

Lord Curzon's Initiatives

"As long as we rule India, we are the greatest power in the world. If we lose it, we shall drop straightaway to a third-rate power." – Curzon, 1902

Curzon's efforts 'to win the goodwill of people, and to prevent any powerful combination between them and the educated middle classes'. – Bipinchandra Pal

Curzon's regime was responsible for creating a certain kind of militancy, a certain kind of disillusionment about British rule for its despotic pretensions. The net result was the beginning of quite a new phase in the history of Indian nationalism with the struggle against the Partition of Bengal.

- Second Delhi Durbar, 1903 (Edward VII)
- **Aggressive foreign policy** (last phase of Great Game)
 - Curzon believed Russia to be the most likely threat to British India.
 - Persia and West Asia: Flag-Waving Mission to the Gulf by Curzon himself
 - Afghanistan: Louis Dane Mission (1904)
 - Younghusband expedition to Tibet under Francis Younghusband in 1903–04
- **Economic Reforms**
 - Indian famine of 1899–1900 → McDonald Committee
 - Remissions of land revenue after the famine of 1899–1900
 - The salt tax was reduced, and the income-tax exemption limit raised from Rs 500 to Rs 1000 a year in 1903–04.
 - Punjab Land Alienation Act, 1900
 - Restricted transfer of property to urban moneylenders
 - Department of Agriculture was constituted in 1901
 - Irrigation Commission, 1901 (Sir Colin Scott-Moncrieff)
 - Cooperatives Credit Societies Act, 1904
 - Agricultural Research Institute at Pusa in Samastipur, Bihar, 1905
 - Thomas Robertson Railway Commission, 1901 → appointment of Railway board
 - 6100 miles of new lines (the greatest expansion under any Viceroy)



Statue of Curzon, Victoria Memorial

- Department of Commerce and Industry
- **Administrative Reforms**
 - Creation of North-West Frontier Province, 1901
 - Ancient Monuments Preservation Act, 1904
 - He commissioned the restoration of the Taj Mahal to its old glory which was until then severely neglected.
 - Curzon did show a genuine interest in India's ancient monuments.
 - Police Commission under Sir Andrew Fraser, 1902
 - Significant improvements in the number, training and salaries of the police force at an additional expenditure of Rs 15 million annually.
 - A separate Department of Criminal Intelligence was also set up to tackle political crimes, in place of Thuggee and Dacoity Department.
 - Calcutta Corporation Act, 1899
 - It reduced the number of elected Indian members.
 - Raleigh University Commission, 1902 → Indian Universities Act, 1904
 - The number of unofficial members was reduced in the university senate by this Act. Curzon tried to bring higher education in India under complete government control and restrict it to a handful of people.
 - Official Secrets Act, 1904
 - The native press was denied access to information on the ground that these were official secret.
 - Partition of Bengal, 1905

Partition of Bengal

"The partition of Bengal is an administrative measure aimed at improving governance and promoting efficient administration in the region." – Lord Curzon

"Bengal united is a power; Bengal divided will pull in several different directions." – HH Risley

"The partition of Bengal is an insult to the unity and cultural heritage of our people." – Aurobindo Ghosh

The Bengal Presidency as an administrative unit was increasing in size with the accretion of territories through conquest and annexation. Its borders touched Sutelej in the west and Arakan mountains in the east. At this time, the province of Bengal was comprising Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. Its total population was 80 million and the capital was Calcutta.

Thus, the presidency was indeed of an unwieldy size and therefore the necessity to partition Bengal was being discussed since the time of the Orissa famine of 1866. From 1870s onwards, there were several attempts with different plans about how to reduce the size of the Bengal presidency to a manageable size.

Earlier Plans: Administrative efficiency and convenience.

- In 1874 Assam was separated with 3 million people as Chief Commissioner's province. Three Bengali-speaking areas, i.e., Sylhet, Goalpara and Cachar, were also added to it.
- HH Risley, the home secretary during Curzon's regime, came up with another proposal to separate the East Bengal districts (Dacca, Rajshahi, Myemensingh) and attach them with Assam.
- The concerns were: Safeguarding the interests of Assam, rather than weakening Bengal, was an important consideration behind the policy decision at this stage. Thus, making Assam a viable administrative unit came to occupy British administrative attention.
 - It would reduce the **excessive administrative burden** of Bengal Government.
 - It would **solve the problem of Assam** which would become a Lt. governor's province with **separate civil service cadre**.
 - Substantial commercial benefits, as the interest of **tea gardeners, oil and coal industries** would be safeguarded. Assam planters would be having a **cheaper maritime outlet** through the port of Chittagong.
 - **Assam Bengal railways** would be brought under a single administration as it is extremely vital for economic development of Northeastern India.



