

Faculti Summary

<https://faculti.net/caste-and-partition-in-bengal/>

This video discusses the emergence of self-consciousness among untouchable communities in Bengal, India, beginning in the late 19th century, particularly during the 1870s and 1880s. By the early 20th century, these communities, notably the Raj Bhe, NARA, and RA, became organized and active in mainstream politics, asserting their identities and fighting against caste discrimination.

The political movements led by these groups gained momentum, especially by the 1930s. During the 1937 elections, they successfully contested reserved seats, illustrating their growing political presence. However, with the onset of discussions about the partition of India in the mid-1940s, these movements faced significant division and challenges. They were largely affected by the proposed partition, which threatened their communities and the spaces they inhabited.

As the partition became a pressing issue, competing interests emerged among the Dalit groups. Some aligned with the Muslim League, believing it would benefit them, while others sided with the Indian National Congress. This video political fragmentation weakened their collective identity, and by the time of the partition in 1947, many Dalit individuals found themselves marginalized in the newly established political landscape of Pakistan.

The partition led to a significant migration of these communities to India. Initially, leaders advised them against migrating, but as the socio-political conditions deteriorated for Dalit groups in East Pakistan, many began to leave. Upon migrating, they faced new struggles as refugees, losing their previous identities and shifting their movements from anti-caste discrimination to issues surrounding rehabilitation and citizenship in India.

Overall, the text highlights the interplay between caste politics, identity, and the consequences of partition, emphasizing how the autonomy of Dalit movements diminished in the wake of political upheaval, shifting the focus of their struggles significantly after the partition.