

IIM Tiruchirappalli Hosts **DAKSHA 5.0**, Exploring the Long Game of Ethical Leadership

Tiruchirappalli, September 12, 2026



The inauguration of Daksha 5.0, marking the beginning of the conclave

The Indian Institute of Management Tiruchirappalli successfully hosted Daksha 5.0, the annual Leadership Conclave & Daksha Research Studio, bringing together industry leaders, faculty members, researchers, doctoral scholars, and students for two days of conversations, learning, and engagement around leadership, research, and organizational practice. Daksha 5.0 takes the previous editions a step further, evolving from an interface between academia and industry to an integration of the two. In a rapidly changing world, it aims to foster a continuous exchange of ideas and perspectives, keeping academic thought closely connected with evolving industry realities and vice versa.

The conclave featured the inaugural Daksha Research Studio (DRS) on September 11, which brought industry and academia together to examine complex organizational challenges, followed by the Leadership Conclave on September 12, centered on the theme "Back to Basics: The Long Game of Ethical Leadership." The second day featured a thematic panel and six sub-themed roundtable discussions, before concluding with a valedictory keynote and the Lakeside Social.

DRS: A Platform for Applied Research



Industry experts, faculty members and research scholars in discussion

The program commenced with Tamil Thai Vaalthu, followed by the ceremonial lighting of the lamp by Chief Guest Mr. Rohit Kumar Agarwala, Director (Finance), CPCL; Prof. Abhishek Kumar Totawar, Chairperson - Placements and Chairperson - Media Relations and Communications; Prof. Satish S. Maheswarappa, Dean of Academics; Dr. Godwin Tennyson, Director (In-charge); and Prof. Jang Bahadur Singh, Chairperson – Doctoral Programme & Research.

The inaugural Daksha Research Studio (DRS) marked a new dimension to Daksha 5.0, bringing industry professionals, faculty, researchers, and doctoral scholars together to examine complex organizational challenges through academic exploration and collaborative thinking.

Delivering the welcome address, Prof. Abhishek Kumar Totawar described DRS as a platform that strengthened the Institute's research ecosystem by bringing real-time organizational questions into closer conversation with academic research.

Addressing the gathering, Prof. Satish S. Maheswarappa, Dean of Academics, highlighted the contrasting approaches of academia and industry, with industry focused on immediate demands and academia emphasizing rigor, foundational issues, and deeper understanding. He noted that DRS provides an opportunity to bring these perspectives together by examining organizational problems in their entirety and exploring their underlying causes.

Dr. Godwin Tennyson, Director (In-charge), positioned the inaugural DRS within IIM Tiruchirappalli's broader research journey, highlighting the Institute's doctoral program

launched in 2012 and the Executive Doctorate program in Management introduced in 2020. He highlighted the growing focus on taking research beyond academic settings and engaging with the challenges organizations face in practice. He also emphasized the scope for research-informed consulting, which offers a deeper understanding and more meaningful interventions than conventional approaches.

Insights from the Chief Guest's Keynote Address



The Chief Guest for DRS, Mr. Rohit Kumar Agarwala, Director (Finance), CPCL, addressing the gathering

Delivering the keynote address, Mr. Rohit Kumar Agarwala, Chief Guest and Director (Finance), Chennai Petroleum Corporation Limited (CPCL), drew on nearly three decades of experience in the oil and energy sector, alongside his ongoing PhD journey at IIFT New Delhi. He spoke about the value of bringing industry experience and academic enquiry together, particularly when organizations face complex problems that cannot be addressed within a single function.

He highlighted how examining organizational capabilities from a broader perspective can create new opportunities, particularly through data, artificial intelligence and digital technologies.

Returning to the larger purpose of DRS, Mr. Agarwala emphasized the importance of moving beyond ready-made solutions towards research that addresses problems unique to organizations. Drawing on examples of industry-academia collaboration and his own doctoral journey, he highlighted how applied research can inform organizational decision-making while creating value that extends beyond immediate monetary returns.

He concluded by emphasizing the need to bring together industry experience, organizational data and academic research to identify both opportunities and problems.

“If all these three are not meeting—experience, data, and research—then either there is a big opportunity or a big problem.”

— Mr. Rohit Kumar Agarwala, Director (Finance), Chennai Petroleum Corporation Limited (CPCL)

Case Competitions: Applying Ideas Through Competition



Students of IIM Tiruchirappalli presenting in case competitions organized by the Student Clubs

A key component of Daksha 5.0 was the series of case competitions organized by the academic clubs. Case competitions play an important role in bridging the gap between classroom learning and real-world business challenges, encouraging participants to analyze complex situations, think critically, and develop practical, actionable solutions. With industry experts serving as judges, the competitions provided participants with an opportunity to present their ideas, engage in interactive Q&A, and receive individual as well as group-wise feedback. The process allowed participants to benchmark their thinking against industry perspectives while strengthening their problem-solving, communication, and decision-making skills.

