

ADDRESS BY THE HON'BLE PRESIDENT OF INDIA
SMT. DROUPADI MURMU
ON THE OCCASION OF CALL ON BY THE IAS PROBATIONERS
(2021 BATCH) UNDERGOING THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY
PROGRAM

Rashtrapati Bhavan, September 25, 2023

You have succeeded in getting into one of the most coveted career options in our country. I convey my heartiest congratulations to all of you. I also express my appreciation for your consistent hard work and sincerity. These qualities have enabled you to enter into what is seen as a 'dream career' by a large number of aspirational youth. You have to demonstrate the same passion and sense of purpose in serving the people, especially those who are under-privileged.

Your service is unlike any other service in terms of authority, role and responsibility. In fact, it is not a service, it is a mission. It is the mission to take India and its people forward under the framework of good governance. Serving the nation and its people is your destiny. Making India an inclusive and developed nation is your collective destination. You are fortunate that your career span is almost co-terminus with Amrit Kaal. This Amrit Kaal is rightly being described as 'Kartavya Kaal' for every Indian. This period also covers the larger time-slice of our remaining window of demographic opportunity. You can make a huge contribution by enabling the fellow young citizens to realise their potential in different fields. You have the great opportunity to contribute to building the developed India of 2047.

You will be instruments of executive action at the ground level during the early phase of your career. Later, you will also play your role in policy

making. You can become effective change-agents in transforming our country through your commitment and creativity.

My dear young officers,

I have seen from close quarters, the difficulties and problems faced by the people living in backward areas and belonging to the deprived segments of our society. I have also seen some sensitive civil servants who went the extra mile to help such people. A compassionate civil servant whose heart beats for the poor and the under-privileged is a true civil servant as distinct from merely a career bureaucrat. Uplifting people of the marginalized sections of the society should be an article of faith for you.

An inclusive, progressive and sensitive society allows greater space to women in all walks of life. The nation is on the path of women empowerment and women-led development. I am very happy that the historic 'Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam' has been passed by both the houses of Parliament. Women are breaking stereo-types and glass-ceilings. They are playing increasingly larger roles in all aspects of growth and development. I have been told that in the batches from 2019 to 2022, the percentage of women IAS officers had ranged between 28 per cent to 34 per cent. I am very happy to note that the percentage of women IAS officers has gone as high as 42 per cent for the batch 2023. Also, out of the top 25 ranks, 14 positions have been occupied by women. These are fresh winds of positive changes. All of you have to further strengthen this trend and make our society more and more inclusive.

My dear young officers,

I find that your training modules are very well conceived. They have also undergone changes to make them more aligned to the dynamic requirements of good governance. I am sure that all of you enjoyed the Bharat Darshan and learnt a lot from it. It is significant to note that the training component is Bharat Darshan and not Bharat Bhraman. It is done with a view to getting insight into the rich diversity of our great

country. You should build upon the glimpses of our great nation seen by you and make your awareness deeper and wider through continuous learning. I have been told that you have just started your training stint as Assistant Secretaries in different departments of the Central Government. As Assistant Secretaries, unlike officers in the field, you will be dealing more with files than with people. However, I will expect you to always visualize the people who are going to be impacted by the files you deal with. You should make efforts to understand the link between 'file to field' and also between 'field to file'. This people centric alertness and sensitivity will make you engage with the files in a far more meaningful manner. I am sure that the national level perspective that you will develop during your current training module will help you in a big way when you go back to your cadre after completing the phase-two of your training at Mussoorie.

As you all may be knowing that before independence, the All-India Administrative Service Training School was located a few kilometers from here at Metcalfe House, Delhi. Sardar Vallabhabhai Patel was the Home Minister in the Interim Government of India constituted in 1946 during the transition to our independence. With his great vision, Sardar Patel gave the blue-print for the civil services of independent India. Speaking to the probationers in April, 1947 Sardar Patel outlined the code of conduct for public servants who were going to work for progress and development of newly independent India. Probationers like you are going to build the developed India of 2047. What Sardar Patel communicated to that group of probationers in 1947 remains relevant for all of you also. I will quote from the great speech of Sardar Patel for your benefit. Sardar Patel had said and I quote, 'You should regard it as a proud privilege ... to uphold throughout your service its dignity, integrity and in-corrumpibility. It is not for you to approach your task ... entirely from self-interest ... your foremost consideration should be how best to contribute to the well-being of India as a whole ... If you serve in the true spirit of service, I am sure, you will have your best reward.' [Unquote]

By following these guiding principles given by Sardar Patel, I am sure that you will enjoy success and glory. I wish you all, a very successful journey ahead.

Thank you!

Jai Hind!

Jai Bharat!