Chapter — 5

MAJOR WORLD PROBLEMS DURING RAJIV GANDHI’S REGIME
Rajiv Gandhi was the first leader from among the developing countries to make the world a part of his political constituency without a political legacy of his own to fall back on. During the five years of his Prime Ministership, (1984-89) Rajiv visited 43 countries in all visits ranging from a few hours to several days he discussed various world issues. He chose his destinations with care and some countries, like the US, the USSR and Japan, he visited more than more. Not all the visits were successful. Some of them, in fact, were plain ill advised. Like the occasion when he went to Oman for the Sultanate's national day, which turned out to be little more and an assembly of Oriental potentates and leaders who received the Sultan's bounty either in plain aid or in the form of expatriate jobs for their nationals. To add insult to injury as it were, the Indian Prime Minister was made to sit along with heads of governments, relegated as they were to a position of relative inconsequence, protocol-wise, behind the heads of state.\textsuperscript{1} Rajiv Gandhi Was quick learner, as in his case, from the glee on the face of General Zia-Ul-Haq, the late Pakistan President, who not only had a pride of place as a head of state, but could also relate infinitely better to Oman's Sultan. When he went to other similarly unfamiliar destinations-Damascus, Budapest and Madrid being examples-during the remainder of his Prime Ministership, Rajiv was careful to ensure that India received adequate mileage from the visit. The most outstanding example, perhaps, or Rajiv Gandhi working towards creating a personal rapport
was a trip to Jordan in 1988. Jordan’s Hashemite royal family has an attachment-in-law to Pakistan, crown Prince Hussain having married into a well-known Pakistani family. Besides King Hussain owes his life and his state to General Zia-Ul-Haq, who was stationed as the head of a Pakistani army unit in 1970. When the Pakistani Liberation Organization all but seized power in Jordan, it was General Zia-Ul-Haq who led the massacre of the Palestinians in what history now known as Jordan’s Block September. However, by the time Rajiv Gandhi ended his visit to Amman, he and Mrs. Sonia Gandhi had cemented a bond with Hussain and his American-born Queen Noor, a bond that was to stand India in good stead during the evacuation of Indians from Kuwait and Iraq, through Amman. During an altogether short span of one term as Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi played a crucial role in setting up the Africa Fund—he pledged $40 million of the Fund’s capital of $70 million—designed to set right imbalances of apartheid, initiated, along with like-minded leaders, the six nation effort a peace effort and disarmament and approached the creation of the G-15 group of developing countries with missionary zeal, Rajiv Gandhi reserved his most important foreign policy initiatives, though, to the areas of immediate concern to India, its neighbourhood. The work of the joint working group on the Sino-Indian border dispute is probably the best tribute to the former Prime Minister’s role in steering Indian foreign policy. But foreign policy initiatives in India’s neighbourhood also proved to be his undoing, as the suspected
LTTE role in the murder indicates. Hardly anyone, perhaps including Rajiv Gandhi, realized that a country which was prepared to send its troops to Maldives or Sri Lanka and destabilize Nepal, would have to shield its leaders from external treats in the way Washington shields its President.²

Regarding India's role in the world, Rajiv Gandhi had carried on with great distinction the tradition of the Indian National Congress and of Jawaharlal Nehru and Indira Gandhi to fully participate in world affairs in order to sub-serve the interests of India and other struggling countries and to secure a position in the councils of the world. Rajiv Gandhi left his imprint on many international issues on the quest for nuclear disarmament on relations with neighbors on the struggle in Africa and on the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) as well as in the area of relations with the Soviet Union and the United States.³ Indeed, his contribution to numerous world problems has been unmatched and brilliant give his short stint of Prime Ministership of India from 1984 to 1989. Leaving aside the politics of pullovers, mailing and vulgarity at home, Rajiv Gandhi was a beacon of hopes for those million who are fighting a struggle for Independence in South Africa.

Rajiv Gandhi's foreign policy achieved great success, and it put India on the international map. The essence of his foreign policy was peaceful co-existence and non-alignment. He did a lot to promote
Indian culture abroad. Rajiv Gandhi was fully aware of the possible threats from external sources, which is why he took great interest in modernising the armed forces. World peace was his favorite subject.

