

## Role of Nawab Salimullah for the Foundation of AIML

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### Abstract

In this article an attempt has been made to remark upon the role of Nawab Salimullah for the foundation of All-Indian Muslim League that is the first and only national Muslim political party in the British India. The Nawab of Dhaka was one of the sole organizers of Muslim League. This article took an attempt to shed light on his number of successive political stances with appreciating contemporary nature of politics in India that eventually gravitated him towards forming of Muslim League. Firstly he launched modern regional politics favoring the partition of Bengal and founded a political association in Bengal, then stepped forward to organize a national political body for the Muslims in India. In this stage, Nawab took remarkable responsibilities like making approach to the Muslim people about urgency of political association, apprehending Hindu communal politics against Muslim, publication of Circular Letter, patronizing the Educational Conference at Dhaka, move for Resolution of AIML pertaining to establishment of League. All of these initiatives have been analyzed by an integrated study to find out the notable contributions of Nawab Salimullah towards forming AIML along with development of Muslim politics in India necessarily. The article also afforded Nawab's other visionary relevant works in order to consolidate an advancement of Muslim League transcending banality and mendacity of everyday life in every arena fulfilling the desired dreams of the cornered Muslims.

**Keywords:** nature of politics, nature, political association, Muslim politics, partition of Bengal, Hindu communal politics, Circular Letter

### 1. Introduction

The year 1906 was the most important and eventful phrase in the history of Indian nationalism for the foundation of the first Muslim political party All Indian Muslim League (AIML). Hence AIML played a decisive role in shaping the destiny of Muslims in India and the entire course of political development of the region. (Sen 1976). Those organizers established and designed AIML as an epoch making event in the political history of British-Indian Nawab Salimullah of Dhaka was the pioneer among them. Historically the foundation of the Muslim League was a new era in political life of India where the Muslims were an organized force in Indian politics. Even under the banner of Muslim League, Muslims had now combined an all-Indian level and were no longer a community indifferent and apathetic to political matters. (Ahmed 1996). And this political party was successfully formed by skilful and influential leadership of Nawab Salimullah, whose missionary zeal imbued his co-religionists and followers with renaissance of political spirit to retrieve the lost glory of the Muslims from the penumbra of history.

Though Nawab started his political career in East Bengal for its Muslim people of the region supporting the Partition of Bengal, (Note 1) immediately after the Partition he felt the urgency of national Muslim political body in India against severe oppositions of the Congress (Note 2) and Hindu agitations favoring the Annulment of the Partition. (Note 3) He was the great Muslim leader, educationist, visionary, political reformer during this crucial and challenging period and was dauntless in organizing number of decisive important initiatives and pragmatic programs for establishment of all-Indian Muslim Political association. Significantly for the first time specific proposal for a Muslim political association was made by him. He argued that such an association should support the British administration, combat the mounting influence of the Congress and protect Muslim communal interests. (Hussain 1985) Nawab was able to make understand Muslim leaders and people about contemporary political maelstrom and malaise of India; he was also able to explain the clear concepts for the necessities of a political body for all Indian Muslims in spite of the presence of the Congress. He perceived the

thought that political, socio-economic and educational developments of the Muslims would only be possible through individual Muslim political institution.(Khan 2013) Moreover all of his moves - organizing all public opinions in favor of AIML, maintaining the correspondence to the leaders of Simla Deputation, (Note 4) promulgating Circular Letter, financing the cost of Education Conference(Note 5), move for resolution of League and others –not only referred to visible inequities and inequalities against Muslim orchestrated not only the government and Hindu dominated Congress but also inscribed the space of all potential and possible directions in order to constitute a Muslim political platform publicly. Virtually Nawab Salimullah was the political reformer of Muslim in the British India who bulldozed all barriers with robust guidance and formed AIML. Basically, in later, Muslim League carried the seeds of Muslim separation in politics of India and eventual creation of Pakistan. (Encyclopedia Americana 1980)

## **2. Life Time of Nawab Salimullah:**

Sir Khwaja Salimullah was born on 7 June 1871 into the most famous and wealthy Muslim Nawab family of Dhaka. He was the scion of Sir Ahsanullah and succeeded his father as the Nawab in 1901. He was educated at home by a British and a German teacher, and experts in Urdu, Persian and English. He married in August 1893, and in the same year he joined Government Service as a Deputy Magistrate until he departed in 1895 to start his business in Mymensingh. In the time of his service he spent a year in Mymensingh and was then transferred to Muzaffarpur in Bihar. Sir Salimullah was the first member of the Nawab Family of Dhaka who actively participated in politics. (Sahabuddin 2013) He wielded a considerable influence over his co-religionists. When Dhaka was decided as the capital city of newly formed province after partition of Bengal, for the first time he emerged politically as a savior of Muslim people of Bengal taking tough stance against Hindu and Congress opposition of the partition.

Meanwhile the partition paved the way of socio-economic, educational and administrative opportunities for the people of the region. Nawab took all possible rights and facilities from the British Government for the backward people of the east Bengal. On the same time he constituted a political organization Provincial Mohammedan (Note 6) Union comprising most of the Muslim leaders of East Bengal to save and establish Muslim legitimate rights supporting the partition. Certainly, immediately after the partition, the Hindu community and the Congress launched many national movements for the annulment of the partition. During that crucial time politically he accomplished several bold and consecutive steps for untiringly the partition an All-Indian issue in favor of Muslim and moved forward playing effective roles for forming AIML in 1906. After the foundation of AIML he was one of the chief promoters and patronizer of the only Muslim political party; he was also elected the founder vice-president of Muslim League. Moreover he founded East Bengal and Assam Provincial Muslim League and was elected president and he presided over the annual session of AIML at Calcutta during the annulment successfully. Nawab desired to establish a university for the Muslims of this province since 1906. (Ali 1907) He contributed to establishment many educational institutions in Dhaka with student residential halls and orphanage. He took various steps for the spectacular development and breathtaking beautification of Dhaka and for its dwellers as well. In the conclusion of his address at Calcutta, Nawab announced his decision to retire from politics with the place of his failing health and he expressed his conviction that satisfied on the eve of retirement that a large number of educated Youngmen would devote their times, labor and energies to the cause of Islam. (Pirzada 1970, Vol-1, 239.) Nawab Salimullah died in Calcutta on 16 January 1915 and he was buried in the family graveyard in Begum Bazaar at Dhaka. (Sahabuddin 2013) He was made a Nawab Bahadur in 1903. K.C.S.I.(Note 7) in 1909 and G.C.S.I.E. (Note 8) in 1911 and was a member of the Legislative Council of Eastern Bengal and Assam. (Ahmed 1996)

