PART I

CHAPTER I

THE IDEA OF INDIA AS A NATION
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The nation has to be narrated in a democratic mode in order to recover the nation for the people of India.¹

- Neera Chandhoke

The term *nation* is an invention of the history of the later 18th century. In Asia and Africa, it is commonly understood to be of Western origin. Moving from king-centered system to people-centered system is certainly a modern concept. This modern concept of *nation* is mainly a Post-French Revolution (1789) phenomenon. The exciting ideas of the French Revolution caught the imagination of ambitious individuals in many countries. The curious point is that the crucial basis for the emergence of the idea of nation was provided by colonialism. This was not an imagined phenomenon either for Latin America or for Africa and Asia. The exploitative quality of colonialism could be opposed only if people, who were exploited, were collected together to a great extent. The idea of *nation* provided such a precise unifying force. Colonialism had to teach its language to its colonized people and provide them with facilities in education, transport, communication, technology, etc. These facilities made the colonized think and act in a way that paved the way for their liberation. Marx described this as a source of *regeneration* of the exploited people. This is in contrast with the role of *destruction* played by colonialism. The transmission of ideas from the East to the West is very significant in the history of the world as a whole. The concepts of Equality, Freedom, Fraternity, Constitution, Nationality and Nation were not principles just suited to Europe only, but were applicable to the whole of mankind. Therefore, countries in the East could also become nations.

The idea of India as a nation is an interesting concept to explore. It is an accepted fact that India is a nation today. Many believe that it became a nation on 15th August 1947, when it got its freedom from the foreign yoke. An attempt is made here is to prove that India was a nation even before its freedom. It had all the essentials of a nation and it was a nation before 15, August 1947. But there were some voices, which raised the cry that India was not a nation:

Some Western political thinkers believe that India is not a nation. They argue that India is hardly better than a loose group of castes, creeds and communities. They further argue that the people of India do not belong to a common race, do not share a common language and do not profess a common religion. It is no more than a geographical expression. While others are of the opinion that India is not a nation but a subcontinent. Churchill, Birkenhead and Strachey are the supporters of the view that India is not a nation. According to them, India is a subcontinent in which people belonging to different races live and where people speak different languages and profess different religions and culture. In this respect, India is like Europe. Just as there are many nations in Europe, so there are many provinces in India. We do not agree to their contention because they deliberately opined like that as they wanted to divide and rule over us. These political thinkers deliberately ignored the national unity of India.²

It is true that these were the factual objections to the status of India's nationhood. Before the advent of the British, India was a vast country, inhabited by a variety of people. Different religions were followed, many languages were spoken and diverse customs were practised. After the fall of
the Mughal Empire, India was divided into a number of independent princely states. But none of these could rise to the status of a powerful empire and bring all the kingdoms into its fold. They involved in fighting among themselves and never became politically significant.

Gradually all of these states were either conquered and annexed by the English or were reduced to submission. All of them suffered from internal weaknesses and none could provide political unity and economic stability to India. The rulers of these states had medieval concepts and none of them had the foresight to visualize the future of India under the rule of foreign European traders. Therefore, in turn, each of them lost the right to rule over the destinies of their subjects and met the fate which they well deserved.

Before India came under the British rule and even during the early part of this rule, the people of India had never thought in terms of a nation. India was then only a geographical term. It was a conglomeration of diverse kingdoms. People of different races and religions, castes and cultures and traditions and tongues lived there. In the midst of such diversity, how could India be called a nation?

Let us examine whether colonial India fulfilled the necessary conditions of a nation. Colonial India included the present day India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. Most of the political scientists have regarded Geographical Unity or the Common Residence in a fixed territory as one of the basic elements of nation. India did have a common territory for its people that stretched from the Indian Ocean in the south to the Himalayas in the north and from Burma in the east to Afghanistan in the west. Geographical territory is essential for the promotion of national feelings and ideas of nation. A population permanently settled down on a fixed territory would naturally be united. A population without territorial unity is bound to be disintegrated. The people who inhabit a common territory for a long period of time would naturally develop the passion for patriotism, which paves the way for national unity. The wandering tribes fail to cherish the feelings of belonging to a nation because they do not possess a common land to call it their motherland. The attachment of the people to their land of birth and living is very powerful. People love their maathrubhoomi, the motherland and their janmabhoomi, the land of birth, which are one and the same. They worship their motherland and are always found ready to make every sacrifice for safeguarding their motherland and their territorial integrity. Love for motherland is a factor that helps a lot in the promotion of national feelings. Common residence is essential, but temporary changes in residence do not lead to loss of nationality. For example, many progressive Indians lived in London for a few years for getting education. Still they were called Indians and they were Indians. Common living naturally leads people to share common language, common culture and civilization, common customs, common etiquettes, common joys and sorrows, common interests, common literature and common history. It should be discussed whether pre-independence India’s geographical unity led to the other kinds of unity.

Racial unity is considered to be another important condition for nationhood. People belonging to the same race are naturally more united than those who belong to different races. Etymologically, the word nation signifies people belonging to the same stock or race. The word nation is derived from the Latin word natio which means birth or race. Though political thinkers like Lord Bryce, Burgess and Leacock regard racial unity as one of the essential elements of a nation, yet it is not absolutely essential. The reason is that there is no purity of race in the world.
Earnest Renan, in his lecture titled, *What is a nation?* in 1882, said:

The truth is that there is no pure race and that to make politics depend upon ethnographic analysis is to surrender it to a chimera. The noblest countries, England, France and Italy, are those where the blood is the most mixed. Despite racial unity, the English, the German, the Dane and the Scandinavian are different nations. All of them belong to the same race, but they do not make a single nation. There is a mixture of various races in the U.S.A., Canada and Switzerland. The same is the case with Russia, China, India and other countries.

In India people belonging to different races have been living together. But this heterogeneity of races did not discount the nationhood of India. Of course, it would be difficult to develop national feelings among the people belonging to different races, as the difference in races might lead to intellectual or cultural differences. Prof. G.N. Gilchrist says:

Race-unity is one of the strongest bonds not because of the ethnological signification of races, but because it implies the further unities of common language, common tradition and common culture.

*Common language* can also be a very powerful factor in developing national feelings. In fact, the language factor is decidedly more important than several other factors. Language is the expression of the culture and literature of the people of a nation. Common language brings all the people of a nation near to each other, enables them to exchange their views and ideas, and discuss their problems freely. Therefore, the common language strengthens their ties and creates better understanding and sympathy among them than any other factor.

But it will be wrong to say that the national unification is retarded in all the nations, which have different languages. It cannot be generalized that linguistic unity is essential for national unity and that language diversity invariably weakens national unity. For example, Switzerland became a nation though its inhabitants spoke different languages like French, German and Italian. In the same way, the presence of many languages was not an obstacle to the status of nationhood of India. After the Muslim conquest, the Muslims patronized the Indian languages, learnt to use them and evolved Urdu as the language of literary expression and common use. Despite the absence of a common language India was a nation.

*Common culture* can weld people into a nation. Common food habits, mode of dress, customs and usages, beliefs and values, ideals, hopes and aspirations develop national feelings easily and spontaneously. Very wide diversities in cultural patterns hinder rather than foster the growth of a nation. It is rightly regarded that the concept of nation is primarily socio-cultural and secondarily political. A common culture is an excellent base for nations. In India, in spite of the cultural diversity, there was an underlying unity which helped the growth of national feelings. Indian culture was and is essentially composite. But it was true that the diversity in culture created a serious problem in India, the consequence of which was historically significant. Yet India was considered to be a nation.

*Common religion* plays a very significant role in consolidating a nation and developing national sentiments. It is a cementing force in uniting people into one nation. The political activities
of many countries were regulated by their religions. This was especially true during the medieval ages. It was religion which united people, disciplined them and made them obey the national authority. Religion, Culture and Language go together. Religion is very powerful in inspiring feelings of oneness. For example, it was Islam that united the Arabs into one nation. It was this national unity that enabled them to conquer vast territory from the Indus to Spain. During the Middle Ages, a fierce battle was fought between the Muslims and the Christians in Palestine for safeguarding the sanctity of their religion. The importance of common religion was greater in the past than what it is today. In medieval and early modern times, the religious factor was of supreme significance. But gradually the intense importance of religion has been softened to a great extent in the light of the principles of toleration and secularism.

In India, there was no common religion for all the Indians. In fact, India, besides being the birthplace of four religions—Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism and Sikhism—was and is a land of many other religions—Islam, Christianity, Judaism, Zoroastrianism and the Baha'i faith. But there was and is religious toleration to a great extent. India followed and has been following the principle of secularism. People belonging to different religions lived together harmoniously and thus the religious toleration and the secular practice made India a nation. Yet there were differences between the followers of Hinduism and Islam which later became one of the reasons for the partition of the country. This will be discussed in detail in the next chapter.

Another important element of nation is Common Political Aspirations. These were more important than most other factors that promote national feelings. Durheim, a famous political scientist is of the opinion that a nation is a group of people who wish to live under the same laws and form a state. The differences of Religion, Culture and Language are overshadowed by the presence of common political aspirations in a nation. The common political aspirations of different countries ruled by foreign powers resulted in fierce freedom struggles and as a result independent nations were created in Europe, Africa and Asia. In India, people belonging to different races, religions, cultures and languages united themselves in the struggle for independence against the British. This united struggle was possible only because of the presence of the common political aspiration of obtaining freedom from the foreign yoke. The deficiencies that were found in the diversities of Religion, Culture and Language were greatly compensated by the common political aspirations of the Indians and thus India was a nation in spite of the diversities.

The next element of nation is Common Economic Interests. They are rather aids towards strengthening union than fundamental agents of union. They act as a fillip in strengthening the ties of unity. For example, in Germany, the common economic interests resulted in the formation of the Zollverein, the Customs Union, which strengthened the national bonds and ultimately led to the establishment of the German Confederation. In the 18th century, the different states of America united into one nation for securing economic interests and they snapped their ties with Britain and declared themselves free. The aim of economic independence and removing poverty along with the aim of winning political independence made the people of India unite together into a nation and fight against their oppressors.

The last, not the least, element of nation is Will and Feeling. The will or urge to be a nation is indispensable. The most important of all the elements is the Will and actual Feeling. The will and actual feeling should spontaneously rise in the minds and hearts of people. Feelings of patriotism and
nationalism are best kindled in a natural manner. The urge to become a nation is psychological, emotional, spiritual and subjective. It cannot be artificially produced and forcibly thrust into the minds of the people. No factor or a group of factors can make a people a nation until a strong urge to unify themselves as a nation is developed in them. In India, there was a strong urge or feeling to be a nation which overcame all the other differences and united them in their struggle against the foreign rule. This strong urge or feeling made India a nation.

Among the elements of nation that are discussed so far, some are essential and some others are not so. Common land, common political aspirations and will or feeling to be a nation are indispensable elements for the growth of nations. Common religion, common culture, common language and such other elements are desirable but not indispensable. They are helpful in the evolution of nations. India did have the indispensable elements and evolved itself into a nation in the absence of other helpful elements.

So far, the essential elements of nation and their presence or absence in India before independence have been discussed and a conclusion that despite the absence of uniformity in religion, culture, and language, India was a nation on the strength of its fundamental unity in diversity has been arrived at. Presence of different religions, cultures and languages was very complex because there was much interrelatedness and overlapping among them. The Indian culture was a composite culture—a fusion of Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism, Sikhism and Islam. The Muslim conquerors were not religious fanatics and they adapted themselves to the conditions in India. They evolved Urdu as a language of literary expression and common use. They also patronized Indian languages. "The geographical environment of the two cultures—the Hindu and the Muslim—and the physical conditions in which they flourished were identical for both. The isolation of the lands promoted a similarity of outlook. The Muslims learnt to use Indian languages and to practise modes of life, which were common." The saint poet Kabir tried hard to bring about the fusion of Hinduism and Islam. Akbar tried to establish the first religion of humanity, Din-e-Ilaahi, by fusing all the good principles of all the religions that were practised in India. Emperors like Chandragupta Maurya (a Hindu), Ashoka (a Buddhist) and Akbar (a Muslim) nurtured the composite culture of India. Lala Lajapat Rai articulated his idea of Indian nationhood without any ambiguity, thus, in 1920:

The Indian nation, such as it is or such as we intend to build, neither is nor will be exclusively Hindu, Muslim, Sikh or Christian. It will be each and all. That is my goal of nationhood.9

The nationhood of India revealed itself through its great diversities. The Indian nation was essentially pluralistic. The best part of this nationhood was the absence of any single criterion of identification. It transcended all the limiting factors of race, religion, culture, language and others. That makes it a unique case that is not found in the other parts of the world. There were other bonds of common political and economic interests, which united the Indian people into one nation. But the people of India had no idea that India was a nation. For the awareness of being a nation, and the rise of nationalism, they had to wait till the arrival of the British. It was only under the colonial rule the concept of nation and nationalism were developed in India.

At this point, it will be very useful to look at what Dr. Neera Chandhoke says in her article, Searching for a Narrative in times of Globalization:
Certainly nations construct themselves around objective factors such as territorial borders, shared traditions, common historical memories, rituals, practices and a common language. But the presence of objective factors is simply not enough. These factors have to be invested with right symbolism and meaning so that they evoke deep sentiments of identification and belonging. It is only then that a group of people can be called a nation. Therefore, I suggest that whether a group of people can be termed a nation depends largely on whether they consider themselves as belonging to one, and whether they consider themselves distinguished from others by this fact. It is simply not enough to depict a nation in terms of its institutions, structures and ideologies; it has to be depicted in terms of structures of feelings.\footnote{Dr. Neera Chandhoke considers these feelings or sentiments of belonging to be significant. They can be developed when the nation speaks the language of belonging to all sections of its people. Then they will intuitively feel at home in the nation and have a sense of roots and rootedness. They will feel that, wherever they are and whatever they are doing, they will always have something and somewhere to come back to. Without this sense of something and somewhere, they will feel alienated.}

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But how could there be a feeling of belonging in India where the society consisted of various religious, cultural and linguistic groups? Dr. Neera Chandhoke says:

...For people belong to the nation in different ways—through their own languages, cultures and religions. Belonging is always plural in its ties, its imagination, memory, sense of history, and perception of the present (emphasis added). Therefore, we call any attempt to impose one sense of belonging on diverse groups, each of which relate to the nation in their own way, through the imposition of one language or religion or culture—fascism. In other words, people must in a democratic nation at least be free to belong to the nation in their own ways. The crucial term here is freedom. Freedom in turn involves two propositions. One, that groups should be free to follow their own religious and cultural practices within the ambit of what is democratically permissible. Secondly, groups should not be targeted on the ground that they subscribe to a religious persuasion that is not that of the majority. A failure to do so, it is evident, leads to alienation, estrangement and withdrawal.\footnote{This was exactly what happened in India though it was not a democratic country under the British rule. The people of India were free to belong to it and they belonged to it in their own ways. Everyone freely followed one’s own religion and culture, and spoke one’s own language and yet everyone was an Indian. The Indian nation recognized the fact of plurality. This plurality exposed the people of India to different ways of life and widened the social horizons, because they learnt from each other different ways of negotiating the world. It made them acquire toleration and open-mindedness.}

The people of Indian nation belonged to it in their own ways. And a good number of them belonged to the Indian nation through their perception of the present which led to the growth of nationalism, which, in turn, further strengthened the nationhood of India.

How was the present then? How did the people of India perceive it? There was widespread economic exploitation of the people of all classes. The British drained the resources of India in an unjust way in the name of trade and by the force of power. India was the source of raw materials required by the industries in England. It was also a big market for the finished products of the British industries. India lost its economic resources. The trading classes of India became bankrupt. Indian
handicrafts and cottage industries were destroyed. The industries could not grow on modern lines because of the antipathy of the foreign rule. There was heavy pressure on agriculture. The revenue policy of the British government proved dangerous to Indian agriculture also. The British deprived the estate owners of their property. "It was estimated that the British regime impoverished India by draining $3,00,00,000 to $4,00,00,000 every year out of India. It was because of this that large masses of Indian people had hardly 2 quid a day." This poverty in India was the direct result of the economic exploitation by the British. The nation as a whole was reduced to mere subsistence level and there was no hope of any relief in future. The perception of these terrible economic conditions by the Indians was one of the most important causes for the growth of national feelings in India.

It was the Western education through the medium of English that made them perceive the present in the light of the Western ideas. The British rule resulted in the extinction of the upper ruling class, foregrounding of the new middle class, and the emasculation of the old intellectual class. Such an emasculation of the old intellectual class was the result of the drying up of the sources of patronage—the courts of kings, nawabs, governors, chiefs, and zamindars. Learning was open to all now. The Christian missionaries, who had the intention of spreading Christianity, worked through education and medical service. They reached all the parts of the country and opened a number of schools where English was taught. The occidentalists favouring the Western Education also helped Christian missionaries in opening schools and colleges where Western education was given through English. "In 1813, the Charter Act sanctioned the annual sum of £10,000 towards the 'revival and improvement of literature and the encouragement of the learned natives of India and for the introduction and promotion of a knowledge of the sciences among the inhabitants of the British territories in India.' From this clause the modern Indian educational system had sprung." Lord William Bentinck stressed the importance of English, the key to all improvements, and announced that education was the panacea for the regeneration of India. A forward-looking group of Indian intellectuals led by Raja Ram Mohan Roy supported Bentinck in his efforts of spreading Western education through English.

