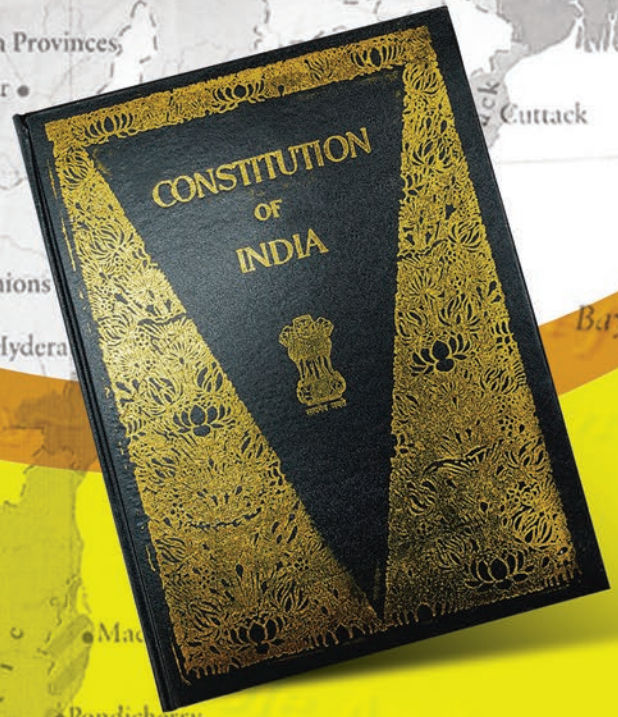


Manthan

Journal of Social & Academic Activism



Integration of Princely States Special





NAMAMI GANGE PROGRAMME

ARTH GANGA INITIATIVE

Self-sustainable economic model based on the **sybiotic relationship between nature and society**, by primarily **strengthening people-river connect** and adopting an **ecologically conscious sustainable development framework**

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- Increasing farmer's income & generating "more income per drop"
- "Gobar-Dhan"- for farmers & keeping pollution off
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- Sustenance of the projects post asset handover



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Manthan

Journal of Social and Academic Activism

Year: 43, Issue: 4

Oct-Dec 2022

Integration of Princely States Special

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Publisher

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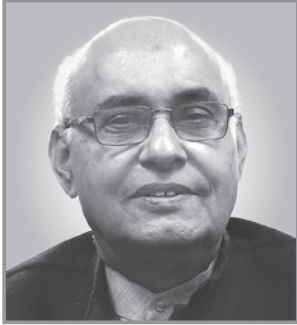
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Dr. Mahesh Chandra Sharma

Editorial

In the year 2022, which is the 75th anniversary of our Independence and is being celebrated as its Amrit Mahotsav, four special issues have been conceptualized by *Manthan*. First, *Indian Constitution and Gram Swaraj*; second, *Indian Constitution and Minorities*; third, *Directive Principles of Indian Constitution* and fourth, *Indian Constitution and the Merger of Princely States*. The three special issues that have appeared so far have been rich in articles that have been well researched, are replete with thought-provoking material, meaningful and worthy of being preserved. These issues have come in for much praise from readers. The learned writers and editorial team of *Manthan* merit commendation for this.

This year's last and fourth special issue is in your hands. One of the many uneven paths through which the history of India's independence traversed was the merger or accession of the sovereign princely states to the Indian republic. Its story is captivating as well as enlightening.

All the princely states were Indian, their accession to the Indian republic should not have been any special event. But the way the country's freedom movement became entangled in the vortex of the Partition of India gave rise to many uninvited problems. British rule with its imperialist ambitions was beset with the mentality of fragmenting India. The manner in which the British ended Paramountcy made the problem more serious. Everything happened in such haste that no one even had time to think about the issue. It was the positive approach of most monarchs and the visionary and courageous action of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel that achieved the goal of unity of the Indian republic.

The representatives of the people residing in princely states could not occupy places in the Constituent Assembly in the normal way others did. Much confusion prevailed among the princely rulers

about their future; there were apprehensions as well. Anti-India forces were active and the British too were provoking them. Partition had also intensified the Hindu-Muslim dichotomy.

The capable writers of *Manthan* have researched all these topics in this special issue. The story of the merger of the princely states is extensive and cannot be captured in any single issue of the magazine. The selection of the titles of the articles, therefore, is indicative. The presentation of the main stories of the merger has been done in such a way that the readers can be able to make an informed guess as to its extensiveness and can also be motivated to read further research material in this regard.

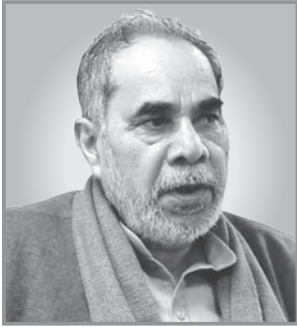
Inspiring motivation through this study is the quest of the Research and Development Foundation for Integral Humanism and *Manthan*. There should be a positive attitude in society towards research and in keeping with the dictum of “*Swādhyāyam Mā Pramadaḥ*” (Neglect not self-study) the propensity in people to read and study should also grow. In this regard, I believe these four issues of *Manthan* will definitely play a meaningful role. Your cooperation and participation in this study is our strength.

Next year’s 2023 series of special issues of *Manthan* will focus on great individuals. This year is the centenary of K.R. Malkani. The first issue of the coming year will be dedicated to his memory. The information about the remaining issues will appear in the next issue. We pursue and adhere to only one mantra: “*Swādhyāyam Mā Pramadaḥ*”.

Shubham!



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Ram Bahadur Rai

Constituent Assembly stands testimony to the sacrifice of the Princely States

Unification of the Princely States was one of the toughest jobs in hand after securing Independence. Here is an absorbing account of the developments, full of intricacies, of that crucial period

The interim government had already been formed but the Constituent Assembly was yet to be constituted. In the meantime, the question of the Princely States was hanging fire. Whether we agree or not but we should certainly know that the complications over the issue were not resolved ever after the formation of the Constituent Assembly. Rather a fresh challenge had popped up before the Constituent Assembly: What would happen to these Princely States? This question was worrying the kings and 'nawabs'. What would the Princely States do after being freed? Such questions were lurking in the minds of the leaders those who spearheaded the freedom movement and were members of the Constituent Assembly. The issue was really very complicated as the British too had their own interest in those Princely States. The Constituent Assembly took necessary measures from the beginning itself to resolve this imbroglio.

The steps had stemmed out of the two announcements it had made that year. The first announcement was of 12th May 1946¹ while the second one was that of 16th May 1946². Now, what was there in these two announcements? Well, these announcements were related to the dialogue between the Cabinet

Mission and 'Narendra Mandal' or the Chamber of Princes. It has a long history of its own. The Cabinet Mission had made it clear that the moment India would independence, the Princely States too would become independent. So, the question had arisen that what relationship these Princely States would have with the independent India. This was to be decided through dialogue between the stakeholders. On one side, there was this Chamber of Princes while on the other side, there was the Constituent Assembly where the issue of representation of these Princely States was yet to be resolved.

The issue was certainly very complicated, and was not at all a straight or simple one. This can be understood through an event, rather a coincidence that had occurred. While being the Deputy Prime Minister in the interim government, Sardar Patel was also donning the mantle of the Home department. One day, he happened to receive a secret file, wherein there was a hint about a dangerous plot being hatched. An outline of the plot was mentioned there. It was September 1946. Today, we have the answers to the questions like 'what was the plot, who had designed it, was it a stand-alone one, etc. After setting India free, the British were planning

to split up the country into three parts, by hook or crook. And the third one of them was – they wanted to create a number of ‘isles’ out of the Princely States standing out like thorns in the country. The secret file had an indication of this plot.

It can be described in medical language as “there was a definite design to crop up many boils on the body of India.” The king of Bastar was a child. His prime minister was a British, who had planned to mortgage Bastar to Hyderabad’s ‘nizam’ on a long term basis. Sardar Patel was stunned after reading the file. It opened up his eyes about the diabolic designs of the British to divide the country. He thought over it, pondered about the challenges in hand and made out some plans to counter it too. R.N.P. Singh has described about it in details in his book.³

India had not been freed by then. But its symptoms could

be felt in the whole atmosphere. Sardar Patel made some inquiries with the then Political department about the contents in the file, but all he got was some confusing answers in roundabout manner. India was known in two ways or by two names, or rather in two parts. First part was British India and the second one was Indian States. The second part was also known as Princely States, which were there in existence much before, and development of their relationship with the British after colonising India is a long history. But their constitutional status was determined for the first time in an official announcement made on 8th February 1921.⁴

We should know its context. The British government formed the Chamber of Princes after enacting the Government of India Act in 1919. This was the forum where the British government and the Princely States used to discuss about their mutual

relationship. The Viceroy used to represent the British government and the emperor of Britain as well. The Princely States were protected by and covenanted to it. The number of Princely States has been quoted differently by different authors. But, in general, counts of 554 and 565 have been given in most of the writings. After Independence, the Indian government had come out with a White Paper in 1948, where the number is mentioned as 584.

As we know, the Constituent Assembly held its first sitting on 9th December 1946. It was formally constituted on that day but the question of representation of the Princely States remained unresolved. The Constituent Assembly did take steps to find a solution to it. One can have an integral view of the scenario only if he goes through the descriptions of the proceedings of the Constituent Assembly along with this historical background. At that time, the Constituent Assembly was tied to the Cabinet Mission Plan. There was a provision in it that a committee will be constituted which would talk to the Princely States and fix the representation issue. It is to be noted here that it was Kanaiyalal Munshi who had on 21st December 1946 submitted the proposal to form the committee.⁵

Those who know him would be aware that he was quite close to Sardar Patel. So, it can be understood that it was basically Patel’s plan to form the committee. The Constituent Assembly was aware of this fact. Hence, the proposal was passed that day after a brief discussion and a six-member committee was formed. Maulana Abul Kalam



Courtesy: <https://www.rajasthanhistory.com/blog/interesting-historical-events-in-rajputana-under-british-rule/the-british-government-formed-the-narendra-mandal-to-fight-against-congress>

Azad, Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Dr B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, Shankar Rao Dev and N. Gopaldaswami Ayyangar were made its members. The committee was given the responsibility of acting as the Negotiation Committee for the Chamber of Princes and talking to the other representatives of the Princely States. Firstly, the Princely States were to determine the representation issue. Under the Cabinet Mission Plan, the figure was fixed at 93. Secondly, the procedure of selection of their representative was also to be decided. One of the members had pressed for an amendment to the proposal, which was accepted by the proposer.

It was also decided that the committee would prepare its report and submit it before the Constituent Assembly. The proposal passed was as it was submitted by the proposer. Only one amendment was brought and the proposer had accepted it. Thus, the committee was given the responsibility of submission of its report to the Constituent Assembly. It was also clear that the committee would determine some principles too and a three-member sub-committee would be formed which work towards implementation of these principles. This was a part of

the proposal brought by K.M. Munshi. That day, K.M. Munshi delivered a long speech, for almost one hour. He had given the reference of the statement of Cabinet Mission chief Lord Pethick-Lawrence. The statement was: "To decide the procedure to be followed to fill the seats of the representatives of the Princely States in the Constituent Assembly, the Negotiation Committee for the Chamber of Princes and the committee formed by the Constituent Assembly's representatives of British India should consult each other on the subject. The Princely States have already formed their committee and the negotiations could be started as soon as the Constituent Assembly's representatives of British India form their committee."⁶

K.M. Munshi mentioned two points in his speech. Firstly, the dialogue should start at the earliest. Secondly, "This committee has to decide on a number of sensitive issues."⁷ Intervening in the middle of his speech, the eldest member of the Constituent Assembly Dr. Sachchidananda Sinha said, "I support this proposal."⁸ This statement of Dr. Sinha is of immense importance. He was the only member of the Constituent Assembly who very

well knew the complexities of the issue of the Princely States. He had written a 51-page long essay on this topic in 1928 and it was published in Asiatic Review magazine in London under the title "Diarchy (dual governance) in Indian Provinces in Theory & Practice".⁹ The organization run by Dadabhai Naoroji used to publish this magazine. A brief debate ensued over the proposal of K.M. Munshi. Many members suggested amendments too. They included Somnath Lahiri, P.R. Thakur, K. Santhanam, Dhirendranath Dutta, Jaipal Singh, B.G. Kher, etc. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru intervened saying that the mandate of this committee is limited. "It will only decide on the process of representation of the Princely States. It is not meant for resolving all those issues related to the Princely States and the rest of the country."¹⁰

In reply to the questions raised, K.M. Munshi referred to the declaration of the Cabinet Mission. It was like this: "The idea behind it is that the Princely States be given due representation in the Constituent Assembly. Moreover, as the issue of representation is decided on the basis of population in British India, they cannot have more than 93 representatives. However, the process of selection of these representatives would be decided through negotiation. Initially, a Negotiation Committee will represent the Princely States."¹¹ Following this, the Constituent Assembly formed the Negotiation Committee. This committee submitted its report on 28th April 1947. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru presented this report. He welcomed the representatives

K.M. Munshi mentioned two points in his speech. Firstly, the dialogue should start at the earliest. Secondly, "This committee has to decide on a number of sensitive issues." Intervening in the middle of his speech, the eldest member of the Constituent Assembly Dr. Sachchidananda Sinha said, "I support this proposal." This statement of Dr. Sinha is of immense importance. He was the only member of the Constituent Assembly who very well knew the complexities of the issue of the Princely States

of the Princely States who have already joined the Constituent Assembly in the meantime and hoped that the rest of the representatives would also join through the approved process.

It is clear that a process had already been fixed by then through negotiation with the Princely States. That speech of Jawaharlal Nehru itself says a lot regarding the Princely States. There were confusions and misconceptions about the Princely States in the Constituent Assembly. These confusions and misconceptions were there because all the talks about it were being done outside the Constituent Assembly so far. That is why, Jawaharlal Nehru had to say that "If the members want to see a detailed report of our proceedings, there is such a report in which everything is mentioned literally. This report can be seen in the library of this Assembly."¹² This report is in the form of an appendix to the proceedings of the Constituent Assembly. That report was really huge.¹³ Only a summary of it was distributed among the members.

The Constituent Assembly was functioning under the Cabinet Mission Plan at that time. This was its limit. Some Princely States were taking advantage of it, who were being instigated by the Political department and its representatives working under the Viceroy. The man, who was leading them very deftly, was Sir Conard Corfield. He was a political advisor to Viceroy Wavell and later to Viceroy Lord Mountbatten. The statements of Jawaharlal Nehru were also confusing. That day also, he clarified this in his speech and said that they are my own views. But he also clarified that

the committee worked as per the Cabinet Mission Plan. The Princely States had, however, complete freedom whether to join the Constituent Assembly or not. This freedom was more of a theoretical one but that too was confusing.

"What the British gave to India on August 15, 1947, was not only Partition, but there were greater dangers than that. To understand this, one must know that British India was only 60 per cent. The rest of 40 per cent of India were the Princely States. The British empire used to rule them in two ways – directly and indirectly."¹⁴ This can be understood from the following statement of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. He said in his speech that "There can be no coercion with the Princely States, except where the events are forcibly led to somewhere else. No doubt, it is coercion but its importance is so great that none of us gentlemen can ignore it."¹⁵ What he said next brings to mind the bitter reality of that time. He said that "when some Princely States accept their responsibilities and join the Constituent Assembly, then they get their rights. But those who do not join, they do not get those rights because they do not accept their responsibilities."¹⁶

Two things should be noted here. The first was that the hands and feet of the Constituent Assembly were bound by the Cabinet Mission Plan, which had provisions to draft the constitution in two parts – one was federal constitution and the other one was provincial constitution. The committee formed by the Constituent Assembly was also as per this plan. The second point to be noted is that the words of

the resolution put before the Constituent Assembly four months later by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru speak for themselves. The more he spoke, the more he left unspoken. After his speech, the President of the Constituent Assembly, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, proposed that "After taking the report of the committee on the Princely States into account, the Constituent Assembly has decided that it be put on record."¹⁷

The statement of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru on the proposal has been mentioned above. There was some debate after his speech. A few amendments were also proposed. Many instances of contrast in the statements of Pandit Nehru can be seen in the proceedings of the Constituent Assembly. There is a famous Urdu couplet by Nida Fazli which means - "Every man has 10-20 faces, whoever wants to understand someone has to see him many times." It totally applies to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. There were many Nehrus in the personality of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. One used to speak while other used to correct it and the third one used to clarify it whenever disputes arose. This can be clearly seen in the case of Chamber of Princes in relation to issue of the Princely States and in his speeches in the Constituent Assembly. On the other hand, the elements of need of the hour and accomplishment were clearly visible in Sardar Patel's statements. Whenever and wherever he spoke, even the infinite sky seemed to limit itself within that. Those who listened to him, they got the path and the direction of the destination.

A speech delivered by Dr. Kailash Nath Katju during that

time was special in many ways. He had close relations with a Princely State in central India and some Princely States of Rajputana. That is why his speech is considered as a bioscope of the circumstances of that time. He said that "There are many types of Princely States and their number is in the hundreds. Some Princely States are so ancient that they can even be considered as the original source of the history of our race. Some of the other Princely States are relatively new and they may have been established just around a century ago and they also do not occupy a very important place in terms of tradition and moral dominance. I do not want to go much deeper into this matter, but I can undoubtedly say that not only from the point of view of the interest of these Princely States themselves but also from the point of view of the welfare of the native people of these States, they should join this great Indian Union."¹⁸

The resolution passed by the Constituent Assembly in its amended form was as follows: "After considering the report of its committee on the Princely States, the Constituent Assembly has decided that it should be put on record. The Assembly welcomes the representatives of the Princely States who have been elected and expresses the hope that the Princely States, which have not yet elected their representatives, will take immediate action to do so in accordance with the accepted method."¹⁹ To understand this proposal, it is necessary to look back a little and pip into the events of that time. The first important event after the

21 December resolution of the Constituent Assembly was that of 29 January 1947. A conference of the representatives of the Princely States was held in Bombay (now known as Mumbai). A resolution was passed there, which was mischievous and due to which public opinion started getting furious. There was a threat in that proposal. It was a threat to boycott the Constituent Assembly. After the conference, suspicion was raised that the political advisor of the Viceroy was hatching a conspiracy. As soon as this point came to light, the chief minister (diwan) of Baroda B.L. Mitter broke away from the proposal. On the instructions of the king of Baroda, he announced on February 8, 1947, that "he is not bound by the Mumbai resolution and would speak directly to the committee on the Princely States of the Constituent Assembly."²⁰ That was a very important announcement. Due to this, the mischief being played by the nawab of Bhopal got a huge blow. He had to relinquish the chairmanship of the Chamber of Princes. Patiala king Sir Yadavender Singh took over the post.

There was a split in the Chamber of Princes as some of the kings realised that the Viceroy's political advisor Sir Conrad Corfield was managing the president of the Chamber of Princes (nawab of Bhopal). V.P. Menon wrote that "Gandhiji also suspected that the section of the political advisor was provoking some Princely States."²¹ So the king of Patiala Sir Yadavendra Singh had to intervene. This is to say that things were taking place in a fast pace. Whatever was happening outside, its echo

was heard in the Constituent Assembly when it used to take up those issues in its sessions. The first turning point came on February 20, 1947, when British Prime Minister Lord Clement Richard Attlee announced in Parliament that there would be a transfer of power. This announcement had an impact on both the committees, i.e. the committee on Princely States of the Constituent Assembly and the Negotiating Committee of the Chamber of Princes. After that, Jawaharlal Nehru made a statement that the announcement (Attlee's) had created a new situation. On the other hand, the Chamber of Princes also realised that much time was not left for them and some way had to be found out soon.

As a result of this, representatives of the Princely States of Baroda, Cochin, Udaipur, Jaipur, Jodhpur, Bikaner, Rewa and Patiala joined the Constituent Assembly. It was on the same day that Jawaharlal Nehru placed the report of the committee on the Princely States in the Constituent Assembly. That date is April 28, 1947.²² It marked a new beginning and it has a story of its own. The wheel of time had turned rapidly. The new Viceroy, Lord Mountbatten, had arrived. Immediately after his arrival, a meeting of the Chamber of Princes was held in Mumbai on April 2, 1947. A proposal was accepted there wherein it was declared that "the Princely States support the independence of the country." In the same resolution, the agreement reached with the committee on the Princely States of the Constituent Assembly was also supported. This was possible because the kings of

Bikaner and Patiala challenged the nawab of Bhopal.²³ The nawab of Bhopal was then the president of the Chamber of Princes. But even after that, the nawab of Bhopal was adamant on the Princely States not joining the Constituent Assembly. For that, he was trying to erect many obstacles. Ultimately, he gave up and resigned.²⁴

The basis for the representation of the Princely States in the Constituent Assembly was the Government of India Act of 1935, in which classification of the Princely States was done and their number was fixed accordingly. They had been given the right to send one representative for a population of 10 lakh. It is described in the proceedings of the Constituent Assembly, in which 16 Princely States came under a single category. They were given 60 seats in the Constituent Assembly. Hyderabad was also there and it got the highest number of 16 seats in the Assembly. Apart from them, some Princely States belonged to the border areas while there were some others which were called 'Group of Princely States' and they were given 137 seats.

The Constituent Assembly also welcomed these representatives of the Princely States in its resolution and expressed the hope that the rest of the Princely States would send their representatives as per the approved system. The second turning point came and it had its impact not only on the Princely States but the Constituent Assembly too could not remain unaffected by it. It is the declaration of June 3, 1947, which is infamous

The Constituent Assembly also welcomed these representatives of the Princely States in its resolution and expressed the hope that the rest of the Princely States would send their representatives as per the approved system. The second turning point came and it had its impact not only on the Princely States but the Constituent Assembly too could not remain unaffected by it. It is the declaration of June 3, 1947, which is infamous for the partition of India

for the partition of India. It is mentioned in another way in the White Paper of the Government of India which was published in 1950. There is a statement of Sardar Patel in it. He made that statement on July 5, 1947, in which he said that a few days ago, the Government of India has created a Department of States to re-determine the relations with the Princely States.

After the declaration of the partition of India, Lord Mountbatten called a meeting on June 13, 1947, which was attended by Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Patel, Acharya Kriplani, Jinnah, Likayat Ali Khan, Sardar Abdur Rab Nistar and Sardar Baldev Singh. Sir Conard Corfield was also present in that meeting, in which the Political department of the British era was converted into State Department.²⁵ The decision taken in this meeting was duly accepted by the interim government on June 25 but it was announced on June 27. This was the decision which was made public by Sardar Patel in his statement. This department came under the control of Sardar Patel and V.P. Menon was made its Secretary.

It was closely related to the Constituent Assembly. The direction of the Constituent Assembly changed. Many of its

complexities were untangled. The process of talks with the Princely States started with a definite goal, which was initiated long ago by Sardar Patel. He had addressed a meeting of the Chamber of Princes on April 15 wherein he had appealed that the decision to join the Constituent Assembly should be taken soon. He also made it clear that only those would be able to rule in their states, who would have the support of the people there. He also warned that those who were refusing to understand the susceptibility of the time, they should keep in mind that India was no more what it used to be during the British. Earlier on 8 February 1947, there was a joint conference of the committees of the Constituent Assembly and the Chamber of Princes which was addressed by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Sardar Patel. But the nawab of Bhopal had created hurdles. That is why, the responsibility of determining the representation of the Princely States in the Constituent Assembly was entrusted to the Chamber of Princes and the Secretariat of the Constituent Assembly.

The first phase of the participation of the Princely States in the Constituent Assembly was completed on 28 April 1947. The second phase was on July 14,

1947, when the representatives of the Princely States attended the Constituent Assembly in large numbers. The day they presented their credentials and signed the register of the Constituent Assembly, their number was 37. The President of the Constituent Assembly, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, had given instructions for this from the very beginning.²⁶ To know this today to satisfy the curiosity arises out of this quest as to which were those Princely States. Therefore read their names – Mysore, Gwalior, Baroda, Udaipur, Jaipur, Alwar, Kota, Patiala, Sikkim and Cooch Behar, Tripura, Manipur and the Princely States of the Khasi tribe, Rampur and Banaras, Eastern Rajputana, the Western India and Gujarat, the Princely States of the South and East and some residual groups. The representative of this residual groups was Balwant Rai Gopalji Mehta.²⁷

There is a formula to know how complex the issue of Princely States was and the decision that Jawaharlal Nehru and Sardar Patel had to take. Anyone would be surprised to hear this today. But this is such a fact of history that should be remembered again and again. That date was July 25 of 1947. A meeting of the Chamber of Princes was called on that day. V.P. Menon writes that "Lord Mountbatten addressed the representatives of the Princely States for the first and last time as the representative of the British monarch."²⁸ He explained this reality as "Though the Princely States were free to take their own decision on whether they should join the Union of India or to go with Pakistan, most of them were geographically adjacent to India

only, and no one could have changed it."²⁹

The proceedings of the Constituent Assembly were almost silent on the process of merger of the Princely States. Authentic information about this is there in V.P. Menon's book 'Integration of the Indian States'. Similarly, there is another book, 'The Indian Princess and their States', written by Barbara Nelle Ramusack in this regard. There is a mention at one place in this book that "Between August 2 and August 14, 114 Princely States merged with India. No Princely State acceded to Pakistan."³⁰ It should be noted that Lord Mountbatten had an important role in this process, the description of which has been elaborated by V.P. Menon. In fact, the Congress leadership in the Constituent Assembly as well as the interim government had handed over the responsibility of talking to the representatives of the Princely States (rajahs, maharajahs and nawabs) to Lord Mountbatten, and he too carried out very well which V.P. Menon has written in detail in a chapter of his book 'Integration of the Indian States'.³¹

At one place in V.P. Menon's book, it is mentioned that in his address to the Constituent Assembly on August 15, 1947, Lord Mountbatten also spoke about the Princely States. Without saying anything, these excerpts of his speech speak that story that relates to the Princely States, "In the meeting in which the June 3 plan (partition of India) was approved, I had presented a discussion paper to the leaders about the consequences of Partition related to governance. And at the same time, we had

also established a system to take one of the biggest governance actions in history. This action was in relation to the Partition of this sub-continent of 40 crore inhabitants and the transfer of power to two independent governments in less than two and a half months. The reason for expediting these things was that once the principle of Partition was accepted, it was in the interest of all parties to implement it as soon as possible. The truth is that the time it was earlier thought to be possible to get the work done, it happened in a little less time than that. To achieve this astonishing result, as much the ministers and employees, who worked hard day and night for it, are praised would be lesser."³²

He said, "I know very well that the happiness that freedom has brought has faded somewhat by this sadness in your hearts as it (freedom) could not come to a united India. The grief of Partition has somewhat dampened the euphoria of today's events. Just as your leaders have shown patriotic statesmanship by taking difficult decisions, in the same way you have shown the spirit of generosity and genuineness by supporting your leaders."³³

This part of his speech is about the Princely States when he said, "Now I take up the problem of the Princely States. In the plan of June 3, arrangement for transfer of power was made only in British India. With respect to the Princely States, it was said in only one paragraph that the Princely States, whose number is 565, would become independent after the transfer of power. This was another major problem and there were apprehensions on all sides in this regard. But after the

establishment of the Department of States, I, as the representative of the emperor, was able to take up this complex problem in my hands. The credit goes to Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, the head of the department and a far-sighted politician, that a plan could be prepared which I found to be equally beneficial for both the independent colony of India and for the Princely States as well. Most of the Princely States are geographically attached to the independent colony of India and hence, it is also more interested in solving this problem. It is the victory of the kings and their governments on the one hand and the sense of responsibility and reality of the Government of India on the other, that the Instrument of Accession could be made acceptable to both the parties and that too, so clear and simple that in less than three weeks, the Instrument of Accession of all the respective Princely States and 'Standstill' agreements could be signed. In this way, one single, undivided political system could be established on most part of this sub-continent of 30 crore people."³⁴

In his words, "Hyderabad is the only Princely State of major importance which has not yet joined. Hyderabad's position is unique in terms of population, area and resources. It also has its own specific problems. Though the nizam of Hyderabad has no intentions to join Pakistan, he has not been able to join India so far. The nizam has assured me that in the three important matters of foreign affairs, defense and transport, he will cooperate with the dominion by whose territory his princely state is surrounded. With the approval

Before leaving, the British had arranged to create hundreds of boils and wounds on the body of India. But the merger of the Princely States became such a medicine that the boils could not even leave their scar. The area of the Princely States was only a little less than half that of present-day India and one-third of the population lived in that area. The Indian Independence Act 1947 made those Princely States independent

of the government, talks with the nizam will be continued and I hope that we will find a satisfactory solution."³⁵

But Lord Mountbatten's hope did not come true. The Hyderabad issue could not be resolved during his tenure. The merger talks were broken during his stay. Three days later, he left India for his country on June 21, 1948.³⁶ What happened after that is a different story. Thus, June 21, 1948, was an important stage in the process of merger which had started from July 14, 1947. But the members of the Constituent Assembly were aware that Sardar Patel would take the merger of the Princely States to its logical end and they would resolve with a grin the complex issue of integration of the rest of India obtained after partition. And that's what happened. The way Article 1 of the Constitution describes India was made possible by the merger of the Princely States. The first line of that Article reads: "India, that is Bharat, shall be a Union of States."³⁷ It should always be noted here that the first amendment to the Constitution should have been actually expressed in these words, "Bharat Varsh, which The British used to call India."

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For, in the merger process, the Princely States handed over their rights, fiefdom, palaces, museums, even their ships and handed over Rs 77 crore in cash too. Apart from this, they handed over railway line of about 20,000 km, for which the Princely States did not ask for any compensation. In return, Sardar Patel had promised to give them some property rights and Privy Purse to survive. Advocate Arvind P.

Datar has mentioned this in detail in his article on the 'Opinion' page of the English daily 'Hindu'. This article appeared on November 19, 2013.³⁹ Sardar Patel was confident that the Constituent Assembly would fulfill his promise.

That moment did come. The date was October 12, 1949. On that day, Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar introduced a proposal for amendments in the draft constitution. It was about the Princely States. Sardar Patel stood up after him and said, "I have prepared a speech. This speech contains a general summary of the background of the amendments that Dr. Ambedkar has introduced."⁴⁰ Sardar Patel's health at that time was such that he was not in a position to read it in total. For this reason, with the permission of the President of the Constituent Assembly, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, that speech was read by K.M. Munshi. If this is not called a nice coincidence, then what would you say that the way K.M. Munshi had got the opportunity to present the proposal of initiating dialogue with the Princely States, in the same way, he read out the historic speech on the closing ceremony of the merger. The first information in that speech of Sardar Patel was that "The

task of integration of the states is now complete."⁴¹ He said that "the amendments that have been introduced are the result of the bloodless revolution which has changed the internal and external system of the states in such a short period of time."⁴² He also said that "Indian democracy has achieved a great victory by merging 501 big units into a few states, which the rulers as well as the people of India should be proud of alike. Such a success is the ultimate result of the credit of the nation or the people in any war in the history."⁴³ ... "The House will note with gratitude the important fact that our Constitution differs from the 1935 plan for democracies and the Princely States, but a true union of the Indian people built on the basic ideology of total sovereignty of the people."⁴⁴

He explained that "the Privy Purse, which is guaranteed under these agreements, for the South is less than the percentage awarded under the arbitration of Dr. Rajendra Prasad, Sri Shankarrao Dev and Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya. It has been fixed at 15 per cent on the first lakh rupees of the average annual revenue of the state, after that 10 per cent on Rs 4 lakh and 7.5 per cent on above Rs 5 lakh to the maximum of Rs 10 lakh.

The amount has gone beyond the maximum limit Rs 10 lakh for only those rulers of some large states for whom it was felt that it is necessary for their life, that too it will be available to them only within their life span. As per the promises given so far, the total annual amount of the Privy Purse comes to about Rs 4.5 crore."⁴⁵

This portion is about the Privy Purse. He said that "the Centre should take the responsibility of paying the amount of the Privy Purse to the rulers on the basis that

- (a) the Privy Purse is fixed by the Centre;
- (b) the form of the private bag is political; and
- (c) such sums are not paid by the provinces."⁴⁶

Clarifying the importance of this decision, he also explained the responsibilities thereof in the Constituent Assembly in these words, "Now, I take up the political and moral angle of these arrangements. In order to see the liabilities we have guaranteed in their true form, we must remember that they are correlated with those significant progress that affects the most important interests of this country. These guarantees are part of those historical decisions in which the goal of the great ideal of India's geographical, political and economic integration is present – an ideal which remained a distant dream for centuries, which is equally difficult even after achieving independence and which still seems as remote to accomplish as it was before."⁴⁷ This is a part of his speech that gives an indication of what the dangers could have been. "In such a situation, there was a real threat of the predominance

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of disruptive forces as some rulers wished to exercise their pre-defined rights on declaring independence and some wished to merge their neighbouring dominion too. If the rulers had exercised their powers in such an unfair way, they would have received substantial support from influential persons opposed to the interest of this country."⁴⁸ Without saying, Sardar Patel has hinted here at the conspiracy which was mentioned earlier in this article.

This portion introduces one aspect of that danger. Sardar Patel says that "If the decision taken with the rulers had not done on the basis of mutual dialogue, then the suffering and wickedness on the part of these rulers at this time would have been more than that can be imagined. We must do justice to them; we must put ourselves in their position and then evaluate their sacrifice. The rulers have now fulfilled their obligations by transferring all the governing powers and agreeing to the integration of their respective states. The main part of our gratitude under these agreements is to assure that the guarantee we have given in respect of the Privy Purse will be in full force. Failure to do so would be a loss of faith and would be very dangerous for the establishment of the new order."⁴⁹

There was some debate on Sardar Patel's address. The first speaker was Dr. V. Pattabhi Sitaramayya. His statement was "With one stroke of pen, he brought these 562 lions out of the cages and they have started wandering in the country. Fortunately, the Department of States caught them and made them useful citizens, and we

are sure that in the fields of diplomacy and industry – the two fields which they are highly qualified for, they will make India shine in the Commonwealth with their cooperation."⁵⁰ Most of the members expressed similar sentiments to that of Dr. V. Pattabhi Sitaramayya. The entire Constituent Assembly was grateful to Sardar Patel for the success of his efforts. The amendments moved by Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar were accepted by the House.

Thus, the Constitution that came into force on 26 January 1950 included two Articles – Article 291 and Article 362. In the first Article, the Privy Purse of the former rulers of the Princely States were ensured while certain rights and privileges were given to them by the second Article. After the death of Sardar Patel, there were demands from time to time to abolish it. But Jawaharlal Nehru continued to refuse to accept those demands. Perhaps he could not forget the promise given by Sardar Patel. But as soon as politics took a slight turn, voices were raised against the Privy Purse in the Congress with a sense of revenge. Those who are knowledgeable of that period remember that this was happening under the aegis of Indira Gandhi. The reason was very clear. In 1967, C. Rajagopalachari, a friend and mentor of Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru, formed Swatantra Party. All the kings and princes of the erstwhile Princely States participated in it and they played a major role in defeating the Congress in the next elections.

Angered by this, the Congress had passed a resolution on 25 June 1967 and directed the

government to abolish the Privy Purse, due to which the 24th Constitutional Amendment came in 1970 but it could not be passed and fell through in the Rajya Sabha. Then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi called on President V.V. Giri to end the recognition of the kings and princes as she wanted to make way for the end of Privy Purse. But it was challenged in the Supreme Court by Nani Palkhivala. It became a historical case. The Supreme Court accepted the arguments of Nani Palkhivala. President V.V. Giri's decision was reversed. But after a massive victory in the 1971 elections, Indira Gandhi got the Constitution amended. In this manner, the story of Sardar Patel and a betrayal of the Constitution was recorded in the pages of history.

As far as the acceptance of the Constitution by the Princely States is concerned, the first mention about it in the Constituent Assembly is found on 4 November 1948. When Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar placed the draft constitution for consideration, he had made a prediction, "The work of unification of the Indian Princely States is going to end sooner than the time in which it was done in Germany. There were 600 Princely States on 15 August 1947."⁵¹ He was proved right. He had also said at that time that "India is going to become a union, but it is not being formed as a result of any such agreement by which the territorial states have accepted to join the union. That is why, they do not have the right to secede from the union. It is a union because it cannot be destroyed."⁵² Dr. Ambedkar had then expressed his good wishes, which in reality was transformed

by Sardar Patel's final statement in the Constituent Assembly. That was 26 November 1949. There in he declared that "All the nine states mentioned in Part-B of the First

Schedule of the Constitution, including the State of Hyderabad, have expressed their acceptance of this Constitution in the manner indicated in my statement made on 12th October,

which this Assembly is going to accept now."⁵³ The Constitution, which came into force in 1950 with this declaration, had 28 states in all which were divided into four categories.⁵⁴

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Prof. Rajendra K. Pandey

British Paramountcy and Indian States' Quest for Sovereignty

Princely rulers caught in the trap of British Paramountcy might have felt proud of their shackles, taking them to be garlands, but the Crown was actually using them against India. A logical analysis with historical perspective

Around two centuries of British colonial rule in India was characterised by a number of subtle aspects which, despite being critical in shaping and preserving the colonial rule, could not become part of mainstream historiography of modern India for obvious reasons. One such distinct characteristic had been the notion of British paramountcy that played pivotal role in legal sustenance of indirect British control over the native princely states despite their not being part of the British Indian empire per se. In fact, when the British descended on the Indian shores, the vast territories of India were politically divided into not only a few big empires but also a large number of principalities ruled by autonomous kings and princes. So, in the course of British conquest of India, major battles were fought primarily between the British and the rulers of key regions like Bengal and Oudh, apart from the Mughal emperor. For instance, the two decisive battles of Plassey and Buxar were fought mainly between the British and the forces of Nawab of Bengal, Oudh and the Mughal emperor. Hence, the defeat of Indian rulers in these battles led to establishment of British control over their areas only, with the rest of India remaining beyond the reach of British conquest.

The colonial rulers could, however, not remain contented with the territories annexed after wars, and looked for ways and means, other than war, to either merge the autonomous princely states into their empire or, at least, extend their indirect control over them. Since this was to be a unique arrangement without any parallel in the past, and defying any previous legal stipulation through which such an arrangement could have been rationalised, if not legitimised, there appeared need for application of a worn out legal concept in the name of 'paramountcy' to denote the relationship of British India government with the princely states subdued by it through means, other than war. The concept of paramountcy was therefore reflective of the manipulative British oversight over affairs of the princely states related to the empire through treaties, engagements and sanads. While the functional dynamism of paramountcy was in its full swing during the reign of Richard Wellesley (1798-1805), it reached its zenith during the reign of Governor-General Warren Hastings (1813-1823). In the times of Hastings, the supremacy of Company rule was asserted with the contention that it was the paramount power of India, and was justified in annexing or subduing any Indian princely state in order to protect its

interests. Since then, the notion of paramountcy remained the legal bond between the British Indian government and a large number of princely states till its dissolution on August 15, 1947. Curiously, the impending lapse of British paramountcy was construed by many princely states as prelude to their emergence as a sovereign state. But given the circumstantial imperative in which all the territories in the Indian subcontinent were to be accommodated either with India or Pakistan, the vigorous quest of some of the princely states to attain sovereignty and rise as independent states could not have become a distinct possibility. What this paper therefore seeks

to do is to critically examine the rise and working of British paramountcy vis-a-vis princely states, on the one hand, and analyse the circumstances in which the lapse of paramountcy was mistaken by some, if not all, princely states as passport for their sovereignty which was not to be in reality.

Rise and growth of paramountcy

Conceptually, paramountcy was a unique theoretical construct derived from European jurisprudence to denote the relationship between a paramount power and a host of states or principalities existing prior to the rise of the paramount power

and retaining their autonomous existence despite accepting the supremacy of the paramount power. In this relationship, the states indeed lose their standing as sovereign powers particularly with respect to conduct of their foreign policies, and usually are required to host a resident political agent of the paramount power in their courts. Such states or principalities are, however, neither inalienable part of the empire held by the paramount power nor are they subjected to interference by the paramount power in their domestic affairs on day to day basis. In the case of India, paramount power was defined by the Butler Committee as 'the Crown acting through



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the Secretary of State for India and the Governor-General-in-Council who are responsible to the Parliament of Great Britain.' On the other hand, the Indian states were like protectorates (but not in strict sense of the term) of the British Indian government with right to retain their titles and manage the routine affairs of their states. Further, articulating the functional import of paramountcy, Lord Reading asserted in a letter to Nizam of Hyderabad that 'the sovereignty of British Crown is supreme in India, and therefore no ruler of any Indian state can justifiably claim to negotiate with the British government on an equal footing. Its supremacy is not based only on treaties and engagements but exists independently of them, and quite apart from its prerogative in matter relating to foreign affairs and policies, it is the right and duty of British government to preserve peace and good order throughout India.'

