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## Patel as an Administrator

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### **Abstract:**

*In this paper, I will discuss "The Strongest Pillar of Nehru's Ministry" Sardar Patel who was the Home Minister in the first Government after Independence. His integrity, leadership and principles in life made him the Humanitarian Leader. He gave utmost importance to discipline and did not intervene politically in any other departments. He was a ruler blessed with great qualities of an organizer and an administrator. He solved many problems of newly independent India with an open mind and thought deeply and advised freely.*

### **1. Her outlook as an Administrator, His work as a Minister before Partition**

Sardar was President of the Ahmedabad Municipality from 1924 to 1928. Even during these days we get a glimpse of Patel as good administrator. Firm determination, decision making administration public oriented, reducing red tapism, winning public trust thought efficient and conscientious working was his chief qualities as an administrator. In 1946, he joined the interim government made formed under Jawaharlal Nehru. He was given the Home Department. In 1944, after independence, Pandit Nehru wrote him a letter to invite you to join the new Ministry to some extent, this letter is not needed at all because you are the strongest pillar of the Ministry.

The words the strongest pillar right describe Sardar's important position in the Ministry when Sardar assumed the office in this ministry he was given the Home Department and the information department. He was also given the Department to state prime set up on July 5 and he was given the status of Deputy Prime Minister. A historian writes about the scope of his internal administration:

'Sardar had supreme authority in the matter of internal affairs. He had control over all the channels of internal power because he headed not only the home department but also the department of information and broad casting. Moreover, he had a key position within the congress'. As he headed these two departments, Patel was able to end the post-independence uncertainty, chaos and anarchy. He is therefore called the architect of a strong' organized and stable India.

After a complete changeover of administration from imperialism to a democratic system after independence, there were many problems like those of infusing spirit of public welfare among the officials, making administration efficient and arousing confidence in the officers and Sardar faced then boldly the first problem was that of appointing senior officers in the administrative and police department in the State as well as at the centre earlier officers of Indian Civil Services and Indian Police were appointed to these posts. But after the second world war, these appointed had almost stopped. The reason was the newly formed Labour Government decision (in 1945) to leave India. But the vacancy of these posts had become a problem and there was a severe dearth of these officials to face this problem, Sardar made many provision like:

1. After independence, the right to retire on proportionate pension and to get compensation for giving up career should not be limited only to European members of All India Services.
2. So far as the Indian Members were concerned, Sardars view as that they should continue to serve the National Government unless some official does not need to continue with his service.
3. Sardar therefore assured them that their services will not be adversely affected but will continue as such.
4. Sardar agreed to give these guarantees only to the services of All India level and not to the provincial services because he looked upon them to be some extent under the State Prince.

Lord Mountbatten wanted even more guarantees for them but Sardar did not accept his suggestion and said, "If any officials want more guarantees from us, its only reason can be distrusting our motives and questioning our good will I would not consider such an official to be suitable for government services and would advise him to give up service.

After these initial provisions, Sardar look some other steps:

- 1) Early Appointments in New Services: Sardar had immediate consultation with state government, solved all their problems and with their unanimous support, set up two service cadres: Indian Administrative Service in place of I.C.S. and Indian Police service, like the earlier ones, were of the state level but the recruitment service conditions and disciplinary action were regulated by the centre through Public Service Commission Recruitment in these services was started in 1947.
- 2) Ending Age Limit: So long as there were vacancies, Sardar started an open system of recruiting even over age person to fill them. Applications were invited from all sources. The reason was that new pass outs from universities needed a lot of training

due to lack of experience. Even after training, it was essential for them to work for several years on junior posts to be fit for senior places.

- 3) About British Officials: although these officials of the pre-independence days were not directly asked to resign their jobs, still, their fitting in to the Swarajya government was not possible as they were foreigners. Moreover, they had for a long time, worked against those persons who were now in administration. Hence Indian leaders had not trust in the English Officials of the civil services. The officers, on the other hand, thought that the Indian government could not do without them they put forward two conditions to stay here – the British government had given them a right to go to England on paid leave after a period of service. The Indian Government should protect this respect and they would stay in India as British Citizens. Of Course, Patel wanted them to go. It was a golden chance and Patel did not accept their conditions and they left of their own. Thus he played a very important role in bringing about a new patter of administration and in laying the foundation of a strong administration for the future. Thus Patel strengthened the weak administrative afflicted by uncertainly by taking several system effective steps and proved false the British? Claims that the Indian went to able to run the government which would lead to unrest chaos and discontent among the people and the congress would miserably fail in ruling over the country. Several factors led to this success of administration and they reveal Patels outlook on administration. It would not be irrelevant to mention them here.

