

Speeches and Writings of
GOPAL KRISHNA GOKHALE

VOLUME THREE : EDUCATIONAL



Gopal Krishna Gokhale (1866-1915)

Speeches and Writings of
GOPAL KRISHNA GOKHALE

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VOLUME THREE : EDUCATIONAL

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P R E F A C E

Three editions of Gokhale's Speeches and Writings were published by Messrs. G. A. Natesan and Co. of Madras : the first in 1908, the second in 1916, and the third and last in 1920. As there had been no further reprint of the work, and as the third edition was out of print, the Deccan Sabha of Poona, which is a sister institution of the Servants of India Society and of which Gokhale was one of the founders and the first secretary, thought that it would be doing a service to the public if it brought out a revised and fuller edition of Gokhale's Speeches and Writings, specially as it was understood on inquiry that Messrs. G. A. Natesan and Co. themselves had no intention of republishing the Speeches and Writings.

In due course the Deccan Sabha decided to undertake the project of publishing the Speeches and Writings. To this end it later appointed a committee to prepare a well thought out scheme of publication. The scheme prepared by the Committee envisaged the publication of the Speeches and Writings in three volumes : The first to contain Gokhale's economic speeches, the second his speeches on political subjects, and the third mainly educational speeches. The first containing his well-known Budget speeches and his evidence, both written and oral, before the Welby Commission, was brought out by the Sabha in 1962 in collaboration with Asia Publishing House, Bombay. But for several reasons, the Sabha found itself unable to carry the scheme to its conclusion.

The unfinished task was then taken over by the Servants of India Society itself, which, as is a matter of common knowledge, owes its birth to Gokhale. The responsibility for editing and bringing out the later volumes was entrusted by the Society to a committee consisting of Prof. D. G. Karve, Shri. S. G. Gokhale, secretary of the Society and Shri D. V. Ambekar (convener).

The Second volume, which included Gokhale's political utterances, was sponsored by the Asia Publishing House, Bombay, who brought it out in 1966 as their own publication. The publication of the Second volume coincided with the celebration of the centenary of Gokhale's birthday last year. It was, therefore, very appropriate that no less a person than the President of India, Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, who presided over the inaugural function of the celebrations organized at the Society's headquarters in Poona, on May 9, 1966, declared the publication of the volume.

Now this is the third and last volume being now published.

Careful preparation of a complete list of all speeches made by Gokhale in the Legislature and copying and comparing of the material with the official report were first undertaken. And the text as printed in this volume may safely be accepted as a faithful copy of the original official report. The first part of this volume containing the speeches made by Gokhale in the Central legislature is fully exhaustive and reproduces all that he said in the Council on the educational subjects that engaged its attention.

As regards the other speeches which appear in this volume, it may be mentioned that the Committee has selected for inclusion only speeches, of which

the available reports could be considered reliable, though not in all cases authoritative. It had to reject a good deal of material which did not seem to answer to this test. It may be hoped, however, that the reader will find in this volume a widely representative selection of the many speeches which Gokhale made outside the legislature, in India and in England.

As in the case of the two earlier volumes, special efforts have been made to bring to light some valuable material, which, though important from many points of view, had remained unpublished so far. Mention of a few instances of this kind may not be out of place. Quite a few of the speeches Gokhale made in the course of the discussions on the Universities Bill in the Imperial Legislative Council which had found no place in any earlier publication are included in this volume. The same applies to the speeches on the resolution calling for papers on the extension of primary education (pp. 145-156). The reader will also find here for the first time the speeches delivered by Gokhale at the inauguration of the Elementary Education Leagues at Madras (pp. 205-219) and Calcutta (pp. 233-245) whose aim was to create public opinion in favour of his Bill, as also his speech at the Calcutta Congress (pp. 246-252) which lent its weighty support to it. Similar Leagues had sprung up at the time in many other parts of India, which is a measure of the public interest and enthusiasm created by the Bill. The speech at the prize distribution ceremony of the Alexandra Institution in Bombay (pp. 253-256) is particularly valuable as providing an indication as to how Gokhale's mind reacted to the problem of women's education. We offer our thanks to the authorities of the Institution for supplying the text of the speech from their record.

Each speech is preceded by a brief introductory note so as to make the context clear. Foot-notes too have been provided, where necessary, to explain personal and other allusions. Subheadings have been introduced at appropriate places, which, it is hoped, will facilitate better appreciation of the speeches.

It is a sincere pleasure to acknowledge the help we have received from the staff of the Servants of India Society's Library and especially the Librarian. Mr. M. V. Sovani, by way of supply of necessary reference books. Our special thanks are due to Mr. V. D. Divekar, the Assistant Librarian, who, at great personal inconvenience, has prepared the index to this, as in the case of the earlier two volumes, purely as a labour of love.

