CHAPTER-V

PATTABHI IN NATIONAL POLITICS
Pattabhi gave up a lucrative medical practice to devote all his time and energy to the Congress which, according to him, was 'entitled to the first claims on our time, attention and expenditure.' Although he attended some Congress sessions between 1898 and 1908, his active association with the Congress began in 1908 when he attended the Madras Congress session as a full-blown delegate. During those days, he belonged to the Nationalist school and was an 'extremist,' being a follower of the 'Lal-Bal-Pal School.' He criticized the British policies—political, economic, educational and social. He stood for National Education, Swaraj and Hindu-Muslim unity. He became a Home Ruler under Mrs. Besant's leadership and made speeches urging people to intensify the Home Rule Movement. From 1916 to 1952 he was, without interruption, a member of the All India Congress Committee. In fact, he was an older Congressman than Mahatma Gandhi himself. He became a member of the A.I.C.C. Before Gandhi was much known in India. Jawaharlal Nehru and others were quite junior to him.\(^1\)

Although skeptical, if not critical, of Gandhi’s programmes in early 1919, Pattabhi was fascinated by his creed of non-violence and stood by Gandhi that year at the Amritsar Congress. At the session, there was a clash between Gandhi, and C.R. Das, Tilak and others. Pattabhi held that the year 1920 was a memorable one. He saw in that year the beginning of a new India—a country in which could be seen the synthesis of the glory of the ancient Vedas and Puranas and the culture of the modern age shaped by Western science and technology. That was the year in which the Congress accepted the new creed of Non-co-operation. Gandhi made a deep impression on the people by his personality and principles and ethics, and the year marked the beginning of a new a period in Indian politics—the Gandhian Era. It was during that time that Pattabhi became a sincere follower of Gandhi.

Pattabhi and Konda Venktappaya took to the Non-co-operation creed and worked for it with great enthusiasm in the Andhra region. They were
vigorously urging upon the British Government to create a separate Andhra State. The Mont ford Reforms disappointed them. They came under the influence of nationalism following the visit of Bipin Chandra Pal in 1907. Masulipatnam provided them with the proper atmosphere to pursue their nationalist ideal. Mutnuri Krishna Rao, Editor of the ‘Krishna Patrika’ and Pattabhi had already become well-known for their anti-government views. The Non-co-operation creed therefore satisfied their emotional urges. Pattabhi, in particular, carried out the triple-boycott programme in his personal life. He never entered the Legislature. He did not send his children to government-run educational institutions. He and the members of his family wore only hand-spun cloth. That was why he said in his autobiography that the whole programme of Gandhi came to him with familiarity. Pattabhi wrote a book in Telugu on Non-co-operation in 1922 to popularize the creed among the local people. He wrote voluminously in support of it in his ‘Janmabhoomi’ from 1920 onwards. In January 1922 Pattabhi presided over the APCC session at Bezwada where he and Konda Venktappaya pledged their support to the Non-co-operation programme. It was no easy task to work for the programme in the early twenties in South India because of the opposition to it from the liberals and the Home Rulers who considered the Non-co-operation programme ‘a dangerous crusade.’ They tried to ‘educate’ the people to withhold their support to it. As such, the leadership of Konda Venktappaya and Pattabhi in organizing Non-co-operation in Andhra was appreciated by Gandhi. Gandhi’s opinion of Venktappaya was very high.

There was a protracted discussion on the programme of Non-co-operation at the Nagpur Congress in 1920. Nearly, 15,000 delegates, including fraternal delegates from the British Labour Party, attended the session. Among the British delegates was Col. Wedge wood who, at the Subjects-Committee meeting, asked the Congress to desist from Non-co-operation. He said, “the Police would be after you and you cannot do your public work unmolested...... your lawyer have taken the oath of allegiance to the sovereign and therefore cannot justly non-co-operate; your friends in England will, above all, be alienated.” This was enough of
a provocation to Pattabhi. Vijayaragavachariar, the President of the Congress and the Chairman of the Subjects-Committee, tried in vain, to pacify Pattabhi who burst forth saying, “Col. Wedge wood has come all the way from England to threaten us saying that the Police would be after us in case we non-co-operated. Let me tell him as the youngest member of this House that during the past fourteen years of my public life, in which we have started a national college and collected funds therefore, every rupee that we have collected has been collected under the shadow of the red turban...... The days of loyalty are gone--gone---no more to return....... Let me frankly but respectfully say that we had no friends in England and have none. Our friends are in India and India is the place in which we should look for our friends.” There was complete silence in the House. Few were prepared, least of all, Col. Wedge wood, for this cannon burst. The delegates were struck by the fearlessness of the young Doctor. That evening, however, Wedge wood happened to meet Pattabhi by the roadside. “Have you anything more for me?,” asked Wedge wood in a friendly way. Pattabhi offered sincere apologies to Wedge wood and told him that he meant nothing personal against the British friend. On the other hand he appreciated Wedge wood’s “balance and benignity.”

The A.I.C.C. decided, in July 1921, in favour of mass Civil Disobedience. Pattabhi cautioned “against all precipitate action both in the matter of felling date trees and Palmyra trees and burning tavern shops.” He was severely castigated for his moderate leaning and for being friendly with C.P. Rama swami Iyer and Mocherla Ram Chandra Rao. Pattabhi was only following the advice of Gandhi, who withdrew the Civil Disobedience movement as it led to violence elsewhere. Gandhi’s withdrawal of the movement came up before the A.I.C.C. At Delhi in 1922. Severe verbal attacks were leveled against Gandhi from all quarters. Bengal’s Hardayal Nag, Dr. Moonjee and Sen Gupta led the attack. Only Pattabhi was with Gandhi while he was answering the volley of questions and insinuations. A censure motion was moved against Gandhi. But he did not permit anyone to oppose the motion by speech. “The storm,” wrote the Congress Historian, “blew over and Gandhi, like the proverbial reed, remained unmoved.” Later that year, the Civil...
Disobedience committee paid Pattabhi a handsome compliment. The committee’s Report said that Dr. Pattabhi “takes a gloomier view. He thinks that the Non-co-operation is not free from the weakness of human nature and is as much liable to succumb to corrupting influences as his fellowmen. The learned Doctor is a keen observer of human nature as his statement shows...."5

Earlier, Pattabhi was invited to the All Parties’ Conference presided over by Sir C.Sankaran Nair. Gandhi gave a note here to Pattabhi to be handed over to Konda Venktappaya. In that note Gandhi asked Venktappaya to suspend the no-tax campaign in Andhra. This, however, led Venktappaya to conclude that Pattabhi ‘carried’ tales’ to Gandhi against Venkatappayya’s leadership of the campaign. Venktappaya was displeased with Pattabhi on this score. Pattabhi, however, made no mention of any discussion he had with Gandhi about the campaign in Andhra. He said that Gandhi on that occasion had no time to talk to him.

A ‘No-Changer’

The Gaya Congress of 1922 witnessed “a fight between those that raised politics to a spiritual level and those that worked politics on the intellectual and the material planes.” In short, it was a fight between Gandhiites and the rest. The former felt that the Programme of Non-co-operation would be upset if entry into Council was allowed. The others preferred Council entry. C.R. Das and Motilal Nehru led the latter group, and although Gandhi was absent, his principles were praised. Rajagopalachari led the No-Changers. His plan of individual civil resistance was criticized by many No-Changers. However, his references to Gandhi carried the day. The No-changers’ were victorious at Gaya though the victory was short-lived. The battle between the ‘No-Changers’ and ‘Pro-Changers’ was carried over to 1923. At the AICC meeting at Calcutta in November, 1922, M.R. Jayakar praised Pattabhi’s ‘elegant diction and forceful eloquence’ although Jayakar rejected the plea for Gandhi’s programme. In his evidence before the Civil
Disobedience Inquiry Committee, Pattabhi Sitaramayya observed that the Government could not be brought to its knees throughout the Councils and Council entry would be misunderstood by the public as a failure of the weapon of Non-co-operation.

Pattabhi’s wife’s home town Co Canada (now Kakinada) played host to the 38th session of the Congress. It was there that the foundations for unity were laid between the two leading Parties—the ‘Pro-Changers’ and the ‘No-Changers.’ C.R. Das led the ‘Prochangers’ and C. Rajagopalachari, the latter. Maulana Mohammed Ali was the President of the session. Konda Venkatappayya was the Chairman of the Reception Committee and Pattabhi was one of the Vice-Chairmen.

At this session, Pattabhi moved a resolution seeking to amend the Congress Constitution regarding the procedure for summoning extraordinary Congress sessions. He suggested other change in the Constitution and all were seconded by Jawaharlal Nehru and passed. He moved another amendment which said that the Congress proceedings must be in Hindustani, English or the provincial language. Explaining the resolution, he said that it was a “matter of great shame to hang on to English as our national language.” He claimed that in Andhra every Village school had a Hindi teacher and that Hindi made good progress in the country. Such a resolution was the first of its kind in Congress history.

A more important matter was the Compromise Resolution moved by C. Rajagopalachari. Pattabhi was very much displayed with this resolution. In a tone of disappointment he wrote: “C. Rajagopalachari was till then the strong protagonist of Non-co-operation of the orthodox type, but a day after the Co Canada session began he changed over to the side of the Council entry much to my surprise and sorrow.”

Babu Shyam Sunder Chakravarti moved an amendment to the Compromise Resolution of Rajagopalachari. Chakravarti, commending the Gandhian Programme
of Non-co-operation and Triple Boycott, said that the Congress must either co-operate or non-co-operate but should not give an impression that "the Congress says one thing and does another thing." Vallabhbhai Patel opposed Chakravarthi's amendment saying that "any attempt to work in the direction of the boycott of councils at the present moment is not only not possible but unfair." Speaking in support of Chakravarthi's amendment, Pattabhi "tore to pieces what he called the pretence that Council entry was a species of Non-co-operation and his frank analysis although destructive was effective." In a twenty-minute tirade against the Compromise Resolution in particular and the Swarajists in general, he asked: "Are you going to take the Compromise in which all the sophistries and all the palpable fallacies and all the tortuous intricacies of the human intellect have been grouped and formulated?" He criticized Rajagopalachari and Patel for being unnecessarily neutral. But he struck a note of humility when he said that it was presumptuous on his part to differ from men like Rajagopalachari and Vallabhbhai Patel "the latchet of whose shoe I am unfit to unloose." The best course for all, said Pattabhi, was to follow Gandhi's policy. Gandhi believed in overcoming evil with good but the Swarajist believed in exchanging blow for blow. He asked people to boycott Councils also. Prakasam disagreed with Pattabhi, and supported the resolution which was finally passed. Pattabhi was sad that the resolution was passed and said that at Co Canada the first brick was withdrawn from the brick wall of resistance to Council entry. The Indian quarterly Register described Pattabhi's speech as "the best in the Congress." Vithalbai Patel remarked once: 'how wonderful it would be if Pattabhi enters Councils and censures the government instead of censuring us in the Congress.' An interesting sidelight was that here at Co Canada—where Pattabhi went a month in advance of the session to help the arrangements—one evening, he invited Jawaharlal Nehru to dinner. The relations between the two were then 'not unpleasement.'

