

Political Development and the Political Parties in Punjab: 1849-1947

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Abstract

Reviewing various political vicissitudes which Punjab had to pass through since its annexation in 1849 to its partition in 1947, the present article aims at studying both the political development as well political parties in the area under consideration. The article appraises the nature and working of political parties as a part of political development. The phenomenon of political development in this article is treated as a negative force exhausting the province on communal lines resulting in to its partition on communal lines in 1947.

Key Words: Politics; Parties; History; Elections; Communalism; British India

I. Introduction

Punjab was the last province of Indian sub-continent to be annexed by the British in 1849 A. D. It however stood the first province where the Muslim majority was able to assert itself and to make it heard (Ikram, 1997: 197). Reasons were purely political. With the ending of despotic rule of the Sikh suzerainty, the British gradually planted representative political institutions, for their own convenience. It established the numerical majority of the Muslims. (Kerr, 1979: 281-283)

The Punjab which was conquered by the British from the Sikhs in 1848 A. D., also included the districts which were later formed into North West Frontier Province in the year 1901, and from 1858 to 1911 the city of Delhi was also a part of Punjab. It also included thirty four Dependent and Feudatory States. (Mathur, 1975:10-20) It will also be expedient to include Kashmir and Tribal Areas ahead of the frontier of British India, which was politically controlled from Peshawar. Total area of the British Punjab was roughly 2, 53,000 square miles. It constituted two thirteenth of the whole of the British Indian Empire. (Sharma, 1992:15-23)

II. Political Developments in Punjab

Since the day of March 29, 1849 A. D. when the Proclamation of the Annexation of Punjab was signed, the administration of the province was placed in the hands of the triumvirate, called the Board of Administration. All the three members of the Board i.e. President —Sir Henry Lawrence, members —Mr. John Lawrence and Mr. Mansel were already well acquainted with the area, its chiefs, soldiers and their culture. They run the province effectively from 1849 to 1853. (Innes, 1923; Thorburn, :150-181; Nijjar, nd: 36-42) The Board enjoyed wide powers and unhampered control over all the, matters

pertaining to Punjab. The members wielded triple powers say civil, fiscal and criminal. It could even award death sentence and used to exercise general superintendence of every moral and material development of the area. This setup was not incumbent with the sophisticated regulations and technicalities of rules but was governed after a “reduced and simpler fashion”. (Kapur, 1928: 33; Kalia, 1929: 6) In 1853 A. D. Lord Dalhousie abolished the Board and appointed one of the members of the Board, Mr. John Lawrence as first Chief Commissioner of Punjab. The dissolution of the Board of Administration opened a new chapter in the eventful history of Punjab. (Sethi, 1990: 21-29)

Hierarchy of Political Executive

A formal hierarchy of political executive in India was initially provided by the Indian Act of 1784, which continued to operate till the replacement of the East India Company by the British Crown in 1858 A. D. (Moon, 1989: 211-232) Such lineage of political hierarchy used to start from the London Government passing to the Central Government in India to the Provincial and Local Governments. The structure of Home Government of India consisted of two segments i.e. a superior parliamentary body known as the Board of Control and the Court of Directors of East India Company. The Provincial Governments were already divided into the different categories under the Regulating Act 1773. In first category there was the designation of the Governor of province to that of the Governor-General (Ibid, 1989:281-282). The provinces in the second category remained under a Lieutenant-Governor appointed under an Act of Parliament by the Governor-General in the Council from amongst the servants of the Company in India. He had no Executive Council (Ali, 1988:595). The third form of Provincial Government was in practice in Punjab, which was being run by the office of a Chief Commissioner, created by Lord Dalhousie in 1853. Such a government was run with much greater dependence on the Governor-General than a Lieutenant-Governor (Op. Cit., 1989:198-201).

