

**ADDRESS BY THE HON'BLE PRESIDENT OF INDIA
SMT. DROUPADI MURMU
ON THE OCCASION OF CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS
OF ST. TERESA'S COLLEGE**

Ernakulam, October 24, 2025

I am very happy to be here to participate in the centenary celebrations of this esteemed college. It is indeed a historic occasion for this excellent institution.

St. Teresa's College has been promoting women's education in India with steady commitment to spiritual values. This is a great contribution to social transformation and nation building. We should deeply acknowledge the vision and legacy of distinguished personalities who built this institution and led it through a century of sustained accomplishments. This college has been spreading the light of knowledge among women for a century. More importantly, it has been transforming lives. I am sure that you will take forward the noble tradition of Mother Teresa of St. Rose of Lima, the founder of this college.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Women from Kerala have given leadership to the nation. Fifteen exceptional women-members of the Constituent Assembly added rich perspectives in the making of the Constitution of India. Of those 15 outstanding women, three were from Kerala. Ammu Swaminathan, Annie Mascarene and Dakshayani Velayudan had influenced deliberations on fundamental rights, social justice and gender equality, as also on several other important aspects.

Ammu Swaminathan was known for her advocacy of gender equality. Addressing the Constituent Assembly on 24th November 1949, she had said and I quote, "Now we can say that when the Indian people themselves framed their Constitution they have given rights to women equal with every other citizen of the country. That, in itself, is a great

achievement, and it is going to help our women not only to realise their responsibilities but to come forward and fully shoulder their responsibilities to make India a great country that she had been.” [UNQUOTE]

It is heartening to note that, as foreseen by Ammu Swaminathan, women in India have been shouldering major responsibilities in our nation-building-efforts. Women of Kerala have set great examples of excellence. The first lady to become a High Court Judge in India was Justice Anna Chandy. In 1956, she became a judge in the High Court of Kerala. Justice M. Fathima Beevi made history when she became the first lady judge in the Supreme Court of India in 1989.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The bright women students of this college represent young India, thriving India and vibrant India. Kerala has most favourable gender-ratio in our country. This can be emulated by other States.

Active participation of women is necessary for the country to leverage its demographic dividend. Gender Budget allocation has increased four and a half times during the last decade. Women led MSMEs nearly doubled between 2011 and 2024. One of the key pillars for achieving the vision of Viksit Bharat by 2047 is to achieve 70 per cent women workforce participation. Women from different socio-economic segments have been driving India's progress. Alumnae of this college have been playing a positive role through their contribution to the growth and development of the country.

I am glad to note that this college has illustrious Alumnae serving the nation in several fields including civil services, diplomacy, science and technology, academics, aviation, business enterprises, medical and legal professions and social service.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Community initiatives of the college are in line with the spirit of helping others. I am happy to note that outreach programs of the college have been widely acknowledged. It is commendable that the college community believes in serving the under-privileged, and in maintaining a simple lifestyle. Knowing about students of the college doing selfless work at flood relief camps is truly heart-warming.

I am pleased to note that the college has taken up the project to promote Sustainability, Leadership and Agency through Education which is called SLATE. By taking up this project, the college has demonstrated its commitment to the objectives of National Education Policy 2020. Connecting young people with India's targets under the Sustainable Development Goals and also enabling them for the jobs of tomorrow are praise-worthy aims of the project. Higher Education Institutions like St. Teresa's College will help India emerge as a knowledge super-power. This is the over-arching vision of National Education Policy 2020.

Another initiative of the college that caught my attention is promotion of community participation through Radio Kochi 90FM in talukas and gram panchayats in this area. I have been informed that the community radio service has a large number of listeners who have been helped in times of need through this communication facility.

Dear students,

I urge you to make life-choices with clarity and courage. You should choose the path that allows you to express your passion and capabilities. A society led by women leaders is likely to be more humane while being more efficient.

I am hopeful that you will demonstrate the effectiveness of women-led-development in the areas of your activities after you complete your formal education.

I am confident that this generation of young women students will lead India into becoming Viksit Bharat by 2047. I wish all of you a very bright future.

Ellaa-varkkum Ende Aasham-sagal.

Thank you,

Jai Hind!

Jai Bharat!