## **3. Partition of Bengal and Unique Role of Nawab Salimullah:**

It is remarkable that the Partition of Bengal in 1905 had a great influence on the territorial and communal politics of Indian sub-continent rather merely administrative matters since the emergence of Pakistan in 1947. Eventually this historical issue continues till the twenty-first century as a vital and important chapter of colonial history in Indian sub-continent in the light of the imperial globalization. Because, partition based Muslim local politics ultimately had been turned into an all-Indian Muslim national politics of British India till independence of Pakistan and India in 1947. The partition of Bengal in 1905 played an important role in the advancement of Muslim politics in Bengal as well. It was introduced mainly for administrative reason that Lord Curzon partitioned the unwieldy province of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa along with Chota Nagpur and other 48 districts. ((Rahim 1978, 193) Muslim populated Eastern Bengal and Assam was formed new province with capital at Dhaka where the partition opened a scope of development for the neglected people of the region. Though

Muslims were happy for the partition, Hindus with their leaders and intellectuals protested and agitated against the partition and manifested vigorous movements (Note 9) for the annulment of partition. (Ahmed 1996) Adversely they opposed the British government for taking the step to divide Bengal-speaking people and to weaken the nationalist movement in India. (Amrita bazaar Patrica, 14 December 1903) Actually, Muslim domination in the new province of Eastern Bengal and Assam was an eyesore for the Hindus so they were acutely reluctant in favor the partition.

Nawab Salimullah and most of the Muslim leaders in India deeply realized the attitude of Hindus that launched many violent movements against the partition. Nawab Salimullah along with all other Muslim leaders successfully started organizing the Muslim community of new province into a compact body by setting up an association to save rights and interests of the people. From the beginning of the scheme of partition, significantly Nawab played all necessary roles for constituting the new province East Bengal and Assam. The Muslims welcomed that move, as in the latter province, they were the majority. Nawab Salimullah (1884-1915) of Dacca (Note 10) was among the prominent leaders favoring partition. Even post-partitioned Muslim politics in Bengal was influenced and guided by him. In this moment, primarily he founded with his political associates like Muhammad Yousuf of Rajshahi, Ali Nawab Chowdhury of Comilla, Fazlul Haq of Barisal a political association named it Provincial Mohammedan Union on 16 October 1905 when the scheme of partition took into implementation. (Malik 2012) The union was established to continue support of the partition and to serve as a mouthpiece for the expression of view on all social and political issues related with the Muslim community. (Moslem Chronicle, 1905, October 21) To consolidate and reserve the strength of the Muslim of new province as a whole for all public affairs was the main object of the association. (Mallik 1960) The association also offered all other association and society to be its member. The association remarked the partition as “the beginning of a new epoch in the history of Bengal.” (Malik 2012) Nawab Salimullah also observed the partition had “aroused us from inaction and directed our attention to activities and struggle”. (Moslem Chronicle, 1905, October 16)

In a word, under the direct patronization of Nawab, the association had played unique role to represent the backwardness of the people of East Bengal and to establish rights and interests of the Muslims through prospective partition. Simultaneously the association would endeavor to convince the government making over the good impacts of the partition so that it would be sustainable for long time. Through this provincial organization the Muslims of Bengal tried to resolve their problems locally. The Muslims of Bengal soon realized that the problems of the Muslims of Bengal could not be solved locally and so they immediately began to organize the Muslims of all over the subcontinent to adopt more effective strategy to safeguard their rights vis-à-vis their rival communities. Accurately Nawab built a consensus that brought need of Muslim political organization. The ultimate result of those efforts was the formation of the All-India Muslim League in 1906. (Malik 2012) Because partition based regional politics among Hindu and Muslim had been turned into national level, where Muslim people constituted AIML. Hence constructive political activities and visionary thinking of Nawab Salimullah contributed towards forming national Muslim political party.

#### **4. His Policy to organize all Muslim Leaders:**

After the establishment of the Provincial Mohammedan Union Nawab Salimullah with other Muslim leaders took steps to generate public opinion in favor of the new province. He aimed at organizing public sentiment for establishment all India based a Muslim political association in order to counteract anti-Muslim agitation of Hindus and the Congress. (Banglapedia 2003, Vol.7:170) Basically Provincial Mohammedan Union had not emerged as the great influential organization that could take all proper initiatives supporting the partition from its position. Therefore, Nawab perceived that if there would be a Muslim Political body comprising all Indian Muslims in place of the Union; it would be respected by Hindu community and British government as well. Moreover, Nawab extremely felt the urgency of a powerful and effective political party for the Muslims in order to combat the consecutive pressure and protests of the Congress against Muslim regarding administration and other perspectives under British rule. Furthermore, where Congress and Hindus operated many movements based on the partition to save the interests of Hindu people of Bengal, it would be a prudential matter for the Muslim community with their leaders to unify and to save the rights and interests of Muslim people both nationally and regionally. The Muslim community realized that the Hindus usually were at least drawing the attention of the government by “powerful associations which warmly advocate their interests”. (Mirza 1910, p.5)

In order to establish a political platform, Nawab assumed a number of successive advancements through co-operations of all other Muslim leaders in India. Ultimately Congress and Hindus led anti-partition movements inspired him the necessity of political body for Muslims in India in order to counteract the pressure of the Congress upon administration. (Rahim 1978,195) Significantly Nawab Salimullah had sent some notes suggesting as a scheme to the participants of Simla deputation for establishment a political body of Indian

Muslim. (Rahim 1978,196) Actually the move for the Simla deputation was initiated by Mohsin ul Mulk (Note-11) who was the secretary of Aligarh College and requested to Archbold (Note -12) on correspondence to arrange for the reception of a Muslim deputation by the Viceroy. (Wasti 1964, p.61) Meanwhile, some regional socio-political organizations were formed (Note-13) and some informal discussions were accomplished in national level.

