



**BAL GANGADHAR TILAK AND HIS THOUGHT ABOUT INDIA AND INDIAN NATIONALISM**

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**ABSTRACT:**

Freedom warrior Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak is credited with developing the idea of nationalism. He viewed nationalism as a mental activity that can only be felt and not shown. Tilak believed that the Mahabharata and Ramayana shared parallels that might be used to instil the idea of nationalism as well as a shared desire for the growth and well-being of society. The goal of the current essay is to highlight Lokmanya Tilak's nationalist viewpoint that, prior to British control, India was never a single nation ruled by a single king or dynasty. India was split up into numerous kingdoms and was home to a wide variety of various faiths, languages, dialects, regions, and cultures that can all contribute to the formation of a nation. The paper covers various aspects related to culture, Vedas etc.

Nationalism essentially refers to a sense of harmony, belonging, and solidarity among a people. Of course, Tilak also recognised the importance of some B.C. Tilak Militant Nationalism objective elements, such as sharing a shared language, living on the same piece of land, and fostering and bolstering the individual's sense of unity and solidarity. Tilak believed that the driving factor behind nationalism was a sense of belonging and camaraderie among a people that was mostly derived from their shared ancestry. Tilak used Shivaji and Akbar in his lectures in order to instil a sense of national pride among the populace. Additionally, he believed that by fostering a sense of shared purpose that can be realised via coordinated political activity, the sense of nationalism might be bolstered.

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**KEYWORDS:** Nationalism, Swaraj, Indian culture, History, Lokmanya Tilak, Hindus.

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**INTRODUCTION:**

In India, Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak is regarded as a nationalist architect, visionary, and spokesperson. Before the British took over, India never had a single ruler, according to recorded history. India was a diverse country. There were numerous kingdoms, faiths, dialects, geographical areas, and scripts. There was no such underlying cause or rationale, such as one language, one religion, or boundary restrictions, that could instil nationalism in its population. Tilak has explored numerous perspectives on the nation's spirit, shared purpose, or desire to be a nation, as well as the basis of our nationalism in various pieces in *Kesari* and some of his lectures when considering Swaraj (the independence movement). Tilak has covered all of these facets of nationalism and the nation. Understanding Tilak's perspective on nationalism is essential to understanding the Swaraj Movement. These viewpoints not only assist us comprehend the Swaraj movement but also aid in preserving nationalism in our land.

Sometimes the psychological link to oneness may be dormant. People would have to be mobilised in such a crisis. Real and mystical elements were to be equally important in this process. Tilak said that religion, which had a strong emotional pull, should be used to revive nationalism's latent spirit. Tilak understood the enormous symbolic power of traditional and religious holidays, flags, and catchphrases in igniting a sense of nationality. Tilak used these symbols to great effect. He thought that when it came to motivating individuals, these considerations were more potent than economic ones. As a result, Tilak promoted the employment of symbols in the shape of the Ganpati and Shivaji celebrations, which later gained a strong emotional appeal.

**Philosophical Foundation of Tilak's Political Thought 'Nationalism:**

Swaraj Tilak was neither an academic political philosopher nor an inactive thinker. He was a pragmatic politician, and India's political emancipation was his main objective. Although Tilak's political ideology had its roots in Indian tradition, it

did not entirely reject western culture. The spiritual and philosophical writings of ancient India served as my inspiration the spiritual and philosophical writings of ancient India served as my inspiration. Consequently, he gave his conception of Swaraj a spiritual overtone. Swaraj, in his opinion, was more than just a political or economic idea. Swaraj was more than a tool for maintaining law and order. It was also more than a system of economics that provided people with the comforts and amenities of a good life. He claimed that Swaraj had complete political, social, economic, and spiritual autonomy. Swaraj was therefore more than just home rule. Home rule merely denoted a political system of self-government without cutting ties to the British Empire. Swaraj also emphasised that people should have elevated self-control that encourages dispassionate discharge of their duties. Tilak believed that materialism denigrates human life and lowers it to the level of an animal. With self-control and effort, Tilak wished for men to transcend the realm of animal pleasures and find true satisfaction by repressing their impulses. So, he views the fulfilment of human life as including both the enjoyment of rights and the unselfish discharge of obligations. Man needs the freedom to carry out his responsibilities, not to indulge in egotistical animal desires. Man has obligations to himself, his family, his kith and kin, as well as to other people and his countrymen. He has a responsibility to work for their collective moral, spiritual, and material well-being. He has to do this. But none of this would be possible without the freedom from all forms of dominance and control for both men and women. Tilak acknowledged the suitability of western liberal institutions and ideas, such as constitutional government, the rule of law, individual freedom, and the dignity of the person, for the realisation of this Swaraj. Tilak's political outlook therefore offered an intriguing fusion of the traditional Indian moral system with western liberal institutions.

