

# SARDAR VALLABHBHAI PATEL



Popularly known as the Iron Man of India, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel was one of the founding fathers of the Republic of India. A statesman of integrity, he played a quintessential role in helping India garner independence from the British rule. However, his role in the independence struggle did not end with just that as he was the man who guided the country to become a united, independent nation. Born in a Gujarati family, Patel was academically trained to become a lawyer. However, inspired by the works and teachings of Gandhi, he switched to give his life for the Indian struggle for independence. One of the leaders of the Indian National Congress, he raised to prominence in his home state for his outstanding work of saving peasants of Gujarat from the oppressive policies imposed by the British Raj, through non-violent civil disobedience. It wasn't long before Patel became the trailblazer in the nationalist movement. It was for his ability to lead from the front that he was given the forename, Sardar, meaning Chief. Patel is also credited for establishing modern all-India civil services and for the same, is remembered as the 'Patron Saint' of India's civil servants. It was his sheer sense of wisdom, practical acumen, sharp mind, great organizational skills and political insight that helped Patel become one amongst the greatest leaders of India.

## SARDAR VALLABHBHAI PATEL



### **Where & when born**

Vallabhbhai Patel was born on October 31, 1875 to a Gujarati family in the village of Karamsad, in Gujarat to Zaverbhai and Ladbai. His father had served in the army of the Queen of Jhansi while his mother was a very spiritual man. Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel was the fourth of the six children in that family.

### **Brief history of the person -personal**

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel tied the knot at the age of 18, to Jhaverba, who was twelve years of age then. Along with Jhaverba, he set up a house in Godhra. The couple was blessed with a daughter, Manibehn, in 1904, and a son, Dahyabhai, two years later.

Starting his academic career in a Gujarati medium school Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel had shifted to an English medium school. In 1897, Vallabhbhai passed his high school examination and started preparing for law examination. 1910, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel went to England to study law. He completed his law studies in 1913 and came back to India and started his law practice. For his Excellencies in Law, Vallabhbhai was offered many lucrative posts by the British Government but he rejected all. He was a staunch opponent of the British government and its laws and therefore decided not to work for the British.

He later started practicing at Ahmedabad. After a meeting with Mahatma Gandhi, at the Gujarat Club, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel got influenced by Gandhi's words. Later, inspired by Gandhi's work and philosophy Patel became a staunch follower of him. Vallabhbhai Patel was one of the great social leaders of India. He played a crucial role during the freedom struggle of India and was instrumental in the integration of over 500 princely states into the Indian Union.

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel's health declined in 1950. He, himself realized that he was not going to live much longer. On 2 November his health deteriorated further and was confined to bed. After suffering a massive heart attack,



## SARDAR VALLABHBHAI PATEL

on 15 December 1950, the great soul left the world.

### **Career in political**

In 1917, Sardar Vallabhbhai was elected as the Secretary of the Gujarat Sabha. The next year, when there was a flood in Kaira, the British insisted on collecting tax from the farmers. Sardar Vallabhbhai led a massive "No Tax campaign" that urged the farmers not to pay their land. The peaceful movement forced the British authority to return then land taken away from the farmers His effort to bring together the farmers of his area brought him the title of 'Sardar' to his name

In 1930 Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel was imprisoned for participating in the famous Salt Satyagraha called by Mahatma Gandhi. His inspiring speeches during the "Salt Movement" transformed the lives of numerous people, who later played a major role in making the movement successful.

Sardar Patel was freed in 1931 following an agreement signed between Mahatma Gandhi and Lord Irwin, in the same year, Patel was elected as the president of Indian National Congress Party for its Karachi session.

In 1934, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel led the all-India election campaign for the Indian National Congress. Though he did not contest a seat for himself, Sardar Patel helped his fellow party mates during the election

During the election for the Congress presidency in 1946, thirteen of the sixteen states proposed Sardar Patel's name for the post. It was a very crucial election, as the elected president of the congress party would be later considered as the first Prime Minister of independent India. Just a few days, before the all-important election, Mahatma Gandhi requested Sardar Patel to leave the candidacy and support Jawaharlal Nehru. Sardar Patel, without pondering twice, stepped down.

