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## RELIGIOUS RHETORIC AND REFORM: A CASE STUDY OF INDIA

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### Abstract

*Nationalist movements in India during the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century took momentum and gained popularity when various intellectual freedom fighters started reinterpreting the religious texts motivating the educated people. The reinterpretation was oriented towards inducing the mass with the feeling of self-consciousness and nationalism. Most of these freedom fighters i.e. Bankimchandra Chatterjee, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Swami Vivekanada, Aurobindo Ghose, Mahatma Gandhi, Vinoba Bhave, who wrote extensively on 'Bhagavad Gita' and their basic interpretation converged on ethical and moral basis for nationalism. Nationalist leaders like Bal Gangadhar Tilak who wrote Gita Rahasya in which he has justified the use of violence for the cause of nation unlike Mahatma Gandhi and Vinoba Bhave who oriented interpretation of Gita towards non-violence. However, both the interpretations worked in mobilising the people against the imperialism by invoking conscience of the mass towards nationalism through religious texts. The article will deal with the stepwise process of highlighting religious texts and their reinterpretation by the leaders towards nationalism.*

**Keywords:** *Religious Texts, Art of Reinterpreting Pro and Anti-Violence, Religious Nationalism.*

## Abstrak

*Gerakan nasionalis di India mengambil momentum dan menjadi populer ketika berbagai pejuang kebebasan intelektual mulai menafsirkan teks-teks agama yang memotivasi orang-orang terpelajar. Reinterpretasi itu berorientasi pada mendorong massa dengan perasaan nasionalisme. Sebagian besar pejuang kemerdekaan ini; Bankimchandra Chatterjee, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Swami Vivekananda, Aurobindo Ghose, Mahatma Gandhi, Vinoba Bhave, yang menulis secara ekstensif tentang 'Bhagavad Gita' dan interpretasi dasar mereka berkonvergensi pada dasar etika dan moral untuk nasionalisme. Pemimpin nasionalis seperti Bal Gangadhar Tilak yang menulis 'Gita Rahasya' di mana dia telah membenarkan penggunaan kekerasan untuk kepentingan negara tidak seperti Mahatma Gandhi dan Vinoba Bhave yang berorientasi interpretasi Gita terhadap non-kekerasan. Namun, kedua interpretasi tersebut berhasil memobilisasi orang-orang melawan imperialisme dengan menerapkan hati nurani massa menuju nasionalisme melalui teks-teks keagamaan. Artikel tersebut akan membahas proses bertahap untuk menyoroti teks keagamaan dan re-interpretasinya oleh para pemimpin terhadap nasionalisme.*

**Kata Kunci:** *Teks Agama, Seni Reinterpretasi Pro dan Anti Kekerasan, Nasionalisme Agama.*

## Introduction

Nationalist movements in India during the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century took momentum and gained popularity when various intellectual freedom fighters started reinterpreting or citing the Hindu religious texts aiming reforms in the existing social system to build a consensus and rapport among the mass to mobilize the people against the domination of the British imperialism and the Christian missionary activities in India. India during post Mughal and pre-independence era witnessed introverted system of society which where Brahmanical and primordial orders wrapped the social system hindering the development of nationalism and inclusivity. The social systems converged into complete acquisitive Brahmanical orders leaving the pristine form of liberal Vedic orders. The ignorant people were subjected to harsh discriminations in the name of castes and sub-castes, and the worst was the situation of women across all the higher castes and affluent societies.

Mughal period, where Mughals kidnapped Hindu women post annihilation of male members, left the community to start strict purdah (veil) system.<sup>1</sup> After the male members were killed widows feared to

be kidnapped they got themselves immolated in the pyre of their dead husbands. Getting themselves immolated with dead husband has been referred as (sati). Generally, scholars cite this tradition as prevalent tradition in primordial society of India. However, referring Mahabharata, Nakula and Sahadeva was the sons of Madri. After the death of her husband Pandu she committed sati. However, Kunti never got sati after her husbands passed away.

