The demand for a separate Muslim homeland embodied in the Muslim League's Lahore Resolution of 1940 was not a bolt from the blue. It was the outcome of social, cultural, religious, educational and economic differences between the two communities which frustrated all efforts of nationalist leaders to keep India united and even impeded her political progress during the freedom movement. Besides, the clash of personalities, the differences in political outlook and aspirations of the elite in both the communities and the attitude and interests of the British Government played a vital role in widening the gulf between the Hindus and the Muslims.

Undoubtedly, the social and cultural norms and ethos of the two communities were not favourable for strengthening social bonds between them. Orthodox Hinduism did not permit interdining and intermarriage with the Muslims. Further, the food habits, the style of dress and the social festivals of the two communities were different. The Hindus and the Muslims occupied different positions before the arrival of the British in India as a result of which it became difficult for the nationalist leaders to find common national memories and common victories around which the fabric of unity could be woven. Each community could adopt heroes who fought against those of the other. The differences deepened during the British rule over India and were exaggerated by communal leaders and some of the Indian and British historians.
Religious differences between the two communities also stood in the way of unity. While Islam repudiated idolatory, orthodox Hinduism idealised it. Similarly, cow was sacred to the Hindus but the Muslims considered the sacrifice of cow on certain occasions as a religious act. Again, the Hindus performed their prayer to the accompaniment of music and drum beating while the Mohammedans wanted complete silence at the prayer time. Several communal riots can be attributed to the difference between the two communities over these issues. The situation was worsened by the partisan and sectional attitude adopted by the communal press and a section of the intellectuals of the two communities who instead of condemning the communal riots supported the rioters. The communal leaders fanned the fire of communal hatred in order to meet their own political ends. The cries of 'Islam in danger' were frequently raised whenever the leaders of the two communities failed to arrive at any settlement.

The Shuddhi movement among the Hindus and the Tabligh and Tanzim movements among the Muslims multiplied the mutual distrust between the two communities. But underneath these religious differences lay political fears and aspirations of the elite of the two communities. The Shuddhi movement launched by the Arya Samaj to augment the numerical strength of the Hindus through conversion of non-Hindus and rehabilitation of the depressed classes in the Hindu community sprang from the fear that the Muslim proselytising drives would weaken
their political strength by reducing their number. The Tanzim and Tabligh movements amongst the Muslims can be traced to the same motives.

These differences themselves, however, did not constitute an unbridgeable gulf between the two communities as the unifying elements were not totally absent. If the Hindu and Muslim kings and generals fought battles against each other in the past, there were saints in both the communities who highlighted the common ideals and values of both the religions and thereby created conditions favourable to communal unity. For centuries the adherents of two religions have lived together amicably.

In fact, the political and economic disparities between the two communities added complexities to their social and religious differences. The Hindus, in general, were traders, industrialists and landlords whereas the Muslims were mostly petty traders, labourers and peasants. Hunter had tried to demonstrate that the Hindus had acquired an edge over the Muslims in services, trade or industry due to superior English education and their competence to adapt themselves to the new situation.1 The observation was not true for all the provinces. It could be true of the Muslims in Bengal which was the main object of Hunter's enquiry or to some extent

of the Punjab but not of the United Provinces where the Muslims' position in services was better than warranted by their population. Nevertheless, Hunter's judgement became the basis of the demand of the Muslims for the protection of their interests in services in all the provinces of India.

Similarly, the Hindi-Urdu controversy, though mainly a language issue, had a great impact on the communal relation amongst the intellectuals of the two communities. The Muslim intelligentsia which played a key role in the Muslim politics got suspicious of the intentions of the Hindus whenever they made a move to replace Urdu by Hindi as the official language. This controversy can be traced back to 1867 when Sir Syed urged the Muslims to organise themselves to protect their heritage. At his instance a few Muslim intellectuals in the Punjab established an association called 'Anjuman-e-Himayat-e-Urdu'. On the other hand, the Hindus in the United Provinces and Bihar launched an anti Urdu movement in 1870 for the replacement of Urdu by Hindi. As a result, the Governor of Bihar issued an order in 1872 that in Patna and Bhagalpur divisions of Bihar, Hindi in Devnagri script would replace Urdu.

