



**JINNAH AND POLITICS OF THE ALL-INDIA MUSLIM LEAGUE
(The First Presidential Episode 1919-30)**

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Abstract

Jinnah had a very close political association with the Muslim League since 1910. He became its member in 1913 and from that time onward, owing to his profound interest in its political affairs, he was elected its permanent President in 1919, a position he held until 1930. This was the initial period of Jinnah's leadership of the League. This period reflects a crucial chapter in the political journey of the League and Jinnah because it not only reshaped Jinnah's political doctrine, but also altered the League's course of political action and the nature of its constitutional struggle. This research mainly explores how Jinnah was invited to the League's forum and why he was elected as its permanent President. It further explores the strategies employed by Jinnah to confront the various internal and external challenges faced by the League during this period and examines his role as its President in safeguarding the distinct political entity of the League from growing influence of the Khilafat Conference and the Congress. The paper critically analyses the contrasting political dynamics and strategies of the Congress and the League with reference to the British constitutional reforms. It also provides an in-depth analysis of the notable factors responsible for the League's political deadlock during this period. The study is based on historical and critical analysis supported by both primary and secondary sources.

Key Words: Jinnah's Leadership, League's Politics, Organizational deadlock, Hindu-Muslim Relations, British Policies.

Introduction

The Muslim biased policy of the Indian National Congress (INC) made in 1885, compelled a group of the Muslim leaders of India to have a political platform of their own to advance the demands of their Muslim community to the British authority. But this long desire could not be fulfilled before the Simla Deputation of October 1906. In this regard the first step was taken by Nawab Salimullah, who on November 9, 1906, proposed a scheme for the establishment of a Muslim organization (Mujahid, 1990: 219). This scheme was discussed during a meeting of the Mohamaddon Educational Conference called at Dhaka on December 30, 1906 and as a result the All-India Muslim League (AIML) was formed. The party had an organizational structure, a constitution and a President. This organization was made to fight the Muslim political rights and interests but due to lack of proper leadership for over a few decades it could not realize its dream. The leaders who laid the foundation of this organization like Mohsin-ul-Mulk, Nawab Salim Ullah and Nawab Viqar-ul-Mulk passed away in 1907, 1915 and 1917 respectively. Even Sir Aga Khan (1877-1957) who was among its founding leaders and its first President neither fully devoted to his position nor gave time to the League's politics. Aga Khan held this position till 1913. He was followed by Raja Sahib of Mahmudabad (1879-1931) who was chosen as the next President in December 1913, and was constitutionally elected for three years in December 1915. But like his predecessor, Raja Sahib too, was unable to establish the political prestige and organizational structure of the AIML. Owing to his physical incapacity, he could not efficiently fulfill his responsibilities although he was elected twice as the League's President (FMA, Vol. 123). On April 19, 1919, Fazlul Huq was provisionally elected as the President until the fresh election (FMA, Vol. 86). Fazlul Huq was keen to assert his influence



in the political affairs of the party but the central office did not allow him to do so. As he was a temporary President therefore the party was bound to elect its permanent President in the coming open session. The Muslim leaders requested Sir Aga Khan once again to accept the leadership but he refused (FMA, Vol. 483). In such circumstances a leader who filled the vacuum of leadership in the League's political journey at this critical juncture and navigated the Muslim nation on the track of its destiny was Muhammad Ali Jinnah (1876-1948). He was elected as the fourth permanent President of the Muslim League (ML) during its Amritsar session of December 1919 (FMA, Vol. 86).

The word permanent was not a constitutional term. However it means only to differentiate between the Sessional President and the Party President as in many cases the President of the ML did not preside over the ML's sessions. According to its constitution the ML permanent President was elected for three years during the open session and was eligible to be re-elected. But since 1931 such President had been elected annually during the meeting of the ML's Council.

Jinnah as the League's President

In his early political life Jinnah was a strict Indian nationalist and preferred to be called an Indian instead of a Muslim. Therefore he joined the Congress in 1906 and promoted national unity on its forum. He did not pay any heed to the ML when it was made in 1906 as he believed that it was a sectarian organization in its attitude. Despite being a staunch Congress nationalist, the Muslim leaders were eager to utilize his political acumen and services. For this purpose he was approached and was persuaded to attend the League's forums. Therefore Jinnah consecutively attended several meetings of the ML's Council during 1910-12. When a significant change concerning self-government was proposed in the ML's constitution along with a resolution passed in December 1912 to endeavour for Hindu-Muslim cooperation, Jinnah welcomed both the resolution and amendment. It was the first step of the ML towards national politics and was hoped that it would help to integrate its policy with that of the Congress (Bolitho, 1966: 51). Jinnah attended the open session of the ML for the first time in March 1913 as a guest (Pirzada, 1969: 260). He took part in its deliberations and supported its new policy (Ravoof, 1947: 45-46). The idea of self-government was incorporated in the League's constitution at the wish of Jinnah (Saiyid, 1970: 36) and a commitment was made for united efforts for future constitutional development of India (Pirzada, 1969: 281). It indicates how significantly Jinnah influenced the ML's proceedings (Mujahid, 1981: 4-5). Jinnah formally became a member of the ML on October 10, 1913, and attended its annual session on December 30, 1913. He moved his first resolution on the existing Indian Council and requested the British Government to reform it (Pirzada, Vol. I, 1969: 320-21). As member of both organizations, the same resolution was also moved by him at the Karachi Congress on December 27, 1913 (Ravoof, 1947: 47-48). Jinnah congratulated the ML for adopting the new goal of self government for India inside the British Empire (Wolpert, 1999: 35). On February 7, 1915 Jinnah's name was included in the list of members of the ML's Council (FMA, Vol. 92). This honour was given to him because of his active participation and interest in the political matters of the ML.

