



Research Paper

## Intellectual Biography of Bal Gangadhar Tilak

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### I. Introduction:

Bal Gangadhar Tilak is bestowed with many titles such as Lokmanya, The Lion of Maharashtra, Valentine Chirol called him 'the father of Indian unrest', Jawaharlal Nehru called him 'the father of the Indian revolution' and Gandhi called him 'the Maker of Modern India', all these titles signifies his contribution in the Indian National Movement. The Character of Lokmanya Tilak had a huge impact upon the national movement and he was instrumental in shaping the destiny of Modern India and bringing in Swaraj. Tilak was a great Sanskrit scholar, a powerful writer, and a strong, subtle and lucid thinker but more than anything else he was a foresighted political leader with the characteristics of a statesman. Sri Aurobindo in his appreciation of Tilak in the book containing the collection of Tilak's writing and speeches highlighted the role played by Tilak in giving directions to the Indian national congresswrites "The congress movement was for a long time purely occidental in its mind, character, and methods, confined to the English educated few, founded on the political rights and interests of the people read in the light of English history and European ideals, but with no roots either in the past of the country or in the inner spirit of the nation. He developed a language and a spirit and he used methods which Indianized the movement and brought into it the masses."<sup>1</sup>The story of Tilak is the story of India's Swaraj, of the Indian National Congress, coming to its adulthood, and of the rise of Indian masses for the first time in quest of Home rule and independence. Tilak like a true teacher throughout this difficult journey guided his followers towards the path of self-respect, discipline, nationalism, and freedom, and like a guardian beard all the troubles and pains realizing that "there are higher powers that rule the destiny of things and it may be the will of providence that the cause I represent may prosper more by my suffering than by my remaining free". Tilak is Acknowledged for bringing realist fervor to the National Movement, he was among the first set of mainstream political leaders in India who admitted that "The nation thinks not with the brain but with an overheated heart. It is only in the throes of tumult that nations are born."<sup>2</sup>

It is true that most of the time of Tilak's career was devoted to the cause of India's struggle for Independence but there are other aspects of his life that constituted a significant proportion of his personality. Apart from being a political activist, he was also a true scholar who wrote books such as The Orion or Research into The Antiquity of The Vedas (1893), the Arctic Home of Vedas (1901), and Geeta Rahasya (1915). His keen interest in Mathematics, law, and orientalism also brought fame for him. He often said that in an Independent India he would have chosen to remain in academics and pursue his interest in teaching and studies. His contribution to education is also noteworthy, he along with his friends established New English School, Deccan Society for Education, and Fergusson College, he also presented a blueprint Infront of the Hunter commission on education. He was a strategist and not a mere idealist and philosopher. This unique combination of being a Theorist and practitioner helped him in visualizing his agenda and implementing them simultaneously. Bal Gangadhar Tilak was a pioneer in inventing new ideas and strategies to strengthen the national movement, some of his major contributions are Swadeshi, Boycott and swaraj; decentralization of the provincial finance;Linguistic provinces, and federal structure; strategy of appealing to the masses: formation of Cooperative societies like the Bombay Swadeshi share capital stores ltd. In May 1906; senta permanent political mission in England; Establishing embassies in important countries such as the U.S.A, Germany, Japan, China. Etc.

Tilak never wrote an autobiography for his followers but there are several biographies of Tilak written by his close acquaintance like the one written by N.C. Kelkar, a close associate of B.G. Tilak and his coeditor in 'Kesari' and 'Maharatta', its English translation is done by D.V.Divekar and is available by the name 'Life and

<sup>1</sup>Pg.6, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, His Writings and Speeches. Ganesh & Co. Madras.

<sup>2</sup>Pg.244-245, ibid.

Times Of Lokmanya Tilak' (1928), another biography written by Tilak's school headmaster D.V. Athalye was published in the year 1921 with the title, 'The Life of Lokmanya Tilak', A.K. Bhagwat and G.P. Pradhan wrote 'Lokmanya Tilak A Biography'. Other significant works on B.G. Tilak are 'The myth of the Lokmanya' (1975) by Richard I. Cashman; 'Bal Gangadhar Tilak: a study (1956) by D.P. Karmakar; 'Tilak and Gokhale; revolution and reform in the making of modern India' (1962) by Stanley A. Wolpert etc.

### **Tilak's Brief Life Sketch:**

The life trajectory of Bal Gangadhar Tilak shows a unique coherence that is very rare to find. Tilak seems to be very steadfast with his approach and beliefs. Leaving a few things, he seldom changed his perspectives and methods. He, like a true Karma Yogi never deviated from his path whatsoever may be the consequences and no matter what repercussions he had to face for his actions and words. For the sake of convenience one can see his life within four different parts, namely, Early life (from birth till education, i.e. 1856- 1879), Public Awakening through education and press (1880-1890), Politics of radical nationalism, and propaganda (1890-1914), National leader and Home rule (1914-1920):

**1. Early Life (1856-1879):** Balwant Rao Tilak who later became famous as Bal Gangadhar Tilak was born on 23<sup>rd</sup> July 1856 in Chikhhalgaon in Dapoli Taluka of the Ratnagiri district of Konkan on the West Coast of India, this place is situated in present-day Maharashtra. He belonged to a middle-class family of modest means who were Chitpavan Brahmins by caste which hold significant social status in their society. The written records provide evidence about his family lineage of residing in Chikhhalgaon for more than 250 years, they also used to hold the 'Mamlatdari' of that area. His father Gangadhar Ramchandra Tilak popularly known as Gangadhar Shastri for his knowledge of Sanskrit was a learned man, who once aspired to attain higher education, but owing to the sad and early demise of her mother and renunciation (Sannyasa) of his father was forced to shoulder the responsibilities of his siblings and family. Bal Gangadhar's mother Parvati Bai was a devout and religious lady. Tilak's father by profession was a government teacher in a Marathi school and after full seventeen years of service, he was rewarded with the much-coveted post of an Assistant Deputy Educational Inspector in the year 1866. It was through his father that Tilak acquired lessons in Mathematics, Sanskrit, and Marathi even before getting admitted to a school. The intensely religious vein of the mother and the stern sense of personal independence of the father reflected themselves in the willful nature of the boy. He got admitted to primary school in Ratnagiri in the year 1861 where Bhikaji Keshav Patwardhan had the honor of being his first teacher, a few years later he along with his parents moved to Poona from where he completed his primary education from Poona city school. Tilak since his childhood was of independent spirit, non-compromising, and indomitable attitude. Because of his outspoken and audacious attitude, Tilak was regarded at school as a boy, clever but querulous, talented but obstinate. He often went into loggerheads with a few of his teachers and headmaster. At the age of ten, Tilak was being just initiated into his English studies when his mother left the world, and when Tilak was in his sixteenth year Tilak's father Gangadhar Shastri passed away in the year 1872. The responsibility of his education fell upon his uncle Govindrao and aunt Gopikabai. At an age of 15, he got married to Satyabhama Bai who was just eleven years old then in the year 1871. Tilak was brought up in an orthodox environment and his family upholds the traditions and customs, all these had a long-lasting impact upon the social attitude of Bal Gangadhar Tilak. A few months after his father's death Tilak took admission to Deccan College in the year 1873 from where he obtained his graduation degree. His non-conformist attitude continued even during his college days and at Deccan college, he became the leader of a group of students who boycotted the lectures of one of the professors Dr. Peterson and was blunt enough to tell him that he did not know how to teach Sanskrit. At college, Tilak was particularly impressed by his mathematics teacher Kero Vaman Chhatre, so much so that he often said that he would have been content to be a teacher of mathematics if India were a free country.<sup>3</sup> Tilak passed his B.A. with first-class in 1876 with Mathematics (pure and applied) as an optional subject. Thereafter he obtained an L.L.B degree in 1879. While studying for L.L.B, Tilak paid particular attention to Hindu law and read almost all the works on Hinduism with commentaries thereon. It was during his college days that he was in contact with Gopal Ganesh Agarkar, who became a close friend. After getting his degree in L.L.B, he got a teachership for himself at New English School which set him up independent in life.

