



**TAMIL NADU AGRICULTURAL UNIVERSITY
COIMBATORE**

**45th CONVOCATION
25th MARCH 2025**

CONVOCATION ADDRESS

**45th Convocation of
Tamil Nadu Agricultural University**

Chief Guest's Address

**Commencement Speech:
Tamil Nadu Agricultural University
Coimbatore**

March 25, 2025

His Excellency, the Governor of Tamil Nadu and
Chancellor of Tamil Nadu Agricultural University,

Hon'ble Minister for Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare,
Government of Tamil Nadu and Pro-Chancellor of Tamil
Nadu Agricultural University,

Dr. V. Geethalakshmi, Vice-Chancellor of Tamil Nadu
Agricultural University,

Esteemed members of the Board of Management
and Academic Council,

Respected faculty, Proud families, members of the
Media, and most importantly, the Graduating class of 2025:

I extend my gratitude to the Hon'ble Governor and the esteemed Vice-Chancellor for this opportunity.

Standing before you today as a proud alumnus, I am truly honoured to deliver the 45th commencement speech at this prestigious institution, which nurtured my academic journey and shaped my career.

Congratulations to each of you on your graduation! Today marks the beginning of an exciting new chapter in your lives. As you sit here in your graduation regalia, you inherit the legacy of an institution that has been pivotal in transforming Indian agriculture for 124 years.

Tamil Nadu Agricultural University (TNAU) stands for education, research, and extension, and it is an epicentre for innovation and genetic improvement of crops. With 948 developed crop varieties, 1,500 farming technologies, and 165 implements, TNAU plays a crucial role in feeding our nation. Varieties like CO 51 rice, COHM 8 Maize, PKM 1 Moringa and CO (BN) 5 forage grass are prime examples of how this university has revolutionized Indian agriculture. This university is at the forefront of innovation, employing drones, nanotechnology, and remote sensing, and also connecting farmers through **Farmer's Producers Organization**. These technologies, empowered the state to receive "**Krishi Karman Award**" from GoI for 5 times in the past 8 years. Initiatives like

One Student One Farm Family and six agribusiness incubation centres showcase, why TNAU is a model for agricultural universities across the country. This institution does not merely teach agriculture it transforms it.

Look around you. Among your classmates are future leaders, architects of Nations' food security, policymakers, innovators, researchers, educators, and changemakers. There are many ways, but the foundation you've built here is unshakable.

Visionaries, Who Defied the Impossible

As you step into the world beyond these halls, I want to share stories of individuals, who revolutionized agriculture against daunting odds.

In 1798, **Thomas Malthus** argued that the population would inevitably outgrow the food supply, leading to widespread famine. A century later, **William Crookes** foresaw European starvation as fertilizer sources decreased. By the 1960s, **Paul and Anne Ehrlich** declared, "the battle to feed humanity is over" in "The Population Bomb," advocating population control measures that left painful scars on India's history.

Yet, while the pessimists preached doom, visionaries created abundance. The **Haber-Bosch process**

transformed agriculture by providing abundant nitrogen fertilizers, unlocking unprecedented crop yields. Science responded to desperation with innovation.

Consider **Norman Borlaug**. Born to humble Iowa farmers. Initially rejected by the University of Minnesota, this stubborn farm boy worked his way through college during the Depression, studying plant pathology.

In the muddy fields of Mexico in 1944, he hand-pollinated wheat, dismissed by local farmers. With minimal resources, he confronted wheat rust disease - considered unconquerable. Fellow scientists mocked his "shuttle breeding technique" for developing wheat varieties, in half the normal time.

Borlaug's breakthrough came during the 1965 India-Pakistan War, when food shortages loomed large. He convinced both nations to adopt his drought-resistant, high-yielding wheat varieties with his observation that, "You can't build peace on empty stomachs".

When the Nobel Committee called him in 1970, they found a mud-covered man in a field, who thought their call was a prank. His work tripled wheat yields and saved a billion lives from famine.