Jinnah's dual membership brought both the political organizations together at single table and they started united efforts to work out a common course of action. Jinnah succeeded in arranging joint meetings of the ML and the INC in 1915 and 1916 at Bombay and Lucknow respectively. The Lucknow League (1916) was presided over by Jinnah. His efforts for joint scheme of reforms were viewed with suspicion by some leaders of the ML but Jinnah



succeeded in convincing them by dispelling their suspicions. Despite the opposition his services for national unity were acknowledged. It was because of his efforts that the remarkable Lucknow Pact was signed with the INC. Jinnah in his presidential address stressed on co-operation between the two great sister communities (Pirzada, 1969: 348-77). These efforts strengthened the ML's trust in Jinnah and his political experience. It reveals his significant influence over the politics of these great parties because he not only brought national unity between them but also brought unity of thoughts and unity of resolutions between them. Jinnah's dynamic personality and conviction in concluding a solution of the communal conflict was appreciated and was honoured as an ambassador of unity (Naidu, 1989: x).

Looking to his dynamic role in the political affairs of India and the ML, Jinnah was elected the permanent President of the ML in December 1919 (Pirzada, 1969: 540). On January 27, 1920, Jinnah was informed by the newly elected Secretary Zahur Ahmad and was requested to accept the position. Jinnah gave a positive response on February 22, 1920 (Pirzada, 1987: 400).

During the first Presidential phase Jinnah faced several external and internal challenges. This phase witnessed the final decision of the World War First (1914-18) in favour of the allied forces. The spiritual sentiments of the Indian Muslims were hurt over the intentions of victorious allied forces towards the defeated Ottoman Empire. This period saw the rise and fall of the Khilafat Movement and the Hindu Muslim riots. On the part of India its political atmosphere was not favorable. In 1919 the Ulema appeared in the Indian politics and they formed a pro-Congress JUH (Jamiatul Ulema-e-Hind) (Afzal, 2011: 53). The Indian Muslims turned to the Khilafat Conference and disregarded the ML. These organizations entangled the ML in political stalemate through their popular religious fervour. The League's reputation also declined due to lack of funding for its political campaign and the disagreement between its two factions (FMA, Vol. 483). Some of its members were opposed to joint meetings of the ML and the INC, while some supported them. Factional clashes broke out within provincial Leagues and they joined the Khilafat Movement (Afzal, 2013: 47-61 & 71-72).

The British government pursued partly coercive and partly conciliatory strategy. Under the former approach, the people were severely dealt with the Defence of India Act and the Rowlatt Act of March 1919. The people protested against this act which turned into a bloody scene at Jallianwala Bagh in April 1919. Under the reconciliatory policy, the British government first fulfilled its promise of August Declaration (1917) in the form of Montagu-Chelmsford Report (1918), the passing of the 1919 Act and appointment of Hunter Commission to explore the causes of the disturbances in the Punjab (Gense, 1955: 396-98). The 1919 Act became a focal point of the politics of both the ML and INC. Next political shift started over this constitution and its nature, features and future. The Indian political parties were demanding an absolute responsible government. They demanded changes in the Act. This led to the beginning of constitutional activities and discourse in India. Earlier in 1913, Jinnah proposed modifications in the composition of the Council of Secretary of State for India. These proposals were somewhat adopted in the 1919 Act (Sections 30-31).

The British repressive policy was vehemently denounced by Jinnah. He strongly denounced the Rowlatt legislation, the brutal massacre at Jallianwala Bagh and the unjust dismantling of the Ottoman Empire. The Rowlatt Act was so strongly resented by him personally that he resigned from the Imperial Legislative Council (ILC). He termed these events as assaults on self-determination and faith of the Muslims (Pirzada, Vol. I: 542).