4. The Indian Observer, December 23, 1871.
In 1880, the Government of Bengal issued orders for the replacement of Persian script by the Nagri in the courts and offices of Bihar. The change in language adversely affected a large number of Muslims who served as Amlahs or Mukhtiar besides pleaders and touts. Similarly, the orders of the Government of India that no person shall be appointed except in a purely English office to any ministerial appointment henceforth unless he can read and write both the Nagri and the Persian scripts fluently added to the fears of the Muslim elite in the United Provinces as it not only affected their economic position but also dimmed the prospects of promotion of their culture. The sectional and communal press added fuel to the fire by taking up the issue only from the communal point of view and by making emotional appeals to one community against the other.

The widening of the schism between the Hindus and the Muslims can as well be attributed to the clash of personalities. Some of Jinnah's contemporaries believed that he aspired to emerge as a national leader after the death of Tilak and disappearance of Annie Besant from the Congress platform. But all his hopes and aspirations were shattered on Gandhi's rise to power in the Congress and he left the organisation.

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5. Report by the Bengal Provincial Committee of the Education Commission, 1884, p. 399.
probably because he could not adjust himself to Gandhi's style of politics on account of his mental make-up and sense of self-importance. The first sign of this clash could be noticed in 1920 when Gandhi's non-cooperation movement received wide acceptance and Jinnah was 'left high and dry with his lone voice of dissent'.

Tyabji carried the impression that since leadership slipped out of his hands because of Gandhi's appearance on the Congress platform, it left at least in his (Jinnah's) subconscious mind a deep resentment against Gandhi. This is evidenced by his rebuff to Gandhi:

"Your methods have already caused split and division in almost every institution that you have approached hitherto and in the public life of the country, not only amongst Hindus and Muslims but between Hindus and Hindus and Muslims and even between fathers and sons."

Thus Jinnah, who was once looked upon as an 'ambassador of Hindu-Muslim unity', parted company with the organisation that kept communal unity as its foremost ideal under the leadership of Gandhi.

It became difficult for the descendants of Muslim aristocracy to adjust themselves to the new political situation. They nursed a grouse against the British for wrestling

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political power from their ancestors. Their pride was deeply hurt when they found themselves poorly equipped for obtaining jobs under the British as against the Hindus on account of latter's superior educational qualifications but they were to blame themselves for this deplorable condition as they had avoided taking advantage of the English education which the Hindu elite were quick to do.

Their aloofness from the British administration created a barrier between them and the British and adversely affected their political and economic position. This realisation was actually at the root of the move of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan to devote himself solely to strengthen his own community which resulted in widening the gulf between the Hindus and the Muslims. Being conscious of the attitude of the British Government towards the Muslims after the rebellion of 1857, Sir Syed strongly felt that a reconciliation between the British and the Muslims was the need of the hour. He realised that without the support of the British power in India, the Muslims would not be able to have their fair share in jobs and administration of the country. In 1883, at the time of the passage of a bill in Viceroy's Council regarding the establishment of a measure of self-government in


(The abbreviation of the Latin word opere citato (op.cit.) is normalised as per usage in The Random House Dictionary of the English Language, College Edition, 1977, p. 930.)
the United Provinces, Sir Syed declared:

"There should not be local bodies that were wholly elected in a country, in which, there existed a caste system and great differences in religion and language. In place of election, there should be appointment by the Government of some members so that the larger community would be prevented from overriding the smaller community."  

This in fact was the basis of the demand for the separate electorates. The view finds support in a recent study of a British scholar also.

Sir Syed Ahmed was averse to the Muslims joking the Indian National Congress founded in 1885 to raise the political stature of all Indians irrespective of their religion or caste. One powerful reason for this attitude could be his fear of the dominant position of the Hindus because of their overwhelming majority which is evident from his speech delivered at Lucknow in 1887:

"It is certain the Hindu members will have four times as many votes because their population is four times as numerous. Therefore, we can prove by mathematics that there will be four votes for the Hindus to every one vote for the Mohammedan."  


