

OUR VIDESHI (IMPORTS) ARE THEIR SWADESHI WOMEN AND THE IDEAS OF THE SWADESHI IN COLONIAL ASSAM

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ABSTRACT

The question of Swadeshi in a provincial context like in colonial Assam had to negotiate with several dilemmas. The issues of nationalism both economic as well the cultural, which might appear trivial at the wider context of the country had played significant role in moulding the identity of modern Assam. The question of modernity versus traditions also played their parts in it.

KEYWORDS: *Nationalism, Sub-Nationalism, Traditional Industries, Imports, Swadeshi*

INTRODUCTION

The emergence of the Swadeshi movement played a significant role in the growth of a new phase of the nationalist movement in India. Although it started with a regional issue, the Partition of Bengal in 1905 on religious line by the colonial state it was able to create a pan Indian appeal through the ideologies and activities which had far-reaching impacts in the different spheres of the Indian life. The Movement helped the Indian nationalists to see the potentialities for the alternative agendas for the attaining the goals for the future course of action. For the first time, the nationalists felt the need to involve the Indian masses and particularly the women in its programme. Moreover, the Movement encompassed such wide areas of agendas and activities from politics, to economic, social and cultural that it is difficult to make a proper assessment of it.

But, the issues of Swadeshi although agreed by the diverse sections of the Indian Nationalists in principle it also had several contestations as well as ambiguities. For example, whether Swadeshi meant idealization or priority of a particular community against the interests of the others? As the Swadeshi Movement encouraged native industrialization it also created contests whether in the name of it the movement discouraged the indigenous crafts of the other communities, who are yet to be industrialized by the natives, like in the case of Assam. Since the colonial period was also the formative period of modern nationality formation, in the different parts of the country which, relied heavily on the linguistic nationalism due to the diversity of the population, the requirements of the Swadeshi was felt differently. In fact, these contestations did not create a major obstacle in the National Movement under the leadership of M.K. Gandhi who gave more priority to the traditional weaving of cotton than industrialization. But at the same time, many of his close colleagues like J. L. Nehru (who was inspired by the contemporary models of developments of Soviet Russia) had several doubts about the Gandhian model of Swadeshi without involving the emerging native large scale industries.¹ As a result, by 1934, there emerged a new wing within the Congress, known as the as the Congress socialists who argued that along with

agriculture and the traditional crafts, emphasis should also be on the growth of native large-scale industries, against the competitions of the British industries.

In a colonial experience of Assam, the Swadeshi Movement had to renegotiate not only with the Assamese culture and the economy which was becoming more dependent on the west. Charu Gupta has shown in the context of the modern Uttar Pradesh how the ideals of the Swadeshi Movements had influenced the agendas of women's dress.² The women's tasks were not only limited to their own dressing only in cotton, ignoring the fashions but also to ensure that the men should also do the same. The west was sought to be portrayed not only different but also 'bad' as a cultural practice. Educated women became the subject of discussion among the nationalists who were depicted as more prone to the imitation of the western fashions. Therefore, there were demands that the education system between the men and the women should be different so that they can fulfill their particular gender roles so that they can perform their gendered social roles efficiently.³

The relationship between the Swadeshi ideologies and the Indian National Congress is interesting. It was a spontaneous reaction from the people of Bengal and the agendas for the Movement were sketched and the Indian National Congress became a divided house after the Surat Split in 1907. Again till 1920, there were no branches of the Congress in the valley and the leading representatives of the province were the Assam Association (1903) which was moderate in their agendas and was less serious about the partition of Bengal. In the same year (1905) Assam was amalgamated to East Bengal (modern Bangladesh) till 1911 when the partition was revoked. This meant Assam lost its privileged position as an independent province and till 1911 the interests and the agendas of the province remained marginal in the wider contexts of the newly created province of the East Bengal and Assam. Obviously, there were differences of opinions regarding the validity of the partition in the contexts of the Brahmaputra valley. Even among the units of the Assam Association which tried to link the districts as its constituent units. For example, the Dibrugarh unit which was under North Lakhimpur District viewed that partition could benefit the growth of the tea industry as it opened the seaports of Bengal, through the river networks. Similarly, the Goalpara unit also believed that by linking up the jute producing areas of Bengal it would create benefits to the newly emerging jute productions of the district.⁴

