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Execution of Sardar Patel's Vision by the Present Government

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Abstract

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, known as the Iron Man of India, laid the foundations for a united, secure, and administratively coherent India after Independence. His core ideals—territorial integrity, bureaucratic efficiency, national unity, internal security, and economic self-reliance—continue to influence Indian governance. This paper critically evaluates the extent to which the present government under Prime Minister Narendra Modi has implemented Patel's vision. By examining policies such as the abrogation of Article 370, GST implementation, Atmanirbhar Bharat, Mission Karmayogi, and infrastructure development, this research traces ideological and functional parallels between Patel's vision and the government's actions.

Keywords: Aesthetic Nationalism, Set Design, Indian Historical Cinema, Visual Culture, Nation Building through Media

Introduction

Sardar Patel played a critical role in integrating over 560 princely states into the Indian Union, laying the foundation for a united India. His contribution toward building an efficient civil services system and a secure, economically sound nation is

unparalleled. In recent years, especially under the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government led by Narendra Modi, there has been a renewed focus on Patel's legacy, with claims of advancing his vision. This paper evaluates whether those claims reflect policy substance or remain symbolic.

Core Elements of Sardar Patel's Vision

Sardar Patel's legacy can be understood under the following dimensions:

- **Political Integration:** Seamlessly unifying a fragmented post-colonial India.
- **Administrative Strength:** Advocating a strong, merit-based civil services structure.
- **Internal Security:** Maintaining law and order with strong policing and governance.
- **Federal Structure with Central Authority:** While accepting federalism, Patel favored a strong Centre to manage India's diversity.
- **Economic Self-reliance:** Supporting local industries, agriculture, and cooperative movements.
- **National Unity:** Promoting inclusive nationalism over divisive politics.

The Statue of Unity: Symbolism and Regional Development

The **Statue of Unity**, unveiled on October 31, 2018, is the tallest statue in the world and commemorates Patel's role in unifying India.

- **Symbolism:** Represents national unity and reverence for Patel.
- **Developmental Push:** Kevadia, where the statue is located, has

become a tourism hub with infrastructure, jobs, and increased connectivity.

- **Criticism:** Opponents view it as excessive spending on symbolism rather than social welfare.

Nonetheless, this initiative visibly anchors Patel's image in the national consciousness and promotes regional development, echoing Patel's integrated approach.

Abrogation of Article 370: Realizing Territorial Unity

One of Patel's unfinished goals was full integration of **Jammu and Kashmir**. In 2019, the Indian government abrogated Article 370.

- **Legal Uniformity:** Enabled central laws to apply to Jammu and Kashmir.
- **Administrative Integration:** Reorganized the state into two union territories.
- **Increased Investment:** Post-abrogation period has seen efforts to boost tourism and infrastructure in the region.
- **Security Concerns:** Ongoing tensions and curbs on civil liberties have drawn criticism.

This bold step aligns closely with Patel's intent to unify India territorially and

administratively, although debates remain on implementation ethics and consequences.

Economic Unification through GST

The rollout of the **Goods and Services Tax (GST)** in 2017 is seen as a landmark reform in economic integration.

- **One Nation, One Tax:** Replaced a complex web of central and state taxes.
- **Increased Compliance and Transparency:** Digital reporting and automated returns streamlined tax administration.
- **Federal Cooperation:** The GST Council ensures state participation in decision-making.

GST embodies Patel's integrationist ideals in the economic domain, strengthening cooperative federalism while empowering the Centre.

Civil Services Reform: Mission Karmayogi

Patel referred to the **Indian Administrative Service (IAS)** as the "steel frame" of India. In recent years, the government has undertaken steps to reform this framework.

- **Mission Karmayogi (2020):** Aims at capacity-building, training, and performance review.

- **Lateral Entry:** Experts from the private sector are recruited to inject fresh talent.
- **Digital Platforms:** iGOT Karmayogi portal to provide training modules.

