PREFACE

Jayaprakash Narayan's political voyage began during the First Non Cooperation Movement when the Indian people had rallied behind Mahatma Gandhi to protest against British atrocities on this country. As a student at the Patna College, he followed keenly the turn of events as the country entered a decisive phase in the struggle for freedom. He made up his mind to join the freedom struggle in order to secure 'freedom' from foreign domination. He was moved by the concept of a karmayogi, a concept he had imbibed from the Gita. Through his self less participation in various movements, he was in constant search for an adequate socio-political theory to achieve freedom, equality and change for this country.

Young Jayaprakash came across Marxist scholars during his sojourn in America. Marxism appealed to him as the theory that could solve India's social and economic problems. On his return to India, he had an opportunity to observe the ground realities of Indian life. His untiring efforts contributed to the acceptance of the socialist ideology as a part and parcel of India's struggle for freedom. As a socialist he realized that political independence from the British rule would not bring changes in the Indian society necessary to liberate the Indian people from poverty and backwardness.

His dream of a socialist order was shattered by the cruel outcome of power struggle in the socialist world. Soon he felt that Marxism was not the only answer to India's problems. His search for a suitable theory continued till he decided to join the Sarvodaya Movement. He became a 'Jeevan dani' and dedicated
his life to the country. He adopted different ideologies and never hesitated to shift from one ideology to another in order to find an answer to India’s contemporary problems. All his theorizations were directed towards several ‘beacons of light’—freedom, equality and change. These concepts that is, freedom from British bondage to freedom from poverty, hunger and social exploitation constitute the fundamental pillars of Jayaprakash Narayan’s social and political theory.

During his long years of political activity, Jayaprakash Narayan came in contact with many leading personalities of Indian politics. He was offered various important official positions including the highest office of the country but he chose to remain far away from the citadels of power. As a keen observer, he had perceived that after independence, the ideals of India’s Freedom movement will soon be buried under the power struggle among political parties. He sought to offer a new definition of politics by removing the concept of power from it. He believed that politics could involve people and could be utilized for social betterment. Politics should not imply conflict or conflict management but consensus for co-operative living.

His concept of Total Revolution was formed to meet the challenges of corruption and anti democratic tendencies in the Indian society.

Jayaprakash Narayan’s message was very clear; western civilization, he believed, had created a Frankenstein of a society where man is caught in a vicious circle of material comfort and ruthless competition. Hence a new movement was necessary to nurture the moral development of man along with social
development. Man must learn to subordinate voluntarily his own interest to the larger interest of society.

Jayaprakash Narayan's political ideas-- his emphasis on the need of moral development, non-violence and his definition of politics as the expression of popular participation-- are the most suitable means of solving the problems that continue to rattle Indian society today. The present study has been particularly inspired by Jayaprakash Narayan's effort to link politics and morality. Jayaprakash Narayan quoted Andre Malraux, on Mahatma Gandhi's birthday, in his Prison Diary, "Art does not depend on the tomb, but on eternity. All sacred art is opposed to death, because it is not an adornment of the civilization it represents, but the expression of its highest values." In this study an attempt will be made to depict the highest values that Jayaprakash Narayan's political thought represents.

In order to understand Jayaprakash Narayan's political thought an attempt has been made to analyze the primary sources including his speeches( those delivered in conferences and public meetings), books and articles written by him, newspaper features, his correspondence with his contemporaries, diaries and interviews. Content analysis of the primary sources has been supplemented by the historical approach that helps to look into the context in which his ideas were formed, developed and changed. For this purpose his biographies and his unpublished autobiography have been consulted. The secondary sources referred to include writings of social and political scientists, economists, political leaders and editors of
journals. Their contributions have been significant for a better understanding of Jayaprakash Narayan's political thought as it was developing over almost six decades.

The present work is planned around the major events of his life and the development of his thought which are discussed in separate chapters. A brief sketch of his life and the major events that influenced his thought have been discussed in Chapter 1: *Life and Formative Influences*. Chapter 2, entitled *Jayaprakash Narayan: The Socialist Phase of His Life*, depicts the Marxist phase of his life. Here an attempt has been made to portray Jayaprakash Narayan's his role in the Indian Socialist Movement and his socialist ideas. Chapter 3: *Jayaprakash Narayan: Sarvodaya and Jeevandan*, focuses on the shift in his ideas from socialism to "Sarvodaya" and on the influence of Mahatma Gandhi and Acharya Vinoba Bhave on his life and thought. His gradual withdrawal from party politics, his experiences with the Sarvodaya Movement and his vision on the reorganization of the Indian polity has been discussed. His criticism of power politics and concern for *lokshakti* and his ideas of democratic decentralization have been taken up in this chapter. Chapter 4, entitled *Jayaprakash Narayan and Total Revolution*, brings out the significance of the concept of Total Revolution. It traces the historical factors that led to the revolution and its effect on contemporary Indian society. Its focus is on his thought and actions during the turbulent period of the 1970s. Chapter 5, *Freedom, Equality, Social Change and Jayaprakash Narayan*, will sum up his views on the above concepts. The last Chapter presents an overview of the findings of the study.