Chapter - III

SOCIAL BACKGROUND AND PERFORMANCE OF THE WOMEN LEADERS
The overwhelming evidence so far confirms that in almost every society women are excluded from certain crucial economic or political activities and their roles as wives and mothers are associated with fewer powers and prerogatives. It seems fair to say then that all contemporary societies are to some extent male-dominated and although the degree and expression of female subordination vary greatly, sexual asymmetry and to some extent female political apathy are presently universal facts of human social life. If men and woman differ politically this could come about in two primary ways. One is more explicitly political and is a direct consequence of being born male or female. Because of their sexual distinctiveness, women and men undergo different processes of political socialization, encounter different political constraints and opportunities, receive differential rewards from the political system.

A second method is indirect but no less effective. Sex linked inequalities in educational and occupational achievements for example are often cited as possible reasons for divergent political traits. Being trained to be less assertive and more nurturant could result in women being less adventurous and successful in conventional politics. These and myriad other ways in which women and men have been differentially allocated and processed by their respective societies have undoubtedly led to political contrasts across the sexes.

Nevertheless there are women who have risen to important heights of achievement. But the records of women holding government office follow a somewhat more puzzling pattern. Women hold a few high offices in almost every government in Canada, Great Britain, France and the U.S.A. the proportion of Parliament seats held by women ranges from 2% to 4%. It is not the economic development of modern societies that appears to give women access to high office so much as their political traditions. This is true in case of Sirimavo and Chandrika of Srilanka, Indira Gandhi of India, Benazir of Pakistan and Khaleda and Hasina of Bangladesh.
Social Background:

The British transferred power to Sri Lanka in 1948 since then it has experienced almost alternately the rule of liberal UNP and radical SLFP. The SLFP was founded in 1951 by Solomon W.R.D Bandarnaike, the owner of large and prosperous coconut plantations. He was English educated aristocratic Anglican Christian. The leaders of SLFP are economically well off and are English educated upper most families of Sri Lanka. S.W.R.D got married to Sirimavo Ratwatte in 1940. She belonged to family of owners of paddy lands in the Kandyan hill country in the 19th century. S.W.R.D was politically shrewd and ambitious and was a great defender of Sinhalese language and culture. S.W.R.D was not a leader of one consolidated, united and disciplined party which could subscribe to his policies and help implementation of the same. He found himself in a state of helplessness as the forces of religious fanaticism and communalism were on rampage. This was followed by the murder of Bandarnaike by an extremist fanatical Buddhist. After the death of S.W.R.D the SLFP was to encash the sympathy of the people to win the 1960 election. So S.W.R.D's widow Sirimavo was made the leader of the party and she won the election of 1960s.

Indira Gandhi was born and brought up in an environment where the members of the family were involved with the national movement. In 1930 she organised Vanar Sena and in 1942 she took part in Quit India Movement. After India's independence her father became the first Prime Minister of India. As her father's companion Indira organised his domestic affairs, accompanied him on many of his trips abroad and played the role of official hostess. Older Congress bosses considered her malleable and since they thought they had nothing to fear made Indira the president of INC in 1952. She entered the Rajya
Sabha after her father's death in 1964 and became the Information and Broadcasting Minister in Shastri's Cabinet. In 1966 after Shastri's death Indira Gandhi became the Prime Minister of India as a result of the process of elimination of other leaders.

In 1996 after 21 years Sheikh Hasina had been able to bring back the Awami League to power. It was a hard earned victory for which all credit should go to her. For Sheikh Hasina it was her first time in office with almost no administrative experience. The quiet daughter of a middle class household, Hasina was catapulted to the top slot following the tragic gunning down of her entire family in 1975. She was forced into politics and the leadership of the Awami League was thrust on her when she returned to Bangladesh after few years of exile in India. As leader of the Awami League Hasina together with Begum Khalida Zia led a pro-democracy movement against Hussain Mohammad Ershad's military regime. Hasina lost the 1991 elections which was held after the ouster of Ershad to the BNP. A by-election rigged by the new government gave Hasina the opportunity she was waiting for. She succeeded in keeping up the tempo against the government and made friends with many of her long time detractors.³ After 1996 elections Hasina became the Prime Minister of Bangladesh.

Benazir Bhutto was brought up in Larkana in the social milieu of rural Sind where her family owns a vast amount of property. She had the privilege of Western education and exposure to political situations. She assumed the leadership of PPP in the wake of her father's execution in April 1979. As Zia regime became more oppressive and put Benazir into jail this enhanced Benazir's popular appeal and also expanded her support base. Imprisonment gave credence
to her leadership. Between 1979-84, the more the Zia regime tried to suppress PPP and to restrict the Bhutto family, the greater the popularity, sympathy and support, Benazir began to evoke. She returned to Pakistan after her exile in London in 1986 and received warm welcome from the people of Pakistan.

In a male dominated society specially in a developing country it is really difficult for a woman to be the leader of the country. But for Begum Zia it is a reality that in 1991 elections she headed the country's democratic government to become the first woman Prime Minister of Bangladesh and second woman Prime Minister of the Muslim world. Begum Zia's political life and experience were much shorter. She never aspired to become a political leader before her husband's death. She belonged to average middle class family and fairly educated and got married to Ziaur Rahman who was an officer in the army. But fate had something reserved for Khaleda. Her husband became the President of Bangladesh after 1975 coup and after his assassination the disorganised BNP thrust the responsibility of reorganising the party on her shoulders which she took as a challenge and in 1991 became the Prime Minister of Bangladesh.

Chandrika Kumaratunga was born and brought up in a environment where the life revolves around politics. Her parents belonged to affluent aristocratic family and she had all the affluence and the benefits of Western education. She was interested in politics as both her parents were the Prime Ministers of Srilanka. After her marriage her husband actor-turned politician got involved in politics but was not very successful as a political leader. After her husband's death she returned to SLFP and in 1994 became the Prime Minister of Srilanka and after winning the 1994 Presidential election became the President of Srilanka.
**Emergence:**

After the assassination of S.W.R.D Bandarnaike by a Buddhist monk total confusion prevailed in Srilanka. Parliamentary democracy was crippled, no cohesion existed anywhere along the political spectrum. Under such a situation UNP found it suitable to comeback but it was soon defeated by a vote of no-confidence.

Hence no alternative was left except holding fresh elections in the country. As S.W.R.D was murdered it was natural to create sentimental atmosphere to win over the people in the election of 1960. Sirimavo Bandarnaike, the widow of S.W.R.D was chosen as the leader of SLFP which got a clear majority in the 1960 election.

In 1994 election the victory of the People's Alliance under the leadership of Chandrika Kumaratunga, daughter of S.W.R.D and Sirimavo Bandarnaike ended the UNP's 17 year rule in Srilanka. Chandrika played a role in her mother's administration in the mid 1970s. She moved into politics in mid 1980s and together with her late husband Vijaya Kumaratunga, led a small left political party, Srilanka Mahajana Pakshaya (Srilanka People's Party) which failed to make any impression on Srilankan politics. Following the assassination of her husband in 1988 by a gunman believed to have been sent by the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna she left for England for two years and took no part in the presidential election of 1988 and the parliamentary election of 1989. On her return she founded yet another new political party, the Bahujana Nidahas Pakshaya (Multi People Freedom Party) which did not last long either. Chandrika rejoined the SLFP in 1991. She took over the mantle of leadership of SLFP from her ailing and aged mother with the latter's willing consent.
The circumstances under which Benazir Bhutto assumed leadership were dramatic. It was in the wake of her father's execution in April 1979 that she became co-chairperson of the PPP. The execution of Z.A. Bhutto evoked mixed responses. In the eyes of his supporters and sympathizers he was a nationalist who stood for Pakistani masses, in the eyes of his opponents Bhutto stood for nothing but evil thereby had to be removed. For Benazir, Z.A. Bhutto's martyrdom evoked sympathy as well as envy. As Zia regime became more oppressive. Benazir leaving a comfortable life chose a difficult path — the path of struggle. She was put in solitary confinement. She choose to pick up the fallen standard of PPP and choose to lead and bind together a party in disarray under the pressure of martial law.