The rise of British paramountcy in India was attributed to the military and political supremacy of the colonial power gained in the course of its battles with major native powers. In view of the proven British military supremacy, the Indian rulers appeared left with no option than to enter into treaties with the former and accept their subordination to the colonial power. This arrangement not only resulted into lose of sovereign status of the states but also reduction of their status as military protectorates without any say in the foreign or military affairs of the paramount power. At the same time, the political supremacy of the British rendered the Indian states liable to accept

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the colonial wisdom with regard to their internal affairs including administration. The concrete reflection of the British paramountcy over Indian states was reflected in the stationing of a resident political agent in the courts of each of the rulers who acted as custodian of interest of the paramount power vis-a-vis the states. The paramountcy was therefore a tool in the hands of the colonial rulers to rob the native rulers of their sovereign standing, apart from running their writ large over the subcontinent, as and when required.

The mechanism through which British paramountcy was established in India consisted of treaty, engagements and sanads. Of these, treaty-making exercise was the main instrument refined and utilised by Governor-General Lord Wellesley in pursuit of his understanding that 'native princes could only retain the personal insignia of sovereignty by surrendering their political independence.' The original intent of such a pursuit was reflective of the colonial mindset that no Indian prince or ruler should be permitted to remain sovereign and independent in such a way that s/he can stand

on equal footing with the British crown. Through his policy of 'subsidiary alliance', Wellesley, therefore, took upon himself the responsibility of cajoling the Indian rulers to enter into an 'alliance' with the British India government by accepting 'subsidiary' position for them in relation to the British crown. Wellesley was, thus, the prime architect of British paramountcy in India whose vigorous pursuance of the policy of 'subsidiary alliance' resulted into a large number of Indian princes giving up their sovereign position and permitting increasing intrusion of colonial elements into their domestic affairs. The net result of Wellesley's policy was that many large native states such as Oudh, Mysore, Hyderabad, Carnatic, Surat, Tanjore etc. were brought under the British paramountcy in the name of subsidiary alliance.

Carrying forward the unfinished task of extending British paramountcy to the remaining native states with renewed verve, Governor-General Hastings reinvented Wellesley's policy of subsidiary alliance to evolve a more coercive and unsparing policy of 'subordinate cooperation or isolation'. Clearly,

while the policy of subsidiary alliance afforded the native princes leg space to deal with the British India government as respectable partners bound by treaty obligations, the policy of subordinate cooperation or isolation was a stringent compulsive trap through which the colonial government required the Indian princes to extend all sorts of cooperation to the former as its subordinate arm or face the perilous scenario of isolation with the risk of annexation into the British empire or assault by a neighbouring state lurking over them perpetually. Moreover, recourse to war was taken to liquidate formidable empires and kingdoms such as Maratha and Sikh. By dint of these forceful pursuits, the British were eventually able to bring the states like erstwhile Maratha principalities of Indore, Nagpur, Gwalior, Baroda, numerous kingdoms of Rajputana, Kalat, and Jammu & Kashmir under British paramountcy by the turn of the mid nineteenth century. By this time, British paramountcy was overwhelmingly established across length and breadth of India with uneasy calm prevailing in many, if not all, of the princely states.

The repercussions of imposition of British paramountcy on Indian states were varying as it proved to be a boon for smaller states, and bane for the bigger ones. Arguably, the paramountcy, in fact, saved the vast majority of Indians from chaos and mayhem which was assumed to be natural upshot of collapse of the Mughal empire. This was particularly true of the smaller rulers and chieftains whose existence as sovereign

entities would have surely been challenged by their bigger and powerful neighbours in the absence of a powerful central authority providing protection to them. The paramountcy, thus, helped in the maintenance of status quo by securing the estates and possessions of all the rulers acceding to military and political supremacy of the colonial rulers. On the contrary, the coercive push for paramountcy resulted into forced war for others who, on being vanquished, had either to accept subservience to the paramount power or had to be pushed into nothingness. This mixed bag of feeling amongst Indian states towards British paramountcy was clearly visible in the course of the first war of independence in 1857 when the rising of some states against colonial rule was put down by the paramount power with active and consistent support from the obliging Indian states.

Termination of paramountcy

The brutal suppression of the first war of independence by the colonial government made sure that the question of any unease with the British paramountcy simply did not resurface. It appeared as if living under paramountcy of colonial rule had become the fait accompli of Indian rulers. Amidst such enervated circumstances, the rising tide of nationalist movement appeared poised to rupture the steady course of paramountcy by compelling the colonial masters to look for ways to accommodate political aspirations of Indians. In other words, with the objective of stemming the surge of nationalist

movement, British government readied itself to offer substantive political reforms to Indians which would surely have serious implications for the working of paramountcy as well. The princely states, therefore, left no time in demanding that in any parleys with regard to the future political arrangement for India, they should also be involved as prime stakeholder. So, it was not surprising that since the arrival of Simon Commission in 1928 through the different rounds of Round Table Conferences, visits of different missions, reports of various committees and enactments of a number of legislations by British Parliament, the princely states were invited as important parties in the talks and negotiations on political reforms for India.

The basic issue in these negotiations was working out suitable political arrangement for British India and need for princely states to adjust with such an arrangement. In the meantime, British government issued a White Paper on constitutional reforms for India in March 1933 in which formation of a federation was mentioned as the plausible political arrangement. Giving concrete shape to federal idea was envisaged through the Government of India Act, 1935, and involved convincing the princely states to join the proposed All-India federation within the mandate of paramountcy. While the ruler of Bikaner showed his enthusiasm for the federal set-up, the ruler of Patiala took up the cause of smaller states, and stated that it would not be viable for the federation to consist of so many states. In these circumstances, an alternative framework called

'Dholpur-Patiala Scheme' argued for creation of a federation consisting of British India and 'Confederation of States' i.e. the collective of Indian states as federating units. Though negotiations for implementation of federal framework was still going on, the prospects of second world war loomed large, and attention of the British government shifted from political reforms to war preparedness including enlisting unconditional support of Indians for their war efforts.

The war period was a phase of hectic activity during which a number of initiatives were taken by British government to assuage feelings of Indians by offering certain political reforms including grant of dominion status. Beginning with the arrival of Cripps Mission in 1942 till the enactment of India Independence Act, 1947 by the British Parliament, the host of activities were aimed at finding agreeable, if not unanimous, solutions to the simmering issues hanging on the tense political firmament of India with serious implications for Indian states as well. Expectedly, the proposals of the Cripps Mission were broadly rejected by all major stakeholders including the princes though it had assured them of adequate protection of their physical existence and safeguarding their interests and privileges in case of India becoming a dominion. Later, Wavell's Plan of impending political reforms including formation of a constitution-making body further indicated the shape of things for India and aroused intense activity among princes to evolve suitable strategy for braving the

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rapid changes proposed for the country. Clear signals for grant of dominion status to India with termination of paramountcy as its logical conclusion were given by the Cabinet Mission in its vital document titled 'Memorandum related to States, treaties and Paramountcy.'

With each passing day, the Labour Government in Britain appeared inching towards grant of independence to India with concomitant settlements. On paramountcy and Indian states, a categorical statement was made by Prime Minister Clement Attlee in the House of Commons on March 15, 1926: 'Before putting forward our recommendations, we turn to deal with the relationship of the Indian States to British India. It is quite clear that with the attainment of independence by British India, whether inside or outside the British Commonwealth, the relationship which has hitherto existed between the rulers of the States and the British Crown will no longer be possible. Paramountcy can neither be retained by the British Crown nor transferred to the new government.' Amidst these developments, while

princes demanded 'progressive contraction of paramountcy' in order to afford them sufficient time and avenues to adjust with unfolding realities, the colonial government ruled out such a possibility and insisted that paramountcy would lapse on the day of final transfer of power to Indian leadership. The legal sanction for termination of paramountcy was ordained by India Independence Act, 1947 according to which India gained independence on August 15, 1947 facilitating the termination of paramountcy.

Princes' Quest for Sovereignty

Although the acceptance of British paramountcy by Indian princes had virtually robbed them off their substantial powers and autonomy, what, nonetheless, remained intact was the monarchical form of government and reigning dynasties ruling over different states. Hence, whenever there was a talk of loosening or termination of paramountcy, princes took no time in becoming hyperactive to secure their states vis-a-vis prospective Indian government. There was no doubt in minds of

the princes that amidst clamour for democratically elected representative government, monarchies with reigning dynasties could survive only when sovereignty was restored to them after dissolution of paramountcy. Remarkably, therefore, princes had always been relentless in their quest for sovereignty ever since the issue of substantive political reforms was accepted in principle by the colonial government especially from 1928 onwards. Taking the elite Chamber of Princes, formed in 1921, as the primary forum for their annual gathering with Nawab of Bhopal acting as its Chancellor, princes didn't miss even a single opportunity to reiterate their demand for restoration of their sovereign status once British paramountcy terminated. In the penultimate years of independence, they also set up a Constitutional Advisory Committee as expert body to consider the nitty-gritty of proposed constitutional reforms and formulate the response of princes to secure their sovereign status.

Princes' clamour for sovereignty was also fuelled by views and recommendations of a number of committees and commissions, officials, and the Political Department of the colonial government in particular

who not only expressed agreement with princes' contention for sovereign status but also argued for the British Crown to facilitate such a process. For instance, as early as 1928, Butler Committee accepted 'the rulers' assertion that their relations were with the Crown, not with the government of India, and could not therefore be transferred without their consent, to a new government in British India...' So much so that when the British government tacitly agreed to divide India into two independent dominions, the Chancellor of Chamber of Princes, Nawab of Bhopal argued that if there was possibility for two dominions in India, why could there not be third entity in the form of a Confederation of States. At the same time, during peak of political activities with the arrival of Cabinet Mission in India, the Political Department under Conrad Corfield indulged in numerous intrigues and machinations to impress upon the point that after dissolution of paramountcy, sovereignty should revert back to princely states instead of getting transferred to government of independent India. Corfield's reprehensible arguments and nefarious designs for restoring sovereignty to princes remained in full swing till Lord Mountbatten asked him to pack bag and return to London

in early 1947.

The frenetic activities of Chamber of Princes in its quest for sovereignty reached climax during the deliberations of Cabinet Mission in India. Soon after its arrival in India, a delegation of Chamber of Princes under leadership of its Chancellor Nawab of Bhopal met the Mission on April 2, 1946 to convey their firm opinion that princes wanted to retain the maximum degree of suzerainty after lapse of paramountcy. Not finding favourable response from the Mission, Nawab of Bhopal sent a memorandum to Secretary of State Pethick-Lawrence arguing for holding a Residents' Conference and acceptance of his demand for progressive contraction of paramountcy. It meant that paramountcy would contract progressively and proportionately substantial powers would be transferred to princes well before the withdrawal of British from India. The iota of sympathetic attitude Pethick-Lawrence was having for the request of Nawab of Bhopal could finally not fructify in face of its considered repudiation by Stafford Cripps who perceived it as a futile and pernicious exercise. Nevertheless, the sinister games of Corfield were booster doses for princes' pursuits as he acted within his limits to keep things moving for them. For instance, he organised the Residents' Conference on December 16, 1946 to rally them behind call for progressive contraction of paramountcy. He also put his weight behind rulers of states like Hyderabad, Bhopal, Junagarh and Travancore to make sure they were not cajoled to join the proposed union of

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India. He even clandestinely got included a clause in the India Independence Act, 1947 with regard to paramountcy which had potential for 'balkanisation of India'.

The high-voltage pursuits of Chamber of Princes could, however, not yield desirable results owing to perceived impracticability of sovereign status of princely states after lapse of paramountcy. On the contrary, the Congress leadership was crystal clear that independent India would consist of both the British India as well as princely states which was unambiguously reflected in the 'Declaration of Objectives' endorsed by the Constituent Assembly. Furthermore, Congress leaders' announcements of sympathetic consideration for demands of princes acted to drive a wedge amongst members of Chamber of Princes. A large number of princes started distancing themselves from hard line pushed forward by Chancellor of Chamber, and expressed their willingness to join the deliberations of Constituent Assembly. Interestingly, most, if not all, of the outstanding issues between Congress and princes were resolved through prolonged discussions between British India Negotiating Committee and Negotiating Committee of States. Resultantly, rulers of states like Cochin, Baroda, Bikaner, Jaipur, Jodhpur, Patiala, Rewa, among others, agreed to send their representatives to Constituent Assembly. This led to irreconcilable chasm between sovereignty-seekers like Bhopal, Hyderabad, Travancore and Mysore, and those willing to join Indian union. The sympathetic attitude of M. A. Jinnah for the

cause of sovereignty-seekers also could not turn the tide in their favour. So, sensing the ultimate failure of his dream of securing sovereignty for princes, Nawab of Bhopal announced his resignation as Chancellor of Chamber of Princes. With this, Chamber of Princes died its natural death though the quest for sovereignty by states like Hyderabad continued even after that.

Patel and death-knell of states' sovereignty

The formation of interim government on September 2, 1946 with Jawaharlal Nehru as Prime Minister tended to further complicate the matter for princes seeking sovereign existence. Taking the issue of smooth integration of princely states into Indian union with utmost seriousness, the interim cabinet resolved to establish Department of States with Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel as its Minister and V. P. Menon as Secretary. Flashing a subtle message to princes after assuming the charge of the new Department, Patel announced firmly but politely, '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 common interests of the country are involved...I invite my friends, the Rulers of the States and their people to the counsels of the Constituent Assembly in this spirit of friendship to our motherland for the common good of us all.' In this restrained statement of Patel was hidden the pointers of his later policy of carrot and stick through which

he would ensure integration of all princely states into Indian union come what may. This message was presumably sufficiently understood by majority of princes leading to their unconditional accession to India.

Patel's onerous task of negating certain princes' continuing quest for sovereignty and securing their integration with Indian union was made easy by valued support and assistance from two distinguished personalities: Mountbatten and Menon. Mountbatten's probably undervalued contribution in the integration of princely states came in the form his stern message to Chamber of Princes that they didn't have any other option than joining either of the two countries. This assertion of the Viceroy was certainly bolt from the blue for those princes who were still reluctant to join Indian union and remain sovereign states with support of British government in consonance with previous assurances given to them by different committees and officials. But Mountbatten cleared the air and brightened the pathways for accession of states to Indian union. Similarly, Menon's deft handling of the intrigues and insinuations of Political Department, particularly dubious role of Political Advisor Corfield, helped Patel had his way in warding off administrative hurdles in persuading states to join the union. Mountbatten and Menon together solidified the strategy of Patel to sound death knell for princes' quest for sovereignty and left them with no alternative than join the Indian union.

The modus operandi for facilitating states' accession to the union was devised to run through

parallel devices of 'Standstill Agreement' and 'Instrument of Accession.' Designed as a tool primarily to protect the personal privileges and endowments of rulers, the 'Standstill Agreement' was identical for all the princes. On the contrary, 'Instrument of Accession' was variable device with two distinct applications vis-a-vis the acceding princes. In case of princes of large states, having substantive membership of Chamber of Princes, 'Instrument of Accession' provided for their membership in Indian union with giving up subjects like defence, external affairs and communications only. But for the royalties having estates, jagirs or taluks only, 'Instrument of Accession' did secure their position while vesting majority, if not all, of their powers and functions in Indian union. Later, in order to exhaust the complications in parallel working of the two vital devices, Mountbatten laid down that 'Standstill Agreement' would be open to signature for only those princes who executed the 'Instrument of Accession' to begin with. These concerted and well-designed strategies of Patel, Mountbatten and Menon eventually left even the fence sitters like rulers of Jodhpur, Nabha, Bilaspur, Dholpur,

among others, rudderless and sign 'Instrument of Accession'.

In spite of a broader agreement amongst princes for the need to join Indian union, certain rulers like Nawab of Bhopal and ruler of Indore continued to toy with idea of sovereign standing. They even went to the extent of contacting a few foreign countries with the objective of receiving their recognition as independent state. However, prevailing political atmosphere, particularly Patel's growing strident approach towards recalcitrant princes, on the one hand, and real danger of backlash from their subjects, on the other eventually persuaded the rulers to give up their quest for sovereignty and adhere to 'Instrument of Accession.' In motivating the reluctant rulers to sign 'Instrument of Accession', rulers of Bikaner and Patiala also played persuasive role by reassuring them of the commitments received from interim government that issues relating to privileges and immunities of rulers would be settled in their favour to the maximum possible extent. In these circumstances, overwhelming majority of princes agreed to sign 'Instrument of Accession' with notable exceptions being Hyderabad, Junagarh and Jammu & Kashmir. On the midnight

of 15th August 1947, British paramountcy in India was terminated, and India emerged as a sovereign and independent nation consisting of both British India and princely states.

Concluding Observations

Establishment and working of British paramountcy in India was reflective of the sinister designs through which a victor could treat the vanquished people and manoeuvre their affairs for completely unwarranted purposes. The initial objective with which paramountcy was imposed on Indian states with a view to safeguarding the boundaries and commercial interests of British India later perverted into proxy rule over these states through the 'Resident' positioned in court of each of the princes. Totally oblivious of even minimal interest of princes and overall welfare of their subjects, these 'Residents', in fact, over the years, evolved into a subset of authority who had developed vested interests of their own and sometimes acted even in contravention of policy decisions of Governor-General. This became very apparent in the penultimate years of Indian independence when Mountbatten's clear directive that princes should consider acceding to either of the two dominions, and not clamour for sovereign status, fell on deaf years of Residents acting on behest of Corfield, and they left no stone unturned to subtly persuade some princes for demanding sovereignty for them. The working of paramountcy therefore produced a number of perversions for both Indian rulers as well as common people whose eradication required monumental

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efforts from Indian nationalist leadership.

That way, wishful quest of Indian princes for sovereignty appeared more as a ploy of colonial government than real intent of the former, barring a few. In other words, while rulers of a few states like Bhopal and Hyderabad really indulged in illusionary thinking that they could survive as sovereign states after lapse of British paramountcy in India, rest of the princes just

tried to sail with the wind, albeit with the blissful dream inculcated in them by rulers like Nawab of Bhopal that they could regain their independent royalty once more. But what they particularly missed was the inherent unity of Indian people who appeared prepared to ward off any kind of external or internal threat to unity and integrity of India in post-independent period. Hence, whenever the demand for sovereignty to princes got louder,

Indian nationalists became most scathing in not only denouncing such a demand but also voicing their commitment of establishing a one and united India. The farsighted vision and tactful handling of the situation in the course of lapse of paramountcy by statesman like Patel indeed helped in decisively putting down the demand for sovereign princely states and facilitating emergence of India as one independent nation. ●

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Devesh Khandelwal

The Accession of Jammu & Kashmir to India

Not only did Pakistan have a malevolent eye on Jammu & Kashmir from the very outset, it also enjoyed the support of the then British regime. Due to this, the process of its accession unnecessarily became highly complicated. A glance at history

Jawaharlal Nehru's fascination with Sheikh Abdullah remained unwavering to such an extent that the latter was outside the purview of any rule, law and constitution. Blunders were being committed, one after another, which could pose a huge problem. The saving grace was that none of the senior Congress leaders, particularly Mahatma Gandhi and Sardar Patel, ever became an accomplice in Nehru's shenanigans. Sardar Patel, for his part, continued to discharge his responsibility efficiently so that the matter ought not become more complicated.

From Srinagar to Delhi, uneasiness about Nehru prevailed everywhere. However, everyone's faith in Sardar Patel's political ability also endured. An example of this is found in the correspondence held after the Congress Working Committee held in Wardha. In the Working Committee, Sardar Patel and Maulana Azad were entrusted with the responsibility of going to Jammu & Kashmir and assessing the situation for themselves. On 15 August 1946, Sardar Patel sent a letter to Prime Minister Kak and said that both of them would try to visit soon.¹ In response to the letter dated August 25, Kak wrote, "There is nothing more gratifying than whenever you want to come here.

Friends and well-wishers are always welcome"² Mahatma Gandhi's aide Pyarelal also corroborates in his book that the Maharaja's administration was always ready to personally meet the Sardar and take cognizance of the situation there.³

During that time, except Sardar Patel, other Congress leaders had no direct or personal contact with the Maharaja of Jammu & Kashmir. Patel admitted that "It is unfortunate that none of the leaders of the Congress established any relations with the Maharaja. Personal contact would have most likely resolved misunderstandings that may have been based largely on misinformation gathered through indifferent sources."⁴

The Maharaja had respect and cordiality for Sardar Patel and also had great faith in him. V. Shankar, who had worked with Patel, writes in his memoirs that "The Maharaja was a man who seldom trusted anyone for a long time, but his loyalty to the Sardar remained strong and lasting."⁵

Sardar Patel wanted to ensure the accession of Jammu & Kashmir to India soon after the paramountcy of the princely states ended. For this, he wrote a letter to the Maharaja on July 3, 1947, "I fully understand the difficult and delicate situation that your state is going through,

but as a sincere friend and well-wisher of the state, I want to assure you that the interest of Kashmir lies in joining, without any delay, the Union of India and its Constituent Assembly".⁶ He also wrote a letter to Nehru on the same day saying, "You know that on 15th August India will be partitioned and we will be completely independent. Almost all the princely states have joined the Constituent Assembly of India. I am aware that Kashmir has unique problems, but given its history and tradition, I think it has no choice but to join the Constituent Assembly of India".⁷

The Maharaja had already made up his mind to accede to India, which he disclosed in a letter to Patel on January 31, 1948, "You know that I would certainly have accepted the Indian Union with the view that the Union will not disappoint us".⁸

Meher Chand Mahajan, who was the Prime Minister of Jammu & Kashmir, has written in his book that the Maharaja was never ready to join Pakistan. He writes, "Armed with personal letters from Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah, his British military secretary visited Srinagar thrice to meet the Maharaja. The Maharaja was told that Jinnah was not in good health and that his doctors had advised him to spend the summer in Kashmir. They were also ready to make their own arrangements when they stayed there. The real motive behind this move was to either persuade or compel the Maharaja to accept accession with Pakistan with the help of pro-Pakistan elements in the state. Had all this failed, the Maharaja would have been removed from the throne and

banished from the kingdom..... He [Maharaja] politely declined to invite Jinnah to spend the summer in Srinagar".⁹

Mountbatten visited Jammu and Kashmir on June 19, 1947 and stayed there for four days. He tried to persuade the Maharaja to accede to Pakistan. He had a few meetings with the Maharaja during a few journeys by car. On this occasion, Mountbatten urged that if Jammu and Kashmir went with Pakistan, it would not be considered an unpleasant act by the Indian government. However, the Maharaja suggested a personal meeting, which was scheduled on the last day of Mountbatten's stay in Kashmir. Mountbatten agreed, thinking it would give the Maharaja more time to think but when the hour arrived, he sent a message that he

was ill and unable to meet him.¹⁰

In whichever way possible, the Maharaja resisted pressure from Jinnah and Mountbatten to join Pakistan, but by then his Prime Minister Kak had called on the then Prime Minister of Pakistan Liaquat Ali Khan¹¹ and assured the latter that the accession of the princely state would be to Pakistan only.¹² On June 17, 1947, Nehru wrote a note to Mountbatten saying, "Mr. Kak has also tried to convince the Maharaja that as soon as he joins the Indian Union, there would be communal riots in the state and possibly enemies from the area adjoining Pakistan might create disturbances by entering Kashmir".¹³

V.P. Menon, Secretary of the Ministry of State, has clearly described Kak's intentions in his



THE LETTER OF MAHARAJA HARI SINGH

26th. Oct. 1947

My dear Lord Mountbatten,

I have to inform Your Excellency that a grave emergency has arisen in my State and request immediate assistance of your Government.

As Your Excellency is aware the State of Jammu and Kashmir has not acceded to either the Dominion of India or to Pakistan. Geographically my State is contiguous to both the dominions. It has vital economical and cultural links with both of them. Besides, my State has a common boundary with the Soviet Republics and China. In their external relations the Dominions of India and Pakistan cannot ignore this fact.

I wanted to take time to decide to which Dominion I should accede, whether it is not in the best interest of both the Dominions and my State to stand independent, of course with friendly and cordial relations with both.

I accordingly approached the Dominions of India and Pakistan to enter into a standstill agreement with my State. The Pakistan Government accepted this arrangement. The Dominion of India desired further discussion with representatives of my Government. I could not arrange this in view of the developments indicated below. In fact Pakistan Government under the standstill agreement are operating Post and Telegraph system inside the State.

Though we have got a stand-still agreement with the Pakistan Government, that Government permitted steady and increasing strangulation of supplies like food, salt and petrol to my State.

Afridis, soldiers in plain clothes, and desperadoes, with modern weapons, have been allowed to infiltrate into the State at first in Poonch area, then in Sialkot and finally in mass in the area adjoining Hazara district on the Ramkot side. The result has been that the limited number of troops at the disposal of the State had to be dispersed and thus had to face the enemy at several points simultaneously that it has become difficult to stop the wanton destruction of life and property and looting. The Mahoora Power House which supplies the electric current to the whole of Srinagar has

been burnt. The number of women who have been kidnapped and raped makes my heart bleed. The wild forces thus let loose on the State are marching on with the aim of capturing Srinagar, the summer capital of my Government. as a first step to overrunning the whole State.

The mass infiltration of tribesmen drawn from the distant areas of the N.W.F. Province coming regularly in motor trucks using Mansehra-Muzaffarabad road and fully armed with up-to-date weapons cannot possibly be done without the knowledge of the Provincial Government of the N.W.F. Province and the Government of Pakistan. In spite of repeated appeals made by my Government no attempt has been made to check these raiders or stop them from coming to my State. In fact both the Pakistan Radio and Press have reported these occurrences. The Pakistan Radio even put out a story that a provisional Government has been set up in Kashmir. The people of my State both the Muslims and non-Muslims generally have taken no part at all.

With the conditions obtaining at present in my State and the great emergency of the situation as it exists I have no option but to ask for help from the Indian Dominion. Naturally they cannot send the help asked for by me without my State acceding to the Dominion of India. I have accordingly decided to do so and I attach the Instrument of Accession for acceptance by your Government. The other alternative is to leave my State and my people to freebooters. On this basis no civilised Government can exist or be maintained. This alternative I will never allow to happen so long as I am the Ruler of the State and I have life to defend my country.

I may also inform your Excellency's Government that it is my intention at once to set up an interim Government and ask Sheikh Abdullah to carry the responsibilities in this emergency with my Prime Minister.

If my state has to be saved immediate assistance must be available at Srinagar. Mr. Menon is fully aware of the situation and he will explain to you if further explanation is needed.

In haste and with kindest regards.

Sd. Hari Singh

book, "After the establishment of the Ministry of State, we were discussing coordination with the rulers and their representatives for the annexation of the princely states that are geographically adjacent to India. The Prime Minister of Jammu & Kashmir, Pandit Ramchandra Kak was in Delhi at that time. On the suggestion of the Maharaja of Patiala, we invited him to one such conference but he was unable to attend. Thereafter, he met me at the Governor-General's house. I asked him what was the Maharaja's position regarding accession from India or Pakistan, but he gave me a very deceptive answer. Kak also met the Sardar. I understand neither the person nor the depth of his game. Later, Lord Mountbatten arranged a meeting between Kak and Jinnah".¹⁴ Therefore, owing to these deceptive activities of Kak, the Maharaja dismissed him from his post on August 10, 1947 and appointed Janak Singh as the Prime Minister.

The Maharaja believed that accession with Pakistan would not be in the interest of both his princely state and India.¹⁵ In fairness to Maharaja Hari Singh, it must be said that in the circumstances that were then prevailing in Jammu and Kashmir, it was not easy for him to make a decision. Ideologically, the Maharaja had made up his mind against Pakistan, but the roads and communication of the princely state were more connected with the borders of Pakistan. Forest resources, especially timber, which contributed significantly to the revenue of the princely state, were transported through the rivers flowing in the direction

of Pakistan.¹⁶ In addition, annexation with India could lead to adverse reactions in Gilgit and areas adjoining Pakistan. The Maharaja's concerns grew when Chitral, Hunza and other feudal vassals began constantly pressurizing him to join Pakistan by dispatching telegrams.¹⁷

On August 12, 1947, the princely government offered a Standstill agreement and apparently Pakistan with its 'secret objectives' immediately accepted it. India did not refuse to accept the agreement, but expressed its desire to send a representative to Delhi to negotiate its terms, "In this context, if you (Janak Singh, the Prime Minister) or any other minister authorized by the Government of Kashmir and the Dominion of India. It will be a matter of joy for the Government of India if they come to Delhi to negotiate the Standstill Agreement. Prompt action is necessary to maintain the existing agreements and administrative order." The Maharaja therefore, considered it appropriate to enter into standstill agreements¹⁸ with India and Pakistan for some time till the conditions became favourable. On 12 August 1947, the princely government offered a Standstill Agreement and apparently Pakistan which had 'secret objectives', immediately accepted it. India did not refuse to accept the agreement, but expressed its desire to send a representative to Delhi to negotiate its terms, stating, "In this context, if you (Janak Singh, the Prime Minister) or any other minister authorized by the Government of Kashmir and the Dominion of India, it will be a matter of gratification for

the Government of India if they come to Delhi to negotiate the Standstill Agreement. Prompt action is necessary to maintain the existing agreements and administrative order".¹⁹

But soon, Pakistan began violating the Standstill Agreement in order to exert pressure on Maharaja Hari Singh. In fact, even after the implementation of the agreement, the relations between the princely state and Pakistan were far from cordial. The administration of Jammu & Kashmir complained about this but in an attempt to force accession, the Pakistan government stopped the supply of food, petrol and other essential commodities to the state. It also limited the free transit of travellers between Kashmir and Pakistan.

Pakistan had thus precipitated an artificial crisis in Jammu & Kashmir, trying to resolve which the state's Prime Minister Janak Singh had become completely entangled in. Sardar Patel therefore, wanted to replace him with a more stable individual who could be in direct contact with him, so that the crisis facing the princely state could be resolved immediately. He found Mehar Chand Mahajan most suitable for this task. The two met on September 21, 1947 and Patel discussed with Mahajan the then needs of the princely state and promised full cooperation and support to him. Mahajan reached Srinagar on October 15, 1947, held a press conference and declared, "Upon the invitation of the Maharaja of Jammu & Kashmir, I am accepting the post of Prime Minister of the state".²⁰

Sardar Patel was in regular touch with Maharaja Hari Singh.

He wrote a letter on October 2, 1947, assuring the Maharaja, "I am trying as quickly as possible to connect the state with the Indian Dominion through telegraph, telephone, wireless and roads. We absolutely feel the need for stability and urgency and I can assure you that we will do our best".²¹ In order to ensure transportation and food supplies to the princely state, he also requested K.C. Niyogi, Rafi Ahmed Kidwai, Baldev Singh and other fellow ministers for their assistance.

On the other hand, the impatience of the Pakistan government was increasing by the day. After resorting to the abovementioned tactics, they invaded Jammu & Kashmir as a last option. Pakistan had been engaged in preparations for this war merely days after Partition. On August 29, 1947, Yakub Khan, the jagirdar of Hazara, sent a telegram to the Maharaja, claiming that the local Muslims were distraught. The telegram further read, "We have made all preparations to enter the state and fight with arms".²²

This pre-planned attack of Pakistan was also confirmed by Naib-Salar-e-Ala of the Muslim League National Guards. He was leading the attack; in an interview to the *Dawn* on December 7, 1947,

he claimed, "We were arranging the tribesmen and expected to have a standing army of 200,000 men within six months. In a few days, these tribes will capture the entire state". From August 1947 onwards, the infiltration of armed raiders into the state had begun through the Jhelum river.²³

In this course of events, the invasion from Pakistan began on September 3, 1947. These raiders plundered whatever came their way, committed countless massacres and wantonly committed arson. Around October 21, they had reached quite close to Srinagar. The state's Prime Minister Mahajan sent a draft press note to Sardar Patel on October 23, 1947, giving horrifying details of the attack, stating, "The entire border is up in smoke and flames. The tale is one of burnt houses, loot, abducted women and massacres. More than 75 percent of Hindu and Sikh homes within four miles of the border have been burnt; men, women and children have been killed".²⁴

Maharaja Hari Singh on October 24, 1947 contacted the Government of India for assistance. At that time, the state had no military and political agreement with India. A meeting of the Defence Committee was therefore immediately held in New

Delhi under the chairmanship of Mountbatten, where the supply of arms and ammunition was considered on the demand of the Maharaja. The problem of strengthening the army of the princely state was also discussed. Mountbatten's suggestion was that unless Jammu & Kashmir accepted accession to India, dispatching troops there might be a risky proposition. After this meeting, V.P. Menon, along with one representative each from the Army and Air Force, was sent to Srinagar to assess the situation and get an overview. The next day, Menon informed of the grim situation and reported that all would be over if India didn't help quickly.

The ninth meeting of the Defence Committee began at 11 am on October 26 to discuss the report on V.P. Menon's visit to Srinagar. Sardar Patel was present there along with his other associates. Menon confirmed reports of the invading tribesmen burning Muzaffarabad. He put the casualties between 1,500 and 2,000 according to official estimates but expressed the possibility that the number could be between 6,000 and 7,000 or even more. In this meeting, Menon emphasised the benefits of obtaining Sheikh Abdullah's cooperation. He told the Defence Committee that morale was still high in Srinagar and the National Conference had maintained the spirit of fighting the attackers. Nehru supported his assessment that no proper administration was functional in Srinagar. The only attempt to control the situation was being made by unarmed National Conference workers. Menon further stated that he had separate meetings with the Prime

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Minister of Jammu & Kashmir and Maharaja Hari Singh. The stated view of both of them was that Sheikh Abdullah could not save the situation.²⁵

Based on Menon's report, the committee directed the Ministry of States to obtain signatures on the Instrument of Accession from the Maharaja. However, despite Menon's warnings, under pressure from Nehru, the committee directed to continue efforts to form an interim government under Sheikh Abdullah. Efforts were also made in the committee to reach a consensus that after the

accession, a plebiscite would be held in Jammu and Kashmir when law and order returned to normalcy. The Governor General suggested that this referendum should be held on three questions—to join India; to join Pakistan; and to be independent. In the same meeting, Nehru said that the Indian government would not object to Kashmir being an independent country under India's sphere of influence. However, in that very meeting, Sardar Patel protested, saying that the future of Jammu & Kashmir is important for India's existence.²⁶

For the time being, the Defence Committee resolved with the decision to dispatch Indian troops to Srinagar that accession, if offered, would be accepted. On the same day, Menon again went back to Srinagar. This time, returned to Delhi on October 26, 1947, along with the accession letter of Jammu & Kashmir to India with the signature of Maharaja Hari Singh. Thus, the accession of Jammu & Kashmir was accepted by the Governor-General of India Mountbatten in the same manner as it had been done with other Indian princely states. ●

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Dr. Lokesh Shekhawat

History of Jaipur and the Shekhawati Federation and its Merger

Shekhawati has been an important region of Rajasthan. This small area of land, encompassing its stories of valour, had always been a separate political unit despite being associated with Jaipur. Here is the story of Shekhawati from ancient times to its merger with the Indian Union

The famous historian Pandit Gaurishankar Hirachand Ojha is of the opinion that Shekhaji and his descendants established an independent and expansive state which is famous as Shekhawati. In the name of Rao Shekhaji, his descendants are called Shekhawats and the province ruled by them is called Shekhawati. The total area of two districts of Rajasthan, Jhunjhunu and Sikar, is included in the present Shekhawati region. But, before India's independence, the entire area of Shahpura-Manoharpur including the Kotputli tehsil to the north-east of Amarsar of the princely state of Jaipur and the area of Bansoor tehsil of the Alwar district were included in the political boundaries of the Shekhawati region. Before being christened as 'Shekhawati', this region has been called with various names in different times. In the Mahabharata era, this region was included in the Matsya, Dashaarn, Shalva and Jaangal districts. Before the 7th and 8th centuries, the area around Harsh (Sikar) was called Anant Gochar and was known as Sapaadlaksh in the Chauhan era. In the 7th and 8th centuries it came under the kingdom of Paariyaatra.¹ Coming to the 15th century of the Vikram Samvat, the southern part of this region had come to be known as Naagarchaal² and the northern part

was known as Baagad.³ During the times of the Kayamkhyanis, Pathans and the Nirwanas, this region was divided into many smaller 'waatis' such as Fatehpurwati, Jhunjhunuwati, Narhadwati, Khandelawati etc.⁴ No definite date or time can be given about when the term 'Shekhawati' came into practice, but in a letter dated Maah badi 9 Samwat 1766 preserved in documents preserved in the Rajasthan Archives, Bikaner, the name 'Shekhawati' is mentioned for the first time.⁵ This means that the name 'Shekhawati' had come into practice earlier. In Vikram Samwat 1788, Shivsingh and Shardool Singh Shekhawat had won the region from the Kayamkhani Nawabs and annexed the area of Fatehpur, Jhunjhunu-Narhad and from then this region came to be known as Shekhawati. Colonel W.N.Gardner in Vikram Samvat 1860⁶ and Elphinston in 1865⁷ used this name. Colonel Todd too, in Vikram Samvat 1887, in his 'History of Rajputana', wrote Shekhawati's history separately from Jaipur's history.⁸ After that, the name Shekhawati came to be in continuous use for this region.

Shekhawati is situated between 27.200 degrees North Latitude and 74.10 and 76.60 East Longitude.⁹ Before independence, its geographical area touched the state of Bikaner in the north, the state of Jodhpur in the

west, the state of Jaipur in the south and the states of Patiala, Torawati and Alwar in the east. Thornton estimated the then area of Shekhawati to be 3890 square miles whereas according to the Indian census of 1941 it is 3580 square miles. This figure can be regarded as almost equal to that estimated by Thorton. Colonel Todd has estimated Shekhawati's area to be 5400 square miles which is not correct.¹⁰ Presently, Churu is to its north-west, Nagaur is to its west-south, Jaipur is to its south-west, Alwar is to its south-east and to its east is Haryana.

