CHAPTER II

Gokhale in the Bombay Legislative Council

Introduction

Gokhale was elected as a member of Bombay Legislative Council in 1899 and remained a member for two years. The Bombay Legislative Council had been formed under the Indian Councils Act, 1861 and up to 1892 when it was further reformed, many eminent Indian personalities like Jagannath Sunkersett, Sardar Vinchoorkar, Jamshedji Jeejeebhoy, V.N. Mandlik, Badruddin Tyabji, K.T. Telang, M.G. Ranade, P.M. Mehta and Gopal Hari Deshmukh were nominated to it. Under the Indian Councils Act of 1892, the minimum number of non-official councilors was increased from four to eight and that of the maximum from eight to twenty. The powers of the non-official members also increased slightly under the new Act. They were given the right to ask questions and discuss the budget. Although they could not move resolutions, they could participate in the discussion. The major drawback was that the budget was discussed only four or five months after it had actually been passed. The official view was that since the members had only to read long expositions of their own views carefully prepared beforehand, these speeches could be heard anytime. This invited adverse comments from both Indian and Anglo-Indian press. The Times of India thus compared the Bombay Council to a ‘suburban literary society’ and found the budget debates ‘listless’ and ‘unprofitable’. The 'Kesari' found the analysis of the budget after it had already been passed as ridiculous as medicating a dead animal. Nevertheless, it was through participation in these budget debates that the Indian members got the opportunity to express their views (which comprised of both criticism and suggestions) on the general administration of the Presidency. A study of the Council proceedings of 1900 and 1901 shows that the Indian members fully utilized their powers and tried to attain redress for the Indians.

An important innovation of the 1892 Act was the introduction of the principle of ‘election’ though in an indirect form. It empowered certain constituencies to elect and recommend members who were then nominated by the Governor. These elective seats in Bombay were allotted to eight constituencies namely – Bombay Corporation, Bombay
University, Bombay Chamber of Commerce, the Sardars of Deccan, the municipalities of Northern Division, the district boards of Southern Division, the Zamindars of Sind and the district local boards of the Central Division.

The Marathi speaking Central Division, which was larger to the Northern and Southern Division in area, population, revenue and educational level and thus the most advanced part of the Presidency outside the town and Island of Bombay, remained unrepresented in the Council until 1895. This was done to ‘contain the undesirable Maharashtrian influences’. It was only after a strong protest from the Poona Sarvajanik Sabha supported by several protest meetings held throughout the division, that the Government revised the rules and the district boards of Central Division were allowed to recommend a member. This seat was held first by B.G. Tilak and then by Gokhale.

**Election to the Council**

Gokhale’s public career had received a temporary set back owing to the unconditional apology that he had offered in lieu of the allegations that he had made against the British soldiers on plague-duty. Perturbed by the public criticism of his act, he even thought of withdrawing from public life or at least shifting his political activity to England. However, it was the sympathetic support of his friends and associates and the counsel of his master Ranade emphasizing the importance of the political work in India itself that made Gokhale change his decision. In an entry made to his private diary on 5th February 1898, he committed himself to a programme of gradual initiation into a parliamentary career that is by seeking a membership of the local legislative Council first and then moving ahead to the Imperial Council and the British Parliament (discussed in Chapter I).

As a first step towards the realization of his political ambition, he decided in 1899 to stand for the election to a seat in Bombay Legislative Council from the Central Division constituency. This seat had been held earlier by Gokhale’s political opponent B.G. Tilak and after the latter’s trial and arrest in 1897 by D.S. Garud, a local public worker. The
conditions in 1899 were however different. Gokhale had volunteered plague-relief work in Pune during 1898-99 and had won the appreciation of both the local citizens and the government. On the other hand, Tilak who had been released in September 1898 and who also wished to contest for the same seat found many of his earlier voters alienated for fear of victimization. D.S. Garud, the third contestant had comparatively a lesser influence over the electorates. Gokhale was therefore in a more advantageous position. His master Ranade however feared the sensitive temperament of his disciple and in a letter dated 06/02/1899 advised him that unless Gokhale was ensured of his success at any risk, it would be better not to move at all.

