

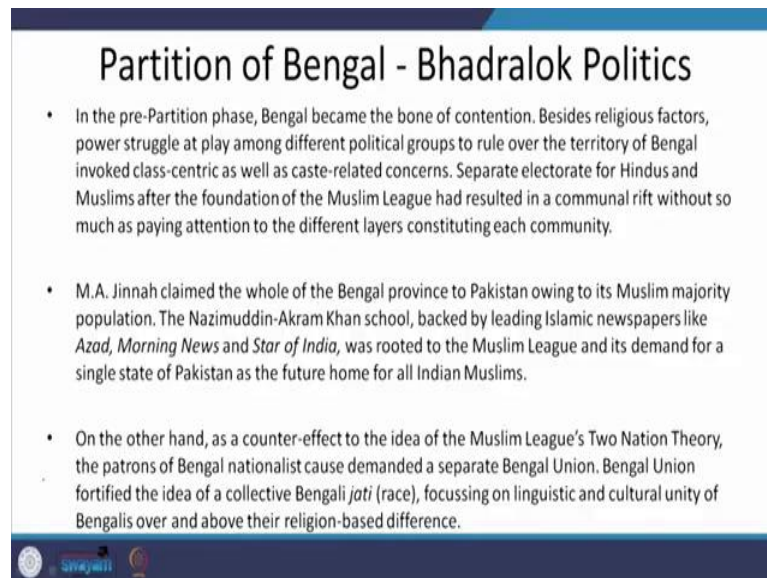
**Partition of India in Print Media and Cinema**  
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**Lecture - 14**  
**Caste Politics and The Bengal Chapter - II**

Good morning and welcome back to the lecture series on Partition of India in Print Media and Cinema. Today, we are going to talk about Caste Politics and Bengal Chapter. This is something we need to understand that during the pre-Partition phase, Bengal and the entire province of Bengal became a bone of contention. Different futures were being imagined about Bengal, the way Bengal would be formed or conceived in the post-Partition times.

There were different groups that proposed different futures for Bengal in the post-partition times. Besides religious factors, power struggles among different factions were at play. And so, who would rule over the territory of Bengal invoked not only politics based on religion and community, but also caste and class-centric concerns.

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**Partition of Bengal - Bhadrak Politics**

- In the pre-Partition phase, Bengal became the bone of contention. Besides religious factors, power struggle at play among different political groups to rule over the territory of Bengal invoked class-centric as well as caste-related concerns. Separate electorate for Hindus and Muslims after the foundation of the Muslim League had resulted in a communal rift without so much as paying attention to the different layers constituting each community.
- M.A. Jinnah claimed the whole of the Bengal province to Pakistan owing to its Muslim majority population. The Nazimuddin-Akram Khan school, backed by leading Islamic newspapers like *Azad*, *Morning News* and *Star of India*, was rooted to the Muslim League and its demand for a single state of Pakistan as the future home for all Indian Muslims.
- On the other hand, as a counter-effect to the idea of the Muslim League's Two Nation Theory, the patrons of Bengal nationalist cause demanded a separate Bengal Union. Bengal Union fortified the idea of a collective Bengali *jati* (race), focussing on linguistic and cultural unity of Bengalis over and above their religion-based difference.

So, separate electorate for Hindus and Muslims after the foundation of the Muslim league had led to a communal rift, without paying attention to how complex and layered each of these communities themselves were. Like we have already discussed, dividing

along religious lines was not a solution to a larger problem, it was just the tip of the iceberg.

Muhammad Ali Jinnah claimed the whole of the Bengal province to Pakistan to begin with, and Jinnah would say that Bengal had a Muslim majority population. So, the entire undivided Bengal should go to what was becoming a new nation-state Pakistan, and the Nazimuddin-Akram Khan School was actually rooted to the Muslim League and supporting the Muslim League cause. They demanded a single state of Pakistan as the future home for all the Indian Muslims.

But there was a difficulty in this idea because Bengal, albeit [its] larger Muslim population, did also have a significant number of Hindu Bengalis. So, if the entire Bengal was imagined under the aegis of Pakistan, where would the Bengali Hindus go?

That was an important question that remained unanswered by this model proposed, by Jinnah's model of a single state of Pakistan. Nazimuddin-Akram Khan school was backed by leading Islamic newspapers, such as Azad, Morning News and Star of India.

Then, as a way of counter-effecting the idea of Muslim League's Two-Nation theory, there was a separate group comprising both Hindus and Muslims that wanted a separate Bengal Union. The Bengal Union emphasized the idea of Bengali jati or race, and focused on the linguistic unity of the Bengalis over and above their religion-based differences.

Now, the main proponents of United Bengal were Sarat Bose and Kiron Shankar Ray among the Hindu organizers, and among the Muslims there were Abul Hashim and Fazlul Huq, Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy.

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## Partition of Bengal - Bhadraklok Politics

- The main proponents of an independent United Bengal were Sarat Bose and Kiron Shankar Ray among the Hindu organizers, and Abul Hashim, Secretary of the Bengal Provincial Muslim League, Fazlul Huq and Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy, the Premiers of Bengal, from among the Muslim leaders.
- They encouraged a departure from communalist politics and instead stressed on a unified Bengali identity. Their emphasis was the Bengali language as a shared identity than the Islamic community/religion. Supporters of Suhrawardy, such as Mohammad Ali Bogra and Tafazzal Ali wanted United Bengal and emphasized the language movement.
- When the United Bengal Plan for a Sovereign Bengal was put forward, it not only met with strong opposition from the Congress High Command but also from Jinnah's followers, Akram Khan and Khwaja Nazimuddin, who wanted Bengal as a whole entity to be part of Pakistan or its close constitutional ally. There was no enthusiasm for a united Bengal amongst the Hindu Bengalis. In 1952 - Introduction of passport system introduced fresh exodus from the Hindu minorities who tried to migrate before the implementation of the system.

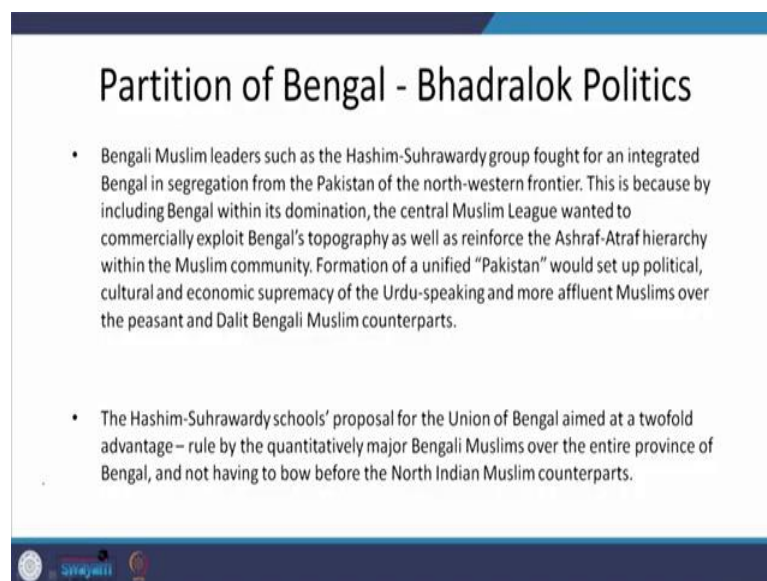
So, the Muslims at that time were holding important positions in Bengal, like Abul Hashim was the Secretary of the Bengal Provincial Muslim League, Suhrawardy and Huq were the Premiers of Bengal.

