



## **GANDHI AND PARTITION OF INDIA: AN OVERVIEW**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*It has 68 yrs for the partition, in India. Still there is no abatement in the pain, affected by it. In spite of getting solved, the problems of partition have worsened. Whenever there is talk over certain issues such as attacks and infiltration by Pakistan, Kashmir problem and relation between Hindus and Muslims, the discussion constitutes the partition of India. The discussion is always centered on the question that who is responsible for the partition, whereas it should be on what caused it. People are not found to be talking or discussing over the happening at the time of the partition. It sounds that T.V serials and movies have been assigned the task.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

All and sundry feels Mr. Gandhi is responsible for Partition. He sounds a soft target. It has turned to be a fashion to consider Mr. Gandhi responsible for every problem in India. We find a group of intellectual people, who believe, that Mr. Gandhi brought religion in Indian politics.<sup>1</sup> India was divided into two hovels under the title of religion. This misunderstanding has spread among both religion (Hindu and Muslim). For Muslims the concept of 'Ramraja' was a symbol of Hinduism (Hindu state) and for Hindu. The importance given to the question of 'Khilafat' by Gandhi was a symbol of strengthening Muslims. Taking note of it both sides accuse him to have brought religion in the politics. But the reality is far away from it. Mr. Gandhi has visited all India before venturing into politics on the suggestion given by his political Guru Gopal Krushna Gokhale. Through that he understood the belief of people. He understood that people of india are religious by nature. Thus, he used religious language for forming the structure of his political program . To attract Hindus towards politics he used "Ramraj" (A concept of ruling). People were well acquainted with it. That's why he used and touched their sentiments. In this way he explained people politics. It worked. A number of Hindus backed him .with the same way he used 'Khilafat' to bring Muslims to the main stream of politics. Here also he succeeded. The entire world has witnessed the integrity

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between Hindus and Muslim in Non co-operation movement in 1920-21. He jollied Dalit, who were quite distant from Hindu, into venturing in main stream of politics. He chose 'Harijan seva' method to get above cited result. The role of strengthening Muslims existed before Mr. Gandhi .in Lakhanaw pact (in 1916) congress approved Muslims separate constituency. That time Mr. Gandhi was not in congress.<sup>2</sup>

Mr. Gandhi is criticized for being responsible for the partition.<sup>3</sup> there is a pertinent question which should evoke but no one has ever questioned it. If we observe the phenomenon.

After 1946, it would get clear that Mr. Gandhi did not play any role in it. According to congress Mr. Gandhi was a hindrance for congress. That's why he was at kept arm's length from important arbitrament. Mr. Gandhi never approved the concept of religious state.<sup>4</sup>

To select the avenue of thwarting Britisher's plan of partition by Jinnah himself was the plan of Mr. Gandhi. As he expressed his plan to Viceroy, he ( viceroy) was taken a back. Having observed, Mountbatten said that according to him it was an interesting idea, but there was an objection to Mr. Nehru. After listening about this objection, Viceroy was alarmed. Mr. Gandhi was thinking to get the idea implemented by meeting and discussing to Viceroy. But Viceroy was advised by his advisor not to give any importance to his (Gandhi's) plan.<sup>5</sup> Mr. Parelal, the secretary of Mr. Gandhi noted that if Mr. Nehru happened to know that Viceroy was supporting to the idea, he would succumbed to the influence of Mr. Gandhi.<sup>6</sup> J. B. Kruplani, then president of National congress, writes that Viceroy's Councilors were not willing that he (Gandhi) should ever succeed in the plan, since they knew that the plan of partition would be foiled. Mr. Patel also opposed Mr. Gandhi's plan, this was known by them. They were afraid that Nehru should stand with Mr. Gandhi and with there influence congress would accept there proposal. Meanwhile they understood that Nehru was influenced by Mr. Mountbatten. Therefore he (Nehru) was told that Viceroy did not allow the plan.<sup>7</sup> Consequently Mr. Nehru came to know that there were a lot of obstacles, that's why the plan could not be accomplished Mr. Gandhi and the Nation had belief on Mr. Nehru and Mr. Patel but they could not come up to. Without having any decision in congress, both of them conveyed Viceroy that congress approved the partition Mr. Kruplani writes that this action was taken without any discussion with the executive committee of congress. Further occurrences were getting clearer. This would be related not to the party but the party's government.<sup>8</sup>

Mr. Churchill had informed Mountbatten that the main hindrance of partition was Mr. Gandhi ,but with the help of Nehru and Patel ,the obstacle could be withdrawn .such a hope he had.<sup>9</sup> Nehru and Patel ,both had alraty given their approved. Then, Mr. Nehru suggested Viceroy that president of congress should also be invited for the meeting of partition, since he was the formal and authorized representative of congress. He asserted that he or P Mr. Patel would

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not represent the congress, if they were invited.<sup>10</sup> Noting the negotiation with leader of congress, Viceroy did not fell to accept the request. Viceroy reply “I don’t find any point in accepting your request as I have, so far negotiated with either you or Sardar Patel”<sup>11</sup>