## 2. His Outlook as an Administrator

An administrator's success is assessed on the basis of the principles laid down by him and his attitude towards administration. For example, Maharaja Hari Singh of Jammu and Kashmir had capable deputies but he was utterly incapable of taking decisions the problem of Kashmir arose mainly because of that before that. Maharaja Ranjit Singh of Punjab always took the right decision. He was a fine statesman, chose the right man for the right posts and always kept the public interest in view. He was therefore a highly successful Ruler. Both these examples are from Monarchy-a Unitarian government. But they are relevant from the point of view of administration Sardar was an administrator in a democracy and he was always successful. His success can be attributed to his principles mentioned below:

- 1) As an administrator, Patel firmly believed that administrative officials should give highest importance to human relations experience. Even after training, it was instead of thinking about the number of their working hours, they should think how much they can contribute to the task of nation building. It is the duty of a true administrator to inspire the administrative official to work in that direction. Patels second conviction was that only that administration is good whom the public deems to be good. The ruler must keep pace with the times. Therefore, after independence, the said in clear terms. These are times of democracy and the rulers must win the trust of the masses. In brief, the success of a democratic government totally depends on the people's approval and cooperation.
- 2) Administration should be free from political interference:  
Patels remarkable success as an administrator was due to the fact that he set some standards for the administrative officials and the politicians and never allowed any political interferences in officials work of laying down their policies and strategies. Today the administration appear to be so weak and irresponsible to us primarily because it cannot take the right decision at any level high or low due to political interference. This interference weakened the very foundation of democratic institutions.'
- 3) Right person should be chosen for the right job:

According to Sh. S.K. Patil, the secret behind Patels success as an administrator lay in his skill to choose the right person for the right join and to win his rust. He loved his assistants like a father and always stood by them. His assistants always turned to him with deep faith, devotion and promptness to serve.

First of all, Sardar chose Sh. V.P. Menon as his deputy. Everybody know how much it benefited the nation. Due to sardar trust in him, Menon played a very significant role in taking policy decisions and apprised Sardar of his view on various issues. Whether it was the merger of Indian States or revitalization of administration Menon made an excellent contribution the best thing was that their relations were based on wrong mutual trust. Sardar chose V. Shankar as his second assistant. He was, in no way, less important than Menon even in the Party he chose the best suitable persons.

- 4) To trust and to win confidence

As an administrator, Sardar gave great importance to trust. It was his conviction that trust should enjoy the first priority in a successful administration. Its best example is that when Sh. V.P. Menon presented a proposal of a reduction in the salaries of the high officials of the central government, all of them accepted at cheerfully. It was a big step based trust Sardar wanted his trust from the top to the bottom. He believed in first doing oneself what one desires to be done by others. It will automatically breed trust. For example before the reduction in the Salaries of officials, all the members of the Central Cabinet had on 10<sup>th</sup> October, 1949, declared, under Sardar's inspiration, to effect a reduction of 15% in their salaries from 1<sup>st</sup> October. Actually, he was worried at India mercesing expenses. Moreover there were problems in the services the step he took to reduce expenses was credible and made possible only by Trust. As acting Prime Minister, he inspired every ministry of the Indian Government to exercise street economy in their future budgets. As a result, Rs. 80 crore were saved during the financial year 1950-51 through reduction in main items of expense. It was an example of credibility set by him at the top and was emulated at the bottom.

- 5) Only efficient administration can preserve civilization

Sardar believed that administration could not only if there was unity in the country. And only then can we preserve our civilization. In order to establish peace and to preserve and promote our civilization he step up all Indian services in a few format so that there should be unity in our adversity under a firm and efficient administration.

