

Lokmanya Tilak's Thoughts on Education and Development

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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’.

2. Lokmanya Tilak’s Thoughts on Education and Development

In 1905 at the venue of the Benaras session of the Indian national congress the movement for national education and an idea of establishing the Banaras Hindu University emerged. Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya placed the concept of founding a Hindu university and the move was supported by Lokmanya Tilak. At this time the ‘Nagari Pracharini Sabha’ organized a meeting and it was addressed by Tilak. In his speech he pleaded for adoption of the Devnagari script to propagate education all over India. He suggested that a beginning could be made by printing text 85 books for primary schools in Devnagari script. The movement of national education soon gained the momentum and popularity. The message of national education spread among the masses. Maharashtra became the leading place in the movement of national education.

Lokmanya Tilak had clear thoughts on education and development. His vision towards education was linked with national development. The strategy of educational development given by Tilak was including various educational goals. All these were important for the development of a nation. Some of the strategies of education and development can be discussed as below.

2.1 Education and Citizenship:

He initiated his ideas of national education and also brought them into practice by establishing school and college in Poona. The overwhelming response and progress of these institutions proved his National Education Mission to be successful even during British period. In Independent India, National Education Policies have been introduced thrice to bring changes in the education system. According to Lokmanya Tilak, ability to read and write only does not mean education but they are the means to attain education. To put forth the importance of education in the words of Lokmanya Tilak, “Good Citizenship is the Civic Goal of the members of a Nation generally” and therefore it is the duty of older generation to safeguard the interests of the younger one. That would be possible only when a Nation takes its education into its own hands and educate the people about literary, social and political importance

2.2 National Education:

The thoughts of Lokmanya Tilak of education were built up on the background of British rule in India where the British government had its full control over the education system. The education in British India has taught people to disbelieve our religion and disrespect our social order. It has perverted our patriotism and encouraged materialistic outlook of life among the people. It has neglected our ancient history and culture which weakened our moral and stamina to break our national back-bone. The use of English language in education has put a burden on the students. Such kind of education encouraged the production of a class of well-trained clerks, obedient, loyal, quiet, submissive and single-minded who discharge their appointed duties without questioning the authority. Even after passing out of these schools, after getting so much education many people could not able to satisfy their bare necessities of life. Faulty education system was to be blamed for such situation of people. Lokmanya Tilak suggested that for proper education, national schools were required where the people and the Government were actuated by the same ideals of citizenship and there was no scope for any conflict or differences of opinion in the matter of National Education.

2.3 Education with Religion and Culture

Lokmanya Tilak considered National education as a branch or means to attain the Self-government or Home rule in India. He also suggested the kind of national education to be given in these national schools. Lokmanya Tilak advocated that providing religious education is the first and foremost

requirement in national schools. According to him secular education was not enough to build up one's character but religious education was also necessary where we learn high principles which keep us away from evil deeds. Our religion teaches that a man by virtue of his actions could become a god. He was aware about the criticisms of his thought of religious education and put forward that some may think that religion begets quarrel. He discarded this objection and explained further that no religion in the world teaches to pick up quarrels. He also added that advocacy of toleration towards other religious beliefs and instructs stick to one's own religion is the biggest virtue of Hinduism. So, Hinduism to the Hindus and Islamism to the Musalmans would be taught in these national schools.

2.4 Education with Local Language:

Lokmanya Tilak strongly believed that the education should be given in our own vernacular languages to lighten the burden and impact on the study of the foreign language. He supported this thought by giving example of Britishers who despite of staying in India for so many years could not speak for a couple of hours in fluent Marathi. Whereas it was a rule that, the graduates in India should obtain proficiency in English language. Such a compulsion for the study of foreign languages did not exist anywhere except in India at that time. He believed that it was possible that instead of spending twenty to twenty-five years for the education in foreign language, we could easily obtain it in few years if provided in the medium of our vernacular languages. He was not against

learning of foreign language and convinced of learning English, but he was against the idea of making its study compulsory

