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## **Chapter-VI**

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## **CHAPTER – VI**

### **Personality : Politics: Objective: Did they differ ?**

Although the British refused in one voice to accept India as a nation, they endeavoured to develop an organization of loyal Indian intellectuals who would be of help to perpetuate their rule in India. The birth of the Indian National Congress in 1885 was the brainchild of the British imperialism and A.O. Hume was instrumental.

While in service Hume came into possession of certain evidence which showed widespread feelings of dissatisfaction and discontent in the country among Indians. "The costly and ineffectual legal system, introduced by the British, totally unsuited to Indian temperament and incapable of meeting needs, the corrupt and oppressive policy, the rigid, unsympathetic revenue system, and the galling administration of the Forest Act and the Arms Act had given rise to complaints 'not loud but deep' all around by the multitude."<sup>1</sup>

Having witnessed the 1857 Rising, Hume was convinced that the British people were in extreme danger of a most terrible revolution. His biographer<sup>2</sup> writes, "The evidence that convinced him of the imminence of the danger was contained in "seven large... volumes containing a vast number of entries... from over thirty thousand different reporters"... all going to show that these poor men were pervaded with a sense of the hopelessness of the existing state of affairs; that they were convinced that they would starve and die, and that they wanted to do something... and that some-thing meant violence."<sup>3</sup>

Hence Hume wrote, "A safety-valve for the escape of great and growing forces, generated by our own action, was urgently needed and no more efficacious safety-valve than... Congress movement could possibly be devised."<sup>4</sup>

It was the basis for the foundation of the Indian National Congress. This is a proof that before the establishment of the Congress, there was serious discontent in the country against the foreign rule, and people were getting united gradually once again. "Some of the religious heads who had come in contact with Hume told him, that unless men like him who had access to Government could do something to remove the general feeling of despair, the ominous unrest, which pervaded even the lowest strata population throughout the country would lead to some outbreak."<sup>5</sup>

In 1883, Hume appealed to the graduates of the Calcutta University to give him fifty men in order to form a body dedicated to the task of moral, social and political regeneration of India, but the real objective was otherwise. He wanted to wrest the leadership of the country from the hands of the discontented elements and transfer the same to those who had no animosity towards the British rule.

Accordingly in 1884, the Indian National Union was formed. "A preliminary report issued to the members stated that the Union was 'absolutely unanimous in insisting that unswerving loyalty to the British Crown shall be the key-note of the institution', and that it was prepared 'when necessary to oppose, by all constitutional methods, all authorities, high or low, here or in England, whose acts or omissions are opposed to those principles of the Government of India laid down from time to time by the British Parliament and endorsed by the British

Sovereign.”<sup>6</sup> These were the people for whom the British rule was a divine gift.

Though from its very inception the Congress maintained its secular character by representing all classes and sections of the people, it was never anti-government in the beginning, since its objective was only social reform. However, gradually nationalist urges began to make inroads into the life of the Congress; and with it the Government also began to segregate itself from the activities of the Congress. Even the Government prohibited its officials to visit any of the meetings of the Congress, leave alone taking part in its proceedings.<sup>7</sup>

The British saw in the constitution of the Indian National Congress a machinery of loyal Indians who would be pro to the theory of ‘Save the British Empire’, because for them India was never a political name but simply a geographical expression like Europe or Africa. “It does not mark the territory of a nation and a language, but the territory of many nations and many languages.”<sup>8</sup> For them never was there any sort of unity either physical, social, political or religious: no Indian nation and no people of India.<sup>9</sup>

The early Congressmen were the loyal Indians who never challenged the British Empire. They belonged to the upper strata of the middle class and were an educated lot. They were the friends of the British, who only believed in making humble appeals nurturing a hope that the British statesmen would ultimately respond.<sup>10</sup> This apart, for these people the English constitution was the best bulwark of popular liberties and the English Parliament the mother of democracy all over.<sup>11</sup> They did not hesitate to declare, ‘We are the citizens of a great and free Empire and we live under the protecting shadow of one of the

noblest constitutions the world has ever seen. The rights of Englishmen are ours, their privileges are ours, their constitution is ours. But we are excluded from them.<sup>12</sup> Still they continued to display their full faith in the British sense of justice and fair play.

However, situation changed as it was bound to happen, the Congress also could not keep aloof from the nationalist urges. Entered into the fray Lala Lajpat Rai, Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Bipin Chandra Pal. The Congress came to be guided by both the moderates and the extremists, though it launched Swadeshi and Boycott Movement in 1905. But nothing substantial achieved. The Government was with the loyalists. Pyarelal writes, 'Everybody who was anybody in public life was shadowed, his mail was censored and his correspondence was liable to be intercepted. Nobody dared speak or breathe freely. The atmosphere was choked with suspicion and distrust. People were afraid of their own shadow. Nobody knew who was who; every stranger was looked upon as a Government spy.'<sup>13</sup>

Being harassed by the British Intelligence Department, Lala Lajpat Rai took shelter in the U.S.A. Tilak was sentenced to six years' of rigorous imprisonment on the charge of seditious writings and was deported to Mandalay in Burma. Arbindo Ghosh had become a recluse. B.C. Pal was totally fused. Arbindo observes, 'No man seemed to know which way to move, and from all sides came the question, 'What shall we do next? What is there that we can do?''<sup>14</sup> In 1911 the Seditious Meetings Act was passed by the Government. The nationalist movement had fizzled out.

The First World War began with no sign of change in the British attitude. The brute force was let loose and there was no sign of relief in sight. Admittedly, it was a period of darkness in nationalist movement.

People awaited eagerly for the dawn to arrive. The harbinger of dawn in India's freedom movement was no other person than Mohandas Karam-Chand Gandhi, 'The author and the hero of the South African Satyagraha struggle'.<sup>15</sup>

A dangerous revolutionary in the eyes of the British became a supreme physician of the Indians overnight. Gandhi emerged to guide when extreme repression took precedence over reform. Though people were at a loss to find out a way to protest, there was no established political party or a leader then to show them the right way. Here appears Gandhi as a messiah with an innocent looking tool of non-cooperation to challenge the mighty British Empire. The British, not for an iota of a second, thought then that 'a half naked fakir' would one day prove invincible for them. Though Gandhi's predominance in the Congress was felt as early as its Amritsar session in December 1919, his call for non-cooperation with the Government was accepted at its special session in September 1920 and then finally adopted at its regular session in December 1920.

For Gandhi's whirlwind appearance in Indian politics, it seems, Nehru is awestruck, 'He was like a powerful current of fresh air that made us stretch ourselves and take deep breaths; like a beam of light that pierced the darkness and removed the scales from our eyes; like a whirlwind that upset many things, but most of all the working of people's minds. He did not descend from the top; he seemed to emerge from the millions of India, speaking their language and incessantly drawing attention to them and their appalling condition.'<sup>16</sup> But Nehru's statement in respect of Gandhi is no exaggeration, the latter had all the attributes of great men. Hegel sums up, "They are great men, because they willed and accomplished something great; not

a mere fancy, a mere intention, but that which met the case and fell in with the needs of the age.<sup>17</sup>

Jawaharlal Nehru was almost a non-entity during this period. He had heard about Gandhi's exploits in South Africa and his leading about 2,300 civil resisters to Natal to disobey the prohibitory order of the Government. Though Gandhi had not tried out these methods in India, Nehru was deeply impressed by this methodology.

Nehru had first seen Gandhi at Lucknow Congress in 1916, but it seems, he was not much impressed. But gradually Gandhi gained sway over him. "My first meeting with Gandhiji was about the time of the Lucknow Congress... All of us admired him for his heroic fight in South Africa, but he seemed very distant and different and apolitical to many of us young men. He refused to take part in Congress or national politics then and confined himself to the South African Indian question. Soon afterwards his adventures and victory in Champaran, on behalf of the tenants of the planters, filled us with enthusiasm", writes Nehru.<sup>18</sup>

The First World War was on. Lala Lazpat Rai urged the Indians from America to help the British Government. In fact, he wanted the Indian youths to obtain training in fighting. Tilak and Gandhi too came out in the open to support the British in its war efforts. In spite of this show of loyalty, the people had little sympathy with the British.<sup>19</sup>

The revolutionary movement began in India in 1912 under the leadership of Rash Behari Bose. Even as far as in America Gadhari Party was formed. A bomb was thrown at the procession of Lord Hardinge and also an attempt was made to cause revolt in the Indian army. Though all these attempts failed to produce any substantial result, it did cause flutter in the minds of the British bureaucracy. The Government of India constituted a committee under Justice Rowlett to

enquire into the causes and extent of the revolutionary activities and to find out ways and means for their eradication.

The reports submitted by Rowlett proposed draconian measures to curb these activities. There was widespread resentment in the country because the Government was going to assume immense powers to deal with the revolutionaries summarily without resorting to the normal practice of law. This was too much for Gandhi to swallow. He came forward with an offer of satyagraha in the event of the recommendations of Rowlett becoming law.

The crisis of leadership in the Congress after the demise of Gokhle in 1915 was over with the emergence of Gandhi. Thus began the Gandhian phase in the history of freedom movement in India. 'All great movements wait for their God-sent leader, the willing channel of force, and only when he comes, move forward triumphantly to their fulfilment.'<sup>20</sup>

Nehru sums up the situation in India under the British at the time of the advent of Gandhi as follows, "...the dominant impulse in India under British rule was that of fear – pervasive, oppressive, strangling fear; fear of the army, the police, the widespread secret service; fear of the official class; fear of laws meant to suppress and of prison; fear of the landlord's agent; fear of the moneylender; fear of unemployment and starvation, which were always on threshold. It was against this all – pervading fear that Gandhi's quiet and determined voice was raised : Be not afraid."<sup>21</sup>

Though Nehru admits that Gandhi influenced millions of people in India, he expresses his doubts whether removal of fear could be so simple as promised by Gandhi. However, he provides his own answer, 'So, suddenly, as it were, that black pall of fear was lifted from the

people's shoulders, not wholly of course, but to an amazing degree. As fear is close companion to falsehood, so truth follows fearlessness. The Indian people did not become much truthful than they were, nor did they change their essential nature overnight; nevertheless a sea-change was visible as the need for falsehood and furtive behaviour lessened. It was a psychological change, almost as if some expert in psychoanalytical methods had probed deep into the patient's past, found out the origins of his complexes, exposed them to his view, and thus rid him of that burden.<sup>22</sup>

Truth and non-violence are high experiences of man; and these two were deeply embedded in Gandhi. 'I do not know of any person who holds to the truth as Gandhi does', writes Nehru.<sup>23</sup>

On Rowlett Bills, Nehru's reaction is worth-noting, 'Today, fifteen years later, we have any number of laws on the statute book, functioning from day to day, which are far harsher than the Rowlett Bills were. Compared to these new laws and ordinances, under which we now enjoy the blessings of the British rule the Rowlett Bills might almost be considered a charter of liberty.'<sup>24</sup> This remark of Nehru should not be construed as belittling of Gandhi's action against Rowlett Bills. In fact, the Rowlett Bills were the beginning. At a later stage, we find harsher acts were operationalised by the British, therefore, vis-à-vis the later acts the Rowlett Bills were almost 'charter of liberty'. Perhaps, Nehru meant they were of lesser consequence.

Gandhi's appeal to the Viceroy not to pass the bills went unheeded. There was no option left before Gandhi than to declare his satyagraha immediately. The bugle of satyagraha was blown on 6<sup>th</sup> April 1919 in Bombay. The response was wonderful all over India. This was the beginning of Gandhi's career as an all-India political leader.

This also marked the beginning of the application of the technique of satyagraha in India's struggle for freedom. Though the technique achieved success in South Africa, it was by no account an easy task in India to implement because it was absolutely a new concept and the people who were supposed to bring it into operation were not actually accustomed to it. It was a principle not purely political for it incorporated certain mystical and ethical elements also into it.

