

Understanding Communalism and Partition of India: Caricature in Print Media in Bengal (1906-1947)

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Abstract: *An important part of Indian history was shaped by the roots of communal politics and violence in pre-independence India. Various perspectives have been taken on communalism, including views of it as a distorted consciousness, an unavoidable primal reality, or the product of vested interest-based politics. In Bengal, there were two significant communities: Muslims and Hindus. While these two communities had developed in somewhat different ways in terms of education, society, and economics, even though, on paper, they had been living in harmony for decades, there was a constant sense of hatred and hate within them. This study examines cartoons, a type of visual art that uses caricature to portray themes of communalism and possible separation in light-hearted ways. The study examines a few cartoons linked to the conflicting ideologies that tore apart the Indian subcontinent in the years leading up to 1947.*

Keywords: *Communalism, Hindu-Muslim, Caricature, Separation, Cartoons, Satire.*

Introduction: The twentieth century was the beginning of a systematic political growth of communalism. After forming the Muslim League in 1906, they demanded the country for themselves, thus starting the demand for partition through communalism. However, different political parties, especially newspapers, played an essential role in this division of Bengal. From the partition of Bengal to the partition of India, these communal riots and the partition of the country were expressed through cartoons and caricatures in various newspapers. The newspaper was influential in printing caricatures or cartoons during colonial Bengal. Bengali satirical periodicals began to demonstrate the courage to mock the British Raj. During the colonial era in Bengal, cartoons in print media often included exaggerated and stereotyped depictions of various religious groupings, especially Muslims and Hindus, reflecting communalism. At that time, cartoons were commonly used in publications like *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, *Hindustan Standard*, *Harbola Bhand*, *Basantak*, *Bharatvarsha*, *Modern Review*, *Masik Basmati*, *Sachita Shishir* to transmit political messages with a communal undertone (Mitter, 1997, p.16).

Political Scenario in Bengal: Lord Curzon was the Viceroy of India from 1899 to 1905. During his viceroyalty, on October 16, 1905, the province of Bengal was divided. After Curzon announced the split, the region had a great deal of political upheaval. The Indian National Congress objected to the proposal to divide the province along communal lines. The partition did succeed in causing a sectarian

schism in the country, which contributed to the formation of the Muslim League in 1906. The formation of the Muslim League in Bengal traces back to the early twentieth century when political conditions in British India were evolving. The Bengal region played a significant role in the early years of the Muslim League. It provided a platform for Muslim leaders to articulate their grievances and demand separate electorates and representation in legislative bodies. The League aimed to provide a platform for Muslim political representation and to communicate the interests and concerns of the Muslim community within the broader context of Indian politics. On October 1, 1906, in Simla, a delegation of Indian Muslims led by Sir Aga Khan addressed Viceroy and Governor General Lord Minto on introducing direct elections to enhance Indian participation in governmental activities. They demanded equal representation on district boards, legislative councils, municipalities, and all governmental levels. They said they made up roughly one-fifth, and in some places, one-fourth of the total population. Muslims were given separate electorates in 1909 under the Morley-Minto Reforms. This reform aimed to address the demands of various communities for separate representation in the legislative councils. These augmented the legislature's number. Muslim rights were recognized under the Constitution. Their rights to vote in general constituencies would have been in addition to the ability to choose their members. The idea behind the separate electorate was to safeguard the interests of minorities, particularly Muslims, by allowing them to elect their representatives. The 1909 Morley-Minto Administration Reformation Act established separate elections instead of joint polls, resulting in the 1932 Communal Award. This furthered the division of Indian voters based primarily on religious and ethnic grounds, further solidifying the division of Hindus and Muslims. Undoubtedly, the creation of competing election methods was a means of instrumentalizing communalism. As Chakrabarty notes, the 1909 Morley-Minto reform "stamped the two-nation theory on the political fate of the country" (Chakraborty, 2004, p.152). It is also important to note that the Indian National Congress omitted Muslims in the nationalist movement. Notably, no Muslim leaders attended the 1932 Unity Conference in Allahabad, which was held to discuss the detrimental effects of the Award, because they believed that separate electorates were the only way for Bengali Muslims to gain power genuinely. A communal identity had now replaced the shared Bengali identity, and the divide and conquer policy of the colonial past had coincided with the Muslim leadership's calculated manoeuvring to secure their newfound advantages. The division of Muslims and Hindus greatly influenced an atmosphere of hostility into several political factions (O'Connor, 2018, p.48).

