



The Unification of India: M. K. Gandhi's Intervention

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Abstract: The paper intends to discuss the views, ideas, and actions of M.K. Gandhi in the unification of India during the struggle period and at the time of Indian independence. Further, it examines his contribution to integrating princely states into the Indian Union. Mainly, it traces the various stages of evaluating Gandhi's view of princely India, such as political, cultural, geographical, social, and historical perspectives. Gandhi criticized the relations between British India and Indian India. However, it tries to analyze the role of Gandhian philosophy as princely nationalist activities or tools and as a counterweight against British rule and native autocracy. It examines and explains Gandhian influence's origins and the growth of the all-India princely states' political activities and movements. Besides, the relationship between the Gandhian followers of British India and Indian India is also dealt with. Gandhi's non-interference and obstructionist policy have been examined critically. He viewed the princely states' problem as internal or indigenous; it was not significant like the colonial rule, so the Indian National Congress (hereafter INC) should not interfere.

Gandhi expressed his opinion on the non-interference attitude during India's freedom struggle, and post-independence is a prominent place in this article. Apart from this, he has articulated different views to the national leaders and Indian India regarding events and situations of princely politics. The Gandhian thoughts and activities were landmarks in the movement of states for the responsible government in princely states and the unification of India.

Key Words: Gandhi, Princely States, Indian India, British, Unification

Introduction:

The main objective of the present paper is to examine and contain M.K. Gandhi's intervention towards the unification of India and the princely states. Principally, it analyses Gandhi's views, utterances, and writings regarding the Indian princely states' problem and solution in peaceful ways. It presents and proposes interpretations of Gandhi's thoughts and approaches in this regard, and they were evident and different from other Congress leaders. It dealt with Gandhi's ideological influence on the Indian states people's freedom movement. Motivated leaders of the princely states implemented Gandhi's thoughts. He referred to two streams of thoughts parallel, as one was a non-interference policy in the internal matter of the state, and the second was a suggestion to the states' rulers for unification and a request to people to peaceful agitation.

Gandhian interventional ideas have stressed the importance of a union and oneness of India and princely states. It is suggested and highlighted throughout his writings. Gandhi's stance might best be defined as one of the ways of unification of India rather than other ways. The idea was to shape the Indian people into a nation or country that could best instead from the colonizers. By arguing Gandhi's thoughts, this concern for both unification and unity, His writing efforts to develop a unification or oneness form of mobilization to political activities to the struggle of Indian nationalists against imperialism and Indian autocracy. The central goal of Gandhi, but it had generally been neglected in historians' writing. It stresses the critics of Gandhi about the princely states' politics and the unification of the states with British India.

Gandhi's writings prominently explained the non-interference attitude of Gandhi in princely states' internal matters during the freedom fighting and post-independence. However, what he interpreted about the Indian traditional rulership and worked for people's rights. In the book, Gandhi mentioned his thoughts and some suggestions to the leaders and activists of the INC, such as do not interfere in the states' internal matters. According to him, the princely states matter was internal. He motivates to lead the unification of British India and Indian India.

He presented his broad political views for nationalist credentials. He mentions and publishes his ideas and thoughts in newspapers such as *Young India* and *Harijan*. Further, he also proposed his opinions in various pamphlets, speeches, and letters. His reviews were collected through two books, *The Indian States' Problem* by Gandhi (1941), and *To the Princes and Their People*, by Gandhi, Mahatma Gandhi Series, Vols. IV, edited by Hingorani, T.A. (1942). These books were a commentary on the problem of princely states and their people by Gandhi.

Further, it is Gandhi's understanding of the native states of India and their people. Consequently, these books looked firstly at the separation of India between British India and Indian India. Besides, it compares the British administration and laws concerning the states' problems.

Firstly, in his outlook, the British administration had a distinct influence on the separation between Indians. However, the possible political result of Gandhian resistance philosophy, activities, and ideas was intended as the source for the agitation against partition between British Indians and Indian Indians. Secondly, he showed himself to be influenced by the cause of national solidarity. Thirdly, the non-cooperation movements made him take up the cause of the princely states' people's campaign much more radically and frequently. Thus, the campaign influenced the agitation against the native rulers' autocracy and the colonial bureaucracy. Gandhi's vision was apparent for the future of India as political, social, and economic set up indicated through his thoughts and outlooks. It proposes to argue that the connections and continuity of Gandhi's ideas with the princely states people's organizations and movements against colonial rule and autocracy. He was a revolutionary that started an inclusive campaign with morality and ethic.

The regression was that the British Crown had been trying to control (unite under colonial rule) all states for a very long time, but they failed in this regard. So, the delay had been compensated for by the fact that Indians could make the integration and unification entirely by various policies. However, he interpreted the Indian traditional rulership and worked for people's rights. This view changed the attention of all Indian princely states' people.

According to Gandhi, unification was part of the solution to the problem of a divided India. Hence, Gandhian intervention was a more systematic approach to the unification of India and the princely states during the freedom struggle and after the transfer of power, leading up to the assassination of Gandhi. He represents the standpoint against the diversity problem of India. These contexts help to understand Gandhi's complex and sometimes contradictory thinking on the issue of unification. He had become the pre-eminent voice for the unity of India against colonial rule rather than native rule. Regional and Praja Mandals' movements followed Gandhi "as a progenitor whose ideas and methods provided inspiration, legitimacy and guidance" (Rudolph and Rudolph, 2006, p. 34).

