CHAPTER I
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The state of internal emergency is considered to be one of the darkest periods in the history of Indian politics. Prime Minister Indira Gandhi is presumed to be the direct or indirect influence behind it. Her birth is also acknowledged as the rising of a new India, indignant to revenge the humiliation and exploitation faced at the hands of Britishers. Sarojini Naidu refers to the birth of Indira as “the new soul of India” (I.22).

Indira was born and brought up in an environment exposed to politics. It was the hospitality of Indira’s grandfather, Motilal Nehru that made the atmosphere of Anand Bhavan amiable for the visitors. Guests from all over the country and abroad, professional associates, their members of the Kashmiri community, friends and relatives arrived there frequently. The Nehrus also had a close affinity with the British administrators. Due to their exposure to the west, they had genuine respect for the British culture and manners. The atmosphere of Anand Bhavan was a confluence of western culture and that of India.

Motilal’s intentions regarding the British had been badly shaken. He was once a great admirer of the European system but later in the course of events he and his son, Jawahar Lal Nehru turned towards Mahatama Gandhi. He angrily protested against the British government for using “unconstitutional methods of repression in India” (I.22). By the time Indira was three years
old, the family had adopted the swadeshi. The crowd she faced in Anand Bhavan basically belonged to the Indian independence movement. As a child, she encounters the replacement of European clothes by khadi; European cuisine by Indian cuisine; hats and silk ties by the Gandhi cap etc. This atmosphere helped her in developing an intellect like an Indian which in later years turned out to be an important political asset to her.

Indira belongs to an extended family that includes grandparents, parents, uncle, aunts, and cousins. She was influenced by the different traits in the personality of her family members. She admires the characteristic quality of her mother’s inner strength. The way she dealt with the incurable disease of tuberculosis. Her power of tolerance and fortitude shown during her imprisonment and stoical attitude in dealing with the household duties are worth noticing. In an interview with Nayantara Sahgal regarding the biography published in May 1973, Indira said “I saw her being hurt I was determined not to be hurt” (Indira Gandhi’s Emergence and Style, 1978. 29). She was greatly impressed by the personality of her grandfather, Motilal Nehru. She admired his “tremendous zest for life. She even loved the way he laughed” (I.38).

When she grew up she seems to adopt the ways and manners of her father, Jawahar Lal Nehru. Her mind was involved in the fantasies of the freedom movement. Sahgal spent her childhood with Indira in Anand Bhawan. She was well acquainted with the
personality of her cousin. She observes: “Her games…had consisted of making fiery political speeches to her dolls and servants, and triumphant encounters with the police” (Indira gandhi’s emergence and style. 1978. 16). She used to enact as a congress volunteer leading a procession of children and other working staff of Anand Bhavan shouting Inquilab Zindabad. She wishes to be another Joan of Arc, whom she considered as her childhood heroine.

The political activities keep on changing so was the involvement of the family specially Motilal Nehru in the politics. At the age of twelve, Indira witnessed her father as the head of the national movement. She desires to gain a real experience as a participant in the independence movement. “I was drawn irresistibly to Gandhiji’s teachings about charkha and I threw myself enthusiastically into the work of the charkha sangh” (I.47) said Indira Gandhi during an interview. Among the other influences in her life the one that cast greater impression was Jawahar Lal Nehru who yearned to fight for India, for letting it free from the shackles of Britshers. She wished the same. She once disclosed this fact to Nayantara Sahgal: “I was hardly more than a baby, but the impact of this tragedy on my elders could not but leave its mark on me” (Sahgal Indira Gandhi’s Emergence and Style. 1978. 16). Her childhood was associated with several dark events of the tyranny of British government and poor plight of India.
Indira Gandhi was a very private person, she never allowed anyone to peep into her personal affairs. As a leader her performance was charismatic especially during the war with Pakistan. However, she lacked the quality of benevolence and humility which is expected to be those in power. She is resentful of those who dare to express themselves before her. She removed all such ministers from her government who displeases her due to their interference or disagreement over the decision made by her. During her term as Prime Minister, there was a quick decline of the cabinet members who accept her stubbornness without getting baffled. On the other hand, her father, Jawahar Lal Nehru during his Prime Ministership does not face any sort of rivalry from the congress party as he provided space to the opinion and ideas of others in the party, if he sensed some logic in it. However, he imposed his will on others only on some matters. In a letter to Mrs. Pandit Nehru wrote: “...why is this so? Indu, I feel, is extraordinarily imaginative and self-centered or subjective. Indeed, I would say that, quite unconsciously, she has grown remarkably selfish” (Sahgal, *Indira Gandhi’s Emergence and Style*. 1978. 24).

At the age of twenty Indira looked delicately built woman of acknowledged beauty. While in India she looks quite different wearing a Khadi cap, dressed in the uniform of a congress volunteer. A slim girl with bobbed half curly hair running within the premises of Anand Bhavan seems to be quite different from
the one who was in Britain as if “she had just stepped out of a high class fashion in Paris” (I.94). She was very particular about her clothes and hair style. Whatever she tried from the Indian dresses to the western style seems impeccable on her.

Indira has been compared with her father in terms of her political career and also as a human being by the citizens of India, party people and opposition parties. She nominated her friends to the post of Chief Ministers in different states instead of their status in the party or among public. A British Journalist regarded her as “a potential Lady Macbeth” (I.262). She permits to pay in her functioning as Prime Minister to the extent which does not hinder her authority. Indira inherited the trait of personal pride and strong will from her grandfather. Her confidence, toughness and resoluteness were a result of the lonesome days she spent as a child. But when both her parents were often in jail, the love which she received from them was boundless. She once remarked, “I did recent the fact, perhaps, that my parents were not with me as other children had their parents. But otherwise I was very proud of them and I did not really envisage having another kind of life” (I.50). Her loneliness, habit of reading the books sent by her father, her father’s letters and her intense contemplation help her to build an identity of her own, to move freely and the ability to take decisions of her own.
Indira’s father and grandfather were considerate towards her. She stated about her grandfather that he had spoilt her terribly. It was Motilal who was “always thinking of Indira” (I. 37). When Jawahar Lal Nehru was imprisoned in the Ahmednagar Fort in 1943 he wrote several letters to his sister Mrs. Vijayalakshmi Pandit who was imprisoned with Indira in Naini jail, Allahabad. Their conversation centers on Indira and their activities in the jail. In one such letter written in 1943 he wrote: “I was glad to read about Indu in your letters—how she has recouped. I am pleased about this for it indicates that she has become essentially stronger and with greater powers of resistance” (Sahgal, *Indira Gandhi’s Emergence and Style*. 1978. 20).