Interactive Experiences: Creativity Beyond the Classroom



Students showcasing their canvas paintings after the workshop

Daksha 5.0 also featured a range of interactive creative experiences, including Resin Art, Lippan Art and Canvas Painting, adding a participative dimension to the program. These hands-on activities offered participants an opportunity to explore their creativity and engage informally beyond the academic and professional sessions.

Day 2: Inauguration - Setting the Context for Ethical Leadership



The ceremonial lamp being lit by the keynote speaker of the inaugural event, Mr. Mallikarjuna Reddy Yarabolu

The second day of DAKSHA 5.0 commenced with the Inauguration Ceremony, which established the context for the conclave's theme, "Back to Basics: The Long Game of Ethical Leadership." Introducing the theme, Prof. Abhishek Kumar Totawar, Chairperson of Placements and Media Relations and Communications, IIM Tiruchirappalli, emphasized that ethical leadership is not merely about arriving at the right answer, but about asking the right questions and examining the process through which decisions are made.

"The entire idea of ethics is anticipatory in nature, and not a post hoc analysis of everything. What matters is whether we notice, whether we stay with it, whether over time we learn enough to make the right process part of how organisations work."

— Prof. Abhishek Kumar Totawar, Chairperson - Placements, Chairperson - Media Relations & Communications

Referring to dilemmas such as choosing between quality and quantity or process and outcome, he highlighted accountability as a responsibility that leaders cannot delegate. He further observed that ethical decision-making is often a gradual process of reflection

and learning through which organizations progressively embed transparency and responsibility into their ways of working.

Tracing IIM Tiruchirappalli's Growth and Industry Engagement

Prof. P. Saravanan, Dean (Corporate Relations and Faculty Affairs), traced the evolution of IIM Tiruchirappalli as it entered its sixteenth year. He highlighted the Institute's expanding academic portfolio, comprising its full-time MBA, MBA-HR, and doctoral programs; programs for working professionals offered through its Chennai campus; executive doctoral and online certificate programs; and its growing engagement with industry, public-sector enterprises, and government institutions through executive education and consulting.

Delivering the opening remarks, Prof. Godwin Tennyson (Director-in-Charge), IIM Tiruchirappalli, observed that leadership is defined not merely by position, but by how individuals respond to the opportunities and circumstances before them. Reflecting on the Institute's growth, he underscored that ethical leadership is not simply about what is achieved, but how it is achieved. He also described DAKSHA as one of the Institute's many touchpoints for sustained engagement among academia, industry and students.

Keynote Address 1: Ethics as Integrity, Teamwork, and Shared Responsibility

The first keynote address was delivered by Mr. Mallikarjuna Reddy, Managing Director of De Beers India. Drawing from his professional journey, he described ethics as an expression of one's values, integrity, and conduct, particularly when no one is watching. He stressed the importance of remaining true to oneself, working for the success of the team, and placing organizational purpose above individual recognition.

Through experiences from his career, Mr. Reddy highlighted communication, collective ownership, and responsible decision-making as essential to building organizations capable of sustaining themselves over the long term. He emphasized that leaders must accept responsibility when things go wrong while allowing the members of their teams to receive recognition when things go right. He also encouraged participants to reflect on the relationships they build and the people they help grow, presenting leadership as a responsibility extending beyond individual advancement.

"You do not need to work for yourself if you start working for your team."

— Mr. Mallikarjuna Reddy, Managing Director, De Beers, India

Keynote Address 2: Authenticity, Purpose and Empathy in Entrepreneurship

The second keynote address was delivered by Ms. Namrata Singh, Producer and IP Owner, SacredIP Trans Media Tech. Drawing from her journey across media, technology and entrepreneurship, she presented ethical leadership as personal and lived rather than performative. She spoke about the courage required to reject opportunities that conflict with one's purpose, the importance of remaining authentic through both struggle and success, and the responsibility to recognise every individual who contributes to an endeavour.

Ms. Singh explained that entrepreneurship had taught her to say no to attractive opportunities when they required compromises inconsistent with her purpose. Reflecting on the journey behind her creative ventures, she observed that meaningful success cannot be separated from the years of difficult and often unpopular choices that precede it. She further stressed that ethics must be incorporated into the design of an initiative from the outset, rather than introduced after decisions have already been made. Identifying empathy as an essential guide when intellect and logic alone are insufficient, she encouraged participants to remain grounded in their values even when success brings greater power and more opportunities to compromise.

