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SPEECH OF DR. SAMUEL PAUL,
DIRECTOR, INDIAN INSTITUTE OF MANAGEMENT, AHMEDABAD
AT THE 8TH ANNUAL CONVOCATION ON
APRIL 21, 1973

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Dhar, Ladies and Gentlemen:

The annual convocation is the only formal occasion when the entire community of the Institute gathers together. May I thank all of you for your participation in this function. We are most grateful to Mr. Dhar for being present with us on this important occasion. Sir, I regard your participation in this function as a symbol of your concern for the growth of professional management and of your interest in this Institute. I have no doubt that the words you have spoken will be a source of inspiration to all of us and especially to the young men and women who are graduating from this Institute today.

This year, our Institute has entered the second decade of its existence. Sir, I am sure that you, as the person most concerned with looking ahead and planning for the country's development, would be interested in our future directions and strategies. However, before I proceed to outline these, it is but proper that I give you an overview of the base from which we propose to grow.

During the current year, we had a total of 277 students in our Post-Graduate Programme (PGP), Programme for Management in Agriculture

(PMA), and the Fellowship or Doctoral Programme (FBA), of whom 144 are graduating today. This is the largest number of students we ever had on the campus. A total of 330 job openings, the largest in our history, were announced for these 144 students. By now almost all of them have been placed with only about a dozen left who are yet to receive an offer. Summer placement for our first year students was completed well ahead of schedule. We conducted eight executive development programmes involving 462 participants of whom a third were from public sector organizations. Eight more programmes are to be offered in the next few weeks in different parts of the country. A total of 48 research projects and 44 consultancy projects were in progress during the current year. The faculty published 11 books and monographs and 120 articles in the past year. There was thus all round growth during the year under review.

Looking ahead, we feel, first of all, that our long term educational programmes, namely, the post-graduate programme and the doctoral or fellowship programme must be expanded substantially in order to cope with the growing demand for our graduates and the pressing need for teachers and researchers in management.

In the area of research where the focus is normally on individual effort, our endeavour will be to organise clusters of people to work on important national problems. To give some examples of interest to you,

Sir, groups have been formed to study problems relating to the public distribution of foodgrains, and rural industrialisation and employment. We also expect to intensify our efforts in the management of industrial relations. We do not look upon these as purely academic studies, but as efforts which, hopefully, would lead to answers useful to policy makers.

In the past, we have taken special interest in the management problems of certain sectors of the economy which we felt might not receive the attention they deserve from our general purpose programmes and research. Our Centre for Management in Agriculture and Banking Studies Project are examples of this approach. The pioneering work done by the Centre has been widely appreciated. In recognition of this contribution, the Gujarat State Fertilizers Company has this year established a Chair at the Institute. I am happy to announce that the Board of Governors have appointed Professor D.K. Desai, the first GSFC Professor of Management in Agriculture.

I suspect, however, that we have done very little work so far in the management of public systems or government systems where an enterprise focus is not so relevant. We are now planning to mount a major effort in this neglected, but socially relevant area. To start off, we propose to take up two fairly large projects on the management of family planning programmes. We look upon this effort as a special case of what I would call "programme management" in government which have

invested massive resources in a variety of programmes. My hope is that the experience gained from these projects will facilitate our moving into other areas of public systems management.

Yet another area of concern is international collaboration. The demand for collaboration from institutions in African and Asian countries has been increasing. We have made a beginning with Tanzania and plan to expand the scope of our international programmes, subject to our resource constraints.

In rounding off my comments on the future directions for the Institute, let me say that we are also aware of our responsibilities to the community and region in which we live. We shall discharge these responsibilities without compromising our role as a national Institute. I am happy to say that the new Centre for Regional Management Studies which has been established at the Institute with an initial endowment from the M.J. Public Charitable Trust will be our instrument for performing this role. The Centre expects to organise executive development programmes and to support research and related activities which will be of special interest to the Gujarat region.

Sir, these plans, these directions, reflect the concerns and aspirations of all of us at this Institute. We need more faculty resources, more space and buildings in order to accomplish them. We seek your counsel and support and of all other friends and well wishers in implementing these plans.

May I now return from my crystal ball gazing exercise to the present and turn my attention to the graduating class of 1973. I propose to share with you the story of an organization some aspects of which may be relevant to you at the threshold of your careers. Perhaps it will remind you of your cases and problem situations in class. However, this is not exactly a case of the same variety. For one thing, it is not only a presentation of facts, but also an interpretation. And for a change, there will be no class participation.

The story is that of an organization which is in the business of knowledge and its application. This organization began several years ago with a small band of professionals most of them in their twenties or early thirties. They were joined by others as the years went by, all of them working as a team for the common goal of creating a unique core of management education and research relevant to our country. They had, no doubt, their own internal problems and setbacks. But they bore their burdens and gave their best to the organization to which they belonged.

These men had often to stray from their academic pursuits and engage in what are often called non-academic or administrative activities for the sake of building their institution. On the whole they did their work cheerfully and took the routine chores in their stride.

Introduction of change is invariably a problem in any organization. At this institution, major changes were brought about through a process of internal discussion and negotiation. Change was seldom imposed from outside without the people concerned understanding and accepting the need for change.

The band of knowledge workers to whom I referred earlier were led by some unusual men. They were unique in their vision, concept of leadership and ability to motivate men. They led without dominating; they directed without dictating. The men who worked with them felt involved and were proud of their participation in an exciting institution building experience.

This is the story of your alma mater. As you step out of its protective wings into new and unfamiliar surroundings, take the lessons of this story with you. Today, you are the young band of workers who like our faculty ten years ago, are being called upon to give your best to the organizations which are awaiting you. Wherever you go, identify yourselves with the people with whom you have to work. Let them see you as part of them and not as birds of passage. Remember that to be able to influence and bring about change in an organization, you must first get accepted within. Never behave as a consultant from outside when you are in fact a member of the family. Remember that doing routine jobs and apparently unexciting chores which make little

use of your education is often a pre-requisite for making the best use of education at a later stage. There is no better way to learn about a new organization and to establish your credentials with your peers in a new environment.

We expect you to become leaders in the profession of management in the years to come. We would like to believe that you are well equipped to hold your own anywhere in terms of the knowledge, tools and sophisticated approaches relevant to management. But may I warn you that there is more to leadership than ideas and their sophistication? The best leaders I have known are men who excelled because of their commitment to tasks and the broader goals of society, hard work, humility and compassion and integrity. There are no substitutes for these qualities.

We now send you out into the world beyond our portals with our blessings and best wishes. Come back to us as often as you can. Our concern for your progress and problems will endure for ever. May your lives abound in excellence and shine brightly before men.