

SPECIAL ARTICLE

Women of East Bengal in Anti-Partition Movement: An Empirical Study

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Abstract: *The Anti Partition movement was initiated in 1905 throughout India in the aftermath of the Partition of Bengal. The male-dominated political leadership called upon the women to take part in the movement with the thought that the women can lead the way by using the indigenous products and boycotting the foreign imported stuffs in the day to day house-hold activities. The Bengali women also spontaneously took part in the anti-British movement in the hope of freedom as they were blocked inside for long in the patriarchal society. They advocated for using homespun products in daily household affairs, spinning the Charka to make yarn and weave cloths out of them, picketed in front of shops that sell imported goods, took part in meetings as well as tried to inspire people in Swadeshi thoughts by writing in contemporary periodicals. Taking part in this movement encouraged the Bengali women and made the foundation of their self-development, which was one of the significant steps of women-awakening. Note that in this article, mostly focused on the women participation of East Bengal (present Bangladesh) in Anti Partition Movement.*

Keywords: Swadeshi, Boycott, Indigenous products, awakening, Laxmir Vandar, patriarchy, Bande Mataram, galvanize, women emancipation

In the history of Bengal, the anti-partition movement of 1905 is a milestone in the direct participation of women in the national movement. Swadeshi¹ and Boycott² movement started through this initiative. The main objective of this movement inspired by Swadeshi ideology was to oust the British rule from India by damaging the British power economically and to improve the overall financially rewarding system of the country. The strategy of the movement included boycotting foreign products and promoting the use of indigenous products everywhere by developing domestic industries and production processes. In this movement, a large number of Bengali women go out from home and show their courage. For the first time, a large part of the women confined at home for a long time, came forward in a national disaster. At that

time, the male members of the family realized that it would not be possible to succeed in the movement against the British by excluding women. So they encouraged women to participate in Anti Partition Swadeshi movement. As their importance as human beings was revealed to the society, the women responded widely to this movement. Women of East Bengal participated in the struggle shoulder to shoulder with men as well as they proved their political awareness and strength. Bengali women's participation in the Swadeshi movement added a new dimension to her self-assertion and created a new domain for them, which became known as the women's emancipation movement. However, while actively participating in this movement, they have remained largely invisible in its recognition. Therefore, in the discussion article, an attempt has been made to analyze the reasons for the participation of the women in the Anti Partition movement, the type of participation and above all, how their role was.

Research Methodology

This article applied qualitative data analysis method. This study used primary and secondary data to evaluate the women participation of East Bengal in Anti Partition Swadeshi and Boycott movement. Contemporary newspaper articles, documents and autobiographies have been used as primary sources. At the same time various informative works written by modern researchers have been used as secondary sources in writing the article. This paper used relevant research books, lectures, articles, Internet article as the tertiary data. Data analysis has been done carefully based on informative and descriptive technique, and historical mode of analysis.

Aims and objectives of the research

The purpose of the research is to analyze how the women of East Bengal broke the deadlock of the long-term blockade system as well as involved themselves in the anti-British movement. Through this movement, Bengali women showed adventure as well as dynamic phenomenon. They are consciously joining politics and trying to uncover the nature of their progress. Conversely, the aim of the study is to reveal and discuss the multi-dimensional participation of numerous women in the Swadeshi and Boycott movements.

In fact, the nationalist movement in India in the late 19th and early 20th centuries inspired Bengali women to join politics the most. At this time, women continued to participate in India's liberation struggle from British rule and exploitation. In 1883, a bill was introduced by the British representative Lord Ripon (1827-1909), a member of the legislative council Sir Courtenary Peregrine Ilbert (1841-1924), which started a movement in India against it. Kamini Roy (1864-1933), Abala Basu (1866-1951) and Sarla Devi (1872-1945), then students of Bethune College, took part in the movement against the Ilbert Bill and they led to the students. In 1885, when the Hindu political organization All India

National Congress was formed, Swarnakumari Devi (1855-1932) and Kadambini Ganguli (1861-1923) joined this organization. Ten women delegates participated in the fourth session of the Congress held in Bombay in 1889. Swarnakumari Devi, Kadambini Ganguly, Pandit Ramabai, Shevantibai Trimbak, Shantabai Nikambo, Kashibai Kanitkar, Manekji, Karmetji and so on were notable among these women.³ It should be noted that in 1901, 200 women representatives participated in the session of All India National Congress.⁴

