

CHAPTER III

THE CONTRIBUTION OF WOMEN AS A CHIEF MINISTERS OF STATE

Introduction:

Ours largest Democracy in the world where women folk constitute nearly half of the total population. It astonishes that though the constitution of India guarantees equal rights to woman along with men, but due to various reasons their participation in politics is very less. In male dominated society like India it is very difficult for women to come and compete with their counterparts. Even then some of the women have successfully crossed hurdles and reached their goals. Especially to become chief ministers is it not a simple task but at there are certain women who have come out with flying colors and reached these positions.¹ If as opportunity has been given to women they can also prove their capabilities and become good administrators. Women are in no way inferior to men and that was proved by some of the successful chief ministers in India. The aim of this Article is to describe the contribution of women chief ministers in India.

A few years back, when Indian woman was subjected to all sorts of injustices and was doomed to the four walls of the house. Serving only the needs of men, not having any to exercise their individual views. Women place has been primarily confined to home, her role limited to procreation, upbringing of children and catering to the needs of men folk by way of creating comforts. In India especially women were subordinated a men and socially oppressed. The various religious practices in India as well as the personal laws based on them consigned women to a status inferior to that of men. The condition of upper class women was in this respect worse than that

peasant woman. Though they had all comforts and luxuries in their individual right were least respected and they have to live compromisingly. “Women did not have an important existence of her own; she existed for men and always played the second fiddle to them”.² This is especially so in India, where women were supposed to have no personality of her own apart from their husbands. They could not find any expression to their kin born talents any desires except as housewives. This state was there up to independence after which there was some improvement and change. This change leads to the empowerment of women in various fields like social, economic, cultural and political.

The position of women is gradually changing and they are acquiring power along with men. It is recently in assembly elections, the results have trounced the incumbent governments across all states got at the hands of two women leaders with a resounding majority- Mamata Banerjee in West Bengal and Kumari Jayalalita in Tamil Nadu. Both of them, along with the existing women heads of state, Mayawati in the state of Uttar Pradesh and Sheila Dikshit in the union territory of Delhi, the mandate has placed on their shoulders would ensure their tasks clearly cut out for the next term. In this context it is more appropriate to know about the women Chief Ministers of India and their contribution in a chronological order.

SUCHETA KRIPLANI:

- **Early life of Sucheta Kriplani:**

Sucheta was born on 25th June 1908 in Ambala in Haryana in a Bengali family. Her father’s name was S. N. Majumdar and he was doctor by profession. She completed her education at Indraprastha College and St. Stephen’s College at Delhi

and started her career as a Professor of Constitutional History at Banaras Hindu University. He married Acharya Kriplani in 1936 and after her married she was involved with the Indian National Congress.³

She participated in the Quit India Movement and worked with Mahatma Gandhi during the partition riots. She was elected to the Constituent Assembly and took part in the subcommittee that drafted the Indian Constitution. In the Independence Session of the Constituent Assembly on 15th August 1947, she sang the song Vande Mataram.

After the independence of India, she contested from New Delhi constituency in 1952 and 1957 general elections and was elected to the Lok Sabha.⁴ She served as the Minister of State for Small Scale Industries at that time. She served in the Cabinet after being elected to the Uttar Pradesh Vidhan Sabha in 1962. She became the first women Chief Minister of any Indian state when she was made as the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh in 1963.

She had to tackle many problems during her tenure including the strike of the state employees for 62 days. She was elected to the Lok Sabha in 1967 from the Gonda constituency of Uttar Pradesh. She retired from active politics in 1971 and died on 1st December 1974.

Political life:

Sucheta kriplani, wife of famous socialist Sindhi leader Acharya Kriplani, her father Shri S.N. Mazumdar was a government doctor but emotion of nationality were high in his heart, this has affected a lot to Sucheta since her childhood.⁵

After completing education at Indraprastha College and Stephen's College at Delhi, she joined Banaras Hindu University in the capacity of lecture. She married with famous socialist Sindhi leader Acharya Kriplani in 1936 and from here onwards her political was started.

Sucheta Kriplani became a first woman chief minister of the Uttar Pradesh state of India from 1963 to 1967. She was born on 25th of June in 1908 in Ambala, Punjab to the S.N. Majumdar (a government doctor) and died on 1st of December in 1974. She was a politician in the Uttar Pradesh state and freedom fighter of the India.⁶

She got her education from the Indraprastha College and St. Stephen's College of Delhi and became a Professor of Constitutional History at BHU. She got married to the Acharya Kriplani (a socialist).⁷ She took part in the Quit India Movement and worked very closely with the Mahatma Gandhi and sang a song, Vande Mataram on 15th of August in 1947 during the Independence Session of the Constituent Assembly.

How Sucheta Kriplani became the first woman Chief Minister of India

After her Indian Independence Movement, she got elected in Lok Sabha in 1952 and 1957. Then, she got elected to the U.P Assembly in 1962 and first woman Chief Minister of UP in 1963.⁸

Achievements of Sucheta Kriplani as a first woman Chief Minister of India

Her great achievement during her political career was, she effectively handled the long strike of 62 days by the state employees. She participated in Quit India movement and worked with Bapu (Mahatma Gandhi) during the Indian Independence movement. She holds the office as a first woman chief minister of India. She is the most inspired lady of India for all the women of country.⁹

NANDINI SATAPATHY:

- **Early life of Nandini Satapathy:**

Nandini Satpathy (9 June 1931 – 4 August 2006) was an Indian politician and author. She was the Chief Minister of Odisha from June 1972 to December 1976. Satpathy was born on 9 June 1931 and grew up in Pithapur, Cuttack, India. She was the eldest daughter of Kalindi Charan Panigrahi; Satpathy's uncle Bhagavati Charan Panigrahi founded the Odisha branch of the Communist Party of India.¹⁰

Political life:

While at Ravenshaw College pursuing her Master of Arts in Oriya, she became involved with the Communist Party's student wing, the Student Federation.¹¹ In 1951, a student protest movement began in Odisha; it demonstrated against rising college education costs, which later became a national youth movement. Satpathy was a leader in this movement, and a police lathi charge was used against one protest she was in. She was jailed, like many others; while there, she met Devendra Satpathy, another Student Federation member and the man whom she later married. (He was later elected for two terms as the lower house member of parliament from Dhenkanal.

In 1962, the Congress party was dominant in Odisha; the Odisha State Legislative Assembly of 140 members had over 80 from the Congress party. At a national level, there was a movement to have more women representatives in the Indian Parliament.¹² The Assembly elected Satpathy (then president of the Women's Forum) to the upper house of India's Parliament, where she served two terms. After Indira Gandhi became Prime Minister of India in 1966, Satpathy became

a Minister attached to the Prime Minister, with her specific portfolio being the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting.¹³

Satpathy returned to Odisha in 1972, due to vacancies caused by Biju Patnaik and others departing from the Congress party, and became the Chief Minister of Odisha. During the Emergency of 25 June 1975 – 21 March 1977, she imprisoned a number of notable individuals, including Nabakrusna Choudhuri and Rama Devi; however, Odisha had the least number of prominent individuals jailed during the Emergency, and Satpathy otherwise attempted to resist Indira Gandhi's policies during the Emergency. Satpathy left office in December 1976. During the general election in 1977, she was part of a group of protesters led by Jagjivan Ram, which became the Congress for Democracy party.¹⁴

Satpathy returned to the Congress party in 1989, at the request of Rajiv Gandhi. The Congress party was unpopular in Odisha as a whole, due to its prior 15-year rule there (primarily under Janaki Ballabh Patnaik as Chief Minister).¹⁵ She was elected as a member of the State Legislative Assembly from Gondia and remained in the Assembly until 2000, when she decided to retire from politics; she did not contest the 2000 elections. She was not influential in and was critical of the Odisha branch of the Congress party.¹⁶

In 1977, Satpathy was accused of corruption and a police investigation started into possible violations of the Prevention of Corruption Act in force at that time. During the investigation, she was interrogated on a number of questions in written form. She refused to answer any questions; her attorney argued that Article 20 (3) of the Indian Constitution protected her against forced self-incrimination.¹⁷ The court agreed, strengthening the rights of the accused with a recognition of the right to a

lawyer and the right against self-incrimination; it moreover held that women have the right to be questioned at their homes in the presence of male relatives, have the right to be brought to the police station only after a formal arrest, and have the right to be searched only by other women.¹⁸ Over the next 15 years, Satpathy won all of the cases against her. Satpathy was a writer in the Oriya language; her work has been translated and published into a number of other languages. She received the 1998 Sahitya Bharati Samman Award for her contributions to Oriya literature.¹⁹ Her last major literary work was translating Taslima Nasreen's *Lajja* into Oriya. She died on 4 August 2006 at her home in Bhubaneswar

Biography of Shrimati Nandini Satapathy:

- 1948-1949: She became Secretary of Girl's Students Association;
- 1958: Formed Orissa Women's Relief Committee and was the Secretary;
- 1962, April; Elected to Rajya Sabha;
- 1966, January 29th: Appointed as Dy. Minister of Information and Broadcasting;
- 1968, April: Elected to Rajya Sabha;
- 1968, October: She was the member of Board of Director to International Centre of Film for Children and Young People held in Paris;
- She was also a member of Working Committee of A.I.C.C.; and also a member of Advisory Council, of Youth Congress;
- 1969, 14th February: Appointed as Dy. Minister to Prime Minister;
- 1970, 26th June: Became Minister of State;
- 1977: Elected to Orissa Legislative from Dhenkanal;
- 1980: Elected to Orissa Legislative from Dhenkanal;

JANAKI RAMCHADRAN:

- **Early life of Janaki Ramachandran:**

She was born to Rajagopal Iyer and Narayani Amma in the town of Vaikom in Kerala State. She had a brother P. Narayanan who was an educationalist. Her father's younger brother was Papanasam Sivan. Janaki's first husband was Ganapathy Bhat (a minor actor), with whom she had a son named Surendran when she was 16.²⁰ Janaki was a successful actress in late 1940s and starred in more than 25 movies including Mohini, Raja Mukthi, Velaikaari, Aiyiram Thalaivangiya Aboorva Chintamani, Devaki and Marudhanaattu Ilavarasi. She starred opposite M. G. Ramachandran in many films whom she later married. M.G.Ramachandran had written in his autobiography that in late 1940s and in 1950, Janaki was earning double the income he received as an actor.²¹

Political Career

When M. G. Ramachandran died in 1987, she succeeded him as the first woman Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu and the Leader of the AIADMK party (which later split into two factions).²² Janaki Ramachandran became Chief Minister in January 1988 after her husband's death, but the government lasted only 24 days, the shortest in the history of Tamil Nadu. Her ministry won the vote of confidence of the Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly in January 1988 but the Central Government under the late Rajiv Gandhi used Article 356 of the Constitution of India to dismiss her government. Her party was defeated in the next elections held in 1989 and she quit politics after the unification of the two factions of the All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam.²³

When M.G.Ramachandran died in 1987, she succeeded him as the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu and the Leader of the AIADMK party. Janaki Ramachandran became the Chief Minister of the State of Tamil Nadu in January 1988 after her husband's death.²⁴

Janaki Ramachandran gifted her property in 275, Avvai Shanmugham Salai (Lloyds Road) in Chennai to house the headquarters of the All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam party in 1986. She gifted property worth crores of Rupees for the establishment of educational and charitable institutions in Tamil Nadu it was an indication of the shape of things to come.²⁵ On the day she was sworn - in as the new Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, 64-year-old Vaikom Narayani Janaki Ramachandran, very diffidently and meekly walked into the conference room of the state secretariat to address her first ever press conference.