The controversy and uncertainty about the system of education in India came to a close when, in 1834, Thomas Babington Macaulay arrived as a new Law Member. In his famous Minute on Education in 1835, he denounced the Indian education vehemently and advocated the Western education through English in such eloquent words as 'a single shelf of a good European library was worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia.' His purpose was two-fold: the first was to secure a cheap supply of Indians knowing English to serve the British government in India; secondly, he also thought that Western education would foster among the educated Indians a sense of loyalty towards the British rule in India and also result in the spread of English culture in India. The result was the introduction of Western education through English in India. The government began to set up schools and colleges to provide Western education to the natives. Despite the presence of selfish interests, Macaulay's purpose proved to be of immense help to Indian nationalism. The cause of the Western education received a further boost when English replaced Persian (the court language of the Mughals) as the official state language and the medium of the higher courts of law. Local languages replaced Persian in the lower courts.
Thus, the Western knowledge, Science, and English language spread among the Indians. All the Indians started receiving the same education irrespective of religious, cultural and linguistic differences. English became the *lingua franca* of the educated people of India. It provided the best means of coming close to and understanding each other. Unity was developed among them by the *common language*. This unity developed the feelings of nationalism in them.

The educated Indians were influenced by the Western ideas of Liberty, Equality, Fraternity, Democracy, Socialism, etc. Many Indians went abroad and came into direct contact with the Western world. They came into contact not only with Britain but also with other foreign countries as well by reading many books on them. The movements in these countries, their economic development, their problems, and the First World War influenced the Indians. The performance of the Indian troops in the *First World War* revived the faith of the Indians in their strength. The *Russian Revolution* of 1917 inspired the national movement of India on economic grounds. The study of British history as well as the histories of other Western nations, and the works of political thinkers of Europe taught the Indians the need for individual liberty and dignity of man as *man*, irrespective of status and wealth. It also taught them the importance of constitution and the evils of imperialism. Then, they realized how the British had cramped them under colonial rule and deprived them of liberty. The examples of Italy and Germany achieving national independence inspired the Indians. The intellectually transformed Indians started dreaming about the independence of the country:

The English education brought about a profound intellectual transformation in India. Many educated Indians began to say that India also must have independence. *Swaraj is our birthright* became the slogan. English education thus brought about a great Indian Renaissance. The early pioneers of Indian nationalism were such great men like *Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Dadabhai Naoroji, Gopalakrishna Gokhale, D.E. Wacha*, who had all drawn their own lessons from the Western Education they had.

The Western education made the Indians more sensitive. Now they could see how the British practised discrimination against them by not providing the similar facilities that were provided to the British people in India. Many Indians, if not all, received the English education for the sake of government jobs. But many high posts in the government and the Army were barred to them. Legally they could not be barred and they were not barred from getting into high posts in theory, but, in practice all the possible difficulties were created. The competitive examinations were held in London only. Majority of the educated Indians could not go to London for the examinations. Some of them, who were able to go to London and who had the capacity to turn out impressive performances in the examinations, felt that they were denied their rightful place in the hierarchy because they did not belong to the ruling class. Naturally, most of the Western educated Indians had to become clerks in the government offices. The inequity was prevailed even though the British posed to be the bulwark of democratic ideas and spoke of the values of liberty and equality. It roused the feelings in the educated class about themselves being the oppressed in their own nation. They also became aware of how the British drained the wealth of India making it poor and of the damage that was being done to it by the continued colonial rule. This awareness created the feelings of nationalism.

The development of the railways, which made the mobility of and intercourse among the people of different parts of India possible, helped the development of national consciousness.
Simultaneously, the British developed and improved the telegraph system and the postal service also. The British also constructed roads and canals/waterways. All of these revolutionized the system of transport and communication.

Thus, the Western education, the English language, the scientific temperament, the liberal ideas, the sensitive attitude, the railways, the telegraph, the postal service and the construction of roads and canals/waterways—all these brought the Indian people closer to each other; and developed the feeling of oneness and the sense of belonging to one nation. They also provided facilities to organize the national movement on all-India basis and made them crave for an independent nation of their own.

India was a conglomeration of different provinces ruled by many kings, princes and nawabs. There was no political unity. Instead, there was rivalry and animosity among the different kingdoms and nawabdoms. This rivalry and animosity very often prevailed even among the people of the same religion or caste if they belonged to different provinces. It was during the British rule that the whole of India was conquered and brought under one sovereign rule for the first time. This enabled the people of India to think and act as one nation. India remained united politically for a long period. One rule, one set of laws, and the same system of administration all over India developed the concept of one citizenship and one nation among the Indians. Thus, it was the British imperialism that was largely responsible for the growth of nationalism and the idea of nation in India.

The Indian Press and Literature, both English and vernacular, also played a significant role in arousing national consciousness among Indians. W.B. Jones, the Commissioner of Hyderabad Assigned Districts, wrote in 1878:

Within the last 20 years a feeling of nationality, which formally had no existence, has grown up and the Press can now, for the first time in the history of our rule, appeal to the whole native population of India against their foreign rulers.¹

All the newspapers, owned by the Indians, were mostly anti-British and gave publicity to racial arrogance, economic exploitation, and personal misbehaviour of the British towards the Indians. Especially after the revolt of 1857, the policy of ruling India by sword was ruthlessly upheld by the British. Not only their authoritative domination, but also their arrogance towards Indians came to be expressed. Disrespectful, unjust, and sometimes, even cruel treatment of Indians became very common. These were widely publicized by the press. This influenced the feelings of the Indians against the oppressors. All the Indians felt that they were one, being ill-treated at the hands of the British and suffering it silently. And the suffering strengthened the feeling of oneness. Thus, the newspapers played a great role in strengthening national unity.

The influence of the writings of Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Rabindranath Tagore, Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, and others on the Indian minds was not insignificant. Their writings about the fundamental unity of India and its great cultural, literary, and religious heritage appealed to the minds of the Indians to get united against the British. Bankim Chandra’s Vande Mataram inspired patriotic feelings in the hearts of Indians.
The British asserted and demonstrated their racial superiority and political domination over the Indians in different ways. 'They tried to influence Indians to adopt Western culture and to spread Christianity holding that these are superior to Indian ways and Indian religions. Being the masters they treated the Indians as inferior.' There was a system in India which denied the right to Indian judges to try Europeans living in India, who were accused of some crime. Sir Courtney Ilbert, the Law Minister during the reign of Lord Ripon, found the system unjust. Most of the provincial governments also recommended that this restriction on the Indian judges should be removed. The Ilbert Bill was a simple measure to put the Indian judges on the same footing as the European judges in dealing with all cases. ‘The necessity of the Bill arose as the Indians who had joined the judicial service were rising in the ranks and that involved the possible trial of Europeans by an Indian judge.' The Bill would make the Indian judges equal to the European judges in respect of their powers to discharge their duties over all citizens irrespective of the colour of their skin.

The proposed Bill was quite democratic in its content and spirit. But the British in India found it hard to accept it on the Indian soil. They could not imagine that the colonizers could be tried by the colonized. ‘They felt it a humiliation to the clan if the ruling class could let one of its members to be tried by a native. The very thought was abhorrent to them.’

All the Europeans protested against the proposed Bill. The opposition to the Bill antagonized the Indian public opinion. It made clear to the Indians the policy of racial discrimination and political domination of the British. It also taught them a good lesson in organizing a movement. As a result, there was counter agitation by Indians to get the Bill passed. But it was in vain. At last, the Bill had to be amended before it could be passed. It lost the very spirit in which Sir Ilbert drafted it. The Indian agitation, though failed, tightened the Indian unity. The failure of the Bill opened the eyes of the Indians to the fact that they had a long, long fight ahead, that they would not be allowed to the positions of power in judiciary or legislature or the army, till they could organize themselves and fight united against the colonial rule and its evils.

The socio-political and religio-cultural reformations influenced the growth of national feelings in India. Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Keshab Chandra Sen, Debendranath Tagore, Swamy Dayananda Saraswathi, Ishwara Chandra Vidyasagar, Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, Swamy Vivekananda, and others exercised a great influence on the Indian people and led them in the path of progress. Raja Ram Mohan Roy decided to rid the Hindu society of its irrational rituals and evil customs. He fought for the upliftment of women by trying to give education to them. He was responsible for the eradication of the cruel, inhuman Sati system. He tried to bring in a change in the Law of Property in their favour. He pleaded for the marriage of widows and the prohibition of polygamous marriages. He also fought against the caste system. He was of the opinion that a democratic society with liberty, equality, and fraternity was possible only with the removal of the caste system. He wrote: ‘The distinction of castes, introducing innumerable divisions and subdivisions among them (Hindus) has entirely deprived them of patriotic feeling.’

Though the Hindu society did not accept his reformative ideas immediately, his attempts began the process of social change. The educated Indians responded to these social reforms in a positive way and they were filled with the feeling of belonging to one society (nation) on equal terms.
Raja Ram Mohan Roy was a great lover of freedom. All his efforts at reform were directed towards the goal of independence. It is believed that political agitation in India began with him. His first agitation was against Adam's Press Ordinance of 1823, which severely curtailed the freedom of the Press. He was unmatched in writing the most effective memorandums to the British Raj. His study of English literature, history, and parliamentary institutions acquainted him with the Western political ideas. He introduced the methods of political agitations by petitions, pamphlets, memorandums, meetings, and the press.

The Brahma Samaj started by Raja Ram Mohan Roy in Bengal; Arya Samaj, founded by Dayananda Saraswathi in Maharashtra; Prarthana Samaj under M.G. Ranade's leadership; the Theosophical Society under the leadership of Mrs. Annie Besant in the south; and the Ramakrishna Mission founded by Swamy Vivikananda brought many changes in the Indian society, culture, religion, and politics.

Raja Ram Mohan Roy established the Brahma Sabha, the early form of the Brahma Samaj in 1828. Debendranath Tagore gave a new shape to the Sabha after the death of Raja Ram Mohan Roy. With the help of Keshab Chandra Sen and others, Debendranath Tagore tried hard to reform the Hindu society by propagating the principles of the Brahma Samaj and by appealing to the people to apply reason even to their religious beliefs. The Brahma Samaj advocated widow marriage, women's education and religious equality.

The Arya Samaj was founded by Swamy Dayananda Saraswati in Bombay in 1875. He taught the people of India to be self-confident and to have faith in future. He reminded them of the glory and greatness of India's heritage and inspired them to make it still greater. He was firm in his opinion that good government could not be a substitute for self-government. He pleaded for the rule of India by Indians only. Many leaders of the Arya Samaj like Lala Lajapat Rai and others played a glorious part in the nationalist movement of India. The view of Mrs. Annie Besant was: 'It was Dayananda Saraswathi who proclaimed India for the Indians.'

The chief architect of the Prarthana Samaj was Mahadev Govind Ranade. His approach to the problem of religion and society was rational. He took pride in belonging to the Hindu faith. He advised the people to free their minds from all narrowness and from unreasonable beliefs. He condemned the isolationism and exclusiveness of the Hindus and insisted that they should embrace the whole of mankind with open arms and strive for progress. The objects of social reform by the Prarthana Samaj were disapproval of the caste system, rising the minimum age of marriage for both males and females, widow marriage, and women education.

The Theosophical Society became very popular especially among the educated people of India, under the leadership of Mrs. Annie Besant. She was called an Avatara, an incarnation of God. By her magnificent personality and extraordinary eloquence, she was able to infuse great vigour in the activities of the Society. The Society opened many educational centers, and, by publishing numerous books and pamphlets, tried to reform the people of India. It preached the unity of God and universal fraternity. It believed that all religions were true. It opposed child marriage; and advocated the
abolition of caste, the upliftment of the outcastes, and the amelioration of the condition of widows. It
denounced all prejudices based on colour and race. It asked the people of India to have faith in
themselves and to realize that they were not so bad as the Christian missionaries regarded them to be.
They were as good as many advanced people of the world were. Annie Besant firmly believed that
India must be governed on the basis of Indian feelings, Indian traditions, Indian thoughts, and Indian
ideas. The Society exercised a great influence in awakening the pride and self-respect of the Indians.

The Ramakrishna Mission was founded by Ramakrishna Paramahamsa’s great disciple Swamy
Vivekananda. He established two principal centers of the Mission, one at Belur near Calcutta and the
other at Mayavati near Almora. These centers trained young men for the work of religious and social
welfare. The Mission opened many schools, philanthropic centers, and monasteries all over the
country. Vivekananda was the first Indian to question the superiority of the West and defended his
religion against the attacks of its Western critics in their own lands. Though he had no interest in
politics, he longed to build a brave, strong and self-sufficient nation. According to him, ‘Religion is the
keynote of music of national life.’ He tried to remove caste, untouchability, and all other inequalities
from the society. All men were the sons of the same God and bearers of the same divine nature,
according to him. He was angry at the weakness, cowardice, and laziness among the Indians and
always asked them to be above all, strong, and manly. He upheld the qualities of truth and
knowledge. He was a great lover of liberty. He said: Liberty in thought and action is the only condition
of life, growth and well being: where it does not exist, the man, the race and the nation must go down.

Thus, the Ramakrishna Mission under Swami Vivekananda played a remarkable role in awakening
the national feelings in Indians by developing love of humanity, fraternity, equality, and liberty; by
stressing the importance of truth and knowledge; and by trying to make them strong and self-sufficient.

Besides these Indian attempts at social reforms, there were many attempts by the British
government also. Lord William Bentinck abolished Sati by passing an Act in 1829. The efforts of
Ishwarachandra Vidyasagar in Calcutta and Vishnu Shastri in Bombay to introduce marriage of Hindu
widows were honoured by the government by the passing of the Hindu Widows’ Remarriage Act in
1856. And through the efforts of Behram Malabari, an Act was passed to abolish child marriage in 1891.

It could be noted here that whereas the Brahma Samaj and the Arya Samaj tried to reform
the Hindu religion and uplift the Hindus alone, the Prarthana Samaj, the Theosophical Society
and the Ramakrishna Mission took all the people into their folds and worked generally for the
upliftment of all the people of India as they were more modern in outlook. However, all these
organizations drew their inspiration from Hinduism only. As such, the nationalism, for the growth of
which these organizations were mainly responsible, was easily termed as Hindu Nationalism. The
Muslims also had their own reformation movements. The Wahabi Movement and the Aligarh
Movement were very important.

The Wahabi Movement or the Waliullahi Movement was essentially a revivalist movement
begun by Shah Waliullah. He was the first Indian Muslim leader of the 18th century to express concern
over the degeneration among the Indian Muslims. He raised his voice against the ugly departures
from the purity of Islam. His contribution to the Muslim reform movement was two fold: he tried to integrate the best elements of the different schools of Muslim jurisprudence to unite Indian Muslims; and he emphasized the role of individual conscience in religion. Shah Abdul Aziz and Syed Ahmed Barelvi popularized the teachings of Waliullah. They also tried to teach the Indian Muslims to be conscious of the present circumstances in which Islam appeared to be in danger. They called upon the Muslims to protect it.

Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, who tried to modernize the outlook of the Muslims, started the *Aligarh Movement*. He tried hard to impart modern scientific outlook to them. He called upon them to receive the Western education and to learn the English language. He criticized the narrow outlook of the traditional interpreters of the *Quran* and he himself interpreted it newly in the light of contemporary rationalism and scientific outlook. He opened M.A.O. College at Aligarh in 1895 to give modern education to Muslims. Soon Aligarh became a center of religious and cultural revival of the Muslim community.

All these social and religious movements resulted in fostering a spirit of rational outlook. Even the attitude of the conservatives, who used to stick firmly to tradition, was changed from unquestioning / uncritical acceptance to justification by reason. Even if these reforms/movements had not been successful in bringing about radical changes, they certainly promoted individualism. The questioning attitude and rational outlook naturally resulted in promoting individualism, which was the basis of modern secular thought. Individualism, secular attitude, cultural strength, political awareness, and economic factors provided a powerful incentive to the growth of nationalistic feelings among the Indians.

Besides socio-religious-cultural associations, many political associations were also formed during this period of the growth of nationalism. What distinguished these political associations from those socio-religious-cultural associations were the political and secular interests that bound together the new classes of the country. This secular nature of the political associations further encouraged the nationalist cause of the country.

In Calcutta, in July 1838, the *Zamindari Association*, also known as the *Landholders' Society*, was founded by Dwarakanath Tagore to safeguard the interests of the landlords. Although limited in its objectives, it rendered, for the first time, good service to the cause of Indian nationalism by marking the beginning of an organized political activity and the use of constitutional agitation for the redressal of grievances. This *Landholders' Society* worked in co-operation with the *British India Society*, founded by Mr. William Adams in England in 1839. Although the *Landholders' Society* was not successful in establishing its branches all over India, it showed that the Indians had already felt the need for an All-India Organization.

The *Bengal British India Society* was established in 1843 with the object of "the collection and dissemination of information relating to the actual condition of the people of British India... and to employ such other means of peaceful and lawful character as may appear calculated to secure the welfare, extend the just right and advance the interests of all classes of our fellow subjects." However, the *Landholders' Society* and the *Bengal British India Society* could not flourish well, and
in 1851, the two were amalgamated and remodelled under the name, the British Indian Association. When the time came for the renewal of the Charter of the East India Company in 1853, it sent a petition to the Parliament in Britain praying for the establishment of a separate legislature of a popular character, separation of the judicial from the executive functions, reduction in the salaries of higher officials, abolition of salt duty and stamp duty, etc. The prayers were partially materialized.

During that time only, many Indians in different parts of India felt that it was the right time to express their opinions about the changes to be made in the British government in India and bring pressure on the Parliament to effect the changes in the renewal of the Charter by sending petitions. For this purpose, many associations, similar to the British Indian Association, were formed almost simultaneously in Madras, Poona and Bombay.

In Madras, the Madras Native Association; in Poona, the Kalyan Unanayak Mandal; and in Bombay, the Bombay Association were formed.

