

## **Sir Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah – His Role And Contribution In The Pakistan Movement (1879 – 1947)**

### **Abstract**

*Sir Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah was born at Shikarpur in 1879. He received his early education from Shikarpur High School, Sindh Madressah, Karachi, and then he was educated at D. J. Sindh College, Karachi and Government Law College, Bombay. After completing his studies in 1902 he started his legal career from Hyderabad bar association. After practicing law at Hyderabad Courts for two years, he started his public career in 1904 when he was elected member of the Hyderabad Municipality. Later he joined the All India Muslim League and became member of Bombay Legislative Assembly and after Sindh's separation became member of the Sindh Legislative Council in 1937. He became first Chief Minister of Sindh in 1937 but had to resign in 1938 because the coalition whose head he was collapsed because of its internal disunity. He again became Chief Minister of Sindh as the nominee of the All India Muslim League in 1942 and continued as such till the creation of Pakistan on 14 August 1947. After establishment of Pakistan, he was appointed as first Governor of Sindh by Quaid-i-Azam and remained as such until his death on 4 October 1948, shortly after the death of Quaid-i-Azam.*

*Sir Hidayatullah was very close to Quaid-i-Azam. During the Pakistan Movement, Sir Hidayatullah worked with the Quaid for the cause of Pakistan. He shared with him all the problems being faced by him in Sindh politics including the bickering attitude of G.M.Sayed and others, though the later was President of the Sindh Muslim League, reported to Jinnah in a number of letters preserved in the National Archives of Pakistan, Islamabad. In this paper the role and contribution of Sir Hidayatullah, the Grand Old Man of Sindh, during the Pakistan Movement, has been discussed and evaluated. As far as the literature on Sir Hidayatullah is concerned very little has been written on his personality as well as on his contribution for the cause of Pakistan.*

### **Early Public Career**

In December 1904, Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah was elected as member Municipal Committee of Hyderabad. Due to his diligence, he became its vice president and later became President in 1921. His hardworking and commitment to his public job earned him wide popularity. In 1912, he was elected as member of the Bombay Legislative Council. In 1913 he joined the All India Muslim League. In December 1915 by a resolution moved by Jinnah, at the annual session of

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AIML held in Bombay, he was made member from Bombay and Sindh of the Reforms Committee in which the needs and interests of the Muslims were to be protected.<sup>1</sup> Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah also spoke in support of this resolution.<sup>2</sup> Later, he was selected as Minister in the Cabinet of Bombay Governor and retained this portfolio till 1928. He played vital role as a member of Muslim League during Simon Commission. In 1928, he was elected member of Bombay Executive Council and remained on this post till 1935.

As a Minister, Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah was associated with the famous 'Sukkur Barrage project' which contributed so much to the prosperity of Sindh in later years. Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah, along with Khan Bahadur Muhammad Ayub Khuhro, Syed Miran Shah and Sir Shah Nawaz Bhutto, represented Sindh in the Round Table Conferences in London. They convinced the Chairman of the 'Committee on Sindh' that Sindh was not to be a deficit province and had sufficient revenue and administrative capability to be a full fledged province. Sindh was separated from Bombay and its first assembly came into being in 1937.

During the debate in Sindh Sub-Committee for Separation of Sindh from Bombay Presidency on 12 January 1931, Sir Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah as Executive Member of the Government of Bombay replied to various objections of the opponents of the separation on a number of grounds that practically Sindh has been functioning "completely independent" as it already had its Chiefs Court and the Judicial Commissioner's Court whose appeal directly went to the Privy Council London without referring to the Bombay High Court, Sindh deserves to be formally separated from Bombay Presidency.<sup>3</sup> Quaid-i-Azam who was also member of the Sindh Sub-Committee paid high tributes to Hidayatullah for his contribution in this committee.<sup>4</sup>

