

**PANDIT JAWAHARLAL NEHRU:
ARCHITECT OF INDIAN DEMOCRACY**

Dr. ASHOK. S. ANIKIVI*

I) Introduction:

Jawaharlal Nehru, a popular leader, a world statesman, a visionary, an inveterate democrat, radical humanist suave politician, a thinker a writer, as first Prime-minister. This in itself was something extraordinary, something worth specially remembering as we celebrate his birth anniversary.

The purpose of this paper is to analyze Jawaharlal Nehru's contribution to the growth of Indian Democracy .He is a man for all seasons, a man for all ages. Nehru's faith in India and its people and people's faith in Nehru were responsible for the development of India. Nehru's firm commitment to democracy saved India.

Pandit Nehru elaborated the policies of the congress and a future of Indian nation under his leadership in1929.He proclaimed that the aims of the congress were freedom of religion, right to form associations, freedom of expression, of thought, equality before law for every individual without distinction of caste, color, creed or religion, protection to regional languages and cultures, safeguarding the interest of the peasants and labor, abolition of untouchability, introduction of adult franchise, imposition of prohibition , nationalization of industries, socialism and establishment of a secular India. All these aims formed the core of the "Fundamental Rights and Economic Policy" resolution drafted by Nehru in1929-31and were ratified by the All-India Congress committee leaders objected to the resolution and decided to oppose Nehru.

The socialism as the goal of the congress was very difficult to achieve. Nehru was opposed in this by the right-wing Congressman such as Patel, Dr.Prasad and Rajagopalachari. However,

**HOD & Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, KLE Society's, LINGARAJ COLLEGE, (Autonomous), BELGAUM-590001, KARNATAKA*

he had the support of the left-wing Congressman namely, Azad and Subhas Chandra Bose. Meanwhile Nehru was elected as Congress President for two years (1936-37). He was then succeeded by his socialist colleagues Bose (1938-39) and Azad (1940-46). After the fall of the Bose from the main stream of Indian Politics, the power struggle between the socialists and conservatives balanced act. After the death of Sardar Patel in 1950, Nehru became the sole iconic national leader, and soon the situation became such that Nehru was able to implement many of his basic policies without hindrance.

It is observed that India is still, of course a functioning democracy, but increasing it is not well governed. The evidence of eroding political order is everywhere. "In spite of the turbulent past the post independence era raised hopes for a stable democratic India. That was certainly the vision of the "Founding Fathers" Under the leadership of Nehru and others, the vision took shape in the form of new Political Institution. The new constitution laid the basis for a British-style parliamentary democracy, arrangements were carefully considered in designing the new Federal system. The congress party-the key institutional manifestation of India's newly discovered national unity-reached out into village India to incorporate the previously immobilized masses and India's first elections were held because elections were held periodically, rural slowly joined anglicized urban leaders of the congress party as India's new ruling elite. Dominance by a single party thus provided stability and it did not appear to be an obstacle to the accommodation of new forces in the party"¹ in such a situation Nehru became the undisputed leader of nation.

II. ORIGIN OF THE PROBLEM:

Jawaharlal Nehru, Mahatma Gandhi's second-in-command in country's freedom struggle and the architect of modern India. His contributions during the freedom movement and as the India's first prime minister are many fold and are worth recalling.² Perhaps the most crucial fact is that Nehru's life spanned two eras. On the one side was his role as a Freedom Fighter in Indian national movement, till 1947. After 1947 he ruled independent India as its first prime minister till 1964. Though the partition of India saddened him, he hailed the dawn of India's independence on August 15, 1947, as India's "tryst with destiny". and perhaps no man could taken office as prime minister, for the first time in his life, under less propitious

circumstances. A divided India, economically disabled by a long and exhausting war torn by acute communal conflict, came into his charge never the less, for the 17 years he strived incessantly for the fulfillment of his dreams for India. What India attempted under Nehru was something truly remarkable.³

Jawaharlal Nehru was a social democrat who had passionate faith in the democratic way of living and clear awareness that true freedom could be enjoyed only in a society planned on socialist lines. He was profoundly impressed by soviet achievements though he disapproved certain aspects of soviet life he saw in the socialist reconstruction of society on a planned basis a message of hope for the world. He was however, no advocate of blindly following the west.

