

Role of the Marginalised Groups of Punjab in Pakistan Movement: 1940-1947

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Abstract

Majority of the Muslim population in pre-independence Punjab belonged to a low-income class of the society. The Muslims earned their livelihood from government jobs, privately owned small businesses, or were workers in industrial units. However, the most populated economic group was of peasantry because majority of the Muslim population lived in rural areas. The contribution of all these four groups of low-income class in the struggle for independence has been generally neglected by historians of the Pakistan Movement. A large number of works has been produced on the contribution of Muslim political leaders of India and Punjab in the freedom struggle. Few works have been produced on the contribution of students, Ulema and women in the independence struggle but no prominent work is available on the contribution of low-income groups of the Punjabi society in the Pakistan movement. This research paper is an attempt to cover this gap in the history of the Pakistan Movement. The paper argues that the emergence of Pakistan was not possible without the participation of Muslim masses in the movement and that the Pakistan Movement was not exclusively an elite based movement.

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Introduction

Muslims of the Punjab were never welcomed in the government jobs by the British since the beginning of their rule. This policy was changed a bit in the twentieth century as some Muslim families had started getting modern education. The middle-level posts had already been filled by Hindus. Consequently, Muslims had lesser share in government services as compared to the Hindus even in the Muslim majority areas. For example, eighty percent population of the Montgomery District was Muslim, but the government of the district was largely in the hands of the non-Muslims. The Table 1 makes the point clear:

Table 1: COMMUNAL REPRESENTATION OF INDIANS IN JOBS IN MONTGOMERY DISTRICT IN 1940

Designation	Muslims	Hindus	Sikh	Christian
Special clerk	4	5	---	---
Senior clerk	4	7	---	---
Junior clerk	25	30	10	---
Temporary clerk	1	2	---	---
Others	9	7	5	1
Total	43	51	15	1

SOURCE: *Inqilab*, October 19, 1940.

The personal staff of the Deputy Commissioner in Montgomery was Hindu. Out of eight *Qanungos*, [Persian: Assistant Lawyer] six were Hindus and two were Sikhs. The Hindu staff remained busy in exploiting and creating misunderstandings among the Muslim members.¹ Almost the same situation was prevailing in other district governments of the Punjab.

¹ *Inqilab*, October 19, 1940.

Indian Railway was a very large department that had employed thousands of people. Punjabi Muslims had also some jobs in the railways but faced problems. The Hindu community was on the higher slots in the Railway and they always tried to ignore the interests of Muslim staff and created hurdles in the way of their promotions.² Not a single Muslim was promoted from the lower Gazett to the position of Assistant Engineer in the North West Railway. Every chance of promotion was availed by the non-Muslim employees. "...so far about twenty seven employees had been promoted as Assistant Engineers in 1943, which consisted of seventeen Anglo-Indians; seven Hindus and three Sikhs, no one happened to be a Muslim."³

Similarly, Muslims were under-represented in the Irrigation Department throughout India. In the Postal Department, the important position of clerks and other higher positions were occupied by Hindus. The Hindus had predominant role in the unions. The Muslims tried in 1931 to establish their own trade Union, but the idea was rejected by the government to avoid communalism in the government offices.⁴

Medical field was another neglected area where Muslim representation was meager. Dera Ghazi Khan's eighty per cent population was Muslim but in 1944 only one Muslim was working in the government's medical department.⁵ Tough time was given to Muslim employees of the Electrical Department. M.P.C. Bahree, the Divisional Electrical Engineer of the Mechanical Workshop, was so biased towards Muslims that Muslim subordinates had to submit their resignations to get out of this exploitation.⁶

2 *The Eastern Times*, 11 October 1942.

3 *Dawn*, November 28, 1943.

4 *Nawa-i-Waqt*, December 2, 1944.

5 *The Eastern Times*, April 7, 1945.

6 *The Eastern Times*, February 11, 1944. Extract from a Letter, written by an employee to the Editor of the newspaper.

Muslims faced the same discrimination in the public sector industrial units. The non-Muslims were welcomed to the well-paid posts and senior positions, whereas the Muslims were ignored. In the Ordinance Clothing Factory at Lahore even the technical Muslim workers were not given promotions on the plea of being uneducated. Non-Muslims easily promoted to foremanship. In 1944, an experienced Muslim Chageman of relevant experience was denied promotion even to the post of Assistant Foreman.⁷

The major control of the business and commerce was in the hands of Hindus. The dominance of Hindus did not let Muslims to have their own decisions. In 1941, Muslim local merchants and shopkeepers of Sialkot decided to have holiday on Friday but Hindu dealers decided to boycott. The Muslim merchants were helpless to work according to their wishes.⁸

The Hindu whole-sale dealers and shopkeepers were so prejudiced that they sold their commodities to the Muslims but never let Muslims to enter shops or to touch their things for the fear of licentious. The Muslims used to buy their things while standing outside and had to put the money in a bowl rather than handing over to the shopkeeper. Hindus never bought things from Muslim shops except in case of a dire need.⁹

Almost the whole industry in the present Pakistani areas was owned by non-Muslims. Not even a single big industrial unit was in the hands of Muslims. So the number of Muslim employees' even labourers was very low in majority of the industrial units.¹⁰ Muslim community was completely absent in grades receiving a salary of over Rs. 200. It began to make its appearance only in the lower grades.

7 *Inqilab*, March 25, 1944.

8 Interview with Dr. Rafique Ahmed, Pakistan Movement Workers Trust, Lahore, February 22, 2005 and Interview with Keramat Ali Khan, PMWT, Lahore, February 12, 2005.

9 *Inqilab*, January 21, 1941.

10 *The Eastern Times*, June 30, 1943.

