

LAHORE RESOLUTION

The historic Lahore Resolution proposed a separate homeland and a separate state for Muslims in British India. On 23 March 1940, at a session of the Muslim League in Lahore, Pakistan, the Chief Minister of undivided Bengal, Abul Kashem Fazlul Haque, presented a resolution demanding a separate homeland for Muslims in the Indian subcontinent. Which is known in history as the Lahore proposal.

What does Lahore offer?

Since the beginning of British rule in the Indian subcontinent, the Muslims continued to be oppressed and exploited by the British in various ways. Besides, due to the Permanent Settlement of 1793, Muslims were often subjected to exploitation and torture by Hindu landlords, Naibs, and moneylenders.

From 1920 onwards, an authoritarian movement continued in India. The British resisted these movements in various ways. After various negotiations including 3 round table meetings to end this movement which continued for fifteen long years, the British Government passed the Indian Rule Act in 1935. However it failed to satisfy the two popular parties of the time, the Muslim League and the Congress, due to the complexity of the Rule of India Act. As a result, political instability increases several times than before.

Elections to the Provincial Legislature were held in 1935 to implement the Indian Rule Act. Congress won 7 out of 11 states in the elections. Muslim League gained a majority in Bengal and Punjab provinces. According to the electoral majority, the Congress was supposed to form an all-party cabinet, but the Congress formed a single cabinet excluding the Muslim League.

The Muslim League formed an all-party cabinet in Bengal and Punjab. This led to a rivalry between the Muslim League and the Congress. Then Congress Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru established his visionary policy. As a result, Hindu-Muslim relations again deteriorated in the Indian subcontinent.

Congress flags are hoisted in law courts and educational institutions in Congress-ruled states. Besides, Vande Mataram is recognized as the national anthem. Nehru said in a declaration, "Only two parties exist in the Indian subcontinent – the Congress and the British Government. All other parties belong to the Congress."

In such an attitude of the Congress, Muhammad Ali Jinnah came forward to help the Muslims. In 1939, he reorganized the Muslim League and propounded the two-nation theory. He declared that, no, there are not two parties in India, but a third party. And that is the Muslim League - the party of Muslims. They are a distinct race."

Since the declaration of this independent nation, Muslims started thinking of forming an independent homeland. During the Second World War, two separate Hindu-Muslim homelands were claimed by the British. Jinnah then declared, "The majority has proved that Hindustan is for the Hindus only, by the limited scope created by the exercise of small responsibilities and small powers."

Besides, Jinnah also said, "Hindu-Muslim are two separate nations. Hence there is a need for a separate state for Muslims. Consequently, on 23 March 1940, at a session of the Muslim League in Lahore, Sheikh Fazlul Haque presented a resolution demanding a separate homeland for Muslims in the subcontinent. It is known in history as the Lahore Proposal. On 24 March, the resolution was unanimously adopted under the chairmanship of Muhammad Ali Jinnah.

The Lahore Resolution states,

Resolved that it is the considered view of this session of the All Indian Muslim league that the area in which the Muslims are numerically in a majority as in the North-western and Eastern zones of India should be grouped to constitute "Independent states" in which constituent units shall be autonomous and sovereign"

Characteristics of the Lahore proposal

1. "Nikhil Bharat Muslim League strongly reiterates that the federal scheme contained in the Government of India Act, 1935 is unacceptable to Indian Muslims as it is inconsistent and unworkable given the prevailing conditions of the country."

2. "Muslim India will be dissatisfied if the whole constitutional plan is not reconsidered and no revised plan will be acceptable to them if the constitution is drawn up without the approval and consent of the Muslims."

3. "It is the considered opinion of this session of the All India Muslim League that no system of governance in India can be carried out or accepted by the Muslims unless it is founded on the principles of the Mmirikhite."

- Adjacent units should be identified as separate regions according to geographical location.
- All these regions should be changed in such a way that an independent state should be established in the areas where Muslims are the majority in the northwest and east of India.
- The provinces of these independent states will be autonomous and sovereign.
- To protect the religious, cultural, political, administrative, and other rights and interests of the minorities of these regions, the constitution should have effective and binding provisions subject to consultation with them.
- In other parts of India where Muslims are in the minority, adequate, effective, and binding provisions shall be made in the constitution for the protection of religious, cultural, political, administrative, and other rights and interests of them and other minority communities subject to their immediate consultation.

Consequences of the Lahore Resolution

After the presentation of the historic Lahore Resolution, India's constitutional and political movement gained a new dimension. Muslims in the Indian subcontinent looked for a new inspiration and hoped for an independent homeland. The Lahore Resolution led to religious nationalism among Muslims. They refused to raise the demand for a separate state. On the other hand, the Hindu community could not accept the separation of India based on the Lahore Resolution. So they created communal riots in different places.

Following this proposal, the Muslim League was given a political program and direction. The Lahore Resolution then began to evolve into the Pakistan Resolution. In 1946, the Muslim Legislators' Convention led by Mohammad Ali Jinnah in Delhi adopted the plan of one Pakistan state instead of the plan of multiple Muslim states.

Hindus see the mutilation of their motherland in the historic Lahore Resolution. Responding to the Lahore Resolution, Mahatma Gandhi said, "Acceptance of the Lahore Resolution would mean dismemberment of India and would be a sin."

According to Nehru, "If the Lahore proposal is accepted, India will become a small fragmented authoritarian police state like the Balkan states."

Since the Lahore Resolution of 1940, there have been Hindu-Muslim sectarian attacks in various parts of India. After World War II, the British government withdrew its colonial rule from various countries. Accordingly, they decided to leave India in the face of Hindu-Muslim riots in Bharatvarsha. Finally, India was partitioned on 14 and 15 August 1947 to form two separate states, Pakistan and India.