



Socio-Political Ideas of Sardar Patel: focus on Nation Building

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Abstract-

This article has mainly examined the Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel's idea of nation building by applying his social and political philosophy in Indian politics. Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel was one of the key players in creation of newly Independent India. He was a man of courage and vision, determined to take up the challenges and provide guidance to the task. With his deep understanding of matters he played remarkable role in merger of princely states into Indian Union. Patel in spite of his exalted status as Iron Man of India, he underlined the importance of bringing about changes in society. It was Sardar Patel who Imparted leadership and direction to the administrative structure of independent India and infused with it new purpose of national reconstruction and development.

The aim of writing this paper is to express the society about Sardar Vallabhbhai Patels great contribution in nation building with his socio- political ideology. Today an India to think of and talk about is very largely due to Sardar Patel's statesmanship and firm administration.

The research article followed two step methodology, descriptive methods by comprising literature review and analysis of secondary data. In order to achieve the objectives, article is mainly based on secondary data are drawn classified from Publication of books, magazines, article and internet.

Key Words- India, nation, political, Patel, social.

Indian society after attaining the independence was exposed to a succession of tension due to the ever-enhancing consciousness, in the minds of the people regarding their social and political status. The process of nation building, which was set forth through the freedom struggle, could be put into action in full swing after the attainment of independence from British rules. Indian leaders had to face numerous problems and new challenges. The leaders of the country had a crucial time in dealing with the process of integration of the country. No one, among contemporary politicians, it seems, was eager to study the context of nation building as a social and political process. Though, now-a-days, modern politicians show keen interest in the dynamics of nation building. It is alleged that far greater attention is being given to the problem of economic development, population growth, family planning, spread of literacy, development of mass media and diffusion of modern science and technology. Clifford Geertz had conceived nation building as *"It is a demand to progress, for a rising standard of living, for a more effective political order for greater social justice and*

beyond all that for playing a part in the large arena of world politics and for exercising influence among the nation.”¹

we find that nation building is a broad term, and when put in the proper perspective, it provides a clue to the prosperity of the country, as well as to its identity as nation. The problems of nation building are so wide and complex that many political leaders of the newly developed states have taken shelter under the unreality of the doctrine of supernationalism. The nature of the problem depends on geographical, social and political structure of the country. The leaders, no doubt have to face discouraging difficulties, coming in the way of efforts in reshaping the country's destiny. When a country remains under colonial government, its common people are kept away from any kind of constructive national activity. The colonial government is not at all interested in developing political consciousness among the people, lest it should become detrimental to its Interests, the external rulers always try to keep the people subdued, never providing an atmosphere for developing any mass consciousness. Educational facilities rendered to the people are far from satisfactory, except that they try to build up a group of intellectuals, who are helpful to them in running the administration smoothly, highlighting their so-called noble deeds, and rationalising their pressure.

Thus, a superficial atmosphere of peace and harmony is created among the people, which if kindled by an able leader can develop into a national consciousness. For a country like Indian having a pluralistic society, the development of the idea of national integration was more of a governing factor for nation building. Indian leaders had to proceed cautiously towards nation building. They had to follow a humanitarian approach, a compromise between extremism and liberalism to avoid an impending civil war. This was unparalleled in the history of the world. Rajni Kothari has commented, In India latecomer had to peruse both nationhood and economic development simultaneously. And what had come only in the last leg of the historical journey of other states was here given the first place.... India's attempt was to put history in upside down."²

Sardar Patel was a dedicated freedom fighter, a strong administrator, a patriot and a dedicated servant of the country. He played pivotal role during the freedom movement as well as for the political and territorial consolidation of India. His contribution was not less than any other famous freedom fighter for the welfare of Indian masses, Patel fought tooth and nail. He specially preferred patriotism, democracy, secularism, Gandhian Secularism and humanism in his thoughts and action. Patel was a great patriotic leader of India. He believes that religion sustained patriotic feelings of human being according to him the main objective of religion was to eradicate the petty jealousies and prejudice and unites them with each -others.³ He specified that “ we all are knit together by bound of blood and felling no less than of self- interest, none can segregate us into segments, no impassable barriers can be set up between us,”⁴

