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Niharika Saikia
Research Scholar, University
of Science & Technology,
Meghalaya (The NAAC "A"
Graded University), Ri-Choi,
Techno City, killing road,
Baridua, Meghalaya, India

An analysis of the role of president Ho Chi Minh as a revolutionary leader of Vietnam and strengthening India - Vietnam relation

Niharika Saikia

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Abstract

Ho Chi Minh, renowned as both a nationalist and communist leader, played a pivotal role in Vietnam's struggle for independence and reunification during the 20th century. Born Nguyen Tat Thanh in 1890, he emerged as a prominent figure in the Indo-China Communist Party, advocating for the liberation of Vietnam from French colonial rule and later confronting American intervention during the Vietnam War. Ho Chi Minh's leadership and ideology, blending communism with nationalism, shaped Vietnam's modern history and its relations with other nations, including India. His steadfast determination and strategic acumen not only led Vietnam to victory against colonial powers but also endeared him to the people as 'Uncle Ho'. His vision for Vietnam emphasized social justice, economic development, and international solidarity, influencing global perceptions of anti-imperialist struggles. This paper examines Ho Chi Minh's ideological contributions, his role in Vietnam's liberation, and his enduring impact on international relations.

Keywords: Ho Chi Minh, nationalist leader, communist leader, Vietnam independence

Introduction

In our world of numerous idiosyncrasies, there have been some additional individuals of exquisite smartness and leadership characteristics originating from revolutionary vehemence and progressive enthusiasm. One such great pioneer and a passionate nationalist was Vietnam's President Ho Chi Minh (also known as Nguyen Ai Quoc) who cultivated the appearance of a humble, benign "Uncle Ho" and a dynamic leader of Vietnam. He had an emblematic brilliance of a comet, as an activist in national liberation and international communist movement, founder of Indo-China Communist Party (1930) and President from 1945-1969 of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (North Vietnam). Ho was born in a scholar's family in 1890 at Kim Lien Village, Vietnam. In his youth, Ho Chi Minh was known as Nguyen Tat Thanh. His father Nguyen Sinh Sac hired himself out as a buffalo boy at his earlier days. The latter's love for his country and his compatriots remain constant. After his graduation the scholar never resigned to serve the aggressor. Until his death, he maintained a dignified life. President Ho Chi Minh was born and grew up in a period when Vietnamese society was becoming clearly differentiated under French Colonial rule and the waves of opposition against the aggressors for the defence of the country were roaring and rising high ^[1].

Vietnam's independence and unification a great achievement, and that could not have been materialised without the inspirational leadership of Ho Chi Minh and his people-oriented policies and strategies. Under the most able guidance of Ho Chi Minh, the people of Vietnam not only liberated their country from the control of colonial powers, fascist and imperialist powers but at the same time wiped out the age-old feudal structure and liberated the people from the feudal system prevalent in the society and its impression in a shortest period, unmatched in the history.

Even today several countries take inspiration from his anti-imperial and anti-hegemonic thought when it comes to freedom of navigation and regional conflict, particularly in the recent case of dispute regarding South China Sea. One needs to closely monitor his ideas in order to understand his role in strengthening the ties between Vietnam and India.

Corresponding Author:
Niharika Saikia
Research Scholar, University
of Science & Technology,
Meghalaya (The NAAC "A"
Graded University), Ri-Choi,
Techno City, killing road,
Baridua, Meghalaya, India

Ho Chi Minh's vision dealt with fundamental, comprehensive and profound aspects of the Vietnamese revolution, including seeking ways to save the country and liberate the people; establishing or creating a social model associated with modern institutions; finding the way of development of the revolution; handling international relations and issues; and developing the personality and dignity of Vietnamese so that they could cope with regional and global integration.

Ideology of Ho Chi Minh

Ho Chi Minh is considered as the most influential leader in Vietnam, who had adhered to both nationalist and communist notions. He was well-known both for the relentlessness and persistence with which he sought after his objective of Vietnamese independence and for his triumph in mixing communism with nationalism. His father was a nationalist and shown his children to oppose the French rule. He grew up as somebody focused and committed to nationalist ideology who was ready to combat for Vietnamese independence. During the 3rd French International in 1919, he argued: "The future of socialism is by allying to nationalist forces and taking greater interest in freeing colonized nations that are marching irresistibly toward independence ^[2].