So, these leaders from among the Hindus and Muslims pushed for the idea of United Bengal. They were encouraging a departure, like I said, from the Hindu-Muslim dyadic politics [or] the communalist politics, and they wanted to celebrate [and] uphold the unified Bengali identity. So, there were supporters of Suhrawardy, such as Mohammad Ali Bogra and Tafazzal Ali, that wanted United Bengal and they emphasized the language movement.

However, we see that this plan or this proposition of a United Bengal or the idea of a sovereign Bengal was met with strong opposition by Congress High Command and also by Jinnah's followers. So, we see that the leading groups that were at that time in the 1940s, actually in the mid 1940s onward, were trying to mobilize the nationalist politics, one was INC and the other was ML, both of them were not happy with the idea of a United Bengal.

We see that the Hindu Bengalis actually side with Congress, Bengal Provincial Congress which was backed by Congress High Command. So there are different kinds of ideas about where Bengal should go. Now, what motivates each of this group let us see.

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**Partition of Bengal - Bhadraklok Politics**

- Bengali Muslim leaders such as the Hashim-Suhrawardy group fought for an integrated Bengal in segregation from the Pakistan of the north-western frontier. This is because by including Bengal within its domination, the central Muslim League wanted to commercially exploit Bengal's topography as well as reinforce the Ashraf-Atraf hierarchy within the Muslim community. Formation of a unified "Pakistan" would set up political, cultural and economic supremacy of the Urdu-speaking and more affluent Muslims over the peasant and Dalit Bengali Muslim counterparts.
- The Hashim-Suhrawardy schools' proposal for the Union of Bengal aimed at a twofold advantage – rule by the quantitatively major Bengali Muslims over the entire province of Bengal, and not having to bow before the North Indian Muslim counterparts.

The Muslim leaders, such as the Hashim-Suhrawardy group, fought for an integrated Bengal in segregation from the Pakistan that would be formed by the North Western Frontier Province states.

How would that benefit the Bengali Muslim leaders? They were aware that formation of a Pakistan comprising Punjabi and Bengali Muslims might lead to exploitation of Bengal's topography by the Western Pakistan. And there would be reinforcing of the Ashraf-Atrap hierarchy within the Muslim community. So, the Bengalis might stand disadvantaged in this scheme.

So, formation of a unified Pakistan would lead to establishment of a political, cultural and economic supremacy of the Urdu-speaking and more affluent Muslims over the Bengali Muslims that are largely understood as belonging to the peasant and Dalit backgrounds.

Although this is a a kind of stereotype that can be challenged and that has been challenged, the fact [remains] that [most] Bengali Muslims hail from peasantry background [and many] are a part of the Dalit populace. This is one prominent stereotype that Bangladeshi writers have challenged or the Bengali Muslims have challenged in many ways.

So, Hashim Suhrawardy school's proposal for United Bengal would aim at a twofold advantage - one would be ruling over the entire Bengal because the Muslims were a majority over there in the province, and the second would be not having to bow before the North Indian Muslim counterparts.

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# Partition of Bengal

- While there were proponents of a Bengal Union such as the Hindu Congressmen like Kiron Shankar Ray and Dhirendranath Dutta, Sardar Patel intervened and refrained them from supporting the idea of a United Bengal
- By May 1947, there was a survey made among Bengali Hindus by the Amrita Bazar Patrika, which supported the idea of Partition of Bengal. Similarly, Islamic newspapers such as Azad, Morning News, and Star of India following Jinnah's will for a single Pakistan state, indiscriminately opposed the Hashim- Suhrawardy faction for United Bengal and developed allegiance to Muslim League.
- In the same way, Jinnah's demand for one Pakistan was protested by Abul Hashim, Secretary of Bengal Provincial Muslim League and a proponent of United Bengal
- While tabling the Lahore Resolution with Jinnah, A K Fazlul Huq criticised Jinnah's Two-Nation Theory on religious terms
- During Huq's Chief Minister position, Hindu-Muslim unity was encouraged and accentuated in Bengal politics to promote the cause of Bengali nationalism. Afterwards, the secular objectives of Huq's Krishak Praja Party in 1937 was drowned by communal politics.

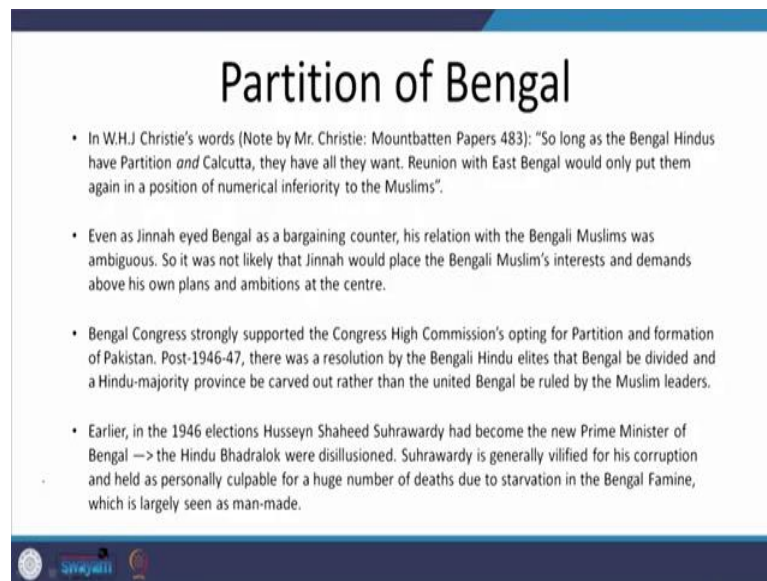
Although there were Hindu Bengalis also pushing for the idea of Bengal Union, major Congress leaders such as Sardar Patel would refrain from supporting them and they actually vehemently protested against this idea. So, while tabling the Lahore resolution with Jinnah, Fazlul Huq is criticizing this idea of Two-Nation theory on religious terms.

Till the immediate years preceding the partition, one could not envision a division along the line of religion because there were so many possibilities coming up at that time.

One case in hand would be Huq's Krishak Praja Party that was trying to unify, that was trying to voice out the demands of the Krishak or the peasants. So, a party that is based on the idea of mobilizing the demands or the requirements of, the views [and] the stance of the peasants, the landless tenants regardless of their religious identity.

Yet we see that KPP is afterwards drowned by larger fundamentalist politics, communal politics. So, 1937 onward, KPP as a voice of the grassroots, agriculturalists, peasants is actually subsumed by larger politics.