### **Contribution during the Pakistan Movement**

#### **First Tenure as Chief Minister of Sindh (1937-1938)**

Sir Ghulam Hussein Hidayatulla, joined as Chief Minister of Sindh in first week of April 1937.<sup>5</sup> For the elections of 1937, Jinnah visited Karachi in April 1936 so as to unite the local Muslim leadership in Sindh because they were divided into three Muslim political parties, i.e. Sindh Muslim League, Sindh Azad party, and Sindh United Party so that they could form one election board to be known as the Sindh Muslim League Parliamentary Board.<sup>6</sup> But Jinnah failed to unite them. Jinnah left Sindh after two weeks' stay, but the task was entrusted to Hakim Fateh Mohammad who was highly respected by leaders of all these three Muslim groups. In his letter to Jinnah on 7 October 1936 Hakim Fateh Mohammad finally informed Jinnah about the failure of his unity talks with the leaders of all the three aforementioned Muslim groups in the province.<sup>7</sup> These groups along with the Independents participated in the elections of 1937 and the election result was as follows:

United Party	23
Congress	7
Azad Party	3
Muslim Party	3
Hindu Sabha	4
Independents	17
Europeans	<u>3</u>
Total:	60 <sup>8</sup>

None of the leaders' of the aforementioned political parties was accepted as their leader in the Sindh Assembly. Consensus of the majority of the Muslim members including the independents developed in favour of Sir Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah, being the senior politician from Sindh and he was accepted as leader of the House in the Sindh Assembly. On this basis the Governor of Sindh, Sir Lancelot Graham invited Sir Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah and asked him to form the government. Thus Sir Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah joined as Chief Minister and Minister of Home Affairs and Finance.<sup>9</sup>

Immediately after his assumption he had to go to Mirpurthal because of a riot between Muslims and Hindus in which certain persons were killed. He met the Deputy Commissioner and received various deputations from both sides and advised them to remain peaceful.<sup>10</sup> This shows his concern for peace and security of the people of classes belonging to different religions. Similarly he took other steps. Hidayatullah himself participated in the Sindh Assembly debates. In such a debate on the budget of the Sindh Government when a number of Ministers had spoken and opposition members from the Congress had objected to certain matters, Hidayatullah himself assured the house that in the appointment of employees and making expenditures of different categories of the departments, he would himself make sure of the merit and genuine needs of the departments. On this assurance, the budget was passed by the Assembly in the last week of April 1937.<sup>11</sup>

The unity within the Muslim groups could not last long. In March 1938 this unity was shattered when some of the Muslim members of the Sindh Assembly sided with the Congress members on an Excise Motion. The Chief Minister felt it very much. Before a no-confidence motion could be moved against him, Sir Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah met the Governor and resigned from this position on 21 March 1938 because the unity between three coalition partners was broken.<sup>12</sup> However, during his tenure Hidayatullah advanced the interest of the Muslim League and that Muslim Nation in the Sindh province.

### **Second Tenure as Chief Minister of Sindh (1941-1947)**

Major role for the cause of the Pakistan Movement was played by him in his second tenure as Chief Minister of Sindh during 1941-47 when he not only helped Jinnah in making Karachi as the capital of Pakistan but as centre for holding the first meeting the Pakistan Constituent Assembly on 10 August 1947 and his government provided all kinds of faculties for the favourable functioning of the federal government. Those were very difficult times. Hundreds of thousands of refugees were pouring from India. They were not only welcomed but the government of Sindh did help them in providing them shelter, food, education and

health care so that the refugees felt comfortable. This was all done under the leadership of Sir Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah first as Chief Minister and then as the first Governor of Sindh, being the first Pakistani to become Governor of a province because the governors of all the other provinces were British.

For the second term he became Chief Minister of Sindh on 7 March 1941 and served as such till 14 August 1947. This was a period when the Pakistan Movement was at its peak. There were a number of challenges which he faced during his Chief Minister ship both internally and externally. First challenge he faced was G.M.Sayed, President of Sindh Muslim League. This challenge came after 1943 when the Pakistan Movement was at its peak. These differences came to limelight after the Karachi session of the AIML held in December 1943.

