

## 14-POINTS OF QUAID-E-AZAM: AN ANALYSIS

*Dr. Fakhur-ul-Islam*

### ABSTRACT

*The extreme and antagonistic recommendations of Nehru Report awakened Muslims. Quaid-e-Azam was extremely disappointed with contents of the report. He, therefore, started working on a workable formula that could safeguard rights of Muslims in the future set up. The 14-points were presented in the Dell India Muslim League on 28<sup>th</sup> March 1929. These points reflected Quaid-e-Azam's wise and firm stand on the issues confronting the Indian Muslims. In this paper, an endeavor has been made to analyze points of Jinnah's formula one by one, so that historical record is kept straight and better understanding of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah and his political acumen is ensured.*

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### INTRODUCTION

In the decade of 1920's Hindu Muslim relations took a dangerous turn in India. In most parts of the country, anti-Muslim riots broke out resulting in killing of thousands of innocent Muslims. Congress leaders proved to be biased and communalists. That situation prompted All India Muslim League in general, and Muhammad Ali Jinnah, in particular, to wage a war for safeguarding Muslims' rights. It was in that backdrop that the 14-Points formula 1929 of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah came to the lime light. It was basically a proposals package for the new constitution of India. The formula was presented in March 1929 and proved to be a befitting rejoinder to Nehru Report of 1928. Furthermore, the 14-points constitutional formula was a serious attempt towards safeguarding political rights of Indian Muslims. Jinnah had a balanced approach towards solution of communal problem in India. Unlike the biased approach of Nehru, Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, rationally took into account all necessary components of federal structure, a system best-fit to a country having multi-communal and multi-cultural units.

**FROM SIMON TO JINNAH**

Even before the arrival of Simon Commission and publishing of Nehru Report, the All India Muslim League during consecutive annual sessions of the party during 1924-26, had made up its mind to present Muslims' point of view for the forthcoming constitution of India. Muslim proposals formulated during those three sessions can be summarized as:

- Effective and adequate representation of minorities should be ensured in the legislative bodies of provinces without reducing majority to minority.
- Separate electorate should continue as per previous practice. However, all the communities should be given a free choice to abandon it in favour of joint electorate.
- Any negative impact of prospective territorial redistribution on Muslim majority provinces, such as Punjab, Bengal and NWFP was rejected. All India League feared that territorial redistribution might affect Muslim majority in those provinces.
- A demand for protection of religious liberty was raised. To All India Muslim League, the religious liberty was comprehensive, encompassing profession of belief and other rights in terms of worship and education.
- For protection of minorities' rights in legislation, it was proposed that any piece of legislation affecting a community should have support of  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the members of that community.

The Congress leaders, however, did not heed these proposals. The above proposals show that All India Muslim League had done home work before appointment of statutory commission. On March, 20, 1927, prominent Muslims met at Delhi. They agreed to forego separate electorates provided certain conditions were accepted. The proposals finalized in that conferences are commonly known as "Delhi Proposals" The conditions were a) Bifurcation of Bombay presidency and carving out separate Sind province from it. 2) Extension of reforms to Baluchistan and NWFP on the same pattern as done in other provinces of India.

The Muslims of India in general and Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah in particular had a hard time during the

decade of 1920-30. Quaid-i-Azam who had resigned from Congress's membership in 1920, decided to reorganize Muslim League and resolve their constitutional problems during that critical time. After that, especially on the question of cooperation or non cooperation with Simon Commission, the All India Muslim League splintered into two groups. The statutory commission was announced in November 1927 by Secretary of state for India Lord Birkenhead with Sir John Simon as its chairman. The Commission arrived in India on 3<sup>rd</sup> February 1928.

Due to "All White" composition, the commission was rejected by Indians. On 16<sup>th</sup> February 1928, Lala Lajpat Rai, presented a resolution in the Central Legislative Assembly expressing lack of confidence in the commission. Quaid-e-Azam, who was member of Central legislative Assembly from Bombay Muhammadan urban constituency, delivered a speech 1928 in favour of the resolution. In the meanwhile a statement by Secretary of state for India Lord Birkenhead charged the atmosphere. He alleged that both Muslim and Hindu communities were unable to unite on a consensus constitution. The Congress took the taunting of Lord Birkenhead as challenge and an all parties conference was convened on February, 11, 1928. The Conference continued up to 11<sup>th</sup> March, 1928. It ended inconclusively. However, in its next session in Bombay on May 1928, the conference appointed a 10 member committee with Moti Lal Nehru as chairman. The Nehru committee submitted its report in August 1928 which is known as Nehru Report. Main points of Nehru Report are given below:

- Repudiation of separate electorates for Muslims.
- In the Centre, formation of Government based on federation with residuary powers concentrated in centre.
- One-fourth Muslim representation in the central legislature,
- Extension of constitutional reforms to NWFP and Baluchistan provinces.
- Notifying Hindi to be the official language of India.

