

# Letters From a Father to His Daughter: Development of Political Consciousness

[1] Kriti [2] Amir Jahan

[1] Ph.D Research Scholar, Department of History, Regional Institute of Management and Technology (RIMT) University, Mandi Gobindgarh, Punjab, India.

[2] Professor, Department of History, RIMT University, Mandi Gobindgarh, Punjab, India.

[1] Email: [kritidahiya40@gmail.com](mailto:kritidahiya40@gmail.com) [2] Email: [amirr6478@gmail.com](mailto:amirr6478@gmail.com)

## ABSTRACT

Letters From a Father to His Daughter represent a great man's fatherly love for his daughter who through his wisdom and talent not only educates her but gave her strength to overcome all difficulties of life with courage. All these letters capture Nehru's love for people and nature and how he tried to imbue personal and political views in her at an early age. Indira shared her father's excitement and dreams. She agreed that letters helped her to see things in perspective and she never saw an Indian problem merely as India's problem but as an international problem. Jawaharlal Nehru was a prominent leader, antiquarian, historian and a writer. In his literary career he produced some of the milestones like A Discovery of India, Glimpses of World History, an Autobiography, and Letters from a Father to His Daughter etc. This research endeavours an analysis of Letters from a Father to His Daughter from a pedagogical point of view in order to see how at an early age he tried to imbue his personal beliefs in her and shaped her to become a leader of the masses. It is not merely a series of letters but an account of experience and thinking of Nehru.

Keywords: Compassion, Humanity, Separate Identity, Supreme Companion

"Letters from a Father to his Daughter" written by Jawahar Lal Nehru to his daughter Indira shows a great man's devotion and fatherly love for his daughter. Letters simply depict Nehru's carving to challanize his daughter Indira's energy in right way so that she could make her own choices for her life. Letters having profound wisdom have touched all major areas of human knowledge. He writes to Indira on wide range of topics including nature, religion, division of labour, racism, caste system, national integration and human values. The profundity with which Nehru wrote these letters to Indira are sure to have had a tremendous impact on her intellect.

Teen Murti being centre of political activities influenced Indira so much that she founded *Bal Charkha* and *Monkey Brigade* to help Congress Party. Mostly taught at home, Indira got education from various modern schools, also even from Shantiniketan and various international schools as Geneva, Switzerland and Oxford University. Indira took active part with the student life of University such as membership in Oxford Majlis Asian Society. She even served her father unofficially when he became Prime Minister of India. Life was subordinated to her father but still she established Bal Bhavan for destitute children and Bal Sahyog for homeless street children. She was also involved in art and craft associations who

managed the performances of tribal dancing at annual Republic Day celebrations. During her father's tenure as Prime Minister she travelled much with her father.

In 1955, Indira became member of her father's Congress Party. By 1960, she was appointed President of Party. Dismissal of Kerala large communist party was the first display of her ruthlessness and authorization tendencies and her indifference to democratic norms. After her father's death, she continued with her political career and became the Minister of Information and Broadcasting in Shastri's Cabinet. But her father's death left her isolated because Nehru had a dominant presence and force in her life. Tension between Shastri and Indira remained prevalent on various issues as crisis in Southern India about Hindi Language and large scale parliamentary infiltrations by Pakistan in Kashmir. Indira immediately went to both places and began to remedy the situation. But Shastri's sudden death put a stir in Congress Party. On one hand Indira is craving for private life but on other hand her political ambitions seem to be attributed to her asserting what she believed to be her hereditary rights.

Indira daughter of a distinguished father, a national leader was sworn as Prime Minister on 24th January, 1966.

Indira was now viewed a harbinger of women's movement. But Indira's term as Prime Minister was met immediately with extreme difficulties as severe droughts, economic hardships, agitation in Punjab and India U.S. strained relations.

In beginning she proved as a weak parliamentary performer. For this she blamed her aunt Vijay Laxmi who undermined her self-confidence by calling her "ugly and stupid" in childhood and that shadow did not leave her until later. Indira faced harsh criticism for devaluation of rupee although she succeeded in her agreement over three million tons of food and 900 million dollar in aid from U.S. Being women other political leaders in India saw Indira Gandhi as a weak leader and wanted to use her as a puppet in the forthcoming 1967 general election.

"This is perhaps one of the reasons why the congress party rallied behind Indira, because she alone had some of her father's charisma and mass appeal".

Indira never adhered to such comments and went ahead saying. Indira daughter of Nehru showed her power and strength in 1967 election campaign and drew enormous crowds throughout India. Indira emerged as "confidant, assertive and dominant leader". "My position among the people is uncontested" and drive at many senior congressmen out of party and power.

Indira's political style was imbued with his aristocratic heritage as descendent of Nehru family and her way of talking, her language, her approach were populist. In May 1967, Indira announced a ten point programme which included-social control of banking, check of monopolies, the nationalization of general insurance curbs on property, the state control of exports and food grains and the abolition of former princes privileges and privy pursue in princely states. Indira made the green revolution a key government priority and initiated subsidies on fertilizers and hybrid seeds and even credit to farmers. Now, country was able to built up buffer grain stock and India became a modest food exporter. Indira looked beyond division of caste, religion and factions. She was now "Desh Sevika", servant of nation. In August 1969 she was described as an "exceedingly shrewd tactician" by the New York Times.

Now her leadership role that was so deeply ingrained with her since childhood or inheritance from her father was reflected in her works done for the country. After Bangladesh liberation, she got an immense amount of admiration. She was awarded with the Bharat Ratna, the highest Civilian Award. Indira put India on an International scientific

map by exploring the country's first underground nuclear device at Pokhran in 1974. India was now not only strong but a leading country in the comity of nations. But on other hand, after 1971 election congress party faced many problems as high inflation, drought, oil crisis etc. Corruption has actually become even more apparent. Indira had given power to few in her government angering many. Even defeat in Gujarat State assembly in June, 1975 was a setback to Indira. Indira had been charged with electoral malpractice in the 1971 general election which barred her from holding office for six years. Indira's refusal to resign and her declaration of emergency was a drastic step. Indira fell between two systems of ruling, one side debasing democratic values and destroying the system but on other side her a vowing dedication to it. Indira had now created her 'self-described Democracy'.