This paper aims to delve into the answers to several vital questions. Firstly, it explores how Gandhi criticized the relations between British India and Indian India, shedding light on his perspective and critique of their dynamics. Additionally, it investigates the non-interference policy of the Indian National Congress and Gandhi in princely states until 1938, examining their approach towards these regions. The paper also discusses how Gandhian thoughts influenced and transformed the views of provincial nationalists towards Indian India, analyzing the impact of his ideologies on their perspectives. Furthermore, it delves into the implementation of Gandhian thoughts in the context of uniting the All-India Princely States' People's Conference, highlighting the strategies and efforts employed to bring about unity among the people of these states. Finally, this paper explains the profound impact of Gandhian thoughts on the nationalist movement of the people in the princely states, illustrating how his ideologies shaped and influenced their struggle for independence. Thus, it tries to give answers to all these above questions. His writing provided some different views regarding princely states' problems and solutions that were important during the anti-colonial national movement.

Gandhi's thoughts were implemented to organize the All-India Princely States People's Conference. The princes' and British governments' reactions were essential to the Gandhian influence on the princely states' political movement against the autocracy. Thoughts and activities were landmarks in the direction of the conditions for the responsible government in the princely states and the unification of India.

He created awareness among the national leaders, political community, and ordinary people of British India and Princely India regarding events and situations of princely politics. The princely states' people started the activities in the Indian national movement. The true meaning of self-government spread across the Indian princely states. Thus, he embraced the struggle against the rulers and suggested that the princes transfer political power with a handover to their people. His criticism was relevant to the princely states' political activities of rulers and the subjects (Gandhi, 1941).

The political future of the Indian princely states was essential for the unification of India. Further, the construction of the merger of India throughout the land of the subcontinent as political and social was necessary for the nation's development. However, he asserted that the situation requires a new idea of Indian unity for all, which must be grown among the Indians forever.

The Rejection of Artificial Separation of India: The Idea of an Indian:

Gandhi rejected the separation of India as British India and Princely India created by British rule. Because before the European government there, India was divided into many local rulers, so the native states existed before British rule. Further, the political condition of India in the early nineteenth century had split into two main parts; one had directly handled by the British Crown, known as British India, and the second remained part of India, known as native or princely India, which was now under the princely rulers. But the native princely rulers were indirectly or virtually under British rule, but they were the rulers of the local administration of princely India. Therefore, according to Gandhi, the creation of divided India into princely states and provincial India was by the British rulers. However, by the treaty and Sanads, Some rulers also depended on British goodwill for their security. For security, all princes had paid charges through commodities. Gandhi suggested the last option to the problem of princely states as "the incumbents are the sole creation of the imperial power. Its simple frown can undo them" (Hingorani, 1942, p. 1).

Some of the princely states had formal treaties with the British, regulated by written engagements. The British government controlled the external affairs and relations. The Princely states had all internal sovereign rights within their boundaries. The theorization of indirect rule in India and the practices of government were a part of the defensive (oriental) approach of British officials (Barton, 1934, p. 12).

Gandhi criticized the relationship between British India and princely states differently from orientalist, Indologist, and nationalist historians and writers. His writing was inclusive because he called all people of British India and princely India. According to him, we (Indians) are together, and our culture is the same from

ancient times (Gandhi, 1941). While “whatever may be the differences of climate and physical feature, and whatever may be the diversities of race and religion in India, it is not these differences reflected in the purely arbitrary division between British and State territory” (GOI, 1930, p. 15).

However, he said how the British captured Indian princely states and created a rift among the Indians. This difference is fake, and Indians had to understand and avoid violence against our people. He warned rulers many times to change the rule and prepare for the welfare of the states’ people. Accordingly, the relations between princely rulers and people as father and children. Geographical British India and princely India were one (Gandhi, 1941). Legally, “the integral connection of the States with the British Empire was not only consisting in their relations to the British Crown but also in their growing interest in many matters common to the land to which their growing interest in many matters common to the land to which they and the British provinces alike belong” (GOI, 1928, p. 296).

The complex issue of princely states arose due to the diplomatic policies pursued by the British in India. The establishment of distinct administrative regions, such as British India and the Indian princely states, presented a constitutional challenge for the British government and the inhabitants of these states. The British government controlled the princes and the native rulers, who ruled with virtual autonomy in internal and local administration. Practically the rulers had been their inner power, but they were subjects of the British government. At the same time, all princely rulers depended on the British government for internal and external security and protection (Gandhi, 1941). During the freedom struggle, the issue of unifying British India and Indian India emerged as a prominent political concern. Gandhi firmly believed that the problem of the princely states directly resulted from British rule. He viewed the princes as mere puppets controlled by the British authorities (Hingorani, 1942, p. 1; Stanley, 2002, p. 30).

The Problem of Princely States:

In 1928 the British Crown published the report of the Simon Commission regarding the princely states. Abhyankar wrote *The Problem of Indian States* in 1928. Abhyankar criticized the problems of the Indian princely states, “there is no constitutional government in almost all the Indian states, and there is no rule of law in them” (Abhyankar, 1928, P. 1). In these states, there was no liberty for the press, no freedom of discussion, no liberty to meeting and gathering. The problem of princely states was not like British India. The princely states’ complicated problem had existed long ago (Ibid).