Nehru was excessively concerned about his daughter, Indira regarding her education and well being. His frequent imprisonment since Indira’s childhood produces a sense of guilt and the circumstances often annoyed him. Her education became a matter of dispute between father and son. The quarrel grew out of the fact that as a participant in the Gandhian non-cooperation movement, Nehru family should boycott not British goods but their schools as well. Hence, Indira was admitted to modern school in Allahabad in 1923. Very soon Motilal shifts her to a European style school, St. Cecilia’s for her better future. This decision paved a way to conflict between the two. He doesn’t want their political pursuits should hinder in Indira’s education.
To seek the advice of Mrs. Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru wrote a letter. Later on Mahatma Gandhi repaired the growing rift between father and son. In terms of her education she was a named, moving from one institution to another. Ultimately, arrangements were made to teach her at home.

Jawaharlal Nehru’s letters written to Indira from prison were a great source of knowledge and encouragement for her. His lesson on written history, the functioning of village republic in India, industrial revolution on Britain and Europe, several crucial events in world history etc. Later these letters were published in a book form entitled “Glimpses of World History.” The heart of these letters was the lesson given on humanity and self sacrifice for the sake of the community and the country. Many of these letters were given by a father to a loved child. These were the lessons on personal courage, on life and love for motherland. Nehru dedicated the leisure offered to him in prison for Indira’s education. He himself was a great scholar, lover of books and a philosopher. He familiarizes various countries and gives her wonderful knowledge about worldly things. When he lives in Anand Bhavan, he keep updating Indira about political developments going on in Europe and other places. During their visits to France, Germany, Britain etc. he tries to satisfy her inquisitiveness and her questions.

In her childhood she met variegated personalities all over the world and in Anand Bhavan too that creates great influence
in her personality. She was a confident child since childhood, who went to meet George Bernard Shaw on her own. She took her reading habits quite seriously. Due to these assets of Indira the great German poet, Ernst Toller and Edward Thompson were greatly attached to her.

Indira was drawn into politics completely and unreturnably after marriage. It began with her campaigning or a woman candidate during an election. She spoke on the behalf of her father and “that is when it all began” said Indira (I.109). That day she realized her potential and decides to continue. However before getting married she nurtures the feeling of being another Joan of Arc and wanted to devote every minute of her life for the national cause. Her political activities came to a halt due to her matrimonial involvement. In politics she had always been compared to her father. People remember the modest, confident and lighter manner of speech that Jawaharlal Nehru had. She was known to be a person having a high opinion about her. People knew Nehru through his public encounter and also through his writings. His ideas and opinions are on record in his writings. He was a much familiar figure than Mrs. Gandhi was.

Feroze Gandhi entered into politics at the age of sixteen. It was a quick but stormy beginning. He got police beating for watching a protest and demonstration against the Simon Commission. The awe and severity of beating by police and later
on by his brother raised the ardor for political agitation and he wanted to rebel. Thus a sudden but total charge appeared in Feroze in nationalistic fervor. Before meeting Indira he has also entered the political movement. Mahatma Gandhi said for Feroze to his mother, Rattima, “Give me seven young men like Feroze and we shall achieve independence in seven days” (I.92).

Gandhiji praises Feroze’s attempt to enter in national movement with Feroze’s joining of the Allahabad city congress the doors of Anand Bhavan opens for him. It was his old scout master, Malaviya who introduces him to Nehru family. He makes his place in the inner family circle of Nehrus. He was devoted to Kamala Nehru, mother of Indira when she was suffering from tuberculosis. Inspite of the contagious nature of her ailment, Feroze never hesitated to be near her. Even when she moved to Switzerland for her treatment, Feroze came to visit her from London, where he was studying at London school of Economics. During this phase closeness developed between Feroze and Indira.

Jawaharlal became a doting father after the death of Kamala Nehru. He needlessly worries about his daughter. But he never tried to impose his will upon her. Their relationship was a close mutual bond. He felt distressed when Indira decides to marry Feroze. At that time Indira was in her teens and the whole of opportunities were open to her. Apart from this, both Indira and Feroze belonged to entirely different backgrounds which could
create problems of adjustment after marriage. Indira’s aunt Vijayalakshmi also was against this matrimony. In fact, the whole world seems to be against it. A leading newspaper of that time, the pioneer published the agitation by several religious communities in protest of their marriage. They had nothing to do against any feeling of communal biases. Media, orthodox Hindu journals, condemnation in public meetings and personal letters to Nehru and Indira were in full swing. They were considered to endanger the Hindu society.

Gandhi defended Feroze and Indira’s marriage. He wrote an article in the Harijan answering those who wanted Feroze should change his religion, he wrote “Religion is not a garment to be cast off at will” (I. 99). The social protests and tensions soon relaxed and it was in the year 1942 after the Quit India movement that the marriage took place. Indira appears to be a devoted wife, mother and daughter after marriage. She maintains a perfect balance to manage her family, her marital relations and at the same time attended her father too.

Indira faced her first and the only imprisonment on 11th September, 1942 to 13th May, 1943. This happens soon after marriage. She was arrested from the Ewing Christian college, Allahabad from a flag hosting ceremony where she was addressing the students and refused to stop on the orders of a British soldier. She shared the barrack with her aunt, Mrs. Pandit and her cousin, Chandralekha Pandit. Her experience in Naini
Central Jail, Allahabad was like being in a battle field where one has to pass through the procedure to get the real picture. She felt her political experience would remain incomplete without going to jail. Although her relationship with the prison had been old enough. When she was not five years old, her father served his second phase in the prison. Her mother, grandfather and aunt too served the confinement during the national freedom. It was in prison that Indira learned to stay calm and self-centered. Besides this she developed the habit of reading voraciously. Mrs. Pandit describes in her prison diary their daily lives in the prison and Mrs. Gandhi’s term of imprisonment. She writes:

The girls have been busy “decorating” our corner of the barrack. Each part has a name Indu calls hers Chimborazo. Lekha’s bit is called Bien Venue…I am obliged to call my abode Wall View because it’s so obvious…Indu and Lekha are both gifted with imagination and the evenings are seldom dull…The jail cat named by Indu-Mehitabel…The girls have a habit of giving names to everything: the lantern, table, bed, even the bottle of hair oil which has recently lost its top as the result of a fall. It is now referred to as Rupert the headless Earl. The lantern is Lucifer. After lock-up they read plays, each taking a part. I am the audience

(Prison Days. 1946).

