

Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak: The Early Life, Family and Education

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1. Introduction

The Indian national movement has witnessed several nationalists and visionary leaders. To name of some them as 'Mahatma Gandhi', 'Subhash Chandra Bose', 'Bhagat Singh', 'Jawaharlal Nehru', 'Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel' and others. All of them have tried their best to bring freedom for India. The contribution of each leader was equally significant. However, there was one courageous nationalist, who choose a different path of national movement. The 'British' government was always keeping an eye on this nationalist. He was the first leader during 'British' India, who took open and most bold path of nationalist movement, interestingly; this national movement was appreciated by the large section of Indian. The name of this leader was 'Bal Gangadhar Tilak'.

He is known as 'Lokmanya', He was considered as one of mass leader, who fought against British India through mass movement, through his writings and his mass appealing speech. Tilak was an Indian nationalist, a teacher, a scholar and an independence activist. It would be interesting to explore the early life, family and education of 'Bal Gangadhar Tilak'.

Lokmanya Balgandhar Tilak was multi-dimensional personality. He was well-known for this contribution in the field of national movement, beside that; he was successful in spreading the idea of 'nationalism' among the common people. He advocated 'Swarajya', which is nothing but the government established by ourselves. It is the government of free India. He was curious, creative, courageous and open to learn the new experiences. He was a scholar of 'Sanskrit' and 'Astro-Mathematics'. His intellectual contribution in the field of writings shows the deep understanding of him about the subjects. He made a commentary on 'Bhagvad Gita', which is known as 'Geeta Rahasya'. He is known as 'selfless' national leader, who fought for the cause of people by paying high sacrifice. The four fold programme introduced by Tilak during British India became most successful. This four-fold programme includes 'Swaraj', 'Swadeshi', 'Boycot' and 'National Education'. The ultimate goal of this path of this programme was to get the freedom from British government and also to reach the self-reliant economic growth. This strategy made him more popular among the people. Bal Gangadhar Tilak was most successful national leader, which brought deep impact on national movement. He became mass

leader and people granted him the title as 'Lokmanya'. Therefore, it is essential to know the early life and education of Lokmanya Tilak. This paper is aims at exploring the early life and education of Bal Gangadhar Tilak. The culture and upbringing of Tilak by his family must be explored.

Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak was fearless and courageous throughout his life. The contribution of Tilak in the field of national movement has been appreciated by many national leaders and even 'British' authors. Tilak was a nationalist, who could understand the right path of national movement. He was one of the early nationalist, who introduced innovative strategy in struggle for freedom. Therefore, he became most successful. Unfortunately, Lokmanya Tilak died in the year 1920 without looking dawn of freedom. The contribution of Tilak makes the people to think about his family background and educational background. This analysis gives selected incidents of his life, family and education.

2. Birth and Family of Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak

Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak was born on 23rd July, 1856 in a village named 'Chikhalgaon', located in 'Ratnagiri' district of 'Maharashtra'. This place is located in the Konkan part of 'Maharashtra'. Tilak family named him as 'Keshav', later his mother 'Parvatibai' gave him a name as 'Bal'. The meaning of 'Bal' in 'marathi' is 'young child'. This name as 'Bal' became more popular and usable among the people in the later life of Lokmanya Tilak. He was the only son of 'Gangadharpant Tilak' after three daughters. 'Parvatibai', the mother

of Lokmanya, was religious women and was practising the 'Hindu' culture in her family. Basically, 'Tilak' family was belonging to 'Chitpavan Brahmin' community. This community was known for educationally elites during those days. Even today, they are well-known as 'Elites' of Indian society.

'Gangadharpant Tilak' (father of Bal Gangadhar Tilak) was popularly known for his knowledge of Sanskrit, and people used to call him as 'Gangadhar Shastri'. He was headmaster of a primary school, and in the later phase, he earned the position of Assistant Deputy Educational Inspector. In 1866, when Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak was nine years old, at that time, his mother (Parvatibai) died. This was the biggest and huge loss to Keshav or Bal Tilak, since he was very much close to his mother. At the age of sixteen years (of Lokmanya), his father, 'Gangadhar Tilak' died. Again, a critical and sad moment came in the life of Lokmanya Tilak. After losing both parents, one can imagine how sad and stressful life could. This age was very painful for Tilak. Both of his mother and father was the inspiration behind Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak's religious as well as educational upbringing. Thus, he had lost his inspiration. The educational process was distracted. The emotional stress was very much high. But, due to the teaching, religious motivation received from his parents, helped him to manage this most challenging situation of life. Tilak family was known liked to live their lives in a simple manner and they were frugal in their habits. This is like Simple living and high thinking life. The 'Hindu' religious text teaches such lessons.