Particularly an informal meeting was held at Lakhnow where Nawab Vikarul Mulk (Note-14) and some other Muslim leaders participated in before presenting the memorandum to Lord Minto at Simla. Nawab Salimullah and his associate Syed Nawab Ali Chowdhury (Note-15) tried to articulate the partition to an all-Indian issue. For why they had been very insistent when the address was being prepared that there should be mention of their wish to see the partition of Bengal made a permanency. (Noman 1942, pp.74-75) This proposal had been resisted by Mian Mohammad Shfi and Justice Shadin who asserted not to incorporate such 'controversial matter' in the deputation. Eventually, Mohsin ul Mulk also unwilling to do so and finally it was dropped. (Noman 1942, pp.74-75) But in this informal meeting Muslim delegates took a decision to establish an all Indian Muslim political association. (Wasti 1964, p.246) They consulted and expressed their suggestions that such type of national political association could be established with the participation of all Muslim leaders and representatives. Apparently the possible and suitable venue was proposed to be the upcoming Education Conference at Dhaka on December 1906. Even the delegates of Simla Deputation also requested to Salimullah for consider and rethinking the matter by consulting all the leaders and he was also authorized to have all effective moves for the purpose. Thus Nawab's proposal marred the prospects of making the partition of Bengal an issue for the Muslim community in India as a whole, Syed Nawab Ali Choudhury joined the deputation and Salimullah, who originally intended to join it, could not do so for personal reasons. (Rahman 1970, p.8) Contemporary historians said that Nawab could not join the Simla Deputation because of an eye operation but he was the political philosopher who took the first concrete step towards establishing a Muslim organization. (Abdullah 1986, p.220) Here we see his political thinking, forward looking and cognitive ability of traits in leadership were coincided with his vision of forming Muslim national political platform in India. So, Nawab Salimullah took a new initiative for forming all-Indian Muslim political body based on the spirit of the partition though he failed to make the partition of Bengal an issue in the Simla Deputation presented to the Viceroy. It is, of course, true that after presenting memorandum to the Viceroy a discussion had already been accomplished among the members of the Simla Deputation forming a Muslim political association on October. (Note 16) And they decided the political body would be formed in the next Muslim Educational Conference that was supposed to be held at Dhaka on December 1906. Even the delegates also discussed the total features with the objectives and duties of the political party would be taken in that Conference. According to this decision Nawab of Dhaka intended to take master planning for the political party on the mid-December and he proposed the name All India Muslim Confederacy. (Qureshi 1967, Vol. IV: 173)

Basically, his new move was issuing a Circular Letter to all Muslim leaders and organizations after close negotiation with prominent Muslim leaders and it was published on press. Hence, Nawab viewed a Muslim political body of all Indian Muslims from the beginning of the partition and his vision was institutionalized through his Circular Letter that encouraged and united all Muslims to be uniformed under unique political platform in order to represent and realize their rights and interests. (Qureshi 1967, Vol. IV:173) The main causes for the formation of the Muslim League were announced in the Circular Letter along with surrounding political scenario was also reflected that exposed pragmatic logic of forming a political body. It was also emphasized that the Muslims had realized that it was important for them to have a platform to voice their demands.

### **5. Circular letter of Nawab Salimullah**

However according to the remarking of Syed Razi Wasti, the Nawab of Dhaka "took the first concrete step" by circulating a letter among Muslims proposing a "Muslim All Indian Confederacy" (Mclane 2007, p.141) In fact, Circular Letter of Nawab Salimullah was the first formal setting off All Indian Muslim League. Nawab circulated a scheme in November 1906 for the formation of the All-Indian Muslim Confederacy that scheme was the embryo from which the Muslim League emerged. (Abdullah 1986, p.219) The Bengalee newspaper also published Nawab's initiative and it commented that meanwhile, in November 1906, Nawab Salimullah of Dhaka who earlier could not join the Simla Deputation circulated another scheme for the formation of a Muslim political institution named as the All India Muslim Confederacy. (The Bengalee December 14, 1906.) But according to the statement of Syed Razi Wasti, Nawab Salimullah took the first concrete step circulating a letter among Muslims and he proposed a "Muslim All-Indian Confederacy" on November 1906. (Wasti 1964, p.77) Shila Sen also remarked "The Nawab of Dacca had undoubtedly been the prime mover behind this development." (Sen 1976, p.42) As a great leader he created the method of achieving the goal of Muslim political body through excellent performance in circulating the Circular Letter. Uncouthly he served and viewed as role model of ensuring organizational innovation throughout publication of the Circular Letter.

However in the Circular Letter, Nawab provided a clear vision and objectives for the Muslim people in India in response to present political crisis. Consequently he appropriately supported the role of Muslim community in politics of India was therefore a very determinant of their prospects for political empowerments particularly at the national level of British India. The Circular Letter invited to all Muslim leaders for expressing their views on the proposed political association at Dhaka where Muslim education conference was arranged on December in the same year. Basically, the Circular Letter was not only declaration of formation AIML but also crystal clear epitaph of the present grievances and backwardness of Muslims in India. He focused on the affected Muslim community and found out the way of collective realizing the vision for the benefit of that affected population often in challenging and hostile environments. Apart from this the Circular Letter clearly exposed contemporary political atmosphere of India especially post-partition politics and Hindu –Congress joint agitation against Muslim interests in absence of any political support for the Muslims. Moreover Nawab articulated the synopsis scene of collective political trends and nature in India since British establishment. Remarkably he notified vulnerable Muslim political conditions encountering potential and well organized Congress. So in the Letter stated all necessities and demands were drawn by the scheme of Muslim Confederacy that favored the Muslim for establishment of a political association. Ultimately all Muslim leaders were convened to the Education Conference and here a political party could be formed depending on views of all. On the other hand the Letter clearly explained all relevant and pragmatic reasons why a Muslim political body is actual demand of the time and how the Muslim community could achieve their political platform by the upcoming education conference.

