

CHAPTER - V
POLITICS OF COMMUNALISM AND EDUCATION

In discussing about the politics of communalism and education, we will first explain the meaning of the word 'communalism' as understood here. 'Communalism' as used here is confined exclusively for the growth of separatism in politics and education among the Muslim community in the context of India's struggle for independence. We have taken only Muslim communalism because they were the dominant minority and also because their movement almost ran parallel to the movement as represented by the Indian National Congress. There is another reason why we have taken only the separatist movement of Muslims. It was this movement which finally led to the partition of the country and also bitterness which is even now the bane of Indian politics.

In analysing the relations between the political developments and growth of education, we have to take into account the two main streams of national movement in the country. One was represented by the Indian National Congress which though predominantly dominated by the politically conscious section of the Hindu Community represented all the communities in the country

and was secular in outlook. The other was exclusively led by the Muslim leadership and claimed an exclusive right to represent the Muslim community.

In this chapter we will be concerned mainly with the development of Muslim communalism as a separate lever for political struggle and how it affected the growth of education in general and the growth of Muslim education in particular.

To have a better historical perspective of the educational backwardness of Muslims we have to go back to the period when British hegemony was established. But one thing should be remembered in this connection that the British conquered India in stages. This is important to understand the uneven growth of the emerging institutional patterns including education in different parts of the country. It was not only from the Muslims that the British wrested political power but it were the Marathas, Sikhs and Nepalese also who finally surrendered ~~and~~ the territories to the British conquerors. However, the titular head of India was the Muslim emperor in Delhi and the final act in the British conquest meant a loss of political power on the part of the upper strata of Muslim society. The loss of political power meant not only a jolt to the prestige and pride to the Muslims but it also dislodged the ruling elites from their privileged

positions. The new political structure that was emerging in the wake of British conquest had also started making its effect felt in the economic, social and educational spheres. The hitherto privileged classes among the Muslims felt that a permanent injury had been inflicted upon their entrenched fortresses.

Another factor which proved to be of great importance was the rise of a professional class among the Hindus who had taken to western education much earlier than the Muslims. Sir Reginald Coupland in his paper 'Hindu-Muslim Antagonism' wrote thus.

...the Muslims failed to share in the intellectual renaissance which the acquisition of the English language and of the knowledge of western science and thought which it conveyed, was bringing about in Hindu India. It was the connexion between education and government that forced the Muslims to bestir themselves.¹

Sir Percival Griffiths lists four major causes for the backwardness of Muslims.²

- i) Replacement of Mughal by British empire.
- ii) Ousting of Muslims from privileged position in land and administration.
- iii) Apathy towards English learning.
- iv) Further depression in Muslim mood after the mutiny.

¹The British in India, Imperialism or Trusteeship, (ed), Martin D. Lewis (Boston: D.C. Heath & Company, 1966), p.78.

²Percival Griffiths, The British Impact on India, (London: Frank Cass & Company, Ltd., 1965), pp. 306-08.

It is not our intention here to trace the history of the growth of Muslim professional classes in the post-mutiny period. Neither do we propose to bring in the controversy of the special religious bias of Muslims towards western education system. What we are concerned here is the growth of politics along communal lines and how it affected the educational growth.

The role of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan in bringing the Muslim elites on a common platform and the establishment of Muhammadan Educational Conference in 1886 has been discussed in Chapter II.³ We will now discuss how the emergence of Muslim elites in the later decades of the nineteenth century and the subsequent events helped in the consolidation and drifting of Muslim elites towards separatism in politics and also in education.

Consolidation of Muslim Elites

The educated elites forming the core of the Indian National Congress had put certain political demands like more representation in the Viceroy's Council and in higher services. In the earlier phases of the national struggle, the demands were put forward in the form of resolutions passed at the annual sessions of the Congress and were more in the nature of petitions. There was yet

³ See, Chapter II, pp. 79-81.

no talk of any 'self-government' in any form. The appeal was to the justice of British principles of democracy and to the institutional forms brought in by the British themselves. But a cleavage had already started showing itself between the educated elite and the ruling power. An element of suspicion of the educated classes had already set in and a search for more dependable allies was on from the side of the British. The search was on two fronts. On the one hand the British rulers had started cajoling the landed aristocracy as the only section in society with a 'real stake' in the land, which meant that their preservation was entirely dependent on the permanence of the British rule and the institutional forms that were associated with that rule. On the other front they had now an opportunity to counterbalance the elites formed around the Congress with another elite group which had started taking shape around the Muslim community. It was in their interest that this elite consolidated its position and got strengthened. Education was a most handy instrument to bring together the Muslim upper classes before they could gather sufficient strength to unite on a common political platform. The partition of Bengal gave the necessary stimulus for that.

Separatism in Politics and Education

It is important to note that the All India Muslim League was formed in 1906 just an year ahead of the partition of Bengal. The partition of Bengal had two very significant effects - both important from the view point of influencing the educational development in the country. On the one hand it created a wave of resentment among the politically conscious middle class and upper middle class sections, most of whom had centred around the Indian National Congress. The movement for the first time escalated among a section of lower middle classes, students and teachers also. The entry of students and teachers had a great political significance. This became a regular feature of the fight for freedom in subsequent years. This also for the first time brought the question of a national system of education as separate and distinct from the already established educational system under the patronage of the rulers. Another effect was the crystallization of a radical section within the Congress. On the other hand the partition also accelerated the process of consolidation of Muslim elites. This section hailed partition as a strong guarantee for the development of education among the Muslims in Eastern Bengal and Assam. The partition also gave this section an opportunity to get themselves

entrenched in higher administrative posts which was not easy for them in the undivided Bengal.

The new class of Muslim elites was trying to strengthen its position and in that process used education as a plank. We give below a few extracts from the memorial sent in the name of the inhabitants of Eastern Bengal and Assam to John Morley, the then Secretary of State for India in Council dated Dacca, 16-10-1906.

... but above all the existing Province has enabled the consolidation of the Mahommadan Community as a whole under one Government which your memorialists consider to be of the greatest advantage to them and their community.... The advantage of a Provincial Council which will give the landholders and educated middle class of the Province greater opportunities of securing a seat in the local council and will enable them to bring to notice and bring local difficulties and inconveniences of the people... The educational facilities which have hitherto been meagre will be now vastly increased and will be on a par with those of the other Provinces of India.⁴

The consolidation of the Muslim elites brought it into direct confrontation with the nationalist forces mainly dominated by Hindu elites in the wake of the partition. The relative educational backwardness of Muslims in Bengal was exploited by the elites among them in strengthening their own political position.

⁴Government of India, Home Department (Education), Proceedings Nos. 82-89, December 1906.

In their confrontation with the nationalist forces, the Muslim elites also drew their strength from the feudal class of Muslims like the Nawab of Dacca. They dubbed the anti-partition agitation 'a handiwork of Hindu money lending and professional classes'. In a memorandum sent to the Viceroy by Moulvi Zahir Uddin Ahmed, President Kankinara Mahommedan Association, Bhatpara, 24-Parganas, dated 8th August, 1905, it was stated that, "... the money lending classes who acquired landed interests by lending money to oldest houses of Zamindars are really the ring-leaders of whole movement".⁵ Thus they tried to bring in a cleavage between the Hindu professional classes and business classes on the one hand and the Hindu feudal interest on the other.

