Chapter-V

Summary And Concluding Remarks
The process of self-government in the country was initiated with the promulgation of Government of India Act of 1917 and 1935. The natural corollary of the 1917 Act was the devolution of power to the provinces by creation of dyarchy—where two governing bodies were jointly vested with the supreme power. The government of India Act of 1935 elaborated upon and extended the base of the restricted franchise. These Acts showed perceptible trend towards provincial autonomy and the establishment of loose central government in a true federal set-up.

Ever since, India was caught up with the divergent regional and national pulls. The composition of the central and provincial legislature became the main spring of political activity, a tug of war started between central structure with over riding powers against autonomous provinces hooked to a loose centre.

Indian Muslims realised their strength and the weakness in the new political configuration. The emergence of mass base politics gave a severe jolt to the regional political matrix. With the ushering of democracy they were bound to be swamped by the brute majority. In their minority provinces due to historical reasons Muslims always dominated the social and political scene. They were certainly to loose out due to electoral constraints. Muslims, as a result became jittery about their future and wanted to be protected from this vicious political trend.
The constitutional compulsion compelled them to shift their political activity to electorally dominant provinces of Punjab, Sindh, NWFP in the north and Bengal, Assam in the east. Muslims felt weighted representation from their minority provinces and the representatives from the majority provinces, would combine to protect their interest in a true federal set up.

The ushering of self-government signalled that, any government at the centre would be dominated by the majority community. All Muslim dominated provinces had their own regional parties, where inter-communal alliances managed the political affair of the state. Regional politicians needed some one who could mediate to safeguard their interest at the centre.

Being a floating politician, Jinnah fitted the bill instantly. He was entrusted with the job to represent a fragile constituency.

Jinnah started his career as a lawyer, groomed up in Benthem and Mill school of thought, he followed the footsteps of Lokmanya Tilak. His approach to politics was step by step progress for constitutional safeguards and limited democracy. He was opposed to any mass base politics and predicted it's bleak future. As a person, he was at home in bar councils and closed door negotiations. It was Jinnah, who opposed the formation of the Muslim League in 1906 on communal grounds. However, he reconciled with Muslim League as an organisation to mouth religious demands, retaining dual membership, he remained in Congress to do political activity.
Jinnah was the champion of the Hindu Muslim unity and brought the historic Lucknow pact in 1916. As an ardent Congressman, he lobbied for the release of the Anne Besant in 1918. It was Jinnah who made MAK Gandhi the president of Home -Rule League in 1920. Jinnah opposed the Khilafat movement as it brought religion for the first time into the politics and masses to the streets. It was at the tiff- off with the Congress on communal settlement that he decided to break away.

The party he cherished most had let him down. Jinnah was a dissatisfied man. To redress the growing dissatisfaction of the Muslims, in 1928, Jinnah as a nationalist, put forward a charter of demands before the Congress. The demands spelled out in 14 points merely sought religious and cultural safeguards for the Muslims. To this, he was not only rebuffed but was even hackled by the Congress supporters. Coupled with it, he faced the personal trauma of losing his wife, disgruntled Jinnah retired from politics to practice law in England.

During the Round Table Conferences Jinnah took interest in the Indian politics. To the idea of Pakistan which was advocated by Sir Mohammad Iqbal, Jinnah reported to have said "don't you know Iqbal is a poet and poets are dreamer." Jinnah scoffed at the concept of Pakistan propounded by Cambridge student Rahmat Ali as Walt Disney's dreamland, a chimera. At the behest of Liaquat Ali Khan, Jinnah came back to India after the promulgation of govern
ment of India Act of 1935. He took the reigns of Muslim politics in his hands. The new political trend demanded to muster strength from the provinces to lay claim for power at the centre. Though communal politics was anthema to Jinnah, he accepted the stewardship of the Muslim League to safeguard Muslim interest. Muslim League then, had no political base and was merely club of feudal elite. It was Jinnah who set before himself the task to reorganise the moribund political party called All India Muslim League.

Meanwhile, some great changes took place in the political alignment after the elections of 1937. There existed some informal understanding with the Congress and the Muslim League to form coalition ministries in the provinces after defeating class based parties backed by the British government. Both the parties did not field their candidates against each other in this election. The results however conclusively placed Congress in clear majority in six out of eleven provinces that went for the polls. The regional parties won in other provinces.

