CHAPTER IV
Tilak's Opposition to Education and Non-Brahmin Empowerment

Tilak at the very outset of his public life acknowledged the turmoil facing the Hindu Society. He called on "everyone that pretends to the title of educated must do everything in his power to give a definite form to this unsettled state of things". Tilak emphasized the necessity of resolving the religious chaos in matters of observing rituals (Mantras and Tantras) and the differences between various schools of thought, Monotheism and Pantheism". He also emphasized that "already a struggle between the castes has commenced". This struggle was due to the consistent attack on caste by reformers and the growing consciousness among the non-Brahmins against caste legitimized differentiation and discrimination. Caste was the most cherished institution by the orthodox Brahmanical society. Tilak discussed at length the twelve important criticism of the institution of caste by the reformers and those who held the caste as an obstruction to national development.

The non-Brahmin consciousness began with Jotirao Phule's attack on caste. Phule considered that the institution of caste was responsible for the decadence of Hindu society and it was anti-thesis of the principle, that all men are equal. Phule did not locate the essence of revolt within the Hindu society, from which other aspects could be criticized. He judged the

1 *Mahratta*, March 26, 1881, p.2.
society by standing outside the cultural system from the standpoint of rationality and equality. Phule's cultural anchorage was "outside the Brahmanic cultural system and not outside the Hindu society".\(^5\) Since the caste promoted inequality was rooted in irrationality, he rejected the entire value system and sought to introduce a new value premise wherein, religious pragmatism and social equality formed the basis of new social order. Phule's attack covered the entire Brahmanical mythology, the origin of the caste system, the Aryan invasion, and the Saint-poets of Maharashtra. After exposing the inconsistencies in these subjects, he went on to introduce a simple ritual\(^6\) system to the non-Brahmins, thereby making them independent of the Brahmins.

Phule attempted to empower non-Brahmins by promoting education.\(^7\) Phule in his representation to the Hunter Commission on Indian education in 1882 stressed the neglect of primary education of the Shudras, Mahars, Mangs and Muslims in the Bombay presidency.\(^8\) Phule suggested that the government should give more importance to primary education than the higher education and opined that the withdrawal of government from schools would tend to check the spread of education. Phule proposed to the government to institute scholarships in order to encourage them to attend high school, college and even engineering college. The colonial government responded to Phule's proposal by granting scholarships for poor non-Brahmin students.\(^9\) This was in addition to the pioneering efforts

\(^7\) Ghanshyam Shah, *Social Movements in India*, (New Delhi, 1990), p.126.
of Phule in establishing schools for non-Brahmins and women. This had the most threatening effect on the old elite. They feared that the extension of higher education to the lower caste would hamper their virtual monopoly in public services.\textsuperscript{10} Phule's attack on Brahminism attempted to make non-Brahmins independent of Brahmanical ritualistic control and empowered them to pose a threat to their monopoly of knowledge and power. Satyashodak polemic expressed the revolt of the lower classes within a single socio-cultural system. It was a class type of conflict that was the fundamental basis for debates over group identity and status\textsuperscript{11}. Phule's social revolt had its own inherent contradictions. His militant stand of emancipating the depressed classes by providing a new identity,\textsuperscript{12} an identity common to all non-Brahmins was not well received by the economically dominant \textit{Maratha} Community, who were more keen to accept the \textit{Kshatriya} status than to be identified with the ritualistically lower caste groups and Phule's opposition to \textit{sanskritization} was also ignored.\textsuperscript{13} However Phule's social revolt gave directions to the non-Brahmins to question the hegemonic superiority in knowledge and power. The non-Brahmins began to demand for their children schools where there was none. Phule very forcefully appealed to the colonial government for increased opportunities for education and employment.

By 1870 the non-Brahmin threat was perceived on ideological terms by the landed Brahmins. Vishnu Shastri Chiplunkar was the first to attack

\begin{itemize}
\item J.R. Shinde, (1985), p.79.
\item Meera Kosambi, "Continuties and Discontinuities in Maharashtra's Socio-cultural scene". \textit{EPW}, Sep, 18 1893, p.1979.
\end{itemize}
Phule's ideology of a separate non-Brahmin identity in his Nibhandmala and called upon the educated young Brahmins to reestablish the Brahminical hegemony in the Hindu society, In order to do so the non-Brahmin aspirations in attaining higher education were to be contained. Since this was not possible as long as the education was in the hands of the colonial government, Tilak began a struggle against the colonial government to transfer education into the private hands.

1. Tilak's Opposition to Mass Education

Transferring education into the private hands was a constant demand throughout the political career of Tilak. Education was to be kept away from the masses and various arguments were put forward to avoid compulsory primary education. Tilak's article in Mahratta argued that "the subjects like History, Geography Mathematics and Natural Philosophy... have no earthly use in practical life" and blamed the educational system for not including "moral philosophy, political economy and sciences". Mass education proposed by the reformers and Phule was criticized,

You take away a farmer's boy from the plough, the blacksmith's boy from the bellows and the Cobbler's boy from his awl with the object of giving him liberal education... and the boy learns to condemn the profession of his father, not to speak of the loss to

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15 Kesari article 'Konkanasta, Deshasta and Kharada interdining and inter-marriages' measures were proposed to bring these three Brahmin communities, together in these times of distress". Kesari,* 1882, p.3. Govind Babaji Joshi a Chipavan reformer decided to marry his three daughters into three different subcastes of Brahmins. He placed an advertisements in papers like Indu Prakash for grooms but "at the first instance was able to find only one suitable Kharad boy living in the Kannada province almost a Kannada in language and lifestyle". He lamented on the lack of enthusiasm on the part of Brahmins residing in Maharashtra. He was able to find grooms for other girls between 1881 to 1884. N.K. Wagle, Three letters of G.B.Joshi on inter- Jati marriages in the nineteenth century Maharashtra in N.K. Wagle (ed.) Writers, Editors and Reformers (New Delhi, 1999), p.201.

16 Mahratta, May 15 1881, p.3. Our system of Education – A defect and a cure
which the latter is put by being deprived of the son's assistance at the old trade. Having done this the boy looks up to the government to give him a job... Mass education removed the youth from a sphere where he would have been contented happy and useful to those who depend upon him and teach him to be discontented with his lot and with the government. 

Tilak criticized the effort of the colonial government in bringing education to the villages and encouraging the peasant's children to take up education.

With a view of securing a larger attendance of Kunbi children in the schools the government has lately placed the primary schools under the control of revenue officers.... they are required to induce cultivators and others to send their children to schools but no one has paused to inquire what ultimate good is to be derived by this forcing process, and whether more harm than good is not likely to result from it.

Tilak argued that instead of teaching ornamental subjects, the Kunbi children were to be taught those subjects which would be necessary for their living. He suggested to the government to open technical schools at the villages or a group of villages to teach the "most ordinary trades" like those of "a carpenter, black smith, mason, tailor etc." To this list of subjects, "quarrying and mining, the smelting of iron ore" were to be included; even this "rational system of education" was not to be made compulsory to those "to whom education was unsuited and useless". Tilak stated that the article aimed to "create awareness among the readers regarding the financial aspects of compulsory education". The sources of income of the educational department were from firstly, the grants made by

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17 ibid.
18 ibid. p.4.
19 ibid. p.3.
20 ibid.p.4.
the government from provincial revenues and secondly, the one third portion of the one Anna local Fund Revenue.

The total expenditure from these two sources in the year (1880) was Rs. 24,13,175. The total number of scholars upon whom the amount has been expended is 2,75,133 of which 1,11,565 are the children of cess-payers. The number of Kunbis or cultivators is 43,650 with the view of securing a larger attendance of Kunbi children in the schools govt. have lately placed the primary school under the control of Revenue officers.. no one has paused to inquire what ultimate good is to be derived by this forcing process. 21

Teaching the "Kunbi children, reading, writing and rudiments of history, geography and mathematics" was likely to do "more harm than good to them". 22 Tilak argued that the curriculum taught to other children was unsuitable to the peasant's children, who needed to be taught the traditional occupation. This was the most definite way of avoiding competition to the old elite in higher education and jobs. Tilak criticized the reformers and the colonial government for sacrificing everything at the altar of education and questioned,

Whether we might not consult our own interest than blindly joining in the cry of education for the masses. 23 We do not wish that because our present system of education is defective and not suited to all, that government should close all its schools and colleges and blot out the Department of Public Instruction. It would argue in us an utter want of appreciation of the elevating influences of a liberal education, if we did so... what we wish and

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21 ibid. p.3.
22 ibid.
23 In September 1849 the Bombay government received a representation from a number of liberal Brahmins protesting against "the old illiberal and barbarous prejudice of confining learning to the Brahmin Caste and locking it up in stores which the great mass of the people will never be able or hope to open what the nation most wants in its useful arts, science and morals and they should find them not certainly in the dead Sanskrit, but in the animated English literature". Quoted in B.R. Nanda, Gokhale, Tilak and the Nehrus, (London, 1974), p.16.
contend for is in short let those, who choose avail themselves of the means of higher education, but let those to whom such education in unsuited and useless— we had a almost said positively injurious — be provided with the means of education of the kind befitting their rank and station in life, and more certain of giving them the bread they want. 24

Since the colonial government and the missionaries were the two important agencies imparting western knowledge and they could not be influenced to accept such a discriminating system of education, Tilak attacked the missionary schools for their incompetence,

they are inefficient Free Church college (at Poona) during the last twenty years had not been able to produce more than twenty five graduates, where as the government college has produced on an average of thirty five to forty graduates every year. 25

Tilak demanded that the Missionary Schools should be transferred to the municipalities with complete power of recruitment of teachers in the hands of school boards, not just for lightening the financial burden but

the local bodies are the best agencies for the work. They know the wants of their own locality and they alone can adjust the course of instruction, the number of schools, the subjects to be taught and ultimately the grants to be given to local educational enterprise. 26

Since the local bodies were controlled by the landed elite, it was possible either to send anti-reformer representatives due to their strength as only the tax payers were allowed to vote, or to exert enough pressure upon the reformer representatives to impose the will of the anti-reformers. Restricting education to those who had “natural inclination” 27 was strongly advocated by Tilak .