It is of interest to note how educational demands were put forward also as to fit in the scheme of political consolidation of this elite group of Muslims. The main demands put forward were,

- i) removing the educational backwardness of Muslims, and
- ii) making Urdu as the second language of instruction.

To gain the goodwill of the rulers, they wanted that educational institutions should keep aloof from the anti-partition agitation and to ensure the development

⁵Government of India, Home Department(Education), July 1906, Proceedings Nos. 228-231.

of Muslims, they wanted to get due representation in Government jobs.

Before examining these demands, note should also be taken of the fact that political consolidation was taking place at the provincial level also. The Provincial Muhammadan Association of Eastern Bengal and Assam was formed in 1905 and an off-shoot of this association was 'Provincial Mohammadan Educational Conference'. Amongst the demands put forward by the Association notice may be taken of i) the introduction of Urdu as an optional second language in Primary schools, and ii) the appointment of Muslims more largely in ministerial services.⁶

We will now discuss about the demands relating to educational backwardness of Muslims and recognition of Urdu as the second language.

Educational Backwardness of Muslims

A lot has been written and said about the general backwardness of Muslims in education in comparison to the Hindus. Loss of political power and their faith in religious education have been stated to be mainly responsible for their educational backwardness, especially in the earlier phases of the introduction of western education. But looking at the facts as they are, these

⁶Government of India, Home Department (Education)
December 1906, Proceedings Nos. 102-103.

arguments do not seem to be convincing. The position taken by us regarding the educational status of Muslims could be studied and analysed better if we take into account the following factors.

- i) The progress made by Muslims in western education was not uniform. The same was true in the case of Hindus also.
- ii) The comparison of education amongst the Muslims with those of Hindus has not been done in a scientific manner. While amongst Hindus, the figures are given caste-wise (Brahmins and non-Brahmins) among the Muslims, no such data is available on the basis of their social and economic status. Granting that rigid caste-distinctions did not exist among them as among the Hindus, there were distinctions of social status and certainly of economic status. The comparison is many times made with Brahmins, which is a highly biased comparison.

The Uneven Development of Education Among Muslims:

We will give the evidence from the data as available in quinquennial reviews, government records and also from some secondary sources.

Anil Seal gives the following facts about North Western Province and Oudh.

...in relative terms the Muslims held more than their share. In 1871, 18 per cent of all those under instruction were Muslims. Ten years later they were 20 per cent of the high and middle school pupils, and 13 per cent of the college students... In the growing competition for education in the second half of the century, these Muslims of upper India had shown themselves at least as alert as the Hindus. Here there was no question of their being prejudiced against State education. In fact, as one Director of Public Instruction in Oudh noticed, Muslims were more ready to avail themselves of its benefits than the Hindus were. As for Muslims being averse to English education 'whatever may be the case in Bengal or elsewhere, it is not so in Oudh.'⁷

The author substantiates the point further.

By the mid-century, Calcutta's 'higher and more respectable' Muslims were already showing a growing desire for sound English education, and it became increasingly clear that what held them back from the new learning was poverty rather than religious prejudice.⁸

⁷ i) Resolution, Government of India, Home Department (Education) 15 July 1885, Muslim Selections, Part 3, p.381, Quoted in Anil Seal, The Emergence of Indian Nationalism, (London: Cambridge University Press, 1968), p.306.

ii) RDPI (Oudh) 1875, Pp.7-9. "English Schools in fact flourished more easily in Muslim towns such as Kakori, Bilgram and Jais than in conservative Hindu towns such as Ajodhya, So, 'In Oudh itself the political danger, if there is one lies in there being too many educated Mahommedans to find employment in the public service." Quoted in Ibid., p.306.

⁸ Ibid., p.309.

The quinquennial review of 1902-07 gives the following figures in respect of the education of Muslims as compared to Hindus.⁹

	<u>Percentage to total population.</u>	<u>Percentage of pupils to total numbers in secondary schools.</u>
Brahmans	5.1	25.3
Non-Brahmans	63.0	48.3
Musalms	23.5	15.0

Though in comparison to Brahmins, the education of Muslims in terms of their proportion to total population is considerably lower, the difference is marginal when compared to non-Brahmins. It must also be borne in mind that percentage is given for the Muslims as a whole. The picture would be entirely different if the calculations had been made in terms of higher and lower strata of the Muslim population. The regional imbalances among the Muslims were also great. The thickly populated province of Eastern Bengal was having the bulk of the Muslim population which was mostly residing in rural areas and were engaged in farming under the Hindu landlords. The growth of western education was mainly confined to urban areas even as late as the twenties of the century. Moreover, institutions imparting higher education were located

⁹Progress of Education in India, 1902-07, Vol. I (Calcutta: Supt. Government Printing, 1909), p.67.

in urban centres. The population that was mainly confined to rural areas suffered due to its geographical location. Regarding the general stage of educational developments among the Muslims, the quinquennial review of 1902-07 giving a province-wise picture pointed out that in Bengal there had been a steady rise in the number of Muhammadans receiving instruction of all kinds. The Muhammadan increase had been proportionately higher than the general increase. In U.P. though they were losing lead, they still had more children in education than the Hindus. In secondary education they were even better represented than in primary. In Punjab, though behind Sikhs and Hindus, they were gradually coming to the same educational level as the other communities there. Only in Eastern Bengal and Assam, the advances made by them were mainly in the field of primary education.¹⁰

With this brief survey of the educational development of Muslims in the country as a whole and in some of the provinces, we come back to the problem of linkage of educational growth with the political development. In upper India, the larger proportion of the Muslims lived in towns and among those living in rural areas, many were

¹⁰Progress of Education in India, 1902-07, Vol.I, op.cit., pp. 282-84.

landlords. The administrative overhaul had been less drastic in upper India compared to Bengal. Urdu remained the language of administration for many years. In Bengal the position was entirely different. Due to the destruction of old administrative structure and replacement of Urdu as the language of administration, the Muslims were forced out from their privileged positions by the Hindu professional classes. Thus, the economic conditions and the state of political affairs were the main factors influencing the educational growth. Religion was at best playing a negative role in making the economically and politically backward Muslims a prey to the propaganda of fanatics. The advanced sections of the Muslims realised this and blended educational demands with their demands for political privileges. Thus the creation of a separate province of Eastern Bengal and Assam and later the principle of separate representation were considered to be important factors contributing to the growth of education among the Muslim community.

