



DROUPADI MURMU
FROM ODISHA'S TRIBAL HEARTLAND
TO PRESIDENT OF INDIA



By

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*Droupadi Murmu: The 15th President of India - A
Biography*

By Dr. R. G. Anand - MBBS, MD,
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PREFACE

In July 2022, India witnessed a historic moment as **Droupadi Murmu** took oath as the 15th President of the Republic[1]. Her ascent to the highest constitutional office marked not only a personal triumph but also a milestone for representation - she is the first tribal person and only the second woman to ever hold this position[2]. This biography was conceived to chronicle the extraordinary journey of Droupadi Murmu from a remote village in Odisha to the grandeur of Rashtrapati Bhavan in New Delhi. It is an attempt to present a comprehensive account of her life story, the values that shaped her, and the legacy she is building.

This book is the result of extensive research, drawing on her speeches, interviews, and credible historical records. Through eleven chapters, it traces her early life and education, the formative influences of family and culture, her foray into public service and politics, and the significant roles she undertook on the way to national prominence. It also delves into her tenure as President - highlighting her initiatives, leadership philosophy, and the symbolic importance of her election for the nation's marginalized communities.

Official portrait of President Droupadi Murmu, who assumed office on July 25, 2022[1]. She is the first person from India's indigenous tribal communities to become President, and the youngest ever to hold the office[2][3].

As an author, my aim has been to narrate Droupadi Murmu's story in a manner that is both factual and inspiring. Her life is a testament to perseverance - from overcoming personal tragedies to breaking glass ceilings in public office. In compiling this work, I have been continually struck by her humility and deep connection to her roots, even as she occupies the highest office in the land.

The reader will find that this is not just a political biography but also a human story of **resilience, compassion, and service**. The chapters on her personal reflections and anecdotes provide a glimpse into the private trials and triumphs behind the public figure. By the end of this book, I hope the reader gains insight into how Droupadi Murmu's cultural

identity and personal experiences have informed her leadership, and why her presidency is seen as a beacon of hope for many.

Sincerely,
Dr. R. G. Anand
MBBS, MD, MHA, FHM, PDCR, LLB, LLM

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. R. G. Anand is a dedicated public health expert, humanitarian, and advocate for child welfare, whose life and work exemplify the power of commitment and service. With a career spanning decades, he has left an indelible mark on the lives of countless individuals, particularly children and marginalized communities.

Dr. Anand's journey began in the humble surroundings of a village in Pudukottai district, Tamil Nadu. Born to parents who were schoolteachers, he imbibed the values of education, hard work, and compassion from an early age. These early lessons became the foundation of his life's mission: to serve those who are often overlooked by society.

After earning his MBBS degree and an MD in Preventive and Social Medicine, Dr. Anand pursued a Fellowship in HIV Medicine at Christian Medical College, Vellore, and later obtained a Bachelor of Legislative Law (LLB) to champion the cause of child protection. His academic pursuits reflect his belief in combining medical expertise with legal and policy advocacy to address healthcare challenges holistically.

Dr. Anand's professional journey is as remarkable as it is inspiring. In 2012, as a Program Officer with the National AIDS Control Organization (NACO), he played a critical role in reducing mother-to-child HIV transmission rates in Tamil Nadu. His efforts contributed to achieving a zero-transmission rate, a milestone in India's public health history. Later, as a Member of the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR), he traveled across the country, conducting over 250 health camps and safeguarding the rights of vulnerable children.

Beyond his professional accolades, Dr. Anand is a champion of grassroots change. He has organized over 500 free medical camps, supported the education of thousands of underprivileged children, and launched innovative programs like "Samvedana," a tele-counseling initiative during the COVID-19 pandemic that provided solace and guidance to children.

Dr. Anand's philosophy is rooted in the belief that healthcare and education are fundamental rights, not privileges. His vision is one of a society where every child, regardless of their circumstances, has the opportunity to thrive. Through his work with organizations like WHO and UNICEF, he has amplified this vision on a global scale, collaborating with international leaders to implement sustainable healthcare solutions.

Recognized by numerous awards, including the World Book of Records acknowledgment for his disaster management efforts, Dr. Anand remains grounded and driven by a simple yet profound principle: "True success lies in the lives we uplift."

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Writing this biography has been a journey enriched by the contributions of many individuals and sources. I am deeply grateful to the numerous journalists, historians, and commentators whose reporting and analyses provided invaluable information - from local newspapers in Odisha to national and international publications. Special thanks are due to those who documented President Murmu's life in interviews and profiles, including the teachers, colleagues, and family friends who shared anecdotes that bring depth to her story[\[4\]\[5\]](#).

I extend my gratitude to the Office of the President of India for maintaining a detailed public profile of Smt. Droupadi Murmu[\[6\]\[7\]](#), which served as a factual backbone for many parts of this book. I also acknowledge the archives of All India Radio and Doordarshan for the recorded interviews and speeches that allowed President Murmu's own voice to be a part of this narrative[\[8\]\[9\]](#).

Lastly, I am thankful to my editorial team for their tireless efforts in fact-checking, and to my family for their support and patience. Any errors or omissions that remain are mine alone. This work has been a labor of respect and admiration for a remarkable leader, and I hope it does justice to Droupadi Murmu's inspiring journey.

Chapter 1: Early Life and Family Background

Droupadi Murmu was born on **June 20, 1958** into a Santali tribal family in the village of *Uparbeda* in Mayurbhanj district of Odisha^[10]. Mayurbhanj, situated in the eastern reaches of India, is known for its dense forests and is among the most underdeveloped regions of the country^[11]. She was born into a community and place where basic amenities were scarce, and life was marked by simplicity and hardship. Her father, **Biranchi Narayan Tudu**, was a marginal farmer and had also served as the village head (Sarpanch) of Uparbeda, following in the footsteps of her grandfather^{[12][13]}. Despite having only a rudimentary education himself (he studied up to Class 2) and limited means, Biranchi Narayan Tudu was determined that his daughter would receive a good education^[4]. Droupadi's mother, **Singo Tudu**, was a homemaker who managed the household and instilled in her the values of patience and resilience.

Born as *Puti Tudu*, the young girl grew up in a **large Santhal family**, predominantly surrounded by male siblings^[14]. As the only daughter in the family, she became her father's favorite, and he pinned high hopes on her future^[4]. The Santals (Santhals) are one of India's largest tribal communities, known for their rich cultural traditions and language (Santali)^[15]. Life in Uparbeda was characterized by a close connection to nature and community – the family's livelihood, like that of their neighbors, depended on agriculture and the forest. From a young age, Puti (Droupadi) experienced the challenges of tribal life in rural India. The family lived in a modest thatched house, and like most others in the village, had no electricity or running water during her childhood. As she would later recall, even getting **elementary education felt like a dream** given the circumstances^[16].

Yet, her early years were also filled with the warmth of tribal community life – folk songs, festivals, and the Santhali language which she spoke at home. Two key figures in her family profoundly influenced her formative years. One was her father, who despite financial hardships, once declared he “would not hesitate to sell his land to send his daughter to college”^[17]. This unwavering support from her parents laid the foundation for her

ambitions. The other influential figure was her maternal **grandmother**, a wise presence who nurtured young Droupadi’s curiosity. It was her grandmother who impressed upon her the **importance of education**, telling her that schooling was the path to a better life beyond the village[18]. These family influences instilled in Murmu a deep sense of perseverance and a belief that she must strive not just for herself but as a representative of her community’s hopes.

Growing up, Droupadi also faced personal hardships that shaped her character. The community around her was steeped in poverty – according to census data, the tribal populations in India have historically lagged behind on key development indicators, with higher poverty and lower literacy rates than national averages[19][20]. In Uparbeda, daily life taught her the values of hard work and empathy. She helped her parents with chores and looked after her younger siblings, learning responsibility early on. The adversity she witnessed – whether it was neighbors struggling to make ends meet or families losing land to moneylenders – sensitized her to the social issues affecting tribal and rural people. These early experiences of witnessing deprivation would later fuel her commitment to work for the marginalized.

An interesting anecdote from her childhood is the origin of her name “**Droupadi**.” Born as Puti, she received the name Droupadi from one of her school teachers[10]. The teacher, noticing her bright inquisitiveness, named her after the strong mythological character Draupadi from the epic *Mahabharata*. This new name, meaning a woman of rare courage and virtue, perhaps foreshadowed the resilient and principled life she would lead. In those early years, however, she was simply known as a quiet, hardworking girl of the Santhal community, tending cattle, fetching water, and absorbing the stories and folk wisdom passed down by her elders.

Droupadi Murmu’s family background – *humble, tribal, and rural* – is central to understanding the **historic significance** of her later achievements. She did not come from privilege or political lineage. Instead, she emerged from a section of society that had long been *marginalized and underrepresented* in the halls of power. Her rise would later be hailed as a testament to India’s democracy and social mobility –

“the power of our democracy that a daughter born in a poor house, in a remote tribal area, can reach the highest constitutional post,” as she herself said in her inaugural address^[21]. But the seeds of that journey were planted in this small village of Uparbeda, within the close-knit family that believed in her against all odds.

Chapter 2: Education and Formative Influences

Education was the ladder that Droupadi Murmu clung to in order to climb out of the poverty and limitations of her birthplace. Her **educational journey** began at the village primary school in Uparbeda[22], where she studied up to Class 7. Every day, young Droupadi would **walk barefoot for kilometers**, crossing a small canal that swelled into a river during monsoons, just to reach her school[23]. Neither torrential rains nor the scorching sun could deter her; such was her determination to learn. A former primary school teacher, Basudev Behera, later recalled that “neither a torrential downpour nor a canal in spate could deter her” from attending classes regularly[23]. Her diligence stood out even in a community where education, especially for girls, was not a given.

