

PT. JAWAHAR LAL NEHRU: CONTRIBUTION AND HIS ROLE AS A NATION BUILDER

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ABSTRACT

PT. Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of India, played a key role in shaping the modern Indian state. This paper examines Nehru's contributions to nation building through his vision, policies and leadership. It examines his efforts to establish democratic institutions, promote industrialization, and promote scientific and educational progress. Nehru's strategies in dealing with post-colonial challenges such as socio-economic disparities and regional diversities are analyzed to understand their impact on India's development. The study also assesses Nehru's legacy in terms of his role in shaping India's foreign policy and his emphasis on secularism and unity. This analysis highlights how Nehru's policies and ideology laid the foundation for India's growth as a democratic and progressive nation. In this context, it is essential to understand Nehru's contribution in its proper context and its relevance to India today.

1. INTRODUCTION

The middle of the 20th century witnessed a wave of decolonization system and liberation movements on the side of ongoing struggles against imperialism. India has not turned into any exception. but amidst all these challenging situations there are divisive forces which forced the partition of India into two countries but notwithstanding that various problems consisting of social, religious, cultural, regional and linguistic conflicts wait in the future. Jawaharlal Nehru, who was the first Prime Minister of independent India, took care of the state of affairs. A prolific student of Indian history, tradition, society and financial system, he proposed a method primarily based on nationwide integration, consensual adjustment and decentralization. At the center of the functioning of the state were ideals, which include democracy, democratic socialism and welfare. Nehru's concept of nation building generally had a "modernist" outlook. He similarly approached the rationalist idea in all areas of the country's development. most importantly, he favored the national establishment of the individual over religion or its religious community. This meant that he emphasized the separation of religion and politics. Besides, the state was to be respected by all irrespective of race, caste or community. subsequently to independence, successive states that were plural like India faced problems that touched on caste, community and religious contrasts. Realizing these shortcomings and thus preparing the way for the process of nation building has therefore become the handiwork of national management. Jawaharlal Nehru had a key position in this attitude. He became the guiding light of independent India and guided its future until his death.

Nehru is remembered as the main leader of the Indian nationalist movement. As a left-leaning leader of the anti-colonial nationalist movement and an internationalist, he became known outside India in the 1920s and 1930s, speaking out against imperialism in other countries and expressing solidarity with anti-fascism and the republican cause in the country. Spanish Civil War. By the time of India's independence in 1947, he was already a world leader of some stature. Its importance grew, especially in relation to the aspirations of other emerging nationalisms in the colonial and ex-colonial world, who looked to India as an example, and with the Cold War, which created the desire of the great powers to have India strategically located both. geographically and ideologically, on their side. In India, his reputation as one of the greats of the Indian nationalist movement and recognition as the acknowledged political heir of Mahatma Gandhi made him a dominant figure in pre- and post-independence Indian politics.¹

Jawaharlal Nehru (1889-1964) was a key figure in Indian history, serving as the first Prime Minister of independent India from 1947 until his death in 1964. A prominent leader of the Indian National Congress and a central figure in the Indian independence movement, he was known for his role in shaping India's political and economic policies. Nehru advocated secularism, socialism and scientific progress, and his policies laid the foundation for the development of modern India. Nehru was born on November 14, 1889 in Allahabad, which is

now in the Indian state of Uttar Pradesh. His birthday is celebrated as Children's Day in India, in honor of his affection for children and his contribution to their welfare. Nehru was born into a prominent Kashmiri Brahmin family. His father Motilal Nehru was a successful lawyer and a leading figure in the Indian National Congress. Nehru's early education was at home under private tutors, followed by studies at the Harrow School in England. He then attended Trinity College, Cambridge, where he studied natural sciences. After completing his studies, he returned to India and was called to the bar at the Inner Temple in London.

Nehru's early life was marked by his exposure to Western education and ideas, which significantly influenced his political opinion and leadership style in the Indian independence movement. After returning to India from his studies in Britain, he joined the Indian National Congress and became deeply involved in the struggle for freedom from British colonial rule. During the 1920s and 1930s, Nehru became a close associate of Mahatma Gandhi and played a key role in organizing various campaigns such as the Non-Cooperation Movement and the Salt March. He was imprisoned several times for his activities. In the 1940s, Nehru's leadership became increasingly influential and he was appointed vice-president of the Congress and later its president. His vision of India's future included a strong, democratic and secular state, which laid the foundation for his role as the first Prime Minister of independent India when the country gained independence in 1947.

