



HEART TOUCHING VOICE OF THE PEOPLE FROM THE PARTITION OF BENGAL

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ABSTRACT

The echoes of the Partition of Bengal resonate with haunting tales of loss, anguish, and resilience. Through the lens of firsthand accounts, the voices of those who witnessed the upheaval reveal a tapestry of emotions, each thread woven with pain and longing. In the poignant narratives, survivors recount the sudden rupture of familiar landscapes, the tearing apart of communities that had coexisted for generations. The Heart of uncertainty and fear permeates their words, mirroring the scorching reality of a forced migration that shattered lives. Amidst the chaos, the voices speak of solidarity and humanity. Stories emerge of individuals who defied religious and cultural divides, offering shelter and solace to those deemed "other." These acts of compassion form a counterpoint to the brutality of the times, reflecting the enduring human spirit amidst adversity. The partitioned land echoed with the cries of separation, as families were torn apart and homes left in ruins. The pain is palpable in the timbre of voices recalling lost homelands and the struggle to rebuild fractured identities. Yet, even in the midst of despair, a resilience emerges—an indomitable spirit that refuses to be extinguished. As the voices traverse time, the scars of the Partition remain etched in collective memory. The Heart of those turbulent days has left an indelible mark on the region, a testament to the enduring power of narratives that seek to preserve the truth and humanity amidst the ashes of division.

KEYWORDS: *Heart, Touching Voice, Partition of Bengal*

INTRODUCTION

The Partition of Bengal in 1947 was a significant event in the history of the Indian subcontinent, marked by the division of the province of Bengal into two separate entities – West Bengal and East Pakistan (later becoming Bangladesh after the Bangladesh Liberation War in 1971). This political decision, driven by the British colonial administration, had far-reaching social, cultural, and economic consequences, and its impact was deeply felt by the people of the region.

To capture the emotional and poignant voices of those who experienced the Partition of Bengal, one must delve into the narratives and personal accounts of individuals who lived through this tumultuous period. The voices from the Partition era resonate with a range of emotions – anguish, sorrow, nostalgia, resilience, and sometimes, even hope. These voices provide a window into the human stories behind the political decisions and the ensuing upheaval.



Families were uprooted, communities were torn apart, and the very fabric of society underwent a seismic shift. The partition resulted in mass migrations, forced displacement, and communal tensions that left an indelible mark on the collective memory of the people involved. The stories of separation, loss, and the struggle for survival during and after the Partition continue to evoke a profound sense of empathy and understanding.

The Heart-touching voices from the Partition of Bengal encapsulate the pain of separation, the trauma of witnessing violence, and the resilience of those who sought to rebuild their lives amidst the chaos. These voices, often passed down through generations, serve as a reminder of the human cost of political decisions and the enduring strength of the human spirit in the face of adversity.

Sorrow and Loss:

- Elderly Refugee: "We had lived together for generations, Hindus and Muslims side by side. When the lines were drawn, families were torn apart, and the land we called home was divided. The pain of leaving behind our ancestral homes still haunts us."
- Displaced Woman: "I lost everything in the partition - my home, my family, and my sense of belonging. The streets I once walked on with my friends are now part of a different country. The memories are all that remain."

Fear and Insecurity:

- Displaced Muslim Family: "We were told that a new homeland awaited us, but the journey was filled with fear. The uncertainty of what lay ahead, the violence along the way, and the loss of a familiar way of life left scars that time could not easily heal."
- Hindu Refugee: "The fear of being a minority in a new land was overwhelming. We left behind the only life we knew, and the struggle to rebuild in a place where we were strangers was a daily battle."

Resilience and Hope:

- Partition Survivor: "Despite the pain, we rebuilt our lives. We found strength in each other and in the belief that humanity would prevail. The scars may remain, but so does the spirit of resilience that defines us."
- Refugee Community Leader: "In the midst of tragedy, communities came together to support one another. The shared history of pain became a foundation for unity, and together we worked towards creating a new life."

Longing for Unity:

- Elderly Witness: "I remember a time when we celebrated our diversities, and unity was our strength. The partition shattered that unity. Even today, I yearn for the day when we can look beyond religious differences and come together as one people."