Punjab under the Chief Commissioner

John Lawrence inherited all the powers and functions hitherto vested in the Board of Administration (Gilmartin, 1994: 127-150). His control over all departments and subordinate services was absolute and all pervading. It included the defense and management of the whole trans-Indus frontiers. Introducing administrative reforms he divided Punjab into seven divisions. Each division was in turn divided into small districts. Each district was further divided into *tahsils* under *tahsildars*. To run this whole system Lawrence was to be assisted by two commissioners, who were to be assigned by Financial and Judicial branches of works respectively. The most vital amongst all the above mentioned units, however, was the district. A district was for most purposes a practical independent unit of which the deputy commissioner was the benevolent despot. The province inaugurated its career with a fabulous set of administration, half of them were civilians, and the rest were the selected military men who preferred the pay and power of administration to routines in regiment (Trevariskis, 156). The concentration of power in the hands of one man facilitated the rapid disposal of business. Lawrence left no arrears to clear his office basket daily. This he did until on May 12 1857, when he received a telegram from Delhi, announcing the siege of the city by the Meeruth (A city in India) mutineers. Then he left the province under effective control, during the stirring uprising of 1857, reflects the most brilliant part of his life. Never had any administrator of the company shown such a perfect blend of organisation, energy and foresight (Mathur, 1975: 27).

Punjab under Lieutenant-Governor

It was on the first January 1859 A. D. that the Punjab and its constituencies were constituted under Lieutenant-Governorship. Sir John Lawrence, who had hitherto held the office of Chief Commissioner, was appointed the first Lieutenant-Governor of Punjab with its headquarters at Lahore. He was, however broken down in health, relinquished his charge in February 1859 A. D., and sailed for England. Little did he know at that time, that after five years he was to return as Viceroy and Governor-General of India? (Ibid, 1975: 30-39)

Educational Nursery to Create Political Crèche

After establishing that vast empire in India, the British decided to promote higher western education for a variety of reasons, by the mid of nineteenth century. Following the same policy John Lawrence took the similar initiative in Punjab. He introduced the system of teaching of Elements of English education and fixed vernacular as the medium of instruction (The Punjab administration Report, 1858:55-56). Since, this education progressed on the principle of downward filtration; those on the top of the traditional society benefited the most from this new education system under the British. This literary and professional element in the Indian society spearheaded the movement for representative government and the party system that followed from it.

The introduction of English in the early stages would have rendered the whole scheme unpopular and overwhelmed its own purpose. Had John Lawrence foreseen that peasantry would not send their sons to schools, but that the money lenders and the traders would, he would have not taxed the peasants for the benefits of the money lenders' community? Such had been the case throughout 75 percent of the villages of the Punjab (Arnold, 1862:279-80). Secondly, the British rule in Punjab was also marked by autocracy of the "non-regulated" provinces. The Autocracy of the individual officials only reflected the government policy observed in administrative as well as constitutional matters. That is why Punjab had been kept behind other provinces in constitutional matters had been repeatedly highlighted by many scholars (Talbot, 1988:20-29; Misra, 1976:51-53; Ikram 1997:200-202; and many others also).

Legislative Council in Punjab

The Indian Council Act 1861, established Legislative Council in Bombay and Madras, and authorised the establishment of similar councils in other provinces. In Bengal and United Province the Councils were established in 1863 and 1866 respectively, but in Punjab a similar council did not come into its existence till 1897, thirty six years after the Act which authorised its creation. The Act did not require the inclusion of any Indian in the Councils and no Indian was included there until 1909. The next development took pace by the enactment of the Indian Council Act, 1892, which increased the number of additional members of the Indian Legislative Council and Provincial Legislative Councils to a maximum of 16 and 20 each, respectively.

Introduction of Electoral Polity

The Indian Council Act, 1892, introduced the element of election though in rudimentary shape i.e. an indirect election by select constituencies by public associations and municipal and other bodies. Although every other province in India took advantage of these provisions, none of them were ever extended to Punjab, where the council was established as late as in 1897 with its strength fixed at nine, all of whom were nominated

by the Lieutenant-Governor. The Minto-Morley Reforms maintained the traditional discrimination against the Punjab. The Punjab like Assam was allowed only thirty members, in spite of the fact that population of Punjab was twenty millions, while that of Assam only seven Millions. Similarly, while the proportion of elected members to the total strength was 53 % in Bengal, 48% in Bombay, Madras and Eastern Bengal, 42% in U. P., Punjab had only 19% elected members (Hussain, 1947:75).