"I've worked myself near to death," later Borlaug recalled, "hunched over in the blazing sun... up to my knees in mud." For 16 years, he slept on a cot in fields, hand-pollinated thousands of wheat plants, and battled tropical diseases.

Borlaug's legacy is not just in agricultural science but in the unwavering belief that science, persistence, and courage can overcome humanity's greatest challenges.

Then there is **M.S. Swaminathan**, the man who fed India. After witnessing the Bengal Famine of 1943 and studying genetics at Cambridge, he dedicated his life to fighting hunger. When experts predicted inevitable starvation, Swaminathan proved them wrong by adapting high-yielding wheat varieties to Indian conditions and convincing farmers to adopt new methods. His holistic approach doubled India's wheat production in just a decade, transforming the nation from food dependency to self-sufficiency. He also pioneered 'Sustainable Evergreen Agricultural revolution' to change the destiny of our nation.

His life's work demonstrates how science, driven by compassion, can change the destiny of nations.

The Revolution in Indian Agriculture

India's agriculture is poised for revolutionary change today. Our vision now reaches beyond traditional food security to focus on farmer prosperity, doubling farmers' income, sustainability, and technological innovation. Through initiatives like "**Prime Minister Dhan-Dhaanya Krishi Yojana**", we aim to uplift 100 low-productivity districts and benefit 17 millions of farmers.

Quality seeds and judicious use of fertilizers remain foundational. "As you sow, so shall you reap" this ancient wisdom guides our modern innovations, like Urea Gold, with sulphur for enhanced nutrient uptake, balancing productivity with sustainability.

Climate-resilient agriculture is imperative. The "**National Mission on Natural Farming & Sustainable Agriculture**" is pioneering strategies to enhance water use efficiency, improving soil health and promote organic farming, mobilizing 25 millions of farmers toward sustainable practices under the **Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana**.

Digital transformation is reshaping agriculture. The Agristack initiative is creating a digital backbone through farmers' registries, geo-referenced village maps, and digital crop surveys. Tamil Nadu leads the nation in

this effort, with over 80% of land parcels registered during Rabi 2024 achieved by our students.

The market linkages through e-NAM empower nearly 2 crore farmers and over 2.5 lakh traders. The rise of agri-startups nearly 2,800 recognized by Startup India reflects the innovation potential that lies within your generation.

Three Principles for Your Journey

Yet, a monumental challenge persists: by 2050, global food demand will surge by 70% to feed 10 billion people, while one-tenth of humanity remains hungry.

Remember this truth: when you improve a seed, you change a nation. When you transform a farming practice, you nourish generations.

As you prepare to write your own story and transform society, I urge you to follow these principles:

First: Dream Big:-

Each morning, when a young newspaper seller walked along the seashore, he didn't just see his small town he saw possibilities. While others saw a poor boy from a boat owner's family, he saw a future scientist. That young newspaper seller became India's 'Missile Man.' Yes Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam the then People's President, often

said, "Dreams are not what you see in sleep, they are the things that don't let you sleep."

Today, as you sit in your graduation robes, ask yourself: What dreams keep you awake at night? What vision of tomorrow makes your heart race? Because that's your fire, that's your calling.

Remember, Dr. Kalam didn't just dream he worked tirelessly to turn those dreams into reality. Your dreams might seem impossible today, just as the presidency might have seemed impossible to a young newspaper seller.

But dream anyway. Dream bigger. And most importantly, let those dreams drive you to action. Like Kalam, don't let your circumstances define your destiny. Let your dreams define it.

Second: Have the Courage to Face Fear

In 1933, as the Great Depression ruined America, banks were closing, people were losing jobs, and hope was fading. In this darkest time, a new president stood to speak. Franklin Delano Roosevelt said words that still echoes today: "The only thing we have to fear is fear itself."

What makes these words powerful is that Roosevelt knew fear firsthand. At age 39, polio struck him. Doctors said he would never walk again. But he refused to let

fear win. Every morning, he spent hours strengthening his upper body. He learned to “walk” using heavy metal braces and canes. Each step was a battle, each movement required incredible strength, but he kept going.