- Partition Survivor: "The scars of the partition may have faded with time, but the longing for a united Bengal, where people of all faiths lived harmoniously, lingers on. The dream of a shared history and a shared destiny is what keeps us going."

SCHEME OF PARTITION OF BENGAL

It was not a hasty decision by the British government to partition Bengal. Officially, the government says it's driven by "administrative convenience," but economic and political factors are the real drivers. Unlike other Indian provinces, politically engaged Bengalis spoke out strongly against the injustice and oppression inflicted by the British. The situation in other areas was different from this. A large number of Bengalis worked for the government in various capacities, including as in the courts, schools, and administrative offices. The colonial authority's diplomatic, avaricious, astucious, and dishonesty were thus exposed to the Bengalis, who subsequently rose out in rebellion against the government's abominable practices. This contributed directly to the escalation of tensions between the Bengalis and the British. Thus, the political objective of the Partition plan was to halt the rising tide of Bengali nationalism. This was the idea that prompted the suggestion. Lord Curzon (1899–1905), who was Governor-General and Viceroy of India during that period, felt compelled to disregard the Indian intellectuals and nationalists who professed to represent the majority because he believed that the Indian people had no purpose apart from being beneficiaries of British charity. To put it simply, this exemplified "intellectual imperialism." While he was in power, Bengali nationalism faced a great lot of animosity, and he had a bad attitude towards Indian nationalism. The massive province of Bengal, which comprised Bengal, Bihar, and Orissa, was proposed for division in a memorandum dated March 28, 1903, by Sir Andrew Fraser, who was acting as Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal. On December 12, 1903, Lord Curzon's first proposal for dividing India was published in the Gazette of India. Chota Nagpur was slated to be transferred to the Central Provinces, while Chittagong Division, Dhaka, Mymensingh district, and hill regions of Tripura were to be transferred to the state of Assam. Sambalpur, Ganjam, Visakhapatnam, and portions of Madhya Pradesh were transferred to Bengal in return. The strategy's political motivations became evident, as did the fact that it was based on the same "divide and rule" approach that the Raj frequently used to strengthen and extend his empire. O. H. In the words of H. Risley, "Bengal united is power; Bengal divided will pull several different ways." Consequently, the Bengali population was meant to be reduced to a minority in the two newly formed provinces in order to limit and diminish their power during the division. Muslims made up the bulk of the population in East Bengal, while speakers of Oriya and Hindi predominated in the province's western regions. This effectively cut off communication between Bengali Muslims and Bengali Hindus. The fact that the split was implemented with the aim of creating a new religious schism is adding fuel to the fire of animosity between Muslims and Hindus. The ultimate tool at everlasting imperialism's disposal was sowing discord between the two factions in an effort to weaken the foundations of national harmony and unity. Curzon had an underlying motivation to do the job in its entirety. The Bengalis, on the other hand, were not shy in voicing their disapproval, agitation, and opposition to the impending partition well before it was officially proclaimed in 1905.