The Government of India Act 1909, prevalently known as Minto-Morley Reforms also maintained this 'conventional discrimination, by giving only one out of 27 elected seats in the newly formed 60-member Central Legislature (Ibid: 77). The state of affairs at the provincial level was also similar with the strength of Punjab Provincial Legislature restricted to 24, out of which only five members were to be elected. It was extended a little later to eight member in 1912, and to sixteen in 1916. It hardly made any substantial improvement if compared with other provinces, especially with proportion to their population (Hussain, 1947: 75-76). The electoral regulations for election to the Provincial Legislative Council were elaborate, as they were intended to secure due representations of all important interests, namely, Local Bodies, Landlords, Chambers of Commerce, Universities, special interests such as, Jute and Tea Planting. Elections to Provincial Council were partly direct and partly indirect. In the case of direct elections, franchise was restricted and fixed at a high property qualification, and women were disqualified from voting. Communal representation was granted to Muslims for the first time in these Reforms.

Punjab's electoral representation in the Council of States and the Central Legislative Assembly

In view of the political agitation in India and the impact of war (First World War 1914-18) the British Government made a progressive realization of responsible government in India. This was followed by a new scheme of the Government of India Act 1919 commonly branded as Montago-Chelmsford Reforms made substantial changes in the structure and functioning of the central and provincial legislatures. At the centre a bi-cameral legislature was introduced instead of unicameral legislature. The bi-cameral legislature consisted of (i) The Council of States i.e. the upper House; and (ii) the Legislative Assembly i.e. the Lower House, comprising 60 (27 nominated and 33 elected) and 145 (45 nominated and 103 elected) members respectively. The Act also provided for two seats in every alternate election for the Muslims. Now Punjab got the privilege to send four directly elected members to the Council of States, and twelve to the Legislative Assembly (PGGE 7, 1920: 120; Indian Statutory Commission Report, 1930:167-68).

Expansion and Empowerment of the Punjab Legislative Council

In the provincial sphere also, the Montago- Chelmsford Reforms brought about important changes. The strength of the Punjab Legislative Council was increased to 94 members out of which 23 members were to be nominated and 71 elected These Reforms enlarged also the functions of the legislature. The members were given the right to discuss finance and taxation proposals, to move regulations on the matters of public interest and to ask questions on all matters excluding foreign relations, relations with the native states and the matters under legal adjudication. Though the franchise was direct but was limited under a strict criterion of qualifications and disqualifications for voters, eventually a little over 3 percent population was enfranchised in Punjab at the moment. Women, however, acquired the right to vote for the first time. Under this Act, functions

of legislatures were classified as ‘Central’ and ‘Provincial’ subjects. The provincial subjects were, in turn, divided into ‘reserved’ and ‘transferred’, to be dealt with by the Governor in Council and the Governor acting with a Minister or Ministers, respectively. Thus, the Act of 1919 introduced diarchy in the provinces which, however, in the process of its implementation, was found to be both unsatisfactory and unworkable (PGGE, 1920; Ibid, 1923). As for as, the political parties are concerned, no elections were held on party basis in Punjab, before 1923. The same system remained in action until the Government of India Act 1935 came into function.

The Punjab Legislative Assembly

The India Act 1935 gave a unicameral legislature to Punjab, although with a changed designation. The Punjab Legislative Council was styled now as the Punjab Legislative Assembly. Its strength was increased to 175 elected members: elected from different communities. As regards franchise, the Simon Commission in its report dated 27th May 1930, expressed the view that franchise attaining under the Government of India Act, 1919 was too restricted and suggested its extension, but opposed the introduction of instantaneous adult suffrage. This disagreement with adult suffrage was mainly on the ground of political complications in managing so mammoth electorate and partly on the ground of mass illiteracy and lack of political education. The commission however, expressed its inclination towards adult suffrage as an ultimate objective. Under these recommendations, franchise was direct but restricted with an average number of voters per territorial constituency was extended to about 16,000 with an enfranchisement of about 12 percent of the total population and 24 percent of the adult population in Punjab. (Bhagwan, 1964: 235-40) This Act and several orders issued by the Governor-General as late as 1936, made profound changes. The same system remained in action until replacement of the British government with the Government of Pakistan in 1947.