All these plans indicate certain kind of administrative concern. However, when province of Bengal was partitioned by the government of lord Curzon in 1905, it didn't follow these plans.

Actual Plan of Partition: Demographic details

- **West Bengal** was made weaker by clubbing together Bengal, Bihar and Odisha with Calcutta as the capital. Its population was 54m.
 - It was a Hindu majority province – 42m Hindus, 9m Muslims
 - 18m Bengalis, 36m non-Bengalis
- **East Bengal** consisted of regions like Dacca, Rajshahi, Malda, Chittagong along with Assam. Its capital was Dacca and the total population was 31m.
 - 18m Muslims, 12m Hindus

Real political intention

- The manner in which the lines were drawn clearly indicated a communal basis and not administrative. It was **to reduce the strength of Bhadrak nationalism.**
- The province of Bengal was in forefront in anti-British struggle. The level of nationalist awakening was highest among the Bengal Hindus. Calcutta was the main centre of nationalist activity. Bengali bhadraloks were providing the leadership in the nationalist movement. Also, the spread of unity between Hindus and Muslims in Bengal was the main source of strength of Indian nationalism.
- Thus, the partition was planned in such way that:
 - Bengalis could be converted into linguistic minority in the west and religious minority in the east.
 - It would also shatter the Hindu-Muslim unity. *“Muslim unity never enjoyed since long time under Nawabs/Mughals”* Openly trying to encourage Muslim communalism.

Partition of Bengal was a master stroke of Curzon's internal policy. He wanted to counter the growing strength of Indian nationalism by dividing Bengal along cultural and religious lines. But the real consequences were completely different. While formulating partition, he didn't imagine the extent of reaction, he underestimated it.

The partition instead of dividing in weakening the Bengalis further united them through an anti-partition agitation. Instead of weakening Indian nationalism, it infused new energy in anti-British struggle. The spirit of radicalism and anti-British discontent lying in heart and mind of people came out in Anti-partition agitation.

Phases of Swadeshi Movement

The agitation against the partition had started in 1903 but became stronger and more organised after the scheme was finally announced and implemented in 1905. The initial aim was to secure the annulment of partition, but it soon enlarged into a more broad-based movement, known as the Swadeshi movement, touching upon wider political and social issues.

It was now that the Indians stood against not only the partition of Bengal but against the Raj itself. This coming together of Indians was unprecedented and was a jolt for the British government and for Britain as a nation, as nothing of this sort had happened in previous five decades. It became the first all-India movement under Congress leadership.

First Phase (1903-05): Moderate Trend

- The government's decision to partition Bengal had been **made public in December 1903**.
- This phase was dominated by the moderates.
 - **Leaders:** Surendranath Banerjea, Krishna Kumar Mitra, Anandmohan Bose, Prithwischandra Ray etc.
 - The **objective** was to exert sufficient pressure on the government through an educated public opinion in India and England to prevent the unjust partition of Bengal from being implemented.
 - Their **methods** included:
 - Petitions and signature campaigns, speeches, lectures and writing in order to appeal to the conscience of the British.
 - Signature campaign was signed by as many as 70,000 people.

Newspaper	Editors
Hitabadi	Dwijendranath Tagore
Bengalee	Surendranath Banerjee
Sanjeevani	Krishna Kumar Mitra
New India (weekly)	Bipin Chandra Pal
Bande Mataram	Aurobindo
Sandhya	Brahmabandhab Upadhyaya
Jugantar	Bhupendranath Dutta
Indian Mirror	
Anand Bazar Patrika	Sisir Kumar Ghosh

Timeline:

- **19 July:** The plan of the partition was **officially announced**.
 - Thus, the failures of moderates and their methods were evident. Now the mood of the people became radical, and the **movement slipped out of the grasp of the moderates**.
- August: **Curzon resigned** and left India. **Lord Minto II** became the next Governor General (1905-10).

- **7 August: Townhall meeting, Calcutta**

- With the passage of the Boycott Resolution in a massive meeting held in the Calcutta Townhall, the **formal proclamation of the Swadeshi Movement** was made.
- Soon, the leaders dispersed to other parts of Bengal to propagate the message of boycott of Manchester cloth and Liverpool salt.



Calcutta Townhall

- **16 October: The Partition plan came into force.** It was the Day of Partition.

