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DOI: <http://ijmer.in.doi./2021/10.12.84>

LOKMANYA TILAK'S THOUGHTS ON NATIONAL EDUCATION AND NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICIES OF INDIA DURING POST INDEPENDENCE PERIOD

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Abstract

Lokmanya Tilak, a strong political and social leader, believed that the spirit of nationalism was important in freedom struggle of India. This spirit could be possibly inculcating through culture and education. Once the people realize their true identity, they would be ready to participate in the movement of freedom struggle on a large scale and Indian National movement would become a movement of masses. 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.

The paper intends to study the relevance of these policies during post-Independence period of India where the interests of the people and that of the administrators are the same and the ideas of Lokmanya Tilak on national education during the period where the interests of the people and administrators were differ.

Keywords: Lokmanya Tilak, Indian National Movement, National Education Mission, National Education Policy.

I. INTRODUCTION

Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak (23-7-1856 to 1-8-1920) was the first political leader in India who was recognized as a leader of masses (Lokmanya: accepted by people in India) in Indian Independence Movement. He was a teacher, social reformer, activist and a lawyer. These qualities have been used by him in the struggle for Independence. Besides these qualities he was an independent thinker with a strong mind, a great scholar, a mathematician, philosopher and astrologer. He realized the importance of culture, media and education in cultivating the spirit of patriotism and ignited this spirit successfully for freedom struggle of India. He started 'Sarvjanik Ganesh Utsav' and 'Shivjayanti Utsav' to mobilize people on a large scale and inculcate in them the spirit of nationalism. He started school and college where he brought his thoughts on education in practise. He started two newspapers 'Kesari' and 'Maratha' where through this powerful print media he cultivated the minds of people to contribute in freedom struggle. He was the first freedom fighter who started 'Swadeshi' Movement to encourage indigenous entrepreneurship by boycotting foreign products. He wanted to promote industries in India so he initialized the idea of providing vocational education in his national education mission. He was well aware of its economic importance in nation building. He was the first political leader to demand 'Swaraj' or 'Home Rule' by giving slogan to the movement 'Swaraj is my birthright and I shall have it'. His demand for 'Sampoorn Swaraj' laid the foundation of the future of freedom struggle for Independent India.

II. LOKMANYA TILAK'S THOUGHTS ON NATIONAL EDUCATION

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. These thoughts of Lokamnya 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. He considered National education as a branch or means to attain the Self-government or Home rule in India. Lokmanya Tilak also suggested the kind of national education to be given in these national schools.



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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 keeps 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.

Secondly, 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.

Thirdly, 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 require 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.

The fourth factor required in National education was the education in politics. He quoted that in America, teaching of the Proclamation of Independence was a part of secondary school education so as to train their children in politics from an early age. The students in India must understand that the Queen's Proclamation i.e., the Government of India Act 1858 was the foundation of our rights. This Act granted the same rights and promised to support religious tolerance and guaranteed equal impartial protection of Law to the People of India. Lokmanya Tilak used the reference of Dadabhai Naoroji's Drain Theory which was based on the experience of his fifty years of understanding of British rule. 'Poverty in India is the result of this drain' was the outcome of his theory. Lokmanya Tilak wanted this education in politics to students in order to understand their rights in the prime stage of their life.

With these four ideas / thoughts on National education Lokmanya Tilak proposed that 'education is a matter of common benefit only if the future generations come out with good life, able to earn their bread and become true citizens. It is duty of the representatives of the Government to provide it. But if Government is not willing to do it then we must do it. Educationists should come forward to devote their learning and experience and generous people to come forth with their money for this common cause of education. A nation cannot progress without any difficulties in the way. So, we must get up and begin the work with our strong will power'. Lokmanya Tilak's 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



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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.

III. NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICIES POST INDEPENDENCE PERIOD

After Independence in 1947, the Government of Independent India appointed various commissions from time to time to formulate a set of principles and guidelines for National Policy on Education.