Lokmanya Tilak married to 'Tapibai' in the year 1871, few months before his father's death. After marriage, the name of his wife was changed to 'Satyabhamabai'. Lokmanya had three sons namely- 'Rambhau Balwant Tilak', 'Vishwanath Balwant Tilak' and 'Sridhar Balwant Tilak'. Shridhar Balwant Tilak' was the third son of Lokmanya Tilak, who was a revolutionary social reformers and writer. He was constructively engaged with a movement related eradication of untouchability along with Dr. B.R. Ambedkar. This contribution and work of 'Shridhar Balwant Tilak' was revolutionary move from the society point of view at that time.

Sridhar Tilak had two sons, namely 'Shrikant' and 'Jayant Tilak'. Among them, 'Jayant Shridhar Tilak' was popular in Maharashtra as political leader. He was a grandson of Lokmanya Tilak. He was generally known as 'Jayantrao Tilak'. He was a 'Member of Parliament' representing 'Indian National Congress'. He was also a member of 'Maharashtra Legislative Council' and stood a 'Chairman' of the house for 16 years. Late Shri Jayantrao Tilak also has participated in the 'Goa Liberation Movement' and 'Sanyukta Maharashtra Samiti', which shows the love and bravery of 'Tilak' family towards the motherland. The 'Goa liberation Movement' was a movement which fought to end Portuguese colonial rule in Goa during a period of 1940–1961. 'Sanyukta Maharashtra Movement', commonly known as the 'Sanyukta Maharashtra Samiti', was an organisation in India that advocated for a separate Marathi-

speaking state in Western India and Central India during a period of 1956 to 1960.

Jayantrao Tilak's son and great grandson of Lokmanya Tilak is Dr. Deepak Tilak. Dr. Deepak Tilak was working as the 'Vice-Chancellor' of Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapeeth, Pune'. He is also known for simple living and high thinking culture. The culture and legacy of 'Tilak' family continued with him. He has made intellectual contribution in the field of literature. He wrote several books on various social, economic and political issues. He also has worked as the editor of 'Kesari' newspaper for several years. He is known as educationist, social worker and sportsman. Presently, Dr. Deepak Tilak has been appointed as the 'Chancellor' of Tilak Vidyapeeth, Pune. The fourth generation of Lokmanya Tilak is also functioning with similar kind of simple living with educational background. Dr. Deepak Tilak has one son (Dr. Rohit Tilak) and one daughter (Dr. Geetali Tilak). Dr. Rohit Tilak is a political leader and educationist, whereas, Dr. Geetali Tilak is working as the 'Vice-Chancellor' of Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapeeth, Pune (Maharashtra). The family tree of Lokmanya Tilak indicates that, at every generation, the member of Tilak family has been engaged with educational and social service.

3. Educational Background of Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak :

The educational background of Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak was interesting, since he has studied several branches of education. He started his primary school education in 1861, and before that, he received deep-rooted

traditional learning from his family. His mother was religious and thus the culture of religion percolated in him. He received an orthodox primary education and made excellent progress in multiplication, Tables, Sanskrit, and mathematics. He followed his father's guidelines and the footprints. Tilak had developed the natural aptitude to learn and earn proficiency in Sanskrit Lexicon (Dictionary) and synonyms from the 'Amarkosha'. Knowing the 'Amarakosha' was a huge advantage in the study of literature and in enhancing Sanskrit vocabulary. In the later phase, Lokmanya Tilak took admission to Deccan College in the year 1873 from where he obtained his graduation degree. At the college, Tilak was particularly impressed by his mathematics teacher 'Kero Vaman Chhatre', so much so that he often said that he would have been content to be a teacher of mathematics if India were a free country. He passed B.A. with first-class in 1876 with Mathematics (pure and applied) as an optional subject. After graduating, he (Tilak) started teaching mathematics at a private school for some while and later in Fergusson College in Pune (Maharashtra).

Thereafter he obtained an LL.B. degree in 1879 from Government Law College, Mumbai. While studying law degree, he paid particular attention to Hindu law and read almost all the works on Hinduism with commentaries thereon. It was during his college days that he was in contact with 'Gopal Ganesh Agarkar', who became a close friend. In the later phase, Mr. 'Gopal Agarkar' became popular as a social reformers and revolutionary thinker. After

the graduation in Law, Tilak accepted a job of 'Teacher-ship' for himself at New English School (Pune). This helped him to set up his life as an independent.