THE ANTI-PARTITION MOVEMENT'S EARLY STAGES AND TAGORE'S CONTRIBUTION

As soon as the official news of the split was made, a fierce insurrection broke out among the people of the land. The Bengali, Amrita Bazaar Patrika, and The Hindu Patriot—three of Calcutta most prestigious periodicals—spoke out against the proposed split at the time. Nevertheless, it is sad that no protest, appeal, petition, or entreaty could change the choice that the government made. Attempts to convince the administration to reverse course were unsuccessful. Because of this, the already-irritated Bengalis developed a strong sense of nationalism, and the independence movement's battle picked up speed significantly. "We object to the proposed dismemberment of Bengal and we are sure that the entire country will rise as one man to protest against it," stated Surendranath Bannerjee, a well-known political leader also known as "Rashtarguru" in Sen 91. As of October 16, 1905, the anti-division protests were almost ready to come to a head. A statewide strike was called for and the day was declared a day of national mourning. This led to the closure of all businesses, the suspension of all public transit, and a general moratorium on food and drink. People marched barefoot through the streets, yelling "Vande Mataram" or "I bow to the Motherland." They took a dip in the holy Ganga River, and then, as a symbol of their unity, people of all castes and religions tied Rakhi knots on each other's hands. Famous poet and philosopher Rabindranath Tagore said that he merely wanted to spread "Education" and "Unity" by becoming a member of this group. In his mind, these were the sole two justifications that may permit him to do so. Invoking the spirit of national emotion inside each individual, Kaviguru created a surge of energy, vitality, strength, unity, and a desire for independence through the act of singing patriotic songs during a parade and tying Rakhi on everyone's hands. Therefore, Tagore's Banga Bibhag (Partition of Bengal) essay paints a clear and precise picture of how Visva Kavi changed the way this movement looked. Abanindranath, Tagore's nephew, writes of how that morning Tagore's presence shone a light on the national struggle in his novel Gharoya. A leading figure in the uprising was Tagore. It was his well-known Swadeshi song "Banglar Mati, Banglar Jol" (which translates to "The earth of Bengal, the water of Bengal") that became a symbol of the oneness that exists between Hindus and Muslims. The idea for this song came up during a meeting he hosted at the Sabitri Library on September 27th in honour of the Rakhi Bandhan holiday. The organisation of the meeting was his idea. The festival of Rakhi Bandhan, according to Tagore, is a celebration of oneness. Tagore also sent greeting cards and rakhis to a large number of his friends and acquaintances. From the Bhandar office located on Cornwallis Street, rakhi and rakhi strings were available for purchase. Anushilan Samiti's revolutionary leader Jibantara Halder deserves recognition in this regard. "In the year 1905, the heart touching patriotic songs of Tagore immensely influenced me" (Mitra 284), he said in an interview. Something needs to be said about this. Pronounced as "O my motherland! I bow to thee" in English, the phrase quickly became a symbol of the uprising. The revolutionary revolutionaries' intense feeling of patriotism is reflected in these songs, which are thought of as having a nationalist flavour. During this time of distress, Ramendra Sundar Trivedi advised the people of Bengal to refrain from expressing their sorrow. Before the assembly that had gathered to lay the cornerstone of Federation Hall, Ashutosh Chowdhury read from his declaration letter, which read, Whereas the Government has



thought it fit to effectuate the partition of Bengal. Thus, we solemnly declare and pledge that we, the people of this province, will do everything in our power to prevent the devastating effects of our province disintegration and to protect our racial identity. This is being done despite the fact that the whole Bengali population has spoken out against our province being divided. (Agarwal, 109). At the end of the gathering in which Tagore participated, the whole group marched from Upper Circular road to Bagh Bazar to pay a visit to the home of Pashupatinath Basu. Tagore accompanied the marchers the whole way. At this specific juncture, the partition did not lead to the split of Bengali society but rather the establishment of a swadeshi coalition through the strengthening of the political alliance between the leaders of Calcutta and their supporters in East Bengal. As far as the political system of Bengali society was concerned, this constituted a revolution .

THE ORIGINS AND EVOLUTION OF THE BOYCOTT AND SWADESHI MOVEMENTS

On July 13, 1905, an open letter expressing open animosity towards the British government and advocating for a boycott of their rule was published in the vernacular newspaper Sanjivan, edited by Krishna Kumar Mitra. The protest conference that was held on July 16 in Bagherhat town, in the Khulna region, became more intense as a result of the government's unfavourable decision. Under the direction of the Maharaja of Dinajpur, the formal declaration of the Swadeshi Movement and the rejection of the boycott resolution were adopted on July 21. All district board, municipality, and panchayet (village council) personnel, as well as honorary magistrate members, were ordered to resign. The grieving Bengalis will continue to observe a national mourning period for another year. This was the movement's agenda. Early on in the movement, a number of well-known individuals led a vigorous newspaper campaign against India's partition, including Motilal Ghosh, Surendranath Banerjee, Kali Prasad, and Prithwish Chandra Roy. The boycott's main economic tool was to discourage consumers from purchasing British products, which was intended to harm the country's economy. The Swadeshi helped revive Indian manufacturing and trade, just as the Boycott had a disastrous impact on the British economy. Students, women, lower-middle-class individuals, zamindars, and rural peasants were all actively participated in the movement, which led some to label it the first popular revolt. As attorneys stopped appearing in court, students stopped going to university, and Bengalis stopped wearing foreign clothes, the Swadeshi movement became a powerful anti-British force. The students were crucial because they participated actively in a variety of student organisations. Jugantar, Brati Samiti, Sanatan Samparadai, Bande Mataram, Dawn Society, and Anushilan Samiti were some of these organisations.

