

## Prospects of One Unit

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**Abstract:** The main objective of the present study was to solve the difference between the provinces of Pakistan. In fact, after the partition of the sub-continent, there were some constitutional matters in Pakistan which were not decided as yet. To solve the constitutional matters, there were different proposals. One of them was to merge the four provinces and states into one whole, that was called one unit.

**Key Words:** Partition, Constitutional Matters, Prospects

### Introduction

The elections of the Constitutional Assembly were held in July 1946. In this election Muslim League had a brute overwhelming majority. According to the Indian Council Act India was divided into two dominions-Pakistan and India. So the original Constitutional Assembly of India was divided into two parts.

The Constitutional Assembly of Pakistan met for the first time on 10 August, 1947. This assembly had to perform two major functions:

- A It had to frame a constitution for the country
- B To act as Federal legislature till the adoption of the new constitution.

The Quaid-i-Azam and his colleagues were not able to pay much attention to the framing of the constitution because there were so many external and internal problems. Liaquat Ali Khan introduced a bill of Objectives Resolution in the Constitutional Assembly which contained the very basic principles on which the future constitution of Pakistan was to be based. The Objectives Resolution was passed by the members of the Constitutional Assembly on 12 March 1949. On the same day, the Constitutional Assembly of Pakistan appointed a Basic Principles Committee (BPC) of twenty-five members headed by Maulvi Tamizuddin Khan to prepare a draft of the constitution of Pakistan. This committee appointed three sub-committees namely:

- A On federal and provincial constitutions and distribution of power.
- B Sub-committee of Franchise.
- C Sub-committee of Judiciary.

The interim report of the Basic Principles Committee was submitted on 28 September 1950, this report proposed a federal system of government and legislative will be House of Unit. (Upper House) and House of People (Lower House). Upper house was to be given equal representation to all the provinces and lower house was to be elected on the basis of population Both the houses were given equal powers and in case of a dispute on any matter the two houses were to decide the question in the joint session. (Report of the Basic Principles Committee, 1954). This report was criticized throughout the country. It was described as undemocratic in nature by the press in the Punjab. "The Imroze" was of the view that the constitution proposed by the BPC would be federal only in name. There was no guarantee for

provincial autonomy as even the heads of the provinces would be nominated by the head of the state instead of being elected by the people. (Imroze, 1950). "The Nawa-i-Waqt" also criticized the undemocratic provisions of the reports and described it as a negation of provincial autonomy and a mockery of federation. (Nawa-i-Waqt, 1950).

The report came under criticism in the province of Bengal. "The Pakistan Observer" reported that Bengali reaction came from all walks of life - high officials, professors, teachers, students medical men and police personnel etc, the first reaction was that of bewilderment. (Pakistan Observer, 1950). Many sections in Bengal were disturbed and they were unable to understand why in the matter of representation in the national legislature West Pakistan was given an advantage over East Pakistan, although the latter contained greater population. (Metz William, 1956). It was interpreted to mean that the real intention of the framers of the reports was to create a Uniform of government. (Pakistan Observer Lahore, 1954). Being conscious of their numerical strength, the Bengalis demanded an overall majority in the central legislature on the basis of population. In case this was not done," Abbas Nur Ahmad, a seasonal Bengali politician, said:-

"It would reduce the majority of East Bengal into a minority and it will turn "East Pakistan into colony of West Pakistan." (Jahan, Rounag, 1972).

The Dacca Bar Association also saw sinister motives behind the report which it was said was designed and framed to cripple East Pakistan. (Chaudhary and Ghulam Waheed, 1969).

The East Pakistan Muslim League working committee held its session on 29 October 1950 and recommended drastic amendments to the report. In a provincial convention held at Dacca on 4 and 5 November 1950, a republican form of government with two autonomous regional governments of East Bengal and West Pakistan and a central parliament elected on the basis of population was proposed in which only defence, currency and foreign affairs were to remain with the centre.

Due to agitation the authors of the report persuaded the members of the constitutional Assembly to postpone its consideration for some time. Liaquat Ali Khan invited suggestions from the public by 31 January, 1951 with a view to helping the framers of the constitution to redraft

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the report. A sub-committee was set up to examine all the suggestions received from the public. BPC sub-committee was still engaged in analyzing the different proposals received from the public. Liaquat Ali Khan was assassinated at Rawalpindi on 16 October, 1951 and Khawaja Nazim-ud-Din succeeded him as the Prime Minister of Pakistan. In the meantime the reports of the two sub committees namely on Franchise and Judiciary had been finalized.