Swarnakumari Devi and her daughter Sarala Devi Chaudhurani (1872-1946) played a paramount role in the participation and leadership of Bengali women in various political activities in the immediate period before the partition of Bengal (1905). Sarala Devi has tried for the awakening of women in this country. In her writings, speeches and activities, women emerged as a shining ideal to the nation. All aged women of Bengal rose up to follow her ideals.⁵ Sarala Devi edited the influential *Bharti Patrika* (published in 1895). The motto of this magazine was to inspire the countrymen with national consciousness.⁶ She formed a women's group called *Antaranga* to inspire women to achieve self-empowerment in various ways. Noteworthy, in 1900 Sarala Devi established several educational centers for Bengali youths and young women to teach stick games, swordsmanship, wrestling, bodybuilding techniques and so on. Her patriotic song titled 'Namo Hindustan' was sung at a Calcutta Congress function in 1901.⁷ Sarala Devi celebrated the 'Pratapaditya Utsav'⁸ in Calcutta in 1903 in imitation of the Marathi 'Shivaji Utsav' to awaken the sense of patriotism among Bengalis. In 1904, she celebrated the 'Beerashthami Vrat' with the aim of awakening the physical and mental strength of the youth people.⁹ On this occasion, she also composed *Birashtami* songs. Sarala Devi tried to awaken the nationalist spirit among the Bengalis by writing several booklets in the 'Bonger Beer' series. Again she celebrated 'Udayaditya Utsav'.¹⁰ Basically, the purpose of these activities was to increase the strength of the natives against the British enemy.

Sarala Devi established 'Laxmir Bhandar' to promote the use of indigenous products. It was a store of indigenous clothes and various items collected from different parts of Bengal. It is to be noted that only women's useful items were available in this store.¹¹ Sarala Devi, Yogeshchandra Chowdhury and a few others jointly managed another *Swadeshi* shop called 'Swadeshi Stores' in Baubazar, Kolkata. In this context, Sarala Devi wrote that 'My and Yogesh Babu's *Swadeshi* efforts started long before the Partition of Bengal movement'.¹² She presided over the second session of the 'Pratapaditya Vrata' of the Mymensingh Suhrid Samiti in 1905 and in this session she sang the national anthem 'Bande Matram' (worship to motherland) in a melodious voice with a slight modification. At that time 'Kali Puja' was popularized in Suhrid Samiti and preached that Goddess Kali will protect the country from any enemy. She got directly involved in politics by forming a political party called Bengal Party along with Surendranath Banerjee and Bipin Chandra Pal.¹³ Noted that in this

year (1905) Sarla Devi got married to Punjab Arya Samaj leader Pandit Rambhuj Dutta Chowdhury and she moved to Punjab with her husband. As a result, her revolutionary activities in Bombay and North India stopped. She later formed 'Bharat Mahamandal' in 1910, a branch of which was also established in Bengal.¹⁴ Sarala Devi was a prime source of inspiration for contemporary women. Therefore, the influence of her ideals and activities in the Swadeshi movement is strongly reflected among Bengali women.

When the partition of Bengal was declared by Lord Curzon (1859-1925) on August 7, 1905, the Bengali Hindus openly revolted against it. Boycott of foreign products, extensive campaign to make the people aware, use of domestic commodities, increase the production of domestic products for this purpose. All levels of women's cooperation and active participation are called for to make the movement successful. As a result, although mainly men took part in this movement, direct participation of women was observed in providing shelter and looking after the revolutionaries, supplying news and arms. The women spontaneously participated in this movement to boycott the British rule as well as foreign products everywhere in India. It must be noted that the anti-partition movement was led by the Bengali Hindu middle class, so only women from middle class Hindu families participated in the first instance. Ashalata Sen (1894-1986) mentioned regarding this movement,

The most vivid memory of my childhood is the movement of the partition of Bengal in 1905. The fiery speeches and writings of Surendranath Banerjee, Bipin Chandra Pal, Ashwini Kumar Dutta, Aurobindo Ghosh, the patriotic songs of Rabindranath Tagore, Dwijendralal Roy and the pistol shots of Khudiram, Kanailal shook the whole country. Carried out mass protests against the tyranny of foreign rulers, marches, strikes, boycott of foreign goods, which resembled the non-violent resistance method advocated by Mahatma Gandhi in later times. ... After half a century of the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857, the Partition of Bengal movement was the largest anti-British nationwide revolutionary effort.¹⁵