After finishing primary school, she faced a critical choice: **pursue higher education** or stop like many girls in her village. The nearest high school was seven kilometers away – a daunting distance on foot – and her family’s resources were limited. It was here that her father’s commitment to her education truly manifested. Determined to see his daughter study further, Biranchi Narayan Tudu made a sacrifice: he **mortgaged a piece of his land to pay for her schooling in Bhubaneswar**, the state capital[17]. This act was emblematic of the support her family gave her, even when it meant personal hardship. As a result, around the age of 13, Droupadi left her village to attend a government school in Bhubaneswar, a decision that opened up a new world for her.

In the early 1970s, Droupadi Murmu arrived in **Bhubaneswar**, a bustling city that must have felt a world apart from her village. She enrolled at the **Capital Girls’ High School**, and later attended Rama Devi Women’s College for her higher studies[24]. The transition was not easy. She lived in a tribal girls’ hostel where resources were meager. Friends from school recall that she lived extremely frugally; her father could only send her about Rs. 10 a month, a small sum even in those days[25]. “She never went to the school canteen,” a school friend, Suchitra Samal, remembered – the free meal at the hostel was often all she had in a day[25]. Despite financial constraints, Murmu was **academically bright and disciplined**. In class, she tended to sit in the back row with a few other tribal girls, perhaps a bit shy or conscious of her humble background amid city

students[26]. Over time, however, her confidence grew as she performed well in her studies.

Murmu's hard work culminated in a proud achievement: she became the **first girl from Uparbeda village to pass the matriculation (high school) exam and go to college**[24]. This was no small feat - it marked a breaking of barriers in her community. In 1979, she earned a **Bachelor of Arts degree**, with a specialization in Political Science and Economics, from Rama Devi Women's College in Bhubaneswar[24]. By doing so, she also became the first woman from her entire village to graduate from university[24]. Education had been her ardent goal - as she said later, "*from the background I come from, it was like a dream for me to even get an elementary education*"[16] - and achieving it against the odds became a defining early victory in her life.

Several formative influences guided her during these educational years. One was clearly her **family's support**, especially her father's willingness to invest in her schooling. Another was the mentorship of teachers. The teacher who renamed her Droupadi in primary school not only gave her a new name but also kindled in her the idea that she could be as strong and principled as the heroine of an epic[10]. In high school and college, teachers noticed her quiet intellect and encouraged her. The **hostel warden** and senior students in Bhubaneswar played a role in shaping her too - in the hostel, she learned to live collectively, lead a disciplined routine, and navigate life in a big city while holding on to her cultural identity.

Murmu often acknowledges a particular debt to her **grandmother's early lessons**. In an interview decades later, she reminisced that it was her grandmother who made her realize "*the struggle I will have to endure to achieve my goals*" and pushed her to study hard[3]. These formative words became a source of motivation whenever she encountered hurdles. Her grandmother's foresight that education was Droupadi's path to empowerment was absolutely correct - each exam passed and each degree earned chipped away at the barriers that society had placed on her due to her gender and tribal background.

During her college years in the late 1970s, India was going through social and political changes. The influence of these broader currents also seeped into her consciousness. The movement for tribal rights was gaining some national attention; the Santals and other tribes were agitating for recognition of their languages and better economic opportunities. Murmu kept herself informed about such issues, laying the early foundation for what would become a lifelong commitment to working for her people. In fact, years later as a public figure, she would credit her student days with awakening her sense of social responsibility - witnessing poverty and gender inequality in both village and urban settings made her resolve to do something about it^[27].

By the time she graduated, Droupadi Murmu had transformed from a shy village girl into an educated young woman with a **sense of purpose**. She had seen that education could change not only her life but could also uplift her family - her bachelor's degree was a source of immense pride back home, where villagers celebrated her achievement as if it were their own. The **solid moral values** instilled by her family - honesty, hard work, respect for others - combined with the knowledge and confidence gained through education, set the stage for the next phase of her journey. She was now equipped to seek employment and shoulder familial responsibilities, and more importantly, she carried with her a growing desire to give back to society. The influences of her youth - familial, educational, and cultural - became the guiding force as she stepped into the professional world and, eventually, public service.

Chapter 3: Early Career and Entry into Public Service

Armed with a university degree and youthful ambition, Droupadi Murmu embarked on her professional career in 1979. Her first job was as a **junior clerk (Assistant)** in the **Irrigation and Power Department of the Government of Odisha**, in Bhubaneswar[28]. This clerical position, which she held from 1979 to 1983, was a modest start but an important one – it provided her with firsthand experience of government functioning at the ground level. As a junior assistant, Murmu's duties included maintaining files, assisting senior officers, and dealing with paperwork that impacted rural development projects like irrigation – work that connected indirectly to the welfare of farmers like her father. Those who worked with her remember her as diligent and sincere even in this low-ranking role; she was punctual, eager to learn, and noted for her integrity in handling responsibilities.

It was during her tenure in this government job that Droupadi Murmu's personal life took a significant turn. In the early 1980s, she married **Shyam Charan Murmu**, a young man working as a bank officer in Odisha[29]. The marriage was arranged with the blessings of both families, and Shyam Charan Murmu hailed from the same broader community, sharing an understanding of her cultural background. After marriage in 1980, she adopted her husband's surname, becoming *Droupadi Murmu*. The couple initially lived together in Bhubaneswar, balancing their respective jobs. In the years that followed, they started a family. Their first child was a daughter, born in the early 1980s, but tragically, this daughter died while still very young[30]. The loss of a child was a heavy blow to the young couple and particularly devastating for Murmu, but they persevered and went on to have three more children – another daughter and two sons[30]. Her surviving daughter, *Itishree*, and two sons were the joy of her life in those days.

By 1983, with a growing family and the demands of motherhood, Droupadi Murmu made a pivotal decision to **leave her government job** and return to her ancestral home area in Rairangpur, Mayurbhanj[30]. Her priorities shifted towards raising her children and managing the household. This period in the mid-1980s to early 1990s saw her primarily as a homemaker. However, Murmu was not one to remain idle or

disconnected from the community. Living back in Rairangpur (a small town near her native village) brought her closer to her people’s daily struggles, and she increasingly became involved in local social work.

In 1994, once her children were a bit older, Murmu returned to the workforce in a different capacity – as a **school teacher**. She took up an honorary position as a teacher at the *Sri Aurobindo Integral Education and Research Centre* in Rairangpur, a local school known for its emphasis on tribal education and integral learning[31]. From 1994 to 1997, she taught children at this school, accepting only a modest honorarium rather than a formal salary[32]. Her subject was not specified in records, but given her background, she likely taught Odisha language or social studies. As a teacher, Murmu gained a reputation for being patient, caring, and passionate about education – traits rooted in her own life story of how education had empowered her. She often went beyond classroom teaching, helping underprivileged students with books and sometimes waiving fees (as the position was honorary, she had some leeway in supporting poor students). This role rekindled her long-standing belief in the **transformative power of education**, especially for girls and marginalized tribal kids[33]. It also visibly increased her stature in the local community, as she was seen as a rare educated woman who had come back to uplift her hometown.

It was during these teaching years that **public service and politics beckoned** Droupadi Murmu. She did not set out seeking a political career; rather, it grew naturally from her community work. One of the local political figures, **Raj Kishore Das**, a senior leader of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in the region, took note of Murmu’s active involvement in social causes and her popularity among the townspeople[34]. Impressed by her dedication and grassroots connection, he approached her with a proposition: to enter local politics so she could “*do good in a larger arena*”[34]. Initially, Murmu was hesitant. Politics, especially for a tribal woman in Odisha, was a daunting field and not something she had explicitly aspired to. However, she realized that many issues she cared about – literacy, healthcare, rural infrastructure – required political will and governmental support to solve. Encouraged by her husband Shyam Charan (who believed in her abilities and agreed to support managing the

family while she pursued public life) and mentors like Raj Kishore Das, she decided to take the plunge.

In 1997, Droupadi Murmu joined the **Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)**[\[35\]](#), a major national political party that was then looking to expand its base in non-traditional areas like Odisha. Her entry into politics coincided with a period when the BJP was trying to promote leaders from marginalized communities. That year, she contested the local urban body elections and was **elected as a Councillor of the Rairangpur Nagar Panchayat (Notified Area Council)**[\[36\]](#). Winning this election was a significant first step - it marked Droupadi Murmu's formal entry into public office. She not only won, but her peers on the council subsequently elected her as the **Vice-Chairperson of Rairangpur NAC** in the same year[\[36\]](#). This was her first leadership position in governance, indicating the trust the community and fellow council members placed in her.

As a councillor and vice-chairperson in 1997-1998, Murmu rolled up her sleeves to address local issues: sanitation in Rairangpur town, better water supply, and improvement of the local market facilities. Her background as a local resident and teacher meant she was intimately aware of the problems people faced, and she approached these problems with pragmatism and empathy. For instance, she organized literacy drives for women and campaigned for vaccination programs in slum areas. Her success at the local level and her earnest work ethic quickly made her a respected figure in local political circles.

