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Partition of Bengal – 1905

Bengal was a very large area and the population rose to almost 80 million by the first few years of the 20th century. Calcutta was the capital of the province and also of British India,

There were difficulties in administering such a large area. The eastern part, especially in rural areas were neglected,

For administrative ease, the partition of the province had been proposed even before Curzon had arrived in India. As per Curzon, after the partition, the two provinces would be Bengal (including modern West Bengal, Odisha and Bihar) and Eastern Bengal and Assam

Partitioning Bengal was first considered in 1903. There were also additional proposals to separate Chittagong and the districts of Dhaka and Mymensingh from Bengal, attaching them to the province of Assam.

The government officially published the idea in January 1904, and in February, Lord Curzon the Governor-General of India made an official tour to eastern districts of Bengal to assess public opinion on the partition. He consulted with leading personalities and delivered speeches at Dhaka, Chittagong and Mymensingh, explaining the government's stand on partition

But the Partition of Bengal went on to happen on October 16, 1905 by Viceroy Curzon, It resulted in a huge political crisis. The Muslims in East Bengal after initial opposition tended to be much more positive about the arrangement, believing that a separate region would give them more opportunity for education, employment, and so on

The former province of Bengal was divided into two new provinces -- 'Bengal' (which comprises of western Bengal and the province of Bihar and Orissa) and Eastern Bengal and Assam, with Dacca as the capital of the latter

Lord Curzon said, Bengal united is a power; Bengali divided will pull in several different ways. Bengalis were the first to benefit from English education in India and as an intellectual class were disproportionately represented in the Civil Service, which was, of course, dominated by colonial officials.

They were also in the forefront of calls for greater participation in governance, if not for independence. By splitting Bengal, their influence would be weakened. This would also, effectively, divide the nationalist movement. Bengalis, who regarded themselves as a nation, did not want to be a linguistic minority in their own province

Owing to mass political protests, the partition was annulled in 1911. New provinces were created based on linguistic lines rather than religious lines. Bihar and Orissa Province was carved out of Bengal. (Bihar and Orissa became separate provinces in 1936). A separate Assam province was created,

In 1947, Bengal was partitioned for the second time, solely on religious grounds, as part of the Partition of India following the formation of India and Pakistan

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