

MAULANA ABUL KALAM AZAD AND PARTITION OF INDIA: A NORMATIVE STUDY

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Abstract

Azad felt that Sardar Patel was in favor of partition. He was responsible for giving financial responsibility to the hand of the Muslim League. The idea of Partition was the product of Patel's mind. Patel was convinced by Mountbatten that he could not work with Muslim League. He may be called as founder of the partition of India. Nehru was convinced by Mountbatten. Azad said that 'I realized that the country was moving towards a great danger'. Azad's opinion was that partition would be harmful both for Hindus and Muslims. Azad thought that the new Constitution of India would be based on communal harmony and communal doubts would disappear. Partition would resolve the communal problems of India. Azad thought that the partition of India would not resolve the Communal solution. Patel argued that Hindus and Muslims could not be united in a state of India. Nehru did not talk about the partition in the way of Patel. Azad talked Nehru that he would not be able to support in idea of the Partition of India.

Keywords

Movement, Partition, Independence, British, Government, Hindu, Muslim.

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Introduction

Lord Curzon divided the Bengal Presidency into Muslim majority areas of East Bengal and Assam and the Hindu majority areas of West Bengal, Bihar, Jharkhand and Odisha in 1905. It was the largest administrative subdivision in British India. The aim of Lord Curzon was to weaken the nationalist politics against the British. The 'Two Nation Theory' of Md Ali Jinnah exercised that Hindus and Muslims of the subcontinent of India are not the same instinct on their religion, culture, language and ethnicity. The Muslims should be provided the separate state of Pakistan. The pamphlet of Choudhury Rahmat Ali entitled 'Now or Never' in 1933 coined the Pakistan consisting of the Punjab, northwest frontier province (Afghani), Kashmir and Baluchistan, but unfortunately it was not concentrated before the eyes of the political leaders. (Talbot, Ian.p.31) In 1932, British Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald accepted the separate electorate both in the Central and Provincial Legislatures for the depressed classes. Mahatma Gandhi started the fast unto his death. The provincial autonomy was introduced by the Government of India Act 1935. The Muslim League won 29 seats out of 64 reserved Muslim seats in Indian provincial elections held in 1937. Unionist Party of Sikandar Hayatt Khan of Punjab and formed the government with the support of the Indian National Congress and Shiromani Akali Dal. The Muslim League in Bengal shares power in a coalition with the Krishak Praja Party under the leadership of A.K. Fazlul Hug. Muslim League organized the 'Deliverance Day' celebration. Jinnah described Congress as Hindu Organization.

The three days session of the Muslim League held in Lahore in 1940 where passed a resolution demanding the separate state of Pakistan known as 'Pakistan Resolution. In August 1940, Lord Linlithgow declared that India should be granted a dominion status after the end of the war. In March 1942, Prime Minister Winston Churchill of Britain sent sir Stafford Cripps. Azad as a Congress President negotiated, consulted and discussed with Cripps Mission. In August 1942, Indian National Congress launched the Quit India Movement. The Cabinet Mission Plan came to India in 1946. (Metcalf & Metcalf, p.211) The Direct Day Action was started by Jinnah on 16 August 1946. The communal violence was started in Noakhali of Bengal, Bihar, and United Provinces and in Rawalpindi between Hindu-Muslim. British Prime Minister Attlee appointed Lord Louis Mountbatten to look over all matters of independence by June 1948. He felt for quick transfer of powers with resolve the communal solution. (Jalal, Ayesha, p.250) *Patel was the most important Congress leader who accepted the policy of partition of India as a communal solution. Jinnah's Direct Action Day had provoked communal violence across India. The*

Soma Sarmina

Hindu-Muslim riots spread all over India. Patel's idea was the weak Central Government and strong the provincial government so that the near about 600 princely states would encourage towards independence. (Gandhi, Rajmohan. P.396) Patel worked from December 1946 to January 1947 with civil servant V.P. Menon for a separate dominion of Pakistan. He was criticized by Gandhiji, Nehru, secular Muslims and socialists for his eagerness for partition. The nationalist leaders like Nehru and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad on behalf of Congress, Jinnah on behalf of the Muslim League, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar on behalf of All India Scheduled Caste Federation and Master Tara Singh on behalf of Sikh were representing for partition of India on religious lines. The plan of partition was planned based on Hindu and Sikh areas for a new India and Muslim predominantly areas for a new Pakistan. Md Ali Jinnah was sworn in Karachi as first Governor-General for the new Dominion of Pakistan on 14 August 1947. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru became as first Prime Minister of the new Dominion of India with Mountbatten remaining as the first Governor-General on 15th August 1947.