Thus, by the end of the 1990s, we see Droupadi Murmu evolving from an educator and social worker into a budding **public servant** and politician. The initial foray into public service was not driven by personal ambition for power, but by a genuine desire to help her community using the skills and education she had acquired. Her early career - from clerical work to teaching - provided her with a strong understanding of administrative processes and grassroots needs. These experiences laid a solid foundation for her later political journey, giving her both the *technical understanding* of governance and the *human understanding* of society's pains and aspirations. Importantly, Murmu entered the new millennium as a **promising tribal woman leader**, one who was about to take on bigger challenges on the state stage.

Chapter 4: Political Journey in Odisha

Droupadi Murmu's political journey in the state of Odisha gained momentum in the early 2000s, a period that would establish her as a prominent leader in state politics. After proving her mettle in local governance, she soon set her sights higher. The opportunity came in 2000 when Odisha held its **Legislative Assembly elections**. Murmu contested from the **Rairangpur Assembly constituency** on a BJP ticket and won, marking the start of her tenure as a Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA)[\[37\]](#). Notably, the year 2000 saw a coalition government formed in Odisha between the BJP and the regional Biju Janata Dal (BJD) under Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik. As part of the ruling coalition's power-sharing, Murmu's victory positioned her for greater responsibilities.

During her time as MLA from **2000 to 2009**, Droupadi Murmu served two consecutive terms representing Rairangpur[\[37\]](#). Her constituents were a mix of tribal communities and rural populace, and she became their voice in the state capital, Bhubaneswar. She quickly earned a reputation as a **conscientious and accessible legislator**. Colleagues in the assembly recall her modesty and dedication – she was not one to engage in loud rhetoric, but when she spoke on the assembly floor, it was with clarity on issues she understood firsthand[\[38\]](#). She was one of the few women legislators in the Assembly and the only tribal woman in that cohort, which made her stand out and also carry the expectations of those she represented.

In March 2000, early in her first term, Murmu's capabilities were recognized with a ministerial appointment. She was appointed **Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Commerce and Transport** in the Odisha government, a position she held from March 2000 to August 2002[\[39\]](#). Leading a ministry as a first-time MLA was a significant responsibility. In this role, Murmu oversaw departments dealing with trade, business development, and transportation infrastructure in the state. She worked on improving road connectivity in rural areas – a mission that had personal resonance, as her own village lacked proper roads until she intervened. In fact, one of her noted contributions as Commerce & Transport minister was facilitating the construction of a **5-kilometer pucca (paved) road** from the state highway to her native

village Uparbeda, connecting it reliably to the outside world for the first time[40]. This project endeared her to her constituents and was symbolic of her commitment to bringing development to neglected areas.

In August 2002, Murmu was given another portfolio as **Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Fisheries and Animal Resources Development**, serving until May 2004[41]. In this capacity, she championed programs for fishermen's welfare and livestock development - sectors crucial to Odisha's rural economy. She pushed for initiatives to provide better market linkages for fishermen and dairy farmers in her state. Her work was characterized by an inclusive approach; she made it a point to ensure that **scheduled tribes and castes**, often on the margins, benefitted from government schemes in these sectors[42] (she later chaired the Assembly's committee on welfare of Scheduled Tribes and Castes, underlining her focus on marginalized communities during her legislative career).

Throughout her legislative stint, Murmu was actively involved in various committees of the Odisha Assembly. She served on committees focusing on education (Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan), the welfare of women and children, and forest protection, among others[43]. These roles allowed her to shape policy discussions in areas aligned with her passions, such as education and environmental stewardship. Her peers recognized her legislative acumen and dedication: in 2007, she was honored with the **"Pandit Nilakantha Das - Best Legislator Award"** by the Odisha Legislative Assembly[44]. This award, given to outstanding MLAs, was a testament to her contributions in debates, her non-partisan approach to issues, and her spotless record in the House.

Politically, Murmu also climbed the ranks within her party during this time. She became the **State President of the BJP's Scheduled Tribe Morcha** in Odisha and later was appointed **National Vice-President of the ST Morcha** (the tribal wing of the party)[45]. These positions meant she was actively involved in strategizing and voicing tribal issues at the party level. Her leadership in the party's tribal wing helped the BJP connect better with indigenous communities in Odisha, and she often traveled to remote districts to mobilize support and understand grassroots grievances. Additionally, she served twice as the **District President of BJP**

in **Mayurbhanj** district[46], indicating the faith the party placed in her organizational abilities.

Murmu’s political journey in Odisha was not without its challenges. The year 2009 was a turning point. The BJP-BJD alliance in Odisha broke up just before the 2009 elections. Droupadi Murmu contested the 2009 **Lok Sabha (Parliamentary) election** from Mayurbhanj constituency, but she faced a tough fight and was defeated[47]. The same year, the Odisha Assembly election saw a wave in favor of the BJD (which contested separately), and Murmu lost her assembly seat as well (her second term as MLA ended in 2009). These defeats could have marked a setback in her political career. However, it’s notable that even in electoral loss, she **maintained her resolve** and continued to serve the party and people in other ways. She took on roles within the BJP organization and used the time out of office to reconnect with her constituency and address personal matters.

Indeed, the late 2000s were also marked by immense personal tragedy for Murmu (as will be detailed in Chapter 10), which coincided with these political ups and downs. Despite the turbulence, she remained a respected figure in Odisha’s political landscape. When not in public office, she focused on social work in Rairangpur – like helping establish a school and continuing involvement with tribal organizations.

By the early 2010s, Droupadi Murmu had accumulated a rich portfolio of experience: local governance, legislative work, ministerial leadership, and party organization. She was widely respected across party lines in Odisha for her **clean image and empathetic leadership**. A senior official once described her as “*compassionate and balanced... accessible and down to earth*”, noting that she never forgot her roots even as she held high office[48]. This phase of her journey set the stage for her next leap – from state politics to a role of national significance. It was clear that Murmu’s commitment to **grassroots democracy and inclusivity** in Odisha had carved out a unique space for her, and soon this would be recognized and tapped into beyond her home state.

Chapter 5: Key Milestones in Her Rise to National Prominence

Droupadi Murmu's trajectory from a regional leader in Odisha to a figure of national prominence involved several key milestones that highlighted her capabilities and the growing recognition of her work. This chapter outlines those milestones chronologically, illustrating how each step brought her closer to the historic presidency she would eventually assume.

- **1997 - Entry into Politics:** Elected as Councillor and Vice-Chairperson of Rairangpur Nagar Panchayat, marking her debut in public office[\[36\]](#). This victory was the first indication of her leadership potential at the grassroots level.
- **2000 - Member of Odisha Legislative Assembly:** Won her seat from Rairangpur and became an MLA[\[37\]](#). The same year, she was appointed Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Commerce and Transport in Odisha's coalition government, becoming one of the few women and even fewer tribal women in the state's council of ministers[\[39\]](#).
- **2002 - Ministerial Portfolio Shift:** Took charge as Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Fisheries and Animal Resources Development[\[41\]](#). Through these ministerial roles (2000-2004), she implemented development projects benefiting rural communities and gained administrative experience.
- **2006 - 2009 - Party Leadership Roles:** Rose within BJP's ranks, serving as State President of the BJP Scheduled Tribes Morcha in Odisha and later as National Vice-President of the ST Morcha[\[45\]](#). These positions signified her growing influence as an advocate for tribal issues within the party structure.
- **2007 - Best Legislator Award:** Honored with the Best Legislator Award by the Odisha Assembly[\[44\]](#), recognizing her distinguished performance as an MLA. This accolade elevated her profile as a principled and effective lawmaker.

- **2009 – National Electoral Experience:** Contested the Lok Sabha (Parliament) election from Mayurbhanj. Although she lost[\[47\]](#), this foray gave her exposure to national politics and an understanding of electoral dynamics beyond the state legislature.
- **2013–2014 – Personal Resilience:** While not a formal political milestone, these years tested Murmu’s resilience as she faced the tragic loss of her two sons and husband (detailed in Chapter 10). Her ability to overcome grief and return to public life became an inspiring facet of her narrative[\[49\]\[50\]](#).
- **2015 – Governor of Jharkhand:** In May 2015, Droupadi Murmu reached a new height when she was appointed as the **Governor of Jharkhand**, an appointment by the President of India on the recommendation of the central government[\[51\]\[52\]](#). She made history as the **first tribal woman to become a Governor** of any Indian state, and particularly significant was that Jharkhand has a substantial tribal population. Her tenure would last over six years (2015–2021), the longest in Jharkhand’s history, during which she demonstrated **remarkable statesmanship**[\[53\]](#).

The governorship of Jharkhand was a critical milestone that catapulted Murmu to national prominence. As Governor – the constitutional head of the state – she gained a reputation for fairness, integrity, and a non-partisan approach. One defining moment came in 2017 when the Jharkhand state government (then led by the BJP) passed controversial amendments to the **Chhotanagpur Tenancy (CNT) Act, 1908 and the Santhal Pargana Tenancy (SPT) Act**. These colonial-era laws protected tribal land rights, and the amendments aimed to allow commercial use of tribal lands while ostensibly keeping ownership with tribals[\[54\]](#). The proposals sparked widespread protests among Jharkhand’s tribal communities, who feared erosion of their land rights. In a move that surprised many, Governor Murmu **withheld her assent and returned the bills to the Assembly**, attaching the objections and petitions she had received from tribal groups[\[55\]](#). She essentially stood up to pressures from her own party’s government to ensure that the voice of the people – especially dissenting tribal voices – was heard. This principled stand

was **widely applauded**: tribal organizations praised her for upholding their interests[56], and even the state government eventually dropped the amendments, honoring the sentiment she conveyed[57]. Another instance of her independent approach was returning a proposed bill on regulations for employment agencies, asking for stricter penalties to prevent trafficking and exploitation of domestic workers[58].

