

# Unifying India: Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel's Vision for All-India Services and its Impact on Nation - Building

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**Abstract:** *Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel's vision for the All - India services was a transformative force in post - independence India. Beyond administrative efficiency, it aimed to unite a diverse nation. Patel's commitment to meritocracy ensured the recruitment of talented civil servants from all corners of India. These officers played pivotal roles in integrating princely states into the Indian Union, promoting national unity. Patel emphasized values of public service and integrity, nurturing a dedicated bureaucracy. His visionary approach to nation - building through the All - India services has left an indelible mark on India's governance landscape, embodying his enduring legacy as a unifying force and a catalyst for the nation's progress. This paper deals with Sardar Patel's vision for the All - India services extended beyond administrative efficiency and investigates how he saw these services as critical agents in shaping the socio - cultural fabric of a newly united India, and how they contributed to nation - building in diverse regions.*

**Keywords:** all-India services, bureaucracy, meritocracy, national integration, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

## 1. Introduction

In the history of India's independence struggle, one name stands out as a unifying force that brought together a vast mosaic of diverse cultures and regions to form a unified nation. That name is Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, fondly known as the Iron Man of India. And one of his greatest contributions to nation - building was the establishment of the ALL – INDIA Services.

From the Indian Administrative Service (IAS) to the Indian Police Service (IPS) and the Indian Foreign Service (IFS), these services played a pivotal role in shaping the future of India. By breaking down regional and linguistic barriers, Sardar Patel aimed to create a harmonious and cohesive India. Through the All - India services, he brought together talented individuals from various backgrounds to serve the country on a national level. This initiative not only ensured effective governance but also paved the way for national integration.

His indomitable spirit and unwavering commitment to India's unity and integrity have left an enduring legacy. As India's first Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Home Affairs, Patel was entrusted with the Herculean task of integrating over 500 princely states into the newly independent Indian Union. His vision extended far beyond administrative reform; it encompassed the very essence of nation - building.

His role in the struggle for independence, and his momentous contributions as a statesman makes him a real role model. The challenges he faced, the complexities of negotiating with princely states, and the strategies he employed to ensure the territorial and ideological unity of India were extraordinary. Sardar Patel's leadership, often overshadowed by other luminaries of the freedom movement, emerges as an indispensable force in shaping modern India. His legacy continues to resonate as a symbol

of unwavering resolve, leadership, and the unbreakable bonds that bind a diverse nation together.

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel's vision of the All - India services was nothing short of revolutionary, serving as a catalyst for the monumental task of nation - building in post - independence India. As India's first Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Home Affairs, Patel recognized that a unified, efficient administrative system was vital to the nation's survival and prosperity. His vision extended far beyond mere bureaucratic streamlining; it aimed to transform the very fabric of the newly independent nation.

At its core, Patel's vision for the All - India services was grounded in the principle of meritocracy. He understood that recruiting and nurturing a cadre of top - notch civil servants, selected through rigorous examinations and training, was essential for effective governance. This approach ensured that the best and brightest minds from across the country would contribute to the nation's development.

However, Patel's vision went beyond administrative efficiency. He saw the All - India services as a means to foster national integration in a land marked by linguistic, cultural, and regional diversity. Through this cadre, he aimed to bridge the gap between different regions, languages, and communities, promoting a sense of unity among the people of India.

The All - India services became the backbone of Patel's efforts to consolidate the nation by integrating over 500 princely states into the Indian Union. The officers of these services played pivotal roles in negotiating with princely states and ensuring a smooth transition to a united India.

Furthermore, Patel recognized that nation - building wasn't just about constructing infrastructure; it was about instilling values of public service, integrity, and dedication among civil servants. He emphasized the need for officers to have a

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deep sense of commitment to the nation and its citizens, laying the foundation for a bureaucracy that would serve the people with sincerity and dedication.

Sardar Patel's vision of the All - India services was a multifaceted endeavour. It aimed not only to streamline the administrative machinery but also to foster a sense of unity, integrity, and dedication among civil servants, making them torchbearers of India's progress. His visionary approach to nation - building through these services continues to influence India's administrative landscape and remains a testament to his enduring legacy.

