

Chapter- 17

Sardar Patel as the Iron Man of India and His Approach to Decision Making and Crisis Management

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Abstract

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel is one of the architects of India unity and has contributed not only through the political foresight but also through the crucial leadership during the times of crisis in India. In this chapter, the mode of decision making and crisis management by Patel is discussed in the formative years of India which was formed due to the independence of the country in 1947, through consolidation of princely states and key issues inside the country. It examines how he used diplomacy, toughness, intelligent bargaining and in exceptional instances militancy to help save the integrity and cohesiveness of a disjointed political system. Using the examples of cases, the chapter replicates the balancing of persuasion and pressure, ethical consideration and political necessity, and short urgency and long-term nation-building that Patel did like Junagadh, Hyderabad (Operation Polo), and Junagadh plebiscite. Lessons are learnt about modern human resource management: the process of leader negotiating with the stakeholders, the ability to overcome the conflicting interests, taking decisive initiatives in ambiguous situations, the manner of risk management, and an ability to maintain composure of stress, as well as the efforts of balancing different teams in the presence of the common purpose. In this leadership, Patel is perceived as being directed by a strong sense of responsibility, articulation of goal, and the capacity to overcome all decisively despite the implication of political, administrative, as well as moral sacrifice. The chapter ends with the lessons to the leaders of contemporary organisations.

Keywords: Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Decision-making, Crisis management, Leadership strategies, Stakeholder engagement, administrative reforms, Human resource management.

Introduction

In August 1947, the sub continental India was split between India and Pakistan not only physically and politically but psychologically as well. The Dominion of India, which was newly independent, comprised of British-occupied provinces, and more than five hundred princely states with their loyalties, borders, and allegiances very much uncertain. It was into this vacuum that Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel entered as the first deputy prime Minister and home minister of India and was given a huge task to unify a likely to disintegrate nation. This challenge was so great that it required not merely political or even moral leadership, but an ability to manage crises and make decisions during stormy situations.

The purpose was clear in the leadership style of Patel in crisis. He realised that national unity was a non-negotiable, and these are not the areas where territorial integrity, political stability, a sense of public could be achieved without taking action that was both firm and in places such as dialogue only. In the internally ruled princely states like Junagadh, Hyderabad and Kashmir, he never approached it in an entirely coercive way. He exercised diplomacy, persuasion, propositions of fine compromise (as privy purses to rulers alike), and, in case negotiation failed, had no hesitation in employing either force or coercion (as in Operation Polo at Hyderabad) to ensure the incorporation of recalcitrant states. This combination ability of negotiating as a firm force turned out to be his trademark.

Patelian management of crisis was also planning, worst-case scenarios, addressing the unrest of people, and bringing together various administrative players under one agenda. He had to manoeuvre between opposing political feeling, colonialism, tribal aspect, financial vagaries and bureaucratic lethargy. Patel did not make any hasty decision base on his judgments of what was risky and he made this decision even

after having consulted with some of the key people who had been advising him (not the least being V. P. Menon) and he also had the moral sense that national unity was more important than a personal or sectional interest. This chapter also examines key instances of Patel in crisis leadership, derives the principles of his decision making, and concludes by giving implications on the current day leadership in human resource and organisational situations, and particularly during times of crisis.

Rationality of Vision and Goal Uncompromising

The reign of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel in the formative years of India remains a demonstration of the ability of vision and goal orientation in a crisis. Every political and administrative decision made by him in 1947 to 1950 was based on his firm conviction in the integrity of India. The national integration through the eyes of Patel was not only a political requirement but also a moral requirement that was imperative in the survival of India as an independent state. His leadership style can be described as classical model of decision-making in leadership theory- in which comprise of clarity of goals is the source of all rational decisions and response to any crisis (*Simon, 1977*). It is this vision that Patel adhered to, and it guided his strategic decisions and re-fused to divide the subcontinent into many small states, instead turning them into one unified nation state.

During independence the country was confronted with one of her greatest challenges the presence of more than 560 princely state neither fully a part of British India nor fully independent (*Menon, 1956*). A large number of these states, which were geographically located as part of the Indian territory, entertained desire of autonomy or even accession into Pakistan. In the case of Patel, this was something unacceptable to the national integrity. At the very beginning, he explained that no house divided could withstand the storms of the world that has just been made free (*Patel, as cited in Verma, 2019*). In this way, he instilled the policy of national unity, which could not be compromised a goal that

was neither questionable nor ambiguous that would become a guiding line to all further actions.

