APPENDIX I
QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Name of the Member:
2. Age:
3. Educational Qualification:  
   - Illiterate Primary
   - Secondary P.U.C
   - Graduate Post Graduate
4. Caste:
5. Religion:
6. Name of the Ward/Panchayat:
7. Family Background:
   i) Marital Status:  
      - Married
      - Unmarried
      - Widow
      - Separated
   ii) If Married
      a) Husband’s Occupation:  
         - Agriculturist
         - Government Service
         - Private Sector
         - Self employed
      b) Husband’s Education:  
         - Illiterate Primary
         - Secondary P.U.C II
         - Graduate Post Graduate
   iii) Size of the Family:  
      - Nuclear Family
      - Joint Family
   iv) Occupation:  
      - Agricultural Labour
      - Industrial Labour
      - Self Employed
      - House Wife
8. Annual Income:  
   - Less than 11,000.00
   - 11,000/= to 25,000/= 
   - 50,000/= to 75,000/=  
   - 75,000/= to 1, 00,000/= 
   - 1, 00,000/= and above
Information relating to Panchayat Membership:

9. The persons who inspired you to enter politics:
   Family members Husband Self
   Political Party Village leaders

10. Present Position:
    Member Member of Standing Committee
    Vice President President

11. Number of terms elected to Panchayat:
    a) One b) Two c) Three 4) more than four

12. Please state your perceived level of satisfaction of power and position
    Excellent Very Good Good
    Neither good nor bad Bad

13. Are you aware of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act?
    Very well aware, Just aware, Ignorant of it.

Participation:

14. How often do you speak in panchayat meetings?
    Always, Very often, Often.
    Less often, Not at all

15. Do you participate actively in ward sabha and grama sabha and panchayat?
    Very actively Actively
    Less actively Passively

16. How often do you have presented the problems of your ward / panchayat in meetings?
    Always Very often
    Often Less often Not at all

17. Do you participate in process of decision making?
    Actively involve Involve to a moderate level
    No involvement

18. Do you meet the members of your ward and solve their problems?
    Always Very frequently Frequently
    Less frequently Never

19. What are your responsibilities in the Panchayat?
20. Do you observe any domination by the male members in the Panchayat?
   Greater Extent  Moderate extent
   Minimum extent No dominance.

21. Do you act on your own in Panchayat?
   Yes  No

If No, Whom do you depend upon?
   Husband  Family members  Panchayat leaders.

22. What is your contribution for the development of your ward / Panchayat?
   General:

23. Do you intend to continue in politics?
   Yes  Cannot say  No

24. As a women leader you have got an extra responsibility towards women?
   Yes  No

25. What is your opinion regarding the women’s Political Reservation Bill?
   Absolutely essential  Essential
   Not essential  Not at all essential

26. Do you think that the condition of women have improved with 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act?
   Yes  No  Can’t say  Not known

27. Do you think that as a woman you face problems in politics?
   Yes  No
   If Yes, Give reasons

28. Are you a member of local organization?
   Mahila Mandal  Self Help group
   School Betterment Committee  Any other

29. Do you feel that your status in society has increased since then?

30. Is training imparted to newly elected women representatives?
   Yes  No

31. How women can perform better in Panchayat activities? Give Suggestions.

32. If any other Suggestions?
APPENDIX NO II

Eminent women politician in Indian politics:

Politics for long has been a bastion of males and it’s not very easy for any woman to make her presence felt in Indian political arena. In a country like India, it becomes even more difficult for a female politician as caste, creed and religion play decisive role in Indian politics. It’s true that most of the successful women politicians in this country owe their success to their family’s political background; nevertheless, nobody can deny them the credit for putting in hard work and displaying requisite acumen for not only surviving but carving a separate niche for themselves. Modern India has witnessed emergence of many such female politicians. Let’s have a look at such outstanding female politicians of India who have broken the tradition myths and proved that a female can be as good a politician as a male.

1. Sarojini Naidu

Sarojini Naidu, born as Sarojini Chattopadhyay also known by the sobriquet as The Nightingale of India, was a child prodigy, Indian independence activist and poet.

