

THE STRATEGY OF INTEGRATION: BISMARCK VIS-À-VIS VALLABHBHAI

Sikata Panda

Associate Professor, Department of Political Science, G.M. University, Sambalpur, Odisha, India

Received: 19 Jun 2018

Accepted: 26 Jun 2018

Published: 12 Jul 2018

ABSTRACT

Vallabhbhai Patel in India is very often compared with Bismarck of Germany because of his role in the integration of India. At the outset, it seems that the leaders made similar efforts to create a strong nation-state. But a closer analysis of the internal and external developments of both the countries of their period reflects their different approaches. The attempt has been made to analyze the different 'contexts' in which they played decisive and distinct roles.

KEYWORDS: *Integration of India, Internal and External Developments, Different Approaches, Attempt*

INTRODUCTION

Concept of nation-state emerged after the Renaissance movement in Europe. Then, it referred to the consolidation of people with similar cultural background under a strong political set up. This perception spilled over to the Afro-Asian countries at the time of decolonization. A stable political system needs integration of people with similar orientation and historical legacy preferably on the basis of consensus. Resorting to force may be of temporary relief. In the long run, it leads to the rise of sub-nationalism and other bizarre consequences as happened in case of the erstwhile USSR, Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia. In this background, a comparative analysis has been done with regard to the techniques of integration of Bismarck and Vallabhbhai who played crucial roles to establish strong nation-states.

Research Objective

Over the years, India has faced successive invasions and several subversive challenges. While the nearby political systems such as China have resorted to force, Pakistan has very often succumbed to military coups and Afghanistan has reconciled itself as a failed state. India despite its social pluralities has managed to tackle the divisive forces. Hence, there is a need for understanding the process of nation-building activities in India which can be a role model for others. During the process, Germany is referred for the purpose of making the study more analytical.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The scope of the study is quite extensive as it intends to analyze the contexts of two political systems which have shaped minds of two distinct political leaders to develop different political techniques.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The work is basically a historical one. So, it is dependent upon secondary sources mostly. No doubt, the attempt has been made to go into the primary source in case of Vallabhbhai who revealed many of his ideas through correspondences and constitutional debates. Important works of V.P. Menon, V. Shankar and Rajmohan Gandhi, etc. have

been referred to extensively. These authors in course of describing his biography and partition process provide some light on the integration process. V.P. Menon's work on a merger of princely states is no doubt extensive but it is confined to India only. Though P.N. Chopra in his book 'The Sardar of India' and B. Krishna in 'Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel: India's Iron Man' referred Vallabhbhai as Bismarck of India, yet they did not give the reasons.

Bismarck

Bismarck, the first Chancellor of Germany is remembered for his contribution to integrate Germany and to establish it as one of the most powerful and industrialized nations of Europe through his 'realpolitik' technique based on aggression and sheer pragmatism.

Bismarck came to the mainstream when Germany was passing through a turbulent phase. Though, Renaissance in Europe initiated nationalistic urge in various parts, yet it became prominent in Germany following the Napoleonic war in the early nineteenth century. Then, it comprised of five hundred states that emerged after the dissolution of the Holy Roman Empire. In view of the common experience gained during the French Revolutionary wars, Napoleonic onslaughts and European liberalism, these German states came together to develop the Frankfurt constitution with a Monarch as its head. It was during the time of King Wilhelm I of Prussia, Bismarck became the Prime Minister. He continued until the country became united and was made the Chancellor. From the very beginning, he had a futuristic vision of integrating the people of German culture by keeping Prussia at the center. He announced the 'Blood and Iron' policy to realize his dream expeditiously. During his time, tax collection was hiked to meet the requirement of military expenditure. He made strategies to have three successive wars such as the Danish War (1862), Austro - Prussian war (1866) and Franco-Prussian war (1870). He followed both carrot and stick policy to snatch the German-speaking territories from Denmark and France on the one hand and pressurized Austria to remain an ally of Germany to counter other European powers on the other. His politics of 'realpolitik' led to the formation of Triple Alliance with Austria, Italy and Hungary. It changed the power equations in Europe resulting in the formation of Triple Entente comprising of England, France and Russia. This expansionist agenda of Bismarck set the stage for the Ist World War. He was a pioneer of 'Weltpolitik'. It shaped the imperialistic design of the foreign policy of Germany.

Nationalistic urge of Bismarck motivated him to follow a repressive policy at the domestic front. It catapulted the country into one of the most prosperous industrialized nations. He was highly apprehensive of the Catholic community which under the leadership of the Pope expressed anti-Prussian gesture during the Austro - Prussian and Franco - Prussian wars. He was dead against forces of socialism, secularism and democracy. As most of the Catholics happened to be Polish, Bismarck throughout his life pursued an anti-Polish policy. He played a key role to sideline the Catholic community and its Centre Party during the 'kulturkampf' (power struggle between emerging democratic force and Roman Catholic Church) programme. It helped him initially to reduce the stature of the Center Party. The laws of the kulturkampf happened to be the harshest. Bismarck believed in excessive centralization to keep the divisive forces away. He tried to secularize people through the state-controlled education system. In the long run, it alienated him from both the Catholics and Protestants. He had scant faith in both liberal and socialist values as he believed both of them to be antithetical to nationalism in one form or other. His pragmatism revolving around nation state put him poles apart from the Liberals, Socialist and Conservatives. He admitted 'In domestic affairs, I have lost the ground that is for me acceptable through the unpatriotic treason of the Conservative Party on the Catholic question'.¹ Thus at the end, despite his success to make Germany a powerful nation, Bismarck was left alone.