Jawaharlal Nehru is focused on state building and realizing his vision of a modern, industrialized India. He worked to establish various institutions, including the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) and the Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs), to promote science and technology education. He also faced significant challenges, including the Sino-Indian War of 1962, which strained relations with China and affected his reputation. Despite these difficulties, he remained committed to his ideals of secularism and democracy. In the early 1960s, he became increasingly ill and his health deteriorated. Nehru died on 27 May 1964, leaving behind a legacy as a key architect of modern India and a leading figure in the post-independence era.

Nation Building is a system of transforming a developing country into a developed one through concerted, coordinated and systematic efforts. Efforts by newly independent nations to redefine the population of territories carved out by colonial powers or empires without regard to religious, ethnic, or other restrictions is referred to as nation-building. To better understand this term, here are some definitions:

According to Myron Weiner, "Nation-building is a vast and extensive process that begins after the creation of a nation-state to become a viable, cohesive and well-organized, autonomous and widely acceptable entity"

Paul James defines it this way: "Nation-building and formation is the broad process by which nations come into being. Nation building desires the association of people in a state and seeks to create a politically stable and viable state with a long existence".

According to Harris Mylonas, "nation-building and legitimate authority in modern nation-states is linked to popular government, to the majority. Nation-building is the process through which these majorities are constructed".²

Wimmer argues "that levels of state capacity in the late 19th century explain contemporary differences in levels of nation-building. State elites capable of providing basic public goods—including security, infrastructure, and the rule of law—across a territory can create far-reaching networks of support for different ethnic groups, rather than limiting such networks to their own ethnic clientele. According to Wimmer, long-term processes of state formation are better predictors of successful nation-building than political regimes or legacies of imperial rule".³

Hechter defines nations as "territorially concentrated ethnic groups". Focusing on the transition from indirect to direct rule, he identifies different types of nationalism: state-building nationalism, peripheral nationalism, irredentist nationalism, unification nationalism, and patriotism. Hechter, like Gellner, defines nationalism as "collective action designed to make the boundaries of a nation coincide with the boundaries of its governmental unit".⁴

Nehru as a nation builder:

Most third world countries are the artificial creation of the departing European powers. Consequently, in most of these successor states, which were inevitably pluralistic states, there was no rapprochement between the state and the nation. The territorial boundaries of these new states usually paid little attention to ethnicity, original historical divisions, or even sometimes geography. Under such circumstances, the ruling classes of these states had to undertake what became known as the nation-building process. This was also seen in India, and in the process,

Nehru was not only the guiding light of the nationalist struggle, but directed the destiny of that nation for a little less than two decades.

During the nationalist struggle, Nehru symbolized a leftist and secular force within the Indian National Congress. A visit to the USSR in 1927 gave him first-hand experience of the socialist experiment he had always loved. He remained the harshest critic of fascism and Nazism and went to Spain himself to boost the morale of the republicans fighting in the Spanish Civil War. He proved to be a source of inspiration especially to the young and downtrodden sections of Indian society, and when truncated settlement was imposed on the subcontinent on the midnight of August 15, 1947, it was this fiery nationalist who through his historic 'Tryst Manifesto' of Destiny' awakening to the world of India as a free nation. We recall here his role in the introduction of a planned economy, initiating the process of industrialization, the development of science and technology, in an effort to nurture the apparatus of political democracy and in an effort to support the secular spirit.⁵

Nehru deserves credit for legitimizing the leadership position of the Congress in post-colonial India by seeking to create a "developmental state". As one of the founders of the non-aligned movement, Nehru again made India a force to be reckoned with in international politics. So it is often said that today, when India is facing challenges to its economic political sovereignty and threats to the secular beliefs of the Indian constitution, we must return to the core Nehruvian values of secularism, pluralism and prosperity and not agree to bail the country out of the current crisis. Nehru helped create modern India by combining the process of nation building with democracy, socialism and secularism. Under Gandhi's leadership and with Sardar Patel, Nehru built the Indian "state" and the Indian "nation". But in the field of building systems, he was the chief architect, which no one could share with him.⁶