On a leadership plane, Patel portrayed what contemporary management researchers refer to as so-called goal-oriented leadership when a firm purpose enables a leader to bring various actors and resources on a shared mission (*Northouse, 2022*). His sense of focus was of great essence since the atmosphere in which he was working was filled with a lot of uncertainty, lack of infrastructure, and rich communal acme. Despite these weaknesses, Patel was able to pass across his vision to the Constituent Assembly, the civil service and the people hence making sure that there was a common understanding of the national priorities to the stakeholders. This is in line with the modern human resource management ideologies that focus on shared organisational vision as the aspect that promotes employee alignment and stand against crises (*Yukl and Gardner, 2020*).

The vision of Patel was never dogmatism but a loose structure that has a goal that cannot be shaken. He knew that there might be more than one method to do things: persuasion and negotiation might be applied, but the final goal of integration could not be exploited. Such combination of adaptability of strategy and strictness of intent are those characteristics of strategic leadership that is addressed in recent literature on crisis management (*Boin et al., 2017*). One of the examples is how he implemented Junagadh by passing a plebiscite, which was a show of democratic legitimacy and the military intervention in Hyderabad governed by the name Operation Polo was an expression of pragmatic determination in the event of a failed dialogue. His choices in both examples were based on the same objective which was to have territorial and political unity (*Guha, 2007*).

Vision clarity was also the reason why Patel remained calm and resolute in situations of crisis. Complex crises in leaders cause challenges in dealing with ambiguity and opposing forces. But, Patel was ethically and strategically incisive to do so without the second thinking. This characteristic reflects what the contemporary organisational theorists call as cognitive anchoring or a kind of internal compass of a leader

that reduces decision paralysis in the face of a pressure (Kouzes and Posner, 2018). The fact that he remained even-headed in his belief that every delay was a cost to the nation (Patel, as cited in Thakkar, 2020) summarises the fact that he was sure about the fact that the only way one could fight against uncertainty was by acting within a timeframe and being confident that the action was deliberate.

In the end, the vision developed by Patel was both a moral as well as an administrative guide towards the state of India rejoining its fragmented parts to one whole. His leadership approach has left a lasting impact on organisational leaders in the present times: teamwork clarity encourages coordination, minimises conflict, and promotes decisive action in instances of crisis. Patel turned a discouraging political experiment into a legacy institutional system by ensuring there was a non-negotiable objective: national unity. His leadership is therefore an illustration of the importance of uncompromising vision, which is a decisive factor of success in building a nation as well as handling crises in organisations (Boin et al., 2017; Northouse, 2022).

Leveraging Strategy Persuasion Incentives and Pressure flexibly

The philosophy of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel with regard to consolidation of princely states is the art of strategic flexibility, the skill of striking the right balance between persuasion, incentive and pressure in accordance with the demands of that situation of every political unit. Contrary to the applications of ideological/procedural approach by leaders, Patel changed his approach to the distinctive political psychology in each of the princely states, its geography and the temper of leaders. His realism was based on the fact that it was necessary to be practical in attaining unity in postcolonial India as well as stern. The theory is aligned with the propositions of situational leadership theory that opine that successful leaders change depending on the followers and their readiness and receptiveness (Hersey, Blanchard, and Johnson, 2013). The key to the use of this dynamic style

by Patel was that he used it not only with people but also with complicated forms of politics.

India was left with a fractured country of 562 princely states during independence which were diverse in size, resource base, and commitments. Patel realised that the same method of negotiation could not give similar results in such a heterogeneous environment (*Menon, 1956*). Persuasion and assurance was enough to rulers who were oriented to cooperation. Patel used personal diplomacy and talked to the rulers one-on-one, pleading with them about their sense of patriotism and duty. He made them a promise that they will not lose their honour, position and some autonomy under the new Constitution. His negotiations with Bikaner and Mysore maharajas also indicate his patient and respectful style of negotiation that ensured that both of them joined India without resistance early (*Thakkar, 2020*).

