CHAPTER - VII

RANADE: POLITICAL IDEAS

With the dawn of the 19th century 'national awakening' quickened as the British bureaucracy came heavily upon Indian nationalism with a vigorous policy of exploitation and repression. The eruption of 1857 sobered down the onslaught though, followed by comparatively liberal constitutional advance. The much-publicized myth of alien invincibility sounded more like hollow arrogance. The principles of western liberalism conveyed to the Indians the essentials of political social and economic equilibrium and justice.\(^1\) It was at this stage that the Indian National Congress was founded to serve as an organized forum of national awakening.\(^2\) It was also the era of transition from the conservatism of Benjamin Disraeli to the liberalism of Gladstone.\(^3\) Dadabhai Naoroji, made India's cause his religion, and in India and in England, he held his brief of nationalism with a purpossive mission.

If the English friends of India - A.O. Hume, William Wedderburn, John Bright, William Digby, Henry Fawcett, Charles Bradlaugh and Henry Cotton, for instance - stood

\(^1\) Encyclopaedia Brittanica, Volume XIII, P. 999.
\(^2\) Source Material, Volume II (quoting), PP. I-II.
against the British policy of suppression with conciliation and repression with constitutional advance, in India, Dadabhai Naoroji, G. K. Gokhale, Pherozeshah Mehta, D.E. Wacha and R.C. Dutt, while welcoming the British connection, advocated an end to the stupor of the past. Apparently, the core of Indian leadership was influenced effectively by the liberalism of the West and they worked towards its judicious application to India as well.

Mahadev Govind Ranade was at once the product and leader of this historical legacy. He was cast in the liberal mould, which largely owed its inspiration to its counterpart in the West. His exertions were directed to bridge the gulf that separated those that worked for gradual constitutional advance, peace and conciliation, from those that stood for an all-out agitation for freedom, motivated as they were by the belief that the 'end' was the all important consideration and the 'means' were of little consequence. Ranade's ideas, as the following pages seek to stress, imbibed the best of the Western liberal principles, but he was not an apologist nor an anglophile to have endeavoured in that vein. What he did was to put a premium on the spirit of liberalism, and not to blindly plead for an impracticable transplantation of ideas. In that lay Ranade's contribution to the vitalization of liberalism in India, and its acceptance by the Indian National Congress and the people - by and large, was an
obvious tribute to the Courage of Ranade's convictions. If Liberalism came to India as a new ideology to suit and channelize the needs of a changing society, Ranade emerged as the foremost pioneer having unlocked the liberal thought-processes. By his distinctive public service he succeeded - in a large measure, in turning the alien Government to the political pulsations of the people.

Ranade had started his work of political education of the people, first as a writer in the columns of the Induprakash and later in the journal of the Sarvajanik Sabha. In these writings he was functioned in all these roles. He has dealt with questions of current or immediate importance, criticized administrative measures and departmental actions, suggest improvements for the time being and advocated far-reaching reforms. He has also functioned as a public man, a publicist, an agitator - politician, though, of course, the form of agitation is very moderate and mild. In some of these writings and the public utterances he made from time to time, he has functioned as a far-seeing statesman, a profound thinker and a fervent patriot, anxious to see that the land of his birth and his fellow-countrymen prepared themselves to take up their legitimate and honoured places in a well-evolved world. He had the prophetic vision of his country being the true land of promise. In an inspired moment he once proclaimed:
"I profess implicit faith in two articles of my creed: this country of ours is the true land of promise, this race of ours is the chosen race. It was not for nothing that God has showered His choicest blessings on this ancient land of Aryavarta. We can see His land in history. Above all other countries we inherit a civilization and a religious and social polity which have been allowed to work their own free development on the big theatre of Time. There has been no revolution, and yet the old condition of things has been tending to reform itself by the slow process of assimilation".  

There are three things that cannot but impress themselves upon the mind of anyone who studies Ranade's political writings and addresses. These are: (1) his frank recognitions of his country's weakness, (II) his fearless exposure of Government faults, and (III) his hearty approval of the British connection.