Vallabhbhai

The role of Vallabhbhai in integrating the five hundred odd princely states at the time of partition is not akin to that of Bismarck. The 'context' of Vallabhbhai was 'colonization', the presence of a powerful imperial authority which annexed two-third of the country by hook or crook. It controlled rest of the parts termed as princely states indirectly. It was not the enlightenment but the colonial administrative measures introduced for the British convenience and their suppressive policies giving birth to a sense of 'revivalism', initiated nationalistic upsurge in India. Hence, India was not a loose state like Germany which consisted of a number of federal units. The popular sentiment of the Indians was given vent by popular organizations like the Congress of which Vallabhbhai was a prominent member. The British remained in India for more than two hundred years and at the time of the Second World War, there was a realization that it was no longer possible on their part to keep India as a colony given the changing international equation and organization of freedom struggle within the country. So negotiations began in between the imperial authority and the political organizations such as the Congress and the Muslim League to get the support of Indians in the Second World War and to initiate constitutional dialogue for the smooth transfer of power.

The Cripps Mission (1942) and the Cabinet Missionc (1946) plans were the first two steps in this regard. Provisions were articulated regarding the interim transfer of power, a formation of a representative Constituent Assembly as far as possible and last but not the least about the fate of the princely states which were till now not annexed but governed by the British Parliament indirectly. Both the plans hinted at giving paramountcy to them, thereby providing opportunities for the disintegration of the country. As the dialogue came to a standstill due to lack of cooperation by the Muslim League the Mountbatten Plan was articulated giving the options to the princely states to join either with India or Pakistan on the basis of demographic composition and geographical contiguity. At this critical juncture, Vallabhbhai was chosen by the Congress Party to play a decisive role. His commitment towards the Nation-state was also revealed from his keen interest to provide stability through the process of integration. As one of the founding fathers of the Constitution of India, he was equally concerned about the creation of a united India. He realized its significance much before the independence and his apprehension was based on the British antagonistic policies aimed at the balkanization of India.

The emergence of India as a politico-territorial unit had a link with the existence of the native Princely State. From the beginning, the country witnessed multiple centers of power with varieties of cultural frameworks. Prior to the arrival of the British, the centralized Mughal dynasty had failed to unify them completely because of its one-man rule and lack of adequate administrative structure. Ironically, it was during the colonial period, the use of modern infrastructure, introduced for the benefit of the British trade, initiated the process to integrate the country. It was further strengthened by the policy of annexation, pursued by the East India Company in between 1765 to 1857. It changed the equation between the states and authority from a position of equality to that of superiority². The shifting of administration from the Company to the British Parliament found little change in the relationship because of the challenges of nationalist upsurge, economic advancement and the Ist World War. The Butler Committee (1928) reiterated the unequal relationship and argued that states in India were not sovereign as defined by the International Law. After the Second World War, the realization of leaving India, compelled the British authority to abandon its big brother attitude towards the Princely States. It provided them scope to balkanize the country at the time of the final departure. Hence, the Political Department which was then in charge of the Princely States, conveniently ignored the existing

provisions claim of the Congress party regarding the religious, cultural and economic affinities of the Princely States and advocated the logic of granting them paramountcy to recognize them as sovereign entities.

