

**Speech of Prof A.H. Kalro, Director, IIMK, delivered at the
Fourth Annual Convocation - April 6, 2002.**

Padma Vibhushan Justice V.R.Krishna Iyer; Mr. K.P.P. Nambiar, Chairman, Board of Governors and Society of IIMK; Members of the Society and Board of Governors, IIMK; my faculty and other colleagues; parents and family members of the graduating students; Class of 2002; Class of 2003; distinguished invitees, members of the media, ladies and gentlemen,

At the very outset I would like to express our gratitude to Justice V.R. Krishna Iyer for having graced our 4th Annual Convocation as the Chief Guest today. Justice Krishna Iyer is a legal luminary known for having delivered several path breaking judgements in the Supreme Court of India as well as for his distinguished public service record. We are grateful to you Sir, for your appreciation of IIMK's progress, its contributions to society and the State, as well as your sagacious advice not only to the graduating class, but also to the larger IIMK community. We will always cherish your words of encouragement in our quest for excellence and our pursuit of relevance to the larger community which we seek to serve.

India has been consciously pursuing for the last 55 years its goals of economic growth, equity and social justice as well as human development. The path of development has been arduous and difficult. The move from a closed and highly regulated economy to a more open and liberalised one has not been without its share of controversy, criticism, pain and hope. There have been several achievements and much that we can be Justifiably proud of, but at the same time there are also several major areas of disappointment and concern. India today is the 11th largest economy in terms of its GNP and perhaps the 4th largest in terms of purchasing power parity. India has several technological achievements to its credit in various frontier areas. It is amongst the very few nations which can design and launch their own satellites, it has advanced nuclear programmes for peaceful purposes, it is a leader in missile technology, it is at the forefront of research in super conductivity, bio technology, bio and life sciences as well as genetic engineering. It is capable of building its own super computer and has an enormous

inventory of skills and intellect. It is the world's largest producer of milk, second largest producer of fruits and vegetables, third largest producer of food, the world's largest producer of tea, groundnut, and other agricultural commodities; the second largest producer of bicycles, third largest producer of PTA and has several billion dollar companies in the public and private sectors. It has a large and diversified industrial base. These achievements are indeed notable and of which every citizen can be proud, particularly as these have been achieved in the context of a multi-racial, multi-religious, and multi-linguistic society that India is and that too as a continuing democracy. The annual growth rate in GNP is approximately 6% and we have finally broken the 3.5% growth rate barrier popularly referred to as the Hindu Growth Rate by eminent Indian economists. However, because of the ever increasing and large population base which in 2001 crossed the one billion mark, the per capita income is just a little more than 400 dollars per year, which places India amongst the poorest nations in the world. One-third of our fellow citizens continue to live below the poverty line and half of the world's adult illiterates live in India. The highest incidence of blindness in the world prevails in India due to causes which can be easily rectified. Intolerance, dogmatism, dissension and corruption have become permanent ingredients of our social fabric.

How can we explain these paradoxical situations as they prevail in India ? I am reminded of a story by Frederick Forsyth and I quote from it: (This is a conversation between Joseph, a priest and the Lord)

" ' While I have been here I wandered by night through the Lower East Side district Of this city, but a few miles from this very cathedral. It is an appalling place, an inferno on earth. There is grinding poverty, squalor, filth stench and despair. Out of these come every vice and crime. Children are used as prostitutes, boys and girls..... 'Do I hear a hint of rebuke, Joseph, that I should allow these things?' 'I could not rebuke you, Lord'

'Oh, don't be too modest. It happens every day. 'But I cannot understand it'

'Let me try to explain. I never gave Man a guarantee of perfection, only the chance of it. That was the whole point of it all. Man has the choice and the chance but never the coercion. I have left his freedom to chose inviolate. Some choose to try to follow the path I pointed out,- most prefer their pleasures now, here. For many that means inflicting pain on others for their own amusement or enrichment. It is noted, of course, but is not to be changed. '

'But why, Lord, can Man not be a better creature?'

'Look, Joseph, if I reached down and touched him on the forehead and made him perfect, what would life on earth be like? No sadness, so no joy. No tears, no smiles. No pain, no relief. No bondage, no freedom. No failure, no triumph. No rudeness, no courtesy. No bigotry, no tolerance. No despair, no exultation. No sins and certainly no redemption. I would simply create a paradise of featureless bliss here on earth, which would make my heavenly kingdom somewhat redundant. And that is not the point of it all. So, Man must have his choice, until I call him home. '"

Clearly it is the choices that we have made which have lead us to where we are and it is the choices that we will make which will lead us to where we want to be. It is our firm belief as well as fond desire that the talent that passes through the portals of this institute will make its humble and positive contributions towards making better choices so that we can further improve upon our life as well as the meaning and purpose of our existence.