To rulers with material interests or afraid of being deprived of royal privileges, Patel introduced the Patel idea of Privy Purses as a sort of money compensation so that they could remain dignified and comfortable even after making the accessions. This is a creative solution that combined both ethical and pragmatic leadership and showed the Patel knowledge of the theory of motivation in practise. He has been successful at converting possible opposition to collaboration by maximising the personal interests of the rulers to national interests. According to leadership scholars, in many cases, managing crises requires balancing the stakeholder interests with the objectives of the organisation to minimise change resistance (*Boin et al., 2017*). This understanding of human behaviour and political psychology is reflected in the behaviour of Patel. Nevertheless, Patel was also very explicit that persuasion had a boundary. When there was no conversation, he was not shy to use an incentive, political, administrative or even military one. Two such examples are his dealings with Junagadh and Hyderabad. Patel protested diplomatically and also used an economic blockade in Junagadh, where the Nawab wanted to join Pakistan against geographical and demographic odds, and eventually backed a plebiscite, which by a very large margin went in India's favour (*Guha, 2007*). Lawlessness and

communal violence ensued in the Nizam of Hyderabad because of his unwillingness to cooperate. Exhausted by the peaceful actions, Patel approved the military intervention (Operation Polo) and restored the situation in the state, making it a part of India (Verma, 2019).

This can be interpreted as a delicate balance of persuasion, incentives and pressure, which highlights the advanced decision-making framework of Patel. He was neither moralistically rigid nor pragmatically expedient, but aimed instead at realistic and pragmatic middle way even though his ultimate objective was national unity. His approach portrays the contingency model of the leadership effectiveness paradigm in the modern context of leadership and human resource management that no universal style of leadership can be applicable in every situation (Northouse, 2022). The success of Patel was to read every situation correctly and use the necessary combination of soft and hard power.

Moreover, his strategic flexibility goes in line with the contemporary management change models. The leaders are nowadays advised to employ a combination of communication, negotiation and reinforcement systems to deal with the resistance to change (Kotter, 2012). An approach like that of Patel reflects these principles and shows how an adaptive leadership would be able to transform its enemies into its allies and ambiguity into collaboration. His legacy teaches us that as well as strength and conviction are necessary in crisis management, one must also have the ability to empathise, be creative and flexible. In influencing and encouraging as well as coercing, Patel was able to reach the desired outcome of uniting without much bloodshed and without coercion to the highest extent possible which is hard to come by during a national upheaval.

Stakeholder Study and Individualised Reactions

The ability of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel to unite more than five hundred princely states into the Indian Union is not just due to his visionary and decisive nature but also in the way he understood the dynamics of the stakeholders exceptionally well. The example of leadership provided by Patel

demonstrated the idea that working with the crisis did not need a general strategy but an understanding of various motives, anxieties, and interests of the participants. His skills of undertaking what contemporary management scholars would describe as a stakeholder analysis, including the classification of key stakeholders, evaluating their strength and self-interest, and the development of specific interaction strategies, played a leading role to his success in political unification with the least degree of conflict (*Freeman, 2010*). By 1947, the Indian politics was a patchwork of princely states that were very different in geographical location, size, political inclination, and leadership temperaments. The progressive states like Mysore and Bikaner were ready to join India in voluntary terms and others like Hydrabad, Junagadh and Kashmir were hesitant and even opposed to it (*Menon, 1956*). According to Patel, each of them needed to be approached differently. It is his initial move in managing crisis.

was thus diagnostic- the awareness of the priorities, stress or threats of the individual stakeholders. This leadership diagnosis is reflected in modern-day definitions of crisis managers calling it contextual intelligence, or the skill to read the environment and modify behaviour based on it (*Boin et al., 2017*).

Patel developed three parameters that defined the princely states, namely geographical location, political orientation, and the personality of the rulers (*Verma, 2019*). Accession was considered natural and irrevocable to those who occupy geographically the Indian sub nation. However, Patel was not an authoritarian way. In other states such as Mysore and Travancore, he resorted to convincing with a sense of trust and reason in the cause of the country and its future permanence. His personal engagement with rulers by correspondence and personal visits case study reveals his empathy and cultural sensitivity, which the contemporary human resource management deems as very crucial in the engagement of stakeholders and negotiations (*Northouse, 2022*).

Oppositely, where rulers had scrupulousness led by the apprehension of losing their power or privilege, Patel used the power of psychology and an incentive worth pragmatism. He guaranteed them that a Constitution would prevent any infringement upon their social status, and that through Privy Purses, which would be a fixed annuity, they would be rewarded by government in appreciation of their former sovereignty. This policy is a way of manifesting his capabilities of reconciliation of conflicting interests under one single vision, which is a central leadership competence in resolving conflicts (Kotter, 2012). In the case of some states, such as Junagadh, where the Nawab was tried to annex Pakistan against the wishes of his Hindu majority citizens, Patel then turned to persuasion which was followed by carefully applied pressure, by using economic blockades and the mobilisation of public opinion till the ruler directly ran away and the accession of the state could be justified by a plebiscite (Guha, 2007).

