

INDIAN INSTITUTE OF MANAGEMENT, AHMEDABAD

TWELFTH ANNUAL CONVOCATION

(April 9, 1977)

CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME ADDRESS

Dr. Swaminathan, Ladies and Gentlemen:

It gives me great pleasure to welcome all of you to the twelfth annual convocation of the Indian Institute of Management. In our Chief Guest, Dr. Swaminathan, we have an eminent scientist and administrator and a friend of the institute who was intimately associated with its work for several years. I am delighted to welcome Dr. M.S. Swaminathan into our midst, although he would have felt quite at home here even without any formal welcome.

It is no exaggeration to say that Dr. Swaminathan's outstanding professional accomplishments and close links with the Institute made him a natural choice as chief guest for this important occasion. Dr. Swaminathan has had a most distinguished career ever since he returned from Cambridge, U.K. after receiving his Ph.D. As head of the Botany Division and later as Director of the Indian Agricultural Research Institute in Delhi, he performed outstandingly. This no doubt was a major factor that led to his elevation as the Director General of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research and Secretary to the Government of India in 1972. Dr. Swaminathan is the recipient of numerous awards and citations in recognition of his pioneering work in agricultural research. To mention only a few, he received the Bhatnagar Award for the contribution to the Botanical Sciences, the Magsaysay Award, the Padma Bhushan Award and the Mendel Centenary Award of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences. Dr. Swaminathan was President of the Indian Science Congress in 1976 and also holds important positions in several international organisations.

Dr. Swaminathan's eminence is firmly founded on his significant contributions to the development of agriculture in India. As a scientist he has pioneered and spearheaded the process of technological change in Indian agriculture. He was the moving spirit behind the introduction of dwarf wheat varieties in the country and the architect of the high yielding varieties programme, dry farming and multiple cropping programmes. To him goes the credit for the national demonstration project involving the active and direct participation of scientists and farmers. As a farsighted and perceptive administrator, he has contributed a great deal towards the strengthening of the educational and research institutions concerned with agricultural research in the country. Many of you are aware of Dr. Swaminathan's connections with our institute. He was a member of our Board of Governors until only a couple of years ago. He has addressed the students and faculty here several times and taken a keen interest in the work of our Centre for Management in Agriculture.

For the institute, this annual convocation marks the end of another extremely busy and productive year. In this context, Dr. Swaminathan and other guests may wish to note the progress we have made in influencing management in agriculture. In addition to the ongoing research work of the CMA, we have been able to establish an identity for the specialisation of management in agriculture in our two year post graduate programme. A streamlined and integrated package of courses with provision for further specialisation in agricultural finance or marketing has been devised by the faculty group which has reviewed the existing curriculum carefully during the past year.

Among other new activities, I should like to make a special reference to the six month management education programme and its 32 participants. These participants are pioneers in a unique programme that we offered for the first time at the institute. I hope that those who completed the Management Education Programme which concluded this week found the experience and learning worthwhile and stimulating. My best wishes to them and in particular, to the participants from Malaysia and Zambia who sacrificed much to be away from their homes in an altogether different environment.

The focus of attention at the annual convocation is understandably on the graduating students. Among those who will graduate tonight are 158 students of the Post Graduate Programme of whom 28 have specialised in Agricultural management. A record number of 8 will receive the title of "Fellow of the Indian Institute of Management." Our Fellow Programme in Management was started in the hope that those who successfully complete will take up careers in management education and research in educational institutions many of which badly need well trained faculties.

From this year we have introduced a new policy concerning the award of gold medals. Instead of selecting outstanding students exclusively on the basis of academic performance, we have, this year, selected four students on the basis of their overall outstanding performance which includes not only academic excellence, but also contributions in terms of their extra academic activities and conduct. One of the gold medals has been reserved for the best student from the agricultural specialisation stream.

The broader definition of performance referred to above is symbolic of the need for every professional manager to be broadbased in terms of his goals, skills and orientation. Professional excellence in the purely technical sense is certainly important, but not enough. Wherever you go and whatever work you do, bear in mind that your professional competence should be informed by social purpose. The ability to relate oneself to others, the breadth of understanding about the issues relevant to one's setting, and the skill to strike a balance between the personal or private and the public or social interest are important attributes of an effective manager. After you leave the institute and look back after some years, I hope you will recall the time you spent here as a period that gave you a foundation not only in professional skills, but also in the other qualities that I briefly mentioned above. My very best wishes to the graduating students of 1977.

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