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Comparative Study of Jinnah and Nehru's Political Leadership from 1928 to 1930

Abstract

This is an analysis of Jinnah-Nehru's leadership and about their emergence as charismatic political leaders in Colonial and post-Colonial India. Jawaharlal was deeply inspired by the political methods of Gandhi and he followed him as his charismatic leader. Jawaharlal considered Jinnah as an opponent of Gandhi and his methods was not attractive for him. Jinnah believed in the constitutionalism and he rejected the methods of agitation, which was the prime method of the Gandhi's politics. This analysis also deals with the historical events of Indian politics from Nehru Report to the implementation of 'Government of India Act, 1935'. During these years Jawaharlal received the moral up keep of Gandhi in every political hurdle or crises. It also deals with the emergence of Nehru on the horizon of Congress and the Indian politics. Jinnah had to face the crises of division within the Muslim League and later on, it proved a disturbing factor in the Round Table Conferences. He had to face many challenges from his own fellow Muslims. In the response of this attitude, he decided to leave India and the Indian politics. In 1934, after the efforts of many prominent Muslims, he came back in India after his self-exile in England and decided to take part in the future elections. He had to face the challenging task of reorganization of Muslim League and the upcoming Elections of 1937. Moreover, this deals with the Hindu-Muslim problems, especially, with the role of charismatic leadership of Jinnah, Gandhi and Nehru.

Key Words: Jinnah, Gandhi, Nehru, Charismatic Leadership, Congress and League Politics, Nehru

The historic session of Congress met in Madras on 25 December 1927 and Jawaharlal demanded "complete withdrawal of the alien army of occupation."¹ Gandhi did not join the Congress Subjects Committee meeting and his faithful follower Rajendra Prasad (1884-1963)² called it "silly", fearing that it would turn the Congress into the "laughing stock of the world."³ Jawaharlal severely criticized the idea of *Swaraj* within the British Empire and declared it "degrading for this country to be within the British Empire. A great country like ours must be a free country."⁴ His resolution was a stunning element for all except only Annie Besant; she favoured and agreed to his resolution of complete national independence.

He also drafted a resolution to boycott the Simon Commission and British Imperialism in India.⁵ His aggressive approach in Indian politics keenly observed by Gandhi and he warned him on 04 January 1928, "You are going too fast." Predominantly, he added, "I do not mind these acts of yours so much as I mind your encouraging mischief-makers and hooligans."⁶ Jawaharlal was extremely angry with Gandhi for refusing to give any lead to his resolution. He wrote a strong letter to Gandhi and he had to destroy the letter. "Your first letter I destroyed after reading and replying to it."⁷

Jinnah and Gandhi had lots of differences, but once again, "their paths crossed again on November 2, 1927 when both went to the Viceroy's house to receive news of Royal Commission appointments."⁸ On 26 November, the Government announced the appointment of a commission.

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“Stanley Baldwin, the prime minister, announced in the House of Commons the appointment of a commission ‘to inquire in to the working of the Indian Constitution and consider the desirability of establishing, extending, modifying or restricting the degree of responsible government’. Such a commission had been promised in the Reforms Act of 1919.”⁹

Two reasons were stated before the Commission. First, the ruling British Conservative Party feared that Labour Party could use the Indian problems during the election campaign of 1929. Second was that the Sawaraj Party of Motilal Nehru and C.R. Das was criticizing the Government in Assembly regarding the reform process. The basic purpose of this commission was to suppress the opposition. Jinnah also had demanded the appointment of a commission as mentioned in the 1919 Act. During the speech, he emphasized that the Commission should consist of such members who could satisfy the people.¹⁰

Unfortunately, commission was appointed by the British government and did not have a single Indian member. This was shocking news for the Indians and it arose the anger throughout the country. Jinnah showed his total boycott to the Commission and said, “Jallinwala Bagh was a physical butchery. The Simon Commission is the Butchery of our souls.”¹¹ Both Jawaharlal and his father joined the boycott rally in Bombay, it was the last great show of Hindu-Muslim unity.¹²

On 18 January 1928, Jawaharlal Nehru issued a circular to inform the critical organisation to participate in the All Parties Conference. The conference was called at Delhi on Sunday the 12 to 22 February. The Congress passed a resolution directing the working committee to convene an All Parties Conference to draw up a constitution for India acceptable to all parties. This was in reply to Lord Birkenhead's challenge to Indian politicians to produce an agreed constitution for India.¹³

On the issue of Simon Commission there was call an all parties Conference, invitation issued to the 29 parties including Muslim League, Hindu Mahasabha and the Central Sikh League. Dr. M. A. Ansari was announced the chairman of it. It held its first meeting 11 February, 1928 at Delhi and Congress led by Gandhi, failed to respond positively. Second time conference met on 8 March, 1928.