Clearly, all the above recommendations were detrimental to the interest of Indian Muslims. The report caused a stir in the political environment of India. The report reflected Hindu Mahasabha mentality. It proved beyond any doubt that Congress

intended to ignore Muslims and fight for constitutional rights all alone.

The concentration of powers in the centre, as suggested by Nehru was undoubtedly a step towards unitary Government, That's why Sir Agha Khan, while contributing article in the London-based news paper *The Time* in October 1928 wrote:

“India, when freed from outside control, cannot have a unitary, non-federal government. The country must accept in all its consequences its own inevitable diversities, not only religious and historical but also national and linguistic”.

#### **FOURTEEN POINTS**

- i) In the Centre, formation of Government based on federation with residuary powers concentrated in federating units,
- ii) Autonomy should ensured in provinces without any discrimination,
- iii) In order to ensure optimum representation of minorities, concrete steps should be taken in all elected bodies especially in provinces. In provinces, it should be guaranteed that minorities representation is not reduced,
- iv) One third representation should be given to Muslims in the Central legislature of India,
- v) The right of separate electorate should continue to be enjoyed by communal groups. Moreover, every community should be allowed to abandon its separate electorate in favour of joint electorate as and when they desire,
- vi) Muslim majority in the Punjab, Bengal and the North-West Frontier Province should not be affected by any prospective administrative and territorial re adjustment,
- vii) Religious rights of every community especially liberty of belief, worship and observance, propaganda, association and education, should be protected,
- viii) With an aim to protect legislative rights of minorities, three fourth voting of the members of any community should be mandatory for any piece of legislation concerning that community,
- ix) Bombay presidency should be divided forthwith in a manner that Sind could become independent province,

- x) Constitutional reforms should be extended to NWFP and Baluchistan provinces,
- xi) Through proper constitutional guarantees, due share should be given to Muslims in all the governmental and non-governmental services keeping in view the requirement of efficiency,
- xii) Muslim culture should be protected and their education, language, religion, personal laws and charitable institutions should be promoted. Moreover, they should be given due share in the Grants-in-aid extended by the state,
- xiii) At least one third Muslim ministers should be inducted central as well as provincial cabinets,
- xiv) The central legislature should not amend in the constitution without concurrence of the provinces of India.

In the following lines, some points of Jinnah's formula have been elaborated further:

**Federation:** Jinnah proposed Federal; form of Government for India because he knew that India was a vast country and the same system is particularly suited to large geographical areas. The other aspect is that vast countries like India are inhibited by diversified religious, social and cultural groups. Carlton Clymer Rodee and his co-authors of book *Introduction to Political Science* opine that this system is good for large states with variety of classes that result from unequal socioeconomic conditions and culture cleavage. To the Western world, Jinnah's demand of Federal Form was not new. In fact that system was quite popular in the world. Argentine, Australia, Brazil, Canada, Mexico, Switzerland and United States of America were some of the notable states where federal form of government was enforced. Pandit Moti Lal Nehru also proposed federation for India; however he wanted residuary powers to be vested in the centre. Keeping residuary powers in the purview of centre would mean Hindu domination over Muslim minority. On the other hand, Jinnah demanded for vesting residuary powers in provinces. In Jinnah's plan, keeping these powers with provinces would benefit Hindu and Muslim communities alike.

**Provincial Autonomy:** The demographic contour of India was such that in Eastern Bengal and North-Western provinces, Muslims were in majority while Hindus dominated the remaining provinces. Hindu majority provinces were larger in size and densely populated as compared to Muslim majority provinces. In case of election to the federal assembly, there would have been majority of Hindu members in the central legislature. In case unitary form of Government was introduced, Muslims would be at disadvantage. Jinnah preempted that threat by proposing uniform measure of autonomy in all the provinces of India. He knew that provincial autonomy was the quality or state of being self-governing. So in case of incorporating provincial autonomy in the future constitution, Muslims would be able to govern their own provinces and develop their economy and culture.

