

An essay on the Muslim issues of British India

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Abstract: In this article an attempt is made to study and explain the real causes for evolution of Muslim issues in India which is rooted from British India. Partition of Bengal (1905) as the part of British divide and rule policy, communal disputes and instability in Jammu and Kashmir, the Shimla deputation with the proposal of separate electorates for the Muslims in legislative house and reservation in jobs for Muslims in government services, followed by Minto - Morley reform of 1909 were is the major developments.

Key Words: Muslim issues; British India; Partition of Indian

1. INTRODUCTION:

Our modern history began with the partition of our great nation into India and Pakistan at the end of the colonial rule. Pakistan declared itself as an Islamic State whereas the India as a secular one. India ensured the equality brotherhood to all its fellow citizens through the Constitution and also proclaimed to remain secular or religious neutral. Thus, instead of Pakistan millions of secular Muslims decided to remain in secular India.

Muslims of modern India shaped their lifestyle in different way. They have certain inherited issues some of them were rooted back from British rule. Soon after the fall of Mughal Empire Muslim gradually ousted from the mainstream.

The foundation for the All India Muslim League, Lahore resolution was an important political move in the history of British India. The entry of religion in politics gave rise to Pan-Islamism. The Khilafat movement, first world war was also notable development which had an impact among Indian Muslims and Appears to be vital determinants of Muslim politics in India. The two nation theory gave birth to very idea of India and Pakistan. Government of India act 1935 and partition gave a new impetus to the Muslim politics in British India.

Let us examine all of the above said Muslim religio-political elements which took place in British India.

2. The partition of Bengal :

In 1905, Lord Curzon divided Bengal as a part of divide and rule policy of British rulers. In this partitioned Bengal, one part of this in which Muslims were thickly populated. Though British claimed that Bengal was as large as France and Britain put together. As the reason to divide Bengal, but one can't denial the role of religion which played a vital role in this partition.

This partition brought wide range of communal disharmony among Hindus and Muslims this was resulted in rising sense of nationality among the Muslims of British India the ultimate result of this communal disharmony reached up to the extent of partition of India. The partition of Bengal indeed brought some amount of political consciousness among the Muslims in British India.

3. Separate Muslim electorates :

The Shimla deputation of 35 Muslim leaders headed by Sir Aga Khan demanded a constitutional protection to safeguard the interest of Muslims. Their demand was to introduce separate electorate for the Muslims to provide adequate representation in legislative house. And also asked to provide reservation for Muslims in government jobs.

As a result of this Minto Morley reforms or Indian Council act of 1909 provided a special status to the minority Muslims in India. They also ensured separate electorates for Muslims. Montague- Chelmsford reform or government of India act of 1919 also gave further expansion to the electoral system.

All India Muslim league:

The partition of Bengal in 1905 provided wider scope in rising political consciousness among the Muslims of British India. In British India many religio-political organisations formed like Hindu Mahasabha, All India Muslim League, Jamath E Islami etc.

The All India Muslim League was founded in 1906 with the aim of safeguarding the political and economic rights of Muslims. On the basis of schemes of Nawab Sallimullah Khan of Dacca "All India Muhammedan Educational Conference" held in 1906 at Dacca decided to form a political Organisation called "All India Muslim league"

The basic objectives of Muslim league are to ensure the protection and advancement of the political rights and interest of Muslims of British India. And also intended to represent their aspirations to the government. The Muslim league was also aimed to promote communal harmony between Muslims and other communities, attainment of self-government, reform of existing administrative system by promoting national unity and boosting public spirit among the people of India.

It was not until 1930 league either had any demand nor idea of separation of Pakistan. Separation of Pakistan was not the primary aim of all India Muslim league. It was Only in 1940 at the Lahore resolution all India Muslim league shifted its aim and rose the demand for separate Pakistan.

4. Khilafat Movement :

The first world war ended in 1918 where the central power had to face defeat and the allied nations were prepared to sign the "Treaty of Sevurus" With the Ottoman empire. As per this treaty all non-Turkish territory which come under the Ottoman Empire will be annexed by the allied nations. But non-Turkish territories contains many Islamic holy places. This treaty will end holding power of Caliph (the Sultan of Ottoman Empire) on those holy places. This incidents increased the angry and created insecure among the Muslims of the world. Thus, the Muslims all around the globe were launched the protest.

