**Subject: History (6th Semester)**

**Topic:\_- SWADESHI MOVEMENT**

In 1905 Governor General Lord Curzon partitioned Bengal. At that time Bengal was a huge province consisted of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. The total population of Bengal was approximately 78 million and it covering an area of 189,000 square miles. Curzon justified division by saying that it would help them to run the administration efficiently but his main motive was not the administrative convenience or efficiency. Actually by making this division Curzon simply tried to bring division between the Hindus and the Muslims and thereby to put a check the growth of the feeling of nationalism among them. But proposal for partition was first made in 1896 by Sir William War, the Chief Commissioner of Assam. He suggested Chittagong , Dacca and Mymensingh divisions should be transferred to Assam. This idea was later on revived in 1901 by Lord Curzon. With that end in view Curzon visited Eastern Bengal in 1904 and he decided to divide Bengal into two provinces. Accordingly he created a new province of Eastern Bengal and Assam with the capital at Dacca. While this newly created province was dominated by the Muslims, Western Bengal, the other one was dominated by the Hind population. The newly created province was placed under the charge of a Lt . governor.  
The people of India especially the Bengali people could not accept the partition easily.The Bengali people considered it as an attack upon their culture and tradition.On the other hand the Nationalist leaders considered it as a plan to create division between the Hindus and the Muslims. Thus there was a strong demand for the cancellation of the partition.But Curzon was determined on his decision which greatly enraged the nationalist leaders and they continued their agitation against the partition.Some of the nationalist leaders could realise that the policy of prayers and petition had gone and so they decided to take some direct method to fulfil their demand.Under such circumstances the feeling of Swadeshi or self reliance  was born and along with this a new weapon was also found.This weapon was the famous boycott which main intention was to stop using foreign goods and promote the indigenous industries of India. Although the original idea of boycott was the refusal to buy the foreign goods later on it developed into an idea of non-cooperation with the British in every field.Similarly the word Swadeshi assumed a new form meaning attachment to everything Indian.Thus a strong movement was started under the leadership of Surendranath Banerjee to put pressure on the British Government.The leaders of the Swadeshi Movement even asked the people to leave the schools and colleges established by the British.They urged the Indian people to establish their own schools and colleges.One of the important characteristic features of this movement was the participation of the students.Even the land owners also participated in this movemen.The protesters started picketing and burning the foreign goods. People were asked to use the Indian goods.The nationalist leaders took various measures for boosting the India’s own economy.The streets of towns and cities rang with the cries of Bande Mataram composed by famous Bankim Chandra.  
The Swadeshi Movement started in Bengal but gradually had spread across the country .The entire nation raised their voice against this partition.But in spite of  stern opposition Curzon did not change his policy.The partition ultimately led to the growth of a new spirit led by LalaLajpat Rai, Bipin chandra Pal ,Aurobinda Ghosh and Bal Ganga Gangadha Tilak.Tilak even declared that "Swaraj is my birth right."Along with the movement many secret organisations were set up which took up many extreme policies to end the British rule in India.  
Looking to the constant demand the British Government finally decided to cancel the partition in 1911 and Bengal was again United. However Swadeshi Movement left a deep impact in the hearts of the Indian people.