ROLE OF THE SIND CONGRESS PARTY IN THE POLITCS OF SIND (1937-1947)

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Abstract

Although the Indian National Congress (INC) came into being in 1885, however, its branch in Sindh was established in 1920 entitled Sind Congress Party, with Dr. Choithram as President, Sirsuti Devi as Vice President, Qazi Abur Rehman as Secretary and Jairamdas as Joint Secretary. [1] Initially it followed the aims and objectives of the INC, for example, to establish self-government in India' and later on Swaraj (freedom) for India but after the elections of 1937Sind Congress Party activities turned against Muslim League and started intrigues to destabilise Muslim League Ministries. In this study the manoeuvrings of Sind Congress and the weaknesses of Muslim leaders of Sindh are highlighted.

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[1] Dr. M. L. Zardari, *Tehrik-I-Pakistan Mein Sindh Jo Hiso* (Hyderabad: M. Salam Khan Zardari, 1984), pp. 42-3

Sind Congress Party formed in 1920 followed the programme of central Congress on issues like separate electorate, Rowlett bill and non-cooperation during Khilafat movement but at the same time took up the local issues being faced by the people of Sind like education, Rasaietc in which Muslim of Sind open heartily supported and co-operated with Congress but the issue of separation of Sind from Bombay Presidency created a rift between Congress Hindus and Sindhi Muslims. After a long struggle of Muslims of Sind British Government through the Act of 1935 separated Sind from Bombay Presidency and provincial status of Sind was restored.

The introduction of the All India Act 1935 among other things provided for "a measure of provincial autonomy, with numerous safeguards and federation between the provinces and the Indian States . . . separate electorates and weight-age for minority community representation. The provincial elections were announced to be held under this Act, which greatly enlarged representation in case of Sind: 34 Mohammedans (one for women), 19 general (including one for women), 2 European, 2 Commerce, 2 Landholders and 1 labour".[2]

For the purpose of sweeping the elections, Sind Congress decided to hold provincial political Conference at Hyderabad Sind, however, the conference was held under the auspices of the Sind Congress Socialists on 18 July 1936 at Karachi under the president ship of M. R. Masani, and attended among other Hindu leaders, by the President of Indian National Congress, Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru. Masani lauded Nehru's efforts of revival of mass interest in the Congress as "inspiration to us in these times of political depression and demoralization".[3]

All India Muslim League became unsuccessful to give ticket to a single Sindhi Muslim Leader as they have formed their own regional parties, for example, Haji Abdullah Haroon formed Sind United Party; Sheikh Abdul Majid Sindhi formed Sind Azad Party, though both of them were the office bearers of Sind Muslim League. Sir Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah also formed Sind Muslim Political Party. Elections were held on 1 February 1937. The Sind United Party secured 21 out of 60 seats. The Independent Muslims 6, Sind Muslim Political Party 4, Sind Azad Party 3, Sind Hindu Sabha 11, Sind Congress 8,Independent Hindu 2, Labour Independent 1, and No Group Party 4. [4] Thus the failure of unification between the Muslim leadership in Sind left the field open for the Congress to exploit the situation in its favour and to carry out the Congress programme in Sind--the majority Muslims Province.

After the elections the Congress refused to form government in six provinces where it was victorious provided assurances were given by the British Government that the Governors would not use the special powers but, in Sind the Congress played its role in ministry formation. In Sind Sir Lancelot Grahm, the Governor of Sind, instead of asking the Sind United party to form government invited Sir Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah, 'the

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[2] Great Britain, *Report of Sind Provincial Delimitations of Constituencies Committee*, Vol. I,(Bombay: Government Press, 1935) p.97

[3] Nriprendra Nath Mitra (ed) *Indian Annual Register*, July-December 1936, Vol. lI, p. 309

[4] *Return showing the results of elections in India, 1937* (Delhi: Govt. of India Press, 1937), p.10

most competent man in the province, to form the ministry, and he was sworn in as Chief Minister along with Mukhi Gobindram and Mir Bandeh Ali Talpur as ministers'.[5] For holding power intact, Sir Ghulam Hussain paid the higher price to Hindus to seek their support, as even the speakership went to Hindus—Bhojsingh was elected as Speaker. Thus the manner in which Hidayatullah came to power clearly demonstrated a triumph of personality over party; with the vagaries of personal ambition as the key determinants of political power, than loyalty to party principles, the future of Sindhi Muslim politics seemed destined to follow an unstable course. This view was clear from the Governor's letter to the Viceroy: "until stable parties are formed with a distinct programme and principles but also commanding personal loyalties, ministers are bound to be short-lived. This will go on until I can get Muslims working harmoniously on a single platform. At present they have two platforms which are, indistinguishable from each other except the enmity".[6]

As the Hindus dominated the ministry, the current sparkled in the Sindhi Muslim leadership—Mohammad Hashim Gazdar summarized the position of Sind Muslims to All-India Muslim League "rather bad and placed all the blame for this state of affairs on the Governor, the ministerial party and the Government's mutual pact with the Hindus", urging that without the "League's agitation the pact with Hindus would ruin the Muslims".[7] With the increased demands of Hindu assemblymen, Hidayatullah was constrained to form in the assembly Democratic Coalition Party, in which ten members of the Sind United Party gave assent to join. By the end of 1937, Hidyatullah's government was stumbling as the Hindu assemblymen alienated their support from the Ministry, as they felt threatened by the proposed legislation of the Democratic Coalition Party. They were further frustrated by the election of Miran Mohammad Shah, the Coalition candidate, over their own candidate to be the new speaker, hence the Hindu assemblymen withdrew their support, and as a result, Hidyatullah's ministry fell on 22 March 1938.[8]