Simultaneously, a Mohammed Ali and Shaukat Ali formed the Khalifath Committee in India to protest against this treaty. This movement has spread all across the India. This can be considered as the major political issue among the Muslims of British India.

5. The two nation theory :

In the early 19th century there was an emergence and rise of religious fundamentalism in British India. This gave rise to a sense of cultural nationalism and created religio-political organisations across the India. The Britishers also tried on religious differences to continue their colonial rule in India even some people with communal outlook were also engaged themselves in taking a larger advantage of this pathetic situation of British India. The Hindu Raj versus separate Muslim state were the major outcome of communal disharmony in British India. The all India Muslim league proposed a separate Muslim state at the Lahore resolution of 1940, with this two nation theory gained a greater attention in British India.

6. Jinnah and The Idea of Pakistan :

Muhammad Ali Jinnah was a prominent important Muslim leader in British India. He popularly known as founder of Pakistan. Even though he was not a founder of all India Muslim league, he was an important person who then rose to the level of president of all India Muslim league. Jinnah and Thilak had a recognisable contribution in bringing "Lucknow pack 1916". In early days of his life, he advocated Hindu-Muslim unity later he turned into a separatist. He was named as responsible for the partition of India on religious ground.

The idea of Pakistan was first introduced by Mohammed Iqbal in 1930. But for long time it was appeared as your eutopic. Until the Muslim league passed the resolution in Lahore which was then took a shape of cultural nationalism and brought the idea of separate state for Muslims. Jinnah believed that it was unlikely that Hindus and Muslims being the part of common nationality. Thus, he demanded for the formation Separate state called Pakistan. He also stressed upon the factor that the areas in which Muslims are in majority should be brought under the rule of separate Muslim state. Jinnah urged that the state of Pakistan should come into existence before India become actually independent. The critics of Jinnah notes the way he used Islam as a handy tool to reach and attain his political aims and aspirations.

Despite of this Jinnah played an important role and succeeded in promoting the idea of Pakistan. His 14-point approach was a major political debate in the British India.

7. Partition of India :

The Muslims who had very little influence in the matter of administration were preoccupied with the idea of protecting their interest and safeguarding their rights was only through separate state called Pakistan. Increased communal disharmony, rise of Muslim league, the experience of partition of Bengal, British imperialist tactics of divide and rule policy constituted together in the partition of India.

Since all India Muslim league and its leadership were very much assertive on Lahore resolution of 1940 of having separate Muslim state, they rejected all the schemes which was said to be alternative to Pakistan.

The Cripps proposal (1942) was the major event in which a mission headed by Stanford Cripps was sent to India in 1942. The mission proposed certain conditions. The mission stated that any province which was not willing to join union could have a separate constitution and form a separate union. But the proposal was rejected by Muslim league as the Cripps proposal denied the creation of Pakistan.

The Cabinet Mission plan of 1946 were brought to find the ways and means for peaceful transfer of power to India. They proposed to form an and interim government until the new constitution comes into force. Meanwhile the Cabinet Mission rejected the demand of a separate Pakistan of all India Muslim league.

As per the Cabinet Mission plan elections were made for constituent assembly. Congress won the election and formed the interim government. Whereas Muslim league decided to boycott constituent assembly which in turn made the situation of the partition inevitably.

The Lord Mountbatten was appointed as the new Viceroy. His plan for transfer of power includes the partition of India into two dominions. The Indian Independence act of 1947 created to dominion like India and Pakistan in 1947. At the end two independent nations came to existence.

8. CONCLUSION:

From the partition of Bengal (1905) till the partition of India and creation of Pakistan, the Muslims of British India passed through many issues. The Khilafat movement, Pan Islamism, rise of communal disharmony, emergence of all India Muslim and Jinnah's is two nation theory were the key determinants and issues of Muslims in British India.

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