Chapter IV

QUEST FOR EQUALITY

1. Education for the Moslems

The indifference of the Moslem community towards western education was a matter of great concern to the educated Muslims in the second half of the nineteenth century. They felt that to survive as a community an intellectual awakening identical to that experienced by the Hindus was necessary. In 1899 the journal 'Mihir-O-Sudhakar' analysed the reasons for indifference which included, inter alia, the lack of Government encouragement and animosity of the Hindus. The Moslem press deplored the lack of Government encouragement in no uncertain terms. In 1924 Islam-darshan wrote:

The Bengal Government spends from its revenue one crore thirty nine lacs of rupees on the spread of education .... From the point of view of their percentage in the total population Muslims are entitled to at least seventy lacs of rupees out of that amount, but actually receive only thirty-one lacs .... Muslim students are virtually denied government scholarships of several lacs of rupees awarded in scholarships of various kinds. Muslims received only ten thousand rupees .... This year Calcutta University had granted 121 Matriculate scholarships, Muslims have got only one of these worth Rs.15 .... What more shameful proof of unjust impartiality could there be?

The Government of Bengal decided in April 1927 to make an annual grant of Rs. 12,000 to the University for the

1 Syed Abdul Gaffar, "Prerita Patra", Mihir O Sudhakar, 8th Pous, 1306 B.S. (1899).
On February 10, 1928, M. Azizul Haque, the then Vice-Chancellor of the Calcutta University, extended certain points in favour of the organisation of Islamic Studies in Calcutta University. He explained that the University of Calcutta was situated in a province where the Moslems formed more than half of the total population. It was only a natural and inevitable consequence of the growth of higher education among them that the Moslem community started feeling their limited scope keenly in the intellectual and academic activities of the University. He felt that, in the wider interest of education in Bengal, this question would require greater scrutiny. He argued that it was extremely important that the University should extend facilities to the Moslem students not only in scientific, technical or modern education but also in the letters of Islam. He suggested that the work of the University should be so arranged and organised that it would harmonise the cultural trends of all its constituents, aiming ultimately at an intellectual unity of the whole. This could be achieved by organising a Department of Islamic Studies in the University of a separate department from that of Arabic and Persian. Secondly, Islamic Studies could be introduced as one of the

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3 Minutes of the Syndicate, 1927, Part 2, pp. 1287-88. Letter No. 173-T Edn. dated April 1927, from J.H. Lindsay, Secretary to the Government of Bengal, Education Department to the Registrar, Calcutta University.
subjects in Matriculation, Intermediate, B.A. and M.A. classes. Thirdly, in order to give effect to the recommendations of the Sadler Commission, a Muslim Advisory Board could be instituted which would tackle all matters affecting the academic and religious interests of the Moslem students. If there was any genuine feeling of grievance on these grounds, this body would try to remove the same. Fourthly, as statistics pointed to the paucity of Moslem students in the Science classes, steps would have to be devised for encouraging Moslem students in joining such classes. A committee consisting of representatives of the Government and of the University would have to be established for investigating these matters. Encouragement would be given to the Moslem students joining scientific and technical subjects by means of special stipends and free studentship. Fifthly, greater accommodation would have to be provided for Moslem students in the Post-Graduate classes. The Carmichael Hostel, Azizul Haque observed, was not large enough for Moslem Under-Graduate students. Nor was it desirable to have both Graduate and Non-Graduate students residing at the same place. He suggested that a new Hostel could be constructed near Wellesley Square at a cost of about Rs. 1,10,000. The Government could be approached for 2½ lakhs of rupees which would complete this project. Finally, he suggested that Urdu should be recognised as a Second Language for the Intermediate examinations which would give the Moslem students of Bengal an opportunity for pursuing Urdu up to the B.A. standard.

At the All India Muslim Educational Conference held at Calcutta on 17 April 1940, the suggestions of Azizul Haque received special consideration. It was suggested that the various universities of India should establish a department of Islamic History and Culture and appreciate the efforts of Azizul Haque for establishing such a department in the Calcutta University. The Conference also upheld the view that the socio-economic needs of the Moslem demanded that definite bias would have to be created in favour of establishing the study of Domestic Science in all stages of female education.

This Conference recommended the following resolutions to Educational Boards, Universities and Provincial Governments:

1. Provision should be made in all girls schools for teaching Domestic Science as a compulsory subject for all girl students.

2. Matriculation courses should be revised in such a way that Domestic Science might be made compulsory for girls.

3. Lady students desiring to prosecute the study of Domestic Science in the Intermediate and B.A. courses should be allowed to offer it for those examinations and provisions would have to be made for its study in all women's colleges.

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5 Minutes of the Syndicate, 1940, Part 2, p. 1119.
On 27 May 1940 the Education Secretary informed the Registrar of Calcutta University that the Government was eager to implement further the proposed scheme of Islamic Studies. But as the teaching of Islamic Studies was a special feature in the University of Dacca, the Government was anxious to ensure financial organisation and cooperation of activities of the two Universities in the province. They suggested that a conference should be summoned where representatives of both the Universities would consult each other before coming to a final decision.

The Vice-Chancellor of the Calcutta University regretted that though they welcomed the idea of discussing the matter with the Government, yet they failed to see the purpose of jointly discussing it with Dacca University. He added that the entire scheme of Islamic Studies in Calcutta University was different from that of Dacca. Moreover, the University had already approached the Government of Bengal for a recurring grant of Rs. 66,000 which would be required for the implementation of the said scheme.6

On 20 July 1940 the Government of Bengal informed the University that they would not provide any financial assistance for the organisation of Islamic Studies in the University of Calcutta from their provincial revenues unless they were sure that there would be no overlapping of the courses of study offered by the Universities of Dacca and Calcutta. They

6 Minutes of the Syndicate, 1940, Part 2, p. 1560. Letter No. N 164 Edn, dated May 27, 1940 from Hubert Graham, Secretary to the Government of Bengal, Education Department to the Registrar, Calcutta University.
requested the Calcutta University to reconsider the question of arranging a joint conference with the representatives of the Dacca University at an early date.\textsuperscript{7}

On 19 January 1942 the Government of Bengal sanctioned a non-recurring grant of Rs. 10,000 for the organisation of the Department of Islamic Studies and Culture in the Calcutta University subject to certain terms and conditions. In the first place, the Government made it clear that the earmarked amount would be spent on the Department of Islamic Studies and Culture alone as a supplement to the University grant. Moreover, if the University grant covered that expenditure, then the proposed non-recurring grant would be withheld. Secondly, the Government intended to include this expenditure within the University grants while revising the existing financial settlement with them.\textsuperscript{8}

The problem of Moslem Education dominated the session of the Bengal Legislative Assembly in 1944. One of the members, Muhammad Habibullah Chowdhury, asked several questions regarding facilities that were offered to the Moslem students in Bengal. The University of Calcutta sent the reply on 20 June 1944 which was then forwarded to the Legislative Assembly for information and clarification of the Minister in Charge of Education. Habibullah Chowdhury had enquired about the number of students

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{7} Minutes of the Syndicate, 1940, Part 3, p. 1982. Letter No. 1446 Edn. dated 20 July 1940 from Graham, Education Secretary, to the Registrar, Calcutta University.
\item \textsuperscript{8} Minutes of the Syndicate, 1942, Part 1, pp. 400-59.
\end{itemize}
studying Applied Chemistry in the Post-Graduate classes in the Calcutta and Dacca Universities. The answer was thirty-six. Out of these, the number of Moslem students was only two. When asked whether there were any special facilities for the Moslem students seeking admission into Post-Graduate classes of Applied Chemistry, the Minister answered in the affirmative. The Legislature was further informed that special facilities were offered to the Moslem students who passed the B.Sc. examinations in the Pass Course and were admitted with Honours in preference to caste Hindu Graduates.  

Several prominent Moslem leaders interested in the educational problems of the Moslems, assembled at a meeting held at the residence of A.K. Fazlul Huq some time in November 1946. Among those present were the Minister for Education, Mafizuddin, Parliamentary Secretary, Director of Public Instruction, Zuberi, Abdul Jabbar, Nurul Huq Choudhury. A committee was appointed to draw a scheme for the establishment of a private Moslem Degree College, a Moslem High School and to consider the possibility of establishing B.Com. and Law evening classes in the Islamia College. The draft scheme was thereafter submitted to the Minister for Education for his approval.  

In the meantime P.N. Banerjee, the then Vice-Chancellor of the Calcutta University, discussed the matter with W.H. Saumarez Smith, Deputy Secretary to the Government of Bengal, and informed

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the Government that the proposals to start Law and B.Com. classes in the Islamia College, Calcutta from the second week of October 1946 would not be possible owing to some technical problems. Nor was it desirable to have "bifurcation of education in Calcutta". To have virtually two universities, one for all and the other for exclusively Moslem students in the city of Calcutta, would appear to him to be "most unfortunate and retrograde".

On 18 October 1946, Itrat Hussain addressed a letter to the Vice-Chancellor of the Calcutta University presenting his views concerning the emergent schemes of Moslem Education in Bengal. He felt that the University would agree to increase the number of students in I.A., I.Sc. and B.A. in the Islamia College up to the total limit of 1000. The Government would provide the requisite additional staff and sanction the necessary capital as recurring expenditure. He suggested that the University should open a branch of its B.Com. classes in Islamia College for which the Government would decide whether it could be converted into a permanent arrangement or not. Regarding the Law classes, Hussain stated that he had already discussed the matter with the Education Minister. The Minister had suggested that it would be better if the University Law College could open a branch of its evening classes in Islamia College, for it would not be feasible to collect students for Muslim areas from different parts of the city and escort them to the University. The Education Minister had attached great importance
to the opening of these classes in Islamia College as there was a very widespread demand for the same. The Government would appoint the staff and finance the scheme in such a case. As regards the B.Sc. classes, Hussain requested the University to allow them to enrol students from that session. He concluded that the education of Moslems should in no way suffer due to the fact that they had no private institution of their own.