Indira undertakes the responsibility of educating the convicts. She pursues the task initiated by her father almost twenty years ago in the Naini jail. She was always overshadowed by her father’s personality in politics as well as in real life. Though her
indulgence in politics was delayed partly because of the circumstances and partly due to the family ties. There was a sense of hesitation and lack of enthusiasm in her acceptance as a leader. Therefore, an old acquaintance of the Nehru family once remarked about Indira that Indira as a political belonged to ‘the late-flowering variety’ (I.32). She rejected many tempting offers to acquire a position in the cabinet, when she was just twenty-nine. At this time she considers her commitment towards her family to be her primary responsibility. She has been assigned a role as a daughter, a wife, a mother which interrupts her from submitting herself to political activities.

It was in the year 1946, when Jawaharlal Nehru was appointed as the head of the interim government. He appointed his son-in-law, Feroze as managing director of the National Herald in Lucknow, of which he has been the founder. This was a difficult time for Indira. She could not decide whether she should live with her family in Lucknow or move to Delhi with her father who had become the Prime Minister. She arranged her household work and political activities in a way that she would devote time to both. She was a dedicated mother, who herself brought up her children, spent time with them, checked their progress while they were in school. In addition to this she pays attention to her father in his old age and days of loneliness. She once described her life as a “travelling salesman” (I.111) because she has been frequently travelling between Lucknow and Delhi. It was a
tedious task to continue the same routine. Thereafter, she sensed the need to be with her father who was now destitute and grown physically feeble and needed someone to dispense the burden of his responsibilities. Jawaharlal always remained the foremost object of her devotion. Her love for him remains incomparable. Hence in 1948 she virtually shifted to Delhi. This move of Indira resulted in the cleavage of husband-wife relationship.

As Feroze Gandhi became an M.P. and grew in stature, he drifted apart from the Prime Minister’s official residence and from Indira. His political career is described as, “the gentle breeze that quickly developed into a storm” (I.113). He had won great success and nationwide reputation for having a deep compassion towards the poor and downtrodden and he keeps challenging the authorities. His love for his country and dedication towards social work is well known among the public. He regularly visits his constituency in every three months. The people of Rae Bareli, his constituency appreciates down to earth attitude. He dislikes the unreal atmosphere in Nehru house which was quite dissimilar to that of Indian villages in terms of poverty. Contrary to the stiff sophisticated upper-class atmosphere in the Nehru house Feroze would favour to be in the service of the downtrodden people who had placed him in such a position. He always chooses the local dialect to converse with them, live and eat with them, talk to them and advise them.
His qualities had placed him in a different set of national acclaim. His speeches and arguments in the Loksabha were competent as of an experienced lawyer. He never hesitate to criticize Nehru or in using punches against the critical issues and attacking the politically corrupt. He wanted to be known by his capacities as an M.P. The Nehru kinship often offends him. Indira remembers an occasion when people addressed Feroze as the husband of a congress president which upsets Feroze. Indira thinks, the biggest sin in marriage is to hurt the male ego. In her hard work and enormous capacity to work Indira paralleled her father. Long working hours and people rushing to hear her often seem to refresh her. Instead of relaxing she preferred to write letter to her father, scribbles notes to be discussed on current issues and instructions to be given. She remains conscious to make the best use of time.

Indira learned the tactics of politics under the shadow of her father. She completed her apprenticeship while living in Prime Minister House known as teen murti. She tried to acquire the perfect political training that would be needed in future as a Prime Minister. She was engrossed in the task of housekeeping, role playing as a hostess for several national and international guests. She had less time to devote in politics, but she always witnessed whenever the leaders come and discuss national and international issues, problems and disputes with her father. She had treasured a great deal of political experience and
understanding of men and matters. Whatever she did had been a
great learning experience for her. Her eight months experience in
prison had a modest impression on her mind. She says, “perhaps
it strengthened my character strengthened me as a person”
(I.131).

On 15th August, 1947 Jawaharlal Nehru became the first
Prime Minister of independent India. With this came the
responsibility of controlling and managing an amorphous
political organization and a vast anarchic country that had been
exploited for years by the Britishers. All these years, Indira
supports Nehru as a devoted daughter, showing her unbounded
affection on him sometimes and at other times rebuking him for
losing control over himself during public meetings. In one such
occasion, she corrects her father during the first Afro-Asian
conference in 1955 at Bandung in Indonesia. Nehru had to face
serious opposition for his proposal of a pact between India and
China. Nehru left the conference out of aggression and was later
scolded by Indira for such a behavior.

Indira was a very shy natured and reserved person during the
formative years of her entering into the politics. When she
became the member of congress working committee in 1955, she
got several opportunities to come in limelight, but her timidness
always overpowers. However, in the later years her influence
over the party and in Jawaharlal Nehru’s life increased a lot. The
initiative that was taken by Indira in the dismissal of the
communist government in Kerala state was marked as an effort of great sagacity. This was after she became the President of Congress party in 1959. These were the years of Indira’s apprenticeship and she showed tremendous growth. In an instance, she played a prominent role to resolve the crisis during the language issues in Madras in 1965. All of these instances proved her resoluteness.

However, after the death of Nehru in May, 1964, her earlier inclination to renounce politics and leave India also enforced her mind. But after contemplating over things she decided to pursue politics and participate in the task of the development of the newly born independent India, as her father had dreamt about. She recovered herself from the sudden and unexpected blow that Jawaharlal Nehru’s death had inflicted upon her.