It is said that the study of leadership requires an examination of the 'interaction of the actor's personally and the situation.' It also requires an examination of the actor's physical appearance and mode of communication with
others which have a definite impact on the actor’s physical appearance and mode of communication with others which have a definite impact on the actor’s personality development. In the evolution of his political career, Pattabhi could not overcome his childhood ‘weakness for frankness.’ An important feature of the ‘inner man’ was being frank. As Rajagopalachari said, Pattabhi despised dishonesty. Pattabhi’s career as a Congressman was marked by clashes with many a Congress leader. For over thirty years he ‘flayed the opponents alive’ and in the process he scorched his own wings many a time. In 1908 at Madras, he displayed rare courage when he opposed V. Krishna swami Iyer over the election of members to the Subjects-Committee and earned from the infuriated Iyer the epithet: ‘a heretic.’ There was a heated exchange of words between him and Mrs. Besant over the question of a separate Congress Circle for Andhra. The Nehru’s--Mothilal and Jawaharlal-and Sardar Patel were among the other leaders with whom Pattabhi was later involved in angry exchanges over some issue or the other. It was said that no Congressman was involved in so many clashes with Congress giants as Pattabhi was.

In his over-zealous support of Gandhi and Gandhian programmes, Pattabhi was strongly critical of the Swaraj Party and its leaders including C.R. Das and Mothilal Nehru. K.Iswara-Dutt, who attended a meeting addressed by Pattabhi in 1923 at Madras, narrated how strongly Pattabhi criticized C.R. Das on that occasion. Drawing a contrast between Gandhi and Das, Pattabhi said that Gandhi was a self-effacing saint’ and Das a self-advertising charlatan.’ Personally, of course, he admired Das’s courage and spirit of sacrifice. Pattabhi recalled how Gandhi, despite political difference with Das, made a handsome collection of lakhs of rupees and helped in liquidating Das’s debits and in the construction of a memorial to him at Calacutta. Pattabhi was a member of the committee of fifteen members which was constituted on Gandhi’s suggestion in 1924, to give effect to the pact between Swaraj Party and the Congress. It was Pattabhi who seconded the resolution regarding Gandhi-Das Pact then.
In the twenties, Pattabhi took part in many conferences and meetings at the national level. The fact that he had no major role to play in the APCC enabled him to spare much of his time in national politics. 'The Hindu,' writing on the quarrels in the APCC, lamented that Pattabhi, 'the brain of Andhra Desa, was not even elected as a member of the APCC. During this period Pattabhi, through his participation in AICC meetings, etc., came closer to Gandhi. There was no meeting at which he did not stand by Gandhi where Gandhi encountered the opposition of leaders like Motilal Nehru, Das and Prakasam. In 1924, Gandhi convened an all-Party meeting at which he suggested the acceptance of complete Non-violence. The younger sections were opposed to it. This year marked the beginning of a conflict in attitudes between the 'younger sections' a conflict in attitudes between 'younger sections' and the 'older elements' in the Congress, the former led by Subhas Chandra Bose and the latter by Gandhi. Pattabhi, who attended this meeting in early 1924, was deeply moved when he saw Gandhi shedding tears over the unexpected attitude of Dr. Gidwani whom Gandhi had taken for one of his ardent supporters.

Gandhi separated the council party from the Constructive Party and created the All India Spinners' Association at the AICC meeting in Patna in September 1925. This meeting was highlighted by a tussle between the Doctor and Pundit Motilal Nehru. Criticizing the Council-entry advocates, Pattabhi said that the Swaraj Party had betrayed the country's trust. This roused Motilal's indignation to the highest pitch and he threatened to resign from the Congress if such charges were leveled. Pattabhi's comment that resignation was not the remedy enraged Motilal all the more. Gandhi as the Chairman intervened and asked Pattabhi not to go on with his declamation. He mildly rebuked Motilal saying that the Congress was bigger and mightier than any individual. When tempers cooled down, Pattabhi and Motilal exchanged apologies and the latter gave his apology to the Congress. Pattabhi's criticism of the Swaraj Party ended only at that meeting but he continued to attack the Party's policies and leaders. He pointed out that the members of the Swaraj Party violated their own Party's rules. For instance, Motilal, violating the
Party rules, accepted places on the Steel Protection and Skeen Committees appointed by the British Government. He quoted Motilal’s own words to say that Swarajists were ready ‘to sail as near the wind of co-operation as possible.’ He reaffirmed the No-Changers’ confidence in the Programme of Gandhi who ‘kindled in the hearts of the nation the flame of self-help and self-realization.’ Ultimately, said Pattabhi, Gandhi’s Programme was bound to triumph.8

K. Rama Rao, a friend of Jawaharlal Nehru and a former Editor of Nehru’s ‘National Herald,’ recalled an incident in 1928 involving Motilal and Pattabhi to which he was a witness. At Anand Bhawan, Rama Rao, Pattabhi and Maulana Azad were engaged in a talk with Motilal Nehru who was greatly excited about his son Jawaharlal’s ensuing election as Congress President. Motilal turned to Azad and began talking to him in Persian. “Dr. Pattabhi who had a considerable element of irreverent mischief,” wrote Rama Rao, “butted in with a couple of fluent sentences in Telugu as if to tell them that he could also speak in a language they could not understand.” Motilal had his fling: “What is that barbarous language you are talking?” Pattabhi and Rama Rao resented the insult to their mother-tongue. There was no justification for Pattabhi to be crude towards the elder politician. Perhaps, he didn’t approve of Motilal talking in a language that was unintelligible to him. But Pattabhi never tried to conceal his dislike for Motilal’s pride and prejudice which his son Jawaharlal ‘inherited. A letter, which Pattabhi wrote to Motilal Nehru seeking postponement of the A.I.C.C. meeting scheduled to take place in September 1929, contained references to Gandhi’s greatness and the efficacy of Gandhian programmes. These references conform the point that Pattabhi was never tried of proclaiming his loyalty to Gandhi and condemnation of the Swarajists. Such criticism of the elder Nehru by Pattabhi could have had some influence on Jawaharlal Nehru’s mind. Pattabhi made references in his autobiography to his none-too-cordial relations with the Nehrus.

It must, however, be stated that Pattabhi’s opposition to Motilal Nehru’s position in the twenties or to Jawaharlal Nehru’s views later on, was not
dogmatic. At the A.I.C.C meeting in May 1927, for instance, when Motilal moved a resolution commending the constitution of joint electorates, Pattabhi, a protagonist of Hindu-Muslim unity, strongly supported it. Pattabhi held that because of Gandhi's influence there was a change in the temperament and attitude of the Nehrus. Motilal, “though an aristocrat of wealth, yet he recognized under the inspiration of Gandhiji, the need to chasten life and character by passing through the discipline of poverty and self-abnegation.” This description of Motilal by Pattabhi was regarded as a just assessment by the C.P. Ramaswami Iyer. Pattabhi appreciated the services of the Nehru family to the nation. When the elder Nehru gifted away his residence, Anand Bhawan, to the Congress, he aptly commented: “His gift to the Congress of the Anand Bhawan is not his greatest legacy; his greatest gift is the gift of his son.” The gift of Anand Bhawan to the Congress is indeed one of the romances of Congress history.9

Gandhi moved a resolution in favour of complete independence at the Congress session in December. The resolution contained a clause authorizing the President to send the text of the Resolution to the Viceroy 'for such action as he may be pleased to take.'69 Jawaharlal Nehru and Subash Bose moved identical amendments to this Resolution agreeing to no time limit for India's Dominion Status and seeking to delete the clause that gave the President the power to send the text of the Resolution to the Viceroy. The Resolution moved by Gandhi was a compromise arrived at earlier in the Subjects-Committee, between the Independence League led by Subash Bose and the followers of Gandhi. The repudiation of the compromise deeply hurt Gandhi.

Subash Bose led the Leftist attack against Gandhi and the Rightists in this clash between the two emerging groups in the Congress. As stated earlier, Bose claimed to represent the younger generation or the 'New School.' Rejecting Gandhi’s resolution, Bose declared that there was then “the fundamental cleavage between the elder school and the new school of thought in the Congress.” He said “accept my resolution and inspire the younger generation with a new
consciousness." Bose's amendment was defeated amidst 'uproarious scenes.' Making a reference to the generation gap, the President of the Congress session, Motilal Nehru remarked: "Both Sub ash and Jawahar have told you in their speeches on the amendment to Mahatmaji's Resolution that in their opinion we old-age men are no good, are not strong enough and are hopelessly behind the times. There is nothing new in this." That Gandhi was hurt by Bose's remarks was evident from his remarks later. Recommending Jawaharlal Nehru for the Congress President, Gandhi wrote in August 1929: "I know that I am not keeping pace with the march of events. There is a hiatus between the rising generation and me."10

Here, at the 1928 Congress session, as Gandhi came under the attack of Bose and Nehru, Pattabhi provided the Rightist counter-attack to the Leftists. Reminding Nehru and Bose that Gandhi's Resolution was a compromise to which they had agreed earlier, Pattabhi took to task both of them for going back on the promise. He characterized their amendments as 'Tweedledum and Tweedledee.' He criticized Nehru and Bose whose followers, he said, were 'mostly communists.' When Sub ash explained that because of his followers, he was forced to resile from the compromise, Pattabhi quipped that if his followers did not follow him, all that he should have done was to resign his leadership. Pattabhi wrote of the Resolution, later, that it provided everything to everybody---"to the fire eaters it would have independence; to those whose motto is 'festina lente' there is the immediate undertaking to adopt Dominion Status if the proposals in the Nehru Report are accepted by the British Parliament within a stated time. To those who are bent on work for Swaraj there is a splendid Programme of work." This clash with Nehru and Bose who were 'temperamentally and ideologically' opposed to him was not the only one he had with them.

Following the release of the Nehru Committee Report, an all-Party conference was summoned in Andhra on 17-11-1928 at Nandyala. At this conference, T. Prakasam moved a resolution supporting the report. Although, he said he neither supported nor opposed it, Pattabhi, criticized the Swarajists and Motilal
Nehru for saying that neither Dominion Status nor Independence could be expected within the next few years. Dominion Status, he argued, was suited to Australia and New Zealand who were the kith and kin of the British, but not to India whose interests were in conflict with those of the British. He added that the hopes of the Nehru Report were ‘moonshine’. Just as the people were afraid of uttering the word Swadeshi in 1906 and Swaraj in 1920, they were now scared to talk of independence. Because of the Swarajists, India, he regretted, was not able to wake up from the hypnosis into which she had been dulled. Addressing a public meeting at Madras he asked all the 316 Congress members of the legislatures in India to resign at once and make the Viceroy tell the British that ‘all is not well with India.’ The British would yield not ‘to threats or to importunate mendicancy,’ but only to mass resignations and a spirit of Party solidarity.

