

Chapter – V

MADRASSAS OF SURMA-BARAK VALLEY IN PARTITION

India attained her freedom at a great cost. The British ruled the country for about two centuries but left dividing the country in to two independent dominions, India and Pakistan. The debate on partition and its inevitability, as entailed by scholars across the subcontinent, has remained inconclusive even to this day. There is still no answer as to whether partition was really inevitable or there was an alternative. Nevertheless, the fact which is most relevant here is that India was partitioned and Pakistan was created. When the rest of the country, observing the situation and looking at it from various angles, was either supporting the partition or protesting against the same, the Viceroy, Lord Mountbatten announced his 3rd June Plan which was implemented with the partition of Punjab, Bengal and Assam. A new nation appeared in the world map – created by political leaders in the name of religion.

An interesting point of observation here is that though Pakistan was created in the name of religion, religious leaders were initially mush against the plan of partition. In the last three decades of the freedom movement, most of the politically conscious *Ulemas* of India were somewhat connected with *Dar-ul-Ulum Deoband* or with a *Deobandi* Madrassa or otherwise with its political wing *Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind*. However, Mr. Jinnah with his able political maneuvers became instrumental in the creation of Pakistan. He managed to gain the support of a number of *Ulemas* and very tactfully utilized them in mobilizing the masses in the favour of partition and in the creation of Pakistan. It would not be totally wrong to say that the attitude Indian National Congress, specially the Bengal Provincial Congress, Assam Provincial Congress and the activities of Hindu Mahasabha and others contributed to a great deal to the shift of a good number of Muslims from their stand of Pro-Congress to Pro-Muslim League. The Calcutta killing following the Direct Action Day, Anti-Grouping Movement, the Line System, land settlement policy fir the immigrants by the government of Assam, etc. made a number of Muslims leaders in Bengal and Assam disappointed and they become worried regarding

their future in India and hence aligned with the Muslim League. Before going to discuss the role played by the *Ulemas* of the Madrassa of Surma-Barak Valley in the historic act of partition, let us focus a brief search light on the eventful happenings between 1940 and 1947.

When Pakistan was established, Sir Mohammad Iqbal was hailed as the mentor of as he on his Presidential address to the League in 1930 advocated the formation of a consolidated Muslim north-west state. But according to Iqbal this was he proposed within the India not out of it which is clear from his speech at very next year in 1931 at the Round Table Conference, where Iqbal pleaded for an All India Federation.¹

In 1940, Jinnah had called a general session of the All India Muslim League in Lahore to discuss the situation that had arisen due to the outbreak of the Second World War. He expressed objections with regard to the fact that the Government had compelled India to join the war without taking the opinion of the major Indian leaders. He further wanted to discuss the reason that had led to the defeat of the Muslim League in the General Election of 1937 in the Muslim majority provinces. On 19th March 1940, Suhrawardy left with a small group of Muslim League workers for Lahore. The Bengal Muslim League contingent led by A. K. Fazlul Hoque reached Lahore on 22nd March 1940. The ovation given to the Bengal delegation was tremendous, and Fazlul Hoque, who was hailed as '*Sher-e-Bangla*' or 'The Tiger of Bengal', moved among the crowds as the undisputed effective leader of the Indian Muslims. Already in his speech in Patna a year before, he had warned the Congress Government, by saying that 'though he was leading a coalition government in Bengal he was a Muslim first and Bengali afterwards and that he would take revenge if the Muslim were hurt in the Congress ruled provinces.'² The Prime Minister of the two great provinces of Bengal and Punjab dominated the conference. Jinnah spoke for more than two hours criticizing the Congress and particularly the nationalist Muslims. He espoused the two nation theory and the reasons for the demand for the homeland for the Muslims. He said,

¹ Farhat Tabasum, pp.5,6

² Dr. Moammad Abdullah, p.109

“We maintained and hold that Muslims and Hindus are two major nations by any definition or test of a nation. We are a nation of a hundred million and what is more, we are a nation with our own distinctive culture and civilization, language and literature, art and architecture, names and nomenclature, sense of value and proportion, legal laws and moral codes, customs and calendar, history and traditions, aptitude and ambitions – in short, we have our own distinctive outlook of life. By all canons of international laws we are a nation.”³

Very strategically, indeed, Mr. Jinnah avoided mentioning religion in his definition. Nonetheless, religion was always at the back of his mind, as that strong, determining force, which had been responsible for many a distinctive feature of the Muslim life all over the world. Jinnah also cleverly abstained from mentioning the test of ‘*watan*’ (home land) as the basis of nationhood. However, the nationalist Muslims, including the *Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind*, regarded the concept of ‘*watan*’ as being at the very core of their conception of Indian nationalism. Mr. Jinnah’s nation, at this stage, was practically homeless, striving relentlessly to have a home which was under foreign domination from which it was struggling to free itself.⁴

Many scholars have ascertained that the arguments and assertions of Jinnah were based on fallacies. Nevertheless, they caught the imagination of the Muslim masses, and Gandhiji’s remarks on those assertions could not affect the Muslim intelligentsia. Gandhiji commented in an article in ‘*Harijan*’, “If we accept the arguments of Sri Jinnah the Muslims of Bengal and the Muslims of Punjab would become two distinct and separate nations.”⁵

The intoxication of partition had not grappled the minds of the Muslims of northern India until then. They were primarily interested in the Muslim Reformation Movement, led mainly by the graduates of Aligarh University. Their governing agenda was to

³ Ziya-ul-Hasan Faruqi p.94

⁴ *Ibid*,p.94

⁵ Kamaruddin Ahmed, p.46

safeguard the religious, cultural and political rights of Indian Muslims, especially of Muslim minority provinces of India. The leaders of the Bengal Muslim League, on the other hand, did not depict much zest with regard to the Reformation Movement, and neither were they concerned so much with the question of safeguarding the rights of the Muslims these were not the immediate problems in Bengal. Their main lookout was the economic emancipation of the Muslims, which they felt would be feasible if they were bestowed with the power of sovereignty, that is, the power to govern themselves independently. According to them, the Hindus, by virtue of their majority, were more probable to dominate the administration in case an All India Government was formed. Sikandar Hayat Khan, along with the leaders of Sind and North West Frontier aligned their views with those of the Bengal leaders.⁶ Jinnah, though apprehensive about the reasonableness or effectiveness of the proposition, was willing to take a risk, accepting it as a game of toss. He was, however, not prepared to lay down the detailed plan.⁷

Sikandar Hayat Khan, at length, drafted the Lahore resolution which was placed before the Subject Committee for discussions and amendments. The Resolution was moved in the General Session by Fozlul Hoque, the leader of the Bengal delegation on 23rd March and was supported by Choudhury Khaliqzaman, the leader of the United Province's Provincial Muslim League and other leaders of the Muslim minority provinces along with some leaders of Muslim majority provinces. Choudhury Khaliqzaman seconded the resolution and spoke of the necessity to comprehend the circumstances which had incited the Muslims to demand for the separation.⁸

The Lahore Resolution was vague and incomplete in many respects. It made no mention about the body or the authority that was to frame the constitution. The issue of actual territorial demarcation of the proposed states was left untouched. The nature of the contemplated constitution was also not sketched. It also did not say anything about the

⁶ Kamaruddin Ahmed, p.46

⁷ Joya Chatterji, *Bengal Divided: Hindu Communalism and Partition 1932 – 1947*, CUP, New Delhi, 2002, p.226

⁸ Binayak Dutta, p.147

means to enforce the “adequate, effective and mandatory safeguards” for the protection of minorities.⁹

The Lahore Resolution subsequently came to be known as ‘Pakistan Resolution’. The word ‘Pakistan’ did not occur explicitly in the text but it envisaged independent and sovereign states in northeastern and northwestern areas of India where Muslims were in majority. The Muslims of Bengal who were burdened under a trauma of identity crisis and were searching for an identity throughout the years had finally found it. It was a relief for them that they were now no longer a community but a nation with its own demarcated territory. The Lahore Resolution gave them a sense of identity, pride and nationhood. The Young generation, especially the Muslim students community of Bengal welcomed it with open arms because until then they too were undetermined about their specific aim or goal. The League leaders and the League supported *Ulemas* embarked upon a vigorous process of campaigning in different areas of Bengal to mobilise the Muslim masses in favour of ‘Pakistan Resolution’. The Editorial of *Jugabheri* of April 01, 1940 stated,

The enthusiasm and high spirit in which on 22nd - 24th March the Lahore session of the All India Muslim League was held in a completely orderly and beautiful manner, beggars description. That on this occasion over a lakh of representatives, volunteers and spectators had assembled from almost all the provinces of India proves that all the hopes and aspirations of Muslim India are inseparably connected solely with the Muslim League.....

On 8th April 1940, *Jugabheri* also reported that a large public meeting were held at Malua near Badarpur of Karimganj which was presided by the Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhasani, Vice President of Assam Provincial Muslim League chaired the meeting where three thousands peoples were assembled. Mr. Abdul Matin Choudhury, Secretary of Assam Provincial Muslim League also warmly welcomed by the local people. The meeting for nearly four hours. The result of this aggressive campaign was disastrous. It

⁹ Ziya-ul-Hasan Faruqi quoted in ,*The Deoband School and the Demand for Pakistan*, p.111

sparked off communal strife and polarization that miserably afflicted the society in both Bengal and Assam. The district of Habiganj faced a tense situation when, on 19th February, the local secretary of the Muslim League and Maulvi Abdur Rahman, MLA, issued notices to discuss the ensuing Saraswati Puja Festival. An untoward incident occurred in the form of firing of a cracker near the mosque. Maulvi Abdur Rahman made an impassioned speech before an unusually large crowd, and a huge procession, comprising of 10,000 people mobilized from the neighbouring villages, indulged in throwing stones and brickbats at Hindu houses.¹⁰ Similarly, on 16-01-1941, in the same subdivision (Habiganj) on the day of *Uttarayan Sankirton*, the Muslim of Bausha village objected to the Hindus taking their '*Sankirton*' past the mosque. The sub-divisional Police Officer was entrusted with the job of arranging the '*Sankirton*' to go by another path but the Hindus objected to this. The Subdivision Officer himself came to the spots and solved the matter by deciding that the '*Sankirton*' would go by the road past the mosques and no music would be played during prayer time as laid down in the Government communiqué regarding music before mosque.¹¹

Between 1940 – 1947 the Ulema of Deobandi madrassas and the *Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind* vehemently opposed the Partition Movement that seldom before in the history of Islamic India had the *Ulemas* taken such a stand so contrary to the political instinct of the intellectual elite and the masses of the people.¹² The Azad Muslim Conference, convened on behalf of the *Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind* and other organizations in April, 1940 at Delhi, reinforced strong views on the reactions that the Lahore Resolution had provoked in the circle of the non-Muslim organization. The Conference voiced its opposition to the partition of India, but simultaneously reiterated deep concern over the safeguarding of the religious and cultural rights of the Muslim community, in case of any future constitutional set up of the country.¹³ The Conference reiterated that the League was playing a dangerous political game at a very high stake. Infact, even as early as 1940, Maulana Mohammad Sajjad of Bihar, one of the geniuses of the *Jamiat Ulema*, had

¹⁰ Kamaruddin , pp.147-148

¹¹ Home Deptt., Police Branch, No. CP/72 – 1941, BNA.

¹² Aziz Ahmed, *Islamic Modernism in India and Pakistan 1857-1964*, OUP, Bombay, 1967, p.193

¹³ Ziya-ul-Hasan Faruqi, pp.96-97

analyzed the Lahore Resolution and remarked that there was nothing in it that could give the least satisfaction to the Muslim living in the Hindu provinces; the Resolution was mainly related to the Muslims of those areas where they were already in majority.¹⁴ A booklet was published in reaction to the Muslim League's demand for a separate Muslim state, consisted of two articles one of Maulana Husain Ahmad Madani, and the other by his disciple and the general secretary of the *Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind*, Maulana Syed Muhammad Miyan. The Urdu booklet, bearing the revealing title of '*Hamara Hindustan aur uske Faza'il*' ('Our India and its Glories'), brilliantly articulates this commitment of leading Deobandi *ulema* to the cause of composite Indian nationalism and gave rise to a spirit in favour of united India.

