HISTORY OF SEPARATION MOVEMENT OF SINDH FROM BOMBAY PRESIDENCY (1913-1935)

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Abstract

Sindh was one of the last territories of India annexed by the British. Sir Charles Napier after defeating the Talpur Mirs of Sindh in 1843 at Miani and Dubba remained Governor of Sindh from1843-1847. After the departure of Napier, Sindh became a commissionership under the rule of a Commissioner-in Sindh within the Bombay Presidency. The unnatural amalgamation with Bombay Presidency and the extraordinary powers given to the Commissioner created hindrances in the economic and political development of the people of Sindh. This situation facilitated the idea of separating Sindh from Bombay Presidency. This article covers the thirty five years of struggle of the people of Sindh for this cause.

After the departure of Napier, the question of the future status of Sindh arose. The official circles of Bombay presidency considered "that Sindh might be more suitably attached with the Punjab, a province with which it had greater affinities in religion, customs, nature of the soil and in many other respects'.[1] When the government floated this idea, the local people opposed the amalgamation of Sindh with Punjab. The reason for opposing was neither administrative nor constitutional but it was the fear in the minds of Sindhis that Punjab could starve out Sindh's Irrigation Scheme by withdrawing to its own use all the available water of river Indus.[2] Thus, the local people very diligently opposed the idea of amalgamating Sindh with Punjab. However, both the Provinces being contiguous and possessing many common characteristics, Sindh was not annexed to the Punjab because of the prevalent chaotic conditions. As the British government had not achieved complete pacification of the Punjab, therefore Punjab being out of question, Bombay was the only option left to the British government.

A study of the events shows that the main cause for the annexation of Sindh with Bombay was merely an outcome of the quarrel between Lord Ellenbrough, the then Governor General and the Government of Bombay Presidency. In order to avoid any further aggravation of differences as a virtue of the so – called necessity, Sindh was linked up with Bombay Presidency.[3]

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1 M. Irfan, 'A Brief History of the Movement of the Separation of Sindh', *Al Wahid* (Special Issue Number) 1 April 1936, p. 52

2 Dr. M. L. Zardari, *Therik-i-Pakistan maan Sindh jo Hisso* (Sindhi) (Mooro: M.S. Kahn Zardai,1984), p.128

3 M.A.Khuhro, *A Memorandum On the Question of Sindh's Separation from Bombay Presidency* (Before the Joint Parliamentary Select Committee) 1933, p.1

This annexation was an artificial one as there were many fundamental differences of geography, climate, language, economy, culture, race and heritage. To quote Dr. Harold H. Mann: 'Cut off from the rest of the Bombay Presidency by the desert or by the sea, Sindh differs widely from it in physical features and climate as well as in language, dress and customs of the people'.[4] These differences hindered the material prosperity and political growth of Sindh. It resulted in growing dissatisfaction of Sindhis against the Bombay administration.

The Commissioner of Sindh was exceptionally placed with special powers to deal with the regional problems, necessitated by the fact that the presidency capital, Bombay was thousands of miles away and was difficult for the governor to control Sindh from here. For example, in 1868 the Sindh Act was passed, which invested the commissioner-in-Sindh with many of the powers of the Governor in Council. Thus, Commissioner-in-Sindh became virtually an independent ruler[5] without the check of an Executive Council and adopted an autocratic system of administration. The Sindh bureaucrats, who largely came from Bombay, ruled like mediaeval kings and no superior authority checked or questioned their actions and even if there were issues, which the Governors in Council had to decide, they were heavily dependent on the advice of the Sindh Officers. Sindh therefore was subjected to an undiluted form of British bureaucratic and intrusive rule for about eighty years.

The issue lay dormant for some time. However, the administrative methods adopted by the British administration and the insulting behaviour of British bureaucrats towards local residents, made the local problems more complex and complicated. Thus, Sindh groaned heavily with an outburst of problems. Lord Harding had admitted this situation in these words, 'Un equally yoked people do not pull on well together and that the weaker party suffers on account of the contract'.[6] The grant of unchecked and despotic powers to the Commissioner in Sindh added fuel to the fire and fanned the flame of fury against the British Government and sowed the seed of the demand for the separation of Sindh from Bombay Presidency.

The study of the subsequent events shows that it was the business community of Karachi, whose business had suffered because of the attachment of Sindh with the Bombay Presidency, which in 1866 for the first time came up with the idea of Separation of Sindh[7].

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4 M.A.Khuhro, *A Story of Sufferings of Sindh* (Larkana: M.A .Khuhro, 1930), p.2

5 D.A. Pirzada, *Growth of Muslim Nationalism in Sindh: Parting of ways to Pakistan* (Karachi: Mehran Piblishers, 1995), p.7

6 M.A.Khuhro, *A Convincing Case for Separation of Sindh* (Karachi: Naval Rai Chand, 1933), p.7

7 Herbert Feldman, *Karachi through a hundred years: The Centenary History of the Karachi Chamber of Commerce and Industry,1860-1960* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1960) p .xiv

The question of the curtailment of the extra powers vested in the Commissioner- in Sindh was first publicly taken up in 1901 at the Bombay Provincial Conference. Later it was continuously criticised in different sessions of Sindh Provincial Conference. It is clear from the study of the events from 1901 -1920 that the questions of the curtailment of the powers of the Commissioner- in- Sindh and the provincial autonomy were first raised by the leading members of the Sindh Hindu Community which was because they were far advanced in education and had a highly developed political sense as compared to the Muslims.

