
NEHRU AND HIS IDEA OF NATION BUILDING

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ABSTRACT

In 1947, India gained Independence from Great Britain. Its poverty rate at the time of British departure was at 70 percent. India is the country with the highest population living below the poverty line. In 1947, India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) was Rs 2.7 lakh crore. At the time of Independence, India had a population of 340 million. Its literacy level was also alarmingly low pegged at around 12 percent. India's independence was in itself a turning point in its economic history, as it was hopelessly poor as a result of steady deindustrialization by Britain. At the time of independence, more than half of India's GDP came from the agriculture industry.

Upon India's Independence in 1947, Nehru became the first Prime Minister of India, for sixteen consecutive years. Being a visionary and modernist, he laid the foundation of the principles of democracy, secularism, fraternity & liberty - upon which our nation rests today. Nehru promoted parliamentary democracy, secularism, and science and technology during the 1950s, powerfully influencing India's arch as a modern Nation. He implemented moderate socialist economic reforms and committed India to a policy of industrialization. The two goals of Nehru-proposal for nation-building were Socialism and Secularism. An economy based on the principles of socialism and secularism made possible the beginning of industrialization, scientific and the technological development at a faster and a wider level and on a strong parliamentary democracy. Nehru advocated a mixed economy, where the government-controlled public sector would co-exist with the private sector. He believed that the establishment of basic and heavy industry was fundamental to the development and modernisation of the Indian economy. The four pillars of his domestic policies were - democracy, socialism, unity, and secularism. He successfully integrated these pillars into the building of modern India.

Keywords: Democracy, Independence, Domestic, Planning, Socialism, Secularism, NAM, Modernisation, Industrialisation, Economy

Introduction

India's independence was in itself a turning point in its economic history, as it was hopelessly poor as a result of steady deindustrialization by Britain. Independence brought dreams of not just an individual, but also of an economic, a social and a political freedom. In 1947, India gained independence from the Great Britain. Its poverty rate at the time of British departure was at a 70 percent. India is the country with the highest population living below the poverty line. In 1947, India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) was Rs 2.7 lakh crore. At the time of independence, more than half of India's GDP came from the agriculture industry. Upon India's independence in 1947, Nehru became the 1st Prime Minister of India, serving for 16 years.

Being a visionary and modernist, he laid the foundation of the principles of democracy, secularism, fraternity and liberty – upon which our Nation rests today. Nehru promoted parliamentary democracy, secularism, science and technology during the 1950's, powerfully influencing India's arch as a modern Nation. He implemented moderate socialist economic reforms and committed India to a policy of industrialization.

The two goals of Nehru proposal for nation-building were socialism and secularism. An economy based on the principles of Socialism and Secularism made possible through the beginning of industrialization, scientific and technological development at a faster and a wider level and on a strong parliamentary democracy. Nehru advocated the mixed economy, where the government-controlled public sector would co-exist with the private sectors. He believed that establishment of basic and heavy industry was fundamental to the development and modernization of the Indian Economy. The four pillars of his domestic policies were democracy, socialism, unity and secularism. He successfully integrated these pillars into the building of the modern India.

Review of Literature

Subhash C. Kashyap (1990) in his book (edt.) "JAWAHAR LAL NEHRU HIS LIFE, WORK AND LEGACY" said Nehru's main thrust was to seek behavioural and attitudinal change of officials with in the administrative system. Nehru expanded the scope of public administration at the system's level and created new forms of organisation and built institutions for scientific work and development functions.

Bhikhu Parekh (1991) in his study said that a 'national philosophy' is needed by every state to comprehend and direct its sustainable development, which Nehru had focused in the involution of his unifying national philosophy. 'Modernisation' was a key to India's national philosophy for him which was integrated with seven national goals of unity of nation, parliamentary democracy, industrialisation, socialism, scientific temper, secularism and non-alignment. This paper comments on this philosophy and examines how he sought to obtain its public acceptance.