In colonial Assam, the term Bengali was universally applied to any people who came from the western side of the valley. Even the British were also called as 'Baga Bengal' (White Bengalis). It was largely due to the geographical position of the valley which is landlocked and even to the outsiders; particularly to the people of Bengal Assam was a mystical land full of black magic. At the same time, Assam was also had the sacred shrine of the Kamakshya which many people wanted to visit. In order to demystify these Haliram Dhekial Phukan, one of the earliest proponents of the western interactions wrote two books, one a history, Assam Buranji (1829) written in Bengali and the other in Sanskrit, Kamrup Yatra Paddhati (Ways to Reach Kamrup or Assam) in Sanskrit.

The colonial policy of recruiting Bengali officials after the annexation of the province in 1826 in place of the natives (as there were very few natives who were literate) and the replacement of the Assamese as the official language of the province from 1836-1873 created several misgivings among a large sections of the people, against the Bengali community. The situation did not change when Assam was made a separate province in 1874 but added Sylhet, a province of Bengal in 1867. It created a valley rivalry which continued till 1947 when a large of the erstwhile Sylhet was again transferred to East Pakistan, modern Bangladesh. In fact, one of the key issues between the two rival nationalities was that

due to the diversity of the population both relied heavily on linguistic identities. The Colonial Census operations further complicated the issue as it tried to show the numbers of the respective people speaking the particular language. The situation is not satisfactorily settled as Assam is one of the unique provinces in the country which follows two official languages in the two valleys, the Assamese in the Brahmaputra valley, the Bengali the in the Barak valley.

The term Swadeshi is applied in the paper is not confined within the context of the Movement (1905-11) but to the wider meaning of economic emancipations or nationalism which implied that the regenerations of the traditional crafts of weaving as well as its adoption by the majority of the people can actually challenge the foreign imports into the province. At the same time, the natives (particularly the educated middle class) This emphasis was not limited to the period of the Movement in which the Assamese women had very limited exposures but, in the long run as its agendas were adopted by the Indian National Congress under the leadership of Gandhi in all the strategies adopted during the Indian National Movement for Independence.

The present paper tries to see the impacts of the Movement in the Brahmaputra valley as the discourse was limited to it. In the Barak valley, it had a different story. The issue of sub-nationalism played active roles in the determinations of the issues that emerged. The issue became more interesting as it assigned new ideals and responsibilities to the Indian women, who not only had to maintain the tradition and forsake the use of imported luxury items but for the first time was expected to weave for the nation, besides participating in the movement in their gendered roles. Moreover, the emphasis of the movement was basically on cotton how it tried to situate silk for which the province was known from the earlier times?

Swedish and Dress

The dress was one of one of the important parameters for the Indian nationalists for its cause against the British Drain of Wealth. From the days of Dadabhai Naoroji to R.C. Dutt the import of foreign cloth was repeatedly questioned. Through the use of statistics and other records, the Indian nationalists tried to show how the increasing imports of foreign cloths led to the Deindustrialization of the traditional handicraft based Indian industries. They were concerned that the increase of the British exports of finished cloths to India was also due to the change of taste of the emerging Indian middle class, who wanted to imitate the taste of the colonial ruling classes, popularised by the western education. Historian Bipan Chandra used the term 'Economic Nationalism' to mean the understandings of the educated natives about the causes of the poverty of the nation. In other words, the Indian nationalists in their quest for the cause of the poverty of the nation identified the British imports into the country as a major factor.

