

B.A VI SEMESTER, PLB-654

Lahore Resolution & The Demand for Pakistan

The Lahore Resolution was a formal statement, which sought the creation of a separate Muslim state. The political statement, written by Zafarullah Khan and other prominent members of the 'All-India Muslim League,' proposed the creation of an 'independent state' based on predominantly Muslim population. When the resolution was put forth by the then Chief Minister of undivided Bengal, A. K. Fazl ul Huq, people started using the word 'Pakistan' quite frequently as the nationalist leaders described the resolution as a demand to create Pakistan. Hence, the 'Lahore Resolution' is considered as a landmark document in Pakistan's history. A monument called 'Minar-e-Pakistan' stands at Lahore to commemorate the famous resolution. March 23 is observed as a national holiday in Pakistan to celebrate their Republic Day and to commemorate the 'Lahore Resolution.'

Historical Background

Influenced by the Viceroy's intention of splitting India into three dominions, one each for Hindus, Rulers of Princely States, and the Muslims, the 'Muslim League Working Committee' came up with several sub-committees in order to put forth various proposals regarding the creation of a separate state for the Muslims. The Muslim League did come up with numerous proposals, but the British kept on rejecting them, as they could not succeed in fulfilling their own objectives.

On January 28, 1933, a Punjabi Muslim nationalist Chaudhary Rahmat Ali came up with a pamphlet titled 'Pakistan Declaration,' which was presented in the 1933 'Round Table conference,' organized by the British government. The 'Pakistan Declaration' stated that the Muslims living in the Northern states of India, namely North-West Frontier Province, Punjab, Sind, Kashmir, and Baluchistan, would want the creation of a separate state. However, the proposal wasn't taken seriously by the British administration until the 'All-India Muslim League' decided to do something about it.

The Lahore Conference

In 1940, the 'All-India Muslim League' held its three-day annual general session from March 22 to 24 at Iqbal Park, Lahore. The welcome speech was delivered by the chairman of the reception committee, Sir Shah Nawaz Khan. The session was then taken over by Muhammad Ali Jinnah, who spoke in favour of creating two independent nations. Jinnah, who was in favour of Gandhi's policies until recently, had started speaking against co-existing with the Hindus. In his speech on the first day of the three-day session, Muhammad Ali Jinnah explained how Hindus and Muslims cannot co-exist peacefully. He said that the differences between Muslims and the Hindus were so great that forming a central government to govern both the sects under one law could pose serious risks. He further said that Muslims and the Hindus belong to two disparate civilizations, based on conflicting ideas. Jinnah believed that Hindus and the Muslims belong to two different nations as the two groups had different epics and different history to derive inspiration from. He even warned by saying that clubbing Muslims in a country dominated numerically by Hindus would lead to destruction and that it is only fair to create two major dominions, based on religion.

After Liaquat Ali Khan finished presenting his annual report, the then Chief Minister of undivided Bengal, A. K. Fazl ul Huq, moved the resolution in the general session, which came to be known as the 'Lahore Resolution.' The resolution, which was primarily written by Sir Muhammad Zafarullah Khan, quickly gathered the support of many prominent Muslims leaders like Mohammad Abdul Ghafoor Hazarvi, Maulana Zafar Ali Khan, Qazi Esa, and Sir Abdullah Haroon. The resolution stated that no constitutional plan will be accepted by the Muslims until geographical units are demarcated, so as to constitute independent states. It also stated that Muslims living in Eastern and North Western zones of British India should be allowed to form an independent state with autonomous and sovereign constituent units. The resolution rejected the proposal of a 'United India,' which stood against the division of India, and recommended the creation of a separate state for the Muslims. According to the resolution, the new state should comprise of Muslims from regions like North-West Frontier Province, Punjab, Bengal, Assam, Sindh, and Baluchistan. The resolution, which is sometimes referred to as the 'Pakistan Resolution' holds great significance in Pakistan's history. In 1941, the resolution was made a part of the constitution, framed by 'All India Muslim League.'

Interpretation of the Lahore Resolution

The proposed 'Lahore Resolution' attracted varied interpretations. Abdul Hashim, one of the members of the 'Bengal Muslim League,' interpreted the resolution as a demand for two distinctive countries. After several other interpretations, it was widely believed that the resolution was a call for a separate Muslim nation. However, many argued against this interpretation, claiming that the words 'independent states' referred to the liberation of Muslim-dominated provinces, such as Punjab and Sindh, which would be autonomous and sovereign. This interpretation too was accepted by many as popular Muslim political leaders had spoken about creating four Muslim homelands in India in the late 1930s. However, the 'All-India Muslim League' leadership later stated that the call was for independence and creation of a separate state for the Muslims. The resolution also became popular as the 'Pakistan Resolution' as many considered it to be a proposal to create Pakistan. Though the term 'Pakistan' was put forth by Choudhary Rahmat Ali in 1933, the resolution was responsible in making it famous as the word 'Pakistan' was now being used throughout India. The term had become so famous that the name Pakistan was eventually used for the envisaged state.

Interestingly, many years after the creation of Pakistan, the 'Lahore Resolution' is still open for interpretation as different individuals view it differently. Though many might think that Muhammad Ali Jinnah was clear in stating that he wanted a separate state, which in turn implies that he wanted the partition of India to happen, a Pakistani-American historian and sociologist named Ayesha Jalal claimed in 2012 that Jinnah never actually wanted the partition to happen. She went on to say that the leader of the 'All-India Muslim League' had rejected the idea of creating Pakistan twice. She further argued by saying that the resolution had no mention of 'Pakistan' and that all Jinnah wanted was control over Punjab and Bengal.

