CHAPTER-III
Autonomy of the Indian State: Historical Background
Introduction

This chapter covers India's fifty years of experimentation with decision making process in representative democracy and its impact on India's developmental policy by the respective Prime Ministers. This chapter in this thesis is meant to promote an assessment of the evolution of the factor and multi-dimensional nature of Indian democracy and development. It makes a comparative analysis of the function of state and its role in decision-making process of the various Prime Ministers of Indian state since independence.

Nehru Era (1947 to 1962)

The present system of government and administration in India is largely a legacy of the British imperial rule that ended in the year 1947 with necessary changes. The years between 1947 to 1967, when Nehru and his political legacy were the dominant themes of Indian politics, are perceived by Marxists and Liberals as "the golden" period of the post-independence Indian political history¹ [Even though they might not have agreed among themselves as to what constituted the most meritorious aspect of this period, yet for them politics during this period had been an important tool of social transformation in the country]. During this period the state was an autonomous agency since it was dominated by the multi ruling classes and bureaucratic elite and sets its own agenda.

¹ Malik, Yogendra and Kapur Ashok, India Fifty Years of Democracy and Development, APH Publishing Corporation, Ansari Road, New Delhi, 1998, pp. XXIV-XXIX.
In the period between 1950 and 1962, Jawaharlal Nehru moved to keep the traditions of Intra-party democracy alive as long as they did not conflict with what he perceived as the essentials of the party’s ideology. The national government, lead by Jawaharlal Nehru frequently consulted the state Chief Ministers and sought the advice of party bosses in the process of policy formulation and implementation. The functional rivalries and power struggles among leaders were mostly settled in the larger interest of the party because of his personality. Nehru was able to dominate the Congress party’s top decision-making agencies, such as the working committee, the Parliamentary Board, and Central Election Committee. Together these offices came to be known as the Congress Party’s High command; and as a result the organizational wing of the party was dominated by the Prime Minister.  

At independence, an age ended but in chaos. Besides the unprecedented communal violence that followed the partition of the country, India had a difficult time integrating some of the Princely States and fighting war (1947-49) with Pakistan over Kashmir at the same time. Since the initial period of independence Nehru was sensitive to two dimensions: 1) Liberalisation or Public contestation 2) participation or inclusiveness and established a democratic, accommodating and consensual political order. He was however, a centraliser, a

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kind of, as Welles Hansen wrote, 'benevolent mogul' eschewing compulsion but reserving all important decision for himself.³

In the federal arena, Nehru built and nourished a broad institutional framework for consultation with state governments but he preserved the “concept of hierarchy of policy” with the centre on the top. From every perspective, the Nehruvian consensus was broad and allowed for a liberal accommodation of dissent on the part of the Chief Ministers but these were definite thresholds to it fixed by Nehru. For Nehru, Congress was the ‘agent of destiny’ the only party capable of delivering the goods to the country with the result that the very act of consulting a non-Congress provincial government in the predominantly Congress party system was pregnant with great risks.⁴

During the early years after independence, Nehru kept a distant but watchful eye on state politics which was more or less with the presence of his highly pragmatic and ruthless deputy, Sardar Vallabhabhi Patel. After the death of the Patel, Nehru remained the ‘unchallenged leader’ until almost to the end of his life.⁵ Between 1952 and 1963, Nehru dominated both the centre and the Congress. As the leader of the central government, Nehru established the constitutionally given predominant role of the centre in the economy, the polity


4. Ibid., p. 51.

5. Ibid., p. 52.
and the society as a whole. He had also tremendous influence in domesticating dissent within the organisation which controlled power both at centre and in the majority of the states during his life time. In relation to state party units, Nehru and consensus building team compromised reconciled and arbitrated difference but tolerated no result. Congress had traditionally performed the reconciliation role during the freedom movement.

Until independence the locus of power in the Indian national Congress clearly rested with the Congress President and his working committee. In 1946, Nehru became the President of the Congress and one month latter he formed the Interim Government. At that time, it was difficult for him to work efficiently and effectively on these two important posts. As he considered the role of the Prime Minister more important, he relinquished the post of the party president. Soon there arose differences between Kripalani and his colleagues in the party over the question of the rule of party and its president in the formulation of the policy of the government. In the cabinet system of government, Nehru observed: “the Prime Minister had a special role to play in giving direction and coordination to the activities of the government.” In sum, the role of the party would have to be limited. But still Kripalani emphasised the old and important role of the Congress president matters by his colleagues in the government. So he came into conflict with leaders of the new government. Having lost the battle

6. Rastogi, Satish Kumar; The Congress Crucible, Anuprak Shan, Sivaji Road, Meerat, 1980, p. 18.
7. Ibid., p. 19.
Kripalani had no choice but to resign. His resignation created a precedent for the supremacy of Congress Government over the mass organisation.

Jawaharlal Nehru was elected president of the Indian National Congress in 1946. But he was obliged by the party soon to resign in order to head the interim Government as the vice-president of the executive council. On the transfer of power in 1977, he became India's first Prime Minister. The Congress presidency and Prime Ministership however remained separate and distinct offices until 1951, when Nehru united both under himself to ensure smooth and coordinated functioning. This centralised arrangement continued till 1954. Between that year and 1963 the organisation was sought to be headed by junior leaders looking after its day-to-day affairs under Nehru's own guidance. So the dominance of one - party Congress government remained unaffected for the first couple of decades since independence.8

The importance of Congress working committee as a centre of decision making in post independence India has fluctuated according to the degree of the committee’s autonomy from the parliamentary wing. There has been a steady trend toward a diminution of its power within the emergency of new centres of power and decision-making corresponding to the creation and development of the new role of the Congress as government.9

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9. Ibid., p. 158.
Nehru assumed the Prime Ministership he had in mind a model of party government relation in which the role of the party executive in decision-making process was limited. The cabinet system of government, he argued, imposed certain responsibilities on a Prime Minister and certain restrictions on the party executive. Under the cabinet system, as Nehru conceived it, the Prime Minister had a special role to play in coordinating and directing the activities of the government. Since the government would of necessity be forced within the party executive, the government had to be free to shape its policies and to act independently within the larger amity of general policy laid down by the party. “normally” Nehru insisted, “a party executive lays down the broadest lines of policy and leaves it to the government to work out.”

It, however, showed that the lack of coordination between party and government exhibited in the conflict over Vanaspati, Language, and the Economic Programme Committee Report came to an end following the Nehru-Tandon confrontation. At this time, several factors converged to bring the coordination potential of working committee into sharp focus.