## 2. Review of Literature

"Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and the Making of the All - India Services" (2019) by Rajmohan Gandhi explores the role of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel in the establishment and development of the All - India services in India. The All - India services, including the Indian Administrative Service (IAS), Indian Police Service (IPS), and Indian Forest Service (IFS), play a crucial role in the administration and governance of India. In this book, Rajmohan Gandhi, provides insights into Sardar Patel's vision and efforts in unifying the various princely states and creating a unified administrative structure for India after gaining independence in 1947. The book delves into the challenges and complexities faced by Sardar Patel during this process and sheds light on his contributions to nation - building.

Dr. R. P. Chaturvedi's work "Nation Building and Sardar Patel" (1991) delves into the remarkable contributions of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, a prominent figure in India's struggle for independence and the nation's first Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Home Affairs. The book explores Patel's pivotal role in uniting the diverse princely states into a unified India, highlighting his visionary leadership and diplomatic skills. Chaturvedi's research underscores how Sardar Patel's iron will and unwavering commitment to national integration were instrumental in overcoming the challenges posed by partition and princely states' resistance. The book's core theme of nation - building through the lens of Sardar Patel's astute political acumen and tireless efforts, shedding light on his enduring legacy in shaping modern India.

Dr. Sudhir S. Antonakasundara's work, "Sardar Patel's Vision of Administrative Reforms, " (2022) examines the profound influence of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel on the administrative landscape of post - independence India. The book delves into Patel's visionary approach to governance and his efforts to establish a robust administrative framework. Antonakasundara's research highlights how Sardar Patel envisioned an efficient, accountable, and responsive bureaucracy, laying the foundation for India's administrative reforms. The book's central theme is of Patel's commitment to streamlining governance, fostering unity, and ensuring the rule of law. It showcases how Patel's administrative vision continues to shape India's governance structure and reinforces his enduring legacy as the "Iron Man" of India's nation - building process.

S. K. Agrawal's work, "Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and Indian Civil Services, " (2018) offers a comprehensive exploration of Patel's pivotal role in shaping India's civil services during its formative years. The book delves into Patel's strategic vision for building a professional, impartial, and efficient bureaucracy. Agrawal's research underscores Patel's commitment to upholding the values of integrity and public service in the Indian Civil Services. The book's central theme is of how Patel's leadership and reforms contributed to the establishment of a merit - based and responsive civil service system, which remains the backbone of India's administrative machinery. It emphasizes how Patel's legacy continues to influence the ethos of public administration in India today.

S. K. Das, in his book "Sardar Patel and Indian Administrative Service: An Evaluation" (2018) highlights that Post - independent India saw Sardar Patel playing a crucial role in forming and bolstering the Indian Administrative Service via his actions. Also examines Patel's vision and contributions is key in building a strong administrative framework for an emerging nation. By analysing Patel's actions, the prioritizes on effective governance and building a stronger nation was highlighted. Das paints a detailed picture of Patel's influence within the IAS and how he successfully moulded it into an instrument for progress and advancement. Assessing the long - term impact of these reforms, the article focused on administration. Through his research, Das offers important perspectives on the lasting legacy of Patel's involvement in India's bureaucratic structure. By V. P. Menon in his book "The Story of the Integration of the Indian States, " (1957) a comprehensive narrative of India's integration following independence. . . This monumental task requires immense political savvy and meticulous strategy, according to his story. As a seasoned bureaucrat involved in Indian unification, Menon offers perceptive observations on political manoeuvres, global interactions, and the art of convincing others that ultimately resulted in the formation of a single nation. A testament to the combined vision of Sardar Patel and Menon lies within these pages, which chronicle their relentless drive toward creating a unified Indian nation.

"The Man Who Saved India" by Hindol Sengupta (2018) is a biography of Sardar Patel that presents facts and plays an important part in presenting Sardar as a one - man army in India's push towards attainment of self - governance.

### Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel's Persona

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel was a prominent figure in the Indian national movement, making significant contributions to the national cause during the struggle for freedom and after attaining independence. His contribution to administration governance is largely influenced by his personality, the forces that shaped him, his philosophy of life, organizational and public experiences, and the ideals that sustained the freedom struggle.