Further Gandhi showed shrewd judgment when he anointed Nehru as his successor. Nehru was the unequalled idol of masses at home and symbol of India's resurgent nationalism all over the world Nehru was cultured and refined he had a world view Nehru was the great despite his serious flaws and grave failures.⁴

India's transition to modern industrial country was based on the foundation that Nehru built and which he called "the temples of modern India" Jawaharlal Nehru, the politician, had the rarest of rare quality of looking upon himself with the cold and detached objectivity of a historian.

Man like Nehru with all their capacity for great and good work is unsafe in democracy. He calls himself a democrat and a socialist, and no doubt he does so in all earnestness, but every psychologist knows that the mind is ultimately a slave to the heart and the logic always be made to fit with the desires and irrepressible urges of man. A little twist and Nehru might turn a dictator sweeping ask the paraphernalia of slow moving democracy.

III. REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU was the staunch believer in the theory and practice of parliamentary democracy. Jawaharlal Nehru in the 'Unity of India', as a passionate and a genuine defender of freedom wrote "to crush a canonry opinion forcibly and allow it no expression because we

dislike it, it is essentiality of the genus as cracking the skull of an opponent because we disapprove of him”⁵

In fact, Nehru believed that the method of democracy was a discussion, argument persuasion and an ultimate decision and acceptance of decision even though it might go against our grains. In his speeches (1953-57) Nehru uttered: “otherwise, the bigger lathi or the bigger bomb prevails and that is not the democratic method. The problem is the same whether atomic bomb are involved or street demonstration.”⁶

Further, he argues that parliamentary democracy demands many virtues. Of course, it demands ability and devotions to work “parliamentary democracy he told his countrymen, “ is something which can be created in the country by some magic , parliamentary democracy naturally involves peaceful method of acting, peaceful acceptances of decision taken, and attempts to change them through peaceful ways again”⁷

S.Gopal (e.d) Jawaharlal Nehru an Anthology, 1983, highlighted that India wrote Nehru, is a curious mixture of diversity and abiding unity⁸

On the other hand B.R Nanda (e.d) India’s foreign policy – the Nehru year (1976) argues, Nehru was himself a curious and a fascinating mixtures of divert sing influence and stream of thought from the east and west. He was influenced by the idealist tradition of the Indian renaissance and the national movement, especially by Gandhi and persistently endeavored to combine idealism with realism.⁹

R.C GUPTA in Indian political thought (2006) expressed that democracy is the best form of government, because it preserves the highest human values, that is why India has chosen democracy and Nehru was so hope full about its success in India he remarked, “We will resist the imposition of any other concept here or any other practice.”¹⁰

Prem Arora and Brij Grover’s Selected Western and Indian Political Thinkers (2010) delineates Nehru’s concept of democracy implied the existence of social and economic equality amongst the member of society. He asserted that a true democracy can flourish only in an equal

society and a system which permuted the existing social and economic inequalities could not only be regarded as democracy, political democracy to him was only the means to attain the goals of an economic and social structure which could enforce freedom, equality and social justice to all...

IV. METHODOLOGY:

The primary method followed in this paper is documentary. We are arguing that it is documentary for the simple reason that our primary source material depended upon the writings of Nehru and other authors.

V. OBJECTIVES:

1. To understand Nehru's contributions to the growth of Indian democracy.
2. To know Nehru also assigned important role to leadership in democracy.
3. To comprehend Nehru came under the influence of certain streams of thought.

VI. ARCHITECT OF INDIAN DEMOCRACY:

Nehru claim to fame in the history of our time rest on one simple fact. In historical perspective he stands out as an architect of democracy under very special circumstance he tried to lay the foundation of democracy, parliamentary democracy, in one of the largest and poorest and most illiterate countries of the world. He succeeded in no small measure this in itself was something extraordinary, something worth specially remembering as we celebrate 125 birth anniversary.