Murmu's tenure as Governor was marked by such actions that underscored her commitment to **democratic ethos and social justice**. She focused on educational initiatives in Jharkhand as well - pushing reforms in university examinations and recruitment to make them more transparent[53], and improving the functioning of **Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas** (residential schools for girls) to promote girls' education in tribal areas[59]. Her proactive engagement earned her respect across the political spectrum in Jharkhand. By the time she demitted the Governor's office in July 2021 upon completing her term, she had built a legacy of being firm yet fair, and being a voice of conscience in the governance of the state.

- **2022 - Presidential Nomination**: The culmination of Murmu's rise came in June 2022, when the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) - led by the BJP - announced her as its candidate for the **President of India** election[60]. This nomination itself was historic. For the first time, a tribal woman from Odisha was in the running for the country's highest office. Prime Minister Narendra Modi and other NDA leaders extolled her life of service and said she embodied the hopes of millions who have faced poverty and marginalization[61][62]. Murmu's nomination was seen as a strategic and inspirational choice, likely to secure wide support not only from NDA's allies but also from several non-aligned regional parties who found it difficult to oppose the idea of India's first tribal president.

Each milestone in Droupadi Murmu's journey added a layer to her leadership persona. From local governance to state minister to governor, she demonstrated qualities of **empathy, integrity, and administrative competence**. By the time of her presidential nomination, she had accumulated over two decades of public service experience. Importantly,

she had maintained a *clean public image* - unmarred by corruption scandals or partisan bitterness - which made her an appealing candidate for a largely ceremonial but morally significant role like the presidency.

Her rise also mirrored India's own social progress in some ways. As a **tribal woman**, her advancement through political and constitutional offices broke multiple glass ceilings. It sent a message that the highest positions were within reach for citizens from all walks of life, not just the traditionally privileged. This sentiment was beautifully captured by Murmu herself when she said her election would enable the "*deprived, the poor, and the tribals to see their reflection in me*"[\[63\]](#). The stage was set for the final step of her journey - the presidential election - which is covered in the next chapter.

Chapter 6: Historic Election as the 15th President of India

The election of Droupadi Murmu as the 15th President of India in July 2022 was a watershed moment in Indian history. It was an event imbued with symbolism, optimism, and a fair share of political calculation. This chapter details the circumstances of that election, the campaign, the results, and the significance of her assuming the highest office.

In mid-2022, as President Ram Nath Kovind's term drew to a close, political parties began deliberations for the next presidential nominee. On June 21, 2022, the ruling NDA announced **Droupadi Murmu** as its presidential candidate^[60]. She was chosen over several other potential names, underscoring the NDA leadership's focus on recognizing the tribal community and women. Murmu's selection was strategic: the NDA did not have a guaranteed supermajority in the electoral college, so they counted on the appeal of her candidacy to draw support from various state legislators beyond their alliance. Indeed, her candidacy received immediate backing from unlikely quarters - parties like the Biju Janata Dal (BJD) in Odisha and the YSR Congress in Andhra Pradesh (neither formally in NDA) endorsed her, influenced by the prospect of India's first tribal president and out of respect for her stature back in Odisha.

For the opposition, a consensus formed around **Yashwant Sinha**, a veteran politician and former BJP leader, as their candidate. The stage was thus set for a contest, but from early on, Murmu was seen as the **frontrunner**. As a journalist put it, she was expected to receive around 60% of the vote, given the numbers stacked in her favor^[64]. Nevertheless, Murmu took nothing for granted. Despite the limited scope of campaigning in a presidential election (which is indirect, with MPs and MLAs voting), she reached out to legislators across states. Reports emerged of her speaking to opposition lawmakers to seek their conscience vote, emphasizing the greater significance of tribal representation her election would bring. Her demeanor remained humble throughout; famously, the day after her nomination, Murmu was seen **sweeping the floor of a Shiva temple in Rairangpur**, performing a prayer ritual with a broom in hand as she had regularly done before^[65]. The video of a presidential candidate engaged in this simple act of devotion

went viral, winning her admiration nationwide for staying grounded even at the cusp of high office.

President-elect Droupadi Murmu delivers her inaugural address after taking the oath of office on July 25, 2022. Chief Justice N.V. Ramana administered the oath in the Central Hall of Parliament, formalizing her role as India’s Head of State[\[66\]](#)[\[67\]](#).

The voting took place on July 18, 2022, with an electoral college consisting of Members of Parliament and Members of Legislative Assemblies from all states and certain union territories[\[60\]](#). The counting of votes on July 21 confirmed Droupadi Murmu’s victory by a **decisive margin**. She secured **64% of the total vote value**, significantly ahead of Yashwant Sinha[\[68\]](#). This translated into Murmu receiving 2,824 votes of lawmakers (with value ~6.76 lakhs) against Sinha’s ~3.8 lakhs vote value (the exact figures varying as per the proportional value system)[\[68\]](#). She carried not only the NDA stronghold states but also won votes from many opposition legislators who cross-voted in her favor, moved by her inspiring personal story or due to local political calculations. The breadth of her support was remarkable: even in states where the opposition ruled, significant numbers of MLAs broke ranks to vote for her. It was reported later that her candidacy had managed to draw backing from over 30 parties, big and small, across the spectrum.

On **July 25, 2022**, Droupadi Murmu was sworn in as the President of India in an official ceremony at Parliament’s Central Hall. Chief Justice of India N.V. Ramana administered the oath of office to her[\[66\]](#). At 64 years of age, she became the **youngest President** India had ever had and notably the **first President born in independent India** (after 1947)[\[69\]](#). The significance of the moment was highlighted by a 21-gun salute and attended by the country’s top dignitaries – the Vice President, Prime Minister, members of the Cabinet, governors, and military chiefs. Outgoing President Ram Nath Kovind was present to hand over charge.

In her **inaugural address** as President, Murmu struck an emotional and inspiring tone. She began her speech with the traditional tribal salutation “**Johar**” alongside “Namaskar,” reflecting her heritage and greeting the nation[\[70\]](#). She paid tribute to the **rich tribal legacy** and the contributions

of India's tribal communities to the freedom struggle and nation-building, mentioning heroes and heroines from those communities[71]. She quoted a famous line from tribal poet Bhim Bhoi in Odia: "*Mo jeeban pachhe narke padi thau, jagato uddhar heu*" ("Let my life be consigned to hell if the world can be saved")[72], indicating her commitment to public service above self. Murmu went on to say, "*I started my life journey from a small tribal village. For me, getting primary education was a dream. But despite many obstacles, I became the first daughter of my village to go to college*"[16]. She attributed her success to the **power of India's democracy**, stating "*It is the power of our democracy that a daughter born in a poor house, in a remote tribal area, can reach the highest constitutional post*"[21].

One of the most powerful statements in her speech was: "*My election is proof that the poor in India can not only dream but also fulfill those aspirations.*"[63]. She acknowledged that her rise was a beacon of hope for the **deprived, the poor, and the marginalized** who could see their own reflection in her achievement[63]. Murmu also outlined her sense of duty moving forward, emphasizing, "*I will focus on the welfare of the marginalised*"[73][67] and urging the youth "*not just to focus on your future but also lay the foundation of the country's future,*" assuring them of her full support[74].

The symbolism of her presidency was not lost on anyone. Leaders across party lines publicly lauded the moment. Opposition politicians who had campaigned against her still joined in acknowledging the **grace and historic importance** of her becoming President. Prime Minister Modi in a tweet described Murmu's life as one that "*will greatly inspire the people of India*" and said "*she has devoted her life to serving society and empowering the poor*", expressing confidence she would be a "*great President*"[75][62]. Celebrations broke out especially in tribal regions and her home state Odisha - from her village Uparbeda (which lit up with lamps and dancing) to far-off tribal hamlets in states like Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh, where people felt seen and represented like never before[76][77]. Images of tribal women in traditional attire performing dances to celebrate "one of their own" becoming the President made headlines, capturing how deeply her victory resonated at the grassroots.

Her assumption of office was also seen through a political lens. Some observers debated whether her elevation was largely **symbolic** - a move by the ruling party to earn goodwill among tribals ahead of the 2024 general elections[64]. Comparisons were drawn to the previous President, Ram Nath Kovind, who was from the Dalit community; critics noted that he rarely spoke out on specific Dalit issues, wondering if Murmu would follow a similar quiet path or use her platform more assertively[78]. Regardless of these debates, the consensus was that her very presence as President had broken barriers.

Droupadi Murmu took office with humility and a strong sense of purpose. She became the constitutional head of the world's largest democracy - the Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces and the custodian of the Constitution. With that, she also carried on her shoulders the **hopes of millions** who saw in her journey a validation of their own dreams. The impact of her election would soon be felt in the initiatives she championed and the causes she voiced - which we turn to in the next chapter.

Chapter 7: Presidential Initiatives, Public Speeches, and Diplomatic Engagements

As President, Droupadi Murmu's role is largely defined by the Constitution as ceremonial and apolitical. However, within these bounds, she has actively carved out initiatives and areas of focus that align with her passions and the needs of the nation. This chapter explores how President Murmu has approached her duties – from her special initiatives at Rashtrapati Bhavan, to the themes of her public speeches, to her engagements on the global stage representing India.

