

Lal Bahadur Shastri

Born on October 2, 1904, Lal Bahadur Shastri was the son of Sharada Prasad Shrivastava and Ramdulari Devi. His birth place was Mughalsarai in Uttar Pradesh. His father was a teacher and a man of integrity and honesty. The fact that, Lal Bahadur Shastri dropped his surname 'Shrivastava' as a symbolic gesture of protest against the prevailing caste system, says a lot about his beliefs and principles. Interestingly, the surname 'Shastri' was given to him as an award when he completed his graduation from kasha Vidyapeeth, Varanasi. The title 'Shastri' means a scholar. Shastri Ji lost his father when he was just one. His mother took care of Lal Bahadur and his two sisters.

Lal Bahadur Shastri's foray into Indian freedom happened because of his fascination for inspiring stories and speeches of the national leaders. He was an avid reader and used to read books by Karl Marx and Lenin etc. This influenced his life in a major way and he decided to join the Indian Nationalist movement. He actively participated in Non-Cooperation Movement and was arrested for it. But the authorities had to release him because he was a minor. Later on, he joined the Congress party and became the president of Allahabad congress committee.

In the meantime, he got married to Lalita Devi without accepting anything in dowry and presented an example to the society. Lal Bahadur Shastri was a man of honour and honesty. He played a very active role in Salt movement and for that he spent nine years in prison. He made a valuable contribution to Quit India Movement. After the independence of India, he served in various positions. Initially, he was a member of Uttar Pradesh state cabinet. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru invited Lal Bahadur Shastri to join the Union Cabinet and he was assigned the crucial portfolio of Railways. After a train accident where more than 150 people lost their lives, he offered his resignation accepting the moral responsibility for the incident. That shows his ethics and morality.

He served in several cabinet positions before succeeding Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru as India's second Prime Minister. He aptly handled crucial issues like food shortage, unemployment and poverty. He was instrumental in initiating "Green Revolution" and "White Revolution". Lal Bahadur Shastri showed exemplary courage and decision making skills when Pakistan attacked India during his tenure. He had said, "Force will be met with force" and crushed Pakistan comprehensively. After the war, he had gone to USSR to sign the Tashkent Declaration where he breathed his last. Lal Bahadur Shastri was the first person to be posthumously awarded the Bharat Ratna.