Seven other ministers, led by R.M. Veerappan, the powerful local administration minister, were also present. Janaki sat down, hesitantly wished the press well and sought continued support from the fourth estate. Then she said that Chief Secretary A. Padmanabhan would make an announcement. Padmanabhan took the floor. He revealed that Janaki had just cleared her first official file, envisaging payment of a Pongal gift of Rs.350 each to 10 lakh government employees (cost: a whopping Rs.35 crore) and indicating that Janaki had decided to continue her husband M.G. Ramachandran's policy of populism. Veerappan fielded whatever questions were permitted from the press it was a government by proxy that was ushered into Tamil Nadu last fortnight. It brought to a temporary halt the sordid political drama that had been unfolding since MGR's sandalwood coffin was lowered into its watery grave in Marina Beach on December 25 last year. As Janaki took over to become the

nation's only woman chief minister, the ruling AIADMK split vertically. Strangely, the other faction too was led by a woman - MGR's favorite film star, Jayalalitha.²⁶

Janaki would have lost the battle for the chief ministership but for the controversial decision of Tamil Nadu Governor Sunder Lal Khurana to support her appointment. Khurana dismissed the request of the outgoing interim chief minister V.R. Nedunchezian (former finance minister and number two man in the MGR cabinet, currently with Jayalalitha) to give him less than a week to prove his majority on the floor of the Assembly.²⁷ On the other hand, Khurana not only allowed Janaki to be the leader of the majority faction of the AIADMK, but also gave her three weeks to prepare for a vote of confidence in the Assembly.

Veerappan had given all the MLAs a cyclostyled form to declare that they were electing Janaki as the legislature party leader of their own volition. Khurana, therefore, claimed to have verified that Janaki was the elected leader of the largest single group of MLAs. The haste with which the governor arrived at his decision took everyone by surprise. Earlier he had told Nedunchezian that he would take some time to decide his course of action. Instead, on January 2 Khurana summoned the press and announced the appointment of Janaki as chief minister. Predictably, the Jayalalitha faction - which had been expecting the governor to act in their favour - accused Khurana of performing an unconstitutional act. With Janaki's swearing in, the split in the party seemed complete. She kept out all the five ministers who were supporting Nedunchezian. But the party's propaganda secretary, Jayalalitha, too had managed to secure the powerful post of general secretary of the AIADMK. Expectedly, she claimed to have the full support of the party rank and file. Factional fighting, which had started even as MGR's body was lying in state, now reached.²⁸

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SHASHIKALA KAKODKAR:

Early life of Shashikala Kakodkar:

Shashikala Kakodkar is a prominent leader of the Maharashtrawadi Gomantak Party (MGP), a political party based in Goa, India, that espouses the cause of the Bahujan Samaj (a term which is interpreted variously, but often taken to mean the masses, or the non-Brahmin section of Hindu society).³⁰ She is the daughter of Goa's first Chief Minister Dayanand Bandodkar (Bhausahab), who ascended to power after the December 1963 elections, following a hotly contested election which saw the polarisation of the electorate on caste and religious lines. Following her father's death in 1973, while still in office, Mrs Kakodkar became the chief minister of Goa, and continued in power till being ousted by a split within her party in early 1979.

Second Chief Minister of Post 1961 Goa:

After the Goa, Daman and Diu Legislative Assembly was dissolved and elections were announced to be held on 1 June 1977, there was a shift in Goa's local political polarisation. A small group of the United Goans Party (dominated by Dr. Jack de Sequeira) in the Assembly was dissolved and decided to form the Janata Party.³¹ Sarto Esteves' book *Politics and Political Leadership in Goa* (p 170) says there was a "lot of hesitation till the last minute" in the MGP, which was in two minds on whether to join the Janata Party or continue its separate identity. Since its unexpected electoral thrashing in the 1963 first Goa elections, the Congress was for the first time a bit surer of itself because of a large number of United Goans (UG) politicians who had joined its ranks.³²

Then Kakodkar fought the elections from the Bicholim constituency, and was opposed by three other candidates, including Jaisingrao Rane, who had been one of her colleagues in the Assembly, but had left the MGP to join the Janata Party.

In that election, the MGP won 15 seats, Congress upped its number to 10, and the Janata Party got three seats, with two going to independents.

Several smaller groups joined in the Janata Party, and with the latter's success at the national (all-India) level, the MGP had to seriously consider whether to continue its separate existence as a regional party. There were a number of rumours about plans for its merger with the Janata Party or one of the other national parties.

But the MGP led by Shashikala Kakodkar stayed separate, and managed to win a majority even if a slender one, with 15 out of 30 seats in the Goa assembly.

Political commentators like Sarto Esteves, author of the book mentioned above, have lavished praise on Mrs Kakodkar, writing: "This (the electoral victory in 1977) in no small measure was due to the qualities of leadership displayed by Mrs Shashikala Kakodkar, the Chief Minister of (the) MG Government. She had proved, by her actions and deeds, that she was a capable leader.³³ She had not only run the administration of the Union Territory successfully, improved the lot of the people, brought about a substantial development of the (Union) Territory in the spheres of education, agriculture, industries and social and medical services, but had also shown by her abilities and behaviour that Goans could ensure political stability and run the administration of the Territory without constant and continual overseeing by the Centre."³⁴

Other less-generous critics of Kakodkar indict her of running a corruption-prone government, which was particularly dominated by Goa's then-strong transport lobby, and which saw a lot of her fellow Gomantak Maratha Samaj caste members gain predominance in government postings. Towards the end of her tenure, Mrs Kakodkar's government was hit by two major agitations one led by traditional fishermen protesting against a policy which saw mechanized fishing eating majorly into their interests, and another campaign by students demanding a 50% bus fare concession for all bonafide students. The latter was largely successful.

While both were, at least in part, stoked by a restive Opposition, the fact remains that these protests reflected the problems of significant segments of the population, which were otherwise ignored.³⁵

Post 1980 Politics:

In the 1980 elections, the MGP, or Maharashtrawadi Gomantak Party was ousted from power, and the Congress (U), which subsequently transformed itself into the Congress (I), took power in Goa. Following the erosion of her party and its dwindling strength in the Goa assembly, Mrs Kakodkar briefly left the Maharashtrawadi Gomantak Party, to found another party named after her late father, Bhausahab Bandodkar Gomantak Party, the or BBGP.

In 1990, when the Congress was ousted from power following the defection of some of its prominent leaders like then Speaker Dr Luis Proto Barbosa, Churchill Alemao, Mauvin Godinho, J.B.Gonsalves, Somnath Zuwarkar, Luis Alex 'Mama' Cardozo, Farrel Furtado the MGP bounced back to power for a short while, as part of the PDF (Progressive Democratic Front) coalition experiment with breakaway Congressmen.

Education Minister; 1990:

Shashikala Kakodkar, also known as *Tai* (Elder sister in Marathi), was the education minister in this government, and was responsible in a major way for the regional languages-alone, no-English education policy implemented in government-aided primary schools in Goa.

Mrs Kakodkar is known for her support for Marathi-language politics, which is one of the major planks of the Maharashtrawadi Gomantak Party, along with the campaign for merger with Maharashtra.³⁶ The latter plan has since been abandoned, following an Opinion Poll held in early 1967 in Goa, where the merger cause was defeated.

Speaking to the media in 2006, Mrs Kakodkar argued against making the English language a compulsory language in primary school. She has been quoted saying by press reports: "(Congress) Education Minister Luzinho Faleiro believes in Portuguese culture and hence is taking such decisions that are unhealthy for our cultural values," At the time, the former Goa chief minister was heading the stir of the Marathi Bachao Andolan (Save Marathi Forum) in the state.

In 1996, Mrs Kakodkar has been active in a campaign favoring the cause of the Marathi language in Goa. Because of historical, religious and geographical reasons, language continues to be an emotive issue in this region, with there being a three-way split among Devanagiri-script Konkani, Roman-script Konkani and Marathi backers.³⁷

SYEDA ANWARA TAIMUR:

Early life of Syeda Taimur:

Syeda Anwara Taimur (born November 24, 1936) was the first female Chief Minister of Assam. She completed her graduation from Aligarh University. Anwara was lecturer in Economics in Debicharan Barua Girls College, Jorhat for some years.³⁸ In 1972, she was elected as a member of state legislature Assembly and appointed as Education Minister during the reign of Sarat Chandra Singha and she was re-elected again in 1978. Taimur served as chief minister of the state from December 6, 1980, to June 30, 1981.

Political life:

She was the chief minister of the Indian state of Assam from 6 December 1980 to 30 June 1981. She is a leader of the Indian National Congress party in Assam and a member of the All India Congress Committee (AICC). In the history of Assam, she is the only female and Muslim Chief Minister of the state. Her term as chief minister ended when the state was put under president's rule for six months. From 1983 to 1985 she was the PWD minister of the same state.³⁹ Anwara was lecturer in Economics in Debicharan Barua Girls College, Jorhat in 1956. She was an elected member of the Assam Assembly (MLA) in 1972, 1978, 1983, and 1991. In 1988 she was nominated to the Indian Parliament (Rajya Sabha). In 1991 she was appointed to the post of Minister for Agriculture in Assam. Her term ended when President's rule was imposed on the state for six months. She was also a nominated member of the Rajya Sabha from 1988 to 1990.

