

NCERT Solutions For Class 12 History Chapter 14 Understanding Partition Politics, Memories, Experiences

NCERT TEXTBOOK QUESTIONS SOLVED

1. What did the Muslim League demand through its resolution of 1940?

Ans: An important resolution was passed by the Muslim League on 23rd March, 1940. This resolution was drafted by Sikandar Hayat Khan, the leader of the Unionist Party and the Punjab Premier. Through this, the Muslim League demanded an autonomy for the Muslim -majority areas of the subcontinent. But in the resolution there was no mention either of the partition of the country or the creation of Pakistan.

Sikandar Hayat Khan was opposed to the idea of the formation of Pakistan. He opined of a loose federation with a lot of autonomy for the states.

2. Why did some people think of Partition as a very sudden development?

Ans: Some people thought that the Partition was sudden development due to the following factors :

1. On 23 March 1940 in the Resolution, the Muslim League had demanded only a measure of autonomy for the Muslim – majority areas of the subcontinent. Later on in the Punjab Assembly Sikandar Hayat Khan, Punjab Premier, who had drafted the resolution reiterated his plea for a loose but united confederation with considerable autonomy for the confederating units.
2. The period between the above resolution and the Partition was only seven years. So, it all happened suddenly.
3. No one was sure about what would happen to people's lives in the future. That is why many migrants in 1947 thought they would return as soon as peace prevailed again.
4. During the initial period even Jinnah did not seriously raise the demand. He adopted it only as bargaining counter, to gain additional favours for the Muslims.
5. The Second World War had delayed the negotiations with the British but the Quit India Movement compelled the British to negotiate with Indian leaders for transfer of power.
6. After the War too, Cabinet Mission had recommended a loose three-tier confederation. That was initially accepted by all the major parties but later developments led to the partition.

3. How did ordinary people view Partition? (or)

Describe the harrowing experiences of ordinary people during the period of partition of India.

Ans: For ordinary people, partition was full of challenges and brought sufferings. The

division was not a territorial division for them. It was also not a party politics of Congress and the Muslim League for them. But for the ordinary people, partition was a challenge for them. It brought misery and troubles to them.

It meant death of their loved one, loss of property and wealth. Partition also uprooted them from their paternal land. People were forced to live in refugee camps. They were also forced to start their life once again from a new platform. So for ordinary people, partition was not a pleasant experience, but it was painful and full of sufferings.

4. What were Mahatma Gandhi's arguments against Partition?

Ans: Mahatma Gandhi was in favour of unity among various communities of the country. He was a firm supporter of religious harmony. He never supported the idea of partition. He did not want the separation of the Muslims from the Hindus who had been living together for centuries.

In his view partition was wrong. He was ready to sacrifice his life for an undivided India. But he was not ready to accept the partition. In his view, Islam stood for unity and brotherhood of mankind and not for separation. So he said that the demand of Pakistan by the Muslim League was un-Islamic and sinful. In his view those who favoured the partition were enemies of both Islam and India. He opined the Hindu and the Muslims belonged to the same land. They were living in India together for centuries. They shared the same land, same food. They drank the same water. They speak the same language and they live in peace and harmony: So he appealed to the Muslim League not to demand for a separate nation.

5. Why is Partition viewed as an extremely significant marker in South Asian history?

Ans: Partition is viewed as an extremely significant marker in South Asian history due to the following reasons :

1. During Partition several hundred thousands were killed and innumerable women raped and abducted. About 15 million people were compelled to move across the frontiers which were not known officially until two days after formal independence. They lost everything. They were rendered homeless. Thus, they were stripped of their local or regional cultures.
2. It was like a civil war because there were well-organised forces on both sides and concerted attempts to wipe out entire populations of other community as enemies.
3. It has been called by the ordinary people as “maashall-la – martial law”, “mara mari” (killings), and “raula” or “hullar” (disturbance tumult, uproar). Sometimes it has been described as “holocaust” but it was not state-driven extermination.
4. The Partition has led to produce India-haters in Pakistan and Pakistan-haters in India. Though such people were there before Partition but they were strengthened because of 1947.
5. Memories of Partition still continue to shape the history of people on both sides of border. Communal groups use them to create feelings of suspicion and hatred.

