

**SPEECH BY THE PRESIDENT OF INDIA, SHRI PRANAB
MUKHERJEE ON MEETING CONTRIBUTORS TO THE BOOK “30
WOMEN IN POWER: THEIR VOICES, THEIR STORIES”**

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I am indeed happy to be here this evening to meet the distinguished achievers who have contributed to the book “*30 Women in Power.*”

2. I congratulate Naina Lal Kidwai, a banker par excellence, for taking the effort to anthologize the accomplishments of these extraordinary women. I also compliment all the eminent and empowered women leaders featured in this book who are pioneers in various fields of activities. The stories and experiences of their journey towards success will serve as an immense source of inspiration and motivation surely to all women. But, also I may add here to all persons, both men and women, as they are stories of challenges, conviction, commitment, dedication and indomitable courage without which nobody can achieve success. This book will also help sensitize men to the problems women are confronted with every day and make them realize that respect for women must inform every decision they make.

3. The book is important not only because it is a celebration of women empowerment, but also because it a timely reminder of the battles that still need to be fought, and those that are being fought each day, by women to find their place under the Sun. The book is about the inner strength of women and how far their determination and faith can take them.
4. We as a nation must respect as sacred, the rights of women to equal opportunities and dignified living. The first steps in this direction, in theory, have already been taken in our Constitution that envisions equality for all. But, as I mentioned it will have to be practiced in many areas such as through women-centric legislation and by fully implementing the seventy-third and seventy-fourth amendments and also not just by the ratification of international conventions (including the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women) but by implementing them in letter and spirit.
5. A lot still remains to be done especially in the direction of translating laws to reality. More girls need to be imparted education; more women need to be encouraged to get economically empowered and more institutions need to support the aspirations of women.

6. If given a window of opportunity, women who are natural multi-taskers have the potential to rise and excel in any field of their choice. We need to build such mechanisms within institutions that facilitate the growth of women into decision making positions.

7. One aspect that worries me immensely is the growing violence against women. The society which cannot respect women simply cannot be called a civilised society. In the Vedic civilization, women were always given the highest level of respect and freedom and at the same time, their protection and safety was a sacred duty of society as a whole. This is our culture, this is our heritage. We cannot allow ourselves to forget this. It is our collective responsibility to create an ecosystem that ensures safety, security and dignity of women in the society.

8. Before I conclude, I once again extend my felicitations to all those associated with the bringing out of the book and wish their efforts all success.

Thank you,

JAI HIND!
