

PARTITION OF INDIAN SUBCONTINENT IN 1947: A HISTORICAL VIEW

Kartik Agarwal*

ABSTRACT

This research paper elucidates the partition of India in 1947 which was succeeded by the India's independence, it brought the most terrible historical event in the whole world and in the Indian subcontinent in particular. This research paper throws light on the historical aspects of it. This present research paper is critical for the evaluation of the historical politics of the whole world in general and the India and Pakistan specifically, to learn the lessons to separate the country and also on the growth of the external Political affairs which may lead the humans towards the peace. The various conditions like religious, communal, 'Divide and Rule' policy, etc. are discussed with supporting references from well renowned books. The important personalities like then British Viceroy Lord Mountbatten, Congress Political leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, Pandit J. L. Nehru, Sardar V. B. Patel, The Muslim League leader Mr. Maulana Azad, M.A. Jinnah and many other minor leaders from Hindu, Muslim and Sikh community are thoroughly studied for their responsibility.

Keywords: Indian Subcontinent, Historical Aspects, Historical Politics, External Political Affairs.

Introduction

The present research paper under title "**Partition of the Indian subcontinent in 1947: A historical view**" seeks to trace the course of political thought of the Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs and the British ruler's policy of Divide and Rule' in India in the regard of the Indo Pak partition 1947. The historical and cultural background of political thoughts has been discussed at some length in this research paper. The interplay of the forces of religion and politics has been highlighted on the eve of the partition. The political ideas and political movements in India have not been remained separate from the religion. That is why the Indian politics on the eve of the partition would not be remained secular. In fact, the demand of the age was of liberalism, modernization and secularism for the welfare of the India subcontinent.

This research paper contains a general discussion of the political aspects of Indo-Pak Partition. Various political aspects of the period of the partition have been evaluated. The political ideas of various leaders have been tested. In particular the Muslim and the Hindu political leaders have been critically and scientifically valued. The study of personal political ambitions of the Hindu and Muslim political leaders, particularly, the study of Mr. Jinnah's hard nature has made the clarity of the political background of the partition. The study of all these aspects helped the researchers to bring out an important conclusion that the Muslim politics and thoughts were determined by the rigid and orthodox nature which developed the over intermix of religion and politics.

Political History of the Demand of Partition in Indian Subcontinent

Mohammad Bin Kasim invaded and established the Muslim rule in India. A considerable number of common Muslim mass people came with him. **Dr. Rajendra Prasad observes**, "The invasions of India by Muslims started with the landing of Mohammad bin Kasim on the shores of Sind."¹

The first Muslim conqueror Mohammad Bin Kasim conquered 'Brahmanbad'. The Governor of Iraq Hajjaj Had sent Mohammad Bin Kasim to conquered India. Mohammad Bin Quasim did his job successfully. He reported to Hajjaj and Hajjaj suggested him to compel the Hindus to pay the taxes to Khalifa of Iraq. It means the Muslims rulers had an intention to spread their political and economic rule.

* University of Rajasthan, Jaipur, Rajasthan, India.

The Basic Differences among the Hindu and Muslim communities

Basically, the Hindu and the Muslim communities belong to two different religious philosophical, social customs and literatures. They neither intermarry nor interdine together. They belong to two different civilizations. Their aspects of life are different. The Hindus and Musalman derive their inspiration from different sources of history. They have different epics, different heroes and different episodes. In short the Hindus and Muslims are two absolutely different entities. Historical fact is that both the entities had been living side by side by the centuries, though they had and have also absolute different habits, customs, social systems, moral codes, religious, political, economic and cultural ideas, traditions, languages, literature and outlook on life. In the lives of the Hindus and Muslims there are not any single element which will show the similarity and will help to the formation of a single nation. As a result they created mutual distrust and misunderstanding. **Dr. Rajendra Prasad comments clearly that,** "The basic differences between these communities, the memories of their past and present rivalries, and the wrongs they registered against each other during the last one thousand years from an unbridgeable gulf between them."²

