



Minto-Morley Reforms and Lucknow Pact Pakistan Movement (Historical Effects of 1909-1940)

Indian Councils Act 1909¹ (Minto Morley Reforms)

The Indian Councils Act 1909, commonly known as the Morley-Minto Reforms or Minto-Morley Reforms, was an Act of the Parliament of the United Kingdom that brought about a limited increase in the involvement of Indians in the governance of British India. The number of members of the legislative council of Governor General and the Governors of various provinces was increased. Moreover, the powers of Members of Legislature were increased. They could now, criticize the actions of the executive, ask questions and even supplementary questions, and express their views by moving resolutions. Besides, matters of public interest were also discussed in the Legislative Council.

The following were the main features of the Act of 1909:

- The number of the members of the Legislative Council at the Center was increased from 16 to 60.
- The number of the members of the Provincial Legislatures was also increased. It was fixed as 50 in the provinces of Bengal, Madras and Bombay, and for the rest of the provinces it was 30.
- The member of the Legislative Councils, both at the Center and in the provinces, were to be of four categories i.e. ex-officio members (Governor General and the members of their Executive Councils), nominated official members (those nominated by the Governor General and were government officials), nominated non-official members (nominated by the Governor General but were not government officials) and elected members (elected by different categories of Indian people).
- Right of separate electorate was given to the Muslims.
- At the Center, official members were to form the majority but in provinces non-official members would be in majority.
- The members of the Legislative Councils were permitted to discuss the budgets, suggest the amendments and even to vote on them; excluding those items that were included as non-vote items. They were also entitled to ask supplementary questions during the legislative proceedings.
- The Secretary of State for India was empowered to increase the number of the Executive Councils of Madras and Bombay from two to four.
- Two Indians were nominated to the Council of the Secretary of State for Indian Affairs.

- The Governor General was empowered to nominate one Indian member to his Executive Council.

The Indians were included in the councils, where ultimate decisions were made, of the India Secretary and Viceroy. Before these reforms, they were excluded from such assemblies. In fact, a type of consultative body was formed. For the first time, the demand for a separate electorate was accepted. Constitutional recognition of Separate Electorate was an excellent achievement for the Muslims. Muslims could now have their representative members at the Legislative Councils. They were to be elected by Muslims alone.

The Indians were not satisfied with these reforms. Strict qualifications of property and education were imposed on the franchise. Consequently, the number of voters was restricted. Moreover, the system of election was indirect. The members of local bodies were elected by the people who, in turn, were to elect members of electoral colleges. The members of electoral colleges were to elect members of Provincial Legislature who, in turn, were to elect members of Imperial Legislature. To win the support of maximum factions of the society, the Government wanted to give special representation to the loyalist classes. In this context, a unique representation was given to landlords, chambers of commerce and other influential groups. Further, S.P. Sinha, an Indian, was included in the Viceroy's Executive Council. However, this act was bitterly criticized by the Muslims, for they had previously demanded that two Indian members including one Muslim should be included in the Council. The Government promised to appoint Muslim the next time. After Sinha's resignation, Sayed Ali Imam was appointed as a Member of the Executive council.

Criticism

- ✚ Demand of responsible government was rejected.
- ✚ Importance of landlords and industrialists increased which was represented by the common Indians.
- ✚ Restricted franchise (Women were not given the right to vote).

Hindu Reaction

The Hindus organized a demonstrative campaign against this act as they were against separate electorate given to the Muslims. The Congress condemned it and demanded the withdrawal of separate electorate. However, benefitted as result of the act, the Muslims warmly welcomed this act mainly due to the provision of separateelectorate for them.

Lucknow Pact²

The Lucknow pact is considered as a significant event in the political & constitutional history of India. It is regarded as an excellent example of Hindu Muslim unity. It was the first and last pact signed between the Congress and the Muslim league.

Factors Behind the Pact

The relations between the British government and Muslims were tense due to aggressive and unilateral policies of the British Indian government. The annulment of the partition of Bengal in 1911 and the British policies in the international system had caused deep anguish among the Muslims. Thus, the Muslims leaderships decided to change the strategy of the Muslim league after the annulment of Bengal in 1911.

In December 1912, the Muslim league changed its aim from loyalty to form self-government suitable to India. However, the League retained the right to modify self-rule by their needs and requirements. Jinnah arose as a devoted champion of Hindu Muslim unity; he convinced All India Muslim league to change their policies for the betterment of India. Muhammad Ali Jinnah in his early career was a member of both the Congress and the Muslim League and was well known as a man free of any religious prejudice, as well as a brilliant advocate and debater. In 1915, mainly due to his efforts, both the Muslim League and the Congress party had their annual meeting in Bombay. At the end of this meeting, a committee was formed with the intention to sort the shared understanding between the two communities. The committee prepared a scheme in November 1916. The plan was approved by both the parties in December 1916 at the respective sessions at Lucknow.

Jinnah and the Pact

Jinnah (Quaid-e-Azam), in his presidential speech at Lucknow, said: *“India’s real progress can only be achieved by a true understanding and harmonious relations between the two great communities. About our affairs, we can depend upon nobody but ourselves.”*

The Congress agreed to the right to separate electorate for the Muslims for the first and last time in the history of the subcontinent. The Hindus conceded that the Muslims would have one-third representation in the imperial legislative council. A weightage formula was proposed under which the Muslims would get less representation than their population in the legislative council in those provinces where they were in the majority but more in provinces where they were in the minority. Provinces should be given maximum administrative and financial autonomy. Elections should be conducted by the general adult franchise. The secretary of the state for India should be given the same powers as are given to the secretary of state for other colonies. The executive and Judiciary should remain separate from each other.

The Muslim League and the Congress should jointly demand the establishment of complete self-government in India. The Muslims should be given separate reserved seats in the legislature with the right of separate electorate. Any resolution affecting a particular community should require $\frac{3}{4}$ (75%) majority of the members of that community for its advancement in any council. All India Muslim League withdrew from the demand that Muslims were in the majority in the Punjab and Bengal.

Significance (Importance of the Pact)

The Lucknow pact was a great achievement of Hindu and Muslim leaders, who were successful in offering for the first and last time. It was a mutually acceptable solution of the Hindu Muslim problem. It appeared to be of particular significance in the history of India. It was the Quaid-e-Azam, who had always been a staunch supporter of Hindu-Muslim unity. The scheme provided for a substantial step taken halfway towards the establishment of self-rule in India which was the central core of the jointly sponsored scheme of Lucknow Pact. The Congress for the first time accepted the demand of separate electorate for Muslims. The pact ensured the protection of political rights of Muslims. Muslim league's separate status was also accepted. Through this pact, both parties were able to put a joint demand before the British. It was a give and take a sort of agreement between both the parties. The Muslims had to pay a big price of losing the majority in Bengal and Punjab to obtain some concessions. Similarly, it carried great constitutional significance in the future for many developments. The scheme of representation of Muslim community in the central and provincial legislatures as embodied in the Lucknow pact was generally followed in the Montague Chelmsford reforms 1919.

Khilafat Movement

The Khilafat movement (1919-1924) was an agitation by Indian Muslims allied with Indian nationalism in the years following World War I. Its purpose was to pressurize the British government to preserve the authority of the Ottoman Sultan as Caliph of Islam following the breakup of the Ottoman Empire at the end of the war.

¹<http://storyofpakistan.com/minto-morley-reforms>

²<https://www.britannica.com/event/Lucknow-Pact>