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From Minority Politics to Nationalism: The Evolution of the All-India Muslim League

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ABSTRACT

In this paper, the author will explain why the All-India Muslim League has been positioned to be to a large extent the minority pressure group in the British India as the main political agent that facilitated the Muslim nationhood that led to the creation of Pakistan. The League was also established in 1906 at Dhaka and it was an original loyalist and reformist movement that mainly aimed at constitutional protection, minority rights and political representation of the Muslims in the British imperial structure. Along the lines of the conservatism of its opinions, and without engaging in the mass mobilization, it was off to the brigading of Muslim anxieties about political extreme in a majoritarian politics. The paper describes early Muslim politics as a measure of gradual and defensive nationalism, which was informed by insecurity and not revolutionary agenda, as postulated under the Nationalist Theory. This move shows that the nationalistic movements tend to develop within the constitutional systems and then establish a mega projects. This was significantly altered in the interwar years especially after the constitutional amendments like the Montagu -Chelmsford Reforms (1919) and the Government of India Act (1935) that strengthened the representative politics as well as an increased communal competition. With the Congress ministries (1937-1939) we

have to note the improvement of the Muslim exclusionist attitudes and the speeding up of the ideological change of the League. The League transformed to some form of cultural nationalism and assumed the Two Nation Theory under the management of Muhammad Ali Jinnah and it became the sole voice of the Indian Muslims. The need to transform Muslim majority states into official was enshrined in the Lahore Resolution of 1940 which represented the formation of Muslim nationalist discourse and not an ideological breakthrough. The qualitative research methodology, which involves the writing on the documents on the constitution, party resolutions, speeches and the colonial documents, is the historical approach.

Keywords: Pakistan movement, Muhammad Ali Jinnah, All-India Muslim league, Communal Politics, Partition of 1947.

INTRODUCTION

The historical antecedence of All India Muslim League can be at least partially related to the political, social and constitutional reforms that subsequently followed the adoption of the British colonial rule in India. The League was not a separatist organization at the onset but a constitutional stand that aimed at protecting the interests of the Muslims in the system of colonialism that was gradually turning out to be more representative and majoritarian. In order to define the sources of it, one has to examine the issue of the Muslim political decline since 1857, the impact of the colonial reforms and the formation of a new Muslim political awareness.

The Revolt of 1857 was a disastrous event, and turning point of the Indian Muslims. The British government was inclined to believe that the key initiator of the revolt that led to their political solitude and inability to receive any benefits associated with the administrative position were Muslims (Metcalf and Metcalf, 2012). The death of the Mughal state and the unification of the British authority made the Muslim elites extremely unsafe to stay permanently in the inferior position in the new colonialist system. This fear was increased by the relative socio-economic modernization of Hindus particularly in the field of Western education and employment in the government (Jalal, 1985).

Muslim reformists were reacting to this crunch by seeking solutions of adjusting to it, rather than struggling against it. Sir Syed Ahmad Khan and his Aligarh Movement which emphasized on modernity, political loyalty to Britain and communal self-empowerment were one of the main personalities in this era (Lelyveld, 1978). Sir Syed said that Muslims were distinct people with their own political interests and warned that it should not indulge in mass politics that was dominated by the majority of the Hindu, particularly the Indian National Congress (Ahmad, 1967). Although he had never propelled a particular political party during his lifetime, his ideas became the intellectual foundation of future Muslims in their political organization.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Following literature have been reviewed for the study:

The Minority Politics of Muslims in the British Colonialism.

The radical politics of dislocation, socio-economic degradation and the logic of the colonial rule of the Indian territory was met by the politics of Muslim minority which was shaped by the response to the radical political displacement during the time of British colonial rule. Once the British power was centralized after 1857, Muslims started to feel not as a religious nation, but as a political minority that should be represented in a specific manner and be guaranteed in the constitution. This perception characterized Muslim politics as either suspicious of loyalty, or as having a constitutional organized politics that ultimately laid the basis to communal politics in the late colonial India.