Urdu as Second Language of Instruction:

As early as 1901, Urdu was being used as a political lever to arouse separatist feelings among the Muslims. Even in Bengal, where Bengali was the language of both Hindus and Muslims, the demand was being put forward to provide separate institutions for Muslims in the name of

preserving their cultural entity. It was alleged that in institutions attended predominantly by the Hindus, Bengali was taught exclusively and the courses were based on Hindu mythology and religion. The Muhammadan Association of Eastern Bengal and Assam formed in 1905 was consulted by the Provincial Government on the introduction of Urdu as an optional second language in Primary Schools.¹¹ This demand was political and it could not be justified on linguistic grounds. In a note by Nomshere Ali Khan Eusofzi, Pakullah, Mymensingh, on Muhammadan Education in Bengal, it was recorded,

...that in Bengal the Bengali language is used not by the Hindus alone but by over 99 per cent of the Mahommedans.... Hence no difficulty is experienced in speaking Bengali by the Musalmans of whom 95 per cent use it as mother tongue and more than 80 per cent knows no other language except Bengali.¹²

With the consolidation of Muslim elites and the formation of All India Muslim League, the question of Urdu as the medium of instruction assumed more and more a political character and was used by the Muslim political leadership to consolidate their own power. The demand for making Urdu a second language now turned into

¹¹Government of India, Home Department (Education)
December 1906, Proceedings Nos. 102-103.

¹²Government of India, Home Department (Education)
October 1901, Proceedings No.9

making Urdu compulsory and also the medium of instruction for Muslim students. The 'Weekly Chronicle' (Sylhet) of 1908 remarked: "...despite the fact that the Bengal Muhammadans speak Bengali, a movement has been set on foot to make the teaching of Urdu compulsory with all Muhammadans and to make Urdu the medium of instruction for Muhammadan youths"¹³

Growth of Communalism in Politics

The growth of Muslim professional classes and their political consolidation had prepared the necessary ground for introduction of the principle of separate representation. Establishment of Muhammadan Educational Conference, Muslim League and the partition of Bengal were all steps leading towards communal politics. And when the delegation of Muslim League presented their demand for communal representation before the Viceroy it was readily conceded.¹⁴

The following reasons could be given for extending the principle of separate representation and thus inducing communalism in politics.

¹³The Weekly Chronicle, 1908, Government of India, Home Department, Selections from Native Newspapers, 1908.

¹⁴K.B.Krishna, The Problem of Minorities or Communal Representation in India, (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1939), p. 99.

- i) With the rise of the nationalist movement, there was a fear that the rising generation of Muslims may be drawn towards the Indian National Congress. Minto had referred to this in his reply to the address of the Muslim League.¹⁵
- ii) The consolidation of the Hindu professional classes had already taken place. The Muslim professional classes had now found a platform of their own in the Muslim League. The granting of separate representation was a gesture to the Muslim professional classes. This further widened the cleavage already existing between them. The government used the Muslim professional classes as a counterpoise against the Hindu professional classes.
- iii) The All India Muslim League had drawn to its fold the majority of the Muslim professional classes and as a political factor it could now no longer be ignored.

The acceptance of separate representations for the Muslims in the Morley-Minto reforms was the first major

¹⁵Ibid; p. 107.

victory for the Muslim communalists. Once conceded it started a chain reaction and could not be reversed throughout the long period of the struggle for independence. On the contrary, with each major political change the principle of communal politics got further strengthened.¹⁶ A number of reasons could be assigned why this process could not be reversed. What we want to point out is that the growth of education among the Muslims was a contributing factor for the demand for separate representation.

The acceptance of the principle of separatism in politics gave rise to the demand for separatism in administrative services and education. The demand was now put forward more strongly that Muslims be given representation in all branches of administration in view of their numerical strength and political importance. In education, the demand grew for a separate Muslim university and also for special concessions to Muslim students far in excess of their numerical strength. Let us examine both these demands.

¹⁶See, Brown W. Norman, 'Nationalism, Communalism and Partition', The British in India, Imperialism or Trusteeship? (ed.), Martin D. Lewis, op.cit., p.98.

"It was the Morley-Minto Reforms that inaugurated modern Indian political communalism. ...In the two successive constitutions granted India after the Morley-Minto Reforms, namely those of 1919 and 1935, the principle of communal representation was extended instead of curtailed, and it thus became the most poisonous single feature of Indian politics in this century."

Representation in Administrative Services

It was natural that with the growth of the Muslim professional classes, they would aspire for getting more and more into the administrative machinery of the government. In this they were facing a keen competition from the Hindu professional classes who had an edge over them due to their early start in the race. To meet this challenge they sought justification for their demand on political grounds by saying that they deserved due representation in view of their 'political importance'. There was hardly any ground on which the idea of 'political importance' could be justified. It was now more than a century that political power had been wrested by the British. In fact, it was not only from the Muslims that this power had been acquired. Hindu rulers like Marathas, Rajputs, Sikhs who had already established their own kingdoms were defeated by the British. Thus the idea of political importance applied equally to them. The only consideration which could be justified in case of Muslims was their relative backwardness in comparison to the advanced sections of the Hindus. The principle of representation on the basis of numerical strength was also illogical as a vast number of Hindu population like scheduled castes and backward communities were also poorly represented and perhaps to

a greater extent than the Muslims. Advanced sections among the Muslims were also taking full advantage of education and government jobs. To treat them as a separate identity requiring special treatment was a retrograde step which instead of reducing communal strife encouraged it. Any special consideration to them kept them segregated from the Hindus and this aggravated the feeling of separatism. But the actions of the government were motivated by the express purpose of playing up the communal views in politics. Their actions also corroborated it. In a letter from H.E. the Hon'ble Sir George Sydenham Clarke, Governor of Bombay, to His Excellency the Viceroy, dated the 24th January, 1909, we find the following reference.

I feel strongly that we should recognise the Mahommedans as a community. This is already done to some extent, as we do (secretly) favour Mahommedans in the matter of appointments whenever a promising candidate presents himself. The Bombay Legislative Council scheme also recognises the Mahommedan Community, as it provides for at least four Mahommedan members in addition to two who would be returned from Sind and the proportion of elected Mahommedans will, therefore, be considerably higher than the population and still more the education basis can claim.¹⁷

Separatism in Education

The demand for separate educational institutions for the Muslims was a demand of their rising professional classes.

¹⁷ Government of India, Home Department (Public) February 1909, Proceedings, Nos. 205-244.

In the growing competition for higher posts in the administrative structure and more representation in the Legislative Bodies, the Muslim elites found that the call for separatism in politics and education could rally the general mass of their community on their side. So they used this separatism in politics and education as a rallying point to further their own interests. This was a retrograde step as far as the growth of Indian Nationalism was concerned. Instead of consolidating the nationalist forces, it helped to drive a wedge between different communities. The support and encouragement to such institutions by the British was a calculated move to divide the rising nationalist tide. This was not a peculiar feature of British Imperialism. Education developed in capitalist countries on distinct class lines. The privileged few representing the top classes had their education in special schools like Public Schools in England. For the working classes and the general mass of people a bare literacy given in elementary schools was thought to be sufficient. In India due to the existence of two major communities, separatist tendencies in one community got encouragement from the rulers. This was specially so in that phase of political developments when the nationalist movement was getting divided into two broad streams, one represented by liberalism and the other

by radicalism. A third centre around communalism was in the political interest of the rulers and obviously got their support.

