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## Both Nehru and Patel Were the Need of the Hour in 1947–48

**Rajindar Sachar**

Prime Minister Modi while speaking on the Budget expressed the grievance that Congress did not make Patel the Prime Minister. Unfortunately no one had advised Modi that Nehru was Gandhiji's choice. He had equal respect for both Nehru and Patel.

The fact actually is, there was no rivalry between Nehru and Patel as both realised that India can only prosper if there was good relation and mutual respect for each other. Patel even when he could muster majority in Parliament did not try to supplant Nehru. Let me give some instances of the respect which Nehru and Patel had for each other.

In 1952, the Congress returned to power with a clear majority in the Punjab Assembly elections. My father became the Chief Minister of Punjab, which then comprised of present-day Haryana and Himachal Pradesh.

I had in 1946 become an active member of the Socialist Party founded by J.P. and Dr. Lohia and others. I

myself had this personal experience in 1955. I was the chairperson of the Socialist Party (Punjab) and the general secretary of the Punjab High Court Bar Association then. The Punjab High Court was shifting from Simla to Chandigarh. It was to be inaugurated by Nehru and he had come to Chandigarh the evening before. My father, who was then the Chief Minister of Punjab, invited Nehru for an informal breakfast at our residence. I was staying with my father, though my office was in another sector. I had admired Nehru a lot during the freedom struggle, but by 1955, my views on Nehru had considerably changed. Our party was convinced (rightly or wrongly, time alone will tell) that Nehru, who had shown the vision of socialism to us, had abandoned that vision and was following wrong policies. Our differences with his policies were deep. Though I was a nobody in those days, I told my father that I will not be at the breakfast table to receive Nehru. My father and I had a beautiful understanding and respected each other's view. He realised my reluctance, even though

he mentioned that I was being childish.

I went to my office before Nehru arrived because I could not think of being at home and being rude by not joining him for breakfast. Of course, we received Nehru with all the dignity and deference due to him when he came to the High Court for inauguration.

Today, I laugh at my presumptuousness – a chit of boy, whom Nehru probably did not even notice, beating his chest by not attending and denying himself a rare close breakfast meeting with one of the greatest leaders of India and who had been a hero of our time. Nevertheless, looking back, I still feel that my conduct was not demeaning, because at that time it represented a youthful, genuine and unshakeable faith in socialism—something which fortunately I still have not lost.

Whatever little was left of democracy vanished when Indira Gandhi imposed Emergency and stifled the press violating Nehru's warning. My father, an old Congressman, wrote a letter to Indira Gandhi during the Emergency reminding her of what Nehru had said:

*To my mind, the freedom of the Press is not just a slogan from the larger point of view but it is an essential attribute of the democratic process. I have no doubt that even if the Government dislikes the liberties taken by the Press and considers them dangerous, it is wrong to interfere with the freedom of the Press. By imposing restrictions you do not change anything; you merely suppress the public manifestation of certain things, thereby causing the*

*idea and thought underlying them to spread further. Therefore, I would rather have a completely free Press with all the dangers involved in the wrong use of that freedom than a suppressed or regulated Press.*

Let me give a few instances where, even when they differed on State policy, Nehru and Patel accepted the other's point of view. In 1947, the Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir realised, after the tribal attack from Pakistan, that it was no longer possible to remain Independent. So he sent his Prime Minister Justice Mahajan with a letter to Pt. Nehru agreeing to accede J & K to India, so that India could send military assistance to J & K.

Mahajan was finding it difficult to convince Nehru about immediately accepting accession of Kashmir, even though Patel agreed with Mahajan. A heated debate ensued, but Nehru still showed reluctance. At this time Sheikh Abdullah, who in the adjacent room and was listening to this debate, came out to tell Nehru to accept the view of Patel and Mahajan. It was in these circumstances of mutual respect for each other that accession of J & K to India took place.

Another important event concerned the accession of Hyderabad. It is well known that while Patel was for taking strong action against the Nizam of Hyderabad who was wanting to remain independent and not accede to India (even when his boundaries had no direct linkage with Pakistan), Nehru was against military action. Finding that the conditions would become irredeemable, Patel decided on his own to send security forces.

While the security forces were

moving in, Nehru came to know about it and telephoned N.V. Gadgil, Minister of State for Home, and told him that he immediately wanted to talk to Patel about this action. Gadgil phoned Patel and told him about what Nehru had said. Patel naturally sensed that Nehru would want to stop action against Nizam. So he told Gadgil to tell Nehru that he had not been able to contact Patel. The result was that the security forces moved in, and the Nizam immediately signed the latter of accession to India.

Nizam realised and understood the working of Nehru and Patel. This is shown by the fact that soon after, when Nehru went to Hyderabad, Nizam did not show the courtesy of receiving him at the airport. But when Patel went to Hyderabad, he realised the consequence of repeating his foolishness, and quietly went to the airport to receive Patel, which was the correct protocol.

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# BJP Ideology and Future of Scientific Enterprise in India

**Ram Puniyani**

With Indian independence and framing of the Indian Constitution, the foundations for progress in society were laid. This was to be multifaceted progress, and an important basis of this was the principle of scientific temper. This process was guided by the architect of modern India, Jawaharlal Nehru. There was a massive surge in the establishment of scientific institutions, accompanied by great contributions by Indian scientists, which contributed to the progress of the country. There were flaws and weaknesses of course, but the direction was clearly that of rational and scientific approach. This fulfilled clause Article 51a of the Indian Constitution that enjoins upon citizens the 'fundamental duty' to develop 'scientific temper'.

The Bharatiya Janata Party and its leaders, who are currently ruling the country and dictating the direction of scientific research and development, seem to have different ideas. During the last seventy odd years of the development of our scientific institutions, foundations have been laid for development in all areas of science and technology, including the areas of basic science and technology, health, atomic energy, space science and what have you; now, the ruling dispensation is putting things in reverse gear.

The inkling of this retrograde direction can be seen during the previous BJP-led NDA Government, when Murali Manohar Joshi, the then MHRD minister, introduced courses like astrology and Paurohitya (rituals) in universities.