Pandit Nehru's anxieties were reflected in his reactions regarding Lahore Resolution. He said that it demanded the Balkanization of India. He compared this attempt to divide India with the mentality of eastern Europeans after the First World War. Gandhiji called the Lahore Resolution as 'Vivisection of India' and called the very idea is a 'sin'.¹⁵ Maulana Abul Kalam Azad stated,

"I am proud of being an Indian. I am part of the indivisible unity that is Indian nationality. I am indispensable to this noble edifice and without me this noble edifice and without me this splendid structure of India is incomplete. I am an essential element which has gone to build India. I can never surrender this claim."¹⁶

He further stated,

"The whole idea of dividing territories into pure (Pak) and impure went against the grain and repudiated very spirit of Islam. He regarded Pakistan as

¹⁴ *Ibid*, p.111

¹⁵ Kamaruddin Ahmed, p.50

¹⁶ M. Hassan, *Islam and India's Nationalism, a reflection of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad*, New Delhi, p.6

symbol of defeatism...a confession that Indian Muslim can not hold their own in India as a whole.”¹⁷

It needs mentioning that there was nothing in the Resolutions to show that the Muslim League had explicitly demanded a homeland for the Muslims alone. In the 30th Session of the All India Muslim League Council held in Delhi, Jinnah had declared that the Muslim League was contemplating a suitable title for the Lahore Resolution, and it was around this very time that powerful Calcutta newspapers like *Ananda Bazar Patrika*, *Jugantar* and others, controlled exclusively by the Hindus, called it “Pakistan”. Jinnah himself had said that the Muslim League was grateful to the Hindu Press for that. Thenceforth, the historic Lahore Resolution came to be known as Pakistan Resolution.¹⁸

Many Jamiat and the Deobandi orthodox leaders regarded the British Imperialism as the biggest enemy of Islam and its followers, and suspected that the British had an ulterior purpose behind the proposed scheme of the partition of the country. They repeatedly warned the Muslims that the scheme, if materialized, would tarnish the unity and integrity of the Muslim community like never before. A group of Muslims would be left behind in the Hindu provinces as a smaller and less effective minority, and it could be ruinous to them.¹⁹ Maulana Mohammad Sajjad expressed anxiety at the suggestion that the strength of the Muslim provinces would be a guarantee for the safeguards of the Muslims living in the Hindu majority provinces.²⁰ Around this time, the ‘Jamiat Formula’ of 1942 was brought forward by the *Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind* in order to demonstrate the divergent Muslim approaches to the solution of the communal problem. The 1942 ‘Jamiat Formula’ gave a tentative proposal for the structure of the Federal Government in so far as the cultural, religious and political safeguards for the Muslims were concerned.²¹

Scholars have opined that the Pakistan Movement was basically a movement of Muslim middle class, who had become apprehensive with regard to their prospective

¹⁷ *Ibid* p.25

¹⁸ Kamaruddin Ahmed, p.50

¹⁹ Ziya-ul-Hasan Faruqi quoted in *The Deoband School and the Demand for Pakistan*, p.110

²⁰ *Ibid*, p.111

²¹ Sayyid Muhammad Miyan, pp.241-42

opportunities of employment in government, commerce, trade and industry, as against those of the Hindu middle class.²² They thought that partition would be an apt solution to this anxiety. The *Ulemas* of the *Qaumi madrassa* and Muslim organizations like *Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind* and *Majlish-e-Ahrar* bitterly opposed the Pakistan Movement. They brought forward a highly controversial question, that Jinnah, who was a westernized *Shia* could not lead the Muslims of India who were predominantly *Sunni*. A prime reason for the nonchalant attitudes of the *Ulemas* and *talebas* of madrassas was that they were not the competitors for jobs with the Hindu middle class.²³ The *Qaumi* madrassas even refused Government's financial assistance for the development of Madrassa. The Governing Body of the Madrassa *Majlish-e-Sura* refused the proposal of Sir Mohammad Shadullah, the premier of Assam who visited *Dar-ul-Ulum*, Banskandi in 1941 and wanted to provide financial assistance.²⁴ It was clearly stated in the principles of their mother madrassa *Dar-ul-Ulum*, Deoband that no government or influential person's assistance would be accepted, as the same was thought to hamper the smooth functioning of the madrassa.

Gauging the significance and popularity of the *Ulemas*, the political leaders changed their maneuvers, and on November 9, 1945, Nawab Ismail Khan, addressing an audience at Allahabad, declared that the ideal objective of Muslim League was to establish a state based on the holy *Shariya* and the political philosophy of Islam. Such utterances again impressed a large number of *Ulemas* of different schools, and a small section of Deobandi *ulema* led by Maulana Shabbir Ahmed Osmani came up to support the demand of Pakistan with vigour.²⁵ Maulana Shabbir Ahmed Osmani published an important pamphlet in 1942, '*Hamara Pakistan*', sketching the image of a Pakistan where Islamic law, '*Sharia*' rule would prevail. He even called for religious men to join the League in order to ensure that Pakistan would be in right hands.²⁶ In this way, the Muslim League, which was till then a Muslim upper and middle class organization, cleverly and

²² Kamaruddin Ahmed, p.50

²³ *Ibid*, p.53

²⁴ Tayeeb Qasim, "*Dar-ul-Ulum, Banskandi*", Arabic magazine published from Dar-ul-Ulum, Banskandi, 2000, p.4

²⁵ Ziya-ul-Hasan Faruqi, p.119

²⁶ P. Hardy, *The Muslims of British India*, p.242

strategically won over many prominent *Ulemas* of the country, especially of the United Province and Bengal. A convention called ‘All India Muslim Ulema Convention’ was organized at Mohammad Ali Park, Calcutta from the 26th to 29th October 1945, and there ‘*Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam*’ was formed.²⁷ The organization mainly aimed to weaken the influence of *Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind*, and motivate the religious sentiments of the Muslim masses in favour of Pakistan. A number of *Ulemas* from Sylhet participated in the convention. Among them was Maulana Abdur Rahman Singkapani of Daulatpur Madrassa in Maulvi Bazar sub-division, a supporter of *Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind*. He shifted his stand and joined *Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam* and Muslim League. Maulana Athar Ali of Bianibazar and Maulana Abdul Bari of Maulvi Bazar also attended the conference, and were selected as President and Vice-President of Assam Provincial *Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam* respectively.²⁸ The convention was inaugurated by the Furfura Sharif’s Pir Janab Abdul Hai Siddqi Saheb, who in his address contended:

“Mussalman’s Allah is one, Kitab is one, it is quite natural their organization would be one. As the *Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind* is propagating the ideals of the Congress it has lost its credibility. It is not possible for an Indian Mussalman to support this *Jamiat*. For this reason the true followers of Islam are compelled to found a separate organization of their own. This *Jamiat* has recognized the League as the National organization of the Muslims. Today, it has become *farz* of all Muslims to strengthen the Muslim League. This is not the order of any individual. This is the command of the Quran. Therefore every Muslim should come forward to support the League in this election. The victory of the League would make our future bright.”²⁹

Maulana Azad Sobhahani in his deliberation bitterly condemned the *Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind* as an agent of Congress, and stated:

“Only a few Congressite Ulema are now vilifying thousands of honest Ulema.....The Indian Ulema has now taken their place by the side of the League

²⁷ Aziz, Mohammad Abdul (et. Al), *Brihatar Sylhetr Itihas*, p.33

²⁸ Dr. Moammad Abdullah, p.274

²⁹ Binayak Dutta, p.158

for achieving Pakistan state. A few anti-national Gaddar and Gomrah *alim* would not be able to mislead the Muslims. Today, ten crores of Muslim are now assembled on one line under the command of the Ulema-e-Islam. This united stand would certainly help the Muslims to realize Pakistan.”³⁰

The leaders of the League kept alive their persistent appeals to the prejudices of the masses. The demographic slogans succeeded in influencing the mind of the common man to a great extent. The strength of Muslim League’s programme during 1940s lied in the promises of their leaders to the public. They left no step to miss any thing, and promised everything to win the every section of the Muslim society. It turned socialist to the socialist, capitalist to the capitalist and Islamic to the pietist. Its slogan was unity, discipline and faith. Jinnah deliberately kept not only the future character and constitution of Pakistan in heaven, but its very boundaries too. P. Hardy writes,

“The voters voted for the creation of a heaven for Muslims and for Islam which should extend over six provinces or regions of British India: Baluchistan, Sind, Punjab, the Nort-West Frontier Province, Bengal and Assam.”³¹

The common man, incapable of understanding the ulterior issues involved behind any matter, could easily be manipulated. The *Deobandi Ulemas* were more popular among the Muslim peasantry and other backward classes. They were, again, aware of the inherent dangers of the Lahore ideology, and stood unanimously for the undivided interests of the Muslim community. They could not promote any idea of the division of the country on the basis of political or economic considerations. They made religious appeals but only to the effect that it was the religious duty of every Muslim to fight for the freedom of the country. On the whole, there thus occurred a major rift in the Muslim intelligentsia. The members of various groups kept preaching conflicting ideas and contrary ideologies, and the ignorant masses were confused.³²

³⁰ Binayak Dutta, p.158

³¹ P. Hardy, p.239

³² Ziya-ul-Hasan Faruqi pp.95-96

There is no doubt that the Jamiat had always been serious in so far as the protection of the religious and cultural rights of the Muslim was concerned, but it is also true that the Lahore Resolution forced them to clarify their position and speak in concrete terms not only for the Muslims' religious and cultural safeguards but also for their political freedom in terms of complete autonomy of the federating provinces. The attitude of Congress in post 1937 election towards the Muslim League led the latter a strict stand and the general approach of the League towards the Congress as quoted by Ziya-ul-Hasan Faruqi,

“It is no use saying that the Congress is not a Hindu body. A body which is Hindu in its composition is bound to reflect the Hindu mind and support Hindu aspirations. The only difference between the Congress and the Hindu Mahasabha is that the latter is crude in its utterances and brutal in its actions while the Congress is politic and polite. Apart from this difference of fact, there is no other difference between the Congress and the Hindu Mahasabha.”³³

This attitude of Congress was widely popularized by the Muslim League throughout the country in communal line that appealed in the minds of common Muslims. And the demand for separate state for the Muslim shaped and directed the Muslims to a particular goal. In Assam Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhasani after joining the Muslim League by Abdul Matin Choudhury gave a new spirit in the League politics. The organizing capability of Abdul Matin Choudhury and oratory strength of Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhasani soon provided a strong hold of Muslim League in Assam politics. The peasants and immigrants leader Maulana Bhasani's selfless service and sacrifice for the peasants made him famous while he was in Indian National Congress and his joining to Muslim League consolidated the Muslim League politics in Assam. It was his sincerity and sacrifice that gave him a unique place in the minds of the peasantry. In spite of being the Vice-President of Assam Provincial Muslim League he criticized Abdul Matin Choudhury who after became the Forest Minister of Assam in 1942 failed to take initiative to meet the grievances of the immigrants of Assam. Criticizing Mr. Choudhury

³³ *Ibid*, p.102

in the Assembly on November 14, 1942 he said, “Whoever goes to Lanka, become Ravana.”³⁴ Thus Muslims of Assam to a large extent were mobilized under his able leadership.