The change of the British Raj played a very significant role in shifting the power balance in South Asia. The Revolt of 1857 did not happen, and, in its turn, marked the start of official acknowledgement of the power of Mughal and political marginalization of the Muslim population (British authorities were inclined to perceive them as a rebelling group, as a whole) (Metcalf and Metcalf, 2012). As a result, the Muslims lacked access to the state patronage, recruitment to the army as well as opportunities to hold administrative positions during the first years of the colonial rule. Instead, the Hindu communities particularly in the metropolitan regions adapted more rapidly to the English education and the colonial societies and brought about an increase in social economic disparity (Hardy, 1972).

This was a comparative insecurity that caused a political insecurity among the Muslim elites. Unlike the Hindu majority, the Muslim minority feared that when the representative government is founded on numbers strength, they will always be left behind as mere subordinates. These fears were not merely imaginary as they were backed by the initial colonial rules that emphasized on competition tests, property ownership and even electoral representation which was not conducive to the Muslims due to their low socio-economic status (Brown, 1994).

In response, Muslim politics during the late nineteenth century was practical and communalist in an effort to defend themselves instead of anti-colonialism. Reformists such as Sir Syed Ahmad Khan had said that Muslims ought to cooperate with the British and education in modern schools ought to be given the priority in order to be politically viable. Sir Syed was categorically against interference in the mass national politics and he had warned that democratic institutions would accord the Hindu majority at the expense of the Muslims (Ahmad, 1967). His ideas classified Muslims as a different category in politics and their interests did not coincide with those which were being voiced by the new Indian nationalism.

This was aggravated by the formation of the Indian national congress in 1885 that escalated the tension of the Muslims. The congress was to represent the entire Indians yet most Muslims believed that it was dominated by the social, cultural and economic rights of the Hindus. The congressional representatives demanded representative government, reforms of civil services and linguistic nationalism were considered as a threat to the Muslim political self-rule rather than nationalist inclusiveness (Pandey, 1990). The efforts of Muslims in the Congress, therefore, until the first decades were comparatively small and mistrustful.

Colonial constitutional reforms also led to the organization of the politics of the minority Muslims. Without protection of the minority, the Indian Councils Act of 1892 and subsequent reform legalized the majority rule and institutionalized the legislative councils.

The Muslim leaders began to demand that the formal political protection was the ingredient that made the communities to exist. This led to the Simla Deputation of 1906 in which the Muslim elites came to the Viceroy to have separate electorates and proportional representation. This was enhanced by the British response when it realized that it was effecting Muslims as a distinct political entity hence communal representation was good and essential (Robinson, 1974).

It was a breakthrough in the politics of the Muslim minority as separate electorates came in with the MorleyMinto Reforms of 1909. Although critics in the future days came out and asserted that this policy had contributed towards the increase of the communal differences, Muslim leaders at the time considered it as a necessary defense of the constitution against Hindu domination (Hardy, 1972).

The Muslim politics was still upscale and constitutionalist during this period. There were other groupings such as the All-India Muslim League which were initially pressure groups which demanded negotiative concessions and not mass mobilization and independence. Most patriotism towards the British Crown came as a strategic requirement and not as an ideological obligation. Muslim leaders thought that the best way of ensuring security against vagaries of democratic majoritarianism was through cooperation with the colonial masters (Jalal, 1985).

The politics of Muslim minority were not in motion either. The small reforms went with the growing strength of the Congress, the growing increments in the electoral politics which slowly politicised Muslim identity. Muslims were already being identified as a minority in religion and as a political community whereby collective right was awarded. The communal contest in provincial and local levels also helped in this change as all jobs, education and political office were also to be contested based on religion (Pandey, 1990).

The needs of Muslims were reflective of other concerns that were more significant in the sovereignty, political and equality. Such fears would be reflected in the autonomy and nationhood principles in the future but it began with the experience of minority in the colonial rule. The British colonialism of the Muslim minority politics was an irrational response to the political marginalization of the population, demographic realities, and the structure of the colonial rule. The politics of the early Muslims was caused by insecurity rather than separatism and centered on the constitutional guarantees, community representation, and negotiated division of authority. Nevertheless, introducing communal identity to the colony politics, this minority experience also resulted in the next metamorphosis of Muslim political requirements, which shifted to protection in India in order to divide the state.