Born : February 13, 1879, Hyderabad, India
Died : March 2, 1949, Lucknow, India
Parents : Barada Sundari Devi, Aghornath Chattopadhyaya
Books : The Golden Threshold
Children : Padmaja Naidu, Jayasurya Naidu, Leelamani Naidu, Randheer Naidu, Nilawar Naidu
Education: King's College London (1895–1898), University of Madras, Girton College, Cambridge

Sarojini Naidu was born in Hyderabad to Aghore Nath Chattopadhyay and Barada Sundari Debi on 13 February 1879. Her father, with a doctorate of Science from Edinburgh University, settled in Hyderabad, where he found and administered the Hyderabad College, which later became the Nizam's College in Hyderabad. Her mother was a poetess and used to write poetry in Bengali. She was the eldest among the eight siblings. Her brother Virendranath Chattopadhyaya was a revolutionary and her other brother, Harindranath was a poet, a dramatist, and an actor.

Naidu passed her matriculation examination from the University of Madras, but she took four years' break from her studies. In 1895, the "Nizam scholarship Trust" founded by the 6th Nizam – Mir Mahbub Ali Khan, gave her the chance to study in England first at King's College London and later at Girton College, Cambridge.

Naidu met Govindarajulu Naidu, a doctor by profession, and at the age of 19, after finishing her studies, she got married to him. At this time, inter-caste marriages were not allowed, but her father approved the marriage.

The couple had five children. Her daughter Padmaja became the Governor of West Bengal.

Political career:

Naidu joined the Indian national movement in the wake of partition of Bengal in 1905. She came into contact with Gopal Krishna Gokhale, Rabindranath
Tagore, Muhammad Ali Jinnah, Annie Besant, C. P. Ramaswami Iyer, Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru.

During 1915–1918, she travelled to different regions in India delivering lectures on social welfare, women's empowerment and nationalism. She also helped to establish the Women's Indian Association (WIA) in 1917. She was sent to London along with Annie Besant, President of WIA, to present the case for the women's vote to the Joint Select Committee.

President of the Congress party:

In 1925, Naidu presided over the annual session of Indian National Congress at Cawanpore (now Kanpur).

In 1929, she presided over East African Indian Congress in South Africa. She was awarded the Kaisar-i-Hind Medal by the British government for her work during the plague epidemic in India. In 1931, she participated in the Round table conference with Gandhi and Madan Mohan Malaviya.

She played a leading role during the Civil Disobedience Movement and was jailed along with Gandhi and other leaders. In 1942, she was arrested during the "Quit India" movement.

Naidu began writing at the age of twelve. Her Persian play, *Maher Muneer*, impressed the Nawab of Hyderabad.

In 1905, her first collection of poems, named "The Golden Threshold" was published. Her poems were admired by many prominent Indian politicians like Gopal Krishna Gokhale.
Her collection of poems entitled "The Feather of The Dawn" was edited and published posthumously in 1961 by her daughter Padmaja.

Sarojini Naidu died of a heart attack while working in her office in Lucknow on 2 March (Wednesday), 1949.

She is commemorated through the naming of several institutions including the Sarojini Naidu College for Women, Sarojini Naidu Medical College, Sarojini Devi Eye Hospital and Sarojini Naidu School of Arts and Communication, University of Hyderabad.

Aldous Huxley wrote "It has been our good fortune, while in Bombay, to meet Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, the newly-elected President of the All-India Congress and a woman who combines in the most remarkable way great intellectual power with charm, sweetness with courageous energy, a wide culture with originality, and earnestness with humor. If all Indian politicians are like Mrs. Naidu, then the country is fortunate indeed."

Golden Threshold:

The Golden Threshold is an off-campus annexe of University of Hyderabad. The building was the residence of Naidu's father Aghornath Chattopadhyay, the first Principal of Hyderabad College. It was named after Naidu's collection of poetry. Golden Threshold now houses Sarojini Naidu School of Arts & Communication of University of Hyderabad.
During the Chattopadhyay family's residence, it was the center of many reformist ideas in Hyderabad, in areas ranging from marriage, education, women's empowerment, literature and nationalism.

