
CHAPTER FIRST :

EARLY LIFE OF LOKMANYA TILAK

CHAPTER - I

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BACKGROUND BEFORE BIRTH AND CAREER :

Bal Gangadhar Tilak was born only a year before, the great movement of 1857 occurred. In these days British rule was deeply rooted in India.

Since the sixteenth century, when modern science and technology began to be developed by the western nation. Asia was no longer a significant match for Europe. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries we find the growth of European nationalism, commodity production and commerce. Asia hence forward became a mere object or field of operation for European imperialism and colonialism. In the eighteenth century and the early part of the nineteenth century the Asiatic countries presented a spectacle of economic decline, political weakness, social stagnation and cultural decadence. But since the middle of the nineteenth century the soul of Asia have once again awakened. Among the foremost leaders and great figures who have been responsible for this mighty awakening of the great Asiatic were Sun Yat-Sen, Tilak, Gandhi and Kamal Pasha.

The intellectual Renaissance of India has been a great causal factor in the rise of modern India nationalism. Teaching of various reformers and religious leaders in India created the longing for an autonomous and self-determinate political existence in the country. The European Renaissance was mainly aesthetic and intellectual. But the renaissance in India was characterized by moral and spiritual creativism. Some of the leaders of Indian renaissance movement frankly advocated a deliberate modelling and moulding of the present life on the basis of the past scriptures like the vedas, the Upanishads, the Ramayana, the Gita and the Puranas. In this connection Indian Renaissance means the re-awakening of the creative activity of the soul of India after a long period of inactivity and sleep.¹ No doubt Indian nationalism is influenced by Indian culture and religion and communalism.

One of the greatest forces in this renascent new India is the Brahma Samaj which has done great cultural and social work in Bengal and other parts of the India. Ram Mohan Roy (1772-1883) leader of the Brahma Samaj Movement which is based on a synthesis of intellectual rationalism. The Brahma Samaj has reacted against social stagnation. Another powerful religious and social movement in India has

been the Arya Samaj founded in April, 1875. Dayananda, the founder of the samaj was vedic scholar and a great teacher of religious monotheism. Arya samaj has done a great service to Indian nationalism especially in Punjab. It struck its root among the Hindu non-Brahmin scholars and the lower middle - classes. Another movement which has championed Hinduism in all its comprehensiveness was started by Vivekananda the foremost disciple Ramakrishna, Vivekananda was a great intellectual and an orator and has a remarkable penetration both in the Vedantic scriptures and European philosophy.

The Arya samaj had a programme of social reform also. Though opposed to the hereditary caste system, it stood, however, for the four-caste division of society to be determined by merit and not by birth. Since the vedas laid down such a division and since the vedas could not err, the Arya samaj could not proclaim the death of the caste system itself.² Since to present day's caste system is remain as it was in past. The Arya Samaj stood for equal rights of man and woman in social and educational matters. This was a distinct democratic conception. It, however, opposed co-education since in the vedic period co-education did not exist.³

The Parathana Samaj was founded by M.G. Ranade. It had a programme of religious and social reforms on the same lines as those of Brahma Samaj. Its founder Ranade was one of the leaders of Indian National Congress and the Indian social conference which held their first session in 1885 and 1888 respectively.

Theosophy introduced in India by Madam Balvatsky and Henry Steel Olcott in 1879 and mainly popularized by Mrs. Annie Besant was another religio-reform movement started in India under the impact of the new Indian and international condition. The uniqueness of this movement consisted in the fact that it was inaugurated by a non-Indian who was a great admirer of Hinduism. Theosophy stood for making a comparative study of all oriental religion. However, it considered ancient Hinduism as the most profoundly spiritual religions in the world. Theosophy, however, failed to strike deep roots in the country.¹

The British rule in India is historically significant. Its impact on Indian life was far reaching. There is no reason to minimise its beneficial effect. Though the rule was based exclusively on selfish motives, it did introduce an element of progress for the people in India and these forces

have moulded the course of Indian history. Most important effect of the British conquest was destructive. It destroyed the foundation of the old order of society in India. But such destruction was necessary in the interest of progress.⁵ The Foreign power combated the conservative and feudal forces of Indian society. India was never a nation. It was ruled by different rulers in different areas. Indian monarchs were frequently busy in fighting and conquering each other. Due to British rule these states were brought under one rule British rule introduce political and economic unification of the country.⁶ They introduce press, Railways, modern medicine, sanitation and health services.

