**The Birth of Muslim Nationalism in South Asia (1857-1947)**

**Introduction**

In this report an attempt is made to figure out the rise and development of Muslim nationalism and how it intensified due to constitutional reforms introduced by the British government. The report will analyze how the partition of India was the the result of strong developments in political development towards Muslim nationalism, which began in constitutional shape in the second half of the nineteenth century whose groundwork can be founded in Sir Syed's MAO College at Aligarh. The report will also observe the role of All India Muslim League in development of political awareness among Muslims and how it led to Muslim nationalism.

**Main Theme**

According to **Jamil Ud-din (1943),** Jinnah said that Pakistan Movement started when the first non-Muslim in India was converted to Islam. This may not have much of phenomenal significance, what it meant was a matter of fact the advent of a new ideology. A state gives birth to a nation and a nation is generally recognized with some reference to a state. The nation is formed on the basis of color, caste, creed and area. However according to Islam, religion comes as a basis of foundation for its nation and a nation is built consequently. Hence, Muslim leaders of the subcontinent considered Muslims a separate nation which reflected their social and cultural identity.

The cultural and political history of the sub-continent shows that Muslims have always been hostile towards non-Muslim political leaders which most of the time seemed to be against their interest. Hindu leaders in this case exploited this difference between the two majorities, Muslims and Hindus to their own political interest. It is an interesting fact to observe how Hindu leaders who promoted a secular state, however, failed by adding fuel to the fire. This developed the two-nation theory and Muslim nationalism was upheld because of this.

**Causes/Factors**

**Formation of Congress and Sir Syed Ahmad Khan**

Muslim Nationalism’s main goal always revolved around the reaction to the action of Congress party. 1885 can be seen as the starting point of nationalist movement in South Asia as Indian National Congress came into existence. As Congress developed as a political, nationalist organization, Muslim nationalism moved forward too in order to crystallize their ideology into a nation too.

In 1883, Sir Syed Ahmad Khan went against the introduction of the western constituent framework to the country as having adverse effects to Muslim interests **(Hamid, 1967)**. He thought wherever Muslims were enabled to vote in elections, they owed their success to dominating influence of non-Muslim Majority and their role was not felt within their own homeland. This ideology formed the basis Muslim political awareness, asserting Muslim nationalism

The consciousness of Muslim nationalism took a practical turn in Simla Deputation, 1906. This can be seen as the first constitutional attempt in which Governor-General Lord Minto gave his consent to separate electorate for Muslims. The Hindu-Muslim unrest became greater than before. Muslims were now seen as a distinct community with historical and military significance since their forefathers ruled over the land **(Prasad, 1999)**. Hindu leaders, who were preachers of a secular state viewed it as a devastating constitutional reform to their political goals and that the Muslim nationalism has become their enemy. Muslims saw the unrest in the Hindu majority as not being able to rule over other minorities and being unable to impose their own ideology and concept of nation. Muslims were against these believes as their idea of state included a nation Islam was the basis of the nation which devised all other aspects which help in building up a nation.

Sir Syed Ahmad Khan’s memorandum in 1892 was simply adopted by the Muslim Delegation in Simla. Sir Agha Khan explains in his book ***The Memoirs of Agha Khan****,* the delegation asked the British government that Muslims of India should not be regarded as a minority but as a nation whose rights and obligations must be protected by the state. He goes on and accepts that the demands of his delegation were the foundation of all future constitutional proposals and its inevitable consequence was the partition of India and the emergence of Pakistan.

**All India Muslim League and Partition of Bengal**

The success of Simla deputation demanded the protection of political and nationalist ideas of Muslims. The main goal of the organization was to protect and maintain the effectiveness of separate representation of Muslims effective.

Another immediate goal was protection of the ruling of partition of Bengal. Although, partition of Bengal was another time delaying tactic for British exploitation in India, it infuriated most educated Bengalis, Hindus and Muslims, students and professionals. Bengal was the focal point of the swadeshi agitation. However, majority of muslims gave a favorable response. Partition of Bengal gave way to muslims in East Bengal to be free of Hindu dominance. It also helped uplift the political representation of muslims in the government. An interesting change in behavior is seen both in muslims and hindus. Poor muslims were rejoiced of being free of oppression as they could be free in following their beliefs. It gave further strength to muslim nationalism it showed them a glimpse how different their lives could in separate state, as a separate nation.

However, there was no such appreciation shown by neither the muslim elites nor the hindus. In fact, Jinnah, also known as the founder of Pakistan did not give any attention to a separate muslim state. He was a member of Indian National Congress at the time.

**Government of Act 1909**

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