CHAPTER-VII
THE INDIAN STATES AND SARDAR PATEL

Background: The dawn on India’s freedom was full of political and socio-economic complexities. The leaders of the country found themselves in an atmosphere surcharged with multifarious and divergent criticalities. These had, if not solved quickly, would have led to further complications. Vexed with various problems of varied dimensions, the leaders had to find out ways and means to face the reality of the situation and arrive at a solution beneficial to the country.

The problems of minorities, though at the first instance seemed of minor nature, came out to be crucial. And, Sardar Patel with his extraordinary caliber, wisdom and capacity, could arrive at an acceptable solution to restore confidence in them; thereby leading them towards the common goal of national solidarity. Simultaneously, a more crucial problem arose due to the British policy towards more than five hundred and odd Princely States, their exact position after the departure of the British was not clearly defined.

The immediate fallout of the freedom of the country was the creation of two distinct nations, namely, India and Pakistan. The native princes were allowed to join either of the two proposed countries according to their choice. A country, invested with such a large number of Free states, could not have dreamt of political consolidation in such an environment. It was quite likely that those princes could have formed a third force and contributed towards its disintegration rather than its further consolidation. Faced with such a critical and complex situation, the mantle of finding out a solution with a view to avoid the disintegration the Congress party had cultivated political awakening and
democratic thinking in the minds of individuals of all sections of the society of the country fell upon Sardar Patel. Sardar’s Patel task was to create political consciousness in the minds of the people of those states and simultaneously to persuade their princes to merge with the union of India so as to form a strong united India after the departure of the British. By tactful method, by promising privy purses, through his friendly advice, and sometimes by stern and strong administrative measures, he could succeed in bringing all the rulers together merging their states into the Indian union without any bloodshed. The final task of nation building thus found its success in the competent and strong hands of Sardar Patel.

THE INDIAN STATES: India is a land of diversities linguistic, ethnic, cultural, and religious as well as many others. This has led to the formation of a large number of small states. As observed by Gurmukh Nihal Singh: “Nature has made India a more or less self-sufficient unit, but historical accidents have divided her into a large number of separate political entities”.

Even in the earlier stages of civilization there had never been an occasion when the whole country had completely been under a single government. The political integration of the country was never possible. Moreover, the concept of a nation also did not exist. India, instead of being a nation, was divided into a number of small states. These were having a separate entity of their fighting among themselves all the time. Political unity among these states was thus non existent. However, they were able to defend themselves against external aggressions either singularly or collectively. The rulers of these states used to look after the welfare of their subjects; they had managed to establish a kind of brotherhood among the people. There was no party system and the states

were governed by the kind who supposedly gained legitimacy through heredity as an accepted head. Democratic institutions were non-existent in these small states. Attempts were, however, made by some rulers to consolidate the country into one unit. Rulers like Ashoka of the Mayura dynasty, Chandra Gupta of the Gupt a dynasty, Harshavardhan of the northern India had made attempts in this direction but their success was not remarkable.\(^2\)

The problem of the Indian states assumed a more serious dimension particularly during the British rule. The states which existed during the earlier period, assumed a different status under the colonial government. The beginning of the British domination in India was, basically, through a series of treaties with the various rulers of the country from time to time. Even after deploying the armed forces, the British Government was not fully successful in extending its control to the entire country; it had to enter into treaties with powerful native kings. At the beginning of the British rule, the various native states could not come together for the purpose of political freedom. To start with, the East India Company, which was a trading company, entered into treaties with the native rulers from 1757 up to Lord Minto’s Governor-Generalship in 1813. The company wanted a footing in India. At the time of Wellesley, it was decided that the British should take up permanently political power in India; also the princes should be allowed to retain their personal insignia of sovereignty by surrendering their political independence. This was maintained by the British rulers in subsequent period. The new policy was formulated by Metcalfe who, in a letter written in 1816 stated:

“They said that some power in India had always existed, to which the peaceable states submitted and in return obtained protection against

the invasion of upstart chiefs and armies of lawless banditti; that the British Government now occupied the place of that protecting power and was the natural guardian of weak states…”

Till the breaking out of the First World War, nationalism in India did not grow to such an extent as to pose a threat to the British rule. There was no upsurge of mass consciousness for the establishment of a responsible Government in the country. The great war of 1914-1919 acted as a catalyst towards accelerating the temper of the Indian nationalism. The doctrine of paramountcy was a peculiar strategy evolved by the British for governing the relations with the states. As observed by Shankar.

“Paramountcy meant that the States accepted Suzerainty of the British government and the government of India, to carry out directions given to them by the Government of India. It was convenient to the British government to refuse to define paramountcy”.

Paramountcy was a special system concerning the relationship of the states with the British government. The states had to cooperate with the government on matters of all-India policies in respect of railways, post and telegraphs, and defense. The crown representatives sometimes used to station an army, construct railways on a part of the states, and used to take the administrative control of the area. States had a series of agreements with the British government. In addition to that, the crown representative could seek military assistance from the government of India in case he found it necessary for the protection of the ruler from an

---


external aggression an internal revolt. The relation of the states with the paramount power was based on latter’s military strength and the states were the subordinate allies. The relationship between the states and the British crown thus remained as long as the British power existed in India. The position of the Indian states and their relation with the British Government were well-defined through various treaties and declarations by the British Government from time to time. As early as 1858, the proclamation of Queen Victoria stated:

“We hereby announce to the native princes of India that all treaties and engagements made with them by or under the authority of the Honourable East India Company are by us accepted and will be scrupulously maintained. We shall respect the Rights, Dignity and Honour of Native Princes as Our Own”.6

The same assurance was further confirmed by Lord Morley, then secretary of state for India on February 23, 1909.7 At a later date, during World War-I in 1914, King George V observed: “Paramount regard for treaties, faith and pledged word of ruler, and peoples is the common heritage of England and India”.8 The position of the states became very much critical at the time of the transfer of power in 1947. It was a question whether with the lapse of paramountcy, the states would attain complete freedom or not.

---

5 The crown representative even conveniently created a few battalions of police force of his own, called Crown representatives' police. The money required by him was taken from Government of India revenue. Shankar V., (ed.) *op.cit.*, p. 546.


7 Morley stated”…The noble promise in queen victoria’s proclamation of 1858-a promise of which every Englishman ought to be for ever proud if he tries to adhere to it and ashamed if he tries to betray or to mock it…” *Ibid.*, p. 166.

There were two possibilities with regard to the position of the states after the lapse of paramountcy. At the time of the withdrawal of the British power in India, one possibility was that the states might become completely free and independent sovereign states without having any control exerted over them by the two newly formed states of India and Pakistan. Such a possibility was very much dangerous since the result would have been that the country would be divided into a number of states which would not have sufficient resources of their own for their liabilities. Such a proposition would have led to the complete Balkanization of the country. The second and the most practical possibility was that with the withdrawal of the British power, the states would develop new relationship with either of the states-India or Pakistan, depending upon the geographical continuity and political situation prevalent. In order to maintain the unity of the country, such a solution was a must, but it was difficult to ascertain whether the Princes of the states, liked to surrender their power and join the newly formed states as federating units. If considered from the point of view of the individual gain, it was obvious that the second possibility might not be welcomed, but taking into consideration the overall interest of the country, the rulers might agree to sacrifice their personal interest and merge their states with the Indian union.

The steps towards more autonomy for India, after the Government of India Act, 1935, were the proposals made by Sir Stafford Cripps in 1942 when the Second World War was in full swing.\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}; also see Urmila Phadnis, \textit{Towards the Integration of Indian States, 1919-1947}, Bombay, 1968, see Chapter VIII.} The British Government assured independence to India after the end of world war provided India participated in the war in their favour. At the time of independence, the position of the native states was also defined in Cripps
Mission. The British Government desired that power should be handed over to the Indian leaders after framing a constitution and if the states desired so, they should also be allowed to take part in the constitution making. In case the states did not agree to accept the new constitution and wanted to retain their independent status, they could accede to the new Dominion at a later date. The treaty with the British Government for the Indian states would be revised to meet the changed circumstances, irrespective of whether the states would adhere to the constitution or not. In case the states decided to join the constitution-making body, they could send representatives proportionate to their population.\(^{10}\)

As regards the position of the states after the transfer of Power, Cripps observed, that would, however, be open to an adhering state to negotiate and make suitable arrangements on these matters in the new Union. Though the states expressed their desire to cooperate with the new union in framing a constitution, they however appealed that they should be permitted to form a Union with all non-acceding states.\(^{11}\)

The Cabinet Mission Plan of 16th May, 1946 gave a clear picture of the transfer of power and the position of the native states in the new set up of free India.

