

GLEAMING IRON IN THE CARICATURE OF SARDAR

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Who is this ‘Sardar’?

How much do we know about this man to whom we owe our ‘Union of India’. Was his indispensability even known to those who were unfurling tricolor from the Red Fort on 15th August 1947 or on the previous night met as a Constituent Assembly to kickstart a visionary legal framework for the world’s largest hula-hoop of 566 independent kingdoms? Was it even possible without Sardar’s iron manacle that fastened all intransigent, self-serving and avaricious micro-kingdoms, into the ‘Union of India’. What meaning was the exercise of independence when 48 per cent of India’s land was owned just by these princes and nawabs? Despite accepting a two-nation theory and making a choice in favour of absurdity for peace, lights from greed and ego-filled palaces mocked and blinded the new republic. Many stories from royal pavilions can be shared to express testing times encountered by Sardar Patel but most shocking ones came from most unexpected quarters namely; Travancore where C.P. Ramaswamy was secretly negotiating its independence with British or Kashmir’s Raja Hari Singh whose stubbornness brought Pakistan inside Kashmir and forced him to flee from Srinagar or Maharaja Hanvant Singh of Jodhpur who was bargaining like a trader between Jinnah and Sardar? Morality, ethics and patriotism sunk as the fear of a common enemy receded and Sardar faced the wrath of both insiders as well as those attacking outsiders called the colonial friends waiting to see the new India collapse into political fragmentation to seek the return of the British. Those 93 members of princely states who were brought to the Constituent Assembly as partners, given privy purses and even ruling positions to whet their appetite for power could only be handled by India’s one and the only Roman emperor called ‘Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel’. His strong fortifications against every form of disorderliness turned all impossibilities into a conceivable nation, strong, united and resolute world leader rising in the midst of melting colonialism. Gandhi himself called ‘Father of the Nation’ couldn’t resist giving Patel the

title of ‘Sardar’. As Menon in his work, *Integration of Indian States*, laments a lack of recognition which has come to Patel¹.

Sardar could silently undertake many challenges at the same time. On one hand, he limited Pakistan’s expansionist ambitions over Kashmir, Hyderabad and Junagadh while on the other, ensured stringent enforcement of Rule of Law to prevent anarchy or entropy of newly constituted organizations of governance. While the Sardar was sweating to prevent century’s worst bloodbath of partition and integration, PM Nehru delivered his first Independence Day speech from the Red Fort of Delhi and the Tri-colour unfurled like inebriated streams of pristine mountain Ganges in an infinitely unrestricted sky of freedom brought by an unwavering and unconquerable team of Gandhi, Patel and Nehru. Patel kept this team together through anger management of Nehru on one hand and absorbing the uncompromising idealism of Gandhi on the other without ever complaining for being repeatedly pushed to a second fiddle in leadership. He had a phenomenal following from a large majority of Congressmen yet he accepted a compromise on positions of Congress President or also of the Prime Minister, out of sheer respect for Mahatma with whom he was just six years younger or to see glimpse of ease on the face of Nehru who was 15 years younger to him. Mountbatten’s press attaché Alan Campbell-Johnson, author of ‘Mission With Mountbatten’ (1951), has given several instances where Nehru and Patel had worked together with Gandhi as their key advisor and lighthouse during delusions. Raj Mohan Gandhi noted in his work that, ‘The establishment of independent India derived legitimacy and power, broadly speaking, from the exertions of three men, Gandhi, Nehru and Patel. But while its acknowledgments are fulsome in the case of Nehru and dutiful in the case of Gandhi, they are niggardly in the case of Patel’.(Gandhi, 2013).

