



## Story 5: “From Red Zone to Khaki” – The Journey of Namrata Jain (IPS, Dantewada)

The land of Dantewada in Chhattisgarh is known for many things — thick forests, tribal resilience, and the shadows of guns. But in the midst of that fear, there bloomed a girl with a name no one forgets today: Namrata Jain.

Namrata was born in Geedam, one of the most dangerous Naxal-affected regions in India. Her childhood wasn't filled with lullabies — it echoed with gunshots and warnings. Schools often shut down because teachers wouldn't come. Roads remained deserted after sundown. And dreams? Dreams were luxury items, sold only to the rich.

But Namrata's family believed in the power of education. Her father ran a small shop and, despite threats and lack of safety, sent her to a private school in Jagdalpur. That 100-km journey was often made in buses that had to change routes due to Naxal alerts. But Namrata endured it like a soldier.

Her first spark came in Class 10, when a female IAS officer visited her school. She saw the lady walk in with confidence, head held high, guarded but fearless. That day, something clicked. "What if I could be her? What if I could return to Dantewada, not as a victim — but as a protector?"

After graduation, she moved to Bhilai for coaching. But city life came with its own trauma — financial burdens, cultural shock, and loneliness. She didn't speak fluent English. Her essays were rejected by mock evaluators. She failed her first attempt at Prelims and broke down. But a call from her father reminded her:

"Don't come home until you win your own battle. Dantewada is waiting for you."

She fought harder. In her second attempt, she cleared prelims and mains but didn't make the final cut. She started teaching poor children in her spare time and returned to her notes each night with redoubled focus.

Her third attempt was her redemption.

Today, Namrata serves in the IPS, posted in areas where women once whispered their fears to her. Now they salute her. She goes on patrols, works with tribal women, and conducts awareness drives against violence.

She didn't escape the fear. She went back to face it — in uniform.

She is not a symbol of law.

She is a promise — that girls from red zones don't just survive.

They lead.