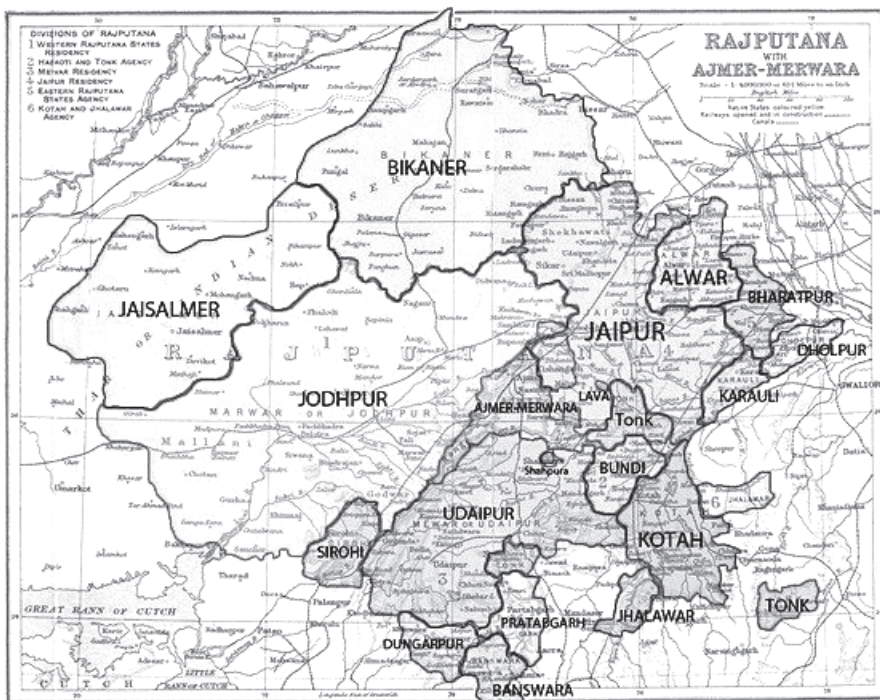
Despite the Shekhawats giving tribute to Jaipur and accepting its subordination partially, in the administrative records of Jaipur this region has been referred to as 'Shekhawati area gair'.¹¹ This meant that Shekhawati was not the property of Jaipur but a separate unit politically. Lt. A H E Boliwion has given a map of the state of Jaipur in his book,

in which Shekhawati has been marked separately.¹²

In this context, analyzing the political stature of the Shekhawats of Shekhawati and the federal form of the state of Shekhawati, the opinions expressed by Indian and foreign historians and then high British officials are also relevant and useful here. In his book 'Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan' Colonel James Todd has given the details of the treaty signed by the Shekhawats and the Shekhawati state with the state of Jaipur which is like this: There is a history of the Shekhawats, the rulers of Shekhawati just like that of the birth, emergence and scope of the Kushwaha caste. It is possible that, people might not have been interested in the history of the Shekhawats spread across an area of 15 thousand square miles over several centuries. But, 40 thousand warriors of this clan are always ready with swords in their hands to defend their state

and their ruler. They consider their state as their country. The name of their country creates a magical effect on the Rajputs. The Shekhawat federation, which has emerged out of the Amer clan, has accumulated a power equal to that of Amer, their parental state over time. Although there is no written law in this federation, neither there is any permanent political assembly and nor there is any direct or indirect chief. But, inspired by the spirit of common good, this federation has always been able to maintain its existence. Even then, it should not be thought that there is no rule of law in this union. Whenever a question of violating the self-rights of even the smallest of landlords, all the big and small Shekhawat sardars have gathered at Udaipur (Udaipurwati of Junjhunu district) and have solved the matter. Udaipur is like a rendezvous of the Shekhawats.¹³ That is why, the place of Udaipurwati in Shekhawati is also called the first meeting place of the Shekhawats.¹⁴ Bhojraj declared Udaipurwati as his capital.¹⁵ In the book 'Hindustan' by Hamilton, in part one page 536, Shekhawati has been described as a separate region politically and geographically just as Jaipur, Marwar and Mewar. The chief of Shekhawati is an associate of the Jaipur state and is just symbolically under its rule, this historical fact is given.¹⁶

The facts given in a letter sent on 29 June, 1818 by the Delhi based resident of the East India Company Sir Charles Netcoff to the secretary of the Governor General are: The chiefs of Shekhawati are khiraj paying tributaries and not under



Courtesy: <https://www.abebooks.com/maps/Rajputana-Ajmer-Merwara-Bartholomew-J-G/31106567427/bd#&gid=1&pid=1>

the Jaipur state. They are totally independent in their areas. They pay khiraz to the king of Jaipur and also serve them militarily and get protection from Jaipur in return. If Jaipur gets unable to protect them they can seek protection elsewhere and pay khiraj elsewhere. There are mainly three parts of the Jaipur state- 1. The king and the jagirdars under him 2. Naruka Chief 3. The chiefs of Shekhawati.¹⁷

The practice of equal distribution of the state started by Rao Todarmal, the son of Rao Bhojraj, the ruler of Udaipurwati proved disastrous for the power of the Shekhawats and they got divided in small thikanas. As a result, they could not get organized as a central force.¹⁸ To the contrary, Colonel J C Brook¹⁹ has expressed his opinion like this: The condition of the small states of Shekhawati is satisfactory. All the castes living there are satisfied. The mistrust which prevailed between the sardars and the Maharaja of Jaipur is also getting diminished gradually.

After Rao Shekhaji, his elder son Raimal became the ruler of Amarsar. Humayun's brother Hindaal, who was the ruler of Mewar, attacked Shikhargadh of Amarsar. But, Rao Raimal, the ruler of Amarsar, negated the attack and looted the retreating forces of Hindaal. After Raimal ji, his elder son Suja ji became the ruler of Amarsar in 1537. When Humayun was defeated in a battle by Shershah, he was given refuge by Sujaji. Shershah attacked Amarsar and established his rule over it, but the brave Suja did not accept Shershah's rule till his last breath. Sujaji's elder son Loonkaran ascended the throne of

Amarsar. His second son Raisal established the independent state of Khandela.²⁰ When in 1572 Akbar attacked Gujarat, Raisal fought with Devidas for him. He saved Akbar in the fierce battle of Sarnal against Ibrahim Mirza. Akbar made him his Manasbadar. He gave him both the jagirs of Khandela and Rewasa. He felicitated him with the status of his courtier.²¹ Akbar appointed him the administrator of his haramkhana and his palaces and gave him the status of a king.

Raisal's son Bhojraj consolidated his rule in Udaipurwati and kept on serving the Mughals. Jahangir gave him the ownership of Patan and Narhad.²² After Bhojraj, Todarmal ascended Udaipurwati's throne. He also received the same status in the court of the Mughal emperor. When Shahjahan rebelled, and when Jahangir's forces faced him on 29 March, 1623, Todarmal fought with the royal army. Due to the tender age of Jaipur's king Mirja Jaisingh, Todarmal used to command his forces. After Todarmal, his son Jujhar Singh had gone to the battles of Kangda and Khurasaan in the times of Shahjahan.²³ Khandela's ruler Kesari Singh also served in Aurangzeb's army in South India but left Aurangzeb's army due to his anti-Hindu policies and came back to Khandela.²⁴ Thus, in the Shekhawat era, Shekhawats earned their name in the Mughal court by helping the Mughal kings militarily. Raisal Darbari received the status of a king in Akbar's time. In matters of land the pattas given by Raisal were considered the last word. And so he expanded his power through them. As a result, establishing of two independent

states of Jhunjhunu and Sikar in Shekhawati became possible, which became the main centers of the thikanas of Shekhawati.²⁵

Sikar, Khetdi, Patan and Bissau were thikanas of the first category. According to Colonel Sutherland, "I feel Jaipur's position vis a vis these small thikanedars is the same as the position of the greatest power in India the British rule is towards Jaipur. If these thikanedars will regularly keep on paying the tribute and will maintain peace and order in their boundaries, then Jaipur won't have any right to interfere in their internal matters."²⁶ The Shekhawats participated in the battles even in the time of the Jaipur king Madho Singh. In 1806, in the matter of the marriage of Krishnakumari (Mewar) in the battle between Jaipur's Jagatsingh and Jodhpur's Mansingh the thikanedars of Shekhawati sided with Jagat Singh. Thus, these thikanedars provided great service to the Jaipur state. A treaty was signed in 1818 between Jaipur's Sawai Jagat Singh and the British in which Jaipur's control over the thikanas of Shekhawati was acknowledged.²⁷ A military unit was sent to Shekhawati in 1831 under Colonel Locket and the British took over the reins of the rule there in their own hands.²⁸ The Shekhawats entered into many treaties with the kingdom of Jaipur and gradually they became tribute payers to the state of Jaipur.²⁹ British influence over the administration of Jaipur had increased. Thus, the position of these small thikanas vis a vis Jaipur was the same as Jaipur's position vis a vis the British.³⁰

The thikanedars of Sikar, Mandawa and Bissau had opposed

the British during the 1857 revolution. Several thikanedars had given refuge to the rebels fighting against the British. From letters of 1767, it comes out that the thikanedar of Bissau Shyam Singh had helped the ruler of Punjab Maharaja Ranjeet Singh against the British.³¹ Mandawa's thikanedar Dan Singh had also helped Ranjeet Singh. Taty Tope was assured full support when he came to Sikar in January 1858. The thikanedars had relations with the British not directly but through the King of Jaipur. Colonel Sutherland in his report in 1841 has written that the king of Jaipur must acknowledge as it was, the traditional rights and liberties of all the Shekhawati chiefs. The 1818 treaty between the British and the Jaipur Maharaja, accepts the rights of these thikanedars as it was.³² Without the consent of the political department, no change could be made in the status of the thikanedars. Up to the time of the 1857 rebellion, the political department accepted the total internal autonomy of the thikanedars who were paying tributes to the Jaipur state and who were maintaining peace in their areas. At the time of Colonel Sutherland's report in 1841, Major Thersvi emphasized that the control over these small kingdoms should not be removed, otherwise there would be injustice there due to selfishness. He said that at least in Jhunjhunu, an organized civil system of administration must be established. There should be a control over this by the court by Jaipur which should work as an appellate in special cases.³³

The rules of paying tribute to Jaipur by Sikar, Khetdi and Panchpana thikanas had been

Before the formation of Rajasthan, the Sikar and Khetdi thikanas of Shekhawati had the rights to collect octroi and also had judicial and military rights. The thikanedars were independent in matters of administration of the state, zakaat, octroi, mining, local police, internal law and order etc. The police of the Jaipur state sometimes went to some places in Shekhawati but could only remain there with the consent of the thikanedar

finalized in 1744. An amount of rupees 105600/- was fixed as tribute for Panchpana. Sikar and Khetdi had rights to maintain their own police force which could even fight if need arose. The other thikanas did not have a right to raise a police force. The Jaipur police itself looked after these thikanas and it had their headquarters in Jhunjhunu.³⁴ Due to their strength, the thikanedars also assumed the roles of fighters which participated in battles if need arose. They never served Jaipur like other sardars. They only served militarily as per need.³⁵ These thikanedars were under Jaipur only as its associates. They were independent rulers in their areas and paid tribute and military service to Jaipur. The King protected them in return. They were not bound to pay tribute or serve if Jaipur did not give them protection. They had the right to pay tribute to anyone and seek protection.³⁶ These thikanas had a special condition that whenever they would send their armies to Jaipur, the expenses must be borne by Jaipur.³⁷

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The kingdom of Jaipur felicitated the thikanedars with various posts and honours. The status of Rao Raja given to the ruler of Sikar, and the status of king conferred on the ruler of Khetdi earlier were continued. Some big thikanas were honoured by giving them the status of Rawal and some special ones were honoured by the status of Tajmi.³⁹

After a detailed analysis of the historical political relations of the thikanas of the Shekhawati federation with the Mughal emperors, the British rulers and the kingdoms of Amer/Jaipur and their administrative systems, it can be said in conclusion that the thikanas of Shekhawati had established strong administrations and rules to make themselves strong. The Shekhawats snatched power from the Nawabs and established their rule over Amarsar, Sikar and Jhunjhunu but subsequently these very thikanas were divided between their clan and several small thikanas emerged. They also fought among themselves in their desire to expand their boundaries and stature. The rulers

of Amer and Jaipur considered these areas as their subordinates only and were connected time to time with each other through various treaties. As the thikanas kept on being divided and became weaker they came under Jaipur's rule. Sikar and Khetdi being large thikanas, their level was different. Their rulers were given the status of King and Raoraja and other thikanas were called Rawals and Tazmi Thakurs.

In the 18th and 19th centuries the British never had a direct rule over the Shekhawati region. The entire Shekhawati region was under Jaipur. The Shekhawats had many treaties with the Jaipur Naresh in this time period, and due to not being able to pay lagaan or tributes on time, the thikanas of Shekhawati became weaker and became indebted to Jaipur. Jaipur was under the British and the thikanas of Shekhawati were under Jaipur. If need arose, British officers came to oversee any matter and make a decision. In the Khetdi thikana there was a high ranking officer called Karaul. He improved the systems in Khetdi giving them a new form. Sikar thikana was also very large and its own system was like an independent state. Although it was totally under Jaipur, discord arose several times. There were small skirmishes too and even a situation was created to surrender it but due to the citizens it could not be done. Eventually in 1938, a Britisher, Captain W.T. Web came to Sikar as a senior officer. The rulers of Jaipur could neither arrest the Rao Raja of Sikar nor they could trouble him in any manner. The other thikanas were so small that the British never interfered in them. They lacked military or police systems.

The criminal justice laws of the thikanas were different from today's laws. 'Putting in the woods' and hanging from a tree were the severest punishments. Strictness was shown in cases of theft. The entire accountability lied on the guards (Meenas) in cases of thefts, which they returned after extracting some amount. Simple fights of the villages like cases of passage, cases of lands or water were disposed of by the Jagirdar himself. Apart from the serious issues, simple matters were disposed of in power centers and a situation of going to the courts was not allowed to develop.⁴⁰

Along with India's independence in 1947, after the transfer of power under the India's Independence Act, there was confusion among the princely states. Sardar Patel had assumed office of the department of states on 5 July itself. It was being difficult for most of the rulers of states to let go their power and stature. A section of them was building pressure that the status of the kings should be allowed to remain, while on the other hand leaders of the freedom struggle were running a campaign for the formation of Rajasthan and for becoming free from these kings. In this atmosphere of confusion and turmoil, Sardar Patel with his wisdom and skill, through the process of merger of the kingdoms facilitated the path of creation of Rajasthan. The creation of the province of Rajasthan happened in seven stages, which began on 18 March 1948 by the formation of the Matsya Sangh. The state of Rajasthan was inaugurated on Navsamwatsar Chaitra Shukla Pratipada 30 March 1949 in Jaipur by the deputy

prime minister of India Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. On that day the fourth stage of greater Rajasthan was completed. In the seventh stage of the unification, the present Rajasthan state came into being on November 1, 1956.⁴¹ Between the first to the seventh stage of the merger process, the merger of all the thikanas of the Shekhawati federation started from 1954 and ended on 16 June 1955 and all the thikanas merged into the state of Rajasthan and joined the Republic of India.⁴² In 1954, the law of eliminating the jagirs was enacted which was opposed through the Bhuswami movement. To quell this movement, the landlords were given the 'Nehru Award'. Through this, the Jagirdars were given compensation and land in the canal areas for agriculture.

Out of the thikanas of Shekhawati which merged into the state of Rajasthan from 1954 to June 16, 1955, some deserve a mention here. The Sikar thikana was merged during the rule of Rao Raja Kalyan Singh.⁴³ Khetdi's last king Sardar Singh merged his state into Rajasthan.⁴⁴ Nawalgadh was merged under the rule of Rawal Madan Singh.⁴⁵ The thikanedar of the unified Bissau and Surajgadh Thakur Raghuvveer Singh merged both his thikanas into Rajasthan.⁴⁶ During the rule of Raja Ramsingh the Khandela thikana was also merged into Rajasthan.⁴⁷ Rao Dheer Singh merged the Shahpura Thikana.⁴⁸ Thakur Arjun Singh merged his thikana Alsisar.⁴⁹ Apart from these, all other thikanas of Shekhawati, merged into the state of Rajasthan in 1955. Due to the important role played by the people and the thikanedar rulers of Shekhawati in the first

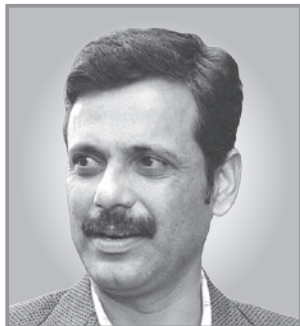
war of independence in 1857, and in the freedom struggle after that, and because of the wave of nationalism and the national awakening, the merger of all the thikanas into Rajasthan took place on its own without any hurdle. As

the independent existence of all these thikanas of Shekhawati under the partial rule of Jaipur remained till the attainment of Independence in 1947, and in comparison to the thikanas of other kingdoms which were

totally under their rule, the thikanas of Shekhawati had a federal structure, and therefore, there merger into the Indian Union is looked at from a different point of view and is regarded and told as a different story. ●

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Dr. Vikram Singh Bhati

Merger of Princely State of Jodhpur with Union of India

Jodhpur was among those Princely States of North India, the merge of which had become a very complicated issue. It would be interesting to know the reasons behind its origin

After India achieved freedom, the integration of the nation was a very difficult task in hand, which was accomplished by the then nationalist leaders as well as the kings and emperors with mutual understanding. In this context, it can be said that even after facing the brunt of Partition and killing of lakhs of innocents, India managed to hold on to itself at that time. The special role of Indian dynasties in it is noteworthy. Dedicating the state and property of one's ancestors to the nation with one's own hands is certainly a great sacrifice.

As a matter of fact, unification of the nation was the goal for them. Taking the circumstances, political events, environment, sense of insecurity, international developments, etc of that time into consideration, it was natural that the decisions would have been affected accordingly. In such a situation, the decisions taken at that time should not be seen from the point of view of the present. They should rather be analysed only by looking things in the context of that time.

Government's Initial Policies towards Transfer of Power

On 1 September 1939, a few weeks after the start of the Second World War, India's entry into the war was announced. Viceroy Lord Linlithgow reiterated the policy of the British

empire to make India a Union and took upon itself the responsibility of respecting the terms of treaties and agreements while assuring the native rulers. 'Narendra Mandal' or the Chamber of Princes reiterated its demand for autonomy of future Princely States. When the difficult period of the war reached, the national government of Vincent Churchill was formed in place of Chamberlain's. The idea of a new constitution was talked about in the Viceroy's proposal in August.

Churchill sent Cripps to India in 1942 to end the constitutional deadlock. The Princely States were ignored in the Cripps Plan. In relation to the Princely States, it was said that representation would be given to them only in proportion to the people they rule over and that in the new circumstances, fresh treaties would have to be signed with them. The Princely States expressed their desire to form a parallel independent federation while the Cripps Plan had proposed creation of an Indian Union.¹

Lord Wavell took over as the Governor General on 24 October 1943. In order to get the support and cooperation of the Princely States during the war, he assured them that the government would not neglect their interests and rights while taking any political decision. During the decisive phase of the war, the

'nawab' of Bhopal was elected the chancellor of the Chamber of Princes. At the political level, the chamber wanted to build a new political force by integrating small states.

In this context, the Wavell Plan was announced on 15 June 1945. While addressing the Chamber of Princes, it was said that political stability, adequate economic resources and effective role of people's representatives in the state administration are necessary in every state. If a state cannot fulfill these conditions, then it should amalgamate with a larger unit or a larger state should be formed by merging smaller states.

The Labour Party government of England sent the Cabinet Mission to India in 1946.² The Mission assured the Princely States that the British government would not alter its political, administrative relations with them without their consent. In its constitutional plan the Mission announced on 16 May 1946, it was clearly stated in relation to the Princely States that the sovereignty then rested with the British government would be transferred to them as soon as it was removed from it and they would be free to join Indian or any union, or not to join anyone.

The Princely States accepted it. According to the announcement of the Mission, the Chamber of Princes constituted a Negotiation Committee of the states which can negotiate with the political parties of the country in respect of the questions related to the states. For this, the nawab of Bhopal was made the chairman of this committee.

At the Ludhiana session of the Akhil Bharatiya Riyasati Praja Parishad in 1946, Pt.

Nehru in his presidential address refused to accept the treaties signed with the British and even declared that the Princely States would be abolished. This was clearly a deception. It was also clarified in this declaration that only those Princely States would be considered as eligible administrative units whose population would at least be 20 lakh and the minimum revenue income would be Rs 50 lakh. They were told to either amalgamate or join the neighbouring states or

provinces.

In this convention, all the Princely States of Rajputana were put under one category. Later, in the Udaipur session under the chairmanship of Nehru, the Riyasati Praja Parishad proposed the criteria of 50 lakh population instead of 20 lakh and Rs 3 crore annual income instead of Rs 50 lakh revenue income. Seen from this point of view, here is a list of the 21 Princely States of Rajasthan with their income and population of that time:³

SN	Name	Area (sq. mile)	Population	Income
1	Udaipur	12,942	19,26,698	1,30,00,000
2	Bharatpur	1,972	5,75,675	64,98,020
3	Bikaner	23,317	12,92,938	2,29,51,333
4	Bundi	2,220	2,49,374	33,00,000
5	Jaipur	15,601	30,40,876	2,80,50,000
6	Jodhpur	36,071	25,55,904	2,16,10,000
7	Karouli	1,227	1,52,413	7,00,000
8	Kota	5,725	7,77,398	53,00,000
9	Tonk	2,553	3,59,933	34,49,432
10	Alwar	3,217	9,00,000	70,00,000
11	Banswara	1,606	2,99,913	16,34,256
12	Dholpur	1,293	2,86,901	15,53,000
13	Dungargarh	1,460	2,74,282	22,00,000
14	Jaisalmer	16,062	93,246	5,40,000
15	Kishangarh	858	1,04,155	14,54,690
16	Patapgarh	889	91,967	9,80,000
17	Sirohi	1,994	2,33,873	15,44,600
18	Jhalawar	813	1,22,299	10,00,000
19	Palanpur	1,774	4,00,000	28,04,000
20	Danta	347	31,110	3,69,735
21	Shahpura	405	61,176	4,18,400
Totals		1,32,225	1,36,90,084	12,63,57,466

On examining this list, we can see that no state was in a position to remain independent from the point of view that

Nehru presented. The Princely State of Jodhpur had an area of 36,071 square miles, which was the largest in Rajasthan and

third in India.⁴ Only Kashmir and Hyderabad were larger than Jodhpur in terms of area. The executive committee of the Rajputana branch of the Riyasati Praja Parishad passed a resolution that no Princely State of Rajputana could avail the facilities of a modern and progressive state, so all the Princely States should be merged into the Ajmer-Merwara province to form a single unit. Jawaharlal Nehru made an important announcement in the Gwalior session of the Riyasati Praja Parishad that the Princely State, which would not participate in the Constituent Assembly, would be considered as an 'enemy state'.

The British government announced in February 1947 that if the representatives of the Princely States did not join the Constituent Assembly by the April session, the interests of the Princely States would be in jeopardy. The Akhil Bharatiya Riyasati Praja Parishad had challenged the right of the Chamber of Princes to represent the Princely States. Prime Minister Attlee of England made a historic announcement on 20 February 1947 that the transfer of power to India would be completed by June 1948.

Mountbatten Plan

After coming to India, Lord Mountbatten prepared a plan for transfer of power. He announced that two independent nations – India and Pakistan – would be established on 15 August 1947 and the Princely States would have the freedom to either join India or Pakistan or maintain their own independent existence. Viceroy's constitutional advisor V.P. Menon played a decisive role

in it. Mountbatten established a separate Department of States on 5 June 1947 in consultation with national leaders and government officials. Sardar Patel was its executive minister while V.P. Menon was made the secretary.

Patel's Role in Integration

On 5 July 1947, Sardar Patel clarified the policy towards the Princely States and said that they would be included in the Indian Union on the basis of three subjects – security, foreign affairs and communications. The rulers of many Princely States gradually separated from the nawab of Bhopal and thus the plan of the newly established States Department turned out to be a success. By 15 August 1947, all the Princely States had already joined the Union of India, except Hyderabad, Kashmir and Junagarh. The merger of the Princely States was the first achievement of independent India and Patel had a special contribution in it.

Formation of United Rajasthan Federation

Though there were six phases of unification of Rajasthan, the main phase among them was the formation of the United Rajasthan Union. On 3 March 1948, a proposal was made to form a United Rajasthan Union by joining the Princely States of Kota, Bundi, Jhalawar, Tonk, Dungarpur, Banswara, Pratapgarh, Kishangarh and Shahpura. Kota was the largest Princely State in the united Rajasthan. Therefore, according to the decision of the States department, the post of royal chief (rajpramukh) was given to Maharao Bhim Singh of Kota.

On 25 March 1948, V.N. Gadgil inaugurated the United Rajasthan Federation. Later, the Maharana of Udaipur expressed his desire to join the Sangh. It was inaugurated by Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru on 18 April 1948. Manikyalal Verma was made its Chief Minister and Gokul Lal Asawa was made the Deputy Chief Minister.

Creation of Greater Rajasthan

After the formation of United Rajasthan Union, the Government of India focused its attention towards Jaipur, Jodhpur and Bikaner. In its session held on 20 January 1948, the Rajputana branch of the Riyasati Praja Parishad passed a resolution demanding formation of a 'Greater Rajasthan' by integrating all the Princely States. After holding several rounds of meetings, V.P. Menon was finally successful in persuading these rulers to merge.

Accepting the recommendations of the Shankar Rao Dev Committee, the four Princely States of Alwar, Karauli, Bharatpur and Dholpur merged in the Rajasthan Union on 15 May 1949. On 26 January 1950, the Princely State of Sirohi also joined Greater Rajasthan. Ajmer and Mount Abu were also recommended to be merged with Rajasthan. Thus, the process of creation of Rajasthan started in March 1947 and ended on 1 November 1956.

Merger of Marwar (Jodhpur) in Union of India

The merger of Marwar with India was the most challenging task. The main reason behind this was that Maharaja Hanwant Singh

Ji of Marwar was a visionary, him being full of royal attitude and very possessive about his subjects and his distrust in the promises of the central authority and the Viceroy. His foresight was justified keeping the prevailing situation at that time.

Marwar (Jodhpur) and Jaisalmer were two such states who share their borders with Pakistan. Therefore, it was a matter of concern for many Congress leaders from the point of view of the whole country. Especially for Pt. Nehru, it was very worrying. The reason behind his worry was that the then Maharaja Hanwant Singh was an expert in politics and diplomacy as well as had relations with international organisations and other eminent people. So he used to take his advice before initiating any work. His policies were very secretive and beneficial to his kingdom. At that time, there were a total of 21 members in Rajputana who were known as the Chamber of Princes.⁵

The original idea and process of integrating all the Princely States like Marwar into the Greater India was that of Mountbatten. He himself used to say that "I myself developed and implemented the method of integrating the Princely States."⁶

Contemporary Political Circumstances

The political situation prevailing during the time of Maharaja Hanwant Singh had been created much earlier. Marwar Lok Parishad was established on 18 May 1938. There was a famine in Jodhpur in 1939, which was efficiently managed by Maharaja Umaid Singh. Although the Lok Parishad could have become popular by rendering public service at that time, its members hardly did any such work.

It was during this period that the Panchayat Act was enacted in Marwar, under which Panchayats were established in villages with a population of more than 1,000. Lok Parishad adopted the path of agitation, but it failed in it. However, it turned out victorious in the municipal elections in Jodhpur in 1941 and Jaynarayan Vyas became the first president. But he resigned on 25 May 1942 and started leading the movement.⁷ There were many arrests but the movement was unsuccessful. So Pt. Nehru and Gandhi had to intervene indirectly, but no specific solution could be found out.

Quit India Movement started in 1942. In October 1942 and April 1943, there were bomb

blasts in two different areas of Jodhpur. Some youths were caught but they were let off after apologising as Nehru had good relations with the royal families. The date of 15 August 1947 was fixed for the independence of India. Communal riots had started at that time. At such a time, the coronation of Maharaja Hanwant Singh took place on June 21. From that time, the diplomacy related to the merger of Jodhpur with India started.

Change in Date of Independence

The British government changed the scheduled date for leaving India and granting independence to India from 15 June to 15 August 1947. This change happened due to the efforts of Mountbatten. The Viceroy wanted to complete the process of giving freedom to India, partition of the country and integrating the Princely States into the Indian Union and forming a larger union by merging smaller states. The kings had to take their decision in this matter and sign the Instrument of Accession by 15 August 1947. The kings were talking to the Viceroy on the one hand and also discussions among themselves on the other hand. That was a very serious situation.

If one keenly observes the situation then, he would realise that it had been created intentionally. Had we been given 10 more months than freedom on 15 August 1947, many problems could have been resolved without any bloodshed. It is possible that the Hindu-Muslim divide that we see today would not have been there or even partition of India would not have taken place. Therefore, it is not the foresight of the British but their ill intention

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of harming India while leaving the country is clearly visible.

Delegation for Integration of Jodhpur & Umarkot

While the process of Partition was going on, a delegation of Sodha Rajputs of Sindh came to Jodhpur and requested Maharaja Hanwant Singh to try to merge their district Tharparkar in India and Jodhpur state. Umarkot was a very ancient state of the Sodha Rajputs of Sindh.⁸ These Rajputs had come from Ujjain in ancient times and established a new state in Tharparkar. They had presented a letter to the Central government, copies of which were also given to Nehru. But no one showed any interest

in it, except the Indian Hind-Dharma Sangh. Later, when the Maharaja himself took up the matter in Delhi, Dr. Shyama Prasad Mukherjee evicted some interest. But the efforts did not pay off. This is, however, to prove that Maharaja Hanwant Singh was keen on merging many parts of the newly formed Pakistan in India.

Doubts in the Mind of Maharaja Hanwant Singh

One question that was lurking in the minds of all the kings at that time was that what would happen after signing the Instrument of Accession. Because they believed that the politicians of India were ignorant about administration

and hence would not be able to run the country smoothly. They also feared that whatever promises the Central government was making to them, they would go back on their words over time.

Though the Viceroy and the Central government had made it clear that large states like Jodhpur would be kept as independent units and these units would have their own constitution and the entire system of governance would remain under it, but Maharaja Hanwant Singh had apprehensions that these units will be totally abolished in future. Hence, he was hesitant to sign the Instrument of Accession. But when the pressure on them increased, he adopted the policy of availing as many benefits as could be taken for their subjects. He also asked to merge Umarkot back in Jodhpur, but Mountbatten refused to oblige.

Social Integration by Maharaja Hanwant Singh

The time of India's independence was a very difficult one. Common people were dependent on their kings. In such a situation, the kings used to do every work with great care. A delegation of people of Rawat caste, who were settled in the Union territory of Ajmer-Merwara, met Maharaja Hanwant Singh under the leadership of Major Fateh Singh during that period. They had a notion that they were Rajputs in the past, so they should be merged back into the Rajput caste. The Maharaja assured them to look into the matter.

When Mehra came to know about this, they also requested that they be included in Rajputs as they too were Chauhan Rajputs in the past. Therefore,



Courtesy: https://www.hmoob.in/wiki/Maharaja_Hanwant_Singh

the consent of Alwar king, who was the president of All India Kshatriya Mahasabha, was taken. A conference was organised in this regard on 30 October 1947 at Sendra in which thousands of Rawats, Mehars and Rajputs participated. This unprecedented conference proved to be a slap on the face of those who were spreading rumours that Maharaja Hanwant Singh would merge his state in Pakistan.⁹

Maharaja Hanwant Singh's Meeting with Jinnah

Jinnah wanted to merge the princely state of Marwar (Jodhpur) with Pakistan. Maharaja Hanwant Singh, the ruler of Jodhpur, met Jinnah personally in August 1947 with the help of the king of Dholpur and the nawab of Bhopal. The Maharaja had talks with Jinnah regarding port facilities, railway rights, import of grain and arms etc. Jinnah assured them of fulfilling all the conditions. But it was within the time period of the conversation that he realized that a Hindu ruler was integrating his Hindu Princely State with the Muslims. So, he wanted to give more thinking to it. In consultation with the nawab of Bhopal, Maharaja Hanwant Singh urged the Maharana of Udaipur to join Pakistan. But he inspired Maharaja Hanwant Singh to reconsider about merging with Pakistan.

The atmosphere in Jodhpur had become pernicious and tense on the question of joining Pakistan. The Maharaja realised that most of the Jagirdars and the people there were totally against the merger with Pakistan. Mountbatten also explained in

Jinnah wanted to merge the princely state of Marwar (Jodhpur) with Pakistan. Maharaja Hanwant Singh, the ruler of Jodhpur, met Jinnah personally in August 1947 with the help of the king of Dholpur and the nawab of Bhopal. The Maharaja had talks with Jinnah regarding port facilities, railway rights, import of grain and arms etc. Jinnah assured them of fulfilling all the conditions

clear terms to the Maharaja that the decision to join Pakistan in countries divided on the basis of religion, despite not being a Muslim princely state, could lead to a communal reaction. Sardar Patel also did not want to see Jodhpur joining Pakistan at any cost. So, he accepted the conditions of the Maharaja of Jodhpur, according to which:

- The Maharaja will be able to import arms without any hindrance.
- Sustainable supply of food grains will be made in the famine-prone areas.
- No obstruction will be created in connecting the Maharaja's Jodhpur railway line to the port in the state of Kutch.

Just as many Jagirdars did not agree to the merger with Pakistan, similarly some Jagirdars of Marwar were still opposing any kind of merger. They wanted to see Marwar as an independent state, but Maharaja Hanwant Singh, understanding the need of the hour, signed the Instrument of Accession with the Union of India on 9 August 1947. By this time, it had become clear that Marwar would merge with the Rajasthan Union because the culture and language of Marwar is almost similar to that of its neighbouring states.

The events that occurred at that time, just before the signing of the accord by Maharaja Hanwant

Singh, were very interesting. Many fictional stories were created in this regard. Menon being killed with a gun was one of them. After fact-checking the entire sequence of events in this regard, primarily based on the book of British journalist, historian, biographer and novelist Leonard Mosley,¹⁰ Shri Onkar Singh has said that the day the Maharaja met Jinnah on the topic, Menon tricked him into meeting the Viceroy also the same day.

There, the Viceroy explained a few things to Maharaja Saheb who found his advice quite rational and on the basis of that logic, the Maharaja agreed to sign the Instrument of Accession. At that point of time, the Viceroy had to go out for some work. As soon as he left the place, Maharaja Hanwant Singh took out his revolver and pointed it at Menon. However, Menon explained him everything all again and the discussion ended there. Finally, the Maharaja gave his approval for the signature.

[Then that's settled, said the Viceroy slapping them both; on the back. He was by this time in a high good honour. He was called away for a few moments at this point, and, as soon as he had gone through the door, the young Maharajah swung on Menon. You tricked me, he said. You got me here on false pretences. I'm going to kill you. He had a revolver in

his hand, and he was pointing it straight at V.P. Menon's head. "I refuse to accept dictation from you", he went on."¹¹

According to Shri Omkar Singh Ji, this story of Mosley had murdered the truth. He created such a sensational story with his imagination, in which Menon is depicted as a knight and patriot and the Maharaja as a criminal. Apart from this, Larry Collins and Dominique Lapierre, the authors of 'Freedom at Midnight', have also given the same fact in their book whereas the truth is that the Maharaja did not even have a revolver with him at that time. He had a small pen-pistol which he had made himself. He had signed the Instrument of Accession with the same pen-pistol and after signing, he jokingly told Menon, "I can even kill you with the same pen I signed." Menon was horrified.

The Maharaja then opened a part of the pen pistol and showed him that the pen can also work as a pistol. Menon was stunned to see that. At that time, Lord Mountbatten entered back the room and took the whole matter as a joke. The Maharaja later gifted the pen-pistol to Mountbatten, who in turn gave it to the Magic Circle in London to

be kept in the museum.¹² Menon tried to portray himself as a heroic person by describing a small pen-pistol as a revolver and distorting facts. In fact, Patel had accepted all the conditions of the Maharaja much earlier, so there was no need for Maharaja Saheb to kill or threaten Menon.

Analysis of Maharaja Hanwant Singh's Perspective on Merger

After analysing all the aforesaid points, it becomes clear that Maharaja Hanwant Singh was a visionary. Not only this, he was a staunch Sanatan Dharmi but was devoid of any bitterness towards other religions. Therefore, if we look at his actions, we will find that his decisions were right. However, he could not succeed due to lack of cooperation and balanced view while taking many decisions like these:

1. If Maharaja Hanwant Singh wanted to merge in Pakistan, met Jinnah in this regard and even tried to instigate the kings of Udaipur, Jaisalmer and a few other states, it is not an ordinary matter. If the three states Jodhpur, Jaisalmer and Udaipur, which were Hindu states and whose

total area was more than the area of Pakistan created at that time (which did not include Balochistan then), were to merge in Pakistan, it was a very visionary idea. In such a situation, Umarkot would have automatically merged with Jodhpur. As a result, many of the deaths that occurred at that time would not have happened.

2. Jinnah was the only central power in Pakistan as compared to that of Indian central power. So, there he could not turn back from his promises. Because the Maharaja would have direct intervention in the central authority and administration there and he could do whatever he wanted. It is possible that its far-reaching consequences would have been that the integration of India would have taken place much sooner.
3. There was doubt in the mind of Maharaja Hanwant Singh that the central authority would later go back on its promises, and that suspicion was not unfounded. Rather it turned out to be right. Because, we can see that in the course of time, the central authority did go back on its promises. ●

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Pt. Dharmveer Sharma

Merger of Princely States of Alwar, Bharatpur, Dholpur & Karauli

No doubt the issue of the merger of those Princely States, who were in favour of the British, was complex, but the merger of those who were patriots and opposed to the British rule was made even more complicated. One such case was that of the Matsya Sangh of Rajasthan

Maharaja Jai Singh, the erstwhile king of the Princely State of Alwar, was a very popular, learned, patriotic, religious, courageous, justice-loving person and was against the British rule too. People used to look at him with great respect and affection. The British had deported him and, in the meantime, he passed away. After his death, Maharaja Tej Singh became the ruler of the Alwar state, who was influential during the merger of the Princely States.

It was the effort of the Hindutva forces of the country that strong pro-Hindutva personalities could participate in the Constituent Assembly and play an effective role in protecting the interests of the country. Maharaja Tej Singh of Alwar had great respect for Pt. Girdhar Sharma Siddha, an influential mass leader of the Hindu Mahasabha, and also used to hold discussions with him from time to time. On the advice of Pt. Girdhar Sharma Siddh, Maharaja Tej Singh had appointed Dr. Narayan Bhaskar Khare, who was the national president of Hindu Mahasabha and an eloquent orator and legal expert of the country, as the prime minister of Alwar state and sent him to the Constituent Assembly as the representative of the state.

After the assassination of Gandhi ji, the government of Matsya Sangh comprising the Princely States of

Alwar, Bharatpur, Dholpur and Karauli levelled false allegations against both of them. Pt. Girdhar Sharma Siddha was accused that before killing Gandhiji, Nathuram Godse had gone to Alwar and stayed in his house and that he had facilitated Godse being provided Alwarking's pistol which he used for firing bullets on Gandhiji. One more allegation was that Godse had gone to Alwar and stayed at prime minister Dr. Khare's residence before the assassination. There, he was provided the pistol of Maharaja Tej Singh and was also imparted training to operate it. Siddhaji was lodged in Alwar jail and later shifted to Delhi jail. But he was cleared of all the charges, declared innocent and acquitted by the court after about 10 months of jail and trial in the Gandhi assassination case. He was even subjected to severe torture during his imprisonment in Alwar and Delhi jails.¹

The communal fire that broke out on the occasion of partition of India helped in starting the process of integration in Rajasthan. Meos or Mewati Muslims became active in Alwar and Bharatpur again. A conspiracy was hatched to give their communal movement in 1931-33 the shape of a peasant movement and the British had even rewarded the Meos of Alwar for this. Hence, they became active again in 1946-47 and created a lot of trouble for both these state

governments. Dr. Khare was the prime minister of Alwar at this time. Earlier, he had been the chief minister of the Central Provinces in 1937.²

Despite originally being a Congressman, he joined the Hindu Mahasabha and was also its national president as he had difference of opinion with the policies of Gandhiji and Nehru. In the communal atmosphere of that time, rumours used to easily take the place of the real information. Dr. Khare was considered responsible for spreading communalism in the state at that time. Based on the reports suggesting that the state governments were encouraging communalism, Sardar Patel convened a meeting of the rulers of Alwar and Bharatpur and the high level officials of Uttar Pradesh at Delhi in October 1947 and asked them to control communal sentiments. Dr. Khare, who did not have a good impression about Sardar Patel, considered this advice as an interference in the internal affairs of the states. After some time, on 16 December 1947, Sardar Patel deliberated on the policy of the Government of India regarding the merger of the Princely States and their integration and reorganisation. It was natural that after democratisation of the administration, smaller states would not have been able to establish a well-developed administration. Therefore, the units of administration should be large enough so that they succeed in running their affairs autonomously. The smaller states had no solution other than merger. The main concern of the rulers, however, was their living amenities.

Keeping the respectable status of the rulers they enjoy and

their feelings in mind, Sardar Patel assured them that due arrangement would be made to ensure that maintenance of their standard of living was taken care of. He commended the rulers who expedited the process of merger and gave up their exclusive rights. Their sacrifices and abdications were described as an obligation done voluntarily for the public good and in the interest of the people. By this abandonment, they have acquired the devotion of the public permanently towards them, because all the complaints or inconveniences in future would be against the representatives of the people.³

The rumour was very strong at that time that the murder conspirators were given shelter in the state of Alwar. On 7 February 1948, the ruler and the minister of Alwar were asked to stay in Delhi until their role in providing aid to the conspirators was investigated.