Virtually, Nawab's Circular Letter was the roadmap of AIML because it not only guided Indian Muslim leaders to be organized but also drew attention to all anti-Muslim blocks in India noticing the urgency of Muslim political association. That's why; the Letter was the guideline for all those had been thinking to form the Muslim political body and to materialize the rising of the Muslim political consciousness and unity of Muslim nation into a well organized body. Mawlana Mohammad Ali remarked the Circular Letter in his briefing that taking advantages of Education Conference at Dhaka, Nawab Salimullah circulated a tentative scheme and invited opinion of Muslim leaders for the formation of a confederacy (that was AIML) preferably by discuss on 30 December at Dhaka or by writings. Moreover, Mowlana added that many Muslims offered detailed opinion on the many points of the Scheme; other expressed general sympathy and some others leaving the settlement of the details till after the discussion about to take place. But several hundred gentlemen travelled to Dhaka to take part in the discussion, where thousands had come from Eastern Bengal. (Rahim 1978, p.197) In the Education Conference, Nawab's scheme of Muslim political party- which also published on the Circular Letter- was voiced and passed by all delegates and historically this Circular Letter formed the All-Indian Muslim League. (Quereshi 1967,p.173) Nawab Salimullah was thus the moving force in the foundation of the national political association of Muslim of the whole of India.

Significantly, his Circular Letter played roles as a defender of All Indian Muslim political party and proved its defensible pragmatic necessities encountering all objections. In the future days his versatile political thinking in Circular Letter had been implemented where he appreciated the Muslim Youth who joined at Congress to refer them to the AIML was happened. Because he also fixed an objective in the Scheme to return the youth to League to be substantial proportion of the nation those now in Congress due to the paucity of Muslim political platform. In his statement in The Circular Letter, Nawab placed his views before Muslim brothers on the project of Mohammedan Confederacy on the occasion of the birthday of the King-Emperor. After discussion of his draft at Simla meeting, he finalized his project based on the discussion and sent its copies to the Muslim leaders and societies all over the country inviting their opinion. He requested them to come prepared for a discussion on this project at the Muslim Education Conference to be held at Dhaka on December 1906. He stated strong refutation against the objection that a political association of All Indian Muslim would adversely affect the local societies and would land the Aligarh College into trouble. He also said-“The noble foundation of the Aligarh College (as a part of Aligarh Movement) was laid 25 years ago and the institute has achieved its purpose, but to keep up its ability and usefulness, we have to enter the next stage of our political life of the community and nation.” (Abdullah 1986, p.220) The emergence of a Muslim All Indian political association was extremely urgent and also the demand of the time considering contemporary national political environment of India. And that necessity was proved by his Letter-“Still it cannot be denied that the Mohammedans are a distinct community with additional interests of our only which are not shared by their communities, and those have suffered from the fact that they have not been adequately represented.”(Pirzada 1970, p. xiii.) He wrote” And it is hardly possible that these additional interests peculiarly our own, can be safeguarded and protected unless there is a central authority to which the government can look for an advice.” (Pirzada 1970, p. xiii.) He appreciated that local societies were unable to redress and represent the rights and aspirations of the Muslim community as a whole.

He stated that the confederacy would be the mouthpiece of all institutions of Muslim- social, religious, political and leading men throughout the country-for one common object of protecting the interests and advancing the cause of their co-religionists. "The main object of the association would be whenever possible to support all measures emanating from the government and to protect the cause of advancement of the interests of our co-religionists throughout the country." (The Englishman 16 December, 1906) The association was intended (a) to controvert the growing influence of the so-called Indian National Congress, which has a tendency to misinterpret and lead to the deplorable situation and (b) to enable our Youngman of education, who, for want of such an association, have joined the Congress camp, to find scope to exercise their fitness and ability for public life. (Amrita Bazar Patrika 13 December, 1906) The National Congress was criticized by Nawab Salimullah due to its position against the partition of Bengal. He remarked the important purpose of the proposed Muslim association "The Executive Committee of the Confederacy will be in constant communication with all other local association and will watch the career of our promising young men, who will no longer look to the Congress for their advancement in life" (Pirzada 1970, pp.xiv-xv.) But, to constitute a united stand of Indian Muslim against the opposition of all Hindu unison to the partition of Bengal and their present agitation for the annulment of the partition. In fact this socio-political reality was one of the important causes as well as immediate causes of Nawab's move for a Muslim political association. It was also his intention to explode the propaganda that Muslim landlords only favored the partition, but all the Muslims of Bengal supported it.

Moreover, Muslims of Bengal felt the urgency of a political body of this nature to represent all Muslims in India along with Bengal. So, these attentions also ushered in Nawab Salimullah in organizing Muslim leaders and inviting them to the conference at Dhaka. And where on 30 December 1906, the first Muslim political party was formed basis on Nawab's Circular Letter. Mr. Rafiuddin, a delegate to the conference, said "The Nawab of Dhaka has rendered the Mohammedan of India a great service in inviting the delegates to the conference to sit at Dhaka to discuss for bringing the political views of Indian Mohammedan to focus on preventing any possible misrepresentation and misconception of facts, and insure the concentration of energy. ...Also, it would have been scarcity done at any other place than Dhaka, where delegates coming from all parts of India and places far away as Somaliland and Netal, received an objective lesson on the necessity for such an institution. They saw the real opinions of the Mohammedans of the new province had been represented by interested and noisy parties and to what dangers material and moral, an inarticulate community was exposed." (Pirzada 1970, p.15) By this conference his cherished dream of "the establishment of a central political organization for Mohammedans has been brought to pass." (Eastern Bengal and Assam Era, 4 January, 1907; M. Yusuf Khan to the Editor) Actually, "Nawab was not satisfied with the trend of discussion at Simla about a Muslim organization and stated in clear terms what he thought about the proposed All-India Muslim Confederacy." (Sen 1976, p.40) As a result he foresaw needs of effective discussion on forming political association even he also stated in clear terms through Circular Letter what visioned and proposed as All Indian Mohammedan Confederacy.