- 1905: *The Golden Threshold*, published in the United Kingdom (text available online)
- 1917: *The Broken Wing: Songs of Love, Death and the Spring*, including "The Gift of India" (first read in public in 1915)
- 1916: Muhammad Jinnah: An Ambassador of Unity
- 1971: *The Indian Weavers*

2 Vijaya Lakshmi Nehru Pandit

She was an Indian diplomat and politician, the sister of Jawaharlal Nehru, the aunt of Indira Gandhi and the grand-aunt of Rajiv Gandhi, each of whom served as Prime Minister of India.

In 1921 she married Ranjit Sitaram Pandit, a successful Maharashtrian barrister from Kathiawad and classical scholar who translated Kalhana's epic history Rajatarangini into English from Sanskrit. He was arrested for his support of Indian independence and died in Lucknow prison jail on 14 January 1944. She died in the year 1990.
Her daughter Nayantara Sahgal, who later settled in her mother's house in Dehradun, is a well-known novelist.

Gita Sahgal, the writer and journalist on issues of feminism, fundamentalism, and racism, director of prize-winning documentary films, and human rights activist, is her granddaughter. She is a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority.

**Political career:**

She was the first Indian woman to hold a cabinet post. In 1937 she was elected to the provincial legislature of the United Provinces and was designated minister of local self-government and public health. She held the latter post until 1939 and again from 1946 to 1947. In 1946 she was elected to the Constituent Assembly from the United Provinces.

Following India's independence from the British in 1947 she entered the diplomatic service and became India's ambassador to the Soviet Union from 1947 to 1949, the United States and Mexico from 1949 to 1951, Ireland from 1955 to 1961 (during which time she was also the Indian High Commissioner to the United Kingdom), and Spain from 1958 to 1961. Between 1946 and 1968, she headed the Indian delegation to the United Nations. In 1953, she became the first woman President of the United Nations General Assembly.

In India, she served as governor of Maharashtra from 1962 to 1964, after which she was elected to the Indian Lok Sabha from Phulpur, her brother's former constituency from 1964 to 1968. Pandit was a harsh critic of her niece, Indira Gandhi, after she became Prime Minister in 1966. Pandit retired from active politics after
relations between them soured. On retiring, she moved to Dehradun in the Doon Valley in the Himalayan foothills.

In 1979, she was appointed the Indian representative to the UN Human Rights Commission, after which she retired from public life. Her writings include *The Evolution of India* (1958) and *The Scope of Happiness: a Personal Memoir* (1979).

### 3. Indira Gandhi

Former Prime Minister of India Indira Priyadarshini Gandhi was the third Prime Minister of India and a central figure of the Indian National Congress party.

Indira Gandhi was born Indira Nehru in a Kashmiri Pandit family on 19 November 1917 in Allahabad. Her father, Jawaharlal Nehru, led India's political struggle for independence from British rule, and became the first Prime Minister of the Union (and later Republic) of India. She was an only child (a younger brother was born, but died young), and grew up with her mother, Kamala Nehru, at the Anand Bhavan; a large family estate in Allahabad. Indira had a lonely and unhappy childhood. Her father was often away, directing political activities or being incarcerated in prison, while her mother was frequently bed-ridden with illness, and later suffered an early death from tuberculosis. She had limited contact with her father, mostly through letters.

Indira was mostly taught at home by tutors, and intermittently attended school until matriculation in 1934. She went on to study at the Viswa Bharati University in Shantiniketan. It was during her interview that Rabindranath Tagore named her Priyadarshini, and she came to be known as Indira Priyadarshini Nehru. A year later, however, she had to leave university to attend to her ailing
mother in Europe. While there, it was decided that Indira would continue her education at the University of Oxford. After her mother died, she briefly attended the Badminton School before enrolling at Somerville College in 1937 to study history. Indira had to take the entrance examination twice; having failed at her first attempt, with a poor performance in Latin. At Oxford, she did well in history, political science and economics, but her grades in Latin—a compulsory subject—remained poor.

During her time in Europe, Indira was plagued with ill-health and was constantly attended by doctors. She had to make repeated trips to Switzerland to recover, disrupting her studies. She was being treated by the famed Swiss doctor Auguste Rollier in 1940, when the Nazi armies rapidly conquered Europe. Indira tried to return to England through Portugal but was left stranded for nearly two months. She managed to enter England in early 1941, and from there returned to India without completing her studies at Oxford. The university later conferred on her an honorary degree. In 2010, Oxford further honoured her by selecting her as one of the ten Oxasians, illustrious Asian graduates from the University of Oxford.

