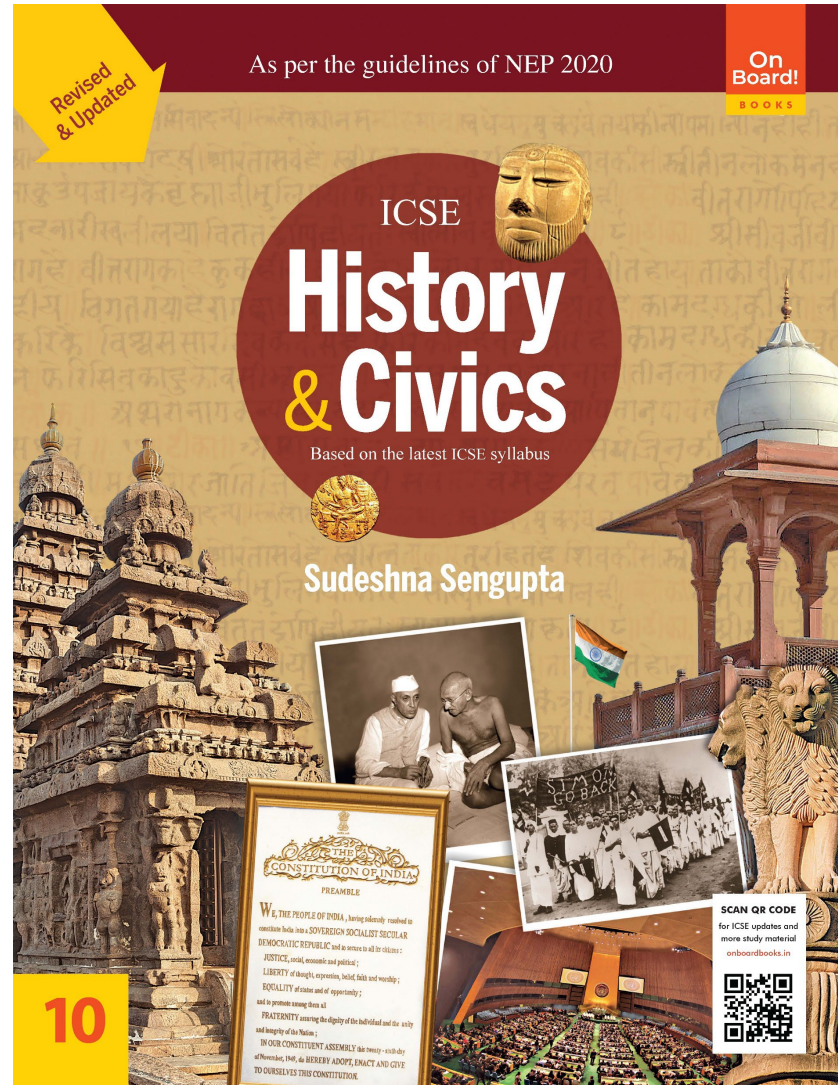


# On Board!

**BOOKS**

# ICSE History and Civics 10



# Section B: History

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# Chapter 5 Formation of the Muslim League and the Home Rule Movement

During the First War of Indian Independence in 1857, Hindus and Muslims together fought against the English. But the growth of the national movement with the formation of the Indian National Congress, led to the birth of communalism, creating a wedge between the two communities. Further, the Government followed the divide and rule policy diligently.

## **FACTORS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE FORMATION OF THE MUSLIM LEAGUE**

### **The policy of divide and rule encouraged by the British**

The policy of divide and rule was practised openly by the British after the First War of Independence. They accused the Muslims of having instigated the War and began to discriminate against them. This led to systematic alienation of the Muslims from the affairs of the country. With the rise of the Indian National Congress, the British began to favour the Muslims.

### **Backwardness of the Muslims in the fields of education and industry**

As the British administration neglected the Muslims after 1857, the Muslims in turn rejected western education and therefore lagged behind.

The Muslims also found themselves in an economically inferior position. Government jobs were not open to them.

## Indian history with a communal flavour

The interpretation of the country's history in schools and in textbooks fanned communal feelings. The rule of the Turks, Afghans and the Mughals was termed as the period of Muslim rule in India. Such a communal representation of history poisoned the minds of the ordinary people.

