CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Of all those factors which have made a tremendous impact on the social life of man, in its variegated aspects, in the modern times, nationalism is undoubtedly one of the most outstanding ones. It has produced far-reaching effects on a global scale by changing the entire outlook and approach of peoples living in different countries towards their present-day problems and future plans of development. Education, being prima facie a social activity, has also felt this impact to a great measure, so far so that it has almost become an instrument of nationalism. This is borne out most conspicuously by the emergence of the concept of 'National Education' which symbolizes a new approach in the educational sphere, characterised by a pronounced stress on the 'culture pattern' and the 'national destiny' of a people - the former providing the foundation and the latter the staple of a national system of education.

NATIONALISM AND INDIAN EDUCATION

In India also, the movement of nationalism has exercised a powerful influence in the domain of education, though this aspect of Indian education has not been brought into light and adequately appreciated thus far. In fact, due to the dominant hand which the British rulers had in shaping the educational policy and pattern of this country for a long time, lasting over a period of about two hundred years, there is a general tendency
to attribute our activities and achievements in the educational sphere to their direction and efforts in the field. Though, there is truth in this, but this tendency is, to some extent, misleading, for it ignores or pays scant attention to the contribution of Indian national movements in the educational sphere, and thus fails to put before us a complete and balanced picture of the forces which have influenced the course of educational developments in modern India.

The particular background against which the Indian national movements arose was essentially a creation of the British rule in the country and its accompanying socio-cultural forces. These forces were chiefly responsible for arousing in the Indian people the sentiment of nationalism, ultimately resulting in the emergence of various reform movements, in quick succession, during the nineteenth century. These movements were "the first national breaches in the fortress of medievalism and the declaration, in religious and social reform language, that the modern Indian nation was born and was growing."\(^1\)

It is true that the first impact of the modern Western culture exercised a rejuvenating influence on the Indian society, for it unleashed those currents of rational and liberal thought which ultimately led to her wonderful renaissance of the modern times. The Brahma Samaj movement typified this influence most vividly. It represented the first attempt of the enlightened Indian elite to reform their religion and society according to those rational and liberal principles which constitute the corner-

\(^1\) Desai, A.R. - Social Background of Indian Nationalism; p. 272.
stone of modern European philosophy, literature and science.

This beneficial effect of the contact with the West apart, there was another side of the picture as well. For, the impact of the Western thought and ideology on the mind of the Indian youth also let loose an unhealthy wave of those denationalising tendencies which culminated in the 'Young Bengal' movement of the early twenties of the nineteenth century. The English-educated young men of Bengal, infatuated with the outward glamour of the European civilisation and culture, took an unabashed pride in shaking off the mental and moral restraints of their own community, showed an unconcealed contempt for everything Indian, and vied with each other most desperately in imitating everything European. In the name of Western liberalism, they indulged in all sorts of anarchic behaviour—drink, beef-eating and unhealthy sex-life. All this marked the climax of the then-prevailing tendency towards denationalisation.

Such excesses on the part of the misguided Indian youth stirred the conscience of all right-thinking Indians and set them thinking about the future of the native culture seriously. Their national sentiment was pricked into consciousness, with the result that a reaction soon started, and, ere long, the pendulum was set moving towards the other extreme. Most of the socio-religious movements, especially those which arose in the second half of the nineteenth century—the Arya Samaj, the Theosophy and the Ramkrishna Mission—were an expression of this new reaction in favour of the culture of
the land. Their chief aim was to check the onslaughts of the Western culture on the Indian soil by instilling into the people a new faith and confidence in the culture of their own country. The influence of this national upsurge did not, however, remain confined to the social and religious spheres only. Within a few decades, it spread to the political sphere as well, resulting ultimately in the foundation of the Indian National Congress in 1885.

While trying to bring about a general national awakening in the country, these movements became increasingly aware of the importance of education as a tool of national regeneration in diverse fields. Their leaders realised full well that any attempt to reconstruct Indian life and society without harnessing the agency of education would not prove adequately effective.

