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JAWAHARLAL NEHRU: A GREAT ARCHITECT OF GLOBAL INDIA

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ABSTRACT

Jawaharlal Nehru, the first prime minister of independent India (1947-64), who established parliamentary government, the initiator of Non Alignment policy in foreign affairs, often referred with the epithet of Panditji, was born on Nov. 14, 1889, in Allahabad. His father, Motilal Nehru, was a barrister and a moderate nationalist leader and congressman. Jawaharlal was educated at home by tutors; most of them were English or Scottish. Under the influence of a tutor, Nehru joined the Theosophical Society at 13. For further education at the age of 15 he left for England, where he studied at Harrow and Cambridge and then for the Bar in London. His English experience reinforced his elegant and cosmopolitan tastes. As Nehru said once at Cambridge, "In my likes and dislikes I was perhaps more an Englishman than an Indian." Through out his life, Nehru advocated Fabian Socialism and a strong Public sector as the means by which economic development could be pursued by poorer nations. Jawaharlal Nehru took active part in the Non-Cooperation Movement; elected President of the Allahabad Municipal Corporation in 1924, and served for two years as the city's chief executive; Presided over Congress' annual session in Lahore in 1929 and passed a resolution demanding India's independence; elected as Congress President in 1936, 1937 and 1946; was one of the main architects of Non Aligned Movement. Jawaharlal Nehru is widely regarded as the architect of modern India. He set India on the path of democracy and nurtured its institution – Parliament, multi-party system, independent judiciary and free press. He also encouraged Panchayati Raj Institution (PRI).

INTRODUCTION

Jawaharlal Nehru was the first Prime Minister of India. He was also a major persona in the Indian Independence movement. The early education of Jawaharlal Nehru played a major role in his political views and economic policies.

Jawaharlal Nehru was the son of Motilal Nehru. Motilal Nehru was a wealthy barrister by profession. He practiced English law in the colonial Indian courts. The family belonged to the educated genteel class. It was also to a large extent anglicized. Jawaharlal Nehru received primary education under the guidance of an English governess. Young Jawaharlal was taught to converse in English from an early age. He also learnt the appropriate customs of the British Raj.

Motilal Nehru wanted his son to get a proper English education. He wished his son to qualify for and serve the Indian Civil Services or I.C.S. He sent his son Jawaharlal to Harrow, the elite Public school in England. Jawaharlal Nehru was to spend the next six years of his life by studying at the hallowed portals of Harrow and Cambridge.

The young Jawaharlal did not enjoy his schooling at Harrow. He found the school syllabus stifling and the standard of residency conditions unbearable. All students of the school were forced to condition themselves to the daily specter of bathing and washing themselves in cold water. After completing school, Nehru took the University of Cambridge entrance examinations in 1907. The same year, he got admission into the University.

Jawaharlal Nehru studied natural sciences at Cambridge University. His chosen subjects were physics, chemistry and geology. Jawaharlal Nehru was weak in mathematics. For this reason, Physics was later substituted by botany.

Jawaharlal Nehru joined the Inner Temple for his legal studies in October 1910. This decision, again, was not taken due to Nehru's fascination with the law. The event merely marked a career move as charted by his barrister father Motilal Nehru. Jawaharlal Nehru passed the Bar final examination in 1912. After clearing the examination, he was called to the bar later that year.

Nehru's education years at England fostered in him the Indian nationalist movement. He believed that the colonial English administration willfully discriminated against Indians. This thinking was further fueled by the abrasive attitude of the British Imperial order against Indians. Jawaharlal was attracted by the socialism of the British Fabians. The forte of equality in socialism acted as a magnet for the impressionable Jawaharlal Nehru.

Jawaharlal Nehru was very much influenced by the socialist and liberal political atmosphere prevalent in Europe in those days. The 1900s heralded the culmination of the Western Age of Enlightenment. The atmosphere of liberalism prevalent in that era emphasized the importance of the rights of the individual. It also emphasized on the rights of the equality of opportunity. This liberal viewpoint came to prominence during Nehru's later years. His British sojourn also instilled in him a secular ethos that was far ahead of his time. This moral uprightness would help him to dream of a new India that would accommodate citizens of all religions.

London was a hotbed of political movements in the early part of the 20th century. The student Jawaharlal Nehru liked to visit the cultural attractions of the capital city of the British Empire. He frequented the museums, opera houses and the theaters of London. Nehru was influenced by the deep social cauldron of pre-World War I London. Socialism was one of the prominent influences affecting the English political class at that time.

The early education of Jawaharlal Nehru influenced him in his later life. The influence was clearly visible on the economic policies adopted by the Indian state after its independence in 1947. Nehru clearly favored a more socialist approach when compared to other South Asian economies. The first Prime Minister was clearly thinking about his heady educational period in London when he promulgated the socialist ideology that influenced Indian government of the 1950's. The economy was treated with a mixed control. The Indian government was in control of the primary industries like electricity, mining and heavy engineering workshops.