They were also in charge of socialising and bonafiring any foreign garments that were brought in. British officials were understandably alarmed by their efforts to spread the Swadeshi doctrine to even the most remote villages through a magical lantern of talks and swadeshi songs. Culturally speaking, swadeshi ushered in a new age for Bengali literary discourse. A number of well-known authors, including "Rabindranath Tagore, Rajanikanta Sen, Dwijendralal Roy, and Girish Chandra Ghosh, among others", were responsible for the composition of patriotic songs, plays, and essays that provided a fresh push to nationalist feelings. The poem "Amar Sonar



Bangla" written by Rabindranath served as a source of inspiration for the Bangladeshi independence struggle, and it was even chosen to serve as the national anthem of the country in 1971. Abanindranath Tagore broke the stronghold of Victorian realism over Indian art and sought inspiration from the indigenous tradition of Mughal, Rajput, and Ajanta painting. India adopted painting as its national art form. Nandalal Basu and Asit Halder created works of art that were bursting with patriotism. His name is Prafulla Chandra Ray, and he started the Bengal Chemical Factory. The Iron and Steel company was formed by J. N . Tata. The Bengal Laksmi Mill and the Mohini Mill were the two textile mills in Bengal that met the demand for fabric during the Swadeshi era. There were a variety of different companies that were founded, including banks, insurance agencies, shipbuilding enterprises, and others. Tagore presided over five separate assemblies during this time period, during which he gave speech after speech. In his enormous articles for Bhandar and Banga Darshan, he placed a major accent on the ideals of national consciousness and fraternity. Some of the Baul songs that were created during this time period are national hymns that are designed to promote a sense of national spirit. These melodies, composed by Kaviguru, showcase the breathtaking landscapes of Bengal. Others are patriotic tunes.

THE ANTI-PARTITION MOVEMENT'S SECOND PHASE

The anti-partition movement entered its second phase on October 22, 1905, when the Carlyle Circular was published in The Statesman newspaper. It was at this time when slavery was officially declared. Some others said that schools that participated in the campaign were essentially committing an act of disobedience and should be cut ties with. Protests over the Circular were the reason for the public meeting at Field and Academy House. In his scathing critique of the administration and subsequent passage of a motion to form the National Council of Education, Abdul Rasul presided over the meeting. Because this was a plea from the poet and not from any prominent politicians, Tagore was ignored despite his long-standing advocacy to prevent education from being included in government law. At a meeting that "Bhupendranath Basu, Krishna Kumar Mitra, Satish Chandra Mukherjee, Bipin Chandra Pal, Monoranjan Guha Thakurta, and Rabindranath" Tagore presided over, a swift conclusion was achieved. As stated in the resolution, the students would reject government institutions if required, but they would remain steadfast in their support of the Swadeshi movement. The students' enthusiastic commitment in the campaign was supported by Tagore, who was under the influence of alcohol. Additionally, in his piece called "Brata Dharan," he had the vision that women who might escape the shackles of home duty should be steadfastly linked to the national uprising. At the Dawn Society protest conference, the idea of national education was given further shape. In their respective opinions, Rabindranath, Hirendranath Dutta, and Satish Chandra Mukherjee discussed the subject. According to Tagore, the political elite would be compelled to create a national education system if students persisted in demanding the creation of national universities in the face of the widespread abuse and discrimination they endured at public universities. On the other hand, he cautioned against putting too much faith in these leaders. Moreover, he warned them not to follow the philosophy of provincial nationalism; if necessary, they were to go to England to accomplish their aims; and then, they were to spend the rest of their lives building a better world for the generations to come. On November 1st, it will be officially declared as



"Proclamation Day." Students in the Rangpur district took part in a protest by singing "Bande Mataram." This led to a fine of 5,000 rupees for more than 2,000 kids. That was done because Magistrate T. Emerson had ruled that shouting "Bande Mataram" in public places was a crime. It was often an erroneous portrayal of the occurrence when the phrase "mild lathi charge" was used to describe the attack on the cops. It was clearly not a minor occurrence, though, as the victims' open wounds made it clear.