A recent controversy knocking out of Narayani Basu’s book *V. P. Menon: The Unsung Architect of Modern India*, claims that Patel was not included in the Cabinet by Nehru. This led to a whirlwind search through history documents in the National Archives. This statement has become much contested as events in history cannot be judged in silos but on a broader canvas of relationships for many years. The documents referred were primarily books by Menon himself written in 1955-56, i.e; *The Story of the Integration of Indian States* and *The Transfer of Power In India* and this author Vappala Panguni Menon who changed the course of history was the closest civil servant and advisor to Patel in his one of the most byzantine project of national integration. Sardar and Nehru shared a mature and cordial relationship and this relationship was maintained throughout the most turbulent and disruptive times in which they could work hand in hand, is an evidence of their deep trust and affection for each other. On 7th April 1949, a letter from Kailash Nath Katju² to Sardar is an evidence of a two men army of Nehru and Patel in which Patel was always the most trusted choice for partymen.

History cannot be read in segments. There are several occasions where Nehru defended Patel. One such occasion when a letter written by Nehru to Rajendra Prasad, generated some misunderstanding against both Nehru and Patel in the mind of Prasad. Nehru immediately defended Patel (letter dated 11th Sept. 1949), ‘so distressed... that you misjudged me for a letter which I wrote, as Vallabhbai had nothing to do with it’. (Shankar, p.543) They could resolve some of their conflicting approaches to problems or selection of Congress Committee members or even the election of President as their basic mettle was united and overlapping. The manner in which Nehru and Sardar brought some of the best merit and talent into the first Cabinet reveals their camaraderie. On one hand, Nehru sought Patel’s help in approaching people from the non-Congress camp such as Shyama Prasad Mukherjee and R.K. Shanmukham Chetty, there was every effort made by Patel to raise Nehru’s Cabinet as an energetic, skilled and representative body that could deliver the rising aspirations of people. Nehru invited Patel to join his Cabinet even though he wrote in his letter to him on 1st August 1947 that, ‘this writing is somewhat superfluous because you are the strongest pillar of the Cabinet.’ Three days later Patel acknowledged that his services will be at Nehru’s disposal, ‘I hope, for the rest of my life and you will have unquestioned loyalty and devotion from me in the cause for which no man in India has sacrificed as much as you have done. Our combination is unbreakable and therein lies our strength’. (Raghavan, 2020). Patel remained a soldier who asked for nothing in return which sees him apologizing to Gandhi in his letter³ written to him on 13th January 1948 for not being able to help Jawaharlal enough due to his age and ill-health.

Even though many narratives between Nehru and Sardar form interesting reading of many history works but two main ones which erupted in the public sphere and proved Sardar’s outstanding control over the party⁴ as well as events at the time of independence may be discussed here. First one which came up in 1949 during the election of interim President of India. Nehru pushed C. Rajgopalachari instead of Rajendra Prasad who had the majority support in the party. Nehru was known for not consulting his party enough before unilaterally deciding in favour of a name. The party was upset and Nehru threatened to resign. Sardar, repeatedly reminded that factionalism should be nullified through understanding as, ‘...cup which is full of nectar is near our lips... may drop down from our hands... in this spirit of dedication, no one should deviate from our chosen path.’ (Shankar, p.504). Finally, Patel persuaded Nehru and subsequently, Rajendra Prasad won through an overwhelming majority. The second conflict emerged out of factionalism surfacing from the United Provinces where the divide between Rafi Ahmad Kidwai and Purushottam Das Tandon became shoddy on the election of Congress President in 1950. Gobind Vallabh Pant being unable to resolve this rising factionalism in Congress sought Patel’s help by writing to him, ‘You are always kind, generous and a unifying source of struggle and light in moments of gloom and depression.’ (Shankar, p.505)

Kidwai was known as a provincial-level Congressman and was described as less experienced as compared to Tandon but Nehru's hatred for Tandon was so severe that he equated his nomination as 'a vote of no-confidence against his leadership' and that he would resign as the Prime Minister if he wins. Nehru even went to the extent of telling a seasoned Congressman like Tandon that he has become 'a symbol of communal and revivalist outlook' (Shankar, p.507). Patel was upset with this abruptness and lack of maturity in Nehru threatening to resign on every difference of opinion amongst party men. Yet, Patel, patiently persuaded Nehru to wait for party opinion to emerge after the Nasik session of Congress where the voting would take place. Tandon won with an overwhelming majority but Nehru overlooked Kidwai's factional leanings first against Govind Ballabh Pant and after his shifting to Delhi in August 1947, he became Nehru's blue-eyed man who could interfere even on matters least known to him. Purushottam Das Tandon's victory sadly but inadvertently became one of Sardar's biggest battles with Nehru, who never forgave Sardar for supporting Tandon and carried it with him till the last months of Sardar's life.⁵