To their great disgust, however, they found that the system of education, which had been implanted in the Indian soil by the British, was ill-suited for this purpose. They could soon understand that the system was devised with certain ulterior motives, having political and economic ends in view, that it was, to a very large extent, an echo of the educational developments and controversies in England, and that it was based on a sense of cultural superiority on the part of the alien rulers, which found expression in the general Victorian notion that the British learning and institutions were the models for India to follow. In a word, they realised that the system was anti-national, being completely divorced from the culture of the land, on the one hand, and unsuited to the real needs and interests of the Indian people, on the other.
This dissatisfaction of the leaders of these movements with the official system of education led them to point out and oppose the inconsistencies and anomalies that were inherent in that system. Their attitude did not, of course, remain only critical; for they gradually took a constructive view of the educational problem, and started thinking of a system of education which could really cater to the needs of the Indian people. This was the genesis of the concept of 'National Education' which these movements sought to advocate in their own characteristic ways. They not only devised and put forward the ideology of national education, but also tried to work it out, sometimes by bringing the pressure of public-opinion on the Government, and at others by working independently of it. Of course, in doing all this, they had to work against heavy odds, but, all the same, they pressed on with their work with indomitable courage and laudable steadfastness.

THE OBJECTIVES

Keeping the above facts in view, the objectives of the present work may be laid down as follows:

(i) To survey critically, assess and appreciate the contribution of our national movements to Indian education.

(ii) To know the real story behind the emergence and development of the concept of national education in India.

(iii) To consider the extent to which the educational ideology put forward by these movements and the institutions founded by them can be incorporated in the educational system of free India, to make it truly national.
THE SCOPE AND DELIMITATIONS

The leading national movements whose contributions to Indian education have been surveyed and assessed in the present thesis are: (1) The Brahmo Samaj movement, (2) The two offshoots of the Brahmo Samaj, namely, Keshub Chunder Sen's Brahmo Samaj of India and Mahadev Govind Ranade's Pruthna Samaj, (3) The Arya Samaj movement, (4) the Theosophical movement, (5) the Ramkrishna Mission movement, (6) the national movements amongst the Muslims and (7) the Indian National Congress movement.

Doubts may perhaps be expressed by some regarding the propriety of including the first six movements under the category of national movements. Such doubts seem to be based on a narrow concept of nationalism. If we take the word 'national' in a broad sense - as has been done in the present work - there should be no occasion for such doubts. To think that the history of Indian National Congress movement is the history of Indian nationalism is only taking a narrow and partial view of Indian nationalism. The Indian National Congress represents only the political phase of it, which came into prominence at a much later stage, that is, towards the end of the nineteenth century. The earlier phase of Indian nationalism, which can hardly be ignored while considering the movement as a whole, is represented by the above religious-cum-social reform movements which, emerging from the early decades of the nineteenth century, prepared the background of and paved the way for the political phase of the movement.
All these reform movements of the nineteenth century were, of course, not national in the sense that they fought for the political emancipation of the country, but in the sense that they were organised and led by the people of the country in the then-existing circumstances, and, above all, in the sense that they had their feet firmly rooted in the ancient religion and culture of the land, and had the real needs and interests of the Indian people at heart. The uniqueness of Indian nationalism is that though it emerged in religion, but in the subsequent years it became increasingly secular.

Looking even from this broad point of view, objection may perhaps be raised to the inclusion of the Theosophical movement in the category of national movements on the ground that it was brought into the country by foreigners and that an English woman – Mrs. Annie Besant – was its chief leader. This is, no doubt, true, but we should not forget that Mrs. Annie Besant had adopted India as her motherland. How deeply and passionately she loved India! What a glorious role she played in the revival of India's ancient culture! And, above all, how splendid were her efforts in the field of Indian education! She was unmistakably the first to conceive explicitly the idea of a national system of education for the country, and to put this idea into actual practice, she struggled throughout her life, working ceaselessly to start a new current in the educational history of India – a current emanating from the ancient Indian culture and moistening the indigenous soil with it, so that India may once again rise in her ancient glory and greatness. The fact is that under her
influence the movement became so much identified with Indian thought and spirit that it hardly appears to be a movement foreign to the land. Taking all this into consideration, and more particularly the contribution and influence of the movement in the field of education, there should be no hesitation in treating it as one of the national movements of the country.

The work is delimited to the period 1800-1947, for the reason that the beginning of the nineteenth century is definitely a very important turning-point in the history of India. This is for two reasons. Firstly, it sounded the death-knell of those old religious dogmas and perverted social institutions which were eating into the very vitals of her social life. This could be made possible due to the impact of the rational and liberal thought of the West, which gave birth to the Indian renaissance of the nineteenth century. Secondly, the advent of the nineteenth century heralded the dawn of nationalism on the Indian horizon; it marks the genesis of those indigenous reform movements which, coming one after the other, awakened the soul and mind of India to her ancient greatness and glory. This naturally led to the emergence of national consciousness among the Indian people for the first time during the modern period. Before this, there was no national consciousness, and hence no national movement. The role of Indian nationalism in the field of education, as in other fields, can, therefore, be traced back only from the beginning of the nineteenth century.

