

## **Chairperson, IIMA's Draft Welcome Address, 31st Convocation 1996**

It is indeed with great happiness that we welcome you, Sir, to the 31st Annual Convocation of the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad and we are indeed grateful for honouring us with the convocation address which he will be delivering a short while from now. It gives me immense pleasure to introduce our respected chief guest to the IIMA community.

Chief Justice Ahmadi graduated in law and joined the bar in the year 1954-55. He was appointed Judge in the City Civil and Sessions Court, Ahmedabad in 1964. The year 1974 saw Justice Ahmadi in the role of Secretary, Legal Department. Two years later, on September 2, 1976, he was promoted as Judge in the High Court of Gujarat in which position he served with distinction till December 1988. During this period he also worked as Chairperson of the Advisory Board under Conservation of Foreign Exchange and Prevention of Smuggling Activities Act, 1974, the Advisory Board Under Prevention of Black Marketing, and Maintenance of Supplies of Essential Commodities Act, 1980; and in the Gujarat State Third Pay Commission. He also worked as a Member of the Ravi & Beas Waters Disputes Tribunal under the Rajiv-Longowal Settlement (Punjab Settlement).

December 1988 saw the elevation of Justice Ahamadi to the Supreme Court of India in which capacity he served till October 25th, 1994. During this period he worked as President, Supreme Court Legal Aid Committee in the year 1989 and as Executive Chairman, Committee for Implementing Legal Aid Schemes in India from 1st November, 1990 to 24th October, 1994. On October 25th, 1994 he became the Chief Justice of India to head one of the most important pillars of a vibrant democratic system - the Supreme Court of the Indian judiciary.

It is indeed a privilege and an honour to have you in our midst on this Convocation Day here at IIMA.

The Nineties have been both exciting as well as turbulent times for this great country of ours. On the one hand there has been little doubt about India's explosive potential on the economic, business, entrepreneurial and managerial fronts. There has been little hesitation about acknowledging India's ancient, rich and varied heritage on the social and cultural fronts. Time

and again there has been recognition that around fifty years of independent nationhood has tested out democratic processes and institutions and there is international acknowledgement that the foundations of a dynamic democratic ethos has been laid in India. The Indian experience has demonstrated that each and every component of the democratic institutional framework is critical to the effective and credible functioning of the Indian polity. The legislature, the executive, the judiciary, the media as well as public opinion have contributed in diverse ways to create the framework of democratic structures, processes and relations.

India has also been going through a process of churning on the social, economic and business fronts with the need for liberalization and globalization. There has never been as much opportunity and challenge for Indian entrepreneurship, managerial expertise and technical capabilities as one has witnessed in the past few years.

New challenges confront our democratic institutions in this context. The effectiveness and efficiency of the judicial system combined with the need for bringing probity, propriety and integrity to public life has thrust upon the judiciary a new and inspiring role in a rapidly changing environment. Speedy justice, alternate dispute resolution processes, the task of protecting constitutional commitments, the role of reaching out to the needs of the disadvantaged and the marginalized, the need for bringing rectitude and righteousness to public and corporate life - are all some of the challenges before the Indian judiciary.

Under your stewardship, Sir, several stirring initiatives have been taken which is contributing to the restoration of public confidence in the functioning of democratic institutions, functionaries, processes and relations. Initiatives in the area of legal aid for the disadvantaged, attempts to bring integrity back to public life, restoration of the effective and independent functioning of public institutions, computerization of the legal management systems for greater accountability, the development of case law databases, enforcement of laws to facilitate urban greening processes, reforms in the legal education systems have been taken up in the recent past under your leadership. The courage of conviction and the leadership role played by the judiciary cannot but be a source of inspiration for other institutions in Indian society.

Like every other institution, management education institutions have also been feeling the

need for reorienting and restructuring teaching-learning processes in response to the cataclysmic changes which are taking place in the domestic and international environment. IIMA has not been far behind in introspecting with a view to remaining in the forefront of management education in this part of the world. The Institute, as you are aware, Sir, offers several programmes - the two year postgraduate programme, the Fellow Programme in Management which is equivalent to the doctoral programme of universities, the Faculty Development Programme for University management teachers, several Management Development Programmes for practising executives. Both the Fellow Programme in Management as well as the Postgraduate Programme in Management have been reviewed during the past three years. Several new courses reflecting the need for developing managers with a global mindset have been developed and offered in the postgraduate programme. The placement of our graduates has as usual been extremely good and is a measure of how well the institute's programme continues to be received by both domestic as well as international companies. Highly reputed international consultancy companies, companies in the private and public sector have been making a beeline for our graduates and the feed back from them has been extremely encouraging.

All these inputs put together only serves to further strengthen our collective resolve to commit ourselves to the great enterprise of developing professional managers with a general management perspective and corporate leaders of the highest calibre committed to excellence in every endeavour.

With these few words, Sir, let me once again on behalf of the Board, Society, Faculty, the Class of 1996 and the entire IIMA community thank you for being with us today on the occasion of the 31st Annual Convocation and once again extend a warm welcome to you.  
Thank You.