During her stay in the UK, young Indira frequently met her future husband Feroze Gandhi, whom she knew from Allahabad, and who was studying at the London School of Economics. The marriage took place in Allahabad according to Adi Dharm rituals though Feroze belonged to a Parsi family of Gujarat.

In the 1950s, Indira, now Mrs. Indira Gandhi after her marriage, served her father unofficially as a personal assistant during his tenure as the first Prime Minister of India. After her father's death in 1964 she was appointed as a member of the Rajya Sabha (upper house) and became a member of Lal Bahadur Shastri's cabinet as Minister of Information and Broadcasting.
When Indira became Prime Minister in 1966, the Congress was split in two factions, the socialists led by Gandhi, and the conservatives led by Morarji Desai. Rammanohar Lohia called her Gungi Gudiya, which means 'Mute Doll'. The internal problems showed in the 1967 election where the Congress lost nearly 60 seats winning 297 seats in the 545-seat Lok Sabha. She had to accommodate Desai as Deputy Prime Minister of India and Minister of Finance. In 1969, after many disagreements with Desai, the Indian National Congress split. She ruled with support from Socialist and Communist Parties for the next two years. In the same year, in July 1969 she nationalised banks.

1971 election victory and second term

The government faced major problems after her tremendous mandate of 1971. The internal structure of the Congress Party had withered following its numerous splits, leaving it entirely dependent on her leadership for its election fortunes. Garibi Hatao (Eradicate Poverty) was the theme for Gandhi's 1971 bid. The slogan and the proposed anti-poverty programs that came with it were designed to give Gandhi an independent national support, based on rural and urban poor. This would allow her to bypass the dominant rural castes both in and of state and local government; likewise the urban commercial class. And, for their part, the previously voiceless poor would at last gain both political worth and political weight.

The programs created through Garibi Hatao, though carried out locally, were funded, developed, supervised, and staffed by New Delhi and the Indian National Congress party. "These programs also provided the central political leadership with new and vast patronage resources to be disbursed... throughout the country."
Verdict on electoral malpractice

On 12 June 1975 the High Court of Allahabad declared Indira Gandhi's election to the Lok Sabha void on grounds of electoral malpractice. In an election petition filed by Raj Narain (who later on defeated her in 1977 parliamentary election from Rae Bareily), he had alleged several major as well as minor instances of using government resources for campaigning. The court thus ordered her stripped of her parliamentary seat and banned from running for any office for six years. The Prime Minister must be a member of either the Lok Sabha (the lower house in the Parliament of India) or the Rajya Sabha (the upper house). Thus, this decision effectively removed her from office. Mrs Gandhi had asked one of her colleagues in government, Mr Ashoke Kumar Sen to defend her in court.

But Gandhi rejected calls to resign and announced plans to appeal to the Supreme Court. The verdict was delivered by Mr Justice Jagmohanlal Sinha at Allahabad High Court. It came almost four years after the case was brought by Raj Narain, the premier's defeated opponent in the 1971 parliamentary election. Gandhi, who gave evidence in her defence during the trial, was found guilty of dishonest election practices, excessive election expenditure, and of using government machinery and officials for party purposes. The judge rejected more serious charges of bribery against her. Gandhi insisted the conviction did not undermine her position, despite having been unseated from the lower house of parliament, Lok Sabha, by order of the High Court. She said: "There is a lot of talk about our government not being clean, but from our experience the situation was very much worse when parties were forming governments". And she dismissed criticism of the way her Congress Party raised election campaign money, saying all parties used the same methods. The
prime minister retained the support of her party, which issued a statement backing her. After news of the verdict spread, hundreds of supporters demonstrated outside her house, pledging their loyalty. Indian High Commissioner BK Nehru said Gandhi's conviction would not harm her political career. "Mrs Gandhi has still today overwhelming support in the country," he said. "I believe the prime minister of India will continue in office until the electorate of India decides otherwise".