The All-India Hindu Seminar, held at Haridwar in 1915, gave rise to the All-India Hindu-Mahasabha, the first Hindu organization on the subcontinent. The goal of the All-India Hindu Mahasabha was to safeguard and promote Hindu welfare. The Hindu Mahasabha started to show more interest in the province of Bengal in 1939. Due to Dr. Shyama Prasad Mookerjee's efforts, the All India Hindu Mahasabha and

the Bengal Provincial Hindu Sabha amalgamated in 1939. Dr Mookerjee began a trip to Eastern Bengal in September 1939 to assess the situation of the Hindu minority and instil a sense of fraternity in them. He was welcomed with open arms by the locals in nearly every location. He had particular difficulties in several areas. He discovered, meanwhile, that Hindus in East Bengal were experiencing fear and panic. On October 16, 1939, certain districts observed "Hindu Nation Day" to promote Hinduism (Roy and Chatterjee, 2021). However, it also deepened communal divisions by institutionalizing separate political identities based on religion. In the political history of Indian Muslims, this was a turning point, even though Muslims were granted a smaller share than their numerical strength. This move contributed to the rise of communalism and eventually played a significant role in the partition of India in 1947.

The people of Bengal were made to understand that the partition of their province was not only possible but also likely when the All India Congress, at the national level, accepted the partition of Punjab. The Hindu Mahasabha, which had previously supported the notion of an "Akhand Hindustan" (Unbroken India), shifted its position and concentrated on securing the most significant amount of land for a "Hindu India." A Working Committee was constituted in February 1947 to examine "the feasibility and desirability of having a separate province for securing a homeland for Bengal Hindus"¹. In the following months, when the Hindu Mahasabha deployed cadres to promote their cause, the Bengal Congress joined the Partition bandwagon, albeit for different reasons. The Congress party leadership presented the demand as one required to continue in 'nationalist' India. Bengalis, primarily from western regions of the province, sent over 400 petitions to district and provincial Congress officials, advocating for inclusion². Partition politics, however, unexpectedly brought the Hindu Mahasabha and the Congress together. The demand for inclusion inside India among those claiming nationalist credentials found common ground with others who had begun to advocate for a Hindu country. Two things are instantly apparent in these petitions. These petitions demonstrate a well-organized political campaign for partition, with focusing on the western province's Hindu-majority regions, which were more likely to remain in India after partition (Chatterjee, 1994, p.248).

Communalism in Cartoons: Under such political situation in Bengal the print media expressed the tensions and conflicts in writing as well as through caricatures which was either a mockery or a satire. Cartoons and caricature have historically served as powerful tools for social and political commentary, reflecting the nuances of culture. In the context of Bengal, they have depicted the dichotomy between

¹ *Hindu Outlook* (New Delhi), 11 February 1947, in File: 102, Shyama Prasad Mookerjee Papers, II-IV Installment, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi.

² File: G-54/1947, Part I; cl-14 (A)/1946:CL-14(B)/1946-1947, All India Congress Committee, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi.

separation and communalism in various ways. For instance, cartoons might portray the partition of Bengal in 1947, illustrating the impact of community division and communal tensions. Additionally, they could depict communal harmony through caricatures that symbolize unity among diverse communities, promoting the idea of solidarity and peaceful coexistence despite differences. Through visual satire and symbolism, cartoons often highlight the consequences of division while advocating for unity and harmony among different groups in Bengal's societal fabric.

Figure-1



हिन्दू और मुसलमानोंका एका झण्डके देखा !
 सादीसे बुद्धियाका नाता झुडते झण्डके देखा !!

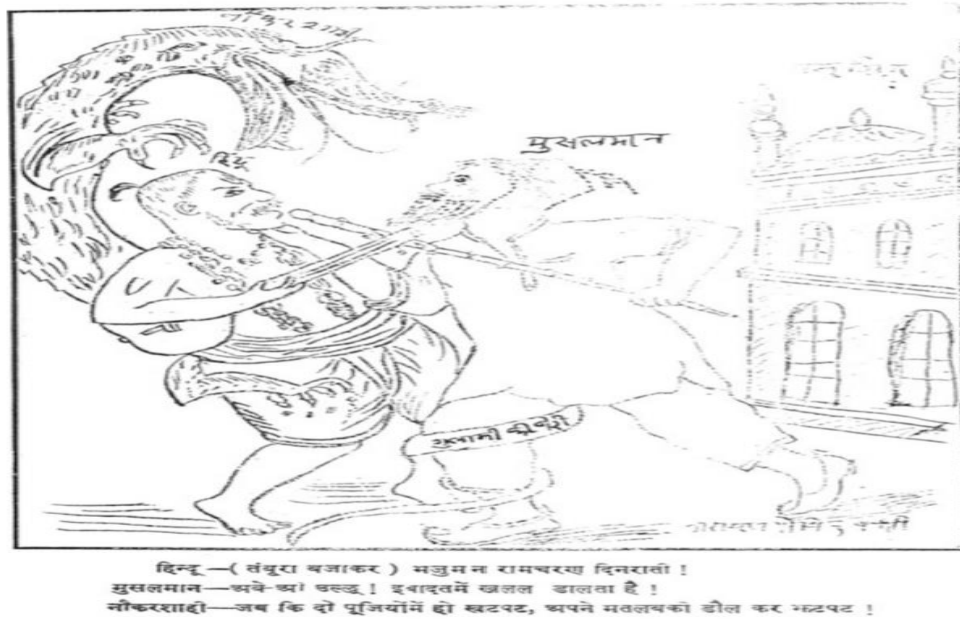
Hindu – Muslim ekta (Unity of Hindus and Muslims),

