

GREETINGS

I am proud to be a participant on this auspicious occasion of the thirty-second Annual Convocation of this our first pioneering social science institution of the country. We owe the Tatas many of our material achievements and intellectual treasures in this country. I take this occasion to express, on all our behalf, how much the Natural Sciences, Fundamental Research and most of all the still neglected Social Science disciplines are indebted to them for their far-sighted sowing of these intellectual seeds in what was at that time rather hard and stony soil. I also congratulate the graduates of this great institution, whose learning and research in the Social Sciences are recognised in today's ceremony and constitute the tribute and reward to their companions and colleagues — the Chairman, Mr. J. J. Bhabha, the Director, Dr. M. S. Gore and the devoted staff of the Institute. This is also an occasion on which I want to convey to you, outgoing graduates, my warm good wishes in the demanding, frustrating but never ending task that the country calls you to. And it is on this call, the call of the Fifth Plan to the Social Sciences that wish to spend some time in wishing you adieu from the Tata Institute of Social Sciences and bon voyage as you set forth to apply what you have learnt in the India of tomorrow.

PLANNING FOR DEVELOPMENT

Our development model, summarised in the slogan, Garibi Hatao, is now established for all of us. We have come to this model through what I would describe as

a long, weary four stage process. The first stage, which goes back to my school days and those of my father's, was directed by the principle "Start from where you are and change as little as possible". This was the time when the art of social change was summarised in the infamous phrase, "A smile for a friend and sneer for the world is the way to govern mankind." There was no place for the social sciences in a society where the social forms of the Eternal East, it was felt, could only be understood in terms of their own symbolism and mystical unlogic, as against the positivistic concepts on which modern science rests. From there we moved on to the second stage where social change was promoted in bits and pices under the ad hoc rule "Do what you can because every little bit helps." This seemed to be the only way for a society which was officially described as being pervaded by "the placid contentment of the masses." Behind this characterisation was the Western model of unilinear development, to which the peoples of India had failed to conform. And so the seeds of Western social science began to be implanted in our soil with alien builders performing for our peaceful but ailing society little bits and pieces of analysis that were thought to help—a Vincent Smith's History of India, a Vera Anstey's Economic Conditions of India, a Henry Maine's The Indian Village Community. We then moved on to the third stage, the revolutionary, fast moving, nation shaking and welding stage of the thirties and forties under the slogan "Change everything all at once". Once we became conscious of traditionalism and its

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parasitral overlay of colonialism and began glimpsing at the power of science to examine and expose our social realities with a view to remaking rather than adjusting to them, once we saw the link between imperialism and our falling per capita income, falling per capita consumption and the periodic famines culminating in the 1942 Bengal famine, low life expectancy, growing illiteracy and erosion of our humanistic values and classical cultures, the political, economic and social revolution of the freedom struggle, with its massive attack, simultaneously on all fronts, was bound to happen. That was the time when the first Twenty Year Plan for the industrialisation of the country was formulated here in this city and also the time when Kumarapp's social instincts and genius were harnessed in founding this historical Institute. The time trends against which we came up, however, led to the fourth stage, where we are now building the development model on the principle "Identify and manipulate the key variables."

OUR DEVELOPMENT MODEL

In building this model, we have defined for ourselves today, four key variables — growth, social justice, stability and self reliance. If I were to describe the Fifth Plan model based on these variables in simple terms it will be something like this. Putting together the information from the Census and the National Sample Survey, we know that 40 per cent of the 438 millions living in our rural countryside and 60 per cent of the 108 millions living in our urban agglomerations are living at or below the Indian poverty line. I define the poverty line as the consumption of 2,200 calories per person per day or the spending of 50 paise per person per day in the rural areas or 72 paise per person per day

in the urban areas. Our four key variables mean getting this group of 50 per cent poor to increase their calorie consumption from 1,000-1,500 to 2,250 and to increase their spending on food, clothing and housing to 50 and 72 paise per person per day at constant prices and increasing that spending annually by 10 per cent, so that by the end of the Sixth Plan period, twelve years from now, they are able to spend double of what they would be spending at the poverty line. The development plan which follows involves dismantling the present distribution system which caters solely to us, members of the middle and upper income groups and building a new kind of mass distribution net work serving our villages, hamlets, and city slums through which wage goods — rice/wheat, cloth, kerosene, dhal, sugar, edible oil etc. — are made available to the poor sector. It also means a new programme of protective protein enriched foods for our 14.5 crores of pre-school children and lactating mothers, protected water supply to the 60,000 villages who have no such supply, rural housing with basic amenities and an educational programme which will give every one basic skills and remove illiteracy. This minimum supply programme will require a production and infrastructural system which can provide employment to the 14 million currently unemployed and the 1,20,000 entering our labour force every week. And back of it all, it will mean extending our agricultural technology to the 80 per cent of our marginal, small, drought exposed, dry-farmers, reordering our production priorities to produce massively the wage goods referred to earlier, (which also require little or no imported machinery, foreign raw material and imported know-how and so can contribute to our policy objective of self reliance) and capacity production

of our heavy and basic industries. The savings drive and price policy will follow as a function of the strategy. Finally this production and distribution model requires replacement of the current centres of feudal and financial powers by wide popular participation in all areas of decision making.

