PREFACE

Although liberalism and liberal democracy remain the prevailing political doctrines in much of the Western World, many argue that neither are relevant to new-felt needs. Liberal values and liberal institutions, that is, are increasingly open to criticism as conservative and socialist critics continue to question both the intellectual ancestry of the liberal tradition and the actual political forms and processes in liberal-democratic states. Despite challenges from both left and right, liberals continue to assert the importance of liberal values and liberal institutions if mankind is to live in freedom and dignity, under the rule of law, free from the capricious and arbitrary exercise of political power. Liberal ideals and aspirations, that is to say, are governed by the quest for freedom and equality, or in other words, for universal personal autonomy.

In its classical form liberalism appeared in England in the seventeenth century, spread to France in the eighteenth century, with the famous slogan during the French Revolution of 1789 of liberty, Equality and Fraternity, and dominated the thought of Western thinkers by the late nineteenth century, put major emphasis on the freedom of individual to control their own destinies. In politics, liberals wanted to limit the rights of hereditary rulers, establish parliamentary institutions, extend the franchise, and guarantee civil liberties. In economic policy,
liberalism expressed itself as a reaction against government intervention in economic affairs at home and free trade among nations.

Contemporary liberalism differs markedly from the classical liberalism of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. To define this difference we have to contextualize it with the central social problem of our day. The degree to which we shall have collective control over individual behaviour. The degree to which individual interests shall be subordinated to social purposes. Thus a discussion of liberalism may not only aspire to clarify where confusion now prevails, it may throw light upon the most vital social issue of our time.

Therefore, during the 20th century in general and preceding few decade in particular, the liberalism has taken altogether different meanings and has entered into various spheres in North America and Western Europe. Beginning with the representative form of government, universal adult franchise and civil liberties, it has taken a long route to enter into such arenas as animals rights, and the question of ecology and environmental protection. This agenda is not confined only with the developed nations but third world countries have also adopted (or have been forced to adopt?). Some of these issues are the matters of prime concern. In India also there is a paradigm shift, from Nehruian socialism imbibing the eradication of poverty and adult
illiteracy to environmental protection and animal rights, etc. this is the farthest limit, the liberal agenda can go in India. For, a country where half of its population live below the poverty line, yet its national agenda talks in the language of the developed countries.

With the establishment of the East India Company's rule in the sub-continent and consequent establishment of the educational institution on the Western lines, the European value system became a role model for the emerging elite of India. Although the classical orientalist tradition highlighted the rich cultural heritage of the East, yet Western value system remain the dominant discourse. Hence everything English, everything European sought to be imitated by our national leaders. Therefore, the notions of the parliamentary democracy, and the liberal ideas of the West became dominant features in the thought of our national leaders.

In this thesis an attempt is made to examine wether of the stamp British image upon India was confined to those aspects of liberalism which were concerned with a belief in the power of reason to regulate the conduct of life and in developing a critical view of dogmatic beliefs. Other aspects of liberalism such as an experimental attitude towards problems in government were not relevant to the situation in India at that time. But the spread of liberal ideas in social and religious areas had its repercussions
in the political field, because the social, religious and political activities of the people cannot be kept separate indefinitely.

The Indian National Congress was the most important political organization in British India. From 1885, the year of its inception, up to 1905, it was dominated by leaders, who were later referred to as Moderates. Surendranath Benerji, Dadabhai Naoroji, Gopal Krishana Gokhale, Gopal Gangesh Agarkar and a number of other prominent thinkers tried to present a liberal critique of Indian society and colonial state and to provide a set of liberal ideas for the transformation of Indian society and polity. But none of them succeeded in providing a comprehensive philosophical framework of Indian liberalism.

With Raja Ram Mohan Roy, and Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, it was just the beginning of what has been called the Indian Renaissance or the period of Enlightenment when systematic thought could not have been developed. Dadabhai's contribution was restricted to economics. Surendranath Banerji was known for his political ideas. G.K. Gokhale was a direct disciple of M.G. Ranade and tried to more or less follow his Guru. G.G. Agarkar attempted to apply Herbert Spencer's evolutionary doctrine to Indian society. More than anyone of these thinkers, it was M.G. Ranade who presented in a fairly systematic manner a model of Indian liberalism in the second half of the nineteenth century.
The significance of Ranade's life is to be found mainly in the "far-spreading web of his mind" - in his diagnoses of India's social, political, economic, and religious ills, and in the remedies that he both propounded and endeavoured to apply. It was an apt comparison when Mr. Selby, of the Deccan College, referred to Ranade as "Our Socrates". He challenged prevalent attitudes and stimulated thought, and the answers to India's complex problem, which in his mind were grasped as an inter-related whole, flowed-out afterwards in divergent streams. There is no dearth of material to study of thought of M.G. Ranade. His contributions are on a wide range of subjects from Poona Sarvajanik Sabha [political organisation from Poona], Prarthana Samaj (Prayer Society), to Social Conference, Indian National Congress and Industrial Conference. Besides being a government servant and a leader of social and political reform movements, Ranade was one of the most sophisticated thinkers during the nineteenth century India. In fact, he provided a philosophical foundation to the Indian liberal movement. He could do this because he was well grounded in India and European philosophy and had a historical and comparative understanding of socio-economic and political developments in India and the World at large. In his writings, Ranade has attempted to solve the conflict between the actions of the state and liberty of the individual.
The plan of this thesis is as follows. The first chapter, the nature of liberalism in all its aspects, as it is understood at present day is brought forward. A special case has been taken to examine at some length the classical and contemporary schools of liberal thought, and their concept by way of comparison noticing the similarities and differences. In the second chapter an attempt has been made to look at the genesis of Western liberalism in Europe since antiquity till present day. Some basic concepts, ideals and institutions were common to all schools of liberalism. They are respect for individual's dignity, supremacy of law, freedom of exercising civil liberties, security of property, and representative governments. It is only regarding the practice they differed with each other.

