

I: MORAJI DESAI

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Morarji Desai was the first leader of sovereign India not to represent the long-ruling Indian National Congress party. The son of a village teacher, Desai was educated at the University of Bombay (now the University of Mumbai) and in 1918 joined the provincial civil service of Bombay as a minor functionary. In 1930 he resigned to join Mohandas Gandhi's civil disobedience movement and spent almost 10 years in British jails during the struggle for independence. During the 1930s and '40s he alternated prison service with ministerial posts in the government of Bombay, rising to the chief ministerial post in 1952. He gained a reputation for administrative skill as well as for harshness.

In 1956 Desai was named commerce and industry minister in the Indian government, for which he worked in high capacities until 1963, when he resigned. He became deputy prime minister in 1967. In 1969 he again resigned to become chairman of the opposition to Indira Gandhi and the Congress Party. He was arrested in 1975 for his political activities and detained in solitary confinement until 1977, whereupon he became active in the Janata Party, a coalition of four smaller parties. That same year, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi unexpectedly held elections after a 19-month suspension of political processes, and Janata achieved a surprising and overwhelming victory. Desai was chosen to be prime minister as a compromise candidate among Janata's leaders. After two years of political tension, the Janata coalition began to unravel. Desai announced his resignation on July 15, 1979, after numerous defections from the coalition in Parliament, to avoid a vote of no confidence.

II: RAJIV GANDHI- NEW EDUCATIONAL POLICY

Indian politician and government official who rose to become the leader of the Congress (I) Party (a faction of the Indian National Congress [Congress Party] established in 1981) and served as prime minister of India (1984–89) after the assassination of his mother, Indira Gandhi, in 1984. He was himself assassinated in 1991.

Rajiv and his younger brother, Sanjay (1946–80), the sons of Feroze and Indira Gandhi, were educated at the prestigious Doon School in Dehra Dun (now in Uttarakhand state). Rajiv then attended Imperial College, London, and completed an engineering course at the University of Cambridge (1965). He met his future wife, Sonia, during his time in England. After returning to India, he acquired a commercial pilot's license and, beginning in 1968, worked for Indian Airlines.

While his brother was alive, Rajiv largely stayed out of politics; but, after Sanjay, a vigorous political figure, died in an airplane crash on June 23, 1980, Indira Gandhi, then prime minister, drafted Rajiv into a political career. In June 1981 he was elected in a by-election to the Lok Sabha (lower chamber of national parliament) and in the same month became a member of the national executive of the Indian Youth Congress (the youth wing of the Congress Party).

Whereas Sanjay had been described as politically "ruthless" and "willful" (he was considered a prime mover during the state of emergency his mother decreed in India in 1975–77), Rajiv was regarded as a nonabrasive person who consulted other party members and refrained from hasty decisions. After his mother was killed on October 31, 1984, Rajiv was sworn in as prime minister that same day and was elected leader of the Congress (I) Party a few days later. He led the Congress (I) Party to a landslide victory in elections to the Lok Sabha

in December 1984, and his administration took vigorous measures to reform the government bureaucracy and liberalize the country's economy. Gandhi's attempts to discourage separatist movements in Punjab state and the Kashmir region backfired, however, and after his government became embroiled in several financial scandals, his leadership became increasingly ineffectual. He resigned his post as prime minister in November 1989 after the Congress (I) Party was defeated in parliamentary elections, though he remained leader of the party.

NEW EDUCATION POLICY-1986

In 1986, the government led by Rajiv Gandhi introduced a new National Policy on Education.

The new policy called for "special emphasis on the removal of disparities and to equalise educational opportunity," especially for Indian women, Scheduled Tribes (ST) and the Scheduled Caste (SC) communities.

To achieve such a social integration, the policy called for expanding scholarships, adult education, recruiting more teachers from the SCs, incentives for poor families to send their children to school regularly, development of new institutions and providing housing and services.

The NPE called for a "child-centred approach" in primary education, and launched "Operation Blackboard" to improve primary schools nationwide.

The policy expanded the open university system with the Indira Gandhi National Open University, which had been created in 1985.

