



## “INDIRA GANDHI: WOMEN EMPOWERMENT-ISSUE AND CHALLENGES”

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### Introduction

The roles a woman plays in various aspects of life are many. At home, on job, in society, as mothers, wives, sisters, daughters, learners, workers, citizens and leaders. There are very few notable women leaders who have made their mark in the global political arena and Indira Gandhi is a name to reckon with. She is the India's first female Prime minister, ruled with an iron fist and thereby earned the name for herself as 'The Iron Lady of India'. Serving as the Prime Minister of India for 3 consecutive terms, as well as a fourth term, Indira Gandhi evokes the image of a strong and determined woman. Born into an affluent and powerful family, Indira Gandhi slowly learnt the ropes of politics from an early age.

### Objectives:

1. To find out Indira Gandhi's contribution for Women Empowerment as a Prime Minister
2. To know Indira Gandhi as a role model for women empowerment
3. To study issues and challenges faced by Indira Gandhi

### Early Life History Of Indira Gandhi

Indira Gandhi is one of the greatest women politicians in India. From her family line of father, Jawaharlal Nehru and her grandfather, Motilal Nehru, she was born with patriotic feelings. She had great interest with Gandhiji and was impressed by his views. She joined the National Congress party in 1938. She became actively involving in India's independence movement. Soon after the prime minister posting

of Nehru, she began experiencing politics. She took care of Nehru's health and well-being. She also served as his confidante and accompanied on his official foreign trips. After the death of Nehru in 1964, she joined his Cabinet as the Minister of Information and Broadcasting. She became the first woman prime minister of India in 1966.

Indira Gandhi was known for her leadership skills. She had firm determination and strong will power. She was the woman behind defeating Pakistan in 1971. She also liberated East Pakistan, which was later renamed as Bangladesh. During her reign, she was convicted for violation of election laws and so declared an internal Emergency on 26th June, 1975. As a result, she got defeated in the 1977 elections. However, she made a great comeback in 1980 with a majority government.

Her bold decisions during the Prime Minister's term were greatly admired. In 1971 she took a drastic step to help East Pakistan and so promulgated war against Pakistan. She imposed National Emergency in 1975 because of her conviction. She made a move to suppress Sikh insurgents, which elicited hatred among Sikhs towards her. She was then assassinated by one of her Sikh bodyguards on 31st October, 1984.

### **Indira Gandhi As A Role Model For Women Empowerment**

Serving as the Prime Minister of India for 3 consecutive terms, as well as a fourth term, Indira Gandhi evokes image of a strong and determined woman. Among several progressive schemes, Indira Gandhi is credited with supporting India's nuclear weapons program which helped establish India as a formidable force. She is also known for boosting the Green Revolution, a program which enabled India not only to become self-sufficient to a large extent in terms of food supply, but also established India's presence as a major food exporter.

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The legacy of Indira Gandhi is an unforgettable one. Especially in the early 20th century, when being assertive by women was regarded as unacceptably outrageous by society. She sought to set standards for other women leaders across the board to follow suit. Her success shows us the importance of taking advantage of one's surroundings and not letting one's gender define the role. "Every position has advantages and disadvantages. I had an advantage because of the education my father gave me and the opportunities of meeting some great people. But in politics one has to work doubly hard to show one is not merely a daughter but is also a

person in her own right", Indira had said, acknowledging the realities of the environment she grew up in.

The life of Indira Gandhi is a story that inspires a whole generation of women to be unapologetic and strive to achieve success by breaking the glass ceiling. Women's political participation and leadership are necessary factors for general peace and prosperity of a nation. It is the only way to encourage more women to be represented across platforms by constantly reminding people about the tales of successful women through history. Strong-willed and determined, Indira Gandhi's tenure as Prime Minister challenged stereotypes at a time when the nation was not ready to witness a woman call the shots. She brought about considerable changes inside the government, established new trends and values and expelled older officials from the Parliament on grounds of indiscipline. Women in power, not just in politics are faced with obstacles that are gender driven, societal norms that discourage their growth, restrictions and expectations that may bog many down. Stories of women who have surpassed these and risen to power need to be at the forefront so it fosters confidence among aspiring women to persevere, just as Indira Gandhi had done. As we continue to discuss issues around gender rights and participation, these are the accounts we turn to, for hope and inspiration. We must reflect and applaud the journey of Indira Gandhi as a leader, as a woman and be grateful that our nation has produced such a dynamic personality.