The shrewd Sardar could foresee many problems. Durga Das once wrote, 'Nehru was the idealist dreamer, Patel, the stern teacher with a cane hanging on the wall'. (Das, 1972) He was always made to stand against factional politics to absorb its toxins and make people work together. Shankar (p.503) calls him a 'Ministerial Angel of the Party' who never forced or imposed his judgments or views but persuaded logically through his patent sincerity, high moral stand and judiciousness to evoke patriotic fervour amongst rivals so that they could remain united. He was alert to rising greed or lust for power in first-time political masters subsequently increasing politicization and corruption in political life. The case of corruption in Bihar Ministry on the purchase of Molasses under government permits which the concerned Minister Krishna Ballabh Sahay disclosed that most of those who involved in such an unfair practice were relatives of Congress leaders like Dr. Syed Mahmud Dev, Prabhunath Singh, Jagat Narain and the IG Police Bipin Behari Verma. In another incident in Hyderabad Sardar intervened through his letter dated 19th November 1947, when P. Ramaswamy Reddy arbitrarily took over home portfolio from P. Subbarayan. There were other conflicts especially in the Punjab province and the United Province. Ministers were entangling into conflicts with the senior police or administrative officers. One such case came up from Govind Ballabh Pant who wished to resign on his differences with the I.G. Police Sir P. Measures, which brought Lord Wavell to write directly to Sardar seeking his help to resolve the issue. In Dec 1948 in his reply to a soft stand of Nehru, he refused to allow the Governor of East Punjab to preside over the meetings of Dr. Gopichand. He wrote, that this was opposed to Constitutional provisions and practices and can hardly be done under free India. Shankar (p. 390) observes that Sardar derived his authority from the Parliamentary Board of Congress and his personal standing for being a fearless fighter, great organizer and a wise Counsellor.

Sardar's prudent approach

Many authors have mentioned that Patel could achieve the most impossible without any external display of preparations or a clue to opponents, keeping a staid face and eyes that revealed much less. It was still remarkable for the January 1947 issue of Time magazine to acknowledge that Patel represented a cohesive India, 'This cinder-eyed schemer is not the best, worst, wisest or most typical of India's leaders but he is the easiest to understand and on him more than any man except Gandhi, depends India's chance of surviving the gathering storms' (Chopra, Vol. 11, p. 8). The last English commander-in-chief of the Indian Army, Sir Roy Bucher equated Sardar to Roman Emperors. He expressed that there was something rock-like in his appearance and demeanour, with an extraordinary degree of confidence.⁶ Patel's yeoman task of integrating princely states into a Union of India was acknowledged by the Soviet Premier Nikolai Bulganin as a feat bigger than the Otto Von Bismark's unification of Germany. It is also interesting to find that while Congressmen and Nehru went on undecided for days on proposals presented by Mountbatten before them, Patel's stand was clear and helped reach a solution. This made Mountbatten realize the metal within the Sardar and asked Nehru to allocate the Ministry of States to him. Historians like Peter Clarke in 'The Last Thousand Days of the British Empire' (2004) and Hindol Sengupta in 'The Man who saved India, Sardar Patel and His Idea of India' (2018) have acknowledged that this decision which was taken despite Nehru's hesitation changed India's fortune and the course of much presumed anarchic future with 566 independent kingdoms each prying for independence.