The Punjab had only few big industrial units i.e. Montgomery Flour and General Mills Ltd.,¹¹ Punjab Textile Mills Jallu,¹² Ordinance Clothing Factory Lahore,¹³ Lahore Flour Mills,¹⁴ Sutluj Cotton Mills Okara, Lyallpur Cotton Mills and Ganesh Flour Mills Lyallpur.¹⁵ The total number of labourers in Lyallpur Mills was almost eight thousand, but the Muslim labourers were less than non-Muslims.¹⁶ The same situation was prevailing in all other Mills. As non-Muslims were in majority and had control, so they had organized labour Unions. Muslim labourers took a long time to be organized.

The most oppressed class of the society, the peasants, was living under the control of masters including the British government, local landlords (Hindus and Muslims) and under Moulvis of the Unionist Party in many areas of the Punjab. They had to pay taxes like lagan [Persian: Land Tax], interest and regular tax. Their food grains were purchased at cheap rates and they had to buy British goods at very high prices. Even in prosperous district of Lyallpur (Now Faisalabad), the peasants were highly oppressed. They were overburdened with debts. This situation did not let common Muslims organize any platform for the protection of their rights for a long time,¹⁷ though anxiety among common Muslims of the Punjab increased due to shortage of food during World War II.¹⁸

11 *Inqilab*, January 24, 1946.

12 *The Eastern Times*, February 11, 1944.

13 *Inqilab*, December 1, 1947.

14 *Inqilab*, January 23, 1947.

15 Interview with Mohammad Sharif Sadberg (A former employee of the Ganesh Flour Mills Lyallpur), 216 B. Ghulam Mohammad Abad, Faisalabad, July 15, 2005.

16 S. D. Gagrani, "Peasant Movement in Some Parts of the Punjab (1931-1939)" in *Punjab Revisited*, ed, Ahmed Saleem (Lahore: Gautam Publishers, nd), 524.

17 Gagrani, "Peasant Movement in Some Parts of the Punjab," 525-28.

18 Glancy to Linlithgow, Document No. 377-EL, January 1, 1942; Lionel Carter, *Punjab Politics 1940-1943: Strains of War* (New Delhi: Manohar, 2005), 288.

The Punjab Congress mobilized various sections of peasantry to enlist their support for the nationalist cause earlier than the Muslim League.¹⁹ The Hindus established Zamindara Sabha, Kirti Kisan Sabha, Akali Jatha of Sikhs and Punjab Kisan Committee (PKC). All these organizations were working for the protection of the rights of Hindus. These organizations were established by the end of 1920s except PKC which was formed in 1937.²⁰ Some Punjabi Muslims were also struggling for their rights through these organizations, yet their distinct voices could not be heard by the government. Over all, these and all other Hindu Unions were working for the greater cause of liberty from foreign rule and not for a separate Muslim country.²¹

It was only after passing the Lahore Resolution that Muslims of all the above-mentioned groups could see a ray of hope. Henceforth, they could think that their rights would be protected in a Muslim country and all possible opportunities of progress would be provided to them. They gradually started organizing themselves. Muslim government employees especially of the North West Railway Department formed their Union which worked for the protection of their rights. Industrial labour, too, in some areas formed their small local level Unions. Muslim businessmen also formed their Unions. Muslim peasantry mostly looked at the Muslim League for salvation. Although all these Muslim employees or Labour Unions were working for the protection of their rights, but the ultimate objective of all these was the creation of a separate state. In other words, all these small Muslim Organizations were followers of the Muslim League's Two-Nation Theory. In 1944, Punjab Provincial Muslim League issued its manifesto which further attracted the attention of

19 L. S. Vishwanth, "Peasant Movements in Colonial India: An Examination of Some Conceptual Frameworks," *Economic and Political Weekly* 25 (January 1990): 118.

20 Bhagwan Singh Josh, "Organization and Politicization of the Peasantry in the Punjab 1925-1942," in *The Story of the Punjab: Yesterday and Today Vol. 1* ed. Verinder Grover (New Delhi: Deep and Deep Publications, 1995), 466.

21 *Dawn*, November 12, 1944.

low-income classes. The Muslim League pointed out rights of all the classes in its lengthy manifesto. It stated:

In accordance with the Muslim League Lahore Resolution of the All India Muslim League the final aim and object of the Muslim League is Pakistan which means establishment of free Muslim States in a free and fully independent India. We believe that while true independence involves the liquidation of imperialism in all its shapes and forms, it must also provide the fullest opportunities of free development to all the nations that inhabit India.²²

The Muslim League declared that it would work for getting larger share in government service for the Muslims and vowed that equal opportunities would be won from the government for the Muslims. The Muslim League had also declared in its manifesto that international level working conditions would be provided to the workers, working hours would be reduced, minimum wages would be fixed and would provide better health, education, housing and old age benefits. For the welfare of the workers, the Muslim League asked the government to create an efficient Labour Department.²³ Similar policy statements were issued by all the provincial wings of the Muslim League.

The Muslim League had more focus on the peasants. It also demanded more humane working conditions for the industrial labour and emancipation of peasants from the exploitation. The Muslim League demanded legislation to eradicate the following issues faced by the workers:

- a. Provision of medical aid and maternity facilities;
- b. Educational facilities for children;
- c. Abolition of forced labour;
- d. Fixation of fair rents;
- e. State supervision of conditions of labour in big estates;
- f. Provision of housing conditions;
- g. Protection from debt;
- h. Protection from middle men.²⁴

22 *Dawn*, November 12, 1944.

23 *Dawn*, November 12, 1944.

24 *Dawn*, January 26, 1944.

All these demands were so much attractive to the Muslims that they started believing the Muslim League as their only hope.