In 1980, Syeda Anwara Taimur created history by being the only female and Muslim Chief Minister of the state of Assam from 6 December 1980 to 30 June 1981. Her term as chief minister ended when the state was put under president's rule for six months. In 1985, Anowara lost to Abdul Jabbar belonging to United Minority Front. This Front later merged in AIUDF in 2006. In 1991, Anowara won again and became the Minister of Agriculture. In 1996, Anowara lost again. Till this period Anowara continued to be the lone female Muslim candidate from Congress (I), else other parties. The year 2001 could be called an important year for Muslim women as in that year two female Muslim women got elected. They are Husnewara Islam, widow of Zahirul Islam contesting from Mankachar constituency and representing Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) and Sharifa Begum, daughter of Dr. Muhammed Idris who was the Congress MLA in Rupohihat and Bhing constituency in 1972-1978, 1983, 1985. These two women could penetrate into the political sphere not due to their capabilities but due to the sphere created by their male family members like husband and father. Idris Ali was a member of assembly for several times and Zahirul Islam was too a prominent congress MLA from Mankachar.⁴⁰ Except Sharifa Begum, all Muslim women were from elite Assamese Muslim family and Sharifaa is the first female Muslim MLA representing the Bengali speaking Muslims of Assam.

AIUDF may have given a new hope to the participation in decision making for the Muslims but not for Muslim women. In 2006, AIUDF appeared as a fresh face in state's politics and it contested in 65 seats and won 10 seats. No female candidates were nominated by AIUDF. In 2011, AIUDF has nominated two women, Begum Gulakhtara in East Bilashipara constituency and Jahida Sultana Sarkar in Samuguri constituency. A prominent AIUDF figure is of the opinion that, 'Society is still don't accept women as leaders in political sphere. We can consider women if she is

influential, rich and belongs to a family that has political legacy like Anowara Taimur. We will consider women only if there is a mandatory provision like 33% reservation’.

Another mentionable name in the politics is Naznin Farooqui whom Congress nominated twice in 1991 and 1998 Nagaon parliamentary 1998, in Assam assembly election in 1996. She failed to win these years though in 2006 she became a member of Rajyasabha.⁴¹

Student politics is an important feature in the politics of Assam. All Assam Minority students Union formed in 1979 has produced about 50% of the political leaders who were either directly or indirectly affiliated this body. Even this body too paid little attention in women’s participation in politics. Till date this body has not appointed even a single female office bearer. AMSU played important role in nurturing Muslim leaders but not female Muslim leaders.

Low literacy rate, access to information, reinforcement of cultural stereotypes and lack of empowerment among the Muslim women etc has resulted their meager presence in the political sphere of the state which in turn has resulted into the neglect of their issues and experiences in policy making.⁴²

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lecturer in Economics in Debicharan Barua Girls College, Jorhat in 1956. She was an elected member of the Assam Assembly in 1972, 1978, 1983, and 1991. In 1988 she was nominated to the Indian Parliament. In 1991 she was appointed to the post of Minister for Agriculture in Assam.⁴³

Currently Member of Parliament Rajya Sabha from Assam, 1972, 1978, 1983 and 1991 Member, Assam Legislative Assembly 1975 Minister of Education, Government of Assam, Oct. 2004 onwards Member, Consultative Committee for the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare.

JAYALALITA:

- **Early life of Jayalalita:**

Jayalalithaa was born on 24 February 1948, at Melukote, in Pandavapura taluk of Mandya district, Mysore State. Her grandfather was in the service of the then Mysore kingdom as a surgeon, and the prefix 'Jaya' ('the victorious') was added to the names of various family members to reflect their association with Maharaja Jayachamarajendra Wodeyar of Mysore. Her mother called her Komalavalli.⁴⁴

Jayalalithaa's father died when she was two years old. Her mother then moved to Bangalore, where her parents lived, with Jayalalithaa. Her mother eventually began to work as an actress in Tamil cinema, based in Chennai, having taken the screen name of Sandhya. While in Bangalore, Jayalalithaa attended Bishop Cotton Girls' School. She completed her childhood education at Sacred Heart Matriculation School (popularly known as Church Park Presentation Convent or Presentation Church Park Convent) in Chennai. She excelled at school and was offered a government

scholarship to pursue further education. She appears not to have accepted the admission offered to her at Stella Maris College, Chennai.

She is fluent in several languages, including English, Hindi, Kannada, Malayalam, Tamil and Telugu.

Her mother persuaded her to work in films when Jayalalithaa was 15 years old and was still in school, taking assurances from producers that shooting would take place only during summer vacations and that she would not miss her classes. Jayalalithaa acted in an English language film, *Epistle*, released in 1961.⁴⁵ She made her debut as the lead actress in Kannada films while still in school, age 15, in *Chinnada Gombe* (1964). Jayalalithaa's debut in Tamil cinema was a role in *Vennira Aadai* (1965), directed by C. V. Sridhar. The following year, she made her debut in Telugu cinema with *Manushulu Mamathalu*. She was the first heroine to appear in skirts in Tamil films. She acted in one Hindi film called *Izzat*, with Dharmendra as her male costar in 1968.

Political Career:

Jayalalitha, is an Indian politician who has been the chief minister of Tamil Nadu, a state in southern India, since 2011. Previously she served as chief minister from 1991 to 1996, briefly in 2001, and from 2002 to 2006. She was a popular film star in Indian cinema before her entry into politics, having appeared as the lead heroine in over 140 films which includes films in Tamil, Telugu, Kannada and worked in one Hindi film. She is the incumbent general secretary of All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK). She is called 'Amma' ('Mother') and sometimes 'Puratchi Thalaivi' ('Revolutionary Leader') by her followers.⁴⁶

Although there have been claims that Jayalalithaa was introduced to politics by M. G. Ramachandran, she has denied this. She was a member of the Rajya Sabha elected from Tamil Nadu during 1984–89. Soon after the death of Ramachandran, Jayalalithaa proclaimed herself as his political heir. She is the second elected female chief minister of Tamil Nadu.

Although there have been claims that Ramachandran, who had been chief minister for the state since 1977, was instrumental in introducing Jayalalithaa to politics, she has denied it. In 1982, she joined the AIADMK, which was founded by Ramachandran. Her maiden public speech, Pennin Perumai (the Greatness of a Woman), was delivered at the political conference of the AIADMK that year. In 1983, she became propaganda secretary for the party and was selected as AIADMK candidate in the by-election for the Tiruchendur Assembly constituency.

Ramachandran wanted her to be a member of the Rajya Sabha because of her fluency in English. Jayalalithaa was nominated and elected to that body as a Member of Parliament in 1984 and retained her seat until 1989. She was successful in her role as Propaganda Secretary and this caused resentment among high-ranking members of the party. Those members engineered a rift between her and Ramachandran, among the alleged consequences of which was that Ramachandran stopped Jayalalithaa writing about her personal life in a Tamil magazine. Despite these machinations, she remained admired by the rank and file of the party.

In 1984, when Ramachandran was incapacitated due to a stroke, Jayalalithaa was said to have attempted to take over the position of chief minister of the party on the pretext that his health would prevent him from the proper execution of his duties.

She successfully led the campaign in the 1984 general elections, in which the ADMK allied with the Congress.

Ramachandran died in 1987 and following this the AIADMK split into two factions, with one section supporting his widow, Janaki Ramachandran, and the other favouring Jayalalithaa. Janaki was selected as the Chief Minister on 7 January 1988 with the support of 96 members and she won the confidence motion in the house, following irregularities by the speaker P.H. Pandian, who dismissed six members to ease her victory.⁴⁷ However, the Indian Central Government under the late Rajiv Gandhi used Article 356 of the Constitution of India to dismiss the Janaki led government and impose President's rule on the State. Jayalalithaa fought the subsequent 1989 elections on the basis of being MGR's political heir.

Leader of Opposition 1989:

She was elected to the Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly in 1989 as a representative of the Bodinayakkanur (State Assembly Constituency).⁴⁸ This election saw the Jayalalithaa-led faction of the AIADMK win 27 seats and Jayalalithaa became the first woman to be elected Leader of the Opposition. In February 1989, the two factions of ADMK merged and they unanimously accepted Jayalalithaa as their leader and the "Two leaves" symbol of the party was restored. On 25 March 1989, quoted as one of the worst incidents to have happened in the Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly, there was heavy violence inside the house among the ruling DMK party members and the opposition. There were allegedly rude remarks made by Karunanidhi, the chief minister, on Jayalilatha.⁴⁹ The heated conversation led to some of the ADMK members tearing the budget report to be read by the ruling party. Mikes were broken and shoes were thrown at Jayalalithaa. At the peak of the

situation, when Jayalalithaa was about to leave the house, Durai Murugan, a DMK minister, was seen pulling her saree. She took a vow that she would not attend the house until the conditions are fit for women to attend, which is seen by a section of the media as "not until I enter the house as a Chief Minister". Though some sections of media term it as a theatrics launched by Jayalalithaa, it got a lot of media coverage and sympathy from the public. During the 1989 general elections, the ADMK allied with the Congress party and had a significant victory.⁵⁰ The ADMK, under her leadership, won the by-elections in Marungapuri, Madurai East and Peranamallur assembly constituencies.

First Term as Chief Minister, 1991:

In 1991, following the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi days before the elections, her alliance with the Indian National Congress enabled her to ride the wave of sympathy that gave the coalition victory. The ADMK alliance with the Congress won 225 out of the 234 seats contested and won all 40 constituencies in the centre. Re-elected to the assembly, she became the first elected female chief minister and the youngest ever chief minister of Tamil Nadu, serving the full tenure from 24 June 1991 to 12 May 1996. In 1992, her government introduced the "Cradle Baby Scheme".⁵¹ At that time the ratio of male to female in some parts of Tamil Nadu was skewed by the practice of female infanticide and the abortion of female foetuses. The government established centers in some areas, these being equipped to receive and place into adoption unwanted female babies. The scheme was extended in 2011. Her party had 26 elected members to the assembly. Her government was the first to introduce police stations operated solely by women. She introduced 30 per cent quota for women in all police jobs and established as many as all-women police stations. There were other

all-women establishments like libraries, stores, banks and co-operative elections. The Jayalalithaa-led AIADMK lost power in the 1996 elections, when it won 4 of the 168 seats that they contested. Jayalalithaa was herself defeated by the DMK candidate in Bargur Constituency. The outcome has been attributed to an anti-incumbency sentiment and several allegations of corruption and malfeasance against her and her ministers. The wedding event of her foster son Sudhakaran, who married a granddaughter of the Tamil film actor Shivaji Ganesan, was held on 7 September 1995 at Chennai and was viewed on large screens by over 150,000 people. The event holds two Guinness World Records: one is for the most guests at a wedding and the other is for being the largest wedding banquet. Subsequently, in November 2011, Jayalalithaa told a special court that the entire Rs.6 Crore expenses associated with the wedding were paid by the family of the bride.

