

IIM Tiruchirappalli Hosts Daksha 4.0 with the theme “ The Human Element: Redefining Leadership in the Age of Artificial Intelligence”

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IIM Tiruchirappalli Director Dr. Pawan Kumar Singh (right) with Air Marshal C. R. Mohan ,PVSM, AVSM, VSM (Retd)

The Indian Institute of Management Tiruchirappalli hosted Daksha 4.0, the annual flagship leadership conclave, bringing together industry veterans, senior leaders and rising changemakers from various domains such as finance, technology, consulting, marketing, operations, and human resources to examine one of the defining questions of our time: how leadership must evolve in an age of artificial intelligence.

Anchored by the theme **“The Human Element: Redefining Leadership in the Age of AI,”** Daksha 4.0 brought together C-suite leaders, functional heads, and domain specialists for a day of structured dialogue that examined not only how technology is transforming

decision-making, but also what it means for trust, accountability, inclusion, and human judgment.

Daksha as a Bridge Between Academia and Industry



Lighting of the Ceremonial Lamp

The day commenced with the Inauguration Ceremony, which was graced by **Air Marshal CR Mohan, PVSM, AVSM, VSM (Retd.)**, the Chief Guest, **Dr. Pawan Kumar Singh**, The Director of IIM Tiruchirapalli, **Prof. Abhishek Kumar Totawar**, Chairperson of Placement Committee and Media Relations Committee and **Prof. P Saravanan**, Dean (Corporate Relations and Faculty Affairs).

Speaking on the purpose and evolution of the conclave, **Prof. Abhishek Kumar Totawar** noted that *"Daksha was created as a bridge between academia and industry, a Setu (सेतु) where ideas, practice, and leadership come together."* Reflecting on this year's theme, Prof. Abishek added that leadership today is shaped not merely by intelligence, but by how wisely and responsibly it is applied, bringing together technology and human element. For students, Daksha creates rare opportunities to engage closely with senior leaders and next generation leaders and see how leadership decisions take shape beyond the classroom.

Strengthening Industry and Executive Engagement



Prof. Saravanan P addressing the audience at Daksha 4.0

Prof. P. Saravanan highlighted IIM Tiruchirappalli's expanding role as a hub for leadership development beyond its full-time academic programmes. Alongside its MBA, MBA-HR, doctoral, and weekend MBA offerings, the Institute has built a strong executive education and consulting ecosystem that works closely with industry and public sector organisations.

Through customised training and advisory engagements with institutions such as the Reserve Bank of India, PSU banks, ONGC, IOCL, BPCL, HPCL, and Aavin, IIM Tiruchirappalli contributes directly to strengthening managerial and leadership capacity across the country. Participants in these programmes also become part of the Institute's growing alumni network, reinforcing long-term relationships between IIM Tiruchirappalli and the organisations it serves.

Leadership in the Age of Artificial Intelligence

Addressing the gathering, **Dr. Pawan Kumar Singh, Director, IIM Tiruchirappalli**, reflected on the deeper relationship between technology, leadership, and human responsibility in a

rapidly changing world. Framing the Institute's vision for leadership in the AI era, he observed,

“Leadership in the age of AI is not about competing with machines. It is about guiding them with human values.”

— Dr. Pawan Kumar Singh, Director of IIM Tiruchirappalli

He noted that **India carries a responsibility to the world (वसुधैव कुटुम्बकम् - Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam) because it holds a vast reservoir of knowledge meant for all of humanity,** and that this responsibility becomes even more significant as technology reshapes societies and economies. Drawing a distinction between technological phases, Industry 4.0 placed technology at the centre, while Industry 5.0 underscores that without human–technology integration, progress remains incomplete, reinforcing the need for leadership that is both technologically informed and deeply human.

Insights from the Chief Guest's Keynote Address



Air Marshal C. R. Mohan, PVSM, AVSM, VSM (Retd.), delivering the keynote address at Daksha 4.0

Delivering the keynote address, **Air Marshal Chakalayil Rajappa Mohan, PVSM, AVSM, VSM (Retd.),** drew on his deep experience in technology, systems thinking, and

organisational leadership to underscore that artificial intelligence represents a transformation as profound as electricity once did for industry. He emphasised that

“AI is like electricity — it will permeate every part of organisational life and society, and how we harness it will shape our collective future.”

— Air Marshal Chakalayil Rajappa Mohan, PVSM, AVSM, VSM (Retd.)

Observing that technology’s power must be guided by human intention, he cautioned against a narrow focus on efficiency alone, urging leaders not to turn intelligence into a **“paper clipping of humanity,”** where the human dimension is reduced to data points and checkboxes.

