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FOURTEENTH ANNUAL CONVOCATION ADDRESS OF  
DR. V.S. VYAS, DIRECTOR IIMA

Mr. Chairman, Shri Rajadhyaksha, Ladies, and Gentlemen:

My colleagues and I are extremely happy to have you, Mr. Rajadhyaksha, with us this evening. We are grateful to you, Sir, for generously agreeing to deliver the convocation address.

Your advice to this graduating class has a ring of authenticity because you yourself have practised the art of management with a rare distinction and have at the same time jealously upheld the ethics of the profession. Your having first set an example of what you expect others to do, makes all that difference for credibility. I do hope that the Institute, for which you have such abundant goodwill, will pass on your message to the successive graduating classes.

By convention, we utilize this occasion to share with the friends of the Institute an account of the activities of the academic year which is coming to a close with this function and also to indicate our plans for the immediate future. Rendering this account in a coherent way is becoming progressively difficult as the scope and the variety of our activities are increasing and becoming more and more complex. I will attempt, therefore, to highlight only the major developments.

The main activities of the Institute — post-graduate teaching, management development, research, and consultancy — progressed on the lines which by now have been firmly laid down. You will be glad to know that the tempo of all these activities has further accelerated.

In our Post-Graduate Programme, we are continuing our efforts to make the incoming class more broad based. We have made special efforts to attract more scheduled castes and scheduled tribes candidates and candidates with agricultural background. As a result, the number of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes applicants rose to 379 this year as compared to 218 last year. Similarly, the number of candidates for the Specialization Package in Agriculture (SPA) increased from 216 to 410.

In this programme, we are making continuous effort to impart an education which is not only rigorous in its approach and comprehensive in its content but which also enables our students, who we hope will be the future leaders in business, industry, and other forms of organized efforts, to imbibe the social realities and get attuned to our own environment. As an example of a part of this effort, let me mention the Institute Lecture Series delivered by eminent speakers like Prof. Purshottam Mavalankar, M.P., Shri V. Krishnamoorthy, former Vice-President of the Asian Development Bank and, Justice V.R. Krishna Iyer of the Supreme Court. We were also fortunate to have Dr. David Hopper, a distinguished economist and Vice-President of the World Bank, to deliver the

Fourth Vikram Sarabhai Lecture.

Another aspect of our Post-Graduate Programme, which is attracting serious attention of the Faculty, is our placement activity. We had a record number of job offers this year. More than 1200 job offers have been received for a class of less than 200. We are happy for the recognition accorded to IIMA graduates by the organizations in the private and public sectors. Our effort now is to influence to the extent possible, and I am aware that the possibilities are not too many, our students to take up not only more remunerative but more challenging jobs. I do hope I will have some positive results to report to you when we meet next year.

The attempt in the management development programmes has been mainly to offer more and more long-term, skill-imparting programmes. Apart from the existing long-duration programmes like the 3-Tier Programme, Management Education Programme, and Computer Application Programme, new programmes in the area of project management, personnel management, and agricultural administration are in the offing.

On the research front, the past trend of encouraging researchers to do individual work on the one hand, and to sponsor group

research on the major management themes on the other has continued. Eight seed-money projects were sanctioned to the faculty who wanted to test new approaches. A large number of group projects particularly under the Centre for Management in Agriculture and the Public Systems Group have also materialized. Special attempt is being made to make the Fellow Programme in Management, which is our Doctoral programme, a programme to foster excellence in research and teaching. Several measures were taken during the year to strengthen this activity. We are also trying to place the FPM students in positions where their contribution may act as a multiplier.

These, then, have been our thrusts in the major activities of the Institute. Before reporting on the more general developments I am happy to inform you that the Board of Governors have invited Prof. V.L. Mote to the STC Chair on Marketing. This is a befitting recognition of Prof. Mote's contribution in the building of this Institute and his outstanding record in his area of specialization.

I would now like to highlight a few developments which have a bearing on all our programmes.

We realise that the management education programmes of the type we are offering have to be continuously enriched by the input of leaders in the profession. To achieve this objective, we have

been trying to have meaningful interaction with the policy makers and top executives in different fields. In this connection, I would like to mention a seminar on "Public Policy for Large Business" that we had. Top executives from the public and private sectors, jurists, academicians, and administrators participated in the seminar and discussed major issues in this area of public policy. Through such activities, we will try to serve in the years to come as a forum for discussion on the key issues in other areas of public intervention.

Another development on which I would like to draw your attention is the growing international dimension of our programmes. In a number of on-campus programmes, the international participation is increasing. During this year, the Institute's faculty worked in six countries of Asia and Africa to assist various institutions in strengthening their management training programmes in public, private, and co-operative sectors. These countries are Egypt, Indonesia, Philippines, Nigeria, South Korea, and Tanzania. In addition, more than a dozen faculty worked with the international organizations, principally with the United Nations agencies. From all these quarters, more demands than we can cope with are coming. In future, our major contribution in this area will be through the on-campus management development programmes, particularly through

our Centre for Development of Management Faculty to which the Chairman has already made a reference.

Finally, we are making serious efforts to understand more about management problems of the tiny, unorganized sector. The management sciences, at present, are not advanced enough to grapple either with the problems of very large and complex systems or with the problems of small and unorganized sectors. We have decided to make a systematic beginning in the latter area. A reflection of this resolve is found in our work with the handloom organizations, with the cooperatives of producers in agricultural sector, and with cottage and small industries in rural and urban areas. With the passage of time, we hope we will have better understanding about the functioning of the unorganized small sector than what one can claim to possess today.

While working in all these diverse fields we have never lost sight of the fact that our major contribution to the society will come from our training activities; and in training programmes we have always given, and will continue to give, a pride of place to the Post-Graduate Programme. This is a programme in which we have built comparative advantages, and we wish to retain them. The advantages which we enjoy are mainly because we have been able to

attract the cream of educated youth of this country into the programme. Hopefully, we have been able to train them with a rigour and comprehension which is difficult to surpass. Once trained, our PGPs have performed in a manner which belied the scepticism of those who were reluctant to give the formal training in management its due. What I have said about the PGP students also applies to IIM Fellows. The PGPs and FPMs are our real assets. They are the main source of our strength.

But we are living in a time when the sole test of success is not the scholastic achievements or acceptance by the employers; these are only partial test. There are other norms which have to be fulfilled. The norm which will be applied to you friends, who are graduating today, is the measure of your contribution to the social weal. One can always take an apologetic, if not skeptical, attitude and maintain that the measures which affect the common welfare are too overwhelming and complex to be of much meaning to guide the actions of an individual scholar, executive or entrepreneur. It may be maintained that individual action in this respect are of little consequence. It is not correct. Contribution to evolve a decent and humane society are made not only by those whose names flash in the newspapers, who address mammoth rallies, control large bureaus, or command large resources. Every one of us can make a distinct contribution.

Every one of us in our private and professional dealings can and does directly influence a number of lives. Many of you will be placed in positions where your action will make a material difference to the life of several others. You should never remain insensitive to this aspect of your career. While climbing on the steps of success, never forget the lowly and the hurt. Contribute to the joy in the humble homes and laughter of hope and happiness to the man at the foot of the ladder. You are fortunate because your skills can not only bring you handsome rewards but can also give you opportunities to contribute in the resolution of urgent social and economic problems. There is a rare confluence of social and private interests. Always try to enlarge this area of convergence. On this day of your graduation let me bless you in the words of the greatest poet of our land,

*"...and the world is full of it"*