Second Term Chief Minister:

Jayalalithaa was barred from standing as a candidate in the 2001 elections because she had been found guilty of criminal offences, including allegedly obtaining property belonging to a state-operated agency called TANSI.⁵¹ Although she appealed to the Supreme Court, having been sentenced to five years' imprisonment, the matter had not been resolved at the time of the elections. Despite this, the AIADMK won a majority and she was installed as Chief Minister as a non-elected member of the state assembly on 14 May 2001.

Her appointment was legally voided in September 2001 when the Supreme Court ruled that she could not hold it whilst convicted of criminal acts. O. Panneerselvam, a minister in her party, was subsequently installed as the Chief

Minister. However, his government was purported to have been puppeted and micro-managed by Jayalalithaa.

Subsequently, in March 2002, Jayalalithaa assumed the position of Chief Minister once more, having been acquitted of some charges by the Madras High Court. This cleared the way for her to contest a mid-term poll to the Andipatti constituency, after the sitting MLA for the seat, gave up his membership, which she won by a handsome margin. India's first company of female police commandos was set up in Tamil Nadu in 2003. They underwent the same training as their male counterparts, covering the handling of weapons, detection and disposal of bombs, driving, horseriding, and adventure sports.⁵²

Third Term as Chief Minister, 2011

In April 2011 the AIADMK was part of a 13-party alliance that won the 14th state assembly elections. Jayalalithaa was sworn in as the chief minister of Tamil Nadu for the third time on 16 May 2011, having been elected unanimously as the leader of the AIADMK party subsequent to those elections. On 19 December 2011, Jayalalithaa expelled her long-time close aide Sasikala Natarajan and 13 others from the AIADMK. Most of the party members welcomed her decision, and on 2 February 2012, Tehelka magazine claimed that Natarajan and some of her relatives were conspiring to kill her by poisoning her food over a period of time. The matter was resolved by 31 March, when Natarajan was reinstated as a party member after issuing a written apology

Honors:

Jayalalithaa has received several honorary doctorates and other honours since that awarded to her in 1991 by the University of Madras.⁵³ In 1972 she was awarded the Kalaimamani by the Government of Tamil Nadu. The politics of forming India's next government could come down to how many seats a 1960s matinee siren can rest from a rival named Stalin. At stake are 39 parliamentary seats in Tamil Nadu, a southern state known for its ancient Hindu temples, its modern auto industry - and a history of electoral landslides. With pollsters predicting that no party will win a majority in the 543-seat parliament, the caucus returned by India's sixth-largest state could hold the key to forming a government after the five-week general election that starts on April 7. Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Jayalalithaa Jayaram - or 'Jaya' to her fans - is riding a wave of popularity that could take her AIADMK party's seat count to 27, according to one survey, potentially casting her in a new role as national powerbroker. Her party is one of many regional groups whose proliferation over the past two decades has made it impossible for national parties to rule alone in India. Two more are led by female firebrands, Mamata Banerjee in West Bengal and Mayawati in Uttar Pradesh. The portly, fair-skinned Jayalalithaa bears little resemblance to the singing, dancing heroine of 1960s Tamil cinema. But, at 68, she is probably more popular than she has ever been. Hopping around the state by helicopter, she is addressing enthusiastic crowds, including one last week near Tiruvannamalai, a holy site where Hindu pilgrims, in an act of devotion, walk around a mountain barefoot at full moon.

"She is the only one who gives voice to the Tamils," said tea seller M.K. Baskran, an AIADMK grassroots organiser, to noisy agreement from fellow

supporters. Others thanked Jayalalithaa for food handouts that sustained their families.⁵⁴

Pundits in Chennai, the former port of Madras founded by the British in the 17th century, describe Tamil Nadu as a 'sweep' state; not a swing state. That is the result of another British legacy: first-past-the-post voting.

MAYAWATI:

Early life of Mayawati:

Mayawati was born on 15 January 1956 at Shrimati Sucheta Kriplani Hospital, New Delhi in a Dalit family. Her father, Prabhu Das, was a post office employee at Badalpur, Gautam Buddha Nagar. The sons in the family were sent to private schools, while the daughters went to "low-performing government schools".⁵⁵

Mayawati studied for her B.A. in 1975 at the Kalindi Women's College and obtained her LLB from the Campus Law Centre, part of the University of Delhi. She completed a B.Ed. from VMLG College, Ghaziabad, in 1976. She was working as a teacher in Inderpuri JJ Colony, Delhi, and studying for the Indian Administrative Services exams, when Dalit politician Kanshi Ram visited her family home in 1977. According to biographer Ajoy Bose, Ram told her: "I can make you such a big leader one day that not one but a whole row of IAS officers will line up for your orders." In 1983 she acquired her LL.B from Delhi University. Impressed by her speaking skills and ideas, Kanshi Ram included her as a member of his team when he founded the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) in 1984. Mayawati was first elected to parliament in 1989.⁵⁶

Political Career:

Mayawati is an Indian politician who served four terms as Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh (UP) as head of the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), which focuses on a platform of social change to improve the welfare of the weakest strata of Indian society the Bahujans or Dalits, Other Backward Classes, and religious minorities. She was Chief Minister briefly in 1995 and again in 1997, then from 2002 to 2003 and from 2007 to 2012.⁵⁷

Mayawati's rise from humble beginnings has been called a "miracle of democracy" by P. V. Narasimha Rao, former Prime Minister of India. In 1993 Mayawati formed a coalition with the Samajwadi Party and became the youngest Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh at that time. She was the first female Dalit Chief Minister in India. In 1997 and in 2002 she was Chief Minister in coalition with the Bharatiya Janata Party, the second time for a full term.

Kanshi Ram founded the BSP in 1984. Influenced by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, the chief architect of the Constitution of India, the party's primary focus is to improve the situation of Dalits and other disadvantaged groups through police reform, affirmative action on hiring of members of scheduled castes for government posts, and providing rural development programmes. Reservation in India is a system whereby a percentage of government positions and seats at universities are reserved for persons of backward classes and scheduled castes and tribes. As part of her social reform plans, Mayawati advocates reservation for the poor as well as for the castes and tribes covered by the original reservation legislation. In August 2012 a bill was cleared that starts the process of amending the constitution so that the reservation system can be expanded to promotions in state jobs. Mayawati's career has been called a "miracle of

democracy" by former Prime Minister of India P. V. Narasimha Rao. Millions of Dalit supporters view her as an icon and refer to her as "Behen-ji" (sister). Her public meetings have been attended by large audiences, who use slogans such as "Kanshi Ram ka mission Adhoora; karegi Behen Mayawati poor" (Kanshi Ram's unfulfilled mission will be completed by Mayawati) and "Behenji tum sangharsh karo; hum tumhare saath hain" (Sister, go ahead with your struggle; we are with you).⁵⁸

In its first election campaign in 1984, BSP fielded Mayawati for the Lok Sabha (Lower House) seat of Kairana in the Muzaffarnagar district, for Bijnor in 1985, and for Haridwar in 1987. In 1989 she was elected as the representative for Bijnor, with 183,189 votes, winning by 8,879 votes. Although BSP did not win control of the house, the electoral experience led to considerable activity for Mayawati over the next five years, as she worked with Mahsood Ahmed and other organisers. The party won three seats in the 1989 national election and two seats in 1991.

Mayawati was first elected to the Rajya Sabha (Upper House) of Uttar Pradesh (UP) in 1994. In 1995 she became, as head of her party, Chief Minister in a short-lived coalition government, the youngest Chief Minister in the history of the state up until that point, and the first female Dalit Chief Minister in India.⁵⁹ She won election to the Lok Sabha in two different constituencies in 1996 and chose to serve for Harora. She became Chief Minister again for a short period in 1997 and then from 2002 to 2003 in coalition with the Bharatiya Janata Party. In 2001 Ram named her as his successor to the party leadership.

Uttar Pradesh, India's most populous state and one of its poorest, is considered pivotal in the politics of India because of its large number of voters. BSP won a

majority in the 2007 Uttar Pradesh Assembly elections, fielding candidates from a variety of castes and religions. The campaign was accompanied by a colourful slogan: Haathi nahin, Ganesh hain, Brahma, Vishnu Mahesh Hain: "The elephant (the BSP logo) is really the Lord Ganesha, the trinity of gods rolled into one". The new slogan invited everyone, including the higher castes, to "come ride the elephant", her party's election symbol.⁶⁰

Mayawati was sworn in as Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh for the fourth time on 13 May 2007. She announced an agenda that focused on providing social justice to the weaker sections of society and providing employment instead of distributing money to the unemployed. Her slogan was to make "Uttar Pradesh" ("Northern Province") into "Uttam Pradesh" ("Excellent Province"). Her government began a major crackdown on irregularities in the recruitment process of police officers recruited during the previous Mulayam Singh government. Over 18,000 policemen lost their jobs for irregularities in their hiring, and 25 Indian Police Service officers were suspended for their involvement in corruption while recruiting the constables. Mayawati instituted reforms to introduce transparency into the recruiting process, including posting the results of selection exams online.

The BSP won 20 seats in Lok Sabha from the state of Uttar Pradesh in the 2009 elections, obtaining the highest percentage (27.42%) of votes for any political party in the state. The party placed third in terms of national polling percentage (6.17%). On 6 March 2012 the Bahujan Samaj Party lost its majority to the Samajwadi Party and Mayawati tendered her resignation to the governor of Uttar Pradesh the next day. On 13 March 2012 she filed nomination papers for the Rajya Sabha, and she was declared elected unopposed on 22 March.

On 15 November 2011, Mayawati's cabinet approved partitioning Uttar Pradesh into four different states for better administration and governance.⁶¹

Mayawati has seen through to completion several of her dream projects, including the Manvyar Shri Kanshi Ramji Green (Eco) Garden (inaugurated March 2011), the Rashtriya Dalit Prerna Sthal and Green Garden (inaugurated October 2011), and the Dr Bhimrao Ambedkar Samajik Parivartan Prateek Sthal (opened November 2012).

Rajinder Kaur Bhattal:

Early life:

Rajinder Kaur Bhattal is an Indian politician and member of Congress. She is a former Chief Minister of Punjab and the first and so far only female to hold the office of Chief Minister in Punjab. Overall she is 8th female Chief Minister in India. She was born in Lahore, and her father's name is Hira Singh Bhattal.

