CHAPTER FOUR
VARIOUS ADMINISTRATIVE DECISIONS AND THE BRITISH IMPERIAL MOTIVE BEHIND THEM

The year 1905, one of the most eventful years in the history of Bengal, saw the British government engaging in artificial manipulation of the population inhabiting Bengal proper and the adjacent divisions of Bihar, Chotanagpur, Orissa and Assam. Whether, the Partition of Bengal, (an epoch making event, which left a profound impact on the political history of the country), was carried out on wise lines or not is a question that has been open to discussion for the last century or more amongst stalwarts of Modern Indian History. The British bureaucracy characterized the Partition as imperative for the purpose of efficient executive administration of an over-grown territorial jurisdiction, while the nationalist historians consider that by partitioning the province along communal lines and erecting a new Muslim majority province in the east, Lord Curzon sought to crush the rising tide of nationalism among the Bengali Hindus and attach the Muslims more firmly to the Raj. Due to this liberal dose of 'Curzonian Acid' sprinkled on a small administrative problem, Bengal lay prostrate and bleeding, cut into two parts. The strategy based on the classic policy of 'divide and rule' proved ill-fated from its inception. The architects of the partition unleashed forces which led to the heightening of communalism and growth of Muslim separatism. Much has been written on the consequences of Lord Curzon's policy but what has till recent years, escaped the attention of historians is the simultaneous growth of Bihari and Oriya sub-nationalism during this period, the emergence of a distinct provincial identity in Bihar from the late 19th century leading to the creation of a new province of Bihar and Orissa out of the Bengal Presidency in 1912 and the secession of Orissa from that province 24 years later (1936), resulting in a more homogenous province of Bihar. In this entire drama of changing of political boundaries in case of Bihar as S.N. Sinha and Mahesh Narayan wrote-"the point for discussion therefore, was not whether a partition of the Lower Provinces should be effected, but whether it should be the partition of the province of Bengal itself, as has been actually carried out, or the separation of the outlying province of Behar—which has long been advocated by competent authorities ....as an ideally perfect alternative scheme for the partition of the Lower provinces” which had “the important
additional advantage of securing for itself the goodwill and sympathy of all parties concerned”.1

SETTING THE STAGE-RECOGNITION AND DENIAL

A perusal of papers from 1867-68 to 1906 shows that many British high officials recognized the just claims of the Biharis, of a province of their own based on linguistic, cultural, geographical, historical identity. The question of creation of a Governorship of Bengal and a Lieutenant-Governorship of Bihar is no new one and was fully discussed in 1867-1868 by the Secretary of State and the Government of India. A Committee was formed on the initiative of Sir Strafford Northcote, to consider it and that of the transfer of the capital elsewhere. They concluded that a Governorship of Bengal would not be compatible with the presence of the Viceroy and the Government of India in Calcutta; that had it been decided to create a Governorship of Bengal the question of transfer of capital from Calcutta would have been taken into consideration; that, although a majority of the Governor-General’s Council and the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal (Sir William Grey) were in favour of the creation of a Governorship, Sir John Lawrence, the Governor-General, was opposed to the proposal, but for purposes of better administration contemplated the constitution of a Lieutenant-Governorship of Bihar and the separation of Assam from Bengal under a Chief Commissioner.2 However, no such change was made then. Chesney in his ‘Indian Polity’ (1870) had expressed the view that Bengal, howsoever governed, would always be too large to be governed properly from one centre because of the vast area under one administrative unit. Therefore he had suggested that the removal of Bihar from Bengal with its Hindustani population would be administratively advantageous and that it might be added to the North-Western Provinces. He had proposed to divide all the Hindustani-speaking people in two parts—one consisting of the districts to the North of the Ganges-Rohilkund, Oudh, Tirhoot and trans-Gangetic Bihar, with a seat of Government at Lucknow and the other, the territory South and West of the Ganges, with its seat of Government at Allahabad. A partition on such lines would provide a better administration of famine-stricken areas of Bihar, Midnapur and

2 Home Delhi-A Dec. 1911, Nos. 8-11, National Archives of India
Orissa, would recognize linguistic affinity of the Hindi-speaking races and in general provide relief to the growing administrative burden of the Bengal Government.3

For the first time the demand of Bihar for Biharis was heeded to when Sir Ashley Eden (1878), the Governor of Bengal issued a circular to the effect that, certain jobs should be exclusively reserved for Biharis in Bihar.4 In 1879, H.S. Cunningham suggested that some redistribution of territory was in several instances very desirable in the interests of efficient administration. The Presidency of Bengal was too vast a charge, both as regards area, population and the variety and the complexity of interests involved, for any single Government, however, able be the official at its head. Arrangements for relieving it of certain tracts of country had frequently been discussed. This change, Bihar attached to North Western Provinces was in his opinion, highly conducive to the more effective management of two portions of the country which were from climate and position, especially exposed to famine and economically very ill-qualified to resist it. Bihar and Orissa were the portions of Bengal whereas experience taught the occurrence of famine was most probable. Therefore he suggested that if, instead of their position as the most remote members of a large aggregate of upwards of sixty millions of people-these districts could be made to form an important part of a smaller province, they would no doubt receive more individual supervision and get the benefit of a more active executive control than was possible under existing circumstances.5 These suggestions, bearing testimony of great statesmanship, however remained on paper as no effective steps were taken in this direction.

Next, Lord Mac. Donnell, one of the most distinguished members of the Indian Civil Service wrote a pamphlet as well as an article in 1896 in the Pioneer, in which he discussed the partition of Bengal and put forward an alternative proposal. Mr. Mac Donnell wrote that the separation of Bihar from Bengal is most keenly desired by its people. He stressed that the Bihari and the Bengali were more widely different than the Celt and the Teuton in origin. He urged for the separation of Bihar and Chotanagpur from Bengal as it would then recognize ethnical and linguistic frontiers. He wrote:-

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3 Chaudhury V.C.P. The Creation of Modern Bihar, Yugeshwar Prakashan, 1964, Pp. 38, 39
4 Ibid, P. 15
5 Quoted from Note by H.S.Cunningham dated 18th August, 1879, Lytton Papers (Indian Office Library, London), Private Secretary’s office, No. 3765, Miscellaneous in Chaudhury V.C.P.,op.cit.P. 41
“Behar and Chotanagpur would be a separate and entirely homogenous charge, which would afford tempting opportunities to an administrator”. “If we British were a logical people and impatient of anomalies, the relief of the overworked government of the lower Provinces would be irresistibly in the separation of Behar and Chotanagpur; Assam cannot be, will never be a charge so popular, or as likely to attract the best men as Behar.”

However, the hopes of separation of Bihar from Bengal were crushed when the representation of the Gaya Municipality presented to the Lieutenant-Governor Sir Alexander Mackenzie received a cynical rejection in the year 1896. He said ...

“In the second place, you refer to the fact that thoughtful men in the province are advocating the separation of Behar from Bengal for administrative purposes. Now, ‘thoughtful’, is not precisely the term that I should apply to the gentlemen who are working this agitation, which is a mere balloon without any substance whatever in it. It is undoubtedly purely a newspaper agitation, of the kind at present in vogue. It appears to me very much like the newspaper agitation at home in what is called the ‘silly season’, when Parliament is not sitting and newspapers have to exercise their ingenuity on something sensational for their readers... It must have been a silly season for Behar and other papers to have taken up this question. They had apparently nothing more useful to discuss. It is the last thing likely to happen within our time. Neither the Government of India nor the Secretary of State is likely to propose the creation of another local Government in Upper India.”

Thus, the movement started by the Behar Times under Mahesh Narayan and Sachchidanand Sinha received a tremendous setback by Sir Alexander Mackenzie’s words. In 1874, Cachar and Sylhet, parts of Bengal were made over to Assam for administrative convenience. In 1891, a small conference of the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, the Chief-Commissioners of Burma and Assam, with a few military authorities, was held to consider measures for the greater protection of the North-Eastern frontier. It

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6 Quoted in Sinha, Alakh Kumar, *Mr. O' Donnell's "False Step"*, Bankipore 1906, Pamphlet, National Library, Calcutta
7 As quoted in Narayan and Sinha, op.cit.P.11
8 Galt, E. A. *A history of Assam* (reprinted; Calcutta, 1967), Pp. 387 - 388
was then proposed to transfer the Lushai Hills to Assam, coupled with a recommendation that the Chittagong Division should also go with them. In 1896, Sir William Ward, the Chief Commissioner of Assam, submitted an elaborate scheme for the transfer of the Chittagong Division to Assam and added to it, in a general way, a hope that the two districts of Dacca and Mymensingh might eventually be given to Assam. Sir Henry Cotton, who succeeded Sir William Ward to the Chief Commissionership of Assam, with his extensive and intimate knowledge of Bengal, opposed this scheme and condemned the idea of transfer of Dacca and Mymensingh to Assam. The result was that the Lushai Hills were made over to Assam and the question of transfer of the Chittagong Division was entirely dropped.

CURZON AND HIS COLONIAL CONSTRUCTION

A new chapter in the history of Bengal, Bihar, Orissa, Assam and Chotanagpur began with Lord Curzon’s arrival on the scene. While lacking the sensitivity to understand the basis of developments which were occurring in the Indian society, Lord Curzon fully grasped the threat posed by the growing reaction against European dominance. In particular he appreciated the danger which lay in the growth of aggressive nationalism among the two most politically advanced groups, the Maratha Brahmins of Bombay-Deccan and the ‘Bengali Bhadralok’. Above all, Curzon was determined that any new territorial arrangements would benefit and not weaken the British position. The suggestions made by the British officials for the relief of Bengal administration were ignored by Curzon, Risley and Fraser, with incredible amount of ‘official bungling’. Curzon gave excuses such as construction of a province including in it the Hindi-speaking population of Bihar and Chotanagpur could not avoid taking a portion of the Bengali population of the Rajshahi division and force the breaking up of Commissioners division and their entire rearrangement. No honest attempt was made to consider the permanent lines of racial and linguistic demarcation in the province.

In December 1903, appeared the famous letter of Government of India with the signature of Sir Herbert Risley which was the genesis of the Scheme for the future Partition of Bengal. Risley followed the lines of recommendations of the conference of

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9 Minute by J. P. Hewett, Jan. 15, 1896, Home Public and March 1896, nos. 175 – 182. N. I. A.
10 J. Westland, minute, April 20, 1897 Home Public No. 204 - 234
11 Note by H. Cotton, Home Dept. (Public) Feb 3, 1897. No. 204 - 234
1891 and of Sir William Ward’s suggestion of 1896 of transfer of the Chittagong Division and the two districts of Dacca and Mymensingh to Assam making the channels of the Brahmaputra the natural boundary between Bengal and Assam. The objects for partition of Bengal were explained in the letter of H.H. Risley, Secretary to the Government of India, dated Calcutta, the 3rd December 1903, thus:-“(i). to relieve the Bengal Government of a part of the excessive burden now imposed upon it, and at the same time to make provision for the more efficient administration of some of the outlying districts of the Province. (ii). to promote the development of Assam by enlarging its jurisdiction so as to give it an outlet to the sea in connection with the Assam-Bengal Railway, and to render it possible to organize independent administrative services. (iii) To unite under a single administration the scattered sections of the Oriya-speaking population and thereby to afford both to Madras and the Central Provinces some relief from the difficulties arising from the great diversity of languages spoken in their existing jurisdictions.”

Therefore, it is clear that though the British Government was apparently worried about the administration of ‘some of the outlying districts’ of the Lower Provinces, the step-motherly treatment that Bihar received from its administrators could not find any solution in this policy. While the establishment of independent administrative services for Assam was aimed for, the constant complaints of the Biharis, of employment opportunities in their own province and Bengali domination of the services, education, courts etc. received no sympathy from their rulers. Similarly, it was perhaps the fate of the Biharis that while the Government was concerned about the linguistic affinity of the Oriyas and bringing them under a single Government by adding certain territories from the Central Provinces and Madras, the plea for a separate province of Bihar could not find any sympathy from its rulers.