Nehru’s emergence as the undisputed leader of the Congress brought to a close, the turbulent period of transition. The mass organisation, he realised, had to be given a sense of participation in the decision-making process under the leadership and guidance of those who carried the burdens of

10. Ibid., p. 167.
implementing the party programme. For these reasons, Nehru began to reshape the working committee to prescribe the agenda, and to guide the debate. As a result the working committee became dominated by parliamentary leaders, and the working committee agenda came to include a large proportion of the broad policy issues facing the government. Pundit Jawaharlal Nehru was a high priest of socialism in India, and his ideas relating to the 'socialistic pattern of society' are reflected in the constitution of India adopted in 1950. However, the constitution of India did not specifically make the mention of the word 'socialist' order as the national goal. But there are many provisions of the Part-III and Part IV of the constitution, the policies and programmes followed and pronouncements made by Nehru — convincingly make it clear that his political leadership had a strong thrust for a socialist order. It is generally believed that Pt. Nehru, being the key-man of the helm of affairs, sincerely tried to build up a socialist nor a communist nor a capitalist. It may be recalled that the word socialist was added in the 'Preamble' of the constitution in 1976 by 42"nd Constitutional Amendment Act.12

At that time many critics have raised doubts about the decision-making process under Prime Ministership of Nehru. Many critics have kept indictments about the Nehru's decision and ideas on socialism have conclusively shown that, notwithstanding the socialist strategy of Pt. Nehru and his Congress, whatsoever, Pt. Nehru and his party actually did in practice was meant to build in

12. Ibid., p. 183.
India an independent capitalist system in the guise of socialism. The hiatus of the Congress led to the concentration of the capitalism in a few hands of big houses and monopolies and the economy of industrial sector in comparison to the agricultural sector of economy occupied an important position in the frame-work of national economy.\textsuperscript{13} Consequently, the very segments of urban and rural populations and their agricultural development were ignored. The progressive land reform, legislation to abolish Zamidaris, Mahalwaris or the Royatwaris system of feudalism in the rural sector, etc were initiated by the Nehru Government. But, these were found to be effective, and these measures virtually helped greatly the rural agricultural sector to grow on capitalist line.\textsuperscript{14}

The Industrial Policy Resolution of April 1956 of Nehruvian era came out a few weeks before the presentation of the Second Plan based on it. It represented a reconciliation of the differences between the advocated of the small scale cottage industries and the large scale heavy industries. This reconciliation was brought about by professor, P.C. Mahalanobis, chairman of the Indian Statistical Institution and advisor to the Planning Commission that released his plan ‘frame’ on March 17, 1955. The two features of the economy strategy of the Second Five-year Plan (1956-61) in terms of the inward-oriented heavy Industry strategy and the 'commanding height' of the economy in hands of

\textsuperscript{14} Ibid., pp. 199-202.
the state reflected Nehru's deep commitment to nationalism and socialism.\textsuperscript{15} It provided for a basic industries sector constituting the foundation for India's future economic development and a separate decentralised cottage industries sector intended for the alleviation of unemployment and improvement in the flow of consumer goals. The reconcile plan frame of Mahalanobis has envisaged industrial development to proceed in two phases vis-a-vis heavy industrial sector based largely on public ownership and a decentralised sector of village and cottage industrial calling for increased mechanisation as an instrument of greater production. It was, however, politically designed by the group of elite political leaders and top few bureaucrats as an acceptable blend in so far as cottage and village industries were assigned a specific place in the total scheme of industrialisation, it's soundness remained subject to question, more especially in the terms of financial allocation. Here, basically in Nehru era, many development schemes initiated by the few industrial and business groups, in which, they had to pay more emphasis on their self-interest rather than the interest of whole society. So they, however, envisaged more importance to the heavy industries than cottage and village industries at that time corresponding to the heavy concentration on industry, these were reduced emphasis on agriculture. The low priority for agriculture was tantamount to taking risks in the area of basic necessities for the masses most directly food and agriculture-based consumption goals. There were critics present at the very formulation of the second plan who sharply underlined such consequences. The harshest among them was the

economist B.R. Shenoy (1962: 15-26), who in a vigorous note of dissent to the memorandum of the panel of economist warned of risks involved in the economic strategy. Along with two other economist, C.N. Vakil and P.K. Brahmanada, warned of the consequences of the relative neglect of agriculture.\textsuperscript{16} Without growth in the agricultural sector, they stressed, investment in industrial expansion will only lead to excess capacity, and cogently argued against following the Soviet Model in the entirely different economic conditions of India. The criticism by Shenoy, Vakil and Brahmanada were picked up by some political leaders, but the votaries of the heavy industry strategy carried the day because the buck of the heavy industry strategy carried the day of the economists and political leaders supported it.

During the Nehru period, state and central politics were largely autonomous, though the central leadership of the Congress know as the 'high command' often played arbitrating and mediating roles between competing functions in the state Congress parties. Moreover, under Nehru, a strong central government in a mutual bargaining situation in which ultimate authority existed in Delhi. Nehru and his cabinet also exercised firm control over both the civilian and military. But on the other hand in Nehruvian era the conditions of the state were unique in its wider historical context. Even during the period of 1950s, and 1960s, control over important decision was highly concentrated in the hands of Nehru and those close to him, and control over few political elite. The level of political

\textsuperscript{16} Ibid., pp. 88-89.
mobilisation in Indian state during 1950s and 1960s were relatively low and elite politics tended to accommodated intra elite struggles. It is also important to recognise however that political struggle in this early stage primarily involved relatively small group elite especially nationalists and other wealthy urban and rural elites.

Under Nehruvian era, the decision-making process of Indian state emanated from the Prime Minister himself passed through the Emergency Committee (only after 1962) and the cabinet, and were finalised by Nehru and the minister concerned with the department and the portfolio. Nehru was clearly the first above equals in the sphere of foreign policy-decision making. The governmental decisions under Nehru originated from him, passed through V.K. Krishna Menon (up to 1962), the foreign affairs committee of the union cabinet (up to 1962) the Emergency Committee of the cabinet (after 1962) and finally reached the external Affairs Ministry.17

Nevertheless, from independence till his death of May 27, 1964, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru remained the supreme leader, guide and philosopher of the Congress. He wanted the Congress to be an idealistic secular democratic, modernisation and socialisation party. He wanted that decision making process of the Indian state should remain far from the party politics and interests. He always wanted that the decision making process of the state should be based on,

from down to top. But, in this, he only partly succeeded. Under his dynamic leadership the Congress won election after election and continuously remained the kingpin of Indian political system. But he could not enforce strict discipline in the party. He had to make many compromises and adjustments with traditionalists, conservatives and antisocialist movement in the party.\textsuperscript{18} He was always trying to maintain the Congress party’s policies and programmes should correspondence to the policy of the state.