Thus, it was an era of conscious political movement in India since the associations established almost simultaneously about this time were all politically motivated. All these associations were above the petty feelings of caste, religion, and region. Their intention was to secure a better government under the renewal of the Charter. But they had their own limitations:

Their weapons for fighting were only resolutions and petitions. These associations performed their activities mainly through meetings which were held in cities alone and confined to a handful of city people only; they opened no branches of their organizations in the small towns or villages generally. The British Indian Association had a few branches in some district towns of Bengal, no doubt. But they did little to look for the interests of all classes of people which they preferred to do.65

So, there was still the need for some new organizations that would represent all the classes and all the parts of India. The need was addressed when, in 1875, Baba Sisir Kumar Ghose founded the Indian League with the object of ‘stimulating the sense of nationalism amongst the people and of encouraging political education’.27 The newly emerging English educated middle class was in the lead in the membership of the League. However, within a year of its foundation, the Indian Association founded by Surendranath Banerjee in 1876 superseded the Indian League. It sought to represent not only the middle classes but also the masses. For this purpose, it kept its annual subscription at Rs. 5/- only. (The annual subscription of the British Indian Association was Rs. 50/-.). The ideals of the Indian Association were:

(i) the creation of a strong body of public opinion in the country, (ii) the unification of the Indian races and peoples upon the basis of common political interests and aspirations, (iii) the promotion of friendly feeling between Hindus and Mohamedans and (iv) the inclusion of the masses in the great public.28

The Indian League and the Indian Association began a new trend in the Indian political field. Both the associations were both consciously political and nationalist. The Indian League wanted to stimulate the sense of nationalism among the people and the Indian Association wanted the unification of the Indian races and people upon the basis of common political interests and aspirations and the promotion of friendly feelings between the Hindus and the Mohamedans.
There was the conscious use of the term *nationalism*. We can also understand that the politicians of the last quarter of the 19th century had realized that the Indian nation included both the Hindus and the Muslims.

The *Indian Association* organized a national movement against the regulation of 1876, which reduced the maximum age limit for the Indian Civil Service Examination from 21 years to 19 years. Surendranath Banerjee visited different provinces of India, addressed meetings in protest against the regulation and received unique support in all the places he visited. Many new political organizations were set up to work in unison with the *Indian Association*. Soon this *Indian Civil Service Agitation* grew to be strong and nationwide. The British government could gauge the depth of this unprecedented movement. Thus W.B. Jones, the Commissioner of Hyderabad Assigned Districts, wrote in 1878:

> Twenty years ago we had to take account of local nationalities and particular races. The resentment of Mahratta did not involve that of Bengalee. Now we have changed that and are beginning to find ourselves face to face not with the population of individual provinces but with 300 million of people united with sympathies and intercourse which we have ourselves created and fostered.

The reactionary measures of the British government like the Vernacular Press Act of 1878, (nicknamed as the *Gagging Act*), which sought to curb the freedom of the Indian Press and the Arms Act of the same year, which sought to prohibit the possession of arms of the natives and the case of contempt of court against Surendranath Banerjee were protested by the Indian Association on all-India basis.

When the Ilbert Bill agitation was raging in India, the *Bombay Presidency Association* was founded by Kashinath Trimbak Telang, Pheroze Shah Mehta, and Badruddin Tyabji to protest against the Bill. In Poona, the *Poona Sarvajanik Sabha* was established in 1867. In Madras, the *Mahajan Sabha* was established in 1884. Many other associations were formed across the country.

The need for a common all-India platform was specially felt during the Ilbert Bill controversy and the contempt case against Surendranath Banerjee. Therefore the *Indian Association* organized two Indian National Conferences. The *British Indian Association* and the *Central Mohammedan Association* supported the second conference. This co-operation of the Muslim community in Calcutta with a Hindu organization was certainly a remarkable development, though Badruddin Tyabji had already been working with the Hindu organizations with his Muslim followers.

So far we have seen that national consciousness had been awakened among the Indians and several associations were formed to give vent to an all-Indian Association. And now ‘the ground was ready for the creation of a political organization that could embrace the whole of India and bring together into one body the several provincial associations and politically conscious individuals scattered all over the country. Conditions were ripe for the establishment of a national assembly to give expression to national demands and requirements.’

The ever-widening gap between the ruler and the ruled, the growth of political awareness among the ruled, the efforts of the different political associations to bring changes in the measures of
the government, and the growing discontent of the natives over the foreign rule resulted in the birth of the Indian National Congress. A.O.Hume, a retired secretary to the British government in India, who understood and sympathized with the growing native dissatisfaction over the British government and the growing political awareness and unity among the natives, launched the scheme of an Indian National Union, in consultation with the Indian leaders and the British sympathizers of Indians in England. In December 1885, the Indian National Congress was established. The objectives of the Congress were:

First, the fusion into one national whole of all the different elements that constitute the population of India; second, the gradual regeneration, along all lines, spiritual, moral, social and political, of the nation thus involved; and third, the consolidation of the union between England and India, by securing the modification of such of its conditions as may be unjust or injurious.

The Indian National Congress held its first session in Bombay under the presidentship of Womesh Chandra Banerjee in 1885. Seventy-two delegates from all parts of the country attended it. The people of India, inspired with the new ideals and thrilled by the visions of a new India, came together and assembled in the Congress:

The birth of the Indian National Congress was an unprecedented phenomenon in the political history of India. It proclaimed the advent of a new era, the era of political unity, not imposed from above, but the expression of the deliberate will of the people. The Congress was the central organ of the new society that had evolved as a result of the economic, social and cultural changes taking shape during the hundred years since Plassey. It marked the consummation of a process, which affected all Indians individually, and collectively.

The Partition of Bengal in 1905 resulted in the complete awareness of the idea of India as a nation. It was the first issue on which all parts of India participated as a body. It was protested against throughout the country and the geographic expression of the territorial expanse of India took the shape of a nation.

It can be concluded that the widespread economic exploitation of India by the British government, the Western education of the Indians, the English language, the Scientific attitude, the liberal ideas, the sensitive temperament, the development of the railways, the telegraph, the postal service, the construction of roads and canals, the political unity, the British feelings of social superiority and their political domination, the Ilbert Bill controversy, the Indian press and literature, socio-political and religious-cultural reforms and the numerous political associations developed the national feeling among the Indians and consolidated the idea of a nation in India and made the people of India aware of its being a nation. The national consciousness was transformed into social and political consciousness, which was directed towards the betterment of the human life in an atmosphere of independence and self-rule. Franz Fanon has said that 'if national consciousness is not transformed into social consciousness during the struggle, the future will not be marked by redemption and freedom but by another form of colonialism. That is why it is necessary to transform that national consciousness into social and political imperatives and humanize it.'

So far, the idea of India as a nation and the growth of nationalism that strengthened the Indian nationhood have been discussed in detail. These notions of nation need to be constantly renegotiated
suit the needs of the present. If such renegotiation does not take place, the nation will fail to spark off
the feelings of oneness and the sense of one nation. Neera Chandhoke says, 'In short, at historically
significant moments of its political biography, nation will be compelled to both re-imagine as well as
re-narrate itself to its inhabitants and for its inhabitants.' She goes on to explain such historically
significant moments which can arise in the political biography of a nation.

When the memories of the period during which the Indian nation took shape in the anti-
colonial struggle begin to fade from the peoples' minds and recollection, and if the Indian nation has to
continue to inhabit the psyche of the Indians, the idea of India as a nation has to be renegotiated
through mythologies, memoirs, literature, songs, films, paintings, etc. It is important that they should
collectively impart significance to what it means to be an Indian, and harness collective emotional
energies in the project of the nation, India. Therefore, there is the necessity of encouraging the study
of and research in partition literature—novels, plays, poems, and stories.

When regional, cultural, linguistic, and ethnic communities within the plural nation, India,
increasingly demand autonomy against the homogeneity of nationalism, there is the necessity of the
renegotiation of the idea of India as a nation.

In the post-colonial world, when the international community intervenes in the affairs of the
nation in the form of harsh and stark political and economic conditions that accompany loan packages
by multi-lateral lending agencies, its sovereignty had to be compromised. So India should counter
these interventions by aggressively restating its nationness.

Prior to the revolt of 1857, the British treated India as one nation, because it suited them.
They were attempting to conquer India, and therefore, they pleaded that the conquest of the entire
sub-continent would alone provide administrative and political unity to this nation. Thus the concept of
the Indian nation was justified on the ground of benefiting the people of this nation. But after the revolt,
they reversed their stand. They left the policy of annexation because the existence of the native states
was found useful for them. Thus, the concept of the Indian nation was against their grain. So, they
pursued the policy of Divide and Rule and encouraged the differences between the Hindus and the
Muslims. This, along with other reasons, resulted in the Partition of the Nation, which will be
discussed in the next chapter.
Reference and Notes:


5. Quoted in Aggarwal R.C., *op. cit.*, p. 92

6. Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 95.


20. Quoted in Mahajan V.D., *op. cit.*, p. 378

21. The Prarthana Samaj was not actually founded by M.G. Ranade. It was as a result of Keshab Chandra Sen’s visit to Bombay, the Prarthana Samaj (Prayer Society) was established in 1867. Keshab Chandra Sen was the first missionary to tour the country for propagating the faith advocated by the Brahma Samaj, the first missionary movement in India. When M.G. Ranade joined the Prarthana Samaj, it rose to the position of strength and stature because of his efforts. R.G. Bhandarkar and N.G. Chandavarkar also worked hard for the Prarthana Samaj.

22. The Theosophical Society was founded by Madame Blavatsky and Col. Oocott in New York in 1875. They arrived in India in 1879 and established the headquarters of the society in Adyar, Madras, in 1882. Soon, its branches were opened all over India. In 1888, Mrs. Annie Besant joined the Society in England, came to India in 1893 and spread the principles of the Society among the Indians.
23. Quoted in Chand, Tara, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. 415
24. Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 418
29. Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 17.
32. Ibid., pp. 549-50.
CHAPTER II

THE PARTITION OF THE NATION

*Song is crushed in every throat;*
*Every spinning-wheel’s thread is snapped;*
*Friends parted from one another;*
*The hum of spinning wheels fell silent.*

- Amritha Pritam

‘Partition is a painful process at any time. When that partition concerns a country of teeming millions who have lived together for centuries with shared values, it becomes a tragedy of almost holocaust magnitude. When that tragedy is self-imposed and is the outcome of political decisions which pushed humanity into the jaws of death, the matter becomes incomprehensible.’

The partition of the nation is the greatest tragedy in the Indian history. It is very difficult to find an event of such magnitude and of far-reaching consequences in the history of the world. It is probably the unparallel event in the history of the mankind. The partition of British India into India and Pakistan was the gory consummation of a long process of mutual demonisation and dehumanisation by the communal minded Hindus and Muslims. It was preceded and followed by one of the cruellest and bloodiest migrations and ethnic cleansings in history. The communal and religious fury that it unleashed caused the death of nearly two million people. Nearly twelve to fifteen million people were dislocated and transferred between the two parts. Nearly seventy five thousand women were abducted and raped. Many of them disappeared. The trauma has been so profound and the hatred created by it between India and Pakistan has been so intense that the relations between the two have not normalized even after six decades. Ishtiaq Ahmed, Professor in the University of Stockholm, Sweden, says, ‘The two states have been on the verge of a nuclear war since May 1988, when both demonstrated their ability to explode nuclear devices. Such a war would, in all probability, seriously jeopardize human existence and civilization in the region.’ He goes on to say that South Asia is undoubtedly the most dangerous nuclear flash point in the world and that this potential for self-destruction derives from a paradigm for pathologically ethnicised politics of the partition of 1947.

The Partition is a very complex and tangled event. Hundreds of books have been written and a number of researches have been conducted on it. ‘It is common knowledge that this complex issue has been made somewhat more complicated by the conflicting approaches of historians.’ It has been variously interpreted, so variously that 60 years have been, it appears, not enough to understand it correctly. But ‘the principal thrust of the differing interpretations offered so far has been to blame one party or the other. Indian writers blame Jinnah and the Muslim League, whereas Pakistani writers find fault with Gandhi, Nehru, Patel and so on.’ Three approaches to the partition have been familiar to all—the Imperialist (British), the Pakistani (Muslim) and the Indian (Hindu). The partition was the outcome of what Gandhi once described, ‘three mighty conflicting forces of British imperialism, Congress nationalism and Muslim separatism.’ The partition process presents a complicated struggle among imperialism and colonialism, nationalism and secularism, and communalism and separatism. The British imperialism and colonialism posed a challenge to the colonized people. The response was
nationalism, secularism, and democracy as the educated elite learnt these lessons from their Western education. But there were also communal, sectarian, separatist, religious, and regional forces that made the anti-colonial struggle for freedom a strange conflict that resulted in the partition. All the forces had been at work simultaneously.

The European model of nationhood characterized by religious, linguistic, and cultural homogeneity became the basis for nation building in India, a land of many religions, languages, and cultures. Foregrounding Hindu India as the basis for nation building, overlooking the simultaneous co-existence of many other communities, was the focal point which widened the gap and strengthened the differences between the two contending parties—Hindus/Sikhs and Muslims. The Muslim fear of the Hindu Raj gave rise to separatist tendencies, communalisation of politics, and finally to the partition of the nation.

Before the advent of the British, Hindu-Muslim relations had been harmonious. There had been peaceful co-existence of the two communities for hundreds of years. India had trade relations with the Arabs for centuries prior to the advent of Islam. Many Arab traders settled in the coastal areas of the Western Ghats and Kerala. In 7th century A.D., when Islam became the ruling religion of Arabia, the Arab settlers in India also became Muslims and continued with their trade activities. So Muslims had come to India basically for the purpose of trade, as the British did later. As a political force, Islam entered India through many invasions by many Turk, Tartar, Mongol, Persian, and Afghan Muslim rulers who established their rule in India and started ruling the people. Islam had enjoyed the official support in India, as did the Christianity later. Though there was resistance from Hindu rulers to the growing power of the Muslim rule, it cannot be said that the Hindus and the Muslims had always been at war. The Muslim conquerors of India were not the people who had borne aloft the flag of Islam. They were a medley of various ethnological groups. All that they had was the pride of the conquest, which lasted for sometime only. Gradually there began the process of unification. A remarkable feature of the early phase of the Hindu-Muslim contact was that the Muslims neither tried to break down the Hindu social pattern nor did they try to raise another social pattern of their own. The Muslims adjusted themselves to the social pattern of the Hindus. It was because nearly 90% of the Muslims were the converts from the lower castes of Hinduism and though they professed the monotheistic Islam, they carried on the same practices and superstitions which they had observed before. In many cases, both the Hindu and the Muslim masses paid homage to the same saints and carried oblations to the same shrines. It was Arya Samaj in the later part of the nineteenth century which was responsible to a very great extent for weaning away of the Hindu masses from such practices. Before these revival and reform movements in both the religions caused them drift apart, there had been religious rapprochement between the two major religions in the subcontinent.

Along with this sociological synthesis, there was religious rapprochement also. Hinduism and Islam influenced each other and produced a synthesis in the form of Sikhism which contained the quintessence of both the religions. The Bhakti movement in Hinduism and the Sufism in Islam created sympathy and a sense of understanding between the two. A large mass of Muslims were converts from the lower castes of Hinduism and though they professed the monotheistic Islam, they carried on the same practices and superstitions which they had observed before. In many cases, both the Hindu and the Muslim masses paid homage to the same saints and carried oblations to the same shrines. It was Arya Samaj in the later part of the nineteenth century which was responsible to a very great extent for weaning away of the Hindu masses from such practices. Before these revival and reform movements in both the religions caused them drift apart, there had been religious rapprochement between the two major religions in the subcontinent.
Political agreement was developed under the influence of this religious rapprochement. Almost all the Muslim rulers followed the policy of religious neutrality during the periods of their rule. Only Firoz Tughlaq and Aurangzeb followed a policy of religious persecution for short durations. Some of the rulers favoured Islam, but did not disfavour Hinduism. Many Hindus were employed in their administration. Many Muslim ministers served in Hindu courts. Often Hindu and Muslim feudatories formed alliances. At least at the level of the ruling elite, the Delhi Kings and Mughal Emperors had practised inter-marriages. In fact, the Mughal system (rule) was substantially dependent upon the support of the Hindu Rajput provinces. The policy of religious tolerance became the creed of the Muslim rule in India. It was on account of its policy of religious toleration that the Muslim state became so popular in the masses that long after the downfall of the Mughal Empire there were attempts in our country to reorganize a state under the leadership of one of the lineal descendants of the Mughal emperors. In the so-called Mutiny of 1857, all the Hindu and the Muslim leaders made the last attempt to restore the Mughal Empire in India. This was 150 years after the collapse of that empire. This shows what deep loyalty the Mughal Empire was able to evoke in the hearts of the Indian people.

Because of the political union, there was a synthesis of the Hindu and the Muslim cultures. The process began with the evolution of a common language. Both the Hindu and the Muslim writers continued to enrich Hindi literature. Other provincial languages like Urdu, Marathi, Bengali, Gujarati, Sindhi, etc., were developed jointly by the Hindus and the Muslims. There was also a synthesis in the fields of art, literature, sculpture, and painting. But 'India as a cultural entity had never fully corresponded with India as a political entity. The political frontiers of kingdoms and empires kept on changing, expanding and diminishing, but never was politics comprehended in terms of unification and division. It was only in colonial India that India was unified and then partitioned.'