A group known as the Anti-Circular Society was formed with the intention of combating the government's policy of regressing pupils. Enrollment at national institutions was encouraged by this society's pupils. In addition to Krishna Kumar Mitra being appointed treasurer, Sachindranath Basu was named editor, and Sukumar Mitra was named sub-editor, among the society members. The first national university was established at Rangpur when Brajasundar Roy and Kali Prasanna spearheaded its construction. A national university foundation committee was formed at the "Bengal Land Holder's Association House" after a few days. Some of the members of this circle included Tagore. Although Tagore was involved in many humanitarian projects and social activities, he had deep-seated disagreements with the Swadeshi leaders' worldviews and principles. A lot of their strategies, plans, and works were just a carbon copy of western models and ideas, and they didn't give a hoot about improving rural areas or fostering basic education or Swadeshi arts and crafts. He inspired the towns to build schools and roads, practice cooperative and multicrop farming, and put his principles into practice in his own special way. One of the Santiniketan idealists built Sriniketan and Visva Bharati University, two institutions that exemplify his philosophy of independence and progress. Finally, with the declaration of separation, the once-raging protest flames died down and became embers. The Partition of Bengal, the Swadeshi Movement, and the Boycott were three of the most pivotal moments in India's struggle for independence. Will Durant makes a compelling case that the revolutionary movement in India may have begun in 1905 due to the significance of that year. In his view, the Partition of Bengal was the earliest attempt by Indians to form a single, united country. The people learned from this conflict that believing in themselves and their abilities, rather than relying on mendicant politics, would help them achieve their goals.

THE CONCEPT OF PATRIOTISM AND NATIONALISM IN TAGORE'S FICTION

Both Ghare Baire (The Home and the World) and Char Adhyay (Four Chapters) detail the ways in which terrorism, exploitation, and violence became ritual acts when patriotic youths worshipped their motherland and sacrificed their human essence. There are four chapters in each of Tagore's works. The majority of activists (82%), as reported by the Raolat Report, were young adults (aged 18–30). In order to generate a productive flow of action for the liberation of society, this revolutionary force needed a passionate but organised drive; instead, as Tagore found out, it grew into a fragmented and totally disorganised movement. The second phase of the Bengali terrorist movement began at the same time as the novel Ghare Baire was nearing completion. Intimate contacts between Nikhilesh, his wife Bimala, and his friend Sandip are depicted throughout the attack of the Swadeshi movement. While being a patriot, Nikhil—Tagore's alias—believes that truth and conscience should take precedence over nation. According to him, "I am willing to serve my country; however, my worship I reserve for Right, which is far greater



than country." Invoking a curse onto my nation is tantamount to treating it as a deity. This is 116. Tagore was vehemently opposed to the idea of elevating the nation to a divine status, since this would lead to the nation being worshipped as an ideal that could never be improved upon. Nikhil, like Tagore, a true nationalist, centred his work on bettering society. In contrast, his magnetic companion Sandip, a Swadeshi leader who thinks that any sacrifice made for the nation's sake is justifiable, must set aside his morals to act. "Humanism ought to be burned alive in the fire of the aimless enthusiasm of pseudo-nationalism," Sandip says, and he thinks it should be done. Sandip is cunning enough to incite the youth, but he is really just a con artist and opportunist masquerading as a leader. Unfortunately, despite stoking the political fire, the goal of national sovereignty and the political motivation behind it have been lost. Because of Sandip's pattern of Swadeshi movement, this resulted in this. Democracy had devolved into autocratic programmes, and the country's politics had crumbled into personal politics, as time passed. Sandip and other powerful people pushed communism, prejudice, and anarchy on purpose so that they might enrich themselves. Those of the lower income bracket are often the targets of revolutionary violence.