The future of the country depended much on the decision of the Princes regarding their participation in the new constitution and the merging of their princely states with the Indian Union. Thus the native

---

\(^{10}\) Cripps Mission of March, 1942 clearly stipulated:-
“(b) Provision shall be made, as set out below for the participation of the Indian states in the constitution making body”.
(c) His Majesty’s Government undertake to accept and implement forthwith the constitution so framed subject to-
(i) the right of any province of British India that is not prepared to accept the new constitution to retain its present constitutional position, provision being made for subsequent accession if it so decides”- V.P. Menon - *op.cit.*, pp. 565-566.

\(^{11}\) V.P. Menon - *op.cit.*, pp. 649-650.
states’ role in free India was very much important and unless those princes were properly guided towards integrity of the country, the very idea of building a united Indian nation would have been at stake.

**Congress Attitude Towards the States:** The Congress, in late nineteenth century, was just like a voluntary organization and the functions were three-fold:- (i) it acted as a social reformer and the same was preached by leaders like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Iswar Chandra; (ii) it tried to maintain the traditional values of the Indian society as enunciated by Dayanand Saraswati; and (iii) it acted as a political organization.

On political ground, its movement was confined to the British India only. In 1893, Dadabhai Naoroji, the President of the 9th session of the Indian National Congress, which was held in Lahore spoke about paramount power and the princes. He stated:

“Another subject of our future work to which I need only touch now is the relations of the government with the native states”.

The idea about the states developed in the 31st session of the Congress at Lucknow in 1916, when the then President A.C. Mazumdar referred to the native states with regard to intellectuals as he remarked that many brilliant persons had shown their excellence in the princely states. The congress did not want to interfere with the internal affairs of the princes though it had full sympathy for the princes with regard to their rights and privileges.

**Between 1920-1947:** The Congress attitude at a later stage had a shift from its earlier standpoint when it was realized by its leaders that for the purpose of integrity of the country, the status of the princely states needed

---

a thoughtful consideration. The 35th Congress session held at Nagpur in 1920 stated: “This Congress earnestly requested all the sovereign princes of India to establish full responsible governments in the states”. In spite of such a resolution, the Congress headed by Gandhi adopted a policy of non-interference in the internal affairs of the princely states. Once he stated:

“Full guarantee of their status to the Indian chiefs without any hindrance from Central Government subject to the right of asylum to the subjects of the states which not being offenders against the penal code, may seek in self governing India”.

The attitude of the Congress became further clear when Sarojini Naidu, the President of 40th Congress session held at Cawnpur (Kanpur) in 1925 clearly stated:

“What ever form your initial consideration may take, remember that one-third of India belongs to the great Indian chiefs and one of your initial duties is to evolve some policy of friendship, without interference with the Indian states and native chiefs of India, so that they, on their part, might come with great deal... And let not the princes believe for a moment that we want to crush them by any subtlety or device hidden or covert…”

The urge for the establishment of self government by the princes of the native states was voiced by Manilal Kothari in the 42nd session of

17 The Congress Presidential Address 1911-1934-GA Natesan & Co. 1934, Madras, p. 768.
Congress held at Madras in 1927. The idea of the Congress, on the eve of freedom, was pointed towards setting of representative government; in the states in the similar fashion as it wanted in British India. The over all idea of the Congress was to have a federal set up in the country and an honourable place for the princely states though the leaders did not like unlimited involvement in the internal affairs of the states. Gandhiji explained:

“…The Congress possesses no authority for enforcing its will in India states even to the extent it does in British India proper”.

**BRITISH ATTITUDE:** The British Government was trying to patronize the princes and the princes were also trying to exploit such a situation. The resolution of the Chamber of Princes of January 29, 1947 clearly proves how antagonistically it pursued the policy of secession when it expressed that any negotiation with the Constituent Assembly would not be binding on them, that they must be allowed to remain sovereign and be guaranteed safeguard regarding their position, and that their decision regarding joining the Constituent Assembly would rest on them alone. It was desired that the States could remain outside the Union and the British Government would not force the Princes to lose their identity.

The condition created during the period of partition was so critical that it needed a practical and intelligent handling to get the wheel turned towards the integration of the country without much difficulty and chaos.  

**Sardar’s Attitude towards the States before Independence:** From the beginning of his career as a political worker of Indian National Congress,

---

20 *Collected speeches of Prabhudas* Balubhai Patwari-Borad-cast on Sardar’s birth day p. 9. As Patwari stated “Their safety and their very survival would depend on British support and help of such friends as the league”…
he was a follower of Gandhiji. During his participation as a leader of the Congress party, his viewpoint was in accordance with the policy-formulation of the party. Sardar, a votary of Congress also agreed with the attitude of the Congress party, towards princely states, but he knew that the integration of the country and subsequent nation-building in India would be possible only through mass-participation with the Congress in the freedom movement.

Sardar’s attitude towards the states also took an appropriate turn with the change in the political atmosphere of the country. The 45th Congress session at Karachi in 1931, spelt out the feeling of the Congress about the affairs in the states. Sardar, the President of the Congress at Karachi, expressed indicated that the princes would not take all uncompromising attitude and join the proposed federation, and it would be possible to seek direct representation of the states’ people in the federal legislature.21

Sardar had a close association with the people of native states, especially in Gujarat. He was the President of Kathiwad Rajakiya Parishad, The Bhavnagar Praja Parishad and Baroda State Praja Mandal. Those organizations represented the people of the respective states, were formed with the perspective of looking after the welfare of the citizens. Sardar had full sympathy for the people of the states, and so he kept constant touch with the people’s organizations in other states, but he did not take a direct part in the movement of those states. His statement about the states clearly indicated: “In those days we were thinking that it was no use fighting with the princes because they themselves were not free agents under foreign rule”.22

---

22 V. Shankar (Ed), *op.cit.*, p. 549.
involvement in the affairs of the princely states, in the early stages of freedom struggle, was thus indirect.

In his speech in the general council of All India States People’s Conference in June, 1946, Patel advised the people of the states not to undertake any direct action. He realized that a barrier had been created by the British government and he could foresee at that stage that the situation as created by an unwise action by the States’ People’s Conference, would tend to be disastrous.

**At the Dawn of Independence:** Being convinced that the princely states should form a part of the overall Union of India, Sardar Patel 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”.23 He had a great hold on the masses. Especially, the people in Gujarat had great regard for him and considered him to be an excellent leader of the country. Sardar also tried his best to look after the welfare of the citizens of the states.

As per the clauses of the Cabinet Mission Plan of May 16th the states were to send 93 representatives to the Constituent Assembly and the states would be represented by a negotiating committee. A States’ Negotiating Committee had been set up in June, 1946, on the Advice of Sir Conrad Corfield, Viceroy’s Political Secretary responsible for Princely States. Sardar in his letter of 7th December, 1946 wrote to K.M. Munshi that though the States’ Negotiating Committee had been given the duties with regard to matters concerning the states, the Congress

---

should find out the method of election and in his opinion the Constituent Assembly should decide the method of the grouping of the states into a union and not the Chamber of Princes. Sardar, thus, realized that in order to counteract any evil design by the Princes, the Congress and the Constituent Assembly, should hold full powers. Accordingly, on December 21st, 1946, K.M. Munshi moved a resolution in the Constituent Assembly that there should be a committee to confer with the Negotiating Committee of the States regarding the distribution of 93 seats allocated to the States in the Constituent Assembly. The relevant resolution was passed and a committee of six including the Sardar was formed. Thus Sardar’s idea got a passage officially.