On 25 October 1946 the Vice-Chancellor of the Calcutta University wrote a letter to the Education Minister on the same subject. P.N. Banerjee, referring to the letter of 18 October 1946, argued that the question of allowing all Moslem students to get away from their existing colleges to join Islamia College, even though temporarily, would raise several issues—legal, technical, financial, administrative, factual and national. He reiterated that if the figures for Moslem boys and girls reading in colleges under State and private institutions in Calcutta were considered, it would amply illustrate the nature of administrative problems which Zuber's proposal would involve. The figures are given below:

### TABLE - 1

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<th>General (Arts and Science)</th>
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It becomes evident from this table that the number of students reading in Science or Arts would be 180 + 233 + 369. Since the Government of Bengal had ordered all Moslem studying Science in the above Colleges (that is to say, City, Bangabasi and Ripon) to take their instruction from the Presidency College, it would involve a question of accommodation. It would be impossible for the Presidency College to provide accommodation to so many students in its laboratories and workshop.

The number of Moslem students studying B.Com. and Intermediate Arts and Commerce in the private institutions would amount to something more than fifteen hundred. As most of these classes were intended for students already employed in offices, therefore, the lectures could only be held between 5.30 P.M. and 9 P.M. P.N. Banerjee observed that it would not be possible for the University to guarantee the safe return of the students after sunset. The Vice-Chancellor recommended that the Principals of the Colleges concerned would have to relax the rules relating to accommodation and to shift their evening classes to the morning or to have two shifts of lectures both in the afternoon and morning. As for Moslem
students studying Law, P.N. Banerjea pointed out that their number in the University Law College alone for both the morning and afternoon shifts was 220. The Principal of that College had made arrangements to complete all afternoon lectures before sunset. The number of Moslem students reading Law in the Ripon College was 263. Of these, 185 were reading in the afternoon shift. Banerjea assured that they had no cause for fear as the University Law College was only next to the Presidency College where they felt quite safe.

The arrangements proposed by Zuberi would also involve certain legal and technical difficulties. The Islamia College lacked affiliation in Commercial subjects and Law. It would not be possible for them to allow students from other colleges to study these subjects. Again, the proposal for new affiliation or extension of affiliation would have to proceed from the college concerned. The college would then be inspected on behalf of the University. If the inspectors were satisfied that the concerned college had the necessary requisites and placed their report before the Syndicate and Senate and the latter approved of it, then only could a new affiliation be granted. This would involve a long-drawn process. Again, the candidates attending lectures in a college which had not yet received affiliation in a particular subject would also involve the question of validity of attendance of the students. Unless the lectures attended by the students were valid they would not be able to obtain their Degrees or Diplomas on invalid lectures.
Financially, too, the proposal of Zuberi of transferring all Moslem students studying in the different institutions of Calcutta to the Islamia College would raise serious implications. For example, the colleges from which such students would migrate would incur tremendous financial losses. Nor would the Principal of such a college be able to grant a Transfer Certificate to a student in the midst of a session, for he would have to go through its financial implications first. This problem could be partly solved if the names of students seeking migration were maintained on the rolls of their old colleges and the candidates continued to pay their fees to their old colleges and secondly, if the Government of Bengal promised to compensate these colleges for the transfers that took place in the midst of any academic session. Zuberi's proposal also involved a national aspect. P.N. Banerjea invited the attention of the Education Minister, Syed Muazzemuddin Hossain, to three important considerations. In the first place, Banerjea stated that the Post-Graduate students in Arts and Science had been concentrated in the University and that of Law in two colleges in Calcutta. Whether or not there should be a third college in a professional subject was a matter of debate. Moreover, the Ministry would have to visualize the creation of two Universities in Calcutta which was never contemplated by the academic world or by the people of the province as a whole. Banerjea raised some pertinent questions. Would it be desirable to separate the Hindu and Muslim students even in the academic life for all times to come? Would the mixed colleges have to
be abolished as well? He concluded that "the unfortunate political situation in the country may subside some day but a proposal to park off the youth of the country into two communities is far too serious a question and to my mind is a question which will be too deep for tears". 10

On 15 November 1946 the following decisions were taken at the conference which took place between the Government of Bengal and the University of Calcutta:

1. The Government of Bengal would take all necessary steps for giving protection to the boys and girls of all communities in colleges and schools in Calcutta, Howrah and the suburbs for the purpose of enabling them to pursue their studies without interruption.

2. A conference between the Minister for Education, Bengal, his representatives and the Vice-Chancellor of the Calcutta University and his Syndicate would formulate schemes for immediate implementation of item No.1.

3. The Moslem students who would not feel secure in attending their respective colleges, because they had to pass through insecure zones, would be provided with option of attending their lectures in Law and Commerce in the premises of the Islamia College and the Calcutta madrassa only for the remainder of that academic session.

In such a case, the names of such Moslem students would remain in the registers of their respective colleges and they would continue paying their fees to their old colleges.

The collection and despatch of such fees would be the obligation of the Principal of the Islamia College. The colleges where Moslem boys would be admitted at the beginning of the session might establish their branches in the premises of the Islamia College or the Calcutta madrassa for a strictly limited period mentioned above.

The lectures that would be delivered in the said premises would be counted as lectures delivered in the said colleges and the Islamia College would be permitted to function in two shifts.

4. The staff required for the purpose of delivering those lectures would be lent by the colleges concerned. The strength and personnel of staff required by the Islamia College and the madrassa would be fixed by the Syndicate.

5. In case such staff were not available for work in the said institution, they would be able to appoint staff for a strictly temporary period with prior approval of the Vice-Chancellor of the Calcutta University and the Education Minister. Their salaries would be borne by the Government of Bengal but would be disbursed by the colleges.

6. The Government of Bengal would pay any other compensation to the colleges concerned in consultation with the University.
7. The Moslem B.Sc. students studying in such colleges would be permitted to read in the Presidency College, Calcutta subject to the availability of accommodation in the Presidency College. The names of such students would be borne in the rolls of their colleges of admission and their fees would be collected and despatched in a similar manner by the Principal of the Presidency College to the colleges concerned.

8. These arrangements would be treated as special emergency measures and not as a precedent. 11

2. Moslem Representation

Historical interpretation of political change among Moslems in colonial India had flowed in three different veins. The first approach is firmly grounded on the view that whatever assumption might have existed among Muslims concerning the nature of politics and political identity, had been dictated by the course of colonial policy and the order of its priorities. The second approach maintains that selection of issues in separated politics had been manipulated and determined by an elite whose interests such politics was designed to serve. 12 Finally, there was a third approach which attempted to explain the development of Moslem separatism in colonial India not so much in terms of colonial policy or the cynical misuse of

religious values, but by the instinct for self-preservation of a minority fearsome at the prospect of majority rule and permanent subjection. Farjana Shaikh argued that the demands for separate Muslim electorates "weightage" and Hindu-Muslim party were partly the responses of a minority uncertain of its political future but they were also fundamentally the manifestations of a profound belief that Muslims in India could not be compared to the other minority communities.  

The introduction of political reforms in 1919 which brought power to the provinces, led to the emergence of competing Muslim parties with substantial bases of support in Muslim majority provinces like Punjab and Bengal. The Communal Award granted by the Government in the summer of 1932 guaranteed Muslims substantial representation in Muslim majority provinces and unequivocally recommended complete self-government for the provinces. It was the outbreak of the war in September 1939 and Britain's readiness to accept the claims of those who would help her in her war efforts that helped the Moslems to crystalise the demand for parity. By March 1940, the party adopted the 'Pakistan Resolution' as they were a different "nation". The prospect of imminent British withdrawal from India in the 1940's made it clear that this notion of party which had served the ends of colonial domination, had become incompatible with the idea of politically responsible Indian democracy.  

The brief resume of Moslem politics in Bengal helps us to understand the trend of Bengali Moslem public opinion regarding their grievances in the field of education. As early as 1903, Naba Nur wrote, "Calcutta University is virtually a Hindu University." In 1924 Islam-darshan wrote: "Calcutta University is the main centre of higher education for the whole of Bengal but Muslims are denied entrance there, Hindu graduates become members of the University and of the Senate and Syndicate Committees, but old, tried Muslim graduates are not entitled to do so. The number of Muslim Professors is negligible."

