CHAPTER-I

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Sonia Gandhi born December 9, 1946, is an Indian politician and the president of the Indian National Congress (Congress Party). Also, she is currently the chairperson of the ruling United Progressive Alliance in the Lok Sabha. She is the Italian-born widow of Rajiv Gandhi.

Born Sonia Maino in Orbassano (8 km from Turin, Italy), she met Rajiv Gandhi, who later became Prime Minister of India, while he was a student at Cambridge University and she a bar-maid in England. They were married in 1968, after which she took up residence in India. She adopted Indian citizenship in 1983, fifteen years after her marriage to Rajiv, when, it is speculated, she realized that her husband’s fortunes as prime minister might be affected by her Italian citizenship. The couple had two children, Rahul Gandhi (born 1970) and Priyanka Gandhi (born 1971).

Sonia Gandhi did not enter politics until after her husband’s assassination on May 21, 1991. Following his death she was pressured by the Congress Party to enter politics and to continue the party’s dynastic tradition of being led by a member of the Nehru-Gandhi family.

In 1998 she formally entered politics, assuming the helm of the Congress Party and declaring herself a candidate for Prime Minister. Largely through her family name, she was able to draw large crowds and nearly single-handedly revitalized the party. However, she remained a somewhat enigmatic figure, and her
opposition (chiefly the Bharatiya Janata Party) constantly played off the fact that she was foreign-born and was not a fluent Hindi speaker until she entered politics, frequently asserting that she had no qualifications other than her name.

She rose to become Leader of the Opposition in the 13th Lok Sabha, and in the 2004 election launched an aggressive campaign to unseat the ruling Hindu-Nationalists. She had been tipped to be the next Prime Minister of India following her party’s surprise victory in the 2004 Lok Sabha election. On May 16 she was unanimously voted to lead a 19-party coalition government.

However, on May 18, a day before her scheduled inauguration, she addressed a meeting of Congress lawmakers and declined to become Prime Minister. Amid indignant shouts from her supporters, she said “I request you to accept my decision and to recognize that I will not reverse it. ... It is my inner voice, my conscience.” Lawmakers surrounded the podium and begged her to reconsider. Later, hundreds massed outside Gandhi’s home in New Delhi. Feelings ran so high that a former provincial Congress legislator held a revolver to his head, threatening to commit suicide, before being disarmed ten minutes later. Distraught Congress workers smashed window panes at the party office to express their frustration. Congress leaders also resigned en masse in another attempt to get her to reconsider. Congress sources said Gandhi was tired of the Hindu nationalist campaign against her foreign origins. Some also said that her children asked her to decline, fearful of the assassination threat.

Manmohan Singh was appointed Prime Minister instead, with her support.

The story should have had a fairy-tale ending: a beautiful young girl meets her handsome Prince Charming, has two children, and lives happily ever after. In 1968,
however, when Sonia Maino married Rajiv Gandhi of India, the fairy tale was only half realized. She snagged a handsome prince, but she also inherited the troubled history of his country. Rajiv Gandhi was a member of a family that had ruled India since the 1940s. His grandfather, Jawaharlal Nehru, was India’s first prime minister, and his mother, Indira Gandhi, held that office throughout the 1970s. Rajiv himself briefly served as prime minister in the 1980s, but was assassinated in 1991 as he attempted to reclaim the post. Almost a decade after her husband’s death, Sonia Gandhi reluctantly followed in her famous family’s footsteps by entering politics. In 2004, after serving as president of India’s Congress Party, she was called upon by members of Parliament to take up the reins of prime minister. Gandhi shocked the nation, and the world, when she declined. Members of the opposition breathed a sigh of relief, but others feared that the Nehru-Gandhi dynasty had come to an end.

Love at first sight

Sonia Gandhi was born Sonia Maino on December 9, 1948, in the small village of Orbassano, just outside Turin, Italy. She was raised in a traditional Roman Catholic household, and her parents, Stefano and Paolo, were working class people. Stefano was a building contractor who owned his own medium-sized construction business; Paolo took care of the family’s three daughters. When Sonia was eighteen years old, her father sent her to Cambridge, England, to study English. He did not know that his oldest daughter’s life was about to change forever.

