

CHAPTER – 3

***SWADESHI* MOVEMENT AND ITS TRENDS
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The partition of Bengal was an outcome of the anti-Bengali, anti-Hindu and anti-Congress philosophy of the colonial government. Of course very many grave issues particularly administrative and political led to the formation of the idea of partition of the province. Since 1860's British officialdom had been thinking of the reduction of the enormous size of Bengal, a very unwieldy province very difficult for sound administration. That is why to the government the reduction of the size of the province for administrative convenience became a must, and this could only be done by partition. In addition to this administrative issue there was a grave political issue of great importance. This time nationalism was gaining in strength. Lord Curzon, the Viceroy (1899 - 1905), apprehended that nationalist agitations might take the form of dark clouds and these might one day threaten the British rule in India. The Viceroy thought that as Bengal was the epi-centre of the all India nationalist agitations so to weaken the Congress party was absolutely necessary and for this an effective blow at Bengal and at the Bengalis required to be hurled by partitioning Bengal and thereby dividing the Bengali speaking population. It is needless to say that this

decision of Curzon was very crude, cruel and virulent. Yet this had to be effected. Risley, the Home Secretary to the Government of India, very bluntly explained thus the logic behind Curzon's plan: "Bengal united is power, Bengal divided will pull several different ways". Risley also added that if Bengal was split up, a solid body of opponents of the British would surely be weakened. Minto, Curzon's successor, in support of the partition argued that from a political point of view the partition was a good political strategy.

In December, 1903 the partition proposals were publicly known. Immediately a tumult of spontaneous protest arose all over Bengal. In towns and markets places protest meetings were held. Besides, petitions and memoranda against the proposed partition were sent to the authority. All these were done to make the people aware of the inhuman and injudicious wrong done to Bengal and the Bengalis. It was expected that the uproarious protest of the Bengalis would put sufficient pressure on the government and as a result of which the partition might not be affected. But all these bore no fruit, and the government remained unmoved. Gradually it became clear to the people that the moderate methods of protest against the proposed partition could in no way hold good. In a mammoth meeting held in the town Hall of Calcutta on August 7, 1905 the Boycott Resolution in respect of

Manchester cloth and Liverpool salt was passed. Strangely enough with the Boycott Resolution was added the call for *Swadeshi* in a very short time. Since then the *boycott* and *swadeshi* became a full-fledged political movement. It was at this stage of the movement the government on September 1, 1905 announced that the partition was to be effected on October 16, 1905. Since then protest meetings were held almost every day all over Bengal.

The partition took effect on October 16, 1905. Mother Bengal was now cut up into two halves. All Bengal shivered in an indescribable agony, pain and sorrow. So the day was observed as the day of national mourning. There was no cooking and no taking of any cooked food on the day: it was the day of '*arandhan*'. To the Bengalis it was a very bad day, nay it was the beginning of their worst of times. The Bengalis deeply felt and apprehended that the Partition was to break all their traditional ties which could never be restored again, and as a result of which there might engender serious political and communal problems of future times. Particularly the ties were so broken and so impaired that they did not get back their former normalcy and buoyancy even after the annulment of the Partition.

October 16, studied in its reverse swing, was not a bad or dark day. On the contrary it was a good and bright day. On the day the people of

Bengal leaving aside all their social and religious differences observed '*rakhibandhan*', the tying of yellow thread at the right wrist of each other's arms. This signified the amity and unity of the people of Bengal. Hence an emotional wave began to sweep all over Bengal. And now Bengal in spite of her present torn and dissected state became a new Bengal. On seeing the changed environment of Bengal, and on feeling the enthusiastic mental fervor of the people Rabindranath sang out:

“Oh Mother, (now) you have emerged all at once from the core of Bengal with so great an amazing beauty. The more we see you the more the eyes get petrified and to our surprise we see that your gates are thrown open towards a golden temple”.

Particularly this is to what Bengal was changed that day as then the *Bengalees* had no other thinking but the thinking of their Mother Bengal. In this context Tagore has prayed “Let the minds and hearts of all the brothers and sisters of Bengal be one, my Lord”!