As alternatives, the nationalists began to appeal the masses through platforms like the contemporary newsmagazines to reduce or stop the use of foreign imported cloths. The volume of the imported cloths into the country was such that the Indian National Congress who utilized boycott against it as a strategy had to continue until the Quit India Movement (1942), beginning with the Swadeshi Movement. Tirthankar Roy shows how the British firms tried to incorporate the native motifs to fight against it.⁵

In colonial Assam, the issue became more complicated as in absence of any major industries apart from the tea and mining it had to depend exclusively on imports for nearly everything. Moreover, colonial Bengal also became major concerns for the educated Assamese middle class as they had to contest for the limited available jobs of the colonial government and this became more contentious when in 1867 Sylhet was added to the province by the colonial government

to add more revenue paying people in the population deficit province. This rather complicated the issue and it remained contentious till 1947. A valley rivalry developed in the province which made the situation more complicated. At the same time, the Assamese middle class began to develop a concept which tried to show that the colonial state's policy of the introduction of the Bengali as the official language of the province from 1836 to 1974 when Assam was separated from Bengal was due to the vested interests of the Bengalis who wanted to monopolise the government jobs. This issue is known as the Language Controversy and even now it can be visible in the province. The Assamese educated middle class was very much influenced by the contemporary Bengal Renaissance but at the same time, they were also critical about the Bengali cultural influences. The introduction of the Census operations by the colonial state from 1871 further complicated the issue as it tried to show in figures the percentage of the particular language speaking people. This was also complicated by the efforts of a section of the Bengali educated men who in order to show the inflated numbers of the Bengali speaking people tried to regard the Assamese language as a dialect of Bengali. Against this trend, Lakshminath Bezbarua consistently fought, although he himself married a Bengali lady, Pragjnsundari Devi from the famous Tagore family.

Sari versus Chador Mekhela

The issue of sari became one of the important debates among a section of the Assamese educated middle class. Due to the influence of the Bengal Renaissance and the rapid immigration into the province by the various sections of the people from Bengal and the other parts of the country, the use of sari was gradually increasing. This was viewed as a danger to the traditional handicraft based industries of the province. There was also concern about the increasing popularity of the industrial goods among the people. Moreover, by the second half of the 19th century, there was also a reaction against the Babu/Bibi culture among the people of Bengal. In fact, there were differences among the urban and rural as well as literate and illiterate apart from caste and class issues in contemporary Bengal. These factors also influenced the mindsets of the Assamese elites.

Sari is the traditional dress among the Bengali women. But, in the 19th century, there were concerns among the educated middle class even in Bengal about the issues of modesty as there was no practice of using undergarments. There were several debates on how to make it more acceptable to the middle-class mentality.⁶ Later, Jnanandanandini Devi, wife of Satyendranath Tagore, elder brother of Rabindranath was instrumental largely instrumental in introducing the concepts of innerwear's like the blouse, petticoat and chemises, which became popular among the women at large, and sari became more respectable. Interestingly, these inner wears were English in origin which made sari more in tune with modernity and gradually they were increasingly adopted by the majority of the women.

In colonial Assam, a section of the educated middle class began to view the use of sari with doubts or suspicions. By the second half of the 19th century, the linguistic national identity began to take a more definite shape in Assam which necessitated a new cultural identity for the province as well for the people. As in the other parts of the country, it was on the shoulders of the Assamese women who were entrusted with the task of the maintenance of tradition. Therefore, they tried to create an ideal or respectable alternative for the native women, not only against the sari but also to re-emphasize the uniqueness and superiority of the traditional crafts, and to mark a special identity for the Assamese community as a whole. This involved marking the difference between contemporary Bengal and Assam. The issue became more intense as there were more similarities between the two nationalities than differences.

