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Academic Ramification in Colonial India: Revisit to Dhaka University as the Symbol of Bengal Partition

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Abstract: *It has been almost hundred years since University of Dhaka was established back in 1921. It was the 13th University built in India under the Colonial rule. It was that like of dream comes true object for those people who lived in the eastern part of Indian Sub-continent under Bengal presidency in the British period. But when the Bengal partition came into act in 1905, people from the new province of East Bengal and Assam were expecting a faster move from the government to establish a university in their capital city. But, with in 6 years, the partition was annulled. The people from the eastern part was very much disappointed for that, but they never left that demand to have a university in Dhaka. After some several reports and commissions the university was formed at last. But, in 1923, in the first convocation of the university, the chancellor Lord Lytton said this university was given to East Bengal as a 'splendid Imperial compensation'. Which turns our attention to write this paper. If the statement of Lytton was true and honest, then certainly Dhaka University stands as the foremost symbol of both the Bengal Partition in the academic ramification.*

Key Words: Partition, Bengal Partition, Colony, Colonial Power, Curzon, University, Dhaka University etc.

Introduction

It has been almost hundred years since University of Dhaka was established back in 1921 and everyone knows the background of establishing this university. It was the 13th University built in India under the Colonial rule. Dhaka University has contributed a lot as the pioneer institution of Bangladesh to its feet. In fact, it is probably that unique university, which determined the future of the language and the land of a nation. In contrary, it was that like of dream comes true object for those people who lived in the eastern part of Indian Sub-Continent under Bengal presidency in the British period. Actually, Dhaka University, after its establishment, became the symbol of East Bengal, later independent Bangladesh since 1971. (Miah, 2014)

Now the question may come, if it was the symbol of East Bengal, then how it could be the symbol of Bengal Division?

Bengal Partition and Reunification

In the colonial period, greater Bengal was rechristened as East Bengal and West Bengal, when Viceroy George Nathaniel Curzon, the first Marquess Curzon of Kedleston,

popularly known as Lord Curzon, divided Bengal presidency in the year 1905 into two part (colloquially called 'Bangabhanga'). The eastern part was named as East Bengal and Assam. There were no such political division before that time. (Bhattacharya, 2016)

There were a huge protest against the governmental decision of partitioning the Bengal, where there were no example to break lands of other two provinces, Bombay and Madras, at the same time. Intellectual like Rabindranath Tagore for a certain period was the frontier face of the anti 'Bangabhanga' movement. That movement was as massive as out of control not only for the British government, but also for the leaders of the Movement. It turns into the 'Swadeshi Andalan' (Swadeshi Movement) with an out-spark condition. Under fire and pressure, government had no choice but revoked there decision in the historic year of 1911. So after 6 years, the administrative division of Bengal was postponed. Bengal reunited truly, but with that, new drama came into play in the political game. (Chatterji, 1994, p. 01)

The leaders from East Bengal were not happy of the decision made by the 'Curzonian' (Bandyopadhyay, 2009, p. 249) administration. They met the viceroy and conveyed their dissatisfaction. They were against this reunification of Bengal.

Sekhar Bandyopadhyay observes, this dissatisfaction was not from one side of Bengal. It was Curzon and Curzonian admin which done all the messed up to build up those protest all together. Bandyopadhyay writes (Bandyopadhyay, 2009, p. 249):

... the Indian Universities act of 1904 placed Calcutta University under the most complete governmental control; and the Indian Official Secrets Amendment Act of 1904 further restricted press freedom. Then, his Calcutta University convocation address, in which he described the highest ideal of truth as essentially a Western concept, most surely hurt the pride of the educated Indians. The last in the series was the partition of Bengal in 1905, designed to weaken the Bengali Nationalists who allegedly controlled the Congress.

'The last in the series' was such an important aspect to discuss. Before going there, we can look at the background of that policy of 'weaken the Bengali Nationalists'.

"As early of 1821, a British officer, signing himself 'Carnaticus' wrote in the *Asiatic Journal*:

'Divide et Impera, should be the motto of our Indian administration, whether political, civil or military.'

