

## Declaration of Emergency

On 12th June, 1975, Justice Jagmohan Lai Sinha of the Allahabad High Court declared Indira Gandhi's election to the Lok Sabha invalid. This decision created a political crisis.

## Crisis and Response

In response to rapid changing political situation and JP Movement, the Government of India on 25th June, 1975 recommended the imposition of emergency to President Fakrudin Ali Ahmed.

The President issued the proclamation immediately.

The emergency was proclaimed under Article 352 of the Constitution which declare a state of emergency of grounds of external threat or a threat of internal disturbances.

The cabinet was informed about it at a special meeting at 6 am on 26th June, 1975 after all this had taken place.

## Consequences '

Freedom of Press and some of the Fundamental Rights of the citizens were suspended. All the ongoing protests ended, strikes were banned, opposition leaders were put in Jail.

The Parliament also brought in many new changes to the Constitution.

Prior approval of government was needed to publish any article or matter it is called press censorship.

## Controversies regarding Emergency

After emergency, an investigation was done by Shah Commission. It found that in some areas excess restrictions were implied during emergency.

The government argued that in a democracy, the opposition parties must allow the elected ruling party to govern according to its policies.

The critics say that Indira Gandhi misused constitutional provision meant for saving the country to save her personal power.

The Shah Commission estimated that nearly one lakh people were arrested under preventive detention laws.

Apart from the arrests of political workers and the restrictions on the press, the emergency directly affected lives of common people in many cases.

## Lessons from Emergency

It is extremely difficult to do away with democracy in India.

'Internal' emergency can be proclaimed only on the grounds of 'armed rebellion'. Advice to the President to proclaim it must be given in writing by the Council of Ministers.

The emergency made everyone more aware of the value of civil liberties.

## Politics after Emergency

The experience of emergency was quite visible in 1977 Lok Sabha Elections. The people's verdict was decisively against the emergency.

## Lok Sabha Elections, 1977

The Janata Party made this election into a referendum on the emergency.

For the first time since Independence, the Congress Party was defeated in the Lok Sabha elections.

The Congress could win only 154 seats in the Lok Sabha elections. The Janata Party and its allies won 330 out of 542 seats in the Lok Sabha; Janata Party itself won 295 seats and thus enjoyed a clear majority.

Janata Government