It was not until 1913, that the idea of separation of Sindh from Bombay first rose in a major political forum.[8] A prominent Sindhi Hindu, Harchandrai Vishindas, Chairman of the Reception Committee of the Indian National Congress's annual session in Karachi, alluded to the idea of separation of Sindh in his speech asserting that: 'Sindh possesses several geographical and ethnological characteristics of its own which gave her the hallmark of a self-contained territorial unit'.[9] Harchandrai showed his fears and apprehensions that: 'Punjab has been long casting very covetous eyes upon the Province (Sindh), and urging her claims to an annexation, which became most insistent after the announcement of territorial changes by His Majesty the King at the last Delhi Durbar. But Sindh has set her face resolutely against all such blandishments and prefers to continue as a part of the Bombay Presidency until such time as destiny permits her, to her own advantage to attain provincial Autonomy'.[10]

Thus, Vishandas used a national platform to publicize and gain support for a local issue. It was not his intention to raise the issue to the level that appeared to be an all-India demand; the notion of separation was still novel to many Sindhis and it would have been premature to introduce the idea at the national level.

The end of the First World War heralded a new trend in the politics of the sub-continent. The British Government therefore felt the need to move in the direction of reforms it had promised after the war for the evolution of a parliamentary system of government in India. To study the situation at first hand, Sir Edwin Montague, who was Secretary of State for India at that time, came to India in 1917. Among the problems that brought to his notice, one was that of the administrative set up in Sindh. Montague noticed that, 'The interesting part of the discussions started when we came face to face with the problem of separation of Sindh. The Sindh Provincial Conference, which came on behalf of the Congress Muslim League Scheme, wants the abolition of the Commissioner of Sindh

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8 By contrast, Sindh's commercial community, particularly Karachi's, has shown an interest in separation from Bombay as early as 1866. Herbert Feldman, *Karachi through a Hundred Years: The Centenary History of the Karachi Chamber of Commerce and Industry 1860-1960* (Karachi: OUP, 1960), p. xiv

9 M.A. Zaidi, Shaheda Ghufran Zaidi (ed.), *The Encyclopaedia of Indian National Congress* (Delhi: S. Chand & Co. Ltd., 1979), VI: 393. D.A. Pirzada, *op. cit.,* p. 41

10 *Ibid.* The prominent leaders who participated in the session of Congress included M.A. Jinnah, Lala Lajpat Rai, N.M.Samarath, D.A.Khare, D.E.Wacha, Bhupendra Nath Basu and Gokhaldas Kahandas Parekh

pending the creation of a special Province. They do not want a special province at present because of the expense. The Sindh Mohammadan Association, which is conservative, wants Sindh separated as soon as possible and meanwhile the commissioner kept. It is undoubtedly true that Sindh gives more funds to Bombay than Bombay gives to Sindh'[11].

In 1918 the Royal Commission of Reforms consisting of Mr. Montague and Lord Chelmsford, was actively involved in examining the proposals for constitutional changes, while prominent Sindh leaders and Sindh Provincial Organizations began to consider the position of the Province under the Reforms. The Provincial Political Conference, a branch of Indian National Congress held its annual session and appointed a sub-committee to report on the desirability or otherwise of separating Sindh from Bombay. This sub-Committee consisted of one Parsi and six Hindu leaders, without a single Muslim participation.[12] It debated on 30 April 1919 the following questions:

(i) The detachment of Sindh from Bombay Presidency and its amalgamation with British Baluchistan to form one province under a Lieutenant Governor with a Legislative Council.
(ii) The detachment of Sindh from the Bombay Presidency and its amalgamation with Punjab to form one province under a Governor-in-Council.
(iii) The continuance of Sindh as a part of the Bombay Presidency, but under the direct control of the Governor-in-Council necessitating the repeal of all powers to the Commission in Sindh over and above those held by the other Divisional Commissioners; and
(iv) Autonomy of Sindh.[13]

The Committee rejected the proposal of amalgamation of Sindh with British Baluchistan and with the Punjab. On the autonomy of Sindh, the Committee expressed the view that the interest of Sindh could be best safeguarded and developed if it had got its own government and recommended that 'Sindh should be constituted an autonomous province with its own legislative and executive' as Sindh was not deficit in its revenue compared with Assam.[14] The other Political Parties of Sindh such as the Sindh Muhammadan

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11 Hamida Khuhro(ed) *Documents on Separation of Sindh from Bombay Presidency* (Islamabad: Islamic Uinversity,1982) p. xxiv, (here after Documents) The Sindh Muhammadan Association did later join the cause for Sindh's separation. Hamida Khuhro, *The Separation of Sindh and the Working of an Autonomous province: An Analysis of Muslim Political Organizations in Sindh. 1843-1938*, pp. 1-2.

12 The members of the Committee were: Jairmdas Daulatram, Durgdas Advani, Narain Anandi, Seth Herchandrai Vishandas, and Parsi members was R.K. Sidhwa, G.M. Sayed. *Sindh jay Bombay Khan Azadi* (Sindhi) (Kandiorao: Roshni Publication, 1989), p.20 *Al-Wahid Special Edition*, 16 June 1936, p. 35

13 Report of the Sindh Reforms Committee on the Montague-Chelmsford Reforms Proposals, *Documents*, *op.cit,* p.14

14 *Ibid.*

Association, while completely satisfied with the then system of government, recommended to the Royal Commission no change. But if change was inevitable then it demanded separation of Sindh.[15] Meanwhile the Sindh Muslim League demanded the annulment of the Commissioner's Act.[16]

Promoted by the Report and the far-reaching effects of some of the reforms embodied in it, some of Sindh's political leaders and organizations began to consider what position Sindh should assume under India's new political order. The leaders of Sindh's two major communities, H. Vishindas and G.M. Bhurgari, voiced a common theme in raising the separation issue once again. To give greater force, they made it consistent with the liberalizing spirit of the Montague-Chelmsford Report. Departing form the earlier notion of Sindh's cultural and territorial discreteness as sufficient grounds for Sindh's separation, Vishindas and Bhurgari now focused on the oppressive and autocratic rule of the Commissioner-in-Sindh as symbolic of Sindh's disadvantageous connection with Bombay.[17] The issues of separation and Sindh's Commissioner did not elicit uniform response from Sindh's major political organizations at this time.

