CHAPTER - VI

PATEL - THE CONSOLIDATOR
Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel played a vital role in solving the most perplexed and complicated problem of the Indian states on the eve of the transfer of power. Patel's unparalleled dexterity, unfathomable skill and untiring efforts in consolidating more than 600 Princely states would always remain a saga in our national history and an imperishable monument to his achievements and service to the country. In this chapter, an attempt is made to examine the conditions of Princely India on the eve of the transfer of power and the manner in which it was solved. In this perspective, the role of Sardar as an indomitable consolidator and an ardent integrationist who changed the very shape of the political map of India is assessed.

The Doctrine of Paramountcy:

From the beginning, Sardar Patel was longing for an United India. As discussed in the foregoing chapter,
Patel's dream of a United India was not realised due to the circumstances. Ultimately India was divided into India and Pakistan. This was the first blow to Sardar's concept of a United India. There was yet another blow to him when the Viceroy announced on 3rd June 1947 that the Princely states of India which had entered into various agreements and covenants with the Government of British India would be released from the yoke of Paramountcy and on August 15, 1947, when the two Dominions, India and Pakistan came into existence, the Princely states would be free to charter their own course—either to join one of the Dominions or to choose to be independent.

There were no less than 600 states in India which were autocracies with the rulers exercising unlimited powers over their subjects under the tutelage of the British who protected them under their Paramount power.

When the lapse of Paramountcy was announced, some ambitious princes felt that the time had come for them to realise their long cherished dream of enjoying absolute sovereignty. They were free to accede to either of the Dominions—India or Pakistan—or to remain free. This posed a great political threat to
the unity and stability of India.

More than 600 states governed by Rajas, Maharajas and Nawabs were littered all over India.¹ The states were not only numerous, they also differed vastly in size, population, etc. They ranged from Hyderabad with an area of 82,313 square miles, a population of over 1,63,38,534² and an annual revenue of about 10 crores of rupees to Bilbarri with a few acres of land, a population of less than a hundred and an annual income of about a hundred rupees. Another state Bankapahari had an area of 5 square miles and a population of 1,241 in the Bundelkhand Agency.³ Calculating in terms of the area

1. The Memorandum on Indian States published by the Government of British India put the number of the Indian states at 601.


Sir Warner Lees in his book Native States of India put it at 693 states.

The Joint Parliamentary Committee on Indian Constitutional Reforms put the total No. of states at 600, White Paper on Indian States, (1950), op.cit., p.17.


3. Ibid.
covered by the 274 Kathiawar states and their total income, it could be said that it provided one state for every 25 Sq. miles of territory and for every 500 heads of population. If the revenue of 171 of the smaller states is added up, it would amount to Rs.650,000 with an average of Rs.3,813 as the annual revenue of each one of them. These figures should suffice to reveal the immense administrative difficulties arising out of the multiplicity of the Indian states. Some were big and some were small in size comprising of 86 million of people. They would have been swept away by the popular upsurge but for the protection of the British power. They were bastions of reaction and autocracy. In most of the Princely states, there was not even a semblance of popular government. People enjoyed no freedom and no political rights. The will of the rulers was law. The rulers were no administrators. They were ignorant of the elementary principles of statecraft. Their main concern was to keep the Paramount power in good humour. They fawned on the Paramount power and squeezed their people dry. The Princes were the most loyal servants of the British and the best antagonists of Indians. This was best illustrated by the Great Revolt of 1857. "The Indian rulers for the most part had not only remained aloof from the
uprising but in certain cases had extended active assistance to the British in suppressing it." They were weak beyond measure, and selfish. There used to be antagonism between the Princes and their people. "This antagonism is mainly due to the unwillingness of the Princes to recognise the signs of the times. A majority of them treat their states as their family, heirlooms and still believe that the subjects exist solely to toil for them."\(^5\)

The British crown stood forth 'as the unquestioned ruler and paramount power in all India'. In spite of the fact that the territories covered by the Native States did not form part of British India and their subjects were not treated as British subjects and their rulers enjoyed a good deal of freedom in administering the internal affairs of their respective jurisdictions, the states were not sovereign in any sense of the term. The rulers were subject to the over-all authority of the Crown. The various phases through which the relationship between the rulers of the Indian states and the

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British Government passed before it was called by the phrase 'Paramountcy of the Crown' which was highly elastic and elusive. They had no power in the sphere of foreign relations and were forbidden from having diplomatic relations or official contact with any foreign power, declare war upon and make peace with any foreign ruler. It was the paramount power that had the right of conducting international relations. It was the duty of states to implement the international agreements made by the Paramount power.

"... In its correct sense Paramountcy is not a factor in creating any rights or obligations, but it is merely a name for a set of rights when vested by consent in another sovereign state... If paramountcy were a source of rights, there would be no limit, save the discretion of the Paramount Power, to the interference with the sovereignty of the protected states by the paramount power... We regard the idea that Paramountcy, as such, creates any power at all, as wholly wrong, and the resort to paramountcy, as an unlimited reservoir of discretionary authority over the Indian States, is based upon a radical misconception of what paramountcy means."6

Paramountcy was a new theory expounded by the British with regard to the states. "The paramount power means the Crown acting through the Secretary of State

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for India and the Governor-General-in-Council who are responsible to the parliament of Great Britain." The East India Company acted as trustees and agents of the Crown till the Act of 1858. The Paramount power was exercised by the Crown as a result of the passing of the Act of 1858. "The fact of Paramountcy of the Crown has been acted on and acquiesced in over a long period of time. It is based upon treaties, engagements, and sanads, supplemented by usage and sufferance and by decisions of the government of India and the Secretary of state embodied in political practice."8

The British enjoyed vast power due to Paramountcy, it had the right to intervene in any activity of the state for the benefit of the State and its ruler. It could depose a ruler if he was disloyal and stop barbarous practice like sati, infanticide, etc., It could intervene for the benefit of whole of India in the economic, financial and defence matters. It had the


8. Ibid.
right to settle precedence and to grant honours, to recognize all succession and settle all disputes related to the right of succession and take charge of states ruled by minors.

The British had some obligations as part of Paramountcy. It was the obligation of British to protect the states against external and internal dangers, rebellions, etc., and to protect them against elimination.

The concept Paramount power was not defined in clear terms by the British. To them, it was a growing concept based on changing conditions in India. "Paramountcy must remain paramount; it must fulfill its obligations defining or adopting itself according to the shifting necessities of the time and the progressive development of the states."  

The internal sovereignty of the princely states was also curtailed by Paramountcy. The relationship between the British and the States was guided by Paramountcy. "It was a unique kind of relationship

9. Ibid., p.31.
without a close parallel with the British empire or elsewhere, based on multitude of agreements.\textsuperscript{10}

For administrative purpose, India was divided into two parts: the British India and the Indian India. The British adopted a dual policy towards these two Indias. The administration of the Princely India was carried out by the Viceroy, the representative of the British Crown with the help of the political Department. The Viceroy was assisted by the political residents and political officers working in the various states in the affairs of the states.

The Crown adopted the policy of respecting the treaties into which it had entered with the Princely States and maintaining the status and dignity of the princes. It generally abstained from interfering in their internal administration. The Government of British India had the right to intervene in the internal administration of a Princely State to set right such abuses as

might threaten it with anarchy and safeguard the interests of British India and of the British Empire. The Government of British India had the right and duty to look after the interests of the country as a whole in matters such as railways, post and telegraphs and other means of communication. However, the exact scope of 'Paramountcy' was not defined by the British.  