The case of Hyderabad was similar as the aspirations of the Nizam towards independence were the reasons behind the long crisis. Although he was tolerant, Patel gave diplomatic talks a chance to play out as he simultaneously increased the administrative and military preparedness of India. In situations where the negotiation could not help, and the violence compromised the regional state of affairs, he commanded a delightful military action, (Operation Polo), which soon brought back peace (Thakkar, 2020). His leadership style depicted adaptive leadership: flexibility in style, strictness in direction, and clear judgement on the indicators of stakeholder response.

Under a contemporary HRM ethical consideration, the processes utilised by Patel are similar to those of stakeholder engagement applied in organisational change and crisis communication. The contemporary leaders should be aware of the interest of workers, employee unions, and the customers, and any other regulators prior to making any significant decisions. The ability of Patel to decipher the will of both rulers and subjects can be likened to that of the HR leader that juggled various interests without derailing of the

organisational mission. *Freeman (2010)* observes that sustainable decision-making takes place when leaders accommodate needs of stakeholders without attacking the main targets. This is what Patel did: through his stakeholder-oriented leadership, he managed to consolidate various individuals into one political, administrative structure, and provide dignity and stability to everyone involved.

Finally, the stakeholder analysis and specific reactions of Patel help to emphasise the significance of emotions, intelligence collection, and situational flexibility in managements. He proved that strong knowledge about human and institutional sources of motivation might be used to change opposition into collaboration. The current crisis leaders in the government or the organisation can consider the example of Patel: the ability to know your stakeholders, is their worldview, and create an answer that does not offend reality and fits his emotion is a pillar of a successful crisis management.

Quickness and Reactiveness Time-bound

One of the greatest leadership attributes that Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel had was his capability to make a fast and well-calibrated decision in situations where he could feel the pressure of time. The years immediately after India gained its independence in the year 1947 were characterised by confusion, political disorganisation and communal chaos. The new administration was limited in resources, institutions were weak and the challenge that arose was to bring together more than 560 princely states into a single political system. At that, the decisiveness of Patel came in handy. As his leadership showed, a swiftness in decision making that has its foundation in a clear purpose and a solid judgement can ensure the crises do not spiral out of control and establish factors that propel the business towards a more stable stance. This ability corresponds to the theory of crisis leadership that recommends acting and making a decision at the right time and being confident in reducing uncertainty to ensure continuity within an organisation (*Boin et al., 2017*).

Patel realised that indecisiveness or falling behind in times of crisis might spell doom to the little nation that was born. According to his words, each time a country makes a delay, it loses its strength (*Patel, as cited in Thakkar, 2020*). This belief was based on not being reactive, but being strategically sensitive to timing, which is a key principle of managing a crisis. He acknowledged that the political vacuum that the British left in postcolonial India in India was an opportunity that could be exploited by the internal and external forces taking advantage of divisions. Thus, speed was turned into a means of defence and policy that is constructive. He was acting as though he was exhibiting what current management experts have indicated as limited rationality of making a good decision under the limitations of limited information and time (*Simon, 1977*).

The way Patel managed him self in the junagadh crisis of 1947 demonstrates his decisiveness. Patel was immediate when Nawab of Junagadh declared to join Pakistan even though the state was located strategically next to India and most of the population was Hindu. He also rapidly sanctioned economically and cut off vital supplies as well as aiding local administrative seizures with diplomatic dialogue at the same time (*Menon, 1956*). This action was a multi-faceted and immediate reaction that helped in eliminating the crisis before it could spill to Pakistan or Britain to face the crisis head-on. This plebiscite was a confirmation of the Indian position and came to establish a precedent of future accessions (*Guha, 2007*). The fast and decisive move taken by Patel against the time constraints avoided what could have been an extended and an internationally debatable tussle.

In a similar fashion in Hyderabad, Patel had patience and was ready to take immediate action. During more than one year, he made negotiation attempts with the Nizam on the grounds of peaceful integration. But once the situation turned violent and anarchy, Patel gave an order to Operation Polo, a short but decisive military action in September 1948 that regained the situation and established the integration of Hyderabad (*Verma, 2019*). The fast, efficient choice and the completion in five days demonstrated that timely intervention is effective.