Indira left her reluctance and joined the central government. She was given the Ministery of information and broadcasting by the new Prime Minister, Lal Bahadur Shastri. All these years it was her father who had overshadowed her. Now she had to prove her worth. She succeeded Lal Bahadur Shastri as Prime Minister after the latter died in 1966. She created history by becoming the first woman Prime Minister of India. Indira who was shy natured and remained tongue-tied during her initial years in politics came up as a transformed personality when she became Prime Minister. She had become quite glaring in her ways. Moreover, she made several complex decisions as Prime Minister. The
decision of the devaluation of the Indian currency in June, 1966 and division of the state of Punjab are some issues that had been taken without much concern. During her tenure the country also faced two severe drought conditions, consecutively in the years 1965 and 1966. The choice of her first cabinet also reveals the shades of her personality. She did not relent when she dropped two important ministers, A.K.Sen and Humayaun Kabir who were working since the time of Nehru and Shastri. Sometimes the press satirically called them members close as her “kitchen Cabinet” (I.190).

It was before the general elections in 1967 that the position and influence of congress party begins to decline so was the prestige of Indira Gandhi. She became the subject of disgust to the public. She was now judged on the basis of her functioning in the government and as a Prime Minister nor under the shade of her father. Rajinder Puri remark about Indira:

Indira, in fact does not have a style which she may call her own…

Her every gesture, every mannerism, seems to be modeled on that of the late Jawaharlal Nehru…(Puri, The Wasted Years).

The year 1969 shows a decline of the congress party. It was a high time for Mrs.Gandhi to reshuffle her policies and unite the party members. There was a clash among the old generation and the vocal emergent radicals in the party known as the Young Turks. In this contrast, Trevor Dribery wrote: “The time has come when Young Turk and old Gandhian can no longer hang
together even if the alternative is hanging separately” (Sahgal, *Indira Gandhi emergence and style*. 1978. 45). Indira introduced the Ten-Point Programme in May, 1967 which included the nationalization of banks, control on property, state control over export and food grains. Her cabinet disagrees to some of the points in the programme.

The cleavage in the government continued till November, 1969. The members of the congress party continued their no-confidence motion against the Prime Minister, followed by personal attack on her. Once during a parliamentary proceedings she said: “It is obvious that the entire motion is designed as a personal attack on me, on the supposed concentration of power in my hands…I have been compared, not for the first time, to Hitler, Stalin and Mussolini, I think the people will laugh at the preposterousness of these comparisions” (Sahgal, *Indira Gandhi’s Emergence and style*. 1978. 65). Mrs. Gandhi announced the election on December 27, 1970 was much ahead of time. They were normally scheduled to be held in 1972. She decides this out of insecurity of reduced majority in the parliament and hospitality of party members against her. She had a support of only 200 members in a house of 525. Desai once remarked about Mrs. Gandhi that “woman will sell the country to the communists” (*I.221*). She found herself being trapped in the political intrigues. The only logical thing to overcome this state was to make her hold stronger. Her opponents were totally
baffled by her enormous and unexpected success in the decisions.

Once again she gained the trust of the Indian public who have now tried to look at her with immense hope and faith that they had previously reposed on Nehru and Mahatma Gandhi. A leading Indian Newspaper described her self confidence, power and leadership in these words: “formidable, almost frightening” (I.230). Indira appeared to be the most powerful leader in the world after India won the war with Pakistan which lead to the creation of a new nation Bangladesh. She broke all the prejudices previously set about her as a “Goongi Gudiya- the Dumb Doll” (I.235). She acquired a high esteem among the Indian masses. People began to trust her and raised their hopes high that under her leadership India would recognize a new identity in the world map. The way she lead the country during the wartime and the toughness by which she twit a world leader having a stature like Nixon played an important role to produce her as a famous and adorable leader. India was hopeful to acquire the desired peace for which it waited since the time of independence.

India faced a heavy burden in 1971 when nearly 9 to 10 million Hindu refugees from East Pakistan had to be absorbed in India. It was bearing a heavy burden on Indian economy to feed, clothe and shelter these refugees for an indefinite period of time. Indian government persuaded a peaceful attempt for this problem. Indira tried to seek help of Nixon, the U.S President to
influence Pakistan for finding a solution of the refugees another problem related to East Pakistan. She felt that the U.S President was ignoring the issue of India and Pakistan. The tragedy of the refugees from the East Pakistan seemed to be a less important matter than that of the flood victims in Bihar. However, the sufferings of Pakistani refugees were much deeper than the flood victims. She admonished Nixon for ignoring the vast proportions of such a human tragedy. She made a visit to Washington “in search of some wise impulse, which as history tells us, has sometimes worked to save humanity from despair” (I.254).

Indira sensed the intentions of President, Nixon, therefore, she refused the request of U.S. to withdraw the Indian armed forces from India’s borders with Pakistan. She does not want to resort to war if the efforts for peace become successful. She was assured that the Nixon government will make every possible effort in order to make Pakistan win over the Indians. The request to pull back the Indian army and non-assistance to the guerrilla forces of Bengal was prevalent. Indira’s plan to provide assistance to the Bengali guerrilla forces harassed the west Pakistani soldiers. The guerrillas had been trained and equipped on Indian soil.

In the meantime, all the efforts to pacify the Pakistani troops failed. And ultimately a war was announced on 23rd November. The war began on 3rd December. Indira was delivering a speech in Calcutta at the midst of it she received the news of Pakistani
air attack. All the efforts for a peaceful solution failed. Indira judged the world to be concerned only to it with certain repercussions while ignoring the basic causes. The war ended with India’s victory under the charismatic leadership of Indira.

Indira reacted sharply to the United States’s anti-India stance. Her boldness in attitude while dealing with the international authorities is praiseworthy. When George Bush, blamed India for being the aggressor, she showed her disgust on this comment and the use of such a harsh language and ceasing the economic aid. The U.S administration was too antagonistic for India and Indian leaders. Kissinger remarks about the Indian Prime Minister as, “The lady is cold-blooded and tough” (I.259). People compared the qualities of both father and daughter as a person and as a national leader. Indira’s resoluteness in taking decisions was different from that of her father, Jawaharlal. He would have hesitated and forefend to face the threat of Pakistani militancy and must have occupied the refugees from the East Pakistan. Apart from this Jawaharlal possessed the humility and benevolence required by the one in power that Indira lacked off.