The Provincial election 1946 was challenging for both the Muslim League and for the Indian National Congress. To the Muslim League, the success of means the attainment of Pakistan, they used every means in course of their campaign. In many places of the provinces the League activists even attacked the nationalist leaders including the *Ulemas* of Deobandi ideologies especially those who were associated *Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind*. On 25th October 1945, Maulana Tayab Ullah requested the public to vote in favour of Congress. In a meeting at Golaghat, he explained in the light of the Quran the demerits of the demand for Pakistan³⁵ He was vehemently revoked and criticized by the League workers. They were annoyed at his anti-Pakistani deliberations at different places of Brahmaputra Valley during election campaign.³⁶ At Golaghat, some Muslim League activists went to the extent of demanding his resignation from Congress and demanded that he should immediately stop his anti-Pakistani speeches. They requested him to join the Muslim League, but being a true Congress man and nationalist leader, he vehemently rejected the proposal. Consequently, on many occasions, he was harassed severely.³⁷ At Shibsagar, his Gandhi Cap was forcibly removed by a group of Muslim League activists.³⁸ However, the campaign continued the nationalist Muslim leaders kept alerting the Muslim masses constantly against the dangers inherent behind the League’s demand for partition. Maulana Hafijul Rahman, Secretary of All India *Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind* and President of Frontier province *Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind* said that creation of Pakistan with Muslim majority provinces meant inviting danger for the three crore Muslims belonging to Muslim minority provinces.³⁹ In another meeting at Delhi organized by the All India *Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind* in Association with Muslim Majlish-e-

³⁴ Atul Hye Shibly, *Abdul Matin Choudhury: Trusted Lieutenant of Mohammad Ali Jinnah*, Published by Juned Ahmed Choudhry, Dhaka, 2011, p.119

³⁵ *Assamiya*, Assamese weekly, published from Guwahati, dated 03-11-1945

³⁶ *The Assam Tribune*, , 2-11-1946

³⁷ Habibullah Mazumder, p. 227

³⁸ *Assamiya*, dated 17-11-1945

³⁹ *Assamiya*, dated 13-10-1945

Ahrar where Captain Shah Nawaz in his address stated that in India who raised the echo of ‘Islam in Danger’ were actually the fifth party of the British. He further stated that if Hindus in independent India tries to suppress Muslim he will be the first person to rebel against them.⁴⁰

On the other hand, just before the Provincial legislature’s election of 1946, the nationalist Muslim organizations formed All India Muslim Parliamentary Board. Maulana Bashir Ahmed became President and Muzzammil Ali and Dr. Martuza Choudhury acted as Secretaries. The Congress and Jamiat finalized a list of 34 Muslim candidates for the Assembly election in the different Constituencies of Assam.⁴¹ In Barak Valley Mohammad Abdus Sattar and Abdul Matlib Mazumder were nominated in Barhkala and Hailakandi Constituencies respectively. The following Muslim members were nominated from Surma-Barak Valley for the provincial election 1946.⁴²:

Sl. No.	Name of the Muslim Candidate	Name of the Constituency
01.	Maulana Ibrahim Ali Chautali	North Sylhet Jaintia
02.	Abu Sayad Muhammad Mubarak Ali BL	Middle (Sadar Tana East Sylhet)
03.	Suluman Khan	West Sadar Biswanath
04.	Dr. Martuza Choudhury	Balaganj, Fechuganj
05.	Maulana Abdur Rashid	East Sadar, (Golapganj)
06.	Muhammad Ibrahim MS	Maulvi Bazar Srimangal
07.	Maulana Bashir Uddin	Kulaura
08.	Maulana Abu Hanif Muazzam	Baneachang
09.	Dr. Ali Angar Nuri	Nabiganj
10.	Hamid Mian	Chunarughat
11.	Maulana Sayad Jamilul Hoque	Jagannathpur
12.	Maulana Main Uddin	Tahirpur
13.	Maulana Abu Asad Nurul Hoque	Chhatak
14.	Maulana Mohammad Ali	Ratabari-Patharkandi

⁴⁰ *Assamiya*, dated 26-01-1946

⁴¹ Habibullah Mazumder, p.223

⁴² *Ibid*, p. 223

15.	Abdul Khaliq Choudhury	King Tana
16.	Maulana Md. Abdus Sattar	Borkhola
17.	Maulvi Abdul Matlib Mazumder	Hailakandi

National leaders of both Congress-Jamiat coalition and Muslim League leaders spearheaded the election campaign. At this juncture, Jawaharlal Nehru came to Assam on December 13, 1945. He held a number of meetings in Brahmaputra Valley and Surma-Barak Valley. In his epoch-making speech at Guwahati before 25000 masses on 14th December, Nehru said that voting against Congress meant admitting slavery before alien power. He said that the coming election was not an election for independence but a test of how much the Indians were interested for independence. Nehru also said that the Muslim League's demand for Pakistan nowhere mentioned about the independence of India. He also said that Pakistan was not a political demand but a political farce. He said that although the Muslim League occasionally abused the British, in reality, they had close relations with the British. He said that though Muslims were in majority in Bengal and Punjab they could be divided half-half.⁴³ Nehru, thus, in his speech at different places of Assam stressed that voting against Congress meant voting against independence.⁴⁴ He arrived at Silchar on December 19, 1945 and addressed an assembly of 5000 persons.⁴⁵ Then, he went to Hailakandi via Duarbond and addressed a massive crowd of about 4000. Meetings were held in different parts of Cachar under the leadership of Satindra Mohan Deb, Gulam Sabir Khan, Sajid Raja Mazumder, Hurmat Ali Barlaskar, Nurul Hoque, Farmuz Ali and others. The arrival of Syad Hussain Ahmed Madani added new momentum to the campaign. He addressed nine meetings in different parts of Sylhet and Cachar, appealing to the people to vote in favour of the Congress-Jamiat candidates in the ensuing election. He urged people to oppose the Pakistan Scheme of Muslim League, saying that it was not only harmful to the country as a whole but also contrary to Islam and the interest of the Muslims. Jamiat leaders like Maulana Abdul Jalil Choudhury,

⁴³ *Assamiya*, dated, 15-12-1945

⁴⁴ *Assamiya*, dated, 22-12-1945

⁴⁵ Fortnightly Report, 29.12.1945, Guwahati, Assam, NAI

Maulana Ibrahim Ali Chautali, Maulana Moshaid Ali, Maulana Rashid Ahmed and others accompanied 'Sheikhul Islam'.⁴⁶

The Provincial Muslim League, in the meanwhile, prepared the candidature list for the provincial election of 1946. Candidates who were selected from Surma Valley were:⁴⁷

Sl. No.	Name of the Candidate	Name of the Constituency
01.	Maulana Nasir Uddin Choudhury	Habiganj
02.	Maulana Nazmul Hussain	Habiganj West
03.	Maulana Makabbir Ali	Silchar
04.	Maulana Md. Abdullah	South East Habiganj
05.	Maulana Abdul Khalik Ahmed	Sunamganj West
06.	Maulana Monuar Ali	Sunamganj Central
07.	Maulana Mohammad Mofij Uddin	Sunamganj East
08.	Maulana Abdul Bari Choudhury	Sunamganj
09.	Dewan Taimur Reja Choudhury	Sylhet Sadar West
10.	Maulana Abdul Hamid	Sylhet Sadar Central
11.	Dewan Abdul Rab Choudhury	Sylhet Sadar South
12.	Maulana moin Uddin Ahmed	Sylhet Sadar West
13.	Dewan Abdul Basit Choudhury	South Sylhet Central
14.	Maulana Muhammad Ali Haidar Khan	Sylhet
15.	Maulana Mafajjul Hussain	Sylhet
16.	Mualana Idris Ali	Sylhet West Central
17.	Maulana Abdul Latif	Sylhet
18.	Maulana Nurul Hussain Khan,	Habiganj West
19.	Mudabbir Hussain Choudhury	Habiganj North East

The 'Separatist' section of the Muslim League brought a couple of central figures like Maulana Abdul Karim, Sir Nizam Uddin, Liaquat Ali Khan, and H.S. Surawardi to the forefront of the election campaign. They took part in a number of meetings in Surma-

⁴⁶ Habibullah Mazumder, p.224, Dr. Moammad Abdullah, p. 112

⁴⁷ *Assamiya*, dated, 02-02-1946

Barak Valley and Brahmaputra Valley. The Muslim masses of Eastern Bengal were economically hard pressed. Due to their educational backwardness and inability to think logically and analytically, they got easily swayed away by the virulent anti-Hindu slogans, and started envisaging a bright future for themselves in an Islamic state.⁴⁸ The nationalist Muslim leaders like Maulana A.K. Azad and Hussain Ahmed Madani were considered as dishonest, traitors of Islam by the Muslim League leaders.⁴⁹

The election campaign revealed the ugliest faces of conflict between the two sections of Muslims in Assam viz. the ‘Separatist’ headed by Muslim League in alliance with Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam, and the ‘Nationalist’ sections headed by *Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind* in collaboration with Indian National Congress. It is also interesting to note that it was not the nationalist Hindus but the nationalist Muslims who primarily became the target of Separatist Muslims in each and every sub-divisions of Assam. When ‘*Sheikhul Islam*’ Hussain Ahmed Madani arrived from Calcutta at Kulaura Railway station in Sylhet, he was shown black flag by the Muslim League activists.⁵⁰ On 30th December, 1945, he was addressing a meeting of *Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind* at Sylhet Town. Just at the close of his speech, the League activists who were between the crowds shouted League slogans blatantly and this was instantly replied back by the Jamiat activists. Again after the end of the meeting, when crowds were returning, there was a clash between two groups at Bondor Bazar, one group headed by the League activists of Sylhet Aleya Madrassa and the other group headed by the *Ulemas* and Maulabis centering round Naya Sadak Mosque, where Hussain Ahmed Madani used to perform *Itikaf* in the month of Ramdhan. With the intervention of local police the situation was somehow brought under control.⁵¹ In the mean time, about 25 League members assembled at Govinda Charan Park at the emergency call of Matasin Ali of Gauertikar, Sylhet .He then delivered a short speech declaring that the statement made by Madani was quite wrong. Next day the League leaders called a meeting in protest. In a meeting of the nationalists at Karimganj

⁴⁸ Prof. Tanmay Bhattacharjee, p.82

⁴⁹ Fortnightly Report 2.2.46

⁵⁰ Fortnightly Report 2.2.46

⁵¹ Interview with Syad Mustafa Kamal (75), Writer, Upashahar, Sylhet, Bangladesh, Place of Interview- His Residence, Date of Interview – 02-01-2012

town hall on December 31, 1945 Madani was disturbed by the Separatist group. Another meeting of Jamiat Ulama Hind at Mahakal, Badarpur on December 27, 1945 was also hampered by the League volunteers.⁵²

In Brahmaputra Valley again a clash occurred between the two groups. On 24th December Muslim League activists attacked a Maulana of *Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind* at Daboka in Nogaon district. Maulana Mufajjal Ali of *Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind* was circulating election agenda of Jamiat at Doboka Bazar when two League activists came and held his hand and charged him for circulation of *Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind* paper. Another group of twelve people also came and abused him. Finding no other way he left the place and entered the shop of Maulvi Abdul Basit to save his life.⁵³ It may be mentioned here that Maulana Mufajjal Ali also faced similar situation earlier too. On 18th November 1945, while he was discussing about Quran and Hadith in a *waaz mehfil* at Doboka, a League activist named Abdul Aziz Mondol stopped him and ordered him to get out from the assembly otherwise warning him that he would pick his ear and force him out of the assembly. Instantly about fifty *ghunda* type of men attacked him. Maulana Mufajjal Ali then took shelter at the residence of Dr. Manuar Khan.⁵⁴

Election for the provincial legislature took place in January, 1946 and both the Congress and the Muslim League became satisfied after getting expected result. However, in many polling stations the League *ghundas* harassed the nationalist Muslim voters.⁵⁵ Although Congress got overwhelming majority, it failed to impress the Muslims of Assam and hence its heavyweight leader like Fakar Uddin Ali Ahmed, Akram Hussain Saikia and others faced defeat before the League candidates. The position of different political parties can be stated thus⁵⁶

⁵² Habibullah Mazumder, p. 225

⁵³ *Assamiya*, dated 12-01-1946

⁵⁴ Habibullah Mazumder, p. 225

⁵⁵ *Assamiya*, dtd. 26.01.1946

⁵⁶ M. Kar, p.261

Congress	-	58,
Muslim League	-	31,
<i>Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind</i>	-	03,
European	-	09,
Others	-	07
Total	-	108

Muslim League Party who were secured only four seats out 34 Muslim seats in the Provincial election of 1937 now got 31 seats out of 34 Muslim reserved seats.⁵⁷ After winning over the Provincial Election in most of the Muslim seats League supporters became excited and in many places of Surma-Barak Valley they pinched supporters of *Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind* making slogan,

*“Jamiyati Oola,
Mair khaila kila
Haraidisla kholla
Maridisi Bhalla”*⁵⁸

(english translation)

Tom cat of Jamiyat,
how were beaten,
pushed their head
but have beaten severely

The overall result of the election went in favour of Congress and under Gopinath Bordoloi as Premier the Congress formed the ministry which lasted till the 14th August 1947. The formation of ministry marked the beginning of a period of turmoil and trouble. Gopinath Bordoloi took the task of conviction the illegal immigrants in different districts. The 31 Muslim League Legislative Assembly Members who were also excited with their result, as a whole opposed the move in the House.⁵⁹ They advised the landless evicted people to spread out and cultivate all surplus cultivable government waste lands.⁶⁰ The MLA’s of Muslim League further decided to take appropriate legal action to challenge the legality of the Line System.⁶¹ Bordoloi government paid no heed to it and the League leaders then took it a major issue for their demand of Pakistan. Once again the demand

⁵⁷ Mohammad Abdul Aziz (et. Al), pp.31,32

⁵⁸ Interview with Abdul Hashim (90), Baroigram, Karimganj, dated 15.04.2010

⁵⁹ Atul Hye Shibly, p.128

⁶⁰ *Ibid*, p.129

⁶¹ *Assam Herald*, April, 13, 1946

for Pakistan became very vocal. The nationalist Muslim leaders like Mualana Muhammad Yakub, (Pir Saheb of Badarpur), Abdul Matlib Mazumder of Hailakandi, Hurmat Ali Borlaskar (Reporter), Silchar, A.K. Nurul Hoque, Silchar, Maulana Ibrahim Chatuli of Sylhet Sadar, Maulana Moshahid Ali of Jaintiya, Sylhet, Maulana Abdur Rashid of Sylhet, Youth leader Maulana Abdul Jalil of Badarpur, Maulana Ahmad Ali of Banskandi Madrassa strongly opposed this demand and tried to convince the people in favour of united India.⁶²