Rajiv Gandhi and World Peace

Rajiv Gandhi lived a dangerous life while he worked ardently for peace at home and abroad. His efforts for international peace and disarmament set off a move to nominate him for Nobel Prize four years back. His last peace mission was an air dash to Moscow and Teheran in February 1991 as a last-ditch effort to end the Gulf war. Rajiv Gandhi in his commitment to settle the Tamil problem dispatched Indian troops to Sri Lanka an unprecedented step. He also sent forces to the Maldives to crush a coup against President Abdul Gayoom in 1988. He signed an accord with President Junius Jayewardene to end the ethnic conflict. He survived two assassination attempts, one at home and the other in Colombo. He had a providential escape when a naval rating tried to hit him with a rifle butt as he is about to leave the Sri Lankan capital for home. At a meeting with journalists, Rajiv Gandhi had said that though he and late General Zia-Ul-Haq of Pakistan did not agree on many things, they pursued the process of normalization of bilateral ties. He disclosed that India and Pakistan had come close to signing an agreement on the Siachin glacier issue. Unfortunately, General Zia-Ul-Haq's death in a plane crash left the task unfinished. Their initiative in 1985 to sign an agreement on non attack of each others nuclear
facilities bore fruits later. The two governments ratified the agreement after Rajiv Gandhi ceased to be the Prime Minister.⁴

Rajiv believed in absolute disarmament. His address to the United Nations Special Session on Disarmament is especially important in this regard. Also, the Six-Nation Five-Continent initiative was founded by him. He was extremely proud of the Indo-Soviet friendship, which had stood the test of time. He also signed the Delhi Declaration in 1986, which spoke of the long lasting friendship between India and Russia. At the same time, relations between India and USA improved greatly. This extension of cooperation and friendship between India and Russia, and India and USA, are some of his most important contributions to India's foreign policy. For a man who believed in equality of all races and oneness of humanity, the apartheid regime in Africa was too shameful. To rid the African continent of this system, he founded the Africa Fund. He fought for Namibian Independence as ardently, and with as much dedication as he would have for India. It was because of Rajiv Gandhi’s efforts that India’s voice was heard in such international forums as the United Nations, NAM and Commonwealth. Rajiv Gandhi had in fact, become one of the most sought after leaders in such forums.

Rajiv Gandhi’s persistence for peace and goodwill found expression in his show of non-aligned intentions. He felt and impressed upon the West that NAM was a positive force for peace. "We make-
decisions on principles that we hold dear, principles of our own Independence, our own freedom of action, our own right to not to be tied to the apron strings of any major power-Our friendship need not be at the cost of another." And, it was Rajiv Gandhi's utmost concern that "countries not aligned with power blocs face threats of pressure, intervention and interference," a pressure, he pointed out, that was mounting despite the presence of the United Nations. The world is and had to be multi-hued, he reminded the superpowers and warning them against economic or political aggression, "From Belgrade to Colombo through Cairo, Lusaka and Algiers, from Havana to New Delhi, we have grown in numbers and we have gained in strength." In other words, he declared with gay abandon - small is powerful when it is independent and yet together. Indeed, Jawaharlal Nehru could not have got a better encore.

As a boy, Rajiv Gandhi found any form of aggression as disgusting. He loved life and saw to it that others around him did the same and with equal passion. Be it an injured animal that needed instant attention, or the wait for the pigeons to fly out of their nests in his bedroom every morning before the fans could be switched on, Rajiv Gandhi held a missionary respect for God's greatest gift to humanity - Life. This found a verbatim translation in the global context where he stood his ground as the most vocal, fearless advocate of disarmament. "There are 50,000 nuclear warheads poised to wipe out the world
several times over: equivalent to three tones of TNT for every man, woman and child-one single taskforce of a big power costs more than the GNP of 86 countries. What madness is this that puts a trillion dollars into armaments every year and leaves but a pittance for human well-being," he told the Co-ordination Bureau of the Non-aligned Movement in New Delhi.

Like his grandfather Jawaharlal Nehru, Rajiv Gandhi too was a queer mixture of East and West. Like Jawaharlal Nehru, Rajiv Gandhi declared that "the atom bomb introduced a fundamental change in the nature of the world-the use of the atom bomb in Hiroshima brought a wholly new dimension to the extent to which man was prepared to destroy man in order to secure victory in war. Today, by a strange reversal of logic, nuclear weapons of ever-increasing destructive capability are produced and stockpiled on grounds that they preserve stability and peace in the world. So the people of the world must rise to assert themselves against this evil." From Russia to the United States of America, his opinion was as firm as it was stringent.

He told the Kremlin, "there are no winnable nuclear wars, as candidly as he told the White House, the very survival of humankind today rests in the hands of a very few countries."

Deterrence, for Rajiv Gandhi, was just a camouflage for balance of power which again was a veneer for destructive ambitions. His
answer was a difficult but a direct opposite: Peaceful co-existence with a no-nuclear warhead world. "We defend ourselves not with weapons but with words. By building public opinion against war."

