

Press Release No.95

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**Hon'ble Governor of Tamil Nadu and the Chancellor of
Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, Thiru. R.N. Ravi
presided over the 42nd Convocation of Tamil Nadu
Agricultural University at Convocation Auditorium,
Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, Coimbatore**

Hon'ble Governor of Tamil Nadu and the Chancellor of Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, Thiru. R.N. Ravi presided over the 42nd Convocation of Tamil Nadu Agricultural University (TNAU) at Convocation Hall, TNAU, Coimbatore today (01.11.2021).

While addressing the Graduates, Hon'ble Governor said, "I am delighted, indeed honoured, to be at this century old institution which has produced reputed scientists like M.S.Swaminathan, the father of India's Green Revolution. This institution has produced world renowned scientists whose names and contributions will continue to shine like bright suns and luminous stars in the galaxy of national and international scientists for long long time to come.

I congratulate all of you who received your degrees and distinctions today. It is a landmark day in your life. Your achievement is a glowing milestone of your success. It opens new doors to avenues and opportunities in your life and career.

As agriculture scientists, you would be touching the soul of India that has traditionally lived in villages and farms. How meaningfully you touch that soul will distinguish you from others.

Our country's Agriculture and Industries were systematically damaged and destroyed during the colonial period. The status of our agriculture and industries until the initial decades of colonization, as available in the records of the British archives bear testimony to the fact that per hectare production of food grains in most parts of India including Tamil Nadu exceeded those in the countries like Japan known for their advanced high yields. Until colonization, India never had food scarcity. By the time the British left India, our agriculture was in such shambles that we did not have adequate food for our people. As a young student in 1960s, I have felt the pangs of humiliation seeing the rice and wheat given as charity by the rich and affluent countries to feed our people.

Thanks to the vision, commitment and untiring efforts of our agriculture scientists, who made the Green Revolution possible, that such a large country within a short time not only became self-sufficient in food but in the true Sanatan spirit of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam, the world is our family, we began feeding the needy and hungry in other countries and continents.

Our country today is food grain surplus. However, corresponding benefit of it has not gone to our farmers majority of who are subsistence and small. A paradoxical situation where the gross food production in the country is surplus and yet the bulk of food producers are poor has arisen due to decades of distorted agriculture policies which though benefited a small number of big farmers did not help the overwhelming majority who are small and marginal.

Our Hon'ble Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi is on a mission to improve the economic lot and overall well being of the small and marginal farmers. Numerous initiatives have been taken in this regard including financial inclusion through Jan Dhan Yojana, Direct Benefit Transfer and enhanced MSP for farm products. The Soil Health Cards are intended to enhance the productivity of the farm and ensure higher return to the farmers.

Our Agriculture scientists have made the country proud by making it food surplus, now the challenge before you is to make agriculture innovative, competitive and diversified while ensuring that it is sustainable.

Today almost every State in our country has an agriculture University. The country has expectation that each of these Universities should be able to help the farmers of the respective State and region in overcoming their agriculture related problems

and also help them with technical know-how. It is expected of them to do hand-holding to an extent, to nudge them towards appropriate agriculture.

I am told that this University has so far produced 30,230 Under graduates, 11,397 Post graduates and 3,504 Ph.D. graduates who have been working in very reputed positions in India and overseas. I wholeheartedly appreciate the entire teaching fraternity for bringing transformational changes in the students. Wherever they are, they are ambassadors of this renowned University.

This would not have been possible without adequate support and patronage of the State Government. However, to optimise the gains, there must be greater and more intimate interface between the University and the State Government. The Tamil Nadu Agricultural University should be technically competent and emotionally involved to identify and resolve the agricultural issues of the farmers of the State. At the same time, the Government of Tamil Nadu should look upon Tamil Nadu Agricultural University as a precious asset, because its main beneficiaries are farmers of Tamil Nadu, make optimum use of it and appreciate and respond to its difficulties and concerns.