In 1965, just a year after arriving in England, Sonia met a young Indian student named Rajiv Gandhi (1944-1991), who was studying mechanical engineering at Cambridge University. According to Sonia Gandhi, it was love at first sight. The courtship, however, lasted three years, perhaps because Rajiv was from one of the most famous families in India, if not the world. Sonia’s parents were reluctant to have
her become involved in such a different culture, and Sonia herself was nervous about meeting Rajiv's famous mother, Indira Gandhi (1917-1984), who was considered to be the "first lady" of India. Indira Gandhi’s father, Jawaharlal Nehru (1889-1964), became the country’s first prime minister after India claimed its independence from Great Britain in 1947, and Gandhi worked closely with him until his death. In 1965 Indira Gandhi was poised to fill Nehru’s shoes.

"Power in itself has never attracted me, nor has position been my goal." Sonia's fears were quickly overcome as she and Indira became fast friends. In 1968, Sonia and Rajiv were married in a simple ceremony in New Delhi. Sonia wore the same pink sari her mother-in-law had worn at her own wedding many years before. A sari is a traditional dress that consists of several yards of cloth draped around the waist and shoulders. Following the wedding Sonia and Rajiv moved in with Indira Gandhi, who by this time had become prime minister. Sonia’s relationship with Indira deepened, and ultimately she became the faithful and obedient daughter-in-law, in charge of running the household. This meant that although Gandhi came into the marriage a modern woman of the West, she soon traded her miniskirts for saris and steeped herself in Indian culture. She even learned to speak Hindi, the official language of India.

Rajiv reluctantly enters politics

While Sonia Gandhi served as hostess at state functions and received visiting dignitaries along with her mother-in-law, Rajiv Gandhi remained relatively removed from politics. After leaving Cambridge, he did not go into engineering; instead he pursued his passion for flying and became a commercial airline pilot for Indian Airlines. The heir to the political throne was expected to be Rajiv’s younger brother,
Sanjay (1946-1980). As a result, the Gandhis lived in relative peace and quiet, while raising their two children, Rahul and Priyanka, away from the glare of the media.

India’s Parliament Explained

In the meantime, the 1970s became the Indira Gandhi decade in India. The Indian public revered her, calling her Mataji, meaning revered mother. Her political opponents, however, viewed her as a sometimes ruthless leader who seemed determined to form a dictatorship. She even caused dissension within her own political party, the Congress Party (CP). The CP was particularly popular in India, because its early members were major figures in the fight for independence from Great Britain. As a result, the party controlled India’s government for most of the twentieth century. In 1969, however, Gandhi split the CP; her splinter group was eventually called the Congress-I Party, the “I” standing for Indira.

By the late 1970s Sanjay had become Gandhi’s primary policy adviser, and in 1980 he officially entered politics by winning a seat in Parliament. Before Sanjay had a chance to fulfill his destiny, however, he was killed in a flying accident. A stunned Indira Gandhi begged her older son to join the family’s political ranks. Sonia Gandhi was vehemently opposed to the idea, fearing that her husband might be injured, or killed, given the explosive nature of Indian politics. After several long discussions, however, the couple jointly agreed that Rajiv should quit his job with the airlines. Although Sonia Gandhi was not pleased, she was a dutiful wife and supported her husband’s decision. In 1981 Rajiv ran successfully for Parliament and took over the seat vacated by his brother. He served as the representative from the Amethi district of Uttar Pradesh, a state in northern India populated by approximately 160 million inhabitants.
In 1984 the Gandhi family, and India, was shaken to its very core when Indira Gandhi was assassinated by two of her own bodyguards. Tensions had been escalating for some time between various Indian religious sects, including Muslims, Hindus, and Sikhs. Earlier in the year, Sikh militants had stockpiled weapons in their sacred Golden Temple, assuming that the government would not dare to enter their holy sanctuary. Gandhi, however, sent troops to storm the temple, which resulted in the deaths of many militants. In retaliation, Gandhi's bodyguards, who were Sikhs, shot and killed the prime minister in her own home. Just hours after the shootings, Rajiv Gandhi was sworn in as his mother's replacement.

Sonia Gandhi, resigned to the fact that her husband must lead his country, became his vigilant supporter and submerged herself in the role of a prime minister's wife. She became an art historian and worked with a team at the National Gallery in New Delhi to restore Indian landscapes. She also collected and edited letters that had been sent between Indira Gandhi and her father, Jawaharlal Nehru, which were ultimately published in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Despite Sonia Gandhi's successes, however, her husband Rajiv was a less-than-successful ruler. He was never able to match the popularity of his famous mother, and his administration was plagued by one problem after another, including charges of illegal arms dealings. As a result, in 1989 Rajiv Gandhi was voted out of office.