Sardar was a barrister and by virtue of his knowledge of law, his clear decision-making on some of the most complicated issues in governance helped his insulation from subjective decisions. The decision for military invasion of Hyderabad was taken after his fatigue from repeated dishonest circumvention on a Standstill Agreement by the Nizam. His army of Razakars continued with attacks on Hindus as the Nizam rejected the agreement. In Cabinet meetings, Patel was very clear that this would not be resolved as sought by Mountbatten's three conditions. However, despite much patience that Sardar retained, violence continued unabated against Hindus in Hyderabad. By 1948 while Nehru was abroad, Patel as Acting Prime Minister ordered military action and resolved the long-pending indecisiveness in quick action.

Patel was particularly sensitive about Junagadh for its location in the Kathiawar region which in itself constituted more than 300 small princely states including Porbunder, Bhavnagar, Lumbi, Jhabua, Gondal and Nawanager. Gandhi and Patel had witnessed the episode of Rajkot Satyagraha of 1938-39 which, notwithstanding a failed uprising of people was an indication of neglect of the struggle of people within these princely states. Raghunath (1979) the historian, mentions it as a big neglect of the Indian Freedom Movement.⁷ Patel

understood the nature of Junagadh Nawab Muhammad Mahabat Khanji III, an eccentric ruler who kept more than 800 German Shepherd dogs and the interesting fact about his fleeing to Pakistan reveals how he left his Begum's behind for these dogs in his royal flight. His state constituted more than 80 per cent Hindus who aspired to integrate into India and a few areas under Junagadh ie; Mongrol and Babariawad even revolted against Nawab's decision to accede to Pakistan. Junagadh is not connected to Pakistan by land and its only the Arabian sea route which could have established its link with Pakistan. Patel foresaw another India split if this was allowed to happen. In the meantime, the Nawab took military action against revolting rulers under Junagadh, signed accession with Pakistan and looked towards setting up a Strategic naval base of Pakistan in Veraval (part of the Junagadh province at that time). His Dewan Shahnawaz Bhutto, father of Zulfikhar Ali Bhutto was a Muslim League politician from Karachi. Patel is said to have outmanoeuvred Bhutto through his flawless diplomacy and left the man with clenched fists to vow for a 1,000 year-long war with India. Despite Mountbatten's pressure on Patel by persuading Nehru and Gopalaswami Ayyangar to support his plan, Patel refused to either take the Junagadh issue to UNO or prevent army from entering to support revolting Hindu rulers. Patel knew that it was time to let the Indian Army take lead of action in Junagadh. Brigadier Gurdial Singh, commander of the Kathiawar defense force led tanks and soldiers into Junagadh during the night when Bhutto left for Pakistan. Many local rulers placed their forces under Brigadier Singh's Command. Before any reaction could come, Patel had already disarmed Nawab's army, civil servants and police troops reached strategic places and sealed the Nawab's treasury. Junagadh army led by Captain Harvey Johnson formally handed over the charge to the Indian Government on 9th November. Patel arranged a plebiscite on 20th February 1948 and legally integrated Junagadh into the Union of India. In the plebiscite, only 91 out of 190,870 (from an electorate of 201,457) voted for Pakistan. Pakistan took the issue to the UN Security Council where Kashmir became a more pressing concern than Junagadh. It is interesting that Pakistan has recently on 4th August 2020 unveiled a new map which includes not just J&K and Ladakh but also Junagadh, Sir Creek and Manavadar. Integration of Hyderabad and Junagadh reflects the pre-emptive, sharp and judicious vision of Sardar in the manner he pulled these bones of contention set to influence Indian history post-independence. Any delay would have cost India heavily as many more overlapping issues concerning the region would have brought another untreatable geographical cancer to India's doorsteps.⁸