Struggle for Independence

a. Low-Salaried Government Employees

The number of Muslim employees in the government service was so scanty that they could not form a separate organization for the protection of their rights. A Muslim wrote a letter to the editor of a newspaper suggesting a separate branch should be set up to look after the rights and interests of the Muslims in all government and public departments and offices.²⁵

It is true that the Muslim government employees could not form any forum against Hindu-dominated organizations but they contributed towards achievement of Pakistan in their individual capacities. Iqbal Khokar was a great example in this regard. He was working in the telephone department as an operator in Lahore. He served Pakistan cause from 1940 to 1947 and prepared personal directory with the help of Departmental Official Directory in which the record of all important personalities of the Punjab government was maintained. During his seven hour duty, he used to record the trunk-calls of important personalities. The recorded dialogue was given to the Muslim League leadership so that they could change their planning accordingly. Mostly, the recordings were given to Nawab Mamdot, Mian Amir-ud-Din, Sardar Shaukat Hayat, Mian Iftikhar ud Din, Hamid Nizami, Mian Mohammad Shafi (*Dawn* reporter). Mohammad Shafi had to provide the required information to *Dawn*. Sometimes trunk lines were provided to him at the risk of Iqbal Khokhar's job. Sometimes, direct over-hearing of the important calls used to be facilitated to Nawab Mamdot. *Nawa-i-Waqt* and *Dawn* published a lot of editorials in the

25 Files of the Gold Medalists (FGM), F/ 1871, 1992, Pakistan Movement Workers Trust (PMWT), Lahore.

light of the information provided to Mian Mohammad Shafi by Iqbal Khokhar.²⁶

Due to Khokhar's efforts, the Muslim League found itself in a strong position against Congress. On the psychological front, the revealing of the top secret dialogues of the Congress leaders in the newspapers demoralized them. In 1946, Akali leader talked with Sardar Patel in Bombay from Lahore on a trunk call. Khokhar noted down their dialogue and took the written material to Hamid Nizami within few minutes. The dialogue was about to defeat the Muslim League in forming government in the Punjab. Next day, the plan was revealed by the *Nawa-i-Waqt* and it could not be practised. In 1941, Pandit Nehru trunk-called the Chief Minister of NWFP and asked him to prepare an album, which should highlight the scene of disrespecting Hindu women by the Muslim League gondas to show to Lady Linlithgow. Iqbal gave the news to Hamid Nizami, who published it in the newspaper. Besides, Nawab Mamdot asked Khan Abdul Qayum Khan to prepare a kind of album in which the Muslim League women should be shown while being disrespected by Congress gonads. With this plan, lady Linlithgow came to know the whole story and the truth.²⁷

Besides other news, a big one provided by him was about the two arms' stores of Sikhs; one at Mohasabai Bathuk near Lohari-gate and the other at the residence of Mr. Sumporun Singh near Queens Road, Lahore. After getting this information, Sardar Shaukat Hayat raided both the places with the help of authorities and took all the arms under government protection. During last two years, Khokhar did his duty for eighteen hours a day and could sleep for few hours inside the telephone office. He used to go home only once in a month to give his salary to his family in Daska. Apart, he refused to accept any promotion during this period so that his services for Pakistan could stay intact.²⁸

26 Files of the Gold Medalists (FGM), F/ 1871, 1992.

27 Files of the Gold Medalists (FGM), F/ 1871, 1992.

28 *Jang, Juma Magazine*, May 4-10, 1984 and Files of the Gold Medalists, F/1803, 2004.

Mohammad Ashraf Khan of Lahore was another selfless character; a low-paid employee in the Punjab University. He joined Muslim League in 1940 and being in Muslim League National Guard (MLNG), served as bodyguard of Quaid-i-Azam.²⁹

Rafiq Ahmed Sadiq was head-clerk in a Government Military Department in Rawalpindi. He got membership of the Muslim League in 1944 and started propagating the Muslim League ideas among different groups of the Muslims. His Hindu bosses were against him due to his anti-Congress ideology and wanted to get rid of him. Rafiq Ahmed wanted to go to NWFP in 1945 while Quaid-i-Azam was visiting the province. He requested for seven days leave which was rejected by his Hindu officers. Despite refusal, he went to NWFP, and lost his job. For the rest of the two years, he spent most of his time, working for Pakistan Movement even in his poor financial time. He arranged many small public gatherings and conveyed the message of Pakistan to the common Muslims. He also served the refugees.³⁰

Chaudhry Mohammad Khan Azhar was another government employee from Chakwal. He also lost his job for the cause of Muslim League. He was president of Chakwal Muslim League and spent seven years of his life only serving for Pakistan. He had been successful in his struggle as Chakwal emerged a core Muslim League entity.³¹

Salah-ud-Din Malik was a typist in the Secretariat of Lahore. In July 1947, he was informed that the Muslim League needed three typists to type a very important document; he provided services with two other Muslim typists. A Hindu employee, Atum Chund tried to stop them. Yet they reached Mamdot Villa, with their machines. They typed the confidential document of the expected Pakistan

29 Files of the Gold Medalists (FGM), F/171, 1992.

30 M. Khan Azhar Ribal, *Maruzat-i-Azhar* [Urdu: Aspects of Ahz], (Rawapindi: Bazm-i-Shaheed Brotheran-i-Ribal, 1982), 18-20 and Files of the Gold Medalists, F/79,.