With this self-motivated changing stand of the Imperial power, it was not possible on the part of the Indian leadership to ignore the group clause in the proposal of the Cabinet Mission, intended if not for Pakistan directly, but for the obvious disintegration of the country. Of all the people, Vallabhbhai Patel because of his long intimate association with the Princes was in the most advantageous position to meet the challenge. He was in touch with the politics of the Princely States since 1927 with the formation of the States People's Conference. He was hesitant of any form of their direct involvement in the freedom struggle till the late 30's as it would have failed in the absence of active help of their rulers and adequate awareness of people living therein. It could hardly be denied that he was sympathetic towards the Princes as they were a humiliated lot under colonialism³. But, in the mid thirties, the rise of the Prajamandal Movements in the states motivated Vallabhbhai to change his earlier policy of the indirect involvement in the states into a direct one⁴. In the Tripuri Congress, he came forward with a plan accordingly. He emphatically declared: "The red and yellow colors on India's map have to be made one. Unless that is done, we cannot have Swaraj"⁵. The Rajkot Satyagraha (1939) reflected the changed mood, where Vallabhbhai on behalf of the Congress played a key role in bringing about an amicable settlement between the ruler and the ruled. He wanted to encash the rising political consciousness of the people and make them stand up against the British authority. With such political experiences, Vallabhbhai became the obvious choice for the Department of States, created at the time of independence to monitor the process of integration. Mountbatten, the last Governor General of India even went to the extent of advising him to get rid of other portfolios to take charge of the onerous responsibility. He advised him: "The one portfolio you must not give up is the states. For the princes have come to trust you in a quite remarkable way and so long as you have got V.P. Menon to carry out your policy so loyally, the Ministry of States will continue to be the mainstay of the Dominion"⁶. No doubt, in course of discharging his responsibilities, Vallabhbhai was challenged by the Princely States, particularly because of their demographic composition and economic viability. He observed that these states had been emboldened by the declaration of Atlee, the Prime Minister of England, regarding the withdrawal of the British power from India. He also encountered the defying mood of the ambitious Princes of Hyderabad, Bhopal, Travancore etc. who were encouraged by Jinnah and Cornard Corfield, the Secretary of the Political Department to form the 'third force'. They moved the Bombay Resolution in January 1947 on behalf of the Chamber of Princes to put terms and conditions for protecting their identities. But, Vallabhbhai relied upon his association with the princes and seized the opportunities to resolve the past conflict between the people and rulers to establish a united India. He had sensed the divisive strategy of the British much earlier. So he wanted the Home portfolio even at the cost of incurring the displeasure of many party members. It proved to be of great help in solving the complex and intricate problems of state integration⁷.

Vallabhbhai started wooing the princes since May 1947, though the Department of States was constituted formally two months later on. During the process, he followed different techniques to tackle the princes with their own unique problems. But, basically he relied upon the age-old policy of Chanakya, the architect of the Mauryan Empire which included Sama (persuasion), daam (money), danda (punishment) and bheda (division). Many also compared him with Bismarck the architect of modern United German⁸. The whole process of integration began at the time of independence, and virtually coincided with the formulation of the Constitution of India. It came to a close by the end of 1949. The arduous task was carried out in three stages of accession, reconstitution and centralization.

Policy of Accession

The formal process of integration started with the Cabinet Mission Plan, Vallabhbhai wanted all the 554 Princely States, to sign the twin documents of the Instrument of Accession and the Standstill Agreement in order to make them part of the Indian Union gradually. The much articulated, well-drafted proposals on the integration were prepared by Vallabhbhai with the help of V.P. Menon, the Secretary of the Department of States. It first demanded the states to surrender subjects like Defence, External Affairs and Communication to the Government of India under the Instrument of Accession with the assurance that it would lead to the Standstill Agreement simultaneously in between the Union and States by virtue of which the Princes would have status quo so far as the other earlier administrative and economic agreements were concerned. Vallabhbhai was reminded of the policy of 'Crown Paramountcy' of the erstwhile Viceroy Reading and Linlithgow, who advocated for surrendering the ultimate power to the British authority in the matter of Defence and Security. The twin documents were applied differently to suit the varying economic requirements and political scenarios of the states. The first 140 states, whose rulers had full powers, were simply asked to part with these three subjects in favor of the Union Government. The second category of 300 states situated mostly in Kathiawar, Orissa, Central Province etc., where the Crown used to exercise certain powers was asked to surrender all the residuary powers including the three original subjects. Lastly, the 70 odd states, which were bigger than the second category and smaller than the first one were instructed not to exercise powers higher than they had prior to 15th August 1947.

Vallabhbhai employed techniques like conciliation, persuasion, good offices, diplomacy from the position of strength and lastly force in order to convince the rulers to sign the agreements. Using these techniques, he evolved his own variants of these conventional techniques, mostly applied at the international level to suit the purpose of tackling the feudal Princely Rulers of India with due courtesy, minimum injury and maximum accommodation. Though, there was an element of coercion behind the process of negotiation, he tried to be persuasive as far as possible to invoke the least resentment.

Conciliation

In the absence of an independent fact-finding body, Vallabhbhai initially used the Department of States to accumulate information and formulate proposals required by the policy of integration. He wanted the Princes to have sufficient information and to take right decision regarding the merger. With the approval of the Cabinet Mission Plan, he made it clear to the rulers that though the plan permitted them to secede from India yet it would not be possible prior to the completion of the formulation of the Constitution for which joining into the Constituent Assembly by signing the Instrument of Accession had become mandatory⁹. His argument succeeded in motivating the Princes of Baroda, Bikaner, Cochin, Jaipur, Patiala and Rewa etc. to come forward to participate in the constitutional proceedings. It weakened the 'third force', constituted under the leadership of the Nawab of Bhopal and helped Vallabhbhai to tackle each individual ruler firmly. No doubt, Mountbatten's June 3rd Plan on partition replaced the original clause on the right to secede and allowed the rulers to have paramountcy even prior to the finalization of the Constitution, but Vallabhbhai apprised the rulers that it was hardly possible in reality. The acceptance of the status of twin dominions weakened the position of the states by preventing them to become independent members of the Commonwealth group of Nations and thereby compelling them to take side with either Dominion¹⁰. Here Vallabhbhai also reminded Sir Corfield, the Secretary of the Political Department the earlier stand of the Imperial authority which refused to recognize the status of Paramountcy of States. He referred to Viceroy Readings who was reported to have said, in 1926, "... the sovereignty to the British crown

is supreme in India, and therefore, no ruler of an Indian state can justifiably claim to negotiate with the British Government on equal footing”¹¹. The revelation exposed the dual standard adopted by the colonial power to balkanize India. Again, he appraised the rulers regarding the limitations of their demand on paramountcy which in the changed situation with the people¹².