Although in the Government of India Act of 1919, Sindh was not made a separate province, nevertheless, there was a clause in the Act, which entitled the representatives of the Sub-Province to make it into an independent province.[18] During April 1920, Sindh Provincial conference held its seventh session at Sukkur under the presidentship of Abdullah Haroon. In his presidential address, Haroon denounced the Act by saying that 'It is sufficiently clear that the Act does not at all satisfy the needs of the country or the wishes of the people, as a whole'.[19]

As there was a clause in the Act to demand sub-province into an independent province, I.S. Haji, a Sindhi gentleman, who represented Bombay city on the Bombay Legislative Council in 1921 and Presidency Magistrate in Bombay, gave notice of resolution under the above clause of the Government of India Act in the Bombay Legislative Council for the appointment of a Committee to take steps to separate Sindh from Bombay and to make it a Lt. Governor's province.[20] The Council was dissolved before the resolution could come up for discussion.

Mean while in Sindh this issue received attention from various sections of the society. In 1924 while in Sukkur jail, Sheikh Abdul Majid Sindhi wrote a pamphlet in Sindhi language, which contains a chapter on the indispensability and urgency of separating

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[15] *Documents*, *op.cit,* p100

[16] *Ibid,* p. 104

[17] Pir Ghulam Hyder, 'A Glimpse into the History of Sindh Separation', *Al- Wahid*, 1 April, 1936, pp. 49-50.

[18] *Al-Wahid*, Special Edition, *op.cit,* p.53.

[19] Presidential Address of Seth Haji Abdoola Haroon at the seventh session of Sindh provincial Conference, 1920, Sukkur. *Haji Sir Abdullah Haroon: A Biography*, (Karachi: Pakistan Herald Press ,n.d.) p. 238-250

[20] *Al-Wahid*, Special Edition, *op.cit.* p.53

Sindh from Bombay.[21] The pamphlet was published in a series of articles in *Al- Wahid* of Karachi, which had hitherto been the only Muslim daily in Sindh. Since then the ball was set on rolling some what furiously and rapidly.

As a result of these articles though the Sindh Provincial Khilafat Committee took up the issue and set up a wide agitation throughout the length and breath of the Province, but until 1925 the question of separation of Sindh was confined to Sindh only. Not all Indian political organizations had yet given any serious consideration to the claims of Sindh for separation. Meanwhile in 1925 Hindu Mahasabha held its annual session under the president ship of N.C. Kelkar. In his presidential address while discussing the question of communal settlement, Kelkar made a reference to Sindh along with other provinces in which the majorities could hold the minorities as hostages and thus unleash tyranny. The idea of holding minorities as hostage was for the first time mooted by Kelkar and his words later on created communal bitterness. The separation of Sindh was from the very beginning a Sindh problem but the mention of it in the presidential address of the Hindu Mahasabha shows that the prominent Hindu leaders were looking at the movement, still confined to Sindh, as a part of a large communal settlement. Since 1913 it was again for the second time that another Hindu leader had furthered the idea of separation from an All Indian platform.

During 1920 the question of Sindh's autonomy was advocated by G.M. Bhurgari from the platform of the All India Muslim League time and again. After his death in 1924 Abdullah Haroon took up the question as an All Indian demand before the Sindh Muslims to give support to it.[22] Haroon thought that the proposal of separation of Sindh would never materialize unless it was made an all-India question. Therefore Haroon went to Aligarh to move a resolution regarding Sindh's separation in the All India Muslim League session held on 30-31 December 1924.. The All-India Muslim League Council discussed and unanimously passed the following resolution:

'Whereas there is no ground, ethnological, geographical or otherwise, for the inclusion of Sindh within the presidency of Bombay, and whereas past-experience shows that such inclusion is in the highest degree detrimental to the best interests of the people of Sindh and to the development of this part of India, the All-India Muslim League is of the opinion that Sindh should be separate from Bombay and be constituted into separate province'.[23]

This was the turning point in the history of the movement for the separation of Sindh. For the first time it gained the support of the Muslims of India.

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21 *Ibid.*

22 Allen Keith Jones, *Muslim Politics and the Growth of Muslim League in Sindh 1935-1941* , unpublished Ph.D Thesis ,Duke University ,U.S.A (1977) ,p.35

23 Sharifuddin Pirzada, *Foundation of Pakistan*, (Karachi: National Publishing House,1969) Vol. II: 73

Meanwhile, in December 1925 while the sessions of the Indian National Congress and All India Khilafat Conference were being held at Cawnpore, the All India Muslim League was holding its session at Aligarh. Abdullah Haroon was a delegate from Sindh to all the three conferences. The delegates from Sindh to the Congress session demanded a change in the party's constitution suggesting that Sindh should get separate representation on the All India Congress Committee and not mingled with Bombay.[24] In fact they demanded Sindh to be treated as a separate province for the purposes of representation on the All-India Congress Committee and in the annual sessions of the Congress itself. As far as Khilafat Conference and the Central Khilafat Committee were concerned, Sindh was already treated as a separate province.

