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Address

• Vikram Nagar, Boudhi Chouk, Latur.
• Tq. Latur, Dis. Latur 413512 (MS.)
• (+91) 9922455749, (+91) 9158387437

Email

• aiirjpramod@gmail.com
• aayushijournal@gmail.com

Website

• www.aiirjournal.com

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Sardar Vallbhbhai Patel's Political Ideas

Maroti Chandu Gawalwad

M. Phil., NET, SET (Political Science)

B. Ed., M. A., NET (Education)

Ph.D. Researcher,

Swami Ramanand Teerth Marathwada University, Nanded.

Maharashtra.

Introduction:

Sardar Vallbhbhai Patel (31October, 1875-15December, 1950) was one of the most influential freedom fighter and social leader of India during Indian freedom movement. He is called the iron man of India. The credit got him for integration of Indian Union. He tackled the Nizam of Hyderabad and the Nawab of Junagarh who initially did not want to join India. The respect goes to him for becoming first Deputy Prime Minister and home minister of India. He was a barrister and one of the greatest leaders of India. His contribution was important to the Constituent Assembly of India. This little effort is to know his political ideas. To know his ideology need to know the Gandhi's influence on Sardar Patel.

Gandhi's Influence On Patel:

Gandhi's influence on Patel has reflected in his thoughts and deeds. He said, "Even if we lose the wealth of thousands, and our life is sacrificed, we should keep smiling and be cheerful keeping our faith in God and Truth. Man power without unity is not strength unless it is harmonized and united properly, then it becomes a spiritual power. A war based on Saytagrha is always of two kinds. One is the war we wage against the injustice, and the other we fight our own weakness. Satyagrha is not a creed for the weak or the cowardly. Non-violence has to be observed in thoughts, word and deed. The measure of our non-violence will be the measure of our success. Ours is a non-violence war, it is a Dharma Yuddha. These thoughts have been expressed by the Patel are seen full of the influence of Gandhism. But he did not accept the whole Gandhism. He has his own capacity in various manners.

Sardar Patel's Capabilities:

Sardar Patel has political, intellectual, military and managerial capabilities. He had a lot of confidence, cynical attitude and a rational mindset. Through these capabilities reflected his political ideology. The five facts which give an overall picture of the capabilities of Sardar Patel including his political, intellectual, military and political sides are as follows:

1. Political popularity among Congressmen and control of the organization
2. Role in political integration of India
3. Role in White Revolution
4. Role in re-development of Somnath temple as a symbol of India's eternal values
5. Role in framing the Constitution¹

Sardar Patel is called Bismarck of India. What Sardar Patel sought to achieve and largely succeeded, was unity in all respects; geographical, political, administrative, cultural and emotional integration of India.

View On Modern Economy:

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel is known as Architect of United India, and he had also a constructive view on modern economy as a liberal economist. Comparatively Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru was in favour of the democratic socialism, and adopted the mixed economy but, Patel has different view on modern economy than Nehru. According to him, "Nationalization is worthwhile only if the government can manage the industries efficiently. But this is difficult. We have neither the man nor the resources even to run our administration let, those who have the knowledge and experience, man-age the industries and increase the country's wealth."²

According to time and circumstances Patel was not the favour of nationalization. He said that unlike many who indulge in the parrot-cry of socialism, I have no property of my own. Before you talk of socialism you must ask yourself how much wealth you have created by your labour. . . . By experience, I am convinced that what is necessary for us is to learn how to produce more wealth and then to produce wealth and thereafter to think what to do with it. Labour is today at the cross-roads; If takes the right road and uses its energies to strengthen the country, India will have a glorious future; but if it is misled and takes the wrong road, it will go down in the ditch and it will lead everyone to destruction and ruin.

