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Founder  
**S. S. Shashi**

Chief Editor  
**Dharam Vir**

Volume 29, Number 1 (January-March), 2020



**Research Foundation International, New Delhi**

Affiliated to United Nations Organization (UNO)

(Autonomous, Regd. Recognized Charitable Organization of  
Social Scientists, Authors, Journalists & Social Activists)

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## **Journal of National Development**

### **Aims and Scope**

*The Journal of National Development (JND)* is an interdisciplinary bi-annual peer reviewed & refereed international journal committed to the ideals of a 'world community' and 'universal brotherhood'. The Journal is a joint effort of like-minded scholars in the field of social research. Its specific aims are to identify, to understand and to help the process of nation-building within the framework of a 'world community' and enhance research across the social sciences (Sociology, Anthropology, Political Science, Psychology, History, Geography, Education, Economics, Law, Communication, Linguistics) and related disciplines like all streams of Home Science, Management, Computer Science, Commerce as well as others like Food Technology, Agricultural Technology, Information Technology, Environmental Science, Dairy Science etc. having social focus/implications. It focuses on issues that are global and on local problems and policies that have international implications. By providing a forum for discussion on important issues with a global perspective, the *JND* is a part of unfolding world wide struggle for establishing a just and peaceful world order. Thus, the *JND* becomes a point of confluence for the rivulets from various disciplines to form a mighty mainstream gushing towards the formulation and propagation of a humanistic world- view.

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## A Study into the Muslim Approach towards Home Rule Demand

*Shalini Pathak\**

*The research paper delves into the concept and meaning of Home Rule as depicted by the Muslim community of India, its relevance and its impact on their community. The paper deals with the arguments advanced by the Muslim community for their negation to the Home Rule demand. The paper is based on the primary sources consulted from the National Archives of India, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, Adyar Archives, Chennai. The Muslims community has always deserved a special notice in the pages of Indian history as it has been one of the most important constituent of the Indian society. The Muslim opinion especially the one dominated by the orthodox Muslims heatedly opposed the Home Rule demand. There were two distinct thinking in the Muslim community with regard to India. The first group was of the Nationalists and the second group was of the orthodox or the conservatives Muslims. The Nationalist s not only believed in the Home Rule demand but stood by the demand simultaneously. Exasperated by the British attitude the Nationalist refrained themselves from the policy of loyal co-operation with the British government and acceded to act in unison with the Congress, which undoubtedly facilitated the moves towards rapprochement, that eventually acquired its shape in the Lucknow Congress of 1916.*

**[Keywords : Muslim approach, Muslims community, Home rule demand, British attitude, Congress]**

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The Muslims community has always deserved a special notice in the pages of Indian history as it has been one of the most important constituent of the Indian society. The Muslim opinion especially the one dominated by the orthodox Muslims heatedly opposed the Home Rule demand.

There were two distinct thinking in the Muslim community with regard to India. The first group was of the Nationalists and the second group was of the orthodox or the conservatives Muslims.<sup>1</sup> The Nationalists not only believed in the Home Rule demand but stood by the demand simultaneously. Exasperated by the British attitude the Nationalist refrained themselves from the policy of loyal co-operation with the British government and acceded to act in unison with the Congress, which undoubtedly facilitated the moves towards rapprochement, that eventually acquired its shape in the Lucknow Congress of 1916. This section mainly comprised of the leaders who has attained western education like M.A.Jinnah, A.Rasul, Mazhar-ul-Haq, Tayabji, Samijllah Beg, Hasan Imam, Wazir Hasan, Syed Nawab Hussain and others.

The second section of the community was that of the Conservative or the orthodox Muslims who were at large influenced by the policy of Sir Saiyid Ahmad Khan and firmly believed in the Aligarh School of Thought. The Aligarh School of Thought acutely opposed the Home Rule creed.<sup>2</sup> They regarded British as their saviour and believed that their interest, political rights and the advancement of their community would transpire only when power is in the British hands, otherwise their community would suffer a great setback. Aga Khan, Nawab of Dacca, Khawaja Samiullah was some prominent leaders who belonged to this group and gave currency to this opinion. They were naturally and traditionally aristocratic, loyal to the British government and kept themselves aloof from any political collaboration with the Congress. It was this section of the Muslim community and their devout adherence to the policy of Aligarh School which made them stand together against the Home Rule demand.

