

# **Chapter-1**

## **The Architect of Integration: Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and the Administrative Unification of India, 1946-1950.**

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### **Abstract**

The Chapter will focus on an important contribution made by Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel in the orchestration of the administrative and territorial consolidation of India during the critical transition in the years between 1946 and 1950. Patel had a monumental task as the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Home Affairs and States bringing together the more than 560 princely states into the newly formed Indian Union and at the same time stabilizing the inherited colonial administrative apparatus. This Chapter holds that the distinctive combination of pragmatic statecraft, coercive diplomacy and political realism would have played a crucial role in India developing the territorial integrity after the colonial invasion through the view of pragmatic statecraft, coercive diplomacy and political realism as developed by Patel historically and analytically using official handwritten documents, parliamentary debates, and the wisdom of the contemporary literature. It discusses his two-tiered approach in the first place, his handling of the so-called Instrument of Accession process to the various princely states, combining persuasion, negotiations with the thorough domination of force (as in Hyderabad and Junagadh) and in the second place his strong-armed advocacy of the principle that administrative continuity must be maintained by keeping the so-called steel frame of the Indian Civil Service (ICS). It also discusses the conflicts between his centralizing, security-based vision and those of Nehru, who was more pluralistic and developmental in his approach. The conclusion states that the legacy of the person named Patel as the Architect of Integration, is core to the contemporary Indian state, to

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VOICE OF UNITY: Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and the Making of Modern India

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creating a powerful, centralized administrative framework which forestalled balkanization during an extraordinarily frail condition.

**Keywords:** Vallabhbhai Patel, Indian integration, Princely States, Indian Civil Service (ICS), Administrative Unification, Post-Colonial Transition, Indian Governance.

### **Introduction**

Not only did August 14-15, 1947, midnight not only signal the independence of India, but it was also the greatest nation building obstacle that India had ever encountered. The British withdrawal brought along a two-related crisis; a bloody partition of Punjab and Bengal, and an end to paramountcy over 562 princely states that covered 48 percent of the subsistence homeland of the subcontinent. These became the largest (Hyderabad further north, larger than Italy), and smallest (and hence no larger than landholding), states, which overnight became legally independent, and all the danger was put into losing the subcontinent into an anarchic mosaic of fragments. This was the time in history when it was necessary to have someone decisive as a statesman and practical as an administrator. That figure was Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel.

Patel who was the first Deputy Prime Minister and Home Affairs and States Minister in India became the genius of the Indian unification of its territorial and administrative borders. The current Chapter recommends the consideration that Patel was an effective individual owing to his two-track revolutionary strategy, that is, the diplomatic-military merging of the princely states and strategic upkeep of the colonial bureaucracy. His politics have often been characterised as *realpolitik*, in stark contrast to the internationalist view of Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru to an underlying tension on which the Indian federalism attained its contemporary shape. The piece illuminates on how Patel with his callous pragmatism made an integrated India out of the doldrums that ate away the nation and its cohesiveness.

## **Research Objectives**

The specific objectives of this research will be the following:  
To analytically assess the political- administrative way, which Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel assumed with respect to the incorporation of princely states in the then years 1946-1950. To determine the value added by Patel in creating continuity in the administration by retaining the Indian Civil service (ICS) or rather reinventing it into Indian Administrative service (IAS).

To discuss the brightest examples of Junagadh, Hyderabad, and Jammu & Kashmir as the examples of the way of implementation of the methods by Patel, it should be mentioned the mixture of diplomacy, coercion, and popular will.

To make the comparison between the efforts of Patel who was a centrist and security based in his governance and the vision of Jawaharlal Nehru who was a pluralist and developmentalist that ruled the transition phase.

In-depth, the question to be answered concerns the legacy of the integrationist views of Patel and its impact on the Indian federal state and its administration ethos.

## **Scope**

The research will be conducted between 1946, when Patel was elected to central positions in interim government, as far as 1950, when finally, the Constitution of India was implemented and the Union was established. The geographical area comprises of those areas that were to make up the Dominion (then becoming Republic) of India particularly the princely states. The range can be thematic: the politically integration, the bureaucratic re-structuring and the discussion of the high-level policy in the Constituent Assembly and Cabinet.

## **Limitations**

The study focuses a lot on the official correspondence and the official arguments, the informal, back-door deals which Patel writes about are less registered.

Although the issue of Kashmir has been identified, the problematic section of the Chapter is the states that were directly managed by Patel because the issue of Kashmir was more or less managed by Nehru.

