

# Partition of Bengal

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## 1. Communalism

Communalism plays a key role in analysing the true nature of the Hindu-Muslim riots in Bengal in 1906 and 1907, after an unsuccessful attempt was made by the British Government to divide Bengal in 1905 and also, in order to analyse the later political developments which resulted in the founding of Muslim League in 1906 and ultimately in the partition of India in 1947.

To understand the socio-political effect of partition in Bengal in 1906, a first hand impression of the term "Communalism" calls forth our attention. Communalism found different interpretations down the ages. But the core idea remains more or less the same.

"The term 'Communalism'...means the tendency of people to perceive their interests as identical with those of their religious group, the tendency to regard the values and activities of members of the other religious groups as alien or antagonistic, the tendency of religion to determine political affiliation, the tendency of group conflict to occur between members of different religious communities" – *John R Mclane (Partition of Bengal 1905: A Political analysis)*.

Even today for a close look at the problems of the so-called communal discrimination in India, a more recent account of the term as interpreted in recent times, is significant.

"The term is widely used in the Indian context to describe mutual hostility between communities based on religion" – *Jaya Chaterjee (Bengal Divided)*.

These definitions are more relevant today when it seems like the people of the land have not learnt from their past mistakes and are ready to run into the same troubled water as their folk did in early years of 1900.

## 2. Hindu-Muslim relation in Bengal before 1900

But the scenario was not always the same. Before 1906 Hindu-Muslim conflict in Bengal was rarely seen as compared to the other states of India. There were reports of stray incidents regarding cow-slaughter, religious and social festivals, representation on consultative and legislative organisations, education and government employment but they remained only small frictions but never caused any great communal disharmony.

The Muslim society in general before 1906 was a backward one, full of discriminations among themselves, divided in classes based on social and economic standpoints. The lower class Muslims were looked down upon by the elite Muslims and social contact was avoided as much as possible. In retrospect, the elite Muslims had more in common with the moneyed Hindu upper class than with Muslim lower class.

In spite of the day-to-day contacts, there was almost no way of integration between Hindus and Muslims. Therefore, ignorance and indifference prevailed. No conscious effort was made by any of the two communities to understand and sympathise with each other's inherent lifestyle, traits and cultures.

Moreover, the attitudes of many religious and communal Hindus as well as of Muslims made any way of communication between the two impossible. Perhaps the greatest discrimination lied in the field of government jobs, educational opportunities and in agrarian opportunities. Although no obvious hostility was in view for any particular person, a general dislike for Muslims always brewed in the minds of the Hindus, as they were the one-time rulers. Stories were heard and spread about Muslim domination and oppression on one hand, and heroic Hindu rebellion against them on the other. As a result, such a passive hostility is natural. But whatever was the situation, a more or less peaceful co-existence between Hindus and Muslims was always witnessed in Bengal prior to the partition.

### **3. Steps towards partition**

Bengal at the time of Lord Curzon was the biggest and most populated province unable to be governed by a single person, or so the official record runs. So, in 1903 a proposal was made to separate Chittagong Division and the districts of Dhaka and Mymensingh from Bengal and add them up with the Assam Province. This proposal met with an overwhelming opposition from all strata of the society; from rich landlords and poor landless farmers, from political leaders and labour classes as well as from both Hindus and Muslims alike. The protest meetings, processions, pamphlets and newspaper articles amply voiced the general public opinion opposing even the idea of separating people by geographical boundaries.

During his tour in Eastern Bengal, Curzon witnessed the solidarity of the people of Bengal, the centre of nationalism in India. The only way to secure the British Regime was to neap the bud of nationalism and in order to do that, the sense of solidarity among Bengali people must be crushed. In East Bengal, the backward Muslim majority would pose no danger to the British, as the new privileges granted to them would make them loyal to the British government. At the same time in Bengal the Bengalis would cease to be a majority after it would be attached with Bihar and Orissa. Calcutta, the centre of the new found nationalism would loose its importance, as the Bengali Hindus with their advanced political awareness will be a minority in the new province of Bengal.