Khan Bahadur Allah Baksh Soomro succeeded Sir Ghulam Hussain as Chief Minister with the support of Congress and Hindu Sabha assemblymen with clear understanding that he would pursue the programme of the Congress.[9] His cabinet was extended to six ministers; of them three went to the Congress along with the Deputy Speaker.[10] The political domination by the Congress, forced the Muslim Leadership, for example, Sheikh Abdul Majid Sindhi, Seth Abdullah Haroon and M. A. Khuhro to re-organize the Sindh Muslim League province-wide and also in the Assembly. In August 1938, G. M. Sayed defected from the Congress, and joined the League, which gave the League Party in the assembly greater length. Felling in a strong position of 26 members the Muslim League party signed the requisition of no-confidence against the Ministry and submitted to the Governor.

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5 *Daily Gazette*, Karachi, 23 March 1937

6 D. A. Pirzada, *Growth of Muslim Nationalism in Sindh: Parting of Ways to Pakistan*(Karachi: Mehran Publisher, 1995), p.73

7 Letter of Hashim Gazdar to Sec. AIML ,29 Sept. 1937,*Archives of Freedom Movement*, Vol. 170 (Karachi: Karachi University), p.19

8 Op. cit, *Indian Annual Register*, Jan-June 1938, Vol. I, pp. 274-5

9 Ibid.

10 Op. cit. D. A. Pirzada, pp.76-7

The publication of new assessment rates gave rise to a move afresh to dislodge Allah Baksh government. The decision of the Government was attacked in all quarters and the Premier had to live in an atmosphere of ceaseless intrigue and opposition. The Sind Congress demanded postponement of assessment proposals in respect of the Sukkur Barrage for one year.[11] Congress was pledged among other things to secure relief from excessive taxation to khatedars and small landholders therefore could not tolerate any legislation, which, far from relieving their distress, adds to their burden. In fact, majority of landholders in Sind were the Hindus and Muslims were their tillers.

The question of new assessment made the political situation jigsaw puzzle. On the request of Sind Congress, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Kirplani and Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad came to Karachi. They along with the local Congress Assembly men held negotiation with the Muslim assemblymen: prominent among them present were Sir Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah, M. A. Khuhro, G. M. Sayed, Gazdar, and Khan Bahadur Gabole. Sheikh Abdul Majid sent a note flatly refusing to participate in the discussion as in his opinion Sardar Patel has already committed him to support the Allah Baksh Ministry. In the negotiation, removal of Allah Baksh from the seat of chief ministership was pinpointed, thus, the negotiations could not break-through and were aborted, The Congress decided to support Allah Baksh ministry if he carryout the Congress programme and policy in Sind while rejecting the League's offer to Congress-League coalition ministry.[12] Ina public meeting at Ram Bagh, Patel declared that it was not the intention of the Congress to overthrow any ministry merely for another. What the Congress wanted was to carry out its programme to attain swaraj through the experiment.[13] However the Congress was able to have postponed the new taxes for one year.

The Sind Provincial Muslim League Conference was held on 8-12 October 1938 under the auspices of Sind league, and presided over by Quaid-i-Azam Jinnah. On the evening of 9 October, Jinnah held "Unity Conference" with Khan Bahadur AllahBaksh, the Premier and his colleague PirIllahiBux along with 7-8 members who though Muslim had earlier refused to join forces with the League. Jinnah then saw Sir Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah (with backing of 13 members), Mir Bandeh All Khan Talpur, leader of Mir Baloch group (with following of 7 members) and G. M. Sayed who had a following of six members. They all showed keen desire to bring unity and solidarity among the various Muslim groups by joining the Muslim League party in the Assembly. The prolonged discussion and exchange of views resulted in signing of agreement between Allah Baksh, Pir Illahi Bux, Sir Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah, Mir Bandeh Ali, G. M. Sayed and Abdul Majid Sindhi. It was agreed that "one solid party of the Muslim members of the Sind Legislative Assembly should be formed as Muslim League Party, within the Legislature, and all the members who join the Party will become members of the Muslim League and sign the creed and accept the policy and programme of the Muslim League and would sign the usual pledge of the Muslim League".[14]

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[11] *Times of India*, (Bombay), 28 August 1938
[12] Press cutting in *Quaid-i-Azam papers*, file. 814, (Karachi: Quaid-i-Azam Academy), p.l14
[13] *Times of India*, (Bombay), 26 August 1938
[14] *Star of India*, Delhi,10 October 1938

As the vote of no-confidence against the Ministry was pending before the Sind Assembly, Allah Baksh utilized the opportunity to his advantage, and emphasizing the possibility of the formation of the League ministry wired to the Congress High Command appealing to them that 'proposed no-confidence motion should not be made a party question and freedom of voting should be permitted. If that were done, of course, all the ten members of the Congress party would vote against the no-confidence'.[15] Allah Baksh backed out of the agreement signed by him to join the Muslim League, on receipt of green signal from the Congress High Command to the effect that Sind Congress would support his ministry. He took up the unabashed position that he and his supporters would join the League Party only if he was assured beforehand that the Party would agree to elect him leader and allow him to continue as Chief Minister. Congress became jubilant as it aborted the Unity Conference of Jinnah.