Persuasion

Vallabhbhai also used his persuasive skill to convince the rulers in favor of the merger. His command over facts sharpened this trait, which he had been nurturing since the beginning of his legal career. His long association with the states convinced him about the equality of status between the British India provinces and the Princely States for having the same culture and character. He tried to invoke the sense of patriotism of the rulers to persuade them to remain within the Indian Union. He reminded them of their past follies which had invited many invaders to exploit India and appealed them not to get trapped again by the lure of Paramountcy. He urged: “we are at a momentous stage in the history of India... I hope that the Indian states will bear in mind that alternative to cooperation in the general interest is anarchy and chaos, which will overwhelm great and small in a common ruin, if we are unable to get together minimum of common tasks”¹³. He assured them of the least interference in their internal matter on behalf of the Government of India. He categorically told them, “They (the Congress) are no enemies of the princely order, but, on the other hand, they wish them and the people under their aegis all prosperity, contentment and happiness. Nor would it be my policy to conduct the relations of the new department with the states in any manner which savors of the domination of one over the other, if there would be any domination it would be that of our mutual interests and welfare”¹⁴. He also tried to placate the Princes by giving them a definite role in the making of the Constitution in order to be recognized as contributors of peace. While negotiating, he appealed to them to make the Nation proud by utilizing their bravery and intelligence in the army and various diplomatic assignments¹⁵.

Good Offices

In course of his negotiations with the rulers, Vallabhbhai skillfully used the good offices of many influential people. It was quite easy on his part to use this strategy as he was known for his ability to choose the right man for right work in the right situation¹⁶. He decided to utilize the services of Jam Saheb, the ruler of Nawanagar and his brother and Queen for the integration of the states of Kathiawar and the formation of the Saurashtra Union. He was also helped by the initiative of Rajkumari Amrit Kaur for the accession of Indore, Patiala and Baroda. He did not forget to encash the patriotic feelings of the state Diwans such as V.T. Krishnamachari (Jaipur), B.L. Mitter (Baroda), K.M. Panikkar (Bikaner), M.A. Srinivasan (Gwalior) etc. He acknowledged that these people had “worked like Tarjans in the great cause of bringing the two sides together and averting the dreaded balkanization of India”¹⁷. Last but not the least Vallabhbhai also took advantage of his good rapport with Mountbatten the Viceroy of India. As the Crown’s Representative Mountbatten was indispensable for the process of integration. He was the only official link between the rulers and the Government of India. He played a decisive role in the weakening of the Karachi-Jodhpur-Bhopal axis, nurtured by Jinnah in connivance with Bhopal to disintegrate India. Mountbatten apprised the reality to the ruler of Bhopal. He wrote: “I pointed out to His Highness that no amount of friendship would enable me to protect either himself or his state or the new ruler of the state, if the Future Government of India thought that he was acting in a manner hostile to the Government by trying to induce an all Hindu state to join Pakistan”¹⁸. He also pressurized the young ruler of Jodhpur to honor his father’s decision to accede to India¹⁹. It gave a rude shock to the ruler and made the task of Vallabhbhai easier. Bhopal which was earlier weakened

for parting ways with Bikaner, became isolated further due to the weaning away of Jodhpur and decided to go in favor of the Union of India. Fall of Bhopal led to the merger of Indore, one of its closest ally whose leader was given a “dressing down of painful severity” by Mountbatten²⁰. He tried to motivate the Nizam of Hyderabad to sign the Standstill Agreement. While paying tribute to his decisive role, Vallabhbhai acknowledged: “... it is as such that I am bold to say that when the history of the six months of your Viceroyalty comes to be written, it cannot but accord you the major share of the credit for the manner in which the manifold difficult tasks have been accomplished”²¹.

Diplomacy from the Position of Strength

Vallabhbhai as the Minister of States and Home used his position skillfully to convince many ambitious Princes. He warned the Princes who were adopting dilatory tactics and unduly delaying the integration process which was needed to be over by the 15th of August 1947. He did not mind warning the young ruler of Jodhpur, the son of one of his friends, about intervention. It subdued the ruler, who was already weakened by the joining of Udaipur and Jaisalmer in the Constituent Assembly. Vallabhbhai also cautioned the ruler of Baroda for the latter’s indecisiveness even after joining the Constituent Assembly. He warned the ruler of Bhopal about his association with divisive forces even after the merger²². Thus, by the stipulated day of independence, almost all the states except Hyderabad, Kashmir and Junagarh had acceded into the Indian Union under the guidance of the Department of States.