Ho Chi Minh admired greatly the determination of his predecessors to gain national independence, but he did not agree with their national salvation directions. By understanding exactly the characteristics and trends of his times, Ho Chi Minh found a development path for the nation suiting the law of development of history, national independence and socialism. After understanding the characteristics of the new era, Ho Chi Minh worked actively to integrate the Vietnamese revolution with that of the world. He did not only serve socio-political purposes of the times but also worked for the rapid development of the world's productive forces.

It was the appealing leadership of Ho Chi Minh that had its enchanted inspiration over the people of Vietnam, who were ready for any sacrifice with this optimism and confidence that after emancipation everybody would be able to share the fruits of liberation. The fact remains that even after freedom the desires of the Vietnamese people never contradicted. In his mind, international cooperation was meant to eradicate poverty and backwardness and he wished his country to catch up with rest of the world. In the midst of 20th century statesmen, this great pioneer was notable for his victory in mixing communism with nationalism. All these were similar to the ideas and ideals of our Indian freedom fighters, be it that of socialist model of development, regional integration, autonomous foreign policy or independent path of development. It was not just Minh as a person, but his ideals and ideologies were responsible for the robust ties between India and Vietnam. His ideals were in concurrence with the ideas of Indian civilization as well as those imbibed during the Indian freedom movement. The anti-imperialism ideology was one of the most binding features of the relations between two countries.

Ho Chi Minh's Vietminh

Vietminh or Doc Lap Dong Minh was a Communist front association established by Ho in 1941 to formulate opposition against French Colonial rule, while involving the Japanese powers. Ho Chi Minh's Viet Minh was extremely

prominent among the Vietnamese in the anti-colonial clash. In the course of long stretches during the thrashing the Japanese settler armed force, toward the demise of the Second World War, on 2nd September, 1945, it could also proclaim the development of Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV). In a discourse to a colossal swarm accumulated in Hanoi because of the presentation of freedom, Ho prosecuted French Imperialism in Vietnam, arguing that, "They have built more prisons than schools. They have mercilessly slain our patriots; they have drowned our uprisings in rivers of blood. They have forced us to use opium and alcohol. In the field of economics, they have fleeced us to the backbone, impoverished our people and devastated our land. They have robbed us of our rice fields, our mines, our forests, and our raw materials. They have mercilessly exploited our workers. For these reasons, we, members of the Provisional Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam solemnly declare to the world that Vietnam has a right to be a free and independent country — and in fact it is so already ^[3].

The French attempted to reinforce its rule, with the finish of the Japanese occupation in 1945. The Viet Minh initiated a long and mischievous guerrilla war against the French, what came to be known as the First Indochina War. Finally, Viet Minh, under the initiative of General Vo Nguyen Giap, unequivocally squashed the French at the Clash of Dien Bien Phu in May 1954. On August 1st, the peace negotiation completing the war eventually came to an end. The triumphant Viet Minh strolled into Hanoi as the French arranged to pull back their forces. Under the courses of understanding set apart at the Geneva Summit in July, Vietnam was to be quickly partitioned into two equivalent parts. The two parts were to be isolated by a Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) running along the seventeenth parallel. The northern half was to be administered by the Popularity based Republic of Vietnam, which had been broadcasted by this great leader, and the southern half would be represented by the non-communist Territory of Vietnam until 1956, when the two zones were to be reintegrated following universally regulated decisions.

Ho Chi Minh's role in Vietnam War

Before the beginning of Vietnam War, Ho Chi Minh had transferred his position as Secretary General of the party to Le Duan. However he remained the head of the state of North Vietnam during the course of Vietnam War. He was acknowledged as the father figure of Vietnam struggle against the western forces. The US had increased its aid to South Vietnam by offering financial backing and military troops from December 1961. America launched Air strikes on North Vietnam from 1965 and in July 1966 Ho Chi Minh proclaimed in front of Vietnamese people that autonomy and freedom is every individual's birth right. In December 1966 he was asked if he would lead the final victory, Ho Chi Minh stated, "If by 'final victory' you mean the departure of the Americans, then we will fight to final victory. Everything depends on the Americans. If they want to make war for 20 years, then we shall make war for 20 years. If they want to make peace, we shall make peace and invite them to tea afterwards ^[4].