The Partition awakened Bengal into a nation. This awakening manifested itself in various nationalist ideas and activities. Bengal now became aware of the fact that hundreds of prayers and petitions and thousands of mammoth meetings could not make the government rescind its orders regarding the Partition. So new weapons were now thought of. In the

context of the Partition 'boycott' and '*swadeshi*' these two old concepts got a new impetus. Now the partition agitations were not mere agitations. The character of the protest movement was now totally changed. *Boycott* and *Swadeshi* held before the people new courses of action and new premises also. *Boycott* could create an economic pressure on Manchester; it would act as a weapon of political agitation against imperialism and it would also train the people in self-sufficiency for the attainment of *Swaraj*. On the other hand *swadeshi* would teach the people to reflect on their political and economic condition, to shed fear, to defy authority and to welcome what worse might come to them.¹ Henceforth *boycott* and *swadeshi*, these two complementary courses of action, added an overwhelming emotional patriotic fervor to the partition agitations as a result of which the anti-partition movement took the character of a full-fledged national movement. In Bengal this was so named as the *Swadeshi* Movement.

The *Swadeshi* Movement of Contai constituted an integral part of the all-Bengal *Swadeshi* Movement. But the issues, dimensions and dynamics of the movement hold altogether a new picture, and make it clear that the Contai movement in spite of having the all-Bengal characteristics was always to a very great extent Local.

Midnapore during the colonial rule was branded as a land of rebels, rebellions and revolutionary activities. Since 1867 the Provincial authority had been thinking of the partition of Midnapore for the reduction of its enormous size with a view to making it feasible for administrative convenience. In the following years the idea did not progress much and it remained shelved for the time being. But the apprehension that Midnapore might be partitioned at any time on any pretext went on ringing in the minds of the people of Midnapore, particularly those of the Oriaya-speaking frontier sub-division Contai adjacent to the newly created province Orissa.

On December 12, 1903 the partition of Bengal scheme in its embryonic form came to be publicly known. Bengal burst into protest against this grievous wrong. Hence all cities and towns and market places assumed a new appearance and a new fervour with the strong determination to resist the implementation of the partition scheme. Protest meetings and protest processions became a regular feature. Newspapers disgorged the wounded feelings of the people. *Nihar*, severely criticized Curzon's divisive scheme without thinking of any ire that might come upon it. It writes, "As Curzon *Bahadur* has decided to partition Bengal however ludicrous be the scheme, so it will surely be affected. But it is a pity that the Viceroy must have it known that the partition scheme will bring about unnecessary

changes, and it will unnecessarily disturb the easy and peaceful life of the Bengalis".²

It is evident from the *Nihar* that Contai was all along aware of the fact that if any partition would occur she would be affected more badly than any other region of Bengal. Besides she had the great fear that as a result of any partition her geography would be circumscribed, her economy would be crippled much more than it had been during the early years of the colonial rule owing to the destruction of her salt-manufacturing industry and other cottage industries, and her socio-cultural life would be impoverished owing to her arbitrary joining with the culturally impoverished Orissa. That is why thinking of this agony of the Contai people the *Nihar* writes: "The government thinks that India is the play ground of the British national ideas and activities, and it is the amphitheatre for the exercise of the prowess of the ruler, and that the subject-people should only have the fear of the ruling power, and they can have no sense of liberty".³ In this context the *Nihar* delineating the worst bureaucratic features of the government which recklessly disregards the cherished feelings of the people, challenges: "Does the government feel itself so supreme as to make and unmake the land and the people according to its own whims and vagaries".⁴ In this connection it is worth noting that nine days before the partition Rabindranath similarly

challenged the ruler: “Are you so strong enough to sunder what fate has bound together, do you really think that our lives are yours to make and break”?⁵

Between December 1903 and July 1905 the anti-partition agitations in Contai were confined mostly to ritualistic *Harikatha* and *Krishnakatha* sittings and *dharmasabha* discussions in which the grappling and crippling of Sonar *Bangla* by the colonial demon, the *Rahu*, was vividly and elaborately analyzed with cogent allegorical interpretations. This created an antipathy of the people towards the devilish rule; but as they then felt themselves helpless against the mighty British rule so they could not but wait for a proper movement and for a suitable occasion to rise against the injudicious and arbitrary actions of the colonial ruler. At last it was on October 16 came the opportune movement and the intended occasion to exert the nationalist feelings and congealed protests of the Contai people – the people who had so long been remained energized with the extremist ideology of Aurobindo which was taught them by Hemchandra Kanungo, a native of Contai, and his associates.