- It was observed as a day of mourning throughout Bengal. Shops and marketplaces were shut for the day.
- On Tagore's suggestion as a mark of unity the partition day was observed as **Raksha Bandhan Day**. People fasted, bathed in the Ganga and walked barefoot in processions singing '**Vande Mataram**', which almost spontaneously became the theme song of the movement.
- '**Amar Sonar Bangla**', the national anthem of present-day Bangladesh, was composed by Rabindranath Tagore, and was sung by huge crowds marching in the streets.
- **Anandmohan Bose** addressed the crowd of 50,000 and pledged to maintain the unity of Bengal.

Second Phase (1905-06): Constructive Swadeshi

The methods of the second phase were starting of non-political programs under **constructive Swadeshi**, which signified the rejection of the mendicant politics in favour of self-help. These steps at self-reliance were termed as **Atmashakti by Tagore**.

It meant a certain kind of self-strengthening movement – strengthening the cultural basis of Indian society, economic foundation of India through self-help measures by philanthropic societies, volunteer corps and cooperative groups.

One of the other features of this movement was the revival of pride in everything indigenous like the use of vernacular language, beginning of Swadeshi enterprises, national education and so on. The constructive work under Swadeshi contributed to socio-economic regeneration of villages and mobilising the masses.



Tagore was the main ideologue of constructive swadeshi, and programme of atmashakti. Thus, he is called the great poet of the Swadeshi movement.

(1) Economic Aspect:

Swadeshi meant reliance on indigenous products and encouragement to indigenous Industries. By itself the concept of Swadeshi was floated a long time ago by leaders of Poona Sarvajanik Sabha and Arya Samaj. Such attempts had started early, and the notable initial efforts in this regard were **Prafullachandra Ray's Bengal Chemicals** started in 1893, and **Rabindranath Tagore's Swadeshi Bhandar** in 1897. However, now it received necessary

political action and practical public platform for support. After 1905, swadeshi was popularized with a new energy and sense of purpose.

The swadeshi programme developed along two lines:

- **Reviving traditional crafts** that had been destroyed by competition from British goods
 - The revival of Indian crafts and a rise in demand stimulated handloom-weaving
 - Educated young men were taught the art of weaving and the fly shuttle loom was popularized through training centres.
 - There was also a partial revival of silkweaving in Murshidabad and Pabna.
- Building large-scale indigenous **industrial enterprise** on modern/western lines.
 - Textile mills: Mohini Mills of Kushtia, The Calcutta Weaving Company, the Tripura Company etc.
 - Leather industry: Dr. Nilratan Sircar founded the National Tannery, where new technologies of tanning were introduced.
 - Consumer articles: soap, matches, cheap cigarettes, buttons, candles, paper and sugar
 - Banking and insurance: Bengal National Bank in 1908, National Insurance Company in 1906
 - Inland trade: Bengal Steam Navigation Company in 1905
 - By 1909, Congress started printing the Directory of Indian Goods and Industries.
 - **See more initiatives in the regional section**



(2) National Education

The other aspect was the building up of a parallel and independent system of 'national education', which used vernacular languages, instead of English, as the medium of communication.

Participation in the Swadeshi movement by the student community was met with repression by the British. The **Carlyle Circular of October 1905** is one example of repressive action by British that threatened student activists with disciplinary action. Consequently, the need was felt to develop national education and leaders began to work in this direction.

Revivalist Aspects:

- Early nationalists had welcomed the spread of western education through English, initiated on a limited scale by the British government. However, the Swadeshi movement was more closely associated with an Extremist criticism of this system, because it neglected vernacular languages and 'indigenous values' in education.
- Rabindranath's Shantiniketan (1901) had also started on similar revivalist lines, but later broadened its vision and became Viswabharati (1921), a progressive university. For Tagore, educational reform was a crucial form of political activism in itself, because it would ensure that the movement reaches the masses.

Encouragement to technical education and western science:

- **A National Council of Education** was set up in Calcutta in 1906 which designed primary, secondary and collegiate courses, which would combine literary and scientific education with technical training.

- The most important educational institution of the movement was the **Bengal National College and School**, 1906, with Aurobindo Ghosh as its principal.
- **Bengal Technical Institute** was established.
- Most noteworthy was the **proliferation of national schools in districts and mofussil areas** in vernacular language.
 - **Aswini Kumar Dutta**, a school-teacher of Barisal, through consistent social-work built up a strong mass-following for the Swadeshi-boycott movement in his district.