We find Indira Gandhi as inspiring woman empowerment for the following reasons:

- She was the second longest serving female Prime Minister in the world.
- She was briefly imprisoned during the Quit India movement and campaigned for her father and her husband Feroze Gandhi in the 1952 and 1957 general elections to the Lok Sabha, but held no formal position in any political body until she succeeded U N Dhebar as Congress president at a special session of the party in 1959
- She stayed in power despite a culture which viewed women to be subservient to men.
- Inspired of representing a relatively new-born democracy, she tackled the world's super powers with her no-nonsense attitude.
- She stayed as iconic symbol of courage from her birth till death.

### **Issues And Challenges Faced By Indira Gandhi**

It took some time before the new Prime Minister could settle down. While Indira Gandhi had been politically active for very long, she had served as a minister under Lal Bahadur Shastri only for a short period. The senior Congress leaders may have supported Indira Gandhi in the belief that her administrative and political

inexperience would compel her to be dependent on them for support and guidance. Within a year of becoming Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi had to lead the party in a Lok Sabha election. Around this time, the economic situation in the country had further deteriorated, adding to her problems. Faced with these difficulties, she set out to gain control over the party and to demonstrate her leadership skills.

- The period was fraught with grave economic crisis resulting from successive failure of monsoons, widespread drought, decline in agricultural production, serious food shortage, depletion of foreign exchange reserves, drop in industrial production and exports, combined with a sharp rise in military expenditure and diversion of resources from planning and economic development.
- One of the first decisions of the Indira Gandhi government was to devalue the Indian rupee, under what was seen to be pressure from the US. Earlier one US dollar could be purchased for less than Rs. 5; after devaluation it cost more than Rs. 7.
- The economic situation triggered off price rise. People started protesting against the increase in prices of essential commodities, food scarcity, growing unemployment and the overall economic condition in the country. Bandhs and hartals were called frequently across the country. The government saw the protests as a law and order problem and not as expressions of people's problems. This further increased public bitterness and reinforced popular unrest.
- The real challenge to Indira Gandhi came not from the opposition but from within her own party. She had to deal with the 'syndicate', a group of powerful and influential leaders from within the Congress. The Syndicate had played a role in the installation of Indira Gandhi as the Prime Minister by ensuring her election as the leader of the parliamentary party. These leaders expected Indira Gandhi to follow their advise. Gradually, however, Indira Gandhi attempted to assert her position within the government and the party. She chose her trusted group of advisers from outside the party. Slowly and carefully, she sidelined the Syndicate.

Thus Indira Gandhi faced two challenges. She needed to build her independence from the Syndicate. She also needed to work towards regaining the ground that the Congress had lost in the 1967 elections. Indira Gandhi adopted a very bold strategy. She converted a simple power struggle into an ideological struggle.

## **Indira Gandhi's Contribution For Women Empowerment As A Prime Minister**

Indira Gandhi served as a role model for women in India and elsewhere. She smashed the myth that women could not be good war leaders or maintain the respect of generals. She felt the need of Women education of girl child more than the education of boys. She impressed her views about women such as "clothes what we wear is really quite unimportant. what is important is how we are thinking". By this she wanted women should not to think about the traditions and superstitious beliefs. Society should be rational and firmly be based on what is good in our ancient tradition was her view of thinking. Providing education to women enables the young people to adjust to the changing world and to contribute to it.

Indira Gandhi gave the opportunity for women to demonstrate their capacities to make military decisions. She went to improve the profile of India in terms of National Defence by testing the first Indian nuclear bomb, and it became harder to stereotype women as weaker than men. Being a Iron Lady of India, she proved that India is a land of equal opportunities. She said if women are smart and relevant, they can achieve anything. She also introduced equal pay for equal work for both men and women

### **Conclusion**

Indira Gandhi and her family had been at the center of Indian affairs before her birth. Indira observed others in her family fully commit themselves to an independent India, including her mother Kamala. Indira was born at a time where women were becoming active in politics, which was another factor that contributed to her rise in government. Indira's mother, as well as other female family members, participated in demonstrations and other acts of civil disobedience. Indira later commented on her commitment to unity among the Indian people when she said, her government "respects all religions and stands for the equality of all citizens of India, regardless of their religion or their caste. Indira had been raised in a politically charged household, and so never developed her political character independently.