Source: Cartoon on the *Matvala*, 15 March 1924, p.5

The colonial authorities categorized *Matvala* as vehemently communal, as did two other Hindi publications from Calcutta, *Hindu Paunch* and *Visvamisra*. The Hindu nationalist narrative of the "dying Hindu race," which was widespread, particularly in Calcutta, served as their source. It is possible to watch this cartoon beside "*Anvesani*," named "*Hindu-Muslim Ekta*"³ (union of Hindus and Muslims) (Figure -1). The communal issues and hatred among the two communities are reflected in the caricature in fig-1. The attempt to bring Hindus and Muslims together following the outbreak of intercommunal violence in the 1920s was derived. It demonstrated the difficulties resulting from the two communities' traditional leaders "forced" cooperation. The beard of a Muslim priest is connected to the *Coṭi* (Hindus of the caste system wear a tuft of uncut hair on the back of their heads) or hair lock, of a Brahman priest (Harder and Mitter ed. 2013, 105).

³ *Matvala*, 15 March 1924, p.5

Figure-2



Bhratprem (Brotherhood). *Matvala*, 9 August 1924.

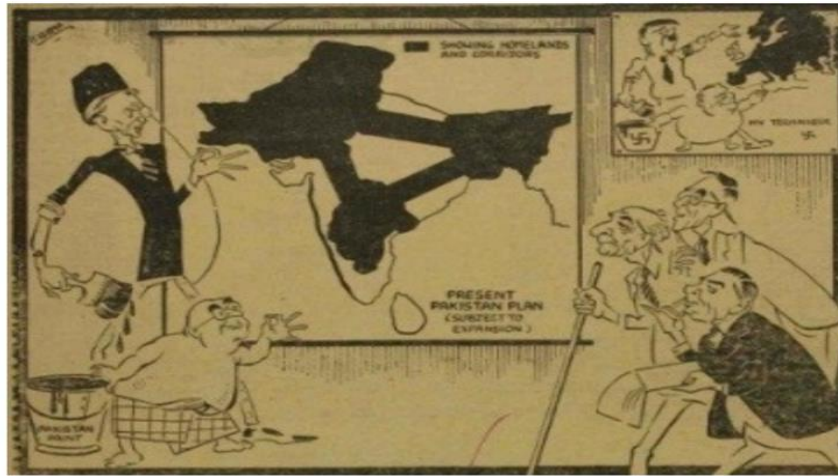
Source- *Asian Punch: A Transcultural Affair* ed. by Hans Harder and Barbara Mitter, 2013, p-106

At the same time, *Matvala* emphasized the irony of a flimsy unification following communal strife. For example, the cartoon "*Bhratri Prem*" (brotherhood) demonstrated that the colonial authority benefited from their mutual hatred (which is usually generated by Muslims (Figure-2)). It showed an aggressive Muslim hitting a Hindu monk who was strolling past a mosque while chanting a sentimental hymn. Both are caught in the web of colonial bureaucracy (Kumar, 2013, p-106). At the same time, *Matvala* emphasized the irony of a flimsy unification following communal strife. For example, the cartoon "*Bhratri Prem*" (brotherhood) demonstrated that the colonial authority benefited from their mutual hatred (which is usually generated by Muslims!). It showed an aggressive Muslim hitting a Hindu monk who was strolling past a mosque while chanting a sacred hymn. Both are caught in the web of colonial bureaucracy (Kumar, 2013, p-105). The editorials and caricatures of *Matvala* were inspired by and added to the Hindu nationalist discussion of communal and communitarian politics. It focused on the condition of the Hindus and relations with the Muslims. It spoke against conversion Christian missionaries and the Islamic forces and Hindu women being abducted and converted. However, it also identified shortcomings with the "dormant" Hindu

middle class and the careless attitude of the orthodox Hindu stewards. It openly mocked Sanatan Hindu organizations that were against the anti-untouchability campaign. (Kumar, 2013,104).

