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SWADHIAN PUBLICATIONS



Contribution of Tilak in Indian national Congress Second Session 1905 T1920 Formation of Indian National Congress

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Background:

It was increasingly felt that instead of having a number of small local organisations. It would be of advantage to have one powerful nationwide organisation. It would also promote Nationalism in a more effective manner and it could be also a vehicle to present public grievances and suggestions to the government. This idea took to root in the period after 1880. Some leaders of Bombay and Calcutta began preliminary discussions to form a National Sabha or organisation for political awakening. Those leaders who took part were Dadabhai Nowroji, Justice- Ranade, Pherozshah Mehta, Badruddin Tayabji, Surendranath Bannerjee, Vyomeshchandra Bannerjee, Kalicharan Banarjee, Anandamohan Bose, G. Subramanian Iyer, Ananda Charlu and others. All of them felt that there should be one national body.

Support of British Liberals:

At this time there were some British liberals who supported the idea of National body of Indian people. They expressed their support and were also willing to help in its formation. Among those English men were Sir Allen Octavian Hume (Madras), Sir Henry Cotton (Bengal). Sir William Wedderburn (Bombay). They were of the view that as there was a growing resentment and discontent among Indians against British rule and if this discontent was allowed to foster, it would affect the British power. Besides, the injustices inflicted on Indians needed prompt redressal. This could be done by a process of good communication between the British and Indians. The British liberals believed that this task could be done if there was a single national organisation of Indians who would put forward the Indian point of view on various issues. This organisation could serve as a 'safety valve'. So that any violent and unruly reactions did not occur. Such an organisation could also be a recognised platform for the Indian public to approach government by constitutional means. Consequently, they decided to take a lead in this regard.

20th December 1885:

All these considerations prompted Indian intelligentsia and British liberals to form nationwide organisation, which culminated in the formation of the Indian National Sabha or Indian National Congress. Sir Allen Hume had formed the Indian National Union in 1884. The first meeting of the Union was to be held in Poona, but as there was an epidemic of cholera there, the venue was shifted to Bombay and on 28th December 1885 at the meeting it was decided to call it as the Indian National Congress. As many as 72 delegates had assembled from various parts of India which comprised of mostly all the important leaders. Vyomeshchandra Bannerjee presided over this conference.

Aims and objectives of the Congress:-

The promotion of personal intimacy and friendship amongst all the more earnest workers in our country's cause in the different parts of the Empire.



- 2) The eradication by direct friendly personal intercourse of all possible race, creed or provincial prejudices amongst all lovers of our country and the fuller development and consolidation of those sentiments of national unity that had their origin in their beloved Lord Ripons ever memorable region.
- 3) The authoritative record, after this has been carefully elicited by the fullest discussions of the matured opinions of the educated classes in India on some of the more important and pressing of the social questions of the day.
- 4) The determination of the lines upon and methods by which during the next twelve months, it is desirable for native politicians to labour in the public interests.

Influence of Extremist Ideology:

The partition of Bengal gave momentum to the rise of Extremism in the Nation Congress because it exposed the cunning and evil designs of the British General opinion was formed in the whole country against this partition. There was widespread anger and the extremists took full advantage to give the priority to the political awakening. Lokmanya Tilak, Lala Lajpatrai and Bipinchandra Pal addressed hundreds of political meetings all over India to stir up feelings and opinion against the British. They got good support from the youth. Dadabhai Naoriji at the Calcutta Congress on December 1906 in his presidential address declared that 'Swaraj' was the goal of the Congress.

The Extremists had full confidence in the National sentiments of the common people. They pursued this belief of theirs and were able to attract all sections of Indian society to the Congress. Lokmanya Tilak placed the four-point programme before the people.

Tilak's four-point programme:

The four-point programme was Swadeshi movement, Boycott Movement, National Education and Swarajya Movement. Among these four points, Swarajya (self-rule) was the ultimate goal and the other three, namely, Swadeshi, boycott movement and National education were to be the means to achieve Swarajya.