The voice of business in the Indian parliament was extremely weak during the first decade after independence. Functional representation had been abolished, mass franchise had been introduced and there was no business party. At that time, people had lot of faith on the Congress leaders, because these leaders had played a dominant role in the freedom struggle for country’s independence. Basically Nehru was an unquestioned leader of the state. Everyone had kept unequivocally such faith upon Nehru’s leadership capacity and imaculative role of Congress party. Business groups were in an embryonic form during the first decade of independence. During the Nehru era, business was unable to influence the selection of leadership within the Congress party. Nehru was the unchallenged leader of the Congress party, had an almost free hand in the selection of his ministers. Nehru, in fact, was a close friend of Shri Ram Singhania and Tata, although his relations with the more obscurantists Marwari’s like K.K. Dalmia and J.K. Birla were more strained. In his role as Prime

Minister, Nehru retrained from nationalising private productive facilities, he provided protection to Indian industry and through the credit and investment facilities provided under the second five year plan he laid the foundation for the expansion of the private sector as a major economic force in India. Although businessmen were far from happy with elaborate system of controls and regulations, they learned to live with that system and they learned how to work through the bureaucracy to use it their advantage.  

Basically Nehru was dependent upon the civil servants rather than the business group in making the state's policies and programs. The process of achieving access to top bureaucracy has been even more precarious. Indian business did not enjoy the rapport with the colonial bureaucracy that English business easily maintained. The formal structure of Government provides for regularised contact between bureaucracy and various organized interests in India. A system of centralized planning – based on a mixed economy in which the private sector is tightly controlled and regulated elevates the bureaucracy almost to the position of an independent centre of decision making power. Although the Indian bureaucracy is remarkably accessible to individuals above a certain status level, numerous factors set limits on the scope of group intervention in the bureaucracy. In the Nehru era, those who form the higher echelon of the Indian bureaucracy have internationalised the long tradition of paternalistic independence developed by the old Indian civil service. They view themselves as independent guardians of the general welfare. As one secretary put it, "The majority of the people in India

are poor, and his majority is not yet able to represent itself. Until the masses of India become more conscious, the bureaucracy must step in to protect their interests.\textsuperscript{20} Since independence, the real power had thus been exercised by the council of ministers, with the Prime Minister at its head. India's three post-independence Prime Ministers Jawaharlal Nehru (1947-64), Lal Bhadur Shastri (1964-66) and Indira Gandhi have all been relatively strong executives who have fairly constantly reinforced the prominent role of the Prime Minister and the Council of Ministers. Although the Prime Minister is theoretically appointed by the President and other ministers are appointed by the President on the advice of the Prime Minister, the selection of the Prime Minister and Council of Members has actually been dependent upon the forces operating within the dominant Congress party.\textsuperscript{21}

The precise role of the Prime Minister depends on the stature, personality and effective power of the PM and on the quality of the Cabinet Ministers. During Nehru era, decision making was highly centralised. Nehru was in a position to obtain from the cabinet any decision he wanted, because he could casually persuade others of his point of view but also because he was willing to be personally responsible for the results. Last part of his life in PM office, Nehru did not consult regularly than formerly with his cabinet colleagues and his bureaucratic team. In earlier part of his life as PM, he started to consult with his senior colleagues in the cabinet prior to reaching any decision. Toward

\textsuperscript{20.} Ibid., p. 268.
the end of his tenure, when his health was failing and confidence in his leadership had been shaken by the Chinese invasion which signaled the failure of his Foreign Policy, Nehru's decision making became more fragmented.

With the abolition of intermediaries and the introduction of capitalist mode of production in agriculture, the peasants supported the government. The first Five year Plan introduced, under the influence of Ford Foundation Report, focused on the development of the agriculture. It goes to the credit of Nehru that he inducted into the decision-making process persons like Mahalanobis, Paul Appleby and other experts in the field of chemistry and physics background person like Hommi Vhaba to create a homogeneous group of decision-makers. This was in continuation of his practice of keeping in touch with the widest possible circle of politicians of all hues and specialists in different fields. If one looks at his intervention in 1957 on the issue of constitutional crisis one voices, as he told the Parliament, that he wanted the state government to call for new elections but the state government wanted to write a situation in which the only option available was President Rule.

The decision on economics, on agriculture, on Community Development Project, on Panchayati Raj showed that he went beyond the multi-class character of the state that Kalecki described an intermediary's regime. He exercised the autonomy of the State through inclusion of other elements, experts, significant politicians and united into a dialogue with opposition leaders and
faction colleagues. He further followed advice of foreigners' at different occasions.

**SHASTRI ERA**

Phrases like After Nehru, who and Quit, Nehru, Quit and What After Nehru were coined during Nehru's life-time. Various commentaries show that he was and grooming Mrs. Gandhi, she had become the Congress President without her involvement. She was interviewed by the American scholar who had come and the question After Nehru who and the Kamaraj plan show that she was not to be what Tagore had said of Jawaharlal at the time of Kamala's national service. Thakur had said he had a right to the thrown of young India.

In the grave crisis precipitated by Nehru's sudden death, good sense triumphed which made an orderly succession possible without creating much heat in the party. Consequently, the cloak of responsibility fell on Lal Bahadur Shastri but he was the Prime Minister of India for only short period. But his humble and simple nature competence and integrity won him the respect of all including his political opponents. Lal Bahadur Shastri was selected through consensus by the Congress leadership nick named as the syndicate in the false hope that he would surrender his decision-making power and authority to them.  

They were nursing the hope that Nehru-type domination would be over and real

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power would be exercised by all of them collectively. But Shastri exerted his authority in all matters even in selecting the members of his ministry.

Unlike the near hegemonic system of the Nehru era, Lal Bahadur Shastri tried to establish a more open and bargaining model of political system. The most critical change was in the style of decision-making. While decision in Nehru time often appeared to be imposed from above; this was not in the case of Shastri era when decisions were made after a spirited exchange of ideas and with a genuine concern for consensus. Shastri established a ‘Grant Council’ of the most powerful wielders of authority in the Congress Party as the supreme decision-making body at the centre. The Grant Council as Michale Brecher described it was the collective substitute for Nehru’s charisma. Shastri was however, no novice to politics. Though his succession to the office of Prime Minister was smooth the loyalties of many Chief Minister were exposed during the succession process. Also, Shastri could not accomplish what Nehru could by the sheer force his personality. Hence, he had to look new means of distinguishing between trustworthy and non-trust worthy. In retrospect, it appears that neither Nehru nor Shastri wanted to witness any successful alternative to the Congress rule in the states. Although both of them were liberal in accommodating diversities of interest and political dissent, they did make

selective use of federal resources to maintain Congress hegemony in the political system.

