



Historical Background of Pakistan

Pakistan did not come into being overnight. Struggle for equal rights for the Muslims vis-a-vis Hindus in British India is spanned over about 90 years which gradually evolved, shaped and reshaped depending on the circumstances. However, the final product of that long historical struggle came out in the shape of Pakistan.

The Basis of the historical movement for the creation of Pakistan started to form with the outbreak of the War of Independence in 1857. The War of Independence started on 10th of May 1857 in Meerut, a remote and small city of the United Provinces of the subcontinent. Though unsuccessful, it brought many changes, particularly in the political strategies of three parties: The British, the Hindus and the Muslims. The causes of the War of Independence can be broadly divided into six categories, i.e., economic, administrative, political, religious, social and military.

Economic Causes

Before the East India Company's (EIC) rule, India's agriculture Industry and trade were flourishing. However, the British tried to exploit India for their economic gains and fulfil the demands of their industry after the industrial revolution. Moreover, the Indian exports to Britain, i.e. cotton, tea, spices ended up in India as finished goods or were further exported to other countries.

After gaining the right to collect revenue at Bengal in 1765, EIC used the money raised through revenue in Bengal for fighting wars in other parts of India. The Policies of EIC badly affected by *Zamindars*, *Talookdars*, middle-income groups, traders and labourers etc.

Administrative Causes

The EIC administrative machinery in India was inefficient and insufficient which created discontent with the locals. The EIC started annexation of Indian States as part of their expansionist policies under the Doctrine of Lapse. All high posts; civil or military were given to Europeans rather than to the locals. Moreover, unjust and exploitative revenue policies were introduced in India which further fueled belligerence against the EIC.

Political Causes

Among the political causes for the War of Independence 1857, the British expansionist policies in the Indian subcontinent takes a fundamental place. Order of Lord Canning to the Mughal Emperor to leave Red Fort Delhi and stay at Qutab Minar further added an insult to the injury for both the Muslims and Hindus alike, as the Mughal Emperor was the legitimate ruler of India. Moreover, a wave of unrest struck the socio-politico fabric of the Indian

society following the Lord Canning's order that after the demise of Bahadur Shah Zafar the Mughal rule will come to an end and all the property of Mughal rulers will be snatched away.

Social/Religious Causes

The EIC started to extend support to the Christian missionaries after 1813. It is noteworthy that the Christian missionaries were not allowed to come to India before that year. Also, the Religious Disabilities Act was enacted which announced many incentives for those Indians who would convert to Christianity. A law made reforms in Hindu customs. However, they were considered as a distortion of the teaching of Hinduism. It was widely believed after 1813 that the actual mandate of EIC was to convert Indians especially Hindus to Christianity.

Military Causes

The EIC had recruited many Indian locals in its military. However, there was a great disparity in the salaries between Indian and European soldiers. Besides, sepoys were sent to distant-overseas- parts of the Empire but they were not given extra salaries. The Indian sepoys were treated with contempt by their English officers as the English thought they were a superior race and were more advanced than Indian. The Indian sepoys were refused promotion in services as like their English counterparts.

The General Service Enlistment Act, 1856 by Lord Canning, was introduced. The act asked for the soldiers from Bengal to be recruited and posted wherever the Empire needed them. It was greatly resented by the Hindus, as travelling via sea for some Hindus meant leaving the fold of Hinduism. Consequently, out of such discontent, the Indian sepoys revolted.

Immediate Cause

EIC introduced Enfield rifles in the military. Papers with grease like substance covered the bullets of these rifles. The sepoys were to cut the cover with teeth before using it. Rumour spread that the grease substance was made up of the fat of pigs and cows. Therefore, both Muslims and Hindu sepoys refused to cut the cover. They protested against the introduction of this new munition and were arrested. It ultimately ignited the fire of mutiny all over India. However, the Mutiny was, ultimately, suppressed, and the British government officially took over the rule of India from EIC.

Causes for the Failure of War of Independence

For a war to be won, one needs a definite aim and a military discipline apparatus; however, the Indian mutineers lacked clear aim. Every group and faction fought for personal reasons without a central Indian command. Some had a problem with job insecurity, while others had a problem with high taxes, while others were concerned with preserving their rule in their states etc.

Moreover, there was a visible lack of unity among those who were fighting against their oppressors. The revolt was not pre-decided and spontaneous incidents sparked it. It could not start at one time in the whole of India. Therefore, the EIC effectively crushed it.