Force

The recalcitrant attitude of a few states compelled Vallabhbhai to take drastic action against them. The non-adherence of the Instrument of Accession by the states like Junagarh, Kashmir and Hyderabad on different grounds challenged the authority of the Government of India. The sudden and surreptitious accession of Junagarh into Pakistan, coinciding with the time of the partition of the country, had a lot of ramifications. It not only violated the norms of cultural affinity, economic prospect and demographic composition, but also adversely affected the ongoing negotiations with Hyderabad and Kashmir and undermined the legitimacy of the Government of India. Junagarh’s forcible annexation of two of its erstwhile feudatories such as Babariawad and Mangrol which had already consented to go with India, violated all international norms. Vallabhbhai apprehended a threat from the decision of Junagarh. He believed it had the potential of spreading communal tension and disintegrating the whole Kathiawar region and affecting the prospect of formation of a confederation under the leadership of Jam Saheb of Nawanager. At this hour, Mountbatten’s recognition of accession of Junagarh to Pakistan and suggestion to refer India’s claim over Babariawad and Mangrol to the United Nations for an independent arbitration complicated the situation further. Besides, Junagarh, the claim of independent status by Hyderabad was also against the basic principles of geographic contiguity and cultural homogeneity as adopted for the process of integration. It was situated at the belly of India, with a sizeable Hindu population and a rich reserve of natural resources. Vallabhbhai anticipated fissiparous tendencies from the decision of Nizam to form the ‘Third Dominion’. In fact, the idea had been articulated in the form of a demand for internal sovereignty since 1925, but it was rejected by the British. It started surfacing again during the unfolding of the constitutional development, with due support from the Political Department of the outgoing authority. Hence, the Nizam dared to violate the spirit of the Standstill Agreement, signed between Hyderabad and the Government of India as the first step towards accession. The defiance was further revealed as he influenced the minor ruler of Bastar to mortgage its mineral resources, extended financial help to Pakistan, banned Indian currency and the export of precious stones from the state, employed Lalik Ali a Muslim League member as his

Dewan, made an arms deal with the Birmingham Small Arms Company, attempted to buy Goa from the Government of Portugal and encouraged the Razakars of the Ittehad-ul-Mussalman to spread communal violence in the state. The British authority, which recognized Hyderabad as one of its 'trusted ally', for its role in the Ist World War, complicated the situation further. It chose delaying tactics as a way of helping the Nizam. The Nizam also wanted the same thing as it suited his interests. It was evident from the observation of Walter Mockton, the Constitutional Advisor to the Nizam who was trying to take advantage of the keen interest of Mountbatten and Nehru to solve the problem amicably. While Mountbatten was eager to create a lasting image for himself before his departure, Nehru was worried about the fate of the Muslim in Hyderabad. Mockton acknowledged, "I wanted the negotiation to continue for Hyderabad as long as possible after 15th August ... the longer they continue, the better for us We have a breathing space to get ready for the economic and political conflict if it comes... I know that Patel was and is against any extension of time to Hyderabad and that the Governor General prevailed over the Cabinet of the Dominion to allow him personally two months time to see whether he and I, who had known each other intimately for many years publicly and privately could find a compromise satisfactory to both sides"²³. Initially, Vallabhbhai was not much inclined for the integration of Kashmir into India. He never approved of its aspiration for independence articulated first in 1942 and then expressed in a fullfledged manner in 1946 through the "Quit Kashmir Movement". In fact, he had no objection to the accession of Kashmir into Pakistan because of its demographic composition and its lack of direct link with India. He was quoted to have said, "If the ruler felt that his and his state's interest lay in accession to Pakistan, he could not stand in his way"²⁴. However, the linking of Jammu with the rest of India due to the division of Gurdaspur by the Radcliffe Commission changed the geographic scenario. Later the tacit support of Pakistan given for the Junagarh accession and the tribal aggression in Kashmir made him realize the strategic importance of the area²⁵.

Thus, Vallabhbhai was forced to take drastic action to foil the plan of annexation of the Babariawad and Mangrol by Junagarh, to prevent communal tension in Hyderabad and to counter the tribal aggression in Kashmir. Even, while using force he tried his best to keep it at the minimum level. In case of Junagarh, he first imposed an economic blockade and then deployed the regional force under the supervision of the Kathiawar Defence Force, that too only in the nearby Babariawad and Mangrol area to prevent undue resistance. In Hyderabad prior to the Army operation, he tried for around one year to resolve the issue through negotiation. He argued, "But, consistent with the policy to secure agreement, not by coercion, but so far as possible with the minimum degree of goodwill on both sides and with due regard to the overall position, we felt that an agreement of this nature, even for a limited period, would have considerable advantages, in the absence of any agreement what so ever"²⁶. Accordingly, he first allowed the Nizam of Hyderabad two months of time for negotiation, and then under the supervision of Mountbatten, he persuaded the state to sign the Standstill Agreement, without going through any formalities and lastly agreed with the outgoing Governor General to give more privileges to the province which were not given to others. But the support of the Razakars and the Political Department made Nizam intransigent. Vallabhbhai encashed skillfully the departure of Mountbatten and death of Jinnah in Pakistan and convinced his Cabinet colleagues to agree to an army operation in Hyderabad. In contrast to Hyderabad and Junagarh the provocation in Kashmir was more blatant. The tribal aggression which could have affected the sovereignty of India motivated Vallabhbhai to convince the Government to take immediate measures in the province in terms of ensuring the supply of adequate military assistance, protecting the life of the ruler and by taking the initiative to connect it with rest of India by road. But prior to it, he had ensured the accession of Raja Hari Singh into India in lieu of Indian guarantee of security to the valley. All these concrete steps, no doubt stalled the inward march of the enemy and initiated the democratization process in the

