

Chapter

5

Extremist Phase 1 (1905–18) (Partition of Bengal and the Swadeshi Movement)

In 1905, the Bengal Partition was announced at a time when conditions were ripe for the emergence of radical politics. The partition was firmly opposed by Indian National Congress as well as the Bengal nationalists and with this the Indian national movement entered its second stage. The anti-Partition Movement gave birth to the Swadeshi movement (sometimes used synonymously) and brought about distinct changes in the content and form of Indian struggle for freedom.

By 1900, many of the early nationalists had realised the futility of praying and petitioning to the government. Their appeals for a just British rule in place for the prevailing 'unBritish' misrule had fallen on deaf ears. The imperialist policies of Lord Curzon, the Viceroy, had ruffled the nationalists, and they were no longer willing to swallow every humiliation. They had gained self-respect and confidence from the social reformers and were now willing to ask for their rights on an equal footing. A confrontation between Curzon and the nationalists was now impending and the occasion finally came with the decision of Curzon administration to partition Bengal.

CURZONIAN ATTACK IN BENGAL

Curzon began his attack in Bengal by passing the **Calcutta Corporation Act 1899** which reduced the number of elected members in Calcutta Corporation and dealt a major blow to the advancement of local self-government initiated by Lord Ripon. The move was carried out in an undemocratic manner and its primary intention was to serve the European Business interests who often complained about delays in the grant of licenses. The Calcutta intelligentsia was deeply offended.

Even before this wrong could be digested, Curzon passed the **Indian Universities Act 1904** which attacked the autonomous character of Calcutta University. The Act was passed despite strong opposition by the only Indian member of Indian Universities Commission, Gurudas Banerjee. The act transferred the power of affiliating schools and colleges to the government officials under the pretext that this would 'raise the standard of education all round'. This act of Curzon convinced the educated Indians that the Viceroy was determined to humiliate Indians in every conceivable way. When Curzon announced the **partition of Bengal in 1905**, a decision forced in the teeth of fierce opposition, the people broke out in open rebellion in the form of anti-partition movement.

Governor General Lord Curzon (In office 1899–1905): The appointment of Lord Curzon as the Viceroy of India was the fulfilment of his long-cherished dream. It is believed that he knew more about India and Indian problems than any other Viceroy before him. However, Curzon came to India in the backdrop of famine and plague of 1896–97; the revenues were declining, the administration was in need of an overhaul. Far more importantly, the Indian voices questioning the very right of the British to rule India were growing louder and louder.



Governor General Lord Curzon

Administrative Reforms: Curzon was convinced about the urgency of a thorough reform of the entire administrative machinery. There was hardly a department which escaped the Curzonian storm of reform. 'Efficiency' and 'centralisation' were the key guiding forces. His method of work was to first appoint an expert commission and then enact the required legislations.

Police Reforms: Curzon appointed a Police Commission in 1902 headed by Sir Andrew Frazer. The commission reported, among other things, that the police was corrupt, oppressive and had failed to secure the trust and cooperation of the people. It recommended increase in salaries of police officials, setting up training schools, provincial police service and Central Department of Criminal Intelligence. Curzon accepted most of its recommendations.

Educational Reforms: Curzon also appointed a Universities Commission in 1902 in view of falling standards and rising indiscipline. He believed that the Universities had become factories for the production of political revolutionaries. Based on its recommendations, he passed the **Indian Universities Act of 1904** which sought to increase official control over the universities and exercise stricter control over affiliation of private colleges. Criticising the act, a historian had remarked, 'The Act left the Indian University to be an institution meant not for the fostering of love of learning but for providing efficient hurdles in a race for job.'

Railway Reforms: Curzon built more mileage of railway lines than any other Viceroy so far. He invited a railway expert, Thomas Robertson, from England who recommended the setting up of a Railway Board.

Army Reforms: These were carried out under Lord Kitchener, the Commander-in-chief in India (1902–08). The Indian Army was grouped in two commands, the Northern Command (headquartered at Murree and striking point at Peshawar) and the Southern Command (headquartered at Poona and striking point at Quetta). Every army battalion was subjected to a severe test, 'the Kitchener Test'.

Foreign Policy: Tibet- Curzon sent a special mission to Tibet headed by Colonel Younghusband to counter the Russian influence there.

Persian Gulf: a mission was sent under Sir Henry McMahon.

Other Works and Reforms included:

Famine Commission: headed by Sir Anthony MacDonnell

Irrigation Commission: headed by Sir Colin Scott Moncrieff

Calcutta Corporation Act, 1899

Co-operative Credit Societies Act, 1904 (to provide loans to cultivators at cheap interest rates)

Ancient Monuments Act, 1904 (to protect and preserve the historical monument in the country)

Formation of Imperial Agriculture Department (to improve Indian agriculture and livestock and encourage scientific methods)

The Partition of Bengal, 1905

Estimate of Curzon: Curzon was a great imperialist. His domestic and foreign policies were guided by the urge to make the British position in India impregnable. Possessing great administrative talent, he tried to bring about a 'root and branch reform' of administration, took up painstaking study of Indian problems and appointed several commissions to guide his policy reforms. However, his obsession for efficiency did him more harm than good as it ensured that all his reforms were directed towards enhancing efficiency rather than the lot of the people. The wisdom of his reforms was further undermined by his attitude of superiority and his contempt for Indian opinion. He refused to meet the President of the Congress and termed Congress activities as 'letting off of gas'. He soon emerged as the most hated person in India, whose insults pushed the political unrest in India to a breaking point. If bad rulers could be seen in a positive light, Curzon's policies provoked India into a new dawn of nationhood.

PARTITION OF BENGAL

Reasons for Partition of Bengal

The British authorities said that Bengal had grown too big to be efficiently administered by a single provincial government. Bengal was a province with a population of 78 million, which formed about a quarter of the population of British India. However, the plan they worked out showed other motives in mind.

Bengal originally comprised of Bengal, Bihar, Orissa and Assam. It was a vast province with diverse population speaking various languages and also diverse in terms of regional development. The British authorities had been making piecemeal efforts for reducing the size of Bengal since 1874 mainly for reasons of administrative convenience, the other reason being providing equal developmental opportunities for all the regions concerned.

- Accordingly, in 1874, Assam was separated from Bengal and made into a Chief Commissioner's province.
- Later, the South Lushai hills of Bengal were also added to Assam.
- In 1904, when Curzon talked about reorganisation of Bengal province, he did not appear to be altogether unreasonable.
- The nationalists had themselves supported the separation of linguistically divergent Orissa and Bihar. They felt that administrative efficiency could be better achieved by partition along linguistic lines.
- Instead, Curzon and his advisers (Sir Andrew Fraser, the Lieutenant governor of Bengal, and HH Risley, Home Secretary to the Government of India) mischievously decided to partition Bengal proper, i.e. Bengali speaking people along religious lines, chiefly to hurt the Bengali speaking educated middle class that was spearheading the national movement in eastern India.

The Motive

Whatever may be the justification for the administrative viewpoint; Curzon's main motive was political and Machiavellian. Bengal had emerged as the centre of nationalistic activities and

the British were keen in its partition in a manner that would throttle the voice of nationalism. According to official assessment by **Risley**, 'Bengal united is a power, Bengal divided will pull in several different ways' and the British found their answer in partition of Bengal along the already existing **Hindu-Muslim fault line**.

The Hindus in Bengal were relatively better off—socially and economically than their Muslim brethren and were able to take better educational advantage of the British rule. On the other hand, the Muslims were mainly agriculturalists and were unable to take a similar advantage. With the aim of creating mutual suspicion and jealousy between the two communities, Curzon declared that the British government wished to stand by the Muslims and allow them equal opportunity for advancement with the Hindus. He cleverly suggested that the only way of securing the Muslims from Hindu domination would be to carve out a Muslim-majority Bengal and join it with Assam, thus forming a new province with Dacca as its capital. Thus, Curzon and his advisers aimed to create Dacca, chiefly representing Mohammedan interests, as a counterweight against Calcutta, chiefly representing nationalistic interests.