Indian economy during the precolonial period of India was quite robust having estimated GDP of 25.1 % of the world economy during the 16<sup>th</sup> Century.<sup>2</sup> There was no slavery system in India as such witnessed in the Western countries. India had bonded labour system but not having complete subjugation as there is no evidence of such practices. In the middle of 19<sup>th</sup> the century there were markets of slaves in America where slaves were sold and bought in open market.

The British occupation of India started from Bengal with the battle of Plassey in 1757, which slowly spread towards the rest of India. (Stanhope, Philip H, 1853). The occupation gave first hand to Bengalis to know English language and culture. This gave them advantage to know how the British had understanding about Indian culture and society. Therefore, some of the Indian reformers who used religious back ground of Indians during the later period came from one of the eastern provinces of India; Bengal.

During this time, India was about to transform itself from medieval to modern age, the leaders started introspecting themselves and finding the causes of the hindrances among the Hindu societies. The British in the beginning were hesitant to start their missionary activities as they feared it may incite the Hindu sentiments so they had adopted non-interference policy with India. However, during the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century, amid many oppositions the British parliament allowed the missionary activities with certain codes and conducts. For example; Hindus were not allowed to use marks or any kind of symbols on their forehead, and the Muslims were subjected to remove their beard and trim their moustaches. Indians answered this movements in the form of Vellore Mutiny which began on

July 10, 1806. This mutiny was being instigated by sons of Tipu Sultan who were forced to live at Vellore after being defeated and demoralized by the British forces.<sup>3</sup> However slowly the missionaries become active and stronger with the aid from the British government.

Some of the intellectuals group of India, on hand, appreciated how British women enjoyed freedom on the social level, and on the other hand they were not able to criticize the Christian missionaries' approach towards conversion spree due to certain welfare activities brought by the same. At the same time, there were many leaders who came forward with *desi* rhetoric. They tried to invoke the sentiments of Hindus and most of them converged on that the prevailed social problems emerged due to not following the original Vedic texts.

For this purpose, few nationalist leaders who reinterpreted the religious texts, values and ethics, have been considered for the study in order to justify the reforms that provided the strong base for the unity of the country during the later phase of the freedom struggle. These leaders are:

1. Raja Ram Mohon Roy
2. Swami Vivekanand
3. Dayanand Saraswati
4. Ishwarchand Vidyasagar
5. Balgangadhar Tilak
6. Mahatma Gandhi

The reinterpretation of religious texts was oriented towards inducing the mass with the feeling of self-consciousness and nationalism. Most of these freedom fighters i.e. Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Dayanand Saraswati, Ishwarchand Vidyasagar, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Swami Vivekananda, Aurobindo Ghose, Mahatma Gandhi, Vinoba Bhave wrote extensively and cited or reinterpreted 'Bhagavad Gita' to disseminate the magnificence of Indian heritage. Most of their reinterpretations converged on ethical and moral basis for nationalism. Nationalist leaders like Bal Gangadhar Tilak, a social reformer and independence activist who wrote Gita Rahasya in which he has justified the use of selfless vehemence for the cause

of nation unlike Mahatma Gandhi and Vonnegut Bhav who oriented interpretation of Bhagwat Gita towards non-violence.<sup>4</sup> However, both kind of reinterpretations worked in mobilising the people against the imperialism by invoking conscience and imbibing convictions among mass towards nationalism.

Some of popular leaders during colonial period used Indian religious texts to instil convictions in their minds about the glory of ancient Bharat as one nation and its scholarship, philosophy and understanding about the other religions and culture, civilizations of the world and thus sometimes demeaning the western culture as well. The purpose was to overthrow the British imperialism. (BG Bhosale, 2009).