The introduction of British political rule led to the introduction of western education in India and the policy of the occidental school under Macaulory's leadership triumphed in the field of education. Sociologically speaking, British politician introduced western education in India only to create a body of people who would be Indian in appearance but thoroughly westernized in culture and meantaility. Bhandarkar, Ranade, Chiploonkar, Tilak, Agarkar and Gokhale, all had high academic degrees. Modern education played a contradictory double role. Introduced at the outset with a view of meeting the politicaland administrative needs of

Britain and even to strengthening the bond of the British rulers and the Indian ruled, it also helped Indian nationalism in its struggle against that rule.⁷ The educated Indian, who studied English democratic literature and imbibed its democratic principles, felt inspired to rebel against the 'reactionary social institutions' and world outlook of a bygone era, such as caste and authoritarian social philosophies which sought to enslave the individual and suppress his free initiative. The study of the English language provided an opportunity to study the social liberatarian, natural scientific and rationalist philosophical literature in that language. This study helped to build up a democratic and rationalist outlook. The renaissance in Northern India and in the Madras presidency was mainly spiritual and religious in character but in western India it was primarily social and educational.⁸

Bal Gangadhar Tilak, although a great all India leader since 1905. For about twenty-five years since the inception of his public career in 1880, his main field of operation was Maharashtra. Hence it is essential to study the main element of modern Maharashtra society and culture because Maharashtra was the stage of Tilak's various activities. The growing ascendancy of the British political power in India

was a great challenge to the Mahrattas who had become politically very powerful in the latter part of the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries. In spite of the severe reverses of the third battle of Panipat, in 1761, the Mahratta politicians built up a powerful state but the successive defeats at the hands of the English crippled the strength of political Maharashtra. On June 18, 1818 the peshwaship came to an end in 1848, the British got control over the Satara branch of the Shivaji family. The last but belated attempt of Nana Saheb, Tatyasaheb Tope and the Queen of Jhansi, in co-operation with some other Indian leaders, to overthrow the British power in 1857 failed completely but nevertheless, it was an unmistakable demonstration that the political consciousness of Maharashtra was active. Only one year before 1857, was Bal Gangadhar Tilak born.

Tilak came to the public scene in 1880. Before that and for several years after that, some important events took place and some significant movements were started in Maharashtra and these provided the situational background, sometime in consonance with which and sometimes in opposition to which Tilak had to frame his policy and formulate his plan of action. It is possible that some of these events, about

which he would have either heard from elders or read in paper's books might have left some influence in him while he was a boy. The social and intellectual ferment of Maharashtra expressed itself in the founding of new association and societies. Mahatma Jotirao Phule (1827-1895) was the founder of Satya Shodhak Samaj. This samaj broke the superemecy of Brahaminism.

The Sarvajanika sabha had been founded by Ganesh Vasudev Joshi often called the Sarvajanikaka because of his great interest in public activities. The sabha became in important political association in Poona and Maharashtra. During the famine of 1878-79, under Ranade's inspiration and silent leadership, the sabha did great work in relieving the sufferings of the distressed agrarian population of Maharashtra. It is remarkable to find that almost a quarter of a century before the launching of the swadeshi movement in 1905, the Sarvajanika Kaka had started the practice of swadeshi in Maharashtra.⁹ Tilak himself had been one of its earliest protogonists and advocates.

FAMILY AND EARLY LIFE :

The Tilakas from one of the families belonging to the chitpavan Brahmin community. The chitpavan Brahmins are known as Konkanasthas because they hail from the Konkan.

The Tilaks are chitpavan Brahmins of the Shandilya Gotra. There is a tradition that the pilgrim Father of the Bene-Israel were washed a shore on the coast of Konkan after the famous wreck. Some of the bodies were recovered in a state which was considered lifeless. But as they were put on the pyre (chita) for being cremated by the people, the bodies revived and the dead people were resuscitated (pavana) to an animate condition. This legend is current among the Bene - Isreal about the chitapavans.¹⁰