An alternative scheme finds mention in Risley’s letter Nos. 3679-3681. He mentions the main features as:-“(i) The transfer of the Chittagong Division from Bengal to Assam. (ii) The formation of a Chief Commissionership of Behar which would include the Patna Division, the Hindi-speaking districts of Chotanagpur (namely, Hazaribagh, Palamu and Ranchi), the districts of Monghyr and Bhagalpur. (iii) The transfer of Orissa

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to the Central Provinces and the conversion of that province into a Lieutenant-Governorship.”

What is of interest here is that the Government of India said:—

“It may be admitted that such a Scheme would be popular with the Bengali opponents of reconstruction, as involving a practical surrender to their agitation against any division of Bengali-speaking territory.”

The despatch further went on....

“It may be thought by some that it would also appeal to local sentiment in Bihar. The cry of Behar for the Beharis has frequently been raised in Bengal in connection with appointments, and it is possible that a large number of the people would be disposed to welcome administrative union with their brethren in the United Provinces.”

The scheme was however rejected by Risley because:—“(i) The proposed commission would not be large enough to recruit for itself and would therefore have to borrow officers as Assam does now. If it were attached for recruiting purposes to the United Provinces, as considerations of language would seem to suggest, it is probable that officers of those provinces would be nearly as unwilling to serve in the new province as Bengal officers now are to go to Assam.(ii) It would take from Bengal all of its best districts and would make the province universally unpopular.(iii) It would establish a final and insurmountable obstacle to the territorial expansion and administrative development of Assam. Even with the addition of the Chittagong Division that province would not be large enough for independent recruitment while the nature of the country excludes the possibility of its further extension eastwards within any time that is possible to look forward to. There would thus be two anomalies instead of the one that exists now—on the east, the unpopular Commission of Assam recruited from Bengal and on the west, the Commission of Behar and Chotanagpur recruited under similar though perhaps less conspicuous disadvantages from the United Province.” Such reasons were thus used by Risley for rejection of a separation of Bihar from Lower Provinces.

13 Parliamentary papers, Vol. 81, 1906 Letter Nos. 3679 - 3681
14 India Home (Public) A Progs, Feb 1905, nos. 155 - 157
15 Ibid
Another reason for opposing the proposal was the fact that during the year, throughout which the question of redistribution had been the subject of public and newspaper controversy not a single representation of any kind had reached the government from a single individual or body in Bihar.\textsuperscript{17} W.C. Macpherson, officiating Chief Secretary, Government of Bengal wrote to the Secretary of State on 6\textsuperscript{th} April 1904 that the primary object of the partition was to improve administration in Bengal by reducing its area, and so making it a more reasonable charge for one local Government. The next object was so to select the districts to be separated from Bengal, that the final scheme may be such as best to secure the interests of the people generally and the efficiency of administration. It was this last consideration which led the Government of India to decide not to increase the area of the United Provinces; and it is the same consideration which induced the Lieutenant-Governor to advocate an addition to the area of Assam rather than to that of the Central Provinces.\textsuperscript{18}

Macpherson’s ‘noble motives’ of better administration is in reality a cloak over Curzon’s desire to crush the two most politically advanced groups, the Maratha Brahmins and the Bengali Bhadralok. Thus, Denzil Ibbetson’s suggestions of transferring Berar to Bombay and Sind from Bombay to Punjab and the alternative proposal of transfer of Orissa to Central Provinces and constituting Bihar and Chotanagpur into a separate Province, were brushed aside by Curzon as he saw no reason to “....gratuitously make a present to Poona of this enormous accretion of political strength, thus sowing discontent and sedition among people at present quiet and loyal, multiplying the forces of our enemies.”\textsuperscript{19} Thus, Curzon rejected the suggestions for separation of either Bihar or Orissa as it would then concentrate the Bengali elements and Bengal would become free of outside influence. Curzon was determined that the territorial re-organizations should consolidate the British power in India rather than fan the burning embers of Bengali or Maratha nationalists. Curzon, during his East Bengal tour in February, 1904, gave hints of a ‘more ambitious’ scheme ‘for a larger re-adjustment in the east of Bengal’. Appeals for the creation of a separate Province of Bihar and Orissa were disregarded by Curzon. At Dacca, he turned down this ‘selfish argument’ of the Bengalis that..

\textsuperscript{17} India Home (Public) A Progs, Feb 1905 nos. 155-167
\textsuperscript{18} Letter, W. C. Macpherson, Esq, C. S. I. officiating Chief Secretary, Government of Bengal to the Secretary to the Government of India, Home Deptt, 6\textsuperscript{th} April, 1904
\textsuperscript{19} Curzon’s note, March 6, 1903, Home Public A, Dec. 1903, Nos. 149-160
"if anything or anybody must be severed, at least let it be someone else. Sever Behar, sever Orissa, sever Chotanagpur but leave us alone. ... Perhaps it does not occur to you that they may be saying the same thing about you; and indeed it would not be surprising for we all of us naturally look at these matters through our own spectacles, and we are all averse from change until we understand that we are going to profit by it. It is only those who can impartially survey the claims and interests of all, and weigh them against each other, who are in a position to decide where the balance of advantage lies. On the present occasion I need not do more than say that even were the whole of these districts which you are so anxious to submit to the fate that you depreciate for yourselves cut off, we should have gone no distance at all towards solving the problem; for whereas one of the Chief factors in the present situation is the existence of what you describe as the small and backward province of Assam on the frontiers of Bengal by a fringe of petty provinces, administered by borrowed officers, and presenting most of the anomalies that are so freely denounced in the case of Assam."20

The last sentence is a clear indication of Curzon’s rejection of the alternative of creating Bihar, Orissa and Chotanagpur as separate provinces.

The fruitlessness of the advantages proposed by Curzon at Dacca is proved by J.B. Fuller’s confidential note of April 5th 1904 where he writes that due to the practice to use native agency very largely in Eastern Bengal, very few posts of the Civil Service could actually be transferred.21 The Chief Commissioner proposed that the Chittagong Division should be transferred to Assam and a new Chief Commissionership of Bihar be created which would relieve Bengal of 22 million people. But this proposal was turned down due to the high-handedness and stubborn determination of Lord Curzon and Risley who cared little for provincial prestige and the policy of self-determination as it ...

"...Would tend to still further consolidate Bengali influence and so-called national sentiment, rather than as desired, breaking up the present combinations of political agitators and creating wholesome centers of provincial opinion."22

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20 Curzon’s address at Dacca, All about Partition, Mukheijee, P. Typed Notes, West Bengal State Archives.
21 Minute by J. B. Fuller, enclosure to J. O. Miller, Private Secretary to Viceroy, Demi-official, April 5, 1904. Parliamentary papers, Vol. 81, 1906
The rest is well-known to the students of history. The list of transferable districts rapidly increased. On the 6th April 1904, the districts of Rangpur, Bogra, Pabna were added to the Government of Bengal and five months later Rajshahi, Dinajpur, Malda, Jalpaiguri and Cooch-Behar State were 'presented' to the new province. This scheme, it was argued, would present the following advantages:—

(i) It would give the new province a population of over 31 millions leaving Bengal with a little more than 54 millions.

(ii) It would provide for the whole of the western frontier of the new province a well-defined boundary, conterminous throughout its length with a well recognized geographical and social distinction, and for a part of its length with the division between the Bengali and Hindi languages. This boundary would correspond with certain physical, linguistic and ethnological characteristics which the boundary proposed by the Lieutenant-Governor ignored.

(iii) That it would concentrate in the new province the typical Muhammadans of Bengal and would constitute the city of Dacca the natural capital of such an aggregation

(iv) That it would bring with the new province the whole of the tea industry with the exception of the gardens in the Darjeeling district, the conditions of which are peculiar

(v) That it would also bring under one Government the greater part of the tract within which jute is cultivated.

(vi) That it would avoid the necessity of breaking up of Commissioner's Divisions.”

To this, the Assam Government under Mr. Fuller suggested to the Secretary to the Government of India, “.... an additional ethnological argument in favour of the proposed boundary line is that it will include almost the whole of the area over which the Tibeto-Burman tribes known collectively as the Bodos, have extended.....”

Thus, while the Government of India recognized the ethnicity of the Bodos, Biharis with a population of 21,547,538 were not considered important enough to be given a province of their own, in recognition of their separate identity. The linguistic and social affinities of Chotanagpur with Bihar, (where 580,892 persons out of a population of 619,600 spoke Hindi in Palamau; in Hazaribagh 1,076,155 out of 1,177,961; in Ranchi 504,797 out of 1,187,925; in the native states of Chotanagpur about 600,000 out of a million residents spoke Hindi) hardly brought about an union of these

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23 (14.b). Letter from the Government of India to the Right Honorable St. John Brodrick, His Majesty's Secretary of State for India, 2nd Feb., 1905 parliamentary papers, Vol. 81, 1906

AN ALTERNATIVE SCHEME

A Conference on the Partition question was held at the Town Hall on Tuesday, the 10th January 1905, under the Presidency of Sir Henry Cotton, which was attended by 300 delegates from the Muffassil. Sir Henry pointed out the difficulties that the Bengalis would face if such a partition is carried out. He emphasized that the entire idea was the brain-child of Lord Curzon himself. Sir Henry said: "I do not believe that the proposal was made, in the first instance either by the Government of Bengal or by the administration of Assam. It sprang like Minerva from the head of Jove.... partially equipped the subsequent weapons having been furnished by the Viceroy himself after his visit to Dacca and Mymensingh." Sir Henry stressed that the Partition would bring about the severance of social and linguistic ties of the Bengalis, administrative inconvenience of re-organisation of districts and the problems faced by the Zamindars who had property both in Lower Provinces and the proposed new Province. As a counter proposal, Sir Henry contemplated the creation of Bihar and Chotanagpur into a Chief Commissionership. He said that the work in Bengal would be too heavy for a Governor assisted by Council, the desired result of relieving him of responsibilities could be attained by other measures then that of partitioning Bengal. Sir Henry said....

"I will offer a constructive scheme. I do not say it will be accepted with any unanimity by the population of the province affected. This, I may say, that it certainly would not be opposed with anything like the vigour and force with which the Partition of Bengal has met. If dismemberment must be made, I would say, separate Behar and Chotanagpur from Bengal and establish them into separate Chief Commissionerships. It would be immeasurably preferable to a proposal of dismembering Bengal. It is said there is a large section of the Beharee population who would welcome it." 

25 Letter from B. Robertson, Esq. I.C.S, C.I.E, Chief Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of Central Provinces, to the Secretary to the Government of India, Home Department No. 2646 A, General Department, dated the 16th March, 1904. Ibid.
26 Mukherjee, P., All about Partition, Typed notes West Bengal State Archives, Calcutta.
27 Ibid.
28 Ibid.
Sir Henry Cotton, once again in his presidential speech at the Bombay session of the Indian National Congress, held in 1904 suggested that if redistribution of territory was absolutely necessary, Bihar as a homogenous tract should be separated from Bengal rather than Bengal itself should be divided into two parts. He admitted that it was desirable to relieve the Lieutenant-Governor of Lower Provinces of some of the responsibilities which rested upon his shoulders. But this could be attained by other means; either by the appointment of an Executive Council, or preferable I think, by the separation of Bihar and Chotanagpur which were not peopled by Bengalis, and the constitution of that province, with a population of thirty millions in round numbers, as a separate administration. It would be easy to device a scheme which did not receive the unanimous disapproval of the affected population. Proposals such as those which had been put forward for the break-up of “Bengal against the loudly expressed wishes and sentiments of the Bengali people, can only be described as a most arbitrary and unsympathetic evidence of irresponsible and autocratic statesmanship.” Similar views were expressed by Sir Charles Stevens, and ex-Lieutenant-Governor of the Lower Provinces, to an interviewer of the ‘Englishman’ that a far more effective method, and one less open to objection would be to create Bihar into a separate administration which would be a charge fully equal in population to the Bombay Presidency.