**State of Emergency (1975–1977)**

Gandhi moved to restore order by ordering the arrest of most of the opposition participating in the unrest. Her Cabinet and government then recommended that President Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed declare a state of emergency because of the disorder and lawlessness following the Allahabad High Court decision. Accordingly, Ahmed declared a State of Emergency caused by internal disorder, based on the provisions of Article 352(1) of the Constitution, on 25 June 1975. Indira Gandhi conducted a program of forced sterilization mostly affecting the Dalit caste.

**Rule by decree**

Within a few months, President's Rule was imposed on the two opposition party ruled states of Gujarat and Tamil Nadu thereby bringing the entire country under direct Central rule or by governments led by the ruling Congress party. Police were granted powers to impose curfews and indefinitely detain citizens and all publications were subjected to substantial censorship by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. Finally, impending legislative assembly elections were indefinitely postponed, with all opposition-controlled state governments being removed by virtue of the constitutional provision allowing for a dismissal of a state government on
recommendation of the state's governor. Indira Gandhi used the emergency provisions to change conflicting party members.

Unlike her father Jawaharlal Nehru, who preferred to deal with strong chief ministers in control of their legislative parties and state party organizations, Mrs. Gandhi set out to remove every Congress chief minister who had an independent base and to replace each of them with ministers personally loyal to her...Even so, stability could not be maintained in the states... President Ahmed issued ordinances that did not require debate in the Parliament, allowing Gandhi to rule by decree.

Elections

In 1977, after extending the state of emergency twice, Indira Gandhi called elections, to give the electorate a chance to vindicate her rule. Gandhi may have grossly misjudged her popularity by reading what the heavily censored press wrote about her. In any case, she was opposed by the Janata Party. Janata, led by her longtime rival Desai and with Jai Prakash Narayan as its spiritual guide, claimed the elections were the last chance for India to choose between "democracy and dictatorship." Gandhi's Congress party was crushed soundly in the elections which followed. The public realized the statement and motto of the Janata Party. Indira and Sanjay Gandhi both lost their seats, and Congress was cut down to 153 seats (compared with 350 in the previous Lok Sabha), 92 of which were in the south. Although in the next election congress won with more than 400 seats.

The Congress Party split during the election campaign of 1977: veteran Gandhi supporters like Jagjivan Ram, Hemwati Nandan Bahuguna and Nandini Satpathy were compelled to part ways and form a new political entity, CFD (Congress
for Democracy), primarily due to intra-party politicking and also due to circumstances created by Sanjay Gandhi. The prevailing rumour was that Sanjay had intentions of dislodging Gandhi and the trio stood between that.

A coalition of opposition, under the leadership of Morarji Desai, came into power after the State of Emergency was lifted. The coalition parties later merged to form the Janata Party under the guidance of Gandhian leader, Jayaprakash Narayan. The other leaders of the Janata Party were Charan Singh, Raj Narain, George Fernandes, and Atal Bihari Vajpayee. The Janata government's Home Minister, Choudhary Charan Singh, ordered the arrest of Indira and Sanjay Gandhi on several charges, none of which would be easy to prove in an Indian court. The arrest meant that Indira Gandhi was automatically expelled from Parliament. These allegations included that she “had planned or thought of killing all opposition leaders in jail during the Emergency”. In response to her arrest, Indira Gandhi's supporters hijacked an Indian Airlines jet and demanded her immediate release. However, this strategy backfired disastrously. Her arrest and long-running trial, however, gained her great sympathy from many people. The Janata coalition was only united by its hatred of Gandhi (or "that woman" as some called her). With so little in common, the Morarji Desai government was bogged down by infighting. Desai resigned in June 1979 after Charan Singh and Raj Narain formed their own breakaway party. Charan Singh was appointed Prime Minister, by President Reddy, after Gandhi promised Singh that Congress would support his government from outside. After a short interval, Congress withdrew support and President Reddy dissolved Parliament in the winter of 1979.

Before the 1980 elections Gandhi approached the then Shahi Imam of Jama Masjid, Syed Abdullah Bukhari and entered into an agreement with him on the basis
of 10-point programme to secure the support of the Muslim votes. In the elections held in January, Congress was returned to power with a landslide majority.

In 1979, when she visited Madurai, some hooligans attacked her. Nedumaran saved her from the attacks.

