CONCLUSION

The emergence of the concept of Hindu Rashtra or Hindu nationalism in the nineteenth century Maharashtra can be attributed to the necessity of constructing a powerful ideology to counter the twin threats from the reformers and non-Brahmin leaders. The revolts from both these quarters aimed to bringing about equality and completely destroy the age-old caste-class privileges. Tilak opposed the reformers’ attempt to free women from the harshness of patriarchal subjugation by imparting education to them. Viewed from Tilak’s patriarchal position, women were not to be educated at all and accepting a situation in which women had English education was beyond Tilak’s ability to accommodate. As a result, it was not the Age of Consent Bill, but imparting English education to woman that was keenly contested in Western India. Tilak considered that English education to women would destroy Hindu household and Hindus would lose their nationality. To the reformers, the issue of the Age of Consent Bill was but a small portion of the larger issue of women’s emancipation, which aimed to make them intellectually independent. Tilak removed G.G.Agarkar from the editorship of Kesari as the latter supported imparting English education to women. Tilak was not against the Age of Consent Bill per-se nor was he against the colonial government’s interference in social issues. In fact, time and again he made personal appeal to the colonial government to interfere in social and economic issues. However, what Tilak opposed was elevating women to the level of men. Tilak appreciated a measure similar to the Age of Consent Bill promulgated in Mysore, because the Diwan of Mysore had taken care to consult the religious Maths and Caste Panchayats. So the anguish of Tilak, when the Bill was passed, was not against the rise of marriageable age but against the reformers who had surrendered the power
of caste into the hands of the rulers. Tilak held prejudices against women’s education throughout his life. He refused to acknowledge that the sphere of women was anything other than home. He opposed the curriculum of the Women’s University at Poona in 1916 and compulsory education for girls in 1920.

The Institution of caste dominated Tilak’s perception of human interaction, society and the state. *Varnashrama Dharma* and the nineteenth century Hinduism were interchangable terms for Tilak. The fortress of this belief however could not stand the first blow engineered by the reformers. Though it did not crumble nevertheless it shook its very foundation. The second major blow was inflected upon by Jotirao Phule’s cultural revolt, which gave a new dimension to social protest. The non-Brahmin assertion began with Phule’s *Satya Shodak Polemic* stormed the citadel of the nineteenth century Hinduism. The new found assertiveness on the part of the non-Brahmin movement not only rejected the age old premise of respect and privileges to the traditional elite but also posed occupational threat to them.

In the initial stages Tilak believed in the providential nature of English education but only objected to the way it was given indiscriminately to all, which resulted in producing reformers and non-Brahmin challengers to the traditional authority. Tilak appealed to the reformers to reconsider their insistence on compulsory education, as it was detrimental to their caste interests. The reformers refused to agree with Tilak and continued to explore ways and means to make education compulsory for all. 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. This prompted Tilak to reject English education and to advocate the alternative system of education came to be called National Education during Swadeshi and Home Rule League Movements.

The attempt to empower the peasant by the reformers through the Deccan Agriculturist Relief Act was seen by Tilak as a challenge to the traditional authority and an attempt to bring about a social change. Tilak suggested to the colonial government to establish industries to provide additional income to the peasants. He did not, however, suggest the same to the moneylenders nor did he urge them to utilise the capital that was left idle due to the passing of the Deccan Agriculturists Relief Act. The rich Maratha-landlords too did not make any efforts to provide cheap credit to the peasants in times of distress or made efforts to establish industries. So an improved condition of the peasants along with the non-Brahmin assertion was detrimental to the interests of the landed elite.

Tilak’s defense of the moneylenders was categorical and definite. He blamed the rigid revenue collection as being responsible for the poverty of the Deccan peasants and not high rate of interest charged by the moneylenders. In doing so he shifted the responsibility from actual cause of poverty to immediate cause of distress. He even declared that a body of moneylenders was better equipped to protect the interest of peasants. The moneylenders of Poona thanked him for his efforts.

Tilak criticizes the colonial government for not creating any Inam and eliminating middlemen like moneylenders and big landlords between themselves and the peasants. Tilak defended the interests of big landlords
like Khots and Inamdars. His no-tax campaign of 1896 was superficial. The distress situation that occurred at that time due to famine and plague continued for next three years. During this period Tilak personally requested the colonial government to strictly collect revenue in Inamdar's lands.

