

P r e f a c e

This is not a study of the history of nationalist thought in Bengal. This is a study of and a theoretical approach to the nationalist thought in nineteenth century Bengal. It is a piece of historical research only to the extent that I have endeavoured to make a historical probe into the past in order to facilitate a better understanding of the present. My purpose, therefore, is not only to record the ideas which emerged from my studies, but to discover and analyse the perceived patterns of thought as they underwent changes in the course of time. Naturally, I could not adhere to a purely chronological arrangement of historical events. Nor was it my aim too. Rather, I considered it necessary to present certain individuals, trends and tendencies as parts of a self-contained whole, which constituted a pattern of thought obtaining at that time. In this, however, I did not deal with the important issues of Western or Indian political philosophy. Rather one could easily find some kind of economic analysis of socio-political ideas. In other words, a relatively greater emphasis has been placed on materialist-objective level of analysis.

This kind of exercise cannot claim to be entirely non-controversial. I do not make such a claim either. It must be admitted that in a work like this evaluation of past perceptions and events in the light of the present thinking becomes somewhat inevitable. I have, nevertheless, tried my best to keep separate my exposition of the nationalist thought in nineteenth century Bengal and my assessment of them.

How far I have been successful in this enterprise can be judged best by others. I, however, hope that my analysis has been substantial enough to establish the patterns which I have found in the course of my research. Incidentally, I would like to add that I have relied largely on 'A Manual of Research' produced by the School of International Studies of the Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, in following procedures of referencing and stylistic requirements of the present study.

It is a researcher's obligation to acknowledge the help, co-operation and guidance that he has received while engaged in this work. Although it is nearly impossible to mention the names of all from whom I have received such help and co-operation, I shall be failing in my duties if I do not mention some of them. My debts are both to institutions and individuals. I am particularly grateful to the University Grants Commission for giving me financial assistance for my research, and to the University of North Bengal for its financial assistance on two small research projects on nineteenth century Bengal.

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