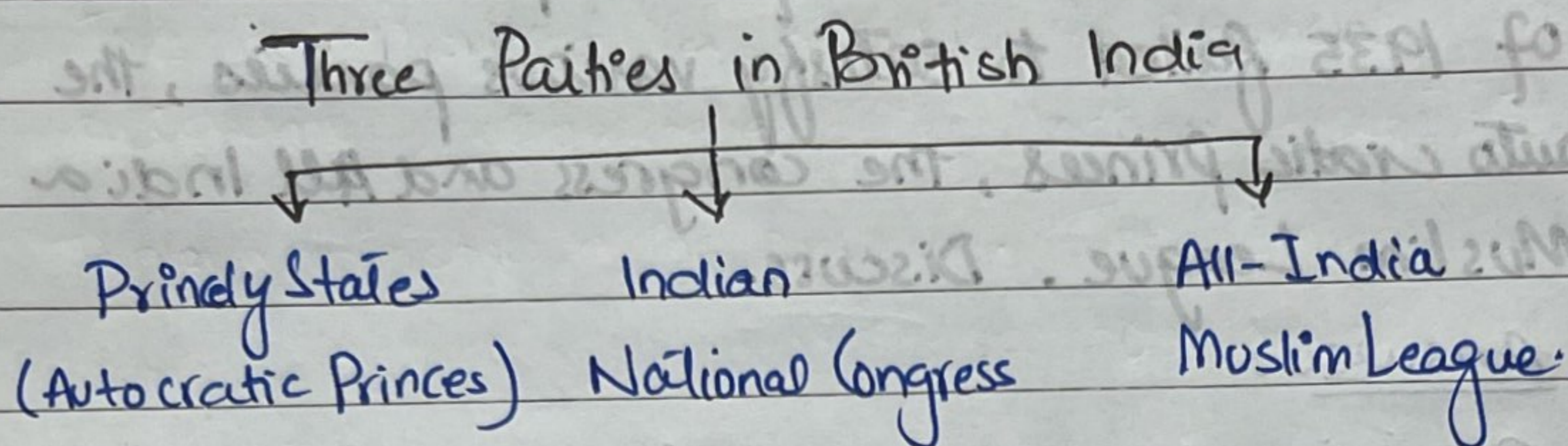


Q: Federation of some sort was the solution to the Communal Problem in Canada, South Africa and Switzerland. However federal plan in the act of 1935 failed to satisfy various parties, the autocratic princes, the Congress and All India Muslim League. Discuss.

Answer:

Countries like Canada, Switzerland and South Africa are known for their multicultural and multi-religious societies. The concept of federation was introduced by British in these countries to address the communal issues. In Canada, the federal system accommodates diverse provinces, balancing regional interests. South-Africa's post-apartheid federal structure aims to empower different ethnic groups. Switzerland's cantonal system fosters local autonomy, easing linguistic and cultural tensions. While federations can enhance representation and accommodate diversity, their success depends on effective power-sharing mechanisms and ongoing dialogue to address communal concerns. British introduced federal system in British India but it failed due to various reasons. 1935 Act was aimed to introduce the federal structure which was opposed by the Indian political leaders. The main players in British India were indeed the princely states, Indian National Congress and the Muslim League. All parties had their own interests and the complexities in addressing the diverse interests and concerns of various communities in British India played a crucial role in the failure of the federal system during the time.

The Government Act of 1935 failed to satisfy various parties



(i) Princely States:

The Government of India Act of 1935 addressed the status and role of the princely states within the British Indian political framework. Some key provisions related to princely states included:

(i) Significant degree of autonomy:

Princely states were allowed a significant degree of autonomy within their territories. They had the authority to govern internally, subject to certain conditions and the overarching suzerainty of the British crown.

(ii) Decision of accession:

The act provided a mechanism for princely states to accede to either the Federation of British India or remain as separate entities.

This decision was left to the rulers of princely states.

(iii) Instrument of accession:

Princely states willing to join the federation had to sign an "Instrument of Accession" with the British crown, including terms of their association, including

the matters like defense communication and external affairs.

iv. Representatives in Federal Structure.

The federal structure included representation of princely states in the council of states. However, the number of representatives was limited, and the overall influence of princely states in federal setup was restricted.

