



A HISTORICAL REVIEW OF THE INTEGRATION OF PRINCELY STATES IN INDIA

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Abstract: It is a well-known fact that India gained its independence from the British on 15th of August 1947. However, the celebration was short lived as it faced challenges in the form of communal riots and refugee crisis. These challenges threatened to fragment the country. Moreover, there was no instrument like the Marshall Plan to cope up with it. At that time, around 562 princely states existed with each state having their own ruling princes and families. This was a mammoth task to convince the head of the respective states to merge in India. As each one of them had a choice to go to either country. However this task was completed in a time span of less than two years and can be called nothing short of a miracle. What is more remarkable is that the entire process was peaceful barring a few exceptions like Hyderabad and Jammu and Kashmir. This is in contrast to the rise of states like China and Russia. The present research paper makes a review of the process of integration of some of the major princely states.

Keywords: Princely States, Integration, Partition, Refugees, Annexation, Colonial Rule.

Introduction: The first signs of the power tussle emerged when the crown started to aggressively push its agenda on the princely states. This was evident in a letter sent to the Chief Commissioner of the Central Provinces in 1884. The letter said that “succession to a native state is invalid until it receives in some form the sanction of the British Authority.” This meant that the ruler was not a heir of the state but was enjoyed its power on behalf of the British empire. Thus over the time, this divide increased until 1928 when Motilal Nehru Committee offered a solution. The offer was to join the Indian federation. This led to a dispute between the princely rulers and two factions. One was “the federationists” which constituted of the Maharajah of Bikaner and the Nawab of Bengal. The other group comprised of the Maharajah of Patiala.

The Federal Structure Sub Committee was before long comprised to especially investigate the question of formation of an alliance of Indian States; it expressed in its report of 15 January 1931 that the States and areas were to be joined in an alliance and upheld for specific safeguards for the states. Over time thoughts

continued with respect to this, and the dignitaries expressed their concerns at the Second Round Table Conference in September 1931. Gandhiji, who overwhelmed the Conference significantly, was against dyarchy at the middle and guaranteed unlimited oversight over India for a completely dependable government. The British didn't consent to this interest. English PM Ramsay reported toward the finish of the Conference that the extraordinary thought of an All-India Federation actually holds the field. The guideline of a capable central government subject to specific obligations and safeguards through a progress period, stay unaltered. This occasion additionally prompted a shift in perspective among numerous princely rulers. The Committee had passed on no expectation for rulers to acquire monetarily by joining the organization. In this manner, the rulers turned fearful with regards to joining the league.

Soon afterwards, The Government of India Act was passed by the British parliament in 1935. This established a kind of constitutional relationship between the princely states and the British rulers. Although, the accession to the federation was optional for the princely states but, efforts to convince the states were persistently pursued by Viceroy Linlithgow.

The rulers continued to drag out the requests for concessions while the political department made an honest effort to appease them. It was in January 1939 that the Viceroy gave the last proposal to the rulers as a roundabout letter encasing updated drafts of the overall statements of the instrument of promotion. The deal incorporated no possibility of variety and a 6-month cutoff time to react on the matter. The rulers tracked down the proposition "on a very basic level inadmissible". In the meantime, following the decisions that occurred in the areas, individuals in the Princely States started to foment for common freedoms also and in this way, on 3 December 1938, Gandhiji announced that there was no arrangement except for complete autonomy. He likewise cautioned the British and the Princely States that Congress strategy of non-intercession might be deserted to help individuals. Before any result could be reached, the second World conflict broke out in 1939, and the British concluded they required the assistance of the Indians, accordingly relinquishing the recommendation for the arrangement of an organization.

Integration of States: One of the greatest benefit of integration of princely states with the India Union was that it allowed a smooth administration of the country. The large number of small states made it difficult to govern the country. Each state would have a separate agenda and rules from its neighboring states. This would have caused conflicts and resulted into creation of barriers between states. Thus, any kind of comprehensive economic policy would not have worked for these states which is in fact important for the growth of the country. Apart from this, the large number of princely states was also dangerous for the unity of the country and could turn into a security threat. The disruptive forces could have also arisen due to the differences as provinces were ahead in development of democratic institutions while autocracy was still prevalent in the states. The signs of disruption were already prevalent in some areas and political progress had been compromised there.

Under such circumstances, this task of integration was assigned to then Deputy Prime Minister of India, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. Except for the States of Hyderabad and Junagadh, all the states signed the "Instrument of Accession". However, later on these two were also integrated. Post-integration, the management and affairs of these states with the center were cast into a new mold in order to fit into the

constitution which was newly formed in the 1950. It had provisions for three categories of States. The territorial integration of princely States was of the following three types:

1. States that merged with the neighboring provinces;
2. Grouping of some States into a separate entity;
3. Transformation of some States into centrally administered areas.