Gandhi addressed the gathering, 'No country has even risen, no nation has ever been made without sacrifice, and we are trying an experiment of building up ourselves by self-sacrifice without resorting to violence in shape or form. This is satyagraha... When we have acquired habits of discipline, self control, qualities of leadership and obedience, we shall be better able to offer collective civil disobedience, but until we have developed these qualities, I have advised that we should select for disobedience only such laws as can be disobeyed by individuals. It is therefore necessary for us till we are sufficiently disciplined and till the spirit of satyagraha has permeated large bodies of men and women to obey regulations regarding processions and gatherings. Whilst we disobey certain selected laws, it is incumbent on us to show our law-abiding character by respecting all other laws. And when we have reached the necessary standard of knowledge and discipline, we shall find that machine guns and all other weapons, even the plague of airplanes will cease to afflict us.'<sup>25</sup>

It was indeed a great expectation from those who never had a taste of it before. Though the response was overwhelming initially, disturbances had broken out he helter-skelter. It was a test of Gandhi's leadership. But at no cost could he compromise with violence, not even at the cost of his leadership. This was possible only with Gandhi. He openly recounted the misdeeds of the people in a meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> April,

1919, 'I have said times without number that satyagraha admits of no violence, no pillage, no incendiaries, and still in the name of satyagraha we burnt down buildings, forcibly captured weapons, extorted money, stopped trains, cut off telegraph wires, killed innocent people and plundered shops and private shops and private houses. If deeds such as these could save me from the prison house or the scaffold, I should not like to be saved.'<sup>26</sup>

Gandhi suspended the civil disobedience movement. He realised unless properly trained, any future satyagraha was bound to be violent. Therefore, he decided to raise a band of properly trained volunteers before taking any decision on this line.

In the beginning, it seems, Nehru was highly enthusiastic towards Gandhi's civil disobedience methodology. He was ready 'to join the Satyagraha Sabha immediately'<sup>27</sup>, since, he thought, it was the only way out when the entire country was passing through the phase of political indecision. But suddenly it dawned upon him that all this was no smooth sailing when he thought of its consequences with cool head. Even he thought, "What good would the gaol-going of a number of individuals do, what pressure could it bring on the Government?"<sup>28</sup>

Though for his father Motilal also the idea of going to prison was "preposterous", both the father and the son tried to sleep on the floor to find out what it was like if they went to prison.

After suspending the civil disobedience movement he did not take respite for a moment but continued his effort to educate the people for future movement of bigger dimension. Gandhi writes, "It is my perception of the law of satyagraha which impels me to suggest the suspension. I am sorry, when I embarked upon a mass movement I understated the forces of evil and I must now pause and consider how

best to meet the situation." But he admits, his attitude towards the Rowlett Legislation remained unchanged.<sup>29</sup>

Gandhi was invited by Gokhale to return to India. In fact, he wanted to strengthen the Congress. In South Africa, Gandhi had virtually brought the British Government in the dock by his satyagraha, which fact was known to Gokhale. Though Gandhi was a pacifist, he knew no submission "to fate or anything that he considered evil."<sup>30</sup> He was willing to undergo pain and suffering to any length for a right cause. He inherited this quality from his forefathers like Dewan Uttam Chand.<sup>31</sup>

This apart, Kasturba his wife, also played an important role in grooming him. Later Gandhi also admitted this fact, 'She was a woman always of a very strong will, which in our early days I used to mistake for obstinacy. But that strong will enabled her to become, quite unwittingly, my teacher in the art and practice of nonviolent non-cooperation.'<sup>32</sup>

Being a man of self-respect and pride, he never hesitated to confess any truth whatever be the situation. When in London, at regular Sunday dinner in the house of an aged widow, one girl tried to develop intimacy with him. Gandhi immediately became alert and did not think for a moment to intimate, "I assure you I have taken no improper liberties with the young lady you were good enough to introduce to me. I knew my limits. You, not knowing that I was married, naturally desired that we should be engaged. In order that things should not go beyond the present stage, I must tell you the truth."<sup>33</sup>

Because of these qualities, Gandhi in political field won the respect of both friends and foes. He was the most appropriate person to fulfill the vacuum during that period of leadership crisis. Gandhi

adopted total newness in guiding national movement. His application of satyagraha in Indian political scenario was absolutely a new concept. It did not subscribe to any existing methodology. He realized in any violent struggle in the world there had never been any involvement of the larger section of people; the same was true with India till his advent into Indian politics. For the first time in Indian political history, the freedom struggle in India received mass base because Gandhi spoke in people's language.

Gandhi's non-violent struggle initially involved the following course of actions:

- a) Renouncing of titles and honorary positions;
- b) Boycott of legislatures;
- c) Withdrawal of children from government schools;
- d) Giving up practice by lawyers and helping people to settle their civil disputes among themselves;
- e) Polite refusal to attend to government functions, parties etc. and citing non-cooperation as the sole reason for doing so.<sup>34</sup>

"The non-cooperation I have suggested is a mild way of boycotting. Total boycott is the ultimate stage in non-cooperation,"  
*Gandhi said this on the eve of the non-cooperation*  
movement that was to start from 1<sup>st</sup> August 1920.<sup>35</sup>

This way Gandhi provided a democratic touch to his approach. The technique of non-violent non-cooperation movement involved into its ambit almost all sections of people either directly or indirectly.<sup>36</sup> From 1920 onwards, the Indian National Congress ceased to remain a party of elites and educated rather it metamorphosed into, in true

sense, a national party – people of all sections joined into its fold, and the movement it launched under Gandhi's leadership, in actuality, assumed mass character.

Nehru writes that the older generation of the Congress leaders, having born in different tradition, did not take easily the new ways of Gandhi, even they felt disturbed by the upsurge of the masses. "Yet so powerful was the wave of feeling and sentiment that swept through the country, that some of this intoxication filled them also."<sup>37</sup>

On Gandhi's potential to sway the masses Nehru elaborates further, "He has been a demon of energy and action, a hustler, and a man who not only drives himself but drives others. He has done more than anyone I know to fight and change the quietism of the Indian people... He sent us to the villages, and the countryside hemmed with the activity of innumerable messengers of the new gospel of action. The peasant was shaken up and he began to emerge from his quiescent shell. The effect on us was different but equally far-reaching, for we saw, for the first time as it were, the villager in the intimacy of his mud-hut, and with the stark shadow of hunger always pursuing him."<sup>38</sup>

Gandhi had an extraordinary organizational ability. The effect of his non-violent non-cooperation movement was massive in 1921. Joining in the fray leaving their lucrative legal practice were Motilal Nehru, C. R. Das, Vallabhbhai Patel, Vithalbhai Patel and Rajendra Prasad. Others in the line who followed suit were important contemporary Muslim leaders of the country, such as, Ali Brothers, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Dr. Ansari and Hakim Ajmal Khan. More than forty-lac volunteers were recruited to launch country –wide movement, for the first time in the country such an enthusiasm was ever witnessed amongst the people. Decision was taken to boycott the

visit of His Royal Highness the Duke of Connaught. Gandhi expressed his apology, in all humility, for this boycott to the Duke, "His Royal Highness the Duke of Connaught will be soon in our midst. It is a matter of great sorrow to me that I should have to advise a complete boycott of all public function held in his honour. He is personally an amiable English gentleman. But in my humble opinion, public interest demands this official visit should be strictly ignored. His Royal Highness comes to sustain a corrupt system of government; he comes to whitewash an irresponsible bureaucracy, he comes to make us forget the unforgettable, he comes not to heal the wounds inflicted upon us but to mock us by flinging deceptive reforms at us. To welcome His Royal Highness is to associate with him in promoting our dishonour."<sup>39</sup>

The response to Gandhi's call to non-violent non-cooperation movement was overwhelming. The movement of 1921-22 was biggest of its kind in the history of India. Gandhi declared, 'By non-violent non-cooperation we seek to conquer the wrath of the English administrators and their supporters. We must love them and pray god that they might have wisdom to see what appears to us to be their errors.'<sup>40</sup> For him civil disobedience was rebellion but without an element of violence in it and civil resister would simply ignore the authority of the state. He compared a body of civil registers to an army, who are subjected to all the discipline of a soldier but deprived of any excitement of an ordinary soldier's life. He emphasized that non-cooperation is an offshoot of love not hatred.<sup>41</sup>

But Gandhi's calculation was going wrong. His teaching 'to love our enemies' was gradually dying in the din of enthusiasm. News of sporadic incidents of violence reached Gandhi from different corners of India. A violent clash between the police and a crowd of people at

Chauri Chaura in Gorakhpur district of U.P. was the last straw on the camel's back. Here the police had fired on the crowd killing several demonstrators on the spot. The demonstrators retaliated, set the police station on fire. Around twenty policemen were burnt alive. This incident took place on 5 February 1922 and immediately after that Gandhi took the unilateral decision to suspend the movement. Gandhi's reaction to Chauri Chaura episode is worth noting here, 'God has been abundantly kind to me the third time that there is not as yet in India that truthful and non-violent atmosphere which and which alone can justify mass disobedience which can be at all described as civil, which means gentle, truthful, humble, knowing, willful yet loving, never criminal and hateful.'<sup>42</sup>

Most of the Congress leaders were shocked at this sudden suspension of movement. They expressed their serious dissatisfaction, and amongst them were Motilal and Jawaharlal. Gandhi tries to explain, "...I sympathies with you, and my heart goes out to Father. I can picture to myself the agony through which he must have passed, but I also feel that this letter is unnecessary because I know the first shock must have been followed by a true understanding of the situation... the brutal murder of the constables by an infuriated crowd which was in sympathy with non-cooperation cannot be denied. Nor can it be denied that it was a politically minded crowd. It would have been criminal not to heed to such a clear warning... I assure you that if the thing had not been suspended we would have been leading not a non-violent struggle but essentially a violent struggle... The cause will prosper by this retreat.'<sup>43</sup>

About his immediate reaction, Nehru writes at a later date in his 'Autobiography', "The sudden suspension of our movement after the Chauri Chaura incident was resented, I think by almost all the

prominent Congress leaders, other than Gandhiji of course. My father (who was in goal at the time) was much upset by it. The younger people were naturally even more agitated. Our mounting hopes tumbled to the ground, and this mental reaction was to be expected. What troubled us even more were the reasons given for this suspension and the consequences that seemed to flow from them... If this was the sole condition of its function, then the non-violent method of resistance would always fail."<sup>44</sup>

But Nehru immediately retracts, perhaps he realizes that he is wrong, 'We had accepted this method, the Congress had made that method its own, because of a belief in its effectiveness. Gandhiji had placed it before the country not only as the right method but also as the most effective one for our purpose. In spite of its negative name it was a dynamic method, the very opposite of a meek submission to a tyrant's will. It was not a coward's refuge from action, but the brave man's defiance of evil and national subjection.'<sup>45</sup>

In fact, the suspension of the movement at that point of time was the only course left for Gandhi, he had no other option. Subsequent developments in India's struggle for freedom proved it to be the best course 'If I had deliberately continued the struggle, the nation would have been crushed. As a result of the postponement of the struggle the nation has made progress, though at a slow rate, its thinking power has increased and the awakening that followed in its wake has been stabilized,' admitted Gandhi on 10.11.1929.<sup>46</sup>

Though the abrupt halt of the non-violent non-cooperation movement and criticism by some Congressmen led the British Government to assess that the influence of Gandhi on his countrymen was on the wane, in reality it was the beginning of the manifestation of

his popularity, which with the passage of time went on becoming stronger and stronger. This fact dawned upon the British Government much later when it was too late. Because of his high ideals and saintly character, Gandhi not only earned respect of his countrymen but his detractors also.

Gandhi was immediately arrested and put to trial. The Sessions Judge, Mr. Bloomfield, who tried Gandhi and sentenced him to six years of simple imprisonment, heaped all praise upon Gandhi in the open court, 'Nevertheless, it will be impossible to ignore the fact that you are in a different category from any person I have tried or am likely to have to try. It would be impossible to ignore the fact that in the eyes of millions of your countrymen, you are a great patriot and a great leader. Even those who differ from you in politics look upon you as a man of high ideals and of noble and of even saintly life. I have to deal with you in one character only... It is my duty to judge you as a man subject to the law... a sentence of six years in all, which I feel it my duty to pass upon you. And I should like to say in doing so, that if the course of events in India should make it possible for the Government to reduce the period and release you, no one will be better pleased than I.'<sup>47</sup>

Henceforth, we find Gandhi dominated the Indian political setting like a colossus. He was now almost alone in the leadership and remained sole authority of the Congress,<sup>48</sup> though he had relinquished his leadership for almost seven years. During this period, the country again plunged into leadership crisis since Gandhi was not in the picture. In fact, Gandhi had himself retired into the background with an objective to fulfill his social obligations to the country. He tried his level best to keep himself away from the then political wrangles. Gandhi took up constructive activities, such as rejuvenating khadi and village

industries, making campaign for removal of untouchability and working towards national integrity. In fact, the objective of Gandhi during this period of lull was to groom the people towards self-sufficiency and unity, and prepare them towards realizing a greater goal of national liberation. He wrote, 'Whilst it is perfectly true that the country as a whole has made remarkable progress in the cultivation of a non-violent spirit it can -not be denied that there is still room for the improvement...'”<sup>49</sup>

Gandhi's methodology of non-violent non-cooperation was an only alternative to constitutional agitation and terrorism, because both of them had so long “failed to make a real dent on the imperialist structure in India.”<sup>50</sup> It was during this period of Gandhi's absence it was realized that Gandhi was the sole leader who had carried mass prestige and could control and direct the masses the way he liked. None of his colleagues was equal to Gandhi and none could claim such power and influence. He was trusted more than anybody else despite his leanings on spiritualism and morality. He could feel the psyche of the people as none else and people understood him more than any of his contemporaries because he suffered equally when they suffered.