The Muslim Hindu Cooperation and Constitutional Reforms.

It is the great influence in the development of constitutional change during the British colonialism which largely affected the relations between Hindu and Muslim in India increasing the political inclusion as well as showing the boundaries of structural cooperation between the two communities. In spite of the fact that reforms were intended to gradually lead to the self government it was operating within a system that supported the principles of majoritarianism and politics of competition. This atmosphere enhanced the social anxieties and ultimately curtailed the prospects of long term co-operation between the Hindu and Muslim political leadership.

The first efforts in the representative government were the Indian Councils Act of 1892 and 1909 which was the first step towards representative government. The Morley Minto Reforms introduced separate electorates of Muslims in 1909, which according to the

colonialists was a protection of the minority interests. The Muslim leaders also viewed separate electorates as a significant hedge against the numerical dominance of Hindus and by most Hindu leaders as a policy of division that undermined the unity of Indians (Hardy, 1972). Although controversial, the initial effect of these reforms was some kind of collaboration between the Indian national congress and the All-India Muslim league particularly when the politics of the Lucknow pact of 1916 were applied that was a period of rare agreement on the demands at the constitutional level (Brown, 1994).

The Lucknow Pact established that co-operation was possible when the constitutional provisions were open to receive the minority assurances and nationalistic aspirations. The congress accepted the separate electorates and the Muslim league lobbied Congress demands of more self-rule. This cooperation was, though, conditional. It was not pegged on a shared ideology but on the strategic orientation to fight against the colonial rule. The differences showed once again following the change in political conditions.

Today, the Government of India Act of 1919 (Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms) enhanced the legislature councils and introduced the notion of diarchy in the provinces. Although these reforms increased the participation of the Indians in the governance, it also increased the provincial level politics. Weak and divided power due to the creation of diarchy suppressed self-governance and popular satisfaction. The reforms failed to address the representation and autonomy issue to Muslims properly with particular reference to the Hindu dominated provinces that the Muslims minority found to be politically exposed (Metcalf and Metcalf, 2012).

Mass politics that started after the World War I transformed the relationship between Hindu and Muslims. It did not take long before the Khilafat Non-Cooperation group re-established a brief-lived communal cooperation with the failure boasting deep ideological rifts. The political tactic of mass mobilization and civil disobedience was becoming mainstream with the Congress, and the leaders of the Muslim community were concerned that mass mobilization would cause the majority to become a political force (Pandey, 1990). The collapse of long-term cooperation at this point was a pointer of the collapse of the national unity with unequal demography force.

In actual sense, the Act upheld high unitary qualities within the center and failed to provide possible constitutional considerations to Muslim minority in Hindu dominated provinces. These apprehensions were reinforced by the experience of Congress ministries in the 1937 elections whereby the interests of the Muslims increasingly got sidelined in the majoritarian provincial governments. Consequently, the 1935 Act was a watershed in that it provided impetus to the calls by the Muslims to have constitutional autonomy and ultimately a separate homeland where the Muslims could exercise their political, cultural and economic rights.

This knowledge became the breakthrough into the ideological and strategic socio-political realm of Muslims. Rather than seek a partial security under an all-India regime where the Hindu majority had the numbers, the League moved on with the case of structural autonomy as the only option of self-preservation possible. It is not an impulsive or expedient transformation but a rational response to frequent failures in the constitution, the political marginalisation. It gave intellectual and political justification to the necessity of having separate Muslim state, which was demanded as a necessity to survive and not as a choice and eventually led to the establishment of Pakistan, as a sovereign state of Muslims of South Asia.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of the research is the Nationalist Theory in particular references to the constructivist/modernist approaches of nationalism, which view national identities as historic, as opposed to primordial or fixed. In this regard, nationalism may be construed to refer to as a response to the changing political, institutional and socio-economic conditions, especially the colonialism. The evolution of the All-India Muslim League is presented as the example of the defensive nationalism because the process of creating the insecurity of the minority within the imperial political system, in which the principles of the majoritarian democracy were dominating. The research views the Muslim nationalism as a contingent political project rather than the inevitability of products of religious dissimilarity, and the perception of the failure of inclusive leadership, which led to the emergence of Muslim nationalism in South Asia. The theoretical perspective is also based on the distinction between cultural nationalism and political nationalism whereby, the Pakistani demand is the product of a process of constitutional nationalism to exclusivist nationalism in which pluralist arrangements were found to be unsustainable. In theory, the achievement of the Lahore Resolution is the culmination of nationalism, or as far as it went, its identity, its terrestrial and sovereign nature, being summed up in an actual political plan.