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## Partition of Bengal

- In W.H.J Christie's words (Note by Mr. Christie: Mountbatten Papers 483): "So long as the Bengal Hindus have Partition *and* Calcutta, they have all they want. Reunion with East Bengal would only put them again in a position of numerical inferiority to the Muslims".
- Even as Jinnah eyed Bengal as a bargaining counter, his relation with the Bengali Muslims was ambiguous. So it was not likely that Jinnah would place the Bengali Muslim's interests and demands above his own plans and ambitions at the centre.
- Bengal Congress strongly supported the Congress High Commission's opting for Partition and formation of Pakistan. Post-1946-47, there was a resolution by the Bengali Hindu elites that Bengal be divided and a Hindu-majority province be carved out rather than the united Bengal be ruled by the Muslim leaders.
- Earlier, in the 1946 elections Husseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy had become the new Prime Minister of Bengal → the Hindu Bhadrakol were disillusioned. Suhrawardy is generally vilified for his corruption and held as personally culpable for a huge number of deaths due to starvation in the Bengal Famine, which is largely seen as man-made.

It is important and interesting how W H J Christie notes in Mountbatten papers that so long as the Bengal Hindus have Partition and Calcutta, they have all that they want. A reunion with East Bengal would only put them again in a position of numerical inferiority to the Muslims. Jinnah was eyeing Bengal as a bargaining counter, and yet his relation with the Bengali Muslims was ambiguous right from the beginning.

It is generally understood that the conservative Hindus as well as the Western Pakistanis depicted the Bengali Muslims in pejorative terms.

Bengali Muslim figure was actually described in pejorative terms, both by the conservative Hindus and the Western Pakistani Muslims.

Jinnah was not likely to put the Bengali Muslim's interests and demands above his own plans and ambitions at the Center. Bengal Congress actually opted for a Partition of Bengal, such that post-1946-47 there was a resolution by the Bengali Hindu elites that a Hindu-majority province which is currently West Bengal be carved out rather than the entire Bengal be ruled by Muslim leaders.

This is also because of the kind of portrayal, the popular imagination and imaging of Suhrawardy among the Bengalis, especially the elite Hindu Bengalis.

Suhrawardy had become the new Prime Minister of Bengal after the 1946 elections and the Hindu Bhadrak section, the Hindu refined class, upper-caste section were disillusioned by this political development.

Suhrawardy is generally, especially in this side of Bengal...the Indian Bengalis commonly vilify the image of Suhrawardy as a figure of corruption and he is held as personally culpable for a large number of deaths due to starvation in the Bengal famine, which was largely understood as man-made.

As well, Suhrawardy is understood as a chief actor and architect of The Great Calcutta Killings. So, Jinnah's emphasis on the single language that is Urdu was a pointer too, pointed towards a single frame of nation where multiplicities, multiple existences, multiple ways of life would not be encouraged. So, it was actually a step towards totalitarianism.

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## East Pakistan and West Pakistan

- Jinnah's emphasis on a single language, i.e. Urdu, was a pointer towards a single frame of nation which is defined in terms of totalitarianism. According to Jinnah, singularity of civilisation could be shown through singularity of language. Urdu claimed for national language monopoly, as it was a language of the majority, and forcefully defined a single frame of nation.
- According to Jinnah's imagination, Bengali Muslim was not patriotic or authentic, and they were defined as defectors/traitors for betraying the idea of Pakistan.
- The idea of Pakistan did not mean the same thing for the Muslims already located in East/West Pakistan, and the ones that acquired a refugee status (called as Mohajirs), moving base from East Punjab or West Bengal

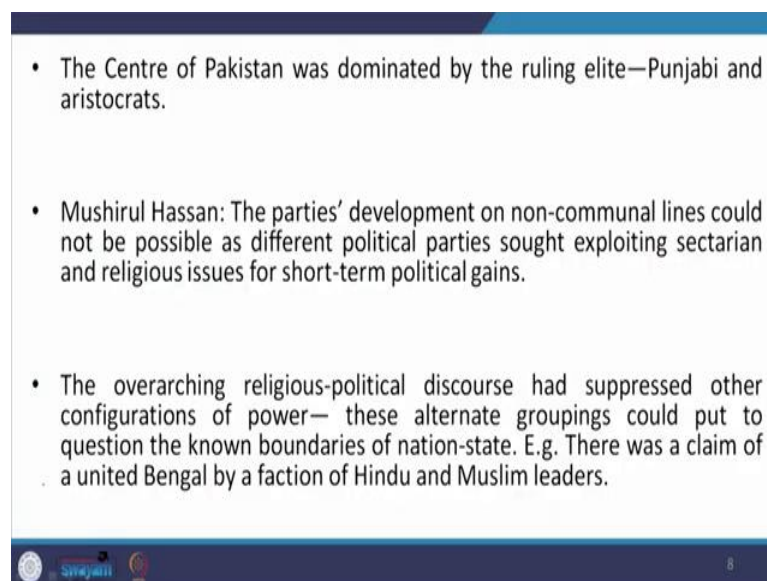
According to Jinnah, singularity of civilization or singular conception of the Islamic world could only be shown through a singularity of language. Urdu claimed for national language monopoly and it was the language of the majority, and it forcefully defined a single frame of nation.

So, like I said, the image of the Bengali; of the Bengali Muslim being not patriotic, not authentic, they being defectors or traitors and betraying the idea of Pakistan was at the heart of Western Pakistani sentiments, popular sentiments. So, the Eastern Pakistan was largely seen as not made up of a populace [comprising] authentic Muslims because they could not vouch, they could not actually prove aristocratic lineages.

It is difficult to understand the idea of Pakistan; [it] would have a different signification depending on one's own belonging. So, the Muslims that were already located, for example, in the Western part of undivided Punjab, did not have to face a refugee experience.

Their understanding of Muslimness or their understanding of nationhood was vastly different from the ones that acquired a refugee status. The refugees that had to move their base from Eastern Punjab would be called the Muhajir. So, the center of Pakistan was dominated by the ruling elite Punjabi and mostly aristocrats.

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- The Centre of Pakistan was dominated by the ruling elite—Punjabi and aristocrats.
- Mushirul Hassan: The parties' development on non-communal lines could not be possible as different political parties sought exploiting sectarian and religious issues for short-term political gains.
- The overarching religious-political discourse had suppressed other configurations of power— these alternate groupings could put to question the known boundaries of nation-state. E.g. There was a claim of a united Bengal by a faction of Hindu and Muslim leaders.

Mushirul Hassan points out how the major political parties' development on non-communal lines could not be possible during the Partition, as different political parties were seeking to exploit sectarian and religious issues for vested interests [and] for short-term political gains.

The overarching religious political discourse had suppressed other configurations of power, the alternate groupings that could actually put to question or that could posit other ways of constituting social groups, beyond the boundaries of nation-state. For example, the Bengal Union, the proposition for a Bengal Union by a faction of leaders comprising both Hindus and Muslims is a case in hand.

Many artworks subscribe to this image of the fragmented borderline. So, especially in Bengal partition, a short story such as Wild Goose Country talks about the meaninglessness of the border, something that even the state actors subscribe to.

There is a description of the border in Wild Goose Country, where the BSF officers are actually standing and witnessing trade across the barbed wire and these are so-called illegal tradings [yet] indispensable. There are commodities produced in this side of the border, which the other side needs and vice versa.