Though the British Government claimed 'Paramountcy', it had no legal basis. R.C. Majumdar writes, "... though the British Governor-General-in-Council claimed paramountcy over all Indian States and in practice exercised it, whenever they chose almost without any check or limit, it is not supported by the legal right

accruing from the treaties themselves and there was no other source from which any such right could accrue."

Further, he writes, "But whatever may be the theoretical position in practice, the British treated them (states) all as feudatory or subordinate states and did not accord to any Indian State not excluding even Hyderabad the same political status or rank which diplomatic usage guaranteed to the smallest state in Europe such as Belgium or Holland." They were in possession of the most effective part of the army of every Indian State which had no power "because through the instrumentality of subsidiary force .... of every Indian State which had no power to resist them even if it had any wish to do so." From the position of a Paramount power de facto, the British imperceptibility assumed the status of permanent power de jure. In other words, while the British paramountcy before the outbreak of 1857 was an undeniable fact, "its legal basis is not so clear and it was not formally enunciated by British administrators as a general principle applicable to India as a whole."  

13. Ibid.
14. Ibid.
15. Ibid., p.959.
The British government continued to prize the loyalty of the princes who ruled over backward population under the control of British Residents or Agents. During the 20th century, when British India was astir with national aspirations, a new constitutional doctrine was evolved by the British in India. All the states with full powers of jurisdiction were now equal in sovereignty; the treaties made by them with the East India Company were sacrosanct. But where the British interests were affected; the undefined word 'Paramountcy' overrode all obligations. This doctrine was silently accepted by the rulers as their Charter of Independence.

The rulers were subject to the over-all authority of the Crown. This is clear from the reply given by Lord Reading to the Nizam of Hyderabad on 27 March 1926. Lord Reading in his letter to Nizam writes, "The sovereignty of the British Crown is supreme in India and therefore no ruler of an Indian State can justifiably claim to negotiate with the British Government on an equal footing."\(^6\)

\(^6\)White Paper on Indian States, \textit{op.cit.}, p.149.
The nature of the relationship between the Government of British India and the Princely States can be seen clearly from a letter written by Lord Reading to the Nizam of Hyderabad. Lord Reading in his letter to Nizam writes, "The right of the British Government to intervene in the internal affairs of Indian States is another instance of the consequences necessarily involved in the supremacy of the British Crown... The varying degrees of internal sovereignty which the rulers enjoy are all subject to the due exercise by the Paramount Power of this responsibility."  

In "The Joint Opinion of the Princes Council submitted to the Indian State Committee on 24th July 1928", the characteristic feature of Paramountcy is brought out in the following words: "Paramountcy can be said to be a 'factor limiting the sovereignty of the state'."  

17. C.H. Philips, op. cit., pp.429-430. The full text of the 'letter from His Excellency the Viceroy Lord Reading to His Exalted Highness, the Nizam of Hyderabad, 27th March 1926' is to be found in the White Paper on Indian States, op. cit., pp.149-151.  

18. Jagdish Saran Sharma, (Ed.), India's Struggle for Freedom - Select Documents and Sources, (New Delhi, S.Chand & Co., 1965), Vol.III, p.1245. The text of the activities of the Paramount Power which are considered under three main heads: (1) external affairs, (2) defence and; (3) intervention is also found in this, pp.1253-56.
Conditions of Princely States:

It was this Paramountcy which was to lapse with the transfer of power on 15th August 1947. Attlee in his historic statement of 20th February 1947 had made it clear that the British Government did not desire to hand over their powers and obligations under Paramountcy to any Government of British India. Therefore, it was but natural that princes intended to declare their states independent. It may be noted here that the princes of India did not feel happy at the growing unlimited interference by the British Government in the internal administration of their states and they made abortive attempts to put some limits on it. In fact, Sir Leslie Scott, an eminent British Lawyer vehemently pleaded their case before the Butler Committee in 1928. They also tried their best to keep Paramountcy outside the scope of the authority of the Government of India. Both the Cripps proposals and the memorandum on States' Treaties and Paramountcy issued by the Cabinet Mission

included specific statements that the rights and powers ceded by the states to the Government of British India would not be passed on to the successor Government of British India. This was done to allay the apprehensions of the Indian Princes who were highly distrustful of Congress politicians and did not at all like the idea of being subject to their control. The "Memorandum on States' Treaties and Paramountcy presented by the Cabinet Mission to His Highness the Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes' on May 12, 1946 explained, "... that the rights of the States which flow from their relationship to the Crown will no longer exist and that all the rights surrendered by the states to the Paramount power will return to the states."20 In another statement, both the Cabinet Delegation and the Viceroy reiterated the thesis that 'Paramountcy can neither be retained by the British Crown nor transferred to the new Government'.

It was decided that India was to be divided and a new Dominion of India was to be ushered in on August 15, 1947. The British Paramountoy over the states would

continue till that date. After that date "the void" according to the Memorandum "will have to be filled either by the states entering into a federal relationship with the successor Government or Governments in British India, or failing this, entering into particular political arrangements with it or them." 21

The Princes heartily welcomed India's freedom so that they could become independent 'sovereigns'. On January 29th, 1947, the Chamber of Princes resolved to 'present a united front in the face of the common danger'. It was not clear what that 'common danger' was, but it was clear that they would fight unitedly in achieving their common goal.

The die-hards among the rank and file of the Indian Civil Service did not welcome the prospects of the transfer of power to Indian hands. Attlee's momentous statement of 20th February 1947 on the 'Transfer of Power' disheartened the Civil Service. Sir Conrad Corfield who was a political adviser to the Viceroy and

21. Ibid.
the Civilian head of the political Department of the Government of India, made a determined effort to make things as difficult for the Dominion of India as he could. He roused the darkest fears on the administrative arena of India. He viewed problems from purely legalist angle instead of weighing the whole problem from the humanistic, logistic and realistic base. Though the role of Corfield was "that of a political Adviser but he considered both honest and honourable to tamper with the loyalty of the Princes to their motherland." He "had tried from the moment independence for British India became inevitable to persuade them (Princes) (a) to liberalize their administrations and (b) to form a solid block with which to resist the encroachment of the politicians of the British India."23


23. Leonard Mosley, The Last Days of the British Raj, (Bombay, Jaico Publishing House, 1966), pp.179-180. "Corfield was determined, however, to do two things when independence came for British India. He set out to make sure that at least that two or three Princely States chief among them being Hyderabad would be saved from engulfment by Congress. He also decided that he would make it as difficult as could be for the other states to be absorbed." Ibid., p.181.
Corfield made some of the Indian states the instruments of his sinister desire. He intrigued secretly with the Nawab of Bhopal, who was the Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes and was a pro-Muslim Leaguer and anti-Congress and wrote letters to the Constitutional Advisory Committee of the Chamber, the Committee of State Ministers and to the Standing Committee of the Chamber of Princes telling them that the British decision to lapse Paramountcy along with the transfer of power to Indian hands placed the Rulers in the best bargaining position. Being a 'convinced royalist himself', he advised the princes to make a collective bargain under the leadership of the Nawab of Bhopal and also promised all the help the political Department could give.

The Nawab tried to make the Indian Princes a 'third force' in Indian politics. It is said that he was about to succeed but his device was foiled by the patriotism of the Maharaja of Bikaner, the Maharaja of Patiala and Udaipur. As early as 17th November 1930, 'the Maharaja of Bikaner, on the attitude of the Indian Princes to Federation' said "... the Princes and states
realise that an all India Federation is likely to prove the only satisfactory solution of India's problem."  

