



## STUDY ON THE SWADESHI MOVEMENT IN INDIA

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**Abstract:** Swadeshi movement was one of the major events in the History of Indian Freedom Movement. It was started in 1905 as an agitation against the partition of Bengal and it spread to other parts of the country including Maharashtra. The Slogans of Swaraj, the concepts of boycott, National Education and the spirit of Swadeshi were spread from Bengal to Maharashtra along with other regions. Swadeshi is the first era of peoples movement. This movement was country wide movement. It united all country. Before the non cooperation movement congress was only the organization of argument. But by this movement Congress became well-organized country wide organization and Khadi became costume of common peoples. In the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi swadeshi movement of congress done the awareness among the people. Swadeshi movement gave impedance to the Indian National Movement . Extremist Lal , Bal and Pal turned swadeshi as a mass movement. Due to successful achievement of swadeshi movement British Government has passed the enactment of 1909 , i.e. Morley Minto act. This is the success of movement. The Swadeshi movement has a prominent place in politics and social system and Freedom movement of India. As a recent observes, swadeshi marked a major change in the depth and dimensions of concerted political hostility to the Raj.

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### Introduction:

Swadeshi movement was one of the major significant events in the History of Freedom Movement in India. It was started in 1905 as an agitation against the partition of Bengal. The presidency of Bengal was the most populous province in British India. It included not only the western and eastern parts, but also Bihar, Assam and most part of Orissa. In regarding to population distribution of this huge administrative unit, the eastern part of Bengal was dominated by the Muslim population whereas the western part was by the Hindus. In the central part of Bengal the two communities balanced each other. As the Bengal presidency as an administrative unit was increasing in size as a result of conquest and annexations, it was thought difficult to administer. Therefore, the idea of reorganizing Bengal presidency had been an issue that came for discussions among the British officials. The discussions of the partition of Bengal had been carried out since the time of the Orissa famine of 1866. In this direction, Assam was separated from Bengal in 1874.

The proposal to transform Chittagong division to Assam came out in 1892 and in 1896 again the proposal to transform the districts of Dacca and Mymensingh, so that the Assam could become a Lieutenant Governor's province. But both these proposals did not materialize. Up to this point, the

considerations of the official regarding the partition of Bengal were only administrative. But things began to change by the time of Lord Curzon. He planned a programme first in 1903, which proposed to transfer the Chittagong division, Dacca, Mymensingh districts to Assam and Chota Nagpur to the Central Provinces; Bengal would receive in return Sambalpur and the feudatory states from Central Provinces etc. However, the final scheme of partition of Bengal was brought out in July 19, 1905, with some modifications over the previous plan. As for this plan, a new province of Eastern Bengal and Assam was constituted with all districts of Chittagong, Dacca and Rajshahi divisions as well as Tippera, Malda and Assam. The motive behind this plan of partition was beyond the administrative grounds. If it was on administrative grounds, Curzon would have accepted several other logical ways of partition like linguistic division. But, he was intended for further weakening the Congress which was little to show for its existence in 1903 (John R. McLane, 1977) and dividing the articulated Bengali community which had controlled the Congress so as to weaken the growing nationalism.

In the early years of Congress was completely under the influence of moderates, who believed in purely constitutional methods and exited for piecemeal reforms in the Indian Administrative system. But during these very years of the Congress,

certain events happened in India and abroad and certain forces were at work, which produced, among the younger of the nation a group of people who began to question the wisdom of the methods of prayer and petitions followed by the moderates in order to achieve their political objectives. They were called the extremist or militant nationalist.

The last official act of Lord Curzon was the partition of Bengal. The province of Bengal was sought to be divided into two parts that is the Western and Eastern Bengal. In Western Bengal Hindus were in a majority and in the eastern zone Muslims were in preponderance. It was said that partition was necessary for administrative convenience and efficiency because the province had become an unwieldy one. But Indians in general and the Bengalis in particular clearly realised that it was a subtle move on the part of the British government to weaken the forces of Nationalism in Bengal by weaning away the Muslims.

Lord Curzon visited East Bengal and in his attempt to win over Muslims in favour of the partition, said that the partition would create in East Bengal a province where the Muslims could flourish without the dominance of any other community. The partition was taken to be a diplomatic move to play the game of divide and rule. Some of the Muslims were apparently caught in the snare. The speeches and intentions of Lord Curzon and other British officials might have been misunderstood, but the subsequent riots which occurred were attributed to those speeches by the Hindus. A vigorous agitation started against the contemplated partition. Swadeshi movement had already been gaining ground in Bengal and other provinces of India for some time. The people of Bengal retained by giving a vigorous start to the movement for the boycott of foreign and specially the British goods. The Swadeshi and the Boycott Movement spread throughout the length and breadth of India and especially in Bengal.

