

- **Further concessions:** In the decade prior to partition, the Indian National Congress made a few more concessions including the **acceptance of autonomy of Muslim provinces by 1942; Gandhiji's approval of the right to self-determination of Muslim Majority provinces in 1944; INC's concession that Muslim Majority provinces (Groups B & C of the Cabinet Mission Plan) could set up a separate Constituent Assembly.**

However, a careful analysis of India's partition builds a strong case against the aforementioned view. It can partly be said that the division of the country had become inevitable:

- **Divide & Rule:** From the Morley Minto Reforms 1909 till the 1935 Act, the British widened the gulf between the Congress and the Muslim League by giving constitutional guarantees to the Muslims as a separate community and hindered the emergence of unity based on a sense of common nationality
- **Failure of Congress:** The **long-term failure of the INC to draw support from the Muslim masses into the national movement** is another major factor. Muslim alienation from the Congress Party dates back to 1928 when the **Nehru Report** rejected several of their demands for safeguarding Muslim interests. The Report recommended the immediate abolishment of a separate electorate for the Muslims.
- **Ambition of Muhammad Ali Jinnah:** The "**Two-Nation Theory**" was reinvigorated by Jinnah himself in his Presidential address to Muslim League at Lahore in 1940. Following this the Congress-league relations became unworkable. This is demonstrated as under:
 - After the **decisive results of the 1946 elections** where Muslim League candidates won 90% of the Muslim seats, the **Interim Government** turned into an arena of struggle. The powerlessness of the Interim Government prompted Nehru to think seriously about immediate transfer of power to at least perform governance functions properly.
 - By 1947, the Congress realized that the spread of **Direct Action and Communal disturbances** could only be stalled by an immediate transfer of power.
- **Preventing Balkanisation of India:** India wanted to safeguard the gains made by the **rejection of the option of Princely States to remain independent**, which could have led to the Balkanisation of Indian Union.

The Muslim League had been incessantly championing the cause of a Sovereign Muslim state for long. To conclude that the partition resulted from a step-by-step concession to the League's demands would hence be a gross oversimplification.

13. *Over the course of the freedom struggle, especially after the Indian Council's Act of 1892, nationalist leaders in India transformed the Imperial Legislative Council, from a powerless machine functioning as a tool of endorsement of government policies into a forum for ventilating popular grievances. Discuss. (250 words) 15*

Approach:

- Introduce with the origin of legislative councils in India.
- Highlight how they were used as a powerless tool of endorsement of government policies till the 1892 Act.
- Explain how the early nationalists used the legislative councils to ventilate popular grievances.
- Conclude appropriately.

Answer:

The Imperial Legislative Council came into being after the **Indian Councils Act of 1861** and **enlarged the Governor-General's Executive Council for the purpose of making laws.** It was made a **powerless machine by design**, which was used as a **tool of endorsement of the government's policies:**

- It **could not discuss the budget or a financial measure** or any other important bill without the previous approval of the Government. It also could not discuss the actions of the administration.
- The **Council met, on an average, for only twenty-five days** in a year till 1892.
- There were only forty-five Indians nominated to it in thirty years, from 1862 to 1892.