

# Swadeshi Movement

Term I

# Political Background

- 1885 – Establishment of National Congress
- 1885-1905: Time of the Moderates
- 1905: Lord Curzon, the then Governor General of Bengal announced the partition of Bengal

# The Province of Bengal

- Comprising the present-day West Bengal, Bihar, Jharkhand and Bangladesh
- 1903: Process of the partition started
- 2<sup>nd</sup> February 1905: Authorities in London sanctioned the partition
- Protests come up principally led by the moderates based on the line of “prayer and petition” but failed.
- 19 July 1905 – New Province announced as Eastern Bengal and Assam comprising the area of Chittagong, Dacca, Rajshahi Divisions, Hill Tippera (Tripura) and Assam.
- 16 October 1905: The province came into existence

# Division based on

- Religion: Hindu majority and Muslim majority
- Urban intelligentsia and Rural Cultivating area (especially jute producing area)
- Reducing the importance of Calcutta

# The protest

- Calcutta – Dinajpur – Pabna – Faridpur – Dacca – Barisal and so on.
- The protest led to the **Boycott** of British goods
- Boycott suggestion came from Krishnakumar Mitra's *Sanjivani* on 3<sup>rd</sup> July 1905.
- Later it was accepted or the formal proclamation of **Swadeshi movement** was made on 7<sup>th</sup> August 1905 with passing the Boycott resolution in a meeting held at the Calcutta Townhall.
- It was followed by the calls from Rabindranath Tagore and Ramendra Sundar Trivedi respectively for the observance of Raksha-Bandhan and Arandhan.

# Birth of Indigenous Enterprises

- Calcutta Potteries
  - Bengal Chemical
  - Bange Lakshmi Cotton Mills
  - Mohini Mills
  - National Tannery
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- Soap, match box, tobacco manufacturing establishments
  - Oil mills
  - Swadeshi banks, insurance, steam navigation companies

# Boycotting the Educational Institution

- The picketing before the shops selling British goods soon led to a boycott of the British controlled educational institutions.
- The threats to the students:
  - Withdrawal of grants, scholarships, affiliations
  - Imposition of fines, rustication orders
- This led a large number of students to leave these schools and colleges.
- This situation forced the Swadeshi leaders to think in terms of running a parallel education system in Bengal.

# New Educational Institutions

- Soon appeal were made, donations collected and distinguished persons came forward to formulate programmes for national education.
- Bengal Technical Institute (1906) later turned into the College of Engineering and Technology.
- Jadavpur (the nucleus of the present-day Jadavpur University)
- Bengal National College and School (1906) – Aurobindo Ghose as the Principal
- A number of primary and secondary schools



# Other parts of India

- This peculiar mass protest of Swadeshi and boycott gained popularity among the new members of INC who were more impatient than the moderates.
- Lokmanya Tilak took it to Bombay and Pune
- Ajit Singh and Lajpat Rai to Punjab and other parts of northern India
- Syed Haider Raza to Delhi
- Chidambaram Pillai to Madras Presidency
- Bipin Chandra Pal's extensive lecture tours motivated in this process

# Calls from INC

- Formally took up the Swadeshi call in its Benaras Session of 1905 presided over by GK Gokhale.
- They supported the movement in Bengal but did not envision it throughout India or the cause of total independence.
- The extremists like Tilak, Bipin Chandra Pal, Lala Lajpat Rai, Aurobindo Ghosh and so on wanted that
- Their pressure promoted Dada Bhai Naoroji in his presidential address in Calcutta Session to mention the ultimate goal of INC as self-government or Swaraj.

# Result

- It shows a new way of protest
- Inspired Mahatma Gandhi to adopt different methods in his Satyagraha
- Mass meetings, processions, boycott of foreign goods,
- Attempts were made to achieve mass mobilization
- Samitis were formed that penetrated deep into the interiors of Bengal spreading the Swadeshi message
- First time popular traditional gathering and festivals were used to reach people. - Ganapati and Shivaji festivals in Maharashtra (employed by Tilak)
- Swadeshi songs inspired people in Bengal
- Public theatre or *jatra*
- Finally, the colonial Government was compelled to withdraw the partition but they shifted the capital from Calcutta to decrease the importance of Calcutta and the intellectuals of Bengal.