On another plane altogether, he saw in armament the main breeding ground for economic instability, for poverty, hunger, disease and death. 'Spend the armament funds to target humanity's bigger enemies, not humans themselves; he exhorted the Big Two, giving them an upright example to follow - his India, "We have no intention to produce a nuclear weapon. We don't want it; we think it is wrong and it is bad-To go nuclear will be our last choice," he said. Through the famous New Delhi Declaration, Rajiv Gandhi not only gave India its first taste of technological convergence of a world initiative by linking six nations from Five Continents through satellite, but also issued a clarion call for disarmament. The nation Heads called for an immediate halt to testing, development and production of warheads. "Initiative must start with superpowers- other nations can only build up public opinion," he asserted, accepting the subsequent Beyond War Award on behalf of the Clutch of Six.

Rajiv Gandhi on Peaceful Nuclear Explosions

But Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's Government has been maintained the drive to keep up the development of peaceful nuclear options is being kept upon. With fully indigenous Dhruv Atomic Plant
going into the production of Plutonium 239, and with the second unit of Kalpakam atomic plant going critical, India has now attained a high level of indigenous nuclear technology.

Addressing the Indian Association of Foreign Affairs Correspondents New Delhi, on November 1, 1985, Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi observed that India has not closed its option on the question of producing a nuclear bomb. He categorically stated that Pakistan was heading toward a nuclear bomb and it was one of the responsibilities of the USA to prevail upon it to abandon the policy. The Prime Minister ruled out joint inspection of nuclear facilities of India and Pakistan, saying that it would not be effective since Pakistan would try to shift its nuclear materials which it was making clandestinely to another place.\textsuperscript{14}

Since India’s Independence India is not against peaceful nuclear explosions. With a full potential of becoming a nuclear power state, India has been refrained from becoming a nuclear weapon state till 1970s. India’s nuclear policy involves total opposition to the development of nuclear weapons and total support for Nuclear Disarmament.

India believes in the acceptance of Nuclear Arms Control involving an immediate and to the growing nuclear arms race, as the first step towards nuclear Disarmament. It is committed to refrain, as far as possible, from making nuclear weapons. It supported in the development and use of nuclear technology for peaceful purposes. India
refused to accept discriminatory international inspections and safeguards in respect of national nuclear establishments and facilities.

Despite the fact that Pakistan’s nuclear programme is a weapon oriented programme, India has decided to avoid as far as and as long as possible the transformation of its present peaceful nuclear policy into a weapon oriented nuclear policy. With a strong potential for becoming a full nuclear power, as is clearly reflected in the progress made in the sphere of nuclear research and technology development, as well as in the development of a strong socio-economic-technological infrastructure which is at the take off stage and is sure to go in for advanced technology in the near future, India continues to refrain from making nuclear weapons. Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi has expressed the need to discuss at the national level the possible and right course for India’s nuclear policy in the face of the new developments in neighbourhood—Pakistan’s capability to enrich uranium and its possession of nuclear triggers. The Government of India has decided to step up the drive for developing and using nuclear technology for developing and using nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. It has maintained the right to conduct Peaceful Nuclear Explosions (PNE’s) in case these are considered essential for the promotion of nuclear research in the country. It has been carefully watching the developments in Pakistan, particularly the developments in Pakistan’s nuclear policy and programme. The Government has made it clear that it would be forced to
reconsider and revise its nuclear opinions if Pakistan keeps up its present nuclear policy, which according to all available informations and data, is a nuclear weapons policy. It means that India on her part is presently keeping up the policy of developing nuclear technology for peaceful purposes, but at the same time it is keeping open her nuclear options. With a fairly developed infrastructure, the progress already registered in the spheres of atomic reactor technology, fuel reprocessing technology, atomic power plant technology, and the ability to indigenously design and establish atomic reactors and power plants. India has the potential to transform, at any time and in a short time, its peaceful nuclear technology into the nuclear weapon technology.¹⁵

The Indian government under of Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi maintained a status quo in respect of the nuclear policy. But the Government declared India's strong desire to keep up the option of developing nuclear technology for peaceful purposes at the same it has made it abundantly clear that India can be forced to reassess and revise its nuclear options in case Pakistan continues to keep up its current drive to acquire the nuclear weapons. In such an eventuality, the threat to the strategic security of India would become very grave and force India to change its nuclear policy. In fact, Pakistan's growing nuclear capability, which by all accounts appeared to be a programme for the development of nuclear weapons, has come to be a major factor in the operationalisation of India's nuclear policy. There has appeared
an ambivalence between the options-to keep up the status quo or to go ahead with the manufacture of nuclear weapons.

