

---

---

**PREFACE**

---

---

The theme of Indian National Congress and social reform is highly controversial and difficult to analyse because of the complexities involved in it. Even then some scholars have tried to explain the theme in their own ways. Mr. Charles H. Heimsath's work entitled "Indian Nationalism and Hindu Social Reform" (1964) and Mr. Sitaram Singh, Nationalism and Social Reform in India 1885-1920 (1968) are the notable examples of it. In both the works, details of the work done by National Social Conference have been enumerated and also the role of the Indian National Congress with regard to social reform has been explained in a passing way, whereas here we have examined the proceedings of the Indian National Congress, including the Presidents' addresses of annual sessions upto the advent of Mahatma Gandhi in 1920.

In the First Chapter here, the work of the social reform movements and also of various political associations that were formed before the birth of the Indian National Congress is explained as a background for the emergence of the Indian National Congress. The founders of the Indian National Congress were great intellectuals of the 19th century for their work in the socio-economic and political reforms in India. They have all remained inspiring men to their posterity in 20th century. They belonged to the group of saviours rather than fortune-seekers in the political field. They, therefore, were the men belonging to different shades of opinion and to different walks of life but were basically reformers in the new environments.

The character of the British Rule as represented by the Governor Generals and the Viceroys of India in the latter half of the 19th century was of secular and of democratic tendencies. These tendencies were born out of reformation, religious revolts, political revolutions and the industrial revolution in Europe. The founders of the Indian National Congress were the men well read in these European theories of progress and they believed that political reform and social fermentation were one and the inseparable. How did then the Indian National Congress become purely a political body in course of time is a matter that reflects on the conservative temperament of the society at large and some of the Congress men undid all that was done upto 1895 and had to revive its policies after 1920. This point of view has been explained here with the original sources that are available now in a published form for the researchers.

For the purpose of this Study, the volumes of Encyclopaedia of the Indian National Congress edited by Zaidi and the information of the National Social Conference in Chintamani's work under the Title "Indian social Reform" (1909) are important. In these sources, proceedings containing discussions and resolutions on the issues are collected together and made available to the readers. The Congress Centenary Volumes published recently are also important, though in many issues, they are one-sided. But these contain lot of good information and also some analyses. Another

important source which yields good material was the 'Social Reformer' of Madras, a journal edited by Mr.Natarajan. The paper was started in 1900 and continued upto 1920. This paper was vocal over the problem of the emancipation of women and their education. 'Indian Spectator' of Malabari was another important paper which continued from 1891-1908. The paper was devoted to the cause of social reform, particularly the liberation of women. These and such other original sources are of immense importance for the study of social reform and the Indian National Congress and the same have been extensively used in this Study.

While preparing this Dissertation, some persons and institutions rendered me valuable service and I must acknowledge my indebtedness to them. Dr.B.R.Kamble, Professor and Head of the Department of History, encouraged me and guided me at every stage of this Dissertation which otherwise would not have seen the light of the day so easily. I gratefully thank him for his guidance. My parents, who are also in teaching field, encouraged me and helped me from time to time. I owe a debt to them. The librarians of Barrister Balasaheb Khardekar Library of Shivaji University, Kolhapur and of Gokhale Institute of Poona, were prompt in making available to me the necessary books and reports. I am thankful to them. My close friends Azad Patel, Manohar Shinde, Raosaheb Sawant and Banne were kind enough to spare their time in going through the draft of the Dissertation for checking it. I thank all of them for their good gesture.