PREFACE

The History of India under the British Raj had always fascinated me. It was this fascination which goaded me to do research.

The Indian Liberals or Moderates have been relegated to a second position and that they have been pictured as though they had not contributed much towards the Freedom struggle in India after 1905. Was it really so? It was my curiosity that got the better of me and I decided to take up research on "The role of the Liberals in the Freedom Movement of India with special reference to Rt. Hon'ble V. S. Srinivasa Sastri".

Chapter I is a study of the impact of political, social, economic, educational and cultural policies of the British East India Company on the Indian political scene, society, economy, education and culture till 1857, thus furnishing a background before delving into the study of the role of the Liberals in the Indian Freedom Movement.

Chapter-II describes and analyses the Indian response to Western contact, trade and ideas of Liberalism.
It attempts to give meaning and tries to trace the evolution of Liberalism in Europe and England since the Renaissance and how it was adapted by politically conscious Indian thinkers such as M.G. Ranade, R.C. Dutt, Dadabhai Naoroji and Gokhale who were really the pioneers of Indian Liberalism. They developed an economic critique of colonialism which helped develop the national movement in India.

With the unfurling of these ideas a need for forming forums where the above topics could be discussed was considered necessary. Chapter-III attempts to trace the formation of political associations since 1813. These were initially regional in outlook and spoke for vested interests. But when the process of disillusionment set in after 1860 as the reality of development in India failed to conform to their hopes. The early Indian Liberals noticed that while progress in new directions was halting overall, the country was regressing. The politically conscious Indian image of British rule took darker hues and they began to probe into the reality of British rule and its impact on the Indian scenario. For this, the older Associations proved unequal to the test.
After 1860's, the political association were more broad based and had included the middle classes who pleaded for increase in the number of Indians sitting in the Legislature, increase in their power, reduction of military expenditure. How the various political Associations tried to arouse public opinion in the moffusil areas and how they thought of an all India organisation forms the rest of discussion in the latter half of the chapter and goes on till the creation of the Indian national Congress in 1885.

Chapter IV and V discusses how the Indian National Congress was the culmination of a process of political awakening that had its beginnings in 1860s. It also deals with the moderate manner in which these early politically conscious middle class Liberal Indians worked in England, spoke on the Congress platforms and in the Legislatures, insisting on a secular outlook, and making moderate demands. The British officialdom was not slow in reading the "new messages that were being conveyed through their activities and watched them with suspicion and foreboding". So they tried to use the communal weapon to deal with the growing
Congress popularity. This led to the creation of the Muslim League and the beginnings of communalism. Besides, a detailed account of the Liberals work in the Legislatures working out the pattern set by the Indian Councils Act of 1892 have been given.

The impact of the Indian Councils Act of 1892 was that the Indian members enjoyed no real powers, they could only make speeches and indulge in empty rhetorics and the bureaucracy could afford to pay no heed to them. Another phenomenon took place. By now certain section of the Congress wanted to take a tougher stand rather than the earlier weak kneed mendicant approach. The Extremist section of the Congress thus wanted to follow the Swadeshi Movement, coupled with boycott of foreign goods and establishment of a National Educational system in which stress was to be laid on self reliance. The Moderate section wanted to go slow on such policies.
These trends coincided with the partition of Bengal which invigorated the Extremists still further and these events slowly but perceptibly led to the Congress split in 1907. The impact of this split on the British bureaucrats led to the expansion of their policy of divide and rule by rallying the Moderates against the Extremist. They also strove to drive in a permanent wedge between the Congress and the Muslim League. The Act of 1909 was a clear indication of their moves. Yet the Moderates worked out this Act of 1909, whilst the Extremists were incarcerated in jails. Pherozeshah Mehta, Gokhale led the Moderate section, Tilak the Extremist section.

Chapter-VI deals with another entrant into the Moderate Politics - Rt.Hon'ble V.S.Srinivasa Sastri. It traces out the early influences and contacts which Sastri had with the country's politics and his role during the Surat split and as a member of the Servants of India Society which propelled him to hold one of the foremost positions in the politics of the day. An analysis of his work at the provincial and central legislatures has been given.
Chapter-VII deals with the role of the Liberals in the Gandhian era. Importance has been given to V.S. Srinivasa Sastri, as a legislator, as a member of the Imperial War Council 1921, member of the Kenya Delegation, as Agent General in South Africa, as a trouble shooter of Indian problems in the Dominions and Malaya. How far he was successful has been discussed and analysed.

Chapter-VIII is a documentation on the work of the National Liberal Federation. How and why this party had been created and the manner in which they infused vigour from 1918 to 1946 is the subject matter of this chapter.

Chapter IX speaks of the part played by the Liberals from the days of the Round Table Conference and ideas like the creation of a Federation, type of Legislature to be established in a Federation, establishment of a Reserve Bank, the question of the Minorities, the Indian Princes are discussed in detail in this chapter. V.S. Srinivasa Sastri and Tej Bahadur Sapru played an important part in these discussions. How they helped to strengthen the vigour of their party has been dealt with in this chapter.
Chapter X is a continuation of the Liberal role in joining in the mainstream of the national movement. They are more viciferous in their demands. By now V.S. Srinivasa Sastri had died. Although they may not have played an active role, their contribution lay in fashioning out a constitution to suit the spirit of the times. Their legal expertise helped in framing the Tej Bahadur Sapru proposals. In this Tej Bahadur Sapru contributed much towards the Freedom struggle at this time. It was mostly the Liberal ideas conveyed by Sastri and Sapru that have helped framing the Independence Act of 1947.

Chapter XI is an epilogue on the contributions of the Liberals during the struggle for freedom. The Bibliography indicates the nature of sources I have tapped whilst writing my thesis. For my primary sources, I had entirely depended on the private letters of the leading personalities of the times, the legislative assembly debates and available government records, political association records, and of course the numerous secondary source materials.
In my humble endeavour to write this thesis, I wish to express my deep and sincere feelings of gratitude to my guide Dr. (Smt) M. P. Kamerkar under whose constant encouragement, inspiration and unfailing interest and supervision, this work had been completed. Even in her hour of distress she found time to guide me.

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I dedicate my thesis to my father late Mr. V. G. Krishnamurti.

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Mrs. Lekmini Nagaratnam