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INTRODUCTION

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I N T R O D U C T I O N

Lokmanya Tilak was a great national leader, who contributed much to the rise of Indian nationalism. Tilak was one of those leaders who asserted ever since the beginning of the freedom struggle Indian's right to Swaraj of national self determination. He recognised the basic conflict between the interest of British imperialism as the aspiration of the people of India and that conflict cannot be resolved unless the Indians have the right to shape their own destiny and conduct the affairs of the country. Such ideals as these can be achieved by fostering strong feeling of patriotism and self-respect among the people, by moulding public opinion and by bringing pressure to bear on the British authorities for granting political right. Tilak in doing so, had a great confrontation with many social reformers especially in Maharashtra. Tilak had to face ' The Satya Shodhak Samaj ', of Mahatma Phule, who advocated the social reform. Tilak was of the opinion that social reform would divide the Indian society, and give an opportunity to the Britisher's to divide and rule. He gave much stress on Swaraj movement than social reforms. Therefore Tilak had to confront with many contemporaries.

Much of the thought content of Tilak has its origin in this conflict. Tilak used all his efforts to evoke nationalistic sense who considered reforms as of secondary importance.

In contradiction, there were various reform movements launched by various reform leaders like Mahatma Jotiba Phule, M.G. Ranade, G. G. Agarkar and Gokhale. Tilak had his own approach to the socio-political problem of India. Tilak resorted to various techniques of mass communication.

This study would hence, deal with Tilak's political thought in comparison to various contemporaries during his period.

In pursuance of this study, the historical method was the basis. Lokmanya Tilak's writings, articles etc., from 'Kesari', were referred besides the secondary sources like Text books written by various well known authors on 'Tilak'. Various articles were also referred.

The first chapter deals with the historical background relating to the ideas of reform, taking into account the development of Arya Samaj, Brahmo Samaj, Prarthana Samaj, theosophy and the Sarvajanik Sabha. It also deals with

social situation in Maharashtra upto 1880 and the impact of epics and scriptures of India on Indian renainsence. The family life and education of Lokmanya Tilak is also accounted for in this chapter. A chronology of Tilak's life has been summarised at the end.

In the second chapter Political ideas of Lokmanya Tilak has been analysed. In particular, the concept of " Swaraj " his major contribution is studied in detail. To Tilak, Swaraj was the classical value system, it was a moral imperative for both, the individual and the community. It was Government for the people and by the people which could be achieved through the means of boycott, Swadeshi and national education.

Nationalism an important concept as viewed by Tilak is discussed in the third chapter. To Tilak, the elements of nation were language , literature ( Mainly the epics and scriptures ) and religion ( Hindu). He stressed on the religion aspect as a revival of moral and natural greatness as the basis of nation's rebirth. Ganapati and Shivaji festivals were symbolical adjuncts, encouraged by him as he felt, they

served to link contemporary events and movements with the historical traditions. In short he substantiated the nationalistic movement in India by strong cultural and religious revival of Hinduism.

An attempt is made in the fourth chapter to study, Tilak's approach towards social reform. The critical question that the nationalist movement faced was whether the social reform should precede the political reform or vice versa ? Tilak opined that India should first achieve independence and then social reform would gradually follow. His arguments in defence of the above option have been dealt in detail in this chapter.

In the fifth chapter, Tilak's attitude towards social reform, taking into account various controversial issues like ' the age of Consent Act ', caste system, female education etc, is analysed. His contradictions with the social reformers like M. G. Ranade, G. G. Agarkar and Gokhale have been examined. Finally an attempt is made to conclude the dissertation.