The administration of the state was carried out by the Government of India. After some time, however, both of them were acquitted. Similarly, the Central government had many complaints against the administration of Bharatpur that they had allowed their territory to become a training ground for anti-Muslim activities. The Maharaja was also shown the evidence on the basis of which it appeared on the face of it that the allegation was correct and he was asked to hand over the responsibility of running the administration of the state to the Government of India. Even an administrator was appointed for the state on 15 February 1948. The Maharaja's brother, against whom Nehru had written to Patel, was deported to England. An inquiry was conducted against the Bharatpur ruler, but he was found innocent. The rulers of Dholpur and Karauli, the two small states adjoining Alwar and Bharatpur,



Courtesy: <https://www.rajras.in/rajasthan/polity/state-formation-post-independence/>

were advised that they merge with Alwar and Bharatpur to form a single, large state. The four rulers were called to Delhi on 27 February 1948. The proposal to form a union was placed before the four states, which they gladly accepted. On the suggestion of K.M. Munshi, this union was named Matsya Sangh. The document to this effect was signed on 28 February 1948. The Government of India appointed an administrator and the ruler of Dholpur was made the head of this new state.⁴

The Matsya Sangh was to be inaugurated on 17 March 1948. But, in the meantime, the younger brother of the ruler of Bharatpur intensified the campaign against the Sangh. The union was described as anti-Jat and, by inciting their sentiments, the Jats were asked to reach Bharatpur armed and fight till the end to block the launching of the new union. Popular Jat leader Deshraj also lent his support to the movement and opposed the establishment of the Sangh. Although Deshraj and other Jat leaders were imprisoned and the Army and the police forces were deployed in Bharatpur to monitor and maintain peace, the possibility loomed large that the Matsya Sangh would have to be launched amid bloodshed in the state. Crowds of Jats started gathering at the ground outside the fort of Bharatpur where the inauguration ceremony was scheduled to take place. The crowds were asked to move away. The rulers of Alwar, Bharatpur and Dholpur also asked the Jat community to vacate the

ground, but all in vain. Finally, Deshraj was called and he asked the Jats to leave and let the Matsya Sangh be inaugurated. Then only the launching of the Matsya Sangh could be possible, though delayed by 2 hours. Deshraj in lieu demanded a representative of the Jat Kisan Sabha to be included in the Cabinet. The Matsya Sangh started operating from 18 March 1948. In a way, the entire administrative structure had to be rebuilt. The population of this union was 18 lakh while its annual income was also less than Rs 2 crore. This union was smaller than the entity that the AISP had conceived in 1947.⁵

Babu Shobharam of Alwar was appointed as the chief minister of the Matsya Sangh while Jugal Kishor Chaturvedi of Bharatpur was a powerful minister in it. However, the work of Matsya Sangh was not going well during this period. Some of the difficulties arose from the fact that there was a lack of influential leadership in the region, and partly because of the presence of conflicting elements within these states. The Jat leadership on the one hand and some socialist leaders on the other used to talk too much about the inefficiency of the administration of the union. There was also a shortage of essential commodities in the region. A movement to create a separate Brij region was going on in the states of Bharatpur and Dholpur while on the other hand, an equally powerful movement was going on in favour of the merger of these states with Uttar Pradesh. The rulers of these four states and the ministers of the

Matsya Sangh were called to Delhi in February 1949 for discussions on this front. Though Alwar and Karauli wanted to merge with Rajasthan, there was no unanimity between Bharatpur and Dholpur. The ministers of the Matsya Sangh were also not unanimous on it. By the end of March 1949, the ruler of Bharatpur informed the Central government that majority of the people of the state wanted a merger with Rajasthan. Dholpur was ready for amalgamation with Rajasthan but wanted a provision whereby the state could merge with Uttar Pradesh if public opinion wanted it. To remove the uncertainties about the future, a 3-member committee was formed with the mandate to give its suggestions after observing the public sentiments. This committee said that most of the population were ready for merger with Rajasthan. On 10 May 1949, the four rulers of Matsya Sangh signed a new agreement, as per which the administration of this Matsya Sangh was transferred to Rajasthan on 15 May 1949.⁶

The perseverance, intelligence and efficiency shown by Sardar Patel in tying the kings and princes of Rajasthan in the thread of unity will always be remembered with respect. The problems, which no one else could have solved without the help of the Army, were resolved by Sardar Patel with great skill through psychological games without shedding a drop of blood, and this reorganised Rajasthan has now transformed the dreams of thousands of patriots and martyrs into reality.⁷

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R.N.P. Singh

Conspiracies by Bhopal Princely State

For the Last fifteen days I have been occupied with the Princes. It is so taxing. There seems to be no end to the Nawab of Bhopal's Intrigues. He is working day and night to cause a split among the Princes and to keep them out of the Indian Union. The Princes are weak beyond measure. They are full of selfishness, falsehood and hypocrisy.

- Sardar Patel to Gandhi,
on 11 August 1947

On 22 May 1946, the Cabinet Mission published the Memorandum on States' Treaties and Paramountcy, in which they declared that Paramountcy would lapse with India attaining her freedom and all the rights surrendered by the States to the British Crown would revert to them. This void would have to be filled by the States entering into a 'federal relationship with the successor Government or Governments' in British India or by entering into particular political arrangements with it or either of them.¹

The vague phrase 'particular political arrangements' was capable of being variously interpreted and Sir Conrad Corfield, Chief of the Political Department, interpreted it to mean that, on the lapse of Paramountcy, that is, as soon as India became independent, the States would also gain their independence,

and would be in a position to negotiate with India or Pakistan on equal terms.²

It was unfortunate that at this time the Nawab of Bhopal was president of the Chamber of Princes. This crafty Prince, under the advice of Corfield, began to organise the Princes into a solid bloc but thanks to the patriotism of some rulers like those of Baroda, Bikaner and Patiala, his schemes were foiled. On Corfield's advice, the Chamber of Princes set up a Negotiating Committee on 10 June 1946 and authorised their Chancellor, the Nawab of Bhopal, to arrange discussions with the Constituent Assembly.

The ruler of Bhopal, Nawab Hamidullah Khan, enjoyed a status and influence with the British and the Princes out of proportion to the State's population, area and revenue. Bhopal's importance was due to its dynamic, articulate and crafty ruler, who was in the forefront of the Princely order by virtue of his personality as a Muslim ruler who could be a most trusted ally of the British.

He ascended the throne in May 1926 and came into prominence at the time of the Round Table Conference in 1931. With British support, he became Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes, first from 1931 to 1932, and again from 1943 till his resignation under force of

It was Bhopal among princely states that played the most devious trick but Sardar Patel's strategy overturned all the game. An account of the events

circumstances in 1947. His second term coincided with the most crucial period of Indian history when the future of a united India was on the anvil.

From the very start of negotiations, the Nawab of Bhopal showed signs of refusal and reluctance to accede. 'The Nawab even threatened to give away the kingdom to his daughter.'³

Initially, he tried to sign the Standstill Agreement without intending to accede to the Indian Government.

Bhopal's Challenge to India's unity was far more pernicious than that posed by CP Ramaswami Iyer or by the Nizam of Hyderabad: whereas his surrender had a great drama. Apprising Gandhi of the dangers inherent in the situation, Patel wrote to him on 11 August 1947: 'For the last fifteen days, I have been occupied with the Princes. It is so taxing. There seems to be no end to the Nawab of Bhopal's intrigues. He is working day and night to cause a split among the Princes and to keep them out of the Indian Union. The Princes are weak beyond measure. They are full of selfishness, falsehood and hypocrisy.' Gandhi's reply showed the great confidence he had in Patel, 'we are faced with difficulty, and difficulties seem to be increasing.... The problem of the States is difficult. But I know you will successfully tackle it'⁴

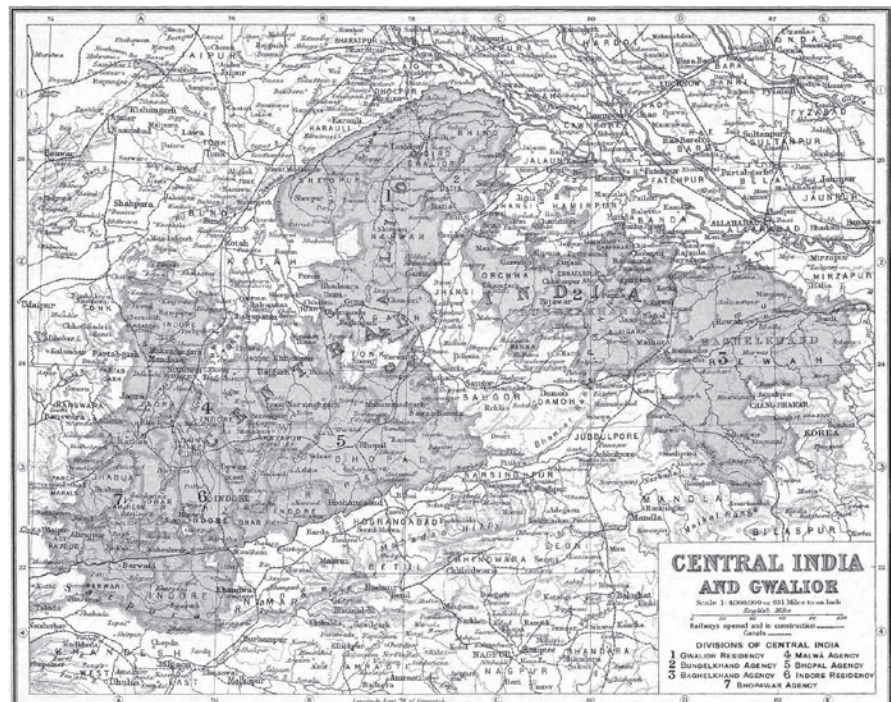
Bhopal was sly and aggressive, who surreptitiously but swiftly moved from one Prince to another, tempting one and all to join hands with him in torpedoing Patel's dream of One India. Due to active support of the Political Department and

its powerful Secretary, Conrad Corfield, he played the game from a position of advantage. He was also manoeuvring at the behest of Jinnah with the sole aim to dismember India with multiple fractures. Such Balkanisation would have had devastating implications in Indian history. Only Patel seemed to have the strength and political acumen to meet the formidable challenge and avert the catastrophe. He did that with rare boldness and wisdom, and succeeded in making Bhopal lick the dust.

Due to encouragement of Corfield and Jinnah, Bhopal had evolved two objectives-to make efforts to evolve a 'Third Force' out of the States, and to secure their Accession to Pakistan, if not immediately but ultimately. Along with the Residents and Agents, he endeavoured to persuade the Hamlets among the Princes to form independent confederations outside the Indian Union. As Jinnah's emissary

and one of his closest advisers, Bhopal was 'not averse to playing an important role in the higher politics of Pakistan'.⁵

Bhopal played an anti-India role in the proceedings of the States' Negotiating Committee on the issue of the Princes joining the Constituent Assembly. The Nawab of Bhopal insisted that the Constituent Assembly should ratify the understanding reached between the two negotiating committees before the States could enter the Constituent Assembly. The Maharaja of Patiala, however, disagreed with the views of Bhopal and urged that the States should join the Assembly. The Nawab of Bhopal made further efforts to dissuade rulers from entering the Constituent Assembly by addressing a personal appeal to them. Here too, Bhopal had to lick the dust when the Maharaja of Patiala announced that he was sending his representatives to the Constituent Assembly



Courtesy: https://www.wikiwand.com/en/Bhopal_State#/Media/File:Central_India_Agency_Map.jpg

because he felt that the stage for the States' participation in the Constitution-making process had definitely come, and that any delay in doing so would be prejudicial not only to his own interests but also to the wider interests of the country. The Maharaja of Bikaner, and other rulers who followed his lead, fully supported the stand taken by the Maharaja of Patiala and decided to send representatives to the Constituent Assembly. Subsequently, the representatives of the States of Baroda, Bikaner, Cochin, Jaipur, Jodhpur, Patiala and Rewa took their seats in the Constituent Assembly. Thereafter, representatives from other States started trickling in to the Constituent Assembly one after another. These developments foiled the designs of Corfield and Jinnah and demoralised Bhopal.

The Nawab of Bhopal had attempted to browbeat weak, vacillating Princes by prophesying 'bloodshed and chaos' in the States if a time-limit on their joining the Constituent Assembly was imposed. He tried to influence them by word of mouth, besides pressing into service his Pakistani-dominated Secretariat, to make them adopt a policy of 'wait and see'. In spite of the shrewdness Bhopal possessed and the patronage he enjoyed of the Political Department, Patel outmanoeuvred him and made him suffer a humiliating defeat at the hands of the Maharajas. And, also through vocal opposition built up within and outside the Chamber by the States Prime Ministers-Dewans Mirza Ismail of Mysore, VT Krishnamachari of Udaipur, Panikkar of Bikaner and BL Mitter of Baroda.

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Panikkar and some other Dewans believed that Bhopal was acting as an agent of Pakistan' and that 'Bhopal came forward as the standard bearer for Hyderabad', having entered into a compact with the Nizam whereby the former (Bhopal) agreed to use the Chamber to rally Hindu Princes to undermine Hindu power in India and the Government of Hyderabad was to finance the devious scheme.⁶ Bhopal had every hope of success. Like Jinnah, he believed that 'a government in India weakened by the hostility of the Hindu Princes to the Congress, would not dare to offend Muslim public opinion and impose its will on Nizam. Bhopal was of the firm opinion that Hyderabad, as large as England and having a population of 17 million and a revenue of Rs 20 crore, would survive and that his tiny island in a Hindu ocean' could do so 'in association with Hyderabad'.⁷ Such a dream turned sour with Britain's change of mind-to transfer power on 15 August 1947 and not by June 1948, as decided earlier, and in this regard Patel had played a decisive role. The speed at which events moved left the Princes bewildered. Bhopal suffered, as his isolation

increased thereafter. Yet his evil genius was not quite played outright till he acceded to the Indian Union.

As soon as Lord Mountbatten announced, on 3 June 1947, that the date of the transfer of power could be 15 August 1947, the Nawab of Bhopal resigned his chancellorship of the Chamber of Princes. In his resignation letter, he stated: 'Now that Your Excellency has indicated to us the policy of His Majesty's Government in regard to the future... the Indian States and Bhopal State would, as soon as Paramountcy is withdrawn, be assuming an independent status. I consider it desirable that I should tender my resignation of the office of Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes with effect from today. Another reason for my resignation is that the Chamber, as now constituted, formed part of a constitutional machinery which in my opinion, will now become *functus officio*.'⁸ In another letter to the Viceroy, he stated that: 'The State of Bhopal does not wish to remain associated in any manner whatsoever with the Chamber of Princes or any of its subordinate organisations. It cannot, therefore, be represented by the

Standing Committee of that body and will negotiate direct with the successor governments of British India in regard to its interests, and its future relationship with Pakistan and Hindustan.⁹ On the resignation of the Nawab of Bhopal as Chancellor, the Maharaja of Patiala, then Pro-Chancellor, took over the chancellorship.

These two letters of the Nawab of Bhopal clearly indicated that he felt so embittered, and even frustrated, that he refused to attend the meeting of the Rulers and States representatives called by Mountbatten on 5 July 1947, in his capacity as Crown Representative. He dismissed it with the contemptuous remarks that the rulers had been 'invited like the Oysters to attend the tea-party with the Walrus and the Carpenter'. Mountbatten regretted to say, 'I have spent more time on Bhopal's case than on all other States put together... it would be a tragedy if he were to wreck the State by failing to come in now'.¹⁰

By the first week of August 1947, the Nawab of Bhopal realised that the vast majority of rulers had opted for Accession and that, if he did not come in, Bhopal would be left in an anomalous

and difficult position. He wanted to know whether he could sign a Standstill Agreement without acceding. He was told that the Standstill Agreement would not be signed with the rulers who refused to accede. He then sent his Constitutional Advisor, Sir Mohammad Zafrullah Khan, for clarification of the terms of the Instrument of Accession. This could not inspire confidence in Bhopal's intentions, especially so because of Zafrullah's credentials. Zafrullah was an ardent Pakistani, who was soon to represent the Muslims on the Radcliffe Boundary Commission and later as Pakistan's nominee in the UNO to argue Pakistan's case on Kashmir and Hyderabad. It was made clear to Zafrullah that it would be impossible to make any alternations in the Instrument of Accession and that Bhopal would have to join on the same terms as all other States. At his meeting with Mountbatten, on 11 August 1947, Bhopal sought his help to save his face. He wanted his Accession to be announced ten days after the creation of the Dominion of India-ie. by 25th August. Mountbatten expressed his helplessness unless Patel agreed. Patel was generous to grant

Bhopal's request, even when Bhopal had something up his sleeve. At last the Nawab signed the Instrument of Accession.

After the announcement of his Accession on 25 August 1947, Bhopal wrote to Patel on 26 August expressing his gratitude for the spirit of accommodation Patel had shown, and an open confession of his guilt. He wrote: 'I do not 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 have conceded defeat, I hope that you will find that I can be as staunch a friend as I have been an inveterate 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.'¹¹

Patel was generous in his reply to the letter of the Nawab of Bhopal. Patel wrote:

'Quite candidly, I do not look upon the Accession of your State to the Indian Dominion as either a victory for us or defeat to you. It is only right propriety which have triumphed in the end, and, in that triumph, you and I have played our respective roles. You deserved full credit for having recognised the soundness of the position and for the courage, the honesty and boldness of having given up your earlier stand which according to us was entirely antagonistic to the interests as much of India

By the first week of August 1947, the Nawab of Bhopal realised that the vast majority of rulers had opted for Accession and that, if he did not come in, Bhopal would be left in an anomalous and difficult position. He wanted to know whether he could sign a Standstill Agreement without acceding. He was told that the Standstill Agreement would not be signed with the rulers who refused to accede. He then sent his Constitutional Advisor, Sir Mohammad Zafrullah Khan, for clarification of the terms of the Instrument of Accession

as of your own State. I have noted with particular pleasure your assurance of support to the Dominion Government in combating disloyal elements irrespective of caste, creed or religion 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 cooperation and friendship."¹²

Why was Bhopal playing Jinnah's game? Obviously for a price in return for the services rendered. Bhopal hoped to succeed Jinnah as Governor General of Pakistan. The succession story saw the light of the day immediately after Jinnah's death, on 11 September 1948, when the Civil and Military Gazette of Lahore published a news dispatch from its New Delhi correspondent, apparently inspired by the Nawab himself. The news item indicated that the Nawab of Bhopal would succeed Jinnah as Governor-General of Pakistan. The ruling clique of

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Pakistan looked upon the news with disfavour, characterising it as sinister. Their reaction was that of a usurper coming to Pakistan to become the head of the State. An agitation was whipped up. A procession went through some of the main streets of Lahore staging a protest. A worked-up crowd gathered at the newspaper office on the Mall, and burnt the copies which carried the news item. The Christian News Editor got so many threatening calls that he had to seek police protection."¹³

According to HV Hodson, 'three days before this period of grace expired', Bhopal had a long talk with Patel and then saw Mountbatten, when he

explained the reasons for his hesitation: He had ambitions to play a big role in the Muslim world in the future, and he feared that if he acceded, Jinnah would denounce him as a traitor to the Muslim cause. Bhopal had flown to Karachi to meet Jinnah, who though 'sufficiently magnanimous towards the Nawab, must have by then seen opposition from Liaquat Ali (then Pakistan's Prime Minister) and other Muslim leaders. It was thereafter, on his return from Pakistan, that the State of Bhopal acceded to India and its 'ruler decided not to resign his gaddi to his daughter, as he had intended to do in order to take office in Pakistan'.¹⁴

Courtesy: Sardar Patel: Unifier of Modern India, by RNP Singh, Vitasta Publishing Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi

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R.N.P. Singh

Junagadh: the Might of People's Will

After Partition, we had a huge problem. Those who partitioned the country had mental reservations. They thought that this Partition was not the last word, and they started the game immediately thereafter. Among the Kathiawar States, they went to Junagadh and got its Accession to Pakistan.... We woke up in time and those who tried to play the game saw that we were not sleeping.

-Sardar Patel

Mountbatten had though finalized the merger of Junagadh into Pakistan, but the rebel of two states under it and Patel's wit changed the game. In a way, it was like snatching the prey from the lion's mouth

THE SARDAR'S warning that it would be suicidal for any State to ignore the compulsions of geography, the vital economic links and the will of the people was fulfilled in case of Junagadh. Up to 14 August 1947, the Dewan of the State kept up the pretense of negotiations with the Indian Dominion. On 15 August 1947, Junagadh announced that it had acceded to Pakistan. This came like a bombshell to all, and particularly to Kathiawar. Junagadh was an important maritime State with close economic, cultural and ethnic links with Kathiawar. Junagadh was the premier State in the group of Kathiawar States. It lay in the south-west of Kathiawar. It was bounded almost entirely by other Indian States, except for the south and south-west where lies the Arabian sea. The State had no contiguity with Pakistan by land and

its distance by sea, from the port of Veraval to Karachi, was about 300 miles. The area of the State was 3,337 square miles and the population (according to the Census of 1941) numbered 670,719, of whom 80 per cent were Hindus. There were several islands of Junagadh territory in the States of Gondal, Bhavnagar and Nawanagar. Similarly, parts of States which had acceded to the Indian Dominion were interspersed with Junagadh's territory. Access to these as well as to certain areas belonging to Baroda State was only possible through Junagadh. Within its borders were Hindu and Jain religious shrines which attracted pilgrims from all over India. Within its area was situated the historic temple of Somnath, which was sacked by Mahmud Ghazni in 1024 AD. Its railways and posts and telegraphs were an integral part of the Indian The system. railway police, telegraphs and telephones were administered by the Government of India.

Junagadh was a Rajput State under the Chudasama dynasty until 1472-73, when it was conquered by Sultan Muhammad Bedga of Ahmedabad. In the reign of Emperor Akbar, it became a dependency of the court of Delhi under the immediate authority of the suba of Ahmedabad. Sometime in 1735, when the Mughal government had fallen into

decay, Sher Khan Babi, a soldier of fortune and an officer under the suba, expelled the Mughal governor and established his rule in Junagadh. The last Nawab of Junagadh was a descendant of Sher Khan Babi.

The Nawab, Sir Mahabatkhan Rasulkhanji, was an eccentric of rare variety. His chief preoccupation in life was dogs, of which he owned about 800, each with its human attendant. He carried his love for dogs to such lengths that he once organised a wedding of two of his pets, over which he spent a sum of rupees 20 lakh and in honour of which he proclaimed a State holiday.

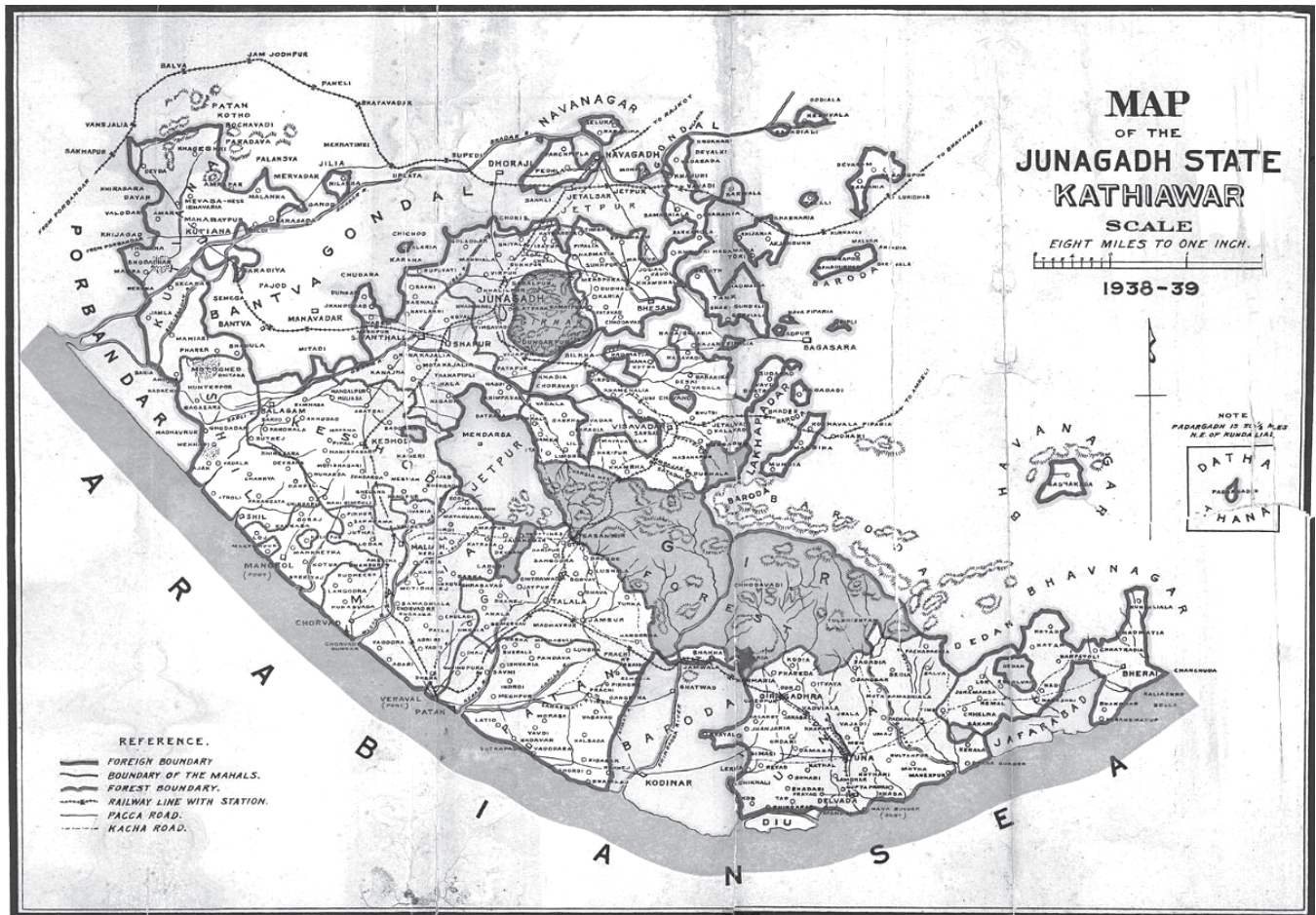
The Nawab had all along been paying lip-service to the idea of a united Kathiawar. On

11 April 1947, in reply to some speculations in the Gujarati press regarding the State's attitude towards the future constitutional set-up of India, the Government of Junagadh issued a press note which contained the paragraph: What Junagadh pre-eminently stands for is the solidarity of Kathiawar and would welcome the formation of a self-contained group of Kathiawar States. Such a group while providing for the autonomy and entity of individual States and their subjects would be a suitable basis for cooperation in matters of common concern generally and coordination where necessary.¹

The clear statement had set all doubts at rest. On 22 April 1947, the Junagadh Government

Gazette reproduced a speech of the Dewan, Khan Bahadur Abdul Kadir Mohammad Hussain, in the course of which he categorically repudiated allegations in the vernacular press that Junagadh was thinking of joining Pakistan: that Baluchis and Hurs had been imported into the State forces; and that the local Bahauddin College was to be affiliated with the Sind University.

The Instrument of Accession was sent to the Nawab for signature. When no reply was received by the Government of India till 12 August 1947, telegrams were sent to the Nawab and the Dewan reminding them that the last date for the receipt of intimation of signing of the Instrument of Accession was



Courtesy: <https://www.raremaps.com/gallery/detail/58415/map-of-the-junagadh-state-kathiawar-1938-39-deccan-printing-works>

14 August 1947. They were requested to immediately reply. Meanwhile, Sir Shah Nawaz Bhutto had taken over as Dewan in May 1947 in place of Abdul Kadir Mohammad, who had gone abroad for medical treatment. On 13 August 1947, Shah Nawaz Bhutto, the new Dewan, replied that the matter was under consideration. Bhutto was a Muslim League politician from Karachi and father of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, who later became Prime Minister of Pakistan.

To carry the deception further, Sir Shah Nawaz Bhutto called a conference of leading citizens the same day (13 August). On behalf of the Hindu citizens, a memorandum was presented to the Dewan. The memorandum analysed the dangers that would accrue to the State if it decided to accede to Pakistan. Apart from its geographical position and the fact that the overwhelming majority of the people were Hindus, the premier status of Junagadh in Kathiawar would be lost; the trade routes would be circumscribed; commerce and industry would be crippled and there would be an immense loss of revenue to the State. The memorandum urged that Junagadh should, therefore,

accede to India.

Having thus staged a make-believe of consulting public opinion over the issue of accession, the Government of Junagadh, on 15 August 1947, announced their Accession to Pakistan. In this connection, the communique issued by the Government of Junagadh stated: "The Government of Junagadh has during the past few weeks been faced with the problem of making its choice between Accession to the Dominion of India and Accession to the Dominion of Pakistan. It has had to take into very careful consideration every aspect of this problem. Its main pre-occupation has been to adopt a course that would, in the long run, make the largest contribution towards the permanent welfare and prosperity of the people of Junagadh and help to preserve the integrity of the State and to safeguard its independence and autonomy over the largest possible field. After anxious consideration and the careful balancing of all factors, the Government of the State has decided to accede to Pakistan and hereby announces its decision to that effect. The State is confident that its decision will be welcomed by all loyal

subjects of the State who have its real welfare and prosperity at heart.'² In Junagadh's Accession to Pakistan on 15 August, Patel saw the first danger sign for splitting India again. He later admitted, 'After Partition, we had a huge problem. Those who partitioned the country had mental reservations. They thought that this Partition was not the last word, and they started the game immediately thereafter. Among the Kathiawar States, they went to Junagadh and got its Accession to Pakistan... We woke up in time and those who tried to play game saw that we were not sleeping.'³

The situation in Junagadh was in marked contrast with that of Jodhpur and one which was much to Patel's disadvantage. In the case of Jodhpur, he had foiled Jinnah's efforts to entice the Maharaja; in Junagadh, he was presented with a fait accompli by a Muslim ruler.

The gravity of situation was further increased by Mountbatten recognising Junagadh as 'Pakistan territory' in his report to the King, in which he stated: 'My chief concern as Governor-General was to prevent the Government of India from committing itself on the Junagadh issue to an act of war against what was now Pakistan territory. Further in the report, Mountbatten exposed what seemed to be his major role in India as her Governor General: 'But at the same time I was aware that, in the wider aspect, my own physical presence as Governor-General of India was the best insurance against an actual outbreak of war with Pakistan.'⁴ He wanted to safeguard Pakistan's position, Mountbatten confessed

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to Nehru much later. 'Pakistan is in no position even to declare war, since I happen to know that their military commanders have put it to them in writing that a declaration of war with India can only end in the inevitable and ultimate defeat of Pakistan.'⁵

However, Mountbatten's views expressed to the king seemed contrary to the advice he gave to the Princes on 25 July 1947, to recognise 'geographical compulsions which cannot be evaded', as also 'the communal majorities of the ruler's subjects.'⁶ Mountbatten had also told the Princes, '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'.⁷

In spite of Mountbatten's being Governor-General of India, he made a serious attempt to play a role in Junagadh which was not in India's interest. He had no control over Jinnah's actions, but he thought he could use his position as Governor-General in averting a war with Pakistan by binding India to three conditions: first, reference of Junagadh to the UNO; second, Indian troops should not enter Junagadh territory; and third, offer of holding plebiscite in Junagadh. Patel was far too clever and strong-willed to fall into a trap laid by Mountbatten, whereas, with this as precedent, Nehru failed in that respect in Kashmir. In Hyderabad too, Mountbatten played a similar role to secure for the Nizam's Association in, not Accession to, India. Association could be terminated, not Accession, with the latter being a permanent commitment.

Patel refused to oblige Mountbatten on two grounds. The first, according to him, was the 'forcible dragging of our eighty per cent of Hindu population of Junagadh into Pakistan by Accession in defiance of all democratic principles'. The second was that Accession to Pakistan would have set up a dangerous precedent. On Campbell-Johnson's admission, it 'would automatically be a direct challenge to the essential validity of the whole Accession policy, with disastrous effects both upon the Kathiawar States and upon the Hyderabad negotiations

Patel, reluctantly, agreed to a plebiscite, even when Jinnah had not asked for it. However, he rejected outright the first two. The first would have, by giving Pakistan locus standi in Junagadh, internationalised the issue, as it happened later in the case of Kashmir. Patel's terse comment was, 'there was a grave disadvantage in being plaintiff in such cases'.⁸ Mountbatten overlooked the fact that in Junagadh's Accession to Pakistan would lie 'Jinnah's tactical shrewdness. He must have seen or if he did not see, it certainly turned out-that the Accession of Junagadh to Pakistan placed India in an acute dilemma from which any escape could be turned to the advantage of Pakistan'.⁹ In fact, 'the Accession of Junagadh to Pakistan was the result of secret negotiations was clear from a number of letters which fell into our (Menon) hands after both the Nawab and the Dewan fled from the State. In one of these, Shah Nawaz Bhutto had written to Jinnah about the interview granted to him by the latter on 16 July 1947, in which Jinnah had advised the Nawab 'to keep out under any circumstances until 15 August and referred to Jinnah's assurances that he would not allow Junagadh to starve as

Veraval (port) is not far from Karachi',¹⁰

Bhutto was in close contact with Jinnah. Obeying Jinnah's advice, Bhutto did nothing until 15 August. On that day, Pakistan having come into being, Junagadh announced its decision to accede to it. The newspapers of 17 August 1947 brought the news to Patel, who asked the Ministry of External Affairs, which was in Nehru's charge, to discover whether Pakistan intended to accept the Accession. After shirking an answer for almost a month, the Government of Pakistan sent a telegram on 13 September 1947, that the Accession had been accepted.

There was also the danger of Pakistan securing a foothold in Junagadh by landing troops through its port of Veraval, a course she secretly adopted later in Kashmir by sending tribal invaders there. Once Pakistani troops were on Junagadh soil, it would have been difficult for India to dislodge them from there. Patel refused to oblige Mountbatten on two grounds. The first, according to him, was the 'forcible dragging of our eighty per cent of Hindu population of Junagadh into Pakistan by Accession in defiance of all democratic principles'.¹¹

The second was that Accession to Pakistan would have set up a dangerous precedent. On Campbell-Johnson's admission, it 'would automatically be a direct challenge to the essential validity of the whole Accession policy, with disastrous effects both upon the Kathiawar States and upon the Hyderabad negotiations.¹² The critics of Patel were completely silenced when Junagadh acceded to Pakistan: they realised then the possibilities of disintegration if the policy of Accession had not been implemented'.¹³

Junagadh was a seaboard State, east of Porbandar, in Kathiawar or Saurashtra, the thumb jutting out of western India and containing numerous States and fiefdoms. Its Accession and acceptance by Pakistan represented a blow to the prestige of the Government of India in Kathiawar. It caused the region's Muslims, about eleven per cent of the population, to look to this pocket and to Pakistan's capital, Karachi, rather than to New Delhi for allegiance; it generated in Junagadh's Hindu neighbours the thought to retaliate against the Nawab's regime and also against Muslims all over Kathiawar; and it raised an important question. If the Nawab and his Dewan could deliver Junagadh to Pakistan,

could not the Nizam similarly offer Hyderabad to Pakistan?

Kashmir was the Queen. If India argued, as Jinnah was sure it would, that not Junagadh's ruler but its people should choose, he would make the same demand for Kashmir in case the Maharaja joined India. And in Kashmir, an India-or-Pakistan option could easily turn into a poll for and against Islam. This implication was plain, yet on 30 September 1947, Nehru told Liaquat Ali, in Mountbatten's presence, that while India objected to the Nawab's Accession, it would always be willing to abide by the verdict of a general election, plebiscite or referendum in Junagadh. Patel would not have volunteered such a commitment. Emphasising Nehru's words to Liaquat, Mountbatten added an assurance that if the need arose, Nehru would apply the principle to other States too, whereupon, in Mountbatten's words, 'Pandit Nehru nodded his head sadly. Mr Liaquat Ali Khan's eyes sparkled. There is no doubt that both the them were thinking of Kashmir'.¹⁴

Vallabhbhai made it plain that a plebiscite in Kashmir would be conditional on one in Hyderabad. Not prepared for the latter, Jinnah offered no plebiscite in Junagadh

as well.¹⁵ It was up to Jawaharlal, as the External Affairs Minister, to talk with Pakistan on Junagadh but when it came to dealing directly with Junagadh, Patel functioned for India. Jawaharlal was fully included by him and the Cabinet's sanction obtained for all major moves but the direction of policy was in Vallabhbhai's hands. On 19 September 1947, he had sent Menon to Junagadh. Menon found the Nawab-clusive- and Bhutto evasive.

On 24 September 1947, at Patel instance, a brigade consisting of Indian troops and soldiers from some of the Kathiawar States was positioned near Junagadh's frontiers. On 25 September, residents of Junagadh and other parts of Kathiawar gathered in Bombay and formed, with Vallabhbhai's knowledge, a provisional government for Junagadh, the Arzi Hukumat, with Samaldas Gandhi, a relative of Mahatma Gandhi, as its president. Rajkot became the Hukumat's headquarters.

Four weeks of waiting followed. Patel was giving time to Pakistan to annul the Accession or arrange a plebiscite. Patel had made up his mind that if Pakistan did neither, he would act. Not, to begin with, by sending forces into Junagadh proper, but by tackling three of Junagadh's feudatories, Manavadar, Mangrol and Babariawad. The latter two had already acceded to India, though the Sheikh of Mangrol alleged duress after freely signing the Instrument of Accession. The Nawab of Junagadh and the Government of Pakistan claimed that the feudatories lacked the discretion to accede, but Vallabhbhai disagreed. The Khan of Manavadar had not

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joined India but he had provoked his neighbours by arresting local leaders; the peace of Gondal State, which adjoined Manavadar, was endangered. On 21 October 1947, the Cabinet authorised the takeover of these three feudatories.

Mountbatten tried to argue against the decision, but when he saw that the Sardar was firm, he urged that the Central Reserve Police rather than the Army be used. But, Vallabhbhai rejected Mountbatten's suggestion. To Patel, the suggestion meant taking unnecessary risks; he was firm that the operation should be handled by the Indian Army'.¹⁶ Manavadar was taken over on 22 October 1947, the other two on 1 November.

Meanwhile, over two-and-a-half months' political stalemate and economic stagnation had reduced Junagadh to near bankruptcy, resulting in a steep fall in the State's revenues and leading to a fast deteriorating situation. In view of the prevailing economic crisis, on 27 October 1947, Sir Shah Nawaz Bhutto wrote a pathetic letter to Jinnah, in which he described the disastrous 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 with generous allotment of foodgrains. There has been harsh treatment of Muslims 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

The Nawab realised that events were not going as he had anticipated, and he decided to flee. Towards the end of October 1947, he left for Karachi with most of the members of his family, some of his dogs and much of the family jewelry. As the party was about to enter the plane, it was found that one of the Begums had forgotten to bring her child but the Nawab refused to wait; the plane took off, leaving the Begum behind to find her way later to the Portuguese settlement in Diu

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 have lost all enthusiasm for Pakistan.'¹⁷

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On 2 November 1947, the Arzi Hukumat captured the town of Nawagadh. Five days later, on 7 November, Bhutto sent the Briton, Harvey Jones, a senior member of the Nawab's Advisory Council, to Rajkot for handing over power to Rajkot and to request Samaldas to take

over the reins of government. A day later, on 8 November, Bhutto modified his request: Would the Government of India accept the reins, rather than Arzi Hukumat? The new proposal went to NM Buch, New Delhi's Commissioner for the States of Western India and Gujarat. Samaldas voiced no objection. Late that night, Buch passed on the news over the phone to Menon during a dinner at which Nehru and Mountbatten were also present. Prodded by Mountbatten, Jawaharlal and Menon drafted a conciliatory telegram for Pakistan, stating that the Government of India was acceding to Bhutto's request but would ascertain wishes of the people of Junagadh before accepting the State de jure.

It was past midnight. Menon went to 1 Aurangzeb Road, New Delhi, woke Patel up and showed him the draft. 'He was strongly of the opinion that an offer of plebiscite should not be made. He pointed out that the Nawab had already fled, that the administration had broken down, and that as the Dewan had been unable to carry on, he had voluntarily offered to hand the State over to the Government of India. The vast majority of the people in the State were non-Muslims. In these circumstances, to commit ourselves to a

plebiscite in regard to Accession was unnecessary and uncalled for. However, after a good deal of further discussion, Sardar finally agreed to the issue of telegram."¹⁹

NM Buch and an Indian Army officer, Brigadier Gurdial Singh, entered Junagadh on the afternoon of 8 November 1947, the State's soldiers were disarmed and reigns taken over. Bhutto had left for Karachi the previous evening.