Reasons to oppose:

The princely states in India opposed the federal system. One key concern was limited autonomy granted to the princely states. They were reluctant to cede control to a central federal authority.

Additionally, the lack of clarity in the distribution of power between centre and provinces, coupled with the reservations about the representation of princely states in the federal structure, contributed to their opposition.

It is important to understand that the actual impact and implementation of these provisions varied, and the political dynamics between the British government and princely states remained complex until India gained independence in 1947.

(ii) Indian National Congress:

The Government of India Act 1935 outlined provisions related to the Indian National Congress (INC) and its role in political structure.

Some key aspects included:

(i) Provincial Autonomy provided to INC:

This act provided for a system of provincial autonomy, allowing elected Indian representatives to form ministries in the provinces. The Indian National Congress participated in these provincial governments.

(ii) Significant role of INC in legislative bodies:

The Act established a bicameral central legislature with the Council of States and the House of Assembly. Members of INC were expected to play significant role in these legislative bodies.

(iii) Communal Representation:

The Act introduced the concept of communal representation, allowing separate electorates for different religious communities. This approach was criticised by INC as it contributed to communal divisions.

(iv) Limited Central Powers:

The Act granted some powers to the central government, significant control over key matters such as defense and finance remained with the British government. This limitation on central powers was a point of disagreement for INC.

Reasons to oppose:

The Indian National Congress led by figures

Like Jawaharlal Nehru and others continued to press for greater self-governance and complete independence from British rule, considering the act insufficient in addressing the aspirations of Indian people.

The act granted limited autonomy to provinces but retained significant control at the center. The distribution of seats and representation in the federal structure was a point of disagreement. The act did not provide fully elected central government, a significant portion consisted of nominated members. This was perceived as undermining democratic powers.

The British government maintained considerable authority, especially in matters of defense & finance. The INC sought a more decisive role for Indians in these crucial areas. The Congress felt that the proposed system did not adequately represent the diverse interests and demographics of British India.

The Congress's opposition was part of a broader demand for greater self-determination and a move toward complete independence from British rule.

(iii) All India Muslim League:

The Government of India Act 1935 included provisions that affected the All India Muslim League. The Muslim League had a complex

relationship with federal system introduced by Act of 1935. While they initially participated in the negotiations leading to the act, they later expressed reservations and criticism.

Some key aspects related to Muslim League and its role included:

(i) Communal Representation:

Communal representation allows separate electorates for different religious communities including Muslims, to ensure voice of minority in political process

(ii) Reserved seats for Muslims:

Allocation of reserved seats for Muslims in provincial legislature. This also addresses concerns of minority to provide them with a share in legislative body

(iii) Council of States:

Participation in the Council of States in which princely states and provinces were represented

(iv) Provincial Autonomy:

Provincial Autonomy was allowed, enabling elected representatives to form ministries in the provinces.

Reasons to oppose:

Initially Muslim League participated, but later expressed criticism. Some reasons for their opposition to certain aspects of the federal system are that they were worried that the centralized government

might not adequately protect the political rights of and interests of muslim minority, as the Muslim League was apprehensive about the dominance of Hindu majority in federal setup.

The Communal Award was seen as insufficient for securing muslim interests. They sought greater safeguard and autonomy for muslims within proposed federal system.

The Muslim League also feared that the federal system might marginalize muslims politically and economically particularly in those provinces where muslims does not have sufficient autonomy.

Like any other political party, the Muslim League was wary of limited autonomy ^{granted} to the provinces and the retained control by the British government over the crucial matters.

These concerns and opposition by the Muslim League reflected the broader challenges in reconciling the diverse interests and communities in British India during that period. The broader political dynamics and the League's demands for greater autonomy continued to evolve, leading to the creation of Pakistan in 1947.

Conclusion:

Federal system was introduced by British in Canada, South Africa and Switzerland. It was

introduced by British in South Africa and Indian subcontinent. South Africa accepted that system but Indians did not accept it. In the Act of 1935 federal structure was introduced for the first time but it failed due to various reasons. It was criticized by the three groups living in the sub-continent Princely state, Indian National Congress and Muslim League as the act was not granting adequate autonomy and maintaining the British control over key areas. Also, British is responsible for the failure as they could not give efficient federation.