INAUGURAL ADDRESS

by

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INDIRA GANDHI RESEARCH INSTITUTE (IGRI)
GOREGAON, BOMBAY
Mr. President, and Friends,

I am happy to be amidst a galaxy of management experts and above all amidst research scholars in management who have come from different parts of the country to participate in this National Management Research and Development Workshop organised by Association of Indian Management Schools in collaboration with the Canadian Consortium of Management Schools and Canadian International Development Agency. I have been very closely associated with research as a scholar and also as the Head of a research establishment namely: WRC/ICSSR in Bombay. I have therefore come here to share with you some ideas, thoughts and processes which may be useful to you for further musings when the deliberations are on and may be even when you get back to your respective work places.

Research in any field has to be goal oriented and must subserve the cause of society one way or another. Although text books adopt a didactic approach and distinguish between pure or basic research on the one hand and applied research on the other, I for one believe that even basic research must attempt to subserve the cause of society in one form or the other. In any case applied research—and Management is concerned with applied research—has to be goal oriented and subserve the cause of the end objectives espoused.

At a time that the world is experiencing radical change in politico-economic and socio-economic systems, the entire process of Management underlying the existing systems will be experiencing a rather traumatic change. And the Researchers in the field of Management, that is the audience here, have to address themselves to these changes—globalisation, deregulation, liberalisation, technology upgradation and the concomitant revolution in informatics. Even the presence of robotics has to be taken into account in the
process of evolving Management Systems in time to come. Our economy is experiencing these changes and the Winds of change are blowing quiet fast particularly after the formation of the Tenth Lok Sabha last year. In the last few months we have had dismantling of controls, delicensing, deregulation and the like. The Management Models that were evolved to grapple with the ‘Licence Raj System’ will have to give way to models that can capture, command and control a market-driven, market oriented and market friendly economic system. Therefore, Research in the field of Management has to address itself to augmenting, improvising and upgrading the speed and quality of information that flows to different decisional centers. Business has grown in size, complexity, diversity and geographical expanse. Business today is no longer an isolated exercise within the four walls of a company, city or country. The whole world is now viewed, and rightly so, as a global electronic village closely knit with a technology prowess that can transmit information across national frontiers with lightning speed. Everyone is in know of what someone else is likely to do or what is happening elsewhere. In the circumstances ‘Time’ is of essence in decision-making. Decisions, be it in business or any or organisation, have to be taken within decreasing reaction of time. Hence, Research in Management has to aid in the process which can improve our understanding of the interrelationships between different variables—different Management systems, tools, controls and techniques on the one hand and organisational effectiveness and efficiency on the other. Such findings must help us, that is to say the society at large, to reach new levels of socio economic equilibrium and explore virgin frontiers of Management. We have to convert our Resources into Results to compete globally and prosper locally. So, the missing link between the Resources that we have and the intended Results can be obtained by Management. In fact it is not untrue to say that management is the missing link between Resources and results between ‘States of Poverty’ and ‘States of

Affluence.’ Hence, Research Studies in Management must attempt to locate the different missing links between Resources and Results in:

(a) functional areas of management like marketing, production, finance, purchase, personnel, etc;
(b) different segments of the management process like planning, organising, staffing direction, execution, motivation and control.
(c) Human systems and structure.

The theme of all Research should be Search for Excellence a La Mckinsey’s Seven S model which includes Style, Staffing, Structure, Shared Values, Skills, Strategy and Systems. In this context I am proud to say that according to a news item in the Economic Times (9-6-1992) a research study on SICOM was undertaken by a team of Bajaj Institute Professionals and that the study has been accepted for implementation. This study was an exploration of SICOM through different approaches including the famous Seven S model and “suggests methods of restructuring the organisation in order to be a more effective player in the emerging financial market.” We are further proud to say that Maharashtra State is proposing to conduct a SWOT (Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities and Threats) analysis for the State through the authors of the ‘Seven S’ model—Mckinsey. A search for Excellence has been the hallmark of this industrial capital of India. Whatever research pursuits are undertaken and in whichever State it be it must strive towards excellence. Needless to add Research is intended to influence the quality of inputs of decision making through constant and continuous improvisations. The danger of safe mediocrity has to be avoided.

The winds of change blowing over the environment also concern all those concerned with educational institutions. We are in the service sector. Our services have to
be delivered in good time, in proper quantities and in specified and acceptable qualities. Above all the service has to be cost effective. These are the typical parameters with which the performance of a shop floor manager is assessed—production quantity, quality, cost and delivery schedules. We in the service sector engaged in teaching, research and educational administration cannot escape or lose sight of these obligations. In fact because the service sector has been lax the end users are being protected through legislation. In fact recently some cases have indicated that all activities of educational institutions could be brought within the fold of The Consumer Protection Act. Public funds are involved in research. Research cannot be an end in itself to meet the whims and fancies of the Researcher.

