



Khilafat Movement, Nehru Report and Jinnah's 14 Points (Pakistan Movement - Historical Events of 1909-1940)

Khilafat Movementⁱ

The Khilafat movement was a very important event in the political history of India. The Muslims of India had a great regard for the Khilafat (Caliphate) which was held by the Ottoman Empire. During World War I, the Ottoman Empire (Turkey) joined the war in favor of Germany. But Turkey and Germany lost the war and a pact commonly known as Istanbul Accord was concluded between the Allied Forces on 3rd November 1918. According to this Pact the territories of Turkey were to be divided among France, Greece and Britain.

During the war, the Indian Muslims were in a very awkward position, because they had a deep-rooted devotion to the caliphate. They had profound respect for this holy institution. Therefore, their support to the British Government was subject to the safeguard and protection of the holy places of Turkey and on the condition that Turkey will not be deprived of its territories. The British Government could not fulfill both of these promises. The Treaty of Savers 1920 was imposed on Turkey and its territories like Samarna, Thrace and Anatolia were wrested from it and distributed among European countries. A wave of anger swept across the Muslin World and the Indian Muslims rose against the British Government. Muslim leaders like Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad, Moulana Muhammad Ali Johar, Moulana Shoukat Ali and others reacted against the British Government policy and were put behind the bars.

Thus, Muslims organized a mass movement, which came to be known as the Khilafat Movement. The aims of this movement were

- (a) To protect the Holy place of Turkey
- (b) To restore the Territories of Turkey
- (c) To restore the Ottoman Empire.

The Failure of the Khilafat Movement

The abolition of Khilafat by Kamal Ataturk was a severe blow to Khilafat movement in the sub-continent, and he exiled Sultan Abdul Majeed, a helpless Caliph and abolished Khilafat as an institution, due to this all agitational activities came to an end in the Sub-continent. The Hijrat Movement made the Muslims disillusioned with the Khilafat Movement due to the declaration of India as Darul-Harab. A large number of Muslims, migrated from Sindh and N.W.F.P to Afghanistan. The Afghan authorities did not allow them to cross the border. After this tragic event, those who had advocated the Hijrat movement come to realize their mistake which failed the movement. When the Khilafat movement became mature and was reaching

its climax a tragic incident took place in the village of Chora Churi in which the police opened fire on the procession of residents. The agitated mob in counteraction set the police station on flames. Resultantly, twenty-one police constables were burnt alive. Due to this incident, the Ali brother and other Muslim leader were arrested, and Mr. Gandhi put off the movement. As a consequence, the movement lost its intensity. The Khilafat movement proved that Hindus and Muslims were two different nations as they could not continue the unity and could not live together. It also created political consciousness among the Indian Muslims about their separate identity, which ultimately paved the way for Pakistan movement.

Montague Chelmsford Reforms 1919

Minto-Morley reforms, introduced in 1909, proved unsatisfactory for Indian people. Indians demanded more representation and called for greater self-government. This could not be achieved without a formal rapprochement between Congress and Muslim League. The Lucknow Pact of 1916 asked for self-rule.

Meanwhile, the World War I had started and Indians despite their grievances and discontentment with the British joined the war with over one million soldiers with the hope that after the war British would be obliged to concede to self-rule in recognition of their loyal services. However, as the war dragged on, Indians became disillusioned as the British did not make any promises regarding self-government. Thus, Indians pressed for immediate reforms and it was felt that a civil disobedience movement might be launched jointly by congress and Muslim league to compel the British to accelerate the reforms.

In view of these circumstances the British felt that something must be done to pacify the Indians. At that time, Edwin Montague was the Secretary of State for India. In his famous August Declaration presented before the House of Commons on 20th August 1917, Montague said that in order to satisfy the local demands, his government was interested in giving more representation to the natives in India. Lord Chelmsford was sent to India as the new Governor General. He stayed for six months and held numerous meetings with different government and non-governmental people. Edwin Montague in collaboration with Lord Chelmsford collected data and made a report about constitutional reforms in 1918. The report was discussed in the House of Common and later it was approved by the parliament. The Bill was introduced in India in 1919 and became Act of 1919.

Main Features of 1919 Act

The Council of the Secretary of State was to comprise of eight to twelve people. Three of them should be Indian, and at least half of them should have spent at least ten years in India. The Central Legislature was to consist of two houses, Upper House (Council of the State), and the Lower House (Legislative Assembly). Council of the State was to consist of 60 members, out of those, 35 members would be elected, and the Governor General would nominate rest of them. The Legislative Assembly was to consist of 144 members, out of those

103 were to be elected and 41 to be nominated by the Governor General. The duration of the Upper House was five and of the Lower House was three years. Powers were divided between the center and the provinces. The important subjects were vested with the center, and unimportant remained with provinces. The important central subjects were defense, foreign affairs, custom, and relations with Indian states, currency, and railway. On the contrary, unworthy provincial subjects were local self-government, public health, education, etc.

The salary of the Secretary of State for Indian Affairs should be paid from British exchequer; previously, his salary was paid by Indian treasury. The system of 'Diarchy' or a kind of double government in the Provinces was introduced. Provincial subjects were divided into two categories "Transferred and Reserved." Transferred subjects which were public health, education, local self-government, and agriculture were under the control of Minister; likewise, all transferred subjects were unimportant. Reserved subjects included administration, police, land revenue, etc. which were under the control of Governor with the help of his secretaries.

Congress Reaction

The Congress did not participate in the elections of 1920 under the 1919 Act. It was against these reforms. In 1923, it was decided to participate in elections with a view to destroy the 1919 Act from within.