Gokhale accepted Ranade’s counsel and prepared himself well for the ensuing fight. He undertook a systematic and exhaustive tour of his constituency. Between 9th and 20th October, he toured Satara, Sholapur, Poona, Bombay, Dhulia, Ahmednagar and Nashik. By appealing personally to the small electorates he thus became confident of his votes. He also employed tactful diplomacy by urging his friend and supporter, Mr. Bennett, the editor of Times of India, not to attack Tilak in his papers, as he was trying to win over many of Tilak’s personal friends. Gokhale also tried through Ranade’s mediation to urge Garud to withdraw from the contest but could not succeed. On the other hand he privately charged of having seen letters in Tilak’s own handwriting conforming to an alliance between Tilak and Garud. Thus, all the contestants used various political tactics to win the election. However, due to Gokhale’s vigourous canvassing and as Wacha stated ‘because of the general opinion as to the undesirability of returning Mr. Tilak and because of Gokhale’s superior ability compared with Mr. Garud’, Gokhale stole a march over his opponents. Tilak was not sure of success and he withdrew from the contest and thus in the final elections, Gokhale defeated Garud easily. This victory proved very important in Gokhale’s career because it ended the period of his political eclipse and gave him an opportunity to engage in active political work once again and prove his mettle.

Gokhale’s work in the Council

Gokhale took his seat as an additional member of the Bombay Legislative Council on 24th January 1900 with Governor Sandhurst presiding. This period was a crucial one
because the Presidency was not only hit by two successive famines but also several of its
districts were adversely affected by the plague. The council debates thus raged mostly over
these two issues. Although Gokhale was a member for two years only, he provided quality
time to the Council. His private correspondence of the period shows that the economist
G.V. Joshi extensively helped Gokhale by providing valuable information and suggestions
on various questions.

The major aspects of Gokhale’s observations on the various subjects are discussed
below.

**Plague – relief**

Coming from Pune, the town ravaged by the plague epidemic, the first question that
Gokhale posed to the government was regards the plague-relief. On 24th January 1900, he
advised the government to appoint a small commission of medical men to inquire into the
allegations as to the adverse after effects of the Haffkine plague inoculation. The
Government refusing to accept his demand however promised to consider his next
suggestion – that of appointing the President of the Poona Municipality to a seat on the
newly constituted Plague Committee. He also elucidated from the government a statement
that the rule granting exemptions to inoculated persons was inapplicable to the two health
resorts – Mahabaleshwar and Matheran and that this was done for their more effectual
protection. 12

On 14th February, he urged the government to fix a maximum time limit, after
which the re-occupation of the evacuated houses in the plague-affected locality would be
allowed. This would decrease the hardships caused to the people. His suggestion was
however rejected. 13 Anxious of the quality and quantity of the relief work, he also inquired
into the number of medical and other officers employed on special plague duty and their
monthly salary and allowances. 14
Gokhale's scathing attack on the famine relief operations in his first budget speech is noteworthy. With the help of appropriate figures, he proved that despite being a lesser-developed province; the Central Provinces had provided larger suspensions and remissions of land revenue than Bombay. Probing into the causes of such a situation, he concluded that excessive rigidity of the system of relief adopted, the over zeal in the wrong direction of the several subordinate officials, excessive concentration of labour on large relief works, excessive rigour in adhering to the provisions of the Famine Code, excessive tasking, excessive fining and illiberal traditions in matters of revenue collections were responsible for the ineffectiveness of the relief work in Bombay. He earnestly implored the Government to reconsider its decision to levy enhanced rates of assessment in the Indapur Taluka and also urged the government to follow a wise and generous policy of abating a portion of the ordinary state demand.