Gandhi, hailing from Porbandar in Gujarat, was intimately familiar with the workings of a princely state. His father, Karamchand Gandhi, served as the prime minister of the Porbandar state, while his uncle held the position of finance minister in Rajkot (Gandhi, 1941; Stanley, 2002, p. 13). Gandhi’s unique perspective and personal experiences shaped his approach to the struggle against colonial rule. It is noteworthy that Gandhi’s movement aimed to challenge the British government rather than directly confront the native rulers of the princely states. He recognized the need for a united front against the common oppressor while respecting the

autonomy and leadership of the princely states within the broader framework of the independence movement. In the twentieth century, Indian princes became increasingly involved in a desperate fight for political survival. Their semi-autonomous existence had been threatened by a British-Indian government that wished to bring the states into a political federation with the British provinces. That plan, embodied in the 1935 Government of India Act, implied the transfer of essential powers from the states to a new federal structure (Stanley, 2002, p. 184). Politically, the struggle of princely states people was for national rights. Hingorani mentioned Gandhi's view towards the states, "Gandhiji, while realizing the urgency and importance of the problem, counsels a course of action which, while it may not satisfy the radical elements in the country, is the only correct and logical one. It is also consistent with the oft-declared policy of non-violence and non-interference by the Congress in the affairs of the states" (Hingorani, 1942, p. I).

The British Crown had not solved the problem of states until August 1947, and since new dominions must access the forms. Every princely state ruler feels to stay sovereign, but the act provided the freedom to people, not autocrats. Kaye stated, "His Majesty's government wishes to make it clear that the decisions announced above relate only to British India and that their policy towards Indian states contained in the cabinet mission memorandum of 12 May 1946 remains unchanged" (Kaye, 1949, p. 17). The problem has been taking some years, so a solution must be the success of the Indian government.

Gandhi was opposed to dividing India. One of the curious problems of princely states was a result of the diplomatic policies of the British in India. However, it imposes one significant condition on all Indians for the national unity of India as Indians. Indian unity, Gandhi insists, should be attained without partition of religion and region as provincial India and princely India. The integration has achieved the unity of India.

The Policy of Non-Interference:

There was only one difference between Indian India and British India the political and administrative governments' relations with the British paramountcy. Indian India had true political heirs of the past of India. The native rulers had preserved the continuity of Indian history unbroken; they maintained Indian political traditions of monarchy, carried their internal affairs in traditional ways, and had military services controlled by their own (Coupland, 1945, p. 15).

Consequently, from the early period of the emergence of Indian nationalism to the second decade of the twentieth century, the INC struggled only against colonial rule. When M.K. Gandhi returned to India from South Africa, INC was already a prominent political organization in India. Before the emergence of the Gandhian movement in the Indian national direction, the INC had not been clear on any policy regarding the Indian princely states and their people but accepted the non-interference approach. Why did the INC apply a non-interference policy towards the princely states till the second decay of the twentieth century? According to Gandhi, the matter of the princely states was internal, so the INC should not interfere in that matter. Moreover, the INC also tried to struggle against the princes even though the British government could not

apply the policy against the autocracy. Even though they both supported each other's therefore, the better way was the non-interference in princely politics to be effective (Handa, 1968).

According to Gandhi, princely India is part of the nation (Hingorani, 1942, p. 9). Further, he represented the standpoint of the Indian states and supported the policy of non-interference, which the provincial Nationalist movement had kept, mainly INC. Gandhi looked towards the problem of the princely states as an internal or indigenous problem; it was not like colonial rule so the INC should not interfere in that matter. The acceptance of the non-interference approach of Congress, he gave given opinion, and he mentioned his thoughts and idea from a long time ago. British India was not free, so the people of India did not enjoy genuine power and self-rule. Therefore, "long as British India does not obtain *Swaraj*, so long will India, British as well as native, remain distracted. The existence of a third power depends upon a continuance of such distraction. We can put our house in order only when British India has attained *Swaraj*" (Gandhi, 1941, p. 9; Hingorani, 1942, p. 9).

Gandhi explained his support of the Indian National Congress (INC)'s non-interference policy. He believed that the primary focus of the Congress was on British India, where its central operations and significant work had been concentrated. While the Congress did have branches in some princely states, it did not intend to involve itself extensively in the local political affairs of those states. Gandhi and Congress recognized the princely states' unique political dynamics and autonomy, and they respected their right to self-governance within the larger context of the freedom struggle (Hingorani, 1942, p. 443). Therefore, the congress members had advised to confine themselves to the constructive work.

Nonetheless, "Praja Mandals have to do constructive work always, and political work properly so called wherever it is allowed, or where there are brave and able enough men to carry on the political struggle" (Hingorani, 1942, p. 443). He asked the local political leaders and activists about their "ability and opportunity." In his opinion, no strong leader existed in the states like British Indians (Hingorani, 1942, p. 443).

Gandhi mentioned this in his speech in the presidential address at the 3rd Kathiawad Political Conference, which was held at Bhavnagar on 8 January 1925. He was the president of the Indian National Congress for this year. Gandhi explained why he supported the non-interference policy in princely affairs. In this speech, he said, "It is necessary, therefore, for me to make it clear at the outset that my views about the Indian states have nothing to do with the views of the members of the Congress. My views are personal to me. They do not bear the *imprimatur* of the Congress" (Gandhi, 1941, pp. 7-8).