Rabindranath Tagore wrote an essay Bratadharan calling for the participation of Bengali women in the Anti Partition Swadeshi movement.¹⁶ He composed a song comparing Bengal to Goddess Durga as well. Rabindranath Tagore then appealed to the women to save the cost of this year's 'Bhai Phota' and donate money to the National Fund formed for conducting the movement. On the contrary, Abanindranath Tagore depicted India as 'Bharatmata' in his paintings. During this period, Hindu nationalism arose as the agitators envisioned the country with Durga and Kali Goddesses. Ramendra Sundar Trivedi wrote a pamphlet entitled 'Bangalaxmir Bratakatha' (Vows of Laxmi) calling for women's participation in the Swadeshi movement.¹⁷ Again in the first issue of Bharat Mahila Patrika (published in 1905), it was written in the editorial that 'Be it politics or art, men's power can never be fully developed if women do not stand beside men'.¹⁸ Kumudini Datta called on women to come forward in the

Swadeshi and Boycott Movement under the title 'Women's Duty in the Crisis of Motherland'.¹⁹ In this way, from the educated society in the urban to the rural areas, women of all levels were called to participate and cooperate in the Swadeshi and Boycott Movement in various ways. At this time Bengali women associated with 'Swadesh Bandhav' federation played an active role in the movement in the field of indigenous art, literature and poetry.²⁰ Notable Swarnakumari Devi (1855-1932), Prasannamoyee Devi (1856-1939), Mankumari Basu (1863-1943), Kamini Roy (1864-1933), Girindramohini Dasi (1858-1924), Nirjharini Devi, Krishnapriya Chowdhury, Lavanyaprabha Dutta, Ashalata Sen, Kumudini Mitra, Banalata Sen and so on participated in Swadeshi movement. Various newspapers including the contemporary Bamabodhini and Antapur magazines played a significant role in organizing women in the Swadeshi ideology. Essentially, the participation of Bengali women in the anti partition proves that they are able to show skills like progressive women of the Western countries by participating not only in domestic work but also in the struggle of the outside world.²¹ In contrast, after passing away of Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902), Sister Nivedita (1867-1911) got to know Arvind Ghosh in a place called Baroda and determined to free India from British rule. Later, both of them joined Sarala Devi's Gupta Samiti. Nivedita continued to spread anti-British sentiments by writing nationalistic articles in contemporary periodicals.²²

In 1905, Bipinchandra Pal formed an extremist party called 'Swadesh Mandali'. Participation of women along with men is observed in this group. At that time, women in cities and villages created a flow of indigenous products such as wall hangings, soap, paper, ink, spinning wheels and so on. In 1906, Arvind Ghosh and some women published encouraging articles in favor of Swadeshi movement in jugantar Patrika and Bande Mataram Patrika edited by Bhupendranath Dutta.²³ Poet Mukunda Das (1878-1934) was one of those who played an outstanding role in the Swadeshi movement through the practice of culture. Mukunda Das sang-

*O my beloved Bengali women
Don't wear a British saree
Break Belwari Bangles.*²⁴

He used to stir up everyone by singing 'Durgam Giri Kantar Maru' and 'Karar Oi Louh Kapat' of the rebel poet Kazi Nazrul Islam.²⁵ At this time, the women also woke up with the chant of Kazi Nazrul Islam's song 'Jago Nari Jago Bhannishikha'.²⁶ Mukund Das with the help of women, he formed Jatra Dal and organized Jatrapala in Jashore, Faridpur and Barisal to spread the message of Swadeshi among the men and women of the remote villages. On the other hand, Manomohan Chakraborty's song 'Chere dao reshmi churi Banganari, kavu hate paro na, Jago ogo ma bhogini, moher ghore ar theko na' used to invigorate Bengali women with a sense of patriotism.²⁷ Bipinchandra Pal used to inspire women in the Swadeshi movement through their hypnotic speeches. Thus

poets, writers, essayists, artists, politicians and other types of people encouraged the women to boycott foreign stuffs and to produce and use indigenous products. Because women were the main conductor of household work as well as most of the daily necessities used by them in the home. So it was most imperative to make women aware of Swadeshi ideology.