He deplores Indian lack of unity and inability to work harmoniously together for common ends. He deplores the lack of enterprise and perseverance, and the tendency to be too easily elated and too easily depressed. He thought that the people were too prone to shout catch-words of which they did not really understand the significance. Speaking in 1893, he said:

4. **Speech At The Social Conference, Lahore, 1893.**
"We bandy about the words freedom and independence, but of their meaning many have no clear idea. Freedom means making laws, levying taxes, imposing punishment, and appointing officials. The true difference between a free country and an unfree one is that in the former before punishment is given a law must have been made, before taxes are levied, consent must been secured, before making a law opinions must have been taken."\(^5\)

He saw among the people of his day a tendency to turn their eyes too much to the past, and to extol extravagantly and without proportion the days of old. He saw that there was danger of this attitude becoming an opiate, deadening the mind to present duty. He therefore urged the need of hard, self-denying work, in place of mere vapouring about the glorious days of yore. "We should learn to be men, stalwart puritan men, battling for the right, not indifferent nor sanguine, trustful but not elated, serious but not dejected. This is the change in character that has to be accomplished".\(^6\) He also urged that the men of the present must seek to do their duty with strength of purpose, perseverance, resolution, and joy, and thereby restore to India the greatness that it possessed in the very ancient days.

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5. As Cited In James Jellock, Mahadev Govind Ranade, P.115.

With equal faithfulness Ranade dealt with Government actions and policies in his writings and addresses. He criticised the land administration, and indicated what he regarded as better methods, and in a similar way he dealt with many other particular matters. He reviewed very frankly the administrative records of Viceroy's and Governors. He felt that the Government in India tended to be too much centralized, and too little adaptable to the varying local circumstances. "One code, one law, one measure, the same taxation, the same routine forms, a fondness for uniformity as an end in itself - this is the besetting sin of the administration". On many an occasion he uttered candid words about the faults into which the members of a ruling race are always prone to fall, and the complete prevalence of which would be fatal to all real advance. His clearest statement on this matter was given at the time of the controversy on the Ilbert Bill. This was a Bill introduced in 1883 to give Indian District Magistrates and Sessions Judges the right to try European British subjects, and empowering Local Governments to extend the right to other officials belonging to certain specified classes. The European Community was fiercely indignant at the Bill and tried to stampede the Government into

7. **Speech On Lord Ripon's Local Self-Government Scheme, 1884.**
abandoning it. Ultimately the Bill was passed, but in an amended form, which substantially whittled down its scope. When the Commotion had subsided, Ranade wrote an essay giving a summary of the affair and a statement of his own opinion. He said:

"The educated minority of the native population with their free press, and their associations unconsciously sympathized with by the mass of their countrymen, represent the soul of Indian liberalism, and their strength lies in the justice of their claim. Arrayed against them are the mighty forces of the official hierarchy, supported by the non-official phalanx of their countrymen here and the great reserve of power and prejudice stored in the large vested interest of their mother country. These are the liberal and conservative forces at work in India...."  

In spite, however, of his keen consciousness of many defects in the attitude, policies, and actions of the ruling race Ranade never ceased to be a loyal upholder of the British connection. He sees the British connection as the coping stone of this long disciplinary process, referring to it as "the discipline afforded us by the example and teaching of the most gift and free nation in the world, whose rule guarantees to us a long continuance of these favourable conditions". "Both Hindus and Muhammadans", he said:

"Lack many of those virtues represented by the love of order and regulated authority. Both are wanting in the love of municipal freedom, in the exercise of virtues necessary for civic life, and in aptitudes for mechanical skill, in the love of science and research, in the love of daring and adventurous discovery, the resolution to master difficulties, and in chivalrous respect for womankind. Neither the old Hindu nor the old Muhammadan civilization was in a condition to train these virtues in a way to bring up the races of India on a level with those of Western Europe, and so the work of education had to be renewed, and it has now been going on for the past century and more under the Pax-Britannica with results - which all of us are witnesses to in ourselves."  

Ranade believed that in God's providence Britain had been entrusted with a great mission in India. "The sole rationale of British rule in India", he once wrote, "is its capacity and its providential purpose of fostering the political education of the country on the largest scale in civil and public activities".  