Indira Gandhi came from a family of giants and for 17 years had been the official hostess and companion to her father Jawaharlal Nehru. In 1955 she was appointed a member of Congress Working Committee. In 1959 at the suggestion of the out-going president she was accepted as U.N Dhebar's successor to the presidency of Congress. In 1964 Indira was not the main contender for the post of Prime Minister after Nehru's death. Lal Bahadur Shastri was chosen to succeed Nehru by consensus. He gave Indira the portfolio of Information and Broadcasting in his cabinet. Shastri's death at Tashkent in Jan 1966 made the Congress leadership look for a new P.M. The choice was between Morarji Desai and Nehru's daughter Mrs. Indira Gandhi. The Congress leaders did see Morarji Desai as a rigid uncompromising person and were reluctant to have him as Prime Minister. Mrs. Gandhi they thought was just the person they wanted. They expected her to follow the dictates of the party and be respectful to them for putting her in power.
In 1981 after the assassination of Ziaur Rahman, Vice President Justice A. Sattar became Acting President of Bangladesh as per the constitution. When the Presidential election took place Sattar became the nominee of BNP and won the election defeating notable candidates like Barrister Kamal Hossain of Awami League, General (Retd.) M.A.G. Osmani from Nagorik Sangha and others. A conflict cropped up in the BNP over the election to the post of Chairman of the Party. There was difference of opinion in the Party regarding the acceptance of Sattar as the Chairman of the Party. A rebel group who was annoyed with Sattar appealed to Begum Zia to stand for the post of chairman of BNP against Sattar. In 1983 Begum Zia came to lime light declaring half day hartal throughout the country. She steered agitation against the rule of General Ershad and was the chief architect of B.N.P's victory in 1991's parliamentary election.

When Mujibur Rahman was killed with his family in 1975 Sheikh Hasina and her younger sister Rehana survived the coup as they were in West Germany at that time. She joined politics in 1981 when after being chosen as chief of the Awami League in her absence while she was living with her family in New Delhi. Hasina returned to Bangladesh and steered league through difficult period but lost the electoral battle to Begum Zia in 1991 but in 1996 it was due to Sheikh Hasina's credit that she had brought the party back to power after a gap of 21 years.

**Indira Gandhi:**

In the history of the world very few women have presided over the destinies of nations. The conspicuous position of a few leading women does distinguish India from many other countries. Indira Gandhi played a foremost role who
was democratically chosen by the world's largest democracy. In relation to the number of men at all levels of political leadership men greatly outnumber women. This is the case in elected as well as appointed administrative positions. In India from the year 1952 to 1975 there were only 13 women ministers in the Union Government of whom one became Prime Minister and one attained Cabinet rank. Women were placed in the less prestigious ministries like tourism, civil aviation, information and broadcasting, education rather than finance, defence, agriculture etc.

The impression that Indian women occupy an important place in Indian politics has been created more by the visibility of few women, Mrs. Gandhi and a number of historical figures, than by the presence of substantial numbers of women leaders. The prominence of women in Indian politics warrants an explanation why in a society where the economic structure, culture and religion strongly denigrate the role of women should even a few women hold positions of importance in the public life of the nations?

The selection of Indira Gandhi as the Prime Minister of India after Lal Bahadur Shastri's death was a compromise. She carried the charisma which Nehru name possessed apart from this reason some thought that she would serve as the puppet of the party and could be vote getters because of her political legacy. She emerged not because of her potentialities but from a process of elimination which thought her to be the most suitable candidate. Marvin Zim pointed out in a Life magazine article, Indira was the choice of Congress party chiefs who had been virtually suffocated by 17 years of her father Nehru's autocratic rule. The 1966 succession was essentially a party affair and party interest to keep Morarji Desai out rather than national interest that accounted
for Indira's victory. In 1964 after the death of Nehru, Indira did not succeed him rather she was still comparatively unnoticed and not seriously considered as a candidate for the succession to Nehru. The election of Shastri as prime minister as well as the election of Kamraj as the party president were carefully orchestrated by the syndicate, a small group of Congress party leaders who had organized in 1963 for the purpose of controlling the Congress Party.

Upon the death of Shastri there did not seem to be any candidate able to command the support Shastri had enjoyed. The choice of Indira Gandhi was based on two factors — (a) political legacy of Nehru (b) intention of blocking the election of Morarji Desai.

At first Mrs. Gandhi gave the Congress leadership little cause for alarm. Her performance till sometimes after 1967 was rather unimpressive, if not positively bad. As a result, 1967 election saw the Congress being mauled badly and it went out of power in quite a few states. The Congress leaders apprehensive of the worsening image of the their party, persuaded Morarji Desai to be the Deputy P.M. under Mrs. Gandhi. This makeshift arrangement did not last long. Mrs. Gandhi felt constrained in the company of Desai and was determined to get rid of him.

Mrs. Gandhi confronted the Congress leaders on a number of issues. She went in for nationalisation of banks ignoring Morarji Desai's objections. She also divested him of his finance portfolio as a consequence of which he left the Cabinet. The privy purses which were being paid to the former princes were also sought to be abolished. After the death of President Zakir Hussain the CWC proposed the name of Sanjeeva Reddy, the Loksobha speaker for the
Presidentship. Mrs. Gandhi at first seemed to go along with it but later she changed her mind and encouraged the party members close to her to support an independent candidate, the former Vice President V.V. Giri. This step resulted in what is referred to as the 1969 split of the Congress. Mrs. Gandhi was left with a major part of the parliamentary party but she now headed a government which was a minority in Parliament and was dependent on the support of some opposition parties like the DMK and CPI. Sensing public support for her policies she went in for mid term poll after dissolving Parliament and her party won handsomely.

Then came the 1971 war with Pakistan which resulted in the birth of Bangladesh found Mrs. Gandhi at the zenith of her political career. The Congress Party which failed to win a majority of seats in half of the state legislative assemblies won only a precarious majority in Parliament in 1967 elections but the result was almost striking in 1971 election. Following the Indo-Pakistani War of 1971, P.M. Gandhi's government addressed those socio-economic challenges that had been postponed or delayed by the conflict. Complicating their efforts was the soaring price of petroleum and petroleum products that followed in the wake of the 1973 Arab-Israeli war. Inflation was already an ongoing drama.

In the post Nehru era the Congress domination continued until 1977 and was resumed in 1980 for another decade But it was a weakened Congress, weakened by a major split in 1969 between the formerly powerful Congress leaders who formed the so-called Syndicate and represented the 'Old Congress' and a younger grouped by Indira Gandhi who represented a new look in the Congress party.
In the mid 1970s the people who had great expectations from Mrs. Gandhi grew restive. A students' movement against corruption was encouraged by J.P. Narayan, the Sarvodaya leader.

The Allahabad High Court judgement which unseated Indira Gandhi for technical reasons was the last straw for her. Sensing that things were going out of her control she decided to take drastic measures. Internal Emergency was declared and the leaders of the opposition were locked up. Censorship was imposed. Amendment in the constitution to facilitate Mrs. Gandhi's continuance in power were made. When Mrs. Gandhi ordered elections in 1977 the results were catastrophic for her. In 1977 the first non-Congress government was formed. But Janata experiment could not and did not last long. The 1980 election to saw the return of Indira Gandhi as the Prime Minister of India.

