CONCLUSION
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Gandhiji did his best to unite the Hindus and the Muslims. But he did not achieve the same measure of success in bringing about Hindu-Muslim unity as he did in conducting his campaign for national freedom or in drawing up a comprehensive and integrated plan of Indian nationhood and national culture. The glorious spectacle of Hindus and Muslims embracing one another as real brothers, struggling and suffering, rotting in prisons, facing lathis and bullets for a common cause that India saw in 1921 and 1922 proved to be a passing show. And yet it cannot be said that his sincere and devoted efforts were totally ineffective. Even here Gandhiji did establish that non-violence as practised by him and the true followers could check the acute symptom of mutual hatred which is the immediate cause of Hindu-Muslim riots, though he could not prove that it could radically cure the chronic malady of cowardly fear which is the real cause of these violent clashes and the real obstacle in the way of Hindu-Muslim unity.

So we are obliged to disagree with Gandhi’s view that the whole movement of national freedom that he led for three decades in India was not based on morally inspired
non-violence but merely on politically motivated passive resistance.

Gandhi's sincerity and devotion to the cause of communal harmony are unquestionable. His quest for Hindu-Muslim unity was noble and exalted in its motivation but his efforts to unite the Hindus and the Muslim against British imperialism in India went unrewarded and ended in failure. Ever since Gandhi's active participation in the Indian freedom movement the achievement of Hindu-Muslim unity always remained one of his major preoccupations. His public life in India is not only a story of his endeavour to free the country from British bondage but also to resolve the Hindu-Muslim conflict and establish communal peace. But Gandhiji failed in his mission to unite the two communities.

Gandhiji's failure to solve the Hindu-Muslim question in India can be attributed to his inadequate understanding of the nature of the problem of communalism. His perception of the problem of Hindu-Muslim relations suffered from certain serious limitations. He failed to look at the problem in its proper historical perspective and, therefore, could not develop a
proper approach to its examination. To him Hindu-Muslim tension in India was essentially due to religious differences of two communities. He believed that it is a problem of religious misunderstanding and intolerance so he tried to solve it through religion.

In Gandhian perception, religious issues such as cow-slaughter and music before mosque etc., have been a constant source of communal violence in India, arose only due to religious misunderstanding and intolerance between the two communities. In his opinion, there is no legal solution to Hindu-Muslim conflict arising out of religious issues because it cannot satisfy both the Hindus and the Muslims. It can only satisfy one party and make the other embittered. So both the parties had to adopt an attitude of religious tolerance and mutual trust to achieve lasting peace. Thus for Gandhi religious tolerance and mutual trust are the only ways to resolve the Hindu-Muslim conflict.

Gandhi advised both the communities to respect one another's religion and mutually trust each other.

The religious differences of the two communities are not the real or sole cause of Hindu-Muslim conflict. Therefore, Gandhi's attempt to resolve Hindu-Muslim conflict
merely by teaching the equality of all religions was bound to fail unless basic conflicts of interests between the communities were resolved. Hindu-Muslim conflict is not a conflict between Hinduism and Islam. It is essentially a conflict of political and economic interests of particular classes of both the communities which mobilized the religious sentiments and susceptibilities of the large masses of Hindus and Muslims "social conflict with political, economic and cultural Motivation rooted deep in history". ¹

It is fact that the British rule and policy was the main reason of hatred between the two communities. Gandhiji is right in his statement "Prior to British rule there was no trace of the type of Hindu-Muslim conflict. It is the British rule, and especially with the later period of British rule. There were wars between states which had Hindu or Muslim rulers; but these wars at no time took on the character of a Hindu-Muslim antagonism. Mus’im rulers employed Hindus freely in the highest positions and the Vice-versa". ²