The Calcutta University Commission 1917-1919 recommended the reorganisation of the Senate of Calcutta on a broad based representative basis. In tune with this recommendation Jyotindranath Basu moved a resolution on 4 July 1921 in the Bengal Legislative Council suggesting that at least eighty per cent of the Fellows of the University should be elected. Hassan Suhrawardy pointed out that it had caused some apprehension in the minds of the Moslem members because it did not lay down any percentage as to the number of Fellows to be elected by the Registered Graduates or by others. He suggested that the principle of communal representation should be accepted here as well. Referring to the University of Dacca he said, "Dacca has allotted 50 per cent of Muslims in its executive body and I place my views in advance that the Muslim interests

15 Editorial Comment, Naba Nur, 1st Year, No.8, Agrahayan 1310 B.S. (1903).

should be adequately safeguarded and represented in the reformed Calcutta University Senate when it comes into existence."17 The demand for adequate representation for the Moslems in the different administrative bodies of the University of Calcutta was also voiced in the Moslem press. In 1928 Saugat wrote: "At the 9th of August session of the Bengal Legislative Council a bill to reform Calcutta University was introduced by Dr. Pramatha Nath Banerjee. It makes no provision for Muslims.... Such representation is indispensable for the success of the University.... respectable and dignified bodies like the Sadler Commission, the Calcutta University and the Dacca Intermediate Board have also pointed out the need for Muslim representation in the (Calcutta University) Senate."18 In the same year, Saugat wrote again: "Not a single Muslim has occupied this post (of Vice-Chancellor) since Calcutta University was established .... It seems to be inconceivable that any Muslim could occupy the post .... Thus the other community has established a monopoly to it .... We believe that .... Sir Abdur Rahim, Sir Gunznawi, Mr. A.K. Fazlul Huq, Maolvi Abdul Karim, Mr. A.F. Rahaman could occupy the post and discharge its duties with competence. We hope that the Minister for Education will give the matter his consideration."19

On 26 March 1931 Maulvi Abdul Kasem introduced a cut motion to initiate discussion on the fact that the interests of the Moslem graduates were being neglected at the Calcutta

19 Editorial Comment, "Kalikātā Biswabidyālayār bhāis chancelar", Saugat, 6th year, No.1, Srabana 1335 B.S. (1928)
He argued that the Moslems were practically excluded from any representation in the University bodies. Abul Kasem referred to the appointment of the Registrar of the Calcutta University which took place some months before. The Syndicate had at first recommended two candidates for this post, one of whom was a Moslem. He happened to be a distinguished M.A. in Mathematics and a member of the Indian Educational Service, but his claim to the said post was brushed aside in favour of some one else. Abul Kasem alleged that Moslem members were never selected for the Board of Studies and the several Faculties or as Examiners. He further pointed out that when he had tried to put forth two Muslim candidates for election to the Syndicate in the previous year, they could not succeed though fact remained that one of them, M. Hidayet Hossain, was the Principal of the Calcutta Madrassa and a distinguished oriental scholar. Abul Kasem lamented that out of two hundred ministerial officers in the University, none belonged to the Moslem community. He suggested that educated Moslems should have a right to be elected in the various Faculties of the University and Islamic History should be introduced in the syllabus of the University.

Bazlul Huq supported this motion and introduced another cut motion to draw the attention of the House towards the inadequate representation of the Moslems in the bodies of the Calcutta University and in the ministerial staff. He quoted


relevant statistics from the University Calendar for the year 1929 in support of his argument. According to this, there were 104 Fellows in the Senate, both elected and nominated. Out of this, 10 were ex-officio Members and 13 were Moslems. In the Faculty of Arts, there were only 13 Moslems out of 64, whereas in Law there were only 7 Moslems out of 34. The Faculties of Science, Medicine, Engineering had 33, 20 and 8 respectively. In the Executive Body of the University and the Syndicate, there were 16 members but no Moslems. In the Council of Post-Graduate Teachings in Arts there were 156 members, of whom only 9 were Moslems. In the Executive Council 2 out of 22 members were Moslems and in the Under-Graduate Committee 1 out of 7 members was a Moslem. Moslems were conspicuous in their absence in committees for Free Studentship, Research Scholarship Award, Library, Bill, Provident Fund, Age, Transfer, Press and Publication Committees. In the Boards of higher studies like English, Sanskrit, Pali, Philosophy, Politics, Commerce and Pure Mathematics there were no Moslems. In the Boards for Arabic and Persian Studies there were 2 Hindu members out of 10, but in the Boards for Indian Vernacular Studies there were only 2 Moslems out of 26 and 1 out of 8 in Philosophy and 2 out of 37 in History. Out of the 77 members in the Council of Post-Graduate teachings in Science there existed no Moslem member. So far as the Boards of Studies were concerned in subjects like English, Sanskrit, Bengali, Assamese, Economics, Physics, Chemistry there were no Moslems.
Among the question-setters and paper-examiners in I.A. examination, only 1 Moslem out of 25 was taken in Bengali exclusively. There were no Moslem Examiners for P.R.S., Ph.D. and D.Sc. examinations or M.A. in English, Philosophy, Economics, Commerce. In M.Sc. examinations and in B.A. examinations in English Vernacular, Economics, Philosophy or in B.Sc., L.T. H.T., there were no Moslems. Finally, Fazlul Huq informed the House that out of the clerical staff consisting of 150 heads, not a single Moslem could be found.

Jadunath Sarkar, representing the University point of view, answered some of the charges brought forward by the Moslem Councillors. With regard to the nomination of members of the Senate, he informed the House that it was done by the Chancellor in consultation with the Vice-Chancellor. Hence his hands were tied. Moreover he had to choose a Fellow of the same character as the outgoing one that is to say, if the outgoing fellow had been a doctor the new one had to be of the same profession. The University was not at all a partial body which the Moslem members had alleged.

Syamaprosad Hookerjee, a member of the Syndicate and the Legislative Council, defending the position of the Calcutta University advanced several arguments on this issue. In the first place, he referred to the appointment of the Registrar and explained the cause of the failure of the Moslem candidate

23 Ibid., pp. 569-73.
to secure the same. The Moslem candidate was excluded as others were thought to be more competent. With regard to other appointments, Mookerjee pointed out that A. Suhrawardy and H. Suhrawardy had been elected as the member of the Syndicate and the Vice-Chancellor respectively. Explaining why Muslim members were lesser in number in the Senate, he answered that the Calcutta University had one hundred ordinary members, eighty of whom were directly nominated by the Governor of Bengal. Hence the University could not be blamed for the discrimination. Again, in matters of examination, Mookerjee argued that competent examiners were chosen irrespective of caste or community.

Syamaprasad Mookerjee further pointed out that during the last twenty-four years very few Moslems had come forward with donations whereas public spirited gentlemen of other communities had created benefactions in the University to the tune of Rs.50,70,000. He remarked, "I am not casting any reflection on the great community, but all I mean to say is this that the members of the Muhammadan community, along with their anxiety to take a larger share in University administration, should also come forward and create benefactions in the University." Mookerjee referred to the numerical shortage of Moslem students in non-professional and professional colleges over which no one had any control.

Naresh Chandra Sengupta suggested that the University ought to be made autonomous with regard to the details of its administration. With regard to the question of communal

24 Ibid., p. 572.
25 Ibid., pp. 574-75.
representation, he argued that the question was not how many persons or which person would be able to get the benefit of the University, but how students were to secure the best advantage and get the best education. He observed, "In all the arguments that have been adduced, I have not heard one word as to how the students of the University, Hindu or Mussalman, have suffered." Sengupta further stated that in the Senate of the Calcutta University there were twenty-eight Hindus as against sixteen Muslims. This ratio did not compare unfavourably with the ratio between the number of Hindu and Moslem graduates.

Abdus Samad could not congratulate Azizul Huq on the motion of communal representation. He observed, "We forget that the magnificent endowment of Rs.50 lakhs, referred to by Mr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee, is intended for the benefit of all classes of students irrespective of their caste or creed. We forget that 99 percent of the private schools and colleges are maintained and financed by the Hindu community and therein special facilities are provided for the education of the Muslim students." He pointed out that the system of the segregation in education had been strongly criticised in the Hartog Committee Report and also in the annual Education Administration Reports of Bengal, but to no effect. To Abdus Samad, the primary cause for Muslim backwardness lay in their

27 Ibid., p. 593.
conservatism which could explain restriction of both male
and female education.

The Minister for Education, Kwaja Nazimuddin, set at
rest the issues in dispute, pointing out that the question of
representation of Moslems in the administrative bodies of the
University could only be solved or rectified when the new
university Bill would be passed. Azizul Huq, who had raised
the debate, argued that the members had missed his point when
he tried to emphasise that the administration of the Calcutta
University was deteriorating, not because of communalism but
because of a principle of caucus with which it was being
run.

The question of improving Moslem representation and
education dominated the sessions of the Bengal Legislative
Council in 1934 as well. An Advisory Committee for the
advancement of education of the Moslems was set up on
3 February 1931, and on 22 November its report was submitted
to the Government. In 1936 Azizul Huq complained that the
Moslems were not participating sufficiently in Medical,
Engineering and other Scientific courses. He proposed that the
money available from the Mohsin Fund would be utilised for
promoting foreign scholarships or foreign training in some
scientific subjects for the Moslem community. Besides, he

28 Proc. of Bengal Legislative Council, Vol.36, No.3,
29 Ibid., pp. 606-07.
30 Proc. of Bengal Legislative Council, Vol.44, No.1, 1934,
p.214
suggested that another special fund would also be created with the cooperation of Moslem public for encouraging Moslem education in the province.\textsuperscript{31}

On 24 March 1936 Abul Ouasem moved a cut-motion in order to raise a discussion on prescribed text-books of the Calcutta University which had allegedly shown disregard to Moslem feelings and sentiments.\textsuperscript{32} Narendra Kumar Basu, on the other hand, pointed out that there were other instances as well where Moslem writers had disregarded Hindu sentiments.\textsuperscript{33} Syamaprasad Mookerjee, an elected member of the graduates of the University as well as the Vice-Chancellor, refuted such charges.\textsuperscript{34} In the first place, he argued, the text-books were never intended to offend a particular community as the Calcutta University was not a Hindu institution. It imparted instructions for all types of communities. Moreover, other examples could be cited where both communities could be hurt. For example, the Bible was a compulsory text-book from Intermediate to B.A. standards of the Calcutta University. But this had been incorporated in the syllabus not to promote Christianity deliberately, but to introduce a work of literature. Thus if the text-books and particular extracts were treated as part of literature then the question of causing deliberate offence to a particular community would not arise. Again, he referred to poems written by Moslem poets dealing in some

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{31} \textit{Proc. of Bengal Legislative Council, Vol. 48, No. 1, 1936}, p. 369.
\item \textsuperscript{33} Ibid., pp. 404-05.
\item \textsuperscript{34} Ibid., pp. 407-10.
\end{itemize}
portions with Hindu ideals and ideas. If such topics were so outrageous to the feelings of the Moslems, no Moslem author would have written them. Mookerjee reminded that the Calcutta University was a national University catering to the needs of all. Any allegation of the kind instigated by Abul Quasem would not be considered as precedent.