Pattabhi was surprised when Gandhi lent his support to the Nehru Committee Report. Pattabhi asked Gandhi: “what is it that has brought you again out of your den? Is it again to coquet with the Swaraj Party because you were in love with Pundit Motilal Nehru?” Gandhi retorted that it was “no lingering love but the burning love for my dear comrade.” Gandhi said that he attached importance to the original resolution.11

According to Pattabhi, Motilal Nehru and Gandhi were particular that Jawaharlal Nehru should become the Congress President in 1929. Pattabhi said that Patel had greater support than Nehru in the Provinces and would have become the Congress President but for Gandhi. Pattabhi said that Gandhi persuaded Patel to withdraw and helped Nehru to become the President. Nehru “thus occupied a place of destiny from which he had the great god fortune to guide the larger destinies of the nation.” Pattabhi did not approve of the way he was made President. Even Patel, he said, agreed to the choice with a certain ‘underlying doubt.’ Six years later when Gandhi desired Nehru to continue in office for a period of five or six years, many Congressmen were displeased. Efforts were made during 1935-
36 by some Congressmen, notably the Rightists, to get Raja Gopalachari elected Congress President as Rajendra Prasad’s term was coming to a close and as Nehru’s name was being mentioned for the office. Rajagopalachari expressed his unwillingness to accept the offer. He and Rajendra Prasad knew that Gandhi desired that Nehru should become the Congress President in 1936. That was a time when Rajendra Prasad and other Rightists clashed with Nehru ‘for his socialist speeches and for weakening the Congress.....’ Jawaharlal him-self seemed keen on becoming the Congress President. He felt that the big businessmen and Zamindars who were ‘influencing the Congress’ wanted to check him. Nehru, who was then in Switzerland with his ailing wife, said in a letter that the Congress was suffering from “non-action” and “non-thought.” It was, according to Nehru “in an ideological flux” Being a Rightists, Pattabhi was displeased with the conferment of offices on Nehru in 1936. He said that it was ‘not an elegant spectacle.’ The death of Kamala Nehru could be a reason for Nehru getting the office that year, according to Pattabhi. It was to mitigate Nehru’s grief that he was made the President that year. Pattabhi had high regard for Mrs. Nehru. He wrote in his autobiography that Mrs. Nehru with her little daughter made an indelible impression in Congress circles and won the admiration of one and all. Although Pattabhi did not approve of the way in which Nehru became the Congress President both in 1929 and in 1936, he, as a loyal Congress man, refuted allegations in newspaper that Gandhi foisted Nehru on the Congress.12

The year 1929 was another important year in the political career of Pattabhi. Gandhi was impressed by the success of the Khadi movement. Khaddar collections in Andhra went beyond Gandhi’s expectations. Pattabhi, who was entrusted with the control and administration of the Andhra Branch of the All India Spinners Association, contributed much to the success of the Khadi movement. That year Pattabhi was taken into the Congress Working Committee in the place of Andhra leader Bulusu Sambamurthi who was in jail. Pattabhi’s association with the Working Committee lasted till 1952, as a regular member for some years and as a special invitee in other years.
As a member of the Working Committee, Pattabhi impressed the members with his constructive proposals. In the first year of his membership, he brought up a resolution suggesting the publication of a Congress Manual. Pattabhi said that it was necessary to bring out a Manual comprising the various political, administrative and cultural problems so as to enlighten the people on several question and problems being faced in the Swaraj movement. Pattabhi wanted the AICC to bear the expenses in this regard. Commending Pattabhi's resolution, Madan Mohan Malaviya said that it was 'one of the most practical proposals before the meeting' and that the Congress should ungrudgingly vote money for the same. Pattabhi also recommended the setting up of a Research Department for the Congress. The Congress accepted Pattabhi's suggestions vis-à-vis the manual and the Research Department. In that year at the AICC meeting held at Bombay, Pattabhi's resolution that a budget stating the income and expenditure of the A.I.C.C. Be prepared by the Working Committee was also passed. Pattabhi was said to be an 'excellent committee-man.' He was a member of many Congress committees and along with Rajagopalachari was a special invitee to the meetings of the Working Committee whenever he was not a member of it.13

There was a crisis in the Bengal Provincial Congress in November 1929 owing to rifts between J.M. Sen Gupta, follower of Gandhi, and Sub has Bose, Kiran Sankar Roy and others who 'opposed Gandhian views.' Pattabhi was deputed to inquire into and report on the disputes in the Bengal Congress. When he reached Calcutta, on this mission, each party wanted that he should stay as its guest. But he stayed in a hotel. The day after the inquiry began, an abusive note saying that Pattabhi was an ignoramus and did not know the procedure of enquiry, appeared in a local newspaper. There was also attempt to assault Pattabhi. Bose's group did not attend the enquiry. Pattabhi, however, completed the enquiry, even though one group did not attend it and sent the report to the Congress President. Even Motilal Nehru's visit to Calcutta could not help the Congress in achieving a compromise. At the Subjects-Committee, later, there were many angry
exchanges between Bose and Motilal on his issue. Nothing was heard of this case, thanks to the Salt Satyagraha that intervened. Subash Bose and Kiran Sankar Roy were arrested on a sedition case and the Congress did not bother itself with the Bengal Congress problem anymore. An effect of this enquiry was that a majority of the Bengali Congressmen became hostile to Pattabhi. It had a bearing on the Congress Presidential election involving Pattabhi in both 1939 and 1948. Most of the Congressmen from Bengal voted against Pattabhi mainly because he opposed Bengal’s hero Bose in 1939 and partly because many of them had uniformly adopted an unfavorable attitude towards Pattabhi.

For the Doctor, who had given up practice, the trips to the A.I.C.C meetings were quite expensive and he spent nearly thirty thousand rupees on his tours as a Congressman. In the early days of 1930 Pattabhi wrote in his ‘Janmabhoomi,’ articles describing the history of the Salt Tax since 1836. This led to an impression that Pattabhi suggested the idea of Salt Satyagraha to Gandhi. In fact, Gandhi thought of it about ten years before it was implemented. At the Provincial Congress Committee meeting in April 1930, cial Congress Committee meeting in April 1930, Pattabhi’s plea that Salt Satyagraha should be offered at various places in Andhra was accepted. He convinced the meeting that Salt Satyagraha would divide the forces of the enemy. His home town Masulipatnam of course one of the places selected for offering Satyagraha. Pattabhi’s dynamic campaign in favour of Salt Satyagraha surprised many in Andhra where, certain sections of the people said that he was afraid of Jail. If it were a fact he would not have written so boldly in newspapers denouncing the British policies. He was only following Gandhi’s advice, “Don’t court jail, you may not avoid it.” He quietly bore the insinuation. In April 1930, he was imprisoned for the first time, for taking part in Salt Satyagraha. That marked the end of his weekly ‘Janmabhoomi.’ He spent his term in jail, “half the time from illness and the other half in recovering from it.” He criticized the British administration for treating ‘C’ class prisoners (he was an ‘A’ class prisoner) worse than murderers. But in difference to Gandhi’s directive, he did not complain about this treatment, and maintained strict discipline in jail. He was again in jail from 5-1-1932 to
15-9-1933 and from 3-10-1933 to 28-3-1934, during 1940-41, in August 1942 and June 1945. Pattabhi spent quite a few years in jail.

It was said that it was Pattabhi who suggested to Gandhi that he should write personally to Lord Irwin as there was no question of a prestige for a Satyagrahi. Gandhi wrote to the Viceroy who replied that he would be glad to see him. Pattabhi praised Lord Irwin's intentions and his efforts in breaking the deadlock. But he asked what could the Viceroy do when the bureaucracy was undoing all that Irwin did and planned to do? The British knew that their commercial and trade interest were going to suffer on account of the Gandhi-Irwin Pact. The emergence of the Conservative Government was another reason for the said failure of the Pact. Pattabhi said that the bureaucracy was trying to destroy the work of Gandhi. He repeated his charge that huge sums of money were being spent on the army. The Government adopted one type of service rules for Indian Civil Servants and another for their own Civil Servants. The whole system breathed of suspicion, distrust and superiority.¹⁴

In referring to the events of 1931, one must inevitably turn to the Karachi session of the Congress which began on March 31, 1931. Pattabhi took a leading part in the deliberations. But as he was now a member of the Working Committee, there was a strain of restraint in his speeches. Writing on the leading personalities at Karachi the 'Swarajya' observed: "The fact that Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya was seated on the dais and he belonged to the Treasury Bench, deprived the debates of some excellent sniping for which the doctor is famous." When Nehru introduced the Resolution on agrarian formula, Pattabhi suggested that in view of its importance, the subject should have a more leisurely discussion. Gandhi, then, suggested that a Committee to go into this question should be formed, and accordingly the Public Debt Committee, with Pattabhi as a member, came into being.
A controversy arose during 1930-31 about the colours of the national flag. The Sikhs objected to the communal assortment of colours in the national flag and made a representation to Gandhi. The Sikhs demanded that the colour saffron should be included in the flag. Pattabhi supported the Sikhs demanded. He said that Saffron, or kesari represented Indian tradition and therefore should find a place in the national flag. The Congress Working Committee felt that there should be no room for communal overtones in the colours of the flag. Moreover, there was dissatisfaction over the fact that the flag bore resemblance to the flags of several countries. To go into the question of national flag, a committee consisting of seven members with Pattabhi as its convener was appointed in April 1931. Pattabhi collected evidence from various quarters. He offered three points: (1) regarding the feeling of the community or group about the design of the flag; (2) suggestions to make the flag more popular; (3) any defect or drawback that should be rectified. The report of Pattabhi was submitted in July 1931. While recommending the substitution of red by saffron, Pattabhi said that the Congress should “declare that the colours of the national flag bear no communal significance.” The report was accepted, and a new significance was given to the three colours.

Pattabhi was also a member of the Fundamental Rights Committee and Economic Programme Committee constituted in 1931. The Fundamental Rights Committee held some of its meetings in Pattabhi’s home town Masulipatnam. It was here that the Committee fixed the salaries of the ministers at rupees 500/- each. The Committee modified the Karachi Congress resolution on Fundamental Rights and Duties. The Committee recommended such reform measures as land reforms protection of the culture and language of the minorities in the different linguistic provinces. T. Prakasam called it ‘Sovietism in disguise.’ Although a right-winger, seldom on good terms with the Socialists and Communists, Pattabhi advocated several economic reforms. He used to describe himself as good a Socialist as anybody among the Congress Socialists. That was because he, like the Socialists, believed in a redistribution of property. Pattabhi was a Gandhian
in terms of ideology though he did not subscribe entirely to the nuances of the Gandhian doctrine of anarchism.

