

UNITY, CULTURAL DIVERSITY AND NATION BUILDING: SARDAR PATEL'S VISION OF MODERN INDIA

KISHAN PRATAP

Introduction

Vallabhbhai Patel popularly known as Sardar Patel is one of the most revered figures in modern Indian history. Besides his total and uncompromising commitment to the cause of national integration, Sardar's sense of justice and personal sacrifice endeared him to the generations to come. As we know, the most significant contribution of Sardar Patel was to take up the arduous challenge of integrating 565 Princely States to make the union of India. Sardar Patel accomplished this through dint of diplomacy and statesmanship, and rare if any use of violence, earning him the sobriquet 'Iron man of India'. Howard Spodek writes that Sardar Patel was, "The Iron Man of strength, supporting other leaders in times of struggle, the man of will and direction when others vacillated or were muddled in their goals; the pragmatist with his feet on the ground when others took to the clouds".¹ He is also celebrated as the 'patron saint of India's civil servants' for aligning and orienting the all-India services system to the administrative needs of an emerging nation. The services since then have provided the edifice of a steel frame to the organisational structure, and administration of the country.

No doubt, the integration of princely states into the Union is one of the most acknowledged direct contributions of Sardar Patel, however, the dynamic and subtle contribution that it has engendered into the daily lives of a billion-plus Indians often goes overlooked. In Sardar's vision, the integration of Princely States was neither the goal nor the end in itself, but a beginning, a means to achieve the aspirational goal of building a strong, vibrant and modern India. The paper is a pattern-based interpretative analysis of the consequence of Sardar Patel's life and works on Indian society, i.e. the socio-cultural, ideational and economic integration of the country that can be said to be a necessary corollary or a fallout of the political integration

he captained. The territorial integration and the structural framework, along with all India civil services, laid by the Sardar provided the basic fabric for evolution of a socio-cultural, economic and ideational ecosystem in the country. An ecosystem that has not only weathered some serious fissiparous and secessionist tendencies post-independence but has also stood its ground despite challenges posed by radical ideologies of politics and identity. A strong, united and resurgent India as we see today has been possible through the processes of structural, socio-cultural and ideological integration set in motion by the unique and inimitable personality, Sardar Patel. The paper is a take on Sardar Patel's aspiration and spirit of nationalism and rationality, which was both realistic and futuristic, and how it laid foundations for a modern, vibrant and constitutionally democratic India. An India that is no less proud of its traditional values, cultural differences, heritage and history. It is a reminder of the unique foresight and contribution of Sardar to the realisation of a diverse yet democratic, large yet connected, traditional yet modern, hierarchic yet equalising India. The paper is divided into three sections. The first section briefly discusses the contours and dynamics of cultural diversity and territorial integration of India. The second section highlights the contribution of Sardar Patel in embedding structural unity that formed the bedrock of the cultural, ideational and economic integration amongst Indians. Finally, the third section discusses the implication and significance of that unity in laying down the foundations of modern India as a cohesive unit, reflecting a fine balance between forces of continuity and change.

I

Cultural Diversity and the idea of 'India'

Indian civilisation is more than five thousand years old and is the birthplace of the cultures that subsequently spread all over the world. India is home to several religions and communities that practice a wide variety of traditions, customs and value systems. The civilisation of India differs from the ancient civilisations like those of Egypt, Mesopotamia, Greece, or any other for that matter, in that its traditions have been preserved without a break down to the present day. In the work titled 'Wonder that India Was' AL Basham expresses that, 'a common Egyptian, Greek or Iraqi has no knowledge of the culture of his forefathers, and in each case, there has been almost a complete break with the past. On the contrary, India is a culture fully conscious of its own antiquity, a culture that has not fundamentally changed for many thousands of years. To this day legends known to the humblest Indian recall the names of the saints, chieftains, knowledge systems, and hymns composed a thousand years before Christ. India has the oldest continuous cultural traditions in the world'.² Ancient India was a world in itself, a culture and a civilisation that gave birth and shape to ideas and artifacts of sorts, material and non-material,

ephemeral and eternal. Foreign influences poured in and often influenced Indian culture, and interestingly they were often harmoniously assimilated and absorbed, and rarely repulsed without examination, making this geography the land of seekers rather than believers. The seekers of truth from all sides and for all times came calling to India, some made it their home, others took the idea of India to places far and wide. Mapping cultural diversity therefore in contemporary India is not easy.

