

INDIAN INSTITUTE OF MANAGEMENT, AHMEDABAD

SEVENTH ANNUAL CONVOCATION, SATURDAY, 15TH APRIL, 1972

Speech of the Chairman, IIMA Society

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Mr. Subramaniam, Ladies and Gentlemen,

May I welcome you to the seventh annual convocation of our Institute. I would particularly like to welcome our chief guest, Mr. C. Subramaniam. Sir, I am fully aware of the pressure on your time. Involved in the gigantic task of nation building as the Minister of Planning, you have pressing duties elsewhere and in spite of this you agreed to come and encourage us in our efforts to contribute to the growth of professional management in the country. We feel honoured. Your association with us to-day is particularly significant in view of your valuable help and assistance to some of our basic activities. One of these, the Centre for Management in Agriculture, I recall, took shape and developed into a viable and strong institution purely as a result of the encouragement you gave during its initial years when you were the Minister of Agriculture in the Union Cabinet. In a very

real sense you, Sir, are the father of the Centre. In addition to research contributions to the problems of agricultural management, the Centre now conducts a one year programme in the Management in Agriculture, and to-day the second batch of 33 students along with 120 of our Two Year Post-Graduate Programme will be graduating. We are glad that you are here to wish them godspeed in the challenging task that awaits them. Their training and education here, I hope, has adequately equipped them to be effective instrument of the economic reconstruction of the nation.

Ladies and gentlemen, on this happy occasion of our annual reckoning, we painfully miss a figure who was our friend philosopher and guide during the initial years of this Institute and continued to remain so till the end of his life. I am referring to Dr. Vikram A. Sarabhai who was our founder and the first Director. With several educational, research and cultural organizations in the city, we share the honour of being the product of his imagination and zeal. He is no more with us, but we will be continuously guided and inspired by his bequests : dedication to work, sincerity of purpose and a sense of humility, the qualities which he so eminently embodied in himself.

As you are aware, the primary task of this Institute is the application of knowledge. It is our endeavour to help people and organisations improve their management practices. We try to do

this by two pronged strategies. One on the hand we organize our executive development programmes for the practising managers. On the other, we hope to bring about change at the grass root level through the Post Graduate Programme and the Programme of Management in Agriculture. We believe that a developing society like ours demands change of managerial practices at all levels. Our programmes are directed to this end. These programmes are a blending of conceptual development and actual experience of Indian environment. The materials which we use and the method of teaching which we employ represent this blending. Our materials, by and large, are a product of research effort of our faculty and research staff. I take this opportunity to commend these efforts and thank the organizations and the individuals who have helped us both with finances and data necessary for these tasks.

The word 'management' is generally used in the context of business and industry. The fact is that managerial abilities and techniques can be fruitfully used in any activity where there is need to adjust scarce means with various ends. Profit-based activities are not the only concern of management education. Hospitals, educational institutions, research

organizations, trade unions, government departments and a host of other non-profit institutions need management techniques as much as business organizations. Our major concern, admittedly, so far has been industrial system, but we owe it to the society to branch off in other areas. In order to be able to do so, we need a much larger staff than we have at present, we need much greater resources. We are grateful both to the government and the private industry for their support to us. But our ambition to expand the sphere of our activities, and include non-profit organizations in our purview can not be realized unless the government comes forward with greater support. I have, in the past, expressed strong reservation about the government policy toward technical education. I reiterate these reservations and hope that outlay on technical education will increase and Institutes like ours will receive greater encouragement. Management education, of necessity, is expensive, but the expenditure should not be viewed in terms of money alone. The quality of work and the contribution of an organization to the social good must be basic considerations.

To a very large extent, the sagacious and imaginative leadership of Prof. Ravi Matthai, the Director of the Institute,

has been responsible for our achievements. He is the architect of our past success and future dreams. Unfortunately he could not be with us to-day because of an operation from which he is still recuperating. Some of you might be also knowing that he has decided to step down from the position of the Director and continue to remain at the Institute as a member of the faculty. He has taken this decision in view of his belief that change of leadership is necessary for the growth of an organisation. Much as we would like him to continue, we respect his feelings and the basic principle underlying his decision which is as unique as sincere. I take this opportunity to pay my personal tributes as well as those of the faculty and the Society for the services he has rendered to the Institute during the seven years of stewardship and hope for his continued and fruitful association with the Institute in his new role as a member of the faculty.

Once again, Mr. Subramaniam, ladies and gentlemen, may I welcome you to our seventh convocation.