The question of famine-relief also formed the main subject of Gokhale's interpellations. He asked the government to provide relief in accordance with the recommendations of the report of the Famine Commission. Anxious about the extent of the relief-work he asked the government to furnish a list of labourers employed in irrigational work and metal breaking work. Though the government maintained that there had been no deviation from the scales of wages and rations prescribed in the Famine Relief Code, Gokhale's enquiries made them submit that a reduction of 25% had been directed in the minimum wages of relief-workers in the Khandesh district. He also appealed for the special relief of distressed weavers by giving them employment in their own trade.

On 26th March 1900, Gokhale brought to light the grievances of the relief-workers in Gujarat and pointed out to the meagerness of the minimum daily wages paid to them on Sunday thereby urging the government to restore the allowances to its old amount. He also asked the reasons for the reduction in the minimum wage and an increase in the task work in Gujarat. He highlighted the bitter fact that while the reduction in minimum wage would mean a return to one-pound ration per day, which was incompatible with the healthful existence of the relief-worker, the increase in the task work would press too
heavily on the worker owing to the general physical unfitness of the relief-workers. The
result would be that even the relief workers of class I and II would be adversely affected by
the Government’s decision. The government however did not agree with Gokhale’s views.\textsuperscript{21}

Dealing with the question of suspensions and remissions of land revenue, Gokhale
urged for a more liberal policy in the affected areas especially in Khandesh and Indapur.\textsuperscript{22}
He was thus able to expose the inadequate relief-work undertaken by the Bombay
Government.

Land Revenue Administration

This question assumed great prominence in view of the successive bad seasons
accompanied by two famines and the budget discussions of both the years turned mainly on
the character of the land revenue administration of the Bombay Presidency. In his two
budget speeches Gokhale summed up his major objections to the system and also suggested
remedial measures.

Firstly, he objected to the excessive and uneven assessments of the lands. He
advised the government to follow the example of the Madras government in basing the
assessment on the net produce and not on the productive capacity of the land.\textsuperscript{23} Secondly, he dealt with the question of revision settlements and suggested that it be dependent on the
course of prices taken every thirty years. Thirdly, he objected to the policy of granting
suspensions on the basis of individual inquires and suggested instead to adopt crop failure
as the basis as was done in other provinces.\textsuperscript{24} He also recommended a scale of fluctuating
assessments, varying automatically with the outturn of crops in place of the then existing
policy of rigidly collecting a fixed amount in good or bad years alike.\textsuperscript{25} Lastly, he
suggested the fixing of more suitable dates for the realization of State demand because the
then prevalent dates of collection placed the agriculturists at certain disadvantages in the
matter of realizing a fair price for their crops.\textsuperscript{26}
It can be stated from the above arguments that Gokhale wanted the land administration to be beneficial to the agriculturists and not to the government treasury in the form of ever increasing land revenue.

**Agricultural Indebtedness and the Land Revenue (Amendment) Bill – 1901**

As a solution to the problem of agricultural indebtedness, which had much aggravated during the famines, the Government introduced the Land Revenue (Amendment) Bill on 30th May 1901. The mover of the bill, Mr. Monteath found the grant of unrestricted property as the main cause of the problem and hence considered a restriction on the transfer of land as the most effectual remedy.\(^{27}\) Thus, the object of the bill was to enable the government to let waste, or unoccupied, or forfeited land to be held for short terms, and to restrict the holder’s power of transferring his land.

The fact was that even before 1901, short leases with restriction of the power of alienation had been granted by Collectors to the wild tribes in Thana, Kanara and Khandesh. But there was no provision under the law for such grants. Hence, it was with the intention to legalize the leases already granted and to make provisions for allowing such action to be taken in the future that the bill was introduced. However, it was introduced at a most inopportune moment when the Presidency was in the grip of one of its worst famines leading to large arrears of land revenue. The bill would thus affect all such lands. The result was great opposition from the Indian quarters. The suspicion towards the bill was further roused owing to the great haste with which it was introduced at a special meeting at Mahabaleshwar where most of the members could not attend. The Select Committee held its meeting the next day and the officials tried ‘to finish everything at once’ but Gokhale persuaded them in getting the next meeting put off till 24th June. He objected to the provision to make for a periodical revision of assessment of building areas and also to the power conferred on the collectors for giving leases of such length as they pleased.\(^{28}\) However, the bill was carried through the Select Committee without any modifications resulting in a minute of dissent from Mr. Gokhale and Mr. Chattre to its report.
In their minute of dissent, Gokhale and Chattre highlighted the moral and material loss which the peasants would incur as a result of the passage of the bill and concluded that 'The real remedy for the chronic difficulties of the ryot must be sought in the promotion of non-agricultural industries to relieve the pressure of surplus population on soil, a better organization of rural credit, an abatement of the state demand where it is excessive and a statutory guarantee, in the absence of a permanent settlement of this demand, that the assessment will not be raised at the time of the revision unless there has been a rise in prices and that the increase will not be more than a certain proportion of the rise in the latter'.

