



## Mains Practice Question

**Q.** Discuss the significance of the Swadeshi and Boycott Movement in India's struggle for independence, examining its impact on early nationalists and the role of revolutionaries. **(250 words)**

15 Jan, 2024 GS Paper 1 History

### Approach

- Write an introduction about the Swadeshi Movement and Boycott Movement.
- Mention its impact on the early nationalists.
- Mention the role of revolutionaries.
- Write a conclusion.

### Introduction

The **Swadeshi** and **Boycott Movement**, launched in India in the early **20<sup>th</sup> century**, played a pivotal role in the country's struggle for independence. This movement was a response to the **partition of Bengal** in **1905** by the British colonial authorities.

### Body

The Swadeshi and Boycott Movement significantly influenced early nationalists and fostered resistance and unity among Indians:

#### **Economic Self-Reliance (Swadeshi):**

- **Promotion of Indigenous Goods:** The **Swadeshi Movement** aimed at promoting the use of **Indian-made goods** and boycotting British-manufactured products. This was seen as a strategy to revive indigenous industries and foster economic self-reliance.
- **Nationalist Consciousness:** By encouraging the use of Swadeshi goods, the movement instilled a sense of nationalist consciousness among the Indian population. It became a symbol of resistance against British economic exploitation.
- **Prominent Figures:** Leaders like Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Bipin Chandra Pal, and Lala Lajpat Rai actively supported and propagated the Swadeshi movement. They emphasized the economic aspect of nationalism and the need for self-sufficiency.

#### **Boycott of British Goods:**

- **Symbol of Protest:** The boycott of British goods served as a powerful means of protest against oppressive colonial policies. Indians refrained from buying and using British-made products as a symbolic rejection of colonial rule.
- **Mass Participation:** The movement saw broad participation from students, farmers, and urban middle-class individuals, turning the boycott of foreign goods into a widespread, cross-sectional mass movement.
- **Impact on British Economy:** The boycott had a tangible impact on the British economy. It led to a decline in the sales of British goods in India, forcing the colonial authorities to take note of the growing discontent among the Indian population.

## Impact on Early Nationalists:

- **Unity among Nationalists:** The Swadeshi and Boycott Movement played a crucial role in bringing together diverse political groups and individuals under the umbrella of a common cause. It marked the emergence of a unified nationalist movement.
- **Political Awakening:** The movement contributed to the political awakening of the masses. People began to actively participate in political activities, and the demand for self-governance gained momentum.
- **Seeds of Civil Disobedience:** The methods of protest employed during the Swadeshi movement, including non-cooperation and non-violent resistance, laid the groundwork for future campaigns, including Mahatma Gandhi's civil disobedience movements.

## Role of Revolutionaries:

- While the movement initially focused on non-violent resistance, it also fueled a more radical and revolutionary impulse among certain factions of the nationalist movement.
- The frustration with the apparent ineffectiveness of peaceful protests led to the rise of more militant revolutionary groups, such as the **Anushilan Samiti and Jugantar**, who advocated for armed resistance against the British.

## Conclusion

The Swadeshi and Boycott Movement marked a pivotal period in India's fight for independence, fostering economic self-reliance and shaping political awareness. The unity it generated set the stage for the larger nationalist movement, culminating in India's independence in 1947.

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