CONCLUSIONS
Indira Gandhi- her name reminiscences awe, inspiration and fear to this day. The only woman Prime Minister of India till date, she knew no parallels during her hey days in office. The challenges she faced were formidable and daunting, be it on the domestic front or on the issues related to foreign policy. She handled all of them with ease. She was held in high esteem both by people and leaders in India and abroad. Even to this day her memories refuse to fade away and continue to linger in the national psyche.

Indira Gandhi- her name inevitably evokes images of two historic phases in the development of 20th-century India. The national stage of drama was dominated by Mahatma Gandhi and his assassination in 1948. Gandhiji bequeathed to the Indian people ideals that have frequently been a source of inspiration to them, but, as few were able to attain his Himalayan virtues, they have more often been a source of frustration and even despair. Jawaharlal Nehru, who ushered India onto the stage of independence, was less demanding in this respect. Yet, he too towered over other men, and he projected an image of leadership- familiar, loving, confident and reassuring- that the Indian nation needed during its years of infancy. But though he extracted high standards of performance from himself, Nehru failed to provide the firmness and direction his people sorely needed to tackle in earnestness the staggering problems of development and national integration. As for Mrs. Indira Gandhi, she’s the spiritual daughter of neither Jawaharlal Nehru, her father, nor Mahatma Gandhi in whose aura she grew up. Although she was influenced by both of them-more deeply by her father, she is, as Gandhi and Nehru were, in their own way, heir to the Indian culture and historical traditions. She mirrors India in many ways.

Nationalism

Mrs Gandhi is secular in outlook and nationalists in spirit. She was aware of the fact that India with its diverse groups and varied cultures is a nation politically and not ethnically. In a country like India with lots of diversity, people have to imbibe a spirit to live together in peace and in case of conflicts; they have to resort to peaceful settlement instead of indulging in violence. It was Indira Gandhi’s firm conviction that in spite of cultural, religious and other differences, India continues to be a nation. Speaking on nationalism in India she observed, “What holds people together is not religion, not race, not language, not even a commitment to an economic system. It is a shared experience and involvement in the conscious and continuous efforts at resolving internal differences through political means. It is a sense of ‘Indianness’
which unites all people despite ethnic, linguistic and religious diversity. Most conflicts and tensions in the world is innate in a failure to take note of the importance of nationalism. Indira Gandhi felt that India is an integrated country but it ‘oneness’ can be further strengthened by education and appreciation of our cultural heritage. Indians must be proud of the great variety of their culture. Indira Gandhi always gave fullest encouragement to folk dance festivals because she believed that through dance and music, barriers are broken down and people get to know each other. She used to wear saris from different parts of India and tied the sari according to the custom of the places she visited.

**Internationalism**

Indira Gandhi neither believed nor espoused the cause of narrow parochial nationalism but believed in internationalism which caters to the needs, welfare, well-being and happiness of the entire mankind. Mrs. Indira Gandhi believed in international public opinion and activism of international agencies promoting world order. In her address to U.N. she has affirmed her faith on the utility and efficacy of International forums and cooperation. Like her father, she believed in peaceful settlement of all disputes and mobilizing international public opinion in bringing to an end the mad race for use of force in bilateral issues.

Her concept of internationalism is tinged with humanism and national dignity with mutual understanding and reciprocity. As a staunch opponent of imperialism, Mrs. Gandhi often irritated the western block but endeared herself to the Third World on international issues. Her firm stand on converting Bangladesh refugees’ issue to a problem of international concern, proved the maturity of her commitment to international institutions. Her approach to China’s arrogant leadership during the debate on the Chinese admission into the U.N. leads one to conclude that national sentiments are subordinate to international postures.

Her concept of internationalism included various facets. They are as follows: 1) Equality of status for all states in the international sphere. 2) Resistance to super powers’ subjugation of the weaker nations in any form. 3) Just economic distribution of world resources among the haves and haven’t countries. 4) Complete support for revolutionary values whereby nationalities struggling for nationhood got Indira’s support and backing notwithstanding of the dangerous consequences of such international stance. 5) Dominance of super powers in the United Nations is antithetical to her concept of internationalism.
The Western Governments were against India because of our general policy of Non-Alignment, because we were the only ones, whenever we saw anything was weakening, who gave the push and said, “come along, do not get discouraged”. We encouraged people to stand up to the western powers. India was taking a leading part, they did not like anybody who does not listen to them and who was making a success in spite of listening to them. On internationalism, she said, “we are determined that India’s strength and size shall never become a cause of apprehension to any of our neighbours. We are pledged not to interfere in the internal affairs of our neighbors in any way but to live with all countries in a spirit of co-existence, equality and mutual respect. We reject the great power-chauvinism.

Socialism, Secularism and Democracy

Mrs Gandhi has all along been a persistent advocate of a secularism, Socialism and democracy. According to her, all these ideas must develop together in this country; otherwise the country will be fragmented. She was equally committed to the philosophy of socialism so that every person in the country will have an opportunity to develop himself by equitable distribution of assets. She also believed in democracy because she believed that it was the best form of government where people express their desires and achieve their aspirations. Indira Gandhi said with courage of conviction that India stands for freedom, democracy, secularism, Non-alignment and peace and declared that we shall defend freedom and national integrity with the determination. We shall strengthen democracy and protect the sacred freedom guaranteed by the Constitution. We shall in thought, word and deed abide by secularism, the great human principle taught to us by Gandhiji and a Jawaharlal Nehru. We shall go ahead with socialism.