Under Shastri, the government decision originated from the joint exercise of Prime Minister and the cabinet, passed through the Emergency Committee and were then finalised by the Minister concerned and the Prime Minister. Shastri was the conventional first among equals. Decisions at the top were clearly shared between the Prime Minister and the cabinet during the Shastri period. Shastri wanted to "carry everyone' with him including, it possible, those who disagreed with him. This approach may delay decision a little but that did not bother Shastri for it went well with his innate love for the democratic spirit and love. The position of the cabinet did not significantly improve even during Shastri's regime. Some new variables like separation of function between the Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister, the Prime Minister's secretary, the committee of secretaries, emerged during Shastri's Prime Ministership. The pyramids of the decision-making were altered due to the emergence of the Prime Minister's secretary in 1964.

**INDIRA GADHI ERA**

On Nehru's death in Mar 1964, the syndicate's support tilted the balance in favour of Lal Bahadur Shastri's candidature for the Prime Ministership. Kamraj played the pivotal role in settling the succession issue and ensuring a smooth transition of power. After the death of Nehru, Shastri became Prime Minister.

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Minister, Kamraj had added a new stature and authority to the Congress Presidency and enjoyed considerable autonomy in organisational matters. But at that period Congress party had not played a major role in the decision making process of Government. Though Indira Gandhi owed her election to the Congress party President and an alliance of Chief Ministers, she took no time to believe the assumption that she was going to be a puppet in the hands of the syndicate bosses. The period of harmonious relationship between the Prime Minister and the Congress President was brief. In her bid to assert herself, Indira Gandhi made important policy decisions without consulting the Congress President, bypassed the old Gandhian decision making mechanism of seeking consensus and showed little regard for the concept of collecting leadership. The election of three of her nominees was interpreted by a leading social scientist as an indication that the "Prime Minister was no longer a prisoner of Kamraj and looked forward to an equal partnership with the Congress President at least until the election results were out".26

Indira Gandhi's second term as Prime Minister marked the beginning of a new phase. 'Institutionalised divergence' was no longer operative and the new rules of the power game dictated by an increasingly self-assertive Prime Minister. Indira Gandhi entailed 'Friction and Confrontation' in the power-sharing arrangement evolved in the Congress party during the last days of Nehru. In a series of shrewd moves she relieved Morarji Desai of the finance

26. Mahmud, Khalid, Indian Political Scene, Main Contender's for Power, Institute of Regional Studies, Islamabad, 1989, p. 29.
portfolio, forcing him to resign from the Cabinet, announced the nationalisation of 14 major banks in order to give an ideological colour to her dispute and manipulated from behind the scene the victory of V.V. Giri as the President of India against the official candidate of the Congress party.\textsuperscript{27}

She had a free hand to give expression to her authoritarian disposition and unleash the trend of personalising the power structure. The Gandhian spirit of seeking consensus and Nehru’s approach favouring dispersal of authority were no longer in vogue. The new style of leadership extended ‘loyalty and obedience’ to the boss who was the only source of authority and patronage and had the exclusive right of decision making.\textsuperscript{28}

Personalisation of power, intolerance of dissent, undemocratic functioning, arbitrary decision making, corruption, opportunism and encouragement of incompetent sycophants were some of the traits the Congress-I had acquired after Indira Gandhi converted the party into an apparatus for projecting her image and sustaining her political ascendancy. The marked decline of its value system and the collapse of its organisational dynamism had induced Rajani Kothari to remark that the Congress party in its centenary year has been close to being scrapped as an institution.\textsuperscript{29}

\addcontentsline{toc}{chapter}{Notes}

\textsuperscript{27} Ibid., p. 30.
The phenomenon of personalisation of power and total subservience of the party to the arbitrary rule of single leader had been completed and the Congress party hardly retained any trace of its Gandhian ethos. Commenting on her election as President of the truncated Congress, as observer said, “It indeed was a sort of reincarnation. Her great empire had shrunk to two and a half states and half a party, but she was an empress again.”

During the reign of Pandit Nehru, democracy had its heyday, though everything was not all right even then. Under his daughter’s rule, its spirit was considerably eroded with authoritarianism gaining the upper hand. She failed to hold even party elections within the Congress for years together under one pretext or other. She succeeded in reducing both the party and the government to a one woman’s rule.

She systematically undermined the authority of many of her own colleagues at National and State levels, suppressed mass revolts as expressed in events like the railway strike and the Telengana movement of autonomy, imposed her own will on the federal structure and projected a big power image of India in the sub-continent and in the International arena. After coming to power again in 1972 elections her party further mobilised the populist and oppositional sentiments, but she was unable to enlist them for structural change when it come

to power despite unprecedented electoral majorities. Soon thereafter the popular unrest found expression in yet another wave of agitations and direct action.\textsuperscript{32}

Corruption became rampant, public office was used for personal and political ends, administration got hamstrung by all kinds of unreasonable demands emanating from the Prime Minister's own office and household, and while all this was going on, the economy stagnated, prices began to rise and the conditions of people deteriorated.\textsuperscript{33} The resulting authoritarianism as a political style of Gandhi emerged, said many.

In the post Nehru era personal political ambitions and the quest for power became a prominent motivation in seeking to control the Congress Party organisation. In 1966, Indira Gandhi became the Prime Minister of India. After the Shastri death the decision-making process degenerated into a diffused and moribund state, due to the bad shape the Congress party was in the intra-party squabbles, vehement opposition to the Prime Minister and leadership tussles. The style of decision-making in the seventies was totally different from that in the preceding era. With her leadership finally entrenched and secure. She had become virtually the sole power centre and the focal point of decision-making in the country.\textsuperscript{34} At that time Smt. Gandhi had relied more and more, on a body of

\textsuperscript{33} Ibid., p. 337.
\textsuperscript{34} Ray, S N., op.cit., p. 60.
distinguished civil servants and trusted advisors in respect of serious and sensitive policy matters D.P Dhar, P.N. Haksar, G. Parthsarthy, had at different times, provided invaluable assistance in foreign policy decision-making as well as in economic and planning policies.\textsuperscript{35} During Smt. Gandhi's era, the Prime Minister's secretariat was more powerful than ever and had complete control over the administrative machinery. Another important thing occurred in Indira Gandhi's tenure from 1966, different people like, Charan Dinesh Singh, Metha, Subramanian Alneel, Karan Singh, Ram, Dhar, Dixit, Swaran Singh had at different time served in the 'inner cabinet' as decision maker for India.