"Finally, she assumed dictatorial powers under the cloak of an 'emergency' on unproven accusations of conspiracy against herself and her government.

Democracy was not Mrs Gandhi's style, but it remained in insistent craving. In a world where leadership had to be one of two kinds, coercive or persuasive, she could not resolve her dilemma and fell between the two, debasing democratic values while repeatedly avowing her dedication to them. The confusion gave her pronouncements during the Emergency a ring of unbalance. With tens of thousands of citizens jailed without charges or trial and her critics outlawed and silenced, she could calmly and convincingly repeat, 'I am a democrat. The repetition carried an element of yearning.'

During emergency all civil liberties were restrained freedom of press was curtailed. To poor who were claimed to be helped and protested during emergency suffered most due to Sanjay Gandhi's clearance and sterilization programmers. Many Jhuggies, shops, houses and other structures were demolished in Delhi. Sanjay's open remarks on communist party of India made the situation more worse.

Emergency was lifted on 21 March, 1977 and declaration for fresh election was announced. Indira and her supporters went from place to place and village to village but it seems she had lost contact with people of the country. Indira and congress party were defeated by the Janta's Party, communist party of India and other regional parties. Indira then resigned and was left without a job, an income and a home. But Indira's arrest and swiftness of release brought Indira back on front page of newspapers in India and abroad. On other hand Morarji Desai's majority melted away due to resign of social group leaders and Charan Singh government

had been brought to power with the support of Indira Gandhi's party. But on 19 August 1979 Indira withdrew her support and after Charan Singh's resignation, there were declaration of fresh election in January 1980. Even Rajiv was pressurized to enter in politics. This gave way to another controversy of being dynastic rule.

In the early 1980 several conflicts prevailed in Assam in northeast regarding deport of Bengali's back to Bangladesh. Punjab tension in which Akali Dal Party demanded sole possession of the state capital of Chandigarh. In 1982 Bhindrawal's carving out a semi-autonomous homeland for Sikh in Punjab spread violence in Punjab. There is arson looting and sabotage. By "operation Blue Star" Indira send Indian army commandos who forcibly entered in golden temple in which half of ninety commandos were killed or injured and nearly 1000 innocent pilgrims were killed. Indira was criticized everywhere for this drastic action in secular country like India. To take revenge Beant and Satwant Sikh body guards of Indira pulled out their revolver and fired from their gun a spray of bullets on Indira. Indira was rushed to hospital but was declared dead. Indira will forever remain in heart of Indian people. As she herself said once,

"I shall continue to serve until my last breath and when I die I can say, that every drop of my blood will invigorate India and strength it"

Nehru her father being away for directing political activities, mother being bedridden with illness Indira's general upbringing was more haphazard. She was even target of her aunt Vijay Laxmi Pandit's hostility. Indira herself says, "It was ever traumatic". Being conscious of his daughter's education and her intellectual development Nehru decided to write a series of letters to her. Nehru writes as if he is physically present and talking to his little daughter. One of key intention of Nehru was to introduce Indira to an unbiased view of history and current state of affairs. Nehru being a perennial source of inspiration to Indira taught her through letters. Nehru made efforts to make Indira a well rounded highly accomplished individual. His letters not only encapsulate some of the very important classical and modern pedagogical principles but also formulate Nehru's unique theory of knowledge. He treats her like a future leader when he lays the foundation for moral values.

In his letter, "How Early History was Written", Nehru tells Indira of country's present situation, of the crisis of foreign rule. Nehru asks Indira to respect India's honour

and have trust in freedom struggle. How connected action can make India free from foreign rule.

"We are not free even in our own country and cannot do what we want. But this was not so always and perhaps if we try hard we may make our country free again, so that we may improve the lot of the poor, and make India as pleasant to live in as are some of the countries of Europe today."

Nehru's Speeches had had quality of intimacy with the crowd. A huge assembly became for him a person and a speech of conversation. In a similar way Indira was no longer a mere leader of the party but she was an agent of a historic process, woman of destiny, champion of poor, in touch with the people's urges and aspirations and uniquely qualified to lead them. As Nayantara Sahgal says in her book "Tryst with Power",

"With its dynastic emotional flavour, the cult highlighted the theme of Mrs. Gandhi's uniqueness among her contemporaries and her special claim to patriotism by virtue of her Nehru blood."

In his letter "The Coming of Man", he highlights the fact that man's psychological and emotional development creates a strong bond of love between him and his children. He wants to tell his daughter about the importance of human qualities like love, affection and tenderness. Nehru, tells Indira that it is the ability to think that makes a man different from other animals.

"Not by physical strength for the elephant is much stronger than he is. It was by intelligence and brain power. We can trace this growth of intelligence from the earliest days of man to present day. Indeed it is intelligence that separates man from the other animals. There is practically no difference between a man without any intelligence and an animal."

How at an early age Nehru tried to imbibe in Indira's mind how population control is necessary for the progress of the country.

"Simple animals like fishes laying eggs and leaving them. They lay thousands of eggs at a time but do not look after them. The mother does not care for her children at all.... As we go up and examine the higher animals we find that their eggs or children are fewer but they look after them better."

The issue that Indira spoke about frequently in 1966, 1967 and 1968 was the need of family planning and India's



population policy acquired heightened importance with the formation of a cabinet committee on Family Planning.

Nehru then brings Indira close to Nature. Nehru himself being an ardent lover of nature teaches child Indira how nature's closeness soothe and console us. In his letter "Book of Nature" Nehru tells Indira that you must learn the Alphabet of nature before you can read story in *his books of stone and rock*.

"If a little pebble can tell you so much, how much more could we learn from all the rocks and mountains and the many other things we see around us?"

Nehru does not want to teach Indira as much as he wants to inspire her to learn. According to Nehru, "adaptability to nature" is necessary for survival. Those who change and fit themselves according to the surroundings have a better chance of survival and upliftment. Whatever the situation be may we must have potential to face it.

In his letter "The Animals" Nehru says to his daughter Indira to "never stop working." As nature goes on and never stops, we must know that learning is a constant process. We must adapt ourselves to the surroundings to have a better chance of upliftment. Whatever the situation may be it must be faced with courage and determination.