By the time the bill came up for second reading, several memorials including those of Bombay Presidency Association and Deccan Sabha had reached the Government all asking for more time to consider the bill. Several protest meetings were held at Sholapur, Narsappana, Wai and other places. A memorial signed by 660 inhabitants of Salsette and Thana was also sent. The native press too attacked the bill with full vigour. The economist and Gokhale's advisor G.V. Joshi under the initial 'J' wrote several letters to The Times of India. Through detailed and accurate statistical tables (which happened to be the main attraction of his letters), he pointed out that it was not improvidence in the agriculturists or reckless borrowing which was the true cause of indebtedness but the continued series of bad harvests during the decade coupled with the rigidity of State demand which even in bad years was almost inexorable. On 27th July, 700 delegates attended a protest meeting held at Townhall, Bombay under chairmanship of Pherozeshah Mehta. In England, R.C. Dutt in a memorial, appealed strongly to the Secretary of State, Lord George Hamilton against the bill and Mr. Caine protested against it in the House of Commons.

In the Council, Pherozeshah Mehta led the fight against the bill. On 23rd August 1901, he moved an amendment that the bill be referred for opinion to various gentlemen and public bodies and associations and that the bill be recommitted to the Select Committee for further report after consideration of such reports and representations. The amendment amounted to a postponement of the bill to a period of at least eight months. He pointed out that the bill constituted an emphatic assertion of the theory of state landlordism. The only
gain from the bill would be rapid collection of revenue in times of famine and not reduction of indebtedness. He therefore opposed the power of depriving the peasant of his perpetual tenure.  

Supporting the above amendment, Gokhale pointed out that the bill in practice would be inoperative, as the moneylenders by simply paying the assessment would prevent the lands in their possession from being forfeited. And even if in some cases lands were regranted to the old occupants under the new tenure, the personal liabilities of these peasants for their old debts would remain in full force, and thus the moneylender would be able to exploit their labour as much as ever. He criticized the extreme precipitation and indifference to public petitions, most of which had not been studied by the government at all. He also repudiated the argument of some of the official supporters that the Indian educated classes were not in touch with the agriculturists in this matter. Instead, he said that it was the officials who, owing to their short official tours, minor inquiries and inadequate knowledge of the vernaculars, could not understand the real problem of the peasants. He also confessed that being a disciple of Mr. Justice Ranade, he could never range himself against the interests of the agriculturists and support the money lenders.

While dividing the agriculturists of the Presidency into four classes, he stated that the first two classes viz. those who were virtually free and those who were partially free from debt would be very prejudicially affected by the bill, the third class which was in the clutches of the moneylenders would not be touched by the bill at all and the fourth category that is those with poor quality of soil and with no monetary assets would remain as earlier. He thus succeeded in establishing that the bill instead of benefiting the peasants would hasten the expropriation of the peasantry and that the government alone would gain by it for the bill constituted a scheme of nationalization of forfeited lands. He also highlighted the dangerous nature of the wide discretionary power, which would enable the government whenever they liked to grant short leases or take land for public purposes without any compensation or allot it to whomsoever they pleased. He therefore suggested that as an experiment the government should select a small area and take over the debts of the
peasants from the moneylenders, start agricultural banks to help the peasants and then declare their lands inalienable without the government sanction. 37

The other members who supported the amendment were Mr. Rahimtulla, Sir Bhalchandra Krishna, Mr. Allabakshkhan Talpur, Mr. Parekh, Mr. Khare, Mr. Moses and the Chief of Ichalkaranji. Among those who opposed were Venilal Chunilal, Mr. Desai and Sardar Venchurkar.