Political Career:

In 1994, Bhattal was a state education minister in Chandigarh. Bhattal became the first female Chief Minister of Punjab when she took office after the resignation of Harcharan Singh Brar, serving from April 1996 to February 1997, the eighth female Chief Minister in Indian history. Her initiatives as Chief Minister of Punjab included, in December 1996, a scheme to provide grants of free electricity to small farmers in order to power wells.⁶²

After the Congress party lost the February 1997 assembly elections in Punjab, bringing an end to her term as Chief Minister, Bhattal took over as president of the

Punjab Pradesh Congress Committee from Singh Randhawa in May, and then as leader of the Congress Legislature Party until November 1998, when she was ousted from her position and replaced by Chaudhary Jagjit Singh. Her ousting, amid claims of misleading statements about the involvement of the Congress leadership, was followed by a protracted dispute with Amarinder Singh, who had succeeded her as Punjab Congress president, and who was seen as responsible for her removal. By 2003, Bhattal had publicly pledged to remove Singh from his position as Chief Minister, and was backed by dozens of dissident MLAs from the Congress party. The dispute saw intervention from the central command of the Congress party in New Delhi, with Sonia Gandhi taking a hand in negotiations. Initially the dissident group led by Bhattal rejected any solution other than the removal of Singh.⁶³

In January 2004, Bhattal accepted a position as deputy chief minister of Punjab, with other dissidents also taking roles in the cabinet, in a bid to heal the divisions. Denying that the dissidents had made demands in order to gain these concessions, Bhattal said that she had accepted the post because Sonia Gandhi had asked her to do so. In March 2007, Bhattal became leader of the Congress Legislature Party in Punjab Vidhan Sabha. The dispute rumbled on, however, and in April 2008 the party high command once again had to intervene, this time asking both Singh and Bhattal to cease speaking to the media about their disagreements.

During this period, Bhattal also saw off attempted prosecutions, with a court acquitting her of corruption charges in April 2008. Continuing as Punjab Congress leader, she also took credit for successfully pressuring the administration of Parkash Singh Badal to introduce a debt waiver scheme for farmers. As of June 2011, Bhattal remains the Punjab Congress Legislature Party leader. She has also served as the

leader of the opposition in Punjab Vidhan Sabha, General Secretary, Joint Secretary and member of PPCC chairperson of social welfare Advisory Board, Punjab and President of Punjab Pradesh Congress Committee are the senior position held by her.

RABRI DEVI:

Early life of Rabri Devi:

Rabri Devi (born 1959) served three terms as the Chief Minister, of Bihar, India, as a member of the Rashtriya Janata Dal political party, between 1997 and 2005. She is the wife of the Indian politician Lalu Prasad Yadav, former Chief Minister of Bihar and former Railway Minister of India, who was later convicted and jailed for embezzlement. Devi has subsequently been a Member of the Legislative Council for Bihar Vidhan Parishad.⁶⁴

Political career:

Devi's appointment as the Chief Minister of Bihar was considered as one of the most unexpected and awkward decisions of the entire Indian political history because she was a traditional housewife and had neither interest nor any prior experience in politics until then. The move fitted well with the needs of the government in power at the time as Lalu Prasad Yadav had to quit as the Chief Minister of Bihar after the Fodder scam was revealed, but he was alleged to have been controlling the affairs by giving his wife the coveted post of the head of the state government. It was alleged that he continued to act and administer as a de facto chief minister with his wife being a ceremonial head.⁶⁵ She became the first woman Chief Minister of Bihar on 25 July 1997. She contested from Saran constituency in 2014 Lok Sabha election but lost. The appointment of Rabri Devi as the Chief Minister of

Bihar came under severe satirical criticism and stiff opposition, because she was nearly illiterate and had little experience or interest in politics.⁶⁶

Sushma Swaraj:

Early life of Sushma Swaraj:

Sushma Swaraj was born at Ambala Cantt in a Brahmin family on 14 February 1952. Her father was a prominent RSS member. She was educated at S. D. College, Ambala Cantonment and earned a B.A degree with majors in Sanskrit and Political Science.⁶⁷ She studied LL.B. At Punjab University, Chandigarh, and practised as a Supreme Court of India Advocate from 1973.

Political career:

Swaraj began her political career with Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad in the 1970s. She joined the Janata Party movement and campaigned against The Emergency. She was a member of the Haryana Legislative Assembly from 1977 to 1982 from Ambala Cantonment defeating then Minister of Defence (India) and four-time Chief Minister of Haryana Bansi Lal by 63% votes at the age of 25 and then again from 1987 to 90. In July 1977, she was sworn in as a Cabinet Minister in the Janata Party Government headed by Devi Lal. She became State President of Janata Party (Haryana) in 1979, when she was 27.⁶⁸ She was Education Minister, Haryana in the Bharatiya Janata Party Lok Dal coalition government during 1987-90.

Member of Parliament.

In April 1990, she was elected as a member of the Rajya Sabha and remained there until she was elected to the 11th Lok Sabha from South Delhi constituency in

1996. She was Union Cabinet Minister for Information and Broadcasting during the 13-day Atal Bihari Vajpayee Government in 1996. During this tenure, she started live telecast of Lok Sabha debates.⁶⁹

Union Minister I&B & telecommunications.

She was re-elected to 12th Lok Sabha from South Delhi Parliamentary constituency for a 2nd term in 1998. Under the second Vajpayee Government, she was sworn in as Cabinet Minister for Information and Broadcasting with additional charge of the Ministry of Telecommunications from 19 March to 12 October 1998. Her most notable decision during this period was to declare film as an industry, which made the film industry eligible for bank finance. Prior to this, the film industry was financed by the underworld on heavy rate of interest. This one decision liberated film industry from the clutches of the underworld. She also started community radio by the Universities and other institutions.

Chief Minister of Delhi.

She resigned from the Union Cabinet to take over as the first female Chief Minister of Delhi in October 1998. BJP lost the Assembly elections because of rising prices and inflation. She resigned her Assembly seat and returned to national politics.

Contest against Sonia Gandhi.

In 1999, BJP nominated her to contest against the Congress party's President, Sonia Gandhi, from the Bellary constituency in Karnataka, which had always returned Congress winners since India's independence. During her campaign,

she addressed public meetings in Kannada. She secured 3,58,000 votes in just 12 days of campaign. However, she lost the election by a 7% margin.

Back in Parliament and Union Cabinet

She returned to Parliament in April 2000 as a Rajya Sabha member from Uttar Pradesh. She was allocated to Uttarakhand when the new state was carved out of Uttar Pradesh. She was inducted into the Union Cabinet as Minister for Information and Broadcasting, which position she held from September 2000 until January 2003.⁷⁰

Union Health Minister

She was Minister of Health, Family Welfare and Parliamentary Affairs from January 2003 until May 2004, when the National Democratic Alliance Government lost the general election. As Union Health Minister, she set up six AIIMS (All India Institute of Medical Sciences) at Bhopal (MP), Bhubaneswar (Odisha), Jodhpur (Rajasthan), Patna (Bihar), Raipur (Chhattisgarh) and Rishikesh (Uttarakhand).

Deputy Leader of opposition, Rajya Sabha

Swaraj was re-elected to the Rajya Sabha in April 2006 from Madhya Pradesh. She served as the Deputy leader of BJP in Rajya Sabha till April 2009.

Leader of Opposition, Lok Sabha

She won the 2009 election to the 15th Lok Sabha from the Vidisha Lok Sabha constituency in Madhya Pradesh by the highest margin of over 4,00,000 votes. Sushma Swaraj became Leader of Opposition in the 15th Lok Sabha in place of Lal Krishna Advani on 21 December 2009 and retained this position till May 2014 when in Indian general election, 2014 her party got a major victory.⁷¹

Position Held:

- 1977–82 and 1987–90 Elected as Member, Haryana Legislative Assembly.
- 1977–79 Cabinet Minister, Labour and Employment, Government of Haryana.
- 1987–90 Cabinet Minister, Education, Food and Civil Supplies, Government of Haryana.
- April 1990 Elected to Rajya Sabha(1st term)
- 1996 Member, Eleventh Lok Sabha(2nd term).
- 16 May – 1 June 1996 Union Cabinet Minister, Information and Broadcasting.
- 1998 Member, Twelfth Lok Sabha (3rd term).
- 19 March – 12 Oct.1998 Union Cabinet Minister, Information and Broadcasting and Telecommunications (Additional charge).
- 13 October – 3 December 1998 Chief Minister, Delhi.
- November 1998 Elected from Hauz Khas Assembly constituency of Delhi Assembly. Resigned from Delhi Assembly and retained Lok Sabha seat.
- April 2000 Elected to Rajya Sabha (4th term)
- 30 Sep 2000–29 Jan 2003 Minister of Information and Broadcasting.
- 29 Jan 2003 – 22 May 2004 Minister of Health and Family Welfare and Minister of Parliamentary Affairs.
- April 2006 Re-elected to Rajya Sabha (5th term).
- 16 May 2009 Elected to the 15th Lok Sabha (6th term).
- 3 June 2009 Elected as Deputy Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha.
- 21 Dec 2009 Leader of the Opposition and replaced Lal Krishna Advani.
- 26 May 2014 External Affairs Minister in the Union of India

SHEILA DIKSHIT:

Early life of Sheila Dikshit:

Sheila Dikshit was born on March 31, 1938 in Kapurthala, Punjab into a Punjabi Khatri family. She was educated at the Convent of Jesus and Mary School in New Delhi and graduated with a Master of Arts degree in history from the Miranda House at the University of Delhi. Dikshit was married to late Vinod Dikshit from Unnao, UP, who was as an officer in the Indian Administrative Service. Sheila Dikshit has a son, Sandeep Dikshit, and a daughter, Latika Syed. Sandeep Dikshit, a representative of the Indian National Congress, is a Member of Parliament of the 15th Lok Sabha of India.⁷²

Political Career:

During the period between 1984 and 1989, she represented Kannauj parliamentary constituency of Uttar Pradesh. As a Member of Parliament, she served on the Estimates Committee of Lok Sabha. Dikshit also chaired the Implementation Committee for Commemoration of Forty Years of India's Independence and Jawaharlal Nehru centenary. She represented India at United Nations Commission on Status of Women for five years (1984–1989). She also served as a Union Minister during 1986-1989, first as the Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs and later as a Minister of State in the Prime Minister's Office.