The Plan

The final plan was to create out of Bengal a Muslim-majority province, where 15 million Muslims would live with 12 million Hindus while simultaneously reducing the Bengali speaking people into a minority in what would remain as Bengal, where 19 million Bengali speaking people would be outnumbered by 35 million speakers of Hindi, Oriya and other languages! Clearly, Curzon's plan for the partition of Bengal was a plan to make the Bengalis suffer both physical and mental division.

The Partition

- The scheme for partition first began with Curzon's Minute on Territorial Redistribution on 1st June 1903.
- On 20th July 1905, Curzon issued the order dividing Bengal into two parts:
 1. 'Eastern Bengal and Assam' with a population of 31 million (comprising of Chittagong, Dacca, Rajshahi divisions, Hill Tippera (Tripura), Malda and Assam) and
 2. The rest of Bengal with a population of 54 million (18 million Bengalis and 36 million Biharis and Oriyas).
- On 16th October 1905, the new province came into existence by breaking up Bengal and its 41.5 million Bengali speaking people.

Curzonian Miscalculation

Curzon and his advisers had made their own calculation of the kind of resistance they may have to face. They had expected the regular petitions and protests, which could be easily tolerated and ignored. They had anticipated the worries:

- The worries of the Bengal nationalists who feared unnecessary Hindu-Muslim discord.

- The worries of the Calcutta High Court lawyers who feared the loss of practice due to the establishment of a separate High Court in the new province.
- The worries of the jute and rice traders of Calcutta who feared the loss of business with the emergence of Chittagong as an alternative port.
- The worries of the educated Indians (babus) who feared the loss of clerical jobs and also the worries of the Bengali zamindars.

But as it emerged, the government had gravely miscalculated and underestimated the threat perception from above quarters. Unlike the prayerful petitions and protests they had expected, the partition evoked a stormy response including unprecedented spike in militancy and the radical demand for swaraj. The British authorities had grossly miscalculated the Bengali dislike for authoritarianism owing to their long history of virtual independence from the central authority. They had also underestimated the Bengali feeling of unity and pride in their achievements arising out of the intense socio-cultural and educational activities of the 19th century.

With their nerve centre at Calcutta, the Bengalis were spearheading Indian Renaissance and inspiring their countrymen in other parts of the country. Led by prominent leaders like Swami Vivekananda (religion), Rabindranath Tagore (literature), Jagdish Chandra Bose and Prafulla Chandra Roy (science), Surendranath Banerjee, Aurobindo Ghosh and Bipin Chandra Pal (politics), the Bengalis were in no mood to swallow the humiliation ignominiously. They had now grown in stature in the eyes of their own people, in self-confidence and self-respect.

ANTI PARTITION MOVEMENT-BOYCOTT AND SWADESHI (1905–08)

Anti-Partition Movement under the Moderates

- In December 1903, the partition proposals of the government first became public. This was followed by immediate protests. During 1903 to mid-1905, the leadership of the anti-partition movement was provided by the Moderates. The prominent Moderates during this time were Surendranath Banerjee, Krishnakumar Mitra, Narendra Kumar Sen and Prithwishchandra Ray. They adopted methods like prayers, petitions to the government, memoranda, speeches and public meetings. They started a strong press campaign through pamphlets and newspapers like **Hitabdi**, **Sanjibani** and **Bengalee**. Their objective was to form a strong public opinion in India and England against the partition so that it could pressurise the government to reverse its decision.
- The Moderates still had faith in British sense of justice and fair play and were not in favour of stretching the agitation too far. They were hoping that the Liberal John Morley will be appointed as Secretary of state for India soon and their prayers will be heard. However, such was not to be the case.
- On 20th July 1905, Curzon announced the partition of Bengal, ignoring all the loud noises created by the Moderates. It was now clear to the nationalists that the Moderate prayers were falling on deaf ears and they needed to find other methods to make their voice heard. Within days of the announcement, a large number of protest meetings were held in towns such as Barisal, Pabna, Dacca, Birbhum, Faridpur, Tangail and Jessore.

It was in these meetings that the pledge to boycott foreign goods was first taken. The students in Calcutta organised numerous meetings against partition and for Swadeshi.

- On 7th August 1905, the **Swadeshi Movement** was formally announced in a massive demonstration held in the Calcutta Town Hall. The demonstration was carried out by all the national leaders of Bengal and the movement, hitherto sporadic, was now getting definite leadership. It was in this meeting itself that the famous **Boycott Resolution** was passed. The leaders began touring the country urging people to boycott Manchester cloth and Liverpool salt.
- On September 1905, it was announced that the partition will be given effect on 16 October. Then onwards protest meetings were held almost every day all over Bengal, some of these meetings drew crowds of ten to twelve thousand—a huge number given the level of politicisation in those days. Even the boycott resolution was a huge success given the fact that the value of British cloth fell sharply during the year from September 1904 and 1905.
- On 16th October 1905, the partition took effect. The day was declared as a day of national mourning throughout Bengal. People fasted and lit no fire in their kitchens. They took out processions walking barefoot, bathed in the Ganga in the morning and took to the streets singing '**Vande Mataram**' which soon became the theme song of the national movement. Rabindranath Tagore composed the song '**Amar Sonar Bangla**' for the occasion (the song was later adopted as **national anthem by Bangladesh** in 1971).
- On the day of partition, Tagore also gave a call for the observance of **raksha-bandhan** or tying of rakhi as a symbol of unbreakable unity of the Bengalis. Ramendra Sunder Trivedi urged for the observance of **arandhan**, i.e. keeping the hearth unlit as a sign of mourning in all homes. Later in the day, Surendranath Banerjee and Anand Mohan Bose addressed massive gatherings. Within a few hours ₹50,000 were raised for the movement.
- It was evident that the social base of the movement was expanding rapidly. The Swadeshi Movement began to spread outside Bengal to different part of the country with Lokmanya Tilak playing the key role in this process. It spread to:
 - Poona and Bombay under Tilak
 - Punjab and northern India under Ajit Singh and Lala Lajpat Rai
 - Delhi under Syed Haidar Raza
 - Madras under Chidambaram Pillai
 - Rawalpindi, Kangra, Jammu. Multan and Hardwar also witnessed active participation in the movement.

Role of Indian National Congress

- In 1905 Banaras Session of the Congress (presided by GK Gokhale), the INC took up the issue of Bengal partition and **both Moderates and the Extremists** supported the cause of Swadeshi and Boycott for Bengal.
- However, differences arose between the Moderates and the Extremists regarding the manner in which the partition was to be opposed. The Extremists (led by Lal-Bal-Pal and Aurobindo Ghosh) wanted to extend the Boycott and Swadeshi Movement even to regions

outside Bengal. They also wanted to extend it from foreign goods to all other spheres of association with the British government like the provincial councils, municipalities, government services, law courts, etc., (or introduce '**Passive Resistance**') thus turning the anti-partition movement into a nation-wide mass movement. Whereas, the moderates wanted to confine the boycott to Bengal and to foreign goods.

- A split in the INC was averted for the time being when a compromise was struck, the INC condemned the partition of Bengal and the reactionary policies of Curzon and supported the Boycott and Swadeshi movement in Bengal.
- In 1906, Calcutta session of the INC (presided over by Dadabhai Naoroji), four resolutions on **Swaraj**, **Swadeshi**, **Boycott** and **National Education** were passed. This was a major leap forward for the INC as, for the first time, swaraj or self-government (like that of the United Kingdom or the Colonies), was declared as the political goal of the Congress.
- Even though the four resolutions were passed, the meaning of the four resolutions was not clearly spelt out. Consequently, throughout 1907, the moderates and the extremists kept arguing over their differing interpretations. Matters came to a head in 1907 Surat Session where the party split with disastrous consequences for the Swadeshi Movement.