As Indira recalls her grandfather's views:

"My grandfather once told me that there were two kinds of people: those who do the work and those who take the credit. He told me to try to be in the first group; there was much less competition".

Nehru succeeded in making Indira's perspective so broad that she started a campaign to save trees. On 17th November 1981 at first anniversary of Department of Environment her public message was a campaign such as, "For every child a tree" is a process of education. Even laws for dealing with Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974, and Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981 were enacted during her time. Indira Gandhi used her political authority to save ecologically sensitive area like Andaman and Nicobar Islands, the entire northeast and rain forests in Western Ghats and wetlands from destruction. She even launched the silent valley hydro-Electric power project in Kerala.

Indira Gandhi's reputation for being a champion of wildlife conservation was spread globally. She was the only head of government, other than the host Prime Minister, to

speak at the first ever United Nation (UN) Conference on Human Environment in Stockholm in June 1972. Her speech there has echoed down decades. Indira Gandhi even gave the go-ahead to India becoming a member of Antarctica Treaty in August 1983. She enacted two laws for protection of wild life and conservation of forests (Forest Conservation Act, 1980) and it continues to hold sway. She always tried to find solace and strength in nature. Like her father Indira loved to live in midst of wildness to promote nature and to give equal space for animals and other living creatures in the environment. Once Indira writes to her friend Dorothy Norman,

"Anyhow I get a tremendous urge to leave everything and retire to a place high in mountains."

In letters Nehru imbibed in his daughter not only the feeling of brotherhood and fraternity but also acquaints her of the difference between democracy and republic.

"Welcoming Panchayati Raj, Nehru had said, ... "authority and power must be given to the people in the villages ... Let us give power to the panchayats".

Nehru tells Indira in his Letter, "Patriarch Becomes the King" that countries like France, Germany and many others have no kings. They are republics where common people choose their governors and leaders from time to time. There is no place for hereditary. Leader's sole purpose should be welfare of society and far away from corruption.

Nehru laid the strong institutional base for the growth of Indian democracy whose value system was shaped under Gandhi Ji's leadership. The four pillars of his domestic policies were a democracy, socialism, unity and secularism. American editor Norman Cousins once asked Jawaharlal Nehru what he hoped would be his legacy to India, "Four hundred million people capable of governing themselves," Nehru replied.

In his letter, "The Patriarch becomes the king" Nehru says,

"They forgot that they were chosen because they were supposed to be the cleverest and the most experienced persons in the tribe or country. They imagined that they were the masters and all the other people in the country their servants. As a matter of fact, they were the servants of the country."

Nehru believed in supremacy of man over God. "God we may deny, but what hope is there for us if we deny man and thus reduce everything to futility."

Indira being daughter of Nehru used to see every morning, a vast number of people from all over the country before going to office. She used to meet people individually, listen to their sorrows and troubles, advise her secretary to take notes and take follow up action to provide relief, wherever possible.

The idea of oneness of the world is stressed many times by Nehru in letters and it denotes Indian principle of "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam" means whole universe is our family. Nehru believes in Buddhist thought of Panchsheel which has its ideals of mutual respect, no aggression, equality, peaceful coexistence and non-interference. Indira's following of these principles became apparent. Nehru nourishes Indira's young mind by saying that service to humanity is the best service. We may live in different places, speak different languages but we all belong to one community that is humanity. Having a broad vision Nehru teaches Indira that world is one village and we all belong to one family. If we find something good in other countries we should grab it and abandon the bad what we have.

"It would be such an excellent thing if all the people in the world were happy and contented. We have, therefore, to try to make the whole world a happier place to live in."

Nehru teaches Indira through letters the importance of values of co-living and non-violence. Nehru tells Indira how foolish and silly it is for countries to fight each other and kill innocent people. It seems great impact on young Indira's mind and later when she became Prime Minister she shows her patience regarding freedom movement of Bangladesh. To Indira non violence is neither cowardice nor resignation. It was Pakistan whose planes made their raid first.

"India stands for peace but if a war is thrust on us we prepared to fight or the issues involved are our ideals as much as our security".

Nehru wants his daughter to be free of racial bias. Nehru tells Indira that climate is thus the chief cause of colour and complexion. Nehru had many Harijan servants at Anand Bhavan who lived and ate with them including Hari Lal who had been Nehru's personal servant. A system of reservations in government services and educational institutions was created by Nehru to eradicate the social inequalities faced by the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. Nehru increased representation of minorities in government and succeeded in establishing secularism and religious harmony.

Nehru tells Indira in his letter, "Different Classes of People" about the origin of rich-poor division.

"And so, division of work went on, several classes arose. There was the king and people of his court.....Then there were priests.....Thirdly there were merchants ..... Lastly there were peasants and labourers who worked in the fields and cities."

Indira Gandhi's policies reflected a commitment to social justice. She aimed to address disparities and promote inclusivity through measures such as land reforms and the nationalisation of certain industries. Indira following the path of her father loved all people of India whether they were rich, poor, harijan, peasant and weaver. Her love for the poor and deprived went far beyond political strategy. She could reach out, touch them and draw close. Indira became the leader of masses. She was massiah of poor and down trodden people in India. A souvenir, Rebirth of congress, published featured an extract from a book of Mrs. Gandhi's late aunt Krishna Hutheering,

"In her veins flow the blood of her father and grandfather like the Ganga she belongs to India and India is one passion of her life."

In one of his letter, 'The Patriarch-how he Developed', Nehru tells Indira, "But as soon as the patriarch started grabbing at the things belonging to the tribe and calling them his own, we begin to get rich people and poor people."

Indira's speech from the Red Fort on August 1967, an annual event was patterned on Nehru's own. She gave a simple definition of socialism:

"Poverty should be eradicated, disparities between the rich and poor should be reduced, the backward people, be they Harijans or the ill people, should have equal distribution of national resources, and she ended with a Nehru like flourish. Though in your veins runs the blood of heroes and great men. Let diffidence give way to confidence; let despair give way to hope."