Patel believed that patriotism preached the love and worship, it also offered the human being to come out of their narrow and selfish habits. However, Patel realised that human brotherhood was a utopian concept, he convinced that religion did not preach cowardness but to act fearlessly and in a disciplined manner. Patriotism meant worship of one's motherland with deep love and regard of one's tradition, history and culture. Therefore, a truly religious person should have no difficult in developing the spirit of patriotism. He believed was the highest form of religion as well as superior to religion to religion. Patel believed in a true religious patriotism which was based on moral value and freedom. In his religious thoughts there was no place of fear in physical

world. But he realized that people must fear only almighty God. He supported the moral view of patriotism and stated that if men seek unity with Deity, then he must necessarily seek unity with interest of the world also and work for it.⁵

As a great patriotic leader, he advocated the complete unity in diversity in India. He suggested for removal of conflicts and also for creating unity for the creation of one nation and for its safety. For that he exclaimed “vast majority of states which, owing to their geographical contiguity and indissoluble ties, economic, cultural and political, must continue to maintain relations of mutual friendship and co-operation with the rest of India. The safety and preservation of these states as well as of India demand unity and mutual cooperation between its different parts.”⁶ Patel suggested us that we take a lesson from our history in which our mutual conflicts, quarrel and jealousies were causes of our falling victims to foreign rule a number of times, so, we should not repeat such mistakes and we should have friendly mutual realign toward each other.

Sardar Patel was a pragmatic political leader he favoured discipline and quick action for the development of the nation. He accepted that freedom could be cherished only where discipline become an integral part of life. He always committed and dedicated for the success of freedom movement to accomplish the work he selected village people, he developed energy within them and encouraging the villagers for their commitment and dedication toward freedom movement. For that purpose, he succeeded in preparing the sleeping villager for the freedom struggle and democratic rights through a planned campaign.⁷ During the Bardoli Satyagraha, Patel made an example for the future generation, creating a sense of confidence among the peasants of Bardoli. The peasant of India till that time were unable to fight for their democratic rights through non-violent means. He encouraged and organized the peasant of Bardoli and ultimately achieved the goal. Thus, it is observed that he was such a great freedom fighter and leader, who inspired the peasant and weaker section of society for their rights and justice. His role during the Bardoli Struggle was really wonderful and praiseworthy. The result of this movement showed his intelligence and management skill.

Sardar Patel was also aware about the women empowerment and their contribution for the freedom of India. For this purpose, he inspired the village women for Bardoli struggle. He greatly impressed by the impressed by the strong determination and devotion of women of Bardoli. He motivated the women of India during the freedom movement and stated that he doesn't like the signs of slavery on your hands and feet, his mean the heavy brass ornaments they wear, they accumulate a lot of dirt, produce all sorts of skin disease and interfere with free movement. He advises them to get rid from all.⁸ Most of the women inspired from his speeches and join hands under his leadership to free India. He also criticized the purdah system in India. He was against the people who kept their wives in purdah, according to him it the reason behind a person is a clear sign of his cowardness his advice those wives to divorce these cowardly partners. He protested against the purdah system in Indian Society, which was in his opinion the big obstacle in field of freedom of women and their progress as well as in the progress of the society and country. So, he tried to boost up the women to oppose these wrong customs. He favoured the active participation of women of India during the national freedom movement and made women to realize their worth not only for the society but also for the nation.⁹

Sardar Patel's political ideas shown that he was a great democratic leader of India. He favoured the popular democracy for Indian masses. According to him, there could be ruler only if the people recognised them as

such the ruler must move with the times, ruler must their trust in the people. Patel fixed the responsibility of the ruler along with the duties for the citizens. Therefore, he had a deep faith in democracy and suggested that liberty, equality and justice are the basic tenants of democracy. Patel believed that Indian people should aware about their responsibilities and sincerity. towards the government. He wanted to achieve the equality and unity among the Indiana masses despite the differences in social structure. He pointed that for unity we must forgot differences of caste and creed and remember that we all are Indian and all are equal. There can be no discrimination between humans. All must have equal opportunities, equal rights and equal responsibility.¹⁰