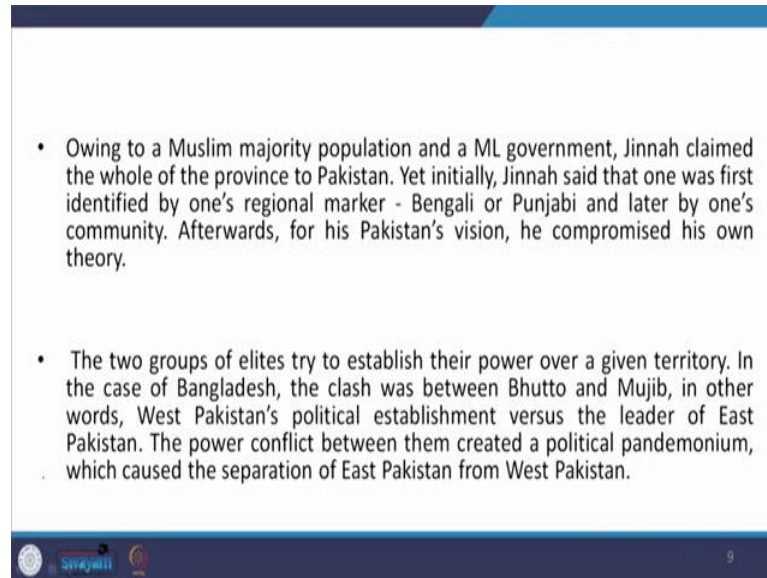
This is like a benign trading and the currency is not the same, but quite similar. Bangladesh calls their currency as Taka, the same word that the Indian Bengalis also use for rupees. So, there is a lot of similarity and yet a conscious difference being maintained. It is a curious situation in the borders of both sides, where it is very difficult to narrate a unilinear account of Indian Pakistan hatred; it is a kind of love-hate relationship.

Humanity is the same if not similar. So, there is a point in Wild Goose Country, where one of the characters see the people, the passengers in a train or in a bus and says that what is the difference between them and us, why this them and us boundary even?

It actually is fragile, it seems fake and a lot of people actually go on to question it. Yet, we see that after 1952, the borders are actually hardened with the introduction of the passport system. There is this fear generated among the minorities that they cannot go, they cannot safeguard their own interests in the presence of a rival community. Or maybe their interests would not be represented as minorities.

So, a lot of Dalit Hindus would migrate to Western Bengal and move in different parts of India in 1952 after the introduction of the passport system, which further hardened the borders.

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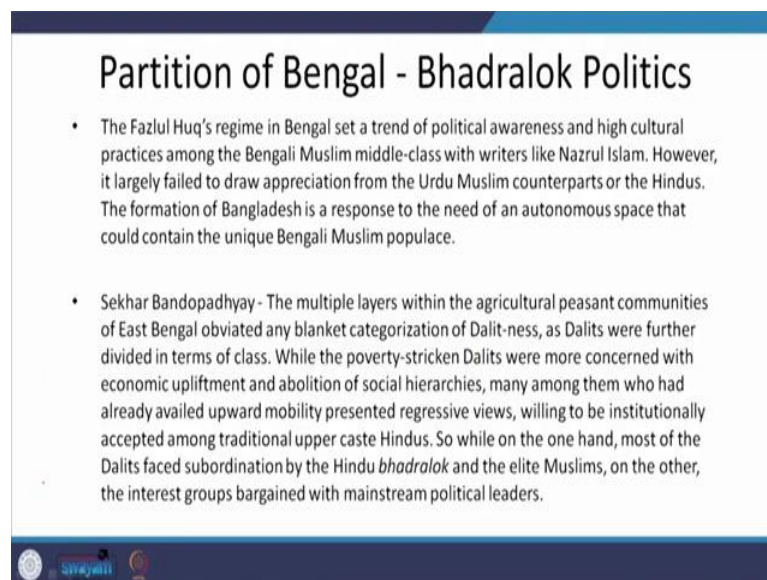


- Owing to a Muslim majority population and a ML government, Jinnah claimed the whole of the province to Pakistan. Yet initially, Jinnah said that one was first identified by one's regional marker - Bengali or Punjabi and later by one's community. Afterwards, for his Pakistan's vision, he compromised his own theory.
- The two groups of elites try to establish their power over a given territory. In the case of Bangladesh, the clash was between Bhutto and Mujib, in other words, West Pakistan's political establishment versus the leader of East Pakistan. The power conflict between them created a political pandemonium, which caused the separation of East Pakistan from West Pakistan.

Initially, Jinnah said that one was first identified by one's regional marker. So, whether one was Bengali or a Punjabi was the first identity and yet, later on he would actually emphasize a kind of an imposition of Urdu, imposition of a Punjabi Muslimness on the Bengalis.




He, in a way, was compromising his own theory. Now, the two groups of elites tried to establish the power over a given territory. In the case of Bangladesh, there was a clash between the Bhutto government and the Mujib government. In other words, between West-Pakistan's political establishment and the leaders of East-Pakistan. The power conflict created a political pandemonium and this actually led to the separation of East-Pakistan from West-Pakistan.

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**Partition of Bengal - Bhadrak Politics**

- The Fazlul Huq's regime in Bengal set a trend of political awareness and high cultural practices among the Bengali Muslim middle-class with writers like Nazrul Islam. However, it largely failed to draw appreciation from the Urdu Muslim counterparts or the Hindus. The formation of Bangladesh is a response to the need of an autonomous space that could contain the unique Bengali Muslim populace.
- Sekhar Bandopadhyay - The multiple layers within the agricultural peasant communities of East Bengal obviated any blanket categorization of Dalit-ness, as Dalits were further divided in terms of class. While the poverty-stricken Dalits were more concerned with economic upliftment and abolition of social hierarchies, many among them who had already availed upward mobility presented regressive views, willing to be institutionally accepted among traditional upper caste Hindus. So while on the one hand, most of the Dalits faced subordination by the Hindu *bhadrak* and the elite Muslims, on the other, the interest groups bargained with mainstream political leaders.

During Fazlul Huq's regime, Bengal had set the trend of political awareness and high cultural inclination and practices among the Bengali Muslim middle-class. There was an emergence of a strong voice of the cultured Bengali Muslim middle-class at that time under the aegis of Huq. This was the time when Nazrul Islam was also writing. Yet, it largely failed to draw appreciation from the Urdu-speaking, Western Pakistani counterparts or even the upper-caste Hindus.

The formation of Bangladesh is in a way a response of a people, a civilization that did not feel themselves included either among the Punjabi Muslims or among the upper-caste Hindus. So, they had to engrave their own cultural and geopolitical space.

Sekhar Bandopadhyay, a historian who is interested in the caste politics and the caste dynamics among the Bengalis, and who looks at the Bengal partition chapter, would say that multiple layers are there within the agricultural peasant communities of East Bengal. So, Dalitness is not a blanket condition or a blanket meaning outside of the class factor.

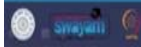
While the poverty-stricken Dalits were more concerned with economic upliftment and abolition of social hierarchies, the upper-class Dalits were more interested in adopting regressive views. They presented reactionary ideas, they were willing to be institutionally accepted among the traditional upper-castes.