In 1998 parliamentary elections, Dikshit was defeated by Bharatiya Janata Party's Lal Bihari Tiwari in East Delhi constituency. Later, Dikshit became Chief Minister of Delhi in 1998. She served for nearly 15 years as the Chief Minister of

Delhi until 2013. Dikshit represented the Gole Market assembly constituency in the 1998 and 2003 Assembly elections and New Delhi constituency from 2008.⁷³

In November 2013, Delhi Chief Minister Sheila Dikshit has declared assets whose value has more than doubled during the past five years, reaching around Rs 2.7 crore. Dikshit's owns an apartment in Nizamuddin East worth around 98 lakh but does not own any vehicle. In her income tax return for 2012–2013, she has shown a total income of around 13 lakh. According to Dikshit's affidavit filed before 2008 assembly election, Dikshit had Rs 1.3 crore in moveable and immoveable properties. She had mentioned Rs 67 lakh in cash and deposits and Rs 63 lakh worth flat in Nizamuddin East.

Her party was wiped out in the Delhi Legislative Assembly election, 2013 and Arvind Kejriwal founder of Aam Admi party won the election in the New Delhi Assembly constituency by a margin of 25,864 votes. She resigned on 8 December 2013, but remained the care-taker Chief Minister of Delhi till the new Government was sworn in on 28 December 2013.

Contributions:

She represented India on the U.N. Commission on Status of Women for five years (1984–1989). In Uttar Pradesh, she and her 82 colleagues were jailed in August 1990 for 23 days by the state government when she led a movement against the atrocities being committed on women. Earlier, in the early 1970s, she was chairperson of the Young Women's Association and was instrumental in the setting up two of most successful hostels for working women in Delhi. She is also the Secretary of the Indira Gandhi Memorial Trust.⁷⁴

Awards:

- 2008 Best Chief Minister of India, by Journalist Association of India
- 2009 Politician of the Year by NDTV
- 2010 Dara Shikoh award by Indo-Iran Society
- 2013 Delhi Women of the Decade Achievers Award 2013 by ASSOCHAM Ladies League for Outstanding Public Service.

UMA BHARATI:

Early life of Uma Bharati:

Uma Bharti (born 3 May 1959), often given the honorific "Sadhvi," is an Indian politician and Minister for Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation in Union Government of India. Raised by Vijaya Raje Scindia of Gwalior, she became involved with the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) at a very young age, unsuccessfully contesting her first Parliamentary elections in 1984. In 1989, she successfully contested the Khajuraho seat, and retained it in elections conducted in 1991, 1996 and 1998. In 1999, she switched constituencies and won the Bhopal seat. In the Vajpayee Administration, she held various state-level and cabinet level portfolios of Human Resource Development, Tourism, Youth Affairs & Sports, and finally Coal & Mines.⁷⁵

Bharti was one of the most prominent leaders of the Ram Janmabhoomi movement of the 1980s and 90s organized by the BJP and the Vishva Hindu Parishad. She was present at the demolition of the Babri Masjid, and was later indicted by the Liberhan commission for her role in the incident.

In the 2003 Assembly polls, she led the BJP to a three-fourths majority in the Madhya Pradesh assembly. She defeated her Congress opponent from the Malehra seat by a 25% margin. She resigned from the post of Chief Minister in August 2004, when an arrest warrant was issued against her regarding the 1994 Hubli riot case.

Uma Bharti was born on 3 May 1959 in Dunda, Tikamgarh District, Madhya Pradesh, to a family of peasants. She attended school up until the sixth standard. As a child she displayed considerable interest in religious texts like the Bhagvad Gita, which led to her being seen as a "spiritual" child. She began to give religious discourses while still a child, which brought her into contact with Rajmata Vijayaraje Scindia, who would later become her political mentor. She describes herself in her youth as a "religious missionary"⁷⁶

Political Career:

With the support of Vijayaraje Scindia, Bharti became involved with the Madhya Pradesh state BJP while still in her twenties. In 1984, she contested Lok Sabha elections for the first time, but lost the election in the Congress wave that followed the assassination of Indira Gandhi. In 1989, she won her first Lok Sabha seat from the constituency of Khajuraho, and retained the seat in the elections of 1991, 1996, and 1998.

She rose to national prominence when she became one of the major faces of the Ramjanmabhoomi movement alongside L. K. Advani and others. Her fiery speeches are credited for helping the movement achieve the momentum that it did. In December 1992 she was one of several prominent Sangh Parivar figures present at a rally in Ayodhya that developed into a riot that culminated in the demolition of

the Babri Masjid. Bharti was indicted for inciting a mob to violence by the Liberhan Commission that probed the incident. Bharti herself denies that she incited the mob, but says she does not regret it, and is willing to take "moral responsibility" for the demolition. She acknowledges that the BJP reaped massive political benefits from the incident.

In the 1999 Lok Sabha elections, she switched constituencies and won the Bhopal seat. She was inducted into the cabinet of the Vajpayee Administration, and held various state-level and cabinet level portfolios of Human Resource Development, Tourism, Youth Affairs & Sports, and finally Coal & Mines.⁷⁷

Chief Minister:

Bharti was appointed the Chief ministerial candidate of the BJP for the 2003 Assembly polls in Madhya Pradesh. On the back of a fierce campaign based on a plank of development, and helped along by her reputation as a Hindutva firebrand, she led the party to a three-fourths majority in the legislature. She herself defeated her Congress opponent from the Malehra seat by a 25% margin.

Bharatiya Janashakti Party:

In August 2004, after only a year in office, an arrest warrant was issued against Uma Bharti in connection with the 1994 Hubli riots, forcing her resignation. In November 2004, she had a public falling out with L. K. Advani during a meeting at the BJP headquarters. This led to a suspension from the Bharatiya Janata Party, which was revoked a few months later at the insistence of the RSS. She continued to publicly defy the BJP high command, insisting that she replace Shivraj

Singh Chauhan as the Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh, which led to several show-cause notices from the party, and eventually, to her expulsion.

In response, Bharti floated her own political party, the Bharatiya Janshakti Party (also abbreviated BJP).⁷⁸ She stated that her party followed the ideology of the RSS, and claimed that she had the support of Mohan Bhagwat, head of the Sangh. However, the party had a marked lack of political success.

Re-Entry into the BJP

Uma Bharti was re-inducted in the BJP on 7 June 2011. She was tasked with reviving the party in Uttar Pradesh, ahead of the assembly election in 2012. Subsequently, she was appointed to the position of vice-president along with twelve others, as part of a team created to guide the BJP through the 2014 Lok Sabha elections. On 16 May 2014, she was elected to the Lok Sabha from Jhansi constituency by defeating Chandrapal Yadav of the Samajwadi Party. On 26 May 2014, she was appointed by newly elected Prime Minister, Narendra Modi as the Minister for Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation in his cabinet.

Ram Janmabhoomi

Bharti is a strong supporter of the Ram Janmabhoomi movement. She was one of the prominent leaders present during the riot which resulted in the demolition of the Babri Masjid. The Liberhan Commission that investigated the incident indicted her (among several other Sangh Parivar leaders) for inciting the mob to a riot. Bharti herself has denied the charges, but has called for the BJP to stop avoiding responsibility, saying:

"The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) came to power twice at the Centre riding on the Ram Mandir movement wave. So it should not disown the movement and wriggle out of its responsibility for the Babri mosque demolition. I was in the BJP then and was present at the site on the fateful day. I am ready to face any consequence, even to go to jail,"⁷⁹

She has also denied the presence of any conspiracy by the Sangh, while stating that she does not regret the demolition, as it furthers the goal of building a Ram Mandir there.

Bharti has held various posts:

- 1988 onwards: vice-president, Bharatiya Janata Party, Madhya Pradesh
- 1989: elected to the 9th Lok Sabha
- 1990: member, Consultative Committee, Ministry of Agriculture
- 1990-92: member, Consultative Committee, constituted under the Punjab State Legislature (Delegation of Power) Act, 1987
- 1991: re-elected to the 10th Lok Sabha
- 1991-93: member, Public Accounts Committee
- 1993 onwards: president, BJP Youth Wing
- 1996: re-elected to the 11th Lok Sabha
- 1996-97: member, Committee on Science and Technology, Environment and Forests
- 1998: re-elected to the 12th Lok Sabha
- 1998-99: Union Minister of State, Human Resource Development
- 1999: re-elected to the 13th Lok Sabha (resigned on 18 December 2003)

- 13 October 1999 – 2 February 2000: Union Minister of State (Independent Charge), Tourism (resigned on 2 February 2000)
- 7 November 2000 – 25 August 2002: Union Cabinet Minister, Youth Affairs & Sports
- 26 August 2002 – 29 January 2003: Union Cabinet Minister, Coal and Mines
- 2003: elected as a Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) of Madhya Pradesh
- 8 December 2003 – 23 August 2004: Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh
- 2012: elected MLA, from Charkhari Seat of Uttar Pradesh Legislative Assembly
- 2014; elected MP, Jhansi.
- 2014; Union Cabinet Minister for Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation

Uma Bharti, Bharatiya Janata Party's leader has been made the Union Cabinet Minister for Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation. Uma Bharti has held several posts during her vast political career. Uma Bharti rose to prominence in 1989 when she won her first Lok Sabha seat from the constituency of Khajuraho, and retained the seat in the elections of 1991, 1996, and 1998. She also held the post of Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh before resigning in 2004 citing Hubli riot case. Uma Bharti She won from Jhansi Lok Sabha seat in the 2014 general elections.⁸⁰

VASUNDHARA RAJE:

Early life of Vasundhara Raje:

Vasundhara Raje was born on 8 March 1953 in Mumbai. She is daughter of Vijayaraje Scindia and Jivajirao Scindia, Maharaja of Gwalior, members of the prominent Scindia royal Maratha family. She completed her school education from Presentation Convent, Kodaikanal, Tamil Nadu, and later graduated with Economics and Political Science degrees (Hons.) from Sophia College, affiliated to Mumbai University, Mumbai. Vasundhara Raje married Hemant Singh, of the ex-royal Dholpur family, on 17 November 1972, but the couple separated a year later. However she has been claiming her relationship with Dholpur Jat royalty during her election campaigns. Her son Dushyant Singh was elected to the Lok Sabha from her former constituency, Jhalawar. She later became a member of the Bharatiya Janata Party. Her siblings are Yashodhara Raje Scindia, Industries Minister of Madhya Pradesh and late Madhavrao Scindia.