Indian nation faced severe socio-economic changes during the year 1972-73. Draught of 1972, war and capricious monsoon leading to the economic imbalance, political upheaval, corruption, misuse of authority, administrative inefficiency were witnessed during Mrs. Gandhi’s Prime Ministership. Her opponents condemned her of all the wrong that under went in the
country. Furthermore, the charges of collecting black money was laid on her senior ministers and secondly the suspected car factory of Indira’s son, Sanjay. These allegations robbed the charisma of her name which shone during 1971-1972. The charges of nepotism were put on Indira upon the Maruti issue. Moreover, economic unrest in the country raised a protest against the government. People showed their contempt against the rise in food prices and political corruption. It was followed by strikes in various departments.

The first six months of 1975 witnessed an embarkation in politics. The JP movement was giving a powerful political challenge to the government. Jayaprakash Narayan, a senior leader belonging to the political tradition of British liberalism, Marxism and Gandhism. He had instigated the student movement that originated in Bihar, in March, 1974 as a demand for educational reformation. This was an organized and disciplined youth movement based on non-violence and change. Sahgal observes: “Their meetings and activities were more stirring than anything I had seen in twenty-five years” (A Voice of Freedom. 1977. 13). In the present time the situation had been altered for the congress party. The miracle of Mrs. Gandhi’s leadership had begun to get feeble and dull. All the high hopes and aspirations that were raised after the victory in the elections of 1971 were getting sluggard. As a consequence, people voted against congress in 1975. This anti-congress wave was also due
to the dwindling faith of public in their leader’s credentials. The love, faith, affection and public sentiments which had been a great source of strength for the congress party paved way to utter distrust. Indian public showed their inacceptance for political system which augments lawless activities, political secrecy, violence and unethical practices. Various sequence of events that happened between January to June, 1975 had a profound effect on the Indian politics.

The death of L.N.Mishra, a minister in the congress government initiated troubles for the party. On January 2, 1975, Mishra was injured in a bomb blast at Samstipur, Bihar railway station. He died later. An investigation was carried by D. K. Kashyap, formerly associated with the Nagarwala case; R. D. Pandey, a deputy director of the intelligence Bureau; Anil Chopra, collector of Daman, who had broken a smuggler gang and Ramanathan, a CBI inspector, the association of congress MPs in selling licences to reputed firms was revealed.

This event was followed by Mrs. Gandhi’s condolence speech in AIR in which she accused the tragedy that had befell on Mishra calling the act as a pre-planning to target her. She blamed that the JP movement bears the entire responsibility of the crime. The wind was still anti-congress, which The Times of India described as “a veritable tornado” (Sahgal, Indira Gandhi’s Emergence and Style. 1978. 146). Any political alliance was
unable to work. Indian public became the greatest force. In an interview JP comments:

The “grand alliance” seems to have become for Mrs. Gandhi the same kind of cry as Bonaparte had become for British mothers in those times...Mrs. Gandhi makes herself out as radical and suggests she stands for policies and ideals of which Jayaprakash Narayan and the Bihar movement are afraid. But the people of Bihar, or for the matter, the people of India, would like to ask her what she has done in nine years of her resign. What radical change has she brought about? (Sahgal, *Indira Gandhi’s Emergence and Style*. 146).

Jayapraksh Narayan and other opposition leaders on 6 March, 1975 held a procession to the parliament to present the charter of demands. The procession is compared to the Gandhian salt march, due to its immense length of about five miles. It seemed that Delhi attired in an armed look. The Congress party and its leader Mrs. Gandhi was quickly losing political ground. There problems seemed to be unending. After the JP movement it was the demand of Morarji Desai to call on elections in Gujrat. He began his fast to death till the elections were announced in the state. One after another Mrs. Gandhi was facing nightmares given either by her opponents or by the members of her party. In the wake of protests, Raj Narain, a socialist filed a case against Mrs. Gandhi for practicing election fraud in the Lok Sabha elections in 1971. The judgment of the Allahabad High Court
came on June, 12, 1975 on the same day when the election results were announced.

Justice Jagmohan Lal Sinha found her guilty on the charges of misuse of government machinery for her election campaign. Court declared her election invalid and unseated her from her seat in the Loksabha. This was followed by the verdict of Supreme Court that she could continue as Prime Minister without her right to vote in the Parliament. The agitation for her resignation gained momentum and reached up to the level of disobedience by the police and the army. Barricading and police patrolling could be seen around Mrs. Gandhi’s residence soon after the announcement of the Allahabad High Court judgment. Members of the congress party and supporters of Indira held a demonstration shouting slogans against justice Sinha. Meanwhile, Mrs. Gandhi addressed the public gathering thrice, every time focusing upon the internal and external threats faced by the country. She had been granted a time of twenty days so that the party may choose another leader. According to the proceedings of the High Court she should resigned from her seat in the Parliament as well as from the party leadership. To a great astonishment she derived benefit out of this situation and once again agitations were raised against Justice Sinha. The demonstrators displayed their loyalty towards her. As a result bus services were brought to a halt, slogans, burning the effigies of
Justice Sinha were wide spread. *The Times of India* reported the political demand:

The public transport system here was virtually paralyzed today (13th) as hundreds of buses were unauthorisedly diverted to points near the Prime Minister’s house to carry demonstrators affirming support and loyalty to her. Not a single DTC bus operated till 1 P.M. Some buses made their appearance around 2 P.M. By 5 P.M. only 380 vehicles out of 1400 were operated on scheduled routes…

There were heated exchanges between rival DTC workers union representatives… workers of the union controlled by the CPI-M protested against the sudden dislocation of the bus services. (*Times of India, 15 June 1975*)

The question rose against the honesty and dignity of Indira Gandhi. MP, Shambu Nath Mishra showed his disgust saying that she is honest and sincere towards her duties and is not passionate for power and position so she should stop this nonsense going on in the country in the form of all the demonstration and protests. If she is fair enough, she will be released from the case against her. The judgment will be in her favor and she can come back to power. This political venture lead to the arrest of two high office bearers in the congress party namely, Chandra Sekhar and Ram Dhan. On the night of 25th June a program of sweep arrest of the congressmen was initiated. This was followed by the declaration of the state of national emergency. The president signed the proclamation on Mrs. Gandhi’s orders of emergency during the night of June, 25, 1975.
The cabinet did not meet the next morning to take any decision. This was the pre-preparation for the dictatorship of Mrs. Gandhi to which the cabinet remained ignorant. An eminent political novelist, Nayantara Sahgal writes about the emergency, “Smacks of Watergate for she operates entirely outside normal political channels. Not even the cabinet knows what is going on and she is careful to shuffle the members around and to dismiss those who become too popular or independent” (A Voice of Freedom.114).