History cannot dismiss Indira Gandhi as a mere daughter of a great father. She in fact changed the very face of India by leading from dependency to self sufficiency. Mrs. Gandhi was in favour of centralising power and nationalising issues. The measures taken by her in this regard included the political destruction of the state political bosses, the selection of the chief ministers of the Congress dominated states by herself in consultation with her small clique of advisers, the increased use of President's rule in the states, the increased use of central police and intelligence forces to minitor and control regional opposition populist; demagogic appeals to national categories of voters, such as the poor, the landless and the minorities, and some manipulation of xenophobic and paranoiac nationalism against Pakistan and the American CIA.¹⁴

Mrs. Gandhi's Prime Ministership symbolises the anomaly of women's position in Indian politics. On the one hand women appeared to be prominent
at an elite level of politics. On the other hand, there persisted gross inequalities between male and female in Indian society as a whole testified to by an imbalanced sex-ratio, severe differentials in wages and work participation and a host of other factors.\textsuperscript{15}

**Foreign Policy of India under Indira Gandhi**

Indira Gandhi performed a metamorphosis both on the domestic front and in foreign policy. In 1968-70 the changing tides of world events brought Indira Gandhi closer to Moscow and distanced herself from Washington. The Indo-Soviet Friendship Treaty was signed in 1971. The 1971 saw another great event in the history of Indian subcontinent, the creation of Bangladesh where India played a leading part. India signed a twenty year Friendship Treaty with Bangladesh in 1972. Indira tried to save the life of Z.A. Bhutto and by doing so won herself a soft spot in many Pakistani hearts though India's relation with Pakistan was not at all cordial. The major irritant in Indo-Pakistan relation is the Kashmir problem. According to Indira Gandhi India tried to have normal relations with Pakistan. Yet successive governments of Pakistan based the survival and unity of their country on the idea of confrontation with India. This had stood in the way of cooperation. Kashmir as early as October 1947 was the first victim of aggression by Pakistan. A large part of that state had been under Pakistan's occupation for many years. India did not intend to recapture this territory by force. Pakistan tried to invoke third party intervention in this matter. In 1972 Shimla Agreement was signed by India and Pakistan. By this agreement Pakistan and India have proclaimed their determination to solve their conflict bilaterally and without recourse to force and to seek a durable peace and growing economic and cultural cooperation.\textsuperscript{16}
Indira Gandhi surprised the entire world in May 1974 by the explosion of a nuclear device at Pokhran. If it were to herald to the world India's hard earned capability to make nuclear bombs, she succeeded in her object, for India was given a seat however reluctantly by the five nuclear powers in the corridors of the so called Nuclear club. However she had no plans to make India a nuclear weapon power\textsuperscript{17}.

Following the Non-aligned Summit (March 1983) in New Delhi, Smt. Indira Gandhi as Chairperson of the movement had taken initiatives to promote peace. The quest for peace was inextricably linked with ending of hunger and want in the developing countries. At the meeting of the Common Wealth Head of Government (1983), Smt. Indira Gandhi stated India's position on major world issues unambiguously. India reiterated its commitment to the declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace. The implementation of the U.N. resolution of 1971 had been blocked causing serious anxiety to the littoral. India affirmed her support to the U.N in its efforts to find a political solution for the complex issues in Afghanistan.

The South Asian regional cooperation programme launched in Aug 1983 had raised hopes of a new era of peace, friendship and cooperation in the South Asian region. Government of India supported the popular fight for progress, national independence and self determination and against colonial oppression and neocolonialism. India resolutely opposed racial discrimination and condemned the policy of apartheid\textsuperscript{18}.

**The economy of India under Indira Gandhi**

Mrs. Gandhi inherited India whose ministers had to go round the world with begging bowls in their hands. After ruling this country for 16 years she
left behind India which is in a position to give food aid to starving people of Ethiopia.

When Mrs. Gandhi took over, the Green revolution had just started. In 18 years the fertiliser consumption increased from about one million tonnes to 8.4 million tonnes and the area under high yielding varieties from about two million acres to 137 million acres.

In June 1966 Indira Gandhi devalued rupee in an attempt to improve India's foreign trade and foreign exchange status. The nationalization on July 19, 1969 of the fourteen leading commercial banks those with deposits exceeding Rs. 500 million was her second major step. She abolished the special privileges of the former princes, passed a Monopolies Act to regulate the activities of some 800 large firms and nationalised the wholesale trade in wheat. Mrs. Gandhi promised to adopt measures to provide greater wealth and income to the lowest 40% through land redistribution, the extension of credit, irrigation and seeds to dry areas thus far not affected by the Green Revolution, and public works to increase rural employment to agricultural labourers.

Indira Gandhi was in favour of getting foreign aid until India stand on her feet economically. In her speech at a meeting of the National Development Council, New Delhi in 1967 Mrs. Gandhi said that problem before India was how to mobilise financial resources to enable the Indians to make fuller use of their capacities. It was clear that if the public sector expenditure on development was to be expanded we would have to pay for developmental outlays for the purchase of materials, for payment of labour etc.
Perhaps the outstanding economic achievement of Mrs. Gandhi's regime was that the country broke out of the centuries old saving trap. The most difficult task of a developing country is to break the vicious circle of poverty-low savings - low growth poverty - low savings. India did break it around 1975-76. Another abiding contribution of Mrs. Gandhi was a strong welfare bias she gave to the economy. It was called Garibi Hatao, 20 point programme, minimum needs programme etc.

Mrs. Gandhi passed a Monopolies Act to regulate the activities of some 800 large firms and nationalized the whole sale trade in wheat. The middle class wanted an expansion of the public sector because they believed that such an expansion would provide the employment opportunities while members of the bureaucracy continued to press for higher wages, though this was accompanied by deficit financing and the growth of non-plan expenditures. 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.

Mrs. Indira Gandhi had been deeply committed to the modernisation of Indian economy through technological upgradation. She took special interest in space research and in the research for peaceful uses of atomic energy. Her decision to nationalise commercial banks and to expand banking to the hitherto unbanked areas especially rural areas helped to provide resources for innumerable small entrepreneurs, farmers and artisans. The second phase of land reforms undertaken in the early seventies, radically altered the rural scene by preventing the concentration of land in a few hands and by providing land to million of
landless families. Employment had been her another major area of concern. She highlighted food, work and productivity as the three major goals of the seventh five year plan launched in 1985-86. She underscored the need to integrate the antipoverty programmes like IRDP and NREP with the programmes for increasing agricultural productivity in the less developed regions.

Sirimavo Bandarnaike:

In 1959 when the Prime Minister S.W.R.D Bandarnaike was assassinated succession to the premiership posed difficult problems. At that time C.P de Silva became the leader of SLFP after his return from abroad and requested the Governor-General to dismiss Dahanayake's government. Dahanayake on the other hand ordered the dissolution of the Parliament and a new election held in March 1960. Prior to 1960 election C.P de Silva relinquished SLFP leadership to S.W.R.D's widow Sirimavo Bandarnaike who became the Prime Minister of Sri Lanka and appointed to the Senate after her party became victorious in July 1960 election.

Within six months of Mrs. Bandarnaike's assumption of office as Prime Minister she insisted on making Sinhalese as the language of administration throughout the island from Jan 1, 1961 as envisaged in the 'Sinhala Only' bill of 1956 without any substantial concessions to the Tamils. Mrs. Bandarnaike unlike her husband was not reluctant to take on two inflammable issues at the same time.