Tilak has talked on the history and culture of ancient India. He published a couple pieces on the Mahabharata in 1905 that can be categorised as Vaidik dharma or Hindu

dharma. From the Himalaya to Sri Lanka, several Kings ruled the nation, but it was founded on religion. During these years, Arya and Anarya became friends. People lived together in different provinces and were known as Rajya's (Tilak, B. G. Kesari 30 May 1905). There were many powerful kings who used to conquer but never ruled their other Kingdoms. Instead, they merely demanded dominance, collected money from subjects and other kings, and enjoyed their freedom. We can see the existence of all other Kings and Kingdoms even in the Mahabharata. Everyone in Bharat Varsha, according to Tilak, knew the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, and the people there used to uphold the morals. Hence, the Mahabharata and Ramayana share many parallels throughout India and can be utilised to promote nationalism. (B. G. Kesari Tilak - 14 March 1905)

#### **Contemporary Historical Background:**

A newly educated young generation of graduates in India's second half of the 19th century developed a fresh way of thinking. The majority of them were drawn to western philosophy, culture, education, social climate, and advancement. Getting an education, landing a nice career, and leading a happy life were commonplace. They firmly believed in a caste- or class-free society, desired the rejection of all religions, and sought to implement social changes for the benefit of the nation. They demanded that the British rulers disrupt religious rites because they believed that British power was a gift from God. (B. G. Kesari, Tilak, 2 April 1901). Our nation's education, nationalism, ethics, or religion are not included in western education. Such education teaches us neither love nor respect for ourselves. Such schooling does not instil in us a love of our motherland or self-respect (Tilak, B. G. Kesari 19 March 1901). Tilak's views on nationalism are grounded in pragmatism. India, he claimed, was never just one country due to its immense diversity. All the kingdoms were brought together under British Control. We learned two things under British rule: that there is only one King and that English is the official language of government (Tilak, B. G. Kesari 3 September 1895). Along with this, British Control

brought these provisions together through governance, legislation, economic choices, the military, the post, the railroad, the roads, the currency, etc. Even so, they gave all religions and castes—Hindu, Muslim, Shikh, Jains, Parsi, Buddhist, Rajput, etc.—the same fairness and equality. In India, there are only two classes: citizens with salvation and rural residents. This has aided in our (Indians') unification and given us the chance to work out our differences and think as a one Nation. All individuals from various castes or religions must get together and consider how they can advance (Tilak, B. G. the Kesari 19 Dec. 1896). Religion, border, language, and prior history are not the essential criteria for creating a nation, according to Tilak, even though they aid in crystallising the concept of a nation. Nonetheless, the primary justification for nationalism is that each person should be proud of his or her country. They must to consider how their advancements would benefit the entire country. The people of the country should share a common interest.

#### **Shivaji Jayanti Utsav:**

Tilak started the Shivaji Jayanti Utsav between 1895 and 1896. It was primarily done to promote nationalism and self-respect. According to Tilak, Shivaji is the idol of reverence for one's self, one's motherland, and one's country. For many years, the concept of freedom was lost. Swaraj and Swadharma were established by Shivaji Maharaj. One needs such idols that may foster power, courage, and self-respect for the building of a nation. We must observe festivals that serve to remind us of our great leaders, whose biographies might inspire us to work for our country (Tilak, and B. G. Kesari 2 July 1895). Tilak added that nationalism is not something that can be observed physically and is neither a material nor a metaphysical thing. It is a feeling that cannot be seen, such as a thinking, choice, desire, or emotion. Every nation must take care to instil a persistent sense of nationalism in its people. (Tilak, the B. G. Kesari, 28 April 1896). Tilak stated that during the Congress Convention in 1895, representatives from Bengal, Punjab, Madras, Sindh, Parsi, Muslim, etc. had united with a single goal in mind: to address

political issues for the benefit of all. This alone serves as a model for future nationalism and national unification. B. G. Tilak (the Kesari 6 August 1895).