On April 25th 1985, the then Defence Minister, Mr. P.V. Narasimha Rao, while intervening in the Lok Sabha debate on the grants for the Defence Ministry, stated that the Union was seeking the opinion of Parliament on what it should do to meet the threat of Pakistan acquiring the nuclear capability. The need for reviewing India's nuclear policy was voiced, of course with concern, by Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi himself. Expressing concern at Pakistan's growing nuclear capability, and the failure of the USA to dissuade Pakistan from acquiring nuclear weapons capability, Mr. Rajiv Gandhi remarked that such a development shall force India to revise its nuclear policy. While reiterating India's strong desire to avoid going nuclear (Nuclear Weapon Technology), the Prime Minister, on 16th June, 1985, while speaking at New York observed: "But it will be difficult for us not to come out with some sort of counter to that. That counter need not be nuclear; it would be the last choice really." It was further clarified that India did not want to divert its resources from socio-economic development programmes to a nuclear weapons programme. Nevertheless, like every other country of the world, India cannot ignore the threat to its security resulting from the development of nuclear weapons by Pakistan. India stands for peaceful nuclear technology and opposes fully and strongly the use of nuclear
technology for making nuclear bombs, however, it cannot ignore threats to its own security.

Analyzing the nuclear policy of the Rajiv Gandhi Government, The Tribune in its Editorial on July 18th 1985, observed: "In these circumstances India's policy direction seems clear. With its infrastructure, know-how and progress in nuclear development, the country can hardly afford to go back. The Prime Minister seems to have pegged his nuclear options on the developments. India, according to him, will be forced to produce the bomb and divert the much-needed funds for economic development in the process if the ambitious neighbour in the north-west is known to possess the explosive device."17

Rajiv Gandhi expressed concern over the Iran-Iraq conflict. He said, "One of the sad wars that are going on is the Iran-Iraq war. We have sent appeals. We have sent envoys. A Minister of State has visited the countries. Envoys from the UN have gone. Envoys from the Arabic countries have gone. Unfortunately, much as we would like to be optimistic, it is difficult to be optimistic at this stage. The sad fact is that the war continues. It is a terrible war with all its grimness and barbarity, reportedly using non-conventional weapons, which are not humane. We hope that such inhuman weapons will not be used and we shall continue our endeavors to try and bring this ghastly war to an end."18
Rajiv Gandhi and UNO

Indian Foreign Policy under Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi continues to be governed by the ideal of full participation in the activities of the United Nations Organisations (UNO) and full contribution towards its successful operationalisation. India continues to regard the UNO as an international platform for resolving the problems which confront the human kind. It is using this platform for securing the rights-political as well as economic, of the Third World- vis-a-vis the two developed worlds. Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi has taken several meaningful steps to make UNO a platform for cooperation among the Third World countries and the Non-aligned countries, for securing international movements in favour of Disarmament, Arms Control and New International Economic Order (NIEO). India is trying to secure a due share for the Third World countries in all organs, forums, committees and institutions of the UNO. It supports the need for making the Security Council more representative by giving permanent member status to some Asian, African and Latin American States. It supports the demand for revision of the UN Charter in order to make the UN more truly representative and operational by ending the present position which favours the five veto powers.¹⁹

Rajiv Gandhi and Commonwealth

India became Republic in 1950. Since then it decided to maintain its membership of the Commonwealth of Nations. It still continues to retain the Commonwealth link because of certain
advantages. The main aim is to develop friendship and cooperation with all other countries. To put it in a nutshell India has always regarded the Commonwealth as a means for forging social, cultural, educational and trade links with other countries of the world.

The Commonwealth is a multi-racial and multi-continental community of nations representing one quarter of mankind, some rich and strong, others small and weak. It now virtually sketches across the entire globe and includes some of the most affluent states of the world such as Australia, Canada, and the United Kingdom, as also some of the least developed like Tonga and Western Samoa. But all recognise the logic of interdependence and commonality of interests. Unlike the United Nations, the Commonwealth is not structured or governed by elaborate procedures. It mirrors the diversity of entire community of nations, but has a character of informality and a tradition of cooperation which is perhaps unique.

In the words of former Prime Minister, Mr. Morarji Desai, "The Commonwealth as it is now constituted, provides the kind of balance which we want to see in the world and is an institution which can in course of time set the pattern for a Commonwealth of the whole world."  