All possible care has been taken to minimise mistakes, either in printing or otherwise. Nevertheless it is difficult to be sure that the result is mistake-proof. If any lapses that may be noticed are pointed out to the Society, every effort will be made to put them right in the later edition, if an occasion arises for bringing it out. Any suggestions from the reader designed to add to the utility of the work will be heartily welcome.

Poona
5th June, 1967

D. G. KARVE
D. V. AMBEKAR

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INTRODUCTION

GOKHALE : EDUCATOR AND REFORMER

The two most powerful influences on Gokhale's thought and behaviour were those of Ranade, whom he avowed to be his master, and of Gandhi, to whose moral and spiritual eminence he has paid several unstinting tributes. The first significant act of Gokhale's life, that of joining the band of dedicated young men who established the New English School in Poona, was, however, done before he met either one of these two heroes of his choice. In fact, an interesting story is told as to how on October 24, 1884 when a meeting of select invitees was being held to incorporate the Deccan Education Society, to take over and carry forward the work of the New English School, Gokhale asked Ranade to be identified before he could be admitted to the Hall. This incident was only the beginning of a relationship which both cherished throughout their life. Gokhale first saw Gandhi only in 1896, by which time he had already made his mark in public life.

The Life-Members of the Deccan Education Society were motivated by a purpose which was essentially human and patriotic. While moving the resolution of incorporation of the Society, Mr. Apte, the secretary, declared :

We have undertaken the work with the firmest conviction and belief that of all agents of human civilization, education is the only one that brings about the material, moral and religious regeneration of fallen countries and raises them upto the level of the most advanced nations by slow and peaceful revolutions. And again in order that education may produce the highest beneficial results which all writers of whatever country or belief agree in ascribing to it, it is absolutely necessary that it should be in the hands of the people themselves. Its scope ought to be free, and in no way must it work against the grain. (p. 71, *History of the Deccan Education Society*).

The paramount significance of education as an instrument of human civilization and national regeneration was the principle by which all actions of the Society were guided. A peaceful revolution in the country was what the members of the Society desired to achieve, and for that end to be attained they believed that the control of education must be in national hands. The speeches on Primary as well as University education published in this volume must be read against this background of Gokhale's beliefs and career. The sooner all the population in India became literate, the progress of all aspects of reform—social, political, industrial—would be facilitated and hastened. It was this faith in the civilizing effects of education which induced Gokhale to moderate his demands as to the content, duration and quality of education, so long as the principles of universality and compulsion were accepted. He knew that once

a beginning is made further progress would be attained almost by the momentum of the resultant enlightenment of the people. Though in the end the immediate effect of the legislative efforts of Gokhale in the field of primary education was no more satisfactory than that of most of his other contributions, yet his advocacy of compulsory primary education served as one of the tests by which the quality of British rule in India came to be judged. When, after the attainment of independence, the constitution of the country came to be written, free and compulsory primary education was inscribed as one of the important directive principles of State policy. If we are now well on the way to be a nation without illiterate youngsters the credit in no small measure should be that of Gokhale.

The long and intimate contact which Gokhale had with the functioning and problems of University education lends special significance to his speeches on the subject of University reform. Like several other things in our public life, the fact that the elite in almost all fields was of foreigners, and especially of foreigners who were only temporary residents of our country, distorted the perspective in which things were seen and judged. This would, of course, not apply to the principle that the composition of University bodies should be free from external influence, governmental or other. To proposals of so altering the constitution of University bodies as to make them largely dominated by official nominees, Gokhale naturally objected on grounds which would be shared by educationists everywhere. That in India an official usually meant a foreign official made the objection doubly valid.

When it came to the setting up of the internal bodies of a university some peculiar undercurrents of contemporary politics were inescapable. Thus it was a mute question how far the teachers should dominate either the academic or executive organs of university life. That they should have the stronger voice in academic bodies, and that they should be adequately represented in the executive bodies appear to be reasonable propositions in themselves. But here again when the teachers who are likely to find a place in either of these bodies are foreigners with no assured standards of qualifications, and with no stake in the country, it becomes at least equally reasonable to argue that representatives of the educated public, that is, of university graduates should find a substantial representation in both bodies. Gokhale's remarks on the two bills which were before the Viceroy's Legislative Council to amend the Universities Act in the direction of greater officialization must be read both in the general and the particular contexts—that which is true of University education everywhere, and that which was specially relevant to Indian conditions of his day. A similar perspective of time and circumstance has also to be maintained in following Gokhale's remarks on the importance of British history as a subject of compulsory study in Colleges.