The separation issue received a tremendous impetus after its support from all India level parties. During 1926-27 Sindh Muslim leaders took up the question very seriously and raised this issue in all the meetings of Congress and Muslim league held in different parts of India. Because of these efforts Muslim Conferences of all India nature also raised their voice in support of the issue. While the Muslims of Sindh began to welcome the idea of separation from All India level platforms the Hindus of Sindh belonging to Hindu Mahasabha began to feel nervous and turned against it.

To gather the support for the separation when in May 1927 the All India Congress Committee met at Bombay, Abdullah Haroon and Abdul Majid Sindhi attended the meeting and placed the case of separation. The All India Congress Committee endorsed the proposal and passed the resolution in favour of separation. The significant fact was that the other members from Sindh on the All India Congress Committee who were all noteworthy Hindu leaders were signatories of the resolution. On the other hand the anti-separationists of Hindu community in Sindh also sent a deputation to discuss their fears. The Congress President assured the Sindhi Hindus' deputation of protecting their interests in autonomous province of Sindh.

Another important development of the same period was that the separation question became a serious communal issue and large numbers of articles were published. For example Abdullah Haroon and Jamshed N.R.Metha published pamphlets in favour of separation entitled 'Sindh Separation' where as Professor Chablani of Delhi University and a Sindhi wrote articles against separation.[25]

To counter the Sindh Hindu agitation against separation in 1927 Sindh National League was formed.[26] To make Sindh Hindus agree to the separation of Sindh, in March 1928 a conference of Sindh leaders including Hindus and Muslim was held at Karachi. After a long discussion both the groups agreed to a pact which came to be known as Sindh Hindu

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[24] *Al-Wahid,* special edition, *op. cit.*p.54

[25] G.M.Syed, *Sindh jee Bombay khan Azadi* (Hyderabad: Arbab Noor Muhammad Palijo, 1947), p.12

[26] M.A. Khuhro, *Sufferings of Sindh* (Karachi: Wahid Art Printing Press, 1981),p. 50

- Muslim Pact.[27]. As a result of this pact Nationalist Hindus became more determined to push the movement more vigorously.

In 1927 the communal riots of Larkana further crystallized Muslim sentiments in favour of Sindh's separation whereas these communal riots gave ground to Hindu leaders of Sindh to oppose Sindh's separation. These Hindus leaders had close ties with the All-India Hindu Mahasabha (a party against the separation of Sindh) which partly explained their stance on the separation issue.[28] In 1927 Professor Chablani in one of his pamphlets, opposed Sindh's separation on racial, political and economic grounds.[29] Chablani argued that Sindh as an independent province would not be viable financially. This articulation started a new debate over the financial autonomy of Sindh in case of an independent province. The turn of events, however, suggests that Hindu opposition of separation of Sindh was the direct result of Larkana riots. Hindus in Sindh were a prosperous community that held the major share of business in Sindh. Larkana riots threatened their monopoly on business.

Meanwhile at the second Hindu Sammelan which was held at Sukkur in April 1927, the separation of Sindh was strongly opposed by the Chairman of the Sammelan Mr.Virumal Begraj. He, in his speech, gave a list of Hindu fears and tried to infuse terror into the mind of Hindus by portraying a horrible picture of *Muslim Tyranny.*[30] To dismiss the fears of Hindus Mr. Jethmal Parsram through his article published in *Daily New Times* laid stress on the point that the Sindh Hindus stood to gain and not to lose by separation.[31] Similarly to clear the minds of Hindus Jamshed N.R. Mehta, president Karachi Municipality wrote an article in the *'Sindh Observer'* in which he proposed 'a small conference of leaders of both the communities, ten from each community, to clear the fears of Hindus and various other points'.[32] Abdullah Haroon sent a letter to the Press welcoming the idea of the conference to dispel the fears of the Hindus.[33] But Hindu Sammelan did not accept this proposal. The decision gave an impression to the outside world that Hindus of Sindh are prejudiced, and are afraid, as a minority to even discuss the question whether on its own merit or as a matter of compromise.

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27 *Ibid,* p.51 On 17 July 1928, Sindh Hindu-Muslim Pact was adopted for the Sindh's separation. It declared that introduction of Joint electorates and Sindh's separation with provincial Autonomy should be affected simultaneously.

28 The Mahasabha's position on separation was based on the premise that "on new province should be created with the object of giving a majority there in to any particular community". Thus the Mahasabha opposed separation because Sindhi Hindus were against it and, secondarily, because Sindh would be a deficit province. See the Mahasabha's evidence in *Proceedings of the Round Table Conference,* 12 Nov 1930, to 19 Jan. 1931, First Session (London: His majesty's stationery Office, 1931), p .416. These proceedings are available in the Quaid-I-Azam Academy, Karachi.

29 *A Biography*, p.74

30 *Daily New Times*,12 April 1927

31 *Ibid,* 10 May 1927

32 *Sindh Observer*, 12 May 1927

33 *Biography, op.cit,* p.74

In spite of the non acceptance of the proposal by Sammelan a public meeting was held at Khaliqdina Hall at Karachi. Hindu separationists like Mr. Jethmal and Mr. Sidhwa, at the Conference, advanced strong arguments dispelling the fears of the Hindus.[34] At the same time the Sindh Mohammadan Association also invited the Hindu Mahasabha leaders to a meeting and discussed the matter on its merits. But Hindu Sammelan ignored all the efforts made by the separationists.

After the Sukkur riots to allay the fears of the Hindus, a compromise formula was worked out; Professor S.C. Shahani led the Hindu negotiating team while, Abdullah Haroon, M. A. Khuhro and Sheikh Abdul Majid represented the Muslims. The formula released to the press, stated:

'We the representatives of the Hindus and Mohammadans greatly deplore the riots that took place in Sukkur, and the gang robberies and other atrocious acts that were committed in the district of Sukkur. It is our firm conviction that events of this kind are greatly harmful to the progress of the country and we express our profound regret at the unhappy and most deplorable happenings in the town and the district of Sukkur...'