So in 1905, the British decided to redraw Bengal's boundaries and divided it into two parts: Western Bengal, with a population of 54 million, of which 42 million would be Hindus and 9 million Muslims with Calcutta as the capital; and Eastern Bengal and Assam with a population of 31 million of which 18 million would be Muslims and 12 million Hindus with Dhaka as their capital. The territory to be transferred from Bengal to the new province consisted of the districts of Chittagong and Dhaka divisions, those of Rajshahi division except Darjeeling and the district of Malda.

Curzon sent the scheme to London in February 1905. It was sanctioned by the Secretary of State for India, St. John Brodrich, in June, and the announcement of the formation of the new province was made public in 20 July, 1905. The province of Bengal

and Assam came into being on October 16, 1905. But at the face of mass protest, both passive and peaceful as well active and violent, the two Bengals were united again in 1911.

#### **4. Turmoil during partition**

The peaceful anti-partition demonstration at the very beginning was joined by the Hindus and Muslims alike and in vast proportions. It started two main types of movements side by side. The first one called for an absolute boycott of using foreign goods and the other promoted the production and use of things made in the country. Both were welcomed with an overwhelming response. The "Swadeshi" and the "Boycott" movements inspired the Muslims and Hindus alike and they took part in it in large numbers. On 23 September, 1905 in a Muslim meeting three resolutions were taken: i) offering their support to the Hindus against partition, ii) joining the Hindus also in matters other than the partition, iii) strong support for the use of swadeshi goods. Even a particular Muslim landlord asked his Muslim subjects not to believe the Government promise of benefits for their support in the new Province.

On the day of the partition, a *rakhi bandhan* ceremony was observed all over Bengal as suggested by Rabindranath Tagore. It stood for the symbol of the unity of the Bengali people. There was no cooking in any house of Bengal. People practised abstinence as that day was marked as a day of mourning. From early morning huge processions marched on the roads of Calcutta. The high nationalist sentiments that it evoked, made the British afraid of a possible uprising against their rule.

Precautionary measure was to be taken against the Swadeshi Movement and soon. Besides using the police to terrorize the demonstrators, special measures were taken to teach the students, the majority among the agitators, a lesson. Educational institutions were inflicted with circulars with orders of preventing the students either from joining the movement or to punish them. Along with the persecution of the convicted students their families were also been harassed by the police. The other method was directed towards the local landlords. Orders were given out to them to check the spread of the movement in their respective areas. Processions and meeting, which echoed any nationalist sentiment, were banned in public places. Most of the influential local leaders were imprisoned. There were some Muslims, who were not against the very idea of having a Province of their own at all. These loyal Muslims were induced with a separatist sentiment and were chosen to be used against the disobedient Hindus. Nawab Salimullah of Dhaka though at first sympathetic to the anti-partition movement, became the leader of the new Muslim opposition to the anti-partition movement. It was said that the British Government lend him huge amount of money at a very low interest to save him from his debt. Muslims were repeatedly being explained about the unsympathetic treatment they would likely get from the Hindus and the privileges waiting for them in the new Province.

Lord Curzon's visit to East Bengal and his provocative Dhaka Address shows to which extent the British Government made no stones unturned for dividing Hindus and Muslims into two different political camps with undying hostility for each other. Within no time, a split became very much evident between the two communities due to this shrewd British policy of divide-and-rule. It was the Government who appealed to the

Muslims to support the partition stressing how much fruitful would be the advantages of partition for them. The Dhaka address of Lord Curzon in February 1904 stated that Dhaka was only "a shadow of its former self" and that the partition "would invest Mahomedans in Eastern Bengal with a unity which they have not enjoyed since the days of the old Mussalman Viceroys and Kings....." This attitude clearly echoed the Government hope of creating trouble between Hindus and Muslims.

The British role in controlling the Hindu-Muslim tension after it broke out during and after the partition, was also not entirely impartial. In fact the wrong Government policy in many cases fanned the communal flames and at the same time inspired the demand of Muslim separatism. As a result of the newfound Muslim aggressiveness, there was increasing tension between the two communities. Gradually, Muslims started their pro-partition demonstration at the very same places where the anti-partition demonstrations were being held. The atmosphere of mutual hostility loomed large. The clashes between the two were now only a matter of time.

