

## ❖ Partition of Bengal (1905)

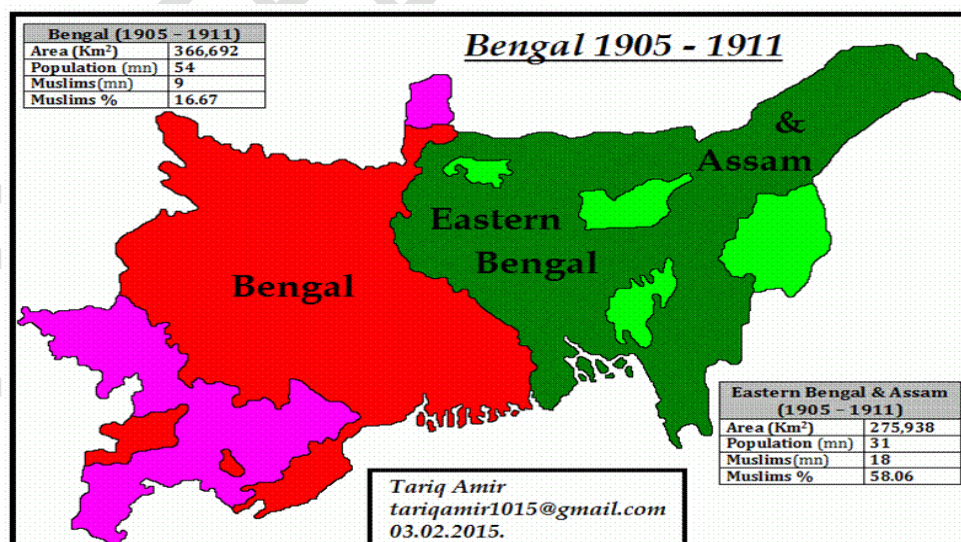
The Partition of Bengal in 1905 was an important event in the political history of British India and Bengal. From 1757 onwards, Bengal, Bihar, Orissa and Assam formed the province of Bengal. It was the largest and most populous province in terms of size and population. As a result, it is difficult for a Governor General to run such a large province. Therefore, for the convenience of governance, Lord Curzon divided the Bengal Presidency on 16 October, 1905 and formed a new province called East Bengal and Assam with Dhaka as its capital. Sir Bampfylde Fuller took over as Governor of the new province.



Lord Curzon

## Background of Partition of Bengal :

The Governor General of India Lord Curzon divided Bengal on October 16 in 1905. This division is known as the Partition of Bengal in history. Before the division the Bengal Province or the Bangla Presidency consisted of Bengal, Bihar, Orissa, Madhya Pradesh and some parts of Assam. The plan to divide Bengal started much earlier. Since the area of Bengal Presidency was too large, various proposals for the rescheduling its area was presented from 1853 to 1903 in the British government circle. In the true sense the plan to divide Bengal was accepted in 1903. The Secretary for India approved it in 1904 and the plan became public in the July of 1904. The plan was implemented in October in the same year. According to this plan the East Bengal and Assam province was created with Dhaka, Rajshahi, Chittagong of Bangladesh, Assam, Jolpaiguri, Tripura Hills and Maldaho. Dhaka became the capital of this province. On the other hand, West Bengal, Bihar, Orissa made the West Bengal which had its capital in Kolkata.



## ❖ Reasons behind the Partition :

There were a number of reasons behind the partition of Bengal.

Although there were various reasons behind the partition of Bengal, administrative and political reasons were the main ones. Although the British wanted to establish the administrative cause as the cause of the partition of Bengal, according to the Indian historians, the political cause was the main reason behind the partition of Bengal.

**According to John R. McLean**, the political motive behind the Partition of Bengal was hidden till 1905.

**According to Sumit Sarkar**, an Indian historian, "Although the British government wanted to change the administration after the partition of Bengal until 1903, political factors became the main factor between December 1903 and July 1905".

## Administrative Reasons :

From 1757 onwards, Bengal, Bihar, Orissa and Assam formed the province of Bengal. It was the largest and most populous province in terms of size and population. By 1903, it had a population of about 80 million and an area of 189,000 square miles. As a result, it is difficult for a Governor General to run such a large province. As a result, one Lieutenant Governor was appointed to assist the Governor General from 1854 onwards. But even then the rulers did not set foot in these areas due to the difficulty of travel. As a result, law and order deteriorated in all these areas and theft and robbery increased. The greatness of the province was blamed for the famine in Orissa in 1866

AD. This was why Curzon considered it an irrational task to keep such a vast area in a single administrative unit. So he planned to divide Bengal in two parts in 1903 and it was implemented in 1905.

### **Socio-Economic Reasons :**

There were also other reasons behind the Partition of Bengal - one of which was economic and the other one was social. During that time Kolkata became the nerve centre for socio-economic activities. Mills and factories, trade and commerce, courts-offices, education institutions- everything was confined within Kolkata. But there was no appropriate transportation system for the raw materials to transport. As a result, the economic condition of Bengal hampered gradually. The population of this area remained uneducated and deprived of education or higher education because of the lacking of appropriate education institutes. Considering these the division of Bengal was inevitable.

### **Political Reasons :**

Lord Curzon did not divide Bengal only considering the advantages of administration or the welfare of the people of the East Bengal. It also involved a far reaching political interest of the British government. The middle class Bengali intellectuals were gradually growing conscious of nationalism and politics. The issue could not escape the consideration of Lord Curzon. The Congress leaders led the all India movement from Kolkata. Therefore its main objective was to stop all anti-British movements that centered upon Kolkata. The united strength of the Hindu-Muslim solidarity, and the united Bengal were threats for the

British rulers. Therefore he wanted to kill two birds with one stone. As the strength of the Bangalees was made weak, the Muslim community was also made happy for the development of the East Bengal. Thus Curzon divided Bengal more to sustain the British rule than to do welfare for the East Bengal according to his "divide and rule" policy. In this way, arrangements were made to weaken the Indian National Unity.

### **Religious reasons**

Muslims were predominant in the eastern part of undivided Bengal and Hindus in the western part. So from a religious point of view, many people think that there is an attempt to form two separate provinces for these two communities.

### **❖ Results of the Partition of Bengal:**

- ❖ The new province advanced in education, in good government, in every mark of prosperity.
- ❖ Eastern Bengal & Assam province would cover 1,06,540 sq. mile with a population of 31 million.
- ❖ Dhaka became the capital.
- ❖ All India Muslim League founded in 1906.
- ❖ As a result of the partition of Bengal, the success of the British policy of Divide and Rule weakened the national unity and nationalist movement in Bengal.
- ❖ The partition of Bengal led to the deterioration of Hindu-Muslim relations.

- ❖ The partition of Bengal resulted in Hindu-Muslim communal conflict. In March 1905, communal clashes broke out in Jamalpur.
- ❖ Important buildings, High Court, Secretariate constructed in Dhaka.
- ❖ Development of communication & security.
- ❖ Created new jobs/services.
- ❖ Economic development.

### ❖ Reactions of the partition of Bengal

- Muslims supported it & became hopeful
- The scare of Zaminders & businessmen
- Bengali Hindus believed that partition was the vivisection of their “mother land”
- Policy of “divide and rule” & conspiracy against Hindus-Muslims
- “Bande Mataram” became the Congress’s national anthem
- movement to boycott, swadeshi movement, Rakhi Bandhan by Rabindranath Tagore
- a nationwide mass movement by congress