### **1. Raja Rammohan Roy (1772 to 1833)**

Roy was born in Bengal province of India in 1772 in a traditional Brahmin family. Bengal was the centre of British rule and Kolkata was the capital of India. His father was chief of various districts and his grandfather Krishna Chandra Banerji had been honoured as Raya Rayan for his service to the Nawab of Bengal. Roy started high secondary education in Persian with the objective of working with courts. He was well acquainted with Persian and Arabian poetry and logic. He was inspired by Quran's monotheism. He also studied Sanskrit at Benaras and mastered Vedanta, the Upanishads, Smritis, Tantra's, and Puranas. He later went to Tibet and studied Buddhist philosophy.<sup>5</sup> He joined British East India company, where he came in contacts with several missionary activities and got supposedly inspired from missionary activities but at the same time questioned its dogmatic views.

His defended human-being's inherent neutrality and natural sentiments for religion and the rest he termed it as invented dogmas by religious leaders for their own convenience.

Roy tried to invoke the existing Hindu traditions which he saw an impediment in the development of the society. He propagated the preaching of 'God is One' by founding Brahmo Samaj. He

became very influential among the mass and called for abolition of primordial practices which he termed them as impediment for their development. He fought against the practice of Sati, a Hindu funeral practice in which a widow supposed to be sacrificed with her husband in some parts of Bengal and Rajasthan. He also crusaded against the polygamy and child marriages.<sup>6</sup> His biggest attack was on idol worshipping among Hindus. He termed idol worshipping as one of the most primordial and corrupt practices reinterpreting the Upanishads<sup>7</sup>. His objective of reinterpretation was mainly focused on two things: one was to counter Christian missionaries which had the sole objective of proselytization of poor Hindus and Muslims, and the other was to organize Indians to counter British imperialism. (Christophe Jaffrelot, 1993: 517-524)<sup>8</sup>. He directly attacked the primordial system of Hindu society comparing the other traditions of the world. He was very critical about the authoritative Brahmins and the priests who deliberately preyed upon the ignorant mass by interpreting the religious texts vaguely and concealing knowledge from the rest of the people. He spoke regarding missionary activity:

*"I feel persuaded that by separating from the other matters contained in the New Testament, the moral precepts found in that book, these will be more likely to produce the desirable effect of the improving the hearts and minds of men of different persuasions and degrees of understanding. For, historical and some other passages are liable to the doubts and disputes of free thinkers and anti-Christians, especially, miraculous relations, which are much less wonderful than fabricated tales handed down to the natives of Asia, and consequently would be apt, at best, carry little weight of them. (Sharma Arvin, 2002: 12).*

*If by the 'ray of intelligence' for which the Christian says we are indebted to the English, he means the introduction of useful mechanical arts, I am ready to express assent and, also my gratitude; but with respect to science, literature, or religion I do not acknowledge that we are placed under any obligation. For by a reference to History it may be proved that the world was indebted to our ancestor for the first dawn of knowledge, which sprang up in the East, and thanks to the Goddess of wisdom, we have still a philosophical and copious language of our own which distinguishes us from others nation who cannot express scientific or abstract ideas without borrowing the language of foreigners....*



*Before, 'A Christian' indulged in a tirade about persons being 'degraded by Asiatic effeminacy' he should have recollected that almost all the ancients prophets and patriarchs venerated by Christians, may even Jesus Christ himself, a Devine Incarnation and the founder of the Christian faith, where Asiatic. So that if a Christian thinks it degrading to be born or to reside in Asia he directly reflects upon them.....*

*Its unjust in the Christians with quarrel with Hindoos because (he says) they cannot comprehend the sublime mystery of the religion. The Doctrine of the 'Trinity'; since he is equally unable to comprehend the sublime mysteries of ours, and since both mysteries equally transcend the human understanding, one cannot be preferred to the others". (Theodore de Bary, ed., 1958: 28)<sup>9</sup>.*

### **On the Status of Women**

*"Women are in general inferior to men in bodily strength and energy; consequently, the male part of the community, taking advantage of their corporeal weakness, have denied to them those excellent merits that they are entitled to by nature, and afterwards they are apt to say that women are naturally incapable of acquiring those merits. But if we give the subject consideration, we may easily ascertain whether your accusation against them is in consistent with justice. As to their inferiority in a point of understanding, when did you ever afford them a fair opportunity of exhibiting their natural capacity? How then can you accuse them of want of understanding? If after instruction in knowledge and wisdom of a person cannot comprehend or retain what has been taught him, we may consider him as deficient; but as you keep women generally void of education and acquirement, you cannot therefore in justice pronounce on their inferiority".*

He further explicates the status of the women by giving narratives of great women referred in the Upanishads known for their scholarship. He attacks the male chauvinism about their question of faithfulness or trustworthiness of women and says at any point of time, the number of male deceived by women is ten times lesser than the number of women deceived by men. He also attacked on polygamy in Hindu community.