### **a) The 1906 unrests**

In the early months of 1906 in Mymensingh, lower class Muslims were reported to be harassing Hindu landlords by refusing to do any customary services or to cultivate the land of their landlords. This was attributed to the preaching of Maulvis, who had reportedly the support of the Nawab of Dhaka with them. The Nawab in turn, had the Government on his side. As a result of this backing of the Nawab as well as of the Government, the lower class Muslims believed that they were doing their duties to their community by attacking Hindus.

Many scattered cases of violence in the early months of 1906 made headlines. A rape in Mymensingh, an attack on two markets in Dhaka by 100 Muslim hooligans, and a serious incident at Magurghona in Khulna during the Bakar-Id festival were more serious in nature. In the latter case, Muslims slaughtered a cow at Magurghona despite Hindu objection and in effect a group of Hindus mistreated a Maulvi and urinated on his Qur'an. But this incident was probably greatly exaggerated. As retaliation 10,000 Muslims met at Mgrurghona itself to punish the Hindus. But Abul Kasim, the Congress leader of Burdwan, along with other Hindu politicians, took great pains to calm down the mob and settled the dispute.

In another incident in Gangail in Mymensingh Muslims refused to work for Hindus, some Hindus desecrated a Qur'an and an Alter of Shiva was stolen from a Temple and was replaced by a cow's head.

The Nawab of Dhaka also asked Muslims not to participate in the 1906 Janmastami procession in Dhaka. The Muslim carters refused to lend their carts for the festival. The crowd of thousands of people, who came to see the holy procession, went away disheartened. The Nawab claimed that this announcement was made out of the fear of a possible Hindu-Muslim riot but actually he wanted to show how much dependent Hindus were on the services of the lower class Muslims.

The first eight months of 1906 passed without much of bloody violence. But the Hindu-Muslim relation was soured to such an extent that in one of the newspaper editorials in August 1906 the following doubt was expressed: "In case British rule

ever disappears from India, it is doubtful if Indian Mussalmans will combine with the Hindus." -(*Charu Mihar, August, 1906*) The writer also expressed his concern because the number of the Indian Muslims were increasing in an alarming number and that they might very soon outnumber the Hindus. It took not a very long period of time to witness that this fear was perhaps not entirely baseless as was proved from the later political developments.

In the mean time, some very significant changes were taking place in the Indian politics that made the entire facade of politics in the whole sub-continent in near future. The most significant of them; the birth of Muslim League in December 1906.

### **b) Birth of Muslim League**

The Muslim community was well aware about their lack of development, but it had no separate organisation of their own to voice their plea to the people as well as to the Government. Political activities of the eastern Bengal Muslims were almost ignorable in the national political scenario. They felt the need of founding such an institution that would be able to convey their own views and needs to the Government. So they put their hopes on the Nawab of Dhaka, Nawab Salimullah, who was nothing but only a puppet in the hands of the British Government. He had neither the knowledge nor the talent for political leadership. In fact, the Government's efforts in saving him from his financial crisis itself speak for his loyalty to the British.

Also, the important changes in the Government of India's policies in 1906 had its influence on the communal tension between the two communities. When the resignation of Lieutenant-Governor Fuller, the more sympathetic one for the cause of Muslims, was promptly accepted by both Morley and Minto, Muslim leaders became very much unsure of their position. It started a general Muslim awakening for the need of having a legitimate organisation for themselves. The possible expansion of the Legislative Council as proposed by Morley and Minto increased the Muslim wish of receiving more consideration through direct representation.

The Simla Deputation in October 1 1906, stressed the importance of safeguarding the Muslim interests as separate from those of other Indians. The deputation had three grounds for such a special consideration. Firstly, the Muslims were numerically the majority and they constituted more of the population than the Hindus in Bengal. Secondly, it stated that besides their numerical strength, their political importance should also be considered, as one of every three men in India's armed forces was a Muslim. Thirdly, it expressed the hope that Muslim representatives in the representative institutions should be chosen not by the 'unsympathetic' Hindus but by Muslims themselves and in sufficient numbers so that they will never be sidelined into an "ineffective minority".

