

**International Seminar**  
on  
**Sardar Patel’s Vision: Integration, Unification and Federalism**  
(10 to 11 June 2026)

**CONCEPT NOTE**

When a nation at the brink of independence was struggling to find and shape its political geography—one which, according to a few leading Western politicians and ideologues, was certainly destined to become a “**new Balkan**” within a few years of the departure of the Raj—an antithesis to such predictions required great strength, immense effort, and incredible determination, combined with statesmanship of the highest order. History bears testimony to one of the tallest statesmen who took upon himself the mantle of this gigantic task of shaping the post-colonial edifice of Bharat in profoundly turbulent times. Through his indomitable spirit and relentless efforts, he made it possible to integrate hundreds of diverse States to form the modern nation-state of India, that is, Bharat. This visionary was ‘Sardar’ Vallabhbhai Patel—without polemics, the chief architect of post-colonial Bharat.

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, fondly remembered as the “Iron Man of India,” played a monumental role in shaping the political and administrative unity of the nation during the crucial period following independence. His realistic political philosophy—rooted in nationalist ideals, anti-colonial resistance, and a commitment to social reform—played a critical role in India’s political independence and post-colonial nation-building. As the chief architect of India’s integration, he successfully brought together over 562 princely States to form a united nation, thereby laying the foundation of modern India’s geo-political federal structure, grounded in a long history of shared federalism spanning thousands of years.

His pragmatic approach to governance, emphasis on administrative cohesion, and firm belief in a strong yet cooperative Centre–State relationship remain deeply relevant to India’s democratic and federal framework even today. Sardar Patel—an affirmatively persuasive leader, renowned barrister, great freedom fighter, and a leader par excellence—later became independent India’s first Home Minister and Deputy Prime Minister. He showed the nation the path of self-sufficiency,

political stability, and economic development. His vision and actions guided the country towards a more secure and confident future.

As a builder of the federal structure, he believed that “the Central Government should perform the same functions and exercise the same powers in States as in Provinces.” His process of integration can best be understood through his own words: “The amendments which are now being proposed concerning the provisions of the Constitution applicable to the States embody the results of the bloodless revolution which, within a remarkably short period, has transformed the internal and external set-up of the States. The legislative and executive authority of the Union in respect of the States will therefore be co-extensive with its similar authority in and over the Provinces.”

For Patel, the tenets of federalism had to be firmly rooted in constitutional processes, as reflected in his assertion: “***Our new Constitution is not an alliance between democracies and dynasties, but a real Union of the Indian people built on the basic concept of the sovereignty of the people.***” Thus, Sardar Patel believed that for a richly diverse country like India, a strong Centre was essential to maintain unity and security. At the same time, he consistently emphasised collaboration, consultation, and mutual trust between the Centre and the Provinces. This balance of authority and cooperation forms the basis of India’s democratic cooperative federalism, wherein both levels of government function in harmony.

Regarding the democratic structure, Sardar Patel firmly believed that “***whether the article provides for consultation or consent of the legislature of the affected State, the wishes of the people cannot be ignored either by the Central Government or the legislature.***” He further observed that, as a result of the policy of integration and democratisation of States pursued by the Government of India since December 1947, the process of what may be described as the “unionisation” of States had been greatly accelerated.

In the context of evolving governance structures, regional aspirations, and ongoing debates on cooperative and competitive federalism—along with diverse challenges confronting nation-states—revisiting Sardar Patel’s vision offers valuable insights into strengthening national unity while ensuring balanced regional development and constitutional autonomy.

The seminar aims to examine Sardar Patel’s vision of national integration, unification, and federalism as a foundational framework of the Indian nation, and to assess its continuing relevance

in contemporary India, while also analysing the causes and implications of challenges to federal structures across different national contexts.

The seminar seeks to bring together academicians, policymakers, researchers, and scholars to engage in informed discussion on Sardar Patel's contributions to India's political consolidation and the enduring principles that sustain unity within diversity.

At a time when the very foundations of the nation-state face renewed pressures globally, the seminar proposes to revisit Patel's constitutional understanding of federalism as a source of insight for addressing emerging challenges in governance and political order.

