CHAPTER-IV

SWARAJ: MOBILIZATION

The logical sequel to Tilak’s position was that every people should strive for Swaraj-political freedom-which is the e’lan vital-Chaitanya-of any nation. Political freedom, to Tilak, was a precondition to moral human existence. As such, freedom was not only a natural right, but also a moral obligation, and struggle for freedom was a moral imperative.

Tilak, primarily, was an activist and, naturally, he sought to put his ideas into practice. Freedom, thus, emerged as the main aim and objective of his life. Tilak, however, did not have a ready-made model to fall back upon. He had to devise his own model and to formulate his own programme for building up the freedom struggle.

Even a cursory review of his writings and activities leads one to a clear inference that Tilak did proceed with a well-thought-out logic.

As has been observed in the previous chapter, Tilak had realized that the only course open to a subject country for its political salvation was Self-Reliance, i.e., the involvement and direct participation of the masses. Further, he was aware that in the absence of people’s participation, no freedom struggle, whether peaceful or otherwise, would be successful. It, logically, followed that a national freedom struggle to succeed, should emerge as a ‘national effort’ in the true sense of the term.

Tilãk was quite conscious of the difficulties faced by the Indians as a subject nation. He fully understood the situational limitations. Indians, as a
people, were disarmed, internally divided, ignorant, and were yet to emerge as a ‘nation’. He also did not belittle the fact that the Indians were faced with a seemingly invincible subjugator in the form of Great Britain.

It appears that Tilak proceeded with his plans on the basis of certain specific and clear hypothesis. His basic premise was that no government could be effectively challenged so long as it does not forfeit its legitimacy among the common people-the masses. Tilak was aware of the fact that even a tacit consent, a mere compliance, lends legitimacy to the existing regime. It is significant that he had also comprehended its corollary, namely, that no government could continue in power once it forfeits its legitimacy and its bonafides get challenged by the common people.

Tilak not only propagated the need of giving the Swaraj movement a mass-base and mass-orientation, but also put in conscious efforts for seeking the support of the masses. in a way, he was trying to put his hypothesis to practical tests.

It must go to Tilak’s credit that he considered this aspect and sought to plan his strategy, accordingly, from the very beginning of his political career. Of course, he did not specify his plans in so many clear terms. Still, a definite pattern can be evolved out of his speeches, writings and actions. As Pandit Malaviya notes, as early as in 1887, i.e., even before Tilak had decided to join politics whole-heartedly, the latter had suggested that public opinion should be made so instructed and strong that the Government would be afraid to disregard it.¹ Tilak laid great stress on the importance and necessity of arousing
in the masses a sense of national self-respect and self-reliance, and of generating the hope and confidence in them that they would be able to regain the power of governing themselves.

As some critics point out, Tilak was, initially, towing the Congress line and, like the Moderates, he also approved of appealing to the Home Government over the head of the Bureaucracy and seeking justice at the bands of the former. Yet, even here, Tilak differed from the Moderates significantly. He observed, “The Home Government would be considerate and just, only on the matters of minor importance. It was hoping against hope that the Britishers would ever agree to any fundamental changes in the basic features of the British Imperial system”, suggesting thereby that the changes would only be marginal.

It must, thus, be appreciated that there was a definite difference in the approach of the Moderates and of Tilak. From the very beginning, as has been discussed elaborately in the previous chapter, Tilak never looked upon the British rule as Divine Dispensation. Nor was he ready to accept the British rulers as political Gurus. As a result, even at that early stage, Tilak had stressed that even the most considerate and generous Britishers would not pay any attention to these appeals and petitions unless and until these enjoyed popular support and backing in India. He explained that the demands of the Indian National Congress would carry weight only if “they are represented, through petitions, from not only every province, district, and city but also from every village.” He advocated that if the Indians desired that their efforts should bear
fruits, then, it was essential that parallel attempts should be started not only at the provincial but also at the local level. He lamented that “the Indian National Congress, working at the national level, has superceded the local organizations functioning at the regional and city levels.”

This, in his opinion, adversely affected people’s participation. Clearly, it was with this view that Tilak observed, “We attach more importance to the Provincial Conferences of the Congress than the National ones as the former can better contribute to the creation of political awareness.”

Tilak further felt that the British rulers could view the educated Indians derisively as an ‘infinitesimal minority’, non-representative in character, and safely ignore their considered opinion, only because the educated class had not extended its field of activity sufficiently and had not taken the necessary trouble to bring the masses within the fold of their movement. He asserted that the Congress movement would not be effective so long as the illiterate peasants were not associated with its work. He strongly felt, “The more the Congress-both at the national and provincial levels-succeeds in reaching the poor masses, the better.”

Tilak pointed out that it was no use claiming that the educated Indians were, as compared to the British, in a better position to understand the plight of the common man. He preferred, “the Ryot-the common toiling people coming forward to give vent to their grievances, in the conferences, openly.”

He did appreciate that the Ryot might not be in a position to articulate the grievances, but insisted, “these people-on whose behalf the educated are voicing the grievances-should at least be present at these conferences.”

He added, “to be
really effective, the resolutions of the Indian National Congress must be brought home to the ignorant masses in simple language"\textsuperscript{11} thereby, getting the common people associated with the working of the Congress. Dhananjay Keer, one of Tilak’s biographers, mentions that Tilak was the only leader to take cognizance of the portrait of a half naked famine-striken farmer displayed in the Congress pendal,\textsuperscript{12} carrying the words, ‘Are there at least twenty men who have a real concern for the welfare of the peasants?’ Referring to the portrait, Tilak observed, “If the peasants are still ignorant about the role and intentions of the Congress, then the fault lies with the Congress leaders who have failed to illuminate the peasants and create confidence among them.”\textsuperscript{13}

Tilak vehemently criticised the educated who fought shy of mixing with the masses.\textsuperscript{14} He warned that such an attitude of aloofness was nothing else but utter foolishness. He reminded the educated, ‘We (the educated) share a common lot with the ignorant masses and are destined to live together. Our destinies are interlinked and, ultimately, it is they (the ignorant masses) who would be deciding our fate.”\textsuperscript{15} Therefore, “No one should despise the commoners-peasants and artisans-as sheer beasts who are considered to be good for nothing.” Tilak, further, asked, the educated not to forget that the goals of the national movement could be reached only with the support, endeavours, and hardships of these common people. Keeping this in mind, “the educated should strive to educate the masses politically”.\textsuperscript{16} The English-educated had developed a false feeling of superiority, a false pride. Tilak entreated that “the educated should give up this egoistic attitude-self-conceit.
The educated should freely mix with the people of all kinds and all castes and, at times, live among them like them and teach them the way to improve their lot.”\(^{17}\)

Tilak’s argument was based on his confirmed opinion that “no concrete purpose would be served by a few educated, conferring together.”\(^{18}\) The educated would be able to act as effective articulators only on the strength of the full backing of the common people. If at all there is any possibility that the Indian National Congress would gain strength so that the government would accept its demands, this would be feasible only when the public opinion gets into its favour. This would make the British rulers realize that they can, no more, take the common people for granted. Explaining this point with a familiar illustration, he said, “the mere vibrations of the strings of a Siar or Tanpura will not, by themselves, produce any musical note. But when the same (strings) are fitted on the Sitar’s or the Tanpura’s Gourd (Gourd is a dried, hollowed pumpkin attached to a hallowed, elongated, wooden framework over which the strings of different musical notes are fixed), it would produce a melodious note. The musical note gets produced only when the strings act in accord with the Gourd. Such is the pattern of the relationship that exists between the leadership in any nation and the public opinion.”\(^{19}\)

Tilak, thus, perceived a new locus of power and strength in the masses and called upon the Indian political leadership to look forward to this new power-centre. He wanted his contemporaries to be mindful of the fact that Lord Rama carried out his task with the help of the monkeys; or, to be more
acceptable, to quote from the recent past, Shivaji also could accomplish his historic task with the help of the ordinary Mawalas. He was, thus, pointing out as to how a capable and ingenious leader could unite a people and enthuse them for magnificent action for a great cause.

It must be noted, at this juncture, that Tilak laid great emphasis on educating the masses rather than on provoking or inciting them. He observed, “If one (a leader) wished to involve the masses in the common cause, his first task should be to educate them for their upliftment; other things would come next.” He insisted, “We must give the best political education to the ignorant villagers; we must meet them on terms of equality; teach them their rights and show how to fight constitutionally. Then only will the Government realize that, to despise the Congress is to despise the Indian nation. Then only will the efforts of the Congress be crowned with success.” One is really impressed by Tilak’s foresight and democratic spirit when one finds him asserting, “At present, the peasant class—the major sector in the society is ignorant and unaware of many things and hence, they are not in a position to have proper and authentic estimation or assessment of their own potential power. They feel that they are insignificant non-entities. The primary duty of the educated is to make them aware of their own potential so that they come to look upon themselves as the true pillars of their nation and makers of their own fortune.