The cycle through which the states were changed into the ones with a new constitutional design was of two steps. It required, in any case, the accession of the Indian States to the Dominion of India. Also, it included the progressions by which the union of little States would turn into feasible authoritative units. With it likewise was set into activity the improvement of democratic establishments and capable legislatures in the States. The division of states before independence can be seen more clearly in the map given below.

Figure 1: Map of India before Partition



Junagadh

The increase of the rulers was just the preface to a last arrangement of the States issue. Before we could imagine the following stage, an undermining cloud showed up over the western skyline. This was the Nawab of Junagadh's accession to Pakistan. It was the most significant among the gathering of Kathiawar states and contained an enormous Hindu populace managed by the Nawab, Muhammad Mahabat Khanji III. The last Nawab of Junagadh was a relative of Sherkhan Babi. The Nawab, Sir Mahabatkhan Rasulkhanji, was an unusual of uncommon vintage. His main distraction in life was canines, of which he possessed hundreds. Without a doubt, that he conveyed his affection for canines to such lengths that he once coordinated a wedding of two of his pets, over which he burned through a tremendous amount of cash and out of appreciation for which he declared a State occasion! The Nawab had from the start been offering empty talk to the ideal of an assembled Kathiawar.

It was on September 15, 1947 that Nawab Mahabat Khanji of Junagadh decided to merge his princely state with Pakistan. By utterly disregarding Mountbatten's perspective, he integrated Junagadh to Pakistan through the ocean. The leaders of two expresses that were dependent upon the suzerainty of Junagadh — Mangrol and Babariawad — responded by pronouncing their autonomy from Junagadh and consenting to India. Accordingly, the Nawab of Junagadh militarily involved the two states. Leaders of the other neighboring states were furious at this and responded aggressively by sending troops to the Junagadh outskirts. Moreover, they also asked to the Government of India for its help. India trusted that assuming Junagadh was allowed to agree to Pakistan, mutual strain previously stewing in Gujarat would decline, and didn't acknowledge the Nawab's decision of increase. The public authority brought up that the state was eighty percent Hindu, and required a plebiscite to choose the subject of increase. Thereafter, India blocked the supplies of fuel and coal going to Junagadh from its territory. It also cut off air and postal connections to Junagadh and sent soldiers to the wilderness. Pakistan consented to conduct a plebiscite, however, it wanted India to withdraw its troops. This condition was dismissed by the Government of India.

After the Indian forces reached Junagadh on 26 October, the Nawab and his family escaped to Pakistan. Before leaving the princely state, the Nawab had emptied the state coffers and took wealth along with him. On November 7, 1947 Junagadh's court, confronting breakdown, welcomed the Government of India to assume control over the State's organization. The Dewan of Junagadh, Sir Shah Nawaz Bhutto, the father of the more popular Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, welcomed the Government of India to intercede. The Government of India acknowledged the greeting of the Dewan to mediate. After these events, a plebiscite was conducted in February 1948 the outcome of which was in favor of India. A plebiscite was led in February 1948, which went consistently for promotion to India. Junagadh turned into a piece of the Indian province of Saurashtra until November 1, 1956. Thereafter, Saurashtra was made to be part of Bombay. In 1960, Bombay state was parted into the territories of Maharashtra and Gujarat based on linguistic differences, where Junagadh was located at that time. Today, this former princely state is a part of Gujarat.

Hyderabad

This was the largest and most financially well to do state which covered an enormous part of the Deccan level. At that time, Nizam Mir Usman Ali was ruling over a large Hindu population in the state of Hyderabad. From the beginning onward, he was exceptionally clear on his interest for a free state and unmitigatedly would not join the Indian Territory. Thereafter, he drew support from Jinnah and the tussle throughout Hyderabad developed further after some time. Various solicitations and warnings from Patel were not sufficient enough to change the psyche of the Nizam, who continued growing his military by bringing in arms from Europe. Things got ugly when outfitted aficionados (called Razakars) released savagery focused on at Hyderabad's Hindu occupants. The Congress government chose to make a more unequivocal turn later the Lord Mountbatten abdication in June 1948. On September 13, 1948, Indian soldiers were shipped off Hyderabad under 'Operation Polo'. In an outfitted experience that went on for around four days, the Indian armed force dealt with the state and Hyderabad turned into the indispensable piece of India. Afterward, trying

to compensate the Nizam for his accommodation, he was made the legislative leader of the province of Hyderabad.