With a population of 1.3 billion-plus, there is an array of linguistic, religious, cultural, and racial diversity, making India a mosaic of cultural diversity and an excellent exemplar of composite culture. India as a society is a product of the gradual and continuous accumulation of cultural elements drawn in from a myriad of sources. Thus the idea of ‘a composite culture has philosophical foundations in the view that unity cannot be conceived as standardisation of beliefs or something imposed from outside. It is something deeper and, within its fold, the widest tolerance of belief and custom is practiced, every variety acknowledged, and encouraged’.³ ‘The visible differences among culturally diverse groups are all part of the hybrid culture’.⁴ The secret of India’s deep and underlying unity amidst cultural diversity lies in the fact that ‘different social, religious and cultural orders adopted the ways of synthesisation and harmonisation’ between each other (Johari, 1987). Oommen points out that ‘the process of synthesisation encompasses a long historical process that has produced an extremely complex society which is an amalgam of four basic dimensions: social stratification, cultural diversity, caste hierarchy, and religious plurality (2004:745-755).

The story of modern-day India as a successful representation and amalgamation of culturally diverse groups and communities is very interesting. Although cultural diversity as a fact in India has existed since times immemorial, it is interesting to trace when and how the idea of India, a nation, began to take shape in the minds of the people inhabiting this ancient inhabitation. A kind of a dream of unity has occupied the mind of India since the dawn of civilisation. One may wonder how did India achieve such a harmonious balance among culturally diverse groups and communities. How did India emerge as an entity integrating a wide variety of differences and cultural dispositions into a single nation-state? How did people belonging to diverse socio-cultural, linguistic affiliations began to imagine India as a nation and develop a sense of collectivity and belongingness? It is in this context that the contribution of Sardar Patel gets accentuated and widely acknowledged. As late as the arrival of Sardar Patel on the Indian political scene in the first half of the twentieth century the idea of India as a nation was still as nebulous and dynamic as it was may be a couple of centuries ago, if not more. Sardar Patel paved way for concretisation of India, and Indianism as we see it today.

Structural Unity, and the emergence of India

Political homogeneity for the geographical, and even cultural, entity called India has hardly been any historical reality. True, during the historical times of Bimbisara and Ajatasatru in the sixth century B.C. through the Mauryas and particularly Ashoka and later during the times of Chandragupta and his son Samudragupta major part of India saw the suzerainty of single kings and emperors, but only on account of their personal political endeavours and ambitions, rather than as political or sovereign entities in the sense of a regular state, and much less a nation. ‘Whole edifice was ever so loose and brittle that all sorts of autonomous, subordinates, and sub-sovereigns coexisted under the larger kingdoms and states, all vulnerable to repeated conquests and foreign rules’.⁵ Political integration for the sake of a political state and nation-building was therefore long felt to preserve, live and promote what has so beautifully flowered in this part of the world under the unique circumstances and opportunities afforded by the mix of geography and culture. Although there was an underlying unity that defined *aryavrat*, this entity was amorphous. It did not have a name or shape, and this did not seem enough to constitute a nation, a nation as grand in proportions as in historical depth and cultural complexity. The need for political integration was more than ever before, and even critical, at the dawn of Independence. During the process of formation of the Union of India, both prior to and after independence, knitting and management of cultural diversity remained one of the central challenges. The sense of ‘collectivity’ as an Indian, began to emerge through the experience of a united struggle for freedom. There was also a variety of cultural processes through which nationalism captured peoples’ imaginations. ‘A common history, myths, fiction, folklore, songs, symbols, festivals, values, and practices – all played a part in generating a strong sense of nationalism, and people started discovering that something was bonding them together’.⁶

Under British rule India was divided into two sets of territories, the first was the territory known as British India, on which the British rulers had direct control, and the second being some 565 independent Princely States, under the indirect control of the British government. Prelude to Independence, the princely states were given the option of joining either India or Pakistan or choosing independence after the lapse of the paramountcy of the British Crown. Indian nationalists and large segments of the public feared that if these states did not accede, most of the people and territory would be fragmented and this fragmentation would have obstructed the emergence of India as a nation. Patel was entrusted with the monumental task of integrating princely states into the Dominion of India. “Mountbatten was relieved that Patel was in charge of this difficult hangover of Raj policy. He was candid in his assessment on 27 June 1947: I am glad to say that Nehru has not been put in charge of the new States Department, which would have wrecked everything.