Swadeshi and Boycott Movement:

Lokmanya Tilak gave wide publicity to the four-point programme. He advocated the exclusive use of Indian goods and to thoroughly boycott foreign goods. Lakhs of people solemnly vowed to follow theses. The reason behind these movements was to hit British economy by large scale boycott of British goods, as the Indian market was important. In order that all types of Indian goods were available as substitute for foreign goods. Tilak put forward the Swadeshi movement. This would encourage Indian industrialists to start production of such goods. This would stop entry of foreign goods.

National Education:

Tilak advocated that education of children should inculcate love for country and one's religion and culture. This was National Education. This would teach children to learn the values of self-sacrifice and develop a patriotic spirit. English education which was imparted in government schools prepared them for clerical posts as the government could ill-afford to inculcate love for the nation.

In this way, if Indians would adopt the three principles, namely, use of Swadeshi goods, boycott on foreign goods and the national education it was the strong contention of Tilak that it was not very much difficult for us to raise the stiff struggle against the foreign rule.

Contribution of Tilak:

Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak played a very important role in the National struggle. Together with Gopal Krishna Gokhale and Bipinchandra Pal, he headed the Extremists and he had a lion's share in the popularisation and spreading the extremist ideology. Ultimate awakening people and execution of Nation from his school days, Tilak along with Gopal Ganesh Agarkar had started a campaign to awake the people to National Welfare. He dedicated his life to the service of the nation and started the 'New English School' at Pune. To arouse public consciousness and to propagate Nationalistic ideas he started two newspapers - Kesari and Maratha. Then, he participated in the formation of 'Deccan Education Society' and 'Fergusson College'. Tilak and Agarkar both strove to inculcate Nationalistic ideas in the youth of Maharashtra in that period. Differently, over the question, "Which comes first, Independence of the nation or improvement of society?" the two separated. Agarkar believed that social reforms were most important whereas political freedom was most important to Tilak. He felt that social reforms could be attended to after political freedom.

Staunch supporter of Indian Nationalism:

Tilak consistently tried to motivate people against British rule, being the staunch supporter of Indian nationalism. According to him, ancient Indian culture, vedic religion and Indian's glorious history were the main supporting pillars of Indian Nationalism. To spread these ideas he started the festivals of Ganesh and Shiv Jayanti as community based. It is called 'Sarvajanik Ganeshotsava' and 'Sarvajanik Shivjayanti'.

Tilak also organised a forceful protest against the Bengal partition. This opposition was so robust and effective that the British Government filed a case of sedition against him. Earlier also a similar case was filed. He was sentenced once in July 1908 for six years imprisonment in Mandalaya, Burma (now Myanmar). While in prison he wrote the masterpiece, 'Gitarahasaya'.

Lucknow Treaty - (1916):

In December 1916 a treaty was signed between Lokmanya Tilak and Barrister M. A. Jinnah which showed the way for Hindu-Muslim unity, their concept of Nationalism was all-pervasive. It was their contention that all people in India should come together and fight unitedly and every one of us should take a share in freeing our country from the shackles of foreign rule.

Lal, Bal and Pal:

In campaigning and spreading the extremist ideology and in awakening the public opinion of this country against the foreign rule both the leaders Lala Lajpatrai and Bipinchandra Pal had done the important work much the same as Lokmanya Tilak. Lal Lajpatrai was known as the Lion of Punjab. He was imprisoned several times for the service of nation. To Bipinchandra Pal no sacrifice was greater for his country. His fiery speeches drew the anger of the government upon himself and he suffered prolonged imprisonment. The trial of Lal, Bal, Pal were responsible for making the Nationalist movement a powerful force.

Conclusion;

The most remarkable work of the Extremists was that they heightened the level of self-confidence among Indians. One of the significant achievements of the Extremists was taking the national struggle to the masses, because they had full faith in the power of the common people. They were aware of the fact that unless any movement does not take the form of public agitation, it does not receive the real strength. It was only by mass agitation that it would become forceful with their resolute and untiring efforts these leaders had...



people and hence the nationalist movement had become itself in real sense as the public agitation.

The Extremists made it clear to the masses that the ultimate goal of the national struggle was to achieve Swaraj. Tilak's utterance, "freedom is my birth right and I will achieve it" stated this without ambiguity. After 1920 under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi the national struggle got united. It is also true that the foundation for this was laid by the Extremists.

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