(3) Cultural dimension

Swadeshi movement, crucially, helped in the imagination of the national cultural identity, which would support political mobilization against imperialist Britain. Therefore this period was uniquely characterized by intellectual upsurge and cultural efflorescence which articulated itself in literature, theatre, songs, poetry and art.

- An interest in **folk traditions** was also revived. In Thakurmar Jhuli (Grandmother's Tales), Dakshinaranjan Mitra Majumdar compiled numerous fairy tales.
- The **patriotic songs** written by Tagore, Mukunda Das and Rajani Kanta Sen are popular even today.
- **Traditional folk theatre** forms like Jatras were used to spread the message of Swadeshi.
- **Historical research** progressed in the colleges burgeoning with bright young graduates. Akshoykumar Maitra wrote biographies of Sirajoddoula and Mir Kasim and founded the journal Aitihāsik Chitra and the Varendra Research Society.
- The **scientific achievements** of P. C. Ray and J. C. Bose's discoveries in Plant Response became the source of great patriotic pride.
- **Indian art** in the late 19th century had come to be characterized by Victorian naturalism. However, artists like Abanindranath Tagore, Rabindranath Tagore and Nandalal Bose made a conscious break from Western aesthetics by borrowing from Japanese artists and exploring indigenous Mughal, Rajput and Ajanta traditions.



Abanindranath Tagore (1871-1951) became principal of the Art College of Kolkata in 1898. He founded the influential Bengal school of art, which led to the development of modern Indian painting: Swadeshi Chitrakala.

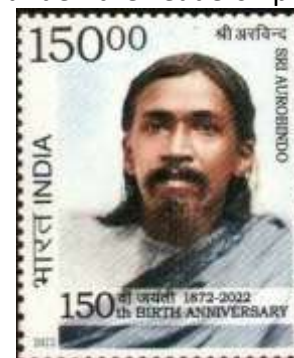
Third Phase (1906-08): Political Extremism

The movement began to take **extremist & militant undertones** and came directly under the influence of extremist leaders.

- The main **leaders** of this phase were Aurobindo Ghosh and Bipin Chandra Pal. They held that without freedom no real regeneration of national life was possible.
- Now, **Swaraj** became the demand and not just constitutional reforms. It emerged in the imagination of many nationalists as the ultimate ideal.

Boycott

- Swadeshi spirit articulated itself through the idea of boycott. It was a new kind of political language of extremists. The moderates were also unable to ignore the deep impact the idea of boycott was making on public mind.
- It was first suggested in Krishna Kumar Mitra's journal, Sanjibani in July 1905. It included boycott and public burning of foreign cloth, boycott of foreign-made salt or sugar, refusal by priests to ritualise marriages involving exchange of foreign goods, refusal by washermen to wash foreign clothes. This form of protest met with great success at the practical and popular level.
- The idea was to **hit Britain where it hurt most** – economy. The pecuniary loss was sure to hurt Britain and the government would be compelled to take correct measure.
- A section of **Indian business class** also saw it as an opportunity to boost sale of their indigenous products. They, along with workers of the textile mills, joined the boycott and bonfire of foreign cloth wholeheartedly.
- **Debate surrounding Boycott:**
- **Moderates** were inclined to limit it as **an economic boycott only** – to the boycott of British goods.
- **Extremists** – in broader sense, boycott of British institutions also. It was a more comprehensive rejection of imperialism, and not merely the imported commodities.
 - **Aurobindo** denounced the self-help movements, swadeshim as inadequate. He visualized the **extension of boycott to a systematic non-cooperation**. British institutions such as legislative councils, municipalities, government services and, development of indigenous alternatives to be boycotted. For him boycott was the **first step towards passive resistance**. Passive resistance meant an extension of boycott beyond British goods to include the boycott of schools and colleges, law courts, government service and legislative posts.
 - With this, many samitis set up arbitration boards in rural Bengal, to settle local disputes. (e.g. Swadesh Bandhab Samiti at Bakarganj under the leadership of Ashvini Kumar Dutta)
- **Passive → Active Resistance**
- Aurobindo soon pleaded that the prevailing situation in India called for active resistance. It was the ultimate political strategy which Aurobindo propounded as the theory of organised and relentless boycott including civil disobedience of unjust laws if required. It would shake the foundation of British hegemony in India. He argued that the time had come for the Indians to defy the laws of the Empire if these laws were not acceptable to them too violent illegitimate laws of the empire.
- *'the essential difference passive/defensive and active/aggressive resistance is this: while the method of aggressive resistor is to do something by which one can bring about positive harm to the government, the method of a passive resistor is to abstain from doing something by which he would be helping the government.'*
- Even **individual violence**, if necessary, was to be pursued. These individual acts of violence were to setup examples for people to rise up in an **open rebellion** against the imperial state.
- He popularized these ideas through **Bande Mataram** newspaper.