Sari proved to be the best example. Although sari was manufactured traditionally with cotton fabrics, the increasing popularity of the chiffon and georgette among the women due to their comforts and conveniences compared to cotton made them popular among the Indian women, from the Maharani's to those who could afford it. This demand was met by the growth of the large-scale industries as well as imports. The case of Maharani Gayatri Devi proves the point.⁷

Satyanath Bora, in his satirical article, '*Chorangchowar Guptakatha*' (Secrets of the Spy) published in the '*Usha*' Vol.III No. X, 1904, ridiculed the attitudes of the new educated middle class towards the 'sari'. In order to emphasize his arguments, Bora invented the story of the origin of 'sari', whereby in the Heaven the prostitutes were dressed in 'sari' to differentiate between the Goddesses and them. To him, those Assamese men who promote it were no less than 'bastards' and should be socially boycotted. In his another article 'Chahabani' (Western Women) published in the '*Jonaki*' in Vol.II No. XII 1890 and in 'Asomar Unnati' (Our Progress) he ridiculed the tendencies of the educated section to become like the Europeans through dress. Here also there was a miserable failure on their part. But at the same time, Ratneshwar Mahanta however, viewed that the European dresses like the gowns are more modest than the Assamese mekheles as there was no practice of under dresses among the Assamese women. He argued that that the Assamese rural women were maintaining the true spirits of the Assamese womanhood through his poem '*Gaonliya Bowari*' (Village Women) published in the '*Assam Bandhu*' in Vol.I. No. VII, 1885.

Panindranath Gogoi in his article in *Jonaki* Vol. II Nos-VI/VII, 1890, 'Amar Unnati ne Abanati' (Our Progress or Decline?) argued that lack of proper education and neglect of the traditional teachings made the Assamese women lazy and weak and they became easily influenced by the alien fashions like wearing of the sari. Although he did not mention the influences of the Bengali novels in the changing attitudes of the Assamese women to sari it was noticed by Lombodar Bora in his satirical article, Sadanandar Natun Abhidhan (New Dictionary of Sadananda) in which he mentioned that by using imported cloths the Assamese women would forget the art of weaving and they will become lazy, 'light-minded, wicked and rough'.⁸In other words, new education and luxuries according to him had the danger of eliminating the feminine qualities of the women. He was inspired by the writings of Dinabandhu Mitra and Bankimchandra Chatterjee, who creatively utilized satire as a part of the social critique. Later, Lakshminath Bezbarua also used this genre to focus on other issues.

But, gradually the Assamese middle class also began to appreciate the need of undergarments to modify the traditional Chador Mekheles worn by the Assamese women. Ratneshwar Mahanta although he did not specify it was in the line of this. Later Sonaram Choudhury also argued in this line in his article 'Vastra' (Dress) published in the '*Awahan*' Vol. I. No. IV 1932. He noted that the wearing of the sari was basically limited among the poorer section of the Assamese people as they could not afford the cost of cotton. He was content that among the higher castes of the Lower Assam the women were still using the traditional cotton attires.

Swadeshi and Cotton

The issue of cotton played a vital role in the issue of the swadeshi. The Indian nationalists targeted it as a prime weapon against the British imports. India was the largest importer of British manufactured cotton while Britain had no sources of its own cotton. This dichotomy was questioned by the Indian nationalists as by 1854 the beginning of the modern cotton industry was started in the country in Mumbai, followed by in the other areas. As the new India was aspiring to become economically self-sufficient with the new Industrialization the colonial state as the British industrial

interests were in no mood to relent. This complexity can be seen in the question of the tariffs. While the colonial state was facing acute shortages of revenue due to the liberal trade policies towards the British industries the later wanted complete Free Trade.

In colonial Assam in absence of any industrialization apart from tea and coal, it had to rely on imports both from Britain as well as the Indian industries. Naturally, the Assamese elites were in a dilemma how to situate themselves in the changing dynamics. Till 1920s the impacts of the agendas of the Indian National Congress was limited and the provincial issues dominated more spaces in the politics of the valley. This however, does not mean that the Assamese educated middle class was unaware about the major issues of the country. This was reflected in the contemporary newsmagazines who continuously updated about the latest events of the country. The issue of cotton was such an issue.

