

Study of Dadabhai Naoroji to Political Nationalism & Loyalty to British Rule

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ABSTRACT:

Dadabhai Naoroji was the first Asian to be a British MP and the first Indian to become a Professor at Elphinstone Institution in 1850. The 'Grand Old Man of India' and the 'Father of Indian Nationalism' are the epithets to explain the personality of this great man who was an educator, cotton trader and social leader. He is none other than Dadabhai Naoroji, who was born on 4th September 1825 at Khadak in Mumbai. He was a Member of Parliament (MP) in the United Kingdom House of Commons between 1892 and 1895. Dadabhai Naoroji played a crucial role in founding the Indian National Congress along with two other famous politicians of that time i.e. A.O. Hume and Dinshaw Edulji Wacha. Dadabhai Naoroji's concept of wealth drain from India during British rule got huge attention. He mentioned the same concept in his book *Poverty and Un-British Rule in India*. After completing his schooling, Dadabhai Naoroji finished his Masters degree in Mathematics and worked as a professor in the same subject. He achieved many honors during his academic career and after completing his education from the Elphinstone Institution, he became a partner of the first Indian commercial company founded in Britain. So, he went to England for managing Cama and Co. While staying in England, he was very keen in exposing the wretchedness in India and what Indians were going through during British rule. In 1866, he established the East India Association in England. This was a platform to put forward the grievances of Indians in Britain. To promote this further, branches of the association were also established in different parts of India.

KEYWORDS: Indian National Congress, British rule

INTRODUCTON:

Dadabhai Naoroji was born to a poor Parsi family in Bombay, Maharashtra on September 4, 1825. When Dadabhai Naoroji was just four years, his father Naoroji Palanji Dordi died and all the responsibilities fell on his mother Maneckbai. His mother never complained and carried out her responsibilities with great courage. Naoroji's marriage was fixed at the very young age of 11 to Gulbai. Dadabhai Naoroji had a wonderful academic career at the Elphinstone Institution. When he was just 25 he became the assistant professor at Elphinstone Institution. After four years he was chosen as Professor of Mathematics and Natural Philosophy in the same institution. He was called the "The Promise of India" by Professor Orlebar. On 1st August 1851 he established the Rahnumae Mazdayasne Sabha to renovate the Zoroastrian religion.

In his work *Poverty and Un-British rule in India* Dadabhai condemned British policies and explained how India was losing all its wealth and possessions. Naoroji set off for England on June 27, 1855 to be a part of the production firm of the mercantile Cama family. Naoroji tried to inform and teach the British public about their tasks and duties. He tried to illuminate the British citizens about the torture and cruelty of the British Raj. To fight for the rights of Indians, he formed the East India Association. Naoroji helped in establishing the Indian National Congress and became its President thrice. In 1883 he was re-elected to the Bombay Municipal Council. An example of his modesty was that he refused the title of "Sir" given to Dadabhai by the British. The Shah of Iran wanted to honor him but he refused. In 1916 he returned to England but fell sick. He started suffering from bronchitis. He was looked after by his granddaughters Mrs. Nargis and Gosi

Captain .He returned to India in October. Dr. Mehrbanoo took charge of his health. Dadabhai Naoroji left for his heavenly abode on June 30, 1917.

FREEDOM FIGHTER:

India, the largest democracy of the world, got independence in 1947. It was a momentous year in the history of India when it gained freedom from the British Empire that ruled it over 100 years. It was not only the British who ruled the country but also many others. It began with the Aryans who came from the Central Europe; followed by the Persians, the Iranians and the Parsis who immigrated to India; and then the Mughals who came and settled down permanently in India. Many a times, the Mongolians looted and invaded India. The Portuguese and the French also entered the country and built there colonies. Finally, the British came and ruled the country for years. The freedom of India was not easily gained. It is not an easy task for a nation to free itself from the clutches of an empire that has been ruling it for years. The freedom struggle in the country went on for decades and the freedom fighters played a significant role in attaining independence.

DRAIN - A NATIONAL LOSS:

The theory of drain is not the invention of Dadabhai Naoroji. About 230 years ago in 1776 Adam Smith in his work *The Wealth of Nations* described the British rulers of India as 'plunderers of India'. In 1857 Karl Marx used almost the same words as used by Dadabhai Naoroji to describe the drain. Dadabhai himself refers to about a dozen of Britishers among his predecessors and contemporaries who vouched for drain. In the 19th century the drain of wealth from India to England took the form of unrequited surplus of export over import. It was in 1867 that for the first time Dadabhai Naoroji in his paper 'England's Debt to India' put forward the idea that Britain was extracting wealth from India as a price of her rule in India, that out of the revenues raised in India, nearly one-fourth went clean out of the country and was added to the resources of England', and that India was consequently 'being bled'. Dadabhai Naoroji dedicated his life to propagation of the drain theory and to launching a roaring campaign against the drain which was considered by him to be the fundamental evil of British rule in India. Since the statistical methods and standardized techniques of national income calculation were not very developed at that time, there was difference of opinion on the volume and extent of wealth transferred to England from India. But the fact that there was continuous drain of wealth from India to England was undisputed issue among the nationalist leaders at that time. Only the agents and some officials of British government did not accept the drain in toto and criticized it. But the truth could not be suppressed much longer.