It is this realization, of the need of giving the freedom movement a mass-base and mass-orientation, that sets Tilak apart from his contemporaries. He not only suggested the necessity of securing a mass-base but went a step
further and suggested a programme which could work as a blue-print for mobilization.

There were two aspects of the programme envisaged by Tilak: the first was mobilizing the people. Educating the people and generating among them a political awareness, thus, formed the preparatory part of his strategy. The second one was enlightening the masses on their role in sustaining a political regime, thus, securing their direct participation in the freedom struggle. Tilak felt assured that this would lend strength to the freedom struggle.

A five-fold strategic programme for achieving these ends is clearly discernible in Tilak, though he did not systematically put it in specific words. The strategy comprised: (1) Communicating with the people in their own language (Communication); (2) Gathering the people together (Aggregation); (3) Making the people aware of the growing poverty and the causes leading to it (Awareness); (4) Giving a new identity and form to the Indian National Congress (Organization); and (5) Organizing popular discontent by involving the masses in protest movements and, thus, initiating them in the freedom struggle (Self-identification and Involvement).

The most obvious thing—if one wanted to establish communication with the people was to speak to the people in a language that they could understand, i.e., their mother-tongue. It was only with this view that Tilak and his compatriots chose, at the very beginning of their public life, to publish the ‘Kesari’ in Marathi and only in Marathi? On getting warned that in that case, ‘Kesari’ would not have the prestige enjoyed by an English paper, they stated,
the ‘Kesari’ was intended to be a people’s paper and they were sure of people’s favourable responses.\textsuperscript{25}  

Tilak, very much, regretted the egoistic attitude of the new English educated, and likened it to the high-browed attitude of the Sanskrit Pandits of the middle ages who had persecuted the saints of the Bhagwat cult for making the exposition of the Vedanta in Marathi.\textsuperscript{26} He greatly appreciated the role of vernacular language, firstly, in bridging the hiatus between the masses and the classes and, secondly, in revitalizing the former. He observed, “The event of translating the Bible into various popular languages in Europe resulted in an upsurge of knowledge leading to a new awareness among the people.\textsuperscript{27} “Similar was the impact of Saint Dnyaneshwar’s translation of the Gita into Marathi, the mother-tongue of the people.\textsuperscript{28}

Tilak, thus, emphasized the role of the vernacular in unleashing the revitalizing forces in the society. Tilak’s foresight, in this, respect, would be better appreciated if it is recalled that it was only in 1905, i.e., after the declaration of partition of Bengal, that leaders like Surendranath Banerjee thought it fit to discard both the Western clothes and English language, and to address the masses in their own language.\textsuperscript{29}

Tilak also appreciated, much, the emergence of provincial conferences that facilitated discussion about political issues in regional languages. He hoped that by this, even common people would develop interest in the national movement.\textsuperscript{30} Tilak, himself, was very keen and advised his assistant editors to use simple, straight-forward language which even a semi-literate would follow.
The language used by Shivram Mahadeo Paranjape—known for his ‘extremist’ views and the editor of the nationalist Marathi newspaper, the ‘Kal’ was more pungent and provocative. Tilaks’ style, however, by its very simplicity and straight-forwardness, irked the foreign government more, because it could reach the masses.31

For the same reason, Tilak wanted his followers to know the culture and language of the regions which they had chosen for their work. He stressed, only then could the workers be in a position to establish an effective dialogue with the people.32

Tilak chose to communicate with the people in their own language and address them in their own idiom. His argument was, necessarily, addressed to the masses. Many a times, the points in his argument were not substantially different from those of the moderate leaders. What was unique with him was that the argument was directly addressed to the people. G.K. Gokhale’s scholarly arguments were, no doubt, at times irksome to the British administrators but those were addressed to the treasury benches and hence left the people cold and uninvolved. As S.M. Mate has rightfully pointed out, “The very caption of Tilak’s article ‘The squandering of Rs. One Hundred and Ten Crores’ bears out that the author was not interested in addressing the legislative members in wispering tones, but was intended to address the masses who he wanted to educate.”33

Tilak, categorically, expressed, in 1902, “Our writings, these days, are not addressed to the rulers alone. We consider it our duty to write for
awakening the people. We wish to inform them fully about the nature of the prevailing political set-up, explain how, as a result, the Indians are being adversely affected, and, as to what measures our people, individually and collectively, can take to prevent this deterioration and damage.” Tilak further stressed, “We aim at inculcating in the minds of our readers the thoughts which stir us deeply and also our agonies and indignation. We want the indignation in our heart to infect people.” He concluded—and it is very important—that he would consider his efforts as useless if they fail to produce the expected results.

Tilak was fully convinced that in order to communicate effectively with the masses and to generate successfully a feeling of unity among them, it was necessary to prepare a common meeting-ground to have some agency of contact. In a backward country like India where literacy percentage was very low, observed Tilak, the printed word could go only a small way. And it was necessary to use the spoken word.

The conferences and meetings of the Congress, by their very nature, had failed to attract the masses who did feel; that they were unwelcome at such sophisticated places. V.R. Shinde— an action-oriented social reformer and nationalist in Maharashtra, and founder of the Depressed Classes Mission—had described how, in the initial phase of the Congress, it was necessary to undergo preparation for the western-styled attire if one wished to attend its session.

Tilak realized that common people would not summon sufficient courage to attend such conferences. It was, therefore, essential and advisable to
meet and deal with the people on equal terms and to make them feel that they belonged to the educated and the educated belonged to them.

Hence, Tilak, suggested that the social and political workers should make use of the traditional occasions e.g. religious functions, cultural congregations etc. To him, these traditional fairs could be converted into huge meetings and utilized by the educated ones, to bring home to the people the real state of affairs of their countrymen enlighten them about the tyranny of the government, and inculcate among them the feeling of nationalism.

Tilak, himself, tried to utilize every such opportunity that he came across, for addressing the common illiterate people. He hoped that the use of these methods would take the nationalist movement to the village huts.

Tilak, therefore, suggested that the social and political workers should make use of the traditional occasions. Where such opportunities did not exist, he suggested, new ones should be thought of.

It was with this view that the two festivals, viz., the ‘Ganesh festival’ and the ‘Shivaji festival’ were initiated by Tilak. He hoped that these festivals, organized on a popular basis, would help in bridging the gap between the common people and the leaders. Tilak was, thus, initiating a much-desired contact with the masses the importance of which the Congress never realized.

R.C. Majumdar precisely and yet effectively summarizes Tilak’s argument in favour of such festivals. As Majumdar observes, these festivals, to Tilak, “provided ample opportunities for the tutored classes to come into close contact with the untutored, to enter into their very spirit, to understand their needs and
grievances, and, lastly, to make them co-sharers in the benefits of education and all other new notions of patriotism which education usually carried with it.”

As Tilak’s ultimate objective was to approach the masses, he preferred to hold the festival under the special patronage of the most popular deity of Maharashtra viz. Lord Ganesh. This festival had another advantage: In order to serve the purpose of the nationalist movement, it was necessary to ensure that the public festival was celebrated by the people at their home towns.

Tilak was elated to see, at the Ganpati festival, people from all castes including the untouchables-forgetting their caste rivalries, and mixing freely with a spirit of common religious affinity? He added that many a patriots must have been exceedingly gratified at the sight.

Tilak’s choice of the Shivaji festival was equally purposeful. He explained, “Shivaji, the founder of the Maratha Empire, is a personality whom people of all castes of Malariashtra commonly hold in high esteem, adoration and veneration. For the people of Maharashtra, ‘Shivaji’ is a common rallying point.” Tilak was convinced, “It would be specially commendable to commemorate the memory of this valiant person who went beyond petty caste considerations and gave everyone an equal opportunity to utilise his qualities for the common cause, and, thus, successfully brought the people in one common national fold.”

The Ganesh and Shivaji festivals helped in bringing the politically conscious class in direct contact with the masses. The Times of India, the
mouthpiece of the ruling British, thus noted, “The men at the head of the movement have been assiduous in going to market place and have apparently made conquest there.”

