

**Title: WOMEN IPS OFFICERS WHO OPENED UNEXPLORED  
AVENUES: EXAMPLES OF KIRAN BEDI AND OTHERS**

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**Title: “Women IPS Officers Who Opened Unexplored Avenues: Examples of Kiran Bedi and Others”**

**Abstract:**

“Each time a woman stands up for herself she stands up for all women- Maya Angelou.”

An empowered woman is an independent decision-maker who can realize and achieve her goals (Women Rsquo;S and Girls&Rsquo; Empowerment), (Empowerment of Women). Although women scholars like Gargi, Maitreyi and Lopamudra are well-known from the Vedic period in India, the Medieval period saw restrictions in women’s rights and decision-making due to the political instability, patriarchy and rigid structure of Indian society. However, exceptions also existed from time to time including Rani Durgavati, Razia Sultan, Rani Lakshmibai, Rani Channamma, and Savitribai Phule. Gender equality is ensured under the “Right to equality” of Article 14 of our constitution (Legislative Department India). But I believe, just creating a law is a task half-accomplished unless it is effectively implemented and accepted by the public.

**Keywords:** patriarchy, instability , restrictions, . Gender equality

## **Introduction**

As we hear the word “Women Empowerment in India”, a few images of role models come to our mind. I am sure one of the names that comes to your mind is Kiran Bedi, a renowned personality who needs no introduction. From being the First Woman IPS officer in India, she has become a trailblazer for gender equality and mascot for women empowerment. Born in a middle-class Punjabi family on June 9, 1949, in Amritsar as Kiran Peshawaria, the young girl was inclined to academic excellence, hard work, and discipline. Her parents not only supported her but also her 3 sisters at a time when girl education was not considered important. Her family’s open-minded and rational thinking can be understood by the fact that Kiran and her sisters went to school 16 km away from their home for quality education (Dangwal 7). Another example is Kiran, the national junior tennis champion during her teenage years (**Dangwal 15**).

Kiran changed her school to study science instead of household subjects (also called home science). The NCC provided her with the first experience of ‘Khakhi’ uniform (Dangwal 8). Kiran Bedi has academic excellence right from BA (Honors), MA, and LLB to a doctorate in philosophy (PhD) from IIT, Delhi. Her entry into the prestigious civil services as an IPS officer in 1972 was a historical landmark at the time when certain jobs and services were considered gender specific. Police, Armed forces, and Law were considered male bastions. She is a crusader for women empowerment and social justice. Her most significant accomplishment was carrying out reforms at Tihar Jail in Delhi where educational and vocational training was provided to the jail inmates during her tenure as the Inspector General of Prisons. With an emphasis on women prisoners’ empowerment, she made changes to help women in jail to become part of society after release (Kiran Bedi).

She is also credited for reshaping the Tihar prison complex, one of the largest prisons in the world by focusing and resolving the issues of corruption and human rights inside. She directed her attention towards sanitation and nutrition problems at Tihar along with the implementation of literacy programs and drug treatment programs (Kiran Bedi | Biography and Facts).

## **Discussion**

Her other notable contributions include reduction in crimes against women during her tenure at West Delhi, involvement in traffic arrangements for the Asian Games in Delhi in 1982 as

well as the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting in 1983. Kiran backed the Subinspector in her team for towing away the Prime Minister's car parked wrongly (Dangwal 39). During her service, she also launched a campaign against drug abuse. She has been bestowed with the President's Police Medal, the prestigious Ramon Magsaysay Award, and The United Nations medal. She is also the first Indian and first woman to be appointed head of the United Nations Police and Police Advisor in the United Nations Department of Peace Operations (Kiran Bedi). She also founded two nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), Navjyoti (1988) and India Vision Foundation (1994) aimed to provide education and adult literacy programs and to offer vocational training and counseling services for women. Drug rehabilitation for prisoners is also provided by these NGOs (Kiran Bedi | Biography and Facts). In her words, "The empowered woman is the one who can make her own decisions and face their consequences." (Dangwal 274).

## **Conclusion**

Women leaders like her empower millions of young girls and women that nothing is impossible and gender, in no way can hinder them on their success journey. Before I finish, I would like to remember Kavita Chaudhary, an Indian television actress, director, producer and writer who passed away recently for her portrayal of IPS officer Kalyani Singh in the Doordarshan serial Udaan during the years 1989 to 1991. Her character inspired young girls to dream and believe that no barrier can stop them from converting their dreams into reality (Kavita Chaudhary) (ETimes). Interestingly, Kavita was the younger sister of IPS officer Kanchan Chaudhary Bhattacharya, the second woman IPS officer in India after Kiran Bedi and the first woman Director General of Police of a state. Kanchan's father was attacked in a property dispute and the police did not register a case against the attackers, this inspired young Kanchan to become a police officer. At times when current television shows still garner TRPs with the saas-bahu saga, Udaan was definitely ahead of time and women empowering (Kanchan Chaudhary Bhattacharya)

I conclude by saying that we need more examples to break gender stereotypes and make young girls believe that they can excel in any field of their choice.

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