The first phase of Tilak's life was crucial as it laid down the foundation of his political belief and worldview. The political activity in India in general and in Maharashtra, in particular, was not dormant and there were diverse forces that were active in doing diagnosis of the root problems of India and also presenting solutions to it. It is obvious that the sharp and curious mind of Tilak was not untouched with these forces and the happenings around him. Ever since 1857, the British policy to divide and rule over the Indians was propagated in a disguised form. While the memory of the first war for independence was yet not faded, British were cautious enough to not upset the masses directly thus we also see various reforms, charters and acts were introduced by

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<sup>3</sup>Pg.8, Lokmanya Tilak, A Biography by A.K. Bhagat and G.P. Pradhan.

the British Parliament in their quest to rule over India under the mighty British crown. At the same time, there were also certain forces who recognized this vicious policy of the foreign government to keep India under social drudgery, political and economic slavery. This was the time when the Great Indian Durbar was organized in 1877 when the residents were facing huge famine. Repressive political decisions of going into the Afghan war and passing freedom curtailing laws such as the Vernacular Press Act were taken. On the economic front also drain has started and protection to local traders and weavers were taken off, the import duty on cotton was also sacrificed in 1877. While all these things were occurring, there was also a group of newly western educated elites who were oblivious of these exploitations and were busy consolidating the gains from the exploits of the British imperial government. Blind and uncritical acceptance of western standards and western ideas developed in them. On the social front, there developed a spirit of latitudinarianism and a general loss of values. All these happenings didn't go unchecked and the task of addressing these issues fell upon the group of progressive Indians armed with the weapon of newly acquired English education and exposure of the liberal western world. Dadabhai Naroji propounded his drain of wealth theory to explain the systematic loot and Indian economy and M.G. Ranade taking this theory further explained the agrarian distress caused by the British policies. M.G. Ranade attributed the cause of India's poverty to foreign exploitation and ignorance of the people. The Sarvajanik Sabhawas established in Poona in 1870 which was supported by M.G. Ranade also carried out activism to plead for the cause of Indian people and educate them politically. Tilak since his college days took active participation in the activities of the Sabha. Other activists such as Ganesh Vasudeo Joshi popularly called Sarvajanik Kaka left no stone unturned to propagate the Idea of Swadeshi. Also, there was a new realization in people like Vishnushastri Chiplunkar, who through his Nibandh-Mala tried to bust the existing belief in the liberal scholars that the British rule in India is for the good of the Indian People. His approach was that of advocating cultural nationalism and rejecting the superiority of the western and British cultures. He also highlighted the urgency of educating Indians in English to pave in them the love for independence and the feeling of nationalism through liberal education. These Ideas and the interpretations of the British existence in India contributed to the formation of opinion in Tilak and he used them in carrying out his own dealings with the British Raj.

## **2. Public Awakening through Education and Press (1880-1894): - The New English School:**

Tilak since gaining maturity was always concerned about the contribution, he can make in bringing fortunes to his country and its people. In pursuit of his goal, he planned along with Agarkar to open a school, so instead of opting for a lofty career as a lawyer despite having an L.L.B degree, he went to start a school. Tilak described his and Agarkar's effort in the following words, "We were men with our brain in a fever heat with the thoughts of the degraded condition of our country and after long cogitation, we had formed the opinion that the salvation of our motherland was to be found in education alone".<sup>4</sup> It is noteworthy that many leaders around that time who were actively engaged either in social or political reform also chose to work on education but Tilak's motivation for working in the education sector was different from these contemporary leaders.<sup>5</sup> He wanted to bring an alternative to the existing structure of education provided by the colonial government, whose initial agenda was to serve the point of view of the administrative needs of the British government. Tilak and Agarkar were trying to spread the light of knowledge further among the middle-class people and were thus purveyors of a new idea. They were cutting out a new path in the public life of dedicating themselves to an ideal, gladly embracing poverty and hardship.<sup>6</sup>

The public life of Tilak began on 1<sup>st</sup> January 1880 with the inauguration of the New English School. Tilak along with Chiplunkar opened this school at Poona, later on, G.G. Agarkar, Mahadeo Ballal Namjoshi, Vaman Shivram Apte joined them in their effort. The school became a great success with its students increasing from a mere 35 in Jan 1880 to 336 in Dec 1880. Dr. W.W. Hunter remarked about the school that even without the aid of the government the school is not only performing well but can also rival other government high schools in the country and abroad. James Fergusson the governor of Bombay also sent his congratulatory message on the success attained by the school.

### **The Arya Bhushan Press; the Mahratta and The Kesari; The first Imprisonment**

Along with the task of creating a new generation filled with an independent spirit and a zeal for national upliftment, Tilak and his associates were determined to raise public awareness about the real situation of their mother nation under the yoke of the colonial government, therefore, the next step they took was to start a press and to begin publishing two newspapers, one in English language and other in Marathi to propagate their

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<sup>4</sup>Pg.25, *ibid*.

<sup>5</sup>For detail see section on his Key Ideas in this article.

<sup>6</sup>Pg.24, Lokmanya Tilak, A Biography by A.K. Bhagat and G.P. Pradhan.

understanding on the day to day events and awaken the masses. The press was named Arya Bhushan Press, the Marathi newspaper was named 'Kesari' by Tilak and Vishnushastri Chiplunkar named the English newspaper 'Mahratta'. It was decided that Tilak should be the editor of the Mahratta and Agarkar should be in charge of the Kesari. The first issue of Mahratta and Kesari was issued on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> of January 1881 respectively. The newspapers covered news of political events, commercial information, political happenings of England, and newly published book. These two newspapers became a leading voice in exposing the demerits of the bureaucratic form of British administration, oppressive taxation, costly government machinery, extirpation of local industry, and native aristocracy.