To all Bengal October 16 was a day of solemn mourning. So the day was observed with two special ceremonies: one was *Arandhan* and the other was *Rakhibandhan*. *Arandhan* signified the depth and gravity of the sorrow

of the Bengalis, and *Rakhibandhan* asserted the fraternal solidarity and the unity of the Bengalis. Besides these two ceremonies there were protest processions with *samkritan* parties which sang mournful *kritans* and patriotic songs.⁶ In the *Harikatha* and *Kathakatha* sittings there were allegorically stressed what great wrong the government had done to the people. On the day there was organized a vast meeting in Contai town. One local zamindar Sjt. Bipinbihari Sasmal presided over the meeting. He emphatically pointed out that all their humble prayers and petitions to the government for not partitioning Bengal were brushed aside, so they must have to take resort to other means.⁷

Now in place of the moderate, and so long ineffective, techniques of prayers and petitions traditionally qualified with *Vaishnava* modesty and humility there came new techniques tempered with Tantric ideology. By this time the anti-partition agitation was merged into the Boycott and the *Swadeshi* movement. So in almost all the meetings that followed the speakers eloquently explained the meaning and significance of 'boycott' and '*swadeshi*'. According to their interpretations boycott was not merely the abandonment of Briton- goods it was the idea of non-co-operation with the British in every field. In a deeper sense it was an act of self-defence, an act of aggression for the sake of self- preservation. And '*swadeshi*' which

literally means a sincere and wholehearted love and attachment to anything and everything of mother Bengal (and also of India) now implicitly referred to the newly awakened nationalism of the Bengalis ultimately aiming at political regeneration leading India towards '*Swaraj*'.

The vast meeting of Contai after the efficacy of the partition was a great success. It was attended by almost all the local zamindars, most of the teachers of High English and Middle English Schools, some lawyers and *mukhteer* and a large number of common people. Some well-to-do Muslims and some Christians also were present in the meeting. All the people assembled in the meeting enthusiastically welcomed 'boycott' and '*swadeshi*', and heartily agreed to follow the practices concerned with the application of the new weapons of the anti-partition movement. They all proclaimed that they would not use Briton-goods particularly cloth, salt and sugar and they would use country-made goods instead.⁸ It was agreed in the meeting that for the furtherance of the movement *swadeshi samitis* were to be organized in villages and towns.⁹ It would be the bounden duty of the *samitis* to see that protest processions were being held regularly at least at intervals, and they would implore the people to stick to the ideas and activities of boycott and *swadeshi*. Besides they would organize regular sittings of *Harisabha* and *Kathakata*, which would allegorically detail the

wrongs of alien demons, and thus they would inspire the people to stand against the evil designs of the government.¹⁰

Meanwhile the Congress leaders made an extensive tour all over Bengal with a view to making the boycott general and to making the *swadeshi* an effective exhilarating nationalist action. As a result in every district and sub-division local centres of agitation sprang up with a variety of their own leaders. In Contai the local leaders were mostly local zamindars who were just before the efficacy of the Partition intensely loyal to the government. The Partition put a severe strain on their loyalist sentiment. Now it was clear to them that the government had designed the Partition outwardly for administrative convenience but practically to impair the unity of the Bengali race and above all to weaken the Bengali nationalism. So the Partition must be protested with all vehemence to make the government rescind the Partition.

In Contai the zamindars played a significant role in the anti-partition movement. In most cases they themselves took the leading in championing boycott and *swadeshi*.¹¹ They engaged their *naibs*, *gomostas* and other *amlas* to speak to their tenants in favour of boycott and *swadeshi*. It was so heard that in one case or two the zamindars by the beating of drums in their estates forbade the shop-keepers to import and sell British goods, and they also

forbade the buyers to purchase any such goods.¹² It is learnt from *Nihar* and *Medini Bandhaba*, the two local weeklys that in the families of the zamindars and also in those of their relations the use of British goods particularly salt and sugar was totally stopped, and that their deities in temples were served sugar-less oblations.¹³