In the 1991 elections, Rajiv hit the campaign trail determined to reclaim his family's title. In an uncharacteristic move, security was light. Following his mother's death, Rajiv had taken to wearing a bulletproof vest and had surrounded himself with bodyguards. On this trip, however, his goal was to reconnect with the masses. Unfortunately, the lack of security would prove to be his undoing. On May 22, 1991, while swinging through Tamil Nadu, a key state in south India, he was killed by a
young female assassin. The woman was a member of the Tamil Tigers, a band of militants who were fighting for a separate state in northeast Sri Lanka (a country just south of India).

After her husband's assassination, Sonia Gandhi was devastated. She became a virtual recluse for the next six years, spending most of her time with her children and rarely leaving her home. She did break her silence twice. In 1992 Sonia Gandhi published a book called Rajiv, which offered an unexpected glimpse into the life she shared with her husband. In 1994 she went into more detail when she published Rajiv's World. She also preserved her husband's legacy by traveling throughout the world and establishing trust funds in his name. Remembering him in such ways provided at least some degree of healing.

Savior of the Congress Party

Throughout her seclusion, representatives from the Congress Party (CP) sent appeal after appeal to Gandhi asking her to be their leader. The CP, once the strongest party in India, had never recovered from Indira Gandhi's death, and by the 1990s it was in serious decline. At the same time, one of the opposition parties, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), was fast gaining ground. Since most of India still revered the Gandhi name, representatives believed that Sonia Gandhi would offer the best hope of infusing new life into their party. Time and again Gandhi refused their offers. In 1997, however, realizing that the CP was in dire need, she agreed to formally join their ranks.

Although she had no political experience, Sonia Gandhi threw herself into the 1998 legislative campaign. She made more than 140 stops throughout the country, delivering speeches to packed audiences. And, even though she spoke in a very soft,
voice and in heavily accented Hindi, she touched the people of India. It may have been partly because she was seen as a grieving widow, or because voters saw her as a reminder of the party’s past glory, but the CP was re-energized and Sonia Gandhi emerged as a political power in her own right. As one CP representative told CNN in December of 1998, “She gave the party again a nucleus around which it could get united.

Sonia Gandhi gained so much popularity that members of opposing parties, especially the BJP, saw her as a very real threat. In an attempt to undermine her credibility, they attacked her verbally and in the press, focusing on a single issue: Sonia Gandhi had no right to be involved in politics because, having been born in Italy, she was a foreigner. It did not seem to matter than Gandhi had become an Indian citizen in 1984. Such attacks did little harm, however, since most of the voting public did not consider Sonia Gandhi to be an outsider. As one male supporter told CNN in 1998, “Ever since she married Rajiv Gandhi, Sonia has lived in India. She has learned all about India and made herself an Indian. In fact, she is a good example of a good Indian woman.”

Although the CP made a good showing in the 1998 elections, gaining twenty-eight seats in Parliament, the Bharatiya Janata Party came out the ultimate winner when it formed a coalition government with seventeen other lesser parties. Therefore, in March of 1998, BJP leader Atal Behari Vajpayee (1926-) was named prime minister. It was, however, a short-lived victory. Shaky to begin with, Vajpayee’s government remained intact only until April of 1999, which meant that elections had to be held again in the fall of the year. In the meantime Gandhi was elected president of the CP, and it seemed possible that another Gandhi would soon be in the country’s top position. Once again the question of Sonia Gandhi’s right to be involved in
politics came into play, although this time the outcry came from several top members of her own party. Not wishing to divide the group, Sonia Gandhi resigned. The CP refused to accept her resignation, however, and instead fired the members who had dared to oppose her.

When the October elections rolled around, it was still not clear whether Sonia Gandhi was the favored CP contender for prime minister. As it turned out, the point was not an issue, since the CP had a poor showing, capturing only 112 seats. The BJP claimed victory, with 182 seats, and Vajpayee once again formed a coalition government. Known as the National Democratic Alliance, the BJP-led government controlled almost three hundred of the 545 seats in the lower house of Parliament, the Lok Sabha. This time, Vajpayee managed to install a relatively stable coalition, and the BJP would remain in control for the next five years.