Research Gap

Although the political development of the Pakistan movement has been greatly studied, significant loopholes exist in the scholarly information of the way the Muslim nationalism developed as a process through experience, leadership and failure of the institution. Much of the surviving literature is about historic events, generally: the Lahore Resolution, the 1946 elections and Partition, and usually cites them as the inevitable result rather than poses the question of the contingent paths that brought them about. This temperament limits a more accurate understanding of how the constitutional practices and the everyday rule transformed the Muslim political conduct with a duration of time.

The very high concentration on the elite leadership discourse and the neglect of the role of non-elite actors and provincial politics in the process of mass mobilization is one of the biggest possible gaps. Despite the central role of leadership, minimum has been given to the transformation of local grievances, economic insecurities and cultural anxieties into concerted political action in different regions.

Methodological Approach

The qualitative historical research design is the methodological approach of this research, and it attempts to comprehend political ideologies, the construction of identity and the discussion of nationalism over time. The qualitative approaches are particularly applicable to the case of the exploration of the formation of the nationalist movements, as it is not concerned with the numerical, meaning, and location. The research is anchored on the critical review of textual analysis of primary and secondary sources. The main sources will be the constitutional documents and party resolutions, electoral records, official correspondence and speeches of the key players in the political arena that will provide a direct insight into the motives, maneuvers, as well as ideological shifts of Muslim leadership. The secondary sources are secondary literature on history, theoretic literature on nationalism and postcolonial literature that contextualizes the actions of the League within the wider discourse of colonial rule and ethno-communal politics. The thematic analysis procedure assists the research in determining recurrent trends in which the research enables identification of minority insecurity, constitutional bargaining, leadership approach and gradual politicization of religiousness. Thematic interpretation is employed along with a

chronological approach to track down continuities and discontinuities in the Muslim politics between 1906 and 1947.

Analysis

Following discussion highlights details of the study:

Reorientation of the league and Leadership of Muhammad Ali Jinnah.

The transformation of the All-India Muslim League, a small political party with almost no efficiency in the past, into a nationwide movement with an army of followers is inalienably linked with the figure of Muhammad Ali Jinnah. The factors that completely changed Muslim politics in the late colonial India, and ultimately led to the Pakistan formation were his political vision and constitutionalism, as well as his strategic skills. The Jinnah leadership did not just happen and was purely reactive, but had gradually increased due to the frequent constitutional failure, majoritarian dominance and systematic marginalization of Muslims in the evolving politics of British India.

Initially, Jinnah had offered to be an excellent advocate of the Hindu-Muslim unity and constitutional cooperation. He was regarded as a representative of unity in a broad sense as he believed that the interests of the Muslims could be maintained in a united India through the assistance of the constitutional guarantees and negotiated deals which he did in the early twentieth century (Jalal, 1985). This step is however not inconsistent but is politically expedient. The first unity that Jinnah confirmed was founded on the perception that the rights of the minority would be upheld via democratic system- a perception that was constantly undermined as the political events continued in the following years after 1920s.

The constitutional talks came to a naughty end and the experience of Congress supremacy more so, the experience of Congress supremacy following the provincial elections in 1937, proved to be the point of turning point in the political career of Jinnah. This action of Congress ministries in the provinces with majority population of Hindus had tremendous influence on political awareness of Muslims. Many Muslims felt that in the absence of mandatory provisions, majoritarian democracy would be Hindu domination with any policies that appeared culturally obtrusive and politically marginalizing (Jalal, 1985; Metcalf and Metcalf, 2012). Jinnah was right when he interpreted such developments that indicated that goodwill could never guarantee Muslim political security.