Gandhi was recalled again to take up the leadership at the Calcutta Congress in 1928. It was at the Lahore Congress under the presidentship of Jawaharlal Nehru it was decided to observe the 26<sup>th</sup> of January 1930 as the day of 'Purna Swaraj' or complete independence. Here Gandhi was instrumental in getting this Nehru Report accepted, however, in the Report the word Dominion Status was incorporated. Gandhi explains, 'For the Congress, Dominion Status means complete independence plus voluntary partnership with Britain... Complete independence of the Congress is no menace to a single legitimate

foreign interest or the presence of a single Englishman who will live as a friend willing to submit to the rules applicable to the whole of Independent India."<sup>51</sup> The British people were no enemy to Gandhi. He expected in them there would be a real change of heart and they would see India a free and self-respecting nation. "... That means substitution of the steel bayonet by that of the goodwill of the people."<sup>52</sup> Now Gandhi was once more at the helm of affairs.

An ultimatum was sent to the British Government either to implement the Nehru Report by December 1929 or he would launch civil disobedience movement on a larger scale than before. Under the leadership of Gandhi the Congress now became the sole spokesman of the people.

Came January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1930, for the first time in India the national flag was unfurled. Excitement and enthusiasm amongst the people knew no bounds. On 26 January<sup>am</sup> independence pledge was taken en masse all over India. To quote Nehru, "Independence Day came, January 26<sup>th</sup>, 1930, and it revealed to us, as in a flash, the earnest and enthusiastic mood of the country. There was something vastly impressive about the great gatherings everywhere, peacefully and solemnly taking the pledge of independence without any speeches of exhortation. This celebration gave the necessary impetus to Gandhiji, and he felt, with his sure touch on the pulse of the people, that the time was ripe for action."<sup>53</sup>

The pledge declared, "We hold it to be a crime against man and God to submit any longer to a rule that has caused this fourfold disaster to our country. We recognize, however, that the most effective way of gaining our freedom is not through violence. We will therefore prepare ourselves by withdrawing, so far as we can, all voluntary

association with the British Government, and will prepare for civil disobedience, including non-payment of taxes. We are convinced that if we can but withdraw our voluntary help and stop payment of taxes without doing violence, even under provocation, the end of this inhuman rule is assured. We therefore hereby solemnly resolve to carry out the Congress instructions issued from time to time for the purpose of establishing Purna Swaraj.”<sup>54</sup>

This pledge, in its entirety, is nothing but manifestation of total commitment of the Congress to the Gandhian principle of nonviolence. Complete independence has become the goal as well as the firm determination of the leaders as of the masses. Gandhi was entrusted with full powers to start the civil disobedience movement by the Congress at its Working Committee meeting on February 14-16, 1930 at Sabarmati. It declared at its resolution:

“In the opinion of the Working Committee, Civil Disobedience should be initiated and controlled by those who believe in non-violence for the purpose of achieving Purna Swaraj, as an article of faith, and as the Congress contains in its organisation not merely such men and women but also those who accept non-violence as a policy essential in the existing circumstances in the country, the Working Committee welcomes the proposal of Mahatma Gandhi and authorizes him and those working with him who believe in non-violence as an article of faith to the extent above indicated, to start Civil Disobedience as and when they desire and in the manner and to the extent they decide.”<sup>55</sup>

Gandhi called civil disobedience “a complete, effective and bloodless substitute of armed revolt” and the last stage of the most drastic form of non-cooperation. The country as a whole pledged itself to the non-violence doctrine of Gandhi.

Gandhi's appeal to the Viceroy had fallen into deaf ears, the latter refused to see him. In sheer disappointment, Gandhi sent a rejoinder on 2 March, 1930, "On bended knees I asked for bread and received a stone instead. The English Nation responds only to force, and I am not surprised by the Viceregal reply. The only public peace the Nation knows is the peace of the public prison... Civil disobedience alone can save the country from impending lawlessness and secret crime, since there is a party of violence in the country, which will not listen to speeches, resolutions or conferences but believes only, in direct action."<sup>56</sup> Gandhi called this civil disobedience a non-violent revolution, which to him not a programme of 'seizure of power', but a programme of transformation of relationships.<sup>57</sup>

Gandhi had no option left; there could not be any retreat now. He has to go ahead irrespective of the consequences, and ahead he went. In fact, Gandhi knew beforehand that there would be lukewarm response from the side of the British Government to his appeal, therefore he had already issued instructions to his followers to be followed should he be arrested, 'This time on my arrest there is to be no mute, passive non-violence, but non-violence of the activist type should be set in motion, so that not a single believer in non-violence as an article of faith for the purpose of achieving India's goal should find himself free or alive at the end of the effort to submit any longer to the existing slavery... When the beginning is truly made, I expect the response from all over the country. It will be the duty then of everyone who wants to make the movement a success to keep it nonviolent and under discipline... whilst, therefore, every effort imaginable and possible should be made to restrain the forces of violence, civil disobedience once begun this time cannot be stopped and must not be stopped as long as there is a single resister left free or alive.'<sup>58</sup>

The historic Dandi march began on 12 March 1930 with seventy-eight followers to break the prohibition of making salt. "The fire of a great resolve is in him and surpassing love of his miserable countrymen. And love of truth that scorches and love of freedom that inspire", wrote Nehru.<sup>59</sup> Covering 241 miles Gandhi reached Dandi on April 5, 1930. Next day he went to the beach picked up a lump of salt and technically violated the Salt Act. In fact, this symbolic gesture of Gandhi was to stir the whole nation and he did it with success. Nehru comments, "It seemed as though a spring had been suddenly released; and all over the country, in town and village, salt manufacture was the topic of the day, and many curious expedients were adopted to produce salt... As we saw the bounding enthusiasm of the people and the salt-making was spreading like a prairie fire, we felt a little abashed and ashamed for having questioned the efficacy of this method when it was first proposed by Gandhiji. And we marvelled at the amazing knack of the man to impress the multitude and make it act in an organised way"<sup>60</sup>

Thus began the non-violent civil disobedience movement throughout India. Millions of Indians joined. Only could Gandhi do this, and he did it and the world felt awe-struck. This was Gandhi an unparalleled leader of the Indian sub-continent. The movement was blow right across the face of the British Government. All kinds of terror was let loose on the unarmed non-violent agitators. Though Gandhi was arrested, the movement continued unabated. Thousands were arrested and put behind the bars. People braved the blows of lathis without protest. This was the spell of Gandhi. His words were as good as command of a general, none of his followers even for a single moment thought to go against it.

The Government felt the mood of the people. Despite unprecedented repression, the tempo of the movement was rising every day. The Government was eager to come to terms. Gandhi and the members of the Congress Working Committee were released on January 26, 1931. Gandhi-Irwin Pact was signed. Though no demands of the Congress were conceded, the very fact that the all powerful British Government had to bow down to sign a pact with the leader of the people of India was in itself an achievement of sorts for the Indian people. The civil disobedience movement was suspended temporarily to pave the way for the Second Round Table Conference. True, nothing substantial achieved as a result of the civil disobedience movement, it reflected for the first time before the world the power of truth and non-violence. To quote Louis Fisher, "The British beat the Indian with batons and rifle butts. The Indians neither cringed nor retreated. That made England powerless and India invincible."<sup>61</sup> This apart, the salt satyagraha which received such an unprecedented response shook for the first time in Indian history the very foundation of the British Empire. This was indirectly a victory of Gandhi's leadership.

Gandhi left for London as per his agreement with Irwin to attend the Second Round Table Conference from September to December in 1931. The Conference was totally a failure. Gandhi returned on December 28, 1931. He was immediately put to arrest on the plea that on his way back at Rome he had given a press statement that he would restart the civil disobedience movement. The British Government, it appeared, was simply playing with time. Worst kind of repression was imposed. The Congress organization was proscribed. Under new ordinance anybody could be arrested under suspicion. Gandhi restarted the civil disobedience movement.

On the issue of the Communal Award, Gandhi took fast unto death. He was released from the jail on May 8, 1933. He took the decision to suspend the mass civil disobedience movement with immediate effect quoting the ground that the Congress had not in actuality accepted the non-violent methodology. But Gandhi admitted, "It has raised Indian from the slough of despond and has brought her prestige which nothing else could have. I make bold to say that, if the non-violence offered had not been adulterated, its effect would have been still more visible."<sup>62</sup> Withdrawing himself totally from the movement Gandhi turned his attention towards the untouchable problem. Gandhi was not only a political reformer but a social reformer too. During this period of retirement from active politics Gandhi took up the mission as a revivalist.

Though Gandhi had withdrawn from active politics, he was all along a guiding force behind the scene. The Second World War came. Once again the Congress felt the leadership crisis because Gandhi was not making direct interference into its day-to-day activities. When India was declared as a belligerent country by the British Government the Congress in its resolution in September 1939, seriously resented this attitude since the consent of the Indian people was not obtained.<sup>63</sup>

During this period once again the significance of Gandhi to lead the Congress was seriously felt imperative. Gandhi assumed the leadership. In fact, the Congress turned to Gandhi after the Viceroy made his phoney "August offer", which promised to concede nothing but only sought co-operation from the Congress in an advisory capacity. A resolution adopted by the All India Congress Committee on September 16, 1940 clearly stated, "The Congress is pledged under Gandhiji's leadership to non-violence for the vindication of India's freedom, the All India Congress Committee, therefore,

requests him to guide the Congress in the action that should be taken.”<sup>64</sup>

Gandhi was again in the forefront. It was the intention of the Congress to restart the passive resistance applying non-violent methods. But Gandhi was against such intention of the Congress. He did not want to embarrass the British Government. He declared, “We do not seek our independence out of Britain’s ruin. That is not the way of non-violence.”<sup>65</sup> He further elaborated, “At a time when the British people are fighting for their existence and are risking their lives and their all, no satyagrahi will ask ‘Are you going to give us Swaraj now or not?’ He will remain quiet. He will say, ‘Why fight against an opponent in trouble?’ We cannot start the battle of Swaraj now on the assumption that they will give us nothing after they have won the war. It is not the way of satyagrahis to take advantage of the opponent’s weak position to wrest political power from him. We have to wrest power with our own strength. We, therefore, tell them: ‘At this hour of trial we do not wish to harass you.’<sup>66</sup> Gandhi had full confidence in himself that he could lead the masses the way he liked, and at the same his concept of non-violence did not teach him to take advantage at the cost of opponent’s weakness, though his colleagues did not like this idea including Jawaharlal Nehru. Even Nehru had remarked in October 1940, “It is perfectly true that Gandhiji is very disturbing occasionally. There is no question of blind faith, so far as I am concerned or many others.” However, Nehru’s statement on May 20, 1940, was curious, “Launching a civil disobedience campaign at a time when Britain is engaged in life and death struggle would be an act derogatory to India’s honour” In fact, the situation in India was such at that time that Nehru, like his other colleagues in the Congress, was at a loss, though in his heart’s sanctum he had full support for Gandhi. Maulana Azad

comments that the then leaders of the Congress though not fully convinced were contented to follow Gandhi. "They rarely tried to judge things on their own, and in case they were accustomed to subordinate their judgment to Gandhiji... After all our discussions, the only thing they could say was that we must have faith in Gandhiji. They held that if we trusted him he would find some way out."<sup>67</sup> Gandhi's leadership in the Congress was unquestionable.

It was a rare quality in Gandhi that he never doubted his opponent. He was always confident that good sense would prevail in the British statesmen, though Churchill's statement that he would "never move a yard" disillusioned him.

On the one hand if Gandhi discouraged mass civil disobedience movement in such a situation then on the other he made a call for individual satyagraha, but he only encouraged those to join who would be able to maintain the non-violent pledge. Gandhi explained the power of individual satyagraha, "In every great cause it is not the number of fighters that counts, but it is the quality of which they are made that becomes the deciding factor. The greatest men of the world have always stood alone. Take the great prophets, Zoroaster, Buddha, Jesus, Muhammad – they all stood alone like many others whom I can name."<sup>68</sup>

The individual satyagraha, as a matter of fact, was a propaganda against the war, though ostensibly it was launched to restore the freedom of speech. Gandhi selected individuals to go from place to place to propagate not to help the British in war efforts, Gandhi's trusted lieutenant, Vinoba Bhave, was chosen to start this propagation. He went from village to village and delivered speech

against war, but he could not continue his effort for long, he was arrested just within a few days.

