Chapter One

Introduction

British rule was established in India as a result of accidental process and it was not planned. One of the effects of this process was binding together of so many princely states divided by language, tradition and political ambition. The path of its progress and the course was marked by many twists and turns. It passed through several stages before it culminated in making India an independent and sovereign nation. The whole period of a century and half was the witness to many transformations. Simultaneous to it was the process of leaving behind medieval outlook and entering into modernity. The atmosphere was charged with debates on the transformation and nationalism was the key word.

Literature is believed to reflect happenings in the society. Newly emerged Indian English Literature was also not free from these influences. Many writers right from Raja Rammohan Roy to Swami Dharmteerth all the stalwarts who are remembered as the freedom fighters wrote on this issue. They introduced the readers to the nuances and complexities of the concept of nationalism. This research is an engagement to understand nationalism and its varieties propounded by different writers, with a reference to the marginalized sections of the society, caste, gender and language aspects and their treatment to the issues.

The study aims at examining four major discourses of nationalist schools. They are of Gandhian school, Hindu nationalist school of Savarkar and Golwalkar, the school of Roy and Tagore who believed nationalism to be a parochial and so detrimental, and Ambedkarite discourse which advocate homogeneity and harmony. Though there are some more discourses based on race and religion the study is restricted to the aforasid four discourses of nationalism. Though there are anumber of literary works beginning with Bankim Chandra’s ‘Anand Math’ in different genres of literature, the study deals only with prose in order to explore discourses on nationalism. The literary works chosen for this study are selected which were published between the period of 1900 and 1947. Gandhi’s ‘Hind swaraj’ is the earlst work and Ambedksr’s ‘What Congress and Gandhi Have done to the Untouchables’ is the latest.
**What is Nationalism:**

Nation and nationalism are comparatively new terms. Referring to the Oxford English Dictionary, Wester International and the American Heritage Dictionary, we observe that ‘nationalism’ is not a primary word. It is a derivative of the word nation, which comes from ‘Natio’. From derivative adjective ‘national’ it is formed. The word is for the first time cited in the Oxford English Dictionary in the year 1300 but we do not find its derivative abstract noun ‘nationalism’in the dictionary up to 1836. (Chaudhuri1999:51)

Hobsawm quotes Pierre Vilar on nationhood who states, “…what characterized the nation-people as seen from below was precisely that it represented the common interests against particular interests, the common good against privileges, as indeed is suggested by the term Americans used before 1800 to indicate nationhood while avoiding the word itself.” (Hobsbawm2000:20)

**Benedict Anderson and Nationalism:**

After publication his book in 1983, we observe a considerable impact of Benedict Anderson on studies of nationalism. According to him nationalism is a specific sort of man-made cultural transformation. He notices three paradoxes in the concepts of nation and nationalism:

1) Historians thinking in an objective manner believe that nation is a modern phenomenon, where as the nationalists thinking in a subjective way concludes that nation is ancient.

2) Nationality is a universal socio-cultural concept and in the modern world people do have nationality as naturally as they have gender. Against this there is specific expression of the nationality.

3) The Nationality is a phenomenon that yields enormous political power but the concept is not concretely and elaborately defined and expounded like other philosophies. This is so because there is no philosopher like Hobbs or Marx to theories it. That is why it suffers from philosophical poverty and also incoherence. This is the factor which might have led scholars like Tom Nairn to write that, “Nationalism” is the pathology of modern developmental history as inescapable as “neurosis” in the individual with much the same essential ambiguity attaching to it, a similar built-in capacity for descent into dementia,
rooted in the dilemmas of helplessness thrust upon the world (the equivalent of infantilism for societies) and largely incurable.” (Anderson1991:5)

Anderson gives a definition of nation, grounded in anthropology as “It is an imagined political community and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign.” (Anderson1991:6)

Nationalism is imagined because it has a limitation that the largest of the nations also have their boundaries. No nation would think of incorporating people living beyond their area to join their nation, however humanitarian it may be. This was possible in case of religions like Christianity but not the nations.

The second concept related to imagined community is of ‘sovereign’ this concept emerged during enlightenment and revolutions which demolished the authority of hierarchical domain established with divine dictate. In short it challenged the divine authority whether in political sphere or in social and religious fields. The concept of freedom emerged and sovereign state was the representative symbol of this freedom.

Ultimately, it is imagined as community because though inequality and exploitation might prevail in it, the nation is every time understood as a horizontal comradeship. This fraternity make millions of people, rather than killing, die willfully for such mental image for last two centuries.

**Cultural Roots of Nationalism:**

The three cultural concepts emerged in eighteenth century renaissance and revolutions which overthrew the ideas which ruled over the minds of people since ancient times. They are as follows:

1) Some languages were supposed to be ‘divine’ and it was believed that they lead one to the truth. Hollowness of this belief was disclosed undermining the importance of such languages. Anderson underlines one fact about the sacred languages that, “….. their readers were, after all a tiny literate reefs on top of vast illiterate oceans” (Anderson1991 :15). He states that the elite class in the society was expert and cunning strata in the cosmological ranks and the strata at the top were supposed to be divine. After the decline of ‘divine languages’ communication was being transacted in vernaculars. Even literature was being
produced in these languages. It was used for administration. The difference could be understood by observing the writings of Descartes (1596-1605) and Pascal (1623-1662) who did their correspondence mostly in Latin but Voltaire (1694-1776) did it virtually in vernacular. Thus we see the erosion in the popularity of sacred languages. Invention of art of printing brought about a revolutionary change in the society. The religious scriptures were made accessible to those who knew only vernaculars with the help of printing. Knowing the principles of religion did not remain a monopoly of a handful people now. Martin Luther’s idea that I do not want a middleman between us and the god started taking roots.

2) The idea that the king is a divine incarnation and his power is a part of divine power itself was the idea prevailing up to eighteenth century. Now the idea of people’s power was taking shape. Along with religious power, glory of dynastic realms also started fading away.

3) This period witnessed the emergence of two new things, the first one is novel and the second is newspaper. If we consider the structure of the novel whether it is a master piece or a common one, we find the device of ‘simultaneity’ used in it. Characters a man (A) his wife (B) and mistress (C) who has a lover (D). Though the characters exist at a point of time they can meet a limited people, know a little more, but that is the limit. Though they are governed by this, limitation they have full confidence in their simultaneous activity. The newspapers also have done a monumental work in the formation of ‘imagined community’. They created awareness that there was a society in the past. Existing in some form, during the present we are a nation; we have a feeling of fraternity among us and we share a common fate. There is a suggestion of future in it. We are nation in present due to history and linked by fate in the future is the concept underlying it.

Print Capitalism:

Anderson quotes Francis Bacon, having known the number of books manufactured by 1600. Believed that print had changed ‘the appearance and the state of the world’ (Anderson1991:37) while bracing the roots of national consciousness Anderson states that revolutionary vernacularizing force of
capitalism received momentum from external factors, of them three have a direct contribution in the rise of national consciousness. They are as under:

1) The nature of Latin language itself was a non-significant reason. Humanists worked hard to recover the pre-Christian literature from almost oblivion and circulated it through the print market. European intelligentsia appreciated the stylistic achievements of the ancient authors.

2) Rome won every battle against its dissenters in Western Europe prior to the age of print due to the lines of connection it had were stronger than its adversaries. When Luther displayed his thesis to the Chapel door in Witenberg it was available in every part of country within fifteen days. This speed in communication was the result of art of printing. There was an alliance between Protestants and capitalism. Who expected to play upon low cost popular editions because it created a large section of new readers who were, hitherto, not in that segment. This helped them to mobilize new readers for political as well as religious purpose. This mobilization shook the bases not only of the church but of the dynasties as well.

3) Some prospective autocratic sovereigns were slow, as well as geographically uneven in their efforts to spread the vernacular language as the means of administrative centralization. Areanization of Latin, the reformation, and random and chaotic development of administrative vernaculars were reason of the overthrow of Latin. The system of productive relations created by capitalism, print that provided a technology of communication and nature of linguistic dissimilarity in human beings helped imagined communities come into being. In absence of anyone of the three it was impossible to have such community. Though capitalism caused cultural and social changes, for unification print technology was essential.

Anderson also identified the three ways in which the print language helped to create the bases for national consciousness. Firstly they created areas of ‘exchange and communication below Latin and above the spoken vernaculars’. This attached them to millions of people. This also formed the seed of nationally imagined community. Secondly print capitalism gave a new fixity to language which gradually assisted to create the image of antiquity which is pivotal for the subjective idea of nationalism. Thirdly, print capitalism proved to be instrumental in evolution of ‘languages of power’ which were other than the earlier administrative vernaculars.
Some dialects were close to print language so they could influence its final form, where as the other which were deprived of the contact had to face devaluation.

**Types of Nationalism**

Nationalism is not a separate branch of a social science that is why we see scholars from different discipline expressing their views on nationalism. Some of them hail from sociology, some from political science and even from other subjects like History. In order to classify nationalism these scholars have sought help of their original disciplines. Owing to this fact we find the concept categorized in several ways. In addition to this we have a great variety in connection with race, language, religion, economy, Political thinking etc., they also contribute to classification of nationalism.

**Carltan Hayes:**

While arranging nationalism in different groups Hays chose different schools of thought existing at that time as the basis. He turned to the study of this subject in the decade of 1920’s for the first time. He divided it into six categories. They are 1) Humanitarian Nationalism, 2) Traditional Nationalism 3) Jacobean Nationalism 4) Liberal Nationalism 5) Economic Nationalism and 6) Integral Nationalism.

**Hans Kohn:**

His studies had a background of the rise of Nazism and Fascism in Germany and Italy. Autocracy, Violence, war and atrocities eclipsed Nationalism. So this inevitably formed the basis of his categorization. He takes Rhine as the point of departure and divides Europe with it as the dividing line. He observes that the nations in the East of Rhine entered into modern culture late and their original culture lacked elasticity in order to transform itself resulting into their lagging behind. Their leaders consisted of writers, historians and former soldiers. Their appeals to the masses were sentimental and provocative. Instead of the concept of citizenship they believed in the concept of ‘folk’. These factors culminated into racism, autocracy and war mongering forming the fundamental principles of nationalism in these countries. The nations to the west of Rhine had professionals, doctors, advocates, bureaucrats and diplomats as its leaders. People influenced by Rosseu’s theory of social contract believed in the
principal of individual liberty and in development philosophy emerging out of renaissance. The concept of nationalism in the nations on the western side of Rhine was formed by educated urban middle class people. Nationalism in England, France and other nations was rational, optimistic and multicultural. That is why the western nationalism is known as ‘good nationalism’ and the Eastern nationalism is identified as ‘bad nationalism’. Good nationalism and bad nationalism are also called authentic nationalism and orthodox nationalism respectively. Cohn sub-divided the western nationalism in two groups, of which the first was Anglo-Saxon or individualistic nationalism which existed in England and the second was in France which he identified as collective nationalism.

The classification of nationalism by Cohn was based on the principles on which that nationalism rested. His idea was largely Euro-centric, it included moral aspect also.

**Louis Snider:**

Snider attempted to classify this concept forsaking Euro-centric idea and moral aspect. He classified it according to historical developments in the concept. The first period 1815-1871 Integrative nationalism, the second 1871-1900 Disruptive nationalism, the third 1900-1945 Aggressive nationalism and the last is 1945 onwards contemporary worldwide nationalism. Snider himself found this categorization inadequate and later categorized the concept on geography instead of history, as he did earlier. The new classification consisted of 1) Fissiparous nationalism (European), 2) Black nationalism (African), 3) Politico-religious nationalism (Middle East), 4) Messianic Nationalism (Russia), 5) Melting pot nationalism (America), 6) Anti-colonial nationalism (Asia) and 7) Populist nationalism (Latin America).

**Michael Hechter:**

Hechter splits nationalism in three groups.

1) **State sponsored Nationalism:** It undertakes to incorporate numerous sections of its population divided by ethnicity, castes and cultures. Aim of this nationalism is geographical unity, so they adopt a policy of assimilating people belonging to different cultures in the state into a unified national culture. In fifteenth century France and England were inhabited by people
belonging to different cultures so they adopted this policy. Russia had also adopted the same policy so Anderson calls this process ‘Russification’.

2) Nationalism of Marginalized people: In some nations there reside some people who belong to a culture dissimilar to its central culture. When such people decline to amalgamate with the nation or decide to constitute a separate group, the kind of nationalism is known as nationalism of marginalized people. Usually such people inhabit in the bordering areas, on that account this name is given to them.

3) Irredentist Nationalism: Some time people belonging to same culture are scattered in several geographical areas. When an effort is made to bring them together it is known as irredentist nationalism.

Victory of Plassy in 1757 paved way for East India Company to establish its supremacy over Bengal. It was the richest province. It generated a large sum of revenue that facilitated to support bigger army which enabled them to face its opponents. This helped the company to subdue adjoining territories and gradually gain control over them. In 1772 the company appointed Warren Hastings as the first Governor General of its territories in India. When Hastings assumed power the company’s agents had knowledge about India merely sufficient to help them to meet their trading requirement. They had their contact mainly restricted to the coastal area. As a result of this they were not acquainted with the languages, culture and traditions of the territories away from the coastal area. The officers of the Company serving in India felt a need to acquaint themselves with the history and culture of the colony they were governing. This would serve dual purpose. Firstly they could equip themselves with the knowledge of the alien people and secondly they made themselves familiar with their history which was essential for effective control and administration of the colony.