Organisation of Samitis: (Volunteer bodies)

- Samitis was one of the major innovations during the Swadeshi age.
 - The success of the boycott depended on popular mobilization.
 - The purpose of the samitis was to gather support by mobilising people and training them in physical and moral aspects.
- Different types some of the samities
 - Philanthropic samitis
 - Self-help societies following the atma-shakti ideal that Tagore
 - Physical culture societies (akharas)
 - The history of physical culture movement can be traced to the 1890s when the whole cult of manliness was propagated by the lay followers of Vivekananda who actually called upon his followers to cultivate manliness by practicing asceticism.

Some important Samitis: (In 1907, the police reported 19 samitis in Kolkata)

Swadesh Bandhab Samiti	Ashwini Kumar Dutta
Anushilan Samiti	Pramatha Mitra
Dacca Anushilan Samiti	Pulin Das
Jugantar Group (Calcutta based Anushilan Samiti)	Khudiram Bose, Ulhaskar Dutta, Tarkanath Das, Barinda Kumar Ghosh, Prafulla Chaki
Midnapur Secret Society	
Atmonnyati Samiti	
Swadeshi Sangam, Tirunelveli (TN)	V.O. Chidambaram Pillai, Subramania Siva


- These samitis generated political consciousness among the masses through:
 - Magic lantern lectures
 - Promotion of Swadeshi songs, plays and poetry
 - Providing physical and moral training to their members
 - Social work during famines and epidemics
 - Organisation of schools
 - Training in swadeshi crafts and arbitration courts.

In this phase, atma-shakti turned into **revivalism**.

- **Religious symbols and mythology** were looked upon for inspiration. Such symbols were **deemed necessary to connect with the larger society**.
- In 1906, Tilak came down to Calcutta and the Shivaji festival was celebrated in the city with great enthusiasm. **Saraladevi** introduced the **Veerashtami** celebration as a festival of the youth. In imitation of the Shivaji festival of Maharashtra, Saraladevi started a new festival in Bengal in honour of the memory of **King Pratapaditya of Jessore**.

One major innovation in the Swadeshi age: Labour Movement

- First intimation of an organized trade union movement undertaken by the Swadeshi leaders
 - Attempts by some of the solicitors like Ashvini Kumar Banerjee or Prabhat Kusum Raychawdhary in Calcutta to set up trade unions.
 - Between 1905-1908 are several instances of strikes in the **jute mill**.
 - **Jamalpur railway workshop**, a strike was organized for the first time.

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- Establishment of the **printers union** after a prolonged strike in the government printing presses.
 - Establishment of the **Railwayman's Union** around 1907-08 when some of the striking railway workers form the union.
 - Other Regions:
 - Tilakites involved in labour mobilization in Bombay
 - Extremists were also involved in the famous Tuticorin strike in Tirunelveli district

Swadeshi outside Bengal:

Maharashtra	Lokmanya Tilak	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic Aspects <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Swadeshi Vastu Pracharini Sabha – Swadeshi store in Bombay by Tilak and Tatas ○ Godrej started with surgical instruments and Desi Typewriter ○ Tilak raised contribution called the Paisa Fund for training men in industrial work, and formed the Paisa Fund Glass Works at Talegaon in Pune in 1905. ○ TISCO was established in 1907 ○ Around same time, Laxmanrao Kirloskar was trying hard to kickstart his idea of a better variety of plough to help our farmers. • Labour mobilization by the Tilakites in Bombay: The militancy of the working-class was revealed when there was a massive upsurge by Bombay workers against Tilak's arrest in a 9 July 1908 • In Bengal, Swadeshi movement had more economic context while in Maharashtra, religious revivalism was more pronounced.
Punjab	Lala Lajpat Rai, Ajit Singh	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1907 Unrest: Pre-existing discontent among the peasants due to Chenab Canal Colony Bill. It was fierce form which led to severe cracked down: both leaders, Ajit Singh and Lala Lajpat Rai, were deported. • Foundation of Punjab National Bank by Lala Harkishen Lal
United Province	Motilal Nehru	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More emphasis over constructive swadeshi. Moderate politics continued to be important in the region. • In North Indian towns, swadeshi ideology or extremist beliefs actually did not have much of an impact. But the Bengali immigrants there created swadeshi outfits and some of these swadeshi outfits became eventually nucleus of secret society movements at a later stage.
Delhi	Syed Haider Raza	
Madras	Chidambaram Pillai, Subramanyam Bharathi and Subramaniya Siva	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact of Bipin Chandra Pal's tour of Madras Presidency (1907) was electrifying. His speeches on Marina beach were attended by thousands. • In 1906, VOC registered a joint stock company called The Swadeshi Steam Navigation Company (SSNC) • Subramaniam Bharati's newspaper Swadesamitran extensively reported nationalist activities, particularly the news regarding VOC and his speeches in Tuticorin. • Labour movement in Tirunelveli

