

392/09/05/16

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Title: The First Partition of Bengal and the Problematic of Indian Nationalism: A Study of Select Bangla Writings (1905-1916)

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The present thesis focuses on responses to the first Partition of Bengal to understand the problematic of Indian nationalism. Based on Hayden White's proposal that literature narrates the 'real' history of the people, the thesis studies the Partition of 1905 and its responses through the literary representations in Bangla. The Partition and Bengal was the focal point until the advent of Gandhi into Indian politics (1917) and the announcement of the Non-Cooperation Movement (1920). Hence, the present thesis analyses Bangla writings produced between 1905 (implementation of the Partition) and 1916 (publication of Tagore's Partition novel *Ghare Baire*). This period is referred to as the Partition era.

The thesis is divided into five chapters, followed by a Conclusion and an Appendix. The first chapter titled "Understanding Nationalism and the Problematic of Indian Nationalism: An Introduction" is an attempt to place the work in perspective by looking at the concepts of nation and nationalism through available theories and historiographies. The second chapter titled "Bengal and Its People: A Historical Perspective on First Partition of Bengal" studies the emergence of various pro- and anti-Partition response through a study of the ethnographic history of Bengal.

The third chapter titled "Discourses of Contradiction: A Study of Select Songs, Poems and Plays" attempts to study Bengali writings, specifically poems, songs and plays, in order to trace the varied ideologies which emerged in the wake of the Partition. The fourth chapter, "Bengali Communities and Nationalist/ Counter-Nationalist Ideologies: A Study of Select Bangla Prose Writings" studies the prose writings of select Muslim, Hindu and Brahma writers who chose the genres of the short story, novel and non-fictional prose writings like memoirs, essays and articles, to express their response to the Partition. Writings by Girish Chandra Ghosh (*Chatrapati Shivaji*), Dwijendralal Ray (*Mevar Patan*), Kaliprasanna Kabyabisharad (*Chandi*), Jashomalini Devi (*Poojar Chithi*), Sakharam Ganesh Dueskar (*Deshar Katha*), Mohammad Nurul Haq (*Aakarshan*), Ebne Ma'az (*Bangabibhag o*

*Swadeshi Andolan*”), Khairnessa Khatoon (“*Swadeshanurag*”), Rabindranath Tagore (*Gora*, *Ghare Baire*, *Prayaschchitta*), among others have been studied in these two chapters.

In order to study the response of the rural-based lower castes/ class community to the political upheaval in Bengal, the fifth chapter titled “The Masses and the Classes: A Study of Folk Literature and the 1905 Partition of Bengal” studies the traditional Bangla folklore available during the Partition era. *Baul* songs by Panju Shah, Duddu Shah, Lalon Shah and *Jatra* plays by Motilal Kabyakanta (“*Ramraja*”) and Mukunda Das (“*Matripuja*”) have been included. The chapter also analyses the experimentations with folklore done by the urban literati, like Ramendrasundar Trivedi (*Bangalakshmir Bratakatha*), Dakshinaranjan Mitra Majumdar (*Thakurmar Jhuli*), to propagate Swadeshi ideologies amongst the masses. The chapter concludes that the lower caste peasantry focussed more on social issues than on elitist and political ones, thereby, re-iterating the fact that the Swadeshi Movement was neither pan-Bengali, nor did it carry a pan-Indian sentiment.

The Conclusion closes the discussion on the varied responses that the first Partition of Bengal received from the Bengalis in the form of pro-Partition and anti-Partition movements/ ideologies. Based on the study of the Swadeshi Movement as the proto-type of the derivative model of Indian National Movement, it is concluded that the problematic of Indian nationalism arises owing to the revival of the pre-modern Hindu-elitist patriarchal order leading to the revival of the pre-modern/ pre-political social differences in the political arena. The pro-Partition responses of the Muslim community, through the Muslim League, and of the lower castes/ class through the Namasudra Movement, and the marginalisation of the women in the nation imagined by Indian nationalism are the manifestation of the social differences in the political sphere. Tagore’s universalism is therefore a plea to break away from the limitedness of nationalism and create a universal world order.

The Appendix is a collection of Bangla writings, advertisements and visual art produced during the Partition era. Most of the texts included in the Appendix have been studied in the thesis through their English translations.