

MOUNTBATTEN AND “MOTH-EATEN PAKISTAN:” A CASE STUDY OF THE PARTITION OF PUNJAB

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Abstract: Lord Mountbatten as Governor General of India was assigned to wrap up the British imperial structure and undertake partition. He held meetings with the leaderships of both Congress and Muslim League but failed to convince them. Mountbatten then reached an understanding with Jawaharlal Nehru secretly and formulated the 3rd June Plan which was approved by the British government for the partition of India along with the partition of Punjab and Bengal. Two boundary commissions under the chairmanship of Sir Cyril Radcliffe were formed to demarcate the boundaries of Punjab and Bengal. He was assisted in his work by the four High Court judges from each of both the provinces. The commissions within a six week time submitted their reports on 9 August 1947. Despite commitments, Mountbatten not only influenced the commissions but also offered changes to please Nehru. After the announcement of Boundary Award on 16 August 1947, the two major communities of Muslims and Sikhs in Punjab totally rejected it. While in Bengal, the reaction was comparatively mild. Punjab became the hub of communal tension because Mountbatten had given a truncated and a moth-eaten Pakistan and Jinnah called it an unjust, perverse and incomprehensible award. This article will mainly focus on Mountbatten's role in the unjust division of Punjab which caused massacre, migration and Kashmir and water issues in future. The current research focuses the question that the way Pakistani Leadership blamed Mountbatten for his decisive role, was he really responsible for all the happenings?

Key Words: Mountbatten, Boundary Commission, Radcliffe Awards, Congress, Muslim League, Punjab, Communal Riots

INTRODUCTION

Indian struggle for independence started with the 'Quit India Movement' of Indian National Congress (INC). The British government during World War II tried to keep the Indian colony intact for exploiting its economic resources and for using it as a recruiting ground. It sent the missions of Cripps Mission (1942) and Wavell Plan (1945), and ensured the Indians full autonomy after the war. Those proposals were, however, rejected by both the INC and All India Muslim League (AIML). INC rejected the "Two-Nation" theory of the Muslims and claimed itself to be the sole representative of all communities including Muslims on the basis of Indian nationalism. It rejected the partition of India and the person of M. K. Gandhi thought it be the vivisection of Mother India. On the other hand, Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah and other Muslim leadership considered AIML as the sole representative party of the Muslims of India and played politics along the lines of Two-Nation theory. They demanded a separate homeland based on the five predominantly Muslim provinces of Bengal, Punjab, Sindh, North West Frontier and Baluchistan.

On this occasion, Labour Party won the elections and Attlee became the Prime Minister of Britain in July 1945. It immediately sent Lord Wavell to India as the new Governor-General with a task to tackle the post-WW II situation. At this juncture, the economic situation was very worse than expected because 3 million people were killed by famine in Bengal which was no act of nature but Britain engineered it during the closing years of WWII (Hickel, 2022). On the political front, the constitutional deadlock between INC and AIML convinced the British authorities to hold fresh

election in India. Both the major parties of India participated in the 1945-46 elections with their specific manifestoes of 'undivided India' and 'achieving Pakistan.' After the elections, Congress though won the Central Assembly seats in the non-Muslim constituencies but it defied its claim of representing both Hindus and Muslims through not nominating any candidate to the thirty Muslim seats (Rahman, 2008) while in the provincial elections, out of 94 candidates in the Muslim provinces, Congress could amass victory only on 23 seats (Queshi, 1946). Muslim League as a Muslim representative body on the hand got a monumental victory on all the thirty Muslim seats of Central Assembly but could capture 425 out of 441 Muslim seats in the provincial assemblies' elections (Bakshi, 1990). Thus, the total percentage of Muslim League victory on Muslim allocated seats after the provincial elections was 85% percent (Aziz K. K., 1987).