Another feature Nehru tried to teach Indira through letters was that "Be brave and never do anything in secret". Fear is bad thing and unworthy. If we hide something means we are afraid. So in our private lives let us make friends with the sun and work in the light and do nothing secretly. And if you do so, my dear, you will grow up a child of the light, unafraid and serene and unruffled, whatever may happen. In Indira's own words,

“Opportunities are not offered. They must be wrested and worked for. And this calls for perseverance and courage.”

Indira was never afraid to voice her opinions and made decisions for her party or with key world leaders. During Bangladesh liberation Indira played a major role and enhanced her reputation by visiting refugee camps and military out posts. It may be due to effect of her father's advice that Indira tackled the world's super-powers with her no nonsense attitude which made Indira a dominating figure. Her voice was heard with gravity in the international forums of the world. Foreign Policy cannot be divorced from a country's internal progress. And this calls for perseverance and courage "non-alignment" stands for, namely, that we believe in independently judging all issues. We have stood for the freedom of all countries.

Indira like her father loved India but she knew fully well that the country was in chaos. Indira was aware that the choice that had been thrust on her was the right one. So she chooses after all to take on the family legacy of service rather than seek personal fulfillment. Indira herself says,

“I was brought up to believe that Politics is not a career, it is not a job, politics is certain world trends, where humanity is going, what it is doing. That is what interests me, for politics is the centre of everything”.

In 1984 after Blue Star operation in Punjab and discontent in Kashmir, Andhra Pradesh and elsewhere Indira's popularity sunk to an all time low. Even newspapers blamed her of 'the rape of democracy'. She kept her own counsel and remained as energetic and calm as ever. In this state of mind in 1984, Indira wrote a document that she mentioned no one. It was later found among her papers.

“I have never felt less like dying and ..... calm and peace of mind is what prompts me to write what is in the nature of a will. If I die a violent death as some fear and a few are plotting....., no force is strong enough to divert me from my purpose and my endeavour to take this country forward.”

Nehru through letters tells Indira that civilization is not a matter of external material evidence but of internal spiritual disposition. To work together is best of all.

“So also the first advance in civilization that early men made was to combine together in packs or, as these are called tribes. They began to work together. There was what is called cooperation.... The tribes of men also chose the strongest man amongst them as their leader.”

Nehru knew how powerful an influence religion was in India practically among all communities. Nehru wants Indira to be free of all superstitions. Nehru tells Indira through letters that the idea of God and of religion is the outcome of early man's ignorance and fear of natural things. Nehru tells Indira how lack of knowledge guides the earlier religious beliefs and how it passed through centuries and became rituals. Some religions first came as fear and anything that is done because of fear is bad. How good and bad things have been done in the name of religion.

“He must have thought that the god in clouds was like himself and liked food. So he would take same meat or kill an animal, sacrifice it as they say, and leave it somewhere for the god to eat! He imagined that he could stop the rain or the hail like this!”

After Blue Star Operation, the idea of removing Sikh security was given to India by the Head of Intelligence Bureau but Indira insisted that India was secular. She was even used to quote widely from ancient scriptures in public speeches.

Under Nehru's leadership the government attempted to develop India by embarking various agrarian reforms. As additional land was brought under cultivation and some irrigation projects began to have an effect. The establishment of agricultural universities, which worked for high yielding varieties of wheat and rice in 1960's began, the Green Revolution, which was a great effort to diversify and increase crop production. Nehru explained,

“For a hungry man or hungry woman, truth has little meaning. He wants food. For a hungry man, God has no meaning. And India is starving and to talk of truth and God and many of the finer things is mockery, we have to find food for them, clothing, housing, education and health are absolute necessities that every person should possess.”

In letters to Indira, Nehru even talks about agriculture. With the coming of agriculture, it became much easier to get food. Before agriculture, every man was hunter.

“With the coming of agriculture, he got more from the land at one time than could be used. He hoarded up this surplus or extra food. Here we find the beginning of surplus food”.

Like father Indira took quick decision when India faced a second year of drought and scarcity of food. Indira with her minister for food, C. Subramaniam, launched a major programme for solving the food problem in India. She and



her Minister visited every state to discuss in detail, the problem and find solution. Indira herself gave up eating rice at that time of scarcity.

“Decisions were taken on spot and action initiated collaborations. With fertilizers firms finalized, improved seeds to revitalize agriculture in India introduced. In three years a Green Revolution was to make India self-sufficient in food”.

Nehru in his letter, “Language, Writing and Numerals” explains to Indira how rhymes and ballads were popular in early civilization. Nehru by adopting story telling method describes to Indira how hoarding of money is harmful for the progress of the country and how trade at national and international level is necessary for the progress of the country. In his letter “China and India” Nehru says,

Many developed civilizations such as Dravidians in India, “used to do trade with other countries. Many goods were exported to Mesopotamia and Egypt and even sent across seas as rice, spices like pepper and teak wood to build houses. Even gold, pearls and ivory were sent from India to Western countries.”

Nehru tells Indira that with the discovery of numerals as Arabic and Roman and with the discovery of counting business and trade developed and paved way to the progress of country. Use of gold and silver made trade much easier.

Nehru is applauded for introducing India to socialist economic reforms and ushering in an era of industrialization.

In his letter ‘Sea Voyages and Trade’ he tries to teach her about the importance of self-reliance by advocating khaddar which is spun and woven in India rather than British textiles. This according to him would provide impetus to domestic industries and a source of income for the poor. Thus he is also trying to teach Indira to be considerate about the poor.

“Consider a piece of foreign cloth that is sold in the bazaar here. The cotton grew in India and it was sent to England.”

Indira being daughter of first Prime Minister and even granddaughter of Motilal never ran after money. She used to wear mostly Khadi Sarees that were spun by her father in jail. As Nayantra Sehgal says in her book, “Tryst with Power”,

“Reserve was natural to Indira and simplicity was her lifestyle. She disliked fuss and clutter around her. She had an eye for beauty but no liking for opulence in food, clothes, furnishings or possessions, and this was not a matter of policy or discipline but because she was made that way. She ate wisely, did not smoke or drink, and dressed in impeccable taste, always in khadi.”