After serving a term of imprisonment, Pattabhi came back to the Working Committee. According to Pattabhi, his places on the Working Committee was secure as long as Rajendra Prasad was the President. Prasad even offered the Secretaryship of the Congress to Pattabhi in 1934. But Pattabhi rejected it saying that a younger man might be chosen for it. Kripalani, nine years younger than Pattabhi, was made the Secretary then. Kripalani had a long tenure as the Secretary. Pattabhi said that the main reason for his rejection was that Nehru who was the dominant figure in the Congress might soon become the Congress President and that he and Nehru might not get on well. Pattabhi wrote that Nehru “who combined superb intellect and high character with a furious temper like mine was only too likely to come into frequent conflict with me.” Rajendra Prasad guessed Pattabhi’s reason right and did not press him to accept it. But Prasad did not want the Doctor’s abilities to go unutilized and put him on the Working Committee. However, when Nehru became Congress President in 1936, Pattabhi was dropped from the Committee. Pattabhi himself said in 1936, after Nehru became the President that he was stepping down from the Working Committee in view of his disapproval of the Congress reversing its stand on Council entry and office-acceptance. It was, however, obvious from subsequent events that neither Nehru was keen on including Pattabhi in the Working Committee nor was Pattabhi eager to serve on it under Nehru’s leadership. It can be assumed that Pattabhi’s position was safe in the Congress so long as the rightists dominated.¹⁶

Being a Gandhian, Pattabhi suggested that an organization for the resuscitation of village life should be started. He strongly supported the resolution tabled at the Bombay Congress in 1934 favoring the creation of the All India Village Industries Association. Supporting the resolution, Pattabhi said that the village industries were dying because of competition with machine made
goods. The All India Village Industries Association came into being that year following the approval of the Congress. The object of the Association which was born in December 1934 was village reorganization and reconstruction, including the revival, encouragement and improvement of village industries and the moral and physical advancement of the village of India.” Pattabhi continued to plead for more progressive steps to reconstruct village life. His idea was that the people living in rural areas should find a place in the national programme.17

‘The Congress Historian’

In 1935, the Golden Jubilee year of the Congress, the Congress Working Committee appointed a subcommittee consisting of Rajendra Prasad, Pattabhi and others to suggest steps in connection with the celebration of the Fiftieth anniversary of the Congress. On the suggestion of Rajendra Prasad, Pattabhi offered to give the manuscripts of the ‘History of the Congress’ which he had written while in jail. Pattabhi requested Rajendra Prasad to go through them. With Prasad approving of the work in general, the Congress Working Committee initially sanctioned Rs.6,000/- towards the publication charges of the book. The writing of this work was not undertaken with a set purpose. It “was the unwitting result of the scribbling of idle hours and notes of lessons given by him to the students of the Andhra Jateeya Kalasala.” He thought of bringing out a small book out of the sketches on some prominent personalities written by him. It ultimately grew into a voluminous work on the Congress. He did not consult any reference books except Congress bulletins. The work was completed in less than two months period before Pattabhi made a formal offer of it to the Congress Secretary, Krishna Das.

A major handicap that affected the publication of the book was that as some portions of it were out, pressures mounted on the author Pattabhi and Congress President Rajendra Prasad regarding the interpretation of some events. For instances, some Maharashtrians complained that Pattabhi’s description of the
Surat incident was 'a little against Lokmanya Tilak' and partial to the moderates. Similarly, some Bengal Congressmen alleged that Pattabhi had made 'reflections on C.R. Das and had not done justice to Bengal leaders.' In such cases, Rajendra Prasad suggested either revision of the chapters concerned or consultation with the Congressmen who complained so as to steer the work clear of controversy as much as possible. Prasad took much interest in the work because it was being published in the name of the Congress. In writing it, Pattabhi agreed to the suggestions made by the Congress President. Rajendra Prasad said that Pattabhi had given him 'full liberty to alter or modify any portion' and that he used this permission 'to not an inconsiderable extent.'

Notwithstanding certain handicaps and problems, the 'History of the Congress' (Volume I), describing the origins of the freedom struggle and the history of the Congress from 1885 to 1935 came out in 1936 at the low price of Rs. 2/8 per copy. The Congress at its 49th session formally thanked the 'official historian' for the earnest zeal with which he had done the work. The bulky volume containing over a thousand pages was translated into all the major Indian languages. The English edition sold over ten thousand copies in the first few years of the publication of the work.

The "History of the Congress," the second volume, covering the following twelve years, came out in 1947 and was by no standards a historical masterpiece. Pattabhi, its author, as Rajendra Prasad observed in the Foreword to the book, was "not a detached historian writing after the events and basing his conclusions on cold recorded facts." He himself played "no inconsiderable part in the later phases" of the development of the Congress. As such, he was not a historian writing in a detached manner. Objectivity, however, was not sacrificed and the book was a very useful production. The author glorified Gandhi, his hero. This weakness is found in every writing of Pattabhi on Gandhi. The Chapters of the book as Rajendra Prasad was told by some Congressmen were too long. Pattabhi's answer was that when the history of the national movement was being covered, it was necessary to have long chapters. It was, however, unfortunate
that Pattabhi made very few references to his own contribution to the freedom struggle. The book was criticized as an 'unsatisfactory' work doing scant justice to the contribution of various provinces to the nationalist movement. It was said that the work was beyond the power of an individual, and a Board of Editors with Pattabhi as the Chairman, would have done a better job of it. Among its strong critics was J.B. Kripalani, who perhaps not noticing Pattabhi, said on one occasion, "Where is that wretched publication, History of the Congress? I have not seen a copy yet." And Seth Jamanlal Bajaj threw the book down, when he could not see his name in it. He regretted his action later, when he found quite a few references to his name. It is, however, good as a source book on Congress history. Dr. Radhakrishnan regarded it as 'a standard history of the Congress.'

Pattabhi translated Nehru's autobiography at Nehru's request. He wrote voluminously on different topics from 1910 till his death in 1959. Some of his works were lacking in a critical approach and were overloaded with metaphors.

At the Lucknow Congress session of the Congress in 1936, the question of retaining proportional representation regarding elections to the A.I.C.C. came up for discussion and voting. Nehru, supported by the Socialists, pleaded for its retention on the ground that it embodied a principle for minority representation. Pattabhi opposed it saying that its retention would lead to corruption. The house passed its retention by 190 votes to 160. It was a triumph for the Socialists. It was a period of increasing clashes between the Right and Left Wings. Pattabhi's criticism of Nehru was that Nehru in contravention of the Working Committee's earlier decision on proportional representation got it restored at the Congress session.

The all-important issue at the Lucknow session under Nehru's presidency was that of acceptance of office and formation of ministries in the provinces. The only person, opposed to the acceptance of office was Pattabhi. According to Pattabhi, C. Rajagopalachari "who held the most pronounced opinions in favour of the issue," persuaded Pattabhi not to oppose the proposition and if it...
was not possible, to be at least, neutral. Pattabhi did not speak much at the Working Committee meeting. Meanwhile, Nehru declared, on another matter, that he was opposed to the resolution which was sought to do away with proportional representation in the elections to the A.I.C.C. Nehru said that as president he would reject the view of the Working Committee. This incited Pattabhi to oppose strongly at the A.I.C.C. Meeting the acceptance of office by Congressmen. Moulana Azad tried in vain to persuade Pattabhi not to oppose the Working Committee decision. Pattabhi said that if it was right for Nehru to oppose what the Committee had passed earlier and get proportional representation restored, he was equally right in opposing the decision of the Working Committee. Using gentle words, Azad pacified Pattabhi and the matter was dropped, but not before Pattabhi had a dig at the Socialists. The Congress, he said, was being ruled by Socialists—\textit{Socialists in belief, conduct and character.}

An unswerving \textit{`No-Changer,'} Pattabhi stuck to the Gandhian directive though Gandhi approved of Council-entry by 1934. Gandhi said that despite his disbelief in the Legislature as an instrument for obtaining Swaraj, he still favored Council-entry by 1934 because he wanted to give the \textit{`Pro-Changers'} a chance to try their methods. Gandhi, however, asked the \textit{`No-Changers'} not to change their stand.

Speaking on the Congress resolution favoring Council-entry and office acceptance, Pattabhi said that the resolution was the saddest disappointment to him. Pattabhi’s argument was that the Congress by refusing to accept office could force the Governors into a position of helplessness leading to constitutional breakdown. Pattabhi said that administration could be paralyzed by rejecting office. There were serious clashes between him and Rajagopalachari at the Congress session and with Prakasam in the A.I.C.C., over the question office acceptance. Pattabhi said that as it was office without power the Congressmen would be helpless against the Governors. When Rajagopalachari, the Madras premier, was unable to fulfill some of the election promises, \textit{“the blunt and logical Pattabhi”}
pointed out 'how there was a retreat from the election thunders' made by the 'Pro-Changres.'

The Haripura Congress, presided over by Subhas Chandra Bose, appointed the Constitution Committee with Pattabhi, Nehru, Kripalani and some others as members. The Committee discussed the advisability or otherwise of indirect election and the means to be adopted to ensure genuine membership and proper elections in the Congress organization. Among the suggestions made by the Committee were indirect election of delegates to the Congress, election of delegates by the District Congress Committee, enrolment of members each year, and the preparation and publication of the lists of members by the District Congress Committees. The Working Committee that year nominated Pattabhi to visit Ceylon to study the conditions of Indians there and establish contact with them. A request to send a Congressman was earlier made by the Ceylonese Indians. But the following year, the year in which Bose and Pattabhi contested the Congress President ship, the A.I.C.C. Changed the nomination and asked Nehru to visit Ceylon.

Defeat at Tripuri

The President ship of the Congress was the highest honor an Indian could aspire to, in pre-Independence India. As Gopala Krishna Gokhale said, the President ship of the Congress was the “highest distinction which it is the power of our countrymen” to bestow upon anyone. Pattabhi had the legitimate ambition to become the Congress President. He, however, did not hope to become a candidate for the office in 1939. By a strange thrust of circumstances Pattabhi was thrown into the whirlpool of Party politics and election controversy in the fateful year of 1939. In the first contested election since 1920 and one of the most bitterly fought election in the history of the Congress Party, Pattabhi, a candidate of Gandhi and representative of the ‘Right wing,’ lost to Sub ash Chandra Bose by a margin of 203, out of nearly 3,000 votes.
To begin with, Gandhi wanted Nehru to continue as Congress President for at least five or six years. But others in the Working Committee, notably Patel, did not like the idea. It was said that Sub has Bose’s mother went to Gandhi before the beginning of the Haripura Congress session and said that she would die if her son did not become the Congress President. Nehru agreed to make way for Bose on the condition that he would become the Chairman of the proposed Planning Commission. According to Pattabhi, the dispute between the private and public sector just then began to raise its head. After some months of ‘unusual silence’ in 1938, Sub has Bose sent for Pattabhi one day and asked the Doctor to be ‘with him in views and voting at the meetings of the Working Committee.’ Pattabhi replied that since he joined the working committee in 1929, there was no occasion for voting on any national basis. The irony of fate was that Sub has Bose called Pattabhi aside and told him that he intended to stand for the President ship of the Tripuri session also.