**Operation Blue Star**

In the 1977 elections, a coalition led by the Sikh-majority Akali Dal came to power in the northern Indian state of Punjab. In an effort to split the Akali Dal and gain popular support among the Sikhs, Indira Gandhi's Congress helped bring the orthodox religious leader Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale to prominence in Punjab politics. Later, Bhindranwale's organisation Damdami Taksal became embroiled in violence with another religious sect called the Sant Nirankari Mission, and he was accused of instigating the murder of the Congress leader Jagat Narain. After being arrested in this matter, Bhindranwale disassociated himself from Congress and joined hands with the Akali Dal. In July 1982, he led the campaign for the implementation of the Anandpur Sahib Resolution, which demanded greater autonomy for the Sikh-majority state. Meanwhile, a small section of the Sikhs including some of Bhindranwale's followers turned to militancy in support of the Khalistan movement, which aimed to create a separate sovereign state for the Sikhs. In 1983, Bhindranwale and his militant followers headquartered themselves in the Golden Temple, the holiest shrine of the Sikhs, and started accumulating weapons. After several futile negotiations, Indira Gandhi ordered the Indian army to enter the Golden temple in order to subdue Bhindranwale and his followers. In the resulting Operation Blue Star, the shrine was damaged and many civilians were killed. The State of Punjab was closed to international media, its phone and communication lines shut. To this day the
events remain controversial with a disputed number of victims; Sikhs seeing the attack as unjustified and Bhindrawale being declared the greatest Sikh martyr of the 21st century by Akal Takht (Sikh Political Authority) in 2003.

On 31 October 1984, two of Gandhi’s bodyguards, Satwant Singh and Beant Singh, shot her with their service weapons in the garden of the Prime Minister's residence at 1 Safdarjung Road, New Delhi. The shooting occurred as she was walking past a wicket gate guarded by Satwant and Beant. She was to have been interviewed by the British actor Peter Ustinov, who was filming a documentary for Irish television. Beant Singh shot her three times using his side-arm, and Satwant Singh fired 30 rounds. Beant Singh and Satwant Singh dropped their weapons and surrendered. Afterwards they were taken away by other guards into a closed room where Beant Singh was shot dead. Kehar Singh was later arrested for conspiracy in the attack. Both Satwant and Kehar were sentenced to death and hanged in Delhi’s Tihar jail.

Indira Gandhi was brought at 9:30 AM to the All India Institute of Medical Sciences, where doctors operated on her. She was declared dead at 2:20 PM. The post-mortem examination was conducted by a team of doctors headed by Dr. T.D. Dogra. Dr. Dogra stated that as many as 30 bullet wounds were sustained by Indira Gandhi, from two sources, a Sten gun and a pistol. The assailants had fired 31 bullets at her, of which 30 had hit; 23 had passed through her body while 7 were trapped inside her. Dr. Dogra extracted bullets to establish the identity of the weapons and to correlate each weapon with the bullets recovered by ballistic examination. The bullets were matched with respective weapons at CFSL Delhi. Subsequently Dr. Dogra appeared in the court of Shri Mahesh Chandra as an expert witness (PW-5), and his
testimony lasted several sessions. The cross examination was conducted by Shri P. N. Lekhi, the defence counsel. Salma Sultan gave the first news of assassination of Indira Gandhi on Doordarshan's evening news on 31 October 1984, more than 10 hours after she was shot.

Gandhi was cremated on 3 November near Raj Ghat. The site where she was cremated is today known as Shakti Sthala. Her funeral was televised live on domestic and international stations, including the BBC. Following her cremation, millions of Sikhs were displaced and nearly three thousand were killed in anti-Sikh riots. Rajiv Gandhi on a live TV show said of the carnage, "When a big tree falls, the earth shakes."

A member of the Nehru-Gandhi family, she was married to Feroze Gandhi at the age of 25, in 1942. Her younger son Sanjay had initially been her chosen heir; but after his death in a flying accident in June 1980, Indira persuaded her reluctant elder son Rajiv Gandhi to quit his job as a pilot and enter politics in February 1981. Over a decade later, Rajiv Gandhi was assassinated.