In the Commonwealth, India stands somewhat midway both geographically and in terms of economic resources and level of development.
India thus continues to be an active member of the Commonwealth. It has played a leading role in securing the existing character of the Commonwealth as an association of equal sovereign states bound together by common links, shared views and attitudes, and by the desire to forge ahead stronger links in the fields of education, technology, science, health, exchange of books, artists, teachers etc. The political ties of the Commonwealth are weak but the ties of friendship and cooperation in socio-economic-cultural spheres are very strong. These links provide an enduring basis for the continuance of the Commonwealth, and for India's membership of this unique body. In the words of T.N.Kaul "The Commonwealth idea embraces a growing dynamic association of vastly different, sovereign and independent countries. They may not and do not see eye to eye on some fundamental and many current problems of the world. They may and do vote on different sides in the United Nations, but they share a common desire for peace and prosperity. They believe in the method of peaceful negotiations, to settle disputes.... They exercise a powerful influence on each other and on the rest of the world. As long as this feeling persists, the Commonwealth idea will live and develop. We may add here that India will continue to be in the Commonwealth for years to come." \(^{21}\)

**CHOGM-1987 and Rajiv Gandhi**

The five-day heads of Government of Commonwealth countries met in Vancouver in October 1987. In its final Communiqué issued on
October 18, 1987, full support was pledged to the Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and the Sri Lankan President Mr. J.R. Jayawardene in implementing the Indo-Sri Lankan accord, which was described as an act of high statesmanship, in favour of regional peace and security. Such a recognition and appreciation was indeed a unique departure made by the CHOGM-1987 as prior to this day, it was a rule with the Commonwealth to avoid references to bilateral matters like the peace accord. India's stand on developments in Fiji also found favour with the Commonwealth. Fiji was formally ousted from Commonwealth.

The Conference also adopted a declaration on world trade which pleaded for the improvement in the functioning of General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs (GATT), and for enhancing its role in maintaining an open multilateral system and its capacity of dispute settlement. It must work for securing a trade which can be conducive to development.22 

In this meeting, Britain got isolated again, over the issue of firm stand against the racist Pretoria regime. India took a firm stand in favour of the urgent need to initiate strict measures for forcing the racist regime of South Africa to abandon apartheid and provide for a really democratic system of government which should ensure a due role of the black majority.

CHOGM showed its full alertness to the need for meeting the menace of terrorism which had made its ugly appearance in several
Commonwealth countries. The communique stressed the need to develop effective extradition arrangements and to deny the terrorist of safe heaven. The Commonwealth countries were of the view that special attention should be given to the growing pernicious nexus between the terrorist groups and drug trafficking. They recognised the urgent need to encourage universal adoption of the necessary international conventions, to strengthen their adherence to these and to promote appropriate action through competent international organisations.

Strengthening of educational and cultural links and the development of additional educational facilities has been a standard items on the agendas of almost all the commonwealth meets. The leaders attending CHOGM 1987 meet agreed to create a Commonwealth institution to promote cooperation in distance education. They endorsed in principle a Canadian proposal to establish Commonwealth University and College network with various units in Britain, the Mediterranean, the Caribbean, Eastern and Southern Africa, West Africa, South Asia, the Pacific and other appropriate places. India has already taken a big leap forward towards the securing of distance education facilities to the people by establishing in September 1985, the Indira Gandhi National Open University with nearly 100 study centres located in the country and acting as the centres catering to the needs of distance education.
The meeting in its communique reaffirmed its support for the efforts of the UN Secretary General and his special representative to achieve a solution which would leave the Afghan people free to determine their own future, guarantee the right of Afghan refugees to return to their homes in safety and honour, and which was based on the withdrawal of all foreign troops, strict observance of the principles of non-intervention and non-interference, sovereignty and the non-aligned status of Afghanistan. This stand of Commonwealth fully supported India's view of Afghanistan problem.23

The Commonwealth leaders expressed grave concern over the increasingly dangerous situation in the Gulf because of the continued Iran-Iraq war which had already taken a colossal loss of human lives. The conflict has increased tensions in the wider area posing a threat to international peace and security. The CHOGM urged both the parties to accept the Security Council Resolution 593 as the first step towards securing a satisfactory solution to the Iran-Iraq conflict.

India played a key role in this meeting and almost all the decisions reached reflected Indian view of the problems and issues. Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi used the opportunity provided by this meeting to discuss bilateral and several international issues and problems with other Commonwealth countries. The isolation of Britain in the Commonwealth
has indirectly strengthened the share and responsibilities of India as one of the key members of the Commonwealth.