To negotiate with the various states, a new department called “States Department” was formed and Sardar Patel assumed its office on 5th July 1947. As early as December 7, 1946, Sardar, in his letter to K.M. Munshi, made it clear that the Constituent Assembly would have the real authority to decide about the grouping of the states.

Nehru always believed that the verdict of the people was supreme and there should not be any question of paramountcy and sovereign power. Independence would not depend on anybody’s declaration but on the acknowledgement of it by other parties. In his speech at the All-India Congress Committee on June 15th, 1947 at New Delhi, he stated:

“We will not recognize any independence for any state in India. Further any recognition of such independence by any foreign power. Whichever it may be and wherever it may be, will be considered an unfriendly act”.

Dr. Ambedkar, the key figure, in framing the Constitution of India, too wanted that the native states should merge with the Indian Union and the States should realize that they could not remain independent, having only geographical boundaries with India and by acting against the will of the people. He said:

“The only way by which the Indian states can free themselves from paramountcy is by bringing about a merger of sovereignty or suzerainty. This can happen only when the Indian states join the Indian union as constituent units….The states should realize that their existence as sovereign independent states will not be worth five years’ purchase…”27

After assuming office of the States Department, Sardar defined the policy of the Government of India with regard to the Princely states and persuaded them to accede to the Dominion of India on the subjects of Defense, Foreign Affairs and Communications. He assured the States that the policy of the government was to create harmony and to work for mutual interest. He pointed out that the Indian states should not forget that the only alternative to co-operation in the general interest was alike. He boldly indicated:

“…But for there can be no question that despite this separation a fundamental homogeneity of culture mutual interest would continue to govern us….The safety and preservation of these states, as well as of India demand unity and mutual cooperation between its different parts….By common endeavour we can raise the country to a new greatness while lack of unity will expose us to fresh calamities”28

**Sardar’ action:** Sardar did not like to have confrontation with the rulers unless otherwise compelled. The situation, prevailing at the time of independence, was extremely critical due to innumerable problems resulting out of positions which needed a careful handling to bring stability into the administration and the social conditions. In such circumstances, it was not desirable to have any additional problem as the situation would have gone completely out of control. Keeping in view the solidarity of the country and the overall aim of nation-building, Sardar felt that a tactful handling of the problems of princely states would be absolutely necessary to avoid the creation of an unknown third force and thus endangering the integration of the country in future. His approach towards the princes was a peaceful one, with friendly advice and psychological treatment, but he did not rule out confrontation as the last resort.

**Appeal to the Princes:** Sardar had close contacts with the princes. He explained that by acceding to the Indian Union the future of the country, and simultaneously the future of the princely states, would be brighter; even peace would return to the country. Sardar appealed to the princes for their good-will and for peaceful accession of their States to India. He tried to impress upon the princes that for the integrity of the country, the princes should co-operate with the Congress to form a United India. He said:

“...I have a few words to say to the Rulers of Indian states among whom I am happy to count many as my personal friends...Let not the future generation curse us for having had

---

29 Shriraj Dharngadhra in his article unification of India stated that when Sardar invited all States to unite with India for mutual benefit and relationship a magic effect was seen and it led to the accession of most of the states G.M. Nandurkar (Ed), *This was Sardar*, Vol. I, Navjivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad, 1974, p. 142.
the opportunity but having failed to turn it to our mutual advantage...”

He thus gave a personal touch to the problem of the princely states by considering the princes as his friends and was sure that his appeal would rouse patriotism in the minds of native rulers. His appeal had an electrifying effect on the princes as can be seen from the various encouraging letters he received from the rulers of the several states. Sardar, could, thus, inspire them by restoring confidence in them with a message that it would be good for them to join the Dominion of India. They realized that for their own security and prosperity as well as in the interest of the country, they should accede to the Indian union. This act of Sardar substantiated his contribution in the formation of a strong Indian nation with the support of a majority of the princely states. He could realize that that was the most opportune moment for the States to be brought into the Indian Union, in order to avoid the creation of a third force which would be disastrous for the country’s unity.

**Sardar’s Psychological Approach:** Sardar’s approach to the princes was multifarious in its composition. He knew that his appeal to the princes might not influence all the rulers. Some rulers, who would not respond to his appeal, would need a different but a stronger treatment. Accordingly, he approached them through a psychological way. He wanted to make the rulers aware of the consequences of not listening to his appeal, and for that purpose, he had to be shrewd. The other approach that he adopted in dealing with the princes was a strong warning and an ultimatum of dire

---


31 S.M. Zaidi for Pathari States of (C.I.) in his letter to Sardar dt. 9.7.47 wrote: “Your statement of 5th July, 1947 giving assurance to the princes is most appropriate and opportune. Alwarendra of Arow states in his telegram dt. 10th July, 1947 stated, “Your recent statement regarding the status is most welcome at this juncture…”
consequences for the defaulter. With an iron will and a strong hand, he persuaded the rulers to merge with India. When his appeal failed, Sardar did not hesitate to go to the extent of warning the princes with the worst consequences. He indicated that at the moment when the country was facing a heavy foreign onslaught, the princes must follow the line of thinking of the government and the citizens of the respective states. He even pointed out that he would not hesitate even in taking strong measures with military contingence. His psychological approach towards the princes paved the way for merger of the princely states.

**Sardar’s Friendly Approach:** On some occasions, Sardar played a friendly role with the princes. He considered them as his own friends and tried to make them realize the consequence of the non-accession of their states to the Indian Union. In his friendly advice to the rulers, Sardar clearly explained to them the steps necessary for the establishment of a United India. He said:

“The real question which comes in the way of establishment of cordial relations between the states and their people is the reluctance on the part of most of the states to recognize the fundamental rights, people’s natural demand for responsible government”.

Sardar clearly realized the drawback on the part of the governments of the states. So he advised them to establish responsible governments in their respective states. His advice to the rulers was a very friendly one. His analysis of the situation was so lucid and appealing to them that a number

---

32 “Life and work of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel”-A Lecturer delivered by Jagjivan Ram on November 13, 1977. (S.P. University)


34 V. Sankar, *op.cit.*, Sardar’s letter dt. 24-7-1946 to Ruler of Bikaner, p. 572.
of princes immediately responded to his friendly call and ultimately merged with the Indian Union.

In spite of his strong action and warning, Sardar behaved most sympathetically and realistically with the rulers. He persuaded the rulers to accede to the Indian Union and convinced them that there was no other alternative to accession. He also created popular opinion among the citizens of the native states, regarding the idea of merging with India. Through persuasion and strong warning he could do the impossible. It was something that nobody could imagine. It was really remarkable that he could win the hearts of the rulers and sail through a rough sea to bring about this bloodless revolution. It was his personal touch which had helped in that respect.\textsuperscript{35}

Sardar Patel showed skill in his quick action to accelerate the process of integration. He knew fully well that any delay in the matter would be disastrous. He wanted to nip in the bud the anti-Indian activities of some of the states. He gained the confidence of the princes, who believed that he was their real friend and that he would be fair to them. It was his patriotic call and his spirit of nationalism that could make deep-rooted effect in the minds of the rulers, who came forward to surrender their sovereignty, in response to his call. It was not the stern action of Bismarck but a call of friendliness, which could attract the heart of the rulers and make them agree to join hands with him.\textsuperscript{36}

The task of nation-building in the country, by uniting all the native states, was a three-fold process consisting of integration, accession and

\textsuperscript{35} Maharaja of Bikaner in his speech on August 15, 1947 said… “Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the Prime Minister of the new dominion and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel have been the architect of the new state of India…The spirit of goodwill and co-operation displayed by them has in a large measure been responsible for facilitating the accessions of the states to the Indian dominion…

democratization and as regarded as truly a revolutionary. That was the greatest achievement of free India. The tremendous changes of bringing the states under the banner of the Indian Union were brought about in a short span of two years. The entire process went on peacefully through democratic and peaceful means without the use of any military power, except in case of Hyderabad. Such a great change was possible only due to the tactful approach of Sardar Patel and his secretary, V.P. Menon. He was the Chief actor of this great drama. He handled the princes with tact, patience and consideration. Though he was a man of an iron will, he did not act hastily and did not antagonize the princes. He knew that unless he could get the sympathy of the princes and win their hearts, it would be extremely difficult for him to achieve success. But this did not prevent him from delivering stern warnings to them who appeared to be of wavering minds. His personality and his approach alternating with appeals and warnings were the factors which led to such a decision by the majority of the princes.37

Initially the rulers’ response was not favourable as most of them thought about their own sovereignty after the lapse of paramountcy. The attitude of the rulers, however, softened when they took a realistic stock of the situation. Mountbatten’s statement of July 25th, 1947 had a great impact on the minds of the princes. They could realize that they would not be able to run away from joining the dominion. Mountbatten said:

“…I am not asking any state to make any intolerable sacrifice of either its internal autonomy or independence. My scheme leaves you with all the practical independence that you can

---

37 V. Shankar, op.cit., p. 557. V. Shankar has observed: “He asked the States to join the constituent assembly and accede on the three subjects of Defense, External affairs and Communications. The whole statement was set in such a key that it was bound to touch the hearts of the Rulers and appeal to their minds. The response was both enthusiastic and quick”.