Theme Panel: Back to Basics-The Long Game of Ethical Leadership



The Theme Panel engages in a roundtable discussion

The keynote addresses were followed by the Theme Panel, "Back to Basics: The Long Game of Ethical Leadership." The session was moderated by Ms. Priyam Dhamankar, Ethics and Compliance Leader, Cummins India, and brought together Mr. Swadesh Behera, EVP and Chief People Officer, Titan Company Limited; Mr. Jaspreet Singh, CMO, Apexon; Ms. Ananda Shalini, CFO, CavinKare; Ms. Apoorva Maheshwari, Head of

Marketing, BESTSELLER India; Mr. Ganesh Sahai, CTO, Nagarro; and Mr. Krishnamoorthy A, MD, HCM Operations and Risk Management, Goldman Sachs.

Opening the discussion, Ms. Dhamankar described ethics and compliance as helping organizations do the right thing and serving as a timely reminder of whether they remain on the right path. She noted that ethical responsibility does not begin only after an individual assumes a formal leadership position; it accompanies employees throughout their organizational journeys. The panel explored ethical leadership through the interconnected ideas of vulnerability, courage, conscience, human judgment, legacy, and adaptability.

Mr. Swadesh Behera described vulnerability as foundational to authentic leadership. Recounting an instance in which Titan's leadership withdrew an organizational initiative after listening to employee concerns, he explained that acknowledging a mistake can strengthen rather than diminish employees' trust.

Ms. Ananda Shalini examined the everyday ethical dilemmas encountered by finance professionals. Drawing attention to the professional code of ethics in finance, she discussed how apparently favorable numbers may still require leaders to examine the underlying circumstances and ask further questions.

Ms. Apoorva Maheshwari described an individual's value system as dynamic and shaped over time through experiences and decisions. She encouraged students to reflect on their instincts and understand the principles that guide their choices. She also highlighted the moral responsibility individuals have to fulfil their potential and noted that consumers can recognise when brands or leaders are being inauthentic, making a clean conscience and consistency of values important foundations for long-term trust.

Mr. Ganesh Sahai explored the distinctions among legal, moral and ethical decision-making.. Referring to developments in artificial intelligence and autonomous systems, he cautioned that organizations must carefully determine which decisions can be delegated to technology. He emphasized that human judgement must remain central to consequential decisions, observing that the "human in the loop" is ultimately where accountability rests.

Mr. Jaspreet Singh examined ethical leadership from the perspective of marketing and brand promises. He spoke about the courage required to reject shortcuts when quality and organizational reputation are at stake, including situations in which additional effort may be necessary to meet deadlines without compromising one's values. He encouraged future leaders to choose organizations whose leadership aligns with their belief systems,

seek access to decision-making forums, demonstrate the business and reputational consequences of proposed choices, and take ownership of their mistakes.

Mr. Krishnamoorthy A reflected on the balance between efficiency, personal responsibility, and choosing the right priorities. He acknowledged that experiencing pressure is natural but cautioned that employees may attempt to resolve serious concerns alone when organizational environments do not allow them to speak openly. He therefore stressed the importance of creating supportive workplaces and returning to fundamental values and processes when established approaches are no longer working effectively.

Together, the deliberations demonstrated that ethical leadership is expressed through everyday organizational decisions, particularly through the willingness to listen, question assumptions, acknowledge mistakes, exercise human judgement, and prioritize enduring stakeholder trust over immediate gains.

Six Round Table Conferences Extending the Conversation

Following the Theme Panel, DAKSHA 5.0 was scheduled to expand into six specialized Round Table Conferences. Each session was designed to examine the implications of ethical leadership within a distinct functional setting, bringing industry experience into focused conversations on influence, technology, finance, people management, operations, and organizational growth.

- **“The Conscience of Influence: Brands, Consumers & Ethical Persuasion”**

The Round Table examined how brands can influence consumer choices responsibly while balancing persuasive communication with transparency, authenticity, and trust; and featured Mr. Akshay Dhapare, CMO Office, Vertical Marketing Head, CMT, Persistent Systems; Mr. Nikhil Jain, Chief Product Marketing Officer, Crizac Ltd; Ms. Tanya Gupta, Associate Director – Product Marketing, Strategy & Growth, DaVinci Commerce; Mr. Pranjal Joshi, Specialist Media & Sponsorships, BMW; and Moderator Prachi Parihar Saxenna, Head-Strategy and Marketing, Confide.

