

C H A P T E R I V

DEVELOPMENT OF THE CONCEPT OF
NATIONALISM IN MAHARASHTRA

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CHAPTER IVDEVELOPMENT OF THE CONCEPT OF
NATIONALISM IN MAHARASHTRA

Like all social phenomenon, nationalism is a historical category that emerged in the social world, at certain stage of evolution of the life of the community when certain socio-historical conditions, both objective and subjective matured. As E.H.Carr remarks " nations " in the modern sense of the word did not emerge until the close of the middle ages¹. But nation states in Europe emerged in the 19th Century and they were closely connected with rise of capitalism in Europe. The ideology of nationalism took birth during renaissance period, but it got its form and content in the second half of 18th Century and first half of 19th Century.

E.H.Carr points out the following characteristics of nation that provide psychological base to the concept of nationalism. According to him... the term " nation " has been used to denote a human group with following characteristics.

- a) The idea of common government whether as a reality in the present or past, or as an aspiration of the future.
- b) A certain size and closeness of contact between all its individual members.

- c) A more or less defined territory.
- d) Certain characteristics (of which the most frequent is language) clearly distinguishing the nation from other nations and non-national groups.
- e) Certain interests common to the individual members.
- f) A certain degree of common feeling or will, associated with a picture of the nation in the minds of the individual members².

One can say that some of these traits could be found in the 'Swarajya' an independent Maratha State established by Shivaji in 17th Century as his State, was based on the concept of Maharashtra 'Dharma'. After Shivaji the primitive nation State of Shivaji became a feudal state during the Peshwa period and the flame got extinguished³.

After the establishment of British rule, the new education system was introduced that created rational outlook in the minds of the educated people. The education system gave birth to a new middle class which was the guiding force behind all political and, social movements. The development of speedy means of communication and English as a common medium to communicate ideas; created sense of unity among the people of India. According to Anil Seal,

the growth of educated class was concentrated in the three coastal Presidencies, Bengal, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu, where the impacts of British rule had worked much longer and gone much deeper than those up country provinces which had been organised during the 19th Century. He further points out that, within these linguistic regions... the new educated classes must be related to the religious, the caste, the linguistic and the economic situations in which they lived⁴.

The process of emergence of nationalism is very graphically described by A.R.Desai. He says " The new classes created by imperialism, the bourgeoisie, the working class and the professional classes were integral parts of a single national economy of India and further they lived under a single state regime. This engendered community of economic and political interests, of the members of each of the new social classes on an all India national basis... they felt an urge to organise themselves on an all India scale and start a movement to advance their common interests on a national basis⁵.

It must be made clear that nationalism emerged in the second half of 19th Century, was Indian nationalism, as such. There are many types of nationalism but the two main types are territorial nationalism and cultural nationalism. Territorial nationalism means, nationalism of all the people

that reside in a particular territory and the latter refers to nationalism of a particular cultural group irrespective of the existence of particular territory. As far as Indian nationalism is concerned, except extreme Hindu and Muslim nationalism, no Indian nationalist advocated of cultural nationalism.

4.1 CHIPALOOKAR'S CONCEPT OF NATIONALISM:

The first important aspect of nationalism of Chipaloonkar was that he vehemently criticised the proselytizing efforts of Christian missionaries and their invectives against Hindu religion. Christian missionaries, criticised Hindu religion and culture, therefore, people started to think that their religion and culture were responsible for their backwardness. On this background to inspire pride of religion and culture, Chipaloonkar showed that Hindu religion and culture was superior to other religions and cultures. He pointed out that " Alexander the great or Ceaser never knew the principles of Christian religion but they conquered the whole world"⁶. Therefore, every thing good does not go along with Christianity and so called backward Hindus also build-up great empires⁷. Therefore, Hindus should not get straved by their vile and motivated propaganda and should take legitimate pride in their religion and culture.

Secondly, his concept of nationalism was based on pride of Marathi language. Chipaloonkar emphasised that our people could understand all intricate aspects of knowledge through their mother tongue. Therefore, he took up the cause of the development of Marathi language by which ordinary people would be in a position to understand and would acquire knowledge of different subjects, and it would lead to creation of political and social consciousness among the people of Maharashtra. He correctly understood the importance of language in promoting the concept of nationalism as language as medium of mutual communication and vehicle of cultural development of the community.

Thirdly, he gave importance to development of our own culture and despised the attempts of missionaries and social reformers to suggest ways and means to improve Hindu society. He was opposed to giving primary importance of social reforms and preferred gradual implementation of social reforms.

Fourthly, he did not believe in the argument that the Hindus lost their freedom, because of their social backwardness, and expressed an view that Indians lost their freedom because of misfortune, treachery, lack of courage and bravery⁸.

Fifthly, history was the main armour in the hands of Chipaloonkar and with the help of historical examples, he tried to expose cunning and wicked designs of imperialist

historians like Mill, Macaulay and others. He made it clear that mother nature had bestowed all qualities to her children without any discrimination.