The individual satyagraha gradually witnessed the involvement of the rank and file members of the Congress. The individual satyagraha was slowly taking the character of mass movement. Leaders like Jawaharlal Nehru and Brahma Dutta were put behind the bar. The British Government became panicky because it was difficult for the Government to tackle both the internal and external situations simultaneously. The debacle at the Pearl Harbour was the last straw on the camel's back. On December 3, 1941 the Government issued official communiqué with an intention to somehow patch up with the Congress, "The government of India, confident in the determination of all responsible opinion in India to support the war effort until the victory is secured, have reached the conclusion that the civil disobedience prisoners whose offences have been formal or symbolic in character can be set free including Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad."<sup>69</sup>

The British Government was determined to fuse the individual satyagraha which had already taking the shape of mass character and to woo the Congress to join the war effort. The aggression upon Russia by Germany developed positive feeling in favour of war against the Imperialist adventure. At the Bardoli conference of the Congress Working Committee on December 23, 1941 it declared in favour of "armed resistance to the Axis as an ally of the United Nations provided India could mobilize under a National Government." Gandhi gave up the leadership post in order "to lead the Congress in the struggle for resistance to the war efforts on grounds in which non-violence was not indispensable."<sup>70</sup> Gandhi's offer of constructive programme together with a civil disobedience movement against anti-war activities was

ignored, though he was assured that the policy for the attainment of swaraj would continue. This was the death-knell on the Gandhian mode of individual satyagraha. Gandhi once again withdrew from active politics.

After the fall of Rangoon on March 8, 1942 the British Government became panicky and on March 11th it announced that Sir Stafford Cripps would visit India with certain terms of settlement between India and Great Britain. Cripps arrived at Delhi on March 23, 1942 with certain premeditated vague proposals, they were as phoney as the August offer. Again Gandhi had to be called out of his retirement to examine the contents of the offer. This proves Gandhi's indispensability to the Congress and the people of India. The Congress rejected the offer on two counts: a) the control and direction of the Defence of India were not going to be transferred to the representatives of the people; and b) rejection of the Congress' demand to establish a national government at the centre. The Muslim League rejected the offer since it did not concede the principle of Pakistan.<sup>71</sup> In fact, the Congress wanted quick transfer of power because the Japanese were knocking at the doors, and hence there was no question of acceptance of the Cripps' offer. In reality, the Cripps' offer was simply <sup>an</sup>eyewash to please Roosevelt; it was never the intention of Churchill to concede anything substantial to India. To Gandhi the Cripps' offer was a post-dated cheque.

The failure of the Cripps' Mission has stunned the people. The Congress, under the leadership of Gandhi, was left with no option than to demand the exit of the British from India for good. Gandhi told the Congress sternly to maintain utmost discipline if they chose to follow him. The British propaganda machinery was trying to represent Gandhi as the tool of Japan, but the people were not that gullible to be misled.

America being champion to the cause of freedom for India found only a few people in support. Gandhi's slogan was "to throw the chains" of the British.<sup>72</sup> Conferring full powers on Gandhi, the All-India Congress Committee passed the historic 'Quit India Resolution' on August 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> 1942 meeting at Bombay.

"The A. I. C.C. therefore repeats with all emphasis the demand for the withdrawal of the British power from India. On the declaration of India's independence a provisional government will be formed and free India will become an ally of the United Nations, sharing with them in the trials and tribulations of the joint enterprise of the struggle for freedom. The provisional Government can only be formed by the co-operation of the principle parties and groups in the country. ...Its primary functions must be to defend India and resist aggression with all the armed as well as the non-violent forces at its command, together with its Allied Powers... The Committee resolves, therefore, to sanction, for the vindication of India's inalienable right to freedom and independence, the starting of a mass struggle on non-violent lines on the widest possible scale, so that the country might utilize all the non-violent strength it has gathered during the last 22 years of peaceful struggle. Such a struggle must inevitably be under the leadership of Gandhi and the Committee requests him to take the lead and guide the nation in the steps to be taken... The Committee appeals to the people of India to face the dangers and hardships that will fall to their lot with courage and endurance and to hold together under the leadership of Gandhiji, and carry out his instructions as disciplined soldiers of Indian freedom. They must remember that non-violence is the basis of this movement. A time may come when it may not be possible to issue instructions or for instructions to reach our people, and when no Congress committees can function. When this happens, every man and woman,

who is participating in this movement, must function for himself or herself within the four corners of the general instructions issued."

After the All-India Congress Committee adopted the resolution, Gandhi advised the people, "Here is a mantra, a short one that I give you, and you may imprint it on your hearts and let every breath of yours give expression to it. The mantra is Do or Die"<sup>73</sup>

Gandhi wrote to the Viceroy seeking an interview, but being frightened by the historic decision of the Congress the British Government arrested all its prominent leaders in the morning of August 9, 1942. The decision of the Government to nip the movement in the bud went haywire. The masses have become decontrolled, since there was no leader in the open to keep the people on a leash. There developed a feeling of intense bitterness and a mad fury engulfed the people. What Gandhi had deplored so long had come to happen. The rudderless people slowly drifted away from the path of non-violence. Jawaharlal Nehru writes, "The sudden unorganized demonstrations and outbreaks on the part of the people, culminating in violent conflicts and destruction, and continued against overwhelming and powerful armed forces, were a measure of the intensity of their feelings. Those feelings had been there even before the arrest of their leaders, but the arrests, and the frequent firings that followed them roused the people to anger, and to the only course that an enraged mob can follow... The people forgot the lesson of non-violence which had been dinned into their ears for more than twenty years..."<sup>74</sup>

There were violent demonstrations almost all over India, but Gandhi is not to be blamed for all these happenings because he was not in the picture then. Being leaderless people behaved on their own way which they thought to be the best. Nobody knew what to do to

force the British "Quit India". In fact, before any course of action could be drawn up, all the leaders of eminence were taken into custody. The Government's action was preemptive in nature.

Frank Moraes draws a graphic picture of 1942 movement:

"There were peaceful hartals (strikes) and protest meetings, but there <sup>were</sup> also outbreaks of mob violence, arson, murder and sabotage. Students and workers were prominent in those demonstrations, which were sometimes dispersed by tear gas and baton charges and sometimes fired upon. In Ballia in the United Provinces crowds were machine – gunned from the air. According to the Government of India's own figures for the period from August to December, 1942, the police and military had opened fire on demonstrating crowds, some of them violent, as many as 538 times, killing 940 and wounding 1,630 persons. Nehru", who thought these figures grossly underestimated, later put the number of those who killed at about 10,000. By the end of 1942 over 60,000 had been arrested.

"The initial damage and destruction done by the violent mobs were considerable. Official statements for this period give the following statistics : 250 railway stations damaged or destroyed ; 550 post offices attacked; 50 post offices burned; 200 post offices damaged; telegram and telephone wires were cut at 3,500 places; 70 police stations burned and 85 other government buildings destroyed. In addition the military casualties were 11 dead and 7 wounded, while the number of police killed was 31, the total of those injured being destroyed as "very large".

"The public reaction was undoubtedly strong, widespread, and in many places violent."<sup>75</sup>

The Government's action in suppressing the movement was brutal in nature; however, the movement gave a terrible jolt to its very foundation in India. The British Government had been made to rethink once again on the continuation of its rule in India. The "Quit India" movement, on the whole, demonstrated before the world "India's irrepressible will to be free." "All sections of Indian opinion may be said to be at one in support of the demand for the immediate transference of power and the establishment of a national Government," reported the then Chief Secretary to the Bengal Government on September 2, 1942.<sup>76</sup> Even public opinion in England was in favour of acceding independence to India.

It is a fact 1942 movement deviated from the path of non-violence in most of the places, but it happened due to over-enthusiasm, and at the same time Gandhi's unexpected arrest had also infuriated the people against the Government. However, it is claimed that those engaged in sabotage activity had "conscientiously striven to avoid personal injury to anyone in carrying out their programmes."<sup>77</sup> Wherever the people contained themselves to cross the limit, it was due to indirect influence of Gandhi's appeal.

In order to justify its act of the arrest of the leaders, the British Government took shelter of disinformation and accused Gandhi and the Congress of "premeditated violence." Gandhi undertook 21 days of marathon fast in protest against this accusation and also to lodge his protest against the rising trend of violence. Even Field – Marshal Smuts, Gandhi's erstwhile opponent for almost twenty years in South Africa, could not contain his indignation, "It is sheer nonsense to talk of Gandhi as a fifth-columnist... He is one of the great men of the world and he the last person to be placed in that category. He is dominated by high spiritual ideals... Whether those ideals are always practicable

in our difficult world may be questioned, but that Gandhi is a great patriot, a great man and a great spiritual leader who can doubt?"<sup>78</sup>

Gandhi was released on June 29, 1944. Hopes were raised that now something substantial would happen. It is true there was no leader of his magnitude in India, but he did not want to take this credit. He called every Congressman his own leader and competent enough to take his own decision within the parameters of truth and non-violence.<sup>79</sup>

On Gandhi's faculty as a leader, Nehru writes, "To the vast majority of India's people he is the symbol of India determined to be free, of militant nationalism, of a refusal to submit to arrogant might, of never agreeing to anything involving national dishonour. Though many people in India may disagree with him on a hundred matters, though they may criticize him or even part company from him on some particular issue, at a time of action and struggle when India's freedom is at stake they flock to him again and look up to him as their inevitable leader."<sup>80</sup>

Gandhi relied too much on the capacity of the people to stick to his principle of non-violence, there his assessment went wrong. Gandhi also realised and admitted this fact when his appeal could not contain violence, "The people do not have my ahimsa. And therefore I have to take a risk, if I cannot curb their violence... Violence, which is due to the weakness of human nature, is bound to be there. Crores of people in the country have no weapons... However, we shall try our best to prevent violence."<sup>81</sup>

When Gandhi was in prison, the Muslim League was gradually strengthening itself and propagating the concept of Pakistan. He tried his level best to come to a compromise with Jinnah but failed.

The war was over and the British were eager to leave power. Partition of India became inevitable with the Mountbatten Declaration in 1947. 'In order to preserve the country's unity, Gandhi was often prepared to give concessions to the Muslim League beyond what his colleagues would concede.'<sup>82</sup> But he could not prevent the vivisection of the country. Though he was a frustrated man, Gandhi left no stone unturned to save the communal carnage, which was the result of the Muslim League's Direct Action Day declaration at Calcutta on August 16, 1946.

A couple of weeks before the Independence Day in 1947, an emissary of Jawaharlal Nehru and Sardar Vallabh Patel went to meet Gandhi at Calcutta. There Gandhi was busy maintaining peace and harmony among the Hindus and the Muslims. Gandhi was handed over a letter in which it was written, "Bapu", you are the Father of the Nation, Fifteenth of August will be the first Independence Day in 1947 and we want you to come to Delhi and give us your blessings." Gandhi replied, "How stupid! When Bengal is burning, Hindus and Muslims are killing each other and I hear the cries of their agony in the darkness of Calcutta, how can I go to Delhi which will be glittering with the lights ? I have to live here for the establishment of peace in Bengal and if need be, I have to give up my life ensuring that there is harmony and peace."<sup>83</sup>

Gandhi fought throughout his life as a crusader to uphold the principles of Truth and Non-violence. He was unparalleled as a leader and the cynosure of eyes of all the Indians. He applied his love force to establish peace and harmony and resist hatred. To sum up:

“There is no parallel in human history of one individual staking his own life for upholding what he believed to be true and trying to fight hatred with love and compassion in his heart.”<sup>84</sup>

## II

“An only son of prosperous parents is apt to be spoilt, especially so in India. And when that son happens to have been an only child for the first eleven years of his existence there is little hope for him to escape this spoiling” – these are the starting sentences of Nehru’s autobiography. True, Jawaharlal Nehru was the most pampered child, but he would be spoilt, it did not fit into his personality. He was one of the destiny makers of India side by side with Gandhi, though the period between 1919 and 1947 was the age of Gandhi but after 1947 till 1964 it was Nehru who was the domineering figure in the history of India.