However, a deadlock continued between both INC and AML over the formation of government and any rapprochement seemed almost impossible. Political uncertainty and the deteriorating circumstances brought India on the verge of a civil war and the sharp communal frenzy caused the eruption of riots in Calcutta, Noakhali and Bihar etc. The uncontrollable situation compelled Lord Wavell to propose his own 'Breakup Plan' and asked the British government for announcing a withdrawal date from India and for letting both the communities to settle their scores through agreement. The British government rejected the plan for withdrawal from India and demanded the leaders of political parties to agree over independence plan (Chawla, 2009) because it believed to retain the Indian colony for another 10 years and therefore, had sent Cabinet Mission plan in 1946 which was again rejected by both INC and AML. The British then replaced Wavell with Mountbatten as Governor General whose task was to try for keeping India united.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Nehru: A Tryst with Destiny of Stanley Wolpert is a biography of Nehru as a political leader who had close relationship with Edwina Mountbatten and who was liked by Mountbatten himself as the most flexible leader of India as compared to Gandhi and Jinnah who attracted his hatred. In this account, Wolpert also reveals Nehru's keen interest in the state of Kashmir than in the division of Punjab and Bengal, and the late announcement of Boundary Commission by Mountbatten which were presented to him on 9 August 1947 (Wolpert, 1996). This valuable book, however, has very little information about the riots in Punjab and Bengal, and also about the division of India.

H. V. Hudson in his book, *The Great Divide* covers British colonial rule and discuss the inevitability of partition as there were religious, ethnic and linguistic differences and no inter-communal harmony between Hindus and Muslims. The author holds that the British government and Lord Mountbatten remained neutral as much as possible during the partition of India. He calls Radcliffe impartial with regard to the state of Kashmir, the District of Ferozpur and denies the happening of any changes in the last moment (Hudson, 1985). The book though offers a deep study of the period but purely from the British perspective.

Alan Campbell Johnson who as a secretary of Mountbatten wrote the book, *Mission with Mountbatten* and claims that Mountbatten was the only person who found the solution of Indian Problem and credit him with smooth transition (Johnson, 1997). This book is also an authentic work on the period but like all other British historians, Alan book also lacks objectivity as it is again written from the British standpoint.

The Emergence of Pakistan, an account by Chaudhri Muhammad Ali is also a very interesting book on India's partition because he was witness to the partition process as well as a member of the steering committee that conducted the administrative partition. The book highlights the Radcliffe Awards controversy for being changed on direction of Mountbatten in the last moment of the partition (Ali C. M., 1973). The author builds a strong case related to the partition controversy from Pakistan's standpoint.

METHODOLOGY

In this research paper, descriptive, analytical and partially narrative methods are used. Both primary and secondary sources are utilized for the conduct of this research. This research is based

on primary and secondary sources which include books, journals, newspapers, magazines, reports, speeches, statements, unpublished dissertations and data available online on internet.

Mountbatten's Arrival in India

Mountbatten though was hesitant first to accept the viceroyalty of India but after assurance of full support from the British parliament and no opposition in India by the Prime Minister. The situation during this time deteriorated in India. The British which previously rejected Wavell's proposal for British withdrawal accepted Mountbatten's proposal and was given complete authority to act on his own with a surety of British Cabinet backing. Mountbatten accepted the office on 11 February 1947 with the condition that the date of withdrawal, announced by Atlee must be changed from the middle of 1948 to 1st June 1948 (Wavel, 1974). Government support of Mountbatten was so strong and influential that the whole Cabinet was shuffled on his wishes, for instance: Earl of Listowel was replaced with Pathick Lawrence as Secretary of State for India, General Ismay became chief of the viceroy's staff, Sir Eric Mievile was made as principal secretary, Mr. George Abell was appointed as private secretary, Captain Brockman R. N. became deputy private secretary and Allen Campbell Johnson was officiated as press attaché (Menon, 1957).

At this juncture, Lord Wavell was in London but not given any hint of "an expected appointment" (Ziegler, 2001). Rumors about Wavell's replacement with Mountbatten on the request of Nehru were also in the air as he blamed Wavell for supporting the partition stance of Muslims. However, Lord Mountbatten or any other British officials were not wishing any partition (Lapierre, 1982).

It was on 20th February 1947 when Prime Minister Attlee issued a statement to transfer power to Indians not later than June 1948 (Menon, 1957, p. 861). In this regard Mountbatten was appointed as Governor General of India but before leaving England, he received instructions from Attlee on 18 March 1947 objectifying his mission to India with obtaining a unitary Government in British India and the Indian states which should operate possibly within the British Commonwealth through the medium of the Constituent Assembly, as proposed by the Cabinet Mission Plan. Mountbatten was told about the flexibility of the date of power transfer but he was instructed to set his eyes on the 1st June 1948 (Menon, 1957, p. 861).