Nehru was a great architect of modern India. In his letters to Indira, he even talks about wall painting from the Egyptians tombs at Thebes and pictures of ruined temples and building at Karnak in upper Egypt. They could not have built there great temples and palaces unless they knew a great deal of engineering. Like Nehru Indira had a special rapport with artists, authors, poets and philosophers. A group of persons encircling her, such as K.N. Rai the Vice-Chancellor of Delhi University, leftist Ashok Mehta and barrister and diplomat P. N. Haskar, whom she later appointed as her Principal Secretary, were superb choices, idealist, optimist and smart men. In his letter “The First Living Thing Nehru” tells Indira,

“Perhaps you remember a gentleman who came to see us in Geneva. His name is Sir Jagdish Bose. He has shown by experiment that plants have a great deal of life, he thinks that even stones have some life”

Nehru had a scientific temper and was a tireless optimist. Nehru’s farsighted vision is responsible for developing modern science in newly independent India. Indira herself was fascinated by new discoveries of scientists. She was like a child when she witnessed man’s landing on the moon. Indira put India on an International scientific map by exploding the country’s first underground nuclear device at Pokhran in 1974, making a significant development in the country’s defence capabilities. The launching of the first space satellite, Aryabhata followed by a host of satellites are among her other remarkable scientific achievements.

In his letters, “The Races and Languages of Mankind” Nehru tells Indira how rivers holy water is necessary for man’s survival and how civilization developed near rivers due to fertility of soil and supply of sufficient water. So the rivers might well be called ‘Father’ and ‘Mother’. We must remember that the Nile and Ganges are considered holy because they give water and food.

“People must have settled down near great rivers, for the land near the rivers was very rich and good for agriculture. There was plenty of water and it was easy to grow food on the land. So we suppose that people settled in India near the great rivers like the Indus and Ganges; and in Mesopotamia

near the rivers Tigris and Euphrates; and in Egypt near the river Nile; and so also in China.”

Nehru also talks about the importance of History and the important role it plays in the future. We must analyze historical facts and look at them realistically as ignorance and reluctance to learn history can lead to failure. In the letter “Different classes of people” Nehru says that,

“History should tell us of the people of a country; how they lived, what they did, and what they thought. It should tell us of their joys and sorrows; of their difficulties and how they overcame them...our study of past times will help us in finding out if people have been getting better and better or worse; If there has been progress or not.”

By talking of Vedas, Rigveda, Puranas and even Ramayana and Mahabharata Nehru imparts literary knowledge to Indira.

“These were the books written in India thousands of year ago. Who but the greatest of men could have written them? And although they were written so long ago, they live today in India and every grown up is influenced by them.”

In Letters from a father to his daughter Nehru discusses natural history, the beginning of earth evolution, solar system ancient civilization, great cities of world, origin of language, nature, culture, environment, science, trade, agriculture, economy, literature, Patriarch, caste system, brotherhood, fraternity, globalization, climate etc. and what not? Nehru imparts Indira with such visionary knowledge and makes her a visionary leader.

“Indira was the product of many cultures. Her close association with the freedom struggle and the stalwarts of the independence movement had moulded her life. In many ways she was a reflection of her father’s mind....She was a rebel, anti-traditional and anti-establishment but a natural cautiousness kept her far away from any major Left commitments. Astrology, prognostication, ritual, superstition had little place in her consciousness. Her early upbringing and her father’s interests expressed with such limpidity in his letters to her, gave her a love of adventure, a fearlessness, an inbuilt sense of the secular; it also awakened a live curiosity and a constant search for new frontiers.”

Nehru’s letters served as an instrument in arousing self-awakening of Indira. These letters were not mere usual communication between father and daughter but a way to develop a standing bond between father and daughter. Being a great environmentalist her concern was not only for people of the world but for plants and animals also. She followed

Nehru’s model of development based on the pillars of democracy, secularism, economic planning of establishing a welfare state and the policy of non-alignment. Like father Indira’s five year plan was focused on agriculture, poverty alleviation and employment generation. The plan was aimed to reduce social and economic inequality between different sections of society. Indira Gandhi adopted Norman Borlaug’s Green Revolution ideology to get rid of shortage of food supply in country. Agriculture was shifted to Industrial sector and adoption of modern methods, and modern technology made India self sufficient. Her early upbringing and her father’s interest expressed with such translucent in his letters to her, gave her a love of adventure, fearlessness and inbuilt sense of being secular. In many ways she was the reflection of her father. During her visit to Europe with her father labour M.P. Reginald Sorenson described Indira as:

“The reflection of her father--- purely her father’s daughter”.

Even Christine Toller the wife of Jewish poet Ernest Toller wrote to Nehru,

“I want to tell you how delighted I was to have met her she seems to me like a little flower which the wind might blow away so easily, but I think she is not afraid of the wind”.

Indira not only preserved the rich heritage of Nehru but Indira made her own significant contribution. Indira took decisions in view of the prevalent circumstances that resulted in raising the stature of India even at international level. Indira had learned from her great father how to identify India’s national interest with independent decision making in international affairs and economic development at home. Even her bitter critics were forced to admire her guts. After her victory over Pakistan leader of opposition A.B. Vajpayee called her Durga. Another opposition leader declared in Parliament: “Madam, you have created not only history but a new geography as well.” She put India on the international scientific map by exploding the country’s first underground nuclear device at Pokhran in 1974. Indira was against colonialism and racialism and believed that these may create tensions and hostility. An increase in India’s economic and military strength during her regime made India an important Regional power which could not be ignored by any super power. As chairperson of NAM she made tremendous efforts for world peace, justice and equity among nations.

Like her father she was never concerned about her safety. She used to move through crowd, with ease. They



gave way to her, created space, welcomed her, shouted slogans hailing her.

For people she was their daughter, their sister, their mother on 30th October in Orissa after seeing the vast sea of people before her, sensing their hopes, their concern, their joys and sorrows, a moment of prophecy entered her. Indira herself said,

"I don't care whether I live or not. I have had a long life and if I am proud of anything it is that I spent the whole of my life in service. I am proud only of this and nothing else, And as long as there is breath in me so long will I continue to serve and when my life goes I can say that every drop of blood that is in me will give life to India and strengthen it".

Indira was not a feminist, she did not do much for women empowerment but she herself was a source of inspirations for women. Her leadership paved the way for increased representation of women in political and public life.

In her Presidential inauguration speech she utters,

"We are the women of India. Don't imagine us a flower-maidens, we are the sparks in the fire".