Even in days of political reaction and of popular disappointment, he held fast to his trust that God's providence was over all, and that the good sense and innate justice of the British character would acknowledge the rightness of India's claims. In words

bright with the colours of the Old Testament, he pictures the goal whose attainment would be the fulfilment of Britain's mission and of India's aspirations:

"With a liberated manhood, with buoyant hope, with a faith that never shirks duty, with a sense of justice that deals fairly to all, with unclouded intellect and powers fully cultivated, and, lastly, with a love that overleaps all bounds, renovated India will take her proper rank among the nations of the world, and be the master of the situation and of her own destiny. This is the goal to be reached - this is the promised land. Happy are they who see it in distant vision, happier those who are permitted to work and clear the way on to it, happiest they who live to see it with their eyes and tread upon the holy soil once more."\textsuperscript{11}

It was such lofty idealism that actuated Ranade to work in all fields. He did not work on temporary impulse, but had well-formulated plans and well considered ideas when he put his hands to any task, small or big. Thus he asked himself what the functions of a State or Government were or should be and after making up his mind about them he proceeded to state his expectations of them in the name of his people:

\textsuperscript{11} Inaugural Address At The 10th Social Conference, Calcutta, 1896.
"The state after all exists only to make individual members composing it nobler, happier, richer and more perfect, in every attribute with which we are endowed, and this perfection of our being can never be insured by any outside arrangement, however excellent, unless the individual member concerned is himself prepared in his own private, social sphere of duties to co-operate in his well-being".  

Thus he invests the State with paternal duties and makes the citizens subservient to the State. Out of this thought naturally comes the corollary that citizens must give implicit obedience to law for the maintenance of peace and order, which is the prerequisite of all progress. Since the British Government professed to preserve peace and maintain law and order, in any event, loyalty to it became inevitable in his scheme of things. But he was not satisfied only with this much. His conception of the State was far broader and higher. He did not merely want a police State, but he wanted a welfare State.

As in his economic thinking, so in his political thinking, Ranade was not a votary of individualism. In fact the position he took as an economist was a corollary of his political faith. In his view, society must take precedence

12. M.G. Ranade: Miscellaneous Writings, P. 78.
over the individual. Human need for collective life gave, in his opinion, to society both moral and political priority. He believed in the organic unity of the State, but this unity was not a fact apart from the individuals who constituted the State. He, therefore, considered that social and economic reform were quite proper fields for state activity. He thought that such parts of individual and collective life as could be well regulated by the citizens themselves without State control might be left to individual and group effort, but where private effort was hampered by social restrictions or where it was likely to be jejune and harmful, the State must step in and put matters right. These ideas were behind all his proposals of administrative, political and constitutional reforms.

A CONSTITUTION FOR PRINCELY STATES

The area of policy in which the sharpest early conflicts arose was the affairs of the princely states. The Sarvajanik Sabha had consistently defended the autonomy of the states, in return for the financial and moral support of the princes. Its support of Baroda in the crisis of 1875 had been unequivocal, and in 1877 it petitioned the imperial darbar to form an Indian parliament with the Princes as the upper chamber. On the other hand, Ranade and the Sabha understood that the qualification of the states for serving as an Indian House of Lords would depend on their
ability first to rule their own houses. This would call for radical reforms in many states which were notoriously corrupt and mismanaged, as the Baroda affair had shown.

In a series of articles on the princely states around 1880, Ranade revealed a major dimension of his vision of modernization, both political and social. Expanding on his plans for British India, he made it abundantly clear that the touchstone of his policy was the standards of public life in the contemporary Western world, not the glories of traditional India. When he was busy defending Baroda against the danger of annexation by the British, Ranade had little time to criticize their internal administration. But by 1880 he felt free to state his view of the princes publicly. He now described them as "at present in too many cases, being the source of annoyance and trouble to their own people and to the Paramount Power, and the laughing stock of the world for utter helplessness and the most depraved voluptuousness". Ranade found the cause of their condition not only in the character of the rules but also in the system by which they ruled. Especially in these years, when several of the princes were boys controlled by regents, Ranade felt that the basic trouble lay in:

"The system of absolute rule which prevails everywhere, ... the temptations of which prove in too many cases so overpowering as to wash off the vanish of (the princes') education in a few years, and leave the state none the better, often much the worse, for the care taken of the Chief during the minority".  

With this in mind Ranade defined the reforms which he believed could revive the administration of the states, taking as his model the principles of British constitutionalism. Here again, as in his other writings of these years, he took the opportunity to enumerate the social classes which could supply India's future leadership. Ranade wanted that there should be a constitution for every State and the princely ruler should pledge himself to respect it.