These were the conditions in which Punjab was lacking in the domain of political activism. The British had planned to keep this province under despotic rule with less political rights, due to its geo-strategic location. They, indeed, wanted to contain the expansionist designs of Russia through Punjab by keeping it a military dominated area. John Lawrence went to that extent that when the total strength of Indian Army was twelve Divisions, four Divisions of Army were deployed only in Punjab. Twenty seven Districts of Punjab had army officers as their Deputy Commissioners (Nijjar, nd: 61; Zahid, 1991:24).

III. Hypothesis

With the introduction of electoral politics in Punjab, the British government put Punjab under a water tight communal representation both at central as well as provincial levels. This eventually dragged the politics of Punjab on communal lines, ultimately culminating in to the Hindu-Muslim divide. Final result of such communal divide was the partition of Punjab at the time of the creation of Pakistan in 1947.

IV. Political Activism and the Political Parties in Punjab

Owing to these autocratic and authoritarian conditions, Syed Ahmad Khan (1817-1898), left his residence in Delhi and settled in Aligarh for his opinionated reformist work. He did not like to be under the “despotic” sway of the Punjab government (Hali, 1903: 445-446). The effects of his movement i.e. Aligarh Movement”, however, activated the people of Punjab also. Similarly, many other organizations of the Sikhs, Muslims and

Hindus were also established and were controlled from abroad due to these very conditions. That is why, the researcher, while reviewing the state and functioning of political parties in Punjab has seen them in different perspectives. Firstly, the researcher has categorized the parties as per the area of their establishment to see the epicenter or control room of the different parties. Secondly, the researcher had categorized the parties in to different communes' i.e. Hindu parties, Muslim parties, Sikh parties, and the joint parties. All this categorization is to see their structures, functions and to see the nature of their influence on the society and in turn on the political system of the province.

Political Parties in Punjab

The figure 2.1 shows that in total there were 63 political parties present in the province of Punjab during British period. Punjab had a multi communal society mainly including Muslim, Sikhs and the Hindus with the subsequent proportions. That is why a variety of Hindu, Muslim, Sikh and common parties were available in plenty in Punjab. There were also a number of tiny parties emerging and abolishing from the political scene or working only in a limited area and scope. Having very little or no influence, such parties are not counted in this list. Further the researcher has categorized all these political parties in to another category. He has seen the parties as per the area of their establishment.

