

Lokmanya Tilak's Thoughts on Indian Industries

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1. Introduction

Lokmanya Balgandhar Tilak was multi-dimensional personality. He was well-known for this contribution in the field of national movement, beside that; he was successful in spreading the idea of 'nationalism' among the common people. He advocated 'Swarajya', which is nothing but the government established by ourselves. It is the government of free India. He was curious, creative, courageous and open to learn the new experiences. He was a scholar of 'Sanskrit' and 'Astro-Mathematics'. His intellectual contribution in the field of writings shows the deep understanding of him about the subjects. He made a commentary on 'Bhagvad Gita', which is known as 'Geeta Rahasya'. He is known as 'selfless' national leader, who fought for the cause of people by paying high sacrifice. The four fold programme introduced by Tilak during

British India became most successful. This four-fold programme includes 'Swaraj', 'Swadeshi', 'Boycot' and 'National Education'. The ultimate goal of this path of this programme was to get the freedom from British government and also to reach the self-reliant economic growth. This strategy made him more popular among the people. Bal Gangadhar Tilak was most successful national leader, which brought deep impact on national movement. He became mass leader and people granted him the title as 'Lokmanya'.

Lokmanya Tilak was not known as an economist in the sense that he did not produce any systematic treatise on any of the aspects of economic problems affecting the life of the people, but he was enough of an economist who ably studied current economic, material, industrial, agricultural and related topics as they cropped up, made their root-going study and made suggestions for their treatment in the best interests of the country. He criticised official tariff, trade, transport and taxation policies as obstructing instead of promoting the growth of industry and as bringing about ever-increasing de-industrialisation of the country. He was opposed to large-scale import of foreign capital in railways, plantations and industries and the facilities afforded to them by the Government.

2. Lokmanya Tilak's Thoughts on Indian Industries:

Industrialisation of the country on modern lines was considered to be the only way of preventing further ruralisation. Industries were regarded as the only agency through which the pressure of the evergrowing population on the soil

could be reduced. Tilak has embodied many of his ideas regarding industrial development on modern lines, in an obituary article on Jamshetji Tata, founder of the Tata House. It appears in the Kesari dated May 24, 1904 and deserves to be substantially reproduced. Tilak said: "How generous the late Jamshetji Tata was when it was a matter of encouraging scientific research is indicated by the fact that he has donated a sum of Rs. 30 lakhs for the establishment of the Tata Institute of Science and Research at Bangalore. But no one should get away with the idea that his greatness ends here. Tata never pushed himself in any political activity, perhaps because he was not inclined toward politics or he considered other activities more important than political activity. We do not hold that this was his shortcoming nor do we agree with a Bombay contemporary of ours in holding that it was a specially commendable characteristic of his. We hold that well-travelled, intelligent and wealthy businessmen and princes have different duties and functions to perform from those of the leaders of the Indian National Congress and our view is strengthened by the study of the late Jamshetji Tata's career. On account of this, we further hold that he has left an illustrious example for all wealthy businessmen and princes to copy. It is true that if a few people in India could be described as rich, they are such businessmen and princes. We fully realise that their number is not very large, but the matter for extreme regret is that those few who are in a position to do something in the best interests of the country are not conscious of or alive to their duties in this behalf as the late

Jamshetji Tata was". Tilak also has written on several other issues related to industrial development. Some of them are discussed as below.

2.1 Indigenous Industries

Lokmanya Tilak was the only leader at that time to see how significant the role of industries was in national economy. He has highlighted the importance of industrial development along with agricultural development. The sectors, agriculture and industries are important for the economic development, both goes with hand in hand situation. Basically, Tilak tried to protect the indigenous industries, especially with respect to small scale industries. He opposed the exploitation of India's trade, industries, raw-material carried out by the British for their benefit. Tilak also has pointed out the negligence of British government towards Indian industries. Lokmanya Tilak was concerned about the decay of Indian industries. While commenting on the decay of Indian industries and impoverishment of the Indian artisans, Tilak wrote many times in 'Kesari'. According to him, British government order was sent to encourage production of raw material and discourage manufacture of finished products. Weavers were compelled to work in company's factories. Contracts were made to supply products to the company as ordered by them. The weavers were not allowed to work anywhere else or sell their goods outside till they fulfilled the contract of the Company. Thus the Indian weavers were harassed in a number of ways; skilled artisans of India were exploited and were impoverished. And by this the art and craft of Indians was decaying. He further pointed out that Indians could