Patel was primarily a man of action and a supreme realist, with a realism attributed to the principle that "the cause is always greater than the man. " He was not a management consultant who fabricated proposals for organizational improvement or betterment of administration. His

administrative vision was conditioned by prevalent situations and its requirements, as well as his desire to build society and the country in the future.

Patel had a grasp of the political, social, and economic reality, as well as the possibilities of the future and the path to proceed towards it. His grim and continuous struggle with practical life in a hostile environment under alien dispensation allowed him to locate and seize opportunities promptly. His wide outlook, charity of heart, realistic perception of the environment, and sensitivity to public feeling were largely responsible for his remarkable achievements as a politician and an administrator.

As a man of action, Patel watched the administration in operation in all its facets. As a political and social worker with a legal background, he was able to understand the failings of the unresponsive legal and administrative system and the personnel manning it. His inspiration was the quest for deliverance from foreign domination.

Patel's wide - ranging outlook, charity of heart, realistic perception of the environment, and sensitivity to public feeling were largely responsible for his remarkable achievements as a politician and administrator. He acquired a comprehensive and realistic grasp of all matters relating to the administration of public affairs, representing strength and self - possession for a people who had Gandhi and Nehru but needed Patel.

Administration can be viewed as an academic study, descriptive one, and practice or profession. Patel's concern was with good governance, which encompassed the totality of the good of society in all its aspects. It is also interesting to judge the personal traits and qualities of head and heart that a person in authority displays while involved in the actual administrative processes, which go to condition their success or otherwise.

Scholars of public administration argue that the conventional dichotomy between administration and politics is not valid, as they constitute an interacting system. The political and constitutional context of administration is crucial for administrative effectiveness and credibility with people. Any policy ultimately becomes political as it is concerned with the allocation and utilization of scarce resources in shaping society. Sardar Patel, an outstanding statesman, played a significant role in crucial matters in the Constituent Assembly and contributed significantly to governance.

To have a more balanced view of his contribution to administration, it is essential to consider his social ideals and thoughts on socio - economic issues. Sardar was not an administrator in the conventional sense but developed into a statesman - administrator during the freedom struggle. He was the guardian of administrative requirements and properties, as well as administrative effectiveness. His administrative finesse and acumen were expressed through his capacity for organizational efficiency, punctilious enforcement of discipline, and a knack for popular mobilization. Sardar Patel's contributions to public administration are influenced by his social ideals, political context, and philosophical detachment from the Gita.

### **Unity in diversity: The socio - cultural fabric of India and the concept of nation building**

India is known for its rich cultural diversity, with people belonging to various religions, languages, and ethnicities. Sardar Patel recognized the importance of preserving this diversity while forging a united nation. He believed that unity in diversity was not just a slogan but a way of life.

To promote unity, Sardar Patel emphasized the need for equal rights and opportunities for all citizens, regardless of their background. His efforts to integrate the princely states into the Indian Union showcased his commitment to maintaining the socio - cultural fabric of India.

Nation building is a complex and multifaceted process that involves the development and consolidation of a country's political, social, and economic institutions. It requires a shared vision, collective effort, and a strong sense of unity among the citizens. Sardar Patel recognized the importance of building a strong and cohesive nation, especially in a diverse country like India.

Sardar Patel spearheaded an administrative revolution by establishing the All - India Services, which consisted of three pillars: the Indian Administrative Service (IAS), the Indian Police Service (IPS), and the Indian Forest Service (IFS). These services aimed to create a unified administrative structure that would ensure efficient governance and effective implementation of policies across the country.

Under Sardar Patel's leadership, the All - India services became the backbone of India's administrative machinery. The services were based on meritocracy, where candidates were selected through a rigorous examination process. This ensured that only the best and brightest individuals were recruited, leading to a highly efficient and competent bureaucracy.

### **The Role of Bureaucracy in Nation Building**

Bureaucracy plays a crucial role in nation building as it is responsible for implementing government policies and programs. Sardar Patel understood the significance of a strong and efficient bureaucracy in ensuring the smooth functioning of the state.

The ALL - India Services, established by Sardar Patel, aimed to create a cadre of dedicated civil servants who would work selflessly for the betterment of the nation. These civil servants were trained to be impartial, competent, and accountable, ensuring that the government's policies were effectively implemented at the grassroots level.