The affairs of the Andhra Provincial Congress Committee of which Pattabhi was the President demanded his immediate presence. As he was getting ready to leave for Bezwada after attending the Working Committee meeting at Bardoli in January 1939, Gandhi called him to say that he should postpone his journey. When it was decided to put up Moulana Azad for the President ship, Gandhi revealed to Pattabhi why he asked him to postpone the journey: “I wanted to place the Crown of Thorns on your head if the Moulana did not agree to contest. But luckily he consented last night and therefore you are free. You may go home to-night.” Pattabhi remarked that on whomsoever he might place the Crown, it was really on his (Gandhi’s) head. The question why the re-election of Bose was opposed, is not easy to answer. Bose’s tenure of President ship did not produce a favorable impression in the Congress circles. With his extremist views, he did not see eye to eye with Gandhi. Not only the leaders of the ‘Right Wing’, but several others including Nehru opposed his re-election. There was, therefore, confusion in the Congress when Bose decided to stand again for the
President ship against the will of Gandhi. The practice till then was to elect Gandhi’s nominee. Gandhi was pained at this ‘revolt’ in the Party. Even Rabindranath Tagore, it seems, was not in favour of Bose’s re-election. Tagore felt that there were no special circumstances that warranted his re-election.23

Gandhi tried to persuade Azad to agree to become the Congress President in 1939. According to Pattabhi, Gandhi suggested Azad’s name so that communal tension might ease. Gandhi was determined to end ‘growing indiscipline’ and ‘corruption’ in the Congress. But once Azad expressed his inability to contest the election, Gandhi felt that Pattabhi was his next choice. In a letter to Nehru on 21-12-1938, Gandhi wrote thus: “Moulana Saheb does not want the Crown of Thorns. If you want to try again, please do. If you won’t or he won’t listen, Pattabhi seems to be the only choice.” Perhaps, knowing Gandhi’s mind, the Right wing leaders also resolved to put up Pattabhi in the event of Azad not agreeing to contest. The element of surprises as far as Pattabhi was concerned lay in that he believed that Azad had agreed to contest the election. He wrote to Rajendra Prasad on 17-1-1939 that Azad agreed to contest after ‘considerable hesitation.’ The very same day Pattabhi, who was at Bombay, expressed surprise when he heard that his name was sponsored. Immediately, he made a press statement that he was withdrawing from the contest. A few days later Azad prevailed upon Pattabhi to withdraw his earlier statement. Stating that he was withdrawing on grounds of health, Azad gave a telegram on January 23, 1939 commending Pattabhi’s candidacy. Later, when Pattabhi expressed surprise over Azad’s withdrawal and the selection of himself, Gandhi said to him: “Yes, I know it I know that you did not know at all about your nomination.”

Gandhi wanted to give the ‘honor’ to Pattabhi in recognition of his services to the cause of the states ‘Peoples’ movement. Azad succeeded not only in withdrawing his nomination but in persuading Pattabhi to stand for the office. Azad said: “I am glad to stay that I have prevailed upon him (Pattabhi) not to do so (withdraw). He is an old member of the Congress and an indefatigable worker.” In his statement on the eve of the election, Pattabhi said, that if
elected, his election would be an appreciation of his effort on behalf of the States.

With Pattabhi’s acceptance of the nomination, the battle between the two wings in the Congress took a serious turn. Clashes between Bose and the Right wing leaders led by Patel and Rajendra Prasad became open and virulent. Bose said of the election that it was a case for clarifying issues. He threw a challenge to the Right wing saying, “let the Right wing who are in a decided majority in the Congress make a gesture to the Left wing by accepting a leftist candidate even at this late hour…… The President is like the Prime Minister of Britain or President of America.” Patel rejected Bose’s charge. Nehru also disagreed with Bose on the issues involved in the election. For Nehru, it was more a clash of personalities than issues. This statement was not only resented in Congress circles but was criticized by impartial newspapers like ‘The Hindu.’ Rejecting Bose’s plea that a Left-winger should be chosen in the interests of national unity and solidarity, ‘The Hindu’ said that Bose was responsible for the split in the Congress. The President ship, the paper added, was an office of honor and Bose ‘was trying to reduce it to the status of a mere Party.’

Bose said he opposed Pattabhi because the latter was a ‘pro-federations it,’ a ‘No-Changer’ and a ‘Rightist.’ On this the ‘Servant of India’ observed that despite ‘Sub has Babu’s avowal, Dr. Pattabhi’s election will not compromise the attitude of the Congress on the question of federation any the less.’ Commending Pattabhi’s candidature “The Hindu” in its editorial said that it was ungracious of Bose to suggest that he alone was sincere in opposing Federation. “We fully endorse”, continued the paper, “the tribute that Sardar Patel and other leaders have paid Dr. Pattabhi in their statement in which they point out that he is one of the oldest members of the Working Committee and had a long and unbroken record of public service to his credit.’ We would earnestly suggest to Mr. Bose that it would be graceful as well as statesman-like for him to withdraw his candidature and allow Dr. Pattabhi to be unanimously elected.”24
The members of the Working Committee, except Nehru, in a joint statement criticized Bose's statements and endorsed Pattabhi's Candidature. The signatories to this statement were Patel, Rajendra Prasad, Jairamdas, Daulatram, Kripalani, Shankar Rao Devo and Bhulabhai Desai. In a rejoinder, Subash condemned the 'Right Wing' and said that it would make the 'radical elements' more suspicious of it. He said that Pattabhi's election would not inspire the country's confidence. Rajendra Prasad and Patel hit back saying that there was no question of Right and Left. Even the soft-spoken Prasad was highly critical of Bose and in a sharp reply he said, "It is wrong to impugn their (voter's) integrity or independence if they choose to vote for Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya."

Jawaharlal Nehru in a separate statement rebuked Bose saying that no principle or Programme was at stake in the election. "Whoever wins," he said "the Federation loses." He thought it fit to pay a tribute to Azad's qualities of head and heart. Surely, Azad deserved Nehru's tribute. But he did not need it then. Nehru was obviously waiting for the Right Wing to defeat Bose so that his position would become stronger. It was well-known that he and Bose were not getting on well. But Nehru refused to sign the statement prepared by the six members of the Working Committee. He did not utter a word about Pattabhi nor did he say to whom, at least, the vote should be given. The Right Wing was unhappy with Nehru. Nehru's postures offended both the Right and the Left Wings. To Bose and the Leftists, Nehru's opposition to Bose's re-election came as a shock. Obviously referring to Nehru's statement, Bose said that 'unkindest cuts' came from a quarter from which they were least expected. The Socialists felt that Nehru let them down. Their camp showed signs of divided loyalty and Socialist vacillation seemed to have begun then. The majority of the Working Committee members were disappointed that Nehru did not sign their statement supporting Pattabhi. Perhaps, Nehru knew that so long as Gandhi was favorable to him, the Right Wing could do nothing against him.
The election revealed a strange pattern of voting behavior. Out of the 2,975 votes cast, Bose polled 1,579 and Pattabhi got 1,376 votes. About 20% of votes in Bose’s home province Bengal went to Pattabhi and a little more than 10% went to Bose from Pattabhi’s home province, Andhra. Prafulla Chandra Gosh and others supported Pattabhi in Bengal, while Prakasam’s group in Andhra voted for Bose. Bose received the support of big States. Bengal gave him 404, United Provinces and Punjab 269 each. The surprise was that Southern Provinces like Karnataka and Kerala, for whose formation Pattabhi fought for over three decades, let him down. There were groups in the Southern provinces and they failed to achieve unanimity. Karnataka gave Bose 106 out of 147 and Kerala 80 out of 98. Added to these, Madras gave Bose more than 50% of its votes. In the Congress Party of Tamil Nadu, there were two groups, one headed by Satyamurthi and the other by Muthuranga Mudaliar and Bhaktavatsalam. It was said that the South failed the Southerner.

The election came to an end with Pattabhi losing by 203 votes. But the sensational controversy did not end there. Gandhi was deeply hurt and issued a statement on the result. He said: “Since I was instrumental in inducing Dr. Pattabhi not to withdraw his name as a candidate when Moulana Saheb withdrew, the defeat is more mine than his.... I rejoice in this defeat. I am nothing if I do not represent definite principles and policy.” Gandhi even felt that there were bogus members in the Congress and that sincere Congressmen should keep out of the organisation. His anguish could be better described in his own words: “It has been since 1920 like an army in action, having one policy and one aim and exact discipline. All this must go if the protestors can have their own way.” It was Gandhi’s only ‘defeat’ since 1923.25

Shanker Rao Deo, a close friend of Pattabhi, lamented: “there can be no room for us, Gandhists--the so-called Rightists, in the Congress cabinet now.” Gandhi was himself so upset that he at once decided to completely dissociate himself from the Congress. In a letter to Nehru on February 3, 1939, Gandhi said:
"After the election and the manner in which it was fought, I feel that I shall serve the country better by absenting myself from the Congress at the forthcoming session. This was followed by the resignation, in February 1939, of twelve out of the fifteen members, including Nehru, from the Working Committee. Bose knew he could do little without Gandhi’s help. There was disagreement over choosing personnel for the new Working Committee. Bose was ill when the Tripuri Congress session began in a tense atmosphere in March April, 1939. Gobind Ballabh Pant moved a resolution reiterating the Congress’s confidence in Gandhian leadership and policies. He further said that the Working Committee should be appointed ‘according to the wishes of Mahatma Gandhi’ as ‘Gandhi alone can lead the Congress and country to victory.’The Left Wing was put on the defensive. Bose asked Gandhi to suggest names to the Working Committee. Gandhi in his letter to Bose expressed his inability to do so. In his letter, Gandhi said, “knowing your own views and knowing how you and most of the members differ in fundamentals, it seems to me that if I give you names it would be an imposition on you. You are free to choose your own Committee.” Gandhi unequivocally said to Bose: “so far as I can judge the old colleagues whom you consider as Rightists will not serve on your cabinet.” Bose replied: “Ordinarily Mahatmaji’s word is law to me, but where principles are involved, I sometimes feel unable to accept his advice or suggestion.”

The crisis deepened with charges and counter charges being made by both groups. It ended with the resignation of Bose as Congress President and the assumption of office by Rajendra Prasad. Nehru who kept away from much of the controversy saying that he was “too much of an individualist,” benefited from the fall of Bose. There was no rival left in the leftist group. He knew that his leadership would be strong only inside the Congress which had a strong peasant base.26

Pattabhi was not upset by his defeat and the unfortunate controversy. He held Bose in high esteem, although he politically differed from him. Bose’s manifesto, he said though he was not correct in saying so, placed his candidature on the high
pedestal of a principle and not merely of a personality. He praised Bose's colleagues, said Pattabhi, did not share his principles and policies could not detract from the glory of his adventure, Bose generated a new faith and fervor and a new philosophy.

The outbreak of the World War in September 1939 led Gandhi to think that Jawaharlal Nehru should from then on be the President of the Congress. According to Pattabhi, Gandhi suggested at the Working Committee meeting in December 1939, that Rajendra Prasad might resign and that Nehru be made the temporary President at least till the Ramgrah Congress session. Pattabhi objected to this suggestion from Gandhi, saying that even if Prasad resigned, it was not for the Working Committee to appoint a substitute in his place. Several members of the Working Committee stoutly opposed Pattabhi. After a great deal of discussion, Pattabhi's point was found to be constitutionally correct. Only the A.I.C.C. Could fill an interim vacancy and not the Working Committee. Pattabhi himself solved the problems by suggesting a way out. He said that an adhoc War Sub-Committee could be appointed with Nehru as the Chairman to deal with the War situation and to hold talks with the Viceroy. This suggestion was hailed by all sides. Rajendra Prasad, Pattabhi said, was a little embarrassed by all this discussion.