Money Spent For National Use:

Patel has not an economic doctrine but, he has maxims of economic development of individual and country. Patel stated to all people of India that, "Spend less, save more and invest as much as possible, should hence for-ward be the motto of every citizen in the country and all of you must see that it becomes the guiding principle of your life. You can select for your-self any suitable means of investment which are open to you, but only make sure that all the money that you save is spent for national cause."³

He favoured industrialization because he believed that without it, rural and agriculture development could not be possible. He advocated industrialization as a means of proper use of our resources

Liberal Economic Policies:

He was not in fevor of the socialist culture. This clearly reveals that Sardar Patel was not in favour of nationalized industrial system having pattern of socialist culture. He favoured private players and liberal economic policies. In short the economic model of Sardar Patel would have three pillars: Industrial Growth, Promotion of Private Entity, and Liberal Government Policies.

The above phrases depicts that Sardar Patel was having a bold view on domestic Industrialization. He advocated self sufficiency of the nation towards fulfilling the basic needs of the population. He also suggested increasing savings and converting it into investment on assets which contribute towards development of the nation.⁴ He said that Self-sufficiency in food and other basic requirements is the hard core of our freedom and it is in your hands to achieve it. If we do not produce more, we shall only be quarrelling among ourselves like two dogs snarling over a piece of bone.⁵

Will Of The People Is Supreme:

Patel supported to the idea of sovereignty of people not the sovereignty of the king. He wanted that democratic governments should be established in the states and the princes should join the Union of India as the federating units. In the process of nation-building, he wanted the citizens of the states to join him. He believed that the will of the people is supreme, and sovereignty rested not with the king but with the people only.' On May 9th 1946 he said: "Sovereignty should rest in the people and not with the individual ruler." ⁶

Synthesis Of Liberalism, Conservatism And Welfarism:

With the sovereignty of the people, his ideas are sum-up a synthesis of liberalism, conservatism and welfarism. According to Dinesh Chandra,

'Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel always raised his voice on several issues against exploitation and criticized the high-handedness of authority, the exploitative revenue policy of the Government and maladministration in the Princely states.

He not only criticized the arbitrary policies of confiscation of movable and immovable properties, but also insisted on. His efforts to reform the Hindu religion and protect the people of other faiths reflected his longing for the right to religion. He encouraged the duly elected authority to bring restrictions through various legislative measures to freedom for all. Thus, **his political value system was a fine synthesis of liberalism, conservatism and welfarism**'. ⁷

Individual Liberty By The Constitution:

He saw a nation as 'democratic in structure, nationalistic in foundation and welfarist in spirit and function.' Individual liberty was to be in conformity with the provisions of the Constitution. He strengthened the plural basis of the nation-state by bringing electoral participation. ⁸ Patel moved against the forced labour under the banner of Gujarat Sabha. His idea was to remove the practice of Monarchy of all princely states of India and to form a Unified Nation of India. On May 9th 1946 he said, "Sovereignty should rest in the people and not with the individual ruler."

Developing A Sense Of National Identity:

Patel tried to develop the sense of national identity among the people of India. Sardar did not want only the territorial integration but also the integration of different communities by developing a sense of national identity. Patel was the chairman of the committees responsible for minorities, tribal and excluded areas, fundamental rights and provincial constitutions. Vallabhbhai Patel stated, "The whole conception (fundamental rights) is born out of the idea of slavery. That idea of slavery has been haunting some of our people. Not even a shadow of it is left no." ⁹

His only desire was that India should be a good producer and no one should be hungry, shedding tears for food in this country. According to him, it is the prime responsibility of every citizen to feel that his country is free and to defend its freedom is his duty. By common endeavor we can raise the country to a new greatness, while a lack of unity will expose us to fresh calamities. He said that today we must remove distinctions of high and low, rich and poor, cast or creed. In domestic Government unity and co-operation are essential requisites. Religion is a matter between the man and his maker. Caste, community will rapidly disappear. We have to speedily forget all these things. Such boundaries hamper our growth. Every citizen of India must remember that he is an Indian and he has every right in this country but with certain duties. Thus, Patel tried to develop the sense of national identity among the people of India.

Conclusion:

After the above brief study the conclusion of Patel's political ideas in short as, Dr. Atul Chandra Pradhan stated that Patel was "a leader of peasants, Patel did not subscribe to socialism because of his pragmatic outlook"¹⁰ Patel's ideas are a fine synthesis of liberalism, conservatism and welfarism. He was in favour of Industrial Growth, Promotion of Private Entity, and Liberal Government Policies.

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