Gradually, the Shivaji festival spread beyond the frontiers of Maharashtra and careful observers soon discerned in it a fresh and not unsuccessful attempt to rally large sections of the population round the idea of liberation of their country. The Ganesh Festival also, as noted by ‘Past Goftar’- a Gujarati paper run by the Moderates, grew into a grand national festival with Muslims rubbing shoulders with Hindus.

Obviously, these measures had some limitations which Tilak was not unaware of. It seems, however, that he believed that in the then Indian context, the first task before him was to make a dent on the political apathy of the people and involve them in the political process. His primary concern was to touch the sympathetic chord of patriotism in the minds of the people and, simultaneously, to make them confident of their own strength. In the then prevailing circumstances, Tilak accepted these festivals as the most effective means of approaching the masses and orienting them to the national movement. R.C. Majumdar observes that history was, hereby, enlisted in the cause of Nationalism. Majumdar’s further observation clearly brings out how effective the method of celebrating the memories of the heroic deeds of great national heroes was. As Majumdar writes, “As Bengal had no knowledge in those days of their own great leaders, the lives of Rajpu, Maratha and Sikh leaders took their place. The patriotism of Rana Pratap and the heroic deeds of Shivaji were
household words in Bengal. It would be difficult to find any literature such as Rabindranath Tagore wrote on Shivaji and Sikh Gurus.”\textsuperscript{45} In fact, as Majumdar further observes, “The Shivaji festival was national hero-worship.”\textsuperscript{46} It has been targeted in some quarters that Tilak was relying on revivalist techniques. But, as observed by Pradhan-Bhagwat, “Tilak’s intention was to revive the creative spirit of the old times and not the old institutions or religion.”\textsuperscript{47} It must be appreciated that Tilak’s writings and speeches, during these festivals, clearly indicate that he was attempting to convey a modern message through the traditional idiom.\textsuperscript{48}

Tilak, both as a political thinker and as a political activist, sought and endeavoured to make the Indian national movement people-oriented. Its importance would be quite apparent if one refers to B.C. Pal’s statement. He observes that it was only after “Lord Curzon had thrown away the ‘baby-comforter’ that our faces have turned to the starving, the naked, the patient and long suffering Indian people.”\textsuperscript{49} As he further adds, “in it, we see a new potency, because we view them now with an eye of love which we never have felt before; and in the (teeming-toiling, starving and naked) population of India we find possibilities, potentialities and germs, that have given rise to this new movement.”\textsuperscript{50}

The next aspect of Tilak’s strategy was to make the people realize their aggravating poverty and to make them aware of the causal relationship between their deteriorating economic conditions and the political subjugation.\textsuperscript{51}
Tilak, purposefully, pursed this line of strategy. He clearly perceived that any people would bear poverty meekly only so long as they are ignorant. He not only appreciated that a fusion of poverty and the perception (knowledge) of its causes, immediately leads to an outburst of unrest, but also actively strove to bring them together. He hoped, this would ignite a spark and explode the very legitimacy of the British rule.

The moderate leaders, too, were aware of the problem of Indian poverty. In fact, as has been very rightly pointed by Bipañ, Chandra, “The poverty problem occupied the centre of the stage in Indian politics in the formative period of Indian nationalism. Every important figure in Indian politics discussed the economic situation in India. And this inquiry and the ensuing debate helped the emergence of economic nationalism in India. It played an important role in the development of Indian nationalism. The economic argument directly hit the target when mere political and sentimental appeals failed in undermining the moral foundations of the British rule. There is a lot of truth in Bipan Chandra’s assertion that “ultimately it was the agitations around economic policies that were carried out unremittingly by all sections of the national leadership which dispelled the hallow of beneficence around British Rule”. But, while emphasizing the importance of the impact of economic nationalism in general, Bipan Chandra fails to take cognizance of and to do proper justice to Tilak’s distinct approach to the problem, and to present a just evaluation of the latter’s contribution. Bipan Chandra gives equal credit to political leaders belonging to all shades of political opinion. His remarks,
namely, “perhaps the only real difference between them was that while some were consciously disloyal, others professed and preached their loyalty and their desire to perpetuate British rule”, ⁵⁴ tend to belittle the magnitude of the real difference between the approach of the Moderates and that of Tilak. This approach of Tilak sets him apart in a class by himself. The Moderates believed that the material injury to India was the result of lack of proper understanding on the part of the British people, Parliament and Government. Hence, they depended on the foreign rulers to achieve their objective of India’s economic development. On the other hand, Tilak clearly perceived the fact that “The present rule (of the British) is the root cause of India’s poverty. The character of this system of Government is such that the Ryot is being ruthlessly exploited. India’s wealth is being constantly drained to Britain in a massive proportion. This drain is extracting the very lifeblood of the people turning them into mere emaciated skeletons living in conditions of slavery.”⁵⁵ He questioned the efficacy of the approach of the Moderates as he was convinced that “It is evident, beyond any shade of doubt, that though fully aware of the deepening poverty of India, the British Government are reluctant to mend their ways and means.”⁵⁶ Thus convinced, Tilak could not associate himself with the Moderates who sought to prove to the British that India had become one of the poorest countries in the world, with the hope that their grievances would be redressed. He preferred to approach the masses directly, and explain to them the inherent contradiction of interests and through it, the futility of hoping that the foreign rulers would help them out.⁵⁷ The arguments advanced by the
Moderates did have had some indirect influence in the development of Indian economic nationalism. With Tilak, however, it was conscious and deliberate policy.

The difference between the two approaches has been brought about most convincingly by Ganesh Vyankatesh Joshi who was known for his mastery over facts and figures about the Indian Economy, and was an able lieutenant of M.G. Ranade, O.K. Gokhalc and R.C. Dull. As Joshi himself observed, he, initially, shared the Moderates’ approach and hope of persuading the British on the strength of the facts and figures. Actual experience, however, made him realize the futility of this approach and convinced him of the logic of Tilak’s argument. Because of this realization, Joshi came to be convinced that only Tilak’s approach could lead to Swaraj.58

Tilak observed, “The people dying of hunger are bound to hold the Governmental system, how-so-ever efficient, solely responsible for their misfortunte.59 By’ this, Tilak was openly pointing out to the masses the real cause of their economic destitution. Obviously, he was explaining to the people, in clear language, their right to challenge the legitimacy of the regime which had failed in its first and foremost task of feeding the population. As he observed, “Crores of peasants, though patient and mild, could hardly be expected to die meekly, in the face of a sure death out of starvation, without protesting against the British Government only because the latter have brought law and order to this land.60 Tilak’s observations clearly indicate that his efforts to undermine the legitimacy of the British rule were deliberate and conscious.
Further, from the very beginning of his political life, Tilak realized the limitations of the Indian National Congress and its working. He, therefore, strove hard to give the Congress party a broader base and a more effective political programme so as to give the national movement a much-needed momentum.

As early as 1892, Tilak had expressed regret that the common masses were ignorant about the usefulness of the movement carried on by the Congress. He tried to bring to the notice of the leadership that “No efforts have been made to properly inform the masses about the working of the Congress, as a result of which the national movement in general is losing its edge and impact.” He apprehended that, ultimately, this might affect the Congress movement adversely. Tilak was highly critical of the fact that the Indian National Congress was working within a very small coterie of the highly educated, like Gokhales and Dinshaw Wachas. He, therefore, suggested that positive efforts should be put in to take the movement to the Ryot. He hoped, as a result, “thousands of peasants would attend the next Congress session, at least as spectators.”

Emphasizing the need of orienting the lower strata of society to the Congress resolutions, Tilak added that “the objectives of the Congress could be fulfilled only when the common people, represented by the vast majority of peasants, artisans and workers, are initiated to behave in conformity with the contents of the Congress resolutions.” Tilak urged that this would be possible only if, “Before arriving at an agreement on any issue at the national level, an
effort is put in to ensure that the issue is discussed and an agreement reached, initially, at the village level and then a the district level.” To him, this was the most proper way of arriving at an agreement. Hereby, he was clearly advocating that people at all levels should be associated with the discussion over different issues. Accordingly, he suggested, “In the coming decade, the leadership should concentrate on organizing the Indian National Congress, on these lines, so that it would, in the implementation of its resolutions, secure full backing and active support of the peasants and workers.65 He wanted every patriot and nationalist to remember that, “it was only then that people could be claimed to have qualified themselves for political rights. Only then would the Government feel like paying attention to our demands.66

Tilak, thus, emphasized that the common masses be associated with and be brought into the mainstream of the national movement. He regretted that ‘Congressmen do not appreciate its importance’,67 and cautioned, if the Congress failed to achieve this, “no useful purpose would be served if only the educated keep on meeting under its banner”68. Till the last, he tried to impress that the movement should percolate to the lowest strata of the society. He was sorry that even in 1919, the movement had remained confined mainly to the urban intellectual classes. He, therefore, prescribed some positive steps to improve the situation69.