The demand for separate educational institutions for the Muslims had begun much earlier than the award of separate representation to them. It was an outgrowth of the development and consolidation of Muslim elites in the last decade of the nineteenth century. As early as 1901 the idea of a separate Muslim university to further the growth of education among them got circulation.¹⁸ But the demand for a separate Muslim university got strength only after the grant of separate representation to Muslims by Morley-Minto Reforms. This demand had two aspects.

- i) To serve as a rallying point for the Muslim professional classes. It was also to serve as a political nerve-centre for these classes.
- ii) For the British it was a counter-balancing force against the nationalist forces.

Demand for Separate Muslim University:- The demand for the establishment of a separate Muslim University at Aligarh was an outgrowth of the demand for separate representation in the Council and Provincial Assemblies

¹⁸Note by Nomshere Ali Khan Eusofzi, Pa^rullah Mymensingh, on Muhammadan Education in Bengal dated 21st Sept., 1901. Home Department (Education), October 1901, Proceedings No.9.

See, Chapter II, p. 83.

after the Morley-Minto Reforms. The establishment of Anglo-Oriental College at Aligarh in 1877 was a clear sign of the consolidation of Muslim elites in opposition to the predominantly Hindu elites in the Indian National Congress. The political importance of the Anglo-Oriental College was clearly recognised by the British. The notes exchanged between Sir H.A. Stuart, Secretary to the Government of India, Home Department and Lieutenant Colonel J.R. Dunlop Smith, Private Secretary to His Excellency the Viceroy clearly bear this out. Sir H.A. Stuart in his letter dated 12-10-1908 expressed his views thus.

On political grounds it is of the highest importance that the success and efficiency of this college should be maintained unimpaired.... It is in the interests of British rule in India to do all we can to encourage and develop the education of Muhammadans.... It may be hoped that in time Aligarh will find imitators and that we shall have a similar college in the Muhammadan province of Eastern Bengal and Assam and perhaps another in the North-West of the Punjab or in the Frontier Province...we must see that Aligarh is not prevented by inadequate resources from meeting the demands of the new university Regulations and from fulfilling satisfactorily the requirements of the community which it serves.¹⁹

Thus the growth of the Muhammadan college was considered politically important and the policy was to encourage the growth of such institutions in other parts

¹⁹ Government of India, Home Department (Education),
November 1908, Proceedings No. 61.

of the country where the Muslims were in majority. The political importance of creating centres of education for the Muslims was to form a nucleus for the growing Muslim elites. The compulsions of political reforms would create a situation whereby this group of elites came in confrontation with the elites dominating the Indian National Congress. The vested interest around both these groups would also grow and could always be used as a political lever for the continuation of British rule.

It is of interest to note that side by side with the movement for establishing a separate Muslim university, a parallel movement for raising the status of Central Hindu College, Benaras to a national university was also afoot. Mrs. Annie Besant was at the forefront of this movement.

The need for a national university was also justified on political grounds. Here is an extract from the letter by Mrs. Besant to the Viceroy, dated the 26th July 1907.

Your Excellency is aware how firmly the Central Hindu College, Benaras - of which the University is the natural outcome - has stood against the mixing up of students in political agitation, and how loyalty to the Crown is there fostered.²⁰

²⁰ Government of India, Home Department (Education),
February 1908, Proceedings No.23.

The demand for raising the status of Anglo-Oriental College, Aligarh to that of a university and the creation of a National University at Benaras were both politically motivated. In the former case, the British rulers considered the consolidation of Muslim elites as a great support to their empire. In the latter case, they suspected the real motive behind the proposed national university, though the advocates of this scheme were giving an unmistakable assurance of loyalty to the empire. The obvious reason was that the opinion of the educated class in the Congress had started crystallizing during the period of Curzon's viceroyalty. When Morley - Minto Reforms were introduced the existing cleavage was widened further. The radical section rejected the reforms outright and the liberal section gave only a conditional support to them. Thus the educated leadership even among the liberals was not beyond suspicion of the government. However, their attempt was to woo this section of the leadership by giving a few concessions within the framework of the political structure. In the case of the Muslim educated classes, they had yet to emerge as a strong political force. It was in the British interest that this emergence be through a posture of confrontation with the elite group in the Congress. In this broad spectrum of claims and counter claims on the part of the

competing educated classes of both the groups, it became clear that separatism in education got impetus from the political decisions and could hardly be justified on educational grounds. There was no mincing of the words on the part of the rulers and they admitted it in their private or confidential correspondence.

Nevertheless, since the Muhammadan Community is united in demanding a University and a refusal would throw it into opposition to Government, it would palpably be unwise to refuse the application on the ground that the University will in fact be denominational.... While admitting, this, however, I do not feel in the least sanguine that any great benefit to education will result from its establishment.²¹

The idea mooted in the proposal for a national university for the whole country was finally abandoned by Mrs. Besant in favour of a Hindu University at Benaras. This modification was considered necessary and inevitable in view of the growing demand for Muslim university. The secular pretensions were thus thrown aside and it was a clear competition on communal grounds. It was stated that, "...the movement for a Moslem University has led to some modification of my more sweeping scheme and to my consenting

²¹ Extract from the confidential demi-official from Hon'ble Sir J.P.Hewett, to the Hon'ble Mr.S.H. Butler, dated the 3rd June 1911, Government of India, Department of Education, August 1911, Proceedings Nos. 1-2.

to make the petition one for a Hindu University."²²

The movement for separate Muslim and Hindu universities at Aligarh and Benaras got momentum in the succeeding years. The movement initiated by the Muslim and Hindu elites now started drawing support and patronage from the landed interests, Nawabs and Rajahas. It is of interest to go through the correspondence between the top bureaucracy in the government which fairly reflected the governmental thinking in this matter. The government thinking had started crystallising to the effect that acceding to the demand for separate universities for Muslims and Hindus was now only a matter of time. Taking this 'fate accompli' the best course for the government would be to direct the movements in such channels as could strengthen its hand politically. To ensure against the domination of professional classes, an early effort was needed to enlist the cooperation and active support of big landlords and aristocrats. We give below a few extracts from the notes exchanged between S.H. Butler, J.L. Jenkins and J.P. Hewett, all members of the Viceroy's Executive Council.

²² Extract from the D.O. dated Shanti Kunj, Benaras, the 13th April, 1911, from Mrs. Besant to the Private Secretary to the Viceroy, Government of India, Department of Education, July, 1911, Proceedings Nos. 141-153.

I am very strongly of opinion myself that we ought to face the inevitable and control the movement by directing it from the outset and being in touch with the leading men... I recognise that there is risk, but I think we must take risk and I am sure that we shall minimise the risk by leading the movement for a Hindu University and securing a good start for it... On the broadest political grounds too I advocate an attempt to carry the responsible Hindu leaders with us.²³

J.L.Jenkins, the Home member denied that the movement was irresistible. Without the approval and support of the government, nothing could be done. J.P. Hewett also thought the movement as inevitable but he held the government responsible for this state of affairs. It was the logical outcome of the policy of government pursued thus far in the field of education. He also cautioned against the new universities becoming the political hotbeds against the government.