Since Congress could run the ministries on its own, it ignored Muslim League as a coalition partner "as a matter of principal and not following other party's high command." Congress put forward the condition of abolition of the Muslim League and its complete merger into the Congress, a precondition, which was organisationally unacceptable to the Muslim League.

In Congress understanding, Muslim League could not win one fourth of votes in the Muslim minori-
ty provinces and not more than half in their majority provinces. Even in their combined strength, the entire community could not get more than one third of seats in the central legislature. Congress had a firm base in the British provinces and its campaign to send elected representatives from the princely states would have placed it almost in an invincible position. The electoral arithmetic conclusively proved, there exist only two forces in India, the Indian National Congress and the British government.

After the implementation of the federal provision in government of India Act of 1935, Congress leaders were convinced of the innocuous nature even from a powerful Muslim coalition. Muslim League had little support in Muslim majority provinces and after pathetic performance in the minority provinces during the elections, Congress felt that the party would naturally fold up and its leaders would come to seek terms.

The refusal by the Congress to form coalition government came as a rude shock to the Muslim League. It was left with two choice either to "throw the towel" by winding and merging itself with the Congress or fight out for its survival by mobilising the Muslim electorate. Muslim League preferred to choose the second option.

After the break down of the negotiations, the two political parties competed directly for the support of the north Indian Muslims. Congress guided by Nehru's belief that economic problem was more important than communal, hoped to win the support of the Muslim masses. Muslim League,
determined not be defeated went to the masses with an increasingly strident communal appeal. In the Muslim dominated provinces, where there was an overriding interest to forge an inter-communal alliances to maintain their supremacy, Muslim politicians were alarmed by the Congress centralised high command. They were apprehensive, that their slender majority could be rendered ineffective by Congress political mechanisation. It was because of these reasons at the Lucknow session in 1937, premier Sikander Hayat Khan of Punjab and Fazlul Huq of Bengal extended their support to the Muslim League. They entrusted Jinnah to mediate for them at the centre on the condition to be left alone in their provincial politics.

Ever since, the dwindling fortune of the Muslim League breathed a new lease of life. The Bundelkhand by election in UP held in July 1937, served as a moral booster for the Muslim League as it could defeat the Congress candidate. In subsequent by elections, Muslim League demonstrated its organisational strength by winning some seats.

Acknowledging a perceptible swing of Muslim votes, Congress Leaders opened windows of reconciliation. Jinnah retreated his old 14 points and co-option of Muslim League through share of power in the provincial ministries. Having a weak position, his demands were again turned down by the Congress. Ever since, Jinnah started developing an alternative strategy to escape from the permanent dilemma of Muslims being a minority.

After assumption of office as a Viceroy in 1936, Linlithgow strove hard towards forming a federa-
tion of the Indian states. He made Jinnah spell out his conditions for rapprochement with the Congress to which Jinnah put forward the demands unacceptable to the Congress. Viceroy knew that the initiative of the construction of the federal council depends on mutual agreement and as such would be redundant without party's representatives, he therefore, dropped the idea of the federation. More so, he was necessitated by the outbreak of the world war II.

Since British government's overriding objective was to turn India into a war base, expand the number of its army, ensure the loyalty of the Indians, the importance of Muslim League grew as Congress remained intransigent over the war issue. Congress wanted declaration of war aims by the British with regard to democracy and imperialism. Viceroy offered Indians membership to the advisory war committee and clarified modification to the 1935 Act and restoration of dominion status only after the war. Congress rejected these proposals and called for resignation of its provincial ministries.

The changed situation made Jinnah realise his growing importance. He offered his support on the condition that Muslim League be recognised as the only organisation to voice Muslim demands. In his address, Jinnah reported to have said "if the interest of the All India Muslim League demands, I am ready to be an ally even of the devil and this would be so, not because I am in love with the British imperialism but because in politics one has to play his game as on the chess board."
Linlithgow assured Jinnah that full weight would be given to the views and interest of the Muslim League. The Viceroy called upon Jinnah along with Gandhi and princes to discuss the wartime problems refuting the Congress claim that there existed only two forces in India. Linlithgow pointed out the futility of negative approach and asked Jinnah to come out with some constructive proposal.