### **Sub-Themes**

- Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel's philosophy of national integration and the unification of Bharat
- Sardar Patel's vision of federalism and Centre–State relations
- Decoding Sardar Patel's approach to addressing regional disparities and fostering national unity
- Patel's diplomatic and strategic efforts in integrating princely States after 1946
- Sardar Patel and the Hyderabad episode
- Integration of States and charting the canvas of national unification
- Vision of national unity and administrative cohesion
- Patel's role in building India's federal structure
- Federalism in contemporary India: lessons from Sardar Patel
- Sardar Patel's contributions to national security
- Governance, bureaucracy, and the legacy of Sardar Patel's administrative vision
- Challenges faced by Sardar Patel and revisiting Mani Ben Patel's diary
- Relevance of Patel's ideas in strengthening national integrity in the contemporary scenario
- Challenges to nation-states and federalism in contemporary times at the global level and the relevance of Sardar Patel's ideas

### **Call for Papers**

A limited number of scholars of repute are invited for the IAS owned Seminar. Those interested in participating should send (preferably by email) an abstract (300 words) of the proposed paper in English along with their C.V. (One page) directly to Co-Convenor **Dr. Gurpreet Singh** Email:

[gurpreetborawal@gmail.com](mailto:gurpreetborawal@gmail.com) and **copy to the Academic Resource Officer, Indian institute of Advanced Study, Shimla on his Email [seminar@ias.ac.in](mailto:seminar@ias.ac.in)** Tel: 0177-2831385

The abstract should clearly state the objectives, methodology, and relevance of the proposed paper including 4–6 keywords. The last date for submission of abstracts is **15<sup>th</sup> April 2026 by 05:00 PM**. The Institute intends to send Invitation letters to selected participants by the 15<sup>th</sup> May, 2026. It is the policy of the Institute to publish the papers not proceedings of the seminars it organizes. Hence, all invited participants will be expected to submit complete papers (in English), hitherto unpublished and original, with citations in place, along with a reference section, to the Convener and copy to the Academic Resource Officer, Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Shimla– 171005 by 20<sup>th</sup> May, 2026.

### **Guidelines for submission**

**Font-** Times New Roman

**Font Size-** 12

**Paragraph spacing-** 1.5

### **Bibliographical References**

- Bibliographical references should be in a consistent style. For detailed instructions we refer to either of the following 3 books: *The Chicago Manual of Style*, *Hart's Rules*, or *Butcher's Copy-editing*. Please cross-check references to see that each reference makes sense and matches the relevant bit in the main text.

### **Books**

- Single Author  
Chaudhuri, Amit, *Afternoon Raag*, London: Heinemann, 1993. p72.  
Surname, First name, *Title of Book*, Place of Publication: Publisher, (date) and page.
- Multiple Authors  
Basu, Tapan, Pradip Datta, Sumit Sarkar, Tanika Sarkar, and Sambuddha Sen, *Khaki Shorts Saffron Flags (Tracts for the Times/1)*, Hyderabad: Orient Longman, 1993 and page.  
Surname of first Author, First name of first Author and First name of second Author, Surname of second Author etc., *Title of Book*, Place of Publication: Publisher, (date) and page.

### **Edited Volume**

- Single author  
George, K.M. (ed.), *Modern Indian Literature: An Anthology, Plays and Prose*, Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 1994 and page.
- Multiple authors  
Ashcroft, Bill, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin (eds), *The Empire Writes Back* [1989], London and New York: Routledge, 1995 and page.

## Translated Volume

- Kemal, Yasher (trans. from Turkish by Thilda Kemal), *The Wind from the Plain* [1960], London: Harvill Press, 1989 and page.

## Paper in Edited Volume

- Single Author and Single Editor  
Masselos, J.C., 'The Khojas of Bombay: The Defining of Formal Membership Criteria During the Nineteenth Century', in *Caste and Social Stratification among the Muslims*, Imtiaz Ahmad (ed.), Delhi: Manohar Book Service, 1973.

Surname, First name of Author, 'Title of Paper', in *Title of Book*, First name of Editor Surname of Editor (ed.), Place of Publication: Publisher, (date) and page.