The Nawab of Bhopal adopted a dilatory tactics and advised the Princes to adopt the policy of 'wait and see' and make no hurry to send their nominees to the Constituent Assembly. The Maharaja of Bikaner realised his tactics and questioned the advisibility and the wisdom of the 'wait and see' policy. He thought that it was likely to create the impression that the Princes 'were playing into the hands of certain political parties in British India'. The Maharaja of Patiala also criticised the 'wait and see' attitude. Other patriotic princes followed the lead given by the Maharajas of Bikaner and Patiala. They decided to send their representatives direct to the Constituent Assembly instead of negotiating through the committee set up by the Chamber of Princes. The representatives of the states of Bikaner, Patiala, Baroda, Cochin, Jaipur, and Rewa attended the Constituent Assembly on April 28th, 1947. Therefore, the representatives of other states also started attending the Constituent Assembly.

After having failed to create a 'third force' against the Congress dominated Indian Dominion, the Nawab of Bhopal decided to set himself as the ruler of a free and independent Bhopal as soon as the British parted with power and the Paramountcy of the Crown lapsed. He, therefore, resigned the Chancellorship of the Chamber of Princes and announced that the moment the British departed from India, he would consider himself free and independent to choose the destiny of his state himself.

The Maharaja of Jodhpur also wanted to form a 'third state' stretching from Bhopal to Jaipur and Jinnah had offered Karachi as a port to the third state. Had the third state come into existence, says, H.V.R. Iengar, former Union Home Secretary, it would have become a "dagger in the heart of India." However, the Maharaja of Jodhpur dropped this idea due to the persuasion of Sardar Patel.25

Travancore also decided to remain an independent sovereign state. Sir C.P. Ramaswamy Aiyar of Travancore, on June 11, 1947 announced that he intended to appoint a Trade Agent in Pakistan.

On June 12, 1947, the Nizam of Hyderabad declared that Hyderabad would become a free and independent state as soon as Paramountcy lapsed. Some other ambitious Princes also thought similarly. Among them was the Raja of Bilaspur whose state covered an area of 500 square miles with a population of less than a million. However, he did not make any announcement like Bhopal, Travancore and Hyderabad. In March 1948, Sandur, a small state consisting of a dozen depopulated village and ruled by a 'Raja' which could offer his people nothing but glamour, threatened the Government of India that any attempts on its part to absorb would be resisted with 'vigour and determination.'

At last Gorfield was successful in making at least two or three states hostile to the Congress and join Indian Dominion. For this purpose, he made use of 'Paramountcy'. He declared that the Princely states were tied down by some treaties with the British Crown. Otherwise, they were completely independent states, owing no allegiance to British India. When the transfer of power took place, Paramountcy would automatically

lapse and the Princely States would immediately get back all those powers which had been taken over by the British and become independent. Further, he said that the Princely states had the right to expel from the territory, the Indian troops which had been stationed there under an agreement with the British. "The Indian Railways which ran through their States by agreements arranged by the British would be stopped. Indian post and telegraph offices... could be closed. Passage through the States from one part of British India to another could be barred."27

Sir Conrad Corfield, who had determined to create chaos and confusion for India, "... ordered his staff cancelling all the arrangements, such as the stationing of troops, the operation of railways, the working of post offices, customs and such like, which had been made between the Paramount Power (Britain) acting on behalf of the Princely States and British India. He also ordered his subordinates to extract from the files all the confidential reports and communications which

27. Leonard Mosley, op.cit., p.181
had taken place between his Department and the Princes... These files he ordered to be burned."

Commenting on these atrocities committed by Corfield, V. B. Kulkarni, very appropriately says, "The crimes of Corfield against India constitute an indelible stain on the record of the British regime in this country." 

The Political Department went one step further. It proposed that the Crown Representative's Force which was maintained out of the revenues of the Government of India should not be handed over to the successor government, but should be distributed among states or groups of states. The Malwa Bil Corps was to go to Indore.

When reports reached Sardar Patel and Pandit Nehru that the Political Department was destroying records, winding up residences and handing over Cantonment areas and the Crown forces to the states, they strongly protested and raised the question at a meeting of the party leaders called by Lord Mountbatten on 13th June. At this meeting Corfield said that he had been acting fully in accordance

28. Ibid., p. 183.
29. op. cit., p. 420.
with the Cabinet Mission's Memorandum on States which allowed any State to declare independence. Nehru vehemently refuted this view and held that the following words occurring in the Memorandum "the void will have to be filled either by the states entering into a federal relationship with the successor Government or Government in British India or failing this, entering into particular political arrangements with it or them," did not signify the possibility of any State becoming independent. When Mr. Jinnah held the view that every state was a sovereign state and could refuse to join both the Constituent Assemblies and none had any right to coerce the native states to take a particular course, that the states were the best judges of what was good for them. Jinnah said, "The States are fully entitled to refuse to join either the Pakistan or Hindustan Constituent Assembly. Every Indian state is sovereign except in those matters for which it had entered into treaty agreements with the Crown."  

The situation was thus grave; there was a serious danger to the integrity of India. The fear that the

ship of Indian freedom might flounder on the rock of the state's independence was genuine indeed. Some British administrators who had lived in India for a life-time were convinced till the last moment that the Princes would not submit themselves to the authority of democratic leaders and, as they had their own arms, they would resist any encroachments on their power, leading to certain civil war in which, the structure of new India may perish. Corfield was one of them. He egged the states to be firm and hoped to see Hyderabad setting itself up as an independent unit. Its territory was vast and coffers full, and the Nizam was fiercely anti-Congress. As stated already, Bhopal, Travancore and Hyderabad lost no time in announcing their intention to become independent as soon as Britain transferred power to Indian hands and Paramountcy ended.

The Congress had intensified its freedom movement in British India. As a result, the people of the states too began to agitate for democratic rights. However, some Princes read the signs of the time and acted patriotically while some others held back to fish in troubled waters.
This was the general picture of the Princely India when Britain announced the lapse of Paramountcy which came like a bolt from the blue. It was clear that it would realise a new force that would substantially alter and atrophy the concept of united India. Thus India would be left truncated, trimmed; dotted with infinite gaps that would stand in the way of geographical cohesion and resultant administrative viability. A truncated and bleeding India would have no strength to suppress disintegrating forces.

If Jinnah was getting a moth-eaten Pakistan, it looked as if the nationalists would get a jaded, stilted India with too many gaps and holes to make it look anything but integrated. If the native states were allowed to remain independent, India would become a disjointed, patchy and unstable nation.

If absolute freedom were to be allowed to native states, the natural aspirations of the people to merge with the rest of India, to throw away the shackles of autocracy and to have democratic set up would remain a dream.
The policy of the British Government abrogating all the contracts and treaties entered into with the native states was incompatible with the realities of the situation. But if paramountoy lapsed and if the special privileges which the Britain possessed and could be handed over to the new rulers were abrogated, it would release a Frankenstein monster which would stand in the way of integration.

Both the parties, the Congress and the Muslim League could not anticipate the course to be taken by the native states. But both of them could anticipate the risks inherent in allowing the kings of native states to stand in the way of national integration.

Patel and the Process of Integration

At a meeting with Lord Mountbatten, it was decided to establish a new States Department which was to function as a single unit with two Ministers, one nominated by the Congress and the other nominated by the Muslim League and two secretaries. The Department came into existence on 27th June, 1947.
When the atmosphere was most uncertain, inauspicious and tense, Sardar Patel assumed charge of the States Department as the Minister for States on 5th July, 1947. Thus, Sardar Patel had not only to face a grave crisis in national affairs, but also a serious challenge to his leadership. He knew that a truncated and bleeding India did not have the strength to suppress the disintegrating forces that threatened to plunge the country into chaos. Sardar selected V.P. Menon, a brilliant I.C.S. Officer with outstanding ability and rich experience as his Secretary. India owes a debt of gratitude to V.P. Menon, Sir B.N. Rao and C.C. Desai\(^\text{32}\) and other officers for the manner in which they carried out Sardar's policy, plans and directions against great odds. They evinced great dexterity in handling the rulers, disarming their suspicions, appealing to them in the name of patriotism - as well as of self-interest and finally pushing them into signing the required agreements. The 'buoyant enthusiasm and uncanny tact' of particularly V.P. Menon were of great value to the Sardar in reshaping the political map of India. Patel had taken keen interest

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\(^{32}\) B.N. Rao was an eminent Constitutional Adviser to the Constituent Assembly and C.C. Desai, was an Additional Secretary to the States Ministry.
in states' peoples' agitation and had become fairly familiar with the Princes' attitude, aspirations and behaviour. Therefore, his good working knowledge of the problems and difficulties of the states and their rulers proved useful in handling the negotiations.

