

CHAPTER - III :

THE CONCEPT OF SWARAJY

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CHAPTER - III :-

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Indian leaders wanted to establish self-Government in India and to correctly articulate their demands, they used a very beautiful Sanskrit word 'Swarajya'. The word became very popular among the Indian nationalists because it could be used any way, as they wanted. The moderates and Extremists perceptions of the meaning of Swarajya were different.

3:1 DADABHAI NAUROJI'S CONCEPT OF SWARAJYA :

Dadabhai Nauroji, the grand old man of India, was one of the great thinkers of Indian nationalism. He spent all his life in the service of Modern India. He was one of the founders of Indian National Congress and was also one of the ~~first~~ finest products of Western Education.

Though he had a great faith in the righteous character of British rule, he criticized it for its omissions. He said that a truly British rule could and would certainly be vastly - beneficial both to Britain and India.¹ According to him Proclamation of 1858 was a 'Magna Charta' for Indians. In his presidential speech at Indian National Congress in 1893, he had proclaimed the loyalty to the back bone of Indians to the British Crown. He advised the Indians to cultivate the judicious harmony of loyalty to Britain and patriotism towards their own country. In the presidential address in 1893 he said, "We do not want that

disaster, and we, therefore, cry out, both for our own sake, and for the sake of the rulers, our heart felt loyalty to the Government."²

But gradually he got disappointed and came to the conclusion that without the right of self-Government, it was impossible to attain national greatness. He demanded at Calcutta Congress in 1906, "As in the United Kingdom and the colonies all taxation and legislation and the power of spending the taxes are in the hands of the representatives of the people of those countries, so should also be the rights of the people of India." He demanded Swarajya or self-Government like that of other former British Colonies.³

There was conflict between Moderates and Extremists for ideals and methods to achieve. Self-Government under British rule was goal of the old school, the ideal of the new school was national autonomy and a qualified freedom from foreign control.⁴

Dadabhai was respected by all, so both the groups accepted him as President of the Congress. He had never hesitated to speak freely in the language of his heart, he was not the man of low standard with a view to placating one side or the other.

In Calcutta Congress in 1906 he stoutly defended the Swadeshi and boycott. The key-note of his address was Swarajya.⁶ In presidential speech he laid stress on three rights of the

Indian people. He demanded that increasing number of Indians should be appointed in the public services. He said in his presidential address, "Just as the administration of U.K. in all services, departments and detailed is in the hands of the people of that country, so should be in India."⁷

He demanded increase in the representation of Indians in the councils. He said that India should have an assembly on the model of self-governing colonies. Lastly, he demanded the right of just financial relations between India and Britain. He said that the financial relations between India and Britain must be adjusted on a footing at equality.⁸ While summing up his speech he said, "We want only justice. The whole matter can be compromised in one word 'Self-Government' or 'Swarajya'."⁹ He had a great faith that in his life time, the British rulers would take steps for establishing self-Government in India. He said, "I hope to see a loyal, honest, honourable and conscientious adoption of the policy of self-Government for India - and a beginning be made at once towards that end."¹⁰

Dadabhai advocated the concept of Swarajya and he wanted self-Government within the British Empire. He did not demand full freedom but believed in slow evolution. Thus, for him Swarajya means self-Government within the British Empire where the Indians would be free to regulate their financial affairs. He wanted self-Government to prevent the drain of Indian wealth. Thus he stood for increasing participation of Indians in

the civil services and political decision making structures and just financial relations to protect the Indian interests.

3:2 G.K.GOKHALE'S CONCEPT OF SWARAJYA :

Gokhale was one of the great leaders of the moderates. Moderates supported British rule and believed that through our British connection India could redeem her past. Therefore, they advocated over all development of the country beginning with social reforms.

Though he supported the British rule, he was a true nationalist and believed in gradual evolution of Indian nationalism. Therefore, he did not demand independence or national sovereignty for his country and advocated self-Government within the British empire.