Indira had amazing ability to communicate and captivate the weaker section. In 1971 her slogan was "They say remove Indira I say eradicate poverty." Silence and reserve were her instruments and tried to avoid any reflective reaction or confrontation and waited till the energy of attack had abated her. Indira herself says,

"An ounce of patience is worth more than a tons of preaching.....In a gentle way, you can shake the world."

Her father Nehru was a peace loving gentleman who never tried to tackle bullies. Indira mostly followed her father footsteps but due to her strong authoritarian streak she never stands to any non-sense. She would take the battle to their door step and defeat the enemy.

We applaude Indira for her victory over Pakistan, nationalization of banks, impressed by her nuclear and space programmes, her empathy for poor and instructive rapport with people, her firm belief in value of education, her passionate conviction in environment conservation and her special efforts towards improvement in technical education etc. Indira Gandhi left an indelible imprint on our county.

But Gandhi's legacy remains in doubt however because of her authoritarian rule during emergency, for centralizing power and even her push for dynastic rule. On March 16, 1977, in sixth general election Indira and her Congress

party were defeated. Indira Gandhi found herself without a job, an income or roof over her head. Lastly her raid over Golden temple resulted in her assassination.

Nehru himself once said, "There is nothing more horrifying than stupidity in action." History has represented Indira's achievements but psychological aspect of history may help us in better understanding of Indira by considering the circumstances, chances and forces that brought her to such great heights and even the reasons why she deviated from her father's policy.

Great psychologist Adler even claims that social environment and motivation plays an important role in achieving one's goal. Indira was brought up in a family and environment where national and international politics were discussed all the time. Her illustrious father had taken care to educate his daughter from all aspects of life. This was even much demonstrated in Nehru's letters to his daughter from prison in which history politics and even every aspect of life had been discussed. So on one side social and political environment of Nehru's family, Indira's education, her talent played important role in raising her to such great heights but on another hand her father Nehru's company and motivation enhanced through letters was superb. Letters served as an important tool that made her self-reliant and brave. Indira became India's second most serving Prime Minister. She had great national support of rural and urban poor. At the end of 1977, she was such dominant figure in Indian politics that congress party president D.K. Baraooh had coined the phrase,

"India is Indira and Indira is India"

Another psychologist Sigmund Freud in his theory of unconscious mind reveals that every experience, thought and impression you even have stored in your subconscious mind has far great influence on our thought and behavior patterns than we realize. Firstly being a single child Indira was rebellious from childhood. Another traumatic event of Indira Gandhi's childhood were long time separation from her father, her mother's illness, her own health issues, pressure of political expectations, male dominance in politics, and most probably her aunt Vijay Laxmi Pandit's calling her ugly and stupid at an early age. Such traumatic effects might have left an imprint on her unconscious mind. After being voted Prime Minister for the first time Indira recalled.

"She Vijay Laxmi Pandit did everything to destroy my confidence, she called me ugly and stupid. Faced with

hostility, however well prepared I am. I get tongue tied and withdrew”

Vijay Laxmi Pandit's remark was when Indira blamed her aunt for destroying her confidence.

“She [Indira] has always been a lonely person .... father mostly absent mother ailing led to a degree of obstinacy and insistence on having her own way and believing she was always right”.

According to Sigmund Freud repressed emotions may lead rather aggressive or dominant over often. Their strength striving for personal power is so great that they feed to push over anything or anybody who gets in their way. Even if child at early age whose parents are not with them and raised in an authorization manner also becomes selfish and trust no one. Indira due to strained relations with colleagues never trusted them. Many biographers agreed that she had an extraordinarily complex character. As Masani observed,

“While one part of her personality sought fulfilment in political leadership, the other craved the greater intimacy, peace and security of private life”.

Thus Indira's story remains one great story of a highly flawed individual, a story born out of great solitude. That's why Mrs. Gandhi became a woman of mercurial moods, warm and generous one minute, frosty the next. Friends called her misunderstood but often agreed that she was hard to understand. As Nayan Tara Sehgal says:

“India's leader from 1966 to 1977 had been a woman whose childhood, education and family tradition had provided her with unusual opportunities for training in democratic ideals, yet whose own temperament had apparently never felt entirely comfortable with his inheritance. She firmly believed in her own dispensability.”

Psychologist Carl Jung believed that human beings are connected after and to their ancestors through a shared set of experience which is called collective consciousness. Our primitive past becomes the basis of human psyche that directs and influences our present behaviour. For everyone Ideal aim is to attain a state of selfhood. So like Erikson Jung directs his theory towards humanistic orientation of individuals. Life is series of lessons and challenges which help us to grow. In case of Indira, she became the leader of masses by deriving energy from reflection of inner feelings, ideas and experiences. Indira being daughter of Nehru and by following her father's policies became a visionary leader. Indira's efforts pursuing towards the idea of separate identity are also so admirable.

Study of American psychologist Millon's controlling power that correspond with Starck's forceful style, we assume that in her dealings with that controlling individuals enjoy the power to direct others and towards obedience and respect from them. Although, they tend to be tough and unsentimentals but their supervising power to guide others to work for the achievement of common goals may make them effective leader. According to Millon and Davis People who have suffered would in Carly life, look toward life a search to fulfil aspirations ambitions pattern of her personality can be identified from her early childhood. She used to deliver speech to servants in Anand Bhawan and used to perform as Joan of Arc. Another domain of Indira's contentious personality pattern revealed in her moods, she was frequently distraught and despondent.

After studying Herman's and Preston's five common leadership style variables we conclude that Indira was motivated primarily by pragmatism and power focusing on goals rather than a process. In her dealings with personnel, opposition parties, the party completeive and controlling and controlling but was accessible hostile and closed, depending on the time period. But with public Indira demonstrated a Consistent pattern of openness and warmth. After speculating pedagogical and psychological evaluation, we come to know that Nehru's teachings through letters and Indira's own credibility played an important role in Indira's self reliance and mental make up.

Being daughter of Independent India's first Prime Minister there may be a lot of pressure on Indira. Especially when she was conditioned from childhood that democracy is an idea that she should respect it till it became hunger for power. It is not always easy to do right things there may be such circumstances to break the rules.