Indira lead her country even through severe challenges helping India transform into a respected member of the world community. Her love of country and sense of duty drove her every move. After her death, Indira was remembered by many as a dedicated leader. Indira Gandhi remains, by far, the best-known woman in Indian politics. Although she undoubtedly had her weaknesses, she increased agricultural production, enhanced India's role as a world power, and developed a remarkable relationship with her people. For millions of Indians, India was Indira, and Indira was India.

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## **SUB-THEME: INDIRA GANDHI'S ROLE ON NATION'S PROGRESS**

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### **Introduction**

Indira Gandhi is remembered as a powerful and capable leader, who brought our country to a new stage. Indira Gandhi was an Indian to the core but at the same time her vision went far beyond her own nation and embraced the entire human race. By virtue of being the Prime Minister of India, the largest democracy in the world, she was able to make a significant contribution to the practice of international relations. Under her dynamic stewardship India's voice was heard with respect in various international organizations and forums. She took certain decisions keeping in view the prevalent circumstances that resulted in raising the stature of India at the international level.

Her policies were pragmatic, her dealings with foreign leaders unsentimental. Her pride, her sensitivity to equal treatment, her political skills in overcoming adversity all helped to keep her government from succumbing to American or Soviet pressures on specific issues. She had a clear-cut perception of India's strategic and national interests. She knew that in international relations power counted more than personal influence and that the strategic interests of a nation were far more important than moral principles. She was successful in protecting India's interests without succumbing to the pressure of superpowers. An increase in India's economic and military strength during her regime made India an important regional power which none of the superpowers could afford to ignore.

Popularly known as the Iron Lady of India, Indira Gandhi earned a formidable reputation across the globe as a 'statesman'. Her sheer sense of politics and



exceptional skills catapulted her position in the Indian politics, so much so that she went on to become the first woman elected to head a democratic country. Till date, she is the only woman to hold the office. She was known for her political ruthlessness and extraordinary centralization of power. She also presided over a state of emergency and made considerable changes to the Indian Constitution. She used the army to resolve numerous internal disputes and encouraged a culture of sycophancy and nepotism, due to which she rubbed many Indians on the wrong side.

### **Objectives**

1. To analyze the contributions done by Indira Gandhi to the Nation
2. To find out how the nation progressed under Indira Gandhis rule

### **Methodology**

To realize the objectives of the study information was collected through secondary data. This data includes books, papers presented, journals, websites and articles from news papers.

### **Indira Gandhi's Contribution towards Nation**

Indira Gandhi has been and still is India's best known politician and leader in the International community. Born into a political family and being the only daughter of India's first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, Indira was exposed to international affairs and geo-politics long before she got an exposure to the realities of Indian politics. For understanding her policies and its impact on India, it is best to look at various phases of her career from the time she came became a minister.

### **Minister of Information and Broadcasting, 1964-1966**

With the sudden demise of Jawaharlal Nehru in 1964, Indira Gandhi was a natural choice to take over power, as she was already the Congress Party President appointed in 1959. She, however, refused to take over the party leadership, instead chose to serve as Minister of I&B under the Prime Ministership of Lal Bahadur Shastri. In 1965, war broke out between India and Pakistan. Unfortunately, PM Shastri suffered a heart attack and passed away just after signing the Ceasefire Agreement with Pakistani President General Ayub Khan in Tashkent, USSR. Gulzarilal Nanda took over as caretaker Prime Minister.

## **Indira Gandhi takes over as Prime Minister in 1966**

There was a power struggle within the Congress party for the leadership and in a closely contested Congress Part Parliamentary election in 1966, Indira Gandhi defeated Morarji Desai to become the leader and thus took over as the Prime Minister on 24 January 1966. She remained the Prime Minister until 1977, but the period in between was an important phase in her life as that of India's.