As soon the War started, in India, the Viceroy sought support to war from the Congress and the Muslim League. The Muslim League opined that if the British Government desires full support and cooperation of the Muslims, then the federal scheme which has been suspended should be abandoned altogether as the provincial part of 1935 Constitution had resulted wholly in a permanent communal minorities, Governors be called upon to exercise their special powers to protect the rights of the Muslims in the Congress-governed provinces and "no declaration regarding the question of constitutional advancement for India should be made without the consent and approval of the All-India Muslim League, and take into its confidence the Muslim League which is the only organization that can speak on behalf of the Muslim India".[16]

On the other hand the Indian National Congress bitterly opposed the British policy of war declaring: "issue of war and peace for India must be decided by the Indian people and no outside authority can impose upon them, nor can the Indian people permit their resources to be exploited for imperialist ends. As a first step the Congress ministries in the provinces tendered their resignations, where Governors rule was imposed".[17]

In Sind strangely enough, the Sindh Congress continued to support the Sindh Chief Minister Allah Baksh. On the eve of war, Congress members along with Allah Baksh bring up- the subject of opening recruitment in the Army to Sindhis. He felt it a disgrace for his province that even the Baloch Regiment have no Balochis in it. The Governor took up the matter with the Viceroy who wrote that in the opinion of the Commander-in-Chief, Sindhis were unlikely to be of "great value as combatants, and that it would be a disservice to the Balochis if any attempt were made to recruit them. . . the Balochi as a whole being nomad, who disliked settled life, uniform and discipline, he has in the past tended to desert freely".[18] However, the Chief Minister Allah Baksh and the Sind

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[15] Letter of Hatim Alvi to Jinnah (Confidential) 12 Oct. 1938,Op. Cit. *Quaid-i-Azam Papers*, file 599, p.1

[16] Liaquat Ali Khan, *Resolutions of the Muslim League*, December *1938-March 1940*(Delhi: National Printing and Publishing House, n. d.) pp.25-8

[17] Dr. Waheed Ahmed, *The Nations Voice*, Vol. I (Karachi: Quaid-i-Azam Academy, 1992), p.825

[18] *Unpublished manuscript on Sir Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah*, by D. A. Pirzada(Quaid-i-Azam Academy, Karachi), pp. 85-6 (herein after UNPUBLISHED MANUSCRIPT)

Congress conveyed their support unconditionally to the British Government in the prosecution of an imperialist war.

During 1939 there was complete unanimity between the Muslim leadership over the Manzilgah Mosque Sukkur dispute, which took turn as Communal question as the Hindus claimed the mosque as part of Tirath Sadh Bella. The restoration Committee launched civil disobedience movement or satyagraha movement resulting into gathering thousands of Muslims at the scene. Some of the satyagrahis court-arrests while the others pushed passed the police and occupied the building.[19] Thus for the time being restoration of the mosque and buildings attached thereto was achieved.

The parleys between the Chief Minister Allah Baksh and the members of the Restoration Committee took place; however, the negotiations achieved no breakthrough because of the slippery attitude of the Premier Allah Baksh.[20] As the negotiations broke off, the Government made arrests of the members of the Restoration Committee and the police took the possession of Manzilgah Mosque, expel the satyagrrahis with tear gas.[21] The expulsion of the Muslims from the Manzilgah was followed by the serious waive of communal disturbance and rioting in the whole of Sukkur city and the surrounding talukas and district causing heavy losses to the person and property.[22] Rioting spread to such an extent that military was deployed to maintain the law and order situation. Apparently the rioting was started by Hindus who jeered at the returning of satyagrahis that they had gotten what they deserved.

Gandhi exploited the situation arising out of the Manzilgah rather suggesting workable solution. He advised the Hindus of Sind to make Hijrat (migration): if no honourable local settlement is arrived at and if the local residents do not feel able to defend themselves and their families and possessions non-violently or violently. . . they should vacate the place in which they live in perpetual fear of their lives and the honour of their women folk".[23] The Working Committee of the Indian National Congress deputed Khan Abdul Qaiyum, M. L. A. (Central) to investigate into the Sukkur riots. Qaiyum held meetings with leaders of both the communities and the ministers of the Sindh government, and submitted his report on 18th January 1940. His findings were: "Thus the communal prejudice and social reaction among Congressmen in Sindh were reported to be alienating Muslims from the Congress in the Province. Congress MLAs in Sindh, who represented the trading and educational classes among the Hindus, cast away Congress (sic) principles and programme to the winds, by obstructing and sometimes even nipping in the bud legislation which aims at ameliorating (sic) the condition of Muslim masses in Sind who are mainly agriculturists and are weighed down by poverty and debts. . . . As long as the Congress is confined to the urban Hindus, and acts as a cheap edition of the

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[19] Op. cit, *Quaid-i-Azam Papers*, file 274, p. 35
[20] Ibid., p. 64
[21] Op. cit. D. A. Pirzada, p. l13
[22] *Civil and Military Gazette*, (Lahore), 18th January 1940
[23] *The Evening News of India*, (Bombay), 6th January 1940

Hindu Mahasabha, there is no very bright future for Congress (sic) amongst the downtrodden and ignorant Muslims (sic) peasantry of Sind".[24]

Justice Weston headed an independent Committee to enquire into the matter. He rejected the claim of Hindus and declared that "the disputed Manzilgah Building was constructed to be used as a Mosque".[25] Hence the Manzilgah Mosque building was handed over to the Muslims in January 1941 and the members of the Restoration Committee who were prosecuted were honourably acquitted.

Sukkur communal riots proved- blow to Allah Baksh Ministry as the administration became rotten to the core. There was continuous clamour from one end of the province to the other that there being nothing like popular government functioning in the province. Allah Baksh's statement that"even the bloodshed in upper Sindh has contributed nothing towards the stability to his ministry, frenzied the Hindus[26] as most of the sufferers in riots were Hindus, therefore the Congress assemblymen withdrew their support to Allah Baksh government, which received defeat on 14th March 1940.