### **The Swadeshi Movement**

It began as anti-partition education in Bengal and by the Court was first suggested by Krishna Kumar Mitra in Sanjivani in 1905. The boycott of British products was followed by the advocacy of Swadeshi and to buy indigenously produced goods as a patriotic duty. The leaders of Bengal felt that near demonstrations, public meetings and the resolutions were not enough and something more concentrated was needed and the answer was Swadeshi and boycott. Mass meetings were held all over Bengal and big crowds took the Oath of Swadeshi. Patients refused to take foreign medicines and were willing to face the consequences. People burnt foreign clothes and foreign cigarettes. The Swadeshi Movement was an immense success. An important aspect of the

Swadeshi Movement was the emphasis placed on self-reliance or *atmashakti*.

Self-reliance means assertion of national dignity, honour and self-confidence. In the economic field it meant indignation of the industry. Mini textile mills, soap and match factories, national banks and insurance companies were started. A prominent part was played by the students of Bengal in the Swadeshi agitation. They depicted the shops selling foreign cloth and other foreign goods. Women also joined processions and picketed the shops dealing in foreign goods. The programmes of Swadeshi and boycott went hand in hand. As a consequence of Swadeshi movement there was a flowering of Nationalist poetry, prose, and journalism.

### **Limitations of the Swadeshi Movement:**

The Swadeshi Movement had its obvious limitations. The efforts to boycott foreign goods and promote Swadeshi goods had temporary success and failed to bring about the economic regeneration of the country. The objectives of National Education hardly made any progress. The movement left the peasants practically untouched and failed to achieve the much-needed Hindu-Muslim unity. By and large the Muslims stood aloof and their anti-Hindu sentiments were sedulously fostered by the orthodox Mullahs and the British. With the arrest and imprisonment of the nationalist leaders and the ruthless suppression of the working class movement, the Swadeshi and Boycott movement subsided. The Hindu of Madras wrote on November 23, 1908, wrote all thoughtful men in the country will accept the ideal which the moderate leaders have set up for realization in politics.... It is also beyond dispute that political agitation in the country must be strictly confined to constitutional methods and must be carried on subject to the laws of the country.

### **Importance of Swadeshi Movement :-**

People do not worry about suppression of imperialism and jail. Conversely they feel

- jail-teerthashetra. Khadi got importance by the pride of Swadeshi.
- Charakha reboots in every house. Truly nationalism is upmost in India and so that
- national movement intensified. Gandhiji was the chief leader of people's movement. Out of India many people took
- inspiration by the principles of Gandhiji such as Martin Luther King, Nelson Mandela and work in other regions totally important in Indian independence movement.

**Significance of the Swadeshi Movement:**

Despite its obvious limitations, the Swadeshi Movement occupies a unique place in the history of the freedom movement in India. A great national impulse pervaded the air and brought nationalism into the realm of practical politics. In December 1905, even Jawaharlal Nehru, then at Harrow, was surprised to read in The Times that the Swadeshi Movement had spread to Kashmir. Mahatma Gandhi wrote in 1908 that the real awakening of India took place after the partition of Bengal. The Swadeshi Movement brought out latent spirit of the people to defy and challenge the authority of the Government with grim determination. The Swadeshi cause, purified by the sufferings of the people, heralded a new destiny in the history of our country. \_For the first time since British rule began, Gokhale wrote, \_all sections, of the Indian community.....have been moved by a common impulse...and to act together in offering resistance to a common wrong.

**CONCLUSION**

The Swadeshi movement was suppressed by the British through repressive measures like imprisonment and deportation of many of the Swadeshi leaders. In Maharashtra leaders like Tilak, Shivaram Mahadev Paranjape was sent to imprisonment during the movement. To conclude, Maharashtra played an importance role in the Swadeshi movement. It was also important to observe that though the use of Swadeshi brought in 1905, the Swadeshi was used for the first time in Maharashtra in 1716 during the period of Peshwa by Goudpad Charya in Nasik (Kesari, January 30, 1906). According to Subodh Patrika, the Swadeshi initiative was started in Maharashtra by Shankar Shashtri Gokhale and Bhau Wadekar, the residents of Poona, in 1846. Tilak encouraged a boycott and had taken active part in the Swadeshi movement of Maharashtra. He spread the awareness about the Swadeshi Movement among the factory labourers. The Slogans of Swaraj, the concepts of Swadeshi, Boycott and National Education and the spirit of Swadeshi which were emerged during the anti-partition campaign were well propagated in Maharashtra. The celebrations of the festivals such as Ganapati utsav, Sivaji festival were one of the important moves in the history of the freedom movement in Maharashtra.

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