



## **Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel**

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel is popularly known as a 'Man of Steel' and 'Iron Man of India' because of his great deeds and contributions to the Indian freedom struggle and independent India. Truly a man of substance, Sardar Patel was born on October 31, 1875 at Nadiad, Gujarat. His father, Jhaverbhai was a farmer and mother Laad Bai was a housewife. The early education of Sardar Vallabhai took place in Karamsad and he completed his high school in 1896. A brilliant student throughout his academic life, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel went on to become a lawyer and started legal practice in Godhra, Gujarat. He went to England for further studies and came back to India in 1913. Vallabhbhai Patel soon established his name as a top notch lawyer but destiny had some other things planned for him.

Sardar Patel got heavily influenced by the life and work of Mahatma Gandhi. Soon the call of the nation made him join the freedom struggle. His works started with peasant movement in Kheda, Bardoli and other parts of Gujarat. He was also an active participant in the non-violent Civil Disobedience Movement against the payment of raised taxes. Government had to surrender to this revolt and since then he was known as the Sardar Patel. His involvement in the freedom movement saw him participating in Salt Satyagraha in Nagpur and Quit India Movement in 1942. Vallabhbhai Patel was also elected as the President of Indian National Congress in the year 1931.

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel made historical contribution of gigantic proportions in post-independent India. After India was declared an independent country, he was appointed as the Deputy Prime Minister in charge of Home Ministry in free India. During the time of freedom, India was divided into 565 princely states with their own Nawabs, Maharajas and rulers. Many of them wanted to become independent rulers and the task of uniting a divided India fell back on Sardar Patel's battle hardened shoulders. He managed to convince majority of the rulers about the potential pitfalls and problems in case they try to act as sovereign rulers. He invoked the patriotism of India's monarchs and ultimately managed to persuade almost all of them barring few exceptions. He also tackled the Nizam of Hyderabad and the Nawab of Junagarh who initially did not want to join India. The successful completion of this task got him great respect from all classes of Indian population. Sardar Patel died of cardiac arrest on December 15, 1950. Vallabhbhai Patel was conferred with Bharat Ratna posthumously in 1991 for his great services to the nation