There are hurdles in any task, and if one is ready to stand for his cause then he must also be prepared for the consequences and to take risks. Journalism is not an easy task and that too within a colonial state where the establishment is hostile towards the free expression of the people. Tilak and Agarkar too had to face the consequences of their fearless writing soon after establishing the press. The famous Kolhapur case for which both Tilak and Agarkar were sentenced to 4 months of simple imprisonment changed the destiny of these mighty leaders in many ways. The case was actually a defamation suit which Rao Bahadur Barve the state Karbhari (caretaker) of Kolhapur filed against the editors of the Kesari and Mahratta, which claimed that he is planning to secretly assassinate the minor, Maharaja Shivaji Rao in cahoots with his stepmother. Tilak and Agarkar got three letters purporting to be written by the Karbhari and they published them in the Mahratta and Kesari and openly challenged Rao Bahadur Barve to prove his innocence before a court of law. The High Court in its judgment could not ascertain the genuineness of the three letters and pronounced its verdict against Tilak and Agarkar. However, the sympathies of the public went with these two young fellows who had championed the cause of the historic dynasty of Shivaji the great. Tilak came out of it not only with his private character absolutely untarnished but also with an added glory to his name, which he did not possess before the imprisonment. Agarkar has explained life in Dongri Prison in his book "101 Days in the Dongri Prison". It was during this imprisonment when Agarkar and Tilak got time to introspect and plan their future endeavors, also the difference of approaches between Tilak and Agarkar due to their different temperament and inclinations also became clear. While Agarkar felt the urgency of social reforms very intensely, Tilak didn't seem appropriate to hurt the vulnerabilities of people at the present stage, because in his opinion that would have an adverse impact upon their larger cause i.e. complete change and Swaraj.

#### **The Deccan Education Society; Fergusson College and the parting of ways:**

Tilak since his final years of L.L.B was willing to start a college but owing to the circumstances he started with establishing a school instead. It was in 1884 that his plans for establishing a college seem to be materializing. With the aim of establishing a private college, Tilak and his colleagues of the New English School founded the Deccan Education Society in Gadre Wada in Poona on 24<sup>th</sup> Oct 1884. The meeting was presided by Sir William Wedderburn and other prominent members that participated were M.G. Ranade, Dr. R.G. Bhandarkar, Justice Telang, Professor Wordsworth, Sardar Coopoo Swami Mudaliar, etc. The aim of the society is to provide private independent education, adapted to the needs of the community, and cheapened to come within the reach of children of even the lower middle class. The goal was the regeneration of the fallen country. On 2<sup>nd</sup> Jan 1885, The Fergusson College was inaugurated at Gadre Wada in Poona, where already the New English School was housed. Fergusson college flourished with time and the hard work and abled teaching of Tilak and his associates secured a good name for it.

To maintain unanimity in a team and maintain its coordination is a difficult task. Coming together is a beginning, keeping together is progress and working together is a success. However, keeping together depends upon the coherence of ideas and ways of functioning of the members of a team. When people of different minds and attitudes come together, their common goal can hold them together for a while, but with the passage of time the difference of approaches widens the gap and parting of ways becomes inevitable. The differences between Tilak and his colleagues kept pricking and it ultimately led to the severing of connections. Some issues that kept irrupting were trivial ones and some were of foundational nature. One such issue was related to the Child marriage controversy and The Age of Consent Bill where Tilak stood against the legal intervention of any kind in social customs and stated that these reforms should be brought from inwards and the advocates of these reforms must practice it themselves first.<sup>7</sup> While Agarkar, Ranade, Kunte, and Modak stood for the necessity of legislation. Another controversy was about the nature of indulgence of the members of DES without side organizations and the earnings-related to it, along with it the demand made by Agarkar for a minimal hike of Rs.5 in the monthly salary of the life members of the society also became a point of debate. While Tilak advocated the Jesuits like Poverty for the members, Agarkar and the majority, highlighted the contrast between the DES and the missionaries and Jesuits, and also questioned the utility and contribution of these groups to the

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<sup>7</sup>It is noteworthy that M.G. Ranade one of the foremost social reformer, when his first wife died, did not married a widow.



civilization. Owing to his differences with other members of the DES, Tilak after a painful struggle severed his connection from the Deccan Education Society. On one hand, where this severing of ties with the DES provided Tilak with sufficient time to dedicate and look into the national politics it also pushed him closer to the social reactionary forces.

Although Tilak had severed his ties from the DES and the Fergusson college, he continued to write in the Kesari and publish his views. His criticism of the approach adopted by Indian social reformers was worth noting which reflects his opinion on these issues. In one of his articles, he writes “Our brothers (reformers) want to bring about social reform with a magic wand.....Those who want to live in society will have to adopt a compromise.”<sup>8</sup> He also continued to attack through his articles on the working of Pandita Ramabai Saraswati and Sharda Sadan and accused her of proselytization. In 1893, Dr. Bhandarkar and M.G. Ranade had to sever their connections with the Sadan due to these accusations.

Tilak wrote the Orion or Research into The Antiquity of The Vedas in the year 1892, which shows that by this time he was particularly interested in presenting his views about the Vedic Hindu civilization. Tilak’s idea on religion by now was evolved from initially being an agnostic to now dedicated towards Hindu Philosophy.

### **3. Politics of radical nationalism and propaganda (1895-1914):**

During this period Tilak entered into the Scene of Political activism. The year 1895 was significant in two ways because it was on 18<sup>th</sup> June 1895 when Tilak’s once close associate G.G. Agarkar passed away and it was also the year when Tilak’s political journey began with him getting elected to Puna municipality. Tilak joined the congress in the year 1889 only after getting assured that his differences with other members of the DES are not going to bridge and thus his separation is inevitable and imminent. Tilak during this time was keenly observing Congress and its work, through his articles he also supported the demands made by congress. However, it was also coming clear to him that the old method of congress is obsolete and won’t yield anything significant. Tilak from the very beginning differed from the liberals in the congress. Following are his words that he said in Lahore congress in 1893 while seconding a resolution on land tenure “this is one of those resolutions which furnish a complete answer to the charge brought against the congress that it exists for the benefit of the educated classes of the country. We are not seeking to benefit that class but the poor classes and I shall point out, coming as I do from Bombay, I don’t plead for the zamindars but the Ryots of Bombay.”<sup>9</sup> His arrival in the Indian National Congress started an epoch that advocates the politics of mass mobilization and cultural nationalism. Conscious of the gap between the leaders and masses, he realized the role Hinduism can play as a powerful force of regeneration and union, it was during this time that Tilak called upon people to celebrate the Shivaji festival and Ganesh Festival.

#### **Differences with the moderates and extremism:**

The differences between Tilak and the moderates like Gokhale and Ranade became evident at the floor of Sarvajanik Sabha on 14<sup>th</sup> July 1895, when the Sabha which was once dominated by Ranade with G.K. Gokhale as its joint secretary, in its annual meeting of the general body became a body which supported Tilak by a majority and all most all its post got filled with Tilak’s group. Offended by this the moderate group severed themselves from the Sabah and later on founded The Deccan Sabha on 31<sup>st</sup> October 1896.

All this while Tilak was also indulged in various kinds of activities such as pleading in the Crawford case by the side of Mamlatdars, representing his friend Bapat in front of the Bapat Commission. Also, this was the time when there was a severe outbreak of plague and famine in Maharashtra, Tilak like a true leader stood up to face the situation and contributed his best. Tilak through his columns in Kesari highlighted the need of remitting the land revenue in famine-affected areas, granting loans, and the need of providing work to the distressed people. He also helped in establishing a plague hospital and gave meals at cheap rates to the people.