Sixthly, he was opposed to the British rule and was of the opinion that India, got impoverished because of the evil British rule, India lost her independence, self confidence and self identity because of foreign rule and it is very essential to realise our national self identity that was rooted in our culture language, history and religion.

Seventhly and last he wanted India to be a modern democratic state where the people would be self-confident patriotic and knowledgeable.

4.2 RANADE'S CONCEPT OF LIBERAL NATIONALISM:

As far Ranade's concept of nationalism is concerned, it was not based on anti-British feelings as it was his firm belief that, through our British connections we could redeem ourselves and our past.

Secondly, his nationalism was also rooted in history, culture and religion of the people as he believed that, Indians are chosen people of God. But he also knew that Hindu religion and culture needed total reformation, if they were to retain their spirit and vitality.

Thirdly, for that purpose, he advocated social reforms as he believed that Indian backwardness was the cause of India's loss of freedom. Social reforms are necessary to modernise society as well as they are the precondition for growth of nationalism and political consciousness in the country.

Fourthly, he advocated development and modernization of Indian economy by increasing business and industrial activities. He was of the view that capitalism was essentially for growth of nationalism.

Fifthly, he believed in moderate liberalism that advocated gradual and steady progress. He did not believe in stability but believed in gradual but constant change.

Sixthly, he advocated the cause of Indian National Congress and believed in over all national development.

Seventhly, he wanted to establish democratic form of Government in India ^h where the people would enjoy all democratic rights and political democracy would be based on social democracy. Thus, he was an advocate of establishment of a society which would not be based on caste, creed and religion.

4.3 COMPARATIVE STUDY:

While comparing ideas of Chipaloonkar and Ranade, we must understand that, Chipaloonkar died very young (32) and it is possible that he might have changed his opinions.

Secondly, he died in 1882 therefore, he could not have the benefit of Ranade to see the growth of the Congress as a major political organisation of the Indian people.

Both Chipaloonkar and Ranade wanted to develop the feelings of nationalism and desired that India should emerge as a nation. But for Chipaloonkar, the main basis of national resurgence was realisation of self-identity based on religion and culture. As for Ranade is concerned, the main base of his nationalism was social reformation and industrial development of the society.

Chipaloonkar took history as a means to create national pride among the people and to refute the vile charges of British historians. Ranade also took help of history and wrote most authoritative interpretation of the Rise of Maratha Power. The difference between their approach was that Ranade did not glorify the past and wanted to reform the society.

In the sphere of religion Chipaloonkar's interpretation of religion was political i.e. it had some political aim, by which he wanted to unite and create feelings of nationalism among people. On the country, Ranade's interpretation of religion was not guided by political considerations though personally Ranade was more religious. Therefore, Ranade stood for completely reformed Hindu religion; but Chipaloonkar did not categorically advocate any basic reform of Hindu religion.

Thus religion for him was a political instrument but for Ranade, it was a means of self realisation and national regeneration.

Chipaloonkar wanted to create pride of Hindu culture among the people of India at the risk of its revival. But Ranade, argued that many inegalitarian characteristics of Hindu culture were responsible for India's backwardness. Therefore, he opposed revivalism and pointed out that there was very little in our culture that needed revival.

Chipaloonkar's view was different to that of Ranade, as he did not advocate the basic change in Hindu social structure which was prevailing during those days. Chipaloonkar's opinion was that the cause of India's miserable condition was not her social system or religion but British rule that had plundered our country. Ranade believed that India lost her freedom because of her social system, hence social reforms are necessary and without them the people could not secure their political rights. Therefore, he gave more importance to social reforms.

Chipaloonkar was of the view that the Britishers established their rule in India for their economic benefits and they plundered India's wealth by many devious means. He was of the view that the British rule was the cause of India's economic ruin. On the contrary, Ranade felt that the British

rule, was necessary for the development of industry and business because we could learn modern methods of industrial production, organisation, from them. He also realised the adverse effects of British policies on Indian economy, but he wanted Indians to take benefit of our British connections and bring about industrial and commercial development.

Both Chipaloonkar and Ranade believed in the concept of democracy and liberalism but Chipaloonkar except in his couple of articles is not very clear about his liberal creeds as one can see some principles of political realism in his writings. Ranade on the other hand believed in liberalism of moderate methods and clearly enunciated its progress oriented tenets. Therefore, the main goal of Ranade was the establishment of progressive democratic state where there would not be any distinction on the basis of caste, race, or creed. Such noble idealism is not found in the writings of Chipaloonkar who is basically conservative and realist to think of such eventuality. Ranade had great faith in great future of India and he pointed out,

" We may all have to die and become manure for the seeds of life in future generations. But once we enter upon the right path, the torch of light blazing inside us, which we only seek to darken with our artificial rushlights, will show to those who come after us the way to heaven... But to achieve this goal an all Indian people should pull strongly and heartily"⁹.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

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