As far as the collaborative politics was concerned, both the ML and INC continued to hold their sessions till 1921 but the League was politically so crippled that it merely replicated the resolutions of the Khilafat Conference and the INC in these meetings. It had no independent agenda of its own. These organizations emerged to represent the Muslim India. Some Muslim leaders proposed to disband the ML as it had lost its national usefulness (Ahmad, 1999: 256). M. K. Gandhi hijacked the Congress and the Khilafat Movement and he in December 1920, convinced the Congress to pass non-cooperation resolution (Khan, 2024: 117). This Congress session proved to be the last one for constitutionalist Jinnah. He did not agree with Gandhi over his non co-operation and boycott movements, therefore he rejected Gandhi's plan and quit the Congress forever (Pirzada, 1984: 402-06). Although Jinnah simultaneously held membership of the INC, ML, ILC and Home Rule League, however, he resigned from all except the ML. Thus the entire axis of his politics came to revolve solely around the ML. But his interest in the Indian politics faded away at the aftermath of his resignation from these institutions. In 1922 no meeting of the ML was called. A reemergence occurred in the moribund political body of the ML when in 1923, Jinnah was re-elected to the ILC and the Khilafat Movement collapsed due to unreliable and self-centred support of Gandhi and his Congress. Such circumstances opened the eyes of the Indian Muslims. They were disheartened and politically paralyzed and were needed unity among diverse perspectives to develop a cohesive policy and an effective strategy for political action. Prompted by these factors Jinnah took steps to rejuvenate the ML (Mujahid, 1981: 16).

In such critical situations Jinnah and Zahur Ahmad made every possible effort to save the ML from being merged in the Khilafat Conference. On the advice of Jinnah, Zahur Ahmad on January 27, 1923, instructed to all the members of the ML's Council to make efforts for the revival of the ML (Sultana: 2016, 51). In this regard a meeting of the ML's Council was called on March 15, 1923, which was chaired by Jinnah (Ahmad: 2006, 27-28). It was followed by its open session on the last day of March 1923, in the absence of Jinnah but owing to insufficient quorum, it was unexpectedly adjourned for indefinite time. As Jinnah was anxious to revive the ML therefore on his proposal the annual meeting was convened again at Lahore on May 24, 1924 which was attended not only by the League's members, but also by representatives of the Congress and Khilafat Conference. The mission of Jinnah in the participation of different schools of thought in this meeting was to make another collective effort for mutual understanding between the Hindus and Muslims. During his Presidential address Jinnah reiterated his strong opposition to the Rowlatt Act, the Punjab atrocities, the Khilafat movement and the non-co-operation and boycott movements launched by Gandhi. He stressed on the unity between the Hindus and Muslims to defeat the foreign rulers and to achieve *Swaraj* (Pirzada, 1969: 566, 575-77).

The subsequent two sessions (1925, 1926) were ineffective and worthless with regard to the reorganization of the League (Mangloori, 1945: 415). During these meetings several resolutions were passed for the reorganization of the League's provincial branches but no practical steps were taken in this regard except re-election process of the previous office holders and the shifting of the ML's Headquarters from Lucknow to Delhi (Pirzada, 1969: 581 & Pirzada, 1970: 101-06). However certain demands made during these sessions proved to be significant for the Muslims in future.

As the ML was not satisfied from the 1919 Act because it introduced dyarchy and the centre was given more power over the provinces, therefore it demanded a federal constitution for India with full provincial autonomy with residuary subjects to be vested in the provinces. The leaders



of the ML also demanded full provincial status for the Muslim majority provinces like NWFP (KP) and Balochistan. They demanded separate electorates and full freedom of religion for all communities.

Jinnah along with his position as parliamentarian also aware of the Muslim demands especially their representation in the legislative bodies. As neither the Act of 1909 nor of 1919 provided adequate representation to the Muslims in the legislative councils, therefore Jinnah demanded due share in government services and adequate representation for the Muslims in the legislative bodies based on separate electorates (Pirzada, 1970: 1-28). Jinnah and his ML urged the British administration to alter the 1919 Act and reaffirmed that ML was committed to achieve a full responsible government and argued that *Swaraj* must be assessed within the framework of practical politics. Jinnah emphasized the government to appoint a Royal Commission to create a plan for putting the constitution of India on solid principles consisted of provisions for independent progress to build full responsible government in India. He also placed emphasis on representation of various communal groups through separate electorates.