However, Lord Curzon rejected the scheme of removal of ‘outside fragments’ from Bengal (Bihar, Orissa and Chotanagpur) as it would concentrate Bengali Hindu elements in Bengal who were considered by him as opponents of British rule, it would fail to destroy the political ascendancy of Calcutta or to attach Muslims to the Raj. This would create in East Bengal the growth of a Muslim power which would keep in check the rapidly growing strength of the educated Hindu community. According to Curzon, Bihar, Chotanagpur and Orissa if made into Chief Commissionerships would be unable to recruit for themselves and would create administrative anomalies. Thus, Bengal was divided, the Province of East Bengal and Assam with an area of 106,540 square miles and a population of 31 millions of whom 18 million were Muslims and 12 millions Hindus was created. Bengal was left with an area of 141,580 square miles and a

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29 Pamphlet by Mahesh Narayan and S. N. Sinha - The Partition of Bengal or the Separation of Behar, 1906, Bihar State Archives, Patna., P. 18
30 Quoted in Narayan and Sinha., Pp. 18 - 19
31 Ibid.
population of 54 millions of whom 42 million were Hindus and 9 million Muslims. Curzon stressed that by this division the territories were divided into two compact and self-contained provinces, the population as well as the physical features of which were homogenous in character possessing a clearly defined river boundary. The Scheme took effect from the 16th October, 1905 against universal protest of the people. From December, 1903, to October 1905, more than 2000 public meetings were held in different parts of East and West Bengal to protest against the Partition. The resolutions unanimously adopted at these meetings were regularly submitted to the Government of India and the Secretary of State. Both the Indian and Anglo-Indian press joined in the protest but no proposals were made either by the memorialists or the Bengali press to separate Bihar. The Separation Movement in Bihar went alongside the Anti-Partition Movement but remained aloof from it and took no part in the Swadeshi or Boycott Movement. Sachchidanand Sinha, Mahesh Narayan, Hasan Imam and Ali Imam tried to seek the co-operation from the British Government for the creation of an independent Bihar by remaining loyal, as they did not want to offend the Government lest the cause of the separation might be neglected by the Government.

The two articles written in February 1904 and August 1905 in the Hindustan Review were later compiled in the form of first a pamphlet and then a book entitled ‘The Partition of Bengal or the Separation of Behar’ by Mahesh Narayan and Sachchidanand Sinha in which they wrote ...

“It is the object of the present pamphlet to show that though the partition of the Lower Provinces was undoubtedly a ‘regrettable necessity’, still it was absolutely unnecessary for the Government to have ridden roughshod and trampled underfoot the ‘desires which are not without praiseworthy side’, and that ‘the higher needs of good government,’ did not at all require the subordination of those ‘desires’, in the way that has been done, but that there is ready to hand an unassailable scheme for the partition of the Lower Province which, while conducing to ‘the higher needs of good government’ to even a larger extent than that contemplated by the partition of Bengal, will have, at the same time, the

32 Ibid., Pp. 19 - 20
33 Home, Delhi B, Deposit, Dec. 1911, National Archives, Delhi.
important additional advantage of securing for itself the goodwill and sympathy of all parties concerned."34

The main features of the alternative scheme were (i) The transfer of the Chittagong division from Bengal to Assam; (ii) The formation of a Chief Commissionership of Behar which would include the Patna division, the Hindi speaking districts of Chotanagpur (viz. Hazaribagh, Palamau and Ranchi); the Beneras division of the United Provinces and possibly the districts of Monghyr and Bhagalpur; (iii) The transfer of Orissa to Central Provinces and the conversion of that province into a Lieutenant-Governorship.35 Narayan and Sinha claimed that....

"Not that our scheme is merely some kind of a remedy for the present state of things, but we claim for it that, in comparison to the scheme of partition which has been carried out, it is superior in all the elements which constitute an ideally perfect partition of territory for administrative purposes."36

The alternative scheme provided by S.N.Sinha and Mahesh Narayan clearly indicated that the demand of 'Bihar for Biharis' was based on solid grounds and the Government in its haste to divide Bengal had failed to appreciate a much more valuable scheme of Partition. The British government had time and again claimed that the partition had been effected for administrative convenience as it was difficult for the government to rule over such a vast area and population According to the partition plan, the new province of East Bengal and Assam had an area of 106,074 square miles and a population of 31,303,282 souls. Whereas if Bihar was created along the lines proposed by Narayan and Sinha it would have a population of 35,549,785 (minus Malda and Beneras) in an area of 109,682 square miles. Thus, almost equal area and a greater population would have eased the so-called 'administrative burden' of the Government of Bengal and the new province would have linguistic, cultural and geographical affinity in the real sense of the word.37 The following figures were given for their proposed scheme:-38

34 Narayan and Sinha., P. 3
35 Ibid. P. 38
36 Ibid.
37 Ibid.,Pp. 41 - 43
38 Ibid.Pp. 41, 42
a). Bengal consisting of:-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area (sq. miles)</th>
<th>Population</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assam</td>
<td>52,959</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rajshahi Division</td>
<td>17,365</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dacca Division</td>
<td>15,040</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chittagong Division</td>
<td>11,773</td>
</tr>
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<td>Burdwan Division</td>
<td>13,949</td>
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<tr>
<td>Presidency Division</td>
<td>12,015</td>
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<tr>
<td>Malda District</td>
<td>1,899</td>
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<td>Feudatory States</td>
<td>8,211</td>
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<tr>
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<td><strong>133,202</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>48,785,503</strong></td>
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b). Bihar consisting of:-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area (sq. miles)</th>
<th>Population</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Patna Division</td>
<td>23,688</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhagalpore Division (minus vision)</td>
<td>18,612</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chotanagpur Division</td>
<td>27,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orissa Division</td>
<td>9,841</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feudatory States</td>
<td>30,441</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>109,682</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>35,549,785</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Narayan and Sinha argued that when a province has to be divided in two parts, for the purpose of better administration, the area and populations of the two parts should be as far equal as possible. The scheme proposed by them was better in this respect as while the difference in the areas of the two divided parts under the scheme, as carried out, was 29,623 miles, this difference is reduced to 23,520 miles in the alternative scheme. While the difference in the population of the two divided parts under the scheme as carried out was 21,479,607 this difference was reduced to 13,235,818 in the scheme as proposed. According to Lord Curzon, the motive for partition was to promote the development of Assam by enlarging its jurisdiction. Sinha and Narayan argued that if large area and large population were signs of good government then Assam would be better off, if joined to Bengal (which would have Rajshahi, Dacca, Chittagong, Burdwan, etc.).

39 Ibid. P. 43
Presidency, Malda and Feudatory States) with a population of 48,785,503 and an area of 133,202 square miles which was greater in size and population than the Province of East Bengal and Assam which had an area of 106,074 square miles and 31,303,282 population.\textsuperscript{40} Alternatively, we find that by this scheme the population of Bengal as proposed would be 48,785,503 which is less compared to the population of 54 millions of the partition scheme.\textsuperscript{41} As Sinha and Narayan declared...

"As to relief to the overgrown Government of the Lower Provinces, it is sufficient to point out that under the scheme proposed we take away over 25,000 miles of territory and over 17 millions of people more than under the scheme as carried out and if relief is to be obtained, by the transfer of territory and population, ....then our scheme is certainly calculated to give better relief to the Government of the Lower Provinces, better in the sense that it transfers more territory and a larger population than under the scheme carried out."\textsuperscript{42}

To make their points stronger they pointed out the immense diversities between Bihar, Orissa, Chotanagpur and Bengal in physical features, climate, nature of soil and agricultural produce, language, literature and alphabets, physique and character of their people and their history.

Financial difficulties that would be faced by the British Government by reforming the Partition were very cleverly dealt by Narayan and Sinha. They wrote that the question of cost need not disturb the people, for the Government of India in their despatch, dated 2\textsuperscript{nd} February 1905 wrote that... "The formation of the new province will necessarily involve a substantial increase of expenditure, but the funds required to meet it will be raised, not by imposing additional taxation on the people of Bengal, but by applying for the purpose of the new province part of the surplus revenues under the control of the Government of India".\textsuperscript{43} Very cleverly, Sinha and Narayan used the Government’s own words for their advantage as they wrote.. "Of course, this holds good for the new Lieutenant-Governorship whether it is created to the East or to the West of Bengal."\textsuperscript{44}The Government of India had stated that the Partition would bring in one province the

\textsuperscript{40} Ibid. \\
\textsuperscript{41} Ibid. \\
\textsuperscript{42} Ibid., P.44 \\
\textsuperscript{43} Ibid. P. 10 \\
\textsuperscript{44} Ibid.
Muhammadan population and the scheme would provide a definite boundary to the new province. Sinha and Narayan through their articles asked the Government that “What is the difference between the geographical characteristics of any district on the east of the river Ganges and any two districts on west of that river in Bengal? What is the difference geographically between Khulna and Jessore and Rungpore and Dinajpore, for instance? All these four districts are typically Bengal districts.” \(^{45}\) They pointed out that by the Partition of Bengal a large population of Muslims remained in Bengal so how could the Government claim that they had concentrated in a single province the typical Muslim population of Bengal? Regarding Bihar they argued that Curzon had refused to create it into a Lieutenant-Governorship on the grounds that it would not be able to provide for itself enough occupants for the Provincial Civil Service. But how could a Province (Bihar) with a population of 21,547,538 not do the same? \(^{46}\) Such questions raised by S.N. Sinha and Mahesh Narayan remained unanswered for the time being.

**PARTITION-A SETTLED FACT?**

Meanwhile, when Lord Morley, a Liberal, succeeded to the office of Secretary of State for India, the people of Bengal and Bihar hope that the grievous wrong which had been done to them would be remedied if not wholly removed. \(^{47}\) Curzon had already resigned his post. \(^{48}\) Lord Minto was appointed the new Viceroy. Morley and Minto considered the Partition to be a ‘settled fact’ and wrote...

“But at the same time, I cannot think there is much more genuine feeling in the movement than the official mind is prepared to admit. I cannot help suspecting that local feeling has been treated with some want of sympathy in aiming at what in the official mind is considered necessary for administrative machinery. The population of Bengal has no doubt bitterly resented the action which has taken so large a slice from the province and which too they might perhaps have been more willing to sacrifice in another direction…” \(^{49}\)

\(^{45}\) Ibid., P. 32

\(^{46}\) Ibid., P. 28


\(^{48}\) The Behar Herald, Aug.26, 1905 RNP (B)

\(^{49}\) Minto to Morley. Letter dated the 13\textsuperscript{th} December 1905, quoted in Chaudhury, V.C.P, op. cit, P. 120
Thus, we find a tacit recognition of the alternative proposal of separation of Bihar, Orissa and Chotanagpur being a better plan, which would have been more acceptable to the people than the unnatural division of Bengal which had been carried out without any regard to provincial prestige and the sentiments of the people concerned or as well as any appeals of self-determination by the Biharis or Oriyas or their intra-provincial rivalry with Bengal. Lord Minto was critical of the manner in which the partition had been effected.\(^{50}\)

In a letter addressed to Lord Morley dated 20\(^{th}\) Dec, 1905, he wrote:-

> "But putting Mohamadans aside, I should say the opinion is decidedly that there has been a want of consideration for local sentiment – and that the overbearing tone of Curzon’s speeches on several occasions has tended seriously to increase the bitter feeling which exists."\(^{51}\)

Minto also understood the political motive behind the partition. In another letter he wrote that the crippling of Bengali political power was in his opinion one of the strongest arguments in favour of partition.\(^{52}\) Lord Minto was however not in favour of the immediate reversal of Curzon’s policy.\(^{53}\) In regard to the partition question, he felt that, as it was his duty as an administrator to carry out a policy already approved by the Secretary of State, he could hold out no hope that there would be a reversal of that policy.\(^{54}\) All attempts made by either the Bengalis or the Biharis for the reversal of the partition proved futile as Lord Minto was not ready to bring about a change. Lord Minto, in a reply to the grievances of the Indian Association said:

> "I must ask you to remember that I am here as an administrator whose duty it is to carry out a policy already approved by the Secretary of State and I should be misleading you if I, in any way, appear to encourage a hope of its reversal."\(^{55}\)

In one of his letters, a clear mention of an alternative scheme is discussed. Lord Minto wrote that partition might have been effected with much greater regard to Bengali sentiment if instead of the sacrifice of a part of the Eastern Provinces, Bihar and Orissa

\(^{50}\) Chaudhury V.C.P. op. cit. P. 121  
\(^{51}\) Minto to Morley, dated, the 20\(^{th}\) Dec. 1905. Quoted in Ibid P. 121  
\(^{52}\) Minto to Morley, dated the 5\(^{th}\) Feb, 1906, (Minto Papers, National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh, M 1005) quoted in ibid. P. 118  
\(^{53}\) Chaudhury V.C.P. op. cit. P 122  
\(^{54}\) ‘Bengalee’ Jan.14,1906 RNP (B)  
\(^{55}\) Hitavadi, Jan 19, 1906 RNP (B)
had been attached with United and Central provinces respectively.\textsuperscript{56} However he rejected this alternative proposal.