Highlighting how AI challenges conventional notions of expertise and agency, he reminded the audience that **being smart is not enough; “it is good to be smart, but you need to be smarter to be good,”** drawing attention to the ethical and value-driven dimensions of leadership decisions. He emphasised that leadership is not simply about managing technology, but about exercising creativity and purpose: leaders must **“do art”** in the sense of **creating meaning, cultivating vision, and shaping organisational culture in ways that machines alone cannot replicate.** In a compelling summation of the conclave’s theme, he asserted that **“the true test of leadership in the age of AI will be whether we can outhuman the machine,”** placing dignity, empathy, and ethical judgement at the centre of human-centred leadership.

Reflecting on his journey, the Chief Guest outlined a simple but powerful balance: dedicating **80 per cent of one’s life to the disciplined pursuit of aspirations, 15 per cent to practising an art that fosters creativity,** and the remaining **5 per cent to explore interests, unafraid of mistakes.** This balance, he noted, shapes leaders who are driven yet imaginative, ambitious yet grounded, qualities essential for leading in an age of intelligent machines.

The Leadership Plenary: Accountability, Trust, and the Human Core of AI



The Leadership Plenary at Daksha 4.0

The conclave opened with the flagship Leadership Panel that brought together leaders from **SQFT Fund, TransUnion CIBIL, Times Internet, Bluestone, and Freshworks**. On the occasion, **Mr. Amol Joshi, Chief Financial Officer, TransUnion CIBIL**, congratulated the Institute on securing the **16th rank in the NIRF 2025 Management category**. IIM Tiruchirappalli's continued commitment to global academic standards can also be noted in its **recent reaccreditation by the Association of MBAs (AMBA)** and its status as a **member of the AACSB Business Education Alliance**.

The discussion moved beyond efficiency and automation to confront deeper questions around **data responsibility, cyber resilience, financial trust, ethical governance, and the human consequences of algorithmic decision making**.

Moderated by **Mr. Alok Ranjan, CEO of Flipcarbon**, the conversation framed leadership as something that has evolved from **command and control** to **influence and impact**, and now to **communication and collaboration**, placing the human element at the centre of how organisations must navigate technological change.

Across the panel, a central theme emerged: **technology can inform decisions, but it cannot own them**. **Mr. Amol Joshi, CFO of TransUnion CIBIL** stressed that artificial intelligence does not remove responsibility from leaders, noting that **someone must still sign, stand behind the decision, and be trusted for it**, and that what matters is not only

the final output, but whether **trust exists at every step of the data and decision-making process.**

This theme of governance and accountability was taken further by **Mr. Kaushik Kadidal, CEO of SQFT Fund**, who argued that the real value of analytics and AI lies not in blind reliance on models, but in the willingness to go deeper into what appears counterintuitive. He emphasised that organisations must build **a culture of accountability where individual incentives align not only with organisational performance but also with social outcomes.** In regulated environments, he noted, **the most important question is not how sophisticated an algorithm is, but who signed off on it,** reinforcing that **AI can make predictions, but leadership must always own the consequences.**

The panel also explored the limits of technology in understanding human experience. **Mr. Gaurav Sachdeva, CRO of Bluestone**, reminded the audience that **humans thrive on each other rather than in isolation**, and that machines, however intelligent, cannot replicate the emotional dimensions of trust, belonging, and care. While AI may analyse, predict, and even flatter users, he observed, **it cannot feel, care, or take responsibility**, making leadership and human judgement indispensable.

From a platform and media perspective, **Mr. Pancham Dogra, Head - Human Resources of Times Internet**, warned that artificial intelligence is already developing a form of emotional intelligence by learning how humans respond. By reinforcing what people want to hear, AI systems can **amplify bias rather than challenge it**, making **judgment, ethics, and accountability even more critical** in leadership decisions.

The ethical stakes of these technologies were brought into sharp focus by **Ms. Satyavathi Divadari of Freshworks**, who described AI as a **double-edged sword**. When machines are given decision-making power, they learn from historical data, including its biases. In hiring, for instance, she pointed to how algorithms trained on past patterns began **rejecting women and minority candidates**, not because the technology was unfair, but because **it learned unfairness from society.** For her, this made **human oversight, ethical design, and accountability non-negotiable** in any AI-enabled system.

Together, the CXO panel underscored a powerful insight that ran through Daksha 4.0: **as technology grows more intelligent, leadership must become more human.** In a world where machines increasingly shape choices, it is trust, ethics, governance, and responsibility that will determine whether innovation truly serves organisations and society.

Six Sectoral Conversations Shaping the Future of Leadership

Designed as a leadership laboratory rather than a conventional conference, Daksha 4.0 then expanded into six parallel Round Table Conferences, each focused on a critical fault line of the contemporary economy.