It is meant to be delivered to the end user that is society at large which expects that its wealth producing resources will augment and replicate itself through improvised management methods suggested by research findings. Thus research should facilitate the process of improvised decision making in different organisations functioning in various sectors of the economy.

I come to another important point which is often neglected. And at least Researchers in Management cannot afford to miss the bus on this count. Research output must be published. It must be available for public consumption and criticism. Only through continuous assessments can change be initiated in the appropriate direction. Research is therefore a powerful tool which can act as a catalyst of change, a pace setter for triggering of a continuous search for excellence in the overall wants satisfying process of man, and of evolving a society in which the maximum good of all prevail. Indeed the Directive Principles of State Policy in Part IV of the Constitution envisage such society and social order in which justice social, economic and political shall inform all the institutions of national life.

This brings me to yet another point. Research must transcend beyond materialistic values and yardsticks. Business cannot survive without a healthy economic state. Therefore, the popular yardsticks in terms of return on investments, market share, technological pre-eminence and other related yardsticks are important but research has to address itself to concepts that have roots in local soil and identify indigenous management models which can provide locally tenable and viable solutions. Mechanical transplantation of research models that have succeeded elsewhere may not be the right answer. At the same time we cannot shut our door. We have to open up to new things that are happening everyday in different corners of the World and imbibe and inculcate into the indigenous system the relevant portions through skillful shifting.

To quote Swami Vivekananda “India should continue to be what she is. How could India ever become like Japan, or any other nation for that matter of fact? In each nation, as is music, there is a main note, a cultural theme, upon which all others turn. Japanese have taken everything from the Europeans, but they remain Japanese all the same, and have not turned European; while in our country the terrible mania of becoming Westernised has seized upon us like a plague.”

The Indian ethos in Management has to come to the fore in Researches in Management so that while we seek to improve our equilibrium in terms of materialistic yardsticks, we do not lose sight of the real inner values needed for survival of societies and also for peace and happiness of man. We must seek an effective juxtaposition of materialistic attainments and the search for truth and self realisation so that there is a right balance between Western Materialism and Eastern Values. I am sure your deliberations will provide you with the necessary drill and grill, rigour and excellence and above all the right sort of attitudes so that you can
contribute more effectively in your respective work places.

In fact, Research is intended to inculcate qualities of discipline and as Dr. Radhakrishnan says “All branches of discipline have only one end.” “सर्वशस्त्र प्रयोजनम आत्मा दर्शनम Sarvasastra prayojanam atma darsanam (an insight into reality is the end of all kinds of discipline).”

Management Institute have a great challenge ahead—be it in the public sector or private sector. They must rise to the occasion and meet the challenges and undoubtedly Research is an important input which can facilitate the process of combating and capturing the challenges so that the commanding heights of the environment are governed by professional management concepts and practices drawing inspiration from researches done at home.

Last but not the least I hope the workshop will inculcate in you the most important qualities required of any researcher namely—Humility, Modesty, Cooperation and Concern for others.

In this context our young men and women should imbibe the correct philosophy of work expounded in the Bhagavad-Gita. The Gita presents work as the means of the abhyudaya, material and social welfare, of the worker and, through him, of his society, and of his reputation (nihsreyasa), spiritual growth and fulfilment. Gita also exhorts the worker to gradually rise to the level of viewing the concept of work as worship—the worship of the Divine who is the Manager of all Managers. Concepts of work and management are interlocked. It is mandatory to work, work being our modest contribution in the management of the affairs of the world.

While discussing work and management one recalls the immortal words of Shri Krishna which provide guidance as to the right type of attitude towards the work.

The right type of attitude is known as बुद्धि योग i.e. sum total of enlightened reasons for the betterment of mankind.

I quote : (Chapter II·49)

“दूरेषि हि वरं कर्म बुद्धियोगात् धानं जय बुद्धी शरण अन्वित्ता क्रमण: फलहेतवः; Dureṇa Hyavaram Karma bhuddhi-yogat dhananjaya; Buddhau saranan anvicha, Kripnah phalahetavah—”.

It means:

Work prompted by the profit motive and for mere selfish satisfaction is far inferior to the work done under the guidance of Enlightened Reasons. Therefore, resort to this बुद्धि योग. O अन्नु nuisance small minded and shortsighted are those who work only for selfish advantage.

All those concerned with Management including the administrators and above all Researchers should imbibe the spirit of Buddha yoga, if mankind is to realize its objective of human development and fulfilment.

I am sure that as the beginnings of the Management Movement were promising, the mirror of futurity holds out its magnificent currents subserving the betterment of mankind.

Thank you.