Gandhi reiterated his stance on the non-interference policy of the Indian National Congress (INC) to the princely states. He emphasized that Congress should adhere to a policy of non-interference when it came to matters concerning the princely states. Gandhi believed that each state had its unique political dynamics and autonomy, and it was not the role of Congress to interfere in their internal affairs. By adopting a non-interference policy, Congress aimed to respect the rights and self-governance of the princely states (Gandhi,

1941, p. 8). Because of while the people of provincial India were fighting for their rights, the interference in the Indian states would be a betrayal of impotence. However, it was “just as the congress clearly cannot have any effective voice in the relations between Indian states and the British government, even so, will its interference be ineffective as to the relations between the Indian states and their subjects” (Gandhi, 1941, p. 8).

Gandhi believed in the inherent unity of the people residing in British India and the princely states. In his view, India was a unified entity, and despite living in different forms, the people shared everyday needs, traditions, and customs. He emphasized the close relationship among the people of each state, highlighting their shared origins and commonalities. According to Gandhi, the perceived differences between states were artificial and imposed by external conditions. While the internal policies of the states might vary, their fundamental origins were rooted in the same Indian identity (Hingorani, 1942, p. 95). Subsequently, although without any interference from Congress, the hidden pressure of unaccompanied situations makes the unification of “the multitude of separate jurisdictions possible.” As well as, the ability of Indians to get unity in diversity would be “the beauty and the test of our civilization” (Gandhi, 1941, p. 9). The essence was the assertion of the feeling of common Indian citizenship. It was a common fact that they cemented together the subjects of Indian states.

He was the only politically distinguished Indian leader who aimed to be a united India. However, Congress’s resolution of non-intervention was justifying in the princely states’ internal affairs. The constitution would be unjust, subjective, and irrational in the states because, legally and politically, the conditions were small or big. Some of them were independent entities concerning the other states. But there was one thing common they all were “under the iron grip of British rule” (Gandhi, 1941, p. 79). But geographically and ethnically, the people of the states and British India were one and undividable.

Gandhi and Haripura Resolution:

Gandhi introduced a fresh agitational and movement approach to the Indian freedom fighters. The All-India States People’s Conferences and the Gandhian movement emerged simultaneously. Gandhi advised members of the All-India Congress not to agitate directly against the native rulers but instead to prepare the local people for such actions. His strategy aimed to mobilize and empower the native populace to bring about change in their respective states. Gandhi sought to create a powerful movement for freedom and self-governance across the princely states by building grassroots support and strengthening the people’s resolve. Sometimes, it did not necessarily coincide with his attainment of majority, as in the case of Haripur’s session of Congress with all India princely states’ peoples conference in 1938.

And in some cases, the ruler had to jointly administer their conditions with the regent even after most people demanded responsible government in the states. The Indian National Congress passed a resolution at Haripura in February 1938. Mainly this congress session was necessary for Indian history because the Congress decided

to start a political movement in princely states. Congress first agreed with full political support to the princely states' people's freedom movement (Gandhi,1941).

According to Gandhi, India was a unified entity. Therefore, all Indians, including the princes, the people of the princely states, and the British Indian people, should unite in their struggle against colonial exploitation. He emphasized the need for political leaders from the princely states and British India to unite and fight for their national interests instead of focusing on regional divisions. Gandhi believed that by joining forces and working collectively, Indians could challenge and overcome the oppressive rule of the British colonialists. (Hingorani, 1942).

Gandhi showed the difference between the states and British rule, and it was only as an expedient in the interests of the princely states towards the national freedom struggle and establishment of a responsible government for all people of India. Further, Gandhi's intervention, seemingly, a pacific continuation of the old system under the equal rule in India, was, in reality, the inception of the policy of express curtailment of the sovereign right of the princes. It brought about only a formal rather than factual change in the princes' status, but it affected a remarkable, if silent, revolution in the Indian states' people. He demonstrated the states' subordinate position differently, thereby reducing the princes to the status of feudatory chiefs (Hingorani, 1942).

Appeal to the Princes:

Inclusively, it would be difficult to argue in one dimension. Primarily, the princes were the creation of the British government to subserve British interests in the Indian subcontinent. As against the plea that special treaty obligations bound the British. Gandhi contended that Congress did not ask the British government to disregard princes. The princes were not like other parties, free to conclude any agreement with Congress even if they wished. The national movement in India was the base for gaining all rights of the people. Further, the rulers had to cooperate with the national trend. Gandhi said, "The princes may ignore the Congress for a time. But they cannot for all time" (Gandhi, 1941, p. 6).

He was not opposed to principalities but suggested to the rulers to give the people rights. Even when he did consider the fate of the princes, he used every method in his command to make the princes feel the realization. He was also supposed to advise the rulers on the course of action they should take after the power transfer. Gandhi predicted the non-liberal attitude of the rulers toward their people's rights, "I think it is wrong of the princes to let their critics say of their people that they are too backward to deserve freedom" (Hingorani, 1942, p. 1). The people of states and outside of states belong to the same stock. If princes were liberal would lose nothing. But "they can lose everything by holding on to their autocracy" (Ibid).

Gandhi counterpoised British rule but not against the native rulers like the same. According to him, all the state governments did not make drastic decisions regarding responsible and equal government. Further, all

rulers did not take any collective action against the agitators. All rulers were trying to solve their states' problems. Unity was absent among the native rulers, and they worked at an individual level. As well as they have an absence of national feeling or national unity, not all but some. Preserving traditional rule was more important for the native rulers than responsible governments (Gandhi, 1941, p. 20).