Partition of India (1947) through Caricatures: Several historians have attempted to identify the political and cultural processes resulting from the partition. Suranjan Das's monograph on communal riots in Bengal and Joya Chatterji's work on Hindu communalism support partition based on the communal-national binary paradigm. Das presents a uni-linear trajectory between Muslim 'communalism', which he believes led to the 1946 riots and, eventually, partition. According to Joya Chatterji, affluent Bengali Hindus played a significant role in pushing the agitation that resulted in the disastrous division of the province in 1947. She contends that on the eve of partition, the public's calls for a distinct "homeland for Bengali Hindus" and division constituted the outcome of a dramatic change "from nationalism to communalism" that had characterized Bengali politics and identity since the 1930s (Chatterji, 1994, p.268). She then takes the dangerous step of arguing that all Bengali Hindus were not "passive bystanders" after identifying the key players in the propagation of Hindu communalism (Chatterji, 1994, p.227). As they attempt to explain the final statement in August 1947 as the result of community fratricide, Das and Chatterji's work both fall into the trap of teleology. It is indisputable that Bengali provincial politics changed after the Communal Award of 1932 to emphasize public mobilization along communal lines. Scholars have highlighted Bengal's distinct political and demographic context in the 1930s, which made it simple for Hindu and Muslim leaders to mix up "class" with "community" while organizing large-scale demonstrations (Hashmi, 1992). Sugata Bose has observed that religion and religious symbols have always shaped the cultural identities of nationalists who identify as Hindu or Muslim and have been essential in mobilizing the masses and the elite against colonial rule in the context of Bengali nationalism (Bose, 2001, p.288). Furthermore, as Partha Chatterjee correctly points out, Muslim politics in Bengal remained limited since they could not win over the region's Hindu minority (Chatterjee, 1997, p.36). It is challenging to believe the claims that communalism played a significant role in the events leading up to partition in light of these critical aspects of Bengali politics. Public opinion must be structured along more communal lines, even in the immediate context of the partition discussions (Roy, 2009, p.1362). Keeping in view the growth of communalism, sectionalism and finally the partition of the country took place in 1947 on the basis of religion. The print media in Bengal expressed the anxiety and tensions of the ordinary masses due to the decisions taken by the political leaders and the British Government.

Figure- 3



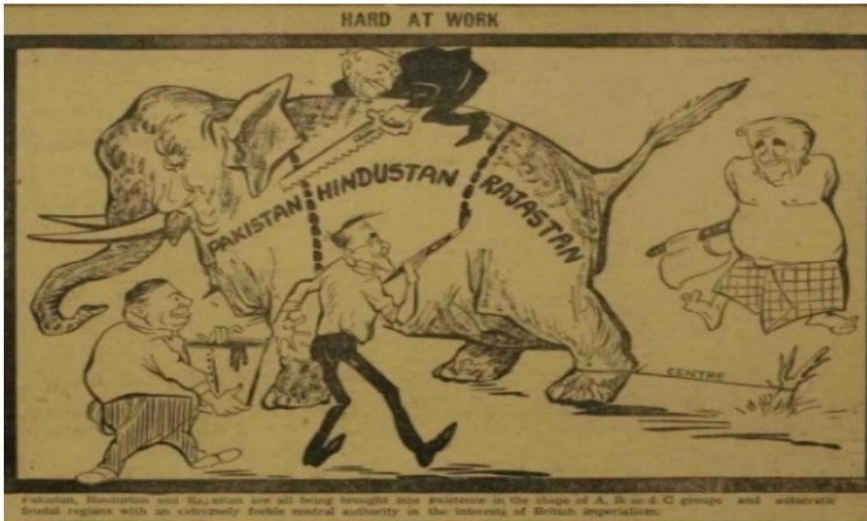
Jinnah's Pakistan,

Source- Cartoons at the Stroke of Partition: A Critical Study, Dialog by Shipra, 2021, p.95