The evolution of the idea in Nehru's mind come under the influence of various streams of thought, mostly foreign, the acceptance of the Gandhian ethics emerged in the enunciation of frame work of democracy committed to secularism, socialism and social justice and creation of a sound institutional base for the instant development of the huge and diverse country constitute the three main themes on which attention is focused in this paper.

Jawaharlal Nehru blamed the authoritarian system because they curbed the individual freedom and did not provide adequate opportunity to the individual for his development further he demonstrated choice for democracy. To him democracy a way of life and a basis for social structure.

No doubt the influence of Marx and Lenin was power on mind. Yet Marxist philosophy did not satisfy him completely nor did it answer the entire question in his mind.¹¹

“A vague idealist approach” he explain “would creep into mind, something rather akin to the Vedanta approach”¹² his mind was to independent to submit itself top any kind of doctrinaire approach .

“I am very far from being a communist” He conceded adding that he disliked dogmatism.¹³

Nehru had strong faith in wisdom of man and his equality in almost all spheres of human life. He always found himself safe in democracy.

“Indian experiment in constitutional democracy owes more to Nehru than to anyone else or to any combination of factors. Aware of his autocratic tendencies, he had striven successfully to curb than lest India should revert to the condition of benevolent despotism. Few men with theses talent could have resisted the inducement to exercise dictatorial powers. Some frustrated Indians regretted his reluctance to do so. Some westerns would do well to appreciate his aspect of Nehru’s leadership.”¹⁴

Thus, history fascinated him. It gave him an insightful command over the past. A keen and immediate sense of the present and a rare anticipation to think and plan for the future of all. He solidly believed that scientific temper and scientific approach to problems would liberate India from economic misery and social in justice. Amazing indeed was his intellectual blend-science and history ,idealism and realism, literature and politics, the revolution of ,Marx and the non-violence of Mahatma Gandhi were all integrated in his unique personality therefore, as Norman cousins considered Nehru “was not one man but a possession of men”.

The first battle was one inside his mind in his early years Nehru raised several questions against the Gandhian approach and openly disagreed with the Mahatma on many counts. Some letters written by Nehru to Gandhiji and found in the Mahatma's approach and work solutions too many doubts that had persisted for long.¹⁵

Further as years rolled by Nehru became increasingly convinced the Gandhian approach though he felt that Gandhiji was 'an extraordinary paradox' he thought that when Gandhiji claimed to be a socialist, some of his followers meant by it "a kind of muddled humanitarianism."¹⁶ But Nehru did not accede with Gandhiji approach to certain economic affairs.

Nehru's concept of democracy indicates the existence of social and economic equality among the members of the society. He argues that the true democracy can flourish merely in equal society and a system which perpetuated the existing social and economic inequalities could not be regarded as a democracy. He was willing to accept the political democracy only in the hope that this would lead to social democracy. To him, political democracy was only the means to attain the goals of economic and social structure which could ensure freedom, equality and social justice to all.

As noted above, Nehru's preference for a mixed economy seemed appropriate under the circumstances he proclaimed that "I am no believer in communist theory, there is much in it which I accept the economic theory, but basically I think it is out of date today, more especially in the atomic age. I think equally that the opposite theory is out of date in the context of modern world affairs". But he found in Gandhi conception of democracy something more than the ordinary. "It is based on the service and sacrifice, and it uses moral pressure."¹⁷

Thus in the opinion of Nehru democracy suggest a system which contributed to the multifarious development of individual. Therefore he uttered "democracy is not only political, not only economic, but something of mind ... it involves equality of opportunity for all peoples as far as possible, in the politic and economic domain. It involves freedom of all individual to grow and to make the best of his capacities and abilities. It involves certain tolerance of others and even of other's opinion when they differs from yours...it is a dynamic not a static thing...

and as it changes, it may be that its domain will become wide and wider ultimately it is a mental approach applied to our political and economic problems”.¹⁸

Underlying the strong institutional base Nehru laid for the growth of Indian democracy was a value system shaped beneath Gandhi’s leadership. The relevance of those highly cherished values, communal harmony, non violence and emancipation of the oppressed section of the society has not decreased with the passage of time Nehru’s commitment to democracy stemmed from that values system nurtured by Gandhiji.