Mountbatten arrived in Delhi on 22 March and held discussion with Lord Wavell the same day regarding the Indian situation. Lord Wavell suggested that partition though a final solution and if our efforts of transferring power to united fails, the situation would be very crucial. As an alternative he presented his own Breakdown Plan of British withdrawal into phases province by province, for instance, to vacate women and children first and then the army (Joshi, 2006).

Mountbatten's first meeting with Indian leaders like Nawab of Bhopal, Mahraja of Bikaner, Liaquat Ali Khan and Pandit Nehru took place in the swearing ceremony day on 24 March 1947 (Mansregh, 1982). However, the friendship of Mountbatten and Nehru started from Singapore where they met for the first time on 18 March 1946 (Durgadas, 2004). This friendship set a new example of civility in Anglo-Indian relations (Tenzelmann, 2007). Although a meeting could not take place between Mountbatten and Jinnah on the ceremony day but he asked Nehru about Jinnah, which he replied that Jinnah is though financially successful but as lawyer mediocre. He is not sincere to Islam or Pakistan but his separatist stance is only for the sake of wining easy attention and secular power (Joshi, 2006, p. 11). He further told that Jinnah is not in favor of holding meetings, answering questions or making progressive statement. Later on in April, Mountbatten met Jinnah with Nehru's created image of him in mind and called the "most frigid, haughty and disdainful" (Wolpert, 2006). During meeting, Jinnah told Mountbatten about the only solution of India in the establishment of Pakistan and the division of defense forces (Menon, 1957, p. 176) but Mountbatten refused the partition of India and called Pakistan a 'sheer madness' and Jinnah's two-nation theory a flawed theory because partition on the basis of religion would necessitate the division of Punjab and Bengal along religious lines. Jinnah protested by saying that Mountbatten does not understand that Punjab and Bengal are nations. They are Punjabi and Bengali first and then Hindus or Muslims. Their partition would cause endless bloodshed and trouble (Lapierre, 1982, p. 39) and if something can bring peace to India is a complete Pakistan (Mansregh, 1982, pp. 137-39). Thus, this first meeting

could not materialize in a close relationship in future and Mountbatten developed a dislike for Jinnah by exclaiming after their first meeting that “My God, he was cold!” (Ziegler, 2001, p. 367). Mountbatten task in India was to grant independence by avoiding partition and to make it as member of Commonwealth (Ali R. U., 2009). However, India was on the verge of a civil war at this point as a result of sharp communal division. In his first personal report to Atlee on 31 March 1947, Mountbatten wrote about the division of Indian Cabinet on communal lines with less chance of finding an agreed solution for the future of India. Each party having its own solution is not ready to consider the solution of the other. He asked for a quick action before the eruption of a civil war (Tenzelmann, 2007, p. 148). Beside that the mounting pressure particularly of Congress introduced a new momentum in the transfer of power in August 1947, ten months before the scheduled 1948 date. Abul Kalam Azad himself believed on the failures of centralized and unitary government in India (Azad, 1960).

After having six unsuccessful meetings with Jinnah from 5-10 April 1947 about the unity of India (Dar, 2008), Mountbatten reached a conclusion (Lapierre, 1982, p. 123) that Mr Jinnah's cooperation could be obtained only by accepting the partition and Pakistan (a truncated version if necessary) but less than that Jinnah cannot be convinced to change his position and without him, unity could only be imposed on India by force of arms (Ziegler, 2001, p. 371). Mountbatten also reiterated that the acceptance of his Jinnah's demand would mean the acceptance of Congress demand for the partition of Punjab and Bengal (Lapierre, 1982, p. 123).

By mid-April 1947, two possible plans for the transfer of power of India were under consideration (Menon, 1957, p. 243). First was Plan Union or united India which was basically Cabinet Mission Plan of 1946 with slight alteration and the second was Plan Balkan or partitioned India which presented a “truncated Pakistan” (Dar, 2008). In this regard a top secret meeting was held in the Viceroy's house on 19 April 1947 which was only attended by his personal staff. It approved Plan Balkan that would allow the provinces to join the present Constituent Assembly of India or set up a new Constituent Assembly of Pakistan (Menon, 1957, p. 534). The province of Punjab and the province of Bengal and Assam were given the option to decide in favor of Partition (Menon, 1957, pp. 176-177). Mountbatten also called the Governors' Conference on 15 and 16 April 1947 for telling the method of power transfer (Menon, 1957, p. 242). Plan Balkan was put forward for comments and discussion which was then revised after the opinion of all the eleven Governors or their representatives. The actual plan was only shown to Nehru and Jinnah by the Viceroy's personal Secretary Sir Eric Mievile (Hodson, 1985). Nehru expressed satisfaction with the plan (Menon, 1957, p. 534) but Jinnah strongly opposed the division of Punjab and Bengal saying “that is your scheme, not mine (Ziegler, 2001, p. 387).