¹. Quoted by In Gandhian Approach to Communal Harmony from Bandyopadhyaya J. Social and Political Thought of Gandhi,pp.172-73.
In Gandhi's Opinion the Hindu Muslim problem is a creation of British government. He was so convinced about the truth of this belief that he declared that communal division in India can be demonstrably proved to be a British Creation.¹ And, therefore, he thought that the communal problem would wither away on the dawn of India's independence. "The moment the alien wedge is removed, the divided communities are bound to unite".²

The British had always tried to keep the two communities separate from each other to sustain their rule in India. The British, no doubt derived immense advantage by playing one community against the other. They could be "accused of taking advantage of, and deliberately aggravating a conflict situation which was already there, but not of creating the conflict through some diabolical magic out of nothing".³

Gandhi took a very simplistic view of the British Policy of divide and rule. He did not take into consideration the factors which could make the policy of divide

and rule effective. The socio-religious differences of the Hindus and the Muslims alone did not help the British in their policy of divide and rule. There was something more to it. The British could play one community against the other because of the conflicting politico-economic interests of the two communities. The British exploited the situation in which both the communities found their political and economic interests, endangered. Thus the British had some time sided with and patronized one community when it posed a threat to their rule and vice-versa. The Anglo-Hindu alliance before 1870 and the Anglo-Muslim alliance in the 20th century can be instanced here. Thus, the situation of the British divide and rule policy could not be checked by Gandhiji.

The dominant congress leadership of the national movement was undoubtedly free from religious narrow-mindedness. On the level of ideas, the Congress certainly appeared as a purely national organisation. Moreover, in the whole history of the movement there is no trace of communalism in its accepted sense. The dominant tendency has been to refuse to take into consideration on the political level the religious distinctions found in Indian Society. However,
as one moves from the level of ideas and ideology to the level of facts, the congress appeared to be characterized by two conflicting tendencies. On the one hand, a group of leaders in the tradition of the founding fathers of the Indian National congress sought to create a broad-based secular nationalism in India and tried to exalt Hindu-Muslim unity at the national level by attempting to define nationalism in territorial and economic terms and the national movement as a common struggle against the British. It carried on active propaganda and forged a movement for achieving Hindu-Muslim unity. But it failed to launch a frontal political and ideological attack on Hindu communalism within its own ranks and outside, because second class leaders, who in the garb of political modernism refused to recognise religious distinctions on the political level but in practice equated the Indian Nation with the dominant Hindu class. Pt. Jawahar Lal Nehru may be cited here in this context. "Many a congress men was a communalist under his national cloak".¹

A comment was made by Imtiaz Ahmad: "one of the characteristics of multiethnic and plural societies is that the communalism of the politically dominant communities in them quite often finds a greater deal of the expression through nationalism and patriotic posture, while the minorities have to build their separatist structures of sentiments in opposition to the dominant communities". ¹

Therefore", the starting point of this attack had to be the recognition of the fact that communalism of the majority and the minority had to be curbed. They were bound to be different in form even while being the same in content. Because of its very character..............

The majority communalists, on the other hand know that the democratic principle of majority rule can give them an opportunity to implement their programme of cultural, religious and social domination and the capacity to corner jobs and other opportunities". ²

The congress leadership on the contrary permitted, "openly communal elements to join the congress and even occupy positions of leadership in it from the local to the All India plane, or otherwise to acquire and retain the reputation of being nationalist without any repudiation by congress and other nationalist leaders". ¹

The Hindu religious tinge of the national movement had alienated Muslims and forced them to think of preserving their religious identity. "Revivalism among the Hindus and its association with the national movement was in no way helpful in bringing the Muslims into the national movement. It had become difficult to have a line of demarcation between Hindu nationalism and Indian nationalism because of the fact" that a great deal of Hindu religious sentiment found its expression through Indian nationalism". ²

The aggressive Hindu cultural revivalism was not only directed against western economic, political and cultural domination but also against the minorities having a

¹. Ibid. p.261.
². See Gangaduaren, Sociology of Revivalism, also L. Qumon Nationalism and Communism Contribution to India Sociology, No.7, p.1964.
distinctive culture and importantly, a culture with roots in foreign regions.