Education, at least chronologically, was Gokhale's first love. It also happened to be, in his opinion, the most potent instrument of national regeneration. We, therefore, find him taking keen interest in educational matters

coming before legislative bodies of which he was a member. He recognized the importance of all aspects of progress, social and industrial, no less than political and economic. He, however, sought to confine his own efforts to the task of ensuring as large and as early a transfer of power to Indian hands as possible. As Gandhi records in his *Autobiography* :

India's poverty and subjection were matters of constant and exclusive concern to him. Various people sought to interest him in different things. But he gave every one of them the same reply. You do the thing yourself. Let me do my own work. What I want is freedom for my country. After that is won, we can think of other things. Today that one thing is enough to engage all my time and energy. (p. 539, *Gandhi's Autobiography*, Navajivan Karyalaya, Ahmedabad, 1933).

As a consequence of the calculated concentration of his energies on the problems of political and economic reform, Gokhale was content to leave other fields of reformation to those who had more interest in, or aptitude for those fields of activity. He was not, however, indifferent to those patriotic and progressive efforts. Whenever it was possible to do so he lent his support to reform measures in those fields. Thus when the Civil Marriage Bill was under consideration in the Central Legislature he supported its voluntary extension to all sections of the community. He felt that with growing education, especially among women, and with the rise and spread of Protestant cults, like the Brahma Samaj, the number of persons who would prefer a civil to a ritualistic marriage would be expected to increase. Even here, though the idea was good, its day had to come. What a foreign Government did not feel sufficiently interested or sufficiently strong to do, a legislature with a much larger representation of the people has accomplished in more recent years.

The present volume contains one speech apiece on women's education and progress among the depressed sections of the community. At the Educational Congress held in London in 1897 Gokhale read a paper on Female Education. Referring to the past, he stated that in the days of India's healthy and progressive living women used to have free access to such education as was suitable to their station and to the nature of their responsibilities. In the course of long years of domination of large parts of the country by foreign invaders women were pushed back into a life of secluded domesticity. The advent of the British in India had brought the two currents of civilization, eastern and western, in mutual contact. The development of a virile and progressive civilization by absorption of the best elements in the two separate currents is a task of far-reaching significance to human progress. It is as stupendous as it is significant and education of women along with that of men is necessary so as to ensure maximum success in this effort.

Along with Ranade, Gokhale felt very keenly and poignantly the responsibility of the rest of the Hindu community for a complete recognition of the

individual dignity and social equality of the members of the "Depressed Classes". When he attended a session of the social conference in Dharwar in 1903, he spoke on a very mild resolution which simply exhorted everybody to try his utmost to improve the conditions of the depressed classes. But in the course of his speech Gokhale made his position clear. Both on grounds of humanity, and of national interest, unless all individuals, including those who belong to the traditionally depressed classes, are brought on a level of social equality, and unless they are given an opportunity to develop to their fullest capacity, neither freedom nor progress was possible. This was true, internally as well as internationally. Gokhale narrated what for him was a memorable speech of Ranade bearing on the vital importance of our attitude towards the depressed classes in our own country.

Gandhi had been on one of his short visits to India from South Africa in 1894. With the support of Pherozeshah Mehta a public meeting was arranged in Bombay at which several prominent speakers made vigorous denunciations of the discriminatory racial policy of the Natal and Transvaal Governments. When it came to Ranade's turn he also expressed his disapproval of the South African authorities in no uncertain terms. But he was fair and bold enough to "turn the searchlight inwards." In India for centuries the lot of the outcaste and the depressed sections of Hindu society had continued to remain sub-human and degraded without raising any strong social movement against it. From a people who allowed such inhuman treatment of a section of their own countrymen to go on without serious attempts at remedying the evil, protests against the white people in Africa treating coloured immigrants as socially inferior could at best be received only with formal courtesy. Gandhi felt the moral challenge of the situation so keenly that he placed removal of un-touchability in the very forefront of his political programme, when in later years he assumed leadership in India's struggle for freedom.

While not disagreeing with the essential justification of Ranade's position, Gokhale was content largely to pursue another side of the same argument. He realized that people who are not treated as equals of white rulers in their own country could not expect to be treated as equals in the white settlers' colonies. He concentrated his major efforts on securing freedom and equality within India so that Indians may be treated with respect everywhere.

Dedication, patriotism and self-sacrifice were virtues of which Gokhale had given unmistakable evidence even before he came into contact with any of the outstanding personalities who were to loom large on the national horizon in his later days. But a passion for systematic and sustained study, an attitude of faithful acquiescence in the results of all dutiful actions, a concern for the emancipation of the individual, and acceptance of gradualism as a beneficial principle of healthy development were traits of Gokhale's more mature philosophy; and these he developed principally as the result of his contact with Ranade. The three speeches about Ranade, which are published in this volume

give a vivid account of the manner in which his teachings and personality had affected Gokhale. While Gokhale places saintliness above all other virtues of Ranade he confesses to have been struck more by Ranade's patriotism. "The first thing that struck anyone who came in contact with Mr. Ranade, as underlying all his marvellous personality, was his pure, fervent, profound patriotism." Some other near friends of Ranade were struck more by his saintliness than by his patriotism. Friends and followers of Gandhi have also been similarly divided as to the dominating influence in his life. Usually, it is the valuations of the observer which are reflected in such contacts and comparisons. Gokhale, himself a fervent and devoted patriot above everything else, reacted more completely and more spontaneously to the warmth and light of patriotism than to the calm and sublimity of mere saintliness.