The Congress leaders also demanded the division of Punjab and Bengal on communal basis like the division of the rest of subcontinent while Jinnah considered it “a sinister move actuated by spite and bitterness” (Menon, 1957, p. 355) and rejected a ‘moth-eaten Pakistan’ (Waheed Ahmed, 2000) which will lead “to terrible consequences, confusion and bloodshed” (Ali R. U., 2009, p. 86) and would definitely create more difficulties for the British government than any other issue because it has to cut all the other nine provinces in a similar way (Menon, 1957, p. 355). He told that “Punjabis and Bengalis would hate to see the unified territories of their provinces to be split up (Ali R. U., 2009, pp. 86-87). Mountbatten and Congress wanted to put Jinnah in an awkward position and his acceptance of partition of Punjab and Bengal would attract violent reaction from the Muslims of those provinces which possibly would result in the division of Muslim League and which Jinnah would never want to afford (Zaidi, 2000).

Beside Jinnah, the Governors of both the Punjab and Bengal rejected the partition of division of their provinces (Ali R. U., 2009, p. 87). Hussain Shaheed Suhrawardi, the last chief minister of Bengal proposed “a sovereign, independent and undivided Bengal in a divided India” (Menon, 1957, p. 355) with a grant of dominion status to the province.

Despite all considerations, reservations and opposition, Jinnah found no choice but to accept plan Balkan but he wanted the distribution of assets and the just share of Pakistan as long as the British ruled India (Jinnah's statement on partition, 1947). Regarding the exchange of population sooner or

later, he asked the respective governments of Pakistan and India to carry it out effectively. He insisted on the division of the armed forces on communal lines in order to prevent any dispute among the troops of the two absolutely free, independent and sovereign states (Menon, 1957, p. 355). Mountbatten and Congress both rejected the partition of the armed forces (Aziz Q.-u.-D. , 1997). Mountbatten knew it very well that the joint military force would keep the newly born state Pakistan at the mercy of India and it would be easy to dominate the two dominions even after independence.

Mountbatten sent his chief of staff, H. L. Ismay and George Abell to London on 2 May 1947 to get approval for the plan from British Cabinet which took only a week to amend and accept the partition plan and returned it by 10th May. The plan demonstration time was decided at 17th May but Mountbatten disclosed it to Nehru (Ziegler, 2001, pp. 378-379) during his trip to Simla. After strong reservations from Nehru, the text of the plan was reformulated (Menon, 1957, pp. 357-358) and was then again sent to England for approval. Beside Muslim League, the new plan was also opposed by the members of Viceroy's Executive Council, Ismay and George Abell. Still Mountbatten threatened to resign if the Cabinet failed to accept the new plan but the Cabinet approved it in a five minutes meeting (Menon, 1957, p. 558).

Mountbatten returned India with an approved plan on 31 May 1947 and two days later he convened a meeting of Muslim League, Congress and Sikh leaders to share the plan with them and sought their final verdict latest by midnight. Jinnah's intention of taking the plan to his party for final decision was rejected by Mountbatten, threatening him with the cost of Pakistan for his delaying tactics (Johnson, 1997, pp. 102-103). A White Paper was issued on 3 June 1947 which gave all the details of the Plan. Both Congress and Muslim League agreed to divide the country. Jinnah was dissatisfied with it but he had no choice other than to accept it as a "compromise or a settlement" (Wolpert, 2006, p. 152). Mountbatten also revealed the same day that power was to be transferred by 15 August 1947 - ten months earlier than the stipulated deadline of June 1948, and just 10 weeks (72 days) later from 3 June 1947 (Tenzelmann, 2007, p. 171), power was to be transferred to the dominions of India and Pakistan.

