

**Convocation Speech of
Prof. Bakul H. Dholakia, Director, IIMA**

38th Convocation – Saturday, March 29, 2003

His Excellency Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, Honourable President of India and the Chief Guest of our 38th Convocation, Shri N.R. Narayana Murthy, Chairman of our Board of Governors, Members of the IIMA Society, the distinguished audience, my colleagues, the proud parents of graduating students and the graduating class of 2003.

This day is a memorable day in the history of the Institute as we have in our midst the Honourable President of India as the Chief Guest. Sir, we are highly grateful to you for accepting our request to grace this occasion by being our Chief Guest. Your thought-provoking Convocation Address has inspired our faculty and the graduating students.

This evening all of us are missing Jagdish Nazareth, who unfortunately passed away on December 29, 2002 following a massive heart attack while he was in Pune. Jagdish was our PGP

Alumnus of 1974 batch who returned to the Institute to pursue doctoral research in the field of sustainable organic agriculture.

Today, IIMA is widely recognised as one of the best and the most respected management schools in the Asia-Pacific region. Over the last four decades, our mission has been to excel in the field of management education. Ever since its inception, IIMA has focussed on developing business leaders. Today, IIMA Alumni occupy key positions in top organizations in India and abroad. While we feel proud of our achievements, we are not contented. Our vision is to emerge as a top-ranking management school in the world. Our aim is to achieve global recognition as a leading player in the field of management education. Our success in this endeavour has the potential of making India one of the most attractive destinations in the world for acquiring management education.

All top-ranking global business schools are international in character. To fulfil our mission, we have to bring international perspective in all our activities. Some of our recent initiatives in this direction include :

(a) Expanding international student exchange programme by

collaborating with many reputed foreign business schools; (b) Holding events like Confluence, which is an international B-School meet; (c) Increasing the international focus in our training materials; and (d) Focussing on international faculty exchange programme.

Our experience with regard to these initiatives has been quite satisfying. Many of our students, who take courses in foreign business schools actually turn out to be toppers there. We also receive highly encouraging feedback from the foreign companies employing our students. All this indicates that our students can successfully compete with the best in the world.

IIMA operates in the premium segment of the recruitment market and has always done well despite adverse market conditions. Against the backdrop of continuing sluggishness in the global economy, this year's placements at IIMA saw 80% increase in the number of companies visiting the Campus. All students of the 2003 batch were placed within four days of campus recruitment. The main reasons for IIMA's success are its stringent admissions standards, which ensure

that only the best talent gets admitted to IIMA and the exceptional rigour and application orientation of its programme.

IIMA has been making a significant contribution to management research in a wide range of areas which are relevant to practitioners and policy makers. The research studies carried out by our faculty during the current year focussed on several important issues in the management of industry, trade and financial services.

We take pride in saying that we are a school of management. Our scope is much wider than that of a traditional business school. The thrust of our research and training activities also extends to the areas of concern for the society at large. In recent years, the Institute has taken several initiatives in this direction. We have set up the Center for Electronic Governance with the objective of developing e-Governance applications and facilitating their successful implementation. This Centre has earned recognition at international and national levels for its accomplishments in the area of e-Governance.

Another major initiative is the Centre for Telecom Policy Studies, which was set up in collaboration with McGill University, to conduct research for supporting policy formulation and its implementation in the telecom sector in India. The workshops and the research studies conducted by the Centre have played a major role in shaping the country's telecom policy.

The third major initiative is the 3i-Network for conducting and disseminating research in the field of Infrastructure. The 3i-Network involves collaboration among IIMA, IIT, Kanpur and Infrastructure Development Finance Company. India Infrastructure Reports constitute a major contribution in this field. Industry and policy makers have appreciated this year's Infrastructure Report, which focussed on Public Expenditure Allocation and Accountability.

The Public Systems Group of the Institute is engaged in conducting comprehensive research in the fields of energy and environment. The major projects undertaken by the Group include long-term energy scenarios for India, Integrated Environment Assessment for South Asia, Implications of Global Environment Changes and a study

of State Level Electricity Reforms which involves a research collaboration between IIMA and Stanford University. The Institute has also undertaken major research initiatives in the field of health care focussing on hospital management. We have also recently initiated a major project in the mental health sector in Gujarat with the support of Royal Netherlands Embassy.

Recently we have established the Centre for Innovation, Incubation & Entrepreneurship with the support of Gujarat Government. The Centre has established the Indian incubator for innovation based enterprises to help innovators in successfully commercialising their innovations through an enterprise. The Centre has initiated a unique national innovator search process *Anveshan* to identify and encourage innovators and entrepreneurs. The first set of innovators selected through this process will enter the incubator in June 2003.

The Centre for Management in Agriculture is engaged in research and training activities in the field of management of agriculture and agri-business sector. Two years ago, we launched a separate 15-month Post-Graduate Programme in Agri-Business Management.

This year we have concluded a comprehensive review of this programme. We will be relaunching this programme as a two-year programme from the next academic year.

For the last three decades, our intake in the Post-Graduate Programme in Management has remained at the level of around 180, while during this period the number of applicants to our PGP has witnessed a 10-fold jump. I am happy to announce that we will be increasing the intake of our PGP from 180 to 250 from June 2003. With this expansion, the Institute is now on a high growth path. We are in the process of constructing a new campus adjoining the existing campus. We plan to construct seven hostels, five class rooms, 12 seminar rooms, International Management Centre for executives, married student accommodation, Incubation Centre, sports complex, a large capacity auditorium and several related facilities in the new campus.

We have been able to achieve all this only through the sustained and dedicated efforts of our distinguished faculty and highly committed administrative support staff and I am confident that with their

collective effort and team work we will achieve our mission during the years to come.

Before I conclude, I would like to say a few words to the graduating class of 2003. I congratulate you on successfully completing the highly demanding programme of IIMA. As you leave us this evening, we wish each one of you brilliant success and sustained happiness in whatever you choose to do while climbing the ladder of progress in your career. Let me also add that we are delighted to welcome you as our Alumni. You are going to be our best ambassadors. Remember, no world-class institution has been able to achieve its glory without an effective contribution from its alumni. I am sure you would like to come back to your alma mater to make your own contribution to the fulfillment of its vision and future plans.

God Bless you. Thank you.