Lord Minto's sympathy and agreement with the Deputation inspired the Muslims to start an all India Muslim political party. After the Educational Conference in Dhaka in July 1906, the Delegates and members of the Simla Deputation met on December 30 to announce the formation of the All-Indian Muslim League.

The Muslim League was established with the following objectives:

1. To inculcate among Muslims a feeling of loyalty to the Government.
2. To protect and advance the political rights and interests of the Muslims of India and to represent to the Government from time to time, their needs and aspirations.
3. To prevent the growth of ill will between Muslims and other nationalities without prejudice to its own purposes.

The birth of the Muslim League is marked by some significant changes in the political arena of India. The general Muslims, who did not rely on the Government to protect their interests, either turned to the Congress or passively opposed the Government policies. But now these Muslims found an alternative in the Muslim League. So in a way, the Muslim League was created as a direct threat to the Congress.

### **c) The 1907 riots**

The Hindu-Muslim riots in 1907 were the direct result of the entry of Muslim League in Indian politics. At the beginning of the year it became very much evident that it would go down in the Indian history as a year with continuous disturbances between the two communities as never seen before. Although the geographical compass was not very wide, in its intensity it was almost uncontrollable.

The riots spread in Faridpur, Dhaka, Pabna and Rajshahi districts within a span of only 4 months. Government officials let the riots run out of control with their partial treatment. They were slow to react against Muslim agitators and the partial one-sided account of the occurrences putting most of the blame on the anti-partition demonstrators rose serious doubts about the impartiality of the government. Only when it threatened to amount into very large proportion than the government desired, hundreds of arrests was made and hard punishments were imposed on the convicted. After that, in the next few years the Muslims in Eastern Bengal remained less violent and aggressive. Even after the riot phase was over, the mistrust for each other was so much fixed in people's mind that it was impossible to return to the pre-partition peaceful co-existence days.

Cumilla in Tripura District became an important place for the pro- and anti-partition agitators. The conflicts were only a natural calamity. The first case of major violence occurred in Cumilla in March 1907, where the pro-partition Muslims decided to establish a branch of Muslim League there. About 600 Muslims met the Nawab of Dhaka and escorted him in a procession through the marketplace. It was reported that a Hindu threw a brick at the Nawab and another allegedly showed him disrespect him by holding a broom in his hand as he was passing by. Angry members forcibly entered a cloth-shop of a Hindu and threatened him. The very evening, a vengeful gang of Muslims broke into more shops and committed minor looting. Hindus were alarmed by the failure of the Police in responding to their complaints. The Nawab's private secretary was beaten by a group of Hindus on March 5<sup>th</sup>. At the following evening a serious fight took place between two groups of lathi-bearing Hindus and Muslims, in which a Muslim bread-hawker, possibly a marcher or a bystander, was killed. Several Hindus were arrested and were charged with murder. Surprisingly, no Muslim was arrested.

After this incident, the Hindu and Muslim leaders cooperated with the Government in preventing further tension in Cumilla. But towards the end of March new tensions burst out in the villages in Tripura, 27 miles north of Cumilla. It was created when the local schoolboys, the volunteers of Swadeshi movement, tried to stop the Muslims from selling foreign goods. But in reality actual culprits were the Muslim hooligans from the other side of the river. Unlike in Cumilla, police took here prompt action.

The Jamalpur riot occurred during a Hindu annual Mela (Fair) and bathing festival. Even after the police assurance, violent Hindu-Muslim riot took place resulting in death, injuries and temple damaging. No Muslim was arrested for the first few days but 11 Hindus were arrested. After the intervention of military police 8 Muslims were also arrested. But the fear of a new lease of riots was not uncalled for. The mistrust and suspicion of one community for the other was obvious. On April 27, in the next occurrence, one of the Hindu volunteers shot and injured a Muslim. The house of the landlords in Ramgopalpur, Gauripur and Natore were searched by the police for weapons. They were accompanied by Muslim mobs. After this incident, many Hindus fled from Jamalpur to Mymensingh in order to escape Muslim violence.