It would be advantageous if we can only get a stable body such as would be furnished by the Ruling Chiefs and big landholders of British India, to check the unstable and democratic tendencies of the lawyers who hope to get all educational control into their own hands in such a matter as that of the establishment of a Hindu University.²⁴

To call the movement as irresistible was to absolve the responsibility of the government from the growth of

²³Note by S.H.Butler, dated 4-8-1911 Government of India, Department of Education, March 1912, Proceedings Nos. 54-59.

²⁴Butler's Note dated 4-8-1911, op.cit.

separatism in education between the Hindu and the Muslim communities. The main factors responsible for this movement were the following.

- i) Conceding the principle of separate electorate to the Muslim community by the Morley-Minto Reforms.
- ii) The emergence of Muslim elites at the end of the 19th century.
- iii) Rising political consciousness generated by the elite groups in the Indian National Congress. This led to a conflict with the government and emergence of a section of this elite group which was more radical and became suspect in the eyes of the government. To counter the effect of this group, the government sought alliance and co-operation with two groups, viz., ruling chiefs, landed interests etc., on the one hand and the Muslim elites on the other.
- iv) Confrontation between the government and the nationalist forces during and after the partition of Bengal. This conflict brought the question of national education into the fore. Active politics had now entered the citadels of educational institutions. The government therefore tightened its control over the

educational institutions. Any policy decision on education or any new scheme on education was first weighed in terms of its likely political effect. The encouragement to Muslim education was considered to be important from the point of view of its far reaching political consequences. The reaction of the government for the establishment of the Muslim university at Aligarh and the Hindu university at Benaras were also coloured by political considerations. As the middle class professional groups, especially among the Hindus were politically suspect, the landed aristocracy and the ruling chiefs were associated more and more in the movement for these two universities. Their opinion carried more weight with the government and influenced the government's decision.

The Maharaja of Darbhanga was the man of confidence for the government to deal with the question of Hindu university. A confidential letter from S.H. Butler to the Maharaja of Darbhanga, dated the 12th October, 1911 stated.

Among the conditions which his Excellency the Viceroy read out to you on the 10th instant was the following:

That the movement must be entirely educational, not political, and that all classes should be represented on it and on the university in a manner acceptable to Government.²⁵

Communal Politics and General Impact on Muslim Education

The emergence of an elite among the Muslims as a separate political power centre and its acceptance as such by conceding the demand of communal representation prepared the ground for special concessions in the educational field. The separation in education was not confined to the demand for a Muslim university. It affected the educational growth of the Muslims in various other aspects. While affecting the quantitative growth of education among the Muslims, it also introduced the principle of segregation and induced special measures to make the community more responsive towards education.

The growth of separatism in education had both positive and negative effects on the growth of education among the Muslim community. On the positive side the special inducement given and the provision of separate institutions gave an impetus to the spread of education among the community in the earlier period. But with the passage of time when

²⁵Government of India, Department of Education, March 1912, Proceedings Nos. 54-59.

the education of the Muslim community caught up with the educational growth of the other communities, even this positive side lost relevance. The negative effects of separatism in education outweighed its advantages in the initial stages and became more pronounced later due to the growth of communal politics. In fact, when the segregate institutions and special concessions given for the growth of Muslim education had outlived their utility, the votaries of communal politics encouraged these measures for their own political benefit. Separatism in education, even if justified as a transient step continued to stay and allowed itself to be exploited for political purposes by the communalists. We will now discuss how the interplay of communal politics and separatism in education affected the growth of Muslim education.

Quantitative Growth of Muslim Education:

The quinquennial review of 1902-07 giving the general picture of Muslim Education made the following observation.

They are but little behind the rest of India in respect of the proportion of their numbers who are under instruction, but this result has not been attained without the offer of special inducement and facilities; and in respect of the proportion receiving higher education, they are very far below the average.²⁶

²⁶Progress of Education in India 1902-07, Vol.I, op.cit.
p. 232.

The following reasons for improvement are mentioned in the review.

- i) Special measures taken by the government to provide suitable educational facilities.
- ii) The more important factor is said to be the gradual change taking place in the community towards education. The earlier opposition to western education is said to be gradually disappearing. The growth in enrolment of Muslim pupils in public institutions rose from 18.8 per cent in 1902 to 19.5 per cent in 1907. The Muslim population was 22.6 per cent of the total population. For higher education, the only colleges maintained solely for Muslim students were the Government Madrassa at Calcutta, the aided Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College at Ali-garh in the United Provinces, and the Anjuman-i-Himayat-i-Islam institution at Lahore.²⁷

It is not possible to isolate a single factor and point out that it was responsible for this much growth in education at a particular time. What can be said on the basis of general trend of development is that a particular policy influenced the growth in a particular direction.

²⁷Progress of Education in India, 1902-07, Vol.I, op.cit., p.284.

For example, as noted above in the review, a major factor responsible for the growth of education among the Muslims was a change of attitude towards education. The more relevant enquiry would be to analyse the causes that brought about this change of attitude. The factors would again be multiple. But here also a few could be spotted which stand apart and prominent. What we feel of consequence for bringing about the change of attitude towards education was the consolidation of Muslim elites during this period. They had emerged as a distinct force demanding special concessions and political rights. In fact, the special efforts and concessions given by the government for the improvement of Muslim education were also partly a result of the consolidation of this elite group. Another important reason for adopting special measures for Muslim education were the government's own political strategy. To get the political support of the community was the aim and the policy towards education was directed to achieve this aim.

However, communal politics was on firmer grounds only after the award of separate electorates in the Morely-Minto Reforms. The educational scene also started to have angularities in terms of claims based on communal lines. We will now survey the position of Muslim education in the year 1912.

The quinquennial review (1907-12) gave this general picture of Muslim education.

The last nine years have witnessed a remarkable awakening on the part of this community to the advantages of modern education. Within this period the number of Muhammadan pupils has increased by approximately 50 per cent..... Still more remarkable has been the increase of Muhammadan pupils in higher institutions, the outturn of Muhammadan graduates having in the same period increased by nearly 30 per cent.²⁸

This 'remarkable awakening' for education was not confined to the Muslim community. The change in the attitude of the people was a common feature shared by all classes of people. "The quinquennium has witnessed a remarkable realisation on the part of almost all classes of the growing importance of education."²⁹

However, the overall increase in enrolment for Muslim pupils was more than that for pupils of all communities. As against the increase of 25.8 per cent for all the pupils, the increase for Muslim pupils was 32.3 per cent. Apart from the quantitative growth in education, the demand for special Muslim institutions grew in this period. Islamia College at Lahore and Peshawar and a few high schools were opened during this period. The demand for Muslim University at Aligarh became more prominent.

²⁸Progress of Education in India, 1907-12, Vol.I(Calcutta: Supt. Government Printing, 1914),p.xv.

²⁹Ibid., p.18.

This general account of the progress of Muslim education brings certain features into prominence which are linked up to the growth of communal politics. They may briefly be listed as follows.