Patel was a Sardar (leader) in whatever he did. He did not spare any unjust or disproportionate slide for emotions or attachments. His conflict with Subhash Chandra Bose had its origin in his elder brother Vithal Bhai's excessive inclination for Bose and his work. Some historians have been unfair to Patel as he was painted as a villain in dealing with Bose, 'So fond of Bose had Vithalbhai become that he willed a portion of his fortune to him to be spent for

the ‘political uplift of India and for publicity work on behalf of India’s cause in other countries’.⁹ Patel did contest this will in the Court and also won the case in retaining his brother’s total wealth. However, this wealth was donated to a public trust. The fact that he gave greater credence to pragmatism than emotions is visible in the manner that Patel continued to speak at the Court despite news about his wife Jhaverba’s demise given to him. His vision of India did not protrude out of the whims and fancies of adhoc and ephemeral desires to achieve a piecemeal policy target but a holistic forward movement of people with its administrative machinery. He neither displayed an emotional outburst nor overtly intimidating nationalism to achieve what was necessary for India’s future, so much so that some of the biggest feats of his administration were achieved when he was simply an acting Prime Minister with the emotionally slippery Nehru not around.

In understanding mischiefs behind the Cabinet Mission Plan or the Cripps Mission, Patel was always ahead of Nehru. He castigated thoughts which suggested that Congressmen are Gandhites and may tolerate anything by sharply reacting, ‘To think that Hindus are Gandhites (sic), and therefore, they may tolerate whatever injustice may be done to them is absurd. Gandhiji does not tolerate any injustice nor does he teach the Hindus or anybody else to do so. His whole policy of life is to resist evil and if the Hindus are Gandhites, they would certainly resist evil or injustice from any quarter.’¹⁰

On the other hand, Patel was also not kind to the RSS. In his meeting with Golwalker, he straight away asked him to eschew destructive methods and adopt a constructive role, particularly the suicidal policy of the Savarkar Group of which Godse, the assassin of Gandhi was an exponent (Sardar’s letter to Nehru 16th August 1949, p.495 of Shankar).

Patel outwitted Jinnah in accepting Cabinet Mission Plan in the beginning as not that which indicated partition but soon realized it and agreed to it sooner than Jinnah realized what was on. Hindol Sengupta observed that, ‘In the end, it was Sardar Patel’s shrewd acceptance, on behalf of the Congress, of one version of the Cabinet Mission Plan ahead of the League which prevented Viceroy Wavell from inviting Jinnah to form the interim government, much to Jinnah’s outraged astonishment’ (Sengupta p. 284). Jinnah regretted later for having accepted the Cabinet Mission Plan. Later, Patel was not forgiving to Sir Stafford Cripps for dividing the country in a subtle craft as written in his letter to him on 15 December 1946, which also carried a warning to the British.

‘.....violence is a game at which both parties can play and the mild Hindu also, when driven to desperation, can retaliate as brutally as a fanatic Muslim (. . .) (E)very action of his (the viceroy) since the Great Calcutta Killing has been in the direction of encouraging the Muslim League and putting pressure on us towards appeasement (. . .) Your interpretation [of

the Cabinet Mission Plan] means that the Bengal Muslims can draft the constitution of Assam (Chopra & Chopra, Vol 10, p. 313).

Patel has been the Montesquieu of India in his statecraft and preemptive understanding to overcome policy disasters. He knew that being garrulous or sermonizer serves no purpose, one ought to prove one's mettle by resolving complications. His daughter explains this better as she describes her father, 'Action appealed to him as nothing else. He believed that a man of words and not of deeds is a garden full of weeds.' He was better than any other in his times. Yet it should not give an impression that he was devoid of emotions or there was not a softer side of his personality. When he shared his prison cell with Gandhi in the Yerawada Jail he became very fond of a prison cat that visited them. Patel would always save his share of milk for the cat and look forward to seeing him back. In the years that followed the Quit India Movement, most Congressmen were pushed to jails. Sardar's whole family was imprisoned but in different jails. He was worried about his daughter Maniben, daughter-in-law Bhanumati and grandson Vipin. He consistently wrote letters to them expressing his concerns and worries (Chopra and Chopra Vol 10. p. 21) about prison life which was a dungeon full of mosquitoes and garbage.

Some historians have mentioned that Gandhi always gave more support to Nehru than Patel due to his looks and stature. When journalist Durga Das verified Gandhi's choice of Nehru instead of Patel in 1946, Gandhi gave him an astonishing reply, 'Jawahar is the only Englishman in my camp (. . .) Jawahar will not take second place. He is better known abroad than Sardar and will make India play a role in international affairs. Sardar will look after the country's affairs. They will be like two oxen yoked to the government cart. One will need the other and both will pull together (Das, p. 230).