These reforms aim to build a more accountable, transparent, and citizen-centric civil service, consistent with Patel's vision.

Atmanirbhar Bharat: Self-Reliant India

Announced in 2020, **Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan** emphasizes self-sufficiency in manufacturing, agriculture, defense, and technology.

- **Support to MSMEs:** Financial stimulus and ease-of-doing-business reforms.
- **PLI Schemes:** Encouragement for sectors like electronics, pharmaceuticals, and auto.
- **Start-up Ecosystem:** Government-backed funding and innovation platforms.

This vision of economic sovereignty reflects Patel's belief in indigenous enterprise and decentralized economic growth.

Infrastructure Development: Bharatmala and Sagarmala

To enhance national connectivity, the government launched large-scale programs such as:

- **Bharatmala Pariyojana:** Highway and economic corridor development.
- **Sagarmala:** Port modernization and coastal community development.
- **Railway Modernization:** Bullet trains, station upgrades, and Vande Bharat trains.

These initiatives bolster national integration, logistics, and trade, fulfilling Patel's goal of binding India economically and physically.

Agricultural and Water Reforms: Sardar Sarovar and SAUNI Yojana

Patel championed irrigation and rural upliftment. The government's initiatives include:

- **Sardar Sarovar Dam:** Completed under Modi's leadership, it now supplies irrigation water to parched regions.
- **SAUNI Yojana:** Transfers Narmada water to drought-prone Saurashtra.

These projects align with Patel's rural-centric development philosophy.

Commemorating Patel: National Unity Day & Educational Emphasis

October 31 is now celebrated as **National Unity Day (Rashtriya Ekta Diwas)** to honor Patel's legacy.

- **Unity Runs and Campaigns:** Encourage national integration across schools and institutions.
- **Curriculum Changes:** More coverage of Patel's contributions in history textbooks.
- **Digital Outreach:** Films, documentaries, and social media campaigns.

These efforts help inculcate Patel's ideals in the younger generation.

International Outreach and Soft Power

Patel's vision was rooted in domestic consolidation, but current policies extend that ethos internationally.

- **Diaspora Engagement:** Pravasi Bharatiya Divas and economic diplomacy reflect India's global standing.
- **Defense Modernization:** Indigenous defense production as part of self-reliance.
- **Act East & Neighbourhood First:** Strengthening India's borders through diplomacy.

These initiatives connect Patel's vision with contemporary global strategies.

Criticism and Concerns

While many actions align with Patel's ideals, critiques include:

- **Centralization of Power:** Overreach by the Centre may dilute federalism.
- **Symbolism Over Substance:** Some argue that statues and campaigns lack material impact.

- **Political Appropriation:** Patel's image is often projected in opposition to Nehru, distorting historical context.
- **Civil Liberties:** Security-driven policies sometimes conflict with democratic rights.

Such criticisms suggest the need for a nuanced, balanced approach to Patel's legacy.

Aspect	Sardar Patel (Post-1947)	Present Government (2014–2024)
Political Integration	Integrated 560+ princely states	Abrogation of Article 370, focus on borders
Bureaucratic Framework	Founded IAS and IPS	Mission Karmayogi, lateral entries
Economic Unity	Supported cooperatives and rural credit	GST, Atmanirbhar Bharat, digital economy
National Symbolism	Promoted unity through action	Statue of Unity, Unity Day campaigns
Infrastructure	Initial road and irrigation works	Bharatmala, Sagarmala, Smart Cities

Comparative Analysis: Then and Now

Conclusion

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel envisioned a united, strong, and self-sufficient India built on principles of discipline, integrity, and integration. The present Indian government has undertaken significant initiatives that reflect and, in some cases, directly implement

Patel's ideals. From national unification and civil service reform to economic self-reliance

and symbolic nation-building, the current governance strategy draws heavily from Patel's blueprint. However, sustaining these gains will require balancing central authority with federal cooperation and symbolism with actionable results. The Iron Man's vision continues to be a relevant guidepost for modern India.

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