Patel, who is essentially a realist and very sensible, is going to take over in consultation⁷⁷ with Pakistan.

Beginning his journey decades back, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel after the Kheda (1918) and the Bardoli Satyagraha (1928) had emerged as a major and popular leader of the freedom movement in India, and a true Gandhian. By the time of independence, Sardar Patel was one of the most trusted names in the Indian freedom struggle. The Congress, and the senior British officials, considered Patel the best man for the task of achieving accession of the Princely States to the dominion of India. Gandhi had said to Patel, “The problem of the States is so difficult that you alone can solve it”.⁸ Silently but decisively he was at the helm of affairs in extending the fold of swaraj and democracy to nearly 80 million people living in the Princely States, which integrated to contribute almost 27 per cent of India’s population and 48 per cent of its territory.

In fact, Sardar Patel’s vision of a strong and united India began taking shape much before the country got independence. Responsibility of states in the Interim Government, and Independence only gave him a freer hand to put into practice what he had always aspired for India - *Ek Bharat, Shreshth Bharat*. Patel’s approach to the objective of national integration was quite clear. Realising the significance of territorial integration of these scattered and interspersing princely states into a single entity, Sardar Patel along with V.P. Menon undertook the daunting tasks of unification of India. Patel started the negotiations with the rulers of respective states to convince them to integrate with the Indian dominion. Historian Ramachandra Guha in his work, “India after Gandhi” writes, “Through the spring of 1947, Patel threw a series of lunch parties, where he urged his princely guests to help the Congress in framing a new constitution of India”⁹ (Guha, 2002). Encountering myriad challenges, Sardar Patel achieved the monumental task with his acute astuteness and political foresight, using a variety of bargaining chips. From convincing through friendly gestures to the use of force, Sardar Patel used all to fulfill his vision of integrating India. Convinced of the larger national, and even popular purpose, Sardar Patel did not hesitate to use *saam, daam, dand, and bhay* wherever deemed fit, as strategies to draw and convince the rulers to accede into India. At times ‘he invoked patriotism, or cautioned the rulers of anarchy, he instilled fear of revolt by masses, from giving assurance of keeping their pride intact, and in a way massaging royal egos through payments’¹⁰ to royal families, or simply convincing the rulers. During the process of integration, the biggest challenge was posed by three states, Hyderabad, Junagarh and Kashmir. The rulers of two of these states particularly, Junagarh, were lured by the offers made by Jinnah, who was following the divisive two-nation theory. Later, Junagarh’s Nawab joined Pakistan, and Hyderabad and Kashmir had decided to remain independent, not joining either. Under the diplomacy and leadership of Sardar Patel, Indian forces ensured Junagarh and Hyderabad’s

merger with India. But, Kashmir, a princely state with a Hindu king and predominantly Muslim population, remained indecisive and reluctant to join either India or Pakistan. Kashmir remained one of the toughest challenges as it also shared international boundaries with Tibet, China, Pakistan and Afghanistan. Most of the princely states had already given their consent for accession/merger with India, even before independence. With his unique ability and convincing power, Sardar Patel could achieve the record feat in the shortest span of time. Nowhere else and never before such a vast population characterised by enormous diversity had been integrated under a union in such a short span of time. With the merger, the princely states surrendered the control over *jagirs*, palaces, educational institutes, offices, thousands of villages, cash holdings, totalling up to crores and a railway system of about 12,000 miles, connecting different parts of India, to the Indian government without receiving any compensation. The unification of India not only resulted in territorial integration but also brought the necessary resources and wealth required for building modern India that was reeling under acute poverty, and stark inequality as a result of centuries of exploitation by the foreigners. By the middle of 1948, Sardar Patel could fulfill his dream of a strong and United India. The path to unity was full of challenges, hurdles, difficulties, surprises, twists and turns in negotiations, bargains, carrots and sticks, and huge expectations. Sardar will always remain as the greatest of all, a leader who combined in his approach the features of a true ‘nationalist’, ‘pragmatist’ and ‘diplomatist’.