Now the question of separate electorates which was considered by the Congress leaders as a hurdle in the way of Hindu-Muslim unity was raised. They demanded that the Muslims should relinquish separate electorates. They did so because they wanted to have majority in the legislative assemblies by depriving the Muslims from electing their own representatives according to their own will. The joint versus separate electorate to be adopted in the forthcoming elections for the legislative assemblies has been the subject of serious discussion among the Hindu and Muslim leaders. The Congress and the Nationalist Party advocated joint system. They proposed the Muslims should be allocated reserved seats in accordance with the Lucknow Pact or the existing population in each province. On the other hand a group of Muslim leaders mostly members of the ILA, assembled under Jinnah at Delhi on March 20, 1927, to discuss the issue. After an extensive discussion these leaders conditionally favoured joint electorates. The conditions were: to grant the Muslims 1/3rd representation at the centre; to detach Sind from Bombay; to grant constitutional status to the NWFP and Baluchistan and to provide due representation to the Muslims based on their majority in the Punjab and Bengal (FMA, Vol. 163). They would make a compromise on the Muslim demand for separate electorates if these conditions were accepted. Neither the Hindus nor some Muslim leaders welcomed the compromise made under such conditions. However these conditions were greatly accepted to the Congress (NAP, Accession No. 181, 281: 1-15). All of these proposals were accepted to the Hindu Mahasabha except separation of Sind from Bombay. Sir Shafi was also not in accord with Jinnah. In a meeting of the Punjab ML (May 1, 1927), under Sir Shafi, a resolution was adopted on communal electorates. For settlement of Hindu-Muslim problem and to avoid tussle between these two communities, a Unity Conference was arranged by Jinnah on August 29, 1927, at Simla but failed to achieve its purpose (Ahmad, 2006: 32-33).

Under section 84-A of the 1919, the British Government on November 8, 1927, appointed a Commission widely known as Simon Commission solely consisted of the British members. It was a unilateral commission which violated the right of association of the Indians in the India's affairs. Its purpose was to investigate the constitutional problems and to recommend suggestions for the future constitution of India. While justifying the commission's composition, Lord Birkenhead (Secretary of State for India) asserted that Indians were unable to conclude an acceptable and unanimous scheme for the India's political problem (Qureshi, 1969: 46). This statement prompted both the Hindu and Muslim leaders who called the All Parties Conference (APC) at Bombay and decided to boycott the Commission (Ahmad, 2006:



33). On the other hand the ML split into Shafi and Jinnah groups over the issue of co-operation or boycott of the Commission (Zaman, 1954: 47). The rift between these opposing groups deepened when Jinnah called his meeting at Calcutta and Shafi at Lahore simultaneously at the end of December 1927. Jinnah ML decided to boycott the Commission and strongly denounced the defiance of the Shafi-League and it was resolved to disaffiliate the Punjab ML which had intentionally defied the command of the central ML. They revised the Delhi Proposals of March 1927. The restriction that a person holding office of permanent President could not serve for more than two consecutive terms, was lifted and Jinnah was elected President for a third term. A committee was appointed to revise and modify the ML's constitution. In his presidential address Jinnah condemned the Birkenhead's statement and the composition of the Simon Commission and termed it the butchery of their soul (Pirzada, 1970: 114-18 & 124-29).

The Shafi-ML decided to welcome the Simon Commission and denounced the Delhi Proposals. Sir Shafi was elected as President while Allama Iqbal and Maulana Hasrat Mohani were appointed as General Secretary and Joint Secretary respectively of this League (Pirzada, 1970: 130-35). However some participants like Ghazanfar Ali Khan and Shaikh Muhammad Sadiq condemned this resolution and asserted that it would sabotage unity among different segments of the Muslims. They acknowledged Jinnah as the President of the ML and argued that such resolution should not be adopted under the League's name. They urged Allama Iqbal and Hasrat Mohani to decline the positions that had been offered to them. At this Sir Shafi intervened and said that Mr. Jinnah had ceased to be the President since January 1927 as his term had expired. However the resolution was adopted by majority of vote (Pirzada, 1970: 137-38).

On the other hand the Congress took a practical step in response to Birkenhead's statement. The Madras Congress (December 1927) empowered the Congress Working Committee (CWC) to collaborate with other such equivalent bodies formed by other parties for the purpose of framing a *Swaraj* constitution and to present it for deliberation and endorsement at a special conference scheduled to be convened at Delhi by March 1928 (Sitaramayya, 1935: 540). In pursuance of this resolution, the Council of Jinnah-Group was authorized to constitute a sub-committee to discuss with the CWC and other organizations to draft a constitution that would ensure protection for Muslim interests (NAP, Accession No. 181 & 281). The Congress called an APC at Delhi on February 11, 1928. It was attended by the Jinnah-League and not by the Shafi-League (Zaman, 1954: 50). This Conference lasted for a month but failed to arrive at any agreement as the Hindu Mahasabha declined to accept the Muslims' demands notably separation of Sind from Bombay (Riaz, 1967: 160). Finally on March 11, 1928, the two sub-committees were assigned this task. One was to assess the financial aspect of Sind's detachment and the other was entrusted with a task to investigate the probability of the system of proportional representation (Zaman, 1954: 50). Both these committees were tasked to present their reports to the APC. But when the Conference met at Bombay on May 19, 1928, in which the League's representatives were absent, these committees failed to submit their reports which discouraged all efforts for an agreed constitution. After an extensive discussion, a nine-member committee was formed without any representation from the ML, under the chairmanship of Jawaharlal Nehru (1889-1964). The Committee prepared a report widely known as 'Nehru Report'. The Report went against the federal system; separate electorates, provincial autonomy and population based Muslim reserved seats. However it was approved by the APC in its meeting on August 28, 1928 and was regarded as a response to the challenge posed by Birkenhead (Mangloori, 1945: 447). The Muslims were not satisfied from the Report. Rather