The reformers on behalf of themselves, women and peasants; Phule on behalf of non-Brahmins and women, threatened the very being of traditional elite within the larger context of Hinduism. For a social system based on inequality, these twin challenges advocating the equality of mankind was most threatening. It was the concept of equality that threatened Tilak most and not the colonial rule. The necessity to contain these twin threats urged Tilak to construct a forceful ideology. Simultaneously, the landed elite in Muslim community too faced threat from its own ranks and file of lower order. This prompted them to construct a notion of Hindu majority swamping the Muslim minority. Similarly, Tilak echoing the communalization process that was sweeping across the country, in the 1880s, constructed an image of alien and ruthless Muslim, out to take on mild and law abiding Hindu.

Tilak's assertion of Varnashrama Dharma in the name of Hindutva his insistence that the Muslims and Hindus formed two separate nationalities together with predominantly Hindu imagery of Swadeshi movement in Bengal, furthered the cleavages between the two communities. The Swadeshi movement which emphasized militant assertion of Hinduism provided an excellent opportunity for Tilak to extend his sphere of influence beyond Maharashtra. Tilak shared with Aurobindo Ghosh and Bipin Chandra Pal only the form not the content, only their militant assertion not their humanism. Tilak’s concept of
national education consisted of the study of the dogma of *Sanatana Dharma*, its history and technical education making it amply clear that even, the reformers, rationalists, *Arya Samagists* and *Brahmo Samagists* would be excluded from his construct of Hindu nationality. Tilak insisted that the fundamental basis of nationality was fidelity to the ancient laws promulgated in golden age and hatred of foreigner and foreign institutions, excluded not only Muslims but also Parsis, Jains and reformers as they did not share fidelity to the same set of ancient laws. Tilak’s own allegiance to the institutions of orthodox Hinduism depended on its utility at any given point of time. When the reformist Brahmins and the Maharaja of Kolhapur appealed to the Shankaracharya in the *Vedokta* controversy, he opposed it by saying that the anti-reformist Brahmins were the Supreme court as far as Kolhapur was concerned. However when inter caste marriage bill was introduced he declared that the Shankaracharya should be the chief authority in deciding things.

Tilak attempted to expand the horizon of their Hindu nationality only after the separate communal electorate was introduced in 1909. Hindu nationality was renamed as Indian nationality and attempts were made to include reformers, *Arya Samagists* and *Brahmos*. The reformers and non-Brahmins refused to be included. They instead continued to advocate Indian Nationality without basing it on any narrow sectarian premise. Tilak’s construct of Indian Nationality did not fundamentally differ from his earlier construct of Hindu Nationality. Emphasizing and articulately supporting caste disabilities and at the same time attempting to unify various Hindu groups was contradictory as a result Tilak failed to develop a consistent basis for Hindu unity. The superficial unity emphasized without appreciating reformist and pluralistic tendencies failed to impress
Hindu nationalists in other provinces. Hence a militant organization did not emerge during his lifetime under his leadership. During the Home Rule League Period, Tilak insisted that Hindutva should form the basis of syllabus for women's university at Poona. He also supported the activities of the Hindu Mahasabha. Tilak's close associates like G.S. Khaparde and N.C. Kelkar were closely involved later with the Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh and the Hindu Mahasabha. When Tilak's ideology was not accommodated in the Indian National Congress under Mahatma Gandhi, he founded a new political party in May 1920 but did not live to see it grow. Tilak was ideologically closer to the organizations propagating Hindutva.

Placing Tilak in the categories of revivalist, orthodox, or extremist is difficult to substantiate as these categories meant different things to different people. If Aurobindo, Bipin Chandra Pal and Lala Lajpat Rai are revivalists and extremists, then Tilak cannot be placed in this category as he opposed reviving idealized Vedic past and opposed colonialism as it refused to be a party in imposing caste-class disabilities. Though Tilak believed in orthodox Brahmanism he cannot be placed in this category as he used the orthodox institutions for defending the landed interests. He can be placed in the category of anti-reformist. It was the nineteenth century reform that would reorient the society in the process of which the traditional elite would lose the privileges made him an anti-reformist. As a result his construct of the anti-colonial ideology of Hindutva or Hindu Nationality aimed to reestablish the power and position of the traditional elite than to establish a monolithic Hinduism. Tilak's struggle for Swaraj was a struggle by the landed elite to reestablish their control over the society.