Dr. Rajendra Prasad observes in his book, "Muslim invaders and rulers of India desecrated and destroyed thousands of Hindu temples and broke in to pieces images installed in them and converted them in to mosques or removed their building materials like posts and pillars to be used in the construction of Muslim mosques in other pieces: now they offered to Hindus who came under their way the alternative of the sword of the Quran and now thousands of Hindus were tortured or slaughtered on their refusal to accept the Muslim faith. The inference that is drawn is that the Hindus have not forgotten and cannot forget these atrocities and they have indelible marks burnt on their memory which cannot be obliterated."³

The separate independent identities of the Muslims and Hindus remained safe. The Muslims remained as Muslims and the Hindus remained as Hindus. Though their day today contact for daily needs and somewhat social and cultural assimilation grew one new culture, it was called Hindstani culture. In the modern period, particularly in British period in India the sense of nationalism brought feeling for the own homeland. No doubt, at the beginning both communities was demanding a nation. Both were emphatic for a nation. But one's own different identities easily encouraged each one to constitute a separate nation. **Dr. Rajendra Prasad observes in his book,** "In politics this was bound to create a nation in the modern sense of the term and this happened particularly after the establishment of British rule in India to which both the Hindus and Muslims become subject. We have quoted authoritative Muslim opinion to show that Musalmans, no less than Hindus, treated both Hindus and Muslims as constituting a nation. At the same time, we know that the All-India Muslim League and its spokesmen are equally emphatic today in declaring that, they the Muslims constitute a nation separate from the Hindus."⁴

The consciousness about better political status and the consciousness about political power and rule is the gift to the Muslims from their ancestorers. It is generally commented that they are more religious and communal. This is not an absolute truth about the Muslims. They were conscious for political reasons **Dr. Rajendra Prasad observes in his book in detail,** "The testamentary injunction of Babar already quoted at length was followed by the Mughal Emperors, resulting in the expansion of their Empire. Departure from it created conditions which ultimately led to its disruption. Foreigners also notice the consideration shown to Hindu sentiment. 'On the occasion of Id'. It appears the cow was not scarified, for we are told, "On that day [Id] everyone who is able, will sacrifice a goat in his house and keep the day a great festival." No wonder that the communities lived side by side amicably, although they never coalesced and never became merged one in the other."⁵

But narrow-minded political leaders of the time purposely forgot it. They just gave the call to common Musalmans that the Islam is in danger in India and come forward with sword to protect Islam from outside danger of the Hindus. Actually, it is fight for the political power by the political leaders, but they made it a communal and religious war of Islam verses Hindu. The Partition of India in 1947 is not simple event but it is one of the most important and significant events in the history of the modern world. It is 'rare event'. Lord Louis Mountbatten was the last Viceroy and First Governor General of Independent India.

It is also necessary to know about great personalities which can be called historical giants who had changed the destiny of the Indian subcontinent by breaking the chains of foreign rule and giving liberty to 400 million mass people. India's human environment is extra ordinary. One can feel that what happened in New Delhi on August 15, 1947 was not only momentous in the history of a whole continent, but also decisive in the history of the whole world. After August 15, 1947 our planet Earth was never

going to be the same. The process set in motion that night at the stroke of midnight, would repeat itself in the four corners of the globe. The end of colonial rule and the birth of the Third world, on page of Britain's history had turned. The end of colonial rule accompanied the Partition, which is the most debated issue, **S. Settar and Indira Baptista Gupta wrote in a book**, "The partition of India is a much-debated issue in the history of South Asia. One will never know exactly how many people died in the riots which accompanied it. But around seventeen million people had to relocate themselves across the newly drawn boundaries."⁶

The freedom of India is one history. At the same time the partition created it is another history. This one history created two nations. In other words, partition is one past event which created two nations and two histories in accordance. **Lal Bahadur Varma observes in detail**, "It should be obvious that two here does not stand for one plus one; it dignities the two opposite sides, antagonistic in nature. The past of the people who were arbitrarily **divided** on 14/15 August remains one. But it was different mental in causing that division."⁷