"This arrangement," wrote Pattabhi, "served useful purpose later too when the Viceroy Lord Wavell sought the assistance of the Congress to form the sought the assistance of the Congress to form the Central Government and Lord Wavell's letter was then addressed to Sri Jawaharlalji on August 7, 1946." Then Azad was the President of the Congress. Pattabhi said that the personality of Nehru enhanced the prestige of the office, and during his office, the President of the War Committee was more important than the Congress President. The Congress affairs, observed Pattabhi, were conducted through a "moral or spiritual head (Gandhi) an intellectual head (Nehru) working along with the former and a constitutional or de jure head (President)."
As in the past, Rajendra Prasad as Congress president took Pattabhi into the Working Committee. The C.W.C. appointed Pattabhi to go into the election disputes in Kerala province in August 1940.

There was considerable disappointment in Andhra in particular, that Pattabhi, the victim of the Tripuri election, was not chosen even in the following year at Ramgrah. Gandhi, in fact, wanted to make Pattabhi the Congress President in 1940. When he asked at the Working Committee meeting in December, 1939 about the following year’s candidate, Nehru forestalled Gandhi’s move by saying: “why, there is the Moulana. He should have presided last year. He must be elected this year.” This forced Gandhi to turn to Moulana and ask: “What do you say, Moulana Saheb?” Moulana asked for a day’s time. The next day, much to the surprise of many including Gandhi, he went and told Gandhi: “This is your order. I have to obey it.” Rajagopalachari, who was there, felt that Gandhi must have been astonished at this. In a conversation with Pattabhi later, Rajagopalachari said: “Do you know Pattabhi what happened this morning? Gandhi never expected that the Maulana would accept. He expected that he would say haw and hum and then he would take advantage and finally excuse the Moulana and mention your name.” Gandhi’s plan was dropped from the Working Committee also of which he had become a member during Rajendra Prasad’s tenure following Bose’s resignation.

An anti-Communist

All through his life, Pattabhi was an avowed ‘enemy’ of Communism. He expressed his disapproval of the Communist methods so openly that he was criticized as a ‘reactionary’ and unprogressive leader. He was one of the earliest of Indian leaders and the most was one of the earliest of Indian leaders and the most consistent of them in opposing Communism. As early as 1929, when the Communist Party was raising its head in India, he wrote: “We are confronted with a new Party. It not only aims at subversion of the existing government but
also at the existing order of society. It wants the acceptance of a number of tenets based on Socialism which are destructive of ideas of profit and property.” He wanted India to resist the spread of Communist ideas which were ‘like an infectious disease whose bacilli thrive on a favorable nidus.’ The doctor prescribed: “Make the Indian soil unfavorable to Communism, by so preparing it, as to knock out capitalism in land, in goods, in raw materials and in food production—all achieved through Non-violence; and Communism does not spread its tentacles round India.”

As the President of the Andhra provincial Congress Committee, as stated earlier, he debarred P. Sundarayya from contesting the A.I.C.C. delegate ship from Kovur constituency on the ground that Sundarayya believed in violence and concealed a great deal of dangerous literature. Pattabhi was maligned for this act as playing into hands of the police and the British imperialists.’ He did not have faith in the Andhra Socialists either. In December 1938, he said that the Andhra Socialists who were ‘pretending’ to work as Congress Socialist Party were really Communists. As such, they stood for violence.

Pattabhi, whose hatred for Communists was almost pathological, held that Communists were helpful to the autocratic, regime of the Nizam of Hyderabad. As a member of the Standing Committee of the A.I.S.P.C. he got a resolution passed in 1946 condemning the role of the Communists in Hyderabad, as being antinational.

He often referred to the ‘growing menace’ of Communism. In Vijay Wada, the stronghold of Communists, he addressed a public meeting at which he asked the people to check the Communist influence without mercy. Every house should become a fort and every person irrespective of sex should become a soldier to meet the Communist challenge.222 With their growing strength in Burma and China, the Communists wanted to sweep across India also. The Communists butted in to start strife’s and prevent the export of raw materials to Europe, possibly to sabotage the Marshall Plan. The revolts in Burma, Malaya, Indonesia
and Vietnam, then were inspired by the decisions taken by the Communists in India. If Non-violence failed to drive out Communism, Pattabhi said that even violence would be justified.

Pattabhi believed that India must be saved from the danger of Communism at any cost. "The Swan of India," he metaphorically remarked, "has to separate the milk of democratic urge from the water of Communist revolt." His abhorrence of Communism was yet another reason for his dislike of Nehru. He was of opinion that Nehru had deep Communist leanings—possibly the result of the latter's Russian tour in 1929. Pattabhi's attitude was typically Right Wing.

The Constitution Committee appointed by the A.I.C.C. in 1939 suggested some change to rectify such abuses as bogus membership in the Party. This committee of which Pattabhi was a member along with Nehru and others, suggested that those Congressmen who associated themselves with communal organizations be excluded from the Party. At the Working Committee meeting in May 1942, Pattabhi asked the Congress to state its Programme clearly as an impression was created in the minds of the people that the Congress was varying its Position from time to time. It was not enough if the Cripps proposals were simply rejected. Pattabhi expressed a fear that the country was moving away from the Gandhian path. He supported Gandhi's resolution regarding India's position in the War. Pattabhi came back in to the Working Committee in the place of Seth Jamanlal Bajaj in 1942.²⁸

A feature of the early forties was that differences among the top Congressmen over the Party's policy were coming to the fore. In fact, the 1939 election controversy set the ball rolling and in the years that followed there were discernible sharp differences in attitudes among the Party leaders. For instance, C.-Rajagopalachari's speeches in 1942 were not liked by Patel, who suggested to Gandhi that Rajagopalachari should resign from the Party. Gandhi not only agreed with Patel but even said that Rajagopalachari should resign his four
Anna membership of the Congress as well. This was according to Pattabhi, a master-stroke of Gandhi. Rajagopalachari followed Gandhi’s advice and he was now completely free to criticize the Congress. Gandhi continued to have high regard for Rajagopalachari’s political acumen. Devadas Gandhi, son of Gandhi and son-in-law of Rajagopalachari, pleaded with ‘tears in his eyes’ that his father-in-law should be restored to his original position. This must have had some effect on Gandhi and a few other top men in the Congress. Patel, however, said Pattabhi, did not change his mind immediately. There was a delicate situation for Pattabhi when he and Patel discussed the Congress affairs in the Ahemadnagar Jail. Patel it seems was never tired of ‘abusing’ Rajagopalachari. When Pattabhi, trying to pacify Patel, told him that he and Rajagopalachari would become friendly again, the Sardar did not like to hear such words. He was sore that Pattabhi had such regard for Rajagopalachari. As the year rolled thanks to Gandhi’s support for Rajagopalachari, the differences between the astute South Indian and the strong willed Sardar vanished. Rajagopalachari, dethroned in 1942, was ‘enthroned’ six years later as the first Indian Governor-General!

Consistent with his policy, Pattabhi opposed the formation of the Central Ministry contrary to the Party principles. But he was ignored. In 1945, when the Working Committee was discussing names of the future cabinet, there was no unanimity about the selection of the Finance Minister. Pattabhi suggested the name of C.D. Deshmukh and G.L. Mehta. There was a comment Deshmukh was ‘not so well-known for his Congress sympathies as for his profound patriotism and sturdy independence of character’. Both the names were rejected, Later, Deshmukh did become the Finance Minister and was rated as one of the ablest ministries in Nehru’s cabinet. Mehta, too, held high diplomatic posts.

Pattabhi narrated in his autobiography an incident that took place during the sojourn of the Cabinet Mission. The significance of that incident lay in the fact that leaders like Nehru and Patel were sometimes considers more important than even Gandhi. The great Mahatma, in whose glory, Patel, Nehru and others
basked, had now to yield to the pressures of his powerful followers. Gandhi realized the growing power and assertiveness of Patel and Nehru but he reconciled himself to the situation. During the visit of the Cabinet Mission, Lord Petrick Lawrence used to invite Gandhi to the morning prayers at the Young Women’s Christian Association. At one such meeting the ‘noble Lord’ took a promise from Gandhi that the Working Committee would accept the draft resolution presented by the Cabinet Committee. That evening, however, Gandhi refused to agree to it at the Working Committee meeting. Patel poured ‘abuse’ on Gandhi accusing him of being ‘untruthful and perverse.’ Gandhi did not speak; and the resolution, as presented by the Cabinet Committee, was passed. The reason why Gandhi went back on his word at the Working-Committee meeting was not known to many. The inside story, said Pattabhi, was that Rajakumari Amrit Kaur went that previous evening to Petrick Lawrence with a request that she should be appointed to the Central Cabinet. She also disclosed to him that she was sent by Gandhi. When Petrick Lawrence replied that he would consider a letter from Nehru, Amrit Kaur lost her temper. The next afternoon, after Gandhi met Petrick Lawrence, Amrit Kaur went to Gandhi and narrated the episode. Gandhi was so upset that he did not want to honor that morning’s agreement. According to Pattabhi, Gandhi was justified in not agreeing to it that evening because he must have felt that if Petrick Lawrence considered Nehru’s word more valuable than Gandhi’s he should not have asked the Mahatma to get the resolution passed at the Working Committee meeting.

In the Constituent Assembly

At the instance of the Working Committee, Pattabhi was elected to the Constitution Assembly from Madras. An able committee man and a gifted speaker, he was at home in the Assembly. But Party discipline did not allow him to speak often. Much to Nehru’s annoyance, Pattabhi suggested that the future prime Minister of India should not hold the Foreign Affairs portfolio. Few realized then, the value of this suggestion. Nehru, almost till his last, did not think it
necessary to have a Foreign Minister on the Cabinet. That was a great misfortune for Indian democracy. Yet another invaluable suggestion was made by Pattabhi when he pleaded in 1946 for the immediate appointment of Deputy Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries so that a second line of leadership would be developed. Later events proved that the failure to accept this suggestion was yet another mistake on the part of the Party leadership.

Pattabhi differed from Nehru on a number of occasions and Nehru, according to Pattabhi, was averse to propose his name to any important committee of the Constituent Assembly. Pattabhi, it appears, asked Nehru three times to consider his name for the Vice-President ship of the Constituent Assembly. But Nehru brushed aside the suggestion. Pattabhi however became a member of the Rules Committee, Union Powers Committee, Provincial Constitution Committee, States Negotiation Committee, and Chairman of the Committee on Chief Commissioner’s Provinces. His regret was that he was passed over when the National Flag Committee was constituted, although everybody was aware of his role as a member of the Flag Sub-Committee in 1931. When he became the Congress President in October 1948, it was suggested that he should resign his membership of the Constituent Assembly. Pattabhi did not accept this plea. Whereupon another suggestion came forth that he should at least not speak much in the Assembly, as he was now the head of the national ruling party. He did not wholly agree with this view either, but thought it wise to restrain himself in the Assembly. This was another reason why Pattabhi did not rise often to speak in the Assembly.