The constitutional talks proved to be a failure and the experience of Congress supremacy particularly, the experience of Congress supremacy following the provincial elections in the year 1937 turned out to be the turning point of the political course of Jinnah. The political awareness of Muslims was affected by this action of Congress ministries in the Hindu majority provinces to a great extent. Majorities of Muslims felt that with no enforced guarantees majoritarian democracy would turn into Hindu domination any policies that appeared culturally intrusive, as well as politically marginalizing (Jalal, 1985; Metcalf and Metcalf, 2012). Jinnah was right in his understanding of these developments that demonstrated that goodwill could never guarantee the political security of the Muslims.

Tracing back to Constitutional Shields and Two-Nation Theory.

The change in the consciousness of the Muslims in British India is a long but dramatic one that was introduced through the politics of political seeking constitutional protection to adoption of Two-Nation Theory. The Two-Nation Theory finally failed to materialize as a denial of coexistence, but a pragmatic way of seeking to overcome systematic inequality and continuous political marginalization.

In the early twentieth century, the political leadership of Muslims was primarily trying to find safety in united India. The constitutional demands such as the separate electorates, weightage, and provincial autonomy were pegged on the fact that Muslims were a numerically minor group, with another historical, cultural and religious identity. When Indian Councils Act of 1909 was introduced, it was a good move by Muslim leaders as they were required to have an option that would not help marginalize them on the political scene (Jalal, 1985).

This was even institutionalized by establishing All-India Muslim League in 1906. The League was not advancing the concept of separation; first of all, it was being asked to be loyal to the British Crown in the process of negotiating the protection of the Muslim interests under the new constitutional system in India. This was a credible plan that demonstrated the assurance that communal coexistence and political cooperation were achievable through a legal and constitutional action (Metcalf and Metcalf, 2012).

However, further changes in the constitution served to show the restrictive character of the safeguard-based politics. The Acts of the Government of India 1919 and the succeeding Government of India Act 1935 that ensued resulted in the Representative institutions being larger but at the same time institutionalized majority rule without adequate protection to minority. These reforms disrupted an inherent imbalance that democratic procedures within a highly plural society were too enriching the Hindu majority (Talbot, 2015).

It was a turning point when they were exposed to provincial governments that were recently formed under the pressure of elections that took place in 1937. The outrage of Muslims over cultural imposition, discrimination in employment and political marginalization increased. The policies which were perceived as the promotion of Hindu symbolism and centralization gave the Muslims the feeling that they needed more assurance by the constitution in maintaining their group identity (Jalal, 1994).

Muslims in Provincial Autonomy: Political, Economic and cultural conditions since Government of India Act of 1935.

The case of the Muslims in the Indian subcontinent under the Government of India Act of 1935 was a time of a turning point in the history of the Muslim political awareness. This was the period that saw the limitations of the governance created by the constitution and the increased Muslim anxieties about political, cultural and economic discrimination in a Hindu majority system. Despite the fact that implementation of the 1935 Act had gone through provincial autonomy and increased representative institutions, the implementation of the Act at the end of 1937 elections indicated that there were structural inequalities that were underlying and had negative impacts on the interests of the Muslims.

The provincial elections that occurred in the year 1937 proved to be a turning point. The Indian national congress and the Muslim league failed to conquer most provinces. This meant that the Muslims were not considered in any of the great political politics even though they represented a large population group. The Congress refusal to establish coalition governments with the Muslim League was in support of the opinion that the Muslims will be sidelined in a democratic arrangement whereby the numerical majority rules (Jalal, 1985).

The Muslim grievances were worsened under the Congress ministries (1937-1939) under the political, cultural and economic arena. The Muslims were discriminated in terms of government jobs, unequal resources allocation, and promotion of symbols and policies that appeared to support the Hindu culture. Muslims considered educational activities such

as spreading of the Wardha Scheme and introducing of Hindu religious symbolism into the general life as the attempts of culture homogenization (Metcalf and Metcalf, 2012).

This was also in terms of economic insecurity that caused the insecurity of the Muslims. The economical position of the majority of Muslims and particularly of the minority provinces such as United Provinces, Bihar, Bombay, etc. was not favorable compared with that of Hindu commercial classes and professional classes. The fact that the Congress rule did not provide Muslims with access to most of them, such as government jobs and the capability to engage in economic activities, also contributed to making the relative deprivation even more significant (Talbot, 2015).

