



PARTITION OF BRITISH INDIA: CAUSES REVISITED

Dr. Anil Kumar Misra
Head, Department of history
V.S.S.D. College Kanpur
& **Ekagra Pandey**
V.S.S.D. College Kanpur

India always remained a place of interest for the foreign invaders and traders due to its enormous wealth. The British came to India as traders, they gained large share of profits; The situation in India was suitable for them to gain control over large territory because the entire nation was factionalized making their rule suitable and easy to gain profit. The British were the main factor for the growth of communalism in India. The communalism using the religious sentiments though politically motivated; was the main reason for the partition of India. The strongest arm of the communal triangle was the British rulers. They were neither the true friends of Muslims nor the foes of Hindus; they were the true friend of British imperialism acted on the tested and tried maxim of "DIVIDE ET IMPERA". Lord John Elphinstone, Governor of Bombay (1853-1860), wrote in a minute, "divide et Impera was the old roman motto and it should be ours." Sir John Seeley, another eminent British civilian wrote, "The existence, side by side, hostile creeds among the Indian people is one of the strong points in our political position in India." Until the seventies of the 19th century it settled the imperial interest to support the Hindus and they did it. The early British economic policies and educational policies benefited the Hindus more than the Muslims. The British looked upon the Muslim as chief conspirators in the revolt of 1857. The British government deliberately adopted the policy of suppressing the Muslims. However a change in British Policy is perceptible towards the 1870s. The Hindus politically more advanced than the Muslims, demanded rights, introduction of representative government etc. The Hindu posed a serious threat to the stability of British rule in India then the politically, economically and educationally backward Muslims. This marked the beginning of a change in the working at the grassroots of British policy, W. W. Hunter's book, *The Indian Musalmans* (1871) described 'The Muslim too weak for rebellion' and pleaded for a change of official attitude towards the Muslim community'. The British in this way started influencing communalism, Sir Syed Ahmed Khan who previously supported unity between 'Hindu and Muslims' by saying two eyes of a beautiful bride, i.e. 'INDIA' later on he went on establishing the doctrine of Hinduphobia to serve his interest for his community, In this regard he said in his speech, 16 March 1888 where he maintained¹ that Hindu and Muslims were not only two nations but as two warring nations who could never lead a common political life, should ever British quit India. Apart from the reasons, there are certain other reasons responsible for the partition like the growing disharmony between the masses formation of religious reform movements, communalism in other respect like writing of History communal overtones. But far and more responsible reason for partition that led to the partition was the formation of Muslim league. Though not only from the sides of Muslims but for in response other section of societies as to serve their religious interest by political means formed their groups like Hindu Mahasabha. The Muslim league was formerly inaugurated on December 30, 1906 with the aim to

protect Muslim interests, to promote the feeling of loyalty towards the relations between Muslims and other communities. Though in the late 30s of 20th century Muslim league again continued its activity, By 1934 M. A. Jinnah believed Congress as pro Hindu party even on the matter of talks the league put a condition always for negotiation to claim herself as Hindu party (for Congress). Though being a nationalist party Congress refused to be called as Hindu party. The two nation theory was given firstly by the poet and political thinker Iqbal. Inspired by the spirit of Pan Islamism Iqbal declared at the Allahabad session of the All India Muslim League held in 1930, "I have no hesitation in declaring that if the principle that the Indian Muslim is entitled to full and free development on the lines of his own culture and tradition in his own Indian homeland is recognised as the basis of a permanent communal settlement. I would like to see the Punjab, North West Frontier Province, Sind and Baluchistan amalgamated into single state. Self government within the British empire, the formation of consolidated north west Indian Muslims state appears to me the final destiny of the Muslims at least of the north west India". The idea was taking place in the mind of young graduate at Cambridge, Rahmat Ali, He visualised the area and coined the name Pakistan in 1933. Rahmat Ali was the first to invite attention to the Hindu-Muslim differences resulting in his propounding the two nation theory. On 28 January 1933 he issued a declaration entitled 'Now or Never': Are we to live or perish forever'? which he addressed to the world: "India was neither a country nor a nation. Its heterogeneity was a proven fact. The Muslims were a separate and distinct nation. 'Our religion, culture, history, tradition, economic system, laws of inheritance, succession and marriage are basically and fundamentally different from those of the people living on the rest of India'. The ideals which moved the Muslims were different from those which inspired the Hindus. These differences extended to the minutest details of their lives. 'We do not inter-dine; we do not inter-marry. Our national customs and calendars, even our diet and dress are different'. To force these Muslims into an Indian federation would sound 'the death-knell of the Muslim nation in India forever.' What would this mean to Islam and the World? He reminded his readers that these 30 million Muslims of 'Pakistan' counted for about one-tenth of the entire Muslim world. Their homeland constituted an area four times that of Italy, three times that of Germany and twice that of France. In population, they were seven times as large as France or Italy. Therefore, they 'deserve and most demand the recognition of a separate national status by the grant of a separate Federal Constitution from the rest of India'. The Indian Pakistanian problem is not an inter-communal issue and will never be solved on inter-communal lines. It is an international problem and, therefore, will submit itself to a permanent solution on that basis alone.² In 1942 Jinnah explained to professor Coupland that, 'Pakistan would be Moslem state or states comprising North West frontiers province, the Panjab, the sind on one side and Bengal on other. The demand became more prominent in the Lahore session of Muslim league and they demanded their state in memorandum to the cabinet mission. Later on the most important event, the Direct action day happened after which riots started, seeming inevitable and logical the Congress accepted the demand of partition, which got its final shape by Atlee's statement on February 20, 1947 of "Divide and Quit" policy. Then the Indian independence act came, that contained the provisions of partition and other provision related to the further administration. That act contained various important provisions related to the transfer of power and partition of the

British India. Two states were partitioned the first was the Panjab and the second was the Bengal both respectively became the part of West and East Pakistan.