But in many times, during her Prime Ministership, she had a different kind of problem. She had to establish herself as a leader of the party and also of the government. The office of the secretary to the P.M. headed by L.K. Jha became the power centre - a real decision-making organisation at the time of emergency. L.K. Jha accompanied Mrs. Gandhi in her trips abroad. In 1967, she had sent him to Moscow, London, Paris and Washington to participate in the deliberations on the nuclear non-proliferation treaty.\textsuperscript{36} But in 1967 P.N. Haksar became the new secretary. Throughout the late sixties and early eighties the Prime Minister office played a large role in the affairs of the government, he by passed or even usurped them. He used to advice her on political matters. The setback came when Prime Minister House (PMH) began to emerge as power

\textsuperscript{35} Ibid., p. 61.

\textsuperscript{36} Datta, Prabhat, \textit{India's Democracy}, Kaniska Publication, New Delhi, 1997, p. 11.
centre with Sanjaya Gandhi overshadowing the Prime Minister herself.\textsuperscript{37} When Mrs. Gandhi came back to power in 1980, P.C. Alexander took over as the new secretary. In his years with Indira Gandhi\textsuperscript{38} he recalled that he was taken into confidence even when Mrs. Gandhi reshuffled her cabinet. He was a regular member of every delegation abroad. Surprisingly even, when the foreign affairs Minister were not included in the delegation, Alexander was there.

P.N. Dhar, who had succeeded Haksar, in his book on the Emergency, made some interesting points about Mrs. Gandhi's functioning. He noted her charisma and courage in 1965 in the wake of War in Kashmir; she gave concepts of self-reliance, poverty alleviation and modernisation on the basis of Nehru legacy and her own thoughts. She did not have a doctrinaire approach and her pragmatism could served India very well. She was influenced by P.N. Haksar, Mohan Kumar Mangalam and the CPI, owing to the attacks on her by the syndicate. She had faith in India's destiny. She manipulated main and events. Her victory in East Pakistan confirm her preminent position. Her kitchen cabinet, had to be seen in the context of the attacks of the syndicate. If Nehru parted company with his contemporaries like C.R., so did Mrs. Gandhi with the syndicate. If Nehru distanced himself from J.P., so did Mrs. Gandhi. If Nehru could not help removed hangers on, they increased under Mrs. Gandhi. What is peculiar to the phase of Mrs. Gandhi's period was the lack of respect of rule of law, that issued for the J.P.'s movement against popularly elected government.

\textsuperscript{37} Ibid., p. 12.
\textsuperscript{38} Ibid., p. 13.
The strategy adopted by Mrs. Gandhi during 1980-84 was a product of what Janta Party government had attempted to intimate hers with: use legal cases like reptiles to kill her. She developed a-paranoia.

In 1969, Indira Gandhi caused a split in the Congress party and moved towards establishing her control over both the organisational and the parliamentary wings of her party. Although Indira Gandhi became the dominant force within her party, it changed the basic character and organisation of the Congress. The Congress, as led by Indira Gandhi, was no longer a party based upon broad consensus, becoming instead dependent upon the charismatic personality and populist policies of Indira Gandhi herself for electoral victories of strengthen her hold on the party. Indira Gandhi adopted a populist strategy and gave her party a slightly leftist and 'progressive' image. She believed that by adopting populist policies and using slogans like *garibi hatao* (abolish poverty), she could build a broad coalition of voters directed from New Delhi. This instrumental use of ideology was a cleavers strategy, enabling her to win election.39 In the case of internal decision-making process of the country is concerned, the dominant factor in Mrs. Gandhi's calculation seems to be her obsession to manage and keep under control the internal political system totally. She may not have been aiming at authoritarianism or dictatorship as her

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opponents constantly charge her. She was shrewd enough to know that such a course is fraught with great danger to her. On the other hand, she appeared to be looking for total management of this system of anarchic pluralism with all its corruption, sycophancy, traditionalism, social parasitism, abysmal poverty etc.\(^{40}\) Her aims appeared to be more control over it by taking advantage of every weakness in it. Hence, she was not worried about social force, consequences of unleashing certain force in attempting to manage the system, or the need to refashion this polity. She has not made even attempts to nurture the institutions assiduously built by her father.\(^{41}\)

Mrs. Gandhi's emergence as powerful national leader, in some respects even more powerful than her father, was accompanied by the pursuit of a populist set of policies. She abolished the special privileges of the former princes, nationalisation of the country's major banks, passed a Monopolies Act to regulate the activities of some 800 large firms,\(^{42}\) and nationalised the whole sale trade in wheat. Simultaneous to her attacks on the wealthier strata, Mrs. Gandhi promised to adopt measure to provide greater wealth. During that period, Indian state was also challenged by the two groups despite Indira Gandhi's majority support in parliament. Though these groups were not put pressure on the central government but they were able to find the way in order to protect their own


\(^{41}\) Ibid., p. 218.

interest in respective provinces. Due to the complex politics, one can say that these two groups within the states limited what Mrs. Gandhi's government could do. One group is the land-owning peasant proprietors and the second is middle class with its dominant position in the state bureaucracies. These two groups were influenced by the central government's policy through their indirect dominant positions and alliance with the top decision-makers of the state. The peasant proprietors were eager to prevent the passage of land reform legislation that would transfer land from the larger landowners to agriculture labourers and tenants, and when state governments imposed ceiling on land holdings, landowners were typically able to find ways to evade the implementation of the legislation. The peasantry was also connected income tax upon them, and they were able through their influence on the state governments, to oppose proposals to transfer such taxes to the central government. Agriculture thus remained the least taxed sector of the Indian economy. At the insistence of the middle class, the government invested heavily in higher education (to the proportionate neglect of primary and secondary school education), provided low rent housing for government officers in urban areas, and kept urban taxes low.

The third group, the business community, was much abused by the government as a source of corruption and as an opponent of many of Mrs. Gandhi's policies (such as the nationalisation of the grain trade), but it was in fact, much more limited by government that it imposed limits upon government.43

43. Ibid., p. 282.
So, the business community was forced to work closely with the bureaucracy in order to obtain contracts and licenses-to open or expand a plant, to import machinery or spare parts, even to purchase raw materials for production. Indira Gandhi had been considered as the 'Iron lady' image which the need in India and abroad had built up around Indira Gandhi as a totally ill-fitting and undeserving one. Perhaps this image stuck to her own on many matters and would not hesitate to take such action as she considered appropriate without bothering about the criticism it might provoke. Indira Gandhi, however had taken a unilateral decision in many matters on behest of the government during her tenure. The decision to go to war with Pakistan was forced on her by the stupidity of General Yahya Khan in ordering the strike of Indian air-fields without any provocation. Yahya underestimated the grit and courage of Indira Gandhi and Pakistan had to pay a heavy price for this. While the war was forced on her; her decision to announce a unilateral ceasefire and to recognise Bangladesh as a new sovereign country was entirely her. It is in these two decisions that remarkable qualities of courage and statesmanship of Indira Gandhi come out most conspicuously. At that time she was taking all kinds of decisions concerning country's important matters without the involvements of other members of her Ministership. This was her unilateral decision-making process because she had also dismissed many provincial governments without consulting other co-members in her cabinet. Indira Gandhi for that reason has been most critiqued by

45. Ibid., pp. 36-38.
some people for her alleged involvement in the dismissal of N.T. Rama Rao's government in August 1984.

