



**Convocation address – IIM Ahmedabad**  
**Prof. Errol D’Souza – Director, IIMA**  
**53<sup>rd</sup> Annual Convocation, March 24, 2018**

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Dear Dr Janmejaya Sinha, Mr. Kumar Mangalam Birla, IIMA Society members, IIMA Board members, my faculty colleagues, Officers and Staff of the institute, the Batch of 1969, family members and friends of the graduating students, graduating students, ladies and gentlemen: Greetings.

It has been an eventful year since we were at the LKP last year on this occasion. It is apt that we recall some of the winds of change.

- The diversity fairy has if I may say so begun to infect the campus. In terms of educational background non-engineers were 32% of the students in the PGP – the highest ever in more than 15 years. In the PGP-FABM non-engineers were 45% of the students. – In terms of gender diversity the PGP saw 28% women joining the program in 2017 – an increase from the 14% figure of 2015. Similarly, the PGP-FABM saw 50% women joining the program in 2017. This year 50 per cent of the graduating students from the FPM are male.
- The 12<sup>th</sup> batch of the PGPX has been special as the intake capacity was increased and the batch now runs in two sections.
- The institute has re-introduced offering Executive Education programs through the e-learning mode. The first batch had 115 participants benefiting through this mode and by now we have impacted 416 participants through five programs.
- We virtually inaugurated the first batch of the ePGP program on 29<sup>th</sup> August, 2017 with 53 participants pursuing the course from 13 cities across the country.
- We regularly have reunions of alumni on our campus. In fact, one reunion if I may say so is currently on as the 4<sup>th</sup> batch of the PGP that is here at this convocation. We held a two-day FPM alum meet – a first for all the IIMA FPM batches.

- In the 2017 ranking of the MHRD National Institutional Ranking Framework we ranked at the number 1 position among higher education institutions in the management category. – Internationally our programs were in the top 30 spot globally. In the composite FT Asia-Pacific Top 20 Business School rank we were at the 4<sup>th</sup> position, surpassing IIMB and ISB.
- Students flagged off the inaugural edition of the four-day management symposium The Red Brick Summit in end September. This event recorded close to 22,000 registrations and it earned a place as a distinguished management symposium in the country.
- CIIE along with The Student Entrepreneurship Cell hosted the 8<sup>th</sup> edition of the Hult Prize. This year's Hult Prize is focused on building scalable and sustainable social enterprises that harness the power of energy to transform the lives of 10 million people by 2025. The Hult Prize is a start-up accelerator organized in association with the United Nations and is the world's largest social entrepreneurship competition spanning across 106 countries with participation from over 5,000 universities.
- The institute welcomed many distinguished academicians and public figures in the last year. Prof Eric Maskin, a Nobel Laureate, visited and delivered a lecture on Mechanism Design. The Right Hon'ble Prime Minister of Canada, Justin Trudeau, also visited and interacted with students. Others who visited included Mr. Salil Shetty, Secretary General, Amnesty International, and Dr. Hasmukh Adhia, Finance Secretary.
- The institute has set up its first footprint abroad with an IIMA Engagement Centre in Dubai from which executive education in the MENA region will be imparted.
- It is an honour that the Hon'ble President of India, Shri Ramnath Kovind awarded IIMA the Rajbhasha Keerti Award 2016-17.
- The IIM Act 2017 has come into being and it declares the IIMs as institutions of national importance and confers on them the power to grant degrees. We are waiting for the Government of India to formulate the rules which will provide the framework within which our regulations and ordinances will be framed. The Act gives autonomy to the Board to run the affairs of the institute.
- Our communications department has been active and IIMA's social media position has risen to the 2<sup>nd</sup> position amongst the world's top 100 business schools. We are also the first management institute in the country to podcast lectures by faculty for the benefit of management students and the public at large.

This is a period of extensive economic turbulence and political uncertainty. International alliances and trading blocs are showing signs of wear and tear, in politics we have extreme candidates who are at the same time popular, and the sustainability of the engines of growth is in question. Our energies at such times are focused on asking what we should be doing, and helping future managers to learn, so as to deal with turbulent times. This stems from our continued focus on excellence in scholarship and educating leaders of enterprises.

As a management school we are also committed to supporting ethical, responsible management education when difficult circumstances can trigger a race to the bottom.

Dear Students you live in a world that is increasingly mobile. I have moved less than most and yet in my adult life I have moved across 4 cities if I do not count stints of a few months to a year in universities abroad, I have lived in at least 5 different houses. Your lives will involve many more house shifting experiences. This is unsurprising as IIMA ka tempo hai zig zag zig zag. Increasingly I find our alums are living as transnational families with one member in one location and one or more members living elsewhere and sometimes in another country. When we move out to new geographical areas we leave behind our relationships with former neighbours, co-workers, and friends. When we anticipate that we will not spend much time in a place we begin to make less effort to get to know our neighbours or to do things that will benefit the community.

Modern technology adds to our isolation. I grew up in a time where we did not have television. We were not induced to stay indoors because of television and air conditioning and spent a lot of our time outdoors interacting with neighbours and friends. Our new communication enabled world has increased interaction but reduced intimacy and person-to-person contact. We are increasingly alone in front of our mobile and computer screens and as we forgo the nonverbal communication cues that come with face to face interaction we are less likely to get to know others well enough, to have confidence in them, and to have a harmonious work relationship with them.

A major issue of our times is growing inequality and as inequality increases we are getting more isolated. We tend to live in gated communities and to give more weight to the private sphere over public spaces. In the process, without realizing it, we focus more on people like ourselves as we insulate ourselves from others and their problems. The more we isolate ourselves the less we will support public goods like government schools and health care that are valuable to the less fortunate and the rest of us.

I am not saying that we should not move and change careers or live in fine houses. I am just asking us to recognize the consequences of certain societal trends that have the ability to divest us from the benefits that improve the lot of all of us together. Many of you have made it through here through the sheer hard work you have put in. But you are also lucky. You are lucky for the support of your families and of many others. You can't take full credit for your successes – that should humble you and make you more compassionate. It requires you to respect people with less power than you and to consider what happens to them when a decision is taken that has the potential to affect them.

On behalf of my family and all those present here I wish you all the best that life has to offer. I know that each of you is capable of being better than you think of yourselves and that you are not quite what you can be. Be alive to the imaginations and the possibilities and continue to invent the future. After all you are from IIMA.