Born in an aristocratic family Jawaharlal had all the comforts at home. Accessibility to English education at home and abroad introduced him to English ways of life and thoughts. Humanitarian and liberal tradition of the nineteenth century too left their impression upon him. Though Jawaharlal claims that his childhood days were “sheltered and uneventful”,<sup>85</sup> this statement is partially true. His father Motilal’s close affinity with Englishmen did not leave Jawaharlal untouched, rather he began to admire the English.<sup>86</sup> Similarly his seven years’ stay at Britain and his taste of English literature and social life, Jawaharlal admits at a later stage that he had become “a queer mixture of the East and West, out of place everywhere, at home nowhere.”<sup>87</sup> Such was Jawaharlal in the beginning not knowing where he would be fitted, ‘I am a stranger and alien in the West, I cannot be of it. But in my own country also, sometimes, I have an exile’s feeling.’<sup>88</sup>

Nehru’s first encounter with Gandhi in 1916 was not that significant, but later Gandhi became his rival father figure.<sup>89</sup> Although the non-cooperation movement was abruptly withdrawn by Gandhi, it received a tremendous response from the masses and for the first time

Nehru also received an opportunity to have a glimpse of the nature of the national movement. He writes, "A new picture of India seemed to rise before me, naked, starving, crushed and miserable."<sup>90</sup> This sight has filled Nehru with a new sense of responsibility.

Nehru began to believe that non-cooperation was the only political way in view of the ineffectiveness of earlier strategies. He wrote, "I am an ardent believer in non cooperation with all that implies and I am firmly convinced that non-cooperation and no other course will bring us victory."<sup>91</sup>

Nehru felt highly enthusiastic and it was his desire to join the satyagraha movement immediately irrespective of the consequences. "I was afire with enthusiasm and wanted to join the Satyagraha Sabha immediately. I hardly thought of the consequences law – breaking, jail-going, etc. – and if I thought of them I did not care."<sup>92</sup> Henceforth, we find, Nehru became the ardent supporter of Gandhi and tried to keep his political activities within the Gandhian dictates.

On the impact of satyagraha on the people Nehru writes, "Of course these movements exercised tremendous pressure on the British Government and shook the government machinery. But their real importance, to my mind, lay in the effect they had on our people, and especially the village masses... Non-cooperation dragged them out of this mire and gave them self-respect and self-reliance; they developed the habit of co-operative action; they acted courageously and did not submit so easily to unjust oppression; their outlook widened and they began to think a little in terms of India as a whole; they discussed political and economic questions (crudely no doubt) in their bazaars and meeting places. The lower middle classes were affected in the same way but the change in the masses was the most significant. It

was a remarkable transformation and the Congress, under Gandhiji's leadership, must have the credit for it."<sup>93</sup>

This is the beginning of the role of Gandhi as a political mentor of young Nehru. It seems Gandhi's ideology of non-violence non-cooperation has stirred deeply the young mind of Nehru, though sometime he felt skeptic at its effectiveness, but it appeared to him a sound practical politics. "What I admired was the moral and ethical side of our movement and of satyagraha. I did not give an absolute allegiance to the doctrine of non-violence or accept it for ever, but it attracted me more and more, and the belief grew upon me that, situated as were in India and with our background and traditions it was the right policy for us."<sup>94</sup>

In fact, it offered to him what he desired, that is the goal of national freedom. With its application he wanted to put an end to the exploitation of the underdog. If on the one hand it gave him a sense of personal freedom then on the other a fulfillment to his moral sense. "So great was this personal satisfaction that even a possibility of failure did not count for much, for such failure could only be temporary"<sup>95</sup>

Initially Gandhi's concept of satyagraha did not find much favour with Anand Bhawan, but the news of the Amritsar massacre accomplished that what could not be achieved by Gandhi's long persuasion. The passage of the Rowlett Act drove the last nail-Motilal Nehru, the father of Jawaharlal took a decision to voluntarily give up both his luxurious way of life and his lucrative profession as a lawyer to join the Gandhian bandwagon of satyagrahi. Jawaharlal too decided to join. The Gandhian spell both on the father and the son was complete. The son also gave up his legal profession. "Jallianwala Bagh was a

turning point... This is when the family came much closer to Mahatma Gandhi and our whole way of life changed."<sup>96</sup>

In 1920 Jawaharlal was totally ignorant of labour conditions in Indian factories or fields. His political outlook was also bourgeois, though he was aware of the existence of terrible poverty and misery. Therefore, he felt that his first aim was to achieve a politically free India in order to tackle this problem of poverty. He had also started paying a little more attention to the peasant problem since Gandhi's agrarian movement. This new interest played an important part in his later years in life. 'I got entangled in the kisan (peasant) movement. That entanglement grew in later years and influenced my mental outlook greatly..."<sup>97</sup>

Nehru was now gradually being groomed to be a matured politician. He writes, "These peasants took away the shyness from me and taught me to speak in public. Till then I hardly spoke at a public gathering...Perhaps many of them could not understand a great deal of what I said. My language or my thought was simple enough for them. Many did not hear me when the gathering was very large for my voice did not carry far. But all this did not matter much to them when once they had given their confidence and faith to a person."<sup>98</sup>

"Go to the villages" was Gandhi's slogan. Nehru trudged many miles across fields and visited distant villages. He took to the crowd and the crowd accepted him, but still he felt apart from them. He wonders that despite his being different in every way from those thousands who surrounded him, different in habits, in desires, in mental and spiritual outlook, had managed to gain goodwill and a measure of confidence from these people. He questions, "Was it because they took me for something other than I was ?" In fact, he was right in his doubt.

The people tried to see in him Gandhi's image. Nehru missed out the point that he was representing Gandhi, his mentor. However, this fact was true only in the beginning of Nehru's political career, but gradually he could build up his own image and identify himself in the crowd.

Motilal accepted non-violence not as a principle but as a timely necessity. Jawaharlal also could not accept it wholly as a principle, but he was fascinated by its elevating qualities and its spellbinding effect on the people. However, sometime he doubted whether the empires founded on the principle of violence could be shaken by non-violence. But he tried to keep his doubts at bay when he observed massive popular response. It proves Jawaharlal was a follower of Gandhi, but a blind follower. He accepted the non-violent methodology wholeheartedly as the only practical programme which the Congress could prepare and pursue. The leadership of Gandhi had to be accepted because there was none of Gandhi's genius either inside or outside the Congress whose leadership appealed to the masses.

The year 1927 was a turning point in the history of the Indian National Congress. In this year for the first time, at Nehru's initiative, the Indian National Congress adopted a resolution, which proclaimed loudly complete independence for the people of India. It was quite strange, though Gandhi attended this session, he did not even participate in deliberation. Even later Gandhi called this resolution as passed in haste and thoughtless one.<sup>99</sup>

When the Second Round Table Conference ended on December 1, 1931 without any result, Gandhi decided to launch non-violent non-cooperation movement. The Government was prepared for this eventuality, it took all repressive measures to suppress this mass uprising. All the prominent leaders of the movement were imprisoned.

All of a sudden Gandhi decided to suspend the movement, though there was tremendous response and enthusiasm amongst the people. Gandhi decided to go on a 'fast unto death'<sup>1</sup> in protest against Ramsay Macdonald's grant of a separate electorate to the 'Depressed Classes' in India. Nehru felt extremely annoyed and disappointed with Gandhi, 'And then I felt annoyed with him for choosing a side – issue for his final sacrifice - just a question of electorate. What would be the result on our freedom movement? Would not the larger issues fade into the background, for the time being at least? After so much sacrifice and brave endeavour, was our movement to tail off into something insignificant?'<sup>100</sup> Even he felt angry at Gandhi's religious and sentimental approach to a political question and his frequent references to God in connection with every trifle political issue. The more he thought the more Nehru became confused and angry at his own helplessness because he was unable to do anything at this sudden turn of political event. But he loved Gandhi since he knew Gandhi was the motivating force behind this upheaval.

But suddenly Nehru realized that he was wrong in terms of his assessment of Gandhi's decision. He admits, "Bapu had a curious knack of doing the right thing at the psychological moment, it might be that his action-impossible to justify as it was from my point of view-would lead to great results, not only in the narrow field in which it was confined, but in the wider aspects of our national struggle."<sup>101</sup>

It seems Nehru has become further awestruck when he finds that at Gandhi's behest the curse of untouchability appears to be vanished from the Hindu society at the drop of a hat:

"Then came news of the tremendous upheaval all over the country, a magic wave of enthusiasm running through Hindu society,

and untouchability appeared to be doomed. What a magician, I thought, was this little man sitting in Yeravda Prison, and how well he knew how to pull the strings that move people's hearts!"<sup>102</sup>

In February 1927, Nehru was authorised by the Congress to represent it at the Congress of Oppressed Nationalities in Brussels. This meeting at Brussels was held under the auspices of the Communist International, which was guided and financed by Russia. While in Brussels, Nehru received an invitation to visit Russia.

Nehru was 37 years old and full of enthusiasm. Moreover, he was the Secretary of the All-India Congress Committee as well. At the Congress Nehru was highly critical of the British rule in India, even he moved a resolution which extended support to the nationalist movement. Besides at his initiative the members at the Congress demanded immediate withdrawal of all foreign troops from China.

Long before independence, Nehru was gradually gravitating towards internationalism and had begun to view India against international backdrop. He advocated in favour of a need to unite all colonial and dependant peoples. After his short visit to Moscow in November 1927, he developed an inclination towards the concept of socialism. His four days' stint in the U.S.S.R. had left such a profound impression that he began to call himself a socialist. He said, 'I must frankly confess that I am a socialist and a republican. We must realize that the philosophy of socialism has gradually permeated the entire structure of society the world over, and almost the only points in dispute are the pace and the methods of advance to its full realization. India will have to go that way, too, if she seeks to end her poverty and inequality, though she may evolve her own methods and may adapt the ideal to the genius of her race.'<sup>103</sup>

1927 was also a crucial year for Jawaharlal. At the Brussels Congress he had been able to present his views forcefully and effectively and his presence felt amongst the members present. He was now recognised as an important spokesman for India. His prestige increased both at home and abroad. He admits that his European sojourn has broadened his outlook and he has been able to see India from a distance. He writes, "Until then I was so involved in Indian affairs that I had little time to think about the broad world or about life's problems in general."<sup>104</sup>

The communist philosophy of life gave Nehru comfort and hope.<sup>105</sup> He had a conviction that real swaraj and socialism are interrelated and inseparable. He explains, "The second ideal, of socialism, indeed includes the first (swaraj), and it may be said that real world order and peace will come when socialism is realized on a world scale."<sup>106</sup>

Gandhi was aware of Nehru's change in way of thinking and efforts. He warned Nehru, "I feel that you love me too well to resent what I am about to write. In any case, I love you too well to restrain my pen when I feel I must write.

'You are going too fast. You should have taken time to think and become acclimatized.'<sup>107</sup>

Gandhi knew this change in Nehru was in consequence of the latter's visit to Moscow. When Nehru wrote about communism and Russia, Gandhi understood what Nehru was pointing at. In frustration he wrote another letter to Nehru, '...I see quite clearly that you must carry an open warfare against my views and me. For, if I am wrong I am evidently doing irreparable harm to the country and it is your duty after having known it to rise in revolt against me. Or, if you have any

doubt as to the correctness of your conclusions, I shall gladly discuss them with you personally, The differences between you and me appear to be so vast and radical that there seems to be no meeting ground between us."<sup>108</sup>

In spite of admitting difference with Jawaharlal from time to time, Gandhi pushed Nehru to the forefront in Indian politics. Even Gandhi played a leading role in Nehru getting elected to the chair of the President of the Congress not less than three times and also making him second-in-command in the Congress after him.

True, Gandhi could be vocal in public to criticize Nehru, but in his heart he had profound fondness for the latter; for Gandhi Nehru was an indispensable comrade 'so valiant, so faithful, so able and so honest."<sup>109</sup> In order to make the Congress more powerful and dynamic Gandhi wanted to rope in the youth force and young Jawaharlal seemed to him the right choice for this task. Therefore, he could not afford to lose Jawaharlal at any cost in spite of the latter's radical views. Jawaharlal too knew his indispensability, but he also knew that his privileged place in the Congress was only due to Gandhi. Though Gandhi could be critical in public against his disciple, Jawaharlal imposed restraint on himself, he could not even think of breaking away from his guru. Sometimes Jawaharlal showed his extreme submissiveness, "No one has moved me and inspired me more than you and I can never forget your exceeding kindness to me. There can be no question of our personal relations suffering. But in the wider sphere am I not your child in politics, though perhaps a truant and errant child?"<sup>110</sup>

Jawaharlal never entertained the idea that his letters of discord written to Gandhi should ever be published and made public by

Gandhi. "I do not quite appreciate your suggestion to publish my previous letters and to comment on it. Should you wish it of course you can do so. But it was an entirely personal letter and I do not see why the public should concern itself with it." Even he tried to convince Gandhi that he had no intention either to criticize or defend anything against Gandhi's wishes. He warned Gandhi against believing everything that appeared in the newspapers. "The other day I spoke at Benares at a public meeting I spoke in Hindi and my speech was wholly distorted in the English report and I was made to say something which I had never thought of. This was commented upon by the Tribune of Lahore and may be other papers, and it was made out that I was attacking you. This was a monstrous notion as I had not referred to you or thought of you in that connection. I have sent a contradiction. This is danger of this happening and I would beg of you not to believe such reports and to give me credit for greater sense and courtesy."<sup>111</sup>

Nehru's political activities never exceeded the parameters set up by Gandhi; political exigencies impelled these two leaders to work in tandem. Maintaining unity in Congress ranks was of prime concern to both of them. Nehru was a link between two generations of Congress leadership, one representing the conservative old guard and the other the socialist radicals, yet he carried respect of both.