**Federal State Nation:**

Tilak claimed that because of the diversity of its religions and languages, India may be compared to the United States of America. Also, India's various provinces ought to unite in a sense of nationalism. We are like a part of the human body, thus even if the eyes have a problem, hands can still help put eye drops in the eyes. The body will perish if all of its components do not work together (Tilak, B. G.).

**Swadeshi:**

Swadeshi was the positive part of boycott which was only a negative weapon. The Swadeshi movement exhorted the people to use indigenous products even if they were crude and costly. It also urged the educated Indians to enter the field of production, instead of pressing for bureaucratic jobs. The swadeshi movement also included in it a plan to train Indians in the art of industry and commerce. Obviously, the success of the swadeshi movement depended upon the success of boycott. The more the people resolved to boycott foreign goods, the more would be the demand for swadeshi goods. Swadeshi was thus a positive programme to reconstruct Indian industry, trade and craft and rescue it from its dilapidated condition. Besides, it was also a powerful political weapon to cripple imperial interests in the domination of the country.

**Vedanta:**

Lokmanya Tilak was a fan of the Vedas and our understanding of the East. Geetarahasya-Karmayog Shastra, Tilak's commentary on the Shrimad Bhagat Geeta, was written. He stated in his explanation of Nishkam Karmayog that one should not behave solely for his or her own advantage but also for the good of society. He needs to worry about himself, his family, society, and country in that order. Tilak said that if you strive to make your country better because you are a part of it, you will advance with it, just as one rupee equals 100 paise. The motivation for nationalism is to aid others. It is referred to as nationalism or love of the nation when this action is exclusive to one nation. The concept of helping others can be expanded to include the entire world or all people.

Between people and people there is a nation. Every person living in the country wants to prosper. Everyone has the opportunity to flourish if the country does well. Likewise, everyone loses if the country is negatively affected. The concept of Global Nation is appealing. Yet, there are no historical examples to be found. All people accept concepts like love and equality. Yet, in reality, we do not have any cases like this (Tilak, B. G. 1906) "Our Motherland has some expectations from us, which is why I appeal to all of you to come together and work for our Nation without any disagreements," Lokmanya Tilak remarked on his 61st birthday, July 23, 1917. The Nation should be treated as God (Rashtra Dev) (Kelkar, N. C.). The concept or experience of freedom is akin to the immortal Atma (soul). The country will become a dead body if nationalism is absent. In other words, the Nation must adhere to the concepts of nationalism and freedom.

**Hindu – Muslim:**

Tilak desired the union of Muslims and Hindus. In India, Hindus make up the majority. One of the common standards that can aid in the development of the country is Hindutva. All Indian citizens, regardless of their religion, who were born and raised in India should view the country as their motherland. Thus, the success of India is the foundation of all of their goals. (B. G. Tilak, 1899). Tilak wished for everyone to put their egos, uncertainties, and misunderstandings aside and unite to create a Nation. He desired both diversity and togetherness. For this he put forth a lot of effort, persuaded all the religious leaders, and brought them together at the Lucknow Congress on December 29, 1917, where the lion's roar "Freedom is my birth right and I shall have it" was declared. The infamous Lucknow Accord united Hindus and Muslims and called for freedom.