Socialism

Indira Gandhi forcefully reiterated her determination to go ahead with socialism because socialism alone, according to her, can cure our economic and social ills, the ills of poverty and the inequalities of income and provide equal opportunities and access to welfare for everybody. Socialism is not a dogma, but a faith born out of reason. The essence of socialism she says, is the world free of economic privileges, the spreading of welfare for all and this can happen if the state has the power to regulate economic relationships and it itself controls the strategy points of economy.

Secularism
Mrs Gandhi’s outlook on life is modern, scientific and rationalistic. Although there is a religious streak in her, it is more expressed in the study of religious literature rather than in the ritual. She had no truck with Palmists, soothsayers or horoscopists. She respected all religions be it Hinduism, Christianity, Islam, Sikhism etc and partook in their celebrations.

Whenever there were communal tensions and communal riots in the country, wherever they might have occurred, Indira Gandhi was among the first to rush to the scene of occurrence. She always had hard words to say to those who incited communal violence and hatred. Her solicitude for the minorities was evidenced in her initiative one endeavours in getting Dr Zakir Hussain elected as the President of India on 6th May 1967. This was undoubtedly one indisputable proof of Mrs Indira Gandhi’s commitment to secularism.

**Democracy**

Mrs Gandhi is a democrat by conviction. She had faith in democracy for the simple reason that there is scope for the development of mental, moral faculties for any individual. She’s not only secular minded but a thorough democrat.

**Champion of women’s cause**

Whenever Indira Gandhi addressed the meetings of women, she emphasised the fact that Indian women were more fortunate in more respects than those in other countries. First and foremost, women in India occupied higher and more respectable positions than their peers elsewhere. Next, even in the so-called advanced countries, women had to fight for the right to vote, right for education and even for life; in India noble souls like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Eswar Chandra Vidya Sagar and Mahatma Gandhi fought and obtained for women, equality with men in every sphere. Because of the fight that women had to put up in the West, the relationship between men and women in Western countries was often strained. In India, on the other hand, women had fought shoulder to shoulder with men for the national cause. Mrs Gandhi believed in equal opportunities for women in matters of education, employment etc. she said that women should have equality in wages and such matters. They must have better services and service conditions at work and living etc.

**Weaker sections**

In our Constitution, Article 46 of the Directive Principles enjoins on the state the duty to promote, with special care, the educational and economic interests of the weaker section. Article 15(IV) permits the making of special provision for socially and educationally backward classes,
besides the Scheduled castes and Scheduled tribes. Article 16(IV) refers to special provisions in favour of backward classes in public appointments. And Article 340 provides for the appointment of a commission to investigate the condition of the backward classes. These provisions reflect the nation’s understanding from the very beginning, of the need for special treatment in favour of such disadvantaged categories of people.

Mrs Indira Gandhi presented her first budget to the Lok Sabha on 28 February, 1966. She declared in her introductory speech that the object of the government’s fiscal policy was growth and stability, with due regard for the welfare of the weaker sections of the community-the small farmer, the landless agricultural labourer, that petty artisan, untouchables, and the tribes living in economically backward areas. Providing adequate opportunities for gainful work was a necessary component of the development strategy of a poor country. The Prime Minister expressed the anxiety over the indebtedness of Adivasis and said special attention should be paid towards measures for their debt relief. She also cautioned against attempts of some people to incite Adivasis to indulge in violence, which she said, would only harm the Adivasis

National Integration

Mrs. Gandhi was an ardent believer in democracy. She always believed in settling issues through dialogue. She entertained different shades of opinion to emerge and took recourse to that opinion which she believed would best benefit the nation she always wanted some positive solution to the persisting problems of regionalism and communalism and not mere jugglery of words. She herself suggested an approach to the problems and requested the members to give practical suggestions,

She always used to say that our people must be made to understand the evil effects of Communalism and of regionalism which seems to negate our national will and purpose. She also said that we must also study and expose to public gaze the poisoning of the young mind through misguided educational processes and ill-conceived text-books. She further said that what we need is a many pronged attack on forces of disintegration and merely to say that if we overcome economic disparities and attain a degree of affluence, we shall solve our problems is not enough. She believed that since every problem ultimately has its origin in the mind of man, we have to ensure that our educational processes, the books we read, the radio we hear; the films we see do not distort the Indian mind but lead it toward integration and solidity.
Speaking about her future vision of India, she said our concern is what kind of India we shall bequeath to future generations— a strong, harmonious, self-confident India or a feuding weak, schizophrenic India. She said that national integration is not a mere phrase but awareness of the burden and task that history has placed on our shoulders. She opines that whatever our party or political creed, we hold the freedom and integrity of our country as supreme and dear above all else. But freedom and unity she felt cannot be taken for granted and eternal vigilance is the price of our integrity, as it is of all liberties.

Mrs. Gandhi is of the view that disintegrating forces are highly harmful to the development of a strong harmonious and self-confident India. These forces stand in the way of the emotional integration of various groups, sects of people in India. Until and unless the people developed secular attitude and outlook, the malady of disintegration continues. Communal or caste troubles and linguistic movements are initiated by a few persons, who are least bothered about national unity and integrity. Distrust and prejudice, in the opinion of Indira Gandhi, seen to be the causes of communal riots in many parts of the country. Mrs. Gandhi at National Integration Council Meeting held in New Delhi on November 12, 1980 rightly pointed out that most riots are provoked by a handful of persons or perhaps by a single person, but because of the prevailing atmosphere of distrust and prejudice, because of the persistence of narrow loyalties of caste, of religion and of language, personal quarrels can soon be transformed into a group clashes and assume a communal color.