Speaking about other personalities, Gokhale evinces a similar standard of more or less subjective appraisal. In Dadabhai Naoroji, Gokhale finds not only an inspiration for whole-hearted patriotic service, but also for a faith in the constructive benefits of India's contact with western civilization through British rule. As he says in his speech, to Dadabhai "belongs the credit of understanding aright the true meaning of the new order of things and the possibilities that it implied for their countrymen." Even in appreciative references to the work of non-Indian personalities Gokhale picks out traits which he himself rates high. Speaking about Mr. A. O. Hume, he not only refers to his great contribution to the establishment and earlier nurturing of the Indian National Congress but he specifies three respects in which Hume's contribution made the greatest impression on him. It was through the Congress that the feeling of a common nationhood among the residents of all parts of India was brought into being. Not only common subjection to the same government, but common hope and determination to transform the government made for a sense of unity of purpose. The formulation of the policies of the Congress in the direction of greater equality, freedom and progress helped to make it, in Gokhale's estimation, India's Party of Liberalism like the British Liberal Party. Whether Mr. Hume would put it exactly in these terms or no, Gokhale derived this principle from the functioning of the Congress during the days of Mr. Hume's close association with it.

In a very real manner Gokhale continued to utilize his contacts with men of goodwill and of distinction to reform and strengthen his own personality. In turn, he put into his own work the essence of his developed thought so that his countrymen, and also the rulers, should be educated into the best ways of securing progress along paths of equality and freedom. It was the patriotic reformer in him which always kept Gokhale interested in receiving and imparting education. All his speeches here reproduced bear testimony to the twin personality of Gokhale — the educator and the reformer.

IMPORTANT EVENTS IN GOKHALE'S LIFE

- 1866, May 9 Birth at Kotluk (Ratnagiri District)
- 1876 Migration to Kolhapur for education
- 1881 Passed his matriculation examination
- 1882 Studied in Rajaram College, Kolhapur
- 1883 Studied in Deccan College, Poona
- 1884 Graduated from Elphinstone College, Bombay, and joined the Law Class
- 1885 Joined New English School, Poona (started in 1880) as a teacher
- 1886 Became a Life-member of the Deccan Education Society, Poona (founded on October 24, 1884), and began teaching in Fergusson College.
Introduced to Ranade
- 1888 Elected secretary, Bombay Provincial Conference
Edited English columns of *The Sudharak*
- 1889 First participation in the National Congress
- 1890 Secretary of the Sarvajanik Sabha, Poona and Editor of its Quarterly
- 1892 Appointed Secretary of the Deccan Education Society
- 1895 Worked as Secretary to the Reception Committee of the National Congress which met at Poona
Elected Fellow, Bombay University
- 1896 Resigned Secretaryship of the Sarvajanik Sabha, and helped in starting the Deccan Sabha, of which he became the first secretary
First meeting with Gandhiji
- 1897 First visit to England for giving evidence before the Welby Commission
Apology Incident
- 1898 Organized plague relief measures in Poona
- 1899 Elected member of the Bombay Legislative Council
- 1901 Elected member of the Imperial Legislative Council
- 1902 Went on furlough from Fergusson College
Elected President, Poona Municipality
- 1903 Elected additional Joint General Secretary to the National Congress
- 1904 Made C.I.E.
Formally retired from Fergusson College
- 1905 Founded the Servants of India Society (on June 12)
Second visit to England as a Congress delegate to represent India's case in view of the impending British General Election
Presided over the National Congress at Banaras.

- 1906 } Third and fourth visits to England to agitate for the prospective reforms
1908 }
- 1907 Lecturing tour in North India
- 1908 Gave evidence before the Decentralization Commission
- 1910 Inauguration of the Ranade Industrial and Economic Institute
- 1912 Visit to South Africa
 Appointed member of the Public Services Commission
- 1912, 1913 } Fifth, sixth and seventh visits to England in connection with the work of the
and 1914 } Public Services Commission
- 1913 Organized financial assistance for the Indian struggle in South Africa
- 1914 Declined offer of K.C.I.E.
 Attempted a Congress compromise
- 1915, Feb. 19 Death at Poona

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