One should not ignore that much of the literature and symbolism which fired Hindu nationalism against the British had a large content of anti-Muslim bias. One of the most noteworthy literary figures who inspired Bengali nationalism was Bankim Chandra Chatterjee. Most of his inspiring writings and speeches on nationalism were exclusively Hindu in character. His novel, Anandmath, which gave India its first national song- Bande Mataram- portrayed the struggle of a religiously inspired political group against a Muslim ruler.¹

The Arya Samaj, a religion-based organisation, played a prominent role in the national Movement, was not merely anti-British but also anti-Muslim. The publication of Ramília Rasool under the auspices of the Arya Samaj is one of the instances. "Many Congress leaders took up the cause of Hindi not so much against,

openly communal grounds. Urdu was branded as a foreign language of the Muslims, while Hindi was praised as the language of Hindus".¹

This was a fair pretext for the Muslim of subjugation politically, culturally and also religiously on the attainment of independence from British rule. Thus the nature and social character of the national Movement not only failed to attract Muslims towards it but also strengthened the separatist tendencies among the Muslims.

Gandhi, after having assumed the leadership of the national movement, laid greater emphasis on Hindu-Muslim unity in the struggle for Swaraj. But he failed to attract the Muslims, whose separate political and cultural identity was established into the national movement. It is to be noted that Gandhiji did not strike a new track to resolve the problem but kept to the traditional approach and followed the same strategy unity from the top in which his predecessors failed. He also tried to unite the Hindus and the Muslims through a scheme of pacts or compromises on political and economic interests between the leaders of the two communities. However, the

only new element in Gandhi's approach to the problem was the introduction of spiritualism and morals in the resolution of the problem. He held that "the restoration of friendly feelings is a condition precedent to any effective pacts . . . ". "Communal pacts, whilst they are good if they can be had, are valueless unless they are backed by the union of hearts" which can be developed by mutual trust, and mutual respect among the members of the two communities".1 But Gandhi's approach did not produce any positive results in the attempt to unite the Hindus and the Muslims. Gandhi failed to develop friendly feelings, mutual trust and mutual respect among members of the two communities. The Muslim, in general, could not dissociate Gandhi's Spiritual approach to the communal problem from his Hindu background. To the Muslim he was no more than a Hindu leader, making subtle use of religion and spirituality as a bargaining counter in favour of the Hindu community. On the other hand, Muslim separatist leadership took full advantage of Gandhi's approach to the problem and strengthened the separatist tendencies among the Muslim masses on

Gandhi's approach to the problem had also certain weaknesses. He had never given serious thought to the problem of Muslim separatism and the particular class interest involved in it. While he was aware of the fact that the 'Hindu-Muslim problem is a middle and upper class phenomenon and the masses of common people remained far from it. ¹

But he failed to recognise the fact that the politico-economic interests which are involved in the problem did not concern the common masses but only a particular class of the community. Thus he could not distinguish between the interest of middle and upper classes of Muslims and common Muslim masses.

The separatist movement among the Muslims represents a particular class interest which had nothing to do with the Muslim masses at large. The competition for government jobs, political representation on

elective bodies and preservation of cultural values were not the concern of Muslim masses but of the middle and upper classes of the Muslim community. Muslim separatism did not promise any radical change in the social and economic life of the common Muslims. They would continue to be exploited in any case by the Muslims as well as Hindu landlords.

Like the earlier leadership of the national movement, Gandhi made an attempt to bring about Hindu-Muslim unity from the top instead of from below. He did not realise the fact that unity from top is a futile exercise because of certain inevitable factors. One of them was the need to safeguard the political and economic interests of the middle and upper classes of the Muslims.

Gandhi was not in favour of separate electorates for the Muslims which was granted by the British to them in 1909. In his opinion" Separate electorates have resulted in the separation of hearts. They presupposed mutual distrust and conflict of interests. They have tended to perpetuate differences and deepen the distrust."  