state, but could hardly bring the permanent solution as in case of Junagarh and Hyderabad. The emotional obsession of Nehru for Kashmir, ambition of the National Conference leader Sheikh Abdullah and the anxieties of Mountbatten to avoid an open clash between India and Pakistan at the time of the British withdrawal were not conducive to find an early resolution to the Kashmir problem. A Kashmir Pandit by birth, Nehru was strongly attached to Kashmir and wanted a lasting solution for the Province. In this context he took certain initiatives like shifting of Jammu and Kashmir from the Ministry of States to the Ministry of External Affairs, placing Kashmir under Gopalaswamy Ayyangar, Minister without Portfolio, beginning a democratization process in the state by sending the Raja in to exile, recognizing Sheikh Abdullah as the Prime Minister of Kashmir and ensuring a special status for the state in the Constitution of India. But all these measures not only fuelled the aspiration of the regional leader and made him bold enough to declare about an 'independent Kashmir'²⁷. Mountbatten's success in influencing Nehru to refer the matter to the United Nation further complicated the situation as it led to a hasty ceasefire. It was admitted by General S.P.P. Throat the Officer heading the Indian Army in Kashmir, "Our forces might have succeeded in evicting the invaders, if the Prime Minister had not held them in check and later ordered the cease-fire.... Obviously, great pressure must have been brought to bear on him by the Governor General..."²⁸. Looking at all these constraints Vallabhbhai confided: "If Jawaharlal and Gopal Swamy Ayyanger had not made Kashmir their close reserve separating it from my portfolio of Home and states, I would have tackled the problem as purposefully as I had done in Hyderabad"²⁹.

- **Policy of Reconstitution**

After securing the accession of almost all the states by 15th August 1947, Vallabhbhai entered into the second stage of the integration. His aim was to bring administrative uniformity as it was by accident that some parts were in British India and others were in the Princely States. He was also very much keen to counter the restive Prajamandal Movements in various backward states, launched to have progressive reforms as in case of the states like Mysore, Travancore, Cochin etc. He was also cautious about the inability of the small states to exploit the rich reserve of natural resources necessary for the development of the country. Hence, he offered two different schemes both for the small and big Princely States for their reorganization. He approached first the smaller states to avoid undue resistance and urged them to merge themselves in the nearby provinces where the sound administrative system was already in existence. Earlier number of similar principles had been applied elsewhere. Those were the schemes of the East India Company applied in India in between 1774 to 1815, the recommendation of the Simon Commission (1930), the Attachment Scheme of Linlithgow (1943) and the Godbhole Plan of the Diwan of Poona. But for bigger units like the conglomeration of states as existed in Kathiawar and Rajputana, he suggested them to form the independent union instead of a simple merger. Last but not the least, he intended to create some centrally administered territories to fulfill the strategic requirement of the country. Thus, keeping an eye on economic upliftment, strategic consideration, national unity, cultural homogeneity, administrative viability, and the process of democratization, Vallabhbhai managed to merge 219 states, involving a total area of 84,774 square miles and a population of 120.18 lakhs with adjacent provinces Orissa, the Central Province, Bihar, Madras, East Punjab and Bombay. This was followed by consolidation of 22 states, into units like Himachal Pradesh and Kutch, covering a total area of 19,061 square miles with a population of 14.37 lakhs. Then came territorial integration of 294 states to create new viable unions of Saurashtra, Matsya Union, Vindhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Madhya Bharata and the Patiala and East Punjab states union, involving a total area of 1500 square miles and a population of 277.64 lakhs. Finally, the creation of still larger unions like Kathiawar, Cochin-Travancore Union and Greater Rajasthan completed the process

and eliminated the threat of assertion by the Princes in any form. Vallabhbhai was influenced by the Godbole plan and suggestion of the Political Department and introduced the scheme of 'Privy Purse' for the princes in the second stage of integration. It was to be charged from the exchequers of the center and states to bring the princes into the fold of Indian union peacefully. He argued, "It is better to secure one rupee from the rulers without a fight; if it could be availed then fight to get a whole rupee. But the people should take care to see that half rupee coin given to the subject is a sound coin, not a counterfeit"³⁰.