4. Pratibha Devisingh Patil

Born 19 December 1934 is an Indian politician who served as the 12th President of India from 2007 to 2012; she was the first woman to hold the office. She was sworn in as President on 25 July 2007, succeeding Abdul Kalam, after defeating her rival Bhairon Singh Shekhawat. She retired from the office in July 2012. She was succeeded as President by Pranab Mukherjee.

Patil is a member of the Indian National Congress (INC) and was nominated for the presidency by the governing United Progressive Alliance and Indian Left.
Pratibha Devisingh Patil is the daughter of Narayan Rao Patil. She was born on 19 December 1934 in the village of Nadgaon, in the Jalgaon district of Maharashtra, India. She was educated initially at RR Vidyalaya, Jalgaon and subsequently was awarded a Masters degree in Political Science and Economics by Mooljee Jetha College, Jalgaon (then under Pune University), and then a Bachelor of Law degree by Government Law College, Mumbai. Patil then began to practice law at the Jalgaon District Court, while also taking interest in social issues such as improving the conditions faced by Indian women.

Patil married Devisingh Ransingh Shekhawat on 7 July 1965. The couples have a son and a daughter.

**Political career:**

The BBC has described Patil's political career prior to assuming Presidential office as "long and largely low-key". In 1962, at the age of 27, she was elected to the Maharashtra Legislative Assembly for the Jalgaon constituency. Thereafter she won in the Muktainagar (formerly Edlabad) constituency on four consecutive occasions between 1967 and 1985, before becoming a Member of Parliament in the Rajya Sabha between 1985 and 1990. In the 1991 elections for the 10th Lok Sabha, she was elected as a Member of Parliament representing the Amravati constituency. A period of retirement from politics followed later in that decade.

Patil had held various Cabinet portfolios during her period in the Maharashtra Legislative Assembly and she had also held official positions while in both the Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha. In addition, she had been for some years the
president of the Maharashtra Pradesh Congress Committee and also held office as Director of the National Federation of Urban Co-operative Banks and CreditSocieties and as a Member of the Governing Council of the National Co-operative Union of India.

On 8 November 2004 she was appointed as the 24th Governor of Rajasthan and she was the first woman to hold that office, and, according to the BBC, was "a low-profile" incumbent.

Patil was announced as the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) candidate on 14 June 2007. She emerged as a compromise candidate after the Left parties would not agree to the nomination of former Home Minister Shivraj Patil or Karan Singh.

Due to the role being largely a figurehead position, the selection of candidate is often arranged by consensus among the various political parties and the candidate runs unopposed. Contrary to the normal pattern of events, Patil faced a challenge in the election. The BBC described the situation as "the latest casualty of the country's increasingly partisan politics and highlights what is widely seen as an acute crisis of leadership". It "degenerated into unseemly mudslinging between the ruling party and the opposition". Her challenger was Bhairon Singh Shekhawat, the incumbent vice-president and a Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) veteran. Shekhawat stood as an independent candidate and was supported by the National Democratic Alliance (NDA), a group led by the BJP, although the Shiv Sena party, which was a part of NDA, supported her because of her Marathi origin.

Patil won the election held on 19 July 2007. She garnered nearly two-thirds of the votes and took office as India's first woman president on 25 July 2007.
Activities

Pratibha Patil’s term as the President of India saw various controversies. For example, during her term as president, Patil commuted the death sentences of 35 petitioners to life, a record — among them are those convicted of mass murder, kidnapping, rape and killing of children. The Presidential office, however, defended this by saying that the President had granted clemency to the petitioners after due consideration and examining the advice of the Home Ministry.

Patil was noted for having spent more money on foreign trips, and having taken a greater number of foreign trips, than any prior president.

Completion of term

The office of president has a five-year term and Patil retired from the role in July 2012. Along with her husband, she set up Vidya Bharati Shikshan Prasarak Mandal, an educational institute which runs a chain of schools and colleges in Amravati, Jalgaon and Mumbai. She also set up Shram Sadhana Trust, which runs hostels for working women in New Delhi, Mumbai and Pune; and an engineering college in Jalgaon. She also founded a cooperative sugar factory known as Sant Muktabai Sahakari Sakhar Karkhana at Muktainagar and an eponymous cooperative bank, Pratibha Mahila Sahakari Bank, that ceased trading in February 2003.