Having identified the divisive forces in India, Mrs. Gandhi and her Government have taken some steps to combat them. One of the steps taken is that communal organizations were banned by legislation. Another step which was taken is to educate the people to imbibe national spirit and not narrow communal, caste, parochial outlook. On the other hand, Mrs. Gandhi time and again, through broadcast and public speeches has advised the people to develop secular attitude or outlook in the interest of national unity. Her efforts to combat the forces of disintegration, in whatever form they appear, revealed her intense desire to build up a strong India, free from social disharmony. She has undoubtedly become a relentless fighter for national unity and integration.

**Emergency**

Emergency was declared on 26th of June 1975 and the Article 352 of the Indian Constitution says “If the president is satisfied that a grave emergency exists thereby the security
of India thereof is threatened whether by war or external aggression or internal disturbances, he may, by proclamation make a declaration to that effect.” Clause 3 reads that such an emergency “may be made before actual occurrence of war or any such aggression or disturbances, if the President is satisfied that there is imminent danger there of”.

The emergency stands testimony to the fact that it was a unique event in the history of the country. The early seventies witnessed intense struggle between the forces of status quo and forces of change. Mrs Gandhi represented the change the people were aspiring for. But the changes that she had contemplated were not consummately and effectively implemented because of the insecurity that was infecting the vested interests and that proved detrimental to the interests of the country.

Meanwhile the country was plagued by problems of umpteen number like political opportunism in the ruling class, inflation, black marketing, foreign debt etc., which were making the lives of common man miserable and pathetic as the government of the day led by Mrs. Gandhi could not rise up to the occasion to take up the gauntlet thrown by the adverse circumstances, despite the fact that she won a landslide victory in the then concluded recent election. Wide spread unrest represented by violence and riots, incited by forces inimical to the government, mostly let by Jayaprakash Naraian who advocated removal of the government because it has become personification of inefficiency and corruption. His advocacy of armed forces and police personnel to revolt against the government took the situation to a flash point. Unable to tolerate further threats to the cohesion and integrity of the country Mrs. Gandhi imposed Emergency as she felt that the country was fast spinning out of control and was becoming ungovernable.

Undoubtedly, the Emergency had its flip side like curbing of fundamental rights, high-handed behavior and excesses of the police etc., some of them real and some of them exaggerated. However the positive side was that a semblance of the discipline was infused into the politics. The prices of essential commodities were brought down and inflation to great extent was reined in. Hoarding, smuggling, black marketing- the phenomena which were fleecing the common man became things of the fast. Industries, offices and educational institutions worked effectively and punctually. The entire nation behaved decently in a disciplined way every where. Mrs. Gandhi made efforts to prove that Emergency was a God- sent opportunity to make good the promises of social and economic changes which were not possible early due to unwanted
disturbances and she introduced the 20-Point Programme to ameliorate the suffering of the common man and better his living conditions.

The ardent democrat that she is, Mrs. Gandhi did away with Emergency and went to election in 1977. Though the results of election belied her expectations, she bowed to people’s verdict in all humility. The Janata government that ensued proved to be a cruel joke foisted the people. As a result, it collapsed like moth-eaten Pagoda and Mrs. Gandhi regained power with in no time because the people of India reposed faith in her to be Manna from heaven who has come to deliver them from problems. She proved to be a colossus on the Indian political scene without any serious challenger.

**20-Point Economic Programme**

The Emergency provided an opportunity to Mrs. Gandhi to formulate some definite plan for achieving rapid economic development. Under this plan 20 economic measures were enunciated. This plan containing 20 economic measures came to be known as 20-point programme. Mrs. Gandhi announced the 20-point economic programme on 1st July, 1975 in a broadcast to the nation and implemented it in all earnestness. This program is not devoid of frailties and criticism but provided succor to the downtrodden and helped them to come above the poverty line to some extent.

**Administrative Reforms**

Bank Nationalization, as a significant part of the national programme of transforming the economy of the country into a socialist one, is a major step forward and the credit of envisaging and making it a reality goes to the late Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi. It was felt necessary that this sector has to attain a dominant role and to occupy a key position in the economy, and secondly, to further the speedy achievement of the various socialistic objectives the country had set before itself.

Nationalizations of Banks did not mean depriving the existing industrial enterprises of their credit needs for genuine industrial enterprises. It was intended to throw open new avenues to the people, particularly to the youth of the country. Prior to nationalization credit to priority areas had been somewhat neglected and it was the vision of Indira Gandhi that unless adequate resources were made available to priority sectors, the development of the country was not possible..
The Nationalizations of the fourteen big banks is an evidence of the determination of Mrs. Indira Gandhi to bring a greater volume of resources within the area of social domain. It effected a major change in the Indian economic structure. It enabled Indians to pay more attention to the small man’s needs, and it restricted the monopolistic operations of the privileged few, of course, Nationalizations of Banks was never thought of as a universal cure. On the contrary, it was to be a weapon to be used with care and discrimination. In the context of country’s situation, the most compelling and urgent task was to accelerate economic development, to resolve the problems of unemployment and inequalities. Since the resources were limited, it was naturally felt more fruitful to invest them in creating new production facilities in preference to merely taking over existing units of industries. Thus, Nationalizations of Banks was an earnest attempt to bring the banking system into tune with the needs and aspirations of the Indian people.

