

Role of women in Swadeshi and boycott movement

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Abstract

In 1905, Lord Curzon decided to divide Bengal, the biggest center of nationalism, on 16 October to destroy Indian unity. The anti-dissolution leaders made a public announcement of celebrating "National Day of Mourning" on that day. The idea of running a Swadeshi and boycott movement at the time of the partition movement was first raised in the mind of Gopal Rao Deshmukh of Poona. Who was known as Lokhitwadi. He started the promotion of Swadeshi for the protection of Indian rural industries only in the decade of 1840-50. In the beginning of the decade of 1870-80, Mahadev Ranade propagated Swadeshi through his lectures and articles. The work of spreading it in the society was done by his wife Ramabai Ranade and her associates.

Keywords: Swadeshi, Boycott, Movement, Nationalism

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Introduction

In those days many people took the vow of Swadeshi and also opened shops of indigenous goods. When Ganesh Vasudev Joshi, a representative of the public meeting, had gone to the Delhi Darwar in 1877, in the same days in Ahmadabad also, some Swadeshi-loving people together established the Swadeshi Enterprises Promotion Board. Bal Gangadhar Tilak was also creating an atmosphere in favor of propaganda and boycott of foreign goods along with criticism of British exploitation through his 'Kesar' letter. Then in 1903, with the establishment of the Swadeshi Object Defense Committee in Ahmadabad, the Swadeshi movement was also started. But the issue of the political movement of Swadeshi movement was first made during the period of anti-Bangladesh movement, which was initiated by a Punjabi Arya Samaji Tharlam Gangaram. On July 17, 1905, in a public meeting chaired by Surendranath Banerjee at Ripon College, a duly resolution was passed appealing to the people to boycott all British and foreign products until the dissolution of the partition was abolished.

Women played a special role in this movement. Women from Bengal, Maharashtra and Punjab were more active. In those days, due to extreme illiteracy, there was no special awakening among women. Still, she did not lag behind from this opportunity. From village to village women used to spin the charkha, now their promotion started in full swing. Money and jewelry began to be donated to the national fund. Movement funds were also being accumulated in the form of a handful of grains from house to house. In Bonorkad village of Murshidabad district, a gathering of 500 women was held for Swadeshi propaganda, in which many women gave ornaments. In the provincial convention, Sarojini Bose, wife of Taraprasanna Bose and Mrs. Ganguly took an oath not to wear jewelry till Swarajya. Christo Mitter's daughter Kumari Kumudini Mitter was very active during this period. Bhagwati of Noakhali wrote the national anthem invoking Kali. Sushila Devi of Sialkot was

awakening consciousness by giving speeches from place to place. Har Devi, wife of Lahore's barrister Roshan Lal, was editing the Hindi magazine 'Bharat Bhagini'. He continued the campaign for organizing meetings, fundraising, social reform and helping political prisoners. Among the members of Arya Samaj, Puran Devi, the pioneer of Hisar, was visiting every district of Swadeshi-Propaganda. Everywhere she was preparing people for Hindu-Muslim unity, for the prevention of untouchability and not to send children to English schools and youths to government jobs. Kuka Netri Hukmi was also active in Ludhiana and Maler Kotla areas. Agyavati and Ved Kumari of Delhi were giving speeches in men's meetings beyond women's meetings. Sarla Devi Chaudhary, the girl of Swarnakumari Devi, went from Bengal to Punjab and became a bridge between Bengal and Punjab, was also in direct contact with Tilak and popularized the Swadeshi movement of women. Along with this, visiting places outside Bengal and Punjab also helped in giving this movement the form of a national movement.

Mrs. Anisa Kidwai, sister-in-law of Mr. Rafi Ahmed Kidwai informed that in those times when Muslim women came out of the screen no one could have imagined. Begum of the famous patriot poet Hasrat Muhani in a masculine disguise, traveling between Delhi, Dehradun and Aligarh, was assisting in his work. Begum Hasrat Muhani had to go to jail and grind the mill for being sympathetic to Tilak's hot party and participating in its activities. Later, she left the veil and came out openly. It is said that she was the first Muslim woman to leave the curtain and do the work of the country. In 1917, she also participated in the women's delegation meeting Lord Montagu demanding women's suffrage. Her name is also taken in the founders of All India Women's Organizations.