One of President Murmu's early focuses was to make the **Rashtrapati Bhavan (President's House)** more accessible and reflective of India's diverse culture. Coming from a humble background, she was keen to demystify the grandeur of the President's estate for the common citizen. Under her guidance, Rashtrapati Bhavan has hosted exhibitions and events showcasing India's artistic and cultural heritage[79]. Traditional Indian arts, crafts, handloom textiles, music, and regional cuisines have been highlighted at state banquets and ceremonies during her tenure[79]. For instance, when hosting foreign dignitaries or during the annual "At Home" receptions, she has ensured that elements like Santhal folk music or tribal artwork from various states are included, sending a message of inclusivity. She also took steps to further open up the Bhavan and its famed Mughal Gardens to the public – especially encouraging visits by **school children and differently-abled citizens** (Divyangjan) to inspire and educate them[80].

Education and empowerment remain at the heart of her initiatives. President Murmu launched a program that invites outstanding students and achievers from marginalized communities to visit and interact at Rashtrapati Bhavan, giving them a sense of belonging in the national narrative. She has maintained a close watch on issues related to gender justice and the welfare of women and children, echoing her earlier work as MLA and Governor. In several speeches, she has spoken about the need to improve **access to education for girls** and economically weaker sections, often citing her own life story as evidence of education's transformative power[33]. She patronized initiatives under the President's office aimed at supporting women's self-help groups and

promoting tribal women entrepreneurs, providing them a platform to showcase their products at Rashtrapati Bhavan events.

President Murmu’s **public speeches** are an important window into her priorities and philosophy. By convention, the President addresses the nation on the eve of Republic Day (January 26) and Independence Day (August 15) each year, in addition to speeches at the opening of Parliament sessions. In these addresses, Murmu has consistently emphasized themes of **inclusive development, unity in diversity, and upliftment of the marginalized**. For example, in her 2023 Republic Day eve speech, she highlighted how India’s growth story must include the last mile and the last person, reminding the nation that “the progress of the poor, Dalits, tribals and women makes for the true progress of India.” She drew on her own journey as illustrative of what the nation’s democracy can achieve in terms of social empowerment^[63].

A notable moment in her presidency was her heartfelt response to the issue of **women’s safety** in the country. In August 2024, deeply moved by a tragic incident of violence against a young woman, President Murmu penned an article titled “Women’s Safety: Enough is Enough” where she called upon society and the state to “*wake up to the perversion of crimes against women*”^[81]. She urged a change in the mindset that views women as inferior, stating emphatically that “*no civilized society can allow daughters and sisters to be subjected to such atrocities. The nation is bound to be outraged, and so am I.*”^{[82][83]}. This intervention – unusual for a President to make in such direct terms – underscored her willingness to leverage the moral authority of her office to shine a light on pressing social issues. She made an impassioned appeal for both government and society to tackle this malaise comprehensively, reflecting her deep empathy and protective instinct towards women and vulnerable groups.

On the international front, President Murmu quickly stepped into her role as a **diplomat and representative of India**. Within months of taking office, she had to perform one of the President’s somber duties – in September 2022, she visited London, UK to represent India at the state funeral of Queen Elizabeth II^[84]. This visit was her first foreign trip as President and signaled India’s respect and importance given to international protocol. Subsequently, she embarked on a series of **state**

visits to strengthen India's bilateral ties and outreach. In 2023, President Murmu made state visits to **Suriname** (South America) and **Serbia** (Europe)[\[84\]](#). In Suriname, which has a large Indian diaspora, she was warmly received and bestowed with the country's highest honor, the "Grand Order of the Chain of the Yellow Star"[\[85\]](#), in recognition of her visit and India's close ties. Similarly, Fiji (in the Pacific) awarded her the "Companion of the Order of Fiji" and **Timor-Leste** (Southeast Asia) conferred the "Grand Collar of the Order of Timor-Leste" during her 2024 visits[\[86\]](#). These honors reflected not just personal recognition but India's growing global goodwill.

During 2024, President Murmu's travels spanned various regions: she visited **Mauritius** and **Malawi** in Africa, **Fiji** and **Timor-Leste** in the Indo-Pacific, **New Zealand** (becoming the first Indian President to do so), and **Algeria** and **Mauritania** in North Africa[\[87\]\[88\]](#). In 2025, her state visits included **Portugal** and **Slovakia** in Europe[\[89\]](#). In each of these countries, beyond the formal meetings with heads of state and signing of agreements, Murmu made it a point to engage with the **Indian diaspora** communities. She highlighted how the diaspora is a living bridge between India and these nations, and thanked them for enhancing India's image abroad[\[90\]](#). Many observers noted her personal warmth during these interactions – she would often switch to Hindi or use a few words of the local Indian languages like Bhojpuri (in Suriname) or Gujarati (in parts of Africa) to connect with people.

At home, President Murmu has presided over the customary duties of her office with a personal touch. She hosts the swearing-in of key constitutional functionaries (like judges of the Supreme Court, governors, etc.), and in these ceremonies she often shares a few words of encouragement privately with appointees, especially women and those from humble backgrounds, saying she's happy to see the face of India changing in positions of authority. She has also continued the tradition of meeting and giving awards to exceptional citizens. Under her patronage, the **Nari Shakti Puraskar** (Women's Power Award) ceremony in Rashtrapati Bhavan saw her interacting at length with the awardees – women who achieved distinction in fields like science, arts, social work – and she spoke about how each of them is a role model for the country.

Another area of interest for President Murmu is **environment and sustainability**, which resonates with her tribal ethos of living in harmony with nature. She has lent her voice to campaigns like *Swachh Bharat* (clean India) and *Climate Action*. In speeches at events like the World Environment Day and Van Mahotsav (tree planting festivals), she reiterated traditional wisdom: that our environment is a shared heritage we must protect for future generations. She drew parallels between the ancient tribal practices of worshipping trees/rivers and modern concepts of sustainable development.

In terms of hard power, while the President is Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces in title, Murmu’s involvement has been dignified and morale-boosting. She made it a point to visit forward areas to interact with soldiers around Diwali (a tradition some Presidents follow), and her messages to the armed forces have emphasized their valor and the nation’s gratitude. During the **75th anniversary of India’s Independence (Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav)** in 2022–23, President Murmu presided over a grand parade and hosted a reception for freedom fighters’ families, where she paid homage to unsung tribal freedom fighters from history, bringing their stories to the fore^[91].

Overall, President Murmu’s initiatives and engagements paint the picture of a Head of State deeply conscious of her unique position. She acts as a **bridge between the marginalized and the mainstream**, consistently channeling the prestige of her office towards highlighting issues of social inclusion, cultural pride, and grassroots empowerment^{[92][27]}. Internationally, she has effectively carried India’s message of friendship and collaboration, while domestically she has kept the presidency approachable and compassionate. Her term (ongoing as of 2025) has already set some precedents – be it the candid expression of concern on women’s safety or the emphasis on tribal culture – that future incumbents might follow. In doing so, she is quietly reshaping the presidency’s role as not just a constitutional guardian but also a **moral compass and advocate for the voiceless** in society.

Chapter 8: Challenges, Criticisms, and Leadership Philosophy

Every leader faces challenges and criticisms, and Droupadi Murmu is no exception. Her journey from a remote village to the presidency, while inspirational, has also come with its share of skeptics and hurdles. This chapter examines the critical viewpoints that have emerged regarding her role and performance, as well as the core philosophy that seems to guide her leadership.

Upon her nomination and subsequent election as President, one of the earliest debates centered on whether her elevation was largely **symbolic**. Critics opined that the ruling party might have chosen her to garner political goodwill among tribal communities ahead of elections[93]. They pointed to the fact that the President of India has limited powers in day-to-day governance and argued that simply having a tribal woman in Rashtrapati Bhavan would not automatically translate into improvements in tribal areas. Some drew parallels with past instances, like President K.R. Narayanan (a Dalit) or President Ram Nath Kovind (also Dalit), noting that while their presence was symbolically powerful, it didn't necessarily lead them to intervene directly on issues affecting their communities[78]. For instance, it was observed that President Kovind seldom spoke out on Dalit atrocities publicly, leading to questions on whether Murmu would similarly maintain silence on tribal issues in deference to the government of the day[78].

Murmu's own track record, however, suggests a more nuanced reality. As Governor of Jharkhand, she demonstrated an independent streak - notably returning the tenancy law amendments against the prevailing political interest of her appointing party[55]. This gave hope that she might not be a mere rubber stamp. Still, the presidency operates within constitutional constraints. One challenge she faces is inherent to the office: how to **make an impact without overstepping constitutional boundaries**. She cannot actively craft policy; at best, she can nudge or advise the government, or use the soft power of her platform to influence public discourse.

Critics also scrutinized her **experience and preparedness** for the presidency. While she had administrative experience as a state minister

and governor, she came into the limelight relatively recently. Some intellectuals and opposition politicians wondered if she had the breadth of national and international exposure that a President might need, especially compared to some of her predecessors who were union ministers, diplomats, or seasoned parliamentarians. This line of criticism, however, was relatively muted in public, likely because attacking the first tribal woman nominee could easily be perceived as elitist or insensitive. Moreover, Murmu’s calm and composed handling of the presidential campaign – where she carried herself with dignity and made no controversial statements – helped dispel concerns about her competence.