The two-frame cartoon that depicts the brief existence of Jinnah's Pakistan idea was published in *The Tribune* on April 13, 1947 (Fig-3). It covered Bengal's eastern region, Punjab, Sindh, and other western provinces, as well as Hyderabad, a Muslim principality in the south. Nizam of Hyderabad was adamant about joining Pakistan rather than giving up his territory to India⁴. Although the ultimate arrangement could have been better and more workable, the cartoon showed the impracticality of the concept of Pakistan in its early stages. To alleviate challenges, a Muslim corridor was intended to connect different parts of Pakistan divided by India. In the interior, Hitler and his ally Herman Goering devised a scheme similar to annexing European land. Jinnah is seen as a painter, and his second partner, Liaqat Ali Khan (who became Pakistan's first prime minister), admires the map that shows the homelands and passageways that virtually completely encircle India. A caricature of Jinnah and his companion watching him make plans was made by three Mission members, depicting how the Indian people viewed the British. The Congress leaders had always assumed that the British would grant Jinnah his every wish. Jinnah was commonly referred to as having evil intentions and was also characterized as a Hitler-like figure. He had to be stopped since it was alleged that he was the one who invented the scheme to conquer India, just like Hitler did in Europe. The cartoonist alerts Indians to the threat that Jinnah poses to India with the help of the British, using Hitler as a stand-in for Jinnah (Shipra,2021, p.95).

⁴ *The Tribune*, 13 April 1946, p.2

Figure-4



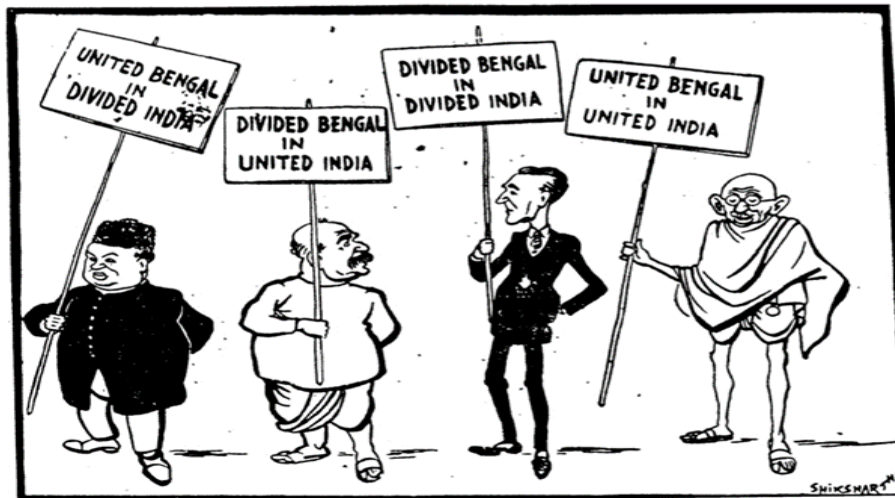
“Hard at Work”

Source: *Cartoon in The Tribune, 20 June 1946, p.3*

On March 24, 1946, a Cabinet Mission travelled to India to discuss the transfer of authority from the British government to Indian political leadership to preserve India's unity and grant independence. The expedition, formed at the suggestion of British Prime Minister Clement Attlee, included Lord Pethick-Lawrence (Secretary of State for India), Sir Stafford Cripps (President of the Board of Trade), and A. V. Alexander (First Lord of the Admiralty). Lord Wavell, the Viceroy of India, participated in some of the conversations. Another caricature was published in 1946 on the eve of the Cripps Mission in which an elephant is portrayed as India in the cartoon "Hard at Work" that appeared in *The Tribune* on June 20, 1946 (Fig-4). It tries to move forward, but a string of "Centre" thread ties one of its legs to a plant resembling a cactus. Lawrence swings a handsaw with one hand while clutching it with the other while seated on its back. Alexander stands next to Cripps, marking several places on the elephant's body with a pail full of paint. Standing barefoot, Wavell the Mahout conceals a saw, ready to split it into three sections: "Pakistan," "Hindustan," and "Rajasthan"⁵. The cartoonist has visually portrayed the provinces' request for grouping under the mission. The thread holding India (the elephant) separated into different parts represents the weaker position the Center is bound to have in the proposed arrangement. The picture portrays all of the British men smirking as they divide the elephant, suggesting that they are not taking the situation in India seriously (Shipra,2021, pp.96-97).

⁵ *The Tribune, 20 June 1946, p.3*

Figure-5



Who is Right?