It was since one and half years some Muslim Leaders had been openly campaigning for the regrouping of the country on communal lines. The regimentation of Muslim opinion on communal platform was to put sufficient pressure on Congress to seek terms. Their strategy was, a solid Muslim front would bend Congress to adopt a more reasonable attitude towards them.

Jinnah who had been pleading the case of Muslim majority and minority provinces and out of the numerous schemes he drafted the famous Lahore Resolution which was passed with great fanfare on March 22, 1940.

The resolution demanded that the 'Muslim states on the north and east of India should be made autonomous and sovereign......'

The euphemism of Pakistan was to challenge the majority rule. Pakistan with the connotation of partition was not the vision of Jinnah. Through Lahore resolution, what Jinnah wanted was to protect the Muslim interest of the entire sub-continent. His vision was for an United India with complete autonomy for the provinces dominated by
the Muslims. He assured sufficient safeguards for the non Muslims in these provinces on a quid pro quo basis. Therefore, he argued for parity with the non Muslims at the centre.

Perhaps the concept of Pakistan would have never been born, had Congress agreed for a coalition in 1937. At this point, Khialquzaman demanded for the Muslim League just two out of nine, and three out of fifteen seats from Congress leader Govind Ballab Bahai Pant to be co-opted in the UP government. Congress by assuming office made it easy for the Muslim League to raise the bogey of "Islam in danger". Then its vacating of office in 1939 was another mistake. The two years of Congress rule, its mass contact programme, cultural and educational schemes, all gave Jinnah an added fillip to consolidate his constituency. He mounted a scathing attack on the Congress for its misdeeds in office and played upon the fear psychosis of being swamped over by the brute majority rule.

Pakistan was not taken seriously on the political horizon before 1937. At the time of the election of 1937, most of the Muslim leadership seemed to have resigned to the fate along the familiar lines of being co-opted in the power structure. They seemed to be satisfied with the statutory rights for the safeguard of the minorities. Yet, somewhere along the way, the vision of united, secular and free India, which all the three parties subscribed got blurred after the Lahore resolution.

Lahore resolution was a double edge sword which Jinnah had wielded. On one hand, it
repudiated the minority status of the Muslims and sought parity with the Congress. On the other it coordinated the aspiration of Muslim majority and minority provinces. Its vague provision for territorial adjustment suited the aspiration of the Muslim majority provinces, while Muslims of the minority provinces were placated with unspecified assurance of safeguards. Jinnah with the backing of entire Muslim community wanted to put a pressure on the Congress to seek terms. He wanted that British government should not ignore the Muslim League in any all-India arrangement.

Lahore resolution was a political strategy to seek power for the Indian Muslims on the basis of equality or alternatively on the basis of two sovereign states. What Jinnah was angling was for the recognition of sovereign Muslim states with their existing boundaries in the north and east of India to be called as Pakistan. He then wanted to enter into an all-India arrangement for the safeguard of the Muslims in their minority provinces on the basis of equality at the centre as well as in the provinces. Jinnah's aim was to secure a base for the Muslims first and then negotiate with the Congress on equal footing. The Lahore Resolution therefore should not be accepted as a demand for the partition of India. It was an alternative strategy for adequate protection of the Muslims of the entire subcontinent.

However, there was inherent flaw in the Lahore Resolution; it was couched in communal terms and loaded with ambiguities. Jinnah's grand strategy was under tremendous constraints, the hollow
base of Muslim constituency could only be wielded into cohesion on communal plank, as such could not be brought back on secular platform. What ever vision Jinnah might have cherished was bound to collapse as it needed an assurance from the Congress. On contrary, as a dominant political party, Congress never agreed to yield anything before complete independence.

British conservative policy was to pay lip service to grant home-rule to Indians. The complexity of the Indian problem heightened by the world war seemed to be the best pretext for British government to gingerly strive for self rule. The Government of India Act of 1935 became the basis of future negotiations which itself was riven with short comings. Through "August offer" British promised "not to coerce dissident minorities into the membership of the Indian dominion." This tilted the balance in favour of Muslim League. What Jinnah gathered from the British responses was to furnish overwhelming Muslim support to vindicate his position. There was a convergence of interest between British government and Muslim League. Jinnah wanted to buy time in order to build Muslim League's political base, the British government on the other hand wanted to proceed on adhoc basis due to the constraints caused by the world war.