At his first meeting with Menon, Sardar Patel defined his policy and referred to the consequences of the lapse of Paramountcy. Immediately, V.P. Menon remarked "...it was the greatest disservice the British had done us as well as the rulers." These two great administrators worked out the modus operandi. It was decided to seek accession of native states on three subjects—Defence, Foreign Affairs and Communication. It was in pursuance of this policy that Sardar Patel issued his historic statement of 5th July 1947.

"The states have already accepted the basic principle that for defence, foreign affairs and communications they would come into the Indian Union. We ask no more of them than accession on these three subjects in which the common interests of the country are involved... This country with

34. Ibid., pp.105-106, for the details of the text. See also for their content, List 1 of Schedule VII to the Government of India Act of 1935 reproduced in a Schedule annexed to the Instrument.
its institutions is the proud heritage of the people who inhabit it. It is an accident that some live in the states and some in British India, but all alike partake of its culture and character. We are all knit together by bonds of blood and feelings no less than of self-interest. None can aggregate us into segments; no imposable barriers can be set up between us. I suggest that it is therefore better for us to make laws sitting together as friends than to make treaties as aliens. I invite my friends the rulers of states and their people to the Councils of the Constituent Assembly in this spirit of friendliness and co-operation in a joint endeavour, inspired by common allegiance to our motherland for the common good of us all."35

Further the statement emphasised that the Congress

"are no enemies of the Princely order, but on the other hand, wish them and their people under their aegis all prosperity, contentment and happiness. Nor would it be my policy to conduct the relations of the new department with the states in any manner which savours of the domination of one over the other; if there would be any domination it would be that of our mutual interests and welfare."36

The statement ended with the appeal;

"we are at a momentous stage in the history of India. By common endeavour we can raise the country to a new greatness while lack of unity will expose us to fresh calamities. I hope the Indian States will bear in mind that the alternative to co-operation in the general interest is anarchy and chaos which will overwhelm great and small in a common ruin if we are unable to act together in the minimum of common tasks."37

36. Ibid.
37. Ibid.
Thus the Sardar invited the rulers to attend the Constituent Assembly as friends to extend their cooperation in the joint endeavour of framing a constitution for United India. He said that the people of the states and the provinces were knit closely by bonds of blood more than of self interest. None could divide them into various segments or put barriers between them. He assured the Princes that the Congress was not their enemy but wished them and their subjects all happiness and prosperity. Further, Patel convened a meeting of a select number of rulers and State's Ministers who had joined the Constituent Assembly, in defiance of Bhopal's direction to the contrary. He appealed to them to accede to India immediately which would enable them to exercise their influence in formulating the policies of the Government. It was a persuasive argument and had the desired effect. Emphasising the great importance of this meeting, V.P. Menon writes, "It was this Conference which at last broke the ice, clearing away a mass of vague suspicions which the rulers had entertained about the new States Department." 38 Sardar gave a splendid advice to the Princes: "They cannot remain

38. op.cit., p.103
outside the Constituent Assembly. It would be suicidal on the part of the Princes to exploit the Hindu-Muslim differences in British India. If any member of the Princely order desires to establish paramountcy, he is mistaken. They cannot establish that paramountcy which the British are relinquising. Paramountcy vests in the people. The Princes should be abreast of the progressive forces in British India while organising themselves for their legitimate rights... If they are anxious to maintain peace and order in the country and cherish the ideal of a united and prosperous India they should cooperate with and take part in the efforts now being made for building the future of India on sound and firm foundations.*39*

Further, Sardar pleaded with the Princes to act with farsightedness. He told them not to forget the realities of the situation and to realise the popular desire for democracy which could not be ignored except under dire peril. He also told them that the popular will should be the deciding factor in the states because 'Paramountcy had been ended not by the effort of the Princes but by that of the people'. The choice before them was either to introduce responsible government and be satisfied with the rule of a constitutional head or to face a revolution. In the past, the paramount power of the British Government protected them, but in future the Government of

India would not render such help in order to maintain their autocratic rule. If peace and tranquility was destroyed; the Government of India would have to interfere and take over the administration.

Further, the Sardar guaranteed them payment of privy purses, ownership of private property and the privileges and dignities enjoyed personally by them if they surrendered their rights.

Jinnah was the biggest impediment in the way of accession of the States into Indian Union and he was trying to tempt some of the border states into signing the agreements with Pakistan. A typical example was that of the Maharaj Kumar of Jaisalmer and the Maharaja of Jodhpur with whom Jinnah signed a blank sheet of paper and presented it to the Maharaja of Jodhpur saying, "write your terms on that your Highness and I will sign them.\textsuperscript{40} The Maharaja was tempted and turned to the Maharaj Kumar who said to Jinnah 'If there is any dispute between Hindus and Muslims in my state, I will not side with Muslims against Hindus.' Jinnah remained

\textsuperscript{40} Leonard Mosley, \textit{op.cit.}, p.177.
mum and thus the negotiations were shattered. The rulers could notice that their Hindu-majority were violently opposed to any agreement with Pakistan.

The memorable appeal of Sardar Patel found instant response. It helped to allay the apprehensions of the Princes and brought about an atmosphere of cordiality. V.P-Memon, the ingenious I.C.S. Officer, under the advice of Sardar Patel prepared two documents - an Instrument of Accession and a Standstill Agreement. By signing the former, the states could accede to the Dominion of India on the three subjects of defence, external affairs and communications. According to the latter Agreement, all agreements and administrative arrangements, existing then between the Crown and the state should continue until new arrangements were made. The drafts of these two agreements were circulated to the rulers at the special session of the Chamber of Princes.

Sardar Patel sought the help of Lord Mountbatten in persuading and convincing the Princes that it would

41. The text of these two documents are to be found in K.M.Munshi, Indian Constitutional Documents - Munshi Papers, (Bombay, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1967), Vol.III, pp.418-422.
be in the interests of themselves and their own people that they should accede to one or other of the two Dominions on the subjects of Defence, Foreign Affairs and Communications. At the behest of Sardar Patel, Mountbatten, on 25th July 1947, addressed the Chamber of Princes for the first and the last time in his capacity as the Crown Representative. Lord Mountbatten pointed out that the states by and large did not have the capacity to handle Defence, Foreign Affairs and Communications by themselves. He suggested them to realise the geographical compulsions and to accede to that Dominion which lay contiguous to them. Mountbatten said "out of something like 565 states, the vast majority are irretrievably linked geographically with the Dominion of India." He emphasised the urgency of the situation and advised them "... if you are prepared to come, you must come before the 15th August... this is in the best interests of States and every wise Ruler and wise Government would desire to link up with the great Dominion of India on a basis which leaves you great internal autonomy and which at the same time gets rid of your worries and cares over External Affairs, Defence and Communications." Further, he concluded

42. Ibid., p.415.
with the cogent appeal, "You cannot run away from the Dominion Government which is your neighbour any more than you can run away from the subjects for whose welfare you are responsible." He also assured that their accession on these subjects would involve no financial liability and that in other matters there would be no encroachment on their sovereignty.

