

**Item No.56.5      Address by the Vice President of India and the  
President of the Institute.**

*Shri Mohammad Hamid Ansari:* Shri T.N. Chaturvedi Ji, dignitaries on the dais, members of the IIPA and friends. I have always believed, since the days when I was a student and occasionally passed by this famous structure, Indian Institute of Public Administration, it was my belief that its Patron-in-Chief should be the Prime Minister of the day. I suppose it was right at the beginning. That was Pandit Ji's vision. It did not happen or did not continue long enough but I do think that public administration is so critical a matter for any society that those who are effectively at the apex of the system of administration should,

with some frequency, interact both with the theoretical and the practical aspects of public administration. Well, I think we all know that certain types of interaction is continuously taking place and yet it is more on the practical plane rather than the theoretical plane. But the whole purpose of a body like this, is to bring purposively together those who teach, those who research public administration and those who practice public administration, to interact and benefit from each other. That point cannot be over-emphasised because what is public administration? Public administration is, I think, an instrumentality of governance and perhaps the most important instrumentality of governance, and any society, ancient or modern, has not been able to function properly without proper governance which means that somewhere in the background there was good public administration. We can go back and read the edicts of Ashoka, we can read the pronouncements of kings and emperors, they have all emphasized one simple point: the principal job of the ruler or the representatives of the ruler is to dispense justice to the public. This is what the essence of public administration is. Now, dispensation of justice was somewhat simpler in the earlier age when things were less complicated. We have moved from the twentieth century to the twenty-first century and the complexities of daily life and, therefore, of daily administration, are acquiring new dimensions. One aspect of it is clearly understood and is being given enormous importance. I refer to corporate governance. Business schools, conferences, seminar, leaders of industry, they all focus on corporate governance, and yet in the totality of things, corporate governance is one aspect of the entire compendium of governance in our society. So, I hope we are not drifting towards a stage when there would be too evident a conflict between what is supposed to be the basic norms of corporate governance which corporate bodies, principally in the private sector, would enforce, and public governance which would go by default because, that would not be a happy day for our society as a whole.

There is one other point. Times have changed. Public expectations have gone up. Democracy has deepened. It has reached the grass-root level. So, what was accepted in the era of *mie-baap raj* is no longer accepted by the public, and anyone involved in public administration, who ignores this, is fishing for trouble, sooner rather than later.

My intention is not to paint a doomsday scenario because only yesterday I was in deep south, near Madurai, and I came across a young Collector who has probably put in six years of work, and who showed

me a remarkable initiative that he had taken, using all the modern assets of technology to deliver something which is absolutely essential for the population there, which is, water. Now, that is one example and I am absolutely certain that across the length and breadth of this country of a billion people, there must be thousands of such examples. What we need to do is to locate the good examples, bring them out, analyse them, popularize them, honour the people who have taken the initiative, so that the best examples become role models for everyone else to follow. I think this is something in which a body like the Indian Institute of Public Administration can play a very important role. I cannot suggest the methodology; there are wiser heads here in this audience who would know how to do it. But my one simple request to this audience is that public expectations have gone up, good governance is not possible without good public administration, and it is for people like yourselves to be able to suggest, both to the public and to the branches of the Government, how to go about it and how to achieve the best results.

I wish the Institute all success in its work and I am sure it would go from strength to strength. It is an important body, it is an essential body and it is a body which cannot afford to rest on its past laurels, but must year-by-year demonstrate its relevance. Thank you very much.