The policy also called for the creation of the "rural university" model, based on the philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi, to promote economic and social development at the grassroots level in rural India. 1986 education policy expected to spend 6% of GDP on education

III: V.P. SINGH- MANDAL COMMISSION

V.P. Singh, who had initially denied any interest in becoming prime minister, emerged after the 1989 elections as the leader of the loosely knit JD coalition whose extreme wings were basically antipathetic to each other. Haryana's Jat leader, Chaudhary Devi Lal, who nominated V.P. Singh for prime minister, became deputy prime minister, thus raising fears in Punjab that another period of harsh Delhi rule was about to begin. V.P. Singh's first visit as prime minister, however, was to Amritsar's Golden Temple, where he walked barefoot to announce that he hoped to bring a "healing touch" to Punjab's sorely torn state. Singh promised a political solution for the region's problems, but, reflecting the ambivalence in his new coalition, the move in Amritsar was not followed up by the transfer of Chandigarh, nor indeed by any state elections.

A similar ambivalence within the coalition was seen with respect to events in Ayodhya (in Uttar Pradesh), an ancient capital and—as most orthodox Hindus believe—birthplace of the deity Rama. The Babri Masjid, a mosque erected by the Mughal emperor Bābur in Ayodhya, was said to have been built over the very site of Rama's birthplace, where a more ancient Hindu temple, Ram Janmabhoomi, was supposed to have stood. In the fall of 1990 a mass march of Hindus bearing consecrated bricks to rebuild "Rama's birth temple" won the support of most members of Advani's BJP, as well as of many other Hindus throughout India. V.P. Singh and his government, however, were committed to India as a secular nation and would not permit the destruction of the mosque, which Muslims considered one of their oldest and most sacred places. India's police were thus ordered to stop the more than one million Hindus marching toward Ayodhya, including Advani himself, who rode in a chariot such as Rama might have used. On October 23, the day that Advani was

stopped and arrested, Singh lost his Lok Sabha majority, as the BJP withdrew its support for the coalition.

Singh had earlier come under severe attack from many upper-caste Hindus of northern India for sponsoring implementation of the 1980 Mandal Commission report, which recommended that more jobs in all services be reserved for members of the lower castes and Dalit (formerly untouchable) outcaste communities. After he announced in August 1990 that the recommendations would be enforced, many young upper-caste Hindus immolated themselves in protests across northern India. V.P. Singh's critics accused him of pandering to the lower castes for their votes, and many members of his own party deserted him on this searing issue, foremost among them Chandra Shekhar, who led a splinter group of JD dissidents out of Singh's coalition. On November 7, 1990, V.P. Singh resigned after suffering a vote of no confidence by a stunning margin of 356 to 151.

Most of those who voted against the prime minister were members of Rajiv Gandhi's Congress (I) Party, for Gandhi retained the largest single block of party faithful in the Lok Sabha; however, Advani's BJP support also lined up against Singh. The smallest new party bloc in the Lok Sabha belonged to Shekhar, whose Janata Dal (S)—the S stood for Socialist—gained the support of Gandhi and thus came to be invited by President Ramaswamy Venkataraman to serve as prime minister before the end of 1990. Devi Lal, who in August had been ousted by Singh, again became deputy prime minister. With fewer than 60 Janata (S) members in the Lok Sabha, however, the new prime minister's hold on power was tenuous and not expected to survive any longer than deemed expedient by Gandhi and the Congress (I) bloc. When the Congress (I) walked out of the Lok Sabha in March 1991, Shekhar had little choice but to resign and call on President Venkataraman to announce new general elections.