230
possibly use and make you free of all those subjects which you cannot possibly manage on your own. You cannot run away from the Dominion Government which is your neighbour any more than you can run away from the subjects for whose welfare you are responsible”….38

This statement together with the speech of Sardar of 5th July, 1947 requesting the rulers to come forward as friends and build up a common Indian nation, so as to avoid anarchy and chaos, had a deep-rooted effect on the rulers.

In order to persuade the states to participate in the Constituent Assembly, a meeting was held between the Rulers’ negotiating committee, Nehru and Patel on 8th and 9th February 1947. Though the rulers wanted certain guarantees as per their conference of January 29, 1947, Sardar intimated that they were to proceed as per the Cabinet Mission Plan and the Congress had no intention of changing the boundaries and the scheme was a voluntary one. The statement had a softening effect and the princes decided to send representatives to the Assembly.39

Sardar did succeed in bringing some rulers together. A meeting held at his residence on July 10th, 1947; it was attended by rulers of Patiala, Gwalior, Baroda and Bikaner. Sardar urged that the states, which were already represented in the Constituent Assembly, should immediately accede in respect of three subjects which would enable them to have a direct voice in shaping the policy of the Central Government. The States’ delegation appreciated the logic of Sardar but various suggestions were made regarding the composition, tenure and functions

39 V.P. Menon, op.cit., p. 68.
of the States Department. This meeting cleared all misunderstandings in the minds of the rulers, regarding the States Department and paved the way for future negotiations.

Sardar met another delegation of rulers and States’ Ministers on July 24th, 1947. That showed that his plan was making headway. A number of rulers broke away from the group of the Nawab of Bhopal, who was against accession, wanted to discuss the matter with the Congress party. The States’ Negotiating Committee, headed by Sardar, finalized the draft of the Instrument of Accession and Standstill Agreement on July 31st, 1947. In the meeting of July 31st, 1947, 25 rulers were present and the Instruments of Accession and Standstill Agreement were approved. Though there was a lot of criticism regarding its (Instrument of Accession) clauses, the critics could not foresee its inner implications in preventing the country from fragmentation and enabling the Government of India to have full command over the states at a later date. This was surely an act leading to the building of a strong Indian Nation.40

**Accession Pattern:** The accession of various states did not follow the same pattern everywhere, Sardar, now, turned his attention towards Kathiaward first since problems were many and there were a large number of small states. Sardar had a hold on the people of those states, and was very much confident of success. He knew that, as soon as an example was set by acceding of any state, it would also have an exemplary effect on the other states and the task of integration would become easier. The process of integration was so quick that by 15th August, 1947, all the native states except Hyderabad, Junagadh and Kashmir signed the Instrument of Accession. This was a task which was

40 Ibid., pp. 101-118.
possible only due only to the ability of Sardar Patel and his comrades. In this connection R.K. Murthy observed:

“It was miracle, performed not with threats and forebodings but with tact and persuasion. The task was beset with immense complications. Studded with personal predilections and individual claims. Proper notes had to be made of the temperament and character of each ruler, adapt the tune of negotiations to evoke the most sympathetic chord in him. A sensible injection of weapon of bluff too helped the early consummation of the grand plan”.

Sardar had also acknowledged the sacrifice of the rulers. In his statement of 16th December 1947 he said: “I am particularly grateful to the rulers of the states who showed commendable appreciation of the realities of the situation and a benevolent regard for public good”. In his press conference in Delhi on January 29th, 1948 he too said:

“While I give plenty of credit to the people for this bloodless revolution in nearly one-third of the country, I have nothing but praise for the manner in which the rulers have co-operated with us and the people in bringing about this development”.

Sardar kept the sacrifice of the rulers foremost in mind; he tried to look after their interests by safeguarding the payment of their privy purses. He also acknowledged the ability of some of the rulers by appointing them as Rajpramukh and afterwards as Governors or Ambassadors. It was Sardar’s Patel’s large-heartedness that enabled him to ensure that the rulers did not find them in hardship after relinquishing their offices. In Patiala, on October 24th, 1947, Patel said:

42 Ibid., p. 31.
43 For a United India-Speeches of Sardar Patel, op.cit., p. 30.
“No quarrel now with the Princes. They are ours and we can make them understand and appreciate our point of view”.44

The process of integration of 40 B & C states of the Eastern and Central India and 449 states of Kathiaward was just like a veritable jigsaw puzzle. The union of Saurashtra came in February, 1948, the union Matsya, the smaller Rajasthan, the Vindhya Pradesh, the Malwa of Madhya Pradesh and the Pepsu came successively thereafter. The union of greater Rajasthan and Union of Travancore-Cochin were formed in 1949. Sardar had some strategic consideration in the process. He took Saurashtra and pepsu first due to defense considerations in the North. The bigger states were tackled at an opportune moment.45

**Sardar’s Scheme:** To build up an Indian nation through the process of bloodless integration was a unique work that was achieved by Sardar Patel. The country which was never united as a nation could be brought under one banner only through the peaceful process of accession of the states. It was indeed integration without confrontation and an important step towards nation building.

Sardar Patel believed in the strength of the people; he had great hold on the masses. Especially in Gujarat, people had great regard for him. They considered him as an excellent leader of the nation. Through his own disciples, he could establish a strong network of political activity in various states of Gujarat. The All India States’ People’s conference was the proof of the State People’s alertness about their democratic rights.46

---

45 B. Prabhudas Patwari, *Collected speeches (Broad Cast on Sardar’s Birthday)*, *op.cit.*, p. 11.
Patel wanted to rouse the political consciousness in the minds of the people of the states. He also wanted to get through with the process of integration as a spontaneous action. Though he depended on the support of the people of the states, yet he moved cautiously so that at no moment could the possibility of any external interference be faced on avoided. He knew that a decision had to be taken quickly and the process should be completed without delay, otherwise, there might rise dangers leading to a complete failure. He observed:

“In the world of today where distances are fast shrinking and masses are being brought into touch with the latest administrative amenities, it is impossible to postpone for a day longer than necessary, the introduction of measures which would make the people realize that their progress is also proceeding at least on the lines of their neighbouring area…”

Patel sought the goodwill and support of the Princely States for free and united India. Thinking some princely states, at the beginning, were against surrendering their sovereignty, Patel, through his stern warnings, put an end to their desire and ultimately otherwise made them fall in line with other states directly or indirectly. As Prabhudas Patwari has written:

“Sardar knew it well that a delay meant a disaster and so by wooing and also at time by speaking bluntly to the recalcitrant and by nipping in the bud the nefarious designs of some of the princely states by a close watch on the events within their

---

48 R.K. Munshi has observed: he stressed the need for the states to accede to one or other of the two dominions on the subjects of defense, Foreign Affairs and communication. He pointed out that states by and a large did not have capacity to handle these three difficult subjects by themselves…”
territories. He could bring home to the Princely order that their interests were not separable from those of their people”….⁴⁹