In the *Swadeshi* movement the women of Contai played a significant role of some great historical significance. It is historic in the sense that like Rani Krishnapriya of the Tamluk Raj Estate (1781) and Rani Siromani of Karnagarh of the Chuar days (1794) who heroically raised their heads against the colonial arbitrary rule and economic exactions Rani Haripriya of Garh Basudebpur made a direct protest against the colonial cruel design of partitioning Bengal for weakening Bengal and Bengali nationalism.¹⁴ Raniji decided to protest against this grievous wrong; so she unhesitatingly made a direct participation in the running boycott-*swadeshi* movement in which big zamindars of Contai like Digambar Nanda and others had already taken a leading part.¹⁵ In a meeting held in her Estate Raniji spoke to her tenants that Bengal was now in a great crisis. Her society, economy, culture, religion and above all her nationality were now on the verge of ruin. Now it was the duty of all her sons and daughters to stand by her in this her crisis, and to undo the wrong they must have to put pressure on the government by using every

possible means. Raniji felt that the boycott and *swadeshi* would be the effective weapons to achieve their desired end i.e. to make the government rescind the Partition orders. She asked her people not to use Briton cloth sugar and salt. Raniji along with all her relations set fire to their valuable *bilati* cloths and smashed all their dear *reshmi* bangles. All these gave imparted a great impetus to the women of her Estate and also to the women of Contai.¹⁶ For these her heroic activities the people of her Estate and also of Contai hailed her as the Rani Siromoni of Garh Basudebpur. Particularly in those days Raniji became a true role model to women-fighters of all Bengal. And that is why participation of the Contai women in the boycott-*swadesh* movement became a unique episode in the history of Midnapore. Again it is unique in the sense that it was the breeding-ground that gave birth to the heroines of *Lavan* Satyagraha of 1930.

The students and their teachers of the High English and Middle English Schools were the life-force of the *swadeshi* movement of Contai.¹⁷ Practically this was so as they added a new connotation to nationalism. To them nationalism was now not merely religion, faith and creed. It was solely *matri- puja*, worship of the motherland Bengal. In this *puja* their mantra was *Bandemataram*.¹⁸ Now it became the gospel of their new nationalism, and as mother-worshippers they were crusaders. *Bademataram* was their war-cry.

The running boycott and *swadeshi* movement was the crusade in which they would be laurelled with victory. They had the firm conviction that they would surely win, and that the government would surely have to reunite Bengal if they would persist in the movement.

The students threw themselves heart and soul into the movement caring little for what punishment might come upon them. They had the only one motto that they would make the boycott general and extend it as wide as possible. So they took it as their bounden duty to participate in protest processions and picketing at shops selling Briton-cloths and other British goods, and to organize protest meetings and participate in them.¹⁹ It was found in most cases their picketings bore the desired results, but in certain cases where the shop-keepers did not pay any heed to their protests against the selling of imported cloths, they forcibly entered into the shops and took out all the cloths and set them to fire. This led to police cases and to their flogging and other repressions including imprisonment.²⁰ In such cases the students sang out: "They have no longer any fear even a little of the red-capped and black-uniformed police. They will all along remain dedicated to adoring the mother land even if the brute force sends them to prison".²¹ The students were then the leaders in their own right. They organized street meetings in markets on market-days.²² In the meetings they mostly read

aloud leaflets like *Raja ke*, *Sonar Bangla*, *Mukti Kon Pathe*, and then explained how the alien ruler had ruined golden Bengal by looting her riches and destroying her industries. They also held before them from the Calcutta-published news papers how the movement was extending and progressing all over the country.

The sacerdotal class i.e. the *purohits*, *goswamis* and *pundits* played a lot in fostering the boycott movement. The *pundits* of *Contai-tols* following the dictates of the *Nawadwip* and *Bhatpara* *pundits* condemned the use of sugar and salt in worshipping gods and offering oblations to the forefathers as these two articles were clarified with the blood and bones of cows and pigs, and therefore these two articles would grievously impair Hindu religion. All the family priests took up the matter readily and carried the boycott into every household of their *Yajmans*. Again the *goswamis*, the devout *vaishnavas*, were dead against the use of sugar in their *Hari-puja* festivities. Three *mahantas* *Raghunath Das Adhikari*, *Kripasindhu Das Adhikari* and *Narattom Das Adhikari* of *Chhota Thakur Badi* and *Bada Thakur Badi* and their disciples devoutly appeal to all not to use Briton sugar and salt as these would impair the worship of their idols. It is needless to say all the devotees of the *mahantas* tried to follow of the dictates of their *mahantas*.²³ And it is astonishingly striking that the *Purohit Sabha* of