Acceptance of Partition in Indian Subcontinent

About Hindu leaders and the Congress Party leaders in the case of partition of the Indian subcontinent to accept is not whole heartedly. The communal circumstances forced them to accept the partition to stop the violence. The Congress felt themselves powerless to stop the violence of the communal forces in the whole nation. The nation was burning in the violence on the one side. And on the other side the communal forces by Jinnah and his Muslim League were demanding to fulfill the demand of partition as a cast of saving the nation from the fire of the communal violence. Finally, the Hindu leaders and the Congress party leaders came round to the view that, only partition would satisfy League's ambitions. **Sucheta Mahajan observes**, "The helpless condition of the Congress leaders made them to accept the partition of the motherland to satisfy the evil of sectarian violence sponsored by Jinnah and his Muslim League."⁸

Mahatma Gandhi's proposal was not surrender to threats of violence but Gandhi wanted the peace before create a Pakistan. This is the cause and the meaning of Gandhi's proposal to hand over the power to Jinnah. The most of the important personalities were agreed with Gandhi on the urgency of ending communal violence. Everyone knows the root cause of the communal violence is political. It was also open that the strong inner desire of Jinnah to become the Prime Minister in new Pakistan. This inner political evil was the root cause of the partition of India. It mentally shocked Gandhi. **According to B.R. Nanda**, "The last two years of Gandhi's life were the saddest and the most heroic. He was shocked and bewildered by the draft towards the partition of India and the explosion of violence, which preceded and followed it."⁹

Here, the question of partition of India into Muslim and Hindu zones has assumed importance since the All-Indian Muslim League passed a resolution in its favour at Lahore in March, 1940. The proposal to divide India into separate Muslim and non-Muslims zones, each such zone being constituted into an independent sovereign state is based on the theory that Hindus and Muslims Communities constitute to separate nation which created Pakistan as homeland of Musalmans made its deep political effects on Indian subcontinent and also on the whole world. As per British Parliament Act the two independent nations created on the map of the world in 1947. **Suniti Ghosh writes in his book**, "India and Pakistan became British dominance under the Indian Independence Act passed by British Parliament in July at record speed."¹⁰

In light on the history of demand of partition the pre-history of the demand should be kept in view. In the British rule the formation of the sectarian groups has been started by the most intellectual personalities in both the Hindu and Muslim societies. Dr. Hedgewar made the beginning of the formation of the Hindu sectarian group by the foundation of 'Rashtriya Swamsevak Sangh' in Maharashtra.

But the impartial observation of Indian society in particular Hindu and Muslim relation in day today life of folk was quite harmonious. Before the rise of political movement of freedom the both societies were too close. **S. Tanvirul Hassan writes**, "Muslims and Hindus lived together, worked together, assumed themselves together and shared each other joy and sorrow."¹¹

The above-mentioned social harmony disturbed by the awareness of minority in the comparison of the Hindus on the ground of political game.

Reasons for Partition in Indian Subcontinent

It is the real fact that 19th century is the century of the movements and revolutions in the world in general and in Indian subcontinent also. By the end of 19th century several nationalistic movements have

started in India. **B.L. Grover and R.R. Sethi said in his book**, "A part from the work of the missionaries, the development of modern education and spread of Western knowledge gave rise to Movement whose ebb and flow, within their currents and under currents have affected life in modern India".¹²

It does not stop here. For the freedom the Indian National Congress continued struggle for a long time against the British rule. History tells us about the politics of the freedom struggle. The All-India National Congress and the All-India Muslim League were busy in the movement against the British rule but one was on one way and other on different path. In 1942, the Indian National Congress has called the nation for 'Quit India', Movement at that time the Muslim League had not given support but remained aloof. And in the next year 1943 the Muslim League passed a resolution for the British rule to 'Divide and Quit'. This is only one example, but there are several reasons for the birth of as separate Muslim homeland in the Indian subcontinent. Not only one but all three parties the British rulers, the Congress and the Muslim League were responsible for partition clearly.

