

“ALUMNI ACTIVITIES”

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First PGP Alumni Reunion

The first PGP Alumni Reunion was held on April 9 and 10, 1970, and about 90 PGP alumni, i.e., 30% of all the Institute's graduates, participated.

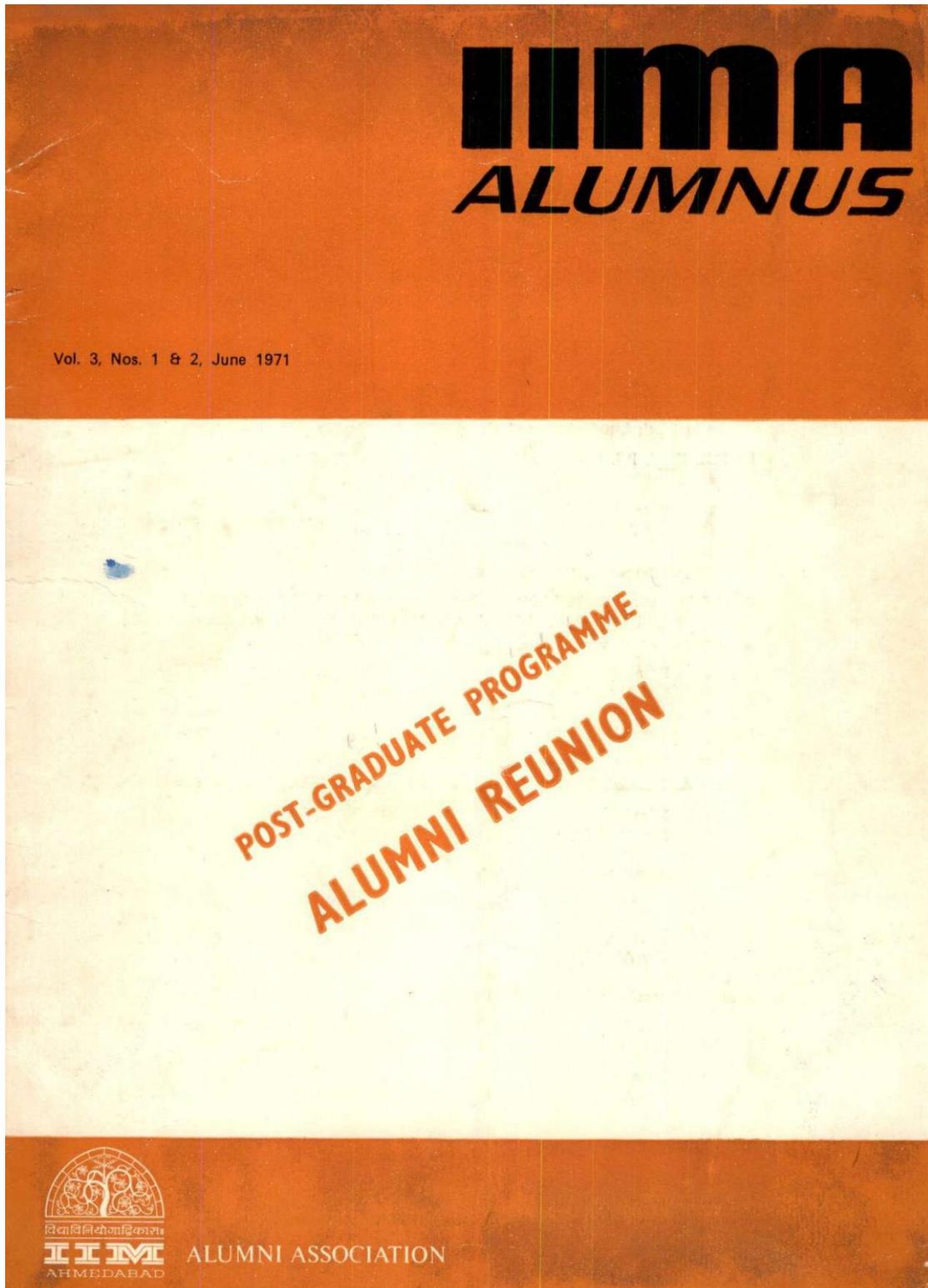
The discussions were spread over three major sessions: (1) MBA in the Business : Expectations and Realities, (2) MBA Programme : A Look into the Future, and (3) Concluding Session. The major papers read at the Reunion were reproduced in the *IIMA Alumnus* of June 1971.

The visiting alumni met with the faculty and discussed the courses currently offered at the Institute. Meetings were also held with the Admissions, Placement, and Alumni Committees. These meetings were very valuable in exchanging ideas on various activities.

The most valuable benefit that the Institute received from the Reunion was the cementing of very close ties between the alumni, the faculty, and the Institute as a whole. The gratitude and the sense of belonging that the alumni displayed on the occasion certainly seemed to promise possibilities of very fruitful collaboration of the alumni in the Institute's future development.

