

MESSAGE FROM VINOD KUMAR GUPTA

On the 72nd Foundation Day of the ICAR-IARS-IASRI (henceforth IASRI), I am filled with immense pride, pleasure and honour to pen this message. While we celebrate this milestone of its formal establishment, let us acknowledge that the roots of this "temple of research and education in statistical sciences" stretch back 94 years, to 1930, when it began as a humble statistical section of the then Imperial Council of Agricultural Research (now Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR)). In this grand timeline, IASRI stands just one year younger than ICAR itself.

Today, we pay homage to the visionaries who built this temple of research and education in statistical sciences. As Isaac Newton wisely noted, "If I have seen further, it is by standing on the shoulders of giants." We are indeed perched upon the shoulders of titans like M. Vaidyanathan, P.V. Sukhatme, V.G. Panse, B.V. Sukhatme, G.R. Seth, Daroga Singh, M.N. Das, Prem Narain, and many others who tirelessly elevated IASRI from a mere statistical section to its current prestigious status. We also owe a debt of gratitude to UK luminaries Frank Yates and David J. Finney, whose recommendations were instrumental in our expansion.

Personal reflection: I hold the unique distinction of a 46-year association with IASRI, from joining as a student in 1970 to my superannuation in 2016. IASRI has been the very air I've breathed.

As we approach our centenary year in 2030, followed by India's centenary of independence in 2047 and IASRI's second-centenary in 2052, we must look to the future with purpose. Peter Drucker's words ring true: "The best way to predict the future is to create it." It is imperative that our young faculty, guided by the dynamic leadership of the Director and senior members, chart a course for IASRI's role in these landmark years. What groundbreaking research programs will we undertake? How will we contribute to nation-building and India's development? We must forge robust, purposeful collaborations with our global alumni network to enhance our capabilities and research initiatives.

While we celebrate our achievements today, let us remain grounded and committed to carrying our legacy forward. The Foundation Day is not merely a celebration of past achievements but an opportunity for introspection. We must, therefore, address our weaknesses while celebrating our strengths. As Johann Wolfgang von Goethe aptly put it, "Knowing is not enough; we must apply. Willing is not enough; we must do." We must

introduce innovative strategies and conduct fundamental research to strengthen statistical sciences and propel agricultural research forward. Please remember statistics was, is and will ever remain the pivot around which emerging areas like data science, data analytics, artificial intelligence, machine learning, support vector machines, random forest, Bayesian methods, boosting and bagging, deep learning, extreme learning machines, natural language processing, computer vision, robotics to make predictions, identify patterns, language modelling, text classification, sentiment analysis, image processing, object recognition, and image segmentation, etc. in making data-driven decisions, bioinformatics and information technology, and so on, will revolve. So let me emphasise once more that fundamental research in statistics will always be the core of modern developments. There is an urgent need to enhance our global visibility. The two-way dissemination of knowledge has always been crucial to research progress and must be practised. We must invite global talent, including our own alumni, while sharing our expertise, fostering a rich environment of intellectual exchange.

To our senior faculty, I urge you to mentor and motivate our young early career researchers. Guide them in identifying research problem, approaching these challenges, verifying research outputs, writing innovative research papers, crafting effective project proposals and project reports, and encouraging conference participation. These seemingly basic skills form the bedrock of successful research careers and quality research. As Albert Einstein said, "It's not that I'm so smart, it's just that I stay with problems longer."

To our early career researchers: remember, an institute is only as great as its people. Your passion and dedication will shape the future of IASRI. In the words of Steve Jobs, "The only way to do great work is to love what you do."

In conclusion, I congratulate everyone on this Foundation Day and wish you a productive and progressive year ahead. May we honour our past, excel in our present, and shape a brilliant future for the IASRI. Remember, my mantra for success in research: Passion, Passion, and Passion. For Passion is strength; Passion is energy; Passion is accomplishment.

JAI HIND!!! JI BHARAT!! JAI SANKHYIKI ANSUNDHAAN!!