Anti-Partition Movement under the Extremists

The Extremists had no faith in British benevolence and firmly believed that the remedy to Indian problems lay in the hands of Indians themselves. They demanded in clear-cut manner **swaraj** or self-rule free from all British influences and not under British Paramountcy, as the Moderates wished.

After 1905, in Bengal, the leadership of the anti-partition movement soon passed into the hands of the extremists like BG Tilak, Bipin Chandra Pal, Aurobindo Ghosh and Brahmabandhav Upadhyaya. This was due to several reasons. The Moderate methods had yielded no results, the government of East Bengal was actively supporting communalism and even tried to crush the nationalist movement and most importantly, the government had adopted aggressive measures to contain the movement. These factors pushed the people into militant nationalism and even revolutionary terrorism.

As the leadership of the movement came into the hands of the extremists, they gave a call for extending the boycott movement from foreign goods and educational institutions to other areas such as legislative councils and municipalities, government services and law courts that would shake the foundation of British hegemony in India. This was called **Non-Cooperation** and termed as '**Passive Resistance** or refusal to render any voluntary service to the government' by Bipin Chandra Pal.

The Extremists raised the question, 'how could the British rule in India continue, if the chowkidar, the constable, the deputy, the munsiff and the clerk, not to speak of the sepoy, all resign their respective functions. No powder and shot will be needed, no sepoys will have to be trained...'. Thus, in general, the extremists saw great potential in a large scale peaceful resistance in winning swaraj from the British.

In April 1904, Aurobindo Ghosh further extended the idea in a series of articles in 'Vande Mataram' and propounded the theory of 'organised and relentless boycott' including **civil disobedience** of unjust laws. He openly declared 'political freedom is the life breath of a nation and was also prepared for an armed struggle against the British rule, if the need be.

Among all forms of struggle introduced by the extremists, boycott of foreign goods met with the greatest success. Public burning of foreign cloth and picketing of shops selling foreign goods became common sight even in the remote areas of Bengal. Women refused to wear foreign bangles and use foreign utensils and washer men refused to wash foreign clothes, even priests declined to accept foreign goods as offerings.

The Extremist call for swaraj relegated all other matters to the background, including the demand for unification of Bengal. Now the central question of Indian politics was independence from foreign rule while the partition of Bengal became the secondary one. Clearly, it was the partition of Bengal that occasioned the emergence of **swaraj as the national goal**.

The extremist ideas found expression in periodicals like:

- New India (edited by Bipin Chandra Pal)
- Vande Mataram (edited by Aurobindo Ghosh)
- Sandhya (edited by Brahmabandhav Upadhyaya)
- Yugantar (edited by Bhupendranath Dutta)

The Extremist Program

Boycott

The agitation against the partition of Bengal began along the regular moderate lines. There were angry protests, numerous public meetings, sharp press campaigns and big conferences. All this was impressive but yielded no results. The search now began for new methods and led to the discovery of **boycott of British goods** as the new weapon. At many places, foreign cloth was publicly burnt and shops selling foreign goods were picketed.

Note: Boycott was first suggested in Krishna Kumar Mitra's journal, **Sanjibani** (3rd July 1905).

Swadeshi

The Boycott of British goods forced the leaders to think in terms of simultaneously advocating **swadeshi goods** (indigenously produced) as a patriotic duty. Swadeshi melas were held for popularising handicrafts and charkha (the spinning wheel) emerged as a symbol of country's concern for economic self-sufficiency.

Swadeshi as self-reliance, self-help- An important element of swadeshi was the emphasis on **self-reliance** or '**Atmashakti**'. In many fields it meant assertion of self-confidence and national

dignity. Economically, it meant reliance on indigenous products and encouragement to indigenous industries. Socially, it meant pride in one's cultural past. Another important element of swadeshi was **self-help** or **constructive work** which was carried out for socio-economic regeneration of the villages and mobilising the masses. It involved many social reform activities and campaigns against social evils like caste oppression, untouchability, child marriage, etc.

Swadeshi in the realm of economy- During the Swadeshi Movement, a number of exclusively Indian enterprises were established such as Mohini Mills, Bange Laxmi Cotton Mills, Calcutta Potteries, National Tannery, etc. Many other textile mills, soap and match making factories, swadeshi banks and insurance companies were opened. **Acharya PC Ray** set up the famous Bengal Chemicals Factory.

Swadeshi in the realm of culture- In the realm of culture, the Swadeshi Movement saw the flowering of nationalist literature, plays, poetry and prose. It saw the creative use of traditional poplar festivals and fairs (melas) to reach out to the masses. Traditional folk theatre forms such as **Jatras** were also widely used for spreading the message of swadeshi. Swadeshi also evoked the rise of Bengali folk music such as Palligeet and Jarigan and fairy tales such as **Thakurmar Jhuli** (grandmother's tales written by Dakshinaranjan Mitra Majumdar. This was the period when **Abanindranath Tagore** took his inspiration from indigenous Mughal, Rajput and Ajanta paintings.

Tilak popularised the **Ganapati** and **Shivaji festivals**. The outstanding poets of this time were Rabindranath Tagore, Rajni Kant Sen, Dwijendralal Ray, Sayed Abu Mohammed and Mukund Das. These nationalists made intelligent use of local culture to reach out to the masses who were being introduced to modern political ideas for the first time.

National Education

Boycott also spread in the student community who boycotted officially controlled schools and colleges. In fact, the students of Bengal played a prominent role in the swadeshi agitation. They regarded the existing system of education as de-nationalising and inadequate and took the lead in and promoting Swadeshi.

The government adopted a stern attitude, making every attempt to suppress the students. On 22nd October 1905, Carlyle, the Chief Secretary of Bengal government, issued the infamous **Carlyle circular** threatening the student activists with disciplinary action. Schools and colleges whose students took active part in Swadeshi agitation were to be penalised, they were to be disaffiliated, their grants in aid withdrawn and their students were to be barred from all appointments under the government.

This further pushed more and more students in leaving the educational institutions of 'slavery'. Consequently, the leaders of the Swadeshi Movement were moved to think in terms of a parallel educational system in Bengal and soon the program for National Education was formulated. The chief medium of instruction was **vernacular** for widest reach.

6.54 Modern Indian History

Distinguished intellectuals took the responsibility of National Education in their own hands and a large number of primary and secondary schools sprang up.

- On 25th July 1906, the Bengal Technical Institute was established (which later turned into the College of Engineering and Technology, Jadavpur)
- On 15th August 1906, National Council of Education was set up with the aim 'to organise a system of education-Literary, Scientific and Technical-on national lines and under National control' from primary to university level.
- Taking inspiration from Tagore's Shantiniketan, the Bengal National School and College was established in Calcutta led by Aurobindo Ghosh as Principal.

Abanindranath Tagore (1871–1951): A distinguished member of the Tagore family, he was a painter and writer who established the 'Indian Society of Oriental Art'. In an attempt to counter the western influence on art as taught in art schools under the British Raj, he tried to modernise the Mughal and Rajput styles, giving rise to Bengal School of Art. His paintings were classified as **revivalist** in nature and he himself emerged as the first major exponent of **Swadeshi values in India art**. The British art institutions eventually accepted his work as a national Indian style and promoted it under the label of 'Indian Society of Oriental Art'.



Abanindranath Tagore



Ganasha-Janani by Abanindranath Tagore. Depicts Parvati playing with baby Ganesha.



Krishna Kumar Mitra

Krishan Kumar Mitra (1852–1936): He was a writer and a leader of the Brahmo Samaj. He significantly contributed to the Swadeshi Movement through his journal, Sanjibani. The idea of Boycott was first suggested in Mitra's Sanjibani.

FORMATION OF SAMITIS (VOLUNTEER CORPS)

For spreading the message of Boycott and Swadeshi movement to the villages, several volunteer bodies sprang up in Calcutta. These were the Dawn Society, the Anti-Circular Society (originally formed to protest against the Carlyle Circular), the Anushilan Samiti, the Brati, the Suhrid and the Sadhena Samitis. The most famous of them all was the **Swadeshbandhav Samiti** set up by **Ashwini Kumar Dutta** who was a school teacher in Barisal. With the help of its 159 branches, Dutta was able to reach the remotest of regions and mobilise the people, particularly Muslim peasants. Barisal itself emerged as the most significant centre for samiti activities.

