

An Analysis Of Sardar Patel's Role In The Building Of Independent, United, Modern India: His Vision And Mission

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Abstract

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel was born in the Nadiad district of Gujarat. As no record of his date of birth is found, the most accepted date of his birth was 31 October 1875, written upon the matriculation certificate chosen by Vallabhbhai Patel himself. He was born into a poor peasant family with no tradition of education. Most of his childhood was spent in the fields at Karamsad. During his adolescent days, Vallabhbhai Patel exhibited the qualities of leadership and organization. In the year 1910, he passed the District Pleaders examination with first division. Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel was one of the leading champions who not only played an instrumental role in making India an independent nation but he worked diligently in unifying the nation. Because of his true patriotism, staunch belief, and dedication to his nation, he is known as the 'Iron Man of India'. He believed in the social development of the country as he thought that even if India attains freedom, it would not become independent in its true sense if the social problems and social evils are not eradicated from the country.

Keywords

Patriotism, nation, Iron man, social evil.

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Introduction

Vallabhbhai Patel went to England to practice law. After his return to India, he became influenced by Mahatma Gandhi and it was through his persuasion, Patel joined politics. Later he acquired a position in Indian National Congress. In 1918, Patel led the Kheda Movement where the farmers were forced to pay taxes during the time of drought. He united and led the struggle and made the farmers free from paying the tax to the government. The government accepted and bow down to the demands of the farmers. This was the first big success of Vallabhbhai Patel.

The other important success that was achieved by Patel was during the struggle of the Bardoli movement in the year of 1928. The farmers of the village Bardoli under the leadership of Vallabhbhai Patel led a protest against the increase of revenue by the governor of Bombay. Bardoli comprises a vast stretch of an area consisting of 137 villages with a population of around 87,000. Because of this movement's victory, the title of 'Sardar' was conferred upon him by the women of Bardoli, which displays the invincible intrepidity and willpower of Vallabhbhai Patel. During the Bardoli movement, he consulted and communicated with a large majority of women and prepared a framework for this movement. In this way, Patel brought women into the arena of politics. His support of the Hindu Code Bill made him take the pledge for women's rights and women's empowerment. For empowering local communities and emphasizing mainly women, the roots of the iconic dairy cooperative Amul-Anand Milk Producers Union Ltd were established.

During the time of independence, India was divided into numerous princely states and these princely states were left with only two choices either to join the dominion of India or Pakistan or remain independent. It was Patel's smart strategy of statesmanship that he became successful in integrating these princely states with India even after confronting the resistance from the states of Hyderabad, Junagarh, Kashmir, and Jammu. In the year 1947, during the Indo-Pak war, Vallabh Bhai Patel acted as Commander in Chief of the Indian Army and lead India towards its victory. Because of his policy of integration of the nation, he was known as the 'Bismarck' of India.

Vallabhbhai Patel has made various contributions in the arena of nation-building, unity, and integrity. Before India's freedom from the Britishers, he along with the help of Mahatma Gandhi very gallantly opposed the atrocities of the Britishers. He joined the Satyagraha movement with Gandhi and became successful in removing the Britishers from India ultimately making it an independent nation. It was because of the constant efforts of Sardar Patel's Bismarck policy; we see India as one integrated nation. At first, the princely states Jammu, Kashmir, Hyderabad,

and Junagadh wanted to become independent states, but because of Patel's strong notions that "manpower without unity is not 'shakti' unless it is properly harmonized and united, then it becomes a spiritual power", India remained a unified entity. Being the first Home Minister of independent India, Patel displayed his wisdom in maintaining peace and harmony in the country because at that time India was going through various communal riots and certain disturbing tensions grew up just after the independence. He set up a platform for an administrative framework that pursued serving the country.

Sardar Patel believed that the development of a nation is only possible through social development. In his every political meeting, Patel laid importance to focus on social development and social reforms. The social evils in the form of language, religion, tradition, caste, and class were very much rampant at that time. Patel has to pass through such challenging phases while he was on the verge of uniting the diversity of the regions. But because of his worth and intelligence, he surpassed all these obstacles thus becoming successful in unifying these regions. Winston Churchill, the British Prime Minister, wished to divide the Indian subcontinent into Hindustan, Pakistan, and other princely states but he did not succeed because of the efforts of Sardar Patel's integrating nation. Patel has done a lot for the nation's unity and integrity, which nobody could have dreamt of during that time.

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel believed that education plays a very important role in the upliftment of people and the development of the socio-political system. According to him, "Modern education is like educating a parrot. Body and mind do not connect nor do there any physical and mental. Education should be such that it develops the mind, body, and soul to make progress. The aim of education should be to make school and the village complementary to each other and join both together". He stressed educating the people in local and regional languages. In Sardar Patel's view, education should not be restricted to a classroom experience but the education system should develop a holistic approach that teaches its students about the values of life and infuse a scientific and innovative temper in them.

