

# Pranab Mukherjee



Shri **P**ranab Mukherjee assumed office as the 13th **P**resident of India on July 25, 2012, after rendering over five decades of service to the Government of India in various capacities.

It is a long, eventful and outstanding journey by Shri Mukherjee, starting from Mirati, his native village in the Birbhum district of West Bengal, to the Rashtrapti Bhavan on the Raisina hill.

Shri Mukherjee, presently seventy eight years old, is a man of unparalleled experience in governance with the rare distinction of having served at different times as Foreign, Defence, Commerce and Finance Minister. He was elected to the Upper House of the Parliament (Rajya Sabha) five times from 1969 and twice to the Lower House of the Parliament (Lok Sabha) from 2004. He was a member of the Congress Working Committee, the highest policy making body of the Party, for a period of 23 years.

Shri Pranab Mukherjee, a man of humble origins, was born in the small village of Mirati in Birbhum District of West Bengal as son of freedom fighters, Shri Kamada Kinkar Mukherjee and Rajlakshmi on December 11, 1935. His father, Shri Kamada Kinkar Mukherjee, was a Congress leader and a freedom fighter who endured great hardship including being sent to jail several times for his role in India's struggle for independence.

Shri Mukherjee spent his school and college life in Birbhum district. He passed the Matriculation examination from Kirnahar Shiv Chandra High School and the B.A examination from the Vidyasagar College in Siuri. Afterwards, Shri Mukherjee acquired a Master's degree in History and Political Science as well as a degree in Law from the University of Kolkata.

Shri Mukherjee started his professional life as a college teacher and a journalist. However inspired by his father's contribution to the national movement, Shri Mukherjee in 1969

plunged into full time public life following his election to the Upper House of the Parliament (Rajya Sabha).

During the period 2004-2012, Shri Mukherjee was instrumental in spearheading critical decisions of the Government on a range of issues such as Administrative Reforms, Right to Information, Right to Employment, Food Security, Energy Security, Information Technology and telecommunication, setting up of UIDAI, Metro Rail etc. through Chairmanship of over 95 Groups of Ministers constituted for the purpose. In the 1970's and the 1980's he was instrumental in setting up the Regional Rural Banks (1975) and the EXIM Bank of India as well as National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (1981-82). Shri Mukherjee was also involved in developing a modified formula for resource sharing between the Centre and the States in 1991 which later came to be known as the Gadgil - Mukherjee formula.

Being a powerful orator and a devoted scholar, Shri Mukherjee has received wide admiration not simply for his intellectual and political prowess but also for his remarkable knowledge of international relations, financial affairs and parliamentary process. He has been acclaimed for his role as a consensus builder on difficult national issues through his ability to forge unity amongst the diverse political parties that form part of India's vibrant multi-party democracy.

Shri Mukherjee's rise in his political career was rapid and phenomenal. He was made Deputy Minister, Industry, Shipping and Transport, Steel and Industry and Minister of State for Finance in the period 1973-74. He assumed office as Finance Minister of India for the first time in 1982 in the Cabinet of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and was the Leader of the House in the Upper House of Parliament (Rajya Sabha) from 1980 to 1985. Later, he was the Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission from 1991 to 1996, Minister for Commerce from 1993 to 1995, Minister of External Affairs from 1995 to 1996, Minister of Defence from 2004 to 2006 and once again the Minister of External Affairs from 2006 to 2009. He was the Minister of Finance from 2009 to 2012 and the Leader of the Lower House of Parliament from 2004 to 2012 till he resigned to contest election to the office of the President.

Shri Mukherjee has extensive diplomatic experience and has served on the Board of Governors of the IMF, World Bank, Asian Development Bank and African Development

Bank. He has led the Indian delegations to the Commonwealth Finance Ministers' Conferences in 1982, 1983 and 1984, the United Nations General Assembly in 1994, 1995, 2005 and 2006, the Conference of Commonwealth Heads of Government at Auckland in 1995, the Non-Aligned Foreign Minister's Conference at Cartagena in 1995 and also the Conference to mark the 40th anniversary of the Afro –Asian Conference in Bandung in 1995.

Shri Mukherjee is married to Smt. Suvra Mukherjee, an accomplished singer of Rabindra Sangeet and they are blessed with two sons and a daughter.

Shri Mukherjee enjoys reading books, gardening and listening to music in his spare time. Simple in his tastes, Shri Mukherjee is a dedicated patron of arts and culture.

Shri Mukherjee has authored several books on the Indian Economy and on Nation Building. The many awards and honours conferred on him include India's second highest civilian award, *Padma Vibhushan* in 2008, the *Best Parliamentarian Award* in 1997 and the *Best Administrator in India Award* in 2011. He was rated one of the Best five Finance Ministers of the world in 1984 according to a survey conducted by "Euro Money" Journal published from New York and was declared 'Finance Minister of the year' for Asia in 2010 by "Emerging Markets", the journal of record for the World Bank and the IMF.

Despite all such remarkable achievements, Shri Pranab Mukherjee remains as humble as ever. For, he believes in, and has genuine concern for, the welfare of the people. He writes,

*" The Ultimate test of all political and economic actions is their impact on man's well-being. Science and technology are a means of achieving self-reliance. A country which has developed on the ideals of Buddha, Gandhi and Nehru, is naturally greatly influenced by humanism. Today the world, which is caught up in a mad race for accumulating sophisticated technology and weaponry, is gradually turning to the East for rekindling the spirit of human concern".*

Shri Pranab Mukherjee was the Chairman of the Council of the Indian Statistical Institute for a very long span of about eight years (September 18, 2004 to June 20, 2012). In fact Shri

Mukherjee assumed the leadership at a crucial juncture and aptly guided the Council through delicate situations.

The meeting of the Council of the institute, held at its Delhi centre on the 28<sup>th</sup> July, 2012 gratefully acknowledged and appreciated the prudent wisdom and inimitable proficiency with which Shri Mukherjee steered the deliberations of the Council to formulate exemplary decisions in academic and administrative domains for sustaining performances of the Institute as a leading Institute of National Importance (in the world of Statistics and knowledge).

The President of India, Shri Pranab Mukherjee, has kindly agreed to grace the 48<sup>th</sup> Convocation ceremony of Indian Statistical Institute on 10<sup>th</sup> January, 2014 and delivered the Convocation Address.



Honourable President, Shri Pranab Mukherjee is conferring Awards in the 48<sup>th</sup> Convocation in 2014

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