than promoting Hindu-Muslim harmony, it inflamed communal sentiments. Leaders from diverse shades of political opinion within the Muslim community like Sir Shafi and Maulana Shaukat Ali criticized the Report. The time when the Nehru Report was published, Jinnah was in England (April to October 1928) (Mujahid, 1981: 555). However when he was informed, he did not remain silent over the Congress's one-sided policy. He added that it was not an unalterable decree (Bolitho, 1966: 93). He hoped that necessary changes safeguarding the Muslim interests would be given serious consideration in the Report. Jinnah on November 2, 1928, in his letter to Nehru showed his dissatisfaction over the Report and made it clear upon him that it had rejected the approved Delhi proposals of March 1927 (Pirzada: 1987: 309-10). At the end of that month he inquired from the ML Secretary whether the League had put forward any proposals regarding the Report (Mujahid, 1981: 555).

The Report was so hailed in the Congress circle that Nehru was elected President for the Calcutta session of December 1928. The Congress welcomed the Nehru Report as a great step towards constitutional development and a solution of Indian political and communal problems (Satyapal & Chandra, 1946: 291). Jinnah also called the session of the ML at Calcutta (Saiyid, 1970: 133). The All-Parties National Convention (APNC) also convened its meeting with the Congress to consider the Nehru Report. Various political parties including the ML were extended invitations. But there were different political opinions within the ranks of the ML which was a great challenge for Jinnah to unite all of them on a common platform and to move a unified agenda on the Nehru Report. However twenty-three representatives were nominated to participate in the proceedings of the APNC with a mandate to carefully present the communal problems that had emerged between the Hindus and the Muslims due to the Report. The delegates were expected to submit their performance report in the ML ongoing session for onward necessary action (Pirzada, 1970: 144-45). The amendments proposed by the ML to be added to the Nehru Report were: separate electorates, 1/3rd seats for the Muslims in the Central Legislature and the provinces shall be vested with residuary powers.

The League delegation led by Jinnah presented these amendments before the APNC's meeting held on December 28, 1928. These amendments were the first draft of Jinnah's 14-Point agenda (Sayeed, 1968: 70). But they were completely disapproved by the Convention Sub-committee. The Hindu Mahasabha reacted so sternly to these amendments that they refused to accept the insertion of a comma in the Report and even threatened for withdrawal of their assistance from it totally. Its leader Jayakar, argued that various organizations had already shown their consent to the Report and incorporation of these amendments could undermine that consensus and lead to the Report's rejection. He claimed that Jinnah represented only a small section of the Muslims and no one could give guarantee that the whole Muslim community would support his proposals (Saiyid, 1970: 135). As no communal pact was reached in the Convention, Jinnah-Group postponed its session. Now the ML was no longer bound to any pact and was free to pursue any course of action it considered appropriate in the interests of the Muslim community (NAP: Accession No. 180 & 280). In the Convention, Jinnah on behalf of the ML delegation, made a long and detailed speech and presented the Muslim viewpoint. He emphasized the demands of the Muslims and expressed his strong resentment over the prejudiced and unproductive recommendations of the Nehru Committee. Jinnah perceived the Report as a hurdle in the way of Indian constitutional development which mainly depended on the cordial relations between the two communities. He warned that injustice, done with the minorities and the Muslims in the Report, could lead to a civil war (Afzal, 1980: 289-95). The Report brought a radical change in Jinnah's political philosophy



and it shifted Indian nationalist Jinnah to a separatist and Muslim nationalist Jinnah. It put a permanent end to all efforts for Hindu-Muslim unity. He was seen with tears in his eyes and told that it was parting of ways (Majumdar, 1998: 24).

Another group of Muslims known as Muslim All-Parties Conference (MAPC) emerged in 1928 under Sir Aga Khan was also not satisfied from the Nehru Report (Mangloori, 1945: 429). During its meeting on December 31, 1928, the Conference put forward certain demands concerning separate electorates, federal constitution, weightage for the Muslims in the Hindu majority provinces and adequate representation for them in both central and provincial cabinet (Aziz, 1972: 53-56). The Jinnah-League got invitation for participation in the MAPC meeting but it was rejected, as the League was strongly of opinion that the emergence of such rival organization would undermine Muslim interest and destabilize their political unity. The ML held that patriotic Muslims were obliged to pledge their allegiance only to the ML in this time of national crisis. They also believed that only representative Institution of the Indian Muslims was the ML and nothing else and people of various ideological opinions could join it to determine the course of action regarding the forthcoming constitutional development. The ML regarded the formation of MAPC and its meeting as unnecessary. It thought the invitation of the Conference as an insult and held that accepting it would be equivalent to signing its own death warrant (Pirzada, 1970: 148-50). However several representatives reflecting all schools of thought attended the Conference except Jinnah. It was attended by Sir Shafi, Allama Iqbal, delegates of Jinnah-camp, JUH, the Khilafat Committee and the Ali Brothers. This Conference was viewed by Sir Shafi as a legitimate platform of the Muslim community (Riaz, 1967: 165).