**Boycott:**

BG Tilak Boycott was a component of the extremists' action plan to put pressure on the alien authorities. Tilak made a significant contribution to the growth and popularisation of the boycott theory. One of the main goals of British imperialism was economic exploitation. The Indian crafts, trade, and commerce were completely destroyed as a result of their careless policies. Foreign

commodities that were permitted to enter the nation freely pressured the Indian economy to compete unfairly with them. It was pointless to count on the British monarchy to defend our industries and maize industry. The only answer was to seek self-help. Boycotting and Swadeshi were the self-help strategies used in this situation. Indians made a solemn commitment not to use products from other countries by engaging in a boycott. Also, it represented a determination to oppose any efforts by foreign bureaucrats to continue running the country. That was obviously a destructive tool. Yet, it was anticipated that it would support Indian nationalism in three different ways. First of all, it would attack exploitation, one of the imperialists' main goals. Second, it would inspire the Indian people to sacrifice their short-term interests for the benefit of the country. Thirdly, it would aid Indian industry, commerce, and craft to restore their position in the Indian society and economy and flourish swiftly under the stimulating impact of nationalism. This would serve to build the sentiment of nationalism among them.

**Secular Nation:**

Parliamentary democracy was a topic Lokmanya Tilak frequently discussed. He used Vedic philosophy as a foundation while creating the idea of the Nation. He thought that Vaidik dharma requires people to labour for or assist others. Vaidik dharma is open to other people's ideas. All of these citizens have tolerated one another's viewpoints for thousands of years. In actuality, India brings "harmony" in variety by embracing various religions, ideologies, civilizations, etc. The first duty of an Indian nationalist is to inquire as to whether the people of India are of one nation, Tilak stated in a statement on May 5, 1905. Tilak reaffirmed his position, saying: "An Indian patriot's first job is to determine whether the country's citizens are a single nation. Everyone agreed that India was a single country when they were asked this question. An Indian patriot faces arduous tasks, but he should not be discouraged by them because character development involves overcoming obstacles, which are ultimately human creations. Vedic ideas and nationalistic aspirations don't contradict with one another. Progress is defined as

continually adapting to new circumstances. As a living system, society would be out of the ordinary if it were unable to adjust to changing conditions. "The social structure of India is certainly asleep, but sleep is not the same as death, and there will undoubtedly be a waking sooner or later. In India, nationalism and racial integration are two aspects of patriotism. To achieve the aim of a composite patriotism, the bounds should be broadened. (Maharatta) Tilak spoke to a small audience in 1919 at Dr. Velkar's Bombay home. There were several notable leaders present, including Dr. Gopinath Bardoli from Assam, Satyamurti from Madras, Chakkarang Chitti from Andhra, Harchand Vishambar Sindha from Punjab, and Divan Chaman Lall from Punjab. We have a lot of distinctions in Hindustan, Tilak remarked. We can observe that very few differences still exist if we embark on a boat trip to England with all of our differences and arrive at Eden Port. A few more differences will vanish when we pass via the Suez Canal to reach the Red Sea. There are no differences any longer as we move forward. We are held captive, and our country is a slave state. The only issue that keeps coming up consistently is that one. The words of Lokmanya Tilak provide us with insight into secularism, inclusivity, and nationalism. P. R. Lele.

Despite thousands of years of Vaidik heritage, many people might be unaware that "India" as a nation was first conceptualised in the nineteenth century. While considering the nation's progress, Lokmanya Tilak examined and discussed numerous national perspectives. Tilak discussed nationalism and looked for commonalities. In order to create a modern, powerful, democratic, and secular India, Tilak's nationalism was built on a pragmatic, realistic, and visionary approach.

**CONCLUSION:**

The following conclusions logically flowed from the aforementioned premises: Being driven primarily by the self-serving goal of material gain, the British Raj was not likely to be sympathetic to Indian demands and aspirations. Even during the worst famine in India, the British government did not halt the export of food grains to England. What did that mean? Just that it was ineffective while

trying to change their minds. Every concession made by the British that even marginally jeopardised their interests would be rejected. Hence, applying pressure in support of one's demands was necessary. We wouldn't go anywhere by living on the streets or by pleading and begging for help. Hence, the new ideology differed from the earlier one in almost every respect. Let us / have a look at a few points This essay sought to investigate Lokmanya Tilak's ideas on nationalism. It has been analysed from a variety of perspectives, including the idea of secularism, the spirit of togetherness, democracy, the federal nation, self-development in the national expansion, and the idea of Swaraj. We are guided by our nationalistic aspiration.

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