriate alternatives for developing their younger managers with growth potential, our new programme may well provide the answer. The response to the concept and design of this programme has been most encouraging.

In respect of research, 51 projects were in progress during the year out of which 13 were completed. A major development during the year was the establishment of the Public Systems Group with a distinct focus on the management problems of governmental or public organisations of a developmental nature. Governmental agencies concerned with health and family planning, energy systems, educational systems, city management and housing are examples of such new programmes and organisations whose problems cannot be tackled within

the framework of enterprise management. A six-member faculty group is currently engaged in these studies.

The Chairman has already referred to our ongoing rural development research. In addition, it is proposed to initiate two major research projects next year on "Policies for the Development of Backward Areas" and "Indigenous Styles of Management". We also held a Conference on management research at the Institute in October 1975 in which faculty from several other institutions across the country participated. This Conference was the first of its kind and we hope that it will continue to be an annual feature and emerge as a forum for management researchers to present the findings of their work. The Institute's new journal Vikalpa was also launched during the year and has been very well received.

I have reviewed the activities and progress of the Institute briefly in order that you might have a sense of the direction in which we are moving and the ways in which we have responded to the challenges in the environment. The spectrum of organizations that we are concerned with, ranging from enterprise systems and agricultural systems to public systems is not something that is commonly found in many parts of the world. As a result, there is considerable international interest in our projects and programmes. It is our intention to increasingly participate in international programmes and strengthen our links especially with institutions

in selected Afro-Asian countries, through programmes of faculty development and exchange.

At a brief but moving ceremony at the Institute in February, Shri P N Haksar unveiled a bronze bust of the late Dr Vikram Sarabhai and later on delivered the first Sarabhai lecture. Apart from the memories of the past evoked by that event, the entire ceremony was a stirring reminder to us that we owe a great deal to the vision, toil and dedication of those who have preceded us for what we are today. The heritage that you, the graduating students, have entered has been built on the labour of many, brick by brick, like the buildings around us. I hope that you who are leaving the Institute today will prove worthy of this heritage. Just as when you came to us, we expected you to understand, respect and build on this heritage, the organisations which you will join shortly, will expect you to understand and build on their traditions. Your sensitivity to the feelings of others and your commitment to the tasks that you take up are as important as the managerial skills and sense of confidence that you possess. Unfortunately, these are not attributes which can be easily developed in classroom, yet without them, you will not go far.

As you step into a new world, a world that will test your vision, initiative and resilience, we wish you all success. Let your lives be models of what professional excellence can achieve, not just for yourselves, but for society at large. Good bye and good luck.

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