In the second draft of the basic principles committee Khawaja Nazim-ud-Din presented the principle of parity to resolve the conflict on federal structure. The Franchise committee finally decided to propose parity in the central legislature as a whole and weight age for smaller provinces. The question of reducing the number of units in West Pakistan was to be solved by merging Bahawalpur with Punjab, Khairpur with Sindh, Baluchistan States Union with Baluchistan province Frontier states with the Frontier province. This it is said was done in keeping with the wishes of Liaquat Ali Khan's constitutional policy. (Binder, Leonard, 1961).

Khawaja Nazim-ud-Din presented the parity formula to the CAP which provided equal representation to both the wings of Pakistan. The report proposed a strong center with residuary powers.

In any case, joint sitting of the two houses were proposed and simple majority was to decide the matter. (Report of BPC Karachi, 1952). The reaction against the proposal of the BPC shattered the hopes of the framers. Awami Muslim League passed a resolution condemning the distribution of seats between the two wings of Pakistan on the basis of parity and regarded it as a violation of the universal principles of democracy. (Morning News, 1954).

Hussain Shahid Suharwardy criticized the formula he said:-

" East Pakistan has 4 percent majority in the total population of Pakistan."

The fear that East Pakistan was a potential enemy of West Pakistan was baseless. The Khilafat-i-Rabbani and United Islamic Front supported the Awami League and suggested that only defence, currency and foreign affairs should remain with the center. (Afzal and Rafique, 1976).

The report was not accepted in West Pakistan. Sheikh Abdul Majeed Sindhi as politician of Sindh was of the opinion that the parity between East and West Pakistan must be dropped and replaced by equality of representation to the various units in the house of units and representation of population base in the house of people. (Pakistan Times, 1954). Sardar Muhammad Akbar Khan Bugti the tribal chief of Baluchistan declared parity provision as thoroughly undemocratic and unfair. The Punjabis interpreted this report as an attempt to establish Bengali domination over the whole country. This view was based on the fear that by winning over the support of the smaller provinces of West Pakistan like Sindh and NWFP, the Bengalis would be in a position to isolate the Punjab and rule over the country. (Khalid Bin Saeed). "Nawa-i-Waqt" in an editorial comment said that :-

The proposed system of parity would result in the

permanent domination of one province i.e. East Bengal over all other provinces of Pakistan. (Nawa-I-Waqt, 1954).

The Prime Minister visited Punjab and the people of the Punjab proposed alternative suggestions to be incorporated in the BPC report. A committee of lawyers was set up by the Lahore High Courts Bar Association to consider the report and suggest amendments. The committee recommended a federal form of government in which the lower house was to be constituted on the basis of population but in the upper house West Pakistan was to receive weight age in such a way that " The total strength of the representatives of each wing in both houses should be equal". It further recommended that West Pakistan be made one single unit, and if it was not feasible then the whole of West Pakistan should be divided into three units namely the Punjab and Bahawalpur as one unit. NWFP and Frontier states as the second unit and Sindh Baluchistan and Khairpur and Baluchistan States merged into the third unit of West Pakistan. (Pakistan Times, 1953).

From Peshawar a senior advocate in a press note on 15 January, 1953 said:

That the best solution to the present constitutional crisis was that there should be only two units of Pakistan namely the East and West Pakistan. He had no doubt in his mind that

Pathan community would welcome the merge of small provinces of West Pakistan into one strong and solvent unit..

It may be mentioned that there is some evidence that both Quaid-i-Azam and Liaquat Ali Khan had also favoured the idea of integrating various provinces of West Pakistan into one united province as a counter poise to a homogeneous East Bengal. (Williams and Rushbrook, 1962).

This scheme further corroborated by the statement of Sardar Bahadur Khan July 1955 to have said that :-

The Quaid-I-Azam wanted to implement a scheme on such lines by 1948.