The failure of the Cabinet Mission triggered the observance of Direct Action Day by the Muslim League on August 16, 1946 in various places of Assam particularly in the immigrant settled areas. Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhasani while launching the Campaign, stated, “Let do or die be the motto of our life, let us be prepared for any suffering and sacrifice, let us be prepared to give our lives if necessary to reach the goal of Pakistan”⁶³ On August 5, 1946 Maulana Bhasani, in a leaflet “Achieve Pakistan or Perish” even went to the extent of stating that the Muslims constitute a separate nationality and thus Pakistan was their legitimate demand. Bhasani’s justification was stated in a poem:

“Pakistan is our only demand
History justifies it,
Numbers confirm it,
Justice claims it,
Destiny demands it,
Prosperity awaits it,
Plebiscites verdicts it.”⁶⁴

On the eve of the observance of The Direct action Day Bhasani urged the Muslims of Assam to be prepared to sacrifice their lives for the cause of Pakistan and to boycott anyone who spoke against the Pakistan. Incident took place at noon in Sylhet

⁶² Kamal Uddiin Ahmed, *Karimganjer Itihas*, p.252

⁶³ Star of India, August 15, 1946

⁶⁴ Atul Hye Shibly, p.132

nearby Naya Sadak mosque where Maulana Hussain Ahmed Madani used to stay. Muslim League volunteers attacked on the supporters of *Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind* and about thirty people were seriously got injured. Deputy Commissioner of Sylhet convened a meeting and where leaders of all political parties resolved the matter.⁶⁵ At Habiganj subdivision of Sylhet, the Muslim League activists circulated a leaflet urging the Muslims to attend the meeting at Habiganj Town Hall at 3 P.M. to observe the Direct Action Day.⁶⁶

Mohammad Ali, Secretary of Assam Provincial Muslim League declared that the Muslim in evicted areas will face annihilation with fortitude and strength.⁶⁷ This sort of a sudden change in the activities of the Assam Provincial Muslim League activists and its supporters in Assam specially in Surma-Barak Valley was actually due to the cruel attitude of the Assam Government. With regard to this, the editorial of Assam Herald wrote,

“Muslims of Assam are stunned to see that in such a dangerous movement, the gallant Congress Ministers of Assam are out to prove their cavalry by torturing the helpless peasants, thousands of whom had already been served with notices to quit. It may be that they would not leave their dear hearts and homes without resistance and any amount of torture on these ill fated people may be lead to serious communal tensions all over the province....Do your ministry propose to convert this yet happy province in to a hell of loot, arson, plunder and massacre?”⁶⁸

The Assamese nationalist news paper, ‘Assam Tribune’ too, in support of the government’s step, stated

“No consideration of humanity or economic development of a province with immigrant settlement can weigh with the government, when the political question that of or no Pakistan is super most in man’s minds everywhere.....Let the

⁶⁵ *Assamiya*, dated 24.01.1946

⁶⁶ Habibullah Mazumder, ,p.239

⁶⁷ *Morning News*, November 10,1946

⁶⁸ *Assam Herald*, November, 19, 1946

Government of Assam prove to be one of the strongest Government of India in safeguarding the interests of the children of the soil, who legitimately with them to act on their behalf and for their economic and political upliftment.”⁶⁹

The Muslim League working Committee, with a view to popularize and grow the sentiments of the Muslims all over the Assam, stated,

“Atrocities have been and are being committed on ten thousands of innocent men, looted and burnt or trampled under the feet of elephants, their ripe paddy field worth million of rupees are being destroyed or given over to local Hindus by the agents of law and order and all these barbarities are being committed for the attainments of its political objective by the Congress party of Assam.”⁷⁰

The *Jughbheri* , weekly newspaper published from Sylhet wrote,

“Though the Hon’ble Minister in Charge of Supply and other high officials are crying loudly for ‘grow more food’, there stands the line system like the Chinese wall to stop people from growing food grains in the most fertile lands of Assam covering lakhs of acres of land. This is making the food situation worse. Millions of Bengali cultivators are eager to solve the food crisis by the growing food grains in these follow lands but the local government guided by their provincial narrowness yet stick their line system.”⁷¹

By 1945, the *Jughabheri* again came out in support of the immigrant. The voice of the immigrants were joined with both for and against Pakistan. On the other hand the *Assam Herald* declared that the voice of Pakistan was the voice of liberty, equality whereas *Assamiya* published from Guwahati declared immigrants were up in the and going to turn Assam in to Pakistan.⁷²

⁶⁹ *Assam Tribune*, November, 22, 1946

⁷⁰ *Star of India*, January, 10, 1947

⁷¹ Home Political, F. R. June 1943, No. 18/6/43, NAI

⁷² Home Poll (I), Fortnightly Report February 1945, No. 18/2/45, NAI

The Bengal Provincial Muslim League extended its support to Assam Provincial Muslim League. A joint committee of action got formed under Maulana Bhasani, as President and Abdul Matin Choudhury as its Secretary. The Assam Provincial Muslim League passed a resolution to launch a Movement against the atrocities of Bordoloi Government in its meeting of 9th February, 1947. A joint meeting of Assam-Bengal Muslim League was held at Bahadurghat under the presidency of Maulana Bhasani where Bhasani urged the people to enroll themselves as volunteer force to defy the civil laws. However, during the movement conflict aroused among the leaders of Muslim League and a section of Muslims under Md. Shadullah were against the movement with the assistance of Bengal Muslim League.⁷³ In spite of his opposition the movement jointly continued. A Bengali leaflet entitled “My last appeal to countrymen”, Bhasani stated the movement as a struggle for existence and a *Jehad* against the reactionary policy of the government of Assam. Maulanai Abdul Hamid Khan Bhasani was arrested on March 10, 1947 at 4:25 P.M. at Tejpur under section 188 of Indian Panel Code and Section 144 was imposed on Tejpur District.⁷⁴ At Hailakandi, in the district of Cachar, M. H. Choudhury addressed a gathering where huge numbers of students were participated. He addressed against the atrocities of Bordoloi government.⁷⁵ During the course of the movement Premier Gopinath Bordoloi while visiting to the villages of Silchar the League activists provoked people for to use abusive words but public remained control. The League volunteers protested his visit and to remove the picketers police charged lathis and arrested six League activists. They were released later.⁷⁶ At Karimganj League activist took violent step. On 18th April, 1947, the picketers shouted with communal slogans in front of Karimganj Court, Post Office, Schools and Hindu Hostels. They compelled Police constables to leave the places and looted the market. However, before any serious incident the situation was brought under control the picketers were suppressed.⁷⁷

⁷³ *Assamiya*, dated 22 – 03 - 1947

⁷⁴ *Assamiya*, dated 15 – 03 - 1947

⁷⁵ Habibullah Mazumder, p.242

⁷⁶ *Assamiya*, dated 20-04-1947

⁷⁷ *Assamiya*, dated 03-05-1947

At Hailakandi, Moinul Hoque Choudhury addressed a huge gathering of students and spoke against the atrocities of Bordoloi government.⁷⁸ On 17th May, three Muslim League MLAs were arrested in Silchar, while they were conducting a League meeting violating Section 144 and consequently there was *lathi* charge which led to number of injuries.⁷⁹ The incident aggravated the campaign A. M. Choudhury circulated a printed booklet comprising the statements of some evicted persons with some photographs. Among these, three photographs were prominent. One showed 19 Muslims in prayers before a demolished mosque, another showed two women moving towards jungles for shelter and the third one showed a helpless boy in front of a demolished mosque.⁸⁰

Nationalist Muslims, who are mainly the followers of *Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind* did not lend support to the Communal campaign of the Muslim League. The All India *Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind* urged the Muslims of Assam not to get involved in the communal campaign of Muslim League on the issues of eviction. A Commission sent by the *Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind* tried to launch an enquiry in the matter in 1946. The Commission submitted its report to the All India *Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind*, stating that the present eviction policy of the Bordoloi Government was as per the agreement signed earlier in 1945 between Shadullah and Bordoloi and that the propaganda of Muslim League was nothing but a rumour.⁸¹

The League leaders who had earlier communalize the immigration issue started aggressive slogans like “Islam in Danger”, “Muslim interest are not safe in India under the Congress”, “Congress is a Hindu Body”, “Congress rule meant to Oppress the Muslims”. A militant spirit developed among League activists in Surma-Barak Valley, leaders of the Muslim League attempted desperately to manage win over the Islamic theological scholars to their side. Their demand for Pakistan got a boost. A meeting was held at 11th February 1947, by the Assam Provincial *Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind* in the Sylhet Khilafat Building under the presidentship of Maulana Basir Uddin. The meeting

⁷⁸ Habibullah Mazumder, p.242

⁷⁹ H. K. Barpujari (Ed.), *The Political History of Assam*, Vol. III, Govt. of Assam Publication, pp284-86

⁸⁰ Habibullah Mazumder p.243

⁸¹ Mortuja Choudhury, an unpublished Diary, Sylhet.

condemned the looting of the Jamiat Hotel by Muslim League activists as a part of observation of Direct Action Day and as reported on 16th August 1946. Many fold resolutions were passed. The most important was the immediate transfer of power to the Indians hand without division. The meeting ended with the formation of a provincial committee. Another such meeting was held at Silchar on 20th and 21st February 1947 (Thursday and Friday), in the Municipality Complex organized by the Cachar Jamiat Ulema and other nationalist Muslims of Surma Valley⁸² under the presidency of Maulana Ibrahim Ali Chatuli of Sylhet. About fifteen thousand people attended the meeting. They came from the different parts of Surma-Barak Valley. The meeting was inaugurated by Maulana Abdul Rashid, the Education Minister of Assam. Other prominent leaders who delivered speeches in the meeting include Barrister Fakar Uddin Ali Ahmed, Maulana Yakub Ali, considered as *Sufi Pir*, from Badarpur, Maulvi Abdul Matlib Mazumder of Hailakandi, Agriculture Minister, Government of Assam, Khan Saheb Rashid Ali Laskar, Maulana Abdul Jalil Choudhury of Gulapganj, who latter on settled in Badarpur, Maulana Mohammad Moshaid Ali of Jaintia and Maulana Sufi Mohsin Ali of Hailakandi. The meeting witnessed different categories of people like Maulanas, general educated nationalist Muslims, Ansar Bahini of *Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind*, Azad Muslim Student Federation of Jamiat Ulema, Jamiat Tulaba and the Muslim masses.⁸³ The meeting aimed to aware and alert the *Ulemas* and Muslims of the Valley regarding the conspiracies of the Muslim League activists, whom they in the meeting compared to '*Feraaun*' (a King of Egypt and an anti-muslim during Prophetic period) and '*Nasara*',(a community of Arabia which was also anti- Muslim during Prophetic period). It appealed to people to sacrifice themselves both mentally and materially for the attainment of the freedom of India. Emphasis was also given for maintaining cordial relations with the Non-Muslim community and society as permitted in the Quran and Hadith.

