INTRODUCTION

For several years, 'Lokahitawadi' was a name known to the previous generation in Maharashtra more from his critics than his followers and friends. Today he is largely forgotten, but it is only appropriate at the present juncture to revive our memory of him.

In this thesis an attempt has been made to present the fundamental ideas of Gopalrao Hari Deshmukh, popularly known as 'Lokahitawadi'. As the approach to the subject is social and political rather than philosophical, the emphasis has been on the total range, sweep and significance of his ideas rather than their philosophical implications. That is why the word 'thought' instead of 'philosophy' has been used in the title of the thesis. It would appear that even the word 'thought' has to be used with some reservation as it is not found to be propounded very systematically but has to be culled and constructed from the author's various writings over a period of four decades (1848-1892).

A renowned political scientist, Dr. A. Appadurai has given the title 'Modern Indian Political Thinking' (instead of 'Thought') to his latest book for a similar reason. But as the word 'thought' appeared in the title of the topic of research approved by the University at the beginning of this study, it has been retained in the title of this thesis.
Gopalrao was a prolific writer. He wrote several books, pamphlets and also a large number of articles for newspapers. Hence though no systematic exposition of theory has been directly and avowedly made by him, but indirectly his political ideas can be traced in his writings. Many of the letters, though written as occasion demanded, are of lasting interest and importance.

The thesis is divided into four parts, viz. 1. Background, 2. Social thought, 3. Political thought including Economic thought, and 4. Evaluation.

Part I: Background

Part I consists of two chapters. Chapter 1 dealing with the historical background beginning from the advent of British rule in India, its aims as well as its social, political, and cultural effects. Chapter 2 presents a biographical sketch of Gopalrao and indicates the part he was called upon to play in the social and political movements of his times. Gopalrao's life was a peculiar combination of opportunity and effort. The opportunities afforded by the time and the efforts he took throughout his life have been explained in greater detail in this part mainly for demonstrating how he accepted the challenge of his time.

Part II: Social thought.

Part II, the foundation of Gopalrao's political and economic thought, analyses the infra-structure of Hindu
society. Chapter 3 puts forth his analysis of social life and explains the general causes of rise and fall of nations and its particular application to the downfall of the Peshwa. Chapter 4 explains how the leadership of the Brahmins has worked a reactionary force in our social and intellectual advancement. Chapter 5 explains Gopalrao's views on pursuit of knowledge or enlightenment as an instrument of social change and discusses how absence of books, use of Sanskrit, and neglect of history and language have impeded its development. Chapter 6 brings out his views on women and women's problems with reference to marriage, role of women in the society, and suggests remedial measures. Chapter 7 analyses the meaning and role of religion and critically examines the spirit of Hindu religion from a somewhat materialistic angle.

Part III: Political thought including Economic Thought.

Part III is the core of the thesis. It deals with the political and economic ideas of Gopalrao in 4 chapters. Chapter 8, the introductory chapter of his political thought brings out his views on the political causes leading to the advent of British rule, and the political deficiencies of our people. It explains how the British challenge was unique in its political set up and patriotic spirit. Chapter 9 is devoted to Gopalrao's views on British rule, its evaluation and how it could be brought to an end. Chapter 10 considers what may be regarded as a distinct contribution of Gopalrao: his theoretical analysis of the political situation, of the
origin of the state, the need for a ruler and practical solutions in the form of political reforms such as local self-government and a parliamentary form of government for India. Chapter 11 is devoted to his economic thought, explaining root causes for poverty of India and pinpointing the responsibility on alien rule and suggesting radical measures such as Swadeshi and boycott.

Part IV: Evaluation.

Part IV consists of one concluding chapter, viz. Chapter 12, which attempts evaluation of Gopalrao as a social and political thinker.