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The Samitis spread the message of Swadeshi to villages through **magic lantern lectures** and swadeshi songs. They also imparted physical and moral training and took up social work during epidemics and famines. They also encouraged folk singers and artists to perform on swadeshi themes in local dialects. The prominent among them were **Mukunda Das, Bhushan Das and Mufizuddin Bayati**. In terms of their ideology, these samitis ranged from religious reform to secularism, from moderate politics to political extremism.

Ashwini Kumar Dutta (1856–1923): He was a Bengali educationist, social reformer and a nationalist. He is remembered for his contribution to the Swadeshi Movement through the formation of the Swadesh-bandhav Samiti.



Ashwini Kumar Dutta



Mukunda Das

Mukunda Das (1878–1934): He was a Bengali poet, ballad singer and a nationalist. He contributed to the spread of the Swadeshi movement in rural Bengal.

POLITICAL TRENDS DURING SWADESHI MOVEMENT

During the Swadeshi Movement, what we see is the emergence of various political trends which competed with one another for popularity. These were mainly:

The Moderates

The Moderates still had faith in British sense of justice and fair play and were not in favour of stretching the agitation too far. They were hoping that the Liberal John Morley will be appointed as Secretary of state for India soon and their prayers will be heard. The prominent Moderates during this time were Surendranath Banerjee, Krishnakumar Mitra and Narendra Kumar Sen. This lukewarm Moderate outlook rapidly and conclusively fell out of popularity in the midst of the prevailing militant atmosphere.

The Constructive Swadeshis

These were also known as the Social Reformists and they aimed at strengthening national sentiment through continuous self-help or Atmashakti according to Rabindranath Tagore. Their main emphasis was on constructive swadeshi program like establishing indigenous industry and enterprise, national education and village upliftment. The prominent swadeshis were Rabindranath Tagore, Ashwini Kumar Dutt, Prafulla Chandra Roy, Nilratan Sircar and Satishchandra Mukherji.

The Extremists or Militant Nationalists

The Extremists had no faith in British benevolence and firmly believed that the remedy to Indian problems lay in the hands of Indians themselves. They demanded in clear cut manner **swaraj** or self-rule free from all British influences, and not under British Paramountcy, as the Moderates wished. (For more details, refer to anti-partition movement under the extremists.)

Tilak was called 'the **Father of the Indian Unrest**' by **Valentine Chirol**.

EXTENT OF PARTICIPATION

The Extremists tried to make the anti-partition movement a mass movement. Swaraj had now emerged as the national goal which was to be achieved through boycott in all spheres. This was possible only by means of mass participation of all sections of Indian society. With their tireless efforts and multi-pronged strategies, the swadeshis were able to rope in certain sections of society into active politics for the first time. These were a section of the zamindari, urban lower middle classes, women and a massive participation of school and college students.

Thus, different sections of the Bengali population such as the zamindars, merchants, lawyers, students and even women rose up in opposition against the partition. The participation of women was the most remarkable development. The traditional women of urban middle class were seen joining the processions and picketing. Their participation broke several old barriers and marked the beginning of women's participation in the national movement.

However, the militant nationalists failed to mobilise the real masses of the country—the workers and particularly the peasants. The movement remained confined to urban lower and middle classes and a certain section of the zamindars. As for the Muslims, the Hindu revivalist propaganda of the swadeshis only aired more suspicion and widened the gulf between the two communities.²

Participation of Workers

Some swadeshi activists made an effort to organise Bengal workers and politicise their economic grievances. Such activists included Ashwini Coomar Banerji, Prabhat Kusum Roychoudhary, Althanasius Apurba Kumar Ghosh and others.

- In September 1905, first instance of boycott by the workers emerged when 247 clerks of Burn Company in Howrah struck work against a humiliating work regulation.
- Next came the strikes in the tramways, printing press and jute mills in Calcutta.
- In October 1905, first real labor union namely the Printers' Union was formed as a result of bitter strikes in government owned presses.
- In July 1906, the Railwaymen's Union was formed.
- August 1906, Indian Millhands' Union, Budge-Budge was formed when the jute mill workers were organised by Ashwini Coomar Banerji. (The participation of workers however declined after 1907 in face of government repression).

Participation of Peasants

The movement was unable to make much headway in mobilising the peasantry. The only exception was the district of Barisal. Historians consider this as a valuable achievement given the fact that peasants were being exposed to modern political ideas for the first time; and that even at the peak of national movement, peasant participation remained limited to specific pockets alone.

In general, the participation of peasants remained negligible as the nationalist leaders of the time did not take much interest in mobilising the peasants for various reasons:

- Firstly, there was a conflict of interest between the Bengali middle class and the peasantry. The middle class in Bengal depended heavily on the rental income from their ancestral lands for economic stability. Accordingly, the swadeshi activists did not raise any voice to protest against peasant grievances such as heavy land revenue and rent, debts, begar and even eviction from land. In other words, no effort was made to organise the peasantry around peasant demands.
- Secondly, a majority of agriculturalists in Bengal were Muslims and the Swadeshi Movement, which had acquired a predominant Hindu overtone, failed to capture their imagination.

Participation of Muslims

The Swadeshi Movement was unable to gain support of the mass of Muslims as well, which proved to be its main weakness, and which may be chiefly attributed to the British policy of communalism. As we have seen earlier, Curzon and his men had played the communal card in partition of Bengal and tried to divide the Hindus and the Muslims along class lines (the Hindus being the zamindars and the Muslims being the peasantry). They wanted to use the Muslims as counterweights against the rising nationalist powers, and planned the partition such that it created a new Muslim majority province. Here they encouraged the educated Muslims to think in terms of a Muslim Political Power.

Accordingly, in October 1906, their efforts culminated in the formation of the **All India Muslim League** under the leadership of **Nawab Salimullah of Dacca** and with government patronage as a political organization dedicated to advance Muslim political interests. Salimullah was also given a loan of ₹14 lakh by the government and supported the creation of a Muslim Majority province. Thus, a majority of the Muslims followed his lead. The League soon became the main weapon of the British to fight the national movement; they also used it to keep the Muslim intelligentsia from joining the national movement. Moreover, the mullahs and the maulvis also communalised the grievances of the Muslim agriculturalists against the Hindu zamindars.

Despite all this, appeals were made for Hindu-Muslim harmony during the Swadeshi Movement and some great scenes of brotherhood were also witnessed. Some outstanding Muslim leaders played a lead role in the agitation such as Liakat Hussain, Abdul Rasul (the barrister), Abdul

Hakim Ghaznavi (the businessman), Ismail Hussain Siraji, Din Mahammed and Maniruzzaman. Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad joined a revolutionary terrorist group.

Yet, these achievements were neutralised when some forms of protest adopted by the swadeshi leaders resulted in unintended negative consequences and gave a predominant **Hindu overtone** to the movement. These militant nationalists emphasised ancient Indian culture while excluded the medieval Indian culture. They identified Indian culture with Hindu religion and Indian nation with the Hindus. Muslims could hardly be attracted by the dips in Ganga, the Shivaji and Ganpati festivals (as propagated by Tilak) or the concept of India as mother and nationalism as a religion (ideas of Aurobindo Ghosh), such actions being against the spirit of Islam. Muslims could not be expected to respond when Pratap or Shivaji were hailed as 'national heroes' who fought against 'foreigners' Akbar or Aurangzeb.

In this way, the militant nationalists utilised the images and myths of Hindu orthodoxy to mobilise their people. Practices such as uncritical glorification of Hindu past, nostalgia for the lost Hindu rashtra, references to the Gita and vow of sacrifice before goddess Kali further increased the gulf between the two communities and harmed the movement considerably.

