

Azhar Mahmood Abbasi,

Lecturer National University of Modern Languages Islamabad.

Muhammad Ali Jinnah: A Journey From Lucknow Pact To Nehru Report

Abstract

The Lucknow agreement which was signed between AIML and INC in December 1916 took a new twist with a change in Muslim League's political doctrine. The inclusion of Jinnah in the Muslim League in 1913 was a historic event, which gave a new direction to the Muslim League's political struggle. Self-rule for India brought the Muslim League and the Congress closer to each other. The leaders of both parties agreed that they should cooperate to make the British accept their constitutional and political demands. They acknowledged that the objectives can be achieved if the two major communities of India forget their differences on petty issues and come closer to each other to see eye to eye on important national issues and interests. The political vicinity had taken a happy turn and the ground for cherished Hindu-Muslim unity had been smoothed. The political relations between these two political organizations remained cordial till the 1920s. After the end of the Khilafat Movement, a rift was created between their leaders on political policies. Jinnah tried to sort out all issues and keep both communities under one umbrella by compromising on the Delhi Muslim Proposal in 1927 but all in vain when the Nehru Report was on the table it turned and shattered the dream of Hindu-Muslim unity. He again put that swing formula in 1928 which had been initiated in Lucknow but this time not succeeded. The current paper explores the role of Muhammad Ali Jinnah in the cordial relations of both AIML and INC in the 2nd and 3rd decades of the 20th century. The current study will highlight the efforts of Jinnah especially his journey from the Lucknow pact to the Nehru Report.

Key Words: Jinnah, AIML, INC, Lucknow, Nehru Report, Hindu Muslim Unity.

Introduction:

When the All India Muslim League came into existence, it was a moderate organization with its basic aim to establish friendly relations with the Crown, safeguard the rights of Muslims, and remain cooperative with other communities in British India. However, due to the decision of the British Government to annul the partition of Bengal, the Muslim leadership decided to change its stance. In 1913, a new group of Muslim leaders entered the folds of the Muslim League to bridge the gulf between the Muslims and the Hindus. The most prominent among them was Muhammad Ali Jinnah, who was already a member of the Indian National Congress. The Muslim League changed its major objective and decided to join hands with the Congress to put pressure on the British government. Lord Chelmsford's invitation for suggestions from the Indian politicians for the post-World War I reforms further helped in the development of the situation. As a result of the hard work of Mr. Jinnah, both the Muslim League and the Congress met for their annual sessions in Bombay in December 1915. (Khan, 2012, 1)

Research Question

1. How did Muhammad Ali Jinnah become the Ambassador of Hindu-Muslim unity?
2. What are the major reasons and proposed solutions behind the Constitutional deadlock in the 1920s?

Research Objectives:

1. To explore the role of Muhammad Ali Jinnah as an Ambassador of Hindu-Muslim unity.
2. To search out the major reasons and proposed solutions behind the Constitutional deadlock in the 1920s.

Research Methodology

The current research is normative, exploratory, qualitative, and descriptive. Both primary and secondary sources have been consulted. Primary sources included government officials, census reports, and interviews. The required data for this research has been collected from Books, Research Articles, Journals, Newspapers, and various websites.

The Historical Lucknow Pact

The principal leaders of the two political parties assembled in one place for the first time in the history of these organizations. The speeches made from the platform of the two groups were similar in tone and theme. Within a few months of the Bombay moot, 19 Muslim and Hindu elected members of the Imperial Legislative Council addressed a memorandum to the Viceroy on the subject of reforms in October 1916. Their suggestions did not become news in the British circle but were discussed, amended, and accepted at a subsequent meeting of the Congress and Muslim League leaders at Calcutta in November 1916. This meeting settled the details of an agreement about the composition of the legislatures and the quantum of representation to be allowed to the two communities. The agreement was confirmed by the annual sessions of the Congress and the League in their annual session held at Lucknow on December 29 and December 31, 1916, respectively. Sarojini Naidu gave Jinnah, the chief architect of the Lucknow Pact, the title of "the Ambassador of Hindu-Muslim Unity".