While the grassroots Dalits were subordinated by the Hindu Bhadrak and the elite Muslims, the interest groups that had gained socio-economic mobility and social escalation would bargain with mainstream political leaders. So, Dalit leaders, the ones that are aware of the nationalist politics and the pan-Indian dynamics would oppose Partition.

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## Partition of Bengal - Bhadraklok Politics

- While Dalit leaders opposed Partition, a majority of Dalits collaborated with the Hindu Mahasabha's faction and voted for Partition. Targeting to politically mobilize the peasants, the Hindu Mahasabha tagged local agrarian disputes with wider political conflicts, and initiated riots between peasants of the two communities. By the 1940s, the Hindu-Muslim atrocity no longer remained a high-caste political affair.
- The poor Scheduled Caste masses mostly supported the mainstream Hindu sentiments. Influenced by Congress and Hindu Mahasabha politicians, they proposed integrationist positions, by agreeing to see themselves chiefly as citizens of a Hindu majority nation-state. However, to their betrayal, the Partition had not resulted in the inclusion of Namasudra (Dalit) provinces within India. They became part of East Pakistan (Bakarganj, Faridpur, Jessore and Khulna, and the Rajbansi areas of Rangpur and Dinajpur).
- Dalits were not prepared with socio-economic capital to resettle themselves in a new land. The political decision, which misused their ignorant support, resulted in undoing their social mobility and caste-based unity, causing them to migrate in destitute conditions to India. Starting from the scratch, they could possibly gain foothold in West Bengal only by fighting with the local *Goalas* (milkman community) and Muslims in West Bengal.



Leaders such as Jogen Mandal; and yet, we see that the majority of Dalits collaborated with the Hindu Mahasabha's faction and they voted in favour of Partition. Hindu Mahasabha actually very successfully mobilized the peasants, they politically mobilized the peasants, tagged the local agrarian disputes with larger nationalist or political conflicts.

And so, in a way they fanned riots between peasants of the opposite communities. By 1940s, we have already seen this through various examples how the Hindu-Muslim atrocity does not any more remain an elitist affair; it moves vertically downward and affects the grassroots as well.

Poor Scheduled Caste masses mostly supported mainstream Hindu sentiments following the trail of Mahasabha's ideas, and so they proposed integrationist positions and agreed to see themselves as a part of the Hindu majority nation-state. Yet, to their betrayal, the Namasudra provinces remained part of Bangladesh.

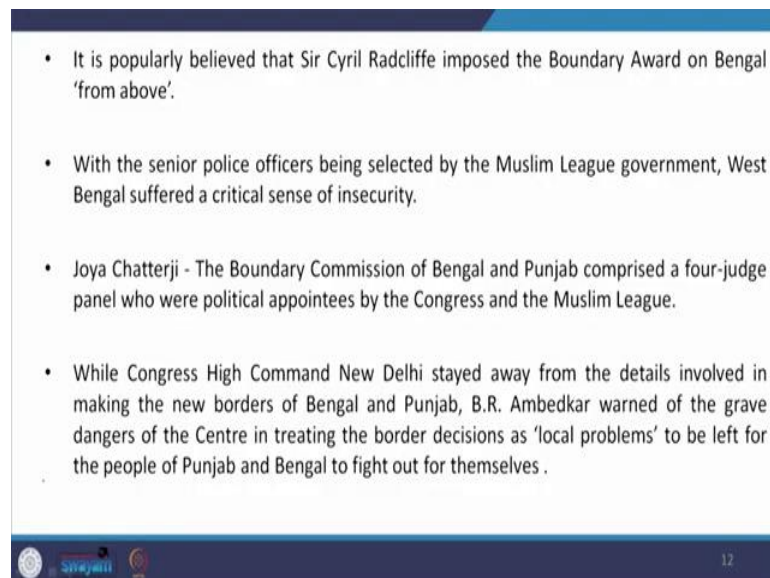
Namasudra provinces such as Bakarganj, Faridpur, Jessore, Khulna, and Rajbansi areas such as Rangpur, Dinajpur - they all actually go to Bangladesh. The Radcliffe Line left the masses to a state of stupor, from which they never recovered.

It was so arbitrary and so illogical, no one knew till a point which provinces would go to which side, and this was a case both on the western and eastern side. So, Dalits were not prepared with socio-economic capital to resettle themselves properly in a new land and so their misplaced support was misused by elite politics and their social mobility was


undone, their caste-based unity fell apart and the partition caused them to migrate to India as almost paupers.

We have already talked about how Radcliffe Line, the Boundary Award on Bengal was largely from above and the senior police officers were being selected by the Muslim League government.


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- It is popularly believed that Sir Cyril Radcliffe imposed the Boundary Award on Bengal 'from above'.
- With the senior police officers being selected by the Muslim League government, West Bengal suffered a critical sense of insecurity.
- Joya Chatterji - The Boundary Commission of Bengal and Punjab comprised a four-judge panel who were political appointees by the Congress and the Muslim League.
- While Congress High Command New Delhi stayed away from the details involved in making the new borders of Bengal and Punjab, B.R. Ambedkar warned of the grave dangers of the Centre in treating the border decisions as 'local problems' to be left for the people of Punjab and Bengal to fight out for themselves .



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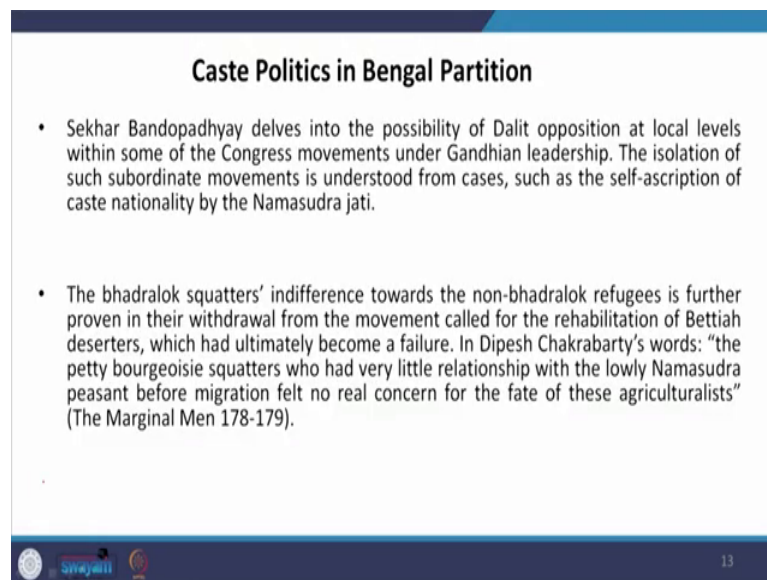
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The West Bengali Hindus as a result suffered a critical sense of insecurity. Joya Chatterji notes how Boundary Commission of Bengal and Punjab comprised a four-judge panel, who were political appointees by INC and by the Congress and the Muslim League. B R Ambedkar actually warns at this point that the Bengal and the Punjab politics not be left to be decided by the people of these respective provinces.