Nehru was elected President of the Indian National Congress for the second successive term in 1937. In the same year elections to the provincial Legislative Assemblies were held. Nehru's propagation of the ideas of independence, agrarian reforms and socialism won a landslide victory for the Congress. But the victory did not give much benefit since the expectations of the people were many and the Congress had its limitations because for every concession the party had to look at the British Government with begging eyes. Nehru writes, "This

dissatisfaction found expression in the Congress itself and the more advanced elements grew restive. I was myself unhappy at the trend of events as I noticed that our fine fighting organisation was being converted gradually into just an electioneering organization."<sup>112</sup>

Nehru had no intention to continue as President of the Congress in such a situation, though there was a rumour afloat that he would be re-elected. To silence such rumourmongers Nehru published anonymously an article in the 'Modern Review' of Calcutta opposing his own re-election.<sup>113</sup> Subhas Chandra Bose was elected President of the Congress instead. Bose could not continue for long despite his being re-elected. His attempt to change the policy of the Congress to demand full independence within six months, if not conceded then to go for civil disobedience did not find favour with Gandhi. At Tripuri Congress in 1939, the rift widened further. Bose could not tolerate insult when he was forced by a resolution to select an executive consulting Gandhi that was also after winning in the election. He tendered his resignation. Though Nehru did not support the rightists, he could not come openly in favour of Bose either, because that would have put the very existence of the Congress in jeopardy. Nehru writes, "He did not approve of any step being taken by the Congress which was anti-Japanese or anti-German or anti-Italian. We passed many resolutions and organized many demonstrations of which he did not approve during the period of his Presidentship... There was a big difference in outlook between him and others in the Congress Executive, both in regard to foreign and internal matters and this led to a break early in 1939."<sup>114</sup>

Even being in tune with the ethos of Indian nationalism, it was impossible for any variety of leftism acceptable to the Congress except that of Gandhi and Nehru. Though Gandhi set out flexible parameters

both for the rightists and for the leftist to operate, he could not allow them to deviate from the path of non-violence. He who tried to break through this Gandhian cordon, he was lost. Subhas Bose lost only because he wanted to cross the barrier set by Gandhi. Nehru was a shrewd politician. He knew his limits. Though he brought radical changes in the character of the Congress, he was careful enough not to transgress the Gandhian parameters. In the fray all other ultra-socialists lost their ground, but Nehru smoothly sailed on with his socialistic concept.

Though Nehru claimed himself to be a socialist, he never joined the Congress Socialist Party nor did he take the side of M. N. Roy or Subhas Bose. He was the most popular leader next only to Gandhi. Therefore all sought him after: the Gandhians, the Communists, the Socialists, the Royists etc. but he did not identify himself with any of the camps. True, the personality of Gandhi holds a tremendous influence upon him, but he was not a true Gandhian. In fact, the remark made by Nehru in December 1929 evinces his actual intellectual leaning, "I must frankly confess that I am a socialist and a republican, and am no believer in kings and princes or in the order which produces the modern kings of industry, who have greater power over the lives and fortunes of men than even the kings of old, and whose methods are as predatory as those of the old feudal aristocracy."<sup>115</sup>

The proclamation of India at war by the Viceroy on September 3, 1939 automatically made India a belligerent nation, which was not liked by the Congress. The Congress felt that the British took the people of India for a ride. At its Working Committee meeting at Wardha between September 8 and 15, 1939, the Congress issued the following statement: "The British Government have declared India as a belligerent country promulgated Ordinances, passed the Government

of India Act Amending Bill, and taken many other far reaching measures which affect the Indian people vitally, and circumscribe and limit the powers and activities of the provincial governments. This has been done without the consent of the Indian people whose declared wishes in such matters have been deliberately ignored by the British Government. The Working Committee must take the gravest view of these developments." This statement was Nehru's draft.

Gandhi's child – like simplicity and deep commitment to the creed of non-violence could never permit him to be a party to the British war policy. Nehru maintained a different view. He disapproved of Fascism and Nazism, but he was not in favour of British imperialism either. His pride could never allow him to make a humble appeal to Hitler, like Gandhi, to desist from war. Nehru wrote, "To condemn Fascism and seek to defend or maintain imperialism is illogical and absurd."<sup>116</sup> "Our war resistance policy is of vital importance to us... our anti war policy must therefore be based on freedom and democracy and opposition to Fascism and imperialism."<sup>117</sup> The Congress Working Committee demanded equality of status and freedom before it decided on the issue of co-operation with the British. However, it deferred its final decision and made an appeal to the British Government to clearly define its war objectives as well as its future policy towards India. But this appeal of the Congress was not given any importance; rather it was interpreted by the Government as its refusal to co-operate. Even Gandhi's expression of sympathies with the allies failed to influence the Government.<sup>118</sup> The Government had no desire to enter into any bargain with the Congress on the war issue. "I am authorized by His Majesty's Government to say that at the end of the war they will be very willing to enter into consultation with representatives of the several communities, parties and interests in India, and with the Indian princes,

with a view to securing their aid and co-operation in the framing of such modifications as might seem desirable,"<sup>119</sup> the Viceroy issued the statement on October 17, 1939. This statement was a clear indication that the British Government had simply tried to ignore the very existence of the Congress as a party representing Indians.

Though Gandhi expressed his serious reservation on this declaration, he was not ready to opt for any drastic step. As stated above, Nehru professed a different view. He was ready to extend all possible assistance to Government but, he kept a precondition, provided India became a sovereign nation. For Gandhi it was very simple he would not compromise on his principle of non-violence. The view of Nehru was echoed by the Working Committee, which met again at Wardha on 17 to 20 June 1940. In fact, it was a novel thing in the Congress to differ from Gandhi. Never did such a thing happen before in the history of the Congress.

The failure of the Cripps' mission, and the adoption of 'Quit India' resolution under the leadership of Gandhi led the British Government to ban the All-India Congress Committee and arrest all the prominent leaders including Jawaharlal. By this time Gandhi had already declared Jawaharlal as his legal heir. The British authorities were trying their level best to dismember the country. The "Direct Actions" of the Muslim League and the subsequent attitude of the British Government made the partition inevitable.

Britain won the battle in 1945, but it was after all a Pyrrhic victory. The loss in manpower and economic resources she suffered was colossal in nature. The year 1945 also marked the end of India's struggle for freedom. Clement Attlee's statement on February 10, 1947 virtually fixed up a date for the British to quit. The Mountbatten Plan of

3 June, 1947 presented a scheme of India's partition. Though the All India Congress Committee accepted it in its meeting on June 15, 1947, it expressed its hope "that when present passions subside, India's problems would be viewed in their proper perspective and the false doctrine of two nations would be discredited and discarded by all." This resolution was adopted in the presence of Gandhi. Gandhi who had just on 31 March 1947 said to Maulana. Azad that if the Congress wished to accept partition it would be over his dead body, kept mum.<sup>120</sup> But it is also a fact that Gandhi was against partition and he remained so till the partition was brought about. The matter of the fact was that in front of Nehru and Patel, Gandhi's voice proved feeble. His trusted lieutenants dominated the Congress and he was sidetracked. Nehru said in 1960, "The truth is that we were tired men and we were getting on in years too. Few of us could stand the prospect of going to prison again and if we had stood out for a united India as we wished it, prison obviously awaited us."<sup>121</sup> This was an unbelievable excuse.

India was proclaimed an independent country on August 15, 1947 with Jawaharlal Nehru becoming the first prime minister. It was no time for Jawaharlal to rejoice because yawning before him were a multitude of problems left behind by the British as a legacy of its misrule of more than one hundred and fifty years. After partition India was now a truncated country, though at the stroke of the midnight hour it awoke to life and freedom. To Nehru, "...a living thing is cut into two, with tremendous loss of blood and loss of all manner of things. Everything is cut up, our army, our postal services, telegraph services, telephone services, irrigation services; all governmental machinery is suddenly cut in two."<sup>122</sup>

For seventeen long years Nehru continued to remain the prime minister. He was generally outspoken and never kept his objectives

secret. Though Gandhi refused to accept any official post, he continued to remain Nehru's adviser so long as he survived and even after his death Jawaharlal claimed that Gandhi was his source of inspiration whenever he faced any political dilemma. Be that as it may, it was Nehru who tremendously felt the void after Gandhi was gone because there was none of Gandhi's stature to which he could go and seek immediate shelter in case of any serious crisis.

"The light has gone out, I said, and yet I was wrong. For the light that shone in this country was no ordinary light. The light that has illumined this country for these many years will illumine this country for many more years, and a thousand years later, that light will still be seen in this country and the world will see it and it will give solace to innumerable hearts. For that light represented something more than the immediate present, it represented the living, the eternal truths, reminding us of the right path, drawing us from error, taking this ancient country to freedom.

"All this has ~~happened~~ when there was so much more for him to do. We could never think that he was unnecessary or that he had done his task. But now, particularly, when we are faced with so many difficulties, his not being with us is a blow most terrible to bear."<sup>123</sup>

So long Gandhi was alive Nehru thought the former's guidance indispensable and during the country's independence movement Gandhi's leadership irreplaceable, because according to Nehru, it was only Gandhi who fully understood the psyche of the Indian masses and has the capacity to sway them at his will.

Sardar Patel was always a competitor of Nehru. Both professed different views – if one was called the rightist then the other leftist, accordingly the Congress was also split into two wings, but both the

leaders were indispensable for the health of the Congress. Gandhi was aware of this fact : he could not afford to lose any one of them, but he had obviously a soft corner for Nehru. Since 1929, Nehru was virtually Gandhi's nominee. Similarly in 1937 and 1946, Gandhi convinced Patel to withdraw his candidature and leave the post of the President of Congress in Nehru's favour.

Nehru was free from any provincial or caste preference or communal prejudice. His English education and taste of English culture had broadened his outlook. He represented the democratic forces in India. He was more acceptable to the masses and enjoyed their support. Whereas with Sardar Patel, it was different. He was popular, but only amongst certain sections of the people. He lacked the cool-headedness of Nehru. Gandhi wanted a successor who could sway the masses but not only the certain sections of the people. Therefore, Gandhi's choice fell on Nehru. Nehru also did not feel unique. He always identified himself with the mass and moved with it. This was Nehru's typicality. But Patel had an iron will, however, Nehru could be swayed by changing situation. For the sake of maintaining unity in the Congress, Gandhi did not want any spit in between Patel and Nehru, since both of them had equal grip over the party. Having feared that after he was gone Patel and Nehru would part ways, Gandhi made Patel to take a vow that he would never split with Nehru. Jawaharlal had all the appreciation for Patel, though the latter misunderstood the former's secularism, <sup>124</sup> "It has stressed me beyond measure to read in newspapers and otherwise learn of whisperings about vital differences between Sardar Patel and myself. Of course, there have been for many years past differences between us, temperament and others in regard to many problems. But India at least should know that these differences have been over-shadowed by fundamental agreements

about the most important aspects of our public life and that we have co-operated together for a quarter of a century or more in great undertakings. We have been sharers in joy and sorrow alike. Is it likely that at this crisis in our national destiny either of us should be petty-minded and think of anything but the national good? May I pay my tribute of respect and admiration to Sardar Patel not only for his life-long service to the nation but also for the great work he has done since he and I have served together in the Government of India? He has been a brave captain of our people in war and peace, stouthearted when others might have wavered, and a great organizer. It has been my privilege to have been associated with him for these many years and my affection for him and appreciation of his great qualities have grown with the passing of time."<sup>125</sup>

But Patel's greatness lies in the fact that when Gandhi declared Jawaharlal as his heir and successor, he never expressed his dissatisfaction rather he appreciated the decision of Gandhi and described Nehru as his leader whenever he found an opportunity. On 14 November 1948, it is said that Patel had uttered, "Mahatma Gandhi named Pandit Nehru as his heir and successor. Since Gandhiji's death we have realized that our leader's judgement was correct."<sup>126</sup>

Sardar Patel died late in 1950 and with his demise a rightist leader and a true colleague was gone who was a real challenge to Nehru's authority.