The theorists of leadership have claimed that during high stakes crises delay can tend to make situations more unstable and illegitimate (Kotter, 2012). This can be traced in the case of Patel: he combined thought and action, on the one hand, making sure that his decisions were prompt and, on the other, they were well-thought.

As a human resource management teacher, the ability of Patel to make decisions when faced with pressure demonstrates the importance of agile leadership, or being capable of making informed decisions despite little information, making effective delegations, and taking action before the chance is lost (Northouse, 2022). Speed can be a factor of confidence and stability that can calm down stakeholders and avoid a state of panic especially in times of crisis in an organisation. The rapid decision making by Patel will have given both the administrators and the citizens confidence that the government was for in control of the unfolding events. The decisions he took were not one-sided but they demonstrated that he worked together with advisors such as V. P. Menon whose efficiency in operations was a complement to the strategic vision of Patel (Menon, 1956).

An example provided by Patel shows that opportunity can turn out of crisis when the decision-making process is implemented timely. His capacity to make decisions without giving in to time created an example of a leader that is still applicable in the contemporary organisation. In governance as well as HR format, a leader who operates in a clear, quick, and ethical manner will be in a position to ensure that there is no burden of uncertainty that hobgoblin cannot bring down any system. According to Boin *et al.* (2017), decisive leaders stabilise institutions when they face a crisis by ensuring that they bring down ambiguity and keep direction. This was shown to be the case when Patel stepped up to the demands of the time, and directed the anarchy of post-independent India in the organisation and integration of a coherent national project.

The Finding of the Middle Ground between the Moral and Ethical Concerns and Realpolitik

Balancing moral and ethical norms with the pragmatic realities of the political world was one of the hallmark features of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel as a statesman a trait which is said to be the combination of idealism and realpolitik. During the tumultuous years after the independence of India, Patel was faced with ethical issues that demanded that he be compassionate and at the same time entirety. His management proved that ethics and pragmatism need not be opposite elements but can both be applied together to bring about result that is correct as well as practical. The given strategy is consistent with modern theories of the ethical leadership as moral reasoning, integrity, and situational awareness are also used as the main qualities of successful decision-making (*Brown and Treviño, 2006*).

The ethical orientation was a result of the Gandhian environment in which Patel was raised though he knew that there was more to governance than moral idealism. The political issues facing the postcolonial India that included the violence of partition and rehabilitation of refugees, as well as, integration of the states, required choices based on the realities of postcolonial security and nation-building. Sentiment is not policy as Patel himself pointed out, responsibility must be (*Patel, as cited in Thakkar, 2020*). This difference in sentimentality and responsibility was to be one of the foundations of his political approach. Even though Gandhi was a proponent of nonviolence, Patel was of the view that the existence of a newly independent state occasionally necessitated the application of coercive force to ensure more damage was not taken, which can also be understood as the ethics of responsibility (*Weber, 1946*).

1948 crisis of Hyderabad is an example of such an ethical balance. Patel had to use diplomatic talks with the Nizam to no avail and as the violence intensified because of Razakar militia; he ordered military intervention (*Menon, 1956*). It was not an act of aggression but an act of moral duty, to ensure the protection of civilians, law and order and external interference were avoided. The operation Polo was a decisive

one and experienced only five days; yet, the number of casualties was minimal, proving that Patel aimed at recovering peace, not establishing dominance in the country (Verma, 2019). His move was ethically sound, with consequentialist logic in believing and doing the lesser of the evils to secure a morally justifiable result. Researchers claim that this kind of decision-making is core to good crisis leadership in which moral imperatives should be balanced with practical necessities (Ciulla, 2020).

This strategy also applied to internal management and human resource management by Patel. He gave importance to fairness, discipline, accountability among the civil services, and he once made the statement that said that the civil service should be in political neutrality and strict in administration (Patel as cited in Guha, 2007). This moral sanity formed the basis of a professional bureaucracy that was competent to implement policies without partisanship. Patel institutionalised the ethical competence meaning the harmony of the values and professional conduct in order to demonstrate the integrity of the governance systems in terms of HRM (Northouse, 2022). His invention of the All India Services showed how far-sighted he is in instilling ethics in the structural makeup of the institutions in the government so that any administrator in future would be guided by the spirit of meritorious service to the nation.