Political career:

Vasundhara Raje Scindia, commonly referred to as the Vasundhara Raje is an Indian politician who has been Chief Minister of Rajasthan since 2013; previously she served in the same post from 2003 to 2008. She is the first female Chief Minister of Rajasthan.⁸¹

Membership of Legislative Assembly:

- 1985-90 Member, 8th Rajasthan Legislative Assembly from Dholpur
- 2003-08 Member, 12th Rajasthan Legislative Assembly from Jhalrapatan
- 2008-13, 13th Rajasthan Legislative Assembly from Jhalrapatan
- 2013 onwards Member 14th Rajasthan Legislative Assembly from Jhalrapatan

Membership of Parliament:

- 1989-91 : Member, 9th Lok Sabha
- 1991-96 : Member, 10th Lok Sabha
- 1996-98 : Member, 11th Lok Sabha
- 1998-99 : Member, 12th Lok Sabha
- 1999-03 : Member, 13th Lok Sabha

Positions held:

- 1985-87 : Vice-President, Yuva Morcha BJP, Rajasthan
- 1984 : Member, National Executive, Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)
- 1987 : Vice-President, BJP, Rajasthan
- 1990-91 : Member, Library Committee, Member, Consultative Committee, Ministries of Commerce and Tourism
- 1991-96 : Member, Consultative Committees, Ministries of Power, Science and Technology, Environment and Tourism
1996-97 Member, Committee on Science and Technology, Environment and Forests, Member, Consultative Committees, Ministries of Power, Science and Technology and Tourism
- 1997-1998 : Joint Secretary, BJP Parliamentary Party
- 1998-99 : Union Minister of State, External Affairs
- 13 October 1999 - 31 Aug.. 2001: Union Minister of State (Independent Charge), Small Scale Industries and Agro & Rural Industries; Department of Personnel and Training; Department of Pensions and Pensioners' Welfare in the Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions; Department of Atomic Energy and Department of Space

- 1 September 2001 – 1 November 2001: Union Minister of State, Small Scale Industries; Personnel, Training, Pensions, Administrative Reforms & Public Grievances; Department of Atomic Energy; and Department of Space (Independent Charge) 2 November 2001-
- 29 January 2003 - 8 December 2003: Union Minister of State, Small Scale Industries; Personnel, Training, Pensions, Administrative Reforms & Public Grievances; Planning; Department of Atomic Energy; and Department of Space (Independent Charge) 14 November 2002 -
- 14 December 2003 - Present: President, BJP, Rajasthan
- 8 December 2003 – 8 December 2008: Chief Minister, Rajasthan
- 2 January 2009 - 8 December 2013: Leader of Opposition, Rajasthan Legislative Assembly
- 8 December 2013 - Present: Chief Minister, Rajasthan

MAMATA BANARJEE:

Early Life of Mamata Banarjee:

Banerjee was born in Calcutta (now Kolkata), West Bengal in a Bengali family to Promileswar Banerjee and Gayetri Devi. She grew up in a lower middle class family. Banerjee's father died due to lack of medical treatment, when she was 17.⁸²

In 1970, Banerjee completed the higher secondary board examination from Deshbandhu Sishu Sikshalay. Banerjee graduated with an honours degree in History from the Jogamaya Devi College, a Graduate women's college in southern Kolkata. Later she earned a master's degree in Islamic History from

the University of Calcutta. This was followed by a degree in education from the Shri Shikshayatan College. She also earned a law degree from the Jogesh Chandra Chaudhuri Law College, Kolkata.

Banerjee became involved with politics when she was only 15. While studying at the Jogamaya Devi College established Chhatra Parishad Unions, the student's wing of the Congress (I) Party, defeating the Democratic Students' Union of the Socialist Unity Centre of India. She continued in Congress (I) Party in West Bengal serving a variety of positions within the party and in other local political organizations. As a young woman in the 1970s, she quickly rose in the ranks to become the general secretary of the state Mahila Congress (1976–80).⁸³

Throughout her political life Banerjee has maintained an austere lifestyle, always dressing in simple traditional Bengali cotton sarees called 'tant', while wearing none of cosmetics or jewellery and always has a cotton bag slung on her shoulder. She has remained single throughout her life. Banerjee is a self-taught painter and a poet.

Political career:

She is an Indian politician who has been Chief Minister of West Bengal since 2011. She is the first woman to hold the office. Banerjee founded the party All India Trinamool Congress (AITMC or TMC) in 1997 and became its chairperson, after separating from the Indian National Congress.⁸⁴ She is often referred to as Didi (meaning elder sister in Bengali). In 2011 Banerjee pulled off a landslide victory for the TMC Congress alliance in West Bengal by defeating the 34-year old Communist Party of India (Marxist)-led Left Front government, until then the world's longest-serving democratically-elected communist government.

Banerjee previously served as the Minister of Railways twice and is also the first woman Railway Minister of India, Minister of Coal, and Minister of State for Human Resource Development, Department of Youth Affairs and Sports and Women and Child Development in the cabinet of the Indian government. She opposed forceful land acquisition for industrialization by the then communist government in West Bengal for Special Economic Zones at the cost of agriculturalists and farmers.⁸⁵

In 2012, Time magazine named her one of the "100 Most influential People in the World". In September 2012 Bloomberg Markets magazine listed her among the 50 most influential people in the world of finance. The mercurial TMC leader was voted in May 2013 as India's most honest politician in an internal poll by members of India against Corruption, India's largest anti-corruption coalition.⁸⁶

Banerjee started her political career in the Congress party, and as a young woman in the 1970s, she quickly rose in the ranks of the local Congress group, and remained the General Secretary of Mahila Congress (I), West Bengal, from 1976 to 1980.^[23] In the 1984 general election, Banerjee became one of India's youngest parliamentarians ever, beating veteran Communist politician Somnath Chatterjee, from the Jadavpur parliamentary Constituency in West Bengal. She also became the General-Secretary of the Indian Youth Congress. Losing her seat in 1989 in an anti-Congress wave, she was back in 1991 general elections, having settled into the Calcutta South constituency. She retained the Kolkata South seat in the 1996, 1998, 1999, 2004 and 2009 general elections.

In the Rao government formed in 1991, Mamata Banerjee was made the Union Minister of State for Human Resources Development, Youth Affairs and Sports, and Women and Child Development. As the sports minister, she announced

that she would resign, and protested in a rally at the Brigade Parade Ground in Kolkata, against Government's indifference towards her proposal to improve sports in the country.⁸⁷ She was discharged of her portfolios in 1993. In April 1996, she alleged that Congress was behaving as a stooge of the CPI-M in West Bengal. She claimed that she was the lone voice of reason and wanted a "clean Congress".

In 1997, Mamata Banerjee left the Congress Party in West Bengal and established the All India Trinamool Congress. It quickly became the primary opposition party to the long-standing Communist government in the state. On 11 December 1998, she controversially held a Samajwadi Party MP, Daroga Prasad Saroj, by the collar and dragged him out of the well of the Lok Sabha to prevent him from protesting against the Women's Reservation Bill.

In 1999, she joined the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government and was allocated the Railways Ministry.⁸⁸

Railway Minister (First Tenure):

In 2002, Mamata Banerjee presented her first Railway Budget. In it she fulfilled many of her promises to her home state West Bengal. She introduced a new biweekly New Delhi-Sealdah Rajdhani Express train and four express trains connecting various parts of West Bengal, namely the Howrah-Purulia Rupasi Bangla Express, Sealdah-New Jalpaiguri Express, Shalimar-Adra Aranyak Express and the Sealdah-Amritsar Superfast Express (weekly). She also increased the frequency of the Pune-Howrah Azad Hind Express and extension of at least three express train

services. Work on the Digha-Howrah Express service was also hastened during her brief tenure.

She also focused on developing tourism, enabling the Darjeeling-Himalayan section with two additional locomotives and proposing the Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation Limited. She also commented that India should play a pivotal role in the Trans-Asian Railway and that rail links between Bangladesh and Nepal would be reintroduced. In all, she introduced 19 new trains for the 2000–2001 fiscal year.⁸⁹

In 2000, she and Ajit Kumar Panja resigned to protest the hike in petroleum prices, and then withdrew their resignations without any reason.

Split with NDA:

In early 2001, after the Tehelka expose, Banerjee walked out of the NDA cabinet and allied with the Congress Party for West Bengal's 2001 elections, in protest of the corruption charges levelled by Tehelka.com against senior ministers of the Government.

Return to NDA:

She returned to the NDA government in January 2004, and held the Coal and Mines portfolio till the Indian general election of 20 May 2004, in which she was the only Trinamool Congress member to win a Parliament seat from West Bengal.

On 20 October 2005, she protested against the forceful land acquisition and the atrocities on local farmers in the name of industrial development policy of

the Buddhadev Bhattacharya government in West Bengal.⁹⁰ Benny Santoso, CEO of the Indonesia-based Salim Group had pledged a large investment to West Bengal, and the West Bengal government had given him farmland in Howrah, sparking protest. In soaking rain, Banerjee and other Trinamool Congress members stood in front of the Taj Hotel where Santoso had arrived, shut out by the police. Later, she and her supporters followed Santoso's convoy. A planned "black flag" protest was avoided, when the government had Santoso arrive three hours ahead of schedule.⁹¹

Mamata Banerjee suffered further setbacks in 2005, when her party lost control of the Kolkata Municipal Corporation and the sitting mayor defected from her party. In 2006, the Trinamool Congress was defeated in West Bengal's Assembly Elections, losing more than half of its sitting members.

On 4 August 2006, Banerjee hurled her resignation papers at the deputy speaker Charanjit Singh Atwal in Lok Sabha. The provocation was the speaker (Somnath Chatterjee)'s rejection of her adjournment motion on illegal infiltration by Bangladeshis in West Bengal. The motion was turned down by the speaker on the ground that it was not in the proper format.

In November 2006, Banerjee was forcibly stopped on her way to Singur for a rally against a proposed Tata Motors car project. Mamata reached the West Bengal assembly and protested at the venue. She addressed a press conference at the assembly and announced a 12-hour shutdown by her party on Friday. The Trinamool Congress MLAs protested by damaging furniture and microphones in the West Bengal Assembly. A major strike was called on 14 December 2006.⁹²

Alliance with UPA:

Before the 2009 parliamentary elections she forged an alliance with the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) led by Indian National Congress. The alliance won 26 seats. Banerjee joined the central cabinet as the railway minister (second tenure). In the 2010 Municipal Elections in West Bengal, TMC won Kolkata Municipal Corporation in a margin of 62 seats. TMC also won Bidhan Nagar Corporation in 16-9 seats margin. In 2011, Banerjee won a sweeping majority and assumed the position of chief minister of the state of West Bengal. Her party ended the 34-year rule of the Left Front.

TMC threatened to withdraw support from UPA in protest of the government's decision to allow FDI in retail markets and also against hike of petrol diesel prices and gave 72hrs for withdrawing the Reforms. On 18 Sep 2012 Evening Mamata Banarjee declared her party has withdrawn support from UPA and ran independently.⁹³ The TMC's Minister submitted his resignation on Friday 21 Sep 2012.