II

Social integration, cultural accommodation and ideational unity

One of the significant outcomes of political integration accomplished by Patel was the emergence of a sentiment of belongingness to India, and thus national integration amidst cultural diversity. “A nation is said to be born when a group of people living in a particular territory develop a political form with a sense of unity and determine their political future. It is believed that the concept of nation arises when national consciousness emerges among individuals, resulting in a peaceful and mutually productive political association. A nation exhibits such features as inclusive membership, operated with an unbiased set of rules, and mutually benefiting citizenship” (Simpson, 2010, quoted in Aliyu et.al, 2017). Starting with political integration, the rise in the spirit of nationalism among ‘Indians’ led to a phenomenal concomitant emergence of ‘social integration’ and the ‘organic solidarity’¹¹ amongst Indians. The emergence of a common identity within the clearly marked territory led discreet groups and communities to unify under the ambit of the union, a single flag, citizenship, and a unifying socio-economic structure. The territorial integration not only united the scattered territories and allegiances, but also countered separatist identities,

and created a feeling of 'oneness' among Indians. Through his astuteness, Sardar Patel could surmount the fissiparous tendencies and successfully plant the idea of nationhood.

The management of diversity, however, became critical after the Independence and unification of India. Effective management of diversity was essential to the task of nation-building, as diversity no longer remained just a social fact, but also a challenge that had to be politically addressed, as it had also become fodder for political aspirations for many careerists and the nefarious designs of the enemies of Indian state. Sardar Patel achieved the dream of structural unity through political integration, but it was also essential to accommodate and privilege the cultural diversity and conflate the ideational unity with the idea of India for realising the dream of a modern and bold India. However, mainstreaming the cultural and ideological diversity of India was far more difficult than achieving structural unity by way of political integration. Sardar Patel realised the need to find ways of balancing the aspirations of diverse communities, meet and reconcile their legitimate demands of recognition, according status, and unite them with the mainstream. The unique imagination and pragmatism of Sardar Patel that achieved the bloodless unification of princely states laid the ideological and philosophical foundation for the social and cultural integration of the country.

In the early years after independence, predictions were made that the Indian political system would eventually collapse under the weight of its diversity and poverty. However, democracy has not only thrived but has also deepened because of its constitutional and political arrangements, mainly in terms of sharing of power by ensuring that a delicate balance between forces of centralisation and decentralisation is maintained and the interests of the powerful in society can be served without fully excluding and compromising upon the interest of those who are at the margins (Ashok K Pankaj, 2002). Post-independence, the presence of enormous diversity necessitated adoption of policies to safeguard the interests of individuals irrespective of socio-cultural, economic, linguistic, ethnic, and parochial differences (Mahajan, 2007). Nevertheless, Patel and the founding fathers of modern India were not opposed to assimilation and considered it indispensable for the project of nation-building. There was a combination of realism and cultural sensitivity in the approach towards the 'management of diversity'.¹² The seemingly simple process of binding scattered states together unfolded the idea of India as a nation which was essential for building a strong and prosperous country. During this process, efficient management of cultural diversity became both a cause and a consequence of the political integration of states into the union. In fact, decades later it can be said that with the kind of diversity India had, political integration was fundamental for the emergence and realisation of the idea of a nation.

