

Two-Nation Theory
Evolution of the Two-Nation Theory
(Urdu-Hindi controversy, Partition of Bengal,
Simla Deputation 1906, Allama Iqbal's
Presidential Address 1930, Congress Ministries
1937, Lahore Resolution 1940)

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Introduction: Understanding the Two-Nation Theory

- The Two-Nation Theory is a fundamental political concept that played a crucial role in the creation of Pakistan in 1947. It is based on the idea that **Muslims and Hindus are not merely followers of different religions but belong to two distinct nations, with separate cultures, identities, and civilizations.**
- The theory essentially argues that **Muslims and Hindus cannot live together in one state because of their deep-rooted differences in religion, culture, and social values.**
- The demand for a separate Muslim state in India, which eventually led to the creation of Pakistan, stemmed from the perception that Muslims needed a state that would preserve their religious, cultural, and political identity, which could not be safeguarded under Hindu majority rule.

Evolution of Two Nation Theory

- The evolution of the Two-Nation Theory occurred gradually over several decades, from linguistic and cultural disputes to political mobilization and the eventual creation of Pakistan.
- Key events like the **Urdu-Hindi controversy**, the **Partition of Bengal (1905)**, the **Simla Deputation (1906)**, Allama Iqbal's **presidential address (1930)**, the **Congress Ministries (1937)**, and the **Lahore Resolution (1940)** played significant roles in shaping and solidifying the theory.
- **Each of these milestones marked the growing realization among Indian Muslims that they were a distinct political entity with unique needs and aspirations, leading to the demand for a separate homeland**

Urdu-Hindi Controversy (1867)

- The Urdu-Hindi controversy emerged as a major cultural and linguistic issue in the late 19th century, which contributed to the formation of the Two-Nation Theory. The controversy revolved around the question of which language should be used as the national language of India: Urdu, which was closely associated with Muslim identity, or Hindi, which was considered the language of the Hindu majority.
- **Muslim Perspective:** Urdu was seen as the language of the Muslim elite, incorporating Persian and Arabic influences, making it more aligned with the Islamic civilization that Muslims identified with. Urdu was deeply embedded in Muslim social, cultural, and religious practices.

Urdu Hindi Controversy 1867

- **Hindu Reactions:** Conversely, the Hindu-majority in the west and nationalist movements opposed the partition, perceiving it as a divide-and-rule tactic by the British to prevent the emergence of a unified national movement. They feared that the division would undermine the political power of Hindus.

Partition of Bengal 1905

- The Partition of Bengal in 1905 was a significant event in the history of British India. Under British colonial rule, Bengal, which was the largest province in India, was divided into two parts: East Bengal (predominantly Muslim) and West Bengal (predominantly Hindu).
- The British claimed that the partition was for administrative efficiency, but the real purpose was to **weaken the growing nationalist movement and to divide the Indian population along religious lines.**
- This **divide-and-rule strategy** was aimed at reducing the political power of the Hindus by creating a Muslim-majority province in the East. The move sparked widespread opposition from Hindus, who saw it as an attempt to divide and weaken their political power. The partition was reversed in 1911 due to public pressure, but it had already achieved its purpose in creating a rift between Hindus and Muslims. The partition of Bengal marked the beginning of the idea of a separate Muslim political identity, which would later evolve into the demand for Pakistan.

Simla Deputation of 1906

- The Simla Deputation of 1906 was a pivotal moment in the history of the Muslim community in India.
- A delegation of Muslim leaders, led by Aga Khan and including prominent figures like Allama Iqbal, presented a memorandum to the Viceroy of India, Lord Minto, demanding separate political representation for Muslims in the legislative councils of British India.
- The deputation argued that **Muslims, due to their distinct religion, culture, and social structure, required separate representation to safeguard their political, economic, and social rights.** This meeting was crucial because it marked the beginning of formal political negotiations between **Muslims and the British government.**
- As a result of the Simla Deputation, the **Morley-Minto Reforms** were introduced in 1909, which granted Muslims separate electorates and increased their representation in the legislative bodies. This was a significant victory for the Muslim League and laid the foundation for the political demands of Muslims in India in the years to come.

Allahabad Address (1930)

- The Presidential Address of Allama Iqbal in 1930 is considered one of the most significant moments in the history of the Muslim struggle for political rights in India.
- Delivered at the Annual Session of the All-India Muslim League in Lahore.
- Iqbal's address laid the ideological foundation for the demand for a separate Muslim state. Iqbal argued that the **Muslims of India should not only have political autonomy but also have a state of their own in which they could live according to their cultural, religious, and social values**. He envisioned a united Muslim state in the north-western part of India, which later became the basis for the concept of Pakistan.
- His famous statement, "***The Muslims of India must be given the right to govern themselves,***" was a powerful declaration of Muslim political aspirations. Iqbal's vision of a separate Muslim homeland gained popularity and was later adopted by the All-India Muslim League under the leadership of Muhammad Ali Jinnah

Congress Ministries of 1937

- The Congress Ministries of 1937 were formed after the General Elections of 1937 under the Government of India Act, 1935. The Indian National Congress won a majority in several provinces and formed ministries in 7 out of 11 provinces, marking the first significant participation of Indians in self-government.
- The Congress government aimed to implement reforms and improve the lives of the Indian masses. However, tensions arose between the Congress and the Muslim League, which felt that the Congress was not adequately addressing the concerns of Muslims. The Congress's dominance in the ministries created a sense of political alienation among Muslims, especially since their demands for separate representation and protection of their rights were not fully respected.
- The Congress's centralist policies were perceived as being insensitive to the aspirations of Muslims, which led to the deepening of divisions between Hindus and Muslims in India. This period highlighted the growing political discontent within the Muslim community, which later culminated in the demand for Pakistan.

Lahore Resolution of 1940

- The Lahore Resolution of 1940, also known as the Pakistan Resolution, was a historic moment that formally articulated the demand for a separate Muslim state.
- The resolution was passed at the All-India Muslim League's annual session in Lahore, led by Muhammad Ali Jinnah. The resolution called for the **creation of "independent states" for Muslims in the north-western and eastern zones of India**, where they were in the majority. This demand was a response to the perceived failure of Congress to address Muslim political aspirations and safeguard their cultural and religious identity.
- The Lahore Resolution marked a **decisive shift in the Muslim League's policy from seeking political autonomy to demanding a separate state**. It is considered the **formal declaration of the creation of Pakistan**, as it laid the groundwork for the idea of a Muslim homeland that would later materialize in 1947.
- The resolution is often seen as the turning point in the political struggle of Muslims in India, paving the way for the eventual creation of Pakistan.

Conclusion

- The Two-Nation Theory emerged as a central ideological framework for the creation of Pakistan, grounded in the belief that Hindus and Muslims in British India were two distinct nations with different cultures, religions, and social systems.
- This theory evolved over time, particularly through key events like the Urdu-Hindi controversy, which highlighted cultural and linguistic divisions, and the Partition of Bengal (1905), which aimed to divide the Indian population along religious lines.
- The Simla Deputation (1906) was a critical turning point, as it led to the demand for separate political representation for Muslims. Allama Iqbal's Presidential Address in 1930 further solidified the need for a separate Muslim state, advocating for political autonomy.
- The Congress Ministries of 1937 exposed the Congress's failure to address Muslim concerns, reinforcing the growing political divide.
- Finally, the Lahore Resolution (1940) formally called for the creation of a separate Muslim homeland, which ultimately led to the formation of Pakistan in 1947. These events collectively shaped and justified the Two-Nation Theory, affirming the distinct political identity of Muslims in India and paving the way for the birth of Pakistan.