Secondly, Tilak was highly critical of the lack of enthusiasm on the part of the Congressmen and their half-hearted participation in the Congress activity. He rebuked the Congress leaders for their inaction and sought to
impress upon them, “the leaders belonging to other nations have demonstrated their readiness to stake even their lives—not to speak of bearing great financial loss—for improving the lot of their nations.”"\(^70\) According to him, it was a sorry state of affairs that “the Congress committees from the provinces, where the Congress session was not supposed to convene, lull themselves into sleep all the year round.”\(^71\)

Tilak was, likewise, critical of the fact that “the Congress is relying for its support mainly on the educated”. As he saw it, “The majority of them consists of those tied by the silvery chains of Government jobs because of which the Congress organization is facing a dearth of dedicated workers.”\(^72\)

Tilak was expecting the political leadership to take up issues concerning people’s cause. He was, thus, clearly suggesting that the leadership should muster confidence of the masses through self-less, dedicated, hardwork and establish credibility. He was keen on generating a sense of belonging and thus reducing the chasm between the educated and the masses.

Tilak, further, suggested that certain measures should be devised which would ensure the working of the Congress, on a continual basis, throughout the year.\(^73\) He stressed that Congress leaders should be aware of the significance of consistency of functioning. His foresight in this respect could be better appreciated if it is recalled that it was in 1905 that Motilal Ghosh sought the guidance of Dadabhai Naoroji on these lines.\(^74\) It could be added that what Rajani Kothari attributed to Gandhi,\(^75\) was suggested by Tilak way back, namely, giving the Congress organization a new shape and perspective.
Tilak, likewise, deplored that the Congress had turned into a debating society. He compared the rhetoric of the patriotic debates of the yearly sessions of the Congress with the seasonal croak of the frogs, and, categorically, expressed, “It was of no use going rhetorical-as if possessed by some Spirit-at the annual Congress session and then just on the return journey (forgetting the spirit) getting absorbed in the thought of one’s own means of livelihood.

Tilak, severely, indicted the do-nothingness of the Congress party. He repeatedly raised the question of giving a new direction to the Congress movement. He wanted to extend the field of ‘constitutional’ movement beyond the yearly Tarnasha of the Congress session. He was fully convinced, “if the Congress activities are confined only to passing resolutions at the annual sessions, the (proposed) constitutional movement would not emerge effective.” And for this, he prescribed the need of ceaseless and sustained efforts. Early in 1897, Tilak observed, “For the last twelve years, we have been shouting ourselves hoarse, desiring that the Government should hear us. But our shouting has no more affected the Government than the humming of a gnat. Our rulers disbelieve or profess to disbelieve our statements. Let us, now, try to force our grievances into their ears by strong constitutional means. Tilak, therefore, insisted that the mode of operation of the Congress should be restructured. As years passed, his pleas became more emphatic, He, naturally, regretted that the Congress leaders were unwilling to consider this fundamental issue.
Tilak made his third important point in this context: He expounded the need to raise a cadre of workers who would be prepared to dedicate their lives for this cause. He was aware of the profundity of the task. And, hence, he pointed out, “The responsibility that we have to bear is so heavy that it could not be shouldered, even slightly, by those who look upon public work as a pastime.”

He observed, “Such a work will require a large body of self-less workers for whom the Congress work .... would be a day-to-day duty, to be performed with strict regularity and utmost capacity.” In Tilak’s opinion, “By now (1896) a large number of organized groups, associations and institutions, ready to undertake public cause, should have emerged ... It is not late, even now, to make a beginning in this direction.” It was up to the leadership, according to Tilak, to set a path through dedicated service. However, he regretted that they had failed in this task miserably.

Tilak did not waver, till the end of his life, from this line of thinking about the need of mass-mobilization. As has been observed earlier, he was unhappy that the national movement had not spread to villages. He, therefore, reiterated, in 1919, the need of concentrating on the villages for support. Only a popular movement, Tilak had been convinced, would make the national upsurge more convincing and long-lasting.

Tilak had been, repeatedly and constantly, invoking the youth to work as missionaries or Ramdasis (disciples of Saint Ramadas). Now he elaborated, “I am on the look-out for young men who, like the zealous Christian missionaries, working day in and day out, would be ready to go to the villages and work for
the upliftment of their compatriots”84 He spelt out how he wanted these village-bound Rarndasis to work: the first step would be to win over the people by mixing with the common villagers, responding to their needs and thus capturing their minds and imagination. These workers, he hoped, could then, act as effective agents of communication between the national leadership and the common people. Tilak wanted the national movement, finally, to emerge as a live process, emanating from the very heart of the people. In fact, through this action-design, Tilak was spelling out a programme for building up a truly mass-based national movement. Unfortunately, however, destiny did not allow enough time for Tilak to bring his ideas into reality.

It may be recalled that from the very beginning of his political life, Tilak had been advocating, emphatically this line of argument-so much so that he attached greater importance to the availability of enough dedicated workers, willing to imitate Ramdasis, than to the redressal of grievances about the issues like the venue of Civil Service examinations or imposition of high tariffs on Indian cotton goods.85 Furthermore, Tilak was convinced that only informing and educating the masses would not suffice. As he observed, “The Government would not be bothered to take cognizance of people’s opinion-whether that of the educated or of the illiterate Ryot-unless they (the people) know how to articulate it effectively. He further elaborated, “Why should they (the British Rulers) show concern? Their advisers seem to have impressed on them that the Indian Ryot is meek and docile, and could be trusted upon not to resist even in the face of dire injustice.” Therefore, the need of the hour, according to Tilak,
was to make the public opinion effective. Accordingly, he had started advocating, since his early political career, that the leaders and political workers work along with the people and take up people’s issues like Land revenue, Forest wealth, Salt tax and Excise duty. He advocated that the people be involved directly in agitations for redressing their grievances. This was, to Tilak, “the assured way of convincing the people that they belong to the educated and the educated belong to the people, and are out to help them.” Apparently, he believed that participation in seemingly minor issues would convince the common people of the strength and efficacy of united resolute action.

It is generally held that people’s agitation in India is a post-Bengal-partition phenomenon. Gandhi observed, “Hitherto we have considered that for redress of grievances, we must approach the throne and if we get no redress, we must sit still except that we may still petition. After the partition (of Bengal) people saw that the petitions must be backed up by force, and that they must be capable of suffering.” Tilak, however, had started treading the path quite early, i.e., in 1896. He proclaimed that simple verbal remonstrance’s in the form of petitions or debates on the floor of Legislative Councils, would not be of any avail, and there is need of going beyond these.

Tilak insisted that the people should summon sufficient courage to resist injustice by concrete action. As such, Tilak sought to give popular vent to public grievances. This, according to him, was the only reliable way of
inculcating self-esteem and generating a will to resist, among the people. He was confident that this would equip them for the ultimate struggle.

It would not be out of place to briefly mention, here, the issues handled by Tilak during this phase (before 1905). This would give a clear insight into his line of thinking and the consequent strategy, and show that, though the popular agitation on the lines of Triswri came into its own only after 1905, Tilak had perceived this line of action long before.

In 1896, when an unjust tariff was imposed on Indian cotton goods, Tilak picked up the opportunity for organizing an agitation around the issue. He appealed to the people to express their feeling of being hurt through concrete action, i.e., by giving up the use of foreign cloth which would make the British rulers sense people’s discontent. This was nothing short of a clear suggestion for a Boycott of the foreign-made cloth. Clarifying this point, Tilak stated, “It is not possible to elaborate any more. One should realize for oneself the full implications of such an action. Failing to do this would clearly mean that the period of India’s misfortune is not yet over.”\(^90\) This observation speaks cut many an unsaid things.

To convince the people of the rightness of their cause, Tilak quoted instances from the history both of Ireland and the U.S.A. This miniature Boycott campaign had significant political implications. Swadeshi, to Tilak, was, likewise, a means of inculcating the patriotic spirit. He, therefore, called upon the people to take to Swadeshi, even at some sacrifice.\(^92\)
Through his able handling of the Famine issue, in 1896-97, Tilak gave a practical demonstration as to how an immediate issue could be properly utilized to build up a popular movement. Even in the face of a severe famine, the (Bombay) Government had been reluctant to invoke provisions of the Famine Code. This actuated Tilak to put in strenuous efforts to channel the spontaneous outbreaks of mass indignation, along organized lines, and give them a definite political direction. He made a decisive move and attempted to take the lower classes by hand, and to lead them in an effective resistance to the oppressive indifference of the colonial rule.