The walk-out of the Indian members

Neither Gokhale's appeals nor Mehta's oratory had any effect on the government and the amendment was negatived by 9 to 14 votes. Therefore, as mark of protest, Mr. Mehta, Bhalchandra Krishna, Mr. Parekh, Mr. Khare and Gokhale staged a walkout of the Council. Formerly, Gokhale was not in favour of this form of protest. He wanted to move amendments to improve the bill. But being new to the legislative work and having accepted Mehta's leadership he decided to follow him. In a letter to Mehta he wrote - 'I would rather be in the wrong with you, than be in the right by myself.' 38 However before withdrawing from the Council he explained that it was only an overwhelming sense of duty, which compelled him to follow the course taken by his colleagues. He did not wish to accept even the remotest responsibility of association with the bill. 39 Gokhale's stand indicates his belief in constitutional methods.

The walk-out of the opposition was the first of its kind in the legislative history of India and it was greatly hailed by the people and the native press. The Council gallery, which was unusually full of viewers, also left the hall along with these native members. 40 'Kesari' 41 very dramatically compared the walk out of the five members to the walk out of the five Pandavas from the Kaurava's assembly after they lost the game of dice. But the Anglo-Indian press was full of criticism. The Times of India 42 considered the act as rude and insulting to his Majesty's representatives and found the performance comic. The Indian public workers and the British friends of India also supported the walk-out. R.C. Dutt wrote - ' You have made a splendid fight against the obnoxious Bill, and the incident in the
Council chamber will be remembered in our country’s history ... But your opposition will not have been in vain; the government will be cautious in applying the provisions of this Bill; and the government will be doubly cautious in introducing such Bills in Madras and elsewhere...’. Digby attested that had he been a member of Council, he would have done the same as Gokhale and others did.

The Bill passed

In spite of the non-official opposition, the bill was passed. The amendments moved by the Chief of Ichalkaranji were rejected. However Gokhale’s speech evoked a favourable response due to the efficient handling of the subject and his earnest appeal for redress. A European member is said to have remarked that after Mr. Gokhale’s speech the Act fell still-born.

Moffusil Municipalities Bill

Another important bill that came up before the Council during this period was the Bill No. II of 1899 - A Bill for the Better Management of Moffusil Affairs in Moffusil towns and cities. The bill was of a most comprehensive character and determined the Constitution of the Municipalities, their conduct of business, their rules and by-laws, their Property and Funds, their Obligatory and Directional Functions, their Taxation and Recovery of Municipal Claims, their Powers and ways to deal with offences against Municipal work, their Accounts, the control over them from the side of the government and Special Provision for City Municipalities. The bill as originally introduced by Sir James Evans had evoked a great storm of protest both in and outside the Council. However, under his successor Sir Charles Ollivant the bill was modified to a great extent in the Select Committee. Gokhale’s practical experience as a member of the Poona Municipality’s General Committee since 1899 was found very useful in the Select Committee and his labours were acknowledged by Sir Ollivant in the Council. Gokhale too came into direct contact with the administrative machinery of the state for the first time as a member of the Select Committee. Gokhale’s private correspondence of the period shows that G.V. Joshi assisted him with ‘instructive and effective criticism’. Though the work in the Select
Committee was slow, Gokhale found the official members conciliatory and was contented that the non-officials had secured their point. In his private letters, he objected only to the provisions of sectional representation and the burden of maintaining Government roads on the Municipalities but in the Council he protested against many other provisions of the bill as well. The bill came up for discussion between 12th and 16th February 1901.