The same thing was put in outspoken language by Lt.-Col. John Coke, Commandant at Moradabad, who, about the time of what the British historians have called the 'sepooy mutiny' of 1857, wrote:

'Our endeavours should be to uphold full force the (for us fortunate) separation which exists between the different religious and races, not to endeavour to amalgamate them. 'Divide et impera' should be the principle of India Government.'

Lord Elphinstone, Governor of Bombay, in a Minute, dated 14th May, 1859, wrote: "Divide et impera' was the old Roman motto and should be ours."

Sir John Strachey, an eminent British Indian Civilian and writer on India, said— “The existence, side by side, of hostile creeds among the Indian people, in one of the strong points in our political position in India.” (Grover, 1993, p. 306)

Probably, we can assume, these examples were vividly creating their successor in Curzon. But it was not Curzon, who initiated to divide the Bengal presidency. But, it's true that, from the very beginning of his tenure in India, Curzon wanted to divide Bengal. Initially, the idea was on the table from 1866. Bengal was the largest presidency among the three colonial presidency and it's administrative areas were increasing gradually thanks to annexation, conquest of land, which integrated Sutej, Assam and Arakan into Bengal from northwest, northeast and southeast respectively (Christie, 1996, pp. 161-171). In fact, practically huge!

In 1866, Orissa fallen down to famine and the pressure of controlling the huge area of Bengal under one administrative body was getting very tough and Sir Stafford Northcote suggested to reduce the size of the Bengal Presidency (Chakravarti & Biswas, 1999, p. XV). In 1874, Assam was separated and started as a chief-commissioner's province. It began its proceedings with 3 million people altogether that time. (Neogy, 1987, pp. 105-106)

But, creating a separated Assam was actually not the goal, it was proven later on. One would see the gradual improvement and intention from the colonial ruler to reduce Bengal's actual areas, which were fully Bengali speaking. Three Bengali speaking areas Sylhet, Goalpara and Cachar were integrated with newly made Assam, while there were some local protest against this decision in Sylhet. In 1892 a proposal was on the board to transfer the whole Chittagong Division (comprising the districts of Chittagong, Chittagong Hills Tracts, Noakhali and Tippera) to Assam. Four years later, in 1896, more eccentric proposal was come for Bengal. Assam's Chief Commissioner of that time William Ward proposed to include Dhaka (then Dacca) and Mymensingh district into Assam. If that would have been happened, Assam would be promoted to a Lieutenant Governor's province, with a separate civil service. But, that was undone that time and only Lushai Hills were included to Assam in 1897. (Sarker, 1973, pp. 9-10)

It's crystal clear that, the colonial project to divide Bengal and weakened its uprising nationalism and intellectual capability was not a plan of sudden. 30 years of thinking and proposals were taking place as catalyst. And Lord Curzon became the successful successor of that legacy.

Curzon came to India in 1900. In March he went to visit Assam. In the European tea garden, planters urged to have a nearer maritime egress than Kolkata (then Calcutta). Government took this as a chance as if the protest was pro-government! That time, the project of those previous plans to divide Bengal was revived alongside the Assam visit of Curzon. And most importantly the admin had their own argument to make a way for Assam by dividing Bengal (Bandyopadhyay, 2009, p. 253):

The Curzonian administration obviously defended the scheme on administrative grounds: it would reduce the excessive administrative burden of the Bengal

government, this would also solve the problem of Assam which would become a lieutenant governor's province with a separate civil service cadre; there would be substantial commercial benefits, as the interests of tea gardens, oil and coal industries would be safeguarded; the Assam planters would be having a cheaper maritime outlet through the port of Chittagong; and the Assam-Bengal railways, which was so vital to the economic development of north-eastern India, would be brought under a single administration."

In the other hand, it was Bengal's on growing population which was under massive scrutiny of the admin and promoted their premeditated mind again to watch Bengal sensitively. In 1901 census, it was reported, Bengal had 78.5 million population then. So, admin became very galvanize to make their mission successful.

Meanwhile, in his note of 28 March 1903, Sir Andrew Fraser, the then chief commissioner of the Central Provinces, had vigorously given the idea and urged to transfer Chittagong Division and Dhaka and Mymensingh. More importantly, for the first time in more than 30 years of scheming, planning, talking and postponing in the table, he came with to outburst the plan that, there would huge political benefits of this divide project.

