The present doctoral research was carried out during the last decade. But the real theoretical research was done during my association with the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad, between 1982-84. My thinking processes regarding the present study began when Vikram Sarabhai was alive 'to provide a "home" to all of us', a kind of home that Robert Frost described as "--- something you somehow haven't to deserve". Once I mentioned to him that I was seriously interested in writing about him and he immediately reacted to my suggestion and said, "why don't you think to write on a great man's life?" I had decided to keep his words and after 10 years of his death, I decided to do my doctoral work on Dr. Vikram Sarabhai ...........

The main objective of my study is to learn lessons from Vikram Sarabhai's experiences as an institution builder and as an innovative leader. It was a difficult task but as Vikram Sarabhai advocated there is nothing impossible if there is strong will-power and dedicated work, and, I began ..........

My first task was to know Vikram Sarabhai through others' eyes who worked with him. I met a number of personalities, his students, scientists, colleagues, friends and also his family members. It was a wonderful experience. Some individuals whom I would like to mention are: Prof. Buckminster Fuller, Dr. Jonas Salk, Mr. Arthur Clarke, Dr. Phillip Morrison, Dr. K. R. Ramanathan, Prof. Ravi Matthai and Dr. Ramanna. Smt. Mrinalini V. Sarabhai, Sat. & Shri Kartikeya V. Sarabhai and
Dr. Mallika V. Sarabhai shared with me their most loving memories.

The present study covers only two institutions founded by Vikram Sarabhai at the time when he started his career as an institution-builder in 1947. Both ATIRA and PRL were started in Ahmedabad in 1947 simultaneously. Both these institutions became model institutions as a number of other institutions were later established on the same lines as ATIRA and PRL.

I would like to specially mention another personality who genuinely helped Sarabhai in all he did in Ahmedabad. It was Shri Kasturbhai Lalbhai, an eminent industrialist full of wisdom and foresight. That is how the success was due to Kasturbhai's wisdom and Sarabhai's vision. There was a special relationship between Kasturbhai and Sarabhai strengthened by mutual understanding, trust and common thinking. All these aspects combined to realize the vision.

Another important aspect of Sarabhai's personality was his race against time!! Working almost for 20 hours a day, he never complained of fatigue or strain. As if he knew that he had to complete so many tasks before he breathed his last. He ignored everyone who beseeched him to take care of himself. This was because, for him, his mission was more important than everything else, even more important than his own life. A personality like Dr. C.V. Raman warned him in a public lecture saying, "Vikram, you are burning your candle from both the ends" - but he continued his relentless mission - his journey to achieve happiness for mankind. Perhaps, it was his race
against time which resulted in his premature death at the age of 52 !!!!

I do not intend to write his biography. But such individuals are not born very often. Unfortunately, as usual, none was able to recognise that there was such an extra-ordinary genius at work - we realized this only after his sad demise.

There are many lessons we can learn from his life ............ These lessons are for both individuals as well as for society.

I am very thankful to my guide Prof. Pravin N. Sheth for his guidance and cooperation. For sparing his valuable time whenever I went to him for his help. To Dr. S.R. Ganesh whose guidance helped me to move out of my subject and who introduced me to many more subjects to understand and clarify many new aspects covered in this study. Apart from his academic scholarship what appealed to me more was his sympathetic approach towards his students like me. My special thanks and gratitude to him.

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- Padmanabh K. Joshi