GAPS IN THE MODEL

Such is the Fifth Plan Model that is emerging and calling for action from all of us in the country, Government, legislators, business and labour leaders, the agrarian and academic community—What is the specific call to you social scientists graduating today? I will start with the simpler tasks that will be facing you and proceed from there to those that are more difficult and complex.

Involvement in Planning: First the basic lesson that you have learnt here will have to be applied. The social sciences are not simply the producer of high level man power—they are that also—but are an integral part of the development model. Social Scientists are not only needed to execute the projects and programmes in the Plan, they have to make the Plan. You are not only plan executors, you are plan makers, because a basic prerequisite of social awareness which is the basis of all planning is the correct diagnosis of the historical situation. You are equipped with the repertory of convictions and aspirations of the people with which you can now help plan the breaking down of our traditionalism and the building in of faith in science to remake society.

The Rationalisation Function: A second task facing you, the social scientists, is to examine carefully this facile assumption of modernisation on which our development model rests. The modernisation

premise in our planning is that traditionalism is passing or has passed; that we are no longer a people satisfied with ourselves, our beliefs and our institutions. It also assumes the replacement of such traditionalism by a growing faith in reason to perceive reality, to change, adapt and mould it for our ends. This modernisation premise may be true. I do not know what I do know is that we have growing primary and secondary data — no doubt defective and varyingly incomplete — but data which are consciously and scientifically collected on everything except on this crucial modernisation premise. We collect and process regularly data on population, morbidity and mortality, family planning acceptors and mix, crop forecasts, irrigation acreage, family budgets, poverty indices and deciles, urban housing, literacy and schooling etc. But there are important areas of social life of which we know nothing. What is the role expectation of the small farmer, the landless labourer or the Harijan living in the segregated part of our villages? What do the religious leaders in our various communities believe, teach and preach about the role of reason and science in daily life? How does the average parent decide about the schooling, marriage and employment of the son or daughter? What do we know of the sense of frustration and alienation which is spreading through our young people, particularly the students in high schools, colleges and universities leading to gheraos, strikes, violence and murder? Our development model is an abstraction to the extent that we lack data on its basic assumption. The social scientist has to fill in this serious gap, as part of the most visible and insistent rationalisation part of his vocation, the discovery of new social facts or new interpretations of known social phenomena.

Popularisation Function: The third task which follows from this rationalisation function is fraught with difficulties and dangers. It will involve delving into facts which are even hidden from Prime Minister (which led one of them to inform the press somewhat laconically as he was planning to visit a neighbouring country that he had ordered the army to throw the enemy out of the country). It may require discovery of the facts which explain the refusal of our political parties to see the nexus between our run-away population and our socio-economic stagnation and increasing poverty. It will call for a factual study of the social, cultural and moral make-up of those living below the poverty line. It will demand an analysis of the complex factors which have led to our stagnant, neglected yet over-exploited rural biosphere, along with the new populations and environmental imbalances induced by our helter-skelter industrialization and manufacturing and agricultural technologies. Such a gap-filling task will necessarily call upon the social scientists to spread their discoveries among the people, as you in this Institute have done in publishing the monumental work — *Field Studies in the Sociology of Indian Education*. We talk of planning from below, of peoples' participation in the planning and execution process. But this requires that people know all the facts. The present policy of selective secrecy that we practise in our centralised technocratic planning system only divorces the universe of ends from the universe of means. The gap between our political pledges and plan targets and our technocratic programmes and executive procedures widens daily. Social Sciences abhor all forms of selective secrecy. Hence you, the social scientists, must engage in the explanation

and exposure of problems which are hidden or passed over in silence.

In this task of rationalisation and popularisation, qualitative social science research is as important as the pursuit of quantified methodology, because such research is aimed not only at our empirical objectives but even more at our political and ethical universe of values (to which I shall presently refer), not only at our quantifiable results but more importantly at our choice of finalities and goals.