Undoubtedly, Sir Syed was successful in keeping back a large number of Muslim elite from the Congress. A League chronicler observed:

"No Mussalman of note since then joined the Congress except one or two. Even Sir Syed Ahmed Khan's coreligionists who differed from his views on religious, educational and social matters and opposed him violently, followed him in politics and preserved their isolation from the Congress."^15

This, however, is an exaggerated account as Hakim Ajmal Khan, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Dr. Ansari, Dr. Syed Mahmud, Zakir Hussain etc. held important positions in the Congress and were not in any way inferior in intellectual attainment and political status to any of the League leaders. Nevertheless, Sir Syed Ahmed's campaign resulted in diverting all the energies of the Muslim community to communal channel. Barrier observed:

"It deadened their nationalistic tendencies and made them prone and amenable to Pan Islamic influences."^16

It is because of this impact of Syed Ahmed's work for his community that led one of Jinnah's biographer to remark that Syed Ahmed was the father of all that was to happen ultimately in Mohammad Ali Jinnah's mind.17

The next step towards separation was the demand for separate electorate for the Muslims put forward in 1906 by the Muslim Deputation led by Sir Aga Khan. It included a number of Muslim nobles, Zagirdars and Zamindars, lawyers, merchants and officials. Toeing the line of Sir Syed, the deputationists demanded that they should be given representation in the legislature not only on the basis of their numerical strength but also on the basis of their political importance and their service to the Empire.\textsuperscript{18}

The Deputation was received cordially by the Viceroy, Lord Minto, and given an encouraging response by the authorities. Admitting the righteousness of their cause, Lord Minto in his reply said,

"...you justly claim that your position should be estimated not merely on your numerical strength but in respect to the political importance of your community and the service it had rendered to the Empire. I am entirely in accord with you".\textsuperscript{19} He added, "... the Mohammedan community may rest assured that their political rights and interests as a community will be safeguarded in any administrative reorganisation with which I am concerned ... "\textsuperscript{20}

In the words of the Aga Khan:

"Lord Minto's acceptance of our demands was the foundation of all future constitutional proposals made for India by the successive British Governments and the final inevitable consequence was the partition of India and the emergence of Pakistan."\textsuperscript{21}

\textsuperscript{19} Ibid., p. 244.
\textsuperscript{20} Minto Papers, Minto's reply to the Mohammedan Address, October, 1906. National Archives of India, New Delhi.
Thus, the warp and woof of the system of separate electorates in India was woven by the Aga Khan Deputation. The country was divided into two distinct political camps. A significant impact of this policy was the birth of All-India Muslim League to guard the exclusive interests of the Mohammedan community. In 1907, the London branch of the All-India Muslim League was set up as a result of the efforts of Ameer Ali. The League played an important role in projecting the interests of the community in England and was helpful in getting a fair share of seats for the Muslims in the legislatures through the system of separate electorates which was later recognised by the Government of India Act, 1909. This was done even against the wishes of Morley, the Secretary of State, who favoured mixed electoral colleges in which a number of seats would be reserved for the Muslims on the basis of their numerical strength but both the Hindus and the Muslims would vote in those constituencies.

However, all the Muslims were not in favour of separate electorates. Nawab Sadiq Ali Khan, Bar-at-Law, said,

"The principles of class and religious representation is the most mischievous feature of the (reforms) scheme. It is not good for the Mohammedans to be taught that their political interests are different from those of the Hindus. From Mohammedan point, too, that principle is fraught with mischief."


Dr. Syed Mahmud criticised it in a League meeting at Aligarh in 1908, and accused the Muslim leaders of 'selling the country for a morsel'.\textsuperscript{24} Hasan Imam, Maulana Mazhar-ul-Huq, Nawab Ali Khan and Dr. Syed Hussain also opposed the separate electorates.

Certain events at home and abroad modified the attitude of the Muslim elite towards Hindus that overshadowed their separatist outlook for sometime. The agitation of the Muslims over the issue of Khilafat compelled them to seek the cooperation of the Hindus in order to put pressure on the British Government for the redress of wrongs done to them by its policy towards the Sultan of Turkey who was considered as the religious head of the Muslims in India. They showed keen interest in the safety and political future of the Caliph. Several orthodox Muslims were drawn towards Pan Islamism. The educated Muslims started realising that the British Government was using them to strengthen its position in India as well as to acquire hold over the Muslim states in the Middle East. This awareness brought the Muslims closer to the Congress. Similarly, the annulment of the partition of Bengal in 1912 added to their suspicion about the British intentions and brought home to them the folly of fighting with the Hindus.