And this is possible because of the degree of social freedom a male community enjoys. He elaborated about the inheritance of the property post the death of the husband. The property left by the husband should equally be distributed among the mother and



the sons equally by excerpting the dialogue on the issue from the Upanishads. (Theodore de Bary, ed., 1958: 6).

On the nationalism and British domination, however, his vision was different;

*“Conquest is very rarely an evil when the conquering people are more civilized than the conquered, because the former bring to (the) latter the benefits of civilization. India requires many more years of English domination so that she may not have many things to lose while she is reclaiming her political independence. (Nirad C. Chaudhury, 1968: 415).*

On view of independence of India from the British, he was sure that India is going to be an independent country and his narrative on social reforms were reaching to the mass he never eschewed himself with the English language based education system provided by the British colonial government. He saw India was getting united and this was an apt time for him to generate a moderate view about the Hinduism among the mass by disapproving the Brahmin's hegemony on the weaker section of the society.

*The Puranas and Tantras describe gods and goddesses, he said, but admit they are an aid for the less educated, of a greater harder to grasp divine unity. Idols have divided the people into Hindu sects, belief in the nationalism of Hindu that embraced one uniting God. It was time to ditch them and return to the Veda's monotheism.<sup>10</sup>*

Roy made a complete new thought for modern nationalism where he prescribed to adopt the middle path, he never promulgated isolation or rejection of traditionalist and radicals, rather he chose to attack the exaggerative impositions. Thus, his Brahma Samaj played very important role in reforming Hindu society. He was the first person who attacked Hinduism for its exaggerative rituals meant for exploiting the weaker section of the society including women. He chose to moderate path by attacking Christian philosophy which was not opposed by the majority of the British and was rather welcomed. His continuous attacks on idol worshipping was not taken by few Hindu leaders in great spirit but it helped them to unite against British imperialism and proselytizing activities.

## 2. Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902)<sup>11</sup>

During the late nineteenth century, followed by Indian Mutiny in 1857, the East India company was abolished and the British crown took over it and then followed the many reforms to contain the rebellions. The reforms were tolerance of religions and inclusions of Indians into their civil service exam. The tolerance of religions came into force as Christian missionaries were turned very active had left no occasions in making propaganda against Hinduism. The mutiny of 1857 also became a factor in uniting the Indians against British. The root cause of this mutiny was the Indian Sepoy who were given cartridge wrapped in paper, which had been coated in a grease so that it could be loaded easily in the rifle barrels. The rumors were that this grease was derived from pig and cow's fat. This angered both Muslim and Hindu soldiers and this led to uprising in 1857. This mutiny resulted in killings of over 10 million of soldiers during next decade.<sup>12</sup> Following this the East India Company was abolished and the British crown assumed full rule of India.

Certain reforms were made in which "tolerance of religion and the recruitment of Indians into the civil service" got prominent place. This gave opportunity for Indians to travel to Britain and other countries and like Raja Rammohan Roy other scholars were given chance to visit. One of such scholars and spiritual gurus was Swami Vivekananda.

No one in the Indian history so far achieved the eminence in the Indian history to become a torch bearer to imbibe conviction among Indians towards their tradition, culture and civilization. Vivekananda was the first spiritual monk who was given chance to speak at the World Parliament of Religions on 11 September, 1893 in Chicago. (Sailendra Nath Dhar, 1975: 91).