Source: Cartoons in the *Hindustan Standard*, 17 May 1947, p.5

The *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, a popular nationalist English-language newspaper published in Calcutta, reported the results of a Gallup poll on dividing Bengal on April 23, 1947. In this poll, 98.3% of Bengalis supported the province's partition. In comparison, 0.6% voted against it in response to *Amrita Bazar Patrika's* question, "Do you want a separate homeland for Bengal Hindus?"⁶ According to the newspaper, most of the poll's 99.6% Hindus and 0.4% Muslim respondents supported the division. According to the *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, the poll's results showed that the Bengali people had decided in support of the province's division (Chatterjee, 1997, pp.240-41). A cartoon in the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* in May 1947 effectively conveyed the uncertainty and disarray people were experiencing. It was headlined, "Who is correct?" (Figure-5). It featured four significant public and political figures: M. A. Jinnah, M. K. Gandhi, Shyamaprasad Mookerjee, the President of the Hindu Mahasabha, and H. S. Suhrawardy, each holding a banner containing their purported statements. Thus, Gandhi holds up a sign that reads, "United Bengal in United India," Shyamaprasad holds up "Divided Bengal in United India," and Suhrawardy holds up "United Bengal in Divided India." Jinnah holds up "Divided Bengal in Divided India"⁷. The cartoon effectively conveyed the high-level differences of opinion regarding Bengal's and India's political future. A certain helplessness was implied by the leaders' picketing in front of an unseen

⁶ *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 23 April 1947, p.1,5

⁷ *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 6 May 1947, p.5

greater power. More significantly, it gave its readers the impression that they could choose which of these leaders was in the best interest of Bengalis and India. Behind closed doors, these choices were made far from Bengal (Roy, 2009, p. 1358). On March 8, 1947, the Congress Working Committee announced that if India were partitioned, it would divide Bengal and Punjab. This pronouncement, made against the backdrop of the 1946 riots, implied to the people of these provinces that separation was near, if not inevitable.

Figure-6



'Telegraphic Campaign for Partition'

Source- Cartoon in the Hindustan Standard, 17 May 1947, p.1

During February and June 1947, the offices of the Hindu Mahasabha and the All-India Congress Committee were inundated with demands for partition from political entities like the Municipal and Union Boards, civil groups like District Bar Associations and Zamindars Associations, and local clubs⁸. A front-page cartoon published in the *Hindustan Standard* showed the Viceroy being inundated with nearly 10,000 telegrams requesting Bengal's partition⁹ (Fig.6). Indeed, a resident of Calcutta named Purna Chandra Chandra wrote to the editor of the prominent Bengali daily *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, proposing that its readers had send the Viceroy at least ten telegrams a day expressing their support for the Partition¹⁰. Most of these petitions demanded that Bengal be divided into its provinces and kept as part of the Indian Union. With the regular publication of local resolutions in newspapers published in Calcutta, the call for the province's split expanded to the districts and mofussil towns. While some petitioners framed their demands as defending "the

⁸ File: G-54/1947, Part I, All India Congress Committee Papers, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi

⁹ *The Hindustan Standard*, 17 May 1947, p.1

¹⁰ *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 26 April 1947, p.9

lives, properties, honour, and culture of the Hindus and other minorities,"¹¹ other resolutions claimed that their call for the division was consistent with Bengali and Indian nationalism¹². The goal of creating a 'homeland' for Bengali Hindus was not the only motivation for advocating for the division of the province. Supporters of the division had emphasized 'communal' connotations in their arguments. Several readers of the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* expressed concerns about the limitations of the questions of the poll. According to D. N. Mukherjee, a member of the Bengal Legislative Assembly, the term of reference provided needs to address the reasons for separation fully. Many believe that partition is necessary to provide a homeland for Hindus and maintain unity within the Indian Union¹³. Shyamasasad Mookherjee said that the current discussion of splitting the province was pointless because it would guarantee India's unity and give those "nationalist" folks a chance to stay inside its borders. Another *Patrika* reader from Calcutta, Sakti Ranjan Bose, emphasized the concept of "unity," stating that "our ambition is not to create a separate homeland for Hindus but to increase the territories under the Indian Union." Not because the majority of people in the West are Hindu, but rather because they desire to establish themselves in a state that is connected to the centre, is the reason we want a distinct state¹⁴.