31 *Jang, Juma Magazine*, May 4 -10, 1984.

boundary. The report was to be presented to the Boundary Commission.³²

The above-mentioned are only few available examples. There must be other Muslim government employees as well who served for Pakistan Movement silently from their respective fronts.

b. Unions and Government Departments

Labourers of urban areas were awakened with the passing of the Lahore Resolution. They established unions from where they campaigned for Pakistan. The most organized among them was Mines Labour Union (MLU). Haji Daust Mohammad was its general secretary. He opened the first Muslim League office in Khewra Union's office building.³³

Mines Labourers held a large gathering at Khewra in 1942. The gathering was addressed by Maulana Zafar Ali Khan. The same year, District Muslim League joined the Central Muslim League. Haji Daust Mohammad lost his job due to his participation in politics. Muslim members were unhappy with the dismissal and under the leadership of labour leader Comrade Fazal Illahi, a set of demands was presented to the Managers. The main demand was the reinstatement of Haji Daust Mohammad. The managers rejected the demands which compelled the labour unions to resort to strike. However, after few days, Haji Daust Mohammad was reinstated.³⁴

In 1945, a grand Muslim League conference was held at Khewra with the efforts of MLU and especially of Haji Daust Mohammad. The British and Hindu administrators tried to stop the MLU from holding the conference and even offered bribes to Daust Mohammad, but failed to stop the MLU. It was Daust Mohammad who spread the concept of Unionism among the Muslim workers. The MLU struggled for the rights of the workers and demanded the abolition of contract

32 Files of the Gold Medalists (FGM) 2000, F/ 187.

33 *Inqilab*, July 17, 1942.

34 *Nawa-i-Waqt*, May 16, 1946.

system and payment of dearness allowance to the labourers. Ultimately, mine workers were granted dearness allowance in 1946.³⁵

Muslim mine labourers of Khewra voted for the Muslim League candidate during the 1946 Elections and he won. Hindu officers started teasing Muslim labourers, using different methods like imposing fine, dismissing them from their jobs and sometimes even disconnecting electricity or water supply to their residential area. All this compelled the labourers to go on hunger strike so that the government could pay attention to the issue.³⁶ The mine labourers actively participated in the Civil Disobedience Movement (CDM) of the ML.³⁷ Some were arrested and sent to jail. Haji Dost Mohammad was convicted to three years jail but was released after the end of Khizer ministry.³⁸

Haji Daust Mohammad was a trustworthy person for the Muslim League. He was made incharge of the left-over property of Hindus at Khewra in 1947. He performed his duty with great honesty and distributed the property among Muslim refugees.³⁹

A few industrial units were working in the colonial Punjab, the contribution and services of the industrial labour were limited to some specific urban areas. The Muslim industrial labour could organize Provincial level Labour Union, but they were working on local basis for Pakistan cause. In fact, the labourers understood the fact that the Muslim League could not cover all the local issues as it was

35 *Nawa-i-Waqt*, May 11, 1946.

36 Files of the Gold Medalists, F/ 187, 2000.

37 On January 24, 1947 the Muslim League National Guards was declared unlawful by Khizer Hayat's government in Punjab. Police raided offices of the Muslim League and the Muslim League National Guards. The Muslim League leadership resisted and as a result they were arrested and sent to jail. While reacting to this move of Khizer Hayat government, Muslims of the Punjab came out of their homes and participated in the Civil Disobedience Movement. Telegram, E. Jenkins to Lord Pethic Lawrence, Wavell Papers, January 26, 1947 cited in Mansergh, *The Transfer of Power*, vol. IX, 556.

38 Mansergh, *The Transfer of Power*, vol. IX, 556.

39 *The Eastern Times*, March 12, 1947.

working on a large scale. Therefore, they turned towards the establishment of local labour Unions, which were following the Muslim League ideology.⁴⁰

The Muslim Industrial labour, like others, worked on two fronts; for the betterment of their working atmosphere and for the achievement of Pakistan because they knew that their rights would be protected only in an independent Muslim country. They held public meetings and strikes. Through the public meetings and strikes, the labourers talked about their rights. The labourers of Government Weaving Factory Shahdra demonstrated on January 14, 1941. Their leader Babu Abdur Rahim and Agha Inayatullah from Lahore addressed a gathering of about five hundred labourers. They assured the dismissed employees of the factory that they would stand by them and present their problems to the Punjab government.⁴¹

The Muslim labourers of Lahore Flour Mills were not happy with the authorities during the period of World War II. The reason was that the Employees Act was not being followed by the authorities due to which shortage of food was faced by the poor labourers. A public meeting of the labourers of Lahore Flour Mills was called under the presidentship of Mian Jan Mohammad where the issue of food availability was discussed.⁴²

The labourers of Montgomery Textile Mills started strike for the accomplishment of their demands.⁴³ The workers of Kote Douni Chund Textile Mills, situated near Shahdrah, went on strike as their demands were not accepted by the government.⁴⁴ The labourers of Cotton Mills Lyallpur had gone on strike for the same reason. They were so restless that District Magistrate had to impose Section 144 within the

40 *Inqilab*, January 18, 1941.

41 *Inqilab*, December 1, 1941.

42 *Inqilab*, July 5, 1942.

43 *Nawa-i-Waqt*, June 13, 1946.

44 *Nawa-i-Waqt*, April 16, 1946.

premis of the Mill.⁴⁵ The Lyallpur labourers talked about Pakistan even in their small gatherings at Mill's canteen. It was fancy for them to have a separate country where they would be free and would enjoy all kinds of rights. The Hindu authorities never appreciated it.⁴⁶ The same situation was prevailing in all other industrial units where Muslim labourers were working.

The Muslim labourers of the industrial units supported the Muslim League during the 1946 Elections. In Lyallpur, Montgomery, Lahore and elsewhere, Muslim Industrial labour existed, they tried their best to make the Muslim League successful.⁴⁷ In the CDM, the labourers were again very active. In all the public demonstrations of Lahore especially and of other urban areas generally, the labourers actively supported the ideology of Pakistan. Habib Ahmed of Lyallpur was so enthusiastic that he sometimes damaged the public property. Once he was arrested while cutting power cables that supplied electric power to a Hindu locality. However, he managed to escape.⁴⁸

Imam Din Mujahid of Lahore was working in an Inter Lock Factory at Lahore. He had know-how of making swords and presented one to Quaid-i-Azam. During 1947 riots, he made swords for Muslims so that they could safeguard themselves.⁴⁹ Another individual example in this regard was a peon of Islamia College Lahore who mostly accompanied Khalida Rathor and few other girls during their election campaign for the Muslim League. The old man was a trustworthy and sincere person and always encouraged the young girls to work for Pakistan without losing hearts.⁵⁰

45 Interview with Abdul Aziz (Brother of deceased Habib Ahmed who was a labourer in a small Foundry of spare parts at Lyallpur), 216 B, G. M. Abad, Lyallpur, July 15, 2005.