The constitution outlined by him bears the stamp of clear thinking and thorough treatment. The principles that he wanted to be embodied in every Indian State Constitution were: (1) Each of the greater Chiefs should be required to nominate a responsible minister, the nomination to be approved by the representative of the British Power, and the person appointed to be irremovable except for clearly proved incapacity, disloyalty, crime, or misdemeanour

14. IBID.: 2
proved to the satisfaction of both the Chief and the British Agent. So Ranade believes "the present subservient race of men of straw and position, who rise to be Ministers by pondering to their Prince's worst tastes and vices, and by standing well with the Political Agent by anticipating his whims, must give way to a better class of people". The Chief, the Minister, and the Political Agent would be the three corner-stones of the constitution. (II) The Chief would only exercise power by way of regular appeal from the order of his Minister. There would be no interference with the delegated power of the Minister until his order was passed, and any of the parties affected by it appealed to the Chief. "At present the Minister is either all-powerful, and virtually supersedes the Prince, or he is only a Secretary, affixing his signature to the dictates of unacknowledged ministers in the background who govern the Prince" (III) There should be a Council or Durbar, consisting of the heads of the different departments and a few selected representatives of the non-official classes, the Chief being President of the Council and the Minister its active Leader. This Council should be the final authority. Without its sanction no new tax or new law or great innovation on existing forms should be made. (V) As "the uncertainty of the King's rights in land, the greed of power and the temptations to abuse it, have been the principle sources of misrule and anarchy which have ruined
the Native States, both large and small", Ranade would make it a condition of succeeding to independent rule that the Prince should agree to the settling of the land-revenue permanently or for long terms on moderate and fixed principles, and to the lightening of all other burdens. (V) There should be separation between the State's public and private expenditure, and the Civil List once settled should not be increased except for good cause and with the consent of Council of Minister. There should be clear division of executive and judicial duties, and of civil and military duties. offices should be bestowed on subjects of the State who are of good family and who have qualified by passing prescribed examinations. The laws of the State should be written. There should be an annual statement of accounts. Local government should be freely fostered, under proper control. Such were his ideas of improving the administration in Indian States.15

THE ROLE OF THE ELITE

The role of the elite in the society is extremely important because it formulates the policies and takes the decisions. The elite give political education to the masses and they set certain model standards in the society. The role of the writers, artistists, social workers and

15. As cited in James Kellock, Mahadev Govind Ranade, pp. 50-51.
scientists even more important than the bureaucrats and politicians. They enlighten the people. Not only that the elite help the poor and remove their genuine grievances. In times of crisis the people look to the elite to show them the way. No society without a governing elite can hope to transmit the culture it has inherited. Thus they preserve and promote the culture.

Likewise, Ranade thought that only the elites were capable of providing direction and control over the complex process of India's transition from feudalism to liberalism. He believed that in all backward countries like India "...there is always only a minority of people who monopolise all the elements of strength. They are socially and religiously in the front ranks, they possess intelligence, wealth, thrifty habits, knowledge, and power of combination...."\textsuperscript{16}

Such a minority, because of its exceptional qualities, can play an influential part in all the spheres of society. Ranade's elite group was composed of Brahmans, Banias, Zamindars and the educated middle class. These sections of the contemporary Indian society possessed qualities like intelligence, wealth, unity and initiative while the masses were "unlettered, improvident, ignorant, disunited, thriftless and poor in means". The masses, on their own

\textsuperscript{16} M.G. Ranade: \textit{The Agrarian Problem And Its Solution}, Volume 2, No.1, P.18.
were not capable of understanding the significance of the principles of liberalism or of participating in the liberal movement.

Ranade held that power must gravitate where there is intelligence and wealth". His scheme of introducing representation of Indians from the local to the provincial level contained provisions for giving political power to the rich and educated classes. At the municipal level, the elected seats were to be divided in the ratio of two to one between the propertyholders and the "intelligent class". To the district Committee, one representative was to be elected from every Taluka by those who pay ₹100 as tax. Due representation was also to be given to the Inamdars as they were an intelligent and influential class. Moreover, they were the natural leaders of their local communities. The educated class represented the intelligence of the district and it "had special aptitude and an anxious desire to make a proper and intelligent use of the right of election."\(^{17}\) This class, according to Ranade, was to get two seats in the District Committee. At the provincial level, the non-official members were to be elected not by the people directly but by the members of the Municipal and the District Committees. Such a body, Ranade admitted, would be

\(^{17}\) See M.G. Ranade: Administrative Reforms In The Bombay Presidency, Volume 4, PP. 1-56.
"far from democratic in its character and results", but would nevertheless provide adequate representation to the people. The masses, he believed, were yet incapable of electing worthy men as their representatives. He held that full-fledged democracy could not be suddenly transplanted into Indian soil, it required training and education for generations to come.

