

Lucknow Pact

Introduction

The Lucknow agreement took a new twist with change in Muslim League's political doctrine. The Quaid-e-Azam inclusion in the Muslim league was a historic event, which gave new direction to Muslim league's political struggle. Self-rule for India brought the Muslim league and the Congress closer to each other. The leaders of the both parties agreed that they should cooperate with each other to make the British accept their demands. They acknowledged that the objectives can be achieved if the two major communities of India forget their differences on petty issues and come closer to each other to see eye to eye on the important national issues. The political vicinity had taken a happy turn and ground for cherished Hindu Muslim unity had been smoothed.

Lucknow pact is considered as a significant event in the political constitutional history of India. It is regarded a high water marked of Hindu Muslim unity. It was the first and last pact signed between Congress and Muslim league.

Factor's Behind the Pact

The relations between the British government and Muslims were tensed due to aggressive and unilateral policies of the British. The annulment of the partition of Bengal in 1911 was a jolt for the Muslims of India; consequently it shattered their confidence in British and brought Muslims closer to Hindus against the British. Similarly the Kanpur mosque incident and the British policies in the international

system had caused deep anguish among the Muslims. Thus the Muslims leaderships decided to change the strategy of the Muslim league after the annulment of Bengal in 1911. In December 1912, Muslim league change its aim from loyalty to form self-government suitable to India. However, the league retained the right to modify self-rule in accordance with their needs and requirements.

Jinnah and the Pact

Jinnah arose as a devoted champion of Hindu Muslim unity, he convinced all India Muslim league to change their policies for the better of India. Muhammad Ali Jinnah in his early career was a member of both the Congress and the Muslim league and was well known as a man free of any religious prejudice, as well as a brilliant advocate and debater. In 1915, mainly due to his efforts, both the Muslim league and the Congress party had their annual meeting in Bombay. At the end of this meeting, a committee was formed with the intention to sort the common understanding between the two communities. The committee prepared a scheme in November, 1916. The scheme was approved by both the parties in December, 1916 at the respective sessions at Lucknow. Quaid-e-Azam, in his presidential speech at Lucknow, said “India’s real progress can only be achieved by a true understanding and harmonious relations between the two great communities. With regard to our own affairs, we can depend upon nobody but ourselves.”

Features of the Pact

The congress party agreed to the right to separate electorate for the Muslims first and last time in the history of subcontinent. The Hindus conceded that the Muslims would have one third representation in the imperial legislative council. A weightage formula was proposed under which the Muslims would get less representation than their population in the legislative council in those provinces where they were in majority but more in provinces where they were in minority. The provincial legislative council will have fourth fifth as elected members and one fifth as nominated members. The member's would be elected by the people directly for the term of five years. In the major provinces the strength of the legislative councils would be 125 and in the minor provinces the strength would be 50 and 75. The Muslims shall be elected through special electorates and their strength in the different provinces shall be as: Punjab 50%, Bengal 40%, U.P 30%, Bihar 25%, C.P 15%, Madras 15% and Bombay 33 %.

No bill, nor any clause thereof, nor a resolution introduced by a non-official member affecting one or other community shall be presented in the assembly without approval of the concern group. Provincial autonomy will be given to the province with maximum powers vested with the provincial council. The provincial council will have authorized to impose taxes, raise loans, and to vote on budget. All proposals for raising revenues shall have to be submitted to the provincial council for sanction. There shall be an executive council in the province headed by the governor whose half of the member's shall Indian national elected by the elected members of the legislative council their term of office shall be five year. The members of the assemblies shall have the right to present adjournment motion. Seats were reserved for the Muslims in those provinces in which they were in minority under the system weightages. Protection shall be given to the Hindus in

Muslim majority provinces. In the centre there shall be an imperial legislative council consisting of 150 members. Four-fifths of the members shall be elected for a term of five years on the basis of direct election. The Muslims shall be given 1/3 seats of the elected members and they will be elected by separate Muslim electorates. The central Government will be headed by the Governor General, who would be assisted by an executive council. Half of the members of the executive council shall be Indians elected by the elected members of the imperial legislative council.

Importance of the Pact

The Lucknow pact was a great achievement of Hindu and Muslim leaders, who were successful in offering for the first and the only time, a mutually acceptable solution of the Hindu-Muslim problem. It appeared as a special significance in the history of India. It was the Quaid-e-Azam, who had always been a staunch supporter of Hindu-Muslim unity. The scheme provided for a substantial step taken halfway towards the establishment of self-rule in India which was the main core of the jointly sponsored scheme of Lucknow pact. The Congress first time accepted the demand of separate electorate for Muslims. The pact ensured the protection of political rights of Muslims. Muslim League separate status was also being accepted. Through the pact the both parties were able to put a joint demand before the British. Congress got strength in terms of political and masses because it had got All India Muslim League Support.

It was basically give and take sort of agreement between the both parties. The Muslims had to pay a big price of loosing majority in Bengal and Punjab to obtain some concessions. Similarly, it carried great constitutional significance in the future for many developments. The scheme of representation of Muslim community in the central and provincial legislatures as embodied in the Lucknow pact was generally followed in the Montague Chelmsford reforms.

Conclusion

The agreement was very outstanding and its dreams were fulfilled the whole political scenario of Indian subcontinent were different. But, it was impossible to the parties to make a united India. The Hindus and Muslims are two different nation and they have different culture and civilization. Therefore the Lucknow Pact failed to make a long lasting cooperation in India among the Muslims and Hindus.