The Lahore Resolution (1940) and the Demand of Pakistan.

The Resolution of Lahore in 1940 takes the centre stage of constitutional and political growth of the Muslim nationalism in South Asia. It was born of centuries of the Muslim experience of colonial constitutional reforms, and of recurrent frustrations by Indian nationalism politics who were failing or refusing more and more to hitch the interests of the Muslims on even terms.

Until 1940, the All-India Muslim League principally insisted on constitutional assurance in an independent India. The approach to co-exist was underscored by Muslim leaders to include the concept of federalism, provincial autonomy, and protection of minority. However, in 1937 the Congress rule, which succeeded provincial elections, basically transformed the political thinking of the Muslims. The view that they promoted cultural domination, centralized power and marginalization by the government among others contributed to the suspicion by the Muslims that they will end up marginalized in a Hindu majority system. The events demonstrated that a numerical democracy devoid of share of power would be changed to the majority rule instead of inclusive governance (Jalal, 1985; Talbot, 2015).

Reorganization of Muslim demands into politics was closely connected with the political leadership of Muhammad Ali Jinnah. Jinnah was not an ideological extremist but as a politician, he was realistic due to the transformation of his beliefs between a constitutional and a Muslim nation. His arguments would go on claiming and claiming that Muslims were not a minority and another nation with its own history, social structures and political aspirations. This argument became further reinforced when Congress could not settle on enforceable guarantees of Muslim equality several occasions (Ahmed, 2017).

In March 1940, the annual sitting of the Muslim league passed the Lahore Resolution to determine the independent states in the Muslim majority states of northwest and east Indian states. The language used in the Resolution had been deliberately fairly scrupulous and flexible. It has not addressed Pakistan by name but neither has it given a rigid constitutional order. Rather it emphasized sovereignty, self-governments and protection of minorities within the proposed political units. Such ambiguous nature also allowed the Resolution to serve as a declaration of Muslim political intent and a bargaining tool of the late-colonial constitutional framework (Metcalf and Metcalf, 2012).

The League of Nations and Mobilization of the Masses and its Right to Muslim Representations.

One of the attributes of 1930s and 1940s politics of Muslims under the British Empire was the change of the All-India Muslim League, which had been a pressure group dominated by the elite, into a mass political organization. The centre of this change was that the League was supposed to represent the political will of the Indian Muslims as a united community. This declaration was pegged on the failures of the inter-communal cooperation

and successful mobilization policies which had been hatched under the leadership of Muhammad Ali Jinnah. The League formed a feeling of the Muslim nationhood upon which it developed, based on organizational growth, electoral politics and symbolic rhetoric, which gave it the power to voice the interests of the Muslim people in the sub-continent.

The mass mobilization of the Indian Muslims with the help of the League was the factor that turned out to be the decisive element in the reconstitution of the subcontinent politics. The League could demonstrate itself as the political will of the Indian Muslims enhancing organization structures, participation in electoral politics and generating a feeling of common identity among the Muslims. Ideology and practical evidence based on this statement was the cornerstone of the call of Pakistan and transformed the politics of the Muslims who were being championed by the elite and made it a national movement. Political leadership and identity within an organization is important in shaping a nation-state and this can be illustrated through mobilization of masses and collective representation that is headed by the League.

Negotiation and Political Stalemate during the Late-Colonial times.

The final phase of the British Indians colonial rule was the period of tremendous constitutions wrangling and increasing stalemate one that was inescapable in the eventual partitioning Political events of the late 1930s necessitated the process of mass mobilization. In 1935, the Government of India Act led to the provincial autonomy and direct election to the provincial legislatures. The weaknesses in the structure of the Muslim league came into play during these elections which took place in 1937. The congress registered huge victories in the majority of the provinces, but the league performed poorly in non-Muslim majority provinces (Metcalf and Metcalf, 2012). This defeat in the elections demonstrated how the League depended on the side of the elites and was lacking the ground touch. The leaders understood that the League could not have the Muslim political interest unless it had a broad base particularly the provinces where the Muslims were minorities.