24 Mahratta, May 15 1881, p.3.
26 Mahratta, Jan 18, 1885.
27 Mahratta, May 15 1881.
Tilak opposed the admission of *Mahars and Mangs* to the schools where the upper-class children studied.\(^{28}\) Tilak argued that the demand for the admission of *Mahars* to the schools was not voiced by the *Mahars* themselves;\(^ {29}\) it was a movement created by emotional British officers and impractical native reformers.\(^ {30}\)

> these reformers... an insignificant minority who in their zeal for the doctrine of the equality of mankind are encouraging the *Mahar* boys to seek admission into government schools... is causing inconvenience to the caste Hindus.\(^ {31}\)

The colonial government’s support to such an endeavour was against the spirit of queen’s proclamation,\(^ {32}\) which guaranteed that the government would "abstain from all interference with religious belief". On the contrary attempts were made by the indiscreet officers to force the association of *Mahar* (and *Dhades*) on Brahmin boys.\(^ {32}\) The article also condemned the attempt by the prostitutes to admit their children to the municipal schools which had earlier been turned down by the board.\(^ {33}\) Tilak blamed the missionaries for setting up low caste people to push forth their claim to admission into schools.\(^ {34}\)

Tilak’s attack on colonial education was not restricted to admission of non-Brahmins into the schools. He criticized the Bombay University’s

\(^{28}\) *Mahratta*, March 26 1882, p.5. Admission of Mahar boys into Govt. Schools.

\(^{29}\) In the mid nineteenth century, a Mahar boy from Dharwar applied for admission to a government school. Upon being refused, he appealed to the Education Department of Bombay province and in 1857 to the Government of India of Calcutta, but his petition was not granted on the grounds that opposition from higher castes was too strong. Elenor Zelliot, *From Untouchable to Dalit*, (New Delhi, 1992), p.38.

\(^{30}\) M.M. Kunte, the Head Master of the New English School started by Chiplunkar and Tilak before the Hunter Commission, quoted in J.R. Shinde, (1985), p. 97-98.

\(^{31}\) *Mahratta*, March 26 1882, p.5.

\(^{32}\) *Mahratta*, Sep 20 1885, p.1.

\(^{33}\) *Mahratta*, Sep 20 1885, p.1. Independent power of Municipalities in respect of public education.

\(^{34}\) ibid.
efforts to simplify the syllabus for the Matric examination as well as for the B.A. examination. The university in 1881 decided to introduce translation from the vernacular to English instead of paraphrasing and admit students who had not taken a classical language in Matric and also simplified Sanskrit and Maths papers. M.G Ranade considered that the early death of graduates was due to poverty and heavy syllabus and the examination system and pleaded the government to simplify it. So simplified syllabus and examination system would help poor graduate students who would turn out to be reformers. Tilak called these measures "Richard Temple's tyranny" and criticized the colonial government for lowering the standard of education. He said that,

> the natives of high social order who are both intelligent and imaginative can understand English authors as correctly and enter into their spirit as fully as ordinary Englishman.  

Hence the need to reduce the standard of education was motivated by Richard Temple's desire to increase the number of passes in the Matric and degree examination. Tilak stated that we expect in a few years, the number of Matric candidates will rise to two thousand or more and the number of passed to six or seven hundred or more. Our colleges will be filled with more students. Tilak stated that if such a situation arose the professors would find it extremely difficult to teach overcrowded classes. Hence, he argued that it was a suicidal policy to implement such measures.

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36 Mahratta, Aug 21 1881, p.1. Our University III.  
37 Mahratta, Aug 7 1881, p.1. Our University I.  
38 ibid.  
39 Mahratta, Aug 14 1881 p.1 Our University. II  
40 ibid.
At this stage Tilak did not consider that the English education as detrimental to the national interest. On the contrary he believed in the civilizing influence of English education. Mahratta wrote.

Before the English education was introduced into the country, we were as ignorant a mass of people as could exist in the nineteenth century, we ourselves had developed few or none of the exact sciences; of the vast field of knowledge and industry opened by European intelligence and enterprise. We were as ignorant as a man on the moon. Even now a little progress has actually been made in English education. We are far from realizing the actual extent to which European knowledge, in all its manifold departments, has advanced, .... we are yet an agriculture nation. Tilak believed or at least considered the providential nature of the English education. He refuted the charges that it was "necessary and fashionable to speak and write English". He said, "we believe that this is too short-sighted and mercenary a view of the study of one of the most developed languages of Europe". The advantages of studying English "was for more important and precious". English exercised influence,

not only on our modes of thought and expression, but on almost every important portion of our individual or national activity... our views about government and policy, and all our future aspirations, are subject to this reforming influence of the English language. Again, the English language is to us a representative of all the languages of civilized Europe. So there was no question of opposing English language or education as the country was backward in its industries and remained far behind the European countries. Similarly Vishnu Shastri Chiplunkar believed that,

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41 Mahratta, Feb 15 1885, p.2. Functions of our Universities.
42 Mahratta, March 15 1885, p.2. Our views about the University Curriculum.

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the English system of education essentially healthy, but perhaps
the defective manner in which the system works in India has been
responsible for creating exactly contrary results.\(^{43}\)

Tilak argued that the duty of a graduate was to utilize the "intelligence and
labour of the country most advantageously, to produce most beneficial
results".\(^{44}\) Instead, Tilak argued, that all that the graduates were doing was
to seek immediate reform and consider persons who were reputed to be
wise and experienced as selfish cowards.\(^{45}\) This was due to the fact that the
graduate's,

moral nature and political instincts are too high... and not knowing
the practical ways of the world, his moral nature is shocked at the
sight of the most degrading vices and superstitions which are but
too common in the world, or his stream political instincts are
stirred up at the sight of oppression, dishonesty and a thousands
other evils, from which few governments are entirely free.\(^{46}\)

So the defect of the colonial educational system was that it did not
include in its syllabus "general culture" which would have curbed the
above tendencies. Tilak wrote at length on the issues of general culture and
special culture. By special culture Tilak meant the European knowledge
and general culture stood for something Indian,\(^{47}\) yet not specifically
discussed as to what it amounted to. It was an instruction, which would
guide the "duties of graduates in relation to the society".\(^{48}\) and "sufficiently

\(^{44}\) *Mahratta*, Feb 15 1885, p.2. Functions of our Universities.
\(^{45}\) *Mahratta*, Feb 15 1885, p.113.
\(^{46}\) ibid.
\(^{47}\) *Mahratta*, March 15 1885, p.2. Our views about the University Curriculum.
\(^{48}\) ibid.
enlarge their ideas to take a correct and liberal view of the matters that are likely to engage their attention.\(^{49}\)

To carry out the instructions in the general culture, Tilak suggested changes in the methodology of teaching itself.\(^{50}\) Tilak stated that the system followed was invented by in a haphazard way by the schoolmasters with different aims in view.\(^{51}\)

The school masters, as they at present are, are so little accustomed to think on the nature of the subject to be taught and to observe the nature of the mind to be educated, that it is almost a matter of mere accident whether an intelligent boy preserves his superiority over boys of less intelligence, or turns out to be a careless whimsical boy wasting his ingenuity in defending farfetched ideas and in pursuing impractical schemes, which often prove injurious to himself and other people.\(^{52}\)

Tilak considered that the western knowledge was very essential for the material development of the country. However the uncontrolled, western knowledge produced inconsiderate graduates who worked against the interest of the society. So knowledge was to be controlled at two different levels. In the first level general culture, or morality or a sense of self discipline was to be introduced which controlled the rebellious nature of the graduates, thereby making them conversant with western knowledge with strong religious moorings. At the second level the spread of western knowledge was to be controlled by introducing vernaculars raising the standard of Education and restricting both primary and collegiate education to the elite.

\(^{49}\) ibid. p.3.

\(^{50}\) *Mahratta*, June 21, 1885, p.3. Professorships and Lectureships on the subject of Education.

\(^{51}\) ibid. p.4.