Jamalpur slowly cooled down owing to Surendranath Banerjee's efforts to bring peace again between the two communities. But Muslims went into a rampage again in May 1907; 24 towns and villages in Jamalpur district were looted along with extensive destruction of property but fortunately only a few reports of confirmed killings and rapes before police intervened.

#### **d) Pattern of riots**

The typical characteristic of 1906 was the widespread preaching of the Maulvis that agitated the Muslims. They were also suspected to be outside stray elements posing as Maulvis. The boycott of the Hindu landlords or to work for them by the lower class Muslims was also significant. It was also a boycott as was adopted by the anti-partition Boycott Movement, but definitely of a very opposite nature.

In 1907, mainly two types of riots took place. The first type took place in towns and cities as in the towns of Cumilla and Jamalpur, which triggered off the second type riots in far-reaching small village areas. It is to mark that the first type of disturbances took place mostly in areas where the politically advanced middle class Hindus dwelled and actively supported the Boycott and anti-partition activities. These activities on the other hand irritated the middle class Muslims, who were being provoked continuously by the outside elements to react against them.

The Cumilla riots for example, had a pattern that was followed many times. First came a political demonstration, pro- or anti-partition and then trouble causing out of it and very soon spreading it among lower class people for whom partition and Boycott was not an important part of everyday life at all. In all the cases Muslim hooligans attacked Hindu middleclass or a Hindu reported to shot a Muslim. In the case of the second type of disturbances the place is usually small villages where almost no middle class people lived and Boycott Movement was not regarded as much of an important issue. The news of the riots in the towns had been spread there and the riots involved mostly outside people than the local inhabitants.

## 5. Reasons of unrest

Mclane suggested four main reasons for the riots, namely, the Government Policy, the preaching of the Maulvis, agrarian tensions and the local leaders of the Swadeshi and Boycott Movement as well. Mention should also be made of the backward condition of the Muslim community that made them an easy prey to the British political exploitation. It took actually all these above-stated elements, "the local and outside political elements. Communal tensions, social divisions, and administrative action combined to produce what are loosely described as communal riots". -Mclane(*Partition of Bengal 1905: A Political Analysis*)

### a) Condition of the Muslims

The Muslim community, though the majority, was always been outstripped by the Hindu minority everywhere. A few facts will make things clearer:

In 1901 only 22 out of every 10,000 Muslims in Bengal knew English compared to 114 out of every 10,000 Hindus. – *General report of the Census of India, 1901.*

Muslims held only 41 of the 'high appointments' under the government, while the Hindus, who were less than twice as numerous, held 1,235 posts... – *Ibid.*

Muslims held less than one sixth of the appointments although they made up two thirds of the population in the new province..... – *25 May 1906. May Appointment Department, Judicial Proceedings, No. 16 Vol. 7215.*

In the Eastern Bengal Range, where the Muslim equalled 59 percent of the population, they held 4 out of 54 Inspectorships, 60 out 484 Sub-Inspectorships, 45 of the 450 head constabships and 1027 of the 4594 constabships.

The same scheme of Hindu dominance was seen in the legal system as well. Most of the main responsible persons belonged to the Hindus- from barristers in High Courts to the local touts in small villages.

At the beginning of 1900, the Muslims in Eastern Bengal became acutely conscious of their backwardness – be it educational, economic, political, social or cultural. Compared to the UP Muslims, their degradedness became even more transparent. The partition, with all the government promises favouring Muslims seemed to provide them with all the possibilities of a future prosperity to climb up to the same platform as with the Hindus.

### b) Religious provocation

Rural Muslims were provoked to attack Hindus by the preaching of the Maulvis the strong communal undertones, appealing to their religious sentiments. There is almost

no doubt as evident from both official reports and newspaper articles that Maulvis or persons posing as Maulvis made religious appeals for attacking Hindus and that they were successful in their purpose to a large extent.

