PREFACE

The theme "Partition of India" acquires a central place in the history of South Asia. It is as a result of this forceful event that a separate nation called Pakistan came into being.

In contemporary India whenever communal riot flares up, Indo-Pak tension hot up, right of self determination is raked partition acquires a central theme in popular gossip.

The present generation is unaware of the nuances of the Partition process. They ask; was partition inevitable? At what point of time Muslims who once ruled India became a minority? Why did they not participate with their combined strength in the wave of Indian nationalism spearheaded by the Indian National Congress? Why only a handful remained as a nationalist Muslim? What forced the rest to become communal? These are some of the questions which continue to haunt the young mind even today.

Even before Muhammad Bin Qasim's conquest of Sindh, Muslims were found as far as in the pockets of Malabar coast and in the city of Benares. After Mahmmod Ghaznavi's depredation, the road of Turkish entry was cleared by Shabuddin Giori following the battle of Tarain in 1192. Thereafter the conquest and consolidation of the North by the Delhi Sultans, took them down South. The rest of India was then taken into the ambit by the kingdoms governed from the North.
However, after the cracking up of the central structure of the Tuglaq dynasty, regional groupings like Bahmani and Vijayanagar emerged in the South and Sharaiki in the North.

At the ideological level, the spurt of mystic Silsila or orders, as they were called, were conquering the hearts of the multitude. The main protagonist of this stream belonged to the Chistya sect whose teachings were akin to the Indian cultural ethos. They became embedded in the soil of India through their message of Pantheism (numen and phenomena are the same).

The 15th, 16th and 17th centuries were the period of cultural assimilation, mutual tolerance and religious co-existence. This was the time when Vedantic philosophy, was fused with the mystic ideology of the Sufis. Dadu, Nanak, Kabir, Pipa were torch bearers of religious tolerance and plural co-existence in India. In this socio-religious climate, emperor Akbar was experimenting with Sulah -e -Kul (peace with all) and Din -e -Ilahi, a common religion, loosely termed as divine monotheist. A secular treatise "Majmaul Bahrain" (mingling of the ocean) was written under the auspices of Dara Shikoh, the illustrious son of Shajahan.

Communalism at this point of time did not exist at the popular level, the co-option of the non-Muslim nobility by the successive Mughal kings suggest that, it did not exist either at the elitist level.
After the death of emperor Aurangzeb, the decline of the central structure set in again. This vacuum was filled by the provincial and regional kingdoms. The last flicker for the restoration of the indigenous central power was kindled by the revolt of 1857. Thereafter, British became the masters of India.

To borrow Anil Seals's phrase, "At the time of 1857, there was not one nation; not even two nation, there was no nation, India was a jumble mumble of societies, a graveyard of nationalities; Indian nationalism was yet to be born."

Indian Nationalism started striking roots under the umbrella of Indian National Congress. Founded in 1885, it was meant to be a safety-valve for mouthing Indian aspirations. But its character and composition underwent a metamorphic change from the time of its inception to the moment India attained independence. Though Muslims stood shoulder to shoulder in the struggle for freedom with the other sections of population, some had reservations about Indian National Congress since its inception. This trend became more pronounced in the last decade of the British rule.

British rule in India was a curious amalgam of contradicting policies. On the one hand it protected social diversities (caste, class, region, religion etc) and on the other they initiated democratic and political reforms. Social identities acquired a new political importance as new patterns of consciousness emerged through interaction with the Western thought and British presence.
As the idea of nationhood and political rights seeped into elite consciousness, the fact being a Hindu or a Muslim acquired meanings which were entirely new. When the new rulers distributed seats in local bodies and legislatures or allocated funds for education treating communities and castes as the basic units of society, the two denominator (communities and caste) became the main constituencies for political competition.

The British perception that Hindus and Muslims were two mutually antagonistic monolith, a notion not corroborated by historical facts, became an important basis for the distribution of share in power and resources. Social and doctrinal differences which had rarely been the cause of civil strife before became the focal point of competition and antagonism between the two communities.

In 1857 Hindu and Muslim chiefs, soldiers and peasants tried to overthrow the English company's rule and place a Muslim prince on the imperial throne. Some ninety years later at the time of independence, a similar initiative was unthinkable. The social relations was poisoned to such an extent that carnage and rebellion became order of the day on the eve of "India's tryst with destiny."

After the great rebellion of 1857, Muslims in India were discriminated by the colonial masters for their alleged role in the war of independence. As a result, they lagged behind when it came to colonial patronage. Muslims found it difficult to adjust to the new ruling elite, their language, values and norms.
It was mainly due to the efforts of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan that a new spirit of educational reform was enthused in them. Indian Muslims became conscious of their fast dwindling status and strove hard to catch up with the rest in the next century.