One of the women who actively participated in the anti-partition movement was Kumudini Mitra, daughter of the Brahmin leader Krishnakumar Mitra. She urged women to join the swadeshi movement along with men. For this purpose, she recalled the pious women of the past who had sent their husbands and sons to fight for patriotism.²⁸ Muslim women's participation in the Swadeshi movement was much less. As Muslim women were backward in education, they were not much politically aware. Khairunnessa Khatun (1880-1912) of East Bengal played an exceptional role in this regard. It is well noted, before the partition of Bengal in 1905, in an article entitled 'Swadeshanurag' in Nabanoor Patrika, she wrote that,

*Come, sisters, we vow to abandon foreign sarees, scorn bodices, camisoles and socks, learn to use perfume and roses instead of lavender, and escape from the high hill shoes. Only then we can benefit our country. ... If we are not foolhardy, the merchants from across the seven seas are deceiving us with little German silver ornaments and carrying off ships full of India's treasure and grain.*²⁹

Khairunnessa, an anti-imperialist woman, presented her statement through writing. She encouraged the women in Swadeshi style and mentioned - Bombay, Dhaka, Pabna, Nadia, Murshidabad produce various types of silk sarees and fine cloths. If all these fabrics are used, the money of the country will stay in the country, the industry of the country will expand the poor working weavers will be able to earn money as well as support their families. It must be emphasized that although Muslims expressed disinterest in participating in the Swadeshi movement against the partition of Bengal in the first stage, Khairunnessa's Swadeshi ideology attracted Muslims to this movement. Among the Muslims, the eminent barrister Abdur Rasul, zamindar and lawyer of Tangail Abdul Halim Ghaznavi, the famous Congress leader Abul Kasem of Burdwan, Mujibur Rahman (editor of The Musalman newspaper) and Ismail Hossain Sirazi, a poet of Sirajganj joined the swadeshi movement.³⁰ However, they were not encouraged Muslim women to join this movement.

Khairunnessa was one of those who realized that the Bengali Hindus and Muslims were suffering as a result of the colonial 'Divide and Rule' policy. As a woman, her thinking was far ahead of her time. Before long ages a woman from a remote village, Khairunnessa, wrote several articles in contemporary journals under the pseudonym 'Khair Khah Munsii'.³¹ In an essay on education and politics, she wrote,

The British are lagging behind in fulfilling the aspirations which they have awakened in the hearts of the educated people of this country by promoting the

*spread of English education and state commentary from time to time. A political movement has started around this. ... Political movement is equally necessary for all, whether Hindu or Muslim. This is why it is seen that these days, Hindus and Muslims have joined together in political movements.*³²

Unemperialist Khairunnessa Khatun encouraged everyone to revive the indigenous stuffs. Appeal to all to consume home-bred cow's milk instead of exotic powdered milk, internal sugarcane sugar and date molasses instead of external sugar. She urged the society to give up the toxic addiction of extraneous cigars and cigarettes. She said, 'Hopefully, each of you will try hard for the development of the country. This poor India has no other option if you are sleeping forever. It is time for us to wake up'.³³

In order to make the Swadeshi movement a success, more than a hundred women participated in meetings held in different places of Kolkata, Dhaka, Murshidabad as well as even in remote rural areas like Bikrampur, Jashore, Faridpur, Khulna, Barisal, Mymensingh, Sirajganj, Nawabganj, Munshiganj, Manikganj, Rajshahi, Kurigram, Chittagong and so on. Women used to participate in the meetings organized by men, sometimes many such meetings were organized by women themselves, it is known through the information published in the contemporary Dhaka Prakash magazine.³⁴ Sushilasundari Gupta led a meeting at Boyara of Manikganj. Again, such a meeting was organized in Khulna under the leadership of Snehashila Chowdhury.³⁵ Women used to take seats on the men's public meeting stage and sometimes they sat in the tent surrounded by a curtain next to the main stage.³⁶ Many times women also spoke in the meetings organized by men. At the meeting of Barisal, Ashwinikumar Dutta, Babu Nibaranchandra Das, Manoranjan Guha used to make hypnotic speeches. At that time, such a Swadeshi meeting was held in Bikrampur, Dhaka on the proposal of the local landlord Upendramohan Pal Chowdhury and with the approval of the headmaster of the local school, Babu Chintaharan Majumder. The meeting was presided over the patriotic zamindar Shyamlal Pal Chowdhury. Here 'Bande Matram' is chanted and many local women participate in it.³⁷ In a Swadeshi meeting held in Mymensingh, it was opined that in their spare time, rural women especially Hindu widows, spin yarn on spinning wheels, weave cloth on looms, cut and sew the cloth. Thus they can meet the needs of the family's clothing.³⁸