Surya Narayan Misra (2013) in his work revealed that Nehru had a very powerful pen and an influencing leader. He could transmit his thoughts as effectively as any established writer. His autobiography stands as a testimony to this. Nehru's unusual ability of cerebration, reflect and contemplate vigorously and intensively was second to none. He is not with us in the last fifty decades. But the impact of Nehru on the equity and social justice continues to be the focal theme of his strategical economic planning for the nation-building process in India.

Bhoomi Shroff (2017) has highlighted in her paper that the Nehru had contributed in the building of a modern Nation by his political legacy, particularly democracy, secularism, constitution and non-alignment.

Objectives of the Study

To explore the idea of Nation Building.

To identify different type of problems after Independence.

To analyses the role of Nehru in Nation Building after Independence.

Research Methodology

Secondary data was collected for objectives of the study. The revived articles, journals, reports, studies and websites link were used as secondary source of data.

Location of the Study

The study covers the idea of Nehru on Nation building.

State of Indian economy after 1947

In 1947, India gained independence from the Great Britain. Its poverty rate at the time of British departure was at a 70 percent. India is the country with the highest population living below the poverty line. In 1947, India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) was Rs 2.7 lakh crore.

Epidemics of smallpox, plague and cholera diseases like dysentery, diarrhea, malaria and other fevers carried away millions every year. Malaria alone affected one fourth of population.

Challenges India was facing after Independence

After Independence, India had to face many problems like illiteracy, corruption, status of women, poverty, gender discrimination, untouchability, regionalism, communalism etc. There are so many problems which were the greater obstacles for the economic growth of India.

There were three immediate issues India faced after the Indian Independence Act, 1947 passed in the British Parliament.

Due to the partition, approximately 80 lakh refugees came back to India from Pakistan. The rehabilitation of these refugees was a major challenge. The second challenge was to integrate the 562 small and big princely states into the United India. The third major challenge was to build a stable political system to fulfil the expectations and hopes of the people and develop India into a strong Nation.

Challenges after the Independence which India had faced were like a giant, some of them were:

IMMEDIATE PROBLEMS

1. Territorial and administrative integration of the princely states.
2. Communal riots that accompanied Partition.
3. Rehabilitation of refugees who had migrated from Pakistan.
4. Protection of Muslims threatened by communal groups.
5. Need to avoid war with Pakistan.
6. Communist insurgency.
7. Restoration of law and order.
8. Political stability and putting in place an administrative system, threatened with breakdown because of partition.

MEDIUM TERM PROBLEMS:

1. Framing a constitution.
2. Building a representative democracy and civil libertarian political order.
3. Organizing elections to put in place the system of representative and responsible government.
4. Abolishing the semi-feudal agrarian order through land reforms.

LONG TERM PROBLEMS

1. Promoting national integration.
2. Pushing forward the process of nation-in-the-making.
3. Facilitating rapid economic development.
4. Removing endemic poverty.
5. Initiating the planning process.
6. Bridge the gap between mass expectations aroused by the freedom struggle and their fulfilment.
7. Getting rid of centuries-long social injustice, inequality and oppression.
8. Evolve a foreign policy which would defend Indian independence and promote peace in a world increasingly engulfed by the cold war.
9. The national movement had brought together different regions, sections of society and ideological currents around a common political agenda.
10. The national leaders were committed to the goals of rapid social and economic change and democratization of the society and polity, and the values imparted by the national movement.
11. The leaders were committed to the values of democracy, civil liberties, secularism, independent economic development, anti-imperialism and social reforms and had a proper orientation. The leadership's position was strengthened by the fact that they enjoyed tremendous popularity and prestige amongst every section of the people.
12. The process of economic development is the size and utilisation of the economic surplus or savings generated in the economy for investment and therefore expansion of the economy.

13. Net Savings – The net savings in the Indian Economy from 1914 to 1946 was only 75 percent of Gross National Product (i.e., national income). The small size may be contrasted with the net saving in 1971-75 when they constituted 12 percent of GNP.
14. Total Capital Formation- The paltry total capital formation, 75 percent of GNP during 1914-46 as against 20. 14 percent of GNP during 1971-75, reflects this jump.
15. Share of Industry – the share of industry in this low level of capital formation was abysmally low, machinery forming only 78 percent of GNP during 1914-46 (This figure was 6.53 for 1971-75)
16. Furthermore, a large part of India's social surplus or savings was appropriated by the colonial state and misspent.
17. Another large part was appropriated by the indigenous landlords and moneylenders. Only a very small part of this large surplus was invested in the agricultural development.
18. The 'Drain', that is the unilateral transfer to Britain in which India got back no equivalent economic, commercial or material returns for it in any form.
19. It has been estimated that 5 to 10 percent of the total national income of India was thus unilaterally exported out of the country.