#### **The Rand murder and second imprisonment:**

The high-handedness of the British officials in the management of the plague epidemic was distressing for the people of Maharashtra, on one hand, the provision of quarantine and hospitalization were made without taking people into confidence, and on the other hand, the arrangements were unsatisfactory. The ignorance of the British soldiers about the local customs and rituals further aggravated this problem. The British soldiers commissioned to check about the patients suffering from plague in a locality ended up entering the religious places and the kitchens of the people, and often disfigure the idols and other items. This made the plague management efforts counterproductive to its very cause. Tilak through the Sarvajanik Sabha and his articles in the Kesari challenged the lethargy, indifference, and ignorance on the part of the government in dealing with the

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<sup>8</sup>Kesari, 7<sup>th</sup> June 1892.

<sup>9</sup>Pg.142, Lokmanya Tilak, A Biography by A.K. Bhagat and G.P. Pradhan.

famine and plague. In a series of articles, Tilak presented the state of the British empire and the reason for its expansion, at the same time he also compared it with the condition of India and how it has impoverished by the rule. For the reason of writing truth Tilak and the Kesari soon became a sore in the eye of the government. Mr. Rand was appointed to administer the remedies against the plague outbreak and all these measures were taken on his behest. Mr. Rand and Lt. Ayerst were shot dead while returning from the banquet at the government house in Poona. A reward of Rs. 20,000 was declared by the government to anyone who would help to discover the assassin. Tilak and his associates were served notice and Tilak was arrested under section 124, I.P.C. for their so-called, provocative articles. The pressure was brought on him that he should modify his language and after his arrest, it was also suggested that he should withdraw his remarks and apologize. Tilak refused to bow down and write an apology. Tilak in his remark said "The charges of sedition are the risk of our profession, and I am prepared to face them. I don't think that the articles are seditious, but the advisors of the government think otherwise."<sup>10</sup> While the trial of Tilak in case of sedition was on meanwhile, the assassin of Rand and Ayerst, Damodar Chapekar was arrested in Bombay. The trial of Chapekar began in session court at Poona and the bench with the unanimous verdict sentenced him to death on 6<sup>th</sup> February 1898. It was Tilak who through a special petition helped Chapekar in prison to draft his petition to the High Court. After the execution, Tilak also arranged for the funeral of Chapekar. Although Tilak was not the one who conspired along with the Chapekar to murder Mr. Rand, he was surely an ideal for Damodar Chapekar. Shri K.D Same who was an accompany of Chapekar in this murder, on his insistence went the next day to inform Tilak about the successful event. It shows how the revolutionaries were idealizing Tilak and saw him as a national hero. With no evidence against Tilak in relation to Mr. Rand's murder and the execution of Damodar Hari Chapekar, the question was raised about the release of Tilak. Tilak was placed in the Yeravda central jail where professor Max Muller sent him a copy of Rigveda to him. At last on 6<sup>th</sup> September 1898, after serving 11 months of punishment, Tilak was released on certain conditions that he won't participate in politics again.

Tilak's health significantly deteriorated during his 11-month imprisonment at Yeravda jail and he was in urgent need of rest and nutrition. In order to help him regenerate his lost health and get some mental peace, he was advised by his well-wishers to stay at Singhad for a few months, where the climate is much pleasant. For two months Tilak stayed here and his health recovered considerably. In Dec Tilak went to attend the INC session at Mysore where he abstained from delivering any speech but when asked by a reporter what will be his next course of action he said: "I will continue to do hereafter what I had been doing before this."<sup>11</sup>

From Mysore Tilak went on a tour to the southern states and from there to Ceylon and Burma. There he tried to understand those societies and his skillful mind very carefully grasped the impact of colonialism over these societies. By these visits, his opinion about the necessity of Hinduism as a unifying force in India and the uselessness of blindly copying the colonial and western culture became stronger.

### **Partition of Bengal and the congress split:**

The period between 1900 to 1908 was the period of crystallization of Tilak's views on many issues such as religion, nationalism, colonialism, etc. The crystallization was due to his recent foreign visits, exposure to new books, and international events that have widened the horizons of his understanding. Events like The Russo-Japanese conflict in which Japan overpowered the mighty Russian empire, the loss of sense of nationalism and cultural pride observed by Tilak in the people of Burma and Ceylon, and books such as Poverty and Un-British Rule in India by Dadabhai Naoroji, Prosperous British India by William Digby and Sacred Books of The East by Max Muller together shaped the opinion of Tilak. Tilak was now sure that the traditional ways of the Congress will not bear any fruit and if one wants some change then he has to act for it. During this period Tilak through his writings in Kesari wrote about the internal administration of India, the extravagant expenditure on the army, the gagging of the press, the need of giving the command of institutions into Indian Hands, etc. He advocated a radical line in congress.

The differences between the moderates and the extremist were already explicit and Tilak securing the majority inside the Sarvajanic Sabha and the parting of ways by the moderates in creating the Deccan Sabha in 1895 this difference came wide open. The partition of Bengal on a religious line pushed the final split for a while. On one hand, we see that the rift between the moderates led by Phirozshah Mehta and Gokhale, and extremists led by Tilak was ever-increasing and was visible publicly now and then in their public speeches and writings on the other hand there was the infamous regime of Governor-General George Nathaniel Curzon over India who was busy in organizing pompous Delhi Durbar when the country was on the brink of Starvation. Then comes on the 16<sup>th</sup> of Oct 1905, the Partition of Bengal threw the country inside a new wave of agitation, protest, and demonstration. Boycott and Swadeshi again came into vogue and people burnt Holi of foreign clothes. Tilak wholeheartedly supported the protest and justified the struggle against the arrogant regime. He described the

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<sup>10</sup>Pg. 192, *ibid.*

<sup>11</sup>Pg. 477, *Life and Times of Lokmanya Tilak*, N.C. Kelkar.

boycott as 'Bahishkaryoga'. Tilak was particularly impatient with the moderates who found faults with and raised various objections to the boycott movement. The moderate faction in the congress was worried that radicals were searching for a greater share and that they would take the congress away from the constitutional methods. Tilak tried his best to tame the rising dissatisfaction of the extremist faction that he was leading, and to bring some sort of agreement with the moderates but failed in his effort. As goes with any split, the differences of opinion further aggravated into disaffection and expressed themselves in the form of trivial issues (such as who will be nominated as the president of the congress), and finally culminated into disunity. During the Surat session of the Indian National Congress, the moderates and extremist group parted their ways, in the year 1907.

#### **The Muzaffarpur Bomb blast and Tilak's third Imprisonment:**

Pratulchandra Chaki and Khudiram Bose, two young lads of Bengal threw bombs with the intention of killing Kingsford, the Chief Presidency Magistrate of Bengal for his role during the partition of Bengal. However, the bomb killed two British ladies instead of hitting the right target. Pratulchandra shot himself dead when the police were about to arrest him and Khudiram got arrested, who took all the responsibilities upon himself. The incident shook the British Bureaucracy, for the reason that this bomb cult was the first of its kind in Indian history. Then followed a brutal crackdown by the British officials, the editors of *Hind Swaraj*, *Vihari*, and *Arunodaya* were prosecuted for sedition. This brutal repression, however, failed to cow down Tilak and he continued to show the mirror to the government through his articles. Tilak's article was intended to criticize the policies of the government and show the truth about the real cause of such harsh action opted out by Indian youth, he also criticized the leniency of the Anglo-Indian press for their cowardly and self-conceited attitude. Prof. Shivram Mahadev Paranjape, the editor of 'Kal' was also vocal in his criticism of the ruthless British policies. He equated the Indian police officials with traitors who acted in cahoots with foreigners and deceive their own motherland. Paranjape was arrested and it was a clear sign that the arrest of Tilak was only a matter of time. Tilak was charged for sedition for the articles he penned down under sections 124A and 153A of I.P.C. As an undertrial prisoner he was kept inside the Dongri Jail and M.A. Jinnah was taking care of his case. The court found him guilty of sedition and sentenced him to six-year imprisonment. Tilak's quest for freedom of the press for Indians was once again repressed by the autocratic government. Tilak was initially kept at the Dongri Jail for a few days and later on sent to Mandalay jail in Burma where he spent his six years imprisonment until 1914.