In mid-1968, US President Lyndon Johnson announced to reduce American efforts in the War and call for a ceasefire with the Vietnam revolutionaries. By March 1973, US troops had left Vietnam and in April 1975, the Vietnamese

Communist Party took control of Saigon by changing its name to Ho Chi Minh City and accomplished the reunification of Vietnam.

Ho's struggle against imperialism

While in France, Ho was acquainted by the French socialists with the key components of progressive philosophy. He read up Marx's noted work 'Das Capital' and other great writings. In any case, he witnessed the issues and logical inconsistencies tormenting the French socialist and communist development - issues that keep on besetting the leftists primarily in the region of Western Europe and North America. Concentrated only on the class struggle in the French society, they knew little of the counter pioneer battle and didn't have a steady approach with respect to the freedom of the states.

It was around the establishment of the famous Communist International, popularly known as the Third International and the Comintern (1919-1943), made essential by the plunge of its ancestor (the Second International) that had a deep impact on Ho in moving towards communism. This First World War was brand as "a radical war" by the Comintern, a war which was dependent on rivalry between various colonial powers for control of the provinces. The progressive position set forward by the Bolsheviks and a bunch of others was: decline to participate in the war, exploit the emergency to crush Capitalism in Europe, and help to achieve opportunity for the settlements. In a short yet significant and moving article, "The Way Which Drove Me to Leninism", Ho Chi Minh talked about his direction as a progressive and how he turned out to be completely lined up with the Third International [5].

He wrote, "What I wanted to know was: which International sides do the people of colonial countries take? I raised this question - the most important in my opinion - in a meeting. Some comrades answered: It is the Third, not the Second International. And a comrade gave me Lenin's 'Thesis on the national and colonial questions' published by l'Humanite to read. There were political terms difficult to understand in this thesis. But by reading it again and again, finally I could grasp the main part of it. What emotion, enthusiasm, clear-sightedness and confidence it instilled into me! I was overjoyed to tears. Though sitting alone in my room, I shouted out aloud as if addressing large crowds: 'Dear martyrs, compatriots! This is what we need, this is the path to our liberation!'

After that, he gained confidence in Lenin, in the Third International. Earlier, during the meetings of the Party branch, I only listened to the discussion; I had a vague belief that all were logical, and could not differentiate as to who were right and who were wrong. But from then on, I also plunged into the debates and discussed with fervour. Though I was still lacking French words to express all my thoughts, I smashed the allegations attacking Lenin and the Third International with no less vigour. My only argument was: 'If you do not condemn colonialism, if you do not side with the colonial people, what kind of revolution are you waging [6].

Ho Chi Minh's contribution to the freedom struggle

As a Leader, **Ho Chi Minh was a** dedicated Vietnamese Communist leader, who was a fervent nationalist and the First President of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam in the period from 1945-1969 and a primary force behind the

Vietnamese skirmish against French colonial rule after World War II. [6] In the year 1930 February, Ho Chi Minh united contending patriot gatherings to build up the Communist Party of Vietnam and later renamed as the Indo-Chinese Communist Party. Ho was roused by the activist zeal of the European Communist Party, which had led him towards the establishment of Communist Party in his country.

He also played a vital role for the unification of Vietnam. Such is the significance and measure of his contribution towards unification, that the essential course associating North and South Vietnam was named after him as a mark of honour.

Ho Chi Minh's role in deepening India-Vietnam Relations

Ho Chi Minh had a strong affinity towards Indian people and their leaders from very beginning. He ventured out to India and fabricated a solid holding with the general public of India and discovered basic grounds in his battle for freedom. This is reiterated by the Indian people even today. Ho Chi Minh is a famous name among the Indians. A large number of Indian people called him as 'Uncle Ho' and Indian historians regarded him as a "cross between Mao of the Long March and Gandhi at the turning wheel [7].