Although Gokhale expressed his general satisfaction for the bill, he tried to modify certain objectionable provisions and in this attempt was supported by G.K. Parekh, S.A. Chattre and P.M. Mehta. Gokhale's major objection was to the provision of sectional representation for it defeated the very object of local self-government - the object of working unitedly. He therefore suggested election by wards instead of sections and proposed the allocation of a certain number of seats from Government quota for election by such sections or minorities who wished to be represented by election instead of by nomination.

He also opposed the principle involved in throwing additional duties on the municipalities without any corresponding increase in their sources of revenue. Through various amendments, he therefore tried to delete from the list of obligatory duties the duty of bearing the plague and famine relief charges, maintenance of provincial roads and leper and lunatic asylums and providing for middle class education. The Government accepted only the amendment regarding the provincial roads whereas the others were rejected.

The Government considered its intervention in Municipal affairs as essential but Gokhale feared that unsympathetic government officers could hamper the promotion of local self-government. He particularly opposed the government dictation in taxation matters and moved an amendment in that direction which was accepted. He also succeeded in curtailing the powers of the Chief Officers regarding the appointments to the Municipalities. However he failed to restrict the disqualification for membership of the Municipal Corporation to persons guilty of non-compoundable offences only. His amendment directed towards the repealment of Police Charges from the Municipal list was also similarly rejected. He also tried to raise the limit of population for a Municipality to be
constituted into a City Municipality in order to save the additional costs that would fall upon smaller towns, but his amendment was rejected.  

The essence of Gokhale’s arguments was to highlight the high level of taxation per head in Bombay. He therefore opposed the additional burdens that were being imposed on the masses through this bill. He succeeded in his attempt only slightly, but his endeavours were supported by the other colleagues in the Council and also praised by the press outside.

Bombay Abkari Act Amendment Bill

Being a supporter of total prohibition, Gokhale had a strong grudge against the Abkari Department, which safeguarded the interests of Government revenue. Declaring himself as being against the ordinary theory of Political Economy of making the intoxicants dearer in order to reduce their consumption, he advocated making them scarcer.

The Bombay Abkari (Amendment) Bill was introduced in 1898 but it came up for discussion in 1901 when Mr. Monteath, the Revenue Member was in charge of it. The object of the bill was to control the cultivation of the hemp plant and the production and sale of hemp drugs (i.e. ganja, bhang and charas). The bill, thus gave the government power of prohibiting the cultivation of hemp absolutely, or of permitting it only under license. The bill also provided for the establishment or licensing of bonded warehouses, where wholesale dealers would be required to store the drugs manufactured, and to pay a quantitative duty as they supplied the drugs to retail dealers, paying in addition rent for the use of the warehouse. The duty was to be a quantitative one and the government intended to raise large revenue from it. Gokhale had a rooted objection to a legislation, which would give Government a direct interest in the increase of sales and would only bring large revenue to Government.
As a representative of the Satara and Ahmednagar districts, which were to be mainly affected by the bill, Gokhale courageously opposed the bill and waged a single-handed fight against it. None of the other members participated in the debate.

Gokhale based his opposition on five grounds. Firstly he considered the legislation as wholly unnecessary as nine-tenths of the officers of the Bombay government who had given evidence before the Hemp Drugs Commission (of 1893) had found the then existing arrangements as working satisfactorily. He also pointed out to the gradually diminishing area under the hemp cultivation, which was owing to natural causes, thereby again making legislation in this matter unnecessary.

Secondly, he opposed the control of hemp cultivation by licenses because innocent cultivators could, thereby, be exposed to the risk of having false charges brought against them by overzealous or blackmailing subordinates of the Revenue & Abkari departments, in connection with the spontaneous growth of wild hemp plants. Thus, while opposing the control of hemp cultivation, Ghokale advised the government to encourage experiments in hemp cultivation with the object of ascertaining if the fiber-producing hemp plant could be grown in the Presidency on a large and remunerative scale.

Thirdly, he opposed the quantitative duty, which was to be levied on drugs consumed, as that would give the government a direct interest in the increased consumption of the drugs and would thereby hamper the interests of temperance. Fourthly, he opposed the policy of making the drugs dearer and instead advocated the policy of making them scarcer. Finally, he objected to the absence of the provision of local option in the bill. He believed that local citizens and municipal bodies had to be consulted and their opinions considered before any new shops were opened in any locality.