During this conference, “the discussion revealed differences between the Muslim League and the one hand and the Hindu Mahasabha and Sikhs on the other.”¹⁴ League walked out from it. The third meeting of the conference was held in Bombay and in this meeting the Communal organization could not ready to modify its attitude towards the issues. On 19 May, Conference rejected the Muslim proposals and agreed to constitute a committee under the chairmanship of Motilal Nehru.

Motilal tried his best to win over Jinnah, “but Jinnah was not his son, and Jinnah would never trust Jawaharlal or be as accommodating to his rapidly shifting moods and mind as his father was.”¹⁵ He wrote a letter to Motilal and conveyed him that “do you want or do you not want the Muslim India to go with you?...It is, therefore, no use asking me not to press for what you call ‘ these small points’.... If they are small points, why not conceded?... We are all sons of this land...nothing will make me more happy than to see a Hindu-Muslim union.”¹⁶

On 22 December, 1928 final report came into front in All-Parties Convention at Calcutta and report finally adopted the Dominion Status or Complete Independence. Gandhi opposed the acceptance of Dominion Status and demanded to change it in the Complete Independence. In this meeting Jinnah appealed in these words:

What we want is that Hindus and the Muslims should march together until our object is attained. Therefore, it is essential that you must get not only the Muslim League but the Muslims of India and here I am not speaking as a Mussalman but as an Indian. And it is my desire to see that we get seven crores of Muslims to march along with us in the struggle for freedom.¹⁷

Officially Gandhi was no more in politics, retirement after he had failed to deliver Sawaraj within one year and had suspended the Non-Co-operation Movement, yet he was in a position to control the roots of the Congress whenever he wanted. But, as his political style and methodology, Gandhi had returned to the Indian politics at the end of 1928. He was all along associated with the working of the Nehru Committee and was totally satisfied with the work of Nehru Committee.

Jinnah presented his amendments in Nehru Report before the open session of All Parties National Convention on 28 December, 1928. His basic amendments were:

- (1) In the Central Assembly Muslims should have 33 1/3 present of the seats.
- (2) That the residuary powers should vest in the Province and not in the Centre.
- (3) That Muslims in Punjab and Bengal should be represented on the basis of population for ten years subject to sub-sequent revision of this principle.¹⁸

Jinnah was not satisfied with the work of Nehru Committee, because Muslim demands were given no place in Nehru Report. During the work of Nehru committee Jinnah was in Paris with his wife Ruttie in the hospital, her Cancer was at last stage. Unfortunately, Nehru Committee report did not "mention of Jinnah's proposals which the Congress itself had approved and accepted in Madras." Gandhi was satisfied with work of the Nehru Working Committee and said, "I ventured to suggest that the report satisfies all responsible aspirations and is quite capable of standing on its own merit."

On 29th December 1928, Motilal presided over the Calcutta Congress and declared in his speech, "I am for complete independence – as complete as it can be – but I am not against full dominion status." In this session the Nehru family royally received, cushioned and pillowed in the front row. And with them was Gandhi, looking more than ever like Mickey Mouse, as India's national poet, Sarojni Naidu, called him. Jawaharlal and his young fellows listened the sober speech of Motilal and his son raised objection on the acceptance of Dominion status. He issued an amendment in the resolution of independence, "By accepting Dominion Status you show to the world that you are prepared to accept the psychology of imperialism."

Many Muslims and other community's leaders were not satisfied by the Nehru Report. Maulana Azad, Rd. Ansari, Sir Ali Imam, Raja Sahib of Mahmudabad and Rd. Kitchen were in the favour of Nehru Report, "But Jinnah remained set against the Nehru 'constitution,' viewing it only as a 'Hindu' document."¹⁹ The first time someone saw him weeping; after his amendments had been rejected at the Calcutta meeting to consider the Nehru Report, in 1928. It is a fine thing that he did – pleading, as a great man, for his people. His demands were rejected. About half-past eight next morning, Mr. Jinnah left Calcutta by train, and his friend Jamshed went to see him off at the Railway Station. He was standing at the door of his first-class coupe` compartment, and he took my hand. He had tears in his eyes as he said, "Jamshed, this is the parting of the ways."²⁰ Contrastingly, Gandhi warned, "If the Nehru report is not accepted by or on behalf of the British people before the end of 31 December next, it will cease to have any meaning for me, I must declare myself an independence wallah."²¹