In continuation with this, Dr. Satya Pal Singh, currently minister of state in the MHRD, recently stated that Darwin's theory is wrong as our ancestors did not mention that they saw ape turning into man in our scriptures. He was duly backed up by RSS ideologue turned BJP leader Ram Madhav.

The latter himself stated a while ago that Wright brothers were not the first to invent the aeroplane, it was an Indian, Shivkar Bapuji Talpade, who first invented it. He emphasised that school text books should highlight the likes of Talpade. The theory of evolution has been one of the turning point discoveries of science, based on painfully collected evidence by Darwin over several decades. As science is not based on faith, there is always scope to fill the gaps of knowledge of the original discoverer, and that's how science develops. In contrast to the methods of science, the fundamentalists harp that all knowledge is already there in the Holy Scriptures, the word of the almighty. The Joshis–Singhs–Ram Madhavs are not the only ones in such retrograde thinking; the Christian fundamentalists too counter the theory of Darwin by putting together what they call 'Creation science', and Islamic fundamentalists like Zakir Naik too dismiss this theory on frivolous grounds.

Singh's statement has been very disturbing for the scientific community in India. A large number of them expressed their anguish in a letter, which they sent to the minister. The letter says that the

minister's statement was simplistic and misleading: 'There is plentiful and undeniable scientific evidence to the fact that humans and the other great apes and monkeys had a common ancestor.' The letter further says that the minister's claim that the Vedas contain answers to all questions is exaggerated and 'is an insult to the genuine research work on history of Indian scientific traditions.'

'When a minister working for the human resource development in the country makes such claims, it harms the scientific community's efforts to propagate scientific thoughts and rationality through critical education and modern scientific research,' reads the letter. 'It also diminishes the image of the country at the global level and reduces faith of the international historical research community in the genuine research by the Indian researchers.'

At another level there are claims that Kauravas were born through the techniques mentioned in our holy scriptures, based on which Balkrishan Ganpat Matapurkar has patented the technique for body part generation, inspired by Gandhari's giving birth to 100 sons and Karna taking birth from the ear of Kunti. At an equally bizarre level is the understanding of the Chief of the Indian Council of Historical Research, Y. Sudarshan. According to him, a reading of the Hindu epic Mahabharata leads to the inference that the weapons described in them were the result of atomic fission and/or fusion. He also claims that stem cell research was there in the Iron

Age in India.

It is not difficult to imagine that with such a pattern of thinking among policy makers, our science policy will get a strong jolt. The government is encouraging research and funding on topics which are based purely on figments of imagination. Huge top level funding has recently been announced for Panchgavya, a mixture of cow urine, dung, ghee, curd and milk. Efforts are being made to prove that Ram Setu (Adam's bridge), a mythical bridge between India and Srilanka, was for real and was built by Lord Ram with the help of his monkey army. In the field of history, efforts are on to prove the existence of River Saraswati and the historicity of epics like Ramayana and Mahabharata, to name a few of the current research topics.

There are two unscientific processes involved here. One is the claim that all knowledge is already there in our scriptures and that research and development in science and technology should be along those lines. The second is claiming that all discoveries have their roots in India, more so the India before the coming of Christians and Muslims. This seems to be running in parallel with identifying India with Hindus and Hinduism alone. With the foundation for good development of scientific enterprise having been laid during the last many decades, the question is whether this community of scientists and Indian society at large will be able to resist these impositions on the direction in which our science has been advancing so far? Will our next generations be able to benefit from rational thinking and achievements of science, or will they be taken backward to medieval age thinking ?

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## Sectarian Politics and the Partition of India : The Targeting of Nehru and the Congress

**Anil Nauriya**

Decades after the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi, the Hindu Mahasabha workers have in recent years become emboldened enough to publicly glorify his assassins. On January 30, 2016, precisely 68 years after the assassination, some of them reportedly distributed sweets to mark the killing as they continue to hold Gandhi responsible for the Partition of India in 1947.

On the same day, an intellectual associated with the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) sought, on the electronic media, to dissociate the RSS from the prime assassin. However, the RSS and its various offshoots, including the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), have seldom dissociated themselves from holding the Indian National Congress (Congress) responsible for Partition. On the contrary, this has been a major plank in their propaganda offensive against the Congress. Many BJP leaders have resorted to such rhetoric, especially at election time.

These attacks became especially marked since 2013, in the run-up to the General Elections of 2014.1 Some of the Hindutva organizations have also become less covert than before in their glorification of the assassins of Mahatma Gandhi. Simultaneously, other sections of Hindutva forces have sought to disclaim responsibility for Gandhi's assassination and have attempted to shift the focus of their attack on Jawaharlal Nehru.2

There have also been some gradual changes in the rhetoric of the BJP as compared, on the one hand, with that of the Jan Sangh, its pre-1977 predecessor, and on the other hand, with that of its natural allies such as the Hindu Mahasabha, the Shiv Sena and similar parties. The Hindu law reform conducted in the 1950s during Jawaharlal Nehru's tenure as Prime Minister had not gone down well with the sections of society prone to support the Jan Sangh, and the momentous churning of a near-stagnant social milieu provided a further point for conservative Hindu bitterness towards the country's first Premier. It was some two decades later, with the Jan Sangh's involvement in the political movement led by Jayaprakash Narayan (JP) in the mid-1970s, that the Sangh found itself having to engage with Gandhians, Sarvodaya workers, socialists and others.

### The targeting of Nehru

Thus, when the Jan Sangh re-emerged in 1980 as the BJP, its traditional doctrinal positions gave way to some modified formulations. In the new conditions, it became necessary to reshuffle the punching bags that the new party would target in its political practice. It is in this phase that its fire came to focus more exclusively on Nehru and his family. This did not mean that the BJP quite discarded its previous antagonism toward Gandhi.

By the 1990s, the BJP under Lal

Krishna Advani had internalised Hindutva, the ideological position of Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, the Hindu Mahasabha leader. In 2003, the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government even installed, in the Central Hall of Parliament, a portrait of Savarkar who had directly inspired Gandhi's assassin. JP was long dead, and in any case, for the BJP, he had served his purpose. The BJP (and the Shiv Sena) felt enabled to show closer affinities with the Hindu Mahasabha without directly attacking Gandhi himself.