**Took husband’s seat in Parliament**

In the same election Sonia Gandhi ran for two parliamentary positions, including the seat in Uttar Pradesh which Rajiv Gandhi had once held.

*Supporters of Sonia Gandhi gather in front of her house in New Delhi in 2004.*

Candidates are allowed to run for two seats simultaneously; if they win both, they must choose which post to take. Sonia Gandhi ultimately won both seats, but chose the district her husband had represented.

Under BJP rule the country seemed to prosper, and by 2004 Vajpayee was claiming credit for turning the economy around. True, big business was booming and India was advancing technologically, but millions of rural Indians living in poverty were not benefiting from BJP reforms. According to statistics reported by CNN in
2004, half of the Indian population was living on less than two dollars a day. However, Vajpayee was so confident that voters were behind him that, although national elections were slated for October of 2004, he called for polls to open six months early.

Sonia Gandhi again hit the campaign trail, covering approximately forty thousand miles in the months prior to the elections, and spending long days speaking in sweltering heat that soared over one hundred degrees Fahrenheit. For most of her appearances she dressed in a simple white sari, which is the symbol of widowhood in India. She also spoke simply and plainly, and made a direct appeal to the nations poor. In direct contrast to Vajpayee, who touted big business, Gandhi’s campaign, according to Egbert Bhatt of the Washington Dispatch, focused on “unity, tolerance, and love among all men.” As they had in 1998, millions of her countrymen embraced the soft-spoken Gandhi, calling her desh ki bahu, our daughter-in-law.

When elections began in April, 2004 voters turned out in droves. Almost four hundred million people went to the polls, and after all the ballots were counted in May, 2004 there was a surprise upset. The CP, along with its coalition allies, captured 279 seats, a slim majority, but a majority nonetheless, in the Lok Sabha. Since it had won a majority, the CP needed to elect a new prime minister, and the frontrunner seemed to be Sonia Gandhi. Although Sonia Gandhi remained tight-lipped about whether or not she wanted the position, political analysts predicted that her victory was assured, and CP members were vocal in their support. Elizabeth Roche of The Age quoted senior official Ambika Soni as saying, “Sonia Gandhi is the leader of the Congress party. We want that our party chief should become the prime minister.”
The fairy tale ends?

On Tuesday, May 17, during a meeting of the CP, Gandhi made a declaration that stunned her party, the people of India, and the rest of the world. "I was always certain," she said, "that if ever I found myself in the position that I am in today, I would follow my inner voice. Today, that voice tells me that. I must humbly decline this post." Gandhi's supporters pleaded with her to reconsider, but she remained firm in her decision to decline the position. Some claimed that she was bullied into her decision by the BJP opposition, who once again berated Sonia Gandhi because of her foreign birth. Others felt that she and her children feared for her safety. But the public Sonia Gandhi indicated that she was stepping aside for the good of her party and the good of India.

The day after her announcement, Sonia Gandhi nominated longtime friend and government official Manmohan Singh (1932) to take the reigns as prime minister. On May 19, 2004, his appointment became official. Although Gandhi did not accept the country's top post, she remained at the helm of the CP, and those around her still considered her to be very much in the forefront of Indian politics. As Mani Shankar Aiyar of the CP told Bill Schneider of CNN.com, "She is the queen. She is appointing a regent to run some of the business of government for her. But it is she who will be in charge and who will continue to direct the fortunes of the Congress Party." In addition, after the 2004 elections, it seemed that the Gandhi dynasty would continue at least for another generation, since Sonia and Rajiv's son, Rahul, was successfully elected to the Indian Parliament.
POLITICAL CAREER

Wife of the Prime Minister

Sonia Gandhi's involvement with Indian public life began after the assassination of her mother-in-law and her husband's election as Prime Minister. As the Prime Minister's wife she acted as his official hostess and also accompanied him on a number of state visit. In 1984, she actively campaigned against her husband's sister-in-law Maneka Gandhi who was running against Rajiv in Amethi. At the end of Rajiv Gandhi's five years in office, the Bofors Scandal broke out. Ottavio Ouattrocchi an Italian business man believed to be involved, was said to be a friend of Sonia Gandhi, having access to the Prime Minister's official residence.

