CHAPTER - II

As an Erudite Journalist

Naoroji wrote soon after his appointment as a Professor in Elphinston College: 'The desire of my life was to serve the people as opportunity permitted'. This was indeed the beginning of that time to 'create record of service and sacrifice' in variety of ways. He had to lead the beginning from his own people and society i.e. Parsi Community which raised him to the position of a leader not only of the Parsi community but also of India. In that capacity, he felt curiously the urgency of an independent newspaper which could communicate his thoughts and ideals in the society. There were in Bombay five Gujarati journals all of them owned by the Parsis but none had the liberty or impartiality needed for the cause of reform.¹

Naoroji was an erudite journalist. He not only edited newspapers but was also a regular contributor to several journals like Students' Literary Miscellany, Voice of India, etc in India. He received enough experience while editing college magazine. He was efficient not only in English but also wrote enough in Gujarati language. He alongwith Hume, Wedderburn started Voice of India in Bombay and later incorporated it into the Indian Spectator. The second part of his journalistic

¹ Masani, op.cit.; p. 61.
activity started in England where he wrote several articles and contributed to the papers such as *Commerce, India, Daily News, Manchester Guardian, Daily Chronicle, Weekly News, Contemporary Review, Pearson's Magazine* etc. His main themes in his writings were the question of civil service, poverty of India and British policies responsible for it etc. He was interviewed by many correspondences, representatives of British newspapers and journals in England.²

Naoroji had that vigour and zeal to start and run such a newspaper but had no money to give this scheme a shape. But when he told his scheme to Kharshedji Nasarwanji Cama, he agreed to finance the newspaper. Hence, the *Rast Goftar* (or the Truth Teller) was started. Naoroji agreed to work without remuneration.³ The copies of the journal were to be freely distributed among the members of the Parsi community. The purpose of this journal was to educate the principles of social, religious and educational reforms among the Parsis in particular and the Indian community in general. Through it, he preached his gospel to the people and to combat the forces of ignorance and conservatism which impeded their progress.⁴

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Naoroji edited this Weekly for two years with rare courage, devotion and self sacrifice during which time it came to be placed on a sound financial footing. When a serious riot broke out in Bombay on 7 October, 1851, the Parsis were in a panic condition and looked in vain to the government which was indifferent if not hostile. He stood forth boldly in favour of the wronged community. He wrote strong articles against the communal riots, indifference and failure of duty on the part of the government.  

The first number of the new journal appeared on 15 November, 1851 and a thousand copies were printed for free distribution. It contained no advertisement in it. A serious local riot between Muslim and Parsis impelled Naoroji to hasten into the field of journalism. There were earlier the most amicable relations between both the communities. Some of the prominent members of both the communities were partner even in business. There was no enmity between the two communities but an ill-conceived article in a magazine, edited by a Parsi youth, caused an appalling ferment. This magazine was called Chitra Dnyan Darpan (The Illustrated Mirror); its editor was Behramji Singh.  

6. For instance, Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhooy, leader of the Parsi community, and Mahomed Ali Rogay, the foremost Muslim, had been staunch friends and partner in business for a quarter of a century.
Khershedji Gandhi who wrote a paper on "female education" that led to practical measures for the education of women.\textsuperscript{7}

Gandhi illustrated a series of memoirs of eminent persons who had influenced and transformed society in different places at different intervals. He interpreted the life of the Prophet and advocated reforms for women-folk according to new situations. This article hurt seriously the feelings of the Muslim community. The Muslims assembled in a mosque of the town on 7 October, 1851 and proclaimed a \textit{Jehad} (crusade) against the Parsis who avoided conflict with the infuriated crowd but the Muslims were bent on vengeance.\textsuperscript{8} The Muslim crowd marched through the dwellings of the Parsis and there was a scene of pillage and destruction. The Parsis became prey of great atrocities. The police prosecuted a few of the worst offenders but this had no effect on the hooligans. Peace returned when the editor tendered a written apology.\textsuperscript{9}