As there were differences in the ML over the Nehru Report, therefore before concluding any strategy, there was need of unity of thoughts between the two camps of the ML. For this purpose on March 3, 1929, the ML's Council assembled at Delhi with Jinnah as the Chairman. The meeting was attended by members of the Shafi and Jinnah camps (FMA, Vol. 151). Both of them pledged to meet together in the forthcoming session scheduled to be convened at the end of March. Jinnah was authorized to negotiate with the leaders of different perspectives and to thrash out a joint scheme for discussion in the coming open session of the ML (FMA, Vol. 152). The agreed scheme prepared, was moved by Jinnah on March 28, 1929, in a meeting of the ML's Council in the form of his Fourteen-Point Agenda. This agenda reflected Jinnah's political sagacity wherein he accommodated diverse political perspectives regarding the strategy and policy of the ML for the upcoming constitutional reforms (FMA, Vol. 185). It became a bond of cohesion between the two camps of the ML. A few liberal Muslims decided to support the Nehru Report with amendments. At the last day of March 1929, the two camps of the ML reassembled at Delhi. Jinnah chaired this gathering. Then Jinnah together with members of the MAPC assembled at Hakim Ajmal Khan's house for negotiation. During this time some opportunist Leaguers proceeded with the meeting and hastily adopted their resolution in support of the Nehru Report which was opposed by the Ali Brothers. The passing of this resolution caused uproar in the *Pandal*. Meanwhile Jinnah returned and upon observing the chaotic situation he at once invalidated all the proceedings of the meeting and postponed it for indefinite period (FMA, Vol. 152). As a result the pro-resolution group of the Muslims dissociated from the ML and established an independent Muslim Nationalist Party to decide their own policy in view of the Nehru Report. The ML suffered one more setback. On one hand, steps were being taken to reconcile its two camps while in contrast a third opposing group emerged. The newly formed camp led by Maulana Azad extended its support to civil disobedience movement launched by the INC in favour of the Nehru Report. However this



group could not maintain its struggle and ceased to exist after a few years (Mangloori, 1945: 431-32 & 436-39).

In May 1929, Ramsay MacDonald was elected as the new Prime Minister of England. He was personally known to Jinnah due to the latter's frequent visits to England concerning political matters. On June 19, 1929, Jinnah wrote to MacDonald proposing a representative conference of the Indian leaders to determine the future constitutional direction of India (Pirzada, 1987: 233-34). Jinnah's suggestion prompted Viceroy Lord Irwin (1926-31), who on October 31, 1929, announced the Round Table Conferences. The essence of his statement was that the logical solution of India's constitutional dilemma was the attainment of dominion status (Wolpert, 1999: 109).

The 1930 was a critical year for the ML. In Punjab an influential camp under Sir Fazli Hussain emerged. Sir Shafi felt isolation and he requested Jinnah to integrate his camp into the ML (Hasan, 1976: 50). Ultimately both Jinnah and Shafi Leagues buried their political hatches, agreed upon Jinnah's Fourteen-Point Formula and became a united body under Jinnah's leadership on February 28, 1930 (FMA, Vol. 186). But the Secretary Saifuddin Kitchlew did not like Sir Shafi therefore he lost interest in the ML and began to take interest in the Congress politics (Hasan, 1976: 50). Jinnah wrote to Shamsul Hasan on December 14, 1929, to investigate Dr. Kitchlew to take either interest in the ML's politics or resign (Pirzada, 1987: 356). However his term of office expired at the end of 1929 and the ML did not elect a new secretary, as no session convened that year. Muhammad Yaqub was asked to perform duties of the Honorary Secretary until the appointment of permanent Secretary. Later on he was elected as Honorary Secretary on February 9, 1930.

In July 1930, Allama Iqbal's name was proposed for the presidential chair of the ML's session scheduled to be held in August 1930 at Lucknow. But Iqbal in his letter to Yaqub, advised to defer the session until September and be convened at Delhi (FMA, Vol. 153). Later on the session was deferred by Mr. Yaqub on the advice of Jinnah (FMA, Vol. 154). But other members expressed their displeasure and Yaqub had to resign from the ML's Secretaryship when no-confidence motion was tabled against him but the resignation was not accepted by Jinnah (Hasan, 1976: 51).

