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INDIAN INSTITUTE OF MANAGEMENT, AHMEDABAD
FIRST ANNUAL CONVOCATION
APRIL 10, 1966

Welcome speech by Shri Prakash Tandon, Chairman
Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad

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Shri Chagla, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Welcome Chagla:

On this auspicious day, the culmination of our hopes and efforts, I feel I cannot begin without paying a tribute to the great State of Gujarat; to the many, and to five persons in particular; to whom this Institute owes its all:

To Kamla Chowdhry, for her sensitive and often unrecognised efforts in throwing the early bridges between Harvard and Ahmedabad, both of whose cultures she alone of in all well understood; for the building of the faculty, the programmes which have made a name in India and, most important, the early norms and values.

To Vikram Sarabhai, the pioneer he always is and a builder of institutions, for his selfless and not always appreciated effort, which brought the Institute into being.

To Harry Hansen, for bringing Harvard to us - an achievement, I believe, more successful than Harvard found anywhere else in the world; for his undaunted zeal and patience despite the many occasions when he confided to me that he wondered whether the effort was worthwhile.

To Douglas Ensminger, for his unfailing personal kindness and support; and for the generosity of the Ford Foundation, but for whom our task would have been harder and perhaps never fulfilled.

And most important of all, to that great doyen of industry in Western India, Seth Kasturbhai, whose stature, wisdom, fairness and counsel was always a source of inspiration.

Through Harry Hansen I would like to send to Dean Baker and all his colleagues at Harvard who have helped us, our grateful thanks.

To each one of them this Institute owes its lasting debt of gratitude, which I hope it will return in its growth and success. And to each one of them I owe a personal gratitude for the support I always needed and ungrudgingly received.

Sir, we are particularly honoured by the presence at our first Convocation of someone of your distinction in academics, at the bar, as our representative abroad, and today to me in the important field, Education.

To you and those from industry who are gracing this occasion, we are indeed thankful. We thank you for the support you have given us and the much greater support that we are going to ask you for today. We need funds, both for capital expenditure and revenue, and it is only to you that we can turn.

The new campus which you are seeing to-day is less than half built and our recurring expenditure needs to be doubled. We need a crore of rupees to complete this campus and another twelve lakhs of rupees each year to augment our budget to do a proper job. But I believe that it is not enough to make an appeal; we have to show ourselves worthy of your

confidence and support; and for this we owe it to you to explain where we are going, and what we see as our objective over the next ten graduations.

Business in the past has developed its own managers; but we began with a new article of faith:

" That training for management extends beyond the frontiers of formal education in humanities, scientific and engineering disciplines is of quite recent awareness in India. It is understandably the obvious first priority in development to think of means of production; and the next of the men with the requisite skills, the engineers, the chemists, and accountants. But for the operation to work at more than its optimum efficiency, these men need the wider appreciation of the overall purpose and wholeness of the operation and the attitudes and philosophy that take the organisation forward. This is the objective of the Indian Institute of Management at Ahmedabad."

Let me attempt to fit this declaration into the milieu of Indian Industry in the coming decade.

As a developing economy we have perhaps the hardest task in the world, with a per capita income and rate of growth among the lowest and a population rising the fastest. It is for industry and agriculture to provide the answer; but I am convinced that the task is essentially managerial in nature. Resources and idealogies are important, but the catalyst is the manager, and upon his skills and ability will depend the measure of success we achieve. I am convinced too that our failures in the past have been managerial, as equally our successes. Where there was good management the results were good and where the management was less than good the results were poor. And this applies equally to the private, public or cooperative sectors.

Our Institute is the matrix of these young managers, whom we equip with the ability to succeed in the task before them. Our first proud crop stands before you today. As someone in industry, I may perhaps look at the task before them.

I feel the most important demand that is going to be made upon these young men and women is to display an ability to operate successfully in an uncertain world.

The stresses and strains and the compulsions of growth that literally change conditions overnight; such things as the weather, war with a neighbour, sudden cessation of foreign aid and vital materials for industry, change in import policies without notice: all this makes the task of the manager one of withstanding the shocks but recovering to function effectively, to maximise production and profits in circumstances where the sands shift without warning.

I know our Institute befits the young men and women well for this task and we pitch our ambitions high. In the years to come we hope to become the mainspring of management inspiration in the country. While we wish never to evolve dogma or doctrine; we want our thinking to flow persuasively into industry through education, research, post-experience courses and consultation. We want, in fact, to become a Nalanda to India industry, with young men and women coming to us from all over India and from many neighbouring countries too.

But for what we hope to give we want to receive, and may I reiterate we need one crore of rupees to build and twelve lakhs more each year to grow.

And a last word to the leavers today if any of you ever need help or advice, please do not hesitate to call on me; I will feel privileged to be of use to you.