Mrs. Gandhi’s pre-emergency techniques are worth noticing. She arranged a power failure on the night of 25th June, so that the newspapers may not be able to publish the news of the declaration of the emergency. The planning for arrest of the party members made on the night of 25th June was also a measure to pretend to the opposition of the surprise attack made by someone trying to disturb the internal security of the country. With the official announcement of the promulgation of the emergency, several parliamentary ordinances were converted into law, enhancing the powers of the government.

The day when emergency was declared was different from other emergencies like the emergency during the war. As there were no roaring of guns, explosion of bombs and striking of alarms or any sort of warning from the armed forces. In spite of this the country seems to come to a standstill. People had already faced an emergency during the Bangladesh war in 1971. But the declaration of emergency on 26th June, 1975 took people by
surprise. To meet the problems of the country mainly the price rise, slump in production and stream-lining it, rising protests etc. a new twenty-point program was launched as a remedial measure. The government has succeeded in making New Delhi one of the quietest capitals in the world, whether it was done intentionally or unintentionally but a sense of consciousness was inculcated among the public. A sweep of erotic arrests was noticed. Around 1,00000 people were arrested during this course. Among these were students, professors, journalists, shopkeepers, legislators, political party workers, businessmen, critics of government. A gathering of more than five people was banned. Entire country was enveloped in a shroud of silence. Censorship on press immobilized it. Any sort of opposition, oral or written was banned. People from different professions were ordered to appear before her to congratulate her on the declaration of emergency. Huge posters of Mrs. Gandhi depicting the twenty point program were huge all over the city.

Every government policy has its own strength and drawbacks. The state of emergency is not an exception to it. The steps taken by Mrs. Gandhi were providing loans to the small farmers from bank, developing new plans for handloom sections, initiating a national program for use of underground water, bringing five million more hectares under irrigation by ending the interstate river water disputes, review of laws on minimum agricultural wages, declaring bonded labor as illegal, special
legislation for confiscation of smugglers properties, raising the crop production from 100 million tons in 1971-72 to 115 million tons, action against the misuse of import licenses, implementing new schemes for workers association, national permit scheme for road transport, providing relief in income tax to the middle class, books, stationary and essential commodities to students at controlled prices. It was an offence to charge more than the printed price. Awareness for the right of the consumers was introduced. New apprenticeship schemes were enforced to enlarge employment and training especially for weaker sections. These were the main highlights of the twenty-point program launched by the government. These were the illuminating sides of the emergency era.

The strictness and severity with which the laws were made and put into practice can be considered as the drawbacks of the emergency era. The rigidity shown during the beautification programme in Delhi is well known. The evacuation of the slum areas in Delhi in the name of city-beautification was absolutely stringent. The same was practiced during the vasectomy schemes undertaken by the government. Ration cards were not provided to those having more than two children. Several villages, street vendors and dwellers were killed and arrested for demonstrating against the forced sterilization. The public specially the poor section faced dire humiliation and contempt as a result of the forced sterilization scheme. This was considered as one of the
most impetuous steps taken. Apart from this the curb put on media since the emergency has been a worldwide concern.

The state of emergency gained acclaim due to its state of discipline and implying efficiency to the various departments. There was no room for corrupt, inefficient and sluggish officials and employees. There was a provision for immediate action against such government officials. They were suspended, demoted, retired prematurely or in an extreme even prosecuted. Inefficiency in administrative offices has given way to quicker work. “The late comers are given red marks which mean the laws of a day’s casual leave” (India today. The Emergency situation in India and its effect on people). Emergency got a hold on the educational system too. Involvement of political parties in the schools and colleges were intercepted. Before the emergency period the student agitation had damaged a great deal of public property by burning buses, damaging trains and violence in the city. Attendance in schools and colleges were given much attention.

One cannot ignore the fact that an authoritarian system was imposed on Indians during the emergency. Eventually the democracy of the country was throttled and the constitution was neglected. Mrs. Gandhi became the law and order herself, the judgment of the Allahabad High Court was shredded. Government was planning to advocate a ‘presidential form’ of government for India. The slogan India is Indira and Indira is
India was prevalent and no one refuted it. Mrs. Gandhi accepted that her ways were authoritarian to some extent. In an interview with Marry C. C she said:

No. Obviously it was authoritarian in some ways because press was censored, and individual freedom was curbed. But the situation was very, very grave and in such a situation, you have to choose whether to consider interests of the larger mass of people or the fewer (Indira Gandhi in the Crucible of Leadership: a Political Biography. 245).

The state of emergency came “like a numbing blow in the dark, the manner of it was shocking though the word “dictatorship” was common usage by then. After Mujibur Rehman’s establishment of a dictatorship in Bangladesh in early 1975, many in India waited for it as we wait for the monsoon” (Sahgal, A Voice of Freedom.1977.13). Growing opposition and spreading disenchantment demands for the change in leadership. She had built a formidable citadel of personal power for herself in the past few years. Yet there were some who dared to rebel. Every time she faced imminent removal, she acted readily by amazing rallies in her favour. Buses full of people were carried to Prime Minister’s house to participate in the rallies. “Unhappily, freedom and fairness are the two bulwarks of India’s political life that Mrs. Gandhi’s style has removed from the scene” (Sahgal, A Voice of Freedom.1977.74).
The restriction on press was one of the most condemning decisions undertaken during the emergency. In his book *Professional Journalism*, Kamath quotes Nehru: “I would rather have a completely free press with all the dangers involved in the wrong use of that freedom than a suppressed or regulated press” (272). Media was not left untouched and unaffected by the emergency era. This move ceased the freedom given to the mass media in a liberal democratic system. The country witnessed a great change in the socio-political environment of India. As a result corresponding changes were seen in the independence mass media system of India. The government gripped control over newspapers. In the midnight of 25th June, 1975, Mrs. Gandhi’s government declared a state of national emergency. Emma Tarlo writes: “Most intellectuals consider it as a blot on the Gandhi-Nehru legacy” (*Unsettling Memories: Narratives of the Emergency in Delhi*. 2003. 23).