not export goods to Europe due to heavy 'octroi' levied on such articles as artistic cane work, calicos, cotton cloth, woollen shawls, mats, raw silk, silk cloth, sugar, liquor, half-cotton cloth etc. Inter-State and Intra-regional trade also was prohibited by the British Government by levying 5% to 15% 'Octroi'. Thus trade, commerce, navigation in India were ruined by the British who used scientific and technical knowledge vis-a-vis labour intensive techniques used by Indians.

2.2 British Export Policy

Lokmanya Tilak pointed out that during last few years many Indian industries were closed down and the employability was transferred from industry to agriculture. Through agricultural income increased because of coffee and tea plantations they belonged to European foreigners so it practically did not help the average Indian citizen. The imports had increased during the British period. The imports of glass, cutlery, iron goods, watches and other items also increased in relation to the exports in agricultural raw materials and every year this deficit was affecting our industry. The Indigenous industries based on agriculture were decaying because of 'British' government's wrong policy. Lokmanya Tilak stated that no country can rely upon agricultural income only as it depended totally on nature. Every country should have other sources of income. Various areas were governed by number of rules, But no rulers destroyed skill based industry in his or wired land. He also pointed out that during last few years the British Government had not taken any efforts to

increase industries or industrial research. Discouraging export policies of 'British' government has reduced the Indian exports and increased imports which resulted to closure of indigenous industries and increasing unemployment and decreasing national wealth.

2.3 Marketing of Indigenous Goods

Lokmanya Tilak realized that, in order to promote the Indigenous industries, there needs establish the market for indigenous goods and articles. British government was not taking efforts in promoting Indian industries, hence Tilak a concept of 'Swadeshi Bazar' or 'Swadeshi Exhibition'. The first 'Swadeshi Bazar' was held at Gopi Talao, Matunga (Mumbai). About 30 stalls were erected where country-made sugar, matches, soap, cloth, caps and umbrellas were offered for sale. There were stalls for the sale of country-made silk, handloom shuttle. The Pandharpur industrial Exhibition was arranged at Pandharpur in Solapur District, on 6th November 1906. This was also a strategic part of 'Swadeshi' movement.

2.4 Paisa Fund for Industrial Development

Lokmanya Tilak supported the co-operative movement in India which could form a strong platform to build up the Indian economy. This can be seen in the Paisa Fund movement. In August 1905, through the efforts of 'Lokmanya' Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Antaji Damodar Kale Paisa Fund Society was formed at Talegaon, Pune. The Society was formulated to support the manufacturing of

Swadeshi goods. The main objective behind this was to raise a huge fund for industrial development by collecting money from the people and strengthen the Indian industries. Lokmanya Tilak as he being a popular national leader he promoted the paisa fund movement and attended first meeting on 27th December 1904. He was appointed as the treasurer of this Paisa Fund. This movement paved a way for 'Swarajya' as the people learnt the art of manufacturing products which boosted the local industries. The Paisa Fund Society fostered Indian industries and provided industrial training to Indian workers

2.5 Establishment of Swadeshi Banks

In October 1906 Lokmanya Tilak wrote an article in 'Kesari' which focussed on the issue that when the Indians invest in European banks and when these suffered losses the same had to be borne by the Indians. He stressed the importance that the Indian trade would not flourish unless the Indians establish their own banks (Swadeshi Banks). As a result of Lokmanya Tilak's vision and expectation, two important banks, which were called as 'Bank of Indians' were established. Bank of India was founded on 7 September 1906 by a group of eminent businessmen from Mumbai and in the later phase one more bank as 'Central Bank of India' was established in 1911 and owned and managed by Indians. As a result of Swadeshi movement the banks could mobilise more capital than expected. A new awakening was seen in the minds of emerging entrepreneurs who started production of consumer goods. Kesari became the Bible of Swadeshi movement which got tremendous support in Maharashtra.