So social and economic impact of the integration to the citizens of former princely states however relevant it is not the key aspect of this administrative-political analysis.

### **Review of Literature**

Patel has an enriched and polarised literature which role and very often scholars are inclined to subscribe to either of the tests of interpretation.

The further storey is the so-called Integrationist School (*Menon, 1956; Das, 1973*). The Storey of the Integration of the Indian States as well as V.P. Menon, the chief bureaucrat of Patel has provided a first-hand account and portrayed a wieldy genius who could use diplomacy and other weapons to rescue India. The series of the letters of Patel that are being edited by Durga Das endow him with the quality of the invaluable realist.

This has been ordered by Theorization of the Critical Reappraisal School (*Copland, 1997; Ramusack, 2004*) and the actions of Patel are now a component of a larger imperial and princely politics. The Princes of India in the Endgame of Empire by Ian Copland came up with this viewpoint arguing that -integration had not been a feat in a single instance but had been accretive to the pressures on the princes, on the one hand, of politics and on the other of money, throughout the years. Barbara Ramusack demonstrates the process of negotiating by the agency of the very princes themselves in an explicit manner.

Such dichotomies include the Patel-Nehru dichotomy under consideration in the so-called Comparative Visionaries School (*Guha, 2007; Nandy, 1994*). India After Gandhi by Ramachandra Guha falls out of proportion in giving its alliance the steel and velvet. A psychological explanation has been provided by Ashis Nandy in which Patel is termed to be a hyper masculine, statist imperative or an overwhelming of more pluralistic possibilities.

The Administrative History School would be relevant to the choice of school of thought which is concerned with the bureaucratic legacy of Patel (Potter, 1986; Maheshwari, 2005). The transition to ICS/IAS that David Potter encounters shed certain light on the very crucial role of Patel in which he vindicates all-India services as an act against provincialism. The current Chapter is an endeavour to weave these strands and prime documents will be undertaken to discuss how Patel applied his vision of centralised administrative state in his political plan of integrating the territories.

### **Research Methodology**

The research design that was adapted in the study is known as qualitative historical-analytical research design.

#### **Primary Sources**

*Machineries:* White Paper on Indian States (1948), The integration of Indian States (Menon, 1956) and Reports of the States Ministry.

*Correspondence:* The chosen correspondence in the Correspondence volumes in the Sardar Patel and the reference material or the States Department of the National Archives India are both the archives (Das, 1973).

*Parliament- Speeches for Parliament:* Constituent Assembly Speeches (1946-1950) the speech of Patel on the ICS and integration, specifically.

*Report:* 2016 Press release in the large-scale newspapers (The Hindu, The Statesman, The Times of India).

#### **Secondary Sources**

Research Book and Article The study of the historical works, the analysis of the political science and biographies.

*Documentaries and Oral History:* Interviews of Moderns and Historical Documentaries to provide a background to the storey.

### **Method of Analysis**

The data analysis will be conducted in the form of a process tracing and content analysis. The analysis will be carried out on Patel in his speeches and letters in which the repetitive themes (unity, security, efficient administration) will be

determined. Thematic and chronological-based integration process will be applied with the purpose of identifying the causal processes and decisions moments. The comparisons will be drawn concerning the examples of the Patel-Nehru approaches due to their verbal statements and policy choices of the high-rise issues.

### **History The Riddle of Unification (Pre-1947)**

The Indian independence act that got passed in the year 1947 never established one nation but on the contrary, two dominions, to be known as India and Pakistan were established. Such kind of violence was brought about by the partition and the change in power in the British Indian province was relatively easy. The more expensive complex issue was the princely states that ruled over more or less of the approximately 48 per cent of the land in the sub-continent (*Menon, 1956*). The independence in these states was different as there existed maharajas, nawabs, and other hereditary masters of the British suzerainty. The termination of the British paramountcy of the legal relation of British treaty between the Crown and the princes meant that such relations were suspended and were exposed to the technical alternative of being free.

Therefore, the threat in the political field was high. The strategic states that Muslim rulers were stationed and ruled by the world gave fertile grounds to war through large number of populations that was either of the Hindu faith or the reverse. The other leaders such as the Nizam of Hyderabad who envisaged independence were forging separatist sentiments and the offer of the leader of Muhammad Ali Jinnah to incorporate the princes in Pakistan on liberal terms (*Guha, 2007*). The fear of Balkanizing, that is, dividing India into dozens of inflammatory, even warring statelets, was a justifiable panic on the Congress side. It was the unscrupulous heritage, of which Sardar Patel, with his genius of juristically talent, with his organising and his reputation of an iron will, was to bring himself under control.