**Rajiv Gandhi and Environment**

Rajiv Gandhi's commitment to advancing India's role in the age of modernization, and swiftly changing global environment proved a daunting task. But Rajiv Gandhi did not shun the moment, pursuing his vision with the hopes of his youth and the vigor of his conviction.

Rajiv Gandhi turned his attention to environment at the United Nations as well as the Belgrade NAM Summit in 1989. He proposed a planet protection found which was adopted by the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Kuala Lumpur two months later. He was also instrumental in setting up the group of 15 Non-Aligned countries to promote South-South cooperation and activate the stalled North-South dialogue.\(^{24}\)

Rajiv Gandhi had launched the Global Environment Protection Fund. He had also upgraded the Department of Environment to the Ministry of Environment and Forests and introduced the Forest Act to stop deforestation in the country in the name of development. Rajiv Gandhi's initiatives put India in the front rank of environment-conscious countries. Rajiv Gandhi is also brought environment to the centre stage of development activity through launching his 'Clean Ganga' programme the massive wasteland development programme and
making environmental clearance compulsory for all projects. He was in favour of environmental and energy audits for all industrial units. Rajiv Gandhi placed the environment on the nation’s agenda.

In his first speech after the famous 1984 victory, Rajiv Gandhi unveiled the Ganga Action Plan which instantly touched a chord even with the environment-unconscious rural multitudes. Despite criticism regarding wastage of funds the fact is that north India’s lifeline and that eternal symbol of Indian civilisation, the Ganga, has regained a considerable degree of its pristine glory. He also unveiled a programme for regenerating vast wastelands and constituted the National Wasteland Development Board.

It was under Rajiv Gandhi’s initiative that the National Wasteland Development Board and the Ganga Action Plan were set up in 1985. Three years later he steered the promulgation of the Environment Protection Act and formulated the New Forest Policy. Rajiv Gandhi also gave directions to procure up the initiative to recommend a special global fund for subsidising environmental projects created from a percentage of world trade turnovers. The revolution recommendation was very well received by the world community. The former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi had held the portfolios of the departments of science and technology, atomic energy, space, electronics and ocean development, besides environment and forests, and had held frequent
parliamentary consultative meetings to discuss these issues. Rajiv Gandhi elevated the Department of Environment, set up by Indira Gandhi, and as a full-fledged ministry. He also constituted a special All India Congress Committee cell on science and technology to inculcate a sense of commitment in these fields at the party level.

The Central Ganga Authority and the National Wastelands Development Board were set up during Rajiv Gandhi's regime. Some of the technology missions launched, by Rajiv Gandhi like drinking water and oilseeds made much headway and involved the country's scientific community, for the first time, in a big way in meeting basic needs of the masses.

Rajiv Gandhi had set a target of greening five million hectares of wastelands every year but the task could not be achieved. However, the interest taken by Rajiv Gandhi in wasteland development, helped in bringing the subject of ecological protection into focus. At the international level, Rajiv Gandhi mooted the idea of establishing a Save Planet Fund at the Commonwealth summit to face the challenge of saving the earth's environment.

High Technology

Rajiv Gandhi understood what technology could do for a country like India. It is most ironical that the life of the man, who wanted to take
the country to the 21st century, has been cut short brutally nine years before he could see his dream year.

Along with those who scoffed when Rajiv Gandhi repeatedly spoke about taking the country to the 21st century there were those who, impressed with his earnestness, began thinking seriously about how he was going to do it. The images thrown up by recurring talk about the leap to the next century were, among other things, those of modernized industry enriching the country with efficient and high quality production brought about with inputs of state-of-the-art technology. The magnitude of the tasks involved in turning such a vision to reality was not fully spelt out but the policy outlined and the successive steps taken during the years when Rajiv Gandhi was Prime Minister were indeed remarkable for the trails that his Government was trying to blaze.26

