



## REACTIONS OF CONTEMPORARY BRITISH OFFICERS AND WRITERS

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### Abstract:

*Taking into consideration Sir Valentine Chirol's book 'Indian Unrest', about Lokmanya Tilak's idea of Ganesh Festival, N. C. Kelkar writes that Mr. Chirol writes in his famous book, "Tilak employed an idea to bring into play the most adored god in Hindusthan, Ganapati, for all his political agitations, keeping in view the benefits of religious support for his political campaigning. As a fact, Ganapati is a Hindu deity related with the wisdom and knowledge and the Hindu culture finds immense pleasure to use His image on the first page of their books. It is highly impossible that there is not a temple of Ganapati to the roadsides or even in hamlets, where His idol has not been carved roughly from a stone and painted with red-lead. Tilak's design to leave his own impression on the society, by establishing youth organizations that are interested in physical exercise, in this Ganesh Festival, was really matchless. This Ganesh Festival offered a wide scenario to Tilak's campaigning."*

### KEY WORDS:

political agitations , political campaigning , Maratha community .

### INTRODUCTION-

In the same way, Mr. Chirol also has confessed about Shivaji Festival. He writes, "Tilak had to win the hearts of Maratha community. Therefore, singing ballads of Shivaji's valour, who was from a family of a Maratha knight and had founded Hindu kingdom in Maharashtra, Tilak initiated his plan to wipe out affection for British rule from the minds of Maratha community that majorly has warrior instincts. Some people also guess that Tilak had planned to begin Shivaji Festival, after reading about the lamentable condition of Shivaji's grave on Raigarh, written by British gentleman ... .. whatever be the intention was, taking advantage of Shivaji's name, Tilak kicked off a huge stir on the national level and thus in the year 1895, in all the major places in Maharashtra, festivals began for the celebration of Shivaji's birth anniversary."

From the above two paragraphs, it is quite clear that even the opponents too had admitted Tilak's credit in the success of these two national festivals. (1)

### **VIEWS OF BRITISH OFFICERS ON GANESH FESTIVAL**

There are many British officers who express their views and opinions on Tilak's Ganesh Festival –

- 1) As per the analysis of M. S. Edwards, Police Commissioner Mumbai (1909-1916), the chief aim of Ganesh Festival was to 'to start an agitation against British'.
- 2) District Magistrate of Ahmednagar writes in his 1896 report, "Campaign of Ganesh Festival has now spread in everywhere and in all the cities. This festival has become a tool for political awareness and day by day, its importance is reaching every corner of Maharashtra and Mumbai region. Watching a huge gathering for Ganesh procession, it has come into notice that there were banners on the carts carrying Ganapati idols that had the message 'only native cloths' and the pamphlets were distributed among the people with the message of 'homemade cloths'."
- 3) District Superintendent of Nashik writes in his report on Ganesh Festival procession of 3rd September 1885, "The procession had fifty bullock carts that had the idols of Ram, Laxman and other deities. Many Muslims too were present for the procession. There were people from Muslim community in the band for the procession."
- 4) Valentine Chirol, who was the first British, to scornfully call Tilak as the 'Father of Indian Unrest', writes about Ganesh Festival, "Tilak's major seek to initiate Ganesh Festival was to reinstate the superiority of Brahmin community, with the other goals of giving a warning to Muslims, reformists and British rule." He expressed this view in his article in 'The Times' and thereafter was published in the volume of 'Indian Unrest'.
- 5) The analysis of the aforementioned discussion has been given by Dr. J. V. Naik, a History scholar and a researcher, in his articles using these statements. (2)

### **National Festival – Reaction on the Festival**

Tilak's opponents used to criticize that Ganesh and Shivaji Festivals were the tools for the campaigning against the rule. Sir Valentine Chirol writes in his book 'Indian Unrest', "These festivals are the opportunities for the plays and singing of religious songs. Through these plays and songs, tales from Hindu Puranas are presented in such a skillful way that the society has a feeling of hatred for the foreign rule. The title of 'Mlenchchha' is commonly applicable for both the Muslims and Europeans. The procession in the abovementioned festivals were arranged in such a way that they should end in a conflict with Muslims and Police. Court matters from these conflicts were the instruments to arrange a massive protest and fiery speeches therein. Tilak's arena of campaigning went on spreading with the rise of Ganesh Festival." (3)

### **Ramchandra Narayan Mandlik - Reminiscences of Colaba Assistant Collector**

(Mr. Brook's 1896-97 statement) while telling reminiscences, Ramchandra Narayan Mandlik states, "There was famine in 1896-97. Tilak was in Pen in connection with a law suit. On the first day, a huge crowd gathered around Mr. Brook's tent."

Mr. Brook was panicked watching the huge gathering. Therefore, he requested Tilak, who pacified the crowd. Thereafter, Mr. Brook said Tilak, "Neither in Hindustan

nor abroad, I have seen such a huge assembly of illiterate people from the pheasant background that has gathered to hear a law suit. This assembly reminded me 'the famous court case of seven bishops in English history'. This is the proof of your reputation in the society. I congratulate you for the same." (4)

### **Effect of boycott campaign on British Commerce**

With the reference from 'The Englishman', about 'boycott campaign', Jog writes, "It can be understood from the below mentioned paragraph from the newsletter 'The Englishman', to what extent the adverse effect of boycott campaign was on the British commerce."