Congress President

After the assassination of her husband Rajiv Gandhi and her refusal of becoming Prime Minister, the party settled on the choice of P. V. Narasimha Rao who became leader and subsequently Prime Minister. Over the next few years, however, the Congress fortunes continued to dwindle and it lost the 1996 elections. Several senior leaders such as Madhav Rao Sindhia, Rajesh Pilot, Narayan Dutt Tiwari, Ariun Singh, Mamata Banerjee, G. K. Moopanar, P. Chidambaram, Jayanthi Natarajan were in open revolt against the incumbent President Sitaram Kesri and quit the party, splitting the Congress into many factions.

In an effort to revive the party's sagging fortunes, she joined the Congress Party as a primary member in the Calcutta Plenary Session in 1997 and became party leader in 1998.

Within 62 days of joining of a primary member, she was offered the party President post which she accepted. She contested Lok Sabha elections from Bellary,
Karnataka and Amethi, Uttar Pradesh in 1999. In Bellary she defeated veteran BJP leader, Sushma Swaraj. In 2004 and 2009, she was elected to the Lok Sabha from Rai Bareli, Uttar Pradesh.

**Leader of the Opposition**

She was elected the Leader of the Opposition of the 13th Lok Sabha in 1999.

When the BJP-led NDA formed a government under Atal Bihari Vajpayee, she took on the office of the Leader of Opposition. As Leader of Opposition, she called a no-confidence motion against the NDA government led by Vajpayee in 2003. She holds the record of having served as Congress President for 10 years consecutively.

**2004 elections and aftermath**

In the 2004 general elections, Gandhi launched a nationwide campaign, criss-crossing the country on the Aam Aadmi (ordinary man) slogan in contrast to the ‘India Shining’ slogan of the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) alliance. She countered the BJP asking “Who is India Shining for?” In the election, she won by a large margin in the Rae Bareilly constituency in Uttar Pradesh. Following the unexpected defeat of the NDA, she was widely expected to be the next Prime Minister of India. On 16 May, she was unanimously chosen to lead a 15-party coalition government with the support of the left, which was subsequently named the United Progressive Alliance (UPA).

After the election result, the defeated NDA protested once against her ‘foreign origin’ and senior NDA leader Sushma Swaraj threatened to shave her head and “sleep on the ground”, among other things, should Sonia become prime minister. The NDA also claimed that there were legal reasons that barred her from the Prime
Minister’s post. They pointed, in particular, to Section 5 of the Indian Citizenship Act of 1955, which they claimed implied ‘reciprocity’. This was contested by others and eventually the suits were dismissed by the Supreme Court of India.

A few days after the election, Gandhi appointed Manmohan Singh as prime minister. Her supporters compared it to the old Indian tradition of renunciation, while her opponents attacked it as a political stunt.

On 23 March 2006, Gandhi announced her resignation from the Lok Sabha and also as chairperson of the National Advisory Council under the office-of-profit controversy and the speculation that the government was planning to bring an ordinance to exempt the post of chairperson of National Advisory Council from the purview of office of profit. She was reelected from her constituency Rae Bareilly in May 2006 by a huge margin of over 400,000 votes.

As chairperson of the National Advisory Committee and the UPA chairperson, she played an important role in making the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme and the Right to Information Act into law.

She addressed the United Nations on 2 October 2007, Mahatma Gandhi’s birth anniversary which is observed as the international day of non-violence after a UN resolution passed on 15 July 2007.

Under her leadership, India returned the Congress-led-UPA to a near majority in the 2009 general elections with Manmohan Singh as the Prime Minister. The Congress itself won 206 Lok Sabha seats, which was the highest total by any party since 1991.
Austerity drive

Sonia Gandhi advocated austerity for all the congress MPs and set an example by traveling in economy class on her 14 September 2009 travel from New Delhi to Mumbai. She saved Rs. 10,000. She also advocated for contribution of 20% of MPs salary (An MPs monthly salary is Rs. 16,000) for the drought affected victims in India.

CONTROVERSIES

1980s voting registration

In 1980 her name appeared in the voter’s list for New Delhi nor to her becoming an Indian Citizen. At the time she was still holding Italian Citizenship. 21 A violation of Form 4 of the Registration of Electors Rules, 1960, which states that “Only the names of those who are citizens of India should be entered on the electoral rolls.” When she did acquire Indian Citizenship, the same issue cropped up again. As her name appeared on the 1983 voter’s list when the deadline for registering had been in January 1983 prior to her becoming a citizen on April, 1983.