Nehru claimed <sup>himself</sup> to be a socialist, and therefore propagated the view that socialism is the only key to the solution of the world's problems and of India's problems. He writes, "...When I use this word I do so not in a vague humanitarian way but in the scientific, economic sense. Socialism is, however, something even more than an economic

doctrine, it is a philosophy of life and as such also it appeals to me. I see no way of ending the poverty, the vast unemployment, the degradation and the subjection of the Indian people except through socialism. That involves vast and revolutionary changes in our political and social structure... In short, it means a new civilization, radically different from the present capitalist order."<sup>127</sup>

Nehru confessed in his 'Autobiography' that he owed too much to England in make up "ever to feel wholly alien to her." Nehru's ideological evolution began with liberalism. He writes that his roots are embedded in the nineteenth century and he has been too much influenced by the humanist liberal tradition. Then he turned towards Fabian socialism, in which he found many issues in common with liberal philosophy. Subsequently he came in touch with Gandhism and developed a passion for it. But the influence turned into frustration with the failure of the passive resistance movement in 1919-1922, and he sought shelter in scientific socialism based on the Soviet model, though he disliked much "that has happened in Russia."<sup>128</sup> But about adoption of the Soviet model in the Indian context, he has reservation. "I do not want India to be drilled and forced into a certain position, because the costs of such drilling are too great; it is not worthwhile; it is not desirable from many points of view."<sup>129</sup> In fact, Nehru was not sure which political standpoint would be suitable in the Indian context. He did not develop any methodology of his own. He could have synthesized two or more philosophies and evolved his own, perhaps he was not sure how to proceed; therefore he simply exhibited a tendency to compromise with one or the other political ideologies. "Nothing is final; we must always learn from circumstances."<sup>130</sup> This reflects Nehru's lack of firmness in taking any final decision. "I have been and am a convinced socialist and a believer in democracy and have at the

same time accepted whole –heartedly the peaceful technique of non-violent action which Gandhiji has practised so successfully during the past twenty years.”<sup>131</sup> From this interpretation it appears that socialism has been turned into an amorphous philosophy, but Nehru had no option. Soviet path to socialism was not in tune with India's requirements. To quote him, “Coming back to India, communism and socialism seem a far cry, unless the rush of external events force the pace here. We have not to deal with communism but, with the addition of an extra syllable, with communalism. And communally India is in a dark age. Men of action waste their energies on trivial things and intrigue and manoeuvre and try to over reach each other. Few of them are interested in trying to make the world a better, brighter place.”<sup>132</sup>

The Congress at its Avadi session adopted the goal of the establishment of a “socialistic pattern of society.” Nehru pronounced, “The Congress had always thought in terms of some socialistic pattern, but at Avadi it formally accepted that and put it in its creed.”<sup>133</sup> When the resolution was being passed no Congress leader dared to question Nehru's prudence, Nehru had the capability to assert his authority.

On the aspect of economic development, the Avadi Session also laid stress on development of public sector undertakings with an objective to realize the goal of equitable distribution of national wealth. With the adoption of this resolution Nehru became an architect of mixed economy. This happened because if on the one hand his emphasis was on the development of public sector then on the other he had no option than to allow private enterprises also to grow simultaneously. Since Nehru being a firm believer in the democratic set up he could not do away with existing system all of a sudden therefore capitalism was bound to prosper. However, in order to check the

growing inequalities he introduced a series of reforms and a system of planning.

For introducing socialist transformation of the country, Nehru wanted to play a long innings. He knew millions of his countrymen suddenly could not be made to think differently, neither could they be uprooted from a social fabric to which could they have been accustomed to for hundreds of thousands of years. Change would be there, he believed, but the process would be gradual so that he could win over the masses to extend their consent. Convinced was he that the people would give their consent spontaneously to socialistic change, but he was wrong. It seems he did not understand the Indian psyche fully unlike Gandhi. Unless there is a strong organizational structure in the backdrop, it is difficult to mobilize the masses. Perhaps Nehru ignored this fact. Had he been aware of this reality, he would not have spoken of ideology as late as 1964, "We have set before us certain values which belong to what might broadly be called a national ideology. Within the framework of this ideology there exist, of course, difference or rather, shade of differences."<sup>134</sup>

Though Nehru could not realize his dream of socialistic pattern of society in his life time, it mattered little, since he continued to fight a lone battle like Gandhi throughout his life in favour of establishing a classless and casteless society. This was Nehru, a true adamant Nehru.

Nehru had faith in the democratic system of government. For him democracy was synonymous with equality. "Democracy if it means anything, means equality; not merely the equality of possessing a vote, but economic and social equality." About capitalism, he writes in his *Glimpse of World History*, "Capitalism means the very opposite; a few

people holding economic power and using this to their own advantage. They make laws to keep their own privileged position secure, anybody who breaks these laws becomes disturber of law and order whom society must punish. Thus there is no equality under this system, and the liberty allowed is only within the limits of capitalist laws meant to preserve capitalism.”

Nehru had commitment to democracy because he thought it is the right means to achieve ends and because it is a peaceful method. It is also capable to remove the pressures, which other forms of government may impose on the individuals.<sup>135</sup> He wrote, “...Democracy means to me an attempt at the solution of problems by peaceful methods. If it is not peaceful, then, to my mind, it is not democracy.”<sup>136</sup>

However, Nehru admitted that there is no equality between the pauper who has a vote and the millionaire who has a vote too, but a millionaire can exercise his influence in hundreds of ways whereas a pauper is deprived of this power. In fact, there is no equality between the person who has tremendous educational advantages and the person who has had none. Therefore, Nehru says educationally, economically and otherwise, people differ greatly. “People will, I suppose, differ to some extent. All human beings are not equal in the sense of ability or capacity. But the whole point is that people should have equality of opportunity and that they should be able to go as far as they can go.”<sup>137</sup> This equality of opportunity can only come with democracy. But Nehru accepts that no democracy can exist for long in the midst of want and poverty and inequality.<sup>138</sup>

Therefore, Nehru switched over to the five-year- plan system in India. His objective was to remove poverty and inequality. Though Nehru failed to achieve fully what he intended to achieve through the

system of five-year plan, his effort was genuine. If ever he went wrong then it was not entirely his fault, but to the greater extent it was the fault of his economic advisers, who failed in their attempt to translate into practice Nehru's vision. Though Nehru was the chairman of the planning commission, he was not apprised fully about its activities. As early as 1953, he wrote to V.T. Krishnamachari, who was the then Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission: "I am almost completely out of touch. Occasionally some paper may come to me. But the real job of planning is to think and discuss vital matters. Either this is done without my knowledge or this is not done at all, because I have no information about it."<sup>139</sup> Some of his planning advisers, such as Chintamani Deshmukh, maintained a bureaucratic attitude.<sup>140</sup> Nehru found little co-ordination between his aims and their policies.<sup>141</sup> Be that as it may, Nehru's contribution to India's economic development cannot be belittled. Nehru played a pioneering role in setting up the Planning Commission and making economic planning an integral part of India's democratic system. Nehru is long dead, but the five-year plan system started by him is still going strong. Being a visionary, Nehru always looked into the future. Every end was not the end in itself but the beginning of a new end for him.

"I am myself a devotee of science and believe that the world will ultimately be saved, if it is to be saved, by the method and approach of science," Nehru said at Allahabad University on December 13, 1947. Nehru played a pivotal role in the development of modern science in India. He admitted that India had vast problems to face and to solve, "such as the problem of hunger and poverty, of insanitation and illiteracy, of superstition and deadening custom and tradition, of vast resources running to waste, of a rich country inhabited by starving people." He questions, "Who indeed can afford to ignore science

today?” He provides the answer himself, “At every turn we have to seek its aid. The future belongs to science and to those who make friends with science.”<sup>142</sup> He feels that science alone is capable of solving all the problems besetting free India. Nehru was instrumental in establishing about thirty research laboratories all over India and five Indian Institutes of Technology at different centres. It was at Nehru's initiative the Parliament adopted the 'Science Policy Resolution' in 1958. If India of today is a power to be reckoned with in the world in terms of its development in science and technology then it is due to Nehru's initiative.

The British had done little in India to promote the development of science and technology. Nehru considered the scientific development as indispensable in Indian context. He knew India could accelerate its progress, though compared to other countries of the world it has a massive labour force. He started the tradition for the Prime Minister to preside over the annual sessions of the Indian Science Congress. He even periodically multiplied the funds earmarked in the budget for scientific research. Nehru extended his official support to the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research, which was established in 1944. Similarly he also constituted the atomic energy commission. Nehru publicly gave his support to the proposal of Homi J. Bhabha to set up an atomic reactor in India. His contribution in the field of science and technology is immense and beyond any parallel in the history of India.

It is a fact, Nehru was in favour of growth of technology, but he was not in favour of compromising with human dignity at any time. “The very things that have brought wealth and prosperity to the entire world, that is, the growth of technology, industrialization and the rest – and may I say, in passing, that I am all in favour of the industrialization of India –

have also brought about the gradual and progressive turning of the human being into a machine. I think that is a very dangerous thing.”<sup>143</sup>

For Nehru it would be a tragedy for humanity in spite of the tremendous growth of civilization in other ways, if the human mind loses its creative faculty and becomes more and more of a machine.<sup>144</sup> He was against any kind of exploitation be it physical or mental. He stood for perfect freedom of an individual. Therefore, it was incorporated in the Directive Principles of State Policy certain objectives, such as, eradication of inequality, a rise in the living standard in social, educational, economic and other spheres, and closing of the gap between various groups and classes in society through providing facilities and opportunities among individuals and groups residing in different areas or engaged in different occupations. When Nehru laid stress on assuring the dignity of the individual, he also simultaneously did not forget to accord prime importance to the unity of the nation as well. By including such rights, like Right to Equality, Right to Freedom, and Rights Against Exploitation in Fundamental Rights, the Government accorded constitutional guarantee to individual liberty. Though Nehru advocated for individual freedom, he did not forget to emphasise on giving due care to the freedom of other individuals also. To quote him “In a democratic society, the concept of individual freedom has to be balanced with social freedom and the relation of the individual with the social group. The individual must not infringe on the freedom of other individuals.”<sup>145</sup> Even he said that no results could be achieved so long as individual interests do not become allied with public interests.<sup>146</sup>

Nehru always stressed on the development of the quality of an individual. Simultaneously with making advances in science and technology Nehru wanted the Indian people to remain attached to their

glorious ancient heritage. "We must look to the future and work for it purposely and with vigour, at the same time we must keep our past inheritance and derive sustenance from it. Change is essential, but continuity is also necessary. The future has to be built on the foundations laid in the past and the present. To deny the past and break with it completely is to uproot ourselves and sapless, dry up."<sup>147</sup> While emphasizing on discarding outdated customs and traditions, he did not like to break with the vital and life-giving portion of the past. He wrote, "We can never forget the ideals that have moved our race, the dreams of the Indian people through the ages, the wisdom of the ancients, the buoyant energy and love of life and nature of our forefathers, their spirit of curiosity and mental adventure, the daring of their thought, their splendid achievements in literature, art and culture, their love of truth and beauty and freedom, the basic values that they set up, their understanding of life's mysterious ways, their toleration of other ways than theirs, their capacity to absorb other peoples and their cultural accomplishments, to synthesize them and develop a varied and mixed culture; nor can we forget the myriad experiences which have built up our ancient race and lie embedded in our sub-conscious minds. We will never forget them or cease to take pride in that noble heritage of ours. If India forgets them she will no longer remain India and much that has made her our joy and pride will cease to be."<sup>148</sup> This was the true Nehru howsoever his detractors may try to level charge against him that he was an Englishman in the garb of an Indian. Never did Nehru try to segregate himself from his past root, rather he derived necessary succour from the past to continue the national movement to its final conclusion. Even through delving deep into the past, Nehru understood the capacity of the Indian people to adapt them to modern situation without giving up the basic values, which they acquired through the ages. He took advantage of this fact and led the Indian

masses together with Gandhi to the final goal of achieving freedom from the British domination.