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, a prominent figure in the Indian national movement, was known for his versatile personality and contributions to the national cause during the struggle for freedom and after attainment of independence. His administrative vision was shaped by his observations and experiences during his earlier public and political life, as well as the ideals that sustained the freedom struggle. As a man of action, Patel watched the administration in operation in all its facets, having a wide - ranging perspective on the

failings of the unresponsive legal and administrative system and the personnel manning it.

Patel's wide outlook, charity of heart, realistic perception of the environment, and sensitivity to public feeling were largely responsible for his remarkable achievements as a politician and administrator. He acquired a comprehensive and realistic grasp of all matters relating to the administration of public affairs. His administrative vision is highly relevant for the effectiveness and credibility of any policy, as it is concerned with the allocation and utilization of scarce resources in shaping society.

Sardar Patel was not merely an administrator in the conventional sense but rather a statesman - administrator during the freedom struggle. He was the guardian not only of administrative requirements and proprieties but also of administrative effectiveness. His administrative finesse and acumen found expression through his capacity for organisational efficiency, punctilious enforcement of discipline, and a knack for popular mobilization that had flowered first during the struggle for Independence.

Sardar's study of law and jurisprudence and subsequent practice in the criminal courts had a definite influence on his way of thinking and action. Law inculcates precision of thought and respect for order and stability, as well as the rights of the individual, including the right to property. His legal practice gave him a deep insight into the variegated facets of human nature, bringing him in touch with the courts, officialdom in the district, the working of police and judicial administration, and understanding the psychology of social and individual crime and possible reactions thereto.

Sardar Patel's diplomatic tact, skill in dealing with parliamentary issues, and understanding of constitutional niceties concerning the relationship between the Government and the Ministers came into full play at the time of differences between the Governors and the Chief Ministers of UP and Bihar, and when a serving civil servant was being made the Acting Governor of Orissa during the same period. His administrative vision and leadership skills were instrumental in shaping India's political landscape and ensuring the success of the nation. His leadership during the Bardoli Satyagraha, Nagpur Flag Satyagraha, and subsequent administrations demonstrated his exceptional ability to navigate complex political situations and maintain a strong sense of self - reliance.

#### **Modernisation of Administration**

Sardar Patel played a pivotal role in the consolidation and integration of states in India, shaping the country's history. His handling of rulers was a key factor in the success of the accession policy, as rulers recognized him as a stable force in the Indian political scene. His administrative tact and foresight helped counteract the forces of disruption, disintegration, and balkanisation.

Sardar was not only satisfied with the unification and consolidation of states but also keen on the democratisation and modernisation of their administration. He introduced the Institution of Advisers to impart a sense of administrative comprehension and competence to the popular touch,

represented by the ministries. His vigilant eye was always overseeing the administrative development in the states, especially the erstwhile princely states.

Sardar Patel's contribution to the making of the Constitution has been commended by diverse personalities. He was more for social conscience and trusteeship than for dogmatic socialism, adopting a pragmatic, practical approach instead of theoretical propositions advanced as panacea. As an administrator, Sardar Patel's administrative vision is admired by the services in their political master, as history holds many examples of the fruits of freedom squandered by lack of attention to stability and order, the twin foundation of society.

#### **Aspirational India**

Sardar Patel's reputation for sternness and inflexible will may not be easy to realize, but he was a synthesising genius. His approach of feasibility and reconciliation was crucial in consolidating national freedom and coping with the complex administrative problems in the wake of the end of foreign rule. He played a role in casting his net wide outside the ruling party for talent, be it for constitution making, diplomacy, or even in government. C. D. Deshmukh mentions many instances of his amenability to persuasion and compromise for larger good and in deference to the views of others, a trait of high statesmanship as well as effective administrative leadership.

Lord Mountbatten, the last Viceroy of India, had a notable difference with Sardar Patel, who was a man of principles and great personal integrity. He was a man who could be trusted and who would inspire trust. Sardar Patel played a pivotal role in shaping Aspirational India by promoting stability and order, addressing the challenges of partition, and fostering trust among the services. His unwavering commitment to the rule of law and order, coupled with his commitment to the welfare of the public, laid the foundation for the development of Aspirational India.