As regards the other end of the period covered by this work, the year 1947 is obviously one of the most outstanding landmarks in the history of India. For, it marks the culminating
point of that long-drawn struggle for freedom, which, passing through all manner of ordeals for about one hundred and fifty years, ultimately brought political independence to the country. The period of struggle being over, the temper of these movements has naturally undergone a marked change. And since through this thesis an attempt has been made to trace the educational contributions of our national movements as forces pitted against—acting and reacting, struggling and asserting against—the educational policies and plans of the alien Government, going beyond this year would not have been consistent with the general tone and temper of the work.

OTHER RELATED WORKS

For a long time there remained a general dearth of literature bearing on the contribution of Indian national movements in the field of education. In the books on the history of Indian education, some reference has, of course, been made to the work done by the Indian National Congress in the cause of national education during the twentieth century, as a part of its political struggle, but the earlier phase of Indian nationalism, represented by the various reform movements, has remained more or less completely untouched. With the advent of the post-Independence era, however, some efforts have been made in this direction. Of these, the following works deserve special mention:


The author, in this work, has discussed at some length some of the
outstanding indigenous experiments in the field of Indian education, namely, the Gurukula, the Vishwa Bharti, the Basic Education and the Jamia Millia Islamia. He has studied these experiments from the viewpoint of the various modern philosophies of education — Idealism, Naturalism, Humanism, Supernaturalism and Pragmatism.

2. 'The Development of National Education in India' by Dr. K.C. Vyas; (published by Vora and Company, Publishers Ltd., Bombay, 1954). The author, in this book, has traced the development of the concept of National Education in India from the nineteenth century, and has also sketched in the last chapter some of the institutions which are the products of the nationalist thought in the field of education, namely, the Jamia Millia Islamia, the Basic National Education, Shantiniketan and Kalakshetra.

3. 'The Origins of the National Education Movement' by Prof. H.D. Mukerjee and his wife, Prof. Uma Mukerjee; (published by the Jadavpur University, 1957). This book is divided in two parts — Part I deals with the genesis and development of the National Education Movement, getting its concrete shape in the birth of the National concept of education. The II part makes a special study of the valuable role played in the movement by the 'Dawn' and the 'Dawn Society' — both founded by Satish Chandra Mukerjee — the well-known leader of the nationalist movement during the Swadeshi days.

4. 'Idealistic Trends in Indian Philosophies of Education' by Dr. (Mrs.) K.D. Seth; (this is a thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy of the University of Allahabad, 1956). In this work, Mrs. Seth has tried to bring out in great detail, the idealistic elements in the educational philosophies of Indian
thinkers. Since the traditional Indian philosophy has been characteristically idealistic, the work throws adequate light on the contribution of Indian educational thinkers to education in general, so far as the idealistic values of education are concerned.

No doubt, the above works are laudable pioneering efforts in the desired direction, but they have their own limitations. Dr. Thacore's discussion is purely philosophical; the work of Dr. Vyas, though on right lines, is very sketchy and lacks in details; Prof. Mukerjee and his wife have confined themselves only to the period of Swadeshi days, that is, 1905 to 1911; and the thesis of Dr. (Mrs.) Seth throws light only on the idealistic aspect of the Indian educational thought.

There is perhaps no single work yet published, which gives a historical, comprehensive and synthetic account of the contribution of our national movements to Indian education. The present work is a modest attempt in that direction.

THE PLAN AND PROCEDURE

This thesis has been planned in twelve chapters, including this introductory chapter. The second chapter, which follows this, has been devoted to a discussion of the inter-relationship between nationalism and education. Effort has been made to bring out clearly the role played by the movement of nationalism on the educational theory and practice in the leading countries of the world. The approach is inductive in as much as all conclusions have been drawn on the basis of relevant historical examples. This chapter is expected to serve a useful purpose, for, by dis-
cussing the vital role of nationalism as a modern factor in education,
it seeks to provide a suitable background to the understanding of the influence of nationalism in the development of Indian education.