The BJP strategy of not directly attacking Gandhi coupled with a selective utilisation of his name continues. Given the great respect in which Gandhi is widely held, it would have perhaps been inexpedient for the BJP, both domestically and internationally, to adopt a course that a party with no immediate prospect of wielding—or continuing to wield—power might have felt free to do. For that reason, despite the celebration and sweets distribution organised by Hindu Mahasabha workers on the anniversary of Gandhi's assassination in 2016, the main focus of the Hindutva-BJP attacks in the immediate future is likely to be not on Gandhi as such but on the Congress, in particular on Nehru and his family.

The functioning of the post-1969 Congress too facilitated this concentrated fire on Nehru's family by the BJP. As the Congress began increasingly to be identified personally with Nehru's daughter, Indira Gandhi, power within the party came to be centralised in her and her younger son during the emergency (1975–77). After her return to power in 1980, and the death later in the year of the younger

son, power within the party came to be wielded also by her elder son who would, after her assassination in 1984, succeed her as Prime Minister and remain in office till 1989. Finally, after the death of all three, the Congress came gradually to be identified at its apex with Sonia Gandhi and also, in due course, her children. In this scenario, attacks on Nehru and his dynasty have received new traction. A very substantive part of the Hindutva attack involves popularising the thesis that the Congress in general, and Nehru in particular, were responsible for Partition.

There have been two tactical features of the Hindutva attack on the Congress in relation to Partition. First, Hindutva forces consciously eschewed any reflective analysis of the pre-independence politics of the Hindu Mahasabha and, second, with respect to British imperial objectives, they either passed them over sub silentio or treated them as not being of adequate importance in causing Partition.

### The silence over Savarkar

For example, the consequences of V.D. Savarkar's adoption of the two-nation theory have not been reflected upon, let alone honestly analysed in Hindutva historiography and propaganda. In his presidential speech at the Calcutta session of the Hindu Mahasabha in December 1939, Savarkar declared that 'We Hindus are a nation by ourselves.'<sup>3</sup> In this speech he pointedly excluded Muslims from this definition of nation. Significantly, this was a few months before Jinnah and the Muslim League formally adopted the two-nation theory.

On August 15, 1943, four years after the 'Hindus are a nation'

articulation, Savarkar said:

*For the last 30 years we have been accustomed to the ideology of geographical unity of India and the Congress has been the strongest advocate of that unity but suddenly the Muslim minority, which has been asking one concession after another, has, after the Communal Award, come forward with the claim that it is a separate nation. I have no quarrel with Mr Jinnah's two nation theory. We Hindus are a nation by ourselves and it is a historical fact that Hindus and Muslims are two nations.<sup>4</sup>*

There are three noteworthy points about this statement. First, in spite of his earlier 1939 speech, Savarkar now affects surprise at the Muslim League demand. Second, even he concedes that the Congress has been the strongest advocate of the unity of India. Third, he endorses Jinnah's two-nation theory. It is quite amazing that even after Savarkar took the position that Hindus and Muslims were separate nations, Hindutva-oriented circles could claim to raise the banner of Akhand Bharat (and even murder Gandhi in its name). Indeed, the Akhand Bharat slogan was again raised by an RSS spokesman on August 15, 2016.<sup>5</sup>

A leading political figure like Savarkar would, it must be assumed, have been fully aware of the demographic composition of the various regions of undivided India. When he spoke of Hindus and Muslims being two separate nations, surely he must have known, or would have been expected to know, that this could serve to legitimise the demand for separation of the regions where there was a majority of the people who he argued constituted a separate nation.

Obviously, Savarkar was aware

of the implications of what he was saying. He knew, as even a person of the meanest intelligence would have been expected to know, that such a formulation could involve geographical Partition. Even though they may raise the slogan of Akhand Bharat, the Hindutva-oriented critics' real grievance against Gandhi, Nehru and the Congress therefore was not, and is not, that the country got divided. Their real grievance obviously is that Gandhi, Nehru and the Congress continued to believe in a composite culture and a concept of nation that did not accord with theirs. *That is why Gandhi lost his life and that is why Nehru is under attack today.* Such matters are not analysed or even mentioned in writings by persons belonging to organisations like the RSS, Jana Sangh or the Bharatiya Janata Party.<sup>6</sup>

As it happened, the vigorous renewal of the Hindutva propaganda holding the Congress responsible for Partition began even as a similar critique of the party, albeit from a diametrically opposite perspective, was being developed in some academic writings, especially at Cambridge University. From the early 1980s, this would gain appreciable circulation and also feed into the Hindutva attack. It is, therefore, necessary to deal with this particular academic critique, as it appears in spite of its many errors to be not infrequently repeated.<sup>7</sup>

As in the case of the Hindutva positions, discussion here too proceeds without recognition of the existence of any British colonial strategic objectives regarding Partition. This is strange considering the attention given by the British to retaining control in areas in undivided India's north-west and the north-east.<sup>8</sup>

The hypothesis has been put across from time to time that in the 1940s, Nehru stood in the way of a federal structure which Jinnah supposedly desired.<sup>9</sup> The notion, which has in recent years received some traction, seems to be that Jinnah stood for a more inclusive, broader Union which was not acceptable to the Congress leaders. Generally, the 'loose federal Union' argument is made in the context of the British Cabinet Mission Plan of May 1946. The Cabinet Mission Plan, in paragraphs 6 and 7, rejected the 'larger' and 'smaller' versions of Pakistan that had been placed for consideration, and overtly envisaged an undivided India. The Plan was to be subject to re-consideration at the instance of any Province after 10 years, and every 10 years thereafter. It envisaged three Groups A, B, and C; Group B would consist of the Muslim-majority Provinces in the north-west and Group C of the eastern Provinces of Bengal and Assam. The Groups would come together at the Centre in respect of specified subjects.