Interestingly Nawab's Circular Letter on political scheme was strongly criticized by Congress leaders and their Newspapers. Bengalee newspaper pointed out "The Moslem All-India Confederacy reminds us of the Marhatta Confederacy of old and Khalsa Confederacy of recent times, why should the Nawab assume a bellicose name when sycophancy is to be the watchword of the Association." (The bengalee, 14 December 1906) The Times of India commented upon the scheme as "ill-advised and indiscreet." But, the Pioneer and the Englishman remarked that the Muslim community of India needed such a representative association for the expression of their views. (Wasti 1964,p.246) Nevertheless, the strong criticism against the Circular Letter by Congress and Hindu leaders usually proved that Nawab Salimullah took a revolutionary mission and vision forming All-Indian Muslim political Association against Hindu dominated Congress. Usually they didn't take easily the initiatives of Nawab Salimullah as well as Muslim political party and they opposed Muslim political advancement with their all possible means and policies. But it was true that this political organization prominently piloted the Muslim nation to be unique rival force for Muslims in the next historical situations and national political contexts in India. Accordingly his Circular Letter worked hard to organize the national All Indian Muslim Political body under his intensive guidance. ( Pakistan Observer, 27 April 1967; *Sher-e-Bangla Supplement*) Truly, Nawab Salimullah was the real founder of the first and only Muslim national political association of united India. M A Rahim Said "Nawab Salimullah was thus the moving force in the foundation of the national political association of Muslim of the whole of India." (Rahim 1978, p.200)

#### **6. Education Conference at Dhaka and role of Nawab Salimullah for forming AIML:**

According to the Circular Letter the Mohammedan Education Conference was started on 27 December 1906 at Dhaka where 8000 delegates from all over India and beyond participated in inaugural session. The venue was Salimullah's beautiful Shahbag garden Conference Hall and he was the chairman of the Reception Committee.

Surprisingly, expenses of four-day long conference were financed by Nawab and his family. John R. Mclane said "The Nawab was to be host to the annual Muhammadan Educational Conference at Dhaka in December 1906." (Mclane 2007, p.141) Even Nawab and his family were responsible for providing all facilities for the delegates of the conference. So, this extensive conference and monumental mega-political meeting was accomplished due to the great sponsorship of Nawab Salimullah. Considerably the financial contribution of Salimullah towards foundation of Muslim League was also essential attribute of the notion of his leadership. In response to his cordial hospitality, several times he had to receive lot of thanks from the participators. Thus his commitment to the Muslim politics was implemented theoretically and practically. In other words, he was not only the patron of the immense conference, but also was the sole organizer of the forming of the Muslim political association. Ultimately he executed his formal roles and took different forms of innovations for foundation of AIML. According to Nawab's scheme historical sensation the Mohammedan Education Conference started at Dhaka participating several thousand Muslims representatives from every part of India. The conference followed 4 day-long schedule. The first 3 days of the conference were scheduled for educational discussion where delegates expressed their opinion and remarked with recommendation of educational problem, prospects and progress of Muslim in India. Especially, all delegates highly respected the partition of Bengal and voiced concerned on the rumor of its impending annulment. (Khan 1968)

### **7. Political Session**

On the last day of the conference significantly followed a special meeting in the first session that was referred to political session where all Muslim delegates sincerely participated in the session with a view to forming a political organization for all Indian Muslims. Surprisingly when Muslim Education Conference was held at Dhaka at the same time Indian National Congress was meeting in Kolkata. (Mclane 2007, p.141) On the first session on 30 December 1906, on Saturday; Nawab Vikar-ul-Mulk presided over the historic session in response to the request of Nawab Salimullah. The discussion in the session followed Nawab's scheme of Mohammedan All-Indian Confederacy as through to find a political association for All-Indian Muslims. Vikar-ul-Mulk, as the president of the political session, stressed the need of a political body of the Indian Muslims. Mentioning the reference to the informal meeting of Muslim delegates at Simla where the decided subject was forming national Muslim political body would be discussed at Dhaka, he said "In the meantime, the Nawab Bahadur of Dacca had formed a scheme for the same and circulated it for our consideration. Today we have assembled here to settle finally the times of action in a question the settlement of which has so long been postponed." (Ali 1907) In his speech, Vikar-ul-Mulk emphasized upon some requisite guidelines on the eve of forming Muslim political association such as the loyalty of Muslim to British rule, good neighborly feelings to Hindus, abstaining from the of the agitation against the Congress. And he called upon Nawab Salimullah to move the Resolution for the establishment of a political organization of the Muslims of India. (Bahadur 1979, pp. 29-30) Nawab of Dacca also exclaimed in the final session that the "new political movement had been forced upon them. Had the party now in power in England been familiar with the position of Moslems, and had Indian public men represented justly Moslem claims, the movement might perhaps not have been heard of, but quiet unobtrusive work was now at discount and only those who cried loudest had a chance of being heard. Moslems had therefore been forced against their own wishes to abandon their traditional policy in order to secure easement of very real disabilities, and to avoid the danger that their interests might be neglected, whilst other communities in India were benefitted." (Ahmed 1974, p.172)

In his speech to move the Resolution, Nawab Salimullah duly expressed emphasizing on the urgency of a political association of Muslim in India. Virtually, he discussed the importance of a Muslim political body and drew attention to all delegates about political awakening among them. Indicating consecutive Hindu agitation against the partition of Bengal, he remarked British central government in England being ignorant of the real condition in India. It was appreciable that the people of majority community were pushing forward their interests in utter disregard over minority and present situation in Bengal proved this fact. Had there been a fair allotment of shares to the various communities, the proposed League would not have been heard of for a long time. (Ahmed 1974, p.173) Nawab said that the practical needs of Muslim in the crisis which they were passing instigated them to believe in the urgency of separate Muslim political organization. Describing the disadvantages of remaining passive in politics or joining the Congress, his agitation focused on history of Muslims from past and changing attitude of Muslim towards the British rule. Significantly an important piece of the speech justified the issues of special concern to policies of British Government in administrative orientations were not benefactors for the Muslim Community. He asserted that the government had been convinced of the steadfast loyalty of the Muslim under the most trying situation. (The Pioneer, 2 January, 1907) In his address he explained and intimated the patterns of proposed political party, its ethical values, objectives and prescribing for its proper design. Actually summery of his speech was the guide on goalsetting and motivation both for Muslim politics in India under British regime. Prominently the notion of his leadership can essentially be attributed by innovation of political institution towards historical situation and cultural perspectives. Thus one of his great traits was the

ability to analyze and understand socio-political situation of Muslim as a key leader attributes. His true visionary Muslim political role made him a leader par excellence.