On 05 February 1929, Jawaharlal addressed a young audience in Delhi and said, "The British Government is afraid of Soviet principles and is trying its best to uproot socialist ideas and not to allow any communist to preach his gospel....But the government should know that ideas can never be checked by cruel laws."²² During 1929 Jawaharlal catapulted the power and Congress crown from several old rivals. Because he had become the darling of Indian youth and his participation in with the comrades in Second and Third Internationals, he emerged as a leader of labour movement in India. It later on helped his cause of strikes in several large cities and towns. The western education, Marxist-Leninist ideas and formulas for revolution he had learned in Ireland and Moscow.²³

On 12 Mach 1929, the Nehru Report came up for debate in the Central Legislative Assembly. When Nehru Committee Report was published all Muslim political parties opposed it. It was an unsuccessful attempt to prepare a future's constitution of India. Jinnah was no more willing to vote as Motilal advised and abjulatory with his report. He claimed on 12 March, "I know, the Nehru Report is my Honourable friend's pet child, but I am speaking dispassionately and I want him to realise, and the sooner he realises it the better – that it is not acceptable to the Muslims."²⁴ Finally he had to bury his faith in Hindu-Muslim unity, Lucknow Pact of 1916 and the title "India's best ambassador".

On 28 March, Jinnah presented his famous 'Fourteen Points' at the Muslim League Council Session in Delhi and it was decided by the League if this resolution was rejected, "no scheme for the future constitution of the Government of India would be acceptable to the Muslims."²⁵ The demands of Muslim League for reservation of seats, separation of Sind, extension of the Reforms to N. W. F. P.

and Baluchistan, were all opposed by the Hindu Mahasabha. Muslim League was not ready to consider other constitutional matters unless and until an agreement was signed in regard to the communal issue. The Hindu Mahasabha met at Jubbulpore under the presidentship of N. C. Kelkar (1872-1947)²⁶ and passed a resolution against the separation of Sind from Bombay.

Gandhi and Congress rejected the Fourteen Points of Jinnah, and Sabhaites were not agreed to make any promise with him. Some Congressmen had already made their minds; they would not cooperate with Jinnah regarding any issue. Moonje wrote a letter to Gandhi on 5 August, "not to agree any modification of the Nehru Report in order to placate the Muslims." Another letter he wrote to Malaviya, who had "intimate relations with Jinnah, not to negotiate with him."²⁷

The denunciation of Gandhi and other leaders spoiled the chance of negotiations with Jinnah. Gandhi refused to fulfil his promise with Jinnah, he would give a 'blank cheque and a swadeshi pen with which to sign it'...which infuriated the latter who said he wanted not a 'blank cheque' but the 'fourteen points' and was not concerned with the involution of Gandhi's mental process.²⁸ On 11 August, Gandhi came back in Bombay and tried to convince Jinnah to accept the 'Nehru Report', but Jinnah could not agree. The Continuous rejection of his proposals and efforts, he burst out on the Muslims, British and Hindu leadership.²⁹

On 19 June, Jinnah wrote to his old friend and new prime minister of Great Britain, Ramsay MacDonald, "The present position is a very serious deadlock and if allowed to continue it will, in my judgement, prove disastrous both to the interest of India and Great Britain."³⁰ He warned him with the current political conditions of India and with the mistrust of the Indians in Great Britain. He suggested him the Dominion Status and Round Table Conference for the political solution of Indian problem. Wolpert argued, "Actual credit for both ideas belongs not to the Irwin but to his new unacknowledged advisor, Jinnah."³¹

Jinnah viewed positively, as compare to Jawaharlal, the Labour Party's returned to power. He went Simla for long talks with Viceroy Irwin. He listened Jinnah wisely and carefully, especially his suggestions. Irwin believed that the Simon Commission had proved as inaccurate, out-dated and misguided. His prime focus was to restore the Indian confidence in the British government. Jinnah further advised him the declaration of Dominion Status and the Round Table Conference. On 14 August 1929, Ramsay MacDonald privately replied to his letter as:

I am very sorry, but owing to a mistake your letter of the 19th of June was not put immediately before me. Let me say at once how much I appreciate the spirit in which it was written and how glad I would be to meet it in any way possible...But one thing I can say here, – because I have said it before that we want India to enjoy Dominion status.³²

It was an optimistic attitude shown by MacDonald and pleased Jinnah, his efforts brought fruit. He replied his letter on 07 September, "If you carry out my suggestion with which I am glad to find that you are in accord, it will bring open up a bright future for India and the name of Great Britain will go down in history as one nation that was true to its declaration."³³ The Viceroy Irwin conveyed the same hopeful message to Jinnah and Motilal. Motilal order Jawaharlal to convey the Working Committee to gather in Delhi on 01 November, to respond the offer of Viceroy.