Even his great opponent B. C. Pal accepted the fact that Gokhale also wanted 'Swarajya' but Gokhale knew that the attainment of Swarajya was not immediately possible in existing political circumstances. However, the term that he used was not Swarajya but self-Government. Before Gokhale, the Congress leaders only demanded the good Government and not Self-Government. In 1908 the Congressmen realised that good Government was not possible without self-Government. Gokhale's demand of self-Government was limited in meaning. He wanted self-Government within empire only. He recognised that, "Our advance towards self-Government could only be gradual." In Surat Congress in 1907

there was much apprehension that Gokhale and Pheroze Shah Mehta would change the political goals of Congress, but it did not happen.

Gokhale demanded Indianization of services and Indian right to participate in the Government. He wanted the political elevation of Indian people, and, therefore, argued that the question of Indianization of public services was such that it transcended all other importance.

In 1905, the Bengal Partition movement had adopted the programme of Swadeshi, boycott and national education. In 1905 at Banaras Congress Gokhale had advocated Swadeshi programme. To him Swadeshi meant an exalted, deep and all embracing love at India.¹¹ Gokhale distinguished the Swadeshi movement from the movement of boycott of British goods. He told that boycott had a sinister meaning. He also held that a strict boycott of foreign goods was not at all practicable in our present industrial condition.

At Banaras Congress he categorized a set of nine demands -
(1) Legislative demands - elected members should be one half and budget should be passed by council, (2) to create advisory boards in all districts, through out the country, (3) appointment three Indians to the Indian council, (4) the recruitment of the judicial branch of the Indian Civil services from the ranks of the legal profession, (5) the separation of judicial and executive administration, (6) the reduction in the heavy military expenditure, (7) the growth and the extension of industrial and technical education, (8) and the alleriation, (9) the expansion ^{of rural indebtedness}

of primary education at rural indebtedness.¹²

Gokhale recognised the necessity of decentralization and wanted to provide checks on the actions of the bureaucracy on the spot.¹³ In his evidence before the Hob house decentralisation commission, he recognised the necessity of (i) Village panchayat at the bottom level, (ii) district council at the intermediate level and (iii) legislative council at the top.¹⁴

Gokhale wanted Swarajya but his concept of it was slightly different from the extremists as he laid greater stress on all round development of the country under the British guidance. Therefore, he suggested self-Government within the empire and a gradual devolution of powers in the Indian Hands.

The Extremists also expanded their own concept of Swarajya and Tilak and Shri. Aurobindo were their two prominent theoreticians. But Swami Dayanand who lighted the lamp of patriotism in the millions of houses in Punjab and U.P. was the first to use of this word. It was a Vedic word which Swami Dayanand used for self-Government and argued than good Government, as in the latter only the people could be happy. Tilak and Aurobindo elaborately discussed their concepts of Swarajya of ~~It~~ as Tilak's was a concept of a very cautious and pragmatic political leader and Aurobindo's was a concept based on metaphysical and emotional nationalism.



3:3 B. G. TILAK'S CONCEPT OF SWARAJYA :

Lokmanya Tilak gave to Indians the mantra "Swarajya" is my birth right and I will have it." at Lucknow Congress in 1906 at Calcutta. The Indian National Congress had decided that the establishment of Swarajya was its goal. But the Congress had not implemented it in the sense that it had not taken further steps to realise it. When Tilak returned back from Mandale prison, he declared that he would establish Home-Rule League to make demand of a Swarajya more effective.

The 18th provincial Conference was held at Belgaum on 29th April, 1916. There he made out a strong case for the immediate grant of self-Government to the Indian people and explained the meaning of self-Government or Swarajya. He said that Swarajya did not mean that our authority was to be established here by driving away the British. Swarajya was not driving away the British King and taking his authority in one's hand. What it meant was Indians should have political authority in their hands.¹⁵

Tilak included the following things in his concept. He said, "Our trade should be expanded, the population should be increased, there should be plenty and that plenty should fall in our hands...."¹⁶ He argued that Swarajya was not merely a political necessity but it was a 'moral imperative' also because it was the unquestionable demand of the moral nature of man. He

demanded freedom to act according to his "Swadharma". This type of political order was known as Swarajya. It meant an order in which the Government was responsible to the people and would work according to Dharma.¹⁷