- i) The demand for special institutions was a direct outcome of the special political concessions granted to the Muslims as a community.
- ii) The growth in higher education for Muslims was comparatively more than in the previous quinquennium. This may be attributed to the political awakening among the advanced sections of the community. The political consolidation of elites was responsible to a great extent for the political awakening.
- iii) The overall increase in Muslim education was also more than that of all communities put together. This may be attributed to the special concessions granted to them and also to the general awakening in the community. The political concessions given to them made the community a closely knit-force which could be activated by their leaders with comparative ease. Thus any action initiated by the leadership could be made popular and effective through the general mass of the community.

In spite of the 1st world war which broke out in 1914, the period of 1912-17 was marked by a general increase in the education of Muslims. The political awakening started earlier got further impetus.

The difficulties which have opposed the expansion of education and especially higher education among Muhammadans are gradually giving way. The percentage of Mussalman pupils to those of all communities bear almost the same proportion as the Mussalman population to the entire population,...

The increase in the education of Muslims was in all stages of education: primary, secondary and higher. In the field of primary education, the increase in enrolment for the Muslim pupils in Boys' primary schools during 1912-17 was 24 per cent. This increase was well above the overall increase of 14.7 per cent for all communities taken together.

In the secondary and higher stages of education the progress recorded for the total population was more rapid than in the field of primary education. The Muslim pupils who till now lagged behind in higher education made rapid progress clearing the backlog of their backwardness.

³⁰Progress of Education in India, 1912-17, Vol.I, (Calcutta: Supt., Government Printing, 1918), p. 27.

³¹Ibid., p. 105.

The general reasons applicable to the other communities for the rapid quantitative growth of education in the quinquennial review (1912-17) were the following.

- i) Strong sentiment growing in favour of professions which are deemed respectable and which provide a more or less sedentary life.
- ii) Effect of great economic changes like easier communications etc., resulting in the increase of wealth among the cultivating and the lower classes. The entry of cultivating and lower classes in the field of higher education increased the competition between them and the middle classes whose mainstay had always been to seek employment in various professions for which higher education was the only means. These reasons were however, operating with a greater force among the Muslim community.
- iii) Special educational facilities like scholarships, free-ships, special schools, separate inspecting staff etc., gave them an added opportunity to acquire the educational benefit.

The advance was being made in all stages of education, primary, secondary and higher by the Muslim community in a

bid to catch up with the education of advanced sections of Hindus. But the literacy level of Muslims was still lagging behind that of the all India figure. According to the 1911 census, it was 3.8 per cent as against 5.9 per cent for all races in India. But this comparative backwardness in literacy was also due more to the peculiar demographic position of the Muslims. According to E.Gait,

The low position of the Muhammadans is due largely to the fact that they are found chiefly in the North-West of India, where all classes are backward in respect of education, and in Eastern Bengal, where they consist mainly of local converts from a depressed class. In the United Provinces, Madras and the Central Provinces and Berar, they stand above or on equality with the Hindus, and the same is the case in Bombay excluding Sind.³²

The period immediately following the first world war was that of rapprochement between the political leadership of Indian National Congress and that of Muslim League. An agreed formula was worked out between them at the Lucknow Convention held in 1916. In spite of the political agreement at Lucknow the leading representatives of Muslims continued to harp on the old theme of Muslim backwardness in education.

³²Census of India, 1911, Vol.I, Pt. I, p. 296, Quoted in Progress of Education in India, 1912-17, Vol.I, op.cit., p. 198.

It was an opportune time to shed the separatist attitude in education but Muhammad Shafi giving his presidential address at the 13th Session of the All India Muhammadan Educational Conference at Aligarh on 27th December, 1916 spoke thus.

... the Muslim scholars constitute less than 1/9th of the entire body of students receiving University education, their number in Secondary and Primary Departments is approximately 1/5th of the total school-going portion of our population. Bearing in mind the fact that the Muslim Community constitutes roughly speaking a little over 1/5th of the entire population of India, these figures obviously disclose, so far as Muslim education is concerned, a highly unsatisfactory state of things in the higher rungs of our educational ladder.³³

The president avoided to mention the comparatively rapid growth of the Muslims in all branches of education during this period. Another important political factor which was of importance for India in the post war period was the Sevres Treaty which had imposed unequal terms on the Sultan of Turkey and resulted in the Pan-Islamic movement among the Indian Muslims also. The leadership of the Indian National Congress had also pitched high hopes on the expected reforms after the end of the war. The reforms did come but were on a low key. The Congress rejected these reforms as totally inadequate. However,

³³Times of India, Bombay 28-12-1916.

the liberal sections in the Congress broke away from it and supported the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms. Congress under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi decided to take recourse to agitation for securing political rights and the non-co-operation movement was launched in 1920. The Muslim leadership had already decided to launch an agitation in the country to undo the 'injustice' perpetrated on the Sultan of Turkey who was the 'Khalipha' also. To bridge the gulf between the political streams represented by the Congress and the League, a marriage of convenience took place between them to launch the stir jointly for achieving the goal of 'Home Rule' in the country and the revival of religious glory of Islam beyond the frontiers.

The unstable conditions created by these agitations were not conducive for the smooth development of education. The earlier spurt of growth tapered off and there was a temporary set-back in the quantitative growth in education. The education of Muslims was also affected.

The quinquennial review of 1917-22 reported that the increase in the number of Muhammadan schools has just kept pace with the growth of the Muhammadan population in British India. In 1921-22, the percentage of Muhammadan scholars to total scholars was 23.5 per cent while the percentage of Muhammadan population to the total population was 24.1.³⁴

³⁴Progress of Education in India, 1917-22, Vol. I, (Calcutta: Supt. Government Printing, 1923), p.200.

The popular upsurge generated by the Non-Co-operation and Khilaphat movements could have undone the principle of separatism in politics and education. But the Congress-League pact of 1916 recognised the principle of separate representation for the Muslim community and thus put it on firmer grounds. This compromise on principles was a retrograde step which might have appeared to give a facade of unity between these two political trends but it ruled out any future possibility of unity of action based on principles of one common nationality. The role that education could play in bringing out this unity was also relegated to the background. The segregation in education continued and in fact strengthened. When the Caliphate stir finally dried up at its source, the marriage of convenience between the Congress and the League was also desolved and the communalism in politics reappeared with a vengeance. It was now no longer confined to a fight for government posts or special privileges in the field of education. The battle was now carried into the streets between the Hindus and the Muslims in the name of religion. The institutions based on communal politics nursed the feeling of separatism further and became the mentors of political intrigues based on communalism. Discussing the extent of separatism in Muslim education the Auxiliary Committee of the Indian Statutory Commission reported.