Mountbatten said to his counselor “Mr. Gandhi has a dramatic impression on congress. He can compel congress to accept his plan. It will be impossible to Jinha to deny proposal of Gandhi.<sup>12</sup> Further he said “to pertain integrity of India is the prime motif of Mr. Gandhi. To work with more integrity and affection, he believes, to root out the fear from the mind of Muslims. It is believed by Gandhi that if Britishers gave India freedom without any partition, people from India would solve all problems. If felt possible and necessary they would establish Pakistan with a different perspective.<sup>13</sup> Jinnah wanted Pakistan and excluding Mr. Gandhi, all congress party was not having any objection.<sup>14</sup>

There was a difference between Mr. Gandhi and his followers’ attitude in the case of partition. His followers’ main motif was to get the power and for that they wanted to get rid of this argument, as soon as possible. Thus they were willing to negotiate and to compromise.<sup>15</sup> Vimal Prasad writes with harsh and straight words that Gandhi used to feel unable to impose his thought on his closed workers for ex Nehru and Patel. These leader had tested power. They were not ready to go to jail again.<sup>16</sup> Nehru and Patel was growing old. Therefore their power to struggle was deteriorating.

Now there remained no value to Gandhi’s words in congress. He was no longer playing the role of leader. That time he was not a leader of congress. But he is only adviser of congress and his advise not compulsory in congress. His interview with some newspaper, on the occasion of a meeting held at the time of relieving of some congress leaders from jail in Shimla in 1945, makes the relationship between congress and him clear. He said ‘I have no right to become authorized representative of congress for a long time, I have played the role of unauthorized counselor, when ever it has been necessary.<sup>17</sup>

Mr. Gandhi himself had raised the question that he told to oppose partition but why couldn’t I do that? Mr. Gandhi was not alone to ask this question but his followers also asked the same. In reply he answers, not only to his opponents but to followers also, when I said that partition had not to be taken place, I had impression that people would support me but when I understood that people had different stand on it, why should I impose my thought or decision on them? Mr. Gandhi was ready to accept the challenge but where were people at the time ? further he said “I say with belief that if non –Muslim were with me ,I would not have let India be divided. I accept that common people are not with me therefore, I should be distant myself.<sup>18</sup>



Mr. Gandhi is an important accusation of not holding any movement to shun partition. One of his most close S.N.Agrawal writes in 'Harijan' that people's movement was only the avenue to tackle the problem of partition. The same way Mr. Gandhi was of that side.<sup>19</sup> He had the idea that if he started any movement, it would have ended with violent riots. According to him, rejection of non-violence was only the reason of partition, thus, he accepted his responsibility.<sup>20</sup> In 14<sup>th</sup> July 1914 Asaf Ali met him there. He said to him as far as my observation is concerned, I think that now there is no role of mine in the matter.<sup>21</sup>

In the morning of 1st June 1947, Mr. Gandhi said to Manu 'I will not be alive to see all this. But if the adversity, which I can assume, takes India into its gulp, and if India is at the stake of losing its freedom, don't forget to tell generations to come that how I was grief-stricken may god forbid that it would ever happen that generations to come would consider me responsible for partition.'<sup>22</sup>

### CONCLUSION:

Mr. Gandhi cannot be held responsible for the partition of India and Pakistan. While blaming Mr. Gandhi for partition, we forget that in 1934 he had resigned from the primary membership of congress. He was not having any part in making any important decision in congress party. Therefore without having any discussion with Gandhi congress party, at the arrival of Mountbatten, passed a resolution of partition considering the population of Hindu – Muslim, asked for dividing Punjab it is only an apt answer to Jinnah's demand of Partition, writes Nehru in a letter to Mr. Gandhi. After 1946 there became a custom to take decisions without taking any advice from Mr. Gandhi.

Congress was the party which was unable to wait for the political power any longer. Among them were Nehru and Sardar Patel. These were close to Mr. Gandhi. But they had got presentiment of power, which made them go away from Gandhi. Both of them, themselves took the ultimate decision of partition discussing with Viceroy. That time Mr. Gandhi was busy in pacifying the riot occurred in Bihar and Naukhal. A lot of people, that time and later too, think that Gandhi might have told both of them to take this decision but it's not true. Gandhi had tried to shun partition. But he came to be lonely. Mr. Gandhi accepted partition but he didn't approve the concept of dual nationalism. He was not ready to consider and create India as Hindu nation. Therefore staunch Hindus assassinated him and made him responsible for it.

Other important site of partition is the role of Britishers. Britishers divided India because they had always said that as long as their rule was there in India, it would be integrated. When their power came to end, it would be divided. To prove this, they divided India, so that they could prove world that India was having integrity just because of them. Britishers had the idea that

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if Mr. Gandhi was given importance in decision making of partition, he would never allow for it. That was only the reason they started to call some leader of congress for the talk. Giving importance to some leaders they reduced the importance of Mr. Gandhi.

As Britishers have had the role in the matter international groups has also had an important role. Why America and England started to show condolence has a reason. There started a cold world war about in 1945. That's why there was curiosity that at which site. the new established countries would go. Geographically India is adjacent to Russia. After independence, India might incline toward Russia. That's why they tried to go indulged in their own problems so that India should not get chance to take part in world's politics. For that India's partition has been deliberately held and through historical writing Mr. Gandhi was made target of accusation.

## NOTES

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