### **The fallacy of a federal Cabinet Mission Plan**

The two underpinnings of the 'loose federal structure' argument are: first, that this is an adequate description of the character of the Cabinet Mission Plan of 1946 and, second, that Jinnah had 'accepted' this Plan. The view, first expressed by the then Viceroy Wavell, and later popularised by Cambridge scholars as well as some Bombay-based lawyers, was that the Cabinet Mission Plan was 'accepted' by Jinnah and the League and that this implied that the Pakistan demand had been given up. This view has been widely circulated, sometimes with the qualification that the demand for Pakistan was effectively given up.<sup>10</sup>

The opposite was in fact the case. The resolution passed on June 6, 1946 by the Council of the Muslim League, which is supposed to have 'accepted' the Plan, made it clear that Pakistan remained its 'unalterable objective'.<sup>11</sup> Curiously, this part of the resolution was not emphasised either by Ayesha Jalal in her work on Jinnah published by Cambridge University Press or by H.M. Seervai in his work on Partition.<sup>12</sup> Jalal and Seervai did not also deal with the League's Madras session (1941), where it had been made clear by an amendment to the League's Constitution that its Pakistan demand was not a 'bargaining counter'. Both these writers were the principal propagators, after Wavell, of the idea that the League had 'accepted' the Cabinet Mission Plan which had, prima facie, rejected the Pakistan idea.

The second and third paragraphs of the League's resolution of June 6, 1946, reiterated that Pakistan remained 'the unalterable objective' of the League and that the Cabinet Mission Plan was for it only a step towards Pakistan, which it saw as 'inherent in the Mission's Plan'.<sup>13</sup> It is not as if the League had 'accepted' the Cabinet Mission Plan and the Congress and Nehru simply came and torpedoed it. The League's options with respect to the Cabinet Mission Plan were restricted as the Labour Government in Britain at this stage was not willing overtly to go further by way of a direct Pakistan commitment. The Mission's Plan ostensibly rejected the Pakistan concept; however, as the League noticed, an alternative route to Pakistan was implicit in the Plan. In the third paragraph of the League Council's resolution of June 6, 1946, it was observed that 'it will keep in view the opportunity and right of

secession of Provinces or Groups from the Union, which have been provided in the Mission's Plan by implication.<sup>14</sup> There was on the League's part no intention to work the Plan except as a route to attain Pakistan.

Later, while withdrawing its 'acceptance' of the Cabinet Mission Plan, the Muslim League had cited, inter alia, a statement by Nehru on July 10, 1946, at a press conference in which he had declared that the Constituent Assembly would be sovereign.<sup>15</sup> Yet, given the fact that the League had just a month earlier, on June 6, 1946, reiterated the Pakistan objective, it is hardly fair to blame Nehru's statement for a withdrawal of a League 'acceptance' that did not really exist in the first place.

Besides, the Congress had already made it clear through Maulana Azad's letter of May 20, 1946 to Lord Pethick-Lawrence, who led the Cabinet Mission, that it would look upon the Constituent Assembly as a sovereign body for the purpose of drafting the Constitution 'unhindered by any external authority'. This letter was drafted by Nehru. What Nehru said on July 10, 1946 was therefore not entirely new.

A federal structure requires that the Provinces have some control over themselves and their fate. In their submission to the Cabinet Mission four days before the Plan was announced, the League had somewhat brazenly referred to Assam as a 'Muslim Province'.<sup>16</sup> The Cabinet Mission obliged the League by placing Assam in Group C, along with Muslim-majority Bengal. There was hardly any upholding of the federal principle here. In placing Assam in Group C the British would

have known that they were including in the Plan a 'deal-breaker'. The statement issued by the Cabinet Mission on May 16, 1946 required under Paragraph 19 (iv) that the provincial representatives to the Constituent Assembly would divide up into three Sections (corresponding respectively to Groups A, B, and C). Paragraph 19 (v) of the Statement further required that these 'Sections shall proceed to settle Provincial Constitutions for the Provinces included in each Section and shall also decide whether any Group Constitution shall be set up for those Provinces'. Maulana Azad pointed out in the letter (drafted by Nehru) to the Cabinet Mission on May 20, 1946 that Bengal would thus play a dominating role over Assam as the Plan required the Provincial Constitution to be 'settled' not by the Province but by the Section, that is Constituent Assembly members belonging to Group C, comprising Bengal and Assam. Rules framed by Group C could thus nullify the theoretical option given to a Province to opt out of a Group at a later stage. Azad pointed out that similarly, in Group B, Punjab would dominate over Sind and the NWFP. Incidentally, those familiar with the workings of politics in Pakistan today would readily endorse the validity of this apprehension. In the form in which it was presented, the Cabinet Mission Plan could not be treated as coterminous with or equivalent to setting up a 'federal structure'. In actual fact, it had the effect of covertly throttling provincial federalism at the Group level.

There were other features militating against inclusiveness. Some of these were immediately obvious. Others unfolded in the course of the Cabinet Mission's

deliberations. Sikhs were left out on a limb in Group B. Jinnah also resisted a role for non-League Muslims in the Executive Council envisaged under the Cabinet Mission Plan. Thus he sought to determine not only the League's representation on the Council but also the composition of the Congress representation. In this context, Zakir Husain was to Jinnah a 'Quisling'.<sup>17</sup> To describe such positions as federalist or inclusive in any way is hardly tenable.

Speech-making apart, Jinnah had difficulty not only with the federal principle but also with a pluralist approach on Pakistan. In the course of his talks with Jinnah in 1944, Gandhi had suggested a referendum in the Muslim-majority areas to ascertain by adult suffrage of 'all of the inhabitants of the Pakistan area' whether they wished to be part of a separate state. The offer is recorded in Gandhi's letter of September 22, 1944 to Jinnah. He also suggested in the letter that a 'third party or parties' be called in 'to guide or even arbitrate between us'. Jinnah responded on September 25, 1944 demanding that the voting in such a referendum be confined to the Muslims in the area.<sup>18</sup> Thus he was not inclined to permit the Sikhs, Hindus, Christians and others in the so-called Pakistan area to have a say in the future of the area that was their home. Such positions sit ill with civil libertarian claims.