### **Leadership qualities**

His leadership activities earned him the title of 'Sardar'. He fought against servitude of Indians to Europeans, organized relief efforts during plague and famine in Kheda

He took a leading role in the non-violent Civil Disobedience Movement against the payment of raised tax, levied by the British. He laid emphasis on unity and non-violent demeanor despite provocation and also briefed the villagers of the potential hardships that they might have to face in the process. When the revolt was launched,



## *SARDAR VALLABHBHAI PATEL*

the British government responded by conducting raids at the holdings of the farmers. They even imprisoned thousands of villagers. The revolt had attained a national status and earned empathy from people across the country. Embarrassed by the same, the government agreed to negotiate with Patel. Not only did they suspend the payment of revenue for the year, they even scaled back the rate of tax, thus making Patel a national hero.

Once a follower of Western fashion, Patel switched to khadi. He even organized several bonfires of British goods in Ahmedabad. Apart from these, Patel supported the empowerment of women and worked for abolishing alcoholism, untouchability and caste discrimination from the society.

In his three terms as Ahmedabad's municipal president, he transformed the city completely. Since 1934, Patel played a significant role in the Indian National Congress; he became chairman of its Central Parliamentary Board. Under the pressure of Gandhi and Patel, the All India Congress Committee launched the mass civil disobedience in the form of Quit India Movement on August 7, 1942.

### **Critical moments of independence, struggle, war etc.**

At the time of independence, Indian territory was divided into three parts. First, the territories under the direct control of the British government second were the territories over which the hereditary rulers had suzerainty. The regions, which had been colonized by France and Portugal, formed the last. According to British government, the province rulers had the liberty to choose how they wanted to be ruled. They were given two choices. They could join either of India and Pakistan or stay independently. The stance of the British government had made the task much difficult for India. At this point many leaders of the congress approached the rulers but they failed to convince. At last, they all made a request to Vallabhbhai Patel to think some other options to bring the princely rulers under Indian control.

While encouraging the rulers to act with patriotism, Patel did not rule out force, setting a deadline of 15 August 1947 for them to sign the instrument of accession document. All but three of the states willingly merged into the Indian union—only Jammu and Kashmir, Junagadh, and Hyderabad did not fall into his basket. Sardar Patel eventually dealt with the tough-situation and came out successfully. He had made secured their accession. Therefore, the state of India we see today was a result of the efforts put in by Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel.



## SARDAR VALLABHBHAI PATEL

### **Principles & Practices**

- Patel was publicly defended by Gandhi and received widespread admiration and support for speaking frankly on communal issues and acting decisively and resourcefully to quell disorder and violence.
- Patel's popularity in post-independence era and even today is remembered as the man who united India. He is, in this regard, compared to Otto von Bismarck of Germany
- Patel was the chairman of the committees responsible for minorities, tribal and excluded areas, fundamental rights and provincial constitutions
- Patel also pledged the reconstruction of the ancient but dilapidated Somnath Temple in Saurashtra

### **Awards and achievements**

- Posthumously, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel was awarded with India's highest civilian award, Bharat Ratna in 1991. His birthday, which falls on October 31, is celebrated as Sardar Jayanti.
- While his home in Karmsad has been preserved in his memory, in 1980 Sardar Patel National Memorial was established, which houses a museum, a gallery of portraits and historical pictures and a library. EDIT
- A number of educational institutes in India have been named after him, including the nation's premier institutes Sardar Vallabhbhai National Institute of Technology, Sardar Patel University, and Sardar Patel Vidyalaya

### **Literary Works**

In a satirical novel "The Great Indian Novel" by Shashi Tharoor published in the year 1989, the character of Vidur Hastinapuri is simultaneously based on Patel as well as the mythological character Vidura.

### **Sources**

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vallabhbhai\\_Patel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vallabhbhai_Patel)

<http://www.culturalindia.net/leaders/sardar-vallabhbhai-patel.html>

<http://www.iloveindia.com/indian-heroes/sardar-patel.html> <http://www.thefamouspeople.com/profiles/sardar-patel-4116.php>