The people should bear in mind, asserted Tilak, that they had a moral claim upon the Government for their livelihood. He, therefore, advised the political workers and leaders to learn the art of enlightening the masses on the technique of fighting ‘legally’ for their just and due rights. As he observed, “this can be done by, firstly, explaining the basic causes of the sufferings the people were undergoing, and secondly, giving the movement a definite political direction.”

Tilak initiated, virtually, a no-rent campaign; under his instructions, the dedicated workers of Sarvajanik Sabha moved about addressing the poor Ryot, explaining to the peasants the provisions of the Famine Relief Code relating to relief measures, and boldly advising them “not to pay the land revenue, if you cannot”. His observation in this case are not merely revealing. These were intended to be a warning to the Government. As he stated, “the certainty of unavoidable death by starvation may lend the helpless villagers the courage to
face bullets in the struggle for their just claims upon the Government for the execution of the Famine Relief Code.\textsuperscript{94} The way in which Tilak organized the agitation during the famine years, made it clear that he did not separate the immediate task, placed by the course of events on the order of the day, from the general aims of the struggle for national liberation.\textsuperscript{95}

The efforts of the government to intimidate the dedicated workers of the Sarvajanik Sabha, were a sure indication that the former could ill-afford to overlook the resistance of 1896-91. The very fact that Tilak was arrested in 1897 and was sentenced to eighteen months’ rigorous imprisonment, shows that the foresighted officialdom was alarmed by the revolutionary potentialities of his campaign among the Deccan peasants\textsuperscript{96}

It need be mentioned, at this juncture that, Tilak’s activities were not just ‘agitational’ in character. Thus, during the famine, he started ‘cheap grain shops’ and formed people’s co-operative guilds. Likewise, during the Plague epidemics, he worked hard to extend help in various ways like running hospitals. N.C. Kelkar notes that Tilak was highly critical of the apathetic behaviour on the part of the educated, during this highly trying situation\textsuperscript{97} Tilak wished that the common people should feel assured of support and help from the educated and the well-to-do classes.

It is, really, regrettable that this constructive side of Tilak’s leadership has remained neglected. He was keen on generating among the masses a feeling of belonging and thus bringing them nearer to the educated.
As has been observed earlier, Tilak’s ultimate objective was to involve the masses in the national struggle. Educating them and generating among them political awareness, worked in Tilak’s strategy, only as preparatory steps. What he believed to be of real importance was the actual participation of the masses in the national movement. It is with this view that Tilak suggested that the leadership of the national movement should take up issues of public importance, and organize people’s movements and agitations. He hoped, thereby, to, firstly, kindle the feeling of ‘nationhood’ and, secondly, to arouse among the masses ‘a will to resist’ and to teach them to ventilate their grievances effectively.

It is clear that Tilak’s advocacy of this strategy was based upon his firm conviction that once a feeling of patriotic self-reliance was aroused, the people would be ready to undergo sacrifice. To Tilak, the leadership could, therefore, rely upon the people’s courage and capacity to resist.

The above said early agitations on Tilak’s part, prove that he had already started treading this new path of involving the masses in popular movements. His utterances and observations clearly reflect that he was only awaiting a chance to elaborate and explain the rationale behind his ideas more clearly and to put them into practice on a larger scale. The partition of Bengal, naturally, struck Tilak as one such opportunity.

The decision to partition Bengal did awaken the Indian masses to the reality of the political situation as if by a jolt. They also experienced that the foreign government did not feel compelled to pay heed to their angry
remonstrances. Tilak chose the psychological moment to bring forth, forcefully, the futility of verbal agitations. The way he sought to organize the anti-Bengal-partition movement, clearly, indicates that he was proceeding on a well-perceived plan of action.

Tilak did believe that it was upto the leadership to give shape and direction to the national movement. He, therefore, invoked upon the leadership not to lose this opportunity. He observed that because of the partition of Bengal, the common people have become agreeably disposed to some sort of concrete action. And he further insisted that it is the responsibility of the leadership to extend the necessary guidance to the common people who were totally un-informed. Tilak exhorted the leadership to remember that merely generating political awareness among the people was of no use if the government felt safe to ignore it. He explained that the only possible way of making public opinion effective was to convince the foreign government that it could not take for granted public support. It was essential, there fore, to make the British government feel the pinch through some concrete proof of people’s discontentment and also of their determination to resist injustice. He observed, “People’s protests, when unsupported by spirited resolute action, work like oceanic tides which lash the coast with gusto, just to reced back”. He added, “Even these waves prove more effective because of their salinity.” Hence, the leaders “should summon sufficient courage lest they perish in perpetual subjugation.”
Observing that, ‘the common people are willing to associate with such a movement’, Tilak exhorted the leadership to prove worthy of the situation, and put in necessary efforts to fulfill the Herculean task of building up a popular national movement on new lines. “A meek submission, at such a time, would seriously impair the spirit behind the national freedom struggle.” And he added, “Our patriotism, education and ability,” in that case, “would go in vain.”

Tilak tried to remind the leaders of the Indian national movement that “Nations march on the road to progress only if political leadership show the ability to give proper direction to the agitated public opinion at the opportune time and thus secure a strong basis for their movement.” He was intent upon utilising the opportunity as he knew well that “in a nation’s life such opportune critical moments come up very rarely.” And, therefore, he cautioned, “if we fail to cash on the opportune moment, it would be height of folly. It would amount to dereliction of duty.” This was, as he stressed, an uphill task and for this cause, the leaders may have to court imprisonment—even deportation. It was, however, their duty to prepare the nation for a concerted struggle for Swaraj.

Tilak, thus, wanted to initiate a new trend of leadership in the politics of India. Hence, he not only preached on these lines but also set the path by his own action. As R.C. Majumdar observes, “the trial and conviction of Tilak (in 1897) may be regarded as a landmark in the history of Indian nationalism. Henceforth, sacrifice and sufferings in the cause of the country rather than
eloquence and debating skill, came to be regarded as the badge of honour and distinction.\textsuperscript{107}

It must be added, at this juncture, that Tilak’s main concern was to ensure that the agitation does not fizzle out merely as a sporadic upsurge of patriotic emotions. He, therefore, advised the leaders “to lose no time in setting the movement on a stable and well-organized basis, before people’s ire is pacified.\textsuperscript{108}

As has been mentioned earlier, Tilak had always emphasized the need of treating the various issues not as isolated cases but as integrated stages of the national freedom struggle. Even in 1896, he had followed the same strategy. One sees Tilak extending the same logic to the issue of Bengal Partition. Liberal leaders—even from Bengal—held that the only aim and purpose of Boycott ‘was to call attention of the British public to Bengal’s great grievance and once the partition was modified ... the Boycott was to cease’. Tilak, however, maintained, “The issue of Bengal partition is but one issue. We must stick up to Swadeshi if we wish such bitter disappointments not to get thrust upon us time and again.”\textsuperscript{109}

Tilak, secondly, endeavoured to treat, the Bengal Partition as a ‘national’ issue. He exhorted that India was one, and it was wrong to expect people from other parts of India to keep quiet.\textsuperscript{110} The Moderates had claimed that the Boycott agitation be restricted to Bengal only. “This is illogical”, Tilak retorted. And he added: “Bengal’s grievances must be grievances of India. You talk of nationality; you read about it; you write on it; but you have not realized
it. Tilak insisted that the opportunity should be utilized to reinforce the sentiment of nationality.

As has been noted earlier, it was in 1905 that Tilak got a chance to elaborate his ideas fully. He urged that injustice could be resisted only through organized and peaceful public activity. To make such activity effective, however, it was necessary to go beyond the three P’s—Prayers, Pleas and Petitions and adopt new methods. He tried to impress upon his countrymen: “Do not ask for charity, ask for a right. Beggarliness begets contempt; those who would feel like helping (us) would do so only if they are convinced that you, the afflicted people, love freedom and are ready to struggle for it.

Tilak, secondly, chose to address the people and explain the importance and efficacy of such an organized and determinate public expression of their grievances and resentment. “It was no use merely collecting people together in thousands and lakhs. Just as a strong wind scatters a heap of straw, a huge gathering would disperse at the very sight of a policeman. It is, therefore, necessary that the people are united in their resolve and are determined even to defy the threats of the foreign government.” The power of public opinion, as Tilak stressed, lies in its resolute will. “It cannot be gauged correctly just by the supporting numbers. The straws, put together to make a big heap, serve no purpose. But the same grass, twisted into a rope, is capable of holding captive even an intoxicated elephant.