The main clauses of the Lucknow Pact were:

1. There shall be self-government in India.
2. Muslims should be given one-third representation in the central government.
3. There should be separate electorates for all the communities until a community demands for joint electorates.
4. A system of weightage should be adopted.
5. The number of the members of Central Legislative Council should be increased to 150.
6. At the provincial level, four-fifths of the members of the Legislative Councils should be elected and one-fifth should be nominated.
7. The strength of the Provincial legislative should not be less than 125 in the major provinces and from 50 to 75 in the minor provinces.
8. All members, except those nominated, were to be elected directly based on adult franchise.
9. No bill concerning a community should be passed if the bill is opposed by three-fourths of the members of that community in the Legislative Council.
10. The term of the Legislative Council should be five years.
11. Members of the Legislative Council should elect their president.

12. Half of the members of the Imperial Legislative Council should be Indians. 13. The Indian Council must be abolished.

14. The salaries of the Secretary of State for Indian Affairs should be paid by the British Government and not from Indian funds.

15. Out of two Under Secretaries, one should be Indian.

16. The Executive should be separated from the Judiciary.

Although this Hindu-Muslim Unity was not able to live for more than eight years and collapsed after the development of differences between the two communities after the Khilafat Movement, it was an important event in the history of the Muslims of South Asia. It was the first time when Congress recognized the Muslim League as the political party representing the Muslims of the region. As Congress agreed to separate electorates, it agreed to consider the Muslims as a separate nation. They thus accepted the concept of the Two-Nation Theory. (Khan, 2012, 2)

The chief architect of the Lucknow pact was Muhammad Ali Jinnah. He has been working for Hindu Muslim Unity since 1913 on various political forums. He talked for a united move against British Imperialism in the Central Legislative Assembly, Indian National Congress, All India Muslim League, and Home Rule League. December 1915 session of both AIML and INC was planned to have within walking distance at Bombay was very fruitful. Although, there were various groups like extremists and liberals in both leading political organizations Muhammad Ali Jinnah kept them united by keeping them under one umbrella of United India.

There were two splits in both the All-India Muslim League and Indian National Congress, Liberal and Extremist.

In the AIML one group is liberal, moderate, and true leaders like Muhammad Ali Jinnah and Mazharul Haq, and the second group is called angry, dissidents as mercurial Moulana Hasrat Mohani called orthodox Muslims and belong to Sir Syed School of thought. The second group made efforts tooth and nail against the Hindu-Muslim Unity. They attempted to adjourn the meeting. Some Mullahas started shouting at President Haq and said "If you are Muhammadan, you out to appear like Muhammadan, dress like Muhammadan, speak like Muhammadan, you pose to be a Muhammadan leader but you can never be a Muhammadan leader. Similar, anti-western sentiments for Jinnah. Everyone, in the crowd of several thousand was standing and shouting, and Jinnah asked Edward Bombay's commission police to clear the tent from non-members but refused to return the ticket. Jinnah preferred to urge Haq to adjourn the meeting and settle the issue some other day.

Likewise, INC was divided into two factions in 1907 and it was Muhammad Ali Jinnah who convinced Lala Lajpat Rai and Gangadhar Tilak to rejoin its old group in 1915. The president of INC in 1915 Satyandra Sinha also received them cordially by saying, Welcome Tilak back to the fold. Tilak responded we are ready to work with any set of minds. (Wolpert, 1994, 25) Similarly, there were two groups in AIML, one was Orthodox led by Moulana Hasrat Mohani who was not ready to work with Hindus and the other was liberal/moderate led by Muhammed Ali Jinnah and Mazharul Haq who was a Bengali barrister and was president of AIML in 1915. Several League leaders were against the league session of this year. Mazharul Haq said, "There are so many things as standing still in this world. Either we must go forward or must go backward,". Muhammad Ali Jinnah took advantage and prepared a formula with his legal mind. He presented that formula before the INC and AIML.