## **The Food Crisis and PL-480 days**

When she took office, India was reeling under severe drought and famine across the country and inflation was very high. From the beginning Indira Gandhi's beliefs were basically anti-imperialist and socialist, and looked upon the Soviet Union as a model to take inspiration from. But the prevailing conditions in 1966 forced her to reach out to President Lyndon Johnson of the U.S.A for food and financial aid. Her meeting with Lyndon Johnson was fruitful wherein he committed to supply wheat under the PL-480 program and extend financial aid, but he set tough conditions, which Indira was not willing to accept. As a result, the PL-480 shipments were delayed by the U.S. administration.

## **Indira: The Socialist**

Between '69 and '71, she took several major policy decisions. First, she fast forwarded the 'Green Revolution' program for self-sufficiency in food. Next, she removed the Privy Purse given to rulers of various princely states. She also devalued the Indian Rupee. Lastly and perhaps the most significant, she nationalized 14 of India's largest banks at that time. She further consolidated industrial policies started under Nehru's time, with emphasis on developing heavy industries by the public sector. However, she also introduced the infamous 'License Raj' that was to hinder development of private business and industry in the years to come.

## **Bangladesh: Her Biggest Achievement**

1971 saw heightened refugee flow into India from what was then East Pakistan that ultimately led to the 1971 war with Pakistan, and finally the creation of Bangladesh. This was to be her greatest foreign policy initiative that boosted her image in the comity of nations. The Indian Army became the first army to win a decisive battle since World War II and gained in stature and confidence. Indira followed this up with exploding India's first nuclear device in 1974, in Pokhran, Rajasthan.

But on the economic front, India was under severe strain. With India just coming out of a costly war with Pakistan in '71, the world ran into the OPEC-led oil crisis in 1973 and the global economy entered a period of recession. India too came

under great strain as inflation rose significantly and people began to protest. It was in this background that Jayaprakash Narayan came out of retirement in 1974 to lead the 'Indira Hatao' campaign.

### **Emergency: Her Nemesis**

As the campaign gained support across the country, another parallel development was taking shape in the form of a judgment by the Allahabad High Court, in response to a PIL filed by Raj Narain, terming her election illegal and was banning her from holding any office for six years. Indira refused to step down that led to further protests all across the country. She retaliated by getting all opposition leaders arrested and jailed and declared Emergency on 25 June 1975 that till date, is referred to as a Black Day in Indian democracy.

### **1980: Return to Power**

This was also a time when her younger son, Sanjay, was emerging as a powerful political influence and many said was being groomed to take over Indira's political legacy. She lifted the Emergency in 1977 and called for fresh elections, grossly misreading people's sentiment against her. She lost badly and the Janata Party came to power under the Prime Ministership of Morarji Desai. It was to be short lived as the alliance soon broke up and Indira Gandhi was to come back to power in January 1980.

### **Operation Bluestar**

This was to be a crucial phase in Indira Gandhi's life and in many ways India's. The movement for Khalistan was gaining ground in Punjab and militancy led by Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale, a onetime prop of the Congress, was at its peak. This led to the Indian Army launching Operation Bluestar, with the storming of the Golden Temple Complex and killing of Bhindranwale and his associates, along with scores of civilians. In a retaliatory action, two of her personal security guards shot her dead on 31 October 1984. Her assassination triggered retaliatory attacks on Sikhs in Delhi and other places.

### **Indira's Legacy**

Indira Gandhi took India's stature to another level with the creation of Bangladesh and making India self-sufficient in food. Her left-leaning socialist policies during the '69-'74 period was perhaps right under the given circumstances, but doing so at the cost of developing India's natural entrepreneurship, resulted in India groaning under a decade and a half of stunted growth. Her strong personality did not allow for other leaders to develop politically and her penchant for dynasty politics has

left a legacy that her party suffers till date. That said, Indira Gandhi will continue to remain the best known political leader India has produced. And Narendra Modi is still a long way away before history can start judging him.

## **Contribution of Indira Gandhi To The Making of A Modern India**

### **Political**

After the mysterious demise of Lalbahadur Sashtri at Tashkent, Mrs Indira Gandhi had to step into the Prime Minister post both as a daughter of Nehru and as an able leader of INC. When she became the Prime Minister, things were not easy. It was the time when India had fought two wars in a small span of three years. Internal situation was also violent when a major section of the congress party under the leadership of Desai turned rebellious. In such a situation, she sailed India through a trouble time to a safe and secure position. Just after her ascendancy, she lifted the emergency proclaimed during the Chinese aggression. In order to maintain normalcy she conceded to the demands of reorganizing states and granting statehood to the north-eastern states as she had earlier done to the demand of statehood of Andhra Pradesh in 1956. Apart from it, she introduced population control measures to check the population explosion under the process of tubectomy and vasectomy. After a just concluded war against Pakistan, she tried to resolve the issue by maintaining normalcy in Kashmir through freeing Farooq Abdullah to carry out the peace process and local governance in the valley.