Sardar Patel and his associates worked at a feverish pace. They had hardly forty days to finalise the formula for accession, to negotiate with Rulers to hammer out suitable changes and to get the contract of accession signed.

Further, Lord Mountbatten warned the Maharaja of Jodhpur who was tempted by Jinnah to accede to Pakistan that such an accession would be in conflict with the policy underlying the partition of the country and that he might have to face serious riots within the States. The writing on the wall could not be ignored with impunity and he should act according to the needs of the time.

44. Ibid. The full text of the 'Speech by His Excellency the Viceroy Mountbatten to a Special Meeting of the Chamber of Princes, July 25, 1947' is also found in this, pp.413-417.
Mountbatten's appeal had the desired effect and he acceded to India and thus followed the lead given by the Maharajas of Patiala, Gwalior, Baroda and Bikaner. Speaking about the great sacrifice made by the Maharaja of Patiala, Sardar said, "I must mention the notable contribution which H.H. the Maharaja of Patiala made to the Unity and integrity of India. He took of the cause of the country at a time when serious attempts were being made to balkanise India by means of one or more 'Rajasthans'. It was his patriotic lead that contributed in a large measure to a change in the attitude of the Princes to the problem of accession to the Indian Union."\(^{45}\) Regarding the dramatic action of the Maharaja of Jodhpur, V.P. Menon beautifully writes, "After a few minutes, Lord Mountbatten went out of the room and the Maharaja whipped out a revolver, levelled it at me and said, "I refuse to accept your dictation". I told him that he was making a very serious mistake if he thought by killing me or threatening to kill me, he could get the accession abrogated. Shortly, afterwards, Lord Mountbatten returned and I told him what had happened.

Presently, the Maharaja calmed down and we departed in company. After leaving him at his residence, I returned to my office. The whole episode became a standing joke between us later on. 46

The rulers of Dholpur, Bharatpur, Bilaspur and Nabha sat on the fence for long, and at last they signed the Instrument reluctantly. The Maharaja of Mysore, Cochin and a few more willingly signed the agreements. The Nizam of Hyderabad, the Nawab of Bhopal, the Maharaja of Indore and Travancore showed their intention of declaring themselves independent the day the Paramountcy lapsed. After a series of visits from V.P. Menon and series of talks with Mountbatten, Nawab of Bhopal signed the agreements but requested Patel not to publish it till August 15. He wrote to Patel a letter which read,

"I don't disguise the fact that while the struggle was on, I used every means in my power to preserve the independence and neutrality of my State. Now that I have conceded defeat, I hope that you will find that I can be as staunch a friend as I have been an inverterate opponent. I harbour no ill feelings towards anyone, for throughout, I have been treated with consideration and have received understanding and courtesy from your side. I now wish to tell you that so long as you maintain your present firm stand against the disruptive forces"
in the country and continue to be a friend of the States as you have shown you are, you will find in me a loyal and faithful ally."47

Vallabhbhai did not consider this as an additional feather in his cap nor as his great triumph over the Nawab. Considering this as a severe defeat of the Nawab, he would have humiliated and looked down upon him. But Vallabhbhai being a man of great qualities treated him as a faithful friend. Sardar in his reply to Nawab of Bhopal writes,

"Quite candidly, I do not look upon the accession of your state to the Indian Dominion as either a victory for us or defeat for you. It is only right and propriety which have triumphed in the end and, in that triumph, you and I have played our respective roles. You deserve full credit for having recognised the soundness of the position and for the courage, the honesty and the boldness of having given up your earlier stand which according to us was entirely antagonistic to the interests as much of India as of your own State. I have noted with particular pleasure your assurance of support to the Dominion Government in combating disloyal elements... and your offer of loyal and faithful friendship. During the last few months, it had been a great disappointment and regret to me that your undoubted talents and abilities were not at the country's disposal in the critical times through which we were passing and I therefore particularly value this assurance of co-operation and friendship."48

After Bhopal's capitulation came the turn of Indore. The Maharaja of Indore went to Delhi with an intention of not signing the Instrument. By remaining in a saloon carriage in Delhi Railway Station, he sent a word to Sardar that if he wanted to meet him, he should come to the Railway station. Patel sent Rajkumari Amrit Kaur to bring him. Patel knew that Rajkumari's appearance would do the trick without loss of face. The Maharaja was surprised to see Rajkumari in the station. She advised him that it was in his own interest to join the Indian Union. The Maharaja agreed to go with her to meet Patel. At the Ministry, he was met by C.C. Desai, member of Sardar's 'inner cabinet'. Desai's own version is worth quoting: "The Maharaja was still under the influence of Nawab of Bhopal who had advised him not to sign the Instrument of Accession. Bhopal had assured him that he was not going to sign but would declare his state independent on August 15th." Indore and Bhopal were neighbouring states, and the Nawab probably thought the two together could withstand any pressure from the Government of India. The Maharaja's main argument was that he had agreed to sign the Instrument along with the Nawab of Bhopal. We told
him that he had already signed it, which His Highness wouldn't believe. He said: "How could it be, when the Nawabsahab himself told me only two days ago that he will not sign as he wanted to be independent? At last I took out the document with Bhopal's signature, which of course Indore could not disbelieve. He quietly signed the Instrument of Accession and walked away."49

The Raja of Meher met C.C. Desai, the day before the Paramountoy lapsed on August 14 - and expressed his willingness to sign the Instrument the next day as he could assume the title of Maharaja when the Paramountoy lapsed. He was not made a Maharaja by the British. The discussion between him and C.C. Desai went on for some time. C.C. Desai lost his patience and told the Raja that he would sign the Instrument that day or not and face the consequences. Desai continued to say, "perhaps you might change your mind by tomorrow, decide to call yourself 'His Majesty' and ask me to prepare an Instrument to suit your new title. Sardar Patel has not sanctioned an Instrument of Accession for 'His Majesty.'"50

Thus the discussion ended and he signed the Instrument as Raja of Meher with a heavy heart.

It is worth referring briefly to the manner in which Travancore was persuaded to join the Indian Union despite its earlier announcement to remain independent as soon as Paramountacy was withdrawn.

Sir C.P. Ramaswami Aiyar, the Dewan of Travancore decided to abstain himself from attending the meeting of the rulers and representatives of the States called by the Viceroy Lord Mountbatten on 25th July as the State had decided not to accede to the Indian Union. Lord Mountbatten, therefore invited him at Delhi. Mr. Menon explained to Sir C.P. Ramaswami Aiyar, the importance and significance of accession to India. V.P. Menon writes, 'I pointed out that on 15th August, the States would literally be released from the centre and would thereafter have no contact with either the centre or among themselves. This was too dangerous a position and if the transitional period was not safeguarded, the result might be complete chaos. Transitions were always risky. In India, especially, there was a real danger
of anti-social elements raising their heads. One aspect of the question which was causing particular concern was the communist menace. The only remedy against this was to build up an integrated economic and political system strong enough to withstand their ideology. Lord Mountbatten also persuaded him and told that accession of Travancore would be hailed throughout India as a great act of statesmanship. Sir C.P. left Delhi without heeding to his advice but showed his willingness to arrive at some agreement in regard to the three subjects on which accession was sought. But soon, he was wounded in a personal attack. However, finally, the Maharaja telegraphed his accession to the Indian Union and the acceptance of the Instrument.