EXTERNAL CHALLENGES

1. **Global world order marked with cold war tensions:** Most of the developing countries were band- wagoning either of the two superpowers USA or the Soviet Union. India followed a non-alignment to stay away from cold war politics and focus on its internal development.
2. **Hostile neighbours: India had to face consequent wars with Pakistan (1965, 1971) and China (1962) during the early phases of its Independence.** This not only hindered India's growth and created regional instability. Nehru declared in 1947, "First things must come first and the first thing is the security and stability of India".

Consolidation of Nehru: Nehru took a firm stance against the possible division of India into smaller principalities. He established the state Reorganization Committee to fulfil regional

aspirants of the people which would lower the chances of them wanting to cede from the nation. This way he strengthened the unity.

Rehabilitation of refugees: Refugees from Pakistan were given shelters and attempts were made to reduce communalism. The government had to stretch itself to the maximum to give relief to and resettle and rehabilitate the nearly six million refugees from Pakistan who had lost their all there and whose world had been turned upside down. By 1951, the problem of the rehabilitation of the refugees from West Pakistan had been fully tackled.

Secularism: It was mainly due to Jawaharlal Nehru's efforts that India emerged as a secular state in the mid-twentieth century. Much before Independence, he played a heroic role in the development of a secular basis for Indian Polity. This helped in building the narrative of 'UNITY IN DIVERSITY'.

Caste Discrimination: He took decisive steps to eradicate the veils of the all-pervasive caste system. Nehru undertook corrective measures by changing existing Indian legal laws. Legal procedures were enacted to make caste discrimination illegal and punishable by law. The enacted laws were strictly enforced.

A system of reservation in government services and educational institutions was created to eradicate the social inequalities and disadvantages faced by people belonging to scheduled tribes.

Gender Discrimination: Jawaharlal Nehru enacted laws to guarantee practical universal suffrage to the women population of the country. The laws aimed to secure the social freedoms to the women. Female legal rights were also increased under Nehru's able Prime Minister-ship.

Welfare State: Nehru was a practical idealist and believed that socialism and democracy were not contradictory but complementary to each other. He wanted to build a welfare state for the equitable distribution of wealth.

His socialist ideals revealed themselves in the way that he introduced laws for land distribution, in order to curtail the economic disparity in India among the landed and the land-less classes.

Nehru was the driving force behind Community Development and Panchayati Raj programmes. You all know how three-tier Panchayati Raj Institution (PRIs) were started in various states; and also, the Community Development Programme (CDP), which was launched in 1952.

Planning Commission: Nehru, a pragmatic socialist understood the importance of the welfare state in a country which does not have sufficient infrastructure, established a planning commission for long term planning of social schemes. Also, the economic policies of investing in heavy industries and protecting the nascent manufacturing sector, helped India to substitute imports to a certain extent. This consisted of a Rapid industrialisation, import substitution, self-reliance, tenancy reforms, agricultural development, cooperative sector and public sector to lead and private sector to be under the support of the public sector, no foreign capital. This led to a path on which economic planning was done.

India set up the Planning Commission in 1950 to oversee the entire range of planning, including resource allocation, implementation and appraisal of five-year plans. The five-year plans were centralised economic and social growth programmes modelled after those prevalent in the USSR. India's first five-year plan, launched in 1951, focused on agriculture and irrigation to boost farm output as India was losing precious foreign reserves on food grain imports.

The second five-year plan (1956-61) laid the foundation for economic modernisation to better serve India's long-term growth imperatives. Launched in 1956, it was based on the Mahalanobis model that advocated rapid industrialisation with a focus on heavy industries and capital goods. Nehru identified power and steel as the key bases for planning. He described the 680 ft Bhakra multi-purpose project on the Sutlej River in Himachal Pradesh as the new temple of a resurgent India. The politics of big dams aside, the huge Bhakra-Nangal dams are among several hydel projects India built to light up homes, run factories, and irrigate crops. The second plan set a target to produce 6 million tonnes of steel.