The other action that Sardar took was aimed at restoring and building up confidence in the minds of the princes. He realized that if the princes could consider him as their friend, they would listen to his advice. They needed to be convinced that their interest would be safe in the hands of Sardar Patel. Such a human touch was necessary to restore confidence in the minds of the Princes. Unless such a confidence was developed, the princes would not agree to surrender all their properties and power for the sake of patriotism.⁵⁰

Sardar’s success thus was in his wise handling of the situation, arising out of the withdrawal of paramountcy. It may be observed that in his approach to the problems of princely states, he had some strategic considerations. The first step of acceding to the Union in respect of three subjects was a wise decision, as it was acceptable to the rulers due to their inexperience in those matters. In this respect R.K. Murthy has observed:

“It was the essential first step to gain a tacit acceptance of the overall authority of the Dominion throughout the length and breadth of the country to get the tacit approval of the rulers to the scheme which would gradually strip them of their regal powers and thus pave the way for democracy to grow”…⁵¹

Sardar Patel was fully aware of the political, social and economic conditions of the various states. He knew the weakness of the princes of such states; so he tried to take advantage of the situation, but he never

---

⁴⁹ Collected speeches of Patwari B. Prabhudas, (Broadcast on Sardar’s Birthday), op.cit., p. 10.
⁵⁰ Prabhudas Patwari has said that the princes realizing Sardar would only play fair to them and would also protect their legitimate rights and interests under the new dispensations varied with one another with patriotic spirit of duty in giving practically a carte blanche to Sardar for what they possessed and ruled by virtue of their past predecessor otherwise”…op.cit., p. 10.
⁵¹ R.K. Murthi, op.cit., p. 28.
tried to exploit the situation. When told by V.P. Menon, regarding the
great danger in not dealing properly with the states which wanted to
maintain sovereignty, Sardar told him that if the problem was not handled
properly and promptly the new-born Free State might disappear. Sardar
agreed with Menon’s formula that a state should accede in respect of
three subjects. Sardar could take Mountabatten into full confidence and
the cabinet entrusted the viceroy to negotiate with the rulers regarding the
accession and also to deal with Hyderabad.

Sardar’s scheme for the integration of the States was quite
elaborate. He wanted not only in geographical integration but also social
and economical integration. He knew that once the country was
integrated geographically, it would be easier to undertake the work for
social, constitutional and financial harmony. While defining the
governments’ policy towards the states, he clarified in the Parliament on
October 12th, 1949:

“As a result of the policy of integration and democratization of
states since December 1947, the process what might be
described as ‘unionisation’ of states has been greatly
accelerated. Two important developments in this direction have
been the extension of the legislative authority of the Dominion
over the states and the federal financial integration of the
states”.53

**Constitutional Provision in Integration:** In the beginning, it was
decided that the States would accede to the Union on three subjects and
the constitution of the States would be framed by the people of the States,
but most of the States did not have any organized administration and

52 V.P. Menon, *op.cit.*, p. 91. In the words of Menon: “Sardar told me that if we
did not handle it promptly and effectively our hard-earned independence might
disappear through the states’ door”.
people’s representation in the Government, and, for them it was extremely difficult to frame a constitution. When the States came closer to the Union, it was agreed that the constitution of the States should follow the constitution of the provinces and the same might be formed by the Constituent Assembly and subsequently ratified by the people of the States. Thus as the States came closer to the Union, the differences between the States and provinces could be eliminated. The people of the States could thus form an integral part of the Indian Nation. Sardar, in his speech of October 12, 1949, explained the reason for including the provision of privy purses in the constitution. He explained the conditions in 1947 when the country was in the process of balkanization and how the princes cooperated with the Government by surrendering all of their kingdoms to the Government of India. Sardar felt that the payment of privy purses was not a big thing in comparison to the amount spent by the rulers. He appealed to the members to give a realistic consideration to that aspect and agreed with him.\textsuperscript{54} He pointed out that the settlement of accession was on the assurance of the payment of privy purses and that they should not go back on our words. Thus, the constitution contained two clauses 291 and 362, which safeguarded the payment of the privy purses to the rulers.\textsuperscript{55} Sardar, however, kept the issue open to review at a later date by carefully formulating the provision of the Privy Purse. He explained the events leading to complete accession of States and declared:

\begin{flushright}

55 Art. 291 of the constitution where under any covenant or agreement entered into by the ruler of any Indian state before the commencement of constitution, the payment of any sums, free of tax, has been guaranteed or assured by the Government of the Dominion of India to any ruler of such State as privy purse for such period as may subject to our agreement entered into in that behalf under Clause (1) of act 278, be determined by the order of the President.
\end{flushright}
“…Unlike the scheme of 1935 our new constitution is not an alliance between democracies and dynasties, but really a union of the Indian people built on the basic concept of sovereignty of the people. It removed all barriers between the people of the states and the people of provinces and achieves for the first time the objective of a strong democratic India”… 56

Constitutionally, all the states came under the Indian Union on November 26th, 1949 when the members signed the final draft of the constitution and Sardar announced that the constitution had been accepted by all the nine states specified in Part-B of the fifth schedule of the constitution including the State of Hyderabad. 57 Six years thereafter came the States’ Reorganisation Act and reference to Part-B states was removed and the princely states merged into the Indian Union in all respect. 58

Article 371 of the constitution provided authority to the Government of India to supervise the functions of the Part-B states for a period of ten years. Sardar explained that for the transitional period it would be necessary to make a provision that till the implementation of constitution, Rajpramukh and the Council of Ministers should be under the general control of the Government of India and should comply with the instructions issued by the Government from time to time. 59 Such a provision was absolutely necessary in order to thwart the reactionary elements in the States where democracy was just in its infant stage. Such a provision accelerated and ensured the process of nation-building in free India.

57 Ibid., Vol. X, p. 983.
Sardar’s efforts for the constitutional guarantee of the privy purse met with a lot of opposition and in 1971, through the 26th Amendment to the constitution, Articles 291 and 362 were repealed with effect from December 28, 1971 and with the introduction of Art 363A, the provision of the privy purse granted to the Rulers of the erstwhile Indian States and certain personal privileges granted to them had been taken away. But, if consider the situation prevailing in the year 1947, we can fully understand the tactful approach of Sardar in granting privy purses and tempting the rulers to agree to accede and avoid creating a third force. On the whole, it was Sardar’s farsightedness which helped to build a strong base for India. Unless such steps were taken at such a critical juncture, we wonder what would have been the position of the country today. In that respect Sardar will be remembered as the founder of the Indian Nation.

**Process of the Integration of States:** When we study the process of the integration of the various states and the part played by Sardar in it, we realize the important role that Sardar had in the integration of the country. The states included Saurastra (including Junagadh) Hyderabad, Travancore, Cochin, Kashmir and other small states. Sardar’s role in each of these states was vital.

**1) Saurastra (including Junagadh):**

Since the smaller states of West Gujarat, which were virtually ebbing out, but had a good organization for rousing the political consciousness of the people in so far as the Congress was concerned they attracted the attention of Sardar Patel in his very first attempt towards their integration. The West Gujarat known as Saurastra constituted a number of small states which did not have much potential from the point of view of economic and political independence. In all, 327 such States

---

existed in Gujarat. These States were attached to some of the adjoining bigger States in April, 1943, as per the attachment scheme. But the attachment scheme terminated with the lapse of paramountcy on August 14th, 1947. The Home Department prepared a revised Instrument of Accession for these states. In the new Instrument of Accession, the States were to be freed from the attaching states and to be administered by the Government as in the pre-attachment period. The states would vest all residuary powers and jurisdiction in the Central Government. The modus operandi was very simple, as those states did not have any capability of declaring independence with the lapse of paramountcy. There was also no possibility for those states to accede to Pakistan due to political and geographical conditions. Sardar succeeded in bringing the small states together and it was a very important step towards national solidarity.61

It was reported that the Jam Saheb of Nawanagar was strengthening his armed forces with a desire to be the overlord of Kathiawad. Sardar had a very good contact with the people of Kathiawad states62 as he was associated with some of State’s Peoples’ Union. Sri U.N. Dhebar was Sardar’s disciple and was the leader of the people of the Kathiawad States. It was reported that the rulers of Kathiawad, on the advice of the political agent, met under the leadership of the Jamsaheb to form a union of Kathiawad, covering the whole of the peninsula and decided to declare sovereign independence subject to the right of Junagadh to declare separate independence or to join Pakistan. The Jamsaheb would be the president of the Union comprising seven states viz. Jamnagar, Bhavnagar, Gondal, Probandar, Morvi, Dhrangadhra and Junagadh. They were helped by the political agent with the intention of

Balkanizing the country. Sardar, on receipt of such information and with the help of his comrades like Dhebar and other leaders of the people’s conference of the states, tactfully dealt with the situation and ultimately persuaded the princes to join the Indian Union. Sardar wrote to B.L. Mitter on 28th June, 1947.