The 3rd June Plan favored the division of the Sub continent into India and Pakistan, the latter being truncated on the basis of contiguous areas' of population, referendum in the North West Frontier Province (NWFP) and Assam, two Constituent Assemblies in case of non-acceptance of the existing one, division of the armed forces assets, Boundary Commission in the Punjab and Bengal to demarcate the boundaries on the basis of majorities of Muslims and Hindus and to take into consideration 'other factors,' anticipated date for transferring power around a date in 1947, independent Indian states which will accede to one or the other Dominion and the granting of Dominion status to India and Pakistan. Besides, the Plan also contained the division of the Legislative Assemblies of Punjab and Bengal into two sections, one for the Muslim majority districts and the other for rest of the province. Their choice in favor of partition of the province (s) will decide the joining of an appropriate Constituent Assembly. Punjab, Bengal and Sylhet will hold elections to send representatives to the Constituent Assemblies (Mansregh, 1982, pp. 89-94).

The uniqueness of Punjab and Bengal province was its Muslim population, 56 % and 54% respectively but at the same time a huge distinctive minority population also existed there. On the insistence of INC, a debate in the Provincial Assembly was agreed to decide the division or the partitioning of the provinces. Both Bengal and the Punjab Assemblies voted for Pakistan which necessitated the demarcation of their boundaries. In Punjab, the Assembly met on 23 June for the decision and decided with 91 votes as compared to 77 to join Pakistan. The Muslim majority areas of West Punjab decided by 69 to 27 votes against the partition of the province while East Punjab casted 50 votes in favor of the partition and 22 against it (Menon, 1957, p. 388).

After the decision by the assemblies, separate Boundary Commissions were to be setup by the Viceroy for both Punjab and Bengal and Assam-Sylhet (Hudson, 1985, p. 346). It was also decided later on that the Bengal Boundary Commission will also deal Assam (Menon, 1957). Jinnah was in favor of three nominated persons from United Nations Organization (UNO) or three Law Lords from Britain and three expert assessors from each side of partitioned province but it Mountbatten

rejected it (Menon, 1957, pp. 320-329). Finally two separate boundary commissions were setup, consisting 4 members (two from Muslim League and two from Congress) -one Hindu and one Sikh for Punjab with high judicial standing was proposed (Quraishi, 1995). Finally the two Boundary Commissions were announced on 30 June 1947 with Sir Cyril Radcliff, the Judge from Britain as the joint Chairman of both the Commissions. He though never set a foot before on Indian soil but now as an arbitrator he had to decide its geographical boundaries. In the given circumstances of communal disorder, administrative failure, vastness of area, technicality of issues and limited available time of 40 days, it was not an easy task. Radcliffe arrived in India on 8 July 1947, almost thirty six days before partition. He later on confessed later that he could have done a better job if he had been given two years (Roberts, 1994). To assist Radcliff, Christopher Beaumont (Indian Political Service) was appointed as Secretary and V. D. Iyer as Assistant Secretary (Gupta, 2002). It was decided that the provincial boundaries of the Muslim majority districts were to be decided according to the 1941 census figures. Radcliffe setup his headquarter in Delhi. The Bengal Commission sat at Calcutta from 16 to 24 of July and again from 4 to 6 August 1947. The Punjab Commission remained in session at Lahore from 21 to 31 July 1947 (Golant, 1975).

Punjab (the land of five rivers) situated in the north western side of Indian subcontinent. It was the fifth largest province of India with an area of 136,330 sq miles and population 28,418,819, out of which Muslims were 16,217,742, Hindus were 6,301,737, Sikhs were 3,757,401 and Scheduled Castes were 1,592,320 (Mitra, 1947) with a density of 287 persons per sq mile (Chauhan, 1995). Punjab was the most important province and communal issue was so sharp because it was developed along communal lines with communal harmony among different communities (Muslim 57%, Sikh 13%, Hindu 22%) (Mitra, 1947, p. 3). It never experienced Sikh-Muslim or Sikh-Hindu communal riots (Moon, 1961, pp. 29-30). The three religions were fairly well spread in Punjab; the Muslims majority was in the west and North and the Hindu and Sikhs in the South and East (Close, 1997). The Unionist Party as an inter-communal party ruled in Punjab from 1923 to 1947 which provided for an equal share to all the stake holders. The death of prominent leaders of the Unionists like Sikandar Hayat Kahan, Sunder Singh Majithia and Sir Chottu Ram in 1930s, the succession of incompetent Unionist's leadership and the success of communal parties, such as Muslim League, Akali Dal and Congress, all have collectively contributed to the end of communal harmony in the province. Though Muslim League emerged as majority party in the Punjab during 1945-1946 elections but was excluded from the government due to its Pakistan narrative since the Pakistan Resolution of 1940. This gap has further widened after the promulgation of governor rule in the Punjab after 8 March 1947 (Moon, 1961).