Ranade's views on representation indicate that he had assigned an important political role to the educated class. He thought that the educated classes were "the brains and the destined leaders of the people". Against the conservative forces which were at work in India, the educated minority "represented the soul of Indian liberalism". He thought that the educated class was unconsciously supported by the masses. In one of his essays, he described the special duties of young educated men towards their country and people. Those who had taken higher education, and had achieved competence equal to those of the Englishmen, should be given equal opportunity in the civil service. He suggested that one-third to one-fourth of the appointments should be reserved for educated Indians.

As Ranade believed that the educated class was to be the agent of change, he expressed his deep concern over the status of higher education. Defending state support for higher education, he argued that those who take advantage of it come from the middle or "rather the hereditary literacy and mercantile classes" who are supposed to lead the work of regeneration in this country. Unless new ideas were communicated to them through higher education, the country could not hope for great progress. It was, therefore, in the interest of the state itself to provide sound and useful education to the "elite of the rising generation". Besides, the majority of students in high schools and colleges belonged to the poor middle classes who needed the help of the government.\(^21\) The masses, on the other hand, were extremely poor and did not care for education. They wanted food and employment and not education.

Those who aspired for higher education and for position in the civil service and in the legislative councils came predominantly from the Brahman caste.\(^22\) Ranade wanted the Brahmans to play a leading role in the contemporary efforts for the all-round progress of the country. He pointed out that it had been the Brahman's

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privileges to be poor and ambitious. This privilege had helped the society before and must be cherished now. In his address to the Industrial Conference, Ranade explained the necessity of the industrialisation of the Indian economy and said, "I can only appeal to the fact that it has been the Brahman's hereditary privilege to formulate the Nation's wants and suggest remedies."\textsuperscript{23}

Along with the Brahmans and the other educated middle class, Ranade included the Zamindars and the Vatandars in his category of elite. In his scheme of extending self-rule in India, he wanted special representation to be given to this class. He maintained that the Vatani Zamindars played a beneficial role.\textsuperscript{24} In his essay, "Chiefs of Indian States in Maharashtra", he pointed out that the rich Vatandars of Maharashtra spent their time lazily and their money in conspicuous consumption. They did not utilise the opportunity of learning from the government teachers specially appointed for their education. The Zamindars of Bengal, on the contrary, took to higher education, went abroad and rubbed shoulders with the Englishmen and served their people.\textsuperscript{25} Ranade exhorted

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{23} M.g. Ranade: Essays On Indian Economics, P. 194.
\item \textsuperscript{24} N.R. Phatak: Op.cit., P. 245.
\item \textsuperscript{25} IBID.: PP. 63-65.
\end{itemize}
the rich classes of Maharashtra to go to the cities like Bombay where they would receive a good education and come to know how the outside world was progressing. They would thereby be able to face the challenge of the new era and assume the leading role which they had been playing traditionally.

Ranade's justification of the aristocratic classes was similar to the conservatism of Edmund Burke, while his elitism was comparable to that of J.S. Mill. Mill had said that it was the privilege of the intellectual elite to see the "futurity of the Species". Their knowledge was, according to him, the key to progress. The well-educated men were the wisest and best men and should, therefore, be elected to office at all levels. Mill sought to reconcile democracy and rule by the educated elite. He sought to undermine the influence of landed interests on politics. He considered aristocracy as the sole cause of bad government in England. In India, Ranade recognised that the landlords were the natural and traditional leaders of the people and that their importance should not be undermined. He tried to combine the interests of his own educated class with those of the aristocratic class. He suggested that some posts in the civil service should be reserved for the members of the aristocratic families of Sardars.

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FREEDOM AND EQUALITY

The traditional problem of freedom of the will is a well-known philosophical controversy. The controversy arises from the apparent contradiction between the experience of freedom and the idea of casualty. As an agent, one always feels that a number of courses are open at every movement and that the course of action that one pursues is as per one's free choice. One could always have opted a different course of action, had one been inclined to choose differently. This feeling of freedom is so much a part of our daily life that it gives us a sense of spontaneous creativity. It makes us feel superior to a mere system-determined automation. It is the source of the variety and creative expression of life. It is the essence of life.