The British government through the method of check and balance maintained a centralized structure in India. It asserted its supremacy by evolving a client-patron relationship. However, at the same time they initiated democratic reforms through local bodies (wards, district boards and municipal corporations). Their idea was to link localities to the provinces and provinces into the nation. In spite of having dominant position in the society, Muslims first realised of being left out in these bodies due to their electoral constraints. It was for the first time that they started feeling themselves to be in the numerical minority in India. They made various representation to the British government including the Simla deputation in 1898 to fetch concessions and privileges to maintain their social standing.

Muslim League which was formed in 1906 did not sprung in opposition to the Indian National Congress but was to guard Muslim's cultural and religious identity. It primarily constituted of the bourgeoisie and feudal element and was disliked by many Muslim leaders then. Indian National Congress was the platform from where Muslim leaders aired their political demands. Muslim league only served their narrow interest. As late
till early thirties there was the provision of duel membership and Muslim leaders attained the sessions of both the parties.

Before the election of 1937, Jinnah wanted to build up Muslim League on an equal basis with the Congress so that through joint cooperation it could wrest power from the British. Jinnah recognised the plural nature of India society and emphasised that only as an equal partner Hindus and Muslims could achieve freedom for themselves. He thought of Muslim League not as a counterpoise to the Congress but as a complementary body. "The stronger the Muslim League is the more powerful will be the nationalist opposition to the British government" said Jinnah. As late as March 1937, Jinnah continued to reiterate that Hindus and Muslims must be organised separately and once they do so, they will understand each other more better and would become more useful for the national struggle.

The Indian National Congress recognised Muslim League as a political party which represented the authentic aspirations of the Muslims all through the freedom struggle. Through Morley-Minto reform of 1909, Muslims were given separate electorate which was recognised by the Congress. The Hindu - Muslim unity struck by Sarojni Naidu in 1916 and the period till the abandonment of the Khilafat movement is generally regarded as the glorious phase of communal unity in India.

Had dyarachy conceived through the Montague -
Chemsford reform in 1919 been established at this stage in the British Indian provinces and some working arrangement reached between the two dominant communities. the political future of India might have been different. However, this reform brought into open struggle for power. It was only after this that the communal relations started deteriorating at a frantic pace.

In 1928, at the time of Simon Commission, Muslim demand included only religious and cultural safeguards put forward by Muslim League's leader Muhammad Ali Jinnah through his 14 point formula. This however was turned down by the Congress. Then the idea of a Federation that was mooted through three" Round Table Conferences" by the British came to bear overwhelmingly on the Indian Muslims. Some how its implications made them develop abhorrence to the idea of the democratic system of governance.

During the "Round Table Conference" Congress tried to project Indian National Congress as the sole voice of India. It claimed to speak for the Muslims which then constituted 30 per cent of the population and depressed class 20 per cent, a fact which was repudiated by both the communities. In fact, Gandhiji had come to a tentative agreement with the Muslims on the basis of joint electorate for both the communities with reservation of seats. But when it came to adjustment of seats between Hindu, Muslims and Sikhs, he was pressurised by certain element that the only seat in the dispute should go to the Sikhs and not to the Muslims.
The reluctance of the Congress to concede one disputed seat is inexplicable. The attempt of Hindu-Muslim settlement failed over one seat make the whole issue ludicrous.' For want of nail the coffin could not be laid to rest.'

Ever since, Muslims main apprehension was they will be reduced to the position of a permanent minority in India. Their mind engaged itself into brain storming sessions to escape from the inherent dilemma of being a minority. It was in this backdrop that the government of India Act of 1935 was promulgated.

The Government of India Act of 1935 signalled the formation of All India federation where with check and balance the princely states and the British Indian provinces would be prepared for the self rule. Had India been a federation as conceived by the Act, the Pakistan bogey might never have surfaced.

At a different plane constitutional reforms of 1935 locked politics out of the centre. It signalled the introduction of provincial autonomy in British India's eleven provinces and encouraged regional identities in these provinces. Provincial leaders who in past had championed the cause of their religious communities were forced to forge linkages across their narrow groupings in order to capture power. The aspiration of the provinces and the centre ran parallel to each other. This was a new phase in India history.
Fazal-i-Hussain, Sikandar and Khizar Hayat Khan Tiwana of Punjab, Fazlul Huq, Suhaerwardy and Khawaja Nazimuddin in Bengal, M.A Khusro, G M Syed and Junejo and Jatoi families in Sindh, Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan and Dr Khan Shaib in the North West Frontier Provinces then dominated the politics in the Muslim majority provinces.

The Unionist Party in Punjab, the Krishak Prjoa Party of Bengal and Sindh United Party represented the regional Muslim identities. They flouted the dictates of the all India Muslim League. Kudai Khidmatgar linked itself with the Indian National Congress in the North West Frontier Provinces.

