

**ADDRESS BY THE HON'BLE PRESIDENT OF INDIA
SMT DROUPADI MURMU
ON THE OCCASION OF INAUGURATION OF FINE 2023
AND PRESENTATION OF 11TH BIENNIAL NATIONAL GRASSROOTS
INNOVATION AND OUTSTANDING TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE
AWARDS OF NIF**

Rashtrapati Bhavan, April 10, 2023

It gives me immense pleasure to welcome you all to Rashtrapati Bhavan. We have gathered here today to celebrate the festival of innovation and creativity. The spirit of entrepreneurship and the zeal to find solutions to challenging problems should indeed be encouraged and rewarded. India has been a land of innovations and inventions. We all are aware about the inventions and innovations of Indus Valley Civilization such as systematic drainage system, well planned architecture, irrigation system, metallurgy techniques and many more. In those times, our ancestors were able to develop technologically advanced structures. Today we are living in an era of technology. So it is our responsibility to make use of technology and bring such innovations which can transform the way of life of people. Innovations and budding innovators will lead the way in times to come.

Today we have an organized database and a diverse innovation ecosystem which is evident from the awards presented today. The 11th Biennial National Grassroots Innovation and Outstanding Traditional Knowledge Awards of the National Innovation Foundation support and enrich the diversification approach of Indian innovation ecosystem. I congratulate the Ministry of Science and Technology and National Innovation Foundation for this commendable initiative towards recognizing and rewarding the creativity and spirit of innovation in the people of the country. FINE- Festival of Innovation and Entrepreneurship is a unique effort which promotes science, technology and innovation

and encourages the citizens to undertake entrepreneurship and make their mark in India and abroad.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Citizens at the grassroots have the potential to come up with Science and Technology based innovative solutions and serve the country to the best of their abilities. NIF plays significant role in encouraging and supporting such innovators.

The National Innovation Foundation (NIF) – India, set up in March 2000 with the assistance of Department of Science and Technology, Government of India, is India's national initiative to strengthen the grassroots technological innovations and outstanding traditional knowledge. I am told that NIF has pooled a database of over 3,25,000 technological ideas, innovations and traditional knowledge practices from over 625 districts of the country. I am happy to know that NIF has already recognised 1093 grassroots innovators and school students at the national level in its various Award Functions.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

These innovation awards are not just a recognition of the work done by the innovators like you but also a stepping stone in your journey ahead. I am told that many Padma awardees have earlier been honoured with innovation awards also. I am happy to know that two Padma awardees of this year - C V Raju and Moa Subong have in the past received innovation awards. C V Raju has got award for Etikoppaka wooden Toys and Moa Subong has been awarded for Bamhum - a bamboo musical instrument. This shows the huge potential of our creative minds, our innovators and our citizens as a whole.

Today we are celebrating not just the achievements of innovators but the spirit of creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship. We can see small innovations happening every other day around us. Mothers daily

use innovation in making meals for their children, teachers use creativity in finding new teaching methods, and some fields such as advertising and marketing are very much dependent on creative skills. So we just have to understand and encourage the creativity and innovation which is already present everywhere.

I have noted that there is only one woman recipient among the 13 national awardees honoured here. All women use creativity daily in their household chores and in other areas also. It is time to encourage women to come up with innovative solutions and products that the country needs. I am sure once the families start supporting the women, they will be able to contribute more in this area too, as they are already doing in other fields.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

One important aspect of supporting and enhancing creativity is to encourage children and youth to ask questions. Curiosity and spirit of enquiry are essential for finding out solutions to challenging problems. Our children should grow up to become solution providers. At least their minds should be working in that direction. Once they understand that they have the capability to find solutions, they will certainly find creative and innovative ways to reach the solution.

Another important thing is that our citizens should have the zeal to serve the country. He or she should try to understand the problems and issues arising in the country and should feel responsible to contribute towards solving them may be at a small scale. I would also like to urge all the innovators, entrepreneurs, traditional knowledge holders and industry representatives to come together to find eco-friendly and sustainable solutions and encourage innovations in this direction. With such great minds and an advanced technology it is not very difficult to achieve sustainable and inclusive development.

NIF in collaboration with the Government, is playing important role in taking grassroots innovations to the forefront. However I would like to

urge the industry representatives to support the young innovators and entrepreneurs. They have a huge role to play in the growth and development of the country especially in Amrit Kaal. The world is looking upon India and we have to show the way forward to others. The Government through various schemes such as Start up India and Stand up India, is providing opportunities to our people to take up entrepreneurship and become employment generators also.

In today's innovation and entrepreneurship eco-system, I am proud to note that our grassroots innovators keep on moving ahead with enthusiasm and with the spirit of service. Once they are convinced of the merit of their innovations and get support from organizations like the National Innovation Foundation, they choose the professional route and become the Grassroots "*Innovator turned entrepreneurs*". They use indigenous resources to solve local problems. Further they continue to follow their dreams and go on to generate revenues and employment. I congratulate the innovators and entrepreneurs for thinking out of the box and also working day and night to fulfil their dreams.

I complement the Ministry of Science and Technology and "National Innovation Foundation" for working to strengthen innovation ecosystem in the country for more than two decades. While many economies are still planning whether they should have their National Innovation Foundation, I am glad that we have established one which gave us a database of few lakh innovations. Many among them are reaching us by way of dissemination through various modes.

Dear Grassroots Innovators, Student Innovators and Outstanding Traditional Knowledge Holders,

I wish that you always keep your innovative and creative spirit alive and I convey best wishes to you all for bright future.

Thank you!
Jai Hind!

Jai Bharat!