The most notable achievements of Mrs. Bandarnaike's first government was the understanding she reached with Lal Bahadur Shastri in Oct 1964 on the question of the Indian minority in Sri Lanka. The agreement provided for the repatriation over a 15 year period of 525,000 Indian residents in Sri Lanka to
India along with the natural increase and the absorption of 300,000 as citizens of Sri Lanka, the future of the remaining 150,000 was to be negotiated later by the two countries\(^1\). In 1964 Bandaranaike's government came to an end because of the act of her own deputy C.P de Silva who crossed over to the opposition with a group of his followers. The premiership of Bandaranaike saw the creative phase in the diplomacy of the non-aligned states. The conference of non-aligned states held at Belgrade in 1961 paved the way for Sri Lanka's stronger trade ties with the Third World. Mrs. Bandaranaike tried to play the role of a political mediator in Sino-Indian dispute in 1962 but with no significant results.

In the economic front in the 1960s Sri Lanka confronted the economic crisis that had been building up ever since the collapse of the tea boom of 1954-5 and there was a permanent foreign exchange crisis.

In 1960s when Mrs Bandaranaike became the Prime Minister for the first time she had little political experience and she carried forward the policies of her husband on the ethnic question with greater vigour. Her move to nationalise most of the schools in the teeth of Christian opposition evoked strong reaction among the Christian and Tamils\(^2\). The rigid insistence of the government on the implementation of the Official Language Act without making any provision for the use of Tamil worsened tensions between the Sinhalese and Tamil communities.

Mrs. Bandarnaike's major problems were of managing the domestic economy and alienation of Tamils and Roman Catholics. As a result, in 1965 election SLFP were not in a position to form government paving the way for UNP led coalition government.
In 1970s election Mrs. Bandarnaike regained power as the head of United Front parties which promised to bring down the cost of living, to solve the problem of unemployment. But the economic conditions of Sri Lanka was far from satisfactory. In 1973-74 there was a fourfold rise in the price of crude oil and this was accompanied by a spectacular upward movement in the prices of wheat, rice and sugar in the international market. Unfavourable climatic conditions also played a part in the drop in local food production.

The economic policy of the United Front was characterised by a great reliance on nationalization and expansion of the public sector as an instrument of economic development but this policy of government proved to be a failure. The government of Bandarnaike faced the youth insurrection of 1971 which was organised by Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP). In Aug 1975 Bandarnaike provoked by public criticism of the SLFP by the LSSP leaders forced them out of the Cabinet, CP leaders resigned after 18 months which ended the coalition government. Some member of SLFP wanted to extend the life of Parliament but the move proved abortive and a general election took place in 1977 after which UNP came to power.

**Foreign Policy of Sri Lanka under Mrs. Bandarnaike:**

S.W.R.D Bandarnaike (1956-59) articulated an eloquent often Nehru-style non-aligned philosophy while Mrs. Bandarnaike developed a special relationship with China but at the same time emerged as one of the Non-Aligned Movement's most ardent advocates. After her victory in July 1960 election Sirimava proclaimed that "In external affairs my government will maintain its policy of non-alignment with power blocs and of neutralism and co-existence. My Government's relation with Common Wealth as well as foreign countries continue
to be friendly. In 1963 Mrs. Bandarnaike as Prime Minister persistently espoused the cause of Buddhists in South Vietnam. When the Sino-Indian war broke out in 1962 Mrs. Bandarnaike resisted pressure from elements within the government party as well as from the parliamentary opposition to brand China as the aggressor. Instead she took the initiative in summoning the Colombo conference of six Non-aligned nations with the object of exploring ways and means of bringing India and China to the conference table with a view to settling the boundary dispute. In the Indo-Pakistan war of 1971 Mrs. Bandarnaike declared Srilanka's strict neutrality. Maintenance of friendly ties with Pakistan had always been a basic element in Srilanka's foreign policy. Srilanka did not accord recognition to Bangladesh until March 1972. These events did not tarnish the Indo-Lanka relationship nor the friendship which had existed between Mrs. Bandarnaike and Mrs. Gandhi. Mrs. Bandarnaike during both her terms as P.M. (1960-65 and 1970-77) had better opportunities to give concrete expression to the ideas enunciated by her husband. Srilanka secured a place in the Security Council in 1960-61 and was one of the states in this phase involved in mediating between the big powers during the Congo crisis. Srilanka also contributed towards effecting a settlement between Turks and Greeks in Cyprus and in easing the crisis in relations between Malayasia and Indonesia in 1963. In Arab-Israeli dispute Mrs. Bandarnaike was strong in her support of the Arab cause. Nehru's relations with SWRD Bandarnaike were especially close both men were brought up in the same tradition of liberalism and moderate socialism and both shared remarkably similar views on Third World issues, nonalignment. The tradition of good will and cooperation initiated by Nehru was carried on by his successors and close friendship and rapport developed between Indira Gandhi and Sirimavo. Mrs. Indira Gandhi was in Srilanka in 1973 and 1976, Mrs. Bandarnaike was state guest in India in 1974.
Ceylon was a co-sponsor of the Belgrade conference and was personally represented by the Prime Minister Sirimavo Bandaranaike. She spoke at Belgrade "also as a woman and mother" and declared:—

"I do not for one moment believe that there is single mother in the world who could bear to contemplate the possible danger of her children being exposed to atomic radiation and slow and lingering death, if not swift annihilation".

The Twenty-five Non-aligned states at Belgrade made a united appeal in the name of mankind to the two Power Blocs to avoid all calamitous steps towards war and hoped and prayed both the U.S.A and the U.S.S.R, to "suspend their war preparations and approaches" and resume negotiation for a peaceful settlement of any outstanding differences between them with due regard to the principles of the United Nations Charter and continue negotiating until both they and the rest of the world achieve total disarmament and enduring peace²⁵.

In maintaining "friendly relations with other countries, Ceylon continued to give priority to the Commonwealth countries. After participating in the Commonwealth Premier's Conference, Sirimavo Bandaranaike felt"..... that the Commonwealth remains a stronger and more cohesive unit than ever before and a factor of influence in world affairs²⁶.

**The economy of Srilanka under Sirimavo Bandarnaike**

The economy of Srilanka is predominantly agricultural. Heavily dependent on the cultivation and export of tea, rubber and coconut. Food stuffs, clothing
and other consumer items form important items of import. The economic progress was not steady owing to consumption oriented economy and the government was under constant pressure to extend benefits of social services to the populace. Population was rising at a pace beyond viability. As a consequence, the government resorted to deficit financing. The economy of the island suffered a set-back when during the 60's import prices increased and export prices declined with the volume of export roughly remaining constant. In the 70's there was no change in the balance of payment situation.

During 1961-70 the average annual rate of gross National product at constant (1959) prices was 4.7%. The contribution of agriculture sector to GNP declined to 35% in 1970 from 41% in 1961. When divided into export and domestic agriculture, the contribution of the former to GNP declined from 21% in 1961 to 15% in 1970 and that a latter from 21% in 1961 to 20% in 1970. Thus export agriculture did not show favourable trends during the decade under review.

<table>
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<th>Year</th>
<th>GNP at prices*</th>
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<td>-62</td>
<td>-3576</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>12016</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>+508</td>
<td>-3074</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Rs. million.

In 1967 the rupee was devalued by 20% in an attempt to stimulate exports and in 1968 import liberalisation and a dual exchange rate were adopted as the government tried to steer the country back towards an open economy. Between 1970 and 1976 the island was able to reduce its dependence on tea, rubber and coconut as its principal exports and main sources of foreign exchange (other than foreign aid). Thus though the 5 year plan (1972-76) had envisaged a real growth rate of 6% annually this had averaged between 3 to 3.5% instead²⁸.

**Benazir Bhutto:**

Benazir Bhutto captured the imagination of the people of Pakistan as a leader who confronted and did not yield to the military regime's policies of repression. She emerged as a symbol of resistance to the military rule.