"The case for a province of Bihar, Chotanagpur and Orissa would no doubt have been more unpopular and possibly Bengal service interest may have unduly weighed against decision which would have taken from the old province some of its most prized employment....\textsuperscript{57}

Also the provinces would have no seaport and Assam would have remained a commissionership.\textsuperscript{58} The Secretary of State, Lord Morley, although in constant correspondence with Lord Minto, and in full knowledge of the political motive behind the partition, kept up his stand that there was no political motive underlying the partition, that the partition had become necessary for facility of administration and that it was inexpedient to interfere with what was now an accomplished fact.\textsuperscript{59}

The 'Sanjivani' refuted these arguments one by one. In an article and showed them to be untenable. It wrote that Morley's first official act had been to alter in certain respects his predecessor's scheme of Army administration. It charged further that the new colonial Secretary had upset his predecessor's decision about Chinese labourers in the Transvaal. It also reminded the people that the Education Act of the late conservative Government was about to be amended by the present Government.\textsuperscript{60}

The Indian problem however remained difficult and unintelligible to Lord Morley and he was unwilling to analyze the conditions which led to the unsatisfactory state of things in India lest he should thereby expose Lord Curzon's misdeeds and official oppression and thereby destroy official prestige in the country.\textsuperscript{61} When questioned by Mr. Rees in the House of Commons Mr. Morley said that he was not aware that recent administrative changes in Eastern Bengal had given rise to a widespread discontent in that part of the country. The 'Hitavadi' of 8th June 1906 asked "Was it ignorance or political

\textsuperscript{56} Minto to Morley, dated the 20, Dec. 1905. Quoted in Chaudhury V. C. P. 124
\textsuperscript{57} Minto to Morley, dated the Feb.5, 1906. Chaudhury V.C.P. op. cit. P.124
\textsuperscript{58} Ibid
\textsuperscript{59} Sanjivani, March 1, 1906 RNP (B)
\textsuperscript{60} Ibid
\textsuperscript{61} Sri-Sri Vishnu Priya-O-Ananda Bazar Patrika, June 18, 1908, RNP (B)
duplicity which led the Secretary of State to give this reply?"62 The faith of the people in
the Liberal Government was being gradually shaken by such replies given by Morley.
The paper charged that whenever an Indian question arised in the House, Morley tried to
take shelter behind official reports and tried to conceal the real state of things. But at the
same time he tried to win their hearts by sweet words. The paper asked "is this the high-
sounded sincere and popular Liberalism of the English people?"63

By 1908, the situation changed, as is evident from Lord Morley’s speech at the
Civil Service club when he said after Khudiram Bose Bomb case -

“I am trying to feel my way through the most difficult problem ever faced by a
responsible Government. This is not the moment to analyse the conditions leading
to this state of things.” “Our first duty is to keep order. It would be idle to deny
that there is a living movement of the people for objects which we ourselves have
taught them to think desirable. Unless we can somehow reconcile order with the
satisfaction of their aspirations the fault will be ours and not theirs, and it will
mark the first break-down of British Statesmanship.”64

At this critical juncture, when the anti-partition agitation was making the British
Government uneasy, the Bihari leaders came out in open support of the Government and
projected a loyalist stance, as we have already seen in chapter three. In 1907, the Bihar
Land Holders’ Association expressed their loyalty to Sir Andrew Fraser and no wonder
won his sympathetic response.65

ANDREW FRASER AND RECOGNITION OF THE CLAIMS OF BIHAR

A new chapter in the History of Bihar began in 1905, when the Behar Landholder’s
Association demanded that Patna should be made the second Capital of the Province and
that the Lieutenant-Governor should hold Council meetings at Patna as well as Calcutta.66
Consequently the house at Chajjubagh at Patna was bought by the Government and Sir

62 Hitavadi, June 8, 1906, RNP (B)
63 Ibid.
64 Sri-Sri Vishnu Priya-O-Ananda Bazar Patrika, June 18, 1908, RNP (B)
65 "An Appeal to Sir Andrew Fraser", The Beharee [Mother Copy] July 19, 1907
66 Address of the people of Bihar, File M 16A/12, 1908. Government of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa,
Municipal Department, Municipal Branch, progs- 59 - 61.
Andrew declared... “It is also the order of the Government of India that the Lieutenant-Governor will now reside for a certain portion of year in Patna...”67 Thus, Patna gained the recognition of being another operational base of the British government.

Andrew Fraser’s reply to the land holders Deputation was full of sympathy with the legitimate aspirations of the rising Biharis and a forcible recognition of their claims. Most of the demands of the people were about to be granted. They were promised to be well represented in the Council, the Calcutta University, the Provincial Service and the Education Department from now onwards, their views would be invited on all important matters of the State. Steps were to be taken to enable the heads of the local Government to come more frequently in contact with the people so as to be acquainted with their needs and grievances at first hand, so that the secondary position which Bihar occupied for so long would not continue.68

In 1908, ‘an address of the people of Bihar’ was presented to Sir Andrew Henderson Leith Fraser, Lieutenant-Governor of Bihar and Western Bengal by the Bihar Land Holder’s Association, the Bihar Provincial Association and the Bihar Provincial Moslem League about the ‘grievances, needs and aspirations’ of Bihar. As the principal reason given out for the Partition of Bengal was greater personal attention of the Lieutenant-Governor to the distant areas for better administration, they wrote- “It strikes us that the affairs of 25 millions of Biharis require as much time and attention- if not more- as the affairs of 16 millions of Bengalis”.69

About the demand of greater employment of Biharis in the Public Services he said that there had been of late some considerable improvement in regard to the amount of attention which the claims of Biharis had received in connection with the Public Services, but the position was very far from being satisfactory in respect of this matter at that moment.70 Fraser hoped to extend the system of recruiting by divisions which secured the recognition of local claims already in existence in Provincial Service to other departments like Judicial, Education and Public Works etc. He further approved the demands of the Biharis that in Engineering and Medicine preference should be given to Bihari graduates

67 Ibid
68 The Beharee, July 9, 1907
69 File M 16A/12. op. cit.
70 Ibid.
for appointments in Bihar, the Provincial Civil Service and the Judicial Service ought in Bihar to be manned almost, if not quite, exclusively by Biharis, Fraser agreed that a man is a better judge, a better executive officer, a better school master, if he can speak in the vernacular of the people among whom he is working.\(^{71}\)

The next subject on which Fraser gave highest importance was Education. He said that a scheme was in progress for bringing the Patna College\(^{72}\) and the Collegiate School up to the highest condition of efficiency. He also mentioned that grants were to be given to the Bihar National College, the Bhumihar Muzaffarpur College\(^{73}\) and the Tej Narain Jubilee College at Bhagalpur. There was to be a training college for Hindi\(^ {74}\) teachers and a Law School at Patna. He advised the Biharis that they ought to remain united in their determination to advance the interests of Bihar, and that they ought to be ready at all times in a courteous and reasonable way such as they had adopted at the present time, to lay their views before the Head of the Government and the officers who work amongst them.\(^ {75}\) A change of attitude is clearly evident in Fraser's dealing of the demands of Bihar. The British Government was now eager to win the support of Biharis as a protecting shield against the onslaught of Bengali Swadeshi and Boycott movements, going on in the country. Also, the British Government was gradually realizing that the grievances of Bihar were by all means true and would lead to great discontent in the future, if not removed soon. It would take time to remedy the state of affairs at present existing.

Sir Henry Cotton, M.P., circulated among members of the House of Commons the following memorandum in explanation of his amendment to Buchanan's proposed restoration of the last clause to the Indian Councils Bill, which authorized the creation of Provincial Executive Councils.\(^ {76}\) It was recognized by Sir Henry Cotton that when the scheme of a partition had actually taken effect, and many additional appointments had been made in consequence of its operation, such as a new Lieutenant-Governorship, a new Board of Revenue, new Secretaries and new Heads of departments, it would be no easy matter to set the partition of the province altogether aside. But it was possible to

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\(^{71}\) Ibid.

\(^{72}\) Ibid

\(^{73}\) Ibid

\(^{74}\) Ibid

\(^{75}\) Ibid

\(^{76}\) "How to Remedy the Partition Blunder" The Beharee May 7, 1909. Mother Copy at Sinha Lib, Patna
devise a new scheme of dividing the province which would absorb the new officials and at the same time give effect to a partition which would satisfy the feelings, wishes, and sentiments of the people concerned and allay the bitter irritation and unrest and dangerous popular symptoms to which the partition had given rise.\(^77\)

The deep-rooted dissatisfaction seething throughout Bengal, earning for itself the sympathy of the entire nation, called for a re-consideration of reverting the status-quo-ante of the Curzonian edifice of the Partition of Bengal. The charges of 'divide and rule' which cut a clear wedge into an essentially united people, put aside the genuine demands of the Hindi-speaking population of self-determination. The constant charges of the Indian Press of sustained secrecy in the dealings of the Government made the fair-minded British public uneasy. The reflections of Oriental-diplomacy in the policy of Lord Curzon called for its serious re-consideration at the Whitehall. Sir Henry Cotton emphasized that more than one scheme had been put forward in Bengal to place the Bengali-speaking community under one and the same administration. But the scheme which would be most popular, with all sections of the community and cause the least administrative inconvenience would be the establishment of a new Lieutenant-Governorship. With its Head quarters at Patna instead of Dacca, and would comprise the tract of country known as Bihar and Chotanagpur and Orissa, and leave Bengal proper, including Assam, under one Government. The redistribution would work out thus:\(^78\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Division</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dacca</td>
<td>Do</td>
<td>15,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chittagong</td>
<td>Do</td>
<td>16,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rajshahiye</td>
<td>Do</td>
<td>18,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burdwan</td>
<td>Do</td>
<td>14,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presidency</td>
<td>Do</td>
<td>12,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assam</td>
<td>Do</td>
<td>56,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^77\) Ibid
\(^78\) Ibid
Lieutenant – Governorship of Bihar.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Patna and Tirhoot</td>
<td>24,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhagalpore</td>
<td>20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chotanagpur (including Feudatories)</td>
<td>46,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orissa (including Feudatories)</td>
<td>29,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This arrangement, stressed by Sir Henry, would bring the entire Bengali-speaking people together, and retain under Bengal the province of Assam as the existing partition does. It would also create a new Lieutenant-Governorship, the population of which would not be Bengalis. This alternative scheme of partition would gratify the Bengalis by according recognition to their strong sense of nationality which had been outraged by the arbitrary disruption of the Bengali-speaking population, and it would please the inhabitants of Bihar, who had long been agitating, through their accredited organs, for the establishment of Bihar as a separate province.79

