



WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN SWADESHI MOVEMENT DURING 1905-1911: AN INSIGHTFUL STUDY

A.JayaLakshmi

Research scholar, Dept. of History, S.K.University, Anantapuramu.

Abstract

The Swadeshi movements, a component of the Indian independence struggle, are the subject matter of this written work. Throughout this movement, Indian nationalism was developed, and economic circumstances in India were improved by adhering to the ideals of Swadeshi, which means self-sufficiency. To achieve its goals, the Swadeshi movement advocated for rejecting British goods and revitalising native manufacturing techniques and products. To encourage Indian women to participate in the fight for India's independence, Mahatma Gandhi made a plea to them. Even though they remained home, the ladies maintained that there should be restrictions on entering items from other countries into their homes. In addition to preventing the importation of foreign commodities and clothing, the Swadeshi movement also restricted the importation of foreign medicine.

Key words: *Swadeshi, Movement, Vande Mataram, Religious devotion, Women.*

Introduction

Swadesh, which means "one's own country," and Swadeshi, which means "about one's own country," are both derived from the word Swadeshi, which is derived from "the word 'swa,' which means 'own,' and 'desh,' which means 'country. The letter 'I' is the typical adjectival ending—the Swadeshi movement originated as a component of the Indian independence struggle."^[1] Throughout this movement, Indian nationalism was developed, and economic circumstances in India were improved by adhering to the ideals of Swadeshi, which means self-sufficiency. During the Swadeshi movement, the strategies that were used included rejecting British goods and revitalising native products and industrial methods. This movement, also known as the "Vande Mataram Movement," was most widespread in Bengal.^[2] "The women of India need to have an equal role in achieving Swaraj as men. As far as "we know, a woman is always superior to a male in her dedication to religious practices. If nonviolence is the law of our being, the future is with woman," Mahatma Gandhi said in his appeal to "the women of India, urging them to participate in the fight for India's independence movement."^[3] As a seedling for the larger liberation struggle, the Swadeshi movement had expanded to several sections of the nation by the time it was established. Even though they remained home, the ladies maintained that there should be restrictions on entering items from other countries into their homes. In addition to preventing the importation of foreign commodities and clothing, the Swadeshi movement also restricted the importation of foreign medicine.

The Beginnings of the Swadeshi Movement:

"The division of Bengal by Lord Curzon, the Viceroy of India, in 1905 marked the beginning of the Swadeshi movement, which persisted until 1911 but still needed to be completed." In comparison to the other pre-Gandhian movements, it was the most successful. "Aurobindo Ghosh, Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Bipin Chandra Pal, and Lala Lajpat Rai" were the prominent architects responsible for their creation. Mahatma Gandhi emphasised the strategy of Swadeshi, which he referred to as the "soul of Swaraj," which is another term for self-rule.^[4] Even though Gandhi was conscious that the Swadeshi movement despised foreign commodities, "he was very concerned with the possibility of the growth of the manufacture of goods in the village and by the villagers, which would be of tremendous



assistance in elevating the people. He wanted a weaving of Charaka as a beginning point to make Swadeshi more influential. He wanted this to be the case.”^[5]

Similarly, his proposals included “encouraging women to participate” in the weaving of garments and increasing the demand for Swadeshi clothing among the general population. In addition, women must do their duties around the home. Through this method, he developed ideas among women that would assist them in joining the picketing campaign for the closure of liquor stores and other activities. The movement can potentially captivate individuals from all walks of life, including landlords, people from low castes, “students, and women. Even though the Swadeshi movement was a mass movement, the truth remains that it vanished by 1908;” in general, it was a “failure.” An official designation of the year 1906 as the Swadeshi year occurs. It was heard everywhere that people were chanting the phrase “Be Indian and buy Indian.” “At the historic Town Hall Meeting” on August 7, 1905, the cry to Bande Mataram was raised for the first time as a political slogan.^[6] The meeting was called to adopt “a resolution of boycott and take the pledge of Swadeshi. The Swadeshi movement, sparked by the British decision to divide Bengal in 1905, saw women's engagement in the movement. Additionally, the strategic manoeuvring of several women leaders led to the growth in the number of women participating in public life.”

Women's Engagement in the Swadeshi Movement (1905–1911)

The Swadeshi movement was an economic strategy that was “a part of the Indian independence movement and the growing Indian nationalism. Its goal was to remove the British Empire from its position of authority and improve the economic conditions in India by adhering to the principles of Swadeshi, which means self-reliance.” This strategy was successful to a certain extent. Several strategies were used by the Swadeshi movement, including boycotting British goods and revitalizing indigenous products and industrial practices.^[7] The “Vande Mataram Movement,” the most influential movement, was most prominent in Bengal. “The women of India should have an equal participation in achieving Swaraj, just like men.” Having the ability to suffer sorrow and adversity in a silent and honourable way is a trait associated with her gender. “Now that the government has involved women in a dangerous situation, I hope that women all over India will accept the challenge and mobilize themselves,” “Mahatma Gandhi said to encourage Indian women to participate in the struggle for India's independence.” The future lies in the hands of women if the nonviolent principle that controls our lives is the basic principle that guides our existence. In addition to spreading over various parts of the country, the Swadeshi movement was the driving force behind the independence effort. The emotion of aversion towards imported items is another symptom of the Swadeshi movement, which was essential in bringing about independence. This version, however, was just a limited form of resistance against the dominance of foreign sources. The Swadeshi movement banned the use of foreign medication and prohibited the garments and items imported from other countries.^[8] Even though the British had successfully conquered the spirit of fierce opposition in 1857, it had not been eradicated. A significant number of people are excitedly anticipating the opportunity to grow at a quick pace. The British government decided to send Lord Curzon, a highly trained administrator, to the position of ruler rather than nominate himself. As a consequence of this, the gap that existed between the two groups grew substantially wider and almost impossible to bridge.^[9] As a result of Curzon's introduction of the Official Secrets Act, which was condemned for its ability to suppress information, as well as his diminution of the power of the Calcutta Corporation, political growth was substantially hampered. He reasoned that the press would be free to do its business if they did not write. “The people were further incensed by the convocation speech that Curzon made at Calcutta University on February 11, 1905.” In this address, he said, “Truth held a prominent position in the