Although Jinnah's first presidential episode was due to expire in December 1930, but he left for London on October 4, 1930 for participation in the RTC. This marked the beginning of a period of separation between Jinnah and the ML. However prior to his departure, Jinnah instructed the League office to make a decision regarding the date and venue of the 21st Session. Later on the session was called at Allahabad on December 29, 1930 and was chaired by Iqbal. Historically this was a significant session of the ML because it was the first occasion when on the forum of ML, the President articulated the aspiration for the establishment of a separate state in Muslim majority provinces. Before this, no one had ever expressed such desire except for the demand of self-rule. However no resolution was moved to endorse Iqbal's scheme. As Jinnah was no more in India and public interest in the League's politics had diminished (Ahmad, 1999: 262), therefore the MAPC, whose members were present in the session, adopted its resolution of January 1, 1929 because it was believed that the contents of the resolution were mostly aligned with Jinnah's Fourteen Points. Some members objected that the Muslim delegates to the RTC were not legitimate representatives of the Muslim community. Instead they were regarded as the nominees of the Viceroy and they had no right to negotiate with the British authority without consulting the Muslim community. Due to this dispute Iqbal walked out of the session (Pirzada, Vol. II, 1970:173).



After Jinnah's departure to London the position of the ML was unsatisfactory. The Muslim Conference emerged as a dominant force, pushed the ML into the background. It found itself once again in the same position it had experienced ten years ago. The office of the President was vacant. Its financial condition was bad. Some members from the Council's list were removed on account of their failure to pay dues (FMA, Vol. 194). Major changes were brought in the ML constitution in 1931. However it once again divided into two rival groups.

Critical Analysis

Following his consecutive resignations from the ILC and the INC, Jinnah became indifferent to the Indian political affairs. In 1920, *Swaraj* was declared as the core principle of the ML. In 1921 it was determined to establish new provincial and district branches of the ML and to revive the already existed branches. But no practical measures were taken in this regard. No session was convened in 1922 while in 1923 the session was adjourned for unspecified period of time (Pirzada, 1969: 553-66). No ordinary meeting of the ML's Council was called except one in 1923 and two in 1924 while two were adjourned due to lack of quorum as required by rules. Similarly only two emergency meetings; one in 1922 and other in 1923 were called. There was hardly more than one meeting held in May 1924, which brought a flicker of life back into the waning body of the ML (Report, 1924: FMA, Vol. 109). The next three consecutive annual sessions were worthless. These sessions were merely like public gatherings and only several resolutions were passed and committees were set up.

As far as elections of the party Office-Holders were concerned, they were never held since 1919 to 1924 in spite of the expiration of the terms of their offices in December 1922. Similarly the ML's Council was enlarged from 150 to 300 in 1919 but new rules could not be properly implemented because the provincial Leagues were in declining condition. The tenure of almost all members of the Council elected from various provinces had expired and new elections were required to be held in line with the provisions of constitution but were not held. Even the reorganized and centrally recognized UP League failed to conduct such election (Report, 1924: FMA, Vol. 109).

Since its establishment to 1930 the strength of the ML membership could not exceed two thousand. One of the significant reasons for this limited membership was that a handful number of Muslims could afford to pay its dues. Most of the members failed to pay the required fees and subscription. The strength of ML's members experienced fluctuation over the years. Historical records indicate that the ML's membership was 586 on 1st January 1917; this number rose to 712 in 1918 but experienced a minor decline to 707 by the beginning of 1919. When Jinnah was elected the President of the ML, its membership was 843. By the end of 1920, this number increased to 953 (Afzal, 2013: 31). The membership was recorded 1093, 1097 and 1184 by 1st January, 1922, 1923 and December 15, 1924 respectively. In 1924, only a total 121 members had paid their subscriptions either fully or partially (Report, 1924: FMA, Vol. 109). Similarly the strength of the members on 1st January 1925 and 1926 was 1284, 1281 and on December 15, 1927 was 1330. Among them, merely 152 members have cleared their entire or part of their dues up to December 15, 1927 (Report 1927: FMA, Vol. 125). According to the Report of March 1929, the membership of the ML had exceeded two thousand (Report 1929: FMA, Vol. 152: 32-35). However the mentioned strength of the ML, which was claiming as the sole political organization of the Muslim India, was surprisingly small. Only 75 members participated in the famous Allahabad session of 1930 (Khan: 1975, 75). For broadening the membership, it was proposed to open the League's membership to men, women and all classes of society alike.