The leaders of the Parsi community held that it was itself responsible for such state of affairs. In such situation, the Parsi press and leaders pursued a policy of bashfulness. Naoroji and other leaders of the Parsis felt that the leaders had betrayed and humiliated the community. The Parsis who had been living at Baharkote asked Naoroji to present their

\begin{itemize}
\item[7.] Masani, \textit{op.cit.}; pp. 62-63.
\item[8.] Ibid.
\item[9.] Ibid.
\end{itemize}
grievances to the authorities. He drafted a memorandum on behalf of them and submitted to the authorities in order to ask the protection for future. The attitude of the press and oscillating policy of the leaders compelled him to feel the necessity of an independent and valorous newspaper. In order to stop the outbreak for future, he tried to give the message of common tranquility and harmony among all the communities for all-round healthy development of the society. This was the background for launching the Rast Goftar.

The paper, it was expected, would work as a dauntless protector of truth and justice and as an uncompromising exponent of the progressive thinking. He had attained experience in this concern as he was the editor of Dnyan Prasarak, a magazine of Dnyan Prasarak Mandali for the promotion of knowledge. He even contributed several articles on social, cultural, Natural Philosophy and Astronomy to this magazine. He became subscriber of the other papers and journals. He was also a regular contributor to the Samachar Darpan, a Gujarati Daily.

Naoroji during his presence in India was active members of several cultural, social, religious and literary societies which were meant for the creation of healthy opinion in favor of reforms in social and religious aspects of the society. He

10. Ibid.; p. 64.
11. Ibid.
also edited the publications of Rahnumae Mazdayasnan Sabha founded in 1851. His engagement in the proceedings of the Sabha made him fearless. Acting as a Secretary of this Sabha, he made strenuous efforts as a reformer to transform 'the old faith according to their Western ideas'. He continued to oppose the constant attacks made by his opponents through press and platform. He was thus a firm believer of social harmony. He had also helped Naoroji Furdooni in editing the publications of Sir Jamsetjee Jeejeebhoj Philosophic Institute.

The occurrence of riots created a great agony in the mind of Naoroji. He was not prepared to see massacre of humanity without any purpose and logic in it. Considering this aspect in mind and checkmating the further occurrence of bloody riots, he devoted first three numbers of the Rast Goftar exclusively to the discussion of the situation created by the riots and aftermath. In the course of his discussion in several articles, he deplored how unfriendly the police had been towards the Parsis. He held equally the Parsis themselves responsible for their thoughtless attitude and their humiliation of the editor of the Chitra Dnyan Darpan. It might, however, be argued that in his defence of the writer of that ill-conceived

14. Ibid.
memoir Naoroji was carried by his ideals of liberty of thought and freedom of the press. It was not so harmless as Naoroji, in his anxiety to stand by a brother journalist, took it to be.  

Naoroji's association with the journalistic activity provided him an undaunted spirit which ushered tremendously in his political speeches and writings. Such was the beginning of his fight against the anti-social, selfish and vested interests' groups. He did not even spare the authorities but denounced its high-handedness and inequalities of the rulers'. He continued to decry the Parsis' leadership questioning their authority to speak in the name of the people. In spite of being an official of the government, he criticised the authorities in one of his articles thus: "we used to hear of the loathsome conduct of those who assaulted the people in the night and fell on their knees on the following morning, craving forgiveness. But in this case the Muhammadan assailers have, instead of bending their knees, forced the aggrieved to make amends to them. We were under the sweet delusion that justice had extirpated tyranny, but during the last two months justice has gone to rest and aggression has had its free innings".

15. Ibid.
In spite of the occurrence of communal frenziness, he did not lose patience but intended peaceful and constitutional solution of the problem forever. A petition was drafted under his direction for the submission to the Governor of Bombay. A deputation waited on the Governor on 26 November, 1851 and prayed that effectual measures might be taken to preserve the public peace. This was a very important period in his life and became a recognised leader. There was no sphere of public activity where he was not a leading light, there was no movement for the furtherance of communal or national welfare he was not an earnest and active worker. 17