Curzon accepted the ideas and in the viceroy's "Minute on Territorial Redistribution in India" (Dated: 19 May and 1 June 1903) he put on some massive changes in the Bengal territory, but interestingly doing nothing, rather following and accumulating the previous 1892 and 1896 proposals of his other British colleagues. He proposed in his minute, very strangely though, Chittagong Division, Dhaka and Mymensingh would transfer to Assam. These proposals were first published as 'Risley Papers' on December 3, 1903 by former Indian civil service officer and Home Secretary Sir Herbert Hope Risley (Rahman, 1974, p. 16), where the writer interestingly hoped would "fix the administrative boundaries of India for a generation."¹

Till then, it seemed, there were no plan to create another 'Bengal'. Bengal would be one as named, but its too many main lands, where majority were Bengali speaking people, would have been gone under the non-bengali speaking new province of Assam. Dangerous plan indeed!

Though, after having done all the ground works secretly for next 2 years from 1903, the final permutation-combination was that, Assam wouldn't be created alone in its own name, rather it got to accept the cohabitation with a newly coined name 'East Bengal'. But, still the plan was so serious! Sumit Sarker observes (Sarker, 1973, p. 11):

... Now began a process of expansion, which soon transformed a scheme for transfer of certain districts into a full-scale partition of Bengal. In the last week of December 1903, Fraser suggested that Bakarganj and Faridpur should also be annexed to Assam, converting the latter into a full-scale lieutenant-governor's province. Curzon in course of his East Bengal tour (February 1904) hinted rather vaguely that "a more ambitious" scheme "for a larger readjustment in the east of Bengal" was being considered. While for the next year and a half the general

public was permitted to hear little about the matter—so much so that the impression spread that the whole idea had been dropped—the officials went on merrily with the game of switching about other people's lands. The list of transferable districts steadily expanded—the Bengal government on 6 April 1904 added Rangpur, Bogra, Pabna; five months later Simla even more generously annexed Rajshahi, Dinajpur, Malda, Jalpaiguri and Cooch-Bihar state to the new province.

This final scheme for new province 'East Bengal and Assam' was comprised in Curzon's dispatch of 2 February 1905 and accepted by Secretary of State Broderick, without having any reasonable parliamentary debate. Final declaration of First ever Bengal partition came on 19 July that year, proclamation came on 1 September and from 16 October it was administered.

The new province consisted of all the districts of Dhaka, Chittagong and Rajshahi divisions, along with Assam, Malda and Hill Tippera with having 31 million of population. Dhaka became the capital of that new province. While the remaining part of Bengal, the 'West Bengal' had 54 million comprised with some other places like Sambalpur and feudatory states of Central provinces; Ganjam district and Visakhapatnam agency tracts from Madras centering the capital of Kolkata.

Now, the problem would go in other directions. Among 31 million of 'East Bengal and Assam' 18 million would be Muslims and rests would Hindus and others. Out of 54 million in 'West Bengal' 42 million were Hindus and 12 million Muslims and others. Sekhar Bandyopadhyay observes this numbers very critically and writes (Bandyopadhyay, 2009, p. 252):

“The Bengali Hindus would be outnumbered by the Muslims in the new province, and they would be a linguistic minority in the old, which would contain a large numbers of Hindi and Oriya speaking population... It was these demographic peculiarities of the two provinces, which raised new questions: was the partition really for administrative efficiency?”

Sumit Sarker has the answer of this question (Sarker, 1973, pp. 12-13):

Nationalist opinion..., has always been virtually unanimous in its conviction that all such administrative arguments were little more than smokescreens for a deep imperialist design of 'divide and rule'. The underlying political motive has been variously explained as encouragement of Muslim separatism (this of course is the most common interpretation of all), the creation of a rival centre of nationalist Hindu politics in East Bengal, and a vaguer but very widespread anti-Bengali feeling in British official circles area of 189,000 square miles and a population (in 1901) of 781/2 million, and suggestions for easing the burden on its lieutenant-governor were thus not unnatural. These inevitably took the form of territorial reduction, since Curzon was-violently opposed to the alternative idea or a governor-in-council system on the model of Bombay and Madras.

