



Smart Revision

The Cabinet Mission Plan

Q: Describe the Cabinet Mission Plan? [4]

Ans: In March 1946 the British made their final effort to settle the differences within India. A three man delegation including Lord Pethick-Lawrence, Sir Stafford Cripps, and A.V. Alexander were sent to India to try to find a settlement acceptable to all. It proposed that an interim Govt. should be set up to rule India whilst the British withdrawal was organized. The govt. would form an all Indian Commission from members of the Provincial and Central Legislatures. The commission would then decide whether there should be one or two states after the British had left. No one accepted so in May 1946 it announced its final plan. Rejected any idea of Pakistan, grouped India into three parts: Muslim territory, Hindu majority areas, Bengal and Assam. At the same time Foreign affairs, defense and communication would be managed by a central Indian Union. But due to conflicting arguments b/w ML and Congress it was dropped.

Q: What was the background of the Cabinet Mission Plan, and what did it envisage for the eventual transfer of power? Give reasons for its failure. [10]

Ans: In March 1946 the British made their final effort to settle the differences within India. A three man delegation including Lord Pethick-Lawrence, Sir Stafford Cripps, and A.V. Alexander were sent to India to try to find a settlement acceptable to all. This 'Cabinet Mission' arrived in New Delhi on 24 March 1946 and met representatives of the Muslim League, Congress, the Sikhs and the Hindu Mahasabha.

The delegation soon found that there was little common ground between the League and Congress. Jinnah was insisting on the formation of Pakistan comprising six provinces. Once this was established he might consider the setting up of a central agency of India and Pakistan to look after certain common subjects. Congress was opposed to any partition and would not accept Jinnah's ideas.

The Cabinet Mission therefore decided on a different approach. It proposed that an interim govt. should be set up to rule India whilst the British withdrawal was organized. The govt. would form

an All-India Commission from members of the Provincial and Central Legislatures. The Commission would then decide whether there should be one or two states after the British had left.

Neither Congress nor the League agreed to the new plan, but the delegation continued its work and in May 1946 the Cabinet Mission announced its final plan. It rejected Idea of Pakistan, Grouped Muslim western territories, Hindu majority areas and Assam and Bengal. Foreign affairs, defense and communication would be managed by a central Indian Union.

The Muslim League stated that it was prepared to nominate members to an interim cabinet to oversee the move to independence based on this plan. Jinnah opposed the plan as Pakistan formation was not mentioned; moreover, congress also rejected as according to this grouping was made which the congress condemns. Nehru however, said that Congress would not feel bound by the plan once the British had left. The League felt that this made further discussions pointless. Any agreement might just be overturned after the British had gone. So the Cabinet Mission was dropped.

Q: Why Cabinet Mission Plan failed? [7]

Ans: Cabinet Mission plan was sent to India to seek out a solution to problems and settle differences but it failed for some reasons.

Neither Congress nor the League agreed to the new plan because it contained some points which were not accepted by League or congress. The plan rejected the idea of Pakistan but instead grouped the post British India into three parts: Hindu majority, western Muslims territories and Bengal and Assam with each part having local autonomy and would be able to draw up its own constitution.

Muslim League defied the plan as it didn't contain any idea for establishment of Pakistan which was now Leagues main focus. Congress also abandoned plan as according to it India was divided into groups, so Congress feared that this would later result in partition of India and Muslim getting better in every expect. That's why it started its opposition to the plan.



However the most significant reason for its failure was that Nehru said that Congress would not feel bound by the plan once the British had left. The League felt that this made further discussions pointless. Any agreement might just be overturned after the British had gone. So the Cabinet Mission Plan was dropped.