The ML was also weak in terms of funding and financial resources. A number of ordinary members were unable to pay their annual dues on time. For encouraging the party membership the central organization had to cancel the arrears due from its members in 1910 and 1920 for the past several years. Unfortunately this strategy failed to reduce the strength of defaulters. Out of 1093 members only twenty-three fulfilled their financial obligation in 1922 and in the next years, the figure was less than this compared to the total membership. The questions of defaulters were raised in meetings of the ML's Council in 1927, 1928 and 1931, but no constitutional actions were taken against them (Afzal, 2013: 31). This negligence on the part of the organization encouraged the number of defaulters. It was 164 in 1919 and 318 in 1920. After 1920, the ML continuously felt the pinch. The ML's Secretary made an earnest request to some distinguished Leaguers particularly to Aga Khan to contribute. In such circumstances the ML had no option than to lessen the burden of its office personnel. Four persons including peons and *Munshis* who had been working for the ML for many years were removed in April 1922, and another worker namely Abdul Wali was sent on unpaid leave (Afzal, 2013: 83).

The total subscription amount collected by mid of December 1924 was significantly lower than Rs. 264 and Rs. 826.6.0 collected in 1923 and 1922 respectively. It was deeply regrettable that despite repeated reminders through earlier reports and letters to the members, very few members paid their subscriptions regularly (FMA, Vol. 109).

Similarly in his working report of the ML for the year 1927 presented on December 23, 1927, the Honorary Secretary said that after shifting the League's Headquarters from Lucknow to Delhi, the League's financial position was unstable because there was nothing recorded on the credit side of its balance sheet. Therefore he appealed for financial contributions to support the League emphasizing that its survival depended on members' financial assistance but unfortunately many of them were not fulfilling their obligation to pay subscriptions (FMA, Vol. 125). In the beginning of 1927, substantial funds were collected through Jinnah's efforts, but by September, the whole funds were utilized and again it incurred a debt of Rs. 800 (Afzal, 2013: 83). The situation remained unimproved in the following year although annual charges were collected but donations continued to fall short. On several occasion Jinnah personally contributed to the League's funds. When in September 1929, the Assistant Secretary warned that it was impossible to keep the ML's Office open without funds, Jinnah donated Rs. 1000 (Report, 1930: FMA, Vol. 154). In his progress report for the year 1928, the Secretary Saifuddin Kitchlew issued a strong appeal for financial assistance, highlighting that the League's propaganda work had been severely hampered due to lack of funds (Pirzada, 1970: 139). Not only lack of financial resources diminished the political stature of the ML but also absence of inspiring leadership like that of Jinnah drastically undermined its influence. After Jinnah left for London in 1930, the ML administrative and financial affairs were largely maintained through personal contributions and loans from its individual members.

Conclusion

Certainly this period of leadership for Jinnah was full of challenges. Several factors contributed to the ML's political stalemate. During this period Jinnah and his ML had to face the emergence of rival influential political entities and unfavourable political scenario of India due to Khilafat cause followed by Gandhi's non-co-operation strategy. Jinnah's strict adherence to his constitutional principles and his deep commitment to legal process leading to his successive resignations from the ILC and the INC, made him lose interest in the Indian political matters, further intensified the ML's political crisis. The next notable factor responsible for the League's



political crisis was its own constitution which introduced cumbersome qualifications for becoming its member. It set the annual subscription and admission fee very high which were unaffordable for an average person to pay. Its membership franchise was limited only to the prominent class of Muslim community. People of other communities were not allowed to become its members which deprived it from becoming a mass organization. Likewise the initial constitution established the position of the President, but it did not mention any constitutional powers of the office.

Another factor was the inadequate funds of the ML. Members did not pay their dues and fees on time. Donations and contributions were rarely paid. The central League lacked effective control over its provincial branches. Unlike the INC, the ML did not have dedicated propaganda resources for disseminating its messages to every nook of India. Similarly unlike the Congress, the ML did not enjoy the British patronage. The Congress had gained such overwhelming dominance over the Indian politics that it was very difficult for any other organizations, particularly the ML to emerge as a mass political force. The irregularity and frequent gaps in holding the annual sessions of the ML also contributed to its political deadlock. The Muslims being a nation were in minority and their lack of unity also significantly contributed to its weak status. Similarly Jinnah's predecessors could not give effective leadership to the ML during the early phase, primarily due to their lack of interest in its politics. When Jinnah assumed the leadership, he had to confront both internal and external challenges. Being a strong nationalist he pursued a policy of collaborative politics with the Congress. Under this policy he was to some extent successful. However due to Hindu biased policy of the INC, the ML could not effectively advance its demands and safeguard the Muslim interests through this joint forum.

However it cannot be denied that like the INC, the ML played its active role in the Indian politics. Jinnah safeguarded it from being merged into the influential political organizations. Its platform was used by Jinnah to present an alternative solution to the India's constitutional and political problems in response to the Nehru Report in the form of his Fourteen-Point agenda. Later on when the British administration realized the importance of these demands, they were deliberated upon and accepted during the Round Table Conferences (1930-32) and finally incorporated in the 1935 Act. All these facts reveal that how essential Jinnah's leadership was for the League. The ML continued to thrive under his leadership but without him it lost its political identity and strong organizational structure.

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