By the end of 1941, the second world war radically altered the Indian situation. British reverses on the eastern flank required a war cabinet to be reconstituted and war efforts to be intensified.
It was in this backdrop that Sir Stanford Cripps came to India to prove British honesty of purpose for granting freedom. However, Cripps put a condition that a prior agreement of the Indian parties was required to enter into the constituent assembly at the same time it gave the option to the unwilling provinces to stay out as a separate dominion. It also gave the princes the exclusive right to send their representatives to the constituent assembly and veto to accept or reject the new constitution. Both the provisions made by Cripps was for the Congress to realise the necessity of reconciliation with the Princes and the Muslim League. Notwithstanding the fact, Congress rejected the Cripps offer and went headlong against the British government with "Quit India", that brought them behind the bars. The absence of the Congress from the political arena provided the best opportunity for the Muslim League to mobilise support in its strategical quest of Pakistan.

At the provincial level the Government of India Act of 1935 intensified the power struggle. An important conclusion, politician of the Muslim majority provinces were alarmed by the advent attitude of the Congress high command. Their dilemma was, they had an overriding interest in forming inter-party coalition but also wanted to be safeguarded from the Congress dominated centre. Therefore they rallied behind Jinnah, at least partly to protect their interest at the centre. On the contrary, the support of the provincial
leaders was essential for Muslim League in order to gain strength and put pressure on the Congress to safeguard Muslim interest in any all-India arrangement.

In Punjab, the Unionist party since October 1937 had been grounded on the terms of Sikander-Jinnah pact. Premier Sinkander Hayat Khan Tiwana advised his party men to join Muslim League in all-India matters, but continue with the existing coalition ministry and retain its Unionist name. Sikander did not want any involvement of the Muslim League in the provincial affairs of Punjab. It was actually after the Shaidgunj mosque Grudawara episode that the Muslim opinion started cementing on the communal lines.

It was in the state's capital that Jinnah passed the famous Lahore resolution. Though Unionist were not a party, Jinnah dubbed Punjab to be the cornerstone of Pakistan.

After Sikander, Khizar Hayat lifted the banner of the Unionist aloft in Punjab. However, it was in 1944, Jinnah threw overboard the pact and tried to storm Punjab asking replacement of the Unionist label by Muslim League. This was a poor show and Governor Glancy warned Viceroy that Pakistan demand was an alarming menace to peace in Punjab and Jinnah should be cut down to size.

In Bengal Fazlul Huq in order to save his ministry associated himself with the Muslim League. He made it clear that the Krishak Parja party was a
non-communal organisation with an economic programme while Muslim League was a political party of the Muslim League. It was Fazlul Huq who was made to introduce the Lahore resolution by Jinnah. His defiance of the ban for participation in the national defence council, led to expulsion from the Muslim League. Fuzlul Huq went to form ministry with the coalition of Hindu Mahasabha and the Congress. However, as a result of the rift between the United Party and the Krishak parja party Fazlul Huq had to show his dependence again on the Muslim League for political survival.

After the famine of Bengal, when Huq's ministry was replaced by Nazimuddin, Muslim Leagues position became marked in Bengal. Muslim League's hold, however remained tenuous in the state suppose to be other corner stone of Pakistan. Like Punjab the Governor of Bengal, also wanted the idea of Pakistan to be immediately quashed.

In sindh, it was the regional parties which held sway. Sindhis were not interested in the interference of the Muslim League in the provincial politics. From 1937 to 1942 successive Muslim governments were dictated directly either by Congress or through coalition of Hindu Mahasbha and independents. It was only after the fall of the Hidayatullah ministry in March 1938, Muslim League began to organise itself in Sindh. A new ministry under Allah Baksh was formed with the support of the Congress. It was during this period
that the communal cohesiveness among the Muslims was able to mature there. The main catalyst being Manzilgah issue, the mosque.temple dispute. The political outcome of this dispute was the fall of the Allah Bux ministry and replacement by Mir Bande Ali Khan. Although there was much fanfare shown in the provincial Muslim League conference at Karachi in 1938, Muslim Leagues support remained relatively weak in Sindh. It was only late 1942 that Muslim League was able to establish a ministry in Sindh. This was led by Hidayatullah who joined Muslim League back, rationalising his act "in the best interest of the community."