It is customary for the Director to use this occasion of the Annual Convocation to report on the activities of the Institute during the year. Despite various constraints that we face we continue our journey towards making IIMK an institution of lasting value.

This year has been momentous in many respects in the development and growth of our institute. During the year, after an elaborate and meticulous process, we entered in an arrangement with Hughes Escorts Communications Ltd. for delivering high quality management education through Interactive Distance Education mode. For this purpose HECL

will establish at their expense in the premises of IIMK a Studio, which will enable us to offer Interactive Distance Learning Programs in synchronous mode. To begin with IIMK will offer eMEP, Post Graduate Certificate Program in Management, a one-year comprehensive program for working professionals. Working adults are often not able to pursue higher education due to factors such as work pressure, family issues and lack of conveniently available high quality programs. Loss of earnings while pursuing a campus-based program is another big deterrent. As an individual grows in any organization and takes on bigger responsibilities, it becomes critical to have qualifications and skills that are commensurate with the role. This program is designed to improve the knowledge and skill base of working adults. The curriculum has been designed keeping the workplace in mind. The learning outcomes are managed so as to be very relevant to the current global business environment. This program will be available to students at select locations across the country.

In addition to offering the eMEP, IDL centre will also offer other Management Development Programs using this technology. The centre will also develop self-learning, computer based learning resources such CBTS, and WBT programs.

An agreement has been reached with the Government of Kerala to establish and incubate a Centre of Excellence devoted to building the competence and capabilities of SC/ST candidates, so that they are able

- i. to compete in the open market for admission in professional as well as higher learning institutions of national reputation;
 - ii. to compete in the open market for specialised categories of job opportunities;
- and
- iii. as research and development scholars, so as to enable them to capture the opportunities in research and development areas in the open market.

- iv. The Centre will also conduct suitable training programmes for capacity building of in-service SC/ST persons.

The entire project cost including provisions for hostel, food, stipend, training expenses etc. will be met by the Government of Kerala. This is an innovative and unique endeavour and we look forward to launch the first programme of this centre soon.

The Centre for the Development of Digital Libraries has been established at the institute so as to share our expertise in Digital Libraries with other institutions and enable them to set up their own Digital Libraries, which can then be networked. We have provided and are providing technical support through CDDL to some organizations including IITM-K, Coir Board, Geetam Engineering College, Visakhapatnam, CDS Trivandrum, TCS etc.

During the year we collaborated with REC Calicut, Mid Town Rotary Club of Calicut and Mr. Ramesh Haridas, CEO of Russian Hill Ventures of San Fransisco, to launch an all India business plan competition in the frontier fields of IT and Life Sciences. Prizes totaling Rs.2.25 Lakhs were sponsored by Mr. Ramesh Haridas to the best 4 entries out of 41 entries that we received. 10 consolation prizes of Rs.3,500/- were also awarded. Mr. Ramesh Haridas is a young entrepreneur who started an Internet Company from scratch and sold it for \$30 million within two years. This competition named "Frontier Business Plan Competition" is merely a precursor to our establishing a full-fledged Incubation Centre at IIMK to promote new ventures and to encourage the youth in setting these up.

Our campus construction work is also progressing. Contracts worth approximately Rs.30 Crores were awarded in the first phase and these are nearing completion by July-August 2002. There have unfortunately been slippages in execution. We now eagerly took forward to moving to our own premises as soon as possible. Recently we also awarded another Civil contract for phase II totaling approximately Rs.20 Crores. After completion of the second phase, the institute will be able to double its intake as well as its faculty and other personnel. The second phase will also provide limited housing for employees.

The institute continued to make progress in its Management Development Programs, sponsored and other research assignments, community projects and its flagship program the PGP. A notable feature of our Post Graduate Program is the compulsory non-credit social development project, the objectives of which are to orient students to the larger socio economic and political conditions in which organisations function, as well as to find reasonable solutions to complex social problems which affect large number

of citizens. Projects this year varied from solving problems like developing practical strategies for waste disposal in the local Kattangal Market, educating women on starting small scale units in Chatharnangalam Panchayat, counselling students for making informed career choices, advising former employees of Viscose Staple Fibre Unit at Mavoor to find out alternative employment opportunities by starting their own small enterprises, seeking remedial measures to overcome the problem of sand mining from the rivers in Kerala, consolidating a micro-credit scheme of the Association for Non-Traditional Employment for Women; designing a Management Information System for optimising operations at National Hospital, Kozhikode, streamlining the functioning of main OPD Department at the Calicut Medical College, management practices at some local NGOS; etc. The social development project at IIMK has now found its roots which is reflected in the requests being made by organisations based in Kozhikode District to our students to help them in their on-going developmental projects.