Contai and some well known *dharma-gurus* appealed to the editor of the *Nihar* to make a general publicity through his paper about respect of the profanity and impurities of British sugar and salt; and thereby they asked their *Yajmans* not to use these articles.²⁴ In addition to this it was asserted that if any *Yajmans* would ignore this their appeal made known through the *Nihar* he would be socially ostracized i.e. no one would perform any religious function in his house from birth to death. It is evident from the *Nihar* that the appeal of the *Purohit Sabha* created a great alarm among the Hindus.²⁵ As a result boycott got a strong religious support in the villages and towns of Contai.

In fostering boycott and *swadeshi Hari- Katha and Kathakata* sittings played a very significant role. To the Contai people the *Kathak- thakur's Ravana, Duryodhana* and *Kamsa* and their inhuman and cruel wrong-doings seemed to be the true personifications of the demoniac actions of the alien rulers. All these deeply impressed the emotionally fevered Contai people, so in every evening they thronged to these sittings. It is thus evident that the *kathakatha asars* drew the people of Contai to participate in the boycott and *swadeshi* movement whole heartedly.²⁶

The zamindars of Contai from the very first stage of the anti-partition agitation did their best by all means to put pressure on the government for the withdrawal of the Partition. They conducted the agitation with reckless hostility towards the cruel design of the government, and they tried with every sincerity of purpose to extend and foster the boycott and *swadeshi*. They held regularly protest meetings at their houses, in the *chandimandaps* and in open market places to explain the dire need of protesting against the Partition. The participation of the zamindars in the protest processions and picketings gave an effective impetus to the movement. The personal presence of the zamindars in the processions and picketings and their inflammatory speeches delivered in the meetings attracted the common mass to the movement and inspired them to keep their religion deprofaned, to fight against the government design to weaken Bengal and the Bengalees and above all to strengthen Bengali nationalism.²⁷ By virtue of the repeated shoutings of *Bande Mataram*, the singing of patriotic songs and the *samkirtan* in chorus the *Swadeshi* movement in Contai assumed an air of romance and was transformed into a sort of religious festivity.²⁸ As a result of all these all the processionists and picketers along with the leading zamindars were so engrossed in the *Swadeshi* frenzy that they entered into the shops selling Briton cloths and other British goods and destroyed all their articles. It is worthwhile to note that on one market day the

processionists led by zamindar Digambar Nanda of Mugberia threw away all the Liverpool salt packets in the Itaberia canal; they also set fire on the British cloths, destroyed sugar and other British goods and glass bangles (*reshmi churi*).²⁹ The Itaberia incident inflamed the *swadeshi* fire in Contai. All the *thanas* of the Contai subdivision adroitly took the Itaberia model as the proper method of boycottism. To the people *Swadeshi-ism* now became their only one idea, nay the only one weapon of salvation.

The heroic leading of Digambar Nanda at Itaberia fanned the flames of boycott, and incited all the zamindars of Contai to come to the forefront of the movement. Henceforth they engaged their *amlas* to spread the boycott idea among the tenants; they prohibited the shop-keepers to sell British salt and sugar.³⁰ They asked the students to extend the agitation to villages and to explain to villagers the boycott ideal and to follow the boycott activities whole heartedly as all these would do good for the country and the countrymen.³¹ The priests of the zamindari estates came forward to foster the boycotting; and working on the religious scruples by emphasizing the profanities of salt and sugar they carried the boycott into every household.³² The zamindars also engaged the *Harisabha*, *Dharmasabha* and *Samkritan* parties to heighten the tone of the boycott-*swadeshi* movement.³³ It was thus the Contai movement attained the character of a religious reform movement. In this connection it is

striking to note that in a meeting held in the house of one Sital Prasad Mandal of Chandibheti near Contai some thirty to forty *Harisabha* parties graced the assemblage with an aroma of religiosity. It is evident from the *Nihar* that *Harisabha* and *Samkritan* parties were regarded as one cardinal feature of the meetings organised in the *swadeshi* days.³⁴ From this one may surmise the heightened the character of religious nationalism of Contai.