But, at the same time, cotton was less available to the majority of the people in the pre-colonial or the early colonial period. It became widely available into the province due to the imports both, Indian and the British and in fact, the British rule in the country saw the extension of cultivation of the crop. The particular climatic conditions of the province did not offer scopes for the cultivation of the crop with some exceptions like in the Garo Hills.⁹ This does not mean that cotton was not cultivated in Assam at all or the Assamese people were unaware about it. Cotton is more comfortable for the daily usages than the silk. The Gamocha, not only serves as a symbol of respect for the elders as well as for welcoming the guests but also offered during all ceremonies like Pujas, wedding and toiletry use.

Swadeshi and Silk

The issue of silk was a problematic issue in the discourse on Swadeshi in colonial Assam. The province is known from times immemorial about its silk products. The Swadeshi Movement basically emphasized in cotton which was becoming more popular among the masses in the province only in the colonial period due to increased supply both from British industries as well as the Indian. The colonial government made several efforts to produce high yielding varieties of silk in the province in order to manage the growing demands of the British silk industries about the raw materials. But it had limited success in this regard.¹⁰

Swadeshi and the National Enterprise

One of the prime agendas of the Swadeshi Movement was to instill the spirit of enterprise among the Indian people. In this respect, several industries were set up with the Swadeshi agendas like the Bengal Chemical Works under the initiative of the famous scientist, J. C. Bose. In fact, the period also marked as a stepping stone to mark the second phase of the Indian Industries growth due to the complexities of the First World War (1914-1918) when imports from Britain was stopped. How colonial Assam responded to this advantage? In colonial Assam, it did not help in the growth of any native industry, but rather invoked a question which reemphasized the conditions of the traditional handicraft based industries.

Padmanath Gohain Baruah who was a loyalist to the colonial regime, in his Editorial in the 'Usha', 1904 argued that Assam should not learn anything from contemporary Bengal as the art of weaving was universally practiced by every section of the society, irrespective of the caste divide. In fact, the art of weaving was so common among the Assamese that those women who could not master it had no chances of marriage. It was a serious issue in other parts of the country where the art of weaving was limited to particular castes of the people.

Lakshminath Bezbarua criticised the attitude of a section of the Assamese youths who were publicly in support of the Swadeshi Movements agendas of boycotting foreign cloths but privately they adorned their wives with the imported cloths. In fact, the Swadeshi Movement had limited impacts in the Brahmaputra valley compared to the Barak valley or Sylhet as the issue of the Partition of Bengal (1905) which was the immediate cause of the Movement had less appeal to the Assamese men. The Assamese men educated middle class was not only concerned about their limited agendas in the valley but also with the issues of loyalty to the Crown. Therefore, no major contemporary literati figure openly supported the Movement. The best examples, in this regard, are, Rajanikanta Bordoloi, Sarat Chandra Goswami and Lakshminath Bezbarua. This obviously does not mean that their ideas of nationalism were limited but they did not want to openly confront with the colonial government. They politically or ideologically conformed to the Congress Moderates and therefore, believed that the time was not ripe for any mass-based movement.

One of the crucial issues regarding Swadeshi in the valley as well as the entire province was the lack of industrialization apart from the tea and the coal industries, which were in the hands of the Europeans. The province remained rural and dependent till Independence (and even at the present time) to the industrial imports from outside.

Swadeshi and the Re-Evaluation of National Culture

The Swadeshi Movement also generated the question of self-independence. As mentioned earlier, the Assamese nationalists who were not directly involved with the agendas and programmes of the Indian National Congress or the Swadeshi leaders had different agendas cantering on the interests of the valley. This demanded a new re-evaluation of Swadeshi in the province. In this process the question of the unique identity of the province (or the Valley) became necessary. By the second half of the 19th century, the impacts of the Bengal Renaissance was being questioned in Bengal through the popular genres like the Babu/Bibi cultures. As Lisa Trivedi argues these criticisms of the contemporary middle-class society was not free from the caste, class as well as the urban and the rural divides.¹¹

In colonial Assam also there were doubts about the colonial modernity which was acquired through the prism of contemporary Bengal. This was given a new fillip by the contemporary question of the Language Controversy. One of the critical issues in the controversy was that both the Assamese and the Bengali nationalists relied on languages as the prime marker of identity as both of them were divided into diverse lines, like race, ethnicity, cultures etc.¹² At the same time, colonial Assam had to face or to speak in the present tense became a dumping grounds of refugees from the neighbouring provinces and the countries. The recent issues of the Hindu Bangladeshi's and the Rohingiyas are the best example.