Nehru believed in serving India to the best of his ability rather than calling himself the Prime Minister of India. He said once, "They call me the Prime Minister of India, but it would be appropriate if I were called the first servant of India. In this age, it is not titles and positions that matter but service."<sup>149</sup>

India became independent on 15 August 1947. Nehru says that in spite of the long-drawn-out struggle that preceded it, it came in peace and good will. "Suddenly all bitterness of past conflict was forgotten and a new era of peace and friendship began. Our relations with Britain became friendly and we appeared to have no inherited problems and conflicts with any other country."<sup>150</sup>

But that was not to be, Nehru went wrong. The long-cherished freedom brought in its wake the Partition followed by mass exodus and killings on both sides of the new frontier unprecedented in the history of world. The atrocities that were committed on the so-called unwanted people on both sides of the borders at the behest of the handfuls of the vested groups by way of forcing them out of their ancestral hearths and homes are beyond words. In fact, it was then thought that transfer of population of this huge dimension across the border was not possible. But this prediction proved absolutely wrong. Transfer did take place but in a most promiscuous manner, undefended and unprotected by any state, Had it been calculated beforehand that migration would take place then a plan could have been drawn up and in that case the loss of at least half-a-million life and unnecessary spilling of blood of either side could have been saved, and even there would have been rehabilitation without much difficulty and with far less cost. In fact,

Nehru had hoped, "...that the Partition of India, which was brought about by agreement, would lead to the creation of two states which would be friendly neighbours and would cooperate with each other. That was natural, as not only geography but a common history and culture and the same language and many other factors common to both would, we thought, inevitably lead to friendly cooperation."<sup>151</sup> Nehru's hopes were belied, when realization dawned upon him ultimately, it was too late. He failed to contain man-made Hindu-Muslim antagonism and consequent massacre, though all through his life he hated communal politics and advocated against mixing of religion with politics. When we read Nehru's subsequent self-introspection, one is bound to conclude that Nehru was in a state of indecision and absolutely helpless in that situation not knowing how to prevent the massive exodus and resultant communal frenzy. To quote his own words, "Freedom came to us, our long-sought freedom, and it came with a minimum of violence. But immediately after, we had to wade through oceans of blood and tears. Worse than the blood and tears was the shame and disgrace that accompanied them. Where were our values and standards then, where was our old culture, our humanism and spirituality and all that India has stood for in the past? Suddenly darkness descended upon this land and madness seized the people. Fear and hatred blinded our minds and all the restraints which civilization imposes were swept away. Horror piled on horror and a sudden emptiness seized us at the brute savagery of human beings. The lights seemed to go out; not all, for a few still flickered in the raging tempest. We sorrowed for the dead and the dying and for those whose suffering was greater than death. We sorrowed even more for India, for common mother, for whose freedom we had laboured these long years."<sup>152</sup> These words do not seem to be the words of a prime

minister, but appears to be of a puzzled man who himself was the victim of the holocaust.

The three princely states of Junagad, Hyderabad and Jammu and Kashmir had not acceded to either India or Pakistan on 15 August 1947. Junagadh's Muslim ruler wanted his predominantly Hindu state to opt for Pakistan, though it had no connection with Pakistan except by sea. Its accession to Pakistan would mean a security threat to India, Hence the Nehru Government decided there could not be any compromise on this issue. In November 1947 Junagadh was merged with India. This task was accomplished by the Indian armed forces, though a plebiscite at a later date also gave its verdict in favour of accession to India. Pakistan pressed its complaint over Junagadh in the Security Council but without any result.

The situation with Hyderabad was different. The Nizam of Hyderabad, once being a faithful ally of the British Crown, was contemplating to declare himself independent. He was even preparing himself for resistance on the strength of his 50,000 army men. Even arms were being smuggled into Hyderabad. His foreign advisers were encouraging him not to surrender. He was also expecting support from Pakistan and Britain if he resisted. It was unthinkable for Nehru to let Hyderabad to become a sovereign state in the very heart of India. However, it was a different issue that the 85% of population of Hyderabad were Hindu and wanted merger with India. Nehru writes, "Popular responsible government in Hyderabad or in any other state or province of India has long been our objective and we are glad to say that it is very near fulfillment all over India, except for the State of Hyderabad. It was inconceivable to us that, in the modern age, and in the heart of India that is pulsating with a new freedom, there should be a territory deprived of this freedom and indefinitely under autocratic

rule... As for accession, it was equally clear to us that a territory like Hyderabad, surrounded on all sides by the Indian Union and with no outlet to the rest of the world, must necessarily be a part of that Indian Union."<sup>153</sup>

When negotiations failed to bear any fruit, India intervened. The Nizam's forces did not last for more than four days. In September 1948 Hyderabad was finally merged with India.

Junagadh and Hyderabad, in fact, were no issues at all, but Kashmir was to give trouble and subsequently turned into an international crisis. This problem is still alive and a constant headache to India.

When the Maharaja of Kashmir was still uncertain on the fate of Kashmir, the Pakistani forces invaded Kashmir in October 1947. Now Maharaja was left with no option than to sign an agreement of the state's accession to India. Though on October 26 the accession of Kashmir was accepted, the raids by the hordes had already started on 22 October 1947. However, the accession agreement provided India with a technical ground to intervene. Indian troops began to arrive in Srinagar on October 27. It is to be noted that when the Maharaja moved for the accession of Kashmir to India, Nehru showed his reluctance to immediately accept this proposal. Rather he put forward a condition that final accession would be decided only after knowing the wishes of the people of Jammu and Kashmir. Simultaneously Nehru placed another condition that Sheikh Abdullah, an old friend and colleague, be allowed to participate in the Government of the State. Besides, Nehru had his own reason to believe that given the chance to decide the people of Kashmir might not opt for Pakistan.<sup>154</sup> Though India's intervention checked Pakistani aggression, the U.N.O.'s

intervention followed by the ceasefire on 1 January 1947 enabled Pakistan to retain 32,000 square miles of the western and northern regions which they had forcibly occupied. India is in the occupation of the remaining portion of Kashmir, which includes the Srinagar Valley and Jammu.<sup>155</sup>

It was Mountbatten who had played the dubious game in persuading Nehru to bring the U.N.O. into the picture, although Patel was not at all in favour of this proposal and even Gandhi too had some reluctance. Interference by the United Nations put an indirect restriction upon India "from making a full-scale effort to drive out the invaders", however "there was no abatement in Pakistan's offensive"<sup>156</sup> Nehru was not in favour of allowing raiders to remain on the land of Kashmir but being duped by Mountbatten he was helpless. To quote Nehru, "Whatever argument one may use about the state's accession to India's or about India's right to have troops in Kashmir there is absolutely no argument, even a flimsy one, to justify Pakistan's action in sending troops there. There is no doubt from any point of view that it was aggression by Pakistan and we were entitled in law and fact to attack Pakistan all over. We were much stronger than Pakistan militarily. But we did not attack them. It was to avoid war with Pakistan that we went to the Security Council."<sup>157</sup> This was a grave political mistake committed by Nehru since the United Nations failed to come out with any specific solution. On the strategic importance of Kashmir V. P. Menon's opinion is worthy to be noted here, "Personally, when I recommended to the Government of India the acceptance of the accession of the Maharaja of Kashmir, I had in mind one consideration and one consideration alone, viz., that the invasion of Kashmir by the raiders was a grave threat to the integrity of India. Even since the time of Mahmud of Ghazni, that is to say, for nearly eight centuries, but with

a brief interval during the Mughal epoch, India had been subjected to periodical invasions from the northwest. Mahmud of Ghazni had led no less than seventeen of these incursions in person. And within less than ten weeks of the establishment of the new state of Pakistan, its very first act was to let loose tribal invasion through the northwest. Srinagar today, Delhi tomorrow. A nation that forgets its history or geography does so at its peril."<sup>158</sup>

Kashmir issue is still a bone of contention between India and Pakistan, and a constant headache to India even after sixty years of independence.

Hurried acceptance of the theory of Partition was another serious mistake, because if independence could be delayed by a year Jinnah would have been dead and today instead of a truncated and a problematic India there would have been a united India more powerful, more prosperous and more assertive. Furthermore, religion could never be the right base for creation of a nation has also been amply proved by the emergence of Bangladesh in 1971.

In 1948, the Constituent Assembly appointed a commission of inquiry under the chairmanship of Justice Dhar to go into the details of the question of distribution of provinces on linguistic basis. It opined that the formation of provinces on exclusively or even mainly linguistic considerations was not in the larger interests of the Indian Nation and should not be taken in hand.<sup>159</sup>

Keeping aside the Dhar Commission's finding, the Congress Government constituted another committee, manned by three members: Jawaharlal Nehru, Vallabhbhai Patel and Pattabhi Sitaramayya. The committee did not recommend anything new but suggested to postpone the formation of new provinces for a few

years.<sup>160</sup> This strategy was thought to be the best solution for the time being in view of other unsettled issues in the country.

However, Nehru took a decision to appoint a States Reorganization Commission to go into the issues of formation of states afresh. But even before its constitution a new state of Andhra Pradesh was created absolutely on the basis of linguistic consideration. Though Nehru thought that creation of an Andhra province would be a mistake, he agreed that he would not stop the process if the Andhras wanted. But he made an appeal to recognize the creation of Andhra province as an exceptional case and not to form the same as a precedent.<sup>161</sup>

Being the Prime Minister of India, Nehru was not supposed to be lenient to any sentiment of the people of a particular province. It was an unexpected decision and a grave historical error, Over and above he was making an appeal to the people not to treat it as a precedent – how naïve was Nehru's behavior politically!

The States Reorganization Commission had three members on its roll: Justice Fazal Ali, Dr. H.N. Kunzru and Dr. K.M. Panikkar. Its finding was also somewhat similar to that of the Dhar's Commission, It said:

"After a full consideration of the problem in all its aspects, we have come to the conclusion that its neither possible nor desirable to reorganize states on the basis of the single test of either of language or culture, but a balanced approach to the whole problem is necessary in the interest of national unity..."<sup>162</sup>

As was predictable, the finding of the commission was simply ignored, because the Nehru Government had no choice left once the Pandora's box was opened in the form of creation of Andhra Pradesh

based on the criterion of language. Henceforth, the languages had become the foundation for formation of new states.

Perhaps never did it dawn upon Nehru then that his sentimental approach to a simple question of state formation would generate ever-growing inter-state conflicts and separatist and secessionist tendencies amongst the vested elements in India in future. It was in the fitness of the thing for Nehru then to delay the process of formation of states by a decade or two pretending one plea or the other, then the demand for redistribution of states on linguistic basis would have gradually mellowed and died its natural death. There was no hurry to bow down to unreasonable demands. But who would advise him or extend support in such a situation of dilemma, there was none around, because his best friend and mentor Gandhi was long dead.

Nehru was also not very happy with the development. In the year 1956, he was feeling absolutely dejected and expressed his unwillingness<sup>64</sup> to consider further changes in the reorganization of western India.<sup>163</sup>

Before we conclude a few words on Nehru's foreign policy will give us a clear assessment of Nehru's faculty as a leader in terms of his foreign relations.

Non-alignment is good, but it is effective only in peaceful situation. In times of crisis it cannot be an effective alternative. India was friendless in 1962, though its defence was in doldrums. The result was : it could not defend its border and a vast chunk of its territory has gone under the occupation of China. N.V. Gadgil, a colleague of Nehru, writes, "Our border defenses were neglected because of the firm conviction of Nehru that since we had no quarrel with anyone, no one would attack us. Our foreign policy, so well conceived from the

standpoint of national security, failed in the end, because of this fatal weakness.”<sup>164</sup>

Let us see what a general has to say on India's debacle in Sino-Indian war of 1962, “It must be frankly admitted that the humiliating defeat inflicted by the Chinese demonstrated the failure of our political leadership. Like other democracies in the past, as at Dunkirk or at Pearl Harbour, India paid the price of unpreparedness... The most important lesson of this war was that a Nation's foreign and defence policies cannot grow in isolation of each other; they must be closely dovetailed. In the ultimate analysis, a Nation's survival or its stature in the world is related to its ability to defend its frontiers. Irrespective of its attachments to the ideals of world peace, a Nation cannot afford to neglect its defence or its Defence Forces.”<sup>7</sup>

He writes further, “India achieved Independence through a non-violent revolution and after Independence, played a leading international role as a non-aligned country. With this background of non-violence and non-alignment, the Nation showed little defence awareness.”<sup>165</sup>

For defence unpreparedness in 1962, Nehru is not the sole leader to be blamed; it was the Defence Minister, V.K. Krishna Menon who did not heed the warnings of military officers. It was the duty of the Defence Minister to apprise the Cabinet of the developments across the border, whether he carried out this duty faithfully or not, it is doubtful. Once a list of defence requirement was sent to Menon but, writes General Kaul, no response was received from the Defence Minister.

“.... Menon received this letter, but whether he placed it before the Defence Committee of the Cabinet, only would he know. We did

not hear back from him or any of his colleagues. I do not know what happened to this letter.”<sup>166</sup>

This was the state of affairs in regard to India's defence on the eve of the Sino-Indian War of 1962.

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