### Religious tinge to nationalism by the Radicals

The Radicals derived inspiration from religious traditions and regarded the scriptures as necessary tools for spiritual wisdom. The British deliberately misinterpreted this to their advantage. Invocation of the Goddess Kali, drawing inspiration from Rana Pratap and Shivaji who fought the Mughals, instilled fear of Hindu domination (if the British left) in the Muslim masses. The British officials played on this sentiment of the Muslims and encouraged them to keep their distance from the national movement.

### Role of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan and the Aligarh Movement

Sir Syed Ahmad Khan (1817–1898) was instrumental in fostering differences between the Hindus and the Muslims. The suppression of the Muslims following the Revolt of 1857 convinced Sir Syed that the only way to improve the lot of the Muslims was to profess their loyalty to the British Empire. Sir Syed knew that the economic backwardness of the Muslims was due to their rejection of western education. Thus, he introduced the study of western sciences and English. He even founded an organization, **the United India Patriotic Association**.

Sir Syed also established the **Mohammedan Anglo-Oriental Defence Association** in 1893. The main objectives of this organization were:

To place the opinion of the Muslims before the government and to protect their political rights.

To prevent political agitation from spreading among the Muslims.

To strengthen British rule in India.

## **EVENTS LEADING TO THE FORMATION OF THE MUSLIM LEAGUE**

The main events that led to the formation of the Muslim League are:

### **The Hindi-Urdu controversy**

In the United Provinces (now Uttar Pradesh), petitions to the offices and courts were submitted only in Urdu. The Hindus for long demanded a change in this procedure. Finally on 8 April 1900, the government gave instructions that petitions written in Hindi in the Devanagari script would also be accepted. The Muslims resented this and the controversy continued for months, as the rift between the two communities widened.

### **Partition of Bengal (1905)**

Both Hindus and Muslims opposed Lord Curzon's scheme for the Partition of Bengal in the initial stages. But the government won over the Muslims on the ground that the new province of Eastern Bengal and Assam would be a Muslim majority region. This fulfilled the desire of the Muslims for a separate state.

### **Simla Deputation**

Nawab Mohsin-ul-Mulk, a prominent politician and member of the Aligarh Movement, decided to send a deputation to Simla to meet the Viceroy. The deputation comprising 36 members with Sir Aga Khan as their leader submitted their demands to Lord Minto on 1 October 1906. These demands pleaded for the following:

- The representation given to the Muslim community should not be based on numerical strength but judged by its contribution in defending the British Empire in India.
- The Muslims should be granted the right of sending their own representatives through separate communal electorates. Muslims should be adequately represented in Municipal and District Boards and the Senates and Syndicates.
- There should be a greater number of Muslims in all government services.
- The deputation also asked help in founding a Muslim University.
- Competitive examinations for recruitment to the services should be abolished.

Lord Minto welcomed the Muslim Deputation. In it, he saw a solution to the problem of reducing the importance of the Congress as the 'voice of India'. Lord Minto, following the unwritten policy of 'divide and rule', assured the deputation that the interests of the Muslims would be safeguarded.

### **Morley-Minto reforms**

Lord Morley was the Secretary of State for India and Lord Minto was the Viceroy. The Morley-Minto reforms gave the Muslims separate representation in the central and provincial legislatures. Also, the system of separate electorates was introduced. It was clearly aimed at deepening the rift between the two communities.

### **FORMATION OF THE MUSLIM LEAGUE**

The anti-partition agitation was gaining ground. The fear of being ruled by the Hindus, in case the national movement succeeded and the belief that the Congress was a predominantly Hindu organization, led Muslims to aspire for a central organization of their own. In a meeting, the creation of a central Mohammedan association to further the cause of the Muslims in India was proposed. This proposal was accepted and on 30 December 1906, the All-India Muslim League was established.



## Objectives and impact of the Muslim League on national politics

The objectives of the Muslim League were as follows:

- To promote, amongst the Muslims in India, feelings of loyalty to the British government.
- To protect and advance the political rights of the Muslims of India and to represent their needs and aspirations to the government.
- To prevent any feeling of hostility towards the other communities of India.

### Impact

The foundation of the Muslim League led to a divide between the Hindus and the Muslims. The interests of the Muslims differed from those of the Hindus. Further, it was believed that Muslims would suffer if they joined the Hindus in their political agitation. The Hindu-Muslim disunity affected the national movement.

### Early years of the Muslim League

The first annual session of the Muslim League was held in Karachi on 29 December 1907. The principles of the League were laid down in a 'Green Book', which included the constitution of the organization, written by Maulana Mohammad Ali. Its goals at this stage were to protect the liberties of the Muslims in India, educate them on governmental policies, avoid violence and keep the Muslims away from the Congress.

