

BHARATHIDASAN INSTITUTE OF MANAGEMENT
Tiruchirappalli

TWENTIETH CONVOCATION ADDRESS

By

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Dignitaries on and off the dais and friends,

I am indeed delighted to be in your midst this afternoon and deliver the 20th Convocation Address.

This is indeed a memorable day in your life and you have been looking forward for it with great expectations. This event is significant as it marks the happy ending of your dream to secure a qualification of your choice from an Institution known for its eminence and excellence.

Life is one long journey with many dreams, out of which some materilise and some don't. But at the end of one dream, begins another and this goes on endlessly.

At this juncture, we who come here to deliver the Convocation Address share with you some insights which would go to stimulate your thought process and help to take the right decision in life to shape your destiny.

Life offers many choices and success depends upon making the right choice in time and remaining committed to it, no matter how challenging it could be.

Often we mistake the career to be the goal in life. Choosing a career and making it a success cannot be the goal in life – to the contrary, it can at best be only a means to sub-serve a larger goal in life.

You are all students of Management and soon some of you will be out of the portals of this Institution and will be entering life with all your dreams. Some of you would like to qualify more; some would like to be professionals whereas some would like to be entrepreneurs. Irrespective of your choice all of you would aspire to be successful both in your career and life and I wish you all the very best.

Everything depends upon management, whether it be the home, the organization or for that matter the nation. When the right man is there in the right place, everything works - even if nothing else is there. The need of the hour are Managers with a vision and a will.

I know of a few outstanding personalities of the yester years of whom some did not even have much of a formal education - yet could accomplish great things. In the recent past, I had the rare honour to speak on the life, message and accomplishments of great Spiritual Masters, Political Leaders, Industrialists, Academicians, Scientists and Professionals who could guide the destiny of their times. To mention a few, Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsar, Swami Vivekananda, Ramana Maharishi and Sri Arabindo from the spiritual world. From the field of public life, I had the privilege to speak about Mahatma Gandhi, Mahakavi Bharathi, Rajaji, and Sri C.Subramaniam. Again from industry, I had the opportunity to speak about Sri T.V.Sundaram Iyengar and Karumuttu Thiagaraja Chettiar. I also spoke on the living legends like the great Sri Avinasilingam Ayya, Rajah Sir Annamalai Chettiar, Sri Kalki and Dr.M.S.Swaminathan.

The life and message of these great men from varied fields of activity have a lot for you to emulate and to meet the current challenges. One thing common among all of them was that nothing was impossible for them. They thought differently and acted courageously. They refused to toe the line of others - instead preferred to try out something of their own, no matter how risky it was.

Their Vision was not limited to their career and home but got extended to the community at large. They never grumbled about their helplessness nor did they give excuses for their failures but dared and ventured and emerged as pioneers and institution builders.

Their times were very different and difficult. They had to fight against heavy odds. They had nothing to bank on except their native intelligence. All they had was an irresistible passion to succeed and an indomitable will to accomplish. Coupled with integrity and humility they made it.

A fire in them drove them to identify a dream and to make the same their mission in life. They not only had a Vision but the will as well. Success never came to them over night. They had to struggle their way through and in the process they had to meet many failures but never lost hope. They learnt lessons out of their failure and bounced back with greater courage, zeal and enthusiasm and finally made it. They converted the challenges into opportunities and scaled greater heights when most others retraced and reconciled to fate. One thing unique about that generation was that they gave back what they got from the community and in the process emerged as outstanding leaders and role models enjoying the admiration and confidence of people around them.

Here, I wish to share a quotation of the Great Kirloskar:

“My dream is not to become an Industrialist but to industrialise India”

Now let me come to the present times.

Contrary to those people and their times, you are blessed with a more conducive environment to entertain bigger dreams. You have the required qualification, exposure and training to prove your mettle. Opportunities are very many and the avenues are open for you to explore. All you need to do is to take the good of the

past and relate it to the good of the present and make the future great. In other words, be a blend of tradition and modernity.