Maulana Ibrahim Ali expressed many strongest views in his presidential address, urging upon the Muslims to live life as per the principles, ideologies and beliefs of Islam. He expressed reservations against the Muslim League's demand for Pakistan. According

⁸² Notice circulated for the meeting found in District *Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind* Office, Silchar

⁸³ Habibullah Mazumder, p.251

to him, Islam always thought the Muslim to live with non-Muslims maintaining a brotherly, friendly relation. Islam never stood for establishing a separate Muslim land. Like him, Maulana Abdul Jalil Choudhury, General Secretary of Assam Provincial *Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind* too vehemently condemned the Muslim Leagues demand of Pakistan. He cited many historical references to convince people and establish that Islam never compromised with slavery and foreign rule. Whosoever tried to exploit and suppress Islam or to do something nasty in the name of Islam was inevitably the enemy of Islam. This two day-convention of *Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind* is said to be a unique event in the history of freedom struggle in Surma Valley, primarily because the conference was held on the eve of India's independence, that too at a crucial time when the Muslim League of Surma Valley was making their last resort to include the whole of Assam in Pakistan. Undertaking all risks, the *Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind* made an effort which has left a significant mark in the very crucial political situation of India.⁸⁴ The two days convention end with a historic procession of fifteen thousand Muslims, in which more than five hundred students of different madrassas of Surma-Barak valley participated. The procession moved via Central Road, Premtola, Narshintola Dighi Road, Kalibari Road, Janiganj etc. shouting loud slogans like *Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind – Jindabad, Hindustan – Azad, Ansarullah – Jindabad, Maulana Azad – Jindabad, Engrej Bagh Jao* etc. holding Jamiat flags in their hand and strapping badges on their chest. It has been reported that the procession covered a distance of more than one mile.⁸⁵

The historic declaration of Lord Mountbatten came on June 3rd 1947. The entire Nation heard it with joy tinged with apprehension. The fate of Sylhet was sealed, and only a month was left to witness, Sylhet's tryst with destiny. It stated, 'Though Assam is predominantly a non-Muslim province, the district of Sylhet which is contiguous to Bengal is predominantly Muslim. There have been a demand that, in the event of the partition of Bengal, Sylhet should be amalgamated with the Muslim part of Bengal. Accordingly if it is decided that Bengal should be partitioned, a referendum will be held in Sylhet district under the aegis of the Governor General and in consultation with the

⁸⁴ Hurmat Ali Barlaskar, *Azad* (Bengali Weekly), March 1947, Silchar; A printed leaflet issued by Cachar nationalist Convention, March 1947, Silchar

⁸⁵ Habibullah Mazumder, p.252

Assam Provincial Government to decide whether the district of Sylhet should continue to form part of Assam province of Eastern Bengal, a boundary commission with terms and reference similar to those for the Punjab and Bengal will be set up to demarcate the Muslim majority areas of adjoining districts which will then be transferred to Bengal. The rest of Assam Province will in any case continue to participate in the proceedings of the existing Constituent Assembly.⁸⁶

The Muslim League became exalted at the announcement of the Mountbatten Plan. The prospect of a sovereign state 'Pakistan' elated them but they were dissatisfied with the fact that Assam would be excluded in the proposed Pakistan.⁸⁷ Even the case of Sylhet was to be achieved and determined by plebiscite. The voice of discontent loomed large in the very tone of Surma Valley Muslim League leaders. Some Muslim League leaders even criticized and lamented on Jinnah's sudden hurried decision with regard to Assam. Mohammad Ali, Secretary of Assam Provincial Muslim League with aggrieved heart addressed, "Are you satisfied today? Should your assurance come to nothing? What was the about at all? It was because many Muslim League leaders including Mohammad Ali were in jail due to their Civil Disobedience against Bordoloi's eviction policy. The helplessness of Mohammad Ali was observed when he said, "but alas the prison walls there stood like a Himalayan blockade on my way."⁸⁸

The 3rd June 1947 announcement actually only suggested the division of Assam. The province of Sylhet, was partitioned only after the referendum in which majority of its population endorsed the separation. As the Muslims constituted an overwhelming majority in the district, such an outcome of the plebiscite was more or less anticipated. A unique experiment in the context of colonialism, the referendum brought out the interesting dimension of Hindu-Muslim communalism. Muslim immigrants were easily mobilized for the referendum. For the Muslims, this campaign during the referendum was actually a continuity of their movement opposing the Assam government since it had

⁸⁶ Prof. Tanmay Bhattacharjee, p.129

⁸⁷ Aziz, Mohammad Abdul (et. Al), pp.111-112

⁸⁸ M. Kar, p.333

decided stringently to follow the controversial Line System.⁸⁹ The campaign gained momentum under the leadership of Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhasani assumed leadership.⁹⁰

Following the acceptance of Mountbatten Plan of 1947, the focus of political activity was confined around the Sylhet referendum to be held on 6th and 7th July 1947. But the acceptance of Mount Batten Plan by two rival political parties viz. Congress and Muslim League received mixed reaction from the Surma- Barak Valley Muslims. Both *Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind* and Muslim League of Surma-Barak Valley were dissatisfied with it. The Muslim League's dream of including whole of Assam within the eastern zone of Pakistan came to sorrowful end. *Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind* leaders like Hurmat Ali Barlaskar, Maulana Abdul Jalil Choudhury, Maulana Ibrahim Choudhury, Abdul Matlib Mazumder, Maulana Mohammad Ali, Gulam Sabbir Khan and others were tired with the Leagues communalization and became apprehensive about their success as well as about the prospects of getting support from the Government of Assam.

As the date for referendum was announced, the League high command constituted a committee comprising the important leaders of Bengal. Their representative, Khaliquzzaman was entrusted with the job to mobilize Muslim support for Sylhet's amalgamation with Pakistan. In all probabilities, the League was uncertain about the outcome of the referendum, Jinnah, who broached the idea of the committee, preferred to organize the Muslims in the Surma valley from the very outset. Another prime feature of the Muslim mobilization was the nature of the local leadership that spearheaded the campaign. Maulana Bhasani, who became famous after his successful movement in Bhasani's *char* was chosen to lead in place of the established provincial League leaders. Bhasani invested the misery of the Bengali Muslims with a religious connotation. He mainly selected mosque compounds, Eidgah or those in the vicinity as the venues for his meetings, and undertook a campaign in which religious terms underlined the significance

⁸⁹ Line System was a device introduced by the government in 1920s to halt the migration of Bengali Muslims in to Assam.

⁹⁰ Bidyut Chakrabarti, p.246

of his persona as a *Pir*.⁹¹ Number of strategies and technique were adopted for success in the Referendum. Number of youth committees were framed at village level, circle level, sub-divisional level hoping that it which would help in organizing the meeting and processions.⁹² The Provincial Muslim League National Guards which was formed earlier was also reorganized and instructed to conduct meetings to protect the League meetings from the interference of the *Jamiati* Muslims. Muslim League guards were also formed in Cachar under Mehtab Khan and in Sylhet under Abdus Salam, who was then a student of Aligarh Muslim University.

The League leaders delivered provocative speeches condemning the appeal of united and undivided India as advocated by the Congress and the *Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind*. They vehemently criticized the so called secular images of the Congress for driving out the Bengali immigrants from Assam only due to their Muslim identity. Maulana Bhasani appealed to the religious sentiments of the people. Infact, the entire campaign was organized in such a way as to gain maximum impact by drawing upon Islam. Mullahs from Bengal were brought in to go to the remote areas of the district. Village *haats* were the places where these Mullahs addressed the villagers.⁹³ The *Ulemas* of Bengal and Assam moved as an organization. Common rural Muslims believed in what the leaders said. *Ulemas* formed “*Anjuman-e-Waayejeen*”, “*Anjuman-e-Ulema-e-Bangla*”, “*Jamiat –ulema-e-Bangla O Assam,*” etc. along with the propagation they also tried to mobilize the Muslim masses politically.⁹⁴ Students were also mobilized for the movement under the organizations like All India Muslim Student Federation and leadership of A. T. Masud, Moinul Hoque Choudhury and many others. In addition the Muslim League leaders carried the campaign through the press also. Many leading newspapers like the ‘The Herald’, *Al-Islah*, *Azad*, *The Jugabheri* etc published various articles, editorials to spread the ideal as was advocated by Muslim League. Besides, Maulana Akram Khan who, in one of his deliberation at Sylhet, said that Pakistan will be attained by force, gave an enthuse to the young League volunteers. Maulana Akram Kham while delivering his

⁹¹ *Ibid*

⁹² T. K. Nurul Hoque (Ed.), *Al-Islah*, (Bengali Monthly), 1376 B. S., KMSS, Sylhet.

⁹³ Bidyut Chakrabarti., p.246

⁹⁴ Dr. Moammad Abdullah, p.7

speeches in Urdu said, '*Ladke Lenge Pakistan*', this sentence became very popular to them and that reflected the militant attitude of the Muslim League activists. Their militant attitude also got reflected in another such poem composed by Abdul Gaffar Dutta Choudhury, teacher of Sylhet Government High School, "*Tasbih felo dure, toshhud poro sobe, talowar haate naw, Allahr Raahe Jaan Kurban Dao.*"⁹⁵ (Give up the counter, take sword in hand, sacrifice your heart for the cause of God." The League leaders of Sylhet also tried to win the support of minority Schedules Caste Hindus of Sylhet in their favour. They were told about the Hindu atrocities and untouch abilities over them in the past years. In Pakistan, they were assured that there would be no sorrows for them. By nominating Jogendra Nath Mandal of Dhubri in the interim Cabinet, the All India Muslim League set up an example to win this class. P. K. Das of Bengal urged the Scheduled Caste of Sylhet to "*Join hands with the Muslims who were going to create a state of the have nots by the have nots and for the have not's.*"⁹⁶

In addition, many *boul*⁹⁷ songs were composed and sung throughout the villages of Sylhet as part of their campaign. These folk songs were composed from religious perspectives with a view to aggravate the emotional feeling among the Muslim voters.⁹⁸ Poems were recited in different places of the valley to mobilize the masses. One such song that appealed to the Muslim masses in large extent was composed just on the eve of Sylhet referendum:

*Aamrato aar Aashame te taakbona-
Aashamer julumer kota,
jibon taakte bhulbona,
Ghorbaari koto bhangilo
Puria chai korilogo
Naa khaiya maanush morilo,
dukhkhe poran baachena.*

(English translation)

We shall no longer stay in Assam,
so long life exists,
we shall not forget the atrocities of Assam,
So many houses have been torn down,
So many burns to ashes.....
Men have died of starvation,
the soul dies of sorrow.

⁹⁵ Aziz, Mohammad Abdul (et. Al), p.115

⁹⁶ Star of India, July, 01, 1947, M. Kar, p.332

⁹⁷ A kind of folk song popular in Surma Valley.

⁹⁸ T. K. Nurul Hoque (Ed.), *Al-Islah*, (Bengali Monthly), 1376 B. S., KMSS, Sylhet.

Jhumma masjid kota
Shunle laagle praner kota go
Bhanglo masjid haati diya go,
masjider chin raakhlona.
Sylhete Alkas morilo
Gulite shahid hoilo go..
Shahidi dorja pailo,
pailo she behest khana.....
Emon julum hoy jekhane
Aamra taakbona shekane go.....
Aamra taakbo Pakistane,
Jhalim deshe roibona.
Habib paagla khoi khaindia
Kural baakse vote diya go..
Pakistan tulo godia
*noile paabe laanchona.*⁹⁹

The tale of Jhuma masjid
 seems like the tale of the heart.
 Elephants have ravaged the masjid...
 ...nothing remained.
 Alkas died in Sylhet,
 became martyr by bullet.
 He got the status of martyrs,
 got the Paradise..
 A place where such atrocities persist,
 We no longer will stay in such place.
 We'll stay in Pakistan,
 no longer we'll stay in the land of atrocities.
 Says Habib the lunatic shedding tears of woe.
 Cast vote on the ballot box of axe,
 Create Pakistan,
 else you will get only insult

Several rallies and procession were convened in different parts of the valley on the eve of referendum. To convince the Muslim masses infavour of League, slogans were raised “*Urir jhar, jhingar jhar, Muslim League faria jhar*” (Bush of bean, bush of *jhinga* Muslim League is certainly winning over). The Jamiatis in its reply prepared another slogan against the League candidates as, “*Pakistan Jhinga jaar, Ghaiye Khar, Bolodhe chhaar*. (Pakistan is bush of ridge gourd, cow is eats and bullock looks)¹⁰⁰ In the Campaign the League activists pinched the against the Congress-*Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind* coalition by raising slogan, “*Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind, Lungi khulia dhuti find*”. Here, *Lungi* and *dhuti* were used symbolically, *lungi* represented Muslim and *dhuti* represented Hindu. The League activists insulted or abused the Jamiatis as they took side of the ‘Congressi Hindus’, saying that they should wore *dhuti*, traditional dress of male Hindu Bengali instead of *lungi*, a dress which the Muslims of Bengal generally wore.

⁹⁹ Sayad Mustafa Kamal, “*Sylheter Referendum o Janapratidinhi*”, Renaissance Pub., Sylhet, 2003 p.21

¹⁰⁰ A common dialogue that I heard from a number of old persons during my field study at Karimganj and Sylhet.

Similarly poems were also composed and recited on the eve of Sylhet Referendum in many informal and formal meetings or gatherings.

(English translation)

Son unishasaatchallisher-2, tisra Junete
Bodolaat ghushana jan koila
aie mote
Sylheti Mushalman-2, Pakistan Jodi chahe bhai
Vote diya proman khada koridibe taai,
Ekhon joruri bodo-2, hoiya drodo voter Mushalman
Kudal baakshe dibai vote hoiya ek pran.
Joto birudhi dhal-2,
cholbol korbo nanamote

Bindumaatra kaan keho naahi dibai taate.
Jodi bhul koraba-2, postaiba bongso
Bhuniadhan.
Jhulum hoite kobu keho naa paiba toran.