46 Interview with Abdul Aziz.

47 Interview with Abdul Aziz.

48 *Rehbar Bahawalpur (Urdu)*, August 1973.

49 Interview with Khalida Munir ud Din Chughtai, 66-Begum, Street No. 2 Cavalry Ground, Lahore: May 15, 2005.

50 *The Eastern Times*, November 24, 1943.

The Muslim labourers of the railway department were another group which was politically well aware and organized. According to a letter published in the *Daily Eastern Times*, "The Muslim employees of the Railway were the worst sufferers of all the public servants in India. Their very existence lied at caprice of certain Hindu high officials. Now with the grace of Allah, Muslim employees have realized the requirement of the time and have started an organized struggle for their rights."⁵¹

The Railway workers conveyed their demands to the higher authorities and presented the resolutions. To resolve the issue of high-prices and non-availability of basic necessities of life, a general meeting of the Railway labourers took place at Carriage Shop Mughalpura Lahore on February 5, 1944. Labour leaders including M.M.A. Khan, Umer Din Khawaja, Mohammad Hussain, Maulvi Allah Rakha and Maulvi Hamid Hussain addressed the gathering. They stressed on the unity of the Muslim employees.⁵²

Another meeting of the North West Railway Muslim Employees Association (NWRMEA) was held at the Carriage Shop Mosque Lahore. More than one thousand railway workers participated in the meeting. Maulana Sirajuddin presided over the meeting. Mohammad Abdul Qadir Khan spoke regarding the grievances of the Muslim railway-men and their inadequate representation in the services and unfair treatment in the matters of promotions. It was emphasised that the Muslim labourers should show the world that they were a separate entity.⁵³

On July 10, 1947 a communal fight took place between the Hindu and the Muslim labourers of Mughalpura Workshop in which six labourers died and thirty were injured.

51 *Inqilab*, January 22, 1943.

52 *Dawn*, February 5, 1944 and *The Eastern Times*, February 4, 1944.

53 *Nawa-i-Waqt*, November 16, 1944.

The situation was controlled by the police.⁵⁴ Muslim Railway employees were friendly and hospitable towards the Muslim League leadership and provided better facilities. They welcomed Quaid-i-Azam and other leaders at Railway stations.⁵⁵

Muslim labourers demanded a seat in the National Legislature. A letter published in the *Dawn* stated that the labour seat in the Central Legislature was occupied by a Hindu, M.N. Joshi for more than two decades. The Muslim labourers nominated M.A Khan, an experienced labour leader who attended the World Labour Conference in 1944.⁵⁶ Although M.A Khan was not nominated as member of the Central Legislature, still the voice of Muslim labourers was heard on all the fronts.

The Hindu labour leadership maligned the Pakistan cause as Diwan Chaman Lal stated that the division of India would adversely affect Indian labour. To counter such propaganda, the Muslim leaders did not show any complacency. Mohammad Fateh Ullah Khan, a prominent labour leader and former vice-president of the All India Railway Men's Federation issued the following statement:

It is a pity that Dewan Chaman Lal has not specifically shown how division of India would affect Indian labour. My personal experience and contact with the rank and file show that Muslim labour, as a body is decidedly in favour of Pakistan and eager to respond to the call of the Quaid-i-Azam at any time...Moreover they feel that their interests will be better safeguarded in Pakistan rather than in Hindustan and even I cannot understand how the division of India would affect Indian labour adversely.⁵⁷

The aforesaid facts reveal that the working class of Muslims in India was committed to the cause of Pakistan. After the announcement of June 3, 1947 Plan, they were very happy and hopeful of their better future. The president

54 Interview with Mohammad Siddique, a former employee (Guard of NW Railway Department), 216 B. I. Bazar, Lal Kurti, Lahore, July 16, 2005.

55 Interview with Mohammad Siddique.

56 *Dawn*, May 13, 1946.

57 *Inqilab*, July 25, 1947.

of the North West Railway Workers Trade Union, Mirza Mohammad Ibrahim, issued the following statement:

The labourers have welcomed the statement of Sardar Shaukat in which he has promised to give a lot of securities to the labourers; that Salary Commissions recommendation would be followed, that labourers would have right to form their Organizations, that no unjust or wrong attitude would be adopted towards them etc. I appeal to the responsible League leadership that we should be released of all previous injustice done towards us. We should be given right to hold our organizational meetings and other activities.⁵⁸

Muslim labourers of the Punjab supported Muslim League cause on every forum; voted to Muslim League in 1946 elections, participated in the CDM and finally achieved Pakistan. In Pakistan, labourers entered a new phase of their lives with new hopes and ideals which they thought would lead towards a welfare society.

c. Small Businessmen

The low-income class supported the Pakistan Movement. The reason is that they were economically independent, although had meagre resources but were not facing restrictions from the government, industrialists or landlords. They were independent to decide their future plans.

This study highlights the contribution of small businessmen living in various cities of the Punjab. It also discusses the plight of small Muslim business community during the Second World War when consumer goods were rarely available. In 1944, Muslim merchants complained about unfair distribution of food. A Muslim delegation representing Muslim Provincial Merchants Association, met Mr. Jain, the civil supply officer. They discussed the problems in distribution of flour-made things and cloth.⁵⁹ The meeting yielded a positive result and the Civil Supply Department started distributing the commodities fairly.⁶⁰

Around six hundred Muslim hawkers and shopkeepers had an important gathering at Lahore under the

58 October 13, 1944.

59 *Nawa-i-Waqt*, September 14, 1944.