## **By Patel: the philosophy and apparatus of the State Ministry: The Steel frame**

Pragmatism, realism and belief in one powerful united India was the cornerstone of his rule. Being an old organiser as he was during his Bardoli Satyagraha until the Congress machine, he treasured discipline, efficiency and time. Specialisation in the job was the first strategy which he adopted when he became the leadership. He even formed the States Department, which was not subservient to the Home Ministry, a strong V.P. Menon as the Secretary, some weeks before gaining independence (July 5, 1947). This provided Patel with a lean bureaucracy team that was going to propel the mammoth negotiations (*Menon, 1956*).

At the same time, Patel wrote about the problem of the administrative mechanism of the state. Many nationalists considered the Indian Civil Service (ICS) as the tool of oppression by the colonists. It was forcibly forced to wholesale disintegration. Patel was intelligent but in the revolutionary way. He made the case of its continuation and gave a well-known defence of the service on October 10 of the same year, in the Constituent Assembly, in October 1949. To this he answers that I may not do a little more to make it plain that the Union will be, that you will not have united India, without a good All-India Service, free to speak its mind... (Indian Constituent Assembly Debates quoted in Patel, 1949). He also might evade the creation of an Indian Administrative Service (IAS), Indian Police Service (IPS) to substitute the ICS, provided that he would be leaving in place a trained and competent bureaucracy and politically incompetent administrative steel frame to service the transition as well as rule of the consolidated union (Potter, 1986). It was a step, which had fatal importance and the same officers whose hands had already been placed upon them to affect the British policy were brought now into the foreground of annexation of princely states and government of a free India.

### **Strategic Integration: Causation, Coercion and Preference**

Patel and V.P. Menon created a step-by-step roadmap of integration which was oriented towards the Instrument of Accession. This document which was founded on the Government of India Act of 1935 gave the princes an option of making a renunciation at the Dominion of India defence rather than all three and still retained the inner autonomy of the respective states. This was a concession to the politics which allowed it to be digestible in regards of accession because there were no conditions made to make it submit to the full and immediate submission (*Menon, 1956*).

Then mounted a vigilant and well waged campaign Delio. He also discussed the patriotism of the princes to which he invited them to be a constituent assembly and to participate in the drafting of the new constitution (*Patel, 1947 as cited in Das, 1973*). He also embraced their own self-interest; this would ensure them privy purses (yearly allowances of money), and also personal privileges and retaining titles. It was a stick with a carrot attached to it. Patel was categorical on the fact that the most significant shall be the proximity of the geographic location, and the people. He proposed the chaos, isolation and rebellion to those states which were not prepared to be involved in it and indirectly reminded the states that the Congress cannot achieve such a possible eventual outcome in case they prefer to remain isolated (*Guha, 2007*).

This step was a preponderating success. Most of the states quickly signed the Instrument of Accession though only very few states had refused to sign by August 15, 1947. The integration had the following steps:

First wave of accessions up to 1947 The first wave of accessions.

State-provinces amalgamation small states became incorporated in the nearby state (e.g., Chhattisgarh, Orissa).

Marriages between Princely States (Unions): Thousands of small states were corporate unions such as the United State of Kathiawar or Madhya Bharat.

Democratisation: In such unions, the introduction of populist ministries took place.

Nonetheless, three large exceptions, Junagadh, Hyderabad and Jammu and Kashmir were forced to be pressed with a heavier hand and this empowered the plan of Patel to the test.

### **Coercive Consolidation Case Studies**

Junagadh: This was a Hindu controlled coastal state of Kathiawar that had a Muslim Nawab who claimed to join Pakistan in September 1947. Patel denied this because of the doctrine of geographical contiguity and will of the people victimised. He blocked, assisted a tentative domestic government (the Aarzi Hukumat) and eventually approved military intervention in November, 1947 (Police Action). A plebiscite was then decided in which vast majority voted in favour of the accession to India (*Menon, 1956*). Junagadh was a noteworthy precedent: notwithstanding the nature of accession to the opposite of geographical logic and demography, anything will not happen.

