

Speech of Dr. Kamla Chowdhry, Acting Director,
at the Seventh Annual Convocation of
Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad
April 15, 1972.

Mr. Chairman, Shri Subramaniam, Ladies and Gentlemen:

First of all let me apologise for Ravi Matthal's absence this evening. He had to suddenly undergo an operation in Bombay and is therefore unable to be with us. He has conveyed his very special apologies for his unavoidable absence.

Shri Subramaniam, we are most grateful to you for being with us today. This year, the Institute completes the first ten years of its existence. The Institute has, during this first decade, grown in many directions. For this we are deeply grateful to those who trusted us in our judgement and gave us ample measure of freedom to choose our directions. I would especially like to place on record here our special thanks to Shri G.K. Chandiramani, Additional Secretary, who recently retired from the Ministry of Education, for his many acts of help. Without him our progress would have been less so, and without him our freedom may have been less so.

I would like to mention here also the efforts of the faculty, the patience and forbearance of their wives, the efforts of the research and the administrative staff of the Institute. Without their help, the Institute would not have achieved success in its many activities.

Just as from a little acorn big oak trees grow, so have our activities grown from small beginnings. From 48 students in the post-graduate programme in 1964, this year there were 234 students in-residence, 34 students in the programme for management in agriculture, and 4 students in our doctoral programme. There is considerable freedom provided to the students to select the kind of courses that would make a meaningful package to a career they are contemplating. We offered 75 courses as electives in the second year from which they could choose.

In an atmosphere of unemployment in the country, our placement committee announced 228 job offers from 123 organizations for 119 graduating students. Even for our first year students, who have to undergo two months training in an organization, there were 133 jobs announced from 72 organizations for only 113 students. Our 31 students in the programme for management in agriculture received 85 job offers from 39 organizations.

For the admissions in our next year for the post-graduate programme we received 4899 applications for selecting a group of 120 students.

You will agree, Sir, that the trust and faith placed in us and the resources invested in us have been amply justified.

We have been organizing programmes for managers, executives and administrators in Government, Business and Industry. This year 300 organizations participated and 119 participants were

from the public sector. You will be happy to hear, Sir, that the State Governments have started taking an active interest in our activities. We ran a special programme for the senior officers of the Tamil Nadu Government. Towards the end of this month we are conducting a programme for the senior officers of the Uttar Pradesh Government. Several other State Governments have requested us for similar programmes for their administrators and officers.

To respond to all these requests effectively, we need more and more resources. We hope, Sir, you will give us your support as you have done so in the past. The Agriculture sector at the Institute started 8 years ago with your help when you were the Minister for Food and Agriculture. Your foresight and act of faith, Sir, 8 years ago, has multiplied in various activities and has produced an institution of which we are all justifiably proud.

In 1969, in response to the needs of the Banking world, we started another sector at the Institute in banking studies. The banking group has contributed considerably to external programmes for senior managers of banks and other financial institutions and in research activities.

All these activities have to be nourished and nurtured by research. In developing new knowledge in management we have taken into account the managerial requirements of new and complex technology on the one hand but also for social values and cultural norms

of behaviour on the other hand. Indian managers of tomorrow need to be as modern, as proficient, and as professional as any managers found in any part of the world. But, at the same time, as truly representative of our values and our culture.

Over the years the faculty and research staff have published 51 books, 410 articles, 20 research reports, and presented 153 papers in professional conferences, thus making a total contribution of 634 publications.

Our consulting activities are also increasing and the faculty are contributing in major projects at the policy making levels.

Two years ago we purchased a Computer - Hewlett Packard 2000-A. The computer facilities are aiding the students, teachers and researchers to teach better, to learn better, and to understand better the dynamics of different managerial situations.

With the expansion of our activities, with the growth of new sectors, with our new plans in areas of relevance to the country, it was time we reviewed our activities and planned our future strategy. A Reorganization Committee was appointed by the Director, Ravi Matthai, to look into the various aspects of the Institute's functioning and to make recommendations as to the structure required for the strategies to be followed.

In January of this year, Professor Matthai decided to step down from the Directorship of the Institute, but to continue as a

Professor at the Institute. This was an act of moral courage and of deep conviction. He believes, at this stage of the Institute's growth there should be a change in leadership. Although we accept his rationale and logic, it is indeed very difficult to accept his stepping down and to know that his leadership, which has contributed so much to the success of the Institute, will no longer be actively there. But he has been guided by his inner convictions and we must accept and grant him the freedom of decision as he so often has granted this privilege to us.

We are here today, because it was Vikram Sarabhai's vision, persistence, and hard work that brought into being the Institute of Management ten years ago in the first place. He nurtured our potentialities and our timid dreams and made us what we are today. In gratitude for all he has left us, in gratitude for enriching our lives, in gratitude for the opportunities he opened for us, and for our children and for our children's children, the Board of Governors decided to name the Institute Library in his name. It will be called the Vikram Sarabhai Library. The Vikram Sarabhai Library is the heart of the campus, and is the tallest building in the campus.

Vikram Sarabhai was a great institution builder and an entrepreneur for social change. The most fundamental aspect of Vikram Sarabhai was the sense of trust and compassion for others.

From this basic quality of trust flowed his distinctive life style, and by this I mean a unique combination of the moral and the excellent.

Today we meet because the seventh graduating class of the post-graduate programme and the second graduating class of the programme for management in agriculture, are leaving the Institute to take their rightful places in the world of work and responsibility outside.

We hope that you too will manage your life style in the years to come with trust, compassion and distinction. Distinction is not synonymous with fame. Distinction is in doing the very best you can with the talents you have and the opportunities you can find. A life style of distinction will mean that you will leave some segment of society a little better than if you had not tried.

At the Institute we have helped, we think, in your intellectual growth, but we have not helped you become wise because we know not how. Wisdom cannot be passed from one having it to another not having it. Wisdom is not susceptible to teaching. Clearly it is a different thing from intellectual growth with which we have been concerned with at the Institute. You can be easily deceived that you are wise because you are academically proficient, articulate, and can reason well. Wisdom is not the opposite of intellectual growth, but intellectualism can interfere with wisdom if not kept in perspective.

Wisdom is the readiness to be flexible without being wavering and vacillating. Wisdom is the courage to stand alone without feeling alienated. Wisdom is to be committed without being dogmatic or possessive. Wisdom is the willingness and readiness to get hurt without hurting others. Wisdom is when Romeo said to Juliet: "The more I give you, the more I have."

So, we hope that you will make wise choices, choices that will lend themselves to a life style of distinction, to a life style that deserves your allegiance and commitment, to a life style where you have the courage to stand alone, to a life style where in losing yourself there is the promise of finding yourself.

God be with you.