Cultural and ideological uniformity cannot and should not be a normative goal in creating a vibrant society and a great nation; however, without a cross-cultural and ideational appreciation of what binds us altogether and what lies at the roots of the apparent cultural differences, building an inclusive state and society, or even staying together for a greater common good, could be a challenge. The founding fathers of modern India had firm faith in the ideals of democracy and constitutionalism to address the challenge. Addressing of the challenges of ‘management of cultural diversity, ensued right from the preamble to the Constitution, solemnly resolving to secure justice, liberty, equality, and fraternity for all’.¹³ The ‘constitutional framework’¹⁴ adopted by India recognises differences and diversity, and guarantees equal citizenship, rights, and protects linguistic, cultural, and religious minorities. The preamble itself identifies the unity and integrity of India as major objectives of the state and society. The provisions under fundamental rights and duties reinforce the idea of national and social integration, which has been further refined through the establishment of a quasi-federal form of the political system. Upholding the values of democracy, justice, equality, liberty, and fraternity, the citizens of India were empowered with a set of fundamental rights and duties to facilitate nation-building. The Directive Principles of State Policy cast the duty upon the state to promote equitable socio-economic development, eliminate social and other forms of discrimination, and promote peace and security. The debates in the Constituent Assembly inform us that these elements central to social integration, and diversity respecting the unity and integrity of the nation in the Constitution have a firm Sardar Patel signature and stamp. Patel headed the Advisory Committee on Fundamental Rights set up by the Constituent Assembly, and presented the draft of the reasonable restrictions to freedom of expression, and that for the inclusion of protection of minorities. Patel introduced the right to non-discrimination of citizens on the grounds of caste, communal, religion, sex, colour, and the clause to provide complete access to public facilities like wells, tanks, roads and bathing ghats to all sections. Sardar Patel strove to make the abolition of untouchability and to make it punishable by law in a comprehensive manner. While drafting the provision for the abolition of titles Patel suggested that the purpose of the provision was to prevent political parties from having “authority to give any inducements or to corrupt people in order to build up their party or to obtain or derive strength by unfair means”. The aspiration of a united, strong, vibrant, and inclusive India was thus writ large on the initiatives taken by Sardar Patel inside the Parliament, as much as outside the hallowed halls on the Raisina hills.

Ensuring equality, justice and development

Yet another significant challenge was to address the issue of economic development and equality. The means adopted to promote and ensure justice, equality, and liberty to the individuals were incomplete without addressing

the issue of development and upliftment of the standard of living of people. Immediately after independence, India accounted 'for one-seventh of the world's population who earned an average income that was one-fifteenth of the average American income of the time. Three-fourths of the Indian people were engaged in agriculture working with primitive tools and techniques, as either destitute landless laborers, highly insecure tenants-at-will, or small-plot holders eking out a subsistence living from their meager plots. The literacy rate stood at 14 percent, and the average life expectancy was thirty-two years' (Nimish Adhia, 2015). Only through establishing a balance between socio-political, and economic integration of people, the dream of holistic development of modern India could have been actualised. Else, there was always a lurking danger of receding into communities formed based on asymmetric levels of economic development. Bringing all under the fold of development or reaching out to the remotest corner of India and involving them in the process of development was imperative. Primarily following a socialist model of economic planning, there was a focus on industrialisation. Eschewing the debate over the success of economic models, the impetus to development served both as cause and consequence of the intensification of the degree of the socio-cultural and political unity of India. The amalgamation of these forces resulted in the rise of a high degree of spirit of nationalism and unity, as an emergent property of the process of unification, fulfilling the dream of the founding fathers of India.

III

Blending Modernity and tradition

India immediately after independence was a site full of cultural diversity, primarily rooted in linguistic plurality, religious identity and associated set of beliefs, practices and traditions. The structural, economic, and social integration had significant implications for the cultural diversity and ideational unity of India, and vice-versa. At no point of time, the founding fathers of India attempted to do away with tradition. However, striking a balance between tradition and modernity was one of the greatest challenges. There was a need to retain heritage and tradition yet adopt a modern institutional framework to achieve goals of development. Factoring in the challenges of communalism and the aftermath of the partition of India, the challenge of emotional integration was addressed through the adoption of secularism as one of the fundamental values in the constitution of India. The constituent assembly and architects of modern India had realised the vitality of securing justice, equality and liberty to the citizens and addressing issues of cultural diversity in India right from the inception of independent India. The basic aim of the adoption of these values was to promote the idea of fraternity while ensuring unity and integrity of the nation along with individual dignity. 'The idea of secularism'¹⁵ was operationalised