Therefore, separate electorates are a hurdle in the way of Hindu-Muslim unity. He was aware of the fact that separate electorates for the Muslims are a mechanism for ensuring a share in political power. He said "what the Mussalmans want is not separate electorates for their own sake but they want their own real representatives to be sent to the legislatures and other elective bodies". ¹ So he suggested that separate electorates should be ended because their demand for real representatives of their community can be secured "by private arrangements, rather than legal imposition. There is flexibility about private arrangements. A legal imposition tends to become rigid....... private arrangement means a domestic settlement of democratic quarrels and a solid wall of united opposition against a common enemy the foreign rule". ²

Gandhi's proposal was that the election of the desired and agreed number of Muslim candidates can be secured in a given constituency under a joint ticket

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¹ Gandhi, M.K., The way to communal Harmony, p 149, also CWMC Vol.26, p 162.
² CWMC Vol.26, p 162.
provided Hindus develop the spirit of trust with the Mussalmans. "So far as political matters are concerned ...... I hold that it is upto the Hindus as major party not to bargain ...... It is my opinion, the only just, equitable, honourable and dignified solution". 

Gandhi advocated that the Minority (Muslims) should be inspired with confidence in their bonafides. This is possible only if the majority had the courage to make a voluntary surrender to the minority. Therefore, Gandhi held that under joint electorates Hindus should elect Mussalmans as their representatives. Hindus should not run after seats in the legislature and other elective bodies. Let all these be occupied by the Muslims. Thus in Gandhi's opinion separate electorates could be replaced by a joint electorate which would bring the Hindus and the Muslims together. But such a proposal was acceptable neither to the Hindus nor to the Muslims.

Gandhiji did not openly denounce this religious characteristic of the national movement. The religious

Overtone of his approach was essentially Hindu, had strengthened the belief among the Muslims that the Indian national movement under Gandhi's leadership was essentially a Hindu revivalist movement. The Indian National Congress was never free from Hindu communal forces. Its door were always open to people actively associated with religion-based organisations. Persons like Pt. Madan Mohan Malviya, Swami Shraddhanand, Balgangadhar Tilak, freely sailed between the Hindu Mahasabha and the Congress. And Gandhi associated leaders him self with these and attempted to justify their conduct and was even open to their influence. Gandhiji failed to distinguish between the nationalist and the communalist. Not only did he fail to dissociate them from the congress but always defended them publicly against the charges of their being communal.¹

That apart he also failed to check the Hindu overtones of Indian nationalism. "The ideological basis of the national movement from its very inception was

embraced within a reaffirmation of traditional Hindu value .... "1 "For one thing, the concept of nationalism was itself improvised through the use of certain Hindu duties, such as Durga, Laxmi, Saraswati. Secondary, several of the supposedly secular and nationalist leaders mobilised the collective emotion of their religious group, that is, they had to appeal to religion in the name of the nation-to-come". 2 Gandhi's life is full of Hindu philosophy and culture. "His life, manners and speech were those of a Hindu par-excellence indeed a self-alienating Hindu a Mahatma- who according to Hindu tradition, should be held in reverence. He drew his inspiration principally from the Hindu holy book, the Gita. He talked of Indian independence as Ramraj, the rule of the Hindu God, Ram: the struggle for it was to him Dharma Yudha which to any one would mean Hindu religious war". 3

Even then Gandhiji himself admitted a sanatani Hindu. "I call my self a sanatani Hindu because. I

believe in vedas, varnashrama_dharma, Cow-Protection, idol-worship, and rebirth.\(^1\)