Metcalf in this regard says that Hastings proposed a plan to the directors of the company in which he underlined the need to undertake a study of the people, practices and institutions of the territory with the aim to adopt its regulations. This was possible by reading the ancient scriptures. The scriptures that came across were all Hindu scriptures, because people who came in their contact were all upper caste Hindus who were scholars of Sanskrit and Persian. This study would liberate the company from their dependence. Hastings wrote in 1785, explaining his idea behind this study that,
“Every accumulation of knowledge and especially such as is obtained by social communication with people over whom we exercise a domination founded on the right of conquest, is useful to the state….. it attracts and conciliates distant affections ; it lessens the weight of chains by which the natives are held in subjection; and it imprints on the hearts of our own countrymen the sense and obligation of benevolence.” (Kumbhojkar 2008: 10)

In 1776 Hasting constituted a panel of Sanskrit legal scholars to compile a ‘code of Gentoo Laws’. They first picked legal decisions on different topics sentence by sentence. Then those passages were translated in to Persian, because the company’s officers did not have the knowledge of Sanskrit, they only knew Persian and from Persian they were translated in to English by N.B. Halhed. Within a decade Sir William Jones, a jurist, mastered the Sanskrit language. This was an important achievement which provided them access to the ancient past of the territory. Another far reaching impact pointed out by Metcalf is that:

“The insistence on a ‘fixed’ body of law necessary if the British were to administer Hindu law, inevitably privileged Brihmanical text over local usages that varied by caste and region, and gave Brahman pundits, attached to the courts as ‘law finders’ until 1864, an unprecedented role in decision making. The whole, complementing the earlier growth of Brahman political power, brought about the ‘Brahmanization’ of Indian Law.”(Metcalf 2008: 59)

This leads us to understand universal principal on which colonization rests. No alien power can establish its domination unless at least a section of the colonized population extends its support to the colonizer. This support or meek acceptance comes as a result of protecting personal interests rather than the larger interests of the society or the country. In case of the Company most ruling class that governed different provinces accepted the supremacy of Britishers. In turn the Company granted them reassurance. Mani describes it as, “The British lost no time in recognizing and reciprocating friendly overtures from the Indian ruling classes. The rajas and nawabs who accepted British suzerainty were left untouched and Brahmans and allied castes were rewarded with positions in the colonial dispensation, especially in the revenue administration born-again zaimindars and rent-collectors.’’(Mani 2008:189)

This project gave impetus to the ‘Oriental’ scholarship. Hastings laid foundation of The Asiatic Society of Bengal in 1784 which was headed by Sir
William Jones, the society was also dedicated to the studies of ancient Indian religious and cosmological texts. British scholars worked on this project in association with Sanskrit pandits. They pieced together the fragments of history they had discovered in the process. The discoveries of history brought to the surface linguistic ties between Indians and Britishers. Jones played an instrumental role in this task. He also perceived parallels between Greco–Roman deities and those of Hindus.

**The Aryan Connection:**

Jones is given credit of discovering the common ancestry of Sanskrit and European language. However, he was not the first person to do so. This resemblance had also been observed by some missionaries and merchants who visited India earlier. Most quoted among those was Fillippie Sassetti, an Italian merchant. Sassetti suggested the possibility of links between Sanskrit and some European languages in 16th century, Jones’s work confirmed the possibility. Another significance of this work was that it triggered an interest among the scholars in European universities. They also encouraged the possibility of study of comparative languages. This was before the emergence of linguistic, the branch of knowledge which undertakes a scientific study of language.

The Vedic corpus was made available for studies to European scholars in early Nineteenth century. Amongst many who studied it German Romantics Harder and Schlegel are noteworthy. They suggested that roots of human history might go back to the beginning which has been recorded in Sanskrit texts. The scholars had classified these languages under the Indo-European family. There were various labels used to refer to this family. Ultimately ‘Aryans’ was the name which gained considerable popularity by the middle of nineteenth century. This term was picked from the Rgveda. The authors of the hymns refer to themselves as ‘Arya’ and from Iranian ‘Avesta’ where the airia is used. It is clear that in neither case it had a racial connotation. Arya in Sanskrit literature was used as an epithet to denote status, particularly when the language itself became increasingly associated with status. Philologists who studied the science of structure and development of language perceived ‘Aryan’ as a language and meant as an ‘Aryan speaking person’. The term was later on incorrectly used to denote a racial connotation.
The idea that these languages shared a common genesis was soon extended to the speakers of the language also. We notice that the debate over this association between the speech and biology dominated the entire nineteen century. The studies led the Orientals to firmly believe in the theory that Aryans developed Sanskrit. The hold of the theory was so strong that scholars like R.K. Mukharjee could write in the year 1956 that “The history of India is mainly that of Aryans of India. Its source is the Regveda which is the earliest book not merely of Indians but of the entire Aryans race.”(Mani2008,p:193.)

Reiterating the point relating to the root of the idea of a common ancestry of alien rulers and upper sections of the colonized, Mani states:

“The interest of European scholars such as H.H. Wilson, C.H. Larson, Colebrook, Monier Williams and above all Friedrich Max Muller in ancient Aryan culture and Sanskrit text gave birth to the legend of ‘the wonder that was India’. They spoke glowingly about the Aryan civilization and went on to create a romantic image of India - an India of sublime spirituality, opulence, Vedic - Upnishidic splendour and epic heroism. Not surprisingly such glorification was well received by the upper castes. They found the Aryan connection flattering because it connected them, on the one hand to the mighty British and on the other vindicated their superiority over the lowly masses …”(Mani 2008:193) This is how the status of castes in Hindu society received almost an official sanction from the colonizers. The result was that the lower caste masses suffered the same slavery which they suffered for centuries.

**Raja Rammohan Roy:**

Raja Rammohan Roy who was widely acclaimed as the ‘first Modern man in India’, ‘The Inaugurator of the new age’ took the initiative in raising voice against unjust discrimination of Jury Act. He was the pioneer of constitutional agitation and introduced western type of progressive and liberal way of life in Indian society. He always cherished and professed progressive, liberal ideals. He always supported spread of western education as against traditional Indian Sanskrit education. For him west was an epitome of progress in all spheres of life. He pleaded vigorously for the settlement of permanent colony of Englishmen in India. “Roy considered colonial rule as ‘benevolent’ and the ‘Providence of God.” (Mani2008:201) He was particularly happy about ending intolerant tyranny of Muslim rule and establishment of ‘enlightened’ English rule. He also believed that British rule was a blessing for
Indians and better than preceding Muslim rule. He readily accepted the superiority of British people but never lost faith in the intrinsic religious, cultural values of Indian society.

Raja Rammohan Roy’s ardent desire to increase contact between Britishers and Indian people and his belief in their superiority and conscience, kept him under the illusion that there would equitable enactment of laws with equal justice by British government.

Consequently when the racial and unjust nature of Jury Act (1826) was exposed, which evoked a protest from many Bengalee people, Raja Rammohan Roy’ had to take initiative and send petition to British parliament voicing wounded sentiments of Indian people. Although he was an active participant in that discontent against hurtful Jury Act, he with other people never raised the question of race which was so obviously evident in the whole issue. He was reluctant to offend his British friends and did not want to alienate them by raising sensitive issue like race. This can be explained by his faith in British rule and desire to see congenial relations between Indian and British people, which were far away from bitter reality.

Raja Rammohan Roy’s more monumental work was abolition of sati. This kind of rationalism and liberalism was definitely the impact of western education but simultaneously he shared with others a social situation and cultural milieu that was predominantly conditioned by brahmanical world-view. He glorified the ancient Indian and imaginatively recreated the past where men were following doctrines of true religion, where there was just and competent government, and women were completely independent with property rights.

To justify his assertions he selectively picked up religious quotes from Manusmriti and other religious texts. While condemning sati on the basis of shastric supports he glorified the concept of chaste and ascetic widowhood. Roy argued, “Manu in plain terms enjoins a widow to continue till death forgiving all injuries, performing austere duties, avoiding every sensual pleasure, and cheerfully practicing the incomparable rules of virtue which have been followed by such women as were devoted to only one husband.” (Mani 2008, p: 204) . Glorifying widowhood he created a major problem for later reformers who advocated widow remarriage and opposed polygamy. Such deeply flowed and dangerous reforms by using shastric support expose his lack of foresightedness and constructive vision.
Roy and his followers did not accept open-mindedly the western liberal progressive ideas but chose to discover great ideals and progressivism in ancient scripture and puranas to help religious conservative fundamentalism. Essentially, it was an act of negation of rational humanistic approach. Ironically by ‘accepting’ the liberal, egalitarian values they firmly established the brahmanical norms and values.

Roy and his followers attacked caste system as ‘undemocratic’, ‘inhuman’ and ‘antinational’, at the same time they glorified the ancient caste system as wonderful institution of useful division of labour. Raja Rammohan Roy made himself clear by insistently saying that essentially he was defending ‘the genuine Brahmanical religion, taught by the Vedas, as interpreted by the inspired Manu, not the popular system or worship adopted by the multitude’. In close observation of his philosophy we find that he wanted to establish Brahmanical order in its original form.

Although he appreciated the ideas like equality of justice or individual dignity, only higher and educated castes mattered for him. According to him lower castes were ‘superstitious’ and ‘fettered with prejudices’ while only the upper castes were aware of ‘true doctrines’. Only the rich merchants and zamindars as ‘respectable and intelligible classes’ were worthy of his consideration and welcomed by him. He never really rebelled against Brahmanism as well as was not very particular about practicing the progressivism he preached. Till the end he avoided eating with anyone from other religion or caste. He never ate any food that was forbidden by shastras for a Brahmin. When he went abroad, he took Brahmin cook along with him.

Valorization of the problematic past became the irresistible concern for Roy and his followers, practice of Sati, enforced widowhood, polygamy and purdah system were the issues primarily concerned with brahmin caste which he wanted to be amended because women of lower strata enjoyed relatively more freedom of expression, better position or respect in the family. Widow Remarriage and property rights for women were common among lower strata of society.

“Thus the essential ingredients of the ideology of the bhadralok, namely, the valorization of brahmanic values, selective modernity, and a pro-British and anti-Muslim orientation, were all present in embryonic form in the intellectual make up of the Father of Modern India.” (Mani 2008:201)
**Swami Dayanand Saraswati:**

Swami Dayanand Saraswati (1824-1883) was born in an orthodox Brahmin family in Kathiawad in Gujrat. He fled his home in pursuit of knowledge, came to Baroda and studied ‘Vedanta’ for one year. Then became an ascetic. An ascetic of Saraswati order named Parmanda initiated him and gave a new name Swami Dayanand Saraswati. Travelling far and wide, finally he reached Bombay and established the *Arya Samaj* on 10th April 1875. ‘The organization was destined to play a significant role in the Indian national movement’ (Bhattacharjee1993:32) In order to awaken the spirit of nationalism among the people of India, *Prarthana Samaj* decided to merge with the *Arya Samaj*.

Indologists were of the opinion that India’s contribute to the human development was mainly in the realm of spirituality and imagination and it was made in distant past so most of them rejected contemporary India. Even Indologists like William Jones felt that, ‘Contemporary India was in urgent need of help’ (Sharma 2011:19). Sharma, explaining the nature of help continues that help was expected from recent developments in Europe in the field of science and on the cultural front by making Indians realize the grandeur of their past.

Before the formation of the *Arya Samaj* “Christian missionaries had made inroads into Hindu society. The administration had been restructured and had firmly established itself. Missionaries believed that a large part of the tradition of Hindus was superstitious, barbarous and savage. Administrators spoke of superiority of Europeans in the field of science, literature and culture. William Wilberforce went a step ahead and remarked that, ‘Hinduism was so rotten that it was beyond the scope of reform’ (Sharma 2011: 20). Remarks of this kind necessitated the need to present a new picture of Hinduism. It needed to be different from one portrayed by the missionaries and Indologists, it was a defense of religion and at the same time an act of preparing ground for nationalism. Hinduism was shown to be monolithic in contrast to many gods and goddesses worshipped in it at that time. Irrespective of barriers of caste, varna and gender that governed the social structure, Hinduism was shown to be egalitarian and nonsectarian. Even though idol worship was a regular feature of the religion, they declared it as non-idolatrous. These features were shown to exist in ancient times, this period was known as the ‘Hindu golden age’. Dayananda
tried to bring this picture of ideal society to reality. He suggested some changes for realization of this dream.

**Supremacy of Vedas:**

Dayananda pronounced that the Vedas have a divine origin. This leads one to accept unquestionably that whatever is written in the Vedas is pure truth. It goes without saying that they were free of error and also were axiomatic. Dayananda not only asks people to accept supremacy of the Vedas but also asks them to reject all other texts dependent on them. Sharma says, “Interestingly at this juncture, Dayananda lists texts that were ‘snares’ and had to be rejected. The list includes the Raghuvansha, Yogvashista, Bhagvat and Tulsi Ramayan. These texts have to be rejected because they combined a sparkling of truth mixed with a large amount of rubbish, myths and fabrications.” (Sharma 2011: 25) The name he gave to his religion was Vedic religion. Dayananda’s insistence on fidelity to the Vedas was a technique of bringing together Hindus divided in different sects and manners of worship. This must also be a reply to the followers of religions having single authentic holy text, who leveled criticism against Hinduism for having so many religious texts.

**Idea of God:**

Defining God was the most important work for Dayananda because all other ideas rested on this definition. According to him god must be formless and non-material entity. He believes that, “only words like ‘omniscient’, ‘omnipotent’, ‘truth’, ‘justice’ and ‘mercy’ signified God (Sharma 2011: 24). By defining God in this way he discards the idea of multiple gods which prevailed in the society of his time. As god did not have physical existence, Dayananda discarded idol-worshipping. He stated that Jains invented the custom of idolatry by making huge statues of their founder and religious teachers and started their worship. He was of the opinion that this seemingly harmless custom resulted in decline of belief in God. Dayananda states, “Now if wearing of the stones of a fruit and the besmearing of the body with ashes can lead to salvation, why then donkeys and pigs and other animals who wallow in dust, and Bhils and other low born men who wear strings of fruit-stones on their bodies [must be] already saved.” (Sharma 2011: 34) He makes it clear that the Vedas do not approve such things. He expects that faith should be based on the rock solid platform of reasoning and strictly following the teachings in the Vedas. While
describing Dayananda’s views Sharma states, “For instance, Dayananda rubbishes the idea that Vishnu and Mahadeva killed the demons like Tirpura. He wonders why the same gods were not equal to challenge of Muslim invaders. The story of destruction of Somnatha temple invokes a similar response from Dayananda. Instead of worshipping stones, he asserts, Indians should have worshipped heroes and brave men in order to save themselves from the Muslim invasions.” (Sharma 2011: 36)

**Social Structure:**

Dayananda rejects the segregation of people in the name of caste. He believes in condensation of thousands of castes into four fold division of society, known as Varna system or *Chatuvarnya*. *Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya* and *Shudra* are the names given to them. Duties of these varnas are fixed so it is also called as a division of labour. The only problem in this system was that it was hereditary, based on birth, not on choice. These four varnas were designated the tasks of priesthood and scholarly pursuits, defense against foreign invasion or internal security, trading and lastly service of the society respectively. Dayananda suggested a reform in it. These divisions were not to be based on one’s birth but on one’s worth, merit. Lala Lajpat Rai describes the position taken by the *Arya Samaj* regarding social structure as, “The *Arya Samaj* repudiates caste by birth; it condemns the numerous subdivisions into which Hindu society split up by reason of castes and sub-castes; it considers the artificial barriers which caste in India has created to segregate man from their fellow-men as a system of apartheid; in its opinion, it is unnatural to divide society into, as it were, water tight compartments or to exclude the possibility of people belonging to one caste having social relations with the other.” (Lajpat Rai 1967:113-114) This position would transform the very foundation of Hindu society. But the *Arya Samaj* adds to its position on caste and say. “Yet it cannot shut its eyes to the facts of life and has to recognize that by birth men are not equal; that they differ from each other in physical powers, in intellectual and mental faculties, in moral dispositions, and also in spiritual development; that they are born in different environments and that their position and status in life must, from very nature of things, be affected by their environment; that heredity also plays its part in making them what they are at birth or in life.” (Lajpat Rai 1967: 114) This statement shows that there is a considerable amount of hesitations in the views on caste leading one to conclude that Dayananda
did not intend to destabilise the social system based on caste. He merely tried to delink it from the custom of awarding the status on the basis of birth. Explaining Dayananda’s views on the matter Sharma says, “In his chapter on Raja Dharma in the ‘Satyarthaprakash’, Dayananda was clear that as far as governance was concerned, the two upper castes, Kshatriyas and Brahmins, alone could rule.” (Sharma 2011: 45) Sharma also points out that Dayananda was in favour of providing equal opportunity of education to the Sudras, but was not in favour of granting them permission to wear sacred thread, which was a privilege of upper varnas.