### **Opening Address - Chicago, September 11, 1893 Sisters and Brothers of America**

It fills my heart with joy unspeakable to rise in response to the warm and cordial welcome which you have given us. I thank you in

the name of the most ancient order of monks in the world; I thank you in the name of the mother of religions, and I thank you in the name of millions and millions of Hindu people of all classes and sects.

My thanks, also, to some of the speakers on this platform who, referring to the delegates from the Orient, have told you that these men from far-off nations may well claim the honour of bearing to different lands the idea of toleration. I am proud to belong to a religion which has taught the world both tolerance and universal acceptance.

We believe not only in universal toleration, but we accept all religions as true. I am proud to belong to a nation which has sheltered the persecuted and the refugees of all religions and all nations of the earth. I am proud to tell you that we have gathered in our bosom the purest remnant of the Israelites, who came to Southern India and took refuge with us in the very year in which their holy temple was shattered to pieces by Roman tyranny. I am proud to belong to the religion which has sheltered and is still fostering the remnant of the grand Zoroastrian nation. I will quote to you, brethren, a few lines from a hymn which I remember to have repeated from my earliest boyhood, which is every day repeated by millions of human beings:

*"As the different streams having their sources in different paths which men take through different tendencies, various though they appear, crooked or straight, all lead to Thee."*

The present convention, which is one of the most august assemblies ever held, is in itself a vindication, a declaration to the world of the wonderful doctrine preached in the Gita:

*"Whosoever comes to Me, through whatsoever form, I reach him; all men are struggling through paths which in the end lead to me." Sectarianism, bigotry, and its horrible descendant, fanaticism, have long possessed this beautiful earth.*

They have filled the earth with violence, drenched it often and often with human blood, destroyed civilization and sent whole

nations to despair. Had it not been for these horrible demons, human society would be far more advanced than it is now. But their time is come; and I fervently hope that the bell that tolled this morning in honor of this convention may be the death-knell of all fanaticism, of all persecutions with the sword or with the pen, and of all uncharitable feelings between persons wending their way to the same goal.

### **Concluding Address -- Chicago, September 27, 1893**

The World's Parliament of Religions has become an accomplished fact, and the merciful Father has helped those who labored to bring it into existence, and crowned with success their most unselfish labor. My thanks to those noble souls whose large hearts and love of truth first dreamed this wonderful dream and then realized it. My thanks to the shower of liberal sentiments that has overflowed this platform. My thanks to this enlightened audience for their uniform kindness to me and for their appreciation of every thought that tends to smooth the friction of religions. A few jarring notes were heard from time to time in this harmony. My special thanks to them, for they have, by their striking contrast, made general harmony the sweeter.

Much has been said of the common ground of religious unity. I am not going just now to venture my own theory. But if any one here hopes that this unity will come by the triumph of any one of the religions and the destruction of the others, to him I say, "Brother, yours is an impossible hope." Do I wish that the Christian would become Hindu? God forbid. Do I wish that the Hindu or Buddhist would become Christian? God forbid.

The seed is put in the ground, and earth and air and water are placed around it. Does the seed become the earth, or the air, or the water? No. It becomes a plant. It develops after the law of its own growth, assimilates the air, the earth, and the water, converts them into plant substance, and grows into a plant.

Similar is the case with religion. The Christian is not to become a Hindu or a Buddhist, nor a Hindu or a Buddhist to become a Christian. But each must assimilate the spirit of the others and yet preserve his individuality and grow according to his own law of growth.

If the Parliament of Religions has shown anything to the world, it is this: It has proved to the world that holiness, purity and charity are not the exclusive possessions of any church in the world, and that every system has produced men and women of the most exalted character.

