



Smart Revision
QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

PARTITION OF BENGAL 1905

Q: Why the Hindu oppose the partition of Bengal between 1905 and 1911? [7]

ANS: The partition of Bengal was enforced in 1905 by Viceroy Lord Curzon for administration purposes. The new province of East Bengal happened to be a Muslim majority province, which the Hindus and Congress strongly resented. They were jealous of the emergence of a Muslim majority province, which would benefit the Muslims. Hindus strongly objected to the partition of Bengal and staged protest meetings and marches because it hurt their economic interests. Boycott of British goods was started and 'Swadeshi' Movement was launched. In fact it was the beginning of agitation and protests against the British Government.

Religious and nationalistic colour was given to this movement and there was an outburst of terrorist activities. An attempt was made to assassinate the Viceroy Lord Minto. The result was that the British government yielded to the Hindu agitation and the partition of Bengal was cancelled in 1911.

Q: Why was Bengal Partitioned in 1905? [7]

ANS: Bengal was partitioned by Viceroy Lord Curzon in 1905. Bengal was a large province with a population of over 85 million. It included not only India-side Bengal and present Bangladesh but also Bihar and Orissa. There were obviously huge administration problems to control such a large province. Several schemes to divide the province had been proposed in the past. Therefore Bengal was partitioned by Curzon in 1905 for administration reasons. A new province under the name of East Bengal and Assam was created where Muslims were in majority. They (Muslims) were happy because it offered the Muslims chances for education and economic progress. But the partition was very strongly apposed by the Hindus and the Congress.

Q: 'Bengal was partitioned because of geographical factors'. Do you agree or disagree? Explain your answer. [14]

ANS: I agree to a great extent that the partition of Bengal (1905) was because of geographical reasons. Bengal was a large province in area and population. Its population of 95 million was ten times greater than the population of Britain at that time.

It was difficult to govern and effectively administer such a large province and the idea of partitioning it was brewing in the minds of the British rulers for quite sometime. Lord Curzon gave a serious thought to it and got the approval of the British government. Bengal was partitioned into two provinces in October 1905 and provinces of West Bengal, and East Bengal and Assam were created. The divisions of Decca, Chittagong and MymenSingh were annexed to Assam. After the partition was enforced, it transpired that West Bengal had a Hindu majority population, while East Bengal and Assam had a Muslim majority population. The emergence of a Muslim province pleased the Muslims because it gave a chance for progress of the Muslim community in fields of education, jobs in Government services and commerce. Under United Bengal, the Province was dominated by Hindus who were better educated, economically better off and more well-organized, while Muslims lagged behind in every field.

Bengal was partitioned for purely administration reasons and the basis was geographical reality. Lord Curzon found that Bengal Presidency was too large a charge for one Governor and he decided to form two provinces, each of manageable size.

The Hindus of Bengal bitterly opposed the partition and blamed the British that the partition has been enforced with sinister motives. In fact the Hindu businessmen of Calcutta feared a reduction in their income and profits. Therefore they staged mass agitation against the partition of Bengal and their protest was supported by the Congress. Muslims were disorganized and were unable to counter the Congress and Hindu propaganda.

In fact, partition of Bengal was done not to favour or harm any community. The partition was done not to favour or harm any community. The partition was done mainly because of geographical ground realities.