It must be noted that the above does not mean that the militant nationalists were anti-Muslim in any way. Most of them, including Tilak, were in favour of Hindu-Muslim unity and the Swadeshi Movement largely remained secular. But the unintended Hindu-tinge was picked up by the British to poison the minds of the Muslims.

Such Hindu revivalist propaganda gave enough reason to Salimullah's men to spread communal hatred, much to the pleasure of the British authorities. At the peak of the Swadeshi Movement (1906-07), eastern Bengal saw a series of **communal riots** in Mymensingh, Comilla, Jamalpur, Dewanganj and Bakshigunj. The nationalists also did not make an effort to understand the depth of the matter correctly and continued with their religious propaganda.

Thus, it is clear that a large-scale participation of the masses was not realised during the Swadeshi Movement. The nationalists were able to make some sort of beginning in worker participation but they showed no interest in rallying the peasants. They also failed to manage the communal card played by the British authorities and only ended up alienating the Muslims further with their Hindu revivalist propaganda. Failing to become a true mass movement, the Swadeshi Movement was unable to rise to its full potential after 1907. Consequently, the government succeeded in suppressing the movement to a large extent.

All India Spread of the Movement

The movement was not restricted to Bengal alone and it spread to other provinces as well. The most significant contribution in making the anti-partition movement and all India one was made by BG Tilak. He quickly gauged that the partition was the right opportunity to spread the cry of Swadeshi and Swaraj to the rest of the country and foster the feelings of unity and brotherhood.

Sir Khawaha Salimullah Bahadur, Nawab of Dacca (1871-1915): He was a prominent Muslim leader during the British Raj and a staunch supporter of partition of Bengal. While the Congress opposed it, Salimullah organised meetings all over East Bengal to build a movement in favour of Bengal partition. In 1906, the All Indian Muslim League was formed at the All India Muhammadan Educational Conference held at Dacca and it appointed Salimullah as its Vice-President.



Sir Khawaha Salimullah Bahadur, Nawab of Dacca

GOVERNMENT REPRESSION

The British unleashed powerful repressive measures to deal with the movement:

- Meetings and processions were banned, the government prohibited shouting of the slogan 'Vande Mataram' in public places
- Laws regulating the press were enacted
- Those participating in the movement in any form were disqualified from government employment
- Student participants were expelled, fined and even beaten up by the police
- Police were given a free hand to launch physical assaults-delegates attending conferences were lathi-charged, picketers were caned, innumerable arrests and convictions were made.
- In April 1906, in **Barisal**, the police infamously attacked the peaceful delegates of Bengal Provincial Conference
- In 1907 in Punjab, **Lala Lajpat Rai** and Ajit Singh were deported
- In December 1908, nine major leaders in Bengal including Krishna Kumar Mitra and Ashwini Kumar Dutt were also deported
- In 1908, Tilak was again arrested and sentenced to 6 years' imprisonment in Mandalay
- Bipin Chandra Pal and Liakat Husain were also arrested
- Chidambaram Pillai in Madras and Harisarvotta Rao in Andhra were put behind bars

The movement could not survive this government repression, particularly the arrest of Tilak. Henceforth, Bipin Chandra Pal and Aurobindo Ghosh also retired from active politics (an event not connected with government repression). Consequently, the Swadeshi Movement was rendered leaderless and completely declined by mid-1908.

REASONS FOR DECLINE OF SWADESHI MOVEMENT

The following causes contributed to the movements' decline:

- No support of the Muslim masses
- Only the first major attempt at mass mobilisation—the movement was only partially successful in mobilising the vast sections of Indian masses

- Its methods were new and unfamiliar, both for the leaders as well as the led
- The movement was unable to convert several forms of struggle like passive resistance and constructive work into real political practice
- Predominant Hindu overtone of the Swadeshi Movement
- Bitter government repression
- Split in the Congress in 1907, the apex all-India organization
- Nature of mass movement-mass movements cannot be sustained endlessly at the same height of struggle and self-sacrifice, but need pause to regain energy for the next round of struggle

CONSEQUENCE: RISE OF REVOLUTIONARY TERRORISM

With the failure of moderate methods, inability of the extremists to give a positive lead to the people and violent repression of constructive swadeshis and extremists, the desire to meet force with force and violence with violence naturally came to the forefront. Finding all avenues of peaceful protest blocked, patience of the Bengali youth had run out as far as mass movements and open politics was concerned. There was a group of nationalists, who, having been aroused into the nationalist struggle, were unable to tame themselves into oblivion and were now ready to take up arms against the hated British officials.

These Revolutionary terrorists based their style on the lines of Irish terrorists and the Russian Nihilists and resorted to assassinations of unpopular officials, heroic individual acts, secret societies and political robberies (popularly called swadeshi dacoities).

- In 1897, first act of revolutionary terrorism was carried out when the **Chapekar brothers** (Damodar and Balkrishna) assassinated two unpopular British officials at Poona.
- In 1904, **Abhinav Bharat** and **Mitra Mela**, secret societies of revolutionaries, were formed by VD Savarkar and his brother Ganesh.
- Other prominent revolutionary groups were Yugantar group in Calcutta and **Anushilan Samiti** in Dacca.
- After 1905, many prominent newspapers advocated revolutionary terrorism like **the Sandhya** and **the Yugantar** in Bengal and **the Kal** in Maharashtra.
- In December 1907, an attempt was made on the life of the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal
- In April 1908, Prafulla Chaki and Khudiram Bose threw a bomb at a carriage, which they believed was occupied by the unpopular British Magistrate Douglas Kingsford (district judge of Muzaffarpur) and ended up killing two English women travelling in it.
- In April 1908, a secret bomb manufacturing factory in Maniktala area of Calcutta was discovered.

The period of revolutionary terrorism had thus begun. During the period 1908-1918, 186 revolutionaries were killed or convicted. Despite periodical setbacks, revolutionary terrorism continued to operate and even spread in India and abroad as a secret child of the Swadeshi Movement.

But even terrorism was bound to fail as a political weapon. It did not aim at mobilising the masses and remained limited to a very narrow social base. Yet the terrorist acts of heroism made valuable contribution to the growth of national feelings in India. In the words of a historian, 'they gave us back the pride of our manhood'.

Yugantar wrote after the Barisal repression (22nd April 1906), 'The remedy lies with the people themselves. The thirty crores of people inhabiting India must raise their sixty crores of hands to stop this curse of oppression. Force must be stopped by force.'

SIGNIFICANCE OF SWADESHI MOVEMENT

Even though the Swadeshi Movement declined by mid-1908, without achieving its aim of swaraj, it cannot be termed as a failure.

- The Swadeshi Movement inaugurated a new phase in Indian politics, marking a total reversal from the earlier moderate approach of praying and petitioning.
- The leadership of the national movement came into the hands of the militant nationalists who gave the Indian people the new goal of swaraj or complete independence from the British rule on the lines of United Kingdom or other colonies.
- For the attainment of swaraj, it introduced new and innovative techniques of political struggle, far in advance of its time. The techniques of boycott, passive resistance and constructive swadeshi relegated constitutionalism to the background and hugely resembled Gandhian techniques of mass-mobilisation like non-cooperation, civil disobedience and constructive programme to be practiced fifteen years hence.
- For the first time, the social base of the national movement was now extended to include a certain section of the zamindari, urban lower middle classes, women and a massive participation of school and college students.
- In the cultural and intellectual realm of Bengal, the movement left deep imprints, eroding further the ideas of European hegemony and inspiring the rest of the nation. These included the following:
 - A rich collection of patriotic compositions and dramatic performances
 - The formation of Bengal School of Painting under the leadership of Rabindranath Tagore
 - Scientific progress led by Jagdish Chandra Bose and Prafulla Chandra Roy
 - Historical research kindled by the findings of Rakhal Das Bannerjee, Hari Prasad Shastri and Akshay Kumar Maitra

Even though the movement was finally suppressed, it had already stirred the Indian Nationalism to a revolutionary new height. People had been aroused of their political slumber and trained in new forms of struggle. As a result of the Swadeshi Movement, the **partition of Bengal was finally annulled in 1911**. However, its chief success lay in the rise of swaraj as the new national goal. The national movement that followed was to draw heavily from the achievement of the Swadeshi Movement.

Bipan Chandra: The Swadeshi Movement may be imagined as an important 'battle' in the long drawn out and complex war of position for Indian independence.

IMPACT OF SWADESHI MOVEMENT ON THE CONGRESS AND THE SURAT SPLIT

The anti-partition movement left a deep impact on the INC. The INC took up the issue of Bengal partition and both Moderates (led by Gokhale) and the Extremists (led by Tilak) supported the cause of Swadeshi and Boycott for Bengal. Yet, there emerged significant differences regarding the manner in which the agitation should be carried out, culminating in the split in the Congress at Surat Session (1907). After the split, the Moderates and the Extremists remained divided from 1907 till 1916, until the reunion under the Lucknow Pact (1916). The split came with serious consequences for the Swadeshi Movement, the Extremists, the INC as well as the Indian National Movement on the whole. The Swadeshi Movement petered out by the end of 1907, the Extremists faced bitter government repression, the INC lost its popular appeal and remained defunct while the National movement itself came to a temporary halt.

Run-up to Surat Split

- The December 1905, Banaras Session of the INC, was presided over by GK Gokhale.
- The differences between the Moderates and the Extremists intensified- The Extremists wanted to extend the Boycott and Swadeshi Movement even to regions outside Bengal. They also wanted to extend it from foreign goods to all other spheres of association with the British government like the provincial councils, municipalities, government services, law courts, etc. (or introduce 'Passive Resistance') thus turning the anti-partition movement into a nation-wide mass movement. Whereas, the moderates wanted to confine the boycott to Bengal and to foreign goods.
- A split in the INC was averted for the time being when a compromise was struck, the INC condemned the partition of Bengal and the reactionary policies of Curzon and supported the Boycott and Swadeshi Movements in Bengal.
- Gokhale said, 'the goal of the Congress is that India should be governed in the interests of the Indians themselves'.

BG Tilak was the main extremist leader who wanted to make the anti-partition movement an all India one. He had quickly gauged that the partition was the right opportunity to spread the cry of Swadeshi and Swaraj to the rest of the country and foster the feelings of unity and brotherhood. During the partition, Tilak extended support to the extremists led by Bipin Chandra Pal and this Tilak-Pal alliance became a cause of distress to many in the Congress. It was because of these differences that the Moderates tried to keep Tilak and his group members out of positions of power within the Congress and never allowed him to become the Congress President.

Tussle for Presidentship

Tussle for Presidentship for the 1906 Calcutta Congress

At the Calcutta session, the extremists had gained popularity owing to various reasons, including the rise of revolutionary terrorism. Here the extremists wanted Tilak or Lala Lajpat Rai to be the President for the Calcutta session but the Moderates secretly wired Dadabhai Naoroji to accept the Presidentship, which he did. As a concession to the extremists, four compromise resolutions on Swaraj, Swadeshi, Boycott and National Education were passed. This was a major leap forward for the Congress as, for the first time, swaraj or self-government (like that of the United Kingdom or the Colonies), was declared as the political goal of the Congress. Even though the four resolutions were passed, the meaning of the four resolutions was not clearly spelt out. Consequently, throughout 1907, the moderates and the extremists kept arguing over their differing interpretations.

1906, Calcutta Congress Session, President Dadabhai Naoroji-

- Four compromise resolutions on Swaraj, Swadeshi, Boycott and National Education were passed.
- Naoroji, in his presidential address, declared swaraj as the goal of the Indian National Congress.

Tussle for Presidentship for the 1907 Congress Session

The Extremists were encouraged by the proceedings at Calcutta session and wanted a strong resolution to be passed extending boycott to the councils, municipalities, government services, etc. They felt that the battle for swaraj had begun and the Moderates were acting as drag. They were now prepared to part with the moderates, not realising that the moderates could have acted as the outer line of defence in case of government repression.

On the other hand, in 1906, Viceroy Minto and Secretary of State Morley began discussing fresh council reforms with the moderate leadership. Encouraged by the news of the upcoming Council Reforms, the Moderates decided to tone down the Calcutta session. They also felt that further association with the Extremists could be dangerous as their struggle for swaraj would invite bitter government repression. Thus, the moderates were equally willing now to part company with the Extremists, not realising that the British were negotiating with them because of the fear of the Extremists.

Both sides did not realise that in a vast country like India, only a broad-based movement had any chance of success against the imperialist power and that the imperialist government would only capitalise further on the growing division within the Congress. At the same time, historian Bipan Chandra writes that both Tilak and Gokhale were mature leaders who were well aware of the dangers of disunity among nationalists. However, when matters came to a head, both knuckled under pressure of their own extremists, such as more extreme Aurobindo Ghosh and autocratic Pherozeshah Mehta.

Once again, the election of the Congress President became an occasion for show of strength between the Congress and the Moderates. Once again, the extremists wanted BG Tilak or Lala Lajpat Rai to be the President and reiterate the boycott, swadeshi and national education resolutions. On the other hand, the moderates wanted Rash Bihari Ghosh to be the President and wanted the resolutions, viz. swadeshi, boycott and national education to be dropped.

Consequently, the Moderate leader Pherozeshah Mehta changed the venue from **Nagpur (Central provinces) to Surat (Bombay Province)** at the last moment. Surat being the hometown of Tilak and in his home province of Bombay, he could not be the President, as per Congress convention. Hence, it was decided that Rash Bihari Ghosh (Gokhale's choice) will be the Congress President. Thus-

Gokhale in 1907: 'You (the Extremists) do not realise the enormous reserve of power behind the government. If the Congress were to do anything such as you suggest, the government would have no difficulty throttling it in five minutes.'

HA Wadia: 'the union of these men (the Extremists) with the Congress is the union of a diseased limb to a healthy body, and the only remedy is surgical severance, if the Congress is to be saved from death by blood poisoning.'

The Surat Split

On 26th December 1907 Congress Session was held at Surat, at the bank of the **River Tapti**. The Congress was now dominated by the Moderates. The delegates met in an atmosphere surcharged with anger. The Extremists wanted a guarantee that the four resolutions would be passed. To pressurise the Moderates, they began by objecting to the election of Rash Bihari Ghosh as the President. What followed was a pandemonium among 1600 delegates. There were shouts and counter shouts, breaking of chairs and unrolling of Turbans. Someone threw a shoe which hit Pherozeshah Mehta and Surendranath Banerjee. The police was called and the session was suspended. The British rejoiced and Minto immediately sent a letter to Morley saying- 'the Congress collapse was a great triumph for us'.

Tilak, who had not anticipated the Surat fiasco, tried to do some damage control. He wrote a letter of apology and offered his future cooperation. But Pherozeshah Mehta and his men did not relent. They excluded the Extremists from the party. They continued to indulge in their obsolete ideas and quickly rolled back all the radical ideas adopted at Banaras and Calcutta sessions. The Moderates quickly reiterated the Congress commitment to the goal of swaraj within the British Empire through constitutional means alone.

The Extremists led by Tilak announced the formation of the **Extremist Party**. However, they decided to work as part of the INC.

December 1907, Surat Congress Session, President Rash Bihari Ghosh:

- Held at the bank of the **River Tapti**.
- The Extremists were led by Lal-Bal-Pal.
- The Moderates were led by Gopal Krishna Gokhale.

Lala Lajpat Rai, who had witnessed the fiasco wrote- 'Instead of leading his party, he (Tilak) allowed himself to be led by some of its wild spirits..he found himself helpless before the volume of opinion that surrounded him.'

This split was further cemented in 1908 Madras session of the INC where a change was made in the party's constitution. It provided that the Congress delegates were now to be elected only by the Congress Committee and associations affiliated to the Congress. The net result was that members of the Extremist Party could not attend Congress sessions. Consequently, Tilak and his followers remained outside the Congress Party until 1915 when a compromise was struck.

Impact of Surat Split on the Extremists

Attack on the Extremists: After the split, the government launched a massive attack on the Extremists. During 1907 and 1911, several new laws were passed to check anti-government activity. These included:

- The Seditious Meetings Act 1907
- The Indian Newspapers (Incitement to Offences Act) 1908
- Criminal Law Amendment Act 1908
- The Indian Press Act 1910

Tilak, the leader of the extremist camp was sent to **Madalay** (Burma) jail for 6 years on the charge of sedition. Lala Lajpat Rai left for Britain and then USA. Bipin Chandra Pal also retired from active politics. Aurobindo Ghosh, who was tried in a revolutionary conspiracy case, was judged innocent, immediately gave up politics and retired to Pondicherry to take up religious work. Even though the youth rallied behind the extremists, they were unable to organise any effective body. Without the extremists, the moderates were left with no popular base. They had lost the respect and support of their own people.

During 1908-1914, there was a temporary halt in nationalist activities. It was only when Tilak was released in 1914 that he picked up the threads gradually.

Tilak's imprisonment in Mandalay: In April 1908, Prafulla Chaki and Khudiram Bose threw a bomb at a carriage in Muzaffarpur to kill a British Magistrate Douglas Kingsford, but erroneously killed two women travelling in it. Bose was hanged while Chaki committed suicide when caught. Tilak, in his paper Kesari, defended the revolutionaries and gave a call for immediate swaraj. The government quickly charged him with sedition and sentenced him to 6 years' imprisonment in Mandalay, Burma (1908-14). In this case, he was unsuccessfully defended by lawyer **Muhammad Ali Jinnah**. While in prison, he wrote **Gita Rahasya**.

Impact of Surat Split on Government Strategy

The attitude of the government towards the Congress had been hostile. After the Swadeshi Movement, the government came up with a novel strategy, that of 'rallying' the nationalists or the policy of 'carrot and stick'. It may also be seen as a three-pronged approach of repression, conciliation and suppression. In the first step, the extremists were to be repressed mildly, chiefly to frighten the moderates. In the second step, the moderates were to be conciliated with some carrots or concessions to ensure that they maintained distance from the extremists. Now with the moderates on their side, the third step was to suppress the extremists with full might. This policy of carrot and stick brought rich dividends to the government and the nationalist activities were temporarily contained.

Taking advantage of the split, the British played the game of **divide and rule**. In 1909, they announced the constitutional reforms, known as the Morley-Minto Reforms with the aim of appeasing the moderates as well as the Muslims. In 1911, the government also annulled Bengal Partition and declared its intention of uniting the Bengalis while carving a new province out of Bihar and Orissa. The seat of the British government in India was also shifted from Calcutta to Delhi.

The so-called '**Reforms**' of 1909 were merely designed to confuse the moderates. They increased the number of elected members in the Councils. This, in no way, democratised the Indian polity. The reformed Councils enjoyed no real power as they were merely advisory bodies. Morley had himself declared in British Parliament- 'If it could be said that this chapter of reforms led directly or necessarily up to the establishment of a Parliamentary system in India, I, for one, would have nothing at all to do with it.'

Further, the reforms also introduced the system of **separate electorates** to please the Muslims under which all Muslims were grouped in separate constituencies from which Muslims alone could be elected. This measure was based on the notion that the interests of Muslims were different from that of the Hindus and could be best protected under a Muslim leader. Such a decision furthered mutual suspicion between the Hindus and the Muslims and proved very harmful for national unity. It ensured ghettoisation of Muslims in India, encouraged separatism and politics of religion rather than one based on common socio-economic problems.

Even though the Moderates were not fully satisfied with the reforms, they continued to support the government and oppose the extremists at the cost of their own popularity among the people.

Impact of Surat Split on National Movement

The Surat Split is often termed as a **national calamity** as it did immense harm to the Congress as well as the national movement. The moderates and the extremists were like the brain and the heart of the nation—one was the law, the other the impulse. Their unified function was a prerequisite for the growth of the national movement. The exit of the Extremists left the Congress paralysed for more than a decade as the Moderates could achieve little. It was only in 1916 after re-entry of the Extremists and exit of the Moderates (1918) that the Congress was re-activated.

But now it was a different story all together. Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi had entered the political scene and associated himself with the programme of the Extremists. He represented a new synthesis of faith and reason, law and impulse and inaugurated a new era in Modern Indian History.



Previous Years' Questions – Preliminary Exam

1. 'The Congress is tottering to its fall and one of my great ambitions while in India, is to assist it to a peaceful demise.' The statement is attributed to [UPSC 1998]
(a) Lord Dufferin (b) Lord Curzon
(c) Lord Lytton (d) None of these
2. Assertion: Partition of Bengal in 1905 brought an end to the Moderates' role in the Indian freedom movement.
Reason: The Surat session of Indian National Congress separated the Extremists from the Moderates. [UPSC 1998]
3. The paintings of Abanindranath Tagore are classified as [UPSC 1999]
(a) realistic (b) socialistic
(c) revivalistic (d) impressionistic
4. A London branch of the All India Muslim League was established in 1908 under the presidency of [UPSC 2001]
(a) Aga Khan (b) Ameer Ali
(c) Liaquat Ali Khan (d) M A Jinnah
5. With reference to the period of extremist nationalist movement in India with its spirit of swadeshi, which one of the following statements is not correct? [UPSC 2002]
(a) Liaquat Hossain led the Muslim peasants of Barisal in their agitations
(b) In 1898, the scheme of national education was formulated by Satish Chandra Mukherjee
(c) The Bengal National College was founded in 1906 with Aurobindo as the principal
(d) Tagore preached the cult of Atmashakti, the main plan of which was social and economic regeneration of the villages.
6. The song 'Amar Sonar Bangla' written during the Swadeshi Movement of India inspired the liberation struggle of Bangladesh and was adopted as the National Anthem of Bangladesh. Who wrote this song? [UPSC 2007]
(a) Rajni Kanta Sen
(b) Dwijendralal Ray
(c) Mukunda Das
(d) Rabindranath Tagore
7. In the context of the Indian freedom struggle, 16 October 1905 is well known for which of the following reasons? [UPSC 2009]
(a) The formal proclamation of Swadeshi Movement was made in Calcutta Town Hall
(b) Partition of Bengal took effect
(c) Dadabhai Naoroji declared that the goal of Indian National Congress was Swaraj
(d) Lokmanya Tilak started Swadeshi Movement in Poona.
8. Four resolutions were passed at the famous Calcutta session of Indian National Congress in 1906. The question of either retention or of rejection of these four resolutions became the cause of split in Congress at the next congress session held in Surat in 1907. [UPSC 2010]

Which of the following was not one of those resolutions?

- (a) Annulment of partition of Bengal
- (b) Boycott
- (c) National education
- (d) Swadeshi

9. What was the immediate cause for the launch of the Swadeshi Movement?

[UPSC 2010]

- (a) The partition of Bengal done by Lord Curzon
- (b) A sentence of 18 months rigorous imprisonment imposed on Lokmanya Tilak
- (c) The arrest and deportation of Lala Lajpat Rai and Ajit Singh; and passing of the Punjab colonisation bill
- (d) Death sentence pronounced on the Chaplekar brothers

10. The partition of Bengal made by Lord Curzon in 1905 lasted until [UPSC 2014]

- (a) The First World War when Indian troops were needed by the British and the partition was ended
- (b) King George V abrogates Curzon's Act at the Royal Darbar in Delhi in 1911
- (c) Gandhiji launched his Civil Disobedience Movement
- (d) The partition of India in 1947 when East Bengal became East Pakistan.



Previous Years' Questions – Main Exam

1. What were the motives which led to the partition of Bengal? What were its consequences? Why was it annulled? [UPSC 1988]

2. 'If Aurobindo was the high priest, Rabindranath was the great poet of the Swadeshi Movement'. Elucidate. [UPSC 1990]

3. How far was the Swadeshi Movement linked with Boycott? Analyse the nature of mass participation in the movement. [UPSC 1992]

11. Which one of the following movements has contributed to a split in the Indian National Congress resulting in the emergence of 'Moderates' and 'Extremists'?

[UPSC 2015]

- (a) Swadeshi Movement
- (b) Quit India Movement
- (c) Non-Cooperation Movement
- (d) Civil Disobedience Movement

12. What was the main reason for the split in the Indian National Congress at Surat in 1907? [UPSC 2016]

- (a) Introduction of communalism into Indian politics by Lord Minto
- (b) Extremists lack of faith in the capacity of the Moderates to negotiate with the British government
- (c) Foundation of Muslim League
- (d) Aurobindo Ghosh's inability to be elected as the President of Indian National Congress

13. The 'Swadeshi' and 'Boycott' were adopted as methods of struggle for the first time during the...? [UPSC 2016]

- (a) Agitation against the partition of Bengal
- (b) Home Rule Movement
- (c) Non-Cooperation Movement
- (d) Visit of the Simon Commission to India

4. Why was Bengal partitioned in 1905? How did it lead to the growth of extremist and terrorist schools of nationalism? Why was it annulled and with what consequences? [UPSC 1993]

5. How did the Swadeshi Movement in Bengal influence the national politics? [UPSC 1998]

6. Trace the origin of Swadeshi Movement. How did it evolve the masses?

[UPSC 2000]

7. What led to the partition of Bengal in 1905? [UPSC 2004]



Practice Questions – Preliminary Exam

1. Consider the following statements with regard to the 1905 Congress Session-

- 1. It was held at Banaras
- 2. It was presided by Dadabhai Naoroji
- 3. It was decided that Swadeshi Movement be extended outside Bengal.

Choose the correct answer from the following options.

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 1 and 2
- (c) 2 and 3
- (d) None of the above

2. Which of the below statements is/are incorrect regarding Lala Lajpat Rai?

- 1. He never presided over any session of the Indian National Congress.
- 2. He left for Britain after the Surat Split.

Choose the correct answer from the following options.

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) both
- (d) neither

3. Consider the following pairs with regard to the leaders of Swadeshi Movement-

- 1. Lala Lajpat Rai-Delhi
- 2. Syed Haidar Raza-Lucknow
- 3. Ajit Singh-Punjab
- 4. Tilak-Poona

Which of the above pairs are correctly matched? Choose the correct answer from the following options.

- (a) 1 and 2
- (b) 2 and 3
- (c) 3 and 4
- (d) 1, 2, 3 and 4

4. Hitabdi and Sanjibani were-

- (a) nationalist literature
- (b) revolutionary groups

(c) voluntary corps

(d) special trains for Congress sessions

5. Consider the following statements with regard to the anti-partition movement-

- 1. The Moderates supported the movement in Bengal and in rest of India.
- 2. The Moderates supported boycott of foreign goods and of government schools and institutions.

Which of the statements above is/are correct? Choose the correct answer from the following options.

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) both
- (d) neither

6. In the context of Swadeshi Movement, consider the following statements -

- 1. The Movement remained limited to Bengal under pressure of the Moderates.
- 2. The movement saw wide scale participation of women and workers for the first time.

Choose the correct answer from the following options.

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) both
- (d) neither

7. Consider the following statements with regard to the participation of Muslims in the Swadeshi Movement-

- 1. The Muslim masses stayed away from the Swadeshi Movement and no prominent Muslim leader joined it.
- 2. The Swadeshi Movement acquired a predominant Hindu overtone due to deliberate effort of the Hindu nationalists.

Which of the statements above is/are incorrect? Choose the correct answer from the following options.

- (a) 1 only (b) 2 only
(c) both (d) neither

8. Which of the below mentioned strategies were used during the Swadeshi Movement?

1. Boycott of foreign cloth and salt
2. Formation of volunteer corps
3. Use of Hindu myths and images
4. Establishing indigenous industries

Choose the correct answer from the following options.

- (a) 1 and 2 (b) 1, 2 and 3
(c) 1, 2 and 4 (d) 1, 2, 3 and 4

9. Consider the following statements with regard to government response to the Swadeshi Movement-

1. The government bitterly repressed the movement and arrested both Moderate and Extremist leaders in large numbers.
2. Tilak was sent to Mandalay jail for six years on charge of leading the Boycott and Swadeshi Movements.

Which of the statements above is/are correct? Choose the correct answer from the following options.

- (a) 1 only (b) 2 only
(c) both (d) neither

10. Which of the following statements is incorrect regarding the Samitis formed at the time of Swadeshi Movement?

- (a) Samitis were volunteer corps formed in Calcutta.
- (b) The Swadesh Bandhav Samiti was set up by Barin Ghose.
- (c) Barisal emerged as the main centre for samiti activities.
- (d) The samitis imparted physical and moral training.

11. Which of the given statements are correct regarding government response to the anti-partition movement?

1. Government came up with a novel strategy of 'carrot and stick' to deal with the nationalists.
2. Government tried to appease the moderates with talks of fresh constitutional reforms.

Choose the correct answer from the following options.

- (a) 1 only (b) 2 only
(c) both (d) neither

12. Which of the following institutions were established during the Anti-partition movement?

1. Bengal Technical Institute
2. National Council of Education
3. Shantiniketan

Choose the correct answer from the following options.

- (a) 1 and 2 (b) 2 and 3
(c) 3 only (d) 1, 2, 3 and 4

13. Which of the statements given below is/are correct regarding the 1906 Calcutta Congress?

1. It was presided by Moderate leader Gopal Krishna Gokhale.
2. Four compromise resolutions on Swaraj, Swadeshi, Boycott and National Education were passed with their meaning clearly spelt out.

Choose the correct answer from the following options.

- (a) 1 only (b) 2 only
(c) both (d) neither

14. The song 'Bande Mataram' first became the theme song of which of the nationalist movements?

- (a) Revolt of 1857
- (b) Boycott and Swadeshi Movement
- (c) Home Rule Movement
- (d) Revolutionary movement

15. Consider the following statements with regard to the decline of the of the Anti-Partition Movement of 1905-

1. It declined due to the annulment of Bengal partition

2. It declined due to government repression
3. It declined after it was rendered leaderless
4. It declined as it was overshadowed by the rise of the revolutionaries

Choose the correct answer from the following options.

- (a) 1 only
(b) 2 only
(c) 2 and 3
(d) 1, 2, 3 and 4



Practice Questions – Main Exam

1. What were the reasons given by the British in favour of Bengal partition? What do you think was the real motive? Examine.
2. Discuss the circumstances leading to the Swadeshi Movement.
3. Write a short note on the following-
(a) Political techniques that evolved during the Swadeshi Movement.
(b) Political trends that emerged during the Swadeshi Movement.
4. Give reasons for the following-
(a) Why did the peasants and the Muslims not participate in the Swadeshi Movement in a big way?
(b) Why did revolutionary terrorism emerge in 1907-08?
5. Curzon's partition of Bengal unleashed the chain reaction which finally culminated into revolutionary terrorism. Comment.

Answers

Previous Years' Questions – Preliminary Exam

- | | | | | |
|---------|---------|---------|--------|---------|
| 1. (b) | 2. (d) | 3. (c) | 4. (b) | 5. (a) |
| 6. (d) | 7. (b) | 8. (a) | 9. (a) | 10. (b) |
| 11. (a) | 12. (b) | 13. (a) | | |

Practice Questions – Preliminary Exam

- | | | | | |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 1. (a) | 2. (d) | 3. (c) | 4. (a) | 5. (d) |
| 6. (d) | 7. (c) | 8. (d) | 9. (d) | 10. (b) |
| 11. (c) | 12. (a) | 13. (d) | 14. (b) | 15. (c) |