Banks being closely linked with the development of the country’s economy cannot remain entirely uninfluenced by the needs of the political situation. When banks were nationalized, the political situation in the country demanded that banking facilities should be extended in an increasing measure to backward areas, to agriculture, to small-scale industry and so on. Mrs. Indira Gandhi wanted that banking operations should have a larger social purpose. Banks Nationalization was a challenge to the policies of Mrs. Indira Gandhi. There were detractors but on the whole there was understanding and appreciation. However, those in charge of banks handled the situation with great care and the transition was smooth. That augured well for future, and they had found a way to serve the people of India and at the same time, keep to sound economics. Nationalizations brought the custodians of banks full powers to deal with various situations. There was no need to seek guidance from other quarters in matters in which they had full competence for decision-making. Nationalizations of banks brought in the re-orientation of credit policies designed to fulfill some of the aspirations of the people.

**Privy purses**

If Nationalization of banks was a milestone in the socialization of the country’s economy, abolition of privy purses represents an important step in the further democratization of our society. India conceived of building up a democratic polity and an egalitarian society after attaining Independence keeping in tune with the prevailing aspirations of the people. Abolition of
privy purses and feudal privileges was a step in right direction. At the time of Independence there were nearly 650 princely states prevailing all over India. The then Indian leaders, to placate them and to make the integration of these states into Indian Union smooth, allowed them some concessions in the form of certain feudal privileges and Privy purses. Subsequently, acknowledging the egalitarian feelings of the people, Mrs. Gandhi believed that the days were gone when birth was the chief road to distinction and all over the world today, distinction comes from achievement, and that the highest privilege to which one could aspire in our country should be that privilege of being an Indian a free Indian, a democratic Indian, not higher or lower than any other Indian. Hence Mrs. Gandhi decided to introduce the bill abolishing the Privy Purses.

While introducing the bill no attempt was made to belittle the co-operation given by the rulers and their constructive role in the unification of the country soon after the achievement of Independence. It was appreciated by the people that they had contributed whole heartedly to the political, social and cultural life of the community and they had voluntarily conceded to have many of their privileges curtailed in the larger interest of the Indian nation. Yet certain institutions associated with them were not in harmony with a society striving for equality and social justice.

The continuance of heredity titles, customary rights, special privileges and privy purses without any relatable functions and responsibilities, it was argue by Mrs. Gandhi was incompatible with our democratic Constitution, the spirit of the times and the demand of changed circumstances. It was emphasized that changes do bring about difficulty and necessitate adjustments, but they are inevitable. The choice was, it was said, between bringing about change peacefully and with consent or to allow changes to come about in a manner which the Parliament and the country might not like.

**Land reforms**

When India became independent in 1947, vast tracts of agricultural lands were in the hands of miniscule minority while majority of the poverty stricken were devoid of any ownership over the agricultural lands. For the heralding in of an egalitarian society, it was believed by both the Congress party and other parties that land reforms were of urgent necessity and the land reforms were ushered in. However it was during the reign of Mrs. Gandhi that the pace of land reforms was speeded up. As per the wishes of Mrs. Indira Gandhi, the effective implementation of land reform measures have transformed the agrarian structure with a new class and caste
Abolition of intermediaries has resulted in the changes in the top of social pyramid and conferred ownership rights on the tenants, feudalistic type of landlords in the property structure was eliminated and there is also a sharp decline in absentee landlordism. Ownership of land became broad based, it has encouraged ownership cultivation.

A vast stratum of the landless poor are made the owners of land by the assignment of banjar land. This policy is very successful in most of the villages where government waste land is available. Landless people became the owners of land and thus changed the agrarian structure at the bottom of the social pyramid. By the late sixties, landless agricultural workers had received or seized 10 million acres of fallow land for cultivation. The ultimate aim of the tenancy legislation is to confer ownership rights on the tenants. The tenancy legislation, through not successful in its implementation, however, compelled the landowners to become owner cultivators taking direct interest in agriculture.

The Andhra Pradesh Land Reforms (Ceiling on Agricultural Holdings) Act 1973, cut big landlords to size by expropriating their surplus lands and distributing the same to the landless poor. No landowner owns land over and above the ceiling area prescribed by the ceiling act, there may be a few cases of landlords concealing land or resorting to mollified transaction but they cannot hold their illegal possession for long. The most beneficial consequence of the legislation is the destruction of semi-feudal land relations in the countryside and the prevention of future acquisition of land above the standard holding. Fear of effective enforcement of tenancy legislation and the ceiling act compelled the landowners to dispose of a part of their holdings and remain within the ceiling area prescribed by the ceiling Act. This has discouraged the concentration of landed property in rural areas and made the ownership of land as broad based as possible. But in statistical terms the magnitude of the distribution of the surplus land by the implementation of the Ceiling Act is very small.

The land reform policy of the government created a broad stratum of proprietors of land and where it is not successful, rural discontent and social tensions manifested in violent activities. Large landlords are adversely affected by the land reform measures. The beneficiaries are largely the middle class peasants and intermediate castes, and the scheduled castes and Scheduled Tribes are also benefited and have become proprietors of land.