#### **4. National leader and Home rule (1914-1920):**

By the time Tilak was released from The Mandalay Jail after serving six years of imprisonment, a lot was changed on the national front. The extremist politics was by now lost its track and the command of the congress was in the hands of moderate leaders; Boycott political or economic, ceased to count as a factor in practical politics; the government of India act 1909 brought in the concept of communal representation and separate electorate; a new party known as Muslim League had emerged, claiming to be the sole representative of the Muslims of the subcontinent. Nationalist leaders like Sri Aurobindo by then had separated themselves from the political activities and had reconciled in the spiritual domain. Tilak had to restart his political activities keeping the changed circumstances in mind. During the last six years, Tilak was kept in complete seclusion from the outside world. On his return, Tilak said at a welcome meeting held at Poona on June 1914 "I have not forgotten the people, and I am glad to notice that the people have not forgotten me. I am ready to serve in the same manner and in the same relation and in the same capacity which belonged to me six years before, though it may be, I shall have to modify the course a little."<sup>12</sup> The need for modification was due to the changed circumstances. With the death of Mr. Gokhale on 19<sup>th</sup> February 1915 and Mr. Phirozshah Mehta in November 1915, there was no substantial meaning left in the divide between the extremist and the moderates, and Tilak was left as the sole national leader. Therefore, Tilak's immediate political program was threefold: a) To bring a compromise between the two congress factions, b) To reorganize the nationalist party c) The setting on foot of a strong agitation for Home Rule. The changed international scenario and the outbreak of the first world war gave him a negotiating power vis a vis British government.

#### **The Home Rule League, Lucknow Congress, and Journey to England:**

With the aim of consolidating his party, Tilak called his followers for a meeting, A committee was appointed under Kharpade's Chairmanship to plan the Home Rule League and in April 1916 it was decided to have the Provincial Conference at Belgaum. Tilak here emphasized the need to change the existing relation between India and England from that of a loyal servant and master relation to a relation between two loyal friends of equal stature. He reminded people that Swaraj is not a gift rather it is a natural right of people that they should have a hand in the administration of the country. He laid before everyone a complete plan of Swaraj and Home rule which was not bereft of the British and where many religions and many different provinces come

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<sup>12</sup>Pg.214, *The Life of Lokmanya Tilak*, D.V. Athalye.

together bonded by a common bond and impartial rule. At the Belgaum conference, the Home Rule League was started by Tilak six months before the Home Rule League of Annie Besant because of some technical issues. The Home Rule of Tilak and Annie Besant share the common goal of bringing self-government to the people of India, however, the program they adopted was different. While, Tilak emphasized the exclusive task of the Home Rule League as a body dedicated only to the task of attaining Self-government, Mrs. Annie Besant's program also included other things such as national education and swadeshi.

At Lucknow Congress, Tilak played an instrumental role in bringing the Muslim league and the congress to sign a pact and compromise. Like a true statesman and great tactician, he tried to convert the three-way war between congress, the Muslim League, and the British government into a two-front war between the Indians and the British government. On the compromise with the Muslim League, he said that "It was like promising the lawyer a huge fee in a complicated lawsuit in view of the success that was to come".<sup>13</sup>

Tilak with the purpose of settling his old unfinished business with sir Valentine Chirol left for England on 23<sup>rd</sup> September 1918. Sir Valentine Chirol in 1910 was deputed by the Times newspaper (London) to India in order to study the Indian unrest. He left no stone unturned to establish the narrative that the unrest is a phenomenon limited to the urban areas of the Deccan, the Central Provinces, Bengal, and Punjab. He discredited Tilak for making trouble in these areas and labeled him as the father of the Indian Unrest. He even tossed Tilak's name in the Tai Maharaj case and considered it extremely damaging to Tilak's private reputation as a man of honesty or even of common honesty. Chirol without any significant proof labeled Tilak's name in the Rand murder case. All these made Tilak file suit against Mr. Chirol for the damage that he has done to Tilak's reputation through his vituperative writings. Tilak, considering that the book that Chirol wrote is circulated all over the English-reading people and if he takes the case in India, that would not be regarded as a very good justification for him, went to file the suit in England itself. Although Tilak lost the case and had to pay Chirol the litigation charges too, when Chirol again wrote the book in 1923, he omitted most of his graver charges against Tilak, which proves the clear conscience that Tilak had. The most important part of Tilak's activity in England was his idea of establishing foreign missions and foreign contacts. Pt. Madan Mohan Malviya, making a comment on Tilak's interaction with him after his return from England said, "the thing that he pressed upon me most was to organize deputation to England, France, America, Germany, Japan and to raise sufficient funds to maintain them for at least five years".<sup>14</sup> Tilak's futuristic vision might have calculated well, that these foreign connections can play in the Independence of India.

On the 1<sup>st</sup> of August 1920, this brave son of India, at the age of 64 breathed his last breath. Mahatma Gandhi wrote an obituary for Tilak in Young India, in which he wrote, "No man of our times had the hold on the masses that Mr. Tilak had. The devotion that he commands from thousands of his countrymen is extraordinary. He was unquestionably the idol of his people. His word was a law among thousands. A giant among men has fallen. The voice of the lion is hushed."<sup>15</sup>

With the passage of Bal Gangadhar Tilak the command of the Indian National Movement shifted on the soldiers of Mahatma Gandhi and he in many ways carried forward the legacy of Tilak.

**Key Ideas:** The philosophical foundation of Tilak's political thought and his key ideas are available through his writings and evident in his political career. The writings of Tilak can be broadly categorized in two sections, the first constitutes those writings that are academic and philosophical in nature, meant for the purpose of solving and establishing intellectual underpinning. The second category includes his speeches and writings meant for the wider audiences to educate and organize them towards the cause of Swaraj. While the former set of work attracted the attention of scholars such as Max Muller, Dr. S.K. Belvalkar, Dr. F.W. Warren, etc. the second category influenced and encouraged numerous people towards attaining Swaraj. A reader is left astounded by the wide range of works produced by Bal Gangadhar Tilak, his works reflect his command over Sanskrit, mathematics, astronomy, and History. The clarity of his thought regarding his objectives and methods for assuring India its liberty and a dignified place among the fellow nations was unambiguous and there lies no difference and antagonism between his preaching and actions. His writings, speeches, statements are of simple, lucid, and scrupulous nature, which conveys to its reader its intent clearly. Following are the Key Ideas that one gets from his works:

**1. Karma-Yoga (The Disinterested Action):** Tilak in Geeta-Rahasya tries to present a coherent philosophy that explains the right motive behind each action, its consequences, and the ultimate result in achieving salvation and emancipation. This interpretation of Bhagwat Geeta isn't a new creation of Tilak, but in it, he reinvigorated this interpretation in lights of his theory of Swaraj, "The Karma Yoga which I preach is not a

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<sup>13</sup>Pg. 487, Lokmanya Tilak, A Biography by A.K. Bhagat and G.P. Pradhan.