The month of August and September 1970 were historic for Indira Gandhi. The government under her leadership made decisive bid to abolish the privy purses and privileges of the former rulers of 'Native states' in pre-independence India. They were not only an anachronism but had no place in egalitarian social set-up with the Congress was keen to establish. Indira Gandhi's decisions on Bank Nationalisation, Devaluation of Indian Rupee were the major unilateral decision of the government during her tenure as Prime Ministership.

India's democratic system received the most powerful challenge from Mrs. Indira Gandhi's authoritarianism and right wing street politics that led to it. It is difficult to point out to a particular date as the beginning of her authoritarian trend in her. In March, 1972, there was another general election in which again she became victorious. A destroyed and humbled opposition led to violations of rule of law in the name of fighting corruption. This reached the climax in June 1975 when her government declared 'emergency' in response. From that day until her defeat at the polls in 1977 there was same kind of authoritarian government in the country. She was to play a major role in the decision-making process helped by her radical supporters. Even if, she did not need any kind of consensus or consultation with her co-colleagues except few

core groups in the issue of various policy making procedures. It was felt that Indian democratic state was running under the few elite leaders through the false legitimating process. During this period many attempts were made to satisfy many of the arbitrary actions of the government. The most important of these actions is the indiscriminate arrests and imprisonment of a large number of political leaders and workers. Morarji Desai and Jayaprakash Narayan were some of the victims. Others were the important leaders of the Congress Organisation, the Jan Sangh the Socialist party, the Marxist party and a very large number of their workers. Many of them were kept in solitary confinement. The government of India banned on 4 July, 1975, the activities of twenty six political organisations. These offices were sealed and their leaders were imprisoned. It was the situation of furthered by emergency that made these administrative excess possible. In Such a political atmosphere the people had no way of expressing their grievances. No letter to the press could be published, no question could be mailing in the parliament with the purpose of giving publicity to the grievance, no processions could be organised and no public meeting could be held. Looking from this point of view, Mrs. Indira Gandhi’s authoritarianism was the greatest threat to the democratic system India faced since her independence. The significance of the fact that the political system survived is that the roots of democracy are very strongly entrenched in the country. What provoked the action was the call given by J.P. to the army and the police to disobey orders.

47. Singh, Naunihal, Political Dynamic of Rule by the People, Anmol Publication, New Delhi, 2000, p. 618.
Again Indira Gandhi took over the reins of office of the Prime Ministership in January, 1980, then the international community almost instinctively seemed to have sensed a qualitatively new phenomenon and a new presence. During this phase Indira Gandhi herself was unable to tackle the irrepressible condition of national and international situation. She had to take all the Congress Working Committee (CWC) into consideration while making the decision for the nation. At that time, All India Congress Committee (AICC) was looking back with pride of the prompt, adroit and balanced handing of many delicate international issues by the Congress government under the guidance and leadership of Smt. Indira Gandhi.  

49. AICC many times complimented the government on the utmost forbearance and fact with which it has been healing the complicated situations in any part of the country. And, also, AICC calls on the governments at the centre and the state to be vigilant against the machination of anti-social forces and responsive to the people's problems and needs. The administration should become more efficient and more humane. All the decisions of the Indian state was taken by the AICC under the leadership of Smt. Gandhi rather than Indira Gandhi herself and her core-group. In 1980s onwards to her death, Smt. Gandhi invited the people with the help of AICC, so that many people of Indian belong to peasant, workers, scientists, intellectuals, professionals,
administrators of all ranks, political activists and cadres in the socio-economic fields-to stand by the Indian National Congress, its objectives and programmes.

Her last tenure of Prime Ministership was full of achievements. At that time Indian state hosted the seventh Non-aligned summit in March 1983. She took the chair of the summit consisting of more than 100 member countries for the first time in its history of which her father was the Principal founder. It was she who stressed the South-South Dialogue and boosted the morale of the Third World. And when Smt. Gandhi, first time took over the reign of the government on January 24, 1966, she herself soon took the first independent decision regarding the foreign tour of Paris, London, Moscow and Washington. She directly appealed to President Johnson of America to stop bombing North Vietnam and reconvene the Geneva conference which irked Washington.\(^{50}\) In 1968, she revived the National Integration Council and Stated, "It was unfortunate that we were lulled into a sense of complacency after 1962.\(^{51}\) During the first three years of her Premiership Indira Gandhi showed no particular fervour for socialism. But during the power struggle of 1969 she decided to nail her flag to the socialist forces not only in the Congress but also in the country at large and to point her opponents as un-progressive bourgeoisie elements become one of the chief features of her strategy. She actively


\(^{51}\) Ibid., p. 25.
supported the famous ten point programme formulated by Dhavan and Subramaniam in 23, 24, 25; June 1967.\textsuperscript{52} She relieved Morarji Desai from Finance portfolio in the name of the implementation of ten point programme. She won immense popularity by announcing the nationalisation of the 14 top bank simultaneously with the acceptance of Desai’s resignation on July, 19\textsuperscript{th} 1969, though some Congress leaders including Kamraj had advocated the nationalisation of Banks even before Indira Gandhi began to favour the idea, yet Indira Gandhi devised the implementation in such a way that she could get the entire credit to her side.\textsuperscript{53}

As a member of the Congress Working Committee, Mrs. Gandhi made her debut into policies at the highest level. On gaining ascendancy in her party, she took to deliberation; as she gained control of the machine, a single omnipotent command.\textsuperscript{54} She created a situation where she could not depend on the loyalist of her senior cabinet colleagues. From these, her one-time equals, public statement or other signs of allegiance were came. An abject example was that of Y.B. Chavan (Then Minister for External Affairs) when on March 8, 1975, in Sholapur, Maharashtra, he told Congress workers he had no political ambition and no stake in the Prime Ministership. Chavan had been in politics all his life. An activist in the Quit India agitation, a respectful Chief Minister of Maharashtra, an