However, Liaquat Ali did not accept the Accession of Junagadh to India. He stated that since Junagadh acceded to Pakistan, neither the Dewan nor the ruler could negotiate a temporary or permanent settlement with India, and that it was a violation of Pakistan territory and a breach of international law. Since Junagadh was the States Ministry's responsibility, Patel had the upper hand in playing a master tactician's game. Understanding Patel, Mountbatten and his advisors had hoped that 'Patel would be satisfied for a decision on the occupation of Junagadh itself to lie in the pending tray until greater problems were safely resolved'.²⁰ Mountbatten was tactfully left in the dark. By the time he discovered what was afoot, troops were already on the move. According to

Campbell-Johnson: All these developments were only brought to Mountbatten's notice late in the evening (of 8th November). It is the first time since the transfer of power that the Government have carried out a major act of policy without fully consulting or notifying him in advance of the event. He feels this may be due to Patel's and VP's (Menon) desire to spare him from embarrassment.²¹

Patel arrived in Junagadh on 13 November 1947, four days after its surrender, and spoke to a large crowd on the grounds of Bahauddin College. After complimenting Bhutto and Harvey Jones for their realism and the Indian forces for their restraint, he touched base on the subject of Hyderabad: 'If Hyderabad does not see the writing on the wall, it goes the way Junagadh has gone.'²² And then dramatically, 'by way of oratorical flourish, asked them to indicate whether they wished the State to accede to India or Pakistan. Over ten thousand hands were immediately raised in favour of Accession to India'.²³

Patel also did some plain speaking, "The action of Nawab of Junagadh would be a lesson to those who are persisting in their chimera of attachment to an

authority with which they have no natural ties... The State is no property of a single individual. Paramountcy has lapsed—certainly not by the efforts of the Princes, but by those of the people'.²⁴

A plebiscite, as Patel had promised, was held on 20 February 1948, after normal conditions were restored—which went overwhelmingly in favour of India. A senior judicial officer of the ICS, CB Nagarkar, who incidentally, was neither Hindu nor Muslim, was asked to supervise it. Out of the total of 201,457 registered voters 190,870 exercised their franchise. Of this number only 91 cast their votes in favour of Accession to Pakistan. A referendum was held at the same time in Mangrol and Manavadar, as well as in Babariawad, Bantwa and Sardargarh. Out of 31,434 votes cast in these areas, only 39 were for Accession to Pakistan. Josselyn Hennessy of the Sunday Times and Douglas Brown of the Daily Telegraph, who were in Junagadh at that time, reported that they could find little fault with the manner in which the referendum was conducted.

Patel was the recipient of congratulations from many quarters for his 'crowning success', especially the Princes who eulogised over his 'noble efforts' in achieving 'a unique victory over Junagadh without causing loss of life and property'. All Kathiawar's Princes and people felt grateful to Patel for 'preserving the integrity and unity of Kathiawar by (his) timely action'.²⁵

After the Junagadh rally, Patel visited Somnath temple at

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Prabhas Patnan, with him was NV Gadgil, his colleague in the Cabinet. Both were visibly moved to find the temple, which had once been the glory of India, so dilapidated, neglected and forlorn.²⁶ Gadgil felt that the temple should be renovated. He mentioned the idea to Patel, who at once agreed and publicly proposed it. The Jamsahab of Nawanagar, who was with them, donated rupees one lakh on the spot, and Samaldas announced that the Arzi Hukumat would give Rs 51,000. Gadgil's Ministry, responsible for public works, undertook the task and the Cabinet approved it; but after a discussion between Gandhi and Patel, it was decided that a trust

Gadgil's Ministry, responsible for public works, undertook the task and the Cabinet approved it; but after a discussion between Gandhi and Patel, it was decided that a trust should renovate the temple with funds from the public. The two agreed that India's government was not a theocratic one and did not belong to any particular religion. It was secular and temple should not be built or rebuilt by it. By the time Somnath was renovated, Patel, who had agreed to perform the inaugural ceremony, was dead

should renovate the temple with funds from the public. The two agreed that India's government was not a theocratic one and did not belong to any particular religion. It was secular and temple should not be built or rebuilt by it. By the time

Somnath was renovated, Patel, who had agreed to perform the inaugural ceremony, was dead. In his place President Rajendra Prasad discharged the role, ignoring objections voiced by his Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru.²⁷

Courtesy: Sardar Patel: Unifier of Modern India, by RNP Singh, Vitasta Publishing Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi

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Dr. Khwairakpam Premjit Singh

Shaping of Modern Manipur A Squeezed Princely State

Like many princely states of India, Manipur too has been a victim of the dual and exploitative policies of colonial rule. The story of the annexation of Manipur

Manipur had endured a painful journey for a century and a half due to the Burmese occupation and subsequent British colonial intervention and ultimately merging into the Union of India in 15 October 1949. This small kingdom, at the confluence of Southeast Asia and the Indian subcontinent, evolved culturally and politically by assimilating of Southeast Asian and South Asian culture without completely abandoning its own indigenous culture and other orders. Since the state adopted the Vaishnavism in the first half of the 18th century, the people of the Manipur valley slowly changed their outlook and consciousness from Southeast Asian affinities to more Indian Hindu culture, while in the hills with the advent of Christianity in the late 19th century a big change happened in many aspects. Besides this, princely state, across hills and valleys, the entire population suffered from colonialism altogether. Manipur lost her traditional knowledge system, existing order things had overshadowed by colonial system, tributary alliance system (a southeast and Chinese political mechanism), indigenous sports, state power finally uprooted, and reinstalled metaphorical durbar led to schism in bonding network between the valley and hills. Since the first decade of

the 20th century, people ultimately started challenging the colonial binary, deliberate fuzzy systems, such as Kuki armed uprising, Zeliangrong socio-religious movement, Nupi-lal (1904 and 1939), political movements under Nikhil (Hindu) Manipuri Mahasabha and even joined the INA forces. The transformation of (Maha) rajas of Manipur into a python that has lost its power to constrict and squeeze; and the merger of Manipur with India in 1949 are key features of the concluding section of the article.

Keywords Colonialism, Paramountcy, Durbar, Movement, Resistance, Merger

Introduction

Migration and settlement by different groups is not necessarily a strange phenomenon in human history- frequency and nature may varies area to area for a number of reasons. Manipur - a kingdom of plural culture like other kingdoms -after going through different phases and finally being shaped with state mechanisms comprising hills and valleys. The process of state formation begun in the valley probably from the 7th century CE and largely completed in the 13th century CE with the amalgamation of six major clans/salai/principalities (small country) Chenglei/Sarang

Leishang them Angom, Kha-Nganba, Luwang, Khuman under dominancy of Ningthouja/Mangang principality. After a series of confrontations, the principality of Moirang finally merged with the kingdom of Meitei kingdom in the 18th century.¹

The highlanders did not join the 'state order,' either because of fleeing from state formation or lacking of feasibilities to introduce this network due to poor connectivity and nature of settlement, there is no definitive answer. Beyond these possibilities and probabilities, there is much historical evidence of the interdependence of hill and valley population and the tributary system was a dominant mechanism that crucially maintained the relationship between hills and valleys as in other southeast Asian regions practices prior to western colonial intervention. The colonialism brought schisms in the relationship between valley and hill but this is also a fact that there were social, religious and educational upheavals in hill areas of Manipur.

Apart from archaeological evidence of pre-historic

settlements, *Puya* (ancient indigenous texts),² the *Chirtharol Kumpapa* (Royal Chronicle) and legendary and mythological literary sources presumably defined that Pakahangba (33 CE) was the first ruler of the Ningthouja clan/dynasty, representing the upper and lower realms of indigenous belief system. Different principalities/clans of valley ruled different geographical areas, as per chronicle and *Puyas* the dominant clan the Mangang (Ningthouja)- which became the centre for unification of 7 principalities.

The ruling period of Loiyamba, king of Mangang principality (r.1074–1112 CE)³ was the crucial phase of state formation of pre-colonial Manipur. Interesting he issued a decree or edict (called *Shinyen*) in which reflect economic and administration function, and later known as the Loiyamba Shineyen (the first written constitution of Manipur). This decree later amended and added/expanded by his successors such as Kiyamba (1461-1508), Khagemba (r.1597-1652), Garibniwaz (r.1709-1748), Bhagyachandra (r.1763-1798) and Chourjit (r.1803-1813). Some scholars

consider Loiyamba as the founder of Kangleipak.

This paper looks at the making of modern Manipur from the second half of the 18th century to the first half of the 20th century. The objective this paper is to highlight the cultural assimilations in pre-modern period, the sufferings of the kingdom of Manipur during the British alliance, the British Raj subjugations since Manipur became a princely state, local resistance movements from different sections of the societies and communities, and participation in Indian National Army and also the merger with the Indian Union. It will also highlight the collapse of native durbar system with the introduction of the colonial "rule of law".

Emergence of Vaishnavism in Manipur: Perpetuation (continuation) and Propagation(spread) of Vaishnavism

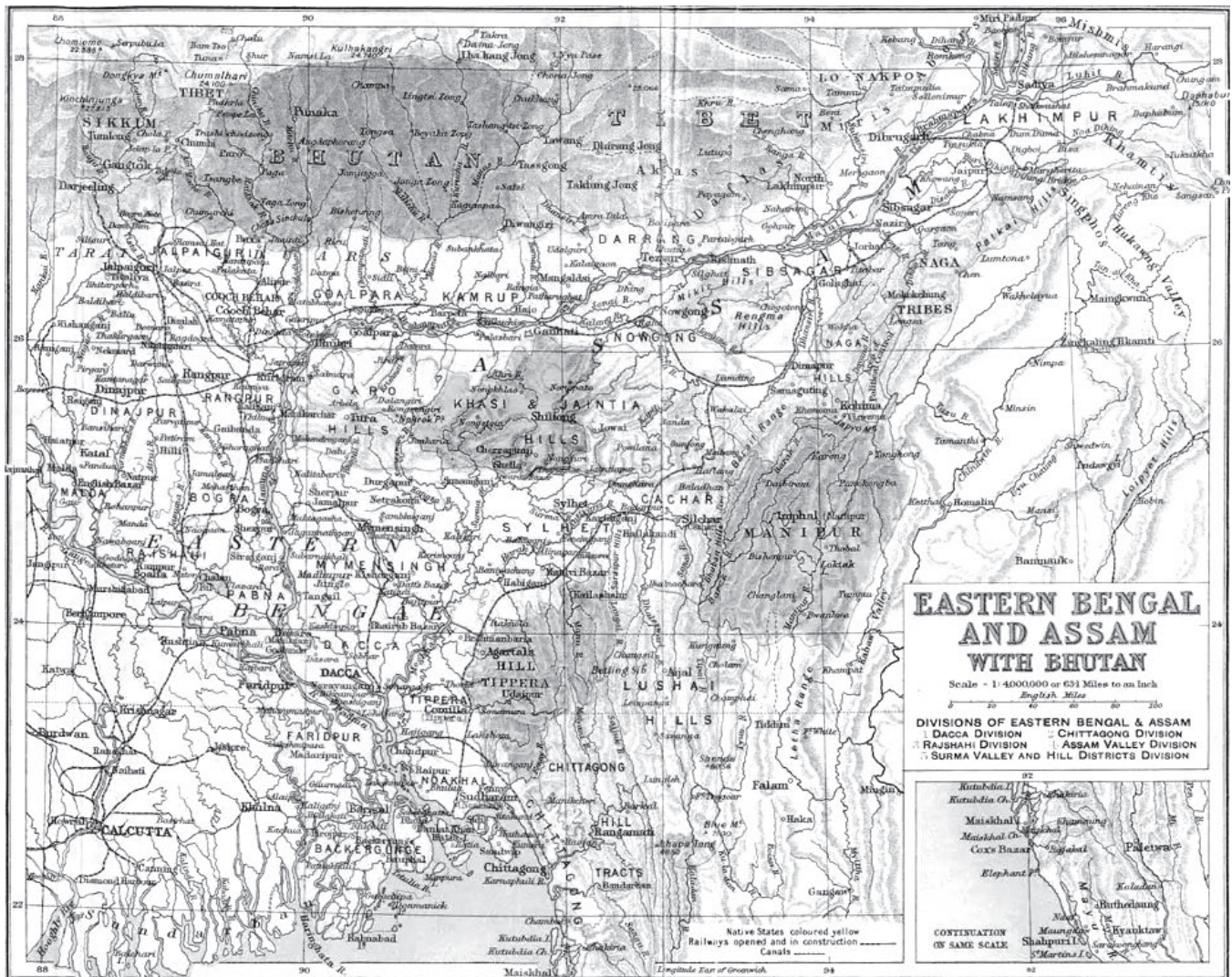
The Hindu religion in the form of the Bhakti movement did not reach the kingdom of Manipur until the beginning of the 18th century and nor influenced from other institutionalised religions rather practiced the indigenous belief system which had strong bonding with socio-cultural and political system of mainland southeast. In the 15th century, the evidence of Kyamba (r.1461-1508) received of an idol gift of Vishnu *Salachakra* from the Pong king Keengkomba and some *Brahmins* appeared in the valley could not assume that Vaishnavism showed the seed on Manipur soil, because there is historical evidence of the

The highlanders did not join the 'state order,' either because of fleeing from state formation or lacking of feasibilities to introduce this network due to poor connectivity and nature of settlement, there is no definitive answer. Beyond these possibilities and probabilities, there is much historical evidence of the interdependence of hill and valley population and the tributary system was a dominant mechanism that crucially maintained the relationship between hills and valleys as in other southeast Asian regions practices prior to western colonial intervention

adoption of Vaishnavism by the state and its subjects. In different waves, the Brahmins from Bengal and Assam immigrated to Manipur in the 16th and 17th centuries probably because of political and religious conflicts in their native places and also because of Bhakti culture-wandering to foreign places in search of peace and tranquillity; both parties maintained a cordial cultural environment.⁴ In 1704, a bhakta from Nimbarka Vaishnavism sampradaya reached Manipur valley and later persuaded Charairongba (r.1697-1709) and his family to embrace

Vaishnavism, and within a few years he was proclaiming Vaishnavism the state religion. However, Kunj Bihari argues that the Vaishnavism could not flourish enough during his regime, but noteworthy that Santidas, a preacher of the Ramanandi sect, came from Sylhet reached Imphal valley in 1717, convinced king Garib Niwaz (r.1709-1748) and overthrew other sects. The Ramanandi sect in Manipur primarily they worship Hanuman and Rama in which propagating vernacular medium in preaching. Suddenly, Santidas abandoned the fundamental doctrine of

Bhaktism and began to advocate casteism and opposed the use of the vernacular Meiteilon (Meitei language) in preaching the Hindu religion. To fulfill his personal desire, Santidas influenced Garib Niwaz and burned down indigenous Meitei *puyas* and other rare manuscripts in 1732 and then introduced the Bengali literature. Chaitanyaite Vaishnavism (Krishna cult and Radha as the way to Krishna) which emerged in the form revivalism of the doctrines of Bhaktism overtook fanatic Santidas cult in the second half of the 18th century, during the



Courtesy: <http://kanglaonline.com/2021/08/was-manipur-only-700-square-miles-in-1949/>

reign of Ching-Thang Khomba aka Bhagya Chandra aka Jai Singh (r.1748–1799). During Baghyachandra, Chaitanayaite Vaishnavism reached its zenith point, sculptured the idols, installed various Hindu temples, launched a new ballet called Ras-lila, etc. In 19th century Manipur, the number of Gauriya Vaishnavism had been increased in the valley. Symbiosis of religion. This evolution of Vaishnavism in Manipur brought changes a lot in term definition of hygiene, food culture, dress code and other social life. Assimilation of religions with local belief system and others.

During Maharaja Chur Chand the Brahmins were getting all benefits from society, started formulating a new religious order in which casteism became quite prominent. In this social stratification Brahmins came to top position. Imposition of concepts on Mangba (unclean), taxes for religious rituals, *chandansenkhai* (a tax for *Vaishnavitemark* and for shradda) unnecessary created an unhealthy social and religious atmosphere in Manipur (valley and hill) which were not in the doctrines of any Bhakti movement. King Chur Chand (1885-1941) and some Brahmins started misusing tools of outcaste and excommunication in the name of religion for their dominancy purpose only. Brahma Sabha was established and King approved it, both collectively tried to destroyed centuries old Vaishnavite tradition and rise fundamentalism in the name of Sanskritisation. Outbreak various socio-religious and political resistance movements in the hill and valley in the

The burning of textual materials such as puyas, available in the palace library or from pandits and even collected from various remote places was a regime-sponsored symbolic destruction of indigenous knowledge and philosophy. The creepy and horrible thing that shook the sentiments of the native people was the cremation of these books with the Hindu funeral rites like the cremation of corpses

first half of the 20th century is connected in one way or other with insensitive nature, public sensitive rather seeking power and comfort creating a group of him, forgotten his duty and give free hand to colonial power. Vaishnavism Hinduism got a bad name in Manipur though Meitei population still followed. In India, Bhakti movement emerged when the time Hinduism brought social disparities but in Manipur it was completely opposite from Bhakti to radicalism.

“Libricide”: Puya Mei Thaba (1732)

The burning of textual materials such as *puyas*, available in the palace library or from pandits and even collected from various remote places was a regime-sponsored symbolic destruction of indigenous knowledge and philosophy.⁶ The creepy and horrible thing that shook the sentiments of the native people was the cremation of these books with the Hindu funeral rites like the cremation of corpses. This heinous crime man made disaster was committed by two powerful senseless beings to promote self-interest ideas. Here, as per my opinion, Bhaktism or its philosophy has nothing to do with this heinous crime. But without a doubt, it has a negative impact on Manipuri knowledge

production, collective memory and also public perception on Hinduism in long term as well. It was a deliberate, calculated attack on the culture of a community.⁷ Interestingly, this criminal Santidas started talking about the doctrines Bhaktism after crime was committed.

“Many people respond to the violent destruction of books and libraries with deep emotion. The sadness and fear in eyewitness accounts convey a sense that the destruction of texts signifies not only the immediate breakdown of order and peace, but also a compromised future. The victims’ sense of loss, shared by many throughout the world, is tied to the perception that books and libraries are the living tissue of culture; the burning of books (as burning is often the means to their end) thus violates ideals of truth, beauty, and progress—and civilization itself.”⁸

This event halted the production of textual materials for the public domain as the state monitored and severely punished those who did not comply with the order. There is evidence of clandestine continuation of Meitei text materials production, but almost certain that Meitei indigenous textual knowledge production ceases and was enormously replaced by the Bengali text knowledge and their

culture in larger way. Meitei script was replaced by Bengali script. Since the fundamental principle was the dissemination and promotion of Bengali culture, the new approach of textual material and knowledge production drifted away from outlook, perception and world view that previously existed in Meitei text production in which valley and hill was an inseparable cultural component. This religious development introduced an entirely new narrative based predominately on Hindu gods, goddesses and deities, incorporating the indigenous world views and changing the nomenclature where necessary. An even larger Manipuris population uses the Bengali script, although Meitei Mayek had already introduced into Manipur state education curricula.

British Protectorate Kingdom: Manipur (1834-1891)

While Bengal began its bad days in 1757 with the EEIC, Manipur suffered starting getting severe blows from 1758 onwards from the Konbaung dynasty. With the rise of the Konbaung dynasty (1752-1885) in Burma, Manipur fell into political and territorial turmoil. In 1758 by Alaungpaya (r. Gourashyam), in 1764 by Badawpaya (r. Bhagyachandra), and then the Seven Years' Devastation (1819-26), the Burmese attacked, plundered and left chaos in their wake. In fact, Manipur suffered from Burmese occupation during the second half of the 18th century and until 1826. And from 1826, by enlisting the help of a colonial power (EEIC), Manipur was jeopardising its competence in

several areas -where the natives generally viewed Manipur as a sovereign kingdom and, on the other hand, the EEIC had been using the term 'British protectorate' as the superficially soft but powerful tool for colonial expansion.

The 1762, the first encounter of Manipur state with the EEIC was a political approach to seek military assistance to push back Burmese power from repeated and continuous intervention on the eastern frontier of Manipur kingdom. The British sent their force to help Gourashyam but failed to reach Manipur due to lack of knowledge of Manipur's terrain in short unknown territory and seasons. The agreement signed in 1762 could not utilise but the terms therein showed what was interest of Company favouring Manipur in the beginning. During devastation period, the exile Manipur ruler and Company worked together and finalising pushed out Burmese from Manipur territory. On 6 March 1824, David Scott signed a treaty with Raja Govind Chandra of Cachar; declared Cachar a protected state of the EEIC. Govind became a tributary Raja, who had to pay an annual tribute of 10,000/-. Jaintia also became protectorate state on 10 March 1824. Manipur also signed a treaty with EEIC (David Scott) and declared as protected Raja under the EEIC. Gambhir was chosen as an ally; neither Chorjit nor Marjit. Bothers were pensioned Rs. 100 per month for each of them. Chourjit was transferred to Navadwip in Bengal. On 20 April 1824, Gambhir was informed that Manipur would be given to him if he could conquer Manipur from

Burmese. Gambhir Singh Levy was established in May 1824 with 500 troops force. British officers trained and equipped them. In 1824 October Burmese entered in Manipur. The Treaty of Yandaboo was signed on 24 February 1826. After the Anglo Burmese war, Manipur Levy was raised to 3000. Major F.J. Grant, Pemberton, Francis Jenkin, and George Gordon were served as the Adjutant General of the Manipur Levy. After the Treaty of Yandaboo the Company established the residency office of Political Agent in Manipur kingdom. The treaty of Jiri (1833) signed between Maharaja Gambhir Singh and EEIC and another one the treaty of Kabaw Valley (1834), keeping aside measurement of lost and gain with these treaties, one of the most significant points to be added here is that after signing these treaties on marking boundary also pleasing the powerful Ava ruler, with death of Maharaja Gambhir Singh the EEIC introduced Political Agency and consequently became the protectorate state.

In due course, power of king of Manipur became weak where the Company servants control from the succession on throne to establishment of new orders in this kingdom. From example, the weakness of Manipur state visible in crystal clear in the dramatic event the war of succession of 1850 waged by exile prince Chandrakirti against Maharaja Debindro Singh of Manipur and how EEIC suddenly switched support from ruling Raja Debindro Singh to Chandrakirti. The EEIC dictated everything, the approval of Governor General of EEIC became the

ultimate sanctioning power of this protectorate state. From the 1830s to 1890s period, the army of Manipur had been extensively used to expand their territorial power in neighbouring territories of Assam and Naga Hills. In 1872 during Gordon, Johnstone for suppression of Angami Nagas in Kohima(Khonoma), Manipur kings of the 19th century were so silent on the loss of Kabaw Valley of Manipur. Raja Chadrakirti during the Third Anglo Burmese war (1885), occupied Kendat in the Kabaw in favour of British but did not claim the right of Manipur over Kabaw Valley. After the occupation of Upper Burma in this third Anglo-Burmese war, the British Crown presented 60,000 rifles to Manipur ruler.

Whether Manipur was a sovereign kingdom between 1834 and 1891 -rather than looking for the definitive answer, analysing the nature of any alliance launched by the EEIC in Indian subcontinent would provide clear ideas about their colonisation process, and most appropriate example is the subsidiary alliance. The historical evidences on military encounter between Manipur Kingdom and recent combined military expeditionary experience with Manipuri armies in the first Anglo-Burmese war gave the EEIC an impression to the EEIC that Manipur is a capable candidate to solidify Burmese westwards expansion,hence by subtly taking some features of the subsidiary alliance, the EEIC declared as the British protectorate kingdom.

Anglo-Manipur of 1891

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rooted in Burma -no longer a threat from Burma. Perhaps they wanted to review Manipur's current political status of Manipur as a British protectorate – wait and watch for a better moment to enter. The war of succession between two factions broke out in September in 1890 at the royal court of Manipur. That internal crisis was icing on the gate moment for the British to restructure the existing alliance in a diplomatic manner with some threats, but it ended in hostilities. Ultimately, the British achieved what they wanted, despite some casualties on their side. In 1891 Manipur turned into a subordinate state and the British GOI immediately revoked all previous treaties signed between the kingdom of Manipur and the British Raj.⁹ All communities prioritised to save the kingdom from colonial power and with a sense of pride and sovereignty fought together and many sacrificed their lives. Around 60 years silence dominancy was over. For decades, Manipur has been commemorating (every year on 23 April and 13 August) those brave rebel heroes who sacrificed their lives in the Khongjom war and on other fronts, and other rebel leaders who were caught, tried and sentenced to death by hanging and to life imprisonment in colonial prisons in exile. So far, Khongjom Parba (Manipur war

ballet) and other art have been the only medium to pay tribute to these unsung heroes, not textual representation. Extraction of their names and contribution could be found in native durbar records, but unfortunately some academic criminals keep these native archival sources private as if they have an inheritance right to national property.

Princely State of Manipur (1891-1947):British Paramountcy “Distinct Subordination”

The metaphorically proud sense of sovereignty in the protectorate phase had completely blown up since Manipur became a state under “distinct subordination”. On 21 August 1891, the Viceroy a proclamation that Manipur is liable to the penalty of annexation. However, the Queen of England exercised her veto power and stopped the process of annexation of Manipur; thus finally regrant the state position under native ruler with some certain conditions which the Governor General in Council might consider desirable, the choice of ruler falling upon him. This was a strategic imperialistic political step concerning the situation of the whole Indian subcontinent princely states. Mr. Ward (Chief Commissioner of Assam) and some officers opined to annex it to British

Empire. H.M. Durand (Secretary to Government of India) also suggested to search for a new fresh person from royal lines and advised the Viceroy the new ruler should be given the “raja” instead of “maharaja” and a salute of eleven guns. Viceroy Lord Lansdowne (Viceroy of India r.1888-1894) also gave his opinion not to restore the deposed King in 1891. With all these different valuable suggestions, the Government of India searched and selected a minor boy from royal circles in view of erasing the existing practice of throne heirship based on brother-to-brother succession. In fact, the minor boy did not have close blood relationship with previous rulers of Manipur. On 18 September 1891, a new *Sanad* was issued in which clearly mentioned that minor Chura Chand will be the king/raja of Manipur depended solely on the pleasure of the British Crown; annual tribute shall be paid to British government; all of his “faithful” successors approved by the paramount power.

Following the process of restructuring and reestablishment of Manipur, in 1892 H. St. P. Maxwell became the first Political Agent and Superintendent of Manipur princely state. Colonial

power’s handpicked six years old Chura Chand was enthroned as “raja” of Manipur on 29 April 1892. Innocent little raja, how could he know undercurrent politics and his position. Under the British Raj, being regency was just a symbolic representation, a nominal head to fool the indigenous public and place them under colonial surveillance forever. As per already setup plan, Political Agent Maxwell brought administration of Manipur under his control and at the same time abolished centuries old ‘*Lallup*’ system, even misused it by British colonial power during protectorate period of Manipur. A notorious colonial system of tax was introduced in Manipur which triggered the political unrest and in long run schism between the hill and valley population. This new tax system implanted an idea of separate identity and entity of hill and valley. The subjects of the valley were to pay two kinds of taxes, house tax (₹2 p.a.) and land revenue tax (₹5 p.a.); where as the house tax (₹3 p.a.) was levied only in the hills.

The colonial power clearly defined what should be meaning of sovereignty of princely state under British paramountcy that the country’s sovereignty is limited within the “domestic

sovereignty” only beyond it the government of British India is the superior imperial power. Manipur was “reduced to the de facto status of puppet or virtually confined them within their own palaces,” Michael Fisher vividly defined the status of this princely state.¹⁰ Under the British paramouncy, the Manipur became a princely state of “distinct subordination.”

Establishment of New Durbar: Interference in Internal Administration

Since 1895 the princely state of Manipur was under the regency of Political Agent of Manipur as the minor raja Chura Chand had sent to the Mayo College of Ajmere to nurture all the essential qualities and characters to be one of the Rajas of the British paramountcy (paramouncy vis-a-vis the Princely States of India). After six years in 1901, raja Chura Chand was brought back to Manipur trained under Political Agent and after a year Captain JR Nuttall of the 44th Gurkha Rifles tutored him. On 9 April 1907, the “Set of Rules” was approved by the Judicial Department of the Government of Eastern Bengal and Assam and officially named it as “Rules for the Management of Manipur State.” It was on establishment of new durbar and main features in this were such as, the Durbar will carry out the administration of the state and the highest criminal as well, which means that durbar will assist raja in the administration of the state. Whereas the armed state police should be under the direct charge of Raja. The Gazetteer officers shall be appointed under the British civil service system. Manipuri

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members of Durbar will be appointed on recommendation of Political Agent and Raja. British subjects will be solely under the jurisdiction of the PA. According to the tradition of the princely states of India, a raja must have a durbar for administration, but it was not available in Manipur as the native Durbar was disbanded after the Anglo-Manipur war of 1891. From 1891 to 1907, the Political Agent administered and looked after the state in absence of minor raja. These were serious arrangement of British colonial power to fully control Manipur from every perspective before handed over the power and coronation of Chura Chand.

On 15 May 1907, Manipur State Durbar (a form of royal court) was established to assist him in administration when he stepped in as a full-fledged raja and handed over the responsibility for the administration of Manipur from his regent (Political Agent). On this very day, he received an ordinance so called “set of rules” to be used in conducting the Durbar of Manipur. In this newly established durbar, raja Chura Chand held the post of President of the Durbar for two years (1907-1909) and one ICS was appointed as the Vice President of Durbar. The hill administration was excluded from the jurisdiction of the Manipur State Durbar and fell under the Vice President in March 1908 (an Assam appointee).¹¹

“Within this political paramounter, the administrative, executive, policy-making and judicial functions were performed by a new institution known as the Durbar from 1907 to 1947.”¹²

In fact, he was unhappy with

In 1904, three major fires broke out in three government buildings within 5 months (March 15 at the Assistant Superintendent of State’s bungalow, July 6 at the main women’s market at Khwairamband, and August 4 at the recently purchased bungalow) forcing PA of Manipur suspicion on Meitei agitators, although he had no evidences. With this frustration and ego for power, Maxwell reinstated the Lallup system, which had been abolished by his order in 1892

sarcastic features in the “set of rules” in which all administrative matters and financial functions were still not yet transferred from Political Agent. Knowing unhealthy atmosphere, Col J. Shakespeare, P.A. (1905-08, 1909-14) informed the situation to the authority, later in 1910 the authority, after submission of a series of requests, finally revised the “set of rules” the responsibility of the state (administration) had transferred from durbar to raja and the raja now had the power to appoint the ordinary and additional members of the durbar, and so on. In 1916 the raja vacated the position of the President of Durbar to an English ICS officer (also known as the Assistant Political Agent)¹³, though he continued to be responsible for the administration of the state assisted by the Durbar.

Public Resistance Movements (1900-1947)

Various forms of resistance movements against colonial power controlled princely state government started from Nupilal of 1904 to Mahasabha movements.

Nupi Lan: Women Agitations (1904 and 1939)

The women of valley challenge

the state in two phases, pointing out the bad governance and continue to push the state using non-violence methods until achieved their demands. These two Nupilals were not based on gender issue rather on social and economic causes of the state. Interestingly, women leaders of these two movements welcomed the discussion and advise from the male freedom strugglers, but while challenging the state, they marched and fought alone. Their organizational skills, political awareness, leadership quality, bargaining skill, and debating skills compelled the British colonial power to fulfill the demand in some way or other. The origin of the first Nupilal of 1904 in response to British.

In 1904, three major fires broke out in three government buildings within 5 months (March 15 at the Assistant Superintendent of State’s bungalow, July 6 at the main women’s market at Khwairamband, and August 4 at the recently purchased bungalow) forcing PA of Manipur suspicion on Meitei agitators, although he had no evidences. With this frustration and ego for power, Maxwell reinstated the *Lallup* system, which had been abolished by his order in 1892; and gave orders to the male subjects of Imphal valley

to come forward, collect the timber from Burma and rebuild the building at no cost. Women took this order as a challenge to the pride of family and society as well, so on 5 October 1904 about 3000 women encircled the residence of P.A. Maxwell and later 2000 above number of women and joined the agitation. Maxwell could not convince them so easily; he employed 30 additional armed forces and in the end there was scuffles. Although women agitators were dispersed that day, they continued their movements in the following days by boycotting the markets.

With his promise to get to the bottom of the matter again, the agitators finally agreed to go back, otherwise things could turn out differently. The agitation continued to boycott the market -women's markets were shut down -questioned the state's use of armed forces by the state against the unarmed women agitators for the civil rights and at the same time pressurizing the British authorities to stop mandating men to provide free service to build their bungalow and collect timber from Burma. Ultimately the government withdrew the temporarily launched *lallup* and resolved the matter.

The Second Nupi Lan of 1939

Again in 1939, Manipuri women came out at the front on the issue of rice scarcity due to poor governance. The World War II started in 1939 and the British Empire gave primary focus on this affair not on local affairs of Manipur. Excessive rainfall (July-August) and hailstorms (November) destroyed the

kharif crops especially rice in 1939 Manipur. In anticipation of natural calamities on 13 September 1939, the Durbar resolved to discontinue export the rice from Manipur. But Maharaja asked to continue rice supply to the Assam Rifles in Kohima and the Sadiya Hills. After ten days (23 September 1939), in the Durbar meeting, the board declined all the rice export business proposals from individuals, but allowed to continue the rice to the Kohima civil station considering the suggestion from the Political Agent.

When food scarcity situation was emerged in October and November months, on 9 November 1939 the Durbar rolled back all welfare measure to discontinue rice export rather export was resumed from 24 November 1939 with permission from raja. Some sources said that the durbar and the king changed their previous decision due to pressure from the British colonial power and Marwari traders. After the durbar resolution to open the rice export ban, the Marwari traders resumed their rice business and the helpless peasants sold their rice as they had no alternative source of income, despite knowing that they would face food problems in the near future. Besides this, in the 1930s, the state had been facing so many issues such as force guard duties for colonial officials, relaunch of *Amin Senkhai*, radical religious discriminations in the valley, Chura Chand's unaccountable expenditure and irresponsible behaviour and so on. The excitement began at the women's market first; small rice vendors in the Khwairamband

women's bazaar were unable to get enough rice to run their business which helps keep the kitchen fire lit. In the first week of December 1939, women began blocking the bullock carts that were carrying rice for sale to the Marwari rice merchants. On 12 December 1939, thousands of women marched first to the Political Agent's bungalow¹⁴ and then approached the Durbar and ceased the campus and detained the President of Durbar, T.A. Sharpe.

Women leaders systematically pressured him to discontinue exporting rice and to repeal the rice export orders with immediate effect. The president (T.A. Sharpe) tried to siphon off the matter for the time being but women agitators and their leaders did not give up and urged T.A. Sharpe to act on their demand immediately. Around 3000 women also joined the agitation at Telegraph office on that day. Knowing the situation, P.A. Grimson, from his field, wired Bulfield to use forces to control the situation. Bulfield led forces and unarmed women fought on this faithful. Though many women were injured they did not retreat from there. That night the President of Durbar together with women agitators waited for the response of the Maharaja (who was in Nabadwip at that time) and in the afternoon of 13 December 1939, they received the Maharaja's order to P.A. to discontinue the rice export and P.A. Grimson also (came back from tour) issued an order to banning rice export on the early morning of 14 December 1939. On 15 December 1939, an emergency durbar session was held and a formal official order

to stop the export rice was issued. During this un-armed agitation, many women were killed and injured by colonial forces. This women's movement lasted for months but eventually subsided as the effects of WW-II.

Excitements in the Hills The Kuki Uprising (1917-1919)

In addition to chronic anguishes from the emergence of *lambus*, the introduction of the house tax, and the *pothang* system, the immediate reason for the armed uprising of the Kukis was the constant pressure from the British paramount power to recruit a second labour corps to be sent to the front of the World War I. Maharaja failed to put more pressure on them, which ultimately led to outbreak of the Kuki Uprising in 1917. After the Kuki uprising (1917-1919), a new system of government was adopted in the hills; and it was divided into three subdivisions (Churachandpur, Tameglong and Ukhrul) each headed by an officer from the neighbouring Government of Assam.¹⁶ In fact, it was a powerful blow to the British imperial power, which was expected to receive from the hill dwellers in collective form. Please note that since the first phase of the establishment of the new Manipur State Durbar, the hills terrains was administered separately under the Vice-President of Durbar. This colonial error was the by-product of a lack of knowledge of the underlying Southeast Asian political dynamics and the cultural and political ties between hill and valley dwellers over the centuries. The primary objective of British Raj was to destroy the

Jadonang, a messianic leader, from the Rongmei community started a socio-religious movement in the Barak hill ranges and in the foothills of the Manipur valley in the second half of the 1920s. He began his public service as a medicine-man, using various methods to heal people with physical and mental ailments. He toured the Zeme, Laingmei, and Rongmei inhabited areas in Manipur and Assam

power, grandeur and control area of raja of Manipur in post 1891 and to measure the cultural ties between hill and valley using the current religious differences. Apparently, their convenience and accessibility were more important than any other reasons.

The Zeliangrong Movement (1927-32)

Jadonang, a messianic leader, from the Rongmei community started a socio-religious movement in the Barak hill ranges and in the foothills of the Manipur valley in the second half of the 1920s. He began his public service as a medicine-man, using various methods to heal people with physical and mental ailments. He toured the Zeme, Laingmei, and Rongmei inhabited areas in Manipur and Assam. Like the Kukis, who suffered from colonial oppression, the Zeliangrong community faced more or less the same causes. He conceived the Zeliangrong union's idea of developing an established belief system so that it could encounter the spread of the Christian religion and the colonial unrests in their region. In the 1920s he successfully structured his school of religious school and began to internalize the essence of Zeliangrong identity and their assimilated world view. At the same time, he was influenced

by the philosophy of Mahatama Gandhi's non-violence and non-cooperation movement. He kept trying to meet Mahatama Gandhi, but failed because of his last-minute withdrawal of civil disobedience in Silchar and he was never allowed to enter Manipur princely state. Knowing the popularity of Jadonang and the possible outcome of his identity movement in Manipur, Cachar and the Naga Hills, the colonial power deliberately misrepresented him as an armed militia and murderer of four Meitei businessmen at Kambironas his religious school had still maintained headhunting practices like their ancestors. He was arrested in Silchar, deported to Manipur, tried and sentenced to capital punishment. He was hanged in Imphal on 29 August 1931.

Jadonang's lieutenant, (Rani) Gaidinliu, felt that Manipur was an unsafe place for her to continue her mentor's dream. She fled to the Zeme inhabited area of Cachar to spread the Zeliangrong socio-religious movement and later her Heraka movement became a popular religious movement. Now the suspicious British, decided to destroy her led movement as they had done with Jadonang. Colonial forces began hunting her, on 19 October 1932 she was captured at Pulomiby

a large colonial armed forces led by Captain Macdonald and sent her to Imphal. At the trial, the colonial court found her guilty, and sentenced her to life imprisonment. She spent 14 years in various jails for socio-religious non-cooperation movement against the British Raj.

The Nikhil (Hindu) Manipuri Mahasabha (NHMM)

On 30 May 1934 the Nikhil Hindu Manipuri Mahasabha, a Hindu cultural organization, was first launched in Imphal under the presidentship of Maharaja Chura Chand, taking the model of the Akhil Bharatiya Hindu Mahasabha. The second and third sessions of the NHMM took place in Terapur (Silchar) and Mandalay (Myanmar) respectively. Some have misinterpreted the NHMM's sermons about the Hindu welfare state. In the truest sense, the NHMM was founded with an ideology to develop a pan-Manipuri identity welcoming the Manipuris (Hindus) diaspora from different parts of Indian subcontinent and Myanmar. Around 400 Manipuri from Cachar, Assam, Tripura, Bangladesh, and Myanmar came and attended in the sabhas. Maharaja became the symbolic representation in the development

of Manipuri nationality. Working together to promote and protect Manipuri indigenous social and culture identity including indigenous martial arts, fostering pride in being a Manipuri and sharing the experiences and thoughts to increase the momentum of oneness are some of the fundamental resolutions of those sessions of NHMM. The leaders so smartly mark the plans by organizing the session in three different main areas where Meitei is have been settled for centuries. Here the meaning of Hindu has an inclusive and cultural rather than religious tone, as the majority of the Meitei population who settled in Assam, Myanmar and Cachar were Hindus.