Although it would be impossible to say that any scheme of partition would not be open to some objection or would be universally adopted but Sir Henry put forward that the scheme would be a popular measure from an administrative point of view and would offer minimum of disturbance. It was a proposal which proceeded along the line of least resistance. No valid argument against it could be based on the ground of expenditure already incurred in establishing a new Government at Dacca. An official residence for the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal had always been urgently required at Dacca, and the new building would make, felt Sir Henry a very suitable residence for the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal when he visited Dacca on tour. The present Lieutenant-Governor of East Bengal and Assam and his staff, the Secretaries, the Board of Revenue, and heads of departments could, with some change of personnel be transferred from Dacca to Patna.80 There would have to be some readjustment of officials, but Sir Henry stressed on the point that taken as a whole, there appeared to be no administrative scheme of similar

79 Ibid
80 Ibid.
magnitude which would be more easily and quickly carried out. Sir Henry, however felt that the adoption of this scheme would not suffice by itself to allay the present unrest. What was wanted therefore was to supplement the modification of the partition by the conversion of the Lieutenant-Governorship and Council. Sir Henry demanded that in all circumstances, the jurisdiction of the High Court of Calcutta should remain unimpaired and un-curtailed over the whole area of the presidency of Fort William to which it extended at that time. Lord Morley's reform proposals did not contemplate this conversion but they provided for the appointment of an Executive Council to assist the Lieutenant-Governor. The re-introduction of clause 3 into the Bill enabled Sir Henry Cotton's suggestions to be carried out about a governorship for Bengal, within a measurable distance of time. Such a measure was a decisive improvement on the existing arrangements. Lord MacDonnell gave a notice for an amendment to be substituted for clause 3 of the Bill but he later withdrew it when the Clause had been rejected. Referring to the proposal of Lord MacDonnell to transfer the Burdwan and Presidency Divisions, including Calcutta to the Government of Eastern Bengal, the 'Pioneer' condemned the amendment because it raised the question of the "partition Lord Mac. Donnell wrote in protest that all the Bengali-speaking people under one should be brought under one administration, leaving the different Hindi-speaking races to be separately provided for. This was the natural line of the division, indicated by ethnical and linguistic as well as by geographical consideration; and it could even now be effected with a minimum of administrative disturbance by making Sir Norman Baker the next Lieutenant-Governor of East Bengal and Assam enlarged as he proposed. He said ...

"I can only continue to regret that while all great Indian provinces will now be free, under Lord Morley's Scheme to press forward in national life and development Bengal, the best educated, the most advanced, and till lately the most docile and orderly of them all, should be hampered in its progress by the division of its people."

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81 Ibid.
82 Ibid.
83 Ibid.
84 'Separation of Behar', April 30, 1909, The Beharee. Mother Copy. Contains extract from the letter of Lord Macdonnell to the Times printed under the above heading)
85 Ibid (Mother Copy) also corroborated by the Hitavadi, April 23, 1909 RNP (B) and the Basumati, April 24, 1909 RNP (B)
The Nayak of February 7th, 1909, wrote that they could not believe that the ‘Pioneer’ had not understood the real significance of the proposal. It was surely not intended to keep the capital at Dacca after transferring the Presidency and Burdwan Divisions to the Province of Eastern Bengal. Lord MacDonnell’s real intention was to annul the Partition of Bengal and to bring the whole Bengali nation under a single ruler. The paper felt that Lord Macdonnell’s proposal, was very good and most opportune as the centralization Commission recommended the appointment of Governors in all the provinces that were being ruled by Lieutenant-Governors and the Bengalis had also been asking for a Governor for the whole of Bengal.86 The ‘Beharee’ however wrote that in the course of his letter to the ‘Pioneer’, Lord Macdonnell had proposed the creation of a Chief-Commissionership for Behar under some misconception. In case the modification of the partition was agreed upon, continued the paper, there would be no difficulty in securing a separate Lieutenant-Governorship for Bihar.87

TOWARDS THE CREATION OF A NEW PROVINCE

The focal points of discussion were the ever-increasing gaps in the Curzonian edifice, the appeasement of the Bengali frustrated sentiments, needs of better administration of India as a whole and of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, appeasement of Bihari and Oriya demands, need of keeping Bihar and Orissa away from the pernicious influence of the Bengali nationalist sentiments, providing a magnanimous boon for the Indians at the Durbar without taxing the Europeans and providing all the above mentioned objectives without alienating Muslim sentiments. Thus, the creation of the new Lieutenant-Governorship of Bihar and Orissa in 1912, has to be seen as only a constituent factor in a much wider scheme of perpetuance of British rule in India.

In a letter of 27 January, 1911 Lord Crewe, the Secretary of State for India informed Lord Hardinge, His Excellency the Viceroy of India, of the King George V’s desire to unite the two Bengals and raise them into a Presidency. The King himself had always disliked the change and he had been supported in this view by many people, including Sir Walter Lawrence, Curzon’s Private Secretary, who had been opposed to the policy from its inception. Crewe wrote that the King had set his heart upon doing

86 Nayak, Feb. 7, 1909. RNP (B)
87 “Separation of Behar”; The Beharee (Mother Copy), April 30, 1909.
something which would satisfy that section of opinion in India which regarded partition as a mistake. He therefore asked Crewe to evolve a plan of re-unification of the two
Bengals.88

Crewe's letter of 27 January, 1911 does not explicitly mention anything about Bihar, Orissa and Assam but when the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, Sir Edward
Baker's letter of 14th February, 1911 to the Viceroy, is read in connection with Crewe's
letter, one can easily understand that the separation of Bihar, Orissa and Assam from the
union of the two Bengalis is intended by Crewe, otherwise the scheme becomes at once
utterly impractical. The primary object of the Government to partition Bengal was given
out to be relief of burden on the Bengal Government. Now if these areas are not separated
from Bengal, then Bengal will have the entire area of pre-partition days in addition of
Assam which had been separated from it in 1874.89

Financial objections were raised by Baker on the proposal of Crewe. He wrote to
Hardinge that if it was assumed that these two Chief Commissionerships (Bihar and
Assam) were created along with the Presidency of Bengal with Orissa joined to it, the
inevitable duplication of administrative machinery would considerably exceed, not
merely that which obtained prior to 1905, but also that of the existing arrangements. If
Bihar and Assam were created Lord Curzon's objections of administering minor
provinces with small cadres of their own, would be revived and this difficulty would be
experienced in two provinces instead of one. "It would be an extremely retrograde step to
revert to this system in Assam, and to introduce it de novo in Behar."90

The first discussions of Lord Hardinge with the members of his Council about the
suggestions made by the King for the creation of a third Governorship i.e. of Bengal, led
to his rejection of the scheme outright. Hardinge rejected the scheme at first because "It
would be regarded as a concession to noisy clamour. It would be a severe blow to the
loyal section of the Indian people." which was by far the largest section, and it would
convince them that it" was "only necessary to go in for sedition, and crime to eventually
attain any object they may desire. Further, it would create the most profound anarchy in

Papers, Vol.-113, Roll no. - 14, Box no. -417, N.M.M.I., New Delhi
89 Letter dated Belvedere, Calcutta, 14th Feb, 1911, from Baker, Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal to the
Viceroy, Ibid.
administration of the two Bengals” which was now “settling down very quietly....”  
Hardinge was convinced that “the position of a Governor in Calcutta under the shadow of
the Viceroy would be absolutely impossible. The best possible solution was to allow the
suggestion to quietly drop altogether. The feeling about partition has almost entirely
disappeared, and in a year or two nobody will think of it. What they wanted was quiet,
and any tinkering with what was done six or seven years ago would raise a terrible
storm.”

Crewe was however reluctant to abandon all hope of finding a way out until every
possible alternative had been tried. He suggested to form Calcutta and the surrounding
districts into an Imperial Enclave directly under the Viceroy, creation of another Capital
for Bengal Government and re-union of the provinces under a Governor assisted by
Commissioners. Lord Crewe, himself mentioned that the difficulties of the scheme
would be the huge costs of setting up of a new establishment and administration, the
question of shifting the Law Courts, the sentiments of Calcutta at being taken out of
Bengal, additional burden to the Viceroy requiring the establishment of a Secretariat for
the management of ordinary affairs and finally the effects on the Muslim masses and the
balance of electoral power. However, Crewe suggested that there would be a distinct
administrative convenience in dissociating the Government of India from the Government
of Bengal and also a permanent satisfaction would be caused by the change.

J.L. Jenkins regarded that it would be most inconvenient for the Governor-General
and a Governor in Calcutta to reside in the same city as- 'two Kings in Brentford'.
Even Mr. Gokhale had advocated the holding of Legislative Sessions at some other place
than Calcutta as it was felt that Calcutta had an undue influence upon the Government of
India. Jenkins agreed with the idea of Lord Crewe that there ought to be an Imperial
Capital in imitation of federal capitals of the United States, Canada, South Africa and
Australia. The actions of the Bengal Government were hampered and criticized in a
manner from which those of other Local Governments were exempted. The public

91 Ibid.
92 Letter no. 19, Government House, Calcutta, 16th Feb. 1911, Viceroy to Crewe, Private and
Confidential. Ibid.
94 Ibid.
95 Enclosure to the Letter dated Calcutta, 14th Feb. 1911, Private and Secret from J. L. Jenkins C. S. I,
Member of Viceroy’s Council to His Excellency the Viceroy., Ibid
opinion in Calcutta was not always the same as the public opinion in the rest of India. Provincial jealousies were fostered by the undue importance given to the opinion of the Bengalis. Despite these advantages Jenkins was not in favour of the creation of an Imperial Enclave. He wrote: “Calcutta was not like Bombay, an island city, largely cosmopolitan whose interests were not absolutely identical with those of the country immediately behind. It was part and parcel of Bengal and drew most of its wealth from Bengal. The placing of Calcutta and Bengal under separate Governments would be regarded as another and a worse partition; and in short the measure so far from being one of conciliation would have precisely the opposite effect”.96

Sir Edward Baker, the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, felt that Lord Crewe's suggestion to form Calcutta into an administrative enclave, directly under the Viceroy, excluding it from the province to which it geographically belongs, so that Partition of Bengal can be revoked and the Bengals can be united, failed to appreciate the true consequences of such an arrangement. He stressed that Washington, which was a Capital only in political and social sense had no real analogy to Calcutta, the second largest city in the British Empire, the commercial, industrial and financial capital of the Eastern half of the Indian Continent. Calcutta had an enormous foreign trade, both import and export, and was the chief emporium and distributing centre of the whole country lying between Chittagong on the east and Kanpur on the west. It was vitally and intimately concerned with the great industries of Eastern India, jute, tea and coal, all of which substantially were financed and administered from Calcutta. He also pointed out that an enclave system would force the Government to supervise and control the Indian owned press based in Calcutta. Thus, separation of Calcutta from all these links was impossible.97 Captain Williams, the Private Secretary to the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal drew attention to the fact that due to the enclave system the local Government would be divorced from all connections with numerous educational institutions at the Presidency, including the Presidency College.98 The scheme of creation of a separate seat of Government of India which would facilitate the union of Bengal was rejected because it was felt that the enclave system instead of pleasing the Bengalis would bring about the severance of all

96 Ibid.
97 G. I. Letter dated Belvedere, Calcutta, 14th Feb. 1911, from Sir Edward Baker K.C.S.I, Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal to the Viceroy, Ibid (22)
administrative, commercial, educational, social, emotional connections of Calcutta from the rest of Bengal and would lead to misapprehension and discontent of the most serious character. However, attempts had been started to get a solution for revoking the Partition and the most important idea that emerged out of this discussion was expressed in the words of Hardinge-

"I am filled with horror at the idea of the Viceroy governing Calcutta as a 'enclave', and I think that, if ever a Governorship of Bengal is created, the Government of India had better clear out and go elsewhere."99

The second suggestion of Lord Crewe was that the provinces should be re-united under a Governor who would be assisted by Commissioners. Jenkins believed that the re-united provinces would be too heavy a charge for a single Government. The Government of Bengal, before the partition was able to administer an area of 22,949 square miles and a population of 81,683,526 due to the system of Permanent Settlement. However now, the management of business in the Legislative Council, politics was more important than land revenue administration which was fast losing its relative importance. All Chief Commissioners worked directly under the Government of India and a Governor with Chief Commissioners subordinate to him as was Lord Crewe’s suggestion, would create difficulties and a clash of power between the Governor of Bengal and those of the Governors not only of Madras and Bombay but also with the Governor-General of India.100 Besides, Crewe’s proposals would bring about the detachment of the High Court from the two provinces it served. Also, that the Government of India had no cadre of its own and would become dependant on local governments for the provision of staff.101

Another great objection raised by the British high officials like Jenkins, Baker etc. was that it would alienate the Muslims who had till then been firm supporters of the Raj. Jenkins wrote:-

"It is sincerely to be hoped that the partition will not be touched in anyway. The agitation against it has died down almost completely. No one now expects any

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100 Enclosure of Letter dated Calcutta, 14th Feb. 1911 (Private and Secret), from Jenkins, Member of Viceroy’s Council to Lord Hardinge, the Viceroy of India, Ibid.
101 Letter dated Belvedere, Calcutta, 14th Feb., 1911, from Baker to Viceroy. (23). Ibid.
change. The vast majority of the people of Eastern Bengal who were shamefully neglected under the old regime, were always in favour of the partition. They have now begun to enjoy and appreciate the benefits of it. They have been assured; over and over again, that the partition is immutable; and if it is now disturbed, they will justly accuse us of breach of faith, and confidence in our consistency and honesty of purpose will be shaken throughout India. The British Government has enough perfidies of this kind to its account without committing another.  