Electoral Victory of 1946 and The Road to Partition.

The British India provincial elections of 1946 were a turning point in the political history of the sub-continent. Such elections not only gave the All-India Muslim League the status of the only face of the Indian Muslims but they also led to the partition of India and the formation of Pakistan. The elections were indicative of the forty years of Muslim political organization, constitutional exasperation, and communal identity establishment, as well the revelation of the systemic irreconcilability between the vision of a strong centralized Indian nation set forth by the Congress and the call to Muslim self-rule set forth by the League.

Elections of 1946 were held on the basis of distinct electorates that were put in place by the colonial reform, especially, the Government of India Act of 1935. The Muslims cast their votes in constituencies that were reserved to them so the League was given a chance to prove that it was an authentic representative group. It was a huge success of the League. The party secured close to all the Muslim seats in the Muslim dominant provinces such as Punjab, Bengal, Sindh, and the North-West Frontier Province, whereas in the Muslim minorities it performed minimally, but with a strategic approach to gain influence in strategic areas (Metcalf and Metcalf, 2012). The result of the elections enabled Jinnah to authoritatively say that the Muslim League represented the majority of Indian Muslims that enhanced the bargaining power of the group in negotiations with both the British government and the Congress.

After elections, the League used its legitimacy to advance the realization of the Lahore Resolution of 1940. The main point that Jinnah insisted on was a constitutional settlement that acknowledges Muslim-majority regions as the foundation of sovereign self-determination. The Political Impossibility of the British government or the Congress to deny these demands was due to the electoral mandate of the League. The League influenced the negotiations during the post-election period such as those that involved provincial autonomy and federation affairs because the League insisted that Pakistan was a minimum requirement to ensure Muslim political security (Robinson, 1974).

Communal tension and violence were also experienced during the period after elections of 1946. The riots in Bengal, Punjab and Bihar provided the urgency to the resolution of Muslim political needs in terms of the territorial solution. The success of the Muslim league in the electoral campaigns coupled with the general feeling of insecurity among the Muslims in the Hindu dominated areas led to the feeling that nothing except partition could help in averting further political marginalization and securing communal safety (Hardy, 1972). In this regard, the Pakistani demand by the League was a political plan and reaction to social facts.

The 1946 elections marked a turning point in British Indian history, and the establishment of the Muslim League as the voice of Indian Muslims as well as gave a boost to the events that resulted in partition. Such electoral policy, mass mobilization and expression of the uniqueness of Muslims by the League transformed the anxiety into an action which legitimized the demand of Pakistan. The elections show how the democracy process in combination with the communal identity and structural political divisions can turn the minority mobilization into the formation of the new nation-state. The electoral victory of 1946 therefore signified the end of decades of political struggle by Muslims as well as the commencement of the last stage of partition of South Asia.

Finding

The paper concludes that the Muslims politics in British India did not experience a sudden ideological break, but it was an experience-based change that moved across over time. Constitutional failure, majoritarian politics, and recurrent failure in the power-sharing arrangements became the main factors that influenced the transformation of the All-India Muslim League as an elite pressure group to become a mass nationalist movement. The initial Muslim appeals to constitutional protection indicated readiness to live peacefully in a united India, but the protection did not work effectively in practice especially when provincial autonomy came into place in 1937.

One of the major results is that leadership was at the heart of transforming political grievances into a rational nationalist project. The League under the leadership of Muhammad Ali Jinnah managed to redefine the Muslims not as a minority group of people but as a political nation. Ideological clarity and organizational discipline were achieved by Jinnah, his constitutionalism, focus on legality and insistence on parity and the League was able to mobilize Muslims of various jurisdictions and social classes.

The analysis also concludes that the 1937-1939 Congress rule was a pivotal triggering point of Muslim political consciousness transformation. The cultural imposition, political disenfranchisement, and economic marginalization of the Muslims under the Congress ministries only added to the perceived threats of the Muslims that the practice of majoritarian democracy would simply mean a lifetime of subjugation. It is these lived experiences that made the Two-Nation Theory credible since it was created not as a theological doctrine but as a political solution.

