

## **SWADESHI MOVEMENT (1905)**

### **Beginning**

The *swadeshi* Movement had its genesis in the anti-partition movement started to oppose the British decision to divide Bengal. With the start of the *Swadeshi* Movement at the turn of the century, the Indian national movement took a major leap forward. The richness of the movement was not confined to politics alone. Women, students and a large section of the urban and a rural population of Bengal and other parts of India became actively involved in the national movement.

### **Components of the swadeshi Movement**

Various sections participated in the swadeshi agitation for different reasons, and these differences got reflected in the movement. For instance, Hindu Zamindars of East Bengal, who were opposed to the partition, so as not to become a religious minority in a situation of increasing peasant unrest, employed openly communal propaganda throughout their agitation-promoting Shivaji utsavs, image-worship, Hindu ceremonies and so on. This propaganda infected the entire movement, and weakened it considerably as communal riots broke out in Mymensingh in 1907-1908. But many Muslims still joined the movement. Among the noted swadeshi agitators were men like Ghaznavi, Rasul Din Mohammed, Dedar Bux, Moniruzzaman, Ismail Hussain siraji, Abul Hussain, Abul Gafer, and Liakat Husain. The 10,000-strong joint Hindu-Muslim student procession in Kolkata on 23 September 1905, also testified the potential for communal solidarity on the swadeshi issue. The fact that it could be triumph has to be ascribed to British divide-and-rule policies and to Zamindars' objectively furthering the designs of the British by heightening communal propaganda. The appeal of the swadeshi movement was its straightforward mass approach and its rejection of 'prayer petition' politics. Along with this movement came enunciated and widely propagated theories for not simply a limited reform of

British rule, but its complete overthrow.

### **Banaras session of the Congress**

The Indian National Congress took up the swadeshi call in its Banaras session, 1905, presided over by G.K. Gokhale. Militant nationalism spearheaded by Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Bipin Chandra Pal, Lala Lajpat Rai and Aurobindo Ghosh was, however, in the favour of extending the movement to the rest of India and carrying it beyond the programme of just swadeshi and boycott of goods to full-fledged political mass struggle. On 7 August 1905, a resolution to boycott the British goods was adopted at a meeting of the Indian National Congress held in Kolkata. It began as a purely economic measure for the development of the Indian industry. Bonfires of foreign goods were conducted on a large scale in all major cities. It had many positive consequences: (a) it encouraged Indian industries especially the small and medium-scale, (b) many swadeshi banks and insurance companies were launched and (c) development of journalism and national poetry which inculcated the feeling of nationalism in the Indian masses.

### **Spread of the Swadeshi Movement**

The message of swadeshi and boycott soon spread to the rest of the country: Lokmanya Tilak took the movement to different parts of India, especially Poona and Mumbai. Ajit Singh and Lala Lajpat Rai spread the swadeshi message in Punjab and other parts of northern India; Syed Haidar Raza set up the agenda in Delhi, Rawalpindi, Kangra, Jammu, Multan and Hardwar witnessed active participation in the swadeshi Movement; Chidambaram Pillai took the movement to Chennai president, which was also galvanised by Bipin Chandra Pal's extensive lecture tour.



### **The 1906 Congress Session**

By the 1906 session of the Congress, the 'extremists'.....

Congress, by their sheer numbers and popularity,

.....

Poised to take over the Congress. One factor was the

.....

To hold the session at Kolkata. 'Extremists' from different.....had forged some links in the interim, and there were attempts ..... to elect one of them as the president of the Congress. The..... was scotched by the 'moderates'. They elected the aged..... respected Naaraji instead. The 1906 Congress ..... was forced to accept four resolutions which they were ..... with-on the partition of Bengal, on the boycott movement on swadeshi, and on self-government. However, the 1906, Congress was by no means a radical affair. The ..... managed to lone down each resolution considerat..... made them ambiguous. Thus, 'Swaraj' became 'the system of government obtaining in the self-governing British colonies'. .... effort of the 'extremists', to have the resolution in support .... Bengal boycott movement extended to cover other ..... was defeated. And the Congress leaders were .... to review even such limited defeats at the next session..... 'moderates' made sure that the mistake of locating the Congress at Kolkata was not repeated.

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