Land reform, Mrs. Gandhi believed, when implemented effectively and efficiently creates a satisfactory and conservative peasantry but if they are carried out half-heartedly, it has an
explosive potential. She further said that more than the economic compulsions, land reforms are vital for the elimination of social tensions and for the creation of political stability.

**Foreign Policy**

Mrs. Gandhi also played a dynamic role in the matters related to foreign policy. Infact, she gave new direction to India’s foreign policy. She gave priority to real politik in international affairs unlike her father, Jawaharlal Nehru, who was more of an idealist in foreign affairs. She cut down Pakistan size and made India a predominant power in South Asia. Her signing of treaty with soviet Russia in 1971 was a defining moment in the annals of Indian foreign policy.

**Relations with Pakistan**

The Indo-Pakistan relations were not cordial from the very start because they are based on mutual suspicion, fear and feeling of insecurity. Three times, both were involved in major clashes at the cost of sacrificing thousands of people and millions of rupees which could otherwise have been used for the benefit of the people of both the countries.

Indo-Pakistan relations occupy a central place in India’s foreign policy. India’s relations with many other countries were largely influenced by the nature of its relations with Pakistan. The partition of India in 1947 has played a supreme role in Indo-Pakistan’s relations. The Kashmir issue has bedeviled the relations between India and Pakistan. If the problems of Kashmir are solved to the satisfaction of both Pakistan and India, there will not be much to quarrel between the two countries.

During the period between Indo-Pakistan war of 1965 and the emergence of Bangladesh, Pakistan launched a propaganda campaign against India. Pakistan’s interference in the international affairs of India, border intrusion by the Pakistani troops, spoiled all hopes of good neighborly relations. After the emergence of Bangladesh, Mrs. Gandhi reminded Pakistan that their disputes should be resolved bilaterally and their interests in the long run lay in developing friendly relations. India has emerged as a major power in the sub-continent after the Bangladesh war. The Simla agreement marked a beginning of a new phase in Indo-Pakistan relations. A change of foreign policy can be seen after 1972 in the relations of the two countries.

Mrs. Indira Gandhi had herself made excellent use of changes in the arena of world politics to act with extraordinary boldness during the Bangladesh uprising of 1971. Mrs. Indira Gandhi resented American attempts to assert a balance between India and Pakistan much before Bangladesh emerged. She aspired for a significant role for India in world affairs. Throughout her
Prime Ministership, Mrs. Gandhi indicated her desire to formulate a vision of the world and to direct India’s foreign policy. In the subcontinent, Mrs. Gandhi’s aim was not the pursuit of power but peace. She desired sub-continental harmony. She was interested in reducing the opportunities for great power interference in the area. The Simla Summit was a good example for this thrust in Mrs. Gandhi’s foreign policy. A change of foreign policy can be seen after 1972 in the relations of the two countries.

The Janata Government decided to concentrate on improving relations with the immediate neighbors. Pakistan was in the throes of a political crisis when Janata Party took over in India and it took some time to restart the process set in motion by the previous governments of the two countries. There was not any abrupt change in Indian foreign policy since some of the fundamentals of that policy Non-Alignment, close friendship with Soviet Union, anti colonialism, and anti-imperialism were nationally pragmatic and the basic principles on which the India foreign policy had been based. The shifts in India’s foreign policy under Janata rule are neither new nor great. They are adjustments.

After the return of Mrs. Gandhi to power in 1980, she was successful in focusing on her concerns- the withholding of arms from Pakistan and the demonstration to the Soviet Union of India’s reliability. Her only desire was to safeguard the national interest of India. She was worried about US-China–Pakistan axis. India desired to gain international peace with the help of both the superpowers. Mrs. Gandhi did not bring any change in the field of non-alignment.

Relations with China

China and India, the two Asian giants fought a war in 1962. The main reason for the war was the unsettled border dispute in the eastern sector in the north eastern state of Arunachal Pradesh the Middle sector and the Western Sector in the Aksai region A very major very large unresolved issue, one that is not easily tractable, is the border dispute between the two countries. The border problem is no longer just a question of the Aksai and the McMahon Line. It is now more complex and includes the strategically important Karakoram Highway, China’s position on Kashmir, its own recognition of the accession of Sikkim to the Indian Union and its support for Naga Mizo hostiles. All the same, the border dispute constitutes the most serious issue to be satisfactorily handled by the two countries. The year 1982 marks a change in the developments of India’s foreign policy. Through the basic principles outlined still continued to form the basis of India’s foreign policy in the post 1962 period, but it came to be characterized by greater
pragmatism and realism. Improvement of relations between India and Pakistan since the Simla Agreement helped ease Sino-India relations and promoted the process of normalization. Any sudden deterioration in India’s relation with Pakistan could easily bring about an equally sudden deterioration in Sino-Indian relations. India and China are neighbors and must live in peace. We search for a viable peace with China and it must be a constant endeavor of Indian foreign policy.

Before the Janata regime, Mrs. Indira Gandhi was beset with various domestic problems and therefore could not make much headway in the field of international politics, Mrs. Gandhi adopted radical measures like the abolition of Privy purses and Bank nationalization which led to the Congress split in 1969.