Surat Split (1907)

The ideological differences between moderates and extremists were intensified by the Partition of Bengal and the Swadeshi movement. There emerged significant differences regarding the manner in which the agitation should be carried out, culminating into the split in Congress at the Surat Session of 1907. In this session, the extremists were expelled from the Congress by the. It was significant setback for anti-British struggle and the national movement lost at least one decade because of it.

Reasons:

When swadeshi started, moderates came under pressure from the extremists to adopt the method of mass agitation. There was a tug-of-war between them following two important issues:

Issues	Moderates	Extremists
Regional Spread	Confine the movement to Bengal only. It is a regional issue.	All India movement to protests against partition of Bengal. It is not a regional but a national issue.
Method of protest	Confine boycott only to British goods.	Extend boycott to other spheres of life also if required.

There were ideological difference between the moderates and the extremists with respect to the visions of India's struggle against British rule. Despite the differences the two were working together. However, gradually as the failure of moderates in getting the annulment of the partition became apparent, the extremists became more influential and started to put pressure.

1905 (21)	Benares	GK Gokhale
In this session, the differences came to the fore for the first time. By adopting mild resolutions condemning the partition of Bengal and the reactionary policies of Curzon and supporting the swadeshi and boycott programme in Bengal, a split in the Congress was averted for the moment.		
1906 (22)	Calcutta	Dadabhai Naoroji
The real issue in all India politics in 1906 was how far the radicalism generated by Swadeshi movement in Bengal was to be incorporated into the future politics of Congress on all India theatre.		
Issue of election of the President:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Extremists were more organized and created pressure over moderates to nominate Tilak as the president. Gokhale and Mehta were not ready and thus tried to outwit them by nominating grand old man of India Dadabhai Naoroji.		
Swadeshi Resolutions:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">In Calcutta session in spite of opposition of Gokhale and Mehta Tilak and Bengal extremist group scored a resounding victory with the help of Bengal moderates. In various committees, extremists called the shots – and got the <i>chatusutri</i> passed		

- Swaraj
- Swadeshi
- Boycott
- National education

- The Bombay moderates were not in favour of these resolutions but they had no option but to reluctantly agree due to insistence of extremists as well as moderates of Bengal. They felt at the end that they were humiliated and defeated, they returned home with sullen mind. But the split was averted again.

1907 (23)	Surat	Suspended Session, Rash Behari Ghosh
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So, when Surat session commenced in 1907 the moderates and extremists were formally determined to establish their control over Congress. The moderates wanted to take back the resolutions adopted at Calcutta in 1906. On the other hand, the extremists wanted their candidate should be president so as to keep intact the Calcutta resolutions.

Issue of the Venue

- 1907 session was planned at Pune, but it was a hotbed of extremism. So, at the last moment, Mehta and Gokhale changed the venue to Surat.

Issue of election of the President and Calcutta Resolutions

- **Lala Lajpat Rai** has returned from Mandalay and extremist proposed his name is the next congress president while the moderate candidate was **Rash Behari Ghosh**.
- But Lala Lajpat Rai, who did not want a split refused to accept the nomination and hence the ultimate fight between the two contending groups boiled down to the question of either attention or rejection of the four Calcutta resolution.
- Mehta conspired to keep the resolution out of the Congress agenda while the extremist decided to oppose the nomination of Ghosh if resolutions were not retained.

The session:

- Tilak tried to address the session but he was prevented from doing so. The open session of Congress at Surat ended in a pandemonium over the election of Rash Behari Ghosh
- Police was waiting outside for the same. Extremist were pulled out and moderates adopted a resolution for their expulsion leading to Surat split.
- But even after this incident Tilak was willing to reunite the Congress but Mehta seemed intransigent, as he wanted to reconstitute the party by purging the extremist elements, a task which he accomplished at the following **Allahabad convention** in 1908. Only moderate attended this session where they reiterated their loyalty to the British Raj. They changed the constitutions of Congress to expel the extremists and took complete control of the Organization.

