

CHAPTER-VEPILOGUE

British domination in India was of a peculiar nature. It did not disturb the stratified society nor the outdated social conventions, superstitions in India. The British domination was interested in uprooting the foundations of Indian economy which was based on agriculture and rural crafts, by imposing heavy revenues on farms and destroying village industries by importing machinemade goods. The peasants were heavily indebted. They had to depend on rural moneylenders who expropriated the poor peasantry. Similarly due to disappearance of 'royal patronage on one hand and 'fierce competition from foreign goods', the farmers and rural artisans were impoverished. Absence of infrastructural facilities such as internal transport, all season roads, financial institutions, training facilities, knowledge of modern techniques of production adversely affected the Indian economy to a lesser or greater extent. The reaction of British domination was different in different parts of the country and the intensity of reaction differed in different periods also. For example in Bengal during 1820-1830 Swadeshi spirit was not seen so long as economic conditions were good due to British plantations. Even Raja Ram Mohan Roy seemed to have been convinced by this situation. It is during the days of partition of Bengal only

that the need to evoke Swadeshi spirit was keenly felt.

But one will be enlightened to know that, there were a number of eminent thinkers in Maharashtra who tried to awaken the country about the impending disaster that was being brought by British rule in India. The views were expressed even prior to the display of spirit of Swadeshi in Bengal. In Maharashtra the generation of thinkers who were well acquainted with the literature of the Western economists, historians, politicians and started comparing and analysing the conditions prevailing in India during British regime and expressed their views and suggested the possible ways to improve the social, political and economic condition of the country. One finds a sort of unanimity of opinions and views expressed by them, with some slight deviations in respect of ways to be followed.

A brief review of these thinkers will be helpful in understanding how Swadeshi movement in Maharashtra emerged as a reaction against British rule and was intended as an instrument to strike at the roots of British imperialism in India.

Shri Ramkrishna Vishwanath was a 'harbinger of Swadeshi'. He pleaded for 'boycott on foreign goods', he wished to develop domestic market, he supported use of machines and free trade in internal market. He was of the opinion that, "Unless social system is changed economic freedom is not

possible." He wished to bring about industrial development of the country with the help of sophisticated machines rather than relying on 'skill' only. He said that India was exploited to the extent of 7/8th of her produce. He pointed out that Britishers are using cheap labour. 'Labour is source of wealth'. 'We should utilize it for our prosperity. He was aware of the need for 'protection to Indian industries', need of joint-stock companies and industrial development.

Vishnubuva Brahmachari emphasised the need of 'infrastructural facilities'. He was a socialist thinker.

Lokahitwadi emphasised all sided development of the country. He pointed out the impending disaster of India getting impoverished, if superstitions are not abandoned and a scientific outlook is not nurtured. He put forth his views on some aspects of Swadeshi.

Jyotiba Phule strived hard for the upliftment of the masses, peasants and rural population. He pointed out the possible difficulties and hardships, the rural population depending on farming forestry had to face due to government's legislations and rules. He realized the need to educate the masses. He desired to arrange exhibitions to encourage good farmers by awarding them prizes.



Dadabhai Naorosji propounded the theory of 'wealth drain' for the first time and explained how India's wealth was systematically drained out by the British. He was confident that 'poverty can't be eradicated without self-government. It is clear that 'Swadeshi thoughts' prevailed in Maharashtra prior to partition of Bengal, and, the Maharashtrians were cocksure that British domination depended on economic exploitation and so, it can be said that all these earlier thinkers were conscious of the need to have self-government. Our own parliament improvement of agriculture, trade and industry and they expressed their views accordingly. These views created a sort of background against which the subsequent thinkers were to delineate detailed, comprehensive programmes for the implementation of the principle of Swadeshi.

G.V. Joshi alias Sarwajanik Kaka, was an active supporter of Swadeshi. He wore 'Khadi' clothes till the end of his life. He encouraged Swadeshi by starting small factory for the production of some consumer goods in his home. He founded, 'Sarwajanik Sabha' for arranging speeches and disseminating Swadeshi spirit. He devoted and dedicated his life for the cause of Swadeshi.