Nandigram protest:

The Nandigram violence was an incident in Nandigram, West Bengal where, on the orders of the Left Front government, more than 4,000 heavily armed police stormed the rural area in the district of Purba Medinipur with the aim of stamping out protests against the West Bengal government's plans to expropriate 10,000 acres (40 km²) of land for a Special Economic Zone (SEZ) to be developed by the Indonesian-based Salim Group.⁹⁴ The police shot dead at least 14 villagers and wounded 70 more.

The SEZ controversy started when the government of West Bengal decided that the Salim Group of Indonesia would set up a chemical hub under the SEZ policy at Nandigram. The Bhumi Uchhed Pratirodh Committee, an organisation formed by the Maoists and Trinamul Congress, took over the administration of the area, and all the roads to the villages were cut off. Thousands of supporters of the Left parties got attacked and were made refugees to be accommodated at shelter camps.⁹⁵ A front-page story in the Kolkata newspaper, The Telegraph, on 4 January 2007 was headlined, "False alarm sparks clash". According to the newspaper that village council meeting at which the alleged land seizure was to be announced was actually a meeting to declare Nandigram a "clean village", that is, a village in which all the households had access to toilet facilities. The BUPC cut off the roads entering the village and the entire area remained out of the control of the district civil and police administration. The State Government announced the cancellation of the project in the first week of March. But the situation showed no improvement. The administration was directed to break the Maoist-backed BUPC's control of Nandigram and a massive operation with at least 3,000 policemen was launched on 14 March 2007. However, prior information of the impending action had leaked out to the BUPC who amassed a crowd of roughly 5,000 villagers at the entry points into Nandigram to oppose the entry of police and assault them.⁹⁶ In the resulting mayhem, at least 14 people were killed. The CBI report on the incident clearly vindicated CPI(M)'s stand that the firing was not by the order of Buddhadeb but by the police to disperse the unlawful assembly after everything else in the standard operating procedure failed. A large number of intellectuals protested on the streets. Mamata Banerjee wrote letters to the Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and Union Home Minister Shivraj Patil to stop the alleged violence promoted by CPI(M) in Nandigram.

2009 Election:

Trinamool Congress performed well in the 2009 parliamentary election, bagging 19 MP seats, among them 5 women (including Banerjee), reiterating its faith in the Women's Reservation Bill. Its allies in congress and SUCI also got six and one MP seats respectively marking the best performance by any opposition party in West Bengal since the start of the left regime. Until then, the Congress victory of 16 seats in 1984, a sympathy vote after the death of Indira Gandhi, was considered their best show in opposition.

Railway Minister (Second Tenure):

In 2009, Mamata Banerjee became the railway minister for the second time. Her focus was again on West Bengal. She led Indian Railways to introduce a number of non-stop Duronto Express trains connecting large cities besides a number of other passenger trains, including women-only trains.⁹⁷ The Anantnag-Qadigund railway line of the Kashmir railway that has been in the making since 1994 was inaugurated during her tenure. She also declared the 25-km long line-1 of Kolkata Metro as an independent Zone of the Indian Railways for which she was criticized. Reuters reported that "Her two-year record as railway minister has been heavily criticized for running the network into more debt to pay for populist measures such as more passenger trains."⁹⁸ The Indian Railways became loss-making in her two-year tenure. Even before stepping down as railway minister to become the Chief Minister of West Bengal, she said "The way I am leaving the railways behind, it will run well. Don't worry; my successor will get all my support". Her nominee Dinesh Trivedi from her party succeeded her as railway minister.

In 2011, the All India Trinamool Congress along with SUCI and the Indian National Congress won the West Bengal legislative assembly election against the incumbent Left Alliance by securing 227 seats. TMC won 184 seats with the INC winning 42 seats and the SUCI secured one seat. This marked the end of the longest ruling democratically elected Communist party in the world.

Banerjee was sworn in as Chief Minister of West Bengal on 20 May 2011. As the first female Chief Minister of West Bengal, one of her first decisions was to return 400 acres of land to Singur farmers. "The cabinet has decided to return 400 acres to unwilling farmers in Singur," the chief minister said. "I have instructed the department to prepare the papers for this. If Tatababu wants, he can set up his factory on the remaining 600 acres, otherwise we will see how to go about it," she added.⁹⁹

She has also been credited to solving the longstanding "Gorkhaland Problem" by setting up the Gorkhaland Territorial Administration.

She has started various reforms in education and health sectors. Some of the reforms in the education sectors include release of the monthly pay of the teachers on the first of every month and quicker pensions for retiring teachers.¹⁰⁰ In health sector "A three-phase developmental system will be taken up to improve the health infrastructure and service," Mamata Banerjee said."¹⁰¹

In fact she was instrumental in the rollback of the petrol price hikes and the suspension of FDI in Retail Sector until a consensus is evolved. In a bid to improve the law and enforcement situation in West Bengal, Police commissionerates were created at Howrah, Barrackpore, Durgapur-Asansol and Bidhannagar. The total area

of Kolkata Municipal Corporation has been brought under the control of Kolkata Police.

Even before assuming the role of Chief Minister, Mamata Banerjee had shown keen interest in making the public aware of the state's history and culture. She had named several stations of the Kolkata Metro after freedom fighters, and plans on naming upcoming stations after religious leaders, poets, singers and the like. One of her unprecedented moves as Chief Minister has been to arrange for the playing of Rabindra Sangeet at traffic signals in Kolkata.

On 16 February 2012, Bill Gates, of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, sent a letter to the West Bengal government praising Mamata Banerjee and her administration for achieving a full year without any reported cases of polio.¹⁰² The letter said this was not only a milestone for India but also for the whole world.

Mamata Banerjee's Tenure as railway minister is now being questioned as most of the big-ticket announcements made by her last year when she was the railway minister, have seen little or no progress. In June 2012, she launched a Facebook page to rally and gather public support for A.P.J Abdul Kalam, her party's choice for the presidential elections.

Mamata didi gave her party support to Pranab Mukherjee for the post of President of India after a long drama over the issue, She also said " she was personally a "great fan" of Mukherjee and wished he grows from strength to strength".¹⁰³

She is against calling bandhs (work stoppage) but she had called many of them when she was in opposition. Mamata Banerjee took on congress for fuel price hike

and other controversial decisions by starting her agitation in Jantar Mantar on 1, October, 2012.

In her statement on 17 October 2012, Banerjee attributed the increasing incidence of rape in the country to "more free interaction between men and women". She said, "Earlier if men and women would hold hands, they would get caught by parents and reprimanded but now everything is so open. It's like an open market with open options." She was criticised in the national media for these statements.¹⁰⁴

Claim to be Doctorate:

When Mamata was elected to the 10th Lok Sabha in 1991, she mentioned in her biography to have obtained a PhD degree from East Georgia University, USA. It was later alleged that such a university didn't exist. To avoid the political controversy, Mamata stopped mentioning this degree subsequently. She was honored with DLitt from Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology.¹⁰⁵

Railway Minister Resignation:

On 14 March 2012, Dinesh Trivedi announced the annual rail budget 2012 that included an all over hike in passenger fares, ranging from 2 paise to 30 paise per kilometre for reasons of safety, along with network expansion and associated modernizations. The rail fare had not been hiked for nearly a decade putting Indian Railways in ICU as far as its financial viability was concerned. The proposed fare hike would have added 4200 crores to railways income, which while paltry compared to its expenses, would still have saved railways from becoming bankrupt. The budget received enthusiastic support from a wide cross section of society including the general public, industry groups and all five Rail Unions. However, the fare hike

proposal in the budget was fiercely opposed by Mamata Banerjee. Although Trivedi initially tried to defend the budget by pointing out that it was necessary for making Indian Railways stronger, Mamata Banerjee forced him to resign as Railway Minister on 18 March 2012. On hearing of the incident, noted Indian woman entrepreneur and Chairman & MD of Biocon, Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw tweeted that "Mamta is a dangerous, populist demagogue: economically illiterate but politically astute – deadly combo!" She added that "Mamta is a sad reflection on just how feudal our society and culture is – talk of human rights!"¹⁰⁶ and "Mamata is behaving like a mad despot. Political leadership is in deficit with such irrational behaviour that can only harm the poor." Industrialist Rahul Bajaj opined that It was a very bold budget and he is a brave man to take such a tough call of increasing fares after ten years. I would have wished to see him around as the Railways Minister. However, it is very unfortunate that his own party is now distancing him." Veteran journalist, Vivian Fernandes reported that, "It is getting clearer by the day that Mamata Banerjee's poribortan is not a change for the better. Like the communists, she can only tear, not build." Trinamool MP Kabir Suman came out in open support for Trivedi and expressed his solidarity with him, saying "My respects for the Chief Minister and other party leaders notwithstanding, I must say that it defies parliamentary decorum to get a Railway Minister removed simply because he has acted in the country's interest."¹⁰⁷

Eruption of Cartoon Incident:

Ambikesh Mahapatra, a professor of Jadavpur University was assaulted, then arrested and forced to spend a night in police custody for allegedly circulating 'defamatory' cartoons of Mamata Banerjee. While Prof. Mahapatra, as the victim of the assault was forced to spend a night in police station, his attackers – Amit Sardar,

Arup Mukherjee, Sheikh Mustafa and Nishikanta Gharai – allegedly Trinamool Congress activists of the New Garia area on the southern fringes of Kolkata, were arrested on the next day and they were released on bail after being produced before the court. Mamata Banerjee defended the professor's arrest.

Abruptly Stopped Interview:

Mamata Banerjee stormed out off the stage in a huff during an interactive programme organised by CNN-IBN TV channel on Friday 18 May 2012 at the Kolkata Town Hall, Kolkata without answering questions from audience (which consisted a large number of students). Mamata alleged that the students were Maoist cadres. Moments after walking off the stage, the Chief Minister instructed the police to take photographs of those in the audience who had asked questions. "The students are only asking Maoist questions and the CPI (M) questions," she complained as the programme moderator sought her answer to the issues raised. "They are the Maoist students."¹⁰⁹ Some publications, in their editorials characterised Mamata Banerjee as "Dictatorial" and her rule as "Mamata's growing dictatorship", citing her forcing Railway Minister Dinesh Trivedi's resignation, and the professor Ambikesh Mahapatra cartoon incident, as examples of this tendency. On June 17, 2013 Mamata was forced to flee from a meeting called at Barasat district, 24 Parganas when a mob assaulted her after a 20-year-old college student was allegedly gangraped and murdered there. She later described the Barasat rapists and protesters as CPM workers.

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