

Role of Bal Gangadhar Tilak in Swarajya and Swadeshi

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Abstract

When the first bugle of the freedom struggle sounded on May 10, 1857, child Gangadhar Tilak was one year old. He was born on July 23, 1856 in a middle class family in Ratnagiri district of Maharashtra. Tilak lived on this earth for 64 years. And in his 40 years of public life, he not only gave intense leadership, dimension, direction and new heights to the freedom movement, but in the 1920s left it at such a point from where every road in front of the British rule would end in a dead end. Was. Tilak left his body on August 1, 1920 in Mumbai and today the country is celebrating the 100th death anniversary of this great nationalist son. Tilak's stand was straight, clear and plain – Swaraj is my birthright and I will have it. This immortal slogan had given a strong message of pride, self-respect and unity to every Indian during that period. British writer Ignatius Valentine Chirol described Tilak as the "Father of the Indian Revolution". Let us briefly understand the principles and contribution of Tilak.
Keywords:- Tilak's Nationalism, Swaraj and Swadeshi Movement, Importance and conclusion of Bal Gangadhar Tilak in Indian History.

I. Introduction :-

According to historians, Tilak was Bhishma Pitamah of nationalism. He was a staunch supporter of Advaita philosophy and considered Vedanta as the basis of free humanity, according to which no moral and spiritual life is possible without freedom. Foreign imperialism kills the soul of a nation and therefore Tilak fought against the British Empire. He believed that the messages of the Vedas and the Gita were capable of giving spiritual energy and moral strength to the nation. The revival of India's ancient culture is essential for healthy and vital traditions. And building true nationalism is possible only on the old ideological foundation. He called this old foundation spiritual nationalism. Bankim Chandra, Swami Vivekananda, Maharishi Arvind were also of the same opinion. It can be said that Tilak had a systematic philosophy of nationalism. He felt that the roots of Indian nationalism should be reflected in the sentiments and culture of the people, not just in the intellectual appeal of Western theories.

Tilak was also opposed to the Anglicisation of Indian society in the name of political and social reforms. He wanted to nurture the nationalist movement on the foundation of a strong cultural and religious revival. So he tried to take nationalism to the masses through the festivals of Ganapati (Pune, 1892) and Shivaji (Fort Raigarh, 1894) in Maharashtra. In this endeavour, he got unprecedented success. These festivals still draw strong attendance every year.

Swaraj and the Swadeshi Movement

Historians consider Shivaji Maharaj as the originator of the principle of Swaraj, who was the source of inspiration for Tilak. In 1895, Tilak started the campaign of Swaraj. Swaraj, he believed, must precede any meaningful social reform. He reminded the people that Shivaji also considered Swaraj as the basis of social and political freedom. The principle of Swaraj was in perfect harmony with the social and political philosophy of Tilak. To give it shape, he started the Home Rule League in 1916 with Annie Besant. Tilak also thought of a federal type of political structure under Swaraj. He had chosen the example of the American Congress for the implementation of his programme. For your information, Tilak was also going to advance the principle of "nonviolent passive resistance".

There were two features in Tilak's political philosophy that distinguished him from liberal thinkers.

First – Where liberals naturally wanted to bring democratic institutions, Tilak wanted immediate Swaraj.

Secondly, they were in favor of giving full rights to the public to oppose the power center which has lost its legitimacy.

The trio of Lala Lajpat Rai, Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Bipin Chandra Pal was also famous. Tilak was the most vocal among these three. He gave a three-point program to the nation for effective political action against the British Raj – Swadeshi, Boycott and National Education. It had changed the nationalist terminology itself.

Boycott – By making the public aware against British manufactured goods, British business interests in India and abroad were to be harmed. Gradually it became a political weapon as well.

Swadeshi - In 1906, in the Calcutta session of the Congress, Tilak supported the Swadeshi proposal and laid the foundation of the economic foundation of nationalism. The Swadeshi movement soon became a symbol of national upliftment and patriotism.

National Education – According to Tilak, India's education system should have its roots in its culture and tradition. He was also a strong advocate of industrial and political education along with the spread and promotion of Indian languages in schools.

There are many proofs of Tilak's multidimensional personality. As a teacher, he was instrumental in the establishment of the Poona New English School, the Deccan Education Society and the Fergusson College. Even before becoming active in the Indian National Congress, Tilak used to disseminate his nationalist ideas through the newspapers Kesari (in Marathi) and Maharat (in English). He started both the newspapers in 1885. He formally joined the Congress in 1890. He played a decisive role in this from 1905 to 1907 and from 1917 to 1920. He advocated self-reliance at a time when some leaders looked to the British Raj for sympathy and support. At that time, Congress was mainly a middle class organization, Tilak had connected it with the lower middle class and common people.

Tilak had also given a broad definition to Sanatan. According to him, a Hindu is one who believes in the teachings of the Vedas and whose conduct is in accordance with the Smriti and Puranas. He was well-versed in ancient Sanskrit philosophy and his political thought was a confluence of Indian thought and nationalist and democratic ideas of the modern world. In the famous trial speech of 1908, he gave an example of John Stuart Mill's definition of nationalism. He is also called Loknayak.