“The question of smaller states will now engage my attention as a Member in charge of the new states’ department. Along with these will come the question of ports? I have no doubt, I shall find your note of assistance in this respect”…. Sardar, then fully concentrated on the states of Kathiawad and with his efforts and support from the people of the states, he could bring the rulers to agree to the accession.

Junagadh created a big problem for the solidarity of the country. It was one of the strongest States in Saurastra at that time and was ruled by a Muslim ruler but the inhabitants were mostly Hindus. Geographically, it was close to India, though it had direct access to the sea through its port of Veraval. In the beginning, Junagadh assured that it would accede to India. Such impression was created by the Dewan, A.K.M. Husen and his brother Nabi Baksh, the Constitutional Adviser. But Husen had to go abroad for treatment and in his absence his place was taken over by Shah Nawaz Bhutto. The Nawab was not at all serious about the administration and welfare of the people. The change of Dewan occurred on 10th August, 1947 and the Nawab was virtually a prisoner in the hands of his new Dewan. Junagadh was so much connected with other States that a part

---

64 Sardar’s letter to B.L. Mitter dt. 28-6-47. V. Shankar, op.cit., p. 21.
65 Sardar got popular support from States’ people. As V. Shankar has observed: “Sardar was in touch both with several Rulers and the Praja Mandal or state congress leaders and his advice was sought by some of the states” V. Shankar (Ed.), op.cit., p. 554.
of its territory fell into the area of the States which had acceded to India. There were two other small States called Babariwad and Mangrol headed by Muslim rulers under the control of the Junagadh State, that had acceded to India, but the Nawab argued that Mangrol had no authority to negotiate any instrument of accession without the permission of Junagadh. Till 14th August, 1947, Junagadh did not accede either to India or to Pakistan. However, on 15th August, 1947, the people of the state were shocked on hearing that the state had acceded to Pakistan and that the accession had been accepted by the other party. The people resented such an undemocratic action Sardar agreed that the armed forces on surrounding Junagadh would be kept in readiness so that they could be deployed in no time. V.P. Menon was sent to meet Nawab and explain about his wrong decision. The Government of India press Communiqué dated 25th September, 1947, strongly denounced such action of Nawab and asserted firmness in dealing with the situation. Under the leadership of Shamaldas Gandhi, who had taken consent of Sardar Patel, Kathiawad People’s Front was formed and supplies to Junagadh were stopped. Bhutto appealed to Pakistan for help but in vain. Violence started in the State and encouraged by the Kathiawad people’s Front, the subjects of the State started a demonstration against the Nawab, who fled to Karachi with his family. On October 27th, Bhutto admitted that the people did not accept the Nawab’s accession to Pakistan. Bhutto fled to Pakistan after requesting the Union Government to take over the administration.

---

67 Allen Campbell Johnson said “Patel had responded to the challenge in a way which, if it raises domestic moral, is hardly calculated to win over world opinion”. Mission with Mountbatten, Ibid., p. 284.

68 The communiqué stated, “The Government of India are determined to find a solution of this problem. Their sole aim is to see tranquility maintained throughout Kathiawad”, Government of India, Press note-national Archives of India, New Delhi.

people’s verdict and ultimately found support and Junagadh came under India, due to the tactful handling by the States’ Department headed by Sardar Patel. Sardar, in his speech on November 13, 1947 at Junagadh, explained at length the strategy adopted by the Government of India. He explained that the Government had tried its best through negotiations to come to a peaceful settlement in the interest of the country. Though the things were moving in the proper direction, the Government of India had to take drastic steps due to a sudden change in the Nawab’s policy, to bring the state under its control, which he thought as the correct step.70 Finally Junagadh merged was merged in Kathiawad States, which became a part of the Gujarat state. U.N. Dhebar, a dedicated Congressman and Sardar’s follower, became the first Chief Minister of Kathiawad states.71 The way Junagadh was made to accede to India was very clear from legal and democratic point of view. Junagadh’s accession to Pakistan raised lot of Public controversy; but from the point of the guideline of the British Government’s partition programme, Junagadh had to accede to India on geographical and economical grounds, though the state was ruled by a Muslim ruler. Taking the population into consideration the state having a majority of Hindus should be a part of India. On similar consideration, Bahawalpur, a state adjacent to India and Pakistan was allowed to accede to Pakistan.72

Sardar, thus acted in a finest way in his handling of the Junagadh situation without keeping any loopholes open for any controversy in future.

71 Government of India File No. 11 (16) Political, National Archives of India. The cabinet decided that Saurashtra would be included in the states specified in Part-III scheduled No. I and would include Junagadh Manavadar, Mangrol. Bantwa, Sardargarh and Babriwad, National Archives of India, New Delhi.
72 The Statesman, October 20, 1947, “The problem of the States for divided India”, by anonymous.
**Hyderabad**: Sardar’s greatest role in the integration of states was his able handling of the Hyderabad crisis. Most of the states acceded to India, Hyderabad, the largest of the native states with a Muslim ruler and 86% Hindu population created a threat to the solidarity of the country. Hyderabad was surrounded by the Indian Territory on all sides and did not have any access to the sea; but the ruler, the Nizam, had high aspirations and wanted to proclaim sovereignty after the paramountcy was withdrawn. In order to negotiate with the Nizam, Lord Mountbatten was chosen and Sardar agreed to this, knowing fully well its pros and cons. Sardar knew that, if the problem was handled by Mountbatten, it would be good for India since international and communal repercussions could be avoided. Moreover, as Walter Monckton, the adviser of the Nizam, was a friend of Mountbatten, negotiations would be easier. However, the decision on any point of controversy beyond the agreed formula was vested in the Congress High command only. Thus, Sardar was sure that, it would not be dangerous for India even if the negotiations were carried on by Lord Mountbatten. On the contrary, Sardar would formulate the policy without coming into direct confrontation with the Nizam.73

The negotiations with the representatives of the Nizam started in July, 1947 but an accord could not be reached. Sardar, in his letter dated 24th August, 1947 to Lord Mountbatten, clearly indicated that Nizam should accede to the Dominion of India in line with the instrument of Accession prepared for the other states. Sardar stated that the Nizam should follow the same path as the other states and in case he did not

---

Author has observed: “...Lord Mountbatten should be handling them (States) was, therefore, sure guarantees to satisfy the outside world....” He (Sardar) also knew that Sir Walter Monckton’s relations with Lord Mountbatten might make the negotiations easier”
agree to the same, he should agree to allow the people of the state to
decide the issue of accession. But, in spite of the best efforts of
Mountbatten, the negotiations failed. Ultimately with great reluctance an
extension of two months was granted to Hyderabad to decide about the
accession. Sir Walter Monekton, in his note dated 15\textsuperscript{th} September, 1947,
stated:

“I know that Mr. Patel was and is against any extension of time
to Hyderabad and that the Viceroy prevailed over the cabinet of
the Dominion to allow him personally two months time to see
whether I, could find a compromise satisfactory to both
sides”….\textsuperscript{74}

Sardar could foresee the difficult situation which the country was facing
and in his letter dated 19\textsuperscript{th} September, 1947 to Mountbatten, Sardar
explained the situation in Hyderabad and stated about the steps that
would be necessary in future due to the wrong policy of the Nizam as he
had created his own \textit{Frankenstein-Ittehadul-Mussalmeen}.\textsuperscript{75}

After some more discussions with a number of delegates from
Hyderabad, some concessions were granted by Sardar to the Nizam and
the Standstill Agreement for one year and the collateral letters were
signed on 29\textsuperscript{th} November, 1947. The same day Sardar made a statement
in the Constituent Assembly and explained that the period of one year
granted to the Nizam would be helpful for final accession. Thus, he
agreed with the settlement reached by the government on the ground that
accession of Hyderabad would be peaceful.\textsuperscript{76}

It is said that Razvi, a member of the Ittehad-ul-Mussalmeen, and
controlling the policy of the Nizam, met Sardar Patel in Delhi to try for

\textsuperscript{74} V. Shankar, (ed.) \textit{Sardar Patel-Select Correspondence 1945-50}, Vol. 2,

\textsuperscript{75} Sardar’s letter to Mountbatten- (Courtesy Miss Maniben Patel).