As the immediate object of Nawab Salimullah's move for a Muslim political association was followed to form a united banner of the Indian Muslims against a strong Hindu agitation for the annulment of the Partition of Bengal. (Banglapedia 2003, Vol.7:170) He guided that the object of proposed League was the protection and advancement of political rights and interests of the Muslim which followed the goodwill to their Hindu neighbor and without prejudice to the traditional loyalty of the Muslims nation. (The Pioneer, 2 January 1907) According to the demand of times, the Muslim represented their aspirations and views consequently submitted their claim for consideration by the government. In common interests, Hindu and Muslim would advance in cooperation, and exclusively Muslim interests would be the concern of the Muslim alone. Here, League would lead the Muslims to adopt both objects. Nawab assured that the government would turn to this representative body for ascertaining the views of Indian Muslim and the Muslim also would turn to it for sincere advice and guidance. (Pirzada 1970, p.15) Then he moved the Resolution which envisaged 'the mighty and splendid fabric of a united people.' Nawab's motion for Muslim political party like League was seconded by Hakim Ajmal Khan and supported by Zafar Ali, Sahibzada Altaf Khan and several other delegates. (Wasti 1964, p.79) On Muhammad Shafi's (1869-1932) proposal, it was also decided to name the proposed organization as All Indian Muslim League, Mohsin-ul-Mulk and Viqar-ul-Mulk were elected provisional secretaries of the proposed association to move forward in that respect. (Zakaria 1970, p.70.)

The aims and objects of the League were discussed fully by the delegates. After slightly changing, the Resolution of Nawab Salimullah was carried with acclamation by the packed audience where All Indian Muslim League was formed along with its three objects. (Note 17) The essentials of Salimullah's proposals were accepted at subsequent Dhaka Conference of Muslim leaders, chaired by the well-known Aligarh figure, Viqar ul Mulk. This conference established the new organization the All India Muslim League. (Hussain 1985) Eventually, the historic Dhaka meeting passed a Resolution supporting the partition of Bengal and deprecating all methods of agitation against it. Finally, the conference dissolved after a vote of thanks to Nawab Salimullah and the President of the meeting. And the steps taken by Nawab in the foundation of the Muslim political association were highly appreciated by the delegates of the conference. (Robinson, 1974, pp.358-418) In consequence of his scheme as the term of Confederacy was followed to League which conveyed identical meaning. M A Rahim accordingly said "In concept and practice, the All-India Muslim League emerged as the political child of Nawab Salimullah." (Rahim 1978, p.205) As a sole organizer Muslim League, although he was able to accomplish the goal of his political philosophy, Nawab Salimullah was severely criticized by the Hindu press and Congress leaders. Expressing resentment against newly formed Muslim association, Surendranath Banerjee attached the organizer of the League and called it "Salimullah League and Salimullah's latest fad." Nevertheless, for the first time Muslims in India achieved their goal of foundation of a political platform that was also the counterpart of Congress.

#### **8. Other steps for AIML:**

After formation of AIML, Nawab Salimullah took upon himself many historical important responsibilities of popularizing and expansion Muslim League with its aims and objects all over India. He assumed several programs to harness public sentiment in favor of AIML and partition of Bengal. So his leadership was accomplished a glorious phrase by flourishing and advancing of the new organization. Nawab was elected the president of the Bengal Provincial Muslim League that was established in 1907 at Dhaka where he took the chair of president. After the foundation of League, ultimately British government recognized the Provincial League as the political association competent to speak on all matters concerning Muslim interests in Bengal. (Bahadur 1979, pp.2-5) By the proper implementation of the influence of Provincial League Nawab was able in getting several opportunities for the Muslim community in Government services. As a mouthpiece of the Muslims, League led services of Muslim advancement such as employed of Government services, educational developments, public works development etc.

When British Government decided for the annulment of the partition of Bengal, after some years of the formation of League, Nawab Salimullah came forward to save the political and the others development of Muslims by his leading roles under the banner of Muslim League. Since Government was convinced and exerted by the strong agitation of Congress and Hindus for annulment of the partition, the annulment was remarked by Nawab as "the deprivation of those splendid opportunities at self-improvement of a community that was clearly in need of help". (Pirzada 1970, p.237) The annulment was a rude shock to the Muslims so that Muslim community started to lose their faith in British with growing anti-British feelings in their minds. In this time Nawab convened a meeting on 30 December 1911 where he presented the situations arising out of the annulment. Eventually the meeting passed resolutions expressing deep sense of regret and disappointment due