Muslim League's claim as the sole representative party of all the Muslims of the Subcontinent was incomplete without the support of Punjab and Bengal. Although Jinnah was fully aware of the consequences of the partition of Punjab, therefore, he tried to convince the Sikh leaders and guaranteed them all the freedom and a life of peace and prosperity, free from the fear of over lordship (Ispahani, 1959). The Sikhs, however, preferred the division of Punjab rather than leaving the whole province for Pakistan (Edwards, 1936).

Both the communities in Punjab were against partition but when the Boundary commissions were formed, each community came up with its own claims. Muslim as the largest religious majority claimed on the basis of demography and contiguous Muslim and non-Muslim districts. The Hindus claimed on the basis of other factors while the Sikhs made a claim on the basis of religious sentiments, contribution to the development of the areas and extensive holdings because the line was to be drawn on the basis of contiguous majority area. The demands were mostly along religious, economic, commercial, political and demographic lines (Butalia, 1999). The Sikhs tried to secure their entire holy places and their owned land but they were predominated by the Muslim population (Lapierre, 1982, p. 125).

The Sikhs were most aggressive and dominant minority as well as the recruiting body of the province. When the Indian army numbered over two million in 1944, Sikhs recruits were seven times more heavily represented in the army (10%) with proportion to their population as compared to any other religious or ethnic group in India (Parkin, 1945). They also owned big lands in Punjab and

contributed heavily to its economy (Ali R. U., 2009, p. 88). Their total population in India was 1.46% and most of them lived in Punjab where they formed 24 % of the total population of Punjab, who resided mostly near Lahore, Kangra and Patiala (Davis, 1951). Nevertheless, Sikhs were a minority in every political unit of Punjab. They rejected any division of the province that will cause the division of their community because their agricultural assets, economic interest and numerous sacred shrines were scattered all over the region (Wolpert, 2006, p. 154). They wanted a separate state of Khalistan in Punjab which was the birthplace of many of their Gurus particularly the Darbar Sahib or the Golden Temple situated in Amritsar. Beside religion, the Sikhs also ruled Punjab. The British refused their demand as they were a small and scattered community and the policy was of carving out of two states from India. They then demanded an autonomous state or the division of Punjab on the basis of their sacred places. If their demand is refused, then they decided to go with Congress rather than with Muslim League or Muslims which it suspected on accounts of the historical legacy of confrontation with Mughals and of their attachment and closeness to Hindu religion as a sub-sect. According to some historians, the decision of Akali leadership to join India instead of getting separate state at the time of partition was the best choice (Sandhu, 2012). Although the British were very close to the Sikhs as their employers in the armed forces but their scattered strength made them weak. Sikhs submitted a memorandum to the boundary Commission in July 1947 and demanded the large Muslim majority areas of Lahore, Lyallpur, Gujranwala and Sialkot and claimed that these regions should be given to the Sikhs (M. M. Saadullah, 1993).

Sikhs' non-accommodation by Mountbatten made them aggressive against Muslims whom they blamed for the division of Punjab. They were unable to comprehend that Mountbatten issued the partition scheme of Punjab and Bengal which was later on followed by INC. Mountbatten advised the commissions to consider 'other factors' in the plan which in fact was to facilitate the non-Muslims especially the Sikhs population (Lapierre, 1982, p. 168). Like the division in the province, the members of the Commission were also divided along communal lines and could not reach any agreement. During the last meeting of the Commission at Services Club in Simla, Radcliffe took the duty himself to give the award afterwards (Gupta, 2002, p. 24).

Under the "other factors" simulation, Radcliffe entrusted vast Muslim majority areas on the east of River Ravi to India. The Muslim Majority tehsils of Gurdaspur 52.1%, Batala 55.6%, Jullundhar 51.1%, Nakodar 59.4%, Zira 65.2%, Ferozpur 55.2% (1993), Pathankot, Ajnala 59.4%, Kasur (57.2 %), Lahore 62.05% and Shakargarh 51.03% (Sherwani, 1984) were also made part of Indian Punjab (Zaidi, 2000, p. 379) while no single Hindu majority tehsil in Punjab was awarded to Pakistan. In addition to the areas, Radcliffe also gave the control of Beas, Sutlej, the upper water of Ravi, and important canals and headworks of Sutlej and Ravi rivers to India (Rai, 1956) which put the economic life of West Punjab at risk (Ali C. M., 1973, p. 215).