Sarker goes with further evidence and quoted W. B. Oldham, then commissioner of Chittagong division (Sarker, 1973, p. 14):

As early as 1896, at least one officer—W. B. Oldham, commissioner of Chittagong division— had realised the possible political benefits of a new province which could “unite the most important part of the Mohammedan population of Eastern India”, thus reducing what he called the 'politically threatening' position of the 'Hindu minority' in undivided Bengal. Oldham's minute attracted little or no attention at that time—but eight years later Risley was to describe his views as Very instructive.

One would come to understand the clear motive of Curzon, if that person convinces with Risley's papers. In his note of 7 February 1904, then Home Secretary, Herbert Hope Risley clearly pointed out with some quotations from Curzon's statement. Curzon said, “Bengal united is a power”. Further, “Bengal divided will pull in several different ways. That is perfectly true and is one of the merits of the scheme.” Curzon blamed Congress for manipulation from Calcutta (Now Kolkata) and said, the “best guarantee of the political advantage of our proposal is its dislike by the Congress.” (Bandyopadhyay, 2009, p. 253)

Greater India which was obviously a Hindu major nation alike now, got stuck after Dr. Francis Buchanan's sociological and statistical surveys from 1807 to 1816, in Bengal Presidency, invited by the British East India Company (The Survey of Eastern India, 1838, p. 17). In that survey, it was first time ever whole India came to know that, in the Eastern part of Bengal, there were more Muslims than Hindus. In 1836, William Adam, on his report of vernacular education in Bengal and Bihar also pointed out the same demographic phenomenon. In 1872, there happened the first census of India, where it was revealed, 49.2 per cent of Bengal population were Muslims. This community mainly belonged to the eastern, central and northern districts. The Bhagirathi, one of the courses of Ganges, has produced the ultimate natural geographical divide in Bengal away before the administrative thoughts. Eastern Bengal was majored with Muslims, Western Bengal with Hindus and Central Bengal was balanced with both the communities. Majority part of Eastern Bengal was rural that time, so did the habitant and 90 per cent of them were from peasant base family. (Bandyopadhyay, 2009, p. 254)

So, when, specially from 1896, this scheme of partitioning Bengal was on board, personnel had these demographic equation back of their mind. It was been vividly exercised that, a new state in Eastern part of Bengal would unite the Muslims in extreme level as far as their 'rights' were concern, and that would decrease the political threat against the rulers, from the Hindus as well.

In February 1904, Curzon went to visit East Bengal and on 18 February he gave a speech in the eventual capital Dhaka. There he revealed the whole shebang. He declared that the scheme “would invest the Mohammedans in Eastern Bengal with a unity which they have not enjoyed since the days of the old Mussulman viceroys and kings...” (Sarker, 1973, p. 19)

If these were the reasons, motives and winning situations of Bengal partition from the Curzonian side, there were some really reasonable outcomes which were purely described by Curzon's successors. New viceroy after Curzon, Lord Minto, in his Memorandum of 5 February 1906 indicated that, partition would act to diminish the 'Virtual Class Rule' by the Bengali Upper-class, colloquially known as 'Bhodrolok', who involved into landowning, moneylending and clerical professions, belonging mostly from the upper castes of Brahmin, Kayastha and Vaidya. In the Resolution of October 1906, East Bengal and Assam's second Lt. Governor Sir Lancelot Hare echoed of Minto as well. (Rahman, 1974, pp. 24-25)

These Bengali Bhodroloks indeed monopolised the whole system and obviously with the 'blessings' of the ruler. They occupied, rather fare to say graved the given chance, education and employment to the highest extension in every possible sector. Virtually there were hardly anyone from other communities and this was the main pillar of their political power. In addition, the landlord, Jamindars, were all from the Hindu upper casts and their lower casts were there vassals. In one hand, they were powerful, on the other hand, there were no parallel power who could challenge them. Certainly, when these Bhodroloks and Babu Sahebs became threat for the rulers in many aspects, they were in search of antidote of them. This time, they encouraged the Muslims and the upper class Muslims didn't make any mistake to own the attention of the colonial ruler as before. (Cronin, 1977)

Anyway, this new province existed till 1911 and after a massive movement against this Bengal partition, which also turned into 'Swadeshi Movement', the government of India was forced to declare the annulment of Partition. The movement was basically West Bengal based and mainly the elite Hindus were opposing the partition. But, by the time, the colonial srulers were very much successful to split the Bengali nationalism into two parts. The language based unity of Bengal suddenly over termed by the religious differences and the language base nationalism was under threat due to the consciousness of 'religious nationalism', which had been promoted by the British administration gradually.