The Hindus and the Muslims thus evolved a common outlook on life and of life. They had a common political organization and a common pattern of culture. They, of course, followed two different religions, but the two religions had become so modified through centuries of mutual contact that their practices hardly differed from each other. In the medieval period, it was very commonly found that many Muslim saints sought inspiration from Hindu sadhakas and many Hindu saints received their spiritual lessons from Islamic faqirs. Among the followers of these saints, we find Hindus and Muslims, both indistinguishably mixed up. Even today, many Hindus take part in many Muslim festivals and many Muslims participate in Hindu festivals. Many Hindus visit Muslim mosques and dargahs and many Muslims visit Hindu temples and shrines. Thus, both the communities had been living together harmoniously for hundreds of years. Of course, there were some conflicts and clashes among them now and then and here and there. However, they were not so strong as to threaten the harmonious and heterogeneous life of the multi-cultural and multi-lingual India. 'The lessons of the immediate past', as Dr. Beni Prasad points out, 'were not forgotten. The fabric of Hindu-Muslim culture built up by five centuries of conscious and unconscious cooperation was maintained and strengthened: it had stood the severest of tests and was accepted as part of the working capital of the land . . . Religious persecution was not resumed anywhere.'

At such a stage, the British entered the country and established their colonial rule in India. Before discussing the response of the Hindus and the Muslims to the British colonial rule, it is better to
look at some basic religious and socio-cultural differences that existed between the two communities in the midst of all synthesis and harmony.

Religious differences hindered the maintenance of unity between the Hindus and the Muslims. The Hinduism was idolatry and polytheistic, but the Islam was iconoclastic and monotheistic. The cow was sacred to the Hindus, but the Muslims considered the sacrifice of cow on certain occasions a religious act. The Hindus performed their prayer to the accompaniment of music, drums, and bells, while the Muslims required complete silence during prayers. The Muslims were mlechchas to the Hindus and the Hindus were kafirs to the Muslims.

The social and cultural norms and ethos of the two communities were not conducive to strengthen bonds between them. Orthodox Hinduism did not permit inter-dining and inter-marriages with the Muslims. The food habits, the style of dress, and the social festivals of the two were different. Each community praised its own heroes who fought against those of the other. It is better to look at what Dr. B.R. Ambedkar says in his article, Thoughts on Partition:

If Islam and Hinduism keep Muslims and Hindus apart in the matter of their faith, they also prevent their social assimilation. That Hinduism prohibits intermarriage between Hindus and Muslims is quite well known. But this narrow-mindedness is not the vice of Hinduism only. Islam is equally narrow in social code. It also prohibits marriages between Muslims and Hindus. With these social laws there can be no social assimilation and consequently no socialization of ways, modes and outlooks, no blunting of the edges and no modulation of age-old angularities.

There are other defects in Hinduism and in Islam which are responsible for keeping the sore between Hindus and Muslims an open and a running sore. Hinduism is said to divide people and in contrast Islam is said to bind people together. But this is only a half-truth. For, Islam divides as inexorably as it binds. Islam is a close corporation and the distinction that it makes between Muslims and non-Muslims is a very real, very positive and very alienating distinction. The brotherhood of Islam is not the universal brotherhood of man. It is a brotherhood of Muslims for Muslims only. There is a fraternity but its benefit is confined to those within that corporation. For those who are outside the corporation there is nothing but contempt and enmity. The second defect of Islam is that it is a system of social self-government and is incompatible with local self-government, because the allegiance of a Muslim does not rest on his domicile in the country which is his but on the faith to which he belongs. To the Muslim ibi bene ibi patria is unthinkable. Wherever there is the rule of Islam, there is his own country. In other words, Islam can never allow a true Muslim to adopt India as his motherland and regard a Hindu as his kith and kin. That is probably the reason why Maulana Mohammad Ali, a great Indian but a true Muslim, preferred to be buried in Jerusalem rather than in India. 11

The difference in response of the Hindus and the Muslims to the British rule resulted in economic and educational disparities between them. The Hindu response was one of adaptation and cooperation. The colonial rule was merely a change of masters/rule for them. Yet they were greatly benefited by the change. Moreover, the Hindus felt a little relieved by the British colonial policy of non-intervention with the local communities in respect of their religion, customs, and cultures. The Hindus took to the Western education through English language. Also, they reaped great benefits from the British policy of reforms and development of industries. Many Hindus got jobs in the British administration. The Hindu trading class engaged in business and industries. A new class of Western-educated Hindus emerged. The Hindu community began to rethink about itself and the situation with
which it was confronted. The British policy of reforms also influenced a similar policy of reforms and 
revival among the Hindus which caused anxiety among the Muslims.

The Muslim response to the British colonial rule was one of resistance and resentment in the 
beginning. The British replaced the Mughal Empire. Consequently, the Muslim community was no 
longer a ruling class, but was reduced to the state of a helpless minority. ‘When the British replaced the 
Mughals and gradually started spreading their tentacles, the leaders of the Muslim community were 
confronted with a situation which they did not know how to cope with.’ Hence, the Muslim 
community withdrew itself passively into the narrow shell of their own community. It did not take to the 
Western education and English language. Therefore, it remained backward in all spheres of life for 
many years till the time of the reformist, Sir Syed Ahmed. ‘The Hindus, in general, were traders, 
industrialists and landlords, whereas the Muslims were petty traders, labourers and peasants.’ In this 
context, B. Sheikh Ali, in his article, Political Parties and their Motives, says:

Social and economic factors too played an important part. In the first half of the 
British rule, the Muslims were looked upon with suspicion and hostility, and the 
Hindus who took to western education and ways of living and thinking were favoured. 
Muslims remained sullen and crestfallen, poverty stricken and discontented.

....In commerce and trade, arts and crafts, the Hindus replaced the Muslims. The 
products of mills and factories hit the Muslim artisans hard. The trade routes by land 
and sea, which were once in Muslim hands, were lost to them. They were reduced to 
drawers of water and hewers of wood, the labourers behind the plough and the hands 
behind the looms.

The bankers, money-lenders, landowners, industrialists, big businessmen and high 
officers were all non-Muslims....The press, educational institutions, banking, trade, 
industry were all in Hindu hands. In 1931, literacy among the Muslims was 6.4 per 
cent. In 1932, Muslims formed 24.7 per cent of British India but their student 
population in schools was 16.1 per cent. Such was the social segregation that there 
were separate tea stalls and even separate arrangements for drinking water.’

Later this backwardness of the Muslim community became the basis of its demand for the protection 
of its interests in services in all the provinces of India through reservation.

The British rulers were neither the true friends of the Hindus nor the foes of the Muslims; they 
were the truest friends of imperialism and acted on the tested and tried maxim of Divide et Empera 
(Divide and Rule). From the very beginning, they realized that their own man power and resources 
were inadequate to keep them in power for long and that they must resort to the policy of divide and 
rule, pitting one community against another on grounds of religion, descent, caste, or anything. Of 
course, they actually did not divide the Indian people into two irreconcilable communities, but they 
made use of the existing socio-cultural and religious differences between the communities to destroy 
their unity and inflamed these differences by patronizing one against the other. This is very clear from 
the communication of the British officers of the time.

The British attitude towards the Muslims is very well brought out by T.L. Sharma, in his well 
documented work, Hindu-Muslim Relations in All India Politics (1913-1925): ‘They saw the 
Muslims as the displaced rulers, whom they had expected to resent the loss of their former power and 
to be strongest in resisting foreign rule and western civilization. This fear about the Muslims 
continued to haunt them throughout the nineteenth century....’ Lord Ellenborough wrote to the
Duke of Wellington from Simla, on October 4, 1842, after the fall of Kabul and Ghazni that while Muslims desired the failure of the British in Afghanistan, the Hindus rejoiced over their (British) victory, and then stated: 'It seems to me most unwise, when we are sure of the hostility of one tenth (Muslims) not to secure the enthusiastic support of the nine tenths (Hindus) which are faithful.' Again, writing to Wellington, on January 18, 1843, Ellenborough said, 'I cannot close my eyes to the belief that Musalman race is fundamentally hostile to us, and therefore, our true policy is to conciliate the Hindus.'

The British regarded the Muslims as the enemies of their empire. The rebellion of the Wahabis endangered the British rule. The Mutiny of 1857 further deteriorated their relations as the British regarded them as its chief instigators. "The British attempted to rouse strong groups of the Hindus against the Muslims during the period of the revolt because they felt that the Muslims were trying to throw them out of India under the leadership of the Mughal Emperor, Bahadur Shah." Thus, the British attitude towards the Muslims till 1870 was that of suspicion and repression. However, the situation was gradually reversed after the revolt of 1857. With the rising of Indian nationalism and secularism, the British started befriending the very despised lot, the Muslims.

The sense of shame and the loss of the glory and prestige of a ruling class because of the replacement of the Mughal Empire by the British; their present status of being reduced to a helpless minority; the social, religious, and cultural disparity between the two communities; their economic and educational backwardness; the British policy of suppression towards them; the association of the Hindus with the British power and the British support to the Hindus; the charge of the British that they (Muslims) were the only real instigators of the Mutiny of 1857; the defeat suffered in it and the consequent harsh and rigorous treatment of the British; and the growth of Indian nationalism were the causes for the growth of the Muslim separatism and communalism.

The Mutiny of 1857 is very significant in the history of India. "It brought to an end the rule of the East India Company [and the power was transferred from it to the crown of England] and also emphatically closed the lid on the hopes of the Mohammedans to recapture their lost Indian kingdom. After the Mutiny, a new era opened up in which the emergence of an intellectual renaissance took place, followed by a nationalist movement." The Western education through English; the writings of the Western political thinkers; awareness about the merits of Democracy and the importance of self-rule; and the perception of the oppression of the natives by the colonial rule resulted in the Nationalist Movement. This posed great danger to the British colonial rule. The British, therefore, decided to support the Muslims against the Hindus, who were mainly responsible for the growth of the nationalist movement. The participation of the Muslims in the nationalist movement was negligible, as only a few Muslims who believed in the secular quality of the movement participated in it. They were called nationalist Muslims. As the Hindus were in the majority, the nationalism was called the Hindu nationalism. There was also the birth of some reformatory associations like the Arya Samaj, the Brahma Samaj, the Prarthana Samaj, the Theosophical Society, and others, which tried to revive Hinduism. The growth of nationalism endangered the British and the Muslims were afraid of the Hindu revivalism.

The growth of nationalism, the British apprehension of it, the Muslim realization of the importance of the British support, and the efforts of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan resulted in the coming
together of the British and the Muslims as well as the British attitude of suppression towards the national movement. Sir Syed Ahmed Khan tried to change the British attitude of hostility towards the Muslims into one of friendship and alliance and the Muslim attitude of antipathy towards the British into one of allegiance and cooperation. He used all his resources, talent, and status to improve the lot of his community. He called upon the Muslims to take to English language and Western education and opened Mohammedan Anglo-Oriental College at Aligarh (now Aligarh Muslim University) in 1875. This college soon developed into a religious and cultural revival center of the Muslim community. It became the center of the famous Aligarh Movement.

Before the Aligarh Movement, the Wahabi Movement had tried to unite the Indian Muslims to protect Islam. Sir Syed Ahmed Khan’s interpretation of Islam gave an opening to the Muslims to come out of their age-old traditions and assimilate a new and progressive outlook without having any sense of guilt. They started taking to English and Western education. ‘Sir Syed Ahmed Khan was the first important Muslim thinker in modern times whose ideas and organizational enterprises led to the growth of separatism amongst the Muslims.’

According to Penderel Moon, Sir Syed expected that ‘there would necessarily be a struggle for power between the Hindus and the Muslims, if the English were to leave India. They could not sit on the same throne and remain equal in power. It was necessary that one of them should conquer the other and thrust it down….To hope that both could remain equal was to desire the impossible and the inconceivable.’

The British imperialism with the policy of divide and rule, the Indian nationalism and secularism, and the Muslim separatism and communalism were now at fray, each rigorously following its own course.

Against this background, there was the birth of the Indian National Congress (henceforth called, the Congress) in 1885 as the culmination of Indian nationalistic and secular forces. It represented all the people of India irrespective of caste, colour, creed, culture, religion, and region. There were leaders from all the communities—Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, and Parsee. It was really secular. In fact, Mr. A.O. Hume, a British ex-ICS officer, was responsible for the birth of the Congress. It represented the political aspirations of the people of India as a whole on the basis of secular nationalism. But Sir Syed Ahmed Khan called upon the Muslims not to join the Congress. ‘He committed himself to the British theory of Hindu-Muslim incompatibility in the field of politics and tried to convince his community that the Congress was a Hindu organization which should be avoided at all costs.’

About the Congress, he said:

I consider the experiment which the Indian National Congress wants to make is fraught with dangers and suffering for all the nationalities of India, especially for the Muslims. The Muslims are in a minority but they are a highly united minority. Traditionally, they are prone to take the sword in hand when the majority oppresses them. If this happens, it will bring about disasters greater than the ones which came in the wake of the happenings of 1857... The Congress cannot rationally prove its claim to represent the opinions, ideals and aspirations of the Muslims.

However, there were many Muslim leaders like Badruddin Tyabji, Rahmatullah Sayam, Mazhar-ul-Haq, Zakir Hussain, Dr. Syed Mohammed, Hakim Ajmal Khan, Maulana Abul Kalam...
Azad, Dr. M.A. Ansari, Maulana Mohammed Ali, Maulana Shaukat Ali, Mohammed Ali Jinnah, who identified themselves with the Congress. They strongly pleaded that the Indian Muslims were different from the Hindus as far as religion was concerned, but the political and economic aspirations of the two communities were the same. In later periods, the number of such nationalist Muslims in the Congress declined. Most of them left the Congress. The prophecy of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan became true after fifty years.

There began a controversy that increased the gap between the Hindus and the Muslims, i.e., the Hindi-Urdu controversy. The Muslims all over India were mainly in favour of the Urdu language as the lingua franca of India, whether they spoke Punjabi, Bengali, or Tamil. The Hindus were mainly in favour of Hindi as the lingua franca of India irrespective of their regional languages. This controversy went on gathering momentum as language played a vital role in creating job opportunities. By virtue of the knowledge of the Persian script, the Urdu speaking Muslim elites were able to hold posts in government services. Urdu was one of the factors that united the Muslims against the non-Muslims. Language was a powerful factor in binding people together. This Hindi-Urdu controversy widened the Hindu-Muslim gap.

The demand for separate electorate for the Muslims was put forward in 1906 by the Muslim deputation led by Sir Aga Khan to the Viceroy, Lord Minto. He received the deputation cordially and responded to it in an encouraging manner. In reply to the deputation, he 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.24

The country was divided into two distinct political camps. It was the communalization of politics. In such an atmosphere, the All India Muslim League (henceforth called, the League) was born in December 1906 as a response to the Congress, for the protection and advancement of the political rights and interests of the Muslims of India. Amir Ali, a close associate of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, set up a branch of the League in London in 1907. It played an important role in projecting the interests of the Muslims in England. The British Government granted separate electorate for the Muslims in 1909, and thus, widened the gap between the two communities.

Lord Curzon had partitioned Bengal into East Bengal (with Muslim majority) and West Bengal (with Hindu majority) on the pretension of administrative grounds. There were widespread anti-partition agitations all over India. The Congress used the Swadeshi and the Boycott Movements to protest against the partition. But the League was vehemently opposed to the ongoing mass movement to annul the partition. This created a lot of resentment among the Hindus against the Muslims. Even the grant of separate Muslim electorates, which was seen as a direct result of the League's pro-British and anti-Hindu activities, irritated the Congress.

In spite of this, the Congress had a friendly stance towards the League because of its secular and national character, which stood for a free united India. Even the use of the word Hindu was restricted in the Congress. In spite of the presence of such Muslim leaders as Mazhar-ul-Haque, Dr. Ansari, Hakim Ajmal Khan, Mohammed Ali Jinnah, and others, the Congress was being dubbed
as a Hindu organization. The Congress always tried to remove the Hindu stigma and prove itself a secular organization. This friendly stance was supposed to encourage the Muslim aggressiveness by some leaders of the Congress and some Hindu leaders. Lala lal Chand, a founder member of the Punjab Hindu Sabha wrote:

There is one thing that is strictly forbidden within the precincts of the Congress...it is the term ‘Hindu’. Resolutions may be passed to favour purely Mohammedan interests but the word ‘Hindu’ is a taboo here....It looks to be very height of folly and absurdity to go on crying for a united nation, when one important community, by its words and actions, makes it persistently and absolutely clear that they do not desire nor seek union... The method of offering the other cheek for being slapped has now been tried over twenty years. There has been enough of coaxing and fawning, which, by giving undue importance to the other community, has begotten only insolence and impudence. May we not now try the counter-method and see its results? At least this is a method equally worth trying and I am sure we shall not thereby be worse off than we are.  

Even in the midst of such an atmosphere, there were many attempts at Congress-League unity by many leaders. A Joint Conference of the Congress and the League leaders was held in Allahabad on 1st January 1911. About 60 Congress leaders and 40 League leaders participated in it. The most prominent leader of the Congress, Gopala Krishna Gokhale, said that the Muslim fear of the Hindu domination should be seriously considered. Every point that was a source of difference between the two communities was discussed. The cultural and religious activities of the Arya Samaj were also discussed. Even the opinion of the League leaders that, they being a minority, no matter should be pressed which, in the opinion of the League, was detrimental to the Muslims, was discussed. The resolution of Mohammed Ali Jinnah against separate Muslim electorate was lost. Though this joint conference did not decide anything, it was a good attempt at Hindu-Muslim unity.