The following cluster of six factors have facilitated the emergence of Benazir Bhutto as a leader in Pakistan. Her family background, execution of her father, her prison experiences, her education at Radcliff and Oxford, Islamization policies of Gen. Zia- ul Haq and finally, politics of electoral competition.

Benazir Bhutto did not emerge on Pakistan's political scene from obscurity. She was trained, groomed and expected to assume leadership role. The outcome of 1988 elections made it difficult to exclude, Benazir from forming the government at the centre. Electoral competition made it possible for Benazir to become the Prime Minister of Pakistan.

On assuming power Benazir Bhutto was quick to concede that on Pakistani political scene she had not emerged as a "free agent". She had to make major
compromises in order to form the government she showed pragmatism and flexibility while accepting the office of the Prime Minister. Appeasing the military, she agreed to let general Aslam Beg to continue as Chief of the Army Staff. She agreed to give military a direct role in the foreign policy, by retaining Sahibzada Yaqoob as Foreign Minister who was elected as a senator on the IJI ticket. She agreed to remain the nominal head of the Defence Committee, not to interfere in the internal affairs of the military and to retain large budget for the armed forces.

Benazir Bhutto had several challenges to face personally. She is the first woman to lead a Muslim nation and climbing over the inhibitions of a conservative populace of male chauvinistic mullah wont be easy. She also had to get over her personal tragedy — her father's execution by Gen. Zia. She was expected to restore Pakistan's national self-respect by asserting her sovereignty over her national and foreign policy and to get rid of the burdensome influence and dictates of the distant foreign powers.

Benazir Bhutto had declared after winning the elections that her government's nuclear policy would be "weapon free" and directed towards meeting the country's energy requirements. She categorically rejected the Zia-sponsored proposal for a no-war pact with India and said the Shimla Agreement was more important to resolve various issues including Kashmir between the two countries.

The ethnic strife took on political overtones in 1985 with the formation of the Mohajir Quami Movement which sought to represent the interests of immigrants from India. The MQM led by Altaf Hussain has grown into important
political force. The inter provincial rivalries are intertwined with the ethnic and other political questions. The question of nationality which had always remained the hub of political activities in the N.W.F.P and Baluchistan, had now gripped Sind and Karachi also.

Ms. Bhutto's priorities were — the delicate relationship with the Army, the still growing burden of Afghan refugees, the rising passions of Islamic fundamental and the simmering ethnic conflicts in Karachi. Benazir tried to overthrow IJI government in Punjab. But Mr. Nawaz Sharif obtained a convincing vote of confidence from the provincial assembly. According to Anthony Hyman an expert on Pakistan says in an article in "Conflict Studies" published by the Research Institute for the Study of Conflict and Terrorism, U.K. Asserting her authority over the army. Benazir had removed the controversial chief of Inter Services Intelligence Lt.Gen. Hamid Gul and brought in a retired general in his place.

The Army remains one of the Pakistan's '3A's — Allah, Army and America — the powers which many Pakistanis say play a key role in their country.

Benazir won the battle over the opposition sponsored no confidence motion in the National Assembly by a relatively comfortable margin. Benazir faced a threat of dissolution of Parliament by President Ghulam Ishaq Khan as her government was in serious dispute with the army over the handling of the political crisis in her home province of Sind. On 6 August, 1990 Pakistan President Ishaq Khan dismissed B.B's government dissolved the National and Provincial assemblies and charged the Bhutto government with corruption and incompetence. From Dec 1988 to Aug 1990 Pakistan's power structure consisted
of the Pakistani Army, the U.S. Government, World Bank, Civil bureaucracy, feudal lords and business groups and Benazir Bhutto (last and least).³⁶

The tragedy with Benazir had been that both in 1988 and in 1993 the Pakistani electorate did not give her a clear mandate. In 1988 she had to form the government with the help of the MQM. Similarly in the poll held in 1993 Benazir was short of a clear majority in the National Assembly and her government had been dependent on the break away group Pak Muslim League (Junejo) and the minority community members. Another source of Benazir's political weakness had been that her party (PPP) could not form governments in two out of Pakistan's four provinces³⁷.

Within weeks of winning the election for second time in 1993 Benazir was locked in a political battle with Mr. Nawaz Sharif over the controversial 8th Amendment of the constitution which gave the President the power to dismiss the Premier. Benazir wanted to restore supremacy of Parliament but Sharif refused to cooperate. Another major issue picked up by Nawaz Sharif for confrontation with Benazir was demands of the M.Q.M leader Mr. Altaf Hussain. Benazir ruled out talks with Hussain whom she termed as terrorist leader. But Sharif called for the withdrawal of all cases against Hussain.

With the situation in Karachi continuing to deteriorate two new developments had taken place. There had been growing western interest in the situation in Karachi. There was growing western pressure on the Benazir Bhutto government to arrive at some political solution to the crisis by reconciling with Altaf Hussain.
Benazir set a political record of sorts when she became the first politician to have been elected as P.M. of Pak for a second time. But the simmering differences cropped up between Pak President and P.M. The death of Murtaza, brother of Benazir came at a time when there were charges of corruption against her and her husband Asif Ali Zardari. Her government was dismissed for a second time.

**Foreign Policy of Pakistan under Benazir Bhutto:**

On the international field, Benazir Bhutto wanted to maintain good relations with neighbouring India by honourably settling the Kashmir problem through political negotiations. But the Pakistani military desired that on Kashmir, Pakistan should vigourously support the uprising in Kashmir, internationalize the problem and seek its resolution. Benazir declared that her government's nuclear policy would be "weapon-free" and directed towards meeting the country's energy requirements. Soon after assuming office Benazir categorically rejected the Zia sponsored proposal for a no war pact with India and said the Simla Agreement was more important to resolve various issues including Kashmir between the two countries. The Simla Agreement had brought back 90,000 prisoners of war and had also brought the "longest peace" between the two countries since 1971. That was its contribution and all problems had to be resolved 'step by step'.

The Afghan issue was high on Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto's priority list only after eight long years of battle and political pressure. The Soviet had finally withdrawn their troops from Afghanistan, for Pakistan and its people the Afghan policy had not been cost free. In fact, Pakistan had paid a heavy price for pursuing a military option in close cooperation with a distant
superpower since it had resulted in destabilising of parts of Pakistan with the proliferation of the "Culture of Klashnikovs." Benazir herself handled relations with the United States and India. She appointed a trusted sympathiser Mark Siegal as Pakistan's lobbyist in Washington.

In terms of formulating and executing foreign policy under Benazir Bhutto due importance had to be given to the view of the military on such critical areas as Afghanistan (continuing the military option), United States (seeking modern conventional arms), India (refusing to accept Indian hegemony) and Iran (restoring Pakistan's special strategic relationship).40

The economy of Pakistan under Benazir Bhutto:

When Benazir Bhutto assumed power the most intractable and potentially explosive was Pakistan's economic situation. In terms of economic theory, the course Ms. Bhutto should take looked simple cutting the deficit, encouraging domestic enterprise and attracting international investment. Only when the deficit has been tackled will inflation fall. That in turn is essential to encourage domestic investment or international aid. Ms. Bhutto could either reduce the defence allocation which consumed almost half the budget or expand the tax base to include agricultural income. Her dilemma was that if she attempted the former she would provoke the wrath of the Army, which would be suicidal. Taxing agricultural income was more feasible but that could not by itself plug the enormous deficit. Mrs. Bhutto talked of privatization, encouraging corporate enterprise and freeing tax collection from government interference41. Ms. Bhutto came to power at a highly critical moment in Pakistan's history, characterized by the highest level of unemployment and acute social, economic problems since the country became independent. This state of economy had paralysed the work
of the economic development Besides this, the policy of stepped up militarisation backed by the U.S. had resulted in a record balance of payments deficit, running into $12 billion every year\textsuperscript{42}.