**Representation of Minorities in Provinces:** In the Indian context, Muslims were a vulnerable, disadvantaged and marginalized class. All the Acts introduced by British Government till 1919 lacked proper attention to minorities' rights. Jinnah took full cognizance of that particular issue. Besides calling for effective minorities' representation, Jinnah stressed the need of averting the transforming of majority of any community to minority in any province.

**Muslims Representation in Central Legislature:** The representation of Muslims in Central legislative Assembly was a bone of contention between All India National Congress and All India Muslim League. Pandit Moti Lal Nehru proposed  $\frac{1}{4}$  seats for Muslims in that legislature. Ironically, Congress leaders had recognized and accepted that right in the 1916 Lucknow Pact, and even they were ready to consider the same demand as part of the Delhi Proposals. However in the Nehru Report, they backtracked on that particular demand. Demanding  $\frac{1}{3}$  representation in the central legislature was a sign of Jinnah's farsightedness. He knew that if one – third seats were reserved for Muslims, it would guarantee protection of Muslims' rights quite safely. Furthermore, in that case, the remaining  $\frac{2}{3}$  would be distributed among Congress, Indo-Europeans and other groups. In this way no other group would acquire absolute majority to frame laws detrimental to Muslims' interest.

**Separate Electorate:** The demand for separate electorate raised by Quaid-e-Azam was not a new one. Sir Sayed Ahmad Khan was the first to raise it on floor of the Central Legislative Council under the Government of India Act 1861. However, the demand was formally submitted by a 35-member delegation during a meeting with Lord Minto on October, 1, 1906, which is known as Simla Deputation. Consequently, Muslims' demand was conceded in the Minto-Morley Reforms and then Government of India Act 1909. They were given reserved seats in the legislatures which were to be filled by separate electorate. Justice Munir opines that in the system of separate electorate some Hindus "saw the embryo of future Pakistan". They, therefore, opposed it. Nevertheless, Congress accorded its consent to the system in the famous Lucknow pact 1916. They withdrew their support in 1928 when Nehru report rejected the same. Congress leaders took u-turns on this particular issues and were badly exposed. For Muslims, it was matter of life death. Quaid-e-Azam was aware of its importance, therefore he made it substantial part of his 14-points.

**Guarantee of Religious Liberty to all Communities:** Religious liberty is one of the basic fundamental and human rights. All the international instruments have recognized this rights and states, in their individual capacity, have incorporated it in their respective laws and constitutions. In India, protection of religious right was all the more important as Hindus were extremely intolerant towards other religions and ideologies. Anti-Muslim riots perpetrated by Hindu extremists constitute a very painful chapter of Indian history. The early part of 1920's decade witnessed bloody riots in various cities of India. Mr. Ambedkar reported that in the year 1921-22 communal riots broke out in Bengal and in the Punjab especially in Multan, reached very serious heights. In the coming years the riots spread to Lucknow, Shahajahanpur, Kankinara, Allahabad and parts of NWFP. Calcutta, the United Provinces, the Central Provinces and the Bombay Presidency were all scenes of riots in 1925-26. The death toll and damage to property was enormous. Keeping in view that state of affair, the All India Muslim league and Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah put in conscious efforts to resolve the question of religious liberty once for all.

**Legislation About Communities in Elected Bodies:** Hindus were dominant in the central legislature and certain provinces of India. In few other provinces, Muslims were in majority. It was feared that in cases of legislation, majority community will bulldoze the minority. To protect both Hindus and Muslims from the effect of grinding majority, Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah suggested a very beautiful and workable formula. He suggested that if a piece of legislation (about a particular community) was under consideration of any legislature or any other elected body, it will not be passed as per routine simple majority practice. Rather, he proposed that it should be abandoned if three fourth of the members of any community in that particular body oppose that legislation on the ground that it would be injurious to the interests of that community. Naturally, that facility was available to both Hindu and Muslim communities in the provinces where they were in minority.

