

**VALEDICTORY ADDRESS  
BY THE HON'BLE PRESIDENT OF INDIA  
SMT DROUPADI MURMU  
AT THE CONSTITUTION DAY CELEBRATIONS  
ORGANISED BY THE SUPREME COURT OF INDIA**

**New Delhi, November 26, 2022**

I am glad to be here today on the historic occasion of Constitution Day. On this day 73 years ago, the Constituent Assembly adopted this document of our collective destiny. We are commemorating today the adoption of the Constitution that has not only guided the journey of the Republic over the decades, but has also inspired several other nations in the drafting of their constitutions.

The Constituent Assembly was composed of elected members who represented all the regions and communities of the nation. They included stalwarts of our Freedom Movement. Thus, their debates and the document they prepared reflect the values that guided the struggle for Independence.

When we read the names of the members of the assembly, we are bound to feel a surge of pride. The decades before Independence were marked by an unusual number of extraordinary individuals. I sincerely believe that no other place and no other time have produced a galaxy of giants like them. They had their own dreams and ideas about the character of this nation, but they were united in their desire to see it freed of shackles. They all made great sacrifices to ensure that the coming generations would breathe the air of a free nation.

The first among them all, of course, was the Father of the Nation. The visionary leadership of Mahatma Gandhi created a generation of great leaders. The Constitution bears an unmistakable stamp of Gandhian principles. Equally, the President of the Constituent Assembly, and also my great predecessor, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, and the Chairman of the Drafting Committee, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, converted a grand vision into words.

I am especially proud of the fact that the 389 members also included 15 women. When some of the leading nations in the West were still debating women's rights, in India women were participating in the framing of the Constitution. Hansaben Mehta, one of them, also made a critical contribution in the drafting of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Sarojini Naidu, Sucheta Kripalani, Durgabai Deshmukh and other women members were already seasoned campaigners, having dedicated themselves to the Freedom Movement.

Speaking of women, I would like to note that their participation in public life since Independence has shown an upward trend, but there is no reason to be content. I understand the Judiciary too strives to enhance gender balance.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The cornerstone of the Constitution is summed up in its Preamble. Its singular focus is on how to increase social good. Its entire edifice rests on justice, liberty, equality and fraternity. I would like to note here that these four stellar values enshrined in our Constitution have been part of our own timeless heritage.

When we speak of justice, we understand it is an ideal and achieving it is not without obstacles. Here, I must mention my immediate predecessor, Shri Ram Nath Kovind, who often stressed on the cost of justice. The onus is on all of us to make the process of seeking justice affordable to all. I appreciate the efforts made by the Judiciary in this direction. The legal aid society and similar initiatives are worth praising, and so are individual initiatives to provide legal counseling for free.

The question of access often goes beyond cost matters. The Supreme Court of India and several other courts now make judgments available in a number of Indian languages. This praiseworthy gesture makes an average citizen a stakeholder in the process. It can also raise their awareness as well as the quality of public debates. Still, the legal language, its complicated expressions and jargon are challenging for most people. I understand that this matter has been debated in the Judiciary too. Let us hope the day is not far when more and more

people from outside the legal fraternity too will be able to read important judgments. The Supreme Court and several other courts have started live streaming their proceedings, which too will go a long way in making citizens effective stakeholders in the dispensation of justice.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Constitution outlines a map for good governance. The most crucial feature in this is the doctrine of separation of functions and powers of the three organs of the State, namely, the executive, the legislature and the judiciary. It has been the hallmark of our Republic that the three organs have respected the boundaries set in place by the Constitution. Each of the three aims, after all, to serve the people. It is understandable that in the zeal to best serve the interests of citizens, one or the other of the three organs may be tempted to overstep. Yet, we can say with satisfaction and pride that the three have always attempted to keep the boundaries in mind while doing their best to function in the service of the people.

In this regard, let me note that the Supreme Court has earned a reputation for its superior standards and lofty ideals. It has played its role as the interpreter of the Constitution in the most exemplary way. Landmark judgments passed by this Court have strengthened the legal and constitutional framework of our nation.

The Supreme Court Bench and the Bar are known for their legal scholarship. The Supreme Court has been served by Judges who have provided intellectual depth, vigour and vitality necessary to create a world-class institution.

I am confident that this Court would always remain the sentinel of justice. I wish the Chief Justice and the Judges of the Supreme Court the very best for the future.

Constitution Day is a day to reaffirm our firm adherence to the constitutional ideals, as these are the ideals that have helped the nation proceed on the path of progress. I would like to compliment the Supreme Court of India for organising this function. I am grateful to the

Chief Justice of India for giving me an opportunity to be here among you today.

Thank you.

Jai Hind!