As far as Ranade is concerned, he had a partly juridical conception of freedom. Freedom did not signify absence of restrained or domination but it meant exercise of domination under the framework of law. It did mean the negation of helpless dependence on others, but it also demanded relief from all unjustified sources of power and authority. Thus Ranade's view is comparable with that of Montesquieu and the constitutionalists. He approvingly cited the view of French writer Dunoyer according to whom liberty is not a mere negation of restraint but is a positive effort to increase efficiency of all kinds of
labour. Freedom could be realized in a country, according to him, through the acceptance of the rule of law and the parliamentary form of government. As a judge, he felt that the judiciary was the backbone of a free country. He also supported decentralization and criticized the growing trend towards uniformity in the country. But with an individualist and legalist approach to freedom, Ranade combined a positive conception of the role of the state. He wanted the state to promote education, and take effective steps towards social betterment and cultural reconstruction.

Free will is not present in brutes. Man has, on the other hand, a delegated freedom to choose between right and wrong, and good and evil. Man's relations with God are manifested by this sense of conscience in him. The spirit immanent in the universe manifests his presence in man through his faculty of conscience. Conscience is man's human nature in its fully developed stage and is the divine voice in man's heart.

This distinguished nature of man provides bases for all law, government, morals, manners, social and family relations, literary and scientific culture as well as religion and worship. According to Ranade, the freedom of conscience is the real freedom and the rights of conscience

are paramount over all other considerations of mere political and social expediency. Man should not submit himself to any outward force or the authority of customs, religious scriptures, usages, traditions or great personalities but should submit to the voice of his inner conscience. Man must rise to the dignity of self-control by making their conscience and their reason the supreme guide for their conduct. Men are the children of God. It is the voice of God which men are bound to listen to. Ranade points out that because of neglect and dependence on outside help, men have benumbed their faculty of conscience within them. Ranade agrees that we should have regard for wise men and great personalities but this regard for them should not come between us and God - "The Divine principle enthroned in the heart of every one of us". We must cultivate a sense of self-respect or rather respect for God in us. It is true that human authority, prophets and revelations should be respected but, again, the reverence for them should not come in the way of "the dictates of conscience" or "Divine Command" in us. The same is true about the customs and conventions of society.

But the freedom of man is not unlimited. Delegated freedom is to be properly exercised. Man is responsible to exercise his freedom, with a deep sense of duty. His conscience comes to his help in this context. The faculty of conscience accuses him when he goes wrong and gives him
satisfaction when he performs his duty. This kind of feeling is the connecting link between man's soul and God. Ranade seeks a change from a society based on the constraints of custom to a society based on freedom. But this freedom is the freedom of the individual's higher powers and not of his weaker nature. The freedom of higher powers implies a deep sense of duty and responsibility. Therefore, men must seek and realise the dignity of self-control instead of outside control. This means that the freedom of action is to be used in such a way that it in no way imposes restraints on the equally free rights of other people in the society. Ranade has followed the theistic doctrine while arguing that all men and women are equally the children of God. In God's sight all men occupy only one level. God is the common father and, therefore, all men are brothers. The common divine element which is present in all men provides, according to Ranade's theism, a basis of union and a common bond of love and help.

Ranade has also emphasised the equality between man and woman. He surveyed the history of female rights in India and pointed out that in the ancient period, especially during Vedic times, women used to take an equal part in religious rites and the deliberations of the state. The Aryan Institution of marriage recognised female liberty and the dignity of womanhood. Among the Ksatriyas, a woman was free to choose her husband through the Swayamvara form of
marriage, and, among Brahmans, women devoted to study and contemplation were free to remain unmarried without losing any of their importance. In the Middle Ages, these Vedic Institutions were abandoned. New usages, which developed during this period, limited female liberty and lowered the dignity of women in the society. Ranade argued that the status and dignity of women should be re-established by reforming the marriage and family system and by allowing them to avail of the benefits of education. Thus Ranade felt that Indian society should undergo a transformation so that the liberty of the individual is enlarged, social equality is established and the status of women is improved. 30

**ADMINISTRATIVE REFORM**

Ranade wanted to improve the public administration of India and purge it of its evils. He felt that a sound public administration had to be linked with the practice of the ideals of sympathy, generosity and moderation. Racial pride and personal glorification would only endanger the soundness of an administrative mechanism. An honest and steadfast adherence to duty could alone provide the moral basis to administrative efficiency. It was also essential to have a grasp of some essential principles and to hold fast to them consistently. He believed in the perfection of

For Ranade's Views on Equality between man and woman see Religious and Social Reform, PP.29-30, See also Miscellaneous Writings, PP. 72-75.
the powers and faculties of Indian manhood. That was the sole constructive method for the regeneration and renovation of the country.

