**Rajaram Mohan Roy as Journalist**

The Press is  aptly referred to as the fourth pillar of democracy other three pillars are Legislature, Executive and Judiciary . We consider press as free from bias and prejudice. Press reflects the realities of this world as wished by social and political world. The press tries to motivate, mesmerize or change the opinion of the people in such a way that people of a particular taste will be addicted to a particular newspaper. This is how a newspaper turns or moulds the language of the news as well in such a manner that it can fulfill its desired goal. It can represent murder and bloodshed along with love, mercy and kindness.

When India was under the control of the British, few jewels were born in this country, who always worried for the upliftment of this country and sacrificed their body, mind, wealth and soul for the welfare of this country. One of these magnificent, shining jewels is Lokmanya *Tilak*. *Tilak* is famous for his multi-faceted personality as a philosopher, a mathematician, promoter of Dharma and a legal expert. He was conferred the title of ‘Lokmanya’. The tough and fiery journalism of Lokmanya Tilak was instrumental in initiating the movement during pre-independence period for bringing about change in the mental setup of the people. After the independence, even now, there is a need to take up  similar movement to bring about change among the people at psychological level and the very purpose of this article to create such awareness among the journalists and citizens of this country.

**Education of Lokmanya Tilak**

Lokmanya Tilak was born at Ratnagiri. He passed Matric examination in the year 1873 and took admission in Deccan College at Pune. In the year 1876, he passed the graduation (B.A.) examination securing first class. He was known as a sharp-witted student. After BA, he studied law and passed LL.B. examination in the year 1879.

Purpose of Tilak’s journalism: Tilak and Agarkar, the two friends completed their education and felt that they should do something in education field for upliftment of their motherland. Their efforts started under the leadership of *Vishnu* shastri Chiplunkar and on the 1st January 1880, ‘New English School’ was set up. The many things that Tilak had planned to take up as service unto the nation, starting a school was just one of them. His idea of service in education field was very expansive and noble. The idea of creating awareness among the people, take them to a new era creating new hopes among them and their implementation started taking root in his mind. As a part of this mission, he decided to start two newspapers, ‘Kesari’ in Marathi and ‘Maratha’ in English.

**The characteristics of Lokmanya Tilak’s journalism**

Tilak had explained about the nature of ‘Kesari’ as – ‘Kesari will fearlessly and impartially discuss all problems. The increasing mentality of appeasing the British is not in the interest of this country. The articles published in ‘Kesari’ will be apt for its name ‘Kesari (lion)’.

### **Torture he had to go through for his principle of fearless journalism**

Tilak came to know that the British Government was repressing the ‘*Maharaj*’ of Kolhapur through his manager *Shri*. Barwe. An article was then published in ‘Kesari’ alleging that Barwe was plotting conspiracy against *Maharaj*. *Shri*. Barwe filed a case against ‘Kesari’ for such accusation. Tilak and Agarkar were sentenced to 4 months imprisonment. After this first sentence, Tilak started feeling the need to take part in political activities and he left the prison with certain resolve. He opted for politics and started working as the Editor of ‘Kesari’ and ‘Maratha’.

### **To ably point out the shortcomings in administration**

In the year 1896-97, there was a severe famine in Maharashtra and people had no food to eat. Tilak wrote an article in ‘Kesari’ and brought it to the notice of the British Government what were its duties under the ‘Famine Relief Code’. He also warned the officers who were trying to throttle the rights of the citizens and made an appeal to the people to fight for justice. Tilak showed how effectively one can serve the people, remaining within the frame of law.

### **Journalism putting forth rational thoughts**

By then, Namdar Gokhale had started to present his views that the movement started by the Congress should be as per the charter. Lokmanya, however, did not agree with his views. In an article “Sanadshir or Kayadeshir (As per the charter or legal)”, he refuted Gokhale’s views as follows – “Britain has not set any charter of rights to Hindustan, therefore, it would be ridiculous to say that the movement should be conducted as per the Charter. Hindustan is governed as per the laws made by the British. The question, therefore, remains is whether the movement is legal or not. When there is alienation of law and morals, if need be, one should break the laws to follow the morals and quietly accept whatever punishment is given for the same.”

### **Journalism exposing suppression by the Government**

The Government was waiting for an opportunity to quash the ‘Jahal (fierce)’ movement and it got such opportunity due to an incident which took place at Muzaffarpur. Khudiram Bose, a young revolutionary threw a bomb on an English officer but it missed the target and fell on the car in which two English women were travelling; killing them in the blast. The Government was enraged. In his editorial published in ‘Kesari’, Tilak expressed his dislike towards such terrorist activities but argued that Government’s suppression policy was responsible for building up such radical attitude. Five very strong articles against the Government were published in ‘Kesari’ in connection with the bomb blast and Lokmanya was arrested on 24th June 1908 for sedition.

### **Tilak believed in journalism as a right to form public opinion**

Lokmanya argued in the Court for 21 hours and 10 minutes against the charges of treason leveled against him. He clarified that the newspapers have a right to form public opinion and it is the duty of a newspaper to bring to the notice of the Government the nature of powers created in the political life of a country and warn against such powers and he argued that he had not committed treason.

### **Tilak’s journalism based in his belief in God**

The speech given by Tilak in the High Court was not an intellectual exercise to protect self but it showed his extra-ordinary qualities like his rationality in thinking, deep study of law, his love for the nation and his readiness to go through any punishment for his principles. All those who heard him pleading his case, experienced his nobility. Tilak was extremely calm at that time.

He was looking at his future with the stance of an observer. As the jury declared him ‘guilty’, Judge Davar asked Tilak whether he wanted to say something. Tilak got up and said, “I am not an offender or guilty let the jury decide anything. There is a supreme power than this Court which controls worldly matters. It could be God’s wish that I get punishment so as to boost the mission that I have undertaken.”

His philosophy towards life was like his philosophy towards politics. He believed in unarmed movement along with armed revolution. We offer our humble regards to this principled leader who had firm belief in his ideals and who fought for his country throughout his life till his last breath !

It is the duty of the leaders to create awareness among people and help to form their opinion. If, however, the Government tramples such awakened opinion of the citizens, what is the use of such awareness? How the sea-waves hit a mountain near its coast and return with same force, so is the condition of opinion of our people. One has to hold one’s nose to open mouth and if we are not going to do anything that would be disliked by the Government, the suppression will never end. The Government is humiliating people’s opinion like blades of grass. These blades of grass should be united to form a strong rope. Hundreds and thousands of people should connect with the same resolve as the strength of people’s opinion is not just in collection but in their resolve.

It is a historical fact that no nation would prosper by forgetting the struggle given by own great national leaders. Many people of Maharashtra have, however, forgotten this historical fact and are ignorant about our glorifying traditions; Lokmanya Tilak from this tradition is no exception ! Descendants of Lokmanya Tilak have preserved valuable things used by Lokmanya Tilak at Kesariwada, Pune. So thanking his descendants, it is a memoir presented to Lokmanya Tilak….