Mir Bandeh Ali Talpur, Leader of the National Party formed the cabinet and was sworn in as the Chief Minister of Sind on 18th March 1940 just before one week of adopting the Lahore Resolution by the All-India Muslim League at Lahore session, which later on became the "Pakistan Resolution". G. M. Sayed, Sheikh Abdul Majid Sindhi, M.A. Khuhro from the Muslim League, Rai Sahib Gokaldas from the Congress and Nichaldas Vazirani of Hindu Independent Party, were taken as ministers.[27] Sind Muslim League showed its full confidence and gave support to the Coalition Ministry of Mir Bandeh All. Within six months in office, there seemed rift and difference of opinion between the Governor and Muslim Ministers, and Hindu ministers were unhappy as the decision on the Manzilgah Mosque, Sukkur, by the Special Inquiry Committee was not yet announced. The signal of change came from within the Ministry as in August 1940, G. M. Sayed made known to his colleagues to give resignation from the ministership under the existing state of affairs, but he has in his mind to make Sind a more progressive. So he, on his own, approached Allah Baksh, the archenemy of the League, with an offer of two cabinet seats (his own and Abdul Majid's) with a mind to persuade him to join the Muslim League. Sayed knew well that Allah Baksh would not at any cost join the League. Allah Baksh turned down Sayed's offer saying that he would not consent to be merely a minister and added the only condition under which he would join was "if Mir Bandeh Ali retires in his favour and his old enemy K. B. Khuhro, resigns from the Ministry altogether".[28]

The Congress High Command took advantage of precarious political situation in Sind. To settle the ministerial controversy, but, in fact, to place the Sindh Congress at proper position to play its role in weakening the ministry if formed by the Muslim League, Abul

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[24] Op. cit., D. A. Pirzada, p. l16
[25] Op. cit., *Quaid-i-Azam Papers*, File 445, p.2
[26] *Deccan Times*, (Madras), 4 Jan., 1940
[27] *Civil & Military Gazette*, (Lahore), 19th March 1940
[28] *Unpublished Manuscript*, op. cit., p.105

Kalam Azad, President of the Congress came to Karachi in November 1940. The League ministers Sayed, Khuhro and Abdul Majid Sindhi welcomed Kalam at the Airport. They also entered into the negotiations with him regarding the ministry affairs without the League approval. The discussions culminated in signing of the agreement on 21st November 1940, between Khuhro, Sayed and Abul Kalam Azad, which became "secret document". The terms were:

1. That Sheikh Majid will resign and K. B. Allah Baksh will be taken up in his place as minister.
2. By 15th February 1941, Mir Bandeh Ali will resign his premiership and either Sir Ghulam Hussainor K. B. Allah Baksh shall become the Premier.
3. If Mir Bandeh Ali decides to stay as Minister one of the two gentlemen K. B. Khuhro or G. M. Sayed shall make room for him.[29]

The Province of Sind was engulfed with political crises—on implementation of "Azad Pact", and the Joint Electorate in Borough Municipalities, as the joint electorate Bill was passed by the Mir Ministry against the settled policy. As a first step to honour the Azad Pact, G.M. Sayed resigned from the ministership and made room for K.B. Allah Baksh who was taken up as Minister. Those in the Provincial League became disgusted and betrayed, but the Sind Congress and Hindu Independents greeted Allah Baksh's ascension once again to the ministry with approval. Sayed's action was treated in the League camp to be Azad's bidding. The Congress High Command was more active as Abul Kalam Azad sent a telegram to G.M. Sayed for implementation of the remaining clauses of the Pact.[30] Therefore, G.M. Sayed called upon Khuhro to fulfill the Pact by resignation of Mir Bandeh Ali and allowing M.A. Khuhro, Abdul Majid, Sir Ghulam Hussain and Khan Bahadur Allah Baksh to carry on the ministerial duties for the remaining period and that K. B. Allah Baksh may be made the Premier.[31] On receipt of copy of Sayed's letter, Haji Abdullah Haroon could not agree with Sayed, treating the so-called Azad Pact being entered into by and between some ministers in their "individual capacity", and thus not binding upon the League to honour.[32] Haroon felt the bargain of some League ministers with the Congress President Abul Kalam Azad injurious and against the League; he therefore, kept in touch with Jinnah. Meanwhile Jinnah wasted his energy and efforts to prevail upon Sayed and M.A. Khuhro but both remained adamant in their views. Jinnah therefore, maintained status quo in the matter of Ministry affairs after hearing from Abdul Majid and Mir Bandh Ali. His final advice was that if Mir Bandeh Ali has to resign for his private and personal reason, Sayed must be included in the ministry with a Muslim League premier and if that was not possible, then ministry must face the vote of no-confidence which could be resisted.[33] As Sayed failed to win over Allah Baksh, he yielded to Jinnah's pressure and re-affirmed his commitment to the League organization in the capacity of the President of the Sind Muslim League.