- **“Trust by Design: Data & the Ethics of Decision Making”**

The Round Table explored how organisations can embed accountability, fairness and transparency into data-driven technologies and decision-making systems; and brought together Mr. Ritesh Saxena, CX & AI Transformation Consultant – COO’s Office, Pine Labs; Mr. Shashikanth Jayaraman, CHRO, MulticoreWare Inc; Mr. Ramesh Ramanathan, Principal Architect, CTO Office, Tata Elxsi; CA Karthikeya Shenoy, Partner, Anup Shashwat & Co, and Faculty for ICAI AI & DAAB initiatives;

and Mr. Pradeep Rao, Director, CyberSecurity, Kyndryl; with Moderator Tanuj Kar, Product Manager, Customer Experience, GE Healthcare.

- **“Profit, Purpose, & Progress: Finance, Governance, and the Cost of Looking Away”**

The Round Table considered how financial institutions can pursue growth while upholding sound governance, stakeholder responsibility and ethical decision-making and featured Mr. Ranjeet Singh, VP, Insurance Dekho; Mr. Sandeep Gupta, ED, JPMC; Mr. Ajay Tandon, VP, Procurement & Strategic Alliances, HDFC Ergo Gen Insurance; with Moderator Devarun Dutta. DGM- Group M&A and Business Development, Godrej Industries Group.

- **“Empowering People, Enabling Performance: Work, Fairness, and Moral Contract of Organizations”**

The Round Table examined how organisations can promote performance while ensuring fairness, dignity and responsibility in their relationship with employees; and brought together Ms. Nidhi Bajaj, VP – HR, Health Prime; Mr. Prasenjit Roy, Business Head of Data & AI, NTT DATA India; Mr. Varun Alagati, Senior Director, Total Rewards, Biocon; Mr. Tanmay Parikh, VP – HR, Dairy Day; and Capt. with moderator Rajat Agrawal, Senior Manager- Total Rewards, Motilal Oswal Financial Services.

- **“The Cost of Output: Ethics on the Shopfloor and Beyond”**

The Round Table explored the ethical responsibilities involved in achieving operational efficiency, from workplace practices and supply chains to the wider consequences of production decisions and featured Mr. Shunmugavel H, COO, Switch Mobility; Mr. Sivaramakirushnan J, Director – Manufacturing Process Engineering, Stellantis India; Mr. Purushottam Tatkar, Plant Head, Henkel; Mr. Mohit Jauhari, Head SCM, SPR Auto Technologies Limited; Mr. Varun Kakkar, Senior General Manager – Supply Chain, Birla Opus; With Moderator Vidhu, Principal Product Manager Consultant, Saudi Manpower Solutions Co.

- **“Scaling for the Future: Strategy and the Ethics of Growth”**

The Round Table considered how organisations can pursue scale and long-term growth without compromising their values, stakeholder interests or broader responsibilities and brought together Mr. Kaviarasu Kathirvel, Senior Director, Agilisium Consulting; Mr. Karthikeyan Soundararajan, Associate Director, Accenture; Mr. Manu Gupta, Co-Founder, The ProdZen; Mr. Ram Srinivasan, SVP – Advisory

Services (Global Practice Leader), Ascendion; Ms. Shweta Jain, Director HR, ICF.
With Moderator Sonali Sakhare, Senior Consultant, Infosys Consulting.

Together, the six Round Table Conferences were designed to move the conclave's central theme into specific organizational contexts, enabling participants to examine how ethical leadership must respond to different pressures while remaining grounded in accountability, transparency and long-term responsibility. The formal closing ceremony featured a vote of thanks delivered by Prof. Abhishek Kumar Totawar, Chairperson of the Placements and Media Relations and Communications.

The evening culminated in a vibrant meet-and-greet session over dinner, bringing together the distinguished guests, faculty members and students in an informal setting. The conversations allowed the ideas exchanged throughout the conclave to develop into personal reflections and meaningful connections, reinforcing the spirit of dialogue, mentorship and shared learning that defined DAKSHA 5.0.

About IIM Tiruchirappalli

Indian Institute of Management Tiruchirappalli (IIM Tiruchirappalli) is a premier business school established in 2011 under the Ministry of Education, Government of India. Known for its strong academic rigor and focus on socially responsible leadership, the institute offers flagship MBA programs, executive education, and research-driven initiatives across disciplines. Its academic quality and global orientation are reflected in its **NIRF 2025 Management ranking of 16**, its **AMBA accreditation**, and its status as a **member of the AACSB Business Education Alliance**, placing it among the **top 2% of business schools worldwide**. With a deep commitment to innovation, industry engagement, and global perspectives, IIM Tiruchirappalli prepares students to become ethical, analytical, and impactful business leaders.

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