Dayananda states that if a Sudra shows signs of rising above his varna by his qualities, he would be placed in the Verna to which he should belong, according to his qualities. He may be sincere in his thinking but he seems to have overlooked a fact in his anxiety to unite Hindus that social structure is extremely complex thing. A simple solution like this would not bridge the gap between the castes and condense them in one Verna. The division of society is governed by endogamous system of marriage. Society adheres to this custom tenaciously. If a Shudra is promoted to a higher varna before his marriage, is there a possibility that people of the varna to which he is promoted would accept him as their own? Would they establish matrimonial relations with him? In case he is married before his promotion the issue would become more complicated. As promotion is awarded on merit of the individual, he might avail benefits of it but as his wife does not show the same merit she would not be eligible for rise in status; what would the Arya Samaj suggest in such a case? In conclusion it could be said that the Samaj seems to have taken a simplistic view of caste system and so had expressed views which are confused and even contradictory some times.

Lajpat Rai argues that society in the time of the Vedas was not divided on the basis of caste. He quotes Manu to prove his point. Yet, Manu has been quoted by several others to prove that he advocates caste on the basis of one’s birth in its rigid form. Rai also states that Regveda has been wrongly interpreted by those who believe that it advocated caste system. He even states that, “Brahmanas are the head of mankind (personified), Kshatriyas are made his arms, vaishys are what are his thighs, and shudras are made his feet”, “That this alone is the correct meaning of the mantra is evident also from the context.” (Lajpat Rai 1967:114-115) Though Rai tries to underline the harmlessness of this system, he does not tell about the basis on which the mankind was classified. In fact birth was the basis of the social division which fragmented Hindu society.
There is one more flaw in this defense. Hindu society has four varnas, people belonging to those were known as Savarnas meaning those who belong to some varna. Apart from those there was a large section of population of Hindus who were treated as ‘Avarnas’ or people did not belonging to varna. They were also known and treated as untouchables. There seems to be no mention of these people in the scheme of the Samaj though they were also Hindus. Apart from the untouchables there is a section who is neither Savarna nor Avarna. They did not live in the civil society but resided in forests. They are known as people belonging to tribes or Adivasis, meaning original residents of the land. Their number is equally large. The Arya Samaj does not seem to have any plans to incorporate them. This indicates that their concern for uniting Hindu community was restricted to a particular section of the society, they treat untouchables and tribal to be outside their pail.

**Impact of the Arya Samaj:**

Arya Samaj was a religious organization. It made a deep impact on the minds of people and attained popularity within a short period. Rai remarks on its progress that, “The Progress it made, the impressive hold it won in spite of heterodoxy and its iconoclasm among the Hindus, the influence which it possessed, the immense “go” which characterized it in all its doings, the national spirit which it aroused and developed among the Hindus, the ready self-sacrifice of its members, the independence of their tone and the rapidity with which the movement was diffused thought India, and last, but not least, the spirit of criticism which it generated, gained for it the suspicion of the ruling bureaucracy.” (Rai 1967:160) There was wide spread unrest in India during the first decade of twentieth century. Some prominent leaders of the Arya Samaj had taken a deputation to the Lieutenant Governor of Punjab to convince him that they were not involved in the political unrest or agrarian revolts in 1907, the Lieutenant – Government replied that his officers have informed him that ‘the Arya Samaj was the centre of unrest’. (Rai 1967: 108) Valentine Chirole visited India during 1907-10 as a special correspondent of ‘the London Times’. He has reported that “the whole drift of Dayanand’s teaching is far less to reform Hinduism than range it into active resistance to the alien influences which threatened, in his opinion, to denationalize it.” (Rai 1967:161) Rai, while speaking about the former remark states that, “We wonder if he realized that this verdict paid the greatest tribute
to the work and to the spirit of Arya Samaj greater even than what its illustrious founder could have ever wished.” (Rai 1967: 108) The statement utters the feeling of pride generated by the remark of the Lieutenant – Governor. Those who made restatements of Hinduism during nineteenth and twentieth century looked upon Dayananda as one who reinstated India’s Golden Age and had defined its origins. “Sri Aurobindo saw him as someone who had ‘the daring conception to build on what his penetrating glance perceived in it a whole education of youth, a whole manhood and a whole nationhood’. After quoting him Sharma enquires, ‘What Dayananda’s penetrating glance perceive!’ and answers that, ‘Aurobindo feels that Dayananda perceived that our true original seed was the Veda.” (Sharma 2011:48) Irrespective of praise by his contemporary people Dayananda’s vision of unified, single coloured and militant Hinduism provided inspiration to enthusiasts of nationalism rooted in Hinduism during his life and even after it.

**Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902):**

Swami Vivekananda was primarily a revivalist who ushered in a new era not only in Bengal but in India. His famous speech at Chicago in Parliament of Religions on 11th September 1893, as the representative of Hinduism, which opened with the remark ‘Brothers and sisters of America’ instantly made him popular. His contribution to revival of Hinduism and theorizing nationalism has been acknowledged by all the vanguards of freedom movement. Chakravarty Rajgopalachari has worded the general feeling about him in his glowing tribute when he said, “Swami Vivekananda saved Hinduism and saved India. But for him we would have lost our religion and would not have gained our freedom. We, therefore, owe everything to Swami Vivekananda.” (Bhattacharjee, 1993 :123) The tribute points out the areas in which he worked and hints at the magnitude of his contribution. Though religion and nationalism seem to be separate fields, Vivekananda perceived them as a single subject. That is why while speaking on the fundamental principles of national reconstruction in India he said that, “National unity in India must be the gathering up of the scattered spiritual forces. A nation in India must be the union of those whose hearts beat to the same spiritual tune.” (Grover 1994:280) Thus for him spirituality and nationalism are the two parts assimilated in one.
Vivekananda differentiates between the Nationalism in Europe and that in India. He points out that Europe in modern times lacks moral and spiritual integrity which is a condition imperative for existence of real nationalism. Material enjoyment has become central to Europeans in modern times so their nationalism has been described as political nationalism and says that atmosphere is being prepared to remove this root evil.

Vivekananda believes that there are two bases upon which we need to emphasize. Of the two the first one is aggressive spirituality which forms the philosophic basis of nationalism and the second one is the Indian masses who form its material basis. He presumes that for centuries Indian people have been brought upon spiritual traditions so Indian masses do not recognize any other principle on which the lives are organized. That is why he point out that all the attempts to awaken them with the help of political consciousness would bear no fruits. He says:

“I see that each nation, like each individual, has one theme in this life which is its centre, the principle note round which every other note comes to form harmony. In one nation political power is its vitality as in England, artistic life in another and so on. In India religious life forms the centre, the key note of the whole music of national life; and if any nation attempts to throw off its national vitality, the direction which has become its own through the transmission of centuries- that nation dies, if it succeeds in the attempt. And therefore, if you succeed in the attempt to throw off religion and take up either politics or society or any other thing as your centre, as the vitality of your national life, the result will be that you will extinct.” (Grover, 1994: 284)

This is how his idea of nation building involved organizing the thoughts and activities of the country on a solid basis which should be in full conformity with the spiritual culture of India.

**Vivekananda on Religion:**

According to Vivekananda Hinduism was a Sanatan Dharma, where as religions like Islam and Christianity were merely sects. He believed Vedantic ideal of Monism or absolute oneness which is, in fact, the very soul. Like Dayananda he did not discard idol worship and belief in incarnations. He did not desire that the society
should select prophets and reject them even by chance. This he did because he was fully convinced that the Vedas and the Upanishadas contained the truth.

Vivekananda states that India was inhabited by a number of races. Unification of these races was a major problem before religion and in its solution there were prospects of its thriving. Another serious problem posed by this situation was that of language. Every ethnic group spoke different language; every region had its own peculiar language which was alien to others. Difference of language had made communication impossible. In order to establish communication it was essential to find a solution to this problem. Vivekananda describes the solution invented by ancient Hindus as the races and tribes were brought under one title ‘Arya’. The division between Aryans and Dravidians was also overlooked as mere pertaining to language and the difference was not of race or blood. The issue of language was settled by declaring Sanskrit, which was also called as Deva-bhasha, language of Gods, the language in which the Vedas were written. Other languages were declared to be secondary to it. Vivekananda, speaking of this achievement says. “Just as Sanskrit has been the linguistic solution, so the Aryan racial solution. So the Brahmanhood is the solution of the varying degrees of progress and culture as well as that of all social and political problems.” (Sharma 2014:179)

Brahmin is a caste as well as a varna which is a part of ‘Varnashramchara’, four fold division of society in Hinduism. Brahmns occupied the top position in this hierarchy. Brahminhood was the avowed goal of the varnashramchara. This division leads us to another important facet of Hindu religion. The status of caste was hereditary. This also functioned as a sort of division of labour. The occupations were also hereditary. They were obligatory on the part of its performers. In the Gita, Srikrishna taught Arjuna the Indian Ideal of civil duties to be performed by one. This ideal was based on Swadharma, that is one’s own duty. Rajput heroes and their female counter parts were remembered by people for their relisation of Swadharma, Vivekananda defines these two terms as, “The right and correct means is that of the Vedas - the Jati-Dharma, that is the Dharma enjoined according to different castes - the Svadharma, that is one’s own Dharma, or set of duties prescribed for a man according to his capacity and position - which is the very basis of vedic religion and vedic society…..” (Vivekananda, 2005: 34)

Vivekananda is critical of some forms of worship prevalent among the Hindus. He argues that they have proved to be detrimental for Hindu society. He launches an
attacked on such customs. He complains, “Major factor for the loss of masculinity, loss of individuality, lack of effort and absence of will was Chaitanya and his Radha-Prem. In emulating Radhas’s love for Krishna whole nation had been made effeminate….. Four hundred years of Chaitanya and Radha-prem had resulted in a complete loss of the sense of manliness among Hindus.” (Sharma, 2014:149-150)

**Gender Issue:**

Vivekananda express his feeling of sorrow for unequal status of men and women of his time. He at the same time looks back to the golden period of the Vedas when they had scholars like Gargi and Maitreyi and glorifies them. He believed that women who were capable of reading the Vedas and could discuss abstruse ideas like Brahma could be seen as equal to men. He opines against the practice of child marriage. He denounces the custom of prescribing marriage of a girl at a very young age as well as he criticizes Hinduism for forcing girls to become mothers before attaining puberty. He even reproaches religious scriptures for granting sanction to such unacceptable practice which affect women adversely.

Lack of ‘manliness’ in Indian male is an observation made by Vivekananda in many of his writings and speeches. He compares Indian male with Greek and Roman male and finds them robust and full of manliness. He attributes the loss of manliness to the form of worship adopted by Indian male. He believes that it rendered them ‘effeminate’ and ‘moaning and crying’ as the factor responsible for loss of their manliness. This observation of Vivekananda leads us to understand his views on gender issue. He is of the opinion that ‘moaning and crying’ are the feminine characteristics. The society has entrusted women these qualities. Men, on the other hand, are expected to be tough and bold; manliness for Vivekananda is an admirable quality which automatically suggests that the opposite of it is ignominious. Thus though he seems to say good things about women, at the same time tend to contradict to them. This is true even about his views on child marriage. On one hand he condemns the tradition but he goes to defend it by saying that, “… Child marriage also has a positive side; it breeds chastity and “Chastity is the life of a nation.” (Sharma 2014:155) This comment hints at the fact that the sort of nationalism he advocates was essentially patriarchal as prescribed by the Hindu scriptures and by ‘Manusmriti’ in particular.
Caste System:

Pointing out the difference between European social structure and that of Hindus, Vivekananda observe that European society treats individual as the unit, where as Hindus have chosen community as the unit on which to structure their society. This community is varna which further disintegrated in the castes. Castes formed basis of developing a society as a community. Vivekananda has repeatedly criticized the degeneration of society into caste and its impact on the nation. He condemns caste as, “Modern caste distinction is barrier to Indian progress, It narrows, restricts, separates. It will crumble before the advance of idea.”(Vivekananda 2005:99) His expression gives us a feeling that he is against caste system, but the word modern used by him is the key word in his statement. In another place he defines cast and says, “In Sanskrit, Jati i.e., species-now this is the first idea of creation, diversity is creation. Now if this diversity stops, creation will be destroyed. So long as any species is vigorous and active it must throw varieties. When it ceases or is stopped from breeding varieties, it dies. Now the original idea of Jati was this freedom of the individual to express his nature, his Prakriti, his Jati, his caste, and so it remained for thousands of years. Not in the latest book is inter-marriage forbidden. Then what was the cause of India’s downfall? - the giving up of this idea of caste.” (Sharma 2014:176)

Thus for him caste is a creation and creating variety is its objective. If we obstruct this process, he warns, result is death. This is not the only occasion he assert his views in favour of caste, in another place he says, “The present caste is not real Jati, but a hindrance to its progress. It really has prevented the free action of Jati, i.e., caste or variation. Any crystallized custom or privilege or hereditary class in any shape really prevents caste (Jati) from having its full sway, and whenever any nation ceases to produce this immense variety, it must die. Therefore what I have to tell you, my countrymen, is this- that India fell because you prevented and abolished caste. Every frozen aristocracy or privileged class is a blow to caste and not-caste. Let Jati have its sway; break down every barrier in the way of caste and we shall rise.” (Sharma 2014:177)

For Vivekananda caste is so essential that he wants to remove all obstructions in the way of its progress. He not only supports caste but also argues in favour of hereditary occupations associated with caste system. He says, “Caste is a natural
order. I can perform one duty in social life and you another; you can govern a country and I can mend a pair of shoes, but that is not reason why you are greater than I, for can you mend my shoes? Can I govern the country? I am clever in mending shoes, you are clever in reading Vedas, but that is no reason why you should trample on my head; why if one commits murder should be praised, and if another steals an apple why should he hanged! This will have to go.” (Sharma 2014:182)

Still he asserts that “Caste is good. That is the only natural way of solving life. Men must form themselves into groups, and you cannot get rid of that. Wherever you go there will be caste. But that does not mean that there should be these privileges. They should be knocked on the head”. (Sharma 2014:182-183) This only indicates that for him caste was indispensible; following ancestral callings was also a part of caste which was obligatory. He has objection only to the privileges being misused by the upper castes. Apart from that he insists that caste distinctions are a necessary element and needs to be observed meticulously. Vivekananda prescribes marriages within the sub castes of a specific caste, but warns that wholesale breakdown of caste is not justifiable. He elaborates on the hazards faced by the community on account of restriction to marry within the group, still proscribes marriages outside group as that will destabilize caste.

