

Veer Savarkar and his Socio Political thought

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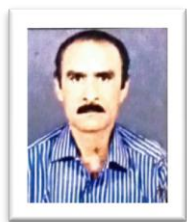
Abstract

The paper tries to highlight the contribution of Veer Savarkar in the national movement as a whole. It covers the early life, starting from the birth of the great leader and traces the trajectory of his life, and his development of interest in the national movement. The paper highlights his radical views and his opinion on the collective development of India. It also brings in light his social and political views which were considered very radical at the time, hence giving a whole worldview of his ideas.

Keywords: Veer Savarkar, Nationalism, Nationalist Movement, Social Role, India, Radical, Independence, Liberation, Revolutionary.

Introduction

Swatantra Veer Vinayak Damodar Savarkar was a versatile personality who has been a source of inspiration for generations of Indians. He was an eminent revolutionary, famous freedom Fighter, important political thinker, devoted social and religious reformer, prolific writer and poet, and a rationalist philosopher. Veer Savarkar is also one of the most controversy creating of India's personas and people are always in difference with each other when it comes to opinions on him, but his life and literary contribution present various prominent phenomena. He became the center of attention and of academics as well as public controversy in post modern and contemporary India because of his military active activism and nationalism during the struggle for Independence. Yet controversies about Savarkar, mostly controversial in tone do not take into account the philosophical zones underlying his social and politically inclined thoughts. Both Indian and Western scholars have focused only on a particular fragment of his thoughts and actions without spending the time and effort to understand his various concepts related to theory in an enhanced but cordial framework. Veer Savarkar was born to a Brahmin Hindu family on 28th of May, 1883, at Bhagour in the Nashik District. He had three siblings namely Ganesh, Mainabai and Narayan. He had always been known for his bravery and so he quickly earned the nick name of Veer which practically means a courageous person. He was under the influence of his elder brother Ganesh who had played a prominent role in his teenage life. Veer Savarkar also became a revolutionary young man. At an early age, he organized a youth group which was named as 'Mitra Mela' He had always been inspired by radical group of political leaders including Lala Lajpat Rai, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, and Bipin Chandra Pal and engaged the group in revolutionary activities. He was enrolled at Fergusson College in Pune and completed his Bachelor's Degree from there. Even when he was a young boy, Vinayak who later came to be known as veer was very aware of the sufferings of people. Therefore, he was emotionally affected by the miseries that were caused by famine and plague. Added to this was the ruthless Treatment and harsh behavior of the British Raj. While such an atmosphere was brooding, Two of British Plague Commissioners were assassinated by the Chapekar brothers. This happened in Poona on 22 June 1897 and thus Subsequently Damodar Pant Chapekar was executed. All this disturbed the young Savarkar. He took a vow in front of Goddess Durga, and pledged sacrificing his nearest and whatever was dear to him, and vowed to fulfil the mission of the martyred Chapekar which was left incompleting. He pledged to drive out the British Raj from his Motherland India and to make her free and great as it had always been. Since then, Savarkar dedicatedly strove to spread this mission of his life.



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Strategy for National Liberation

According to Savarkar, the liberation of the Motherland was to be achieved by a preparation for war which included the teaching of Swadeshi and boycott of foreign goods; imparting national education and creating a revolutionary spirit; and carrying patriotism into the rank of the military forces. With clear indications of an imminent war in Europe, Savarkar wanted to utilize the opportunity. Savarkar and his Abhinay Bharat started writing, printing, packaging and posting revolutionary literature. He wanted to impart military training to his comrades. A resolution demanding Swaraj was unanimously passed at a Conference held in December 1908. Conscious of the hardships that could follow, Savarkar warned his audience: "Before passing this resolution, just bring before your mind's eye the dreadful prison walls, and the dreary dingy cells". The resolution was passed unanimously.

Not only was this Savarkar among the first Indian leaders who realized the importance of international support for India's freedom struggle. The Indian revolutionaries of Abhinay Bharat were in constant touch with the revolutionary forces of Russia, Ireland, Egypt and China. Savarkar's aim was to organize a united anti-British front with a view to rising in revolt simultaneously against the British Empire. Savarkar wrote articles on Indian affairs in the Gaelic America of New York, got them translated into German, French, Italian, Russian and Portuguese languages and had them published. Savarkar deputed Madame Cama and Sardar Singh Rana to represent India at the International Socialist Congress which was held on 22 August 1907 at Stuttgart in Germany. He had also been a staunch supporter of the idea of the establishment of a Jewish State in Palestine. He won the sympathies of the Irishmen serving in Scotland Yard, who actually helped the Indian revolutionaries in smuggling political literature.

The English were quick to realize the growing support and power of Savarkar and took necessary measures to prevent the further growth of the same. They tried their best to curb the power of the Indians who were mindful and full of nationalism and no wonder Savarkar fell prey to the same. His political thought and revolutionary ideas caused the English to fear what was coming. Thus they played smart by not trying to put him behind the bars but to get in written his expulsion from politics. Though Savarkar passed the final examination at the Gray's Inn, the Benches of his Inn refused to call Savarkar to the Bar. They wanted him to give a written undertaking that he would never participate in politics. Savarkar rejected their offer.

Savarkar's activities finally led to his arrest in March 1910. While being extradited to India, he made the famous escape through the port-holes of the steamer into the sea and reached the shore off Marseilles in France. However, he was recaptured. Influenced by world-wide public opinion in favor of him, the French Government demanded that Savarkar be returned to France. However, the Hague International Tribunal passed a judgment in favor of the British Government. At the young age of 27, he

was sentenced to two transportations for life and imprisoned in Andamans. The life in prison (1911-1924) was one of untold hardships.