### **Economic**

Apart of making India into a strong and stable country, she had given focus more on the economic reconstruction and development among the poorer masses. During her initial period of ascendancy of power, there was severe drought in the country and it was met by the huge import of cereals and food items from various parts of the world and especially from the U.S.A under the Public Law 480. That famous slogan "Garibi Hattao" is still the punch line of various succeeding governments. She attempted to eradicate it through the introduction of various plans, programmes and schemes out of which the famous 20 point agenda was very important followed by the other schemes. Providing safe drinking water, employment, shelter, food and essential commodities at a much subsidized rate was first upon her agenda. Besides, in order to let the common people access the banking system, she nationalized the existing banks and gave simultaneous priority to the agriculture and industry by the introduction of green revolution and the new industrial policy respectively

### **Socialism**

Socialism was also another idea of Mrs. Indira Gandhi who wanted to organize the state on the principle of socialism. Though she followed the footstep of her father

who popularized the notion of democratic socialism, but she deviated a little bit because of need of the hour and to make India a strong and a stable nation on the basis of socialistic principle. Her first attempt towards this was the nationalization of 14 banks in the year of 1969. Then later she consolidated it through the incorporation of the word 'socialism' in the India constitution in the forty second constitutional amendment in 1976. The next attempt was followed by the reservation of important sectors of industrial units having security, national importance, for the government control. For example the railway, post, heavy industry etc. she always used to give importance to the state than the society. According to her view, a state had to play the role of a welfare state which will do everything for its citizens in return of loyalty and nationalism from them during the time of need.

### **Secularism**

She was one of the staunch upholders of secularism in the Indian politics. Indian Hindu majority was not in position to have a Muslim leader as a prime minister or a president. She determined to change the scenario and set a new tradition of tolerance based on the principle of secularism. In the presidential election of 1967, she openly supported the candidature of Dr. Zakeer Hussain who was from the Muslim minority. Most of the leaders opposed to this idea and even most of the leaders from the Congress party itself were not happy with decision. But still she took a political risk and at last, got him elected to the presidential post and established a new tradition of secularism.

### **Conclusion**

She made India strong and a leading country in the comity of nations gave a clarion call to the world to save humanity from the nuclear holocaust, raised her voice against all kinds of exploitation. She displayed rare statesmanship in tackling international disputes. Indira Gandhi's role in guiding the developing nations of the world and her personal contribution towards disarmament and global peace were duly acknowledged by the international community. The image of India as a country which had to be taken seriously was definitely her biggest contribution. Indira possessed both the strength and humility to be a remarkable leader. As a child of the nationalist struggle, Indira was forever bound to her country, and was destined to lead India.

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## “INDIRA GANDHI’S ROLE IN NATION’S PROGRESS”

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### Introduction

Mrs. Indira Gandhi was a great leader and she was the first and the only female Prime Minister who ruled India Till date. Mrs. Indira Gandhi was known to have a strong resolve and also iron will. India has seen a great success and improvement during her tenure. The first eleven years of Indira’s position as Prime Minister saw her evolving from the perception of party leaders to the one with iron resolve to split the party for her policy positions or to go to war with Pakistan to liberate Bangladesh. At the end of this term in 1977, she was such a dominating figure in Indian politics that a Congress party president had coined the phrase “India is Indira and Indira is India. Following the 1967 elections, Indira Gandhi gradually started moving towards socialist policies. The biggest achievement of Indira Gandhi after the 1971 election came in December 1971 with India’s decisive victory over Pakistan in the liberation war, that led to the formation of independent Bangladesh Gandhi remained a staunch supporter of Palestinians in the Arab–Israeli conflict and was critical of the Middle East diplomacy sponsored by the United States. The major decision which Mrs. Indira did during her tenure as a Prime Minister is in 1969, she nationalized fourteen major commercial banks. The above are just few glimpses of her political career. In our paper we are going to highlight on the Development of our nation under her rule and the difference she made being the Prime Minister of India.