Mrs. Indira Gandhi was of the opinion that the Government would try and find a way in solving the dispute with China without insisting on its acceptance of the Colombo proposals as a pre-condition. India was prepared to follow a more flexible approach on the border issue with China. China on its part also showed signs of entering into negotiations with India. The Indian response to China was conditioned by three factors. Firstly it was felt improvement of relations with China would adversely affect India’s relations with the Soviet Union. Secondly, Mrs. Gandhi was hesitant to take a bold step towards China for fear of adverse reaction at home. And thirdly, it was felt in the Ministry of External Affairs that the time was not appropriate for the opening of a dialogue with China. China’s sensitivity to Pakistan’s security concerns was demonstrated both in 1965 and 1971 Indo-Pak wars and also by the unparalleled Chinese military support to Pakistan in terms of free supply of military hardware and the establishment of defense production facilities.

India and China should take stock bilaterally of major developments around the world. They should review internal issues concerning major powers including themselves. The Janata regime aimed at maintaining equi-distance between the super powers. The Chinese leadership saw in the change of Indian leadership in 1977, an opportunity to reduce the Soviet influence in India. Janata Government continued old policy although it was serious about normalizing Sino-Indian relations, a change of policy was inescapable. Morarji Desai categorically supported the Lok Sabha resolution of 1962 to “drive out” the Chinese from the Indian soil. He however, substituted “vacate” for drive out.” With regard to expansion of trade and cultural relations with China the Janata Government was flexible. The Janata Government continued the trend set by its predecessor in maintaining cordial relations with the neighbors’ countries of India. -After the re-
emergence of Mrs. Indira Gandhi to power in 1980, there was a change in the improvement of relations with China. The Chinese foreign Minister Mr. Huang Hua visited India on 26th June, 1980 and this marked an important development in the restoration of relations between China and India. During the period 1982-84 both the Indian and the Chinese leadership expressed their desire to find a speedy and peaceful solution to the border issue.

**Relations with Bangladesh**

With the moral and material support of Government of India under the leadership of Mrs. Gandhi, the emergence of independent Bangladesh became possible, the dismemberment of Pakistan and the emergence of Bangladesh have changed the power structure in the Indian sub-continent. Following the liberation of Bangladesh its relations with India remained very close for a few years. In fact, in the very first year, Sheik Mujib himself enthusiastically went in for signing a treaty of friendship with India. During the period of Sheik Mujibur Rahman, the interaction between the two countries in the political, social economic and cultural spheres was in full swing.

Indo- Bangladesh amity is essential for the maintenance of peace and stability in the sub-continent and the world. Historical, ideological and personality factors were obstructing the development of cordial relations between these countries. Super power rivalry in the area was also further aggravating the situation. Co-operation in economic and cultural spheres helped the emergence of harmonious relations between these countries and a durable and creditable opposition to the super power rivalries in area. It is difficult to assess the role of India in the crisis in the sub-continent. The merits of the role of India in the Bangladesh independence movement can be determined only in the long run, whether it has contributed to peace and stability in region or otherwise.

A number of factors were active in the determination of interaction between India and Bangladesh. India had always been friendly towards Bangladesh and made a number of gestures concerning the Farakka issue in the hope of strengthening the bonds of friendship. The anti-Indian and pro-Pakistan lobby which got encouragement from the ruling elite after the murder of Sheik Mujibur Rahman left no stone unturned in instigating the people of Bangladesh against the Indian government. Their propaganda had made the people of Bangladesh suspicious concerning their countries’ interaction with India. During Sheik Mujib’s regime both the Governments signed a number of agreements and treaties. The Indo- Bangladesh Treaty, The
Indo-Bangladesh boundary Agreement and Interim Agreement on the Farakka Barrage are a few among them.

After the murder of Sheik Mujib, a number of governments tried to control the country. Among them President Zia-Ur-Rahaman was considered to be a successful person. The political instability in Bangladesh is responsible for complicating the bilateral issues existing between the two countries. The New Moore Island controversy and the Farakka Barrage problem were the two main areas where both the governments have opposite viewpoints. But these issues are not as complicated as are sometimes projected by the leaders and Prime Ministers of both countries. It would not be wrong if we blame both these factors for playing adverse roles for their selfish interests in deteriorating cordial atmosphere that was existing in the beginning, when Bangladesh got independent.

There is a need to create proper atmosphere for the solution of the problems and it would be beneficial for both the countries if they prefer to maintain brotherly relations. In 1977 when political climate changed in India, the Janata Government wanted to strengthen the relations with its neighbors. The agreement of Farakka signed in 1977, through bilateral in nature, failed to satisfy both the governments and after the re-emergence of Mrs. Indira Gandhi, the Government of India demanded the revision of the Agreement.

Mrs. Gandhi continued good neighborly relations with its immediate neighbors. The basic principles of foreign policy remained unaltered. Relations with Bangladesh improved rapidly during the Janata regime. It recognized the legitimacy of post-Mujib regime in Dacca, It signed with it a five year agreement on the use of Ganga waters, and assured it that pro-Mujib elements would not be allowed to carry on their activities against Bangladesh from the bases. After the re-emergence of Mrs. Indira Gandhi in 1980, the Congress government continued good neighborly relations with its neighboring countries including Bangladesh.

