

## First edition of DAKSHA: The Leadership Conclave 2022

Indian Institute of Management Tiruchirappalli conducted its first Leadership Conclave, Daksha, on 24 September, 2022. The conclave was focused on the theme “Resilience and Adaptation”. The event acted as a platform for eminent industry leaders to present their views and for the participants to learn and interact with them. Through various thought-provoking and insightful discussions during the event, the participants, students, and audience gained insights on how organizations anticipate, prepare for, respond and adapt to disruptions. This conclave was made possible with the help of the CII Young Indians (Yi), Title Sponsor: ICICI Bank, Associate Sponsor: VDart, and was Powered by SBI, PNB, Axis Bank, and Kotak Mahindra Bank. The event hosted 28 industry leaders as speakers in various panel discussions and round table discussions.

The day commenced with the inauguration ceremony. Dr. Pawan Kumar Singh, Director, IIM Tiruchirappalli, addressed the gathering by welcoming the Chief Guest, Mr. Sandeep Gupta, Executive Director, India Lead – Treasury/Chief Investment Office, J.P. Morgan Chase & Co., and all the Guest Speakers. He expressed his gratitude to the speakers and team that made this conclave possible. The Director touched upon the importance of naturally gaining knowledge and how we must dignify the essential responsibilities bestowed upon us as we climb to higher positions. He also added on the significance and future of Human Resources (HR) in any organization. He said that young managers need to be assertive without being arrogant. He concluded by saying that knowledge should be in a fluid state and not rigid so that a person can hear, learn, and be open to change.

The chief guest, Mr. Sandeep Gupta, delivered the keynote address. He set the theme of the day by speaking on Resilience and Adaptation. He defined resilience as the ability to handle stress and bounce back from calamity. Further, he elaborated on the two types of resilience: Individual and Organizational. Mr. Gupta then enlisted the attributes of resilient people and discussed the methods through which resilience can be built by everyone. He concluded by saying that when adversity stares down at you, there are two options: you can either get upset and be bitter, or be resilient to it.

The conclave began with two Panel Discussions which empaneled speakers across industries and organizations like Berkadia, Carnival Group, CUMI India, Indigo. The first discussion revolved around the theme of “Building Resilience for Competitive Success”, highlighting how companies acted resiliently during the onset of various phases of Covid-19 and how that helped them gain competitive success. The discussion brought to light how companies have shifted focus a lot more towards employee welfare in terms of health and job security. It also focused on the importance of cash flow to survive disruptions and assure employees of monetary and job security. It was discussed how CUMI Industries successfully built resilience towards the pandemic by focusing on organizational cash flow, converting all factories and hospitals into Covid centres to help employees, and in all keeping organizational communication alive. The Carnival Group’s story was also highlighted, stating how they bounced back from the worst-case scenario when the pandemic had adversely affected their cinema sector and were left with zero cash flow. This example built up on how vital personal resilience is in the context of organizational resilience. The panelists further talked about the potential turmoil in the future from biological and cyber attacks, directing companies to develop task forces and invest highly in cyber security. The panel discussed about what organizations must do to become resilient, starting out by countering rigid practices and people in organizations and realizing current inefficiencies. The second discussion focused on the topic of “Decoding Growth Potential through Sustainable Initiatives”. The panelists deep-dived into the importance and implications of sustainability practices. The discussion started on a rather different note – ‘Sustainability Comes With a Price,’ - implying that there are almost always certain trade-offs between profits and green environmental regulations in industries. The panelist continued the discussion by stating that every organization requires the following: Lakshmi (Money), Saraswati (Learning & Growth), and Durga (Safety) to sustain. Touching upon ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) compliance, it was also brought to attention that ESG is no longer lop sided. ESG is not only about the organization, but the clients also have to be considered. The discussion concluded with highlighting the role of organizational culture and that it should be value driven from the apex/upper management of a company.

The second phase of the event was the five focused group discussions, engaging senior leaders from Saint Gobain, Vodafone Idea Ltd, PwC, Publicis Sapient, Rockwell Automation, Pfizer, Biocon, Kauvery Hospitals, etc. The first round table discussion was on the topic “Resilient Supply Chains: The Need of The Hour.” It featured a discussion on how telecom companies grew during the pandemic with the help of rapid digitalization at the time. The panelists focused on the importance of sticking to the fundamentals in the era of digitalization. The panelists agreed that human capital is one of the most essential ingredients to becoming resilient. The second round table discussion was on “Redefining Customer Value in New Normal,” wherein the participants discussed how the customer is a mutating creature seeking comfort, and how brands have to constantly evolve and understand a customer needs in real-time to remain relevant. The tricky situation for brands is to stay relevant yet also ensure differentiation. The fact that customer needs will never stop changing, and competitors have developed the necessary resilience and will not be quiet, further makes the task of marketing ever so dynamic and critical. The third round table discussion was on the topic of “Corporate Resilience & Stock Performance”. It sparked a detailed discussion along the lines of volatility management, active vs passive investing, ESG, etc. The discussion started with the statement that emotion drives the market and will always impact a fund manager. The implications of the Russia-Ukraine conflict were also discussed, given that Europe is highly dependent on Russia’s natural resources. Another interesting point discussed was that concepts like ESG were not popular five years ago, but now one cannot go anywhere without knowing them. Future outlook is, thus, critical. The fourth round table discussion was on the theme of “Building Resilience through Adaptation”. It brought about insightful points regarding adapting and preparing for the future. The panelists highlighted that today employees are in a position to dictate to an organization. The panelists also shed light on the misunderstanding of ‘one size fits all,’ saying that companies must empathize with employees and their situations. The panel emphasized that it is the responsibility of the HR managers to help employees outperform their own capabilities. The fifth and final round table discussion was on “Entrepreneurship, Resilience and Adaptation”, highlighting key aspects such as ambition, resourcing, pivoting, perseverance. The panelists discussed that ambition is the seed that germinates into an organization, and resource follows that. One must maintain equilibrium between the two and be agile to manage resources. Additionally, it was discussed that people must persevere by taking calculative risks. When a strategy is not working, one must quickly pivot according to the market demand. Finally, the panelists concluded that it becomes highly crucial to unlearn and learn and being open to different options.

Capt. Pranav Prasoon, National Head HR – HCCB (Hindustan Coca - Cola Beverages Pvt. Ltd.), delivered the keynote address at the Valedictory Ceremony. He applauded the guests for the wonderful sessions and appreciated knowledge exchanged throughout the conclave. Capt. Prasoon emphasized that HR is the mother of an organization and how much it impacts an employee’s willingness to stay with the organization. He stated that during the pandemic, a vacuum had been created between the organization and the employees, and it was the HR’s work to fill that vacuum.

The Vote of Thanks was proposed by Prof. Abhishek Totawar, Chairperson – Placement, IIM Trichy. He extended his deepest gratitude to the partners/sponsors of the event and all those who made it a success, including the Director, Academic Clubs, Faculty, Staff, and members of the Placement Team and Placement Office.

The conclave concluded with the National Anthem, followed by a meet-and-greet session.