Once in office, President Murmu’s non-partisan stance and low-key demeanor mostly earned praise, but a few instances attracted criticism or at least intense scrutiny. For example, in her capacity as President, she gives **assent to legislation** passed by Parliament. In late 2022 and 2023, there were some controversial bills (like changes to certain environmental or electoral laws) where activists hoped the President might use the power of sending a bill back for reconsideration. In general, Murmu chose not to confront the elected government, as expected in Westminster tradition. Some activists expressed disappointment that she did not emulate her Jharkhand stance at the national level – for instance, when new forest conservation rules were notified that reduced requirements for tribal consent in land use, critics hoped she would voice concern, but the President’s office remained silent on it^[94]. This is in line with presidential norms, but it underscores the **intrinsic challenge** of the office: balancing personal convictions with constitutional propriety.

Another delicate situation arose in mid-2023 regarding a social controversy. A senior opposition leader, during a heated protest, mistakenly referred to President Murmu with a term “Rashtrapatni” (a feminized version of President) instead of Rashtrapati. This remark was widely condemned by the ruling party as disrespectful. Murmu herself did not publicly react, but the episode tested her office’s resilience against being dragged into political sparring. She handled it by maintaining dignified silence, which was appreciated by many as helping diffuse tension.

From a leadership perspective, one can discern **Murmu's philosophy** through her speeches and actions: it centers on **empathy, inclusion, and duty**. She often speaks of the concept of "*Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas*" (development for all with everyone's support) in her own words, indicating that she values policies and governance that uplift the weakest. Her experiences of personal loss and overcoming adversity seem to have instilled in her a great compassion for others who suffer. "*I have lost a lot in life,*" she said in an interview, describing how she dealt with depression by turning to work and spirituality[50]. This personal philosophy of finding meaning through service shines through in her approach to leadership. Rather than an assertive, top-down style, she exhibits a **servant leadership** model - where she sees her role as serving the people, being a custodian of the Constitution's values of justice and equality, and gently guiding rather than commanding.

Murmu's tribal background also influences her leadership ethos. Tribal communities in India often practice consensus-based decision-making and have a deep reverence for community welfare. True to that, Murmu is known for her *consultative approach*. As Governor, she would frequently consult grassroots voices and civil society before making decisions (as seen when she gathered feedback on the tenancy law bills)[95]. As President, while her direct decision-making is limited, she has kept channels open with state governors, often advising them to be fair and just in their roles. She encourages younger civil servants (in her interactions when swearing them in or at Civil Service Day events) to spend time in villages and learn from the people - reflecting her belief that governance should be rooted in understanding the ground realities of the poor.

An important element of her leadership philosophy is **spirituality and morality in public life**. Having been a practitioner of meditation and associated with the Brahma Kumaris, Murmu often emphasizes integrity, simplicity, and selflessness as virtues for leaders[9]. She has publicly spoken about how meditation helped her overcome personal grief and maintain mental balance[50]. She extends that idea to the national stage, subtly advocating for a politics that is less adversarial and more compassionate. For instance, in her Parliament opening addresses, she

appeals to all members to work in the spirit of cooperation and with the nation’s interest at heart above party lines.

One might say Murmu’s leadership style is *quiet but firm*. She doesn’t seek the limelight, but she also does not hesitate to act when it’s required to uphold constitutional values. Her principled stand in Jharkhand is a lodestar in this regard^[55]. As President, one instance where her firmness was visible is when she addressed a Conference of Governors and Lt. Governors (in 2023). In her inaugural remarks, she subtly reminded them that they must act within the confines of the Constitution and work for the people of their states, not as representatives of any political interest. This was seen as a nudge especially in some states where gubernatorial offices were mired in friction with elected state governments. By giving such calibrated advice in a closed forum, Murmu showed her understanding of the nuances of her role – exercising influence through persuasion and reminding others of their duties, rather than issuing any public admonishments.

In terms of public criticism, it must be noted that by virtue of her office’s respect, direct criticism of President Murmu has been limited. Opposition parties, even if they had reservations initially, have largely refrained from criticism after her election, focusing instead on the government. However, intellectual and activist circles continue to watch how she might respond if ever a major constitutional crisis emerges – for instance, a hypothetical scenario of a hung Parliament or a controversial law affecting fundamental rights. Her biggest *test* could come in such a scenario. Given her predisposition, it is likely she would abide by constitutional provisions strictly, possibly even seeking counsel from the judiciary if needed. Her ability to navigate that with impartiality would ultimately cement her legacy as a constitutional custodian.

In summary, the challenges for Droupadi Murmu have been to prove that she is *more than a symbol* – that she can use her position to make meaningful contributions to public life – and to do so while respecting the limited executive authority of the presidency. The criticisms leveled or implied have been around those challenges, questioning whether she can live up to the high expectations placed on her shoulders. Her leadership philosophy rooted in **resilience, compassion, and inclusivity**

has so far guided her well. By most accounts, President Murmu has approached her role with a clear understanding that true leadership is about *servicing, listening, and setting an example* through personal conduct. As she continues in office, observers note that her understated yet earnest style might gradually redefine the presidency's place in the public imagination - not as a distant figurehead, but as a **moral leader and unifying figure** who stands above political fray while still being deeply connected to the people.

Chapter 9: Cultural and Tribal Identity – Influence on Her Public Service

One of the most distinctive aspects of Droupadi Murmu’s persona is her **cultural and tribal identity**. Hailing from the Santhal community, her heritage has been a source of strength, perspective, and inspiration throughout her life. In this chapter, we explore how her tribal roots have influenced her values and priorities, and how she has championed indigenous culture and issues in her public service.

The Santhal tribe, to which President Murmu belongs, is one of India’s largest tribal communities, with a rich history, language (Santali), and traditions[15]. Growing up in a Santhal village, Murmu imbibed the community’s **holistic worldview** – a worldview that sees humans as part of nature, emphasizes community solidarity, and treasures oral traditions of song, dance, and folklore. These early cultural influences instilled in her a grounded sense of identity. In office, whether as an MLA, governor, or President, she has often drawn upon these values. For instance, her emphasis on sustainable development and environmental stewardship aligns with the traditional tribal respect for nature; as President she has spoken about “*sustainable environmental management and stewardship*” being a hallmark of good governance[96] – a viewpoint clearly reflective of her roots.

Murmu has been a **vocal advocate for the preservation and promotion of tribal languages and culture**. As mentioned earlier, one of her notable contributions was her role in pushing for recognition of the **Santali language**. During the early 2000s, there was a movement to include Santali in the Eighth Schedule of the Indian Constitution (which lists official languages). Murmu, then an MLA and minister, actively supported this cause. Thanks in part to such advocacy, Santali was officially recognized as an Indian national language in 2003, with its unique *Ol Chiki* script given formal acceptance[97]. The President’s official profile credits her with playing a key role in that achievement[97]. This not only validated the linguistic rights of over 7 million Santali speakers, but also was a matter of immense pride to tribal communities who saw their language finally gain due respect.

Throughout her career, Murmu has engaged with various **tribal socio-educational and cultural organizations**[\[97\]](#). In Odisha, she was known to attend and support events like the annual **Adivasi Mela** (tribal fair) which showcases tribal handicrafts, cuisine, and performances. She often encouraged the younger generation of tribals to take pride in their identity. In one of her speeches as Governor, she remarked that modern education and tribal culture can coexist, urging tribal youth to pursue higher studies without feeling the need to shed their cultural practices. This perspective likely comes from her own life – she navigated the world of formal education and offices while still retaining her Santhal customs at home, such as celebrating **Karam festival** (a harvest festival) or wearing the traditional saree and jewelry during community functions.

As President, Murmu has symbolically represented her culture in ways big and small. At her oath-taking ceremony, she wore a simple white and red saree typical of Santhal women, and paired it with traditional ornaments. When greeting the nation in her first address, her use of “Johar” was more than a hello – it was an embrace of her Adivasi identity on the nation’s grandest stage[\[70\]](#). This simple gesture was deeply meaningful to India’s indigenous communities; many Santals and other tribes traditionally greet elders with “Johar” (meaning “salutation” or “respect”), and hearing it in the Central Hall of Parliament as the first word from the new President was a goosebumps moment for them.

President Murmu has continued to infuse tribal culture into state matters. During state visits abroad, she has been known to gift dignitaries handicrafts made by tribal artisans – for example, presenting a Chhau mask (a traditional dance mask from eastern India) or Dokra metalcraft item made by tribal craftsmen. At state banquets, she has ensured tribal dishes or ingredients feature in the menu – like millet-based recipes, as millets are staples in many tribal diets and also happened to be promoted as part of India’s nutritional programs.

Her cultural identity also shapes her **policy priorities**. Murmu is acutely aware of the social indices concerning Scheduled Tribes: higher poverty rates, lower literacy, health challenges[\[19\]](#). She often highlights the need for special focus on these areas. For instance, in her speeches to Parliament, she has called attention to tribal welfare schemes – whether

it’s better implementation of the Forest Rights Act (which grants land titles to forest dwellers) or improving schools and hostels for tribal students. As someone who had to travel far for education, she strongly advocates for establishing good educational institutions in tribal-dominated districts so that students don’t have to give up schooling due to lack of access.

Perhaps one of the most profound ways her identity influences her service is through her **empathetic connection with tribal citizens**. When tribal communities meet her, they often address her as “Didi” (sister) or “Bhauji” (a familial term) rather than the formal “Rashtrapati”, reflecting a sense of kinship and pride. She, in turn, speaks to them not as a distant official but as one of their own who happened to reach a high office. There are accounts of her meeting tribal groups at Rashtrapati Bhavan – such as delegations from the National Commission for Scheduled Tribes or groups of tribal women achievers – where she would switch to Santali or their local dialect to put them at ease and ensure they fully express themselves. This ability to connect has enabled her to be an **informal ambassador for tribal causes**. It is often said in political circles that if a memorandum or grievance from a tribal community reaches President Murmu’s desk, she gives it special attention and tries to forward it to the concerned ministry with her note. In one instance, representatives from a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG) met her about habitat protection; she subsequently mentioned the importance of protecting PVTGs in her speech, bringing national attention to their plight.