Moral realism as proposed by Patel is a contrast to utopian idealism as well as cynical opportunism. He realised that politics must restrain the making of moral choices in governance. When the princely states were uniting, such as the case of Patel, he valued the sovereignty of the rulers even though he was also keen to maintain the national interest at all times. His dealings were characterised by persuasion and not coercion though he failed to persuade he would not hesitate to make a decisive action. This delicate combination of negotiating and high-level require several forms of high-level diplomacy and strictness aimed at the other government part of negotiating the more nuanced moral rocky areas without sacrificing moral stand (Kidder, 1995).

Through a leadership/HRM lens, the combination of ethics and realpolitik as developed by Patel is a timeless guide on how to make decisions in complicated organisations. The leaders in present times are going through similar tensions of ethical values versus business pressures. The example of Patel reiterates that ethical leadership should not be interpreted to mean no action or being ideal but rather to include moral courage, a strategic vision and capability to take concrete steps in the benefit of the greater good. The leadership approach of his administration makes us recall that moral authority augments, not inhibits practical efficacy, it is as true in the present-day management of corporations as it was in the building of modern India.

Negotiation, Communication, and Conflict Resolution Skills

The leadership of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel in the years of the Indian formation was marked by his radicality, skills in administration, and outstanding capacity to communicate, negotiate and solve conflicting situations. Since Patel was working in a highly fragmented politically as well as emotionally charged era in the Indian history, communicative competence acted as a strong tool of nationalisation. Organising more than 560 princely states to become a part of Indian Union was one of the biggest achievements of negotiation and diplomacy, and he did not use any force to do it; he just used persuasive language and strategical empathy. These characteristics are core dimensions of transformational and communicative leadership stressed by modern theorists of leadership since the clarity of the message, emotional intelligence, and integrity help leaders motivate the collaboration between various stakeholders (*Northouse, 2022*). Patel was a successful negotiator as he based his negotiation skills on comprehensive knowledge of human psychology and political environment. He was dealing with every ruler not only as a political rival but also a human being who had fears, loyalties and aspirations. His communications used to be marked by respect and reason without using threats except in vital cases. V. In one of the storeys, P. Menon in his

interview with Patel who was close to him during the process of integration noticed that Patel was persuasive because of his calm arguments and moral authority that neutralised suspicion and created a sense of trust. It is consistent with the principles of the negotiation system that was developed by Fisher and Ury (2011), who recommended concentrating in the interests instead of focusing on positions, coming up with win-win options and insisting on objective requirements. The letters and consultations of Patel with the princes were often full of joint national interests and not of political expediency, they formed a feeling of companionship and not subject-subordination.

A good example of his mastery in negotiation is seen when Patel negotiated the accession of Bhopal and Travancore. Both the states refused to integrate initially on ground of sovereignty and future representation. This is exhibited in his correspondence by Patel where he could be firm and conciliatory at the same time. He promised rulers that they only need not worry about the aspects of their dignity and privileges being eliminated by the Indian Constitution and it was important to state that the concept of a fragmented India could not have been sustained (*Verma, 2019*). His style is what the modern HR literature refers to as interest-based negotiation overcoming conflicts by meeting organisational and personal needs (*Lewicki et al., 2016*). Such power to touch convergence in contrary interests helped a lot in reducing opposition and in getting voluntary collaboration.

Besides strategic negotiation, the ethical transparency and clarity of purpose are the attributes of communication of Patel type. He was direct in his speech, never employed rhetoric to either adorn or obscure issues, and delivered judgments in their authentic and sincere way. Such frankness created trust between co-workers and the people. The people were often left uncertain about their nations but occasional public talks by Patel gave them their confidence and drove the bureaucracy to quick action. The scholars of communication state that psychologically safe and organically aligned leaders generate communication during crises (*Heath and O’Hair, 2020*). This was demonstrated in speeches and administrative circulars

by Patel, which were made up of specific expectations and the moral responsibility, without a reliance on demagoguery. Another area that Patel performed well was conflict resolution. Being a lawyer, his experience was training him in reasoning and arbitration. During the Constituent Assembly he often acted as issue in-between factions where he facilitated the clash between conservatives and progressives. He placed a strong emphasis on consensus-building, and it cannot be successful unless the policy has the goodwill of those who are to implement it (Patel, as cited in Thakkar, 2020). He succeeded in turning the possible conflicts into relationship conflicts, which is characteristic of contemporary conflict resolution frameworks of organisations, emphasising the importance of collaboration, relationship, and mutual problem-solving (Rahim, 2017). The interpersonal diplomacy could therefore not only solve immediate problems in politics, but also develop a culture of shared decision-making in the Indian administrative structure.