'Under these circumstances we urge the government that a committee be appointed by them at once in consultation with us to enquire into the (a) causes of the tragic events (b) the adequacy and the timeliness of the measures taken by the authorities, (c) the allegations as to the hardships caused to some innocent people during the investigations (d) the conduct of the police and the Revenue officials in the course of their inquiry and investigation; (c) the promptness and sufficiency of the measures taken to bring the real culprits to trial and to recover property stolen or looted, and (f) to adopt measures required to remove the political, social, economic and educational defeat to the existing situation revealed by the tragic events'[35].

A committee was set up consisting of the leaders of different communities under the chairmanship of a Parsi leader Jamshed Nusserwanji Mehta. Abdullah Haroon, Mohammad Ayub Khuhro, and Allah Baksh Soomro represented Muslims while Prof. Shahni, Lalchand Navalrai, and Dr. Hingorani represented the Hindu community. The Committee tried to recover stolen and looted property and returned it to the owners. It decided to consider and determine which of the pending cases should be withdrawn and, to restore goodwill and harmony among the people of two communities. By taking such measures communal tension in Sukkur was reduced considerably and most of the matters were settled amicably.

By 1928 anti separationists Hindus had fully realised that because of its acceptance by Congress, Sindh separation movement had become very formidable .Therefore they decided that they have to devise some new method to attack this movement and to convince Congress to give up its support to the movement. So when in 1928 the meeting

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34 *Ibid.*

35 Hamida Khuhro, *Muhammad Ayub Khuhro: A life of Courage in Politics* (Karachi: Feroze Sons, 1998), p.85.

of the All India Congress Committee was convened the anti separationists Hindus argued that 'financially Sindh would not be self –supporting and therefore it had no right to be constituted into a separate Province'.[36] The Hindus now took their stand on financial grounds. They persuaded the Congress Committee to appoint a sub- committee to look into the financial aspect of the issue. On the demand of Hindus the sub- committee was constituted which consisted of Abdullah Haroon, A.Majeed Sindhi, Jairamdas Daulatram, and Professor Chablani. Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas was appointed as the Chairman of this committee.[37]

The members of the committee met at Bombay but could not reach to a decision. The sub- committee without the consent of Muslim members issued a report. According to which they tried to prove that 'the deficit of the separate Province would amount to two crores'.[38] But both Hindu and Muslim separationists wrote rejoinders to the allegations and strongly condemned the report. Abdullah Haroon while criticising the report said that 'financially Sindh could support it self and was capable of cutting its cost according to its cloth'.[39]

The influence of this group of Hindus and the strength of their economic argument was revealed the following year at the level of all-India politics. While the financial controversy was still raging the Nehru Report, which formulated a framework for India's constitution, conceded the separation demand of Sindh. However, a few months later in June 1928, an All Parties Conference was convened in Lucknow to discuss the Report. The Conference altered the Report's position of support for separation in line with the wishes of the anti-separationists Sindhi Hindus, and held that Sindh separation should be granted only after certain financial and administrative conditions had been met.[40]

This attachment of conditions to the separation demand was a setback to the Indian Muslims. They reacted with anger and dismay but also renewed their efforts to secure the separation demand. The All-India Muslim league leader, Mohammad Ali Jinnah, declared eargerly at the December meeting of the All-Parties National Convention in Calcutta that 'The Mussalmans feel that (conditional separation) is shelving the issue and postponing their insistent demand until doomsday and (they) cannot agree to it'.[41] Also at the Calcutta meeting the Sindhi Muslim leadership led by Abdullah Haroon, submitted a representation urging that 'the linkage of conditions to the separation demand be ended and that separation be undertaken as the majority of Sindhis have already so desired it

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36 G.M.Syed, *Sindh jee Bombay Khan Azadi, op.cit*, p.18

37 M.A. Khuhro, *Sufferings of Sindh, op.cit*, p. 55

38 *Ibid*

39 *Ibid.*

40 *All-Parties Conference, 1928, Report of the Committee appointed by the Conference to determine the principles of the Constitution for India.* (Allahabad: General Secretary, All India Congress Committee, 1928), p. 16.

41 All-Parties Conference, 1928, *The Proceedings of the All-Parties National Convention* (Allahabad: Rafi Ahmed Kidwai, Secretary, All-Parties National Convention, 1929)

and that its separation shall in no case be made conditional on the basis of the financial and administrative considerations as recommended in resolution No.4 of the All Parties Conference'.[42]

Meanwhile at Lucknow convention the Sindh separation issue after a long discussion a new formula was evolved, which was accepted by both the parties. According to the resolution; 'with the inauguration of the Nehru Constitution, Sindh was to be separated from Bombay provided it was found financially self-supporting'.[43] But even after giving their assent to the resolution the anti -separationists continued their agitation against separation. After a few months they convened a conference at Sukkur where they rejected the resolution on Sindh of the Lucknow convention.