The PPP government was successful in attracting foreign investors but was slow in during a systematic privatization policy. Unemployment, inflations and stagnation in the industrial enterprises particularly in the public sector demanded immediate attention and policy action. However the Benazir Bhutto government could not pay adequate attention to these problems. Inability of the government to formulate long term economic policy weakened the confidence of the industrialists, who were skeptical of her. Instead of formulating an economic policy, the government indulged in politics of patronage, providing jobs to the PPP supporters and sympathizers in the public sector. This created sour feelings in the bureaucracy and increased inefficiency\textsuperscript{43}.

In 1995 the key economic indicators showed relatively little change from recent years GDP growth was around the 5% level aided by a better cotton crop but hindered by the problems in Karachi, inflation at well over 10% and a large trade deficit were continuing concerns. The rupee was devalued at the end of October. In June the government was forced to withdraw from the programme of structural adjustment which it had agreed with the IMF on the grounds that it was no longer able to meet the targets reducing the fiscal deficit\textsuperscript{44}.

**The economy of Pakistan under Benazir Bhutto**

Pakistan is basically an underdeveloped country. The economy is in bad shape and the value of Pakistani currency is on decline. Benazir inherited a Pakistan which has been basing its ‘growth’ on borrowed affluence largely stemming
from its Western friends. The other area which has brought revenues for Pakistan have been overseas remittances which are also declining. On top of that, the previous government had been spending a lot on non-developmental expenditures, with the result that very little was left for health or education i.e. the vital social sector.45

On the economic front Benazir could not formulate a coherent economic policy. Her PPP embarked on the policy of privatization. Instead of formulating an economic policy the government indulged in politics of patronage, providing jobs to the PPP supporters and sympathizers in the public sector. Thus grew the perception that the PPP regime neither had the will to streamline the public sector nor was serious to encourage privatization.46

Economically the people of Pakistan are struggling to make ends meet due to a reeling economy. Inflation is growing by leaps and bounds. The fiscal policy of the PPP government was a bundle of contradictions while bank employees had been given a 35% increase in salaries, no substantial relief had been given to government employees. Pensioners remained a neglected class.47

**Begum Khaleda Zia :**

After the fall of the Ershad regime at the end of 1990, election to the Parliament took place in Feb 1991 under a neutral caretaker government. The election brought two women to top positions in formal structures of power — one as the Prime Minister of the country and the other as the leader of opposition in the Parliament. Their ascendance in a male centred and male dominated sphere of activity as politics in a patriarchal society is certainly unique and significant. The Feb 1991 election was widely acclaimed to be the first free and fair elections
in 20 years. Altogether 76 political parties and independents fielded 2774 candidates including 32 women to contest for 300 general sets in addition there were 30 seats reserved for women. The four major parties to contest the elections were Awami League, BNP, Jatiyo Party of Ershad and the Jammat-i-Islami of Bangladesh. The BNP won the largest number of seats 140 as against 100 seats won by the Awami League led eight party alliance⁴⁸.

Two years after the assassination of Ziaur Rahman Bangladesh Nationalist Party faced the first split on April 1983. The leaders of the BNP realised the need of activating the party and aligning with other political forces for the movement against the Ershad regime. Negotiations were started and a seven party unity was born with BNP, UPP (Zafar), Ganotantrik Party, Krishak Sramik Party (Haq), NAP (Nuru) and Revolutionary Communist Party under the leadership of Begum Khaleda Zia. Immediately after the assassination of President Ziaur Rahman, Vice President Justice Abdus Sattar became the acting President as per the constitution. According to the constitutional provision the election of the President was required to be completed within 180 days. The initially unwilling Justice Sattar became the BNP presidential candidate which he won defeating notable candidates.

A bitter conflict cropped up in the BNP over the election to the post of Chairman of the Party. Most of the party men in BNP proposed Justice Sattar's name. But the rebel group approached Begum Zia and induced her to stand as a candidate against Sattar.

From near reluctance to the centre stage of national politics and eventually to the seat of power. This is the story of Begum Khaleda Zia. She was never
a political aspirant. It was the brutal assassination of her husband that changed the course of her life and her entire life pattern. Partly her temperament and partly the widespread popular sympathy enabled her to ride on the crest of people's power that swept the despotic rule of Gen. Ershad and eventually returned her to power.

In order to give the hard won democracy a permanent institutional and meaningful shape and also in deference to the wishes of the people Begum Zia switched over from the Presidential to the Parliamentary system.

Immediately after assuming power Begum Zia faced a terrible unprecedented problem as the country was hit by a terrible cyclone. She appealed to the international community for immediate help and cooperation. The government had to confront another serious problem received as a legacy from the Ershad regime. A Pay Commission constituted during the last part of Ershad regime had recommended unusually large scale increase of pay of government employees. Jute, cotton and textile workers also created a serious problem agitating on a number of demands.

A series of set backs in the domestic political arena and in diplomatic fields have tarnished the image of the BNP government of Begum Khaleda Zia. In the diplomatic field apart from the postponement of the SAARC summit, the government had to accept the demand of the UN High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) to allow it to interview all the Rohingya refugees before their repatriation to Myanmar to ascertain whether they were being forced to go back.

115
Bangladesh's full fledging democracy came under severe strain as the government of P.M. Khaleda Zia faced the twin challenges of a united ruling party. Begum Zia had stoically defended her position and kept a semblance of stability in one of the world's poorest countries. The problems before Begum Zia was that with a stagnating economy she faced severe resource limitations she had very little to offer to the dissatisfied critics.

**Foreign Policy of Bangladesh under Begum Khaleda Zia:**

Since the end of the Cold War in 1990 all nation states big or small have been restructuring their foreign policy orientation and Bangladesh is no exception. The fundamental aims of the foreign policy of Bangladesh are (i) self preservation (ii) economic development (iii) national self respect.

1990 saw the end of Cold War in international relations and 1991 saw a new democratic regime in Bangladesh after many years of military dictatorship. In 1991 Begum Khaleda Zia became the Prime Minister of Bangladesh. The core of her foreign policy depended on three things: (1) consolidation of independence and sovereignty of the country (2) strengthening of the relationship with the Muslim world on the basis of 'Ummah' in order to accelerate the pace of peace, progress and development and (3) strengthening of bilateral, regional and international cooperation for socio-economic development.

A significant aspect of Bangladesh's foreign policy under Begum Zia was to promote "economic diplomacy" the main features of which were to open its market to the developed countries and maintain a strong relationship with the donors as well as 'industrialised countries'. As part of her economic
diplomacy she visited countries like Japan and South Korea and encouraged their investors to invest in Bangladesh. But unfortunately long term political instability and a strong labour union discouraged foreign investors.

Following the dissolution of Soviet Union, Bangladesh had to reorient and redefine its foreign policies. Khaleda Zia's government sought to make new friends to consolidate relations with the world's major powers and to attend actively to regional relations. In Pakistan-Bangladesh relations the question of repatriating about 250,000 Bihari refugees or 'stranded Pakistanis' as they preferred to call themselves was the major irritant. For Khaleda Zia's government it failed to obtain an agreement with India over the sharing of the Ganges waters. It had emerged as the most volatile issues in Bangladeshi politics. Initially in her speeches to the U.N. and the Commonwealth P.M. Begum Khaleda Zia sought to tell international leaders about the plight Bangladesh was faced with because of the uneven share of the Ganga water. International support in this regard was not very encouraging.