Junagadh was another State which gave lot of trouble. It was one of the three states which did not agree to accede to the Indian Union in advance of the lapse of Paramountcy. Its Nawab was an eccentric type of man who cared more for his pet dogs which he owned in hundreds and less for the comforts of his subjects. He took great delight in performing the marriages of his pet dogs with pomp and ceremony, led the bride and the

51. *op.cit.*, p.111.
bridegroom in procession, declaring a public holiday in the state on the occasion and gave them bath in perfumed water. He gave them special food imported from abroad.52

The affairs of the state were looked after by Nawab's Prime Minister (Dewan) Sir Shah Nawaz Bhutto, a native of Karachi. Till August 14, 1947, Bhutto kept up the pretence of negotiations with Patels Ministry. On August 15th, he announced that Junagadh had acceded to Pakistan. This was vehemently opposed by the people of Junagadh and Kathiawad. It was a generally accepted principle that a state should join India or Pakistan according to its geographical situation and the population composition. Junagadh was an important maritime state with close economic, cultural and ethnic relations with Kathiawad. 80 percent of its population was Hindu. It contained sacred Hindu and Jain Shrines including the famous Somnath Temple. Its nearest point of contact with Pakistan was 300 miles away and was connected only by sea route. Its accession to Pakistan would thus have led to many complications of trade, commerce and

52. Ibid., p.120 for the details of other eccentricities of Maharaja about his dogs.
communications. It was a clear violation of all accepted canons of decency and the basic principle on which the partition of India had been agreed to. Geography, religion and economic interests were all against this accession. Junagadh's accession to Pakistan might be constitutionally valid but was politically unsound and physically impracticable. Virabhadrasinghji Maharaja of Lunawada, Chairman, Gujarat State Organisation explains vividly in his telegram dt. 25th September 1947,

"WE FIRMLY BELIEVE THAT GEOGRAPHICALLY ECONOMICALLY AND CULTURALLY JUNAGADH HAVING AFFINITY WITH KATHIAWAR AND GUJARATH FOR LONG PAST SHOULD HAVE JOINED THE DOMINION OF INDIA AND THAT THEREFORE THE ACTION TAKEN BY HIS HIGHNESS THE NAWAB SAHIB OF JUNAGADH IN ACCORDING TO THE PAKISTAN DOMINION HAS NOT BEEN A STEP ON THE RIGHT DIRECTION NOR IN THE BEST INTERESTS OF THAT STATE AS WELL AS THOSE OF KATHIAWAR AND GUJARAT."53

In the same telegram, Virabhadrasinghji Maharaja of Lunawada requested the Nawab to reconsider his unfortunate decision. 54

The Nawab claimed rights of suzerainty over Mangrol,

54. Ibid., for the details a telegram of Virabhadrasinghji Maharaja of Lunawada, dated 25th September, 1947.
Manavadar and the small states Babariawad when the Paramountcy lapsed. This decision was prompted by Jinnah's encouragement. Jinnah's aim was to create 'pockets of Pakistan' in India. It was the main intention of Bhutto to protect Islam and Muslims of Kathiawar. It is evident from his letter to Jinnah. Bhutto wrote to Jinnah: "Though the Muslim population of Junegadh is nearly 20 percent and non-Muslims form 80 percent, 7 lakhs Muslims of Kathiawar survived because of Junagadh. I consider that no sacrifice is too great to preserve the prestige, honour and rule of His Highness and to protect Islam and the Muslims of Kathiawar." 55 Jinnah promised to send seven companies of Pakistan Reserve Police to the help of Nawab. Jinnah would have succeeded in creating 'pockets of Pakistan' in India but for the strong hand of Sardar Patel.

The accession of Junagadh to Pakistan was the result of secret negotiations between the Dewan Sir Bhutto and Mr. Jinnah. This "was clear from a number of letters which fell into our hands after both the Nawab and the Dewan fled from the state. In one of

these Sir Shah Nawaz Bhutto had written to Jinnah about the interview granted to him by the latter on 16th July, in which Jinnah had advised the Nawab to 'keep out under any circumstances until 15th August' and referred to Jinnah's assurances that he would not allow Junagadh to starve as 'Veraval is not far from Karachi'.

This deliberate mischief could not be tolerated either by Patel or by the people of Kathiawad. Sardar Patel protested to Pakistan against the arbitrary decision of the Nawab. But Jinnah replied that the Nawab was competent to take the decision ignoring the geographical position, the wishes of the people and their economic interests.

Samaldas Gandhi, nephew of Mahatma Gandhi met Patel at Delhi and informed that he and his friends has decided to form a Kathiawad People's Forum and fight till the liberation of Junagadh. They had decided to march into the territories of Junagadh and liberate its people. Under the leadership of Samaladas Gandhi, the Kathiawadis began to enrol and

56. V.P. Menon, op.cit., p.123.
the businessmen stopped supplies to Junagadh. With the result, the prices began to soar. The Muslims had to face many hardships and they had no enthusiasm to fight. On 27th October, Bhutto wrote to Jinnah describing the miserable consequences which had followed in the wake of Junagadh's accession to Pakistan. He wrote,

"Our principal sources of revenue, railways and customs have gone to the bottom. Food situation is terribly embarrassing though Pakistan has come to our rescue... There has been a harsh treatment of Muslims travelling on Kathiawar railway lines who have been subjected to several kinds of hardships, and humiliations. Added to this, His Highness and the Royal family have had to leave because our secret service gave us information in advance of serious consequences to their presence and safety. Though, immediately after accession, His Highness and myself received hundreds of messages chiefly from Muslims congratulating us on the decision, today our brethren are indifferent and cold. Muslims of Kathiawar seem to have lost all enthusiasm for Pakistan."57

Thus it was evident that even the Muslim population of Kathiawad hated joining Pakistan. They wholeheartedly welcomed joining the Indian Union.

The Sheikh of Mangol was independent in respect of the major portion of the State, but in respect of 21

57. Quoted in V.P. Menon, op.cit., p.136.
villages, the civil and the criminal jurisdiction was exercised by Junagadh. Junagadh considered Mangol as its vassal and when it acceded to India, the Nawab of Junagadh was greatly annoyed and sent his army to occupy the state of Mangol and Babaraiwad which had also acceded to India.

The Muslim hooligans in the state took advantage of the situation and began to terrorize the Hindus. Law and order situation was worsening. Sardar Patel sent Indian troops to the borders of Junagadh. The next day, V.P. Menon was sent to Junagadh to persuade the Nawab to face facts. He could meet only the Prime Minister who told him that future discussions should be held with Pakistan. However, to avoid undue publicity, Sardar Patel requested the Maharaja Pratap Singh of Baroda to allow the Indian troops to be stationed in his State which was nearer to Junagadh. The Maharaja thought the government's difficulty was his opportunity and wrote a letter in his own hand expressing his readiness to oblige. Patel put one condition. When the Junagadh crisis was over that the Maharaja should be made the king of Kathiawad and Baroda.58

Little did the Maharaja knew that his own state would be merged in Bombay within the next 12 months. This particular ruler's ambition may have been an idle dream but it throws some light on the psychology of his class and shows what serious difficulties the princely states may have created if their integration in the Indian Union was not achieved.

Trouble was also brewing in Manavadar whose Khan had not acceded to India and was arresting local leaders and harassing the people. It was a tiny state that had applied for accession to Pakistan without consulting the overwhelming majority of Hindus in the state. There was danger of a flare up if suitable action was not taken in time. A small police force was sent to Manavadar to take over the administration. Both the Shaikh of Mangrol and the Khan of Manavadar acceded to India immediately and left for Karachi.