After the rejection of the Nehru Report by the Muslims, British government sent Simon Commission to India to discuss the future constitution of India with the Indian politicians. It was under this intricate situation that on 12 November 1928 the Simon Commission began its sittings in Karachi to listen to the case for separation of Sindh, an issue which was to be finalised in the next constitution. The Commission was assisted by a Provincial Committee comprising Sir Shah Nawaz Bhutto, who was a member of the Governor's Executive Council as Chairman and Syed Miran Mohammad Shah, a lawyer and member of the Bombay Legislative Council from Hyderabad Sindh. The Muslim case was put up by the delegation from Sindh Mohammadan Association led by Mohammad Ayub Khuhro. The case was forcefully presented and debated in detail. The All Sindh Hindu Association led by Professor H.L. Chablani put the case against the separation. Apart from expressing Hindu fears Professor Chablani concentrated on the financial aspects of the problem. His main argument was that Sindh was subsidized by the Bombay presidency Government and that a separated Sindh would not be able to support itself. This was the argument that was most likely to appeal to British official mind. It was also the argument that was played up by the Bombay Government, which was opposed to the detachment of Sindh from the Presidency. The Simon Commission gave its opinion against autonomy for Sindh, maintaining that the time was not yet ripe.[44] Syed Miran Mohammad Shah did not agree with the Commission's opinion and with the help of Jamshed Nusserwanji's pamphlet and on the advice of Jinnah and Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola, wrote a note of dissent.[45] The decision of the Commission caused great disappointment in Sindh but the Sindh leadership did not lose heart.

In March 1929, Muslim League held a session in Delhi in which Jinnah worked out an agreed Muslim formula which included the basic and irreducible minimum Muslim conditions for constitutional settlement. The formula came to be known as the '*Fourteen Points of Mr. Jinnah'*. Regarding Sindh, point nine was quite clear and emphatic: 'Sindh should be separated from the Bombay presidency'.[46] However fair and urgent the case for

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42 M. A. Khuhro, *A Story of the Sufferings of Sindh*, *op.cit,* p.53. *A Biography*, p.81

43 *Documents, op.cit,* p. 170

44 *The Documents, op.cit,* p. 165-178

45 D.A. Pirzada, *op.cit*.pp.51-52 also in *Documents, Minutes of Dissent*, p.177

46 *Documents*, *op.cit,* p. xxvi

separation might have appeared to the Muslims of Sindh and the rest of India, the British officialdom was strongly opposed to it and the Hindu extremist element took full advantage of their reluctance to concede autonomy for Sindh.

After the failure of the Simon Commission the British government decided to try and solve the constitutional problem of India through Round Table Conference.

The Round Table Conference sub-committee on Sindh (Sub Committee IX) was chaired by Earl Russell and its members included Marquees of Zetland, Marquees of Readings, H.H. The Aga Khan, M.A. Jinnah, Dr. Shaffat Ahmed Khan, Sir Mohammad Shafi, Dr. B.S. Mooje, Mr. C.Y. Chintamini, Raja Narendra Nath, Sardar Sampuran Sing, Mr. M.R. Jayakar, Sir Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah, Sir Shah Nawaz Bhutto, Sir Abdul Qaiyum, Mr. B.V. Jadhav, Sr. Phiroze Sethna, Mr. H.P. Mody, Sir Hubert Carr and M. Issac Foot.[47] The committee discussed the matter in detail. There was some expected opposition from Hindu diehards like Dr. Moonji. The Committee gave the following opinion:

> 'The sub-committee with two dissentient (Dr. Moonji) and Raja Narendra Nath) are impressed by the strength of the arguments in favour of separation, and they have come to the conclusion that the principle of separation should be accepted'.[48]

The sub-committee noted further in its conclusion, the Bombay government's opposition on administrative grounds, but decided that they were not 'inseparable'.

Meanwhile S.C. Shahani, Member Legislative council sent a telegram to the representatives of Round Table Conference, namely, Ramsay Macdonald, Wage Woodbin, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, Dr. Moonje and M.R. Jayakar urging upon them to oppose the separation of Sindh. The telegram read:

> 'Your attention is drawn to recent two hundred incidents of dacoties in Sindh. Hindus of Sukkar and Rohri have been looted, molested and killed. Sindh should not be separated otherwise Hindus will be totally destroyed'.[49]

To combat the allegations of Prof. Shahani, Abdullah Haroon immediately sent telegrams to the British Prime Minister stating:

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47 *Documents*, p. xi

48 Government of India, *India Round Table Conference,* 12 November 1930-19 January 1931 *Proceedings of sub-Committees vol. IX (Submitted No .IX (Sindh)* (Calcutta: Government of India Central Publication Branch, 1931) p.91 Now available in the Quaid-I-Azam Academy.

49 "S.C. Shahni to the representatives of RTC, Nov. 1930", G.M.Sayed Collection, *Some letters of Politicians and workers*, (Sindhi) p.223

'Prof. Shahani's opposition to Sindh's separation [is based] on concocted grounds and could not be considered. He has mentioned about dacoties, looting and killings of Hindus to create communal questions. Except for Sukkur District, there is no incident of dacoties. In Sukkur some incidents took place due to floods and bad economic conditions in which Hindus and Sikhs were also involved. Agriculturist class is under grip of moneylenders. Every agriculturist in Sukkur has to pay Rs.500/= to the moneylender as interest. Attention is drawn that since many years Hindu-Muslim demand for separation of Sindh is on historical, geographical, linguistic, economic and administrative bases'.[50]

Abdullah Haroon informed G.M. Sayed about the above situation and urged upon him to call the meeting of the Managing Committee of the Sindh Mohammadan Association with a view to discussing the prevailing political situation and to take appropriate action in this direction.[51]

As a result on 9 January 1931, Sindh Muslim Conference held its meeting at Jacobabad under the president ship of Haroon and decided to form 'Sindh Muslim Legislative Association'. The conference passed, the following resolution on the separation of Sindh which was moved by Sayed Miran Mohammad Shah and supported by Moulvi Abdul Karam Chishti:

> 'This Conference is of the candid view that Sindh should be separated unconditionally. Except for the above, the people of Sindh would not accept any reforms. The question of separation should not be seen from communal point of view. This resolution of the Conference should be sent to the Members of the Round Table Conference'.[52]

Because of the financial argument given by Hindu anti- separationists, under the decision of the Round Table Conference in 1931, Government of India appointed a committee under the chairmanship of Sir Miles Irving to report on the financial position of Sindh. The Committee conducted its inquiry from July to September 1931. The terms of reference for the financial enquiry committee were as follows:

> 'With reference to the report of sub-Committee ix of the Indian Round Table Conference, to examine carefully the probable revenue and expenditure of a separated Sindh and the scrutiny of the debt on the Sukkur Barrage and also to recommend an equitable adjustment of the financial commitment for which Sindh may properly be considered liable'.[53]

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50 Haroon to the Prime Minister British Cabinet London Nov. 1930, G.M. Sayed, *ibid,* p.221-222

51 Haroon to G.M. Sayed, 18 November, 1930, *Ibid*, p.221

52 *Proceedings of the Sindh Muslim Conference held at Jacobabad,* 9 January 1931, G.M. Sayed, *op.cit* p.225-229

53 *Report of the Sindh Conference*, 1932

Among those who gave evidence before the Committee were Sir Abdullah Haroon, M.A.Khuhro, Syed Miran Mohammad Shah and Prof. Gokhale. The anti separationists who gave evidence before the committee were Chablani, Dewan Bhojsingh and Dr. Hingorani. Some influential voices were raised in favour of separation and Rewachand Thadani, Rustom Sidhwa and Prof. Bhateja wrote newspaper articles to prove that Sindh's financial position was strong.

The Miles Irving Committee as it came to be called, came to the conclusion that separated Sindh would start its career with an initial deficit of Rs.108.45 lakhs.[54] The Irving Report was submitted to the second Round Table Conference, which met in November 1931. Gandhi also attended this session but the conference could come to no satisfactory conclusion on the constitutional issues concerning India. The Prime Minister of England Mr. Ramsay Macdonald gave his *'Communal Award'* and accepted the principle of the separation of Sindh subject to finding means for financing it. To find these means, the directive was given to the Government of India to arrange a Conference with representatives of Sindh to find possible solutions to overcome financial difficulties disclosed in the Irvin report.

Following the suggestion of the Prime Minister, Government of India organized a conference which was attended by A.F.L. Brayne, Chairman, Main Ali Bakhs Mohammad Hussain, Sir Shah Nawaz Bhutto, Mr. Lalchaud Wavlrai, Abdullah Haroon, Mir Bandeh Ali Talpur, K.B.M.A. Khuro, K.B. Allah Baksh Mohammad Umar, Prof. H.R.K. Batheja, Prof. H.L. Chablani, Hoshang N.E. Dinshaw, Mr. H. Dow, Diwan Bahadur Murlidhar Jerandas Punjabi, Mr. E.L. Price and Qazi Abdur Rehman.[55]

The Conference met at Karachi on 25 April 1932 and carried investigation until 17 May 1932.[56] The Conference gave a favourable report on the separation of Sindh. Mr. Batheja, member of the Brayne Sindh Conference submitted a report that 'Sindh's deficit could be met through additional revenues through Sukkur Barrage Land'.[57]

During the conference Abdullah Haroon in his letter to Sir Samuel Hoare, Secretary of State for India noted, 'I need not reiterate the importance of Sindh separation. The question of deficit is being exaggerated; the financial difficulty can be solved easily by just distribution and equitable readjustment between the Government of India, Bombay Government and the future government of Sindh'.[58] But the Hindu members of the conference who were opposed to the proposal of separation, expressed the view that a decision on the principle had been reached at the Round Table Conference in the absence

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[54] *Irving Committee Report,* p.58

[55] G. M. Syed, Sindh *Jee Bombay Khan Azadi* (Sindhi) *op. cit.* p.84

[56] *AFM*, Vol. 241: 44

[57] Proceedings of Political Conference of Leading Muslims held on 1 September 1932 at Karachi at the residence of Khan Bahadur Wali Mohammad Hassan Ally, AFM, Vol. 241:44

[58] Haroon to Sr. Samuel, Hoare, Secretary of State for India, 1 November 1931, *Archives of Freedom Movement, Abdullah Haroon Collection,* Vol .II, p.38-40

of any Hindu representative of Sindh and that the real meaning of the conclusion of Sindh sub-committee lay in the statement of its Chairman that if Sindh cannot show that it can stand successfully on its own feet, the separation does not take place. The Prime Minister's statement, they feared, would be interpreted as going beyond this.

The strong and effective campaign of the anti-separationists served to further politicize the Muslim community and reinforce unity in the ranks of the Sindhi Muslim leadership. Unlike the Hindus there was no division among the Muslim elite over the issue of separation, but similar to their opponents in the Hindu camp, Sindhi Muslim leaders formed their own informal organization called Sindh Azad Conference early in 1932, to provide a platform for the cause of Sindh separation. Sir Shah Nawaz Bhutto was appointed its Chairman, M.A. Khuhro Vice Chairman, Sheikh Abdul Majid, Secretary, and Abdullah Haroon, Treasurer.[59] This formation of an exclusively provincial level organization on the part of the Sindhi Muslim elite was significant in at least two ways. It provided a basis for Sindhi Muslim strength and unity by bringing together the landed aristocracy and the Muslim middle class on the single-issue of separation. But beyond that it reflected among them a growing sense of a regional, largely Muslim, Sindhi identity, which was reinforced by arguments they chose to advance their cause of separation. They continued the old arguments of Sindh's cultural discreetness and the unjust Bombay connection but they evolved new arguments to counter the thrust of the Hindus. The Sindh Azad Conference was scheduled to be held on 27-28 March 1932 at Khaliqdina Hall at Karachi on the insistence of Haji Abdullah Haroon. Sir Mohammad Iqbal gave his assent to preside over the Conference. However, the conference was postponed on the advice of Sindhi Members of Bombay Council.[60]