He states that the reformers who have attempted to eradicate caste system are inspired by the ideals of Western society which is definitely a wrong step. He says, “All the reformers in India made a serious mistake of making religion accountable for all the horrors of priest-craft and degeneration and went forthwith to pull down the indestructible structure and what is the result? Failure!” (Grover 1994:299)

Vivekananda on the one hand express sympathy for the people belonging to lowered castes and their pathetic condition and on the other hand holds themselves responsible for their condition and reprimands them for doing so. He says, “To the non-Brahmana castes I say, be not in a hurry do not seize every opportunity of fighting the Brahmana, because as I have shown, you are suffering from your own fault. Who told you to neglect spirituality and Sanskrit learning! What have you been doing all this time? Why have you been indifferent? (Vivekananda 2005:101-102) For the downfall of the lowered castes he blames themselves. While doing so he completely forgets the instances like Shambuka in Ramayana who was punished with death penalty for transgressing the laws of his caste and trying to learn the scriptures. He also seems to over look the command issued by Manu that even if the scriptures
fall on the ears of an untouchable he should be punished by pouring molten lead into his ears. This is how Vivekananda’s view about lowered is erroneous.

Vivekananda admires the lowered castes for the hard work they do and warns the upper castes that if the lowered castes stop working the supply of food they consume and clothes they wear would also stop, which will cause them great inconvenience. Yet in the next instance his views seem changed. He believes that intelligence of a man has to be associated to the caste. In an attempt of showing sympathy to ‘weaker’ he states assuming that Brahmin is born with more intelligence so does not need more teaching but with the lowered castes it is a different case. He says, “If son of a Brahamana needs one teacher, that of Chandala needs ten. For, greater help must be given to him whom nature has not endowed with an acute intellect from birth.” (Vivekananda 2005:107) Though he speaks this with a view to doing justice to them the influence of age-old beliefs prevalent in Hindu society on his thinking clearly comes out.

In fact he is firm on the view that, “caste should not go; but should only be readjusted accordingly. Within the old structure is to be found life enough for the rebuilding of two hundred thousand new ones. It is sheer nonsense to desire the abolition of caste. The new method is evolution of the old.” (Vivekananda 2005:51)

**Love for Past:**

This shows a new aspect of Vivekananda thinking, as he glorifies caste system and at the same time he himself finds many faults with it. He believes that period of the Vedas was the Golden period in history of Hindu religion so he wants to undo the developments that have taken place between Vedic period and the present and apply Vedic principles to present day life. He is of the opinion that this would solve all the problems faced by the nation.

**Sri Aurobindo Ghose:**

Aurobindo (1872-1950) emerges from a different background compared to Dayananda, Vivekananda and others. He was a son of Dr. Krishna Dhan Ghose from Bengal who was a perfectly anglicized gentleman. His father was so particular about his upbringing that he was sent to England for studies at the age of seven. This was with an intention to keep the boy away from any Indian Influences. Aurobindo read
Bhagwat Gita in translation because he neither knew Sanskrit nor his mother tongue, Bengali, but knew European languages like English, French, German and Greek. As a student in England he fared well. While in Kings College, Cambridge he did exceptionally well in the classics. As a young man he developed interest in Joan of Arc, American Revolution, Mazzani and such subjects. This naturally led him to join a group of like-minted youth, so he joined ‘Indian Majlis’, an organization in Cambridge, as a member and soon climbed to the secretary ship of the organization. During this period he delivered revolutionary speeches. Before returning to India he also became a member of a secret society formed by youth named ‘Lotus and Dagger’. He was moving in the direction which his father wanted to prevent right from his childhood. Father believed that Europe was far superior in all respects than the ‘smoky retrograde mysticism in which his country was running to waste.’ (Grover 1993:311) All the fortifications raised around him by his father see proved of no avail.

On returning to India in 1893, he did different jobs in Baroda state and climbed to the post of Vice-Principal of Baroda College. There Aurobindo learnt Indian languages like Sanskrit, Bengali and Hindi. His political opinions were formed during this phase of his life. There he came in contact with Shri. Vishnu Bhaskar Lele, who had knowledge of yoga and introduced him to it. He also came in contact with K.G. Deshpande who edited newspaper named ‘Indu Prakash’. At his insistence he wrote a series of articles in the newspaper. He had developed his political ideas of nationalism mixed with virulent religiosity after he left Baroda in 1905.(Sharma 2011:51) He express the idea as, “I spoke once before with this force in me that nationalism is not politics but a religion, a creed, a faith. I say it again today, but I put it in another way. I say that it is the Sanatan Dharma which for us is nationalism. This Hindu nation was born with the sanatan Dharma, with it moves and with it grows…… The Sanatan Dharma, that is nationalism.” (Sharma 2011: 52)

On arrival to Bengal Aurobindo became the Principal of National College. His belief in revolutionary nationalism became more firm. He started his attempts of saving culture by transforming it into a political movement. He organized like-minded youth in Bengal. He was connected with the bomb factory established at Maniktala in 1908. The bomb explosion intended to assassinate the District Magistrate of Muzzafarpur, which killed two innocent British ladies, was also orchestrated by him. After this attempt the Government was infuriated. It arrested Khodiram Bose and many others involved in the incident. Aurobindo’s brother
Barindra Ghose, who was a well known terrorist associated with the bomb factory, was also one of the suspect. This relation must have given a clue to the police to involve Aurobindo in this case. Some also say that Narendranath Gossain implicated Aurobindo. He was arrested in May 1908 and kept in Alipore jail as an under trial prisoner. Aurobindo spent his time in the jail reading the Gita and the Upanishadas. This imprisonment changed the course of his life as he had paranormal experiences in the jail. In one place he says that Vivekananda used to visit him in the jail during his meditation, guided him about intuitive plane and instructed him for around a month about it. In another place in the same book he is reported to have said that the spirit of Vivekananda gave him direction about the super mind. (Grover 1993:318)

After his release from jail in May 1909 he started two weekly newspapers, ‘Karmayogin’ in English and ‘Dharma’ in Bengali. He did this with an intention of reorganizing the Nationalist Party which had slackened during his absence. He makes his intentions clear in his Uttarpasa speech as, “when I went to jail the whole country was alive with the cry of Bandemataram, alive with the hope of a nation, the hope of millions of men who had newly risen out of degradation. When I came out of jail, I listened for that cry, but there was instead a silence. A hush had fallen on the country and men seemed bewildered”. (Grover 1993:319) Ultimately in April 1910 due to an order from ‘above’ and listening to his ‘inner voice’ he went to Pondicherry which was a French colony. He went there with a fake passport and false name. There he began a life of renunciation.

**Aurobindo’s Nationalism:**

While tracing the emergence of nationalism Aurobindo states that it neither did emanate from the Congress sessions, different associations and the moderate leaders nor from scholars and English educated generation. He claims that it existed even before all that. He uses a mythical source to cause the birth of nationalism. He says, “It was born like Krishna in the prison house, in the hearts of men to whom India under the good and beneficent government of absolution seemed an intolerable dungeon, to whom the blessings of an alien despotic rule were hardly more acceptable then plagues of Egypt….“ (Grover 1993:77) He further states that it did not come into existence as a result of persecution and adds that persecution cannot put an end to it. His description of nationalism given above is definitely different from any scholar on
that subject. There is an element of spirituality involved in it and it did not emerge as a consequence of some socio-political happening but the description suggests that as if God himself kindled the feeling of nationalism in the minds of the masses. In the same article he states, “Nationalism is an ‘avatar’ and cannot be slain, Nationalism is a divinely appointed ‘shakti’ of the eternal and must do its God given work before it returns to the bosom of the universal energy from which it came.” (Grover, 1993:79) This part of his writing does not leave a doubt regarding Aurobindo’s concept of nationalism that it has less element of politics or sociology. It is dominated by spirituality and mysticism.

Aurobindo states that nationalist thinkers have urged a need to realize ones separateness from other nations but we must realize the goal of nationalism, for it is necessary for us to live as a nation before we learn to live as humanity. Such attitude contains the recipe to make one xenophobic and lead to divide humanity. But he further clarifies that we do not do this in order to shut ourselves from the humanity but in order to gain individual strength to develop the capacity to live as a nation for humanity. This way he had set a very complex goal before his idea of nationalism.

God’s presence is strongly felt in Aurobindo’s idea of nationalism. He draws attention to the nature of fight. On the one hand there is the most powerful government of the world equipped with every facility. On the other hand there were poor, ignorant, fragmented Indian masses. The fight was extremely unequal. He agrees to the fact. Still he had a hope because he had a staunch belief that it was God’s work and He was with him. He reiterates that God is in the movement, that he is its leader and guides it. (Grover 1993:173)

Celebration of festivals in order to disseminate ideas of nationalism was vehemently upheld by Aurobindo. While arguing in favour of it he said that human being is by nature ceremony loving, he seeks help of psychology in order to make his point. He adds that no man can work silently for a long time and said that, “Ceremonies help the imagination and encourage to see in the concrete that which cannot be immediately realized.” (Grover 1993:192) With this he appreciates the celebration of Ganapati and Shivaji festivals started by Tilak and remarks that it had helped to reawaken and solidify the national feeling in Bombay state. He made this argument in order to propose the celebration of the day on which Bengal was partitioned i.e. 16th October and 7th August as commemoration of Boycott.
Unification of Hinduism was the theme which Aurobindo stressed like most of the religious reformers of his time. Most of them suggested abolition of different sects and rituals that tend to divide Hindus. He also advocated the need to free Hinduism of all the divisive sects and rituals. He asserted that, “All Hindus must come to a common agreement about the need to cherish Hinduism as a sacred and inalienable possession.” (Sharma 2011:65)

**Hindu Social Structure:**

All the religious reformers lay stress on divisions in Hindu social structure. Aurobindo was also an ardent supporter of the system, rather he advocated in favour of it more vehemently than the rest of reformers. He links it with the concept of nation and asserts that, “There is no national life perfect or sound without the ‘Caturvarna.’” (Grover 1993:152) He then elaborately explains that the nation’s life must have in it the element of Brahmin which for him represents qualities like spirituality, knowledge, learning, high and pure ethical aspiration and endeavour. He attributes manhood as well as moral and physical strength, love for battle, desire for glory, the sense of honour, chivalry self-devotion, generosity and grandeur of soul to kshatriya and expects the nation to contain in it these qualities also. Vaishya has qualities of industry, thrift, prosperity, philanthropy, benevolence and the like and the shudra has honesty, simplicity, labour, religiosity and a sense of service to the nation while doing the most trifling work in the most modest position. These are the qualities a nation needs to incorporate in itself. If we do not observe caturvarnya, the four fold division in the society, the system disappears and that causes ‘Varnasankara’, intermixture of varnas leading to a mess, causing the kshatriya and the vaishya to diminish. He tells that in ‘kaliyuga’ the shudras become powerful and attract into him the Brahmin who is less vivacious, who have lost the ‘Brahmatej’ or spiritual force. ‘Brahmatej’ is the basis of all the things, so for the return of Satyayuga, Brahmatej is essential. He attaches it to the nation and says that the nation lives and becomes great with its help.

Some may find this idea impalpable. Aurobindo anticipates it and clarifies that it is a great truth. To the skeptics he tells that they hold that only the European ideas are real and have become unfamiliar with the knowledge of their forefathers. He denounces British education stating that it resulted in denationalizing.
Advocating the need for a powerful Caturvarnya he says, “It is only when these four great departments of human activity are all in robust and flourishing condition that the nation is sound and great. When any of these disappear or suffer, it is bad for the body politic. And the two highest are the least easy to be spared. If they survive in full strength, they can provide themselves with the two others, but if either the Kshatriya or the Brahmin goes, if either the political force or the spiritual force of a nation is lost, that nation is doomed unless it can revive or replace the missing strength. And of the two the Brahmin is the most important. He can always create the Kshatriya; spiritual force can always rise up material force to defend it.” (Grover 1993: 153)

While emphasizing the importance of the four fold social division he compares it with the division of labour in European societies. He says, “Caste was originally an arrangement for the distribution of functions in society, just as much as class in Europe, but the principle on which the distribution is based in India was peculiar to this country.” (Grover 1993:17) He states that as the European society was predominantly material the division had a material basis and as Indian civilization is spiritual and moral the division in India had a spiritual object and a spiritual and moral basis. He describes the duty of Vaishya to amass wealth for the race and sudra’s to serve the society are so important that without them the other castes would not be able to perform their duties. They did the service and labour for the common good. He agrees that there was difference of status in the varnas which placed Brahmin at the top and sudra at the bottom but states that the inequality was accidental, external or vyavaharik. He cites the theory given by the Rgveda and states that in ‘Virat purusha’ each varna formed a part, so there is no inequality in a devout Brahmin and a devout sudra and adds that, “Caste, therefore, was not only an institution which ought to be immune from the cheap second- handed denunciations so long in fashion but a supreme necessity without which Hindu civilization could not have developed its distinctive character or worked out its unique mission.”(Grover 1993:18) Like the other religious reformers He also believes that the society has degenerated and with it the caste system but tells that it is the nature of institutions established by human beings to degenerate. He feels that this degeneration has given birth to caste arrogance, with a sense of superiority and exclusiveness which resulted into a tendency to dominate others rather than doing one’s spiritual duty. He expresses a
feeling of dissatisfaction over it and says that this change has weakened the nation and is responsible for our present condition.

Thus like, Swami Dayananda and Swami Vivekananda, he asserts that caste was not based on birth and if it does so today it is due to the impurities which have entered into the system. But at the same time eulogies the system and says that its existence is absolutely essential for Hinduism. He condemns the reformers who were striving to eradicate caste system by saying as influenced by European education who have not understood the core of their own religion.