### **c) Economic reason**

Another official view is that the Maulvis were successful in their purpose, owed to purely economic and not to religious reasons. There was enough discontent against Hindu landlords and moneylenders, which inspired them to rebel against the oppressive Hindu upper class. But the Muslim rioters did not discriminate between Hindu upper class or Hindu peasantry. There is not ample proof that the riots were agrarian in nature although in many cases the landed class was attacked.

### **d) The local leaders**

The local leaders were more to blame. It is a common belief that the Nawab of Dhaka helped to prevent the spread of the riot. He was working merely as a Government catalyst. But we should not forget that he was also the most prominent of the Muslim leaders favouring the partition. A believable reason for his effort to check the spread of the riots could be his interest in keeping his own estates free of trouble.

Another Muslim leader, Salimullah's close political ally, Nawab Ali Chaudhuri, an arch communalist, hostile to both Hindus and the government, was more likely to ignite Muslim violence. His newspaper *Mihir-O-Sudhakar* in which the infamous *Lal Ishtahar* with its colourful and provocative language targeted against Hindus, was published, was violently communal in nature.

But it is almost impossible to state with certainty if any particular person directed the violence. The leaders always stayed out side the crowd only inspiring people with their oration, but without physically directing them on the road.

### **e) Government role**

The Government can also be blamed for their irresponsible favouritism to the Muslims. This partiality gave the Muslim hooligans the wrong impression as a signal to attack and loot Hindus. It seemed like, the Hindus were made to suffer for their anti-partition sentiments. When the wide acceptance of Congress among the Hindus threatened to spread among the Muslims as well, the partition came as an effort to protect Muslims from the influence of the Congress, to stir in them a communal interest separate from the Congress and to build a Muslim organisation to counter the Congress.

There is no doubt that the effect of partition resulted in communal tensions. This was not an accidental development but rather the very purpose of the British policy. It was the main British interest to divert Muslims from the Congress by promising them political power very much different from the Congress, that would enable the non Congress Muslims to organise themselves under their guidance. After the partition,

special efforts were made to provide Bengali Muslims with extensive educational opportunities and to give them more opportunities in Government service. To provide the Muslims with employment, a large number of Hindus had to lose their Jobs in Barisal. This discriminatory treatment made the message very clear that Muslims were being awarded for their support to the partition and at the same time Hindus were being punished for their opposition of the same.

The account of Nevinson, an impartial observer, who was then on his visit to India, stated:

"I have almost invariably found English officers and officials on the side of the Mohammedans where there is any rivalry of race or religion at all...the plea was that only the Hindus were opposed to the Government's policy of dividing them from the rest of their race, so that they alone needed suppression... It was the beginning of a dangerous road, to which one could not see the end, and knowledge that our country was taking that road aggravated the sense of wrong." -  
*Mr. H. W. Nevinson, (The New Spirit in India)*

The subsequent riots that immediately broke out in the years 1906 to 1907, fully justified his apprehensions.

## **6. Changes in Hindu-Muslim relation**

Some significant changes took place in the relations between Hindus and Muslims. The partition was favoured by the educated elite Muslims with the promise of their new educational, economic and political developments. On the other hand, the educated Hindus believed, and believed with reason that, partition would bring a decrease in their opportunities of development. The mutual trust was forever crushed with no hope for a further peaceful co-existence. The mental harmony was already divided even after the Provinces were united again in 1911 at the face of vast public opposition.

Secondly the new agitational politics of the Hindus frightened the Muslims. The successful agitations and processions of thousands of Hindus, the majority being students, as anti-partition demonstrators, could not find its Muslim counterpart, simply because the numbers of educated and advanced Muslim students and teachers were very limited.

Thirdly, for the first time, Muslims had the feeling of insecurity as a minority community in the field of politics. While the Hindu leadership was more vocal and agitative in their communication with the government, the Muslim leaders were yet to reach that stage to go for a direct opposition with the Government through mass demonstration for gaining concessions by showing the popularity of their demands.