Figure 1 Political Parties in Punjab 1849-1947

1. Indian National Congress (Punjab)	33. Hindustani Workers of the Pacific Coast
2. Kuka Movement	34. Hindu Mahasabah
3. Brahm Samaj of Punjab	35. United India League
4. Anjuman-i-Punjab	36. Jamiat-e-Ulema-e-Hind
5. Anjuman-i-Islamia	37. Central Sikh League
6. Singh Sabha	38. Akali Dal,
7. Lahore Indian Association	39. Gurdwara Reform Movement
8. Hindustan Socialist Republic Army	40. Communist Party of India (Lahore)
9. Arya Samaj (Punjab)	41. Sanghtan
10. Central National Muhammadan Association	42. Shudhi
11. Punjab Riyasti Parja Mandal	43. Tabligh & Tanzim
12. Anjuman-e-Himayat-e-Islam	44. Swaraj Party
13. Muhammadan Educational Conference	45. Punjab National Unionist Party
14. Young Men Muhammadan Association	46. Rashtarya Swami Siwak Sang RSSS
15. Nojawan Bharat Sabha	47. All India Muslim Conference
16. Babbar Akali Movement	48. All India Muslim Nationalist Party
17. Khilafat Movement	49. Pseudo Riyasti Parja Mandal
18. Jamat-e-Ahmadia	50. Kisan Movement
19. Chief Khalsa Dewan	51. All India Majlis-e-Ahrar-e-Islam
20. Muslim League	52. Khaksar Tehriq
21. Punjab Muslim League	53. Muzara Movement
22. Bharat Mata	54. Kirti Kisan Party
23. Panch Khalsa Dewan	55. Muslim Unity Board
24. Punjab Chief Association	56. All India Kisan Sabha
25. Muslim Association	57. Majlis-e-Ittehad-e-Millat
26. Punjab Provincial Muslim League	58. Punjab Muslim League Assembly Party
27. Khalsa Dewan Society	59. Central Zamindara League
28. Ghadar Party (Punjab)	60. Jamat-e-Islami
29. Sikh Educational Conference	61. Jamiat-e-Ulema-e-Islam.
30. Indian Independence League	62. National Progressive Party
31. Hindustani Association	63. Congress Nationalist Part
32. Ahmadia Anjuman-e-Ashaat-e-Islam	

Political Parties Established Abroad but Working in Punjab

The first purpose to see the parties as per the area of their establishment is to evaluate the covered and secret working of parties either from abroad or from out of Punjab but from within India. The table 1 shows a list of the parties which were established abroad and kept working there upon. The Table shows that seven political parties were established abroad mainly in USA and UK.

Table 1 Parties Established Abroad but Working in Punjab

Sr. No.	Party	Year	City
1	Khalsa Dewan Society	1907	Vancouver
2	Ghadar Party (Punjab)	1908	California
3	Indian Independence League	1908	California
4	Hindustani Association	1914	Vancouver
5	Hindustani Workers of the Pacific Coast	1914	California
6	United India League	1915	Vancouver
7	Communist Party of India	1921	Tashkent

Source: Ralhan, O. P. (2002). *Encyclopedia of Political Parties*.

Some of the activities of these parties were being controlled from their sub offices in Germany, France, Canada, and etc., but the main centre of their activity was USA. The table shows another feature that such parties were mainly established in the first and second decade of the twentieth century. It may be due to the strict check of the British government on such activities in India. Or due to the British-Sikh animosity or obstinacy since the end of Sikh rule in Punjab by the British, because all these parties were established and run by the Sikhs. Communist Party of India was the exception which was established by Marindra Nath Roy in 1921 in Taskent.

Political Parties Established Inside India and also working in Punjab

The table 2 shows that the total numbers of political parties were established in India but also working in Punjab along with other parts of the country was nineteen. All these parties were established with in the period from 1877 to 1938. These parties included all the communal shades of India i.e. the Muslim, the Sikh and the Hindu. Some of them were working for safeguard of the rights of rural people and some other for the rights of the urban population. Most of these parties were Indian Nationalist and defending the notion of united India. The table also reflects that the parties established in India up till 1938 had engulfed all the shades of the society representing the interests of all the different groups, one way or the other, and leaving no space for more parties to be established. Further that Punjab had gone self sufficient in party politics by the time.

Table 2 Parties in Punjab Established Inside India

1	Central National Muhammadan Association	1877	Calcutta
2	Muhammadan Educational Conference	1886	Aligarh
3	Indian National Congress (Punjab)	1893	Calcutta
4	All India Muslim League	1906	Dhaka
5	Hindu Mahasabah	1915	Bengal
6	Hindustan Socialist Republic Army	1919	Delhi
7	Jamiat-e-Ulema-e-Hind	1919	Delhi
8	Khilafat Movement	1920	Aligarh, UP
9	Sanghtan	1921	Ahmadabad
10	Shudhi	1921	Ahmadabad

11	Swaraj Party	1922	Gaya
12	Rashtarya Swami Siwak Sang RSSS	1925	Nagpur
13	Nojawan Bharat Sabha	1926	Meerath
14	All India Muslim Conference	1928	Delhi
15	All India Muslim Nationalist Party	1929	Allahabad
16	Congress Nationalist Party	1934	Bombay
17	All India Kisan Sabha	1936	Lukhnow
18	Majlis-e-Ittehad-e-Millat	1936	Delhi
19	Central Zamindara League	1938	Kapurthala

Source: Ralhan, O. P. (2002). *Encyclopedia of Political Parties*.