Source: IIMA 9th Annual Report, 1970-71, Pg. 56, IIMA Archives

“POST-GRADUATE PROGRAMME ALUMNI REUNION”



Source: IIMA Alumnus, Vol. 3, No. 1 & 2, June 1971, Cover page, IIMA Archives

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The Reunion Images*

Expectation and Reality

WITH what expectations do the bright young graduates of "a premier management institute in Western India" (memories of cases)—none other than the IIMA—go out into the world of industry and what is the stark reality they come up against? What are the expectations of industry and to what extent do the MBAs fulfil these? How can this gap be bridged? T. S. Srinivasan (PGP 1967) attempted to answer these questions in the session on "MBAs in Indian Business : Expectations and Realities."

Srinivasan's observations were the result of a year's work as Accounts Officer (Cost and Finance) in a medium-sized machine tool company in South India which employed about 200 people and had a turnover of Rs. 40 lakhs a year. His responsibilities covered various aspects of finance and accounting including the task of assisting the director in the formulation of accounting and financial policies. His was obviously one of the senior positions in the company and he was expected to step straight into the job though he had only four years of experience before joining the IIMA—none of it in a managerial capacity.

What did the company get out of him in a year? Srinivasan answered : "Apart from a few procedure manuals which I wrote under the direction of the director and a few internal audit procedures which I

*A summary of some of the papers presented at the PGP Alumni Reunion, April 1970.

helped install, I think the company got very little out of me."

The main reasons for his failure to live up to the company's expectations, according to Srinivasan, were (1) the administrative practices of the company, (2) his own personality, and (3) the environment within the company.

Among the hindrances caused by the administrative practices of the company, he said the main obstacle was the assumption that no on-the-job training was required for MBAs. This created a problem insofar as he was supposed to be *responsible* for a function which he was only learning.

He candidly admitted that factors inherent in his own personality were also responsible for not fulfilling the company's expectations of him. The main impediments he felt were his lack of passion for getting things done, the mundane things like chasing production and sales targets, which are of very vital importance to industry, and his independent nature.

Environment within the company is also a vitiating factor. Srinivasan suggested that we should "accept the environment as a 'given' factor in the situation and to strengthen oneself by building on the strengths in the environment." Later, one could think of trying to change the environment itself.

How can the gap between expectation and reality, between the MBA and the employer, be bridged?

Srinivasan suggested that the needs and requirements of industry should be looked at more realistically when placing MBAs and suggested changes in

the curriculum to place greater emphasis on developing the self-awareness of the participants.

His advice to the MBAs was to try and adjust to the company environment.

Relevance of the Curriculum

Jayant Dey (PGP 1967) in his paper "The PGP Curriculum and My Last Assignment" tried to analyse how useful the courses at the IIMA were in the context of working on a job.

Dey was working in the personnel division of his company and his job was to assist the personnel manager in carrying out the different tasks to be done by the personnel division, including manpower studies, job evaluation, salary administration, preparation of budgets, and various special studies on the organization and compensation aspects. His job involved report-writing, co-ordination on a company-wide basis, development of norms based on analysis of data, quantification of intangibles, contacting senior managerial personnel, etc.

In his particular job, Dey found certain courses particularly useful. It was interesting to note that he emphasized the relevance of certain "quantitative" courses (Operations Research, Production, Advanced Cost Accounting and Budgetary Control, and Management Information Systems), which participants specializing in Organizational Behaviour normally avoid. Besides these, Dey found the courses in Written Analysis of Cases (at one time known as Written Executive Communication and now as Written Analysis and Communication), Organizational Behaviour, Business Policy, and, of course, Personnel Management to be particularly useful. He suggested that a greater emphasis be put on quantification, even in such topics as "Management by Objectives" and "Training," for it is often necessary to measure the usefulness of various personnel policies. He also suggested that one of the elective OB courses should include such topics as job evaluation, manpower planning, quantification of appraisal, work measurement, and applicability of computers for various tasks related to personnel management.

Dey found that WAC course to be of great practical use. He suggested that a refresher or brushing-up course in WAC is necessary towards the end of the second year of the Post-Graduate Programme. He also suggested that reports and assignments in the Business Policy course in the latter part can be oriented in the WAC style and graded accordingly.

The large additions to the Organizational Behaviour faculty and the increased number of courses in that area should certainly take care of some of Dey's suggestions. The need for greater quantification does not, however, seem to have impressed the OB faculty. The latest reports indicate that the OB area is yet a haven for anti-quantitative participants.