To foster boycott and *swadeshi* the zamindars organised *melas* in their estates. The religion-centric *melas* like *Rasmela*, *Dolmela*, *Siva-chaturdashi mela* and *Charakmela* were by virtue of their organisation transformed into *swadeshi melas*. Students and volunteers paraded up and down the *melas*. They sang *swadeshi* songs and lectured on the impurities of the British sugar and salt. In the *melas* stalls of *swadeshi* goods were opened. In most cases *swadeshi melas* became centres of the exhibition of ingenious *swadeshi* goods which drew the attention of the people and attracted them to the dexterity in their production. This is how the *melas* in one sense upheld the significance of the *swadeshi*.³⁵

Shortly after the efficacy of the Partition it was felt that a well-knit organisation was extremely urgent for conducting the boycott-*swadeshi* movement. With this end in view zamindar Digambar Nanda in a meeting held at his residence spoke in respect of the setting up of a *Swadeshi Samiti*. Nanda

said: the *Samiti* would facilitate the progress of the movement in very many ways: the *Samiti* would assess the nature and development of the boycott-*swadeshi* agitation, it would solve problems that the agitation might gradually face; it would keep contact with the District and Calcutta *samitis* in respect of conducting the movement; it would organise *swadeshi* meetings with invited national leaders who would lecture on the usefulness of boycott and *swadeshi* for the economic well-being of the country. It would also open *swadeshi bhandars* and help them with *swadeshi* goods and also with money.³⁶

The boycott-*swadeshi* movement in Contai became a movement of constructive *swadeshi*. Practically it laid much stress on *swadeshi* economy. Meanwhile there grew the idea that the boycott of British goods could in no way be a permanent boycott; because in the then economic set-up of the country it was really difficult to substitute indigenous goods for the British goods. That is why much importance was given to the resuscitation of cottage-cotton handloom industries and even to the foundation of cotton cloth mills. Digambar Nanda and some other zamindars of Contai personally helped cotton weavers with money and with means of production for starting their work. One more interesting thing is that they inspired their tenants and others to grow cotton in their zamindari estates.³⁷

It was at this time when the resuscitation of the decayed industries was given much importance and the rejuvenation of agro-economy became a question of great importance some public-spirited liberals and wealthy zamindars were thinking of forming a fund for the growth and development of Contai economy. In one *swadeshi* meeting B. N. Sasmol raised a proposal for the formation of such a *Dhana Bhandar*. Sasmol proposed:

“We the inhabitants of the Contai subdivision being fully inspired by national consciousness and being fully aware of our duties to our dear motherland wholeheartedly take the vow that we shall donate our one day’s income for cotton thread spinning and for the development of the weaving industry of Bengal”.³⁸

The proposal was seconded by one Munshi Mahiuddin. Some prominent nationalists of Contai like Banabihari Mukherjee, Pramathanath Banerjee, Dwarikanath Dhar and Bidhubhushan Giri in their speeches highly applauded the proposal. In the meeting the object and scope and working of the *Dhana Bhandar* was fully explained.³⁹

The lawyers of the Contai court also played a very positive role during the *swadeshi* movement. Almost regularly they attended the *swadeshi* meetings, almost regularly and in most cases they presided over them. Their logical explanation of the wrong done to Bengal and the Bengalees impressed the

audience. And in cases of any friction between shopkeepers dealing in British goods and student-picketers forbidding their sales they did not take the cases of the shopkeepers. On the contrary they stood for the students-picketers, and by applying pressure tactics they forced the shopkeepers to come to understandings with the students.⁴⁰

The boycott programme was a direct hit at the government and at the same time it was a challenge on Manchester economy. During the early stage of the *swadeshi* movement it was expected that if the boycott was thoroughly and actively followed it would put a heavy pressure on the government to rescind the Partition.