In Assam, Muslim League somehow Muslim League was able to form a ministry under the stewardship of Sadullah. However, in the North West Frontier Provinces, it could not cut much ice. It was able to form a short lived ministry headed by Aurangzeb during the period of 1942-45. Politics remained confined to self seeking clans and kinship group in NWFP. Many Muslim politicians were unhappy about the Lahore resolution. Allah Bux of Sindh described it as harmful and fantastic. In Sindh, the general opinion thought Pakistan to be impracticable, some even openly advocated for joint electorate. In Bengal, Fazlul Huq after introducing Lahore resolution was soon talking of a united India. In NWFP it was not even discussed by Governor Cunningham in his fortnightly reports.
In Muslim majority provinces, the call for Pakistan had seem to have done little for Muslim League to strengthen its control. The period between 1942-45, Jinnah relatively had an easy time due to the absence of Congress from political arena, but he was unable to establish any loyal ministries. Muslim politicians of the majority provinces aligned with the Muslim League out of calculation and not out of commitment towards Pakistan.

Sindh ministry was revolting from Muslim League's control. Muslim League had lost all semblance of authority over the ministry in Punjab. The ministry in Assam, Bengal and NWFP were very tenuous, whose survival depended on Governor's favour. Even then Jinnah asserted to have full control over the provincial Muslim politics. This he did by raising the banner of Muslim League aloft, beneath which he kept the rump of the warring factions of the provinces united. Though Muslim League was still organisationally weak, it had progressed over the years from non existence to form ministries in its dominant provinces.

At the national level seeing discernable shift of the Muslim masses towards the idea of Pakistan, Congress opened negotiation through Rajgopalachari. According to Rajaji's formula, Pakistan could be created out of Muslim majority districts by taking the plebiscite of not just the Muslim residents but of the entire population. This proposal was deliberately made in order to expose the hollowness of Muslim Leagues claim and
create a rift between Jinnah and the provincial leaders who wanted to keep their provinces intact. Rajaji thought that this may stop the provincial leaders from pursuing the path of separatism and eventually dilute their enthusiasm of Pakistan. Jinnah understanding the nuances, responded to Rajaji proposal as only a "husk of Pakistan". He reasoned that since Rajgopalachari do not have Congress backing, so he would like to talk directly with Gandhi.

During Gandhi - Jinnah talks, the discussion mainly revolved around the precise meaning of the word Pakistan. Jinnah made three demands, first acceptance of two sovereign Muslim states with their existing provincial boundaries, second, right of self-determination to be exercised by the Muslim residents alone, third, relation between two states to be settled by a common centre or by a treaty between two independent sovereign states. Gandhi, only acceded to Muslim separation as brother of the same family, leaving things of common concern. Jinnah to this was flabbergasted and reported to have said "why Gandhi really came up for the talks when he had nothing to offer." He further added "Mr Gandhi should realise that it was not 1937-38, it was not 1939-40. He may further had to take into consideration that it was not even 1942, why don't he realise it is 1944".

In spite of receiving negative reports from the Muslim dominated provinces and Governor's plea to quash the idea of Pakistan, Viceroy thought fit to reconstitute an executive council at the centre.
Wavell called upon a conference at Simla to resolve the political deadlock. Here the main hitch was an agreement on communal differences. In order to resolve the crisis, Wavell was ready to grant communal parity but at the same time wanted to nominate a Punjabi Muslim and perhaps some one from the congress camp. Congress was not ready to agree on communal parity and preferred it to be on party lines. It also wanted to nominate one Muslim from its own ranks.

On the contrary, Jinnah insisted that all the Muslims should be nominated from the Muslim League alone. Viceroy promised Jinnah to hold the balance from the fear of Congress combining with others to outvote the Muslim League. Jinnah's attitude hardened during the conference and he demanded parity against the combined opposition for the Muslim League. Wavell was aware that the reconstruction of the executive council was not possible without the Muslim League whose status as a national party was growing over the years. At the same time it was also not possible to concede Jinnah's preposterous demand. Since the two parties remained intransigent over the issue, Viceroy preferred to close the conference and deferred it till the mandate of general election was known.