Sardar was a small man of 5'5" whereas both Nehru and Jinnah were 5'8", as Sengupta mentions, both the taller men got their countries but Patel had to be confined to being a Home Minister. Yet, he walked pretty tall in all meetings and was mostly better supported within the party. It was Patel who got Rajendra Prasad elected as the first President of India despite enormous pressure that Nehru mounted upon Prasad to decline his nomination in support of Rajgopalachari. His personality had sophistication of a very high level of intelligentsia and he was in full control of the Bar after his return from England as a Barrister.

Raising and Institutionalizing All India Services

The visionary Sardar knew that the task remains incomplete as long as this politically integrated republic is not immediately provided with an all-India-level disciplined and impermeable administrative framework embedded in 'rule of law' which had almost become a will-o'-the-wisp for most decolonized peers. A subtle designer of Indian Administrative and Indian Police Services

(IAS & IPS) pulled out from the debris of the British administration comprising 1500 officers, mostly English who had left the country and some Muslims who migrated to Pakistan. This timely initiative revealed an unmatched strategic planner in Patel which when seen with his architectural foresight for a stringently disciplined yet parliamentary controlled army speaks volumes about his vision for India. This cautious planning could be done by him at a time when military coup d'état of civilian governments had become a norm in nascent Afro-Asian republics and these military regimes became the best fodder for deepening bipolarity of international politics for four decades that followed.

Nehru was informed about the two All India Services in the Cabinet Meeting of 30th April 1948 in which Patel had emphasized the need for Constitutional provisions regarding these services. Subsequently, Patel drafted special recruitment, disciplinary and regulatory framework for maintaining high standards of discipline, impartiality and impersonality. Patel emphasized like Max Weber logical justification for apolitical civil services to maintain loftier levels of integrity and incorruptibility amongst those who govern. 'The injunction that the Indian civil servants must not dabble in politics was rigidly followed both before and about two decades after independence' (Ghosh, Srikant, 1997). Indian democracy derailed, politics and politicians, APH Publishing Corp. 354) At one place he clarified the need for keeping civil services independent from politics with Constitutional safeguards since they are needed to provide their correct and fearless opinion to the Minister, 'Today my Secretary can write a note opposed to my views. I have given that freedom to all my Secretaries. I have told them, 'if you do not give your honest opinion for fear that it will displease your Minister, please then you better go. I will bring another Secretary'. I will never be displeased over a frank expression of opinion' (Wangchuk, 2018, 30th October).

In Sardar's letter (27th April 1948) to Nehru, he categorically explained how provincial governments were consulted before raising these services and the manner in which unanimity prevailed in their views on constituting them. He further raised some crucially important points in this letter which sets a stage for a steel frame administration of India. To put it in brief points:

- The services should be assured of their prospects as a result of diligent and honest work.
- All political considerations either in their recruitment or in its discipline and control should be reduced to a minimum. These services should be above party.
- Services should be amenable to the control and discipline of Ministers both provincial and Central.
- All India Services should be based on uniformity under the Central government responsible for its recruitment and training.

- Constitutional safeguards and guarantees are the best medium of providing for these services and are likely to prove more lasting in contrast to interference and seriously prejudicing their efficiency.

Patel, as the first Home Minister of India, delivered his landmark address to the first batch of civil service officers on 21st April 1947 at Metcalfe House in Delhi. He emphasized a need for esprit de corps, path of 'Dharma', humility and to remain above communalism and politics. Ten years later The Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration (LBSNAA) came up in Mussorie for an institutionalized training as envisioned by Patel. This training as emphasized by Patel ought to be rooted in building an administrative ability that could handle the aftermath of partition, could manage developmental challenges and eventually manage official operations with flawless efficiency. In short, this administrative force was expected to bring peace with prosperity. Patel repeatedly and generously acknowledged their contributions as in a speech in Bombay on October 15, 1949 (p.354), 'All that we have been able to achieve, whether it be in the sphere of States or in Kashmir or any other theatres, has been possible because of their loyalty and whole-hearted support'.