Lokmanya Tilak studied 'Sanskrit' and performed religious practice. Along with that, he devoted his knowledge to produce 'Shudda Panchang'. A 'Panchāng' is a Hindu calendar, which follows traditional units of Hindu timekeeping, and presents important dates and their calculations in a tabulated form. He had written a book on diet plan for diabetic patient. 'Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak' was a person with remarkable intellect, and he proclaimed few research papers and articles in 'Kesari'. He wrote several articles in 'Kesari' on various social, economic issues. He consistently wrote against the 'British' government policies. The 'Kesari' editorial was so much famous that, it had deep impact on masses and also on 'British' government. The articles on various issues were contributing to and foundational dependencies of Indian studies. Even today, the content of the articles wrote by Lokmanya could be stressed in today's society. The economic system has several problems, which was addressed by Lokmanya Tilak long back before 1920. The life journeys and the articles, books, and publications written by Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak are still in use and it will be useful to solve the versatile problems of modern India.

Besides the academic achievement, Tilak was disciplined and dedicated in his life. His lifestyle was simple. The personality and culture developed by Tilak during his education helped him to face the challenges of life with positive attitude. The fearless and courageous personality of him led excellent outcomes

in later life as an adult. The foundation of success comes from childhood, parenting and teaching of family. This was truer in case of Lokmanya Tilak. Lokmanya Tilak was good at things like sharing, interacting with others in school and society in a polite way. He was a brilliant student who dislikes injustice. He had an eagerness for freedom and defending ability. Tilak had independent opinions and a straightforward attitude. All these qualities helped him to become the political leader. When Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak was a child, he had developed that much knowledge about what is right and wrong. Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak had honoured the place in Indian history as the maker of modern India. The national leaders and British authors also had honoured the contribution of Lokmanya Tilak in the freedom movement.

4. Lokmanya Tilak's Social and Political Life:

i) Political career

Tilak had a long political career agitating for Indian autonomy from British colonial rule. Before Gandhi, he was the most widely known Indian political leader. Unlike his fellow Maharashtrian contemporary, [Gokhale](#), Tilak was considered a radical Nationalist but a Social conservative. He was imprisoned on a number of occasions that included a long stint at Mandalay. At one stage in his political life he was called "the father of Indian unrest" by British author Sir [Valentine Chirol](#)

b) Indian National Congress

Tilak joined the [Indian National Congress](#) in 1890. He opposed its moderate attitude, especially towards the fight for self-government. He was one of the most-eminant radicals at the time.^[15] In fact, it was the Swadeshi movement of 1905–1907 that resulted in the split within the Indian National Congress into the Moderates and the Extremists.

Following the [Partition of Bengal](#), which was a strategy set out by [Lord Curzon](#) to weaken the nationalist movement, Tilak encouraged the [Swadeshi movement](#) and the Boycott movement. The movement consisted of the boycott of foreign goods and also the social boycott of any Indian who used foreign goods. The Swadeshi movement consisted of the usage of natively produced goods. Once foreign goods were boycotted, there was a gap which had to be filled by the production of those goods in India itself. Tilak said that the Swadeshi and Boycott movements are two sides of the same coin.

[Lala Lajpat Rai](#) of [Punjab](#), Bal Gangadhar Tilak (middle) of [Maharashtra](#), and [Bipin Chandra Pal](#) of [Bengal](#), the triumvirate were popularly known as [Lal Bal Pal](#), changed the political discourse of the [Indian independence movement](#). Tilak opposed the moderate views of [Gopal Krishna Gokhale](#), and was supported by fellow Indian nationalists [Bipin Chandra Pal](#) in [Bengal](#) and [Lala Lajpat Rai](#) in [Punjab](#). They were referred to as the "[Lal-Bal-Pal triumvirate](#)". In 1907, the annual session of the Congress Party was held at [Surat](#), Gujarat. Trouble broke out over the selection of the new president of the Congress

between the moderate and the radical sections of the party. The party split into the radicals faction, led by Tilak, Pal and Lajpat Rai, and the moderate faction. Nationalists like [Aurobindo Ghose](#), [V. O. Chidambaram Pillai](#) were Tilak supporters. ^{[15][21]}

c) Sedition Charges

During his lifetime among other political cases, Tilak had been tried for [sedition](#) charges in three times by British India Government—in 1897, 1909, and 1916. In 1897, Tilak was sentenced to 18 months in prison for preaching disaffection against the Raj. In 1909, he was again charged with sedition and intensifying racial animosity between Indians and the British. Tilak was sent to Mandalay from 1908 to 1914. While imprisoned, he continued to read and write, further developing his ideas on the Indian nationalist movement. While in the prison he wrote the [Gita Rahasya](#). Many copies of which were sold, and the money was donated for the Indian Independence movement.