- Single Authors and Multiple Editors  
Salomon, C., 'The cosmogonic riddles of Lalan Faqir', in *Gender, Genre and Power in South Asian Expressive Traditions*, A. Appadurai, F. Korom, and M. Mills (eds), Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1991 and page.

Surname of Author, First name of Author, 'Title of Paper', in *Title of Book*, First name of first Editor Surname of first Editor and First name of second Editor Surname of second Editor (eds), Place of Publication: Publisher, (date) and page.

## Paper in Journal

- Single Author  
Bouiller, V., 'The Nepalese State and Gorakhnathi Yogis: The Case of the Former Kingdoms of Dang Valley, 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> Centuries', *Contribution to Nepalese Studies*, 20 (1), 1993, pp. 29-52.

Surname, first name, 'Title of Paper', *Name of Journal*, Volume number (Issue number), (date), pp. 000-0.

- Multiple Authors  
Murty, M. N. and R. Ray, 'A Computational Procedure for Calculating Optimal Commodity Taxes with Illustrative Evidence from Indian Budget Data', *Scandinavian Journal of Economics*, 91(4), 1989, pp.655-70.

Surname of first Author, First name of first Author and First name of second Author Surname of second Author, 'Title of Paper', *Name of Journal*, Volume number (Issue number), (date), pp. 000-0.

## Paper in Edited Journal

- Single author  
Gaborieau, Marc, 'Life-Cycle Ceremonies among Converted Muslims in Nepal and Northern India', in *Islam in Asia*, Yohanan Friedmann (ed.), vol. I, *South Asia*, Jerusalem: Magnes Press, Hebrew University, 1984 and page.

## Unpublished Papers/Mimeographs/Discussion Papers/Working Papers

Chander, P. and L. Wide, 'Corruption and Tax Compliance', mimeo, New Delhi: Indian Statistical Institute, 1989.

Surname of first Author, First name of first Author and First name of second Author Surname of second Author (1991), 'Title of Paper', mimeo, Place: Organization, (date).

**Newspaper:** Author's Last Name, First Name. "Title of Article." *Name of Newspaper* (City and Province/State of Publication, if not Included in Name), Date of Publication. <https://doi.org/DOI> Number or Name of Database.

### **Website/URL:**

#### **With author:**

- Author Last Name, First Name. "Page Title." *Website Name*, Month Day, Year. URL.
- Example: Schallhorn, Cathlyn. "Chicago." *Britannica*, December 17, 2021. <https://www.britannica.com/place/Chicago>
- Full Note: First Name Last Name, "Page Title," *Website Name*, Month Day, Year, URL.
  - Example: 1. Jack Caulfield, "A Step-by-Step Guide to the Writing Process," *Scribbr*, April 24, 2020, <https://www.scribbr.com/academic-writing/writing-process/>

#### **If there is no author or date:**

- Bibliography: "Title of Page." *Website Name*, accessed Month Day, Year. URL.
  - Example: "About the UvA." University of Amsterdam, accessed July 24, 2018. <http://www.uva.nl/en/about-the-uva>
- Full Note: "Title of Page," *Website Name*, accessed Month Day, Year, URL.
  - Example: 1. "Catholic News Agency," accessed March 25, 2025, <https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/>

### **Citing blog posts and blogs**

- Citing blog posts and blogs Blog posts are cited like—quotation marks; the title of the blog, in italics; the date of the post; and a URL. Blogs that are part of a larger...clear from the titles, the word blog may be added in parentheses after the title of the blog. Blog posts can often be cited in...2. William Germano, "Futurist Shock," *Lingua Franca* (blog), *Chronicle of Higher Education*, February 15, 2017, <https://www...>

### **News sites and blogs**

- News sites and blogs Titles of news websites and blogs, like the titles of newspapers and other...along with the title. Titles of articles and blog posts should be placed in quotation

marks (untitled posts...Wasted Food; “Food Waste Stump Speech,” in Wasted Food, a blog by Jonathan Bloom Huff Post; “The Best and Worst...

### **Titles for websites, blogs, and social media**

- Titles for websites, blogs, and social media (Whether they are mentioned in the text or...quotation marks) may be used for generic or descriptive titles. Blogs are treated like periodicals, their titles set in italics...Merriam-Webster.com CMOS Shop Talk; the Shop Talk blog YouTube.

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