

Mahathma gandhi



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Indira Gandhi was the first woman Prime Minister of India. Political thinkers, even today consider Gandhi as the most controversial Premier of the nation. She was so much interested and inclined towards the national politics that she had decided to stay with Prime Minister father in Delhi. Her husband, Feroze Gandhi stayed back in Allahabad. It was during her period in office, India was enveloped into " a state of emergency". In order to suppress the rising movement for a separate state called " Khalistan" Gandhi ordered the army to launch a manhunt inside the Golden Temple in Amritsar.

The event was termed as the " Operation Blue-Star". She was accused of unfair treatment to the Sikhs and the anger was so intensified that on 31 October 1984, she was shot by two of her Sikh bodyguards. Indira Gandhi was awarded the Lenin Peace Prize (for 1983-84). Childhood Indira Gandhi was born in an aristocratic family of Nehru on 19 November, 1917, in Allahabad. Her father, Jawaharlal Nehru was a lawyer and also leader of the Indian Nationalist Movement. Indira's mother, Kamala, was a religious lady. It was reported that there was a huge difference between the lifestyle of Jawaharlal Nehru and his wife Kamala.

The Nehrus, for traditions, followed a more-western and sophisticated lifestyle. This is one of the reasons her mother had nearly-isolated herself from the values of the Nehrus. Indira's Grandfather, Motilal Nehru was a renowned barrister of that period. He was also a prominent member of the Indian National Congress Party. Due to this, lot of noted leaders and party activists would visit the " Nehru House". Mahatma Gandhi was one of them. Therefore, since childhood, Indira Gandhi had developed an interest in the affairs of country's politics.

Indira Gandhi attended prominent schools including Shantiniketan, Badminton School and Oxford, but she showed no great aptitude for academics, and was detained from obtaining a degree. In 1936, her mother, Kamala Nehru, finally succumbed to tuberculosis after a long struggle. She was eighteen at the time. Jawaharlal Nehru was languishing in the Indian jails that time. Marriage Life and Politics After returning from Oxford University, Indira started participating enthusiastically in the national movement. In 1941, Indira married Feroze Gandhi, a journalist and key member of the Youth Congress.

Though Nehru had raised a strong objection to the marriage of his daughter with a Parsi, but could not prevent Indira. In 1944, Indira gave birth to Rajiv Gandhi followed two years later by Sanjay Gandhi. Feroze later became editor of a newspaper of the Indian National Congress Party in Allahabad. Indira and Feroze were happily settled there in Allahabad but things worsened after Indira decided to shift to Delhi, with her father. She moved to Delhi, with two sons, while Feroze Gandhi stayed back During the 1951-52 Parliamentary Elections, Feroze Gandhi was asked to contest election from Rae Bareli.

He eventually won the elections and moved to Delhi, but opted to live in a separate house. Feroze, with time gained popularity and soon became a prominent face against corruption. His popularity increased, especially after he exposed a major financial scandal in the Nehru led cabinet. It was reported that the then Finance Minister T. T. Krishnamachari, a close aided of Nehru, was involved in the scandal that would benefit the major insurance

companies. . On 8 September 1960, Feroze died after a major cardiac arrest.

Indira as Congress President

Indira Gandhi was a devoted partisan of the Congress Party and became one of the political advisors of Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru. In 1959, she was elected as the President of the Indian National Congress Party. After Jawaharlal Nehru passed away on 27 May 1964, Indira Gandhi contested elections and eventually elected. She was appointed as the Information and Broadcasting Minister during Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri. At that time, people in southern parts of India were protesting over Hindi being considered as the national language.

With each day, the situation was worsening in the region. In order to pacify the anger of community leaders, Indira Gandhi visited Madras (now Chennai). Indira Gandhi had a very good manipulating the media and she used them as an instrument of image-making. During the Indo-Pakistani War of 1965, Indira Gandhi was on a holiday trip to Srinagar. Despite repeated warnings by the security forces that Pakistani insurgents had entered very close to the hotel, she was staying, Gandhi refused to move. The incident fetched her huge national and international media attention.

As Prime Minister Following the death of Lal Bahadur Shastri on 11 January 1966, in Tashkent, the party countered a serious trouble, as, some of the senior leaders of the Congress party desired to contest. Unable to reach at a consensus, the high-command led by K Kamaraj picked Indira as their contender. Senior Congress leader Morarji Desai opposed Indira's nomination for the coveted throne and decided to contest against her. During voting, Desai gained only 169 votes as compared to Indira's 355 votes.