The Birth of Nikhil Manipuri Mahasabha (NMM)

In December 1938, the fourth NHMM session (Chinga session), Maharaja Chura Chand was absent. The vice president of NHMM chaired the session and resolved to drop the word "Hindu" and rechristened it as Nikhil Manipuri Mahasabha. Knowing that Maharaja was incapable of functioning his durbar, being too dependent on colonial authority and at the same time always travelling outside his state and using the state revenue irresponsibly, the

majority of the members felt that the aims of Mahasabha would be fulfilled under his leadership. The session elected Irabot as the new president of Nikhil Manipuri Mahasabha. This NMM was moving towards the direction of political movement than seeking cultural affinities under his leadership. Now, NMM had proposed to the government to establish a common administrative system for both the hills and valley of the state and also called on the government to set up a Legislative Council based on a representative form of government elected by adult franchise. In few months, the NMM declared itself as a political organization and requested government employees, who were the members of NMM, to resign from the organization. Irabot talk about a responsible government. In 1939, there was a schism within the NMM, a splinter group called Praja Sanmelani under the leadership of Irabot was emerged and supported the Nupilan of 1939, though other group of NMM did not join it.

An interesting fact of the Chinga session was that Maharaja Chura Chand was unhappy with Irabot's decision to conduct the NHMM session without him. Thus, in the future, a conflict arose between these two. In early 1939, before Irabot left the NMM, he put pressure on the Manipur State Durbar to produce a new reform plan, but Maharaja failed to submit produce even a draft of it. In January 1940, under Praja Sanmelani, Irabot called on the public through public meetings to join his political movement against the feudal administrative system. He, along

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with his followers valorously fought for the right of a Brahmin woman who was physically assaulted by a police officer. He was arrested, sentenced to three years imprisonment and deported to the Sylhet jail.

INA in Manipur: Contribution of the People of Manipur

Manipur and Nagaland endured a rough patch during World War II as the Allies attempted to defend the Indian subcontinent from the combined forces of the Axis and Indian National Army who were attempting to oust British power from Indian soil in 1944. In Imphal and Kohima fronts thousands of Indian National Army sacrificed their lives for India's independence. Around 20,000 INA soldiers lost their lives in Manipur war front. Despite of all these significant contributions by our Indian freedom fighters in this war, I would like place more emphasis on the contribution of Manipuris in the INA led freedom movement.

Before the combine Indo-Japanese force reached Manipur, Netaji sent an appeal letter to Indians (including Manipuri people) and Indian National Congress workers,¹⁷ to support and join the INA led freedom struggle once it reaches Manipur. The hero who brought the message from Chamol (INA advance Base Camp) regarding the coming of a powerful INA force was none other than Lungdam Kuki. In Manipur, there was no INC party but Nikhil Manipuri Mahasabha welcomed his appeal. Around 200 Manipuri had joined the INA movement.

The INA along with the

The INA along with the Japanese forces reached Manipur on 18th March 1944 and the Gandhi Brigade (Tamu-Pallel side), the Subhash Brigade (towards Kohima Nagaland), and Azad Brigade were approaching from different directions. Another combined force, advancing from the Tiddim (Chin Hills) front, captured the British camps at Zezo, then pushed Allied forces back to Thingangphai, Chura Chandpur, and then defeated the enemy again at Toronglaobi

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Singh, and 4) M. Koireng Singh. Thirteen members of NMM from Imphal and Nambolnamely, 1) Th. Angou Singh, 2) P. Tomal Singh, 3) S. Ibohal Singh, 4) I. Tombi Singh, 5) L. Bijoy Singh, 6) L. Kanhai Singh, 7) M. Jatra Singh, 8) W. Gyaneshwaor Singh and his wife 9) Keinya Devi 10) M. Amuba Singh, 11) M. Randhoni Devi wife of M. Amuba Singh, 12) L. Irabot Singh, 13) Kh. Jugeshwar Singh went to Moirang and joined the intelligence wing of INA. In the second fortnight of July 1944, the combined forces of Japanese and INA started retreating towards Myanmar. On 20 July 1944, all those Manipuri who were working as intelligence staffs in INA forces were leaving for Rangoon as the British colonial power were after them. After a long hardship journey they reached Rangoon on 16 September 1944 and they, along with their commander Col. Malik, met Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose. Under Netaji, they (Manipuris) were all involved in preparing for the second phase of the armed independence movement. Three of them enlisted in the armed wing; two women INA fighters were transferred from their previous position to the Jhansi Rani Regiment; and the rest were attached to the intelligence

group.²⁰

However, regarding the contribution of the people of Manipur in the INA led freedom struggle, the Kukis and Meiteis played a major role from various angles. Kukis were the first group of people of Manipur to welcome the INA forces at the Manipur-Myanmar border. As many as 100 of Kuki people were enlisted into the Indo-Japanese forces and fought valiantly for liberation from colonial oppression. In 1943-44, some 32 Meiteis working in Burma volunteered under L. Guno Singh to be enlisted into the Indo-Japanese forces to work as an advance team in the war front. Thirteen of them were deployed to the Tamu-Pallel front to collect intelligence sources as an advance team. And the remaining nineteen²¹ out of 32 Meiteis had been deployed as an advance team in the Tiddim-Moirangline.

Towards Freedom of Manipur: Constitutional Reform Movement

In late 1930s, the resistance movements in the hills and series of popular movements led to emerge an inclusive democratic movement against the British paramountcy. Analysing the Indian national movement in

the British India and its political development, the NMM, Praja Sanmelani and many elites were looking forward for democratic and more responsible government questioning on value and essence of Manipur State Durbar.

During World War II, since 1938 the British Government of India had advised the Indian political parties, and the Chamber of Princes to work on a Constitution giving priority on democratic universal franchise government through the legislative assembly. The pressure hasn't arrived yet to Manipur till late 1946, perhaps considering the effects of WW-II in Manipur. After the death of Maharaja Chura Chand (in November 1941), Bodh Chandra was coronated in 1942 and in early 1947 Maharaja Bodh Chandra received pressure from the Governor of Assam, and the Chamber of Princes to work on shaping a new constitution and its constitutional assembly along the lines of the structure of the Interim Government of India (also known as the Provisional Government of India) formed on 2 September 1946.

Finally, in March 1947, Maharaja Bodh Chandra enacted the "Constitution Making Committee" of Manipur,

consisting of total 15 members: 5 each representative from plains and hills respectively and 5 from official side. The committee submitted the draft of Manipur state constitution within four months in July 1947 to the Maharaja of Manipur. Maharaja Bodh Chandra was unhappy with the points recommended by the "Constitution Making Committee," namely members shall be elected by universal franchise, and no space for inducting a nominated Chief Minister. Apparently, the committee was just following the instructions on model to be followed and sentiment of people. Maharaja procrastinated the schedule to hold constituent assembly elections till June 1948 probably on questions where the Maharaja power had gone.

The Manipur State Council (1 July to 14 August 1947): In the meantime, the Manipur State Administrative Rule was passed on 1 July 1947 and accordingly the Manipur State Council was established replacing the MSD. The Manipur State Administrative Rule was the reform constitution in which the features, namely, i) Chief Minister (previous President post of MSD), ii) 4 from valley and 2 from hills, total 6 ministers were nominated, iii) Maharaja designated as Maharaja in Council; were given. F.F. Pearson was the Chief Minister of Manipur.

The Interim Council (15 August 1947 to 26 November 1948): in the light interim council model, the interim council government was formed and it took charge from the State Council on 14 August 1947. The features of this interim council

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are: i) 2 officials, ii) 2 non officials iii) 2 nominees from hills. On 15 August 1947 M.K. CBarta was appointed as the Chief Minister of Manipur in the Interim Council.

The Constitutional Government of Manipur (26 November 1948- 15 October 1949): Now Maharaja Bodh Chandra realized that renaming and restructuring according to his desire could not delay and escape from establishment of democratic elected government with a written constitution Act. Therefore, the Maharaja Bodh Chandra accepted all the terms mentioned in the Manipur State Constitution Act, 1947, except nomination of Chief Minister. And Maharaja had issued an order in February 1948 for the implementation of the Constitution called Manipur State Constitutional Act, 1947. From 11 June 1948 to 27 July 1948, the election of State legislative assembly was conducted. As per Constitution, the total number elected member was 53 in number (30 from valley, 18 from hills, 3 from Muslim areas, and 1 each from commerce and education. The members of Popular Council of Ministers were: i) Chief Minister post was nominated post, ii) 4 ministers from valley, iii) 2 members from hills. On 26 November 1948, M.K. Priyo Bartawas sworn as the Chief Minister of Democratic constitutional government of Manipur. In the government, Maharaja was remained as nominal head of the state. Maharaja Bodh Chandra signed the Merger Agreement with India on 21 September 1949 and effective on 15 October 1949. On 26 November 1948,

the under Manipur Constitution Act of 1947, a democratic government was formed by universal franchise election process. Maharaja of Manipur as per agreement with officials, the Chief Minister was reserved for the nominee that was his brother M.K. Priyo Barta.

Discourse on the Colonial Dominance in the Administrative System of Manipur

The spread and existence of the British Raj in the Indian subcontinent from the second quarter of the 18th century is strongly linked to the role of Political Agent. Political Agent was a powerful colonial surveillance agent to know all possible states affairs of alliance states of India, extract and control sources, exert British dominance over native states, maintain speed and also smooth sailing of colonial power with imposition of colonial favour rule of laws with rhetoric propagandas.

The wartime alliance during the first Anglo-Burmese War cemented the relationship between Manipur and the Company and the latter installed the Political Agent under the treaty signed with Gambhir Singh. In weighing the value of Manipur at that time, they knew keeping Manipur on the Burmese front as an independent state would give the Company more security on the eastern front therefore in place of subsidiary alliance their relationship was protectorate state. From protectorate to princely state phase, the political Agent took multiple roles such as handling of succession affairs, establishment of offices, changes in economic policies, handling

the affairs of mapping and boundary issues, replacement of royal administration and judicial system with new colonial oriented system, division of hill and valley.

Throughout the journey of relations with the British empire, the power rajahs of Manipur had always been in the realm of confusion, whereas the power of the PA had increased over time. If we look at the political iridescence during the transition period from princely Manipur to integration with India (19-1949) in the sphere of power' i.e. MSD and Political Agent and, it is quite fascinating.

When the interim government in the Union of India began, elected leaders insisted that the princely states to give serious thought and enact a constitution for universal suffrage constitution; and not surprisingly this shook the spirit of the Maharaja of Manipur, knowing that this so-called reformation will destroy Maharaja's power in MSD and ultimately abolish it. Although, he formed the constitutional making committee in the form of positive response, he was reluctant to adopt the draft constitution. Maharaja's delaying tactic was rechristening of MSD as Manipur State Council (1 July 1947-14 July 1947) and then another restructure i.e. the Interim Council (15 August 1947 to 26 November 1948), and finally accepted the Manipur State Constitution Act of 1947 and launched the Constitutional government on 26 November 1948. Maharaja painfully and involuntarily diluted the MSD -under the Manipur State Council, he introduced the post of the Chief Minister instead of President

of MSD, but other posts were nominated, this act was carried out by mutual understanding with the paramount power. On 15 August 1947, with the end of British paramountcy, the Interim Council had begun, but by that time no picture of universal suffrage had emerged. Maharaja continued to negotiate with the position of Chief Minister for his own brother M.K. Priyo Barta because he wished to retain great power in the realm of the royal family, while he/Maharaja remained as the nominal head of the executive.

During India's interim period, there was a change in the position of Political Agent position, similar to the changes in Durbar. On 2 July 1947 the Dominant Agent was a post created to work as an agent of the Dominion of India/the Union of India and its main function was to manage the relationship between the Dominion of India and Manipur. The last Political Agent of Manipur (1946-47) C.P. Stewart was the first Dominant Agent of Manipur. In fact, the post was created by the interim government considering the future plan that will place in the princely states. Within a month gap, on 15 August 1947, Deveshwar Sharma was appointed as the Dominion Agent

in India. Due some reasons he was removed from this post and at the same Dominant Agent post was also repeal.

The GOI proposed to allocate a place for the executive position of Dewan in Manipur, but the Maharaja initially refused because this executive official position was not provided in the Manipur Constitution Act of 1947. But later the matter was considered and M.K. Priyo Barta was nominated as Dewan of Manipur. And after a month, on 18 April 1949, the GOI imported General Rawat Amar Singh as the Dewan of Manipur. On 15 October 1949, the day Manipur was merged with the Union of India and the Dewan office was replaced by the Chief Commissioner of Manipur, it has since become the centrally administered area. The first Chief Commissioner of Manipur was General Rawat Amar Singh. This is a brief historical evolution of the post of the highest executive officer post Political Agent in the history of Manipur.

Manipur Merger with India: A Murky Phase in the History of Manipur

The merger phase, history of Manipur, with the Indian Union is a chaotic event, and indeed the narratives vary even within

the nationalist perspective as well. This domain remains a challenging work for a historian, as objectivity here always swings between two ends of nationalism. Historical narratives of Manipur's merger with India, by referring to Manipur of 1947-49(14 August 1947-14 October 1949) and its past, always turned out to be a murky affair from Manipuri perspectives in many aspects.

Under the dynamic leadership of Sadar Valabhai Patel, Menon and Sri Prakasa (Governor of Assam) had accomplished the mission of merging Manipur with India on 14 October 1949. V.P. Menon in his own work "The Story of Integration of the Indian States," narrate the integration of Manipur with India.

In view of its position as a border State and its undeveloped character, it was decided to take over Manipur as a Chief Commissioner's province. The merger agreement was signed by the Maharajah on 21 September and the State was taken over by the Government of India on 15 October 1948. The details of the Privy Purse and private properties of the Maharajah were settled by Sri Prakasa, then Governor of Assam, in consultation with the States Ministry.²²

The history of integrating princely states and shaping of today's India has had many mixed narratives and like them Manipur has its own narratives. Rather than discussing narratives on whether Maharaja was willingly signed the merger agreement or not, I prefer stress more on possible emotional issues of Manipuri with the process of merger agreement. The way V.P. Menon explains

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about the integration of Manipur, in his above mentioned book, can sense that the merger process was more mechanical than mutual respect and corporation. The GOI forcibly introduced Dewan and passed the power from the native Dewan (M.K. Priyo Barta) to the non-native person (General Rawat) as Dewan within a narrow time interval, which could be one of the factors for the lack of trust bond between two parties. But there are evidences that political parties were dissatisfied, namely NMM with Maharaja Bodh

Chandra's delaying politics with constitutional reforms and Maharaja Chura Chand's irresponsible nature in many socio-religious issues and economic crises. In the collective memory of the people of Manipur, they keep on asking the question.

Through two incidents, Manipur lost its inheritance to the Kabaw Valley: first, Manipur had no further right to claim or occupy it under the Kabaw Valley Treaty of 1834 and second, Manipur had no further right

to receive an indemnity for the Kabaw Valley from Burma since 1954 – after 120 years. What is the difference between political agents of the British colonial power and Pandit Nehru as Prime of Minister in their decisions about the Kabaw valley; perhaps this is one of the most common questions asked by the Manipuri people in post-independence India. Most importantly, the youths of Manipur have never failed to represent and contribute to India's pride in various fields. ●

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Dr. Chander Pal Singh

Integration of Travancore and Hyderabad

Travancore and Hyderabad had decided to establish themselves as free and sovereign states and also had declared this at about the same time. Their intent too, was the same. It was the soundness of mind of Sardar Patel that eliminated all the hurdles in the way of unification of these states

On 3 June 1947, Lord Mountbatten announced the decision of the British Government to relinquish power to India and Pakistan. On 11 June 1947, Sir C.P. Ramaswami Aiyar, the Diwan of Travancore announced that Travancore had decided to set itself up as an independent sovereign State. Next day, a similar statement was made on behalf of the Nizam of Hyderabad (*Menon 87*). The decision of Travancore and Hyderabad to become independent was based on the premise that with the end of the British rule in India, the British paramountcy over the Indian princely States will lapse, and as a result the States were free to choose independent status. Though both Travancore and Hyderabad had a similar motive for gaining independence, inherent reasons behind their posture were very different.

Travancore and Hyderabad were not the only states to harbour ambitions of becoming sovereign independent states. States like Kashmir, Bhopal, Indore, Jodhpur, Dholpur, Bharatpur, Bilaspur, Nabha also aspired the same. Ambitions of these states were boosted by the Cabinet Mission Plan of 16 May 1946 which stated that after the independence, the paramountcy could neither be retained by the British Government nor transferred to the new Indian Government leaving thereby a window of opportunity for

them. Besides, a section of the British bureaucracy especially the Political Department led by Sir Conrad Corfield, was busy encouraging the belligerent princes to look for options other than acceding to the new federal government. Needless to say, Jinnah also supported such princes. (*Menon 88*)

To deal with the question of States, a new department called States Department was created on 25 June 1947. Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel was made the minister of this department while V.P. Menon was made the secretary. The States department adopted the policy that initially the States should be asked to accede on three subjects - defence, external affairs and communications, to achieve the basic unity of India. Rest of the necessary details regarding the relations between the centre and states could be finalised after the Constitution was framed (*Menon 93*). Plan seemed workable because so far this had been the de facto arrangement between the States and the British India. But the challenge before Sardar Patel and his team was to implement the accession of the states before 15 August, the date of transfer of power, as after that date the paramountcy would cease to exist, giving the States a chance to exert their sovereignty thereby posing a threat to the unity and integrity of the nascent nation.

Travancore

Travancore, occupying the southernmost tip of the Indian subcontinent, was the State with most ancient unbroken lineage continuing from the times of the Cheras.. Having evolved a distinct culture and customs of its own, Travancore had also carved out a distinction for progressive administration - very well organised taxation system, elected legislature, and separate judiciary. It was far ahead of most States in literacy, and spent about a quarter of her revenues on education. Travancore was perhaps the most prosperous and richly endowed State with ample natural resources, well developed manufacturing sector and a robust maritime trade. It was the third most populous State in India after Hyderabad and Mysore (Jeffer 138). In 1750, Raja Martanda Varma, an illustrious King of Travancore dedicated the State to Sri Padmanabha, the family deity. Martanda Varma and his successors since then ruled the state as 'Dasas' (servants) of the Lord Padmanabha. Travancore became a subsidiary state of East India Company in 1795. But within a decade, Travancore was up in arms against the Company in the form of a revolt led by Velu Thampi (1765-1809), the Prime Minister of Travancore during the reign of Bala Rama Varma Kulasekhra Perumal. This revolt was one of the first instances of rebellion against the East India Company.

After the great revolt of 1857, hostility between the States and the British Government gave way to friendly relationship. States were now seen as breakwaters against the rising nationalism and

princes were now collaborators of the British power in India. Both British and Princely States had an aversion for activities of the activities of Indian National Congress and also revolutionaries because the States feared movements for democracy which the Congress promoted. Main goal of the Congress was to establish

responsible governments in the States although it was the strategy of the Congress leadership to avoid any direct intervention in the states' affairs till 1938.

During the 1940s, Travancore State Congress was specifically instructed by the Congress high command not to start a Satyagrah in the state. Sir C.P. Ramaswami



Courtesy: <https://educalingo.com/en/dic-en/travancore>

Iyer, one of the most prominent statesman of his time who was also an ardent patriot and Hindu social reformer was the Dewan of the state. But as far as the Congress was concerned, the State administration under Sir C.P. followed a severely repressive policy. Travancore Congress was not banned but the state made it impossible for Congressmen to hold even ordinary public meetings. There was a complete muzzling of press, arrests and conviction of Congress sympathisers. The Dewan made it clear that any civil disobedience or subversive activities against the states will not be tolerated. In January 1946, constitutional reforms were introduced by the Dewan but they failed to satisfy neither the Congress nor the Communists. Though adult franchise was introduced for elections to legislature, the executive was not bound to the decisions of legislature. Disgust against the State was further encouraged by the atmosphere created by INA trials and Royal Indian Navy revolt. But it were the Communists, not the Congress who attempted an insurrection against the state. A section of Congress aligned with Communists who organised a hasty uprising in 1946 which was brutally repressed resulting in death of hundreds of workers.

Travancore State Congress deplored the State government for the inhuman repression and also the Communists for being dictated by foreign forces. Implicit in the State Congress's stand was the understanding that any active movement against the state authority should be avoided on the eve of transfer of power by British to Indian hands (*Rangaswami 216*).

Coming to the drama which unfolded after the declaration of 3rd June plan, C.P. Ramaswami not only refused to send representatives of Travancore to the Constituent Assembly but also announced the intention of Travancore to remain independent after the transfer of power by the British Government.

Mahatma Gandhi called C.P. Ramaswami's declaration as "tantamount to a declaration of war against the free millions of India". (*Harijan, 29 June, 1947*). Travancore State Congress at once resumed its struggle against the State Government by organising spate of meetings and other activities defying the ban on political activities. It also threatened a campaign of direct action to begin from 1st August. There was a sharp exchange of words between Congress leaders and C.P. Ramaswami which in the opinion of V.P. Menon was detrimental to the situation.

State's response was to remove the ban on the Congress on one hand and on the other hand tried to manipulate the public opinion by controlling the press and engineering statements from retired government officials supporting the stance on independence. At the same time, Conservative Party members were in favour of Britain entering a new relationship with states desiring to become independent. Though His Majesty's Government through Prime Minister Attlee and Mountbatten's statements did desire that all Indian states should identify themselves with India or Pakistan, the official provisions in the Indian Independence Act of 1947 on the states remained vague.

Initially, C.P. Ramaswamy remained adamant about not signing instrument of accession. V.P. Menon has presented a detailed account of himself and Lord Mountbatten's interactions with the Dewan. Dewan's point of view was that Travancore being a maritime state, most of the state's income was derived from customs, import and export duties which it was not ready to share with the centre. He was worried that from being one of the most prosperous state, Travancore would be reduced to a fifth grade state if it acceded to the Indian union. He was alarmed by a proposal of the Union Consultative Committee of the Constituent Assembly to divert to the centre revenues from these heads. Menon tried to convince the Dewan that the accession plan had nothing to do with financial or other commitments. The accession was only about surrendering three subjects - defence, external affairs and communications; of which

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states never had any control during the British paramountcy. Dewan accepted that he was not fully aware about this approach. Menon also emphasised that transfer of power would be period of tricky transition which ought to be handled carefully in the best interests of states and the union. There was a danger that Communists, who had a strong presence in Travancore, might cause some serious mischief if the state remained aloof from India. C.P. Ramaswami was also requested not to take to heart the utterances of Congress leaders but to think in the best interests of Travancore and India. (*Menon 110-111*). Mountbatten also tried to convince him that accession of Travancore would be seen as a great act of statesmanship and would shape the future destinies of India. Initially, C.P. Ramaswami rescinded from his earlier stand of independence to an 'agreement' on three subjects rather than accession but this proposition was outrightly rejected by the States Department.

Things turned out for better on 21 July when after meeting with Mountbatten, the Dewan of Travancore agreed that accession was inevitable. He carried the copy of the Instrument of Accession with him to Travancore promising to be back on 27 July. Something significant happened during this meeting though the details are missing. Clues about what transpired in the 21 July meeting may be seen in 25 July meeting of Viceroy with the princes when Mountbatten warned the defiant princes that it would be better for them to sign the instrument of accession before 15 August because after that date terms would not be

Among the native states, Hyderabad enjoyed perhaps the most prominent place. Hyderabad was the largest among the native States in terms of population and revenue and second largest in area after Kashmir. In 1948, with about 16 million inhabitants, Hyderabad was as large as England and Scotland together (Lucian D Benichau, 7). About 86% of the population was Hindu, but the ruling class including the civil services, the police and the army, was predominantly Muslim

favourable for them. On 25 July, C.P. Ramaswami returned to Travancore where he was attacked by an assailant. Four days later, on 29 July 1947, Travancore ruler telegraphed to the Viceroy the decision of Travancore to join with the Indian union.

What finally led to the accession of Travancore? Were the Viceroy and States Department able to convince about the inevitability of the accession? Was it the Communist threat or the threat by the Congress about the proposed direct action plan? Or was it C.P. Ramaswami's personal decision to resist the accession? All these questions demand a serious study.

Hyderabad

Among the native states, Hyderabad enjoyed perhaps the most prominent place. Hyderabad was the largest among the native States in terms of population and revenue and second largest in area after Kashmir. In 1948, with about 16 million inhabitants, Hyderabad was as large as England and Scotland together (*Lucian D Benichau, 7*). About 86% of the population was Hindu, but the ruling class including the civil services, the police and the army, was predominantly Muslim. The rural areas were 95% Hindu in population who after two centuries of subjection

had become virtually servile and developed an underdog mentality. Hyderabad's size, resources and its pivotal location of being in the heart of India made its ruler the Nawab of Hyderabad to dream of a sovereign independent status as an Islamic country. Sardar Patel aptly called Hyderabad "a cancer in the belly of India". (*Munshi, 1*) Situation was further compounded by the fact that a sizeable part of the state was the centre of Communist activities who dreamed of creating a liberated zone in India, beginning with Hyderabad. An independent Hyderabad combined with the Communists had the potential of cutting off south India from the rest of India. Accession of Hyderabad was a great impasse which the Government of India had to solve and when all peaceful methods failed due to the state's nefarious designs, Government of India had to resort to a military takeover to protect the unity and integrity of the nation and also the life, property and honour of the Hindu population of the state.

State of Hyderabad was founded by Mir Qamruddin Chin Qilich Khan, later endowed with the titles of Nizam-ul-Mulk Feroz Jung and Asaf Jah, in the fading years of the Mughal Empire. During the course of Anglo-French rivalry for control

of Deccan, the Nizam vacillated between the two European powers before entering into subsidiary alliance with East India Company in 1798. As per the conditions of the subsidiary treaty, Nizam parted with a substantial part of his sovereignty by agreeing to pay the British for protection who also controlled his foreign relations, keeping a subsidiary British force and a British Resident at Hyderabad.

V.P. Menon has emphasised the point that despite its position as the premier state, Hyderabad was treated by the British no differently from other Indian states i.e. British regularly asserted and exercised their right of intervention in internal affairs of Hyderabad prior to 1947 (*Menon, 301*). Menon cites several example in this context. This point is significant because even before 1947, Nizam repeatedly made several attempts to assert his independence in internal matters. He was famously rebuked by Lord Reading in 1925 by asserting that the sovereignty of the British Crown was supreme in India and this independence existed independent of any treaty. The Viceroy emphatically pointed out that it was the right of British Government to intervene in the internal affairs of Indian states and that Nizam was in the

same category as that of rulers of other Indian states (*Menon, 302*). Sir William Barton, the then British Resident also made a valid point that Nizam's administration always remained a foreign entity and owing its existence to British Government in India. "Without the British, it must have relied on the handful of Muslims domiciled in the State... Left entirely to himself it is doubtful if the present Nizam would be able to maintain himself for any length of time" (*Menon, 370*).

Popularly known as 'the richest man in the world', Mir Osman Ali Shah, seventh ruler of the Asaf Jah's dynasty was the Nizam since 1911 during the fateful times of 1947-48. A highly eccentric person, Nizam was obsessed with money and power. It was generally known that anything which cost him money was unimaginable disaster. He rarely dressed in new clothes. He drove around in a thirty year old car. Grapevine had it that he never offered any hospitality to a guest lest it would involve some expenditure (*Munshi, 12*).

Seen in the light of the history of the Asafjah rule in Hyderabad, Nizam's attempt to maintain himself as a separate sovereign after the transfer of power was not backed by the facts on ground. In Menon's words, "Geographically,

culturally, economically and politically, Hyderabad had always been an integral part of India. No natural barriers separated the border areas, the population was completely homogeneous with the population of the surrounding Indian provinces, and the State had been entirely dependent upon India for its railways, its postal, telegraphic and telephonic services and its air communications. Economically, the state had never been an independent entity in any sense of the term, but had always been an integral part of India. This position, which had existed for over a century and a half, could not surely be wiped out overnight by a mere declaration of the British parliament with regard to the lapse of paramountcy." (*Menon, 369-370*)

Two indispensable accounts to study the Hyderabad issue are of V.P. Menon and K.M. Munshi, writing from different vantage points, two men were intricately associated with the deliberations, negotiations and developments leading to the accession of Hyderabad. While the former coordinated at the level of Government of India as Secretary of the newly created States Department, the latter was the Agent-General of the Government of India in Hyderabad from 5 January to 21 September 1948.

Soon after the announcement of the 3rd June plan, the Nizam issued a firman declaring that on 15 August he would be entitled to resume the status of an independent sovereign and no representatives from Hyderabad would be sent to the Constituent Assembly. On 11 July the Nizam sent a delegation

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to Delhi to meet the Viceroy. Mountbatten and Menon tried to convey to the delegation that accession to the Indian Union on three subjects without any financial commitment would be mutually advantageous. But the Hyderabad delegation was not ready to compromise on Nizam's sovereignty. Hyderabad also threatened that if Government of India pressed too hard, the Nizam might consider joining Pakistan. In subsequent meetings, it became clear that Hyderabad wanted a standstill agreement without signing the instrument of accession (*Menon, 304*). The Government of India found itself in a tricky situation, because it was evident that the deadline of 15 August would pass without the accession of Hyderabad. At the same time, Government of India did not wish to break-off negotiations with the Nizam.

Mountbatten was of the opinion that the reason behind Hyderabad's stubborn stand of not agreeing for accession was not the Nizam but the Muslim ruling elite which was bound to revolt should the Nizam decide to join the Indian Union. He was confident that Nizam will ultimately tame this elite and Hyderabad will ultimately join the Indian Union. Mountbatten was only partly right because he failed to gauge the deep rooted communal bias of Nizam against the Hindus. Much before Jinnah developed his concept of Pakistan, Nizam has come very near to realise his dream of making Hyderabad an Islamic State. He was able to push his 86% population i.e. Hindus of Hyderabad into impotence by keeping them out of the governing elite. Munshi reveals that Nizam also dreamt of the supreme glory

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of becoming the head of the Muslims world. To this end, he married his sons to the daughters of the ex-Sultan of Turkey to produce the future kings of a new Muslim empire out of the ashes of two great Muslim empires, the Ottoman Empire and the Mughal Empire.

To help realise the Nizam's dreams to become a sovereign independent monarch of an Islamic State of Hyderabad, fundamentalist Islamic elements founded Majlis-i-Ittehad-ul-Mussulmeen in 1926. Chief object of the Ittehad was to unite Muslims in the State in support of the Nizam and to reduce the Hindu majority by large scale conversions. Razakars were the paramilitary volunteer force of Ittehad. Their numbers swelled to about a hundred thousand in July-August 1948. Ittehad gradually grew into a powerful communal organisation for thwarting the political aspirations of Hindus and liberals Muslims. Organisational and political capacity of the Ittehad scaled a new height after Kasim Razvi became its president in 1946. Ittehad under Razvi made sure that no liberal statesman continued in office of any importance in the State. Ittehad effectively used its seven dailies, six weekly papers and Nizam's Radio in its psychological

war against India. Munshi, who came to know Razvi intimately during the course of his tenure as India's Agent-General in Hyderabad wrote, "he [*Razvi*] believed himself to be a heaven-appointed leader whose mission was to liberate the Muslims of the Deccan from the Indian Union" (*Munshi, 36*). Within less than a year Razvi succeeded in becoming an irresistible driving force in Hyderabad leading even the Nizam to the belief that his cherished dream was almost within his grasp.

In August 1947, the Nizam opened his cards further. In a letter to Mountbatten dated 8 August, the Nizam offered a treaty with India instead of accession. Hyderabad would conform to all India standards with regard to railways. Hyderabad would also contribute an agreed number of troops for defence of India. Hyderabad also gave a vague promise to conduct her foreign policy in conformity with the foreign policy of India. But these offers were qualified with three conditions: Hyderabad would remain neutral in the event of a war with Pakistan; Hyderabad should have the right to appoint her diplomatic agents wherever it thought fit; If India seceded from the British Commonwealth, Hyderabad would be free to

review the treaty.

As the crucial date of 15 August drew nearer, State Congress in Hyderabad started a popular movement to support accession of Hyderabad with Indian Union. The State Congress celebrated 7th August as 'join the Indian Union Day' across hundreds of places in the State and many Congressmen were arrested and crowds were lathi-charged. Swami Ramanand Tirtha, president of the Hyderabad State Congress was also arrested. Armed Rajakars actively helped police in the crackdown on Congressmen. In all about 9000 Congressmen courted arrest. But the grave reality remained that on 15 August, 1947, Hyderabad was still outside the Indian Dominion and this caused public anxiety in the country. Indian press pointed out that because of its geographical location in the heart of the country, Hyderabad could become a threat to national stability.

At this point of time, Nizam was making complex moves in Hyderabad. On one hand, Ittehad-ul-Muslimeen, led by Kasim Razvi, who also was the chief of Razakars, were pressurising those who were urging the Nizam to come as close to accession as was possible. On the other hand, the Nizam was adamant on not accepting 'Instrument of Accession' but was ready to sign a treaty which broadly covered the subjects mentioned in the instrument of accession. But Sardar Patel was very clear that any variation in the Instruments of Accession or in the arrangements related to state's association with the Dominion of India would put Government of India in a very awkward situation vis-a-vis the states who had already signed the

Instruments. It would also give an impression that Government of India could be forced to extract benefits not available to those states who had already joined the Dominion. Sardar wanted a referendum of the subject people of Hyderabad on the issue of accession. He said he would accept whatever might be the result of such a referendum. But Nizam outrightly rejected the offer of referendum.

At the same time, Hyderabad was preparing for a showdown by increasing its military capabilities. It placed a big order for arms and ammunition from Czechoslovakia. When questioned by Mountbatten, representative of Hyderabad gave a vague answer to this breach of faith by Hyderabad. On 18 September, 1947, Nizam wrote to Mountbatten that accession would lead to communal disturbance and bloodshed in Hyderabad meaning thereby that Muslims of Hyderabad would not tolerate it. Same plea had been given by Bhopal and Rampur before they acceded.

Soon after, Hyderabad stiffened its stand; it was no longer willing to even discuss the question of accession. Nizam also demanded withdrawal of Indian troops from the territory of Hyderabad. Not only that, Hyderabad cancelled V.P. Menon's visit to Hyderabad at the last minute. Sir Walter Monckton, the constitutional advisor to the Nizam, who was also a part of Hyderabad delegations to Delhi, attributed this sudden hardening of stand to influence of Pakistan. But clearly, the growing influence of Ittehad-ul-Muslimeen under the leadership of Kasim Razvi was now dictating the Hyderabad

policy.

Despite Hyderabad clearly backing off from accession, negotiations resumed in October. For Government of India, because of the prevailing political and communal situation in the country and precarious position of the Hindus vis a vis the Rajakars, breaking off negotiations with Hyderabad could not be afforded. According to Menon, it was now decided that the 'accession' being unacceptable to the Nawab, the substance of accession should be extracted by a Standstill Agreement to get some breathing-time. It would also get Hyderabad committed to not accede to Pakistan. Sardar Patel reluctantly agreed to it saying sometimes one has to accept the second best option in politics.

Initially, the draft of the Standstill Agreement prepared by Hyderabad could not be agreed to by the Government of India. Sardar Patel was of the view that rather than accept the agreement drafted by Hyderabad, negotiations should be broken off. But Mountbatten wanted the negotiations to go on. He asked Menon to prepare a draft of Standstill Agreement (without accession) and Collateral letter acceptable to Government of India. These drafts were taken by the Hyderabad delegation to get signatures of the Nizam. In Hyderabad, the documents were put before the Executive Council for advice. Executive Council voted in favour of accepting the agreement. Nizam formally approved the decision of the Executive Council but kept delaying his signatures on the document. Meanwhile, Ittehad-ul-Muslimeen was able to prevent the delegation from returning to

Delhi with the agreement. Kasim Razvi called for rejecting the agreement and for fresh negotiations. He felt that since Indian union was faced with the Kashmir situation as tribal invasion of Kashmir backed by Pakistani forces had started on 23rd October 1947, it could not say no to Hyderabad's demands. Razvi also called for a new delegation. Old delegation resigned and new delegation was chosen. All this happened with the tacit consent of the Nizam. Nizam also wrote a letter to Mountbatten that if the negotiations with the Government of India were to breakdown, Hyderabad would immediately negotiate and conclude an agreement with Pakistan.

Sardar Patel was greatly annoyed by the developments. In his opinion, the new delegation from Hyderabad should be immediately sent back. Mountbatten was also very upset but he was still in favour of continuance of negotiations. Delegation was told that Government of India cannot discuss old proposals and the agreement previously accepted by both parties should either be accepted in toto or rejected altogether. Delegation couldn't achieve anything and returned. But Kasim Razvi's influence continued to grow as now all members of the Executive Council were his appointees. Thus the Hyderabad Government virtually came under the control of Razvi.

Hard stand taken by the Government of India bore fruit and ultimately both the Standstill Agreement and the Collateral Letter were signed by the Nizam on 29 November 1947. Standstill Agreement consisted of five

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articles:

1. Until new administrative arrangements and agreements are made, all the previous arrangements and agreements on matters of common concern including defence, external affairs and communications as existed before the transfer of power would continue. The only difference was that Government of India could not send or station troops in the State except in time of war.
2. Government of India and Hyderabad agreed to appoint their political agents in Hyderabad and Delhi respectively.
3. Government of India would not exercise any paramountcy functions in their relations with Hyderabad.
4. Any dispute arising out of the Agreement would be referred to mutually agreed arbitrators.
5. Agreement would come in to force immediately and would stay for a period of one year.

Agreement was accompanied by a Collateral letter from the Nizam wherein he emphasised that suspension of the sovereignty was very much temporary. Nizam also raised several unresolved issues such diplomatic and trade representation of Hyderabad in foreign countries, return of residencies, issue of supply of

arms and ammunition to the state, withdrawn of Indian troops, return of cantonments and continuance of his rights in regard to currency, and postal rights and so on.

According to Menon, Nizam also gave a secret undertaking to Mountbatten, promising not to accede to Pakistan. Nizam's undertaking contained two conditions: Nizam will be at liberty to reconsider the Agreement if Indian Union decides to secede from the Commonwealth; and in the event of a war between India and Pakistan, Nizam will remain neutral.

On 29 November Sardar Patel laid the Agreement and letters on the table of Constituent Assembly which was then functioning as Parliament. Sardar on this occasion underlined that Government of India appreciated the internal difficulties of Hyderabad and that it was the policy of the Government was not of coercion but of securing maximum goodwill of both sides. But the reality was altogether very different. Different stakeholders saw different ends in the Agreement. As Menon has noted in his memoirs, Nizam saw it as an opportunity for withdrawal of Indian troops from Hyderabad and subsequent position of strength from where independence could be asserted, Nehru saw communal

peace for a year in Hyderabad, and Mountbatten hoped that Agreement would pave way for amicable accession on part of Hyderabad. Only the realism of Sardar Patel could penetrate the camouflage of Nizam and realise what Hyderabad was up to. As far as the real significance of the Agreement for the future developments was concerned, Campbell-Johnson, Mountbatten's attache noted, "the Nizam has succeeded only in completely forfeiting whatever reserve of confidence the Government of India - and Patel in particular - had in him" (*Benichou 193*).

As part of the Stand still Agreement, K.M. Munshi was appointed as Agent General in Hyderabad. Munshi has written a graphic account of his eventful tenure. Nizam's government tried to make life difficult for Munshi and he was made virtually a prisoner in his own house. Nizam's Government started pressing for speedy withdrawal of Indian troops and demanded supply of arms and ammunition for Hyderabad army. Hyderabad declared that Indian currency was not a legal tender in the state. They also banned export of precious metals to India. Hyderabad also advanced a loan of 20 crore rupees to Pakistan in

the form of Government of India securities and appointed a Public Relations Officer in Karachi. All these were gross violations of the Standstill Agreement. At the same time Hyderabad complained about constant bad press in Indian media against the state and obstruction of their foreign trade. Moreover there were alarming reports of persecution and even killings of Hindus by Rajakars whose activities were increasing day by day. Rajakars were being projected as liberators of Muslims. Patel asked his officials to be ready for all eventualities, but before he could take some definite action he had a heart attack and so remained out of action for some weeks.

