



Research Unit
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Diary of an Indian Girl

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As the sun rises over India, a young girl wakes up and stretches lazily. Today is just another school day or so she thinks. But as she glances at her grandmother's old, weathered diary lying on the table, curiosity takes over. She flips open the fragile pages, filled with dreams, hopes, and a vision of a future where women are in every field.

"One day, I hope to see a world where women stand equal in every sphere—where they are leaders, creators, innovators, and decision-makers. Where a young girl can look around and see that she can be anything she dreams of. That world may not be mine, but perhaps it will be yours."

The girl smiles as she reads these words. She knows she lives in a free nation because of the sacrifices of fearless women like *Rani Lakshmbai*, *Sarojini Naidu*, and *Captain Lakshmi Sahgal*: women who not only fought for independence but also ensured that future generations of girls could dream without limits.

The independent India was already ahead of other countries in women empowerment. India adopted Universal Adult Franchise from the very beginning, giving every woman a vote: a right some of the world's biggest democracies granted their women only decades later. It was a bold step, ensuring that Indian women had an equal voice in shaping the nation's future.

Women weren't just given rights, they shaped them.

The first thing she hears is the morning news: *"The President of India, a woman, addresses the nation with confidence and pride."* As she listens, she realizes that female leadership is not an exception, it is the new normal.

She flips through her schoolbooks and reads about the **15 powerful women** who were part of India's

Constituent Assembly, ensuring that women's rights were enshrined in the Constitution.

At school, her teacher, a woman talks about how women's participation in higher education has increased by almost **32%**, with enrollment rising from **1.57 crore in 2014-15 to 2.07 crore in 2021-22**. Women are no longer just students; they are leading in fields like Medical Science, Social Science, and Arts. During science class, she reads about the women scientists at **ISRO** who played key roles in India's space missions. Today, women scientists helped send **Chandrayaan-3** to the Moon.

At lunch, she eats a meal prepared under the **Mid-Day Meal Scheme**, where thousands of women work to ensure children receive nutritious food. Her mother, a working professional, returns home in the evening. She is not just earning—she is leading. She works with a team, makes key decisions, and contributes both to her home and to the nation's economy. Across India, over **10 crore women** have been mobilised into **Self-Help Groups (SHGs)**, driving economic empowerment at the grassroots level. Programs like Jan Dhan Yojana have ensured that women have financial independence, with more than **55%** of bank accounts under the scheme belonging to women.

She picks up a magazine that talks about how women in India have been breaking the glass ceiling in both rural and urban regions. As she flips another page, she reads about how **Article 243D of the Constitution** mandates **reservation for women in Panchayats**, ensuring representation for marginalized communities. In **21 States and 2 Union Territories**, **50% of seats in Panchayats are reserved for women**. This means women across India are **in leadership roles**, guiding efforts in **sanitation, water conservation, and rural development**.

She then reads about **NaMo Drone Didi**, a groundbreaking initiative aimed at empowering women-led **Self-Help Groups (SHGs)** through **drone technology for agriculture**. She googles further and watches a video of **Sunita Devi from Uttar Pradesh**, a proud **NaMo Drone Didi**, explaining how she sprays crops using drones.

Today, initiatives like **Stand Up India and Start-Up India** are supporting women entrepreneurs, ensuring they don't just join businesses—they own them. As of December 31, 2024, a total of **75,935** recognised startups include at least one-woman director (as per self-reported data of recognized startups), showcasing the rise of women entrepreneurs in India. As she picks up her mobile phone, she wonders who makes such technology possible. She reads about women like Dr Tessa Thomas, the **“Missile Woman of India”** and Director General (Aeronautical Systems), DRDO; Dr Kalpana Saroj, Padma recipient and Chairperson, Kamani Tubes; Justice (Retd) S. Vimala, **1st** woman to be appointed as judge of Chennai Mahila Court; Anita Kundu, **1st** Indian woman to climb Mount Everest from both

the Indian and the Chinese sides; Ishrat Akhter, 1st international wheelchair basketball player from Kashmir, and Vartika Shukla, 1st Chairperson & Managing Director of Engineers India Limited (EIL).

The metro she takes is not just a convenience—it is a testament to women engineers and urban planners. Even the roads she travels on have been designed and built with the contribution of women in infrastructure and development.

Before bed, she watches a documentary on sportswomen like PV Sindhu, Mary Kom, Vinesh Phogat and Mithali Raj. Women who have won Olympic and world titles, proving that women can conquer any field, from badminton courts to boxing rings.

As she lays her head on her pillow, she reflects on the diary in her hands. Her grandmother had once dreamed of a world where women have the right to participate in every field of life. She closes the diary with a smile. That dream has come true!

This Women's Day, we celebrate the trailblazers of the past and the changemakers of today.

The future is not just bright; it is hers to shape

References

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