It is strikingly peculiar to note that when boycott and *swadeshi* were amalgamated and the movement was running forcefully there emerged a new trend of the movement ---- the trend of revolutionary nationalism. This time under the guidance of Satyendranath Bose and Hemchandra Kanungo there were established in Midnapore a number of *akhras* which were outwardly centres of physical culture but practically covers of revolutionary activities. Kshudiram Bose personally supervised the *Bande Mataram Ground Akhra* of Contai. Digambar Nanda of Contai and some other local zamindars gave financial assistance to those *akhras*.⁴¹ It is thus evident that the *swadeshim* of Contai was gradually taking the character of revolutionary nationalism.

By the middle of 1907 it became perceptibly clear that the anti-partition movement was gradually declining and by the middle of 1908 it was clear that the boycott programme could not achieve the desired end. The leaders of the agitation were now trying hard to keep the movement alive. But they could not stir up the former enthusiasm of the people. It was found that by this time the zamindars had got dispirited. The pressure of the government circulars drew the students to schools. Practically this time they had lost their fighting zeal and nationalist enthusiasm. The cry of *Bande Mataram* was almost stopped. The agricultural class now questioned what benefit was there in boycotting British goods as the *bilati* goods were much cheaper than country-made goods particularly cotton-cloths. Besides, it became clear to all that there was no possibility of a united Bengal. Contai as well as Bengal was now getting totally changed. The Contai of 1905 and 1906 was now almost a dream. Now all over the country there prevailed an amazing silence. In Aurobindo's words ---- "A hush had fallen on the country". Yet the leading agitators of Contai hoped against the hope that though the first upsurge of the movement was gone, the nationalist sentiment of the Contai people did not disappear. True, the stream of *swadeshi* had lost its life-force in the desert of failure and frustration; at the same time it was also true that the stream would again flow with all vehemence and forcefulness in proper times. Practically and historically this became a

reality during the enthusiastic and heroic participation of the Contai people in the Non-co-operation Movement of 1920-21, in the historic *Lavan* Satyagraha of 1930 and also in the Quit India Movement (1942).

Notes &References:

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- (6) *Nihar*, October 24, 1905, V-5, N-9.
- (7) *Ibid*.
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- (9) *Ibid*, September 26, 1905, V-5, N-7.
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- (21) Basanta Kumar Das, *Swadhinata Sangrame Medinipur*, Vol.-I, *Medinipur Swadhinata Sangram Itihas Samiti*, Kolkata, 1980, p.110.
- (22) *Nihar*, December 12, 1905, V-5, N-16.
- (23) *Ibid*, October 24, 1905, V-5, N-9.
- (24) *Ibid*, October 3, 1905, V-5, N-8.
- (25) *Ibid*, October 24, 1905, V-5, N-9.
- (26) *Ibid*, October 24, 1905, V-5, N-9 & June 5, 1906, V-5, N-41.
- (27) *Ibid*, October 24, 1905, V-5, N-9 & March 20, 1906, V-5, N-30 & June 5, 1906, V-5, N-41.
- (28) *Ibid*, October 24, 1905, V-5, N-9 & Basanta Kumar Das, Vol.-I, 1980, p.94.
- (29) *Ibid*, Vol.-I, 1980, p.116.
- (30) *Ibid*, October 24, 1905, V-5, N-9 & March 20, 1906, V-5, N-30.
- (31) *Ibid*.
- (32) *Ibid*, October 3, 1905, V-5, N-8.

- (33) *Ibid*, October 24, 1905, V-5, N-9.
- (34) *Ibid*, May 29, 1906, V-5, N-40.
- (35) *Ibid*, October 29, 1907, V-7, N-9.
- (36) *Ibid*, August 22, 1905, V-5, N-2 & September 26, 1905, V-5, N-7 & March 20, 1906, V-5, N-30 & August 28, 1906, V-6, N-2.
- (37) *Ibid*, September 12, 1905, V-5, N-5 & September 26, 1905, V-5, N-7 & March 20, 1906, V-5, N-30 & August 28, 1906, V-6, N-2.
- (38) *Ibid*, October 24, 1905, V-5, N-9.
- (39) *Ibid*.
- (40) *Ibid*, October 3, 1905, V-5, N-8 & November 7, 1905, V-5, N-11.
- (41) Basanta Kumar Das, *Swadhinata Sangrame Medinipur*, Vol.- I, Medinipur Swadhinata Sangram Itihas Samiti, Calcutta, 1980, pp.106-107.

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