Khawaja Nazim-ud-Din generally followed Liaquat Ali Khan's policies. There was no alternative to postpone the discussion of the BPC report in the CAP. Later on Khawaja Nazim-ud-Din was dismissed by Governor General, Malik Ghulam Muhammad, and Muhammad Ali Bogra became the Prime Minister of Pakistan. He started negotiations with the provincial governments to put an end to the controversy regarding the BPC report. Muhammad Ali Bogra discussed the situation with his colleagues in the cabinet and had consultation with experts. He was able to give a constitutional formula commonly known as " Muhammad Ali Bogra Formula" Muslim League Parliamentary Party approved the formula and presented it to the CAP along with the report of the BPC. The new formula retained the principle of the parity and federal form of government. The federal legislature was to consist of two houses, upper house with 50 seats and lower house with 300 seats, distributed among the five units on the basis of population. In West Pakistan, this formula was appreciated but from Bengal Mr. Nur-ul-Amin was the only one to have favoured this formula and other politicians opposed it. The general discussion of

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this formula in the CAP started on 7 October, 1953, the day it was introduced the assembly adjourned the session to give time to the various parties for a campaign in the forthcoming elections in East Pakistan. Muslim League's defeat in March 1954 elections in Bengal Province legislature gave a new shape to the consideration of the report. In view of these election results, East Bengal had emerged as one complete entity in itself but West Pakistan remained divided as before. To face this new crisis successfully, the idea of merging all the provinces of West Pakistan into one unit came to the mind of the politicians of the Punjab. The Muslim League assembly party appointed a committee to consider the question of allocating powers between the center and Units. In its meeting on 23 July 1954 the feasibility of making the western wing of Pakistan into one unit came under discussion. This proposal was based on the argument that since West Pakistan is one economic unit, it was highly desirable that it should also become one administrative unit. It was likely to solve the constitutional problem. While Malik Firoz Khan Noon, the Chief Minister is reported to have strongly supported the idea and it was opposed by Abdul Sattar Perzada, the Chief Minister of Sindh. (Pakistan Times, 1954). The Bengali member of the sub-committee also opposed the plan. After a few weeks, some politicians set up an organization called 'Security of Sindh' to oppose the merge plan. Muslim League assembly party held meeting on September 1954 to discuss the one unit. Some members criticized this plan. Malik Firoz Khan Noon presented the Zonal federation scheme as an alternative to the one unit idea. This scheme provided that each province should have ten members from each zone in the zonal legislature and they were to be indirectly elected by the provincial legislatures. Each of these zones was to have a governor who was to be subordinate to the Federal Government. The Muhammad Ali Bogra formula regarding the central government set-up was to remain undisturbed. The zonal scheme, however, did not find favour with the members of the committee. Some members criticised the zonal scheme. The first Constituent Assembly could not get progress to draft the constitution, so Governor General Ghulam Muhammad decided to dissolve the CAP and he was encouraged by the support of important politicians. The undemocratic action of the Governor General to dissolve the CAP was without indicating the provision of any law. No public protest was raised as procession was taken out against the Governor General's action and no further agitation went on in the mosques. The man in the street was unconcerned and completely indifferent. (Binder Leonard). Indeed, it was welcomed by a number of political leaders.

Ch. Muhammad Ali reconstituted his cabinet and this was called a cabinet of talents. One of the first tasks to which the new cabinet, installed by Governor General Ghulam Muhammad attended, was the question of unifying the various provinces of West Pakistan into one unit. Although the idea was not a new one, it was formally presented to the cabinet by General Muhammad Ayub Khan." He said:-"

"This is what we have got to do, the first thing is to

unify West Pakistan." According to strategic economic point of view it was

essential that these provinces must be welded into one unit and all artificial boundaries removed. It was essential for the further development of the country." (Rashdi and Muhammad, 1970).

It was necessary that Punjab, the largest single component in West Pakistan, should be ready to make the required sacrifices and be content with 40 percent representation. The smaller provinces may continue to enjoy representation according to their population. Before the one unit was put into effect, the existing provincial and state legislature and cabinet will have to be done away with so as not to interfere with and impede reorganization.

The advantages were as follows:

Given the above, the fear of any one unit dividing and dominating other would disappear; harmonious and unfettered development in each unit would be possible; fear of provincialism will be reduced to the minimum, savings in manpower in eliminating so many heavily provincial administration would be effected, expenses of administration would be reduced to the minimum and the danger of politicians interfering with the local administrators curtailed. In other words very valuable gains would have been made by such a reorganization. The one unit scheme was implemented in 1955.