Azizul Huq argued that a book on History or literature would not be judged by isolated extracts taken from one place and other. What was required was an overall assessment of the entire perspective. This he felt would do justice to any such allegations. 35

In the next year, Syed Mustagaswal Haque echoed with the Moslem grievances that they were inadequately represented on different governing bodies of the University and that their interests were being neglected. 36 Md. Abdul Hakim Vikrampuri, too, pointed out that a modification and amendment of the Calcutta University Act was absolutely necessary as the Moslems were not properly represented in the Senate and the Syndicate proportionate to the population. 37 Hakim Vikrampuri suggested that more Moslem professors should be appointed and examiners of the same community should be offered appointments. It was unfortunate that there were no Moslems amongst the clerical staff of the University which he proposed should be rectified. Finally, he urged that Islamic education should be encouraged

37 Ibid., pp. 610-11.
by creating Chairs on Moslem culture and civilization, Law and Sculpture, without which it would appear to him that the Hindus were attempting a cultural conquest over their community providing instructions in Hindu culture, tradition and history.

Pramatha Nath Banerjea, opposing the motion, argued that the myth of a cultural conquest of the Moslems should not be entertained as the Moslems with their symbol of the crescent had fought Christianity effective - thus the fear of a cultural conquest at the University level should be treated as a lunatic fantasy. 38

In 1938, the question of inadequate Moslem representation at the Senate and the Syndicate of the University was raised once more by Abdul Bari. Abdul Bari argued that his motion had been prompted not only by the desire to criticise the existing state of affairs in the Calcutta University or by the demand to emphasise the inadequacy of Moslem representation in the Senate and Syndicate or the other departments of the University but by a desire to appeal to the good sense of the Vice-Chancellor who could increase sufficiently the number of Moslems in the Senate and Syndicate. 39 Forwarding statistics to strengthen his argument, Abdul Bari informed the House that out of 100 members in the Senate, 21 were Moslems, while at the Syndicate level there was only one Moslem member in contrast to 70 non-Moslems. Among the clerical staff which

38 Ibid., pp. 614-17.
39 Proc. of Bengal Legislative Assembly, Vol.52, No.4, p. 364.
numbered 180, the Moslems claimed only 2. In the Post-Graduate Department including Arts and Science, there were only 2 Moslem Professors while the total number of Professors were 88. Among the higher officials of the Calcutta University there were no Moslems.

Abdul Latif Biswas, supporting the motion of Abdul Bari, too, forwarded some more statistics to elucidate the point that Moslems were being denied of their rights and privileges in the University administration. For example, Biswas argued that the University Press had 29 hands, but the Moslems did not feature in this matter. The same was applicable for the Library where there were 11 appointments and yet had no Moslem member. Moslems were conspicuous in their absence in the office of the Controller of Examinations. As a representative of the Moslem community of Bengal, Biswas demanded justice and equity from the University.

W.C. Wordsworth was of the view that educational problems would have to be solved in an academic way detached from communal rivalry. Syama Prasad Mookerjee informed the House that under the existing Act nominations to the Senate were made by the Chancellor, so there could not be any objection to having a larger number of Moslems on the Senate or on other bodies of the University. As for the Syndicate, however, the Senate had to elect the members together with the different

40 Ibid., pp. 364-65.
41 Ibid., pp. 370-72.
42 Ibid., pp. 373-77.
faculties of the University. The Vice-Chancellor had nothing to do with regard to the constitution of the Syndicate. As regards the appointments in the different branches of the University, the discretion lay with the Senate which acted on the recommendations of especially constituted Selection Committees. Matters, however, were different for the non-teaching posts, that is to say, the clerical posts, and Mookerjee assured that the University would investigate the matter soon. Mookerjee admitted that greater facilities would to be created for not only the Moslem community but also other communities who had not progressed in education as the Hindus had done. On 9 March 1940 M.A.H. Ispani, a member representing the Muslim Chamber of Commerce, put forward the same grievance in the Bengal Legislative Assembly that the number of Moslems employed in the various departments of the University were still hopelessly inadequate. Nalinaksha Sanyal, however, opposing this argument emphasised that the number of members of the Senate showed not merely a proportionate but more than a proportionate weightage to Moslem in the Calcutta University. This statement was valid in comparison with their contribution or in comparison with the number of Moslem students reading in the Calcutta University.

On 27 April 1944 the Minister in charge of Education, Tamizuddin Khan, in reply to a starred question put up by Jasimuddin Ahmed furnished statistics concerning the names of the

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44 Ibid., pp. 223-30.
Moslem members in the Senate and Syndicate of the Calcutta University and the number of meetings which they had attended during the last three years. It was as follows:

**TABLE - 2**

**Statement of Attendance at the Syndicate Meetings**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1941</th>
<th>1942</th>
<th>1943</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of meetings held</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of meetings attended</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khan Bahadur Tasadduq Ahmed Professor</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TABLE - 3**

**Statement of Attendance at Senate Meetings**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1941</th>
<th>1942</th>
<th>1943</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of meetings held</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of meetings attended</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sir Z.R. Zahid Suhrawardy</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khan Bahadur Tasadduq Ahmed</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major Dabirudding Ahmed</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Table-3 contd. to next page)

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45 Proc. of Bengal Legislative Council, Vol. 67, No. 4, 27 April 1944, pp. 374-75.
### Table 3 (Contd.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1941</th>
<th>1942</th>
<th>1943</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nawabzada A.S.M. Latifur Rahman</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>(Fellowship ceased on 3.9.1941)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sir Mohammad Azizul Haque Vice-Chancellor</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>(Fellowship ceased on 18.6.1942)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Ali Karim</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khan Bahadur Maulvi Maula Baksh Shamsul Ulama Khan Bahadur</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maulvi Muhammad Mush</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khan Bahadur Maulvi Alfazuddin Ahmed</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Md. Gudrat-i-Xhuda</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khan Bahadur Tafazzal</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khan Bahadur Abdulla Abu Sayeed</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>(Resigned on 11.6.1941)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professor M.Z. Siddiqi</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sir A. Fazlur Rahman T. Ahmed</td>
<td>(reappointed on 25.2.1943) Nil</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professor Saheed Suhrawardy</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Sayed Hedayetullah</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>(Fellowship ceased on 9.1.1942) Nil</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khan Bahadur Maulvi Ebrahim Khan</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S. Wajid Ali</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maulvi Abdul Bari Cheudhury</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>1941</td>
<td>1942</td>
<td>1943</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abdur Rahama Siddiqi</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abdul Quasem (died on 1944)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fazlur Rahman</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khan Bahadur Muhammad Ali</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hamidul Huq Chaudhury</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Itrat Hussain Zuberi</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khan Bahadur K.M. Asudullah</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Hon'ble Mr. Justice Syed Nasim Ali</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sir Abdul Halim Ghuznabi</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khan Saheb Dewan Muhammad Ahbap Chaudhuri (appointed on 23.9.1941)</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khan Bahadur Badiur Rahman (appointed on 18.2.1942)</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.K.M. Zakariah (appointed on 18.6.1942)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Captain Mahmood Hassan</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(appointed on 23.7.1942)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maulvi Amjan Ali (appointed on 16.6.1943)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Ataul Hakim (appointed on 2.3.1944)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. Education for the Scheduled Castes

In modern Indian historiography the study of caste movements has recently assumed enormous significance. The role of scheduled castes and other depressed classes has been analysed in the context of the Indian National Movement by young scholars like Gupta, Banerjee and others. S.K. Gupta has identified the principal determinants of inequalities in Indian society, such as ethno-centrism, institutionalised religion, caste, untouchability, metaphysical and philosophical theories like karma, dharma and moksha, economic extortions, religious discriminations and quite a number of politico-legal disabilities. Gupta firmly believes that untouchability caste - religion - internalisation nexus assumed a dominant place in the peculiar setting of the country. The economic and politico-legal inequalities derived a lot of sustenance from this nexus. The play of feudal principle greatly enhanced the role of the economic mechanism and initiated the process of reordering of determinants through several centuries. This process was greatly accelerated during the regime of British Raj.