Throughout the relevant period, the British resisted suggestions for resolution of the inter-communal question which did not involve a key role for themselves. They saw themselves as arbiters in an inter-communal dispute. Gandhi and Maulana Azad had called this particular bluff more than once in statements usually neglected by historians.

On August 8, 1942, a few hours before his arrest on the next day, Gandhi dictated a letter to a citizen of Bombay, backing Azad's offer to the League that if it cooperated fully in the demand for Indian independence, the Congress would have no objection 'to the British Government transferring all the powers it today exercises to the Muslim League on behalf of the whole of India, including the so-called Indian India.'<sup>19</sup> On May 8, 1946 also, Gandhi suggested that an 'impartial non-British tribunal' go into the points of dispute.<sup>20</sup> But it was difficult to get the British to agree. In fact, the provision in the Cabinet Mission Plan regarding review after every 10 years also contained within it the likelihood of continued British supervisory presence.

Parenthetically, we may note that within independent Pakistan too, Jinnah was not enamoured of federalism or its implications. Although Bengalis constituted a majority in Pakistan after its formation, Jinnah, in a speech at Dhaka on March 21, 1948, declared that Urdu and 'no other language' would be Pakistan's state language.<sup>21</sup> It was this early disinclination to grant a due place to the Bengali language in Pakistan that contributed to the movement for secession of its eastern wing.

The oft-heard lament for the Cabinet Mission Plan and the attempt by diverse forces to pin its 'failure' upon the Congress and Nehru is especially surprising considering some other particularly obscure features of the Plan. These features associated with the Cabinet Mission Plan have historically not received adequate attention. These relate to the complicated tie-up

envisaged in the Plan between four future events and processes: (i) the lengthy Constitution-making process required under the Plan; (ii) the transfer of power and sovereignty in the form of independence to India; (iii) the condition relating to the formulation of a treaty between the United Kingdom and the Constituent Assembly; and (iv) the stationing of British troops in India and the terms on which these troops would be withdrawn.

An examination of these intricate inter-relationships indicates that the Cabinet Mission Plan was not a document simply offering a 'loose federal Union'. Let us consider these features seriatim.

First, on *the length of the Constitution-making process envisaged under the Plan*, for it was only after this process was complete that sovereignty was to be transferred under the Plan. In a statement issued on the same day as the Plan was announced, Stafford Cripps declared:

*So the three Sections will formulate the Provincial and Group Constitutions and when that is done they work together with the States representatives to make the Union Constitution. This is the final phase.*<sup>22</sup>

Thus, as per the Cabinet Mission's Plan, work on the Union Constitution would start only after Provincial and Group Constitutions were ready. That meant that each Group could take its own time settling its own Constitution and the constitutions of the Provinces comprising the Group. Then work would start on the Union Constitution in association with the (princely) States. Paradoxically, the Cabinet Mission Plan simultaneously declared [in Paragraph 14] that British

paramountcy over the princely States would not be transferred to the new Indian government on attainment of Indian independence. Thus, even while expressing the hope that the princely States would co-operate, the Cabinet Mission Plan offered the States the enticing prospect of their own independence if they did not co-operate in the making of a Union Constitution.

Second, it is not generally known that the matter of transfer of sovereignty was deferred under the Cabinet Mission Plan. The Secretary of State for India, Pethick-Lawrence, as leader of the Cabinet Mission, wrote in his letter dated May 22, 1946 to Azad that '*independence cannot precede the bringing into operation of a new Constitution*'.<sup>23</sup> He added:

*When the Constituent Assembly has completed its labours, His Majesty's Government will recommend to Parliament such action as may be necessary for the cession of sovereignty to the Indian people . . .*<sup>24</sup> [emphasis added]

Even at that stage this transfer of sovereignty was to be subject to certain provisos. Oddly enough, these vital issues have often escaped attention.

A third aspect concerns *the Treaty envisaged under the Plan*. Paragraph 22 of the Cabinet Mission Plan made it necessary to negotiate a treaty between the Union Constituent Assembly and the UK, to provide for certain matters arising out of the transfer of power.<sup>25</sup>

The Cabinet Mission did not envisage any transfer of sovereignty in the form of independence without the Union Constitution having been drafted and in the absence of such a

Treaty having been negotiated. The inevitably long-drawn Constitution-making process intrinsic to the Plan also implied the possibility of continued British supervisory presence. What shape would this take? Moreover, what was there to prevent this supervisory presence from telescoping into the review envisaged in the Plan after 10 years? [It may be noted parenthetically that it was only on February 20, 1947, by when it had become fairly clear that the Cabinet Mission Plan was not working, that the British Prime Minister announced a 'definite intention' to hand over power to Indian hands 'not later than June 1948'.]

There is finally *the inter-related matter of the stationing of British troops*. In the Nehru-drafted letter of May 20, 1946, Azad had pointed out to the Cabinet Mission that its notion of British troops remaining in India 'till after the establishment of the government in accordance with the instrument produced by the Constituent Assembly' would be 'a negation of India's independence'.<sup>26</sup> Nehru made this point several times. For example, on August 20, 1946, he observed:

*I am sure that when British armed might is removed from India, it will be easier for all of us to face the realities in India and arrive at mutually advantageous agreements.*<sup>27</sup>

The Cabinet Mission, while confirming in its statement on May 25, 1946 that there was 'no intention of retaining British troops in India against the wish of an independent India under the new Constitution', maintained that 'during the interim period' it was 'necessary' that 'British troops should remain'.<sup>28</sup> By

'interim period' was meant the entire elongated period leading up to the framing of the Union Constitution under the Plan, which would be a sequel to the framing of the Provincial and Group Constitutions, and finally the formulation of a Treaty between the Constituent Assembly and the UK.

Not surprisingly, in his letter dated May 20, 1946 to Pethick-Lawrence, Gandhi had also observed that with British troops in India, 'independence would in fact be a farce' and that 'it can in no way be contended that in the face of the troops, there would be natural behaviour in the Constituent Assembly'.<sup>29</sup>

Thus in the obviously long-drawn Constitution-making process envisaged under the Plan, with no transfer of power or sovereignty in the form of Indian independence, and with one political party still committed to its objective of Pakistan, the continued British presence, including the presence of British troops, had the distinct prospect of playing off Groups, Provinces and Princely States against one another.