As Paulo Ceelho says: “Each human being is unique, each with the own qualities and desire for adventure. However society imposes on us a collective ways of behaving and people never stop to wonder why they should behave like that.”

Nehru's charisma, intelligence and charm made him the hero of India. Indira Gandhi is remembered as the most powerful women in the world during her tenure. It is natural for human beings to make mistakes. To err is human. Indira Gandhi took hard and tough decisions – decisions that had the country's interest at heart. In her death she left a message to

the people of this country and to the whole world, a commitment to people can never be killed by any power, however strong it may be.

Pandit Nehru's advice to his daughter through letters is something all of us we need today. With saga of motherly and fatherly advice one may be thrilled who came across Nehru's "Letters from a Father to His Daughter." Although much History and politics have been discussed in it. But content of letters encompasses all major areas of human knowledge. Nehru through his correspondence serves as the perfect father and superb companion who with his extraordinary talent and experience guided Indira from her childhood. In these letters Nehru does not speak of this deeper dimension but reveals something of his own inner self through experience and her understanding of the national and international issues of the country were acute. These are the best letters written even and most popular in the world to-day. Rather than lecture her on facts Nehru reminds her of many places they had visited together and tells her the things they had seen.

This means Nehru wants Indira to think. Because it is the best way to teach the child how to think rather than what to think. By adopting this method we may implant the seed that will bloom later.

Indu dear, congratulation to the little monkey in enrolling fellow Vanars in the Vanar Sena." Although it must be noted that Indira Gandhi survived harsh political realities to become India's 1st woman Prime Minister.

"My political life started at the age of three. I have no recollections of playing with other children. My favourite occupation as a child was to deliver thunderous speeches to the servants while standing on a high table. All my games were political ones. I was like Joan of Arc, perpetually being turned at the stake"

Nehru through letters to his daughter gives a strong message to everyone that is to be kind towards children. Every child is special and unique. Each child should be grown up with love and care. Nehru invested a lot of his energy in to the emancipation of children and youth whom he believed to be the future of the country. Nehru himself said once:

"I may not have time for adults, but I have enough time for children."

Nehru was aware that preaching a child is of no use unless you practice what you preach. Man is the highest animal. So there should be strong emotional bonding between parents and children.

"The mother rabbit gives birth to a large number of baby rabbits every few months and many of these die. But a higher animal like the elephant only gives birth to one baby elephant and looks after the baby well. So you will see that as animals develop they do not lay eggs but bear developed young ones like themselves, only smaller, and the higher animals usually give birth to one baby at a time. You will also notice that the higher animals have some affection for their young ones. Man is the highest animal and so you find that the mother and the father love and take care of their children a great deal."

Children's natural freedom should not be barred by teaching and behaviour of elders. At school children learn many things which are useful but they gradually forget that essential thing is to be human and kind be playful and make life richer for ourselves and others. Idea of oneness or national integration is stressed many times by Nehru. Nehru's letters denote one nation which denotes a body of people who have feeling of oneness, built one basis of common history, society, culture and values. What Nehru wants to impart his daughter in letters is clear through Dorothy Simpson words:-

"National integration: creating a mental outlook which will promote and inspire every person to place loyalty to the country above group loyalties and welfare of country above narrow sectarian interests."

Nehru himself is credited with the formation of secular values in modern history of the country. Nehru declared in 1937.

"It was science alone that could solve these problems of hunger and poverty, of insanitation and illiteracy of superstition and deadening customs and tradition of vast resources running of waste of a rich country, inhabited by starving people".

Nehru nourishes young Indira's mind by telling her that we may live in different places, speak different languages, but all belong to one community that is humanity. Instead of having faith in God and religion, Nehru advocated humanism which he termed as scientific humanism. Like her father she believed that improved science and technology hold the key to success. Through letters Nehru even talks about the importance of agriculture. Seeds of green revolution were sown during Nehruvian era but Indira raised the super structure of Green Revolution.

Nehru's letters reveal his ecological consciousness and how he even wants his daughter to be equally conscious towards nature. He teaches his daughter to live in harmony



with nature and coexist with the entire flora and fauna. He wants Indira to love every form of nature to see the beauty in it and enjoy its loveliness. That is why environment issues hold a special place throughout Indira's political career at the top. She even did much for wildlife conservation as well.

By giving example of animals Nehru teaches Indira how small family is happier and population control is necessary for the progress of country. Indira did much for population control by sterilization programmes, however she was much criticized for this as of implementation method was wrong.

At international level she made tremendous efforts for peace, justice and equality among nations. Above all Nehru even tells Indira that power is not a right but a privilege, one that ought to be used wisely and benefit those whom it is designed to protect and serve rather than the selfish interests of those who hold it. As Bobbeta Sharma explains:

"Her (Indira Gandhi's) transformation from a shy reserved young girl to becoming the first PM of India is fascinating since later Indira Gandhi came to be referred as 'the only men in cabinet or 'the iron lady of India'. But the spark was even evident even when she was a child."

As Indira says in Preface of letters from a Father to his daughter,

"Most children idolize their parents, but not all parents are as good companions as mine were. My father was interested in everything and delighted in sharing his enthusiasm. I was full of questions and this enabled him to tell me about the world, and the men and women who inhabited it and who have moved others by their ideas and actions, and through literature and art. Above all he loved to speak and write about our wonderful country, its early achievements and grandeur, and the later decline and bondage. "They brought a fresh outlook and aroused a feeling of concern for people and interest in the world around. They taught me to treat nature as a book"

These letters give advice to all of us that children are our future. They must be nurtured with love and care. Each and every child should be imparted with universal values as peace, freedom, social progress, equal rights and human dignity from early age. There should be no place for arrogance and hatred. Parents must have emotional bonding with their children. Children should grow up in natural environment. Nature should be their best companion. Teacher student relation must be based on mutual understanding. Children should be taught in a natural way instead of solely bookish

knowledge. Children should be taught to give respect to animals also. Because the greatness of nation and its moral progress can be judged by the way its animals are treated.