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Remarks by Dr. Douglas Ensminger, Representative in India
Ford Foundation, New Delhi

Shri Chagla, Shri Tandon, Shri Matthai, Professor Hansen, Dr. Sarabhai, members of the graduating class, ladies and gentlemen, I am very happy to be here with you today on the auspicious occasion of the Institute's first annual convocation. And I am very grateful to the institute for honoring me with the privilege of taking part in it.

Capital, technology and labor must have well-trained and efficient managers to produce expanding, creative industries. The need is urgent in India today. It has been estimated that one lakh more managers will be needed within the next five years if the return on the national investment in physical assets and technology is to be realized.

I am sure that all of us here today agree that these men and women should be drawn from all sections of society and that they should be able, dedicated, imaginative leaders. Outworn traditions must be challenged as India emerges on the world's industrial front. At the same time, vital aspects of India's great national heritage must be preserved.

Since Independence there has been mounting concern over how to solve today's pressing managerial problems and how to develop and train future business leaders as well. This convocation indicates that these problems are being tackled realistically here at the Ahmedabad Institute. Those of you who are graduating today will soon be starting out on your careers in business, industry and government. You will be engaged in a significant national effort to improve the performance of management in India today.

Some universities and management institutions, such as yours, are beginning to undertake significant research into Indian business problems. Their graduates will bring this new knowledge and these new ideas with them to offices and factories throughout the country. You are the vanguard of India's new corps of professional managers.

However, and I would like to emphasize this point, I feel very strongly that you also must concern yourselves with the management problems of today as well as learning how to become the managers of tomorrow.

There is a big gap between theory and practice - between the classroom and the office. You must bridge this gap quickly. I applaud the efforts of the faculty and students here at Ahmedabad to go out into offices and factories to gain an understanding of current problems, to cultivate mutual respect between themselves and practising managers and to break down the common misconception that theoretical management has little practical application. I would urge you to redouble these efforts.

I would urge the Government to continue, and increase its support not only of training programs for young people but for practising managers to provide them with the opportunity to study their changing environment.

A start has been made here at Ahmedabad, at the Calcutta Management Institute and at the Administrative Staff College in Hyderabad. The Hyderabad Staff College is bringing together government officials and public and private sector managers so that they can share their experiences and explore possible solutions to their problems in the light of modern management practices.

Its services are expanding to cover consultants, applied research and functional training. The All-Indian Management Association is providing information and other vital services for professional managers. These institutions complement each other, and in my opinion, they deserve continuing support. The central and state Governments, universities, public and private sector businessmen have all cooperated in a manner which augurs well for the future.

Let me just mention briefly some of the difficulties which those of you who are graduating today may encounter, as I see them.

You are the first of many of your countrymen to begin your careers with an understanding of modern management theory. Not all of your superiors will have this new knowledge. However, you will find that they have experience and executive skills which can only be acquired by practice. Until you have gotten some of this experience and learned some of these executive skills you will not be managers in fact.

Some of the most successful practising managers do not have degrees. They do not need them and they never will. If you have the good fortune to work with one of these exceptional men try to analyse his performance and find out why he is successful. You probably will find a combination of dedicated effort, hard work, imagination, vigor, and drive, a capacity to absorb and master detail, the ability to make bold, brave decisions and to accept responsibility for them. In my opinion, you must cultivate these qualities as you apply the theories of modern business management.

I would urge you to look for and accept responsibility willingly, to exercise initiative and avoid referring small matters to your superiors. You will make mistakes but you will learn from your mistakes.

You will undoubtedly encounter many difficulties. The insights you now have into the modern managerial environment will challenge the accepted and tested practices of many of the men you work with. You must be able to introduce changes in attitudes and work habits without harming your relationships with your superiors and colleagues. It will require a great deal of patience and tact. It is a big challenge but you must meet it or your training will be wasted.

Your success will depend largely on your own, individual efforts. I would advise you to keep in touch with research activities here at the Ahmedabad Institute and elsewhere. Take an active interest in your local productivity committee and management association. Read as widely as you can and remember that what works in another country may need modifying before it can be applied here with the same results.

You have a unique opportunity to contribute to your country's future. You are not managers yet. You still have to learn how to apply the knowledge you have acquired. You are the vanguard of the future managers of India's growing business and industry.

May I congratulate you and wish you success.

Thank you.

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Remarks by Dr. Harry L. Hansen
Malcolm P. McNair Professor Marketing
Harvard Graduate School of Business Administration

Shri. Chagla, distinguished guests, ladies & gentlemen:

I bring you greetings from a distant sister institution that is graced by the opportunity to share this day.