\(^{52}\) ibid.
By 1885 Tilak realised that support to English education proved detrimental to anti-reformer's interests, as more and more Brahmin students began to rebel against the society and more non-Brahmin students began to pursue collegiate education. Tilak began to support the introduction of vernaculars in the colonial education system,

vernacular should be made the medium of instruction in our High schools we are of opinion of that if this were done the next generation of students would receive a sounder education than they at present do.\textsuperscript{53}

The vernacular to be introduced was Sanskritized Marathi and not pure Marathi, as the Sanskritized Marathi had the ability to "transcribe... foreign sciences into Marathi."\textsuperscript{54} The teaching of mathematics in Marathi was also supported.\textsuperscript{55} Tilak suggested the extension of the three-year degree courses into a four year one which would enable a student to be thorough in the subjects and only the students serious enough to devote time and energy towards acquiring knowledge would opt for it. Tilak argued that such a measure would reduce the increasing number of graduates every year. Tilak wrote,

We believe, there are few person who would like to see a large number of men honoured with the title of B.A. without any regard to what their qualifications are for that honour. ... no one will like to see the title of B.A. degraded into a common place and implying no high educational worth. Another consideration leads us to the same conclusion. As education and knowledge advance and reach a wider and wider portion of the community competition for government or other services * harder every year... the government not being in a position to have a test examination of its own, is required to make an indiscriminate

\textsuperscript{53} \textit{Mahratta}, July 12 1885, p.2. Reform of the University Curriculum
\textsuperscript{54} \textit{Mahratta}, March 20 1887, p.5. Sanskritized vs pure Marathi
\textsuperscript{55} \textit{Mahratta}, Apr 18 1886, p.2. The Cultivation of Indian Vernacular.
selection of servants from among a large number of graduate applicants.\textsuperscript{56}

The demand by the non-Brahmin and the depressed classes for education on equal terms within the same existing English education pattern and Phule’s emphasis for compulsory primary education\textsuperscript{57} worsened already existing animosity between anti-reformist Brahmins and the non-Brahmins. Non-Brahmin movement led by Phule questioned the legitimacy of caste hierarchy. However it was the demand for education that tilted the carefully maintained balance, in favour of non-Brahmins. The occupational threat perceived by Tilak to the landed elite by the non-Brahmins\textsuperscript{58} and reformers was to be contained by the methods of increasing the educational standards, the number of years in colleges as well as transferring the educational institutions from the hands of the government into the private hands. Tilak considered that the

indiscriminate competition for the government's offices would lead to indiscriminate selection like the competitive examination to test the caliber of the candidates.\textsuperscript{59}

The reformers on the other hand pressed hard for implementing compulsory education. Gokhale speaking at the second Bombay provincial conference stated that,

educationally Indians are very poorly fed... since Duffrin's time the department of education was placed on famine ration,

and urged the government to take up a firm stand. \textit{Mahratta} opposed such a stand by stating that,

\textsuperscript{56} \textit{Mahratta}, March 1 1885, p. Reasons for raising the standard of education.


\textsuperscript{58} J.R. Shinde, (1985), p.79.

\textsuperscript{59} \textit{Mahratta}, March 1 1885.
Whatever the eloquence of the facts and figures Mr. Gokhale, we stick to our view and say that the leaders of public movement are committing serious blunder in insisting upon government to continue to maintain and manage institutions, the utility of which is disproportionately too small compared to the cost they entail and in which hardly any scope for development.\(^{60}\)

The occupational threat was perceived not only with regards to the government jobs but also in the technical field. Tilak considered that India was technically backward but was "content with some preliminary steps in the introduction of technical education" than to introduce technical education in every town and village throughout India.\(^{61}\) Tilak criticized Taleyarkhan's scheme,\(^{62}\) which attempted to introduce technical education on the European model with assistance from the experts of various countries of Europe. Tilak considered "grandeur of Taleyarkhan," as unfavourable. The scheme proposed to introduce a special tax to finance such an undertaking. The proposed taxes included enhancing the Salt tax, reimposing import duties, universalizing the income tax, "the fat farmers and landlords, who pay or do not pay at all some antiquated states dues, be sufficiently taxed". The list also included some newly devised birth, succession, marriage and feast tax. Tilak opposed the taxes and the government involvement in the scheme and stated that he "favoured only municipal and public contributions for establishing the technical schools". Tilak's proposal "confined the technical schools within the limits of cities and larger towns and admissions to such schools in the hands of few who are the financial contributors and municipal councilors". Tilak wrote at length about the neglect of technical education in India and that the

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61 *Mahratta*, Feb 28, 1886, p.1 How to introduce technical education in India?

62 D.A. Taleyarkhan was the state municipal commissioner of Baroda whose ruler Gaikwad's non-Brahmin leaning was often criticized by Tilak, *Mahratta* Oct. 16 1881, p.2.
government favoured "ornamental education", but made serious effort to stop any kind of education reaching the masses. This was also the time that Tilak organized the industrial conference in Poona and read a paper on the industrial aspects of the caste system. In his speech, Tilak basically approached the concept of superiority and inferiority and contempt, associated with the Caste system. Tilak argued that the feeling of contempt originally did not exist and could be removed through toleration and compromise and through the leaders of the Hindu society. So the abolition of caste was not necessary. Those who asked for the abolition of caste were a small minority of extreme thinkers.

Tilak considered that caste was an essentially secular and social organization among the members of the Aryan race. He compared the caste to the trade guilds of medieval Europe and served the same purpose in ancient times. He hoped that the caste as an institution would work like a trade union in the modern times. For this he wished that the colonial government would give active support.

I know that the government has refrained from interfering with caste questions from a desire to let them alone. But I believe that the non-interference of Government in such cases, is itself an interference with caste practices interference nonetheless serious because it is negative in its form. The proposition may appear paradoxical at the first sight, but a little consideration will show that it is as sound as any.

Concluding his speech Tilak stated that "the caste as an Industrial institution is very useful and endeavours ought to be made to preserve it

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63 Samagra Tilak, Vol.7, "Hindu castes from an industrial point of view" Speech delivered in Sep 1892 p.471.
64 ibid. p.477.
65 ibid. p.469.
66 ibid. p.475.
from decay" and in order to do so he proposed to introduce the western concept of co-operation and enterprises"\(^{67}\) However this stand of Tilak failed to impress the Satya Shodaks.

By 1888-89, it was clear, that the Brahmins were losing the ground at least in primary and secondary education in the Bombay presidency. The report of the Director of Public instruction, printed in Mahratta\(^{68}\) clearly stated the tilt towards the non-Brahmin education. For the year 1887-88, out of 484039, secondary school students, only 93,336 were Brahmins. The rest included 2,87,641 other Hindus, 9360 low castes. In the year 1888-89, of the total no of 507,752 students, only 95919 were Brahmins and 2,99,716 were other Hindus and 10,630 low castes. The credit did not entirely go to the colonial government as the non Brahmins also undertook individual efforts in this direction. In 1888 Krishnarao Bhalekar a Satyashodak leader started Din Bandhu Sarvajanik Sabha Free School in Poona with the help of M.G. Ranade and Lokhitwadi which became very popular.\(^{69}\) Tilak realized, that the idea of keeping the masses out of the reach of schools and colleges by rising the standard of education would not work as the colonial government and the reformers were collaborators in this enterprise. Hence he began a systematic attack on the colonial education system as a whole and the part played by the colonial government in particular.

In 1889, Tilak began the attack on the colonial education system and "those who are carrying on the agitation for the maintenance of costly

\(^{67}\) ibid. p.477.

\(^{68}\) The Statistics as printed in Mahratta March 16, 1890, p.2.

government institutions". Tilak opposed the government maintaining the education institutions. He proposed a scheme, where in "the presidency should be broken up into a number of educational units, not only for the purposes of the distribution of funds but also for the purposes of meeting the educational requirements of the variously civilized communities". The educational units were to consist of elected and the official members. "The municipal constituencies were to be utilized and asked to elect a certain numbers of representatives for the Educational Boards". These Boards were to be empowered to determine firstly, the number of schools primary, secondary, technical necessary for the locality; secondly to determine the rate of fee to be charged in the several schools and the number of free studentships to be allotted to them; thirdly to determine the class of each school in point of cost and standard of teaching.

Entrusting, primary and secondary education in the hands of elected education board with powers to decide which locality needed school and which did not, what was the amount of fee to be charged and the standard of teaching each class was an incredible idea. The municipal constituencies which elected municipal board members consisted of only tax payers who also happened to be the members of elite economically dominant class cluster of landed Brahmins and merchants. Hence the responsibility of entrusting entire educational apparatus in the hands of old elite elected members was sure to prevent the reformers and non-Brahmins from entering the schools and Brahmins who were also reformers from being appointed as teachers.

72 ibid.
The second point of attack on the colonial educational system was that it gave less prominence to the study of vernaculars. Tilak began to argue that the vernacular was to receive highest priority in primary and secondary education. Tilak also blamed,

the agitators who are for mass education and the maintenance of costly government schools, are the persons responsible for insisting on continuing English as the medium of instruction. This sin of keeping a large portion of the population in complete ignorance of western thought and culture is thus on their heads and we are trying to avoid that sin; but they would not allow us to do it.\textsuperscript{73}

Tilak's contention was that, those who supported mass education opposed vernacular education is incorrect as both Reformers and Phule, who strongly advocated mass education, favoured vernacular education. Ranade was personally responsible for the introduction of Marathi at graduation level in Bombay University. The third important point made by Tilak in his attack on the colonial education system was that there was a lack of moral discipline in schools and colleges,

the evil lies in the system of education itself... Under the influence of western education old beliefs have been shaken and all domestic and social discipline, as it hitherto obtained, has come to be looked upon as unworthy of our adherence... The holiest of our books-we mean the Vedas - is taught in our schools and colleges in the most profane manner possible our religious and social restraints are fast loosing their hold upon us and the frame of mind which brings about these results naturally refuses to submit to new restraints.\textsuperscript{74}

\textit{Mahratta} argued that,

\textsuperscript{73} \textit{Mahratta}, March 3 1889, p.1.

\textsuperscript{74} \textit{Mahratta}, Sep 8 1889, Moral Discipline in Schools and Colleges Editorial p.1.
the whole question reduces itself to how to engraft a higher civilization upon a nation without destroying the feelings of respect and reverence which are essential to the stability of every social system. Can it be done by the Secular system of education, which is at present followed by Government? and if not, how can a foreign government, differing from the rules, in religion and many other circumstances, improve it so as to secure a steady progress?.

So western education removed "respect for old institutions and beliefs ... people have ceased to look upon the past with reverence", and it was essential to bring back the old discipline in the schools and colleges. The secular system of education which was followed by the government schools under a foreign government was the most unlikely means of doing it. So Tilak argued that the educational institutions were to be transferred into the hands of native agencies, as there was a "very large avoidable waste of teaching power in the country. If this were to be utilized provision can be made for the teaching of more than fifty-seven percent of the population.