Shuno bhandu ghon-2,
diya mon luber boshete
Ulta path naa doribai, jibon taakite.
Jibon pan kori-2, taratari kaaje laagi jao.
Ekjan shotojonke, binoye bujao,
Ebar haar Jodi-2, nirobodhi kaandi jaabe din.¹⁰¹

The year 1947, 3rd of June,
The Viceroy made this announcement
in this way,
If Sylheti Musalman demands Pakistan,
Let them prove it by the vote.
Now it is very essential,
Let all the Muslim be firm for once and
Caste their vote in the ballot box of axe.
Opponent parties shall create mischief in
numerous ways.
Let all your eyes be tainted by them.
If you slip once, you'll repent for
generations.
Never shall you be relieved of your
torments.
So, listen dear friends and let not your
heart be obsessed with greed.
Do not run the wrong path
so long you are alive.
Live life, and fulfill your task,
One can make realize the hundreds with
Love and tenderness. If you lose
now, for generations you will cry.

¹⁰¹ It's a poem used to recite with a peculiar style that are neither like poem nor song, in local language it is called 'Kabi' and such was very popular in rural Bengal during partition days. I have collected this from Kendriya Muslim Sahitya Sangsad, Chouhatta, Sylhet, Bangladesh on 28.12.2012.

These were to encourage the other voters and with this they tried to show the display of confidence to win more support in favour of partition. In these informal yet important gathering, the support to Sylhet's union with Pakistan was always presented as 'a service to Islam and Muslim fraternity' elsewhere. The supporters of *Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind* and Maulana Hussain Ahamd Madani were also threatened with dire consequences. Some League activists made it difficult to the Jamiat Ulema workers to move freely in Sylhet. Religion was used till the last bid to mobilize the masses for Pakistan and the Referendum was identified with the religious terms.¹⁰² The ordinary rural Muslim masses started believing that casting vote for Pakistan means supporting the cause of Islam.¹⁰³ Apart from the divine punishment, what was most effective in garnering support was 'social ostracism' which acted like magic in the Muslim villages where survival was almost impossible without effective co-operation among those living there.

The League activists also attacked the Jamiat-Congress coalition by singing songs in various places of Surma-Barak Valley. Even in Sylhet town was reflective of the smear campaign, which read.

*Muslim League e
Dabi kore jato guli bhag
Iha shuni adhikangsho
Jamiati rag....
Jodi taar saathi hoilay
Nij anna khaiya
Te kene re Mussalman
Murti puja korona.*¹⁰⁴

(English translation)

The Muslim League
has claimed so many divisions.
Hearing this, half of Jamiatis
are full of anger.
And if you have been their companions,
by consuming your own grain,
then why do you Musalman
not worship idols.

In the Sylhet Referendum, the symbol for Sylhets retention with Assam was cottage and Sylhets attachment with East Bengal was axe. League activists, using the symbol of the referendum raised the slogan, "*Ei Kural Khar? Ibarhim Khalilullar*",

¹⁰² Ananda Bazar Patrika, July 3, 1947

¹⁰³ *Ibid*

¹⁰⁴ Binayak Dutta, p.210

(Whom do this axe belongs? It is of Ibrahim Khalilullah's).¹⁰⁵ Muslim believe Ibrahim to be the father of Muslim Community. Leagues marketing of election symbol had wide appeal to the common masses. It meant that if any Muslim does not cast his vote in favour of 'axe' it will mean that he is avoiding Ibrahim Khalilullah, the father of the Muslim community. On the other hand, 'cottage' which was the symbol of nationalist Muslim, League activists in their campaign compared it with the 'house of satan'. To them, this is the house where there is no person, and an empty house is always a house of 'ghosts'. So, the League worker in their slogan said, "*Bhuter ghore kural maaro*" (Hit with axe on the house of ghost).¹⁰⁶

Yet there were many doubts with regard to inner motive of Sylhet Muslim League leaders on the Sylhet referendum alone. So, it would not be wrong to say in this connection that if Mohammad Ali was right blaming Jinnah for step motherly treatment towards the case of Assam, it would not be in any way unjustified if any Muslim League leaders of Cachar blamed the Sylhet League leaders for the same. Thus the Muslim League members of Sylhet who once strongly advocated Sylhets retention with Assam now became the ardent supporter for the separation of Sylhet. While Muslims of Cachar had a strong love and affection and whole hearted desire to remain in Sylhet. Sylhet Muslim League perhaps thought that if Sylhet was achieved by any means Cachar would come automatically under Pakistan. Such forethought was observed in a very popular slogan,

*"Sylhet niche gono vote, aar Cachar nimu laathor chute"*¹⁰⁷

(Sylhet is taken by referendum and Cachar will be taken by kick)

The *Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind* infact, can be said to have played a much broader and wider role in comparison to its counterparts Muslim League and Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam whose outlook were actually quite narrow. The *Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind* and the Congress had a good hold in Surma-Barak Valley. The frequent visit of *Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind*

¹⁰⁵ Interview with Sayas Mustafa Kamal (80), Naya Sadak, Sylhet, dated 30-12-2012

¹⁰⁶ Interview with Sayas Mustafa Kamal (80), Naya Sadak, Sylhet, dated 30-12-2012

¹⁰⁷ A very common and popular dialogue among the supporters of Muslim League of Hailakandi, Karimganj.

leaders of National level, particularly Maulana Hussain Ahmed Madani of Dar-ul-Ulum, Deoband created a massive impact in Surma Valley. A good number of Maulanas of Surma Valley became his disciple and *murids*. Many madrassas of Surma-Barak Valley were founded on the basis of the ideology and principles of Dar-ul-Ulum in the last part of the 19th century and in the first half of the 20th century. These institutions became instrumental in preaching the messages of Hussain Ahmed Madani among the masses. Many of the *Ulemas* of this madrassas were his direct students who studied in Dar-ul-Ulum, Deoband. The presence of Madani in Surma Valley on the occasion of Ramdhan at Naya Sadak Mosque gave a new boost to the nationalist spirit. Assam Provincial *Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind* secured three Assembly seats in Surma-Barak Valley in the Provincial election of 1946, while all the Muslim seats of Brahmaputra Valley went in favour of Muslim League. There was not much difference of votes between the *Jamiat* and the Muslim League in the election of 1946, showing that the political hold of the *Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind* in Surma-Barak Valley was not negligible.¹⁰⁸

The nationalist Muslim leaders, like Maulana Ibrahim Ali Chautali, Maulana Abdul Jalil Choudhury, Maulana Ahmed Ali, Maulana Abdul Matlib Mazumder, Hurmat Ali Barlaskar and others toured throughout the districts and organized the meeting and processions to undo the Muslim League's attempt to separate Sylhet from Assam. They urged the people to vote for Sylhet's retention with Assam. The student wing and other associate groups of *Jamiat* for example Islamic Student Federation, *Jamiatul Tulaba*, *Ansar Bahini*, *Revolutionary Sainik* etc. organized number of meetings all over the district.¹⁰⁹ The Nationalist meetings were usually accompanied with slogans like "*Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind – Jindabad*", "*Muslim League Murdabad*", "*Hindustan Jindabad*", "*Pakistan Murdabad*" etc.¹¹⁰ Maulana Madni in his speech at Sylhet condemned what he called the crocodile tears of Muslim League and taunted them for claiming themselves as the saviour of Islam and guardians of the Muslim society in India.¹¹¹ In a gathering

¹⁰⁸ Habibullah Mazumder, pp.255-56

¹⁰⁹ Hurmat Ali Barlaskar, *Azad*, (Bengali Weekly), Silchar, February, 1963

¹¹⁰ Nurul Hoque, *Al-Islah* (Bengali Monthly), Sylhet, 1376 B.S.

¹¹¹ Habibullah Mazumder.p.257

nearby Bhanga Markajul Ulum Madrassa of Karimganj Madani while addressing said,

*“Marde haq baatilke saamne
Sar jukata nehi
Sar kata sekta hai
Magar jhuka sekta nehi.”*¹¹²

(English translation)

Man with truth never bow down to eunuch,
even head can be cut down but shall never bow down.

Madrassa students along with their teachers too joined in the campaign through procession, discussion, rallies and meetings. In counter to the League activists song, “...Assame aar taakbona... Guli khey morbona...” (We no longer will stay in Assam...would not like to die with bullet), they also raised slogan, “*Purbo Bonge Jaabona, Ghurar dhan khabo na.....*” (We shall not go to East Bengal, would not like to take the rice of cows), and “*Pakistane Jaabo na, fen khey morbona*” (We shall not go to Pakistan, would not like to die taking the juice of rice). Leaders of the *Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind* opposing the communal appeal of Muslim League propagated the message of “*Hindu Muslim Bhai Bhai...*”(Hindus and Muslims are the brother of each other) and also appealed to the public for not breaking Sylhet by favouring Muslim League. Their kind appeal to the public was reflected in the common slogan raised by the nationalist Muslims of the Valley, “*O sajani, Sylhet Bhangia Gura Kortaini...!*” (Oh dear, do you like to divide the Sylhet...!) However, chorus “*Naraye Taqbir, Allahu-Akbar*’, was used by both the groups to provide spirit among their followers. The village singers drafted songs to excite the feelings of the masses in favour of League, “*Ayre Muslim ayre tora/ekbar phire ay/Bihar o Kolkatar dike ekbar phire ay/age morlo koto muslim Bihar Kolkatay/ Seshe Shahid hoilo Alkas/Sylhet o jelay.*” The nationalist camp replied, “*Na bujile porer kothay/ghore kural na maario/Bhaire bhai bhorer bakshe vote diyo/ Bangladeshe durbhikko/Manush more lokkho lokkho/Sylhet jelay sei durbhikko taniya na aniyo.*”¹¹³ Processions, slogans and marching on the road by the youths of the Muslim National Guards and the Volunteers were visible. Through loudspeaker and microphone,

¹¹² Interview with Maulana Abdul Hoque (70), Bhanga, Karimganj dated 16.04.2010.

¹¹³ Prof. Tanmay Bhattacharjee, p.185

the people were asked to vote for the axe symbol. Motor car and boats were used but boats served more as the District was under the spate of seasonal flood.¹¹⁴

The incident which happened on April 24, 1947 contributed to a large extent for Muslims of Surma Valley to favour Sylhet's retention with East Bengal on the eve of Sylhet Referendum. Alkas was a young boy of 18 years, who was shot dead by police firing on April 24, 1947 while he was in a procession of Pakistan National Guard. The procession was started from Shah Jalal's Dargah after having *Ziyarat* to his tomb. The procession crossed Rikabazar, Lamabazar, Sheikh Ghat, Kazirbazar and when it reached near Sylhet Kotwali Police Station where British Flag was flying, Alkas moved forward and removed British flag and was replaced by Pakistani Flag. Suddenly a bullet hit his chest and he breathed his last. Thousands of public assembled at the court point from where procession was started following the dead body of Alkas which reached Govinda Park (present Hasan Market) via Kumarpara, Naiyorpul, Dupadighirpar and Bandorbazar. His *Janaja* (final prayer for dead body) was held at 5 P.M. and was conducted by Maulana Suhul Osmani of Sylhet Aliya Madrassa where several thousands of people assembled. Alkas was finally buried in a grave at Manik Pir's graveyard.¹¹⁵

The news of Alkas's murder soon spread with the circulation of a leaflet prepared and published by Bachu Mia titled "*Shahid Alkas*" to the remotest corner of the Valley and that gave rise to great resentment in mass scale. As a result of the incident therefore, the sentiment aroused was very deep. The momentum created by it not only accelerated the pace of the Civil Disobedience Movement but it had its inevitable effects on the historic Sylhet Referendum as well. The movement it had created a deep impression on the Muslim masses that the life, honour and property of the Muslims were not safe at the hands of the Congress. The martyrdom of Alkas added strength to the impression.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁴ *Ibid*, p.104

¹¹⁵ A pamphlet *Shahid Alkas*, May 1947, Sylhet, KMSS

¹¹⁶ Dewan Nurul Hussain Choudhury, *Sylheter Itihas*, p.31

As mentioned earlier, the movements, agitation, procession, rallies organized by the *Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind* and its allies were mainly organized and conducted by the *Ulemas* and Talebas of different Madrassa of the Valley of which in Cachar Dar-ul-Ulum, Banskandi, in Hailakandi Dar-ul-Ulum, Sahabad, Qasimul Ulum Lala Madrassa, in Karimganj Madinatul Ulum, Baghbari, in Sylhet, Aliya Madrassa, Fulbari Aziria Madrassa, in Sunamganj, Chatak Jalilia Madassa, in Maulvibazar, Maulvi Bazar Senior Madrassa played important role in the pro-partition and anti-partition movement. Many *Ulemas* of these madrassas were studied in the Dar-ul-Ulum, Deoband for higher education. However, in the peak hours of the movement during 1945 to 1947, a good number of *Ulemas* most of whom were associated with Calcutta Aliya Madrassa, Dakha Aliya Madrassa and Sylhet Aliya Madrassa, Jingabari Fazil Madrassa took the side of the Muslim League and played leading role in the Provincial election of 1946 and in the Sylhet Referendum. However, number of *Ulemas* who studied in different madrassas United Province, Bihar, Delhi and Calcutta also played a tremendous role in the pro-partition and anti-partition movement. It has been observed that the responses of the some of the madrassas were clear and they took active part in the partition and anti-partition movement whereas it is also observed that in some madrassas *Ulemas* were divided on this issue.