In 1916 Taj Mahal Hotel of Bombay Conference proved successful and Jinnah received Loud Cheers as the students of Bombay considered Jinnah the “Idol of the youth or crowned King of Bombay;”. Finally, Jinnah made a scheme of reforms. Both political organizations were allowed to work with each other. All India Muslim League appointed a committee of 71 members representing of every province under the chairmanship of Raja Sir Muhammad Ali Mohammed Khan Bahadur, the Raja of Mahmoodabad. Committee members included Bombay, Agha Khan, and Jinnah, Punjab led by Mian Sir Muhammad Shafi and Mian Sir Fazal Hussain. Before that meeting ended, president Mazharul Haq remarked upon the great work done for the league by his friend Muhammad Ali Jinnah, “the entire Mohammadan community of India owed him a deep debt of gratitude, for without his work it could not be possible. President Mazharul Haq turned to Jinnah, saying, Mr. Jinnah was the Musلمان of India thank you”. It was the first such tribute to Jinnah received by the Muslim League but would not be the last. The year 1916 was national fame and good fortune for Muhammad Ali Jinnah. Similarly, the Indian National Congress appointed its committee headed by Motilal Nehru, who invited its members to its political Allahabad house in April 1916 to discuss the proposed reforms with the league’s leaders. (Wolpert, 1994,25)

After this successful session of both organizations, in April 1916 Muhammad Ali Jinnah went North of Darjeeling, a city in West Bengal, which is located in the Himalayas foothills. Darjeeling is a hill station where Britishers and elite Indians used to go for summer. (Haider, 2004, 15) Muhammad Ali Jinnah usually spent his summer in England but this was the first summer he went to Darjeeling with his friend and client Sir Dinsha Monockjee Petit, who was the father of Rattan Bai (Maryam) the second wife of Muhammad Ali Jinnah. Both met first time in Darjeeling where their love story was beginning. They shared the cheated and went horse riding on the beautiful trails of the Himalayan foothills. They got married two years after this incident in 1918. Ratti was the only daughter of Petit and she was born on 20th February 1900 and died on 20th February 1929. The day of 20th February was remarkable for her life, she also expressed her feelings of Love for Jinnah on 20th February and asked her father marry to Jinnah. (Wolpert, 1994, 39)

In October 1916 Jinnah presided over the Bombay Provincial Conference at Allahabad. Jinnah concluded his Bombay conference address with the all-absorbing question of Hindu-Muslim Unity. “I believe all thinking man as though convinced that our real progress lies in goodwill, concern harmony and cooperation between two great sister communities”.

Jinnah was speaking as an advocate for the Muslims as a whole and not expressing his ideology. Jinnah prepared a formula with his legal mind to convince Congress’s president A. C. Mazumdar for two days in Calcutta in mid-November 1916. The key to their Lucknow pact lay in agreeing upon a percentage of Muslim members for each of the legislative councils. (Wolpert, 1994,27)

The Lucknow Pact -1916 was a joint demand to the British

What was the Lucknow pact? Lucknow Pact refers to an agreement between the Indian National Congress and the Muslim League. In 1916, Muhammed Ali Jinnah, a member of the Muslim League, negotiated with the Indian National Congress to reach an agreement to pressure the British government to adopt a more liberal approach to India and give Indians more authority to run their country. This was a considerable change of policy for the Muslim League (not to loyal British), as its position had been to preserve Muslim interests in India. After the unpopular partition of Bengal, the Muslim League was confused about its stand and it was at this time that Jinnah approached the League. Jinnah was the mastermind and architect of the pact and signed it with Congress led by Mahajan. The agreement was confirmed by the annual sessions of the

Congress and the League in their annual sessions held at Lucknow on December 29 and December 31, 1916, respectively. Sarojini Naidu gave Jinnah, the chief architect of the Lucknow Pact, the title of "the Ambassador of Hindu-Muslim Unity".