Sekhar Bandyopadhyay argues that during the nineteenth century and the early twentieth, the pattern of distribution of economic resources along caste lines had started changing under the impact of colonial rule. The higher castes (namely, Brahman, Kayastha and Baidyas of Bengal) had gradually extended

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their predominance to the field of education and consequently to the modern sectors of white collar and industrial employment. Yet, the process of change in the material context of caste which had started during the colonial period, was far from complete during the first few decades of the twentieth century. Caste assumed a significant place in politics and still more an important force to reckon with "at a time when Muslim separatism had emerged as a viable political alternative to Indian nationalism." 47

It would be wrong to assume that these castes were totally dependant on the Government for their upliftment or education. In the field of education, the Rajbansis of Rangpur had volunteered to pay a portion of the estimated cost of the Government hostel for the students of their community in 1911. The 'Kshatriya Samiti' had offered scholarships for the education of the poor Rajbansi students. By 1925, it had spent something around `10,000 for the education of 70 such students. Some other caste associations like those of the Sahas, Paruis or Sadgops also mobilised mass support through local organisations and attempted at self-reliant development by patronising education of their members. The Sahas of Eastern Bengal, for example, organised the first provincial conference of the Vaisya Sahas of Eastern Bengal and Sylhet in 1923 and established a broader social organisation

called 'East Bengal and Sylhet Vaisya Saha Sammilani'. The aim of this organisation was to promote education both formal and non-formal and inaugurate a model agricultural farm as well as a cooperative bank.

Self-initiative to promote material advancement of the community was more common among the prosperous trading castes like the Subarnabaniks, Titis and Gandhabaniks. They organised samities and their first emphasis was on education. For this purpose, scholarships were offered to needy students, a free hostel was set up in Calcutta and libraries were established both in Calcutta and in the interior. A number of private endowments and collective funds were also administered both by the central and the local samities for providing educational scholarships offering financial assistance to needy and lonely widows or for running charitable dispensaries. Nor did the question of female education escape their notice. In December 1925, the Calcutta Samaj organised a 'Subarnabanik Mahila Sammilani' where five hundred ladies discussed their own problems and worked out strategies to solve them. The Gandhabaniks organised a 'Gandhabanik Mahasammilani' in Calcutta in December 1923 which was expected to act as a common forum for the exchange of ideas and promotion of business. They also proposed to raise funds to send their children abroad to acquire 'industrial, commercial and technological education in pharmaceutical chemistry', for example, which would help them to modernise their traditional trade. 48

The caste like the Namasudras in Eastern Bengal did not lag behind. For the spread of education among their members, the Pods of Paundra-Khastriyas awarded a gold medal every year from 1910 to the boys of their community who would stand first in the Middle English examination in the District of 24-Parganas. This was an example followed by the Baruis as well. The Jogis tried to organise their members through local committees. They made strenuous efforts for the dissemination of education and scientific instructions on the craft of weaving, their traditional occupation.

The Government of India Act of 1919 formally recognised the special needs of the 'depressed classes' by providing for the nomination of one representative from them to the Bengal Legislative Council. In the first election in 1921, only nine depressed class candidates were elected, in 1923 seven, in 1926 four and five in 1929. In 1930, when the Swarajits came out of the Councils and the Congress boycotted it, six 'depressed class' candidates successfully got through.\(^49\) The lower caste people considered the new regime to be an improvement over the past. In this new 'egalitarian rule', wrote a Saha pnaegyrist, anyone could aspire for self-improvement as education and wealth had become equally accessible.\(^50\) In 1918 the 'Society for the Improvement of the Backward classes which had been established in 1913, started accepting Government subsidy and by 1922 virtually became an agency of the British Government. All official grants for the improvement of the schools for the

\(^{49}\) Ibid., p. 150.

\(^{50}\) Ibid., p. 156.
backward classes began to be distributed through this body and by 1924-25, the recurring Government grant it received far exceeded its independent collection of private subscriptions.  

Mohini Mohan Das, a Namasudra leader from Dacca, pleaded for an enhanced education budget for the primary education of the depressed classes in 1925. He felt that a large part of the social body was lying inert for want of education and thereby frustrating the agitations for Swaraj. The Harijan programme did not arouse much enthusiasm in Bengal. This was partly because of the fact that untouchability per se had never been much of a problem in Bengal.

By 1937 the process of politicization of caste, in addition to religion, had been virtually completed. The 'depressed classes' politics in Bengal assumed a distinct shape. In 1938, the Scheduled Caste members of the Bengal Legislative Assembly founded the Independent Scheduled Caste Party with Hemchandra Naskar as its President and Jogendranath Mandal as the Secretary. In 1942 Ambedkar organised the All India Scheduled Caste Federation which declared in its first conference at Nagpur that no constitution would be acceptable to the Scheduled Castes unless it recognised the Scheduled Castes as distinct and separate from the Hindus. In April 1945 in its provincial conference at Gopalganj in Faridpur, Jogendranath Mandal announced in his Presidential Address that

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51 Ibid., p. 157.
52 Ibid., p. 161.
53 Ibid., pp. 171-72.
the first and foremost aim of his Federation was to establish 'the separate political identity' of the Scheduled Castes. So powerful had this organisation become by the mid-40s that Ambedkar in view of the uncertainties of his Maharashtra base, decided in 1946 to bank on the support of the Bengal Scheduled Castes for his election to the Constituent Assembly.54

In the 1930s, when the British Government began to patronise lower caste movements in order to legitimise India's colonial connection, all sorts of realignments began to take place. In some areas, for example, the 'elites' among the lower castes allowed themselves to be co-opted into the dominant structure, while elsewhere they continued their protest against high-caste domination. The movements, which had once started as 'lower caste movements', began subsequently to pull in different directions, as various other forms of identities that cut across or encompassed the caste identities were in the process of formation or articulation. Bandyopadhyay argues, "It is these complexities, rather than the assumed homogeneity and unilinear progress of these movements which require investigation."55 In the thirties of the present century when lower castes did receive special patronage of the colonial rulers, their hope for obtaining more special privileges remained unsatiated. This was reflected in the Bengal Legislative Council when Akshoy Kumar Sen raised questions whether any special educational facilities were under consideration of the Government for the benefit of the Scheduled Castes or not.56

54 Ibid, p. 183.
The then Minister for Education, Kwaja Nazimuddin, stated in reply that a scheme for providing special scholarships for educationally backward classes had been under consideration of the Education Department. Moreover, the Government had already sanctioned two schemes for giving additional grants for the educationally backward Santhal community in the Burdwan division and in the district of Dinajpur. Such schemes could be carried out immediately as soon as the allotment of funds would be made. In the next year, Kishori Mohan Chaudhury demanded introduction of a special provision for hostel accommodation for the depressed class students. He said, "Education ought to be a great leveller, but in these days it seems that it is tending to create communal feelings in the students." Syamaprosad Mookerjee reported that the Calcutta University since 1918 had already established two special hostels for the depressed classes. Twenty-four Jogi students and twenty-seven Namasudra students stayed in one hostel and twenty-four Jogi students in the other. The Calcutta University administered these two hostels out of the special grant which was being paid by Government since 1918. As to the question of desirability of continuing such separate hostels for scheduled caste students, Syamaprosad Mookerjee stated that both the Government and University would communicate with the colleges to find out whether it would be possible to accommodate scheduled caste


58 Ibid., pp. 385-86.
students in the ordinary hostels. If this could be done, the money realised thus would be diverted for providing better facilities to students belonging to the backward classes.

Reverend B.A. Nag added another dimension to the debate. He pointed out that Namasudra students were never admitted to ordinary hostels. 59 For example, in the Eden Hindu Hostel, no Namasudras were admitted as they could not eat with caste Hindus in the same room. If scheduled caste students were allowed to stay with caste Hindu students in the ordinary hostels as proposed by S.P. Mookerjee, then it would be a gain for the whole country. Sarat Chandra Bal opposing the motion argued that if the depressed classes hostels were removed, then it would spell disaster for the depressed classes. 60 He emphasised that students of this community were generally poor and the seat rents of the ordinary hostels were higher. They would be deprived of studying in Calcutta if the depressed caste hostels were to be removed. He felt that this step would be an additional strain on them considering the social stigma attached to this caste. Jitendralal Banerjee pointed out that in non-Government colleges, the hostels did not have any stringent rules of admission in the sense that all students were admitted to such hostels. The students of Vidyasagar College had resolved to admit students belonging to the depressed classes. He supported S.P. Mookerjee's proposal. 61 In view of the above discussions, Kishori Mohan Chaudhuri withdrew his motion. 62

59 Ibid., pp. 386-87.
60 Ibid., p. 388.
61 Ibid., p. 389.
62 Ibid., p. 389.
On 11 August 1936, the Assistant Director of Public Instruction, Bengal, addressed a letter to the Calcutta University regarding hostel accommodation for the backward classes. There he stated that the revised scheme proposed by the University in this regard had been duly referred to the Education Department and was to be considered very soon. On 17 March 1938, Monmohan Das moved a motion to raise a discussion on the necessity of granting a capital grant of rupees five lakhs for the spread of education of the Scheduled Castes and for the appointment of a Special Officer for the said purpose. As a member of the backward community, Das felt that unless some special scholarships and stipends could be awarded to the students of this community desiring to prosecute further studies in high schools in subjects like medicine, surgery, engineering and technology, their efforts would be nipped in the bud. He proposed that scholarships should be granted for fifty per cent of the students going up for higher studies and seventy-five per cent would get scholarships if they prosecuted higher studies in colleges.

On the next day, A.K. Fazlul Huq explained the policy of the Government regarding the education of the Scheduled Castes and other backward classes in the Bengal Legislative Assembly. With regard to the general policy pursued by the Government towards the education of the scheduled castes he


64 Proc. of Bengal Legislative Assembly, Vol.52, No.4, 17 March 1938, pp. 395-96.
stated that the question was considered on three heads:

a) grant-in-aid to schools started by the scheduled castes for their own benefit, b) free and half-free studentships in schools and colleges, and c) special scholarships for students belonging to the scheduled castes. 