On December 17, 1905, a Swadeshi meeting of women was held at Dinanath Sen's residence in Gandaria, Dhaka. Here it is said, 'Bengali women can help everyone and if they think they can do it'.³⁹ In this way, women's Swadeshi meetings were held at a large scale in Faridpur, Madaripur, Dhaka, Mymensingh, Rangpur, Barisal and so many places in East Bengal. Which the contemporary magazine Dhaka Prakash published news regularly. It should be noted that women subjected to various forms of oppression for participating in the Anti Partition movement- this information was known through Dhaka Prakash as

well. Incidentally, it may be mentioned that Kamaladashgupta mentioned the names of the following among those women in and around Dhaka who organized meetings and encouraged women to use indigenous products during the anti partition movement of 1905.⁴⁰

1. Muktakeshi Devi (Mother in law of Vijaykrishna Goswami)
2. Sushilasundari Sen (Daughter of Dinnath Sen of Dhaka)
3. Chinmayi Das (Sonarang village)
4. Navashashi Devi ("Do")
5. Sushila Sen ("Do")
6. Kamalkamini Gupta (Outshahi village)
7. Priyabala Gupta ("Do")
8. Girija Gupta ("Do")
9. Surma Sen ("Do")

Due to the influence of Swadeshi movement, local production of various products started in different parts of Bengal. Then capsules (medicine) were made in Munshiganj of Dhaka as well as pen nibs were made in Wazirpur, Rahmatpur and Krittipasha villages of Barisal. The Great Eastern Trading Company of Calcutta began producing cement and painting dyes.⁴¹ Again, Bengali women spun yarn on spinning wheels. It should be pointed out that 'Charka' (spinning wheel) is widely used in Kolkata. Conversely, women like Navashashi Devi, Sushila Sen, Kamolakamini Gupta of Bikrampur got together and formed a women's association. They bought 24 spinning wheels and distributed them among the women of the village to prepare yarn.⁴² Spinning wheel was widely used in places like Manikganj, Kurigram, Rajbari, Bikrampur and so many different places of East Bengal. Note that in 1906 'Sakhi Samiti' was re-activated as 'Mahila Shilpashram'.⁴³ Here widows were trained in spinning, textile weaving, tap socks, undervest, lace, cloth cutting, garment making, candle making and leather goods making. Arts and crafts fair are also organized to showcase home made products.

Then again, a large number of Bengali women collected funds for the Swadeshi movement with their limited money and ornaments. By the way, many women contributed money and ornaments to Ashwini Kumar Dutta's Swadesh Bandhav Samiti (formed to conduct the Anti Partition movement) of Barisal. In this association, Hemanalini Gupta of Barisal deposited 3 rupees. Sarojini Bose and another woman from Barisal, sent their gold bangles to Ashwini Kumar for donation to the 'Swadeshi Bhandar'. Later, in 1908, Sarojini Bose was conferred with the title of 'BangaLaxmi' for her long-standing effective contribution to the Swadeshi movement.⁴⁴

Apart from this, Manorama Basu (1897-1986), a young housewife of Barisal, participated in the anti partition movement by tying a rakhi of yellow thread on her wrist. Throughout her life Manorama Basu was very actively involved in the politics of Bengal. 17 years old housewife Labanyaprabha Dutta (1888-1971) encouraged her family to boycott foreign goods and husband Jatindranath

Dutta to participate in the Swadeshi movement. Another woman Kusumkumari Dasi of Barisal established a school in an effort to raise awareness of the anti-British movement of local girls and started teaching in this school.⁴⁵ Again, the zamindar of Mymensingh, Dinmani Chowdhury instructed her subjects to use indigenous products.⁴⁶ She started wearing local hand looms and khadi sarees. Dinmani supported the Swadeshi and boycott movement as well. In this context Ashalata Sen mentioned,

*The Bengal secession movement brought a revolutionary mindset to the people of the country. Even veiled women in the old pantheon began to take an active role in the movement to boycott foreign goods. My maternal grandmother Nabashashi Devi sent me to the housewives of the neighborhood to get them to sign the 'Foreign Exclusion and Swadeshi Use' pledge. ... She used to let me read many revolutionary books like history of Rajput, Maratha and Sikh struggle against imperialism as well as biographies of Raja Pratapaditya of Bengal, Tikendrajit of Manipur and Garibaldi of Italy. I often thought about how to get independence of our country. I used to read Bangkim Chandra's Ananda Math, Navin Sen's Plassey'r zuddho and Swami Vivekananda's writings with great interest.*⁴⁷