Azad's thought in Partition of India

From 1939 to 1946 Azad was the Congress President and he nominated Nehru as the Congress President. On 6 August 1946, Jinnah's 'Direct Action Day' for separate Pakistan spread as communal riots all over India. Thousands of people were killed especially in Bengal and Bihar. The communal relations at that time reached in the very worst situation, Azad tried to manage the riots between Hindus and Muslims. Despite that political situation, Azad called the Hindu-Muslim unity. League came into coalition with Congress but boycotted to join in the Constituent Assembly. (Azad, p. 2.). Muslim accused Azad of Hindu-dominated political leader. Azad tried to convene to both the religious i.e. Hindu and Muslim. He had great faith in Hindu-Muslim unity. His idea of Hindu-Muslim unity is indivisible unity and rationality. I am proud of being an Indian. I am part of the indivisible unity that is Indian nationality. I am indispensable to this noble edifice and without me this splendid structure is incomplete. I am an essential element, which has gone to build India. I can never surrender this claim". (Hasan, Mushirul, p.2).

On 3 June British Government announced a proposal for partition of India based on religion pointing out that the provinces of Bengal and Punjab were to be separated on the religion line. The Princely States were free to choose the join as they intended. The debate was held in the All India Congress Committee and some Muslim leaders like Saifuddin Kitchlew and Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan opposed against the decision of partition of India. Azad opposed against this proposal of the British Government and he discussed with Congress leaders like M.K.Gandhi, Sardar

Bhallavbhai Patel and Jawaharlal Nehru. Azad did not sign in the resolution of the AICC and there is no other way out from the civil war between Congress and Muslim League and ultimately the proposal of partition was approved. Azad tried to make united India by condemning the separation of India. The British Government was agreed to transfer the political as well as administrative powers at the end of the World War II to the hands of Indians. The Government allowed the release of all political prisoners in 1946. Maulana Azad led the Congress in the Constituent Assembly of India to framework the draft constitution. Azad acted as chief role in the process of delegation of negotiation with Cabinet Mission. The Muslim League by the Lahore Resolution envisaged for the separate state of Pakistan. Azad argued against separate state of Pakistan which would weaken the Muslim Community. To him, separate state cannot develop the Muslim identity and demand for Pakistan would be buried. (Menon, V, p.235).

Jinnah had accepted the Cabinet Mission Plan but the speech of Congress President Nehru in press conference was that Congress had not accepted anything but Congress would participate in the Constituent Assembly. This speech of Nehru was responsible for withdrawing the support of the League on Cabinet Mission Plan. Azad stated that this was the first blunder of Congress President. Lord Wavell suggested giving the Home portfolio in the hand of the Muslim League, but Patel insisted to remain the Home Department in Congress hand and Liyakat Ali of Muslim league leader selected to Finance affairs. This was the second blunder of Congress. Azad stated that his history of the partition of India would never forgive leaders of the Congress. India was divided into two by Congress, not by Muslim League. Sardar Patel and Nehru were the supporters of partition. Gandhiji remained on the willingness of Azad. Gandhiji and had spent in Patna and in Noakhali to make a new atmosphere of Hindu-Muslim unity. Azad opposed continuing against partition and was saying he was an Indian and he love Indian nationalists. He was not a man to surrender him in the issue of partition. Azad was afraid that India will lose its cultural heritage of unity. Gandhiji said that "If the Congress wishes to accept partition, it will be over my dead body". Gandhiji was not agreeing in favor of partition. Gandhi was convinced by Lord Mountbatten. Gandhi said that Congress will ask to Jinnah to form government and choose the members of the Cabinet. In consultation with Azad Gandhiji said that that is appeared for the partition of India. Azad said he would never surrender him in support of partition. He recognized himself as a nation-builder. (Prakash & Raj, P, p.13).

In 1942 the national Congress was declared an illegal organization by the British Government. The reelection of the Congress President was not possible and

Azad was remained as president. After Cabinet Mission Plan the situation returned to normal. Azad did not want Patel as Congress President in the contemporary situation. Azad had announced a statement proposing the name of Jawaharlal Nehru as Congress President on 26 April 1946. He also had been appealed to all Congressmen to elect Nehru as Congress President. The leaders from Calcutta, Bombay and Madras came to meet with Azad to withdraw his statement with the name of the proposed President. Azad was determined on his decision because Gandhiji agreed with him. Though Gandhiji was not fully comfortable with this decision and Azad should not be continued to act as Congress President and Nehru should succeed of Azad. Some people and Congress leaders gave the names of Sardar Patel and Acharya Kripalini. At the end of the decision, Jawaharlal Nehru was accepted as President of Congress.