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[29] Letter of G. M. Sayed and Khuhro to Nichaldas Vazirani, 22 Nov. 1940, *Quaid-i-Azam Papers*, File 365, p.8
[30] Letter of Abul Kalam Azad to G. M. Sayed, 24 December, 1940, *Quaid-i-Azam Paper*, File, 460, p.15
[31] Letter of Sayed to Khuhro,12 January 1941, *Abdullah Haroon Collection*, Vol. 5 (Islamabad: National Archives), pp. 82-3
[32] Letter of Haroon to Sayed, 15 January ,1941, Ibid, p. 83
[33] Letter of Jinnah to Sayed, 27 February 1941, *Quaid-i-Azam Paper*, file 460, pp. 63-4

The tripartite clique—the Congress (7 members); the Hindus (11 members) and Allah Baksh group (16 Muslim Members) set the stage to over throw the Mir Ministry. They withdrew all the one-rupee cut motion on 6th March 1941, resulting into the resignation of Premier Mir Bandeh Ali Khan, M. A. Khuhro and Abdul Majid, the League Ministers. The other ministers did the same, crossing the floor during the session. The ministry was defeated and the Governor invited Allah Baksh to form the government. He was sworn as Chief Minister on 7th March 1941 with Sir Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah, Pir Illahi Bux, Nichaldas Vazirani and Rao Sahib Gokaldas as ministers.[34] The Congress declared its support to Allah Baksh ministry unlike previously—Allah Baksh worked for the promotion of Hindu interests by implementing Congress dominated policy and programme. Gandhi and the Congress High Command allowed Allah Baksh to continue as a member of the so-called National Defence Council.

The Quit India Movement launched by the Congress after resignation of the Congress ministries by the end of 1939, to oust British, failed to receive response from the rural masses and the minorities remained aloof. In Sind, the Congress could not give call for the support of the Movement. However, Allah Baksh by the end of September 1942 renounced his title of O. B. E. and Khan Bahadur as a protest against the British policy in denying freedom to India and arresting Congress leaders.[35] Lord L. S. Amery referred the question of Allah Baksh's renunciation of his honours to the War Cabinet, which considered it on 7th October 1942. They concluded that the right course would be for Allah Baksh to resign; but that if he showed any reluctance to do so, his letter to Lord Linlithgow might well be treated as constituting relinquishment of office. At their interview on 10th October, Sir H. Dow, the Governor of Sindh failed to persuade Allah Baksh to resign, dismissed him. In his place Sir Ghulam Hussain became the Chief Minister of Sind on 22nd October, 1942.

Sir Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah, on persuasion of the Sind Muslim Leadership joined the League, but this time, fully committed to the League's ideals and programme.[36] There was now, to a greater extent, unity within the rank and file of the League, which had remained in shambles since 1937 election and dominated by pro-Congress Muslims. From now and then Sind proved to be the gateway of Pakistan, struggles for which were in bloom, in a sense that Sind Assembly passed the principles of Pakistan Resolution in March 1943 before any province could do so.[37] Created by Jinnah the unity in the Sind League leadership, however, could not last long. Abdul Majid Sindhi, the pioneer of the League, resigned from the League due to some grievances against Ghulam Hussain's ministry on 25 October 1943. [38] Within four months in power the League Ministry, differences arose between the Premier and the President of the Sind League, G. M. Sayed, who on one hand levelled barrage of allegations against the Ghulam Hussain, on the other, Sayed started interfering in the Ministry affairs. Jinnah intervened in the matter

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[34] Op. cit, *Indian Annual Register*, Jan-Jun 1941, Vol.I, pp.253-57
[35] M. U. Abbasi, *The Colourful Personalities in Sindh*(Karachi, 1948), p. 13
[36] Letter of Ghulam Hussain to Khuhro, 16 October 1942, *Quaid-i-Azam Papers*, file, 365,p. 85
[37] Op. cit. , *Indian Annual Register*, Jan-June 1943, Vol. I. p. 253
[38] *Unpublished Manuscript*, p. 125

and made it clear that the organization of the League came within the ambit of G.M. Sayed, and Ghulam Hussain would look after the Ministry's affairs. Hence G.M. Sayed was cooled down for the time being.

The Congress and the Hindu group in the Assembly exploited the conflicting situation, and on their backing Sayed went ahead with his efforts to throw out the Ministry. His inner group of advisers, namely Hatim Alavi, G.H. Shah and two Hindus: Tahilramani and Dingo Thadani, accentuated his desire. S.M. Sharma, editor of Daily Gazette had cautioned Jinnah that G.M. Sayed had planned to topple down the ministry by creating a coalition of Moula Bux Soomro, Nichaldas Vazirani and his group.[39] On 24th February 1945 when Assembly was in session it was defeated by Sayed and his group in the Assembly with the support of the Congress, on the motion of supplementary grant,[40] however, Ghulam Hussain was able to reconstitute the ministry. Jinnah reprimanded Sayed for having top pled his own ministry. As G.M. Sayed acted aggressively in all matters whether the ministry affairs, the organization of the League and the award of tickets for forthcoming elections, for which Jinnah came to Karachi, therefore, he was expelled from the League on 2nd January, 1946. Sayed then shouldered with the Congress to harm the Leagues goal of Pakistan and betray Jinnah.

In sum, Sayed wanted "self-determination to establish a Sindhi Pakistan without interference from the League High Command", and he argued that it was the "Nawabs and Nawabzada who create all-round trouble by trying to make Sind a pawn in the All India Muslim League game". Sayed was not prepared to accept any "outside interference" in his "Sindhi Pakistan," and so far as the communal problem was concerned, he was certain that it could be "settled between the Hindus and Muslims living in the Province for centuries" and who would "know how to get together and settle their affairs easily".[41]