The left-of-centre economic ideology which was shaping policy since Indira Gandhi had taken over as Prime Minister in 1966 was articulated in the policy directives for the curbing of the concentration of economic power and the pushing up of the public sector to commanding heights. It led to legislation typified by the Monopolies and Restrictive Trade Practices Act. The Government did not have any doubts at the time that it was going in the right direction and it was assured by its leftist supporters that this was how India could eventually become a modern state without the problems of acquisitive, exploitative
capitalism. Indira Gandhi herself had lived long enough to see that this economic ideology was fast beginning to lose steam. While the public sector had become a perpetually loss-making leviathan, the shackles put on the private sector not merely precluded substantial production increases which were badly needed by the country. They also had the wholly unintended and undesirable result of making it possible for the private sector to maximise profits from restricted production and higher prices. The first steps towards liberalisation of the restrictive regime and making it more competitive were taken during the early 1980s before Indira Gandhi disappeared from the scene in 1984. The relatively high growth rate which was achieved by the Indian economy during the 1980s and repeatedly taken note of by the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and other international agencies had undoubtedly been made possible by the policy of liberalisation pursued actively by Rajiv Gandhi's Government. The technology leap taken particularly by the international electronics industry was also making it obvious that India had just no choice but to jettison restrictive economic and industrial policies and becomes receptive and hospitable to technology and investment inflows. The new lingo which was beginning to invade the precincts of industry as well as government - software, compatibility, interface and the like- and the steady shedding of their ageing looks by industrial and government establishments with computer controls and
terminals taking one are serving a purpose even if they are doing nothing more than infusing a whiff of change and freshness.

The momentum imparted to the country's economic growth during at least the earlier half of Rajiv Gandhi's Prime Ministership will have to be sustained and accelerated in the years ahead. His strategy was not complete and there is some force in the criticism that an open door policy for attracting foreign capital could result in the foreign parties getting entrenched in the country without making any contribution to India's economic development indiscriminate and unimaginative technology imports will demoralise indigenous research and development effort. Not the least important of the tasks is that of sustaining and accelerating food production, the expansion of opportunities and facilities for education and the rapid creation of jobs in productive sectors for wiping out the unemployment backlog and for the creation of more jobs. 27

The 21st century doesn't mean just computers. When one talks of technology although to an average person technology means computers and televisions and fancy data communication links and satellites, advanced technology also means genetic engineering, making seeds better, making them resistant to disease, making them more productive, seeing what else the farmer needs as back-up, tractors,
implement, power, water, fertilizer. That too is technology. We have to give the best so that the farmer can perform his best.

The initiatives taken by Rajiv Gandhi included launching of the technology missions to meet the needs of the society, an action plan to cleansing the Ganga, plan to regenerate wastelands and greater thrust to nuclear power generation. Besides this, Rajiv Gandhi continued the science policy adopted by late Indira Gandhi, envisaging greater self-reliance and use of science and technology for uplift of the poor.

Rajiv Gandhi in his brief political career nevertheless left an indelible mark on the country's business and industrial environment. He inspired more confidence than any other contemporary leader not only among the business and industrial community at home but also among those abroad who want to help India to come out of its balance of payments problems.

**Rajiv Gandhi Views on World Economic Order**

Initiating a dialogue with the developed nations he was hopeful of establishing a 'new economic order'. The North-South dialogue which was losing its steam and teeth had got an unimpeachable loyalist, in Rajiv Gandhi, who helped mitigate the Third World debt crisis by compelling the IMF and World Bank to work out solutions. His persuasion led to formulation of Baker's plan by the US and other
developed nations got interested in waiving off their loans particularly to poor countries.

Rajiv Gandhi also streamlined internal economic policies to meet the global challenges. The economic policies adopted by Rajiv Gandhi were different from his precursors like Indira Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru. Going against the traditional socialism, Rajiv Gandhi decided to improve the bilateral relationships with the United States of America and subsequently expanded the economic and scientific cooperation with it. A revived foreign policy, emphasizing on the economic liberalisation and information and technology moved India closer to the West.²⁸

His introductory measures to reduce the 'Red Tapism' and allow business house to set up their establishments was remarkable. In 1986, Rajiv Gandhi announced a national education policy to modernize and expand higher education programs across India. Rajiv Gandhi brought a revolution in the field of information technology and telecom. The idea helped in originating the Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Limited, popularly known as MTNL. Rajiv Gandhi was the man to transcend telecom services to the rural India or India in true sense. He increased government support for science and technology and associated industries, and reduced import quotas, taxes and tariffs on technology-based industries, especially computers, airlines, defence and telecommunications. He introduced measures significantly reducing the
License Raj, allowing businesses and individuals to purchase capital, consumer goods and import without bureaucratic restrictions. In 1986, Rajiv Gandhi government announced a National Policy on Education to modernise and expand higher education programs across India. During Rajiv Gandhi's period the Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya System was introduced in 1986 which is a Central government based institution that concentrates on the upliftment of the rural section of the society providing them free residential education from 6th to 12th grades. By establishing Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Limited (MTNL) in 1986, Rajiv Gandhi brought the telephones to the doorsteps of rural families.