Justice Ranade through his books and speeches justified the cause of Swadeshi and advocated a theory of protective tariff, for India, an industrially infant country.

Hon'ble G.K. Gokhale's attitude was 'objective'. He appreciated some principles of British rule, but at the same time asked the British government to protect Indian industries from foreign competition, and, desired that Indians should be employed in the place of the Britishers, so that money would not go out of our country. He wanted some promotional measures to be adopted for the development of Indian agriculture, industry and trade. He pleaded for purchasing Swadeshi goods.

The cumulative reaction of all these thoughts culminated in making Swadeshi as an instrument for achieving Swaraj and ousting the British. All these thoughts were assuming a militant form, in 'Tilak era'. Tilak succeeded in raising a counter-vailing power vis-a-vis British rule in India. People were gradually becoming militant and constructive. 'Bonfires of foreign goods' were held, at the same time 'encouraging measures were adopted to inspire adventurous entrepreneurs to undertake industrial activity. Tilak found in industrialisation a bright future for Maharashtra and for India also. This was a positive aspect of Swadeshi. Boycott was seen as a negative aspect, but, it was more apparent than real. Because he pointed out that by 'not importing foreign goods and purchasing our countrymade goods, we were serving the cause of Swadeshi, as the money stayed in our country, rather than flowed out of the country. He wanted diversification of industries.

He used various media of communication such as 'Press' and 'Platform'. The 'concepts', 'precepts' of Swadeshi were preached by Tilak through a number of articles published in 'Kesari' upto 1920. These thoughts influenced his own times and governed the generations to come.

His name shall remain immortal in the hearts of Indians as an uncrowned king and an undaunted politician who incurred the wrath of British Government. Mr. Chirol, news reporter of London Times described him as 'father of Indian discontent'. He made tremendous efforts to strengthen the economic power of the masses and enlightened them politically and educationally.

In Maharashtra during 'Swadeshi movement' a number of new industries, financial institutions were set up in different districts, as a result of Tilak's preachings and influence. For example 'Paisa Fund' was started by Mr. Kale to become an 'Ideal Educational Fund'. Mr. Antaji Kale was its chief promoter. He wanted young generation to enter industrial activities rather than running after jobs. The 'Paisa Fund' was a need of time, when it was difficult to raise long term loan needed for industries from any one. People were requested to contribute only one paisa rather than 'one rupee'. It is due to Tilak's influence, Maharashtra pointed out that, the inspiration given by great leaders

public faith and co-operation could tap the potentialities of entrepreneurs fruitfully. The glass factory located on 32 acres of land at Talegaon continuously applied advanced technology, diversified its production and manufactured 456 types of products.

Besides the glass factory, engineering goods unit was started by a small man from Belgaum at Kundalroad railway station in Sangli. Mr. Laxmanrao Kirloskar was a man of vision, drive and initiative. His dream of 'Kirloskar Industrial Complex' was carved on a dry, dreary land. A number of examples of factories in Pune, Solapur, Nasik, Satara, Sangli, Bombay can be given to point out the all pervading and growing success of industrial development which was caused due to the influence of 'philosophy of Swadeshi' propounded by Tilak. These industrialists took a vow of Swadeshi and practised it throughout their lives, and left the illustrious heritage of industries behind them for generations to come.

Tilak's ceaseless efforts materialised in Maharashtra to some extent. It revealed that Maharashtriyans are competent to start the industries independently and successfully.

In fine it can be said that early visionaries found in 'Swadeshi' the answer to the problems that cropped during British rule, and salvation from British domination. Maharashtra

and India shall remain indebted to these great thinkers, who implanted and nurtured the spirit of Swadeshi in Maharashtra to grovy into an all pervading Swadeshi movement that was to comprehend the entire country.