Ranade criticized the Indian administration as being too costly and not within the capacity of Indian to bear it. Consequently, he supported the widespread demand for retrenchment of Government expenditure. "Indian economists", he wrote, "must not rest till the annual expenditure is reduced by another three or four millions". Military expenditure was one area were expenditure could be curtailed. Moreover, war with Afghanistan should be ended and all ideas of annexing it abandoned "on grounds of economy, if not of justice and policy". 31 Civil expenditure could be brought down, said Ranade, by gradually replacing Europeans in the administration by Indians who could be employed for less. Since the ICS and other higher administrators were paid more than their counterparts in Britain or in the White Colonies, the cost of civil administration, said Ranade, could also be reduced by cutting down the salaries of "the higher officers to the English or colonial scale". 32 On the other hand, Ranade


32. IBID.
opposed any reduction of expenditure on education in general or on higher education and advocated, instead, its enhancement and allocation of "an adequate proportion of the revenues raised to such an important purpose as education".  

On Sir Richard Temple's administration he wrote:

"He had no love for the people. His pride of Englishism was intense to overbearing, and he thought the native races were all to be patted like children, and had no further purpose in life but to remember gratefully the hired services of every white men in the country... He had no love for free institutions, and took care to secure himself from all possibility of conflict with independent views. His rule was essentially one of self-seeking and self-laudation and eminently demoralising in its consequences."

In 1871 and 1872 he wrote an attack on the increasingly rigid and bureaucratic structure of the British Raj which, little known, is one of the first and most incisive of many nationalist attacks. It also reveals the strong influence of Whig principles of government on his mind. The 1860's had seen systematic codification of law in India. Standard systems of procedure were established between 1859 and 1861


34. Quoted in P.J. Jagirdar, Mahadev Govind Ranade, P.88
by the Penal Code, the Code of Civil Procedure, and the Code of Criminal Procedure. These codes, which provided the basis for Ranade's work as a judge, were in his eyes the final guarantor of the subjects' rights against the threat of despotic government. His pamphlet on the system of civil justice has been lost, but enough appears in his critique of the system of criminal justice, published in 1872, to indicate the full range of his views. The essays were designed as a rebuttal to the proposals of Sir James Stephen, Law Member of the Viceroy's Council.

When Ranade received a copy of the proposals with a request for his comments, he wrote the response which marked his first appearance on the stage of all-India administration. Ranade warned against giving the district collector undivided and therefore authoritarian power. No other British Officer was both so powerful within his sphere and so intimately in contact with the daily life of the people as the district officer, hence the tendency toward despotism inherent in the British Raj must be checked at this point. Stating a theme to which he returned frequently throughout his career, Ranade attacked the all-powerful collectors for their lack of understanding of local conditions and their discouragement of Indians from acting responsibly for themselves. The most effective step toward checking these abuses, he suggested, was to ensure the
courts full autonomy, for under a modern political system only the courts could act as disinterested defenders of Indian society:

"The disparity between the power represented by the governing classes and the capacity on the part of the subject millions to influence the exercise of this power for good, and to check its evils or abuses, is so great that, in the interests of a good and progressive liberal Government, it is essential that the two functions of sovereignty represented by the Judge and the Collector of revenue must be entrusted to separate officers. The judicial courts are emphatically the only institutions in the land which serve the purposes of a formally guaranteed constitution to conserve the rights of the subject population, and the education they give in the habits of constitutional obedience to the law, as distinguished from abject submission to the individual will of the officer declaring and executing the law, is of a sort which can never be too highly esteemed". 35

