NATURE AND SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The struggle for freedom of India from the British rule is an epoch-making event in the history of Modern India. In fact, the 1857 Mutiny was the first step towards such an agitation, an event which rocked India in the next century. History of Modern India from 1857 onwards is nothing but the History of Freedom Movement in India. The several legislative acts that were passed in 1909, 1919, 1935 and so on were nothing but results of the agitations of the people for greater participation in the Government, and, ultimately, an agitation for self Government with the final demand that the British should Quit India. This is a thrilling story by itself.

Of late, a number of works on Freedom Movement in India have seen the light of day. There have been differences of opinion about the historic event of 1857, which has been described by some as the 'First War of Independence', while others labeled it only as a 'Mutiny of Sepoys.' There was a Muslim who, in 1857, had
instigated the Muslims to fight against the British in India. The evidence sighted in this case shows that even that individual was thinking more in terms of re-establishment of Mughal rule in India. There never seems to have been national consciousness, much less a national movement against the British Government. This shows that whatever may be the claims made, the events connected with 1857 were disjointed and they were all individual efforts made by disgruntled chiefs or petty kings to re-establish themselves in power. Hence, it cannot probably be described as a National War of Independence.

In these last two decades, Freedom Movement, as a subject of study or research, has gained importance. Besides general accounts, in one or more volumes, about the Freedom Movement, there are efforts made by scholars to investigate the contributions made by people of several provinces and regions of India. So far as South India is concerned, there are general works on Freedom Movement in Andhra Pradesh or Karnataka or Tamil Nadu or even Kerala. The Gazetteers published by several State Governments in this regard have made useful contribution to our knowledge about the national movement in general and regional movements in particular. With regard to
Andhra Pradesh itself, we have four volumes edited by Prof. M. Venkatarangaiah entitled *The Freedom Struggle in Andhra Pradesh* (Andhra). There is also another work of Prof. Sarojini Regani’s entitled *Highlights of Freedom Movement in Andhra Pradesh*. She has also published a dictionary, *Who is Who of Freedom Struggle in Andhra Pradesh*, in four volumes. Recently, several departments of History in several Universities of Andhra Pradesh and also the Central University of Hyderabad, have been making more in-depth studies. They have confined themselves either to regions like Rayalaseema or Telangana or Coastal Andhra, or to the several districts. These are in-depth studies wherein the contributions of several hundreds of people, forgotten in the annals of History, have been recaptured and remembered with due reference.

The present thesis is also an in-depth study, but of a different nature. Herein, it is confined itself to the evaluation of the contribution of Muslims to the Freedom Movement in Rayalaseema. Thus, the subject has got its own constraints and limitations. It is concerned with a particular region, namely, Rayalaseema, dealing with a particular sect of people, namely, the Muslims. This work is a modest attempt to highlight the participation
of Muslims of Rayalaseema in Freedom Movement. The scope of study is limited to the Muslim contribution. It may be noted here that, at a later stage, with the formation of the Muslim League, the National Movement came to be regarded, in restricted sense, as Hindu Movement inspite of the fact that Muslims also worked shoulder to shoulder with the Hindus for political independence. However, at a later stage, at least in the North, because of the British policy of Divide and Rule, there was a clear division separating the Hindus and Muslims. The latter were prone to the influence by the Muslim League and its leaders, who suspected the treatment and attitude of the Hindus towards their counterparts in their political struggle. North Indian leaders like Ali Brothers, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan identified themselves with the cause of liberation of the country from the clutches of the British. They did not suspect the Hindus' concern about the Muslim in the country. But, for various reasons, the Muslim League played a different role altogether and but forward its claim for the recognition of a Muslim State, later became known as Pakistan, different from India, which then was considered to be a Hindu State. This ethnical demand and rumour spread to several parts of the country resulting in communal clashes and human suffering and ultimately leading to country's partition. But, this
flare-up was confined mostly to the North, above the vindhyas. As is discussed in the following chapters, the situation in the Deccan and the South was entirely different. Here, there was harmony among the peoples of different faiths and each protecting the interests of the other. The Sultans and Nawabs who ruled over Rayalaseema were not disliked by the Hindus. Conversion of Hindus to Islam was numerically not so great in the South as in the North. The Muslim chieftains, the Nawabs and Sultans obviously ruled over a State which had a Hindu majority. It had become therefore, imperative to rule safely, they had to treat their subjects alike without prejudices. True, they had a soft corner towards Muslims but they did not ignore, much less persecute, the Hindus. They took Hindus into confidence and there was a good deal of Hindu and Muslim amity.