Education reforms and building Institution for future India:

Nehru initiated the construction and functioning of a number of schools. The schools provided primary and secondary education to the rural population. The schools are spread throughout India. Primary education was provided free of cost. The government schools also provided free meals to its students. The scheme was the trump card of Jawaharlal Nehru. The great statesman understood the importance of food to attract students to schools.

It was Nehru who built the basis of Indian space and engineering triumph by establishing ISRO in 1969 on the suggestions of Vikram Sara Bhai with which India has now achieved the status of space power today. Moreover, IIT Indian Institute of Technology, establishment had added a silver feather in the reputation of engineering excellence world-wide. Nehru's contribution to the study and application of the science of administration is overwhelming.

He had great interest in bringing about administrative reforms in the country. The Indian Institute of Public Administration (IIPA), New Delhi with which he was associated since its inception as its President, is an example of his interest in improving and developing administration in country. Also, he laid the foundations of a dual-track nuclear programme due to which India had achieved nuclear power. In setting up of the autonomous Atomic Energy Commission under the leadership of the renowned scientist, Doctor Homi Bhabha, Nehru evolved the right organisation. Likewise, he chooses Professor Mahalanobis (called the "father of Statistical Science in India") for directing the nation's highest Statistical Institute, namely Indian Statistical Institute, Kolkata (Calcutta). These many organisations, 95 ideologies and policies of Nehruvian Vision had given autonomy to Government system which gave a direct control to government over organisation pattern emerged from Nehru's thinking.

Non Alignment Policy (NAM): Nehru, being the foreign minister, did not want to join either of the power blocks. Also, he did not want India to remain aloof from world politics. Therefore, Nehru's visionary approach to establish NAM with other third world countries proved to be an ideal foreign policy approach. His greatest contribution was his policy of Non alignment during the Cold War. It meant that Nehru received financial and technical support from both power blocks (US and then USSR) in building India's industrial base from a scratch. It meant that India maintained neutrality toward both the Blocks. Steel mill complexes were built at Bokaro

and Rourkela with assistance from the Soviet Union and West Germany. His idealistic approach focused on giving India a leadership position in Non alignment. There was substantial industrial development. Industries in fact, grew 7.0 percent annually between 1950 and 1965 almost trebling industrial output and making India the world's 7th largest industrial country (Walsh)

CONCLUSION

In recent years, a prominent change can be observed in the interpretation of history- where in the present times the narrative around the contribution of past leaders is presented differently. One such example is of India's first Prime Minister- Jawaharlal Nehru. The nature of Nehruvian way of politics (debate and deliberation) lead to development of respect for parliamentary procedure, abiding faith in the constitutional system. Through the planned economy approach, Nehru envisaged that in and of extreme poverty and inequality, the objective of government policy must be the welfare of poorest, most deprived and most marginalised of the people. It is reflected in the creation of frame work of the rights, including the right to work, the right to food, the right to education and the right to fair compensation for land, all of which have empowered the poorest of people in India.

Nehru's contribution to India can never be truly evaluated. Despite facing daunting task, he was successful in maintaining and strengthening the nation. Carrying the tradition of the national movement, he nurtured the newly born Nation, India. We recall here his role in introducing planned economy, initiating the process of industrialisation, developing science and technology, trying to rear an apparatus of political democracy and endeavouring to foster a secular spirit. Nehru deserves the credit of legitimising the status of Congress leadership in post-colonial India by trying to create the developmental state.

Nehru is regarded as the builder of modern India. He has gone down in history as an outstanding statesman and political leader who devoted his life of passionate quests and gigantic endeavours to national development. He is considered a multifaceted personality-a statesman with an instinct for democratic fusion and socialism, a charismatic leader with an

international outlook of amity and friendship, a writer with a distinct vision, an upholder of peace and secularism, a thinker of contemporary events and a leader of masses.

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