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Gender's worked for Bedi

What was shocking about Kiran Bedi's histrionics was that she blamed everyone from the Prime Minister to Police Commissioners for what she claimed had been an "unfair decision". But it was Bedi's track record as Commissioner of Delhi Police. Television channels, which gave precedence to Bedi's outpourings, over the first woman President, projected the issue as one of gender bias and how Bedi was not permitted to occupy a position that was made to look like a decision driven by male domination. What was painful and unfortunate about her exalted position in the media and in society is because she is a woman and, moreover, the first woman to be in favour, never against her.

It was because she was a woman that the then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi invited her for breakfast at her residence, possibly serving as the SDPO of Chanakyapuri. Kiran Bedi has acquired a larger-than-life reputation of the art of 'marketing' herself at a time when many MBAs were still struggling to understand what 'marketing' always managed to highlight her persona more than her causes. It was routine that her image loomed large over her work, now debunking the very system that allowed her to grow over the years, ignoring dozens of mistakes and happy to portray these indiscretions as acts of courage partly because she enjoyed certain concessions on account of her being a woman IPS officer in a male-dominated police force.

However, what needs to be borne in mind is that Kiran Bedi was elevated to the rank of DGP, which is not justified given her poor track record, only because considerations other than those shown in her service record at the United Nations and her winning the Magsaysay award helped her get to where she did in the service. If her record had been taken into consideration, she would have not made it to her current senior rank. In fact, a man would have been promoted in part of the IPS with so many indiscretions in his record.

The myth about her 'excellent track record' can be shattered if one follows her performance as a police officer. Kiran Bedi is one of the IPS officers in the country who has not been awarded the two medals — the Police Medal of Meritorious Service and the Police Medal for Distinguished Service (after 21 years), which everyone gets as a matter of routine. She has always left her postings under circumstances which would have attracted extreme disapproval from a woman and media darling.

For instance, she was in Goa during the CHOGM in the early 1980s and left her post after a disagreement without informing her immediate superior. She was in Mizoram where an agitation erupted because of her not informing her boss who discovered to his horror that the operational officer was missing from her post the following day. In Delhi, she had a controversial tenure in the West District. As Traffic DCP, she is remembered for vacating the position on account of her mishandling of the traffic problem.

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