On January 25, 1947, Pattabhi moved in the Constituent Assembly that a committee to recommend the order of the future business of the House in regard to the framing of the Constitution be constituted. Moving the resolution Pattabhi said that such a committee was necessary to acquire ‘a proper idea of the way and the difficulties that lay ahead of it.’ The Committee came into being with K.M. Munshi as its Chairman.
In the Drafting Committee when discussion turned to Fundamental Rights, Pattabhi suggested an amendment that in clause 2 of article 19 the words "any class or section" be replaced by "all classes and sections" (regarding religious instruction). He also suggested that it was necessary to limit the right to manage religious affairs, provided in article 20, by making it subject to public order, morality and health. These two amendments were accepted by the Committee. Pattabhi also moved an amendment seeking to ensure that the Supreme Court's power to issue wrist for the enforcement of Fundamental Rights would not be affected by any law that Parliament might make for conferring similar powers on any other court. This amendment was accepted by the Drafting Committee with a slight modification. It was evident that Pattabhi took the position of the Rightists who in the Assembly seemed to attach greater importance to Fundamental Rights than Directive Principles of State Policy.

As a member of the Union Powers Committee, he made a strong plea for concurrent jurisdiction in broadcasting. He said that the centre should not have absolute power over broadcasting in view of the fact that rural uplifts, rural education and such other nation building activities were more in the provincial sphere of influence than under the centre.

As chairman of the Chief Commissioners' provinces, Pattabhi suggested several changes in the constitutional set-up of these Provinces. This committee held that Ajmer-Merwara, Coorg, Delhi, etc. Should they should be designated as Lieutenant Governor's Provinces and that they should have legislatures. Delhi, it said, should have the right of self-government. A demand was made that these recommendations made by the Committee headed by Pattabhi deserved to be enforced. But, said Nehru, in view of certain problems, particularly in Delhi, they were not being taken up.
When there was discussion on certain subjects, such as linguistic States' People's Conference on which he was an acknowledged authority, Pattabhi did speak with a command over facts and figures. He said, for instance, that the question of linguistic provinces ‘must be taken up as the first and the foremost problem to be solved by the Constituent Assembly. He continued to lead the pack during the ensuing months.’ In the Constituent Assembly there were several groups of like-minded persons, headed by men like Nehru and Patel. One such group which made useful contribution to the debates during the three years and moved several amendments to the Draft constitution was known as the ‘Canning Lane Group.’ The members of this group included Pattabhi, Mrs. Durgabhai Deshmukh, Kala Venkata Rao M. Ananta sayanam Ayyangar. Pattabhi's house, 19, Canning Lane was the Centre group’s activity.

When a Muslim member, during a debate in the Assembly, complained that Muslims in Independent India were likely to suffer, as they were numerically inferior to Hindus, Pattabhi, a champion of Hindu-Muslim unity for over thirty-five years and an opponent of the partition of India, spoke with emotion. The whole tension, he said, was due to the British policy, and the seeds of separation sown in 1905-06 grew over the years into a dangerous tree. Separate electorates were no solution at all, but only aggravated the tension. How could they, he asked, serve the purpose of the 7% of people in Madras, 9% of people in Bombay, 4½% in Central Provinces and 14% in United Provinces. He suggested a Congress-League organization or any nomenclature for such a body based entirely on political grounds. The need was to eschew all religious predilections. He envisaged a free India where Hindus, Muslims, Parsees and Christians and other minorities could live as brothers. In such a country minorities would not and should not suffer neglect. There should be, according to him, no communal problems and the moral responsibility. For ensuring that rested with the majority community. He won Nehru’s support when he opposed K.T. Shah’s amendment that there should be a plebiscite in Kashmir under the auspices of the United Nations. Nehru and Pattabhi were also together in opposing the
introduction of Nagari Numerals as against International Numerals, during the debate on Language at the meeting of the Assembly Party.

Pattabhi recalled that in 1931 at his house at Masulipatnam, he had laid the foundations of the Fundamental Rights Chapter. The Committee, which the Congress appointed in 1931 and which he headed, stated that Fundamental Rights implied Fundamental Duties. He asked the ruling Party and the people to bear that in mind. He praised the creation of the office of the Controller and Auditor General as financial strictness, was vital for the success of Indian democracy.

The framing of the Constitution was completed. Speaking on the finalized Constitution, Pattabhi praised the efforts of the Constituent Assembly which ushered India from 'the stage of bureaucracy and dependence to the stage of a Republic and Co-operative Common-wealth.' The great effort was to right the wrongs done by the British, who from 1905 divided India at various levels. Because of them India "was divided longitudinally into provinces and states, horizontally into communities, transversely into rural and urban areas and obliquely into Scheduled and Non-scheduled Tribes."31 The greatness of the Constitution, said Pattabhi, lay in its commitment to bring into reality the dreams of Gandhi-Khaddar, elimination of untouchability and Hindu-Muslim unity. The leaders should strive to achieve these ideals. Pattabhi quoted a British Parliamentarian, who said: "Let us educate our Masters."

Pattabhi was a member of the Economic Programme Committee of the Congress. This Committee was concerned with the implementation of a general Programme in regard to priorities.32 In December 1947 Rajendra Prasad appointed the Agrarian Reforms Committee which submitted its report in 1949. This Committee made certain recommendations regarding land reforms. After this step, the only important step taken by the Congress was in 1950 when Pattabhi convened a conference of Chief Ministers of the States and Presidents of Provincial Congress Committees to devise methods to implement the 'economic programme. Pattabhi
also convened the ‘Economic Planning Conference’ in 1950. He also took steps to study the working of the All India Village Industries Association and Spinners’ Association. Pattabhi was concerned about rising unemployment and economic misery. As the Congress President, he helped the Congress retain the sense of commitment to the economic uplift of the people.

As President of the Congress Constitution Committee, Pattabhi recommended in 1947 that Congress should ordinarily meet every three years, that all Congress elections should be triennial and that the Working Committee should consist of twenty-one members in up due to ‘political developments’. Pattabhi played a prominent role in the Congress Party discussion over the Finance Minister R.K. Shanmukham Cheety’s conduct in 1948. The Finance Minister was charged with being lenient to words tax-dodgers. Pattabhi was very critical of Cheety’s alleged softness to words them. At the Party meeting, Pattabhi said that on account of Chetty’s conduct the prestige of the Party had fallen low. Charges such as these led to Cheety’s resignation.33

Like most Congressmen, Pattabhi felt that the partition of India was a tragedy that could have been averted. He thought that Gandhi had succumbed to pressure. He wrote that P.C. Ghosh wept then there was a discussion about partition in the Ahemadnagar Fort. Pattabhi lamented that it was a great blow to Hindu-Muslim unity.

**Congress President at last**

Pattabhi hoped that the honor of becoming the Congress President would come to him after his defeat in 1939, in view of the circumstances in which he lost the election. He sought the support of top leaders like Nehru and Rajendra Prasad for his candidature. The former as usual was non-committal and not warm in his replies to Pattabhi, while the latter agreed that Pattabhi should become the Congress President. Azad too was favorable but Patel ignored his requests. No Andhra since Ananda Charlu in 1891 and no South Indian since S.Srinivasa
Iyengar in 1926 held the office. The office became practically the monopoly of about seven individuals between 1926 and 1948. The resignation of Kripalani earlier on a difference of opinion created some complications in the political situation. Pattabhi was aware that 'the centre of gravity shifted' from the Party to the Government after the formation of the interim Government. The relationship between the Party and the Government was the vital question. Pattabhi promised Prasad that if he became President he would maintain balance between the Party and the Government. He even said that "on the most vital occasions I shut up my mouth in the interests of such harmony and co-operation." Prasad felt that the South Indians were unhappy that they were not getting adequate recognition. He wanted to assuage the feelings of the South. Prasad had high personal regard for Pattabhi and was keen on getting him the honor that was denied so long. He was, however, worried that the contest between a Southerner and a Northerner would have 'linguistic overtones.34

The contest between Pattabhi and Tandon was said to be a battle 'between two ways of thinking'—the Party versus Government. Pattabhi was for amicable relations and Tandon for the 'supremacy' of the Party. Tandon was Patel's nominee and the received support from big business and the Hindi-speaking states. Azad and Rafi Ahmed Kidwai (a close friend of Nehru) were among the Muslim leaders who worked for Pattabhi; and the minorities were behind him. Tandon was described as a Hindu revivalist. Patel thought that Pattabhi would not secure many votes in Andhra.

In yet another closely contested election, he defeated Tandon by less than 120 votes—a margin narrower than the one by which he lost to win Bose in 1939. Andhra gave him 126 out of 162 votes and the Southern States this time gave him a large number of votes. In Bengal and United Provinces, Tandon secured a big majority. Pattabhi secured a majority in the princely states. He said that Jainarayan Vyas, despite tremendous pressure from Patel, got for him 100 votes from Jodhpur. Shanker Rao Deo too worked for him. Patel took it as a personal
defeat and even chided Deo and Vyas for supporting Pattabhi. His victory in 1948 was the fulfillment of his long cherished dream. But he regretted that Gandhi who wanted to make Pattabhi President nine years earlier was no more. Pattabhi’s victory was described by some as a triumph against communalism and provincialism. The ‘Modern Review’ said that it was due to “his devoted service to their (States) emancipation from feudal exploitation,” that Pattabhi won the election. It was in the fitness of things that Pattabhi assumed office in the Princely state of Jaipur in December 1948.

Pattabhi, however, knew that he became President when all power had passed from the Congress President to the Prime Minister. Pattabhi soon judged the new set-up. “The Congress,” he made it clear, “is like a parent to a grown-up son, competent to advise but not to impose its advice on the Government of the day. Its function will therefore be to exercise influence rather than authority and to attune itself to the needs of a country which is governing itself through the Party Organisation.” In his Presidential Address, he said that the Congress was the philosopher while the Government was the politician. The latter had power, while the former had influence. He pleaded for village uplift, prohibition and the establishment of a co-operative common wealth. On language he struck a moderate note and stated that pure Hindi should not be imposed as the National Language of India. A language based on Sanskritised Hindi and Arabico-Persianised Urdu should be evolved. English must be preserved at higher levels.

As Congress President, he warned the people against the growing menace of Communism. Communalism also must be combated and corruption rooted out. He paid a warm tribute to missionaries for their ‘magnificent work’ in the fields of medical aid and education. He appealed to Muslims to join the Congress in large numbers. He did not find any conflict between Islam and loyalty to India where the Muslim brethren were born. He was confident that Muslims would enrich India’s cultural life. Indian Muslims and Christians played a great role in the growth of Indian Nationalism. The greatest problem facing the country was shortage of food. The
energies of the people and the leaders must be directed to achieve self-sufficiency in food.