The chitpavan Brahmans are undoubtedly the most powerful and the most able of all the Brahmans of the Deccan. A curious legend ascribes their origin to the miraculous intervention of parashurama, the sixth Avatar of God Vishnu, who finding no Brahmans to release him by the accustomed ritual from the defilement of his earthly labours, dragged on to shore the bodies of fourteen barbarians that had found washed up from the ocean, burnt them on a funeral pyre and then breathed life and Brahmanhood into their ashes, on these new made Brahman's he conferred the name chitpavan which mean's " purified by fire " and all the land of the konkan from which, by a bolt from his arrow, he caused the sea for ever to recede.¹¹

The place of origin of the Tilak is chikhalgaon in Dapoli Taluka of the Ratnagiri District. Keshavrao was the great grand father of Lokamanya Tilak. He was born in the year 1778 and was the khot/^{of}chikhalgaon. Khoti is a vatan granted by ancient king's to persons who either had taken a pioneering part in colonisation or had brought follow land under cultivation. The khots carried on the administration, collected the land taxes in their villages, and paid them to the Government treasury. Tilaks belonged to one such leading family in the village.¹² Keshavrao was a man of letters, a capable horseman, a swimmer and a cook.

Keshava's eldest son was Ramchandra pant, the grand father of Tilak. He was born in 1802. Ramchandra was little educated, took service as a surveyor under the new British regime. His marriage took place, as was custom in those day's at an early age and he had a son in 1820 when he was hardly twenty.

This son Gangadhar learnt the rudiments of Marathi from his grand father, and a few days later he was sent to school of Dabhcl. After completing his studies in that primary school, the boy took the road to Ponna to prosecute further studies on his own account and responsibility. While Gangadhar was thus striving to receive an English education in Ponna,

his mother, Ramabai, who was on her way to pilgrimage to Nasik, a holy city in Maharashtra, came to poona to get a glimpse of her son. She left for Nasik, but died of cholera before reaching the place of pilgrimage. This sad event changed the course of Gangadhar's life. He gave up his education and returned to his native place. He got himself married to a girl from the Achwal family. Realising that the income from the khoti would not be much helpful in the maintenance of his family he accepted the post of a teacher in a Marathi primary school at Malvan on a salary of Rs. 10/- a month. Finally Gangadharpant was posted to Ratnagiri on a monthly salary of Rs. 20/- as Head master of the Marathi School. Gangadharpant was an Orthodox Brahmin, devoted to rigid performance of religious rites and observances.¹³ His wife Parvatibai, too was intensely religious, Tilak's family was totally orthodox and religious.

While the Tilak family was comfortably placed, Bal was left a legacy of 5,000 rupees together with the small ancestral property when his father died in 1872.¹⁴ According to Tilak's close associate, N. C. Kelkar, Tilak could not maintain himself, with ease until 1899, when he could live off the profits of the kesari. But it is clear that Tilak's great

grand father and grand father were elite person of the village due to Khoti and his father was a teacher and supplemented the family income by writing text books on arithmetic, grammar and history. Bal Gangadhar Tilak was not from poor family and his family has well social background.¹⁵

Balwantrao Tilak was born on 23 July 1856. The name given to this dear male child was Keshav, also the name of his great-grand father. But usually he came to be known as Balwant or Balwantrao. Even this name Balwant was transformed into the domestic name " Bal ", and it was by ' Bal ' that the child became famous in Indian history.

At the age of five¹⁶ or six¹⁷ he was sent to school in Ratnagiri. Bhikaji Krishna Patwardhan was his early preceptor. His father, being a Sanskrit scholar gave to his young son a good training in Sanskrit. In 1866, Gangadhara was transferred to Poona as an Assistant Deputy Educational Inspector. When young Balwantrao was only ten he had to face profound and grave tragedy. His mother, Parvatibai, the embodiment of Hindu holiness and purity, died on July 24, 1866. Gangadhara Tilak had now come to Poona and Balwant Tilak began his studies there at first in a Marathi institution. There he learnt Marathi grammar, history and geography.