60 *Inqilab*, January 14, 1945

presidentship of Seth Mohammad Umer. The issue under discussion was the distribution of cloth among the Muslim cloth shopkeepers and hawkers. It discussed that the quota of cloth for Muslims was less than their need. Secretary, M.K Mir said that Muslim cloth business should be strengthened.⁶¹ When all the tactics proved unsuccessful, Muslim merchants and shopkeepers started strike. Sheikhpura's Muslim shopkeepers resorted to strike.⁶² While facing all the difficulties in the British rule, Muslim businessmen had realized the importance of a separate country. They voted for the Muslim League and actively participated in the CDM. It was on several occasions that Muslim shopkeepers of different areas went on strike to show their sympathies with the other workers of the Muslim League.⁶³

Lahore was a major center of all the political activities during the 1940-47. There were many notable individuals from business class, and one of them was Tajuddin Zareen Raqum, a penman who was running a small training center of hand-writing. He had complaints against the government. He was of the opinion that pen-men were paid a little amount for their hard labour. To settle this issue, he formed Anjuman-i-Khushnawees. Majority of the members of Anjuman were in favour of the idea of Pakistan. A session of the Anjuman took place in March 1947.⁶⁴ Besides the social welfare, he directly participated in the Pakistan Movement. He created hundreds of posters, designed banners and other literature for the Muslim League on a number of occasions. Besides, the task of writing all the secret pamphlets and documents was also entrusted to him.⁶⁵

A cartoonist, Qazi Aslam Iqbal was working for *Siasat* and *Zamindar* in Lahore. He created images of Congress

61 *Inqilab*, March 20, 1946.

62 *Dawn*, February 26, 1947.

63 *Inqilab*, March 4, 1947.

64 *Mushriq*, June 13, 1987.

65 Files of the Gold Medalists, F/ 187, 1998.

and its leadership that depicted their hypocrisy. Although he actively served the cause of Pakistan, however, his cartoons were very helpful in creating awareness among the Muslim masses in the Punjab.⁶⁶ Hakim Mohammad Tariq, who got membership of the Muslim League in 1944, was a silent participant of the Pakistan Movement. His *Mutub* [Urdu: clinic] was earning him sufficient income for his requirements. In 1946, Quaid-i-Azam was expected to attend a prize distribution ceremony in Islamia College Lahore. Few days before his arrival, Allama Mushriqi came to his *Mutub* and had a secret meeting with his followers. He distributed petrol coupons among the followers and instructed them to take the motor vehicles, parked outside the residence of Khizer Hayat Khan. They planned to stop Quaid-i-Azam to enter Lahore. Allama asked his followers to gather one lakh Khaksars at the Railway station to block the passage of the Quaid. After knowing the whole plan, Hakim Mohammad Tariq went on his bicycle to Rashid Ali Khan, Malik Lal Khan, and Maulvi Ghulam Muhiuddin and informed them about the plan. These people had a meeting with the Muslim League high command and planned for the security of the Quaid-i-Azam. Later, he, with a lot of others, demonstrated in front of the homes of Sardars and other elites who were not ready to return their titles back to the government as had been asked by the Quaid-i-Azam.⁶⁷

Muslim cloth merchants and hawkers were not given representation in the Cloth Syndicate. As a protest, they decided to boycott the buying and selling of cloths. This shows the unity of Muslim cloth merchants and hawkers.⁶⁸ This unity of Muslim cloth sellers bore fruits. Civil Supply Officers of Lahore accepted the demand of the Muslims and started distributing the cloth on communal lines between Hindus and Muslims. Afterwards, out of fifteen cloth depots

66 Files of the Gold Medalists, F / 1751.

67 *Nawa-i-Waqt*, April 11, 1999; *Urdu Digest*, January 1968; *Imroz*, August 14, 1991.

68 *Nawa-i-Waqt*, September 14, 1944.

of Lahore five were of Muslims, two of Sikhs and eight of Hindus.

Tonga-Wallas [Urdu: horse-cart driver] of Lahore were also supporters and workers of the Muslim League. To win justice, they formed a Union. In June 1946, Tonga drivers decided to go on strike when some labourers of General Special Mills Mughalpura were beaten. These tonga-wallas were instrumental in propagating the idea of Pakistan and participated in the CDM.⁶⁹

The business class of the other districts of Punjab were also active. Sangla Hill, a rural part of Sheikhpura, produced individuals like Chaudhry Sardar Mohammad and Bashir Nizami. Chaudhry Sardar Mohammad had business of spices and after joining the Muslim League in 1939, organized its branch in Sangla Hill. He led a group of the Muslim League members from Sangla Hill to attend the 1940 session of the Muslim League. During the 1945-46 Elections, he canvassed in Khizer Hayat's constituency for the Muslim League candidates. The manager of Khizer Hayat locked him in a room for many hours, threatened him, but he was not subdued by such tactics. He visited many villages and streets of Sangla Hill to collect the funds for the Muslim League, which had a positive impact on the minds of the people and they started joining the Muslim League in large numbers.⁷⁰ Bashir Nizami was always helpful to Choudhary Sardar Mohammad in all his struggles for the Pakistan cause. He was brother of Hamid Nizami and Majid Nizami, but could not get higher education, so opened a bookshop to support his family.⁷¹

The Muslims of Jehlum participated actively in the Pakistan Movement. Abdul Majid, Salar of Muslim League National Guards (MLNG), was owner of a small hotel. His business was disturbed by political activities, but for him Pakistan was more important than his business. Sher

69 Files of the Gold Medalists, F / 339, 2000.

70 *Nawa-i-Waqt*, September 4, 1981.