Ashalata Sen wrote various revolutionary poems, the biography of Florence Nightingale and the story of Savitri to energize the Bengali women in the Swadeshi movement.⁴⁸ In addition, Nanibala Devi of Howrah district, Dukaribala Devi of Birbhum, Khiroda Sundari Devi of Mymensingh, Hemanolini Gupta of Barisal, Lavanyaprabha Dutta, Kusum Kumari Dasi, Bindubasini Devi of Pabna, Muslim women Jobeda Khatun Chowdhury, Shamsun Nahar Mahmud, Razia Khatun of Mymensingh, Halima Khatun, Samsunnesa Begum, Rawshan Ara Begum, Raiju Banu Begum, Badrunnesa Begum and other more women participated directly and indirectly were also involved in the Anti Partition movement. Apart from the women of the civil society, 'Barbanita' (Punk) women are also known to boycott foreign goods and use indigenous products and send money to 'Swadeshi Vandar'.⁴⁹ In this way, the spontaneous participation of all classes of women in the Swadeshi movement is observed in East Bengal.

The courage of Bengali Women increased mainly by participating in the Anti Partition movement. Therefore, they are participated in a direct role in the violent movement. In 1907, the National Congress split into moderate and extremist factions in Surat. Bhupendranath was jailed for 1 year for anti-British writing in jugantor newspaper this year. Again, Arvind Ghosh and Sister Nivedita were closely monitored by the police. They were charged with treason. At this time, bomb attacks on train lines, later shooting of Dhaka Magistrate Allen (23 December 1907) as well as bomb attacks on the Mayor of Chandannagar was continued, which was just a renaming of independence movement in the name of Swadeshi movement. Sister Nivedita then directly joined these activities

and many other women cooperated in the revolutionary work from behind. In 1908, Khudiram was hanged for accidentally killing English woman Mrs. Kennedy and her daughter by throwing a bomb instead of Magistrate Kingsford of Muzaffarpur. It is worthwhile to note that Prafullachaki took part in this attack but he sacrificed himself to avoid arrest.

Nanibala Devi (1887-1967), a woman born in Bali in Howrah district, is the first notable Bengali woman who participated in the armed revolutionary struggle against the British. She worked together with the anti-British revolutionaries. Nanibala Devi was arrested by the police for these activities and she was the first woman royal prisoner in Bengal.⁵⁰ Besides, Dukaribala Devi (1887-1970) of Jhaupara village in Birbhum was initiated into the revolutionary ideals of nephew Nibaran Ghatak. When the nephew hid seven pistols in Dukaribala Devi's house, the police searched her house and found Dukaribala and took her to jail (1917).⁵¹ Khiroda Sundari Devi (b. 1883) of Mymensingh became a member of the 'jugantor' party of Khitish Chowdhury and revolutionary leader Surendramohan Ghosh. She was able to prove her skills in armed revolutionary action. In this way, the women of Bengal embarked on the anti-British armed struggle along the path of Anti Partition movement and began to show the performance of political foresight. Under the pressure of Swadeshi movement, the British government was forced to announce the cancellation of the partition of Bengal in 1911, which is the great success of this movement. However, the Swadeshi ideology remains strong in the hearts and activities of Bengalis.

Importance

By the encouragement of Bengali male society, women to actively participate in the anti-partition movement, which led by the educated middle class, because they thought, it would not be possible for them to succeed alone. So, they set the agenda for women's participation. In this movement, women have to follow the program set by men. They are well aware that women use different things in the home. Therefore, women can play the most effective role in rejecting foreign goods and using indigenous products. Then again, women can also do the work of encouraging the male members of the family like husbands, sons and brothers to actively participate in this movement. Mainly keeping these issues in mind, men called women to participate in anti partition movement.

Women are motivated to stand by their husbands, sons and brothers in the days of national calamities, being moved by the invitation of men in the long-standing patriarchal society. They feel the joy of a little release from the blocked life. Consequently, Bengali women consider participation in this movement as a sacred religious duty. They were inspired to send the male members of the house into direct struggle and themselves participated in the meetings. National leaders have been vocal in demanding their release if women are imprisoned. Inversely, women sent a little amount of money and jewelry to the national

fund. They continued to glorify their country by writing in various contemporary magazines. At that time, Girindramohini Dasi published a poetry book called *Swadeshini*. Saralabala Sarkar wrote an article titled 'Swadeshsebai Bangaramani' in *Sahitya Patrika*. In this way, the spirit of patriotism is awakened in women from cities to villages.

Nevertheless, women defied the government ban and chanted 'Bande Mataram' to face the police torture. Mainly by participating in the anti partition movement, the image of women in the society is brightened as well as the strength of their efficiency is proved. Joining the movement with the male leads to relaxation of the blockade system in the society. An example is set of other work that women can do in addition to housework. There is a change in women own attitude towards society. It is strongly proved that when men and women work together, they can do everything with twice the strength.