Sardar Patel played an important role in the making of the constitution. The hypothesis of the very First Article of the Indian Constitution that states "India, that is, Bharat, shall be a Union of States", becomes possible only because of him. He was very much influenced by the policies and principles of Mahatma Gandhi's discipline, spirituality, ahimsa, and moral strength. He participated in various movements led against the exploitative policies of the Britishers and became a member of the All-India Freedom Struggle. After reorganizing the Congress

Parliamentary Board, Sardar Patel became its chairman and aided the party to accept and adopt the Cabinet Mission plan thus forming the interim government in the year 1946. Sardar Patel considerably looked into the matter of fundamental rights. In the annexure included in the interim report, various other Fundamental Rights such as citizenship, equality, and freedom for citizens, right to religion, cultural rights, educational rights, and right to constitutional remedies were set out. It became a matter of debate in the Constituent Assembly for the division of rights into justiciable and non-justiciable categories. Upon the article of citizenship, Sardar Patel claimed that the state shall not discriminate against any citizen based on caste, creed, religion, or sex.

Soon after India attained its independence, Sardar Vallabhbhai became Deputy Prime Minister of the country and looked after various departments such as the Department of home, state, information, and broadcasting. He also became the chairman of the Committees for Fundamental rights, Minorities, and the Provincial Constitution. Sardar Patel made provisions for the right to private property, privy purses for princes, and constitutional guarantees for the civil services in the constitution. He was also a member of the partition committee and helped in the allotment of duties and shares between India and Pakistan.

After the partition of India and Pakistan, a large number of officials went to Pakistan. Due to this, Vallabhbhai Patel restructured the Indian bureaucracy as he was very well aware that the newly independent India needed a strong setup to run its civil, military, and administrative bureaucracy. He had a vision that the civil service must enhance solidarity and national unity of the country. Vallabhbhai Patel incorporated his vision upon the importance of civil service for an independent India while addressing the first batch of IAS officers on April 21, 1947, and stated "...you are the pioneers in the Indian civil service, and the future of this service will depend much upon the foundation and traditions that will be laid down by you, by your character and abilities and by the spirit of your service. You can look forward to your future with trust and confidence, and if in the true spirit of service, I am sure you will have your best reward". He stressed diligent and honest work. Every year April 21, is celebrated as 'Civil Services Day' for Civil Servants to renew their commitment to public service. Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel also gives importance to self-reliance. He cautioned the people for becoming greedy and motivated for creating wealth before claiming a share. He was an upholder of Gandhian ideology on the employer-labor relationship. He tried to provide legitimacy to labor through a constitutional process. He wished to industrialize India rapidly to curtail its dependence on external resources. He perceived the country's building national

capabilities thus he promoted entrepreneurship as India was moving forward in the field of manufacturing as well as exporting. Even after his death, Sardar Patel continued to encourage those people who dream of building a renaissance 'New India'. The present Prime Minister of India Sri Narendra Modi is engaging with the legacy of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and has tried to envisage the vision of Sardar Patel's concept of New India by launching a campaign, Aatmanirbhar Bharat Mission on 13th May 2020 for making India and its citizens self-reliant in every aspect. This mission was built around the five pillars of Economy, Infrastructure, System, Vibrant Demography, and Demand. The essential component behind this campaign is the need to create an environment that will permit Indian companies to be worldwide competitive with other countries of the world consequently making India self-reliant.

According to Sardar Patel, the ideal of congress lies in the establishment of a free democratic state in which equal opportunities were to be given to every member for self-fulfillment and self-expression so that one can attain a minimum of a civilized standard of life'. Sardar Patel's birth date, 31 October is celebrated as 'National Unity Day' since 2014 for his contribution to uniting 562 princely states of India. With the effort of the Bhartiya Janta Party and the decision of Prime Minister of India Sri Narendra Modi, the world's highest statue of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel built in the Narmada district is known as the Statue of Unity of 182 meters in height. The motive behind celebrating National Unity Day is to promote cultural unity and to stimulate the mutual spirit of understanding among the people of different States and regions of the country.

The honorable Prime Minister of India Sri Narendra Modi is working hard to transform the dream into a reality of Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel by making 'Ek Bharat' into 'Shreshtha Bharat' through his various schemes and policies such as Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana, Skill India Mission, Make in India and a lot more. Therefore, it can be said that Sardar Patel's notion of nation-building purely rests upon democracy, equality, civil liberty, and social justice. He repudiated the use and misuse of culture, religion, and community identity in the creation of nationhood. He will always be remembered as the architect of a united India.

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