At home he had learn t and was advancing well in Sanskrit. After finishing his studies in the Marathi pathshala, Bal was sent to the city school and then to the Poona High School. Tilak finished his studies in the city school. But he had to wait for a while because of the Dipavali holidays. Balwantrao joined the Poona High School but soon after his father was transferred to Thana. Apparently everything was all right for Bal at this time. He was progressing well in his studies and the father was working in Thana. Hence arrangements were made for the marriage of young Bal. In month of Vaisakha in 1871, while not yet a Matriculate, young Balwantrao was married . He was only fifteen. Many leader got married in early life. His wife's name was Tapibai and soon changed a Satyabhamabai. But unperceived a dark fate was rushing with great fury to engulf the Tilak family. On August 31, 1872, the father the main prop of the family suddenly died of dropsy. At the age of ten, Bal had losth his dear mother, now when only sixteen he lost his father. At this time he got great encouragement from his uncle Govindrao who was fifteen years younger than Gangadhar Tilak and twenty years senior to Balwantrao.

It is said that the bridegeroom preferred good books to a gold ring as a present from Ballalrao, Bals father-in-law. And the father-in-law fulfilled the desire of his

son-in-law. The bride was rather well built and looked stouter than the bridegroom. The weaker constitution of Balwantrao became the but of the jokes of his classmates and colleagues.¹⁸ Tilak, in this connection, lost one college year for making good physique vigorous and athletic.¹⁹

In 1873, Tilak joined the Deccan College. In these days he began living in one of the college hostel. Tilak used " Sovala Dress " at the time of meals and it was continued in congress session also.²⁰ When Tilak came to the college he found that his physical structure was not robust. Hence he decided to devote the first year of his college life only to making his physique vigorous, hence he failed examination in the F. A. Examination. But he passed the next year. While a student at the Deccan College Tilak went for one term, in 1875, to the Elphinston College, Bombay. The teacher of Mathematic there was Mr. Hawthornwait. Tilak was not satisfied with the teaching of mathematics at the Elphinston College, hence, he returned to the Deccan College.

In 1876, Tilak passed the B.A. Examination in the first division. Tilak appeared at the M.A. Examination in Mathematic, but he failed. After some year, while a professor at the Fergusson College. Tilak attempted once again to get an M.A. Degree in Mathematics but this time also he could not success to his credit. Then he finally gave up the idea of getting an M.A. degree.

From 1877 to 1879, Tilak continued his studies for the law degree. He devoted special energies to a mastery of Hindu Law. For studying law Tilak had to go to Bombay and keep the law terms. In December 1879, Tilak passed the law examination. In 1891 Tilak has source providing additional income was law class.

EARLY ACTIVITIES :

During the 1880's Tilak became involved in a series of nationalistic endeavours, notably in the formation of New English School (1880) and the Deccan Education Society (1884) and the establishment of two newspaper's the English language Maratha and the Marathi language kesari, both initiated in 1881. The founder's included Vishnushastri Chiplunkar, Gopal Ganesh Agarkar, first editor the Kesari, W. S. Apte, first Principal of Fergusson College Mahadev Ballal Namjoshi and several other's Gopal Krishna Gokhale joined the Deccan Education Society in 1886.

The school and society were founded on the missionary principles of sacrifice and service, but within a few year's serious difference had emerged concerning the interpretation of these ideas. The immediate bone of contention was whether

life member's of the society should obtain employment outside the society and should contribute such income to the coffers of the society. The quarrels culminated in the resignation of Tilak from the Deccan Education Society.

Because of the recent publication of relevant Tilak letter's which throw light on his personality, it is worth retracing the step of the controversy. In the initial year's of the society the life member's worked for the rather modest monthly income of 40 rupees (480/- Rs. per year). In cases of special hardship the Managing Board could allocate funds or provide a loan to a needy member. When the society received government support in 1886, it was able to increase the annual salaries of life member's to 880 rupees.

According to Agarkar, serious differences within the society dated from the time when Mr. Tilak made a proposal for a loan of money to the press and I objected to it.²¹ The majority of the members disagreed with Agarkar and the loan was made to Tilak. Agarkar won a pyrrhic victory when a motion was passed that no loan should be sanctioned without the unanimous approval of member's. This motion backfired on Agarkar, for it was applied to his ally, Gokhale, who was later denied a loan despite great need.²² A second difference of opinion arose

at the meeting of February 22, 1887, when Agarkar attempted to amend the bye-laws of the society to increase the monthly salaries of life members by five rupees, in opposing the amendment Tilak contended that salaries should be limited to necessities in accordance with the principal of jesuitical poverty.²³ Agarkar was much poorer than Tilak. In the late 1880's Tilak consistently found himself in a minority position in the decisions of the Deccan Education Society. His decision was due in part to thwarted political ambition; he increasingly found himself out of favour with the dominant figures of the poor congress party and passed over for a younger man, Gopal Krishna Gokhale, a protage of Ranade, who was selected for some of the key position.²⁴

Gokhale was appointed joint Secretary of the Bombay Provincial Conference in 1888, a secretary of the Poona Sarvajanic Sabha in 1889 and became editor of its quarterly journal in 1890. Tilak doubtless resented this rising young star in the Poona political firmament, particularly as Gokhale was a relative new comer to Poona. Gokhale had not joined the Deccan Education Society until 1886, where as Tilak was one of the founding members of the New English School of 1880, the forerunner of the Deccan Education Society.