Swadeshi and the Women

Since the issue of the women is intricately linked up with the question of nationality there was a new demand placed on the shoulders of the Assamese women to maintain the traditional crafts in order to maintain the identity of the Assamese nation. Therefore, a reinviorgated demand was placed for the women not only to boycott the imported cloths which also included the factory manufactured cloths by the Indian owned mills as well as the British ones. The women organizations as well as the women's newsmagazines like the '*Ghar Jeuti*' therefore, increasingly began to demand that the native women should renounce the 'luxury' of the imported cloths as well as the cosmetics. A kind of comparisons and contrasts between the lifestyles of the urban and the rural was used to emphasize the differences goals of Swadeshi and

colonial dominance and dependence. Interestingly, when the difference between the urban and the rural divide was made it was ideally located at Kolkata as the very concept of urban was experienced by only a few select class of women who had the access to visit any metropolitan cities like Kolkata. As late as in 1926, when Assam hosted the Congress session in Pandu, Guwahati which became the capital of the province in 1974 was still a big village. The Assamese women continued their traditional crafts of weaving even though they had to settle in any emerging towns. Pranabjyoti Deka, shows how his mother who had the experience of settling in Kolkata when she returned to Guwahati continued her skills in weaving. This was not the exceptional case in Guwahati but can be located throughout the valley.

With these agendas, obviously, the Assamese women and the women's organizations began to appeal the women to join in the National Movement. While, M.K. Gandhi's appeal to the Indian women as well as the men to use the 'Charkha' as a symbol of the Swadeshi it did not take much time to appropriate this to the contemporary Assamese situations. Since, the Assamese women practicing weaving as a part of their life the emphasis on weaving by the agendas or the programmes of the Indian National Movement under the guidance of the Congress, they became more enthusiastic to this. This is clearly reflected in the pages of the 'Ghar Jeuti' the first Assamese newsmagazine which within its brief existence (1927-33) also became the mouthpiece of the Assam Pradeshik Mahila Samiti, the branch of the Assamese women in the Congress. The issue became more important when in the particular contexts of the province the duty of weaving was also placed on the men by the agendas of the Indian National Congress. In other words, from the gender stereotyped roles of the women on whom the art was basically confined now demanded the men to do so. Did it change the gender roles? Obviously not in the Assamese or the Indian contexts. In other words, since the Assamese women were already involved with the issue of Swadeshi through the maintenance of the tradition of weaving did it made the men to escape with the issue? It remains a serious question of debate as neither the Assamese women tried to argue on it. The introduction of the 'Charkha' was new to the province and although, it made spinning less easier, did it free the Assamese nationalist's men from its actual practices? The answer is problematic as there were few available references about it. So the question of any change in the gendered division of labor did not emerge in colonial Assam. In other words, the task of weaving for the cause of the nation was continued by the women. At the same time, whether the Assamese women were prepared to make any radical change to their gendered roles in the society? As the issues were highlighted in the 'Ghar Jeuti' and even in the 'Awahan' the Assamese women internalized the ideals of the Swadeshi as their personal or individual agenda rather than the nation as a whole. In fact, whether the practice of weaving by the men as popularised the pictorial depictions of Gandhi and the others are also not beyond questions. It seems particularly in the context of the province as only symbolic. The same can be extended to the rest of the country as the imports of the British cotton as well as the production of the Indian textile mills was continuously increasing in spite of the Gandhian emphasis on the Khadi. In fact, the Gandhian predicaments became apparent as the Indian industrial interests also began to rely on the Congress for their own competition against the British goods in the expanding native markets, facilitated by the improvements in communication systems, like the railways and the road transports. Even among the Indian nationalists, there were concerns about the need to support the growth of the native industries. Noted historian S. Bhattacharya has shown Rabindranath Tagore, who otherwise supported the ideologies of the Swadeshi was uncomfortable with many of the ideas of Gandhi against industrialization in the country.¹³