As if to reward the efforts of the Joint Conference, certain events at home and abroad modified the attitude of the League towards the Congress, overshadowed their separatist approach for sometime, and brought them together. The annulment of the Partition of Bengal, which was announced in 1911, shook the Muslim loyalty to the British. Again in 1911, Italy attacked Tripoli, which was a part of the Turkish Empire. Turkey withdrew its forces from the Balkan states to defend Tripoly. The Christian dominated Balkan states used the opportunity to get rid of the Islamic rule. This resulted in the Balkan wars in 1912. Britain indirectly helped the Balkan states. Turkey was defeated. This added to the suspicion of the Muslims about the British intentions. In August 1912, the British had rejected the long-standing Muslim demand to raise the MAO College to the level of a university. As a result of all these events, the League adopted self-government suitable to India as one of its aims in 1913. The First World War started in 1914. Turkey fought on the German side against the British. The Indian Muslims exhibited their sympathy towards the Muslim world in general and to the Turks in particular. But the British had no such sympathy towards the Muslims in general. The stiff attitude of the British towards Turkey injured the Muslim feelings about the British. So there was willingness on the part of the larger section of the Muslims to cooperate with the Congress against the British. In order to seek the cooperation of the Congress, the League chose Mazbar-ul-Haque, a prominent Congressman as the President of the League in 1915 and deputed him to come to a permanent settlement with the Congress. He discussed with the Congress President, S.P. Sinha. Lokamanya Tilak, a prominent leader of the Congress had a year-long consultation and discussion with the League
leader, Mohammed Ali Jinnah (also a Congress leader of repute simultaneously), who was considered to be the ambassador of Hindu-Muslim unity.

The result was that in 1916, the Congress and the League held their annual sessions at Lucknow. Ambika Charan Mazumdar presided over the Congress session. Mohammed Ali Jinnah presided over the League session. The famous Lucknow Pact was made between the Congress and the League. According to the Pact, the Congress accepted the Communal Electorate (separate electorate for Muslims), the Communal Veto (the provision that any resolution or bill introduced in Legislative Council by a non-official member affecting any community shall not be proceeded with if three fourths of the members of the community should oppose these) and the Weightage (one third of the seats in the Central Legislative Council and reservation of seats in the provincial legislatures on the basis of their population). The League agreed to the demand of self-government and freedom from the colonial rule and also to the disappearance of communal electorate after ten years.

The Pact was significant for two reasons—the two antagonistic factions of the Congress, the Extremists and the Moderates (Garam dal and Naram dal), were united; and it served as an easy steppingstone for the demand of a separate homeland by the Muslims. It was reasoned that once the basis of division of the electorate was accepted, there could be no logic in refusing the division of the country on the same basis. Many Hindu leaders like Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, Dr. Moonje and others criticized the Congress appeasement of the League. But their criticism was overruled.

The Khilafat Movement started by Ali brothers with the support of Gandhi further strengthened the Congress-League unity. The cause for the Khilafat Movement was the ill treatment meted out to the Sultan of Turkey, the symbol of Islamic power. After the World War I (1914-1919) in which Turkey was defeated along with Germany, the British dismembered the Turkish Empire and dethroned the Sultan from the pedestal of the Khalifa (head) of the Muslim world. The Indian Muslims took it as a grave insult to Islam. So they started the Khilafat Movement against the British for the restoration of the Khalifahood to the Sultan of Turkey. Gandhi virtually led the movement and called upon the Hindus to support it. Apart from this, the primary motive of starting the first Non-Cooperation Movement led by Gandhi was to gain the sympathy of the Muslims to the national cause.

But the truce between the Congress and the League was short-lived. The Moplah Rebellion by the Muslims of Malabar region in Kerala in 1921 inflamed communal passions. It resulted in violent Hindu-Muslim riots in different parts of India during 1921-24. After the non-cooperation movement in the name of Khilafat was withdrawn, there was gloom all around. Khilafat itself became irrelevant with the establishment, in 1924, of a Republic form of government in Turkey and the abolition of the office of the Khalifa. The British started reviving their friendship with the Muslims. It must be noted that the Muslims, in general, did not like the leadership of a non-Muslim in a purely Islamic movement. Therefore, Gandhi’s leadership was highly resented. An allegation was brought against Mohammed Ali that he had prostrated before Gandhi and called him God. The Charkha and Khadi of Gandhi were also ridiculed.
All these happenings accentuated the community consciousness of the Muslims and the Hindus and their political apprehensions. "Both of them began to regard themselves as separate political entities with separate political interests. The communal riots, which grew in ferocity and frequency year by year, were one manifestation of the growing separatism and rivalry." The Congress-League unity was at stake. Old feelings of rivalry, jealousy, and fear sprang up again to poison the relations between the two communities. Many riots took place over the same old issues of cow-protection or music before mosque.

In 1921, Balkrishna Shivram Moonje expressed regret that the Hindus were divided into watertight compartments (castes) with hardly any sense of community among them. On the other hand, the Muslims formed one organic community, religiously well organized and disciplined. This observation exaggerated Muslim unity as they were also divided into Shias, Sunnis, etc., but the Hindu caste divisions were proverbial. The Hindu leaders were deeply worried that the lower caste Hindus might convert to Islam or Christianity. In fact, in the beginning when Islam entered India, many low caste Hindus embraced Islam in order to escape from the rigorous treatment and merciless exploitation by the upper caste Hindus. Then, there was no sense of Hindu unity. But now, the sense of Hindu unity or integration made the Hindu leaders worried about it. So, there was the birth of some Hindu organizations to protect Hinduism and its followers.

The Hindu Mahasabha, which was formed in 1915 by Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, Lala Lajpat Rai, and other leaders of the Congress, who had got disgusted with its pro-Muslim and anti-Hindu policies, had been gaining in popularity. One of its leaders, V.D. Savarkar, presented the idea of Hindutva in 1923. It was an ethno-cultural category purporting to bring Hindus of all castes within a communitarian fold. Non-Hindus had to be assimilated into it by making them accept the Hindu culture and India as their object of prime loyalty. They could, however, retain their personal religious beliefs. In the annual session of the Hindu Mahasabha at Benaras, in 1923, Malaviya started Sangha (organization) for the protection of Hindu interests and Swamy Shraddhananda started Shuddhi (the scheme of reclaiming the Muslim converts from Hinduism). In response to this, Dr. Kichlew started the counter movements of Tanzim and Tabligh. "Maulana Mohammed Ali supported Tabligh and said that it was the duty of every Muslim to convert non-Muslims to Islam. Shaukat Ali told the Khilafatists that if the Hindus or any other community attacked them, they should pay back in the like manner." The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangha (RSS), founded in 1925 by Keshwar Baliram Hedgewar adopted semi-military styles of organization to instill martial arts among the Hindus. Thus, the communal, religious, and revivalist activities continued on both sides, which widened the gap between the Hindus and the Muslims. Gopal Das Khosla says in Stern Reckoning:

As the revivalist movement gathered force, its momentum carried it beyond the limits of safety and sanity. The buffers of reason proved quite inadequate to arrest this emotional rush, and before the end of the 19th century, signs of mutual suspicion and antagonism had begun to appear with disturbing frequency. Hindus and Muslims began to assert themselves as separate entities by withdrawing themselves from each other's festivals, by wearing different dress, observing distinct manners and by each demanding a separate language and educational institutions. Hindu culture and Muslim culture were now mentioned as distinct and irreconcilable conceptions.
The British, the Muslim and the Hindu fundamentalists, and the Nationalists formed an interesting triangle. The nationalists strove to wipe out communalism through their secular ideology. They desired to keep away religion from politics in order to provide an amicable atmosphere for all the communities to meet on a common ground with common political goal, i.e., to achieve independence of their motherland. On the other hand, the other two parties wanted the presence of communalism to continue indefinitely to serve as a means to achieve their own selfish political ends. The British, though were not the creators of communalism in India, recognized its valuable use and indirectly encouraged it, since it would enable them to justify their stay in India. The British claimed that, as a third party, they alone could keep the communal frenzy under control. To the Mohammedan communalists, the presence of communalism could serve as a perfect cause to justify their demand for special political safeguards and power to maintain their identity, which they claimed was in danger of being eliminated by the major community. The Hindu fundamentalists pointed out the ever rising communalism to justify their argument that the Mohammedans, with their separatist tendencies and extra-territorial connections, would try to recapture their political power, which would sabotage the chances of the majority community from gaining any legitimate power. 

The Lucknow Pact had sown the seeds of separation and the Khilafat Movement germinated those seeds. All the unity moves and conferences failed. Even the All Parties' Conference called by Gandhi in Delhi on 23rd and 24th January 1925 failed. But it made clear that the communal problem was not an easy nut to crack. ‘At the Khilafat Conference at Patna, on September 22, 1925, Gandhi said that he had lost his hold on both the Hindus and the Musalmans. ’

The British government deputed the Simon Commission to study the situations in India and to suggest a new scheme for constitutional reforms. As there were no Indian members in the Commission, the Congress boycotted it. But the League did not cooperate with the Congress. In 1928, the All Parties’ Conference formed a Committee under the chairmanship of Motilal Nehru to evolve a scheme for constitutional reforms that could be acceptable to the League also. The Committee submitted its report, which was called the Nehru Report. But the League rejected the report. The Congress also refuted The Fourteen Points Plan by Jinnah. The Congress and the League could not arrive at a mutually acceptable solution.

The Hindu Mahasabha, which chose to believe that India was a homogenous nation, wanted unitary government, uniform franchise, and majority rule. According to this view, all the Indian minorities were religious minorities and as such, political and administrative rights could not be guaranteed, though their religious rights might be safeguarded.

The Muslims demanded recognition in constitutional and administrative arrangements because of their distinct individuality on the basis of distinct religion, culture, and tradition. It signified that the Indian government ought to be federal in character.

This insistence on both the sides was rooted in mutual suspicion and apprehension. The Hindu apprehension was expressed in the speeches and writings of many Hindu leaders. Lala Lajpat Rai, an enlightened, widely travelled, liberal-minded, courageous leader, who tried to bring about Hindu-Muslim unity, said:

I have devoted most of my time during the last six months to the study of Muslim history and law and I am inclined to think it (Hindu-Muslim unity) may be neither
possible nor practicable. Assuming and admitting the sincerity of the Mohammedan leaders in the non-cooperation movement, I think their religion provides an effective bar to anything of the kind... What is the remedy? I am not afraid of seven crores of Indian Musalmans, but seven crores plus the armed hosts of Afghanistan and Central Asia, Arabia, Mesopotamia and Turkey will be irresistible. I do honestly and sincerely believe in the necessity and desirability of Hindu-Muslim unity; I am also fully prepared to trust the Muslim leaders, but what about the injunctions of the Quran and Hadis?

His solution was given in the following words:

My suggestion is that the Punjab should be partitioned into two provinces, the Western Punjab with a large Muslim majority to be Muslim-governed province and the Eastern Punjab with a large Hindu-Sikh majority to be non-Muslim-governed province... Under my scheme the Muslims will have four Muslim states: i) The Pathan Province or North-West Frontier, ii) Western Punjab, iii) Sind and iv) Eastern Bengal.

However, Lajpat's suggestion neither involved the creation of a separate independent state to be ruled either by Muslim or by Hindu majority nor did it uphold the two-nation theory. It only recognized the genuine aspirations of the three communities. He was only genuinely interested in removing all impediments to communal amity.

The Muslims also had their own apprehensions. Most of them believed that they would be overwhelmed by the Hindu majority in all the matters of population, religion, and culture. Others believed that they would be driven out of India. Abdur Rahim, President of the League, said, 'Some of the Hindu leaders had spoken publicly of driving out Muslims from India as the Spaniards expelled the Moors from Spain.' Under such circumstances, Hindu-Muslim unity could not be imagined.

Dr. Iqbal was probably the first important Muslim leader to put forth the idea of a separate homeland for the Muslim community. In his presidential address in the League session held in Allahabad in 1930, he observed that the Muslims and the Hindus had religious, cultural, and traditional differences, which made the unity of the two communities a dream. He was of the opinion that the European principle of democracy did not suit India, as it was inhabited by heterogeneous groups of people with different languages, religions, and cultures. He proposed the amalgamation of the Muslim majority provinces of the Punjab, the NWFP, Sind, and Baluchistan into a single self-governing Muslim state under a Central Indian Authority. Although he did not advocate a separate sovereign state for the Muslims, 'he undoubtedly provided the Muslims with an ideological weapon, which was used by the Muslim leadership as the basis for a separate Muslim homeland.' 'Even Jinnah gave credit to Iqbal for initiating the move for an independent sovereign Muslim state in the Indian subcontinent.'

Three Round Table Conferences were held to settle the communal and the constitutional problems of India. The Congress did not participate in the first Round Table Conference that was held in 1930. The second Round Table Conference was held in 1931 in which Gandhi, the sole representative of the Congress, could not accept the demands of the League. The third Round Table Conference was held in 1932 in which the Congress did not participate. No settlement could be arrived at between the Congress and the League. 'The basic reason was that Mr. Jinnah, by that time, was convinced that the Hindus and the Muslims constituted two distinct nations, that the Congress was the representative organization of the Hindus alone and that the Muslim League alone had the right to represent the Indian Muslims. The Congress was not prepared to accept these assumptions. Therefore,
there was no meeting ground between the two and no settlement could be possible. The League continued to insist on its demands and went on instigating the Muslim sentiments against the Hindus. The purpose was to exhibit Muslim solidarity in favour of the demands of the League.

As no settlement was arrived at regarding the communal question, the British Prime Minister, Ramsay MacDonald, announced his Communal Award. It upheld separate electorate and other safeguards for the Muslims. It also categorized the Depressed Classes as a separate political entity and granted them separate electorate. Gandhi started his fast unto death in the Yaravada jail to protest against the Communal Award. He was of the opinion that it would be the end of the Hindu community and of nationalism. However, Gandhi made the famous Poona Pact with Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, the leader of the Depressed Classes according to which the Depressed Classes remained in the general electorate. But the part of the Communal Award relating to the Muslims remained unsolved.

The name Pakistan was used for the first time in a pamphlet, Now or Never, issued by a group of young Indian Muslim students at Cambridge. The leader of the group, Chaudhry Rahmat Ali, coined the word Pakistan by using the first letters and the last letters of the Muslim majority provinces: Punjab, Afghania (Ali’s name for NWFP), Kashmir, Sind, and Baluchistan. When the word was written in Urdu, there was no I in it. Pakistan was supposed to mean the Land of the Pure. Rahmat Ali stood for a separate sovereign and independent Muslim state, which proposed the division of India. He did not include Bengal in his idea of Pakistan. But later, in his pamphlet, The Millet of Islam and the Menace of Indianism, he spoke of a federation of three Muslim majority states: Pakistan (Punjab, Afghanistan (NWFP), Kashmir, Sind, and Baluchistan); Bangistan (Bengal and Assam); and Osmanistan (Hyderabad and Deccan). However, these ideas of Chaudhry Rahmat Ali attracted no serious attention. The idea of Pakistan was described as chimerical and impracticable and as only a student scheme. But the League accepted the name Pakistan later.

In 1937, elections were held for Provincial Legislatures in accordance with the Government of India Act of 1935. The Hindus enthusiastically supported the Congress under the impression that it would get the obnoxious Communal Award annulled. The results were surprising. The Congress got clear majority in six of the eleven provinces—Bombay, Bihar, the CP, Madras, Orissa, and the U.P. It emerged as the single largest party in Assam. The League could not get a majority even in the Muslim majority provinces. The Krishik Praja Party of Fazlul Haque in Bengal and the Unionist Party of Sir Sikandar Hayat Khan in the Punjab got a majority. In the remaining three provinces, the seats were shared between different parties and independents. So it was wrong to believe that the League represented the entire Muslim community in India. An interesting fact was that the Congress failed to win a single Muslim seat in Bengal and Punjab, which meant that the Muslims refused to accept the Congress leadership.

The League got some noticeable success only in the UP and that too because of the support of the Congress and its ally Jamiat-ul-Ulema-i-Hind. In fact, there had been a political understanding between the Congress and the League. Maulana Azad had assured it (the League) of two seats in the Ministry to be formed by the Congress after the elections. However, at the time of Ministry formation, Jawaharlal Nehru had other considerations and he offered only one seat to the League in proportion to
the assembly seats it had actually won. The Congress also tried defection of certain League members to its own fold. The incident caused a great rift between the two major political parties. Jinnah exploited it to his great political advantage. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad lamented over this act of Nehru and accused him of giving a new lease of life to the Muslim League.  

This failure to form a coalition government in the U.P. has been a great point of contention in the Indian history. In fact, among the many explanations that are offered for the partition of India, 'there is one (the failure to form a coalition government) which has been particularly popular among the historians of modern India... If there had been a coalition government of the Congress and the Muslim League in U.P. in 1937, the Partition of India may well not have occurred. This, though crudely and simplistically put, is the crux of the coalition argument.'

Many developments of this period, as also the subsequent intensification of communal politics, have been attributed to the failure to form the coalition government: 'the absence of a substantial Muslim component with the Congress Legislative Party made it insensitive to Muslim sensibilities and rendered its secular image vulnerable; it led to increasing communal trouble and the widening of the gulf between the two communities; it was a blunder, by the Congress, of the first order; and a fatal error, the prime cause of the creation of Pakistan.'

Four legislators of the League—Suleman Ansari, Saiduddin Ahmed, Sir Wazir Hasan, and Ali Zaheer—joined the Congress. Jinnah was furious and rigorously tried to consolidate the position of the League. It started to consider the Congress as number one enemy. Jinnah propagated the Congress as anti-Muslim so forcefully that in the bye-elections, Jinnah led all his candidates to victory.

The secular character of the Congress had to be questioned seriously, because in the post-1937 set-up, the Congress itself took to destroying its credentials and claims to secularism and liberalism. 'Its policy of attempting to break or discredit Muslim ministries in Muslim majority provinces (such as the NWFP) naturally created the perception that the Congress was intolerantly anti-Muslim and set up the League's 'Muslim' image in contradistinction with the Congress' 'Hindu' orientation.'

Had the Congress really been secular, it would have not tried to break the Muslim ministries. Instead, it would have offered two ministerial seats to the League and formed a coalition government with it in the U.P. Had it done so, the course would have been different at least, even if it would have not avoided the partition. Dr. Rajendra Prasad complained to Vallabhai Patel:

"The Muslims as a body have been alienated... I think if we had not been engaged in breaking, or at least discrediting Muslim ministries in non-Congress provinces, the position would have been different. The Muslim League propaganda has gained much strength on account of this attitude of the Congress in Muslim provinces."