<sup>14</sup>Pg.562, *ibid.*

<sup>15</sup>Pg.600, *ibid.*



new theory; neither was the discovery of the law of Karma made as recently as today. Compliance with the universal law of Karma leads to the realization of Swaraj. The Karma Yogin strives for swaraj and the Gnyanin or spiritualist yearns for it"<sup>16</sup>. The fundamental problems that philosophy grapples with, tries to explain how to situate individuals within society? What should be the relation between society and the individual? How the fruits of individual action should be harnessed. Then comes the realm of metaphysics which tries to explain "the higher ends", the action and consequences of one's action, ethics, etc. Tilak finds answers to these above questions in Bhagwat Geeta which has three messages of Karma-Yoga, Lokasangraha, and Bhakti- these messages are a higher synthesis of different philosophies<sup>17</sup>. Karma-yoga is the way of action in the path of truth and duty which removes the doubt caused by the momentary pleasure and pains in the long and harsh journey of Swaraj. The ethical principles of Bhagwat-Geeta are different from the teachings of Utilitarianism and Hedonism<sup>18</sup>. Karma Yoga tries to find a midway between the material world and the metaphysical aesthetics of life. Karma-Yoga does not look upon this world as 'Nothing'; it requires only that your motives should be untainted by selfish interest and passion<sup>19</sup>. It is noteworthy that Tilak wrote Geeta-Rahasya while he was serving a six-year sentence at Mandalay jail, the dreadful journey of Swaraj and the thorny path requires solid philosophical underpinnings to support the moral and physical capabilities of the Sadhak (Seeker). The philosophy of Karma-Yoga prepares the Sadhak to bear the consequences and sufferings of his/her chosen path and remain steadfast. "The renunciation of life by fearing the results of action is the escapist way of salvation, Tilak put forth that the idea of action and not renunciation was the message of Geeta"<sup>20</sup>. Karma-Yoga motivates an individual to stick to his path and strive for Swaraj even if the immediate result is unforeseen, "You should not presume that you have to toil that you yourself might reap the fruit of your labor. Remember, it is not you who hadplanted the mango trees the fruit whereof you have tasted"<sup>21</sup>.

## **2. Cultural Nationalism (Swadeshi, Ganapati and Shivaji Festivals):**

Tilak applied the tactics of appealing to the baser instinct of the masses for forging unity among them and mobilizing them. He recognized the tremendous symbolic significance of historical and religious festivals, flags, and slogans in arousing the spirit of nationalism. Indian masses who share strong emotional bondage with their religion were more susceptible to emotional appeal, hence, Tilak consciously chose this method. The tools that Tilak adopted to appeal and generate a sense of cultural nationalism among the Indian masses were Swadeshi, National festivals, and movements based on identity. To understand the notion of cultural nationalism as propagated by Tilak one can look back to the speech that he delivered at the Bharat Dharma Mahamandala, he said "Hindu religion provides for a moral as well as social tie. This being our definition we must go back to the past and see how it was worked out. During Vedic times India was a self-contained country. It was united as a great nation. That unity disappeared bringing on us great degradation and it becomes the duty of the leaders to revive that union"<sup>22</sup>. The appeal for swadeshi had a huge impact upon the masses, during the agitation against the partition of Bengal it became a huge success in mobilizing the masses. Tilak took the opportunity created by the swadeshi movement to teach the people the lesson of self-reliance. People boycotted the foreign goods and went for their Indian substitute. The impact of Ganapati and Shivaji festivals can well be understood by the observation made by Chitrol in his book *The Indian Unrest*, "By means of these two festivals, one in the worship of God and another in honor of the name full of great historic appeal, Tilak secured a necessary platform from which he could carry on, with tremendous advantage, his campaign of political awakening."<sup>23</sup> Tilak being a shrewd political leader and able statesman knew how to appropriate the existing tools to their best, thus he used his unique organizing capabilities in creating and reinvigorating the existing mechanisms in fulfilling his national goals. N.C. Kelkar observes that "The ingenuity of Tilak resided not in originating the festival, but in giving it a collective aspect and utilizing it as a most efficacious means of creating national enthusiasm among the people."<sup>24</sup>

**3. National Education:** Tilak's Project for national education was a part of his larger program of swaraj and self-rule. He identified the role of education in the Indian Swaraj from the very beginning, thus in his public address to more than two thousand people gathered at the prison gate, just after his release from prison of 101 days in the year 1882, he said "The key to our progress is the education of our people". While most of his

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<sup>16</sup>Pg.245, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, *His Writings and Speeches*. Ganesh & Co. Madras.

<sup>17</sup>Pg.630, Lokmanya Tilak, *A Biography* by A.K. Bhagat and G.P. Pradhan.

<sup>18</sup>Pg. 622, *ibid*.

<sup>19</sup>Pg.247, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, *His Writings and Speeches*. Ganesh & Co. Madras.

<sup>20</sup>Pg.623, Lokmanya Tilak, *A Biography* by A.K. Bhagat and G.P. Pradhan.

<sup>21</sup>Pg.246, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, *His Writings and Speeches*. Ganesh & Co. Madras.

<sup>22</sup>Pg. 35, *ibid*.

<sup>23</sup> Pg.281, *Life and Times of Lokmanya Tilak*, N.C. Kelkar.

<sup>24</sup>Pg.282, *ibid*.

predecessors who engaged with this topic were concerned about the role of education in the social, economic, and psychological upliftment of the people, he was perhaps one of those foremost thinkers and activists in modern India who recognized and envisioned the political potential of a National Program for education in shaping the upcoming nation and securing independence for it. For Tilak, education is not just an isolated thing that enriches the scientific temperament, provides facts, is based on rationality, and upholds truth, rather it is the means “that gives us a knowledge of the experiences of our ancestors.”<sup>25</sup> In this sense, his views on education differed from his contemporaries like M.G. Ranade, Agarkar, Ramabai Saraswati, etc. His plans for national education resonated with the communitarians who project the existence of the self which is socially rooted and the role of education is to reinvigorate that socially rooted self for the purpose of creating a great nation. The main agenda of national education is not social reform but the national rejuvenation and inculcating a sense of pride among fellow brethren. In this sense, his plan of national education also presents a strong critique of colonial and western interpretations of India. Thus while seconding a resolution on the appointment of an education commission in India in the 17<sup>th</sup> congress at Calcutta, Tilak pointed out at the advancement made by Japan in the field of the independent educational system he also highlighted the sorry state of affairs in India, “education in India had been reduced to the position of a subordinate handmaid of administration and unless it is raised to its real position of a goddess of learning, India could not be raised to the state of the civilized nation of the west.”<sup>26</sup> For Tilak, “That is called national education which enables you to know your nation. I was first proud of the present system of education but afterward, I asked myself the question as to why in spite of equal abilities and intelligence, our country lags behind other nations?”<sup>27</sup> and the answer to this lies in the foundation, structure, and philosophy of that educational system. The ignorance of Indian masses and the drain of wealth is due to this misappropriation of the educational system in India, one such example that Tilak noted was of Indian armies sent abroad to help England fight its enemies at India’s expense. There were four major elements of Tilak’s plan for national education: -