The vote in election 1946 was a vote for Pakistan for the Muslim League. But the opposition of Sayed group backed by the Congress was a bitter pill for the League to swallow. The Congress used power and purse to support Sayed group and Muslim nationalists "to bury Pakistan in Sind".[42] Jawaharlal Nehru and Sarojni Naidu along with other ladies, toured Sind, and in his speech at Sukkur, Nehru said that the Congress is not fighting the elections for capturing ministries, but for strengthening itself for India's freedom with greater force. He alleged that the League and the Hindu Sabha had stood for India's slavery and perpetuation of the British Raj and that they have knocked at the door of the British government.[43] He further said that the politics in Sind were "partly tribal and clan loyalty and loyalty to certain backward elements". He further said the candidates put by the League were not "in any way real Muslim Leaguers" and probably they were just accepted because they might win.[44] Nehru proved to be the worst orator by

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[39] Letter of Sharma to Jinnah, February 1945, *Shams-ul-Hasan Collection*, Sindh Vol. IV, (Karachi: Quaid-i-Azam Academy) pp. 72-3

[40] V. P. Menon, *Transfer of Power in India*, Volume V, (Calcutta: 1957),pp. 587-88

[41] Op. cit. ,*Unpublished Manuscript*,p.154

[42] Ibid., p. 157

[43] *The Tribune*, Delhi, 8th January 1946. Also G. Gopal,,*Selected Works of Nehru* (1981), Vol. 14, p. 322

[44] Ibid., p. 323

abusing a lot of Sindhi Muslims. He gave lacs of rupees to the nationalist Muslims through Khan Abdul Samad of Baluchistan, for election campaign, who in turn, called dozen of Moulvis(clergymen) from Baluchistan province to campaign in favour of "nationalist fools".[45]

The elections were held in February 1946. Of the total 35 Muslim seats, the League captured 27. Those who opposed the League captured 8 seats - 4 nationalist Muslims led by jamiat ul Ulema, and 4 by the Progressive League of G.M. Sayed. The Congress put up 18 candidates of these 6 were returned unopposed and the other 12 gave crushing defeat to their opponents. The Congress candidates secured as many as 78.07 per cent of the total votes polled. Four candidates of Sayed's group who have pledged their support to the Congress defeated their opponents on the issue, which had placed before the electorates.[46] The trend of voting this time was purely on communal line. Sayed declared: "for him the freedom of India had a higher priority than the question of Pakistan". "Muslim League High Command", Sayed viewed "was no more than a fraud" and added: "We realized rather late in the day that we were being exploited not for the promotion of the interests of the masses, but we were being literally dragged under heels with the object of perpetuating the hold of Muslim feudal Lords and confirmed favourites of the British Bureaucracy, for whose benefit alone we were made to get rid of Hindu vested interests".[47]

The Congress President Azad and Patel helped to form coalition assembly party with Sayed group —and nationalist Muslims, with G. M. Sayed its leader with the hope to form the ministry. The basis of the "Pact" was to carry out the Congress programme as laid down in the Congress election manifesto—freedom of India.[48] Sayed's pact with the Congress was to sabotage Pakistan for which the League had been struggling since 1940. The formation of stable ministry in Sindh was also placed upon a knife's edge due to strong Coalition Assembly Party of Congress-Sayed group. What Sayed wanted without giving up the demand for Pakistan was that this could be achieved by "fostering mutual good-will between Hindus and Muslims" as the "free Pakistan was not possible of achievement without achieving freedom of India."[49] The Congress was hopeful to be invited to form the ministry as its coalition party had support of 28 members. Azad gave offer to the Muslim League for the formation of an "All-Party Government" on the basis of parity between the League and the Congress Coalition Party, which the League turned down.[50] Lord Wavell opined about the Congress and Sayed attitude: "At the moment it appears probably that there will be an anti-League Coalition government in Sindh, but I doubt very much whether the Congress have been wise in their tactics in Sindh. It is known everywhere that Sayed Group have devoted their efforts to commanding the

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[45] Letter of Abdul Rashid Arshad to Jinnah, 14 January 1946, Op. cit. , *Shams-ul-Hasan Collection*, Vol. VII, Sindh, p. 36
[46] *The Sinners of Sind*(Hyderabad) (n. d.), p. 10
[47] *Hindustan Times*, (Delhi), 4 February 1946
[48] *The Statesman*, (Calcutta), 7 February 1946
[49] Op. cit,. *Unpublished Manuscript*, p. 159
[50] *The Hindustan Times*, (Delhi), 6 February 1946

highest price and that Sayed himself if he accepts the premiership will be a bought man and not a stable one.[51]

Now the Congress turned to its old tactics - Sayed tried to bribe and seek support of Abdul Sattar Pirzada, the League's MLA by offering him the seat of speakership if the Congress succeeded in forming the ministry, which offer was turned down by Pirzada. [52]Sayed was criticized severely by Liaquat Ali Khan who declared that the dream of the Congress would die before it could "form the ministries in Muslim majority provinces and rule," and added: "Mr. G.M. Sayed and his supporters fought the elections on the principle of Pakistan. Now he has formed coalition with the Congress by saying freedom of India first-How would the Britishers quit India? They must transfer (power) to Hindus before they go, and then Mr. Sayed would beg to Hindus for Pakistan".[53]

Sir Francis Mudie who had replaced H. Dow as Governor discussed the political situation with Sir Ghulam Hussain, the leader of the Muslim League Party in the Assembly, G. M. Sayed leader of the Coalition Party and other political leaders. He gave offer to Sir Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah on 8th February 1946 to form the ministry; therefore, he was sworn as Chief Minister with a team of ministers, namely K. B. Mir Ghulam Ali Khan, Talpur, M. A. Khuhro, and Pir Illahi Bux. The Premier appealed to the Muslim electorate to teach lesson to those Muslims, namely Sayed and his group who had betrayed the Muslim League and joined hands with the Congress to impose their will.[54]