by way of giving recognition and equal respect to all religions. Secularism was inherent and well-integrated with the core philosophy of the constitution and modern values of ensuring equality, justice, liberty and fraternity among people. Fraternity, especially, was perceived as a significant way to counter divisive tendencies, particularly emanating from religious differences. To overcome religious rife of differences and promote religious fraternity, the constitution guaranteed to every person the freedom of conscience and the right to profess, practice and propagate religion. During the debates on the question of separate and joint electorates and reservations of seats in legislatures and services for the minorities, in the Advisory Committee on Minority Rights, and later in the constituent assembly, Patel stood his ground firmly in favour of joint electorates, and resorted to bring equality to all and eradicate the concept of minorities. Patel said, “It is not our intention to commit the minorities to a particular position in a hurry. It is in the interest of all to lay down real and genuine foundations of a secular state, then nothing is better for the minorities than to trust the good sense and sense of fairness of the majority, and to place confidence in them. So also it is for us who happen to be in a majority to think about what the minorities feel, and how we in their position would feel if we were treated in the manner in which they are treated. But in the long run, it would be in the interest of all to forget that there is anything like majority or minority in this country and that in India there is only one community” (Patel quoted in Awasthi, 2017). Thus without imposing uniformity or regimentation of cultural preferences, the foundations of modern India were laid down on a perfect blend of tradition and modernity. The provision in the constitution of India provided a perfect ground for blending the two seemingly opposite forces. If secularism retained and respected tradition as it was primarily emanating from religious beliefs and practices, the adoption of values of liberty, equality and justice erased the evils of tradition and ushered and instilled the modern values that cherished individuals’ freedom.

To conclude, the structural unity resulted in the integration of cultural diversity, economic integration and ideational unity steadily. Sardar Patel’s pursuit was remarkable in achieving national integration in an otherwise highly diverse society. The unity amidst cultural diversity was achieved through the Constitution, which created space and respect for diversity. The Constitution did not impose uniformity but acknowledged and accepted vast diversity and differences among people, operating within the framework of the union of India. The ideational unity was achieved by implanting the idea of nationhood and ‘Indianness’ among people irrespective of their background, caste, culture, region, or religious affiliation. As defined by Simpson (2010), national integration is “creating a mental outlook which will promote and inspire every person to place loyalty to the country above group loyalties and the welfare of the country above narrow sectarian interests.”

The task of nation-building in the post-independent scenario in India was monumental. India was left hopelessly poor, extremely divided, witnessing the high intensity of communalism, regionalism, casteism, and facing the aftermath of partition. The social malice, inequality, and religious divide that turned ugly during the unfortunate event of partition, in fact, had been plaguing India for a considerable time. The 'divide and rule' policy of the British had severely fragmented Indian society. The seemingly smooth process of territorial unification of India was full of twists and turns and challenges. The unwavering spirit of Sardar Patel made the insurmountable, surmountable. What started as a journey and process of territorial unification, gave birth to the rise of India. What India looks like today or the way we see it, would have not been possible without reviving, integrating and building structural, cultural, social, economic, and ideological foundations of a grand civilisation. Sardar Patel's efforts and initiatives have resulted in offering every Indian a reason to enjoy a sense of pride and belongingness, i.e. being an 'Indian'. Seventy-five years after independence it is easy to decipher the way architects of modern India in general and Sardar Patel in particular aspired for the idea of an *Ek Bharat, Shreshth Bharat*. The magnitude, implications and significance of the contributions made by Sardar Patel is not easy to fathom. The ensuing socio-cultural, political and economic transformations, fashioned the character of post-independence India. Sardar Patel's contribution cannot be just restricted to understanding the role he played in the territorial unification of India. That was just the beginning of the unfolding of a grand project called the formation of 'India'. India as we know today is a sum total of incommensurable efforts and the undying spirit of the founding father of modern India, and an illustrious son of Bharat Mata, Sardar Vallabhbhai Jhaverbhai Patel. No words and narratives can do justice to the immense contribution, that this ever-grateful nation owes him.