The involvement of the men weavers in the Suwalkuchi based silk industry seems to be a recent development when the Assamese silk began to attract the attention of the outside world towards it. But, at the same time there is also a caste called the 'Katani' who in the existing caste hierarchy occupied relatively inferior positions in the society. They were basically involved with the rearing of the cocoons as well as manufacturing silk threads, but not weaving. Yet this crucial effort did not enhance their caste positions in the society and remained marginal.

As a result, the issue of the Swadeshi as a practice, to a large extent was limited to the Assamese women. The Assamese women were situated in such a position in which they had only to fulfill the dictates of the men. The situation was not fundamentally different in the other parts of the region or the country as a whole.

CONCLUSIONS

The issue of the Swadeshi and the growth of the Assamese nationalism posed several important questions in terms of identifying the agendas of the Assamese women's agendas not only in the context of the ideology but also in terms of identifying as well as fixing the gendered positions of the Assamese women. The Assamese nationalists in order to provide any solution to it appealed the Assamese women to maintain their special qualifications as weavers or self-reliant against the increasing demands of the Swadeshi ideologies. As in the other parts of the country, it was fixed on the shoulders of the women to fit in the models whereby they had to avoid the use of the foreign imports which not only included cloths but also cosmetics and at the same time promoted Swadeshi by returning to swadeshi by involving in weaving. Therefore, the Assamese women's organizations as well as the print media unitedly supported the issue. The issue was not very difficult on the part of the Assamese women who were still maintaining the practices of weaving. In a sense, the Swadeshi ideas made the Assamese women more Swadeshi.

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2. *Accessed: 02-01-2018 10:58 UTC*
3. *This trend was later emphasised in the post-colonial India, inspired by the success of the contemporary Soviet model which tried to combine agriculture and the large scale industries as the economic driving force for the new nation.*
4. *Charu Gupta, "Fashioning' Swadeshi, Clothing Women in Colonial North India," The Economic and the Political Weekly, Vol.XLVII, No.42, October, 2012.*
5. *The issue of the proper education for the Indian women remained a critical issue during the colonial period, and the various women's organizations also began to advocate it. For details, see Geraldine Forbes, Women in Modern India, Cambridge University Press, 1999 (Indian Reprint), pp.*

6. For details see, A.C. Bhuyan and S. De ed., *The Political History of Assam*, Vol. 1978, Publication Board Assam, Guwahati.
7. For details see, Tirthankar Roy, "Traditional industry in Colonial India, Out of Tradition: Master Artisans and Economic Change in Colonial India" Author(s): *The Journal of Asian Studies* , Vol. 66, No. 4 (Nov., 2007), pp. 963-991 Published by: Association for Asian Studies Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20203238> Accessed: 24-05-2016 10:00 UTC, and Roy tried to show that the very concept of Deindustrialization is problematic as there were instances of interactions between the traditional handicraft based industries with the new technologies (although in most cases second hand purchases from Britain). Moreover, there were also the questions of consumer rationality where price of the commodity and quality or durability mattered. M.K Gandhi understood it and he advocated that since Swadeshi cottons were costlier one should use it in a lesser degree. Obviously it did not address the basic questions of the Indian women.
8. He developed his arguments in, *Economic History and Modern India: Redefining the Link*, *The Journal of Economic Perspectives*, Vol. 16, No. 3 (summer, 2002), pp. 109-130 Published by: American Economic Association Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3216953> Accessed: 24-05-2016 11:54 UTC
9. In the context of colonial Assam Deindustrialization is problematic as it is advocated by Priyam Goswami in her book, *The History of Assam, From Yandabo to Partition, 1826-1947*, Orient Blackswan, 2012. In colonial Assam there were imports and usage of imported cloths, but the relative economic backwardness of the province and the diversity of the people make it difficult to generalize the impacts of Deindustrialization. Sualkuchi (the hub of the Assamese silk industry) for example, would have not survived if one seriously takes Goswami's propositions. That, Sualkuchi could maintain its existence also meant the adoption of new techniques and market strategies to cope up with the challenges from others, both western and Indian. It is noteworthy that by the 20th century Sualkuchi businessmen could learn and practice the strategies to make their products as the representative of the Assamese silk cloths, both within the state and outside.
10. For details see, Himani Bannerji, "Attired in Virtue, Discourse on Shame (lajja) and Clothing of the Gentlewomen (bhadramahila) in Colonial Bengal, in *Inventing Subjects*," *Studies in Hegemony, Patriarchy and Colonialism*, Tulika Books, New Delhi, 2001, pp. 99- 134.
11. For details see, Maharani Gayatri Devi, *A Princes Remembers*, (1976) Rupa Books, New Delhi, 2011.
12. For details, see, Nanda Talukdar ed, *Lombodar Bora Rachanavali*, Publication Board Assam, 1977, p.62.
13. The issue of the Garo Hills is interesting in the colonial context. The colonial government viewed it as an alternative source of the American cotton as it suited the climatic conditions for the crop, and the issue of its annexation 186 was also dominated by this issue in the time of the American Civil War. But, colonial Assam failed to satisfy the needs of the colonial industrial needs as well as the expectations of the Assamese nationalists as it could not produce more as well as it did not fulfil the desired quality for the large scale industries.

