

## P R E F A C E

Nineteenth Century is the century of Social reforms in India. The year 1818 is a significant turning point in the history of Modern Maharashtra. In that year the Maratha Power was finally liquidated and the British Rule was established in the Western part of India. With the establishment of British Rule a new age in the life of Maharashtra began. This new age is the age of renaissance in Western India. Many factors were responsible for bringing about renaissance in this part of the country during the first half of the 19th century. The liberal British rulers and administrators who adopted progressive social policies, made the beginning of the new era. Spread of western education and liberal ideas accelerated the speed of socio-religious changes here. The Protestant Christian Missionaries also made an important contribution for furthering the cause of socio-religious transformation.

However, the changes of progressive nature, were brought about in almost every walk of life in Western India, when the educated Indian youths took the initiative in this regard. This generation of English educated Indian youths in Western India has been represented by Acharya Bal Shastri Jambhekar ( 1812-1846 ). To him goes the credit of laying the foundations of a number of progressive movements in Maharashtra. He sincerely endeavoured to spread enlightenment among his fellow-countrymen. It was

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Bal Shastri Jambhakar, who started the first Marathi newspaper entitled 'Durgun' in the year 1832. He was a great teacher himself and he propagated the ideas of progressive social change through his writings. He sincerely attempted to reform Hindu religion. Within a very short span of life he achieved a number of remarkable things.

Bal Shastri Jambhakar laid the broad foundations of our national progress in Bombay and was in the forefront of the reform movement. His contributions in various fields, were well recognised by his contemporaries. But gradually, owing to an unexpected turn in the wheel of fortune, the literary and other activities of Poona assumed a hectic ascendancy and in consequence, the sober work of Bal Shastri Jambhakar and his colleagues in Bombay was pushed into the background. But when one takes into account his varied and extensive learning, high moral character and strenuous exertions in different fields for the advancement of his countrymen, since the advent of British rule in Western India, one must indeed, regard him not only as the most brilliant Indian of the 19th century, but as one who is rightly entitled to be called the pioneer of renaissance in Western India.

So far the scholars in the field of History, have not thoroughly studied the history of renaissance Maharashtra. Those who have studied the topics related to the renaissance in Maharashtra, have not properly taken

into account the role played by the native people in the renaissance activities. Unfortunately no scholar has so far made any attempt to study Acharya Bal Shastri Jambhakar's life and career in the context of his times. It is Bal Shastri who has left a mark of his own on the Renaissance Movement in Western India. Therefore, his contribution needs to be analysed in detail. In a comprehensive history of Modern Maharashtra, the achievements of social reformer like Acharya Bal Shastri Jambhakar must find a place, otherwise there would be a serious lacuna in the work.

However, about a century later after his death, his grandson Ganesh Gangadhar Jambhakar, known as 'Lokashikshankar', compiled, edited and published in three volumes, the vast amount of literature and source material, pertaining to the life and career of Acharya Bal Shastri Jambhakar. First of these volumes, contains an introductory survey of biographical and other references during the century (1846-1946). Second volume contains Bal Shastri's select writings in English and Marathi. Third volume contains biographical material with notes which will be very useful for writing a comprehensive biography of Bal Shastri Jambhakar.

An humble attempt has been made in the present dissertation to study the life and career of Bal Shastri Jambhakar and also his role in the renaissance in Maharashtra, with the help of above mentioned original source

material. Indeed it has proved useful to throw fresh light on the life and activities of Bal Shastri Jambhakar and to arrive at new interpretation of not only Bal Shastri's work but of the Renaissance Movement in Maharashtra as such.

I offer my humble work to the world of scholarship for their scrutiny and comment.

KOLHAPUR

29th November 1986.

  
(Mahavir B. Hatgine)