Jinnah's rejection of the Wavell scheme reflects the telling changes that had occurred, since 1937 in the Indian political scene. This began with the coalition controversy when Muslims only
demanded to be co-opted in the power structure and wanted cultural and religious safeguards. They went to seek parity with the Congress in 1940 to escape from the dilemma of permanent minority status. Jinnah reported to have said to shelve Pakistan provided given satisfactory procedure for secession of the provinces and adequate protection of the Muslims.

In 1944, Jinnah had said, Britain should frame a constitution dividing India into two sovereign nations where British authority over defence and foreign affairs would remain intact for an unspecified period. Jinnah insisted on the same arrangement during the the course of talks with Gandhi. Gandhi did not commit himself to any firm guarantee but assured that Muslims would be adequately protected after independence. During the course of Simla negotiation, Jinnah demanded parity between Hindus and Muslims and nomination of all the Muslim members by the Muslim League alone. He further raised his terms by seeking parity against the combined opposition.

The problem of advancing towards self-rule was to accommodate various conflicting strands of Indian polity. First was the accommodation Indian National Congress's claim to be the true representative of India and natural repository of power after British departure. Second was to accommodate Muslim Leagues claim to have separate identity for the Muslims in a country that was to be governed by the predominantly majority
community. This entailed maintenance of a balance between Muslim majority provinces and Hindu majority provinces on some common agreement. The third was to accommodate princely states by a guarantee of substantial autonomy and their role in Indian politics. Lastly, to establish a central authority which was representative of all divergent interest in India.

After the Act of 1935, both Congress and Muslim League had their own angle of looking at India. Congress wanted popularly elected assembly in the provinces and the centre, majority rule and immediate independence. It announced, no role for princes, feudal elements or european community, however it vouched to safeguard minority interest.

On the other hand, Muslim League opposed to the centralised unitary concept of India. It saw India as body of autonomous provinces hooked to common centre with minorities, schedule caste and princes playing pivotal role. Muslim League wanted two sovereign states, in the north and east of India with their existing boundary to be called as Pakistan. To protect the interest of the minorities, it wanted the two states to enter into a treaty on quid-pro-quo basis. To check centralised high-handedness it sought communal parity at the centre.

These conditions were mutually antagonistic to the two contending parties. Any rapprochement was only possible with mutual give and take.
Congress refused to move from the position of strength. It showed its indifference to the Muslim League and thought that the impracticality of their demand would die a natural death and its leaders would come to seek terms.

On the other hand Muslim League undaunted by their weak position refused to "throw the towel" and decided to challenge the supremacy of the Congress. They were helped by the British government due to war time considerations. It is not surprising that the game of power politics slowly propelled India towards disintegration. Simla conference was perhaps an honest attempt to arrest such slide, its failure pushed India into a blind alley.

All through the years the outward manifestation of the British policy was to prove sincerity of purpose by introducing constitutional reforms but its inner core always remained the same, as that of Victorian paternalism. The spirit of the Raj was based on the conviction of its permanence. It believed that if at all power was to be transferred, it should be on the British terms within the common agreed framework.

Even the Cripps proposal of April 1942 made under the stress of the Japanese military threat to India did not provide any change in the character and status of the Raj. British held out the carrot that in the end of the war an elected body would form a new constitution along with other dominion with an allegiance to the crown. The political parties were asked to assist with the clear understanding the control and direction of India would remain in the British hands.
As late as June 1945, after the fall of the Berlin, British calculated that that the war with Japan would last for another year. Meanwhile, within this period if they could bring an Indian government, then after the war a national cabinet could be established to give the future shape to India. Contrary to the calculation the war ended in August 1945.

Even before the cession of the hostilities the first post war general election held in Britain voted the conservative party out of office. The return of Labour party with the vast majority dramatically changed the political mood in England. The Labour government under Atlee was eager to hasten India towards independence.