Chief Minister of Punjab, Mumtaz Daultana, delivered a speech in the CAP in support of one unit in September, 1955. Chief Minister of Punjab, Mumtaz Daultana, had a secret document and this secret document was divided into three sections:-

- a The case for one unit.
- b Political campaign for one unit.
- c Objectives of one unit.

According to Mian Mumtaz Daultana, the common people of West Pakistan were sure to heartily respond to the idea of one unit if they were properly made aware of the administrative advantages, the economic savings and the improvement in the standard of political leadership. It was to be emphasized that one unit would primarily operate to the advantage of the less developed and less prosperous areas and to the automatic adjustment in the East - West relationship. The opposition criticized the plan on the potent weapon of one unit and in the smaller provinces was the fear of Punjab's domination. The smaller province of Sindh Chief Minister Abdus Sattar Perzada opposed one unit. NWFP also opposed one unit. Punjab princely states did not show serious opposition because they must, by their condition, bow to authority. It was made clear to them that they could continue in power only if they accepted the one unit plan. After the acceptance of the one unit plan by the leaders of West Pakistan the, North West Frontier Province Assembly was the first legislature to approve the one unit scheme. Sardar Rashid and his party-men agreed to support the one unit resolution in the provincial legislature. This resolution was passed without any difficulty. The Opposition led by Pir Sahib of Mankisharif, the NWFP Awami League branch, boycotted the session. (Pakistan Times, 1954). NWFP Awami League and Red shirt set up anti one unit front. The

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opposition demanded that a referendum or general election be held in the smaller unit of Pakistan before the establishment of one unit. It asserted that people of the frontier province will not accept the decision to form one unit unless the people's wishes were ascertained. Abdul Sattar Pirzada was replaced by Muhammad Ayub Khuhro as the Chief Minister of the Sindh. He enjoyed better position. The Opposition strongly protested against the one unit plan. Muhammad Ayub Khuhro presented the one unit resolution in the assembly on 11 December 1954. This resolution was passed by an overall majority. Out of 109 members 104 were present in the house and 100 voted in favour of this scheme. The Chief Minister of Punjab Malik Firoza Khan introducing the resolution in the support of one unit in the provincial assembly in 13 November 1954 not only welcomed the decision to implement the scheme but also urged authorities to take early steps to implement it. He said: -

" It gives me great pleasure to put the motion before the house. I feel that if West Pakistan is turned into one administrative unit it will be the greatest thing that could have happened to this country after the creation of Pakistan". (Punjab Assembly Debates, 1954).

The princely states Bahawalpur and Khairpur Assembly passed a resolution in favour of merger with other provinces under one unit till 10 December, 1954. The rulers of the Baluchistan states had agreed to merge their states with the centrally administered Baluchistan in October 1954. After the various provinces and states had been made to agree to accept one unit, the Governor General of Pakistan on 17 December 1954 issued an order for the establishment of a council for the administration of West Pakistan. (Pakistan Times, 1954). This council submitted its report in February, 1955 and following it an ordinance was issued for constituting the province of West Pakistan. A few days later Mushtaq Ahmed Gurmani and Dr. Khan Sahib were designated as the Governor and Chief Minister of the province respectively. One Unit bill was introduced in the assembly by Sardar Amir Azam Khan on 23 August, 1955. The bill was to provide for the establishment of the province of West Pakistan by integrating provinces and states. (CAP., Debates, 1955). The bill was proposed by him to pave the way for resolving many constitutional problems between East and West Pakistan which will greatly facilitate the framing of our constitution based on a large measure of provincial

autonomy and equal partnership and federal center. (Ibid, 1955).

The debates started and many members from NWFP, Sind and Punjab criticized this bill. Ch. Muhammad Ali, the Prime Minister, of Pakistan believed that the primary duty of the CAP was to give the country a constitution as rapidly as possible and then to move on to free and fair elections. It was with this spirit that the unification of West Pakistan was conceived. The debate on the bill concluded on 30<sup>th</sup> September, 1955 and when it was put to vote 43 voted for and 13 against it.

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