With the support of Kathaiwad People's Front, the subjects of the Nawab, both Hindus and Muslims revolted against him. Sensing danger, the Nawab fled to Karachi with family, his pet dogs and all the available cash,
securities and jewellery worth more than £750,000. The Muslims of Junagadh requested the Prime Minister to avoid bloodshed and disaster. Prime Minister Bhutto appealed to Jinnah for help which did not come. He, therefore fled to Pakistan on 8th November 1947 after requesting the Union Government to take over the State's administration. The Regional Commissioner at Rajkot took over the State.

Addressing a huge gathering at Rajkot on 12th November, Sardar explained the origin of the Junagadh problem and said that "Pakistan had no business to meddle with Junagadh."59 Disclosing the deep-laid plans of Pakistan against India, Patel said, "Rampur, which was the first to declare its accession to the Indian Dominion, witnessed the first fruits of Pakistan's malevolence. We met this challenge resolutely and the resistance collapsed. Then they sought a foothold in Junagadh. We warned them, we begged of them, we reasoned with them but obstinancy was not conquered."60 He continued to explain how in the past the Muslims of Kathiawad had "contributed to the League's 'Two-Nation Theory'

60. Ibid., p.6.
propaganda and how they took part in League politics. But I have forgotten the past which is dead and gone if only they will treat it as such. But if they still feel an attachment to the "Two-Nation Theory" and look to the outside power, they have no place in Kathiawar." 61 He explained the reason as to why Pakistan was created and how the recent disturbances in Junagadh had belittled the image of India, Sardar Patel said:

"It was to put an end to this dual loyalty that we agreed to create Pakistan so that those who preferred to abide in that faith can find a place where they can pursue it. In India, there is no place for such persons... They should live in India like brothers and in harmony with non-Muslims... Recent disturbances have disgraced India in the eyes of the world and it is for us to win back our lost reputation by correct behaviour and noble conduct. At the same time, I deplore the tendency to get panicky. If we have to die, we must die like brave men. As human beings with a sense of human dignity, we cannot die crying." 62

When the Government of India took over Junagadh, it decided to hold a referendum to ascertain the unfettered choice of the people in regard to accession. The polling was held on 20th February 1948, and out of the total

strength of 2,01,457 registered voters, 1,90,870 voted for India and 91 for Pakistan. A referendum was held at the same time in Mangol and Manavadar as well as in Babariawad, etc. Out of 31,434 votes cast in these areas, only 39 were for accession to Pakistan.

With this, Jinnah's dream of creating 'pockets of Pakistan' in India was shattered in his first attempt. He had supported Junagadh's accession on the specious plea that the rulers decision to accede to either dominion as he wished was final. But the same Jinnah conveniently forgot this argument when the Maharaja of Kashmir acceded to India and put forth the argument of the people's wishes.

There were some more Princes who were wavering in their minds. On July 28, 1947, Lord Mountbatten arranged a reception in honour of fifty rulers and hundred State's representatives. This was the most diplomatic reception which was used by Mountbatten to exert his influence through his charisma on such rulers as had not yet signified their willingness to accede to India. Many of them had signed only the Standstill Agreement which
was meant for only those rulers who opposed the policy of accession.

Thus, Lord Mountbatten also with his 'infectious charm and inborn tact' rendered signal service in inducing the wavering princes to see the writing on the wall and act according to the spirit and needs of the time. His contribution in the political integration of India can never be underestimated. Commending Lord Mountbatten, V.P. Menon writes "Another factor which went a long way in winning over the rulers was of course the infectious charm and inborn tact of Lord Mountbatten. It was because of his abundant love for India and not merely because he was obliged to do so, that he had taken upon himself the task of negotiating with the rulers on the question of accession. And once he undertook any task he invariably put the whole weight of his personality into what he was doing and spared himself no effort. Half-hearted methods and half-hearted measures are alien to him. India can never forget the magnificent service he rendered at critical juncture in her history."63 Thus the political consolidation of Princely States except Hyderabad and

63. op.cit., p.117.
Kashmir was complete without bloodshed because of the superb strategy designed and supervised by Sardar Patel.

The Administrative Consolidation of States:

By the time Hyderabad merged into the Indian Union, the political consolidation of other states was complete, but they were to be knitted together and brought under the effective control of the centre.

Sardar Patel first turned his attention to the States of Orissa. He convened a conference of the rulers of the states in that province. He told them that the Orissa States were like ulcers on the body of the province and that they must either be cured or eliminated. As a veritable disciple of Gandhiji, he used persuasive arguments to make them understand two points: (1) the awakening of the people which had become manifest in their demand for self-government, (2) their inability to stand on their own and serve their people properly. The rulers realized that a
situation was fast developing which they might not be able to cope with. Patel, therefore asked them to merge in the Orissa province and satisfy the demand of the people for self government. The rulers' main concern was the privy purses. Sardar assured them that he would safeguard their privy purses, privileges and rights to their private properties.

Regarding the rate of annuity or privy purse, the suitable formula prepared by K.V. Godbole of Poona, the Dewan Phaltan state was accepted. By 15th December, all the rulers had signed the merger agreement.

After the merger of Orissa States, on 15th December, Patel appealed to the ten rulers of Chattisgarh in the Central Provinces (Now Madhya Pradesh) to sign the merger agreement. They readily accepted the same conditions put to the rulers of Orissa States and signed the merger agreement. Now, all the States are merged with Madhya Pradesh.

64. For the details of Godbole's formula about rates of Privy Purse, see, D.V. Tahamankar, op. cit., p. 235.
The next merger problem which was to be tackled by the Sardar was of the 222 States of Kathaiwad. He suggested them to form a sort of federation of their own and grant responsible government to those Unions. The ruler accepted the advice of Patel and on 15th Feb., 1948, the United States of Kathaiwad was formed and the States of Rajputana, Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, Central India, etc., merged themselves into Unions of Rajasthan, Pepsu, Saurashtra, Himachal Pradesh and Travancore and Cochin. Baroda was merged in the State of Bombay. Mysore was integrated.

Sardar Patel brought about the integration of states like a magician. K.L. Punjabi writes "Like a magician, Sardar had picked up the fragments of States and from his basket produced compact and viable units. The map of India was changed completely. Out of 554 States, 216 had merged in the Provinces. 310 had been consolidated into six Unions, five were put directly under the Centre as Chief-Commissioners' Provinces, 21 Punjab Hill States formed the Himachal Pradesh and two states were made into separate provinces. The 554 States were thus reduced to fourteen unions and states." 65

While forming Unions, the rulers had surrendered their separate sovereignties in return for privy purses. If the Union Legislatures then decided to merge with India, there was nothing to prevent them from doing so. However, Sardar Patel did not want to rush things. He anticipated that practical problems of administration were sure to make merging inevitable sooner or later. The Unions would have to rely more and more on the Centre for guidance and personnel. This gave Patel an opportunity to strengthen the Government of India to hold on to the Unions. In course of time, it became evident that these could be administered properly only if they became Indian Provinces. Therefore, the Unions merged into Indian Provinces. The Pepsu joined East Punjab; Baroda and Kathaiwad went into Bombay; Rajasthan Union became Rajasthan; Gwalior merged into Madhya Pradesh; Travancore and Cochin became Kerala, Mysore was created a separate state. The Sardar installed those rulers who had innate administrative skill and who had guided the destiny of their States with ability, in high offices.
Thus the effect of the process of merger and integration was that there remained only 15 States. It was a stupendous and remarkable achievement of Sardar to reduce their number from nearly 600 to only 15. Never in the history of India, not even under Mughal's rule, nor the rule of Harsha, such an integration was achieved and brought under the rule of one Government. Therefore, it is no exaggeration if we say that he was more than the Moghal Emperors, Harsha or Ashoka in this respect.

