

Good Evening everyone! Mr. Karnik, Director Pankaj Jalote, Arun from the Board of Governors, Students, Faculty, Administration and Parents, I am really privileged and delighted to be here with you all today. When Kiran Karnik asked me a few weeks ago, He asked me perhaps for the fourth or fifth time to come to the Institute so I had no heart to say no, I said yes and after I said yes he said *"Oh, I think you should know that our Chief Guest was supposed to be Dr. Kalam but it's very unfortunate, what has happened"* and then he said you are going to come in his place and I nearly ran away, I mean I didn't even dare stand in place of him but then I truly am privileged for that reason and many more reasons to be here with you all today and hopefully share a little bit of my experience in the industry and my personal career path as well and hopefully some lessons which will be useful to you young students.

So I spent a little bit of time before coming down here with the Faculty and Kiran and Pankaj before this and it's really impressive what this Institute has achieved. I think it's very commendable, I heard about the kind of work that is being done here, the kind of jobs that all of you have got into and I think this Institute certainly with its focus on research and education is destined to go a long long way. Let me try and answer the question that one of the faculty members asked me about, what do I think is the future? I have no crystal ball and of course my first reaction is to say, Let's all wait and see, I know as much as you do and perhaps the faculty here knows more than I do for sure. But my view is very simple, if I take a simplistic view, we are seeing all around us an explosion of data. Look at your smartphones and how much you store on this; the messaging that goes on, from where the data is available to us on various computing devices and everything is just a massive explosion of data. At a personal level, at a corporate level at the national level and that really requires immense computing powers. The question I say is forget everything else about where technology is going. Basically if you look at the world around us, we need a massive increase in computing powers and processing and storage and the data management of it and at the end of the day we are storing all of this what do we do with it? So a lot of it is going to be at the end of the day data driven and everything that is needed to support it in terms of the computing power I would say very simplistically that is what we need to do. Data not just in terms of words and characters and numbers but data also in terms of images and all of that. So at a very simplistic level that is what I would say we are headed for.

Second point, that I would say, stay more practical. As a nation, we have built a reputation as a very very strong IT services. You look at the companies around us, India today is recognized as a destination, nobody disputes the fact that one offshoring outsourcing destination in the world is India. We successfully compete with the best of best. And then we say, if you want to get IT services done, India is the place. We have the talent, we have the scale, we have the absolute service, we have everything that is going well for us, our knowledge of English, it's perfect. But as I said in that whole process the thing we have forgotten is development of intellectual property, development of product and development of platforms which will really take us beyond. It's not a question of money, money of course is more on the products vs the services but it's more than money. I think it's really about what is the intellectual capital of this country and that really where, I believe, the next generation of development, I hope all of you are going to focus on. For me there is a very simple analogy that I draw here, when you think of engineering, you say German engineering, you don't question it. A German engineered car, whether it's right or wrong is a separate question but you would say you want to look at German engineering. It's got a

brand, It's got an association which is like superior quality that you would readily go after. I think, if I have to build a vision of what is technology and what is Computer Science and IT mean to this country I would say, we should look at the day when the people will say it is Indian Software, Indian Technology, just like German engineering. Then it's not about the services that are delivered in India, It is a product, we own the design, Indian designed product, that's what we should aim for and I think that requires intense focus on product development. It requires a different level of entrepreneurship in this country. It requires a different level of focus on technology and from everything that I have heard today from Mr. Jalote I think this Institute is absolutely on the right track and I hope all of you here will make the right choice and really take India at the right place. When I started my career I think I was the only, I would say from my batch of classmates and also who joined the IT company first, I was perhaps less than 5% of the people stayed in India, less than 5%, this is what I'm talking about 30 years ago and I was considered an absolute fool in the group for having stayed back here. I look back now 30 years and say I am glad I made the choice to be here and I hope you all make the right choice. I think it's important to have international experience, I have worked outside India, I have worked in many different countries but at the end of the day this is home, this is where I belong and this is where I want to contribute to. My friends, India needs you. I feel very very strongly about it. At the end of the day we can all sit back and be armchair critics and say this is not being done in India, it is not possible, the infrastructure is not good, this is not good but all of us have a duty to do that. We are the second most populous nation on this world but if you look at it, we supposedly have all the resources, more resources, more human capital than most other nations would have but the question is you look at education in this country, you look at the literacy levels, you look at our ability to find teachers, you look at our classrooms, we have a big paucity of that and that I believe is where technology comes in and that is where all of you come in, but I'm not asking you to go and teach rural India but I'm asking all of you to look at how can you apply everything you have learnt to create products, to create services, to create something that we can really apply not just in India but anywhere. You can choose to live anywhere else in the world but at the end of the day it's about really contributing in a meaningful way and creating something that helps the nation and helps society.