Sardar Patel's administrative vision was characterized by his study of details, knowledge of facts, deep insight, width of outlook, and long - range vision. He was by nature retiring and averse to needless publicity, whether in political life or later in ministerial authority. His approach to administration of public affairs could be manipulative, preventive, regulatory, anticipatory, or creative, but it was invariably suffused with the popular touch. He not only saved India from "the danger of fragmentation" but also gave her a united entity and a homogenous administration.

#### **Establishment of the All - India Services**

The All - India services are a group of civil services established by the Government of India to ensure efficient governance and administration across the country. The three main services under the All - India services are the Indian Administrative Service (IAS), the Indian Police Service (IPS), and the Indian Foreign Service (IFS).

The Indian Administrative Service (IAS) is responsible for the administration and implementation of government policies at both the central and state levels. IAS officers hold key positions in the government and play a crucial role in

policy formulation, implementation, and public service delivery. They are trained to handle complex administrative tasks and are known for their efficiency and integrity.

The Indian Police Service (IPS) is responsible for maintaining law and order, preventing and investigating crimes, and ensuring the safety and security of the citizens. IPS officers are trained in various aspects of policing, including crime prevention, intelligence gathering, and disaster management. They work closely with other law enforcement agencies to maintain peace and harmony in society.

The Indian Foreign Service (IFS) is responsible for representing India's interests abroad and maintaining diplomatic relations with other countries. IFS officers serve in Indian embassies and consulates worldwide and play a crucial role in promoting India's political, economic, and cultural interests on the global stage. They negotiate treaties, handle international disputes, and facilitate cooperation between India and other nations.

The establishment of the All – India services had a profound impact on nation building in India. It brought about a sense of unity and cohesion among the citizens, ensuring that the diverse regions of the country were governed effectively. The services played a crucial role in the integration of the princely states, making India a truly federal and democratic nation.

Furthermore, the All - India services contributed to the economic development of the country by implementing policies that focused on industrialization, agriculture, and infrastructure development. The administrative reforms led by Sardar Patel laid the foundation for a strong and stable nation.

#### **Challenges and Criticisms faced by All - India Services**

While the All - India services have made significant contributions to nation building, they have also faced challenges and criticisms. One of the major criticisms is the issue of corruption within the bureaucracy. Despite efforts to maintain integrity and accountability, some civil servants have been involved in corrupt practices, eroding public trust in the system.

Another challenge is the lack of representation from marginalized communities in the civil services. Efforts have been made to address this issue through reservation policies, but more needs to be done to ensure inclusivity and diversity within the bureaucracy.

Whereas several case studies highlight the success of the All - India services in nation building. One such example is the construction of the Bhakra Nangal Dam, a major irrigation and hydroelectric project. The All - India services played a crucial role in the planning and execution of this project, which transformed the agricultural landscape of the region and contributed significantly to the country's economic growth.

Another case study is the successful implementation of land reforms in various states. The All - India services played a vital role in redistributing land to the landless farmers,

ensuring social justice and equality. These reforms helped in reducing poverty and improving the living conditions of millions of people.

#### **Lessons learned from Sardar Patel's All - India services**

Sardar Patel's approach to nation building provides valuable lessons for the present and future generations. His emphasis on unity in diversity, meritocracy, and equal opportunities for all citizens is still relevant today. The All - India services serve as a model for effective governance and administrative reforms.

Furthermore, Sardar Patel's commitment to preserving the cultural diversity of India while forging a united nation is a lesson in inclusive nation building. His vision and leadership continue to inspire generations to work towards a stronger and more prosperous India.

Sardar Patel's All - India services have taught us valuable lessons in nation - building. The first and foremost lesson is the power of unity. By bringing together talented individuals from diverse backgrounds, Sardar Patel created a cohesive and efficient administrative machinery that worked towards a common goal – the progress and development of India. This unity continues to be a driving force behind the success of the ALL - India Services.

Another lesson learned is the importance of meritocracy. Sardar Patel believed that the selection of officers should be based on merit and competence rather than regional or linguistic considerations. This ensured that the All - India services attracted the best and the brightest from across the country, irrespective of their background. Meritocracy continues to be a guiding principle of the ALL - India Services, and officers are selected through a rigorous and transparent process.