Making of the new borders were not problems solely of the Bengalis and the Punjabis; these should not be treated as local problems left for the people of these provinces to fight out for themselves. These borders would actually and indeed pose greater problems and difficulties for the entire nation, and he was correct.

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**Caste Politics in Bengal Partition**

- Sekhar Bandyopadhyay delves into the possibility of Dalit opposition at local levels within some of the Congress movements under Gandhian leadership. The isolation of such subordinate movements is understood from cases, such as the self-ascription of caste nationality by the Namasudra jati.
- The Bhadrak squatters' indifference towards the non-Bhadrak refugees is further proven in their withdrawal from the movement called for the rehabilitation of Bettiah deserters, which had ultimately become a failure. In Dipesh Chakrabarty's words: "the petty bourgeoisie squatters who had very little relationship with the lowly Namasudra peasant before migration felt no real concern for the fate of these agriculturalists" (The Marginal Men 178-179).

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Bandyopadhyay delves into the possibility of Dalit opposition at local levels within the larger Congress movements under Gandhian leadership. So, the instance of the Namasudras self-ascribing about their caste nationality is a case in hand. Through self-ascription of caste in the caste nationality, the Namasudras isolate their own subaltern movements from the larger vortex of nationalist or anti-colonial struggles.

In the postcolonial phase, we see that the Bhadrak squatters' indifference towards the non-Bhadrak is proven during the movement called for the Bettiah deserters; rehabilitation of the Bettiah deserters. Dipesh Chakrabarty notes that the petty bourgeoisie squatters who had very little relationship with the low Namasudra peasant

before migration did not really feel any concern for the fate of these agriculturalists.  
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- The camp-dwellers of Bettiah in Bihar had launched a peaceful movement in May 1958, for the fulfilment of their demands of improved living and better economic conditions in camp-settlements, as well as for their rehabilitation. It had influenced the Dalit Bengali refugees, who refused to go outside West Bengal. Like the Bettiah rebels, the Bengalis demonstrated massive civil disobedience in a Gandhian way, which resulted in more than 30,000 camp refugees being arrested (Basu Raychaudhury, "Life After Partition" 11).
- Regarding the hierarchy within the Netaji Nagar colony where he grew up, Manas Ray comments: "The vast majority of those who came were middle-class people with some urban exposure. Those who did not fall in this bracket...tended to concentrate in two adjacent wards lying at one end of the locality...In retrospect, it seems amazing how little I knew of that world, how subtle and comprehensive was the process of normalization of divisions" (quoted in Sen 70).
- In another context, Ray reflects: "...Today...the refugees present a sharply variegated scenario – from those powerfully entrenched in the bureaucracy and professions to the emaciated vendors at busy market sections or the near-pauper rag-pickers in the eastern flanks of the city" ("Growing Up Refugee" 151-152).

The camp-dwellers of Bettiah in Bihar had actually launched a peaceful movement, they were following the Gandhian way to protest and demand for improved living and better economic conditions in their camp settlements. But this resulted in more than 30000 camp refugees being arrested. And yet the Bhadraklok refugees do not intervene or defend their position at all.

Manas Ray would further corroborate with what Chakrabarty said. Ray says that a vast majority of those who came [from East Pakistan] were middle-class people with some urban exposure. Those who did not fall in this bracket tended to concentrate in two adjacent wards lying at one end of the locality.

So, he is talking about the colony where he had grown up as a refugee child. "In retrospect it seems amazing, how little I knew of that world, how subtle and comprehensive was the process of normalization of divisions." And then, he goes on to talk about the variegated, the multivarious meanings of the term "refugee." This is something we have to discuss separately in our ensuing module about the refugees.

How the term can never be a homogenized expression that includes the situation or the experiences of all refugees. So, refugee can mean so many things - from those powerfully entrenched in the bureaucracy and professions to the emaciated vendors and even the rag-pickers in the eastern flanks of Calcutta.

So, leaders from the Namasudra castes, such as Mukunda Mullick, Jogen Mandal had lost their autonomy just prior to the partition. The partition had left the the Namasudras in East-Pakistan essentially as second-class citizens compared to the aristocrat Punjabi Muslim populace.

There was a geopolitical circumstance in the East-Pakistan, where the Awami league was able to act as a vanguard for a movement of autonomy in reaction to the West-Pakistani repression.

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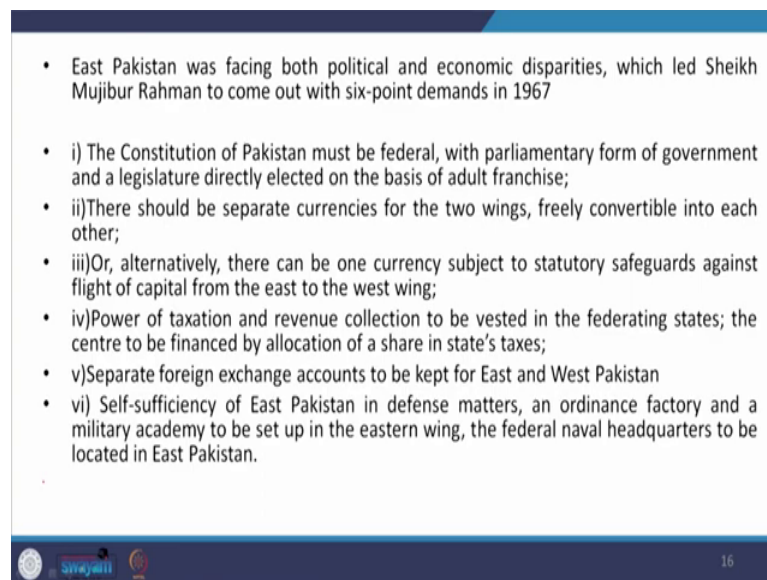
- Leaders of Namasudra caste politics such as Mukunda Mallick or Jogen Mandal lost their autonomy - by the time of a second Partition of Bengal in 1947.
- The Partition left the Namasudras in East-Pakistan as second-class citizen in a Muslim and Punjabi-dominated state.
- There was a geopolitical special circumstance in the East Pakistan, where the Awami League was able to act as the vanguard of a movement for autonomy in reaction to West Pakistani repression.
- East Pakistan had visible and perceptible differences from West Pakistan, which made the former imagine itself differently and also re-form a nation on a set of different identity markers. The first tension between the two wings emerged over the issue of giving national language status to Bengali in 1952, which was granted in 1955. The dress code, especially of women—who, in a patriarchal society, are considered as the preservers of society's culture—also played an important role.
- Women in Bangladesh dress similarly to that of the Hindu women in the Indian state of West Bengal.

East-Pakistan had visible and perceptible differences in terms of ethnicity, language, culture, food and sartorial habits. And so, the East-Pakistanis would imagine themselves differently.

The East-Pakistanis would imagine themselves differently and also seek to form a nation on a set of different identity-markers. The first clash between the two wings of Pakistan happened centering the issue of national language in 1952. There was the issue of national language status be given to Bengali language in 1952, which was granted in 1955. So, the first tension between the two wings emerged centering the question of national language and the status of national language be given to Bengali. This demand was granted in 1955 and we also see separately that the dress code of women from Eastern Bengal, Eastern Pakistan - regardless of their communal identity, most Muslim Bengali women would dress like the women from the Indian state of West Bengal.