The repressive policy of the British towards the Khilafat movement and the stringent measures taken by them

\textsuperscript{24} Syed Mahmud, Oral History Transcript, p. 8, N.M.M.L., New Delhi.
against its leaders such as Ali Brothers, Maulana Hasrat Mohani prepared the ground for rapprochement between the Muslim League and the Congress. The former introduced radical changes in its objectives in order to get closer to the latter. The clause of loyalty to the British Government in its constitution was dropped and an important clause of attainment of self-government was added. In order to seek the cooperation of the Congress, the Muslim League chose Maulana Mazhar-ul-Huq, a prominent Congressman, as the President of the League in 1915 and deputed him to come to a permanent settlement with the Congress. Even Comrade of Ali Brothers joined hands with Al Hilal of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, a prominent Congress member, for bringing the Muslims closer to the Congress.

The Lucknow Pact representing the high-water mark of Hindu-Muslim cooperation was the result of these efforts. The All-India Congress Committee in consultation with the Reforms Committee of the League prepared a scheme which was adopted by both the organisations at the Lucknow Session in 1916. The Government reports commented that the talks were mainly initiated by a small group of young League leaders referred to as the 'Lucknow Gang'. Jinnah, the ambassador of Hindu-Muslim unity, was the main figure behind the Lucknow Pact. He

25. N.G.Barrier, op.cit., p.211.
26. Ibid., pp. 211-212.
presided over the Lucknow League Session and tried to compose the constitutional differences in the best possible manner. Laying stress on the need for unity, he said,

"Towards the Hindus our attitude should be of good will and brotherly feelings. Cooperation to the cause of our motherland should be our guiding principle. India's real progress can only be achieved by a true understanding and harmonious relations between the two great sister communities. With regard to our own affairs we can depend on nobody but ourselves."  

The Pact conceded the League's demand for the separate electorates for the Muslims and provided weightage to them in all the five provinces where they were in minority. As a result, the Muslims got over representation in the provincial legislatures in Bihar, Bombay, Madras, Central Province and the United Provinces.\(^{29}\) Besides, they were given one-third of the seats in Central Legislative Council. The Muslims in turn agreed to give better representation to the Hindus in Bengal and the Punjab.\(^ {30}\) Another significant gain for the Muslims was the inclusion of the provision that any resolution or bill introduced in a Legislative Council by a non-official member affecting any community shall not be proceeded with if three-fourth of the members of the community affected should oppose these.\(^ {31}\)

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However, certain sections in both the communities remained dissatisfied. For instance, a number of educated Muslims were not satisfied with their proportion of representation in particular provinces, especially in the Punjab and Bengal, where their representation was reduced to 50 per cent and 40 per cent respectively. They raised a continuous demand for the revision of the Pact in the subsequent years. The Pact was also criticised for having been passed by those persons who were not the true representatives of their community. A recent study by an English scholar points out that the Muslim League was not properly organised at the time of the Lucknow Pact and existed merely on paper as its Council consisted in reality a small group of autocrats. But such observations were equally applicable to the Deputation that met the Viceroy in 1906, for, hardly any member could claim to be a duly elected representative of the Muslim community.

The Lucknow Pact was viewed as a positive step by several Congress leaders towards unity though some of them had their reservations about its repercussions. The Congress agreed to the principle of communal representation and conceded separate electorates in order to woo the Muslims.

The latter, however, came to an agreement with the former not because of change of heart but out of sheer necessity as is evident from the historic development preceding the Lucknow Pact.

Madan Mohan Malaviya vehemently opposed the acceptance of the principle of separate electorates as he could foresee its undesirable political consequences in the years to come. Jinnah was reported to have remarked privately in 1935-36:

"How can the Hindus oppose Pakistan when they had recognised the separate identity of Muslims in 1916 itself." 35

The Lucknow Pact, according to Malaviya, was a surrender by the Congress and if viewed from this angle, the roots of Pakistan were nurtured in 1916. 36 The acceptance of the principle of separate electorates by the Congress added weight to the British policy of isolating the Hindu community from all other communities in India.

Thus, the Lucknow Pact not only recognised the All-India Muslim League as the mouthpiece of the Mohammedan community but also gave formal recognition to the communal politics in India. All these concessions, however, were made to carry the Muslims towards nationalism.

36. Ibid.