

**ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT OF INDIA,
SHRI RAM NATH KOVIND
ON THE OCCASION OF CALL ON BY THE INDIAN
ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICE OFFICERS (2017 BATCH)**

Rashtrapati Bhavan, September 23, 2019

1. I warmly welcome you to Rashtrapati Bhavan. I congratulate you on joining the prestigious Indian Administrative Service. You are all talented young people and now a part of a privileged group. The basis for this privilege comes from the higher call of duty and service that is expected from you. This has been the legacy of your distinguished Service and you must continue to uphold it.

Dear Officers,

2. Your Service is at the vanguard of India's development and growth. In the past seven decades, we have made significant progress as a nation but a lot more is required to be achieved. There are social challenges to be overcome. There are economic constraints that mandate us to accelerate growth while being respectful of the environment. And there is the ever pressing need to adhere to the principles of social justice and equity. We, as a nation, as a people, are determined to overcome these limitations and transform India. And you, as change-makers, will be at the centre of all this. Your generation will be witness to unparalleled makeover of India, as a vibrant democracy, as a global economic engine and as a nation having eliminated poverty and providing higher standards of living for its people.
3. We have promised ourselves to create a new India. In the last several years, the government has made remarkable progress in providing rural housing, toilets, electricity, roads, clean cooking fuel and financial inclusion. And now we have undertaken to provide clean drinking water to millions across

India. Over a billion people have been given digital identity. More and more public service is being made available on the digital platform. These have led to ease of living for people, which in turn have led to rising aspirations, and we are duty bound to meet them.

4. You are about to finish your 13 month attachment with the Government of India. In your engagement with the various Ministries, you would have got a macro-picture of our national priorities, our diversity and our challenges. The scope, coverage and objectives of Ayushman Bharat, Jal Shakti Abhiyan, Swachh Bharat and Beti Bachao Beti Padhao, to name some of our key programmes, would have given you an understanding of the scale of the change that we aspire to bring. You are already conversant with ground realities having undergone your district training and attachments. You have thus been part of both the vision and implementation. You are now fully equipped to combine and connect the two.
5. In your endeavor, you will have to look at approaches that give optimum results. You must emphasize on teamwork and take everybody along and recognize everybody's contribution. And while you do so, you must lead and be a role-model. You must make best use of technology to foster good governance. You must also encourage greater people's participation in socio-economic programmes, especially where you are dealing with mindsets and attitudes. Administration is no more about "us" and "them", but only about "us" and "us together". The gap between government and people must go. Your approach should be people-sensitive and people-centric. We are duty bound to enhance "Ease of Living" for our people.
6. In these changing times, communication has become seminal to achieving results. You must develop effective channels of communication with people and with stakeholders using digital platforms, social media, youth clubs and more. These would also be an effective mechanism of feedback for you.

Dear Officers,

7. India is changing fast. The youth is aspiring for more. Our women are confident and playing a greater role in nation-building. Our people are demanding efficient public service, better roads, better sanitation, and better digital network. We are also witness to greater transparency and accountability in public life.
8. These present new challenges for you. But you should not treat them as hindrances. You must not hesitate in taking decisions in public interest. You have been given authority and you must exercise it with impartiality, for if you don't, you are denying someone, and more often, the needy and the poor, her or his due. And you must maintain the highest standards of integrity and honesty in the discharge of your duty. You will be judged by your actions and by your intentions. The people of India have placed great faith in you and you should do your best to keep their trust.
9. You represent a new India, an India that is confident, progressive, open to ideas and one that wants to bring people to the centre of governance. You have chosen your career as a vocation, as a service. And that should come out clear in your conduct and demeanor. I expect that you would take the lead to change the whole vocabulary around District Administration, where authority and power must now be understood to be service and dedication to a larger cause.

Dear officers,

10. You are at the cutting-edge of implementation and your role is paramount if India is to transform itself to a 5 trillion economy, to double farm-income, to achieve social justice and to make women equal stakeholders in our progress. You have worked hard and with sincerity to reach thus far in life. You must continue with the same zeal and dedication to serve the people of India.

11. And as you prepare for your career ahead, a word of caution for you. We are a parliamentary system of government. We elect our representatives, who owe their allegiance to their respective political parties governing in States and at the Centre. These political representatives have a dual role, one to serve the people and another to nurture their political constituency. But you have only one role – and that is to serve the people as public servants. While discharging your official duties you are expected to be always neutral and objective, in implementing government policies. If you fail to do so, you would break the trust placed in you by the system. Impartiality is the hallmark of Bureaucracy, and you must observe it in letter and spirit.

12. Your Service is the pivot of India's administration that combines, integrates and holds together the various layers of national, state and local governance. On you depends the aspirations and hopes of the poor and marginalized, and on you depends the well-being of our billion plus people. I am sure you will stand up to their expectations. I wish you the very best in your careers ahead.

Thank you.