The Cabinet Mission Plan was quite different from the current perception of it in sections of the academic community and among sections of the intelligentsia. That this perception has acquired an appreciable hold is, in part, to be accounted for by the resources still available to colonialist historiography. Far from being the blueprint of a loose federal Union, the Cabinet Mission Plan contained within it no early, clear and definite prospect of Indian independence as such; instead it set out a Constitutional route for dissolution, a possible prelude

to a larger Pakistan and even the prospect, under colonial auspices and under the watch of British troops, of the separate independence of various Princely states.

Looked at from any angle, therefore, it appears that attempts to shift the primary responsibility for failure of the Cabinet Mission Plan and consequently for Partition upon Nehru individually or upon the Congress collectively, whether these attempts be made on behalf of Hindutva or on behalf of the League or by colonialist historiography, are less than convincing and historically dubious. This is more so because each one of the forces involved in or associated with such targeting usually excludes its own role from the analysis. It is necessary that this record be set straight as the sectarian accounts tend to become elements in the contemporary political and electoral arena.

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#### References:

1. See, for example: 'Modi Blames Congress for Partition and Changing India's Geography', November 10, 2013, <https://www.indiatoday.in>.
2. See, for example, the report about an article published on October 17, 2014 by the mouthpiece of the RSS in the southern state of Kerala: 'Nehru Solely Responsible for Partition; Godse Chose Wrong Target: RSS Mouthpiece in Kerala', October 25, 2014, <https://www.outlookindia.com>.
3. *Indian Annual Register*, 1939, Vol. 2, p. 317.
4. *Indian Annual Register*, 1943, Vol. 2, p. 10.

5. 'RSS Leader Asks Youths to Make "Akhand Bharat" a Reality', August 15, 2016, <http://indianexpress.com>.
  6. See, for example, Jaswant Singh, *Jinnah: India-Partition-Independence*, Rupa and Co., New Delhi, 2009. Incidentally, the silences on the Hindu Mahasabha and its post-Malaviya leadership in Jaswant Singh's book become more deafening as Partition approaches. The last mention in it of the Mahasabha is with reference to the Gandhi-Jinnah talks of 1944 about which it is observed on p. 312: 'The announcement of the impending meeting also angered the members of the Hindu Mahasabha.'
  7. For an earlier critique of such perspectives, see Anil Nauriya, 'Some Portrayals of Jinnah : A Critique', in D.L. Sheth and Gurpreet Mahajan (ed.), *Minority Identities and the Nation-State*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1999, pp. 73-112.
  8. We may cite one of the several indications of a British expectation of a foothold in the so-called 'Pakistan' areas. On April 25, 1946, a few days before the Cabinet Mission Plan was announced, one of the contingency arrangements put forward by Sir William Croft, the Deputy Under Secretary of State, India Office, was 'that we should withdraw from Hindustan and leave it to its own devices while staying in Pakistan by agreement which he estimated would be forthcoming . . .' (*The Transfer of Power, 1942-7*, HMSO, London, Vol. VII, Document 138). Upon this Viceroy Wavell said that he 'had considered this possibility in consultation with the Commander-in-Chief, and thought that we might have to contemplate something of the sort . . .' (*The Transfer of Power, ibid., Vol. VII*). At the meeting of the Cabinet Delegation with Wavell on May 31, 1946 the Viceroy said that 'he did not feel that there were final grounds for rejecting the possibility that we might remain in North-Eastern and North-Western India for an indefinite period' (*The Transfer of Power, ibid., Vol VII, Document 415*). This line of thinking was understandable also because, so far as British control of India was concerned, Wavell, his administration and provincial Governors were naturally more in sync with policies maintained by the previous British Government headed by Winston Churchill than with the post-war Labour Government. Earlier, when on a visit to England soon after the change in Government, Wavell had on August 31, 1945 called on Churchill, the former Prime Minister. The latter's parting advice had been to 'Keep a bit of India' (Wavell, *The Viceroy's Journal*, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1973, p. 168).
  9. In an article published on August 18, 2009, Jaswant Singh says: He said Jinnah envisaged that some areas of the new country would have Muslim majority areas and some Hindu majority areas and believed a federal system that kept the country as one was desirable. Nehru, by contrast, demanded a system that was centralised. 'Nehru believed in a highly centralised policy. That's what he wanted India to be,' Mr Singh went on. 'Jinnah wanted a federal polity. That even Gandhi accepted. Nehru didn't. Consistently he stood in the way of a federal India until 1947 when it became a partitioned India.' ('Search for the Real Villain of Partition Divides India Again', August 17, 2009, <http://www.independent.co.uk>.)
- See also: 'Nehru was as Much to Blame as Jinnah for Partition', Rediff interview with Nisid Hajari (author of *Midnight's Furies: The Deadly Legacy of India's Partition*, Viking/Penguin, Gurgaon, 2015), January 28, 2016, <http://www.rediff.com>. In the interview, Hajari asserts: 'Up until the spring of 1946, a political compromise that would have preserved a united India was still possible. The Congress - Nehru in particular - would have had to grant the Muslim areas that (eventually) became Pakistan more autonomy than he was willing to grant, and have had to accept a weaker Central government than he wanted.'
10. See, for example, Aijaz Ahmad, "'Tryst with destiny" - free but divided', *The Hindu*, Independence Day Supplement, August 15, 1997, pp. 22-23.
  11. For text, see Maurice Gwyer and A. Appadorai, *Speeches and Documents on the Indian Constitution, 1921-47*, Vol. II, Oxford University Press, Bombay, 1957, p. 601.
  12. Ayesha, Jalal, *The Sole Spokesman: Jinnah, The Muslim League and the Demand for Pakistan*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1985 and