Jammu and Kashmir State

This was a princely state with a Hindu ruler administering over an overwhelming Muslim population which had stayed hesitant to join both of the two domains. The integration of Jammu and Kashmir proved to be one of the toughest one given its geo strategic location and importance for both the countries. The leader of Kashmir was Maharaja Hari Singh who had offered a proposition of halt consent to both India and Pakistan, forthcoming an official conclusion on the state's promotion. However, Pakistan ignored the agreement and attacked the Kashmir from north with a multitude of officers and tribesmen conveying weapons. In the early long periods of 24th October, 1947, a huge number of ancestral Pathan cleared into Kashmir. Worried by these developments, the Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir spoke to India for help. As a result, he sent his mediator Sheik Abdullah to Delhi to request India's assistance. It was on 26th October 1947 that Maharaja Hari Singh signed the 'Instrument of Accession' for the state of Jammu and Kashmir. This was signed in Jammu after he escaped from Srinagar. As per the signed 'Instrument of Accession', the Indian Government would manage communication, defense and external affairs only and the rest of the powers will remain with the state. Given the hill terrain of the region, the Indian troops had to be airlifted into the state.

On fifth March, 1948, Maharaja Hari Singh declared the formation of a democratic government in Jammu Kashmir which was led by Sheik Mohammed Abdullah as the Prime Minister. Thereafter, the state constituent assembly was formed in 1951. It met without precedent for Srinagar on 31st October 1951. In 1952, the Delhi Agreement was endorsed between Prime Ministers of India and Jammu and Kashmir giving exceptional situation to the state under Indian Constitutional structure. On sixth February 1954, the J&K constituent gathering confirmed the increase of the state to the Union of India. The President in this way given the constitution request under Article 370 of the Constitution stretching out the Union Constitution to the state for certain exemptions and changes. According to Section 3 of the J&K constitution, Jammu and Kashmir is and will be a basic part of the Union of India.

Travancore

The historic significance of this princely state was that it provides a strategic advantage for maritime trade. Moreover, this region had adequate labor and was rich in natural resources. From the very beginning onwards, this state had refused to integrate into the Union of India. Not only this, it also questioned the Government of India at that time. The Dewan of Travancore, Sir C. P. Ramamswamy Aiyar made it clear by 1946 that his aim was to create an independent state of Travancore. However, this state would also consider signing a treaty with the Union of India. Some of the scholars have also stated that Sir C. P. Aiyar had ties with the then British government. British government supported an independent state of Travancore because they wanted to extract and purchase a mineral called monazite from that area. This mineral was found in abundance in Travancore and would have helped Britain in developing nuclear weapons at a rapid pace. Sir, C. P. Aiyar was adamant for making Travancore an independent state till July of 1947. Thereafter, an attempt

was made on his life by a member of the Kerala Socialist Party. This led to a change of heart and soon afterwards, on July 30, 1947, Travancore joined the Union of India.

Jodhpur

The Rajput illustrious state regardless of having a Hindu ruler and an immense Hindu population, strangely had an inclination towards Pakistan. Young and natural, Jodhpur sovereign, Hanvant Singh calculated that he may further develop deal from Pakistan since his state was coterminous with the country. Jinnah paid all due respects to have furnished the Maharaja with a stamped clear piece of paper to list all of his solicitations. He moreover offered him free induction to the Karachi port to arms gathering and getting close by military and agrarian assistance. Seeing the risks in the limit state assenting to Pakistan, Patel instantly arrived at the sovereign and offered him sufficient benefits. Patel promised him that acquiring arms would be allowed, Jodhpur would be related with Kathiawar by rail and that India would supply grain to it during starvations. On 11th August 1947, Maharaja Hanvant Singh, King of Jodhpur denoted the Instrument of Accession and the State of Jodhpur was facilitated into the Indian Dominion.

Bhopal

Historically speaking, Bhopal was also one of the states that wished to stay independent from the Union of India. The ruler of Bhopal was a Muslim Nawab, Hamidullah Khan, who was controlling over a larger part of Hindu population. Hamidullah Khan was a dear sidekick of the Muslim League and relentlessly conflicted with the Congress rule. He had explained his decision to accomplish independence to Mountbatten. However, in a reply to this, Lord Mountbatten wrote “no ruler could run away from the dominion closest to him”. And rightly so, by July 1947, the Prince became aware of the huge number of rulers who had consented to India and decided to join India.

Conclusion: To conclude, it can be said that the integration of princely states into India was a historic event not only for India but for the whole world. As such a peaceful merger is rarely achieved. India at that time was largely fragmented with some 500 odd princely states covering 28 percent of its area and 48 percent of the Indian population. Most of these states were also allies of the British and it was not easy to appease them. Moreover, there was a risk of Balkanization of India if these states were to form allies and become powerful in their own regions. There is no doubt in the fact that Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel played a vital role in the process along with V.P. Menon who was then the secretary of the Ministry of States. For this task, Patel deployed a variety of tactics ranging from invoking the patriotism of the princes to warning them regarding the possibility of anarchy in case they refuse to join India. As an enumeration for giving up their states, the Government of India made payments to the royal families known as “privy purses”. Bikaner, Baroda and some other states from Rajasthan were the first ones to join the union while the others followed. Nevertheless, one cannot deny the fact that this process has saved India from internal political, social and economic conflicts between the states in the years to come. However, the tussle that emerged during the merger of Kashmir is still a challenge for India today.

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