... there are in almost every province a large number of recognised segregate institutions which are intended to meet Muhammadan requirements. In 1927, in Bengal, out of 1,109,237 Muhammadan pupils over 663,000 were in segregate institutions. In Bombay Presidency (excluding Sind) 85,001 out of 120,912 Muhammadan pupils in primary schools were in segregate institutions. In the United Provinces, out of 192,889 Muhammadan boys in primary schools 92,620 were in segregate institutions. In Bihar, out of a total of 135,695 Muhammadan pupils in all institutions, 86,384 were reading in segregate primary schools.³⁵

Describing this alarming growth of institutions on communal basis the Resolution of the Government of Bihar stated, "A decidedly disquieting feature in the sphere of primary education is the steadily increasing demand for the multiplication of institutions on a communal basis."³⁶

The demand was not only for separate institutions for the Muslims but also for Sanskrit pathshalas. "The report draws attention to the astonishing increase in the number of Sanskrit pathshalas and of maktabas during the last five years, accompanied during 1926-27 by an actual decrease in the total number of primary schools".³⁷

Justification for Segregate Institutions:

The existence of segregate institutions for the Muslims could be justified on two counts, (i) educational and (ii) political. The educational justification was

³⁵ Auxiliary Committee Review, p.194.

³⁶ As quoted in Ibid., p. 200.

³⁷ Ibid., p. 201.

given on the ground that Muslims as a community were backward in education and due to their insistence on religious education it was necessary to make provision of separate institutions. The argument was tenable to some extent in the earlier periods of educational development. But even during the earlier period, the marginal gains in enrolment of the Muslim pupils were upset by the virus that it injected in the body politic of the country. It created a permanent schism in the educational climate of the country. In later years when the education of the Muslim community caught up with the general education index of the country, there was hardly any justification of separate institutions on educational grounds. The policy of separatism in education was a logical outcome of communal politics and was used by the communal politicians in their own interests. Even the provision of special incentives and subsidies for the education of Muslims at the secondary and collegiate level was utilised for the consolidation of the political power of Muslim elites. For instance, the demand for special scholarship for higher education in the twenties were for legal education which could hardly be justified on the ground of economic opportunities or prevailing employment situation. The demand for special concession were thus political rather than educational and sought to be justified on political grounds.

It may be argued that we certainly do not desire to subsidize the production of lawyers, of whom there are already enough and that we ought to give medical or engineering scholarships only. The community, however, probably quite rightly, regard the production of more Moslem lawyers capable of becoming leaders as one of its most urgent political needs in view of their political struggle with the Hindus, and, when school committees are predominantly Moslem, they often deliberately permit the school to become a nursery for Moslem lawyers by allowing, or even encouraging, Moslem teachers to neglect their educational work in order to study law. At present, therefore, the demand for financial assistance to Moslem students of law is met in a manner that is educationally disastrous.³⁸

The growth of education among the Muslims had caught up and in some cases surpassed the general educational growth in the country by the thirties of the present century.³⁹ There was no reason on educational

³⁸ Government of India, Department of Education and Health, May 1922, Proceedings Nos. 156-175.

³⁹ Progress of Education in India, 1932-37, (Simla: Manager, Government of India Press, 1940), p. 242.

The percentage of Muslim pupils to Muslim population rose from 3.3 in 1921-22 to 4.7 in 1926-27 and 5.2 in 1931-32. In 1937 it was 5.5. In the period while the Muslim population was 24.7 per cent of the total population, the Muslim pupils formed 26.1 per cent of the total number of all communities.

The Bombay Report observed that the Muslims "...are decidedly in advance of the intermediate and backward Hindus and their percentage is much higher than the percentage of all communities or of Hindus as a whole."

(Bombay Report page 196, quoted in Ibid., p. 246) Similar trend was noticed in reports from Bengal, United Provinces also.

grounds alone to harp on the old theme of special type of education for the Muslim community. In fact, the segregation in education was detrimental in the long run to the community for which it was meant. The harmful effect of this policy had even been noticed earlier by the Auxiliary Committee of the Indian Statutory Commission. This is what they had to report on this issue.

...the official reports...indicate very clearly that, generally speaking, these institutions have done but little to raise the general standard of education among Muhammadans to that of other communities, that a great many of them are accentuating the educational backwardness of the community, that their enrolment is increasing year by year and that a continuance of these institutions on a large scale would be prejudicial both to the interests of Muhammadans themselves and to the public interest.⁴⁰

Separatism in education helped the vested interests among the community to strengthen their own political position and use education as a plank for political bargaining. But for the common mass it led to a policy of segregation in schools which hampered their growth politically as well as educationally. Politically they could not identify themselves with the main-stream of nationalism and became a prey of communal frenzy whipped up from time to time by the vested interests. Educationally

⁴⁰ Auxiliary Committee Review, p.199.

it led to unnecessary proliferation of institutions of sub-standard quality.⁴¹

In spite of the growth of communal politics the general political and educational awareness that had developed after the thirties was showing its effect on the growth of a desire for secular education among a section of the Muslim population.⁴² But the advocates of communal politics considered this tendency as politically unwise and did everything in their power to arrest this healthy trend. In spite of the overall rapid progress made by the Muslims in catching up and even in surpassing the all-India index of enrolment, this section of the leadership sensed a danger of losing their grip on the political situation if this trend continued. It sought to justify the continuation of separate schools on educational grounds. Thus, the report from Bengal stated.

...the politically conscious section of the Muslims feels... that there is a danger of Muslim boys losing their individual outlook if they attend general schools which are

⁴¹Progress of Education in India, 1927-32, Vol.I(Delhi: Manager of Publications, 1934), p.243.
"...the greatest handicap to progress in the higher ranges of education is that children in largely increasing numbers attend segregate schools."

⁴²Progress of Education in India, 1932-37, op.cit.,p.241.

"Although as religious institutions they are still popular with a certain section of the Muslim community, their limitations from the point of view of secular education are being increasingly recognised and Muslim boys and girls are now entering general institutions in larger numbers than before."

manned very largely (in some places almost exclusively) by non-Muslims and where the education given is more or less non-Islamic in character.⁴³

Thus the 'politically conscious' section of the Muslims were apprehensive of the Muslim boys and girls losing their 'individual outlook' and getting polluted by 'non-Islamic' education. The 'politically conscious' were in fact 'politically communal' in outlook and identified the 'individual outlook' with the 'communal outlook'. The 'non-Islamic' education was the secular education given in the general institutions. The net outcome of communal politics in education was this reprehensible outlook. The politically communal leadership of the Muslims wanted to keep the Muslim boys and girls away from the mainstream of the nationalist movement. They sensed the danger and rightly too that their identification with the general educational developments will check the growth of communal policies and the main plank of communalism will show signs of cracking. But the political situation favoured the communalists and this healthy development could not make much headway.

The policy of segregation in schools had yet another beneficial effect on the growth of education along healthy

⁴³Bengal Report, p.108, quoted in Progress of Education in India, 1932-37, op.cit., pp.247-48.

channels. It clouded a number of other factors which hampered the educational growth of the Muslims. For instance, in Bengal, where they formed a majority of the population, they were mainly agriculturists. The obstacles which prevented the spread of education in rural areas were many. To count a few, the poverty of rural masses, unsuitability of educational system to meet rural needs, inability of the rural economy to absorb the products of education, etc., were all real obstacles which prevented the rapid spread of education. But all these causes were applicable to other communities also. The policy of segregation which was mainly the outcome of Muslim communal politics brought the divisions on community basis down to the villages. Thus education which could act as an integrating force become a part of the interplay of communal forces.