In the context of human resources management, the communicative and negotiation abilities of Patel helps to show value of emotional intelligence (EI) in leadership. Goleman (2013) argues that EI, which consists of self-awareness, empathy, and relationship management, is fundamental in the management of the dynamics of people in the context of change in an organisation. All these dimensions were an implication of interactions by Patel. The empathy allowed him to foresee opposing him, self-regulation avoided an escalation, and relationship management maintained trusts in the long run. Through incorporation of emotional intelligence.

thus, through strategic communication, Patel was made a virtuous example of adaptive leadership, which would settle conflicts by persuasion and insights, but not force.

The legacy of Patel gives timeless lessons to the modern day leaders. The skill of negotiating through empathy, communicating clearly, and finding solutions to conflicts constructively has been and will always be essential whether during the management in a public or company. It is the kind of example set by Patel that in periods of institutional change, the strength of centrality is not authority, such as power, but

rather the ability to listen to, convince, and reconcile, which is the essence of leadership.

Administrative Reforms Administrative Leadership

The idea of nation-building by Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel had no boundaries as far as political unification was concerned; it actually involved creation of strong, neutral and effective state systems. As the first Deputy Prime Minister and home minister of India, Patel was bold to lay the foundation of the pillars of the administrative machinery in the state. His institutional formation demonstrated grave understanding on the facets of the design of organisations, ethics of governance and human resource systems, which are reflected in the values of both human resource management and modern day administration (HRM). The three values of the contemporary day governance and organisational leadership namely neutrality, professionalism and accountability have been the foundation bare of the institutional leadership of Patel.

Patel also learnt that any free and sovereign political state without a stable administration would amount to disaster. According to his experience as a lawyer, freedom fighter and a leader of the Congress, he believed that the future of India was in a disciplined bureaucracy that can provide policies of the nation in a more efficient and honest manner. His best contribution was the formation of the All India Services (AIS) - specifically; Indian Administrative Service (IAS) and Indian Police Service (IPS). He referred to them as the steel frame of India which he argued would work unless the country proceeded on the course of majority of the failed states (*Patel, as cited in Thakkar, 2020*). His intuition is an antecedent to the modern principle of institutional capacity building in the HR industry (namely having well-built structures in organisations to eradicate individual to ensure long-term viability and performance) (*Northouse, 2022*).

The factors that influenced the institutional leadership style of Patel were linked to Max Webers theory of bureaucracy proposed mental provisions towards rational-legal authority, hierarchy and employee selection depending on their merit (*Weber, 1946*). He insisted they appoint the civil servants

based on merit as opposed to political loyalty, they had to be well trained and insulated against being influenced by politics. His insistence to retain the AIS as an all India cadres was initially decontroversial with some of the states viewing it as centralization. However, Patel argued that national cohesion and uniformity of the administrative machinery could be achieved by virtue of only one service (Menon, 1956). This was progressive enough to be employed to ensure that Indian governance remained in motion.

When in hard place--an institutional virtue

As a reflection of the human resource management, the reforms introduced by Patel reveal that the HRM sees the idea of strategic human resource development (SHRD)- balancing the policies on personnel and the national goals (Budhwar and Debrah, 2013). He demanded civil servants training, moral and discipline. These institutions assisted in defining the character of the training arrangements like the predecessors of the Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration as a means of proving that Patel still perceived that the skills development/ value orientation is the best way to lead. Also, his open letter to civil servants, i.e. you are not the masters of India; you are the servants to the people helped the principle of humble leadership in HRM, servant leadership (Greenleaf, 2002). Patel institutionalised citizen centric service and accountability to the bureaucracy through instilling these values.

The other trait of the administrative leadership that Patel demonstrated was that he managed to deal with the post-Partition crisis through coordination within the organisation. His policies were rehabilitation policies against refugees, border control policies and emergency administrative councils. These programmes depict the values of crisis management and adaptive leadership, according to which the institutions are transformed to be active to meet new challenges (Boin et al., 2017). The concept of decentralised leadership that is a characteristic feature of modern HRMs also manifests through the distribution of central forces with local autonomy where new initiatives might have been

promoted, but a strategic German control could be created on a board-wide basis (*Mintzberg, 1989*).