\textsuperscript{76} \textit{For a United India-Speeches of Sardar Patel}, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 15.
additional concessions from him; but Sardar quickly disposed him and firmly indicated that there was no possibility of accepting Hyderabad as being independent. When Razvi indicated that Sardar should realize their difficulties, and that in case Sardar did not concede his request, Hyderabad would fight tooth and nail, Sardar remained unmoved and replied:

“How Can I stop you from committing suicide if you want to”?\(^77\)

This proves that Sardar was confident that in the course of time he would be able to merge Hyderabad with India.

As per the new agreement, K.M. Munshi a trusted man of Sardar was sent to Hyderabad as Agent General of India and detailed reports about the political conditions were received through him. Sardar also kept in touch with the members of the Hyderabad Congress and formulated his policy on the basis of the information he received from time to time. Sardar was not at all hopeful about the settlement in Hyderabad in line with the Standstill Agreement for one year…\(^78\)

Inspite of Standstill Agreement for one year, the Nizam did not give up his hope of attaining complete independence with the help of foreign powers. His doubtful actions, were reported to Sardar by K.M. Munshi, other trusted people and the reports of the news-papers regarding the reign of terror and the oppression of the Hindu Community. The Razakars started arson and looting in the neighbouring States. The Nizam wanted to represent his case to the Security Council to internationalize the issue. People, in India became impatient but Sardar was preparing for

\(^77\) K.M. Munshi, *op.cit.*, p. 72.
\(^78\) V.P. Menon stated: *The Nizam and his advisers conceived the agreement as providing breathing-space n which to secure the withdrawal of the Indian troops from Hyderabad …Sardar was doubtful of the bonafides of the Hyderabad Government*, *The story of integration of Indian States. op.cit.*, p. 323.
the final assault and counting the days. In his letter to Nehru, Sardar stated:

“I have already decided to issue instructions to Hyderabad and Bhopal States regarding the composition of their armed forces. We are telling them that we are bound to take it into account in making allotments of arms and equipments and that the composition of these forces should be readjusted in order to create more confidence among the non-Muslim majority”…

When the situation was becoming alarming, Sardar intimated Nehru that the time came to tell Hyderabad that the Nizam should accede unconditionally. Sardar wanted that the situation should be tackled firmly so that it did not go out of hands. In his letter dated 21st June, 1948 to N.V. Gadgil, Sardar cautioned that the decision about Hyderabad’s accession should be similar to that of the other States and the situation could be brought under control. He advised the Indian Military to be alert as he apprehended that the trouble, any time, might demand immediate military action.

Sardar sought information from defense ministry and was informed that in case of any military action, it would not take more than three weeks. In spite of his illness, Sardar kept in close touch with the day to day events on Hyderabad. Though Nehru was hesitant due to the international reaction, Sardar was firm in his stand. It was decided that military would march into Hyderabad, on 13th September, 1948 and Sardar did not agree to postpone the operation. At the instance of Sardar,

---

79  Sardar’s letter dated January 25, 1948 to Nehru, (Courtesy Miss Maniben Patel).
In his letter to Nehru Sardar observed: “I feel very strongly that stage has come when we should tell them quite frankly that nothing short of unqualified acceptance of accession and of introduction of unlimited responsible government would be acceptable to us”.
C. Rajagopalachari, the then Governor-general called a meeting of the cabinet to regularize the action.\textsuperscript{81} Sardar’s assessment was correct and Hyderabad was captured practically without any bloodshed within a week’s time. It was a great achievement.\textsuperscript{82} Sardar’s conviction regarding the action taken against Hyderabad was very clear. He was very confident that actions taken by him were without flaw and would stand against any criticism. On October 30\textsuperscript{th}, 1948 he boldly said:

“We shall do what the interests of the people of Hyderabad demand and what they themselves desire. It would be for them to take a decision and no outside interference can succeed in keeping the Nizam on the throne if people wish otherwise”….\textsuperscript{83}

There were suggestions regarding the dividing Hyderabad into three linguistic parts but Sardar indicated that this would be done at an appropriate time, if necessary. With the merger of the State with India, the next step for financial and social integration started automatically and ultimately it gave birth to a new linguistic state called Andhra Pradesh which contributed to a greater consolidation in removing all doubts of any disintegration at a later date. A bold step taken at, an appropriate time has strengthened the process of Nation-building in India.

\textbf{Kashmir:} Kashmir was also a problem. The state was ruled by a Hindu ruler, whereas the population was Muslim. It occupied a strategic position. Till August 15\textsuperscript{th}, 1947 Kashmir did not accede to India. Sardar knew the importance of Kashmir from its geographical position and wanted to tackle the problem himself as the Minister of the States, but, Nehru was willing to deal with Kashmir, and Sardar did not object to it. But Sardar too did not fail to give his best advice in this regard. As

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{81} V. Shankar, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 108.
  \item \textsuperscript{82} D.V. Tahmankar, \textit{op.cit.}, pp. 232-238.
  \item \textsuperscript{83} The Amrita Bazar Patrika, press report, dt. 31.10.1948.
\end{itemize}
observed by Allen Campbell Johnson in his book ‘Mission with Mountbatten’:

“Indeed the states Ministry under Patel’s direction, went out of its way to take no action which could be interpreted as forcing Kashmir’s hand and to give assurances that accession to Pakistan would not be taken amiss by India”…

When the Maharaja of Kashmir agreed to accede to India, in similar lines as the other states, the question of sending the army to Kashmir to help the Maharaja rebuff an armed attack by the intruders was discussed at a meeting. Everybody including army generals, Nehru and Mountbatten could not find a solution but Sardar got up and said that Kashmir should be defended at all costs. The committee decided to send an agent to Kashmir and Kunwar Sir Daleep Singh was posted as Agent in Jammu.

At the instance of Mountbatten, the Kashmir dispute was referred to the United Nations on 1st January, 1948, but Sardar was not present in Delhi at that time. Sardar, however was skeptical about the reference to the United Nations. Had Sardar’s advice on Kashmir been heeded by Nehru, the problem we are facing now would not have risen at all. At K.M. Munshi said:

“But for Jawaharlal Nehru, who, under the influence of Sheikh Abdullah, took away the portfolio of Kashmir from Sardar’s States Ministry, Kashmir would never have become the problem that it has been”…

Kashmir still poses a problem for the country; but the steps taken by the Indian leaders in sending the army to Kashmir at the request of the Maharaja was in the Cabinet Mission Plan. The action regarding Kashmir

84 A.C. Johnson, op.cit., p. 261.
Note: V.B. Kulkarni in his book ‘My country and my rulers’ has observed: “Perhaps the story of Kashmir’s accession to India would have been different if the issue had been handled by him and not by Nehru” P X.
85 Government of India, File No. 11 (8) PR, 47, Ministry of States, National Archives of India, New Delhi.
86 K.M. Munshi, op.cit., p. 175.
was defended by the Prime Minister when he informed the Prime Minister of the U.K. that:

“Helping Kashmir is an obligation of national interest to India…I should like to make it clear that the question of aiding Kashmir in this emergency is not designed in any way to influence the States to accede to India”…

Sardar also played his role by holding a secret meeting with Ramchandra Kak, the Prime Minister of Kashmir. The position of Kashmir, as it stands today, is much better for India from the strategic point of view, and such a political situation created in Kashmir is a kind of an interim solution and has helped the country to stand against any onslaught from the external powers. The solidarity of the country has been strengthened with the accession of Kashmir to India.