The official view was that the high duty would discourage a larger consumption of the drugs. Mr. Monteath also stated that similar legislation had been in force in other provinces without causing any inconvenience there. It was clear that with official majority, Gokhale’s amendments would not fare well. Thus, his first two amendments which sought
to remove the restrictions on the cultivation of hemp and which aimed at a provision of local option were rejected. However, his last amendment was accepted which proposed that if a license holder was unable to pay the rent and the government realized the same by the sale of the drugs in his possession, then the surplus drugs would be given back to the license-holder.\textsuperscript{64}

Some Other Issues

In his budget speeches and interpellations Gokhale also expressed his views on the working of certain other government departments and suggested alterations in their policies so as to benefit the common man. He suggested disforestation of considerable area of the forest in Central Circles in order to relieve the villagers from the harassing restrictions and the oppression of the subordinates of the Forest Department.\textsuperscript{65} He also demanded the reduction in the irrigation rates so that the great disproportion between the total irrigable area and the area actually irrigated would decrease.\textsuperscript{66} Concerned with the further advancement of the irrigational works in the Presidency, he enquired about the progress of such works in the Council and urged the government to provide sufficient water for agricultural purposes.\textsuperscript{67} He also highlighted the burden of taxation on all the classes and urged for redress. He thus demanded reduction in the state demand\textsuperscript{68} and grazing fees\textsuperscript{69} to relieve the peasants and reduction in the income tax\textsuperscript{70} to relieve the middle and the upper classes.

Gokhale also outlined the importance of mass education and urged for wider diffusion of primary education. Instead of the Local Boards spending on the primary education he proposed the charge to be borne out of the Provincial revenues.\textsuperscript{71} He also put forth the grievances of the students of the Poona College of Science regarding limitations on the admissions put by the government.\textsuperscript{72} His exertions were thus directed towards the promotion of both primary and higher education. He also highlighted the grievances of the Khots like the suspension of the payment of Khots’ profits to Khots in Khoti villages under government management,\textsuperscript{73} non-payment of the remuneration promised to the Khots under the Government Resolution of 1876 which would prevent the eventual forfeiture of these
villages to the government, and the orders of the Collector of Rantnagiri requiring all the managing Khots to provide sureties for the due payment of government revenue.

On several occasions, Gokhale brought to the Government’s notice the general problems and grievances of the common people sometimes even citing individual cases of injustice and urged for their relief. Thus, on 14th February 1900, he urged the government to make provisions to improve the supply of drinking water in the several Deccan districts in view of the coming hot season. On 12th February 1901, he brought to notice the great dissatisfaction owing to the wholesale reduction in granting renewal of licenses for firearms in the Rantnagiri district. The government assured him of due consideration of the matter.

He also cited the general resentment among the villagers, especially of Khandesh district, on account of forcible seizure of private carts for the use of officials and the acquittal of these accused officials by the Magistrate of Parola. In a series of question asked on 12th March and again on 22nd August 1901, Gokhale brought up the grievances of the poor residents of Matheran and Mahabaleshwar. He objected to the increase in the monthly-rent of the unleased plots in the bazaar limits of Matheran and urged for an inquiry into the matter. He also inquired into the rightfulness of those orders, which expelled permanent residents from their hometowns. He also highlighted the problems of the horse owners in the Matheran. The official answer to all these questions was not definite and sometimes they were even unaware of the existence of these problems.

On 22nd August 1901, he urged an inquiry into the excessive low compensation given for the lands taken up permanently for the Shevgaon-Mohdi Road in the Shevgaon, Nevasa and Kopergaon Talukas. He also brought to notice the injustice done to a senior European official Mr. McIver who instead of being appointed to some Special Departments was appointed to a Deputy Collectorship of the 3rd grade. He thus highlighted the injustices done to all classes of Indians and also to the non-Indians.