### ALIENATION OF THE MUSLIMS BY THE BRITISH

The following reasons led to the alienation of the Muslims by the British.

**International events** Events taking place outside India drew the League closer to the Congress. During the First World War, the Turks were badly defeated by the Allies. The attitude of Britain towards Turkey was very harsh. The Caliph was the Turkish ruler and the religious head of the Muslims. The Muslims were enraged at the humiliation and decided to support the Congress in its demand for self-government in India.

**National events** With the annulment of the Partition of Bengal in 1911, the Muslims felt that they had been cheated. The Ali brothers were arrested for supporting Turkey's entry in the War against the British. Muhammad Ali Jinnah, at the time, a staunch Congress leader and a nationalist, wanted the League to come closer to the Congress. He was instrumental in spreading nationalist ideas.

**The changed objectives of the League** With the change in the political attitude of the members of the League, there grew a desire for unity with the Congress. At the annual session of the Muslim League held in Lucknow in 1913, the Congress ideal of self-government was adopted. This commonality of interests brought a positive aspect to the relationship between the Congress and the League. The Indian National Congress welcomed this change.

**A compromise between the Early Nationalists and the Radicals** The unity between the two factions of the Congress was brought about by the release of Bal Gangadhar Tilak in 1914. He bridged the gulf between the Early Nationalists and the Radicals. Decision to launch the Home Rule League Annie Besant and Bal Gangadhar Tilak decided to launch the Home Rule Movement in order to establish Home Rule Leagues in India. This decision was primarily taken because British were unwilling to grant even small concessions despite their lofty promises and full-hearted cooperation from Indians in the War.

## THE LUCKNOW PACT

The joint scheme of political reforms drawn up was finally adopted by Congress and Muslim League at Lucknow in December 1916. This came to be called as the Lucknow Pact.

**Terms of the Lucknow Pact** The main features of the Lucknow Pact were as follows:

- The Council of the Secretary of State for India shall be abolished. The Secretary of State for India would be assisted by two Under-Secretaries, one of whom should be an Indian.
- Half of the members of the Viceroy's Executive Council shall be Indians elected by the elected members of the Imperial Legislative Council.
- Four-fifths of the members of the Imperial Legislative Council shall be elected. One-third of these shall be Muslims elected by a separate electorate.
- The government of India shall not ordinarily interfere in the local affairs of the province.
- Except in military and foreign affairs, the Imperial Legislative Council shall have full control over the government of India.
- Four-fifths of the members of the provincial Legislative Councils shall be elected directly by the people.
- The provincial Legislative Council shall have full control over the provincial government.
- No Legislative Council shall proceed with any bill if three-fourths of the members of any community are opposed to it.
- Executive officers in India shall have no judicial powers. Members of the judiciary shall be placed under the control of the highest court of that province.

## Importance of the Pact

The Lucknow Pact was hailed as a noteworthy achievement in many respects.

**Hindu-Muslim unity** The problem of representation of the two communities in the various legislatures was dealt with. The Congress compromised with the principle of weightage and separate electorates. The Muslim League was satisfied as it gained all that it had demanded for.

**Early Nationalists-Radicals reunited** The Lucknow Pact brought the two factions of the Congress together, strengthening the organization and bringing the best minds of the country together after eight long years.

**Demoralised the government** The Congress-League alliance and the coming together of the two factions of the Congress, unnerved the government.

**Growth of self-governing institutions** With the outbreak of the First World War, the national leaders believed that there would be changes in the constitution of the government of India. To pacify the Indians, the government made the August Declaration of 1917 providing for the gradual development of self-governing institutions in the country.

## Drawbacks of the Lucknow Pact

- The Congress lost its secular nature and future events made it difficult for the Congress to control any communal disturbance in the country.
- The pact provided for Muslim representation in the Council.
- The pact also provided for a Communal Veto in legislation.
- The Congress was determined to win over the League at any cost for the sake of national unity.
- All decisions were made by the leaders of the two organizations, paying little attention to the wishes and feelings of the masses.

## HOME RULE MOVEMENT

While the Early Nationalists were busy forging unity among the different political parties in India, the Home Rule Movement was beginning in all earnestness.

### Factors leading to the formation of the Home Rule

**Implications of the First World War** Though the First World War was fought for the establishment of democracy and sovereignty of the people, the British showed no inclination to grant the same to their colonies, especially India. Not even self-rule within the dominion was granted. Hence, leaders like Tilak and Besant decided to form the Home Rule League in India.