Figure-7



"You Asked for it", cartoons in *The Civil & Military Gazette*, 12 June 1947

Source- Cartoons at the Stroke of Partition: A Critical Study by Shipra, Dialog, 2021, p.105

¹¹ *The Hindustan Standard*, 23 May 1947, p.7

¹² File: G-54/1947, Part I, All India Congress Committee Papers, April-May 1947, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi

¹³ *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 28 March 1947, p.4

¹⁴ *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 30 March 1947, p.8

Mountbatten is seen a cartoon relating to partition was published just prior to the event where Lord Mountbatten is seen as "You Asked for It," slathering a goat into two pieces and holding a blood-smearred blade. Jinnah and Nehru, who represent the two halves of the goat, respectively, walk off in different directions with a haughty demeanor (Fig-7). In this instance, the goat represents the "Indian state," which Mountbatten divides in two at the leaders' request. Once their demands are fulfilled, the leaders are determined enough to turn around and never look back. Because of the two men, the goat passes away. A single "India," where people from all cultures and geographical areas have coexisted since prehistoric times, is symbolically touched by the goat's death (Shipra, 2021, p.105). Millions of people who lost their lives during the process of splitting the country are symbolized by the blood of the goat that is trickling from the blade and splattered across the ground. While Jinnah receives the lower body (legs, abdomen, etc.), the cartoonist has depicted the essential portions of the goat (head, mouth, mind, and heart) given to Nehru. 'Divide and rule' is clearly in effect as a British policy. Pakistan experienced an identity crisis, which is highlighted by the fact that Jinnah is receiving the lower body. The picture suggests that Pakistan will always be under the shadow of Hindustan, regardless of what Jinnah has accomplished in that regard. Since Mountbatten carried out his orders under the direction of Nehru and Jinnah, he cannot be held accountable for the goat's death. The image mocks the leaders of India with a calm demeanor. The ramifications of their suggested remedy hardly occurred to them. Without a doubt, the division of India proved disastrous for the country's well-being, and the issue of communal harmony was unable to be resolved. Considered a man of reason, Mountbatten understood that vivisection would never solve a problem. Even with knowledge of the actual situation, he feels helpless. By blaming Indian authorities, these illustrations in *The Civil & Military Gazette* created a counter-discourse to the generally acknowledged British perspective on India's division. They assisted the British in getting out of the crisis. (Shipra,2021, p.106).

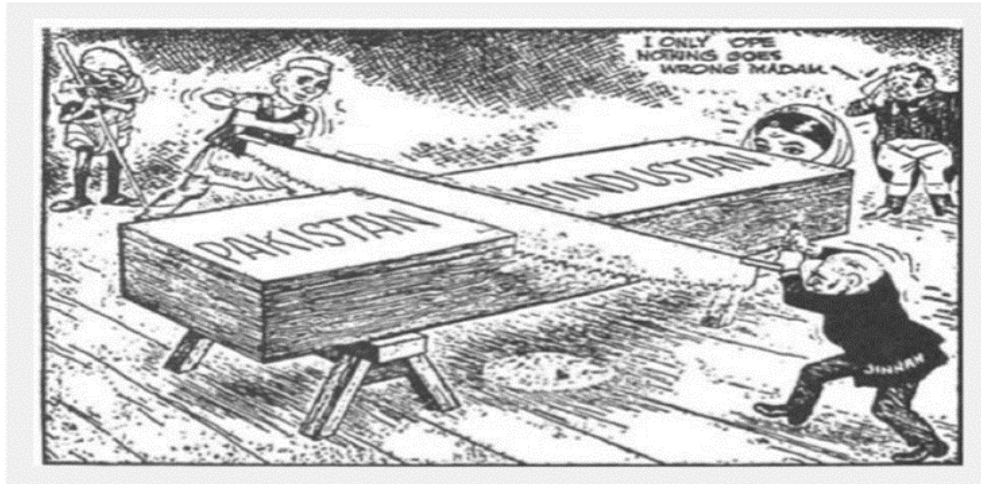
Figure- 8



Source- Khanduri, Ritu Gairola.2014. *Caricaturing Culture in India Cartoons and History in the Modern World*, Cambridge University Press, p. 108

Jinnah, the leader of the Muslim League, was the subject of Ahmed's ruthless caricatures during the decision to partition and the years of independence. In a cartoon titled "Separation, Not Liquidation," A famous cartoonist presented Nehru and India as the errant partners breaking away to start his own company, in addition to evoking a mercantile vision of the nations as a trade (Fig-8). Jinnah was the focal point of Pakistan. The Hindustan Times jokingly portrayed these ideas of Jinnah and the Partition, and this continued to shape public perceptions of India and Pakistan. Nehru stands calmly at the door of what is known as India—"the oldest firm in the East"—wearing a kurta, churidar, Gandhi cap, and jacket. Nehru sternly tells the President of the Hindu Mahasabha, who is crying, "Friend, dry your tears." Even if one of the partners chooses to start his own business, this shop remains the same." Jinnah is shown in the cartoon as a proprietor of a Pakistani store named M.A. Jinnah, with his sleeves pulled up and his board "Pakistan' stores, General Merchants, Proprietor M.A. Jinnah" in the corner. The words "Just opening, entering a new venture, goods expected any minute" are displayed to readers and onlookers. This is a fascinating example of "Secularism" acting on a whim and pushing "Communalism" at the eleventh hour. It is helpful to research the past governmental initiatives related to "national integration" (Khanduri, 2014, pp.108-109).