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ENDNOTES

1. Howard Spodek in Political Thinkers of Modern India: Vallabhbhai Patel, Volume 18, page 353, edited by Verinder Grover
2. Basham, AL, The wonder that was India, Picador, 2004
3. Jawaharlal Nehru, in his book “Discovery of India” uses the phrase ‘unity in diversity’. He further writes that “Some kind of a dream of unity has occupied the mind of India since the dawn of civilisation. That unity was not conceived as something imposed from outside, standardisation of externs or even of beliefs. It was something deeper and, within its fold, the widest tolerance of belief and custom was practised and every variety acknowledged and even encouraged.”
4. Although, singly or collectively, these divisions have, at times resulted in relative discrimination and communal conflicts, but India has been resilient to such divisive tendencies. India has been successful in resisting disintegration and binding diverse communities under national framework so far. Its diversity and complexity notwithstanding, India’s unity and integrity is incredible where differences in terms of caste, language, ethnicity, and cultural practices is woven into a unique cultural fabric yet they maintain their distinctive identity.
5. (VP Menon, integratopn of indian states)
6. (NCERT, 2011:70).
7. MJ Akbar : Gandhis’s Hinduism The Struggle Against Jinnah’s Islam, Bloomsbury 2020
8. Gandhi, Rajmohan (1990), *Patel: A Life*, Ahmedabad: Navajivan.
9. Guha, India After Gandhi
10. Payment to be made to royal families for their agreement to merge with India, called as “privy purses”. The payments of ‘privy purse’ were made to the former rulers under constitutional provisions of Art. 291 and Art. 362. Privy purse conferred ‘special status’ to ruling class, and kept their royal status intact. ‘Privy purse’ was abolished by the 26th Amendment to the Constitution of India in 1971.

11. In sociology, mechanical solidarity and organic solidarity are the two types of social solidarity that were formulated by Émile Durkheim, introduced in his *Division of Labour in Society* (1893) as part of his theory on the development of societies. *Organic solidarity* is a social cohesion based upon the interdependence that arises between people from the specialisation of work and complementarianism as result of more advanced (i.e., modern and industrial) societies. Although individuals perform different tasks and often have different values and interests, the order and very solidarity of society depends on their reliance on each other to perform their specified tasks. Thus, social solidarity is maintained in more complex societies through the interdependence of its component parts.
12. Freedom to practice one's faith in everyday life and celebrate religious festivals, are some of the basic freedoms that all the communities enjoy along with their counterparts of other major or minority religions. India has been able to sustain diversity and effectively manage cultural difference, because its political foresight incorporated elements of tradition and modernity, diversity and equality as well as respect and dignity in a fine balance. Along with set of rights given to individuals and communities, division of states on the basis of language also is one the most comprehensive means of political recognition of cultural and ethnic identity in India that helped in containing and sustaining multicultural character of Indian society, weaving it into a harmonious whole (Harihar Bhattacharya, 2003: 148-161).
13. Cultural plurality demands essential political virtues, like mutual respect and recognition of the otherness of the other, civility along with tolerance, appreciation of plurality, open-mindedness for embracing new ideas and understanding different ideologies, empathy for the weak and the stranger, prevent friction, avoid escalation of conflict and ability to resolve differences amicably.
14. Some of the major provisions in the Constitution of India providing equal opportunity and rights for all citizens are: *Article 14*: ensures equality before the law and equal protection by the law; *Article 15*: prohibits discrimination on the grounds of religion, race, caste, sex and place of birth; *Article 21*: No person shall be deprived of his life or personal liberty except through the procedure established by law; *Article 25*: ensures freedom of conscience and the right to freely profess, practice and propagate religion; *Article 26*: ensures the right to manage religious institutions, religious affairs, subject to public order, morality and health; *Article 29*: protects the right of minorities to conserve their language, script or culture; *Article 30*: provides for the protection of the interests of minorities by giving them a right to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice. The State is directed not to discriminate against minorities' institutions in granting aid; *Article 350A*: directs the State to provide facilities for instruction in the mother tongue at the primary stage of education.
15. Constitution of India guarantees to its citizens six fundamental rights, one of which is the right to freedom of religion. Article 25 of the Indian Constitution gives each citizen: Freedom of Conscience; Right to Profess any religion; Right to Practice any religion; and Right to Propagate any religion. Secularism as contemplated by the Constitution of India has following features: (1) The state will not identify itself with or be controlled by any religion; (2) While the state guarantees to everyone the right to profess whatever religion one chooses to follow, it will not accord any preferential treatment to any of them. (3) No discrimination will be shown by the state against any person on account of his religion or faith. (4) The right of every citizen, subject to any general condition,

to enter any offices under the state and religious tolerance form the heart and soul of secularism as envisaged by the constitution. It secures the conditions of creating a fraternity of the Indian people which assures both the dignity of the individual and the unity of the nation. Unlike western interpretation of meaning of secularism which is 'strict separation between state and the church', in India secularism, does not mean the separation of religion from state, instead it implies that the state is 'equi-distant' from or to all the religions, and recognises, supports, and participates in religious affairs in a neutral manner.