to the annulment of the partition in utter disregard of Muslim feelings and trusts that the Government would take immediate steps to safeguard the Muslims particularly the Muslim interests of Eastern Bengal. (The Pioneer Mail, 8 March 1912) The resolution also pronounced that now the Muslim has no alternative except desisting from entering protest though they have been loyal to British with due respect. (The Pioneer Mail, 5 March 1912) Nawab felt insulted the matter of annulment and as expressing instant protest he disowned the title G. C. I. E. that was decorated British Government and he regarded it as bait, a bribe and halter of disgrace round his neck. (Hamid 1967, p.92) Nawab Salimullah of Dacca, observed in 1912 in the session of the League held at Calcutta that: "No responsible person could discover a valid reason for reopening the issue since the agitation against partition had almost died out. (Hamid 1967, p.92) Shila Sen pointed out "The Nawab of Dacca in particular was very much perturbed as he was not consulted before the decision was taken though he was functioning as a kind of non-official adviser to the Government. (Sen 1976, p.44) Moreover the annual session of League was held at Calcutta on 3 March 1912 under the presidentship of Nawab demanding reappraisal of the Muslim policy to suite the change of time. The Nawab of Dhaka voiced the grievances of the Muslims for annulment in his presidential address and the issue as a ready concession to an utterly seditious agitation. He also appreciated the decision of the government to set up a University of Dhaka. (Note 18) Eventually after the formation of League, in all participated meetings of League, Nawab delivered speeches in favor of Muslims and emphasized to achieve all rights and interests of Muslims by political negotiations and organizing movements. He believed that since many times the interests of Muslims had been sacrificed to reach a compromise with Hindus at an all-India level. Throughout these years, Salimullah held positions of authority in several leagues and conferences and continued to speak out on important political issues. In 1907, he became president of the All Bengal Muslim League, formed newly Kolkata. In 1908, he became the secretary of the newly established East Bengal and Assam Provincial Muslim League, becoming president in 1909. He served as the chairman at the 22nd Convention of the All India Mohammedan Educational Conference at Amritsar in December 1908. In March 1911, at a meeting at the Ahsan Monjil (Note 19), he presided over a decision to maintain the provincial Muslim League and provincial Educational Conference separate for political and educational activities. Ahmed 1991, p.39) On 2 March 1912, Salimullah chaired a meeting at which the two Muslim Leagues of the Bengal were combined into the Presidency Muslim League and the two Muslim Associations were combined into the Bengal Presidency Muslim Association. Salimullah was made president of both the organizations. (Banglapedia 2003, vol.9:33)

## 9. Conclusion

Eventually, from the time of its establishment to the emergence of Pakistan, AIML was only mouthpiece of the Muslim rights and interests in British India. As a Muslim political party, all of its activities and programs were manifested to present and prevent Muslim legitimate rights and interests. Most significantly, Muslim League was able to transfer from Muslim political vision to a more inclusive position by growing the trust and commitment of these much needed fulfilling its objective. It is important that for the formation of this political body, Nawab Salimullah not only took all effective and possible roles but also awakened all Muslims to be conscious of their political ideas and rights and to form a political association to meet the challenges of times. Apparently, he was succeeded in reorientation of all consecutive successful events and efficient policies such as organizing pre-partition feelings, corresponding with all Muslim leaders, circulating Circular Letter, promoting the expenses of the Education Conference etc. Moreover, his efficient and inimitable leadership, outspoken political statements especially uncompromising character guided the Muslim to constitute All-Indian Muslim League. So, he was the planner and designer of the first Muslim political party by which Muslim community achieved their independent Pakistan through many political struggles and vicissitude. Shila sen said "The Nawab of Dacca had undoubtedly been the prime mover behind this development." (Sen 1976,p.42) Having analyzed Nawab's numerous activities and achievements of a great visionary, he was genuinely responsible for all effective actions of forming AIML which was carried forward by the Quaid-e-Azam to fight for and to achieve Pakistan as an independent entity for the Muslims who have been lost in the wilderness for a pretty longtime. (Note 20)

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## Notes

Note 1: The Bengal Presidency or Bengal of British India was partitioned by British viceroy Lord Curzon in 1905 due to the grounds of administrative efficiency. The province was the largest province of India forming Bengal, Behar and Orissa (Assam was excluded from Bengal from 1874 as an area under a chief commissioner) extending over the area of 1, 89, 000 sq miles with a population of 80 million, which was too vast to be administered by one lieutenant Governor. The new province was Eastern Bengal and Assam with capital at Dhaka covered an area of 106,540 sq. miles with a population of 31 million comprising of 18 million Muslims and 12 million Hindus. Bengal remained with an area of 141,580 sq. miles and a population of 54 million, of which 42 million would be Hindus and 9 million Muslims.

Note 2: Indian National Congress is Indian first political party founded in 1885. Allen Octavius Hume, a retired member of the Indian Civil Service, was credited for inaugurating this organization. The first session of Congress was presided over by Womesh Chandra Banerjee who was also elected as the first president of Indian National Congress. The party declared three aims and objectives: 1) Inculcate a feeling of national unity and try to eradicate the notion of race, creed and provincial prejudices. 2) Seek the co-operation of all the Indians in its efforts and allow them to take part in the administrative affairs of the country. 3) Find a solution to the social problems of the country.

Note 3: By the announcement of Emperor King George V in Delhi on 12 December 1911 the Partitioned Bengal that was affected in 1905 was reunified. In the face of the constant violent movements and strength oppositions of Hindu nationalists and the Congress, secretly British Viceroy Lord Hardinge and his council planned and approved the scheme of the Annulment of the Partition of Bengal. The secretary of the state of India Lord Crew gave the sanction to the scheme that was accordingly announced by the king. According to the scheme Delhi was made the seat of the Government of India in place of Calcutta and the Bengali-speaking division (the Presidency,

Bradman, Dacca, Rajshahi and Chittagong) constituted into Bengal Presidency with Calcutta as capital. The area was estimated 70,000 sq miles with population of 42 million. The non-Bengali speaking areas Bihar, Orissa and Chota Nagpur were formed under a new Lt. Governorship with headquarters as Patna. Assam was again placed under the rule of a chief of Commissioner.

Note 4: Almost 35 Muslim leaders, a galaxy of Muslims leaders from all the provinces of India, presented a memorandum to the Viceroy of India in 1906 at Simla. Thus Simla Deputation of 1906, the most representative Muslim delegation, was the first systematic attempt of the Muslims to present their demands and interests to the British government seeking their acceptance. This delegation was led by Sir Agha Khan and Nawab Mohsin ul Malik served as a secretary and this delegation met the Viceroy in Simla that was why it was called as Simla Deputation.

Note 5: The greatest Muslim reformer, educationalist and political leader of British India Sir Syed Ahmad Khan (1817-1898) was the founder and sole organizer of All India Muslim Educational Conference (AIMEC) established in 1886. This organization stated aims were to encourage the study of western education among Indian Muslims with reviving Islamic religious learning. It also aimed at removing their doubts and misconception about the western and modern education. The organization campaigned against the Muslim participation to confrontational politics of Congress. Until the founding of the Muslim League in 1906, it was the principal national centre of Indian Muslim. (Hardy, P. (1972). *The Muslim of British India*, London, Cambridge University Press. p-139.