How could he become a National leader of all the communities of India. His tendency to interplay the forces of religion and politics led to religious revivalism. This could not attract the Muslims towards the congress and the national movement and left them embittered. It is, therefore, not surprising that the communal Muslims condemned the congress as a Hindu organization and Gandhiji as a Hindu revivalist. Under these circumstances it would be impossible to project before the Muslims an image of the Indian National Congress as a secular and national organization. Beside "there could be no place for Muslims in a patriotism whose images were the Hindu Gods and Goddesses, and such a patriotism was obviously not destined to make for the union between Hindus and Muslims."\(^2\)

Gandhi's alignment with the leaders of the Khilafat Movement was the most successful effort at Hindu

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2. Imtiaz Khan: op. cit. p 83.
Muslim unity in the course of National Movement. But such a success in uniting the Hindus and the Muslims against foreign rule was short lived. One of the reasons of Hindus and Muslims coming closer was the identical interests of both the communities. The Khilafat and non-cooperation movements were directed against the British. Muslims, on the one hand, were agitating for the restoration of Khilafat institution and so they wanted the help of non Muslims. Hindus, on the other, supported the Khilafat just to bring the Muslim masses in a struggle against British rule in India. It was to serve the religious interest of the Muslims on the one hand and political interest of the congress Hindus on the other. Muslim participation in the Khilafat and non-cooperation movements was primarily an expression of their loyalty to the religious institution of the Khilafat. But when the Khilafat Movement ended in failure, Muslims started drifting away from the National Movement. And they again returned once more to the old problems of the community as had already been shown, the product of economic and political interests which divided the
Muslim and the Hindu communities. Gandhi's success to unite both communities could not prove permanent but it was a momentary success.

The Gandhian solution of this problem, by leading the Khilafat Movement started crumbling when the Non-cooperation movement was called off. The riots took part in the country. The Moplah rising of August 1921, the Mullan riot of 1924 and the Kohat riot of Sep. 1924 gave a fatal blow to Hindu-Muslim unity. Some of Gandhi's statements in connection with these riots were greatly resented by the Muslims and created misunderstanding, writing in Young India on April 2, 1925. he observed, "The Mussalmans take less interest (in the internal political life and advancement of the country) .... because they do not yet regard India as their home for which they must feel proud". On the communal disturbances, he wrote that "Mussalman as a rule is a bully, and the Hindu as a rule is a coward".  

   See also CWMG, Vol. 26, p.442.

2. CWMG Vo., p.142.
Thus, he imposed this blame that Muslims alone were responsible for communal riots.

He wrote again in *Young India* on June 19, 1924, "The Mussalman being generally in a minority has a class developed into a bully...... Bullying is the natural excrescence of an aggressive spirit. The Hindu has an age old civilization. He is essentially non-violent......... The Hindus as a body are, therefore, not equipped for fighting. They have become docile to the point of cowardice. This vice is, therefore, the natural excrescence of gentleness".  

Gandhi appealed to Muslims to forbear because "being bullies", they could fight and fight well and could protect themselves from the attacks of Hindus. On the contrary, he advised the Hindus to fight back because "quarrels must break out so long as the Hindus continue to be seized with fear. Bullies are always to be found when there are cowards. The Hindus must understand that no one can afford them protection if they go on hugging fear".  

1. ibid. p. 64.  
2. ibid. p. 312.
No doubt there were surprising statements made by Gandhiji. How these statements can unite many communities living in India.

Again, "his description of Urdu as the religious language of the Muslims, tacit support to the Shuddhi Movement, indifference towards the unity conferences and suspicions regarding the lack of respect on the part of the Muslims in the past of India projected him as a Hindu leader". 1

Therefore, "he was described as a Hindu leader who wanted to establish a 'Banias Raj' in the country or a tool in the hands of the Hindu revivalists and the reactionaries". 2

There is a love-affair story, by this story we guess of Gandhian sincerity towards the Muslims. The letters reveal that Mahmud (Muslim) was a family friend of Ramdas, Gandhi's third son. It is said that Mahmud