To achieve harmony between the Provincial Government and the Provincial Congress Party, he laid down a new procedure. Every year the Provincial Government should invite the Provincial Congress President and Secretary to a conference and discuss with them the legislative Programme for the year. Other major problems too could be discussed. The Provincial Party should popularize programmes through the district and local organizations. "An attitude of sympathy on the part of the Government and a spirit of co-operation on the part of the Congress Committees are essential," he said. He regretted the declining morality of the Congress organization. Unless it was immaculate in discipline and rectitude, it would have no place in the hearts of the people. He issued directives to all Congressmen that no Congressman should interest himself in recommending candidates for offices, for securing permits for export and import or for obtaining licenses for shops for himself or friends or should approach authorities, particularly the executive including the police and the judiciary in respect of civil or criminal cases pending before them. "An organized attempt is necessary to check the growing tendency to profit by the influence that Congressmen undoubtedly can exercise over officers and Ministers." They should not even own cinema houses. Pattabhi revived the National Week-a Week meant for introspection and self-purification. He contemplated youth organizations so that the youth would imbibe some of the Gandhian principles. He insisted that every young man or woman must undertake constructive work. Then only would he or she be eligible to take the degree. He toured the country extensively with a view to toning up the moral outlook of the people. He was, however, aware that very little would be achieved through pious resolution alone. The initial enthusiasm wore off before long, and Pattabhi realized how ineffectual his office was. He was completely disillusioned. As Stanley A.Kochanek put it: 'Pattabhi had chosen to adapt,' unlike Kripalani who protested and resigned. Pattabhi, true to his word, gave no scope
for differences between him and the Prime Minister. He could neither control nor influence policy.

In a speech brimming with humor, Pattabhi narrated how weak the Congress President had become. He said “when I became President I only though I was made the ‘Pathi’ (Head) without a ‘Rash tram’ (State), which was quietly removed from it. But later by an ‘open dacoit,’ my whole title was taken away and made over to the President of the Republic. I am sincerely proud that if I have done nothing for the Republic I have at least supplied the title for the President.” He played a ‘Passive role’ as Congress President and his election helped to reinforce the relationship between the Congress President and the Prime Minister. He vacated the office in September 1950, and although a request was made to him to continue in office, Pattabhi excused himself saying that he was not fully satisfied with his two-year term.

The end of Pattabhi’s term created new Problems. A group within the Congress ‘was determined to reverse the process that grew over these two years.’ There was a turmoil in the Party, when Tandon became the President in 1950. Nehru could not get on well with Tandon and at the A.I.C.C. Meeting at Bangalore in 1951 there were ugly scenes. According to Pattabhi, it was he who suggested to Nehru that a new President might be elected in 1951 to solve the problem. Nehru liked the idea and Dhebar became the President. This restored normalcy to the relations between the Prime Minister and the Congress President.

The First General Elections were about to take place in 1952. It was suggested that Pattabhi should contest a seat for the Lok Sabha. But Nehru turned it down. Instead, he wanted Pattabhi to be elected to the Rajya Sabha. Pattabhi told Nehru that he was too old to make a reputation as a Parliamentarian and therefore a younger man like M.Tirumala Rao might take the place. Nehru opposed this suggestion saying that Tirumala Rao being a defeated candidate, should not be nominated. (Tirumala Rao was defeated at the polls when he contested a seat for
the Lower House). With characteristic frankness, Pattabhi asked Nehru how defeated candidates like P.C. Sen. and Kalipad Banerjee of Calcutta were being considered. Nehru ended the discussion without further talk. Pattabhi became a member of the Rajya Sabha.

The first General Elections were over and Nehru was now the undisputed master of Indian politics. There was no Gandhi restrain him, no Patel to oppose him. The Right Wing after Patel’s death became ineffectual. Early in 1952, at the Parliamentary Board meeting, Moulana Azad, always on intimate terms with Nehru, proposed Pattabhi for the Vice-President ship of the Indian Republic. Nehru told Azad that he had already made the offer to Dr. Radhakrishnan and that he accepted the offer. Pattabhi joined the others in hailing Nehru’s choice. He said that Dr. Radhakrishnan “will make an ideal Vice-President; indeed we have in him a future President.”

It was evident that Nehru had no mind to give Pattabhi a place in the Cabinet. Moulana Azad and Rajendra Prasad were sad that this senior Congressman was being neglected. A seat in the innocuous upper house was no honor to Pattabhi. Azad and Ravi Shankar Shukla pleaded with Nehru that at least a Governorship might be given to Pattabhi. Nehru agreed. Hardly had Pattabhi attended the first session of the Rajya Sabha when he was appointed Governor of Madhya Pradesh.

**Governorship: A Case Study of in-group relationships**

The office of the Governor in free India carried neither prestige, nor power. In fact, the gubernatorial office has been the graveyard of political careers. The Governor is described as a “Puppet controlled by a Chief Minister on the one hand and by the President, that is to say, virtually the Prime Minister on the other.” J.B. Kripalani said that Governorships “have been turned into rest-houses for...”
the old and weary politicians and those neglected at the polls." Many former Governors have declared that the office is virtually ‘useless.’

Pattabhi’s old Right Wing colleagues, Rajendra Prasad and Azad and Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh, Ravi Shankar Shukla persuaded Nehru to offer the Governorship of Madhya Pradesh to Pattabhi. On June 20, 1952 Pattabhi became the Governor of Madhya Pradesh. Pattabhi’s appointment as Governor and his continuance. In office for a period of five years could well be taken up as a case study of in-group relationships.

That Right Wingers like Prasad and Azad persuaded Nehru to give the office to Pattabhi meant that they still cherished their Right Wing loyalties. Nehru who never had affinity with the Right Wing was reluctant to make the appointment. But he did not wish to enter into a controversy with the top leaders of the Party on this issue. He, therefore, agreed to give Pattabhi the governorship of Madhya Pradesh. But when he made the appointment on a short-term basis, Nehru did not conceal his disinclination to be generous towards Pattabhi and the Right Wing.

The four important figures in this issue were: Nehru, who made the appointment; Rajendra Prasad, who as President of India, recommended Pattabhi’s name and continuance in office; Pattabhi, the appointee; and Ravi Shankar Shukla, Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh, who was also instrumental in Pattabhi continuing in office.

To begin with, Nehru, while making the offer of appointment to Pattabhi, wrote a long letter, full of condescending words, in which he laid down the ‘do’s don’ts’ of a Governor. Nehru said that the Governor must keep in touch with all sections of the State. He thought that ‘the Governor’s position is of great importance.’ That was why he said he had to give ‘considerable attention to this choice of Governors.’ In a postscript to this letter, Nehru added: “the normal term of a Governor is supposed to be five years. That is rather a long time in this fast
changing world. In some cases, therefore, we are for the present fixing the term of two years for the appointment. At the end of that period, the matter can be reconsidered. I propose that your appointment should be for this term of two years.....”

Accepting the offer, Pattabhi who had many an exchange with Nehru since 1928, wrote a letter that could not have pleased Nehru. In that he said, “I do not comment on the appropriateness since you say you give ‘considerable attention to the choice of Governor’.... Your letter, may I say, is the ‘Instrument of instruction’.... The appointment does not matter particularly to one who is presently finishing his three score and twelve....”

President Rajendra Prasad, who had much to do with the appointment, wrote a warm letter to Pattabhi in which he expressed happiness at the latter’s acceptance of office. Prasad promised to offer ‘advice or assistance,’ on any matter, if required.

Pattabhi’s two-year term passed off without trouble. Pattabhi who according to many did not get the recognition he deserved in free India, was anxious to continue in office for a full term of five years. He informed Chief Minister Shukla that his term was coming to an end in 1954. The Chief Minister brought the matter to the notice of the Prime Minister. Nehru, who had a high regard for democratic norms, asked the Chief Minister whether Pattabhi might be continued in office. Shukla, in his letter dated May 20, 1954, told Nehru that the relations between the Governor and the Chief Minister were good and that he desired Pattabhi’s continuance in office. While Nehru was thinking over the matter, President Rajendra Prasad urged Nehru to continue Pattabhi in office. They both agreed that Pattabhi should have the full term.

Nehru, however, changed his mind in 1956. He wanted Pattabhi to retire on November 1, 1956, ‘to synchronize’ with the reorganization of states in India.
this suggestion, Pattabhi replied that he would gladly retire but cautioned that Nehru's "administration may be free from any suggestion of illegal procedure and arbitrary decision in respect of a big office in the State." Rajendra Prasad and Shukla prevailed upon Nehru again and Pattabhi was allowed to continue in office till the end of his five-year term. In April 1957, two months before the end of the five year term, Nehru wrote to Pattabhi that the latter should retire 'about the 1st of June, 1957.' As the term drew to a close, President Rajendra Prasad wrote a letter to Pattabhi in which he conveyed the Government's "appreciation of the admirable manner in which you have discharged the stewardship of the State." Pattabhi profusely thanked Rajendra Prasad for his 'uniform kindness and consideration' and for 'prolonging the original term of two years from time to time' so as to keep him in office for the full statutory term of five years.41

It was felt that Nehru was ungenerous towards Pattabhi as the term of five years was given on a piecemeal basis. It is, however, necessary to emphasize that Nehru respected the wishes of senior party men, the Constitutional Head of India and the Chief Minister of the State concerned. Nehru not only avoided an open clash with some leaders in the Party on the issue but displayed a high sense of political propriety by complying with the request of the President of India and the State Chief Minister. In the evolution of the relations between President and the Prime Minister and between the Union and the States, Nehru, and Rajendra Prasad saw to it that democratic practices were by and large respected. Pattabhi's continuance in Office is an example in that regard. That the leaders of the Congress Party did not allow their personal differences to affect the unity of the Party is also evident from this issue.

Pattabhi, as Governor, functioned on the lines suggested by Nehru. His intellectual pursuits were, however, not bogged down by the office he held. He inaugurated the X VI session of the Indian Political Science Conference at Sagar in December 1953. He delivered the Convocation Address of Nagpur University in Sanskrit. He made speeches in Urdu and Hindi. His speeches as Governor were brought
out in book from. As suggested by Nehru, he toured all parts of the State and established contact with the urban and rural population. In his relations with the Chief Minister and other Ministers Pattabhi never forgot that he was only the Constitutional Head of the State. He had cordial relations with them. Pattabhi, as Jagjivan Ram said, was greater than the office of the Governor. As Governor, he set some ‘noble traditions’ which some younger Governors wanted to follow.40

After his retirement as Governor, Pattabhi lived in Hyderabad where he passed away on December 16, 1959. During the two years and six months that followed his retirement, Pattabhi continued to take a keen interest in public affairs through his writings and public speeches. He took part in a language convention at Hyderabad in February 1958. He wrote to V.V.Giri, then Governor of Uttar Pradesh, to help in establishing an ‘Andhra Ashramam’ at Benaras on the banks of the Ganges. That was shortly before his death, it was Pattabhi’s regret that he could not do all that he wanted to achieve. Nehru comforted Pattabhi by saying that “one wants to do so much before the end. And yet there is no end to the work to be done.”41

In the Nehru-era of Indian politics, Pattabhi could not rise high. As the ‘Krishna Patrika’ observed, Pattabhi being a Gandhian and right winger did not fit into the new set-up. Pattabhi’s autobiography reveals a strain of his frustration over the meager recognition he got in free India. But being a disciplined Congressman who had first attended a Congress session in 1898 and who had begun to take active interest in the Congress from 1908 onwards, Pattabhi never openly expressed his personal grievances.