**Role of Annie Besant** The idea of starting a Home Rule League originated from Annie Besant. She was new to the political field but her activities at the Theosophical Society made her well known in India. She realized that no real improvement could be effected without raising the political status of India. She championed the cause of 'building up India into a mighty self-governing community.'

**Role of Bal Gangadhar Tilak** Tilak set himself to the task of bringing the two wings of the Congress together. He knew that for any political action to succeed, Congress support was necessary.

### The Home Rule Leagues

Annie Besant formally inaugurated the Home Rule League in September 1916. Within a few days, branches were formed at Bombay, Kanpur, Allahabad, Benaras and Madras, among other places.

### Objectives and programme

Home Rule as the very words suggest means 'self-government'. The two leaders wished to attain self-government within the British Empire by constitutional means, and to educate and mould public opinion in the country to attain their goal. The principles of swaraj, swadeshi, and national education were promoted for self-government.

## Government response and impact

The government soon realized the intensity of the movement. It stated that there should be reform providing for more Indian members to the local bodies and the legislature as well, to keep the Early Nationalists happy and the Home Rule leaders in check. Repressive measures, however, also came into force.

Impact of the movement was remarkable as:

- Common people became a part of the movement and spread it to the villages.
- The Home Rule Movement created organizational links between town and the country which were to prove beneficial in later years.
- Both the Congress and the Muslim League considered the proposal of passive resistance.
- To control the situation, the Secretary of State Montague made the historic August Declaration in the House of Commons.

### THE AUGUST DECLARATION (1917)

The government was finding it difficult to cope with the national awakening created by the Home Rule Movement and India was united as never before. Under such conditions, the government had to placate the national leaders.

On 20 August 1917, Edwin Montague, the Secretary of State for India made an historic announcement: 'The policy of His Majesty's Government with which the Government of India are in complete accord, is that of the increasing association of Indians in every branch of administration, and the gradual development of self-governing institutions with a view to the progressive realization of Responsible Government in India as an integral part of the British Empire.'

The crucial expression was 'responsible government' which was hailed by all the nationalists.

## Features

- More Indians would be appointed in every branch of administration.
- Indians could seek employment in the higher services.
- The racial bar, which excluded Indians from the King's Commissions in the Army, was also removed.
- All provincial and district bodies would have leaders elected from among the locals.
- All important decisions would also be taken by majority vote.
- There would be limited interference in the day-to-day administration.
- The administration of the provinces would be independent, while the central government would remain responsible to the British Parliament through the Secretary of State of India.

## Reaction

The Early Nationalists welcomed the declaration but the Radicals felt that it fell short of expectations. As the Muslims had been granted reserved seats in the Legislative Councils, the other minorities like the non-Brahmans in Madras and the Sikhs of the Punjab also wanted exclusive rights. They wanted special representation either through separate electorates or through reservation of seats in joint electorates.

## **MONTAGUE-CHELMSFORD REFORMS (GOVERNMENT OF INDIA ACT 1919)**

The report on Indian constitutional reforms, known as Montague-Chelmsford Report or more briefly as Mont-Ford Report, for which the national leaders had been waiting for a long time was finally published in July 1918 and it received royal assent in 1919.

## Provisions

### **Bicameral legislature**

- The centre would have two houses – the Legislative Assembly and the Council of State.
- The Council of State would have 60 members, of which 33 would be elected and 27 nominated by the Governor General.
- The Legislative Assembly would have 145 members of which 104 would be elected, and the rest nominated.
- The term of the Council of State would be 5 years and that of the Legislative Assembly 3 years.
- The Central Legislature could make laws for the whole of India, but the Governor General's sanction was required for all laws.

### **Dyarchy in provincial government**

- The subjects to be dealt with by the provincial governments were divided into – Transferred and Reserved.
- The 'reserved' subjects were administered by the Governor with the help of the Executive Council while the 'transferred' subjects, with the help of the ministers responsible to the legislature.
- The 'reserved' subjects included law and order, finance, army, police, etc. The 'transferred' subjects included education, public health, and local self-government, agriculture, etc.
- The size of the provincial Legislative Councils was enlarged. While 70% of the members of the provincial legislatures were to be elected, about 30% were to be nominated by the Governor.
- There would be separate electorates for Legislative Assembly, the Council of State and Legislative Councils.