The biggest and the richest princely state that remained landlocked in central India was subjected to the jurisdiction of Nizam who wanted to be independent. He strengthened one of the Muslim communities the Razakars that would torture the Hindu community in the most horrible way. The failure of the two in the negotiations prompted Patel to seek the permission of Nehru to combat operation Polo in September 1948 when barely a year later, law and order in the country disintegrated internally. Indian Army also defeated the troops of Hyderabad very rapidly and also Nizam surrendered. As it happened, Hyderabad was consulted and it proved that Patel had no hearing regarding protecting the integrity of the Union and its people by playing out superior force (Benjamin, 2008). Jammu and Kashmir case has been the most disagreeable and this was to a large extent it was not the personal opinion of Patel when the accession was done and the State was ruled by Nehru. First of all, Hindu Maharaja of this Muslim dominated state was timid. After the invasion of his tribe by Pakistan, he gave his signature to the Instrument of Accession to India in October 1947. The Indian soldiers were sourced in and war was fought. He had the mind of integrating other neighbouring states into one state just like Himachal Pradesh

and Nehru and the necessity of having a plebiscite was within the scope of the political management. The issue of Kashmir illuminates a bit on the Kashmir track divergence between the position of a firm support of the integration and that of the more international or rather the legalist opinion of Nehru (*Das, 1973*).

### **The frame and the administrator Unification is made of steel:**

In addition to unification of the territories, Patel also made the effort to unify the new union on the administrative front. He had been categorical in his defence of the All-India Services. He observed that the nation was bound to possess a unitary based, meritocratic service that will intervene to overcome provincialism and parochialism as a unifying one. He had been the administrator of integration of the administrative machine of the princely states into that of the Indian Union which was rather complicated task of balancing laws, systems of taxes and courts (*Potter, 1986*). The second mega issue that Home Ministry led by Patel was confronting was the high number of refugees, domestic security threat, and the empowerment of provincial boundaries to be drawn. The autocratic and even dictatorial manner in which he has conducted these, has bought him the reputation of the Iron Man of India, but has elevated him stability where there is much drift.

### **Nehru vs. Patel: An Analysis of the Visions during the Transition**

Nehru and Patel were fundamental to the new Indian nation and their coalition but also a productive but an uneasy dyarchy, they did not always act in manners that they felt.

*Patel:* You make me a unity and a great state. He was centralised and security cross-minded foreign policy. What was of interest to him more the efficacy of the administration, and the regional tranquillity and immediate interests (communal violence and non-obedience of the prince). His vision was the complete independence of the united India and the strong centre (*Noorani, 2014*).

*Nehru*: Social, developmental and democratic transition. His approach was the idealist strategy, pluralist and internationalist one. His interest was in economic planning which contributed to national building that is secular and the place of India in the global arena too. He also was more inclined toward the issues of regional identities and excited by the over centralization of power (*Guha, 2007*).

These disparities were echoed in the manner in which they viewed Kashmir not only in their attitude towards Pakistan but also in their perception of the affairs in the economy. The Patel was also more abusive against Pakistan and never trusted the UN. His economic strategy was prepared to pragmatic approach and the private enterprise unlike the Nehru a state socialism. In spite of such tensions, professional relationship between the two leaders was still that of mutual respect that left to Gandhi the occasional role as the mediator with most of the occasions. They were complementing him during their youthful years when they were all too similar to Nehru in his outlook, and Patel in his performance.

## **Findings**

**A.** One of the Approaches that was calculated was a Two-pronged Strategy which Patel was engaged in the approach. This was institutionalised through the institution of the integration mission which was headed by V.P. Menon. Meanwhile, his personal vindication of the ICS/IAS at the Constituent Assembly (Oct 1949) was no longer than a stage to the realisation of an administrative mechanism that would be obedient to the Union.

**B.** *Instrument of Accession section of Diplomatic Masterstroke*: this is a psychological compromise, a political favour, a way of depriving three subjects (Defence, External Affairs, Communications) so as to have few opponents. On privy purses and personal privileges, it was actually sold to be directly against the personal interest of the princes.

**C.** *Hierarchy of Coercion: Patel Strategies were circumstantial Seduction*: In most states (e.g. Bikaner, Baroda), it was enough that one was enticed to patriotism and realism.

**Political and Economic Coercion:** In the case with non-volunteer bigger states, they also formed such popular movement (Prajna Mandals), established economic boycott (Junagadh at first), and emphasised seclusion.

**Military Force (Police Action):** It happens only when intransigence and internal anarchy has occurred as in case of Hyderabad (Operation Polo, Sept 1948). A combination of force and plebiscite defeated Junagadh.