To those of you who, devoted to an ideal, brought this Institute into being, I bring greetings of admiration and respect. Your list is long, and you will forgive my oversights, I hope, of protocol: Sarabhai, Lalbhai, Tandon, Mangaldas, Mehta, Chowdhry, Esvaran, Choksi, Thacker, Chandramani, Charat Ram, Dandekar, the Members of the Board of Governors and of the Society, Douglas Ensminger and others whose contributions are great but quiet. You touched the Institute with your hands and gave it life. You created the Institute. You did not have to do it, but you knew it had to be, and that was enough to make you fill your busy lives with still another problem. There is a theory that humanity progresses because it must. If indeed this is true, if humanity progresses inevitably, there is no need to worry. One can as the expression goes "snore away" and let humanity carry us to realms of perfection and delight. But humanity does not necessarily progress. One of the world's great intellectuals introduced his work on the philosophy of history by writing, "When we first contemplate the past, that is history, the first thing we see is nothing but ruins". We must grip the future in our hands, and shape it, and not leave it to humanity, or to say it differently to others in general. To modestly correct another philosopher who said "I exist, therefore I am", one would more thoughtfully say "I create, therefore I am". To you who created this Institute we send greetings: here is a dream given reality in this class, in the guests assembled here, and the magnificent buildings that rise around us. What finer reward is there than to see the fruits of one's labour before one's eyes.

To the Faculty, I bring also greetings of admiration and respect, and the keenest appreciation of your fortitude. You came by design from different walks of life: business, education, government, from the four corners of India and from abroad. You threw in your lot with a new venture in education, sensing its promise, yet risking your careers in being asked to take up new ways of work and thinking. You were even bold enough to be drawn by the challenge. You suffered through the shock of a year at Harvard; the uncertainties of forming a new faculty; the problems of blending the cultures of India and America. You had a thankless task in which you could not escape criticism. You were asked to teach, to research, to administer, to come to know each other, to forge new concepts of faculty behaviour and to do all of these things yesterday. To you, speaking for my colleagues, I bow and offer my hand; you were asked to do the impossible and you did it. If reward in life is in the overcoming of what is said to be impossible you are today rich men and women, as a professional in your field I salute you.

And now to you, the class, for I have saved you for the last, I bring special greetings, greetings of warmth and affection, of hopes and challenges, of welcome into the ranks of the potential leaders of men. Overworked, underworked, misunderstood, ambitious, lazy; insecure, secure - you are like your American counterparts who some sixty days from now will sit under the elm trees of Harvard Yard and say goodbye to the freedom of youth and accept with a rare combination of regret and pleasure the

responsibilities of their own lives. For better or for worse you, like they, are now your own administrators, and you can and must run your own show.

This is now the first year a company such as yours has assembled here to mark the passing through of a class. You are almost now the "old boys", but for a few of your members who must always be the "young girls": You are indeed a small company, but you are unique, you are the first; you are the smallest class there will ever be, you have experienced the most, you cannot ever happen again, you will be the most remembered. You suffered, you learned, you protested, you laughed, you insulted. Will any class again like such a gamut of emotions? No.

Close your eyes. Close your eyes. I want you for a moment to see and hear in your imagination the great company of the young of India who will follow you and sit where you are. Sit closer for there are many to come, and they are impatient, and they are impatient, and they crowd you, and all of you together, must even so overflow the plains around us. Close your eyes. Can't you hear their voices, feel their presence. Be reminded by your senses that you are more than the class of 1966; you are part of the class of the 20th century and of the 21st and beyond. None has been here before you; there is no end to those who follow after you.

But you have a price to pay for being such a special company. You cannot truly be the leaders we hope you are unless as you work for whatever hours or wealth may be your lot in life, you do not sense your place in the ideals and rich culture of your great country, and give yourself to meeting its great needs. By this giving you will in the end indeed receive a good deal, no small and selfish gain, but the great rewards that come from service and dedication to goals larger than one's own. To those of you who may not wish to shoot your arrow so high, I say "pull back the bow" your arm is stronger than you think.

You are now the first. If your class were to have a heraldic crest it should have inscribed on it the lines from a moving quatrain:

"Awake ! For morning has flung the stars
Into the bowl of night and put the starts to flight
And lo! The hunter of the East
Has caught the palace turret in a noose of light."

You are the morning. You must think, and feel, and dream in vivid imagery such as this if you are to grow the resolve to accomplish great things. Never fear-life can be relied upon to place the obstacles to face the resolve. And men will not be surprised if you falter. Men do. But I am enough of a mystic to believe that life wants us to prevail in the end and chooses its obstacles to fit the man, asking only as its price for victory that we do in all tasks more than we need do. You are in the morning of your lives; make it a greater morning for others. If there be starts in your eyes, don't brush them away.

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