Over and above this, there were expenditures under the head of non-recurring capital expenditure, such as construction of buildings, reconstruction of hostels and repairing of existing institutions. Under the first head, the Government had already spent a sum of Rs. 71,879 for general education of the scheduled castes and backward classes. They had also spent Rs. 9,250 on a grant to the society for the improvement of education among backward and depressed classes and Rs. 3,312 on a grant to hostels and messes for Namasudra etc. thereby bringing the total expenditure to Rs. 96,121 under the scholarships head. Thirty-six primary preliminary scholarships for boys of the value of rupees two each, tenable for two years, had been granted. The Government thus incurred an annual expenditure of Rs. 1,728 for these scholarships. In addition to these, there were also sixty-six primary final scholarships for boys of the value of rupees three each, tenable for a period of two years, the cost of such being Rs. 4,752 annually. There were forty middle scholarships for boys of the value of rupees four each tenable for four years entailing an annual cost of Rs. 7,680. Finally, there were six junior scholarships of the value of rupees ten per month tenable for two years in any college, costing the

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Government £1,440 a year. Roughly, the total expenditure would come up to £20,000 annually.

Again, for the technical branches of education, there were the following scholarships:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Two scholarships of £240 per annum</td>
<td>£480</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two scholarships of £300 per annum</td>
<td>£600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three scholarships of £10 a month for 2 years</td>
<td>£720</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two scholarships of £10 a month for 2 years</td>
<td>£480</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two scholarships of £12 a month for 2 years</td>
<td>£576</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two scholarships of £7.3 a month for 4 years</td>
<td>£720</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>£3,578</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fazlul Huq explained that the Government had been spending a sum of over £23,000 on scholarships for the scheduled castes. Huq further reported that some additional provisions had been made in the Budget of 1938-39 for the scheduled castes. He pointed out that state scholarships provided under the High Commissioner for India in England would increase the ultimate cost to £11,162 which would have to be paid by the Government.
A detailed account of this amount would be as follows:

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Scholarships for members of scheduled castes amounting to ₹. 29,160 = ₹. 29,160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Creation of special stipends for girls of educationally backward classes amounting to ₹. 4,560 = ₹. 4,560</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Educational scholarships for members of scheduled castes (Medical) amounting to ₹. 3,840 = ₹. 3,480</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Creation of scholarships for backward classes at the Jackson and Chittagong Medical Schools (Medical) = ₹. 360</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Total .. ₹. 49,802

or, roughly ₹. 50,000 a year

Besides these, the Government also provided certain facilities for the scheduled caste students like free studenthips in Government aided schools up to fifteen per cent of their own enrolment, subject to a minimum of two. Three seats were reserved for such students in each of the two training colleges in Calcutta and Dacca.

When dealing with scheduled caste education, the Government, according to Huq, followed the same rule that governed the education of boys of the Moslem community. He remarked, "We make no distinction whatsoever in grant-in-aid
rules and capital grant to schools between the students of Muslim community and the students of the scheduled castes community.\textsuperscript{66}

Fazlul Huq added that while in the other states like Bihar, U.P. and Madras there were separate institutions for the scheduled castes, in Bengal there was no need for starting separate institutions for the scheduled caste students alone as here the scheduled caste students had equal access to general educational institutions as well. In that sense, the Government of Bengal by providing special facilities to the scheduled caste students was spending more for such students when compared to other provinces. It was the declared policy of the Government, as Huq observed, "to do their utmost for the education of the Moslems and the scheduled castes in order to bring them on a line with the other advanced communities in this country ..."\textsuperscript{67} Huq reiterated that the scheduled caste students did face disabilities and disadvantages, just as the students of the Moslem community had undergone but they had no cause for despair, as the provincial revenues belonged to all castes and communities. Moreover where men like Bhagai Haldar of Agarjari village in Bakarganj were present, there was definite hope for this community. Bhagai Haldar, it may be mentioned, had donated all that he had for the advancement of this community. He had begged from door to door and had started schools and hostels for all communities.\textsuperscript{68}

\textsuperscript{66} Ibid., p. 34.
\textsuperscript{67} Ibid., p. 35.
\textsuperscript{68} Ibid., p. 36.
On 8 March 1940, Madhusudan Sarkar raised a discussion on scheduled caste education in connection with the motion of Rasik Lal Biswas and Momohsan Das who had spoken on the same subject. Sarkar drew the attention of the House to the fact that his community was educationally backward. This problem had assumed a serious proportion as scheduled castes had been favoured by fifteen per cent of the services and yet were lacking in the supply of requisite number of candidates. They constituted one-fifth of the population of Bengal, that is to say, nearly twenty per cent, but it was unfortunate to note that they could not provide the requisite number of men in the various departments owing to their backwardness. Das further pointed out that in the budget of 1940-41 two lakhs and eighty-five thousand rupees had been provided for the education of the scheduled castes but that amount had been provided out of rupees five lakhs which had been earmarked for expenditure on scheduled castes welfare as a whole. Das suggested that in consideration of the backwardness of the scheduled castes in Bengal, they would require the following recurring expenditure:

| TABLE - 6 |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| 1. Grant-in-aid for 18 High English Schools at ₹. 200 per month = ₹. 43,200 |
| 2. Grant-in-aid for 120 Middle English Schools at ₹. 75 per month = ₹. 1,08,000 |
| 3. Grant-in-aid for 2 Middle English Schools for girls at ₹. 100 per month = ₹. 2,400 |
| 4. Senior and Junior Scholarships = ₹. 20,000 |

(Table contd.)

69 Proc. of Bengal Legislative Assembly, Vol.56, No.3, 8 March 1940, pp. 166-68.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Stipends to school pupils</td>
<td>Rs. 72,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Stipends to college students</td>
<td>Rs. 30,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Three overseas stipends at Rs. 400 per month each</td>
<td>Rs. 14,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Six stipends for B.T. students at Rs. 20 per mensem</td>
<td>Rs. 1,440</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Creation of 10 stipends for Textile Institute, Serampore at Rs. 15 per mensem each</td>
<td>Rs. 1,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Creation of 10 stipends to Veterinary College at Rs. 15 per mensem each</td>
<td>Rs. 1,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Creation of 10 stipends in Dacca Agricultural College at Rs. 10 per mensem each</td>
<td>Rs. 1,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Creation of 10 stipends in Female Training Schools at Calcutta and Dacca at Rs. 10 per mensem each</td>
<td>Rs. 1,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Creation of 6 stipends in the Calcutta Government School of Art at Rs. 100 per mensem each</td>
<td>Rs. 1,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>Creation of 10 stipends in the Calcutta Government Commercial Institute at Rs. 10 per mensem</td>
<td>Rs. 1,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>Creation of 2 stipends in the Sibpur B.E. College at Rs. 30 per mensem each</td>
<td>Rs. 720</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>Creation of 8 stipends in the Ahsanullah School of Engineering, Dacca at Rs. 15 per mensem each</td>
<td>Rs. 1,440</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>Creation of 3 stipends in the E.B. Technical School (Fakna) for Sub-Overseer Class at Rs. 5 per mensem each</td>
<td>Rs. 180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Rs. 3,02,180</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Nalini Ranjan Sarkar pointed out that the allegations made by some of the scheduled caste leaders like Anukul Chandra Das or Kshetra Nath Singha that the Government, particularly the Finance Department, was obstructing the schemes meant for scheduled caste education, could not be entertained. Moreover, he observed that mere spending on bricks and mortar would not improve scheduled caste education.  

A.K. Fazlul Huq, however, informed the House that his Government would give a sympathetic consideration to the above problem. He announced that he had already appointed a Special Officer belonging to the scheduled caste community to help this officer in formulating schemes for the furtherance of scheduled caste education. He had also committed the Government to an expenditure of five lakhs of rupees on this subject every year. Moreover, if on any particular year this amount or any part of it were left unused, it would be carried forward from year to year until fully exhausted.

Huq gave an account of the expenditure already made in respect of scheduled caste education. Out of rupees five lakhs, what had been budgeted in the previous year, a sum of Rs. 33,02,747 had been allotted immediately, but it could not be spent. Only Rs. 1,92,872 had been spent on various schemes. In 1940-41, therefore, he estimated that Rs. 2,85,455 would be required and the committee (referred to earlier) had been asked to put forward definite and permanent scheme. The Government was inclined to help scheduled caste students by providing scholarships,

70 Ibid, pp. 168-70.
71 Ibid., pp. 170-72.
building hostels and even supplying them with books and other things. He reminded the House that "never before in the history of this province was there a definite sum earmarked and a sum of such an extent for the education of boys and girls of any community," as the present one. Huq was referring to the generous sum of rupees five lakhs which the Government had budgeted for scheduled caste education in that year. During the discussion of Budgets in 1943-44, Upendra Nath Edbar pointed out that the amount spent on scheduled caste education was not adequate. He observed, "We demanded more money for our education year to year, but the so-called popular Government has been consistently and persistently turning a deaf ear to our demand."