71 *Nawa-i-Waqt*, January 24, 1988.

Mohammad, a seller of fruit was another silent character, who also contributed for Pakistan.⁷²

Mohammad Maqbool Ahmed Qureshi was another unknown veteran of Pakistan Movement who belonged to lower middle class. He had business of flour-grinding and rice-ginning in Duska (Sialkot). He lived in a locality where Hindus were in majority. He had developed keen interest in the Pakistan Movement since the Pakistan Resolution of 1940. He arranged many small gatherings where demand for Pakistan was discussed. After having support of a number of people around him by 1942, he inaugurated Duska branch of the Muslim League on April 3, 1942. This gathering took place at the residence of Lal Din Darogarh in Muslim Mohalah. Hindus were against it but soon a group of volunteers was prepared by Mohammad Maqbool, which was ready to sacrifice everything for Pakistan. The others supporting him were Chaudhry Faqir Mohammed, Mohammad Dar, Baba Abdul Majeed, Hafiz Mohammad Sadiq, Labhu Khan Halwai, Lal Din Darogarh and many others. They worked selflessly in 1945-46 Elections for the Muslim League. Mohammad Maqbool, with other workers of Pakistan Movement, was sent to jail during the CDM. With other fellows of lower-class, he collected food, clothes and other items for refugees inhabiting in Sialkot. Further, he provided the animals and other things left by Hindu to the Muslim refugees.⁷³

Mirza Mohammad Shafi of Gujrat had a small business. He got membership of city MLNG and later was appointed as its Salar. He worked day and night for the success of Quaid's visit of Gujrat in 1945. During 1946, he visited many villages without any transport facility and canvassed for the Muslim League. He was arrested during CDM and then worked during referendum in NWFP.⁷⁴

72 Files of the Gold Medalists, F/1848, 1990, and Kawaja Mohammad Tufail, *Tehrik-i-Pakistan Mein Sialkot Ka Kirdar* (Sialkot: Idara Matbuat-i-Tehrik-i-Pakistan, 1987), 46-47.

73 Files of the Gold Medalists, F/424 1994.

74 Files of the Gold Medalists, F/424 1994, and F/124, 1990.

Ghulam Haider Puther, a resident of Dera Ghazi Khan, had a shop of sweets. During 1946 Elections, he canvassed for the Muslim League candidates from DG Khan whose name was Akhund Abdul Karim. During the CDM, he participated in the demonstrations daily while holding the Muslim League flag in his hand. Police adopted harsh attitude and tortured him badly for several times, but no one could bring his flag down.⁷⁵

d. Muslim Peasants

Another group of the low-income class was peasant forming a large majority among Muslims. They had little power; even then they played an important role for the establishment of Pakistan. It is true that majority of the peasants did not know about the idea of Pakistan before the vast scale propaganda tours of the students, women and of the Muslim League workers. The students of Islamia College particularly and of other institutions generally, started propaganda campaign for Pakistan in 1944. Students were very straightforward and simple while explaining about Quaid-i-Azam, the Muslim League and Pakistan. Normally the reaction of peasants was positive. They were enthusiastic to hear that they would be able to live in a Muslim country under a Muslim government with Islamic rules and ideas.⁷⁶

The overall result of the propaganda campaigns was very positive and the villagers started showing their enthusiasm to achieve Pakistan. Daultana visited many villages in January 1945, and was very happy to see the atmosphere in the village. He said that the villagers, who used to be considered illiterate and uneducated, attended the meetings in large number. Then, they were considering that the Muslim League was the party that should rule over Muslims of India.⁷⁷

75 *Dawn*, December 22, 1945.

76 Interview with Dr. Rafiqe Ahmed, Pakistan Ideological Foundation, Lahore, February 22, 2005.

77 Interview with Dr. Rafiqe Ahmed.

There were some individuals among the peasants, who served the Pakistan cause. Choudhary Zafar Ullah from Tehsil Bhalwal of District Sargodha was one of them. His father had a small tract of land. This was the time when agriculturists were passing through difficult days. He did his matric from Gujrat in 1924, but could not get further education due to the weak economic position of his family. He had been serving as a *Qanun-go* in Sargodha. He was a thoughtful, practical man. He had organized *Anjuman-i-La Warisan*. This organization had been struggling for the Islamic law of inheritance which seeks division of property among the rightful heirs. In fact, under the British rule, the property of the father inherited to the eldest son. The Deputy Commissioner of Sargodha had dismissed him from his job due to his unofficial activities. During the 1940-47, he worked for the Pakistan cause. He even had public meetings at different villages in Sargodha and convinced his fellows to strive for independence. He was arrested during the CDM and was imprisoned in Shahpur jail, where he remained for six months.⁷⁸

Baba Aziz ud Din was a very committed peasant leader throughout his life. He belonged to Qasur and had a small piece of land. He was a *Hakim*, too. He started his political career in 1919, while getting membership of District Kisan Committee Movement.⁷⁹ He joined Congress in 1923 and was appointed as Secretary of the All India Kisan Sabha. He left Congress in 1923 due to its anti Muslim policies and got membership of the Muslim League along with his followers. He worked for the Muslim League in his area and visited other areas as well. He joined the Punjab Muslim Defence Committee. Hindus had been busy in maligning the Muslims. He had organized the Muslim youth of Kahina Nau, Burki, Manawan, Khalra, Bhukiwind, Waltoha, Lalyani and brought them under MLNG. He took his National Guards wherever required. He participated actively in the CDM with all his

78 *Imroz*, June 24, 1969.