Cultural, linguistic [and] ethnic identifications were very different for the two flanks, two wings of Pakistan.

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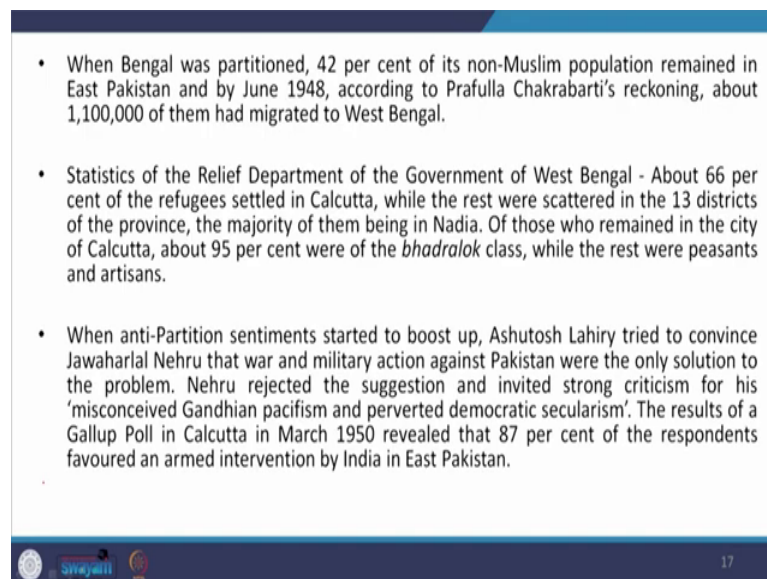
- East Pakistan was facing both political and economic disparities, which led Sheikh Mujibur Rahman to come out with six-point demands in 1967
- i) The Constitution of Pakistan must be federal, with parliamentary form of government and a legislature directly elected on the basis of adult franchise;
- ii) There should be separate currencies for the two wings, freely convertible into each other;
- iii) Or, alternatively, there can be one currency subject to statutory safeguards against flight of capital from the east to the west wing;
- iv) Power of taxation and revenue collection to be vested in the federating states; the centre to be financed by allocation of a share in state's taxes;
- v) Separate foreign exchange accounts to be kept for East and West Pakistan
- vi) Self-sufficiency of East Pakistan in defense matters, an ordinance factory and a military academy to be set up in the eastern wing, the federal naval headquarters to be located in East Pakistan.

And then we see that East-Pakistan claimed facing political and economic disparities, and Sheikh Mujibur Rahman came out with six point demands in 1967. The points would include Constitution of Pakistan be made federal with parliamentary form of government and a legislature directly elected on the basis of adult franchise;

and then, there would be separate currencies for the two wings, freely convertible into each other or alternately one currency subject to statutory safeguards against flight of capital from the east to the west. And then, power of taxation and revenue collection be vested in the federating states. So, separate foreign exchange accounts be kept for East- and West-Pakistan.

And finally, self-sufficiency of East-Pakistan in defence matters; an ordinance factory be set up there and military academy be set up in the western wing; as well as the federal naval headquarters be located in Eastern Pakistan.

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- When Bengal was partitioned, 42 per cent of its non-Muslim population remained in East Pakistan and by June 1948, according to Prafulla Chakrabarti's reckoning, about 1,100,000 of them had migrated to West Bengal.
- Statistics of the Relief Department of the Government of West Bengal - About 66 per cent of the refugees settled in Calcutta, while the rest were scattered in the 13 districts of the province, the majority of them being in Nadia. Of those who remained in the city of Calcutta, about 95 per cent were of the *bhadralok* class, while the rest were peasants and artisans.
- When anti-Partition sentiments started to boost up, Ashutosh Lahiry tried to convince Jawaharlal Nehru that war and military action against Pakistan were the only solution to the problem. Nehru rejected the suggestion and invited strong criticism for his 'misconceived Gandhian pacifism and perverted democratic secularism'. The results of a Gallup Poll in Calcutta in March 1950 revealed that 87 per cent of the respondents favoured an armed intervention by India in East Pakistan.

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So, when Bengal was partitioned, 42 percent of the non-Muslim population remained in East-Pakistan.

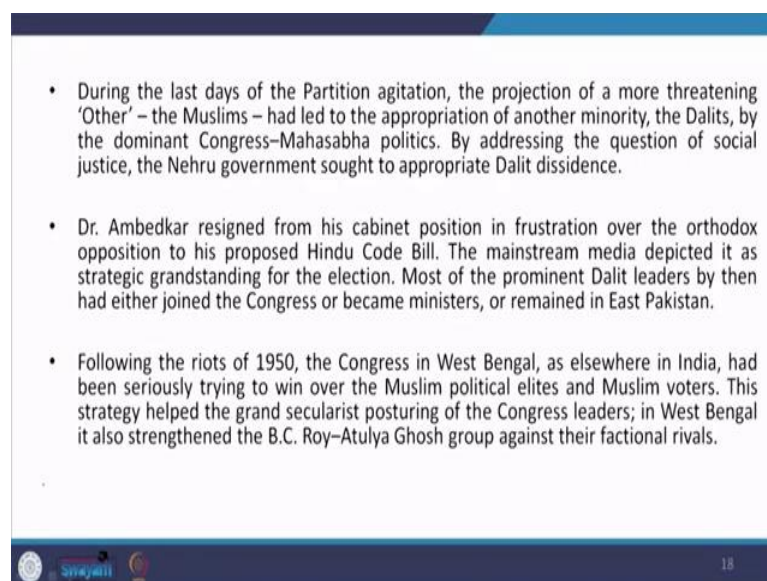
Yet, by June 1948 according to Prafulla Chakrabarti's reckoning, almost 11 lakhs of this populace had migrated to Western Bengal. So, statistics of Relief Department of the government of West Bengal notes that about 66 percent of the refugees that settled in Calcutta were from the upper-castes.

Most of the refugees were scattered in the 13 districts of the province and a majority of them resettled in the Nadia district. So, those who could relocate themselves in the main hub of the city were from Bhadrakol class origin, and the ones that had to resettle in other parts of West Bengal, in the suburban parts, were from peasantry and artisan backgrounds.

There was a time when anti-partition sentiments were being flared up, being boosted and figures like Ashutosh Lahiry wanted to convince Jawaharlal Nehru that war and military actions be taken against Pakistan. That was the only solution to the problem. Nehru would vehemently reject Lahiry's idea.

And we see the results of a Gallup Poll, Gallup Poll in Calcutta. So, the results of a Gallup Poll in Calcutta in March 1950 reveals that 80-87 percent of the respondents were actually in favour of armed intervention by India in East-Pakistan.