- i. **Religious education:** The religious education that Tilak wanted Indians wanted to get was different from a simple theocratic instruction, its agenda was more nationalistic than spiritual or orthodox. The nuances of his ideas on religious education are complex and thus it is very vulnerable to misinterpretation. The purpose of religious education was not to train students into some kind of orthodox institution and maintain a puritanical structure rather its purpose was to imbibe within them their great past and rich historical tradition, so as to provide them with command over their own intellect without foreign intervention, by linking their past to their present. How can a person be proud of his religion if he is ignorant of it?<sup>28</sup> “How can a person who does not feel proud of his religion be proud of his country? That is how religion and nationality are interconnected.”<sup>29</sup> Tilak was careful enough not to disturb the religious sensitivity of the minorities of India and thus he prescribed “Hinduism to the Hindus, Islamism to the Musalmans will be taught in these schools, and it will also be taught there to forgive and forget the differences of other religion.”<sup>30</sup>
- ii. **Education in Vernacular language:** Tilak probably would have identified the hegemonic role that the English language played in instituting the British Rule in its colonies, therefore while acknowledging the importance of the English language he stood for imparting education in vernacular languages. The awakening of the masses is only possible in the language which they speak. Tilak argued that “mere knowledge of the language is no true education. Such a compulsion for the study of a foreign language does not exist anywhere except in India.”<sup>31</sup> To save the unnecessary waste of time (about eight to ten years) in learning a foreign language he proposed to give education through vernaculars.
- iii. **Industrial Education:** Tilak was particularly interested and impressed by the advancements achieved by countries like Germany and Japan in the field of industrial and technical education. The progress in the area of education has helped these countries to stand among the ranks of developed western nations and has also uplifted the standards of their countrymen. The need for industrial education was thus aimed to fulfill the dual goal of *swadeshi* and *swarajya*.
- iv. **Political Education:** Politics is the limb of every society through which it functions, a nation becomes immobile and handicapped if its politics are captured or colonized by foreign rulers. Tilak was of the opinion that unless the people are educated into politics and are given self-rule, they are bound to be fallen into a wretched state of poverty. He observed, “In America, the proclamation of Independence is taught in V or VI classes. In this way, they train their children in politics. We are not given such education as may inspire patriotic

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<sup>25</sup>Pg.81, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, His Writings and Speeches. Ganesh & Co. Madras.

<sup>26</sup>Pg. 251-252, Lokmanya Tilak, A Biography by A.K. Bhagat and G.P. Pradhan.

<sup>27</sup> Pg.361-362, *ibid*.

<sup>28</sup> Pg.81, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, His Writings and Speeches. Ganesh & Co. Madras.

<sup>29</sup>Pg.146, Lokmanya Tilak, A Biography by A.K. Bhagat and G.P. Pradhan.

<sup>30</sup>Pg. 85, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, His Writings and Speeches. Ganesh & Co. Madras.

<sup>31</sup>*Ibid*.

sentiments amongst us.”<sup>32</sup>Therefore, a mere ability to read and write or get into a position of doctors, engineers, and clerks is no education for Tilak rather education means the will to walk on the path of self-government and swaraj.

**4. Swarajya and Home Rule:**The most significant contribution of Bal Gangadhar Tilak to the Indian national movement was his continuous and arduous advocacy of Swaraj. For him, Swaraj is the natural consequence of the diligent performance of one’s duty. In one of his speeches, he defined his notion of swaraj as “What is this Swaraj? It is a life centered on self and dependent upon self. There is swaraj in this world as well as in the world hereafter. The doctrine taught by our forefathers that the goal of life should not be meditation alone.”<sup>33</sup>By this statement, he meant that Swarajya should be the goal of every action of the collective effort of the slaved nation unless this goal is attained there should be no diversion from it. Being a statesman, he knew very well the psyche of the Indian society, which tends to see every materialistic want as superfluous and secondary. Thus, he took great pain in rediscovering and defining the inherent philosophy of Bhagwat Geeta in terms of Swaraj. For him “Swaraj in this world is important in order to attain swaraj in another world, God does not help indolent.”The very purpose of this definition of Swaraj was to pull out the Indian masses, who were deeply messed inside the logic of the metaphysical world and the philosophy that pain in this world brings reward in another. The second contribution of Tilak is to make Swaraj a public good, a good which is accessible to all, even to illiterates, as it is a birthright. Therefore, swaraj should be an issue for the masses and not only an affair limited for elites, it is not only an issue of making a government and who governs but it is an issue of self-existence. He argued If illiteracy is not a disqualification in civil law there is no reason why it should not be so in Nature’s law also.<sup>34</sup>Tilak being a realist knew that “Politics only admit self-interest and turns to philosophy in so far as it serves that interest”<sup>35</sup> that is why a vague and imprudent definition of Swaraj would prove to be a colossal mistake. Therefore, Swaraj should define in terms which is both achievable i.e. realistic and comprehensible. In this way, he dexterously crafted his notion of Swaraj to suit his agenda of self-government. He knew that given the practical compulsion of time swaraj devoid of British suzerainty would be imprudent hence he said “swaraj is not driving away from the king and taking his authority into one’s hand.it means taking into hand the rights of the subjects.”<sup>36</sup>Self-government for India was his present political aim and absolute independence was then beyond the range of practical politics. Tilak was a foresighted person who always look at the bigger picture and was ready to make smaller compromises to attain larger good he once said“In less than 15 years there would be a time when the English would be compelled to arm the Indians and depend on their help. And then an armed and well-trained India will have to be satisfied by granting swaraj to it. But when such a time comes all must stand united nothing will be achieved if we are not united.”<sup>37</sup> Tilak’s definition of swaraj was also significantly different from that of M.K. Gandhi who talked about Gram Swaraj and the moral upliftment of masses so that they can win over themselves first and then think of winning political swaraj. Tilak’s opinion differed from that of Gandhi just the way a realist differs from an idealist. Tilak argued for political swaraj as a priority which begins with the provincial autonomy first. Know his plans Gandhi once complimentedTilak as“your ways are devilish, to which Tilak replied My good friend you have not burnt your fingers as yet while playing with this government. During the last 40yrs my fingers have been burnt more than once. When you get your fingers burnt, I am sure you will go ahead of me.”<sup>38</sup> Tilak could see in advance what rest of his fellow leaders belonging to the moderate party took time to comprehend,“The tide of the world has changed. The question of India’s freedom has become a question of world freedom for the sake of world freedom India must be made free and given Swaraj”<sup>39</sup>

**5. Democracy (Responsive Cooperation):**The tide which Tilak led was known to the history of the Indian national movement as an extremist phase, however, a black and white distinction of historical events is clearly misleading and a student of history knows that watertight compartmentalization of historical events into categories is impossible. The activities of Tilak thus should be seen with those lenses which do not omit the grey areas of history. In defense of the extremist ways of Tilak, it is said that he had brought the reforms much earlier which in the ordinary course government would have taken at least fifty years to grant. On the other hand, the radical faction accused Tilak of making too many concessions to the moderates and the Muslim League, to which he replied “I was never immoderate or unruly. Certain timid people who lack self-confidence might look upon my political demands as unconstitutional and dub me an extremist, but I am a moderate in my goal from

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<sup>32</sup>Pg.83, *ibid*.