Reorganization of the State: Jawaharlal Nehru, played a significant role in the reorganization of states in post-independence India. The primary objective was to create a more efficient and administratively coherent state structure that reflected the country's diverse linguistic and cultural demographics. Role of State Reorganization Commission in Managing Reorganization in 1953, Nehru set up the State Reorganization Commission (SRC). And in 1956 it became the States Reorganization Act. This was a key act that reorganized the boundaries of Indian states and territories. on linguistic lines. The goal of the law was to resolve regional and linguistic disputes by creating states that would more closely correspond to the linguistic and cultural identity of their inhabitants. Several states were created or reorganized under this act. Likewise, Andhra Pradesh was created in 1953 and became the first state created on linguistic basis. Kerala was formed in 1956 by the merger of the princely state of Travancore-Cochin with the Malabar region. Gujarat and Maharashtra were separated from Bombay State in 1960. The recommendations of the SRC were instrumental in shaping the boundaries of the new state. Nehru's reorganization efforts were driven by the goal of reducing regional tensions and promoting administrative efficiency by aligning political boundaries with the linguistic and cultural realities of India's diverse population.

Nehru and Socialism: Nehru was a staunch believer in socialism – a model for society. He always believed and pleaded for socialism but never joined the Congress Socialist Party and accepted Gandhiji's leadership. He was of the opinion that in a country like India, where the masses are illiterate and backward and inhabited in villages, if the state should not interfere at least in the economic and political spheres, "even bourgeois democracy was threatened". he advocated centralized economic planning and also introduced the concept of a mixed economy, arguing that these two new additions would bring about the necessary "economic change" along with the required political change. According to him, "this change will have to be towards democratically planned collectivism" (The Discovery of India). For Nehru, "collectivism" is not pure socialism, but a mixed economy where the public sector exists side by side with the private along with cooperative agriculture. The public and private sectors imagined themselves helping each other. In practice, private sector monopoly houses have grown enormously since independence, reducing Nehru's expectations. His socialism was rather Indian and offered the best prospects for meeting the demands of equality and social justice and the challenges of modern science and technology. Nehru believed in socialism in the economic sense or what is sometimes called "scientific socialism".⁷ Nehru himself used three terms, socialism, democratic socialism and the socialist pattern of society, successively over a period of forty years. That is why its content became a part of socialism at a time of change. His views on private property changed.

Nehru on Democracy: "Our democracy is a fragile plant which needs to be cultivated with wisdom and care and which requires a great understanding of its real processes and discipline. It is not just some structure that the constitution creates. This structure itself is lifeless. We need to give it life and purpose. That life must be the spirit and discipline that animates us; this purpose must be a well-organized social purpose to the realization of which we direct our efforts and energies."⁸

Nehru placed the highest importance on democracy and considered it better than dictatorship and authoritarianism. According to him, democracy is supposed to nurture the creative spirit and liberate the great masses of human beings from poverty. If not, then this creative spirit can only work in a few people. He considered economic democracy as important as political democracy. According to him, political democracy must develop into economic democracy. This will eradicate poverty and unemployment and bring development. Nehru felt that "if India succeeds in achieving these results under a system of political democracy, it would indeed be a great victory not only for India but for democracy". Establishing democracy in the nation is Nehru's primary contribution. He established and nurtured democratic institutions in the country such as parliament, independent judiciary, free and fair periodic elections, free press and non-political civil service, opposition in parliament to strengthen and preserve the democratic spirit in the country. Today, India proudly calls itself the 'world's largest democracy' - the foundations of this democracy were laid by Nehru through his vision, ideals and pragmatic approach. To quote S. Gopal, "Democracy in India achieved against daunting odds - adult suffrage, sovereign parliament, free press, independent judiciary is the most enduring monument to Nehru".⁹ As an advocate of democracy, Nehru held firm to the philosophical principles of liberty, equality and fraternity in the process of nation building.

The Idea of Secularism: Nehru's Idea of Secularism in Indian Society and Politics. He always condemned mixed ideas from political life to religion. Nehru presented secularism as the opposite of communalism. During India's independence movement, Nehru proposed the Fundamental Rights Congress Resolution (1931) in Karachi. In this proposal, the state should observe all religions neutrally. He maintained the practice of promoting an individual's religion as personal and avoided the provincial idea of religion from a political, cultural and social point of view. Nehru's definition of secularism was the separation of religion from the political, economic, social and cultural aspects of life. Religion is considered a purely personal matter. Neutral to the state in terms of religion. Freedom of all religions and tolerance of all religions. Equal opportunities for followers of all religions and no discrimination on the basis of religion. After independence, the Fundamental Rights of the Indian Constitution (Articles 25-28) and the 42nd Constitutional Amendment of 1976 added the right to freedom of religion and the word secular in the preamble. This thing corresponds to Nehru's idea of secularism. All his life condemned to fanaticism, communal separation, violent riots. If we look into Indian history, then one can find secularism since ancient times. But secularism is Nehru's forte. The way Nehru portrays secularism in his present is relevant today and will be relevant in the future.

