

**ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT OF INDIA,
SHRI RAM NATH KOVIND
ON THE OCCASION OF CALL ON BY THE OFFICER TRAINEES
OF INDIAN INFORMATION SERVICE**

Rashtrapati Bhavan, October 31, 2019

1. I am pleased to meet all of you today and welcome you to Rashtrapati Bhavan. I congratulate the young Officers Trainees joining the Indian Information Service after succeeding in the Civil Services Examination. You have opted to join a career at a time when information has become critical in building of a society. I am sure that while working for the Government, you will get many opportunities to serve the people of our great country.

Dear Officer Trainees,

2. We are living in an era where information is suitably democratised. It is in this context that your joining the information service is particularly relevant. Today, information is available far and wide and is no longer the preserve of the elite. Even so, there remains a large segment of our people that could benefit from greater awareness about different public programmes and welfare schemes.
3. As Officers of Indian Information Service, you play a versatile role in not only dissemination of information but also in checking its veracity and collating it for a meaningful purpose. In this era of dumbing down of information, you need to emerge as providers of positive information, that is, information which is useful and relevant for people and society. This is in addition to your role as Information Gate Keepers and Information Enablers. It is for you all to make welfare schemes understandable to the common people. Without people's participation and support, even the best of policies, programmes and public schemes may fail to deliver on their promise. Thus, your role becomes important.

4. Through public outreach and communication, you can educate people about different welfare schemes and policies. All of you have the skills and ability to make these welfare schemes and policies comprehensible, relevant, real and actionable for the people at the last mile. Thus, you play an important role in ensuring people's participation which is most critical to the success of any programme.
5. I am told that the Officers of Indian Information Service played an important role in ensuring the success of Swachh Bharat Mission, Jan Dhan Yojana and Ujjawala Schemes. Information Officers have contributed in a big way towards the success of the Voter Education Programme of the Election Commission of India, strengthening democracy at the grassroots. It is through communication tailored to different segments of the society and stakeholders that these schemes and programmes achieved phenomenal people's participation. This success entailed communication to change strong habits and behaviours. Such communication is always challenging. It was left to professionals like all of you to work with other stakeholders to take on this challenge and indeed you did extremely well.
6. I am happy to know that Information Service probationers get extensive training not only in traditional modes of communication such as Broadcast and Print but also in the new age tools of Social Media. This is extremely important as the platforms for public communication have undergone rapid change in the last few years. New communication formats will continue to emerge in days to come. All of you must be prepared to keep learning and acquire the skills to master the communication paradigm of the future. At the same time, make every effort to master the classical skills in a communicator's toolkit. Sharpen your writing skills so that you can prepare incisive papers, whether they are notes for media or talking points for senior political executives or civil servants. Develop strong professional networks with the media

community, so that you can disseminate correct information concerning issues of public importance and check misinformation. By doing so you will be able to ensure that the government's outreach and communication with people shall remain relevant, timely, practical and effective.

Dear Officers,

7. All of you are public servants. You are expected to serve the nation and its people with courage of conviction and devotion to duty. In whatever capacity you serve or whatever role you play, always do so in the spirit of public service – committed, transparent, accountable, efficient, responsive and professional. While discharging your duties, you must maintain the highest standards of integrity and discipline. As probationers, you have been invariably on alert against any errors. You should stick fast to the probationer's mindset, and remain ever alert and honest in the service of the nation. I wish you all success in your career and happiness in your personal life.

Thank you,
Jai Hind!