From some of the utterances and writings of Ranade it is easy to determine that he was in favour of a written constitution for self-government India, that he favoured a federal form of Government with sufficiently autonomous units forming the Indian State, much as it obtains now, with

largely decentalised powers and full-fledged local self-government bodies and defence of the country being the concern of the federal Government. Ranade was not opposed to the idea that there should be a constitution and that it should contain a chapter on fundamental rights. It may be divided that in his scheme of constitutional structure the following points would find a prominent place. (1) Supremacy of the Law, (II) The Indian Princes would have become members of a body like the House of Lords and their States might have remained as constitutionally and democratically governed units, (III) Parliamentary Government, (IV) Representation of India in the Imperial Parliament pending the full development of the Indian Constitution, (V) Decentralisation and popularisation of the Judiciary, (VI) Common Constitution for States. All this was in keeping with his general principles, but it is obvious that no occasion to frame a full-fledged Indian Constitution arose in his time, we can only speak with confidence of such of his ideas as had a permanent bearing on the Indian situation.36

It should not be considered surprising that most of the political reforms advocated by Ranade were expressed in his addresses at the Social Reform Conference, because he considered political reform as only part of social

re-construction. Considering the fact that India lacked geographical and cultural homogeneity, he made up his mind that a centralised system of administration was quite unsuitable, he declares:

"We must push in volume and momentum of the central absolutism, without endangering our defence against foreign attack. This should be the leading motto of native political aspirations. Centralised India is a giant like a steam-roller, which crushes good and bad things under the same process and the germs of progress are nipped in the bud by the dead weight of inert forces". 37

So he adopted the federal principle as a necessary pivot of the Indian Constitution. The decentralisation of power was one of the fundamental principles in his political thinking and this he applied not merely to big provinces - he did not speak of any linguistic provinces as a principle because no occasion for it arose - but also to local self-governing institutions and advocated considerable devolution of powers and privileges to village Panchayats. Therefore, he favoured democratic, representative and constitutional governance of human society. He did not want absolute power to be concentrated anywhere. "One of the worst effects", he

37. Quoted in D.G. Karve; Ranade - The Prophet of Liberated India, P.163.
said, "of absolute power is that it warps man's perceptions in regard to the innate dignity of human nature and its common identity under all manner of extraneous disguises. The representatives of a ruling class soon learn to lisp the shibboleth of the natural and inherent superiority of European over Asiastic races". This is very akin to Lord Acton's aphorism: Power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely".

To sum up, the many-splendoured life of Ranade manifested itself in his political realism. He was not a political philosopher in the accepted sense of the term. It was not given to him to be sheltered and secluded in the ivory-tower of a philosopher. His public life was not a bivouac but a complete efflorescence of service, dedication and sacrifice. And, in keeping with the needs of the country, and in consonance with the demands of public life, Ranade gave expression to his ideas on various issues and problems that engaged the attention of the knowledgeable. And these ideas, cumulatively, give the true measure of Ranade - the practical idealist.

He was loyal to the British, but his loyalty was not transplanted from the medieval feudalistic order. He accepted the British connection as ordained and had faith in the fruition of British munificence, in terms of material benefits, but he was not an Anglophile to support the
perpetuity of the British rule in India. What he expected of the British was a government conducive to the welfare of the people, what he anticipated was an administration progressively open to Indians, based on trust, conciliation and justice, what, he aspired for was a bureaucracy shorn of its un-British and un-Indian activities and devoted to public service. He held constitutional means above expedient recourse to direct action and violent cataclysms, and in opposing them, sought to transform the character of the British rule through adopting the accepted constitutional methods of their own. He put premium on racial equality, communal amity and progressive - perfectibility of the people in the artifices of self-governing institutions. He was not a mendicant to beg for self-government, he would negotiate, he would endeavour to compromise but in an honourable and just manner. He would criticize, chastise, indict, request, advocate, plead and bring moral force to bear upon the ruler, but he would not tolerate despairing criticism, fruitless political agitations and the injured innocence of the martyre. He would fight injustice, oppression and wrong wherever they emanated and whatever be the consequences.

Ranade's discerning liberalism, in fact, unveiled him as a unifier, reconciler and a nation-builder, for he was nothing if not practical. He boosted the process of
liberalism and gave new directions to constitutional practices. He gave power, and depth, and consequently added meaning to the contours of public service. By his conscientious adherence to liberalism, Ranade gave an objective lesson in the practicability and feasibility of the liberal principles. He might thus be credited with making liberalism a workable movement in Indian politics.