PREFACE

Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee is one of India’s great and ideal nationalist. He is said to be the perfect successor of his father, Sir Asutosh Mookerjee. He excelled in his personal academic career and made the University proud. Though he pursued a course in law, his passion was education and its administration. Working for the prestigious Calcutta University was his obsession. In 1934, he became the youngest ever Vice – Chancellor of this University, at the age of only 33. As the Vice – Chancellor, he took many innovative steps, where he involved both students and teachers. He was deeply in touch with Tagore’s Vishwa Bharati, and even invited Tagore to give a speech at the convocation ceremony, in Bengali language.

Syama Prasad was not only a brilliant scholar. He was full of perseverance, effort, versatile thinking, oratory skill, sincerity, positive energy and endless knowledge. He possessed a limitless love for his fellow country men.

The political career of his started in a small way, back in 1929, when he was elected to the Bengal Legislative Council. In 1941, he became the Finance Minister in the Fazlul Huq Government.

The versatile genius as he was, Syama Prasad excelled in many other fields. He was an outstanding journalist, for which he became the president of the editorial board of the ‘Nationalist’, an English journal.

His political thoughts and activities during the national awakening deserves considerable applause. He wanted total freedom in politics and education. He vehemently opposed politicising of education, for which he carried on his mission till the last days of his life. He proclaimed, that he stood for an united, independent and secular India. He never believed in direct combat, rather he went for constitutional remedy. He criticized the repressive policy of the British. He was at pain to see many a youthful life being sacrificed in movements like the non-cooperation rallies.
In 1947, January, the past president of Indian Constituent Assembly, Mr. Pattabhi Sitaramaiya had written an article named, ‘My Colleagues in Conssembly’, in a Bombay paper, wherein he said that, “Syama Prasad had attracted the attention of all, with his amicable nature. If qualities are thought to be hereditary, then he, from all angles was a worthy son of Sir Asutosh.” (Maitri, pp.100).

Later on in 1952, in the first general election, he stood as a candidate from the ‘People’s Party’ or ‘Janasangh’. He won, defeating the Communist party as well as the Congress and went to the Lok Sabha. In the same year, other political parties joined hands in an All India movement. Infact, Acharya Kripalani and Jai Prakash Narayana’s ‘Praja Socialist Party’ also joined the above movement. Ultimately, in 1953, he strongly disagreed with the Prime Minister, regarding the issue of ‘permit’ to enter the state of Kashmir. He himself defied this law, only to be arrested. Rest is a tragedy in the history of India.

The researcher has been earnest in analysing the contribution of this great leader that he was, to the best of her capacity.

The researcher expresses her deep respect and heartfelt gratitude to Prof.(Dr.) Mita Banerjee, Vice Chancellor, The West Bengal University of Teachers’ Training, Education Planning and Administration, Kolkata, West Bengal, for her great inspiration to do this work. Without her guidance and immense experience, it would not have been possible to complete this project successfully. Her valuable suggestions and observation have been highly illuminating.

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The researcher is specially thankful to Dr. Reena Bhaduri, niece of Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee, for her immense help and guidance, without which this project could not have been authentically presented at the way it has been.

The researcher remembers a great inspiration behind this work, Late Dr. Bharati Banerjee. She was the very first person to motivate the researcher in taking up this task. The researcher is sure that she is showering blessings from her heavenly abode.

The researcher is immensely grateful to the Asutosh Mookerjee Memorial Institute for lending important and relevant information which was absolutely exhaustive.

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Lastly, the researcher thanks her family members, specially her son, Abhiroop De, who has consistently helped her in his own capacity. She also thanks her husband for his moral support. She remembers her late father, whom she lost during this period, and who was very enthusiastic about this study.

Last, but not the least, the researcher is indebted to her mother, Srimati Santana Dutta, for her support and blessings always. This study is dedicated to her beloved mother.

**IVY DATTA**