However Tilak's arguments that Vernacular and the transferring of education into private native hands would bring about education for the masses was contradicted by his own arguments on compulsory and free education. In 1890 the Ahmadabad Municipality wanted to introduce government rules which made "penal under the municipal act to allow a child beyond six years and below thirteen years to remain ignorant of the three Rs". Tilak opposed it by saying that

75 ibid.

76 Mahratta, Nov 30 1890, p.2. Mass Education Editorial..
we want that government should send the child to a school where
a demand for it has been made. We want the parents to be bound
to send their children to school where a school exists.\textsuperscript{77}

So logically where schools did not exist and where the demands for schools
had not been made, no compulsion was to apply. Again when the free
education bill was introduced in the British parliament,\textsuperscript{78} Tilak said that
"we have not arrived at a stage when the institutions of free education may
be introduced with advantage to our country".\textsuperscript{79}

Tilak's opposition to compulsory education was guided by the fear
of occupational threat by the non-Brahmins, which also threatened the
position of Brahmins against the masses within the Indian caste-class
hierarchy and destroy the intellectual aristocracy carefully constructed and
maintained since the medieval period. This was one of the major points of
differences with the reformers. Ranade's sense of social justice\textsuperscript{80} and
Agarkar's totally rationalist approach refused to spare the caste interests
overtake the national interest where ideally every citizen men and women
were educated and led highly moralistic life.\textsuperscript{81} The reformers were also
aware of the opposition from the anti-reformers and were willing to slowly
persuade the orthodoxy to accept the reforms. Tilak opposed the
persuasiveness of the reformers by stating that -

\begin{quote}
there are innumerable points on which the minority of intelligent
men will claim the possible persuasibility of majority; and if in all
these cases government action is invoked by the reformers, there
cannot be a worse kind of oppression, we may mention here an
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{77} ibid.
\textsuperscript{78} Mahratta, July 19 1891, p.8.
\textsuperscript{79} Mahratta, July 26 1891, p.6.
\textsuperscript{81} Y.D. Phadke, Social Reformers of Maharashtra, (New Delhi, 1989), p.39.

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instance - the compulsory education of children, a special education tax, the license tax intended to insure against famine and such other taxes ... a precedent of legal interference in any one of these instances will serve to pave the way for the others. The success of the present agitators is sure to rouse into action others of the same or perhaps more sanguine temper.  

The reformer's beliefs and emphasis on mass education, which undermined caste, gave a deathblow to the Hindu religion. Attacking Gokhale's insistence on expanding educational infrastructure, Mahratta wrote,

the leaders of the public movements are committing serious blunder in insisting upon government to continue to maintain and manage institutions the utility of which is disproportionately too small compared to the cost they entail and in which there is hardly any scope for development. Mr. Gokhale seemed to make much of the money spent upon education by the nations of Europe.

The threat to the institution of caste was the greatest of all the threats to the nineteenth century Hinduism. Efforts were made to organize the Brahmin elite to dissect the exact causes threatening the caste system. In 1886 Mahratta reported an event called Hemantotsva (Autumn Festival) of the Bombay Hindu Union club, in which Brahmin scholars belonging various places and proficient in both secular and religious matters took part. Discussions were centered around the scriptural sanctions regarding social issues, metaphysics and the state of the nineteenth century Hinduism. Scriptural sanctions regarding the social issues particularly concerning the Age of Consent were extensively discussed. Discussion on metaphysics centered around an appreciation of Madhva philosophy.

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82 Mahratta, Dec 14 1884, pp1-2
83 Mahratta, Oct 4 1891, An Eccentric tendency: How to meet it, p.2 Ed.
85 Mahratta, Feb 21 1886, p.7.
86 Mahratta, Feb 28 1886, p.6.
with a view to bring together the rival Konkanastha and Deshantha Brahmins. The participants also discussed the attacks on the institution of caste and held the English education responsible for it. Educational system particularly primary education given in rural areas was attacked,

What does our cultivator's son care whether Peshwa reigned in Poona and Aurangzeb had his court in Delhi? Of course a knowledge of the history and geography of one's own and foreign countries has its advantages for advanced students, but to an agriculturists they are none. The educational department ought to remodel the courses prescribed for village schools for Rayat's children and introduce in them agricultural subjects such as preparing of soil, the tending of bullocks the implements of husbandry.

The institution of caste was upheld as a proud possession of the nineteenth century Hinduism. Caste was declared as an "absolute necessity" so that "different communities could live in peace". The system was "calculated both to impart contentment and peaceful citizenship". It was argued that, it was impossible that all persons could be of the same caste as it would result in (Varnasankara) mixing of castes which was characterized in the Bhagwad Gita as hell (Sankare Narakyeva). Hence everyone should try to go according to his religion.

The speakers at the meetings stated that the evils of caste system were "much magnified by interested persons". The caste jealousy was of recent growth and it was due to a combination of circumstances, which

88 Speech of Kashinath Panth Khare reported in Maharatta, Feb 21 1886, p.5.
89 Maharatta, Feb 14 1886, p.5.
90 Maharatta, Feb 14 1886, p.6. Until Tilak came in Contact with the Bharat Dharma Mahamandala established by the Maharaja of Darbhanga in 1892, the word religion in the writings of Kesari and Maharatta denoted varnashrama dharma or jati dharma. Hinduism meant performing one's own caste duties.
91 Maharatta, Feb 14 1886, p.5.
included the colonial government which at the advise of the reformers, missionaries, street preachers\textsuperscript{92} and emotional British officers had "issued orders putting limitation upon their employment in the service". The speakers warned that "these feuds are likely to intensify further if timely measures are not adopted to check them".\textsuperscript{93}

The speeches delivered at the \textit{Hemantotsava} expressed the urgency of the situation, "the serious calamity awaiting us in the destruction of our National Religion". \textit{Varnashrama Dharma} was called the national religion and arguments were put forward to oppose the reformers claim that the division of the community into castes was an important reason for the inability to defend themselves against foreign aggression. \textit{Mahratta} argued that caste did not weaken the society as "even Krishna has preached the doctrine of each one to his duty in the \textit{Bhagwadgita}".\textsuperscript{94} The speaker argued that the Vedas and \textit{smritis} were above logic could not be questioned, just because some of their content did not meet the approval of the people trained in English way of reasoning. Those who "depreciated \textit{shastras}" were called "atheists and the example of Sankaracharya seeking the help of the sword to put down the atheists" was invoked and in the end, the speaker declared that "\textit{ashrama dharma} had reduced the caste system to a science".\textsuperscript{95}

Upholding the institution of caste and attacking the colonial government and the reformers for undermining caste did not go unchallenged during the discussions held at Hemantotsva meetings. \textit{Mahratta} reported two incidents of opposition to such thinking by the

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{92} The word was used in the editorial to denote Phule and Satya Shodak Samaj \textit{Mahratta} Jan 12 1890, p.4.
\item \textsuperscript{93} \textit{Mahratta}, Feb 14 1886, p.5.
\item \textsuperscript{94} \textit{Mahratta}, March 21, 1886, pp.4-5.
\item \textsuperscript{95} \textit{Mahratta}, Feb. 14, 1886, p.5.
\end{itemize}
organizers at a meeting. A Maratha speaker opposed the speaker's blaming the colonial government for the ills affecting the society. He also did not find any fault with the English education and the university curriculum. A Brahmin speaker Rao Saheb Bapat at the same meeting countered a speaker's defence of Peshwa regime. He stated that even Savai Madhaurao Peshwa the just, had done nothing for the security of his subject's life and property and the complaints had to go to the highest authority through channels which were open to bribery and the robberies were more conspicuous by their frequent occurrences than the few rendered in our own times.96

The voice of dissent97 in the club meetings denoted that, at the Hemantosvga meeting not all were willing to accept newly emerging anti-reformist theory that the colonial education had lured the unsuspecting youth and poisoned the hearts of the youth.98 However, except these two voices of dissent, Mahratta did not report any such differences of opinion during its other eight editions covering the entire sphere of discussions held during the meetings. Malabari made a clear distinction between Brahmin reformers the orthodox Pundits and the priestly class and argued that the first two categories "were no match for the priestly class" who exercised immense power. "Priest is a friend of the caste, the custodian of its honour and integrity". So Malabari regarded the age of Consent issue not as a

96 Mahratta, Feb 21 1886, p.6.
97 Phule also stated in his "warnings:" 'that there were several Brahmins who were convinced about the tyrannical and oppressive rule of the Peshwas, but for the fear of their own caste men they could not master enough courage to confess'. M.J. Phule, (1991), p.62.
98 Mahratta April 17 1887, p.6, letter to the editor signed A sufferer.
measure for women’s emancipation but a struggle between the caste and code.  

Sidelining the voice of dissent was a well thought out strategy practiced by Kesari and Mahratta. The earliest mention that the Brahmin and non-Brahmin rift was in 1888 when Tilak stated that,

for the past ten years or so persistent attempts had been made to vilify the Brahmins as a race and lower them in the estimation of the other classes. Possibly the object of these foolish writers may be to set themselves up in place of the Brahmins and to be the only persons held in honour and respect by the Shudras, they possibly covet the high esteem that is paid to a Brahmin by the Shudra.

The editorial also blamed that "these mischievous persons" were not actually interested in rising the station of the Shudras by providing educational facilities. The editorial concluded that “so far as our experience goes except in the coterie under the immediate influence of Dinbandhu and co., the Brahmins and the Shudras were living together in amity and peace".

The anti-reformers received criticisms not only from the Satya Shodaks but also from the reformers who blamed them for "keeping up the sense of caste as against the sense of one nationality". The reformist journal Indu-Prakash blamed the anti-reformers as,

hankering after perfect independence and a renewal of old caste-Government like the Peshwa under which no one who was not a Brahmin and that a Chitpavan to boot, rose to a high position...

