

**ADDRESS BY THE HON'BLE PRESIDENT OF INDIA
SMT. DROUPADI MURMU
AT THE CONVOCATION CEREMONY OF THE NATIONAL
INSTITUTE OF DESIGN, AHMEDABAD**

Ahmedabad, February 27, 2025

I am glad to be here today with you. I find the atmosphere here quite pleasing and inspiring. Ahmedabad is home to some of the most distinctive educational initiatives in post-Independence India, and the National Institute of Design is one of them. NID indeed holds a place of its own, not only as the pioneer of design of education and practice in the country, but also for its unique way of teaching. Its faculty and students have consistently raised the bar of excellence in this field. I am sure the students completing their studies today will continue this great tradition.

Design can mean different things to different people, but in essence it is a very simple concept. An example of design thinking is the invention of the wheel, and it changed the world forever. Design can also produce something that is visually pleasing. For example, the invitation for the Republic Day 'At-Home' ceremony last month was designed by the NID. It featured visual elements associated with south India, and was very much appreciated by everyone.

The concept of design has many aspects and the NID has excelled in all of them, with emphasis on 'design as a service for the betterment of society'. There are many problems all around us, and many of them require not great resources but design tweaks. Creative thinking can lead to solutions that can improve the ease of living, especially for the underprivileged communities. To put it differently, design is often a less

noticed but crucial factor in social and economic development of our country.

Traditionally, in our country, design has been interwoven in the fabric of everyday life in all communities. Some of the historical facts are well known, and I am happy to note that the NID has done exemplary work in studying the lesser known design traditions. I am sure there is much more to be done in this regard. We need to study and document knowledge systems, including design systems, of more traditional communities. Their cultural practices, I believe, hold the key to some of the challenges that confront the world in the twenty-first century. Therefore, revitalizing the historical solutions drawn from India's diverse cultures and leveraging them for innovation will benefit not only the nation but will also contribute to global progress.

Design forms a bridge between tradition and modernity. It brings together time-honoured knowledge, crafts, and artistic practices, which are often rooted in rural and tribal communities, on one hand, and contemporary technologies and design principles on the other. This fusion fosters innovation and also preserves our rich cultural heritage.

This is particularly important in rural and tribal settings, where traditional skills need to be enhanced, adapted and integrated with modern needs to create sustainable livelihoods. NID's outreach programmes exemplify this by sharing expertise with traditional and social sectors across India. This fosters innovation and exploration of new market potential for crafts through collaborations with artisans.

Our designers have demonstrated the power of design to create positive social change. They are making impactful design interventions in the social sector, bringing improvements in crucial areas such as healthcare, housing and sanitation. They are focusing their skills and expertise on addressing real-world problems, which often affect marginalised communities. This way, they are also helping bridge the urban-rural divide. After all, the benefits of designers' expertise must

reach all segments of society, promoting equitable and balanced development.

The NID has been at the forefront of all such praiseworthy efforts. Moreover, it has applied the same creative thinking to the problem of design education and created a model of its own. Its interdisciplinary, holistic approach to problem-solving offers valuable lessons for other educational institutes. Indeed, integrating design pedagogy into the education system can make learning more meaningful too.

Those of you who are completing the studies today are fortunate to have been taught in this great institution by eminent teachers and practitioners. On this important day in your life, I would like to say a few words to you. This place has taught you skills and nurtured your talents. As you step out in the world and begin your career now, you will surely remember that this exceptional education was made possible by our society and you will be happy whenever you get an opportunity to pay back to the society, no matter how and where.

In design, as I understand it, there is form and then there is function. Making beautiful things is a creative work and brings joy as well as monetary rewards. But never forget the functional aspect. There are problems that await your solutions. Your creative spark can change the lives of people. Do spend some time in villages, and if possible in remote areas. It will inspire new ways of looking at the world, and if you can help people there with your learning, so much the better. Think of the humble 'charkha' and then think of Gandhiji who rediscovered it and sought out people to enhance its design. His sole motive was to free millions of people from poverty. His notion of design had a beauty of its own.

My congratulations to the students as well as the faculty, the administrators, the director and the Governing Council on today's occasion. My best wishes to you all.

Thank you.
Jai Hind!
Jai Bharat!