Political Parties Established with in Punjab

The table 3 shows a list of political parties established with in Punjab and contributing their due share in the political development of Punjab. Such parties had a highest strength in numbers i.e. 38, as well as in their influence in the political system of Punjab. It can be proved from the subsequent election results in Punjab. The table shows that the first ever political party in Punjab was established in Punjab in 1850, in the name of Kuka Movement. It was basically a Sikh religious movement belonging to what was known as Kuka Sect. Being communal in nature the party was meant to work for only a specific community. Later on the same party served as nursery to most of the Sikh parties and movements. Then the last two parties which were established in 1941 and 1945 respectively were also communal say religious Muslim parties.

Table 3 Parties Established with in Punjab

1.	Kuka Movement	1850	Rawalpindi
2.	Brahmu Samaj of Punjab	1863	Lahore
3.	Anjuman-i-Punjab	1865	Lahore
4.	Anjuman-i-Islamia	1869	Lahore
5.	Singh Sabha	1873	Amritsar
6.	Lahore Indian Association	1877	Lahore
7.	Arya Samaj (Punjab)	1877	Lahore
8.	Anjuman-e-Himayat-e-Islam	1884	Lahore
9.	Young Men Muhammadan Association	1891	Lahore
10.	Jamat-e-Ahmadia	1901	Qadian
11.	Chief Khalsa Dewan	1902	Amritsar
12.	Muslim League	1906	Lahore
13.	Punjab Muslim League	1906	Lahore
14.	Bharat Mata	1906	Lahore
15.	Panch Khalsa Dewan	1906	Amritsar
16.	Punjab Chief Association	1907	Lahore
17.	Muslim Association	1907	Lahore
18.	Punjab Provincial Muslim League	1907	Lahore
19.	Sikh Educational Conference	1908	Amritsar
20.	Ahmadia Anjuman-e-Ashaat-e-Islam	1914	Lahore
21.	Central Sikh League	1919	Lahore
22.	Akali Dal,	1920	Amritsar
23.	Gurdwara Reform Movement	1920	Nankana Sahib
24.	Babbar Akali Movement	1921	Hoshiarpur
25.	Tabligh & Tanzim	1921	Lahore
26.	Punjab National Unionist Party	1923	Lahore
27.	National Progressive Party	1923	Lahore
28.	Punjab Riyasti Parja Mandal	1928	Lahore

29.	Pseudo Riyasti Parja Mandal	1930	Lahore
30.	Kisan Movement	1930	Ludhyana
31.	All India Majlis-e-Ahrar-e-Islam	1931	Amritsar
32.	Khaksar Tehriq	1931	Lahore
33.	Muzara Movement	1931	Hissar
34.	Kirti Kisan Party	1931	Lahore
35.	Muslim Unity Board	1934	Lahore
36.	Punjab Muslim League Assembly Party	1937	Lahore
37.	Jamat-e-Islami	1941	Lahore
38.	Jamiat-e-Ulema-e-Islam	1945	Lahore

Source: Ralhan, O. P. (2002). *Encyclopedia of Political Parties*.

Both these parties were basically against the idea of Pakistan and were staunch supporters of united India so were Indian nationalist. Secondly, both these parties were in essence born out from already working parties. The founder of Jamat-e-Islami, Maulana Maudodi was already working with Majlis-e-Ittehad-e-Millat, and Jamiat-e-Ulema-e-Islam which was a split group of Jamiat-e-Ulema-e-Hind.