To digress a bit, after 1945 the global situation warranted a new world order and British policy plummeted towards decolonisation. In India events moved at a frantic pace. The hardened position of the political parties came in the way of its unity. The election of 1946 demonstrated the power equation in the country. It conclusively proved that Muslim League was a formidable force in the Indian politics. Henceforth, British had to honour the electoral success of the Muslim League. It also had to see that both Congress and Muslim League come to terms with each other. The two parties were locked on contending claims. Muslim Leagues contention was acceptance of constitutional safeguards prior to the formation of the constituent assembly, while congress
did not want to give any commitment before complete independence.
After the war the new government was not bound by the war time commitments Cripps or Wavell offer and as such they both were rejected by the contending parties. A Cabinet Mission visited India under Pethick Lawrence which provided the last chance to reach some compromise on the basis of provincial groupings. The very acceptance of the Cabinet mission by Jinnah was significant that his mind was still open to persuasion even a year after the war. However, Nehru's remark "we are not bound by any thing, except that we have decided for the moment to go into the constituent assembly and there was a 'big probability' that there would be no grouping", spoiled the purpose of the mission.
After this, the direct action by Jinnah plunged the country into a civil war. The interim government which was hastily forged became a big farce, there existed a deep rooted suspicion that did not allow the government to function. Thereafter, time was running out for the British government. Any agreement among the Indians was a distant dream. Prime Minister Atlee announced on February 20, 1947 that British would withdraw from India not later than June 1948. Wavell was replaced by Mountbatten, the great grand son of Queen Victoria to preside over the liquidation of the Raj. In the game of one upmanship, Mountbatten in April advanced the deadline of transfer of power to August 15, 1947. The hastiness which Viceroy
Mountbatten showed in resolving the decade long problem through surgical operation leaves to ponder, was partition inevitable?

It was evident that British were in no mood act referee to force communal settlement and if they would have quit India there would have been no one to transfer power. According to Mountbatten, in March 1947, "India was a ship in mid ocean with ammunition on the board. " The only alternative was chaotic Civil War or the partition of India.

How did Pakistan come about? The British did not want it, Congress would not have thought about it. Muslim middle class did not know what it meant. Then what went wrong?

Ever since the passing of the Lahore resolution the vision of united India got blurred. The nebulous slogan of Pakistan was interpreted by the Muslim Leagues sole spokesman MA Jinnah as late as 1946 as the demand for the establishment of two separate states in the north and east, with some common arrangement with India. Negotiations between British authorities and the Indian leaders were conducted as late as April 1947 on the basis of an independent united India. Even on the eve of negotiations leading to India's partition, Punjab's leader Firoz Khan Noon confessed, "he did not believe in Pakistan and wished that the term had never been invented."

Muslim community was heterogenous in political orientation and cultural moorings. They did not consist of a band of happy brothers eager to live in an ecstasy of Islamic solidarity. Perhaps the communal frenzy unleashed during the brief period of
1946-47, forced the provincial leaders of the Muslim majority provinces to unwillingly accept the idea of Pakistan. It warranted a large scale of migration of the population from both sides. This was one of the darkest period in Indian history, as there was carnival of carnage and rebellion in the subcontinent when India was making "tryst with destiny"!

The major findings of this dissertation are, Lahore resolution was not a demand for India's partition but an alternate strategy for adequate protection of the Muslims in the subcontinent. It could be on the basis of adequate protection at the centre or alternatively on the basis of two sovereign states. It eventually fructified into Pakistan because of British ambivalence, Congress indifference and Muslim League's intransigence. Second finding is, British policy was to evolve a mechanism for the unity of India. They showed their honesty of purpose by making efforts towards constituting a federation of Indian states, and through Cripps mission and Simla conference they negotiated rapprochement between the contending parties. However, British conservative politics came in the way to take any bold step. As a result, British propped up Muslim League as a counterpoise to the Congress. Jinnah was encouraged to come up with an alternate strategy to refute permanent minority status of the Muslims. British helped Muslim League to consolidate its position during the war due to absence of Congress from the political arena.
Third contention - Congress showed no concern to solve the communal impasse in India. On the contrary, it harped on seeking independence first, overriding the sensibilities of the minorities. Some attempts like Rajgopalachari's plan, Sapru proposal, Gandhi-Jinnah talks, Liaquat Desai negotiation were made but all lacked sincerity of purpose. Congress failure to solve the vexing communal problem proved one of the biggest mistakes that had cost India its unity.

The other contention-Muslim politics differed from province to province. Study of the regional politics shows that as late till 1945 Muslim League had a very hollow base and Jinnah had a feeble grip over his constituency. The demand for Pakistan could have been nipped into the bud during 1940-45 but British benevolence, Congress indifference and Muslim Leagues intransigence made it roll down the road of inevitability.