Figure- 9



Sawing through a Woman

Source: Pioneer, 8th July 1947

In 1947, the partition of India emerged as a significant topic for political cartoons. "Sawing through a Woman" is that sheds light on partition fantasies. Jawaharlal Nehru, clad mostly in white, representing a man of peace, and Muhammad Ali Jinnah, clad entirely in black, are shown sawing open the box containing Bharat Mata, also known as Mother India (better known as the embodied feminine, patriotic portrayal of India). Mahatma Gandhi appears vulnerable and concerned in the background besides the British delegates¹⁵ (Figure-9). "Sawing through a Woman" is a political cartoon that sheds light on the misconceptions surrounding partition and independence. The image shows Muhammad Ali Jinnah, clothed in all black, and Jawaharlal Nehru, mostly dressed in white, sawing open the box containing *Bharat Mata*, often known as Mother India—a more accurate description of the embodied feminine, nationalistic portrayal of India. Stereotypical depictions of Mohandas Gandhi and a British representative are shown in the background. Considering these political players and the political domains that provided the framework to comprehend Partition and Independence is vital. In summary, by 1947, there was a great deal of hostility between the Indian people and the British colonial forces, and the British wanted to quietly and swiftly withdraw from India. Simultaneously, the primary concern in Indian politics is safeguarding the Muslim minority (Metcalf, 2012, p. 207). Jinnah was one of the first to advocate for political segregation between Muslims and Hindus. However,

¹⁵ *Pioneer*, 8 July, 1947

Nehru and the Indian National Congress envisioned technological advancement, education, and the end of caste to bring about a sociocultural and industrial revolution (Naim, 1979, p-150). Their two visions were entirely different.

Furthermore, there is a British actor in the picture. In that case, he discusses various issues related to the tensions in India at the time and the uncertainty accompanying independence or partition. Because of British colonization and imperial influence, Indians believed that partition or independence was the only option to redeem the mother from the harm that had been done. When you consider this concept of the "Mother," the only feminine body you see on the side of the box labelled "Hindustan" is the head of Mother India. Just as she was essential to partition, she is also critical to the cartoon. In light of partition and independence, identities, deconstructions, and formations would likely arise not from the event itself but rather from rescuing the mother, based on this portrayal of the mother (Bhattacharya, 2019, p.77). Though they were now free from a political system and society where Muslims were not adequately represented, I believe that for Muslims, this meant leaving her. For Hindus, it meant sticking by her side to witness what they could do without her. For Muslims to succeed in doing so, they would need to accept that they are different from Hindus and maybe decide what aspects of their past as Indians should remain and what should be made into Pakistan (McFadden, 2015).

Conclusion: Communalism in Indian cartoons often reflects the social and political tensions surrounding religious and cultural differences. Cartoons can serve as a medium to critique or propagate communal ideologies, depending on the perspectives of the cartoonists. Some cartoons may satirize communal stereotypes or highlight the absurdity of divisive ideologies, while others may perpetuate harmful narratives or stereotypes. Overall, the portrayal of communalism in Indian cartoons are complex, reflected the diversity of opinions and experiences within Indian society. Cartoons in print media often included exaggerated and stereotyped depictions of various religious groupings, especially Muslims and Hindus, reflecting communalism. Cartoonists contributed to the continuation of intercommunal conflicts by using their images to represent spiritual and cultural differences, sometimes disparagingly or aggressively. Cartoons were employed to highlight and exaggerate perceived disparities among populations, thus strengthening preconceptions and biases. These drawings frequently reinforced preconceptions and widened divides by depicting religious symbols, rituals, and community leaders negatively. There are the cartoons usually depict critical as given above in the article, Congressmen, British, Leaguers, and events, but they hardly ever show the everyday person. From a historical perspective, the images used to hold the average person's perception continue to be elitist. The cartoons' sparse depictions of "people" or "populace" allude to the public's disenfranchisement from the decision-making process as a whole. The Partition as

declared by Mushirul Hasan was "Never before in history (the history of South Asia, specifically) did so few divide so many," (Hassan,2012. p.43). The cartoons, therefore, reflected and the situation of the country of anxiety, tension and consternation through mockery, satire and irony and it gained popularity among the readers.

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