

(Ritwika Chakraborty)

Q: The culmination of swadeshi movement proved failure of the moderates, Comment. [150 W 10m]

Ans: The Swadeshi Movement had its genesis in the anti-partition movement which was started to oppose the British decision of Partition of Bengal. Starting in 1905, the two main objectives were boycotting of British goods and advocacy of Swadeshi goods. However, the movement also brought forward the differences between the extremists and the moderates.

Moderates methods

- ① The adoption of swadeshi & boycott resolutions made it clear that moderates and their ways of constitutional agitation had become obsolete.
- ② They did not succeed in keeping pace with time as they could not get the support of younger generations.
- ③ Their ideas and propagandas of passive aggressiveness did not appeal the masses.
- ④ Their reliance on British for the welfare of Indians proved harmful as the Morley-Minto reforms were introduced that buried the seeds of communal disharmony among Indians.

Extremists methods

- ① The extremists demanded extension of the Swadeshi movement outside Bengal as well as boycotting of all govt services.
- ② Their emphasis on mass participation was an improvement over moderate politics and became very popular among the masses and younger generations.

③ They raised the level of nationalism from academic pastime to service and sacrifice for the country

④ But there were some limitations that were attached to the extremists as well. Tilak's opposition to age of consent bill (raising the marriage age from 10 to 12), his organising of Ganesh and Shivaji festivals, support to anti-cow killing campaigns portrayed him as a Hindu nationalist. Bipin Chandra Pal and Aurobindo Ghosh also spoke of a Hindu nation of Hindu interests. These things alienated many Muslims from the movement.

⑤ The extremists' functioning lacked consistency. Their leaders had different perception of their goal of swaraj like for Tilak swaraj meant some sort of self govt while for Aurobindo Ghosh it meant complete independence.

The moderates and their methods of constitutional agitation had a slow pace of progress and their technique proved ineffective in stopping Bengal split or demanding legislative reforms and this disillusioned many of its followers who sought other forms of protest. According to Tilak, "our nation is like a tree of which the original trunk is swarajya and the branches are swadeshi and boycott". Extremist philosophy garnered mass attention and hence proved to be the reason for failure of moderates.

Copy Good
Ritwik

11/20