The British Government thus feared that both the Muslims and the other loyalist classes would feel betrayed and abandoned. This feeling of bitterness and contempt would not be removed by any kind of explanations. Lord Hardinge fully grasped the need to keep the millions of Muslim masses loyal to the Raj. He understood that if the partition was revoked on the lines suggested by Lord Crewe, consistency and honesty of purpose would be shaken throughout India. There can be no doubt that the abolition of the new province would be regarded as a Hindu triumph and a blow, not only to the Muslims of East Bengal but to the Muslims of the whole of India. Thus, we see that Lord Crewe’s overt suggestion of creation of Calcutta as an Imperial Enclave, directly under the Governor-General of India with the creation of a new Capital of Bengal possibly at Dacca and creation of a new Governorship of Bengal; and the assumed creation of Chief-Commissionership of Bihar, Assam and Orissa were considered by Lord Hardinge, Jenkins and Baker to have unanswerable flaws which would rather than provide conciliation, would produce the opposite effect. Thus, neither the Viceroy, nor the Home Member- James Jenkins or the Lieutenant-Governors of the Bengal- Baker and Hare, were receptive to Crewe’s proposal. The King yielded to the Viceroy’s strong views on the matter. The entire idea was dropped for the time being but the problem of a suitable boon at the Durbar without taxing the British people still remained.

In the meantime, various practical considerations against the Partition were put forward by the Nationalist leaders like Surendra Nath Banerjee, Sachchidanand Sinha, RashBehari Ghosh and others, to the British Government. It was pointed out that under the existing system, the old and new provinces with the exception of Bihar, Orissa,

102 Jenkins to Viceroy, 14th Feb. 1911, Ibid.
Chotanagpur and Assam were inhabited by the same people, who spoke the same language, who had the same manner and customs and the same system of land laws. The two Bengals were however provided with two separate Legislatures which could enact different and even conflicting laws for the same conditions. As Sinha and Narayan had pointed out the Bengali leaders now accepted that the partition followed no natural boundaries, observed no racial or linguistic affinities and secured no territorial symmetry or compactness. The remoteness of Jalpaiguri, Malda, Dinajpur, Rajshahi, Bogra, Rungpur from Dacca and Shillong, the capitals of the new Province were not taken into consideration when the Partition was effected. The Partition stimulated discord, fanaticism and a sense of estrangement between the Hindus and the Muslims and had put restrictive measures on the press and the public alike.\(^\text{104}\)

The rise of extremism and revolutionary terrorism in India was attributed to the hurt sentiments of the people caused by the Partition. The spate of political dacoities, murders and assassinations forced Lord Hardinge to re-consider the question of Partition. Hardinge noted-

"The feeling amongst the Bengalis in both provinces, who hold most of the land, fill the professions and exercise a great influence in public affairs is as strong as ever. It is deeper and more persistent than anyone imagined it to be, and there is little hope that it will disappear for many years, if at all. The demand for partition is now becoming a traditional demand based on racial reasons, like Home Rule for Ireland. And, as long as it exists, we must be prepared for trouble in Bengal. There is a feeling of expectation abroad that the King will, on the occasion of the Durbar, reverse the deed of partition and will re-unite the Bengali population of the two provinces. In the absence of any large boon to satisfy the general expectations, and to fill the imagination of the people of the country and more particularly of Bengal, we must, I fear, be prepared for a recrudescence of revolutionary crime next year when the Durbar is over."\(^\text{105}\)

Influenced perhaps by the need of good governance of Eastern Bengal which was at that time swept by a tide of extremism and revolutionary terrorism, as well as, by the constant

\(^{104}\) Home, Delhi B, Deposit. Dec. 1911, From Rash Behari Ghosh and others to Hardinge.
\(^{105}\) Note by His Excellency the Viceroy, page-30, Hardinge Papers, N.M.M.L, Vol-113, Roll No. - 14, Box No. 417, N.M.M.L, New Delhi
demands made by the Biharis and the Oriyas of the creation of a separate province on linguistic basis, James L. Jenkins, Member of Viceroy’s Council put forward a ‘bombshell’ suggestion of reversal of the Partition of Bengal. The essential point of this new scheme put forward by Jenkins was the Transfer of Capital to Delhi.106

In view of the prevailing political situation of the country a settlement had to be found out that would be satisfactory and conclusive. Therefore it should (i). provide convenient administrative units, (ii). satisfy the Bengalis, (iii). conciliate Muslim sentiments and (iv). be so clearly based upon broad grounds of political and administrative expediency as to negative any presumption that it had been exacted by clamour and agitation.107 The final scheme that was promulgated to satisfy all these conditions was :-(I). Restore the Chief Commissionership of Assam,(II). Make Bihar and Orissa into a Lieutenant-Governorship with a Legislative Council, and a capital at Patna or elsewhere,(III). Erect Bengal proper into a Presidency with a Governor in Council appointed from England,(IV). Make Delhi the Imperial Capital, placing the city and the surrounding districts under the direct administration of the Government of India.108

We find tremendous similarities in the Government proposals and those which had been suggested by Sachchidanand Sinha and Mahesh Narayan in 1906. Sinha and Narayan had suggested the re-union of the two Bengals with the five Bengali-speaking divisions viz. Burdwan, Presidency, Rajshahi, Dacca and Chittagong along with Assam Division. The union of the rest was accepted by Hardinge except Assam as he felt that Assam which was still in a backward condition, was more fit to be administered by a Chief Commissioner than the more highly developed form of Government of Bengal. Besides, events of the past twelve months on the Assam-Burma frontier were perhaps responsible for this proposal.

Sinha and Narayan’s life’s work was to establish the separate identity of Bihar which was accepted by Hardinge in this proposal that the Biharis and Oriyas had long demanded separation from Bengal and had little in common with the Bengalis either in language or sentiment. Also Sinha and Narayan had claimed that Orissa should be grouped with Bihar together into a separate administration which should be under a

107 Note by His Excellency the Viceroy of India (Secret) H-20.6.11, Ibid.
108 Ibid
Lieutenant-Governor and not a Chief Commissioner. Even this demand was respected by Lord Hardinge in his proposal where Bihar and Orissa were put together under a Lieutenant-Governor. Hardinge proposed that there may be districts that would have to be transferred to round off the two proposed provinces, but these subsidiary questions would be enquired later. Also the additional expense that would by this scheme be incurred would be simply that of a Chief Commissionership of Assam.  

About the transfer of the Imperial Capital to Delhi, Lord Hardinge wrote—

“This last proposal is the keystone of the whole scheme, and, according as it is accepted or not, the scheme must stand or fall.”

The Viceroy asked for the opinion of the members of his Council, Sir Guy Fleetwood Wilson, Mr. J.L. Jenkins, Mr. R.W. Carlyle, Mr. S.H. Butler, Mr. Syed Ali Imam, Mr. W.H. Clark and the Commander-in-Chief O’M Creagh. Fleetwood Wilson believed that the partition had to be based on some other re-adjustments of so much greater importance as to overshadow the actual partition re-arrangements. He believed...

“At present the Government of India is apt when in Calcutta to look at things through binoculars. When at Simla the tendency is to reverse the glasses and look at things through the wrong end.”

It was thus necessary to transfer the Capital to Delhi which would also win the support of the Muslims. He however, strongly advocated the attachment of Orissa to the Madras Presidency and Bihar to remain a part of Bengal as he thought that...“Behar has already produced capable and resolute politicians and I have not the slightest doubt that, under an ‘English’ Governor, its interests would not be allowed to suffer.” He further argued...

“I think it is hardly necessary to create a Lieutenant-Governorship for Behar and Orissa, especially as we are approximating the time when that post will have to be created for the Central Provinces.” He advocated Bihar to be attached to Central Provinces as a second option. The reason behind these suggestions was the tremendous financial burden that would be imposed upon the Government by creation of a new Lieutenant-Governorship.

109 Ibid.
110 Ibid
111 Note by Sir Guy Fleetwood Wilson, dated 22.6.11, Hardinge Papers. Ibid.
112 Ibid
113 Ibid.
The Commander-in-Chief however, supported the proposal of the Viceroy as the martial races of India, Sikhs, Rajputs and the Muslims would welcome Delhi which had a central position, as the new Capital of India.\(^{114}\)

Jenkins was a strong supporter of the Scheme as he felt that until they got rid of the 'partition ulcer', they shall have no peace in Bengal. The creation of the Capital at Delhi and the related changes in Bengal, Bihar, Orissa, Chotanagpur and Assam would be an '...assertion of an unfaltering resolve to maintain British Rule in India'. Jenkins made the entire scheme all the more essential by pointing out that in near future, some amount of self-government had to be given to the people of India to satisfy their just demands. The Government of India would then restrict itself to matters of Imperial concern and therefore it should have a separate existence and not be a part of any province. He suggested that first a Chief-Commissionership should be created in Bihar which would later be elevated into a Lieutenant-Governorship. He favoured the inclusion of Orissa not in Central Provinces but in Bihar. However, as the Biharis already had a Legislative Council (that of Bengal), even the grant of Lieutenant-Governorship to Bihar, to gain the approval of its people was possible. Assam was to be made into a Chief-Commissionership directly under the Viceroy.\(^{115}\)

Carlyle was not in favour of alienating the Muslims and suggested that East-Bengal should have a Chief-Commissionership in which case East and West Bengal would have a common Legislative Council and High Court but their local administration would be independent. He favored the creation of a Lieutenant-Governorship for Bihar with its Head-quarters at Ranchi. He urged the inclusion of Orissa in Lieutenant-Governorship of Bihar and not its transfer to the Madras Government. For better administration, direct routes between Cuttack and Patna had to be developed. Again, echoing the proposal of Mahesh Narayan and Sachchidanand Sinha, Carlyle suggested that the Beneras division could be added to the new Province.\(^{116}\) However, he was prepared to abandon the entire scheme "should the eastern Bengal Mahommedan opinion be strongly adverse... the keynote of our policy should be to satisfy Mahommedans, that

\(^{114}\) Note by O'M Creagh, dated 24.6.11, Ibid.
\(^{115}\) Note by J. L. Jenkins – 24.6.11, Ibid.
\(^{116}\) Note by R. W. Carlyle – 29.6.11, Ibid.
Butler put forward strong objections to the new scheme some of which included the fact that trade would suffer in Calcutta, Statesman would become a purely local paper, expenditure that has been made in Dacca to make it a Capital of Eastern Bengal and Assam would go in vain, Muslims of Eastern Bengal would not be happy with the change of the Capital to Delhi as changes in that part of the world hardly affect them and above all the Civil Service would lose two important Lieutenant-Governorships. He demanded a separate High Court at Dacca, a separate University, a semi-independent Commissionership at Dacca which would not be closed to the I.C.S. 118