Teachers today need to embrace diversity and create an inclusive classroom where every student feels valued, respected and heard. Teachers can integrate culturally relevant materials and activities into their lesson-plans to promote diversity and inclusion. Teachers should constantly find new and innovative ways to keep their students engaged and motivated. Teachers must help their students become informed and responsible citizens who can positively contribute positively to their communities and the world. Teachers can incorporate global issues and perspectives into their lesson plans, such as discussing environmental issues or examining cultural differences and similarities. Teachers must also focus on helping students manage their stress and nurture mental health by encouraging them to take breaks, engage in physical activities or be in company of nature. Teachers having diverse skills can help students become responsible citizens who can thrive in a fast paced, inter connected world. Under Indira Gandhi's leadership article 39(F) of the Indian Constitution, 1950 was substituted through the 42nd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1976 to expand the scope of the said article,

"Children are given opportunities and facilities to develop in a healthy manner and in conditions of freedom and dignity. Children and youth are protected against exploitation and against moral and material abandonment."

Be away from hatred and jealousy, and do work for the nation's progress should be everyone's motto of life. Try to spread peace, as peace is contagious. Letters seems to give message to all that we should treat the planet as sacred, to treat trees and rivers as sacred, to treat people as sacred. We must salute such great soul who appears in universe to uplift humanity renew wisdom and rekindle human values.

To conclude we say that Nehru due to his great spirit and devotion continued writing letters to his daughter from prison that mentioned his strength of body and mind and succeeded in providing a great leader Indira to India. Nehru's teaching and political ideology played a crucial role in shaping Indira Gandhi's political beliefs, leadership style and approach to governance. Nehru's experience and strategic insights were instrumental in shaping her political strategies, especially during challenging times. Nehru's nationalist sentiments influenced her own commitment to the nation's progress and development. She emerged as a leader in her own right, making independent decisions and facing

unique challenges. Mrs. Indira Gandhi had displayed her tremendous capacity for revivifying and to "re-authenticate" the non-aligned movement as a major channel for the exercise of India's influence in global affairs as well as for the protection of its own national interests. Some

of her policies may have deviated from her father's ideas due to changing circumstances and her own experience, but Indira Gandhi left an indelible imprint on our country. So Letters from a Father to His Daughter having much treasure of knowledge must be prescribed for school syllabus. The most important thing to do in life is to contribute for the well-being of humanity.

A leader should have a mission and vision and a spirit of sacrifices compassion and commitment. We must see the world as a whole and not as a dissociated part. In words of Mr. Lester Brown, "we have not inherited the earth from our forefathers but we have borrowed it from our children." Children are supreme assets of nation. More adequately and robust they transform into an adult more the nation will prosper. In Nehru's words:

"Children of today will make the India of tomorrow".

We must follow A.P.J. Abdul Kalam's words,

"Let us sacrifice our today so that our children can have a better tomorrow".

## References

- [1] Jawaharlal, Nehru, "Letters from a Father to his daughter" Penguin Group publication, Gurugram, Haryana, India, pp. 1-154, 2004.
- [2] Alfred, Adler, "Theory and Political Psychology of Aga Mohammad Khan Qajar", Journal Research Letter of Political Science, vol. 4, pp. 7-50, 2009.
- [3] Alfred, Adler, "Individual Psychology/ simply Psychology", Riley Hoffman, pp. 123-131, 2020.
- [4] Alfred, Adler, "Inferiority Complex", Alleydog. Com online glossary, pp. 123-131, 2020.
- [5] Sara Schupack, "Leading women Indira Gandhi", Terry Town: Marshal Lavendish, pp. 43, 2012.
- [6] Balraj, Puri, "Economic and Political Weekly- Era of Indira Gandhi", vol. 20 (4), pp. 148-150, 1985. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4374003>.
- [7] Frank, Katherine, "Indira: The Life of Indira Nehru Gandhi". London: Harper Collins, p. 254, 2001.
- [8] Nayantara, Sahgal, "Indira Gandhi Tryst with Power," Penguin Books, India, p. 275, 2012.
- [9] Stephanie, Scheck, "The Stages of Psychosocial Development", According to Erik H. Erikson, ebook, GRIN Verlag, pp. 4-22, November 13, 2014.
- [10] Bobbeeta, Sharma "Indira Gandhi- Child of Freedom Movement", Senital Digital Desk, 2017.
- [11] Carl Gustav, Jung "Theory of Personality in Pshycology", 2022.
- [12] T. Millon (wich Weiss, L. G.. Millon. C. M., & Davis, R. D.) "MIPS: Millon index of personality styles manual". San Antonio: Psychological Corporation, p. 34, 1994.
- [13] Z. Masani, "Indira Gandhi", Thomas Y. Crowell, New York, pp. 110 & 126, 1975.
- [14] Inder, Malhotra, "Indira Gandhi: A Personal and Political Biography". London: Hodder and Stoughton.
- [15] M. C. Carras, "Indira Gandhi: In the crucible of leadership". Boston: Beacon Press, p. 89, 1979.
- [16] Frank, Katherine, "Indira: The Life of Indira Nehru Gandhi". London: Harper Collins, pp. 187-188, 254, 2001.
- [17] P. Gupte, "Mother India : A Political Biography of Indira Gandhi", Charles Scribner's Sons, New York and Toronto, p. 290, 1992.
- [18] U. Vasudev. "Indira Gandhi: Revolution in restraint". Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, p. 258,
- [19] T. Millon & R.D. Davis, "Personalty disorder in modern life" Wiley, New York, pp. 278-279, 2000.
- [20] Ela, Sen, "Indira Gandhi: The First Biography", Peter Owen Publishers, London, UK, P. 3, October, 1973
- [21] Ian Copland, "History in Flux: Indira Gandhi and the 'Great All-Party Campaign' for the Protection of the Cow, 1966-68", Sage Publications Ltd, Journal of Contemporary History, vol. 49, no. 2, pp. 410-439, 2014.
- [22] H. C. Hart, "Indira Gandhi: Determined Not to be Hurt", in H.C. Hart (ed.) Indira Gandhi's India Boulder, p. 266, 1976.
- [23] R. J. Corsini, "Encyclopaedia of Psychology" (2nd edn, New York, vol.3, pp. 49-56, 1994.
- [24] J. Thakur, "All the Prime Minister's Men", New Delhi 1977.