Academic Ramification: Establishment of University of Dhaka

In this six years of separation, people from the new province certainly enjoyed some expedite and exclusive benefits ever before. Education and service became very express for them.

Previously, there were 19 colleges in the united Bengal and among them 10 belonged to West Bengal and though East Bengal was Major in population, there were only 9 colleges. General Degree College and other higher educational institutes were 45 in numbers in whole Bengal Presidency. Among them 30 were in West Bengal and only 13 were in East Bengal. Very poor in number indeed and certainly an indication of discriminative academic ramification.

Professor M. A. Rahim, that's why argued in his renowned book written on the basis of history of Dhaka University (Rahim, 1981, p. 3):

Most of the colleges in Eastern Bengal were dominated by the Hindus directly or indirectly and the poor Muslim students failed to get the benefit of higher education from these institutions.

The reasons behind these discriminations were arguably understandable. When British formed rule here in India through the East-India company, it were the Muslim rulers, whom they defeated. So, they didn't actually fell trust on the Muslims. Rather, they gave all the opportunities and patronizations to the Hindus. Thus, Hindu community became rich, educated and by that process gain power. Hindus shown positive attitude toward English language and to University education.

Meanwhile, Muslims thinking pattern were different until a certain time period of 20th Century regarding University education, as Purabi Debnath has written in her research work (Debnath, 2010, p. 78):

The question of Muslim response to University education had been a complex one. Since the days when the Hunter Commission of 1882 considered the depressed condition of Bengali Muslims to be one of the main causes of their educational backwardness, the situation had not changed much till the early years of the twentieth century.

Muslims and their leaders avoided the English system due to their so many prejudices and superstitions; plus the distrust to the ruler as well. Professor Sirajul Islam Choudhury says, 'Bengali Muslims didn't participate in that biggest initiative of education, they were at least 50 years behind in this regard.' Even, in the Persian school, Hindu students were better in number than the Muslims, Professor Choudhury says by referring Willam Adam. (Choudhury, Bangaleer Jatiotabad, 2011, p. 67). This statement was so true. One would get this observation even at least in four high level commissions from by the then government of India or Bengal. They are namely The Hunter Commission of 1882, The Nathan Commission of 1912, The Hornell Committee of 1913 and the Calcutta University Commission of 1917 (Miah, 2014).

So, Hindus took the opportunity and made life prosper; while Muslims remained in the middle age to some extent by not extended their hand to the ruler. In the process, ruler got understand for numbers of times that, Hindus would be very difficult to control. So they decided to return with trust to the Muslims in a way, by which Hindus could be also controlled. When the Muslim leaders came to understand the situation that, there community needs to grow up rapidly with acquiring the modern knowledge of education, they moved faster to take some initiatives. (Razzaq, 2012, pp. 333-350)

First of all, the priority went to establish a university in Dhaka. From 1880s, Muslim leaders from Dhaka were demanding a university, but this demand was not that much die hard. From the 20th century the demand got pressure. So, let us start from the begging to look at the demands of a university in Dhaka in a formal way. On 29 December 1906, the 20th session of the Mohammedan Education Conference was held in Dhaka. All India Muslim League was established in this conference and the honorary joint secretary of the conference Khan Shahebzada Aftab Ahmed spoke about the importance of a university in

Dhaka. In 1908, in a conference of the Province Muslim education society, held in Mymensingh also demand for a university in the capital of Dhaka. On 5 April 1910, a member of East Bengal and Assam legislative council, Anangamohon Naha demand a university in Dhaka.