This ultimately helped the industrial development in India. The indigenous industries were protected from the British government.

2.6 Sugar Industry:

Tilak strongly held that the sugar industry had excellent chances to prosper in India, particularly in Maharashtra. The Deccan Soil was quite suitable for growing sugarcane with the help of irrigation works and building up sugar plantations and factories. He had placed an order for machinery to carry on an experiment in the production of sugar. He strongly held that if Indians made up their mind to encourage Indian Sugar quite earnestly, India could be soon in a position to do without foreign sugar altogether and even export it, if the Government co-operated with the people in raising the necessary tariff wall and procuring expert help for sugar factories. He referred to the subject more than once but on one occasion, he devoted an exhaustive article to fully expound the sugar question. In the Kesari for July 17, 1906, Tilak has compared the Mauritius Island with Maharashtra and has conclusively proved that the latter's potentiality to provide all the sugar India needed with the least little doubt. He pointed out that Mauritius with 36 miles length and 23 miles breadth had an area of only 713 square miles so that it was not even half an ordinary Indian district and yet it exported three crores worth of sugar to India while the 'Maharatta' Deccan which produced better quality sugarcane and had immense land at its disposal for multiplying sugar plantations was unable to produce the sugar it needed, simply because the Bombay Government and the Government of India

were indifferent towards building up this industry that had excellent prospects to grow. But he wanted his countrymen to be self-dependent, come together, bring experts from sugar producing countries like Java, Phillipines, Mauritius and Cuba and machinery also from there, get their own men trained and thus raise this industry in spite of Government's discouragement and want of sympathy just as the textile industry was raised without any backing from the Government. Tilak's estimate was apparently correct since when India became politically free and began to organise its economy without any restraints, the sugar industry has prospered both in the private and co-operative sectors, not only in Maharashtra, but also in other States.

2.7 Interdependence between Agriculture and Industry:

The close inter-dependence between agricultural and industrial progress was stressed every now and then by the 'Mahratta' and the 'Kesari'. The Mahratta wrote on 4th September, 1881 "There is superfluity of agricultural labour in the agricultural labour market and unless that is removed from it and employed elsewhere, no remedial measure to improve the wretched condition of the agriculturist will be productive of permanent good results. The development of agricultural and mechanical industry must be simultaneous. Similarly in its issue of February 12, 1882, the Mahratta argued that "no mere legislation, no banks, not even the permanency of land tenure would go to improve the condition of the peasantry without the introduction of several industries since no merely agricultural country could ever prosper." The problem of development of

agriculture and the economic condition of the peasantry was viewed by many Indian leaders in the wider context of Indian economy and their conclusion was that progress of agriculture was inevitably connected with industrial development and that unless the tendency towards ruralisation of the country was reversed all other efforts were bound to be found short of the real requirement.

3. Conclusion

Lokmanya Tilak's thoughts on industrial development in India were most relevant during 'British' period. He has pointed out that, the significance of agriculture and industries were important for the economy. According to him, agriculture was the backbone of Indian economy, but it must be connected with industries. The farmers must take lead in developing their farm with the help of modernization and farm products can be used for the 'processing industries. His thoughts about the modernization and mechanization of industries must be praised

Key Points of Tilak's Thoughts on Industries

- Textile industry: Tilak emphasized the importance of revitalizing India's textile industry, which was severely impacted by British policies.
- Handicrafts: He encouraged the preservation and promotion of traditional Indian handicrafts.
- Small-scale industries: Tilak supported the development of small-scale industries, such as pottery, weaving, and oil pressing.
- Agricultural-based industries: He advocated for industries based on agricultural products, like sugar, oil, and cotton.
- Critique of British Policies: He criticized British policies that exploited India's resources and hindered industrial growth.
- Drain of wealth: He argued that British rule led to a drain of India's wealth, stifling industrial development.
- Indian-owned industries: He envisioned industries owned and controlled by Indians, promoting self-reliance.
- Technological advancement: He encouraged the adoption of modern technology to improve industrial efficiency.
- Social responsibility: Tilak believed industries should prioritize social welfare and worker benefits.

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