According to Gandhi, the princes should support the national freedom struggle and be free from the native rulership from British colonial rule. Because of immemorial systems, the power and customs of the native Indians were invaded, subdued, and modified by a succession of foreign conquerors who imposed a new government and introduced an exotic creed, strange languages, and a foreign government. He claimed that the rulers of states worked to attain and preserve their traditional autocracy under British rule. But they did not give the rights of their people (Gandhi, 1942).

Consequently, in free India, princes had a definite place. Further, he drew the attention of the princes towards the weakness of their existing position. The small princes would abdicate their role, and the bigger states should regularize. The people of the states would remain as they were forever. It means the people of the states would be under the same ruler of princes. But the states' people also "will fight for their rights either non-violently or violently." According to his imagination, none of them thinks that the people of the states will forever remain as they stated today. Nonetheless, the princes could not control millions because all became conscious of their power, as "spiritual or physical" (Gandhi, 1941, p. 15).

Hence, the rulers should understand the signs of the future. The paramount power had created the rescue of princes as they had no duty towards the native subjects. There were no treaty obligations for the matters of the princely states like the paramount power would protect them against misrule. Gandhi's approach to unifying India and the princely states was apparent. He mentions his views and thoughts in newspapers such as **Young India** and *Harijan* and in pamphlets. According to him, all princely rulers should give all rights to the people of the states'; otherwise, people would protest and agitate against them (Hingorani, 1942, p. 1).

So, the princes were equally free to do anything for their subjects. If the colonial government was not ready to take any responsibility for the princely states' subjects, princes had to establish an equal rule for all. They can apply policies like paramount power (Gandhi, 1941, p. 15). Again, Gandhi appealed to the princes, and he believed that the princes had a half part in India. Accordingly, "the princes and all others will be true and amenable when we become true to ourselves, our faith, and the nation. At present, we are half-hearted. The way to freedom will never be found through half-heartedness" (Gandhi, 1941, p. 18).

Gandhi personally did not desire the extinction of the princely order. But he wanted the princes to recognize the times and shed much of their autocracy (Hingorani, 1942, p. 10). He believes the Indian states should establish a democratic government and abolish all social distinctions. All citizens would be equal, and no one "titular heads of the states in the persons of rajas and nawabs" (Gandhi, 1941, p. 18).

Further, he predicted the people's agitation against the rulers. He appealed to people and princes to cooperate and said father and children in the relationship. The princes had to give freedom to people, and people had to struggle peacefully. He suggested non-violence in every level of society and politics to princes and people. It was clear that if the princes gave the people rights, this power transfer process from princes to people would be without violence. If the princes were to live as such, they should adapt to the circumstances that existed at the time of the power transfer and after. While very few people had faith in Gandhi's plan as "the plan of princes voluntarily parting with power and becoming real trustees" (Gandhi, 1941, p. 4-5).

Further, he wrote on the status of Indian states under *Swaraj*. When *Swaraj* attained, the relations between princes and people would be mutual and cooperative, and conflict would destroy. These guidelines were not comprehensive, and they were designed to advise princes on the most common uses of the situation of the states. For example, in the above case, the advice relates to using rules for people and avoiding violence. He did not refer only to the people of states but to princes also. The relationship between the people and rulers was necessary for an independent India (Hingorani, 1942).

He mentioned his thoughts regarding the existence of princely states. He didn't desire the extinction of the princely states. But he wanted "the princes to recognize the signs of the times and shed a large part of their autocracy." Notwithstanding, the struggle of both the Indians cannot stay bayonet of the British paramount power (Gandhi, 1941, pp. 20-21).

He hopes for combined freedom for all, including rulers also. Therefore, he provided a non-violence way for agitation. Further, he wished that "I am putting forth the best non-violent effort I can, but my non-violence may fail because of my imperfections. I ask for the helping hand of those who would see India win her goal without a blood bath" (Gandhi, 1941, pp. 20-21). Gandhi warned the princes, "But if they do not listen, I do not ask for their coercion. Let British India have her independence, and I know, the princes know, that true freedom of British India also means freedom of their people. For, as I have said, the two are one. No power on earth can keep them separated for all time" (Gandhi, 1941, p. 21).

He did not strongly resent the feudatory status and secretly desired the destruction of the princely states. The first thing he appealed to princes was to surrender to the people of the states and support the national movement. According to him, when British rule ended, the princes would be gone to get rid of rubbish. The princes had no independence, which was the pathetic condition of the states. The real power consisted in the hand of a third party. The ability to protect the subjects had not existed in the hand of the princes.

Appeal to the States' People (Political Activists):

Moreover, the treaties, if they oblige the British government to protect the princes, equally compel them to protect the rights of the people. Gandhi provided a new agitational and movement approach to the Indian freedom fighters. It was coincident that All India States' People's Conferences and the Gandhian training

started contemporary. He suggested that the All-India Congress members not agitate against the native rulers but prepare the native people for that. Further, the relationship between the Indian nationalist political parties and the Indian states' rulers brought conflict for federal India.

Hence, the origin of the relationship between the prominent provincial political parties and leaders. The native Indian states' people were not in the political activities of anti-colonial or anti-autocratic movements. Still, they were the people of one land, already one but divided under administrative boundaries. However, the relationship between the Indian states' people and the provincial leaders was one of India's most essential during colonial rule (Hingorani, 1942).

Ideologically committed to the recovery of political history, Gandhi's writing grew through the political agenda of native justice of the new political movements in the states by the native people after 1920. The relations for reconstructing the past from the vantage point of princely state society's experiences were because of their current invisibility in the mainstream of nationalist (provincial) activities. The princely states' nationalist movements should serve to justify their continued exclusion from the regional political arena (Gandhi, 1941).