- H.M. Seervai, *Constitutional Law of India*, Vol. 1, N.M. Tripathi Private Ltd., Bombay, 1991 (4th edition).
13. Gwyer and Appadorai, op. cit.
  14. Ibid.
  15. Ibid., p. 619.
  16. For Terms of Offer made by the Muslim League as a basis of agreement, May 12, 1946, see Gwyer and Appadorai, *ibid.*, p. 573. Earlier, on February 7, 1946, Viceroy Wavell, in a cable to Pethick-Lawrence had accepted that Assam (apart from Sylhet district) was not a Province to which there could be 'a reasonable claim' on behalf of the projected Pakistan. (*The Transfer of Power, 1942-7*, HMSO, London, Vol. VI, Document 406). When the Cabinet Mission Plan was yet in the making, the Mission offered to Jinnah on April 16, 1946 the possibility of a Union Centre limited to essential subjects and envisaging also 'in one federation the whole of the Provinces of Sind, Baluchistan, North-West Frontier Province, the Punjab and Bengal plus perhaps the Sylhet district of Assam'. (*The Transfer of Power, 1942-7*, *ibid.*, Vol VII, Document 116). By the time the Cabinet Mission Plan was announced in the following month, Assam as a whole was to be added to Group C. The Mission was fully aware of the unfairness of this, particularly when the Group was to frame the Provincial Constitution as well. A note by W. Croft and F.F. Turnbull, secretary to the Mission, circulated on April 25, 1946, and by these two men and G.E.B. Abell, the private secretary to the Viceroy, on May 2, 1946 presaged this change in the manner the Mission would treat Assam. [*The Transfer of Power, 1942-7*, *ibid.*, Vol. VII, Documents 140 (enclosure) and 179]. While these documents were not as such 'accepted', they clearly affected the evolution of the Cabinet Mission proposals. Besides, a further rigidity was introduced in terms of restricting the possibility of any Province opting out of the particular Group in which it had been placed. After initially suggesting that 'Provinces should be free to form groups', a formulation that still remained in Paragraph 15 of the Cabinet Mission Plan, the same document went on to nullify this by specifying in Paragraph 19 (viii) that 'opting out' by a Province from the Group could only be after 'the new Constitutional arrangements come into operation' and 'after the first general election under the new Constitution'. The change in Paragraph 19 occurred primarily as a sequel to a cable on May 9, 1946 from F. Burrows, the Governor of Bengal whose views had also been sought by Wavell (*The Transfer of Power, 1942-7*, *ibid.*, Vol VII, Document 231). Burrows wanted also to ensure that the voting system within the Group, for formulation of the Constitutional arrangements, be such that decisions would be by simple majority. The inherent unjustness of this was marked also in relation to the NWFP and similarly placed Provinces. In any explanation of partition and analysis of sectarian politics, the role of officials like Croft, Turnbull, Abell and Burrows who pointedly introduced and encouraged sectarian demands needs close evaluation. The arrangements devised by them appear to have been programmed to ensure the failure of the Cabinet Mission even before the publication of its Plan. How these arrangements could be projected in scholarship and in 'popular' writing as loose federal arrangements, and Nehru accused of opposing them without justification, remains quite inexplicable.
  17. Wavell, *The Viceroy's Journal*, p. 296.
  18. Sharifuddin Pirzada, *Quaid-e-Azam Jinnah's Correspondence*, East and West Publishing Company, Karachi, 1977, p. 124.
  19. *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol. 76, p. 382.
  20. *Ibid.*, Vol. 84, p. 123.
  21. Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah, *Speeches & Statements as Governor General of Pakistan 1947-48*, Ministry of Information & Broadcasting, Government of Pakistan, Islamabad, 1989, p. 183.
  22. Gwyer and Appadorai, op. cit., p. 585; italics added.
  23. *Ibid.*, p. 591.
  24. *Ibid.*
  25. Gwyer and Appadorai, *ibid.*, p. 583.
  26. *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru*, Vol. 15, Orient Longman, New Delhi, 1982, p. 177.
  27. *Ibid.*, p. 303.
  28. Gwyer and Appadorai, op. cit., p. 595.
  29. *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol. 84, pp. 173-174.

# Why Were Budgets of Critical Farming and Food Security Schemes Revised Downwards

**Bharat Dogra**

When the budget is announced the common and understandable tendency is to compare this year's budget with the previous year's revised estimate (RE) so that one can know the extent to which allocation has changed in the new financial year compared to the previous year. However it can be very useful also to compare the revised budget (RE) of the previous year with the original budget estimate (BE) of the previous year to gain a complete understanding of how any important scheme or program has been budgeted .

To give an example, in the budget speech and in other policy statements the government has highlighted its commitment to spread organic farming and eco-friendly farming. But in reality we see that the budget for a very important scheme meant for this and related works such as protecting traditional seeds and time-honored practices of tribal farmers has been repeatedly revised downwards. This scheme is called Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana (PKVY). Originally an allocation of Rs 350 crore was made for this in the budget for 2017–18 BE, but this was later cut very drastically to Rs 250 crore in the RE for the year. Now in the new budget an allocation of Rs 360 crore has been provided for this scheme. If we compare with the RE of the previous year, the increase is significant, but if we compare with 2017–18 BE, then even the impact of inflation is not covered.

If we go back one more year to 2016–17, then we see that during this year also the budget for this scheme was cut. In fact, it was cut even more drastically from the BE of Rs 297

crore to an actual expenditure of Rs 153 crore, a cut of nearly 50 percent at a time when there is such an acute need to save traditional seeds and traditional wisdom in farming. So for both these years, the modest allocated funds for this scheme have faced heavy cuts.

Similar has been the experience of the budget allocation for National Food Security Mission (NFSM). The budget allocation in 2017–18 for this was Rs 1,720 crore, but this was later cut in the RE to Rs 1,400 crore. The estimate for this scheme for 2018–19 is Rs 1,691 crore. This appears to be higher than the previous year's RE, but is actually lower than the BE of the previous year. Here again, if we go back one year, then again we see that the allocation for this mission was cut from Rs 1,700 crore in the BE to Rs 1,280 crore in the RE.