The Muslim League had accepted the Cabinet Mission Plan. There was no need to stay in Delhi of Azad. He started returned to Calcutta on 30 June 1946. Sarat Chandra Bose was traveling to Calcutta on the same train and said why you have done this work. From most of the railway stations, the slogan was coming that Azad should continue as Congress President. Sarat Babu said Azad that look at the platform thousand and thousand men desired you remain as Congress President. In this regard, a meeting of the AICC was called on 7 July 1946. The Working Committee met on 6 July in 1946. Azad invited Jawaharlal Nehru to take charge over as Congress President. Azad explained the Cabinet Mission Plan with rigorously showing the great victory of Congress. The Leftists and the Congress Socialists had opposed vehemently against the plan. The achievement of Congress was full without a violent and bloody uprising. The Britishers accepted the demand for Indian nationality as a result of non-violent agitation and negotiation. Azad claimed that a vast country like India becoming independent. The Cabinet Mission had accepted all the important demands of the Congress which provide the unity of India and as well as the assurance to the minorities. The Congress had understood for the freedom and unity of India. The resolution of the Working Committee accepting the Cabinet Mission Plan had been presented by Azad. It had been sent to Lord Patrick-Lawrence and they congratulated Azad as well as Congress for accepting the Plan.

On 10th July 1946, Nehru stated in the press conference that Congress would enter in the composition of Constituent Assembly and participation in the formation of Interim Government. Muslim League had accepted the Cabinet Mission Plan as Congress accepted the plan, but demanded of Congress to modify the plan through the majority in the Constituent Assembly which may be deprived minority and it was the mercy of the congress majority. In the meeting of the League Council held

on 27 July 1946, Jinnah reiterated the demand for a separate independent Islamic state and rejected the Cabinet Mission Plan. League did not decide to participate in the Constituent assembly. The meeting of the Congress Working Committee was held on 8 August 1946 and AICC made a resolution on the cabinet Mission Plan. Viceroy, on 12 August 1946, invited Jawaharlal Nehru to form an interim government at the center. Nehru visited New Delhi to discuss the proposals of the Viceroy. The Congress Working Committee made a resolution at Wardha held on 10 August 1946 where there is no carry for Muslim and it was the repetition of Congress. Md. Jinnah rejected the invitation of Nehru to cooperate in the formation of the Interim Government. Jawaharlal Nehru met with Jinnah in his house to discuss the political situation and as well as freedom of India on 15 August 1946. The Direct Action Day was declared by Jinnah on 16 August 1946, but no clear guideline was there of the program. In Calcutta, as Azad felt on 16 August the League would attack on Congressmen and seize the Congress property. The Bengal Government decided to declare 16 August as a holiday and the panic was created among the people that the government was under the Muslim League. The Congress Working Committee formed Parliamentary Sub-Committee with the members like Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Dr. Rajendra Prasad and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad. It was decided that the proposed names of the member to be submitted to the Viceroy for the formation of the interim Government. Sarat Chandra Bose informed to the Governor to tackle the situation.

Concluding Observation

From the above-mentioned contribution of Azad in partition of India, it may be concluded that Azad did not want for partition. He desired a composite nationalism based on Hindu-Muslim unity. Azad thought partition could not solve the communal problem. His opinion was that there is political cause rather than religion behind the partition of India. He acted as a negotiator and coordinator of the British Government. The question arose from the several sides for the election of the President. He negotiated with Cripps Mission proposals, Lord Wavell, in the Simla Conference and in British Cabinet Mission, Mountbatten Plan and government of India Act and served as first Education of India in post-independence. He was a true nationalist though he propagated the revival of the Muslim religion. The goal of Azad was unity of India without on the basis of communal disparities. Azad always condemned against partition. The feeling was that Azad had been trying to coordinate still with Britishers. Azad was competent with a great knowledgeable person in political transferring powers from British to the Indians. The Congress provinces like Bengal, Bombay, Madras, Bihar and the UP openly expressed that Azad should be charged with the responsibility of the course of independence.

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