14. *The contemporary record shows that the Assamese silk industry had no markets outside the province. For details see, THE INDIAN SILK INDUSTRY Author(s): H. Maxwell-Lefroy Source: Journal of the Royal Society of Arts, Vol. 65, No. 3355 (MARCH 9, 1917), pp. 290300 Published by: Royal Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41347244> Accessed: 03-07-2017 10:32 UTC*
15. *In 1916, according to the Reports of the Royal Society of Arts and published in March, 1917, Assam produced only 12000 lb of mulberry silk compared to Mysore which produced, 1152,000 lb and Bengal,60,000 lbs. It also indicated that Indian weavers were increasingly dependent on the Chinese sericulture to meet the growing demands. For details, see, "INDIAN INDUSTRIES: I.—Sericulture and Silk Manufacture Source," Journal of the Royal Society of Arts, Vol. 67, No. 3479 (JULY 25, 1919), pp. 579580 Published by: Royal Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41348027> Accessed: 03-07-2017 10:26 UTC*
16. *For details on the issue see, Rajen Saikia, Ssocial and Economic History of Assam, (1835-1921) Monohar Publishers, New Delhi, 2000, pp. 193-204. Language Controversy created a kind of demarcating point between the sari and the mekhela. The most classic example is Lakshminath Bezbarooah, who married a Bengali girl from the Tagore family of Bengal but, till the end of his life remained a champion of the indignity of the Assamese culture. Interestingly he may be compared with Bolinarayan Borah, the first civil engineer (from Liverpool) who also married a Bengali woman, but was more interested in amalgamating with the high cultural values of the Bengal Renaissance*
17. *Along with the question of language colonial Assam also had to face the problem of large scale immigrations, which is still a burning issue in the province. For details see, Kaustavmoni Boruah, "Foreigners in Assam and Assamese Middle Class," Social Scientist, Vol. 8, No. 11 (Jun., 1980), pp. 44-57 , Retrieved from, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3516752> Accessed: 03-07-2017 10:29 UTC.*
18. *Quoted in Lisa N. Trivedi, Virtually Mapping the "Nation : Swadeshi Politics in Nationalist India, 1920-1930," published in Journal of Asian Studies, Vol.62, No.1 (February 2003), pp.11-41, retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3096134>.*
19. *For details, see, S. Bhattacharya edited, Mahatma and the Poet, based on the select correspondences between Gandhi and Tagore, National Book Trust, New Delhi, 1997. Incidentally, it was Tagore who used the term 'Mahatma' to Gandhi for the first time, and it became popular among the masses.*