Policy of Centralization

Vallabhbhai was aware of the centralizing tendency in most countries and harped upon it in the third stage of the integration process³¹. The formation of the big federal unions and centrally administered territories were part of such strategy for consolidation. To pursue the plan further, he made a sincere attempt to bring the states at par with the provinces and devised a common framework of governance through the Constitution of India. He put some states in Part I and some other in Part-II because of the differences in their administrative development. He incorporated the provision of emergency in it as a 'safety valve' to cope with the challenges in a transition period³². He envisaged a 'recombination plan' to make the civil servants more competent particularly in the less developed states. He felt the necessity of an integrated armed service for the protection of the country in general. The armed Central Reserve Police Force was created to root out indiscipline appearing during the process of integration. The Indian States Finance Inquiry Committee was constituted for the proper financial integration which first involved the functional partition of the composite state governments and then the merger of the partitioned federal portions with the Government of India. During the process, he was very much keen to ensure equality in the treatment of states especially in the sharing of divisible federal taxes, grants-in-aid, subsidies and dues of Privy Purse.

Thus, within the shortest possible time, Vallabhbhai managed to foil the balkanization plan of the British authority with the least reliance upon force and integrated the whole country into one Union.

Comparison

Bismarck is sometimes compared with Vallabhbhai. But a detail analysis reflects their different approaches towards integration of states³³. Bismarck tried to unify a loose federation which came together under the banner of the Frankfurt constitution. As part of German-speaking population was staying in France, Austria and Denmark, he resorted to 'force' to snatch the provinces and to build a unitary state. He had a plan underneath to develop a Prussia centric state which was not palatable to many units of Germany. His 'Iron and blood' policy showed his obsessive nationalistic instinct. During the *kulturrekampf*, he was instrumental in having harsh measures towards minorities like the Polish. It was reflective of Nazism which was pursued by Hitler to exterminate the Jews. The secularization process introduced by him made the state extremely powerful leaving no private space for the individual. All these measures alienated him from the liberal, socialist and conservative forces of Germany. His *weltpolitik* politics changed the power equation in Europe and led to the First World War.

Vallabhbhai's task was less arduous than Bismarck as the unification of India had already been on the anvil due to the positive role played by the social reform organizations, revivalists and the centrist political organizations like the Congress. The most popular political outfit called the Congress reflected varied shades such as the moderates, extremists, radical, agitational and the constitutional thinking to unify the country. Over and above the British administrative measures

are taken to keep India as a colony provided indirect support to it. What Vallabhbhai contributed was to nullify the British divisive strategies. He did it decisively by convincing the Congress to accept the Cabinet Mission Plan immediately to be in the center stage of negotiation and motivating the princely states to join with India. He appeared to be an agitationalist for his role in Kheda and Bordoli agitations during the freedom struggle. But, he was picked up by Gandhi to organize people for his access into the grassroots equation³⁴. He was a staunch Patidar who is known for his conservative mindset³⁵. It was proved when he decided to jump into the electoral politics to encash the constitutional opportunity introduced by the 1935 Act. He was a key figure of the Congress who negotiated with the British for the smooth transfer of power amidst the ongoing communal violence.

As a Patidar, Vallabhbhai was truly liberal and highly conservative. He was very possessive of right to life and right to property. It was reflected from his deliberations made in the Constituent Assembly while drafting the Constitution of India. It was also proved from his effort to compensate Zamindars for land reforms. His pragmatism was different from Bismarck. He never changed his perceptions in quick successions. Bismarck sided with the Liberals to make *kulturrekampf* successful and supported the Center Party led by the Protestants to impose the tariff for penalizing the liberals. At the end, it left the leader isolated. Vallabhbhai's faith in 'middle path' enabled him to be picked up by the Congress to lead the Department of States to convince the princes for coming into the fold of Indian union. He used peaceful techniques like persuasion and good offices of prominent personalities to convince the princes. There was sparing use of 'force' only in case of Kashmir and Hyderabad. It was resorted to in Hyderabad as the ruler of the state in violation of the principles of Mountbatten Plan was keeping liaison with the Pakistan authorities and in Kashmir to protect the country from the invasion of 1948. Vallabhbhai was instrumental in bringing 'Privy Purse' under Article 249 of the constitution. It was a master stroke as it helped in quick merger of the princely states. Unlike Bismarck, he had the least faith in the expansion. In the initial phase, he was not keen to have Jammu and Kashmir for its contiguity with Pakistan and demographic composition³⁶. The tribal invasion of 1948 had changed the scenario. It compelled the ruler of the state to flee to India to seek protection. It motivated the Indian leadership to take drastic action. Vallabhbhai was also skeptical about China when it annexed Tibet. He had warned Nehru about the imperialistic policy of China which later period to be true³⁷.