The Indian society has always been familiar with the Muslim opposition and it dates back to year 1905, when Shaymaji Krishnavarma, a doyen of Indian revolutionary, established the Indian Home Rule Society on foreign turf and assiduously conducted the agitation for Home Rule across the seas. The Vice-President of Indian Home Rule Society, was a Muslim, Abdullah Suharawardy,



and his association with the Indian Home Rule Society made him unpopular amongst his Muslim colleagues who devoutly adhered to the policy of Aligarh School of Thought. Ziauddin Ahmad, a devout follower of Aligarh School and supporter of Sir Saiyid Ahmad Khan wrote to Abdullah Suharawardy- "You know that we have a definite political policy at Aligarh i.e. the policy of Sir Sayed Ahmed Khan. I understand that Mr. Krishnavarma has founded a society called the Indian Home Rule Society and you are also one of its Vice-Presidents. Do you really believe that Mohammedans will be profited if Home Rule is granted to India? There is no doubt that Home Rule is decidedly against Aligarh Policy. What I call the Aligarh Policy is really the policy of all the Mohammedans generally."<sup>3</sup>

The key component of Muslim opposition to the Home Rule demand was on the apprehension that Home Rule would "result in placing the Muslim minority under the iron heel of unsympathetic Hindu majority."<sup>4</sup> They were of the opinion that if the power was transferred from the British hands to the Hindus then their community's interest would suffer an eclipse and the political advancement of their community would be inhibited to an uncomparable extent. The Hindu dominancy in India was the paramount reason of the Muslim trepidation and for their firm resistance to the Home Rule claim. They were never in compliance with the Home Rule demand and looked upon the demand with a great suspicion. The Muslims believed that Home Rule explicitly meant the administration of the elected representatives of the people. It meant the rule of Hindus only.<sup>5</sup>

The Joint Scheme of the Congress and Moslem League was condemned by the Muslims in unmeasured terms. The decision of Jinnah and Wazir Hasan to arrange for the joint session of the Congress and Moslem League in Bombay 1915, with the aim to draw-up a mutually accepted Scheme of Reforms,<sup>6</sup> met with a determined opposition from the conservative Muslims, Sunnis, Khojas of Bombay and also from the Government of Bombay who clearly gave indications for its disapprobation of the plan to hold the joint session.<sup>7</sup> The Governor of Bombay Lord Willingdon was not in favour of any political meeting amidst the crucial wartime.<sup>8</sup> Fuzul-bhoy Currimbhoy, Heji Yusuf Sobani, Sardar Suleman Mitha were some prominent opponents who were averse to the proposal of junction with the Congress and kept themselves aloof from the Congress.<sup>9</sup>



The Bombay Muslims were categorically against the joining of the Congress and held themselves aloof from the Congress. Sir Fazulbhoy Currimbhoy and Mr. F. M. Chinoy pointed out, "the Mussalmans in Bombay while anxious to cooperate with the sister communities, were opposed to the proposals of a junction with the Congress and do not think that the time has come to give up the traditional policy of Mussalmans, sanctified by Sir Syed Ahmed and adhered to by Mohsin-ul-Mulk and Nawab Mushtaq Hussain."<sup>10</sup> The Bombay Mohammedans reacted acutely regarding the joint session of the Congress and the Moslem League. The adamant opposition to Home Rule by Mohammedans was further indicated by the publication in the *Mukhbir-i-Dekhan*, an appeal from Bihar under the signature of Shah Suliman Sahib, the High Priest of the *Nadwa* which involved *God's curse* on the Home Rule agitation.<sup>11</sup> It described the Congress League scheme as "absolutely fraudulent."<sup>12</sup>

The Mohammedans in the Punjab also expressed their disapprobation towards Home Rule demand and reprimanded the Congress-League Scheme. They also imitated on the similar lines of the Bombay Mohammedans views and regarded Home Rule as the rule of the Hindus only. The Mohammedans in Punjab disassociated themselves from Wazir Hasan's movement and proceeded in the direction to establish "a real representative political institution"<sup>13</sup> in order to promote separate Mohammedan interest. A prominent Mohammedan gentleman, who represented the Mohammedans of the Punjab Council stated- "We are taking vigorous steps to establish a real representative political institution in order to promote separate Mohammedan interests as distinct from the so called national propaganda to muster our strength and to put forth before the public our political creed and doctrine. The scheme adumbrated by the Home Rulers to which the Wazir Hasan's League is giving its support is on the face of it, the basis of *Hindu Rule or Swaraj*. I do not think any single Mohammedan will be prepared to accept it."<sup>14</sup>

The Hindu factor which was prominent and dominant in the Muslim minds gained more strength after Besant's Presidential address to the congress of 1917 held at Calcutta. The Muslims reprimanded Besant for the paucity of reference to that part of the history, which was concerned with the Mohammedan rule.<sup>15</sup> Besant was further condemned on the ground that she made "no reference of communal representation" and that "the Nationalist camp was labouring under the hope that communal representation was wrong

in principle and would have to be abandoned.”<sup>16</sup> They believed that Besant was all for Hindus and Home Rule means *Hindu Rule*.<sup>17</sup> The Hindu delegates gave notice of amendments to the resolution of self-government to the effect that all reference to the special representation should be erased from the Congress-League Scheme.<sup>18</sup>

