

### **Growth of Political Awareness (1883–1911):**

During this time, Indians started to become more politically aware because of British unfair policies. Educated people, students, and reformers began to realize that the British were not ruling India for the benefit of Indians, but for their own interests. The spread of English education and newspapers helped people understand ideas like liberty, equality, and national rights. The formation of the Indian National Congress in 1885 was a major step, as it gave Indians a platform to express their political opinions and demands. Leaders such as Dadabhai Naoroji, Surendranath Banerjee, and Gopal Krishna Gokhale worked peacefully to demand reforms and greater participation in government.

### **Partition of Bengal (1905) – Causes:**

In 1905, Lord Curzon, the British Viceroy, divided Bengal into two parts — East Bengal and West Bengal. The British government said that Bengal was too large to govern efficiently. However, the real reason behind this decision was political. The British wanted to divide the Hindu and Muslim population to weaken their growing unity and nationalism. By creating a Muslim-majority province in the East, they hoped to win Muslim loyalty and reduce Hindu influence in politics. This was part of the famous “Divide and Rule” policy used by the British to control India more easily.

### **Indian Reaction to the Partition:**

The partition of Bengal created a strong reaction all over India. People were angry because they understood the British motive behind it. Leaders like Rabindranath Tagore, Surendranath Banerjee, and others organized large protests, meetings, and processions. The national flag was raised, and people tied Rakhi on each other’s hands to show unity between Hindus and Muslims. Newspapers and songs inspired people to stand together. This movement also encouraged the idea that Indians must depend on themselves instead of the British.

### **Swadeshi and Boycott Movements:**

As a response to the partition, Indians started the Swadeshi and Boycott movements. The Swadeshi movement encouraged people to use goods made in India, while the Boycott movement urged them to stop buying British goods. People burned foreign clothes and promoted local industries like handloom and cottage products. Schools and colleges were also set up by Indians to promote national education. These movements increased national pride, developed economic independence, and gave Indians the confidence that they could manage their own affairs.

### **Results and Reversal of the Partition (1911):**

The strong and united protests forced the British government to cancel the partition in 1911. Though the partition was withdrawn, it had already created a deep sense of national unity among Indians. The event proved that united struggle could defeat British policies. The capital of British

India was also shifted from Calcutta to Delhi. On the other hand, the partition also gave Muslims their first experience of a separate province, which later influenced their political identity. Overall, the Bengal Partition became a turning point that made Indians more united and determined to fight for independence.