



*Journal of Advances and  
Scholarly Researches in  
Allied Education*

*Vol. VIII, Issue No. XV,  
July-2014, ISSN 2230-7540*

**PARTITION OF INDIA, 1947: ANALYZING THE  
REASONS**

AN  
INTERNATIONALLY  
INDEXED PEER  
REVIEWED &  
REFEREED JOURNAL

# Partition of India, 1947: Analyzing the Reasons

Ekramul Haque Choudhury<sup>1</sup> Dr. Ved Kour<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Ph.D Scholar, Department of History, Calorx Teachers' University, Ahmedabad, Gujarat, India

<sup>2</sup>Associate Professor (Retired), CRM JAT PG College, Hisar, Haryana, India

**Abstract – The partition of the South Asian sub-continent into India and Pakistan was one of the most crucial events in both countries histories. There was exceeding tensions in India between the two main political parties; the Indian National Congress, with predominantly Hindu based support and members and the Muslim League formed later as protest against the minority Muslim population and their overlooked rights. Violence and bloodshed between Hindu and Muslim population had become increasingly severe and forced the decision surrounding partition to be made quickly before it escalated any further. Furthermore, the British intention to leave India was a ticking clock forcing the two parties to come to a decision quickly rather than be granted independence only to be left in a civil war. However, the social and economic barriers between Muslims and Hindus also furthered the support for partition**

**Key Words: Communalism, Muslim League, Two Nation Theory, Hindu- Muslim Politics, Pakistan, Politics of Division, Hate etc.**

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## INTRODUCTION

Tensions between the Muslim League and Congress led to the League's increasing insecurity of being disadvantaged by having a single Indian nation dominated by Hindus and that their interests would not be accounted for. The Muslim League felt increasingly isolated which led them to push harder for the partition of India. Much of this sense of isolation was set about by the actions of Congress. For instance, in the 1937 elections the Congress won majorities in seven of eleven provinces in which no Muslim cabinet ministers were appointed unless they were members of Congress and relinquished their loyalty to the Muslim League. The Congress flag was flown from public buildings and parliaments opened with the singing of the Hindu national anthem. Hindu values were said imposed in institutions such as schools where children were made to "worship the portrait of Gandhi and that attempts were made to persuade them not to eat beef" Although, there had been some hope of an undivided India, with a government consisting of three tiers along roughly the same lines as the borders of India and Pakistan. However, Congress' rejection of the interim government set up under this Cabinet Mission Plan in 1942 convinced the leaders of the Muslim League that compromise was impossible and partition was the only course to take. The Muslim League leader, Jinnah, stated that "...the sole aim and object of the Congress is to annihilate every other organization in the country and to set itself up as a fascist and authoritarian organization of the worst type." This statement exemplifies how exceedingly threatened the Muslim

League felt as the minority in a nation dominated by the Hindu majority, only increased by the isolating actions of Congress, which led them to strive for separate nation of their own.

The violence between Hindus and Muslims which had begun to plague India became an overwhelming factor forcing the political leaders to come to an agreement over the partition of India. On 16 August 1946 the League called for a hartal; Jinnah stating that "Only over the dead bodies of Muslims will the congress flag fly in the Northern Provinces," only increasing Muslim and Hindu tensions. In Calcutta the call for this day long strike unleashed communal rioting and bloodshed; 4,700 people were killed and over 15,000 were injured. 'The Great Calcutta Killing' was followed by outbreaks of violence throughout India in which Muslims and Hindus, many of which had lived for generations in peace, turned on each other. This violence further convinced Congress, as well as the British, that the two groups simply could not live together in peace. Not only this, but, with all the violence the alternative to a partition seemed to be a holocaust. This violence was a significant push which made Congress reluctantly agree to the partition of India.

The British intention on ending their colonial rule in India as soon as possible was a factor which sped up the decision surrounding partition. If the British were to grant independence and vacate India they would no doubt be leaving her in the midst of a civil war. The British government announced that it would

leave India by June 1948 whether or not the issue of partition was resolved or not. The pressure increased to seek a political partition of territories as a way to avoid a full-scale civil war without the British as the mediator.

Although, some would argue that that the religious violence and Congress's discrimination of Muslims were only the occasion for the demand of partition and that the real cause was economic and social. Generally Hindus were much better educated and wealthier than Muslims. As stated earlier they had most of the position is the government as well as commerce and the professions. Not only this, but Muslim and Hindu ideologies being on two different sides of the spectrum made integration difficult. Where Muslims believe in one god, Hindus worship many. Such drastic differences are there in such basic things such as the Hindu's worship of cows yet to Muslim they were a source of cheap meat. Because such huge divisions not only in class but in culture, social customs and history it is understandable that many Muslims saw the partition alone as the way to achieve higher economic and social status.

The exceeding tensions between the Indian National Congress and the Muslim League over Muslim as well as the violence which plagued the country forced the decision surrounding partition to be made quickly before it spread further. In addition, the British intention to leave India was a ticking clock forcing the two parties to come to a decision quickly rather than be granted independence only to be left in a civil war. Additionally, the obstacle of social and economic differences of Muslims and Hindus also advanced the support of partition. All the above factors were crucial in the reasons for partition of the South Asian sub-continent, however, what is most crucial about most of them was the way these factors forced the decision to be made faster. There was therefore less time for both parties to come to an agreement which suited both equally.

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