In the third chapter, growth and development of liberalism in Great Britain is analysed. Liberalism, both as a doctrine and as a political program, developed fully in England between the Glorious Revolution (1688) and the Reform Act of 1867. Liberalism was first a limited appeal for constitutional guarantees and individual rights. It became a positive theory of economic and political organization and a political programme with broad national appeal extending to many groups and classes. The genesis of Indian liberalism, the fourth chapter of this thesis, an attempt is made to glance over the social, religious and political reform movements, since 19th century. The correlation among
these three movements is noticed significantly. A clear understanding of each one of them requires knowledge of the others as well. Deteriorated dissatisfied contemporary society was the rudiment of such reform movements. The champions of reforms in different ways and outlooks highlighted the reforms and their need. Such efforts of those great men enabled India to regain her former splendour and find her rightful place in the present modern world.

The fifth chapter deals with specific reforms and the movement led by Ranade as a social reformer and organizer during the last two decades of the 19th century. It was at the 1892 "Allahabad Social Conference" that Ranade made it clear regarding the direction of social change he envisaged. He said, "the change that we should all seek is thus a change from constraint to freedom, from credulity to faith, from status to contract, from authority to reason, from unorganised to organised life, from bigotry to toleration, from blind fatalism to a sense of human dignity." That is what I understand by social evolution, both for individuals and societies in this country. In fact, he was practically the life-breath of the reform movement. He organised the movement, focussed the various forces and spasmodic activities of individual reformers. Again, he said in Madras in 1898: "The issue is not this or that particular reform about which people have so much controversy, but the general spirit of purity, justice,
equality, temperance and mercy which should be infused into our minds and which should illumine our hearts. Is it to be the spirit of justice, charity, mercy, toleration and appreciation of all, or is it to be exclusiveness, haughtiness, pride, cruelty and misery of all kinds? The choice lies with us and We may choose which We prefer."

The sixth chapter deals with Ranade's writings on economics with the spirit of compassion. In its formal structure each article was an array of statistical or historical facts and of opinions of all concerned persons, followed by an analysis and a conclusion. But the conclusions had an intimate relation to the problem of India's poverty. There was no article which did not say something of importance for the solution of that problem. He left to his successors many unsolved problems, but he also indicated ways in which they might be solved. His writings also influenced coming generation of Indian economists and political leaders, till 1947. It is, therefore, not surprising that the strategy of development in industry and agriculture followed in post-independence India bears the strong imprint of his ideas.

The seventh chapter analysis Ranade's political ideas. The idea of political freedom is a relative idea. It consists in the optimal balancing of the individual and the collective freedom. Individual liberty is a complex variable in any society depending on the economic, social
and political organisation, along with the cultural and moral values. Ranade believed in the mutual-dependence of the economic, social, political and cultural spheres of society. He thought that politics represented an important aspect of human activity and that without the rights and duties of citizenship no one could feel the full dignity of human existence. The Indian National Congress (which strove for political reform), Indian Industrial Conference (which looked for the economic advancement) and the social conference (which worked for the social reforms) were regarded by Ranade as sisters who should go hand-in-hand if they wanted to make real progress. He insisted that people cannot have good social institutions when they do not enjoy political liberties. They are not fit to exercise their political rights unless their social institutions are based on reason and justice. Similarly, if their social system is imperfect, they are unable to achieve real economic progress. If their religious institutions are degenerate, they cannot succeed in the social, political and economic fields.

The eighth chapter provides a summary of M.G. Ranade as a comprehensive liberal philosopher, who liberated the whole man and became the light and guide to all earnest workers. For this reason, an attempt has been made in the present work to outline what appear to be the leading
principles of Ranade in the several fields of social, economic, and political activities in which he took part.

The last chapter deals with the conclusion on the basis of the analysis of the impact of the Western thought and organisation ability over the social and political leadership in India in particular, whereas in general, it is being observed, that the movement of social reforms in India did not cease in the 18th century, but still continued and need to be continued further.

Therefore, the world's greatest democracy, which is fifty years young, has a long way to go in the fulfilment of the dreams of all humanity, for, it is destined to solve "the greatest practical problem for the human race". Along with it, led the world spirit awaken to greater freedom and greater justice.

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