

# The Accidental Prime Minister: The Making And Unmaking Of Manmohan Singh

## A Man of Numbers and Nuance

Manmohan Singh, India's 13th Prime Minister, was a quiet and unassuming figure who rose to power through a combination of intellectual brilliance, economic acumen, and political pragmatism. His journey from a humble village in Pakistan to the highest echelons of Indian politics is a testament to his resilience, perseverance, and the transformative power of education.

Singh's early life was marked by poverty and hardship. Born into a Sikh family in Gah, Punjab (now Pakistan), he witnessed firsthand the horrors of the Partition in 1947. His family was forced to flee to India, where they settled in Amritsar. Despite these challenges, Singh excelled in his studies, earning a first-class degree in economics from Punjab University.

In 1957, Singh joined the prestigious Indian Economic Service (IES). Over the next two decades, he held various positions within the Indian government, including Chief Economic Adviser to the Ministry of Finance and Secretary-General of the United Nations Commission on Trade and Development (UNCTAD).



## The Accidental Prime Minister: The Making and Unmaking of Manmohan Singh by Sanjaya Baru

★★★★☆ 4.1 out of 5

Language : English

File size : 1288 KB

Text-to-Speech : Enabled

Enhanced typesetting: Enabled

Word Wise : Enabled

Print length : 319 pages  
Screen Reader : Supported



Singh's reputation as a skilled economist and policymaker grew steadily. He was widely recognized for his expertise in trade, finance, and development economics. In 1982, he was awarded the Padma Vibhushan, India's second-highest civilian award, for his contributions to the field.

## **A Reluctant Politician**

Despite his success in the economic realm, Singh had no initial aspirations for a political career. However, his expertise and the persuasive efforts of then-Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao convinced him to enter the political arena in 1991.

Singh was elected to the Rajya Sabha (Upper House of Parliament) and appointed as Finance Minister in the Congress-led government. He wasted no time in introducing a series of bold economic reforms, known as the "Singh Reforms." These reforms aimed to liberalize the Indian economy, reduce government regulation, and integrate it more fully into the global market.

Singh's economic policies were controversial at the time, but they ultimately proved to be transformational for India. The country's GDP growth rate accelerated, foreign investment poured in, and millions of people were lifted out of poverty.

## **Prime Minister with a Legacy**

In 2004, Singh was chosen by the Congress Party as their Prime Ministerial candidate. He led the party to a resounding victory in the general election, becoming the first Sikh to hold the office of Prime Minister.

Singh's tenure as Prime Minister was marked by a continuation of the economic reforms he had initiated as Finance Minister. He also oversaw a number of social welfare programs, including the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), which provided work and wages for rural laborers.

Singh's government also played a key role in the India-US nuclear deal, which ended India's nuclear isolation and allowed it to purchase nuclear technology from the United States. This deal was highly controversial and faced strong opposition from the BJP and other political parties.

### **Unraveling of a Legacy**

Singh's second term as Prime Minister was far less successful than his first. The global financial crisis of 2008 hit India hard, leading to a sharp slowdown in economic growth. The government's response to the crisis was widely criticized, and Singh's popularity declined significantly.

In addition to economic challenges, Singh's government was plagued by a series of corruption scandals. One of the most high-profile scandals involved the allocation of 2G spectrum (radio frequencies used for mobile phones), which led to the imprisonment of several senior government officials and corporate executives.

These scandals damaged the image of the Congress Party and undermined Singh's authority. In the 2014 general election, the Congress

Party was defeated by the BJP led by Narendra Modi.

## A Statesman of Integrity

Despite the setbacks in his later years, Manmohan Singh's legacy as a statesman of integrity and competence remains unblemished. He was a man of few words and simple tastes, who dedicated his life to public service. His economic policies transformed India, and his commitment to social welfare programs made a tangible difference in the lives of millions of people.

Singh's unassuming demeanor and unwavering determination are a reminder that even the quietest of voices can have a profound impact on the course of history. His journey from a refugee camp to the Prime Minister's Office is a testament to the resilience and transformative power of the human spirit.



### The Accidental Prime Minister: The Making and Unmaking of Manmohan Singh by Sanjaya Baru

★★★★☆ 4.1 out of 5

Language : English  
File size : 1288 KB  
Text-to-Speech : Enabled  
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled  
Word Wise : Enabled  
Print length : 319 pages  
Screen Reader : Supported





## **My Little Bible Promises Thomas Nelson**

In a world filled with uncertainty and challenges, children need comfort, hope, and inspiration. My Little Bible Promises is a powerful tool that provides young readers with...



## **Policing Rogue States: Open Media Series Explores Global Security Challenges**

In today's interconnected world, the existence of rogue states poses significant threats to global security. These pariah nations often flaunt international...