Preface

In this thesis, I propose to discuss the developments, thoughts and activities related to the period of Indian renaissance. My objective in doing this is (a) To understand role played by European renaissance and the values associated with it in the context of Indian renaissance. (b) To analyse and assess the thoughts and activities during the period of Indian renaissance on the background of the Indian tradition and the values and ideas associated with European renaissance (c) To explicate the meaning of the concept of renaissance on the general and philosophical level with special reference to Indian renaissance. (d) To explore the meaning of the concept of renaissance and sister concepts like revival, reformation etc., to unfold the logic underlying the functioning of the social dynamics and the historical process.

The period after the arrival of the British to independence is considered as the period of renaissance in the history of India. The term ‘renaissance’ signifies a process of transformation that took place in Europe at a particular period in history which made the transition of the European society from the traditional ways to modernity possible. The term was used to describe the nature of the developments in Italy that took place on account of the revival of the Greco-Roman culture. The distinguishing characteristic of this process was that it was motivated by ancient culture and took pride in imitating it and rejecting the ideas of the middle ages. It was believed that with the revival of antiquity, there was a rebirth of the European
culture. The same word ‘renaissance’ was applied in connection with the developments in India in the period from the arrival and the settlement of the British to independence.

The developments that took place in the period of renaissance are of special interest to the historians and sociologists. The study of the historians, though, is primarily event oriented and individual and institution based, directed towards highlighting the distinguishing characteristics of the period. Sociologists attempt to analyse and study the different developments, activities and transformations as processes of modernization and westernization. Such studies help bring certain ideas to the fore. But a study of these ideas and their interrelations is not their province. A philosopher seeks to grasp the general picture of the developments of the period to understand its link with the past and its role as a mediator between the past and the future of the society. I have in this thesis endeavoured to draw such a picture of the renaissance period.

The subject chosen for the thesis is vast and complex in nature. However specifying a definite aim and methodology enabled me to cope with its comprehensiveness.

I would like to state that in the thesis I have not considered all kinds of developments. Neither have I discussed the contribution of all the thinkers belonging to the period. I have considered only those representative thinkers that suited my
I first registered for my thesis a long time back but due to some unavoidable difficulties I could not complete it earlier. During this rather long period of study, several well-meaning people encouraged me and kept my motivation going. I wish to record my deep sense of gratitude to my guide Dr. S.S. Barlingay with whom I had stimulating academic discussions from time to time. Some of the insights he provided need a very special mention.

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