It was no use simply conveying to the government the people’s discontentment. As Tilak put it, “Protests are of no avail. Mere protests, not
backed by self-reliance will not help the people. Arguments and discussions may prove useful only in academic debate. But when it comes to political power-game, at times, it is necessary to put pressures for securing a favourable response from the power-holders. Reminding of this truth, Tilak exhorted. “The people should, therefore, adopt effective measures that would put the Government in difficulties and force it climb down, and come to terms with the people.” The problem, however, was: How, this could be achieved? Tilak prevailed upon the need of adopting a new programme, like the Trisutri-Swadeshi, Boycott and National Education—for ensuring positive involvement of the masses. As he observed, “History abundantly proves that a subject people, however helpless, can, by means of unity, courage and determination, overcome the mighty rulers without resort to arms. Reassuring the people, Tilak asserted, “One should not belittle the strength of people’s determined refusal to extend co-operation to the rulers. Citing, in this connection, the upsurge in Czarist Russia, Tilak observed that “The Russian experience has belied, for once and all, the illusion that no people would summon courage to resist an atrocious political regime. It has convincingly proved that even small ants, when united, get the strength to over-power a hugh animal like an elephant.

Now, it was upto the Indians, Tilak believed, to prove that they—though dark-skinned-do possess the capacity and the will to resist injustice and, that too, through peaceful agitation. The need of the hour was to convince the foreign government that it could no longer take for granted the loyalty and
support of the masses at large. And, eventually, the imperial rulers would feel compelled to take cognizance of India’s grievances. According to Tilak, the Thsutii—particularly the Swadeshi and Boycott—were the most effective methods in the then prevailing circumstances. These, to him, would serve a dual purpose: First, of effectively ventilating people’s discontent against a specific grievance— in this case, the Bengal partition and, second, of instilling in them an awareness of ‘nationhood’. This would facilitate people’s involvement in the national struggle and lend it more strength. Tilak looked upon and wanted Swadeshi to be utilised as a ‘political weapon’. Herein, he differed from the Moderates who had preferred to emphasize the economic aspect, that is, in the Moderates’ opinion, the constructive side of Swadeshi. The Moderates had argued that only in this facet Swadeshi was noble and justified. Tilak, boldly, proclaimed, “The import of Swedeshi, in to-day’s context, goes much beyond its economic implications:

Presently, we are being treated as ‘bonded slaves’ in every field of life .... Today’s Swadeshi movement, aims at higher objectives. We want to use this movement as a weapon to retrieve, from the British, our legitimate rights, which they have usurped so far, if they do not, on their own, surrender these. Swadeshi aimed at making people self-reliant and capable of resisting the policies that were ruining India. Tilak derided Lord Minto’s advice on honest Swadeshism: he retorted, “The people are trying to do, for themselves, what the Government ought to have done years and years ago. Tilak lent the Swadeshi movement a moral basis: he declared that the Indians could consider the
question of dissociating the movement from politics, “only if the Indian Government dissociates from the commercial aspirations of the British nation.\textsuperscript{125}

The object of Swadeshism was, thus, assertion of the national spirit. And Swadeshi, to Tilak, was a tool for the political resurrection of India. He described Swadeshi as the beginning of self-government and prophezied that it would culminate in Swaraj.\textsuperscript{126}

According to Tilak, “The masses understand what the Swadeshi movement means. They do not understand such abstruse theories as no taxation without representation-they understand that the village industries are dying out and the scheme for the protection and revival of these industries will have their support.\textsuperscript{127}

The Swadeshi movement, subsequently, did play a consequential role in the Indian national struggle. Tilak’s hope was vindicated.

Swadeshi turned out to be, specifically, “the initial phase of the nationwide anti-colonial movement during the imperial era.\textsuperscript{128} It emerged as an important means of awakening the vast masses of India to conscious social life and alerting them to the struggle for the emancipation of their mother-land. The masses did understand the meaning and message of Swadeshi in the proper perspective. Thus, J.D. Rees (member of Viceroy’s Council and an expert on India) observed, “Swadeshi was merged into Swaraj or Independence and denunciation of British goods, eventually, in the condemnation of British rulers.\textsuperscript{129}
Tilak’s expectations proved correct in one more respect: With Swadeshi, the struggle also started to spread from classes to masses and the people began to look upon themselves more and more for salvation.

Tilak’s interpretation of Swadeshi clearly explains why he looked upon Swadeshi and ‘Boycott’ as two sides of the same coin. The Moderates, however, were trying to distinguish between the two. Tilak not only observed that there was no difference between Swadeshi and Boycott, but also emphasised that the term ‘Boycott’ expressed the very rationale behind Swadeshi.

In Boycott, Tilak perceived a weapon that would render the Government a positive proof of people’s rumour and discontent. He elaborated that it was natural for a government to keep quiet, if not sufficiently pressed for redressal of grievances. A government would continue with the same unjust policies if they do not meet with some resistance on the part of the people. The Government would react only when it meets with some obstruction in the smooth running of its administration. “They would, otherwise feel, that they can safely afford not to pay attention to people’s demands we, the advocates of Boycott and Swadeshi, are trying to awaken the government authorities out of their slumber.

The spontaneous eruption of emotions after the partition of Bengal had brought the idea of Boycott in the realm of possibility. On this issue, however, the Moderates were reluctant to take an unequivocal stand. They thought that “the word ‘Boycott’ implies a vindictive desire to injure another.”
Tilak who did not and could not agree with the Moderates’ position, tried to maintain the high pitch of the Boycott movement. He lamented, “Many people have not yet grasped the full significance of the Boycott movement.” He justified such measures as absolutely necessary especially when the struggle is between a people of a subject nation and their alien rulers. As he asserted, “We have neither the power nor the inclination to take up arms against the government; that does not mean that we could not have recourse to some other effective means. Tilak, as has already been observed, was fully alert to the potential strength of united action on the part of the people inspired with spirit decrops. Boycott, to him, accordingly, represented one such means, a legal but effective weapon of resistance. As such, he insisted that “every patriotic Indian should resort to Boycott. As he clarified, “There is no need of arms either; we have a stronger weapon, a political weapon in Boycott”. Indians should just realize this.

One sees Tilak emphasizing this point time and again. He was constantly trying to convince the people that the invulnerability of the British empire depended upon people’s co-operation as also to assure the people that their future rests entirely in their own hands.

Tilak wanted that the people should understand that “We are willing instruments of our own oppression in the hands of our alien government, and that the government is ruling over us not by its innate strength but by keeping us in ignorance and blindness to the perception of this fact. It is business of
everyone of them to befool you in believing that you are weak and they are strong.  

Tilak further justified the implementation of the Boycott movement by adding that the British rulers in India had, at stake, their economic interests and not just the political ones. As was customary with him, Tilak tried to convey this message through the traditional idiom of Chaturvarnya. To quote him literally, “The British rulers are not just Kshatriyas, i.e., Warrior-kings but a combination of both Kshatriyas and Vaishyas, i.e., traders.” Hence, the surest way was to make the British rulers feel the pinch, was by challenging their commercial interests through Boycott. Evidently, Boycott and Swadeshi had been, to Tilak, the only and effective, available means for a totally debilitated country like India. 

Tilak was looking for an opportunity of extending the sphere of the Boycott. In his writings, there is a definite suggestion of an all-pervasive boycott. He suggested, “We shall not give them assistance in collecting revenues and keeping peace. We shall not assist them in carrying out the administration of justice, we shall not assist them in fighting beyond the frontiers, we shall have our own courts and when time comes we shall not pay taxes. Can you do this by united efforts? If you can, you are free tomorrow.”

Convinced of the potentialities of Boycott, Tilak opined that if the Indians did not take to it, “That would mean turning their back on the Kamadhenu or refusing nectar at the hands of God Himself.” As he sought to make it clear, “The rulers are really apprehensive of this Boycott agitation.
They fear, the Boycott on the British goods would culminate into boycott against the British Imperial Government itself.\textsuperscript{143} He, further, explained that it was really the people who run the Government. “You must realize, that you are a great factor in the power with which the administration of India is conducted. You are yourself the useful lubricants which enable the gigantic machinery to work smoothly.\textsuperscript{144} And Tilak added, “though down-trodden and neglected, you must be conscious of your power of making the administration impossible if you but choose to make it so.”\textsuperscript{145} Tilak’s elaboration of the concept of Boycott, thus, gives a clear hint of total non-cooperation.

