PREFACE

The present Thesis stems out of my study of Geography as a student, my teaching of geography at the collegiate level and particularly out my experience as Special Officer for Geography in the Maharashtra State Bureau of Textbook Production and Curriculum Research over the last ten years. While it is our usual practice in the Bureau to organise the writing of the Geography textbooks and monitoring their production at every stage till their final publication and later on arrange for their evaluation, I have not come across so far any study of the evolution of Geography textbooks over a period of time. This theme occurred to me while comparing some older textbooks with those currently produced by the Bureau. The theme was further discussed and elaborated in consultation with our Director Dr. R. S. Saraf and some senior Geographers including my guide Prof. D. M. Wagh. It will be seen that the study period marks the beginning of the British rule in Western India and ends with the year of establishment of the Maharashtra State Bureau of Textbook Production and Curriculum Research. My main attempt has been to study the evolution of Geography textbooks in Marathi and analyse their contents. The area of my study is Western Maharashtra because the history of modern Education in Vidarbha and Marathwada differs significantly from that in Western Maharashtra, as these two regions of Maharashtra were in the administrative orbit of the erstwhile Central Province (C. P.) and Berar Province and the Nizam’s Dominion. It was, however, found inevitable to study books written in English mainly because the Marathi books were either their translations or were heavily based upon them.

For the purposes of collecting the required data an attempt was made initially to consult the available Geography textbooks as well as on related disciplines from the following libraries at Pune.

For the purpose of identifying and listing textbooks, the following documents were also found very useful:

'Dolamudrite and Date Granth Suchi'. Further, an attempt was made to obtain old textbooks by visiting the libraries of the established institutes, colleges, and high schools in Pune, Bombay, and Kolhapur. An appeal to the public was made through the newspapers to sell, donate, or loan old textbooks in their possession. This had some response. For the purpose of placing this study in its pedagogical framework, books on Education were consulted in the libraries of the M.S Bureau of Textbooks, the State Institute of Education, Mahamahopadhyaya Potal's Collection in Shri Parashurambhau College, the Tilak College of Education, and Fergusson College in Pune and in Bombay. Elphinstone College, Government Secondary Teachers' Training College, and the Libraries of University of Bombay, the Royal Asiatic Society and Mumbai Marathi Grantha Sangrahalaya. Books on Historical, Social, and Political conditions in Western India covering the study period were also consulted. So were books and reference on Geography available in other British Libraries. A detailed list was also prepared to identify the sources of geographical information in the writings of British administrators, travellers, and scholars serving in India during the study period. A particular effort was made to study and document the atlases in Marathi as well as in English, published during this period.

Analysing the Geography textbooks and ancillary publications of this period has been both an exciting and rewarding experience. It reveals how our textbooks in Marathi were influenced by the British textbooks, and how they did not, and perhaps could not, take up an independent point of view to make Geography a useful and attractive subject, though there was improvement towards the end of the study period. In tracing this development, it is tempting to propose what may be called 'a colonial model of textbook evolution'. This however needs to be further tested.

The present findings are placed before the reader with the hope that they will serve a useful purpose in making our Geography textbooks better and better.

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