ethical principles of the Western world before it was similarly respected in the Eastern world." This statement further enraged the populace. To extend his case, Curzon argued that Indians lacked the qualifications to hold renowned posts. The division of Bengal, which Curzon carried out, became the focal point of political instability and drew the attention of revolutionary organizations.^[10]

"Mahila Shilpa Samithi (1906 -1918)"

"It was the Swadeshi Movement that served as their source of motivation. Since Sarala Devi Chaudharani had substantial issues with the male leadership of the National Social Convention," she decided to create the "Bharat Stri Maha Mandal" in 1910.^[11] By creating "branches of the Sri Maha Mandal in Allahabad and Calcutta," she established this organisation's branches. She did this while serving as the secretary of this organization. Madam Cama received significant attention because of her efforts, which led "the British government to see her as a potentially dangerous revolutionary who aimed to overturn British power in India." Keeping a low profile and maintaining a high vigilance, the detectives were ready to pay careful attention to her actions. In May 1909, "she decided to go to Paris and left London." In the year 1910, the bureaucratic government of India was responsible for introducing the globally recognized Press Act.^[12] Several editors were placed behind bars as a direct consequence of this law, and the printing presses were put out of commission. However, Madam Cama did not allow herself to be subdued by this dictatorial behaviour. During March in the year 1910, she wrote in her journal that she was in favour of and complimented her fellow people for their efforts.^[13] She believed that the Press Act was an acknowledgement of failure on "the part of the Indian government, and she attributed this conclusion to the victory of the Revolutionary Party."

Madam Cama

In her plea to the Indians living in Europe, Madam Cama urged them to make the most of their time in the West by engaging in various forms of physical exercise. The most important thing she advised them to do was "learn to shoot straight because the day is not far when coming into the inheritance of Swaraj and Swadeshi." This magazine, was sent to several countries, including the United States of America, Egypt, and several regions of Europe and India. A total of "426 copies were seized at the Oxford Post Office" at one point in time.^[14] She had a strong loyalty to the cause of women. Precisely, she desired "the women to share the obligations, hardships, and sorrows that their fellow citizens were experiencing." At the same time, Madam Cama made significant contributions to the Adhinav Bhara Society.^[15]

In India and London, V.D. Savarkar established this society, "which was responsible for the murder of Jackson at Nasik and, subsequently, via V.V.S. Aiyer in Pondicherry of Ashe in the Tinnevely District." This society was responsible for the death of Michael Jackson.

"Indian Women in Abrod:"

"While Indian women in India and Europe were battling for independence, women in South Africa" demonstrated the power of the passive resistance movement. They established an example for other women to follow. When they were in the Satyagraha Army of Mahatma Gandhi, they were receiving training. Many returned to India to take their position among the independence fighters, and this training proved beneficial for them. After Kastirba Gandhi became involved in the battle, she never left her husband's side and took on some of the duties that he had previously taken on.^[16] "Mrs Kasturba Gandhi, Mrs J. K. Doctor, Mrs Kashi Chagan Lal Gandhi, and Mrs S. Magan Lal Gandhi were among the sixteen women detained and condemned "to three months of incarceration with hard labour. The second group of sixteen women was also arrested."^[17] After Kastirba Gandhi became



involved in the battle, she never left her husband's side and took on some of the duties that he had previously taken on. "Mrs Kasturba Gandhi, Mrs J. K. Doctor, Mrs Kashi Chagan Lal Gandhi, and Mrs S. Magan Lal Gandhi were among the sixteen women detained and condemned to three months of incarceration with hard labour. The second group of sixteen women was also arrested."^[18] A young woman named Valliamma R. Munsuswami Mudaliar, who was sixteen years old, was released from prison with a deadly fever and ultimately passed away. "Bai Fatma was another individual who refused to provide her fingerprints, and she was detained with her mother and daughter for her refusal."^[19]

Conclusion

The "history of the liberation struggle is filled with the stories of courage, sacrifice, and political sagacity" that hundreds of thousands of women from our nation have made throughout its existence. It will be most fitting for us to pay our respectable homage to all of those courageous children of Mother India and to those wealthy and determined foreign women who fought and helped tremendously to the achievement of our freedom struggle and all other activities that took place in the process of nation building on the auspicious occasion of Independence Day, which is celebrated in our country.

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