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99 Malabari’s speech reported in Mahratta Aug. 31, 1884, p.8.
100 Mahratta, Feb 26 1888, p.5. Editorial Notes.
101 ibid.
102 Mahratta, Nov 6 1887, p.1. Reformers and Their Tactics, It was a reply to the anti-Chitpavan/Brahmin articles in the Subod Patrika and Indu-Prakash which were the main organs of the reformers.
except some men of the soldier caste whose services were indispensable.

_Mahratta_ called it “the foolish, incorrect and uncalled for allusion to the _Chitpavans_” in the article. Tilak stated that the reformers lacked moral courage and the force of character and blamed the reformers for dividing the nationality.

Though Tilak stated that Brahmins and non-Brahmins lived in perfect peace except among the coterie of Deenbandhu, he could no longer ignore the fact that the Congress movement received little response from the non-Brahmins. The non-Brahmins under the influence of Satya Shodak Samaj leaders were opposing the Brahmin dominated Congress. Phule was suspicious of Indian National Congress and said that the Congress, demand for Indianisation of services would further strengthen the position of Brahmins. Without the support of the masses, Tilak could not claim leadership on behalf of the people of Mahrashtra. Tilak wrote, "it was a matter of extreme difficulty to enlighten the masses regarding the need for self government". The efforts of the anti-reformers to make the masses understand the evils of the colonial government was countered by silly teachings and Preaching of half timid, half ignorant and wholly stupid street preachers who are encouraging caste jealousies and personal animosities. Tilak hoped that reformers would soon realize the futility of opposing anti-reformers as they both had common interests of maintaining

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106 _Mahratta_, Jan 12 1890, p.4. The Education of the Masses.
107 A non-Brahmin leader Ganapat Sakharam Patil, the editor of _Dinmitra_, began a kind of wayside pulpit from a raised platform in the market place in Poona. He was joined by other _Satyashadak_ leaders who spread the non-Brahmin's ideology to the masses. The platform was removed and the speeches were banned in 1890 by the Poona city Municipal Committee, Rosalind O Hanlan, (1985), pp. 285-286.
privileged position within the Hindu Community. Tilak argued that such
tendencies could be countered only by removing education from the hands
of the government and transferring it into the hands of private bodies;
which would in turn introduce national education. Tilak warned that until
the national education was introduced, incidents like, "few hundred
illiterate low castes protesting against the Congress" would continue.108

The non-Brahmin antagonism to the anti-reformist leadership was
the crucial issue. The reformers were unwilling to enter into any
compromise with the anti-reformers as hoped by Tilak. Anti-reformers had
come under severe attack from all sides. The "irreverence grown in
schools" was the prime cause for concern and the second important cause
for concern was the way the reformers with their extensive knowledge of
western philosophies as well as Hindu Scriptures were able to silence the
orthodox arguments in the issues concerning the Age of Consent and
women's education. However the reformers were matched wit by wit by the
English educated anti-reformer leader like Tilak and Rajendralal Mitra and
not by the traditionally qualified priests. The priestly class lacked modern
education and communication skills. They were also ridiculed by the non-
Brahmin leader for their illogical arguments. Phule had asked the
Satyashodaks not to involve Brahmin priests in religion or marriage
ceremonies and a large number of non-Brahmins followed it,109 which
causd a drop in the income of the priests.

108 Mahratta, Jan 12, 1890, p.4. The Education of the Masses. Krishnarao Bhalekar, the non-
Brahmin leader organised a campaign to petition the British government on the subject of
free and compulsory education. He prepared the memorandum and called for a meeting in
1889, which was attended by ten thousand people. At this meeting a resolution was passed
criticising the Indian National Congress and stating that it did not represent the backward
classes. MS Gore, Non-Brahmin Movement in Maharashtra, (New Delhi, 1989) p.32.
In order to strengthen the priesthood it was suggested by a reader in *Mahratta*\(^{110}\) that an elaborate plan for revitalizing the Brahmin priesthood on the lines of Roman Catholic priesthood was to be implemented. The writer argued that,

> the priest at one times the representative of god and as such had a claim on our implicit obedience... He has forfeited that sway which he once wielded over us because he is confined to poverty and ignorance.\(^{111}\)

Suggestions were made to free the priests from their implicit dependence on the layman for their existence. The priests were to be organized on hierarchical basis beginning with Sankaracharya in an equivalent position of the Pope, assistant Sankaracharyas as equivalent to Archbishops with a salary of Rs. 200 to 400 per month and local priests an equivalent of Parish clergyman with a salary of Rs. 50 per month.\(^{112}\)

The anxiety expressed in the articles in *Mahratta* regarding the threat to the institution of Caste denoted that the anti-reformers perceived that the institution of caste was in real danger and there was an urgency to tackle the issue and stop the non-Brahmins and reformers from eroding the base of power of the Brahmins. The attempts to stop the non-Brahmins from acquiring English education were not successful due to the reluctance on the part of the colonial government and the persistent attempt by the non-Brahmins to acquire education.\(^{113}\) This led to a change in the attitude of Tilak who hitherto took an antagonistic position to that of non-Brahmins, began to think in terms of collaboration with them. The death of


\(^{111}\) ibid.

\(^{112}\) ibid.

facilitated this. Phule died in 1890, which resulted in the decline of the centrally organized Satyashodak activity. The non-Brahmin leaders began to work at their own individual levels and areas. Non-Brahmin movement did not decline as the consciousness created by Phule's powerful polemic sustained the movement. However the lack of centrally organized activity created a vacuum which helped the anti-reformers to reorganize themselves.

Tilak, during the age of consent controversy had already developed a line of thinking. The 'nationalists' (rashtravadi) were to be necessarily - anti-reformers (Sudharaks), anti-revivalists (those who tried to revive Vedic values) and those who had complete faith in the caste system (Varnasrama Dharma). When the Age of Consent Bill was passed the response of Tilak was not an attack on the reformers for belittling Hinduism by obtaining the colonial government's legislation in legally enforcing a reform, but neglecting the caste. Tilak criticized that,

the Sudharaks (reformers) hold that the institution (caste) has done immense mischief while the Hindu nation believes that had it not been for the influence of caste, the Hindu nation would have long ceased to exist, the reformers had undermined the influence of caste punch and the religious heads of the communities.

Tilak quoted a Bengal court regulation which stated that the courts couldn't entertain complaints which involved social principles. So caste was a social combination of the members who are united by birth and not by enrollment. Tilak called this a real genius of the institution.

116 Maharatta, May 10 1891, p.3. The Caste and Caste alone has Power, Editorial.
The Sudharaks are trying to substitute enrollment for birth and in doing so they are importing a glittering western principle for the sound, safe and prudent eastern one.  

Tilak blamed the reformers for surrendering the power of the caste into the hands of our rulers and by doing so they were killing the vitality of the nation. In order to counter the influence of the caste negating reformers, Tilak called on the Hindu nation to take on the "benevolent despots" who were a threat to national existence. Tilak stated that we need not wait to establish schools and open colleges, to found new Sabhas and associations, organize new conferences and congresses. All those that exist ours. So long we have lived in society just as we live in our Hindu families. Let those who are ashamed to own the Hindu character of our institutions walk out, or if they don't, drive them out by taking all work out of their hands.

The age of consent brought the strength and the weaknesses of the anti-reformers to the surface. The anti-reformers lacked the key institutions to influence public opinion. The reformers and the non-Brahmin attack on the caste necessitated Tilak to assert himself as a leader of the "Hindu nation". Though technically defeated in the age of consent issue, Tilak gained an edge over the reformers for standing against the colonial rule. So after 1892, Tilak could work independently and manipulate freely in the absence of a strong non-Brahmin leadership. In order to do this Tilak had to totally nullify the effects of Phule in forming the non-Brahmin identity.

118 Mahratta, April 26 1891, p.2.

In spite of the vigorous campaign to isolate the reformers, Tilak's attempts to consolidate Brahminical tradition in the name of Hindu tradition did not receive the expected results. The Indian National Congress and the Poona Sarvajanik Sabha remained in the hands of the reformers. The non-Brahmin movement received fresh impetus from the support it gained from the Maharaja Saiyajrao Gaikwad of Baroda who was implementing the policy of mass education. Tilak criticized him for holding the caste discrimination responsible for the backwardness of the country and considered that his analysis of caste was not mature. However Tilak's criticism did not deter the Maharaja who continued to support the non-Brahmin movement to sustain itself in the form of instituting scholarships for non-Brahmin students and employ them in large numbers in the administration. During this period western India also witnessed communal tension and riots. Between 1890 to 1893 riots broke out between the Hindus and Muslims during Balaji procession, Rang Panchmi, Nag Panchmi, and Dussera Procession. So virtually tension existed throughout the year and could be harnessed at a convenient time. According to a biographer of Tilak, terror stricken Hindus flocked to Tilak after Bombay riots and the other biographers explain that the Hindus had earlier participated with Muslims in the Muhraum festival and as the

120 Kesari, May 16 1893.
121 Maharatta, Jan 12 1890, p.2.
122 Maharatta, Apr 13, 1890.
123 Maharatta, April 13, 1890.
124 Maharatta Dec. 3, 1893, p.3 Editorial.
125 Ram Gopal, Lokmanya Tilak, A Biography, (Bombay, 1956), p.84.
tension between the two communities grew in the early 1890s the Muslims stopped allowing the Hindus from taking part in the Muhraum festival. The responsibility fell on Tilak to provide the much-needed recreation to the masses in the form of religious festival. Tilak had argued during the Bombay riots that in the eastern nations religion was everything and he had to give concrete shape to such a widespread emotion. So Tilak began Ganapati festival.