The Muslim League under the leadership of Muhammad Ali Jinnah had great difficulty in making inroads into the domains of the provincial satraps. Jinnah went to Lahore in 1936, with the mission of smashing the political base of Fazal-i-Hussain but hardly any Muslim politician of consequence visited him. He left Lahore in rage saying "I shall never come to Punjab again, it is such a hopeless place." Politics in all the Muslim dominated provinces remained nebulous and Jinnah could not win support either of the Bengali or the Sindhi Muslims.

The volte face of the Congress since the election of 1937 had a far reaching impact on the Indian politics. Untill the Congress scornful refusal of Jinnah's offer "to work as equal partners" the Muslim League never stigmatised the Congress as
an exclusive Hindu organisation, however ever since then it talked in terms of two nations.

This dissertation entitled "The Demand For Partition and British Policy: 1940-45" picks up the story at this juncture of history.

The First chapter contains the scope, literature review and objective of this thesis. It contains the background to the demand for partition from 1935-40. It deliberately avoids the elections of 1937, the coalition controversy, mass-contact programme, education and cultural schemes of the Congress and Muslim League's grievances report. It is being omitted because these facts happen to be too well known to be repeated. In this chapter the focus is on the British effort towards making the all India Federation work and responses of the Muslim League. The first chapter stops at the outbreak of the second World War.

The second chapter discusses the war-time exigencies of the British government and the various partition schemes, out of which emerged the Lahore Resolution, popularly believed to be the raison-de-tre of Pakistan.

The thesis refutes the contention that Lahore resolution was a demand made for the partition of India. It is being argued that through the Lahore Resolution was a new strategy evolved by the Muslim League for the adequate protection of the Muslims of the subcontinent either in the united India or alternatively on the basis of two nation
bounded by a common treaty. It was the resolve of the Muslim minority to somehow circumvent the idea of majority rule.

This chapter highlights the provincial responses, the British responses and Congress responses to the Lahore Resolution. It goes on to discuss August offer made by the British government which helped Muslim League to enhance its position in all India framework. The chapter also analyses the implication of the Cripps offer made by the British government when it was about to loose the empire to the Japanese. It discusses whether Cripps offer was to balance the long term unity of India or it opened the floodgate for Pakistan.

The third chapter "The breaking Down of the Impasse" discusses the Sapru proposal, Gandhi-Jinnah talks, provincial reactions to them and goes to find out how 'All India' really was the Muslim League. This chapter covers the period between 1942-45. It was during this period most of the Congress leaders were in jail and Muslim League tried to build up Pakistan movement in the different provinces. The chapter explores the British responses to the Muslim League's movement for Pakistan.

The fourth chapter discusses the Liaquat-Desai pact Simla conference, provincial reaction to the Simla conference, the reason of its failure and the resultant consequences.
The last chapter contains the summary and the concluding remarks of the previous four chapters.

The main contention of this dissertation are: The demand for partition as enunciated in the Lahore Resolution was an alternative strategy to centralised power structure and majority rule.

The second contention is, British policy was to evolve a mechanism so that unity of India could be achieved without jeopardizing the diverse interest groups. Congress plea for complete independence and handing over power to them made the British rulers raise the status of Jinnah and the Muslim League as counterpoise to the Congress. British policy makers were quite happy when Muslim leaders opposed Congress claim to speak for all India and courted them as potential allies. Though, at the last moment they made desperate bid seek a rapprochement between the contending parties.

Provincial politics differed from province to province is the third contention of this dissertation. The interest of the provincial leaders of Muslim majority provinces was to keep their areas intact from all India politics. A detailed study of regional politics, is done here in order to bring out the contradictions to the Muslim League’s demand for Pakistan at all India level and its hollow base in the Muslim majority provinces.

The Simla conference was the last chance when some rapprochement was possible through
mutual adjustments. The hardened position of the political parties acted as a catalyst, as after this the die was cast; India was gradually sliding towards disunity. The British global policy to vie for decolonization hastened the process of eventual partition of the country.

The source of inspiration for this work was derived after the release of the thirty pages of the late Maulana Abul Kalam Azad's "India Wins Freedom" and the resultant controversy. Ayèsha Jalal's work on Jinnah "The Sole Spokesman" stirred in me the curiosity to do more research on the theme. My M.Phil dissertation "Pakistan's Historiography and Partition" was an effort made in this direction. I hope that this dissertation "The Demand For Partition of India and British Policy: 1940-45" may be worthy enough for the consideration of Doctoral degree. Needless to add, whatever deficiencies, errors and shortcoming occur, I am solely responsible for them.

JNU
New Delhi
Syed Ali Mujtaba