On 31 October, Viceroy Irwin announced a Round Table Conference next year in London to resolve the Constitutional problem of India and to implicit in the declaration of 1917 would lead to the Dominion Status. In a public statement Jinnah responded to Irwin's announcement, "welcomed as a fundamental change."³⁴

In a Delhi Working Committee meeting agreed on a manifesto, which initially written by Motilal and Gandhi convinced Jawaharlal to sign after his amendment of it. He had to agree with Working Committee and its recommendations. They wrote as, "We appreciate the sincerity underlying the declaration, as also the desire of the British Government to placate Indian opinion."³⁵ It was very hard for Jawaharlal to sign such manifesto which he had spoken against so angrily and forcefully. He felt betrayed with his comrades and facing agony, headache and brain fever.

On 04 November, he wrote to Gandhi and expressed his feelings, "I can take, I think, a calmer view of the situation than I could two days ago but the fever in my brain has not left me... something

seems to have snapped inside me evening before last and I am unable to piece it together... I believe that we have fallen into a dangerous trap.”³⁶ Gandhi replied him with apologetic tune and advised him to act according his inner voice. He tried to rescue him from the struck condition and wrote, “I have always honoured your resistance. It has always been honourable... Resist me always when my suggestion does not appeal to your head or heart... In my opinion your signature was logical, wise and otherwise correct. I hope therefore that you will get over your dejection and resume your unflinching cheerfulness.”³⁷

On 08 November, he wrote again to Jawaharlal, “you must not resign now... It will affect the national cause... May God give you peace.”³⁸ His followers were unhappy on his compromise with the Congress elites. On 04 December, one of his followers and friends wrote him, “your signature to the Delhi manifesto was a betrayal of the Indian masses in the struggle of independence.”³⁹ His followers were demanding his resign from the Congress and suggesting him to launch an All India Anti-Imperialist Federation on the lines of Soviet revolution. Birlas, Tatas, leading financiers and industrialists, and other major supports of Gandhi found Jawaharlal far less appealing. Because, he was emerging as a serious threat for Imperialism and to pro-British industrialists. That's why, he was not invited by Viceroy Irwin, and for discussion he invited Jinnah, Gandhi and Motilal. He argued on it, “I do not know who took the initiative in arranging this interview.... Gandhi and my father were present....Representing the Congress view-point....The interview came to nothing; there was no common ground, and the two main parties – the Government and Congress – were far apart from each other. So now nothing remained but for the Congress to go ahead.”⁴⁰

It was the beginning of his political blunder that he was considering only two main parties in India, later on, this attitude paved the way for third party, the Muslims. Viceroy offered Jinnah, Gandhi and Motilal that if they agreed to accept his invitation to the Round Table Conference, he would offer them doing something big. This offer was accepted by Jinnah, but Motilal and Gandhi were restrained by Jawaharlal's threat of resignation from Congress. On 29 December, the annual session of Congress was held in Lahore and presided by Jawaharlal.

He harangued the public gathering and presented a new tricolour flag of saffron, white and green. He pledged, “I have just unfurled the national flag of Hindustan. I want you to take a vow that you will have sufficient strength to protect this flag, and that you are ready to sacrifice your lives for freedom.” In addition, he asserted on national unity for the goal of freedom. He gave the brief outline of Indian history and criticized the invaders, “the coming of the Muslim the equilibrium was disturbed.”⁴¹ He showed his great concern to restore the harmony of ancient India. He had the Marxist view of world history and seeing the Indian problems in economic class conflict. For the Independence Day Pledge, he was preparing his followers, to the attainment of complete Independence for India abstain from participating directly or indirectly in any future elections and he ordered to Congressmen associated with any assembly to resign their seats.⁴²

Further he was mobilizing his followers to be ready for the Civil Disobedience, including abandon pay taxes. Motilal surrender before his son and started to listen his voice attuned with the mind of Gandhi. Finally, Gandhi acknowledged his inveterate demand to announce the complete independence of India. For the cause of complete Independence he called for a national day of celebration on Sunday, 26 January 1930. Thousands of crowded meetings were held and proclamation of national freedom was read out in different languages which were written by Gandhi and Jawaharlal.⁴³