Relations with Soviet Union

After India gained independence in 1947 there was not much of relationship between India and Soviet Union. In fact Soviet Union viewed India’s policy of Non-Alingment with suspicion. It suspected it to be a guise to support the Western powers. Subsequently because of the help that Russia rendered India over the issue of Kashmir and in the wars with Pakistan resulted in generating warmth in their relationship. The development of Indo-Soviet relations contributed greatly towards peace, stability and progress in South Asia. The friendship and co-operation
between USSR and India have been an important factor in international life. They are exercising a favourable influence for finding solutions to the most pressing and acute international problems existing in Asia and the World. The Soviet Union and India, together with the other peace loving countries made vigorous efforts to resolve the major problems of the day which are vital for universal peace. On most of the international issues, both the countries agreed with each other.

Based on mutual trust, equality and respect, the close ties between the USSR and India meet the basic vital interests of the two countries. The conclusion of the Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Co-operation between these countries during the reign of Mrs. Gandhi placed these relations on a more stable economic and political foundation. This treaty is not aimed at against any third party. It is a genuine act of peace, raising Indo-Soviet friendship and co-operation to a new stage, and accorded with the interests of the active defence of peace and the strengthening of security in Asia and the world as a whole. This treaty marked a change in India’s foreign policy. It was the first political treaty concluded by India with a big power. It was a diplomatic master stroke of Mrs. Gandhi as far as India’s foreign policy is concerned as it provided much needed security to the country.

Though there were minor irritants at times, between India and Soviet Union, they were not beyond solution. The Indo-Soviet relations stood the test of time. India has not shown any hesitation in being close to the Soviet Union. In no way, the Soviet Union poses a military threat to the subcontinent. Friendship with India has served the Soviet Union’s interest too. The Indian Government and the great majority of the Indian public favour close ties with the Soviet Union because ties helped India in building her economy and defence potentials.

During the Sino-Indian conflict in 1962, Soviet Union extended support to India. During the Indo-Pak War of 1965, Soviet Union played an important role in bringing about a cease-fire. Convergences between the Indian and the Soviet foreign policies lay in areas of vital interest to both the states. Differences between the Indian and the Soviet foreign policies arose from their origins, their ultimate objectives, and from the different capabilities of the states. None of these were synchronised. India’s foreign policy was rooted in the concepts of autonomy, humanity and development. Indian and Soviet Governments chose to build their relationship on the basis of conveniences in their policies, rather than emphasise their differences. Circumstances made this attitude mutually advantageous especially during Mrs. Gandhi’s term in office. This was
especially due to the fact that India lacked the power to oppose both the super powers at the same time and the Soviet Union lacked allies in Asia and looked for friends.

During the late 1970’s, the Janatha Government differed with Moscow on Vietnam’s military intervention in Kampuchea and on Idi Amin’s brutal regime in Uganda. The, then, Prime Minister, Morarji Desai had publicly talked about abrogating the Indo-Soviet treaty. The relations between India and Soviet Union during Janata rule however continued to be as cordial as before. Though the Treaty of 1971 marked a change in India’s foreign policy, the relations between India and the Soviet Union grew closer over the years.

Apart from their common security links, India and the Soviet Union had close economic links when the Janata Government came to power in March 1977. The Janata Government did not maintain any “special” relations with any country but after staying in office for some time, the Janata Government realised that foreign policies do not change with change of governments as they are based on national interests. It also realized that India was still dependent on the Soviet Union on a number of issue of foreign policy.

Mrs. Gandhi succeeded in securing Soviet support by concluding a treaty of peace, friendship and cooperation. After her reemergence, the Indo-Soviet relations improved further. Mrs. Gandhi favoured the continuing friendly relation between the two countries. Mrs. Gandhi maintained very intimate relations with Soviet Union.

Relation with the U.S.

Owing to different perceptions of the national interests, both the United States and India pursued foreign policies which often clashed with each other. Also there were many issues that divided the two countries. The two countries differed on questions like representation of China in the United Nations, the Korean War, the Vietnam war, the Hungarian crisis the question of Indochina, Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, its support to Pakistan over Kashmir, Sino-Pak-US access etc. India pursued the policy of nonalignment which in the beginning was regarded by American leaders and presidents as “pro—Soviet” and “immoral”, while the United States Government followed the policy of “containment” of communism which was entirely disapproved by the Indian leaders.

Despite these differences, the American Government always give due importance to India, the largest democracy of the world having vast economic resources, internal strength and strong leadership. After the downfall of the Americans supported ChiangKai-Shek regime in
China, the United States looked to India as a logical alternative leader in Asia. In the beginning, the United States Government tried its utmost to win over India, rather than Pakistan (which was of no match India in any respect) as an ally to check the expansion of communism in Asia. But the Indian leaders, pursuing a policy of nonalignment and peaceful coexistence with both the power blocks refused to ally with American headed Western bloc. It was only then that the American choice fell upon Pakistan. Though pro-Pakistan in certain respects; the United States Government never lost sight of the importance of India. United States leaders found high American stakes in the survival and development of democratic India.

There was a competition between the communist system of economic development in China and the democratic system in India. The success or failure of democracy in India, American leaders felt, would have highly influenced the course of events in other countries of Asia. Washington wanted to build India as a showpiece of economic development under a democratic setup in contrast to the communist system of economic development in China. To bolster the weak Indian economy, the American Government provided economic and technical assistance in the form of loans and grants. It is true that while giving economic aid to India, the Government of US adopted an arm twisting policy in order to influence India’s foreign policy which irked India.