It theorized on the understanding that excluding states people from the mainstream focus was not unintentional. It creates the erroneous image that the states' people in provincial politics were pre-ordained and valid for all times. It also makes evident that the trivialization of people of states' lived experiences was inevitable if people did not claim their right to the construction of the constitution of India or the upcoming government of India (Gandhi, 1941). Protection of the princes was a duty of the paramount power owed to them, and it equally must protect the "people living in their jurisdiction" (Gandhi, 1941, p. 177).

To sum up, Gandhi's intervention makes evident the socio-political, economic, and cultural factors that denied princely states access to the public domain and the colonial conspiracy of silence over princely states people's contribution to making history. Therefore, his interventions play the dual role of restoring princely states to history and recovering political participation in the nation's political activities. Moreover, Gandhi felt that they also must "their duty to withhold support from princes when it proved that a ruler is guilty of breach of faith with his people as in Rajkot, or when it proved that his people denied ordinary civil liberty and one of his citizens is driven from pillar to post and practically denied access to courts of justice as in the case of Jaipur" (Gandhi, 1941, p. 177).

According to him, freedom and self-government is not the removal of all bad things from a country or society, "in fact, there are perpetual differences even in the West between the rulers and the ruled. There, too, people seek happiness and suffer misery in return" (Gandhi, 1941, p. 11). According to Gandhi, princely India was part of the nation or indigenous. The *Swaraj* was the main goal of the national freedom struggle. After achieving the *Swaraj*, there would be a cooperative relationship, and the conflict would be destructive. In fact, "British India under *Swaraj* will not wish for the destruction of the Indian states, but will be helpful to them.

And the Indian states will adopt a corresponding attitude towards British India” (Gandhi, 1941, pp. 9-10; Hingorani, 1942, p. 31).

But it has been abundantly proved that the British had rarely interfered with the princes purely on behalf of the people. The destruction of Indian states under British rule would not be helpful to native people but helpful to the British government. The demand of the people for demolition would be the source of the closeness between British rulers and the native rulers. The native rulers would help the colonial government because of the fear of native people’s demand for responsible government and freedom. The native rulers’ attitude would be favorable towards the British rulers because they helped them for their survival. They would start anti-nationalist activities, which are inadequate for the freedom struggle.

Further, it would be great for the British as rulers were supported by the British, not by the nationalists. Therefore, the demand for destroying princes under British rule would be harmful and worse for India. After the independence, the princes would voluntarily join India as a nation (Gandhi, 1941, pp. 10-11).

Gandhi’s appeal was crucial in inspiring activists from different ideological backgrounds. He provided detailed suggestions and guidance for various situations, advocating for non-violence and ethical actions where space for agitation was limited. While some activists adhered strictly to non-Gandhian ideologies and adopted a more formal approach, the majority embraced Gandhi’s principles of non-violence and morality. Many activists recognized the effectiveness of the Gandhian way and incorporated it into their struggle against the native rulers. Gandhi’s influence could be shown in the diverse range of individuals who rallied behind his ideas and joined the freedom movement (Hingorani, 1942).

Opposition to Partition:

He challenged the nationalist movement in princely states. Besides, it was the demand of the prominent leaders for the colonial dominion under paramountcy. The position of the Indian princes was the final arbiter concerning succession in the states after the power transfer. It correlates to the right to appoint regents and make other arrangements for administration during the last phase of the freedom struggle.

The communal award gave a different track to the Indian freedom struggle that divided the aims of the Indian National Congress and the All-India Muslim League. The identity crisis, the demand for separation based on the two-nation theory, the princely states’ autocracy, and the bureaucratic differences between the administration of British India and Indian India are all factors responsible for the partition of India (Gandhi, 1941). The growth of the demand for self-government became the dominant theme of the nationalists’ struggle in India. The emergence of the communal and minority sense was the production of the government’s policies.

The growth of nationalism and communalism took place at the same time. The origin of Indian nationalism was secular, but after the second decay of the twentieth century, communalism took hold of a broad sense of

nationalism. There are many debates and interpretations about the emergence of this communal violence and narrow religious importance in the Indian national freedom struggle. This limited sense gave birth to the partition of India. The British government announced their policy towards Indian states contained in the cabinet mission memorandum of 12 May 1946 (Kaye, 1949, p. 17). Therefore, the central princely states' rulers repeatedly emphasized their desire that there should be continuing sovereign status after the transfer of power. With this desire, princes tried to maintain their autocracy. It was essentially a subject for complete and free discussion. Permanent national unity for Indian people could only be based on constitutional law. The more extensive self-government of the Union of India desired the common good (Gandhi, 1941).

Equally, Gandhi and the nationalists demanded joint self-government for India. But the AIML urged a separate nation based on religion. The INC continued its aim for only and final freedom for all Indians. Gandhian approaches and methods led to and secured national release but not unity between Hindus and Muslims (Coupland, 1995). They became independent with partition. Gandhi was always against the partition of India based on the Muslim minority (Hingorani, 1942). When the plan for the division of British India was announced in June 1947, which was against Gandhi's wish, he was not happy with the Crown's decision and the league's leaders (Desai, 1991). However, the unification of India failed, and partition was one of the parts of the rift in Indian unity. The division was proof of the failure of the agreement of the freedom movement. He challenged nationalism in princely states (Gandhi, 1941).