Social Reformer

After he was released from jail in 1924, Savarkar took up the task of a social reform with great sincerity. He declared a war against caste system and untouchability and tirelessly wrote against the taboos concerning sea-crossing and re-conversion and inter-caste marriages. He carried on a great propaganda in favor of co-caste schools through the Press and appealed to the authorities to set up such schools where there is no caste difference. In the course of time, he was able to ensure justice and civic, humane and legitimate rights for the so called 'untouchable' children and made them sit along with upper caste Hindus in public schools. Then came the question of the entry in temples for the 'untouchables'. The orthodox Hindus gave in to the face of Savarkar's arguments. —"He is not God who can be desecrated", he remarked. He transformed the Ganesh festival started by Tilak into an all Hindu festival where the issue was discussed threadbare. Thanks to Savarkar's efforts, the Vithoba temple of Ratnagiri at last witnessed the historic entry of 'untouchables'. Later, the Patit pavan temple was constructed which became the centre of Pan-Hindu activities. Savarkar fearlessly and whole-heartedly supported Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's struggle for liberation of the 'untouchables'. Removal of untouchability, he maintained, implied purification and salvation of misguided orthodox touchable also. Savarkar also distributed sacred threads among the 'untouchable' Hindus and declared: —The people who regard untouchability which has been a disgrace to humanity as a part of their religion are really the fallen people. As part of his efforts, He organized Sahabhojan, the first Pan-Hindu dinner of its kind. At the same time, Savarkar Urged the 'untouchables' to not abandon their occupations as every occupation has its own value. With his supporters, he visited the slums and small towns where the 'untouchables' were living, and thus guided them, and not only this, he even worshipped with them

Savarkar's Vision of India

Savarkar dreamed of an India that would have unbound faith in a World Commonwealth as his political philosophy administered that the World is the Common Motherland and humanism is the patriotism of man, but his India would not be undermined during the process which leads to the cure of humanity into a World Commonwealth. In international politics, Savarkar's India would help to bring peace and prosperity in the world. Nationalism, according to him, nothing but an inevitable step towards the goal of humanity and humanist State. Savarkar's vision of his country was one in which all citizens would have equal rights irrespective of their caste, creed, race or religion, and they owed an exclusive and devoted allegiance to the State. All minorities would be given safeguards to protect their language, religion, culture, etc. but none of them would be allowed to create a State within a State or to deprive upon the legitimate rights of the majority. Further, the fundamental rights

of freedom of speech, freedom of conscience and all other rights

Worship, of association, etc. should be to be enjoyed by all citizens likewise. If any restrictions were imposed, the interest of public peace and order or national emergency would be the only guiding principle. There would be joint electorates and one man would have only one vote as a general rule. All the Services would be given by merit alone. Primary education should be free of cost and compulsory. DevNagari would be the national script of the nation, Hindi, the national language and Sanskrit, the Devabhasha of India. A lot of publications emerged from Savarkar's pen over a course of fifty years, and His first work, the Indian War of Independence, appeared in 1908, or fifty years after The rebellion of 1857-58 had been brutally crushed. In this work Savarkar pointed that Hindus and Muslims had to stand together in resistance against the British. In Hindu Pad-Padashahi [1925], a Treatise on Hindu Kingship, or more particularly on the glories of India under Maratha rule, Showed as well the impact of political events on Savarkar's thinking: both the Khilafat movement, as well as the Moplah Rebellion, doubtless played a part in turning Savarkar against Muslims. However, his signature piece, in this respect, was a "treatise" he penned in 1922, "Essentials of Hindutva", a more elaborate version of which appeared in 1928 as Hindutva: Who is a Hindu? (Nagpur, 1928). Savarkar vigorously set forth the idea that Hindus constituted a nation, bound together by common blood, and that Hindus were united "by the tie of a common heritage we pay to our great civilization—our Hindu culture". Savarkar eschewed the word "Hinduism"; to him, Hindutva represented the essence of the Hindu way of life. As he wrote, "If there be any word of alien growth it is this word Hinduism and so we should not allow our thoughts to get confused by this new fangled term." The Hindus' devotion to their motherland was supreme; indeed, whosoever was devoted to Hindustan, and considered it his or her holy land (punyabhoomi), was a Hindu.

Aim of the Study

1. To establish an ideology relating to Veer Savarkar and his views at the time.
2. To focus on the sociology and political views of Veer Savarkar.
3. To highlight Savarkar's view of India and his objectives for the country.
4. Veer Savarkar and his contribution to the national movement.

5. To establish Veer Savarkar's contribution to the independence movement as a whole.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Savarkar dreamt of a country free from the shackles of the British. His philosophy was clearly ahead of time and he was a great revolutionary in every term. Shri C. Rajagopalachari once described Savarkar as a national hero, a symbol of courage, bravery and patriotism, an abhithir in the long battle for freedom. The then Vice-President Dr. Zakir Husain paid tributes to Veer Savarkar and said: "A great revolutionary as he was, he inspired many young men to work for the liberation of our Motherland". Paying rich tributes to Savarkar, the then Prime Minister, Smt. Indira Gandhi said: "Savarkar was a great figure of contemporary India and his name is bywords for daring and patriotism. He was cast in a mould of a classic revolutionary and countless people drew inspiration from him"

At the end I would like to conclude with Savarkar's own inspirational words-
"Calmness in preparation but boldness in execution, this should be the watchword during the moments of crisis."

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