The demand got in extreme after the revoke of Bengal partition on 12 December 1911. Muslims were certainly got shocked and disappointed on this decision of the government. Viceroy Lord Hardinge quickly came in a position to perceive this situation of the annulment of the partition through various media. On 17 December and 20 December Sir Salimullah wrote two hand written letters to the viceroy Lord Hardinge and expressed his pain and sorrow feelings due the annul of partition. He requested the viceroy to do something in the educational ground for the people of East Bengal, so that they would recover the shocked of the annul. Hardinge gave foremost emphasize to that letter and on 21st December he told and asked the Educational Council member Sir H. Butler that, “Whether it would not be desirable to encourage the creation of a University in Dacca with Mohammedan hostels.... An undeniable proof of our intention to encourage Mohammedan education or in this way to safeguard the interests of the Mohamedan’s in the province.” (Maksud, 2016, pp. 44-45)

Later in 1917 to 1919, the ‘Calcutta University Commission’, popularly known as ‘Sadler Commission’, would reveal that, British government planned to establish a university in Dhaka in the 1909-10 financial year (Calcutta University Commission, 1919). Which would look very contradictory as per as the decision from government was concern.

Anyway, on 31st January 1912, Hardinge came to Dhaka for a 3 days official visit to assuage the aggrieved Muslims (Miah, 2014). Under the leadership of Sir Salimullah and Sher-i-Bangla A.K. Fazlul Haque, a 19 members representative team met the viceroy next day. The Viceroy told them, “The Imperial government realise that education is the true salvation of Mohammedan community and are most anxious to help them... the Government felt very strongly about this, and in view of the difficulty of access to Calcutta from Dacca, and for other reasons, the Government propose to recommend to the Secretary of State the constitution of a University in Dacca and the appointment of a special officer for education in Eastern Bengal.” On 2nd February the government declare to establish a university by releasing a communique. The Muslim leaders became very happy on this decision and they appreciate the decision. (Maksud, 2016, pp. 45-46)

Meanwhile, for nowhere and in a shameful manner Hindu leaders from Kolkata again oppose this decision of the government. On 12 February a 10 members representative team met Lord Hardinge under the leadership of renowned lawyer Rashbihari Ghose. Surprisingly Ghose said: “It is feared that the creation of a University at Dacca will be the nature of an internal partition—a break up the natural life of the people now happily reunited.” (Rahim, 1981, p. 5) Interestingly, these Bengal leaders were against the partition and now they were against a university in Dhaka. This is how they had proven the partition more convenient for the people of East Bengal and that is why the Muslim leaders were unhappy to be reunited. Once, Rabindranath Tagore was with them in the

anti-partition movement and now we would see Tagore was supporting the Muslim leaders and criticized the Hindu leaders. In an essay named 'Hindu Biswabidwalay' in 1911, Tagore wrote (Tagore, 1911):

Aj Amader Deshe Musolman Swatontro Thakia Nijer Unnoti Sadhoner Chesta Koritese. Taha Amader Pokkhe Jotoi Opriyo Ebong Tahate Amader Jotoi Osubidha Houk, Ekdin Porosporer Jotartho Milon Sadhoner Ihai Prokrito Upay... Adunik Kaler Shikkhar Proti Somoy Thakite Monojog Na Koray Bharatbarsher Musolman Hindur Ceye Onek Bishoye Pichiya Rohiyache. Sekhane Tahake Soman Korla Loite Hoibe. Nijeder Swatantro Bisshwabidwalay Sthaphon Proviti Uddog Loiya Musolmanra Je Utsahito Hoiya Uthiachen Tahar Moddhe Protijogitar Bhab Jodi Kichu Theke Thake Tobe Taha Stahi O Sotto Nohe.