Each Union was headed by a 'Rajpramukh' who enjoyed powers similar to those conferred on the Governors of Provinces. The Rajpramukhe were assisted by popular ministers. Some states were brought under the direct jurisdiction of the Central Government for political and military reasons. They included Himachal Pradesh, Manipur, Kutch, Bhopal, Bilaspur, Coach-Bihar and Tripura. When the Indian Constitution came into force in January 1950, there were nine Provinces known as part 'A' States, a similar number of units called 'B' States, and ten Provinces known as part 'C' States.

In order to achieve the administrative consolidation
of the States and Unions, Patel provided from the Central Government experienced officers to the Unions. The State Forces were integrated in the Indian Army.

The significance and the beauty of the State's integration is that this task was accomplished without any coercion, bloodshed and ill-will of the princes. The princes extended their cooperation because they trusted that Sardar Patel would honour the promises and pledges he had given them. Appreciating the most laudable work of Patel, V.P. Menon observes:

"The masterly handling of the rulers by Sardar was the foremost factor in the success of the accession policy. The rulers soon came to recognize him as a stable force in Indian politics and as one who would give them a fair deal. Added to this, his unfailing politeness to the rulers, viewed against his reputation as the 'Iron Man of India', endeared him to them and created such confidence that all accepted his advice without demur." 66

Sardar could integrate so many states so easily, effectively and successfully for he recognised the rights of the rulers 'acquired by heredity and history'. He gave them the place of honour in the independent India.

66. op.cit., p.117.
Sardar described the rulers as 'co-architects' in the work of building the nation.

By integrating nearly 600 States, Sardar performed a miracle. Once Sardar said, "The great ideal of geographical, political and economic unification of India, an ideal which for centuries remained a distant dream and which appeared as remote and as difficult of attainment as ever even after the advent of Indian independence was consummated by the policy of integration. Further he cautioned the people to shudder sloth and sluggishness and bring an harmonious integration and the happy blending of the old and new. He said, "We have to weave new fabrics into old materials; we have to make sure that simultaneously the old and the new are integrated into a pleasing whole - a design which would fit well into the pattern of all India." 67

The integration that was brought about by Sardar was political, but the real integration was to be brought in the hearts and minds of the people of different states so that they could overcome their

67. Ibid., p.469.
regional loyalties and develop telescopic outlook. In one of his speeches Sardar said, "Almost overnight we have introduced in these States the superstructure of a modern system of government. The inspiration and stimulus has come from above rather than from below and unless the transplanted growth takes a healthy root in the sail, there will be a danger of collapse and chaos." 68

When the British transferred power to India, many had expected that there would be nothing but chaos and confusion in India. Nobody had expected that Sardar would bring such a revolutionary change within such a short time. Even Nehru had not expected this. Therefore, speaking in September 1948, Nehru confessed:

"Even I who have been rather intimately connected with the State people's movement for many years, if I had been asked six months ago what the course of developments would be in the next six months since then, I would have hesitated to say that such rapid changes would take place... The historian who looks back will no doubt consider this integration of the States into India as one of the dominant phases of India's history." 69

68. Ibid.
69. Ibid., p.468.
Sardar never believed in using force to win the Princes. As Durga Das points out, "his dealings with the Indian Princes were marked by paternal approach, friendly feelings and an advisory role."\(^{70}\)

K.L. Punjabi gives out the secret of Sardar's success in the following words:

"One of the secrets of Sardar's success was the speed which he generated in the movements sponsored by him. They were like fast rolling battalions of tanks."\(^{71}\)

Therefore, the speed which Sardar adopted to reach his goal, was undoubtedly the main reason for his success. He was pragmatic in this. This was not appreciated by some of his critics. To such critics, he replied, "The charge is sometimes hurled against the Ministry of States that it has moved too quickly. But world today is different from the world of yesterday. Things could move slowly where there was more leisure and less speed. To-day, one day is equal to a century. See how overnight the States have fallen and empires have disappeared. In integration and democratisation,

\(^{70}\) op.cit., p.LVI
\(^{71}\) op.cit., p.223.
therefore, there must be quick progress if the country is to avoid disasters and threats to its existence and unity."\(^7\)

Some critics charge Patel that he was over-magnanimous to the Princes in respect of their privy purses and private properties. But, it seems, they are ignorant of the vital statistics and tremendous value of their invaluable sacrifice. The rulers were drawing privy purses to the tune of 20 Crores. After integration of States, the Indian Government sanctioned only 5.8 Crores. The privy purse in case of each ruler was fixed in consultation with the Ministry or the leaders of the Union. Therefore, Patel had followed a democratic way. They were granted for life and in the case of successors, it was left to the discretion of the Government.\(^7\) Moreover, the Princes were not allowed to keep their property as much as they desired. It was also decided by the Chief Ministers of the Unions and the States. The Indian Government inherited cash balances and investment of about 77 Crores. The Princes

\(^7\). Speeches of Sardar Patel, \textit{op.cit.}, p.39.

\(^7\). For the details of the privy purses sanctioned to each Ruler, see, K.L.Punjab, \textit{op.cit.}, p.224.
surrendered over 500 villages and thousands of acres of land and their palaces, museums and buildings, jewellery, fleets of cars and Airoplanes, etc. 74 Besides these, the Indian Government acquired about 12,000 miles of railways without payment of compensation. This was not a small gain to the Indian Union brought by the integration of Princely States for which Sardar Patel was responsible. Sardar achieved all this not by antagonizing the Princes but by winning their good-will and heart. The people of the states considered him as their 'friend, philosopher, guide' and champion.

While moving Article 291 of the Constitution in the Constituent Assembly, Sardar Patel remarkably acknowledged 'the ready and willing help' rendered by the rulers "in implementing the policy of integration and democratisation' and the great 'sacrifice' made by them in this 'bloodless revolution'. Sardar also referred to the privy purses. He said, :

"The privy purse settlements are therefore in the nature of consideration for the surrender by the rulers of all their ruling powers and also for the dissolution of the States as separate units. We would do well to remember that the British Government spent enormous amounts in respect of the

Maharatta settlements alone... Need we cavil then at the small— I purposely use the word small— price we have paid for the bloodless revolution which has affected the destinies of millions of our people? The capacity for mischief and trouble on the part of the rulers if the settlement with them would not have been reached on a negotiated basis was far greater than could be imagined at this stage. Let us do justice to them; let us place ourselves in their position and then assess the value of their sacrifice... The main part of our obligation under these agreements is to ensure that the guarantees given by us in respect of privy purses are fully implemented. Our failure to do so would be a breach of faith and seriously prejudice the stabilisation of the new order."

The integration of the Princely States with the Indian Union and their democratisation without resort to force— except in the case of Hyderabad— is the greatest and magnificent achievement of the 'Iron Man' of India, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. Many people consider it a miracle, an exhibition of something supernatural and incredulous. The most astonishing and notable feature of this revolution was that he as a veritable disciple of Gandhiji adopted Gandhian policy and statesmanship. Throughout this bloodless revolution, he adopted Gandhian means of love, ahimsa, cooperation, good-will, justice

and magnanimity. The name of Sardar Patel will ever remain memorable in the annals of this glorious ancient land of ours. Referring to the integration of the States achieved by the Sardar, Gandhi writes, "The task of dealing with the Princes was truly formidable, but I am convinced that Sardar was the only man who could have coped with it."  

R.K. Murthi pays a glowing tribute to Sardar's work in the following words, "History has examples of conquerors who carved out empires with the might of their sword. It has instances of men rising in revolt, overthrowing established regimes, creating new States by breaking up existing ones. But not once in history has an individual managed to transform the shape of a vast country like India through a process of negotiation, persuasion and accommodation. That credit goes to Sardar Patel."