At the same time, however, Tilak warned the people that the path of agitation—even peaceful one—would not be a smooth one. “Though it is proposed that the movement should be a bloodless one, it is in no way meant that the people might not have to shed their own blood in sacrifice. To make the Boycott movement a success, it was essential that the people are ready to suffer or to go to jail.\textsuperscript{146}

Tilak attached utmost importance to ‘National Education’—the third component of the Trisurti—as an effective means for achieving Swaraj.\textsuperscript{147} His definition of National Education was quite simple and yet precise and self-explanatory: “National Education means learning to identify oneself with one’s Nation.”\textsuperscript{148}

In elaborating this concept, Tilak stated, “As ‘self-realization’ is the surest way of ‘Self-salvation’ (Moksha), National Education is the surest way of attaining Swaraj”.\textsuperscript{149} He further explained, “the aim and objective, in fact,
the very task of ‘national education, was to enlighten the people and to generate in their minds an awareness and spirit of nationhood.’ The then prevailing system of education, as implemented by the foreign rulers, Tilak observed, was defeating the very purpose of education, “as it failed to inspire the sentiment of nationhood.”

Tilak’s advocacy of national education did not, however, mean, as some critics would like one to believe, that he failed to appreciate the relevance and significance of modern Western education and knowledge. It must be noted that he compared the indigenous system of education with the Western one, and very lucidly brought out the plus points of the latter. As he observed, “Because of their tendency to indulge into formal semantic debates, the scholarship in the traditional Indian disciplines such as Nyaya, Vyakarana etc., though sharpened the intellectual faculty, did not, materially, enhance the knowledge of ‘Life-Sciences’ that facilitates progress of a nation. By life-sciences are meant subjects like spirit of nationalism, a sense of obligation to the ‘mother-land’, system of government, theory of politics, issues concerning moral and material development of the nation, inter-relationship between nations etc."

To put, in modern parlance, Tilak was, thereby, explaining the revitalizing and modernizing role of modern Western education. Although Tilak shared, thus, the views of the Moderates regarding the contributory role of Western education, he was sceptical of the real intentions of the foreign rulers and wondered as to whether the latter would allow things to take their
natural course. If the Western education failed to produce the expected results in India, observed Tilak, it must be said that either the Western education was not properly imparted or that those who received it lacked the capacity to digest it—which was obviously not true.\textsuperscript{152} Tilak’s grudge was thus not against the introduction of Western knowledge as such, but was against the underlying policy of the British, of “diluting education in such a way that the spirit of nationalism would not gain strength” among the Indians.\textsuperscript{153} He was, therefore, insisting on incorporating such aspects in education as would give socio-political relevance to it and enable the students to have a correct perception of the national situation.\textsuperscript{154}

How much value Tilak attached to modern Western education would further be clear from his remark, “I would enlist it as a black day for India if the Indians turn their back on Western education.\textsuperscript{155}

Tilak expected ‘national education’ to play its role as a socially, mobilizing force. He emphasized that our students should be told as to “how our nation is being emaciated due to casteism, caste-hatred and caste-conflicts.\textsuperscript{156} He also hoped that this experience of learning together would act as a cementing force. He, therefore, appealed, ‘not to have a separate educational institution for each caste. National education should, ultimately, aim at doing away with caste-distinctions, caste-hatred, and caste-rivalries.\textsuperscript{157}

Tilak has come under lot of criticism for suggesting that ‘religious education’ be introduced. But it must be appreciated that Tilak did not want to substitute modern education with the traditional religious one. He wanted just
to supplement it with religious (and not only the Hindu religious) education, because, he believed that emphasis merely on the secular-material-aspect would be harmful to human character. His approach, in this regard, need be understood against his views on the materialistic approach.\textsuperscript{158}

In Trisutri, Tilak had perceived an additional advantage: it provided the nationalist leaders with a programme that would attract people of all communities irrespective of their religions. Time and again, he is seen emphasizing this point through his articles and speeches.

It is worth noting that Tilak was in search of additional issues that would enable the nationalists to involve more and more people-of all religions-and, at the same time, make people’s direct participation possible. The Temperance movement, initiated by Tilak in 1907, was one such attempt. The British Government was quick to discern the real motives, and looked upon ‘the movement as entirely political.\textsuperscript{159}

Tilak had ever been striving to extend his field of activity. And, clearly, he had been, at this stage, considering the advisability of gaining the sympathy of mill-hands and teaching them how to get organized.\textsuperscript{160} Tilak delivered addresses and speeches to mill-hands on Swadeshi and Temperance; he, as well, sought to urge the milihands to get organized and fight for better conditions. Tilak, simultaneously, endeavoured to expose the real character of the colonial rule and thus attract the milihands to the national liberation movement. “To reach directly the widest sections of the mill population, Tilakites went to work as plain mill hands and to live in their midst.”\textsuperscript{161}
Tilak’s campaign among the mill-hands was a success. And it did not go unnoticed. As H.G. Gell (Police Commissioner of Bombay) observed, ‘the milihands constituted, one hundred thousand in number of whom at least fifty thousand must be able bodied. Anyone able to enlist the sympathy of so large a number of men must occupy a powerful position and if intent on disorder can practically set all authority at defiance. Tilak had no doubt considered this point. It was further noted, ‘The large majority of milihands are Marathas and Tilak is a Brahmin, but that does not come in his way.’ The Government of Bombay, naturally, had grown apprehensive of Tilak’s popularity among the non-Brahmin sections. This contributed, in a large measure, to Tilak’s long imprisonment. Gell opined ‘Had he (Tilak) been vouchsafed a larger period of liberty, (he), no doubt in time, have had a larger organized body of mill-hands at his disposal. Fortunately, he was arrested in time. The then Governor, Sir George Clarke, pointed out, “If Tilak had been allowed more time to mature his plans, it was quite, possible that he might have succeeded in promoting a ‘general strike’ which is one of the Russian methods advocated by the violent party.

It is proposed, at this stage, to briefly consider whether, as some of his critics suggest, Tilak had changed and grown soft after 1914-the post-Mandalay period. These critics further observe that ultimately, Tilak saw the wisdom of the stand taken by the Liberals. Such a consideration is necessary because, if the answer is in the affirmative, it would mean that Tilak himself had lost faith in the efficacy of his own strategy.
Before discussing this controversial point, it must be borne in mind that Tilak was mainly an, ‘activist’. While understanding the thoughts of a leader like Tilak, one cannot rely merely on his words-spoken or written. Moreover, there are bound to be ups and downs in the intensity of the struggle, and a leader has to adopt his strategy accordingly. It is neither possible nor expedient for an activist leader to explain all his views and plans openly. A scholar, studying such a personality, should concentrate on and try to understand the strategy that the leader would have liked or wanted to adopt. In Tilak, one clearly gets such indications.

It is evident that Tilak desired, very much, to take advantage of the political situation emerging as a result of the first world war. He would have liked to go in for obstructive measures in order to bring pressure on the Imperial rulers. Tilak has been noted to have observed, in despair, “What can T do? The stalwarts are away from the scene. Lala Lajpat Rai has left for America while Aurobindo Ghose has chosen to be in Pondichary. Even a handful of workers are not available; had a political leader of the stature of Lajpat Rai or Aurobindo been present in every province, it would have been possible to organize effectively campaigns such as ‘No War-Loan’ or ‘No Recruitment in Army.’ Tilak further explained, “The Government, to-day, is badly in need of additional financial resources. They would be seeking to impose taxes. And this is the opportune moment to pressurize them through obstructive means, to make them yield to our demands. Tilak lamented that “our leaders do ot know how to turn the adversities of the (Imperial) rulers to
the country’s advantage.\textsuperscript{169} This clearly indicates that Tilak had, in no way, given up his strategy though, in the then existing circumstances, it could not be materialised.

Secondly, even at this stage, Tilak had not given up propagating the need of ‘Passive Resistance’. He openly stated: So long as law-making was not in people’s hands, laws which were repugnant to justice and morality, would some time be passed. Under such circumstances, it was, to Tilak, perfectly ‘constitutional’ to oppose, peacefully, such laws though the Government might brand such efforts as illegal. He clearly distinguished between the ‘Legal’ and the ‘Constitutional’: “Law and Constitution are not the same. So long as a particular law is not in conformity with justice and morality and popular opinion, according to the ethics of the 19th and 20th centuries, so long as a particular order is not constituent with all these principles, it might be legal but not constitutional”.\textsuperscript{170} Passive resistance, i.e., peaceful resistance to injustice, was, thus, perfectly constitutional. He further emphasized, “Hence, you people should not confound the words ‘constitutionally’ and ‘legally’.\textsuperscript{171}

Thirdly, as has been observed earlier, Tilak was not satisfied with the results achieved thus far, and was thinking about new lines of activity which would give the Indian national movement a new fillip. Unfortunately, however, he did not get sufficient time to actualize his plans.

