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Pak Affairs

Q. NO. 4

CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF
CONGRESS MINISTRIES OF
1937 AND ITS ROLE FOR PAVING
THE WAY FOR A SEPARATE
MUSLIM HOMELAND :-

Introduction:

→ The formation of the Congress Ministries in 1937 was a pivotal event that significantly influenced the political landscape of colonial India. Following the provincial elections mandated by the Government of India Act of 1935, the Indian National Congress secured a majority in several provinces, establishing

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ministries that implemented policies perceived as discriminatory against Muslims. This period marked the beginning of a strong Muslim sentiment favoring the creation of a separate homeland, Pakistan. Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah and other Muslim leaders saw Congress's rule as the final indicator that Muslims could not expect fair treatment under a Hindu-Majority government. As Jinnah famously stated;

⇒ The Muslims can expect neither justice nor fair play under Congress government. "

→ This realization catalyzed the Muslim League's demand for a separate state.

Policies of the Congress

Ministries that paved a

way for a separate

Muslim homeland:

→ The Congress Ministries, formed after the 1937 elections, implemented several policies that were perceived as undermining Muslim cultural and political rights. These, policies, often seen as exclusionary and coercive, deepened the divide between the Hindu and Muslim communities and paved the way for the demand for a separate Muslim state. Following are those policies;

(1) Bande Matram

as National Anthem:

→ The Congress declared Bande Matram, a song with deep Hindu nationalist undertones, as the national anthem.

The song's verses, which include references

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to Hindu deities and imagery of Mother India as a goddess, were considered offensive by Muslims. They felt excluded from this symbolic representation of Indian nationalism, which appeared to prioritize Hindu cultural and religious identity over a more inclusive national identity.

The mandatory singing of this song in schools and government office was viewed as an attempt to impose Hindu culture on all citizens, irrespective of their religious beliefs.

(2) Warda Scheme and Vidya

Mandir Scheme:

→ Educational reforms like the Warda Scheme and Vidya Mandir Scheme aimed at promoting Hindu cultural values were seen as an attempt to undermine Muslim identity. The Vidya Mandir scheme further

entrenched Hindu ideology in the educational curriculum, alienating Muslim students.

(3) Urdu - Hindi Controversy:

→ The decision to promote Hindi and Devanagiri script over Urdu, which had significant cultural and religious importance for Muslims, intensified communal tensions. It was seen as a direct attack on Muslim cultural heritage.

(4) Hoisting of the Tricolor flag:

→ The Congress also insisted on hoisting the tricolor flag (the Indian National Congress's flag at that time) in government offices and public institutions.

This flag with its strong associations with Hindu-Majority Congress, symbolized their dominance.

(5) Muslim Mass Contact

Campaign:

→ Congress's Campaign aimed at engaging with Muslims directly. It was perceived as a move to diminish the influence of Muslim League, further straining Muslim-Hindu relations.

(6) Hindu - Muslim Riots:

→ There were numerous reports of communal violence during this period, which were often attributed to the hostile policies and actions of Congress leaders. This violence further convinced Muslims of the need for a separate state.

→ These policies were perceived as coercive assimilation tactics, deepened the Muslim sense of alienation. As

Jimnah pointed out;

“The 2 1/2 years of Congress rule are a sobering experience for Muslims. The years of Congress rule have given us a very bitter lesson and have created fear of the Hindus' domination.”

Impacts on Muslim Sentiment and Identity:

The actions of the Congress led to a significant shift in Muslim political thoughts.

Flowchart: Impact of Congress

Ministries' policies (1937-1939)

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Exclusionary and Discriminatory Policies

1. Muslim Alienation and fear
of Colonial Domination

2. Increased Support for
Muslim League

3. Strengthening of Two-Nation
Theory.

4. Demand for a Separate
Muslim Homeland
(Pakistan)

Fig: IMPACTS OF CONGRESS MINISTRIES

Critical Analysis:

→ It is undeniable that the Elections of 1937 became an eye opener for the Muslims of United India.

Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah was fully aware of Congress's evil intentions, and struggled hard to make Muslims realize that they need a separate homeland for themselves at that time. Soon after Congress came into power and adopted a rigid attitude towards the Muslims, they realised that they had no constitutional authority to protect their freedom in United India. So, the only option left for them was to demand a separate Muslim state.

∴ The Muslims are a nation

by every definition of the word Nation. It is absolutely

wrong to consider Muslims

as a minority. ∴

(Quaid-e-Azam)

Conclusion:

→ The tenure of Congress Ministries was indeed a turning point that contributed to the crystallization of the Muslim separatist sentiment in India. It highlighted fundamental differences between Hindus and Muslims in colonial India and underscored the Muslim community's fears of being marginalized in a Hindu-dominated state. The Two-Nation theory became the basis of the creation of Pakistan. With the end of the Congress rule in 1939, the Muslims celebrated the Day of Defiance on December 22, 1940. Thus, they formally put forward the demand for a separate Muslim state, Pakistan, for cultural and religious freedom.

ان تازہ خراقل میں بڑا سب سے وطن ہے
جو پیرس ہے آگے ماوہ مذہب و مافن ہے

(شاعر ملت، علامہ اقبال)