The Future

The session on "MBA Programme : A Look into the Future" gave a peep into the future as foreseen by S. S. Chopra and Labdhi Bhandari (both of PGP 1967). Bhandari defined the objectives of the PGP as "developing skills and attitudes which not only prepare an MBA to be a better newcomer to business but are also conducive to his growth and development as a professional manager and imparting "sufficient knowledge of management science and its various functional areas." Both these, he emphasized, were equally important. He clarified that, in his view, "modern management is a concept, an approach, an attitude of mind, and not just the tools and techniques." This was a very important differentiation, especially if we ourselves were to retain our jobs, for the tools and techniques that we had learnt will soon become obsolete and our only saviour would be concepts approach, and attitude of mind.

Bhandari made a very strong plea for much greater emphasis and in-depth study in the functional areas. This was important, according to him, because most MBAs were working in specific functional areas, especially in the first few years of their careers. He also advocated greater emphasis on theory and recommended a departure from the practice of complete reliance on the case method. Also, the pro-

portion of Indian cases, he recommended, should be increased. His view was that the overall viewpoint should be supported by very sound grounding in one or two functional areas. Such grounding was very important in the short-run, though in the long-run the general superiorities of "approach" and the greater basic abilities would doubtless put the MBA in the forefront.

Bhandari also emphasized that in-company training was necessary and that there was an enormous amount to learn after graduating from the IIMA. The period of training could be shorter, but was essential.

In future, Bhandari saw MBAs fitting in well into organizations. "There is no doubt," he said, "that MBAs have an edge over non-MBAs." That gives us hope.

Chopra emphasized the bigger and more important role that professional managers have begun to play and the fact that their responsibilities would increase with time. The abolition of the managing agency system and the complexity and technological base of modern business was making it essential for professional managers to be at the helm of affairs in industry. Added to this were the international ripples caused by a major decision of any one country and the unpredictable political and economic changes. These factors, Chopra said, would prove more demanding on the abilities of the professionals. Also, these same factors made it necessary that managers had a thorough understanding of the international money market. Chopra said that the introduction of a course on this, covering such aspects as the creation of paper gold, the effects of revaluation and devaluation, etc., was essential.

Chopra suggested the creation of more productivity consciousness through a detailed study of its various aspects. Another suggested change in the curriculum, resulting from his experience as a Financial Controller, was the study of tax and tax laws and company law. In the area of Business Policy, he suggested greater emphasis on studying take-overs, mergers, foreign

collaboration, etc. He also advocated greater study of the organization of market research and surveys, and emphasized the importance of the rural market which he likened to a blooming virgin. (Marketing experts, take note.)

Chopra pointed out that a number of institutes and universities were starting MBA courses. Therefore, the future for the IIMA's MBA lies in his own knowledge and abilities and the capability to effectively use these.

MBAs in Government

The experiences of an MBA in a totally different role were presented by R. S. Ganpathy (PGP 1969) in his paper "The MBA in Government : Problems and Challenges." He outlined some of the major national tasks (population control, infrastructure-growth, agricultural revolution, R & D, banking, etc.) in all of which there was great need for professionally trained managers for planning and administration. With the increasing governmental initiative in the field of economic and social development, the need for such professional managers would also increase.

He pointed out that it was most unfortunate that not more than a handful of MBAs had joined the government in the last few years. This was so, according to him, because no attention had been paid to matching the MBAs personal objectives with the national objectives. Therefore, instead of managing the challenging programmes of vital importance to the country, this goal incongruity led to MBAs "being engaged in selling tooth pastes, toilet soaps, or chewing gum . . . (satisfying) the vanities of the idle rich and enriching the coffers of some individuals." The main reasons for this are, he said, the low salary levels, slow advancement, bureaucratic approach, and hierarchical structure of the government. Added to this are "the absence of government problems in the MBA curriculum, the capitalist-mercenary image of careers prevalent at the IIMA, and the absence of any sense of social responsibility among the MBA graduates."

Ganpathy suggested that the MBAs should be employed by the government at higher levels and

with fairly high salaries. A substantial number of the problems, he said, are created because of a lack of manpower policy in the government and the existence of a free market in manpower. He foresees the ultimate emergence of professional technocrats in the government, this step being aided by MBAs already serving as special assistants of project managers.

Ganapathy suggested that the Post-Graduate Programme curriculum should include more case studies on government problems and that the placement office should communicate to the students (through arranged lectures, etc.) the challenging

opportunities available in the government. He also suggested that the Institutes of Management be developed into Graduate Schools of Administration, thereby closing the gap between a business school and a school of public administration.

He suggested that the MBAs owed it to the country to have a greater sense of social responsibility. He proposed that a large number of MBAs should spend some time in development tasks working in the government. From his own experience, he could say that a great deal of important and meaningful work could be done by the MBAs in the government.

The Class of 1968 during their 55th reunion in December 2023



IIMA Archives, December 6, 2023



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