The Madrassa which played significant role in the Partition Movement in Surma-Barak Valley was Sylhet Aliya Madrassa. Maulana Romiz Uddin Ahmad of Sylhet Aleya Madrassa was an active supporter of Muslim League and also for Pakistan.¹¹⁷ He was the patron of Sylhet's first monthly journal '*Al-Islah*' who through his journal propagated the ideology of Pakistan Movement. The man who played vital role during Sylhet Refendum in mobilizing common masses infavour Eastern Bengal was Maulana Suhul Osmani of Sylhet Aliya Madrassa. Maulana Suhul Osmani was born in Bhagalpur, Bihar. From 1915 to 1918 he taught in Calcutta Alia Madrassa and then he taught a year in Sylhet Alia Madrassa. In spite of being a government employee he participated in many Khilafat conferences in Surma Valley and even presided over a number of such conferences. In 1920, he went to Patna and became the Principal of

¹¹⁷ Mustansirur Rahman Choudhury, *Anchalik Itihas: Fulbari Aziria Aliya Madrassa*, p.72

Shamsul Huda Madrassa. In 1937, when ‘Title’ class was started in Sylhet Alia Madrassa, he was again brought to Sylhet as Principal of Sylhet Alia Madrassa and remained there permanently.¹¹⁸ His speech in the light of *Quran* and *Hadith* to the different parts of the district greatly contributed in mobilizing the Muslims. However, his lecture before the huge gathering of Muslim masses on 12th June 1947, Thursday at Shah Jalal Dargah Mosque had a wide religious appeal that to a large extent changed the mood of the Muslim masses of Surma Valley. His speech was later printed and widely circulated throughout the district as ‘*Fatwa*’ and had greatly convinced the Muslim masses to cast their vote infavour of East Pakistan. Maulana Suhul Osmani’s *Fatwa* is translated hereunder:¹¹⁹

Appeal to the Muslim Brothers

1. *Attainment of Pakistan through casting vote is ‘Sarhi-Jihad’ for the Muslim of Sylhet and for every one it is ‘Farz-e-Aa’in’. Muslim male and female if any one for negligence does not join in this Jihad then he or she would be great sinner as per Quran and Hadith.*
2. *If any Muslim fails to donate his property in this jihad then his all property would be ‘haram’ (strictly formidable in Islam).*
3. *If any Muslim instantly after getting information of this Jihad, leaving all his worldly activities does not join in it or shows negligence he would have to explain it in ‘Qiyamat’ (the Day of Final Judgment).*
4. *If any Muslim male whose wife posses voting right but he forbid her to cast vote or does not assist her in casting vote, he would be a big sinner.*
5. *If any Muslim does not take so far his knowledge of any helpless (blind, handicapped, patient etc.) Muslim female- male to the vote centre, then in the day of final judgment he must would have to explain the same before Allah.*
6. *During the hours of Jihad there is no restriction on women’s ‘purdah’. If posses hijab then good, otherwise can go covering with shawal. Considering the situation have to be cast vote in any means.*
7. *If Muslim of Srihatta with their intentional mistake forbids Srihattas attachment with Pakistan then the descendents of present Muslims of Srihatta will complain to Khuda at the field on Day of Judgment that our*

¹¹⁸ Dr. Moammad Abdullah, p.274

¹¹⁹ Leaflet Containing this Fatwa in Bengali was published and circulated by Maulana Wasif Ullah, Secretary District Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam, Shah Abu Turab Masjid Road, Srihatta

these ancestor Muslims forbade us to join Dar-ul-Islam, they must have to be punished in appropriate way.

8. *If Srihatta join with Pakistan then there will be starvation, lack of foods, lack of cloths, sufferings etc. all these are the conspiracies of Shatan and nothing else. There is no such question. This land must have to be attached with Pakistan otherwise would have to do 'hizrat' to leave the country.*
9. *This time casting vote is not to any person, not to any institution but to the very favourite thing of our Prophet Mohammad's(S) more than his heart Dar-ul-Islam i.e. casting vote for creating Pakistan.*

(N.B.: Due to shortage of paper only a few copies are printed. After reading pass it to the other and for its wide propagation read and explain the same going through house to house.)

Maulana Wasif Ullah

Secretary

Srihatta District Jamiat Ulema-e-Islami

Shah Abu Turab Masjid Road, Srihatta

Maulana also in his speeches at different places of Sylhet asserted that the failure to vote for transfer to Pakistan would be a sin against Islam and denounced who would vote for Sylhets retention with Assam as *Kafir*.¹²⁰ Maulana Suhul Osmani was then an old man and his *Fatwa* was widely circulated under Maulana Wasif Ullah, *Imam* of Shah Turab Mosque, Sylhet. However, some of the *Ulemas* who were the product of this madrassa later on studied in Deobadi Madrassa and came under the influence of Maulana Hussain Ahmed Madani were opposed the partition. Maulana Sayad Jamilul Hoque of Saidpur, Sunamganj was student of Sylhet Aliya Madrassa when Khilafat Movement was started. He took active part in the movement at Sylhet and imprisoned for fourteen months. It is because of this he was popularly called 'Jeli Maulavi'. He later became the disciple of Hussain Ahmed Madani and opposed the creation of Pakistan. Maulana Sakhaatul Ambia was a product of Sylhet Aliya Madrassa who played important role in Khilafat Movement in Surma-Barak Valley had close contact with Tabligue and Tanjim Movement. He was a nationalist Congress and it was because of his effort and invitation that *Sheikul Islam* Hussain Ahmed Madani first came to Sylhet. Maulana Ambia fought against the Line System of the Assam Government and later he joined Muslim League and played active role in favour of partition and in Referendum he

¹²⁰ Binayak Dutta, p.206

moved every corner of the valley to convince the masses to cast vote for Sylhet's attachment with East Pakistan.¹²¹ Maulana Anjab Ali of Kanaighat who studied at Calcutta Aliya Madrassa was a teacher of Sylhet Aliya Madrassa. Earlier, he was the supporter of *Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind* but later joined Muslim League and became its active member. He wrote a number of poems in Urdu in favour of Partition and on Md. Ali Jinnah that largely contributed in mobilizing the common masses.¹²²

Fulbari Aziria Madrassa and Jhingabari Fazil Madrassa played an important role in the partition movement. Maulana Abdul Musabbir of Gahapur, Balaganj who studied in Fulbari madrassa, formed the Sylhet District Muslim Student Association which provide voluntary service in mobilizing the Muslim masses in favour partition movement.¹²³ The *Ulemas* and *Talebas* of Jhingabari Fazil Madrassa played an important role in the partition movement, Maulana Abdul Aziz, Maulana Nesar Ali, Maulana Abdus Salam and other teachers of the madrassa worked in favour Pakistan and in the Referendum too they not only circulated Suhul Osmani's Fatwa but also preached the importance and advantages of joining with East Bengal which also meant joining with Pakistan.¹²⁴ Shadullah, the premier of Assam also visited this Madrassa. Maulana Abdur Rahman Singkapani of Maulvi Bazar who studied in Calcutta Aliya Madrassa and taught in Daulatpur Madrassa under Bishwanath Police station of Sylhet also actively participated in the India's movement for freedom. Maulana Singkapani was a worker and supporter of Congress and *Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind* later joined the Muslim League and on the first session of All India Jamiat-e-Islam which was held from 26th to 29th October, 1945 at Mohammad Ali Park he too joined in it. He became the General Secretary of Assam Provincial Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam. Maulana Abdur Rahman was closely associated with the national leaders of Muslim League like Maulana Shaukat Ali, Nawab Mohsin ul Mulk, Maulana Akram Khan, Manirujjaman Islamadadi and others. He was also closely connected with Assam Provincial *Tabligue* and *Tanzim* and *Assam-Bengal Anjuman-e-*

¹²¹ Dr. Moammad Abdullah, p.279

¹²² *Ibid*, p.75

¹²³ *Ibid*, p.273

¹²⁴ Interview with Maulana Ibadur Rahman (58), Principal, Jhingabari Fazil Madrassa, Jhingabari, dated 04-01-2012

Hemayatul Islam (1923-24). He tried to mobilize the Muslims to a large extent in favour of partition and in Sylhet Referendum too, he worked in favour of Sylhet's joining with the East Pakistan.¹²⁵ Maulana Syad Abbas Ali of Bishwanath under Sylhet and Maulana Shah Abul Hasim of Bahubol subdivision of Habiganj had studied in Calcutta Aliya madrassa and they also actively participated in the partition movement and in Sylhet Referendum in favour of Sylhet's union with East Bengal. Maulana Abul Hasim was a good orator and delivered a number of speeches in Assam and Bengal during provincial election of 1946 to mobilize the public in favour of Muslim League. Maulana Abdul Bari of Singkapon village under present Maulvi Bazar District was a student of Calcutta Aliya Madrassa. He too attended All India Ulema Conference which was held at Calcutta in 1945 and was selected as the Vice-President of Assam Provincial Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam. Maulana Jahid Uddin of Moglapur village under Nabiganj subdivision of present Habiganj district was a student of Shamsul Huda Madrassa, Patna (Bihar). He came in close contact with Shabbir Ahmed Usmani and under his inspiration he returned to his home and established Saidpur Bazar Aliya Madrassa in 1945. He too participated Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam and propagated against *Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind* activities in his area and appealed to the public to stand for Pakistan.

Hafiz Maulana Athar Ali of Ghungadia village under Bianibazar subdivision of Sylhet District was a student of Muradabad Qasimul Ulum Madrassa, Rampur Aliya Madrassas and went to Deoband for Higher education. He was awarded the *Sanad* of *Tafsir* and *Hadith* from Deoband. He came in to contact with Anawar Shah Kashmiri, Maulana Sabbir Ahmed Usmani and many others. He was the spiritual disciple of Maulana Ashraf Ali Tanwi of Deoband madrassa. Hafiz Maulana Athar Ali also attended the All India Ulema Conference at Calcutta and was selected as the President of Assam Provincial Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam. He took leading role in organizing the movement for attaining Pakistan and in Sylhet referendum he campaigned all over the Valley on foot and appealed the Muslims to cast vote in favour of axe.

¹²⁵ Dr. Moammad Abdullah, p.276

Dar-ul-Hadith Ashraful Ulum Madrassa Ratanpur of Hailakandi subdivision was the first madrassa of colonial Cachar. Among the *Ulemas* of the madrassas Maulana Azfar Ali, Maulana Sadar Ali, Maulana Ahmad Ali, Maulana Abdur Rashid Maulana Abdul Manna Mazumder, Maulana Masaddar Ali and Maulana Jia Uddin Laskar were the active worker of *Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind*. About 50 students of the madrassa along with the above mentioned teachers participated in the Jamiat Convention at Silchar in February 1947.¹²⁶ In this area *Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind* had profound influence and in the Provincial election of 1946, Abdul Matlib Mazumder secured the seat as the *Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind* candidate. Madinatul Ulum Baghbari Alia Madrassa was center of Jamiat Ulema Hind in Karimganj subdivision. The madrassa was established following the ideologies of Dar-ul-Ulum, Deoband. Madrassa was informally affiliated under the Deoband Madrassa. Cheragia Qaumia Madrassa, Cheragi under Karimganj subdivision was also moved against the partition. Hussain Ahmed Madani visited this madrassa during the election campaign of 1946.¹²⁷

Jamia Islamia Dar-ul-Ulum Dar-ul-Hadith, Kanaighat madrassa of Sylhet was one of the important centre of *Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind*. Maulana Mohammad Moshaid Ali who was popularly called Bayumpuri after the name of his village Bayumpur, under Kanaighat Police Station in Sylhet. He studied in Rampur Aliya Madrassa and Dar-ul-Ulum, Deoband. He was the disciple of Hussain Ahmed Madani and was inspired with the political ideology of his '*murshid*'. Like other Deobandi Ulema, Maulana Moshaid Ali was also a strong opponent of the Pakistan scheme of Muslim League. He was an active member of *Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind*.¹²⁸ Dar-ul-Ulum, Sahabad madrassa of Hailakandi Subdivision of Cachar district also participated in the anti-partition movement. Maulana Hakim Ali of Rongpur, Hailakandi, Maulana Moshaid Ali, Sylhet, Mualana Makkaram Ali, Maulana Nasir Uddin, Maulana Sheik Sayid Ahmed, Maulana Sheik Motosin Ali, Maulana Soman Ali, Maulana Jonab Ali, Sheikh Abdul Hoque, Maulana Nur Mohammad and Maulana Ekram Ali. Most of the teachers of the madrassa

¹²⁶ Interview with Maulana Jia Uddin Laskar, aged about 95 years, Head Maulana of the Madrassa, Date of interview 16.10.2011, Place of Interview – Office of the Madrassa.

