



Director, IIMA's Speech for ePGD-ABA Convocation 2026

Prof. Bharat Bhasker, Director, IIM Ahmedabad

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A very good evening to all of you!

I would like to welcome Dr. Gaurav Aggarwal, Chief AI Scientist, Reliance Jio; Members of the Board of Governors; Faculty and Staff members; and the graduating students of ePGD-ABA!

It is our pleasure to thank Dr. Gaurav Aggarwal, Chief AI Scientist, Reliance Jio, to IIMA today for the convocation ceremony of the e-Post Graduate Diploma in Advanced Business Analytics. He has had successful stints at Google Research, Yahoo Labs, and his own startup Fashiate, which was acquired by Snapdeal. At Reliance Jio, he brings fundamental advances in AI through real-world applications. Additionally, Gaurav also plays a pivotal role as an anchor volunteer at iSPIRT, a mission-oriented, nonprofit, technology think-and-do tank, to bring techno-regulatory innovation for AI in India. Dr. Gaurav, I express our heartfelt gratitude to you for joining us today. Having worked in Machine Learning and AI for over two decades, it will be inspiring for our students to hear your insights drawn from your valuable experience and demonstrated leadership.

I would also like to extend my heartfelt congratulations to the graduating class of ePGD-ABA! Your dedication, discipline, and perseverance deserve recognition, and today marks the successful culmination of your efforts. Your batch of 41 students represents a rich diversity of professional backgrounds and domains. You brought experience from industries such as Consulting; Retail/E-commerce; Advertising; Telecom; Banking, Financial Services and Insurance; FMCG; IT; and Manufacturing; among others.

Remember that your diversity is your strength, which will help you add multidisciplinary perspectives to business analytics in your future professional



careers as well. In analytics, solutions are rarely one-dimensional. Business challenges are complex, interconnected, and deeply contextual. Having exposure to different industries and functions enables you to ask better questions, interpret data more meaningfully, and design solutions that are both robust and practical.

It is also important to note that this kind of diversity reflects how analytics teams work in the real world. Today's analytics-driven organisations bring together professionals from different domains to work collaboratively. Such teams comprise people from different backgrounds who come together to create insights that are both technically strong as well as useful in business decision-making.

Your graduation from this programme comes at a very relevant time. Interestingly, **as of 2024, India has emerged as a global leader in the demand for data analytics jobs, with a notably high share of analytics and AI roles.** Over the past six years, the share of data analytics job postings originating from India has **grown by over 50%**. This clearly highlights how central data has become in business, governance, and society.

Organisations across sectors are relying on analytics to improve efficiency, manage risk, personalise services, and promote innovation.

Therefore, the knowledge and skills you have gained through this programme are highly valuable and will serve you well in your professional journeys. The ePGD-ABA programme has equipped you with strong analytical foundations, exposure to advanced tools and techniques, and the ability to connect data insights with business strategy. These capabilities are in high demand today.

We live in an era where data has become the backbone of decision-making. From pricing and supply chains to customer engagement and public policy, data informs almost every strategic choice. Advances in computing power, cloud platforms, and artificial intelligence have further accelerated this shift. However, as the volume and speed of data increase, so does the responsibility that comes with using it wisely.

This brings me to an important point: that **analytics is not just about numbers and algorithms; it is also about people.** It is about understanding human behaviour, anticipating needs, and designing solutions that improve lives.



Therefore, as you move forward, I would urge you to balance efficiency with empathy and always keep ethics as your guiding compass.

I would also like to emphasise here that analytics and AI are evolving faster than any curriculum can fully capture. New tools, methods, and applications are emerging continuously. In such an environment, you must focus on continuously upskilling yourself, have the willingness to learn, and remain adaptable. I will urge you to view this diploma not as the endpoint but as a strong foundation for lifelong learning.

Encouragingly, both global and domestic organisations are making significant investments in analytics and AI in India. For example, a few months ago, **Google announced that it will set up USD 15 Billion AI Hub in Visakhapatnam**. This will also be its largest investment in India. This initiative aims to strengthen AI capabilities and expand AI-powered services.¹

At the same time, academic institutions across the country are expanding and strengthening their analytics programmes to meet growing industry demand. This convergence of industry investment and academic capability places India in a strong position to shape the future of analytics globally, and you are now part of that story.

The world needs your talent; it needs sharp minds guided by sound principles. It needs leaders who can translate data into insight, insight into strategy, and strategy into lasting value- for businesses, communities, as well as society.

Congratulations to each one of you. May your journey ahead be purposeful, enriching, and transformative.

Thank You!