The socialist leaning of Jawaharlal Nehru was apparent in the land redistribution program announced by the Indian government in the middle of the 20th century. The rural sector was given importance. Nehru correctly thought that since the majority of the Indian population lived in its villages, the rural sector should also get a lion's share of the country's economic resources. Dams were built. Canals were dug. The British education of Nehru is starkly visible in the promotion of fertilizers to increase the crop yield of the land.

The British education of Jawaharlal Nehru is also displayed in the Prime Minister's quest for independent energy sufficiency. Nehru actively promoted the acquiring and development of Nuclear Energy. Hydro-electric power projects were also enthusiastically taken. The License Raj was also his creation.

The License Raj was a unique byproduct of Nehru's combined Social-Liberal philosophy. The License Raj was started with the view to help the Indian industrial sector. The intention led to limited success. Indian industries soon became unprofitable and became globally uncompetitive. The failure of the License Raj led to its gradual scrapping by successive Indian governments from the 1980's.

Jawaharlal Nehru was the epitome of a resurgent India in the middle of the 20th century. He had the best of worlds, a privileged British education and an Indian upbringing. His study at the Harrow School helped him to get a firm grounding of the British cultural ethos. This was further cemented by his attendance at the Trinity College in the University of Cambridge. His stint as a Barrister at the Inner Temple in London helped to hone his already sharp negotiation skills at the bar. This legal training would help him to negotiate the treacherous minefield of pre-independence British politics from 1910 to 1947.

Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of independent India, was a man, who could influence the masses with his oration. He was an immensely learned man and could feel the pulse of the masses.

Nehru's Message to the Nation on the Independence Day was delivered on the brink of midnight of the 14th of August, 1947. The speech focused on various topics related to India and the freedom that she had achieved from the shackles of British colonial rule. The speech also encourages and inspires the countrymen to wake from the long slumber and take steps for the upliftment and development of India.

The message of the first Prime Minister of independent India, Jawaharlal Nehru, also requested the people of the country to actively participate in the process of nation-building. He also urged the people to have and show confidence in the national leaders of the country, who were bestowed with the duty of carrying the nation forward. The concept of equality was also emphasized in the independence speech made by Jawaharlal Nehru.

Independence Day Speech

"Long years ago we made a tryst with destiny, and now the time comes when we shall redeem our pledge, not wholly or in full measure, but very substantially. At the stroke of the midnight hour, when the world sleeps, India will awake to life and freedom. A moment comes, which comes but rarely in history, when we step out from the old to the new, when an age ends, and when the soul of a nation, long suppressed, finds utterance. It is fitting that at this solemn moment we take the pledge of dedication to the service of India and her people and to the still larger cause of humanity.

At the dawn of history India started on her unending quest, and trackless centuries are filled with her striving and the grandeur of her success and her failures. Through good and ill fortune alike she has never lost sight of that quest or forgotten the ideals which gave her strength. We end today a period of ill fortune and India discovers herself again. The achievement we celebrate today is but a step, an opening of opportunity, to the greater triumphs and achievements that await us. Are we brave enough and wise enough to grasp this opportunity and accept the challenge of the future?

Freedom and power bring responsibility. The responsibility rests upon this Assembly, a sovereign body representing the sovereign people of India. Before the birth of freedom we have endured all the pains of labour and our hearts are heavy with the memory of this sorrow. Some of those pains continue even now. Nevertheless, the past is over and it is the future that beckons to us now.

That future is not one of ease or resting but of incessant striving so that we may fulfil the pledges we have so often taken and the one we shall take today. The service of India means the service of the millions who suffer. It means the ending of poverty and ignorance and disease and inequality of opportunity. The ambition of the greatest man of our generation has been to wipe every tear from every eye. That may be beyond us, but as long as there are tears and suffering, so long our work will not be over.

And so we have to labour and to work, and work hard, to give reality to our dreams. Those dreams are for India, but they are also for the world, for all the nations and peoples are too closely knit together today for any one of them to imagine that it can live apart. Peace has been said to be indivisible; so is freedom, so is prosperity now, and so also is disaster in this One World that can no longer be split into isolated fragments.

To the people of India, whose representatives we are, we make an appeal to join us with faith and confidence in this great adventure. This is no time for petty and destructive criticism, no time for ill-will or blaming others.

We have to build the noble mansion of free India where all her children may dwell. The appointed day has come-the day appointed by destiny-and India stands forth again, after long slumber and struggle, awake, vital, free and independent. The past clings on to us still in some measure and we have to do much before we redeem the pledges we have so often taken. Yet the

turning-point is past, and history begins anew for us, the history which we shall live and act and others will write about.

It is a fateful moment for us in India, for all Asia and for the world. A new star rises, the star of freedom in the East, a new hope comes into being, a vision long cherished materializes. May the star never set and that hope never be betrayed! We rejoice in that freedom, even though clouds surround us, and many of our people are sorrow stricken and difficult problems encompass us. But freedom brings responsibilities and burdens and we have to face them in the spirit of a free and disciplined people.