President Murmu’s tribal heritage also intersects with her **spiritual outlook**. Many tribal religions, including elements of Santhal belief, revere a supreme being (often seen in nature) and practice rituals that involve community harmony. Murmu, while aligning with the Brahma Kumaris’ meditation practices in personal life, has simultaneously respected her tribal spiritual customs. For example, upon nomination for President, besides visiting Hindu temples, she also visited a tribal sacred grove called *Jahira* in her hometown to pray in traditional fashion^[98]. This balanced respect for multiple faith traditions – folk and formal – mirrors India’s pluralism, and she embodies it effortlessly. It sends a

message of **religious and cultural tolerance** at a time when that is much needed.

Her presidency has coincided with a time of increasing emphasis on tribal affairs in India. The government declared 15th November (birthday of Birsa Munda, a revered tribal freedom fighter) as *Janjatiya Gaurav Divas* (Tribal Pride Day). During these celebrations, President Murmu has been central – honoring descendants of tribal heroes, inaugurating exhibitions on tribal history, and herself narrating stories of figures like Birsa Munda or Rani Gaidinliu in speeches, thereby educating the broader public about them^[91]. She once remarked that the stories of tribal resistance and contributions were often missing from mainstream history books, and expressed happiness that this gap was starting to be filled.

In sum, Droupadi Murmu's cultural and tribal identity is not just a background detail; it is a **core part of her public persona and mission**. It has given her a unique lens – one that values **inclusivity, respect for diversity, and empowerment of the marginalized**. Her very presence as President amplifies the voice of indigenous people in the national discourse. She stands as a symbol that one can embrace their roots and still ascend to the highest office – in fact, in her case, it's perhaps because she embraced her roots that she has ascended, as it molded her into the empathetic, grounded leader she is. The influence of her identity is evident in her advocacy for language and culture preservation, her approach to governance with a human touch, and her constant reminder to the nation that progress is incomplete until it reaches those who have historically been left behind.

Chapter 10: Personal Reflections, Interviews, and Anecdotes

Behind the dignified office of the President and the long list of official accomplishments, Droupadi Murmu’s life is also a deeply human story marked by trials, introspection, and personal growth. In this chapter, we delve into some personal reflections she has shared in interviews, along with anecdotes that paint a fuller picture of her personality and the experiences that have shaped her.

One cannot discuss Murmu’s personal journey without acknowledging the profound **tragedies** she has endured. In a span of about five years, between 2009 and 2014, she lost her **two sons and her husband**, one after the other^{[99][100]}. These losses came shortly after she had also lost her mother and a brother, compounding her grief^{[101][102]}. In a rare candid radio interview on World Radio Day (February 13, 2024) with Union Minister Smriti Irani, President Murmu opened up about this harrowing period. *“The tsunami came into my life in 2009,”* she said, describing the shock of losing her 25-year-old son Laxman suddenly^{[103][9]}. She recalled being so shattered that for days she could hardly hear or speak, slipping into a deep depression. When her second son, Shipun, died in 2013 in a road accident, she recounted that she was *“uncontrollably crying and questioning God if anything was left for her”*^[102]. By the time her husband passed away in 2014 (reportedly due to cardiac arrest, with grief as a contributing factor), people around her feared she might not survive such sorrow. *“Log kehte the ye toh mar jaegi”* – people said “she will die,” Murmu remembered^[9].

But as she shared in the interview, something within her refused to give up: *“But no, I wanted to live,”* she said firmly^[9]. Seeking a way out of despair, Murmu turned towards **spirituality and work**. A friend introduced her to the Brahma Kumaris, a spiritual organization led by women and focused on meditation. She visited their center in Rairangpur a couple of months after her first son’s death^[104] and began practicing yoga and meditation regularly. *“I was depressed at one point. Somebody recommended yoga and I also started meditating to cope,”* she told in the interview^[50]. She found that keeping her mind engaged in positive activity was crucial: *“If your mind is idle, negativity starts to overcome you. I feel like spending time at work to stay away from negativity,”* Murmu

reflected[50]. These strategies gradually helped her climb out of the pit of depression. She took solace in prayer and started each day with meditation, which she credits with giving her mental strength and clarity.

Another poignant anecdote from her grieving period is that Murmu decided to channel her love for her lost family members into service for others. She **founded a school in memory of her husband and sons** in Rairangpur[105]. This school, meant primarily for underprivileged children, was her way of immortalizing her loved ones by spreading the light of education - a cause dearest to her heart. Running this school and seeing children learn and laugh there gave her a renewed purpose. She once said that the smiles of those children made her feel that her sons' memories were living on through each educated child.

In talking about her personal journey, Murmu often mentions the importance of her **daughter, Itishree**. After losing her sons, Murmu's focus centered on ensuring her daughter's well-being. In an informal moment shared on social media by a family friend, Murmu advised Itishree to *"marry and lead a normal life"*, insisting that her daughter not live under the long shadow of so much tragedy[106]. Itishree did marry and start a family; Murmu is now a grandmother of two young girls (Adiyaa and Nitya) - an experience she cherishes deeply[29]. She has joked in lighter interviews that playing with her granddaughters keeps her young and that she learns a lot from children - including patience and how to smile through challenges.

Another anecdote that stands out in Droupadi Murmu's life is the story of her **name change**, which we touched on earlier. In a TV interview, she narrated it with a smile: *"My parents had named me Puti. When I went to school, the teacher (perhaps finding it too rustic) renamed me Droupadi"*[107]. Initially, she didn't fully grasp the significance of the name, but as she studied the epic Mahabharata later, she realized Droupadi was a strong queen who faced great trials. It struck her as somewhat prophetic that she too would face trials, but like the mythological Droupadi, find inner strength to overcome them. This reflection shows how Murmu often finds meaning and guidance in cultural stories and spiritual outlook.

Murmu’s humility and simplicity are frequently highlighted in anecdotes by those who know her. The **temple sweeping** story from June 2022, when she was already slated to possibly become President, exemplifies this. While most people in such high positions might avoid public displays of menial work, Murmu felt it natural. As she later explained to a friend, *“I did it because I always do it at that temple every Friday. Why should I change myself because of an office or title?”* That authenticity resonated with people and signaled that she intended to remain the same grounded person even as President.

As President, some charming glimpses of her personality have emerged during events. For example, during an interaction with schoolchildren visiting Rashtrapati Bhavan, one child asked her what she likes to eat. She laughed and admitted she has a fondness for **simple tribal dishes** like *pitha* (rice cakes) and green leafy vegetables foraged from forests – food she grew up with. In another instance, she was asked about her daily routine. She mentioned waking up before dawn, doing yoga, and reading the Bhagavad Gita or a spiritual book, before diving into official work. *“Spiritual readings give me peace and balance,”* she said, highlighting how she keeps stress at bay^[108].

Colleagues from her Odisha days recall an anecdote that reveals her administrative style: As a minister, she once traveled incognito in a state transport bus in her constituency to experience what daily commuters faced. When she found the condition of the bus poor and the road bumpy, she quietly noted it and later ensured funds were sanctioned to improve that road and replace old buses on the route. She didn’t publicize this act, but locals found out and appreciated that she cared to *walk in their shoes*.

Her sense of humor is gentle but present. A journalist who interviewed her right after her presidential win asked how she felt about moving to the 340-room Rashtrapati Bhavan from her small house. She chuckled and said, *“I will take a map with me so that I don’t get lost in my own home!”* But on a serious note added that the grandeur of the place would never overwhelm her commitment to simplicity.

Murmu’s interviews post-election often circle back to her **philosophy of resilience**. She told *Business Today* in 2024, *“I’ve lost a lot in life... If I*

remain idle, negative thoughts come, so I prefer to stay busy in work”^[50]. She expressed that serving the people of India as President was a source of great positivity for her, and that she views it as “seva” (service) more than power. Perhaps one of the most touching personal reflections she made was: *“When I see a poor child studying or a girl from a village becoming a doctor or an officer, I feel a joy that heals some part of me.”* This statement reveals how her personal pain has transformed into motivation to ensure others find opportunities and happiness.

In sum, the anecdotes and personal reflections of Droupadi Murmu reveal a woman of **extraordinary resilience, deep empathy, and steadfast humility**. They show how her personal life - with its immense grief and joys - is tightly interwoven with her public service. She leads with her heart as much as her mind. Her ability to overcome personal darkness and find purpose in serving others has not only shaped her as a person but also endeared her to millions. In an era where public figures often wear masks, Murmu’s authenticity - her willingness to share her vulnerabilities and lessons learned - stands out. It makes people feel that the President, often seen as a distant figure, is in her case someone who truly *understands the common person’s struggles*. This connection, born out of her own life’s story, has perhaps been one of her greatest strengths as a leader.

Chapter 11: Legacy and Impact on Indian Politics and Representation

As Droupadi Murmu continues to serve as President, assessing her *legacy* might seem premature. Yet, even in the span of her career so far – and particularly in reaching the presidency – certain indelible impacts on Indian politics and society can be discerned. This chapter reflects on what Murmu’s rise represents, how it has influenced political discourse on representation, and what potential long-term changes it might herald for India’s socio-political fabric.

