P R E F A C E

The subject of this thesis – I must gratefully acknowledge at the very outset – was suggested to me, some six years back, by my revered teacher, Prof. P. S. Naidu, who was then the Head of the Department of Education, University of Allahabad, when I approached him for undertaking research in Education. And soon after I started exploring the subject, I realised for myself the fascinating nature and possibilities of such a work, which motivated me to go ahead with it wholeheartedly. Now that the work is complete, my heart naturally goes out to my old teacher in grateful memory of his advice, which has at least materialised in the form of this thesis.

The history of Indian education is a long episode of efforts made by a number of agencies – missionaries, directors and other officials of the East India Company, the British Government, philanthropists and Indian national movements. Of all these agencies, it is perhaps not incorrect to say that the contribution of Indian national movements – led by such mighty personalities as Raja Ram Mohum Roy, Swami Dayananda, Mahadev Govind Ranade, Keshub Chunder Sen, Swami Vivekananda, Mrs. Annie Besant, Gopal Krishna Gokhale, Mahatma Gandhi and others – has not been adequately appreciated. Hardly any attempt has been made to study their ideology and work in the educational field, and to assess their significance in the development of Indian education in sufficient detail.

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The reason as to why the contribution of Indian national movements in the field of education has not been adequately appreciated in the past is not far to seek. Most of the books available on the history of Indian education till recently, as well as the massive volumes of educational documents, in the form of reports, periodical reviews and brochures, were written by the British officials who obviously looked at things from the British point of view. No wonder then if educational literature, written by them, manifests a bias in favour of the official system and tries to magnify the contribution of the alien rulers in the educational sphere. The books written by the missionaries have the same tale to tell. Working under the patronage of the Company and having racial and cultural affinity with the ruling nation, they also could not help praising the educational efforts of the British Government. The books written by Indians and from the Indian point of view were, on the other hand, conspicuous by their absence for a long time, with the result that the work of Indian national leaders in the field of education remained obscure and unnoticed for many a decade.

Any way, now that we are a free nation with the power to shape our own destiny, there can hardly be any justification for ignoring or overlooking the influence and contribution of our national movements in the sphere of education. In fact, never was perhaps the need for understanding the Indian ideology and viewpoint in the educational field so great as today, for, to create a national system of education
towards which our attention is directed today, we have to build essentially on Indian foundations. The present work is an humble attempt to fulfil this vital national need.

For getting the relevant material for this work, I am very grateful to the staff of those public and university libraries - especially those of the National Archives, New Delhi, and the library of the Prantiya Shikshan Mahavidyalaya, Jabalpur - who/only gave me free access to their shelves but also helped me in locating the desired publications and other source-materials.

I must also thank the publication-centres of the Brahma Samaj, Arya Samaj, Ramkrishna Mission and Theosophy at Calcutta, New Delhi, Belur Math (Howrah district) and Adyar (Madras) respectively, who supplied me with all the literature available with them in regard to these movements, especially that pertaining to their efforts and activities in the educational field.

In the end, I express my heart-felt gratitude to my revered supervisor, Dr. Atmanand Misra, under whose valuable and affectionate guidance this thesis could be written. Himself a scholar and educationist of repute, he not only steered me clear of many errors but also guided my reading and gave me valuable suggestions regarding the plan and design of this work.

As for the limitations of the work, it may be said that no human work can claim perfection, much less a work of this type which covers a long period of about one hundred and
fifty years and is inextricably inter-woven with diverse human motives. The specific omissions and commissions of details apart, the work may, however, be viewed from a wider angle of vision, focussing on the general tenor and approach of the work. The aim of writing this thesis has been to bring into light the contribution of those national movements of India which, starting in the nineteenth century as a reaction against the culture and civilization of the West, and passing through many ups and downs, strived to put forward and practise a national ideology of education. And if this aim has been achieved through this work even in a broad way, the labour involved in it has perhaps not been quite in vain.

S.S. DIKSHIT

Chhatarpur,
March 18, 1963.