***The separation of Bengal***

Curzon announced the partition of Bengal. The reason for partition was given as an attempt to improve administration. But the real aim was to ‘Divide and Rule’. The partition was done in order to create a separate State for Muslims and so introduce the poison of communalism in the country. However the Indians viewed the partition as an attempt by the British to disrupt the growing national movement in Bengal and divide the Hindus and Muslims of the region. Widespread agitation ensued in the streets and in the press. People of different parts of India opposed the partition of Bengal all over the country. This opposition was carried on by organized meetings, processions and demonstrations etc. Hindus and Muslims tied *‘rakhi’* on each other’s hands to show their unity and their protest.

The use of Swadeshi (made in our own country by our own people) goods, business, national education and Indian languages were encouraged. The new nationalist spirit of self reliance- shed the fear of repression including imprisonment and painful torture by the British rule. It was Bal Gangadhar Tilak who realized the importance of boycott as a weapon that could be used to paralyze the whole British administrative machinery in India. The boycott and Swadeshi movements were instrumental in the establishment of swadeshi enterprises - textile mills, banks, hosiery, tanneries, chemical works and insurance companies. Swadeshi stores were opened. Volunteers supplied goods at the doorstep of every household. The movement spread to all classes and groups of people. Everyone, including women and children, came forward to take part. The most active were school and college students. This made the British reverse the partition of Bengal and unite it in 1911. During this time, the role of Radical Nationalists in the Indian National Congress, who were called the *‘Garam Dal’,* came to be appreciated. They tried to involve people from all classes and groups including peasants, worker, students as well as women. They succeeded in uniting the Indian people against the common enemy - the British. The young people were roused to the highest level of patriotism and zeal to free their country. They helped in making people self confident and self reliant. They also revived the Indian Cottage industry.