Due to the first war world, the scheme of establishing a university in Dhaka was shadowed a bit. But, the report of the Nathan Commission or 'Dacca University Committee' was remained valid for the upcoming times. Nathan Commission was formed on 27 May 1912 by the Government of Bengal. This Commission had 13 members with Robert Nathaniel was the Head of the Commission. DS Fraser, ICS, was appointed the Secretary of this Committee. Remaining members were GW Kuchlu, Director of Public Instruction, Bengal, Rashbehair Ghosh, Advocate of the Calcutta High Court, Nawab Syed Nawab Ali Choudhury, Nawab Sirajul Islam, Ananda Chandra Ray, Pleader and Zamindar of Dhaka, Mohamed Ali of Aligarh, HR James, Principal of Presidency College, Calcutta, WAT Archbold, Principal of Dacca College, Satis Chandra Acharji, Principal, Sanskrit College, Calcutta, Lalit Mohan Chatterjee, Principal of Jagannath College, Dacca, CW Peake, Professor of Presidency College, Calcutta and Samsul Ulama Abu Nasar Muhammad Waheed, Superintendent of Dacca Madrasa. (Chakraborty, 2015)

Later, the Calcutta University Commission, led by the Vice-Chancellor of University of Leeds Sir Michael Sadler, after having worked for 17 months massively, suggested so many points to reduce the pressure of the university and they revived and echoed the issue of 'Nathan Commission' to create a university in Dhaka. Their first point of suggestions was — 'creation of a teaching and residential university in Dacca.' By this suggestion of the Sadler commission, the legislative council of India passed 'The Dacca University Act, 1920' and the Governor General would sign the act on 23rd March 1920 (University of Dhaka, 2014). Sir Philip Hartog became the first Vice Chancellor of the University and the University would inaugurate on 1st July 1921 (Maksud, 2016, pp. 13-24).

'Splendid Imperial Compensation': Turned as the Symbol of Bengal Partition

In 1923, in the university's first ever convocation, the chancellor of DU, Alexander George Robert Bulwar Lytton revealed a sensational information, which became a legend till date. He said, "It is no use recalling the days when Dacca had just ceased to be the capital of Eastern Bengal and when the late Sir Robert Nathan and his committee of

experts were busy designing the University of Dacca as a splendid Imperial compensation.” (Choudhury, 1989, p. 26)

Last three words of these statement draw attention in the public life ‘*splendid Imperial compensation*’! Which meant, Dhaka didn’t have the quality to have a university of its own! Which meant, If the Bengal revoke was not taken place in 1911, Dhaka won’t get a university! How silly. It was sooner or later, they had to establish a university in Dhaka, because of the fact that a huge number of people were depended on Dhaka and they would dream to have a university in their beloved city. But, if this was the main motive to establish this university in Dhaka, then it has to be highlighted that, Dhaka university is the ultimate creation of the Bengal Partition and vice-versa and the colonial rulers voted to that phenomenon of the Hindu middle class, who once said, creating Dhaka university meant to create ‘internal partition’ (Maksud, 2016, p. 51).

Professor Serajul Islam Choudhury observes this two words very keenly to some extent. He says, that partition was basically between the two middle class. This was effect and cause of that internal partition. Though he backs Dhaka University and says, it was not Dhaka University who created this partition. But, as Dhaka University patronized Muslim middle class to galvanize power for the Muslim Nationalism and was leading a communal side against another communal side, so in those development of communal differences or riots, this university really acted as a pioneer. He rightly says, not the whole portion of the candle was lightened, there were dark mixing with it here and there. (Choudhury, 2011, p. 69)

Conclusion

Binoy Ghose, once famously said that, “To understand what is been built, firstly one needs to know what has been broken.” (Translation from Bengali “Ki Gode Uthlo Bujhte Hole Ki Vengechure Gelo Ta Age Jante Hoy.”) (Ghosh, 1979). It’s a very true statement indeed. If we measure Bengal divide and its aftermath under this quotation, we see, the expenses of broken became huge and huge compare to the new built up. Though, Bengal reunited in 1911, but the legacy of its partition carried away after 36 years and Bengal was partitioned once again, this time with the Indian partition itself in 1947. Back in 1903, Sir Herbert Hope Risley hoped, the partition would ‘fix the administrative boundaries of India for a generation’. It came true, tragically, anyway! Interestingly those Hindu middle class, 35-42 years ago who wanted Bengal should be united, this time went on to the reverse side! Thus, For last 70 of years Bengal exists with its two divided hearts! And, obviously, if the British statement was true and honest, Dhaka University, as the pioneer institute of East Bengal, now Bangladesh, stands as the supreme symbol of the Bengal partition!

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