

PREFACE

We are happy to present the second volume of the Gazetteer of India which deals with the history and culture of our ancient land. This volume follows an entirely new scheme of treatment which is more systematic and more informative than the relevant volume of the earlier series. The Imperial Gazetteer Volume on History had been written from the point of view of an imperial power. It was felt that a fresh treatment was necessary in order to present the history of a free nation in its correct perspective. Although many works exist on Indian history, Prof. Humayun Kabir, the then Minister of State for Cultural Affairs, felt that there was need for a standard book on history written with a new approach. He expressed the hope that it would serve as an authoritative text-book on history for the people not only in India but outside as well. It was proposed by him that the English version should be translated into all the major Indian languages. He was also of the view that an abridged edition of about 300 pages might be issued for students.

In view of the importance attached to these volumes, a Central Advisory Board was constituted for the revision of Gazetteers. It was presided over by Prof. Humayun Kabir and several eminent persons were its members. The Board appointed a number of sub-committees for finalizing the plan of Volume II (History and Culture) particularly as regards the periodization of Indian history, separate treatment of social, economic and cultural aspects as also the history of South India. The views of several eminent historians such as Dr. R.C. Majumdar, Dr. Tara Chand, Prof. K.A. N. Sastri, Dr. K.K. Datta, Dr. B.P. Saksena, Dr. N.K. Sinha and Dr. K.K. Pillai were solicited. In the new plan, it was decided to adopt a chronological division of Indian history into 'Ancient', 'Medieval' and 'Modern' periods. Most of the scholars agreed that the 'Ancient' period should end at A.D. 1206, while the 'Modern' period may be taken to commence from A.D. 1761.

The main emphasis in this volume has been on the social, cultural, economic and artistic life of the people. The necessary background of political history has, of course, been given with it. The political history of each period is followed by chapters on economic life, society, religion, literature, art and architecture. For instance, in the 'Ancient' period, we have three chapters devoted to cultural studies, government and economic life, society, religion, literature and art and architecture. Indeed, the attention paid in the old gazetteer to the life of the common man and the cultural heritage of the country was not only inadequate but also unsystematic. The new plan has sought to correct this shortcoming. The history of South India has been dealt with, so far as possible, as an

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integral part of the general history of the country. It may be recalled that the old gazetteer had a separate chapter on the Hindu period in South India up to the fall of the Vijayanagar Empire. It was also decided that the clash between the rising Indian political organizations and the British rulers should be examined in a separate chapter entitled the 'Indian National Movement'. Besides, an exhaustive chapter on the source-materials of Indian history has also been added. It has been our endeavour to mention almost all the important sources—Indian and foreign—which throw light on the history of India. This chapter will be of immense use to scholars for research purposes. It would not perhaps be incorrect to say that this volume is the only authoritative history of India published by the Government of India and written with the cooperation of a very large number of distinguished scholars.

Eminent scholars in different fields were appointed as contributors to the various sections in this volume. It was, however, found that there were a number of points on which there was difference of opinion among the scholars. In view of this, it was decided to set up a small Advisory Committee with Prof. Sher Singh, the then Minister of State for Education, as Chairman. The members of the Committee were Dr. R.C. Majumdar, Dr. A.D. Pusalker, Dr. A.L. Srivastava, Dr. P.C. Gupta, Prof. P.K.K. Menon, Prof. S.H. Askari, Shri Jai Chandra Vidyalankar and the Editor (Gazetteers). The members of the Committee were required to go through the drafts of the chapters in which they had specialized and to offer suggestions. I am grateful to Prof. K.N.V. Sastri for his help and co-operation in scrutinizing the draft and to Dr. Bhabani Bhattacharya for having seen it from the literary point of view.

It was, indeed, a challenging task for the Editor and the officers of the Gazetteers Unit to scrutinize the contributions of over a hundred scholars, verify the facts, introduce uniformity, and also avoid overlapping, as far as possible. The task of giving diacritical marks on all vernacular terms was equally trying. It was rendered all the more difficult in view of the fact that there are more than fourteen major Indian languages besides Sanskrit, Persian and Arabic. The printing of the volume presented quite a problem as there are very few presses in the country which could provide diacritical marks and were willing to take up the big assignment of printing this volume.

To give the readers an idea of the important places which occur in the volume, 4 maps have been included. The system of transliteration followed is generally the same as that standardized by the Indian National Bibliography, Calcutta. In accordance with the decision of the Advisory Committee, no diacritical marks have been given on proper names occurring from the nineteenth century onwards. In the case of place-names, the system adopted by the Survey of India has been followed. The same system would be used in the next (third) volume which is in the press.

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I would like to take this opportunity to thank Prof. S. Nurul Hasan, Minister of Education, Social Welfare and Culture, Shri I.D.N. Sahi, Education Secretary and Shri Mohan Mukerji, Additional Secretary, Department of Culture, who have been taking keen interest in the work.

New Delhi

OCTOBER 15, 1973

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