**Bal Gangadhar Tilak (1856-1920):**

Tilak played a pioneering role in the struggle for India’s freedom. Along with a leader, who declared that ‘Swaraj is my birth right and I shall secure it’, he was an educationist, a mathematician, a journalist and also an indologist. His slogan inspired thousands to follow him. He attended the congress session for the first time when it was held in Bombay in 1889. Till then he did not involve himself in its work. He criticized the congress leadership in 1891 for its style of functioning. This could be called the starting point of the long drawn, fierce struggle he waged with the moderates which earned him the reputation of an ‘extremist’. Due to his strong commitment to the cause of ‘Swarajya’ he had serious differences with his one-time close friends like Gopal Ganesh Agarkar. Agarkar was of the opinion that Hindu society suffered from many drawbacks which needed to be eradicated before attaining ‘Swarajya’. Tilak, on the contrary, believed that doing so would cause a distraction in the efforts for ‘Swaraj’. He was involved in an equally terrible disagreement with social reformers of his time.

In 1891 Tilak acquired complete ownership of ‘Kesari’ a Marathi daily, as well as ‘Maratha’ English weekly. That gave him freedom to express his views without restrictions. The popularity began to spread far and wide. During ‘Age of consent Bill’ controversy in 1891 His views gave him status of the leader of Pune in social matters, leaving Ranade far behind. In 1893-94 many cities in Maharashtra witnessed Hindu-Muslim riots. Tilak stood behind Hindus firmly during these riots.

A Hindu-Muslim Riot broke out in Yeola in 1894. After the riots subsided, officers in Yeola started arresting people in groups. Tilak, taking cognizance of it, wrote articles in his papers criticizing the action by the officers. Phadke, commenting on this issue says, “Due to his articles Tilak did not remain a leader of Brahmins of
Pune only. He was being recognized as a leader of Hindu, Religious, credulous Marathi speaking non-Brahmin Marathi speaking workers, oil-pressers, minor traders from Pune, Mumbai and rich Gujrati merchants in Mumbai developed admiration for Tilak” (Phadke 2005:86) Thus his area of influence expanded from Brahmins to non-Brahmins and some middle castes also.

After riots in Mumbai in 1893 a meeting was organized in Pune at Baba Maharaj Pandit’s residence to organize a massive public meeting. Tilak and Namjoshi were discussing things in private. During the discussion the idea of celebrating Ganesh festival on a social basis came forward. So far worship of this deity and the festival used to be a family affair. Now Tilak transformed its nature and made it public celebration. As per the decision, Ganesh festival was celebrated on a social basis in an impressive manner. This idea was enthusiastically supported by non-brahmins along with Brahmins. This was possible because there was freedom to celebrate religious festivals during the Raj. Behind giving Ganesh festival a social basis there was an intention of bringing people belonging to different castes together in the name of religious activity. This provided a much needed opportunity for orienting those people. This festival proved to be a powerful instrument for awakening of people. The cultural performance or ‘Melas’ organized during the festival were an effective medium of spreading opinions.

By the end of April 1895 ‘Kesari’ started publishing articles expressing a need of restoration of ‘Samdhi’, the tomb, of Shivaji Maharaj, which was situated at the Raigad fort. Since 1896 celebration of Chhatrapati Shivaji’s birth anniversary became a regular tradition. It became a characteristic feature in the cultural life of Marathi speaking people. These two festivals provided the leaders an opportunity to remind the people the ancient religion of the Hindus and their glorious history. They organized speeches on mythological and historical incidents, sermons, songs and dialogues during the celebrations in order to kindle feeling of patriotism among the audiences. Describing the activities Phadake says, ‘As Tilak and his followers had a strong influence on the Ganesh festival celebrations everywhere during Tilak’s lifetime, through songs and dialogues in mela moderates in the congress were ridiculed, social reformers were mocked at, similarly women who were taking education, people who converted to Christianity as well as people belonging to untouchable castes were vilified.’ (Phadke 2005:87) The celebration of these festivals helped Tilak in two ways. Firstly it helped in expanding his sphere of influence further in the middle and
lowered castes. As these festivals were started on the back drop of communal riots, it helped them to organize as Hindus. Phule’s Satyashodhak movement had given the masses a new identity belonging to middle and lowered castes. These festivals were used to make them forget all that and relapse to the old caste identities. Tilak could organize the masses as Hindu to show solidarity in case of communal riots, against conversion of Hindus to Christianity and create a picture of forging a unity in the society which was fragmented in the name of caste, class, language and culture. This picture makes Dr. Ambedkar describe Hindu society as, “Hindu society as such does not exist. It is only a collection of castes. Each caste is conscious of its existence. Its survival is the be all and end all of its existence. Castes do not even form a federation. A caste has no feeling that it is affiliated to other castes except when there is a Hindu-Muslim riot. On all other occasions each caste endeavors to segregate itself and distinguish itself from other castes.” (Dr.Ambedkar 2013:33)

Dr. Ambedkar debunks the myth of unity after forty years of its forging. This shows the failure in creating a unified Hindu society. The failure can be attributed to Tilak’s views on social reformation. While locating Tilak regarding the social reforms Phadke says “Tilak’s view point on social issues was not orthodox like Sanatani Brahmins, it was basically and mainly conservative.” (Phadke1986:53) While stating so he had people like Bhaushastri Lele in his mind and adds that he was not of the opinion that no change should be allowed in the position of the society. He quotes Tilak that, “Whoever wants to bring in whatever change in the social condition should do it systematically and gradually”. (Phadke1986:53) Tilak was known as an extremist in the political field who felt an urgent need for attaining Swarajya, he had no patience to wait for it. His views on social reforms were diametrically opposed to his views on politics. He had stated it time and again that Swarajya is the first thing on his agenda and he would not deviate from it. But he suggested to those who feel the need for social change that they should not make haste. Phadke states that Tilak had no objection in elevating people born in lowered castes, taking into account his merit and actions. But Tilak had taken it for granted that while doing so the authority to decide whether such rights should be granted to one or not was to be invested with Brahmins” (Phadke1986:52) This view renders the concept of change ineffectual as Brahmins were at the helm of affair in Hindu society and they have always strived to maintain their position. If they are entrusted with the authority to decide about social change they would do whatever they had been doing so far, to protect interests of their
own caste against that of others. It was in their interest to keep people poor, helpless and hopeless, segregate them in the name of caste.

Karmveer Vitthal Ramji Shinde had organized the All India Untouchability Eradication conference in Mumbai, on 23rd and 24th March 1918, under the Chairmanship of Maharaja Sayajirao Gaikwad of Baroda. Gandhi was also invited to participate in it. Though he did not attend it, he expressed his support by sending a telegram. Tilak was not going to attend the conference in the beginning but when Shinde insisted very much he changed his decision on the condition that he would attend it in his personal capacity and not as the editor of ‘Kesari’. As promised, he attended the conference and in his speech he declared that, “I will not call the God a God if he approves the untouchability’. (Phadke1986:246) The audience welcomed it with a thunderous applause. Besides Tilak, radicals like Bipinchandra Pal, Khaparde, Jamnadas Mehta, Kelkar attended the conference. The organizers prepared a proclamation that they will abide by the resolutions passed at the end of the conference. The aforesaid radicals signed the proclamation, but when Shinde asked Tilak to sign it, he refused it saying that, “I do not think that I can undertake this new task owing to preoccupations. (Phadke1986:247)

In fact the organizers did not expect him to join them forsaking his own works. It was simply to show solidarity with their cause and implement the resolutions in his personal life. He said that a single individual cannot perform all the tasks. Nobody would disagree with it. While participating in his political activities he spared time for making a ‘Panchang’, as he found time for it, in spite of his busy scheduled, he must be feeling that it is an important activity and eradication of untouchability not so important, as he did not find time for it.

Issues of ‘Kesari’ show that all the meetings and minor programs attended by Tilak during his stay in Bombay from 24th to 27th March 1918 featured in its news in detail, but the reporting of the conference he attended ended in single line that, ‘Tilak had gone to Untouchability Eradication Conference’. (Phadke1986:247) According to Phadke, Tilak’s refusal to sign the proclamation as well as miserly reporting of news in Kesari only indicate that he was not prepared to hurt thousands of his followers and lose their support by taking a clear cut position on the injustice inflicted upon the untouchables.

Though this is a possibility, it is not the sole reason Tilak refused to support any change in social structure. Before Tilak, Vishnushastri Chiplunkar emerged as the
vanguard of anti reformist movement. Along with Vishwanath Narayan Mandlik, a well known advocate and member of legislative council, Tilak joined Chiplunkar. This group called themselves ‘Nationalists’ and criticized every reform as ‘loss of nationality or ‘Rashtriyata’. They stated that caste has been the basis of Hindu society and losing caste is as bad as losing nationality. There were their contemporaries, like Lokhitwadi and Phule, who made eradication of caste inequalities a mission of life. They were condemned by Chiplunkar and Tilak as ‘traitors to the nation – Rashtra’. They also believed that Brahmans are the sole custodians of knowledge. Both Chiplunkar and Mandlik died early. After their death Tilak took responsibility of defending the dispossessed elites as well as their privileges. B.M. Malabari, a social reformer wrote the famous ‘Notes on Infant Marriage and Enforced Widowhood’ (1884). This was an attempt to bring the horrors of child marriage to the notice of the public. Malabari was also a member of legislative council. He suggested an amendment to the Indian Penal code to raise the age of marriage for girls from ten to twelve. This is known as ‘Age of Consent Bill’ Malabari campaigned in favour of this bill all over the country as well as in England. Actually this bill was not going to bring a sea change in womens’ position in the society. As Sudhir Chandra rightly comments, “The change was marginal and the act was unlikely to be an effective instrument. Yet in a society that considered marriage sacrosanct, practiced child marriage, mocked the idea of marital rape, and had organized massive agitation against the measure, it was a pioneering intervention.” (Mahrotra2008:98)

Tilak declared an enthusiastic support in case of Malabari’s book but opposed the bill and appealed the Hindus ‘to make a united effort to put an end to such revolt’ (Rao2010:17) There is a dichotomy in Tilaks views on the issue. Rao believes that by opposing the bill he hoped to establish himself as a leader of the orthodoxy. Speaking on behalf of the opponents of the bill, while defending the age old custom, Tilak said, “If restrain on age of sexual intercourse for women is raised to twelve years Garbhadhan ceremony of woman attaining puberty before that age would prove to be unlawful and it is the command of the Shastras to perform Garbhandhan of a woman within a stipulated period of attaining puberty. So this law will contradict the religious ritual.” (Phadke2005:41)

As supporter of tradition worshiping people, Tilak, along with S.G. Jinsiwale, retired judge of Bengal, Sir Rameshchandra Dutt and Pandit Shashdhar Tarakchudamani reiterated that “Sexual intercourse with a woman under the age of
twelve years, even if she is a wife, would be an offence. On the contrary Hindu scriptures laid down a connection that even if wife attains puberty before the age of twelve she should accord consent to sexual intercourse” (Phadke2005:41).

Along with these arguments Tilak tried to defend the tradition by saying that the non-Hindu government should not interfere in the customs of its subject, by doing it is contradicting the Queens declaration of 1858.

**Women’s Education:**

Justice Mahadeo Govind Ranade, along with his supporters, laid foundation of Huzur Paga High School for Girls in August 1884. On the occasion of its inauguration in Pune, Ranade expressed hope that such schools will be established in every small town. Tilak instantly retorted that ‘education would make woman immoral’. He opposed Ranade’s efforts to establish girls’ high schools calling it ‘a threatening immediate problem’ and appealed his fellow nationalists to handle this issue at once. A superstitious belief had spread at that time regarding women’s education that it causes the woman widowhood. Nationalists in general did not oppose women’s education on this ground. They opposed it out of fear of women ruining their traditional virtues and making them immoral and insubordinate. The nationalists led by Tilak used two arguments for their disapproval of women’s education. The first was that the women are weak and they should not be taxed with subjects that are beyond their powers to understand. The second one was that the education would make women immoral. These objections to women’s education are based on issues regarding women’s capacity. Tilak and nationalists in general had formed an opinion that woman are inferior in intellect compared to men, so teaching these subjects to them would be doing injustice by putting additional burden on their minds. They expressed their hostility to women’s education by saying that, ‘teaching English to girls is to interfere with the natural aspect of a woman’s life’ (Rao2008:17)

Rakhmabai’s episode brings out Tilaks attitude towards women and their status in Hindu family. Rakhmabai was married to a person as a child. Her mother was widowed at the age of seventeen. Rakhmabai’s father had left a sizable property behind him. After six years of her husband’s death her mother married to Sakharam Arjun. His poor cousin Dadaji Bhikaji was Rakhmabai’s husband. He used to live with Sakharam Arjun, but due to his dislike for disciplined life there, he left him and
started living with his maternal uncle Narayan Dhurmaji, who had lapsed into a life of moral degeneration. This had an influence on Dadaji also. In fact, he was married to Rakhamabai on the condition that he should have good education and his cousin should provide him facilities to do so. Dadaji did not have interest in education. On the contrary Rakhamabai showed interest in it and acquired good education. After that she realized that there was no point in living with her husband who suffered from moral deterioration. Dadaji decided to establish the conjugal rights. When Rakhamabai refused, he sent her a notice through solicitors to which she did not respond. Finally Dadaji went to court for restitution of conjugal rights. Faced with such a turbulent situation, Rakhamabai wrote an article in the ‘Time of India’ under the name ‘A Hindu Lady’ which dealt with women’s education and child marriage. Age of consent Bill controversy was fresh then. V.N. Mandlik, a lawyer and supporter of Tilak, had taken a firm stand against raising the marriageable age of girls. She also criticized him for his opposition to the bill. At this point Tilak entered into the controversy and mocked her scornfully saying “Hindu Lady coming to the front in a manly way to take up cudgels on behalf of the oppressed and downtrodden half of the Hindu community.” (Rao2010:19) He expressed doubt about the genuineness of the letter and commented that ‘some irresponsible rash and ill informed enthusiast’ must have got it written with the help of a school girl with an intention of gaining sympathy. Tilak very firmly declares in his article in ‘Maratha’ of 5th July 1885 entitled ‘A Hindu Lady on Early Marriage’ that, “At any rate we are not inclined to believe the letter to be genuine production of a Hindu lady until better evidence is brought forward. And till then we do not hesitate to consider them as worthless and undeserving of the sympathy as they have evoked.’ (Rao2010:10)

**Tilak on Khoti and Moneylenders:**

In Maharashtra money lending was mostly carried on by the Chitpavan and the Deshartha Brahmins. Phule repeatedly pointed out that Kulkarni along with the Mamlatdar were an important source of suffering of the peasants. Agricultural production in the Deccan and Konkan was dominated by a class of big landlords called Inamdars who held large tracts of land as Inams. This class opposed the ‘Inam commission’ of 1847, constituted for surveying the alienated land and collection of
revenue. The land revenue code of 1879 offered incentives to the Inamdars to allow the survey. On this issue Tilak said, “…… at one stroke all our ancient rights are taken away and we are declared to be mere occupants of land.”(Rao2010:61) Inamdars dominated the Deccan and the Khots were the revenue collectors and administrative controllers in the Kokan area. The majority of khots were chitpavans, exercising monopoly over the money lending and grain dealing business of the village.