Bangladesh - U.S. relations could be described as multi-dimensional and durable. The bilateral relations were mainly based on two principles i.e. strengthening democracy and promoting market economy in Bangladesh. American aid and investment were offered on the basis of these principles. In recent years Bangladesh procured a big market for her garment products in the United States and the U.S. on the other hand remained committed to Dhaka's development process and offered limited military cooperation and training facilities for the armed forces.
The economy of Bangladesh under Begum Khaleda Zia:

The end of the Ershad government brought a new era to Bangladesh politics. In one of the few totally free elections since 1970 the BNP under the leadership of Begum Khaleda Zia, the widow of General Ziaur Rahman won a stunning victory. The new government faced a series of daunting problems, including a major economic crisis, severe cyclone damage caused by the worst storm in twenty years. Bangladesh in recent years had liberalised its investment policies to attract capital and knowhow from around the world.

The long-drawn political confrontation had left behind deep scars on the economy of Bangladesh. From an impressive $3.4 billion, the foreign exchange reserve had over the year 1995 declined to $2.3 billion. Inflation which was around a manageable 3% was around 10% in mid 1996. The garment industry which accounts for a major share of Bangladesh's total export earnings was going through a major crisis in the 1995-96. In 1995 of the total export earnings of $3.2 billion, the garment industry contributed over $2 billion. Bangladesh was trying hard to woo foreign investment particularly from Japan and the East Asian tigers. The problems and challenges to sustained growth of the national economy were numerous. Added to this is the unprecedented growth of population which was expected to soar up to 130 million by the turn of the century. This was bound to further retard the pace of development in spheres of life. Thus it can be summed up that Khaleda Zia's performance on the economic front is dismal. Despite the government's measures the 92-93 had witnessed economic stagnation. Unemployment, both rural and urban was rising, prices were shooting up. The business community became highly critical of government's trade policies which had flooded the country with Indian goods. This was detrimental to the domestic industries which were still in their infancy.
But there was ray of hope when helped by a bumper rice crop Bangladesh achieved its target of 5% GDP growth for the fiscal year ending on 30 June 1993. After experiencing economic reverses in the 1980s Bangladesh had achieved a measure of stability in the early 1990s according to the World Bank, which reported marked improvements in most economic indicators since 1990. The government had liberalized the foreign exchange regulations introducing full convertibility of the taka used for external trade in Oct. 1993. New governmental measures were announced to speed up deregulation and to encourage foreign investment. Despite these relative economic successes four rounds of severe monsoonal floods between May and July did tremendous damage to the low lying territory of Bangladesh.

The announcement of P.M. Khaleda Zia at Thakurgaon on April 5, 1994 regarding the participatory perspective plan had unfolded a new receipe for the whole nation. The current perspective plan had been formulated for the period of 1995-2010 which was based both on local planning involving the consultative participation of the local people as well as the standard centralised approach of the assessment of resource mobilisation and the allocation according to the sectoral and regional priorities.

Chandrika Kumaratunga:

Srilanka elected a new government on Aug 16, 1994 and a left-of-center People's Alliance (PA) coalition replaced the administration of the right-of-center United National Party (UNP) which had governed Srilanka for 17 years.

One of the most significant features of this general election was that it signalled the conclusive takeover of Srilanka's political leadership by the younger
leaders. Two generations — while President Dingiri Banda Wijetunga, 73, of the UNP played a prominent role in his party's campaign, the principal campaign responsibilities were borne by P.M. Ranil Wickramasinghe, 44, and senior Cabinet Minister Gamini Dissanayake 52, who were relatively young but were veteran politicians. In sharp contrast stood the P.A. leader and now the new P.M. Chandrika Kumaratunga 49, the second daughter of the two former P.Ms — S.W.R.D Bandarnaike (1956-59) and Mrs. Sirimavo Bandarnaike (1960-65 & 1970-77).

The Sorbonne educated Chandrika had been long active in politics but was not seen as a potential P.M. or President until 1993\textsuperscript{56}. She is a comparative newcomer to Sri Lanka's electoral politics through she played a role in her mother's administration in the mid 1970s. She moved into politics in the mid 1980s and together with her late husband Vijaya Kumaratunga led a small left party, Sri Lanka Mahajana Pakshaya (Sri Lanka People's Party) which failed to make any impression on Sri Lanka's politics. Following the assassination of her husband in 1988 she left for England for two years. On her return, she founded yet another new political party, which failed to create any impact. Mrs. Kumaratunga rejoined the SLFP in 1991 and assumed the deputy leadership of the party and in 1992 after successfully outmaneuvering her brother Anura Bandarnaike who had been tipped to succeed his mother to SLFP leadership\textsuperscript{57}.

Ms. Kumaratunga's accession to power as Prime Minister was not an unusual event in itself as she belongs to SLFP which ruled Sri Lanka for more than 16 out of 46 years of the country's post independence history. But the task which remained ahead of her as P.M. was much more difficult given the complexities of the Sri Lankan political situation and of the fact that she headed
a government which had been the outcome of a coalition formed prior to the elections.

For the People's Alliance government the road to peace had not been without any heavy odds. Nevertheless encouraged by the mandate for peace which the Sri Lankans gave to the P.A, Kumaratunga sought to pursue a peace process with sincerity and determination. Giving a serious try for peace would remove the stigma attached to her parents (i.e. SWRD Bandaranaike and Sirimavo Bandaranaike whose overtly anti-Tamil and pro-Sinhalese policies widened the chasm between the two communities) and fulfil the dream of her husband, Vijaya Kumaratunga who lead his life for the cause of peace58.

Of all the issues the 11 years old ethnic strife in Sri Lanka consumed most part of the UNP's 17 years old rule. The crisis had been there since the early phase of Sri Lanka's independence which had been exploited by the major political parties of the country. Addressed in a manner which was never free from partisan politics, the issue in its early phase epitomized a non-acceptance on the part of the country's politicians of the pluralistic nature of Sri Lankan polity. A conflict thus generated between those who tried to establish the dominance of Sinhala-Buddhist majority on the premises of language and religion and those who envisioned a state based on the concept of pluralism59.

After taking over, Chandrika Kumaratunga continued with the policy of engaging the Tamil groups principally the LTTE in a dialogue to resolve their outstanding problems60. Her approach remained relevant until the LTTE broke the truce on 19 April 1995 was guided by political realism and experience of the past. The PA government seemed to be the first one to openly acknowledge
the fact that it had lost physical control of the North to the LTTE, that the government needed to get clearance from Prabhakaran to move its machinery and that peace could not be restored without the cooperation of the LTTE. The new peace approach included the P.A government's commitment to search for an alternative compromise formula. The statement like the one which Kumaratunga made in Jan 1995 — that she was more concerned with a 'unified country rather than a unitary structure' and that 'unity does not mean unitary' was quite extraordinary and unusual to hear from a Sinhalese politician.

Whatever mistakes the previous governments had made no one can accuse Chandrika of insincerity in wanting a fair settlement of the ethnic conflict which has plagued the island for so long. She called to halt the fighting, agreed to unconditional talks at location, sought by the LTTE, lifted the embargo on goods shipped to Jaffna province to ease the plight of the civilian population and indicated clearly enough that she was prepared for any solution, including devolution of powers to the regions, if only the territorial integrity of the nation could be guaranteed.

The package of reforms offered by Chandrika to bring to an end the bloody ethnic war in the island nation is both devolutionary and revolutionary in nature. She wanted to set up Regional Councils in place of the present Provincial Council and give them unencumbered jurisdiction over 45 subjects, including finance, police, judicial and public service commissions. The centre was to confine itself to such subjects as defence, national security, foreign affairs, immigration, currency, international economic relations, monetary policy etc. Interestingly there was to be no concurrent list and thus a major point of friction stands eliminated. Chandrika further declared that Regional Governors will be
appointed by the President with concurrence of the Chief Minister of the region and that a Chief Minister cannot be removed as long as he enjoys the confidence of the Regional Council.