There's another aspect of it where you can really help. I just first want to focus on where you can contribute in terms of what the industry needs. So one is what the nation needs and what you can look at. The second part is what the industry needs. I have to be careful with how I say this. At the end of the day it is not about technology, I hate to say that to a class of Computer Scientists, but at the end of the day it's not about the technology, it's about the application of technology for the society, for a nation, for a company and that's what matters the most. You look at driverless cars, you look at connected cars, you look at smart energy systems, you look at anything else, it's all about how you apply technology to solve a business need and I find too often that people focus on, I like to play with the technology, ok my friend, you like to play with the technology but for what purpose? I will give you a story I've said a couple of times, it's one of my favorite examples about technology. I was talking to a company which uses coconuts as its raw material; they make oil, one of the world's largest procurer of coconuts, this company. They said to me, you know in Kerala, you have to climb up a tree, I'm sure you have seen this, to look at the coconuts, check them, see what's going on, are they ready to pluck before they drop down. They said the earlier generation, it was a profession. People are willing to do that. This

generation, no young kid wants to do it, kids don't want to follow that generation climbing up a coconut tree. So he said we have a serious problem and he asked me you think you can help me with technology. What use is what everything you all are doing if you can't help me solve this problem and later on, I don't know how many of you have the solution but I came across a start-up that I met about three months ago in Kerala and he told me he is exactly developing something using drones which is going to actually establish when these are ready, Drone is great, it will fly all around and take pictures, but at the end can we apply it to this country and what it needs and do something with it. That to me is application of technology. Very very simple problems, tremendous impact that you can make with technology. So let's move on, that's a little bit about what my expectations are in terms of, from an industry and where really you can help. I believe a lot of you will go into start-ups, the money is exciting, you can see all the funding pouring in, at the end of the day you have to make your choices around what really you want to do, all of that is exciting and you have a great future truly ahead of you. A little bit around personal lessons, what I have learnt from my career and in this industry, in the technology industry which I hope will be of use to you. First one, I would like to say is , you are here for the long haul. You have started working for six months now? You are just out of school. I have just completed 30 years at work and I feel like I just graduated from college. Besides that, life spans, work spans are all increasing, you guys will probably work 40 years, maybe more than that, and when you think about it you think that , "ok, somebody is offering me within one year of joining this company someone is offering me 40% more salary, do you think I should jump?" Ok, it's a good choice, of course, when you're young and you're starting it's an important choice you have to make and 40% more might pay the EMI for the coveted gadget that you want. But make the choices, think long term, make the choices based on long term. Sometimes you give up one or two years of doing something that may not sound exciting but I'll tell you, in the long term everything helps and I learnt this from a lady who's an icon, she was one of the first women CEOs in this country, at a time when, I think in the 50s or 60s, 60s perhaps, in a hardcore manufacturing organization, she was Leela Poonawala, who is the CEO of alfa laval, I assume you all have heard of Alfa Laval, and she told me she was the only woman on the shop floor and they tried everything to throw her out of it, everything. They finally told her, I think you should go maintain the gardens, housekeeping is the right job for you. She said, I felt miserable but I did that and for three years in a row, Alfa Laval won the award for the best managed and the most beautifully landscaped gardens in Pune. Good for her, she proved a point. She went back and she told me she had to go sell to Russia, in Russia, in Sweden and in another countries, it's a Swedish company. She said she went there in a saree in a very thin sweater and she said you cannot imagine the hardships I went through but I was not willing to give up. No matter what they do to me, I was determined to succeed and she told me how does it matter if I do housekeeping for two years, think 30 years my friend, 40 years, it doesn't matter. That's what I tell people, when some people tell me, you know the project that you have given me is not nice I'm going to quit the company, I say ok, please do, if you're in a rush, please do and I'm sure you will learn more somewhere else and you will build your career but at the end of the day if you are going to work 40 years, are you going to change your job every two years because you don't like the project, because you don't like something else. You have to think long term, and think about how are you going to build your career and what you are going to do with it and that's the best thing and I have gone through it personally, It's not just Poonawalla, I have gone through it personally, I have made absolutely unconventional choices, I quit one of the best companies in India and joined a very small one and again,