Moreover, the lack of public support also played a role in the failure of the war. The Educated groups (mainly converted into Christianity), many traders, and lots of peasants did not participate in it because they were blossoming in the rule of the EIC.

Another factor which can be attributed to the failure of the War of Independence 1857 is the lack of national spirit among the Indians. Lucknow, Jhansi and Bihar just revolted to safeguard their rulers' narrow interests rather than safeguarding the larger interest of India. The Mughal ruler and other local rulers had quite weak armies which had no match for the English officers and their war tactics. Therefore, the efficient English officials were able to suppress the revolt in 1857.

Nature of the War of Independence

The War of Independence was not a religious war. It was fought by both religious communities, i.e., Hindus and Muslims alike to reclaim their independence in India. War of independence was fought because of economic and socio-cultural reasons rather than religious reasons.

After the defeat at the hands of EIC, the Hindus blamed that the Muslims were alone responsible for it. They blamed a religious conspiracy against the British by the Muslims.

Hindi/Urdu Controversy

Language is a fundamental means of social-cultural interaction. It may lead to disintegration in societies with cultural diversities. The Urdu language was born in India. India was used to be considered as a golden sparrow regarding its fertile land and workforce. That's why many of invaders, including the Muslims, came to occupy it for different purposes. It happened because when these different people from different regions of the world came to India, they brought with them, over number of other things, their language as well. People like Arabs, Persians and Turks, etc. when mingled with the native people, they exchanged words of their languages and thus with this mingling, a new language emerged which was termed as Urdu, meaning the "language of the troops".

Since the invaders of the Muslim world formed it and emerged during the rule of the Mughals in India, it was termed as the language of the Muslims, and that is why initially it was called "Musalmani". However, there were not only Muslims that spoke or used Urdu, but all the communities in India joined hands for the promulgation and development of that new language. It was not only used as an everyday language, but a large number of literary works appeared in Urdu in all the regions of the sub-continent primarily Deccan, Lucknow, Maisur, Dehli etc. Thus, almost the whole of India contributed to the flourishing of Urdu.

In 1837, Persian was replaced by Urdu as the court and state language, no one objected to that. With the fall of the Mughal Empire, Hindus, however, started looking at Urdu as the

language of the invaders. The British on the other hand, in their disregard for Muslims, adopted the same attitude. Thus, both intentionally started their efforts to get rid of the language of the Muslims. In this regard names of Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Raja Shiv Parshad, Lakshman Singh, Haresh Chandra and Binkam Chatterji, etc., among many others are well known. The first effort was made at the start of the nineteenth century when a new language was formed with the name Hindi in which words of pure Arabic, Persian and Turkish were removed and replaced by Sanskrit words. In that regard in 1809, a Hindu wrote a novel in that very Hindi with the title “Prem Sagar”, but since it was not a full-fledged effort, soon that language went into oblivion.

However, after the War of Independence in 1857 when the British Crown’s wrath fell upon the Muslims, the Hindus considered it to be a ripe moment to get rid of Urdu and replace it with their language – Hindi. The combined, organised effort started in the second half of the nineteenth century. In 1867, the Hindus of Banaras presented a request to their government regarding the replacement of Urdu with Hindi and its Persian script with that of Devnagri script. Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, at that demand remarked that when even the language of a nation is not safe at the hands of other nations in a region, it would be unwise to continue living with them.

Sir Syed, who was, in fact, a great advocate of Hindu-Muslim unity before that incident, started focusing on the cause of Muslims alone. His Scientific Society Gazette presented articles on the importance of Urdu. Similarly, some Muslim newspapers like Noor-ul-Absar and Banaras Gazette also took the responsibility to safeguard their language.

The anti-Urdu process continued when, in 1871, the Governor of Bengal, G. Cambell, banned Urdu in the province at all levels, courts, administration and even schools. The ban on Urdu boosted the Hindus in other regions like NWFP, Punjab, Behar, Sindh, Oudh, etc. to counter Urdu there. Meetings were held of the Hindus in which thousands of them signed memorials supporting the cause of elimination of Urdu. The circumstances became even more hard for the Muslims and their language when Anthony MacDonnel became the governor of UP in 1900. He was a pro-Hindu and thus anti-Muslim. Thus, he dismissed Urdu as the official language of UP, which was in fact considered to be the home of Urdu language. He issued orders and declared Hindi the official language of the province.