**Rajiv Gandhi and Terrorism**

Rajiv Gandhi is a staunch supporter of peace and love. He condemned all sorts of violence before and after assuming the office of the Prime Minister. As such he declared terrorism as anti-social and anti-developmental in nature. Rajiv Gandhi has given a call for the terrorists and extremists to come to negotiation table to solve all the problems, which evoked anger among certain sections of the society. He is victim of terrorism, as his mother was assassinated by her body guards. It was a great shock in his entire life.

During Rajiv Gandhi's tenure cross border terrorism is prevalent in Jammu and Kashmir, Punjab and North-East India. To deal with terrorism he wanted to change the existing locus to deal with terrorism. While speaking in parliament on terrorist activities in Punjab he declared
that "we have certain constraints and certain draw backs. We have certain limitations in the laws that are available to us. Tomorrow or may be day after, we shall be bringing some amendments to this House and we are looking into what we can do to counter terrorism as such."\textsuperscript{29} He questioned the member "Are our laws good enough to handle terrorism? If they are not, we shall bring suggestions to the House".\textsuperscript{30}

In pursuance of his declaration in the parliament, Rajiv Gandhi’s government has taken the decision to introduce Terrorist and Disruptive Activities (Prevention) Act (TADA) in the Parliament. The Act has given scope to the authorities to take special steps to arrest acts of terrorism. Rajiv Gandhi’s commitment to suppress terrorism is not only confined to India but also extended to international level. It is evident through his Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) mission of Sri Lanka and peace mission of Maldives. In Sri Lanka the terrorists started to dictate terms to the democratically elected governments and in Maldives the terrorists forcefully taken the reins of government. The bold step taken by Rajiv Gandhi to suppress Tamil militants proved costly, as he was assassinated by them in 1991.

Rajiv Gandhi and Security Policy

Rajiv authorized an extensive police and Army campaign to contain terrorism in Punjab. A state of martial law existed in the Punjab state, and civil liberties, commerce and tourism were greatly disrupted. There are many accusations of human rights violations by police
officials as well as by the militants during this period. It is alleged that even as the situation in Punjab came under control, the Indian government was offering arms and training to the LTTE rebels fighting the government of Sri Lanka. The Indo-Sri Lanka Peace Accord was signed by Rajiv Gandhi and the Sri Lankan President J.R. Jayewardene, in Colombo on July 29th 1987. The very next day, on July 30th 1987, Rajiv Gandhi was assaulted on the head with a rifle butt by a young Sinhalese naval cadet named Vijayamunige Rohana de Silva, while receiving the honour guard. The intended assault on the back of Rajiv Gandhi’s head however glanced off his shoulder. Though the embarrassed Sri Lankan President Junius Richard Jayewardene initially attempted to pass off the bizarre assault as "Rajiv tripped a little and slightly lost his balance".\textsuperscript{31} Rajiv Gandhi’s government also suffered a major setback when its efforts to arbitrate between the government of Sri Lanka and the LTTE rebels backfired.

With his speech while addressing the Joint Session of the US Congress and India, he famously said, "India is an old country, but a young nation; and like the young everywhere, we are impatient. I am young and I too have a dream. I dream of an India, strong, independent, self reliant and in the forefront of the front ranks of the nations of the world in the service of mankind."\textsuperscript{32}
Inference

Rajiv Gandhi made extensive tour of the world during his five year term of Prime Ministership. In all his visits, he discussed and expressed his views on the problems contending by humanity. As a staunch advocate of peace, Rajiv Gandhi gave top priority to peace and stability in the world. Rajiv Gandhi considered that world peace can be ensured only through the gradual elimination of weapons of mass destruction. Rajiv Gandhi categorically expressed his negative views on the weaponisation at various international forums like UNO, NAM, CHOGM, SAARC, etc. But Rajiv Gandhi is not against the utilization of nuclear explosions for peaceful purposes. He expressed concerns over the use of non-conventional weapons in Iran-Iraq conflict. Like his predecessors Rajiv Gandhi expressed faith in UNO and extended full support for the activities of world organization. In CHOGM meeting Rajiv Gandhi raised the issue like GATT, racism, terrorism, drug trafficking etc. Rajiv Gandhi firmly believed that the future generations will live happily only when the environment is preserved and protected. For this purpose Rajiv Gandhi had launched the Global Environment Fund. Rajiv Gandhi also introduced several programmes in India keeping in view of environmental protection. Rajiv Gandhi also made strenuous efforts for scientific and technological advancement of India. For speedy growth of Indian economy, Rajiv Gandhi initiated the policy of liberalization. Rajiv Gandhi expressed his disappointment over the discriminatory bias of GATT proposals and policies of IMF and World Bank.
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