Other States: Regarding the accession of the other states, Sardar acted like a magic-stick. In no time, he could merge the States of Orissa, Chhattishgarh, Rajasthan, Punjab and so on. He realized that the people of states were supreme and by organizing the States’, people for establishment of popular government, he could achieve success. He had, with him, able workers and supporters who had worked untiringly to bring such a merger in record time.

The Maharaja of Mysore was not inclined to join the Union of India after withdrawal of British power. His Dewan M. Sankar Lingegowda had a series of correspondence with Sardar through which he expressed that after the lapse of paramountcy, the Maharaja of Mysore should get back the territory ceded in 1799 and sovereignty should return to the King, Sardar, clearly explained to him, in his reply, that even in England the sovereignty rested with the people with the King as the head of the State. Similarly, in a democratic country, the authority of the

87 National Herald, January 10, 1948, press report.
88 Government of India, File No. 11 (8)/48, Ministry of States, National Archives of India, New Delhi.
people is supreme. He also warned that Maharaja should carefully note that after June, 1948, paramountcy would evaporate in air and he would have a hard time; hence to maintain his honourable position even after the lapse of paramountcy, the Maharaja should take the Mysore Congress into confidence. Sardar’s advice had sobering effect on the King and ultimately he joined the Constituent Assembly and sent seven representatives there out of which few were elected representatives of the people of the state.\footnote{Various Correspondence between Sardar and Diwan of Mysore State from February to June 1947-Courtesy Miss Maniben Patel.} Sardar’s handing of the situation was not in the normal way but he gave a human touch while he pointed out the future of the King after departure of the British power. He acted on the basis of information he used to get from various sources through reliable party cadres.

Indore was also a trouble spot. At the beginning Maharaja Holkar of Indore in collaboration with Nawab of Bhopal wanted to attract some more states like Jodhpur to form a group against accession to Indian Union. But in Indore the State’s People Conference was very active. Maharaja was given an ultimatum that by May 25, 1947 popular government had to be established, which was not acceded by the King. On the other hand without the consent of Praja Mandal, the King appointed one Mr. Horton, a Britisher as his Prime Minister. Praja Mandal launched a statewide agitation and invited Sardar Patel to intervene. Maharaja did not succeeded in his negotiations for remaining independent but his accepted Instrument of Accession was not received by the States’ Department before 15\textsuperscript{th} August, 1947. To create pressure on the King, it was indicated to him that since the Instrument of Accession was not received in time the terms and conditions would be revised. Sardar met Maharaja of Indore on 19\textsuperscript{th} August, 1947 and the King signed the revised Instrument of Accession and acceded to India, Sardar’s careful handling of the Indore affairs and timely action could
pave the way for integration of Indore. It is interesting that afterwards the King became friendly with Sardar.90

Bhopal was a State ruled by a Muslim ruler; but geographically it had no connection with Pakistan. The Nawab of Bhopal was very powerful and he was the chairman of the negotiating committee of the Chamber of Princes. The Nawab had no intention to accede to Indian Union, rather he was keen in maintaining his sovereignty or joining hands with Pakistan. The Nawab and King of Indore had a joint interview with Mountbatten, the viceroy on 4th August, 1947 when Viceroy intimated that he did not have any authority to alter the terms and conditions of accession and final decision rested with Sardar Patel. He, however, assured that Sardar Patel would not be unkind to them.91 After a considerable time Nawab did not find any alternative, so he acceded to India. In spite of his earlier anti-Indian attitude, Sardar realized that the Nawab was a changed man when he admitted his fault and apologized to him. Sardar took him as his friend and exchanged his cordial relation in the coming years.92 Nawab in later years was very helpful in tackling the refugee problem. Sardar thus gave a humanitarian touch to politics of integration of States.

There are innumerable instances where Sardar could bring down the rulers of the States to terms and agree them to accession to India as per the terms and conditions stipulated by the Government of India. Sardar had to deal with diversified Kings having different attitude with caution and applying varied, human, social, political and psychological approach.

90 Various correspondence between Sardar, Indore Praja Mandal and His Highness Maharaja of Indore between January ’47 to November ’47-Courtesy Miss Maniben Patel.
91 Government of India, File No. 8 (83)-PR, 47, Ministry of States, National Archives of India, New Delhi.
Sardar will always be remembered as the man who laid the foundation stone for a United India. The complex process of integration of the Princely State, which ended with success, has paved the way for the stability and prosperity of the country. In the face of partition, it was not sure whether the departure of the British power from India would create a vacuum and leave behind the possibility of creating a third force contributing towards the balkanization of the country. Even the initiators of partition were not fully convinced regarding the establishment of peace and harmony in the post-partition period. The Congress leaders, baffled by the thrust created through disturbance and communal riots by the Muslim League. Had to look for a solution to such a calamity and had to reconcile to the idea of partition, without looking deeply into the problems that might come ahead, while Sardar was prepared to face the consequences. His conviction was crystal clear, when he brought an analogy between a riot-stricken country and a mutilated leg of a person which needed amputation to save the rest of the body. Even on the eve of partition Sardar was fully aware that the post-partition period would be full of immense problems and the first and foremost task would be to integrate all the Princely States into the Union of India a positive step directed towards the unity of the country as the prerequisite for nation-building. His actions, aimed at establishing a sovereign democratic country in divided India, were too commensurate with the need of the time. The immediate requirement after partition was the unification of the country by merging the princely states in the Indian Union and Sardar could decide upon the speed with which the action was to be undertaken.

The integration of the princely states in India was handled in a well-organised manner by Sardar. The pattern of integration was also not identical in case of all the states. Sardar could visualize the socio-political environment in the various states based on which, his action-plan was formulated to suit the requirement. It is interesting to find that his approach to the problem had a broad base and diversified modalities wee
adopted. It is unimaginable what a spade work he did to obtain the political information of the various states to formulate his action plan. His association with the State’s people was very close. By virtue of his ingenuity, he followed the path of persuasion with friendly states, threats with smaller states and even confrontation with the states which were found to be unmanageable through normal channels of action programme. In all such cases, Sardar followed a well-organised path of action, keeping in view peace and harmony and preparing the country for a better future and promising its citizens overall prosperity as a nation of the world.

The after effect of the integration process is also interesting from the point of the contribution it had made in the nation-building activity. Though at the time of merging the states into the dominion of India, certain complexities like misunderstanding and enmity developed between the ruling Congress party and the rulers of the States, the same did not persist for a long time but ended in a happy note of mutual adjustment. As Sardar could generate confidence in the minds of the people of the various states, his task in bringing back normalcy and healthy administrative set up in the integrated states became easier. The mechanics of integration of the states turned out to be so simple that the total number of five hundred and odd states could be integrated in a short span of time without even a single drop of blood being shed. Sardar’s overall management of the integration system has proved to be far superior to any other integration process in the world surpassing the ingenuity of Bismark, the great unifier of Germany. His multipronged attack with definite objective of homogenization of the country, his stage play in the integration drama with the help of his Lieutenant like V.P. Menon, U.N. Dhebar, K.M. Munshi, J.N. Chaudhari, V. Shankar and others has proved to be a great success as we can see from the results which have followed in the successive years. The efforts of Sardar have led the country towards democratization and prosperity through the
economic steps which were taken in the post-integration period. The absence of a third force has resulted in the solidarity of the country and we are now poised for great promises in the coming years as one of the recognized nations of the world. Sardar’s role in the dynamics of nation-building through the process of integration has paved the way for a glittering future of the country. “If this integration of princely states” writers Geoffrey Tyson in ‘Nehru’ “had not been carried out with a skilled and sure had by the late Sardar Patel the sub continent might easily have suffered division into a third major segment in which the smaller princely states would have grouped themselves round the more powerful rulers in independent blocks, with resultant balkanization of a large part of the land”.

The integration of the princely states thus acted as a synchronizing phenomenon and established a State of balance between chaos and segmentation and solidarity of the newly born Indian Union.

---