

11th Annual Convocation of the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad
(April 10, 1976)

WELCOME ADDRESS BY MR. KESHUB MAHINDRA, CHAIRMAN OF THE INDIAN INSTITUTE
OF MANAGEMENT AHMEDABAD SOCIETY

Prof. Dandekar, Ladies and Gentlemen:

May I welcome you all to the 11th Annual Convocation of the Indian
Institute of Management.

I should like to extend a special word of welcome to Prof. V.M.
Dandekar, who is our Chief Guest at this Convocation today.

It would be sheer impertinence on my part to try and introduce
Prof. V.M. Dandekar to you. He is very well-known to a large number of
people not only in this country but abroad. He has been responsible for
research on some of the most meaningful themes in economic planning and
development and, in particular, has made a significant contribution
towards approaches for tackling the crucial problems of poverty, of
growth and equity.

Prof. Dandekar, as some of you may know, has recently been busy with
a new institution he has set up in Lonavla, called the Indian School of
Political Economy, where political workers are invited for studies. I am
certain that under his able guidance these studies will make a notable
contribution.

In all the years since Independence, the growth of social and political
consciousness has outpaced the rate of economic development. Millions still
live near or below the breadline and rightly desire more and better.

Economic development is still the highest imperative as everyone knows: to give independence and democracy their fullest meaning; to banish hunger, ignorance and disease; to provide minimum decencies of life without which institutions founded on tolerance cannot long endure. To compress a century and more of development from the bullock cart to nuclear power into the space of a generation or two is no small task. I am sure Prof. Dandekar will agree with me when I say that despite all the hurdles this is being done in the total context of the Indian socio-political picture which, at times, is full of light and shades -- the shades seemingly more disturbing and in need of our concerted and concentrated attention.

In evidence, I am sure you will find it interesting to know that, at this Institute, we have taken up for researches and studies various aspects of what is generally described as a strategy of "growth with justice." The problems of food distribution, rural employment, mechanisation and income distribution, and different facets of district planning, are some of the themes on which work has been organised at this Institute.

Knowing the importance of translating theory into practice, attempts have been made to evolve action plans for rural development under two different projects currently under way at the Institute. Our Education Systems Unit has taken up an area in Rajasthan for integrating education with economic development of the area. Another project with which the rural development group is involved, in collaboration with the state and the district level administration, the voluntary agencies and people's own organisation, is that of putting in action comprehensive plans for

rural development in one of the most economically depressed areas in the country. In this fashion we learn and hope to contribute.

Although, the attack on poverty has undoubtedly improved the lives of millions, considerable amount of work still needs to be done in utilising the idle manpower and creating employment. Lest we forget amidst the glamour of urbanisation, eighty percent of our people still live in the villages. It is only when real incomes begin to grow in their hands that our economy will begin the cycle of re-generation leading to the take-off stage. This concern for rural poor, however, which Prof. Dandekar has so ably championed finds its expression in some of our management development programmes. It would be relevant to cite the example of two new programmes:

1. On the training of agricultural and rural development personnel for the north-eastern states, and
2. A training programme on the management of the rural development projects.

The new directions which we are imparting to training and research arise from the basic need for using professional competence, and expertise in areas of current relevance. In this we would be happy to share our experiences and other concerns with government functionaries, voluntary workers, and others interested in the challenge of rural development.

As many of you may know, our competence lies mainly in the fields of organisation and administration and, yet, we are convinced that these efforts must also have a wider environmental setting and relevance to contemporary times. In this context, it is important to note that the

first batch of our two-year post graduate programme students, with specialisation in agriculture, will be graduating today. It is my earnest hope that these new graduates will provide the much needed human input in planning and managing our agricultural programmes and agencies.

Altogether, a total of 164 graduates of the Institute will be receiving their diplomas today. Apart from the 23 graduates with specialisation in agriculture and 4 persons who will be awarded the title of Fellow of the Indian Institute of Management, this include 137 graduates who have completed the general post-graduate programme.

These young men and women represent a valuable addition to the growing coterie of professionals in our country. While we are proud of their achievements, I express the hope that they will preserve their innate enthusiasm, perseverance and sense of achievement as they step out into the harsh realities of the world outside. Many surprises and challenges lie ahead and the new careers which await them should be seen as opportunities to apply what they have learnt here and what they will be learning afresh outside.

To the young hopefuls, if I may be permitted to offer some advice: let the ability to learn, the willingness to listen, the humility to appreciate the best in others be your most valuable and guiding assets. I am confident that you will prove yourself worthy of the trust that has been reposed in you and will bring lustre to this Institute in which you have acquitted yourself so creditably for the last few years.