

**ADDRESS BY THE HON'BLE PRESIDENT OF INDIA
SMT DROUPADI MURMU
AT THE INAUGURAL SESSION OF THE INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S
CONFERENCE BEING ORGANISED BY THE ART OF LIVING
INTERNATIONAL CENTRE**

Bengaluru, February 14, 2025

I am happy to join you all at this inaugural session of the International Women's Conference of the Art of Living. It is heartening to see so many women from different walks of life gathered here from various parts of the world. You are the ones who can make a positive and long-lasting impact in the lives of people, especially other women, across the world.

The theme of this conference, "Just Be", encourages people to pause, reflect and look deep within. Within us is a treasure of virtues, talents and immense strength. It is for us to find it and use it for our own benefit as well as for the benefit of humankind. Sri Sri Ravi Shankar ji and the Art of Living centre have inspired and helped people around the world to search within and find inner peace through meditation and humanitarian service.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We are in the age of technological disruption. The advances in technology have given us a better quality of life in some ways. In such a competitive world, we must ensure that our human values remain intact. In fact, every human being needs to put in extra effort consciously, to promote human values of compassion, love and unity. This is where the role of women becomes very important. Women have a special ability to lead through compassion. They hold the ability to look beyond the individual and work for the well-being of families, communities, and even relationships at the global level.

Today, women who have contributed to the development of the people and the nations through their own unique ways, are present here in the conference. I am told that they will deliberate upon the matters

concerning mind and consciousness. I am also told that the sessions in this conference will focus on using the power of mind in overcoming various challenges. I am confident that all the women attending this conference, will come out with such spiritual principles that can be applied by people to make their lives and also the lives of those around them, more beautiful and peaceful. Conferences like this also spread the message that a person is not an isolated entity, but part of an interconnected whole.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am told that this conference will also hold sessions on mental wellness. In today's world, mental health has become one of the most crucial issues facing people of all age groups. Women, in particular, are at the crossroads of multiple challenges including competing professionally, meeting societal expectations, and fulfilling personal aspirations. Sometimes the cultural norms of a society make it difficult for women to speak openly about their emotional well-being. Each of us need to understand that mental wellness is fundamental to the ability of any woman to lead a meaningful life and contribute to the family, society and the world. You all can help break the silence that surrounds mental health issues by creating safe spaces for dialogue and providing support systems. Together, you all can be the change-makers and can ensure that mental health is integrated into every facet of our lives.

I feel proud to share that India's Nari Shakti is rising to aspire, achieve and contribute. Whether it is science, sports, politics, art or culture, our sisters and daughters are moving ahead, holding their heads high. They are making their families, institutions and the country proud. It is not possible to break barriers and challenge stereotypes without mental strength. I urge every woman to gather courage, dream big and utilize all her strength and potential to achieve her dreams. Every little step that each of you takes towards your goal, is a step towards a developed India.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am happy to know that the Art of Living is undertaking several

initiatives in the field of education. I am told that these initiatives are benefitting children not just in urban but also in the remote tribal areas of our country. It is heartening to know that most of the children are first generation literates. There is no greater investment in humanity than the education of our children. Education has the power to break cycles of poverty and inequality. I was the first girl from my village to go for higher schooling and pursue college education. With right guidance and support, many children can become active participants in the journey of our nation. As women leaders, you all have a significant role in shaping the future through the education of next generation.

Here I would also like to highlight the need to work together to deal with the global challenges like climate change. I urge you all to deliberate upon issues related to environment conservation. Our mother earth nurtures us all. Let us take such steps which take care of our Mother earth.

I expect you all to come to the forefront and take responsibility for a safer and prosperous future for our children. I expect you all to have a dream that is bigger than your personal ambitions - a dream for your country, a dream for the world. I extend my best wishes to all of you for a bright future and purposeful life.

Thank you!

Jai Hind!

Jai Bharat!