## Powers of the Secretary of State

- The powers of the Secretary of State to control the Government of India with regard to the transferred subjects were reduced to a minimum.
- The Secretary of State would be concerned with safeguarding the administration of central subjects and matters of imperial concern.

## Criticism

The Government of India Act was condemned by the Congress and the Muslim League.

- The financial arrangement was faulty.
- Under the new Act, the British government only pretended to grant political power to Indians. In reality, the real power still remained with the British.
- The distribution of subjects between 'reserved' and 'transferred' was at times illogical. It continued and worsened the communal issue.

In the light of such defects, the Congress and the League found the reforms 'disappointing and unsatisfactory'. Sensing the resentment of the Indians, the British government passed new acts to suppress the opposition, marking a new phase in the struggle for freedom.

## To Remember

**Factors responsible for the formation of the Muslim League** – The policy of divide and rule encouraged by the British, backwardness of the Muslims in the fields of education and industry, Indian history with a communal flavour, religious tinge to nationalism by the Assertive Nationalists, the role of Syed Ahmad Khan and the Aligarh Movement.

**Events leading to the formation of the Muslim League** – The Hindi-Urdu controversy, the Partition of Bengal in 1905, the Aligarh politics, deputation to Lord Minto, deputation welcomed by Lord Minto, Morley-Minto Reforms granted special privileges to the Muslims, separate electorates granted.

**Formation of the Muslim League** – Nawab Salimullah convened a meeting at Dacca, on 30 December 1906, the All-India Muslim League was established, British branch of the Muslim League was established in London in 1908.

**Objectives and impact** – To promote feelings of loyalty to the British among the Muslims, to protect and advance the political rights of the Muslims, to prevent the rise of hostility among the Muslims towards any other community. A divide between the Hindus and the Muslims, British exploited the divide to their advantage, it weakened the national movement, the League undermined the importance of the Congress.

**Role of the League in early years** – First annual session in Karachi on 29 December 1907, Sir Sultan Mohammed Shah, the Aga Khan III, first Honorary President of the Muslim League, second session in Amritsar in 1908, nationalist Muslims like Rashid Ahmed and Habibur Rahman stayed away, Jinnah joined the Muslim League in 1913.

**Muslim alienation from the British** – Annulment of the Partition of Bengal, war against Turkey, regarded as a breach of trust by the Muslim League, political attitude changed, Lucknow Pact or the Congress-League Accord in 1916 saw the Congress and the League coming closer.

**Circumstances leading to the Pact** – International events, national events, objectives of the League changed, Compromise between the Early Nationalists and the Radicals.

**The Lucknow Pact** – Essential features: Council of the Secretary of State abolished, Executive Council to have more Indians, Muslims to be elected by a separate electorate, provinces to be autonomous, role of members of a community in the Legislative Council important, separation of the judiciary from the executive, Importance of the Pact: Hindu-Muslim unity, Early Nationalists-Radicals united, demoralised the government, growth of self-governing institutions, Drawbacks of the Pact: The policy of separate electorates continued, Muslim representation in excess of the population, communal veto introduced, compromise by the Congress, wishes of the masses not considered.

**Factors leading to the Home Rule Movement** – Role of Annie Besant: Self-governing institutions, Role of Bal Gangadhar Tilak: reorganized the nationalistic party, implications of the First World War.

**Objectives and programme of the Home Rule Movement** – Attain self-government within the British Empire, principles of swaraj, swadeshi and national education promoted, Influencing masses through stirring speeches and writings in the weeklies.

**Government response and impact** – Repressive measures taken, passive resistance by the Congress and the Muslim League, new life to the national movement by the Home Rule Leagues, people from small towns and villages were brought in, to cope with the situation, the August Declaration promised 'responsible government'.

**The August Declaration, 1917** – The Secretary of State Edwin Montague made the declaration on 20 August 1917 that there would be self-governing institutions in India wherein the actual power would reside, the aim was to set up a 'responsible government' in India. Basic features: More Indians in every branch of administration, provincial and district bodies to have elected leaders among the locals, administration in the provinces to be independent, central government responsible to the British Parliament, Reaction to The Declaration: Moderates welcomed it, Besant made a plea for self-government, other minorities wanted exclusive rights like the Muslims.

**The Government of India Act, 1919** – It was based on the Montague-Chelmsford Reforms, It aimed at: Bicameral legislature, dyarchy in provincial government, powers of the Secretary of State, Criticism of the Act: Financial arrangement, distribution of subjects illogical, intensified the communal issue.

**Thank You**