This was the beginning of his public life under the auspice of the Rast Goftar. His persistent efforts, rationale approach, dedication, this paper became within two months an influential organ of progressive thinking. The readers of this journal demanded that its size should be increased and also converted into a weekly paper. He agreed to accept the demand of its subscribers provided there was an adequate increase in the number of subscribers. Its subscription was two annas per month. He expected that those who could afford would give a larger subscription so as to enable the proprietors to spread the paper among the poorer classes of the population. He was

17. Masani, op.cit.; p. 66.
happy to note that the subscribers came forward and was converted into a Weekly.\textsuperscript{18}

It is remarkable that in those days a government servant was not prevented from running a newspaper. Naoroji's association with the \textit{Rast Goftar} continued even after he left India in 1855 and made England his home. In his absence, a syndicate was formed to run the paper. This paper continued to preach the gospel of brotherhood, amity, reformatory zeal and dedication.\textsuperscript{19}

The record of work done by Naoroji between the years 1851 and 1855 was remarkable for the range of his sympathies and the versality of his intellect. During his sojourn in India, he was actively associated with many organisations. Although his means were limited yet he kept on giving pecuniary assistance and personal service to such humanitarian movements.\textsuperscript{21} Thus it can be said that he played a very important role in the social, educational and economic life of the country. He turned his

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{18.} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{19.} The syndicate of the paper consisted of Dadabhai, Kharshedji Nussarwanji Cama, Kharshedji Rustamji Cama, Dossabhai Franji Karaka, Naoroji Furdoonji, Shorabjee Shapurjee Bengalee and Pestanji Ruttonji Colah. Three years later, Karsandas Mulji, the well known Hindu reformer, became the eighth member of this group.
\textsuperscript{20.} Singh, \textit{op.cit.;} p.6.
\textsuperscript{21.} Mosani, \textit{op.cit.;} p. 69.
\end{flushleft}
ways as he was to build a nation. The fortune took him away to another country where a greater work for the welfare of the Indian people was to be started.

The last quarter of 19th century witnessed the emergence of several organisations which created a national awakening and political consciousness at its highest. Naoroji's work in Bombay province had already made contribution in arousing the nationalist feelings among the educated Indians. But his greater part for India's cause lay in England. However, he was closely associated with many organisations in India along with several other nationalist leaders of the country but his role in the foundation of Indian National Congress was also of a great order.22

The expansion and growth of education, press, means of communication and transportation, economic condition of the masses etc. prepared way for the formation of national organisation. The Indian intelligentsia had started realising that "in ascendant class of British Indians they had always a force hostile to the advancement and that the only way of overcoming it was to organise and strengthen their own".23 This class of educated Indians knew very well that the only path to attain their national ends was to present a bold front

to unreasonable race hostility. They appealed to the British nation and Parliament for the fulfilment of rights and privileges conferred by several acts and pledges of the British sovereign and statesmen on them. Consequently, the national feeling came into practical shape in the establishment of the Indian National Congress.  

Naoroji came to India in April 1881. It was in 1885 when he kept himself busy in the preparations for holding the first Indian National Congress. Hence, he took a prominent part in the deliberations of the first Indian Congress held in Gokuldas Tejpal Sanskrit College in Bombay under the presidency of Womesh Chander Bonnerjee on 28-30 December, 1885. He, in fact, was one of the founding fathers of the Congress. It would not be out of place here to review the political ideas of Naoroji. He had profound faith in the benefits of the British rule and wished for the permanence of that rule in the country.

Naoroji was of the opinion that all the errors of the British Government were due to the ignorance of the British
public and Parliament and their remedy lay in the agitational activities through proper and constitutional means. However, the efforts to obtain redress from the local authorities repeatedly received a rude rebuff. A belief grew that the liberty-loving people of England with their traditional love for justice and freedom would extend a helping hand to the Indian people. Naoroji believed in these principles. He along with Hume and Wedderburn held that the interests of the Indian people were almost equal and the continuance of the British rule could be made to conform to be best interests of India. He was inclined towards the programme initiated by the moderate wing of the Congress. He started believing in the sense and traditions of equality, justice and fair play which would pave the way for the gradual development of India's constitutional model. 27