**D. Administrative Integration through Fusion:** In D. Administrative Fusion, Patel noted the complicated integration process of the state bureaucracies, the harmonisation of the taxation systems and expansion of the Union laws. This internalisation was much greater than the accession process that takes place politically in forming an integrated polity.

**E. The Parting:** This was most conspicuous in Kashmir: The unilateral (headed by Patel) of Nehru (UN referral) and the legalistic-internationalist one.

**Pakistan:** Paranoia and indifference among adolescents: Patel in his opinion regarding the diplomatic activity of Nehru.

**Economic Policy:** The realist image of Patel to the private industry compared to the socialism in the state which was led by Nehru.

## **Discussion**

**The Realism of the Iron Man:** this was the mind of Patel, and his cold calculation of power. He knew that it was self-preservation and not ideology, that inspired the princes. His promise of privy purses that was exploited under the pretences of being feudal in nature was a political compromise that led to infinity of military war. His irrationality in entering Hyderabad with his force, has been justified by his own impending misrule of Nizam and Razakar carnage as a police action in the name of internal security as opposed to assuming the power.

**The Centralising Impulse and its Critics:** Time and again the centralist visionary was Patel. The IAS was defended because there was the need to have a union which could be solidified by the establishment of a bureaucracy which would report to

the centre directly. This has impacted on a long-term basis but this has witnessed an efficient, centralised system of administration. This, critics would claim, suffocated the regional autonomy and institutionalised bureaucratic elite and is the major hurdle in the Indian federalism.

The counterfactual to the efficient model by Patel is Kashmir Unresolved Paradox. It has lost what it has failed to possess in complete integration, which was gone very far by Nehru, and to this the otherwise unprotested nature of Patel has unsuccessfully contributed. It additionally provides a grave weakness on his policy that is confused with the international intervention, and rival nationalistic claims.

**Synthesis Leadership** Ah-Synthesis The disparities were complementary with the Nehru-Patel dyarchy. Not only the territorial base but the administrative one as well was gained by Patel and Nehru was able to progress in his foreign policy and the intended economic development. The role of the mediator was significant until the death of Gandhi in 1948 and the pressure increased further.

### **Implications and Legacy**

*Indian State Legacies:* Patel had left behind to himself a well-developed central administrator machine made up of a structure of territorial states. This was opposite to the balkanization that had been witnessed in most of the post colonials.

The ideal of Patel of an integrated and elite administrative service is shared by the Ethos of the so-called Steel Frame: IAS, an extremely powerful and more than often despised institution of Indian government.

*Political Integration Model:* The accession-merger- integration model was a weak similarity with other regions in the decades later such as Nagaland and Mizoram with their separatist inclinations.

*Modern Political Rhetoric:* Patel legacy is currently being stirred by the current day politics in the form of an image of his presence as a symbol of national unity feeling, his leadership, his nationalistic feeling in majoritarian tinges and very much against the Nehru-Gandhi legacy.

## **Conclusion**

The map of the republic we have today was as of January 26, 1950, the date on which the Constitution of India had been put into operation, with only one outstanding issue, which was Kashmir and the questions of few enclaves. Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel to a large extent was orchestrating this great feat. He managed to do so with a compound of statesmanship vision, compromise and ruthless determination that brought hundreds of divergent political units together in a single Union which was called the Union. The policy of an instrument of Accession which was a promise of privy purses and a coercive command of arms provided a model of unification that was successful and in the long run peaceful as compared to the bloodshed of Partition.

Simultaneously, his recalcitrance regarding retaining and indianizing the civil service frame of steel provided this country the administrative permanency and professionalism upon which to operate this massive new country. There is some consensus with regard to the manner in which his centralising mood and his stern approach would have worked in the situation of Hyderabad, and his understanding of minority rights, but there is an unanimity that without the special contribution of Patel, the individual history of the post-colonial Indian state would have been a history of disintegration and of undying conflict.

The popularity of the Architect of Integration Patel has consequently been central to the Indian state. He changed the abstract character of an India, which was united, into the actual political and administrative state. His works led the people of the Republic of India to begin not on the course of some lax confederation, but instead a union of sovereign states, which had enough institutional strength to survive as a democracy. The fact that Patel succeeded in the country at a time when nations in the post-colonial world were grappling with disintegration and civil war is an attestation of the efficacy of an expedient kind of statecraft in nation building.

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