Accordingly, India would be allowing all individuals "to follow that form of religion which best appeals to him," while "any creed or dogma which coerces others into following one uniform practice is a religion only in name, for a religion worth the name does not admit of any coercion" (Harijan, 16 November 1947). The question of Hindu-Muslim unity was exercised in the mind of Indian political leaders and even in people. Gandhi scarcely said that there must be unity between Hindus and Muslims. No activist of the Indians dares to ignore the part of the nation (Hingorani, 1942, p. 45). Gandhi refers to the Khadi and removals of untouchability. Those two things were "in a manner, more important than Hindu-Muslim unity, for that unity is impossible without them" (Hingorani, 1942, p. 54).

The partition plan only dealt with the provinces but did not clear the position of the princely states. After the transfer of power, the central question engaged the thoughts and energies of the national leaders to shape a new India. The political geography of the new India remained unclear because some of the princes' demanded sovereignty. Of course, this demand for the freedom of the princes was the central issue. Suggestions to establish unity among the British Indians and Indian Indians were not more helpful than direct action against the rulers.

Unification of British India and Indian India:

Gandhi worked and struggled for the unification of British India and princely India, as he wrote in many ways. India was precisely saved from such a catastrophe because of Her pre-existing geographical and cultural unity. Indeed, the unification process had begun, even as India was divided between British India and Indian India.

The political exercise between the provincial political leaders, mainly Congress (British Indians), with the government and the Indian states' rulers and their people was different. Even then, the political exercise between the Congress and the Indian states' people differed. Therefore, there must be unity between the British Indians and Indian Indians and ignore the differences. Even so, the political communications and practical exercises between the British Indian politicians and state activists differed. Therefore, there must be unity between the British Indians and Indian Indians and ignore the differences (Singh, 1991). Gandhi always tried to secure the princely people's future within the federation, and the transfer of power always remained the central strategy of the princes. The princes had no independence, which was the pathetic condition of the states. The real force consisted in the hand of the third party (British rule). The ability to protect the subjects had not existed in the hand of the princes (Gandhi, 1941, p. 10).

In his opinion, the condition of the princes was pitiable. The princes had no independence, and the real power did not consist of the princes' ability. And they could not protect the subjects against the world like the British. However, Gandhi said about Indian anarchy. According to him, there was anarchy in the British Empire and anarchy in the empire's states. It was not only by the princes and the chief but also presented mainly to India during the British time. To conclude his statement, this situation existed in India from ancient times, but it was very wrong in colonial times. Accordingly, the disorder and unrest throughout the country would change "if one of the parts of India becomes self-governing" (Gandhi, 1941, p. 10).

However, the situation of Princely India was different from Princely India. So, the states' subject should be the struggle against the native rulers but with non-violence. There is no need to struggle with violence against the native rulers. Because, in British India, the people had a consciousness of their terrible (political) condition, they had the desire to be free from it. Once British India would be free from colonial rule, princely India also would be free. The British Indians had taken the "first step" and "must lead the way" against the British government because the people of British India were aware of their horrible condition. They desire to be free from this rule (Gandhi, 1941, p. 10).

Again, he said that the people of British India had "knowledge following in the wake of desire, so those who only wish to be rid of their peril will find out and apply the means of deliverance. Therefore, I have often said that the liberation of British India also spells the liberation of the states" (Gandhi, 1941, p. 10). When the auspicious day of the freedom of British India arrived, the relationship between the ruler and ruled in the Indian states would not cease but be purified. *As Gandhi conceived, Swaraj* does not mean the end of kingship. Nor does it mean the end of capital accumulated means ruling power (Hingorani, 1942).

Gandhi felt the completion of a closer and permanent political unity between Indian India and British India. Scattered throughout the subcontinent should be the foremost aim of the national movement of India. It might be an advantage for the widespread desire for national unity. He said there would never be an Indian nation until the princely states' order disappeared from the geographical and political demands. Their disappearance would be the best thing that could happen to India, the best possible thing (Gandhi, 1941).

The problem of Indian princely states did not solve till the transfer of power. However, the Crown had lapsed, and the British left India; therefore, all treaties with all shapes and princes. Thus, the act of independence mentioned that all states could work under the Dominions governments. After the transfer of power, all the problems of princely states rulers and their people were the responsibility of the new dominions' government. They would peacefully solve it. The burden of new controls is to stop the communal violence that was long affected (Gandhi, 1947).

In his independent ideal state, the emphasis had shifted to removing all discrimination and trying to interweave the secular and equal system. Though in *The Problem of the Indian States*, he does not spell out his ideas of modern democracy, he grapples with the concept of equal local rulership. In his letter, he advocated that equality and emancipation are the core of democracy. According to Gandhi, independent India or native rule is "freeing man from political and social enslavement and economic exploitation" (Gandhi, 1909, p. 67). Independent India for Gandhi is equivalent to 'native rule' or 'Ramraj' in which he argued that moral authority and power are the basic foundations of the sovereignty of the people (Ibid).

The daunting challenge of partition marked the initial years after independence; it posed a significant risk of the country's fragmentation. The issue of the remaining princely states, which had not yet joined the Union of India, added to the official concerns. Both the people of the states and India called for integrating these states into the Indian Union. The unification of the princely states became a pressing demand, aiming to ensure the territorial integrity and unity of the newly independent India. In general terms of consolidation, it means the supreme coercive power of the nation in the native people's hands unitedly. As mentioned, Gandhi strongly objected to this divided form of ruler power because maximum coercive power ruthlessly usurped different rulers' liberty—the semi-sovereignty allegiance by the British force. The British and actual rulers who controlled such absolute power of the state could not get the approval of Gandhi. He also says that there was too much comprehension for the unification of the states in India (Gandhi, 1941).