The Congress also exhibited its Hindu orientation in Bombay and Bihar provinces. In Bombay, Mr. Nariman was the acknowledged leader of the local Congress. Naturally, the Congress should have made him the Chief Minister of the Bombay province. But he was a Parsee and the majority of the Congress Assembly members were Hindus. Finally, Mr. B.G. Kher was made the Chief Minister of Bombay. Similarly in Bihar, Dr. Syed Mahmud was the top leader of the provincial Congress and he was also a General Secretary of the AICC. So it was taken for granted that he would be elected as the Chief Minister. But Sri Krishna Sinha was made the Chief Minister and Dr. Syed Mahmud was given a place in the cabinet. In this connection, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad says:
These two instances left a bad taste at the time. Looking back, I cannot help feeling that the Congress did not live up to its professed ideals. One has to admit with regret that the nationalism of the Congress had not then reached a stage where it could ignore communal considerations and select leaders on the basis of merit without regard to majority or minority.

This communal policy and practice of the Congress spread fast among the ministers. The Muslim masses began to rally round the League. Jinnah made use of this situation to the maximum.

In 1939, the World War II broke out. This time Turkey was on the British side. Taking the excuse that the Viceroy had declared that India would participate in the war without consulting its elected representatives, the Congress asked all its ministries to resign. The League rejoiced and celebrated the event as the *Day of Deliverance* from the Congress rule. The British government, even the Labour members who had been supporting the Congress cause earlier, started hating not only the Congress but also the whole Hindu community for opposing Britain at such crucial time. On the other hand, Jinnah visited the Viceroy and other British officers and assured them of Muslim cooperation at the center if only the British looked after their interests in the provinces and accepted the League as the sole spokesman of the Muslims.

The League took the help of religion and raised the cry *Islam in danger* and called upon all the Muslims to make a unified attempt for social, economic, and political upliftment of the community, and for this, to assemble under the League flag. The Muslims responded to this call in a positive way. The British started assuring the Indians that they would grant Dominion status to India and thereby tried to win their support to their war efforts. The League thought it prudent to press for its demands. The result was the demand for a separate homeland for the Indian Muslims. On 24 March 1940, the League, at its *Lahore Session*, formally adopted the resolution, which demanded the establishment of independent sovereign Muslim state. Jinnah claimed that the Muslims were a separate nation and that there were two nations in India—Hindus and Muslims. Jinnah, who was an ardent nationalist before and who had tried for Hindu-Muslim unity, now became the protagonist of the two-nation theory. In his presidential address at the Lahore Session, he said:

> Notwithstanding a thousand years of close contact, these nationalities are as divergent today as ever, and they cannot at any time be expected to transform themselves into one nation merely by means of subjecting them to a democratic constitution and holding them forcibly together by the unnatural and artificial methods of British parliamentary statutes... Muslims are a nation according to any definition of a nation and they must have their homelands, their territory and their state.

The League did not actually use the words *Partition* or *Pakistan* in its resolution. Since some Indian and British newspapers started to use the word *Pakistan* for the intended separate state for the Muslims, it came to be known as *Pakistan Resolution*. The League adopted the name only in 1943. In his presidential speech at the 13th Session of the League at Delhi, Jinnah said that the word *Pakistan* was thrust upon them (the Muslims) by the Hindus! He said:

> ...Who gave this word? Let me tell you it is their fault. They started damning the resolution on the ground that it was Pakistan.... They fathered this word upon us. Give the dog a bad name and then hang him... You know perfectly well that Pakistan is a word which is really foisted upon us and fathered on us by some section of the Hindu press and also by the British press.
Although there was no mention of either *Partition* or *Pakistan*, the League’s resolution maintained that all future constitutional arrangements were to be considered since Indian Muslims were a *nation* and not a *minority* as had been presumed in the past. Jinnah argued that, as there were at least two nations in India, a transfer of power would have to evolve dissolution of the unitary center, which was an artifact of British colonialism.

This two-nation theory cornered the Congress in such a way that it could no longer approach the problem from the angle that the Muslims were a minority community. Nehru realized that all the old problems fell into insignificance before this new stand taken by the League. The whole problem had taken a new complexion. The two-nation theory closed all the doors of any further negotiations purely for political safeguards alone.

As a national and secular organization, the Congress vehemently reacted to the two-nation theory. Gandhi argued that this theory was an untruth: ‘The vast majority of the Muslims in India are converts to Islam and are the descendants of converts. They did not become a separate nation as soon as they became converts.’

Gandhi further put forward counter arguments to Jinnah’s claim that the Muslims were different from the Hindus in all respects, and hence, they had the right for a separate nation:

A Bengali Muslim speaks the same tongue as a Bengali Hindu does, eats the same food and has the same amusements as his Hindu neighbours... the same phenomenon is observable more or less in the south among the poor who constitute the masses of India.

C. Rajagopalachari criticized the two-nation theory as a medieval conception. Nehru repudiated the two-nation theory: ‘Why only two? If nationality is based on religion, then there are many nations in India.’

Surprisingly, there was opposition to the two-nation theory even from some Muslim quarters. Sikandar Hayat Khan, the prominent Muslim leader of Punjab, who drafted the resolution, openly declared that there was a great difference between his draft and the one that was finally passed. It meant that the two-nation theory was not a part of his draft. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad vigorously opposed the two-nation theory on the ground of historic unity of India. Various nationalist Muslim groups such as Jamiat-ul-Ulema, All India Organisation of Muslim Divines and Scholars, Majles-i-Ahrar-i-Islam, the Independent Party of Bihar, the Krishik Praja Party of Bengal, the All India Momin Conference, the Anjuman-e-Watan of Baluchistan and the Central Standing Committee of All India Shia Conference condemned the partition plan and disputed the claim of the League to be the only representative body of the Muslims... Khan Bahadur Allah Bur, Premier of Sind, presiding over the Azad Muslim Conference, said that a majority of the ninety million Indian Muslims who were descendants of the earlier inhabitants of India were in no sense other than sons of the soil. He characterized the Pakistan scheme as harmful and fantastic and opined that it sought to create another Palestine under British mandate. He exhorted the Muslims to live like brothers in a joint family.

But the Congress leaders did not utilize this opportunity to get the support of the Muslims who were against the two-nation theory. Instead, the Congress resorted to negotiations with the League with compromising pacts and formulas and started appeasing the League.
In 1940, the Viceroy, Lord Linlithgow, assured the Muslims in his August Offer that complete protection would be provided to them in case of any settlement between Britain and India. In 1942, the Cripps Mission proposed the grant of freedom to India after the cessation of war through a constitutional assembly for creation of a new Indian Union in which the Indian princely states could also participate. The right of the provinces to stay out of the union was retained. Gandhi termed the offer as a post-dated cheque on a crashing bank fit for rejection only. The Cripps' proposals were rejected both by the Congress and the League.

The Congress started the Quit India Movement on 8 August 1942. The League opposed this with a call to the British to Divide and Quit. The British government became angry with the Congress for its Quit India Movement when it was busy with the war. It arrested all the senior leaders of the Congress and put them behind bars. This gave the League a free hand to incite communal passions among the Muslims. The British authorities gave overt support to the League during the period 1942-45. The League told the Muslim elites in the Muslim majority states that they would be denied all rights in a Hindu dominated India and that the League alone could guarantee their rights. It sought the support of the Indian Muslims in the name of religion, with the slogan, Islam in danger. The Muslim Mullahs, Maulvis, Maulanas, Ulemas, and Piris gave it their full support. The League propaganda 'drew heavily on Muslim/Islamic values, on memories of renowned Muslim generals and warriors, chiefly those who had humbled Rajput and Maratha chieftains. Wild promises were made of restoring Islam's glory in the future Muslim state, of liberating the Muslim peasantry from the tutelage of the Hindu moneylenders and the bondage of the Hindu zamindars. The students of the Aligarh Muslim University were deputied to different provinces to propagate in favour of Pakistan. It was openly emphasized that support to the League meant support to Islam. Many newspapers supported the cause of partition. The propaganda of the League succeeded. The majority of the Muslims agreed with the views of the League and supported the demand for Pakistan. The dreamland of Pakistan was imagined to be a land of happiness where there were no difficulties, degradations, and humiliations.

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar agreed to the Pakistan demand. The Congress members of the Madras Legislative Assembly, led by C. Rajagopalachari, went to the extent of passing a resolution, recommending acceptance of the League's demand for Pakistan. But it was rejected by the AICC. V.D. Savarkar had declared in 1937: 'India cannot be assumed today to be a Unitarian and homogeneous nation, but on the contrary, there are two nations in the main: the Hindus and the Muslims. These two antagonistic nations are living side by side in India.' Of course, he had only accepted the presence of two nations living side by side in India and had not imagined the vivisection of India.

Jinnah rejected the formula of compromise by C. Rajagopalachari which was known as CR Formula, in 1944, as it did not include the acceptance of Pakistan directly. Even the Desai-Liaquat Pact, in 1944 was rejected by both the Congress and the League. 'The C.R. Formula and the Desai-Liaquat Pact, as late as 1944, were not simply attempts to pacify the League, but a kind of surrender to the communal policy of the same.' These offers gave Jinnah enough confidence to become even more rigid in his refusal to allow the Congress to nominate non-League (Muslim) members during the Simla Conference. Gandhi was released in May 1944, on the grounds of ill health, but in fact, to use him as a mediator between the Congress and the League. Gandhi-Jinnah talks failed.
Maulana Azad called Gandhi's talks with Jinnah, on this occasion, 'a great political blunder. It gave a new and added importance to Jinnah, which he later exploited to the full.'

The Viceroy Lord Wavell's proposal, known as the Wavell Plan, to reconstitute his Executive Council from Indian leaders in equal proportions of 'Muslims and Caste Hindus' (instead of the League and the Congress) made all the difference. The Congress president Maulana Azad nominated two Hindus, one Muslim, one Sikh, and one Parsee. The League nominated five Muslims. Four were to be nominated by the Viceroy—a Sikh, two from Depressed Classes, and Sir Khizir Hayat Khan, the leader of the Unionist Party of the Punjab. Thus, in a cabinet of 14, seven were to be Muslims. But Jinnah insisted that all Muslim members should be the nominees of the Muslim League and that the Congress had no business to nominate a single Muslim. The Congress did not accept this and the Wavell plan failed.

In July 1945, Mr. Attlee became the Prime Minister of the Labour Party Government in Britain. At the end of the same year, Central and Provincial Assembly Elections were held in India. The Congress and the League came out as the principal political parties in India. The League got 428 of the 482 reserved Muslim seats (in 1937, the League had got only 108 seats). The Congress contested the elections with the promise of getting independence from the British Raj and maintaining the unity of India. The League fought the elections on the promise of getting independence not only from the British Raj but also from the Hindu Raj and getting Pakistan for them.

The Cabinet Mission was sent by the British government to resolve the issues of the formation of the interim government and the framing of the Constitution. The Cabinet Mission Plan rejected the demand for Pakistan and instead, suggested a Central Government in charge of Foreign Affairs, Defence and Communication. It, however, conceded the League demand half-way by grouping the provinces of Madras, Bombay, C.P., U.P., Bihar, and Orissa into Group A (the Hindu majority provinces); Punjab, Sind, and NWFP into Group B (the Muslim majority provinces); and Bengal and Assam into Group C (where the Muslims have a thin majority). The full autonomy to the provinces and their right to opt out of a group gave to the League the substance of Pakistan. Further, the Cabinet Mission Plan laid down the procedure for the election of a Constitution making body, Constituent Assembly. In the election of the Constituent Assembly, the Congress won 199 of the 210 general seats and the League bagged 73 of the 78 Muslim seats. Jinnah maintained that the Congress, having the support of 211 members, along with its alliance, out of 296 of the Constituent Assembly, would place the Muslims at the mercy of the Hindus. He, therefore, demanded two Constitution making bodies, one for the people of India and one for the people of Pakistan.

After much deliberation, the Congress accepted the recommendation of the Cabinet Mission, but later refused to accede to parity with the League in the interim government or to a compulsory grouping of the 6 Muslim provinces. The League also accepted it, but afterwards rejected it really because of the Congress refusal, but outwardly on the ground that the Mission did not recommend the creation of a sovereign state for Muslims and refused to participate in the Interim Government to be formed. In protest, it celebrated 16th August 1946 as the Direct Action Day, which resulted in widespread Hindu-Muslim riots. Calcutta was plunged into an orgy of bloodshed, murder, loot, and arson.
Within three days, according to an estimate, 5000 persons were killed and 15,000 persons were wounded in the famous Calcutta Carnage. Majority of the persons killed and wounded were Hindus. Violence went on unabated. The police, mostly consisting of Muslims, were silent spectators and, at times, abettors to crimes. Only when the Hindus started retaliation in desperation, the riots were brought under control on the fourth day. The Viceroy, Lord Wavell, visited Calcutta on 25 August 1946 when the signs of massacre, looting, and arson were still clearly visible. Instead of taking the League government of Bengal to task, the Viceroy said that the League should be involved in the Interim Government to avoid incidents like those that took place in Calcutta.

After the Calcutta Carnage, violence suddenly broke out in Noakhali on 29 August 1946 and in Tipperah district on 15 October 1946. Murder, rape, arson, loot, and forced conversions were committed on a large scale. Again, most of the sufferers were Hindus. Amidst this violence, on 2 September 1946, Nehru was installed as the Prime Minister (then called Vice President).

Among the victims of the Calcutta Carnage, there were hundreds of men from Bihar who had gone there for earning their livelihood. On hearing the news of their massacre and looting and the atrocities committed on Hindus in Noakhali, the Hindus of Bihar started retaliation on the Muslims in a big way. The curious result of the retaliation in Bihar was that the Muslim attacks on Hindus in Calcutta and Noakhali were reduced.

The League joined the Interim Government when Noakhali and Bihar were burning and bleeding under the fire of its direct action. It nominated five members on 26 October 1946. Its intention in joining the government was to act as a brake on the Congress and also to strengthen its position in administration. Now the coalition government was formed of the two parties with two different goals, one to unite, and the other to divide. This difference was leading the country to the final divide.

The Muslim League started violent action against the Khizr Hayat Khan’s coalition ministry in the Punjab in order to replace it by a purely League ministry. Communal riots were also engineered in Lahore, Jullundar, and Gujarat. The riots spread in other towns of Multan, Rawalindi, Amritsar, and also in the NWFP.

By this time, Britain’s priority was to get out of India as quickly as possible before anti-colonial politics became more radical than it had been and before communal violence reached even more dangerous levels. There were reports of violence; and peasant, labour, and student unrest from all the parts of the country.

In this state of violent anarchy, the British government announced its decision in the House of Commons, on 20 February 1947, to leave India by June 1948:

But if it should appear that such a constitution will not have been worked out before the time mentioned... His Majesty’s Government will have to consider to whom the powers of the Central Government in British India should be handed over on the due date, whether as a whole to some form of Central Government for British India, or in some areas to the existing provincial Governments, or in such other way as may seem most reasonable and in the best interests of the Indian people.
The British Government also sent Lord Mountbatten to replace Wavell as Viceroy and to work out a plan for the transfer of power to India in a manner that would best ensure the future happiness and prosperity of India.

Prime Minister Attlee’s statement in the House of Commons definitely fixed the date of British abdication, but it was ambiguous over the question of succession. The two alternatives were deliberately added in the statement to please both the Congress and the League. The Congress liked the first alternative of a Central Government. But the League understood the second alternative to imply that if it continued to boycott the Constituent Assembly till June 1948 so as to make it not a fully representative Assembly, the British would be obliged to hand over power over the Muslim majority provinces to the League, which meant the creation of Pakistan. Therefore, the League decided to continue the course which it had already adopted. H.V. Hodson drew the correct conclusion: “The statement of 20th February 1947, in the context of Indian politics, was thus an open license for Pakistan in some form or other.”

Communal riots continued in the Punjab. Violence could not be controlled. Thwarted by the League, opposed by the League ministers in the Interim Government and abandoned by the provincial officials, Khizr Hayat Khan, the Chief Minister of Punjab, resigned on 2 March 1947. The Punjab came under the Governor's rule.

Such was the situation in which Lord Mountbatten came to India as the Viceroy with the task of winding up the British Raj in India by 30 June 1948. He held interviews with the leaders of the Congress, the League, the Sikh community, the rulers of the princely states, and the Governors of all the provinces. He took stock of the existing situation of the entire country. He came to the conclusion that the situation had so deteriorated that it was beyond proper remedy; that the emotional excitement was at its worst and opinions stood in an uncompromising conflict; that the partition of India and the establishment of Pakistan were inevitable; and that the proposal to partition should come from the Indian leaders and not the British.

Lord Mountbatten soon discovered that he had no choice. Jinnah was obdurate that the Muslims would settle for nothing less than a sovereign state. He found himself unable to move Jinnah from his stand. Indian unity needed positive intervention in its favour including putting down communal forces with a firm hand. This the British chose not to do. They, in fact, took the easy way out. A serious attempt at retaining unity would involve identifying with the forces that wanted a united India and countering those who opposed it. Rather than doing that, they preferred to woo both the sides into friendly collaboration with Britain on strategic and defence issues. Ram Gopal says in Islam, Hindutva and Congress Quest:

Under pressure from the League's organized massacre of Hindus and Sikhs and its continued obstacles in the governmental work from inside as an equal partner of the Interim Government, the Congress felt that there was no alternative but 'partition'. It was, however, not ready to cede to Pakistan large areas of the Punjab and Bengal having Hindu majority. Mountbatten discussed the matter with Jawaharlal Nehru and Sardar Patel and got their approval for the partition. He further comments:
It ought to go to the credit of Lord Mountbatten for cornering Jinnah to either agree to a united India with Bengal and Punjab remaining united or to have Pakistan with both the provinces partitioned to allow Hindu majority districts to remain in India. Jinnah argued at length that the partition of Bengal and the Punjab for creating Pakistan would be disastrous for the life and culture of the people in the two provinces. Mountbatten silenced him by saying that the same argument applied to partitioning the whole of India. Jinnah had to reconcile to a Pakistan with a partitioned Punjab and a partitioned Bengal, which he later termed as a truncated, mutilated and moth-eaten Pakistan.