Integration Function : Fourth, you the social scientists are equipped with the only means of integrating the development process, which necessarily has to be broken into phases. These phases are the setting of objectives, the formulation of strategy, the elaboration of programmes and the detailing of projects through the instrumentalities of research and analysis, consultancy and policy formation, formulation of schemes and execution of field projects. In such phased development planning, there is need for a two-fold process of integration. The first is to integrate the planning phases and instrumentalities into a meaningful system, which with the Systems Approach and its sub-system, the Planning-Programming-Budgetting System with which the social scientists is equipped, can be fairly easily accomplished. The second integration is more complex and fateful in its consequences. All development models, all empirical planning begin, as we have seen, with a statement of objectives, which in our case today is growth, social justice, stability and self-reliance. Such a statement of objectives is the starting point of any Systems Approach and represents one universe for the social scientist — the universe of verifiable benefits. But this empirical universe must be derived from two other universes — the

political and the ethical. Our political universe has two goals — the security of our country from external aggression and internal peace through national integration, which are spelt out in the doctrine of Panch Sheel — peaceful settlement of disputes, respect for national sovereignty, non-interference, reciprocity and peaceful cooperation. Our ethical universe is the system of values spelt out in our constitution, "Justice, social, economic and political, liberty of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship, Equality of status and of opportunity and Fraternity, assuring the dignity of the individual and the unity of the nation." Behind these values are our religious, moral and philosophical concepts of truth, tolerance, charity and non-violence. The integration task of the social scientist is immensely complicated. The empirical objectives of growth, social justice, stability and self-reliance are being confronted by stagnation, social injustice, instability and neo-colonialism. The political goals of external security and national integration are facing continuing external insecurity and national disintegration. The ethical values of truth, tolerance charity and non-violence are overridden with growing corruption, casteism, communalism and violence. Even more, while the universe of empirical objectives are quantifiable and verifiable in terms of benefits and results, the universe of political goals and that of ethical values from which the empirical objectives are derived are not. It is the heart breaking but imperative task of the social sciences to analyse, dissect, synthesize and propose lines of action that will reconcile the apparently irreconcilable at each of these levels of discourse. Even more, the social scientists possess the tools that can ensure the integration of the three universes, so that our plan objectives flow from the political ends of the country, and

both derive ultimately from the ethical universe.

THE CONTINUING PROCESS OF LEARNING

For these tasks, facing you, as you leave this your alma mater, you have of course continually to learn and learn how to learn. Today marks only a stage, albeit an important stage, in your lives, in this never ending process of learning how, where and what to learn. The scientific work that you have trained yourselves in, has been linked to a given social situation, to a particular moment in our history. That situation is fugitive. This moment is passing. What remains is your grounding in what has come to be called the nomothetic disciplines, the law seeking sciences, the sciences which call you all your life to identify laws and to be motivated by the ideal of learning, as objective, assured, and independent of human opinions, attitudes and situations, as that which characterises physics, chemistry or mathematics. And as part of this life-long learning imperative is the corollary of inter-disciplinary co-operation which beckons to you, to continue the multidisciplinary research and team work that you have learnt here. Research demands specialisation, but life is not divided into sociology, anthropology or economics, into natural sciences, life sciences and earth sciences. Our society presents us with situations which demand inter-disciplinary cooperation. We have learnt within each discipline, the need for this cooperation — the need to use the hypothesis of biology, the methods of mathematics and the findings of psychology, geography and anthropology to analyse any socio-economic phenomenon. This multidimensional composition of social facts has of course always existed. But science and technology are creating daily entirely new conditions of life for

us, and the development of media of expression and communication have introduced new social complexes — complexes which can only be apprehended and analysed by multidisciplinary team work. And it is with this rich equipment that you, social scientists, can and must join the national battle of the war against poverty — poverty and its accompaniments of ignorance, stagnation, humiliation, injustice and exploitation. And at this point our social science research becomes meaningful social action: the pursuit of truth becomes tested in the crucible of application. That I know is the supreme joy and vocation of the social scientist, similar to that of our forefathers to whom to work was to pray, to us, to know is to act. That is true science, real social science — where action is the fateful and fruitful dialogue between the human mind and human reality.

SOCIAL SCIENCES' CALL TO THE NATION

And so I believe that the time is now over-due for a clearer and more explicit recognition by the Government, the world of business and society in this Country, of the role of social sciences and social scientists in national development. That recognition has started with the founding four

years ago of the Indian Council of Social Science Research of which your Director is the distinguished Chairman. The Council is presently engaged in a status study of social science research in the Country, while at the same time promoting in every way oriented and developmental research. Now we must go further. I call upon the Government and society for the specific recognition of the role of the Social Science in development planning and more particularly for the mobilisation of this scarce resource in the preparation of the Fifth Five Year Plan. This should be done by asking the Council to perform the same kind of mobilising task as is being done by the National Committee for Science and Technology. Whether this be done by entrusting the Council with the task or by attaching social science expertise to the major sectors of the planning process is secondary. What I am calling for is the clear recognition and full use of the social scientists of the Country (not only for its economists and statisticians) in the high stakes which our development model represents. And it is in that setting, that I convey once more to you, the outgoing-graduates of the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, all good wishes in the irreversible tasks that lie ahead of you.