Why was the Lucknow pact made? [Muslims' New Strategy after Reversal of partition of Bengal] When Bengal was partitioned in 1905, Hindus reacted against the decision and they went on violent protests and boycotts of British goods. On the other hand, the Muslims remained loyal to the British rule. The British could not sustain the pressure of demonstrations and reversed the decision of partition in 1911. This was a betrayal of the Muslim's loyalty. They realized the British rulers could no longer be trusted. Now they had to devise a new strategy for achieving their goals. They wanted to turn towards the demand of self-rule but they needed constitutional protection – separate electorate and provincial autonomy – from Hindus after the British would leave India. Muslim League, therefore, signed the Lucknow Pact in 1916 in which Congress agreed on granting the Muslims 1/3 reserved seats in the central legislative council.

(Jinnah's Role and liberal leadership) At the time of the pact, Muhammad Ali Jinnah was an idealist who believed that Hindus and Muslims could work together. He wanted that all religious groups should live together in harmony. He was a strong supporter of Hindu-Muslim unity. He believed that joint demands would put more pressure on the British. Therefore, he persuaded the Congress and the Muslim League for the Lucknow Pact in 1916. He believed that this pact would lead to a united Indian nation. (Note: Mr. Jinnah became a realist after the Nehru Report in 1929 who then believed in the two-nation theory).

[Joint Demand] Congress was keen to gain the support of the Muslim League for its demand for self-rule in India. It hoped that it would be difficult for the British to reject the joint demand. Therefore, it was ready to give concessions to the Muslim League for its objective of home-rule. That is why Congress went into the Lucknow Pact with the Muslim League in 1916. (https://megalecture.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/HIST_TOPIC_12_The_Lucknow_Pact_1916_joint_demands_to_the_British.pdf) (Accessed on 11-03-2022)

Gains for AIML from the Lucknow Pact

There were few gains from the Muslim Point of view. All India Muslim League got approved the various things from INC through this pact. The first thing is the right of the separate electorates, as the Muslims of British India were given the right of separate electors in the 1909 act but this was the first time when INC accepted this right for Muslims of India. Secondly, Muslims were given the right of one-third of seats in the Central Legislative Assembly and INC also accepted this. Thirdly, before the Lucknow agreement INC claimed to only the political party of all Indians but after that the leadership of INC accepted the AIML as the political party for the Muslims of British India. The significant role played by Muhammad Ali Jinnah received a title by Sarojini Naidu who was a friend of Jinnah and the first Indian lady to be the president of INC. She wrote a book on Jinnah titled "*Muhammad Ali Jinnah" Ambassador of Hindu Muslim Unity" Speeches and Statements from 1912 to 1917*". In the mid-year of 1917, Jinnah moved the most important resolution calling for the implementation of the Lucknow pact's reforms on the Central Legislative Assembly and a few days later Jinnah moved almost the same resolution from the league platform to accept the Congress League scheme of December 1916. (Ishtiaq Ahmed, 2021, 19)

Delhi Muslim Proposals

The Khilafat movement brought Hindu-Muslim communities to cooperate. The leaders made efforts to revive harmony in preparing constitutional proposals.

The British were in favor of Constitutional demands as they said after every ten years the constitutional and political structure of British India would be revised. In 1926 there were communal riots in most of the areas of British India. All the major political parties were gathered and it was concluded that the separate electorates were the bone of contention between Hindus and Muslims. The Muslims of British India on the platform of the All India Muslim League were asked to withdraw from the rights of separate electorates which were approved by Congress in the Lucknow Pact in 1916. Muhammad Ali Jinnah accepted this challenge and forwarded some proposals instead of Separate electorates. These proposals were called the Delhi Muslim proposal.

On 20 March 1927, thirty Muslims assembled in Delhi and a democratic gesture, agreed to forego separate electorates if their four proposals were accepted. (Hassan 1980, 1.)

The Text of Delhi Muslim Proposals: March 1927 Important Muslim leaders on the initiative of the Quaid met in Delhi to discuss constitutional and political issues.