The United States had vital stakes in the survival and development of Indian democracy. It was determined to see that Communist China did not engulf democratic India. This is evident from the fact that America and Great Britain’s military supplies to India were prompt during the Chinese invasion of 1962. Again, during Indo-Pakistani war of 1965, when China threatened India to open its northern front, the United States wanted China to keep off the Indo-Pakistan war, otherwise, the United States would come to India’s defence. The United States defined its basic interest in India in terms of the success and survival of an effective democratic model which could counter the Chinese and also Soviet influence in southern Asia. But more importantly, American interests also demanded a balanced relationship and stability in the region. The year 1971 saw a new low in the Indo-US relations because U.S supported Pakistan in the 1971 Bangladesh war and sent its Seventh Fleet into Bay of Bengal. Mrs. Gandhi remained unperturbed and pursued the war successfully. The 1971 war had changed the balance of power in the region with the emergence of Bangladesh and the reduction of the size and power of Pakistan. India had also emerged as a most powerful nation of the region. The United States
wanted no further flare up of any regional war which would upset the balance of power and stability in the region.

After the end of Cold War in 1991, United States became the sole superpower and India wanted to befriend it. The post Cold War period saw improvement in relations between United States and India. Two presidents of United States, George Bush and Barack Obama visited India and the relationship culminated in the signing of Indo American civilian nuclear peaceful agreement in July 2005. Of late, the relations between India and United States are running on even keel and in the days ahead will show signs of remarkable improvement.

**Nuclear issue**

It is a conventional belief that India’s nuclear tests in May 11th and 13th, 1998 were an epochal event that propelled it into the ranks of the nuclear weapons states. But it is pertinent to note that India became a nuclear power on 18th of May 1974 with its 'peaceful nuclear explosion' in the deserts of the Pokhran firing range.

India’s desire to become a nuclear power can be traced to India’s traumatic defeat in the Sino-Indian border conflict in October-November 1962, which was closely followed by China conducting its first nuclear test on 15th of November 1964, and China’s ambiguous warning conveyed to New Delhi during the 1965 India-Pakistan war. These events posted the Chinese nuclear threat on India’s security horizon, requiring a credible response. Immediately after the Chinese nuclear test, an alarm was raised in the Indian Parliament and the Government of India authorised the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) to conduct research into nuclear explosive technology.

In 1971, the security scenario for India was critical. Pakistan’s military crackdown in East Bengal in March-April 1971 resulted in a massive refugee outflow into the neighboring states of India; simultaneously, an American-Sino-Pak axis evolved and it got consolidated after Henry Kissinger’s secret flight to Peking from Pakistan in July 1971. Finally, the incursion of the Seventh Fleet into the Bay of Bengal during the India-Pakistani War 1971 was a transparent excise in gunboat diplomacy with the nuclear weapons to intimidate the Indian forces moving towards Dacca. The security impetus to the decision to test a nuclear device in the light of emerging situation in south Asia is obvious.

When the nuclear test was conducted in May 1974 at Pokhran, the Soviet Union had noted India’s experiment as an attempt to keep India’s technological development on a level with
world technology on the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. The French Atomic Energy Commission had sent a congratulatory message on the success of the experiment, while China had reported the event without any comment. Japan, on the other hand, expressed its regret. Canada, a major collaborator of India’s nuclear research program, while expressing concern that India was setting the wrong example in worldwide efforts to prevent nuclear explosion technology, it had felt slighted that India had gone ahead with the experiment without its knowledge.

Pakistan’s apprehensions, however, may well be understood, despite explanations and reassurances by the Indian government. Prime Minister Mrs Indira Gandhi herself had addressed a letter dated 22 May, 1974, to Prime Minister Bhutto of Pakistan. She gave the assurance that, “We remain fully committed to a traditional policy of developing energy resources entirely for peaceful purposes. The recent underground nuclear experiment conducted by our scientists in no way alters this policy…. Every country has the right to develop technology for various economic uses of nuclear energy. Every country has the right to develop its natural resources and this is especially so at a time when the world crisis in raw materials and energy resources has demonstrated that the tapping of all forms of energy resources is essential to our survival. Indian had advanced scientifically in nuclear research to develop its nuclear technology for the utilization of its indigenous resources for peaceful and economic purposes.

Though India acquired the power of the Atom bomb during the reign of Mrs. Gandhi, it never became a war mongering nation. It continued to pursue the policy of Non-Alignment. The policy of Non-Alignment which was first espoused and practiced by Nehru in the context of cold war was also carried forward by his daughter and successor, Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi. She was of the firm belief that the answers to the problems besieging India could not be found by joining any of the power blocs but by following independent foreign policy steering clear of power blocs. In the Non-aligned meetings and in other conferences she always championed the cause of Third World countries and exhorted them to stay united and advised them to extend cooperation among themselves for their bright future. She was of strong perception that joining the power blocs will deprive them of their independence and makes them slaves once again Mrs. Gandhi was an epitome of success as a Prime Minister. Her period was witness to many upheavals both within the country and outside. Internally, terrorist and secessionist movements were raising their ugly head and in the international arena the country was facing mounting
challenges from the cold war power politics and from her immediate neighbours like China and Pakistan. Mrs. Gandhi handled all of them deftly and with ease and could protect the territorial integrity of the country and at the same time upheld the prestige of India in the comity of nations. However, it is a tragedy that Mrs. Gandhi who strode like a colossos on the Indian political scene fell to assassin’s bullets on 31st December 1984.