Lord Mountbatten’s formula was to divide India but retain maximum unity. The country would be partitioned in such a way that the limited Pakistan that emerged would meet the goals of both the Congress and the League to some extent. The League’s goal of Pakistan would be conceded to the extent that it would be created and the Congress’ goal of unity would be taken into account to make Pakistan as small as possible. The princely states would be free to be independent or join India or Pakistan.

In such a situation in which Nehru and Patel accepted the proposal for partition, Gandhi came back to Delhi from the riot-hit areas of Bihar and in answer to Maulana Azad’s question about the acceptance of the partition by the Congress, said:

If the Congress wishes to accept partition, it will be over my dead body. So long as I am alive, I will never agree to the partition of India. Nor will I, if I can help it, allow the Congress to accept it.

Gandhi tried hard with the support of Maulana Azad to avoid the intended partition. He discussed the matter with the Congress leaders and Lord Mountbatten a number of times without success. Gandhi was bitter and accused his followers of betraying him for the sake of power. He made a final attempt to avoid the partition by proposing to the Viceroy that the Interim Government be dismissed and Jinnah be invited to form Government at the centre by choosing his ministers even if all of them were Muslims. Mountbatten wanted the approval of the CWC, but the CWC rejected the proposal. Gandhi’s final attempt to avoid the partition failed. Sardar Patel was of the opinion that Gandhi must bear a part of the blame because it was he who had conceded the right of self-determination to the Muslims and had made a hero of Jinnah. Expressing his views on the Lahore Resolution, Gandhi had said:

... I know no non-violent method of compelling the obedience of eight crores of Muslims to the will of the rest of India, however powerful a majority the rest may represent. The Muslims must have the same right of self-determination that the rest of India has. We are at present a joint family. Any member may claim a division... But I do not believe that Muslims, when it comes to a matter of actual decision, will ever want vivisection. Their good sense will prevent them. Their self-interest will deter them. Their religion will forbid the obvious suicide which the partition would mean.

Mountbatten went to London in May 1947 and got the approval of the British Government to his partition plan. Coming back to India, he announced his partition plan, which came to be known as 3rd June Plan, to accomplish the transfer of power on the basis of Dominion status to the successor states of India and Pakistan. Both the Congress and the League and all the other parties accepted the plan. The British Government passed the Indian Independence Bill, 1947 on 18th July 1947 and fixed the date of 15th August 1947 for setting up the two Dominions.
The rationale for the early date for the transfer of power was that the British could escape the responsibility for the rapidly deteriorating communal situation. Mountbatten later defended the early date on the ground that things would have blown up under their feet had they not got out when they did.

The abdication of responsibility was callous and the speed with which it was done made it worse. The 72 days time-table from 3rd June to 15th August for the transfer of power and the partition of the country was to prove disastrous. The Partition Council had to divide officials and assets. The most important thing was the settlement of boundaries between the two states for which a Boundary Commission was set up under the chairmanship of Sir Cyril Radcliffe.

On 15th August 1947, the British India was legally partitioned into independent states of India and Pakistan. Nehru became the first Prime Minister of Independent India and Lord Mountbatten became the first Governor-General of Independent India. Mohammed Ali Jinnah became the first Governor-General of Pakistan and Liaqat Ali Khan became the first Prime Minister of Pakistan. The Radcliffe Award (of the boundaries) was only announced on 17th August after Sir Cyril Radcliffe left for England.

The macabre dance of massacres even after the partition was the only indictment on Mountbatten. His loyal aide, Ismay, wrote to his wife on 16th September 1947: 'Our mission was so very nearby a success: it is sad that it has ended up such a grievous and total failure.' Both the early date for the transfer of power and the delay in announcing the Radcliffe Award compounded the tragedy. It would not have occurred had the partition been deferred for a year or so. The Radcliffe Award was ready by 12th August, but Lord Mountbatten decided to make it public only after the Independence Day so that the responsibility would not fall on the British. The Independence Day witnessed strange scenes. Flags of both India and Pakistan were flown in villages between Lahore and Amritsar as the people of both the communities believed that they were on the right side of the border. The morrow after freedom made many of them alien in their own homes.

In the last part of this chapter, finding answers to some questions or rather discussing some important questions becomes obligatory. Firstly, why did the Congress, which wedded to the belief in united India, accept the partition? What made Gandhi acquiesce? Why did he not oppose it? Why did Nehru and Patel advocate the acceptance of the 3rd June Plan and the CWC and the AICC pass a resolution in favour of it? Among the various reasons at work behind the Congress acceptance of the partition, Gandhi recognized one reason that was operative. He explained that the Congress accepted the partition because the people wanted it. At the prayer meeting on 4th June 1947, he said:

The demand has been granted because you asked for it. The Congress never asked for it... but the Congress can feel the pulse of the people. It realized that the Khalsa as also the Hindus desired it... as representatives of the country they (the Congress leaders) cannot go against public opinion. They derive their power from the people.

'The Congress was in a desperate mood. The demands of the League for safeguards and concessions had exasperated its patience. Its ideology was quite different from that of the League which desired exclusive privileges for a section of the society. The Congress was secular, democratic, rational and liberal and regarded all the people of India as equal. Any discrimination to concede extra
concessions to a particular community would offend the others. The bitter experience of the Congress when it came to power in 1937 and in 1946 in the Interim Government, made it feel that it was impossible to work with the League.\textsuperscript{54} The League joined the Interim Government, after its initial refusal, only to strengthen its hand in the administration and solidify its demand for separate homeland by putting a check on the Congress ministers and getting the support of the officials of the government. The Congress had also made many sacrifices for the sake of the principles of nationalism, secularism, and democracy. It had even adopted the policy of appeasement towards the League. But it failed to draw the Muslim masses into the national movement and stem the surging waves of Muslim separatism and communalism, which, since 1937, had been beating with increasing fury. The League raised the cry, \textit{Islam in danger} against the Mass Contact Movement of the Congress. While the Congress was national in its character, the League was sectarian. There was mutual incompatibility between the two. As the League did not come to any understanding on the issue of safeguards, no compromise was possible. When the communal violence went on unabated because of the \textit{Direct Action} ravages of the League, the Congress inevitably came to a decision to accept the partition.

Nehru and Patel's acceptance of the partition has been popularly interpreted as stemming from their lust for quick and easy power. In relation to this, while talking about the leaders of the Congress, Ram Manohar Lohia says:

These men were old and tired. They were near their deaths, or so at least they must have thought. It is also true that they could not have lived much longer without the restorative of office. They had begun looking back on their life of struggle with a sense of hopeless despair. Their leader was not allowing them to temporize over much. What fancies had started assailing them can only be a matter of speculation and will differ according to each case. Some may have been hungering for office and the power and comfort and pelf that go with it.\textsuperscript{55}

It was true that they were old by then. They were also tired. They were just released from jails after their arrest during the \textit{Quit India Movement}. Their living in jails dispirited them. Leonardo Mosley quotes Nehru as saying:

We were tired men, we were getting on in years too. Few of us could stand the prospect of going to prison again—and if we had stood out for a united India as we wished it, prison obviously awaited us. We saw the fires burning in the Punjab and heard of the killings. The plan of partition offered a way out and we took it...\textit{We expected that partition would be temporary, that Pakistan was bound to come back to us.}\textsuperscript{56} (emphasis added)

They were not the sort of people who could sacrifice principles for power. They had been fighting all their lives for the principles of nationalism, secularism, and democracy. They had been struggling for independence and unity. Their patience was exhausted and could no more tolerate the sinful nexus between politics and religion. Besides, they thought that the partition was only temporary and Pakistan would have to come back. They could not control the communal violence in the country, particularly in the Punjab, as the heads of the Interim Government. Their experience with the League ministers as partners made them decide that it was impossible to work with them. The reality was that they were only accepting what had become inevitable because of the long-term failure of the Congress to draw in the Muslim masses into the national movement. Besides, Lord Mountbatten personally made it clear to them that Jinnah would rest with nothing less than Pakistan and the violence could not be controlled without the partition. All these made their acceptance of the partition inevitable.
But why didn't Gandhi oppose it? Why did he not start a mass movement against it? And why not a fast? To answer these questions, it would be useful to look at what Gandhi said:

When I said that the country should not be divided, I was confident that I had the support of the masses. But when the popular view is contrary to mine, should I force my own view on the people? And today I can say with confidence that if all the non-Muslims were with me, I would not let India be divided. But I must admit that today the general opinion is not with me and so I must step aside and stay back. No one listens to me any more. I am a small man. True, there was a time when mine was a big voice. Then everyone obeyed what I said; now neither the Congress nor the Hindus nor the Muslims listen to me. Where is the Congress today? It is disintegrating. I am crying in the wilderness."

It was clear to Gandhi that the people, both the Hindus and the Muslims, were not with him. The expression of Gandhi's values and principles in terms of Hinduism had a repulsive influence on the majority of Muslims in India. Even the leaders of the Congress were not listening to his words. He was such a liberal minded leader that he could not force his views even upon his followers. And the followers had now become communal and they wanted the partition. The popular opinion was contrary to his opinion. Who would respond to his call of a mass movement? Gandhi's understanding of the concept of mass movement was different from that of others. 'A movement may or may not quell violence, but the existing violence quelled any possibility of a movement.' Gandhi's words to Louis Fischer in 1946, 'I cannot think of civil disobedience when there is so much violence in the air,' show that it was impossible to start a mass movement against partition amidst violence. Again there would be none to respond to his fast also. So Gandhi could not stop the partition, could not start either a mass movement or a fast against it, and could not even stop the violence. The whole atmosphere was so surcharged with communalism that it was not at all favourable for any struggle against the partition. However, Gandhi was able to stop violence after it had started. He went to Noakhali and other violence-hit areas and stopped the violence and brought the situation under control. The one-man army, Gandhi, alone did what an army of 50,000 soldiers could not do.

Thus, the root of Gandhi's helplessness was neither Jinnah's intransigence nor the alleged lust for power of his lieutenants, but the communalization of the people and politics. He saw the inevitability of the partition and asked the Congressmen to accept the partition as an unavoidable necessity in the given circumstances, but to fight it in the long run by not accepting it in their hearts. He did not accept it in his heart and he chose to plough a lonely furrow walking barefoot through the villages of Noakhali.

Secondly, why did Jinnah, who was a great nationalist and ambassador of Hindu-Muslim unity, propound the two-nation theory so forcefully? Is it true that he merely used the threat of a separate nation to wrest more concessions from the Congress and he really did not want the partition? Is it true that he was the one who was alone responsible for the partition? Is it the ego clash of Jinnah with Gandhi that resulted in the partition? Jinnah was, no doubt, a great nationalist in the beginning and his belief in Hindu-Muslim unity, which he tried to bring about, was beyond question. When Lord Curzon divided Bengal in 1905, 'Muslims favoured the divide since they were in a majority in the Eastern part, but Jinnah took a stand against it.' He opposed the Muslim demand, under the leadership of the Aga Khan, for a separate electorate for the Muslims. 'He even refused to join the League when it was formed as a counter force to the Congress. ... He criticized its leaders for the hostility they displayed against the Hindus and the divisive stand they took in politics.' Presiding over the Bombay Provincial Conference, Jinnah said:

I believe all thinking men are thoroughly convinced that the keynote of our real progress lies in the good-will, concord, harmony and cooperation between the two great sister communities. The true focus of progress is centred in their union.

Jinnah once said to Sir Tej Sapru:

Sapru, I think I have a solution for the Hindu-Muslim problem. You destroy your orthodox priestly class and we will destroy our Mullahs and there will be communal peace.
He did not participate in the Khilafat movement. He thought that it would adversely affect the national cause. No Muslim was more genuine in endorsing the national demand for independence than Jinnah was. He was a proud Indian and not just a Muslim. Motilal said that Jinnah, unlike most Musalmans, was a keen nationalist as any Congressman and that he was showing his community the way to Hindu-Muslim unity. Gokhale called him the best ambassador of Hindu-Muslim unity.

Such a man turned out to be a staunch advocate of the Hindu-Muslim divide on communal and religious lines and one of the prominent persons responsible for the partition. It was because Jinnah realized that realities were different from ideals. Besides, Jinnah was oversensitive and highly self-respected. He would not easily follow others, but would make others follow him even with difficulty. The psychological, or more precisely, the ego factor in the case of the main actors of the drama—Jinnah, Gandhi, Nehru, Patel, Azad, Churchill, Attlee, Wavell, and Mountbatten—played a very important role in the entire process of the partition.

There are some striking similarities between Jinnah and Gandhi: both of them came from Gujarati speaking ancestry; both of them studied in London and were lawyers trained in Britain. They spent long years outside India; both established political power through a political party—Gandhi through the Congress and Jinnah through the League; and both were associated with a great poet—Gandhi with Tagore and Jinnah with Iqbal. Each of them was the target of attempted assassination by a fanatic of his own religion. Each of them had a laudatory title—Mahatma (Great Soul) Gandhi and Qaid-e-Ajam (Great Leader) Jinnah. And finally both of them died in the same year 1948.

But despite these similarities, Gandhi and Jinnah were poles apart in Indian politics. There are again some interesting contrasts between them: Gandhi was deeply spiritual, but Jinnah was materialistic; Gandhi was secular, but Jinnah was sectarian; and Gandhi stood for the nation, while Jinnah, excluding some years in the beginning, stood for the community. Gandhi’s ascetic habits, simple dress, and meditating introspection reflected the struggle to purify his own soul; but Jinnah was a worldly, westernized aristocrat, cold and austere, and pragmatic and clever. Gandhi worked on the basis of ethical idealism and Jinnah worked on his skillful tactics of a shrewd parliamentarian. Gandhi was a saint, but Jinnah was a practical politician. While Gandhi stood for unity, Jinnah stood for partition.

Jinnah was against separate electorates for Muslims. But when it was introduced, he did not hesitate to take personal advantage out of it. He contested the election to the Viceroy’s Executive Council from the reserved Muslim constituency of Bombay and got elected. His three-year tenure on that body and the lure of Muslim representation gradually drew him away from the purely nationalist mind-set to which he had so far adhered and made him turn more to the problems of the community rather than of the country as a whole. It was a turning point in his political career, but he pursued it cautiously. He started to cleverly manage the contradiction between nationalism and communalism. Gradually, the scale weighed more towards communalism. When Gandhi paid more attention to Ali Brothers, Azad, and other Muslims in the Congress, Jinnah’s vanity was hurt. In his attempt to regain his prestige, he adopted different tactics to step up the demand for separate and privileged treatment to the Muslims. Gradually, to get more power and to be on par with Gandhi, he propounded the two-nation theory and became the father of Pakistan.
Jinnah was indeed a charismatic leader who would not let history ignore him. He would conceive a great ideal and would work hard to get it accepted by others, even his adversaries. He was a superb tactician and all his plans were intended to concentrate enormous power in his own hands, 'an objective which he could rationalize in terms of the well-being and special goals of the Muslim nation and Pakistan.' He was domineering. He would not tolerate the slightest insult or humiliation and was quick to retaliate. ‘He pursues power as a means of compensation against deprivation. Power is expected to overcome low estimates of the self, by changing either the trait of the self or the environment in which it functions.’ All these personal qualities of Jinnah made him a stubborn leader who would not compromise with his ideas and ideals. B. Sheik Ali gives a meaningful comparison:

Both Jinnah and Gandhi were superb in their own respective strategies, but poles apart about the final objective in view. Jinnah was uncompromising in what he wanted and he was supreme in his party. Gandhi was a saint who had strayed into politics to say ‘look at the generosity of the Lord; the sinner commits the sin, but the sublime shares the blame’. . . . In other words the unity of command, which was there in the League under Jinnah’s hand, was absent in the Congress, whose captain had left the wheel to a dozen lieutenants who set the sails in different directions. The confused motives of the Congress strengthened the monolithic solidarity of the League.

It was true that Jinnah was keen on securing safeguards for his community. After the Nehru Report did away with the separate electorates, Jinnah was willing to accept joint electorates with reservation of seats for the Muslims. But it was rejected. Even in 1935, Jinnah agreed to accept joint electorates provided the Congress accepted his Fourteen Points of 1928. But the Congress rejected this also. Finally, with the failure of the Congress to form a coalition government in U.P. by giving only two Ministerial seats to the League in 1937, the parting of ways with the Congress became more conspicuous. All these events made Jinnah go on with his own ideas and ideals and made him pass the famous Lahore Resolution demanding a separate homeland for the Muslims.

According to the Revisionist Perspective—this tries to break the two popular myths: the Congress for Unity and the League for Partition—Jinnah used the threat of a separate nation only as a bargaining counter to get his demands accommodated by the Congress. According to the orthodox perspective it was not so. He was really so firm in his demand that he would not rest with nothing less than a separate nation. But it is wrong to place the whole blame solely on himself. It was his strong determination and the circumstances in which he was placed made him go on with his demand till the end. Many other persons and reasons that have been discussed earlier were responsible for the partition and not Jinnah alone.