“An Act to make provision for the setting up in India of two independent Dominions, to substitute other provisions for certain provisions of the Government of India Act, 1935, which apply outside those Dominions, and to provide for, other matters consequential on or connected with the setting up of those Dominions. - 18th July 1947”³

The partition further happened on the provisions of the Indian Independence Act of 1947. There were many consequences that were faced by the citizens of the then India. First and foremost the mass exodus that happened leading the migration of communities from Pakistan to India and vice versa. The migration has had many dire consequences, major influx happened in Punjab region both the sides saw the bloodshed. Because of based on religious basis, the riots took place. Again the major problem was the settlement of refugees. After partition, massive population exchanged occurred between the two countries. Based on 1951 census of displaced persons 7,226,000 Muslims went to India from Pakistan while 7,249,000 Hindus and Sikhs moved to India from Pakistan. The census failed to identify those Muslims who migrated from Pakistan to India. “Once, H C Shourie, who was the Rehabilitation Commissioner of Refugees in New Delhi, told me that several Muslims families from the NWFP region of Pakistan came to India in 1947. It is surprising that the reverse migration, albeit small but very significant, hardly gets any attention from historians”.⁴ Apart from migration and refugee crisis there are some instant and long term causes that are affecting both the nations even the whole world. These problems are affecting from the time of partition to the day till today. One of the important consequences was the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi by Nathuram Godse. Nathuram Godse stated that he killed Gandhi for showing too much leniency towards Pakistan while disregarding the interests of Hindus. Later on Godse was hanged and effect of killing of Gandhi ji by Godse was manifested in the section of the society from which Godse belonged. There are also some effects manifested on the politics of post independent India specifically in the region of Maharastra.

From partition communal violence broke out resulted in killing of millions of innocent people from both the religions. Some long term effects are also seen such as the Kashmir problem, inter country water dispute, growth of militant terrorism. India and Pakistan has already fought four wars respectively in 1947, 1965, and 1971 and in 1999. The first war was just fought after the independence, kabailis supported by Pakistani troops attacked but they were forced to go back leaving the portion of land behind, the next war was fought in 1965 between both the nations resulting in victory of India, after which the Tashkent accord was signed. The remarkable war of 1971, was fought in the time of Indira Gandhi the daughter of Pt. Jawahar lal Nehru, in this war a new nation was created as Bangladesh, liberating it from the atrocities of the Pakistan. The recent war was fought between India and Pakistan in the month of june-july of 1999. When Pakistan breached the accord and captured the heights of Kargil-Drass- Batalik sector. Failing in all such attempts of direct confrontation Pakistan adopted the policy of provoking terrorism in the valley region. Since then the series of talks are carried on that were started from the time of Congress and Muslim league. We will try to revisit all the causes and the consequences throughout this dissertation.

Importance of historical research- Research is done for the purpose of adding something into the existing knowledge, it may be aimed at as an activity which

aims at bringing to light something new. It adds to the existing knowledge through a systematic study or investigation of a particular subject. A prominent scholar B. Sheikh Ali has written, "Research is the activity undertaken to bring out something new, to extend the horizon of knowledge and to contribute some original idea. It is an attempt to make a diligent and systematic inquiry or investigation into a subject, in order to discover facts or revise the known facts or put the facts into theories."

Historical research can constitute either all or any of the three important activities given below:

1. Collection of new data
2. Fresh interpretation of the data already known and
3. Subordination of the data to a principle

Normally research in India is undertaken after completion of post graduation but in some Indian universities the students are given an option of writing a thesis in Master's Degree. It is in form of along essay duly supported by available sources and interpretation. Usually students applies critical methods in completion of his work, but serious research work is done by the students after completion of post graduate degree. Research activities in social science has received greatt encouragement after the establishment of Indian Council of Social Science research and Indian Council of Historical Research. Both these councils financially support not only the institution but also the researchers. Hence the researchers are encouraged to undertake the research work in order to procure degree as well as financial help. To sum up we may say that whatever may be the category of research, its quality and output but it fully depends the labour and working of the researcher who has undertaken this work. A careless researcher will spoil all his work because of the wrong drawn conclusions and observation but a devoted researcher will be able to highlight his work due to his labour sincerity.⁵

Reference:

- 1- A new look at modern Indian history, B. L. Grover & Alka Mehta, S. Chand publications, 2016, Growth of communalism and partition of India, page no. 427.
- 2- Origin and Development of the Idea of Pakistan Abridged Version of History of Partition of India , K.K.Aziz, publication Muslim Deeni Mahaz, 2016, chapter one- two myths, page no. 17
- 3- Indian Independence Act, 1947. ro & ii GEO. 6. CH. 30.
- 4- The new Indian express, when muslims left Pakistan for India, by Vivek shukla, 14 August 2017
- 5- Historiography, Dr. K.L. Khurana and Smt. Sadhana Gupta, Lakshmi Narayan Agarwal publishers, 2003, Research Methodology, Page no. 47