Muslim League Reaction

The Muslim League did not reject the act as Congress did. Though it was not completely satisfied with the reforms, the initial response was favorable. It too did not participate in the election because of understanding with Congress. Thus, some benefits which the Act could yield were reaped by the Hindus alone.

Simon Commission

Simon Commission, a group, appointed in November 1927 by the British government under Stanley Baldwin to report on the working of the Indian constitution established by the Government of India Act of 1919. The commission consisted of seven members under the joint chairmanship of the distinguished Liberal lawyer, Sir John Simon, and Clement Attlee, the future prime minister. Its composition met with a storm of criticism in India because Indians were excluded. The commission was boycotted by the Indian National Congress and most other Indian political parties. It, nevertheless, published a two-volume report, mainly the work of Simon. Regarded as one of the classic state documents, the Simon Commission report proposed provincial autonomy in India but rejected parliamentary responsibility at the center. It accepted the idea of federalism and sought to retain direct contact between the British crown and the Indian states.

Nehru Report

Most of the Indian political parties decided to boycott the Simon Commission on the plea that it lacked Indian representation. The British decided to throw the ball in the court of Indian Politicians. Lord Birkenhead, Secretary of State for Indian Affairs, challenged the Indians, *“If they have any political capability and competence then they should form a unanimous constitution and present it to us, and we will implement it.”* Indian political parties accepted the challenge and called an All Parties Conference at Delhi in January 1928. The conference was attended by around hundred delegates from all the important parties including Indian National Congress, All India Muslim League, National Liberal Federation, Hindu Mahasabha, Central Sikh League etc. The conference failed to conclude the issue of the rights of minorities. The second round of the All Parties Conference was held in March the same year. Two sub-committees were formed, but the result was not different from the first session. It was during the third session of the All Parties Conference held at Bombay in May 1928 that a seven members committee under the chairmanship of Motilal Nehru was formed to determine the essential features of the future constitution of India. Despite many hurdles, the Nehru Committee completed its task and its report, commonly known as Nehru Report was presented in the fourth session of the All Parties Conference held in August 1928.

Nehru Report demanded that India should be given Dominion Status with the Parliamentary form of Government. There should be a bicameral legislature consisting of Senate and House of Representatives. The Senate will comprise of two hundred members elected for seven years, while the House of Representatives should consist of five hundred members elected for five years. Governor-General will act on the advice of executive council. It was to be collectively responsible to the parliament. There should be a Federal form of Government in India with Residuary powers to be vested in Centre, Nehru report demanded. There will be no separate electorate for minorities. It claimed, *“Since a separate electorate awakens communal sentiments, therefore, it should be scrapped, and the joint electorate should be introduced.”* The system of weightage should not be adopted for any province. There will be no reserved seats for communities in Punjab and Bengal. However, reservation of Muslim seats could be possible in the provinces where Muslim population should be at least ten percent. Judiciary should be independent of the Executive. There should be 1/4th Muslim Representation at Centre. Sind should be separated from Bombay provided it proves to be financially self-sufficient. Reforms should be introduced in NWFP. The report was not acceptable to Muslims. In the fourth session of the All Parties Conference convened in December to review the Nehru Report, Jinnah representing the Muslim League presented four amendments in the report.

Jinnah's 14 Points

In order to counter the proposals made in the Nehru Report, Jinnah presented his proposal in the form of Fourteen Points, insisting that no scheme for the future constitution of the government of India will be satisfactory to the Muslims until and unless stipulations were made to safe guard their interests. The following points were presented by the Quaid to defend the rights of the Muslims of the sub-continent:

1. The form of the future constitution should be federal, with the residuary powers to be vested in the provinces.
2. A uniform measure of autonomy shall be granted to all provinces.
3. All legislatures in the country and other elected bodies shall be constituted on the definite principle of adequate and effective representation of minorities in every province without reducing the majority in any province to a minority or even equality.
4. In the Central Legislature, Muslim representation shall not be less than one third.
5. Representation of communal groups shall continue to be by separate electorates: provided that it shall be open to any community, at any time, to abandon its separate electorate in favour of joint electorate.
6. Any territorial redistribution that might at any time be necessary shall not in anyway affect the Muslim majority in the Punjab, Bengal and the NWFP.
7. Full religious liberty, i.e. liberty of belief, worship, and observance, propaganda, association, and education, shall be guaranteed to all communities.
8. No bill or resolution or any part thereof shall be passed in any legislature or any other elected body if three fourths of the members of any community in that particular body oppose such a bill, resolution or part thereof on the ground that it would be injurious to that community or in the alternative, such other method is devised as may be found feasible practicable to deal with such cases.
9. Sind should be separated from the Bombay Presidency.
10. Reforms should be introduced in the NWFP and Balochistan on the same footing as in other provinces.
11. Provision should be made in the Constitution giving Muslims an adequate share along with the other Indians in all the services of the State and local self-governing bodies, having due regard to the requirements of efficiency.
12. The Constitution should embody adequate safeguards for the protection of Muslim culture and the protection and promotion of Muslim education, language, religion and personal laws and Muslim charitable institutions and their due share in the grants-in-aid given by the State and by local self-governing bodies.
13. No cabinet, either Central or Provincial, should be formed without there being a proportion of at least one-third Muslim ministers.
14. No change shall be made in the Constitution by the Central Legislature except with the concurrence of the States constituting the Indian Federation.

Muslim League made it clear that no constitutional solution will be acceptable to them unless and until it incorporates the fourteen points.

¹<https://historypak.com/khilafat-movement-1919-1922/>