Lahore Resolution & the Partition of India

During the 'Second World War,' the 'All-India Muslim League' started gathering support from South Asian Muslims and their 'two-nation theory' started getting momentum. However, the then Viceroy of India, Lord Linlithgow, assumed that the 'All-India Muslim League' wanted non-federal government sans Hindu domination. Hence in order to assuage the fear of being dominated by the Hindus, Lord Linlithgow announced that future constitution would take into account the views of the minorities as well. But the proposal was rejected by both the 'Indian National Congress' and the 'All-India Muslim League.'

Referring to the Lahore resolution, President of the Constituent Assembly, Dr. Rajendra Prasad stated that neither Hindus nor the Congress wanted partition, but Muhammad Ali Jinnah and the 'Muslim League' were clear in their pursuit to create a separate state for the Muslims. Also, the notion of creating a separate state for the Muslims eventually became an integral part of the All-India Muslim League's political discourse in India.

After the partition of India in 1947, the 'Lahore Resolution' was credited for having played an important role in the partition. It was said that the resolution was a decisive step towards finding cultural, economic, social, and political future for the Muslim populace in British India. Though there were many proposals in the past that sought a homeland for Indian Muslims, the 'Lahore Resolution' played a key role in the subsequent partition of India.

Cripps Proposals

Background

- Japan was advancing outside the eastern borders of India and the fall of Burma was a jolt to the British in the war. The threat of a Japanese invasion on India was looming and Indian support was essential for Britain's war efforts.
- When the 2nd World War broke out in 1939, the Viceroy Lord Linlithgow declared India a party to the war as part of the British Empire. This was done without consultation with Indians and this led to massive protests from the Congress Party. The party leaders, who were heading 7 provincial governments resigned from their posts. The Muslim League celebrated it as 'Deliverance Day'.
- Britain was facing pressure from the US and other allied leaders over its own imperial policies in India and also to secure Indian cooperation for the Allied war effort. This also led the British government to send Cripps to India.
- In other words, The Cripps Mission was sent by the British government to India in March 1942 to obtain Indian cooperation for the British war efforts in the 2nd World War. It was headed by Sir Richard Stafford Cripps, a labour minister in Winston Churchill's coalition government in Britain.

Members of Cripps Mission

1. **Stafford Cripps** – Left-wing Labourite, the Leader of the House of Commons and a member of the British War Cabinet
2. **Lord Pethick-Lawrence** – Secretary of State for India
3. **A. V. Alexander** – First Lord of the Admiralty

The Purpose of Cripps Mission

Following the World War-II, the Cripps Mission had several reasons to come to India. The reasons are given below:

1. Britain suffered many losses in Southeast Asia and Japan's threat to invade India seemed real for them. Hence, Britain wanted India's support.
2. Britain was pressurised by the allies (USA, USSR & China) to seek India's cooperation.
3. Indian nationalists had agreed to support the Allied as they hoped for immediate transfer of substantial power and complete independence after the war.

Proposals of Cripps Mission

- Setting up of an **Indian dominion**. This dominion would have the freedom to remain with the British Commonwealth or to secede from it. It would also be at liberty to take part in international organisations.
- A Constituent Assembly would be formed to frame a new constitution for the country. This Assembly would have **members elected by the provincial assemblies** and also nominated by the princes.
- Any province unwilling to join the Indian dominion could form a separate union and have a separate constitution.
- The transfer of power and the **rights of minorities** would be safeguarded by negotiations between the Constituent Assembly and the British government.
- In the meantime, until this new constitution came into force, **India's defence would be controlled by the British** and the powers of the Governor-General would remain unaltered.

Significance of Cripps Mission

- For the first time, the British government acknowledged India's right to be a dominion.
- Indians could frame their own Constitution.
- The proposal of giving freedom to the provinces to be a separate union turned out to be a model for the country's partition in 1947.
- The right to cede from the Commonwealth indicated full sovereignty at a later stage.
- In the interim period, Indians were guaranteed a good share in the administration.

Why did the Cripps Mission Fail?

- The **proposals were seen as too radical** by the British and as **too conservative** by the INC who wanted complete independence.
- The Mission was **rejected by the INC, the Muslim League** and other Indian groups.
- The Hindu Mahasabha and the Liberals were against the right of states to secede.
- The Sikhs objected because they thought any partition would leave Punjab in the hands of Pakistan.
- The Depressed Classes objected because they were apprehensive about their status in a country 'dominated by upper-caste Hindus.'
- It is also believed that the mission failed because of a clear lack of support for it by the Viceroy Linlithgow, British PM Winston Churchill and the Secretary of State for India, Leo Amery.

After the failure of the mission, Cripps returned to England, and the Congress-led by Gandhi started their new campaign, the Quit India Movement in August 1942.

Indian National Congress Rejected the Mission

INC rejected the Cripps Mission for the following reasons:

1. The INC was against the provinces' right to separately form unions as this was

damaging to national unity.

2. They were also against the Governor-General's power being retained as against him being only a constitutional head.
3. They also protested the lack of share in defence.
4. There was no concrete plan for the immediate transfer of power.

Muslim League Rejected the Cripps Mission

Muslim League rejected the Cripps Mission for the following reasons:

1. They did not like the idea of a single union of India.
2. They protested against the method for the Constituent Assembly's creation and also against the procedure to decide on the provinces' accession to the Indian union.

The significance of Cripps Mission is important to understand as it was the first time in history when Indian dominion was recognised.