The major demands were:

1. Punjab and Bengal: statutory Muslim majorities
 2. No Weightage in provinces
 3. Sind to be separated from Bombay
 4. Constitutional Reforms in NWFP
 5. One-third seats for Muslims in Central Legislature
 - 6 On communal issues, no law will be passed if three-fourths of members of the concerned community oppose it. If these demands are accepted, they will give up „a separate electorate. “
- Subsequently, the Muslim League was divided into the Punjab, Shafi League, and Jinnah League. Sir Muhammad Shafi opposed Jinnah on the issues of separate electorate Attitude towards the Simon Commission. Jinnah continued his unrelenting efforts to promote Hindu-Muslim unity.

Delhi Proposal embodied the political demands of a large and representative body of Muslim opinion and quite significantly formed the basis on which all future negotiations with the Congress were conducted. In short, the proposal was the cornerstone of Muslim politics in the late 1920s and the early 1930s. (Hassan 1980, 1.)

The Nehru Report: 1928

The main objective was to constitute proposals for the Indian Constitution. The Congress called the All Parties Conference and appointed a 10-member committee in May 1928 under the Chairmanship of Motilal Nehru and Secretaryship of Jawaharlal Nehru.

Recommendations that threatened Muslim interests are:

1. No Separate electorate
 2. No One-third of seats for Muslims in the Central Assembly
 3. No reservation of seats for Muslims in Punjab and Bengal. In Hindu-majority provinces, Muslims may be given seats according to population
 4. Sind to be made a province if it can bear its expenses.
 5. Baluchistan and NWFP were accepted to be given constitutional status on certain conditions.
- (CSS point, Muslim Politics in British India, p,2.)

Departure of Jinnah from Hindu Muslim Unity

Though Jinnah left the Indian National Congress in December 1920 in the Nagpur session he did not leave efforts for Hindu-Muslim unity till the failure of the Nehru report in 1928. His complete departure from Hindu Muslims took place in unity in the late 1920s. There were

communal riots began in 1926 in British India and All Parties Conference held a session. It was observed that the bone of contention between Hindus and Muslims was separate electorates. It was demanded by the leadership that if the All India Muslim League withdraws from the right of separate electorates the other demands will be fulfilled in the Nehru report. Jinnah despite the opposition of many other Muslim leaders took this bold step and withdrew from the rights of separate electorates put some proposals in Delhi and sought their acceptance from INC. Finally, all in vain, and when the Nehru report was on the table it failed to fulfill the demands of the Muslim community. In the end, Jinnah declared it was the parting of ways and this was also a departure of Jinnah from the Hindu Muslim Unity platform as well.

Conclusion

There were so many political and constitutional developments taking place in the 2nd and 3rd decades of the 20th century which compelled and changed the political landscape of British India. AIML and INC were two mainstream political parties in British India and both were launching the political struggle in favor of making a common move against British Imperialism and to approve certain political and constitutional reforms. The Lucknow pact was the best example of Hindu-Muslim Unity which was also used as a tool in the Khilafat Movement at AIML's platform and later in the Non-cooperation movement launched by K.M. Gandhi. The first and last agreement signed between AIML and INC in 1916 became unpopular among both AIML and INC after 1923. After the failure of the Khilafat Movement, there were communal riots in most of British India. The All Parties Conference was gathered and concluded that the separate electorates were a bone of contention between Hindus and Muslims.

The AIML and Muslims were asked to withdraw from these rights which were officially approved in 1909 and INC accepted in 1916. Muhammad Ali Jinnah accepted this challenge and took this bold step and withdrew from this right and placed certain demands instead of separate electorates. He also tried to repeat the swing formula that had been initiated in 1916 but this time he got no longer support from both platforms. In short, when Nehru's document was on the table there was nothing favorable for Muslims in the report. Muhammad Ali Jinnah again formulated a document in his legal mind but was rejected by everyone. Though he was struggling for Hindu-Muslim unity, as he had left the INC he didn't leave the efforts for Hindu-Muslim Unity. Finally, Muhammad Ali Jinnah prepared his 14 points including some points of the Delhi Muslim Proposal, and presented these points in March 1929 from AIML's platform.

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