The Congress made immediate effort to move a no-confidence motion against the ministry—Patel, too, stayed in Karachi to give it guidance in this direction as he was certain that ministry would be toppled down. He opined that the Congress had to fight against heavy odds and he hoped that "with the combined efforts of Sayed and Moula Bux it will be possible to make a breach in the League ranks, which are none too solid.[55] Ministry resumed its session on 12th March 1946. The discussion on non-confidence motion moved by Prof. Ghanshyam Jethanand was postpone due to adjournment of the Assembly to March 16. The Sind League Assembly Party met to consider the question of an "all Party Government but before they could be given to the Congress Coalition Party, the matter should be referred to Jinnah, thus the Premier and Khuhro wired Jinnah: "Sayed and followers willing (to) join League provided ban (is) removed. Situation demands their entry. Muslim public (is) also anxious settlement. Kindly wire approval."[56] Sind League Assembly Party's discussions with Opposition Party were shelved due to the intervention of Jinnah and Liaquat Ali Khan—Jinnah's unequivocal verdict was: "Ban on Mr. Sayed and others in my opinion, cannot be removed. They must express regret and surrender unconditionally. There can be no terms or negotiations so long as Mr. Sayed remains in the enemy camp."[57] However, the no-confidence motion was defeated on 19th March by a margin of one vote and the ministry survived.

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[51] Letter of Wavell to Lord Pethick Lawrence, 5 February 1946,Op. cit. ,*Transfer of Power*, Vol. VI, pp.884-85
[52] *Star of India*, (Delhi), 4 February, 1946
[53] Ibid.
[54] *Deccan Times*, Madras,17February 1946
[55] Op. cit., *Unpublished Manuscript*, p. 162
[56] *Hindustan Times*, Delhi, 20 March,1946
[57] *Civil & Military Gazette*, Lahore, 20March l946

Patel became "sore at heart" as Mir Bandeh Ali could not sail in the same boat with the Congress in spite of the fact that the Congress had paid him the high price "for inducting him to come out of his party and join the Coalition, and the failure of Mir Bandeh Ali to stand by his promise" said Patel had "made the position of the coalition more vulnerable and ridiculous."[58] Patel treated the ministry in Sindh as a Mudie Ministry" supported by the European block and in fact, not the League Ministry.

In the month of July, ministry came under grave crisis as it had called the session on July 15; to elect members to the Constituent Assembly from Sind in view of the Cabinet Mission plan as the Muslim League had decided to enter the Constituent Assembly and the interim government. The Opposition had tabled the no-confidence motion and Nehru in his press conference declared that "it will be passed and the ministry will cease to exist."[59] On that day there were defection of two League MLAs, namely K. B. Fazal Mohammad Khan and Khan Sahib Sardar Khan from the League Assembly Party, and joined the Opposition Benches, therefore the Governor had to prorogue the assembly—the opposition strength stood at 31 while the government only 24.[60]

Nehru believed that the Governor must have acted in consultation with the Viceroy and both were therefore responsible for doings in Sind and wanted governor's removal. When Patel dine with Viceroy on the night of September 5, Sind affairs came under discussion. Patel accused the Governor of "partiality". The only response the Viceroy had "that Sind politics were very peculiar, and that I thought the Governor was doing his best in a very difficult position, he was bound to take the advice of his Chief Minister as far as possible."[61] Sind affairs came under discussion between the Governor of Sind, the Viceroy, and the Secretary of State for India. However, the Governor Mudie was in favour of dissolution as he "thinks that after a fresh election a more stable Government may be procurable. The crux of situation is that there are now 8 Muslim members who are against Muslim League Ministry and in present state of communal feeling those seats may go to Muslim Leaguers in a new election."[62] Ultimately, the Viceroy announced his final verdict in the matter: ". . . . promise of dissolution would be used by Premier, to influence voting on the no-confidence motion. I have told Mudie that a decision must be reached after result of voting on no-confidence motion is known."[63]

The Governor asked the Premier Ghulam Hussain to form a coalition government but he failed in his endeavours because the Congress refused to deal with him, except through Sayed, with whom the League refused to deal. Thus the Governor dissolved the assembly in the second week of September and announced the elections to be held in December 1946. After the resignation of the cabinet, the Governor reappointed Ghulam Hussain

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[58] Op. cit., *Unpublished Manuscript*, p. 164
[59] Ibid., p.165
[60] Ibid.
[61] Op. cit, *Transfer of Power*, Vol. VIII, pp. 418-19
[62] Ibid., pp. 429-30
[63] Ibid., p. 475

Hidayatullah and the same team of ministers to carry on the work till the next elections were held.

The action of the governor came under severe criticism by Nehru who said: "I do wish to say that the behaviour of Sind Ministry and the Governor amounts to a racket and a public scandal, and I am astonished that all this should have the support of higher authorities. This is setting a very bad example to the rest of India and my colleagues and I take the strongest exception to it."[64] The only response to Viceroy to Nehru's was that he could not deny that Sind politics were often un-edifying, however, the recent action taken by the Governor had his approval, and until the results of the coming elections, the premier Sir Ghulam Hussain must be given the team he required to carry on with the work of administration.[65]

The elections were announced to take place on 9th December 1946. G.M. Sayed approached Khwaja Abdul Majid, President of Muslim Majlis Delhi, for assistance and requested him to send in Sind trained workers who would carry the "gospel in the masses" during election campaign. He stated: "Muslim Jamiat, of which I have the honour to be Parliamentary Leader is contesting almost all the seats against the Muslim League, which were 35."[66] The Congress, as usual, lent full support to the nationalist Muslims and Sayed group by advancing large sums of money.