Conclusion

It can be concluded that even in a brief span of two years, Gokhale was able to establish himself as a sincere and effective representative of the people in the Council. He exposed the inadequateness of the administrative measures with consummate skill.
However, being a beginner in the field, his inexperience and immaturity is easily betrayed. For example, he read out his speeches and sometimes spoke very rapidly. He also depended heavily on the advice and guidance of G. V. Joshi and M. G. Ranade. Then again, he decided to follow the lead of his senior colleague Pheroze Mehta in staging a walkout of the Council though he did not agree with such legislative tactics. These experiences, however, proved to be a useful training ground for him and he overcame the above-mentioned drawbacks during his membership of Imperial Council. Moreover, his dedication to his duty and undeterred opposition of official policies was clearly discernible inspite of his being new in the Council. It was this quality which made his election to the Imperial Legislative Council easy.
CHAPTER II

Ghokale in the Bombay Legislative Council

Footnotes

1. The Times of India, 26th August 1901.
4. Ibid., P. 21.
6. M.G. Ranade to G.K. Gokhale, 6th February 1899, Sr. No. 443-16, Gokhale Papers, Reel No. 9.
7. G.K. Gokhale to Rangopant, 20th October 1899, Sr. No. 203-19, Gokhale Papers, Reel No. 4.
8. Ibid.
9. M. G. Ranade to G. K. Gokhale, 9th October 1899, Sr. No. 443-29, Gokhale Papers, Reel No. 9.
10. G. K. Gokhale to Rangopant, 21st October 1899, Sr. No. 203-20, Gokhale Papers, Reel No. 4.
11. D. E. Wacha to G. K. Gokhale, 28th October 1899, Sr. No. 569-46, Gokhale Papers, Reel No. 11.
13. Ibid., P. 30.
16. Ibid., P.401.


18. Ibid., P. 9.

19. Ibid.

20. Ibid., P. 47.


22. Ibid., P. 10, 49 and 70 and also in Procds. Bombay, 1901, Vol. XXXIX, P. 211.


24. Ibid., P. 448.

25. Ibid., P. 450.


28. G. K. Gokhale to G. V. Joshi, 12th June 1901, Sr. No. 203-318, Gokhale Papers, Reel No. 5.


30. India, 2nd August 1901.

31. R. C. Dutt to G. K. Gokhale, 15th and also 30th August 1901, Sr. No. 168-4 and 5, Gokhale Papers, Reel No. 4.


33. Ibid., P. 365.


35. Ibid., P. 431.

36. Ibid., P. 438.

37. Ibid., P. 439.

42. The Times of India, 27th August 1901.
43. R. C. Dutt. to G. K. Gokhale, 26th September 1901, Sr. 168, Gokhale Papers, Reel No. 4.
44. William Digby to G. K. Gokhale, 23rd September 1901, Sr. No. 160, Gokhale Papers, Reel No. 4.
46. G. K. Gokhale to G. V. Joshi, 6th August 1900, Sr. No. 203-310 (34A), Gokhale Papers, Reel No. 5.
47. Sr. No. 203-308, Gokhale Papers, Reel No. 5.
49. Ibid., P. 130.
50. Ibid., P. 121.
51. Ibid., P. 133.
52. Ibid., P. 125.
53. Ibid., P. 133.
56. Ibid., P. 404.
57. G. K. Gokhale to G. V. Joshi, 26th February1901, Sr. No. 203-311, Gokhale Papers, Reel No. 5.
59. Ibid., P. 406.
60. Ibid., P. 407.
61. Ibid., P. 408.
62. Ibid., P. 408-09.
63. Ibid., P. 410.
64. Ibid., 413.
65. Ibid., P. 452.
66. Ibid.
69. Ibid., P. 452.
70. Ibid., P. 454.
71. Ibid., P. 455.
74. Ibid., P. 72.
75. Ibid., P. 71.
76. Ibid., P.30.
78. Ibid., P. 146.
79. Ibid., P. 147 – 148.
80. Ibid., P. 148.
81. Ibid., P. 212 – 213.