Impact of Surat Split

- Surat split was **great setback for India's struggle** against British rule. The atmosphere of political activism prevailing in the country got transformed into **political passivism**.
 - Congress was weakened at this stage and became an ineffective body. The extremist politics could not crystallize into a new political organisation. The two factions could again come together after one decade at Lucknow in 1916 and the Congress was revitalized only when Gandhi took the leadership in 1920.
- Surat split was great **success of British**. What they had failed to achieve through Partition of Bengal, was achieved by them easily through Surat split.
- **Moderate** leadership was further **discredited**; and INC remained a club of a selected few.
- **Extremism** subsided and declined; and leaders were **dispersed**.
- Surat split resulted in sudden **decline of swadeshi movement**. Once the extremists were not in congress, Swadeshi lost its leadership and died out suddenly.
- Surat Split greatly **disillusioned the younger generation** of Indian nationalists. Many of them lost faith in the efficacy of peaceful methods of struggle. They realized that the British would never let the congress succeed. This disillusionment pushed many of the younger nationalists into the fold of **revolutionary extremism** to fill up the political vacuum.
- British feared the rising tide of extremism, so with an objective to weaken the national movement, the colonial government introduced the policy of **divide-and-rule** and fanned the rise of **communalism**.
- The Surat split taught a **tough lesson to Indian nationalists**. This bitter experience made them smarter for the future because when similar ideological differences developed after the withdrawal of the NCM, the opposing camps in the Congress worked consciously to avoid another split.



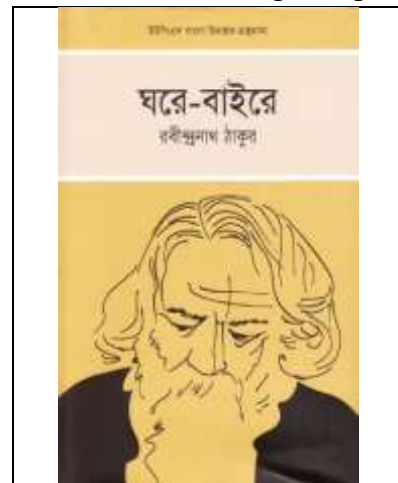
Sri Aurobindo presiding over a meeting of the Nationalists after the Surat Congress, with Tilak speaking, 1907

Fourth Phase (1908-): Revolutionary Movement:

Covered separately.

Why did Swadeshi Movement Fail?

- **British policy of carrot and stick (3-pronged strategy: repression-conciliation-suppression)**
 - The extremists were to be repressed to frighten the moderates. There was **severe crackdown on the people**
 - Meetings and processions were banned, the government prohibited shouting of 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 (lathi charge, caned, innumerable arrests & convictions).
 - **Moderates were then to be placated** through some limited concessions and hints of further concession if they disassociated themselves from the extremist. Lord Minto offered the bait of fresh reform in legislative council in the beginning of 1906.
 - The unity of the leadership was broken by the Surat Split of 1907. Once moderate fell into the trap, extremist were suppressed through use of full might of the state. Moderates could then be ignored.
 - **There was a severe crackdown on the Extremist leadership:** The prominent leaders were arrested, which rendered the movement leaderless.
 - 1907: Lala Lajpat Rai and Ajit Singh were deported.
 - 1908: Krishna Kumar Mitra and Ashwini Kumar Dutt were deported.
 - 1908: Tilak was again arrested and sent to Mandalay Jail for six years.
 - 1908: Aurobindo put under trial
 - **Revolutionary extremism** was also cracked down.
 - Seditious Meetings Act, 1907
 - Indian Newspapers (Incitement to Offences) Act, 1908
 - Explosive Substances Act
 - Criminal Law Amendment Act, 1908
 - Indian Press Act, 1910
- **The Swadeshi alternatives were expensive**, and people could hardly afford them. A time came when the local people refused to consume local products and continued to opt for imported products for the simple reason that they were cheaper. When there were attempts to enforce boycott on the rural population by forcing them to buy high-priced local goods, it created tensions.
- The **methods of mass protests used were largely unfamiliar** and new to both leaders and masses. It was primarily because of this failure of mass mobilization.



Ghare Baire (Home and the World) was a novel by Tagore which illustrates the political setup in the novel is the Swadeshi Movement and the novel brings out the essence of the movement.