In the context of Agricultural Education, I would like to touch upon the implementation strategies framed by The Indian Council

of Agricultural Research in line with the National Education Policy 2020. The ICAR has come up with a vision and a well defined road map with multitude of activities envisaged to comply with various provisions of National Educational Policy 2020.

We have to be prepared for the uncertain disastrous consequences of climate changes like changing monsoon patterns, rising sea levels, deadlier heat waves, intense storms and flash floods. All these pose great threats and risks to the agriculture sector. In a pre-emptive initiatives, some 35 varieties of various crops developed by ICAR institutes were dedicated to the Nation by Shri Narendra Modi, Hon'ble Prime Minister of India on 28th September, 2021. Earlier on a separate occasion, the Hon'ble Prime Minister dedicated 17 biofortified varieties of 8 crops to the Nation on the occasion of 75th Anniversary of the Agriculture and Food Organisation (FAO), the United Nations.

The UN General Assembly's consideration of 2023 as the 'International Year of Millets' which was initiated by India and supported by over 70 Nations gives us a boost. I am told that this University stands pioneer in Millets research accounting for nearly 120 years of work at various research stations. Millets are the crops of 'Gene house'. The varieties related in Sorghum, Pearl Millet, Finger Millet, Barnyard Millet and Maize had far

reaching consequences owing to their higher yield and nutritional superiority.

An Agricultural University's contribution to public is generally assessed by the extent of its impact on the economy of the people. I am informed that the incremental income due to the adoption of TNAU crop varieties, management technologies and farm machineries by Tamil Nadu farming community is worth Rs.10,433 Crore per annum. The sector wise contribution of Rs.5,029 Crore (crop varieties), Rs.4,863 Crore (management technologies) and Rs.541 Crore (farm machineries) respectively. It is indeed a remarkable contribution. My earnest compliments to the scientists and auxiliary personnel of The Tamil Nadu Agricultural University on this achievement.

I am happy to note that TNAU has bounced back to 8th position from 33rd with appreciative 'H' index, filing of more patents, increased number of MoUs signed with foreign and other institutions and industries and its other big achievements. I congratulate the Vice-Chancellor and his entire team. The University should now aim higher goals emulating the National Education Policy 2020 and as advised by ICAR to become a Multi-disciplinary Education and Research University (MERU) with enhanced students' strength, increased visibility, estimated outputs, improved research, accomplished outcomes etc.

In this Golden Jubilee Year, I wish that the Vice-Chancellor and his accomplished team of scientists will endeavour and earn more accolades in the years to come and the Tamil Nadu Agricultural University will be one among the Top Five Agricultural Universities of India.

Once again, congratulations to all the Medal winners and all the graduates. My best wishes to all the students, parents, faculty and staff of this University. I wish all the students well in their academic career and life here and hereafter. I firmly hope that they would prove worthy of the great legacy bequeathed to them by this university and grow as men and women of impeccable character, devoted to the values of truth, purity and selflessness and serve our beloved India in her march towards Shrestha and Samriddha Bharat."

On this occasion, Dr.Trilochan Mohapatra, Director General, Indian Council of Agricultural Research and Secretary, Department of Agricultural Research and Education, Government of India, New Delhi, Dr.N.Kumar, Vice-Chancellor of Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, Thiru. Anandrao V. Patil, I.A.S., Secretary to Hon'ble Governor and other dignitaries participated.

In this occasion, 2602 Graduates received degrees and 45 graduates received Gold Medals and awards from Hon'ble Governor and the Chancellor.

After the Convocation Function, The Hon'ble Governor of Tamil Nadu and the Chancellor of TNAU visited the Research Institute building, the century old heritage building and met the Members of the Board of Management. Dr. N. Kumar, Vice-Chancellor, Tamil Nadu Agricultural University briefed Hon'ble Governor and the Chancellor about the Tamil Nadu Agricultural University.

Raj Bhavan, Chennai – 22

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Date : 01.11.2021

Addl. Director (PR)