We have to analyse Tilak's political ideas and his views towards social reform so we can summarise his life in chronology in brief.

CHRONOLOGY OF THE LIFE OF LOKMANAYA TILAK :

- 1856 : Born at Ratnagiri in/then Bombay Presidency.
(23rd July) ^{the}
- 1873 : Entered Deccan College.
- 1876 : Passed B.A. in First Class.
- 1879 : Took LL. B. Degree.
- 1880 : Started New English in Poona.
(1st January)
- 1881 : Started Newspapers Kesari and Maratha.
- 1882 : First imprisonment in Kolhapur in Barve case
Sentenced to four years simple imprisonment.
- 1884 : Formed the Deccan Education Society.
(24th Oct.)
- 1885 : Started Fergusson College.
- 1887 : Agarkar snapped all his connections with
Kesari -Tilak. Agarkar controversy on the
issue of social reforms.
- 1889 : Crawford case.
- 1889 : Deputed along with Namjoshi to go to Bombay
with the plea to the Congress session at Pune.
- 1889 : Regarding Shard Sadan Controversy of Pandita
Ramabai.
- 1889 : The Congress session held at Bombay. Charles
Bradlaugh graced the session. Tilak moved
an amendment that the members of the Imperial
Legislative Council should be elected by
Provincial Legislative Councils.
- 1891 : The affair of Gramanya or social ostracism
due to Tea at Panchhond Mission at Pune.

- 1891 : The Second Bombay Provincial Conference held in Poona under the Presidentship of Rao Bahadur G.H. Deshmukh - Tilak spoke in support of the resolution pertaining to Crawford case.
- 1891 : The Congress met at Nagpur. Tilak given privilege of moving the resolution the Arms Act.
- 1893 : Published the book Orion.
- 1893-94 : Hindu-Muslim riots in Bombay Province provoking articles from Tilak in Kesari and the Shivaji and Ganapati festivals.
- 1894 : Prepared a memorandum to be submitted to the British Parliament dealing with the subject of simultaneous Civil Service Examinations.
- 1895 : Majority in Sarvajanik Sabha.
- 1895 : Elected Member of Poona Municipal Council and also as a member of Bombay Legislative Council.
- 1896 : Celebrations of Shivaji and Ganapati festivals started.
- 1896 : Famine in Poona and outlying district Sent travelling agents to collect information regarding famine.
- 1896 : Plague in Poona.
- 1897 : First Sediton Case.
- 1897 : Legal Case on Tilak filed by Tai Maharaj, wife of Tilak's close friend, Baba Maharaj, in adoption of son.
- 1898 : Sentenced to fourteen months' rigorous imprisonment on sedition charge.
- 1899 : Released from prison.
(4th July)
- 1899 : Travelled to Burma.



- 1903 : Published Arctic Home in the Vedas.
- 1905 : Partition of Bengal,
Lala Lajpat Rai, B.C. Pal and Arabindo Ghosh
accepted Tilak's four fold programme.
- 1906 : Calcutta Congress under Dadabhai Naoroji.
- 1907 : The Surat Split.
- 1908 : Second sedition case and sentence for six
years to Mandalay.
Composed Gita Rahasya.
- 1914 : Madras Congress presided over by Bhupendranath
Basu-Tilak's re-entry into the Congress.
- 1916 : Lucknow Congress under the Presidentship of
Ambika Charan Mazumdar - Lucknow Pact.
- 1917 : Established Home Rule Leagues.
- 1919 : Tilak goes to England to contest the Chirol
case.
- 1919 : Amritsar Congress Resolution on Responsive
Co-operation adopted.
- 1919 : Founded the Congress Democratic Party.
- 1920 : Death.
(1st August)

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