### Objectives

The major objectives of our paper are:

- To study the contributions of Mrs. Indira Gandhi to our Nation
- To highlight the impact of her leadership on the women of India
- Comparison of India during her rule and immediately after her rule.

## Research Methodology

To realize the objectives of the study, secondary sources are used for the collection of data. We have used Random sampling method. The study being descriptive in nature, an attempt is made to study the Impact of Mrs. Indira Gandhi as the Prime Minister on India.

## The contributions of Mrs. Indira Gandhi to our Nation

During her term as Prime Minister, Gandhi brought about a radical change in the country's economic, political, international and national policies. She oversaw the implementation of over three Five-year plans - two of which were successful in meeting the targeted growth. One of her crucial economic decisions included the nationalization of fourteen major commercial banks. The move proved to be fruitful as it improved the geographical coverage of banks with the number of branches rising from 8200 to 62000. Furthermore, the nationalization of banks increased household savings and saw investment in small and medium-sized enterprises and agricultural sector. She then nationalized the coal, steel, copper, refining, cotton textiles, and insurance industries. The main aim of this move was to protect employment and secure the interest of the organized labor. As for the private sector industries, she brought them under strict regulatory control. It was during Gandhi's premiership that Green Revolution brought remarkable change in the agricultural production in India.

Refusal to bow down to the hegemony of America (1967) which refused to release food and other aids unless India supported their war in Vietnam. Piqued at this rebuff, Indira Gandhi set in motion with renewed vigor the Green Revolution, the seeds for which were already sown by her predecessor. Nationalization of 14 major private sector Banks (1969) the move to Nationalize the Private sector Banks was a vital step in freeing the economic growth of the country from the clutches of a few vested interests, and throwing open the Banking facilities to the common people. Along with Railways, Telecom, and Space Research, Banking in India, is one of the biggest and safest in the world, which guarantees the financial security of the general public against the global economic risks. War with Pakistan and successful Liberation of Bangladesh (1971) it indeed took great courage on the part of Indira Gandhi to take the battle inside the enemy territory, undaunted by the threat of America positioning its dreaded Seventh fleet in the close vicinity of Indian waters. This victory, along with her imaginative slogan of "Garibi Hatao" (Abolish Poverty) gave Indira Gandhi a massive mandate in the general elections, which even her father, the charismatic Nehru could not command.

Peace with Pakistan and Shimla Agreement (1972) this helped to mollify the distrust of the Western powers about India's hegemonic intentions in the region, and improved Indira Gandhi's image as a statesman in the international



opinion. Operation Smiling Buddha (1974) the clandestine underground testing of India's indigenous nuclear capability in Pokhran, Rajasthan, no doubt irked the Western Powers, but nevertheless gave India's defence preparedness a major boost in confidence. State of Internal Emergency (1975) The Emergency, though considered as the biggest blunder of Indira Gandhi by most people, it was also perceived by the middle class intelligentsia as having some positives, such as enforcing discipline on a wayward bureaucracy, and crack down on anti nationals, smugglers and hoarders. The Second Coming and the Assassination (1980-1984) perhaps the best action of Indira Gandhi was putting an Indian, Captain Rakesh Sharma, in outer space with Soviet Support in April 1984, just a few months before her assassination.

### **The impact of her leadership on the women of India**

Gandhi also brought social reforms by introducing clauses in the Indian Constitution related to wages - equal pay for equal work to both men and women. The life of Indira Gandhi is a story that inspires a whole generation of women to be unapologetic and strive to achieve success by breaking the glass ceiling. Women's political participation and leadership are necessary factors for general peace and prosperity of a nation and the only way to encourage more women to be represented across platforms is by constantly reminding people about the tales of successful women through history. Women in power, not just in politics are faced with obstacles that are gender driven, societal norms that discourage their growth, restrictions and expectations that may bog many down. Stories of women who have surpassed these and risen to power need to be at the forefront so it fosters confidence among aspiring women to persevere, just as Indira Gandhi had done. Indira Gandhi will forever be remembered as a powerful and capable leader who brought her country to the world's stage and developed India into a regional superpower. Having faced her fair share of criticism, Indira continued to relentlessly pursue her goals with a conviction unmatched by any leader of her time. And this was the reason she commanded respect, irrespective of gender.