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\item \textsuperscript{53} Ibid., pp. 428-430.
\item \textsuperscript{54} Sahgal, Nayantara, \textit{Indira Gandhi, her Road to Power}, Macdonald Publishes, London and Sydney, 1983. p. 183.
\end{itemize}
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able and popular union Defenses Minister during the Indo-Pak war in 1965, this was for him a pathetic act of submission, showing how senior Congressmen of recognised ability had been humbled in obedience to the leadership cult.\textsuperscript{55} 

Although her government had nationalised banking, general insurance and local mines, Mrs. Gandhi is by no means hostile to private industry.\textsuperscript{56} She had often stated her commitment to a mixed economy in which private and public enterprise co-exist while attempting to curb the expansion of large business houses, her government had done much to promote the interests of smaller industrialists and businessmen and of the urban petty bourgeoisie in general. During the early years of her Prime Ministership Indira Gandhi was often accused of being dependent on her advisers, Kamraj, Ashok Mehta, Dinesh Singh, D.P. Mishra, P.N. Dhar and P.N. Haksar were each in turn identified as the power behind the throne. With the passage of time she did not like to take any adviser, however influential or indispensable, while she took advice from those whose judgment she trusted, ultimately she kept her own counsel and her decision were very much her own. Mrs. Gandhi nonetheless, retained the portfolios of information and broadcasting. Atomic energy and space and chairperson of Planning Commission, though she had relinquished the important home portfolio to Uma Shankar Dixshit, an old and trusted follower.\textsuperscript{57} She was

\textsuperscript{55} Ibid., p. 184.
\textsuperscript{57} Ibid. pp. 288-289.
also the deciding voice in External Affairs, Defenses and Economic Affairs and she was the supreme voice in all government decision and appointments.

In her decision making style the following could be discerned: (i) induction of people from outside the bureaucracy like P.N. Haksar and P.N. Dhar; (ii) listening to Chief Ministers like D.P. Mishra; (iii) depending on people in the bureaucracy like P.C. Alexander and L.K. Jha; (iv) relying on non-Congress Parties like the CPI and the CP(M) in Parliament during the period her government was in a minority; (v) having a small group of advisors; (vi) relying on Parties in opposition like the CPI since the Congress split till Sanjay Gandhi started to attack the CPI; (vii) for her programmes and policies create majorities in legislatures.

**Morarji Desai Period**

Morarji Desai, became the Prime Minister in 1977 after a great convulsion of the democracy in India. He also stated to maintain his own position in decision and policy making process. Morarji Desai, the Prime Minister, did not attach much importance to party manifestoes, and resolutions of the party’s executive committee. Whenever he was asked about the slow implementation of programmes, his stock reply was “in this old country things move slowly and it
will take time to translate the programmes.”\textsuperscript{58} The Prime Minister had his own priorities. The Janata party’s Lok Sabha manifesto (1977) did not so much as mention prohibition. But Morarji Desai successfully imposed his views on his cabinet, and it accorded the highest priority to the implementation of the prohibition policy.\textsuperscript{59}

Desai had the dominant role in government but difference within the Janata were not confined to the enrolment of the Janata, serious difference had emerged among its top leaders who were openly engaged in strengthening their group in the party.\textsuperscript{60} Moraj Desai, Jagjivan Ram and Charan Singh could not provide collective leadership in the party, Instead of landing the party. Instead of leading the party Desai, Ram and Singh created many conflicts and junior leaders like A.B. Bajpayee, L.K. Advani, Biju Patnaik, and George Fernades spent a lot of their time to mediate in resolving disputes among the top ‘troika’\textsuperscript{61} of the party. The Indian State by the Janata Party under the leadership of Desai failed to achieve any cohesion in its working during the first year of its existence and serious conflicts emerged among its various constituent groups which were involved in a competition to control the party organisation. Since groups in the party had an unequal strength they formed alliances and coalitions to extend their influence.


\textsuperscript{59} Ibid., p. 363.


\textsuperscript{61} Ibid., p. 60.
Shastri and Mrs. Gandhi did not come to power with Nehru's overriding autonomy theory. Starting out among equals, each had to depend at first on consensus rather than Charisma. Despite the traditional patterns of consensus decision making, Mrs. Gandhi strengthened in her hands. After the massive victory in 1971, and 1972 general election since then, Mrs. Gandhi concentrated the decision making process in the hands of PM and her secretariat. Power of the state had become concentrated that even the few independent voices among members of the cabinet that could make themselves heard have been stilled. Yet, her decisions involved others. Morarji government lived for too short a time for discovering decision-making process.

**RAJIV GANDHI ERA**

Rajiv Gandhi was appointed Prime Minister of India in an extraordinary way. Unlike in the 1960s, no formal body of the Congress was called into play to elect new leaders. When Srimati Gandhi died, Rajiv was no more involved either in the party or held in any significant position in the government was appointed as Prime Minister by the President of India, Zail Singh on the advice of a few senior Congress leaders. Then, latter on it was approved by Congress Working Committee. But Rajiv Gandhi suddenly showed one more, personalised the nature of authority in the democratic country like India. Both Srimati Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi both followed the policy of centralisation strategy without consulting the rank and file of the Congress party.

Both leaders also strengthened their position in decision making process. Their decision, however, were the final and last say in any policy and decision procedure of state. After the death of Indira Gandhi, Rajiv Gandhi did not hesitate to follow the guide line of his mother. He also kept on maintaining a high profile and a group of advisors, who failed in ways of different than syndicate's opposition to Mrs. Gandhi.

When he became the Prime Minister in 1985 the Prime Minister's office began to assert itself at the initial stage very slowly. The appointment of Mrs. Serla Grewal as the secretary to the Prime Minister brought about a change. The Prime Minister's office (PMO) started playing important role in economic and External Affairs following Rajiv Gandhi's keen desire to liberalise the economy, B.G.Desmukh who worked as the cabinet secretary and later on joined the PMO during the Rajiv Gandhi's regime wrote that many a time Prime Minister House overshadowed the Prime Minister office which continued to function. According to B.G. Deshmukh, Mr. V.P. Singh wanted Prime Minister to be developed as professional body. It executed effective damage limiting exercises in the field of economic matters and in external affairs when the Gulf war broke out. The Prime Minister House became non functional and unimportant. That means many kinds of decisions and policies were being taken at the Prime Minister office (PMO). This office was dominated by the group of upper middle and urban class. Mr. Rajiv Gandhi was also admired for the first