While presenting the Budget Estimates for the year 1944-45, Tulsi Chandra Goswami, the Finance Minister, announced that the Government had provided a sum of rupees five lakhs in the scheduled castes education fund for the next year. In this connection, he informed that the fund had been created in 1938-39 with an initial contribution of rupees five lakhs and that a lakh and a half had been put into the fund in each of the years 1941-42 and 1943-44. During 1944-45, the Government proposed to make a payment of five lakhs into that fund. Upendra Nath Barman had clamoured for the introduction of a recurring grant of rupees five lakhs under the head "Scheduled Caste Education", without which their improvement could not be effected. Unfortunately, this had not been done for though a

72 Ibid., p. 174.
74 Proc. of Bengal Legislative Assembly, Vol.67, No.2, p. 29.
sum of rupees five lakhs had been provided for the same cause it was not a recurring grant. This was a matter of concern. Previous experience showed that this grant would not be spent in one year and would be spent in many years. Again out of the provision of rupees five lakhs, three lakhs and thirteen thousand had been provided for construction of hostels and schools, so the rest would be insufficient for meeting other expenses. While pledging for grants, Mukunda Behary Mullick, spokesman of the scheduled castes, urged that a mere two per cent of two crores of rupees, that is to say, rupees five lakhs would not be enough for the education of a community which was already backward. On 1 April 1944 Madhusudan Sarkar raised a question as to the functions of the Scheduled Caste Education Committee. Tamizuddin Khan, the then Education Minister, informed him that the Committee was to advise the Government on all matters relating to the scheduled castes.

The Government of Bengal wanted to ascertain if the University of Calcutta had the provision for reservation of seats for scheduled caste students in courses for science degrees. The Government was eager to know whether it would be possible to reserve some seats in the institution under the control of the University for scheduled caste candidates selected by the Government of India for the award of their scholarships. The University of Calcutta informed the Government

75 Ibid., p. 109.
76 Proc. of Bengal Legislative Assembly, Vol.67, No.30, 13 March 1944, p. 35.
77 Proc. of Bengal Legislative Assembly, Vol.67, No.4, 1940, pp. 6-7.
of Bengal that every effort would be made to reserve seats for students for scheduled castes wherever such facilities were available. The Government was further informed that where facilities were very limited, minimum qualification for admission would be insisted upon. Necessary circulars were sent to the concerned institutions asking for required information.  

4. **Female Education**

Female education in Bengal did not develop as an organised movement during the early decades of the nineteenth century. It had limited success in the fifties and sixties of that century. Golam Murshid has analysed some of the factors that had brought about this change. He emphasised that the success of women education during the fifties and sixties of the nineteenth century "was largely due to the young Brahmos and the Brahmos influenced the Hindus." The Brahmo leaders like Kesab Chandra Sen, Bijoykrishna Goswami, Sibnath Sastri, Aghore Nath Gupta and Umesh Chandra Dutta took up the cause of women's education with almost a religious zeal. The publications of the 1850s aiming at women emancipation in general and female education in particular also helped this cause in a significant way. Scholars like Bibyasagar, Madan Mohan, Tarashankar Tarkaratna, Asksay Kumar Dutta, Peary Chand, Dwarkanath Roy and Peary Charan

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had a liberalising influence on the conservative Hindu society. The latter also now became conscious of the need of women education. Some of the periodicals like *Masik Patrika* (1854), *Bamabadhini Patrika* and *Abala Bandhab* (1869) which were solely devoted to the cause of women's emancipation and elevation, greatly helped the women to educate themselves. Furthermore, the instances of women writers like Kailasbasini Debi, Taherannessa, Saudamini Debi, Madhumati Ganguli and Krishna-kamini set examples before the women and demonstrated how important was education in their lives.  

A new milestone was reached when in May 1849 the Victoria Girls' School, later known as the Bethune School, was founded by J.E.D. Bethune. This school intended for the upper class Hindu girls had no proselytizing objectives. In his inaugural speech delivered on 7 May 1849 Bethune stated that from a perusal of the reports of the progress of education in Bengal, he had felt "that the day could not be far distant when an imperative call would be made for extending the benefits of education by which the young men of Bengal had so largely profited, to the other half of its inhabitants." He, too, emphasised that the happiness of domestic life would be enhanced "by the graceful virtues and elegant accomplishments of well-educated women." 


82 Bethune College and School Centenary Volume, p. 107.
The reorganised Bethune School sent up Kadambini Bose to sit for the Entrance Examination of the Calcutta University in 1878. She came out successful and was placed in the Second Division. This was a historic event from the point of view of women's education in Bengal and elicited favourable comments in the Press and on the platform. Soon the College classes were attached to the Bethune School by 1871. Needless to say, Kadambini Bose was its first student in the First Year Arts class. On 8 February 1881 Manmohan Ghose, Secretary, Bethune School Committee, addressed a letter to the Director of Public Instruction, Bengal informing the latter that the School Committee had reached a consensus on the desirability of establishing B.A. classes along with the School in the interests of higher female education in Bengal.  

The Director of Public Instruction gave a favourable reply to this letter and addressed the Government of Bengal on 16 February 1881. The Director of Public Instruction, Bengal concurred with the proposals of the Bethune School Committee that B.A. classes should be established in that institution and also recommended the appointment of any additional Lecturer on a salary of rupees one hundred a month. He stated, "Upon the principle involved I have only to say that Government having gone so far in promoting the higher education of women cannot in my opinion now stop. So long as young native ladies are found desirous of pushing their education to a higher standard, the measures of Government must keep pace with their aspirations."  

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83 Bethune College Centenary Volume, 1879-1979, p. 21. See also, Minutes of the Syndicate, 1875-76, pp. 39-40.

84 Letter No.1072 dated 16 February 1881 from the Director Public Instruction, Bengal, to the Secretary to the Government of Bengal, quoted in Bethune College Centenary Volume, p. 22.
Before this movement could gather momentum, the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, Sir Rivers Thompson, reviewed the situation. He felt that no sufficient reasons exist which would explain why duly qualified young ladies would be debarred from studying medicine in the Medical College. He immediately decided to allow Kadambini Ganguly to take up Medicine in the Medical College. This decision was couched in the Government Resolution on 29 June 1883. Doubtless, this resolution could be hailed as a landmark in the history of women's education not only in Bengal but also in India as well.  

By 1916-17 there were three colleges in Calcutta, namely the Bethune College, the Diocesan College and the Collegiate department of the Loreto House. But the contributions of the Bethune College bore no comparison with the other two. The Fifth Quinquennial Review of the Progress of Education in Bengal (1912-13 to 1916-17) noted that “the Bethune College is the oldest Government institution for the education of girls in India.” It should be mentioned in this connection that the Calcutta University Commission raised two issues on Women's education. Satyasaran Sinha suggested a curriculum of Vocational Education for women and upgradation of High English Girls' Schools into

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85 Bethune College and School Centenary Volume, pp. 42-43.
86 Ibid., p. 68.
Women's colleges. The years 1918-27 were marked by an overall expansion in female education. By 1918 Bethune College had risen high in the estimation of Indians. The steady increase in the number of students, no doubt, put a growing pressure on the accommodations available. But the College undertook new initiatives to establish a company of girl guides and to revive its Magazine "Usha" in 1918. Students on the College rolls on 31 March 1919 stood at 85, only to increase to 89 by the next year and to 111 on 31 March 1921. The inadequacy of accommodation was counteracted to some extent by the construction of a small building for Science classes and the Botanical laboratory. The Sixth Quinquennial Review of Progress of Education in Bengal (1917-18 to 1921-22) laid special stress on the progress achieved by the Bethune School and College towards female education. Another redeeming feature was that the increased demand for scientific education which was among the male students, was also simultaneously discernible among women students. "The principal bases upon this her claim that the College be affiliated in Chemistry and Physics to the Intermediate standard, a claim which at the end of the period was not far from acceptance," observed the Sixth Quinquennial Review while stating the progress of education of Bengal.

Studies in the College was widened in 1923-24 when it secured the affiliations upto the I.Sc. standard. The reputation of the College as a premier institution for women spread far and wide. The number of students increased every year, so much so that in 1925-26, it stood at 151. In 1925 for the first

time, six students were sent up for the I.Sc. examination, of whom five came out successful.

In 1925-26, a new hostel for women was established in Circular Road by the Education Department which relieved the Bethune College of the shortage of accommodation to some extent. It was still the largest women's College in Bengal according to the Seventh Quinquennial Review of the Progress of Education in Bengal (1922-23 to 1926-27). 89

In the following sessions, 1927-28 and 1928-29 the College maintained its usual progress. The number of students on 31 March 1930 stood at 182. But with the launching of the Civil Disobedience Movement in April 1930 by Mahatma Gandhi the numerical strength of the Bethune College also dwindled to 140. The Report of the Review on the Progress of Education in Bengal for 1927-32 mentioned, "It should be noted with regret that a wave of unrest spread among a section of the students of the Bethune College during the Civil Disobedience Movement which rendered disciplinary measures necessary. A few students were compelled to leave the College and others that remained had to give an undertaking for their future good conduct." 90 With the advent of 1931 things at the Bethune College somewhat settled down. From 1931 onwards, the institution kept up its high efficiency so far as the results of the University examinations were concerned.

