

## Leadership Role Of Vallabhbhai Patel In Bardoli Satyagraha

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### Abstract

The Bardoli Satyagraha of 1928 considers as significant movement in the Indian independence movement, which was a strong demonstration of organized, nonviolent resistance against British colonial policies. This Satyagraha was led by Vallabhbhai Patel in Bardoli taluk, Gujarat against impose of unjust 30% tax increase by Bombay Provincial Government during a period of severe economic hardship brought on by floods and famine. The study explores Patel's strategic leadership, organizational capabilities and dedication to Gandhian values of nonviolence in this movements. It also focusses on Patel's title of "Sardar" and his contributions, which make him a prominent leader in the Indian National Congress. This study highlights how Patel organized farmers, coordinated resistance and negotiated with colonial officials to get substantial concessions and established an example for future peasant agitations in India. This article is based on secondary sources of data and follows a qualitative historical analysis.

**Key Words:** Colonial policy, Independence, Leadership, Nonviolence, Peasant, Satyagraha.

### 1.1 Introduction

In the rural area of Bardoli taluk, Surat, Gujarat in 1928, one of the most significant event was occurred during India's struggle for independence. The region, suffering from disastrous floods and famine in 1925, which led to severe economic crisis. At that time, the Bombay Provincial Government's decided to raise land revenue by 30%, but the farmers of the area were reluctant to pay this revenue. They started to resist this injustice decision of the British authority. Vallabhbhai Patel, a well-known lawyer and president of the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation, emerged as the prominent leader in this crucial period and abled to mobilizing the farmers to oppose this injustice through nonviolent means. The study highlights leadership of Patel in Bardoli Satyagraha in terms of his strategies, organizational structure, its furthermore consequences of the agitation for India's struggle for independence.

#### 1.1.1 Objectives

The primary objectives of this study are

1. To analyze Vallabhbhai Patel's leadership strategies in organising the Bardoli Satyagraha of 1928.
2. To assess the role of the Bardoli Satyagraha in shaping Patel's national prominence and its influence on subsequent peasant struggle in India.
3. To explore how Patel's application of Gandhian satyagraha principles contributed to India's anti-colonial struggle.

### 2.1. Methodology

This study employs a qualitative historical analysis to examine Vallabhbhai Patel's role in the Bardoli Satyagraha of 1928. The research based on secondary sources of data. Secondary sources, includes book, journal etc.

### 3.1 Bardoli Satyagraha: Historical Background

In a devastating floods in 1925, all the crops of fields were destroyed in Bardoli taluk, which led to severe economic hardship among farmers. Despite these circumstances, the Bombay Provincial Government, which was under British control announced a 30% increase in land tax ignoring the farmers' plight or their requests for assistance. By this decision of the government, the financial situation of the farmers made much worse. Because, lack of resource of farmers created difficulties to pay the increased taxes of the government. This policy was the example of the British government's insensitivity towards Indian peasants, which was a recurrent issue in the freedom movement in India. In that moment, Vallabhbhai Patel who had emerged a reliable advocate for the farmers of Gujarat by the success of Kheda Satyagraha in 1918, the localsof the Bardoli area Narhari Parikh, Ravi Shankar Vyas, and Mohanlal Pandya requested the help from Patel. Patel, who was greatly influenced by the Gandhi's principles of nonviolence, , transformed the Bardoli movement into a paradigm of disciplined resistance against British rule in India.

#### 3.1.1 Leadership of Patel

Patel's leadership was incredible by strategic planning and grassroots mobilization. After refusal of Patel's request on land revenue by the government, he organised the farmers Bardoli taluk to withhold their payment as a method of nonviolent protest. He had adopted various strategies for the success of this farmer agitation. He divided the taluk into various manageable sections under trusted associates like Parikh, Vyas, and Pandya to supervise activities and operations in different areas. This

decentralized structure facilitated effective coordination and rapid information distribution among the satyagrahis. Patel also recruited volunteers to monitor activities of government officials, so that the protestors were informed early and keep them prepared for any coercive action used by government such as property seizures or auctions. Patel's strategy of intelligence network kept them one step ahead of the authorities and in this way they abled to undermined colonial ruler's efforts to suppress the movements.