2. Ibid. pp 17, 18.
and Sumitra, Ramdas' daughter, fell in love. Her parents agreed to the proposed marriage, since Sumitra would not be any more happy in life without Mahmud; but that the parents failed to secure Gandhi's approval. Gandhiji said that he was opposed to Sumitra's union with Mahmud he was against what he termed as 'Love Marriage' while he had given his blessings to several "Love marriages" in the past: Ramdas Gandhi and Nirmala, Devadas Gandhi and Laxmi, Kanu and Abha and Firoz Gandhi and Indira Gandhi. The only conclusion arrives at is that Gandhi sabotaged the proposed union between his grand daughter and Mahmud, even after his son had given his consent, because Mahmud happened to be a Muslim.¹

In such circumstances, how Gandhiji might get success in uniting the two communities Refusing the marriage of Sumitra with Mahmud proved that Gandhiji did not like to marry his grand daughter with a Muslim. Gandhiji, in the late twenties had come to the conclusion that the Hindu-Muslim problem was beyond his control. The failure of the Khilafat Movement, the Non-cooperation Movement, disappointed him. He became

nervous, to see the communal riots. He was disappointed and desperate. As early as January 1927, he told a meeting at Comilla in Bengal that Hindu-Muslim Problem had passed out of human hands into God's hands. Writing to Jinnah in May 1927 he said, "I wish I could do something but I am utterly helpless. My faith in unity is as bright as ever, only I see no daylight out of the impenetrable darkness and in such darkness, I cry out to God for light". He was so much desperate at his failure to unite the Hindus and the Muslims that he said, "I have learnt more and more to resign myself utterly to his grace". Gandhi admitted that interdining and intermarriage are not the causes of communal problem. The causes of discard are economic and political, and it is these that have to be removed. But this statement was not followed by any solid solution of the problem. Gandhiji however, concentrated more and more on spiritual conversion and changing the hearts of both the communities solving their problems. But nobody accepted it, because no one wanted to

surrender voluntary of one's political and economic interests in favour of others.

His constructive programme also failed to attract the Muslim Masses towards him. On the contrary, his ideal society constantly referred to as Ram Rajya contributed to Muslim alienation rather than to Muslim association. For the Muslims, Ram Rajya was nothing but Hindu Raj. Thus Gandhi could successfully mobilize the Indian Masses (non-Muslims) through conservative ideas of Hindu religion but he failed to mobilize the Muslim masses in the struggle for India's independence. An Indian political Scientist points out: "In many respects, Gandhi was a rather conservative Hindu. In his philosophy and methods, in his daily rituals and routine, in prayer and preachings, in his attempt to rouse the masses through Hindu religious songs like the Ramdhun, in his constant reference to Ramraj as the ideal form of state and society that was expected to emerge after Swaraj, in his life long struggle for the cause of Hinduism than a secular and humanitarian cause in his practically life-long support of the caste system and his opposition to cow-slaughter
and in many other respects, he was a thoroughly orthodox Hindu and proudly declared himself to be so. Indeed, no historian worth his salt can deny the fact that in many ways Mahatma Gandhi was one of the greatest architects of Hindu revivalism in Modern India. Gandhi as a Person, his philosophy and methodology were, therefore, particularly unsuited to the resolution of the Hindu-Muslim conflict. A party to a dispute cannot hope to assume successfully the role of the judge or the arbiter. In order to bring about a harmony between contending forces, one has to rise above and beyond those forces. Gandhiji failed to do so.¹

The Muslim leadership was in the hands of upper and middle classes became the natural leaders of their community because of the traditional feudal socio-political structure of the community. This leadership could mobilise the Muslim masses on religious and cultural, if not economic issues and could isolate them from the Indian National Movement and from the leadership of Gandhiji. So Gandhiji's attempt to win over the Muslim leadership proved futile.


Thus, Gandhiji's quest for Hindu-Muslim unity ended in failure. But he would be remembered as the first Hindu leader who, preached, fasted, wrote and suffered much for his own perception of unity between the two major communities.