89 Ibid., p. 76.
90 Ibid., p. 81.
The Quinquennial Review of the Education Department for the years 1926-27 to 1931-32 reported a great deal of progress so far as higher education of women in Bengal were concerned. The following table of successful women candidates in examinations in 1926-27 and 1931-32 would amply show the rapid studies which women had registered in higher education: 91

**TABLE 7**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Matriculation</th>
<th>Intermediate</th>
<th>B.A.</th>
<th>M.A.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1926-27</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1931-32</td>
<td>394</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The year 1932-33 was a landmark in the annals of women's education in Bengal for in this year the number of Arts Colleges for Indian women rose from four to six. These included women's section of the Vidyasagar College, Calcutta. The Asutosh College, Calcutta and the Brojomohan College, Barisal, the Krishnanagar College which received the approval of the Government to admit women students in August 1932. The opening up of so many women's colleges in 1932-33 meant much for the Bethune College. Though the higher education for which the College had stood found a great impetus in this way, it also weakened its unique position in regard to numerical strength in the following years. The Civil Disobedience Movement which

91 J.C. Bagal, op. cit., p. 83.
commenced in February 1932 for the second time had a depressing effect on this institution. By July 1933, however, it had recovered from the situation and its numerical strength now rose to 148. In the following session, 1934-35, the number of students for the Bethune College swelled to 194 and proper arrangements were made for the teaching of Civics and Economics in the College. "In 1934 the Bethune College had occupied the first position among the affiliated women's Colleges and women's departments attached to men's Colleges in Calcutta."

In 1935 it was affiliated to the Honours course in Economics and Physical Education of girls was especially looked for. By the end of 1936, Bethune College had once again launched on a promising career. The number of students now rose to 277 and success in the University examinations far outnumbered the former years. This year also saw the opening of a large women's hostel adjacent to the College. Equipped with these facilities the Bethune College could claim the highest number of students (306) in the session 1937-38. From this year again the Government scholarships for Indian women were introduced to encourage advanced studies in the United Kingdom. The state of higher studies of women in Bengal in 1938 could be easily understood in the light of the following figures:

| TABLE - 8 |
|----------------------|----------|
| Appeared in Examinations | Passed |
| M.A. candidates  | 42 | 37 |
| M.Sc. candidates  | 364 | 247 |
| B.A. candidates   | 898 | 559 |

92 History of the Bethune School and College, p. 88.
93 Ibid., pp. 90-91.
Needless to say, results of the University examinations of the Bethune College were quite satisfactory during this session. There were cent per cent success in I.Sc. and ninety-five percent in I.A. in 1939. A comparative analysis of the results of the different colleges revealed that the position of the Bethune College, among Government colleges, was second only to the Presidency College. In 1941 the Bethune College had 362 students, the largest number of students on the rolls. Biology was added to the subjects affiliated for the I.Sc. The results of the examinations revealed cent per cent passes in the B.A. Honours.

With the storming of Pearl Harbour in December 1941, situations changed drastically in India as well. As in the case of other catastrophes, education became the first casualty. The Bethune College and School with their new and old buildings, as well as their spacious compound, were requisitioned by the Government for the A.R.P. early in 1942. An idea of the condition of the College during the war years could be from the Quinquennial Report of the Bethune College for 1942–47 submitted by the Principal, Mrs Tatini Das. Mrs.Das wrote:

The quinquennim under review records the tale of education in duress. What with the prolonged occupation of our College building and compound by the A.R.P. for full four years of the War emergency period and what with frequent dislocation of work due to communal riot directly on our re-occupation of old site, the College suffered, as was inevitable, a terrible set back in respect of the residence of students, tutorial supervision and general administration work of the College,

94 History of the Bethune School and College, p. 99.
both creative and conservative. We have reasons to be grateful that the institution could somehow be preserved from what at one time looked like virtual extinction in its life of increasing usefulness destined to complete the existence in 1949.

If this was the plight of Bethune College, other institutes of learning fared no better. Situations limped back to normalcy only in 1947 when India gained her freedom. The introduction of western education had definitely stirred the Hindu middle classes who had accepted the new education and had been in their turn imbued with liberal ideas associated with such education. They had been instrumental in bringing about a change in the social outlook as well. This attitude was partly reflected in their quest for providing education to their women. The story was not the same, however, for the Muslim community.

In 1903 the Journal Mihir-I-Sudhakar had expressed surprise over the fact that the Census of 1901 had revealed that only four hundred Muslim women knew English. In 1919, Al-Eslam, another journal had suggested that Muslim women needed a type of education suited to Muslim society. Even in 1929 female education of the Muslim community had to meet opposition from the orthodox Muslim leaders. Feroz Begum wrote, "By Female Education, we do not necessarily mean the acquisition of education in the Western mould. Probably it was through seeing this Western type that our Mulas have grown alarmed .... But they do not realise that if our womenfolk are properly educated then they will not only become worthy mothers and housewives but also true mates to their husbands and competent advisers to them."

This was the picture of Muslim female education during the twenties and thirties of the present century.

On 19 March 1934 the Education Minister, Khwaja Nazimuddin, speaking in the Bengal Legislative Council, raised the question of women's education. He said that the problem of girls' education loomed large every year. "It is singularly unfortunate that this persistent demand from the other sex for more and better ways of education comes at a time when the purse strings of Government must be held so tight." In spite of this, he promised to try his best and find out plans for improving the same when funds would be available.96

The question of providing sufficient grants for female education of the Muslim community came up once more in the Legislative Council in the next year. Azizul Haque speaking on this subject on 26 March 1935, mentioned the proposal for the provincialisation of the Sakhawat Memorial Girls' School in Calcutta. He informed that the Government of Bengal maintained five girls' schools in Bengal. These were situated in Chittagong, Comilla, Mymensingh, Dacca and Calcutta. Unfortunately, the Calcutta Government Girls' School, that is to say, the Bethune School, failed to admit Muslim students, as a result of which the Muslim girls had to face great difficulties in central, western and northern Bengal. The provincialisation of the Sukhawat Memorial Girls' School, he professed, would solve the problem of educating Muslim girls in Calcutta.97

96 Proc. of Bengal Legislative Council, Vol.43, No.5, 1934, p. 369.
Tahmin Alam, Begum Roquiah Sakhawat Hossain: Chintā Chetonār Dhārā O Samāj Karma (Dhaka: Bangla Academy, 1992), pp. 92-133
On 23 March 1936 S.M. Bose brought a cut motion in the Bengal Legislative Council to raise a discussion on the neglect of women's primary and secondary education. He suggested that a Committee should be appointed for women's education which would submit a comprehensive scheme for their education. Naresh Chandra Sen Gupta pointed out that the expenditure on women's university education by the Government was not at all adequate. Apart from supplying grants-in-aid to some colleges and the maintenance of the Bethune College, the Government was hopelessly neglecting women's collegiate education in Bengal. Even the Bethune College was maintained all along on a footing of inferiority to all Government colleges for men. The staff was inadequate and facilities for studying different subjects were also wanting. For this reason, he emphasised, hundreds of girls flocked to other institutions like the Scottish Church College and the Vidyasagar College where facilities for higher education were better. He urged that more provisions should be made for female education in general. Satisch Chandra Ray Chowdhury supporting the motion pointed out the necessity of extending girl's education without any further delay. W.C. Wordsworth, too, agreed that there was a genuine desire for the advancement of girls education in Bengal. He suggested that a permanent standing committee of women could be set up to advise the University and the schools on matters of female education. M. Azizul Haque, explaining the Government point of view, agreed that female education should be looked after. Moreover, the Moslem girls were facing the problem in still
more difficult form as they could not join the Bethune College. For the time being he suggested that an institution imparting suitable education to the Moslem girls should be established. The Advisory Board for women's education would also be drawn up to aid and advise this department. The demand for the higher education of women persisted in 1938. Provincial autonomy had vested the Moslems of Bengal with governmental powers. This acted as an incentive to Moslem women to take up higher education in large numbers. The Muslim League Government demanded a separate college where a majority of Moslem girls would be able to study. This was one of the main reasons why the Lady Brabourne College was opened in the Park Circus area in July 1939.

In February 1942 Maulavi Idris Ahmed Mia, member of the Bengal Legislative Council, raised some questions regarding the number of Muslim girls, caste Hindu girls, Scheduled Caste girls, Christian girls and girls belonging to other castes or creeds for the time being, reading in (a) Government colleges affiliated upto the B.A. standard, (b) private colleges affiliated upto the B.A. standard, (c) Government colleges upto the I.A. standard, (e) Government Islamic Colleges affiliated upto the I.A. standard, and (f) private Islamic colleges affiliated upto the I.A. standard.

In his reply, the Education Minister, Khan Bahadur M. Abdul Karim, laid the following statement on the table:

TABLE - 9

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Muslim Girls</th>
<th>Hindu Girls</th>
<th>Scheduled Caste Girls</th>
<th>Christian Girls</th>
<th>Girls belonging to other caste or creed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Government Colleges affiliated upto the B.A. standard</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>361</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private Colleges affiliated upto the B.A. standard</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>1,417</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government Colleges affiliated upto I.A. standard</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private Colleges affiliated upto I.A. standard</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>310</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government Islamic Colleges affiliated upto I.A. standard</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private Islamic Colleges affiliated upto I.A. standard</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table is illustrative of the dismal condition which characterised women's education during the period under review. Gender discrimination in the field of women's education was, indeed, acute. As early as 1869 John Stuart Mill strongly raised his voice against the subjection of women. He wrote that the principle which regulated the social relations between the two
sexes - "the legal subordination of one sex to the other - is wrong in itself, and now one of the chief hindrances to human improvement, and that it ought to be replaced by a principle of perfect equality, admitting no power or privilege on the one side, nor desirability on the other."¹⁰⁰ The scenario which saddened and embittered John Stuart Mill remained almost unchanged in so far as educational opportunities to the Bengal women in the first half of the nineteenth century was concerned.