A letter from Government of India containing a detailed list of breaches of Standstill Agreement including demand for banning Rajakars and Ittehad -ul-Muslimeen was presented to Laik Ali through K.M. Munshi on 26 March. Laik Ali, the Prime Minister of Hyderanad, defiantly told Munshi that the Nizam and Muslims of Hyderabad were prepared for martyrdom rather than accession. Nizam's advisers had assured him that Hyderabad would be able to bear any economic blockade by India for some months during which public opinion around the world could

be mobilised in their favour. They were also sure of support of Muslim countries who would not permit any Indian military action. Furthermore they assumed that India was not strong enough to undertake any military action at that point of time.

In response to the above letter, Hyderabad's letter to Nehru was full of evasive replies and countercharges. India was accused of tightening up of economic blockade of Hyderabad, Indian Union was also charged with propaganda war through newspapers and radio, and troop concentration and armed incursions into Hyderabad territory by the Indian army. Letter concluded that arbitration as provided in the Standstill agreement was the only course of action left.

More than the defiant countercharges, the Government of India was perturbed over the activities of Rajakars and their chief Kasim Razvi. On 31 March, Kasim Razvi had delivered a very disturbing speech. Razvi in his speech 'urged the Muslims of Hyderabad not to sheathe their swords until their objective of islamic supremacy had been achieved.' He exhorted them to march forward with the Koran in one hand and the sword in the other to hound out the enemy. But the most sinister part of the speech was his declaration that 'the forty five million Muslims in the Indian Union would be our fifth columnists in any showdown.' (*Menon 334*). In another speech on 12 April, he boasted that "the day is not far-off when the waves of the Bay of Bengal will be washing the feet of our Sovereign". Kasim Raja went as far as to say that he would

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plant Asafjahi flag on Red Fort in Delhi (*Menon, 336*). As a result of the activities of the Rajakars and their chief there was great panic among the Hindus of the state and exodus started. On part of the Government of India strong messages were repeatedly given to Hyderabad to control Razvi and his outfit but representatives of the State either denied the charges or kept giving evasive replies and sometime justified the insane activities. Sardar Patel, for whom the situation was becoming unbearable, did not mince words when he confronted Mir Laik Ali:

“you know as well as I do where power resides and with whom the fate of the negotiations must finally live in Hyderabad... if that is the position, then it seriously undermines the whole future of the Nizam and his Dynasty... the Hyderabad problem will have to be settled as has been done in the case of other states. No other way is possible. We cannot agree to the continuance of an isolated spot which would destroy the very union which we have built up with our blood and toil, we do wish to maintain friendly relations and to seek a friendly solution... If its demand to maintain an independent status is persisted in, it is bound to fail.” (*Menon 338*)

By the end of April 1948, when the Razakars' menace was broadening out onto a serious national danger for India, the Nizam's Government compounded problems for India by lifting the ban on Communists, another formidable anti-India force. Soon Razakars and Communists reached a tacit understanding and synergised their tactics and operations. Communist Party of Hyderabad

By the end of April 1948, when the Razakars' menace was broadening out onto a serious national danger for India, the Nizam's Government compounded problems for India by lifting the ban on Communists, another formidable anti-India force. Soon Razakars and Communists reached a tacit understanding and synergised their tactics and operations. Communist Party of Hyderabad was quick to denounce the Indian efforts towards accession of Hyderabad and also criticised the call for responsible government in the State

was quick to denounce the Indian efforts towards accession of Hyderabad and also criticised the call for responsible government in the State. Communists who had gone underground in India moved about freely in Hyderabad. As a result of the informal Razakar-Communist alliance, situation in Indian border districts adjoining the Hyderabad territory increased and situation became very grave (*Munshi, 153-55*). Communists were now bold enough to boast that three thousand villages had been liberated.

Meanwhile, Lord Mountbatten, Nehru and Menon had intensive discussions with Sir Walter Moncton and arrived at a four-point programme. These four points called Nizam's agreement and action on immediate steps to bring the Razakars under control by banning their activities, release of imprisoned congress state leaders, immediate reconstruction of the existing government to make it representative of all communities, the formation of a constituent assembly by the end of the year and an early introduction of responsible government in the state.

The story from here onwards is again a repeat of protracted negotiations with Hyderabad making irrelevant and

exasperated changes followed by the request of Nizam for further modifications or putting up a new excuse. Hyderabad were least inclined to move in the direction of accession and establishing responsible government, the two main objects of the government of India. Sardar saw through the game clearly: Hyderabad was not interested in implementing the standstill agreement, Nizam didn't try to control the activities of Razakars or perhaps did not want to and even if wanted to the power of Kasim Raja was such that he did not dare to. Hindu population, both in and on the boundaries of the State was living in fear and Kasim Razvi and Nizam wanted to blackmail India against contemplating any military action as Sardar told Laik Ali, “ [Kasim Razvi] has categorically stated that if the Indian Dominion comes to Hyderabad it will find nothing but the bones and ashes of one and a half crores of Hindus” (*Menon 338*). In reality, the Nizam was using the breather provided by the Standstill Agreement in its favour for preparing for independence. But Sardar, from the beginning, was in favour of treating Hyderabad at par with other states and not giving much scope for manipulation to Nizam.

“he was deeply disappointed that even after so much profitless discussion with so many Hyderabad delegations we should still be thinking of producing formulas for their acceptance. He referred to the Razakars who had perpetrated crime upon crime in the villages in our territory. He felt most strongly that a stage had been reached when we should tell the Nizam quite frankly that nothing short of an qualified acceptance of expression and of the introduction of undiluted responsible government would be acceptable to the government of India. Sardar said that it was useless to waste any more time” (*Menon 344-45*)

Sardar sent his opinion to Mountbatten and Nehru in writing. But Mountbatten personally requested the Sardar to give him one more chance to settle the Hyderabad issue before he left India on 21 June.

On 14 June, a day after meeting Sardar Patel, Lord Mountbatten again met the Hyderabad delegation. The delegation now asked for four more amendments to the draft Heads of Agreement. On the same night Cabinet approved them in the interest of peace and of reaching a settlement. Delegation wanted to settle further demands but was sent to Hyderabad to get signature on the agreement as no further concessions could be given. Nizam then asked for four more amendments and refused to accept the final draft in its present form. On the evening of 17 June Nehru held a press conference wherein he declared that no further negotiations with Hyderabad will be undertaken but the door will be kept open for the Nizam to accept the agreement whenever he

wishes. Munshi who was keenly following the developments hit the nail on its head, “negotiations and Laik Ali’s acceptance of draft agreements, from time to time, were a device to kill time till Lord Mountbatten left India. For, if they broke with him, a brat with Sir Walter Monckton would follow and the Ittehad did not want to convert any of them into enemies”. (*Munshi 175*)

Extremely disappointed by breakdown of negotiations with Hyderabad and having failed to negotiate a final settlement, Lord Mountbatten left India on 24 June 1948 and was succeeded by C. Rajgopalachari as the Governor-General. With Mountbatten gone there were very few left in Delhi who were not convinced that Nizam and Laik Ali cabinet, under the control of Rajakars will never agree to accession and responsible government, the two main agendas on the table. Sardar saw a silver lining in Mountbatten’s exit. Standstill “agreement has gone to England”, he told Munshi (*Munshi 177*). But Nizam and his advisors were still convinced that with war in Kashmir and bagful of problems bogging down the Indian Government, India will not resort to military action. Moreover, world opinion will also favour Hyderabad. False confidence of the Nizam was bolstered by anti-Indian British press and some British politicians and bureaucrats.

Soon the conditions deteriorated pretty fast. Reports spoke about the increased terror unleashed by the Rajakars on the Hindu population through loot, arson, rape and murder. Even the Muslims who did not support the Rajakars suffered from their wrath. With India as their

common enemy, Communists and Rajakars joined hands. Illicit gun running through aircraft from Pakistan, particularly by Sidney Cotton, an Australian, was another headache for India. These charges were confirmed not only by Indian press but by J.V. Joshi, a member of the Nizam’s Executive Council, who resigned from his position. A few lines from his resignation letter are sufficient:

“A complete reign of terror prevails in Parbhani and Nanded districts. I have seen in Loha is seen of devastation which brought tears to my eyes - Brahmins were killed and their eyes were taken out. Women had been raped, houses had been burnt down in large numbers. My heart wrung in anguish... Under the circumstances, I cannot continue to lend my name to a government which is powerless to prevent these heartrending atrocities which I have seen with my own eyes” (*Menon 353*).

Since Hyderabad was trying to use all available resources to buy arms and ammunition from foreign countries, the Government of India was forced to impose an economic clamp down over it against which Hyderabad made a very strong protest. These developments were coupled with border raids and frequent attacks on train passing through the Hyderabad territory. Neighbourhood provinces also made serious complaints against the nefarious activities of Razakars whose number had swollen to more than 200,000. Hyderabad also started a vigorous international campaign to malign India and requested prominent world leaders to arbitrate. Going against the letter and spirit of the standstill agreement they also

formally approached the Security Council in United Nations Organisation.

The resultant environment in Delhi can be very well imagined. Public opinion and press was openly accusing the Indian Government of inaction in the face of the above developments which ridiculed the stand taken by it as well as danger to Indian territory and people. A consensus emerged in the Indian camp that situation demanded quick and swift action in the interest of both India and the people of Hyderabad. On 9 September, after careful evaluation of the situation it was decided to send Indian troops to Hyderabad on 13 September to stop the menace of Rajakars and install a sense of security in adjoining Indian territories. This operation named 'operation Polo' by the Army was commanded by Major General J.N. Chaudhuri. On 17 September Hyderabad army surrendered. Indian army reached Hyderabad city on 18th September from two sides with little resistance. On the same day their army surrendered, Laik Ali and his cabinet tendered their resignations. Administration was handed over to Major-General Chaudhuri as Military Governor which continued up to December 1949. Immediately after

the the installation of the Military Governor's administration, Nizam issued a proclamation of accession of Hyderabad to Indian Union on the same terms and conditions as with other native states.

Leading Rajakars including Kasim Razvi were arrested. Members of Laik Ali cabinet were put under house arrest. On 23 September Nizam withdrew the Hyderabad case from Security Council. Government of India decided that Nizam would continue to be the constitutional head of government after a democratic government was established.

It is pertinent to ask why unlike with the other States, Sardar allowed long fruitless negotiations with Hyderabad and why they were left mainly in the hands of Lord Mountbatten? By virtue of its size and particular circumstances, Hyderabad was unlike any other State. In the context of the recent partition, dealing with Hyderabad involved communal question and international repercussions. This is precisely why Lord Mountbatten who also had the Hyderabad's confidence, was given the task of handling the sensitive problem. Negotiations with Hyderabad were left entirely in Mountbatten's hands because

the Indian leadership including Sardar had full confidence in his sincerity (*Munshi, 51*). Sardar was well aware of the evil designs of Ittehad and the strategy of Hyderabad of protracting the negotiations to the point of absurdity, still he was convinced that Mountbatten would strive his utmost to prevent a show-down with Hyderabad. Regarding Sardar's overall strategy, Munshi was of the opinion that "Sardar felt that having regard to the circumstances in which the country was placed, a beginning had to be made to associate Hyderabad with India even on minimum terms acceptable to the Nizam so long as the people had some voice in its governance. Once Hyderabad was within the orbit of free India, he was sure that the people of Hyderabad could be relied upon to assert themselves. Popular government, however limited in scope, would make closer association on the lines desires inevitable" (*Munshi, 52*). On the other hand, Nizam and his advisors believed that Mountbatten was their best guarantee against any positive action that could be taken by the Government of India against Hyderabad. But they failed because they became victims of morbid communal passion. ●

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Dr. Pradeep Kumar

The Role of Patel and Menon in the Integration of the Princely States

Following Independence, the task of unification of the princely states was no less challenging than that of the descent of the Ganga from heaven. This was made possible in a peaceful way because of a Bhagiratha like Sardar Patel and his associate V.P. Menon

A permanent solution to the problem of integration of the princely states in independent India remained an important and serious challenge. Although the Constituent Assembly was formed in 1946, the question of the merger of the princely states remained as it is; its complexity did not diminish at all. The issue of the complexity of their integration into India was emerging as a new challenge before the Constituent Assembly. The kings and the nawabs were worried about what would happen to the princely states. The question of what the princely states would do when they became independent, loomed as a formidable one before the leaders of the freedom movement. The British regime, acting in a very devious way, by the Indian Independence Act 1947, granted a choice to the princely states of either joining India or Pakistan or remaining independent. This option also gave them complete freedom and became a challenge for the creation of a new India. Indeed, the challenge of the merger of the princely states now became highly complicated, because the interests of the British too were yoked to those states. The Constituent Assembly took necessary steps from the very outset to resolve these issues.

The India that the British bequeathed on August 15, 1947 was not only divided but faced greater

dangers than its vivisection. In order to understand this, it is essential to know that British India was only sixty per cent (60%) of the country; the remaining forty per cent (40%) of its territory comprised the princely states. The British Empire ruled them in two ways—directly and indirectly. One finds varied mentions about the number of princely states. Normally, the figures of 534 and 565 are found more often. The Cutler Committee (1929) had fixed their number at 562. In the white paper published by the Government of independent India in 1948 on the princely states, their number stood at 584. Of these, 28% of the population of the whole of India lived on 40% of the territory, which was that covered by the princely states.

Three of these princely states—Hyderabad, Junagadh and Kashmir were forcibly merged into the Union of India. The rest of the princely states either voluntarily, or upon the persuasion of Patel joined the Union of India. Sardar Patel was the harbinger of national integration and a skilled architect of united India. Along with connecting the farmers and youth in the freedom movement, he had performed the task of giving it a planned momentum. Not only this, just before independence, together with V.P. Menon, he also effected the unprecedented endeavour of unifying India. By merging 565 small and big

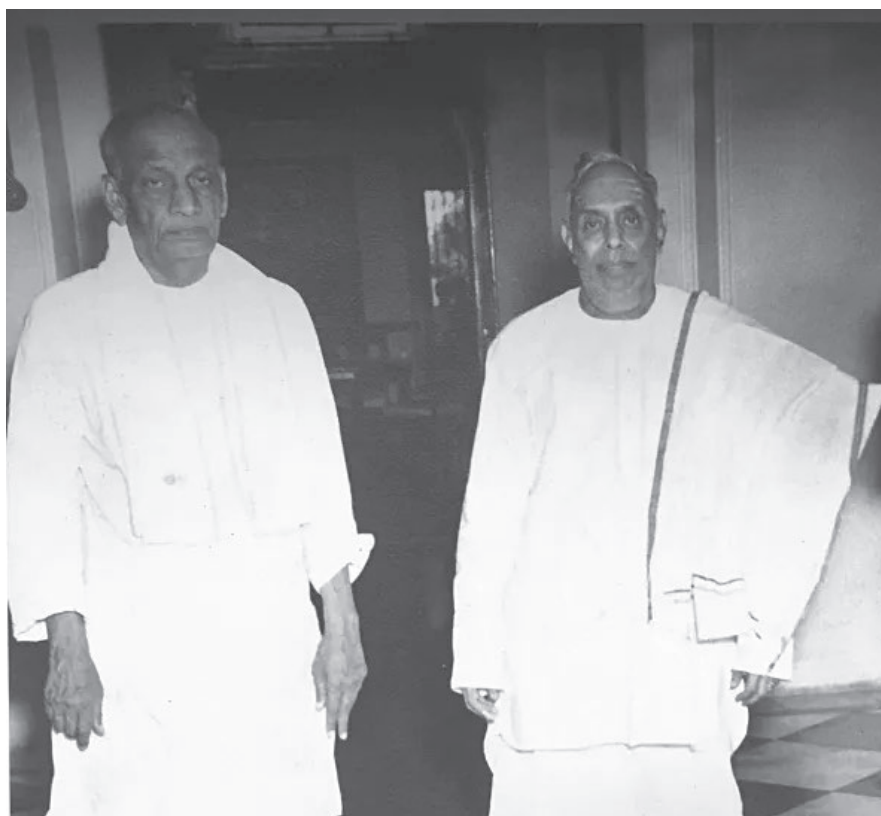
princely states of the country into the Indian Union, he presented a unique example of a unified India to the world. If anyone merits the credit of bringing into practice the satyagraha that Mahatma Gandhi propagated based on truth and non-violence, which paved the way and mobilizing the people of the country on its basis, then it is Sardar Patel.

Gandhi had said in 1930 at the Congress' Karachi session: "If Jawaharlal Nehru is a thinker, Sardar Patel is a doer".

The princely states were autonomous states in British India. These were called princely states, royal states or in a broader sense, native princely states. Before Independence, their number was 565, under which 28% of the population lived on about 40% of the territory, although no single opinion has been formed so far regarding the number of princely states. Somewhere their number is given as 548, while elsewhere we find their numbers as varying from 549, 550, 551, 552, 553, 554, 555, 556, 560, 561, 562, 563, 564, 565, 556 or 568. In some places, this has been said to be 584 princely states. According to the Butler Committee (1929), their number was 562. In the white paper on the princely states published by the Government of independent India, their number is 584. These were not directly ruled by the British Empire, but by Indian rulers, although for practical purposes, they were indirectly controlled by the British administration. These princely states were instrumental to the British government in curbing the rise of nationalist tendencies and other colonial powers.

At the time of Independence, the entire territory of India was divided into three kinds of regions. One: those areas of British India that were under the direct control of the India Office in London and the Governor General of India. Second: the princely states, which were ruled by Indian monarchs. Third: the colonial territories of France and Portugal, which included Chandranagar, Pondicherry, Goa, etc. The Indian Independence Act, 1947, gave the princely states the option to join the Dominion of India or Pakistan, or establish themselves as an independent and sovereign state. The proposal which the last Viceroy Lord Mountbatten had put to Jawaharlal Nehru regarding India's independence also contained a provision that the 565 princely states of India would choose to merge with

either India or Pakistan, and if they wished, they would not go with either of them. They could also remain free. As a result, some princely states decided to join India, some wished to remain independent, while some others wanted to be part of Pakistan. Many of these 565 princely states, most of which were part of the British Indian Empire, signed the Instrument of Accession in India one by one. In other words, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and V.P. Menon demonstrated their extraordinary abilities and with their diplomatic dexterity, obtained the signatures of the princely states. Hyderabad, Junagadh, Kashmir and Bhopal were the states that were the exceptions. Of these, the merger of Bhopal was the last one. Bhopal was the last princely state to join the Union of India also because Patel and Menon knew



Courtesy: <https://contingentmagazine.org/2020/05/21/how-do-you-write-a-biography/>

that Bhopal would eventually have to merge with India. On the other hand, Junagadh had declared it would join Pakistan, whereas Kashmir declared it would remain independent. Politically integrating all these regions and finding a permanent solution to the problem of the princely states was an important and serious challenge before the prominent leaders of the country at the time.

The responsibility of this crucial and important political integration was entrusted to Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and V.P. Menon. Patel understood very well that the lack of sense of nationalism among the monarchs could lead to anarchy. That is why, by awakening the feeling of nationalism, he made every effort to include the princely states in the Indian Union. He also reinstated the concept of the privy purse (a payment made to royal families signing on the merger with India). Some princely states wanted to be a part of Pakistan in view of their personal interest. Patel's remarkable ability and skill, diplomatic foresight and personalized way of handling issues made 561 princely states out of 565 ready for accession within a span of just six weeks. At the time of the British departure from India, all except three of 562 princely states had decided to merge with India. These three were: Kashmir, Junagadh and Hyderabad. The largest of these states was Hyderabad, which had an area of more than 82,000 square miles. There were 12 princely states that were surrounded by Pakistani territories, and were therefore included in Pakistan. The remaining 554 princely states remained in India. Of these,

The responsibility of this crucial and important political integration was entrusted to Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and V.P. Menon. Patel understood very well that the lack of sense of nationalism among the monarchs could lead to anarchy. That is why, by awakening the feeling of nationalism, he made every effort to include the princely states in the Indian Union

except Junagadh, Hyderabad, Bhopal and Jammu & Kashmir, 550 princely states agreed to join the Indian Union before 15 August 1947 due to the efforts of Sardar Patel. Patel resolved the issue of these princely states and jagirs in such an efficient manner that even his harshest critics were astounded. India did obtain independence in 1947, but in a mutilated form. The partition of the country was effected; apart from this, 562 princely states had also emerged as an issue. The British, in pursuit of their diplomatic game, had granted them the right to merge or not to merge with the Indian Union. It was in such an adverse and uncertain situation that Sardar Patel accomplished the crucial task of imparting integrity and stability to the nation. Due to this incomparable ability and vision of Patel and his work for the integrity of the nation, he is known as the architect of unified India. He translated into action the idea of making India a nation in accordance with the modern definition of "one nation one state". It is because of the merger of the native princely states that Patel is compared with Bismarck of Germany. In actuality, Patel's accomplishment is greater than that of Bismarck. Bismarck had unified only 20 to 25 states in Germany, whereas Sardar Patel set an example by merging at

least 565 princely states in India, an example of the kind of which is not found anywhere else in the world. The duo of Patel and Menon not only persuaded the small and large princely states of the country to join independent India, but after Independence, solved the problem of about 500 princely states with great dexterity and did not allow the unity of India to be disturbed. There is hardly any such example in history, when a statesman or nation-builder has achieved such great success in the last three to four years of his life. Sardar Patel served as the Home Minister for four years, which are regarded as the historic moments of his life. As a minister, he used to meet every individual and find a solution to their problems. He accomplished the merger of 565 princely states, of which the most difficult mergers was Junagadh and Hyderabad, for which he adopted the policy of Sama (reconciliation), Dama (buying off) Danda (use of force against enemies) and Bheda (sowing discord among adversaries) to include these states in the Union of India in a resolute manner. Before Partition, the British regime had given forty days to the princely states to join either India or Pakistan. Sardar Patel faced the critical challenge to make 562 native princely states towards independent India in

such a short time. Prior to August 15, 1947, if these princely states did not join India or Pakistan, they could consider themselves independent from the following day. It was in the span of such a short time that Patel had laid down the fundamental mantra for all these princely states to join India, which was to awaken the feeling of patriotism among the rulers of all the princely states and domains. It was with this basic mantra that Sardar Patel had resolved to merge every princely state into India. Many princely states had declared that they would join India merely after meeting Patel. Some rulers were persuaded by Patel to come forth for one India, as a result of which except a few, all the remaining princely states accepted the proposal of merger with India.

The south coastal state of Travancore was one of the first princely states that refused to sign the Instrument of Accession with India. It raised questions on the national leadership of the Congress. Sir C.P. Iyer, the Diwan of Travancorem, had also entered into a secret treaty with the British government, which was in favour of an independent Travancore. The region was rich in the mineral monazite, which could have given Britain an edge in the nuclear arms race, but after a failed attempt to

assassinate him by a member of the Kerala Samajwadi Party, C.P. Iyer decided to ally with India and on 30 July, 1947, Travancore joined India.

Jodhpur was a Rajput princely state. Its ruler was Hindu and the majority of the population was also Hindu, but the king was strangely inclined towards Pakistan. The young and inexperienced Raja Hanwant Singh surmised that his kingdom could negotiate a better deal with Pakistan because of the border of his princely state with Pakistan. Jinnah gave the Maharaja a signed blank paper, asking him to list all his demands. He also proposed free access to the port of Karachi for the manufacture and import of weapons with the help of the military and farmers. Responding to this, Patel immediately contacted the Maharaja and aroused his national consciousness by assuring him of adequate benefits and offers to his state. On August 11, 1947, upon the persuasion of Sardar Patel, Maharaja Hanwant Singh signed the Instrument of Accession, thus integrating his princely state of Jodhpur into the Indian Union.

Junagadh, a princely state in the southwest of Gujarat, which did not accede to India until 15 August 1947, had a majority Hindu and Raja Muslim

population. On 15 September 1947 Nawab Mohammad Mahawat Khan decided to join Pakistan and argued that Junagadh was connected to Pakistan by sea. The rulers of the two states, Mangrol and Bavariabadh, which were under Junagadh, in response declared independence from Junagadh and joined India. In response, the Nawab of Junagadh captured both these states using military force; as a result, the kings of the neighboring states appealed to the Indian government for help. The Government of India believed that if Junagadh was allowed to join Pakistan, communal riots would take on a very frightening form. Also, the state's majority Hindu population which was 80%, would not accept this decision. For this reason, the Government of India proposed a solution to the issue through a plebiscite. In the meantime, the Indian government stopped the supply of fuel and coal to Junagadh and the Indian forces captured Mangrol and Bavariabadh. Pakistan agreed to the plebiscite with the condition of withdrawal of Indian forces but India rejected this condition. On 7 November 1947, the Junagadh court invited the Government of India to take over the administration of the state.

The Diwan of Junagadh, the well-known Sir Shahnawaz Bhutto, (Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's father) decided to invite the Government of India to intervene. A plebiscite was held in February 1948, which unanimously went in favour of merger with India and thus the princely state of Junagadh too became a part of India.

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Hyderabad — A Saga by Itself

Hyderabad was the largest and most prosperous princely state in that period, covering most of the Deccan plateau. Even under the British rule, Hyderabad used to have its own army, railway service and postal department. At that time, Hyderabad was the largest royal house of India in terms of population and total national product. Its area was 82698 square miles, which was more than the total area of England and Scotland. The majority of the population (80%) of the princely state was Hindu, while Muslims, despite being a minority, held important positions in the administration and the army. A Muslim ruler Nizam Mir Osman Ali ruled there. It demanded the status of an independent state and refused to join India. At the same time, by contacting Pakistan (Jinnah), he also received assurance of help from the latter. Kuldip Nayar wrote in his autobiography *Beyond the Lines: An Autobiography* that Jinnah responded by saying that he would not want to jeopardize the existence of Pakistan for the sake of a handful of the elite. The confusion and confusion about Hyderabad thus increased with the passage of time. The Razakars, led by radical Qasim Rizvi, were holding public meetings in support of Hyderabad's independence and were attacking not only non-Muslim passengers by forcibly halting trains passing through the state's territory, but were also harassing people living in Indian areas adjoining Hyderabad.

Nehru, on the other hand, was in favour of adhering to Mountbatten's advice seriously,

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that the entire issue should be resolved peacefully. Sardar Patel did not agree with this assessment of Nehru. He believed that the Hyderabad of that time was like a cancer in India's belly, which could not be tolerated. Patel was aware that Hyderabad was completely under the spell of Pakistan. So much so, Pakistan was looking to negotiate a "Hyderabad Agreement" with Portugal, under which a port of Hyderabad would be built in Goa and used by the princely state when needed.

Not only this, the Nizam of Hyderabad was in direct contact with Lord Mountbatten through one of his constitutional advisors, Sir Walter Mockton. Mockton also had close ties to the Conservative Party. When Mountbatten advised him that Hyderabad should at least send his representative to the Constituent Assembly, Mockton replied that he would seriously consider a merger with Pakistan if Mountbatten exerted more pressure. Moreover, he also expressed his desire for Hyderabad to become a member of the Commonwealth, which was turned down by the Attlee government (Inder Malhotra; "The Horses that Led Operation Polo"). The Nizam's Chief of Army Staff, Major General L. Edroos wrote in his book

Hyderabad of the Seven Loaves that the Nizam himself had sent him to Europe to buy arms, but he could not succeed in his mission as Hyderabad was not recognized as an independent country. Meanwhile, the Nizam's agent in London, General Nawaz Jung, persuaded an Australian arms dealer, Sydney Cotton, to supply arms to Hyderabad. When India came to know that Sydney Cotton ships were carrying weapons for the Nizam, it banned those flights.

At the time the Nizam felt that India was determined to acquire Hyderabad, he also offered that the responsibility of foreign affairs, defence and communication should be handed over to India, keeping Hyderabad as an autonomous state, but this proposal was not implemented because he could not persuade Qasim, the chief of the Razakars, to agree do so. The activities of the Razakars turned the public opinion of the whole of India against them. On 22 May, when they attacked the Hindus travelling by train at Gangapur station, the government across India was criticized for being soft on them. Former Chief of Army Staff of the Indian Army, Lt Gen S.K. Sinha wrote in his autobiography *Straight from the Heart*: "I was in Kashmir with General Cariappa when he

got a message that Sardar Patel wanted to meet him immediately. On reaching Delhi we went straight to Patel's house from Palam airport. I remained on the verandah. While Cariappa went inside to meet him and came out five minutes later, he told me that Sardar had asked him a direct question which he answered in one word. The Sardar had asked him, "If there is a military response from Pakistan on the issue of Hyderabad, would he be able to deal with that situation without any additional help?"

Cariappa replied in one word — "Yes" after which the meeting was over. After this, Sardar Patel finalised the military action against Hyderabad. The then Chief of Army Staff of India, General Robert Butcher was against this decision. He said that Pakistan's army could drop bombs on Ahmedabad or Mumbai in response. The date for entering Hyderabad was fixed twice but had to be cancelled due to political pressure. The Nizam made a personal request to the Governor-General Rajagopalachari not to do so. Rajaji and Nehru met and both decided to halt the proceedings. A meeting of Defence Secretary H.M. Patel and V.P. Menon was called to respond to the Nizam's

letter. In this context, Durgadas wrote in his book India from Curzon to Nehru and After that when the draft of the reply to the letter was prepared, Patel announced that the Indian army had entered Hyderabad and nothing could now be done to stop it. Nehru and Rajaji were worried that this might prompt Pakistan to retaliate, but when nothing happened from the Pakistani side for 24 hours, their concerns turned into smiles. As soon as the Indian army entered Hyderabad, the then Prime Minister of Pakistan, Liaquat Ali Khan called a meeting of his Defence Council and asked them, "Can Pakistan take any action in Hyderabad?" Present at the meeting, Group Captain Alvarde, who would later become Air Chief Marshal and Britain's first Chief of Defence Staff, said, "No!" Liaquat insisted, "Can't we bomb Delhi?" Alvarde replied "Yes, it is possible but Pakistan has a total of four bombers of which only two are functioning. One of them might perhaps reach Delhi and drop a bomb, but none of them will be able to come back".

Sardar Patel had decided to forcibly merge Hyderabad with India. For this, he commenced Operation Polo in September

1948. This secret operation of the Indian Army was named Operation Polo, because at that time Hyderabad had the largest number of polo grounds in the world, 17 in all. In this action which lasted for five days, 1,373 Razakars and 807 soldiers of Hyderabad State were killed. The Indian Army lost 66 of its soldiers while 97 soldiers were injured. Ultimately the Nizam of Hyderabad had to sign the Instrument of Accession to India.

Nawab Hamidullah Khan was the Nawab of the princely state of Bhopal. It extended to Bhopal, Sehore and Raisen. Nawab Hamidullah, educated at Aligarh University, became the Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes twice in 1931 and 1944 and was also its chancellor during the Partition of India. With the declaration of Independence in 1947, he resigned from the post of Chancellor because he was in favour of the independence of the princely states. Hamidullah was pondering till 14 August 1947 what decision he should make. Jinnah had speeded up the pace of inviting him to Pakistan by offering him the post of Secretary General there; here, Hamidullah remained fascinated by his princely state. On 13 August, he asked his daughter Abida to become the ruler of the princely state of Bhopal, so that he could go to Pakistan and take over the post of Secretary General, but Abida refused to do so. Bhopal's merger happened at the last, and one of the reasons for this was that Nawab Hamidullah, who was the Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes, maintained his interference in the internal politics of the country. He was a friend of both Nehru and Jinnah. In March

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1948, Hamidullah declared the independence of Bhopal. In May 1948, he announced a cabinet of the Bhopal government, with Chatur Narayan Malviya as its prime minister. By this time, there was a rebellion within Bhopal regarding the process of merger. Simultaneously, the duo of Patel-Menon, the architects of the merger, also started exerting pressure. Another problem that had come to the fore was that Chatur Narayan Malviya had also turned in favour of the merger. The Prajamandal became the main party of the movement for merger with India. In October 1939, the Nawab went on leave and in December 1948, the largest demonstration in Bhopal's history took place in support of merger.

Many protesters were arrested, including Bhai Ratan Kumar, Thakur Lal Singh, Dr. Shankar Dayal Sharma. The entire city of Bhopal was shut down. The state police tried to suppress the agitators by pouring water on them. On January 23, 1949, Dr. Shankar Dayal Sharma was sent to jail for eight months. In the midst of all this, V.P. Menon once again came to Bhopal and told the Nawab in clear terms that Bhopal could not remain independent. From the geographical point of

view, Bhopal is closer to Malwa. Therefore, Bhopal would have to become a part of Central India. Finally, on 29 January 1949, the Nawab, dismissing his cabinet, took all avenues of power into his hands once again. Pandit Chatur Narayan Malviya had sat on a fast for 21 days. V.P. Menon was watching the happenings while residing in Bhopal. He was stayed at Lal Kothi (the present Raj Bhavan) and kept up constant pressure on the Nawab. Finally on April 30, 1949, the Nawab signed the letter of merger. Sardar Patel said in a letter to the Nawab, "It was a matter of great dismay and sadness for me that your undisputed skills and abilities were not allowed to be put to use by our country when the country needed it". Eventually, on June 1, 1949, the princely state of Bhopal became a part of India. Chief Commissioner N.B. Banerjee, appointed by the centre, took over and the Nawab received a privy purse of Rs.1,10,000 per annum. Bhopal was merged. The earlier tricolour of black, white and green, which was the symbol of Nawabi rule for about 225 years, was lowered from the Lal Kothi and the other tricolor of saffron, white and green of the Union of India was now unfurled.

The Tale of the Princely State of Kashmir

The princely state of Kashmir was one where the majority of the population was Muslim, while the king was a Hindu. Raja Hari Singh maintained a standstill position without taking any decision on the Instrument of Accession to join either Pakistan or India. Meanwhile, Pakistani soldiers and armed tribals infiltrated and attacked Kashmir. The Maharaja appealed to the Government of India for help. The king sent Sheikh Abdullah as his representative to Delhi for assistance. On 26 October 1947, Raja Hari Singh signed the Instrument of accession. Under this, communication, defence and foreign affairs were brought under the jurisdiction of the Government of India. On March 5, 1948, Maharaja Hari Singh announced the Interim Popular Government, with Sheikh Abdullah as the Prime Minister. In 1951, the State Constituent Assembly was elected and met for the first time on October 31, 1951. The Delhi Accord was signed in 1952, under which 'Special Status' was granted to Jammu and Kashmir in the Indian Constitution. On February 6, 1954, the Constituent Assembly of Jammu & Kashmir approved the accession to the Union of India. According to Article 3 of the Constitution of Jammu & Kashmir, Jammu & Kashmir is and shall remain an integral part of India.

Sardar Patel believed that the Kashmir issue should not have been taken to the United Nations. In fact, the matter could have been resolved in the interest of India even before it was taken to the United Nations. But due

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to Nehru's short-sightedness, the circumstances became such that the issue reached the United Nations. Once, Sardar Patel himself told H.D. Kamat that had Jawaharlal Nehru and Gopal Swami Ayyangar not intervened in the Kashmir issue and separated it from the Ministry of Home Affairs, he (Patel) would have easily resolved this issue in the interest of the country like Hyderabad.

Sardar Patel succeeded in bringing most of the princely states under the sway of the tricolour through his skill and diplomacy, and military intervention when needed. Above all, he has a reputation for meeting this Himalayan challenge peacefully and successfully. He accomplished this task without any bloodshed, only by his sheer intelligent administrative acumen. On July 5, 1947, Patel clarified the policy towards the princely states and said that "The princely states will be included in the Indian Union on the basis of three subjects; security, foreign and communication system".

He merged those princely states that were sovereign in themselves into the Indian Union. They had a different flag and a different ruler. Patel, along with VP Menon, began the work of merging many native states into India during the transition period just before Independence. Patel and Menon explained a lot to the native kings that it would not be possible to give them autonomy. As a result, except the three princely states of Hyderabad, Kashmir and Junagadh, all the remaining princely states voluntarily accepted the proposal of merger with India. By August 15, 1947, the Indian princely

states except Hyderabad, Kashmir and Junagadh had joined the Union of India, which is a phenomenal achievement in Indian history.

Patel was also instrumental in the integration of Lakshadweep group of islands with India. The people of this region were cut off from the mainstream of the country and came to know about the independence of India only several days after August 15, 1947. Although this area was not geographically close to Pakistan, Patel felt that Pakistan could lay claim to it. That is why, to avert any such situation, Patel dispatched a ship of the Indian Navy to hoist the national flag in Lakshadweep. A few hours later, Pakistani naval ships were seen cruising near Lakshadweep, but they had to return to Karachi after seeing the Indian flag flying there. All this was the result of Patel's vision.

Congress leader N. G. Ranga too was of the opinion that Nehru, Maulana and Mountbatten were responsible for the delayed action. Ranga writes that "In the case of Hyderabad, Sardar Patel himself felt that had he heeded the advice of Jawaharlal Nehru, the issue Hyderabad would have become complicated instead of being resolved". Maulana Azad and Lord Mountbatten had more or less the same counsel as Nehru. Sardar Patel was in favour of the merger of Hyderabad with India but Nehru did not agree with it. Mountbatten's stratagems too were such that they caused delay in the materialisation of Patel's thinking.

In fact, Patel was the architect of modern India. The organizational capability of Bismarck, the statecraft of

Kautilya and unwavering loyalty to national unity of the kind Abraham Lincoln had, were clearly visible in his formidable persona. The indomitable zeal and immense power with which he resolved the initial difficulties of the nascent republics have earned him an indelible place in the political map of the world. The contribution of Sardar Patel in the political history of India can never be forgotten. The nation will always remember the historic tasks accomplished by him.

