

JBIMS Diaries: Autonomy and Leadership

On the indelible Wednesday evening of 21st December, 2016, the Venetian Gothic architecture of the Mumbai University campus at Fort witnessed numerous ovations for nearly two continuous hours. Esteemed and illustrious stalwarts of the industry, distinguished alumni & elite faculty of Jamnalal Bajaj Institute of Management Studies (JBIMS), and students of JBIMS along with those of other respectable b-schools had gathered in the convocation hall of Mumbai University to celebrate two memorable occasions - autonomy of JBIMS and launch of its Leaders Speak series, with the first lecture by Dr. Nitin Nohria, Dean of the Harvard Business School.

Another important occasion for the students of JBIMS was their first formal interaction with the institute's newly formed Board of Management. Acclaimed board members such as Mr. Ajay Piramal (Chairman), Mr. Uday Kotak, Ms. Chanda Kochhar, Mr. Noshir Kaka and Mr. Niraj Bajaj graced the event by their presence. The event was covered by Madison World, with its founder, Chairman and Managing Director, Mr. Sam Balsara enriching the evening with his involvement.



(From Left) Ajay Piramal, Chanda Kochhar, Sanjay Deshmukh, Niraj Bajaj and Uday Kotak

The evening began with Mr. Ajay Piramal thanking Dr. Sanjay Deshmukh, Vice Chancellor of Mumbai University, for his contribution towards the successful adoption of autonomy by JBIMS, followed by Dr. Deshmukh's enlightening speech on what makes a good leader and how, in his own words, "Simplicity is the strength of a good idea". Later, Mr. Noshir Kaka took stage to share the board's vision for the institute. His comments on the extraordinary plans for the institute captivated the students' attention and triggered another round of roaring applause.



Dr. Nohria addressing the students

Dr. Chavan greeting Dr. Nohria

The event progressed towards the highlight of the evening - Dr. Nohria's lecture on "Building Leaders: Knowing, Doing and Being". Dr. Nohria instantly spread his aura when he took hold of the audience with his opening statement on leadership. With all eager eyes on him, Dr. Nohria went ahead to elaborate the three aspects of good leadership - knowing, doing and being. Amongst the content of the enlightening and paradoxically simple view of the facets of leadership, the audience found itself intrigued by Dr. Nohria's take on contextual intelligence, humility vs self-confidence, pragmatic vs creative thinking and other such illuminating conceptions. Dr. Nohria focused on execution of ideas with his remark, "Ideas are cheap; executing ideas is more important". Referring to Harvard Business School's unique and extensively successful case study based method of imparting education, he emphasized on the need for simulated situations to be used as an approach towards designing a curriculum for any business school. He articulated the importance of responsibility by saying, "Leaders are people who act like owners". Dr. Nohria ended his lecture with the same level of effectiveness with which he began it by asking all students to focus more on leveraging their strengths rather than eliminating their weaknesses.

The evening ended with Mr. Niraj Bajaj delivering a vote of thanks to Dr. Nohria and other guests present at the venue.

Evenings like the one from 21st December, 2016, do not stay in students' minds as just events. With the aura emanating from the presence of personalities which they idolize, students carry these evenings with them as unforgettable memories and ardently consuming sources of motivation.