<sup>33</sup>Pg.245-246, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, *His Writings and Speeches*. Ganesh & Co. Madras.

<sup>34</sup>Pg.248, *ibid*.

<sup>35</sup>Pg.289, Lokmanya Tilak, *A Biography* by A.K. Bhagat and G.P. Pradhan.

<sup>36</sup> Pg.463, Lokmanya Tilak, *A Biography* by A.K. Bhagat and G.P. Pradhan.

<sup>37</sup>Pg.518, *ibid*.

<sup>38</sup>Pg.528, *ibid*.

<sup>39</sup>Pg.529, *ibid*.

the beginning. I do not, therefore, resent being called a moderate.”<sup>40</sup> In order to do proper justice one should analyze the methods adopted by Tilak well within the temporal and spatial framework. Considering the colonial setup of that time where the very structure of the government was exploitative and the lethargy on the part of Indian masses, Tilak took two tasks simultaneously at a time, one was to continuously push the boundaries of the agitation and create new normal in the political discourse of the time, well within the limitations of his extremist ways and constitutional restrictions and second was to uplift the political consciousness of the masses so that they could be united for upholding their respective duties in the upcoming free Indian nation. The method which Tilak adopted thus reflects the necessity of his time, which is an amalgamation of Constitutional democracy and responsive cooperation. Tilak knew very well that it would be futile to wage a war against the imperial government and any such attempt would be crushed ruthlessly, therefore he advised the radical underground activists against it. Tilak also had faced the repercussions of criticizing the government and had to serve years of sentences for his active journalism he, he knew “Truth had among its rewards a cup of poison, a crucifixion, the consuming flames of fire or least of all a dungeon”, in that prevailing circumstances only a constitutional agitation mixed with non-cooperation and passive resistance could work. Tilak adopted this approach of ‘responsive cooperation’ with the British to gain the most out of his negotiation and while dealing with his fellow countrymen he adopted democratic values. During the war periods, Tilak adopted this technique of responsive cooperation with the colonial powers, and explained it in the following ways “on responsive cooperation the new party is of the opinion that it is no use fearing this repression so long as the government continues its autocratic attitude whether we take a conciliatory attitude or make strong protests.” Unlike the methods of the moderates which stands for unconditional support to the Raj, Tilak advocated a relation based on mutual benefits between two brotherly countries on the principle of giving and take. Tilak on the other hand with dealing with the internal matters was always large-hearted and never hesitated in making big concessions to the moderates, the minorities, and deprived sections. His role in the settlement between the Congress and the Muslim league and between moderates and extremists was widely acclaimed. On differences with the Moderate party in congress, he said “it was natural that there would be differences in the congress, but the only way of solving these differences was by majority decision. To compromise does not mean unity on each and every issue; it requires a frankness of mind and openness of approach to each other. Both parties should be prepared to meet each other halfway, as it is not a question of prestige but diplomacy.”

**6. Political Reform vs Social Reform:** One thing that differentiated Tilak from the rest of the leaders of his times was his political shrewdness blended with realism. Tilak never allowed his political goals to be interrupted by any other nonpolitical issues running around him, for he was sure that these other issues are less prioritized and will only exhaust the energies of the workers without bringing significant results. This outlook towards political goals and an incessant desire of keeping one’s eyes on the prize often pulled Tilak into controversies and disputes with his counterparts, mostly moderates. Agarkar the closest comrade, parted his ways with him due to similar reasons. Tilak’s approach towards social reforms can be understood better in the words of N.C. Kelkar, one of his close associates who later took the responsibility of editing *Kesari* in his absence, “Five principles that Tilak followed in the matter of social reform:

- a. Under foreign domination political reform must be given precedence over social reform.
- b. More than others, the educated people must first take up the political work.
- c. For the sake of convenience, two separate sets of workers must devote themselves to the two kinds of work.
- d. Leaders of social reform must be men of spotless character, and must boldly push the work forward by personal example and by actual practice.
- e. The line of least resistance and yet of sure results was the spread of knowledge among people and the policy of appraising the strength of the chain by means of the strength of its weakest link.”<sup>41</sup>

Tilak’s approach towards the social problems around him was influenced by the testing realities of his times. One can see how his methods and explanation had a mixture of anticolonialism, social conservatism, and cultural nationalism. Tilak had a novel and unique responsibility upon his shoulders, i.e. to challenge the earlier method of moderates in bringing political reforms in India, to spread the spirit of nationalism among the masses, to bring in the radical and socially conservative faction of society into congress fold, and create a united front against the British, all these divergent interests had to be served and that is why “he was careful not to take up too many subjects at once, because the antagonism generated by each, would have been made worse, by antagonism to each other.”<sup>42</sup> These attempts by Tilak were not an easy one and it exposed him to a wide range of criticism often by his own followers. “He was opposed by the group of extreme social reformers because he stood between them and the laws of the government for carrying out social reforms. He was fired at by

<sup>40</sup>Pg.479, *ibid.*

<sup>41</sup>Pg.203, *Life and Times of Lokmanya Tilak*, N.C. Kelkar.

<sup>42</sup>Pg.45, *The Life of Lokmanya Tilak*, D.V. Athalye.



conservatives because he pleaded with the people to first plow their untutored minds to receive the seeds of social reforms”, thus the orthodoxy targeted him for his non-conformist attitude.<sup>43</sup> His notion of social reform was different from that of the liberal reformers in terms of method and not content. He believed in gradual, organic, and evolutionary reforms.

Tilak was also sure that these social problems are a result of India’s political degradation and loss of freedom and in a free India these problems will slowly wither away. Secondly, he was convinced that social reforms will never culminate into political liberation. During his visit to Ceylon and Burma, he observed those societies closely and concluded that “If we compare these societies with ours, the question that arises in our mind is how far these social reforms are important from the national point of view”, Tilak noted that in spite all reforms such as women’s emancipation, freedom to follow any faith, widow remarriage, and divorce, the Burmese were still a divided and dependent people, with little or no self-respect.<sup>44</sup> He concluded that social reform and national regeneration did not go hand in hand.

Thirdly, Tilak is of the view that wholesome of the criticism of the Hindu Society that is coming is partly because of the degeneration that has occurred into it due to a long history of subjugation and political disunity while other criticism can also be attributed to the misrepresentation of Indian society done by the orientalist under the garb of western hegemony. Tilak objected to the interpretation of the Indian caste system done by orientalist and its blatant acceptance by Western-educated Indians. Here a reader can understand the limitations of orthodox nationalism which Tilak was advocating, it failed to see the real significance of the demands that were emanating from the marginalized groups, i.e. non-brahmins (Dalits) and women, these groups had got voice under the changed system that did not recognize the traditional social order. The task of incorporating these sections and addressing their issues, later fall upon Ambedkar, and Gandhi realized the significance of subsuming them into the National fold, which is why he took up the task of social reforms along with political reforms.

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<sup>43</sup>Pg.204, Life and Times of Lokmanya Tilak, N.C. Kelkar.

<sup>44</sup>Pg.220, Lokmanya Tilak a Biography, by A.K. Bhagat and G.P. Pradhan.