The Widening Gulf: Role of Education

In order to understand the political antagonism between the Hindus and the Muslims, it is necessary to recognise that the conflicts and compromises were due to the power struggle between the rising middle classes of both the communities. With each instalment of constitutional reforms the conflicts and antagonism between the middle class leadership of both the communities increased. This was so because the political reforms gave

an added opportunity to the professional classes to increase their representation in the legislative bodies and the administrative services. The compromises that were effected from time to time between the political organisations such as the Congress and the Muslim League were based on the exigencies of the situation rather than on principles of political commitment.

The elections for provincial assemblies held in 1937 under a relatively wider franchise under the new constitution of 1935 made the breach wider between the Congress and the Muslim League. The Congress bagged a large majority of the general seats and nearly half of the total seats in the provincial lower houses. But the Congress contested only 58 of the 482 Muslim seats and won 26. Muslim League won only 4.6 per cent of the total Muslim votes.⁴⁴ The poor showing of the Muslim League in the elections was a jolt to the leadership which mainly represented the upper strata of the Muslims. For the first time the leadership felt the need to broadbase their movement and draw in the support of the Muslim masses. For the first time the League presented itself before the Muslim masses with an economic and social programme affecting their welfare. The induction of social and economic issues in the programme of the League gave an

⁴⁴R.P.Dutt, India To-day, (Bombay: People's Publishing House, 1947), p.380.

opportunity to the leadership to enlist younger elements in the movement. The separatist ideology developed in education over years in the past paid dividends in this new strategy adopted by the League.

How the League leadership reacted to the scheme of basic education as proposed in the educational conference held at Wardha in 1937 gives an insight into the estrangement in political policies affecting their attitude towards educational issues. In his presidential address delivered at the Patna session of the Muslim League in December 1938, M.A. Jinnah reacted to Wardha scheme of education in these words.

Take next the Wardha scheme of education. Were the Muslims taken into confidence when the scheme was under preparation? The whole scheme was conceived and its details worked out behind the back of the Muslims. Who is the author of this scheme? Who is the genius behind it. Mr. Gandhi. I have no hesitation in saying that it is Mr. Gandhi, who is destroying the ideal with which the Congress was started. He is the one man responsible for turning the Congress into an instrument for the revival of Hinduism. His ideal is to revive Hindu religion and establish Hindu raj in this country, and he is utilising the Congress to further this object.⁴⁵

This was a call to the Muslim educated classes to dissociate themselves completely from the basic education scheme. By branding Gandhi as a Hindu revivalist, Jinnah tried to make basic education appear as a part of Gandhi's

⁴⁵C.H. Philips, The Evolution of India and Pakistan, 1858 to 1947, Select Documents, (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), p. 351.

scheme to bring in the ideals of Hindu religion in the reconstruction of the Indian educational system. His aim was to prevent the educated elites among the Muslims to have an intellectual communication with the educated elites among the Hindus. Education in the hands of Muslim League had an exclusive appeal and in the forties when the demand for Pakistan was voiced, the Muslim youths educated according to the western system of education became a handy instrument for the propagation of the demand for Pakistan.

The stand taken by the All India Muslim Educational Conference on the report of the Central Advisory Board of Education on the post-war educational development plan for India clearly proves that the Muslim political leadership was not prepared to share in any plan of national education which did not give full weightage to their separatist demands. A special committee of the All India Muslim Educational Conference made the following recommendations.⁴⁶

- i) Compulsory education to be enforced though basic education should not be made obligatory.
- ii) Denominational schools should continue and they should be recognised.
- iii) Religion should form the basis of education.
- iv) In urban-speaking areas Urdu should be made the medium of instruction.

⁴⁶National Planning Committee Series, General Education and Technical Education & Developmental Research, (Bombay: Vora & Co., Publishers Ltd., 1948) pp. 193-94.

- v) There should be separate curriculum for Muslim Elementary schools.
- vi) There should be separate schools for Muslim boys and girls on principle.
- vii) Selective system for High schools should not be applied to Muslim community.
- viii) Seats should be reserved for Muslims both in High Schools and Universities. In the Universities the number of seats for Muslims should be doubled. Places and scholarships in Technical Institutions should be reserved for the Muslim students.
- ix) Number of Muslim men and women teachers to be appointed must be fixed.
- x) Education should be administered by individual autonomous units.
- xi) There should not be any strong Central Education Department.

The Congress also enlisted the support of the masses through the constructive programme of which education was an active constituent. It tried to integrate education as a part of the broad national movement. The League on the other hand made the appeal of education on communal lines and used it to further widen the breach between the two political movements. As in politics, it prevented the

growth of an all India outlook and approach to educational problems. The politics of separatism got the maximum support from the educated Muslims and it were they who were responsible for the popularisation of the demand for Pakistan among the Muslim masses. The Muslim masses were drawn to them because they had no other type of leadership. The encouragement to separatism in education helped in widening the cleavage in the two major Indian Communities.

The major premise taken in this chapter is that the growth of separatism in education was an outgrowth of the communal politics. The analysis is confined to only the Muslim community. The reason being that it was the dominant minority and its political consolidation on a communal platform finally led to the partition of the country. The emergence of elites among the Muslims started late in the nineteenth century and they used education as a most handy instrument to bring together the Muslim upper classes before they could gather sufficient strength to unite on a common political platform. The relative educational backwardness of Muslims was exploited by the elites to wrest maximum concession from the rulers and in consolidating their own position. But the argument of relative backwardness of Muslims in education has been stretched too far in reports on education. The comparison of education among the Muslims with the higher castes among the Hindus, especially Brahmins,

does not give a true picture. There was a large section among the Hindus which was equally if not more backward than the Muslims in education. Separatism in education grew more after the acceptance of the principle of separate representation in Morley-Minto reforms. The demands were put forward to give separate facilities to Muslims in education on the basis of their numerical strength as well as political importance. Both these grounds could hardly be justified except on political considerations. The demand for a separate Muslim university also got fillip after the grant of separate representations to the Muslims. A commonly held view that the demand for a separate Muslim university was a reaction to the demand for a Hindu university stands refuted in this study. The demand for a separate Muslim university was being voiced since the beginning of the present century. It gathered momentum only after the award of separate representation.

Separate educational facilities and concessions to the Muslims acted as an incentive only in the early period of their educational growth. But the negative effects of this policy outweighed the advantages of the initial stages. After the twenties and especially after the thirties, when the education of the Muslims caught up with the all-India index of educational growth, there was hardly any justification on educational grounds to continue the policy of

separation in education. It only helped the vested interests among the Muslims to strengthen their own political position and use education as a plank for political bargaining. For the common people, the segregation in education hampered their growth politically as well as educationally. In fact, the political leadership opposed and resisted the healthy trend of desegregation in education. The separatist ideology in education developed over years helped the leadership of the Muslim League to enlist active cadres from the educated youth for political purposes. This was very much visible in the forties when the demand for Pakistan was voiced.