It becomes clear that, in the South, the policy of splitting the people on the basis of religious and caste for their own ends by the British did not fructify very much. The Hindus of the South, all said and done, had not been victimised to such a great extent as the Hindus of the North under the Muslim rule. Naturally, the Policy of religious tolerance by both was more realistic in the
South than in the North, the reasons for which have been discussed in the second chapter.

The aim of the present thesis is to show to what extent and in what manner did the Muslims participate in the Freedom Movement in South India. As stated above, even here, the study is limited to a region, namely, Rayalaseema, comprising four districts of the present state of Andhra Pradesh. This has provided me an opportunity to look into the activities of those Muslims who directly participated in the movement. When compared to the people at large who made immense sacrifices for the cause of the Nation by participating in the movement, communitywise, the contribution of Muslims, quantitatively, may be less. But, qualitatively, they too made quite a significant contribution to the movement for political independence, which has formed the subject of research study as recorded in this dissertation.

The sources for the study of such a subject would also move down from the general to the particular. We know, in greater detail, about the contributions made by the leading personalities of the society, who sought and enjoyed the support of somany, Muslims being the minority in the region under study, it is quite obvious that they could not come to limelight to such an extent as the
Hindus. Long after its becoming Indian Republic, several thousands of those who participated in the movement and contributed their mite, were honoured by the Governments, both Central and State, by way of granting pensions and lands and by honouring them with (Tamrapatra) copper plates. These records of the Government of Freedom fighters as recipients of awards and pensions, formed the basic source material for Prof. Sarojini Regani's edited work Who is Who in the Freedom Movement in Andhra Pradesh in four volumes. The Freedom Struggle in Andhra Pradesh (Andhra) in four volumes, edited by Prof. M. Venkataramaiah have also provided us further details. Several documents available in the State Archives are also consulted for the study. I have also gone through the Newspapers like Andhra Patrika (Daily) Sri Sadhana Patrika (weekly) The Hindu, The Madras Mail and The Indian Express. Further several Governments records (Jail records) have also been examined for details about the Government prosecutions made against the people participated in the movement.
I have also examined oral evidence for my study. Not satisfied with the scanty information available in records, I have contacted in person those participants who are still alive and the kith and kin of those who passed away, for more information and biographical details. For this purpose I corresponded with them and sent questionnaire seeking answers and classifications. These questions have been listed and discussed in the Chapter VIII. In a few cases, I personally even interviewed the concerned relatives friends for confirmatory evidence. My efforts did not go in vain. I could collect required material and information from the living and kith and kin of the dead Freedom fighters for my research work. Also oral evidence have been verified with the help of documents at our disposal. The activities of the participants in Freedom struggle, their psychological make-up, and background helped me in evaluating their contribution in the last Chapter.

There are in all eight chapters in the present thesis. In the second chapter, I have analysed the geographical and historical background, while in the third chapter I have discussed the awakening and growth of political awareness in the region under study. The outline sketch of the Freedom Movement in Andhra Pradesh with
special reference to Rayalaseema is the subject matter of the next three Chapters i.e. IV, V & VI. For this I had to use the material from secondary sources in the form of published works, like those of Prof. M. Venkatarangaiah, Prof. Sarojini Regani, Prof. B.R. Gopal's edited work History of Andhra Pradesh, Part II, P. Raghunatha Rao's History of Modern Andhra and Gopalakrishnan's Political Movement in South India: 1914-1929. In the last two chapters I have examined the role of the Muslims of Rayalaseema region in Freedom Movement and evaluated their contribution. Herein is a micro-level study about the participation of Muslims in the Freedom Movement in Rayalaseema. I have discussed and made an analysis of the basic causes for such participation, mainly socio-economic. In my own humble way, I consider this thesis as a micro-study of the Freedom Movement, a contribution to the Political history of Rayalaseema.