Non-Aligned Movement: Nehru's commitment to the Non-Aligned Movement was a cornerstone of his foreign policy. The movement was founded in 1961 by leaders from newly independent countries who sought to remain independent of the major powers of the Cold War, primarily the US and the Soviet Union. Nehru was one of its key architects, along with figures such as Yugoslavia's Josip Broz Tito and Egypt's Gamal Abdel Nasser. The basic idea of non-alignment was to avoid a formal alliance with any of the superpowers and instead focus on preserving national sovereignty and promoting peaceful coexistence. The aim of the movement was to provide a platform for countries to cooperate on mutual issues without getting embroiled in Cold War rivalry. Nehru saw the movement as a way for newly independent nations to assert their independence and influence in global affairs. He believed that it was imperative that countries like India, which had recently emerged from colonial rule, did not become pawns in the geopolitical struggles between the US and the USSR.

Nehru's approach to non-alignment was pragmatic. Although India took a mixed stance, it did not avoid clashing with both blocs entirely. Under his leadership, India established diplomatic and economic relations with both the US and the USSR and balanced these relations to promote Indian interests. The movement gave developing countries a voice in global forums and aimed to create a fairer international order. It helped promote decolonization and strengthen solidarity between countries with common interests in economic development and political sovereignty. Nehru's commitment to non-alignment reflected his vision of an independent India that could navigate the complex global landscape of the mid-twentieth century without succumbing to external pressures or alliances.

Nehru and his economic policies: Nehru played a central role in shaping the economic policies of the country during his tenure from 1947 to 1964. Nehru's economic policies were often considered socialist. There is no doubt that socialism played a very significant role in Nehru's ideological makeup. At the same time, however, it is also important to consider that Nehru himself denied any overt socialist tendencies in the economic policies he adopted. Nehru advocated a kind of mixed economy. Nehru realized that any kind of unquestioning ideological adherence to any form of economic principle or "ism" would be detrimental to India's growth. He wanted a hands-on approach in building the Indian economy that would best suit the country's needs. On the one hand, as a devout Gandhian, he strongly believed in improving the rural economy. On the other hand, he firmly believed that the development of heavy industry would be the best way to serve India's economic interests. His economic strategy

centered on several key principles: 1. Planned economy: Nehru emphasized a planned economy and believed that state intervention was necessary for development. This led to the creation of a series of five-year plans aimed at promoting industrialization and economic growth. 2. Industrialization: He encouraged heavy industry and established public sector enterprises to stimulate growth. This approach was to create the basis for a modern industrial economy and reduce dependence on imports. 3. Mixed Economy: Nehru's policies promoted a mixed economy model where both the public and private sectors were involved. While the government took the lead in key sectors such as steel, energy and transport, private enterprise was encouraged to participate in other areas as well. 4. Socialist principles: His policies were influenced by socialist ideas aimed at reducing inequality and providing basic amenities to all citizens. This included significant investment in education, health and infrastructure. 5. Agricultural Development: Although industrialization was a priority, Nehru also recognized the importance of agricultural development. Efforts were made to improve agricultural productivity, although this was not as emphasized as industrial policy. Overall, Nehru's economic policies aimed to create a self-sufficient and self-sufficient economy, although they met with mixed results and faced criticism for not achieving rapid growth.

Planning Commission of India: Nehru wanted to create an ideal welfare state in India for all, not just any section of the community. He observed in other countries where one or a small section of people enjoy economic and social benefits and a large section of people live precariously, therefore he had a great awareness of the poor Indians without benefits. At the same time, Nehru did not deny the democratic path, he wanted to solve the problems of poverty and unemployment democratically on this scale, which was not achieved anywhere. While visiting Moscow in 1927, he was influenced by the Soviet experimentation with the socio-economic life of their country, but after 1947 many changes took place in Russia. Here, after the end of World War 2, Nehru watched the economic revival of European countries, these things also influenced Nehru. He pursued three steps for India: state-led industrialization, constitutional democracy, and economic and social redistribution. The Planning Commission was constituted on 15 March 1950 under the chairmanship of Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru by a resolution of the Government of India.