The virtual reason behind Indira's selection for the post was the belief that " Indira is not so competent in taking decisions and thus she would, indirectly be controlled by the top leadership. " But Indira Gandhi, in contrast to the high-command, showed extraordinary political skills and elbowed the Congress stalwarts out of power. The election of Indira Gandhi increased the differences of opinion between the top Congress leaders. The split looked evident as the members hardly looked united on any issue.

To dispel the growing chances of split-up, Indira Gandhi inducted Morarji Desai in the cabinet. He was appointed as Deputy Prime Minister and then Finance Minister of the country. In 1969, Gandhi issued order to nationalize all the banks of the country. In 1971, to solve the Bangladeshi refugee problem, she declared war, on Pakistan, on the side of the East Pakistanis, who were fighting for their independence. The US President Richard Nixon, supporting West Pakistan sent its Seventh Fleet to the Bay of Bengal as a warning to India keep away from East Pakistan.

This move had further alienated India from the First World and brought close to the USSR further. To strengthen the national security, in 1974, India successfully conducted an underground nuclear test, at Pokhran in Rajasthan. Declaration of Emergency During 1975, the Opposition parties joined by local groups and NGOs staged regular demonstrations in almost all the states of the country protesting against the rising inflation and unchecked corruption in the government. The intensity of protest was increasing day by day. The government failed to pacify them and contain the movement.

At the same time, Allahabad High Court, hearing a petition against Indira Gandhi ruled that she had used illegal practices during the election. The Court also ordered her to vacate the seat, immediately. The ruling helped in adding fuel to the ongoing political fire. The agitation and anger of the people amplified. Realizing the consequences, Indira Gandhi, on 26 June, 1975, declared “ a state of emergency, due to the turbulent political situation in the country”. Now, the political baton came into the hands of Indira Gandhi, which she used very tactfully.

All her political rivals were imprisoned, constitutional rights of the citizens were abrogated, and the press placed under strict censorship. It was reported that the leaders of the Opposition parties were beaten and assaulted in the jail. Taking advantage of the situation, her younger son, Sanjay Gandhi, began to run the country as a dictator. He ordered the removal of slum dwellings, and in an attempt to curb India's growing population, initiated a highly resented program of forced sterilization. In 1977, Indira Gandhi called for elections.

It was reported that the call for an election was taken after she apprehended a threat of military coup. Post Emergency Period In the next elections, Indira Gandhi was completely defeated by the Janata Dal, led by Morarji Desai and Jai Prakash Narayan. Congress managed to win only 153 Lok Sabha seats, as compared to 350 seats it grabbed in the previous Lok Sabha. During the electoral campaign, Janata Dal leaders urged the people to choose between “ democracy and dictatorship”. Though the Janata Dal emerged victorious by a huge margin it could not keep the coalition intact for longer.

The allies were concentrated more on the self-development. They would fight almost on all the issue and every ally threatened to quit if their interest is not served. The internal strife became evident within months of taking charge. To divert the attention of the people from their failure the Janata Dal ordered to arrest Indira Gandhi. However, the strategy crashed disastrously and gained Indira Gandhi, a great sympathy. Indira Gandhi started giving out speeches and highlighted the wrong policies of the Janata government. In the next elections held in January 1980, Congress returned to power with a landslide majority.

Political experts viewed the victory of the Congress as a result of inefficient and ineffective "Janata Dal". Operation Blue Star and Her Assassination Two events of the Indian political history that tarnished the image of Indira Gandhi were declaration of emergency in 1975 and launching of Operation Blue Star in Punjab. In September 1981, a Sikh militant group led by Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale demanded a separate state of Khalistan. They started motivating people in Punjab and organized several outfits to carry out their plans. In June, they entered into the premises of the Golden Temple, Amritsar to take shelter.

Indira Gandhi asked Lieutenant General S. K. Sinha, then Vice Chief of Indian Army to prepare a position paper for assault on the Golden Temple. Sinha advised her against any such move suggested to adopt an alternative solution. But Indira Gandhi stuck to her idea and on the night of June 5 the Indian Army stormed the Golden Temple led by Major General Kuldeep Singh Brar. The security forces had managed to kill Bhindranwale along with other

separatists but a large number of followers and innocent civilians were also killed in the exchange of fire inside the holy shrine.

The act was viewed as an unparalleled tragedy in the Indian political history. The impact of the onslaught increased the communal tensions in the country as many Sikhs resigned from the armed and civil administrative office and also returned their government awards. On 31 October 1984, Indira Gandhi's bodyguards Satwant Singh and Beant Singh, as avenge of the Golden Temple assault, assassinated the Prime Minister at her Safdarjung Road residence