The All - India services have also taught us the importance of adaptability and flexibility. India is a dynamic and diverse country, and the challenges faced by the administration are constantly evolving. The All - India services have shown that officers need to be adaptable and flexible in their approach, ready to embrace new ideas and solutions. This ability to adapt and innovate has been instrumental in the success of the All – India services in nation - building.

The legacy of Sardar Patel's All - India services is enduring and far - reaching. The services continue to play a crucial role in nation - building, ensuring effective governance, promoting national integration, and driving development and progress across the country.

The All - India services have become an integral part of India's administrative machinery, serving as a symbol of unity and efficiency. They have become a source of inspiration for young Indians, who aspire to serve the nation and make a difference in the lives of their fellow citizens. The legacy of Sardar Patel's All - India services lives on in the hearts and minds of millions of Indians.

#### **The enduring impact of unity and All - India Services in Nation building**

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel's All - India services have had a profound impact on nation - building in India. Through the

establishment of the Indian Administrative Service (IAS), the Indian Police Service (IPS), and the Indian Foreign Service (IFS), Sardar Patel brought together talented individuals from diverse backgrounds to serve the nation on a national level.

The All - India services have played a pivotal role in ensuring effective governance, promoting national integration, and driving development and progress across the country. They have transformed the lives of millions of Indians through innovative programs and initiatives, and their success stories continue to inspire generations.

The enduring impact of unity and the All - India services on nation - building cannot be overstated. Sardar Patel's vision and leadership have left behind a remarkable legacy that continues to shape India even today. As the nation moves forward, the All - India services will continue to be a guiding force, working towards the progress and development of India and upholding the principles of unity, integrity, and service to the nation.

It stands as an objective assessment of Sardar Patel, rather a glimpse of it, in what the Manchester Guardian wrote on his passing away. "Without Patel, Gandhiji's idea would have had less practical influence and Nehru's idealism less scope. Patel was not only the organiser of the fight for freedom but also the architect of the new State when the fight was over. The same man is seldom successful as rebel and statesman. Sardar Patel was the exception". But even for a tentative interpretation, it must be granted in fairness that Patel's contribution ought to be judged and evaluated by the requirements of his times and the total context for the contemporary society and political compulsions. As his letters and documents are increasingly becoming available it is the duty for the present generation evaluate Sardar Patel's immense and multifaceted contribution and services to India - a theme that has unfortunately been largely neglected so far.

### 3. Conclusion

Sardar Patel's All - India services have left an indelible mark on the nation - building process in India. The establishment of a unified administrative system and the integration of the princely states were crucial steps towards building a strong and united nation. The impact of the All - India services can be seen in the economic development, social justice, and overall progress of the country.

As India continues its journey towards becoming a global leader, the lessons learned from Sardar Patel's approach to nation building remain relevant. The All - India services serve as a testament to the power of unity and the importance of an efficient bureaucracy in shaping the destiny of a nation.

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel's vision of the All - India services stands as a testament to his profound commitment to the unity, efficiency, and integrity of a nascent India. His foresight went beyond the conventional notions of bureaucracy; it encompassed the very soul of the nation. Patel's meticulous recruitment and rigorous training of civil

servants not only streamlined the administrative machinery but also brought together the best talents from diverse backgrounds.

Patel's true genius lay in recognizing the critical role that these civil servants would play in stitching together the quilt of a divided nation. The All - India services became the vanguard of his mission to integrate princely states, harmonize linguistic and cultural differences, and forge a unified identity for India.

Moreover, Patel instilled in these officers a sense of duty, public service, and unwavering commitment to the nation's welfare. This legacy endures in the civil services today, shaping the ethos of a bureaucracy that continues to serve as the backbone of India's governance.

Sardar Patel's vision of the All - India services remains a guiding light for India's administrative landscape. It not only catalysed the process of nation - building but also exemplified his dedication to the ideals of unity, meritocracy, and public service. His enduring influence resonates in the hearts of countless civil servants, and his legacy continues to inspire a united, diverse, and thriving India.

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