Lastly, there is ample evidence that even after 1914, Tilak did not part company with the revolutionaries.\textsuperscript{172}
At this stage, it need be understood as to wherein exactly lay the core of Tilak’s argument as also his differences with the Moderates. It must be re-emphasized that his real contribution lay not in his propagation of violent means but in his strategy to involve the common man in the main stream of politics. One may say, here, that it was mainly his efforts to mobilize the masses which had earned him the nomenclature ‘the Father of Indian Unrest’.

‘Organize, educate and politicize the common people’ had been Tilak’s motto, and he never wavered from it. He wanted to rejuvenate the national politics of India by arousing a new sense of self-confidence and new assertiveness among the common masses. He appealed to the people to recognize their own strength. The moderate leadership had sadly failed in this respect. One may, rightfully, say that the Moderates failed to realize the need and importance of such a move. Their method of Constitutional agitation did not involve the masses. Tilak had long lamented that “the Moderates are not prepared to accept the idea that the Indian National Congress should emerge as an organization enlightening the common masses.”

It need be stressed, here, that even during the post-Mandalay period, this gap between the positions of Tilak and the Moderates had remained unbridged.

With a historical perspective, Tilak was convinced that any agitation for freedom, on the part of the colonial people in the new institutional set-up, would succeed only if it had a mass sanction behind it. Otherwise, all the pious resolutions and policies evolved by small coteries, however logical these might be, Tilak insisted, had only the worth of the paper on which they were drafted.
This explains the consistent and passionate plea of Tilak to transform, radically, the base of the Congress from the elite to the masses.

Historically it can be said, Tilak succeeded in transforming the organizational nature of the Congress. The national struggle, too, proceeded in the direction prescribed by Tilak. This signal contribution is affirmed by Acharya Jawadekar (a great scholar of the Indian freedom movement) who observed that Tilak’s efforts in this direction enabled Gandhi later to convert the Congress as really an organization of mass-action.\textsuperscript{174} Tilak provided the spring-board which Gandhi could extend.

The Congress movement has, now, come to be identified with the Indian National movement. It is, however, quite evident that it was only with the acceptance of the strategy, enunciated by Tilak, that the Congress movement emerged as a National movement in its true sense.

To conclude, the ultimate objective of Tilak was Swaraj. He was well aware of the difficulties in securing it. He knew that the people of India were divided, illiterate and disarmed, and did face an invincible Imperial power. Armed rebellion was beyond imagination. As has been observed at the beginning of this chapter, Tilak did not have a ready-made model and had to devise his own.

Tilak’s contribution as a political thinker lies in his devising his own model and formulating a programme for attainment of Political Freedom—in fact, in his spelling out the dynamics of freedom movement for a subject people.
Tilak set out on the basis of certain specific and clear hypothesis: no government can be challenged so long as it does not forfeit its legitimacy among the common people and as a corollary, no government could continue in power once it forfeits its legitimacy.

As has been seen in the previous chapter, the principle of legitimacy was not novel: what was novel was Tilak’s conscious application of that principle to India’s freedom struggle. This was a sure indication that Tilak had great faith in the capacity and capability of the common man. He, thus, exhibited a keen and unparalleled perception of the role of the masses.

It should go to Tilak’s credit that he identified in the masses a new locus of power and strength, and thought of invoking the strength of public opinion for winning Freedom. He was convinced that this could be achieved only if one succeeded in removing the political apathy and in kindling a spirit of self-reliance among the people. This called for an organized effort to bring together the masses and the classes. Educating the masses, and generating self-confidence and awareness among them about their potential strength, thus, emerged as the main pillars of Tilak’s strategy. It should be remembered that Tilak’s faith in the common people was not shared by most of the contemporary Congress leaders.

Another major consideration for Tilak was to kindle an urge for National Freedom among the common men. He, therefore, emphasized the need of inculcating the spirit of nationalism among them. He hoped to prepare the people for the freedom struggle by arousing in them a, will to resist ‘will to
resist’, and by convincing them that they were not insignificant non-entities, and also that by hard determination, they could oppose a supposedly invincible opponent. His five-fold strategy, as has been discussed above, was carved out accordingly.

A continuity of thought is discernible throughout Tilak’s political career: In the early phase, more emphasis was laid on mobilization—the first task—to communicate effectively with the people. At a later stage, when mass-participation became feasible, Tilak took the opportunity of involving the masses in direct agitations on specific issues, thus, infusing among them an assurance about themselves. Once the people were so prepared, Tilak wanted to build up, on the strength of their vigorous support, a national freedom movement. Tilak did visualise, as has been observed in the previous chapter, the possibility of an armed struggle as a last resort. Yet, as the foregoing discussion would bring out clearly, he was thoroughly convinced that, whatever may be the nature of the last phase of the Freedom struggle peaceful or otherwise it would not succeed without people’s active involvement and participation. Tilak’s was an unprecedented effort in India—perhaps in Asia.

The differences between Tilak and the established Congress leadership, thus, had deep ideological roots which were reflected in their respective modes of strategy. Although these differences became more pronounced after 1905, these were perceptible, years earlier.

A point of crucial importance need be made here: Tilak put emphasis on the participation of the masses in the Freedom struggle. But he did not look
upon the masses as cannon-fodder; nor did he believe in inciting the masses. He, rather, concentrated on educating them and convincing them of the justness of their cause. He did not want to carry people along with him by sentimental or emotional appeal but tried to convert them by logical argument. His appeal had always been to reason.

Tilak’s contribution in this field is definitely positive. Tilak did his best to bring the common man on the political scene of India. His contribution in setting India on the path of democracy is, thus, not limited merely to associating the masses with the freedom struggle but extends to his efforts to ‘democratise’ Indian politics in the true sense of the term.

Summing up, Tilak, correctly identified a new locus of power among the poor and the illiterate millions, and formulated his strategy for freedom accordingly. His strategy made both the British government and the Indian politicians to take cognizance of this new power centre, viz., the people. It must be appreciated that as a political thinker, Tilak exhibited a clear perception of the relationship between the sustenance of political power of a government and public opinion. His strategy for mobilization for Freedom was founded on this basic understanding. This strategy is thus a major contribution of Tilak.

According to Tilak the first step towards liberation—whether ‘political independence’ or ‘individual salvation’ (Moksha)—was ‘selfrealization’, i.e., knowing one’s real nature-Atinampa. Tilak’s phased programme was a practical reflection of his views as a political thinker.
NOTES AND REFERENCES

24. It may be mentioned that many a papers, then, were bilingual in character.


45. Ibid, p. 68.


50. Refer to the Chapter ‘Nationalism’ for detailed discussion of this point.


53. Please refer to Chapters, ‘Nationalism’ and ‘International Relations’ for Tilak’s elaborate argument.


56. P.5.
57. Bipan Chandra: Rise and Growth of Econ. Nationalism in India, p. 742-743.


82. ‘Kesari’, 12th Jan. 1897.


84. ‘Kessari’, 12th Jan. 1897.


93. Samagra Tilak, Vol. No. IV, p. 668. Also refer to A.J. Karandikar:

   Krantikarak Tilak aani Tyancha Kal, p. 383.


98. Tilak and the Indian Struggle for Freedom, pp. 74-75.

128. B.G. Tilak. His Writings and Speeches, pp. 52-54
136. Goyal OP.: Political Thought of Gokhale, p. 29, Kitab Mahal, Delhi


140. B.G. Tilak. His Writings & Speeches, p. 64.


147. B.G. Tilak. His Writings & Speeches, p. 77-78.

148. B.G. Tilak. His Writings & Speeches, p. 77-78.

149. B.G. Tilak. His Writings & Speeches, p. 77.


161. Please refer to Chapter ‘Social Philosophy’.
166. Tilak and India’s Struggle for Freedom, p. 590.
174. Acharya Jawadekar’s Foreword, p. 7 to Prema Kantak: Satyagrahi Maharashtra Jawadekar’s, Sulabh Rashtriya Granth Mala, Pune, 1940.