### 3.1.2 Policy of Non-violence

The core of the Patel's approach was his strong adherence to Gandhian ideology of satyagraha or principle of nonviolent resistance. He urged farmers to remain peaceful in front of the colonial authorities. The villages also remained non-violent even when government used violent methods including deployment of Pathan enforcers from the northwest to scare the peasants and seize their property. Patel adopted the policy of non-violence not only maintained moral superiority of the movement but also to gather sympathy from both locally as well as nationally for the movements. It made a strong impact in national movement of independence also.

### 3.1.3 Diplomatic Victory

Patel's experience and his previous involvement in municipal governance and his legal background, as a lawyer enabled him to make discussion with colonial authorities in an efficient manner. As part of interaction, Patel's first appeal to Governor of Bombay was rejected. After dismissed his initial request, Patel intensified the protest by setting a strict deadline for tax collection resistance. As a result, the government compelled to reconsider its stance by considering Patel's strong position and his ability to negotiate with the authority, support by the collective determination of farmers of the region. It was Patel's diplomatic victory because the government decided to eventually cancellation of the tax increase and the release of the seized property.

### 3.1.4 Outcomes of the Movement

In response to the Bordoli Satyagraha, the colonial authority adopted coercive tactics. They used Pathan enforcers to scare farmers and seized of property like land, house, cattle, utensils etc. The authority planned to auction all these seized of property. But plans to auction off seized land and homes were unsuccessful, because no buyers from Gujarat or the surrounding areas came forward. It reflects that Patel was very much success to influence people by the Satyagraha and also it indicates the widespread mass support for the movement. The Bordoli movements got extensive elite support. Prominent political leaders K.M. Munshi and Lalji Naranji resigned from the Bombay Legislative Assembly in support of farmers' struggle which strengthened the influence of the movements as well as came into national consideration. Indian government officials also played a crucial role by providing day today governmental information to the activists of the movements. On the other hand, those who supported governments activities were socially excluded by the local people. Finally, the government cancelled the tax hike for the year and postponed the 30% increase to the next year. The government authority returned seized properties to the farmers, which indicates significant victory for the farmers and reinforcing the effectiveness nonviolent technique.

### 3.1.5 Patel's title of Sardar

The victory of Bardoli Satyagraha's highlighted Vallabhbhai Patel to national recognition. He successfully united various communities, maintained strict discipline and gave a positive outcome in the agitation. That is why Mahatma Gandhi and other satyagrahis gave him the title as "Sardar", which means leader. But Patel attributed the movement's victory to Gandhi's principles of non-violence, which indicates his humility and dedication to national struggle for independence. Thus, the Bardoli Satyagraha had enduring implications for peasant uprising in India. During the global economic recession in 1930's, the consequences of Bordoli Satyagraha was inspired similar tax resistance movements as well as new activists to participate in the independence struggle. Later, organizational framework of Patel became a model for future agitations, which emphasized strength of collective action and nonviolent technique.

## 4.1 Conclusion

Under the leadership of Vallabhbhai Patel, Bardoli Satyagraha of 1928 was a prominent example of peaceful, collective, planned, nonviolent resistance against colonial rule. It was an example of how a small local agrarian struggle turned to a national symbol of resistance. Patel's capacity to mobilize farmers, maintain discipline, his confident negotiations with authorities marked a significance impact on agrarian movements. Besides, the movement not only provided immediate relief to the Bordoli's farmers but also strengthened rural base of the Indian National Congress paved the way for future mass movements. Patel's title as "Sardar" stands as evidence of his undefeatable role in India's struggle for independence.

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