The other significant discovery is the electoral politics role. The 1945-46 elections confirmed the status of the League as the representative of the political will of Muslims and constitutional discussion turned into the competition of the sovereignty. Not because of tactical mistakes but because of structural incompatibilities between nationalism of a centralized type and autonomy demands, late-colonial negotiations, such as the Cripps Mission or Cabinet Mission Plan, failed.

On the whole, the information provided proves that the demand toward Pakistan was the cumulative effect of constitutional frustration, mass mobilization, and strategic leadership in a colonial government that was unable to balance diversity with democracy.

CONCLUSION:

Muslim Politics and the Partition Road.

The history of Muslim politics in British India, including the early minority movements to the subsequent legislative and socio-political agitation of the desire to create Pakistan is an intricate mix of historical, constitutional and socio political reasons. During the late colonial era, the Muslim population which was initially alienated following the rebellion of 1857 slowly attained a strong political awareness. Although these actions were aimed at safeguarding the interests of Muslims, it was also institutionalizing communal identities and pre-empting a more aggressive political agenda.

The colonial period constituted both the opportunities and challenges to the political leaders of the Muslims, as constitutional reforms in the period, including the Morley-Minto Reforms in 1909 and the Government of India Act in 1935. They gave Muslims formal representation and the chance to engage in government, on the one hand; and on the other, they showed how inept the protection of minorities would work in a system dominated by majority numbers. This was especially brought to light in the 1937 provincial elections which saw the shame of the Muslims in the Hindu dominated provinces with Congress ministries. The perceived majoritarianism of policies, coupled with the inability of the inter-communal cooperation, created widespread fear and assisted the Muslim league to transform into a mass political movement gradually, even though led by Muhammad Ali Jinnah as an elite pressure group.

This change was facilitated by the leadership of Jinnah. Having been initially devoted to the principle of Hindu-Muslim unity and constitutional negotiation, Jinnah, in the course of the 1920s-1930s, was driven by events that led to the conclusion that Muslims could not afford political security through goodwill and compromise. He transformed the Muslim league into the one representative of the Muslim interests with focus on organizational discipline, mass mobilization and ideological clarity. Around the end of the 1930s, the League more and more started to position Muslims as an autonomous nation, who should not only be given protection, but also sovereignty and self-determination. It was this reorientation which prepared the intellectual and political groundwork of the expression of the Two-Nation Theory and of the Lahore Resolution of 1940.

Future Recommendations

According to the results, the following areas can be suggested in terms of future research and academic investigation. First, it is required to be conducted on micro level regional studies which look into the ways in which Muslim political consciousness has developed in various provinces like Bengal, Punjab, Sindh and the United Provinces. These studies would go beyond all-India histories and expose the way the local socio-economic situations influenced the politics of support to the Muslim League and the need of Pakistan.

Second, the comparative nationalist approach ought to be pursued in the future, putting Muslim nationalism in South Asia into intercultural comparison with other minority nationalism in colonial experience, like Ireland or Palestine. This would further enhance theoretical knowledge regarding the role of constitutional exclusion and majoritarian democracy to causes of separatists.

Third, there is a need to pay more attention to non-elite actors, such as students, women, religious scholars, and local activists who remain underresearched about their role in mass mobilization. Leadership persons remain at the center; nevertheless, grass-root engagement that is to be analyzed systematically led to success of the League.

Fourth, the institutional legacies of pre-Partition politics on the postcolonial state formation of Pakistan should be studied by scholars in the long term. These problems like civil-military, centre-province conflicts and constitutional instability can be clearly explained by referring to their origins in the late-colonial negotiation and the League insistence on centralized leadership in times of crisis.

Lastly, the future research ought to be more participatory of cross-disciplinary approaches by utilizing history, political theory and sociology to understand identity formation, nationalism, and state-building. Oral histories, discourse analysis, and archival research can all be used to offer a more in-depth picture of the problem of Muslim nationalism that is not based on elite politics.

The recommendations are intended to take scholarship away from oppositional arguments about inevitability and contingency, and into a more process-based, sophisticated vision of the development of Muslim politics and the establishment of Pakistan.

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