

NEHRU REPORT (1928)

When the Simon Commission failed miserably, there was no substitute for the British government but to invite the Indians to draft a constitution for themselves. They understood that the two main parties, the Congress and the Muslim League, had serious differences of opinions. Lord Birkenhead, Secretary of State for Indian Affairs, threw the ball in the Indian politicians' court and invited them to plan for the future action to which both Hindus and Muslims would agree. The Indian leaders took the opportunity and the All Parties Conference was summoned at Delhi in January 1928. Over a hundred representatives of almost all the parties of India participated in the conference. However, the leaders could not arrive at any consensus. The biggest obstruction was the issue of the rights of the minorities. Another meeting of the All Parties Conference took place in the month of March. The leaders once again could not resolve their differences and did not reach a conclusion. The sub-committees too proved a failure because of the difference in opinions of the Congress and the Muslim League.

The meeting of the All Parties Conference was conducted for the third time in Mumbai on 19 May 1928. There was no prospect of an agreed constitution. It was decided that a small committee should be appointed to look into the details of the constitution. Jawaharlal Nehru was appointed the head of this committee. The committee included nine other members including two Muslim League representatives, Syed Ali Imam and Shoaib Qureshi. The committee worked for 3 months at Allahabad and the memorandum that it presented was known as the Nehru Report. The report suggested that a Declaration of Rights should be included in the constitution making sure complete liberty of conscience and religion.

The following were the recommendations put forward by the Nehru Report:

1. India should be accorded the status of a dominion.

2. There should be a federal system of government: residuary powers lying with the centre.
3. India should have a parliamentary system of government headed by a Prime Minister and six other ministers designated by the Governor-General.
4. The legislature should be bicameral.
5. There should be no separate electorates for any community.
6. The proposal of reservation for the minorities was as bad as that of separate electorates.
7. Reservation of seats for Muslims could be possible in provinces where Muslim population was at least 10 per cent of the total, but this was to be in strict proportion to the size of the community.
8. Muslims should be given one-fourth representation in the Central Legislature.
9. Sindh should be separated from Bombay only if the committee approved that it was financially self-reliant.
10. The North-West Frontier Province should be given a complete provincial status.
11. A new Kannada speaking province, Karnataka, should be established in South India.
12. Hindi should be made the official language of India.
13. Provision of Fundamental Rights for the people of India in the Constitution.

Events that Unfolded after Nehru Report

Despite opposition from the Muslim League, the Congress government with a disobedience movement if the Nehru Report was not implemented into the Government of India December 1929. This attitude of the Congress proved to be pivotal in the partition of India, it also proved to be a turning point in the life of Mohammad Ali Jinnah. After reading the Nehru Report, Jinnah announced a 'parting of the ways'.

Muslim League's Reaction to Nehru Report

The recommendations of the Nehru Report were not accepted by the Muslim League. Jinnah claimed it to be going against the interests of the Muslim community on account of rejection of separate electorates. He had expected the report to take into account the Delhi Proposals fully. The Muslim League had been asking for one-third representation at the centre while the Nehru Committee gave them only one-fourth representation. Though both the demands of the Muslim League were considered in the Nehru Report, they were incomplete. It was said that Sindh should be separated from Mumbai but the condition of self-economy was also put forward. It demanded constitutional reforms in the North-West Frontier Province but Baluchistan was overlooked in the report

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