2.5 Education with Industrial Knowledge :

Lokmanya Tilak believed that education can be given through books and also through anything else. Every business requires one or the other kind of education. Therefore, he advocated Industrial education given in the schools. He had given example of Germany to support his view on industrial education. The industries in Germany declined due to the rivalry between England and Germany. But then the German Government started providing scientific and mechanical education required for industries in the country. As a result, Germany became powerful in commerce that it became an object of great apprehension to other countries. Such education was lacking then in our country. A potter knows how to use china clay for pottery but does not know how to make this china clay by himself. Therefore, this dependency ruined his industry. India was importing many things required in daily life such as matches, tons of sugar from other countries which increased the import payments and thereby increasing the payment of taxes by Indians. Industries in India could not grow because we lack industrial education. India was known as a resource's rich country. If proper

industrial education was been provided then it was possible to flourish industries in India and it could become a self-reliant country.

2.6 National Education Mission :

A nation cannot progress without any difficulties in the way. So, we must get up and begin the work with our strong will power'. For this, Lokmanya Tilak brought out the 'National Education Mission'. After completing education from Deccan College in 1879, Lokmanya Tilak and his Colleagues Gopal Ganesh Agarkar, Vishnu Shastri Chiplunkar, Vaman Shivaram Apte and Madhavrao Namjoshi started New English School on 2nd January 1880 in Poona. Foundation of the school seemed to be the first step taken by Lokmanya Tilak in National movement. In this school they wanted to create awareness among youth regarding the future of the society and inculcate in them the noble values of patriotism through national education. On the first day of opening of the school only 19 students have been enrolled but the number rose to about 858 by January 1884. The then President of Education commission Dr. Hunter was surprised with tremendous growth of school within a short span of time and remarked that such type of institution was undoubtedly capable to compete with the rival government schools not only in India but also in other countries.

The founders of the New English School did not apply for any grant in aid from the Education Department of the government. So, it was an independent body to decide its own education system which proved to be capable enough to compete with the other schools. The highly intellectual teachers like Lokmanya

Tilak, Agarkar and Apte made the necessary adjustments in the subjects like History, Geography, Mathematics and Science. They discouraged the use of English as a medium of instruction and gave greater importance to the vernacular language. To provide cheaper and quality education to the people was actually the ambition of Lokmanya Tilak and his colleagues. Their ambition was to spread such kind of education to college level and to start a college which became a reality in the form of The Deccan education Society in 1884. After a prolong wait of application made to the University to start a college by the Deccan education Society, Fergusson College in Poona was started in 1890. In this way Lokmanya Tilak started his career for spreading of cheaper education with the aim of establishing an Indian Educational Mission, forming a network of education throughout Maharashtra

3. Conclusion

Lokmanya Tilak's thoughts on national education were nothing but a path of national development. This path was more practical since this has wider inclusion. Lokmanya Tilak proposed a greater importance to religious education, vernacular languages in education, vocational education and political education in his national education mission. After Independence, three major national education policies have been introduced to bring revolutionary changes in education. These policies have greater relevance to the thoughts of Lokmanya Tilak on education. The use of regional language and promotion of culture and

heritage is also part of new education policy. Lokmanya Tilak's national education policy has greater relevance in contemporary period.

Key Points of Tilak's Thoughts on Education and Development

- Nationalist education: Tilak believed education should foster nationalism and patriotism.
- Indian culture and traditions: He emphasized the importance of teaching Indian culture, history, and traditions.
- Mother tongue: He advocated for education in the mother tongue, rather than English.
- Vocational training_: He supported vocational training and skill-based education.
- Self-reliance: He stressed the need for self-reliance and indigenous development.
- Economic empowerment: He believed education and development should focus on economic empowerment.
- Rural development: He emphasized the importance of rural development and agricultural growth.

- Educational Institutions: Tilak co-founded Fergusson College in Pune, which became a hub for nationalist and educational activities. He established the New English School in Pune, which emphasized Indian culture and traditions.

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