Sir Syed’s successors at Aligarh, mainly Nawab Mohsin-ul-Mulk, the Secretary of the Aligarh Trust, took action against MacDonnel’s act. He called for a popular gathering of the supporters of Urdu at Aligarh and openly condemned governor’s work. He also founded Urdu Defense Association, and it was decided that the association would take actions against the doings of the governor. The result of this Muslim response was that Urdu too- along with Hindi- was declared the official language of the province. However, Mohsin-ul-Mulk was not satisfied with this outcome and continued his struggle. When UP got rid of MacDonnel, he founded another association called Anjuman-e-Tarraqi-e-Urdu to counter all future attempts of the Hindus and the English against Urdu.

Formation of Indian National Congress

Amid agitations over many diverse issues against the British Raj by the local Indians, the Indian National Congress was founded on December 28, 1885. Womesh Chunder Bonnerjee was selected as the leader of the Congress. Among its main objectives was the fusion into one national whole of all the different, and till now discordant, elements that constitute the population of India. It also aimed for the gradual regeneration of Indians along all lines, mental, moral, social and political. And the consolidation of the union between England and India, by securing the modification of such of its condition as may be unjust or injurious to the latter country.

An Englishman A.O. Hume founded the Indian National Congress. He was a retired government official with the blessings of Lord Dufferin, the Governor-General of India. When Hume took the scheme to the Governor-General, the latter amended it and gave his blessing on the condition that "*His name in this connection with the scheme of the Congress should not be divulged so long as he remained in the country.*" His condition was faithfully maintained, and none but the men consulted by Mr Hume knew anything about the matter.

Sir Syed was quite critical about the Congress; he asked the Muslims not to join it. A vast majority of people followed his advice. He was of the opinion that if he were told that even the Viceroy, the Secretary of State and the whole House of Commons had openly supported Congress, he would remain firmly opposed to it. The times quoted Sir Syed on 12th November 1888, "*It is my deliberate belief that should the resolution of the native congress be carried into effect; it would be impossible for the British Government to preserve peace, or control in any degree the violence and civil wars which would ensue.*"

The contemporary Muslim Press was also full of criticisms about the Congress. Mohammad an Observer, The Victoria Paper, The Muslim Herald, the Rafiq-i-Hind and Imperial Paper spoke with one voice against it. Moreover, Muslim Organizations and Institutions like Central National Muhammadan Association, Muhammadan Literary Society of Bengal, the *Anjuman-i-Islam* of Madaras, the Dindigal *Anjuman* and the Muhammadan Central Association of Punjab asked the Muslims of Indian not to join Congress as they thought it would never serve the interests of the Muslims of India.

Partition of Bengal

In 1905, the provinces of Bengal and Assam were reconstituted to form two provinces of manageable size. The scheme was sent to London in February 1905. The Province of East Bengal and Assam officially came into being on 16 October 1905.

The whole plan was nothing but a readjustment of administrative boundaries. However, the Hindus resented it. The partition resulted in the creation of Muslim majority province, East

Bengal, which was distasteful to the Hindus. Hindus regarded the partition as an attempt to strangle nationalism in Bengal, where it was more developed than elsewhere. Agitation against the partition included mass meetings, rural unrest, and a “swadeshi” (native) movement to boycott the import of British goods.

Since this partition favoured the Muslims therefore, they embraced it and seven days after the partition, on 22 October 1905, a large Muslim meeting at Dacca appreciated the boon conferred on the people by the change. Two days later, another huge gathering of Muslims offered thanks to the God for the partition and declared that under the new scheme, written by the Manchester Guardian on 23rd and 27th October 1905 that “...*the Muslims would be spared many oppressions which they hitherto had to endure from the Hindus.*”, *the Hindu agitation against the partition was condemned.*

However, even though the partition of Bengal was beneficial for the majority of the Muslims of Bengal, the British India government succumbed to the Hindu and Congress agitation against the partition. In 1911, East and West Bengal were reunited. The aim was to combine appeasement of Bengali sentiment with administrative convenience. This end was achieved for a brief time but the Bengali Muslims, having benefitted from the partition, were angry and disappointed. This resentment remained throughout the rest of the British period. The final division of Bengal was done at the partitioning of the subcontinent in 1947, which divided Bengal into India in the West and East Pakistan (later Bangladesh) in the East, intense violence also accompanied it.