On a similar pattern, under the guise of "other factors" Bengal's Muslim majority areas of Murshidabad, Malda, along with two third Muslim majority district of Nadia and two Thanas of Jaysore were also awarded to India. It was even provided with a corridor to Assam and in total, over six thousand square miles of land with a Muslim population of three and half million was given to India (Zaidi, 2000, p. 379). Further, Calcutta which was the most important commercial centre of Bengal was given to India as a non-Muslim majority city.

Radcliffe completed his work in India in 31 days and finalized the Awards till 9 August 1947.

They were announced on 16 August and were made public on 17 August 1947. By this time Radcliffe had left India after destroying his notes and drafts on the Boundary Commission. A day before India's independence he wrote a letter to his step son saying that no one would be loving him in India for the Punjab and Bengal awards. The aggrieved 80 million Indians will be looking for him but he did not want them to find him. He told that he worked, travelled and sweated all the time in India during the implementation of the partition (Gupta, 2002, p. 24).

Radcliffe was mainly responsible for these unjust Awards, but it was in reality Mountbatten who played for India who always gave the impression that he neither influenced Radcliffe, nor met and discussed the issue. However, during the declaration of the Awards, Radcliffe was only listening to him and the Awards were a command performance. Even some British officers believed that

Radcliffe only act upon Mountbatten's directions (Mosley, 1962). The Muslim members of the Commission believed that on the instructions of Mountbatten the Awards were revised and altered in favor of India. Even the non-Muslim members noticed that the actual decision maker was Mountbatten (Mahajan, 1963). One of the British office files also blames Mountbatten for altering and changing the Award at the expense of Pakistan. Ian Scott, Mountbatten's deputy Private Secretary disclosed that the Viceroy himself attended a meeting of the Boundary Commission in Lahore on 22 July 1947 (Dar, 2008, p. 113). Even Radcliffe admitted that he showed the first draft of Award to the Viceroy and included his amendments in the revised draft. Although Radcliffe finished his work by 10 August but Mountbatten pended the announcement till independence (Ali C. M., 1973, p. 209). Perhaps he had sensed the risk of violence in the early announcement of the Awards and did not want to sabotage the ceremonies of British glorious period in India by delaying it till 16 August 1947.


Although Mountbatten claimed that the Awards were not ready until 13th August and since his business with Independence Day ceremonies first at Karachi and then at Delhi on 14 and 15 August, did not provide him with a time to discuss them with Indian Leaders (Menon, 1957) but it is mentioned in the minutes of the Viceroy's Staff Meeting of 9 August that by evening Radcliffe would be ready to submit his report. So Mountbatten intentionally delayed the announcement for avoiding responsibility for the disturbance (Seervai, 1989).

Another fact is that Mountbatten was worried about the reaction of Muslim League to the Awards. He thought that the best time for announcement would be after the independence of India and Pakistan where Jinnah would be compelled to accept the Awards. He also wanted to utilize the time for making some additional changes in them. The two Tehsils of Muslim majority area: Ferozpur and Zira were shown on the Pakistani side of the map, sent by Abell to Jenkins on 8 August. The last minute alteration of boundaries by Mountbatten was designed basically to satisfy INC and Nehru who in a letter to Mountbatten on 9 August blamed Radcliffe for awarding Ferozpur and Zira tehsils to Pakistan and requested him to reverse the decision. The entire district of Gurdaspur was assigned to Pakistan but Mountbatten gave it to India to make it as a gateway to Kashmir (Ali C. M., 1973, pp. 218-219). Gurdaspur was the only land and road route to Kashmir at that time which it sowed the seeds of Indo-Pakistan rivalry.