Sir Ali Imam expressed his approval for the Viceroy's proposal. He, very importantly grasped the fact that all the four proposals were in fact parts of a single programme and had to be taken together to give effect to a great political conception. He emphasized that Lord Curzon's knife had cut the Bengalis asunder. As a result they became the minorities in the Council and were dominated by the Biharis and the Oriyas due to their greater population strength. He urged the Viceroy to give the Bengali his due as an enlightened Government should, by reasons of political expediency and higher rights of justice. He pointed out that the Hindu population (3,429,099) of Assam was double of that of the Muslim (1,581,317). In order to gain numerical superiority of the Muslims over the Hindus in East Bengal, Sir Ali Imam suggested that Cooch Behar with a population of Hindus (397,946), Muslims (168,236; Sikkim (Hindus-38,306 and Muslims-21); Hill Tipperah (Hindus-119,192 and Muslims-45,323) should be given to the Chief-Commissionership of Assam. This will bring the Muslims in majority in the proposed Governorship of Bengal. The Burdwan division will have 6,855,164 Hindus and 1,084,820 Muslims; Presidency division- 4,502,490 Hindus and 4,405,537 Muslims; Rajshahi will contain 3,061,876 Hindus as to 5,283,182 Muslims and Dacca- 3,524,287 Hindus and 7,209,562 Muslims; Chittagong will likewise have 251,423 Hindus as to 3,333,326 Muslims. Thus, in the proposed Governorship the Muslims with a total population of 21,316,427 will claim numerical superiority over 19,195,240 Hindus and would thus accept the reversal of the Partition to a certain extent. He argued that the
retention of Manbhum and Hazaribagh in the Bengal Presidency, as demanded by the Bengalis would disturb this equilibrium. He strongly advocated that the districts of Manbhum and Hazaribagh be given to Bihar to which they actually belong, based on affinities of race and language.\textsuperscript{119}

Ali Imam’s argument is supported by the memorials from Chotanagpur sent to Lord Curzon during the pre-partition days in which they clearly stated their affinity with Bihar. Sir Ali Imam urged for the unification of Bihar, Orissa and Chotanagpur into one Lieutenant-Governorship. He provided the population figures in support of his proposal:-

\begin{tabular}{|c|c|c|}
\hline
\textbf{Districts and Divisions} & \textbf{Hindus} & \textbf{Muslims} \\
\hline
Bhagalpur Division- & 6,279,471 & 1,776,705 \\
Patna Division & 5,095,660 & 547,748 \\
Tirhoot Division- & 8,624,133 & 1,238,959 \\
Palamau District- & 533,179 & 52,353 \\
Manbhoom District & 1,132,619 & 62,799 \\
Hazaribagh District & 954,105 & 119,656 \\
Ranchi District & 474,540 & 419,172 \\
Singhbhum District- & 265,144 & 5,375 \\
Orissa Division & 4,183,456 & 103,359 \\
Sambalpur Division & 755,088 & 4,373 \\
Feudatory States of Chotanagpur- & 615,454 & 8,614 \\
Feudatory States of Orissa- & 1,778,921 & 7,880 \\
\hline
\end{tabular}

He stressed on the retention of Manbhum and Hazaribagh districts as they were very much a part of Bihar as Bengali was not the language of Manbhum. Its dialect was known as the Rarhi Boli that merged into Hindi, the language of Bihar. Hazaribagh was totally a non-Bengali district with Hindi as its vernacular. He urged that the Bengalis demanded these two districts not due to affinity of race but due to their rich coal-fields. If these districts were retained in Bihar, the Muslims would gain numerical superiority in Bengal. Guided by Sachchidanand Sinha, Sir Ali Imam a great supporter of the Separation movement in Bihar demanded a Lieutenant-Governorship with a Council for Bihar. He wrote- “As a Behari, I know the feelings and sentiments of the people of that province on this subject. They will resent and oppose to the utmost any proposal to work them up and place them under a Chief-Commissioner. They will insist on a Lieutenant-

\textsuperscript{119} Note by Ali Imam – 1.7.11. Ibid. 
\textsuperscript{120} Ibid.
Governor, a Legislative Council, a High Court of their own and ultimately a University.”

The statesmanship of Ali Imam is reflected in the following words which ultimately influenced the British Government in framing its final policy-

"The Beharis- Mahommedans and Hindus alike are a great asset to us in the disturbed conditions of Bengal, and I think it would be nothing short of a political blunder to alienate their sympathy and strain their loyalty".121

Clark suggested that it would be better to join Orissa to Madras and make Bihar a Lieutenant-Governorship by itself as the geographical position of Bihar and Orissa was an objection to their being formed into a single province.122 The objections raised during 1905-06 Partition of a separate Bihar being an anomaly in the sphere of administration as it would not be able to provide occupants for Provincial Civil Service, were ignored by the Council members as well as the Viceroy.

An insight into the change of attitude of the Viceroy and the other British high authorities can be made by the perusal of the memorial sent by RashBehari Ghosh in June, 1911 which proposed the reconstitution of Bengal proper, Bihar and parts of Orissa under a Governor and Council with Assam under a subordinate Commissioner as in the case of Sindh under the Governor of Bombay. The rest of Orissa and Chotanagpur were to be transferred to the Central Provinces. But should this first scheme be unacceptable to the Government of India, the memorialists suggested, alternatively, the creation of two Lieutenant-Governorships, one for Bengal and Assam, and a second for Bihar and Orissa which was a reflection of the earlier scheme presented by Sinha and Narayan.123 They submitted that no boon would be more warmly appreciated and acknowledged than a modification of the Partition of Bengal. RashBehari Ghosh stated in the memorial that

"...the present division has been made at the wrong end. The Bengalees resent the dismemberment of their people by being placed under two separate Governments. The Beharees have throughout prayed for their separation from Bengal, while the Oriyas likewise in a petition submitted five years ago prayed for being freed from the Bengal administration. As we have already pointed out, neither the Beharees

121 Ibid.
122 Note by W. H. Clark, dated 3.7.11 Ibid.
123 Memorial on the subject of Partition of Bengal, G. I. Home Public, Delhi B Deposit, Dec. 1911
nor the Oriyas have much in common with the Bengalees either in language, manners or customs. Under these circumstances if a partition of the Province were needed to relieve the administration of Bengal the most appropriate division would be to place the five Bengalee speaking divisions with the neighboring Province of Assam and a portion of Chotanagpur under one Lieutenant-Governor and Behar with the rest of Chotanagpur and Orissa under another... May Your Excellency's Viceroyalty inaugurate a fresh epoch by vindicating British justice, fulfilling the royal mandate by rectifying what is admittedly an error and securing the progress and contentment of the people.  

The Viceroy sent his proposal and the opinions of his Councilors to the Secretary of State. The fact that the Transfer of Capital to Delhi and the creation of Governorship of Bengal and the Lieutenant-Governorship of Bihar and Orissa was very closely inter-related and that the announcements had to be made together at the Durbar, was impressed upon the Secretary of State by Hardinge. Absolute secrecy had to be maintained until then. Two drafts (A and B) were prepared to be sent to the Secretary of State. Draft A was highly secret where the ulterior motives of satisfying the Bengali clamor were mentioned and Draft B was to be published, thus the words were sugar-coated to please the public-opinion. Ultra-private Cypher was used for the entire process. The Secretary of State accepted the proposal. He was very impressed with Sir Ali Imam's proposals for Bihar.

The Despatch dated 25th August 1911 from the Home Department was an important step towards the goal of Bihar. The Despatch mentioned the following causes for the proposed changes. The Government of India should not have its seat in the same city i.e. Calcutta which had the seat of a Chief Provincial Government. With the consolidation of British rule in India and the development of a great inland railway system, the original requirements of making Calcutta the Capital of India had ended. Calcutta, due to its hot and moist climate and being situated at the eastern part of India was geographically unsuitable to be the Capital of India. The importance of the Imperial Legislative Council under the Indian Council's Act of 1909, rendered the removal of the

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124 Memorial on the subject of Partition by Rash Behari Ghosh and others. Home, Delhi B, Deposit Dec. 1911.
125 Telegram dated 7th Aug. 1911, from Crewe to Viceroy, Hardinge Papers, op. cit.
126 Home, Delhi A, Dec. 1911, Nos. 8-11, Transfer of Seat of Government of India from Calcutta to Delhi and the Constitutional Changes in the Bengals., N.A.I.
Capital to a more central and easily accessible position practically imperative. The political situation of Bengal (after the Partition) supported the removal of the Government of India from Calcutta. On geographical, historical and political grounds it was generally recognized that the Capital of a great Central Government should be separate and independent as in United States, Canada and Australia. In course of time, the just demands of the Indians of a larger share in the Government will have to be met.

The maintenance of British rule in India depended on the ultimate supremacy of the Governor-General-in-Council. The only possible solution of the devolution of power to the Indians without impairing the supreme authority of the Governor-General-in-Council was to give the provinces a larger measure of self-government with the Government of India possessing power to interfere in case of mis-governance but mainly restricting their functions to matters of Imperial Concern. If this ideal was to be achieved it was necessary that the Supreme Government should not be associated with any particular Provincial Government. The removal of the Government of India from Calcutta would be a step towards the growth of local self-government on sound and safe lines. The transfer would bring about many administrative advantages as well. Due to the proximity of the Government of India and the Government of Bengal, the responsibility of local matters was attributed to the Viceroy. The Government of India took more notice of the public opinion in Calcutta than the rest of India which often varied and brought about provincial jealousies. The resentment among the Bengalis against the Government due to the Partition still persisted and they influenced the public opinion.

The opposition to the Partition was first based on sentimental grounds but since the enlargement of the Legislative Councils with representative elements, the grievances of the Bengalis had become much more real and tangible. The Bengalis were a minority in the Councils as the Biharis and Oriyas with a greater population dominated due to representative element based on population strength in the Councils. The Bengalis were outnumbered by the Biharis and Oriyas in Bengal and by the Muslims and Assamese in Eastern Bengal and Assam. This substantial grievance would be more keenly felt in course of time as the representative character of the Legislative Council would increase with time. Thus, a solution had to be found to obtain peace and prosperity of the country by removing the genuine grievances of the Bengalis. The reversion to the status-quo-ante of the Curzonian Edifice was impossible because the old province of Bengal was
unmanageable under any form of Government and any such step would alienate the Muslims of East Bengal. The Partition of Bengal was responsible for the growing estrangement between Hindus and Muslims. This regrettable antagonism and the violent hostility which the Partition aroused amongst the Bengalis counter-balanced the good work done in Eastern Bengal and Assam where the Muslims reaped the advantages of a sympathetic administration closely in touch with them. Instead of dying down, the bitterness of feeling amongst the Bengalis was becoming more and more acute. The Bengalis were labouring under a sense of real injustice which should be removed without further delay.

However, the satisfaction of the Bengali demands should not be injurious to the sentiments of the Muslims of Eastern Bengal who had remained loyal to the British Government during the anti-partition movement. Therefore various incentives and benefits had to be offered to the Muslims to make them accept the annulment of the partition. In any plan of re-unification of Bengal, the Muslims should have numerical equality or possibly a small superiority over the Hindus. The Governor-in-Council should reside in Dacca from time to time to keep in touch with Muslim sentiments and interests. Their interests had to be safe-guarded by a special representation in the Legislative Councils. And above all a new Capital had to be found which would be acceptable to the Muslims and would please them by reminding them of their former glory. Thus, we see that all the conditions- geographical, political and administrative were conclusive for the Transfer of Capital from Calcutta to a more suitable place.