Shrimati Esu Bai Savarkar, wife of Ganesh Savarkar, made a valuable contribution to the revolution work of these two brothers by forming a small women's circle of their own. Many such details are scattered in the memoirs of the veteran, which no one has recorded. It was not considered good for women to work outside the home and instead of being proud of it, it was hidden. It was a big deal then to participate directly in revolutionary activities, and perhaps even more so to express it.

To make the Swadeshi boycott movement a success, women activists like Swarn Kumari Devi, Annie Besant, Margaret Cousins etc. participated enthusiastically. Swami Aurobindo Ghosh even linked the foreign object boycott movement with the religious sentiments of the people. Arrangements were given by the Dharmacharyas and the sannyasis once again left their solitude and went out to make the Swadeshi movement a success. The priests refused to use foreign objects in religious ceremonies. On August 28, 1905, in a religious festival, 50,000 people took an oath in front of Kali Mata that they would not buy foreign goods. Foreign goods were sold on a large scale during Durga Puja festival, but this time there was silence in those shops too. Not only clothes, all foreign articles like sugar, rice, shoes, soap, bangles etc. were left lying in the godowns. Those who bought or held them were stigmatised. The students returned even the answer sheets of foreign papers and took the examination only after giving them native copies. Even small children refused to take foreign toys and drink foreign medicines. Women stopped using foreign cotton sarees and toiletries.

Swadeshi and boycott movement from Bengal spread rapidly to other parts of the country as well. The environment in Maharashtra was already favorable for this. Tilak made a stormy tour of Bombay province and other parts of the country and told people from place to place that the Swadeshi movement was not only a result of the dissolution of the country, it was an answer to the long-standing exploitation of India by the British, which was in Bombay, Central Provinces. Its clear results were visible in Punjab and some princely states. In Poona, Vijaydashami festival was celebrated by burning Holi of foreign objects. There were about 5000 people in it including a large number of women and students. Indigenous exhibitions were organized. Pro-indigenous plays were played and funds were collected for this propaganda.

The intensity of the movement and the enthusiasm of the people in which Tilak was declared 'Second Shivaji' and Surendra Nath Banerjee in Bengal came to be called 'Badshah of Bengal'. Seeing this, the respect of Indian leaders had also increased in the eyes of the British rulers. This formed the background of the 'Minto-Male' reforms of 1909. But this improvement was not satisfactory. After the implementation of the 1909 Tax Act, the British repressed all the revolutionary parties who were fiercely opposed to the British rule. But he did not realize that repression has the opposite effect. Now they may have to face fierce

parties. The Moderate Party had also strongly opposed the separate electoral system in the Lahore Congress of 1909 to express its dissatisfaction, but the revolutionaries were active to give a strong answer to it. In June 1909, with the arrest of Vinayak son-in-law Savarkar's brother Ganesh Damodar Savarkar, the activities of 'Mitravala' had intensified, which was secretly being run by Ganesh Savarkar's wife Aisubai Savarkar and some of his friends. When the government recovered revolutionary literature in search of his house, he was sentenced to life in black water and all the property was confiscated. On 21 December 1909, Vinayak Savarkar shot the Nashik District Magistrate Jackson in response.

A famous Maharashtrian leader, Mrs. Sushila Tai, tells that Mrs. Esu Bai Savarkar, wife of Mr. Ganesh Savarkar, brother of Veer Savarkar, made a valuable contribution to the revolution work of these two brothers by forming a small women's troupe. At the same time Madan Lal Dhingra assassinated Curzon Wylie, an English officer in the meeting of the Imperial Institute in London. Actually, Dhingra had planned to assassinate Lord Curzon, who partitioned Bengal, he did not succeed in that. Dhingra was hanged on August 1909. When Vinayak Savarkar was hiding here and there from the British, Madame Cama in France tried to help him but failed and was caught.

In the era of revolutionary movement, apart from Bhikaji Cama, other names are not found in the revolution leadership, but their indirect role in the successful operation of revolutionary activities everywhere, transporting their papers, arms and hiding places and food for them. Fundraising along with raising etc and being ready to face every situation on time are well known facts. At some places, their role was also in the form of responsible actions and courageous acts.

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