Like Bismarck, Vallabhbhai was not in favor of massive industrialization to be done at the cost of agriculture. As a typical Patidar, he suggested for gradual land reform and asked for a gradual nationalization of industries which would protect all sections of the society. As Bismarck gave preference to the Polish community over the Germans, Vallabhbhai had never shown such partiality. He had banned communal organizations across the religion at the time of partition and assassination of Gandhi. He argued, "ours is a secular state. We cannot fashion our policies or shape and conduct in the way Pakistan does"³⁸. It was this balanced approach visualized by him towards the building of the nation-state helped the country to a large extent to remain resolute. Unlike the erstwhile USSR, which succumbed before the pressure of 'Glasnost' and 'Perestroika,' India continued to be firm even after the threat of many divisive forces and the process of globalization and liberalization. Much after his death, the great critique of Vallabhbhai and socialist leader Ashoka Meheta said, "Looking back perhaps in those very difficult years, in 1946-47-48 he had a case. It was a question of India surviving or not surviving I think we did not at least I failed to think that fact into account"³⁹. Thus, Vallabhbhai was not deserted like Bismarck. History of India remembers him as a great nationalist and pioneer of modern India.

REFERENCES

1. *German Foreign Policy, 1870-90, Encyclopedia Britannica.*
2. *Sir William Lee Warner, The Native States of India (London: Macmillan, 1960, p.31).*
3. *Navajivan, 7 April, 1929.*
4. *In the late thirties many Princely states in India witnessed the Prajamandal Movements which were launched by the local leaders against the atrocious rulers and feudal lords.*
5. *Gujarat Samachar, 2 October, 1934.*
6. *G.M. Nandurkar (ed.), Sardar's Letters Mostly Unknown, Vol. II (Ahmedabad: Navajivan, 1977).*
7. *Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, India Wins Freedom (New Delhi: Orient Longman, 1959, p.178).*
8. *Dr. Zakir Hussain, The Statesman, 1 November, 1968.*
9. *Durgadas, Sardar Patel's Correspondence, Vol. V (Ahmedabad: Navajivan, 1971, pp.242-3).*
10. *B. Krishna, Sardar Patel: India's Iron Man (N. Delhi: Indus, 1945, p.321).*
11. *Government of India, File of Political Department, No.12, Political (Secret), 1924-6, No.1-49, pp.7-9.*
12. *G.M. Nandurkar (ed.), Sardar Patel: in Tune with the Millions, Vol. I (Ahmedabad: 1970, p.57).*
13. *P.N. Chopra, The Collected Works of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Vol. XII, Op. cit., p.121.*
14. *B. Krishna, Sardar Patel: India's Iron Man, Op. cit., pp.322-3.*
15. *P.N. Chopra, The Collected Works of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Vol. XII, Op. cit., p.43.*
16. *John Wood, the Political Integration of British and Princely Gujarat: the Historical Political Variable in Indian States Politics, (New York: Columbia, 1971, p.243).*
17. *D.R. Manekar, Accession to Extinction (N. Delhi: Vikash Publishers, 1974, p.115).*
18. *Durgadas, Sardar Patel's Correspondence, Vol. V, Op. cit., pp.515-6.*
19. *B. Krishna, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel: India's Iron Man, Op. cit., p.339.*
20. *Ibid., p.352.*
21. *Vallabhbhai Patel to Mountbatten, 10 August 1947, Patel Papers, Navajivan, Ahmedabad.*
22. *B. Krishna, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel: India's Iron Man, Op. cit., p.352.*
23. *Durgadas, Sardar Patel's Correspondence. Vol.VII, Op. cit., pp.426-7.*
24. *V. Shankar, My Reminiscence of Sardar Patel, Vol. I (N. Delhi: Macmillan, 1974, p.127.)*
25. *The Round Table Quarterly, Review of the British House of Commonwealth Affairs, December, 1948, pp.9-14, White Paper on Jammu and Kashmir, Government of India, March, 1948, p.9.*
26. *Meher Chand Mahajan, Bhavan's Journal, 5 December, 1965, p.29.*

27. *White Paper on Hyderabad*, Government of India Publication, N. Delhi, 1948, p.48.
28. Durgadas, *Sardar Patel's Correspondence*, Vol. I, *Op. cit.*, p.263.
29. S.P.P. Throat, M.B. Krishna, *Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel: India's Iron Man*, *Op. cit.*, p.397.
30. H.V. Kamath, "Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel: Some Memoirs", *Bhavan's Journal*, 16 January, 1982, p.63.
31. *The Hindustan Times*, 20 April, 1939
32. *The Hindustan Times*, 26 January, 1949
33. *The Constituent Assembly Debates*, 12 October 1949.
34. Chpora P.N., *The Sardar of India*, (New Delhi: ALLFED PUBLISHERS, 1955, P48.)
35. Krishna B., *Sardar Patel: India's Iron Man*, *Op. Cit* PP432-42
36. Hardiman David, *Peasant Nationalists of Gujarat: Kheda Districts, 1917 -34* (New Delhi: Oxford University, 1981, PP 128.)
37. *Ibid*, PP – 43
38. Shankar, V. *My Reminiscence of Sardar Patel*, Vol. I, New Delhi: Macmillan, 1974, PP - 127
39. Gandhi Rajmohan, *A Life, Anedahal*, Narajivan Publishing House, 1991, Pp – 511 - 12
40. Chandra Bipan, *Essoays in Indian Nationalism*, New Delhi: Har Anand Pvt. Ltd,1999, PP 202
41. Gandhi Rajmohon, *op.cit* P-49