It is country's misfortune that Patel could not live to see that as per his dream and strategic plan LBSNAA came up in Mussorie and on April 15, 1958, training for All India Services (IAS and IPS) shifted from the Metcalfe House to this new academy. The Union Home Minister Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant declared in the Lok Sabha, that the National Academy of Administration would give training to all the recruits of the Civil Services. However, Sardar's further plan for a training centre to match contemporary times and socio-economic changes a research-based work was needed. He gave high credence to training at the grassroot which would be more reflective of people's needs and aspirations with a strong foundation of a constitutionally driven secular administrative framework. The Indian Institute of Public Administration (IIPA) was to come up four years after his sad demise but it reflected less of Patel's philosophy for his envisioned 'law and governance' framework with a strong training in Constitutionalism and Secularism. It turned more Nehruvian¹¹ who had greater fascination for Bertrand Russell than Prem Chand, a deviation from Patel due to which the latter was repeatedly made to bridge gaps of disconnect left behind by Nehru as a competitive superior asserting his will in peer relationships within the party. As an American consultant, Prof. Paul H. Appleby Director of Syracuse's Maxwell School was invited to conduct a survey and lay foundations of this feeder institution to match in-service training of all services. Appleby's report was published as *Public Administration in India : Report of a Survey* (1953, p. ii, 66). This report carried an appraisal of theory and practice of public administration in India by an American scholar and practitioner who focused more on the federal needs and challenges for the new republic. The traditional patterns of administration were looked into but that was a marginal reference

within a larger process of decentralization recommended by Appleby. In a 16th May 1953, the weekly brought out a 'Review' of Appleby Report, which says,

'Mr. Appleby is here thinking of the American tradition. How far that tradition is worth promoting' in this country, where a discretion once vested is likely to produce a spoils system as in the United States on a minor or major scale, is debatable. A complex problem has not too easy or obvious a solution, and Mr. Appleby has not offered any. He has pointed out the deficiencies. At the same time, he has provided an outsider's appraisal which must on balance be encouraging rather than otherwise. Even if his report does contain some academic recommendations, such as. for example, the establishment of an Institute of Public Administration, it is also lull of suggestions and *obiter dicta* which can be studied with profit. This is more than can be said of most reports produced on such short acquaintance with the problems of this country'. *Our Delhi Letter* (EPW, p. 563)

However, Appleby's recommendation for a research institute of public administration matched Patel's keen interest into an institutionalized research-based training for a civil servant who could guide and advise political masters with confidence to remain above politics and fear. Nehru finally inaugurated IIPA on 29th March 1954 and declared the institute's mandate to be Training, Research and Information dissemination and exchange.

Patel's role as a Constitution framer cannot go unmentioned. He Chaired two main Committees of the Constituent Assembly (1) Advisory Committee on Fundamental Rights, Minorities, Excluded and Partially Excluded Areas (2) Committee on Provincial Constitution which evolved emergency provisions, the role of Governor, Language Policy, All India Services, Special Provisions for Jammu & Kashmir. A JVP Committee that became famous during those times was led by Jawahar, Vallabh Bhai and Pattabhi Sitarammaiyaya and it carved the linguistic policy and policies of Linguistic provinces. Patel was uncompromising on property rights and was quite displeased with Nehru on his Abolition of the Zamindari Act. Shankar writes (p. 472), that Sardar's role in Constitution-making has not been generally appreciated to the fullest extent but whenever a serious controversy developed it was not Nehru but the Sardar whose voice generally prevailed.