The Karachi session of AIML was successfully held on 24-26 December 1943 in which about ten thousand visitors attended the session. It was presided over by Quaid-i-Azam. Three Chief Ministers, Sir Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah from Sindh, Malik Khizar Hayat Khan Tiwana from the Punjab and Sardar Aurangzeb Khan from the NWFP (KPK) participated in this session. This session was organized by G.M.Syed, Chairman of the Reception Committee being President of the Sindh Muslim League with the support of Chief Ministers and other Muslim League workers.<sup>13</sup> At this session Sir Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah delivered a marvelous short speech. Actually Hussain Imam moved fourth resolution at this session by which AIML's concern was expressed regarding the "shortage and rising prices of all necessities of life throughout the country" which was allegedly caused by the wrong "policy pursued by the Central government during the last four years".<sup>14</sup> Speaking in support of this resolution Sir Ghulam Hussain said that the Sindh Government was doing everything for the protection of the rights of the *kisans* to the extent that "landless cultivators got 50 per cent of the produce for himself". This was not done in other provinces. Charging the Federal Government for the food crisis, he blamed: "Who is responsible for this man-made famine in India? It is the irresponsible Government at the Centre that is responsible for this famine". He also explained that his government opposed a number of taxes which the federal government wanted to make on the poor tillers of land. Continuing, he said: "We cannot sacrifice the majority of the poor farmers of Sindh at the cost of pleasing the Centre." During the course of his speech he also explained that when Lord Wavell, the Viceroy, came on his recent visit to Karachi he informed of all these matters and concerns of the Sindh Government. He also explained that during our government "we did not care much for big landlords". He was very happy to announce that in the recent famine crisis in Bengal his Ministry made present of Rs. 200,000/- to Bengal "in the form of reduced prices of rice sold to them".<sup>15</sup> Sir Nazimuddin, the Bengal Premier, endorsed these remarks of Sir Hidayatullah.<sup>16</sup> Towards the end of this session the organizing Committee thanked Sir Hidayatullah for helping in holding this session in Karachi.

Hidayatullah also participated in the AIML Legislators' Convention held in Delhi on 7-9 April 1946 presided over by the Quaid-i-Azam in which more than 400 Muslim Legislators from all parts of British India participated. As desired by Quaid-i-Azam, H.S.Suhrawardy moved a resolution by which ambiguity regarding the Lahore Resolution of March 1940 was removed. Suhrawardy's resolution demanded: "That the zones comprising Bengal and Assam in the North-East and

the Punjab, North-West Frontier Province, Sind and Baluchistan in the North-West of India, namely Pakistan zones where the Muslims are in a dominant majority, be constituted into a sovereign independent State and that an unequivocal undertaking be given to implement the establishment of Pakistan without delay”.<sup>17</sup> Speaking in support of this resolution, Hidayatullah, congratulated the Muslims of the minority provinces for joining their Muslim brethren in their struggle for Pakistan. He also declared: “There was no Muslim who did not believe in Pakistan. Even Malik Khizar Hayat Khan and Dr. Khan Sahib were not against it”. He also declared that “90 percent Muslims were with the League and were determined to achieve Pakistan”. He also made it clear: “We shall not accept anything less than Pakistan. Every man in Sindh will resist the imposition of a government unacceptable to Muslims with all possible means”.<sup>18</sup>

Since 1944 Hidayatullah faced stiff bickering from the Muslim League camp itself. This was mainly headed by G.M.Syed, President of the Sindh Muslim League, who was charged by the Sindh Premier as acting in the hands of his enemies in the Congress camp. Syed created a lot of difficulties for Hidayatullah which were complained to Quaid-i-Azam. In some matters the Quaid agreed with him, while on others he did not interfere with the decisions of the Sindh Cabinet or those of the Sindh Muslim League Council or the Sindh Muslim League Parliamentary Board. It was on minimum matters that Jinnah intervened because he was heading the party at the all-India level as its President with full democratic norms allowing the local and provincial units to function with full democratic norms keeping in view the opinion of their respective people. Wherever Hidayatullah erred he warned him, but when he was right he supported him. Mainly Hidayatullah remained loyal not only to the Quaid but to the cause of Pakistan. It was because of these bickerings that Jinnah was ultimately convinced to endorse the recommendations of the Sindh Muslim League Parliamentary Board not to award the League ticket to G.M.Syed for the coming elections in Sindh in February 1946. For these reasons Syed even turned out not only against Jinnah, but even against the idea of Pakistan. Continuing the same policy after the creation of Pakistan, Syed championed the cause of Sindhu Desh. He maintained this posture until his death on 25 April 1995. The federal government faced a lot of difficulty in handling him.