This commendable progress has been possible because of the dedicated and sincere work of all my colleagues as well as the able support and enlightened guidance provided by our Board of Governors. On behalf of all my colleagues I wish to place on record our sincere gratitude to each and every one of them as well as to the Ministry of Human Resources Development and the Government of Kerala who have invariably supported all our ventures in building an institution of excellence of which we can be proud. I would also like to use this opportunity to thank all those organisations which have recruited our graduating class for placement in their organisations and provided summer internship opportunities to the class of 2003, to organisations and individuals who participated in our MDPS, funded our research projects and gave us consulting assignments to work on. I wish to make special mention of GE Fund which for the second time instituted a scholarship of Rs.2.35 Lakhs to be given to a student for the two year period. A similar scholarship was instituted this year by HECL. We extend our gratitude to, them as well. I also thank the REC and CEDTI for providing the physical infrastructure to IIMK.

I now turn to say a few words to our graduating class. Management schools are not ivory towers. Each school seeks to evolve its own unique identity, which is a mix of two cultures, academic, and business. However, it is our firm belief that management schools have the responsibility to develop not only managers, but also entrepreneurs and leaders for tomorrow. The challenge we seek to address, and will continue to, is the education of graduates who have **the mind of the manager and the soul of the leader.**

Our graduating class has contributed its mite to institution building by their sincerity, emotional maturity, hard work and superior performance. I wish to take this opportunity to thank each and every one of them for their positive contribution to making IIMK a better place to study and work in. They have shown me considerable goodwill and affection which I will always cherish.

Each one of our graduating students, I am sure, has her or his own dreams. Dreams and ambitions drive us constantly to attain our goals and climb the ladder of success. It is sometimes said that means justify the ends. But always remember, in whatever courses of action that you pursue, you do not cross the limits of morality, and continue to be conscious of your duty to others who are affected by your actions. Even the mighty ocean is ever conscious of not crossing the limits of its shore. Its waves as they cross the seashores invariably pull back thereafter. When this does not happen, they only leave behind devastation, death and misery. It is said in the Valmiki Ramayana (Ayodhya Kand, Chapter 14, Sloka 6) as follows:

सरितां तु पतिः स्वल्पां मर्यादां सत्यमन्वितः ।
सत्यानुरोधात् समये वेलां स्वां नातिवर्तते ॥ ६ ॥

Saritam tu pati swalpaam

Maryadaam satyamanvitam

Satyanurodhaal samaye

Velam swaam nativartate

"The ocean will never go beyond the limits to the shore and will never violate the rules of morality. Behold, these moral rules are based upon the eternal truth. "

You must learn never to violate your professional and ethical codes of conduct, to be always guided by truth, tread the path of righteousness and to distinguish between right and wrong. You must learn to cultivate your inner conscience which will always remind you to stay within the boundaries and limits of moral behaviour and action. As the leaders of tomorrow you have a great responsibility to discharge as you guide the destinies of several of your fellow citizens. Leadership is about change. In your journey up the corporate ladder and in your pursuit of success, you will have to always challenge the status quo and prevailing paradigms. Through challenge only can emerge a new order of change. According to Michaiavelli, there is nothing more difficult to carry out nor more doubtful of success, nor more dangerous to handle, than to initiate the new order or things. To be able to do so, you will have to constantly cultivate those personal qualities which will enable you to succeed.

According to Bhagavat Gita Chapter XIII Sloka 7, it is only those who are not proud, are not deceitful, are non-violent, tolerant, abide by simplicity, who are pure, steadfast in their efforts and exercise self control who ultimately successfully manage change.

अमानित्वमदम्भित्वमहिंसा क्षान्तिरार्जवम् ।
आचार्योपासनं शौचं स्थैर्यमात्मविनिग्रहः ॥८॥

Amanitvam adambhitvam

Ahimsa ksaantiraarjavam

Acharyopasanam saucham

Sthairyam atmavinigraha

I once again thank Justice V.R. Krishna Iyer for having accepted our invitation to be the Chief Guest at this fourth Convocation of IIMK, and for his inspiring address. To my young friends who are graduating today, I wish you and your families all success, prosperity, happiness and contentment in your professional and personal lives.

May the Lord almighty bless you all.

Thank you.