ADDRESS

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Shri J.C. Sengupta, Vice-Chancellor, Bidhan Chandra Krishi Viswa Vidyalaya; Professor Ashok Maitra, Director, Indian Statistical Institute; Dr. Prem Narain, Director, Indian Agricultural Statistics Research Institute; Professor Kapur, President of this Session; friends and delegates !

At the outset let me tell you that the President of this Society, Dr. O.P. Gautam is unable to come due to his heavy commitment in Delhi. So in his place the Executive Council of the Society requested me to say a few words to the delegates and the participants. My two previous speakers have already told you of the importance of two aspects where the statisticians are very much involved in agriculture, one is field trails and the second is large scale sample surveys which helped you in determining the area and yield of crops. In these two areas Indian Statistical Institute was the poineer Institute because it started the work right from 1931. The first paper on design of experiments was published in the journal of ICAR in the year 1931 by Professor P.C. Mahalanobis. Later on from 1936 onwards the work on large scale sample surveys was initiated by the Institute and it gave a very general idea of how large scale sample surveys should be conducted in this conutry and this has been the practice now all over the world—everybody has accepted the techniques. Later on the IASRI under the stewardship of P.V. Sukhatme and V.G. Panse did a lot of work on the area and yield of crop.

But I would like to address to the members that the agricultural statisticians have greater responsibility now because now the planning has shifted from macrolevel planning to multilevel planning including microlevel planning that is at the Block level. It has been accepted by the Planning Commisson and it has been accepted by the various

states, specially by the particular state of West Bengal, the microlevel planning at the Block level. Those of you who are familiar with some of the problems that are associated with the Block level planning they know that we are trying to introduce the new areas for individual beneficiary schemes like IRDP, that is, Integrated Rural Development Programme, NREP i.e. National Rural Employment Programme and we are going to introduce a host of other schemes at the Block level to improve the living conditions of the people at the rural area. The triple theory that if you have a very high growth rate at the micro-level that will percolate down to the lowest stratum has been found to be not working.

Now, why to try to undertake these problems? I am associated with these in some way. I found that the data gap is tremendous. When you go to introduce the IRDP programmes in the villages, I had the experience of visiting about three/four states of India, where these schemes have been introduced where I have seen that no data are available at the Block level. And it is so very difficult to choose the individual beneficiaries whom you are going to help to increase their standard of living and to help them to have higher income. Now, a completely different type of outlook has to be ushered if you want to make a microlevel planning a success in our country. And statistics has to play important role in the microlevel planning. So I request the participants, those who are agricultural statisticians, to study these problems. These will involve design of surveys, collection of information, that is, what will be the collecting machinery and the errors which occur in various estimates. So all the problems that are in the microlevel planning that are all there with the difference that it must have very good data base. Now, I wish to draw the attention of the participants to this new task. Unless the statisticians can give the necessary data base for introducting the scheme of rural development, so many crores of rupees that has been spent on rural development will be of no use. I will give you a specific instance. Government is helping persons who have land and trying to give them some assistance. When we wanted to see the records that how much land has been distributed to the landless, no record was available. You don't have any record that who are the beneficiary persons who have got some land after distribution. So, if the person does not have land and if you give them assistance for increasing agriculcural yield, where is he going to use it? Such big information gaps are there and when I visited some of these states. I must declare frankly that I was not satisfied with the work that, has been done in the various states for these individual beneficiary

schemes. So this is the occasion where I can draw the attention of the agricultural statisticians to this particular task. You know from the National Advisory Board of Statistics we are also trying to give some outlines and some guidelines that have already been formed which will go to various states to improve the data base. I only request you to be equal to the task that will come to you in near future.

With these words I thank you everybody for attending this conference in the premier institution in statistics, Indian Statistical institute, founded by Professor P.C. Mahalanobis about fifty three years from now.