The table also shows that three parties were established in the decade of sixties, again three more in the decade of seventies and only one each new party in the decades of 1880s or 1890s. Later on however, in the first decade of the nineteenth century there was a mushroom growth of political parties numbering nine in total. Then 02, 06 and 08 parties were established in the second, third and fourth decades respectively. No other party was established after the making of Punjab Muslim League Assembly Party in 1937, which was formed with the collaboration of M. A. Jinnah and Sikandar Hayat and was functional only within legislature having no structure of it out of the Punjab Legislative Assembly.

All the rest of parties established out of Punjab whether with in India or abroad had to depend on the support of these very Punjab made political parties. However, the communal element played a central part in the politics of Punjab throughout the whole British period. All this is clear from the election results and the party position there upon from the period of 1923 to 1947.

Political Parties and Elections in Punjab 1923-1947

The table 4 gives a complete picture of the position of political parties in the Punjab Legislative Council (PLC) and the Punjab Legislative Assembly (PLA) elections in Punjab during the British period. It shows that in aggregate there were total fourteen parties which could secure seats in these elections: i. the Akalis, ii. the Ahrar, iii. the Ittehad-e-Millat, iv. the Congress Nationalist Party, v. the Muslim League, vi. the Khalsa National Party, vii. the National Progressive Party, viii. the Congress, ix the Khilafatists, x the Central Sikh League, xi the Hindu Mahasabha, xii the Gurdwara Prabandhak committee, xiii the Swaraj Party, and ivx. the Unionist Party. Most of them were primarily from Punjab.

The only party present in all the five elections was Unionist Party. It could be possible for the central parties of the Muslim League and the Congress to develop their vote bank in Punjab only after the introduction of 1935 Act, that too with the support of local parties. Entrance of these central political parties in Punjab resulted in to the communal divide of the politics and of the political parties of Punjab.

Table 4 Party Position in the Plc/ Pla, 1923-1947

PLC ELECTIONS 1923		
S#	Party Name	Seats
1	Unionist Party	33
2	Swaraj Party	12
3	Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee	09
4	Independents	17
Total		71
PLC ELECTIONS 1926		
1	Unionist Party	31
2	Hindu Mahasabha	12
3	Central Sikh League	11
4	Khilafatists	03
5	Congress	02
6	Independents	12
Total		71
PLC ELECTIONS 1930		
1	Unionist Party	37
2	National Progressive Party	20
3	Independents	14
Total		71
PLA ELECTIONS 1937		
1	Unionist Party	98
2	Congress	18
3	Khalsa National Party	13
4	Hindu Mahasabha	12
5	Akalis	11
6	Ahrar	02
7	Muslim League	02
8	Ittihad-e-Millat	02
9	Congress Nationalist Party	01
10	Independents	16
Total		175
PLA ELECTIONS 1946		
1	Muslim League	73
2	Congress	51
3	Unionist Party	19
4	Akalis	21
5	Independents	11
Total		175

Source: Yadev, K.C. (1987) *Elections in Punjab 1920-1947*. New Delhi: Manohar Publications

Communal politics and the Political Parties in Punjab

Furthermore, the investiture of the representative institutions and the way the electorate was divided in to water-tight communal (Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, etc.) and urban-

rural constituencies, the forces of nationalism and unity were disturbed and weakened a great deal. Representation of Punjab in the Central Legislature from 1920 to 1947 was distributed as: 04 seats for Council of States (02 Muhammadans, 01 Sikh, and 01 Non-Muhammadan), and 12 seats in the Central Legislative Assembly (06 Muhammadans, 02 Sikhs, 03 Non-Muhammadans, and 01 Landlord). (PGGE, 1920: 120) The Government of India Act 1919 injected the virus of communalism at the provincial level also. The division of communal seats was done in such an arbitrary manner that the Muslims (%52.2%) were given 40.4 percent i.e. 32 seats (27 rural, 05 urban), and rest of 59.4 percent i.e. 39 seats were given to the non Muslims. (NAI, 1920: 145) The situation in the Government of India Act 1935 slightly changed. Here the strength of Punjab Legislative Assembly was extended up to 175 seats in total (42 general, 84 Muhammadans, 31 Sikhs, and 18 special seats). (Kapur, 1985: 311) Notwithstanding, Punjab where communal competitiveness was larger than in most of other provinces was bound to suffer more by the unnatural divisions created in the electorate.