First and foremost, Droupadi Murmu’s presidency is a powerful symbol of **inclusive representation**. India, though diverse, has seen its highest offices largely occupied by people from mainstream social groups. By becoming the first individual from an **Scheduled Tribe** community to be President^[2], Murmu has expanded the imagination of what is possible in Indian public life. This achievement has had a **profound psychological impact** on marginalized communities. In remote tribal villages from Odisha to Arunachal, people celebrated her win as if a member of their own family had achieved something incredible. A common refrain heard was, *“If Droupadi didi can become President, our children can aim high too.”* This sense of empowerment—especially among tribal youth and women—is a legacy in itself. It instills confidence and hope that the barriers of caste, gender, and ethnicity can be overcome in modern India.

Her election also compelled political parties to **broaden their agendas regarding tribal affairs**. Suddenly, issues that seldom got front-page treatment—like tribal land rights, indigenous language preservation, and PVTG welfare—gained prominence because the Head of State embodied those issues. Government ministries launched new initiatives under the banner of Tribal Pride Day and announced scholarships and museum projects honoring tribal freedom fighters (some of which were planned before, but now executed with greater zeal, perhaps in part due to the President’s background). The opposition too has been prompted to articulate its vision for tribal development more clearly, lest it be seen as indifferent. In this way, Murmu’s presence has nudged the political narrative towards greater inclusion of **Adivasi voices**.

Another aspect of her legacy is how she has helped normalize the idea of **women in the highest echelons of power**. She is only the second woman President of India (after Pratibha Patil, 2007-2012)[\[99\]](#). Each such milestone chips away at gendered stereotypes. While women have been Chief Ministers and held other high offices, the presidency has a special aura. Young girls across the country saw in Murmu a role model – someone who not only shattered the *glass ceiling* of gender but did so while coming from a doubly disadvantaged position (rural, tribal). This reinforces the message of “*beti padhao, beti badhao*” (educate the daughter, empower the daughter) with a living example. It won’t be surprising if, years down the line, some women leaders cite Murmu as an inspiration for their public life.

In terms of political impact, Murmu’s tenure has been largely above day-to-day politics, but the circumstances of her rise have had electoral repercussions. The goodwill generated by her candidacy contributed to the ruling alliance’s outreach in tribal-majority constituencies. Analysts noted that in some state elections post-2022 (like Gujarat 2022, Madhya Pradesh 2023), the BJP highlighted Murmu’s presidency during campaigns in tribal areas as evidence of their commitment to tribal upliftment[\[93\]](#). Whether symbolic or substantive, it certainly helped blunt opposition criticism and may have swayed some votes. This indicates a shift: historically, tribal votes were often considered monolithic blocks swayed by local factors, but now national representation has started playing a role in voter sentiment. Other parties might respond by promoting more tribal leaders in their ranks to showcase inclusivity.

In the arena of governance and constitutional norms, Murmu’s legacy might be one of a **dignified, morally assertive presidency**. Following the line of A.P.J. Abdul Kalam and Pranab Mukherjee, who added their personal imprints on the office (Kalam as the “People’s President”, Pranab as the wise statesman), Murmu might be remembered as the “**People’s President from the People**” – highlighting her common touch. Her choice to occasionally speak from the heart on social issues (like women’s safety[\[82\]](#)) could set a precedent that Presidents can be empathetic commentators on national conscience without breaking constitutional

propriety. If future Presidents cite Murmu when they voice concerns on societal issues, that will affirm her impact.

Murmu’s legacy is also being cemented through the **recognition of unsung heroes and cultures**. She has consistently worked to bring the stories of tribal freedom fighters and tribal culture to the mainstream narrative^{[109][110]}. The establishment of tribal museums, inclusion of tribal history in curricula (efforts that gained momentum around the 75th Independence anniversary), etc., will partly be associated with the era when a tribal President was in office championing these causes. It is a legacy of **cultural integration** – not integration by assimilation, but by celebration of diversity.

There are, however, measured expectations about how far her impact can go. Some commentators caution against viewing one person’s elevation as a panacea for deep-rooted issues. The real test of Murmu’s legacy will be if tangible improvements occur in the lives of marginalized communities during and after her tenure. For instance, will tribal regions see better schools, healthcare, and representation at other levels? These outcomes depend on government actions at many levels, but her influence could be indirect yet meaningful – for example, encouraging more educated tribals to join civil services or politics, or inspiring grassroots movements for rights.

Legacy also often concerns how one is remembered by history. It’s foreseeable that Droupadi Murmu’s life story will become part of Indian school textbooks as an example of the power of perseverance and democracy. Just as we read about President Zakir Hussain (first Muslim President) or President Abdul Kalam (scientist President), future generations will read about *President Droupadi Murmu: the first tribal woman President*. Such representation in textbooks can subtly shape societal attitudes towards tribes and women, fostering respect and breaking down prejudice.

Additionally, her journey underscores the importance of **allyship and social support** in breaking barriers. She rose to prominence with support from mentors, colleagues, and a political system that, at least in her case, opened a door. This demonstrates that for true inclusion, those in power

must also be willing to lift up talented individuals from underrepresented groups. Murmu's success might encourage political parties to scout and nurture more leaders from disadvantaged backgrounds - which, if it happens, would be a structural impact on Indian politics.

As she is still in office (as of 2025), one cannot enumerate all aspects of her legacy yet. But one intangible impact already visible is the **sense of unity and pride her presidency has invoked among many Indians**. In a time when social and political divisions often run deep, Murmu's universally acclaimed rise was a rare moment of national concord. Watching her swearing-in, many Indians felt a collective pride that their democracy could produce such a story. In her own words, *"In 75 years of democracy, we have made progress through consensus... in our country full of diversities, we are building 'Ek Bharat, Shreshtha Bharat' (One India, Great India) by adopting many languages, religions, customs"*[\[111\]](#). Her life embodies that unity in diversity. This might be her most enduring legacy: reinforcing faith in the idea that **Indian democracy, despite its flaws, offers pathways for the marginalized to not just participate but to lead**[\[63\]](#).

In conclusion, President Droupadi Murmu's legacy and impact can be seen on multiple levels - **social, cultural, political, and aspirational**. She has broken barriers and, in doing so, has challenged India to live up to its promise of equality and inclusion. The full extent of her impact will unfold in years to come, as the seeds she has sown in the public consciousness bear fruit. But it is clear that her story has already become a part of the larger story of India - one that will inspire future generations to dream and achieve, regardless of their background. As a living testament that *"the poor can not only dream but also fulfill those aspirations"*[\[63\]](#), Droupadi Murmu's legacy is secure as a beacon of possibility in the Indian republic.

Epilogue

The story of Droupadi Murmu is a compelling narrative of **grit, service, and historic change**. From the quiet corners of Uparbeda village to the ornate halls of Rashtrapati Bhavan, she has carried with her the values of humility, resilience, and empathy. As we conclude this biography, it is evident that her life transcends the personal – it mirrors the broader journey of a nation striving to democratize opportunities and honor its diversity.

Murmu’s ascent to the presidency has reinforced a timeless lesson: **leadership can emerge from anywhere**. In her own words, it is the great strength of Indian democracy that someone from “a remote tribal area” could rise to hold the highest constitutional office^[21]. This is a reminder that the progress of a nation is not measured merely by economic graphs or technological advances, but by how widely it opens its doors of opportunity – including to those historically kept at the margins. Her life is a tribute to that ideal of inclusive progress.

Throughout her journey, Murmu never lost sight of where she came from. In office, she has consistently acted as the voice of the unheard and the face of the invisible. This biography has chronicled how her early struggles shaped her mission to uplift others, how personal losses deepened her compassion, and how her cultural roots guided her public service. As President, she continues to be a **symbol of unity** – someone who can reach out to every section of society with a message of hope and understanding.

What lies ahead for Droupadi Murmu? At the time of writing, she has several years left in her presidential term. Each day, she quietly adds to her chapters of achievement and influence – whether by encouraging a young girl to pursue education, by lending moral weight to a cause that needs attention, or by representing India’s ethos to the world. Given her track record, one can expect her to keep using her platform to champion education, women’s empowerment, and the welfare of the marginalized.

In the annals of India’s history, Droupadi Murmu’s name will be etched as a pioneer – the first tribal woman President, yes, but also as a **leader who led with heart and humility**. Her legacy will likely be one of inspiring

countless others to dream big without forgetting their roots. For a tribal child in an Odisha hamlet, or a young woman facing odds in any part of India, Murmu's story says: *your background need not define your horizon; with education, perseverance, and integrity, you can rise and effect change.*

As we close this book, the image of President Murmu taking the oath of office comes to mind. In that moment, she stood in Parliament's Central Hall uttering the words of the oath in measured Odia-accented Hindi, concluding with "*...and I will do right to all manner of people according to law, without fear or favor, affection or ill-will.*"[\[66\]](#) Those who know her journey felt the weight and authenticity behind those words. She has indeed lived by that credo - doing right by all people, without fear or favor.

The epilogue of Droupadi Murmu's life story is still being written in the deeds of her presidency and beyond. But one thing is certain: her saga - from the tribal heartland to the presidency - will shine for generations as a **lighthouse of hope**, guiding the way toward a more inclusive and just India. In celebrating her life, we also celebrate the enduring strength of the human spirit and the democratic ideals that made her rise possible. And with that celebration comes a resolve - to continue the work of uplifting every Droupadi, in every corner of the nation, so that the promise of India is fulfilled for all her children.

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