The third chapter is intended to give a bird's eye-view of the educational background of the Indian national movements from the year 1600 up to the beginning of the nineteenth century, ending with a brief statement of the educational situation as it existed immediately before their emergence. An effort has been made in this chapter to describe and evaluate the part played by the three main agencies in the field of education during this period, namely, (1) the indigenous institutions, (2) missionaries and (3) the East India Company. Such a grounding in the past was considered to be necessary for a clear and intelligent understanding of the educational contribution of Indian national movements in the subsequent years.

The seven chapters that follow have been devoted to the various national movements, taken in their chronological sequence. Such a separate treatment of every movement is designed only to maintain clarity of thought, and not to give an impression that these movements were exclusively self-contained or devoid of any inter-relationship. In fact, it is quite easy to discern a thread of connection running through them all, and, taken as a whole, they represent one big national movement calculated to re-orient Indian education, along with other aspects of Indian life, in such a way as to bring it in tune with the true spirit and genius of the country. In other words, they are like those different rungs of the same ladder which must be climbed in due succession to reach the final goal, that is, an all-round regeneration of the country.
The method of treatment followed in all these seven chapters is, more or less, the same. In the first few pages, the origin, nature and aims of these movements have been sketched against the background of the socio-cultural conditions of the day; this is followed by an exposition of their educational ideology, as expounded by their leaders, and a detailed survey of the actual work done by them in the educational field. While surveying the educational work and efforts of these movements, the official system of education has also been frequently referred to, in order to understand their educational contributions against the background of the contemporary educational conditions. Critical observations have been made where called for, and inferences have been drawn on the basis of recorded facts and figures. An over-all appraisal of their educational contributions has been given towards the end of the chapters.

In the eleventh chapter - the last but one - an attempt has been made to collect the various threads of this long episode together by giving an assessment of the educational contributions and effects of these movements as a whole.

The last chapter has been devised to draw certain broad conclusions about the educational contributions of Indian national movements, both from the negative and positive points of view. This chapter has also been devoted to a discussion of the extent to which the educational ideology upheld by these movements and the institutions founded by them can be incorporated into the educational structure of free India, in order to make it national in spirit and purpose. Suggestions for this have also been given towards the closing part of the chapter.
This is predominantly a historical work; hence, on the whole, the method of historical research has been used to locate and assess the specific weight of different social, religious and political forces which have formed the under-currents of these movements and their contributions. Attention has particularly been focussed on the educational ideology of their leaders, for every historical event or movement is, as Sir Henry Sharp has pointed out, 
"linked with the name of striking personalities".\textsuperscript{1} Besides, this approach gives the present work a living touch and fills it with human interest, instead of its being only a monotonous catalogue of events or a mere 'charnel-house of facts'. Of course, all unnecessary biographical details have been omitted.

THE SOURCE MATERIAL

The material for this work had to be collected from a variety of sources. A lot of books on Indian educational history, many biographies, reports, brochures and also a number of treatises on the cultural, political and constitutional history of India had to be dug into. Searching and sifting of relevant material from them has been a long and arduous task; more so, as all the desired literature was not available at the same place. A number of libraries, both public as well as those of universities, had, therefore, to be visited. So far as the educational contribution of Indian national movements at the ideological level is concerned, much help was received from the published works of their outstanding leaders, which could be had from the publishing centres mentioned in the Preface.

\textsuperscript{1} Selections from Educational Reports, Vol.I; p.iii.
The material used in the present work has been drawn both from the primary and secondary sources, but, so far as possible, in giving the educational ideology of the leaders of these movements, original sources, in the form of their published works, have been tapped. Quoting of long passages has been avoided; instead, their most cogent and relevant portions have been quoted in their extract-form, sometimes only a sentence or two. References to the quotations have been given in the foot-notes. The full particulars of the works to which the notes refer, have been given in the Bibliography at the end.

SCOPE FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The present work suggests more intensive research in the field on such topics as (i) Contribution of the Early National Movements to Indian Education (to be devoted exclusively to the indigenous reform movements of the nineteenth century, representing the socio-religious phase of Indian nationalism), (ii) Origin and Development of the Concept of National Education in India, (iii) The Contribution of the Indian National Congress to the Development of National Education, and (iv) The Role of National Movements in the Educational System of Free India (focussing on the work still being done by some of the socio-religious movements, particularly the Arya Samaj and the Ramkrishna Mission, and their future possibilities).

Besides the above topics, the contribution made by certain individual Indians, like Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, Rabindra Nath Tagore, Sri Aurobindo, D.K. Karve and others, in the field of education, may be investigated in a separate work. They have not been included in this work for the obvious reason that they do not come within the purview of any national movement.