The same is visible in figure 2. It shows that the Muslims being in majority were leading in the sphere of political participation. Being more mobilised they were having a big number of 22 political parties. As per proportion to their population Sikhs stood second in developing political parties. They established 19 political parties. Third was the ranking of joint parties being 12 in number. These were generally the Indian Nationalist Parties and were sufficient complex in their structure to accommodate all the communities living in the province. Hindus being in numerical minority were standing at the last with merely nine parties that too were mostly established out of Punjab. Such a Sharpe communal split of political parties portrays a polarized kind of political structure of the province. The Unionist Party however made strenuous efforts to cut across the communal lines in the legislature. It was little successful too in this regard. But the elections of 1946 with a massive participation exposed a communal drift which resulted in to partition of the province on communal linen, at the time of independence in 1947.

Figure 2 Communal Distribution of Parties of Punjab 1849-1947

<p>MUSLIM</p> <p>Muslim Unity Board Central National Muhammadan Association Muslim Association Punjab Provincial Muslim League Young Men Muhammadan Association All India Muslim Conference Jamat-e-Ahmadia Ahmadia Anjuman-e-Ashaat-e-Islam All India Muslim Nationalist Party Muslim League Punjab Muslim League Jamat-e-Islami Majlis-e-Ittehad-e-Millat Anjuman-e-Himayat-e-Islam Anjuman-i-Islamia Jamiat-e-Ulema-e-Hind Khilafat Movement Tabligh & Tanzim Jamiat-e-Ulema-e-Islam All India Majlis-e-Ahrar-e-Islam</p>	<p>JOINT</p> <p>Lahore Indian Association Communist Party of India (Lahore) Nojawan Bharat Sabha All India Kisan Sabha Punjab Chief Association Pseudo Riyasti Parja Mandal Punjab Riyasti Parja Mandal Hindustan Socialist Republic Army Punjab National Unionist Party Anjuman-i-Punjab Hindustani Association Punjab Muslim League Assembly Party Indian National Congress</p> <p>-----</p> <p>SIKH</p> <p>Akali Dal Babbar Akali Movement Central Sikh League Central Zamindara League Chief Khalsa Dewan</p>
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Muhammadan Educational Conference Khaksar Tehriq	Ghadar Party (Punjab) Gurdwara Reform Movement Khalsa Dewan Society Kuka Movement Sikh Educational Conference Singh Sabha United India League Muzara Movement Bharat Mata Kirti Kisan Party Indian Independence League Kisan Movement Hindustani Workers of the Pacific Coast Panch Khalsa Dewan
HINDU Sanghtan Shudhi Brahmu Samaj of Punjab Rashtarya Swami Siwak Sang RSSS Arya Samaj (Punjab) Hindu Mahasabah Swaraj Party National Progressive Party Congress Nationalist Party	

V. Conclusion

Since the investiture of the representative institutions and the electoral politics in Punjab, the province was dragged on the communal lines. Though the Unionist Party provided a little break through but when both the factors — water tight communal representation, and entrance of the central parties in the politics of Punjab — joined together, they transformed the political culture of Punjab in to purely a communal polity. The same was reflected in the elections of 1945-46, which divided the society in to two streams i.e. the Muslims and the non-Muslims, resulting in the partition of the province on communal lines along with the division of India in 1947. The elections of 1945-46 were the last elections to be held in united India before Pakistan won its independence. Central issue of the All India Muslim League's campaign in these elections was the demand for a separate country for the Muslims of India. The party's subsequent victory with 73 out of 84 Muslim seats in the Punjab Legislative Assembly legitimised its claim to represent the Muslims. It also paved the way for the partition of Punjab. Thus it can safely be concluded that the division of India and partition of Punjab both were the outcome of an electoral process, mainly influenced by a massive political participation on communal lines.

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