Rao Abdul Rahman Khan of Raipur in his article entitled *Muslims and The Future of India* published in the newspaper *Al-Bashir* of Etawah dated 24<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> July, 1917, wrote, “Can the *Hamdam* mention even few of Besant’s good works for the Mohammedans. When establishing the Central Hindu College she closed its doors upon the Mohammedans. It is well known that she is an advocate of Theosophy and if the Mohammedans have to profess this religion they would loose *Islam*. It cannot be understood how Besant can be regarded as the well-wisher of Mohammedans.”<sup>19</sup>

The Ulemas and Maulvis who represented one of the most significant circle of the Muslim community also expressed their antipathy towards the Home Rule grant to India. They were not in compliance with the justification grounds put forth by the Home Rule leaders and opposed to the Home Rule policy on the apprehension that the interest of their community would not be secured. The irrepensible Home Rule demand created a great furore and the Muslims realized that their sectional interest can be cultivated and nurtured only under the Christian or Mohammedan rule. They discerned that the only way-out to this unnerving situation was that the power should be vested only in the British hands, who would not only safeguard their community’s interest but would also take sufficient measures for its furtherance.

The Muslims representing the Aligarh School of Thought not only opposed the reforms in the Congress-League but also solicited the Ulemas to issue the *Fatwas* against Home Rule.<sup>20</sup> The Ulemas of Madras also gave their religious verdict against the demand of Home Rule.<sup>21</sup> As written by Mr. Montagu in *His Diary* - “Then a delightful man, with a beautiful beard and a fine profile, told us that he had studied the *Koran* and all the commentaries, the Bible and the Holy Books and he could find no sanction for the Congress-League Scheme in them.”<sup>22</sup>

The Muslims opponents emphasized that Hindus and Muslims are two different communities and their survival together was impossible. They implicitly gave their denial for Home Rule and

insisted that any mutual agreement between them was unthinkable. In a pamphlet entitled *Home Rule and India*, Nawab Ahmed Hussain Khan Bahadur wrote- "It is impracticable and unnatural to fuse both of them into one single nation. The waters of the *Ganges* and *Indus* may unite but there can never be a real union of hearts between the Hindus and the Muslims as long as they are Hindus and Muslims."<sup>23</sup>

Essential measures were taken by the Mohammedans to counterblast the Home Rule demand resulting in the augmentation of the Mohammedan opposition to the activities of the Home Rule League. With every passing day, the opposition to Home Rule solidified. Monstrous meetings were held and resolutions were passed against its immediate grant. An anti-Home Rule petition bearing the signature of the Mohammedans of Arcot, an important Mohammedan center in Berar was submitted to the Secretary of State for India during his visit to India.<sup>24</sup> An anti-Home Rule newspaper *Al Hanif* was started in Fatehgarh and anti Home Rule meetings were held at Barabanki, Meerut, Shahabad in the Hardoi district where the "feeling amongst the Mohammedan was dead against Home Rule."<sup>25</sup>

With the object to safeguard the interest and rights of Muslims, endeavours were made to organize political associations and to counter those Muslims who had joined the Home Rule League's.<sup>26</sup> The endeavour led to the dawn of an *All-India Moslem Association*. The cardinal principle of the organization was that "Mohammedans cannot safely allow their sectional interest and the political importance of their community to be merged into the Indian nation of the future and that Mohammedans interest are sure to suffer under a system where the power would vest in Hindu hands."<sup>27</sup> The numerical strength of association was not too large. The association incorporated those members who had forsaken the membership of the All- India Moslem League. Basically this association was established in opposition to the All-India Moslem League. Its promoters were reported to be "pro-government and opposed to Home Rule or self-government."<sup>28</sup>

Although the demand encountered a formidable opposition, but on the other side, it also procured a magnificent support from the same community. There was a great indignation against the demand of Home Rule, but then too the opposition was not felt to an adequate extent as the opposing communities were not organized.<sup>29</sup> The agitation manifested itself mainly in the form of protest meeting

where resolutions were passed by few interested people. Though the Muslim, were adamantly against the demand of Home Rule but many people from the same section definitely supported the demand.

The orthodox Muslims in supporting the demand of Home Rulers circulated *Urdu* pamphlets in favour of the Congress League's scheme. These pamphlets were circulated by the Hon'ble Yakub Hasan, a retired Deputy Collector Khan Bahadur Safdar Hussain and Maulana Abdul Shbhan Sahib. Khawaja Nazir Ahmed, son of Kamakuddin, the *Imam* of the Working Mosque strongly opposed the British rule in India.<sup>30</sup>

The logic given by the Home Rulers in justification of their demand made it apparent that their claim for Home Rule was not seditious. With their impressive evidences they successfully proved that India was legitimately entitled for Home Rule. Although, the movement had to confront opposition, but it was not that the opposition was beyond endurance as the cries of opposition were not united, Unity was utterly lacking in the opponents of Home Rule and therefore, it became possible for the Home Rulers to withstand pressure and carry out their demand expeditiously.

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