



# Lecture-38



## **Partition of India**

“Partition” – the division of British India into the two separate states of India and Pakistan on August 14-15, 1947 – was the “last-minute” mechanism by which the British were able to secure agreement over how independence would take place. At the time, few people understood what Partition would entail or what its results would be, and the migration on the enormous scale that followed took the vast majority of contemporaries by surprise.

The main vehicle for nationalist activity was the Indian National Congress, whose best-known leaders included Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru. Even before the 1940s, it had long argued for a unitary state with a strong centre; even though Congress was ostensibly secular in its objectives, organisations representing minority interests increasingly viewed this idea with suspicion, believing that it would entrench the political dominance of Hindus, who made up about 80% of the population.

At around 25% of its population, Muslims were British India’s largest religious minority. Under imperial rule, they had grown accustomed to having their minority status protected by a system of reserved legislative seats and separate electorates. The British system of political control hinged on identifying interest groups willing to collaborate, a governing style often described as “divide and rule”.

The prospect of losing this protection as independence drew closer worried more and more Muslims, first in parts of northern India, and then, after World War II, in the influential Muslim-majority provinces of Bengal and Punjab. In 1945-6, the All-India Muslim League, led by Muhammad Ali Jinnah, won a majority of Muslim votes in provincial elections. This strengthened the party’s claim to speak for a substantial proportion of, but never all, the subcontinent’s Muslims.

### **MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTION:**

#### **Q1. Consider the following statements regarding the “Pakistan” Resolution:**

- I. On 23 March 1940, the League moved a resolution demanding a measure of autonomy for the Muslim majority areas of the subcontinent.
- II. Sikandar Hayat Khan, Punjab Premier and leader of the Unionist Party, who had drafted the resolution, declared in a Punjab assembly speech on 1 March 1941 that he was opposed to a Pakistan that would mean “Muslim Raj here and Hindu Raj elsewhere ...
- III. The origins of the Pakistan demand have also been traced back to the Urdu poet Mohammad Iqbal, the writer of “Sare Jahan Se Achha Hindustan Hamara”.

Which of the following statement(s) is/are correct?

- A. Only I

- B. I and II
- C. I and III
- D. All of the above

**Answer: D**

**Q2. In which of the following day Muslim League announced “Direct Action Day”?**

- A. 16 August 1945
- B. 16 August 1946
- C. 16 August 1947
- D. 16 August 1948

**Answer: B**

**Q3. Who has given the two nation-theory?**

- A. Mahatma Gandhi
- B. Muhammad Ali Jinnah
- C. Sardar Ballabh Bhai Patel
- D. Jawaharlal Nehru

**Answer: B**

**Q4. Who is the author of the book ‘The Other Side of Silence’?**

- A. Khuswant Rai
- B. Urvashi Butalia
- C. Khushdeva Singh
- D. Mahatma Gandhi

**Answer: B**

**Q5. Who among the following described his relief work in his title Love is Stronger than Hate: A Remembrance of 1947?**

- A. Khuswant Rai
- B. Urvashi Butalia
- C. Khushdeva Singh
- D. Mahatma Gandhi

**Answer: C**