This has been a very simplistic argument put forth by all his biographers, Stanley Wolpert and Richard Cashman considered that the Ganapati festival served to intensify communalism. Cashman has stressed that Ganapati was a popular deity in the western India. The most popular deity among the people of western India was not Ganapati that position was reserved to two deities. One, Vittal, the presiding deity of Pandarapur, worshipped by both the Brahmins and non-Brahmins, Tilak too accepted this fact when he wrote in another context that "the god Vithoba is par excellence the deity of the masses. Thousands of pilgrims visit it in the year from the most distinct parts". The Bhakti tradition of Maharashtra, which emerged there, produced saint-poets who came from various castes and traditions. The other popular deity was Khondoba.

127 Tilak wrote that the Hindus had disassociated themselves from participating in the Mohraum Festival Mahratta, July 22 1894, p.4. Editorial Notes.also, G.P. Pradhan (New Delhi, 1994), p.19.
128 Mahratta, Sep 10 1893, p.3. Editorial.
130 ibid.also Richard Cashman,( 1975), p.78
worshipped by the largest section of the society, the non-Brahmins.\textsuperscript{133} It is understandable that Tilak being an orthodox Chitpavan belonging to the philosophic tradition of Sankaracharya was least expected to show sympathy with the rival philosophic tradition of Bhakti. Regarding the deity Khandoba Phule had already made him a part of the Satya Shodak Polemic.\textsuperscript{134} So Tilak was left to choose from among the deities besides the above mentioned to propagate Hindu nationalism to counter the Muslims. So what was needed was a militant deity fit to be evoked in the struggle against the British and the Muslims and Ganapati god representing knowledge and not war was hardly expected to draw Tilak's attention for this purpose. Revival of Shivaji’s memories had already begun by M.G. Ranade\textsuperscript{135} and Phule \textsuperscript{136} and Tilak had been watching for some time the growth of public interest in Shivaji.\textsuperscript{137} Mahratta wrote two articles in 1886 on Shivaji, emphasizing the Hindu Muslim Conflict.\textsuperscript{138} Tilak began the Shivaji festival in the following year. So as a logical prologue Tilak should have started the festival of the favourite deity of Shivaji, Bhavani of Tuljapur, who as the legend goes blessed Shivaji with a sword to fight against the Mughal emperor and free the Hindus from the yoke of Muslim oppression.\textsuperscript{139} Bhavani or Durga is worshipped throughout Deccan during the Dussera festival, which falls in the months of October-November and


\textsuperscript{134} J.R. Shinde, (1985), p.64.


\textsuperscript{137} D.P. Karmarkar, (1956), p.121.


the ancient Hindu kings were supposed to have worshipped this goddess of war during the first nine days of *Dussera* and on the tenth day used to leave for war and conquest, and more over a major communal tension had taken place during the *Dussera* celebrations in 1893. But Tilak began the *Ganapati* festival. Why?

Phule as a part of Satyashodak polemic had asked the non-Brahmins to stop celebrating the *Ganapati* festival which was a part of three day celebration where in on the third day, the non-Brahmins had to feed Brahmins, worship their feet and drink water touched by them. So the Brahmins were to be most benefited by reviving this festival. It was the *Chitpavans* who most respected *Ganapati* and were also as a caste most isolated by the growing social reform and non-Brahmin movements. *Ganapati* festival on a popular scale was aimed to nullify the Satyashodak polemic and reassure the anti-reformist *Chitpavans* of their leadership in the society. So the songs sang during the festival were not anti-British though Tilak stated that it was aimed to explain the government policies to the masses. The festival’s justification in the name of national festival did not come till 1896 when he explained that the role of the festival was mass recreation and mass education. The songs were essentially anti-reformers and anti-Muslim. Though in the subsequent years the *Ganapati* festivals became sources of communal clashes, the festival was started by Tilak to

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140 ibid. p.82.
141 *Mahratta*, Dec. 3 1893.
143 *Kesari*, Sept. 8, 1896.
144 Richard Cashman (1975), pp.29-80. *Mahratta* itself admitted that the songs were anti Sudharaks *Mahratta*, Sept. 25 1904, p.455.
remove the sense of alienation among the Brahmins and bring back the non-Brahmins into the framework of traditional institutions.145

Tilak was partially successful in his efforts as the Ganapati festival was organized on caste lines146 and each caste had its own set of celebrations of songs and dances. The non-Brahmin melas were more numerous, songs sung there were more devotional147 and they failed to reflect extremely political melas of anti-reformist Brahmins. So Tilak could not change the nature of the non-Brahmin Ganapati melas from devotional to political. The Reformers stayed away from the melas. Tilak criticised the 'Samajists' for not understanding the significance of the religious enthusiasm of the masses.148

Phule had attempted to create an alternative cultural anchorage by attacking the Brahmanism and by emphasizing Shivaji as the people's king. Phule published A Ballad of the Raja Cahrtrapati Shivaji Bhosale. Its underlying purpose was to recruit the figure of Shivaji for the construction of a collective identity for all lower castes.149 Phule published his poem (Pavada) in 1869, which represented Shivaji as the leader of the lower castes. This was the first and the earliest interpretation of Shivaji. Phule emphasized the conflict between the upper and the lower castes as central

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145 Paul B. Courtright on the other hand states that “Ganesh could mediate the non-Brahmin masses who loved Ganesa with the Brahmin elite” though concedes that the “Brahmins stood to gain the most in the revitalization of a revisionist traditionalism that emphasised the unity of Hindu and the intellectual and political leadership of Brahmins, Ganapati Lord of Obstacles, Lord of Beginning, (New York, 1985) p.237.

146 Kesari, Sep 11 1900.

147 Richard Cashman, (1975), p.86.

148 Mahratta, Sept. 4, 1898, p.3. The Ganapati Festival Editorial.

to his analysis\textsuperscript{150} and attempted to balance between three contending castes of Brahmin, Prabhus and Marathas for hegemony. Phule was also the first intellectual to make an effort to restore the tomb of Shivaji in 1885.\textsuperscript{151} Phule’s efforts were supported by Ranade\textsuperscript{152} who saw Shivaji in the continuation of historical tradition of Bhakti Saint poets and as a result regarded Shivaji as people’s king.\textsuperscript{153} Phule began the ballad with an account of king Bali and attempted to assimilate Shivaji into a much older tradition of non-Brahmin (Kshatriya) rulers and protectors of common man in direct contrast to Brahmanical Peshwa regime.\textsuperscript{154}

An alternative effort was going on in the orthodox elite circles to represent Shivaji in an entirely different light. In order to undermine Phule and reformers representation of Shivaji as the people’s king, Shivaji’s importance in the Maratha history was projected in a way, which was, much more than a good king. The opportunity for such a representation of facts was provided by the constant struggle for supremacy by the Mahratta and the Mughals in the Deccan. Rajaramshastri Bhagavat a Sanskrit Professor at St. Xavier College published his poem (Pavda) in 1889. As a reformer he questioned the division of the society upon the basis of birth and advocated inter-dining and inter-marriage\textsuperscript{155} argued that there was harmony among the different caste groups as represented in the battle of Purandhar where Murarji Baji Prabhu defeated Dilir Khan with a handful

\textsuperscript{150} Rosalind O’Hanlan (1983), pp.3-4.
\textsuperscript{151} Gail Omvdt, (1976), pp.58-59.
\textsuperscript{153} M.G. Ranade, Rise of the Maratha Power, (Bombay, 1961), pp.5-6.
of Mavalis.\textsuperscript{156} Another poem published in 1877 by one Ekanath Annaji Joshi described Sivaji’s as a protector of Hindu religion from the threat of Islam. Joshi had very little concern for the local tradition as such and considered Shivaji as merely a vehicle through which a supra-local Hindu tradition could be effectively advocated.\textsuperscript{157} The struggle for supremacy between the \textit{Marathas} and the Mughals and the \textit{Bahamani} Kingdom became the point of reference to Shivaji and not his supposedly just administration as represented in Phule’s \textit{Pavda}. Contrary to the historical truth of a struggle between three contending forces for supremacy, the struggle was depicted as the one between two contending religions.\textsuperscript{158} When Afzal Khan marched against Shivaji in 1659, \textit{Sambhaji} of Supa, and Moray of Javli joined hands with Afzal Khan and on his behalf Khondaji Khopde, the deshmukh of Utroli won over a number of maval deshmukhs to his side. Even Baji Nimbalkar, deshmukh of Phaltan who is described as “one of the biggest zamindars of the Deccan and whom Shivaji had reconverted to Hinduism joined Afzal Khan willy-nilly and the Savant of wadi, Bhaskar Krishnaji \textit{Kulkarni} too joined Afzal Khan. Hence, Shivaji’s struggle against the Mughals and the Bahamani kingdom could hardly be considered as a struggle between two contending religions.\textsuperscript{159} A similar event took place in the eighteenth century when the chief Nirmal Surya Rao joined hands with Nizam of Hyderabad against Raghuji Bhosla and

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{156} ibid. p.4.
\item \textsuperscript{157} Rosalind O’Hanlan, (1985), p.181.
\item \textsuperscript{158} Letter to the Editor “had Shivaji been alive he would have burned with indignation at seeing the Hindu temples destroyed by Muslims and thousands of cattle slaughtered to feed the Europeans. \textit{Kesari} May 28, 1995.
\end{itemize}
Shah Navaz Khan joined hands with Raghuji Bhosla in the same campaign.  