1) They provided credit to the peasants to encourage them to settle in their villages, with a condition that the peasant would provide them free labour for agricultural works. Chitparan Sowcars also dominated the money lending business in rural areas of Deccan. They were far more interested in acquiring land than the Gujrathi and Marwari money lenders.

Khoti Act in 1880 conferred upon khots full rights over the village and did not improve the condition of tenants. They had to pay one-half to three quarter of the gross product. The Khots consolidated their own private estates on which the peasants were required to labour for no payment. After the death of strongest defender of Khots, V.N. Mandalik, Tilak expressed the necessity on the part of khots to ‘watch their interest with diligence’. (Rao2010:62) ‘The Mahratta’ started by Tilak consistently defended the interest of moneylenders, particularly Brahmin moneylenders. Tilak would not have gone to such an extent had the rebels attacked only the Gujarati and Marwari money lender and spared the Chitparan sowcars. DARA (The Deccan Agriculturists Releif Act) was severely criticized by Tilak for ‘betraying sowcar and for being partial to the peasantry’. He criticized the British ‘for destroying the harmony in the villages by interfering on behalf of the peasants’. He condemned Ranade for ruining sowcars by attempting to provide alternative credit through the agricultural banks.

2) The money lender is an important member of the village community who has rendered yeoman’s service to the society and above all to the kunbis in times of distress……. He is the god of the agriculturists who might now and then feel exasperated with him but who nevertheless is his best friend and if the kunbi is told to make a choice between the khushalchand sowcar and the Mabaji sowcar, we need not say he will prefer the former”. Khusalchand
sowcar here refers to any money lender and Mabaji sirkar to representative of
government. (“Agricultural loans bill” the Maharatta 3rd December 1882:1)

He had been a staunch defender of class hierarchy and caste hierarchy
also. Being an orthodox puritan, he always justified the established
exploitative system. Tilak considered the provisions of DARA struck at the
root of the existence of the Brahmin money lenders.’(Rao2010:74)

“Tilak’s” argument that the moneylenders were rendering a valuable
service by advancing loans to the peasants in times of distress is disputed by
all historians who have written on the condition of the peasantry in nineteenth-
century Deccan and Konkan.” (Rao2010:15) Due to provision of DARA he
called upon money lender to “defend their interests by denying the credit to
the Kunbis”. He was not only opposing DARA & Agricultural bank which
was meant to empower the rural cultivators but he was also opposing the
impending challenge to the feudal authority.

3) “The advent of the British government has topsy-turveyed the entire fabric of
the mutual relations between the Inamdars, who should be the king, the
Hakdars who are his dependents, the village officers who should be his
servants and the tenants who occupy the place of his subjects” (‘Inamdars
Grievances’, editorial, Maharatta, 8th November 1903: 521)

Tilak’s defense of moneylenders was definite and very categorical. He
justified the right of sowcars to confiscate the movable and immovable
property of the peasant and arrest him by using the authority of the court.

‘Kesari’ always criticized the government officials for opposing khots on
behalf of peasants. Measure of government ensuring tenant’s right to complain
about the Khot’s, demand for excess share was defied by Tilak. He said this
measure would “break down the khoti system”, even if he was rising as
national leader, his agenda of caste class interest was one of the prime issues
pertinently focused.

Tilak’s defense of the interests of money lenders was not only economic
but also social it was also a defense of caste hierarchy protecting supremacy of
Brahmins.
Jotirao Phule:

Nineteenth century Indian society witnessed many efforts in favour of revival of religion. Conservation of the age old social system was one of the prominent motives behind these efforts. As there were people who strived to preserve the system, there were some who launched a fierce critique of the system and pointed out flaws in it. Jotirao Govindrao Phule (1827-1890) was the most influential among them. Phule had noticed the strategic importance of education in liberation of the suppressed section of the society. Commenting on his views on significance of education Mani quotes Chakravarti, “He saw Brahminism as the ideological and institutional system of monopolising knowledge and power by a particular class which uses these to exclude, divide and dominate other groups in society. He argued that even before trying to overturn the material power of the upper castes over the lower castes, and over their own women, it was necessary to step out of the ideologies of Brahmanism for which access to knowledge was an essential prerequisite, that is one had to understand a system before one could dismantle it.” (Mani2008 :251- 252)

This is perhaps the reason why some social scientists believe that Phule saw the close relation between knowledge and power over a century and half before Foucault and Edward Said perceived it. (Mani2008: 251)

Phule was born in Mali family engaged in farm activities producing fruits and vegetables. His grandfather Shetiba was engaged in service to supply flowers to the Peshwa, Bajirao II in Pune. As the Peshwa was satisfied with his work he conferred on him an award of a piece of land which measured about thirty five acres and was free of tax, located just outside Pune. His father Govindrao had opened a shop to sell the farm products in Pune. Phule emerged on this background. He went to a Marathi school in the beginning. Phule’s biographers record that a Brahman clerk in his father’s shop prompted him to withdraw Jotirao from the school and engage him in the field for tending crops. It was owing to the timely intervention of a Muslim clerk Gaffar Beg Munshi and a British offer Mr. Laggit that he could continue his education. Then he was sent to the Scottish Mission School run by Murray Mitchell. In 1847 he had read Thomas Pain, George Washington and Shivaji which left a deep impact on his mind. In 1848 he visited the American mission school for low caste girls in Ahmednagar and started a school for girls in Pune the same year. He was only 21 years old then. This was a step in the direction of reformation of the Hindu society.
Phule’s difficulties also began with it. Fearing a violent reaction from the high caste Hindus his father turned him and his wife out in 1849. Harbouring no feeling of discouragement he continued his task with the same devotion. He set up more schools before 1852 and admitted girls belonging to all the castes. In 1855 he started a night school for working people. His work in the field of education was not the only mission but he opened a multi-pronged attack on the social system. In 1860 he joined widow remarriage campaign. In 1863 established a home for widows who had fallen prey to oppression and had conceived. In 1868 he opened the water-tank in his house for the untouchables. In 1873 he established Satyashodhak Samaj. During next some years he worked as a member of Pune Municipal council and gave testimony before the Hunter commission for education on 19th October 1882. He was honoured with the title of ‘Mahatma’, meaning the great soul, in a massive public meeting on 11th May 1888 and he died on 28th November 1890.

During his fairly long career he wrote many books. His first writing, published in 1869, was ‘A Ballad of the Raja Chatrapati Shivaji Bhosle’. Rosalind O’Hanlon calls it ‘one of the very earliest printed Marathi accounts of Shivaji’s life’. Next he wrote ‘Brahmanache kasab’, meaning ‘Priest Craft Exposed’ which was published in 1869. Christian journal ‘Satyadipika’ published his next writing, it was a ballad named Vidyakhatyatil Brahmin Pantoji’ meaning ‘Brahmin Teachers in the Education Department’ in 1869, which brought to the light the mischief played by those teachers in order to obstruct the education of students belonging to lowered castes. He wrote ‘Gulamgiri’, literally meaning Slavery in 1873 which was in the form of dialogue between Phule and one character named Dhondiram. Phule also handled the genre like play. He wrote the a named ‘Tritiya Ratna’ (The Third Eye) which, according to Marathi novelist and critic, Dr. Bhalchandra Nemade, was the first political and discussion play written in Marathi literature. Apart from these he composed poetry which is known as ‘Akhanda’.

Orientlists in the nineteenth century developed the theory that Indo-European languages belonged to the same decent and so its speakers shared Aryan lineage. Nationalist leaders, without exception upheld the view of being Aryan and, owing to that, superior to others. Dayananda Saraswati named his organization ‘Arya Samaj’, Aurobindo Ghose believed it and denied the idea of strife between Aryans and people belonging to the race that resided in the ‘Aryavarta’ giving birth to ‘Varnas’. Bal Gangadhar Tilak emphasized that the culture of Aryas was superior and asserted that
their invasion and absorption of non-Aryans did not signify tyranny or unfairness but rather stand for intense potency and vigor possessed by Aryan race. Another view they unanimously expressed was that of the idea of ‘Golden Age’. They argued that the Vedic age was the Golden period. They also believed that today’s period was of the degeneration of that noble race.

Compared to this view of Aryan past Phule’s interpretation is noticeably different, Phule gave an opposite explanation and stated that ‘Golden age’ of India was during the pre-Aryan period. King Bali’s regime was the most glorious period of its history. The most crucial ethical principles of the period were that of warrior, peaceful landlords and cultivators. These values were respected as the best principles even in the nineteenth century. Adherents to these principles were the Shudras and atishudras who imbibed and combined in their past the activities related to war as well as agriculture. O’Hanlon points out that, “It is also noteworthy that of all the writers who were to draw upon the work of Orientalists and Sanskritists such as Max Muller to develop the concept of an ancient Aryan past, Phule was very much the earliest. Ghose, Tilak and Ranade were all writing at the very end of the century. Dayananda’s ‘Satyrth Prakash’ came out two years after Phuley’s ‘Slavery’ in 1875. Phule was always very much to the forefront in recognizing the potential ideological importance of key symbols and concepts in nineteenth century society and attempting to give them a meaning in line with his broader interpretation of history” (O’Hanlon1985:149-50).

Phule enters into a debate of Ramaraj, the ideal of golden age of Hindus in India where people were governed with equity and goodness and protected from all enemies. He states that the idea was conditional. It meant that it was justice and welfare for those who believed in Brahmin – centered variety of Hinduism. Phule, as we have seen above, calls Baliraj as the ideal period. Even there was a difference in relation to the ideals. Phule’s society was antagonistic to the things described in Ramraj. Everything that was glorified and fostered in it was treated as enemy by Phuley as he believed that it destroyed the real golden age of India.

**Interpretation of Chatrapati Shivaji:**

Phule wrote ‘A Ballad of Raja Chatrapati Shivaji Bhosale’. He wrote it without seeking assistance from Brahmin clerk or books written by them. He
demolished the efforts by Brahmin historians to establish their supremacy by using the symbol of Shivaji. His ballad was an attempt to write a studious biography of Shivaji. As he had grasped the secret of social struggle in India he wrote the history of Chatrapati Shivaji in the context of liberation of shudratishudras. He deciphered the relation of on-going struggle for liberation from Brahmin domination from the period of Bali to Shivaji’s glorious achievements. The ballad opens with a description of the battle between Bali and Parshuram.

Parshuram was in fact a Ram with an axe who had vowed to free the earth of kshatriyas, the warriors, second among the four Varnas. So in kaliyuga, present age there were only three varnas according to the scriptures. Brahmin, Vaishya and Shudra are the remaining varnas. Phule sought to divide the society in two groups. He separated Brahmins from rest of the varnas and started calling them shudratishudras mean shudras and ati-shudras combined. He brought it to the notice of the rest of the population that Brahmins are their exploiters, tormenters and attempted to create a bipolar society in which rest of the population stood against Brahmins to end their domination.

Brahmins had refused to coronate Chatrapati Shivaji refering to the scriptural reference of Parshurama erasing the kshatriyas, arguing that there are no kshatriyas remaining. So they treated him as a shudra and so cannot be coroneted. Phule picks this fact and relates Chatrapati Shivaji to the masses. O’Hanlon remarks. “Phule did not stop with the figure of Shivaji in his attempt to recruit symbols from popular culture to the cause of the lower castes. His account of the ancient history of India formed a second dimension to the ballad, The Triumph of the ‘desi’ and ‘mavali’ armies of Shivaji recalled the more ancient martial past of the ‘shudra kshatriya’ under king Bali, and the meaning of Shivaji’s career became the inheritance of the mantle of king Bali in the leadership of the lower castes and the protection of land from foreign conquest.

Phule portrayed Shivaji as a man of action and a person who led ‘desi’ and ‘mavali’ armies rather than a sagacious administrator involved in planning with his ‘Ashtha Pradhan Mandal’, the committee of counselors.

Phule, unlike other conventional historians asserts that the aim of Shivaji’s efforts was not the protection of the sacred symbols of Hindus, the cow and Brahmins, as the title given to him ‘Go Brahman Pratipalak’. He also claims that he did not aim at establishing an independent Hindu empire. O’Hanlon says, “Instead he used
Shivaji’s career as a vehicle to convey an idea of the glorious martial past of the lower castes of western Maharashtra. This in turn recalled the more ancient martial past of the ‘shudra kshatriya’ under king Bali, so that the Muslim invasion appeared not primarily as a threat to the Hindu religion, but as a repetition of a previous invasion by an alien social and religious power.’(O’Hanlon1985:173-74) Thus he declared Brahmins as alien to the local tradition and tried to prevent the appropriation of Shivaji by orthodox in order to fit him in the list of worrier gods of Hindus.

Phule searched for Shivaji’s tomb and found it. As it lay unidentified for so many years he proposed its renovation in 1885 he also came out with an idea of celebrations on the occasion of Shivaji’s birth anniversary every year much before Tilak.

**The Concept of Nirmik:**

Phule’s objections to Hinduism included its God, who appears in many forms. Polytheism in it was unacceptable to Phule. Hindus also practiced idolatry, he expressed disapproval to it. He did not only reject the ideas in Hindism, but put forth a new concept of God. Phule discarded the theory of reincarnation of God. According to Deshpande this was the central thesis of Hindu theology, he further states that, “It is also a way of dissolving the apparent contradiction between polytheistic ritual practice and monotheistic metaphysical positions.” (Deshpande2002:7) When he laid the foundation of ‘Satyshodhak Samaj’ (Truthseeker’s society) on 24th September 1873, he had laid down some rules for the followers. The first of them was a vow that ‘I will not worship any god apart from the creator, Nirmik.’ Later on the society framed three principles for its working. The first of them asserted that the God is one and He is all pervading, passionless, formless and the reflection of truth. The second one was regarding the form of worship. In contrast to the existing forms of worship they lay down that every human being has a full right to worship the God. As we do not need a middleman to meet the mother or to gain favour of father in the same way we do not need a priest or a guru in order to worship the god. He puts forward the notion of the divine as a single and unique being as O’Hanlon says, “…. the creator of all things and the source of moral law for human society.”(O’Hanlon1985:128) Phule by doing so undermines the idea of *Karma* which was a very strong notion of justice. For him creator was just as well as determinate so the idea of justice was now related
to him. Thus by the idea of separating the God and external world Phule succeeded in subverting the traditional Hindu religion in different ways.