d) Life after Mandalay

Tilak developed [diabetes](#) during his sentence in Mandalay prison. This and the general ordeal of prison life had mellowed him at his release on 16 June 1914. When [World War I](#) started in August of that year, Tilak cabled the King-Emperor [George V](#) of his support and turned his oratory to find new recruits for war efforts. He welcomed The Indian Councils Act, popularly known as [Minto-Morley Reforms](#), which had been passed by British Parliament in May 1909,

terming it as "a marked increase of confidence between the Rulers and the Ruled". It was his conviction that acts of violence actually diminished, rather than hastening, the pace of political reforms. He was eager for reconciliation with Congress and had abandoned his demand for direct action and settled for agitations "strictly by constitutional means" – a line that had long been advocated by his rival Gokhale. Tilak reunited with his fellow nationalists and rejoined the Indian National Congress during the Lucknow pact 1916.

e) Tilak and Gandhi:

Tilak tried to convince [Mohandas Gandhi](#) to leave the idea of Total non-violence ("Total Ahimsa") and try to get self-rule ("Swarajya") by all means. Though Gandhi did not entirely concur with Tilak on the means to achieve self-rule and was steadfast in his advocacy of [satyagraha](#), he appreciated Tilak's services to the country and his courage of conviction. After Tilak lost a civil suit against [Valentine Chirol](#) and incurred pecuniary loss, Gandhi even called upon Indians to contribute to the Tilak Purse Fund started with the objective of defraying the expenses incurred by Tilak

f) All India Home Rule League

Tilak helped found the [All India Home Rule League](#) in 1916–18, with [G. S. Khaparde](#) and [Annie Besant](#). After years of trying to reunite the moderate and radical factions, he gave up and focused on the Home Rule League, which sought self-rule. Tilak travelled from village to village for support from farmers

and locals to join the movement towards self-rule. Tilak was impressed by the [Russian Revolution](#), and expressed his admiration for [Vladimir Lenin](#). The league had 1400 members in April 1916, and by 1917 membership had grown to approximately 32,000. Tilak started his Home Rule League in [Maharashtra](#), [Central Provinces](#), and [Karnataka](#) region. Besant's League was active in the rest of India.

5. Conclusion :

Lokmanya Tilak has challenging early life. He had to face several struggles and challenges throughout his early life. Despite of this, he could establish himself as one of the great educationist and political leader. The performance of Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak in India before 1920 had been widespread and amusing. The freedom movement led by him was successful in connecting the people; this was the biggest success of Lokmanya Tilak in establishing himself as national leader. He played an immense role in achieving freedom. Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak was the first popular leader of the Independence Movement. The early life and family background of Lokmanya Tilak gives inspiration and motivation to the youths.

Key Points of Tilak's Early Life and Education:

- Lokmanya Tilak was born on July 23, 1856, in Chikhali, a small village in Ratnagiri, Maharashtra, India.
- Family: Tilak was born into a middle-class Brahmin family. His father, Gangadhar Ramachandra Tilak, was a school teacher and a Sanskrit scholar.
- Primary education: Tilak began his education at a local school in Ratnagiri, Maharashtra, where he studied Sanskrit, Marathi, and Hindi.
- High school Education: He attended the New English School in Pune, where he excelled in academics and developed an interest in social and political issues.
- Deccan College: Tilak enrolled in Deccan College, Pune, for his undergraduate studies. He graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1877.
- Law studies: Tilak pursued law at the Government Law College in Bombay (now Mumbai), earning his LL.B. degree in 1879.
- Influence of Indian culture: Tilak was deeply influenced by Indian culture, philosophy, and traditions. He studied Sanskrit, Indian history, and Hindu scriptures.

- Western education's limitations: Tilak believed that Western education had its limitations and that Indians should also learn from their own cultural heritage.
- Influence of family values: Tilak's family instilled in him strong values of nationalism, social reform, and religious tolerance.
- Marriage: Tilak married Tapibai Gangadhar Bhide in 1871, when he was just 15 years old.
- Early career: Tilak began his career as a teacher and later became a journalist, writing for various publications, including the Kesari newspaper.

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