It was during this phase that the democracy was extinguished, fundamental rights and individual freedom placed under suspension, any sort of opposition against the functioning of the government was banned. India has been a democratic country with a liberal democratic political system since independence. Moreover, India, like Japan, is a country which provides maximum freedom to press in comparison to other democratic countries of the world. Among the hallmarks of democracy, press has been a significant one. But during this
period of Indian history which is known as emergency, a great change was noticed. The press which has been a prominent agent of political socialization has an important appliance of public opinion. Kuldeep Nayar, an eminent journalist observed while he was arrested during the emergency:

That was a dark night, when we nearly lost our hard-earned freedom. Mrs. Gandhi became a law unto herself. The press was gagged. One lakh people—from top political leaders to ordinary people—were detained without trial. A chapter of authoritarian and extra-constitutional rule began with Mrs. Gandhi and her son (Sanjay Gandhi) calling the shots (Interview of Kuldip Nayar, 25 June, 2010).

By 26 June, 1975 power had shifted from Parliament through the Ministry and the cabinet to the Prime Ministry.

The press has to follow certain guidelines during the emergency. Among them was the restriction against the publication of any prejudicial matter regarding the maintenance of law and order, public safety, civil defense, military operations etc. In an interview with Stewart D. Mc Bride, Nayantara Sahgal comments on the press censorship: “The censorship has put Indian society right back into the middle ages. Now we have to wait for news from travelers, such as someone coming from Bombay who tells us that there has been a meeting or there was a protest” (A Voice of Freedom. 1977. 101).
In mid seventies the country witnessed unprecedented turn of events in the socio-political climate of the country. The main issues that paved way for a widespread discontent among Indian population were raising prices of different commodities, unemployment, exploitation and corruption. During this phase (1973-1974) the railway employees of Gujrat and Bihar states went on a strike. The working Chief Minister of Gujrat, Mr. Chiman Bhai Patel was forced to resign. But after fresh elections, opposition party formed the new government while the congress party loosed its grip. It was an alarming situation for Mrs. Gandhi. She was threatened that a political crisis might emerge. With the beginning of the JP movement the demand for Indira’s resignation grew at the center. In his book *Democracy in India*, Bhambhri observes: “In the state and the whole situation in the country became polarized between Indira Gandhi versus JP movement” (64). The declaration of emergency was the counteraction on the part of Indira Gandhi’s government to JP’s challenge.

After the emergence of the emergency era varied opinions came forth regarding the inevitability of the need for such a decision. A prominent writer and journalist, Khushwant Singh who was the editor of The Illustrated Weekly of India, was among the supporters of the emergency. He observes:

By May, 1975 public protests against Mrs. Gandhi’s government had assumed nationwide dimensions and often turned violent. With
my own eyes, I saw slogan-chanting processions go down Bombay thorough fares smashing cars parked on the roadsides and breaking shop-windows as they went along. Leaders of the oppression parties watched the country sliding into chaos as bemused spectators hoping that the mounting chaos would force Mrs. Gandhi to resign (Media Under the Shadow of Emergency).

It seemed that the emergency was a necessary outcome of socio-political and economic problems going on in the country. P.N.Dhar who was the Secretary and chief official advisor of Indira Gandhi during emergency was the one who believes in the inevitability of emergency. Vinoba Bhave, a great freedom fighter praised the emergency and called it an ‘Anushashana Parva’.

The emergency rule faced immense criticism in spite of Mrs. Gandhi’s defending the emergency and the name tag of a power-hungry woman on the ground that was an attempt to protect the state and the Indian people. Other than Indira Gandhi it was her son Sanjay Gandhi who is suspected to be the one behind the atrocities committed during the emergency. He was also the only beneficiary to Mrs. Gandhi during this period. He developed the Twenty-Point program which proved to be most controversial. Nevertheless, the state of emergency was a dramatic turn in the Indian political affairs and it came forth with several criticisms and controversies and also few appreciations.
The government got powers to curb the freedom of press. In 1951 a special legislation called the Press Act was put on the statute book. In 1969, Indira Gandhi made a persistent attempt to curb the freedom of the press. She found the press being too critical of her ways, especially when the newspapers expressed their disgust to the authorities of the ruling party. This dislike grew up to the demand for her resignation. Allegations were also made against the congress party for practicing fraud to win the elections in 1971. Socialist like JayaPrakash Narayan too had raised agitation against the central government through satyagrahas. All these revolutions and criticisms resulted in the declaration of a state of emergency on 26 June.1975 under article 352 of the constitution, claiming the internal disorder due to strikes, rallies and protests. In this way, the democracy was strangled. Soli Sorabjee observes: “The first and most crucial round of battle for freedom of the press and civil liberties was lost without a struggle in the first week after the emergency” (The Emergency, Censorship and the Press in India 1975-1977. 1977. 15).