## **7. After-effects**

### **a) Spread of nationalism**

The anti-partition movement clearly showed the hidden potential of a passive protest. There was not much use of the physical force on the side of the people. On the other hand, the Government used all its methods of suppression, both civil and of course, military with full abundance while it was only the mental force of the people that made such a huge amount of resistance work successfully.

The very thought of such a passive opposition to the Government was soon adopted by the rest of India to fight for their common cause for getting themselves free from the British dominance. In the later period, the ideals of both the Swadeshi and the Boycott Movement were combined together in the wider spectrum of a full-fledged movement as an Indian national struggle for freedom.

### **b) The militant nationalism**

As the military forces were being used by the British to control the movement, a counter force was also developed among people. They realised that only passive resistance was not enough, opposition by force was also important. A network of many secret revolutionary organisations, such as the Anusilan Samiti and Dhaka Anusilan Samiti, were established to practise the collection and the use of arms. Their main activities included collecting weapons, making bombs and killing and robbing the British officials, specially the jailors. The intensity of this type of military opposition from all over India, in Bengal, Punjab, Utter Pradesh as well as in London, almost unnerved the British.

### **c) The Congress split**

The Congress, in the meantime, was also dividing into the moderates and the extremists in the matters of ultimate political goals and means to be used in order to get it. The moderates, under the leadership of Gokhale wanted colonial self-government by using the method of petitioning to the Government. Their argument was that, there was still need for British Government in India, as it was not yet fully prepared to shoulder the responsibility of absolute freedom. The extremists, on the other hand, demanded nothing but the total self-government or "Swaraj", free from any British influence. They resented the very idea of passive resistance as 'begging' for something that was legally theirs.

### **d) Passive resistance**

The one significant factor that led to the freedom, was the use of the method of 'passive resistance'. It was the brainchild of Arobindo Ghosh, another prominent leader of the extremist school. He developed his theory of passive resistance as:

"the object of it is to force the hands of the Government...The passive method is especially suitable to countries where the Government depends mainly for the continuance of its administration on the voluntary help and acquisition of the subject people. The first principle of passive resistance, therefore, is to make administration under present condition impossible by an organized refusal to do any thing which shall help either British commerce in the exploitation of the country or British officialdom in the administration of it, -unless and until the conditions are changed in the manner and to the extent demanded by the people. The attitude is summed up in one word, Boycott."-Arobindo Ghosh(*Passive Resistance, Bande Matarm, 17April 1907*)

He elaborated his idea later more clearly:

"The policy of Passive Resistance was evolved partly as the necessary complement of self-help, partly as a means of putting pressure on Government. The essence of this policy is the refusal of co-operation so long as we are not admitted to a substantial share and an effective control in legislative, finance and administration."-Arobindo Ghosh(*An Open Letter to My Countrymen, 31 July 1909*)

As we can see from the following events in the Indian history, Mahatma Gandhi adopted the same procedure as shown by Arobindo before him. His extensive use of this method resulted in the ultimate attainment of freedom in 1947. But along with it came another shock, the 1947 partition, though the ground was already prepared for it long ago, in 1905.

## **8. Conclusion**

As the partition agitation, both pro- and anti-, condensed, the Simla Deputation and the founding of the Muslim League marked an undeniable change in the Indian Politics. The Muslim League, from its very birth, made it absolutely clear that its interests were separate from that of the other Indians. Although several times attempts were made for a peaceful reconciliation between the League and Congress over many arguments, the basic difference laid in the mentality was hard to overcome. This separatist attitude was the memorable standpoint in the history of India as it ultimately resulted in the 1947 partition exactly almost at the same places where the line was drawn in 1905. In a way, the Bengal partition fired the spirit of a country-wide nationalism through which gradually the freedom became a reality, it also sowed the seed of the birth of Pakistan and Bangladesh. After the turbulent years of early 1900's, life ceased to be the same peaceful one in the Indian subcontinent. The communal harmony was destroyed and for ever. Now even after 55 years, the hatred is there for all to see. The journey through what Nevinson described as the 'dangerous road' began in 1905 by the British, and still no end seems to be in sight.

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