But who won in this inter-personal dispute? Assigning of victory and defeat is a difficult task and it is especially so in a dispute involving the fate of nations. It might be justifiably concluded that Jinnah won the dispute, as Pakistan, which was his goal, was created and Gandhi’s dream of a united India was shattered. Even Gandhi’s own biographer conceded: ‘The cold and immaculate Jinnah had triumphed over Gandhi.’

Yet neither of them won in the sense that neither converted his opponent. Both Gandhi and Jinnah stated several times that each sought to persuade the other. Both men, in fact, publicly expressed disappointment at not having ‘changed their adversary’s position.’ The partition itself
cannot be considered to be the victory of anybody because of the large scale violence and loss of human lives and because the partition failed to solve the Hindu-Muslim problem.

Thirdly, were the British responsible for the partition? What role did they play in it? Was it not possible for them to avoid it? And why did they decide to leave India suddenly? It is not historically fair to confine responsibility for the partition to the British. The British certainly used the existing differences between the two major communities. Having the background of deep understanding of the society and polity in India and amply assisted by a very efficient intelligence system, the British very ably made sure that politics remained communalized so that they could draw the maximum advantage out of it. Whether the British were exclusively responsible for communalizing politics in India, the answer will certainly be ‘No,’ in the sense that the British did not create the bases which were already there (and politics continue to be communalized in India today when the British are no longer the masters), but the British surely exploited them to the maximum extent possible. It will indeed be naive not to expect them to do so. Having come to India for trade, the British acquired political power through skill and military strength and they maintained it through the policy of divide and rule. They crushed the Muslims whom they had replaced politically and supported the Hindus. When the Hindus became educated and modern, and as a result, developed nationalistic feelings and posed a threat to the British power, they started supporting the Muslims who had now become helpless because of the British hostility and their own antipathy to them. Thus, the British played each against the other according to the needs of the time. They used Sir Syed Ahmed Khan as an instrument to use the Muslims against the Hindus. If A.O. Hume founded the Congress for the Hindus, Thomas Beck, the Principal of the MAO College, excited the Aga Khan to found the League for the Muslims. While the Congress wanted a united India, the League wanted a divided India. The British used the existing social, religious, cultural, political, traditional, and other differences to keep the two at a distance so that they could be in the center, ruling both of them. Small differences were enough excuses for the colonists to divide the two communities. They advanced the theory that the Congress and the League were incompatible and that the Congress did not represent all the Hindus. They overemphasized the problem of the minorities. They kept the princely states aloof from the main political and religious conflict. Thus, they encouraged the existing differences to maintain their power.

But in the end, they wanted India to remain united in the British Commonwealth under the status of a Dominion so that they could use India’s army and economic resources for military purposes. Britain wanted such guarantee before the transfer of power and it was in these circumstances that Britain let ‘the threat of Pakistan’ hang over the heads of the Congress so that they would give Britain the military facilities it wanted. One wonders whether the threat of a partitioned India did not allow the British to play with the Congress and Jinnah until the game no longer remained a game. The very absurdity of a country made up of separate wings, and where, under any circumstances, millions of Muslims would have to remain behind in India leads one to wonder whether the idea of Pakistan was not a game plan that went wrong.

It was not possible for them to avoid the partition, though they wanted India to remain united. To avoid the partition, they should have identified with the Congress and suppressed the communal violence. It would mean that they would have offended the League. They did not want to take sides.
They took the easy way out. At any cost, they wanted to keep both India and Pakistan in the British Commonwealth under Dominion status even at the cost of the unity of India.

There are many reasons for the British decision to leave India suddenly. Firstly, after the World War II, the war-weary England was economically broken and socially disrupted. It had to start programmes for economic reconstruction and social readjustments for the welfare of its people. So there was no justification for the continuation of its colonial rule in India at the expense of attention to the domestic problems. It had to improve its own industry, foreign trade, foreign investments, and financial status especially in the wake of the competition of the U.S.A. Secondly, the changed international political situation and the changed international commitments of the U.K., made it decide to leave India suddenly. The U.S.S.R., emerged as a new super power. Both the U.S.S.R., and the U.S.A., brought pressure on the England to solve the problem of India and to give it complete freedom at the earliest. Thirdly, the British could no longer continue their rule in India in the mid-twentieth century, as they did in the nineteenth century. India was not medievalistic, but a modern and nationalistic country, which had been fighting for its independence. Though there were differences between the Congress and the League, yet both wanted the termination of the colonial rule in India. The continuation of the colonial rule would be against the wishes of the Indian people and it would arouse bitter animosity of all parties in India against the British. Fourthly, they realized that their ability to enforce law and order had greatly diminished. Though they had broken the Quit India Movement earlier, they realized their inability to control the large-scale communal disturbances now. They could no longer take for granted the loyalty of Indians at all levels of the administration.

It would be useful to look at the reasons for the advancing of the date of the transfer of power recorded by Lord Mountbatten in his report, submitted to His Majesty’s Government in September 1948:

The earlier date was adopted in order to cut short the interval between the announcement and its implementation, because of the growing importance of the leaders and the increasing tension among the communities as the ominous incidents in Bengal, the Punjab and the NWFP indicated. Delay might have jeopardized the precarious agreement between the parties achieved after years of wrangling. Then the earlier date was favoured both by the Congress and the League and was therefore expected to ensure goodwill among the communities to soothe ruffled tempers and minimize chances of conflict.

There were some other impartial considerations which were important: the civil administration was deteriorating, the officials were openly taking sides, and the police was unreliable; the prolongation of the period of waiting would worsen the situation; the army presented difficulties for use as an instrument of government for the maintenance of peace as it was to be bifurcated shortly and the British troops, on the way out, could not be expected to check the civil commotion and communal riots as they were busy in protecting the life and property of the British residing in India; the necessity of resuming recruitment to the Indian Civil Services and transferring a considerable number of British troops from England to India to continue till June 1948 were not warranted by the conditions in England; and finally, Lord Mountbatten argued that it was impossible to foresee that a calamity of such gigantic proportions would befall Punjab. He expected more trouble in Bengal where the after-effects of 1946 killings had not died out, rather than in the Punjab. And even if such a forecast could be made, it was not possible to do much to overcome it in the then existing state of affairs — uncertainty in the civil and military departments and bitter animosity between the communities.
Campbell-Johnson, justifying Mountbatten's action in antedating the transfer of power, stated:

Direct action had been launched by the Muslim League in August 1946; there were riots and reprisals for riots. This set off the spark, and disturbances of great intensity took place in Bengal and Bihar. The trouble spread to Lahore and the NWFP. In his first talks with Lord Mountbatten, the Muslim League leader, Mr. Jinnah, gave a frank warning that unless an acceptable political solution was reached very quickly, he would not guarantee to control the situation from his side. A similar warning was given by Congress leaders. 

...the Sikh leaders gave an equally frank warning to Jenkins.

We can end the discussion of the question about the British responsibility for the partition with a letter to Gandhi written by an ordinary Englishman:

I feel terribly ashamed, sad and distressed, and the more you say that India must look to her own faults and not blame Britain, the worse I feel. I think I understand what you mean and why you speak thus and how determined you are to bring India through this crisis with the least bloodshed, the least bitterness and in the finest spirit possible. But I cannot escape the condemnation of our conscience. We, the British, have done so much to bring India to this spiritual tragedy...for the past policies, the communal electorates, all the divisive influence, the way we have let things drift and hang on to India till the situation was so overripe that human beings themselves began to go rotten morally and spiritually.

Fourthly, who were the winners? Who were the losers? What were the gains and what were the losses? Although Jinnah and the League appear to be the winners (for the reason that Pakistan was created) and Gandhi and the Congress appear to be the losers (for the simple reason that Gandhi and the Congress were against the partition), they were not the real winners and the real losers. For India, it was the partition of the nation, but for Pakistan, it was the creation of the nation. Though Jinnah and the League might have had a little consolation in getting a separate homeland for the Muslims, it was only a mutilated and moth-eaten Pakistan that Jinnah got. He really wanted the whole of the Punjab, Bengal, and Assam to be allotted to Pakistan. In this sense, he was also a loser. Besides, it cannot be said that Jinnah was successful in creating a separate homeland for the Muslims, and thereby protecting them from the supposed threat of the Hindu Raj, because there were many Muslims, scattered in different parts of the country, remained in India as minorities. These Muslims, who thought that Jinnah left them in the lurch finally, were the losers. All those who suffered the pangs of the partition were the losers. Even those who crossed the borders for a new homeland had to undergo heavy loss of life and property. The greatest loss was the loss of the old identity and severing of a long-standing, centuries-old link with the roots of the land, culture, and tradition. Was the partition a suitable answer to the question of Hindu-Muslim tussle? No, the partition did not end the Hindu-Muslim communal problem. Instead, it intensified the problem, as nearly more than one third of the total Muslim population in British India was left behind in independent India. The roots of the present communal clashes in the country are in the partition. John W. Hood, an Australian scholar, writes:

The Partition may have satisfied certain political and ideological egos in the early stages and given at least temporary comfort to those who feared the consequences for minority communities in a free India. However, it is sadly evident that if the basic intention of partition was to dispel tension and obviate the potential for further disputation and conflict, then it has been a monumental failure. In their little more than fifty years of Independence, India and Pakistan have been at war three times, while continuing tension over the rightful identity of Kashmir, in particular, keeps
relations between the two countries in a worrying state of on-going stress. As East Pakistan, Bangladesh, experienced violence and oppression while being in one way or another kept under the thumb of West Pakistan and after a crippling war of liberation in which India became heavily involved, attained its independence in 1971. Since then, Bangladesh has been involved in on-going border and immigration disputes with India. Looming ominously over what has become a miasma of mistrust, blame and counter accusation is the nightmare reality of the continuing enhancement of the nuclear capabilities of India and Pakistan, while in all three countries the extent of poverty is immense as is the expenditure on defence.90

Jason Francisco, in his article, In the Heat of Fratricide: The Literature of India’s Partition Burning Freshly, answered this question of who the real losers were:

Who were the losers in the partition? Without question it was the great majority of common people who had lived side by side for generations and had cultivated deep attachments to land, language, friendship and a shared cultural heritage.91

It was the common innocent people who lost their lives and property, relatives and friends, culture and tradition, and identity and recognition were the real losers. We know that these people did not demand separate homelands and did not know about the partition, yet they became the victims of it and suffered the cruel pangs of it. It resulted in the estimated death of two million people and dislocation of nearly twenty million people. They were the real losers.

Finally, was the partition necessary? Was it not possible to avoid it? Was it not possible to control the violence? Whose fault was it? Who was responsible for it? Partition was not at all necessary. ‘Partition was uncalled for, unnatural and a negation of all that India stood for throughout her long and chequered history spanning fifty centuries.’92 Looking at the harmony in which the Hindus, the Muslims, the Sikhs, the Parsees, and others had been living and at the resultant plural culture in India, who could say that the partition was necessary. ‘The idea of Pakistan had no solid ground as it was based upon ‘flimsy arguments and largely emotional considerations.’ The originator Jinnah himself was doubtful about its realization till the very last day. It was conceded by the British because they did not wish to use force against the Muslims. The basic concept that the Muslims constituted a nation was false and Jinnah himself repudiated it in his opening address to the Pakistan Constituent Assembly on August 11. There was the weakest of bonds between the Muslim people living in the western and eastern regions of India and no solidarity even among the Muslims inhabiting the different provinces of the western region... Many Englishmen regarded Pakistan impracticable. Mountbatten thought it a mad scheme.93 The common people of all the communities did not even think of the partition. The partition did not solve the Hindu-Muslim problem. So it was not at all necessary.

But was it not possible to avoid it? Various reasons for the partition which have already been discussed—social, cultural, religious, historical, political, communal, economical, and psychological—made the partition unavoidable. Certainly, the partition was not the consequence of the fault of the common people. They were not at all responsible. But the leaders who led or misled them were responsible for it. They were at fault. If not, it was nobody’s fault. Mushirul Hasan, in his article, Memories of a Fragmented Nation, says that ‘the country’s division was a colossal tragedy, a man-made catastrophe brought about by hot-headed and cynical politicians who failed to grasp the implications of division along religious lines.’94 (emphasis added). The mutual distrust, suspicion,
and hatred among the leaders/politicians and their followers were responsible for the greatest tragedy in the history of India. Those who demanded Pakistan and those who conceded Pakistan found themselves in the same state of unbelievable shock when the consequences of their senseless action confounded them. But the worst part was that the innocent people—Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs alike—who never consulted nor even remotely had anything to do with the game a few were playing in Delhi, were put at the mercy of the consequences not knowing the what and why of what was happening around them.

It would have been possible to avoid the partition had the leaders of the Congress and the League discarded their mutual distrust, suspicion, and hatred; and tried to build up a friendly atmosphere. Had they practised cooperative politics and not divisive politics; had they been more interested in the problems of the country than in the problems of the community; had they been able to understand the real feelings of the common people and not the self-interests of a few elites; had they been cautious enough to understand that the differences between the major communities and the minor communities were deliberately highlighted and used to widen the gap among themselves; had the British been eager in suppressing the growing differences between the two communities and not in encouraging them, the partition would have been avoided. But these are only might-have-beens of the past and what happened however much deplored cannot be reversed. Again, it may be an act of supererogation to fix up the responsibility for the partition of India on any particular person or party.

Was it not possible to avoid the violence? This question seems to be more relevant than all the other questions discussed so far. If the two communities could not live together in harmony and wanted to part ways and get separated, why could they not do it in a friendly and peaceful manner? Again we have to go back to the leaders. They could not stop mutual distrust, suspicion, and hatred that were spreading among the common people. When they themselves could not shun those vices, the common people—the followers of the leaders—could not be expected to do so. The leaders could not imagine that the partition would unleash such beastly violence. It was the most unreal belief that the partition would be peaceful. No riots were anticipated and no transfer of people planned, as it was assumed that once Pakistan was created there would be nothing to fight over. The hope was that madness would be exorcised by a clear surgical cut. But the body was so diseased and the instrument used so infected that the operation proved to be terribly botchy. Had the partition not been antedated but fixed to take place in June 1948 as it had been announced, the communal frenzy might have subsided by that time, violence could have been avoided, and the partition would have been peaceful. It would have given an opportunity to the Government to retain the British units of the army longer in India or to organize a new force to control violence and maintain peace. Had the British been more eager in effecting an orderly and peaceful transfer of power than in early relief from the irksome involvement in the quarrel of the two aspirants for power and had Mountbatten not been a failure in foreseeing the outbreak of violence, the violence could have been avoided. Again, all these are only might-have-beens, could-have-beens, and would-have-beens and had-beens and had-not-beens.

As we know, the administration was deteriorating, the government at the center was not strong and communal feelings were high, the army was about to be divided into two, the British troops were
more interested in protecting the lives and property of the British people living in India and the macabre
dance of violence could not be controlled. Even Gandhi, the Guru of Ahimsa, lost his control over
the people. No one was listening to his words. The whole atmosphere was tense with communal
hatred at its height. Though Gandhi was able to control violence in a few places like Noakhali, he was
not able to avert it on all-India basis.

Neither all questions can be answered nor are all the answers given unquestionable. The
discussion has been going on and on and will go on for years before we get convincing clarifications to
all the doubts and answers to all the questions about the complex event of the Partition. All the
clarifications and answers are only hypotheses. These questions and answers are not useful any more.
What has been done cannot be undone. History does not retrace its steps. But history may repeat
itself. So, we must look forward and ask ourselves what we can do to live in peace and friendship
with each other. The Partition is not the victory of any one or any party. It is a wonder whether the
deep wounds that the partition inflicted on the Hindus, the Sikhs, the Muslims, the Sindhis, the Parsees
and others entitle anyone or any party to claim victory. If they are to be victorious, all the communities
need to nurture attitudes that may heal the wounds of the partition and enable the peoples of the
subcontinent to plan a future of mutual respect, friendship, peace, and progress.

History has recorded that the idea of a nation in India developed during the colonial rule. But
the irony is that the same nation was partitioned under the same colonial rule. Although history has
recorded all the minute details of the terrible event of the partition of the nation, it has not recorded the
feelings of the people who experienced the partition. "As a result, the historians' history of partition is
not a history of the lives and experiences of the people who lived through that time, of the way in which
the events of the 1940s were constructed in their minds, of the identities and uncertainties that partition
created or reinforced." The real experiences of the partition of the people who lived through it and
their feelings and sentiments are effectively represented in literature. How the partition is represented
in literature and how literature functions as a mirror to reflect the partition will be discussed in the next
chapter, The Partition and Literature.
10. Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 149.
16. Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 23
17. Quoted in *ibid.*
27. Gopal, Ram, *op. cit.*, p. 94.
32. Quoted in *ibid*.
33. Quoted in *ibid.*, pp. 110-111.
34. Quoted in Chaudhri, Sandhya, *op. cit.*, p. 49.
35. Quoted in *ibid*.
37. Gopal, Ram, *op. cit.*, pp. 119-120.
41. Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 304.
42. Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 305.
44. Quoted in Chaudhri, Sandhya, *op. cit.*, pp. 51-52.
46. Quoted in Arun, Prabha, *op. cit.*, p. 112.
54. Quoted in Gopal, Ram, *op. cit.*, p.137.
56. Quoted in Chand, Tara, *op. cit.*, vol. 4, p. 496.
57. Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 499.
60. Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 158.
69. Quoted in *ibid*.
71. Ibid.
73. Ibid.
74. Ibid.
75. Ibid.
76. Ibid., p. 364.
79. Ibid.
80. Ibid., p. 369.
82. Ibid., p. 153.
86. Ibid. pp. 559-560.
87. Quoted in ibid., p. 560.
88. Ibid., p. 561.
91. Francisco Jason. ‘In the Heat of Fratricide: The Literature of India’s Partition Burning Freshly’ in *Inventing Boundaries*, op. cit., p. 381.
95. Naqvi, Mushtaq, op. cit., p. 3.