

E.V. Sampathkumaran

Director, TIFR

Dear distinguished dignitaries on the dais, colleagues, invited participants, and members of TIFR family.

Good morning to everybody. It gives me great pleasure to welcome all of you to the inaugural function of ICTS, TIFR. I particularly appreciate those who have travelled from far-off places.

At this moment, it is good to recall the history of TIFR, as Bangalore occupies a special place in its history. Homi Bhabha on his return to India in early 1940s actually started his career at IISc, Bangalore. He subsequently built up the campus of TIFR in Mumbai, which flourished and continues to remain a leading national institute of great international repute. In that sense, judged by this past history of TIFR with its initial activities in IISc campus, I have no doubt in my mind that ICTS will also flourish and will make a mark in the same way, carving a niche for itself in the family of TIFR. It is also important to recall that two more centres of TIFR (NCBS & CAM) in Bangalore are doing extremely well in their own spheres of research.

It is also interesting to note that it took about 7 to 8 years for Homi Bhabha to make the magnificent buildings in Colaba, despite his proximity to Pandit Nehru and JRD Tata. In fact, Pandit Nehru in his inaugural speech of the Colaba campus took note of it. Clearly, this implies that it is not easy to make institutions. Therefore, Spenta Wadia and his team should be appreciated for achieving this in these days with the increasing level of bureaucracy and procedures.

Of course, TIFR has a strong tradition of opening of new activities and new centres from time to time, which are world-renowned, for example, NCRA (with GMRT facility) in Pune, NCBS in Bangalore, CAM in Bangalore, HBCSE in north Mumbai, and with the most recent ones being TIFR Hyderabad and ICTS. In addition, it nurtured some other activities, which came independent of TIFR eventually (SAMEER, NSTS).

The ICTS was conceived as a centre where scientists and mathematicians could come together for meetings and for sustained interactions and collaborations. Since it is multidisciplinary in its character, these interactions uniquely allows us greater cross-fertilization, to further our understanding of some of the most outstanding questions of our times, with potential impact on the future of humankind and the growth and development of India.

Today, with this inauguration we are poised for a new start. The ICTS has already made a name for itself, both nationally and internationally, with a number of high quality programs

and workshops, which have drawn some of the leading practitioners from around the world. In the pamphlet of ICTS, there is a quote by a Spanish Poet (Antonio Machado), as mentioned by Spenta *“For a traveller, there is no road, but the road is made by walking”*. This tells us how many difficulties one has to face to make an institution. Therefore, on behalf of TIFR, I would like to express heartiest congratulations to Professor Wadia, Professor Avinash Dhar and their team members for their unstinting efforts to make this wonderful new centre.

I must also add that the Council of Management had strongly supported the idea of ICTS at the time of its proposal several years ago and continued to do so at all stages. The state and central governments very heavily backed up this venture. In particular, the support of Department of Atomic Energy, which is responsible for funding, should be placed on record. One should not forget one important historical fact. Actually, this centre was proposed during the directorship of Professor Shobo Bhattacharya and I am glad he is here on the dais. I take this opportunity to thank him as well as the next director, Professor Mustansir Barma, who gave tremendous boost to this venture, spending his quality time and effort for the progress of ICTS. Professor Sandip Trivedi during his tenure continued this push. I have got the great opportunity to carry out the pleasurable job of welcoming this august gathering for this inaugural function. We in TIFR are looking forward to ICTS to play an important and unique role in the future, making TIFR and the whole nation proud.

Finally, I would like to add that Professor Barma, under whose directorship this centre has been nurtured, is abroad and he asked me to convey his congratulations to the staff of ICTS for their hard work to bring up this place to this level and also wishes for its glory in future.

With these few words, let me warmly welcome all the participants for this inaugural function, also wishing all the success to ICTS for its activities for many years to come. I am really honoured for getting this great opportunity to welcome you all for the inaugural function of ICTS.

