PREFACE

Democracy, as is a multidimensional ideal, must be rooted in the tradition and culture of the country concerned for its success. This is the fundamental truth of democracy. The story of Western democracy is qualitatively different from that of India. Rulers in ancient India, unlike their Western counterparts were very much under the surveillance of the people, although it was not ‘*demos*’ and ‘*creitia*’, that is, the rule of the people. But the spirit of ancient Indian rule was democratic. Outwardly ancient India had so many kingdoms but royal ascendency needed popular support. Not only that, the behaviour of the royalty was subject to popular scrutiny.

Modern Indian democracy is actually the product of British Indian Reform Acts. The democracy we live in today is a British tailored one enforced by the admirers of the Western, especially the British system. The concepts enshrined in the Constitution of India are Western. The governance is elitist, therefore having no connection with Indian tradition and culture.

However, this is not the only story of modern Indian democracy. Gandhi and Subhas Chandra Bose, in tune with the teachings of Swami Vivekananda, developed their own ideas of Indian democracy where tradition and culture formed the foundation. Even the socialists, when they were Marxists in their ideology, clearly stated that Marxism in India should be tailored according to the tradition of India. M. N. Roy, however, had his own humanistic model for democracy in India. Jayaprakash Narayan (JP) went to the extent of calling himself ‘a student of Swami Vivekananda’. Although his political life was a travel through many paths for the freedom of man, he ultimately gave a call for total revolution which demands reconstruction of Indian polity by active participation of the people from the grassroot level to the highest level of administration. This call he gave when India had been groaning under rampant corruption. The situation today far from improving is deteriorating day by day. It is high time we start reconstructing our life as suggested by JP.
I took up the subject to my teacher at the post-graduate level Dr. Sankari Prasad Banerjee, Professor (Retd.) of Philosophy at the Calcutta University. He approved the scheme and inspired me to work for Doctoral dissertation. Under his supervision I started my work and he checked a considerable portion of my dissertation. His sudden demise had a discouraging effect on me. However, Dr. Dikshit Gupta, Professor (Retd.), also my teacher in the Department of Philosophy, affectionately agreed to work as my supervisor. It is under his kind guidance I have been able to complete the work.

I have been benefitted by the advice and suggestions of many eminent persons, some of whom were close associates of Jayaprakash Narayan. This has been possible because of my close association with the activities of the bi-monthly Bengali journal ‘Samaajbaadi Bhaabna’. In this connection I must gratefully acknowledge the advice of Swami Purnatmananda, former Editor of ‘Udbodhan’, the 107 year old Bengali monthly journal of the Ramakrishna Mission and presently Secretary of the Ramakrishna Mission, Tripura. Last but not the least I acknowledge the support of the workers of the National Library, the Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture, Golpark and the working team of ‘Samaajbaadi Bhaabna’, specially its Editor Dr. Asim Kumar Chaudhuri, who is a JP scholar.