The League once again called on the support of student workers from Aligarh and the Punjab. It also had the invaluable help of Gilani Pirs of Multan who had large number of followers scattered throughout Sind. Maulana Abdul Qudus of Jamiat-ul- Ulema-e-Islam and Abdul Hameed Khan approached Sindhi Muslim leaders to forge unity and vote for the League candidates. Jinnah came to Sind to help the Muslim League in every way to win elections. He appealed the peoples of Sind to support official Muslim League candidates and should not be misled by anyone who had defied the League. He could not carry out his tour of whole province because he had to leave for London on His Majesty's Government invitation.[67] Jinnah asked Khuhro to go to Sayed's constituency and campaign for the League candidate, but he refused to do so because of his friendship with Sayed, which Khuhro believed had earned Jinnah's annoyance that cost him the premiership after the elections.[68]

G. M. Sayed and his group and the Muslim nationalists who were called as the "evil genius in Sind politics" received a crushing defeat at the hands of the Muslim League—Kazi Mohammad Akbar of Hyderabad defeated Sayed. The Muslim League won all the 35 Muslim seats and the Congress 20. Three Europeans and two members of Muslim Jamiat (an old party of Sayed) were returned successful. A close comparison between the votes secured by the League candidates and their rival show that the League had become a political party of the Muslim masses in Sind as it obtained 83% of the Muslims vote

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[64] Ibid., p. 562
[65] Ibid., p. 567
[66] Letter of G. M. Sayed to Khwaja Abdul Majid, October 1946, *Archives of Freedom Movement*, Vol. 386,p. 82
[67] *Dawn*, (Delhi), 26th & 27th November 1946
[68] Op. cit., *Unpublished Manuscript*, p. 170

compared to the 60% vote it had polled in January elections. The League observed "Victory Day" throughout Sind on 5th January 1947 for the success in elections. At Karachi Abdur Rab Nishtar and Malik Feroze Khan Noon addressed a public meeting. Jinnah sent congratulations to the Muslims of Sind for their brilliant victory they had achieved in the elections and added "if you remain united and disciplined and continue to work in the same spirit we will achieve Pakistan sooner than many people expect."[69]

Leagues success was a bitter sip for Sayed group and the Congress to swallow. More frustrated was Patel to see that in "Sind the Congress has lost all along the line" and added: "All the efforts and money spent have been sheer waste and we have purchased bitterness and enmity in the bargain. I hope this experience will put you on guard for the future and you would work on different lines hereafter."[70]

Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah was sworn as Premier of Sind on 3 January 1947 with the following team of ministers: M.A. Khuhro, Pir Illahi Bux, Pirzada Abdus Sattar, Ghulam Ali and Mir Bandeh Ali Khan Talpur. Mohammad Hashim Gazdar was elected Secretary of the Assembly Party. The Congress went out of the political scene in Sind, which gave difficult times to Muslim League since 1937 in two ways: firstly, it supported the Muslim nationalist Premier on agreeing to carry out Congress Programme and secondly when Muslim League formed full-fledged Ministry in 1942 it benefited itself from the conflict between the League Leadership and gave support to topple down the League Ministry.

The Governor reported to viceroy that before the dissolution of the Assembly in September 1946, when the League was weak and the Congress strong, the League was willing to form coalition government, but the Congress always refused. Now the position was reversed and if the League had offered a coalition the Congress would almost certainly have accepted unless the High Command had objected. "The League's present attitude", he said "is due partly. . . to the fact that they think they can get along without the Congress and partly to the great increase in bitterness brought about the events in Bihar and the UP (where Muslims had been butchered and large scale migration took place). Now they say that they will not agree to a coalition in Sind unless coalition governments are formed in the Congress provinces as well. This was also Jinnah's line when I saw him."[71] The Sindh Ministry then continued its existence without the Congress till 14th August 1947.

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[69] *Deccan Times*, (Madras), 12 January 1947
[70] Op. cit., D. A. Pirzada, p.137
[71] Op. cit., *Transfer of Power*, Vol. IX, p.489

Conclusion

The study of the Period of Sind Assembly from 1937 to 1947 is full of interesting developments. Sind Congress party being in Muslim majority Assembly tried to make use of the differences among Muslim politicians of Sind to be in command of Sind Assembly. Congress Party to fulfill its all India agenda in Sind helped Sind Congress in creating and exploiting political issues in their own benefit. Sind Congress supported all those Muslim politicians like Hidayatullah and Allah Bakhsh who could help them to create hurdles in the formation of Muslim League Ministries in Sindh.

There is ample evidence that both Congress and League through their local organisations tried to counter one another in Sind. At the time of 1946 elections Jinnah was able to create rapprochement between all Muslim leaders of Sind and bring them on the Platform of Muslim League from where they contested the February elections of 1946. But this did not end the dissent among the Muslim leaders. As a result Muslim League could not win all the Muslim seats. For the formation of Ministry Congress entered onto negotiations with other groups. But because of the Congress controlling attitude and personal rivalries of Muslim Leaders the Governor of Sindh dissolved the Sind Legislative Assembly and pronounced re-election in December 1946. But this time Muslim league won all the Muslim seats of Sindh Assembly and formed first time the solitary Muslim league Ministry.

Thus the sprite of creating and managing separate Muslim majority province of Sindh which was demonstrated during separation movement by the Muslims of Sindh could not continue after the elections of 1937. The ego, lust for power and short sightedness of Muslim leaders allowed Sind Congress to play the part of King Maker which they played very astutely in Sindh till 1946.