That the princely rulers within their states might challenge the people is not new, but this time, the agitations differed significantly from previous ones. Traditional mythologies have long survived, but now deceit rampant among the people of the states for madness was different (Gandhi, 1941). Moreover, some pieces of contemporary scholarship have also criticized the views of Gandhi toward the princely states and his political ideas toward the states' rulers and people. During this time, native states had growing nationalist demonstrations to abolish the "repressive regimes" of the princely order (Hingorani, 1942).

In both these rulers and people, however, the threat to the power and legitimacy of rulers comes either from their inner circle or an upswell of widespread resentment. He is markedly different, even from when Gandhi worked for freedom for India, as well as this movement flows parallel to this one that considers Kathiawad as unique. In this case, he noted that the non-state actors' campaign was far more widespread and premeditated than a narrow focus on the Gandhian intervention in the unification of princely states in India (Gandhi, 1941).

The agitation would worsen significantly, so he suggested a radical and immediate solution. In the broader context of the Gandhian intervention in the unification of princely states and India, this paper has highlighted the central role of Gandhi's intervention, mainly represented in the most critical debates surrounding the formation of the modern postcolonial state. From the position of unification or *Akhand Bharat*, the anti-partition movement, to the effort to rebuild the native rulership with equality and equal rule for all (Gandhi, 1941).

Critics of Gandhi's Approach towards the Princely States:

There was criticism regarding Gandhi's not-supporting the agitation against the native rulers. He was emotionally attached to princely states because his father and brother worked in Porbandar and Rajkot in a position of dewans (finance ministers). According to Gandhi, there was no need for agitation against the native rulers, but they had to give the rights of their people voluntarily. And he had hoped they would give it. He explained the position of the Indian states during the colonial era and how to change it freely by the rulers. There was a criticism of Gandhi against the agitation against the native rulers. He was emotionally attached to princely states because his father and brother worked in Porbandar and Rajkot (Stanley, 2002).

He aptly does not demolish the native political system but believes in voluntary accession. The perception of the concept of voluntary accession was the primary thought of Gandhi behind the non-interference in the princely matter. He suggested to native rulers the transfer of power and rights of the states' people as possible. The exclusion provided deliberative privileges and denied the dominance of colonial rulers. During the latter period, his suggestions were made by accession policy by the states Ministry of India headed by Sardar Patel (Menon, 1956).

He had main long-term goals behind the non-interference policy in the princely states. At the heart of political activities was the decisive aim of real political leaders and how they had used Gandhi's ways to shape our nation authentically. With an imaginative approach to the politics and government of India, Gandhi inspires leaders to find genuine solutions with peace for the problem of states, rulers, and people. He also gives substantial indications as to the future political direction of activists in the conditions regarding the non-interference policy.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, the analysis has examined M.K. Gandhi's views on the unification of British India and Indian India, as well as the unity of their people. Gandhi's intervention was guided by the vision of the political future of the native rulers and their people, emphasizing the essential unity of India. He advocated for self-government and sought to achieve the true meaning of Indian unity within a single nation. Gandhi was a proponent of the unification of India and envisioned a harmonious and ideal state. His contribution in this regard was unique, shaped by the influence of the people's movement in the princely states.

Furthermore, Gandhi was an inspirational guide for managing political activities based on values and priorities in both the princely states and British India. He provided suggestions to activists and leaders, offering a roadmap for effective engagement and participation through practical political tools and positive strategies. His teachings emphasized cultivating good relations and fostering a meaningful environment. Gandhi demonstrated the significance of identifying and upholding our highest national and indigenous values while highlighting the need to overcome unconscious political behaviors. He sought to create a transformative and conscious approach to political action through his guidance. Gandhi was deeply interested in a unified India's political and social construction. He recognized the country's pre-existing geographical and cultural unity, crucial in saving India from potential catastrophe. Even during the period of division between British India and Indian India, the process of unification had already commenced. Gandhi's approach to unifying India differed significantly from that of other Congress leaders. He advocated for two parallel streams of thought: one was a policy of non-interference in the internal affairs of the states, and the other involved suggesting to rulers the importance of unification while encouraging peaceful agitation among the people of the states.

Gandhi's unique approach aimed to balance respect for the autonomy of the princely states with the aspiration for a united and harmonious India. Gandhi was a native of the Porbandar area, the princely state or non-British rule area. The man from a princely place did not oppose the rule of autocracy. The citizen of the princely state agitated against colonial rule. Interestingly, he indicated the boundaries of state people through a list of the indigenous past within the region. He had tried to present a concerned people's and leaders' understanding of the shaping of modern India. Many aspects of the unification of modern India appear puzzling. A nation that has drawn diverse people to its bosom can also be exclusive and exclude states' people.

Gandhi had a keen interest in the political and social unification of India. He believed India's pre-existing geographical and cultural unity was crucial in saving the country from potential catastrophe. His followers embraced and implemented his ideas and principles, including Vallabhbhai Patel. Patel, a prominent leader of the Indian National Congress, played a significant role in integrating princely states into the newly independent India, working towards realizing Gandhi's vision of a unified nation.

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