In 1921, Ho published his first writing about India titled "Revolutionary Development in India". The first work of Ho Chi Minh about India was a proof of his significant discernment for the nation, individuals, customs, culture and philosophy of India. He commended progressively dauntless patriotism, communicating the harmony and assurance to win national autonomy for the people of India. Ho Chi Minh had attested a predictable crumple of the British rule in India, for their fierce arrangements, despite the fact that this pilgrim realm conspired to band together with outside powerhouses to command India. He stated, "The British Empire could not contrive to such Indian waves. They could anyway console themselves, when their leaving time in India is coming, by proclaiming that they were brutally leading to the fall of evil French colonialists in Indochin [8].

The empathy he had for the Indian people was developed from his understanding and compassion for the common destiny of Vietnamese and Indians who lost their country; leading a life of slaves, who endured agony and degradation under the colonial rule. Ho, through his columns, expressed his adoration for all the classes, affection for people, and untiring support to help national freedom struggle of the colonised people in order to obtain sovereignty and freedom for each country. They might be essential bricks that Ho established, developing concrete fellowship between Vietnamese and Indian [9].

India has additionally given immense political, moral and strategic help to Vietnam amid its Liberation War against the United States. During the 1970s in Indian colleges and schools, streets across India, especially in Kolkata, slogans like "Amar Naam, Tomar Naam, Vietnam, Vietnam" (My name, your name Vietnam, Vietnam) and 'Ho, Ho, Ho Chi Minh, We shall fight, we will win', created ripples. Calcutta's Harrington Street was renamed as Ho Chi Minh Sarani at the stature of the Vietnam War, more interestingly because the American Consulate is housed on it. Ho Chi Minh's warm feelings towards Indian people are additionally reflected by his enthusiasm for progressiveness of India, especially Prime Minister Nehru. While being detained by

Kuomintang powers of Chiang Kai-shek, enduring guardianship, Ho still focused on following the energetic battle of the Indian. Knowing the nationalist Jawaharlal Nehru will now be taken to jail by the British. Ho Chi Minh composed a sonnet from jail in Guangxi on PM Jawaharlal Nehru. "To Nehru" - a lyric that Ho Chi Minh composed in his "Jail Journal" in the period of 1942-1943.

"To Nehru

I am struggling, you are active
 You are in Jail, I am in prison
 Ten thousand miles apart, we have not met
 We communicate without words.
 Shared ideas link you and me
 What we lack is personal encounter
 I am jailed by a neighbouring friend
 You are chained and fettered by the enemy ^[10].

His incredibly well disposed and cheerful relations with Prime Minister Nehru established the framework of India-Vietnam relations. The close relationship with Vietnam has its verifiable roots in the struggle for freedom from outside powers and the national battle for autonomy. Both the pioneers in a joint articulation had reaffirmed their confidence in Panchsheel, the five standards of serene concurrence and urged that the uses of these standards in universal relations would help, to loosen up global strains and provide peace and comprehension among countries.

He had been the point of convergence among the savvy people and political activists since the last half of the century, especially in the seventies. This was the period when a considerable amount of literature was composed in the different Indian dialects about Ho Chi Minh. Noteworthy among this was produced in West Bengal where various odes and accounts praising him were composed by various writers, poets and scholars.

Consequently, Ho's role in reinforcing the relations between two nations stays unequivocal. The shared characteristic of belief system and shared vision for the world inspires the relations between two countries and keeps India and Vietnam till date. There is hardly any person, who might be ignorant of Ho Chi Minh or who might be unaware of his unparalleled patriotism shown by him for the general population of Vietnam in freeing their country from the then super powers like France, Japan and the US.

Conclusion

Ho Chi Minh's role as a leader, revolutionary ideologue and a propagator of liberation and emancipation of the oppressed massed in unparalleled. His conviction for his people and his dynamic leadership was single headedly responsible for the freedom of the Vietnamese people. His struggle against the neo-imperial ideology made him a hero for the people of post-colonial states, who had faced similar tyranny, oppression and exploitation. His inspiration made the mighty US power surrender and move back to their state. It has been said that that Vietnamese War was not lost in the battlefields of Hanoi but in the streets of New York. Ho Chi Minh was able to galvanize the support from his people and create a resistance that not only was strategic in terms of military power, but also moral power as the continuous pressure of Vietnam lead to widespread condemnation of US policy of Vietnam. Generations to come will seek inspiration from his dynamic and revolutionary leadership.

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