The Media was restricted by introducing a censorship order dated 26th June, 1975 under Rule 48 of the Defence of India Rules, 1971. The consequence of such an order was that without proper scrutiny and permission of the censor, no news item, comment on emergency, any other action taken under MISA or shall be published. The press council that had been established in
1966 was abolished under the ordinances that were promulgated on December 8, 1975. The ordinance also prevented the publication of any such objectionable matter having some inference with the supply, distribution, production of commodities, creating any disharmony among different sections of the society. Other policies laid down in respect of media were. The four news agencies were fused into one, advertisement policies were reviewed, withdrawing the housing facilities given to journalists etc. Newspaper like The Indian Express and The Statesman showed courage to defy the censorship order. Mr. K.K. Birla, head of The Hindustan Times was a staunch supporter of the congress party. On 28th June, two days after the declaration of emergency The Indian Express published a blank editorial to express disgust while due to official threat most of the sections of the Print media showed a meek submission regarding the curtailment of press. Quotations from Gandhi, Nehru and Tagore were banned during this press censorship but The Financial Expert published a song by R.N.Tagore’s from Gitanjali. Political cartoons about Indira Gandhi were banned. Frank Moraes, a leading editor recalled, “…Nehru didn’t care what the newspapers said about him. With her if there’s an article, editorial or cartoon she doesn’t like, one of her entourage lets her disapproval be known” (Sahgal, Indira Gandhi’s Emergence and Style. 1978. 41). The leading newspaper The Times of India, whole maximum directors were government nominees, soon submits before the government policies. The
atmosphere in the print media was heightened by the detention of senior journalist Kuldeep Nayar. T.N. Singh remarks against the 1976 Press Act as: “If Gandhiji were to be reborn, he would be put behind bars and Harijan would not be allowed to be published” (Sorabjee. The Emergency, Censorship and the Press in India 1975-97. 1977. 15).

S. Mulgaskar, the editor-in-chief of Indian Express, restricted the writings of Nayantara Sahgal. She was told not to write on any political issue. At that time her pamphlet on anti-fascism was in prominence. Everyman’s last issue was shredded by police and it was shut down. It was a matter of ill-concealed satisfaction that Nayantara would not be able to write about politics. Nayantara felt, “…to be creative, but a ban on any side of creativity is a ban on all of it” (Sahgal, A Voice of Freedom. 15).

At the midnight of 14th August, 1947, India got independence while at the midnight on 25th June, 1975, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi proclaimed a state of emergency throughout the country. From this time onwards the print media was silenced. This was considered as deliberate act on the part of the government to prevent the news of the proclamation of emergency to get published. It was all of a sudden that all the printing machines came to a standstill due to electricity failure at the Bahadurshah Zafar Road, the hub of newspaper in New Delhi. It was reported as:
According to the White Paper Misuse of Mass Media, issued by the ministry of Information and Broadcasting in August 1976, as many as 258 journalists were detained during the emergency (110 under MISA, 66 under Defense of Rules, 83 for other reasons) 43 correspondents, 2 cartoonist, and 6 cameramen were disaccredited; 7 foreign correspondents were expelled out of the country; and the entry of 29 was banned…Indian correspondents representing foreign news organizations were ordered to vacate the government houses within two months (White Paper Misuse of Mass Media, issued by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting in August, 1976. 12).

Moreover, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting was given to Vidya Charan in place of I.K.Gujral. He executed the new policies soon. The emergency regime got strong hold on media. The news that favored and publicized the government’s working especially during the emergency was allowed to be published. Sunit Ghosh in his Modern History of Indian Press “one of the figures shows that the information and publicity budget excluding AIR and Doordarshan rose to Rs. 18.70 crores in 1976-77 as compared to Rs. 11.90 crores in the Pre-emergency year 1974-75” (289).

On the contrary, the public was ignorant about the inhuman acts enforced during the emergency like forced sterilization, arbitrary arrests etc. Any news item that breeds hatred and contempt or that bears criticism and protest against government
proceedings were banned. It was all practiced to stop people from knowing the truth.

In an interview with Howard Anderson, a 55-year old St. Petersburg public relation consultant, Nayantara Sahgal comments on the freedom of press that the press cannot regain its freedom unless Mrs. Gandhi is defeated and her party thrown out of power. Sahgal observes:

Mrs. Gandhi and her party no longer represent the values of Jawaharlal Nehru and Mahatma Gandhi- the essentially civilized and human values that India fought for and built independent nationhood on and which have produced the agricultural and industrial achievements my country has today (A Voice of Freedom. 106).

The press regained its freedom in March 1977 that is 19 months after the national emergency. It resumed its lost vigor and validity after the elections in March 1977 where Indira’s party lost the elections. The press tried to reveal the truth of emergency regime and leaves the power of decision making in the hands of the public. It resulted in the expulsion of the congress party in the elections and the victory of democracy.

Mrs. Gandhi had showed an authoritarian tendency since her term as Prime Minister in 1966. It was not after the declaration of emergency that she tends to be a dictator. But her powers during the emergency in June, 1975 were considered only a
continuation of her earlier style. It was difficult for her to work within the democratic, parliamentary system. Thus, she tends to modify it. Mrs. Gandhi’s cousin, Nayantara Sahgal boldly criticizes her move. She believed that it is quite challenging to change an ancient society. But it was not justified to imprison one lac people in order to solve the economic crisis of the country. When during an interview with Nina McCain, Nayantara Sahgal was asked whether Indira Gandhi was following the footsteps of her father, Sahgal responded:

I could just sit down and weep when I hear that. No greater democrat ever lived than Nehru…He profoundly believed in freedom for his people…She never absorbed his essential faith. She is not of his ilk at all. (A Voice of Freedom.112).

On May 28, 1977, the Ministry of Home Affairs appointed the Shah Commission in order to inquire the allegations against Mrs. Gandhi for misusing power and performing malpractices during the emergency. Mary. C. Carras writes in her book Indira Gandhi in the Crucible of Leadership: A Political Biography that the commission was headed by former Chief Justice J.C. Shah. Those who found her as “a sinister specter hovering in the political wings” (215) were after gathering the necessary tools to utilize it against her. A close scrutiny of the charges proves that the case of the proclamation of emergency was fraudulent, along with it the detention of the political opponents was also a criminal act. The decision of proclaiming the emergency had not
been consulted before the cabinet. However, the matter was submitted to the cabinet for their ratification the next morning i.e. on 26\textsuperscript{th} June, 1975. The Shah Commission found her assertion partly true. Mrs. Gandhi in an interview to Mary. C. Carras justifies her conduct as:

The cabinet is never consulted on the budget. The same is true regarding the devaluation of the rupee in 1966...The Prime Minister is not bound to put everything before the cabinet...And we were concerned that nothing leaks out (\textit{Indira Gandhi in the Crucible of Leadership: A Political Biography}. 233).

She disaffirms all the charges of any arbitrary action taken by her coterie in her or in Sanjay’s name during the emergency. Probably she feels that without suffering any change can be possible. But harassing the public was not the intention of the government during the emergency.
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