Conclusion

From the above discussion, it is evident that from the beginning of the 20th century, the women of East Bengal started to become politically conscious to a limited extent and they started actively participating in the national liberation movement. Magazines like *Bharati*, *Antahpur*, *Dhaka Prakash*, *Bharat Mahila*, *Janhvi*, *Bamabodhini*, *Navashakti*, *Sanjibani* and *Bangavasi* published short stories, novels, essays, poems as well as editorials encouraged women to participate in Anti Partition movement. At that time, the advertisements of Swadeshi products were published in *Suprabhat* and *Anthapur* newspapers. In contrast, some changes were made in the leadership of the nationalist movement at this time. Among the national leaders can be seen the attempt to re-establish the glorious role of women in ancient India. The country began to be imagined as a mother. Women tend to be worshiped as mother Goddesses for their strength. In the novel *Bankimchandra Anandamath* compares homeland India in the form of Goddesses *Durga-Kali* as well as a political interpretation of the worship of female power is found here. The tune 'Bande Mataram' composed by Bankimchandra was later widely used to galvanize the masses in the Anti Partition movement. Women started organizing themselves by establishing various associations. Muslim women participated in Anti Partition movement in fewer numbers than Hindu women. Because in contemporary era *Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain* started the work of awakening Muslim women, but the environment to encourage Muslim women with nationalism and political consciousness has not yet been created largely. The overall conservative environment kept Muslim women in an indirect role in this movement. In spite of all obstacles, the women of East Bengal played an important role in making this movement a success. With the success of the movement, women's confidence increased manifold, they became bolder. Therefore, Bengali women continued to show strength in subsequent national movements. In fact, women's daring participation in the Anti Partition movement put the women's awakening and

women's emancipation movement in East Bengal on the path to success.

Notes and References (Endnotes)

1. The word 'Swadeshi' means native. At the beginning of the 20th century, 'Swadeshi' came to mean the policy or ideology of adopting indigenous goods and ideas. One of the results of which was the use and spread of indigenous products. The main objective of this movement was to oust British rule from India by damaging British power economically. On the contrary, improving the overall economic system of the country
2. The word 'Boycott' means exclusion. The boycott movement was aimed at attacking the British economy by opposing the British government and boycotting their goods. Not only British clothes or products, but British thought, legislature, education system, governance, courts and so on. Note that the Swadeshi and Boycott movements started simultaneously in India that is an Anti Partition movement
3. Kanak Mukherjee, *Women's Emancipation Movement in India*, National Book Centre, New Delhi, 1989, p.44; Anwar Hossain, *Swadhinata Sangrame Banglar Muslim Nari 1873-1971*, Progressive Publications, Calcutta, 2006, p.186
4. Manmohan Kaur, *Women in India's Freedom Struggle*, Sterling Publishers, New Delhi, 1992, p.36; Maleka Begum and Syed Azizul Haque, *Ami Nari Tinshoto Bosorer Bangali Narir Itihas*, The University Press Limited, Dhaka, 2001, p.96
5. Dhaka Prakash, 1934, p.3 (15 numbers 74 parts) (Dhaka University Central Library Reprography Section)
6. Arifa Sultana, *Bangavanga o Bangali Nari*, Professor Muhammad Ishaq Fund Lecture 2016, Bangladesh Asiatic Society, Dhaka, 2016, p.3
7. Ibid
8. Maharaja Pratapaditya was one of the most powerful Bhuiyan (Zamindar) among the twelve Bhuiyans of East Bengal. Saraladevi built a stage named after the warrior Pratapaditya. A sword was kept here and wreaths were offered to that sword in memory of Pratapaditya. In this way, efforts were made to increase the mental strength of the natives
9. Saraladevi encouraged the Indians that if someone was tortured by the British soldiers, they should immediately redress themselves without waiting for a trial. The heroism stories of those who showed bravery by taking such remedies at that time were serially published in Bharati Patrika. Then, many people from Antaranga party used to come to meet Saraladevi to thank her for this. She formed an intimate group with some of them. Saraladevi used to place a map of India in front of the team members and tie a rakhi to each person's hand after swearing. This rakhi was in recognition of any resistance or war for the motherland. It is particularly noteworthy that after a few years in 1905, on the day of the partition of Bengal, this 'Rakhibandhan' spread in a new form throughout the country. See details: Kamala Dasgupta, *Swadhinata Sangrame Banglar Nari*, Jatiya Granth Publications, Dhaka, 2018, p.31
10. Ibid, p.32
11. Bharati Roy, 'Swadeshi Movement and Women's Awakening in Bengal 1903-1910',

