

**ADDRESS BY THE HON'BLE PRESIDENT OF INDIA
SMT. DROUPADI MURMU
ON THE OCCASION OF INAUGURATION OF
THE NEW DELHI WORLD BOOK FAIR 2025**

New Delhi, February 1, 2025

I am happy to be among so many book lovers present here at the inauguration of this Book Fair. I am told that the National Book Trust and the Ministry of Education have been organizing this book fair for the past five decades. I appreciate their sustained contribution to the great cause of promoting the culture of reading books.

This year's theme of the Fair highlights journey of India as a Republic during the last 75 years. This Book Fair also provides an excellent expression to India's cultural diversity, its abiding unity and impressive progress.

I am glad to know that many other countries also participate in this Fair. I am happy that the Russian Federation, the Focus Country of this Fair, will organize various literary events, activities for children and cultural performances. I am sure that Russia's special participation in the Fair will help strengthen cultural bonds between the two countries.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Reading books is not just a hobby; it is a transformative experience. Reading books from different languages and cultures builds bridges among regions and communities. I am glad to know that this Book Fair has many stalls representing India's different languages, and also languages of other countries. This will enable book-lovers to access literature from around the world at one place.

I appeal everyone to give special importance to creation and promotion of books for children. One of the best habits we can develop in our children is the love for reading books. Every elder should take it up as an important duty.

I gratefully remember my elders, including my teachers who inspired me into reading more and more books. I recall a few lines of an Odia poem which I read during my school days:

ଏହି ବହିରୁ ପଢ଼େ ମୁଁ ଯାଠ,
ବହିକି ପଢ଼ି ବୋଲାଏ ଚାଟ,
ଏ ବହି ମୋତେ ବତାଏ ବାଟ,
ବହିଟି ମୋର ସାଥୀ;
ଏ ବହି ପଢ଼ି କେତେ କଥା ମୁଁ
ଶିଖଇ ନିତି ନିତି ।

It means:

I read my lessons from this book. I become a student by reading the book. The book shows me the right path. The book is my friend. And I also learn so many things by reading the book.

If the habit of reading is cultivated during childhood, it remains a life-long habit.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Apart from reading the books prescribed as part of the syllabus, school children should read different kinds of books on diverse subjects. This will help them discover their potential and capabilities. This will also help them become good human beings.

I am happy to know that in this Book Fair, several activities promoting children's literature and reading habit are being organized.

Developing the habit of reading among our children should be done in a concerted and consistent manner by elders, teachers, writers, publishers, voluntary organisations, social workers, media groups and everyone who can contribute to this cause. When you make a child enjoy reading, you contribute to nation-building.

The magic of books should continue to guide us towards building a more learned and compassionate society.

I wish all the book-lovers a very bright future.

Thank you!

Jai Hind!

Jai Bharat!