- ❖ The Conference of Vice Chancellors of Universities (1948)
- ❖ The Conference of the education Ministers of the States (1948)
- ❖ The University Education Commission (1949), (Radhakrishnan Commission)
- ❖ The Secondary Education Commission (1952)
- ❖ The English Review Committee, (Kunzuru Committee) (1955)
- ❖ The Central Advisory Board of Education (1957)
- ❖ The Education Commission known as Kothari Commission (1964-66)

These various Commissions recommended several changes in the education system in India mainly about the medium of instructional and educational language and use of regional language at primary and secondary level, replacement of English as an instructional language at university level, three language formula where it should be made compulsory to learn one regional language, one national language and one foreign language including English.

National Policy on Education 1968: aimed to promote sense of common citizenship and culture, national integration for national progress. It also gave greater attention to research and development in science and technology. It formulated certain principles and guidelines to promote development of education in India as following:

- Right to free and compulsory education to children up to 14 years of age guaranteed by Article 45 of Indian Constitution.
- To increase the standard of Teacher education to improve quality of education.
- Implementation of Three language formula as per suggestions given by various commissions.
- Guaranteed Education opportunities to all i.e., each and every citizen is entitling to get education irrespective of caste, color, region, religion.
- Implemented of uniform education structure from higher secondary to university level such as 10+2+3.
- Encouragement to students in participating in extra-curricular activities during the course such as Sports, Art etc. and their involvement in the programs of national construction, community service etc.

National Policy on Education 1986: The objective of National System of Education was to eliminate disparities in the educational system and improvement in the quality of publicly funded schools. 'Operation Blackboard' was launched to improve the quality standard and facilities in the primary schools in rural and urban areas. The District Boards of Education, District Institutes of Education and Training, and Village Education Committees were established for the improvement in school education programme. It introduced Programme of Action in 1992 to promote women's equality, special provisions for the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, other educationally disadvantaged sections, minorities, the physically and mentally handicapped, and for the areas which need special attention. It emphasized on enhancing and promoting vocational education, adult education, education for the mentally and physically challenged persons, non-formal education, open universities and distance learning, rural university, early childhood care and education. Delinking of degrees from certain jobs was one of the important objectives of National Policy on Education, 1986.

IV. NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY 2020

After 34 years of National Policy on Education 1986, The National Education Policy 2020 is introduced. The policy aims to comply with the objectives of SDG4 of United Nations. Its vision is to introduce such an education system which will transform India into an equitable and vibrant knowledge society. It also ensures the quality education to all for making India a global knowledge superpower. It envisages to bring a change in the curriculum and pedagogy of our institutions. It proposes to cultivate among the students a deep sense of respect towards the Fundamental Duties and Constitutional values, and their roles and responsibilities in a changing world. The new policy committed to develop knowledge, skills, values, virtues among students for commitment of human rights, sustainable development and global well-being, which enables them to become a truly global citizen with Indian pride. These objectives are guided by the rich heritage of ancient and eternal Indian knowledge and culture.



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The NEP 2020 proposed to change the school curricular structure from 10+2 to 5+3+3+4, bringing children of age group 3 to 5 in a formal education system. Vocational education along with internship from class 6 is also a key change in the policy. Redesigning of board examination is one of the major initiatives proposed in school education.

As far as higher education is concerned the policy proposed a new umbrella regulator for regulation, accreditation and funding for all the faculties. It opens the education field for not only public and private players but also to top foreign universities to improve quality and competitiveness of the institutions. A multidisciplinary approach is adopted by adopting a credit transfer system. More autonomy will be given to individual institutions.

V. CONCLUSION

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 objectives of these policies to a great extent are similar to that of the objectives of National Education Mission by Lokmanya Tilak i.e., to inculcate the spirit of nationalism among people, to respect of rich heritage and culture and build a socially, politically and economically a strong nation. Though the objectives are hard to achieve but not impossible. To put it in the words of Lokmanya Tilak that the problem is not the lack of resources or capability, but the lack of will.

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