## 6) Discipline in Administration

Although Patel's whole life is a living example of discipline and he was a disciplinarian by conviction, he thought it to be all the more important in administration. According to Sh. R.K. Moorti the most important thing was that "Sardar knew the importance of binding together the members of administrative and defense services thought bonds of discipline. These two services are responsible for the internal and external state of the country. His approach was therefore very sound. There is a severe lack of discipline in these services are very frequent changes in the government and the people live under the shadow of fear Sardar did not talk of discipline in these services alone but also included the leaders and high officials in the democracy and did allow any presource on undue political interference in administration.

## 7) Need for fearless and intelligent officers

Sardar believed in a free and fair administration and he deeply felt its need the therefore advised the administrative officials to work fearlessly with an open mind, and to think deeply without casing for any pressures from political leadership. At the sometime, he advised the ministers also not to exercise any pressure.

Sardar adopted the above mentioned principles in his administration. It was our good fortune that as a ruler blessed with great qualities of an organizer and an administrator, Pate managed countless problems at a time in 1948 when the country really needed a leader like him. He brought the administration closer to the people through the principals of faith, unity and efficient organization and laid utmost emphasis on discipline and allowed no undue political interference. He went into the official's background and thus maintained his tradition of making the right choice and in cultivating in them a sense of duty. He humanitarian leader.

It would be relevant to quite what Sh. Shanta Kumar has to say about the present state of affairs and the relevance of Sardars view on the subject:

He had firm, practical and disciplined attitude towards administration today Administration is becoming loose and there is a severe discipline in governance. The reason is that the government is losing grip at the top. There is no ideal conduct at the top worth emulation these is a need to start restoring discipline right from the top and it must be enforced with strictness. Those at the top should had an exemplary life to be able to enforce discipline at the lower level. To bring honesty, there should be honesty at the top. Only a disciplined leader can enforce discipline Patels life gives us a message to first do what we wish other to do.

Sardar is an example of being a skilled administrator thereof his administration qualities during the most adverse circumstances when he became Home Minister in the interim government before partition of brief account follows

His works as a minister before partition

On 2<sup>nd</sup> September, 1946, Pandit Nehru formed his ministry without the Muslim League.... and Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel was made the Home Minister. The Patel was made the Home Minister the country was the passing through dangerous circumstances. The situation had become grave due to Muslim Leagues non participation and its insistence a separate state. Pakistan communalism had raised head states like Bengal, Delhi, Bombay and United Province. Sardar was deeply worried. He had sensed Leagues real motives that was why when the League announced its decision to join the ministry on 13<sup>th</sup> October, 1946 Patel had opposed giving it the Home Department According to Acharya Chandra Shekhar Shastri – Sardar had already sensed that Muslim League will misuse police and other services to prove its Two-Nation theory. Later on, the league actually misused communication department of destructive purposes. Foreign Trade department for communal revenge and Finance Department for exerting undue Burden on the industrialists.

Some of the administrative steps taken by Patel during Pre-Partition days were:

## 1) Permission to wear the native dress

Immediately after taking over administration Sardar declared that all the employees, if they so desired, could put on the national dress of Dhoti and Kurta instead of coat and trousers. He thus made a start with Indianization.

## 2) Steps Concerning Punjab Administration

Sardar took effective steps for the protection of the minorities in those districts in Punjab where the law and order situation was so serous due to rising communalism that the British Officials and even the Governor was unable to control it and attacks of minorities were continuing in March 1947. As Home Minister issued transfer order of 5 district Magistrates who were spreading ill will among League and the Congress in Punja.

## 3) Bearing the Burden of Partition

Undoubtedly it was Patel's decision that always succeeded in setting the dispute raised by the Muslim League and the day to day problems of the Government. Keeping in view the partition of the country, he undertook not only the responsibilities concern transfer of power but also those related to defining and deterring the system of governance. He also took up the task of merging the native states by holding discussion with the princes. By 15<sup>th</sup> August, 1947, a pre-partition minister, he had completed the formalities of the merger, of 552 native states spread over 3,88,793 sq. miles and having a population of 4,07,82,000 with the Indian Union. Moreover even before partition, he had proved himself to be a skilled administrator by launching crucially important tasks like re-establishing system of civil services in the country, strengthening internal security and stabilizing the unprecedented excited public opinion.

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