In the case of Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana, the original allocation of Rs 4,750 crore in 2017–18 was later cut drastically to RE of just Rs 3,050 crore. The allocation for 2018–19 is Rs 3,600 crore. This remains much below the BE for the previous year even though it is higher than the RE.

Such a downward reduction appears even more shocking when it takes place in the context of a scheme that has been proclaimed to be of very high priority for the government. This is the case with the flagship irrigation scheme called the Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchai Yojana (PMKSY). In the case of its component under the Ministry of Agriculture, during 2017–18 the BE of Rs 3,400 was cut to RE of Rs 3,000 crore, while in the case of its component under the Department of

Land Resources, its BE of Rs 2,310 crore was cut even more heavily to RE of Rs 1,832 crore. The RE under other components of the scheme increased compared to the BE. However if all the components are taken together, there is still a marginal decline in RE compared to BE. Again, if we go back one year, we find that in the financial year 2016–17, the BE for all the various components of this scheme taken together was Rs 5,767 crore, and this was cut later to RE of Rs 5,182 crore.

Similar is the story of some other schemes like the National Mission on Oilseeds. In fact, during 2017–18 even the overall RE of Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare is moderately less than the BE. Incidentally, in the case of another ministry which is important from the point of view of vulnerable people, namely the Ministry of Labour and Employment, for this too the original allocation in the BE of 2017–18 of Rs 7,188 crore was later reduced to Rs 6,581 crore in the RE.

Hence it is important to keep track of budget of schemes and sectors which are crucial for public welfare throughout the year to find out if any cuts are being planned or made so that such tendencies can be opposed on the basis of reliable information. We can ignore marginal changes, but if substantial cuts are made, particularly in the case of public welfare schemes and sectors, then these should be placed before the Parliament and people so that the reasons for such cuts can be debated, and if these are found to be unreasonable, then these should be opposed and withdrawn.

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# Meaning of Education

**Sandeep Pandey**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently gave tips to students on how to clear the Board examinations with flying colours. Students of Jawaharlal Nehru University are protesting against a newly introduced policy of making attendance in classes compulsory. Do these things have anything to do with education?

Educationists today globally agree that the system of conducting collective written examinations is not the best method to evaluate students' learning. In fact, learning a subject in the sense of becoming knowledgeable, and scoring good marks in written examination in that subject, are two totally different things. In a country where tuition and coaching classes are given more importance than school education by not only students and parents but teachers as well, we are only preparing students to score high marks in examinations. Narendra Modi is only strengthening this viewpoint. It is another matter that there are experts in this country than Narendra Modi to guide students in this.

Education means developing a comprehensive understanding of the subject being learned. Ideally the students should select the subjects according to their interest and then learn it at their pace and through a method which they are comfortable with. The role of a teacher should be only that of a facilitator. If we foist a subject upon a student against her/his wishes, s(he) may score good marks under some pressure, but will

never be able to develop a liking for the subject or make use of the knowledge in real life.

Education must be linked to social concerns. There should be all round development of students. The students should acquire knowledge, skills and experience which they think will be useful in their lives. If adults start defining the objectives for children and also tell them how to achieve those, then the formal process of education may be completed but it would have lost all its relevance.

If we make attendance in classrooms compulsory, education will seem like tedium. The quality of teaching should be so exemplary that students get drawn to the class. This demands competency from teachers. It is only when the teacher is not capable or the administrators have no confidence in themselves (and, as an extension, in the students) that they think of making attendance in class compulsory. If the student doesn't understand the subject in class, it is better that s(he) goes to the library or takes the help of some other teacher or students outside the class to learn.

The evaluation should be only of whether the student has learnt the subject. If the student has not understood the subject s(he) should get another chance. If s(he) doesn't learn even in the second chance then s(he) should get a third chance. This process should continue until the student learns. To close the process

of evaluation before that would be against the very idea of education. Somebody can understand a topic only in one reading whereas another person may require several readings. The important thing is understanding, not the time taken to learn. Hence the idea of conducting examinations at a particular location within a stipulated time and that too in a competitive setting is meaningless. It is inexplicable why the educated class likes to create an unnecessary artificial competitive atmosphere for evaluation of learning of their children which doesn't resemble any real life situation.

Ideally no student should fail. If a student fails, it should be considered the failure of the teacher and not that of the student. The student has come to the teacher as an ignorant individual. It is the teacher's responsibility to impart knowledge. If the teacher is unable to make the student learn, it means the teacher doesn't know how to impart knowledge to the student.

The big question is also to what use we're putting our education to. If we're using our education to serve our individual or at most familial interests, facilitate corruption, work against nature and other human beings or to cause disrespect to them, then our education has no purpose.

Recently, I got an opportunity to teach a short course on 'development studies' at the National Academy of Legal Studies And Research (NALSAR) University in Hyderabad.

In addition to classroom discussions, the students were expected to visit a local Anganwadi centre and measure the height and weight of one child each to determine whether the child was malnourished. To understand the background of the child, they were also expected to meet the family and study how it meets its various needs within a limited low income, given that only the children of this category would attend the Anganwadi. For any problem related to their situation like lack of sanitation facilities or drinking water, they were to file an application under the Right to Information Act before the appropriate authorities. During the eight-day period of the course, they were also expected to scan some newspapers to see how much coverage of the issues being

discussed in the class was done by them. All the work done by the students was to be presented in the last class before other students and then a report was to be submitted based on their presentation. Now, since every student was studying a different child and different family, the element of competition was eliminated from the evaluation process. Some students asked whether they could work collectively. They were given the freedom to work together, provided they did the same amount of work as they would have done individually. So if two students were working together, they would study two children and two families. Presentations were to be made separately by each of them. In the process of preparing their presentations, they did whatever

studies or research that were required on their own.

Which will be the process in which the learning for the students will be greater? One where they make their own choices of the subject of study and do it their own way, or the other where they study books and restrict themselves to classroom discussions, get their presence recorded in the class akin to incarcerated prisoners of a jail, have the feeling of being continuously monitored by their teachers and invigilators, and perform under pressure to score high marks in examinations? The answer is easy to guess.

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