**North-West Frontier, Sind and Baluchistan Affairs:** Quaid-e-Azam was not the first leader to present the case of extending Government of India Act 1919 to NWFP; rather it was burning issue in the beginning of 1920's. Before him, the demand for introduction of reforms in that province was raised in the Delhi proposals and even Nehru report. Mulana Zafar Ali Khan, while writing in favour of that demand termed the province as *Sarzameen-i-Be Ayeen* (Land without constitution). However, no leader was more enthusiastic than Quaid-e-Azam in giving Pukhtoons their due rights. On the same analogy, he demanded the same facility for Baluchistan. As for as the problem of Sind was concerned, it too was an old demand and had been raising by Muslim League from time to time. The underlying objective for demanding Sind's separation was to get a Muslim majority province. The existing arrangement i.e. keeping it part of Bombay was unnatural as both Bombay and Sind were not geographically contiguous. So including North-West Frontier, Sind and Baluchistan in the 14-point, Quaid-e-Azam fulfilled desire of the Muslims living in those areas.

**Share in Services and Other Rights:** The share of Muslims in the services of state and local bodies together with protection and promotion of their culture, education, language, religion, personal laws and charitable institutions, were few economic,



social and cultural rights. In the post War of Independence era, these rights were badly usurped. The extent of usurpation was recorded by British writers themselves. WW Hunter has given some statistics in his illustrious book titled *The Indian Muslamans*. According to him, in 1869, in the high grade services the ratio of Mulims to Hindus was 1:3, in the second grade, it was 1:10, and in the third grade, it was 4: 27. He further writes that in Bengal, out 2111 posts, 1338 were Europeans, 681 Hindus and only 92 were Muslims. He recalls that a Century ago, at the zenith of their rule in India, Muslims occupied key position in administration but now they were reduced to clerical or lesser jobs. He concludes that:

“The proportion of Muhammadans to Hindus as shown above is now less than one-seventh. “The proportion of Hindus to Europeans is more than one half; the proportion of Musalmans to Europeans is less than one-fourteenth. The proportion of the race which a century ago had the monopoly of government, has now fallen to less than one-twenty-third of the whole administrative body. This, too, in the gazette appointments, where the distribution of patronage is closely watched. In the less conspicuous office establishment in the presidency town, the exclusion of Muslamans is even more complete. In one extensive department the other day, it was not a single employee who could read the Muslaman dialect; and in fact, there is now scarcely a government office in Culcutta in which a Muhammadan can hope for any post above the rank of porter, messenger, and filler of ink-pots and mender of pens.”

The condition of Muslim in 1920's was not much better than the one revealed by Hunter. Jinnah therefore, took special care of these sectors and made them part of his constitutional formula.

#### AMENDMENT IN CONSTITUTION

The last, but most important demand by Jinnah was constitutional guarantee for Muslims. It was obvious that Hindus would not hesitate to tailor the future constitution according to their own whims and wishes, In order to preempt that eventuality he demanded: “No change can be made in the constitution by the

central legislature except with concurrence of Jinnah was fully justified in raising that demand because in all federal forms of the world at that time, concurrence of federating units was must for constitutional amendments. In this regard, article 5 of the US constitution may be cited as an example. The same article provides for amendment procedure in the American constitution.”

In the case of USA, ratification by the legislatures of three fourths of the several States was required. However, Jinnah proposed only concurrence of the federating units for incorporating changes in the constitution. In other words his proposal for prospective amendments was in consonance with spirit of federalism and international practices.

## **CONCLUSION**

The 14 point formula of Quaid-e-Azam exhibited his mature sense of constitutionalism and statesmanship. It aimed at protecting and safeguarding social, political, economic and cultural rights of the Indian Muslims. The very presentation of this formula was proof of the fact that Quaid-e-Azam believed in constitutional solution of Indian problem. The form of government, federation, he suggested was best-fit for India Likewise, separate electorate was the only way to keep both the communities at a reasonable distance. The same formula also reveals that Jinnah had a very unbiased approach to all communities in India. He did talk about Muslim problems, but never at the cost of other communities.

Jamiluddin Ahmad was right to say “a close study of the points show that they contained the germs eventual evolution of Pakistan in one form or another. It speaks volumes for the political sagacity of Quaid-e-Azam that he brought about the transition from 14 points to Pakistan in such a logical manner that the whole onus of responsibility for future to evolve a single political structure for the whole subcontinent lay with Hindus leaders”.

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