Chandrika came to power on a 4 major promises — an end to the widespread corruption by having a transparent and honest government, re introduction of democratic values, ending the ethnic war and a more equitable economic development.

While Chandrika Kumaratunga had won widespread admiration for her courageous move to announce a federal style devolution of power to end the country's 12 year old bloody ethnic conflict, she was strongly criticised for not been able to deliver on promises of economic development and social change. The image of Chandrika who campaigned on the promises of a new beginning was badly tarnished when the government failed to abolish the unpopular executive presidency by her own deadline of July 15, 1995.

Srilanka's constitution 1978 describes the Srilankan state as the "Democratic Socialist Republic of Srilanka" (Art 1). But Art 9 says that "The Republic of Srilanka shall give to Buddhism the foremost place and accordingly it shall be the duty of the state to protect and foster the Buddha Sasana while assuring to all religious the rights granted by Art 10 & 14(1)"e Chandrika was trying to rectify the wrongs done by the various acts of her father whose "Sinhala Only Act" of 1956 was the beginning of the alienation of the Ceylonese Tamils from the state structure.

With a chain of army camps in northern Srilanka coming under the siege of Tamil militants the LTTE had scored the most significant strategic advantage
vis-a-vis the Srilankan army ever since the breakdown of the peace talks between the government and the Tigers. Correspondingly it came as a major set back for the People's Alliance government led by Ms. Chandrika who had won the elections on a peace platform. Ms. Chandrika's peace policy some say was much against the advice of the military, had two aims — first by persistently talking about peace with the LTTE the young and energetic President sought to isolate the LTTE internationally. Second and this was more important as much as it was ominous for the LTTE, the govt gradually hoped to win back the support and confidence of the people of Jaffna which had been the main support base of the Tigers.

Chandrika invited all members of LTTE to 'lay down arms' and offered them an amnesty guaranteeing their safety. In offering amnesty for those members of LTTE who laid down their arms and surrendered Chandrika has shown deep political understanding of the situation. The Srilankan Cabinet approved actual powers of devolution granting a liberal dose of political and administrative autonomy to Tamil provinces. The proposals will be submitted to Parliament by 5th Nov 1997. But they may not get constitutional sanction because the ruling alliance does not have the required two thirds majority. Under the government proposals, the elected regional councils will function under a semi-federal structure.

**Foreign Policy of Srilanka under Chandrika Kumaratunga :**

In the foreign policy arena the People's Alliance led by Chandrika Kumaratunga laid emphasis on "geopolitical fundamentals", underscoring the fact that "South Asian concerns would be given priority". Foreign Minister Kadirgamar and President Chandrika Kumaratunga paid their official visit to
India. It was widely held that Chandrika wanted to ensure that India did not disrupt negotiations with the LTTE by insisting on Tigers’ supremo Vellupillai Prabhakaran's extradition for the Rajiv Gandhi assassination trial. She had publicly stated that Prabhakaran would not be punished or extradited. The government also strove hard to enlist the support of the international community in tackling the ethnic strife.

The economy of Srilanka under Chandrika Kumaratunga:

The economic growth rate is estimated at 3.5% in 1996. Hit by a prolonged drought, production in the agriculture suffered terrorist activity and escalation of the North East conflict resulted in setbacks for the tourist industry. Srilanka had been forced to increase its defence expenditure which had doubled increasing from 2.7% of GDP in 1985 to 4.5% in 1994. The future economic growth of Srilanka remains uncertain because there seems to be no easy solution to the ethnic conflict. But still if we go by the figures Srilanka has done extremely well on the economic front despite political tribulations and the unfavourable regional impact of the Asian economic crisis. According to a new I.M.F. report country's real economic growth rebounded to 6.4% in 1997 from 3.8% in 1996. Preliminary figures suggest that Srilanka's real economy grew by 5.8% in the first quarter of 1998 reflecting broad based growth across most sectors of the economy especially services and manufacturing. Consumer price inflation declined from 17% at the end of 1996 to under 11% at the end of 1997. The external current account deficit narrowed to 3% of gross domestic product in 1997, reflecting strong export growth of textiles, garments and tea, high growth of port services and higher transfers arising from compensation payments to victims of the Gulf War.
Sheikh Hasina:

The Awami League which led the War of Liberation in 1971 to free Bangladesh from Pakistan's yoke and was overthrown by a bloody military coup in 1975 became the victorious party in June 12, 1996 general election defeating the Bangladesh Nationalist Party. Sheikh Hasina, who along with her sister Rehana survived the coup of 1975 which killed Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, became the second women Prime Minister of Bangladesh.

The Awami League which led Bangladesh's liberation war against Pakistan in 1971 lost power in a military coup in 1975. It is due to Sheikh Hasina's credit that she has brought the party to the door step of power after a gap of 21 years. She joined politics in 1981 after being chosen as chief of the League in her absence. Almost single handedly Hasina launched a movement to oust Begum Khaleda Zia, the out going Prime Minister and succeeded in building a broad opposition front against the government. In the process she was able to paralyse the government and hold the country to ransom by calling for frequent general strikes and lockouts.

As leader of the Awami League Sheikh Hasina together with Begum Khaleda Zia led a pro-democracy movement against Hussain Mohammad Ershad's military regime. The Awami League under Sheikh Hasina's leadership faces certain challenges. The biggest problem is the shattering economy and natural calamity. India occupies an important position in the politics of Bangladesh and Sheikh Hasina will have to play the India card carefully because much anti-India feeling still survives. She made a break through by trying to solve the water dispute between India and Bangladesh. Sheikh Hasina will have to ensure she does not tread on the army's toes and is able to have a working
relation with Begum Khaleda. Hasina had to work together with various parties including a religious group like the Jamaat. This helped to dilute criticism of the Awami League as a party not particularly committed to Islam. Yet another problem is that democracy has not yet taken deep roots in Bangladesh. Two leaders have been assassinated. There have been three coups and 18 attempted coups. For 15 years of its 25 years, the country has been ruled by the military.

After becoming the Prime Minister in her address to the nation, Sheikh Hasina sought cooperation to complete the unfinished task of the Father of the Nation and to build a ‘Sonar Bangla’ where the people were ensured of their basic needs. Hasina was quick to call back ambassadors and professionals were removed from their posts. Her target was those who were directly involved with the assassination of Mujibur Rahman. In its first six months the Hasina government signed a 30 year agreement with India over the sharing of the Ganges water.

**Foreign Policy of Bangladesh under Sheikh Hasina:**

The major event in the foreign policy of Bangladesh under Sheikh Hasina was the 30 year agreement signed between Bangladesh and India over the sharing of the Ganga waters. After the signing of the treaty Hasina maintained that the water treaty was a historic milestone. The 30 year agreement would enable the government to formulate long term plans for managing water resources. It would also help to promote regional understanding and cooperation among other SAARC countries she added.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina visited Saudi Arabia, People's Republic of China which was described as a fruitful visit in a friendly ambiance. Her visit
to the United Nations was rated as a failure in drawing high level attention
to the woes of her country for which international attention was needed both
for economic assistance and for diplomatic support. The long awaited deal
between Bangladesh and Nepal on the use of the Mongla port for import and
export deals of Nepal came as a good signal for both these countries.

The economy of Bangladesh under Sheikh Hasina:

Sheikh Hasina wanted a political consensus on the economic issues for
smooth functioning of the economy to achieve a faster growth. The main problem
for industrialisation is the energy problem which the government was sincerely
trying to solve. Hasina emphasised the willingness of the government to
maintain the market economy introduced over the last 10 years. Bangladesh
being disaster prone and poverty stricken with an overwhelming population
to feed finds it difficult to achieve a steady economic progress.
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