IV: P.V. NARASIMHA RAO- NEW ECONOMIC POLICY

Rao was born in a small village near Karimnagar (now in Telangana, India). He studied at Fergusson College in Pune and at the Universities of Bombay(now Mumbai) and Nagpur, eventually receiving a law degree from the latter institution. He entered politics as a Congress Party activist working for independence from Britain. He served in the Andhra Pradesh state legislative assembly from 1957 to 1977, supporting Indira Gandhi in her split from the Congress Party organization in 1969; initially called the New Congress Party, the splinter group took the name Congress (I) Party in 1978. He held various ministerial positions in the Andhra Pradesh government from 1962 to 1973, including that of chief minister (head of government) from 1971. In that latter post he implemented a revolutionary land-reform policy and secured political participation for the lower castes. He was elected to represent Andhra Pradesh districts in the Lok Sabha (lower chamber of the Indian parliament) in 1972 and, under Gandhi and her son and successor, Rajiv Gandhi, served in various ministries, notably as foreign minister (1980–84, 1988–89). Besides his political career, Rao was known as a distinguished scholar-intellectual who once was chairman of the Telugu Academy in Andhra Pradesh (1968–74). He was fluent in six languages, translated Hindi verses and books, and wrote fiction in Hindi, Marathi, and Telegu.

After Rajiv Gandhi's assassination in May 1991, the Congress (I) Party chose Rao as its leader, and he became India's 10th prime minister after the general elections in June. Rao almost immediately began efforts to restructure India's economy by converting the inefficient quasi-socialist structure left by Jawaharlal Nehru and the Gandhis into a free-market system. His program involved cutting government regulations and red tape, abandoning subsidies and

fixed prices, and privatizing state-run industries. Those efforts to liberalize the economy spurred industrial growth and foreign investment, but they also resulted in rising budget and trade deficits and heightened inflation. During Rao's tenure, Hindu fundamentalism became a significant force in national politics for the first time, as manifested in the growing electoral strength of the Bharatiya Janata Party and other right-wing political groupings. In 1992 Hindu nationalists destroyed a mosque, leading to sectarian violence between Hindus and Muslims that persisted throughout Rao's term as prime minister. Corruption scandals rocked the Congress (I) Party, which continued its long decline in popularity and lost control of several major state governments to opposition parties in 1995.

Rao stepped down as prime minister in May 1996 after the Congress Party—the “(I)” designation had been dropped by then—was soundly defeated in parliamentary elections in which it garnered an all-time low share of the popular vote. Rao resigned as party chief that September, and the following year he was charged with corruption and bribery in an alleged vote-buying scheme dating from 1993. Rao, the first Indian prime minister (in or out of office) to face trial on criminal charges, was found guilty in 2000, but his conviction was later overturned.

NEW ECONOMIC POLICY- 1991

Objectives of New Economic Policy 1991

1. Enter into the field of 'globalisation' and make the economy more market-oriented.
2. Reduce the inflation rate and rectify imbalances in payment.
3. Increase the growth rate of the economy and create enough foreign exchange reserves.
4. Stabilise the economy and convert the economy into a market economy by the removal of unwanted restrictions.
5. Allow the international flow of goods, capital, services, technology, human resources, etc. without too many restrictions.
6. Enhance the participation of private players in all sectors of the economy. For this, the reserved sectors for the government were reduced to just 3.

Branches of New Economic Policy 1991:

1. Liberalisation
2. Privatisation
3. Globalisation

Liberalisation

1. All commercial banks were now free to fix their interest rates. This was previously done by the RBI.
2. Investment limit for small-scale industries was increased to Rs. 1 Crore.
3. Indian industries were given the freedom to import capital goods.
4. Companies were given the freedom to expand and diversify their production capacities based on market requirements. Previously, the government used to fix the maximum limit of production capacity.
5. Restrictive trade practices were abolished. Licensing was removed in the private sector and only a few industries were required to obtain licenses, namely, liquor, cigarette, industrial explosives, defence equipment, hazardous chemicals and drugs.

Learn the difference between globalization and liberalization in the linked article.

Privatisation

1. Under this, many public sector undertakings (PSUs) were sold to private players.
2. PSU shares were sold to private players.
3. PSUs were disinvested.
4. The number of industries reserved for the public sector was reduced to 3 (mining of atomic minerals, railway and transport, and atomic energy).

Globalisation

1. Tariffs were reduced – reduction of customs duties in import and export to attract global investors.
 2. Foreign trade policy was for the long-term – Liberal and open policy was enforced.
 3. The Indian currency was made partially convertible.
 4. The equity limit of foreign investment was increased.
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