Tilak called for a public meeting in May 1895, to raise funds to repair Samadhi of Shivaji, to erect a suitable Chatri and to arrange a permanent endowment, which would provide the necessary funds for an annual festival at Rajgadh. 161 Tilak's appeal drew little response from the non-Brahmin leader and the Maratha Princes. The Maharaja of Kolhapur the descendent of Shivaji gave no financial assistance and Gaikwad of Baroda gave rupees one thousand 162, which was a tiny sum in comparison to his contribution of rupees thirty three thousand to the Deccan Association. Gaikwad apparently considered investment in the field of education as more essential than supporting a movement led by Poona group. 163 Tilak's attempt to give a new meaning to Shivaji's career where in his wars against Muslim rule he was seen as the go-Brahman pratipalak, the Protector of Cows and Brahmans, and hence a representation of an older-style Hindu religion. Tilak declared that it was the duty of every Hindu to celebrate Shivaji festival 164 and elevated it to the level of national festival. 165 The non-Brahmin leaders opposed such appropriation of symbols by Tilak. 166 A Shivaji Club was formed in Kolhapur in 1893, which was raided in 1897 by the Maharaja of Kolhapur. The violent


161 Kesari, July 2.1895.


164 Kesari Aug. 21, 1896.

165 Kesari Sept. 1, 1896.

interpretation of Shivaji’s actions in Kesari also prevented the non-Brahmins from supporting the Shivaji festival. Kesari wrote that the murder of Afzal Khan at the hands of Shivaji was an occasion in which every Hindu, every Maratha must rejoice. Tilak supported similar sentiments when he declared that great men were above common principles of morality and morality did not reach the pedestal on which these great-men stood. Mahratta justified the Shivaji festival on these lines and called the period between the loss of Peshwai and the current awakening as a period of sleep and stated that Shivaji festival is a trust in the hands of those left behind and they have to preserve it intact in all honesty.

Due to the insensitive interpretation of Shivaji, the next Shivaji festival was held only in 1906. N.M. Lokhande, the Trade Union leader, refused to support the festivals. When Lokhande was made a Rao Bahadur in 1896, Tilak commented that “we believe his only qualification for this honour was being a Maratha”.

The indifference shown by the non-Brahmin leaders towards and Shivaji festival made the festivals partially successful until 1906. The rise of militant representation of Hinduism during the Swadeshi movement assisted Tilak to revive the festival. By 1906, when the third and final Shivaji festival was held, Tilak had changed his position yet again. Now, as an all India leader of the extremist party he was speaking a different

168 Kesari, June 15, 1897.
169 ibid.
170 Mahratta, April 17, 1898 Editorial p.3.
171 Mahratta, April 24, 1898, p.4.
172 Mahratta, Jan 5, 1896, (EdN) New Years Honours.
language. The poems read and the songs sung, at the festivals continued to be anti-reformers and Muslims. But Tilak stressed that the movement was aimed at giving political education to the people for establishing distinct Indian nationality. Tilak attended the Shivaji festival in June 1906 at Calcutta and tried to contextualise it with the Bengal psyche:

His (Shivaji's) whole life was, as it were engulfed and inseparable from Bhavani and we cannot read of Shivaji without Bhavani... we cannot conceive of Shivaji without Bhavani. Kali is the presiding deity of Bengal and the same goddess was the protector of Shivaji.

This contextualisation was necessitated by the fact that not all Bengali intellectuals were willing to accept Shivaji as the national hero. Sarala Devi Ghoshal the leading woman organizer of the Swadeshi Movement insisted that Bengal had its own national hero in the persona of Maharaja Pratapaditya and suggested that a festival in his name should be started. Tilak during his visit to Calcutta insisted that Shivaji was the only hero to be found in Indian History capable of inspiring the political aspirations. Tilak insisted that “Shivaji who respected religious scruples of the Mahomedans had to fight against the Mughal rule that had become unbearable to the people”.

The revival also led to the questioning of the notion of Shivaji as a national hero, and Marathas as defenders of Hinduism by one R.P. Karkaria in the Times of India. Mahratta wrote three rejoinders explaining

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175 Mahratta, June 10, 1906, pp.273-274, Shivaji Festival at Calcutta.
176 Mahratta, June 21, 1903, p.289.
177 Mahratta, June 24, 1906, p.*
its position. Mahratta accepted that an authentic reliable history of India compiled from trustworthy original sources is yet to be written “and the history that was available “was written by partisans of an alien government and by unscrupulous politicians to further the sinister purposes of policy Karkaria had based his understandings of the Maratha misrule on such a history.”

Mahratta argued that,

a deep urging for retaliation and a passionate yearning for religious freedom was strong and the Marathas cared only for their religion without interfering with the religion adopted by the Mahomedans.

They had,

risen almost to a man in defense of their ancient religion and their chosen sovereign, both of whom were threatened by the merciless foreigner with cruel extinction and disgrace.

Having defined the nature of the raison d’être of the Maratha state, Mahratta went on to defend the alleged plundering of the neighbouring kingdoms by the Maratha army as, war in those days provoked reprisals and was accompanied by a certain amount of plundering in the enemy’s territory. France had suffered during the occupation of the Prussian army and the Manchurian villages were ravaged by armies of Russia and Japan,

to the charge of certain excesses all that we have to say is that at the worst they too, as human beings were at times over-powered by those passions and impulses that are but common to all warlike and conquering nations.

179 ibid. p.259.
180 Mahratta, June 9, 1907, p.270. The Mahrattas and their Rule: A Reply II.
181 Mahratta, June 23, 1907, p.294. The Mahrathas and their Rule: A Reply III.
182 ibid.
If the raison d’etre of the Maratha state was to defend Hinduism and the military excesses was a part of war and politics, then why Karkaria asked, did the Marathas raid the neighbouring Kingdoms both Hindu and Muslim? This Mahratta explained,

the Marathas had, as the price of peace, obtained from the Mogul Badshah of Delhi, rights to levy and receive the Chouth and Sirdeshmukhi tributes from various states subject to the court of Delhi. But unredeemed bad faith and duplicity deeply ingrained in the habitual dealings of the several princes (who) always tried to evade their obligations and betrayed a morbid eagerness to take every advantage of the difficulties and internal dissentions among the Marathas who consequently every now and then constrained to send expedition against recalcitrant states to compel submission and to vindicate the Maratha rights at the spear’s point.183

Mahratta argued that there was no radical difference between the Marathas and the East India Company in using force to establish paramountcy in the country.184 So in its own argument asserting political power was not necessarily consistent with the policy of defender of Hinduism. The circumstances dictated the terms. In the medieval period the presence of “alien despotism and in the modern times it was the alien tyranny” and the contributions of the Maratha rule was to be considered in this context.

The rejoinder written by Mahratta, in all probability failed to successfully answer the question raised by Karkaria. This failure was sidelined and Karkaria was pulled up “for joining hands with the traitors (ettu Brute) and a large crowd of hostile foreign critics of the Maratha rule” 185

183 Mahratta, June 23, 1907, p.294.
184 ibid. p.295.
185 Mahratta, June 2, 1907, p.258.
Shivaji as a national hero was not easily accepted by non Maharashtrians is evident from the fact that a Gujarati pamphlet was issued in Surat during 1907 secession asking the people to awake and arise against Tilak. The Pamphlet stated that,

Shivaji looted Surat twice and declared while leaving the second time that he would come a third time and loot away Surat a third time. Shivaji of course did not come. But today Tilak has come and is going to cut off your noses and ears so far that reason stand up.

Tilak’s efforts to make the non Brahmin reformers join hands with anti-reformers to celebrate Shivaji festival had failed. Now Tilak also failed to make Shivaji a national hero during the Swadeshi movement.

3. The Vedokta Controversy

So, the Shivaji festival failed to bring the Brahmins and non-Brahmins together, under the anti-reformist leadership as hoped by Tilak. The non-Brahmins continued to be hostile to Tilak’s attempts to bring them under Congress Platform. Since the death of Phule in 1890 the centrally organized Satyashodak Movement was absent yet the non-Brahmin leaders were successful in holding on to their own against the onslaught of militant activities of Tilak. Shahu, the Maharaj of Kolhapur who along with other Maratha chiefs began to promote non-Brahmin educational and administrative advancement, supported them. Inspite of highly developed consciousness among the non-Brahmins their educational

186 *Maharatta* Dec. 29, 1907, p.606, the editorial quoted the passage in original Gujarati and gave on English translation.

187 ibid.

advancement remained far behind the Brahmins.\textsuperscript{189} The Maharaja of Kolhapur established the \textit{Maratha} Education Society to encourage non-Brahmin education. \textit{Mahratta} commented,

we trust that the stated managers of the institution will not lose sight of the fact that the education imparted in our schools and colleges at present is only one sided and unless it is supplemented by other methods, the danger is that the Maratha students who come out of this institute would be only so many more competitors for clerkships under Government.\textsuperscript{190}.