The major reason behind Mountbatten unjust decisions were the pressures of INC and Nehru and the Awards were to please him by squeezing Pakistan as much as possible because India had accepted Mountbatten as their first Governor General and the membership of Commonwealth (Menon, 1957, pp. 870-71). On the other hand, Jinnah refused to accept Mountbatten as a common Governor General and he decided to become the first Governor General of Pakistan himself (Johnson, 1997, pp. 128-29). He requested the King to accept him as the future Governor General of Pakistan (Menon, 1957, p. 879). Mountbatten wounded deep from inside and his pride was hurt (Stephen, 1963) with this decision. He then threatened Jinnah with his whole assets and the future of Pakistan (Quraishi, 1995, p. 346). Mountbatten then got closer to the Congress and changed the Awards to punish Jinnah for not appointing him as the joint Governor General of both India and Pakistan and created numerous issues for Pakistan, such as the Kashmir issue which caused three wars and hatred between both the countries.

Jinnah declared the Awards an "unjust" "incomprehensible" and even "perverse" (Ali C. M., 1973, p. 220). He termed the award political rather than judicial and considered it as a huge addition to the already existing problems of the new state of Pakistan. Since Jinnah had pledged to agree to the Awards he said he and his people would also accept it and tolerate this misfortune with courage and hope (Zaidi, 2000, pp. 648-651).

The partition resulted in ten million desperate refugees, of which more than 200,000 were murdered during their journey to their destined homelands (Wolpert, 2006). 14 and 15 August were the days of rejoicing and the joy was almost delirious but lasted hardly forty-eight hours. Punjab was at last blown up with the announcement of the Radcliffe Award on 16 August 1947. The news of communal troubles began to circulate in the capital because in East Punjab, Hindu and Sikh mobs had attacked Muslim villages. They burnt houses and killed innocent men, women and children.



Exactly the same reports came from West Punjab where Muslims have killed men, women and children of the Hindu and Sikh communities. Both parts of Punjab became graveyards of destruction and deaths. Nevertheless, Muslims were the victims more than anyone else (Dar, 1999) because Muslims faced the anger of Hindus, Sikhs and Mountbatten. The communal tension touched a new height when the Sikhs started religious cleansing of Muslims in East Punjab and forced them to flee towards west Punjab. The Hindu Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh - RSS (Hassan, 2006), Sikh Jathas and Akali leaders (Suhail, 1991) played a decisive role in this horrible tragedy (Ali C. M., 1973, p. 254). Despite the communal disturbances, millions have crossed the newly created borders in 1947. Approximately 5 million people were massacred, 12 million people left their homes (Suhail, 1991, p. 88) and about 7 million refugees reached Pakistan. During this whole episode, governments seemed helpless and powerless in dealing with the Sikh and Hindu zealots.

CONCLUSION


The Partition plan was announced on 3 June 1947 and was implemented on 14 and 15 August that year but the Radcliffe Awards were announced on 16 August, two days after the announcement of independence. During these interval days, the people of the two major provinces of Punjab and Bengal were in standstill position and did not know to join Pakistan or India. Within two days, most of the Muslim majority areas were awarded to India. The three communities (Muslim, Sikh and Hindus) of Punjab rejected Punjab Award which later on resulted in a massive migration, abduction, and massacre of millions of people. This all happened because of flawed planning and hasty implementation of the British government.

The division of the Subcontinent was a crucial and critical issue that could not be handled in such a manner. If it would have been addressed few years or few decades earlier with proper planning and strategy by the British government, the results of the partition would have entirely been different. Mountbatten just wanted to save the image of the British at the expense of millions of people who were massacred, abducted, and compelled to migrate in order to avoid chaos and the uncertain situation. Mountbatten hurt the cause of Pakistan by dividing the Muslim majority provinces of Punjab and Bengal which created multiple problems for the new dominions and sowed the seeds of hatred between the two countries which could not even be mitigated even after the passing of the period of seven decades. Mountbatten's sharp thinking and careful tackling of the problems may have saved both India and Pakistan from the disastrous repercussions and the deadly events may not have taken place in 1947.

The lack of statesmanship sagacity combined with vested interest and personal like and dislike of Mountbatten have subjected the future of the two states of Pakistan and India to crisis and chaos. The pitting of Sikhs against the Muslims when Hindus were the major adversaries which greatly impacted the course of events is beyond comprehension to an ordinary mind. It also made the Awards very controversial in the eyes of the Muslims of Punjab and Pakistan. At this juncture, Sikh community should have struggled against the British instead of wasting men and money against Muslims on the instigation of British and Hindus. Their resolve for a separate state might have borne fruits but they could not sacrifice their closeness to the British. They did not realize that the province has to be divided between Pakistan and India and only British could accommodate them. Unfortunately, the moths unleashed by Mountbatten ate and is eating Pakistan till date.

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