He proclaimed, “The British Government in India has not only deprived the Indian people of their freedom but has based itself on the exploitation of the masses, and has ruined India economically, politically, culturally and spiritually. We believe, therefore, that India must sever the British connection and attain *Purna Swaraj* or Complete Independence... we will therefore prepare ourselves by withdrawing, so far as we can, all voluntary association from the British Government, and will prepare for civil disobedience, including non-payment of taxes.”⁴⁴

Now the Jawaharlal had become the mass leader and his charisma was enchanting the Indians. Gandhi began to prepare for the Campaign of civil disobedience to give effect to the Independence Pledge. Jawaharlal made specific commitments to the minorities, because he wanted the Muslim

population behind this campaign. But prominent Muslim Congressmen like, Ansari, Tassaduq Sherwani and Khaliqzaman disliked the campaign. Gandhi embarked on the first act of law breaking that not only captured the attention of the Indians but also the world. He denied to pay the salt tax and started his historic march of 241-Miles from his *Sabarmati Ashram* to the Gujrat sea coast of Dandi. Substantially, Gopal argued, "Till now they had failed in achieving Hindu-Muslim unity because they had been working on wrong lines; they should seek it on an economic basis and in the course of the fight for freedom."⁴⁵

On 6 April 1930, the anniversary of Jallianwala Bagh, he decided to break the law and manufactured salt. On 09th April, he sold the packets of salt in the city and Jawaharlal arrested on 14th April to assist Gandhi in salt making on 11th April. He admitted to the magistrate that "I have deliberately broken the salt laws" and he was sentenced to six months in prison. He had been kept in the 'A' class, provided the facilities of "once a fortnight he could have one interview, write one letter and receive one."⁴⁶

After few days later on 5 May, Gandhi was arrested and Jawaharlal called it, "full-blooded war to the bitter end. Good."⁴⁷ In the absence of Jawaharlal his father presided over a meeting of Congress Working Committee on 12 May 1930. The meeting decided to continue the boycott of foreign cloth and to inaugurate a no-tax campaign.

On 11 October 1930, Jawaharlal released from jail. He resumed his presidency of the Congress and addressed a public gathering on 12 October in Allahabad, "we are in deadly earnest, we have burnt our boats, we have taken the great resolve and there is no going back for us."⁴⁸ He issued a circular to all the provincial Committees, on 14 October, to launch a fresh offensive. To manufacture of salt and the boycott of the British goods, clothes and taxes.⁴⁹ After eight days of his release from jail, he was arrested on the charges of sedition, incitement to manufacture of salt and non-payment of taxes sentenced two years rigorous imprisonment, with additional five months if he did not pay his fine, five-hundred rupee.

On 24 October, he gave a message to his comrades, "I shall keep my promise and come to you when your heroine sacrifice and borne fruit and made India a free land, worthy of the heroes and heroines that inhibit her... Let this message of freedom be carried to field and factory... Be of good cheer, comrades, for the day of our deliverance approaches."⁵⁰ He was mistakenly believed that freedom was in sight and felt destined soon to see free republic of India. Motilal, the acting president of Congress, called for Indians to celebrate his son's forty-first birthday as 'Jawaharlal Day'.

It was celebrated at all India level, anti-British demonstrations around the country involving more than 20 million demonstrators. The serious measures were taken by the police, in action 20 people lost their lives and 1500 founded. It is the height of his charisma that his followers fearlessly following their charismatic leader. Once in 1928 Motilal wrote a letter to his nephew and shared his fear about Jawaharlal, "he will change the face of India. Such men do not usually live long; they are consumed by the fire within them."⁵¹

Conclusion

This comparative analysis elaborated the situational context which was a real challenge to the charismatic leadership of Jinnah, Gandhi and Nehru. The profound efforts of Jinnah to cooperate and the settle down the Hindu-Muslims question were set-aside by Gandhi, Nehru and Congress. As compare to Jinnah, they could not reckon the intensity of the situation which late on became the foundation of a serious deadlock between League and Congress. No doubt, Nehru emerged in Congress as young blood, emotional, aggressive, law breaker and impetuous. Jinnah had established his personality as a 'constitutionalist', who was interested to deal matters with in the paradigm of constitution. This Congress leadership's omit turned Jinnah into a communalist and it is a fact that they ruined his nationalistic ideas. Later on, it paved the way of Jinnah to emerge as a charismatic leader of the Muslim India.

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