In the face of this evidence, if anybody dreams of the exclusive survival of his own religion and the destruction of the others, I pity him from the bottom of my heart, and point out to him that upon the banner of every religion will soon be written in spite of resistance: "Help and not fight," "Assimilation and not Destruction," "Harmony and Peace and not Dissension."<sup>13</sup>

His entire speech was focused on the religious harmony in the world bringing him the title of the "Cyclonic monk of India" He made relevance emphasizing the ultimate goal of all the religions are same and pluralism is a catalyst to this. This pluralism manifest into accepting all the religions of the world as true having different paths to reach to the one destination. Each path has its own way to personify the human-being into the supreme being. The mere existence of one path should be understood as a singular means as followers may assume define the world as a frog of a well who has never seen the world beyond.<sup>14</sup> He cited Vedas for the Hindu way of life; which may be termed as a religion, which can be taken as source of revelation is nothing but a source of accumulated treasury of spiritual laws discovered by different persons at different times. He talked about science as a continuous flow to reach its ultimate goal of unity and once its reached it would cease to yield further. The existence of Faith in God is directly proportional to the cause of

worry or sorrow. Thus, he legitimized the relationship of God and human-being as natural based on cause and effect model.

Emphasizing the plurality, he was opposed to the conversions of people to different faiths. He was critical of increasing rift of different streams emerged out of Hinduism such as Jainism and Buddhism that made a base of nationalism in India. His take on nationalism is deeply rooted in Indian spiritualism and morality which is based upon its ethical knowledge treasured in its hundreds of spiritual texts compiled thorough the course of time.<sup>15</sup> Vivekananda imbibed the millions of youths of India struggling with choosing the right path, or hopelessness with a sense of energy and asked them to fight until you find your objectives. This became a source of conviction of Indian youths left in misery by the exploitative British imperialism.

### **3. Dayanand Saraswati (1824-1883)**

Swami Dayanand Saraswati, a renowned scholar of Veda and Sanskrit and later founded Araya Samaj, aimed at reforming Hindu society. He gave a call for Swaraj as “Indian for India” in 1876, he was called as the “makers of Modern India” by India’s President S. Radhakrishnan. Arya Samaj opposed to the English education and was opposed to Brahmo Samaj of RRR. They were completely opposed to the Christians missionaries’ intentions to convert Hindus and Muslims.

Dayanand was a very genius from his childhood and always questioned the cause of causative phenomenon who questioned the power of God while he was asked to guard statue of lord Shiva during one of the auspicious days to worship Shiva and when he saw a rat was eating the offering and the God was not able to control it. Thus, later he fought against the orthodoxy which also brought wrath from the fundamentalists towards him. (KC Yadav, tr., 1976: 11). His teaching source was Vedas and Bhagwat Gita advocating Karma and Reincarnation. He took keen interest in understanding the

religious extravaganza since he was mere 14. He started taking part in religious discourse and debates and soon he became very popular. One of the most important debates on “Do the Vedas uphold deity worship? that took place in 1869 in Varanasi, he participated and won against 27 scholars and 12 experts pundits attended by approx. 50,000 people.

Summary from the debate:

Excerpt taken from comments over the debate:

*A person named dayanand Saraswati who roams along the river of Ganda and really a scholar of Shastras. He has studied entire Rigveda and says with conviction that idol worshipping, wearing necklace of rudraksha (Elaeocarpus ganitrus), basil, etc all these are not mentioned in the Vedas. These all things are myths. We should not go against the ways described in Vedas, if going against it will bring sins.<sup>16</sup>*

During the debate, he was firmed in his teaching and knowledge about Vedas and would answer each and every question asked by the priests and scholars. Most of the questions asked to him converged upon the idol worshipping and ritualistic extravaganza. Like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, he was adamant on the unity of God.

He founded Arya Samaj which opposed to the several ill traditions which was hampering the progress of the society and bifurcated the Hindus among different sects. Idol worshipping, animal sacrificing practices (these two things are still prevalent among Hindus all over India), child marriages, castes systems, meat eating and discrimination against women etc. Arya Samaj also opposed to dogmas and symbolism which it termed as against the teachings of Vedas. (JTF Jordens, 1978: 3-4).

#### **4. Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar (1820-1891)**

He was called as Bengali Polymath as described by his title “Vidyasagar” means ocean of the knowledge. He had significant knowledge in almost all the modern subjects which paved the way for him to be one of the most significant farsighted social reformer.