- **Maintaining a high momentum** of mass struggle could not be sustained for a long time as fatigue began to appear.
- **Failure of the Samiti movement** to create a broad-based movement based on peasant support.
- **The lack of formal party structure** of the Congress was one of the causes for the failure.
- **Social composition**
 - Participation largely remained limited to **Hindu middle classes in towns**.
 - **Muslims** largely stayed away from this movement with some exceptions.
 - It was because of the following factors:
 - Curzon's partition plan soothed Muslim interests upto certain extent.
 - The boycott of British goods directly hit the common Muslim consumers by raising the prices of such essential commodities like cloth, shoes, and soaps while there was no Muslims trading class in Bengal which could take advantage of swadeshi slogans.
 - Use of religious symbols and mythology dissuaded some Muslims from participating in the movement.
 - **Workers' participation** was low.
 - There was no large-scale conscious attempt to enlist the support of industrial workers. The attempts remained limited to white-collar workers.
 - The Swadeshi movement **could not attract the peasants** of Bengal as the leaders did not adopt progressive agrarian programme. There was inherent class conflict between zamindars and peasants.

So, despite the great achievements of the Swadeshi movement, it remained an example of an inadequate mass politics.

Real Contribution of the Swadeshi Movement

With petering out of the mass movement one era in the Indian freedom struggle was over. It would be wrong to see Swadeshi movement as a failure. Swadeshi movement transformed the character of anti-British struggle. Now, the extremist leaders were pushed to the fore front of Indian National movement.

- The **National movement assumed new aims and objectives** during the Swadeshi Movement. Concessions and reforms were no longer guiding the anti-British struggle. Congress adopted attainment of **Swaraj** as its objective.
- The age of memorandum and petitions was over and there started an era of agitation and revolution for pushing the demand. Nationalist **activities came out in the street**. Anti-British struggle was no longer limited to discussion chambers and conference halls.
- The movement **innovated several new methods and techniques of mass mobilization**. Hereafter, **swadeshi, and boycott** became the main weapon to be used by Indian nationalist against British rule.
 - Holding musical conferences, campaigning in countryside with the help of theatre performances, local folk jattras to spread Swadeshi message.
 - Samiti emerged as critical linkage between the masses and the leadership.
 - Labour movement was a new technique of mass mobilization.

- All of which eventually suggests the **first efforts by the nationalists to undertake mass mobilization**, although it didn't succeed in the way Aurobindo had visualized it. The armed revolution never happened but it did leave behind many examples of bravery, heroism, self-sacrifice to inspire the later generations of freedom fighters as well.
- The trends which were visible in the course of Swadeshi movement i.e. swadeshi, boycott, national education etc., resurfaced during subsequent period as well. It proved precursor to Gandhian programme as well.
- **Social and geographical base**
 - It took the idea of nationalism to many sections of people hitherto untouched by it. And by doing so it further eroded colonial legitimacy and institutions.
 - This was the **first all India movement under the leadership of the Congress**.
 - Swadeshi movement was the **first mass movement in the history of India's struggle** against British rule. For the first time students, women and other sections of urban population participated in nationalist struggle. This widened the social base of national movement greatly.
- This movement encouraged **domestic industries**.
 - Various entrepreneurs showed interest in setting up domestic industries.
 - P.C. Ray setup 'Bengal Chemicals'
 - Swadeshi Vastu Pracharini Sabha – Tilak
 - TISCO was established in 1907
 - PNB in Lala Harkishan Lal
 - Chidambaram Pillai formed a Navigation Company.
- It greatly **strengthened the cultural foundations of the National Movement**, because nationalist music, paintings, literature and education witnessed remarkable progress during swadeshi movement. Indigenous art was also promoted during the period.
 - Formation of **Bengal School of Painting**
 - Avanimdranath Tagore tried to rejuvenate Mughal and Rajput paintings. (Bharat mata portrayal for the first time)
 - Nand Lal Bose made an important contribution in painting.
 - Rich collection of patriotic composition and dramatic performances
 - Scientific progress led by JC Bose and Prafulla Chandra Roy.
 - Vernacular languages too got a boost as newspapers were published by extremist leaders and revolutionary nationalists in the vernacular languages to promote radical ideas.
- Swadeshi movement created an intellectual bridge between India and west.
- British Response
 - The Act of 1909 was introduced under the pressure of the Swadeshi movement.
 - Under the pressure of the Swadeshi movement, the government withdrew the partition of Bengal in 1911.