The entire idea and use of the word "swadeshi" is thus very ironic, given that the same individuals who were supposed to safeguard the people of the country inflicted unimaginable suffering on them. So, what Tagore was trying to say via Sandip was that this nationalist movement had misguided and often harmful intentions. Tagore would continue to denounce revolutionary nationalism and its reliance on violence, spectacle, and sloganeering in his last novel, *Char Adhyay*. One of the three main protagonists in the book—basically the story of a group of revolutionary terrorists in Bengal—is Atin, the son of a zamindar who has joined the fight due to his love for Ela. There are three primary characters in the book. Indranath has successfully recruited young guys and integrated them into their movement as the leader of the group. Ela and other beautiful young women like her are hand-picked to join the organisation using this strategy. Like Indranath, Atin gradually realises that he is losing touch with his true humanity and nature as time goes on. With his statement, "I'm here because it becomes me; either victory or defeat will be equally great," Indranath expresses his desire to become a legendary character, a great man. He is more focused on being an exceptional person in his own right. The colonial rulers tried to make me look smaller than I am by closing the doors on all sides. Even though I will fail miserably at every stage, I have resolved to prove to them that I am extraordinary. You can see how these followers have come to me at my request, unconcerned about the repercussions of their behaviour, because I can call. the sixth (196) Therefore, a need for power drives his leadership. At Indranath's behest, Atin carries out Ela's death, the last stage of his degradation. Through this piece of literature, Tagore illustrates how young people, when moved to fervent patriotism, lose touch with their humanity. In addition to depicting the revolutionaries' criminal underworld, the story's four chapters show how their humanism-related frustrations, disappointments, humiliations, and sacrifices ultimately led to their downfall. So, rather of inspiring true patriotism, the inflated claims of nationalist leaders like Sandip and Indranath inspire indifference.

Another of Tagore's works that addresses patriotism and nationalism is the highly acclaimed book *Gora*. The story's protagonist, Gora, first came across as a racist and xenophobe Hindu



nationalist. He turned into a mindless zealot because he was devoted to serving India by preserving its caste system, customs, and superstitions. Despite being born in Ireland and raised by Krishnadayal and Anandamoyi, Gora had no idea that they reared him in a Hindu household. Herein is the situation's irony. Conversely, upon coming to this realisation, he starts to value authentic human identity and spirit and elevates the idea of globalism. Finally, at the end of the novel, Gora says to Anandamoyi, "You are my true mother!" as she reaches out and touches his feet. The mother was waiting for me at my own home, even though I searched everywhere. You show zero tolerance for bigotry, casteism, or disdain for any person. To be exceptional, you are the very definition. You personify Bharatvarsha in my eyes. the number of A A human embodiment of Bharatvarsha (India), Gora's mother is praised in the book for her integrating, loving, and nondiscriminatory character. She embodies all that is universal: humanity, love, and inclusivity. Patriotism and religion, according to Tagore, are not fixed traits that a person innately possesses but are, instead, shaped by his upbringing and experiences. He achieves this by introducing the ridiculous situation of a white man who has an unbridled love for Hinduism and his birthplace. Tagore uses this tale to show how he became more internationalist and less nationalistic.

CONCLUSION

The Partition of Bengal survivors' accounts show how complicated human emotions can be in reaction to major historical events. As a result of the profound psychological impact it had on the local population, the division changed the region's political climate for decades and helped shape the identities of those who lived through it. The words of those who survived the Partition of Bengal are powerful and compelling because they convey a powerful blend of human resilience, pain, and the indomitable spirit of the human race. There will always be echoes of the division in the collective memory of everyone who lived through that tumultuous times since it was a watershed moment that changed people's lives irrevocably. Thus, the Partition of Bengal stands as the nation's most momentous and politically charged event, sparking Hearted debates across the whole country. It was also during this period that the Boycott and the Swadeshi movement began to gain traction. Spreading across the nation, the Swadeshi message and phrase could be seen in places like Rawalpindi, Kangra, Jammu, and Haridwar. The movement was carried to the Madras presidency by Chidambaram Pillai. Ajit Singh, Syed Haidar Raza, and Lala Lajpat Rai were among the nationalists who expanded the movement's reach to Delhi, North India, and Punjab. Without a doubt, the movement was going through a slump in 1908 due to the political swadeshi, which signified a shift from nonviolence to violence and from mass mobilisation to elite action. In their failed efforts to gain independence, the radical political movement tried to establish a new political organisation and devised a lofty strategy for an armed revolution. Tagore claims that he had an overwhelming need to travel to the Andalan while the movement was in its early stages. He thought this Anti-Partition movement would provide a fresh avenue for the struggle for spiritual emancipation in his motherland via the unity of humanity.



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