In 1897, there were many deaths due to plague in Bombay (now Mumbai) and Pune. The situation was no longer under the control of the government. The Assistant Collector of Pune used brutal methods to contain the disease. These included incidents of burning houses and even shooting patients. In protest against this, Tilak had published articles quoting "Bhagavad Gita" in his newspaper Kesari. After the publication, the Assistant Collector and his assistant were murdered. Tilak was accused of inciting and was sentenced to eighteen months. But when he came out of jail, he had become a national hero. He came to be called by the name of Lokmanya i.e. "beloved leader of the people".

– He also wrote two books – The Arctic Home in the Vedas (1903), Srimad Bhagvat Gita Rahasya (1915)

– His political career started from Pune.

– He opposed the Age of Consent Act of 1891

In the 1907 Congress (Surat session), there was a division between the moderate party and the hot party. Taking advantage of the opportunity, the British government sent Tilak to Mandalay Jail (Burma) for 6 years.

At the time of the formation of the Indian Home Rule League in April 1916, he gave his immortal slogan - "Swarajya is my birthright and I will have it." Had given

Tilak and Jamshejji Tata started Bombay Swadeshi stores during the Swadeshi movement.

– A film on his life was also released on January 2, 2015 – Lokmanya: Ek Yug Purush

– Tilak had an important contribution in Poona Pact

Loknayak Tilak's thoughts in modern India - society, government and nation - are enlightening all

Bal Gangadhar Tilak, the great hero of freedom struggle breathed his last on 1 August 1920 with the advent of Gandhi era in India's freedom struggle and his 100th death anniversary is being celebrated in 2020.

Destiny called back this great leader from India very early. Had Tilak lived longer, the conditions of the country's freedom struggle could have been better. Tilak was the leader of the front line among the leaders of his generation. He was instrumental in preparing the country for the Gandhian era. On 4 August 1920, Mahatma Gandhi wrote about Tilak in Young India that "no person in our time had such a hold on the public mind as Tilak had."

Importance of Bal Gangadhar Tilak in Indian history

He was the first leader to give importance to Indian identity. Identity was considered an archaic topic by the early social scientists. But this gradually began to change and many social scientists understood the importance of identity and identified it as a motivating factor for human enterprise.

Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak was the first leader to advance the importance of identity in modern India. Tilak realized that identity could be a great tool to energize a dull society.

He believed that once people understood their identity, they would themselves be inspired to join the struggle for freedom.

Lokmanya Tilak: Creator of Modern India

"Swaraj is my birthright and I will have it!", this is the slogan that created political consciousness among Indians towards self-rule. This slogan was given by Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak. In view of his contribution to the Indian independence movement, Tilak is revered as a leader of Indian public opinion.

His being called the "Maker of Modern India" by Mahatma Gandhi or the "Father of Indian Unrest" by the British colonial power attests to his contribution and legacy to Indian society and the freedom struggle. Tilak was the first leader to take forward the idea of Swaraj and Swadeshi. Looking at the way he has used Indian culture, education and newspapers to awaken the spirit of Swaraj and Swadeshi among the people, it can be said that his contribution as a philosopher-politician is incomparable.

Tilak's call for Swaraj and Swadeshi

In both Swaraj and Swadeshi 'Swa' means by oneself is common. The first strong step in Tilak's strategy for independence was the effort for self-reliance.

For this, Lokmanya Tilak wanted to develop collective thinking along with action. For which he took the help of newspapers like "Kesari and Maratha" and established "Deccan Education Society".

This experiment of Tilak to awaken political consciousness among the masses through culture, education and press was so powerful and successful that later others like Gandhi and Ambedkar adopted the same experiment.

The methods adopted by the British rule to suppress his ideas of Swaraj and Swadeshi worked to reach Tilak's ideas to every Indian.

The objectives of Tilak's Home Rule Movement were very clear. He did the work of preparing a fertile ground for Swaraj through his Home Rule Movement.

Tilak's views towards Swadeshi were not limited to the boycott of imported goods. They wanted to make this boycott a factor in promoting indigenous entrepreneurship.

Tilak's Swaraj was also not limited to political freedom. He was also conscious of the need for cultural and economic independence.

The public festivals started by him—Ganesh Utsav and Shivaji Jayanti—were clearly aimed at a cultural amalgamation of all castes and communities.

In an editorial in Kesari, he wrote, "This (Ganesh) festival is centuries old and universal; But the new thing about it this time is that all castes – not just Brahmins – came together and made it a festival of all Hindus, which is something we should be proud of."

Prophet of Modern India

There was also a blueprint of post-independence India inside Lokmanya Tilak. For which, along with Swaraj, Swa-Bhasha and Swa-Bhusha, i.e. mother tongue and indigenous dress, were preferred by them.

Perhaps, he was the first national leader who envisioned the formation of linguistic states. He had said that we should create separate states for Marathi, Telugu and Kannada people.

He had a very clear principle that education should be imparted in the mother tongue only.

As a brilliant strategist, Tilak used two things – constitutionalism and democracy – which the British rulers considered their gift to the world. He boldly used his professional skills as an editor.

His editorials were not only harsh, but also carefully written with arguments to avoid legal implications.

II. Conclusion

The tone and principles of Lokmanya Tilak's demand were strategically clear and satisfactory. He wrote that "India was like a son who has grown up and matured. Now it is right that the trustee or the father should give him what is his." Today when we talk about self-reliant India, Tilak's legacy should be carried forward. Reviving the spirit of economic nationalism to promote indigenous manufacturing and striving for social integration through culture were prominent features of Tilak's strategy. This strategy of Tilak for self-reliance remains true even today.

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