- Calcutta Historical Journal*, Vol. X, N. 2, 1985; Bharati, Karthik, 1311.
12. Kamala Dasgupta, *Ibid*, p.33
 13. Terrorism in Bengal (A Collection of Documents, Vol. 1-4, Compiled and Edited by Amiya K. Samanta, Director, Intelligence Branch, Govt. of West Bengal, Calcutta, 1995), Vol. II, p. 808; Quoted in Arifa Sultana, *Ibid*, p.4
 14. Rejina Begum, *Rajnitik Andolane Banglar Nari 1905-1947*, Bengal Publications Limited, Dhaka, 2016, p.103
 15. Ashalata Sen, *Sekaler Katha*, Sahitya Prakash, Dhaka, 1996, p.11
 16. Arifa Sultana, *Ibid*, p.5
 17. Ramendra Sundar Trivedi invited local women to his residence at Jomakandi in Murshidabad. His daughter Girijadevi recited the Bangalaxmir Bratakatha among the five hundred women present. The main theme of this pamphlet was that Goddess Laxmi was leaving Bengal through the partition of Bengal and only a Laxmi like Bengali woman could retain her by boycotting foreign goods. (Arifa Sultana, *Ibid*, p.5)
 18. Edited by Sri Saryubala Dutta, *Bharat Mahila*, (Monthly Magazine), Part I, Issue 1, Bhadra 1312, Calcutta
 19. *Ibid*
 20. Sumit Sarkar, *The Swadeshi Movement in Bengal 1903-1908*, Peoples Publishing House, New Delhi, 1977, p.288
 21. Aparna Basu, 'The Role of Women in the Indian Struggle for Freedom', in *Indian Women : From Purdah to Modernity*, B.R. Nanda (ed.), Vikas Publishing, New Delhi, 1976, p.17
 22. Kamala Dasgupta, *Ibid*, p.12-13
 23. *Ibid*, p.14
 24. Maleka Begum, *Banglar Nari Andolon*, The University Press Limited, Dhaka, 1989, p.81
 25. *Ibid*, p.83
 26. *Ibid*
 27. Geeta Chatterjee, *Bangla Swadeshi Gaan*, Naya Prakash, Kolkata, 1983, p.10
 28. Kumudini Mitra, 'Matrivumir Durdine Mahilagoner Kortabba', *Bharat Mahila*, Bhadra 1312, p.12-15; Quoted in Arifa Sultana, *Ibid*, p.6
 29. Khairunnessa Khatun, 'Swadesanurag', *Navanur*, third year, sixth (6th) number, Ashwin, 1312, p.21
 30. Prodip Kumar Lahiri, *Bengali Muslim Thought, 1818-1947*, K.P Bagchi, Calcutta, 1984, pp. 246-282
 31. Syed Abul Moksud, *Pathikrit Naribadi Khairunnessa Khatun*, Sahitya Prakash, Dhaka, 1992, p.47
 32. Khairunnessa Khatun, 'Rajnoitik Andolan o Musalman', *Navanoor*, Third Year, Fifth Issue, Bhadra 1312.
 33. Khairunnessa Khatun, *Swadesanurag*, *Ibid*, p.23
 34. *Dhaka Prakash*, August 13, 1905, p.3

35. Arifa Sultana, *Ibid*, p.10
36. Yogeshchandra Bagal, *Jatiya Andolane Banganari*, Visva Bharati Library, Calcutta, 1361, p.143
37. *Dhaka Prakash*, September 10, 1905, p.5
38. *Dhaka Prakash*, September 17, 1905, p.8
39. *Dhaka Prakash*, December 24, 1905, p.3
40. Kamala Dasgupta, *Swadhinata Sangrame Banglar Nari*, Jatiya Grantha Prakashan, Dhaka, 2018, p.272
41. *Dhaka Prakash*, September 17, 1905, p.9
42. Arifa Sultana, *Ibid*, p.11
43. Yogeshchandra Bagal, *Ibid*, p.32
44. Arifa Sultana, *Ibid*, p.14
45. *Ibid*
46. *Ibid*
47. Ashalata Sen, *Ibid*, p.14
48. *Ibid*, p.17
49. Maleka Begum, *Ibid*, p.83
50. Maleka Begum and Syed Azizul Haque, *Ibid*, p.98
51. *Ibid*