Another feat of Sardar in which he unequivocally established and emphasized a secular basis of the Constitution. In his historic speech in the Constituent Assembly made on 26th May 1949 and later on 12th October 1949, he vehemently reminded the vicious introduction of communal electorates which finally led to the divisive idea of Pakistan. Communalism divides, is a fact of history. Anything other than secularism was a pernicious idea to weaken the country. In his speech he made it clear that, 'it was in the interest of all to lay down real and genuine foundations of a secular state in India as if there was

only one community'. Later he emotionally concluded that, 'In the long run it would be in the interest of all to forget that there is anything like a majority and a minority in this country.'

Conclusion

Patel is presented in mainstream history as one who politically integrated the country but this task alone is a mere understatement about him notwithstanding the fact that this task alone was enough to declare him as a 'Sardar'. As Hindol Sengupta points out that, 'Patel possessed both the courage of renunciation and dignity not to leverage the threat that he felt Nehru might throw if refused- that of moving into an opposition role to the Congress' (p. 286).

It is never too late to acknowledge Patel's contribution to modern Indian, as there is immense learning for civil servants in his mannerism and strategies which resolved some of the most tangled and catastrophic problems that India faced in the last three years preceding independence. Civil Services training institutes may encourage high-level research to study Patel's interaction with those many civil servants who stood by him to achieve the impossible for the 'Union of India'.

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ENDNOTES

1. ‘While most Indians know far more about Gandhi and Nehru and their contributions in making the nation that they call home, few would immediately, in the same breath, give equal recognition to Patel. Such acknowledgement is eminently due, and it is a shame that it has never been adequately given, if for nothing else then those ‘four hectic years, 1947 to 1951’ p.9, Menon, 2014.
2. Katju, ‘the more I ponder over many problems which beset us these days the more I recognize the vital role which you and Jawaharlal have both come to play in our

national destiny in these critical days....but one or two questions which can only be solved by the influence that you exert and if you leave them unsolved they may cause national disaster afterwards.’ In this reference was being made to solving problems of reorganization of linguistic areas.

3. ‘The sight of your anguish yesterday has made me disconsolate....the burden of work is so heavy that I feel crushed under it....Jawahar is even more burdened that I.His heart is heavy with grief.’ (Shankar, p.202, letter 13 Jan. 1948.
4. ‘Sardar’s role in the Congress Party was a decisive one. He enjoyed both popular trust and confidence.The rank and file looked upon him with awe. He had the reputation of fairmindedness and sound judgement. He was fearless and set great store by stability..... as a leader he would influence local judgements through the faith and confidence he inspired but he was capable of refraining from pressing his views to the point of going against democratic principle...’(Shankar, p. 508)
5. ‘Nehru never forgave him for having lent his support to Tandon and the last two months of Sardar’s life on this planet were spent in an uncomfortable position of receiving pin pricks from him whenever he could get an opportunity of giving them.’(Shankar, p.508)
6. Chopra, Preface, 2017, p. 1.
7. Times of India, ‘Hyderabad was a key strategic state between India’s north and south. Sardar Patel said it would be like ‘a cancer in the belly of India’ if it remained independent’ Sept 12, 2021, available at <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/how-hyderabad-came-into-the-indian-union/articleshow/86134604.cms>
8. R.K. Murthi, *Sardar Patel: The Man and His Contemporaries* (Delhi: Sterling Publishers, 1976), p. 5.
9. Chopra and Chopra, *The Collected Works of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel*, vol. 10, p. 222.
10. ‘Nehruvian’ as an adjective suggests an idealistic westernized product. ‘Nehru, by the way, confirmed that Gandhi was right about the younger man’s Englishman-ness when he told Canadian-born economist John Kenneth Galbraith, “*You realise, Galbraith, I am the last Englishman to rule India.*” John Kenneth Galbraith (2001) and as Akbar writes, Nehru’s solution to the rising friction was, as he wrote in 1926 to his Cambridge mate Syed Mahmud, scion of a wealthy, land-owning family from Bihar, and who would later become a Congress leader: *I think what is required in India most is a course of study of Bertrand Russell’s books* [. . .] Religion as practiced in India has become the old man of the sea for us and it has not only broken our backs but stifled and almost killed all originality of thought and mind, (Akbar, 2002, p. 2)