The question of providing a separate Capital for the Government of India had often been debated with the object of finding a site where the Government could spend all seasons of the year, but, the various sites suggested were either difficult to access or were devoid of historical associations. Delhi was the only possible place. It had splendid communications, its climate was good for seven months in the year. Annual migration to and from Simla could be reduced in volume and would take up much less time and be far less costly, due to their proximity. Some branches of the administration like Railways, Posts and Telegraphs would be benefited from the change to such a central position. The Commerce and Industry Department would be closer to commercial centres of Bombay and Karachi. The political advantages of the transfer would be a driving factor for the change. Delhi was still a name to conjure with. It was associated with the ancient Hindu
legends. It was in the plains of Delhi that Pandava Princes fought with the Kauravas. To the Muslims it would seem that the ancient capital of the Mughals would be restored to its former glory. Throughout India, as far as the Muslim conquest extends, every city had a ‘Delhi Gate’ and among the masses, it was still revered as the seat of the former Empire. The change would be hailed by the Ruling Chiefs. It would be accepted as an assertion of an unflinching determination to maintain British rule in India.  

If the headquarter of the Government of India be transferred from Calcutta to Delhi, which would be the Imperial Capital under the direct administration of the Government of India, the following scheme with inter-dependant proposals were submitted:  

“(I) To reunite the five Bengali-speaking divisions, viz. the Presidency, Burdwan, Dacca, Rajshahi and Chittagong divisions, forming them into a Presidency to be administered by a Governor-in-Council. The area of the province will be approximately 70,000 square miles and the population about 42,000,000.

(II) To create a Lieutenant-Governorship-in-Council to consist of Behar, Chotanagpur, and Orissa with a Legislative Council and a capital at Patna. The area of the province would be approximately 113,000 square miles and the population about 35,000,000.

(III) To restore the Chief Commissionership of Assam. The area of that province would be about 56,000 square miles and the population about 5,000,000.”

The Despatch which bore the signatures of Hardinge of Penshurst, O’Moore Creagh, G. Fleetwood Wilson, J.L. Jenkins, R.W. Carlyle, S.H. Butler, S.A. Imam and W.H. Clark proposed to create a Lieutenant-Governorship-in-Council for Behar, Chotanagpur and Orissa. It said-

“We are convinced that if the Governor of Bengal is to do justice to the territories which we propose to assign to him and to safeguard the interests of the Mahomedans of his province, Behar and Chotanagpur must be dissociated from

\[127\] Ibid.  
\[128\] Ibid.
Bengal. Quite apart, however, from that consideration, we are satisfied that it is the highest degree desirable to give the Hindi-speaking people, now included in the Province of Bengal, a separate administration. These people have hitherto been unequally yoked with the Bengalis, and have never therefore had a fair opportunity for development. The cry of Behar for Beharis has frequently been raised in connection with the conferment of appointments, an excessive number of offices in Behar having been held by Bengalis. The Beharis are a sturdy loyal people, and it is a matter of common knowledge that, although they have long desired separation from Bengal, they refrained at the time of the Partition from asking for it, because they did not wish to join the Bengalis in opposition to Government. There has, moreover, been a very marked awakening in Behar in recent years, and a strong belief has grown up among the Beharis that Behar will never develop until it is dissociated from Bengal. That belief will, unless a remedy be found, give rise to agitation in the near future, and the present is an admirable opportunity to carry out on our own initiative a thoroughly sound and much desired change. The Oriyas, like the Beharis, have little in common with the Bengalis, and we propose to leave Orissa (and the Sambalpur district) with Behar and Chotanagpur. We believe that this arrangement will well accord with popular sentiment in Orissa and will be welcome to Behar as presenting a sea-board to that province. We need hardly add that we have considered various alternatives, such as the making over of Chotanagpur or of Orissa to the Central Provinces, and the creation of a Chief Commissionership instead of a Lieutenant Governorship for Behar, Chotanagpur, and Orissa, but none of them seemed to deserve more than passing consideration, and we have therefore refrained from troubling Your Lordship with the overwhelming arguments against them. We have also purposely refrained from discussing in this despatch questions of subsidiary importance which must demand detailed consideration when the main features of the scheme are sanctioned, and we are in a position to consult local Governments concerned.\textsuperscript{129}

The cost of the transfer to Delhi was given to be 4 million sterling and the construction of buildings for the new capital of Bihar would be 50 to 60 lakhs.\textsuperscript{130} They

\textsuperscript{129} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{130} Ibid.
hoped that "In the event of these far-reaching proposals being sanctioned by His Majesty's Government, as we trust may be the case, we are of the opinion that the presence of His Majesty the King-Emperor at Delhi would offer an unique opportunity for a pronouncement of one of the most weighty decisions ever taken since the establishment of British rule in India." Lord Crewe was convinced that...

"History teaches us that it has sometimes been found necessary to ignore local sentiment, or to override racial prejudice, in the interest of sound administration, or in order to establish an ethical or political principle. But even where indisputable justification can be claimed, such an exercise of authority is almost always regrettable in itself and it will often be wise to grasp an opportunity of assuaging the resentment which has been aroused, where this can be done without practical detriment to order and good government." Lord Crewe agreed with the proposals of Lord Hardinge regarding Bihar. He wrote...

"...you have offered the plainest and reasonable solution, if any substantial change is to be made at all. The three sub-provinces above named," (Bihar, Chotanagpur and Orissa) "while differing inter se in some marked features are alike loosely connected with Bengal proper, and their complete administrative severance would involve no hardship to the Presidency. You describe the desire of the hardy and law-abiding inhabitants of Behar for a clearer expression of their local individuality, differing from the Bengalis as they largely do in origin, in language, in proclivities, and in the nature of the soil they cultivate. Orissa, again, with its variety of races and physical conditions with its considerable sea-board, invested with a peculiar sanctity of religious tradition, prefers a code of land legislation founded on a system of tenure differing in the main from those both of Bengal and of the Central Provinces, and has long felt uneasiness at a possible loss of identity as a distinct community. The highlands of Chotanagpur, far less densely populated than Bengal and containing a large aboriginal element, also possess ancestral and historical claims for separate treatment in various respects. These three sub-provinces with their combined population of some thirty-five
millions would form a charge well within the compass of a Lieutenant-Governorship; and it may be assumed that the controlling officer would be able to bestow continuous care and attention upon each of the divisions within his area."  

Lord Crewe confided the scheme to the King, George V and Asquith as well as Morley. The King received the news with enthusiasm and was eager to announce the scheme at the Durbar. With some difficulties Crewe convinced his Council members. The Viceroy considered all legislative and administrative measures necessary to give effect to the proposed changes. By the sections 38 and 56 of the Government of India Act, 1833 and sections 15 and 16 of the East India Company Act, 1853, it was clear that it was within the competence of His Majesty's Secretary of State to appoint a Governor-in-Council for the Presidency of Fort William in Bengal. This opinion had been expressed by Sir H. Maine in 1868 and nothing had occurred to alter the position. The Indian Councils Act, 1861, sections 9 and 17 empowered the Governor-General-in-Council to appoint times and places of meeting of the Legislative Council at such places within the territories of India as the Governor-General-in-Council may appoint. Under section 16 of the East India Company Act, 1853, the Court of Directors were empowered to appoint a Lieutenant-Governor which was exercised in 1854. Regarding the legislation required for Legislative Councils was concerned, the existing Legislative Councils of Bengal, and East Bengal and Assam would automatically cease to exist on the termination of the appointments of the Lieutenant-Governors of those provinces, that is to say, when a Governor-in-Council would be appointed for Bengal.

On December 12, 1911, at the Delhi Durbar, King George V, announced the transfer of the Capital, the erection of a Presidency for reunited Bengal and the creation of a Lieutenant-Governorship for Bihar, Orissa and Chotanagpur and the restoration of the Chief-Commissionership of Assam....

133 Ibid.
134 Telegram dated Viceregal Lodge, Simla, 5th Sep. 1911 (Private and Secret), Viceroy to Secretary of State, Parliamentary Papers, op. cit.
135 Home, Delhi-A, Dec. 1911, Nos. 8-11, Transfer of the Seat of the Government of India from Calcutta to Delhi and the Constitutional Changes in the Bengal.
137 Home, Delhi-A, Dec. 1911, Nos. 8 - 11
"We are pleased to announce to Our people that on the advice of Our Ministers, tendered after consultation with Our Governor-General-in-Council, we have decided upon the transfer of the seat of the Government of India from Calcutta to the ancient capital of Delhi, and simultaneously, and as a consequence of that transfer, the creation at as early a date as possible of a Governorship for the Presidency of Bengal, of a new Lieutenant-Governorship in Council administering the areas of Behar, Chotanagpur and Orissa and of a Chief Commissionership of Assam, with such administrative changes and redistribution of boundaries as Our Governor-General in Council, with the approval of Our Secretary of State for India in Council, may in due course determine. It is Our earnest desire that these changes may conduce to the better administration of India, and the greater prosperity and happiness of Our beloved people."\textsuperscript{138}

A series of official proclamations followed the King’s announcement by which the dreams of the Biharis were realized. In Calcutta, on 22\textsuperscript{nd} March 1912, the Secretary of State for India in Council by the Notification No. 288 declared:-

"The Secretary of State in Council of India, under the powers reserved to him by the East India Company Act, 1853 (16 and 17 Vict. C.95), and the Government of India Act, 1858 (21 and 22 Vict. C 106), is pleased to declare that the Governor General of India shall no longer be Governor of the Presidency of Fort William in Bengal, and that a separate Governor shall be appointed for such Presidency."\textsuperscript{139}

The proclamation of the Governor General (No. 289) of 22\textsuperscript{nd} March, 1912 declared....

"The Governor General is pleased to constitute the following territories which are now subject to and included within the limits of the Presidency of Fort William in Bengal, namely :- the districts of Bhagalpur, Monghyr, Purnea and the Sonthal Parganas, in the Bhagalpur Division, the Patna Division, comprising the districts

\textsuperscript{138} Home, Delhi-A, Dec, 1911, Nos. 8 – 11, National Archives, Delhi. Transfer of the Seat of the Government of India from Calcutta to Delhi and the Constitutional Changes in the Bengal.

\textsuperscript{139} Parliamentary Papers. Cd. 6189, year 1913. National Archives, Delhi. Proclamations for delimiting the Presidency of Bengal, for constituting the Province of Bihar and Orissa; and for forming Assam into a Chief Commissionership under the immediate authority and management of the Governor-General-in-Council.
of Gaya, Patna and Shahabad, the Tirhut Division, comprising the districts of Champaran, Darbhanga, Muzaffarpur and Saran. Transfer of the Seat of the Government of India from Calcutta to Delhi and the Constitutional Changes in the Bengals. Proclamations for delimiting the Presidency of Bengal, for constituting the Province of Bihar and Orissa; and for forming Assam into a Chief Commissionership under the immediate authority and management of the Governor-General-in-Council the Chotanagpur Division, comprising the districts of Hazaribagh, Manbhum, Palamau, Ranchi and Singhbhum, and the Orissa Division, comprising the districts of Angul, Balasore, Cuttack, Puri and Sambalpur, to be, for the purposes of the Indian Council Act, 1861 (24 & 25 Vict.C.67), a Province to which the provisions of that Act touching the making of Laws and Regulations for the peace and good government of the Presidencies of Fort Saint George and Bombay shall be applicable. The Governor General is further pleased to direct that the said Province shall be called the Province of Bihar and Orissa, and to appoint Sir Charles Stuart Bayley, to be the first Lieutenant-Governor of the Province, with all powers and authority incident to that office. The Governor General in Council is also pleased to specify the first day of April, 1912, as the time at which the application of the said provisions of the said Act to the Province of Bihar and Orissa shall take effect.¹⁴⁰

Thus, the imperial motives of the British government behind the policies and administrative decisions taken, with regard to Bihar’s claim of a separate identity versus Bengali nationalism is clear from our discussion so far. The chapter highlights the fact that the policies of the British Government were actuated by the imperialistic designs. The policy of ‘divide and rule’ adopted by the British, acted as a barrier for the Government’s recognition of Bihar’s claims. Later the British Government accepted the same as it suited their imperialistic motives. Thus, the dealing of aims and aspirations for the fulfillment of provincial interests of the Biharis by the British Government, were mostly limited by the force of circumstances.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid