

## CHAPTER-1

# PARTITION OF BENGAL (1905-1911 A.D.) AND SWADESHI MOVEMENT

### KEY POINTS

- The Background of Partition of Bengal.
- Partition of Bengal
- Swadeshi Movement
- Consequences of Swadeshi Movement
- National Literature
- National Education
- The contribution of women in Swadeshi Movement.
- Rise of National Industry
- Establishment of Muslim League.
- Swadeshi Movement and Indian National Congress.
- Anti-movement activities of the Government
- The contribution of Swadeshi Movement.

### Introduction :

The partition of Bengal is one of the most important chapters in the freedom struggle of India. (This partition, which occurred during the reign of Lord Curzon (1899-1905), is a historic event in the political history of India. The creation of two states by dividing the vast Bengal province stirred

a national struggle against the British rule in whole India. This event is known as the second important political upheaval in India after the Sepoy Mutiny in 1857.

In the last part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the national movement became very strong in the Bengal province. This consciousness and uprising among the people put the British government in a dilemma and to suppress this national uprising, Lord Curzon created a new province named 'Eastern Bengal and Assam' by adjoining East Bengal to Assam. On the other hand by keeping the remaining west parts of Bengal with Bihar and Orissa (Odisha) as before, another province was continued as West Bengal. The whole country stood united on the protest to this partition. It created a new era in the uprising of national sentiment in every Indian. (In reality the movement against the British policy of partition of Bengal was the first active national struggle in all Indian perspective.)

### 1.01. The Background of Partition of Bengal

The British government introduced Regulating Act in 1773, and upgraded the post of the Governor of Bengal Presidency to the level of Governor General. By this introduction, the two Governors of Bombay and Madras were brought under the control of the Governor of Fort William. Since the area under the Governor of Fort William had become vast, the governing of Bengal province was given to a Lieutenant Governor. Again it had not been possible to continue good governance in the Bengal province by just one Lt. Governor, as this province covered a vast area of North and East India.

According to the Allahabad treaty (1765 A.D.) between the Moghul emperor Shah Alam and Robert Clive, the East India Company won political authority on Bihar and Orissa along with Bengal and these three regions were included in the province of Bengal.

After the sepoy mutiny in 1857, the British took steps to reform the Indian administration and the partition of Bengal was also included in this process. After the discussion between the government of England and India the decision was taken to disjoin a vast area of East India from Bengal. Keeping this view in mind, on 7<sup>th</sup> February 1874 the state of Assam was created by including six districts from Brahmaputra valley (Goalpara, Kamrup, Nagaon, Darrang, Lakhimpur and Sivasagar) with Khasia-Jayantiya



Hills, Naga Pahar, Garo Pahar, Cachar and Srikhatta (Total area 54, 100 sq. mile, population 41,50,000). The post of a Chief Commissioner was created for this new state and Colonel R.H. Keatings was given the charge of the state (1874-78). According to some historians it was the first step

The British colonialism was established all over India starting from 2<sup>nd</sup> tenure of Robert Clive (1765) to the rule of Lord Dalhousie (1848-1856) and Calcutta, Mumbai and Madras became the three main administrative centres of East India Company. The highest administrator of each centre was given the post of President and the administrative system was popularly known as Presidency under the President.

in the process of partition of Bengal. In the process of this partition two British officers helped Lord Curzon. One was Andrew Fraser, the then Chief Commissioner of Madhya Pradesh and the other was J. Bamfylde Fuller, the Chief Commissioner of Assam. In 1901 A.D. Fraser gave proposal to Lord Curzon to change the geographical boundary of Madhya Pradesh and Bengal.

The famine broke-out in Orissa (a part of Bengal) in 1866 A.D. and around 10000 people lost their lives. Viceroy Lord Northbrook (1872-76 A.D.) by showing his administrative caliber put the proposal of the partition of Bengal before the government of England.

Fraser mentioned the increasing population of Bengal which was 7.8 crore at that time and he proposed to disjoin Orissa and Sambalpur from Bengal and to annex to Madhya Pradesh. At the same time Fuller also proposed to annex Chittagong to Assam with a view to expanding the tea business. Lord Curzon studied two proposals of them and finding it pragmatic, he expressed his desire to implement these.

The following regions went under the British empire in India – the valley of Brahmaputra (through the treaty of Yandabu on 24<sup>th</sup> February, 1826), Cachar in 1832, Khasi Hills in 1833, Jaintia Hills in 1835, the province of Motok and Sadiya in 1839, the province of Khamti in 1843, the province of Singfoo in 1843, the area of Angami Naga Hills in 1854. These regions were controlled by the Lt. Governor of Bengal up to 1874. Then the area of Bengal was 2,53,000 sq. mile and total population was 4 crore 60 lacs.

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## 1.02. The Partition of Bengal

When Andrew Fraser was appointed as Lt. Governor of Bengal in 1903, Viceroy Lord Curzon directed him to make a plan for re-demarcation of the boundary of the province. Then Andrew Fraser made a slight change in the previous suggestion of William E. Ward and made a plan for the partition of Bengal. He submitted his plan to Lord Curzon on 28<sup>th</sup> March, 1903. He suggested to annex Dhaka, Chhattagram and Rajshahi (total area of 15 Districts) to neighbouring state of Assam. On 1<sup>st</sup> June, 1903 Viceroy Lord Curzon prepared a detail proposal of the partition of Bengal, by discussing with Hebert Risley, the Secretary of State, Govt. of India.

With a view to expanding tea business, through sea routes also, the European tea planters put proposals to expand the boundary of Assam up to Chhattagram. Keeping this view in mind Chief Commissioner William E. Ward (1894-96 A.D.) in his second tenure put proposals to annex Chhattagram, two districts of Dhaka and Maimonsing to Assam. But this proposal would not be implemented due to chaotic political milieu of that period.

This proposal was officially accepted by the British government and it was recognised as, 'the Minute on Territorial Re-distribution in India.' Since this proposal was officially declared by Hebert Risley, the Secretary of State on 6<sup>th</sup> Dec. 1903, it was known as 'Risley papers.' The process of bifurcation of Bengal and to annex one part of it into Assam is historically known as the historical 'Partition of Bengal'.

The area of three territories Dhaka, Chhattagram and Rajshahi was about 106540 sq. mile and total population was 31 million, out of which 18 millions were Muslims and 12 millions were Hindus.

It was said that the vast Bengal province could not be ruled smoothly under a Lt. Governor and accordingly the plan was taken to create a province named 'Eastern Bengal and Assam', by annexing 15 districts of North and East Bengal to Assam. On the other hand the Bengal province was to be continued with the remaining western parts of the province and by annexing Bihar, Orissa and Chotanagpur. Dhaka was to be the capital of the proposed 'Eastern Bengal and Assam', and this proposed state had a population of around three crores and ten lacs. Among this Muslim population was 1.8 crores and Hindus were 1.2 crores. On the other hand

Calcutta was to be the capital of the proposed 'Bengal province' and it had a population of around 5.4 crores. Among this Hindus were 4.2 crores and Muslims were just 90 thousands. But in comparison to the people of Bihar and Orissa, the Bengalis were minority.

(Though Lord Curzon proposed to make the territory of Bengal smaller and the territory of Assam bigger for a smooth administration, the hidden agenda behind it also came on the surface. Because the unity between Hindu and Muslim farmers and labourers was a threat for the British, they planned to break the unity by division. Herbert Risley's letter to Lord Curzon mentioned, 'The United Bengal is a big force, the partition will destroy this big unity.' So the hidden purpose behind the partition of Bengal was to decimate the Hindu Muslim unity. To meet this vested interest, communal feelings were needed to be spread.

Since Bengal was considered to be the centre of Indian nationalism, through the partition of Bengal it was planned to divide the province and to make the Hindu Bengalis and intellectuals a minority in both the states. The real motive of Lord Curzon was to strengthen the British empire in India by weakening the politically conscious Hindu-Bengalis and thus to resist the growth of Indian nationalism. Through this plan he tried to increase loyalty of the Muslim who were politically less conscious, and thus planned to sow the seed of communalism in Indian society. At the same time he took it as a weapon to dominate the growing anti British extremists.

(On 2<sup>nd</sup> February, 1905 Lord Curzon sent the proposal of partition of Bengal to Secretary of State for India in London for necessary approval. On 9<sup>th</sup> June, Secretary of State for India John Brodrie approved the proposal and informed the government of India by telegram message. On 19<sup>th</sup> July, 1905, the British government of India published this proposal. On 1<sup>st</sup> September, 1905, it was declared officially that the partition of Bengal would be implemented on 16<sup>th</sup> October. The four points programme on partition of Bengal declared by Lord Curzon on 1<sup>st</sup> September was as follows-

**The 1<sup>st</sup> point (phase) of the partition of Bengal -**

- (a) The name of the new province will be 'Eastern Bengal and Assam', by annexation of Rajshahi, Dhaka and Chittagong to Assam.
- (b) The capital of new province will be Dhaka.
- (c) The administration of Eastern Bengal and Assam will be handed over to a Lt. Governor.
- (d) The capital of Assam will be transferred from Shillong to Dhaka.

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The boundary of divided Bengal as per the plan of Partition of Bengal of Lord Curzon.



#### 2nd Point (Phase)

- (a) There will be separate high court in Dhaka for Eastern Bengal and Assam.
- (b) Until a separate high court is established, the new province will be under the jurisdiction of Calcutta high court.

#### 3rd Point (Phase)

- (c) Calcutta will be the capital of New Bengal province which includes West Bengal, Bihar, Orissa and Chotanagpur.

#### 4th Point (Phase)

- (d) The partition of Bengal will be implemented on 16<sup>th</sup> October, 1905.

### 1.03. Swadeshi Movement (1905 – 1911 A.D.)

The British government planned the partition of Bengal against the wishes of the people of Bengal. The leaders like Surendra Nath Banerjee, Bipin Chandra Paul, Arabinde Ghose, Rabindranath Tagore, Rasbihari Bose, Ramendra Sundar Trivedi etc. understood the conspiracy

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of the British government and they were able to create awareness among the people against this conspiracy. They launched anti-partition propaganda among the people through various meetings and writings realising that the partition of Bengal would be a threat to the heritage of Bengalis and Hindu-Muslim unity as well. To create strong public opinion against the partition of Bengal, at first they started signature collecting campaign. The protest paper signed by 70,000 Indian was submitted to the Secretary of State for India. The British government remained strong and tried to justify Andrew Fraser's plan of partition of Bengal. But the people of Bengal broke out with anguish.

(When it became clear that the government was adamant to implement this partition, the anti-government feeling rose gradually among the people of Bengal. Since the public opinion was disrespected, the whole Bengal broke out into national movement against this partition. Hindu-Muslim unity was put under threat and Bengali nationalism was wounded. Already there was dissatisfaction among the Indians as Lord Curzon interfered the rights of Indian on education, newspaper and local self government. His process of partition was also reactionary. Hence there was a huge public protest and dissatisfaction against this partition. From the partition proposal was raised on 6<sup>th</sup> December, 1903, till it was officially declared on 19<sup>th</sup> July, 1905, many places of East, West and North Bengal witnessed thousands of public protests and huge public uproars. Irrespective of caste, creed and religion people plunged into this movement. This movement became famous as Swadeshi movement because it was publicly recommended that the Indians would unitedly boycott foreign goods and would start using home-made goods made by the Indians.)

Great sensation was created among the people by the article 'Bangar Sarbanash' published in the journal Sanjibani (6<sup>th</sup> July, 1904, editor Krishna Kumar Mitra). The first protest meeting against the proposed partition of Bengal was held at Khulna (Bagerbari) on 14<sup>th</sup> July, 1905. The prominent leaders like Surendranath Banerjee, Motilal Ghose, Dwizendralal Mitra etc. called the people for breaking this conspiracy of the British to divide the motherland. On 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> July, 1905, the same protest meeting was held at Kishorganj and Pabna, respectively. The next day of the official declaration of the partition of Bengal, the 2<sup>nd</sup> protest meeting was held at Dinazpur on 20<sup>th</sup> July, 1905. This protest meeting was presided over by the king (Maharaja) of Dinazpur and the proposal was passed to boycott the British goods. Plan was taken to organize protest meeting at grass root level.

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The student community was attracted to this environment of movement. The students of Ripon College (presently Surendra Nath College) for the first time staged a walk out from their classrooms and took part in the movement on 18<sup>th</sup> July, 1905. On 31<sup>st</sup> July, 1905, under the leadership of the students from Ripon College, a vast student rally was organised against this partition. They formed a central committee to launch various movements against this partition. On 7<sup>th</sup> August, 1905, a huge public meeting was held at Town Hall of Kasimbazar, Calcutta under the presidentship of Maharaja Manindra Chandra Nandi. At the call of the representatives from various places, a unanimous decision was passed to boycott the British goods. On that day the students recited the patriotic song of Mukunda Das, (Hey banga janani, Swarna prasadini...) by calling for boycotting foreign goods. A 'Student Union' was formed under the leadership of Surendranath Banerjee. Through his inspiring speech Rabindranath Tagore called the people for maintaining social harmony. To stop buying and selling of British goods, the students decided to continue picketing programme in the business institutions. The British goods were put on fire in the various protest rallies.

On 23<sup>rd</sup> September, 1905, a big protest rally was held at Rajabazar, North Calcutta. It was presided over by Abdul Rasul and prominent Muslim leader like Halim Gajnahi, Liakat Hussain, Md. Ismile Choudhury were present. This protest rally played an important role in continuing the movement against the partition of Bengal. On that day a historic foot March, a symbol of social harmony, took place where people of all caste, creed and religion took part in this procession.

On the day of implementation of the partition of Bengal i.e. 16<sup>th</sup> October, 1905, the people of Bengal observed 'National mourning day'. As per the proposal of Ramendra Sundar Trivedi every household in the Bengal province avoided cooking on that day. At the call of Rabindranath Tagore, the Bengali people of Calcutta observed Rakhibandhan on that day. People sang Tagore's Rakhi song, 'Bangalir pran, Bangalir Mon, Ek houk he Bhagaban.' To strengthen the unity and fraternity among Hindu and Muslims, they tied Rakhi at the hands of the pedestrians. Under the leadership of Rabindranath Tagore thousands of people gathered at Maszids at Kalutola and Chitpur and tied Rakhis to the Moulabi's and other Muslims. From that day it was decided that protest meeting would be organized in every district of Bengal and boycotting of the foreign goods would be done strictly. According to the instruction of student groups, all the students decided to go to school barefoot until the proposal for partition of Bengal would be cancelled.

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On 16<sup>th</sup> October, 1905, a strike (Hartal) was held in the afternoon in entire Calcutta. All the shops, business establishments, educational and other institutions, buses and trams remained closed. Ananda mohan Bose (President of Indian National Congress of Madras session, 1898) laid the foundation stone of 'Federal Hall' as symbol of unity and heritage of Bengal and he addressed a big public rally and called the people for joining the movement against the partition of Bengal. 'Vande Mataram' rent the air of Calcutta and patriotic slogans were roared every where. People of Bengal from that very day observed a year long mourning.

At the beginning, the swadeshi movement was confined to the boycotting of foreign goods and using indigenous goods. However, it was an economic pressure on the British. The intensity of the movement gradually increased and so the amount of boycotting foreign goods also became higher. Arbinda Ghose said, 'Boycotting means patriotism and the essence of patriotism is the non co-operation with the British in all respects.' This message from saint Arbinda made the feeling of patriotism more lively in the activists of this movement. People started avoiding British administration, govt. educational institutions, Courts etc. apart from foreign goods. Local goods were more appreciated by the people. People felt pride buying the things manufactured in India and by the Indians and this helped in building up the foundation of Indian economy. Indian people became united to boycott the foreign goods, which already occupied Indian markets. People developed a tendency not to pay their taxes, government loans etc. thinking the British government a foreign agency only.

Though the main centre of the Swadeshi movement was undivided Bengal, yet it crossed the boundaries of Bengal and soon took a form of a national movement. The people of Maharastra, South India, North-East India supported this movement and it turned into an all Indian movement. Under the leadership of Surendranath Banerjee, Bal Gangadhar Tilok, Gopal Krishna Gokhley, Anundamohan Bose, Lala Lajpat Ray, Dadabhai Naoraji etc., this movement crossed the corridor of Bengal and spread to various states of the country.

The Swadeshi movement is considered as a full fledged successful movement. Every step of this movement inspired the people of Bengal and had a direct influence all over India. Through it was a political movement against the British, yet this seven years movement (1905-1911 A.D.) had a far reaching impact upon literature, society, education and economy of India.

## 1.04. Consequences of the Swadeshi Movement

### (a) National Literature :

The tide of patriotism that emerged from the Swadeshi movement had contributed a lot to the national literature. On the influence of Swadeshi movement, many magazines, newspapers, books, dramas, songs and articles were published.

The 'Bengali' (1904) edited by Surendranath Banerjee, the 'Sanjibani' (1904) edited by Krishna Kumar Mitra, the 'Hitabaadi' (1905) by Laliprasanna Kabya Bisharad and Yogendranath Vidyabhusan, the 'Yugantar' (Weekly, 1906) by Bhupendra Dutta, the 'Sandhya' (1906) by Brahmanabandhab Upadhyaya, 'The Dawn' (1906) by Satish Chandra Mukherjee, the female magazine 'Su-Prabhat' (1906) by Kumudini Mishra, 'Vande Mataram' by Rabindra Ghose etc. created a strong national sentiment among the people and excelled the movement.

Some important plays written on the background of Swadeshi movement were- 'Palashir Prayachitta,' by Khitod Prasad, 'Sirajuddoula' and 'Mir Kasim' by Girish Ghose, 'Sabbas Bangali' by Amrit Lal Bose, 'Bangar Angashod' by Amarendranath Dutta etc. At the same time some famous books written on the background of Swadeshi movement were 'Japani Bir' by Swarna Kumari Devi, 'Joy Sangeet' by Pramathnath Ray Choudhury, 'Nabha Bharat' by Kartik Ch. Dasgupta, 'Bangalakhmir Bratakatha' by Ramendra Sundar Trivedi. Twenty three numbers of patriotic songs composed by Rabindranath Tagore on Swadeshi movement will remain a treasure of Indian Culture. The song 'Amar sonar Bangla Ami Tomake Bhal Basi' won the status of national anthem of independent Bangladesh. The song, 'jadi tor daak suno keu naa ase, tabe ekla cholo re...' received everlasting popularity. During the movement period, the songs of Rajanikanta Sen, Mukunda Das, Dwizendralal Roy etc. inspired the Bangalis. The article 'Bhai Bhai Ek Thai' written by Rabindranath Tagore on the background of Swadeshi movement was a famous article.

A national institution named 'Bangia Kala Sangsad' was established under the leadership of Abanindranath Thakur during the Swadeshi movement. This institution aimed at creating foundation of Indian Fine Arts, free from western influence. Through his famous painting 'Banga Mata' Abanindranath Thakur tried to establish Indian Fine arts at par with the western paintings. Sister Nibedita transformed 'Banga Mata' into 'Bharat Mata'.

### (b) National Education :

The Swadeshi movement was not confined to boycotts of British goods

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only. It also had a big influence on the prevalent educational system of Bengal. It was noticed that the movements were becoming popular among the students and the chief secretary of Bengal R.W. Carlyle circulated a notice (10<sup>th</sup> October, 1905) warning all the students not to take part in the movement. The student community made strong protest against this circular and they observed a walk out of the classroom. Under the presidentship of Rabindra Nath Tagore, a vast student rally was organized at Pataldanga Mallikbari (4<sup>th</sup> Nov, 1905) and on that rally, an 'Anti Circular Society' was formed to disobey the order of the government. This was the first incident of disobedience of government order.

The prominent leaders like Bipin Ch. Paul, Rabindranath Tagore, Abdul Rasul etc. called upon the student community to leave government institution. At the same time Satishchandra Mukherjee, the editor of 'the Dawn' named the University of Calcutta as the house of slaves (Gulam-khana) and he called upon the students community to leave that house of slaves and to accept national education. Satish Ch. Mukherjee, started a national institution named 'Dawn Society', with full co-operation from Rabindra nath Tagore and Charu Das Banerjee and engaged in the work of spreading patriotic feeling among the students.

This society did against the Curzon's University law (1904) and Carlyle's circular (1905) and started movement for uprising the national education. On 5<sup>th</sup> August, 1905, Rabindranath Tagore gave a valuable lecture on importance of national education in a public meeting at Calcutta. Next day he established the Banga Jatiya Vidyalay where many people were present. On 8<sup>th</sup> November, 1905, the second Jatiya Vidyalay was established in Rangpur. The number of students leaving government schools increased and consequently many national schools were established at many places of Bengal. Under the leadership of Rashihari Bose the National Education Council (Jatiya Siksha Parisad) was formed on 11<sup>th</sup> March 1906 at town hall Calcutta. Bengal National College was established on 15<sup>th</sup> August 1906. Arabinda Ghose was the first principal and in the same year on 12<sup>th</sup> December, Bengal National College was promoted to National University.

During the Swadeshi movement, all together 62 secondary schools and 3000 national primary schools were established. Bengal Technical Institute was established with the financial help from reputed barrister Taraknath Palit (a close friend of Anunda Ram Boruah, the first ICS of Assam.). Later on, this institution was changed into Jadavpur University. Bihar Vidyapeeth, Patna, Samarth Vidyalay, Maharashtra and Gujrat Vidyalay, Gujrat were established in the style of National University.

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Rabindranath Tagore



Rajanikanta Sen



The famous picture 'Banga mata' by Abanindranath Thakur



**Sister Nibedita, a source of inspiration of Swadeshi movement.**

### (c) The contribution of women in Swadeshi movement

Keeping equal pace with the man, the middle class urban women also took active part in the swadeshi movement by crossing all the social barriers. This participation of the women folk against the partition of Bengal led the Indian freedom struggle to a well organized level.

Among the prominent female leaders of swadeshi movement, Sarala Devi Choudhurni was to be reckoned to lead the Swadeshi movement in a revolutionary way. Like the Navaji festival of Maharashtra, she started organizing various festivals like 'Binamani Puja', Pratapaditya Utsav, Udayaditya Utsav, Pyayam Samiti etc. and trained the boys and girls on wrestling, stick play etc. games. She edited a magazine named 'Pharati' and prepared the youth force of Bengal to plunge into national movement.

Another prominent woman who contributed a lot in creating national awareness among the youths and the women was Sister Nibedita. This Ireland born strong lady had her real name as Margaret Elizabeth Noble (1864-1911). During her stay in Calcutta she was actively associated with Youngmen's Hindu Union, Vivekananda Society, Durga Society and Anusilan Samiti etc. and encouraged the youths and the women folk to be independent by involvement in indigenous industries.

The bravery of the Bengal women amazed the British Rulers. Regarding the courage of Bengal women, the Daily Telegraph, London on 11<sup>th</sup> October 1907 wrote - 'The Bengal women are the most obstinate and most dangerous antagonist of the English'.

### (d) The rise of National Industry

On the background of swadeshi movement, the mentality for self development grew in Bengal and it brought a positive and congenial atmosphere for the establishment of national industries. As the demand of locally made goods grew higher, several big industries and various small scale industries came into being. Spinning machine, small and medium scale handloom industries, industries for producing mustard oil, soap, sugar, match box etc. and many biscuit factories were established. Along with this, national bank and national insurance companies came into existence. The Swadeshi Bhandar, established by Rabindranath Tagore became a reputed textile firm. At the prime time of Swadeshi movement Yagesh Ch. Choudhury and Krishna Bihari Sen jointly established, 'Indian stores' at Bow bazaar, Calcutta. All kinds of India made products were sold in this establishment. Another woman from Tagore's family named Sarala Devi



started, 'Lakshi Bhandar' at Cornwallis street (Now Bidhan Sarani). The 'United Bengal Stores' was established by Abdul Halim Gajnabi at Lal Bazar.

Some extra ordinary people like Jagadish Ch. Bose, Prafulla Ch. Roy, Nilratan Sarkar etc. planned to establish some heavy industries at Bengal to grow an atmosphere of self development and self reliance. At the initiative of Nilratan Sarkar, 'Banga Lakshi Cotton Mill' was established on 1<sup>st</sup> August, 1906 and (Acharya Prafulla Ray started 'Bengal Chemicals' on 25<sup>th</sup> July, 1906) Jamshedji Tata established iron factory in 1907. As a consequence of boycotting foreign goods and productions of local industries, the number of imported goods came to be very low in India.

Due to the political movement in Bengal, the foundation of modern industries was laid in various provinces of India. The first Indian industrial summit was held on 17<sup>th</sup> December, 1905 under the chairmanship of R.C. Dutta at Varanashi and this summit awakened the Indians about the prospect of indigenous industries in India. Even revival of many national industries were possible after this summit. In short, the Swadeshi movement opened a new chapter in the progress of Indian industries and business.

#### (e) Establishment of Muslim League L7

The British government never wanted a vast and united India. To keep their imperialism intact, they tried to divide the Indians with respect to religion, language, caste and region. The partition of Bengal was also a big weapon to create communal feelings among Indians.

To build a strong public opinion in favour of the partition of Bengal, Lord Curzon took a programme of long trip in February, 1904. In the places like Dhaka, Maimonsing, Chattagram etc. he campaigned in favour of the partition of Bengal, saying that it would benefit the Muslim people a lot. On 18<sup>th</sup> Feb, 1904, he organized a big rally in Dhaka and called the Islamic people for standing unitedly against the Hindus. With the help of Nawab Sallimullah Khan, he tried to approach the Muslim of Bengal. For this purpose he lent Rs. 14 Lacs to Nawab with minimum interest. He also promised to give special facility to the Islam land Lords. Many Muslim leaders welcomed this partition of Bengal. The leaders who had belief in Lord Curzon, thought that this proposal of two states would be able to fulfil the aspirations of the Muslim community. They had also their vested interest and strong temptation for self establishment. In this way the British created a destructive political mentality in the Muslims.

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Lord Minto became the Viceroy of India after Lord Curzon and his declaration on 13<sup>th</sup> April, 1906 indicated some special political gains to the Muslim citizens. He made an official declaration of Rules of Administrative Reform. After this declaration a section of Muslim leaders were united to discuss on how the interest of Muslims would be protected in the proposed reform rules. Discussing with William Archbold, the principal of Aligarh College, they prepared a petition. They demanded a separate electorate for the Muslims in the proposed reform. On 1<sup>st</sup> October, 1906 under the leadership of Aga Khan a representative group consisting of 35 members submitted the petition to Lord Minto at Simla. The Viceroy assured them that the demands would be considered. In such a favourable environment of royal grace, they deeply involved in bringing dream into reality.

On 30<sup>th</sup> December, 1906 some educated Muslim leaders attended a meeting at Dhaka palace. This meeting was organized by Nawab Salimullah and was presided by Nawab Bikor-ul-Mulook. In this historic session a political organization named All India Muslim League was established. Nawab Salimullah, who led the creation of Muslim League declared the aims and objectives of this newly formed political organization on that day itself.

These were –

- (a) To increase the sense of loyalty of the Muslim people to British.
- (b) To keep aware the British government regarding the political rights and interests of the Muslim people.
- (c) To create the sense of unity among the Muslim people by removing feelings of being frightened, disgusted and terrorised.

Viceroy Lord Minto and Secretary of State for India Lord Morley expressed their satisfaction with the activities of the Muslim League. These two British officials took the opportunity of the differences of religion and opinion between Hindu and Muslim for political gain. Lord Minto also planned to bring the moderate groups of Congress close to British govt. within a very short period. The Muslim owned separate electorate through the Indian Council Act (Morley-Minto Reform), 1909.

The Muslim League emerged as an active political organization opponent to Indian National Congress to be able to represent the Indian Muslims. They could easily win the political rights by taking the opportunity of loyalty to the British. This league soon became a big force to weaken the Indian National Congress. In March 1910 the head office of Muslim League was transferred to Lucknow.

The Muslim League could not influence every section of the society. It was confined to some high class conservative people and when the proposal for partition of Bengal was repealed in 1911, the importance of Muslim League declined. After the demise of Sallimullah in 1905 the conservative character of Muslim League went under the tremendous changes.



**Bapuji, the initiator of Khadi**

### **1.05 Swadeshi Movement and National Congress**

Surendranath Banerjee, Bipin Ch. Paul, Arabinda Ghose, Aswini Kumar Dutta and many other intellectual leaders through the National Congress were able to unite people against partition of Bengal. During 1885-1905, National Congress mainly concentrated on social and economic development. But after the partition of Bengal, it could establish itself as a big organisation in the context of greater Indian nationalism.

The 19<sup>th</sup> annual session held in 1903 at Madras, under the presidentship of Lalmohan Ghosh, Indian National Congress warned the govt. to give up the plan of partition of Bengal. Before the implementation of partition of Bengal Lala Lajpat Ray and Gopal Krishna Gokhley reached London on 6<sup>th</sup> July, 1905 to give a representation on behalf of National Congress to give up the plan of partition of Bengal by the British government. They submitted a protest petition signed by the people of Bengal to the

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Secretary of State for India against the implementation of partition. Since inspite of all the oppositions of the Indians the partition was implemented, the Indian National Congress, had to take strong stand against the partition.

After six years of Swadeshi Movement, the result of Bengal partition, the British government was compelled to go for unification of Bengal in 1911. This big incident brought about an opportunity to the people of India to be united for freedom and self government (Swaraj), the Indian National Congress being the central force of it.

### 1.06: Anti-Movement Actions of the Government

The British Government expected support from moderate group leaders of Congress on the issue of partition of Bengal. In order to keep these leaders loyal, Lord Curzon offered them various titles, posts, medals etc. The moderate Congress members were offered the post of judges in high court, member of British parliament, member in Viceroy's Council etc.



Lala Lajpat Ray, Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Bipin Chandra Paul  
(Lal-Bal-Paul)

for obtaining support towards partition. In spite of all these policies, Curzon failed to control the anti-partition movement. The firm stand of Congress leaders like Surendranath Banerjee, Gopal Krishna Gokhale etc. against the partition of Bengal, set the government in to trap. Bipin Ch. Paul urged every leader to give up and return titles, posts and honours offered by the British government. (The first response to this was Gopal Krishna Gokhale who returned the 'Knighthood' title to the British immediately)

### 1.07 The contribution of Swadeshi Movement :

- (1) The Swadeshi movement was able to give the Indians a political knowledge regarding mass movement. Indian people learnt that if the majority of the people come forward for a common cause, then a mass movement would certainly become successful.
- (2) The Indian National Congress from its inception believed in peaceful demand to the British govt. for the development of India. The partition



of Bengal brought a change in this outlook of the Congress. The Swadeshi movement made them realize that the progress of India is possible only through mass struggle.

- (3) Reigning over the post of Viceroy Lord Carzon declared, "administration and exploitation will go hand in hand". This arrogance of the empirical ruler was retaliated through the determination of Indians to boycott foreign goods, the use of local goods and the starting of local industries. Therefore, the Swadeshi movement will always be remembered in the history of economic and industrial development of India.
- (4) The Indians got the privilege to demand for Swaraj through the Swadeshi movement. The sense of nationalism stirred by Swadeshi movement compelled the Indian National Congress for the first time to take the proposal for demanding Swaraj in its Calcutta session in 1906 under the presidentship of Dada Bhai Naoraji.
- (5) The Swadeshi movement also attracted the women of India to the mass movement. Two incidents played great role in this regard. Every family in the Bengal province went on fast on the day when Prafulla Chaki was executed. Every kitchen was closed down and all mothers passed the day by mourning. (The second incident was the police torture on Bhupendra Nath Dutta, the editor of "Yugantar", for his sharp criticism on the partition of Bengal) His mother Bhabaneswari Devi called the women for a mass movement instead of weeping for the incident. Thousands of women came out to join the movement.
- (6) The Swadeshi movement also gave birth to armed movement. The tendency to resort to violent method occurred in some section of activists.

The decision to repeal the partition of Bengal clearly showed the defeat and discontentment of the British Government. The success story of Swadeshi movement inspired the Indians to join and strengthen the national freedom struggle led by Mahatma Gandhi. The success of anti-partition movement will ever remain as an important event in the history of freedom struggle of India.

## SUMMARY

- ✧ Partition of Bengal under the Viceroy Lord Curzon was an important event in the political history of India.
- ✧ The reason behind the partition, officially announced, was that the Bengal province was too large to be administered by a single Lieutenant Governor. A total area of 1,06,540 sq. mile comprised of Dhaka, Chittagong and Rajshahi was annexed to Assam and came to be known as Eastern Bengal and Assam.
- ✧ Dhaka was established as the capital of Eastern Bengal and Assam.
- ✧ Lord Curzon suggested to limit the area of Bengal province for better administration. The main objective of this policy was to divide the unity of Bengal province.
- ✧ Through Partition of Bengal, Lord Curzon tried to break the centre of Indian nationalism. It resulted in division of Bengal into two parts and Hindu-Bengalis were turned into minorities in both the provinces.
- ✧ The decision to effect the partition of Bengal was announced in July 1905 by Lord Curzon the Viceroy of India. The partition took place on 16 Oct. 1905.
- ✧ Partition of Bengal created mass agitation among the people of Bengal.
- ✧ Following the partition, an anti-British movement broke out which involved non violent and violent protests and boycotts.
- ✧ Irrespective of caste, creed and religion, people got involved in the movement.
- ✧ Partition sparked an extremely major political crisis, which led to the beginning of Swadeshi movement that included boycotting of British goods and accepting Swadeshi goods.
- ✧ Although the centre of Swadeshi movement was undivided Bengal province, it spread out not only in Bengal but throughout India.
- ✧ Swadeshi movement was regarded as a successful and active movement. It had far reaching impact on literature, society, education, economy etc. of the country.
- ✧ In order to continue the British imperialism undisturbed, they tried to divide and rule Indians on the basis of castes, creeds, religions and regions.
- ✧ Another significant event during Swadeshi movement was the creation of Indian Muslim League, established by a section of Muslim elites in the direct instigation of the British.
- ✧ The emergence of violent movement is also an important event of the period of Swadeshi movement.
- ✧ The philosophy of INC changed after partition of Bengal. INC believed that the development of Indians would be possible only through mass movement.
- ✧ The capital of Assam was shifted from Shillong to Dhaka as a result of partition of Bengal.

- ☛ The effect of Swadeshi movement extended up to Assam also.
- ☛ Bengal was reunited on 12 December, 1911 as per the royal proclamation of Delhi. As a result of reunification-
  1. The capital of India shifted from Calcutta to Delhi.
  2. The administration of Assam came under the Chief Commissioner.
  3. The capital of Assam again shifted to Shillong.

## EXERCISE

**Very short answer questions :**

1. In which Viceroy's time did the partition of Bengal take place?
2. On which date in 1905 did the partition of Bengal come into force?
3. In which meeting was the proposal of giving up foreign commodities accepted?
4. Who was the editor of the journal *Jugantar* published in the time of Swadeshi movement?
5. When was the institution named National Education Council (Jatiya Siksha Parishad) established in Bengal?
6. Who was the main introducer of the industry named Bengal Chemicals?
7. Under whose presidentship did the Conference of Indian National Congress accept the proposal of *swaraj* for Indians?
8. When did the unification of Bengal take place?

**Short/ long answer type questions :**

1. Mention three main geographical regions of Bengal which were annexed to the province West Bengal and Assam created after the partition of Bengal.
2. Write briefly about what were the intentions of the partition of Bengal.
3. Why was the anti partition of Bengal movement named as Swadeshi movement? Discuss briefly.
4. Discuss the contributions of Swadeshi movement towards national education.
5. How did the national industries develop during Swadeshi movement? Explain in short.
6. What were the anti-movement measures taken by the British to dominate Swadeshi movement?
7. Mention three results of Swadeshi movement.
8. Mention three contributions of Swadeshi movement.

**Write short notes on :**

1. Kabitguru Rabindranath Tagore
2. Margaret Elizabeth Noble (Bhagini Nivedita)
3. Nawab Salimullah