In police modernization and internal security, other fields that Patel reformed was in police. The need to have professional policing is one of the very first things that he pointed out in a bid to bring some stability in the democratic society. Establishing training, discipline and accountability within the police force heralded subsequent performance management systems where role clarity, conduct standards are the support mechanisms to achieving organisational objectives (*Aguinis, 2019*).

After all, the institutional legacy of Patel is on his buildings, his culture created by him. He understood a civil service that has no fear or no politics or no obligation to its politicians-values and this element continues to play part in the Indian administrative spirit. The fact that his leadership was based on institutions that he built on competence and ethics as opposed to being based on power alone illustrates that good leadership should be anchored on institutions. The situation with Patel in HRM and to the organisational context will demonstrate that with the help of the visionary approach to leadership, the systems that are disintegrating can be converted into the unified performance-oriented institutions, and the change in the structure, culture and ethical purpose can be anchored.

History of Leadership and the Lessons to the current Human Resource Management.

The examples of what should be learned in the modern times of the human resource management (HRM) and the leadership of organisations left a legacy that was not only eternal in its political legacy but timeless to this present day. Strategic pragmatism, vision, decisiveness, and ethical foundation of leadership coupled with robust character traits depicted by Patel would have been more appreciable in the modern theory of leadership that centres on transformational, ethical, and strategic leadership (*Northouse, 2022*). His strategies to address the stakeholders, institutional building, crisis management and people administration provide a picture of the HR practitioners who are interested in aligning

the organisational objectives and ethical and people oriented approaches.

Patel has contributed one of the key contributions to the modern HRM that deals with transparency of the vision and goal congruency. He aligned the civil servants, political players, and local leaders towards the same direction by saying that there was a national unity goal that was not to be compromised (*Thakkar, 2020*). Organisation wise, this puts emphasis on clarity of goals in inspiring the employees, doing away with conflicts and enhancing performance. The modern HR models such as strategic human resource development (SHRD) put an accent on the fact that organisational commitment and unity are best achieved when organisation requirements are harmonised with performance of individual functions (*Budhwar and Debrah, 2013*). This principle finds its reflection in the example of the leadership of Patel: the formulated expectations and justifications were applied to the formation of commitment and responsibility among the circle of different stakeholders.

The legacy of Patel has also brought out adaptive leadership. His flexible attitude to the acculturation of the princely states a mix of persuasion, rewards, and the use of pressure correctly shows the applicability of the schemes customization to the stakeholders inspirations and interests (*Verma, 2019*). This to the HR professionals implies that the leadership and management styles can only be shaped to suit different needs of employees, organisational cultures, and different situational challenges. Some of the developed styles that reflects the adaptive style employed by Patel that would not favour either of the extremes, in firmness or empathy, would be interest-based negotiation, conflict resolution, flexible performance management techniques, etc.

The second lesson that will not go away is that of building institutional capacity and governance with moral values. The beginnings of the professional and responsible institutions were the development of the All India Services by Patel, promotion of the professional neutrality by appointing on merit and introduction of accountable institutions (*Menon, 1956*). This would today within HRM thinking be transferred

into planning the sound organisational structures, application of accurate job functions, work ethics and workplace professionalism. Such values can only be institutionalised by its leaders hence ensuring continuity, resilience and ethical conviction- values that Patel demonstrated nationally.

The relevance of communication and conflict management in leadership have been confirmed by another example, given by Patel. The ability to persuade those princes that wanted to reject him, to facilitate the struggles inside the organisations and to inspire civil servants prove that emotional intelligence, open communication and negotiation competences are the focus of high achievement in ruling (*Goleman, 2013; Lewicki et al., 2016*). HR professionals can use these in the modern society because they know that trust, clarity and active listening play a crucial role in solving conflicts, establishing cooperation as well as achieving strategic goals.

Finally, Patel is practical since he integrates moral responsibility and practical exigencies in the process of making ethical decisions which is a blessing to ethical decision making in HR and leadership (*Brown and Treviño, 2006*). His principled pragmatism ideology of doing what is right but as having minimal effect as possible and not embarrassing people is relevant in the case of the crises, restructuring, and managing change in the organisation.

Conclusion

Patel left a lot of lessons to us about the present position of HRM and organisational leadership. His foresees, flexibility, morality and organisational predictions is an indication that leadership is not majorly about power and control, but about blending human capacities with the organisational and societal interests. The combination of them allows the contemporary leaders and the HR professionals to create single, consistent, and ethically responsible organisations, which presupposes the perennial relevance of the example set by Patel.

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