Jawaharlal Nehru also assigned an important role to leadership in democracy and declared that “it is the leaders and their policies that shape the activities of the followers.” He wanted the leaders to be truthful and person of strong convictions, a leader must adapt himself to his environment and choose what he considers as the lesser evil. Again Nehru’s democracy also implied free thinking and therefore he favored free flow of ideas and opinions in the state. In the absence of civil liberties social progress was bond to the jeopardy. Nehru’s democracy meant solution.

The true democrat that he was Nehru accepted responsibility for his failures without putting the blame one others around him. His biographer described Nehru as a “prophet frustrated”. S Gopal said that Nehru failed to follow the adult suffrage with speedy enforcement of land distribution and tenancy reform, a proper emphasis on education, a revision of administrative system and control of population. “Had these steps” wrote Gopal, “been taken democracy would have been accompanied by basic changes in society and 1950’s would not now appear more and more of faded golden age”.

Nehru has also been criticized for his tolerance of corruption and his occasional fondness for flamboyant buccaneers. Probably Nehru was aware of the burden he was carrying on his shoulders when he could not thwart certain friends who were his liabilities. One can get a hint of Nehru’s problem from a statement once made: “the most difficult thing in life is what to do with one’s friends”.¹⁹

VII. CONCLUSION:

Nehru's faith in India and its people's faith in Nehru were responsible for the development of India. Nehru's firm commitment to democracy saved India with all its faults the Indian democracy under Nehru's leadership grew to be the most enduring system in the third world.

The uniqueness of Nehru's democracy which was hailed as the Hellas of Asia lay in the fact of that it could survive severe test both from within and outside. Disapproving some western critics who had prophesied the collapse of Indian democracy after Nehru, the Indian democracy not only survived Nehru but came out with flying colors from the most trying years that followed.

In a nutshell, we find Nehru's concept of democracy was quite extensive and not a static one. It aimed at multifarious development of the individual.

References:

1. *Atul Kohli, Democracy And Discontent: India's Growing Crisis of Governability (Cambridge, Cambridge University press, 1990)*
2. *Gupta Barun Das, "JAWAHARLAL NEHRU, The Architect of Modern India". Main stream, Volume-LII, no -23, may 31, 2014*
3. *Malya Prakash .P, "A Man for All Times: A Special Features on Jawaharlal Nehru". 'SHREYAS' Canara Bank Magazine volume- XV, no-6, November-December 1988, p.13*
4. *Noorani.A.G , "Patel's Communalism a Documented Record" in Frontline, Volume 30 no - 24, December 13,2013, p.9.*
5. *NEHRU. J. The Unity of India, p.67*
6. *Speeches (1935-57), p.178*
7. *Ibid, p.156*
8. *S.Gopal (e.d) Jawaharlal Nehru-An Anthology (Oxford, Oxford university press, 1983), p.238*
9. *B.R Nanda (e.d), India's Foreign Policy- The Nehru years, (New Delhi, Vikas, 1976), p.182.*
10. *R.C.Gupta, Indian Political Thought (Agra, Lakshmi Naraian Agarwal, 2006), p.145.*
11. *Jawaharlal Nehru- The Discovery of India, (Calcutta, Signet Press1947), p.12.*
12. *Ibid.*

13. *Quoted in a Centenary History of the Indian National Congress. B.N.PANDE (e.d) AICC (I) and Vikas Publishers Delhi, p.816.*
14. *R.C.Gupta, Great Political Thinkers (East and West) Agra, Lakshmi Naraiian Agarwal, 2006),p.144.*
15. *S.GOPAL (e.d) An Anthrology,op.cit, p 99-100.*
16. *Ibid, p.102.*
17. *Ibid, p.103.*
18. *AICC papers, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi.*
19. *S.GOPAL, Jawaharlal Nehru- A Biography, volume.III (Delhi, Oxford University press, 1976), p.118*