- In **BFSI**, leaders **Mr. Abhijith Arkalgud** (Director, Zeta), **Mr. Robin Arya** (CEO & Founder, GoalFi), and **Mr. Punit Talreja** (Vice President – Sales Trading, JM Financial), moderated by **Ms. Radhika Singhania** (IB Analyst, JPMorgan Chase), debated how technology is reshaping financial inclusion and the social contract between institutions and customers.
- In **IT and Analytics**, the conversation centred on how ethical responsibility can be built into systems that increasingly shape human choices, with insights from **Mr. Sandeep Ghatke** (Director, Talent Acquisition, ZoomInfo), **Mr. Praveen Kumar** (Leader of Products, Broadcom), **Mr. Vikalp Dutt** (Director, Pre-Sales, Rakuten Symphony), and **Ms. Lochana Raghupathy** (Head of Technology, Jeevitam), guided by **Mr. Nireesh Venda** (AI Solutions Engineer, Microsoft).
- The **Consulting** track examined how advisory work is being redefined in a world where expertise itself is challenged by artificial intelligence, with **Mr. Easwaran P S** (Head of Asia Pacific Supply Chain Consulting, Deloitte), **Mr. Srinivas Giridhar** (Senior Director, RSM US LLP), **Mr. Arul Vel Arasan C** (Senior Director, ANSR Consulting), and **Mr. Raghuram Kasiviswanathan** (Partner, Uniquis Consultech Inc.), moderated by **Mr. Arul Prakash** (Consultant, ZS Associates).
- **Marketing** leaders **Mr. Ravi Shankar Singh** (Head – HR & L&OD - Retail, Lifestyle Landmark), **Mr. Santosh Vuppala** (Head of Analytics & Insights, Titan), **Mr. Ashish Banka** (Global Head – Talent Acquisition & HRBP, Cradlewise), **Mr. Kapaganti Srinivas Guptha** (Associate VP – Business & Growth, Spinny), and **Prof. Meenakshi** of IIM Tiruchirappalli with **Ms. Khaleda Mehjabeen** (Program Manager, Aditya Birla Capital) as moderator, explored the impact of platforms, omnichannel engagement, and data-driven personalisation on consumer trust.
- The **Operations** round table addressed resilience and localisation in an era of fractured global supply chains, with **Mr. Bangaru Babu** (Vice President & Head of Manufacturing Solutions, Aragen Life Sciences), **Dr. Dinesh Kumar Murugesan** (GCC Head), **Mr. Kaushik Chakraborty** (Chief People Officer, Savills), and **Ms. Srividya Harish Venkateswaran** (Senior Director – Business HR & TA, Bluedart),

moderated by **Ms.Antara Rabha** (Customer Experience Manager, MSIL).

- The **Human Resources** dialogue focused on how talent, capability, and organisational culture must adapt when work becomes hybrid and augmented by machines, featuring **Mr.Arulprakash Arumainathan** (Head of TA – India, Logitech), **Dr. Mohit Sharma** (Associate Director HR & ODS, Synergy Consulting), **Mr.Ravi Rangaraju** (Director, Regional HR, Thomson Reuters), **Ms.Pritika Gulati** (HR Director, Amagi), and **Ms.Simran Singh** (Principal, Kwan Ventures), with **Ms.Madhura Dabak** (Specialist – TA & Strategy, D.E. Shaw & Co.) as moderator.

A Platform for Thoughtful, Inclusive, and Future-Facing Leadership

Together, these conversations reflected a central idea that has come to define Daksha as a platform. Technology may be advancing at unprecedented speed, but leadership remains a profoundly human responsibility. Decisions still require judgement. Systems still require trust. Organisations still depend on people.

By convening voices from across industries and functions, IIM Tiruchirappalli positioned Daksha 4.0 not simply as an academic event, but as a space where India's business leaders could collectively examine how to lead with integrity, empathy, and responsibility in an age of algorithms.

Reaffirming the Human Core of Leadership

As artificial intelligence continues to reshape the way organisations operate, Daksha 4.0 reaffirmed a simple but powerful insight. The future of leadership will be defined not only by how intelligent our machines become, but by how deeply the human element is inculcated in our decisions.

The programme transitioned into a soulful **Classical Flute Performance** by **Smt. Sikkil Mala Chandrasekhar**, accompanied by **Shri N. C. Madhav** on the violin, **Shri S. Hariharasubramaniam** on the ghatam, and **Shri R. Akshay Ram** on the mridangam, presented under the **SPIC MACAY** initiative. The evening concluded with a formal closing ceremony, featuring a vote of thanks delivered by **Prof. Abhishek Kumar Totawar**, Chairperson of the **Placements and Media Relations Committee**

The evening concluded with a vibrant meet-and-greet session, bringing together guests, faculty, and students in an informal setting. Over dinner, conversations flowed freely,

allowing ideas shared during the day to deepen into personal reflections and meaningful exchanges. The relaxed interactions fostered a sense of connection and community, reinforcing the spirit of dialogue, mentorship, and shared learning that defined the spirit of Daksha.

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 rigour and focus on socially responsible leadership, the Institute offers flagship MBA programmes, 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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