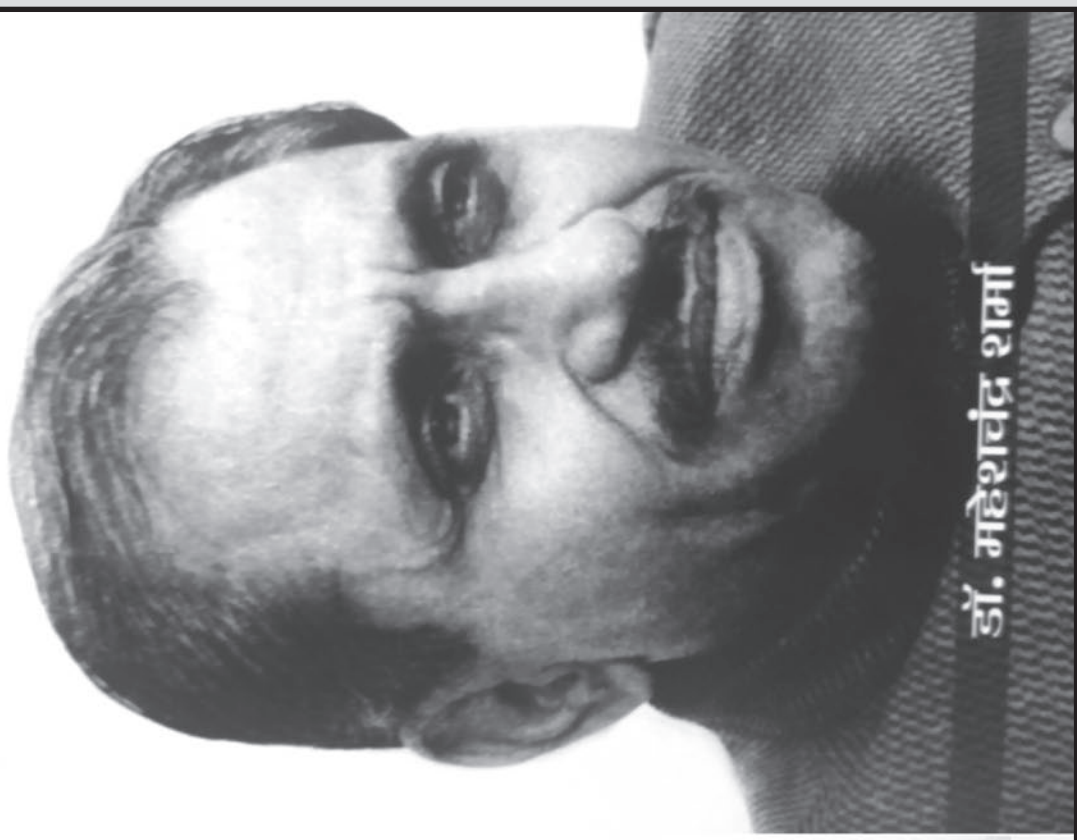
Sardar Patel also knew the art of winning the hearts of opponents quite well. Along with obtaining Independence, he presented a unique example in history by including the native kings in the Indian Union. Although initially, many rulers had a grouse with him for the integration of their princely states, later all of them became his close friends because of his patriotism and intent to do everything for the sake of the country. When Patel passed away, many kings wept saying that their friend and protector was gone. In fact, it is due to the practical and tough attitude that Patel had adopted in the case of Hyderabad and Junagadh that these two princely states are in India today. Sardar Patel left this world very soon, but his dedication and sacrifice towards the nation, the decisions he made with determination will always remind us of him. He was the Iron Man of India. He achieved a unique place in the history of free India first in the independence of the country and later in the creation of a united India, by integrating the princely states with all his strength. ●

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पं. दीनदयाल उपाध्याय

कर्तृत्व एवं विचार



डॉ. महेशचंद्र शर्मा

पं. दीनदयाल उपाध्याय

कर्तृत्व एवं विचार

डॉ. महेशचंद्र शर्मा



“पंडित दीनदयाल उपाध्याय के विषय में जानकारियाँ बहुत ही सीमित हैं। डॉ. महेशचंद्र शर्मा ने इस विषय पर गवेषणात्मक अध्ययन किया है। इस शोध-ग्रंथ का प्रकाशन न केवल जनसंघ की राजनीति व विचारधारा के प्रति लोगों को लाभदायक जानकारियाँ देगा वरन् राजनीति शास्त्र की वैचारिक बहस को भी आगे बढ़ाएगा। दीनदयाल उपाध्याय व भारतीय जनसंघ को समझने के लिए यह शोध-ग्रंथ प्रामाणिक आधारभूमि प्रदान करता है।”

—डॉ. इक्बाल नारायण

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“यदि मुझे दो दीनदयाल मिल जाएँ, तो मैं भारतीय राजनीति का नक्शा बदल दूँ।”

—डॉ. श्यामा प्रसाद मुखर्जी

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ISBN 978-93-5186-262-8

9 789351 862628

₹ 500/-

प्रभात प्रकाशन

ISO 9001 : 2008 प्रकाशक

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Panna Lal

Merger of Princely States in Pakistan

It was not only India which had to face the challenge of the Princely States and their merger, the portion which separated from her – Pakistan – too had similar issues. Here is a brief description of how they handled this problem

The subject of this article is the story of those 9 Princely States which merged with Pakistan. These Princely States were situated in the northwestern part of undivided India, i.e. the present-day Pakistan. These Princely States with Muslim majority population were in favour of the creation of Pakistan, but they also had their own regional ambitions. They nurtured the dream of becoming separate countries. Therefore, these Princely States refused to merge with Pakistan in August 1947. They played hide and seek with Jinnah a lot. But how gradually these regions merged into Pakistan and eventually become a part of it, this story of conflict of self-interest and ambition is quite interesting and informative. Narrating the story of the merger of the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP) with Pakistan, Attiya Khanum, a professor at the Women's University in Multan of Pakistan, writes that in July 1947, a plebiscite was held in the states that joined the NWFP. Frontier Gandhi Abdul Ghaffar Khan had boycotted this referendum. These states opted to join Pakistan since they were located in the northern border of Pakistan and were supporting the campaign demanding creation of a separate country.

Amb

The population of this small state was

about 48,000 in 1947. According to Prof Khanum, the British government used to give Rs 15,300 annually to the ruler of the state. The 'nawab' of Amb, Muhammad Farid Khan, signed the Standstill Agreement with Pakistan in July 1947 and the Instrument of Accession to join Pakistan on 31 December 1947. Amb was the first Princely State of the NWFP which agreed to join Pakistan.

Chitral

The Princely State of Chitral was situated in the far north of Pakistan. It was close to the erstwhile USSR. Its ruler Muzaffar-ulMulk decided to join Pakistan on 15 August 1947. But the state signed the Instrument of Accession only on 6 November 1947.

Dir

Dir was a small Princely State located in the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP). After the partition of the country, this province remained independent and neutral till February 1948. The British government used to give Rs 50,000 every year to this state. This province had signed the Instrument of Accession on 8 November 1947 itself, but the formal merger took place in 1948 only.

Swat

As soon as the name of Swat comes, the picture that emerges in front of us is that of the 2,000 years old statues of

Buddha located in Bamiyan. The valleys of Swat may be witnessing the barbaric justice of Taliban terrorists, but once civilizations were born here. This place was the centre of Gandhar civilisation. If we talk about the time around 1947, the population of Swat with an area of 18,000 square miles was 2,16,000 in 1931. There used to be settlements of Hindus too there at that time. Then there used to be a lot of bloodshed for power in this land of Jirga, Warlord and Pathan fighters. In 1917, the Jirga (local panchayat of chieftains) declared a chieftain named Minagul Abdul Wadud as the king of Swat. To please Minagul Abdul Wadud, Britain conferred him the religious title of Wali in 1926.

When Pakistan came into existence on 14 August 1947, Minagul Abdul Wadud did not join it at that time. But later bowing to the pressure of Pakistan, Minagul Abdul Wadud announced the merger of Swat with Pakistan on 3 November 1947. Although Minagul's descendant Miangul Jahan Jeb continued to rule in Swat for a long time after that, but Pakistani dictator Yahya Khan announced the complete merger of Swat with Pakistan on 28 July 1969. It is to be noted here that in 1969 itself, Yahya Khan merged not only Swat but also Dir and Chitral completely in Pakistan and ended their independent identity.

Balochistan

The freedom movement that is raging in Balochistan of Pakistan these days, has its roots growing since the time of Partition. Balochistan, comprising Kalat, Kharan, Los Bela and Makran, was such a Princely State which

was not directly ruled by the British empire. The Partition was done by the British. As we know, these states had been given the right to decide their future after the partition of the country. After the independence of India, the ambitions of the chieftains of the Baloch tribes were on a high. They wanted a separate country for themselves. First of all, let me tell you the story of Kalat.

Jinnah had a tough time with regard to the unification of Kalat. Although Khan Mir Ahmed Yaar Khan of Kalathad initially shown great enthusiasm for the creation of Pakistan, but he changed his colours when the indirect pressure to include Kalat in Pakistan began to mount on him. Kalat had an area of 1,39,850 square kilometres. Its population was 2,53,000 in 1951. When the Cabinet Mission came to India in March 1946, Mir Ahmed Yaar Khan had stated that his had a treaty directly with the British Crown, and not with the British India empire. After this, a meeting was held in Delhi on 4 August 1947. Lord Mountbatten, Khan of Kalat, Chief Minister of Kalat and Muhammad Ali Jinnah were present in that meeting where Jinnah presented his side. It was decided that Kalat would be independent from the British empire on 5 August 1947. Kharan and Los Bula were also asked to merge themselves with Kalat.

The British Treaty of 1876 had given Kalat internal independence. It had also promised not to interfere in its internal affairs. On the basis of this treaty only, Mir Ahmed Yaar Khan had said that Kalat would get complete independence with the end of the treaty of 1876, and being an independent state, the people of Kalat would have the

right to decide their own future. A meeting was held between Mountbatten, the representatives of Pakistan and a delegation from Kalat on 19 July 1947. In this meeting, Pakistan even agreed to recognise Kalat as an independent and sovereign state.

Muslim League had accepted Kalat as a sovereign state

A declaration was signed between the Muslim League and Kalat on 11 August 1947. The Muslim League even issued a statement saying that Kalat was a sovereign state and the Muslim League respects its sovereignty. However, to allay its own fears, the Muslim League had also stated that Kalat is not an Indian state.

Kalat declared itself as an independent country on 15 August 1947, the day of India got its independence and a day after the creation of Pakistan. Kalatruler Mir Ahmed Yaar Khan even went to the extent of creating the upper and lower houses of the Kalat parliament. Kalat said it would be an independent country and that its relations with Pakistan would be friendly.

But Jinnah hardly drew any solace from this sham pact? Jinnah understood the importance of this region as it was directly connected with Afghanistan and Iran by land route. He also knew that an independent Balochistan could become a threat to the very existence of Pakistan in future.

Jinnah started besieging the Khan of Kalat

Jinnah started encircling Balochistan. On 17 October 1947, Jinnah called the Khan of Kalat to the negotiating table with an excuse that a few issues

were left out during the on August 11 discussions. By the way, Khan of Kalat was a friend of Jinnah. He had helped Jinnah a lot in creating Pakistan and had even gave him money. But this time, he sensed the intention of this cunning friend.

The Khan of Kalat resorted to delaying tactic over Jinnah's invitation. Jinnah again called him for talks on 14 February 1948. By that time, Ahmed Yaar Khan was trying to raise the issue of Kalat at the international level. He talked to Afghanistan, but could not get whole hog support. Till now, the Khan of Kalat was avoiding meeting Jinnah.

Meanwhile, on 27 March 1948, Jinnah told his Foreign Secretary Ikramullah that Kalat should be clearly told that there was no option left but to merge with Pakistan. This was a kind of final warning.

Pakistan's invasion of Kalat

On 1 April 1948, Jinnah ordered to send his forces to Kalat. Kalat's army and resources proved to be dwarfed by the Pakistani army and he finally surrendered and signed the Instrument of Accession.

Merger of Makran, Las Bela and Kharan

When Kalat was fighting for its existence, its neighbouring Princely States of Makran, Las Bela and Kharan succumbed to the pressure of Jinnah and merged with Pakistan in March 1948.

Bahawalpur

Situated in Punjab of present-day Pakistan, Bahawalpur was one of the densest territories of

Khairpur was a small Princely State within the border of Sindh. At the time of partition of the country, Khairpur nawab Mir George Ali Murad Khan Talpur-II was a minor. In place of Mir George Ali, his representative Mir Ghulam Hussain Khan had signed the Instrument of Accession. However, the nawab continued to rule the state partially

undivided India. Its population in 1947 was 15 lakh. After Partition, a large number of Hindus and Sikhs fled to India from here.

The rise of the Sikhs in Punjab had crushed the nawabs of Bahawalpur. The rulers of Bahawalpur had signed an agreement with the East India Company in 1833 and acknowledged their suzerainty.

Nawab Sadiq Abbasi was ruling over Bahawalpur in 1947. At the time of Partition, the nawab was in a bad health and was undergoing treatment in England.

Nawab Sadiq declared himself an independent emirate on 15 August 1947. It came as a big setback for Pakistan. Bahawalpur shared its borders with India, hence the news of the creation of an independent Bahawalpur between the two countries blew the senses of Pakistan.

The Muslim League immediately began to establish contact with Amir Nawab Sadiq. When the nawab returned from England to Bahawalpur, Pakistan exhorted pressure on him to sign the Instrument of Accession.

Finally, on 3 October 1947, Aamir Nawab Sadiq signed the agreement for the merger of Bahawalpur in Pakistan. But this merger of Bahawalpur was only partial. Eight years later, Bahawalpur was fully annexed to Pakistan when the Aamir signed

another agreement with Pakistan on 14 October 1955. In lieu of this, the Aamir started getting Privy Purse of Rs 32 lakh annually from Pakistan.

Khairpur

Khairpur was a small Princely State within the border of Sindh. At the time of partition of the country, Khairpur nawab Mir George Ali Murad Khan Talpur-II was a minor. In place of Mir George Ali, his representative Mir Ghulam Hussain Khan had signed the Instrument of Accession. However, the nawab continued to rule the state partially. It is to be noted that there was no democratic set-up in these areas earlier. So, when they merged with Pakistan, the Pakistani government handled important issues like foreign affairs, currency exchange, and security while the nawabs retained the rest of the administrative issues with themselves. The same thing happened with Khairpur too but later it was completely merged with Pakistan in 1955.

Apart from this, Pakistan had also forcibly merged the two Princely States of Hunza and Nagar, situated in the present-day Gilgit-Baltistan, with itself. India has, however, never recognised this merger. Gilgit-Baltistan presently falls under Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (POK), which is an integral part of India. ●

[Translated from Hindi]

Courtesy: <https://www.aajtak.in/world/story/princely-states-of-pakistan-merger-story-balochistan-jinnah-india-independence-day-ntc-1309760-2021-08-15>

Victory of Democracy over Autocracy

At the time of merger the newly formed government of India had promised many things with the princely states. Why had the government promised so and how did they got took under the umbrella of the Constitution of India, an account of the scenario in the words of Sardar Patel, the architect of the modern India

India, that we own today, is actually a result of deadly struggle, countless sacrifices and great acumen along with absolute determination. All this has been reflected in the historic speech of Sardar Vallabhbhai J. Patel that he had prepared to deliver in the Constituent Assembly on 12th of October 1949. He, though, could not deliver it himself, as it could cause strain to him and so he humbly requested the chair to permit Mr. Kanhaiyalal Maniklal Munshi to recite it on behalf of him. Having permission from the chair Mr. Munshi had recited Sardar Patel's speech in the Assembly.

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel: Sir it has been my endeavour to keep the house fully informed of our policy and the developments in respect of the States. Apart from the statements I have made on the floor of the House from time to time, I laid before the house in July last year a White Paper on States in which was set out in detail not only the policy pursued by the Government of India towards the States but also the various agreements and Covenants entered into with the Rulers were reproduced. In March last I placed before the House another detailed report on the policy and the working of the Ministry of States. Now that the process of integration of the States has been completed I propose to place before the House next month another State Paper which will contain a comprehensive review of all the developments which have taken place in respect of the Indian States since this Government was called upon

to face the problem of States.

The amendments which are now being proposed concerning the provisions of the Constitution applicable to the States, embody the results of the bloodless revolution which within a remarkably short period, has transformed the internal and external set up of the States. The fact that the new Constitution specifies only nine States in Part III of Schedule I is an index to the phenomenal progress made by the policy of integration pursued by the Government of India. By integrating 500 and odd States into sizeable units and by the complete elimination of centuries-old autocracies, the Indian democracy has won a great victory of which the Princes and the people of India alike should be proud. This is an achievement which should redound to the credit of any nation or and by the complete elimination of centuries-old autocracies, the Indian democracy has won a great victory of

which the Princes and the people of India alike should be proud. This is an achievement which should redound to the credit of any nation or people at any phase of history.

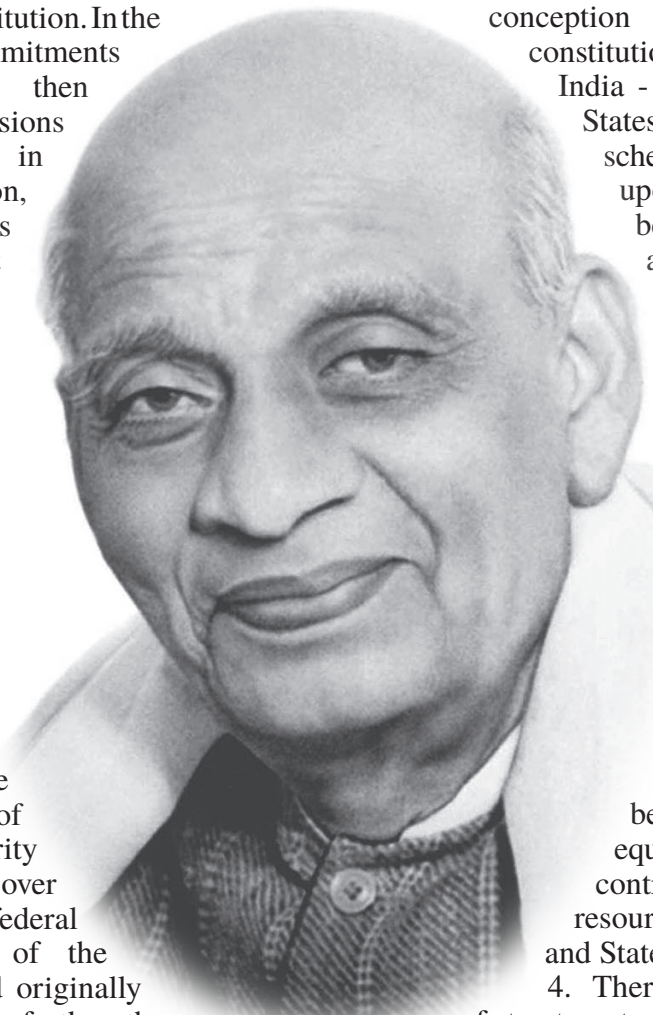
As the House is aware, when the States entered the Constituent Assembly of India, it was thought that the Constitution of the States would not form part of the Constitution of India. It was also understood that unlike the Provinces the accession of the States to the Indian Union would not be automatic but would be by means of some process of ratification of the Constitution. In the context of those commitments and the conditions then obtaining certain provisions were incorporated in the Draft Constitution, which placed the States in certain important respects on a footing different from that of the Provinces.

As a result of the policy of integration and democratization of States pursued by the Government of India since December 1947 the process of what might be called important developments in this direction have been the extension of the legislative authority of the Dominion over the States and the federal financial integration of the States. The States had originally acceded in respect of the three subjects of Defence, Foreign Affairs and Communications only. With the formation of the Unions the legislative power of the Dominion Parliament was extended in respect of the Unions of States to all matters specified

in the Federal and Concurrent Lists except those relating to taxation. The content of the accession of the State of Mysore was also likewise extended.

The gap in the financial field has now been filled by the arrangements which have been negotiated with the States on the basis of the recommendations made by the Indian States Finances Enquiry Committee. The fundamental basis of this scheme is that federal financial integration of the States is a necessary consequence of the basic conception underlying the new constitution of the Union of India - that of Provinces and States as equal partners. The scheme, therefore, is based upon complete equality between the Provinces and States in the following respects :-

1. The Central Government should perform the same functions and exercise the same powers in States as in Provinces ;
2. The Central Government should perform its own executive functions through its own executive organizations in States as in Provinces;
3. There should be uniformity and equality in the basis of contributions to Central resources from Provinces and States;
4. There should be equality of treatment as between Provinces and States in the matters of common services rendered by the Central Government, and as regards the sharing of divisible federal taxes, grants-in-aid, 'subsidies', and all other forms of financial and technical assistance.



The fact that these far-reaching changes in our fiscal structure are being introduced with the full concurrence of the States is in itself a great tribute to the excellent work done by the Indian States Finances Enquiry Committee under the chairmanship of Sir V. T. Krishnamachari, who brought to bear on this important problem his vast experience in Indian States.

These important developments enabled us to review the position of the States under the new Constitution and to remove from it all vestiges of anomalies and disparities which found their way into the new Constitution as a legacy from the past.

When the Covenants establishing the various Unions of States were entered into, it was contemplated that the constitutions of the various Unions would be formed by their respective Constituent Assemblies within the framework of the covenants and the Constitution of India. These provisions were made in the covenants at a time when we were still working under the shadow of the theory, that the assumption, by the Constituent Assembly of India, of the constitution-making authority in respect of the States would constitute an infringement of the autonomy of the States. As however, the States came closer to the Centre, it was realised that the idea of separate Constitutions being framed for the different Constituent units of the Indian Union was a legacy from the Rulers' polity and that in a people's polity there was no scope for variegated constitutional patterns. We, therefore, discussed this matter with the Premiers of the various Unions and decided, with their concurrence, that the Constitution of the States should also form an integral part of the Constitution of India. The readiness with which the legislatures of the three States in which such bodies are functioning at present, namely, Mysore, Travancore and Cochin Union and Saurashtra, have accepted this procedure, bears testimony of the wish of the people of the States to eschew the separatist trends of the past.

In view of these important developments it became necessary to recast a number of the provisions of the Constitution in so far as they related to the States. The amendments we are proposing have been examined by the Constitution-making bodies of Mysore, Saurashtra and Travancore and Cochin Union. Some of the modifications proposed by these bodies have been incorporated in the amendments tabled before the House. Others have been dropped as a result of the discussions I have had with the representatives of these Constituent Assemblies.

It is a matter of deep regret for me that it has not been possible for us to adopt a similar procedure for ascertaining the wishes of the people of the other States and Unions of States through their elected representatives. Unfortunately we have no properly constituted legislatures in the rest of the States; not will of India emerges in its final form. We have, therefore, no option but to make the Constitution operative in these States on the basis on the basis of its acceptance by the Ruler of the Rajpramukh, as the case may be, who will no doubt consult their Councils of Ministers. I am sure neither the honourable Members representing those States in this House nor the people of the States generally, would wish that the enforcement of the Constitution in these States generally, would wish that the enforcement of the Constitution in these States should be held over until legislatures of these States, when, constituted under the new Constitution, may propose amendments to the Constitution. I wish to assure the people of these States that any recommendations made by their first legislatures would receive our earnest consideration. In the meantime, I have no doubt, that the Constitution framed by this House, where all the States except one are duly represented, will be acceptable to them.

In view of the special problems with which the Government of Jammu and Kashmir is faced, we have made a special provision for the continuance of the constitutional

relationship of the State with the Union on the existing basis. In the case of Hyderabad State the acceptance of the Constitution will be subject to ratification by the people of the State.

As the House will see, in several respects the Constitution as it now emerges, is different from the original draft. We have deleted such provisions, as articles 224 and 225, which imposed limitations on the Union's legislative and executive authority in relation to States in the federal sphere. The entries in the legislative List, which differentiated between the States and Provinces have likewise been dropped. The legislative and executive authority of the Union in respect of the States will, therefore, be co-extensive with its similar authority in and over the provinces. Subject to certain adjustments during the transitional period, the fiscal relationship of the States with the Centre will also be the same as that between the Provinces and the Centre. The jurisdiction of the Supreme Court will now extend to the States to the same extent as in the case of the Provinces. The High Courts of the States are to be constituted and will function in the same manner as the Provincial High Courts. All the citizens of India, whether residing in States or Provinces, will enjoy the same fundamental rights and the same legal remedies to enforce them. In the matter of their constitutional relationship with the Centre and in their internal set-up the States will be on a par with the Provinces.

I am sure the House will note with gratification the important fact that unlike the scheme of 1935, our new Constitution is not an alliance, between democracies and dynasties, but a really union of the union of the Indian people built on the basic concept of the sovereignty of the people. It removes all barriers between the people of the States, and the people of Provinces and achieves for the first time the objective of a strong democratic Indian built on the true foundation of a co-operative enterprise on the part of the people

of the Provinces and States alike.

As the House is acquainted with trends of developments affecting the States it is not necessary for me to explain to the House the various amendments which have been tabled. There are two or three matters, however, about which I should like to make a few observations.

One of these is the proposed article 306-B. As the House is aware, the States, as we inherited them, were in varying stages of development. In most cases the advance had to be made from the starting point of pure autocracy. Having regard to the magnitude of the task, which confronted the Governments of the Unions in the transitional period, and to the fact that neither the Services inherited by them nor the political organizations, as they existed there, were in a position to assume, unaided, full responsibilities of the administration, we made a provision in some of the Covenants that till the new Constitution came into operation in these Unions, the Rajpramukh and the Council of Ministers shall, in the exercise of their functions, be under the general control of the Government of India and comply with the instructions issued by that Government from time to time. The stress of the transitional phase is likely to continue for some years. We are ourselves most anxious that the people of these States should shoulder their full responsibilities; however, we cannot ignore the fact that while the administrative organization and political institutions are to be found in most of the States in a relatively less developed state, the problems relating to the integration of the States and the change-over from an autocratic to a democratic order are such, as to test the mettle of long-established administrations and experienced leaders of the people. We have, therefore, found it necessary that in the interest of the growth of democratic efficiency, the Government of India should exercise general supervision over the Governments of the States till such time as it may be necessary.

It is natural that a provision of this nature which treats States in Part III differently from Part I States should cause some misgivings. I wish to assure the honourable Members representing these States, and through them the people of these States that the provision involves no censure of any Government. It merely provides for contingencies which, in view of the present conditions, are more likely to arise in Part III States than in the States of other categories. We do not wish to interfere with the day-to-day administration of any of the State. We are ourselves most anxious that the people of the States should learn by experience. This article is essentially in the nature of a safety-valve to obviate recourse to drastic remedies such as the provisions for the breakdown of the constitutional machinery. It is quite obvious that in this matter the States, e.g., Mysore and Travancore and Cochin Union where democratic institutions have been functioning for a long time and where Governments responsible to legislatures are in office, have to be treated differently from the States not conforming to these standards. In all these cases our control will be exercised in varying degrees according to the requirements of each case. The proviso to the article gives us the necessary discretion to deal with each case on its merits.

I hope this statement which embodies our considered policy will allay any apprehension which the Governments of any of these States may have concerning this article.

Another matter about which I would like to remove misgivings is the proposed amendment to article 3. This amendment places the States in Part III on the same footing as the States in Part I in respect of territorial readjustments. The Constituent Assembly of Mysore recommended to us that the article as already adopted by this House, which provides for prior consent of the House, should remain unaltered. We have not found it possible to agree to the suggestion for the simple reason that in such matters there should be no differentiation between

Part I and Part III States. I, however, take this opportunity of assuring the representatives of Mysore State that whether the article provides for consultation or consent of the legislature of the affected State, the wishes of the people cannot be ignored either by the Central Government or legislature. After all, we are a democracy; the main sanction behind us is the will of the people and we cannot act in disregard of public opinion.

I now come to the proposed article 267-A in respect of which some explanation is necessary. The Government of India have guaranteed to the Rulers of merged and integrated States payment of privy purses as fixed under the terms of the various Covenants and Agreements of Merger. Article 267-A give constitutional recognition to these guarantees and provides for this expenditure being charged on the Central Revenues subject to such recoveries as may be made from time to time from the Provinces and States in respect of these payments.

I shall first deal with the financial aspect of these arrangements. In the past, in most of the States there was no distinction between the expenditure on the administration and the Ruler's privy purse. Even where the Ruler's privy purse had been fixed no effective steps was not, directly or indirectly, charged on the revenues of the State. Large amounts, therefore, were spent on the Rulers and on the members of the ruling families. This expenditure has been estimated to exceed twenty crores of rupees per year.

All the agreements of merger and covenants now provide for the fixation of the Ruler's privy purse which is intended to cover all the expenses of the Rulers and their families including the expenses of their residences, marriages and other ceremonies, etc. The privy purse guaranteed under these agreements is less than the percentage for the Deccan States under the award given by Dr. Rajendra Prasad, Shri Shankarrao Deo and Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya. It is calculated on the basis of 15 per cent, on the first lakh of

average annual revenue of the State concerned ten per cent, on the next four lakhs and seven and a half per cent above five lakhs, subject to a maximum of ten lakhs. The maximum figure of ten lakhs has been exceeded only in the case of some of the major States, which had been recognised as viable and the amounts fixed in such cases are payable during their life-time only. The total annual privy purse commitments so far made amount to about Rs. four and a half crores. When the amounts guaranteed to certain Rulers during their life-time are subsequently refixed the total annual expenditure in respect of privy purses will amount to less than Rs. four crores.

Under the terms of the Covenants and the agreements entered into by the Rulers privy purses are payable to the Rulers, out of the revenues of the States concerned and payments have so far been made accordingly. During the course of the discussions with the Indian States Finances Enquiry Committee, it was urged by most of the States that the liability for paying purses of Rulers should be taken over by the Centre on the ground that-

- a. privy purses have been fixed by the Centre;
- b. privy purses are political in nature; and
- c. similar payments are not made by the Provinces.

Apart from these considerations, the position has definitely changed since the execution of the Covenants. In the first place, so far as the merged States are concerned, with their total extinction under the new Constitution of India, as separate entities, the basis of liability for privy purse payments guaranteed to the Rulers of the States will undergo a change, in that the States, from the revenues of which privy purses are payable, would cease to exist. Secondly, the term "revenues of the State" has now to be viewed in the context of the federal financial integration of States. This integration involves a two-fold procession, of 'functional' partition of the present composite State Governments, and the other of 'merger' of the partitioned

federal' portions of the State Governments with the present Central Government. It follows, therefore, that when the federal financial integration becomes effective, the liability in respect of privy purse payments should strictly speaking be shared on an equitable basis by the functional successors to the Governments of merged and integrated States, that is, the Central Government, on the one hand, and the Governments of Provinces and States on the other. Having regard to all these factors, we have decided that the best course would be that these payments should constitute a charge on the Central revenues, but that, at the same time, provision should be made for the recovery of such contributions from the Governments of the States, during such transitional period and in such amounts as may be considered appropriate. These recoveries are to be made in accordance with the scheme for financial integration of the States.

I have already stated that the privy purse settlements made by us will reduce the burden of the expenditure on the Rulers to at least one-fourth of the previous figure. besides, the States have benefited very considerably from the process of integration in the form of cash balances inherited by them from the Rulers. Thus, for instance, the Rajpramukh of Madhya Bharat alone has made over to the Union large sums of money yielding interest sufficient to cover a major portion of the total privy purses of the Rulers, who have joined this Union. So far as the assumption of the part of the burden by the Centre is concerned, we must remember that this arrangement flows as a consequence of the financial integration of the States, which will have an effect of lasting character on the economy of this country. The fiscal unification of India will patch up the disruptive rents in the economy of India which rendered effective implementation of economic policies in the Provinces impossible. Thus, for instance, in the matter of income-tax evasion alone, which has been a serious matter in recent years the gains

from federal financial integration will prove very substantial. From the financial point of view, therefore, the arrangements we have made are going to benefit very materially the economy of this country.

I shall now come to the political and moral aspect of these settlements. In order to view the payments guaranteed by us in their correct perspective, we have to remember that they are linked with the momentous developments affecting the most vital interests of this country. These guarantees form part of the historic settlements which enshrine in them the consummation of 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.

Human memory is proverbially short. Meeting in October, 1949, we are apt to forget the magnitude of the problem which confronted us in August, 1947. As the honourable Members are aware, the so-called lapse of paramountcy was a part of the Plan announced on June 3, 1947, which was accepted by the Congress. We agreed to this arrangement in the same manner as we agreed to the partition of India. We accepted it because we had not option to act otherwise. While there was recognition in the various announcements of the British Government of the fundamental fact that each State should link up its future with that Dominion with which it was geographically contiguous, the Indian Independence Act released the States from all their obligations to the British Crown. In their various authoritative pronouncements, the British spokesmen recognised that with the lapse of paramountcy, technically and legally the States would become independent. They even conceded that theoretically the States were free to link their future with whichever Dominion they liked although, in saying so, they referred to certain geographical

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compulsions, which could not be evaded. The situation was indeed fraught with immeasurable potentialities of disruption, for some of the Rulers did wish to exercise their technical right to declare independence and others to join the neighboring Dominion. If the Rulers had exercised their right in such an unpatriotic manner, they would have found considerable support from influential elements hostile to the interests of this country.

It was against this unpropitious background that the Government of India invited the Rulers of the States to accede on three subjects of Defence, External Affairs and Communications. At the time the proposal was put forward to the Rulers, an assurance was given to them that they would retain the status quo except for accession on these subjects. It had been made clear to them that this accession did not also imply any financial liability on the part of the States and that there was no intention either to encroach on the internal autonomy or the sovereignty of the States or to fetter their discretion in respect of their acceptance of the new constitution of India. These commitments had to be borne in mind when the States Ministry approached the Rulers for the integration of their States. There was nothing to compel or induce the Rulers to merge the identity of their States.

Any use of force would have not only been against our professed principles but would have also caused serious repercussions. If the Rulers had elected to stay out, they would have continued to draw the heavy civil lists which they were drawing before and in large number of cases they could have continued to enjoy unrestricted use of the State revenues. The minimum which we could offer to them as quid pro quo for parting with their ruling powers was to guaranteed to them privy purses and certain privileges on a reasonable and defined basis. 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 Mahratta settlements alone. We are ourselves honouring the commitments of the British Government in respect of the pensions of those Rulers who helped them in consolidating their Empire. Need we cavil then at the small-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 for 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 Rulers have now discharged their part of the obligations by transferring all ruling powers and by agreeing to the integration of their States. The main part of our obligation under these agreements, is to ensure that the guarantees given by us in respect of privy purse are fully implemented. Our failure to do so would be a breach of faith and seriously prejudice the stabilisation of the new order.

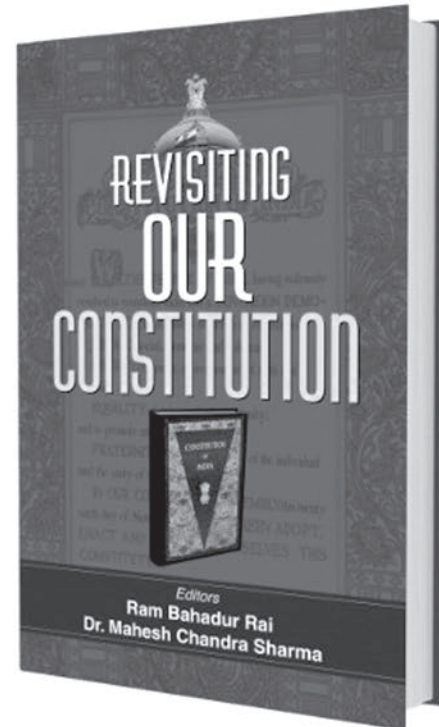
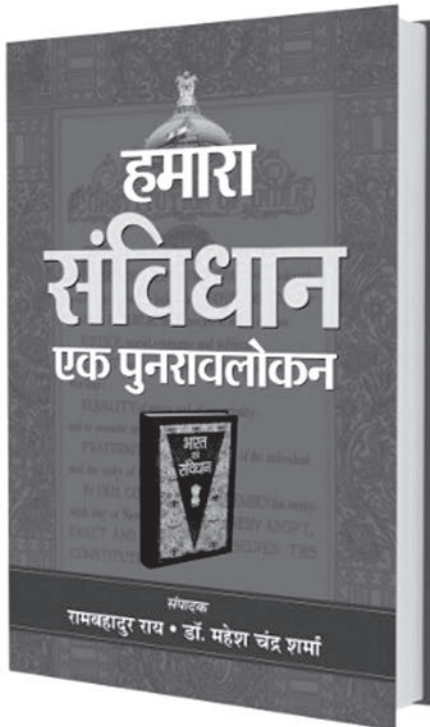
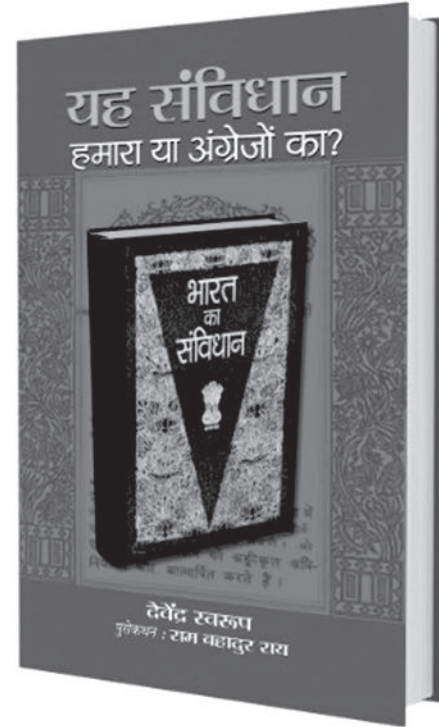
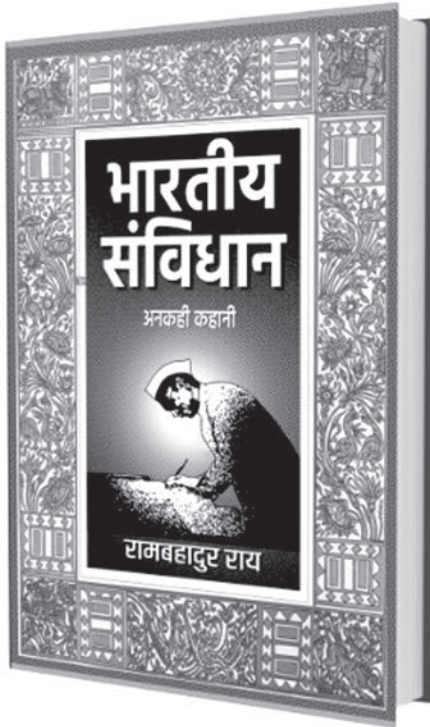
In commending the various provisions concerning the States to the House I would ask the honourable Members to view them as a coordinated over-all settlement of a gigantic problem. A particular provision isolated from its context may give a wholly erroneous impression. Some of us might find fault with what might appear as relies of the previous autocratic set up. I wish to assure honourable Members that autocracy in the States has gone, and has gone for good. Let us not get impatient with any particular term which might remind us of the past. The form in which the Rulers find recognition in the new Constitution of India, in no way impairs the democratic set up of the States. The Rulers have made an honourable exit; it now remains for the people to fill the breach and to derive full benefit from the new order.

I take the liberty to remind the House that at the Haripura Session the Congress in 1938 defined its objective in respect of the States as follows :-

"The Congress stands for the same political, social and economic freedom in the States as in the rest of India and considers the States as integral parts of India and considers the States as integral parts of India which cannot be separated. The Purna Swaraj or complete Independence, which is the objective of the Congress is for the whole of India, inclusive of the States, for the integrity and unity of India must be maintained in freedom as it has been maintained in subjection. The only kind of federation that can be acceptable to the Congress is one in which the States participate as free units, enjoying the same measure of democratic freedom as the rest of India."

I am sure the House will agree with me when I say that the provisions which we are now placing before the House embody in them full achievement of that objective.

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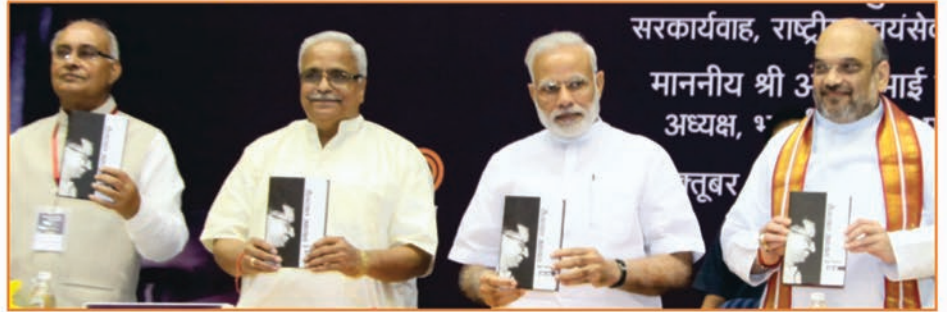


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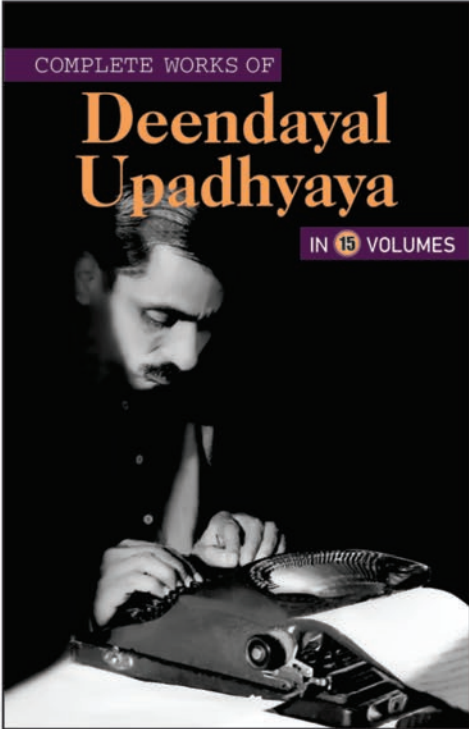
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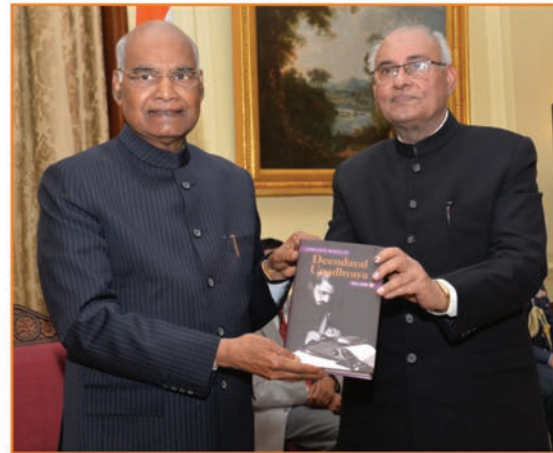
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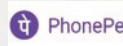
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