63. Datta, Prabhat, op.cit., p. 11.
64. Ibid., p. 12.
time for his new economic policies. Within the months after taking office, he announced new policies to accelerate India’s slow industrial growth liberalising imports, providing new incentives for exports, permitting the import of technologies, encouraging foreign investments through joint ventures, reducing taxes and de-regulatory the economy so as to make it more competitive liberally oriented economists and administrators (elite bureaucrats and business groups) were placed in charge of Planning Commission, the Finance Ministry and other key economic positions on behest of the state.\(^65\) Rajiv Gandhi also promised to restructure the Congress, to hold party elections for the first time in fifteen years and to encourage a new younger leadership to take responsibility in the States and in the Central government. He also appointed number of young MPs as Junior Ministers. An Anti Defection Bill was introduced to discourage elected members of parliament and state assemblies from threatening to bring down governments in order to improve their own chances of becoming ministers Rajiv Gandhi’s new approach and his willingness to take fresh look at old problems, aroused the hopes of India’s business community and received enthusiastic support from it and from the press. His youthfulness, his managerial styles, his modern attitude towards technology as manifested by his eagerness to empanel India’s computer industry, his reputation for personal integrity (Mr. Clean) helped in all this.\(^66\)

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66. Ibid., p. 298.
The Prime Minister, initially praised for his openness, was now criticised for his lack of accessibility while he appeased daily on national television, giving the appearance of accessibility, the reality was that he rarely met with senior Congress politicians, cabinet position were frequently reshuffled, signifying his lack of confidence in his own party, and for advice he fell back upon a small number of bureaucrats and personal friend. The result was that all too often the Prime Minister made hasty and politically unwise decision or issued statements that were politically inept. A decision in early 1986, for example, so shapely increase petroleum and kerosene Prices at a time when international prices were declining simultaneously antagonised the middle classes and the poor. After a sharp popular reaction and opposition from senior figures in the Congress party, the Prime Minister hastily revered the decision. In short, Rajiv Gandhi has not succeeded in creating a new party leadership; while at the same time the older party workers are disgruntled. Congress leaders in the state remain weak because of their dependence upon the centre and use therefore, highly a vulnerable to revolts from dissident factions within the party. Cabinet appointees have not based well at the hands of the Prime Minister. During his Prime Ministership, he took crucial steps to opening and liberalising the economy, for engineering for a hundred to two hundred million strong middle classes formation and consumer boom, and who emerged as an international leader. But after five years, the same electorate that en masse voted for Rajiv Gandhi and Congress, en masse ran away from them.67 The 1989 election was

67. Assianand, *Wither Indian and Wither Mankind*, Indian Institute of Ecology and Environment,
certain no vote on the performance on Rajiv Gandhi and his government, it was once again a usual 'vote against' the periodical ventilation of the collective frustration and the maniacal hate and mistrust brewing in such frustration.\textsuperscript{68} Rajiv Gandhi stood at the apex of what was by now a top down political system, the resistance of the party may have slowed his initiatives but was by no means decisive. Rajiv Gandhi replaced those who really resisted with those who were more royal and at least during 1985 and 1986 continued with his liberalisation measures.\textsuperscript{69}

The above analysis ensure that the nature of autonomy of the Indian state is being determined by the nature of the party system. State has been a separate and independent entity. It is the political parties who influence the real character and capacity of the state. From Nehru to Rajiv Gandhi, the conditions of the Indian state were being envisaged through the policies and decision taken by the respective Prime Ministerships.

From the very beginning, Rajiv seemed to be interested in new departures. Unlike his predecessors, he seemed to believe that rapid economic development was a matter not merely of devising good socialist programs but of

\textsuperscript{68} Ibid., p. 21.
improving the management of programs and creating a more hospitable atmosphere for private industry.\footnote{Meheta, Ved, \textit{Rajiv Gandhi and Rama's Kingdom}, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1994, p. 81.}

With the achievement of India's Independence in 1947, one phase of India's democratic revolution came to an end. During the first two decades of Independent Indian Congress project of national building was put into force. The Nehru – Mahalanobis development model was implemented focusing on heavy industries such as steel, oil, coal and electricity mostly in the public sector. It sought to promote science and technology through Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) and National Laboratories.\footnote{Mohanty, Manoranjan, 'Theorizing Indian Democracy', (ed) Rajendra Vohra and Subhash Palshikar, \textit{Indian Democracy Meanings and Practices}, Sage Publication, New Delhi, 2004, p. 102.} The Zamidars were abolished, thus making many tenants owner – cultivators. Nehru was trying to make a balance between the party and the state. He emphatically gave various suggestion regarding the state policies should have coherence which the Congress Party. That means, though Nehru tried to construe the state as an independent entity, but due to the pressures of his party members, various decisions and policies were being influenced by the top Congress leaders. It led the foundation of close relations of political parties policies with the policy of the state. There should not be any difference between the party politics and the state. Indira Gandhi, from the beginning, she took a radical posture and split the Congress in 1969. She initiated some structural measures such as land reforms, nationalisation of banks.
and strengthening public sectors. From 1972 onwards she began to firmly take over the leadership of the Congress and the Government and centralise powers in her own hands. Rajiv Gandhi also had a vision to carry forward the India as a developed state in the World. For that reason he took various policies without any broad base consensus and consultations with other co-members of the party. He reposed strong faith upon the young leaders and administrators of the state.

Some points of Rajiv Gandhi’s pattern of decision making needs to be made: (i) exercised independent judgement as is shown in his dispute with Zail Singh, who was instrumental in helping him in becoming the PM; (ii) independents of action in organising Asian Games with a team that included Arun Nehru; (iii) ousted Sanjay loyalists; (iv) established technology missions under bureaucrats and experts like Sam Peteroda for technology; (v) depended on bureaucrats on signing Punjab, Mizoram and Gorkhaland accords; (vi) depended on friends like Arun Singh (Doon School) (vii) reduced the influence of God man like Dhivendra Brahmachari. Some from his group ditched him and set up anti-Congress coalitions like Arun Nehru and V.P. Singh says Nicholas Nugent, his bio-grapher.

This survey suggests that the state, whatever its class nature, exercises relative freedom in dealing with policy issues with the help of journalists, politicians inside and outside the Party, bureaucracy’s creamy layer technologists and political parties and trade unions other than those ruling and

72. Ibid., p. 103.
being in power. We notice that at different phases of her carrier Mrs. Gandhi alternately had groups of pragmatist and radical oriented actors, who could easily form 'episteme community’. In case of the period of Rajiv Gandhi liberalisers in the technology mission became such a group. The Nehruvian early years of presaged these if one looks at the decision-makers of the first and the second five years plans. The third plan was a continuation of the strategy of Nehru started by the second plan. It is therefore not surprising that the 1990s witnessed the prominent growth of liberalisers. We deal with this in the next chapter.