EXPRESSION OF LOVE AND LOYALTY TO BRITISH RULE:

Dadabhai Naoroji was an admirer of British character and system. He acknowledged wholeheartedly the British contribution to India regarding education, centralized administration, discipline, political unification of the country, railways, telegraphs, hospitals, security, etc. But he could not reconcile himself to the outcome of British rule in India. To him the British rule in India was un-British in character. Hence the title of his book *Poverty and Un-British Rule in India*. He expressed his earnest desire to see in India the true British government. While addressing, a meeting in England in aid of the Indian Famine Relief Fund on July 1, 1900, he said, "If it were British rule and not un-British rule which governed us, England would be benefited ten times more than it is." Dadabhai Naoroji adopted a persuasive approach to cure the malpractices of British rule and get the drain checked. He frequently referred to British government's pledges and assurances given to Indians. He used to quote many British officials about the importance of India to British empire and that India's prosperity was a prerequisite for Britain's prosperity.

Perhaps it was his persuasive tactics that he reiterated in the 2nd session of the Indian National Congress that this Congress was not a nursery for sedition and rebellion against the British government and that it was

another stone in the foundation of the stability for that government'. Again in the ninth session of the Congress in Lahore in 1893 he declared, "We, the Congress are only desirous of supporting government, and having this important matter of poverty grappled with the settled, we are anxious to prevent the political danger of the most serious order declared to exist by the secretary of state himself. We desire that the British connection should endure for a long time to come for the sake of our material and political elevation among the civilized nations of the world". He also appealed to the morale of the British people and the government, and emphasized on cooperation to strengthen the British government.

REALISATION OF ACTUAL BRITISH CHARACTER AND INTENTION:

But all this was in vain. There was no sign of change in British policy of exploitation and suppression. Realising this, Dadabhai Naoroji started expressing his displeasure and disapproval of British rule in India. '... Is it just and fair, is it British that all the cost of such greatness and glory, and the prosperity of United Kingdom should be entirely, to the last farthing thrown upon the wretched Indians, as if the only relation existing between the United Kingdom and India were not of mutual benefit, but of mere masters and slaves. . . ?" He exposed the reality of protection provided by the British government. He said, "The way you secure life and property is by protecting it from open violence by anybody else, taking care that you yourselves should take away that property". In 1895 he clearly understood the aims and objectives of the government in colonization of India and declared that British India was indeed the British India and not India's India. But he was slow in putting forward the radical demands.

SHIFT IN HIS STAND:

Dadabhai Naoroji exposed the danger of drain forcefully and pointed out its impact on the Indian economy. According to him, it was drain that caused and intensified the famines in India. It was the fundamental cause of mass poverty. The drain was not limited to that of wealth but there was political and intellectual drain too. The drain was a slow poisoning to the India's national economy. According to Dadabhai Naoroji the injury inflicted to India by earlier foreign invaders was limited; it was once and over. But the British rule in India was an unending chain of drain and exploitation.

Dadabhai Naoroji opposed the opium trade of Britain with China from the Indian land. According to him this being an act of immorality covered the intensity of drain. Had it been stopped, the British government would be fully exposed. The British government was behaving with India like a step mother. The other British colonies, e.g. Australia, are advancing and flourishing, but India's condition was worsening day by day.

CALL FOR POLITICAL NATIONALISM AND SELF-RULE:

Dadabhai spent his full energy to propagate the theory of drain. After years of reconciling effort and persuasion of British authorities, he was disappointed from lack of any reform on the part of British rulers and accordingly the sentiment of disloyalty crept into him whose full demonstration we find in his speeches of 1904 and 1905 in which he declared that the self- government is the only solution for India's misery. In his message of the Benares session of the Indian National Congress he asserted, "Without self-government the Indians can never get rid of their present drain, and the consequent impoverishment, misery, and destruction." Thus, he was guided from economic nationalism to political nationalism, and that the former could not be achieved without the latter. As early as in 1876, in his essay on 'Poverty of India', he laid stress on the fact that Britain was able to keep back a large part of India's exports chiefly because of the political position it held over India. In 1896, he wrote a letter to Welby in which in an unambiguous term he stressed that drain was all simply the result of the unnatural administration and management of Indian resources by an alien country. He reiterated that Indians must have their full share of public employment and a voice in their own expenditure.

In Calcutta session of the Indian National Congress, Dadabhai was overemphatic when he declared in his presidential address that all the political demands of the Indian people could be summed up in one word, 'self-government or *swaraj*', like that of the United Kingdom or the colonies.

CONCLUSION:

Dadabhai Naoroji struggled for this cause for the next 12 years before he died in 1917. But the revolutionary spirit with which he filled the Indian masses continued to work till Indian people achieved the freedom in 1947, and forced the sun of British empire to set down in the East. Now at the passage of about half a century on acquisition of political nationalism. It is true, as Dadabhai envisaged, that the prosperity of masses or economic nationalism is not possible without self-rule or political nationalism. Similarly, it is also true that political nationalism or independence is incomplete without the welfare and prosperity of masses. Thus the political nationalism are supplementary and complementary to each other, and this is what to be struggled for

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