The Indian Economy is booming. Never before there was a time like this when things were so good. In the last Summit at Davos, the only slogan was "India Everywhere". The Nuclear Pact between India and the U.S. speaks of the fact that India is emerging as a global power to reckon with. The Prime Minister has said that "India's turn has come - Nobody can refuse her a place of pride among the Comity of Nations.

Great changes are in the offing. Enormous challenges have to be encountered and equally so infinite opportunities will come your way. We need to foresee change and change to remain relevant. Mere academic qualification will not get you the right placement of your choice much less the capability to go up in the ladder. In between the knowledge and education lies the cutting edge which is what in the past we called it as Wisdom and which is what now you call it as Soft Skills.

As one from the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, I have to draw your attention to the Vedic Vision of India which gives the Wisdom to see life in all its entirety and to make it meaningful, enjoyable and purposeful.

Get to know a little bit of that profound Vision and you will realize that man is the Crowning Glory of all creations. You have the capacity to discriminate between the real and the unreal and gain clarity to decide your destiny. Know yourself to be infinite and limitless. You are the maker of your own Destiny. You can be what you want to be. You have everything in you and there is nothing for you to source from outside. All you have to know is to know your true nature and manifest the same. Gain the supreme knowledge to liberate yourself and expand your horizon and entertain a big dream.

“Teach yourself; teach everyone his true nature and call upon the sleeping soul and see how it awakes – power will come, glory will come, goodness will come and all that is excellent will come when the sleeping soul is raised to self conscious activity”.

- Swami Vivekananda

Today you have to decide whether you want to stand out or get lost in a crowd. If you make the first choice, then you will gain the much required Clarity, Courage, Conviction, Confidence and Compassion to succeed in life and career. You are not a programmed being. You have the freedom and the competence to make the right choice.

“We reap what we sow; we are the makers of our own fate. The wind is blowing; those vessels whose sails are unfurled catch it, and go forward on their way, but those which have their sails furled do not catch the wind. Is that the fault of the wind?We make our own destiny.”

- Swami Vivekananda

To the leaders in Education, I have this to submit. It is high time we reorient and restructure Education to redefine its goal to mean Human Excellence and not just Academic Excellence as hitherto understood to be. In other words, the twin dimensions of the human personality are reason and emotion and they need to be balanced and for which man has to reach out to the third dimension of his personality. i.e., the supreme consciousness, or the spirit that facilitates the expansion of the human personality to develop a high sense of national pride and self esteem and to emerge as enlightened citizen with a strong passion for excellence. All management has to begin from within and expand to everything without.

“Education to be complete has to be humane; it should include not only the training of the intellect but the refinement of the heart and the disciplining of the soul”.

- Dr. S.Radhakrishnan

Every nation has a character of its own and management concepts have to be in conformity with the same. Bharathidasan Institute of Management should evolve a Business Management Model most suited for our conditions based on our value system. Blind copying of a model alien to our culture will do more harm than good. Western models structured for material advancement will not suit our ethos which has a spiritual orientation.

Peter Drucker admits with a rare frankness that although he has tried to see the new dimensions of modern management, he has not been able to deal either with the “moral horrors” or “spiritual agonies” arising out of modern management culture.

Excellence the ultimate in human pursuit is possible not by doing a job for the sake of it but for the love of it and in the process getting lost in it. Excellence never comes out of a conscious effort. This internal adjustment brings out the best in us to emerge not as just Businessmen or Professionals but as Leaders who could look beyond the Balance Sheet, the Shareholder and the Customer and develop the sensitivity to reach out to the miseries of our fellow beings.

India is blessed with everything. The only thing it lacks is leadership. There is a leader in every one of you. I call upon you to know him and come to terms with him and emerge as great leaders and help India emerge as a super power in the 21st century.

Jai Hind.