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- During the last days of the Partition agitation, the projection of a more threatening 'Other' – the Muslims – had led to the appropriation of another minority, the Dalits, by the dominant Congress–Mahasabha politics. By addressing the question of social justice, the Nehru government sought to appropriate Dalit dissidence.
- Dr. Ambedkar resigned from his cabinet position in frustration over the orthodox opposition to his proposed Hindu Code Bill. The mainstream media depicted it as strategic grandstanding for the election. Most of the prominent Dalit leaders by then had either joined the Congress or became ministers, or remained in East Pakistan.
- Following the riots of 1950, the Congress in West Bengal, as elsewhere in India, had been seriously trying to win over the Muslim political elites and Muslim voters. This strategy helped the grand secularist posturing of the Congress leaders; in West Bengal it also strengthened the B.C. Roy–Atulya Ghosh group against their factional rivals.

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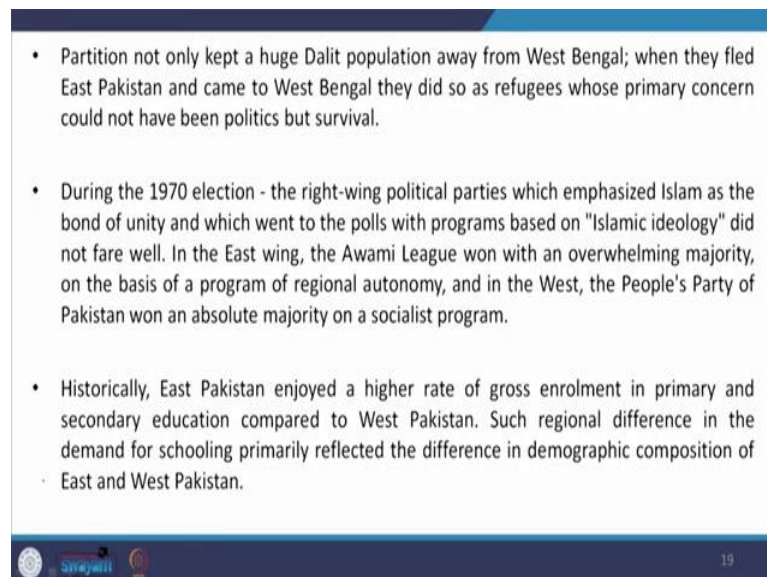
So one sees that following the riots of 1950, the Congress in West Bengal had been seriously trying to win over the Muslim political elites and the Muslim voters.

During the last days of partition, the projection of a more threatening 'Other' that is the Muslim would enable submerging the cause of the Dalit with the Hindu cause. So, the minorities would be subsumed within Hindu politics by Congress and Mahasabha through projection of the Muslim as the threatening or the violent Other.

The Nehru government actually sought to appropriate Dalit dissidence through the question of social justice. Ambedkar was actually frustrated over the orthodox situation of Congress. And he resigned from his cabinet position in the context of the Hindu Code bill. Dr. Ambedkar actually resigns from his cabinet position frustrated over the orthodox position of the Congress.

The mainstream media depicts this as Ambedkar's strategic grandstanding for the election. We see that eventually the prominent Dalit leaders are sucked into major political factions - be it Congress or some other major political party, or they remain in East Pakistan.

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- Partition not only kept a huge Dalit population away from West Bengal; when they fled East Pakistan and came to West Bengal they did so as refugees whose primary concern could not have been politics but survival.
- During the 1970 election - the right-wing political parties which emphasized Islam as the bond of unity and which went to the polls with programs based on "Islamic ideology" did not fare well. In the East wing, the Awami League won with an overwhelming majority, on the basis of a program of regional autonomy, and in the West, the People's Party of Pakistan won an absolute majority on a socialist program.
- Historically, East Pakistan enjoyed a higher rate of gross enrolment in primary and secondary education compared to West Pakistan. Such regional difference in the demand for schooling primarily reflected the difference in demographic composition of East and West Pakistan.

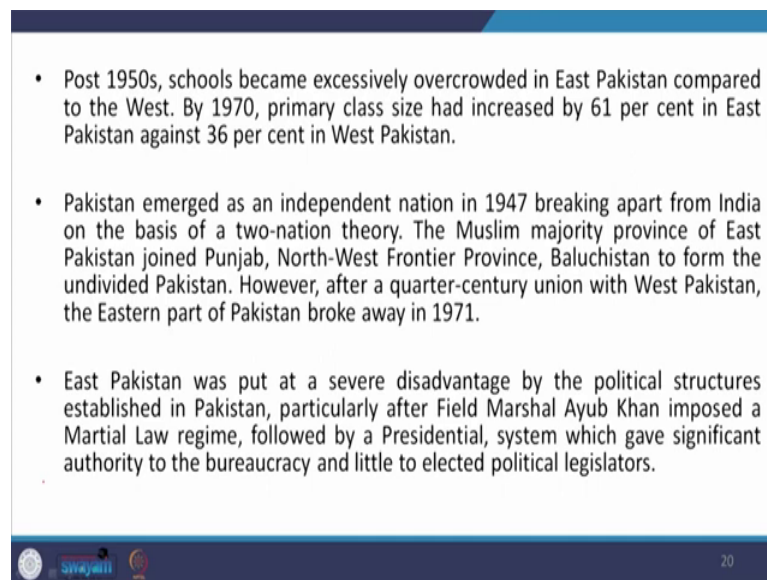


During the 1970 election, the right wing political parties [of Pakistan] emphasized Islam, and yet they were greatly thwarted. They faced a significant defeat; this is the case of Pakistan we are talking about.

The right-wing political parties emphasized Islam as the point of unity and actually forwarded their programs based on Islamic ideology, [but] did not fare well. In comparison, both the Awami League and the People's Party of Pakistan won an absolute majority. So, Awami League was actually forwarding the case of regional autonomy, whereas PPP was focusing on a socialist program.

They had overwhelming victory in both wings of Pakistan.

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- Post 1950s, schools became excessively overcrowded in East Pakistan compared to the West. By 1970, primary class size had increased by 61 per cent in East Pakistan against 36 per cent in West Pakistan.
- Pakistan emerged as an independent nation in 1947 breaking apart from India on the basis of a two-nation theory. The Muslim majority province of East Pakistan joined Punjab, North-West Frontier Province, Baluchistan to form the undivided Pakistan. However, after a quarter-century union with West Pakistan, the Eastern part of Pakistan broke away in 1971.
- East Pakistan was put at a severe disadvantage by the political structures established in Pakistan, particularly after Field Marshal Ayub Khan imposed a Martial Law regime, followed by a Presidential, system which gave significant authority to the bureaucracy and little to elected political legislators.

One also sees that the idea of schooling is very differently developed in these two wings. Post-1950s, schools in East-Pakistan are excessively overcrowded compared to the west, and by 1970 primary class size in East Pakistan increases by 61 percent compared to 36 percent in West Pakistan.

One sees these differences hardening with progression of time and finally, after a quarter century union with West-Pakistan, the eastern part actually breaks away in 1971. East Pakistan claims that it was put at a severe disadvantage, where the political structures established by Pakistan, especially by Field Marshal Ayub Khan imposed the Martial

Law regime and followed by a presidential system, which gave significant authority to the bureaucracy and little to the elected political legislators.

With this, we would stop today's lecture here and meet you for another round of discussions again.

Thank you.