Swiss accounts

Swiss magazine Schweizer Illustration in 1991 revealed that she was controlling accounts worth $2 billion dollars in her minor son’s name.

Harvard scholar Yevgenia Albats cited KGB correspondence about payments to Rajiv Gandhi and his family, which had been arranged by Viktor Chebrikov, which shows that KGB chief Viktor Chebrikov sought in writing an “authorization to make payments in U.S. dollars to the family members of Rajiv Gandhi, namely Sonia Gandhi, Rahul Gandhi and Paola Maino, mother of Sonia Gandhi” from the CPSU in
December 1985. Payments were authorized by a resolution, CPSU/CC/No 11228/3 dated 20 December 1985; and endorsed by the USSR Council of Ministers in Directive No 263 3/Rs dated 20 December 1985. These payments had been coming since 1971, as payments received by Sonia Gandhi's family and "have been audited in CPSU/CC resolution No 11187/22 OP dated 10/12/1984. In 1992 the media confronted the Russian government with the Albas disclosure. The Russian government confirmed the veracity of the disclosure and defended it as necessary for "Soviet ideological interest."

In 2008 her party appointed Prime Minister Manmohan Singh. Singh was the only international leader to initially refuse data provided by the German authorities during 2008 Liechtenstein tax affair but the Germans had no information on any Indian politician's accounts., although after 17 years of investigation by a Janata Dal and United Front and National Front and a BJP government, there has been no evidence to link Rahul Gandhi or Sonia Gandhi to the Swiss accounts.

All this was in the wake of the 2006 Swiss Banking Association report revealing that the combined deposits of Indian citizens were far greater than any other nation, a total of $1.4 trillion dollars, a figure exceeding the nominal GDP of India.

Foreign birth

Gandhi's foreign birth has sparked intense debate and opposition. Although Sonia Gandhi is actually the fifth foreign-born person to be leader of the Congress Party, she is the first since independence in 1947.

Early in her leadership, there was even criticism from within the Congress Party. In May 1999, three senior leaders of the party (Sharad Pawar, Purno A.
Sangma, and Tarici Anwar) challenged her right to try to become India’s Prime Minister because of her foreign origins. In response, she offered to resign as party leader, resulting in a massive outpouring of support and the expulsion from the party of the three rebels who would go on to form the Nationalist Congress Party.

A senior Congress leader Pranab Mukherjee said that she surrendered her Italian passport to the Italian Embassy 27 April 1983. Yet surrendering a passport does not amount to the loss of citizenship as commented by President of Janata Party. However, Italian nationality law did not permit dual nationality until 1992. So by acquiring Indian citizenship in 1983 she would automatically have lost Italian citizenship.

The Italian citizenship law of 1992 did open a window of opportunity for those who lost their citizenship prior to 1992 to reregister as Italian citizens until the deadline of 31 December 1997. No comment or evidence has been put forward by Sonia Gandhi to confirm that she did not re-register post 1992, presenting implications to her position as an elected member of Parliament. As the present Government of India does to believe Indian nationality law to permit dual citizenship.

Sonia Gandhi (born 1946) is the widow, daughter - in - law and granddaughter - in law of three Indian prime ministers. As such, it is not surprising that she entered politics as well, becoming the leader of India’s Congress Party in 1998. An Italian by birth, Sonia Gandhi became a member of India’s most illustrious political family in 1968 when she married Rajiv Gandhi, son of former Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi. In 2004, Sonia Gandhi shocked the nation when she was elected prime minister but turned down the post fearing the question of her nationality would tear apart the nation the Gandhi family had sacrificed so much for.
Indira Gandhi

Sonia has authored two books: Rajiv and Rajiv's World.

In addition, she has also edited Freedoms Daughter and Two Atone, Two Together (two and her children when her husband Rajiv Gandhi was assassinated by a May 21, 1991.
REFERENCE:

1. As Stated by a Senior Congress Leader.

2. Author's conversations and Interviews with Leaders Present outside, 10 Janpath on that day.


4. This input was given to the Author by more than one Leader who was present in the meeting.

5. This input was given to the author by more than one leader who was present in the meeting.

6. Based on inputs from Senior Party Leaders.

7. Sonia's statement was reported in the media and read out at the CWC meeting.


11. As narrated by Pawar in a meeting with the press at his residence in March 1999.