\textit{Mahratta} suggested that,

what we want is cooperation, which is not inconsistent with the progress of any community\textsuperscript{191}

And advised the Maharaj to “follow Shivaji who evolved a nation out of the different races” The tactful support was limited to the educational endeavours alone. When the non-Brahmins began to fill in the top posts \textit{Mahratta} was up in arms. In 1901 the ruler of Jamkhandi-a small \textit{Maratha} principality placed in \textit{Kesari}\textsuperscript{192} an advertisement for the post of a district Surgeon. It stated besides the qualification and experience that preference would be given to non-Brahmins. Tilak criticized the advertisement as,

mischievous, aggressive and rancorous hatred of Brahmins as a caste and created racial jealousy... what does he (the political agent who had placed the advertisement on behalf of the ruler of Jamkhandi) mean by promising preference to non-Brahmins when the question is of the appointment of the best available man to take charge of a hospital.\textsuperscript{193}

\textsuperscript{189} \textit{Mahratta} Feb 5. 1899. Education in the Bombay Presidency.
\textsuperscript{190} \textit{Mahratta}, Oct. 6, p.3. The Maratha Education Society Editorial.
\textsuperscript{191} \textit{ibid}
\textsuperscript{192} \textit{Kesari}, 11 April 1901.
\textsuperscript{193} \textit{Mahratta}, 21 April 1901, p.3. Non-Brahmin Craze. Editorial.
Maharatta called the advertisement as "a bare faced aggressiveness" on the part of the non-Brahmins and the policy of showing preferences to non-Brahmins was to be condemned as it encouraged incompetence and created bad blood among the communities. It was a policy of illegitimate preference and would lead to a disgraceful scandal."\textsuperscript{194} Tilak blamed the colonial government encouraging such policy,

though the genius of the British rule recognises only a cosmopolitan caste still, and even for such a Government it is regarded the height of culpable unwisdom to create a feeling of racial jealousy and animosity among the communities... The policy of showing preference to non-Brahmins quo non-Brahmin must be condemned because it gives under encouragement to in competence and secondly, because it creates bad blood among the communities on the good mutual understanding of which the well being of the state depend.\textsuperscript{195}

Tilak's attempt to bring back the non-Brahmin through Shivaji festival into the traditional Brahmanical fold and severe criticism of their efforts at advancement in education and employment further alienated them. Tilak speaking at the provincial conference in 1903 declared that,

with the increase of village primary schools, there has been a greater increase in Abkari (liquor) shops throughout the presidency.\textsuperscript{196}

Till now they were suspicious of Tilak's motives and now they were confirmed in their apprehension that joining Tilak was detrimental to their interest. Soon the Vedic ritual issue that rocked the state of Kolhapur and the series of editorials, by Tilak made non-Brahmins completely against

\textsuperscript{194} ibid.
\textsuperscript{195} ibid.
\textsuperscript{196} Samagra Tilak, Vol.7, p.493.
Tilak and thereby the Congress, a fraction of which was under the leadership of Tilak. The thread of non-Brahmin movement was taken up now by the Maharaja of Kolhapur. Shahu Maharaj became the Maharaja of Kolhapur in 1894 and soon began the task of recruiting non-Brahmins for administrative posts. He appointed R.V. Sabnis as the head of the Huzur office and this was not liked by the anti-reformist Brahmins.

In 1900, the Maharaja of Kolhapur Sahu became aware of the fact that the religious rites in the palace were not conducted according to Vedokta, the rituals according to the Vedas which entitled him to the Kshatriya status but according to Puranokta the rituals according to the Puranamas which equated him with a Shudra. Sahu ordered that henceforth all rituals were to be conducted according to Vedokta and the hereditary priest Rajopadhya refused and his Inam lands were confiscated. Few priests supported Sahu and conducted rituals according to Vedokta and they were excommunicated by the Brahmin community. Tilak considered this unnecessarily aggressive mischievous attitude of the Marathas and called the demand for the Vedokta as a fad and mania.

The priest who had conducted Vedokta at the palace lent himself against the sense of the entire Brahmin community of Kolhapur, to a few impulsive Marathas to help them in carrying out the new fad, had been naturally excommunicated

The Brahmins who supported the Maharaja were called,

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200 Kesari, 22 Oct. 1901.
the Brahmin slaves of Maharaj’s affection... there would be certainly a limit to his (maharaja’s) countenancing mischievous men to embarrass and hurt the feelings of the entire Brahmin community. There must also be a limit to his attempts to coerce them into the acceptance of any opinion by threat of displeasure... the conflict between the Brahmin community and members excommunicated must be left to be solved by themselves.\(^{202}\)

The Maharaja and his Brahmin supporters appealed to the Shankaracharya, the religious head to decide the issue. Tilak called this controversy “strife between the church and the state” and expressed that the matter would have been solved had Shahu placed the issue before the community of Brahmins who instead of the Sankaracharya are “the Supreme Court in the matter at Kolhapur”.\(^{203}\) By not doing so, Shahu had created deep discontent in the minds of his subjects.\(^{204}\) Confiscating Rajapadhy’s inam lands on the pretext of disobedience and failure in duties was unjust.\(^{205}\) If such acts do not go unchecked Tilak warned, “people would have even to bear more absurd edicts of the Maharaja than those hitherto issued”\(^{206}\)

Rajapadhy, after his lands were being confiscated by Shahu, appealed to the colonial government for interference which the latter rejected. Tilak called the rejection by the paramount government to discharge the obligations arising from a guarantee undertaken by them in this case at any rate amounted to giving up their policy of religious neutrality.\(^{207}\) The entire controversy, according to Tilak was encouraged

\(^{202}\) Maharatta, Oct. 20 1901, p.3.


\(^{204}\) Maharatta, March 8, 1903, p.109.

\(^{205}\) Maharatta, Aug-Nov. 1, 1903, p.506. The Vedokta affair.

\(^{206}\) ibid.

\(^{207}\) ibid.
by the British government “to play a game of unprincipled and high handed interference with sacred property rights”.\textsuperscript{208} Pressure have been brought to bear upon the Brahmins to do what their conscience and religion would not sanction, this was interfering with the petitioners religious rights which was against the policy of all civilized governments.\textsuperscript{209} Inams were conditioned on spiritual service\textsuperscript{210} Vedokta had so upset “the balance of mind of Shahu,”\textsuperscript{211} that “hereditary hakdari or cash payments of the Gramjoshis and other hereditary holdings had been suspended. This was a crude and bungling method of aspiring to remove the distinction between the Brahmins and the Marathas”.\textsuperscript{212}

When Sahu ascended the throne, Tilak welcomed it as an unexpectedly favourable political happening at the holy place of Karveer and reminded Sahu that

to take a proper pride in Hindutva and strive for its prosperity is the hereditary duty of the Kolhapur rulers.\textsuperscript{213}

Now Sahu had betrayed such interest by manifesting, an irreverent self-assertion, the exhibition of human vanity in its worst form, a patent desire to trifle and tinker with religious questions and a convenient confiscation of valuable estates on prostituted political authority. The abuses of secular authority hateful as when they are accomplished under the guise and colour of a higher spiritual aspiration.\textsuperscript{214}

\textsuperscript{208} Mahratta, Nov. 1, 1903, p.506.
\textsuperscript{209} Mahratta, Nov. 15, 1903, p.532.
\textsuperscript{210} Mahratta, May 7, 1905, p.221. Vedokta Affair once more editorial.
\textsuperscript{211} Mahratta, Nov. 15, 1903, p.532.
\textsuperscript{212} Mahratta, July 30, 1905, p.362.
\textsuperscript{213} Kesari, April 3, 1884.
\textsuperscript{214} Marratha, May 7, 1905, p.221.
The Shankaracharya of Sankeshwar who under the threat of confiscation of his estates declared in 1905 that the maharaja of Kolhapur being a descendent of Shivaji was entitled to Vedokta ritual. Tilak criticized Shankarcharya for not being impressed with the injury and misery caused to Rajopadhya. The victory of Sahu in the Vedokta controversy rejuvenated the non-Brahmin movement. Tilak questioning the Maharaja’s leadership asked,

He is beloved, it is said, by the majority of his people we have no wish to dispute a statement so sweet and flattering. But a plebiscite taken just at this time in his own capital might perhaps prove very instructive to Maharaja himself and his encouragement to Non-Brahmins was as struggle against Brahmin domination could be traced to the Maharajas mental and moral composition.

Though the Vedokta controversy began as a personal desire of Sahu to be treated in a Kshatriya, the issue along with the issue of encouraging non-Brahmins in education and employment and the response of Tilak changed him into a head of non-Brahmin movement.

After the issue of the Vedokta was solved, the non-Brahmin movement lost momentum. The non-Brahmins remained neutral and opposed Tilak whenever possible during the Swadeshi movement. In Belgaum the dais erected for Tilak’s speech was demolished by the Non-Brahmins. Tilak on his part began to appeal to the non-Brahmins for their co-operation to the movement. Tilak delivering a public lecture at Allahabad explained that in the destruction of village industries the most affected were the non-Brahmins, and the colonial government allowed the

people to rise to a particular level and not beyond it. The government wanted clerks, lawyers, judges, engineers and doctors and the encouragement given to the backward classes was to bring them up to this level and no higher. Tilak suggested that if any one wanted to rise higher than this level, then they should support the Swadeshi Movement. However, the non-Brahmins refused to cooperate with Tilak.

Phule’s attack on the institution of caste heralded an era of non-Brahmin consciousness. Phule’s ideological strategy was to present the enemies of lower caste, the scattered Brahmin communities of Western India as a highly organized monolith, with an essential unity and common purpose in carrying out its designs. In this endeavour Phule did not spare the reformers who happened to be Brahmins by birth, but were as articulate as Phule in their attack on Brahminism. The construction of this monolithic identity was an ideological need for popular movement.

Tilak on his part started the *Ganapati* and Shivaji festivals essentially to negate Phule’s cultural revolt. Phule had asked the non-Brahmins to stop celebrating *Ganapati* festival and had made Shivaji as a champion of non-Brahmin assertion. Similarly when the Maharaja of Kolhapur demanded the *Vedokta* ceremonies in his palace. Tilak opposed it and supported the priest who refused to conduct the *Vedokta* ceremonies in the palace. This aggravated the Brahmin and non-Brahmin rift even further.

Tilak was opposed to mass education, because according to him it caused more harm than good. He opposed the efforts of Bombay university to simplify the syllabus for Matric and B.A. examination by stating that it would lead to crowded classrooms. Tilak’s perception of occupational

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threat from the non-Brahmins and the loss of age-old privileges because of reformers, led him to oppose mass education. Tilak’s insistence on entrusting primary and secondary education into the hands of elected boards and his opposition to English education was to achieve the same results. Tilak considered caste as the non-negotiable aspect of Hinduism and attempted to interpret the 19th century Hinduism only in terms of Varnashrama Dharma as a result he reserved his severest criticisms for his follow Brahmin reformers who had caused the first breach in this foundation of Hinduism, and insisted that the reformers formed a separate nationality.