The issue with which differences between Syed and Hidayatullah deepened related to Shikarpur bye-election campaign in December 1944. Syed was supporting Ghulam Nabi Pathan, where the Premier Hidayatullah was supporting his younger son for this bye-election. The editorial of Daily Gazette, Karachi supported the candidature of Premier’s son and termed Syed’s stance unreasonable.<sup>19</sup> In his letter of 29 December 1944 he informed Jinnah: “I have no doubt that Mr. Syed must be writing all sorts of false stories to you to save his face now. He is not only a Dictator, but is above all law, and is a law into himself. But no action has yet been taken by you against him for his unconstitutional behavior during this whole affair.”<sup>20</sup> Gazdar, was a Minister in the Cabinet of the Sindh Premier. He was actually Syed’s man. His attitude with the Premier was not genuine. Writing about him in the same letter, Hidayatullah wrote: “I cannot, however, tolerate Mr. Gazdar for a moment longer now. In spite of his assurances to you and to me, he is still intriguing against me. They are trying to stab me very soon, and so I must

get rid of him at once. I cannot allow a disloyal and treacherous colleague with me in the Cabinet.” Regarding Syed he further wrote: “It is not my concern now what the Syed party are doing as regards K.B. Maulabux. They have put a dummy candidate, the brother of Pir Pagaro, for reasons best known to them”. Lastly, he urged upon Jinnah: “Kindly reply to me at once”.<sup>21</sup> Responding to this call, Jinnah replied on 2 January 1945 that recently he had settled certain matters in Delhi meeting in the presence of Syed, Liaquat Ali Khan and Hidayatullah. Jinnah advised Hidayatullah to act according to the arrangements settled in this meeting.<sup>22</sup> At the same Jinnah told Hidayatullah: “You can understand that I cannot interfere with the normal functioning of the Central Parliamentary Board or the Committee of Action, as was acknowledged by all at our last meeting in Delhi”. At the same Jinnah assured Hidayatullah: “As regards the Muslim League Party in the Sindh Assembly, you are its Leader, and so long as you enjoy the Party’s confidence, you can handle the question regarding Mr. Gazdar in such a manner as you may think proper, and this position of yours was recognized by all the others who were present at our last meeting”.<sup>23</sup>

In July 1947 Jinnah proposed to Lord Mountbatten that after the creation of Pakistan, Sir Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah will be appointed as Governor of Sindh w.e.f. 15 August 1947 after the transfer of power from British to Pakistan.<sup>24</sup> This was accepted by the British Government.<sup>25</sup>

## References

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- <sup>1</sup> S.S.Pirzada, *Foundations of Pakistan: All India Muslim League Documents 1906-1947*, vol. I, Islamabad, NIHCR, Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad, 2007, pp.335-337.
- <sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 338.
- <sup>3</sup> S.S.Pirzada, *The Collected Works of Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah*, vol. III, 1926-1931, Karachi, East and West Publishing Co., 1986, p. p. 558.
- <sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. pp. 558-559.
- <sup>5</sup> *Times of India*, 12 April 1937.
- <sup>6</sup> Abdul Razzaq Shahid, “Quaid-i-Azam and the All India Muslim League 1924-1937”, in Riaz Ahmad (ed.), *Pakistani Scholars on Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah*, Islamabad, Quaid-i-Azam Chair (NIPS), Quaid-i-Azam University, 1999, p. 269.
- <sup>7</sup> Hakim Fateh Mohammad to Jinnah, 7 October 1936, in Quaid-i-Azam Papers, F. 821, National Archives of Pakistan, Islamabad.
- <sup>8</sup> Indian Annual Register 1937, Vol. I, p. 168(p).
- <sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. iii.
- <sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>11</sup> *Times of India*, 1 May 1937.
- <sup>12</sup> Indian Annual Register 1938, Vol. I, p. 274.
- <sup>13</sup> Pirzada, *Foundations of Pakistan*, Vol. II, p. 409.
- <sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*,p. 441.
- <sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 442-443.
- <sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 443.
- <sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 478.
- <sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 482-483.
- <sup>19</sup> *Daily Gazette*, Karachi, 20 December 1944.
- <sup>20</sup> Hidayatullah to Jinnah, 29 December 1944, in Shamsul Hasan Collection, Vol. IV, National Archives of Pakistan, Islamabad.
- <sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>22</sup> Jinnah to Hidayatullah, 2 January 1945, in Shamsul Hasan Collection, Vol. IV.
- <sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>24</sup> Mansergh, *The Transfer of Power 1942-1947*, Vol. XII, p. 28.
- <sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 268.