Position Held:

- 1972 – 74 Cabinet Minister, Social Welfare, Government of Maharashtra
• 1975 – 76 Cabinet Minister, Prohibition, Rehabilitation and Cultural Affairs, Government of Maharashtra.

• 1977 – 78 Cabinet Minister, Education, Government of Maharashtra

• 1979 – 1980 Leader of the Opposition, Maharashtra Legislative Assembly

• 1982 – 85 Cabinet Minister, Urban Development and Housing, Government of Maharashtra

• 1986 – 88 Deputy Chairman, Rajya Sabha

• 1986 – 88 Chairman, Committee of Privileges, Rajya Sabha; Member, Business Advisory Committee, Rajya Sabha

• 1991 – 1996 Chairman, House Committee, Lok Sabha

• 8 November 2004 – 23 June 2007 Governor of Rajasthan

• 25 July 2007 – 25 July 2012 President of India

5. Brinda karat:

Brinda Karat is a communist politician from India, elected to the Rajya Sabha as a Communist Party of India CPI member, on 11 April 2005 for West Bengal. In 2005, she became the first woman member of the CPI Politburo. Wikipedia

Born : October 17, 1947 (age 67), Kolkata, India

Spouse : Prakash Karat (m. 1975)

Siblings : Radhika Roy

Movies : Amu

Education : Welham Girls’ School, Miranda House, University of Delhi, University of Calcutta

Parents: Sooraj Lal Das, Oshrukon Mitra
Brinda Karat was born in Calcutta, where she spent her early childhood in a family of four siblings, including one brother and three sisters. Her father was Sooraj Lal Das. She lost her mother Oshrukona Mitra, at the age of five. She has a sister, Radhika Roy who is married to Prannoy Roy.

Brinda was educated at the elite Welham Girls School in Dehradun and, at 16, went on to do her B.A. Degree at Miranda House, a college affiliated to the University of Delhi. In 1971, she enrolled for her M.A.in History at the University of Calcutta

**Political career:**

In 1967, after graduation from Miranda House, she left for London, where she worked with Air India at Bond Street for four years. While working for Air India, she campaigned against the mandatory wearing of skirts in the airlines rather than the saree. The Air India Headquarters finally agreed with her and ever since then women working for the airline in London can exercise a choice of whether to wear a saree or a skirt as their uniform.

In an interview, Karat says she returned to India motivated to work for the people. While working in London, she became associated with the anti-imperialist, and anti-war movements during the Vietnam War and Marxist ideology. She joined many of the anti war demonstrations in London.

In 1971, she decided to leave her job and return to Calcutta, where she joined the Communist Party of India (Marxist) CPI (M). She started her political work as a student activist since under the guidance of the Party she enrolled as a student in Calcutta University. On the suggestion of the party to understand practical politics, she joined the Calcutta University. Initially she worked with students in the college
campus and later during the Bangladesh war at refugee camps in the State. She was also writing for the Party weekly and later became a full-time worker there.

In 1975, she shifted to Delhi and started working as a trade union organiser with textile mill workers in North Delhi. She grew to be active with worker's movements and the Indian women's movements. She gained prominence in the campaign for reform of rape laws in the 1980s. Karat was relegated from the central committee in the wake of her protest against the lack of representation of women in politburo. But the party found it an act against Leninist principles. Even today, Brinda stands out as a prominent campaigner for gender issues.

On 11 April 2005, she was elected to the Indian Parliament, Rajya Sabha as a CPI (M) member for West Bengal.

In 2005, only after the inclusion of 5 women members to the Central Committee did Brinda Karat agree to be nominated to the exclusive 17 member Politburo. The Politburo is the highest decision-making body of the party and Brinda Karat is its first woman member.

Family

She is married to Prakash Karat, a Keralite by origin and a prominent CPI(M) leader, holding the position of general secretary currently. Her sister Radhika Roy is married to Prannoy Roy, founder and CEO of NDTV. In 2005, she acted in Amu, a film made by her niece, Shonali Bose, on the Anti-Sikh riots in 1984. She is also related to the Marxist historian Vijay Prashad.
Literary works

Brinda is the author of Survival and Emancipation: Notes from Indian Women's Struggles. This is a comprehensive book on the wide ranging concerns of the women’s movements in India from a left perspective.