Patel support equality as an important feature of democracy in India. His conception of democracy was based on equality, liberty and justice these were adopted in Indian constitution as a principle of democracy for the welfare of masses. Patel was fully supporter of representative democracy for India throughout Indian freedom struggle and during the making of constitution process because he believed that “it should be obvious to everyone, however, that even democracy and democratic institutions can function efficiently only where the unit to which these are applied can subsist in a fairly autonomous existence so there is no alternative to integration and democratisation. It can be saying that Patel felt that there is no alternative of democracy in Indian society, because it is based on consent and will of people. In democracy, democratic institution should work with efficiency and sincerity. He again said that, “In a democracy, of course, it the will of people that prevail, but the people must have experience to make their own free will felt and must have the responsibility to see that very one is going to fulfil his obligations”.¹¹Hence, it is evident that the proper working for the democracy is well educated and strong public opinion is required but being his awareness of that fact, he was a strongly recommended representative democracy as well as democratic way of life. He earnestly wanted to maintain harmonious relationship between the people, institution and ruler in political system, democracy cannot be ruled by force, it can only be ruled by the consent of the people. He also looks for the responsible ruler aware of the need of the time and demands of the people and he suggested that both the rulers and ruled class should maintain their grace of service toward each other because this the true sign of building any nation.¹²

Sardar Patel was knowing the importance of administrative system in political setup and always against the political interference with the work of civil services in democracy. Although he was against those politicians who persistently interfered with administrative system and tried to destroy its efficiency at the same time, he also requested the bureaucrats to their support for the development of democracy.¹³ He believed in the firmness in administration was totally against the misuse of power by the authority and bureaucracy. He accepted the dedication and efficiency of public servants in democratic system that is why, he pronounced the doctrine of intellectual integrity of civil servant and sharing their responsibility with an alert manner He laid stress on the purity and trust in civil servant, which made them sincere and honest in public life. Through, he favoured these principles especially for the secretaries of the government and obviously it also applicable to others officials.¹⁴ To building the successful nation the first thing is to achieve Hindu- Muslim unity secondly to removal of untouchability and the third thing is to attain self-sufficiency. For the strengthen of nation Sardar Patel supported decentralization of powers and reinforced the idea of Panchayati Raj system for the success of the working of democracy in India. He explained that we should establish gram panchayats in villages, preserve

the best in your tradition and culture and live for the selfless devotion to your ideals. He felt that gram panchayat has preserve and maintain pure and healthy culture heritage of India. He believed that panchayat Raj system was based on selfless service, morality and dedication; provides quick justice at the grass roots level.¹⁵

Another approach of Sardar Patel to building the nation by uplifting the people through physical and mental education. In his views, “Modern education is like educating a parrot. Body and mind do not connect with each other nor there is any physical and mental progress. Education should be such that it develops the mind, body and his soul make progress. The aim of education should be to make school and the village complementary to each other and join both together”.¹⁶ In this way he admitted that modern education system is not sufficient for the all-round development of Indian people. He accepted that our educational system should be through the medium of our own language. Patel always stressed on the importance of fair and right education for the development socio-political system.

Further Patel believes in the unity of all communities he said that “it’s our duty today to think about all this, to pledge ourself to live with all Indians as brothers and cease to bear anyone a grudge. Whatever our community, all of us Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Parsis, Christians we should remember that we belong to one country”. In this regard he not only worked for political unification but to build an emotionally united country where everyone regardless of caste, creed or religion can live with oneness.¹⁷ Patel believed in rich heritage of Indian culture which favoured union of all communities. He never encouraged discrimination between Hindu and Muslims community. He believed in secular version of life. He said that “we have to forget the differences between caste and caste, religion and religion, community and community and be united and shed fear.” Therefore, he believed in friendly and pure relation among all communities to make India strong and powerful nation.

In nutshell, we can say, that Sardar Patel was devoted his whole life for the sake of united the Indian Nation. His contribution in nation building is undoubtedly and unforgettable. History does not give a second instance in which a leader of a country did so much useful work for his country as Sardar Patel did for India as he gave strength and political unity of nation. Today we need leaders of such calibre and dedication to secure the nation.

End notes

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