The first Congress session marked the quickness in political consciousness of the people. The resolutions passed by the first Indian National Congress were widely circulated and discussed by the local political organisations. The Indian newspapers also welcomed the formation of organisation as the most powerful organ of the Indian political opinion and put forward various suggestions for the consideration of the next Congress. These developments were discussed in the second

27. Ibid.
The first Indian National Congress which was held at Bombay was attended by 72 delegates but since then the number of its membership began to increase every year. Almost all the Congress Presidents vehemently showed their loyalty to the British rule and denounced 'Russian autocracy' as opposed to British liberalism and hope that the English people would see their way to granting the just demands of the loyal Indians. Naoroji dwelt at length on an aspect of the problem which was a matter of debate at that time among the Congressmen. But there were some people who wanted to discuss social problem from the platform of the Congress. Though he had begun his public career as a social reformer yet he was not in favour of mixing up the two issues because this issue would create a lot of problems before the newly founded Congress.

Naoroji clearly indicated that if both the questions were mixed together 'the other important movements' might be discredited and discouraged; so it was not deemed opportune time because "for everything there are proper times, proper circumstances, proper parties, and proper places; We are met

29. Report of the First Indian National Congress, Bombay, 1886
together as a political body to represent to our rulers our political aspirations and not to discuss social reforms". He knew that every caste had its own customs, traditions and 'social arrangements' which widely differed from others, so the Congress which consisted of all classes would not take-up the social reforms needed in each individual class. He firmly believed: "A National Congress must confine itself to questions in which the entire nation has a direct participation and it must leave the adjustment of social reforms and other class questions to class Congresses. But it does not follow that because this national political body does not presume to discuss social reforms... to solve those complicated problems on which hinge the political introduction of those reforms". 32

Naoroji was of the opinion that the Congressmen intended to make it the common front of all the people of India and saved it from being the battle-ground of factional interests. But this tone was set most of all by Naoroji. 33

Naoroji was by this time also casting his glance at more and more ambitious goals. Hence, he left for England to contest election to the House of Commons. He knew that without making British politicians familiar with the Indian, their

31. Ibid.
32. Singh, op.cit.; p. 20.
33. Ibid.
grievances would not be redressed. Besides, he was also advised by several Congressmen to contest the election to Parliament. On the eve of the second Indian National Congress, many Congressmen decided that Naoroji who had been living in England since a long period should contest election for Parliament where he might be able to present India's case. Meetings were held all over India to canvass for his election. It was quite tough and gallant fight in a foreign land but ended in Naoroji's defeat. He was not at all upset as he had got sufficient experience of election. But all this made his chance better at the next election.

The second part of Naoroji's journalistic activities began in England when he attempted to educate and acquaint the British with the ideals of Congress through the press. It was deemed as the most important communication media in England by the promoters of the Congress there. So he exercised his great influence through British press for India's demands and aspirations. He wrote to the press to convey information to support the India's national movement, contradict or correct a wrong information that was sought to be given. He utilised the India, an organ of British Congress Committee, for the

35. Ibid.
publication of articles and letters in it. He gave interviews to the British newspapers, journals.\textsuperscript{36} He also wrote pamphlets and book in this regard. Its main characteristics were the discussion on Indian affairs, information regarding the programme, policies and demands of Indian National Congress, Indian problems, British rule and policies towards India. They covered a wide range of subjects connected with the Indian issues such as civil service question, reform of the councils, drain, costliness of British empire and other matters affecting India and her people. He made a strong plea for India and sought solutions of the problems through the columns of the British press.\textsuperscript{37}

Naoroji demanded raising of the age for the competition for civil service in India and also holding the competitive examinations simultaneously both in India and England. He raised this issue and insisted upon the British Government to give effect to the resolution of Parliament. In a letter to the editor of the \textit{Times} (London) and other journals of Britain, he therefore, clarified his stand on the issue and conveyed the feelings of the people of India and the Congress which asked for its implementation.\textsuperscript{38} He reported: "That the enthusiasm in