**Phule on Education:**

Education occupied the central position in Phule’s revolt against the social system this is why we see that his entry into public life was marked by establishing a school in 1848. Even when he wrote the play *Tritiya Ratna* (The Third eye) education was the important theme. Mani comments that, ‘In this play he argues that by denying knowledge to the shudras, the Brahmins might be held responsible for the condition of masses and for the backwardness of Hindu society itself.’ (Mani 2005:272) Traditionally educated Brahmins were at the forefront in taking English education. This enabled them to qualify for minor jobs in various government departments under the colonial administration. Phule argues that these employees used their power to prevent shudratishudras from making any progress. We have instance when cultivator express his anger against the Brahmin teachers and other elite employees who undermine the prospects of their education in villages, though British administration genuinely plan for their education. The cultivator says, “I have heard that our Candy Sahib has prepared many teachers and sent them from village to village to pass on their learning, but what is the use? All the Brahmins in these villages give secret advice to the *Kunbis* and *Malis* not to send their children to school.” (O’Hanlon1985:127)

Phule did not give up. He started schools for these sections of the society. Not only he opened schools, he strived to impart a different kind of education to his students. He believed that there was no scope for analysis and reasoning in brahmanical system of education. They used a typical method while narrating incidents and facts. This leaves shudratishudra students cut-off from the reality. He was of the opinion that education which raise question and which is a two way process develops thinking capacity among the students. His belief was not unfounded. A fourteen year girl, Mukta Salve, belonging to *Mang* caste who studied in his school, wrote an essay entitled ‘*Mang Maharachy Dukkha Vishayi*’, meaning ‘About the grief of the Mangs and Mahars’ which was written in 1855. Uma Chakravorty writes, “Muktabai presents the best example of Phule’s belief that a special vision, a tritiya ratna, would be the outcome of education and would have the means to strip the
falsity of Brahmanical ideology. It enabled her to proclaim, ‘Let that religion where only one person is privileged and the rest deprived, perish from the earth and let it never enter our minds to be proud of such a religion’…. Muktabai’s essay ends abruptly, ‘Oh, God! What agony is this! I will burst into tears if I write more about this injustice. Even so, the anguished Muktabai understood and rejected the existing social order and provided a scathing critique of Brahmanical power in nineteenth century Maharashtra. The newly acquired skills of literacy for this untouchable woman had made it possible to question, in print, the most ‘sacred’ person in the social hierarchy and reject unequivocally his ‘knowledge’ and his authority (Mani 2008:272).

During his period downward percolation theory of education was very popular but he showed the courage to declare that it would do no good as far as shudratishudras are concerned. He made it clear that it would prove beneficial to the Brahmins only. He also laid a great stress on the need for primary education. Due to poverty and ignorance shudratishudras failed to understand the importance of education. As they were under the impression of Brahmins they felt that educating their children is a sin. This situation warranted immediate intervention by the government. In his testimony before the Hunter commission, Phule requested the government to take lead to solve this problem.

Phule had received a contract to supply stones for construction of Khadakwasla dam. There he worked with the labourers and had an insight into their exploitation. Realising the need for their awakening Phule started night schools for the workers while he was working with Khadakwasla project as well as construction of Yerwada brigde. Such a keen attitude he had regarding education for the deprived masses.

**Gender Issue:**

Phule was the first person in the colonial era to take a serious cognizance of the problems faced by Hindu women. He made it amply clear in the reply to the honour bestowed by the Board of Education, Bombay Provincial Government upon him for his labour in the field of education. He said, “In their opinion women should forever be kept in obedience, should not be given any knowledge, should not know about religion, should not mix with men, and they bring out extracts from our shastras.
in which women are so deprecated in support of these idiotic beliefs, and ask whether anything written by the great and the learned sages be untrue.” (O’Hanlon1985:119)

In the same speech Phule admits that, too little is done to further the cause of education of native females and much need to be done. Perhaps because of his understanding of the issue Phule’s entry into social life was contemporaneous with starting of schools for girls. Gail Omvedt points out that he was so conscious about using the word in this regard that instead of using a word human which includes both the genders which had a currency in his time, he coined a new word to cater to that need and started using it, the word was ‘Stree-Purush’ which referred to both genders specifically. He had so much of precision in his thinking about women.

He laid blame on Brahmins for spoiling the society by framing exploitative rules, Phule categorise all women irrespective of caste or varna with shudratishudras. Though he criticized the Brahmin male he had a compassion for women even though they were Brahmin. There was a custom of widows not remarrying amongst the Brahmins. He took an active part in remarriage of windows. Widows were not supposed to have long hair, after widowhood they were expected to shave their heads clean. When Brahmins were not ready to rethink of the custom, Phule organized barbers who undertook such shavings. He organized a strike of barbers against such inhuman custom. Deshpande comments, “For him Brahman woman was as much shudratishudra as a dalit woman. In that senses it was a remarkably modern and gendered view which saw gender itself, not Varna, as the basis for the oppression that women faced.” (Deshpande2002:15)

A custom of child marriage prevailed amongst Hindus. Taking pity on the pathetic condition of child girls a Parsi reformer B.M.Malabari wrote two notes, on child-marriage and imposed widowhood and submitted them to the then Viceory, Lord Ripon, for consideration and action by the British government. It, in turn, sent it to the presidency governments and also to some eminent personalities of the time. Phule was also sent a copy. He responded it with a great deal of compassion for the child brides and child widows without considering that they were Brahmins. In his reply he portrayed the pathetic picture of the victims of this custom. He points it out that being healthy can be such a serious problem for a child bride that Phule says, “Thus she is so unbearably tyrannized that she is obliged to put an end to her life by committing suicide; and the crime is very often hushed up by bribing the village Patel, Coolkarni (the quarrel monger) and policeman” (Desphande 2002:193). It is
noteworthy that all the nationalist leaders reacted adversely to Malabari’s proposal – on this background Phule’s views on this issue are definitely unique and also show farsightedness.

Phule was a man of action. He did not provide a lip service to these issues. Enforced widowhood posed many serious problems. Sexual consequence of the issue resulted in a large number of young Brahmin widows becoming pregnant. The blame for this was shifted on the widows. The families were threatened with excommunication. So they had to resort to abortion or throwing their new born babies. In order to protect the honour of the family such women either committed suicides or they were murdered by their families. In order to relieve such woman of the blemish Phule took a revolutionary decision of establishing a fondling home for suffering widows. This also prevented many infanticides. It is interesting to note that custom of restriction on widow remarriage prevailed among Brahmins only and Phule took initiative to save those widows. He and Savitribai comforted those widows, provided for their safe delivery and even ran an orphanage to take care of the babies. Phule couple adopted one of the baby boy, Yashwant, in 1873 who was born of a Brahmin widow in the fondling home.

**Agriculture:**

Phule himself came from the family actively engaged in agriculture. Whole community of Shudratishudras was, in some way or the other, dependent on agriculture. It was the major source of employment even in his time. Though a large section of population relied on agriculture for its livelihood, the problems of peasantry had become critical right from the pre-colonial period. In medieval times, during feudal regime, revenue was collected at the rate of one third of the total production sometimes half of the production was extracted. This left the peasants with no surplus. They were the most exploited part of the system. During colonial rule agriculture attained some stability. They brought in many reforms which helped to improve the position of the peasants, but his becoming a part of the revenue system also added to their difficulties. Now revenue was to be paid in cash and on time, failing to which notices were issued to them. Scanty rainfall and family problems compelled them to seek help of money lenders. As mentioned earlier a class of moneylenders had emerged from among the Brahmins of Maharashtra along with Marwads and Banias.
Peasants entered into the vicious circle of borrowing loan from them and started losing their lands to money lenders. Phuley observed these developments keenly and expressed his views about the system.

Phule brought it to the notice that colonial government plundered the cultivators by raising taxes. He pointed to the ‘local fund’ and ‘octroi’ as the example of it. He criticized the government severely in ‘Cultivator’s Whipcord’. Phule describes the exploitation of the peasantry as three fold. Firstly they were fleeced by Brahmin priests. Then there was a system of moneylenders who plundered them and the third one was the bureaucracy of which the lower level was occupied by Brahmin employees. They robbed the peasants to their skin.

Phule did not stop at explaining the nature of peasant’s exploitation but also made some suggestions for improvement in agriculture. Chausalkar had enlisted them as under. Phule insisted upon adopting appropriate methods of breeding cow and oxen, he recommended building small dams in order to prevent rainwater from draining away, he suggested that the help of army personnel could be sought to build them, peasants should regularly maintain the waterways so that they do not dry up, every source of water should be utilized and government should fund these activities, grazing lands which are converted into forest should be restored and returned to peasants, breeding of high yielding sheep and goats should be undertaken, vocational training of different trades should be given to peasants children, agricultural schools should be established (Deshpande2002:12-13) These suggestions were the result of his minute observations of agriculture. He tried to unite peasants under his shudratishudra segment.

**Racism…. And Indian Nationalism:**

“Racial discrimination was a major formative influence behind the growth of nationalism in India in the nineteenth century” (Bose 1981, p: 1). Racism and social discrimination had manifold manifestations. The most important was inequality in the administration of justice and in public services. There was no entry for Indians to many parks, playgrounds and other areas and native servants were ill treated by their European masters. Various sorts of inequality and discrimination were also commonly prevalent in ancient India of which many were primarily based on caste system for example rate of interest on a loan was 24% for Brahmin, 36% for
a Ksatriya, 48% for a Vaisya and 60% for Sudra. Evidence of low caste people against higher caste people was not considered as valid or qualified evidence.

Concepts like equality before law and right for everyone were began to be widely acclaimed in only eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Growth of political consciousness was an output of western education. By the first quarter of 19th century Western education had been introduced and there was great demand for new learning. It was in Bengal first the British rule was firmly established which resulted into wide acceptance of western education and change of economy leading to birth of middle class intelligentsia. Bengalee intellectuals wasted no time in employing this knowledge for creative purposes European history and literature brought them close to prevailing concepts of democracy, nationalism and the equality of west. Works of Voltaire, Rousseau, Tom Paine, Hume began to reach India towards the end of the 18th century. Indian middle class intellectuals were quite influenced by the Glorious revolution, the American war of Independence and French revolution. Flooding of these egalitarian thoughts and revolutionary events created a kind of awareness in Indian growth which merged them into group, conscious of discrimination. They began valuing ideas like equality of opportunity, equality of rights and human dignity ultimately threatening the ‘tranquility of stagnation’ which existed in the earlier period of British rule.

Race questioned assumed a new dimension in early nineteenth century for another reason. In 17th century India appeared to Europeans as alien and repugnant to that of Europe but they never considered India as inferior Warren Hasting supported the revival of oriental learning, the foundation of Asiatic society, the Sanskrit college in Banaras (1792) and liberal official patronage for oriental studies and Ideology reveals the respect and concern Europeans felt for Indian civilization and culture.

This picture changed very rapidly. Renaissance, various geographical discoveries radical political philosophies changed European attitude towards oriental civilizations. Industrial revolution was the ultimate driving factor. “Respect for past was replaced by a pride in the present”. (Bose1981:9) These factors strengthened the feeling of cultural supremacy in Europeans which culminated into contempt for Indians, ill-treatment of natives and racial discrimination. Growing national consciousness in Bengalee youth due to impact of western education created an awareness about need for change in administrative as well as and judicial measures and dissatisfaction with related strategies. Conspicuously it was the provision of the
Jury Act of 1826 that made politically conscious Indians aware of religious and racial discrimination. Organized agitation against this act was the first step in long drawn struggle against British rule nourishing the rise of Indian Nationalism.

**Development of Education in Colonial India:**

When the East India Company took over India it had a medieval system of education. There were *Tols* in Bengal, *Pathshalas* in Western India, *Pyols* in South India, *Chatuspathis* in Bihar and similar education systems in other parts. Hindu schools were headed by Brahmin Pandits as they belonged to the Verna endowed with the authority to impart education. Sanskrit and Arithmetic were the subjects taught in Hindu schools. As Persian was the language of the court and administration, in Bengal many Hindu sent their children to learn Persian rather than Sanskrit.

Sanskrit learning suffered from another serious restraint. *Verna* system prevailing in Hindu society had laid down that Brahmans alone were entitled to use Sanskrit. Remaining there *Vernas* were forbidden from learning it. The restrictions were more stringent in case of the lowest *Vernas*. If person belonging to it listened to Sanskrit or it fell on his ear accidentally, he was punished by pouring molten lead in his ears. As a result Brahmans were the beneficiaries of these schools.

There were also village primary schools which catered to the need of children belonging to strata of the society whose status was lower than Brahmans like shopkeepers, artisans and peasants. Printed books were not used in the schools. Slate and pencil were used in the process of education. Medium of instruction in those schools used to be vernacular and they did not have a religious curriculum. Landed gentry arranged for educating their children at home. During this period state had no role in education, some religious and some private institutions catered to the need of education.

By the middle of eighteenth century the missionary activities had gathered good momentum. After 1817 English school gained popularity in coastal areas of Calcutta, Madras and Bombay. In spite of so much activity the company administration did not feel that education was their responsibility. It had absolutely no interest in education of the natives.

Another step was establishment of a Sanskrit college in Calcutta. The elite section was not happy with the Company’s policy of providing Sanskrit education.
Raja Rammohan Roy voiced the feeling of this class in the letter addressed to Governor General Lord Amherst in 1823, in it he says,

“The Government are establishing a Sanskrit school under Hindu Pandits to impart such knowledge as is already current in India. The seminary can only be expected to load the minds of the youth with grammatical niceties and metaphysical distinctions of little or no practicable use to the society. The pupil will there acquire what was known two thousand years ago, with the addition of vain and empty subtleties since produced by speculative men such as is already commonly taught in all parts of India. If it had been intended to keep the British nation in ignorance of real knowledge, the Baconian philosophy would not have been allowed to displace the system of the schoolmen, which was the best calculated to perpetuate ignorance. In the same manner, the Sanskrit system of education would be the best calculated to keep this country in darkness, if such had been the policy of the British Legislature. But as the improvement of the British native population is the object of the government, it will consequently promote a more liberal and enlightened system of instruction, embracing mathematics, natural philosophy, chemistry and anatomy, with other useful sciences which may be accomplished with the sum proposed by employing a few gentlemen of talents and learning educated in Europe and providing a college furnished with the necessary books, instruments and other apparatus.” (Bhathacharjee 1993:10-11)

Elite Hindus in Bengal were so enthusiastic about English education that they were prepared to finance such institutions. In this regard Sajni Kripalani Mukherjee observes that, “The Hindu College, which later became Presidency College, was set up in 1817, before the colonial agenda for anglicizing education had been fully formalized. It was set up at the request of, and indeed with funding from, a group of Hindus at once elite and orthodox.” (Mehrotra 2012:52)

With British taking over the administration missionaries gradually arrived and with other activities they opened schools. They did so with dual purpose of imparting education as well as converting the natives to their faith, because they believed that the natives were groping in the dark. Missionaries from different Europeans countries had started establishing their educational institutions in India in as early as 1575. By the middle of 19th century the activities gathered good momentum. Dr. Bell started a school of indigenous variety. 1817 onwards English schools became very popular in Calcutta, Madras and Bombay. Though so much of educational activity was going on,
the East India Company administration did not look at education as their responsibility.