### **Comparison of India during her rule and immediately after her rule**

After the death of her father in 1964, Indira Gandhi was appointed as a member of the Rajya Sabha. She also became one of the members of Lal Bahadur Shastri's cabinet, serving as the Minister of Information and Broadcasting. The untimely death of Lal Bahadur Shastri saw numerous contenders for the position of the Prime Minister. However, unable to come to a single conclusion, Indira Gandhi was chosen. She became the Prime Minister of India in January 1966 and continued to serve the same until 1977. During her term as the Prime Minister, Gandhi worked hard to normalize relations and reopen diplomatic establishments between India and Pakistan. Most of the second term of the premiership of Indira Gandhi was spent resolving the political problems of Punjab. Immediately after her rule we had a nation armed with nuclear weapons and missiles; a nation with the ability to assert

an independent foreign policy and independent path of capitalist development, in the main, fully capable of holding its head high in the international community and world economic stage. But her bequest is also a nation with a democratic culture built on the proliferating quicksand of personalized, dynastic politics and money power, of weak and ineffective institutions easily subverted by the individuals carefully chosen to lead them.

A nation where the rule of law is a plastic, contingent concept which rarely makes demands on those in authority. Indeed, over time, the style of politics the Congress adopted during Indira Gandhi's time has become the norm for virtually all parties, right down to the induction of sons, daughters, wives and brothers at every level of political power. And yet, it would be unfair to lay the blame for the current decline of politics and institutions and the rule of law entirely at the door of Indira Gandhi, even if the trend began with her. But the responsibility for fixing things lies with the present.

### Conclusion

Indira Gandhi is a very dynamic political leader who led India to success. She was a role model to many people including women. She was bold and took decisions with confidence. There are very few notable women leaders who have made their mark in the global political arena and Indira Gandhi is a name to reckon with. Elected four times as the Prime Minister of the country and becoming the world's longest serving woman Prime Minister from 1966 to 1984, Indira was most admired for her iron-fisted approach and bold governance style. Her success shows us the importance of taking advantage of your surroundings and not letting your gender define you. The legacy of Indira Gandhi is an unforgettable one. The life of Indira Gandhi is a story that inspires a whole generation of women to be unapologetic and strive to achieve success by breaking the glass ceiling. We must reflect and applaud the journey of Indira Gandhi as a leader, as a woman and be grateful that our nation has produced such a dynamic personality.

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St. Agnes College is a premier Catholic minority institution which from its inception in the year 1921, has imparted value-based education to the women of South India. It is a standard-bearer of repute in the field of Higher Education and has ceaselessly worked for the holistic development of young women on the west coast of India. As such, the intellectual and social contribution made by St Agnes College as it approaches its centenary year is matchless.

The institution has the distinction of producing women graduates and men/women post graduates who hold positions in different spheres as educators, scholars, scientists, chartered accountants, entrepreneurs, management professionals and service professionals serving in various parts of the world.

St. Agnes college was the first college under Mangalore University to submit itself to the NAAC Accreditation process in 1999 and had the honour of being awarded a 'Five Star' status. Subsequent re-accreditations in 2005 2012 and 2017, saw its banner flying high with an A grade in both cycles and 'A+' grade (CGPA 3.65/4) in the fourth cycle. It is also one of the first colleges in Mangalore University to be recognized as a 'College with Potential for Excellence' by the UGC in 2006 and has been the only institution under Mangalore University and third in the Karnataka State to be awarded the College of Excellence in 2017. The College is awarded the 'Star Status' by DBT, MST, Govt. of India in 2017. The institution is also the proud recipient of the International 'Jimmy and Roselyn Carter Foundation Partnership Award' in 2006 for its path breaking project in rainwater harvesting and watershed management which brought succour



The departments of History, Economics and Political science, being the earliest departments in the college, are committed to provide integral, value based and quality oriented learning experiences in the classroom and beyond, fostering the goals of national integration, unity and harmony in diversity as well as personal and national leadership for service. They are committed to develop a strong conviction for empowerment and action for restoration of women's dignity and human rights. The departments have been organising university/state/national level seminars and workshops for the benefit of the students / teacher/scholars in social sciences and are now seeking to make an impact beyond Indian shores.



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