\textsuperscript{36} \textit{India}, August 26, 1892; October 1895, February 1896; \textit{Times}, August 11, 1893.
\textsuperscript{37} \textit{Ibid.}; July 6, 1917; \textit{The Tribune}, July 3, 1917.
\textsuperscript{38} Naoroji's letter to the Editor of the \textit{Times}, August 9, 1893; \textit{Naoroji Papers}, N-1, 561.
India on the passing of the Resolution is thoroughly genuine and spontaneous, there cannot be the remotest doubt. The subject was taken-up by the Indian press, and by the people generally immediately on the arrival of the news by telegram.... It is a subject in regard to which the people of India have been crying out for a generation. The Indian National Congress has been putting forward a Resolution demanding this concession as justice.... It will be, I think, admitted by every one that there is a strong feeling really existing.... India is following the good lessons which England has taught her to agitate constitutionally and persistently for any just cause, and that we are determined to contribute to do".39

Naoroji denounced the attitude of British Parliament and Government for ignoring the just demand of the Indians and excluding them from admission to the higher jobs in the administration of India. In a letter addressed to the editor of The Daily News (London), he made it clear that it was an open violation of acts of Parliament and the most solemn proclamation and promises made by the authorities of Britain from time to time. Through this letter, he urged upon the British people "to remove this blot of injustice and degradation from the British names and to accord to the Indians with British honour and generosity, their true position as British citizens, which is always declared to be their rights,

39. Ibid.
by acts of Parliament and Proclamation of the Sovereign".\footnote{40}

During the last days of Naoroji’s sojourn in England a more intensive press campaign was undertaken throughout the United Kingdom than before. He wrote articles, letters and gave interviews to the British Newspapers and journals. The correspondence of \textit{Daily Graphic} (London) interviewed Naoroji just before entering Parliament on 8 August, 1892. He asked many questions to Naoroji ranging from his personal life to the object of his political campaign on behalf of the people of India. Asked about the stay of his purpose in England, Naoroji replied: “I stayed in England solely to carry out my political aspirations, I have already held that it would be of the greatest advantage to India; and voice in the Imperial Parliament. What I should most like to see would be the direct representation of the Indian people at Westminster”.\footnote{41}

Regarding the membership of Parliament, he told that this privilege had not yet been offered to the Indians. He intended that the best thing they could do was to invite English constituencies to send the people of India to parliament. This was his reason for coming forward in Central Finsbury; his long stay in England had made him as familiar with English political questions as with the wants of his own country.\footnote{42}

\footnote{40} Ibid.
\footnote{41} \textit{India}, August 26, 1892.
\footnote{42} Ibid.
As far as the questions of Indian civil service and election system for India were concerned, Naoroji replied: "It is less ambitious than many people imagine.... I hope to be useful by occasionally calling the attention of the government and of the country to administrative points as they crop-up. Anglo-Indian officials do their work on the whole admirably, but the best of administrator is not heard by a little parliamentary publicity. Generally speaking, however, these detailed questions are beyond functions of the British Parliament. They must be fought out in India itself, where we have our Legislative Councils and our own press. The really important work of the House of Commons is to introduce constitutional changes that can only be effected by an Act of Parliament".

He praised the English officials and the Government of India but the price that paid for English administration was ruinous. He criticised the Anglo-Indian officials' apathy towards the Indian people from whose money, they received their salaries, pensions, allowances and other benefits. "It was a huge system of absenteeism, like that Irish landlord system. We cannot get rid of it altogether, because we cannot afford to do without some English Officials. But we can safely mitigate the evil. And the remedy I propose it to have the examinations for the upper ranks of the civil service held simultaneously in India and in England, so that natives of India may have a better chance of getting appointment".

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43. Ibid.
44. Ibid.
Asked about the election system for India, Naoroji made his point clear that the existing norms were of nomination and he was in favour of the principle of popular election. He proposed that a few members of each legislative council should be elected by the same electorate which chose the members of the municipal councils. Naoroji did not want that the elected members should vote against the government but to advice the government whenever there was need for it.  