"Many of the chief Marwari firms are ruined. Many import centers in Europe either have to shut down their retail outlets or have to curtail their transactions to a very lower level. Stocks in the warehouses are accumulating. By now, this fact has gained such a wide popularity that to hide it would be useless. On the other hand, it is the status quo to publish the loss incurred due to this boycott campaign. There is no question of motivating these boycotters, because they need no inspiration."

"This boycott is a very influential device that is in the hands of the enemy of rule, with the help of which they have awakened British citizens and the rule in India to uproot the vested interests of British in India. It is the basic difficulty to make them aware of this bitter truth. We too should not neglect this boycott campaign with the closed eyes. Not the armed struggle, but this boycott campaign would surly damage the relation between British and India." (5)

### **Some views over Tilak's two books**

With the references from various scholars like Prof. Whitney, A. O. Hum, Prof. Bloomfield, Prof. Pischel, Paul Keras, Prof. Warren, N. C. Kelkar writes :-

#### **1) View on the book 'Orion'**

1) Prof. Whitney (America) writes, "Your theories are very important and leaving long-lasting effects. And therefore, I doubt whether these theories could accurately be formulated. In that era, in Hindustan, even the planets were neither decided nor had been given any titles. I fear, because you have given references of such a long back period."

2) A. O. Hum (Lahore) writes, "Taking your theories into consideration, it is not unfair to decide Vedic period. There is a great possibility that after 20-25 years, scholars might use the milestones that were established you."

3) Prof. Bloomfield (Baltimore, America) writes, "I just leafed through your book and found it be very interesting and creative. However, I am not ready to accept your theories and so it is my plan to cross-verify the references that you have given therein."

4) Prof. Pischel writes, "I did not understand some of the references that you have used in your ideas, because I am deficient in the knowledge of mathematical astronomy. However, after considering everything, I am of the opinion that the quality of being ancient of Vedic literature and Vedic culture and your conclusions about Orion were concrete and authentic. Nowadays, nobody in Europe follows Maxmullar's etymology. I too believe that those were incorrect. However, it has become outdated now to consider the scriptures for the comparative study. In any case, your book is undoubtedly significant." (6)

## 2) Arctic Home

5) Paul Keras (America) instantly approved the theories expressed in this book and wrote his view in the magazine 'Monist', "However, over one or two views, we have differences of opinion. There is an ethnical difference in Turani and Aryan races, with the differences of languages too."

6) "It is quite possible that people of diverse races speak a common language and you also believe that Arcadians were not pure Turanis. However, blend always tends to the development."

7) Prof. Warren expressed his opinion in the Chicago magazine 'Open Court', "A new book has been written in Hindustan over Aryan ancient home, over which scholars in America and Europe are musing. The author of this book Tilak is an expert of Sanskrit and knows western sciences admirably. He writes English in such a sound and confident way that even an Englishman would be envious of him. Moreover, as he is a scholar of law, his narration is clear and he can discriminate easily with what can be acceptable and unacceptable as evidence. His first book 'Orion' already has won respect in the society and so it is not a surprise that scholars admire his second book too." (7)

## CONCLUSION

- It seems that while working in the political field, Lokmanya Tilak exercises religion. For this, on the various daises of Ganesh Festival, Shivaji Festival, Kirtan, Plays, gatherings etc., he expressed his views for the social harmony, awareness and to unite people. From the available literature, it is clear that he had used these daises for national awareness and as a tool in the movement of independence.

- Through Ganesh Festival, he united people and through Shivaji Festival, he ignited the feeling of self-esteem in people. In the independence movement, he won the contribution of every religion, by his secular views. People of the other religions too participated in the festivals initiated by him. Thus, these festivals proved to be an instrument for social harmony.

- Through these festivals, he utilized four-fold principles. In these festivals, he blended ancient references with the modern virtues. Many of his contemporary philosophers, both from India and the foreign countries have expressed their views on his work.

- Sir Valentine Chirol, in his book 'Indian Unrest' has praised Lokmanya Tilak's Ganesh Festival, as it extended his arena of campaigning. Moreover, he also mentions that with the initiation of Shivaji Festival, Tilak won its advantage for his political work.

- District Magistrate of Ahmednagar says, "This festival has become a tool for political awareness."

- There are various views of many authors and thinkers, on the books written by Lokmanya Tilak. Prof. Whitney finds Tilak's theories important with the long-lasting effect. A. O. Hum admires Tilak's research as a milestone. Paul Keras approves Tilak's theories on Arctic Home.

## References from the following books have been used in the abovementioned sample.

(1) N. C. Kelkar, 'Tilak Charitra', Volume No. 1, Pune 1923, Page No. 419

(2) S. G. Patil, 'Ganesh va Shiv Jayanti Utsav Yanche Bhartiya Swatantrya Ladhyatil Yogdaan', M. Phil., Unpublished Thesis, Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapeeth, Pune, December 2000, Page No. 53

(3) N. G. Jog, 'Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak', Publication Division, Delhi, 1972, Page

No. 49

(4) S. V. Bapat, 'Lokmanya Tilakanchya Aathvanee va Aakhyaayika', Volume No. 2, Pune, 1925, Page No. 408

(5) N. G. Jog, (abovementioned book), Page No. 108

(6) N. C. Kelkar, (abovementioned book), Page No. 639, 640

(7) N. C. Kelkar, (abovementioned book), Page No. 643