Tilak defined the spiritual connotation of Swarajya, "It is a life centred itself and dependent upon self. There is Swaraj in this world hereafter. The Rishi who laid down the law of duty betook themselves to forest, because the people were already enjoying Swarajya or people dominion, which was administered and defended in the first instance by the Kshatriya King. It is my conviction, it is my thesis, that Swarajya in the life to come cannot be the reward of people, who have not enjoyed it in this world."¹⁸

Tilak's concept of Swarajya was different from Moderates as much as he expounded democratic Swaraj. At Belgaum Conference, Khaparde in his presidential address said that the ideal of Swarajya, proclaimed by Dadabhai Nauroji in 1906 was wholly approved of by the Extremists.¹⁹ At this Conference, Tilak said that, "The question of Swarajya has nothing to do with the King or the idea of the King. The Swarajya that I propose to take to you about this evening refers to this visible Government, what changes must be brought about in it, so as to ~~xpm~~ promote the well being of the people ... The question of Swarajya really means in whose hands should be rested the control of our affairs ? I have said that we do not wish to change the immovable Government or the King; but what we demand is that

the management ^{of} at our affairs should not be, as now, in the hands of the visible Government - the bureaucracy but should be transferred to our hands. In our word agitation of Swarajya stands for the transfer of control to the people at the land"²⁰ He further argued, "The essence of Swarajya is that we should manage our domestic affairs according to our wishes."

Tilak advocated democratic Swarajya. According to T. V. Parate, as he is 'Father of Indian Urnest' and the 'Father of Indian Revolution', he also can be described as, "The pioneer of Democratic Swarajy".²¹ Moderates were more interested in matters like the expansion of legislature, Indians should be appointed on higher posts etc. Tilak said that the acquisition of posts and getting big salaries was not the aim of Swarajya. He made it clear that if the entire personnel of Government in the Indian state were Indian; the ruling chief was Indian and so were his ministers and civil servants and the above posts were appointed by the Secretary of State and if they were responsible to him, it would not be called as Swarajya 'Swarajya signifies the responsibility of executive to the elected representative of the people. It means that the ultimate power is in the hands of the people and that the state exists for their well being and happiness."²²

In his Ahmadnagar speech, he said that the bureaucratic rule at the English imperialists was alien in its nature. But

his meaning of the word alien was not related to religion. X Alienness was related to interest. Hence if a person had been working for the good of India, he would not be considered an alien. That King who did his duty, could not to be considered as an alien. If a man was exerting himself for the good of India, and had taken measures in that direction he could not be considered an alien, but the British Government did not do these things therefore, it was an alien.²³

In his Ahmadnagar speech, he accepted the possibility of having linguistic provinces. He said that India was a big country and it could be divided into linguistic provinces if the people wanted it.²⁴ He said, "When we asked for Swarajya, we may have at first an Englishman coming from England as the Governor but in the end President elected by the people should be appointed as Head of State and a separate Council should be formed for disposing the questions related to whole nation. We want the same arrangement as one existing in U.S.A. Just as there are different small states and there is a Congress to ~~write~~ unite them. So the Government of India should keep in their hands similar power of the Imperial Council."²⁵ In the meeting some people asked him if he got Swarajya as he demanded in what way would he manage it ? He said, "ability comes with opportunity."

His concept was more important than that of the other leaders. Because he was first to demand Swarajya when he said

that, "Swarajya is my birth right." His demand of Swarajya was different from Moderates, as he advocated full freedom within the British Empire. He opposed bureaucratic system of Britain in India. Though he was ready to support the idea of home-rule or self-Government within the British Empire for a limited period, his meaning of Swarajya was quite different from those of Moderates as he desired that all administration should be in the hands of Indian people on the lines of Ireland, and Canada. As far as his political ideas was concerned, he advocated the establishment sovereign independent democratic state of India on the lines of Federal State of U.S.A., it may be pointed out that of all the thinkers his idea of Swarajya was dear.

3:4 SRI. AUROBINDO'S CONCEPT OF SWARAJYA :

Among the titanic personalities thrown up by ~~Yeni~~ ^{Yeni} assant India from Raja Ram Mohan Roy to the present day, the name of Maharshi Aurobindo stands at the top. In beginning, he criticized the Indian National Congress for its narrow and restricted aims, defective and futile method as well as the British Government. On the other hand, he had prepared the ground for an armed insurrection by secret organization. Later he became a great leader in Bengal. Due to his work in Bengal, he is known as 'Prophet of the Indian Nationalism.'