The Divide and Rule Policy of the British Rulers in India

Very said that the 'Divide and Rule' policy was practiced by the British rulers in India. At the first step the British categorized the people in the census according to religion and viewed and treated them as separate from each other. The Britishers were very clever and minded. They studied the basic religious texts of the Indian religions. They found many differences. On the basis of that knowledge, they broke the coexisted life of Indian people. At the same time the Britishers had still in fearful threat from the Muslims. Who were the former rulers of the subcontinent. Over 300 years ruling history was on the name of the Muslims. In order to win the side of the Muslims the Britishers provided the timely help to establish Aligarh Muslim Educational Institute. **B.L. Grover and R.R. Sethi had said that**, "The British rulers interposed themselves between the Hindus and Muslims and thus created a communal triangle of which they remained the busy".¹³

There was also an ideological divide between the Muslims and the Hindus communities in India. It was the time when the strong feelings of nationalism grow in India by late 19th century. At the same time there were also communal conflicts and movements in the country that were based on religious communities rather than class or regional ones.

Especially they remember (in the memory of the past) the old days of power over the Indian subcontinent that the Muslims had held on it. The point the old monuments which were old centers of Mugal rule. The glorious past of the Muslims made them emotionally different to accept the colonial power and culture. They refused to learn English language and to associate with the British. This was the drawback of the Muslim society as they found that the Hindus were now in better positions in government than they were and thus felt that the British favoured Hindus. To wash this misunderstanding the British rulers provided all kinds of help and co-operation to the social reform work of the Muslim prominent leader Sir Syed Ahmad Khan. Through this co-operation the Britishers successfully turned the Muslims to their side and away from the Hindus.

Hindu Communities are also Responsible for the Partition

Hindus are also responsible for the partition of Indian Motherland. They were not ready to forget the past of the Muslim rule and cruelties in accordance. There will not be any gain for blaming the Muslims of the present time for the past wounds. Hindu revivalists rallied for a ban on the slaughter of cows, a cheap source of meat for the Muslims. They also wanted to change the official script from the Persian to the Hindu Devanagiri script, effectively making Hindi rather than Urdu. The All-India National Congress committed several mistakes for the tragic divide of the country. The mistakes in the policies of the Congress made impossible to live in an undivided India after freedom. The Muslim League was totally frightened by the threatened policies of the Congress leaders, in the Congress rule the interests of the Muslims would be completely suppressed. One such policy was the institution of the 'Bande Mataram', a National Anthem which expressed anti-Muslim sentiments, in the schools of India where the Muslim children were forced to sing it and etc.

The British had badly needed of the help of the large Muslim army. On the part of the Congress the British Government was in more dangerous condition and was facing more and more difficulties because of the Congress's 'The Civil Disobedience Movement', there on the side of the Muslim leaders, particularly Mr. Jinnah and his All-India Muslim League party opposed the 'Civil Disobedience Movement' by bitterly criticizing. **V.P. Menon had said that**, "The president of the Central National Mohammedan Association commented that the resolution is suicide and that the Muslim could never support the demand for complete independence as opposed to Dominion status".¹⁴

One more mistake, the Congress made in war withdrawal of the support of the Muslim League from the assembly. Then the League formed strong ministries in the provinces that had large Muslim population. At the same time, the League actively campaigned to gain more support from the Muslims society in India, especially under the guidance of prominent and dynamic leader like Jinnah. The rejection of the Cabinet Mission Plan in 1942 is to shut up the doors of the United Nation after freedom. It was one chance on the part of the Congress to convince the leaders at the Muslim League. But on the part of the Muslim League, The Political situation and decisions were different. That their resolution of the August 1940 of separate Muslim State Pakistan would not allow them anything except the goal of separate Muslim state Pakistan. At the same time the League had fear to work with Congress because the Congress was in Majority. **V.P. Menon observes again**, "The league on the other hand feared that sharing power with the Congress would reinforce those centralizing and unifying tendencies inevitable in war, which would stifle in advance its ambition for a separate Muslim state".¹⁵

Migration of Peoples

Partition of Indian subcontinent was a political event. It had been to accepted. But at the same time, it was a human tragedy also because it damages the friendship, love, nationalism and religious faith in the personal life of an individual. No doubt the political elements were active in all human tragedy. For the large part, most South Asians were still experiencing the enduring hurt from the era because the emotional and psychological issues from the past incidents. In the making of Pakistan, religion appears to have been the determinant of nationality because of the confliction worldviews. The struggle for Pakistan proved one thing that the Indian Muslims were always a distinct and readily identifiable community. This distinctive separateness of the Muslims was fully in the behavior of Jinnah which never allowed him to work together with the Hindus and Congress Party. **According to V.P. Menon**, "Indeed Jinnah had made this abundantly clear to the Viceroy. There could therefore be no question of the League and the Congress representatives, working together as one team".¹⁶