6. The relations between India and Pakistan too have been influenced by the legacy of the Partition.

6. Why was British India partitioned?

Ans: Several factors can be attributed for the partition of British India. Some of them are discussed below:

Role of Communal Parties and Organisations: Several historians and scholars think that the main purpose of the foundation of the Muslim League was to serve the interests of the Muslims. In retaliation, the Hindu Mahasabha was founded. The Muslim League was demanding more and more political rights for the Muslims. In retaliation of this, some of the Hindus took steps and established the Hindu Mahasabha in the year 1915. The Hindu Mahasabha also demanded more political rights and representation of the Hindus in the different government organizations. Following in the footsteps, the Sikh League was founded. Akali Dal also put forward demand for their people. Directly or indirectly, these political parties helped separation. They created feeling of separation and isolation among different communities.

British Policy: In India, the British followed the policy of Divide and Rule. In India, before the arrival of the British, the Hindus and the Muslims lived happily. There was unity, mutual cooperation and brotherhood among them. But the British did not like this. They sowed the seeds of dissension and followed the policy of Divide and Rule. Most of the historians believe that this policy of Divide and Rule was the main reason of the partition. The British historians, journalists and writers propagated through their writings that Muslim invaders made the Hindus enslaved and they had been exploited for centuries.

Role of British Government: The British Government also encouraged partition. The British Government encouraged the Muslim League to demand for a separate state. They tried to disrupt the movement of independence by playing the game of imperialism.

Role of Leaders: Role of leaders was also responsible for the partition. Under the leadership of Jinnah, the Muslim League moved a resolution at Lahore demanding a measure of autonomy for the Muslim majority area and after that a new nation called Pakistan. The great poet Mohammad Iqbal also spoke about the need for a Muslim state in north west India as early as in 1930.

7. How did women experience Partition?

Ans:

1. The women had harrowing experiences of the Partition — (i) Women were raped, abducted, sold and forced to settle down to a new life with strangers in unknown circumstances.
2. Later on when women adjusted themselves in new conditions and developed new family bonds, they were traced and sent back to their earlier families. The governments were insensitive to the complexities of human relationships. They also did not consult the concerned women. Thus, the government undermined their right to take decisions regarding their own lives.
3. At some places, women were killed by their own men to preserve their 'honour'. Some women might have been compelled to end their lives against their will.

8. How did the Congress come to change its view on Partition?

Ans: Initially the Indian National Congress was not in favour of the partition. But in March, 1947, the Congress high command agreed to Punjab into two parts. One part would consist of the Muslim -majority areas and the other part would consist of the areas having Hindu-Sikh majority. To most of the Sikh leaders and Congress leaders, partition of Punjab was a necessary evil. The Sikhs feared that their denial to the partition of Punjab may lead them to be overpowered by the Muslims. They would be under control of the Muslims. Situation was the same in Bengal. The Bhadrakalok Bengali Hindus of Bengal wanted to retain political power with them. They were also apprehensive of the Muslims. In Bengal, the Hindus were in minority. So they favoured the partition. They thought that partition would help them to retain political dominance. These reasons forced the Congress to change their view on Partition.

9. Examine the strengths and limitations of oral history. How have oral-history techniques furthered our understanding of Partition?

Ans: Oral history techniques help historians to write experiences of people during the time of partition. In fact, history of partition has been reconstructed with the help of oral narratives. It is not possible to extract such kind of information from government records. Government would not provide such information which paint them in bad colour. It will also not tell about the daily development of the events during the partition. Moreover, Government was involved in negotiation. Documents of government deal with policy matters and throw light on efforts of major political parties.

But the oral history tells the day to day account. It is told by the people who have actually gone through the trauma and pains of the partition. But the oral data is not free from limitations. Oral data lacks concrete details. It does not have the chronological order. Oral accounts are concerned with tangential issues and that small individual experiences are irrelevant to the unfolding of the larger canvas of history. In oral history people may not talk their personal aspects. They can hide even their fault or fault of their community as a whole. Many people may not remember all events. People tend to forget also. Accuracy of narration can also be questioned.