The Commission outlined some points, First, to make an assessment of India's material, capital and human resources, including technical personnel, and to explore the possibilities of augmenting these related resources, which are found to be insufficient in relation to national requirements. Second, to formulate a plan for the most efficient and balanced use of the country's resources. Third, define the phases based on the priority in which the plan should be implemented and propose the allocation of resources for the proper completion of each phase. Fourth, to indicate factors that tend to slow down economic development. Fifth, determine the conditions that need to be created for the successful implementation of the plan within the current socio-political situation of the country. Sixth, to determine the nature of the machinery required to ensure the successful execution of each phase of the plan in all its aspects. Seventh, to review from time to time the progress made in the implementation of each phase of the plan and also to recommend policy modifications and measures considered important for the successful implementation of the plan. Eighth, to make necessary recommendations from time to time on matters deemed necessary to facilitate the performance of these functions. Such recommendations may be related to prevailing economic conditions, current policies, measures or development programs. They may even be issued in response to some specific issues referred to the commission by the central or state governments. In July 1951, the Planning Commission prepared a draft curriculum under the title "First Five-Year Plan", where the above points were mentioned.¹⁰ Under Nehru's leadership, the Planning Commission focused on creating and implementing five-year plans aimed at addressing various socio-economic problems, including poverty, infrastructure development, and industrialization. Nehru's emphasis on planned economic development helped shape India's initial economic policy and growth trajectory.

Nehru and Indian Foreign Policy: Nehru is the architect of India's foreign policy and his vision of foreign policy during his era was guided by a set of principles and objectives aimed at ensuring India's sovereignty, promoting peace and advancing the nation's interests in the world. global scene. Key aspects of Nehru's vision included: Non-Alignment: a policy of non-alignment, advocating that India maintain its independence from both the Western and Eastern Cold War power blocs. This approach was intended to protect India's autonomy, prevent association with any military alliance, and allow the nation to pursue its own interests without being drawn into conflicts. Peaceful Coexistence: Nehru believed in peaceful coexistence among nations, emphasizing diplomacy, negotiation and dialogue to resolve international disputes. He tried to establish friendly relations with other countries, despite ideological differences. Third World Solidarity: Nehru's foreign policy aimed to promote solidarity among the newly independent nations of the Third World. He believed in the importance of collective action in solving common problems such as economic backwardness and colonial legacy.

Promotion of decolonization: Nehru was a vocal supporter of decolonization and supported the independence struggles of various nations. He saw colonialism as a grave injustice and called for an end to imperialist rule throughout the world. Promotion of Internationalism: Nehru valued India's involvement in international organizations such as the United Nations. He believed in the potential of these institutions to facilitate cooperation, promote global peace, and address issues such as poverty, health, and education. Economic self-reliance: Nehru's foreign policy extended to economic matters as well. It aimed to strengthen India's economic self-sufficiency by promoting industrialization, technological development and trade diversification. Asian Identity: Nehru emphasized India's identity as an Asian nation and sought to strengthen ties with other Asian countries. He envisioned a united and cooperative Asia that could play a significant role in global affairs. Peaceful resolution of conflicts: Nehru advocated the resolution of conflicts through peaceful means and negotiation. He believed that war and aggression should be avoided whenever possible. Nehru's foreign policy vision was shaped by a mixture of idealism and pragmatism, reflecting his deep commitment to India's national interests, sovereignty and the pursuit of global peace. Although his approach has faced challenges and criticism, his legacy in shaping India's diplomatic identity and contributing to international discourse remains enduring.¹¹

Nehru's unusual ability to think, reason and contemplate with vigor, efficiency and intensity was unmatched. He has not been with us for the last fifty years. But the impact of his strategy on equity-based economic planning and social justice continues to be central to India's state-building process. His role as the first Prime Minister of independent India was to look after the development of the state in which state building and nation building were very important. Thus, it could be argued that Nehru was concerned with social, political and economic issues while at the same time concerned with cultural and regional integration. Next, the addition of the princely states to the Indian Union under the leadership of Nehru and Sardar Patel, who was then the Home Minister, was vital. Five-year plans, establishment of planning commission, initiation of Village Development Programmes, expansion of heavy industry units, which encouraged the growth of both private and public sectors. Holding general elections based on the Universal Adult Franchise in 1951-52, 1957 and 1962 was a significant achievement for the newly decolonized nation. It will have greater significance not only for India but for the entire world. In fact, his ideas and approach to political, economic and social issues are more relevant today than during his lifetime. Policy makers, politicians, intellectuals and scientists must remember Nehru's vision for the development of India and Indians in thought and action. His vision, mission, intellect, sacrifice, dedication, scientific temperament and human approach to the masses. Nehru's spoken words, writings and the selfless work he did will resonate for centuries.

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