You’ll face your own fears: research challenges, failed experiments, competitive exams, professional setbacks, and personal struggles.

Roosevelt teaches us three powerful lessons about confronting fear:

Fear grows when we run from it. It shrinks when we face it. Hence Face it.

Small victories build courage. Celebrate each step forward.

Your struggles can become your strength. It will help you to understand people’s pain.

Every failure is a new learning opportunity. Correct it and proceed until your dream becomes reality. Be optimistic. Focus on practical solutions. Transform fear into constructive action.

Third: The Power of Perseverance

Allow me to share a final story this is your story too. one that resonates deeply with our roots. Picture a remote village in Tamil Nadu four decades ago, devoid of roads, electricity, phones, or even clean drinking water. In this arid land, the sounds of cattle and rural life fill the air.

Born into a farming family, this young boy attended the local Government Middle School. Each morning, he toiled in the agricultural fields with his father before school. His hands are hardened from farm work, but his mind searches for knowledge. He studied under the dim glow of a kerosene lamp.

Having failed to write English alphabets, Don Bosco Higher Secondary School initially refused to admit him. In 10th grade, when he failed in English in his quarterly exams, his classmates laughed. With each humiliation and rejection, he refused to stay buried, pushing like a germinating seed-breaking hard soil toward sunlight.

His dreams of becoming a doctor were shattered, and he was admitted to the Agriculture University only in the fourth round of counselling, being the first graduate from his family. Private companies refused to employ him. He failed to secure admission to pursue a Ph.D. In each rejection, he worked harder.

He joined as an Agriculture officer in the state department, where a friend motivated him to appear for civil services exams at age 26. He failed in the Prelims. He tried again and failed in the interview. In the next attempt he was selected for the Indian Railway Traffic Service. He also failed in Indian Forest Service exams four times. But like a mountain climber who can see the peak, he knows he hasn't reached his ultimate goal. In his fourth attempt, he failed in the Prelims itself. His determination grew stronger with each failure. After five years of struggle, he finally entered into the IAS.

His journey transformed every stumbling block into a stepping stone, proving dreams don't see the social status, educational background, or past failures only the fire of determination and persistent effort.

The boy from that small village, who failed to write English alphabets, who faced rejection after rejection, who refused to let destiny write his story, stands before you today as an IAS officer delivering this commencement speech.

This story speaks to every dreamer: "Yes We Can Do it".

No dream is too big, no obstacle too formidable, and no destiny too rigid for someone willing to put in a ceaseless, determined effort. Your persistence is more powerful than any destiny.

As Thirukural states:

“தெய்வத்தான் ஆகாது எனினும், முயற்சிதன்
மெய்வருத்தக் கூலி தரும்.”

Hard work and perseverance will certainly bear fruit, proportional to the effort invested.

Your Sacred Calling

Graduates of 2025, you must make a meaningful contribution to the world. Artificial intelligence, climate challenges, hungry & thirsty soils, diminishing returns, technology fatigue, pest incidences, growing disparity between farm and non-farm income, and socioeconomic inequality persist and grow.

The challenges before you are immense, but so is your potential. Dream boldly, face fears courageously, and persevere ruthlessly. This is how you'll build the Viksit Bharat 2047, as envisioned by our Hon'ble Prime Minister.

You possess something powerful: fresh ideas, new energy, unlimited potential. Every expert was once a

beginner. Every leader starts at the bottom. Every success story begins with a challenge.

As you step into the world, remember that you are equipped with knowledge, passion, and the legacy of TNAU. Transform the future of agriculture, innovate, and inspire those around you. And also ensure no child knows hunger, no farmer faces ruin and no soil loses vitality. The journey ahead is yours make it extraordinary.

Your future is waiting. Your dreams are possible. Your time is now.

Thank you.

Congratulations, Class of 2025!