On this day our first thoughts go to the architect of this freedom, the Father of our Nation [Gandhi], who, embodying the old spirit of India held aloft the torch of freedom and lighted up the darkness that surrounded us. We have often been unworthy followers of his and have strayed from his message, but not only we but succeeding generations will remember this message and bear the imprint in their hearts of this great son of India, magnificent in his faith and strength and courage and humility. We shall never allow that torch of freedom to be blown out, however high the wind or stormy the tempest.

Our next thoughts must be of the unknown volunteers and soldiers of freedom who, without praise or reward, have served India even unto death. We think also of our brothers and sisters who have been cut off from us by political boundaries and who unhappily cannot share at present in the freedom that has come. They are of us and will remain of us whatever may happen, and we shall be sharers in their good [or] ill fortune alike.

The future beckons to us. Whither do we go and what shall be our endeavour? To bring freedom and opportunity to the common man, to the peasants and workers of India; to fight and end poverty and ignorance and disease; to build up a prosperous, democratic and progressive nation, and to create social, economic and political institutions which will ensure justice and fullness of life to every man and woman.

We have hard work ahead. There is no resting for any one of us till we redeem our pledge in full, till we make all the people of India what destiny intended them to be. We are citizens of a great country on the verge of bold advance, and we have to live up to that high standard. All of us, to whatever religion we may belong, are equally the children of India with equal rights, privileges and obligations. We cannot encourage communalism or narrow-mindedness, for no nation can be great whose people are narrow in thought or in action.

To the nations and peoples of the world we send greetings and pledge ourselves to cooperate with them in furthering peace, freedom and democracy. And to India, our much-loved motherland, the ancient, the eternal and the ever-new, we pay our reverent homage and we bind ourselves afresh to her service. Jai Hind."

He was a great statesman and it was his foresight that he created institutions like Planning Commission, National Science Laboratories and laid the foundation of a vast public sector for

developing infrastructure for industrial growth. Along with public sector, Nehru also wanted to encourage the private sector to establish a social order based on social justice that is why he emphasized on planned development. With Nehru's vision India emerged as a leader nation with the policy of non alignment and the principle of Panchsheel, the five principles of peaceful coexistence at a time when the rivalries of cold-war were playing with humanity. He had distinct vision that eradication of poverty and better living style is possible with the extensive application of science and technology and industrialization. Education to him was very important for internal freedom and development. He was a passionate advocate of education for India's children and youth, believing it is essential for India's future progress.

His government oversaw the establishment of many institutions of higher education, including the All India Institute of Medical Science (AIIMS), the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), the Indian Institute of Management (IIM) and the National Institute of Technology (NIT). Nehru envisioned the developing of nuclear weapons and established the Atomic Energy Commission of India (AEC) in 1948. He was the survivor of India's great cultural heritage and wanted to combine tradition with modernity.

Nehru was a successor to Gandhi, his real inspiration into politics came in contact with Mahatma Gandhi. At that time Gandhi had launched a campaign against Rowlett Act. Nehru was instantly attracted to Gandhi's commitment for active but peaceful, civil disobedience. Gandhi himself saw India's future in the young Jawaharlal Nehru. On 15 January Gandhi said, "Some say Pandit Nehru and I were estranged. It will require much more than difference of opinion to estrange us. We had differences from the time we became co-worker and yet I have said for some years and say so now that not Rajaji but Jawaharlal will be my successor."

As the ideologue of the Indian Constitution and the Indian polity, Nehru's contribution cannot be denied. It is his doctrine of secularism and his approach to harmonizing the diversities of India. For Nehru secularism did not mean 'a state where religion as such is discouraged. It meant freedom of religion and conscience, including freedom for those who may have no religion'. For Nehru, the word secular was not opposed to religion. Jawaharlal Nehru played a key role in building modern India. He set up a Planning Commission, encouraged development of science and technology, and launched three successive five-year plans. As a result there was huge growth in agricultural and industrial production. He also had great contribution in developing independent India's foreign policy. He called for liquidation of colonialism in Asia and Africa. He played constructive, mediatory role in some disputes in international arena such in Korean crisis, Suez Canal conflict and so on.

Jawaharlal Nehru was a prolific writer, a great visionary, a charismatic leader, a successful statesman and he wrote a number of books like 'The Discovery of India', 'Glimpses of World History', his autobiography, 'Towards Freedom' (1936) ran nine editions in the first year alone. In 1955 he was awarded Bharat Ratna, India's highest civilian honour. But Jawaharlal Nehru couldn't improve India's relation with Pakistan and China. The Kashmir issue was always a

thorn in Indo-Pak relation and the border dispute with China. The Chinese invasion in 1962, which Nehru failed to anticipate, probably caused his death. Jawaharlal Nehru died of a heart attack on May 27, 1964.

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