79 Files of the Gold Medalists, F/ 2913, 2003.

followers. He was arrested and remained in jail for two months.⁸⁰

Chaudhry Rehmatullah was another important peasant leader. Most of the members of Socialist or Communist parties were non-Muslims. Almost all of them were inspired of the Communist Russia. Chaudhry Rehmatullah was one of the very few Muslim members of the Communist Organization, who believed in Islam and idea of Pakistan. He is also the founder of the Labour Movement in Pakistan.⁸¹

The peasants started arranging for the Muslim League conferences in their areas. A group of Muslims of Shuruqpur under Zahir Niaz Beigi met with Liaquat Ali Khan. It demanded that upcoming Muslim League Conference of nine hundred villages in Shuruqpur should be presided over by the Quaid-i-Azam. Liaquat Ali Khan promised that it would be arranged after the complete recovery of the Quaid-i-Azam.⁸²

The peasant and the small land-owners voted in favour of the Muslim League and made it successful on the rural seats for provincial Legislature. Dera Ghazi Khan was a backward and a rural area. A bye-election took place in DG Khan in 1946 during the rule of Unionist government. The administrative machinery was with the Unionist candidate. The Muslim League candidate was not powerful. The peasants showed the best of their wisdom and were in favour of the Muslim League. A number of peasants were sent to jail, but the brave men asked their family members to caste vote for the Muslim League only. As a result, the Muslim League candidates were successful. More or less the same situation was faced by the peasants in all rural constituencies.⁸³

80 Sharif Jallundhry, 'Pakistan Kai Quami Karkun,' Chaudry Rehmat Ullah, *Tehrik-i-Pakistan Weekly* (Urdu), August 14, 1981.

81 *Inqilab*, December 6, 1946.

82 Aftab Ahmed Qureshi, *Tehrik-i-Pakistan Mein Dehi Awam Ka Kirdar*, (Lahore: Mohiban-i-Pakistan Publishers, nd), 1.

83 *Nawa-i-Waqt*, June 19, 1946.

After supporting the Muslim League in the Elections of 1946, the troubles of peasants could not come to an end. They faced hardships in getting essential commodities like sugar and oil. The local *Zaildar* was reported to have told them that owing to the peasants' support for the Muslim League, they were facing the hardship. The *Zaildar* of one Gujrat village and of other villages were giving sugar to their relatives and friends but the poor peasants languished.⁸⁴ A Unionist, Fateh Sher Lungrial of Montgomery with the help of Hindu and Sikh *Zamindars* created trouble for the Muslim League peasants. Hindu and Sikh *Zamindars* decided to eject Muslim peasants from their villages. Muslim *Zamindars* protested, but the non-Muslims maintained that only those could live on their lands, who would deny the Muslim League.⁸⁵

The peasants of some areas were now politically awakened. They made their local organizations and sent telegrams to the Quaid-i-Azam to show their sympathies. The young Musalmans of the village Nusa (Rawalpindi District) sent the following telegram to the Quaid-i-Azam:

The youngmen Muslim Association of village Nusa stands for Pakistan and have full confidence in the leadership of Jinnah. The youngmen assure Quaid-i-Azam to die while fighting for Pakistan. Traitors to England were shot dead but traitors to Muslim India are being interviewed and raised to the skies. This is unkindest cut of all and against your professions of disinterestedness and impartiality. Hundred Million Muslims' sole accredited leader is Mr. Jinnah who alone is competent to speak on their behalf.⁸⁶

Whenever Quaid-i-Azam visited by train, the peasants always welcomed him.⁸⁷

The villagers had to face many troubles during CDM. Thousands were even "refused any ration of controlled commodities, like sugar and kerosene oil and otherwise

84 *Nawa-i-Waqt* 24 April 24, 1946.

85 *Dawn*, April 14, 1946.

86 Qureshi, *Tehrik-i-Pakistan*, 9.

87 Qureshi, *Tehrik-i-Pakistan*, 12.

prosecuted'.⁸⁸ Muslim clerks and petty village officials, who refused to act as the tools of the Khizer Government's Ministers in their political war upon the Muslim League, were harassed, humiliated and removed from the position of responsibility.⁸⁹ Even in the presence of difficulties, peasants showed their full support to the idea of Pakistan. They held meetings wherever possible to show the world that they were the true supporters of Pakistan. One such grand meeting of the villagers took place on September 29, 1946 after *Mughrib* prayer. The speakers talked about Pakistan. Munshi Mohammad Azam delivered a speech. People came from Nawan Pind, Sayedpur, Kunj Pura and Jhugian Nangar. These were the villagers who participated very actively during CDM of 1947.

Conclusion

A close examination of the events of Pakistan Movement shows that marginalized groups of the Punjab were main contributors in the Pakistan Movement. Their role was very important on individual basis as well as on collective level. Especially during the last two years Muslim masses of Punjab played a key role in the making of Pakistan. The Muslim masses showed their strength and unity by casting votes for the Muslim League in 1945-46 elections. They significantly contributed in helping the Muslim victims of Bihar riots. Money, clothes, food and other items were collected and provided to Bihar victims.⁹⁰ They also actively participated in the Civil Disobedience Movement. Although during the freedom Movement, the Muslims of rural Punjab suffered yet they continued their efforts and sacrifices. Ultimately, their efforts bore fruit and Pakistan emerged on the world map.

88 Resolution passed by the All India Muslim League Working Committee at Karachi, January 31, February 1, 2 1947, Resolution no. 5 cited in Syed Sharifuddin Pirzada, *Foundation of Pakistan: All India Muslim League Documents 1906-1947* (Karachi: Royal Book Company, 1990), 424-25.

89 Pirzada, *Foundation of Pakistan*, 425.

90 One minor example can clarify the situation. Mohala Islampura of Gujranwala sent 40 rupees and 128 items of different daily commodities, people of Hafizabad sent Rs.125. Poor masses of Malakund and Gujranwala sent Rs.200 and 100 respectively. Same kind of small contributions were made from many other areas. *The Eastern Times*, February 11, 1947.