

## **Address of the Chairman Dr Ashok Bhan at the 36<sup>th</sup> AGM of IIPA J&K Regional Branch on January 10, 2014**

Dear Members

Thank you for braving the chilly weather and attending the AGM in a spirit of camaraderie to put together our efforts to spread the message of good governance in the State and elsewhere. Our strength lies not only in our ability to organize training, workshops, memorial lectures and other programs but also in the regularity with which the family is able to meet year after year for the AGMs and every two years for the elections. This is a mark of our sound health and democratic credentials.

We have discussed the Agenda at length and provided useful inputs for future activities. These will receive the attention of the EC for implementation.

It has been a very eventful and pleasant journey for me as part of the IIPA fraternity. I and our team of dedicated office bearers over the years have enjoyed the confidence of the General Body. In all humility I express my gratitude to you all for showing faith in me and my colleagues' year after year now for 15 long years, a decade as Honorary Secretary and 5 years as the Chairman of this prestigious organisation. You have been equally magnanimous in understanding the need for transition to younger leadership and allowing Dr Bloeria and me to step down halfway through our current tenures so that the new leadership gets time to settle down and in the transition we continue to informally lend our helping hands for the success of the Regional Branch. I assure you that I will be only a call away for any service that the Regional Branch may require of me. I will enjoy with pride from sidelines every success that Branch or its Members achieve in years to come and I have no doubt that there will be many such occasions.

Though I became a Life Member of the IIPA in 1984 when participating in a training program at New Delhi, any meaningful induction in a managerial role was a mere accident. The sad and sudden passing away of our founder and mentor Shri Veeranna Aivalli had left a void not easy to fill. I accidentally landed in your midst not sure how to utilize the vast experience and resource that you all possessed for the growth of the Regional Branch and fulfilling its objectives. We have together with mentors like Shri J.A.Khan and Dr S.S.Bloeria been able to steer the ship to respectability. The loss of two much respected Members and valuable colleagues Shri Sati Sahni and Shri Ram Sahai

gave jolts but the inner health enabled us to withstand the absence of their towering persona.

Every good thing must end. What is gratifying is that we have a very experienced, hardworking and able team to take us forward. The young blood in the EC gives the satisfaction that the organisation is in safe hands for many years. I take this opportunity to thank the EC and AGM for accepting my suggestion to nominate Shri B.R.Sharma as the Chairman and Dr Pawan Kotwal as the Vice Chairman for the interim period of one year till elections are held in January 2016.

I welcome the new Chairman and the Vice Chairman and wish them success. As I said they have a dependable team led by Er J.B.S.Johar, a blend of experience, intellect and youth including some extremely active Office Bearers, Members of the Executive Committee and an active coordinator in Jatin. My best wishes to all of them. They have to take the Regional Branch to new heights of excellence.

As I take leave from Executive functions I would like to leave three thoughts for you to ponder as the Regional Branch continues its successful march forward:

First, we must continue our focus on capacity building for good governance and utilize our platform for a healthy debate and interaction between the practioners of Public Administration, academia and the civil society. Before any program is finalized we must ask ourselves if it fits into the broad objectives of the IIPA. Never ever should we allow a program under IIPA banner unless the Regional Branch has a substantial academic contribution to make to the event? Merely lending our name and facilities to others to perform is tempting, as it may add to the number of programs. But it will ultimately diminish our stature. We should ensure that every program organized is substantially a product of efforts of the Members and contributes positively to achieve the objectives of IIPA. The website must be used extensively to disseminate the content of deliberations. Developing of the Publication window into a first class web-journal will give us the required push. The academicians among our members will have to devote to this task.

Second, often murmurs are heard about commercializing our programs. Commercialization is the modern mantra and appears tempting but it can turn to be a Frankenstein difficult to control. True sometimes the need for more money is out of enthusiasm to organize more events. So far, we have refrained from accepting funds other than the annual grant received from the Government, rent for the hall utilized for academic activities or sponsorship when collaborating with Government institutions like the SIC, Tourism Department, Central University of Jammu or WWF, contributions from

elected representatives out of Constituency Development Funds and occasional help from J&K Police. Essentially funding has been entirely from the Government side with the exception of an odd advertisement for publishing a souvenir. The thumb rule has been that the Regional Branch has not accepted any donations or funding from private parties or charged participants for the training programs and IIPA members don't accept any remuneration and always work in an honorary capacity.

I would urge you not to depart from this line without an informed debate and evaluating the pros and cons. It is good to have more money but it is not easy to delineate when genuine need turns into greed. I often ask myself whether we have attained the class or stature of being sought after by the Universities, public sector, private sector or PSUs to organize training programs for them. We are at best moving towards such a stage. We must develop competency in some core areas so that we can give something more than what the Government run training institutions are able to provide. Till then my view is that the time and energy that we devote in the great cause of good governance must continue to be voluntary as well as honorary. I am sure no one will dispute that the society has been quite generous to each one of us, in service or those who have retired. It is a small return that we as members of the IIPA can make to the society. Meanwhile, I would suggest that we must continue to strictly observe probity and documentation while spending the public money. The Hony Treasurer will have to play a pro-active role in this.

Thirdly, the Regional Branch represents the entire State of Jammu and Kashmir though we don't have many members from Ladakh. The diversity of the state and accompanying challenges of Governance must reflect in the number and nature of programs that we organize. In the first 25 years of its existence I am sure more programs were held in Srinagar than in Jammu. For reasons beyond our control we have not been able to make much impact in the valley during the last few years. Willy-nilly the Regional Branch is sometimes being called the Jammu Regional Branch. There is need for reaching the dormant members and also launching a membership drive so that the newly acquired facilities in Srinagar are used to advantage. As the new Chairman and the Vice Chairman (Central) normally move with Darbar, I am sure the gap will be filled and we will have more activities in the valley too.

Ladies and Gentlemen, it has been a great privilege knowing you all and working with you as part of IIPA fraternity. I have learnt a lot in your association. Most of all the art of listening to the others' view point. For that I will ever remain grateful to you. Mercifully my ruthless approach to create and execute work, in close collaboration with you all, has

not diminished. If this ruthlessness caused irritation or upset any of you, I ask for forgiveness.

The Jammu and Kashmir Police I must single out for standing by the IIPA in every crisis and in our day to day programs. And the generous financial support from the GAD of the State Government has sustained us over the years. University of Jammu and its faculty has been our best partner in achieving our academic objectives. I thank Shri J.A.Khan and Dr S. S. Bloeria for their patronage. Grateful thanks to J&K Police, GAD, University of Jammu and my fellow Members for their unstinted support.

I extend my best wishes to you all for a happy New Year. Jai Hind.