my friends, first of all they called me an idiot when I didn't want to move to the US with everybody else and later on when I quit a large company and joined an extremely small one, they again thought I was completely foolish but I can tell you every choice I have made, I've made it with some degree of understanding that it doesn't matter, you don't have to follow a conventional life, you don't have to follow a conventional career path. Do what you believe is right, do what you think you will enjoy, then you will succeed. So that's my first message in my learnings not just from my personal experience but also what I've seen from some of the very very successful people around me. Think long haul.

The second thing, I think about it and I get asked this question very very often by people and they say, when did you decide you want to become a CEO and how did you work towards it and I say, I never thought about it. I never never said I want to be a CEO. I probably said it one week before I became one. When the opportunity came and the boss said, here are the two possible roles, you can be CEO of India or you can do this, what do you want? And I said, yeah ok, I'll do this. I think at the end of the day it's all about pursuit of excellence. It's not about pursuit of a role, it's not about pursuit of a title; it's about pursuit of excellence. Take a piece of work, give it everything you've got, do it well and success will follow. For me, it's very simple. And perhaps I am wrong; I am not saying my view of the world is right, it just happens to be my view of the world that I am sharing that with you. I think that there are many others who say, you need to have an absolute clear vision 10 years down the line. I have no clue how the industry is going to change two years from now, what am I going to think about 10 years. All I can do is to say, look, I have this, this is today's opportunity, I am going to do it exceedingly well and I am fairly sure that when I complete it, the next one will be even better than what I am doing today. I hope you all agree with me on that. I'm sure you will get another chief guest who will come and say, plan your career, do that. You make the choice, I am not going to tell you what to do, I will only tell you what I did. That's the second part of it. To me it's not about a title, don't go for fancy titles, don't go for fancy designations, it is not important. Go for what you believe is the right thing to do and pursue it with all your heart and everything that you have got. The third one I have, which both the speakers before me alluded to is about learning, I don't know how many of you have heard this Sanskrit shloka, I will not dae say the shloka in Sanskrit but I will say it in English on what it means. It says, one fourth from the teacher, one fourth from your own intelligence, one fourth from the people around you, actually it says peers or students around you and one fourth from experience of life. And I think that's what it is. The learning only comes; what you've got so far is only one fourth and may be even less than that because some of you will study. The real part of it is you got 3/4th and more to do as you go along and especially in the technology industry. The day you stop learning you're dead. You can take it from me. I have seen too many people who say, I have become a general manager, I am managing a thousand people, I am running a project successfully, I know how to do it, I know how to keep the clients happy, I know how to deliver a project and I say so what, you cannot think of what's going to come in six months' time and how to move to it. Too many of our people in this country, the talent is stuck in the legacy technology area. I think it's the burning need right now in the industry in this country and everywhere else that you have to move faster so much that I believe; learning isn't about attending a class, it's about really paying attention to what's going on around you and saying look this is where I learn from; so remember that. You can google, you will find the shloka in Sanskrit, I think it's very very powerful for me, personally, to think about. The reality hits you hard, that's all the learning is all about. What you get from an

education, great education, great institute, I'm not in any way saying you haven't got what you needed but all I'm saying is, it's still only a fourth of what you can get, what you need to get in your life. Finally, I think it's the end of the day, it's my favorite saying that, it's not about money, it's not about position it's all about having a dream and living it. All I can say, my friends, is dare to dream and dare to live that dream. That's more important.

Best wishes to all of you. Hope you have a wonderful life and a wonderful career. Thank you.