

Class: BA 6th Semester

Paper: HIS-HC-6016

History of India VIII (c.1857-1950)

Topic: Partition of Bengal

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Partition of Bengal and Swadeshi Movement

Partition of Bengal : Introduction

- The decision to effect the Partition of Bengal (বঙ্গভঙ্গ) was announced on 19 July 1905 by the Viceroy of India, Curzon. The partition took place on 16 October 1905 and separated the largely Muslim eastern areas from the largely Hindu western areas. The Hindus of West Bengal who dominated Bengal's business and rural life complained that the division would make them a minority in a province that would incorporate the province of Bihar and Orissa.

The New Province After Partition

- **Western Province** - West Bengal, Bihar, Orissa, Hindu Majority , Hindi and Oriya speaking Majority
- **Eastern Province** - East Bengal, Assam, Tripura , Chittagong, Dhaka, Rajshahi, Malda, Muslim Majority , Bengali speaking Majority.
- **Reasons Behind partition**
- **Official Reasons** - 1. Less Administrative Burden On Government 2. Deal with Famine and Defence 3. Attend to Remote Areas.
- **Actual Reasons** - 1. Weaken the National Movement 2. Policy of Divide and Rule 3. Reactionary Politics of Lord Curzon to show that the opinion of the political leaders had no meaning

Why was Bengal partitioned in 1905

- 1. Unwieldy for administration; very large consisting of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa with 78 million population, poor means of communications, difficulties in relief work during times of trouble (famine, plague), smaller units can be managed efficiently.
- 2. To address the misery of Muslims, sense of deprivation in Eastern Bengal, social, economic and educational backwardness, neglected and isolated due to under-governance, flow of all investments towards Calcutta in Western Bengal.
- 3. Bengal partitioned to weaken the solidarity of Bengal, Bengal was the hub of creating national awakening posing real threat to the rulers, British played the communal card widening the hostilities between Hindus and Muslims, division along religious line, weakened INC to curb the growing sense of nationalism.

East Bengal's Reaction After Partition

- All the Muslim's are very much supportive to the decision of partition.
- Muslim's became very hopeful of development.
- Lower cast Hindu's are also very happy with that decision.

West Bengal's Reaction After Partition

- They clearly saw the aim of the Britishers to break the unity of the Bengali people on communal lines and thus weaken the nationalist movement.
- The division of Bengal provoked an agitation and angry reaction of West Bengal's people. It created widespread indignation all over the country.
- The day of partition was observed as a day of mourning . All business came to a standstill. On the suggestion of the great poet Rabindranath Tagore the day was also observed as a day of unity and solidarity of the people.He introduced a programme called "Rakhi Bondhon".
- During the movement to lend the partition of Bengal, new methods of struggle were adopted. These methods, which included Swadeshi and Boycott Movement, brought in participation by the common people in the anti- British political activities. "Bande Mataram" became their movements main anthem

Aftermath of Partition

- Eastern Bengal & Assam province would cover 1,06,540 sq. mile.
- Muslims & lower caste Hindus became pleased.
- Dhaka became the capital.
- Formation of All India Muslim League in 1906. Important buildings, High Court, Secretariate constructed in Dhaka.
- Development of communication & security.
- Created new job/service opportunities.
- Economic development.
- Development in education sector.

King George Annulment of Partition of Bengal

- The authorities, not able to end the protest, assented to reversing the partition and did so in 1911.
- King George announced in December 1911 that eastern Bengal would be assimilated into the Bengal Presidency. Districts, where Bengali was spoken, were once again unified and Assam, Bihar and Orissa were separated.

Why was the partition of Bengal reversed in 1911

- Surrender in front of protests and demonstrations, Law and order situation, cult of bomb and terrorism developed, violence spread to most parts of India, attacks on British officials and their Indian associates.
- Economic reasons: boycott of British goods and Swadeshi Movement, decline in demand of British products in Indian markets, imports dropped, profits of British traders ruined, local industry flourished, use of home-made products increased.
- British measures proved ineffective, restrictions on print media and public gatherings, imprisonment of leaders, activists sent into exile, reconciliatory efforts also failed, Morley-Minto reforms of 1909 could not pacify Indians.
- Delhi Durbar in December 1911, George V (King of United Kingdom and Emperor of India) had to address the Indians, British wanted peaceful proceedings.

Reactions and Aftermath of annulment

- In 1911, the capital has been shifted from Calcutta to Delhi.
- The Bengali Muslims were angry and disappointed.
- Lord Hardinge promised a new University at Dacca in 1912.
- This resentment remained throughout the rest of the British period.