Born in a very poor family, he showed to the society that if a person wants to go ahead in his life nothing can stop. He started studying in the street lamp when there was no oil in his hurricane lantern. He mastered Vedanta, Grammar, literature, Smriti and Ethics in Sanskrit college, thus he became renowned Sanskrit scholar and became the principal of Sanskrit College in 1885.

Through his talk and lectures and writing he widened his reach towards the mass mobilizing them to realize the unethical traditions prevailed in the contemporary society. He showed great sympathy for the downtrodden. He was the first scholar and reformer who started thinking of girls' education and opened many schools exclusively for the women. He started making efforts for the remarriages of widows by taking the first step to get his own son married with a widow. Thus, dedicating his entire life in social reform, he further made a base for the nationalism in India. His struggle for the widow marriage was manifested into Widow Remarriage Act in 1856 and since then remarriages of widow started. He was also critical about the tradition of child marriage and polygamy prevalent among Hindus and called for immediate abolition of such acts.

## **5. Bal Gangadhar Tilak or Lokmanya Tilak (1856-1920)**

Tilak was considered as the greatest enemy of the British empire as the British called him "Father of the Indian unrest." He was conferred the title of "Lokmanya" means 'accepted by the people as their leader. (D.V Tahmankar, 1956). Unlike other reformer he was more focused on Bhagwat Gita and used to cite its couplets as frequent possible in his talks. He propagated the power of Swaraj (self-rule) and deep seated consciousness among Indians. His famous quote in Marathi language which means "Swaraj is my birthright and I shall have it!) became very famous. He reinterpreted Bhagwat Gita as 'Gita Rahasya' for the common man to justify act against the British imperialist. He forged very close alliances with both contemporary Hindu and Muslim leaders.

## Conclusion

India, a rich, old and glorious civilization, came under several attacks mostly by the Mughals starting from early 16<sup>th</sup> to the early 18<sup>th</sup> century and then followed by the British from 1858 and 1947. This long period of invasion changed and weakened the identity of *Bhartiyata* or Indianism of the Indians changing the scholarship and mindset of the mass. Colonialism overpowered the moral and ethical conscience of the Indians built through thousands of years and they were no longer able to establish their own identity. However, through the course of time, during the British Raj, people started learning English and read the interpretations of Indian texts by the British and western scholars, which let the rise of Indian leaders who used the rhetoric pertaining to the religious texts like Bhagwat Gita, Ramayana and Mahabharata which could bring convictions among the mass back resulting their unification against the colonialism.

Unlike India, Indonesia being an archipelagic country has different landscapes and strategic location along major sea lanes from Indian ocean to pacific ocean. Its numerous diversified cultures have been somehow remained partially influenced from other parts of the world due to inconvenience in mobility of the people. However, Indonesia is a country where the maximum number of Chinese migrated across the globe for various reasons. Java was considered as a central place in Southeast Asia for lucrative trade, agriculture, aristocracy, cultural vibrancy and arts. Besides, the native Indonesians were polite, tolerant, suave and not contesting anyone arriving across the sea which reflects from the fact that not a single incidence before the arrival of the Dutch has been referred in the history where native Indonesian showed any tangible aggression towards Chinese emigration.

Monarchy was the commonality of the government system of different regions and islands. Most of the Indonesian monarchy system was based upon pattern of ancient Indian monarchy where a king was considered as the most supreme being and established himself at par with the God. Therefore, like British who made divide and rule policy,

Dutch also used the same tactics to rule over the archipelago and used the ethnic Chinese populations against the native Indonesians in establishing their rule. Later period Indonesian leaders like Sukarno and Mohammed Hatta, called for the unification of all the ethnic groups and fight against the Dutch colonialism. (Clark, 2014: 163-165).

## EndNotes

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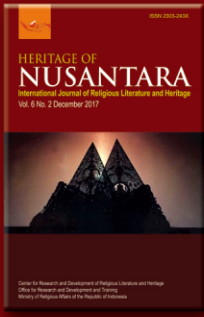
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