Available at <http://aligarhmovement.com/institutions/aimec> and <http://www.pakistanherald.com/Profile/Sir-Syed-Ahmad-Khan-1201>

Note 6: The word “Mohammedans” means the “Muslims”.

Note 7: Knight Commander of the Order of the Star of India. This was the order of chivalry that means traditional code of conduct associated with the institution of knighthood, created and decided by the British Crown to reward and entitle Indian high officials, princes, chiefs, British officers and administrators who served in India and were loyal to the British rule. Proclamations of these orders of titles were founded by the Queen Victoria in 1861.

Note 8: Knight Grand Commander of the Order of the Star of India or Grand Commander of the Order of the Star of Indian Empire.

Note 9: Anti-Partition agitations were strongly manifested and organized by the educated Hindu people and interpreted attack on their ‘national solidarity’. The lawyers assailed its legality and intellectuals remarked as disaster on the Bengali Language and literature. The politician claimed terrible struck of British to check progressive political trends of Indian people. Agitation increasingly formed of a Swadeshi Movement to boycott the import of British manufactured goods. Swadeshi and Boycott were developed as *Swaraj* (self-government) movement that followed their main objective. By the Congress it was destined to become the main platform of the Indian nationalist movement as a nation-wide mass organization with uncontrolled violence, anarchy and disorder. Congress viewed it as an attempt to 'divide and rule' and moved '*Bande-Mataram*' (Hail Motherland) almost became the national anthem. Even Hindus related their movements to their religious spirit. Congress Leader Bal Gangadhar Tilak introduced Shivaji cult and Shivaji's birthday was celebrated as a national hero with fair and programs. Several terrorists' societies were formed to launch attempts of assassinating the British officials. The press assisted a great deal to disseminate revolutionary ideas. Communal disturbances and riots became a familiar feature in Bengal. (A.R. Mallick, *The British Policy and the Muslims of Bengal*. Dhaka, 1962, pp.14-19. S. N. Banerjee. *A Nation in the Making*. Karachi, p. 189. A. Hamid. *Muslim Separatism*. Lahore, 1967, p.53. Internet [www.asb.com](http://www.asb.com) [January 10. 2014]; also available <http://dhakadailyphoto.blogspot.com/2006/11/partition-of-bengal-1905-and-its.html> [January 10. 2014].

Note 10: Now Dhaka, the capital city of Bangladesh, after the partition of Bengal Dacca was capital of the new province East Bengal and Assam Presidency.

Note 11: Saiyad Mehdi Ali popularly known as Nawab Mohsin-ul-Mulk (1837-1907) was one of the architects of Sir Saiyad's mission and Aligarh Movement. He served the Nizam of Hyderabad (1874-1893) as Deputy Collector and the Nizam entitled him Munir Nawaz Jang and Nawab Mohsin-ud-Daula. After retirement he joined Aligarh Movement. After Sir Saiyad, he became the Secretary of the MAO (Muhammadan Anglo

Oriental) College management in 1898. He became the Secretary of the Muslim Educational Conference in 1899. Nawab was one of the founders of the All Indian Muslim League and became the Secretary of League in 1906. He and his brother Viqar-ul-Mulk were asked to draft the constitution for the League. He carried on correspondence with the private secretary of the Viceroy to give his point-of-view on the necessity of separate representation for the Muslims in all legislatures and local bodies of India.

Note 12: William A.J. Archbold (1865–1929) was the Principal of MAO College (1905 –1909) and Founder Secretary of Appointment Association, University of Cambridge; and Secretary of Board of Indian Civil Services Studies.

Note 13: Such as Mohammedan Literary Society, Central National Mohammedan Association, Aligarh Movement etc.

Note 14: Mustaq Hussain popularly known as Viqar-ul-Mulk (1841-1917), who was the younger brother of Muhsin-ul-Mulk and his successor in Aligarh Movement. His profession was started as a teacher and soon became connected with the mission of Sir Syed. He served the state of Hyderabad from 1875 to 1892 and for his meritorious services was elevated to the title of Nawab Vikar-ul-Mulk. He was elected the secretary of the Aligarh College. Nawab was a member of the Simla Deputation in 1906. He wanted the Muslims to organize themselves politically and to safeguard their political rights. He also played an active role in the establishment of the Muslim League.

Note 15: He was the Muslim zaminder of Dhanabari at Tangail district of Bangladesh and Muslim nationalist leader of Bengal.

Note 16: In a letter to Dunlop Smith dated 29 October 1906 the Aga Khan states “I have asked all the members of the Simla Deputation to form into a permanent committee” Minto Papers, Correspondence, vol-2, no- 126.

Note 17: These three objects are: 1) to promote among the Muslims of India, feelings of loyalty to the British Government, and to remove any misconception that may arise as to intention of the Government with regard to any of its measures. 2) To protect and advance the political rights and interests of the Muslims of India, and to respectfully represent their needs and aspirations to the Government. 3) To prevent the rise among the Muslims of India of any feeling of hostility towards other communities, without prejudice to the other aforementioned objects of the League (*The Pioneer*, Calcutta, 2 January 1907; *The Englishman*, 4 January 1907; Ahmad, Muhammad Saleem. . (1988). *The All India Muslim League: From the Late Nineteenth Century to 1919*. Bahawalpur, Ilham Publishers. p- 38.

Note 18: Lord Hardinge proposed the establishment of a University at Dacca in January, 1912, as a compensation for annulment. See also Ali, S. N. A year in the Imperial Legislative Council, 1916-1917, Calcutta, 1917, p-25.

Note 19: Ahsan Manzil was the official and residential palace of the East Bengal's most influential zamindars (landowner) of Dhaka who were entitled as Nawab by the British Government. It is located Kumartoli on the bank of the Buriganga River under Sutrapur thana of the Dhaka City Corporation. It is one of the most finest and significant architectural monuments of Bangladesh. The nawabs of Dhaka used to conduct their court affairs here as chief of the *panchayet* (village council). In 1985, government made it a museum.

Note 20: Available <http://sayeedjournal.wordpress.com/chapter-2-the-origin-of-the-dhaka-nawab-family-our-ancestors-and-the-birth-of-all-india-muslim-league>. (November 25, 2013).