

## ABSTRACT

There emerged severe political and administrative crises in the Punjab during 1946-1947. These crises were not natural but the ruling regime paved the way for their emergence. Nevertheless, they were manageable and controllable. Ironically, the British as ruling party did not respond to those crises properly that led towards the Punjab tragedy at the time of the transfer of power. Otherwise, the tragedy was not inevitable and this unprecedented human massacre was definitely avoidable. It was the outcome of British's lack of planning and mismanagement regarding the Punjab partition. By comparing transfer of power arrangements of the Punjab with that of UP and Bengal, this work asserts that the Punjab crises arose because of the lack of British's planning and foresight. The British did not respond to the fragile situation of the Punjab timely that eventually went beyond their control. Throughout their rule, the British pampered the Sikhs to strengthen their rule but on the last leg of their raj, they left the Sikhs in lurch. The British accepted Sikh demand at the behest of the Congress to divide the Punjab in case of Pakistan but the proposed Punjab partition was going to affect them severely. It made the Sikhs desperate entirely, so they repeatedly demanded accommodation for them in the Punjab partition but all in vain. Consequently, they had to adopt other stern measures to rectify the wrongs that had been done to them in the Punjab partition. Hence, the Punjab partition violence was a war in desperation started by the Sikhs to mitigate their losses in post partition scenario. It was not a war of succession or a war of revenge or a war of retaliation etc. as was described by some eminent partition historians. Moreover, during the Punjab partition, the British collaborated with the Congress to leave it as British's true successor in the region. However, the British ignored the Muslim League thoroughly & categorically. The Muslim League continuously attempted to bestow everything

under the sun to the Sikhs to keep them in Pakistan but they were continuously discouraged by the British towards that development, as the Congress was not in favor of it. Then, the Muslim League wanted to keep British troops at the time of partition, it advocated exchange of population between two successor states, it pleaded to delay the date of the transfer of power, it demanded to arrest the hotheaded Sikh leaders on the eve of the Punjab partition. All such pleadings of the Muslim League could have definitely made the Punjab partition a smooth transition. However, the British ignored all such the Muslim League' requests as the Congress' stance was against it. Thus, this work is an exclusive study of the British strategy in the Punjab for the Congress, the Muslim League and the Sikhs on the last leg of the British Raj. This work addresses to the gap in the existing historical literature regarding the British strategy to deal with the political situation at the time of partition in the Punjab. Thus, this study, being the first of its kind at Ph.D. level seeks to bring out a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the Punjab crises in 1946-47. By bringing forth new facts, it reinforces many previous observations and at the same time repudiates certain previous conclusions drawn in this regard. Concisely, this work presents a more realistic and reliable picture of the Punjab partition at the time of the transfer of power in 1947. Thus, it is a unique addition in the sphere of research history of the Punjab partition.