¹²⁷ Interview with Maulana Abdul Khalik(60), teacher of the madrassa, dated 09-10-2010

¹²⁸ Dr. Moammad Abdullah, p. 280

were the product of Dar-ul-Ulum, Doband. Politically the madrassa was affiliated under *Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind*. The *Ulemas* and the *talebas* of the Madrassa actively participated in the anti-partition movement. Hussain Ahmed Madani whenever visited Hailakandi, he visited this madrassa and on the eve of Provincial election of 1946, the day on which Maulana Madani delivered before huge crowd at Lala, madrassa classes was dismissed and every one of the madrassas also attended the meeting of Madani.

The most important madrassa of Barak Valley was Dar-ul-Ulum, Banskandi the largest madrassa of North Eastern India. The madrassa was established following the foot step of Dar-ul-Ulum Madrassa. Madrassa was informally affiliated to Dar-ul-Ulum Deoband. *Muhaddis* and the *Talebas* of the madrassa were participated in all the major political movement against the British. It is stated earlier that the Government wanted to make the madrassa as government madrassa but the offer was rejected by the Madrassa authority. Even the proposal for financial assistance by the Premier of Assam, Sir Mohammad Shadulla was vehemently rejected by the authority considering Mohammad Shadullah as the agent of British colonial government. Hafiz Akbar Ali, Maulana Nur Ali Sahab (d 1952), Ujan Tarapur, Banskandi, Maulana Amir Ali Sahab (d 1952), Rupairbali, near Banskandi were actively participated in the anti-partition movement. They were there in organizing Jamiat Convention at Silchar.

Jamia Islamia Arabia Darul Hadith Hasnabad Madrassa of Chhatak under Sunamganj sub-division also played important role in mobilizing the masses against the anti-partition movement. Foundation stone of the Madrassa was laid by Hussain Ahmed Madani in 1929 and till the very last day of the Colonial rule the madrassa propagated the message of Sheikul Islam Hussain Madani. Similarly, Dhaka Uttar Ranaping Arabia Hussainia Madrassa, Golapganj, Sylhet also preached the political ideologies of Hussain Ahmed Madani. Jamiat Ulema Hind Conference were held in the Dhaka Uttar Ranaping Arabia Hussainia Madrassa, Golapganj under the Presidentship of Hussain Ahmad Madani where Maulana Riasad Ali, Maulana Sirajul Islam, Maulana Makammil Ali, Maulana Mastakim Ali and others delivered speeches and appealed the Muslims for proving the strength of their faith by casting vote infavour of Sylhet's retention with

Assam. Maulana Majammil Ali of Bianibazar and Maulana Mastakim Ali of Golapganj were the two prominent Ulema of the madrassa actively participated in the anti-partition agitation in Sylhet. Maulana Sayad Nazir Uddin Ahmed of Balakandi, Maulvi Bazar who studied in Fulbari Aziriya Madrassa and Dar-ul-Ulum, Deoband became the disciple of Hussain Ahmed Madani both spiritually and politically actively participated in the anti-partition movement in Sylhet.¹²⁹

Aal Jamiatul Arabiatul Islamia, Badarpur under Karimganj subdivision (Deorail Madrassa) was one of the prominent madrassa that rose against the partition movement. It was the madrassa where Maulana Abdul Jalil Choudhury, of Assam Provincial *Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind* and most favourite disciple of Maulana Hussain Ahmed Madani taught for a long years till his death. Maulana Sayad Jamilul Hoque of Saidpur, Sunamganj was student of Sylhet Aliya Madrassa when Khilafat Movement was started. He took active part in the movement at Sylhet and imprisoned for fourteen months. It is because of this he was popularly called '*Jeli Maulavi*'.¹³⁰ Maulana Sayad Jamilul Hoque was the political disciple of *Sheikul Islam* Hussain Ahmed Madani. In 1941 at the Lahore Session of All India *Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind*, he represented the Sylhet group. He was the President of Muslim Samiti that was formed in South Sunamganj mainly in Dhirai and Jagannathpur. He strongly opposed the creation of Pakistan and in Sylhet Referendum too worked for Sylhet's attachment with Assam. However, after the partition when Sylhet became a part of East Pakistan, he remained there and on January 11, 1949, he joined Muslim League.¹³¹

Maulana Mohammad Ibrahim Ali Chatuli was another active member of *Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind* and was a supporter of Indian National Congress. During Provincial election of 1946, 34 seats were allotted for Muslim on which 31 candidates were elected from Muslim League and only 3 candidates were elected from Jamiat-Congress coalition. Maulana Chatuli had profound influence and even in high tide of

¹²⁹ Dr. Moammad Abdullah, p.275

¹³⁰ During the Revolt of 1857, East India Company Government arrested his father for mobilizing the masses against the British.

¹³¹ Dr. Moammad Abdullah, p.277

Pakistan movement of Muslim League he was elected as Congress-Jamiat candidate from the Sylhet North in the Provincial election of 1946. It must be mention here, he was the 'Imam' of Sylhet 'Naya Sadak Masjid' which was the main centre of *Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind* in Surma Valley as Sheikul Islam Hussain Ahmed Madani stationed there during his long staying at Surma-Valley. Maulana Mohammad Ibrahim Ali Chatuli also served as 'Imam' in Bandar Bazar Jame Masjid.¹³²He was the leading figure during the campaign for Sylhet Referendum in favour of Sylht's retainment with Assam.

Maulana Sikandar Ali (1880-1982) of Ladia village under Chunarughat subdivision of present Habiganj district who studied in Dar-ul-Ulum Deoband. He was the disciple of Hussain Ahmed Madani both spiritually and politically and was quite opponent of Partition Movement. During Sylhet Referendum he visited house to house and propagated the message of his murshid Hussain Ahmed Madani infavour of Sylhets retention with Assam.

Like as Maulana Chatuli, Maulana Abdur Rashid of Lakhipasha village under Golapganj subdivision of present Sylhet was an active worker of *Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind*. In the Legislative Council Election of 1937, he contested as Congress candidate and was defeated by Abdul Matin Choudhury of Muslim League. However, in the provincial election of 1946, he was elected as a candidate of Congress-Jamiat coalition and was appointed as education minister in the Cabinet of Gopinath Bordoloi.

On the eve of the Sylhet Referendum, there was a meeting of Jamiat Ulema Hind at Karimganj High Madrassa, where League activists created chaos to dismiss the meeting, but meeting was held. They attacked on the Jamiat Ulema Hind's volunteer most of whom were the students of different madrassas. Maulana Sofiqul Ahmed of Bhanga Markajul Ulum Madrass who was also called as Jonab Ali was attacked by the League activist. He fall on a slope of land, where a League activist hitted him with a stick and to protect his head he raised his hand and the stick fall on his finger of right hand and

¹³² *Ibid*, p.282

was cracked. Maulana Sofiqul Hoque received freedom fighter pension in post independent period till his death.

Ulemas and Talebas of Chhatak Jalilia Alim Madrassa, were divided on issue of United India and Pakistan. Maulana Adam Raja Choudhury, Maulana Tafajjul Hoque were the *murid* of Hussain Ahmed Madani and thus took his side in favour of united India where as Maulana Abdul Bari, Maulana Nasir Uddin of Khargaon, Maulana Fazlul Karim, (MLA of Assam Legislative Assembly), Maulana Mohsin Ali (MLA) took strong side with Jinnah, Bhasani and Abdul Matin Choudhury in favour of Pakistan.

On 9th February 1946, violence broke out in Surma Valley in the form of a clash between the students of Jhingabari Madrassa, a centre of Muslim League followers and Gasbari Madrassa, supporter of *Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind* under Kanaighat Police Station, Sylhet. A good number of students and the supporters of *Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind* were assaulted.¹³³ On 10th February a meeting was called by the Jamiat leaders to devise means and strategies to take revenge for the incident. In different places of Sylhet and Cachar clashes between the two groups took place. The Jamiat leaders and activists were ill treated by League workers and sometimes several attempts were made to even murder them.¹³⁴

Finally the referendum was held on 6th and 7th July 1947. The outcome was favourable to those demanding the amalgamation of Sylhet with East Bengal. The valid votes casted in the referendum, 239619 (56.6%) were infavour of Sylhet amalgamation with Pakistan only 184041 (43.4%) of an undivided Assam in India.¹³⁵ Subdivision wise result of the Referendum were-

¹³³ Fortnightly Report, 16-02-1946

¹³⁴ *Dainik Azad*, May, 25, 1947, Dakha

¹³⁵ Bidyut Chakrabarti, p.188

Sl. No.	Name of the Sub-division	Vote infavour of Sylhet's join with Eastern Bengal	Vote infavour of Sylhet's join with Assam
01	Sylhet Sadar (Main)	68,381	38,871
02	Habiganj	54, 543	36,952
03	Sunamganj	43,715	34,211
04	Maulavi Bazar	31,718	33,471
	Total including Karimganj	2,39,619	1,84,041

The worst faces of hatred and ill-behaviour got exposed during the Sylhet Referendum campaign. Many Jamiat leaders were heavily tortured and threatened to be murdered by the League supporters during the Campaign hours¹³⁶. But the verdict of Plebiscite went in favour of Muslim League. The strength of the uslim League could be guessed from the fact that it compelled all the opponent within the Muslim society including the marginalized Jamiatis (follower of *Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind*) in to out to contest and pressured them them to join Muslim League ranks a day before referendum. The success of the League in coverting Jamiatis' forcefully within its fold were also indicated in the 'Dawn' published from Calcutta on 4th and 5th July 1947.

The division of the country also led to the division of the Muslim society. To the Muslims of Muslim League, the *Ulemas* who were under the banner of *Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind* were their main enemy. There were reasons for the same; first, they were the main competitors of preceding provincial elections on seats reserved for the Muslims. Secondly, the base of the *Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind* were the Deobandi Ulema whom the League from the very beginning considered as the orthodox and out dated. Thirdly, the League activists, convinced the Muslims to a large extent, the Jamiatis were working against the Islamic state Pakistan, and were the agents of the Hindus. To, the Jamiati's the League leaders were all political, Mr. Jinnah was a western educated person and he had been working for his political ambition. The League Leaders, in their practical life were not Islamic. Hussain Ahmad Madani in his every lecture in Surma-Barak Vallley tried to show the importance of United India and demerits of the divided India.

¹³⁶ Habibullah Mazumder, pp.270-71

Thus, it is seen that the institutions that were founded to impart religious education to its 'Community' and 'Society' also became active in mobilizing the Muslim masses of Surma-Barak Valley both socially and politically and took active part in the movement to liberate the country from the foreign yoke considering it as part of '*Iman*'. The participation of Deobondi Ulamas in the freedom movement in Surma-Barak Valley was an integral part of participation of Pan-Indian *Ulemas* in general and Deobondi *Ulemas* in particular, as most of such *Ulemas* of Surma-Barak Valley were either product of Deobond Madrassa or of a Deobondi madrassa or were '*murid*' of either Hussain Ahmed Madani or Rashid Ahmed Ganguhi or of same line, '*Silsila*'. The District and Provincial *Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind* Committee tried its best along with Congress Committee, united Assam but ultimate plebiscite went in favour of Muslim League. The *Jamiat* volunteers and leaders of Surma-Barak Valley fought their last fight not against the British, not against the Hindus but against their co-religionist i.e. against Muslim League by whom they were harassed most on the issue of united country and united Assam.