The correspondence of the Great Thoughts also interviewed Naoroji and asked many questions. The first question was about the civil service. Naoroji referred to the resolution of June 3, 1893 in which he claimed to be an achievement of his efforts. He said that it was duty of the government to implement the resolution so that the educated Indians could get the appointments in higher jobs of the administrative set-up of the country. But he was aggrieved to note the opposition of the official circles. Unfortunately, in Indian matter the Indian authorities invariably ignored or resisted any resolution or act which tended to benefit the Indians. This had been their policy ever since 1833 when the first Act was passed 'to treat Englishmen and Indians in His Majesty's Service on the same footing, without regard to race, colour or creed'.

As regards the sincerity of English Government to the welfare of India, Naoroji was of the opinion that the Indian

45. Ibid.
46. India, October, 1895.
Government would not improve the condition of the Indian masses in the existing set-up of the government machinery. He further remarked: "We are suffering severely from the East India Company, we could appeal to Parliament against any unjust act of the Company. But now the government feels that it ought to uphold the Secretary of State for India, whoever he may be, and he is usually a man without any adequate knowledge of Indian affairs, who plays into the hands of the India Council". 47 He went on to caution the government that constant violation of pledges, the persistent opposition to Indian interests and the deterioration and impoverishment of the Indian people by an evil administration must lead sooner or later to a rebellion. He foresaw the emergence of powerful forces which would, if succeeded, shatter the British empire in India. Asked about the solution of the problem, Naoroji suggested that the British rule should apply just, honest and honourable solemn pledges 'to more Indians feel that to fight for the British rule is to fight for their own hearts, homes and prosperity'. 48

47. Ibid
48. Ibid.
In another press interview given to G.W. Tooley for the publication in the Humanitarian, Naoroji articulated his apprehension of a rebellion in India as the Indian people were awakening more and more every year. If the government did not pay its attention towards amelioration of the problems, the situation would worsen like that of Russia and secret societies would emerge. "But the succeeding generations will not feel that. They will start where men in India today leave off. They will have no personal memory of old India. However, improved the conditions in which they find themselves, they will accept them as a matter of course. They will demand more and if they do not get, they will rebel".49

Naoroji was again interviewed by the Correspondent of the Star on 16 January, 1896. Elaborating his views about the opinion and sentiments of the Indian people, he told the Correspondence that they would be 'loyal to the England unless some important mistakes were made by the authorities'. He prayed the benefits of the British rule but there were multiple evils in the administrative set-up of the country. He expected that when the British public came to know the grievances of the Indian masses, the evil design would surely be remedied.50 As regards the large amount of fighting power in India, Naoroji

50. India, February, 1896.
said: "Quite so you have in India an amount of fighting power which England can utilize in any part of the world, and which it would be not child's play to resist. You have in the Sikh, the Rajputs, the Marathas and all the martial races, Hindus and Muhamdans, a warlike breed of some thousands of years. Its total strength is not far short of two third of the whole fighting power of Europe.... You have employed them in Africa, China, and in other parts of the world. But England should pay fairly for whatever she taxes from India that is to her interest. She should not throw all the burden upon India, as she does in frontier wars like Chitral, and in many other ways".51

Besides journalistic activity, Naoroji created a sensation in the British people by writing his famous book Poverty and Un-British Rule in India in 1901. He propounded the theory of drain. He displayed facts and figures to prove the systematic financial burdens put on the people of India. He overwhelmingly discussed at length the problem of India's impoverishment and the drain which had close connection. Discussing the drain theory as a very unfortunate aspect on the Indian people, he wrote: "Owing to this one unnatural policy of British rule of ignoring India's interests, and making it the drudge for the benefit of England, the whole rule moves in a wrong, unnatural and suicidal grove".52 He criticised the

51. Ibid.
52. Naoroji, Poverty and Un-British Rule in India (London 1901) p. 211.
costliness of existing system of administration which entailed an annual drain of 30 millions sterling without any corresponding return.\textsuperscript{53}

Naoroji's efforts in presenting India's grievances before the British press received some sympathetic support. However, his endeavours did not succeed in arousing the British conscience to improve India's economic condition as the British policies towards India remained unchanged. But he continued to be courageous and outspoken critic of the British rule in India.

\textsuperscript{53} Ibid.