In the other side of the Muslim Community, the ruler of the Dhaka Nawab Salim Ullah Khan established the Muslim league for the unification and struggle against the Hindu religion. Letter on the branches of this organization were founded through the country under the name of protection the rights of the Muslims. Sir Syed Ahmad Khan founded Muslim University at Aligarh. Through this institute Muslim philosophy was spreaded throughout country. **L.Prasad writes in his book**, "The Aligarh Movement, therefore, became thoroughly communal under his guidance. It certainly helped in the creation of Pakistan".¹⁷

Conclusion: Partition of Indian Subcontinent was a Tragic Historical Event

Partition of Indian subcontinent was a tragic historical event is mentioned here. During 1914 to 1945 period there took place two World Wars. The Brittan had badly suffered and was not in position to mention its power over India and other territories of the British imperialism. The Second World War was the war of two different views of the life which was against the democracy and the dictatorship. In the same period in India on local level the Hindus and Muslims failed totally to develop the common grounds which would have enable them to form one nation, though they leave together for centuries in this subcontinent. **Dr. B.R. Ambedkar comments that**, "In the absence of common historical antecedents the Hindu view that Hindus and Musalmans from nation falls on the ground. To maintain it is to keep up a hallucination. There is no such longing between the Hindus and Musalmans to belong together as there is among the Musalmans of India".¹⁸

The Muslim league leaders also failed to preach the idea of nationalism. The Muslims developed the wrong notion that their interest was not only differed from thoughts of the Hindus but was also in contradiction with the thoughts of the Hindus. Sir Mohammad Iqbal and many other Muslim leaders gave incentive to this idea. Mr. Mohammad Ali Jinnah and the Muslim League organized their conferences and discussed this idea. Thus, they developed this idea under a single banner only. They determined to achieve Pakistan and if necessary, do violence. The Primary cause of partition of India was the fanatics religious zeal and communal feelings of the Indian Muslims. Though they lived together for centuries but the Muslims and Hindus did not successes to build up sentiments of good unity, brotherhood and social equality among each other. **L. Prasad writes**, "Thus it is more the truth the Hindus and the Muslims had wide differences concerning their religion and culture and had failed to find a common meeting ground which, at best could be economic".¹⁹

On June 3, 1947 Pandit JawaharLal Nehru said that there has been violence and shameful regarding violence in various parts of this great country. This must end. Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel also said that he felt that if they did not accept partition, India would be split in too many bits and would be completely ruined'. Even American Govt. favored the idea of independence of India.

Mahatma Gandhi and Pandit J.L. Nehru failed in putting up common idea and course of a slogan which could appeal to both. So that they could forget the religious differences. Mahatma Gandhi did not bring them economic issue to different and therefore failed to create an ideal vision of India which brings equal benefits to the Hindus and Muslims. Not only this but Mahatma Gandhi failed on religious ground also. **L.Prasad write that**, "Besides Gandhi forgot that a fanatically determined religious minority could never listen to reason. Therefore, his policy of compromising with the Muslims even on principles was bound to fail".²⁰

In this picture, the important events make us clear that the partition of Indian subcontinent is the result of the Muslim separateness and the Britishers 'Divide and Rule' policy. A few the most prominent and influential figures were, Jawaharlal Nehru, Mahatma Gandhi, Mohammad Ali Jinnah, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and lord Mountbatten. They were active persons on the eve of the partition. Actually, the partition of India was such an event which made bloody to the whole Indian subcontinent there was the total mass destruction. The violence, communal riots throughout the country was the immediate impacts of the partition. Particularly it was the partition of Punjab and Bengal the whole country suffered by it.

In short, the partition had a long back history of separatist attitude of the Muslims leaders and Muslims community since long back history of invasion of Mohammad Bin Kasim in 712-13 which irrigated by the British rulers by the 'Divide and Rule' policy against the Hindus in modern time and the subcontinent divided.

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