He criticized the Congress and simultaneously showed the weak points in the aims and methods of the Congress. His attack heralded the dawn of a new era in Indian politics and political

thought as it forced thinking minds to ponder over the problems facing the country from a new angle and led them to think of complete independence as their goal.²⁶ He criticized the Indian National Congress's method, leadership and decision making process, etc. In his articles in 'Indu Prakash' he writes "that its aims are mistaken, that the spirit in which it proceeds towards their accomplishments is not the spirit of sincerity and whole heartedness, and that the methods, it has chosen are not the right method and the leaders in whom it trusted, are not the right sort of men to be leaders. The National Congress was not really national and had not attempted to become national."²⁷

His idea of Swarajya was different from that of the early Congress leaders. He said that, "we are uselessly discussing our methods and ideals. Swarajya is the only goal, it means self-Government without any limitation or reservation." Surendranath Banerjee and other early Congress leaders wanted self-Government or colonial independence within the British Empire. Aurobindo writes, "those who voted for colonial Swarajya knew well in their heart ~~at~~ of hearts that their idea was not the ideal of the nation."²⁸

His mind was fully seized by the concept of independence. His ideas were far ahead of Tilak as he advocated complete independence as the true meaning of Swarajya. He said, "in the using of their method, we must not direct our attention from

Swarajya. If we forget our aim, we will lose all other things." He had compared Swarajya with 'paras pathar'. He said, "Swarajya is the alchemic stone and we have it in our hand. It will turn to gold every thing we touch."

Foundation of his thinking was spiritual not political hence he entered politics to realise certain higher ends and the study of Indian history and culture, revealed to him that India had a mission - spiritual mission. Therefore, his concepts was different from other political thinkers. Swarajya was not only a political concept, a political freedom. He writes, "Swarajya is the direct revelation of God to his people - not mere political freedom but a freedom ~~of the community, xfreedom~~ ~~of the individual, xfreedom of the~~ vast and entire, freedom of the individual, freedom of the community, freedom of nation, spiritual freedom, social freedom, political freedom."²⁹ He wrote, "without political freedom the soul of man is crippled."

He advocated political reforms leading to independence rather than social reforms. As he ~~he~~ argued that the social freedom was not result machinery but of the freedom of intellect and the nobility of human soul.³⁰ He opposed British rule in India. He said the dependent India was not in a position to deliver the message of spirituality to the world and act as a guide and helper of mankind. He said in a ringing tone, "If she wants to spread their message, she must first of all shake all bondage to the foreign yoke and become free, and by our political

freedom we shall once move to recover our spiritual freedom."³¹

Thus, we can see three important trends in the concept of Swarajya of Sri Aurobindo as he advocated the complete independence as the real meaning of Swarajya and argued that without complete freedom you could not achieve or realise spiritual goals. He was of the view that India had a spiritual mission to perform and only independent India could redeem her glorious past by delivering the message of spirituality to the world.

While summing up our discussion on the concept of Swarajya expounded by Dadabhai Nauroji, B. K. Gokhale, Tilak and Sri Aurobindo, we can see their differences of opinions as moderates were more vocal about the ~~Indianization~~ Indianization of civil services and gradual increase in the population representation and they were reticent about the democratic rights of the people as well as division of power. It can be safely said that at that time moderate's concept was self-Government within the empire where central authority would largely remain in the hands of the British Government but there would be liberal grant of autonomy ^{at} provincial level. As far as the extremists' interpretation was concerned, Sri Aurobindo advocated complete independence as the true meaning of Swarajya, but his discussion was more emotional and metaphysical than political. Tilak gave a complete extremist definition of Swarajya as he demanded self-Government within the empire as the true meaning of Swarajya, where both the central and state

authority would largely remain in the hands of the Indians and there would be total provincial autonomy ultimately leading to the Americal type of Federal set up with Presidential form of Government.

Tilak along with Dr. Besant tried to articulate the demands of the Indians for self-Government and for that purpose, they launched their own Home-Rule League movements. Acquisition of Swarajya home rule or self-Government was their goal.

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