The emergence of the Sindh Azad Conference was noteworthy in another sense for it had a bearing on the theme of provincial all India relations. The Sindhi Muslim elite was compelled to form their own provincial organization chiefly because of the above mentioned reasons and as the national Muslim organizations had failed to provide any leadership at the provincial level. But despite the All-India League's inability to furnish organizational leadership for the Sindh separation cause, it continued to support the issue at its meetings as did the other Muslim national organization, the All-India Muslim Conference. Thus the pattern of harmonious local-centre Muslim relations established in the 1920s and based on a common allegiance to the goal of separating Sindh from Bombay continued into the 1930s and the final years of the separation movement.

Sindh Azad Conference met on 15-16 April 1932 at Hyderabad Sindh. It was the most representative gathering that had ever taken place in Sindh. The resolution on the separation of Sindh was moved by Khuhro and was cabled to the Prime Minister, the Secretary of State for India and H.H. the Aga Khan, by Syed Miran Mohammad Shah, Secretary of the conference. The Conference further observed that 'The Sindh Muslims

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59 *Daily Gazette,* 2 September 1932, p.5

60 *Haji Abdullah Haroon, Chairman, Reception Committee Azad Sindh Conference, 18 February 1932 to Sayed Ghulam Murtaza Shah, Qazi Abdur Rehman and S.M. Shafi*; G.M. Sayed, *op.cit,* pp. 232-233

do not wish to be hood winked by the Sindh Hindus by accepting their impracticable conditions, imposed at the so called Allahabad 'Unity Conference', which on the other hand makes Sindh separation impossible. We emphatically desire that this question be decided on its own merits and that Sindh should immediately and unconditionally be separated from the Bombay presidency and constituted a separate province'.[61]

The year 1932 witnessed hectic activities by both the protagonists and antagonists of the 'separation' so as to make the strongest case for the second Round Table Conference to be held in November on which the Reforms that were expected to be announced would depend. On 18 April 1932 Sindh Azad Conference met at Karachi under the president ship of Sheikh Abdul Majid. The leading participants in the Conference were Khuhro, Abdullah Haroon, Haji Mir Mohammad Baluch, Syed Miran Mohammad Shah and G.M. Sayed who was the Chairman of the Reception Committee. The Conference passed the resolution on separation of Sindh'.[62] In the same year 16 September was celebrated throughout Sindh as 'Sindh Separation Day' with great enthusiasm. On 15 November the Second Azad Conference met at Hyderabad under the president ship of Allama Yusuf Ali. The Conference passed its resolution supporting separation and also set up a permanent body 'Sindh Azad Conference'. On 5 February, the working committee of Sindh Azad Conference met to work out measures to counter the Hindu propaganda. The committee appointed Pir Ali Mohammad Rashdi to publicize the cause of separation and to counter Hindu propaganda. The battle in the struggle for separation continued.

At last the labour and efforts of Muslim leaders were rewarded and on 24 December 1932, the Secretary of State for India announced the definite decision of the British government to separate Sindh from the Bombay Presidency and establish an independent, autonomous Governor's province in Sindh.[63] There can be little doubt that the findings of the Miles Irving committee, Brayne Conference and Muslim efforts played an important part in deciding the issue of Sindh's separation.

After the announcement of separation the Government of India constituted a Sindh Administrative Committee to work out the mechanism for the separation of Sindh from Bombay. The administration as well as the infrastructure necessary for the new capital of Sindh, Karachi, had to be established for the new province. The Chairman of the committee was Sir Hugh Dow who was considered an expert in Sindh finances, especially the administration of the Sukkur Barrage finance. Abdullah Haroon and Khuhro were the Sindh Muslim members on the Committee who represented the majority of the people of the province

In the mean time, the Government of India appointed Mr. Nixon to examine the financial separation of Sindh with the Bombay Government so as to determine the liabilities of the new province in respect of debts and capital expenditure.

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61 Hamida Khuhro, *op. cit.* p. 99-100

62 Ibid., p.101

63 Allen Jones, *op. cit,* p.50

After the financial and administrative issues were finally settled the provincial autonomy to Sindh was given a prominent place by the British Government in its new Constitution for India, the Government of India Act, 1935. Under the authority of the 1935 Act, Sindh was declared a separate province on 1 April 1936, thus bringing victory to the Sindhi Muslims who were engaged in a long and at times bitter struggle to secure the goal of an autonomous Sindh province.

Sindh separation Movement has manifold bearings upon the Sindhi leadership. In the beginning of the twenties the issue of separation was eluded by the Hindu leaders from the platform of the Congress .But latter the Hindu leaders, especially the Hindu Mahasahbatists, opposed the issue of separation on the account of their economic and political interests. They also feared that in separated Sindh, they would be in a minority and at the mercy of Muslims, as there would be 'Muslim Raj in Sindh'. Upon the conclusion of the Sindh Separation Movement the Sindhi Muslim leadership appeared to have reached a pinnacle of political success. They achieved a broad measure of unity among themselves and established close relations with the all- India Muslim leadership. The unity which was achieved throughout the movement ended during the elections of 1937. The Muslims leaders become pawn in the hands of Sindh Congress and as a result, till independence, there could be no single stable government in Sindh.