Though company had shown no intentions of academic sort, there were some officers who were endowed with deep interest in language and literature. In 1792 Jonathan Duncan founded a Sanskrit college at Banaras which later became Banaras Hindu University. Frazer started a school for children of landed gentry in Delhi district. Charles Grant was keen on introducing English education. As Grant’s objective behind imparting education was to convert them to Christianity the Company did not like his initiatives. It had expanded the sphere of its interest and now it was assuming political and administrative importance. Naturally it wanted to have an image of religious neutrality. So it started discouraging the missionary activities in the later part of 18th century. The Company’s charter was renewed every 10 years. It was to be renewed in 1813, this time Charts Grant and William Wilberforce along with many others lobbied for revoking the policy and achieved success in their efforts. The 43rd clause of the Charter states that, “for revival and improvement of literature and the encouragement of the learned natives and for the instruction and promotion of a knowledge of the science among the inhabitants of the British territories in India.” (Ramchandran And Ramkumar2011:62) This opened the country to the missionaries. The charter granted an objective of promoting secular learning in contrast to the conversions. Schools were opened in Ajmer, Calcutta, Khulna, Burdwan, Agra, meerut, Poona. Despite the provision in the Charter, education suffered from neglect almost for a decade. Bengal had to wait to see the formation of The Committee of Public Instructions till 1823.

Missionary activities abated in the middle 1850, this could be owing to two reasons. The Government had then started to take some measures in the direction of education. Their attempts, as far as Indian society was concerned were appreciable but they were not adequate. A close look at them would give us an idea of the flaw which rendered these efforts lopsided. They were directed towards educating male. In Indian society, whether Hindu or Muslim, female education was grossly neglected. As a result women suffered from many problems pertaining to illiteracy. 1818 onwards activities for promotion of girls’ education through establishing schools and Orphan Homes for them was taken up by wives of the missionaries as well as who came from England for this purpose. In 1821 a boarding school for girls in Tinnavelly was founded. By 1823 the Church Missionary society had established 23 schools for girls.
In 1857 an important change occurred. The British crown took over the administration from the company. As this caused more involvement in the administration the government also had a feeling that activities of the missionaries have created a feeling of resentment among the Indians. This resulted in abating of the activities of the missionaries. By 1823 the Church Missionary society had established 23 schools for girls.

The year 1857 witnessed another important development. In that year Act of Incorporation were passed for setting up universities at the Presidency headquarters of Bombay, Calcutta and Madras. This gave further impetus to education. Some existing colleges were converted into universities. Those included Punjab University (1882), Allahabad University (1887) and Alighar Muslim University. Within a very short period the number of colleges affiliated to these universities multiplied. The number of students appearing for matriculation examination also witnessed a steep rise. In spite of the rise in the number, education was far from being universalized. It predominantly remained an affair related to privileged sections of the society. Pointing at the gap between male and female literacy Naik and Narulla state that, “All this time (towards the last two decades of the nineteenth century) only one male in ten and seven girls in a thousand were literate.”(Ramchandra and Ramkumar 2011, p: 73)

There was an equally yawning gap in the education of elite castes and lowered castes. Figures related to knowledge of English and literacy among different castes in Bengal show that in 1891 percentage of literate persons among Brahmin male was 68.1% of the total population of the caste. Where as that of chandal was merely 3.5%. Percentage of English knowing male Hindus among literate persons in different castes in 1891 also show equally uneven spread of education. Of the total literate Brahmins 12.8% knew English, among the kayasthas, a writer caste the percentage was 8.2%, among kaibatta, an agrarian caste it dropped down to 1.5%, where as among chandala it was mere 0.6%. These are the figures related to North Bengal. Situation in Bombay Presidency was not much different. In 1891 percentage of literate Brahmins was 47%, mali, an agrarian caste which stood on the middle wrung of the social system, had only 3.0% literate male of the total population. There is no wonder that there is no mention of untouchable castes like Mahar or Mang because there was no education in it.

In 1830 Alexander duff started an English school in Calcutta. He was of the opinion that the upper section of Indian society need to be brought in touch with
western education. This would help in bringing in practice the company’s ‘downward filtration’ theory. By this theory he meant that they need to educate only the upper strata of the society and expected that once they are educated they will, in turn, take education down to illiterate masses. In this way education will spread in the society. Beginning of English education opened avenues for the upper caste educated young men. In this sense the aspirations of the natives were fulfilled. English education was different from Indian education. It did not expect the pupils to just mug up things and reproduce. On the contrary it initiated the student to use his reasoning capacity. Use of reasoning develops a habit of questioning and analyzing critically. There is no wonder Hindu College also had to witness such phenomena. In 1826 a young teacher was appointed there who introduced his students with Homer’s *Iliad* and Thomas Pain’s *Rights of Man*. His name was Henry Vivian Derozio. There the students adopted two precepts of which the first one was by H. Drummond, “He who will not reason is a bigot, he who cannot reason is a fool and he who does not reason is a slave” and the second one, “Cast off your prejudices, and be free in your thought and actions. Break down everything old and rear in its stead what is new.” (Mehrotra 2012:55) This new vision changed the course of the lives of his students. They shed inhibitions which they used to observe as the impact of their religious traditions and started freely doing things which were taboo for them. They discussed and debated different issues in the college, after college hours and even during late nights. During these debates Hindu religion also had to face a severe criticism. This raised alarm in the minds of the orthodox people. They found Derozio to be source of this evil. He was accused of making the students atheist, they made more serious allegations and compelled the management of the college to issue him a show cause notice and he was compelled to resign in 1831. This episode shows that the natives wanted the education for getting a job but were not prepared to imbibe the changes the education would bring in the attitudes of the learners. Interference of education in their religion was not acceptable to them. The rapid rise and development of the press was one of the major causative factors behind the growth of nationalism in India. By bringing revolutionary changes in political, social and religious aspects of Indian society, it played a vital role in changing Indian mindset. Initially its impact was slight but gradually it influenced the company employees effectively. *Bengal Gazette* was established by James Hicky in 1780 followed by *India Gazette* in the same year. That was the beginning of journalism in Calcutta as well as in India. In 1784 *Calcutta Gazette* by Francin
Gladwin and in 1785 *Bengal Journal* by Thomas Jones were established. Before the end of the eighteenth century, the *Bengal Journal*, the *Oriental Magazine*, the *Madras Courier*, the *Calcutta Chronicle*, the *Bombay Herald*, the *Bombay Courier*, the *Bombay Gazette*, the *India Herald*, the *Calcutta Courier*, the *Telegraph*, the *Hurkaru* and the *Asiatic Mirror* were established. Along with publishing Government circulars, information orders, newspapers like the *Bombay Herald*, the *Calcutta Chronicle*, and the *Oriental Magazine* also published writings on public welfare issues, socio-religious traditions, reforms prices of commodities of general use etc. As a result of understanding and alliance between Indian higher Caste elites and colonial government company followed the policy of non-intervention in religious matters. Press on the contrary raised its voice against the religious conservative practices like human sacrifices, infanticide and sati and tried to introduce liberal reforms in it. Press created awareness among people about the hurdles in their development. In April 1819, the *Calcutta Journal* (11 April, 1819) wrote about a sacrifice performed by a widow of 24 years of age at Chitpoor Press exposed the feigned attitude of govt toward people and fickleness of its stand for progressive reforms.

Apart from these unjust customs press drew people’s attention towards social problems that were not markedly explicit but had powerful influence on society. *The Reformers* owned by Prassannakumar Tagore condemned the government for its indifference towards, beggary, slavery, prostitution and for that matter purchase of young girls. Press was not apathetic about social issue it inspired people to think. Newspaper and journal created awareness about racial hatred discrimination and concern for right to maintain human dignity. Contemporary newspapers repeatedly published incidents of social tyranny with critical comments. Even if the victim could reach the court for justice, the experience was partial. British judge were always lenient towards European criminals. Consequently racial animosity reached climax. Native opinion gave an angry reaction about it and wrote “The colonist is a notorious theorizer on the equality and inequality of races and whenever he came in contact with a coloured man, he at once views him as constantly his inferior and destined by heaven to be.” (Bose 1981: 108) *Native Opinion* also criticized colonial judicial system for appointing young and inexperienced judge the restriction of carrying native shoes in the hands for native people while allowing western shoes to move freely in the Asiatic society was strongly criticized by the *Hindoo Patriot* and *Englishman*. Focusing such issues of public concern journalism became the integral
part of the Indian nationalism. Their papers published political discussions analysis of problem from different angles and solutions. Many political leaders had their own forum.

In Maharashtra Tilak expressed his opinion about caste system moneylenders’ Hinduism and women’s education etc. Analyzing the colonial rule he wrote in Maharatta dated 20 February, 1881 “…the insecurities of the landed classes the willingness of the government to enforce the caste privileges and caste restriction, and indiscriminate spread of English education as the chief drawbacks of the British school.” (Rao 2011 :281). He vehemently opposed reformers by writing articles in Mararatta about women’s education Age of Consent Bill. He wrote in Maharatta “our Shashtras and customs require a girl to qualify herself for a married life and if our school cannot give them necessary training they are worse than useless.” (Rao 2011 :117)

Besides there social issues in political field there were many agitations against and also for the implementation of various acts. Agitation against Jury Act 1826, Charter Act of 1853 were focused and discussed by the newspaper like The Reformer and the India Gazette and that created consciousness of nationalism.

Nationalist movement regained its strength from the controversy created by Illbert Bills of 1883. The most powerful paper like Indian Mirror wrote potent and effective articles supporting the agitation in favour of Illbert Bill struggle against racial discrimination was at its peak, this racial animosity was not due to only ‘common hatred’ but had political, economic, cultural implications on much deeper level.

**Emergence of Indian English Prose:**

Main reason behind this loss in Plassy and Buxur was conspiracy for Siraj-ud-Daula’s deposition by moneylenders and wealthy Hindu-Jain merchants due to Mugals’ severe control over their trade than Robert Clive’s efficiency. This event led to the creation of first ever written English book by Dean Mahomde (1759-1851) He served company Bengal Army and published this book in form of series of letters to a imaginary friend built upon his experiences in colonial army.

In colonial government some Englishmen had a passion for oriental philosophy culture and at the same time several young Indians were enthusiastic about
receiving western education. There was pressing need for clerk junior official who knew English language. With the support of advocates of western English education like Raja Rammohan Roy, Hindu College was established in 1817 although curriculum of this college included teaching of science, liberal thought, English language and literature, upper caste elite people who had full authority over Hindu College were strongly resistant to any changes or reforms in their traditions culture. “The Western impact, the infusion of English literature and European thought and the resulting cross-fertilization have thus been the means of quickening the interplay and circulation of ideas and the emergence of a new literature and a new climate of hope and endeavour in the country and, a bold marching towards new horizons.” (Iyengar 2011: 520).

There were several writings in English even before Macaulay’s Minute of 1835 “Raja Rammohan Roy’s essay on A Defence of Hindu Theism 1817 may be regarded as the first original publication of significance in the history of Indian English literature”. (Naik 1999:14). In this essay he effectively defended monotheism. He was the editor of periodical The Brahummunical Magazine in English and his A letter to Lord Amberst on Western Education was also extensively discussed. “English was for him not only the language of command but also of documentation of histories of narrative, theological disputation, and personal reflection” (Mehrotra 2012: 45).

Rabindranath Tagore, who was internationalist and preached universal harmony, was a major literary figure after Raja Rammohan Roy. In ‘Nationalism’ he laid emphasis on the need for social change along with political change. The Religion of Man (1931) includes his lectures delivered at Manchester College, Oxford. He warned India and Japan not to get swayed in the western modernization but preserve their moral vigour. “Tagore’s Prose is remarkable…. for its frequent spells of impassioned semi-poetic utterances.” (Naik 1999: 81)

Behramji Malabari used power of his prose writing for nationalist purposes. Being a staunch defender of social reforms he wrote Notes on Infant Marriage and Enforced Widowhood. Age of Consent Act was his vital contribution toward implementing social reforms. According to him paying attention to social reforms did not mean abstaining from political or national issues. He published the Indian Spectator, the weekly in English. Under the veil of his varied comedy there was always social criticism on colonialism and social orthodoxism. He was the editor of periodicals named as Voice of India and East and West in which he published various
thought opinions and discourses. Sri Aurobindo in his youth was deeply under the influence of Vivekananda’s thought and philosophy. He wrote on various issues like cultural, political, metaphysical, social and religious subjects. The Life Divine by him is an essence of his writings which focuses on the idea that every human being has inside him existence of divine which transcends his physical being. He presented various type of Yoga in The Synthesis of Yoga. In Foundation of Indian culture he intensely upholds Indian traditions.

Cornelia Sorabji (1866-1954) was a prominent personality in Indian politics. She was aware of the oppression and humiliation that women suffered in the society. So she opposed child marriages and supported the movement against it. Her legal and some fictional experiences are described in her Love and Life Behind the Purdah (1901). “Her Pro-British and anti- Nationalist sentiments were well-known”. (Mehrotra 2012 :142)

Mahadeo Ranade (1842-1901) in Maharashtra zealously advocated social religious political reforms. His Essays in Indian Economic rightly asserts his status as ‘Father of Indian Economics’. Religious and Social Reform (1902), Miscellaneous Writing (1915), and the Wisdom of Modern Rishi include his speeches and writings, reflecting synthesis of eastern and western thoughts.

Unlike Ranade, Bal Gangadhar Tilak was militant nationalist. He was against socio-religious reforms and staunch defender of Hindu religion and tradition. His thoughts are revealed in Writing and Speeches (1922) and Towards Independence. His Marathi interpretation of Bhagawadgita named as Gitarahasya was translated in English in 1935. He also wrote The Orion Researches into the Antiquity of the Vedas (1893) and The Arctic Home of the Vedas (1903). Majority of prose writers during growth of the movement of nationalism remained consistently committed to the Hindu religion, Vedic past and its traditions. They adopted western thought but at the core they remained the same reactionary traditionalist, glorifying the Hindu traditions and past. Of course there were staunch and resolute exceptions like Dr. B.R.Ambedkar, Mahatma Phule etc. This right winged ideology gave birth to aggressive Hinduthwavadi cultural nationalism which strengthened its roots by glorifying and reviving the Hindu ancient past with its traditions.
References


