

**ADDRESS BY THE HON'BLE PRESIDENT OF INDIA
SHRI RAM NATH KOVIND
AT THE CONVOCATION CEREMONY OF ANNA UNIVERSITY**

Chennai, March 11, 2021

Vanakkam!

இந்த மதிப்புமிக்க பல்கலைக்கழகத்தின் பட்டமளிப்பு விழாவில் உங்களைப்போன்ற உற்சாகமான மாணவர்களிடையே இருப்பதில் நான் பெருமகிழ்ச்சி அடைகிறேன். இன்று பட்டம் பெற்ற எனது இளம் நண்பர்களுக்கு குறிப்பாக அவர்களின் சிறப்பான செயல்திறன் மற்றும் கல்வி திறனுக்காக பதக்கங்களை வென்றவர்களுக்கு எனது மனமார்ந்த வாழ்த்துக்கள். [It is indeed a pleasure for me to stand here among the enthusiastic students on the occasion of the convocation ceremony of this prestigious university. My heartiest congratulations to my young friends who have received their degrees today, especially to those who have won medals for their meritorious performance and academic excellence.]

Anna University is blessed to be located in this land of Tamil Nadu which has been the cradle of knowledge and learning since times immemorial. The long literary tradition spanning over centuries in the form of Sangam Literature is a matter of pride for all Indians, as it symbolises the rich cultural heritage of our country. The anthologies of poems from this literature have been universally appreciated by readers and scholars alike. With the antiquity of texts embodied in its ancient literature, it is not surprising that Tamil language has been accorded the status of classical language.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Knowledge is wealth, and it is the best among all forms of wealth. As the famous saying elaborates that it cannot be stolen by thieves, cannot be seized by kings, cannot be divided amongst brothers, and it is not heavy to carry either. The more it is spent, the more it

flourishes. The wealth of knowledge is therefore, the most important among all kinds of wealth.

Knowledge is the foundation upon which the character of each individual is built. I have said earlier and would like to reiterate that education is the catalyst for change and the youth is the most potent agent of social transformation. Educated youth, given the right direction can bring revolutionary changes in the course of history.

That is what the National Education Policy 2020 aims to achieve. Last year, I had the opportunity to discuss with the Visitors and Vice Chancellors of the central universities and higher education institutions, the educational scenario in our country and the implementation of the new policy. The new policy seeks to implement a modern education system based on research, skill and acumen relevant to the evolving needs of the present. At the same time, it would also include within its domain our rich cultural heritage in consonance with a futuristic outlook. The policy focuses on inculcating moral values and promoting understanding of Indian culture. I am confident that the implementation of this policy would usher in an era of modern learning and education. It will create a brigade of researchers and professionals who would take our country to the great heights of development, as befitting our national aspirations.

It is heartening for me to know that today I stand in a university which is the hub of technological education. It is one of the largest technological universities in the world, offering undergraduate and postgraduate courses in Engineering, Technology, Architecture and Applied Sciences relevant to the current and projected needs of the society. I am told that the oldest college of this university made humble beginnings in the form of the School of Survey in the summer of May 1794. Over the years, it became the famous Guindy College of Engineering which celebrated its 225th anniversary last year. From those beginnings has grown a large cluster of excellent academic institutions which has four university department campuses, 13 constituent colleges, three regional campuses at Tirunelveli, Madurai and Coimbatore, and over 550 affiliated colleges. Not only in

numbers, but in quality too, the Anna University making an impressive contribution in the field of education sector. That is why it figures among the top institutions in QS World and NIRF rankings.

Even the number of the students has drastically increased over the years. What is more encouraging is that this university has been witnessing gender empowerment through education and it shows in the number of women students at this university. I am told that more than one lakh candidates at undergraduate, postgraduate and PhD levels are receiving degrees today of which about 45 percent are women. It was a bigger pleasure for me to know that out of total students being conferred with gold medals and first-class degrees today, more than 60 percent are women. I am told that out of 66 students being conferred gold medals, 42 are our daughters and further out of 13 students, I just gave gold medals to, I noticed nine are girls. This shows the lead being taken by our daughters in our society. This excellence displayed by women is a reflection of the future of India as a developed nation. I congratulate each one of these daughters for this accomplishment, which is just a stepping stone on the path of further progress, both academic and personal.

Anna University has created a conducive ambience for encouraging technological pursuits that cultivates the right learning attitude for the young students. The scientific temper that is nurtured in the students is well expressed in the projects and achievements of this university. I am glad to note that this is the first Indian university to design, develop and operate a satellite in association with ISRO. Named ANUSAT, the satellite is not just an achievement but also an inspiration for young minds across the globe to open up and reach for the stars.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honour for me to come to Anna University as my esteemed predecessor, Bharat Ratna Dr. A. P. J. Abdul Kalam, was also an alumnus of this university. The Government of Tamil Nadu has done well to have instituted an award named after him. This university has produced icons like Dr. Verghese Kurien who literally engineered a

great social transformation through milk cooperatives. As the driving force behind the White Revolution, Dr. Kurien will always be remembered as one of the foremost social entrepreneurs of modern India. Such illustrious alumni of this university remain sources of inspiration, not only for all of you but also for all students everywhere.

We in India believe in promoting knowledge for the benefit of all. I am reminded of the great poet, Subramania Bharati, who wrote:

பூரண ஞானம் பொலிந்த நன்னாடு
புத்தர்பிரா னருள் பொங்கிய நாடு

“Our country India is blessed with complete knowledge,
It is this place where resides the compassion of Gautam
Buddha.”

It is this compassion combined with knowledge that helps a nation march ahead on the path of progress while promoting a culture of caring. I am confident that all the students receiving degrees today will walk this path in their life ahead and make their alma mater and our country proud.

My young friends today are on the threshold of beginning a new journey. Some of you would be pursuing higher studies while others may take up professional responsibilities. But always remember that it is your deeds that will reflect your personality. Always try to give back to your family, society and country which have nurtured you in the most significant phase of your life. I am sure that you will never step back from putting in your best.

I extend my best wishes to the students. I also congratulate their families who have worked hard to bring each one of them thus far in their journey of life. I also appreciate the faculty and administration on this occasion for their contribution.

Thank you,

Jai Hind!